

1 April 2025

Positive preliminary assessment of the satisfactory fulfilment of milestones and targets related to the fifth payment request submitted by Slovakia on 16 December 2024, transmitted to the Economic and Financial Committee by the European Commission

Executive summary

In accordance with Article 24(2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/241, on 16 December 2024, Slovakia submitted a request for payment for the fifth instalment of the non-repayable support. The payment request was accompanied by the required management declaration and summary of audits.

To support its payment request, Slovakia provided due justification of the satisfactory fulfilment of 20 out of 21 milestones and targets of the fifth instalment of the non-repayable support, as set out in Section 2(1.5) of the Council Implementing Decision of 13 July 2021 on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Slovakia¹.

For 2 targets covering a large number of recipients, in addition to the summary documents and official listings provided by Slovakia, the Commission services have assessed a statistically significant sample of individual files. The sample size has been uniformly set at 60, which corresponds to a confidence level of 95% or above in all cases.

In its payment request, Slovakia has confirmed that measures related to previously satisfactorily fulfilled milestones and targets have not been reversed. The Commission does not have evidence of the contrary. Upon receipt of the payment request, the Commission has assessed on a preliminary basis the satisfactory fulfilment of the relevant milestones and targets. Based on the information provided by Slovakia, the Commission has made a positive preliminary assessment of the satisfactory fulfilment of 20 milestones and targets out of 21 milestones and targets.

The milestones and targets positively assessed as part of this payment request demonstrate significant steps in the implementation of Slovakia's Recovery and Resilience Plan. They notably highlight the continuation of the reform momentum in key policy areas. This includes, among others, the implementation of legislative reforms such as the transition from coal in the Upper Nitra region, the establishment of a central management body for selected public hospitals and the entry in operation of an energy data centre. The milestones and targets also confirm progress towards the completion of investment projects related to performance contracts with public universities, support for excellent researchers, launch of financial instruments for innovative businesses and providing infrastructure to support the fight against money laundering and corruption.

¹ ST 11205/23 INIT, ST 11205/23 ADD 1, ST 11205/23 ADD 1 COR 1, ST 14437/24, ST 14438/24

By the transmission of this positive preliminary assessment and in accordance with Article 24(4) of Regulation (EU) 2021/241, the Commission asks for the opinion of the Economic and Financial Committee on the satisfactory fulfilment of the relevant milestones and targets.

Non-repayable support

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Non-repayable support

SK-C[C2]-R[R2]-M[C2.5]: Methodologies for the decision-making process of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic

Related Measure: C2.R2 Increasing transparency and streamlining decisions of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic

Qualitative Indicator: Publication of methodologies by the Monuments Board

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The reform aims at improving quality and efficiency of the decision-making process of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic by developing three methodologies to classify the monuments endowment, set objective criteria by which Monuments Board makes decisions and quantify the costs associated with the interventions of the Monuments Board. In addition, the objective is to reform the mapping of state-owned monuments by assessing their basic technical aspects, construction, economic, energy-related and other aspects. The mapping shall result in adopting a diagnostic of at least 1000 relevant state-owned monuments. The reform shall facilitate investment decisions on renovation with a view to preserving the monumental value as well as improving energy efficiency, where applicable.

Milestone C2.M5 consists in the development and adoption of three methodologies to classify monument buildings to increase the transparency, public acceptance and speed up the decision-making processes of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic. Based on standardised methodologies, diagnostics of at least 1000 state-owned monuments are adopted by the Monuments Board to facilitate renovation decisions.

Milestone C2.M5 is the only milestone of this reform. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence.	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone and the reform (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Per rollam voting, No. MK-503/2024-420/2693 of the Steering Committee.	The document provides evidence on the adoption of the three methodologies and the diagnostics of 1077 state-owned monuments, on 13 March 2024 (date of the last signature of the member of the Steering Committee).

3	Order of the Minister of Culture no. 13/2021 issued on 13 October 2021	The Order establishes the Steering Committee as the responsible authority adopting the deliverables of Reform 2 under Component 2 of the Slovak Recovery and Resilience Plan.
4	Methodology to classify the monuments endowment approved by the Steering Committee on 13 March 2024.	It characterises and presents the different categories of cultural monuments and their degrees of protection, in line with the requirements of the Monuments Act. It is published on the webpage: https://www.pamiatky.sk/plan-obnovy-a-odolnosti .
5	Methodology to set objective criteria based on which Monuments Board takes decisions approved by the Steering Committee on 13 March 2024.	It sets objective criteria and uniform requirements for the restoration and protection of the cultural monuments. It is published on the above webpage. It is published on the webpage: https://www.pamiatky.sk/plan-obnovy-a-odolnosti .
6	Methodology to quantify the costs associated with the interventions of the Monuments Board approved by the Steering Committee on 13 March 2024.	It determines unit costs for the high-quality restoration and maintenance and provides guidance on how the estimated costs can be calculated. It is published on the above webpage. It is published on the webpage: https://www.pamiatky.sk/plan-obnovy-a-odolnosti .
7	Diagnostics of 1077 state-owned monuments	
8	Passport of one monument building	

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

Development and adoption of three methodologies to classify monument buildings in order to increase the transparency, public acceptance and speed up the decision-making processes of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic.

The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic developed three methodologies to ensure a uniform and high-quality restoration, maintenance and protection of the immovable cultural monuments. The three methodologies were adopted by the Steering Committee as the authority responsible for adoption of deliverables of the Reform 2 under Component 2 of the Slovak RRP (Annex 3), on 13 March 2024 (Annex 2).

1. The methodology to classify the monuments endowment (Annex 4) sets out the different categories of immovable cultural monuments (architecture, archaeology, history, historical greenery, folk construction, engineering, industrial architecture) and their degrees of protection.

It includes a “vademecum” providing the owner, the general public and the specialist public with information on their rights and obligations.

2. The methodology for the decision-making principles of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic Office (Annex 5) sets objective criteria and uniform requirements for the restoration and protection of the monuments. It consists of 38 sub-methodologies grouped in 10 areas (legislation, international conventions and charters; pre-project and projects preparation requirements, urbanism, archaeology, restoration of visual components of architecture, buildings: typical categories, elements, and materials; maintenance and preventive actions, construction requirements). The methodology is meant to increase the transparency and predictability of decisions of the Monument Office of the Slovak Republic and of the County Monument Offices.
3. The methodology for calculating the increase in the cost of intervention in the monument (Annex 6) determines unit costs for the high-quality restoration and maintenance and provides guidance on how the estimated costs can be calculated and planned individually.

The three methodologies were made publicly available on the website of Monuments Board. The possibility for public to read and understand the classification of the monument endowment and decision-making principles of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic Office increases transparency of its processes. The possibility to consult these methodologies will allow owners to anticipate the decision of the Monuments Board, facilitating project and financial planning, which will improve the public acceptance. Finally, the methodology for decision-making principles unifies different decision-making criteria in specifically defined areas, which allows to speed up the decision-making of the regional offices. This is also in line with the description of the measure, which states that **the three methodologies are meant to: (1) classify the monuments endowment, (2) set objective criteria by which Monuments Board makes decisions and (3) quantify the costs associated with the interventions of the Monuments Board.**

Based on standardised methodologies, diagnostics of at least 1000 state-owned monuments shall be adopted by the Monuments Board to provide diagnostics of the basic technical aspects, construction, economic, energy-related and other aspects of the relevant state-owned monuments to facilitate renovation decisions.

A list of diagnostics of 1077 monuments out of 1266 owned by the State or institutions established by the State or created by law, was provided (Annex 7). It includes for each monument data as regards: its identification, location and ownership; basic technical aspects, such as the area and floor; information on its construction, such as the description of construction-technical state, risk of an accident and recommendations for improvement; economic aspects, such as approximate financial costs required for reconstruction and identification of the methodology for calculation of reconstruction costs; and energy information, such as the issuance of an energy audit and energy performance certificate, and other energy related aspects.

To obtain the diagnostics data, the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic developed electronic passports of 1077 monument buildings in line with the internal standardised methodologies and the methodology for calculating the increase in the cost of intervention in the monument (Annex 6). The e-passports together with other accompanying documents such as photo, documents or data on, inter alia, geo-digital targeting of surfaces, objects have been archived in an online database of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic. A copy of one passport was provided (Annex 8) as an example.

While the diagnostics of 1077 state-owned monuments were developed by the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic, they were formally adopted by the Steering Committee (Annex 2) established by the Minister of Culture as the authority responsible for adoption of deliverables of the Reform 2 under Component 2 of the Slovak RRP through the Order no. 13/2021 (Annex 3). The Council Implementing Decision required the adoption of the diagnostics of the state-owned monuments by the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic. The diagnostics were adopted by the Steering Committee. Whilst this constitutes a minimal formal deviation from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, the justification provided due to internal procedures of Slovakia is acceptable and does not affect the progress towards the achievement of the reform or investment that the milestone represents. The Monuments Board of Slovak Republic could not formally adopt the methodologies as the Ministry of Culture was appointed by the Government of the Slovak Republic to implement this reform. The Ministry of Culture then formed the Steering Committee as a responsible body for coordinating and adopting the outcomes of the work prepared by the Monuments Board of Slovak Republic. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

In line with description of the measure, **the reform shall facilitate investment decisions on renovation with a view to preserving the monumental value as well as improving energy efficiency, where applicable.**

The three methodologies are aimed to ensure a uniform and high-quality restoration, maintenance and protection of the immovable cultural monuments, compliant with the requirements of the Monuments Act No 49/2002. The methodology for the decision-making principles of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic (Annex 5) includes in section 11 related to the “current construction requirements” specifications as regards the energy efficiency of historical building, outdoor and indoor energy-efficient lightning, and conditions for the installation of photovoltaic panels. This will allow the owners of relevant buildings to anticipate the Monuments Board decision regarding monumental value and energy efficient renovation measures, facilitating the owners to make informed investment decision.

The collected and published data on the State-owned monuments (Annex 7) are meant to provide relevant information for decisions of the building owners on the renovation. They include information on the energy efficiency, with emphasis on whether an energy audit has been carried out or if an energy performance certificate has been issued. They also inform on the approximate costs of renovation which are essential considerations facilitating the investment decisions on renovation. These elements are aimed to ensure that the renovation incorporates aspects related to the energy-efficiency of the monument.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactory fulfilled.

SK-C[C3]-R[R2]-M[C3.5]: Implementation of optimised rail transport timetable

Related Measure: C3.R2 Public passenger transport reform

Qualitative Indicator: Entry into force of an optimised rail transport timetable

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context

The reform aims at improving the provision of passenger transport. This reform aims to increase the frequency of rail transport, especially on the lines with the highest potential for modal shift of traffic from cars to trains.

The milestone envisages the publication and the entry into force of the optimised rail transport timetable, as well the publication of a new rail passenger transport service plan.

Milestone C3.M5 is the second milestone of the reform, and it will be followed by milestone C3.M6, related to the making integrated transport system allowing multimodal ticketing to be operational in at least six counties. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 30 June 2026.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the target (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled;
2	Annex 1 -Transport Service Plan for Rail Passenger Transport	A basic document that informs the optimisation of the train traffic graph ("Grafikon"). The annexes set out the scope and planned timetables to be implemented by optimised timetable.
3	Annex 2 - Framework Contract for performance of public service obligation – Ministry of Transport and Železničná Spoločnosť Slovensko ZSSK (Slovak Railways), along with yearly subcontracts.	Copy of the Contract for Transport Services between the Ministry of Transport and Slovak Railways, based on the public service obligations. Slovak Railways (ZSSK) service approx. 95% of the Slovak rail passenger traffic. Framework Contract 2021-2030) and the 2023 and 2024 subcontracts.
4	Annex 3 - Framework Contract for performance of public service obligation concluded between the Ministry of Transport and Leo Express Slovensko („LESK“), along with yearly subcontracts.	Copy of the Contract for Transport Services between the Ministry of Transport and Leo Express for the operation on the line Bratislava-Komárno line since December 2023.Framework Contract 2023-2032) and subcontract for 2023 to 2024.

5	Annexes 4 to 6 -Rail Timetables 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 issued by Railways of the Slovak Republic, the national railway infrastructure operator	National train timetables that are valid - from 11 December 2022 to 9 December 2023; - from 10 December 2023 to 14 December 2024; - from 15 December 2024 and onwards. Published on website of the Železnice Slovenskej republiky (Railways of the Slovak Republic) : https://www.zsr.sk/pre-cestujucich/cestovny-poriadok-2024-2025/
6	Annex 7 – “Impact assessment of the new train timetable concept 2022/2023”, prepared by Value for Money Division (UHP) of the Ministry of Finance in June 2024.	An analysis carried out by the Value for Money Unit of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, in cooperation with Slovak Railways Company, evaluates the impacts of the optimised timetable in 2022/2023, also available: https://www.mfsr.sk/files/sk/financie/hodnota-za-peniaze/analyzy-uhp/vyhodnotenie-gvd-2023_zssk_uhp.pdf
7	Annex 8- Response to the First Observation Letter and attachments.	FOL Response, screenshots, and Link to the Slovak Government’s Integrated Database of Traffic Data https://idp.gov.sk/
8	Annex 9 – Communication with the National Implementation and Coordination Agency (NIKA)	Communication on the dates of signatures of performance of public service obligation contracts between the Ministry of Transport and rail transport operators

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

The Ministry of Transport and Construction shall implement the ordering of rail passenger transport services according to the finalised Transport Service plan by 31 December 2023.

Finalisation of the Transport Service Plan a major part of the comprehensive reform of public transport

The Ministry of Transport approved and finalised the Transport Service Plan for Rail Passenger Transport (Transport Service Plan, see Annex 1) in February 2022. The role of the Transport Service Plan is laid down in Article 23 of the Public Transport Act (*Act No 332/2023 on public passenger transport*, which was assessed under the previous milestone of this reform), and Articles 15 to 20 of Decree No. 269/2024 as the basis for drawing up a public transport service contracts.

As demonstrated by Annex 1, the goal of the Transport Service Plan is to identify, based on objective criteria, i) meaningful (prospective) railway passenger transport lines, ii) determine the number, frequency and routes of trains that are required to serve the public interest, and iii) how modal transfers

at the nodes should function. Furthermore, its other goal is equally to improve the state of the rail transport by increasing the optimisation of the network and its utilisation by rail transport operators and passengers.

The Service Plan (Annex 1) is going to be implemented in three stages: startup stage, stage 1, and stage 2. The startup stage until 2022, which included the development and implementation of the first optimisation of the rail transport timetable, which is the subject of this milestone (Annexes 4-6).

The ongoing Stage 1 (approx. 2024-2026) presupposes the implementation of the startup stage and the completion of transport infrastructure projects such as completion of the modernisation of the Žilina node, the Kúty-Devínska Nová Ves line and the electrification of the Bánovce nad Ondavou-Humenné line. Many of these projects are to be implemented through funding from Investment 1 of Component 3 on rail infrastructure. Moreover, Stage 1 the Transport Service Plan expects the establishment of a fixed system of the nodes on the network of Railways of the Slovak Republic (ŽSR) and expects a significant increase in traffic on the lines with the greatest transport potential.

By the end of the decade, the Transport Service Plan envisages the achievement of stage 2. This would entail a fully optimal status of rail, allowing for consistent train services at regular time intervals trains (at stroke time intervals, namely train services every 60 minutes and 30 minutes or 15 minutes during peak hours), subject to the passenger traffic flow requirements and fixing infrastructure bottlenecks. To reach that state of a fully optimised system by the end of this decade, the Transport Service Plan focuses on the following key elements: a) the introduction of punctual train transport (at regular stroke time intervals); b) speeding up trains and shortening intervals on most lines c) introduction of zone service on selected lines; c) strengthening transport on lines with the largest number of passengers; d) streamlining the public service obligation (reducing costs and subsidies for the transport of one passenger or one kilometre of train travel) by optimising the needs for shifts, vehicles and personnel.

Therefore, the Transport Service Plan creates conditions and goals for the development of a fully optimised rail network and system of rail public transport, making it a major part of the comprehensive reform of public transport, as required by the Council Implementing Decision.

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that **a new transport service plan, followed by the optimisation of rail passenger transport, shall form a major part of the comprehensive reform of public transport.**

Implementation of ordering by the Ministry of Transport according to the finalised Transport Service plan by 31 December 2023.

In accordance with Article 21(3) of the 2023 Public Transport Act, the Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic is the sole contracting authority for implementing ordering for passenger transport by rail. Moreover, the Ministry of Transport is required Article 23(7) of the Act to implement the Transport Service Plan in its ordering of public transport.

The authorities provided transport service ordering of contracts (see Annex 3 and Annex 4) with passenger rail service providers. The main contracts provided are the framework contracts. The first framework contract was signed with the Slovak Railways (ZSSK) (the main rail passenger transport operator servicing

Slovakia through public service obligation), servicing approximately 95% of Slovakia of passenger effective in 4 December 2020, and then subsequently supplemented through yearly subcontracts. The authorities shared two subcontracts in 2023 and 2024. Furthermore, Slovakia submitted a framework contract with Leo Express Slovakia, the second rail passenger transport operator, for the sole line Bratislava-Dunajská Streda - Komárno, where it has been operating since December 2023.

Therefore, the requirement of implementing ordering of rail passenger services by the Ministry of Transport according to the finalised Transport Service Plan was finalised with rail service providers by 31 December 2023 was met.

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that **by 31 December 2023 optimised rail transport graphics shall be published.**

Publication, implementation and entry into force of the optimised graphics (rail timetable)

As demonstrated by Article 44 of Act. No 513/2009 Coll. on railways and Articles 81-85 of Ministry of Transport Decree No. 351/2010, a timetable (rail transport graphic) for rail passenger transport is prepared by the Slovak railway manager, Železnice Slovenskej republiky (Railways of the Slovak Republic).

As required by the milestone and quantitative indicator, rail transport timetables are published on the website of the Railways of the Slovak Republic. The respective timetables of rail transport operators are also published on their respective websites. The rail transport timetable implemented in 2022 for the 2022/2023 period, as documented in Annex 4. Slovakia additionally submitted updated rail timetables for 2023/2024 and the most recent 2024/2025 timetable (see Annexes 5 and 6), which have been implemented for those periods and also include Leo Express for the line Bratislava-Dunajská Streda - Komárno. Based on the above, it is demonstrated that the graphics (timetable) were both published on the websites of Railways of the Slovak Republic, the operators, and they have been fully implemented.

The Council Implementing Decision states in the description of the measure that rail transport graphics shall be published, while the name of the milestone speaks of the implementation of rail transport timetable and the qualitative indicator describes the entry into force of the rail transport timetable. The Recovery and Resilience Plan submitted by Slovakia on 29 April 2021 provides that this milestone requires the implementation of a rail transport graphic ("grafikon" in Slovak). In light of the contextual interpretation of Council Implementing Decision, the terms "rail transport graphics" and "rail transport timetable", on the one hand, as well as the terms "entry into force" and "implementation", on the other hand, are considered interchangeable and reflect that rail timetables are not legal acts and, by nature, are actions of railway infrastructure operators which are intended to become operational. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

Optimised nature of the rail graphics (timetables)

In order to demonstrate the optimised nature of the rail graphics, Annex 7 provides detailed assessment by the Value for Money Unit of the Ministry of Finance concerning the 2022/2023 timetable whether these ZSSK timetables have optimised the rail transport in Slovakia. The following elements are set out

based on the analysis in Annex 7 and the timetables in Annexes 4-6, showing that this optimisation of the timetable (rail transport graphic) occurred, and demonstrating that the optimisation of the rail timetable took place in line with the startup stage and early stage 1 of the Transport Service Plan:

- The introduction of regularly repeated train transport times and strengthening transport on lines with the largest number of passengers

The 2022-2023 and the subsequent timetables (Annexes 4-6) show that a so-called stroke regime with regularly repeated departures of services on the same line at the same minute throughout the day was introduced on all rail passenger services. On prospective lines with a daily passenger count of more than 1000 passengers, 30-, 60- and 120-min intervals have been introduced. The basic interval of 120 min is reduced to 60 min during peak hours. On the most widely used suburban lines, a full day period of 60 min interval has been introduced, reduced during peak hours to 30 min intervals. On lines where passenger numbers are less than 500 daily, intervals of 120 minutes or more have been applied.

As is demonstrated by Annex 7 (pages 1-4), the 2022-2023 ZSSK timetable and the subsequent timetables based on the new Transport Services Plan have resulted in optimisation in the form of an increase in the transport of paying passengers by 6% compared to the scenario if there had been no change in the timetable with the assumption of post-pandemic development. Moreover, Annex 7 confirms the change in the provision of transport service had a positive impact on the passenger rail lines, the market share of which represents up to 81% of paying passengers.

- Streamlining cost performance in the public interest

As demonstrated by Annex 7 (page 6), the 2022/2023 ZSSK timetable and the subsequent timetables based on the new Transport Services Plan improved Slovakia's rail traffic handling and contributed to the recovery of train travel after the pandemic. The traffic performed increased by 6% of train kilometres. Moreover, the State subsidies per train kilometre to ZSSK decreased by 7 % and per passenger-km paying passengers by 7 % and 14 % respectively. Traffic has also been boosted on the routes with the largest passenger numbers. The new traffic handling model made it possible to increase the efficiency of ZSSK by dispatching more trains with lower numbers of vehicles and staff compared to 2022.

This is also in line with the name of the milestone, **which states implementation of optimised rail transport timetable**, and in line with the qualitative indicator, which states **entry into force of an optimised rail transport timetable**.

The frequency of rail transport on the lines with the highest potential for transferring traffic from cars to trains shall be increased, allowing for better coordination of regional public bus and train services.

As was demonstrated above, Annex 7 shows that the largest increase to the frequency of trains took place on the Bratislava-Košice and Bratislava-Nové Zámky routes, where 73% of passenger traffic is concentrated in Slovakia. The reinforcement to frequency was mainly due to the deployment of new trains in the section Bratislava-Trenčín, Bratislava-Galanta and Košice-Prešov, which coincide with the above-

mentioned lines, and was permitted thanks to the optimization of the train timetables. Importantly, these lines broadly align with the most used road traffic routes, namely the unfinished D1 highway between Bratislava-Košice and R1 highway between Bratislava-Nitra, as is demonstrated through Annex 8. Therefore, this demonstrates that the requirement of frequency increase on the rail lines with the highest potential for transferring traffic from cars to trains shall be increased was fulfilled.

For the purposes of the requirement of “allowing for better coordination of regional public bus and train services” in the milestone description, it is necessary to read new Transport Service Plan and the optimized timetables together. These two are essential for achieving better intermodal coordination, as the Service Plan and timetables have introduced regularly repeated departures of services of the same line in the same minute throughout the day, allowing passengers to have more reliable connection times with other modes of transport. The Transport Service Plan (Annex 3) demonstrates that main railway lines are to be connected at interchanges to the connecting suburban bus lines, which creates the prerequisites for the emergence and development of integrated transport systems.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactory fulfilled.

SK-C[C4]-R[R1]-M[C4.1]: Transition away from coal at the Upper Nitra region

Related Measure: C4.R1 The termination of coal-based electricity production at Nováky power plant and transformation of the Upper Nitra region

Qualitative Indicator: Cessation of the lignite electricity generation at the Nováky Power Plant

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of this reform is to advance with decarbonisation of the Slovak economy, specifically with transition away from coal in the Upper Nitra region. Slovakia is a heavily industrialised economy, with elevated contribution of energy production to overall greenhouse gas emissions. This measure is expected to deliver positive effects on environment, while contributing to green transition of the Slovak economy.

Milestone C4.M1 requires to terminate the support for production of electricity and to discontinue the electricity generation from lignite at the Nováky power plant (located in the Upper Nitra region).

Milestone C4.M1 is the only milestone of this reform. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence. For legal acts please provide the full legal reference and date of entry into force	Short description
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1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Annex 1 – Permit for electricity generation from by the Office of regulation of the network industries (URSO) on electricity generation for Slovenske elektrarne a.s. No 2005E 0120 – 16th Amendment (dated 13 September 2022)	The permit for electricity generation by the URSO for the Novaky power plant (KVET - ENO, z. Elektrárne Nováky, 972 43 Zemian. Kostofany), part of the Slovenske elektrarne a.s. The document is entitled as “Príloha č. 2 - Povolenie č. 2005E 0120”.
3	Annex 2 – Permit for electricity generation by the Office of regulation of the network industries (URSO) on electricity generation for the Slovenske elektrarne a.s. No 2005E 0120 – 17th Amendment (dated 11 December 2023).	The permit for electricity generation the URSO confirms that the Novaky plant was no longer included in the register of power plant facilities of the Slovenske elektrarne a.s. (as of 1 January 2024). The document is entitled as “Príloha č. 3 - Povolenie č. 2005E 0120”.
4	Annex 3 – Decision 12316/2022-11.1.1/av by the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic of 14 November 2022 issued in the framework of Environmental Impact Assessment investigation procedure, upon request by the Slovenske elektrarne a.s., on change of activity at the Nováky power plant - the termination of lignite-based electricity and heat production.	The document confirms that the Ministry of Environment issued an EIA decision approving the proposed modification of activity at the Nováky power plant (the termination of lignite-based electricity and heat production, as requested by Slovenske elektrarne a.s. in September 2022), without further assessment. The document is entitled as “Príloha č. 7 – Rozhodnutie vydané v zisťovacom konaní”.
5	Annex 4 – Resolution of the Slovak government No. 276 /2024 of 17 May 2024 – ‘The update of the Action Plan for the Transformation of the Upper Nitra Coal Region’.	The document approves the May 2024 update of the Action Plan (included in Annex 12). The document is entitled as “Príloha č. 8 – Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 276 z roku 2024”.
6	Annex 5 – ‘The May 2024 update of the Action Plan for the Transformation of the Upper Nitra Coal Region’, following a Resolution of the Slovak government No. 276 /2024 of 17 May 2024 (in Annex 8)	The May 2024 Action Plan confirms that the lignite-based electricity production at the Nováky power plant was terminated on 20 December 2023. The document is entitled as “Aktualizácia Akčného plánu transformácie uhoľného regiónu Horní Nitra - Marec 2024”.
7	Annex 6 – Document issued by the by the Office for the Regulation of Network Industries of the Slovak republic (URSO) on 29 January 2025 on the “Termination	The document confirms the termination of support to lignite electricity generation in the Upper Nitra Region, including information on final settlement of the financial flows related to subsidies between the

	of subsidies for electricity generation from the coal in the Upper Nitra”. The document is undersigned by the Director of URSO, and carries the identifier No. 2965/2025/BA from 29 January 2025.	short-term organizer of the electricity market OKTE and the Slovenské elektrarne a.s. The document is entitled as “MH SR_GR Petrovic_ukoncenie podpory E z U_29012025.pdf”.
8	Annex 7 – A decision by the by the Office for the Regulation of Network Industries of the Slovak republic (URSO) on the tariffs for the provision of system services and the operation of the system in the electricity sector, document. The decision was issued on 29 December 2023 and has the number 0121/2025/E.	The decision confirms that a special tariff for electricity production from the domestic coal power plant TPSV (SE) was included in the ruling of the Slovak Regulatory Office for Network Industries (URSO) on tariffs for system services and electricity sector operations (point 7). The decision also specifies 30 June 2024 as the final settlement date for the subsidy. The document is entitled as “0121_2024_E.pdf”
9	Annex 8 – A decision by the by the Office for the Regulation of Network Industries of the Slovak republic (URSO) on the tariffs for the provision of system services and the operation of the system in the electricity sector, document No. 099-2024/E from 31 December 2024.	The decision confirms that a special tariff for production of electricity from the domestic coal TPSv(SE) was no longer included in the ruling of the Office of Network Industries of the Slovak republic (URSO) on the tariffs for the provision of system services and the operation of the system in the electricity sector. The document is entitled as “0099_2025_E.pdf”

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

In the framework of transformation of the Upper Nitra region for the Nováky power plant, the Slovak authorities shall terminate the support to lignite electricity generation.

According to Annexes 1 and 2, the Nováky power plant, which previously benefited from state support for lignite-based electricity generation, ceased to hold a permit issued by the Office for the Regulation of Network Industries of the Slovak republic (URSO) to produce and supply lignite-generated electricity to the grid as of 31 December 2023. Consequently, this automatically signified the termination of any support for lignite electricity generation.

In addition, the document by the Office for the Regulation of Network Industries of the Slovak Republic URSO (Annex 6) includes information on the termination of the financial flows related to subsidies, following the discontinuation of the lignite-based electricity production as of 20 December 2023. This document confirms that the final settlement of financial flows related to the subsidy for coal-based electricity generation between the organizer of the short-term electricity market OKTE a.s. and Slovenske elektrarne a.s, utility corporate in the Slovak Republic and the Nováky lignite power plant operator, took place on 30 June 2024.

Furthermore, as detailed in Annex 7 and Annex 8 (and also in the summary document), the evidence confirms that a special tariff for production of electricity from the domestic coal TPSvSE (which served for financing of subsidies for coal-based electricity generation in Slovenske elektrárne a.s.) was phased out. Initially, such tariff was included in the decision of the Office of Network Industries of the Slovak Republic (URSO) of 29 December 2023 (under point 7). Annex 7 also specifies the date of 30 June 2024 as the final settlement day for the subsidies. Furthermore Annex 8 shows that this a special tariff was removed from the decision of the Office of Network Industries of the Slovak republic (URSO) of 31 December 2024 on system service and operation tariffs, confirming the end of this special tariff TPSvSE and the termination of lignite electricity generation support to Slovenske elektrárne a.s.

In the framework of transformation of the Upper Nitra region for the Nováky power plant, the lignite electricity generation shall be discontinued.

According to Annex 2, Slovenske elektrarne a.s. (utility corporate in the Slovak Republic and the Nováky lignite power plant operator) ceased to hold a permit to produce electricity from lignite and supply it to the grid as of 31 December 2023. "Elektrárne Nováky" plant was removed from the register of facilities authorized to generate electricity which is demonstrated by the 17th amendment to Permit No. 2005E 0120, issued by the Office for the Regulation of Network Industries (URSO) on 11 December 2023 and effective from 1 January 2024 (Annex 3). Annex 1 also shows that in the earlier 16th amendment to Permit No. 2005E 0120, issued by URSO on 13 September 2022, "Elektrárne Nováky" (i.e. Nováky electricity power plant) was still included among the generation facilities eligible to feed electricity into the grid.

Furthermore, on 14 November 2022, the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic issued a decision (prepared pursuant to Annex 8a to Act No 24/2006 on the Environmental Impact Assessment) on modification of activity proposed by Slovenske Elektrarne a.s. at the Novaky power plant (Annex 3). This document confirms that such change in activity at the Nováky plant did not have to be assessed under legislation related to the environmental impact assessment, because the production of electricity and heat from lignite was set to discontinue by the deadline of 31 December 2023.

Lastly, the further specifications column of the Operational Arrangement requires the government to provide annual updates to the Action Plan for the Transformation of the Upper Nitra Coal Region. The 2024 update of the Action Plan, adopted through the Government Resolution No. 276/2024 (Annex 4), reaffirms (on pages 11 and 20) the termination of lignite-based electricity production at the Nováky power plant, effective 20 December 2023 (Annex 5).

Furthermore, in line with the description of the measure, **this shall deliver positive effects on environment and a price reduction for final electricity consumers.**

The 'positive effects on environment' stemming from termination of the lignite electricity generation at the Novaky coal plant are outlined in the March 2024 Update of the Action Plan for the Transformation of Upper Nitra Coal Region (Annex 5). While referring to the study of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Section 6.1.3, Pillar III, page 47), the updated Action Plan underlines (Annex 5) that the mining as well as industrial activities (including energy sector) contributed to significant pollution of the Upper Nitra region. Furthermore, the mentioned study of the Slovak Academy of Sciences notes that the lignite mined at the Upper Nitra Region had a 'problematic quality' and that the lignite-based electricity production plant Novaky was the second largest polluter of SO₂ and NO_x in Slovakia (part 2.7.2). Consequently, this

automatically signified that the termination of lignite electricity generation in Novaky plant had significant positive effect on environment.

The Commission considers that there is a clerical error in the text of the Council Implementing Decision as regards the description of milestone C4.M1 and has undertaken the assessment on a revised basis. In this description, it is stated the reform “shall deliver [...] a price reduction for final electricity consumers”. However, based on the intention of the reform outlined in the original RRP on page 158, the Slovak authorities did not list a direct reduction in final electricity prices among reform objectives, considering that this is subject to many other factors, such as market forces, taxes and fees. The inclusion of this requirement is a consequence of a clerical error during the July 2023 CID Annex revision. The original CID Annex adopted in 2021 included the wording “will deliver”, which was during the July 2023 revision incorrectly changed to “shall deliver” instead of the more suitable formulation “is expected to deliver”. The wording “is expected to deliver” is the one considered relevant for the assessment of milestone C4.M1 given that that the expected downward impact of this reform on electricity prices is not sufficient to guarantee an overall and immediate reduction in the final electricity prices. The termination of the subsidies was expected to result in a reduction of electricity prices, while such impact could not be guaranteed and thereby required by the milestone. Against this background, the justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C5]-R[R1]-M[C5.1]: The Land Planning reform

Number and name of the Milestone: C5.M1 The Land Planning reform

Related Measure: C2.R1 Adaptation to climate change – Reform 1: Land planning reform

Qualitative Indicator: Entry into force of the Land Planning Act by the Parliament

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The reform shall provide a basis for safeguarding landscape structures, ecological stability and biodiversity in land-use planning documentation and subsequent approval processes for the authorisation of buildings and activities. Together with the subsequent methodological documents and maps, the landscape planning act shall provide the technical basis for land-use planning documentation and subsequent approval processes for the authorisation of buildings and activities.

The Ministry of the Environment shall prepare an act which shall then be approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The act shall be accompanied by the development of a methodology for assessing the value of landscape and ecosystems which shall aim at ensuring that climate adaptation considerations are factored in territorial decision-making and building proceedings, promoting the implementation of nature-based flood prevention measures and measures to prevent drought and biodiversity loss.

Milestone C5.M1 is the only milestone of this reform. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence. For legal acts please provide the full legal reference and date of entry into force	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled
2	Resolution No. 731/2024 of the National Council of Slovak Republic of 4 December 2024	The Resolution demonstrates an adoption of the Act that amends Act no. 24/2006 Coll., on environmental impact assessments, and other acts, including the Act no. 200/2022 Coll on urban planning
3	Methodology for the evaluation of the landscape, ecosystems and biodiversity. (Dated November 2024)	The methodology is published in the website of Slovak Environment Agency and available at: Metodika pre zohľadnenie a posúdenie hodnoty krajiny /ekosystémov/biodiverzity SAŽP
4	Act No. 350/2024 Coll., amending and supplementing the Act no. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment and amending and supplementing other acts, effective from 1 January 2025 with partial effectiveness on 14 December 2024	The Act is published in the Official Journal and available at: 350/2024 Z.z. - Zákon, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 24/2006 Z. z. o posudzovaní vplyvov na životné prostredie a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov
5	Proposal of the Act from 17 September 2024, amending and supplementing the Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment and amending and supplementing other acts	The proposal submitted to the National Council of Slovak Republic by the Ministry of Environment, is available at the National Council of the Slovak Republic website: Zákony : Vyhľadávanie v návrhoch zákonov : Detaily návrhu zákona - Národná rada Slovenskej republiky
6	Decree No. 153/2024 Coll., on standards and methodology for preparation of urban planning documentation and urban planning materials, effective from 1 July 2024	The Decree is published in the Official Journal and available at: 153/2024 Z.z. - Vyhláška Úradu pre územné plánovanie a výstavbu Slovenskej republiky o štandardoch a metodike spracovania územnoplánovacej dokumentácie a územnoplánovacích podkladov

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

By 31 December 2023 the Ministry of the Environment shall prepare an act which shall then be approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The qualitative indicator required entry into force of the Land Planning Act by the Parliament.

The Ministry of the Environment, as the responsible ministry for environmental matters, prepared the proposal of the Act amending the Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment and other acts, including the Act No. 350/2022 on urban planning (Annex 5). The Ministry submitted the proposal to the National Council for adoption on 17 September 2024 (Annex 2 and 5). The National Council of Slovak Republic adopted the Act No. 350/2024 Coll. on 4 December 2024, amending and supplementing Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment and amending and supplementing other acts. This Act has partial entrance into force, as pursuant to its Article 6, the Article 4 enters into force on 14 December 2024 and the rest of the Act enters into force on 1 January 2025 (Annex 2 and 4iii.).

The Council Implementing Decision required the preparation of the act by 31 December 2023. The Ministry of Environment of Slovakia prepared the act on 17 September 2024 instead. Whilst this constitutes a minimal temporal deviation from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, the delay in preparation of this act is considered both limited and proportional, notably as the delay does not change the nature and effect of the measures. Moreover, the act was adopted on 14 December 2024 and the provisions relevant for this reform entered into force on the same day, therefore the act has legal effect at the time of the preliminary assessment. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

Additionally, the Council Implementing Decision required the entry into force of the Land Planning Act by the Parliament. The Parliament of Slovak Republic adopted the Act No. 350/2024 Coll. which introduced an amendment to Act No. 200/2022 Coll. on urban planning. This amendment introduced by Act No. 350/2024 Coll. fulfils the elements of land planning act:

- This Act introduces landscape planning study, which as an urban study describes the current state of the landscape and verifies or proposes parts of the urban concept related to protection, recovery and creation of landscape infrastructure, landscape structure or green infrastructure in the dedicated area. The content of the study must follow the requirements of Decree No. 153/2024 of 17 June 2024 and Decree No. 392/2023 (paragraph 16(4) of the amended Act No. 200/2022 Coll.).
- The landscape planning study, and its updates, is introduced as document that will be prepared by the urban planning authority when preparing the Urban Development Concept of Slovakia and Urban Development Plan of Region (paragraph 28(4) of the amended Act No. 200/2022 Coll.).
- Additionally, the Urban Development Concept of Slovakia and Urban Development Plan of Region will be prepared on the basis of the landscape planning study (paragraph 31(1) of the amended Act No. 200/2022 Coll.).

- The responsible urban planning authority will draft the first landscape planning study for the purposes of Urban Development Concept of Slovakia by 31 July 2026, and the first landscape planning study for the purposes of Urban Development Plan of Region by 30 September 2027.

Whilst this constitutes a minimal formal deviation from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, the deviation is considered acceptable, notably as an amendment to an existing act has the same legal force as a self-standing act, and the Act No. 350/2024 amending the Act No. 200/2022 Coll. on urban planning fulfils the elements of land planning act. As of this, this minimal deviation does not change the nature of the measure and does not affect the progress towards achieving the reform that the milestone represents. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

The act shall be accompanied by 31 December 2023 by the development a methodology for assessing the value of landscape and ecosystems [...]

Methodology for assessing the value of the landscape, ecosystems and biodiversity was developed in November 2024 by a scientific working group (as demonstrated by Annex 2), and it was made publicly available on the website of Slovak Environment Agency: [Metodika pre zohľadnenie a posúdenie hodnoty krajiny /ekosystémov/biodiverzity | SAŽP](#).

The Council Implementing Decision required that that the Methodology accompanies the act by 31 December 2023. The Methodology was only finalised on 27 November 2024 (Annex 3). Whilst this constitutes a minimal temporal deviation from the requirement to prepare the methodology by 31 December 2023, the delay is considered both limited and proportional, notably (i) the methodology had to reflect the final version of the Act no. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment and other acts, which was proposed on 17 September 2024 and adopted by the National Council on 4 December 2024, and (ii) the methodology was prepared and published at the time of the preliminary assessment. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

[...] which shall aim at ensuring that climate adaptation considerations are factored in territorial decision-making and building proceedings, promoting the implementation of nature-based flood prevention measures and measures to prevent drought and biodiversity loss.

As provided in the chapter on introduction of the methodology (Annex 3), the methodology will be used for two processes, (i) for preventative assessment of the landscape at local and subregional level, and (ii) for causal evaluation of concrete landscape during the assessment of specific project.

In case of the (i) preventative assessment of the landscape at local and subregional level, the methodology will be used as a basis for preparation of the urban planning documentation of microregions, urban areas and zones, urban planning materials and landscape planning studies, i.e. documents relevant for territorial decision-making and building proceedings (chapter on introduction of the methodology). The methodology supports the assessment and evaluation of the aspects of the landscape, also with regard to the risks and vulnerabilities of the landscape, ecosystems and biodiversity (chapter A.9 of the

methodology, Annex 3). The use of methodology in this process will result in, besides others, complex proposals for measures to preserve the positive status of landscape, maintaining the ecosystems and biodiversity, including climate adaptation measures to negative impacts of climate change (chapter A.10 of the methodology, Annex 3). The methodology also provides good examples of measures to initiate positive changes in landscape, including close-to-nature flood solutions, measures to increase the water retention capacity of the landscape, nature-based solutions, biodiversity support and other climate adaptation measures (chapter A.10.3 of the methodology, Annex 3).

For the (ii) casual evaluation of concrete landscape during the assessment of specific project, the methodology will be used for preparation of the documentation used for evaluation of the impact assessment as part of environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment processes pursuant to Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment, i.e. documentation used for some types of building proceedings (page 4 of the methodology, Annex 3). As part of this process, the methodology provides for a step to assess the negative impacts of climate change, including the water retention capacity of the landscape, flood protection measures (e.g. the impact of the project to river basin, the rainwater retention and its reuse) and drought prevention measures (chapter B.4.2, Annex 3).

Furthermore, in line with the description of the measure, **the reform shall provide a basis for safeguarding landscape structures, ecological stability and biodiversity [...]**.

The landscape planning study, as provided for by Act No. 350/2024 Coll., shall not be prepared in contradiction with the requirements of Decree No. 153/2024 of 17 June 2024 and Decree No. 392/2023 (Article 16(4) of the amended Act No. 200/2022 Coll.). The Annex 6 of Decree No. 153/2024 of 17 June 2024 sets out the content of the landscape planning study (chapter 1.2.2), which, besides others, requires the study to include:

- Analysis of limits, problems, risks and vulnerabilities of the area, as regards landscape infrastructure and green infrastructure, water regime, ecological stability and biodiversity in the context of environmental needs;
- Recommendations for (i) priority land adjustments to create the landscape and green infrastructure, (ii) sustainable management of the land, (iii) optimisation of the water regime, (iv) protection of ecosystems and support to biodiversity, (v) protection and creation of significant landscape structure and other natural and cultural-historical values of the landscape;
- Graphic proposal of spaces for landscape and green infrastructure and constructions for protection and creation of landscape and graphic proposals of the recommendations in the point above.

As provided in chapter A.11 of the methodology, the result of the application of this methodology will be a study that includes a graphic part consisting of, besides others:

- Map of actual landscape structure;
- Map of relief types;
- Map of landscape types;

- Map with all identifies values from different areas and elements with negative impact in the landscape and localisation of proposed measures.

[...] in land-use planning documentation and subsequent approval processes for the authorisation of buildings and activities. Together with the subsequent methodological documents and maps, the act shall provide the technical basis for land-use planning documentation and subsequent approval processes for the authorisation of buildings and activities.

As provided in the chapter on introduction of the methodology (Annex 3), the methodology will be used as a basis for (i) preparation of the urban planning documentation of microregions, urban areas and zones, urban planning materials and landscape planning studies, i.e. documents relevant for territorial decision-making and building proceedings; and (ii) for preparation of the documentation used for evaluation of the impact assessment as part of EIA and SEA processes pursuant to Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on environmental impact assessment, i.e. documentation used for some types of building proceedings.

The landscape planning study is a mandatory document for preparation of the Urban Development Concept of Slovakia and Urban Development Plan of Regions (Article 31(1) of the amended Act No. 200/2022 Coll.), which are land-use planning documentations (Article 18(4) of the amended Act No. 200/2022 Coll). Pursuant to Article 18(2) of the amended Act No. 200/2022 Coll., the land-use planning documentation is binding documentation for approval processes for authorisation of buildings and activities.

This shall have a significant impact on the maintenance of landscape structures, ecological stability and the protection of biodiversity.

The Annex 6 of Decree No. 153/2024 of 17 June 2024 (evidence 6) sets out the content of the landscape planning study (Chapter 1.2.2), which, besides others, requires the study to include:

- Analysis of limits, problems, risks and vulnerabilities of the area, as regards landscape infrastructure and green infrastructure, water regime, ecological stability and biodiversity in the context of environmental needs;
- Recommendations for (i) priority land adjustments to create the landscape and green infrastructure, (ii) sustainable management of the land, (iii) optimisation of the water regime, (iv) protection of ecosystems and support to biodiversity, (v) protection and creation of significant landscape structure and other natural and cultural-historical values of the landscape;
- Graphic proposal of spaces for landscape and green infrastructure and constructions for protection and creation of landscape and graphic proposals of the recommendations in the point above.

During the approval processes for authorisation of buildings and activities, the urban planning authority is required to issue a binding statement regarding the alignment of the proposed projects with the binding parts of the urban planning documentation (paragraph 24 of the Act No. 200/2020 Coll.). This way the

landscape planning study, as binding document for urban planning documentation, will impact the future activities in the specific area.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C6]-R[R5]-M[C6.10]: Adoption of legislative amendments that introduce of the definition of segregation at schools in the legislation and the development of methodological material for the implementation of desegregation

Related Measure: C6.R5 Promoting school desegregation

Qualitative Indicator: Adoption by the Parliament of an amendment to Act No. 245/2008 or to Act No 365/2004 and the creation and approval by the Ministry of Education of methodological material

Time: 2023-Q3

1. Context:

The reform introduces a legal definition of segregation in schools and methodological material to prevent and eliminate segregated education.

The milestone requires legal amendments to the Anti-discrimination Act (Act No. 365/2004 Coll.) or the School Act (Act No. 245/2008 Coll.). The formulation of the definition avoids being subject to different interpretations and the methodological material shall provide guidance to the creators of schools, schools, directors and teachers.

Milestone C6.M10 is the first step of the implementation of the reform and will be followed by milestone C6.M11 and target C6.T12, related to the entry into force of the legal definition of segregation in schools and 100% of schools applying desegregation standards. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2025.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document (" <i>Cover note SK-CC6-RR5-MC6.10_FIN_2024-12-13_FINAL</i> ")	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Act No. 182/2023 Coll. adopted on 9 May 2023 as effective from 30 May 2023 to 31 August	Article 1(5) of Act No. 182/2023 introduced Article 1(2)(ah) in Act No.

	2023 amending Act No. 245/2008 on education (<i>"Príloha1_ZZ_2023_182_20230530"</i>)	245/2008 concerning the definition of segregation in schools. The Act is retrievable at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2023/182/20230530.html
3	Act No. 290/2024 Coll. adopted on 30 October 2024 as effective from 1 January 2025 to 31 August 2025 amending, amongst others, Act No. 245/2008 on education and Act No. 596/2003 on state administration in education (<i>"Príloha5_ZZ_2024_290_20250101"</i>)	Article 4(6) amended Article 1(2)(ai) of Act No. 245/2008 concerning the definition of segregation in schools. Article 4(7) amended Article 1(2)(aj) of Act No. 245/2008 such that it states that complying with the prohibition of segregation in schools means that measures are adopted and implemented to prevent and eliminate segregation. Article 3(57) introduced Article 1(16)(1)(q) in Act No. 596/2003 which states that to include a school, at which the language of instruction is the Roma language, in the network of schools, a statement is needed from the government's plenipotentiary for Roma communities on the school's compliance with the prohibition of segregation in schools. The Act is retrievable at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2024/290/20250101.html
4	"Methodological Material on School Desegregation for Founders and Principals" (<i>"Metodický Materiál desegregácie Škôl Pre Zriaďovateľov A Riaditeľ'ov"</i>), published by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (2022) (<i>"Príloha2_Spolu v jednej lavici.pdf"</i>)	Pilot version of the methodological material titled "Methodological Guide – desegregation in education and training", retrievable at: https://www.minedu.sk/desegregacia/
5	"Methodological Guide – desegregation in education and training" (<i>"Metodická Príručka – desegregácie vo výchove a vzdelávaní"</i>), published by the section of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport Section for national and inclusive education, (2023) (<i>"Príloha 3_Metodicka prirucka2023"</i>)	Original version of the methodological material, retrievable at: https://www.minedu.sk/desegregacia/

6	Request for approval of the publication of the methodological material titled “Methodological Guide – desegregation in education and training” (“ <i>Metodická Príručka – desegregácie vo výchove a vzdelávaní</i> ”) (11 December 2023) (“ <i>Príloha4_Spisovy obal_schvalenie ministrom2023</i> ”)	Page 1 states that the request is approved by the Minister of Education by signature on 19 December 2023.
7	“Methodological Guide – desegregation in education and training” (“ <i>Metodická Príručka – desegregácie vo výchove a vzdelávaní</i> ”), published by the section of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport Section for national and inclusive education (2024) (“ <i>Príloha6_Metodická príručka desegregácie2024</i> ”)	Amended version of the methodological material reflecting an amendment to the definition of segregation which clarified the wording of the original definition retrievable at: https://www.minedu.sk/desegregacia/
8	Request for approval of the publication of the methodological material titled “Methodological Guide – desegregation in education and training” (“ <i>Metodická Príručka – desegregácie vo výchove a vzdelávaní</i> ”) (13 December 2024) (“ <i>Príloha7_Spisovy obal_schvalenie ministrom2024</i> ”)	Page 1 states that the request is approved by the Minister of Education by signature on 13 December 2024.

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

The reference to “Roma” in this preliminary assessment is an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of different people of Romani origin. It also encompasses groups such as traveller populations, without denying their specificities.

Amendments to the legislation shall concern the Anti-discrimination Act (No 365/2004 Coll.) or the School Act (No 245/2008 Coll.) and other legislation related to the financing and management of schools. – From the qualitative indicator: Adoption by the Parliament of an amendment to Act No 245/2008 Coll. or to Act No 365/2004 Coll. and the creation and approval by the Ministry of Education of methodological material.

Act No. 245/2008 Coll. and other legislation related to the financing and management of schools have been amended by Act No. 290/2024 which was adopted on 30 October 2024 and entered into force on 1 January 2025 in accordance with Article 7. For instance, Article 4(6) amended Article 1(2)(ai) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. (on education) concerning the definition of segregation in [primary- and secondary-level] schools and Article 3(57) introduced Article 1(16)(1)(q) of Act No. 596/2003 Coll. (on state administration in education), which is related to the financing and management of schools, and states that to include a school, at which the language of instruction is the Roma language, in the network of schools, a statement

is needed from the government's plenipotentiary for Roma communities on the school's compliance with the prohibition of segregation in schools.

The approval of the Ministry of Education of the methodological material created by the Ministry has been provided on page 1 of the request for approval on the publication of the methodological material titled Methodological Guide – desegregation in education and training (*“Metodická Príručka – desegregácie vo výchove a vzdelávaní”*) of 13 December 2024 (Annex 8 in the table of evidence, *“Príloha7_Spisovy obal_schvalenie ministrom2024”*). The latter document was created by the section for national and inclusive education of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport.

The definition of segregation clearly determines what acts and omissions are considered to be segregation in order to avoid different interpretations in interpretation.

Article 1(2)(ai) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. defines clearly what acts and omissions are considered to be segregation: “Segregation in education and training is an act or omission of an act which is contrary to the principle of equal treatment under a special regulation i) and as a result of which there is or could be spatial, organisational or social exclusion of a group of children and pupils or participants in education and training or their separate education, except for education provided in accordance with an international treaty, to which the Slovak Republic is bound ii) in the exercise of the rights of national minorities to education and training in the language of the national minority concerned and in the creation of conditions for the education of children with disabilities or talents and pupils with disabilities or talents, taking into account their will and interests and those of their legal representatives, if participation in such education is optional and corresponds to the regulation of the conditions of education and training pursuant to this Act, specifically for education and training at the same level of education”.

i) “Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts (Anti-discrimination Act), as amended”.

ii) “Convention against Discrimination in Education (Notification of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic No. 276/2024 Z. z.). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Notification of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic No. 317/2010 Coll.).”

Different interpretations are avoided because the definition clearly states that any form of spatial-, organisational- or social “exclusion” which violates the principle of equal treatment, as established in the Anti-discrimination Act (Act No. 365/2004 Coll.), is unjustifiable, but that “separate” education is justifiable on the basis of exercising the right of national minorities to receive education which is instructed in the language of the national minority, and on the basis of providing education to children and pupils who have a disability or who are gifted. Moreover, the definition, including the conditions it provides under which separated education is permissible, are consistent with UNESCO’s Convention against Discrimination in Education and the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see also the two footnotes to the definition).

The methodological materials shall provide guidance on preventing and eliminating segregated education for the various educational actors (such as creators, schools and school facilities, directors and teachers) **in practice.**

The methodological material provides guidance on preventing and eliminating segregated education on pages 33 to 52 which contain 15 tables which provide in the columns named “possible solutions” (“*Možné riešenia*”) and “proposals for forms of solutions” (“*Návrhy foriem riešení*”) outlines of possible desegregation measures which cover the prevention and elimination of segregated education (Annex 7 in the table of evidence, “*Príloha6_Metodická príručka desegregácie2024*”). Examples of outlines of preventive measures are: the establishment of an official list of school districts and the regular analysis of these (page 51) and the ensuring that schools, including support staff, have a keen interest in each pupil and regularly and intensively consult and communicate with parents and social workers (page 40). Examples of outlines of eliminative measures are: the provision of school bus services from marginalised Roma communities to other areas (page 51) and the promotion of extracurricular activities jointly conducted between children with and without a Roma background (page 44).

The methodological material provides guidance for various educational actors such as creators, schools, school facilities, directors and teachers on pages 33 to 52 which contain 15 tables which provide in the column named “key actors and cooperating entities” (“*Kľúčoví aktéri a spolupracujúce subjekty*”) an indication of what outlined desegregation measures could be implemented by what educational actor(s). Examples of educational actors, to which the methodological material is addressed, are: various Ministries, self-governing regions, municipalities, the school inspectorate, founders of schools, school principles, support staff at schools, NGOs and parents.

The methodological material provides guidance in practice as it structures the outline of possible desegregation measures around a typology of eight forms of education at risk of segregation in Slovakia: i) overrepresentation of Roma in schools for pupils with special educational needs, ii) overrepresentation of Roma in classes for pupils with special educational needs, iii) differentiated schools for certain ethnicities, iv) schools which segregate internally, v) schools at which the language of instruction is a national minority language which is not the [main] language of the Roma pupil, vi) ethnically homogenous schools due to demographic trends, vii) ethnically homogenous school due to residential segregation, and viii) areas in which relatively many Roma live forming a school district. An overview of the typology can be found on page 32 of the methodological material.

This is also in line with the description of the measure, which states that **the desegregation in schools shall be implemented by developing the methodological guidelines for the various educational actors** (such as creators, schools and school facilities, directors and teachers) **for the prevention and elimination of segregated education.**

The milestone is further specified in the Operational Arrangements, which requires: **For the purposes of these Operational Arrangements, ‘Desegregation’ shall be understood primarily in the context of preventing and eliminating segregated education for individuals of Roma origin.**

Desegregation is understood primarily in the context of preventing and eliminating segregated education for individuals of Roma origin, because the methodological material for the implementation of desegregation states in its introduction on page 7 that, in Slovakia, the risk of segregation in education is particularly high for persons with a Roma background (Annex 7 in the evidence table, “*Príloha6_Metodická príručka desegregácie2024*”). Subsequently, the methodological material interprets the definition of segregation on pages 8 to 27 in the context of the segregation of Roma, and the typology on page 32 is based on eight forms of education at risk of segregation as encountered by Roma in Slovakia.

As a result of this, the guidance on page 33 to 52 puts Roma central in the outlined desegregation measures.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled

SK-C[C7]-R[R2]-T[C7.6]: Percentage of pedagogical and professional staff trained, especially in preparation for the new curriculum, inclusive education and digital skills

Related Measure: C7.R2 Preparing and developing teachers for new content and form of teaching

Quantitative Indicator: percentage of pedagogical and professional staff trained

Baseline: 0

Target: 55

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of this reform is to strengthen the quality of skills of teaching and professional staff and motivate them for lifelong professional development. The focus is on the new curricula, inclusive education and the acquisition of digital skills.

Target C7.T6 requires that, by the 31 December 2023, at least 55% of pedagogical and professional staff of schools shall be trained.

Target C7.T6 is the second and last target of reform C7.R2, and it follows the completion of milestone C7.M5, related to legislative changes bringing about, among other things, the introduction of new study programmes preparing future teachers, an allowance to motivate teaching and professional staff and a new model of accreditation of professional development training programmes. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2025.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence. For legal acts please provide the full legal reference and date of entry into force	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.

2	Annex 1 – List of trained staff and content of trainings	The excel table contains 12 columns: name of training; type of training; training content; training area (new curriculum, inclusion, digital, other); name of the training provider; identification number of the training provider; unique identifier of the staff member; name of the staff member; type of the staff member (pedagogical or professional); reference number of the certificate of completion; trainings conducted in 2023 or after 2023; length of trainings.
3	Annex 2 – Methodological Guideline 1	This guideline supported “updating education” trainings organised from 2 September 2022 to 30 June 2023.
4	Annex 3 – Methodological Guideline 2	This guideline supported “innovative education” trainings organised between 1 January 2022 and 15 October 2023.
5	Annex 4 – Methodological Guideline 3	This guideline supported various training courses for the professional development of pedagogical and professional staff, organised between 16 October 2023 and 31 August 2024.
6	Annex 5 – Methodological Guideline 4	This guideline supported “innovative education” trainings organised from 1 January 2022 and 20 November 2024.
7	Annex 6 – Aggregated school data on the baseline value	The document provides aggregated data from the quarterly school reports, expressed as full-time equivalents (FTEs).
8	Annex 6.1 – Additional data on the baseline value	This document shows how the total baseline value, expressed in physical persons, is calculated, compared to FTE calculations. The document has been certified (with signature) by the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, an organisation under the Ministry of Education.

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the target.

By the 31 of December 2023 at least 55% of pedagogical and professional staff of schools shall be trained.

According to the 2020 Quarterly School Work Reports, which individual schools submit every quarter to the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, and as confirmed in Annex 6.1, there were a total of 86 936 pedagogical and professional staff working in various school establishments such as kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and special schools in Slovakia. By 10 December 2024, 49 693 pedagogical

and professional staff were demonstrably trained, as correspondingly reflected in Annex 1. As 57% of the staff have been trained, the target is overachieved.

Each employee listed in Annex 1 is a pedagogical or professional employee, who has been counted only once in the table and has been assigned a unique identifier (EDUID). All certificates of completion of the trainings are also assigned to a unique reference number (column K of Annex 1), corresponding to the unique staff member. Following the selection of a random sample of 60 units, Slovakia submitted the certificates of completion of the training courses attended by the 60 sampled individuals, as well as additional documentation on the training courses. The target requirement can be considered met because the evidence confirmed that the 60 sampled individuals were effectively trained. The Commission verified that most of the training courses focused on the three areas of inclusive education, new curriculum and digital skills, as per the CID.

The Council Implementing Decision required that the training sessions should have been conducted by the 31 of December 2023. Out of the 49 693 pedagogical and professional staff trained, 26 677 (54%) were trained by 31 December 2023 and 23 016 (46%) in 2024, by the submission of the payment request. Whilst this constitutes a minimal substantive deviation from the requirements of the Council Implementing Decision, meeting the target beyond 2023 has allowed for a larger number of pedagogical and professional staff to complete their trainings at the time that best reflects their individual professional development needs. At the same time, extending the implementation of the target until the submission of the payment request in 2024 has also supported longer-term educational trainings, such as qualification education, which can last up to 2 or 3 years. Finally, as the new curriculum was published in May 2023 and the investment in school digitalisation (C7.I1) is being rolled out as of 2024, allowing for trainings organised in 2024 to be counted towards the target objective is warranted. As of this, this minimal deviation does not change the nature of the measure and does not affect the progress towards achieving the reform that the target represents. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the target is satisfactorily fulfilled.

Furthermore, in line with the name of the target, **pedagogical and professional staff shall be trained especially in preparation for the new curriculum, inclusive education and digital skills.**

Over 90% of training sessions are in line with the three priority areas, namely the new curriculum, inclusive education and the acquisition of digital skills. The pedagogical and professional staff was trained in two main ways. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education has launched four methodological guidelines (calls for application), allowing eligible schools to claim the reimbursement of the training costs incurred and therefore promoting the lifelong professional development of pedagogical and professional staff. On the other, such staff participated in training sessions organised directly by the National Institution of Education and Youth (NIVAM), a public institution under the Ministry of Education.

The first methodological guideline supported “up-to-date education²” training sessions organised from 2 September 2022 to 30 June 2023 for pedagogical and professional staff employed in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. The focus of the training was on the three priority areas of school curriculum, inclusive education and digitalisation of education. This guideline accounts for 39.6% of all trained individuals. The second methodologic guideline supported “innovative education” training³, organised from 1 January 2022 and 15 October 2023, with a focus on changes to the new curriculum, inclusive education, digitisation of education and additional topics. This guideline accounts for 5.2% of all trained individuals. The third methodological guideline supported various types of professional development training organised between 1 January 2022 and 31 August 2024. Such training includes “qualification education”, “functional education”, “specialist education”, “pre-attestation education” and “innovative education”. This guideline accounts for 12.9% of all trained individuals. Finally, the fourth methodological guideline supports “up-to-date education” training sessions, similarly to the first methodological guideline, organised from 1 January 2022 to 20 November 2024. This guideline accounts for 9.6% of all trained individuals.

The training sessions organised by NIVAM are provided free of charge to pedagogical and professional staff. Overall, NIVAM contributed to 32.7% of trainings, most of which took place in 2024. These sessions consisted of “innovative education” programmes and professional events as well as three online courses of 5 and 10 hours, all of which focused on one of the three priority areas. Through one online course (“Modern Education for the 21st century in kindergarten”), kindergarten teachers were made aware of the objectives of the curricular reform in the 1st cycle of primary schools, as well as of inclusive approaches in kindergarten education. Another online course (“Curricular reform at a close – New state education programme”) instructed participants about the curricular reform in primary schools and the reason for its implementation. Finally, the third online course (“DigitEDU”) focused on developing competences on the use of digital equipment in teaching and inclusive education.

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that [...] **especially in preparation for the new curriculum, inclusive education and digital skills.**

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

2 The objective of “up-to-date education” is to renew, according to the needs of the schools, the professional competences of employees, to acquire new knowledge, especially on changes in the relevant legislation, education programmes and pedagogical documental or to acquire new knowledge and skills in a specific field of work activity.

3 The objective of “innovative education” is to deepen the professional competences necessary for the pursuit of a professional activity or apply the latest knowledge or experience in education and training.

SK-C[C8]-R[R1]-T[C8.2]: Performance contracts signed with public universities (in percentage)

Related Measure: C8.R1 Change in funding for universities, including the introduction of performance contracts

Quantitative Indicator: Performance contracts signed with public universities (in percentage)

Baseline: 0

Target: 90

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of the reform is to introduce performance contracts to the legal system in order to support the profiling and diversification of universities based on their specific strengths and potential for development.

Target C8.T2 requires that at least 90% of performance contracts are signed with public universities.

Target C8.T2 is the second and last target of the reform, and it follows the completion of milestone C8.M1, related to the conclusion of an overarching agreement of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic with universities. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence. For legal acts please provide the full legal reference and date of entry into force	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the target was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Annex 1 – List of all performance contracts signed with public universities	The excel document contains a list of all signed performance contracts with public universities and the links to the contracts published in the Central Register of Contracts. The versions stored on the Register are not signed.
3	Annex 2 - Act No. 131/2002 on universities and amending certain acts, hereinafter referred to as “Higher Education Act”. The	Articles 89(3) and 89(13), on the financing of public universities, are particularly relevant for the assessment.

	Act entered into force on 1 April 2002.	
4	Annex 3 – Performance contracts signed with public universities	The 20 performance contracts have been scanned to show the signatures. These documents complement Annex 1.

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the target.

At least 90% of performance contracts signed.

Performance contracts for 2024 are integrated into the subsidy contracts concluded with each public higher education institution. These contracts commit institutions to utilize the allocated subsidies in line with their stipulated terms. As evidenced in Annex 3, by the end of 2023, the Ministry of Education, Research, Development, and Youth of the Slovak Republic (MŠVVaM SR) successfully signed the performance contracts with all 20 public universities in Slovakia, surpassing the initial target of 90% of performance contracts signed.

Article 3(17) of the contracts (Annex 3) states that the Ministry of Education establishes measurable indicators for a period of three years, according to Article 89(3)(d) of the Higher Education Act (Annex 2) drawn up in accordance with the methodology for the breakdown of the subsidy. Each contract includes Annex 7, containing measurable indicators with their current level of implementation, together with established levels of implementation for 2024, 2025 and 2026.

Article 3(20) of the contracts (Annex 3) establishes that, in accordance with Article 89(13) of the Higher Education Act (Annex 2), the public higher education institution shall provide the Ministry with an evaluation of the fulfilment of the measurable indicators for 2024 by 31 August 2025, an evaluation of the fulfilment of the measurable indicators for 2025 by 31 August 2026, an evaluation of the fulfilment of the measurable indicators for 2026 by 31 August 2027. The achievement of a binding target is a condition for obtaining a specified subsidy as laid out in Annex 7 of the contract.

Articles 3(21) and (22) provide that, pursuant to Article 89(13) of the Higher Education Act (Annex 2), the Ministry of Education, after verifying the accuracy of the data, published on its website an evaluation of the fulfilment of the measurable indicators, and adjusts the break-down of the subsidy in accordance with the methodology for 2026, 2027 and 2028 and based on the fulfilment of measurable indicators.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C8]-I[I1]-M[C8.9]: At least 2 calls concluded for supporting the strategic development of universities

SK-C[C8]-I[I1]: Investment support for the strategic development of universities

Qualitative Indicator: Award of the contracts following the calls

Time: 2023-Q2

1. Context:

The investment primarily underpins the implementation of reform 5 on the concentration of educational and research capacities. For this purpose, the investment supports projects developing research, education and accommodation infrastructure. Project management is based on roadmaps, and investment plans detail the scope of investment projects.

At least two calls for applications are concluded which cover infrastructure projects which have high added value for excellent research and internationalisation, and the management of the investment project and induced investments.

Milestone C8.M9 is the first step of the implementation of the investment, and will be followed by target C8.T10, related to the reconstruction of at least 120,201m² of area of universities, including dormitories. The investment has a final expected date for implementation on 30 June 2026.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document ("Súhrnný dokument SK-C[C8]-I[I1]-M[C8.9]")	Summary document duly justifying how the target (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Five calls for applications and one call for expression of interest ("Výzva")	Call No. 08I01-20-V01 supporting the merging of universities and supporting the (re)construction of research-, education- and accommodation-infrastructure thereby realising on average at least 30% primary energy savings on a subset of infrastructure projects. Call No. 08I01-20-V02 supporting the project management of merging universities which benefit from call No. 08I01-20-V01. Call No. 08I01-20-V03 gauging the interest in creating consortia of universities and supporting

		the (re)construction of research-, education- and accommodation- infrastructure thereby realising on average at least 30% primary energy savings on a subset of infrastructure projects. Call No. 08I01-20-V04 supporting the (re)construction of research-, education- and accommodation- infrastructure thereby realising on average at least 30% primary energy savings on a subset of infrastructure projects. Call No. 08I01-20-V05 supporting the creation of consortia of universities and supporting the (re)construction of research-, education- and accommodation- infrastructure thereby realising on average at least 30% primary energy savings on a subset of infrastructure projects. Call No. 08I01-20-V07 supporting the (re)construction of research-, education- and accommodation- infrastructure thereby realising on average at least 30% primary energy savings on a subset of infrastructure projects. All calls can also be retrieved at https://www.minedu.sk/uzavrete-vyzvy/
3	14 applications to call No. 08I01-20-V04 and four applications to the call No. 08I01-20-V05 (<i>ŽoPPM</i>).	The applications outline what the submitted projects entail and how these contribute to the objectives of the call and the strategic objectives of the applicants, as well as how these fit within the policy context, to what risks the implementation of these projects is subject and the identification details of the applicants, including their financial stability.
4	14 lists of activities which are proposed to be undertaken by the 14 applicants to call No. 08I01-20-V04 and four lists of activities which are proposed to be undertaken by the four applicants to call No. 08I01-20-V05 (<i>“Zoznam investičných aktivít”</i>)	The lists describe what mandatory and optional activities are proposed to be undertaken by the applicants, including the contribution of each activity to the objectives of the call and the objectives of the university, the risks the implantation of the activity is subject to, the timeline of the implementation of the activity, and the cost of each activity.

5	Four roadmaps and investment plans, one of each for each applicant to call No. 08I01-20-V05 (<i>"Investičný plan 08I01-20-V05"</i>)	Four spreadsheets, one per consortium, containing the roadmap and investment plan of each consortium as funded by call No. 08I01-20-V05. The roadmap describes what investment activity is planned to be completed in what time period and the investment plan describes what each investment activity constitutes.
6	14 signed contracts for call No. 08I01-20-V04 and four signed contracts for call No. 08I01-20-V05 (<i>"Zmluva"</i>).	Contracts were concluded with the following universities under call No. 08I01-20-V04: 1. Bratislava University of Economics (<i>"Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave"</i>) signed on 15 March 2024 2. Bratislava University of Economics (<i>"Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave"</i>) signed on 15 March 2024 3. University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice (<i>"Univerzita veterinárneho lekárstva a farmácie v Košiciach"</i>) signed on 10 April 2024 4. University of Prešov in Prešov (<i>"Prešovská univerzita v Prešove"</i>) signed on 10 April 2024 5. Žilina University of Žilina (<i>"Žilinská univerzita v Žiline"</i>) signed on 10 April 2024 6. University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice (<i>"Univerzita veterinárneho lekárstva a farmácie v Košiciach"</i>) signed on 17 May 2024 7. Bratislava University of Economics (<i>"Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave"</i>) signed on 22 May 2024 8. Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica (<i>"Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici"</i>) signed on 22 May 2024 9. Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica (<i>"Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici"</i>) signed on 22 May 2024 10. Slovak Technical University of Bratislava (<i>"Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave"</i>) signed on 7 June 2024 11. University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice (<i>"Univerzita veterinárneho lekárstva a farmácie v Košiciach"</i>) signed on 20 June 2024 12. J. Selye University (<i>"Univerzita J. Selyeho"</i>) signed on 7 June 2024

		13. University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice (<i>"Univerzita veterinárskeho lekárstva a farmácie v Košiciach"</i>) signed on 28 June 2024 14. Catholic University of Ružomberk (<i>"Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberku"</i>) signed on 29 July 2024 Contracts were concluded with the following universities under call No. 08I01-20-V05: 1. Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra (<i>"Slovenská poľnohospodárska univerzita v Nitre"</i>) signed on 22 May 2024 2. Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica (<i>"Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici"</i>) signed on 14 May 2024 3. Slovak Technical University of Bratislava (<i>"Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave"</i>) signed on 6 June 2024 4. University of St. Cyrila and Metoda in Trnava (<i>"Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave"</i>) signed on 26 September 2024
7	Addition to the evaluation of call No. 08I01-20-V04 and call No. 08I01-20-V05 (<i>"Doplnenie k hodnoteniu výziev"</i>).	Overview document describing the processes leading to the conclusion of contracts with the beneficiaries of call No. 08I01-20-V04 and call No. 08I01-20-V05.
8	Two threads of emails (<i>"Potvrdenie o prof. orientovaných"</i>)	Two documents which each contain a thread of emails in which the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport enquired universities what professionally orientated bachelor programmes will be taught and whether these programmes will be provided at buildings funded from calls which are funded from the RRF.

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

Award of the contracts following the calls.

The award of the contracts following the calls is provided by the launch of calls: No. 08I01-20-V01, No. 08I01-20-V02, No. 08I01-20-V03, No. 08I01-20-V04, No.08I01-20-V05 and No. 08I01-20-V07 (Annex 2 “Výzva”), and the concluding of contracts following call No.08I01-20-V05 (Annex 6 “Zmluva”). The other calls, that is, No. 08I01-20-V01, No. 08I01-20-V02, No. 08I01-20-V03, No. 08I01-20-V04 and No. 08I01-20-V07, are not directly related to milestone C8.M9 but are related to investment 1 and therefore related to the constitutive element of the description of investment 1 to underpin the investment primarily to reform 5 which is targeted at merging universities’ excellence potential, as explained further down in this preliminary assessment where the underpinning of investment 1 to reform 5 is assessed. The copies of the calls and the concluded contracts have been provided and are listed in section two of this fiche.

Call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence, “Výzva”) concerns a call for applications which has two objectives. First, it seeks to support the creation of consortia of universities, and second, it seeks to support the (re)construction of research, education and accommodation infrastructure and realise on average at least 30% primary energy savings on a subset of these infrastructure projects. Annex 6 (in the table of evidence, “Zmluva”) shows that the contracts were awarded to four universities: the Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra (“*Slovenská poľnohospodárska univerzita v Nitre*”), Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica (“*Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici*”), the Slovak Technical University of Bratislava (“*Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave*”) and the University of St. Cyrila and Metoda in Trnava (“*Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave*”). All contracts have been provided and have been signed between May and October of 2024. Article 2.9 of the contracts states that the universities engaged in consortia with respectively the following four partner universities: the Technical University of Zvolen (“*Technická univerzita vo Zvolene*”), the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra (“*Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre*”), the University of Economics in Bratislava (“*Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave*”) and and Trnava University (“*Trnavská univerzita v Trnave*”).

Call No. 08I01-20-V04 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence , “Výzva”) concerns a call for applications which seeks to support the (re)construction of research, education and accommodation infrastructure and realise on average at least 30% primary energy savings on a subset of these infrastructure projects. The beneficiaries of this call are not required to participate in the consortia supported by call No.08I01-20-V05.

Calls No. 08I01-20-V01 and No. 08I01-20-V02 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence“Výzva”) concern the creation of mergers of universities and did not receive any application. Because of this, the call for expression of interest, No. 08I01-20-V03 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence“Výzva”), was launched to gauge the interest in creating consortia of universities,.

Call No. 08I01-20-V07 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence “Výzva”) was launched after call No. 08I01-20-V04, identical in nature to call No. 08I01-20-V04 and launched because call No. 08I01-20-V04 closed before its allocation was exhausted.

2 calls to support the strategic development of universities as described in the reform 5. Shall provide:
[...].

The strategic development of universities as described in reform 5 is supported by the concluded call No. 08I01-20-V05. Reform 5 of component 8 concerns the completion of the formal connection process of at least two consortia of universities which fulfil the six criteria on these as listed in the description of milestone C8.M8: *i) harmonise internal quality systems on the basis of commonly defined procedures and areas; ii) create at least five joint study programmes of which at least one is established in a field of study in which one or more of the universities which offer the joint programme show above-average*

performance in the scientific performance evaluation system; iii) introduce flexible study paths enabling students to take courses at each university of the consortium; iv) bring research units together to conduct joint research projects and enter the resulting body or bodies into operation; v) share premises and subject-specific classrooms, and for universities which have these, laboratories; and vi) integrate library, publishing and IT systems. Section “group 1” of the concluded call No. 08I01-20-V05 states on page 6 that all universities which benefit from the call must implement the six activities listed in the description of milestone C8.M8 (Annex 2 “Výzva”).

The Council Implementing Decision required at least two calls to be concluded which support the strategic development of universities as described in the reform 5. Yet, the authorities of Slovakia only concluded one call which directly supports the strategic development of universities as described in the reform 5 (call No. 08I01-20-V05). Whilst this constitutes a minimal substantive deviation from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, the progress towards the achievement of the investment that the milestone represents is not affected because parts a) and b) of the remainder of the description of milestone C8.M9 are fully covered by the mandatory activities listed under sections “group 1” and “group 2” on page 6 of call No. 08I01-20-V05 (as described further down in this preliminary assessment where the specific criteria are assessed) and because the implementation of call No. 08I01-20-V05 should lead to the full implementation of reform 5 as described in the Council Implementing Decision. As of this, this minimal deviation does not change the nature of the measure and does not affect the progress towards achieving the investment that the milestone represents. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

This is also in line with the name of the milestone, which states that **at least 2 calls concluded for supporting the strategic development of universities.**

The sub-programme for university development shall support infrastructure projects for the development of research, education and accommodation infrastructure with high added value for excellent research and internationalisation: for example, upgrading existing or new spaces for the concentration of excellent research and doctoral studies, including foreign researchers, upgrading existing or new spaces for practical teaching in professional bachelor courses, upgrading existing or new premises for indoor facilities, debarrierisation and modern digitisation of buildings.

The sub-programme for university development is provided in section “group 2” on page 6 of call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence “Výzva”) which concerns a series of mandatory and optional (re)construction and modernisation activities to be implemented by each consortium.

That the sub-programme for university development supports infrastructure projects for the development of research, education and accommodation infrastructure, is provided in section “group 2” on page 6 of call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence “Výzva”) which states that each of the investment activities must focus on research, education, accommodation, or other support infrastructure that will be used by the consortium in the implementation of its activities. The sub-programme requires each consortium to implement at least one reconstruction or modernisation activity. Whether this activity leads to at least 30% primary energy savings is optional. Moreover, the sub-programme can support other investment activities such as the construction of new facilities and the extension of existing buildings.

Annex 6 (in the table of evidence, “Zmluva”) shows that the infrastructure projects have added value for excellent research and internationalisation in annex No. 2 (on the agreement of the provision of funds) to

the contracts following call No. 08I01-20-V05. The annex describes the funded infrastructure projects. These match the nature of the examples provided in the Council Implementing Decision. For instance, annex No. 2 to the contract between the Ministry of Education and the Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra (*"Slovenská poľnohospodárska univerzita v Nitre"*) states on page 16 that the consortium will construct a greenhouse for research in plant cultivation which corresponds to the example: *"upgrading existing or new spaces for the concentration of excellent research and doctoral studies"*; annex No. 2 to the contract between the Ministry of Education and Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica (*"Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici"*) states on page 14 that the consortium will reconstruct the university library in Banská Bystrica which corresponds to the example: *"upgrading existing or new premises for indoor facilities"*; annex No. 2 to the contract between the Ministry of Education and the Slovak Technical University of Bratislava (*"Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave"*) states on page 36 that the consortium will refurbish the data centre at the Bratislava University of Economics, including by improving air-conditioning, the firefighting system, security doors and internet connectivity, which corresponds to the example: *"modern digitisation of buildings"*; and annex No. 2 to the contract between the Ministry of Education and the University of St. Cyrila and Metoda in Trnava (*"Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave"*) states on pages 8 and 9 that the consortium will replace a non-compliant elevator and construct a new lift in two of its buildings, which corresponds to the example: *"debarrierisation"*.

This is also in line with the description of the measure, which states that **the first one that support projects for the development of research, education and accommodation infrastructure with high added value for excellent research such as:** upgrading existing or new spaces for the concentration of excellent research and doctoral studies, including foreign researchers, upgrading existing or new spaces for practical teaching in professional bachelor courses, removing the barriers and digitisation.

The programme for university development shall support project management and induced investment by bringing together universities.

The programme for university development supports project management, as page 11 of call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence *"Výzva"*) states that amongst the eligible expenditures for bringing together universities are: "professional construction supervision" (*"odborný stavebný dozor"*); "salary expenditure directly related to the implementation of the project" (*"mzdové výdavky priamo súvisiace s realizáciou projektu"*); and "overheads directly linked to the implementation of the project" (*"režijné výdavky, ktoré priamo súvisia s realizáciou projektu"*). These costs are intended to cover the management costs of the investment and can relate both to activities from "group 1", concerning the areas in which universities integrate, and "group 2", concerning the mandatory and optional (re)construction and modernisation activities. Annex No. 4 (on project budget) to the contracts concluded under call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 6 *"Zmluva"*) state that such project management costs have been budgeted for all four consortia. For instance, in the form of salary costs for project managers.

The programme for university development supports induced investment, as page 7 of call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence *"Výzva"*) lists induced investments (*"Iné vyvolané investície"*) among eligible activities under (re)construction and modernisation activities.

Project management is based on the approved roadmap, as page 15 of call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 2 in the table of evidence *"Výzva"*) requires the inclusion of a roadmap and investment plan to all submissions to the call for applications. The roadmap is thus evaluated by the Ministry and for successful applicants approved. One roadmap has been provided for each consortium which lists the various activities the consortium implements in the context of call No. 08I01-20-V05 and provides a planned start and

completion date for the implementation of each activity (Annex 5 in the table of evidence “*Investičný plan 08I01-20-V05*”).

This is in line with the measure description, which states that **the second scheme shall support project management based on the approved roadmap.**

Once the Roadmap has been approved, and depending on its feasibility and ambition, as well as justifying the necessary investments and ensuring their continued sustainability, **it shall include an investment plan linked to the process of bringing together university units.**

An investment plan linked to the process of bringing together university units is included in the roadmap and has thus been provided for each consortium (Annex 5 in the table of evidence “*Investičný plan 08I01-20-V05*”). The roadmaps take the form of a spreadsheet with two tabs. The first tab constitutes the roadmap and the second tab the investment plan.

The plan determines the scope of the investments, as the investment plan lists the activities the consortium plans to implement and describes these in greater detail, including by providing the geographic location where each activity is planned to be implemented, whether the activity is planned to result in primary energy savings, the planned size of newly and/or reconstructed area, and the budgeted cost of each activity.

This is in line with the measure description, which states that **the scope of investments shall be determined in the plan linked to the process of bringing together university units.**

From the measure description: **Investments shall underpinned primarily reform 5 targeted at mergers of universities’ excellence potential.**

Investments primarily underpin reform 5 because 69.5% of the amount contracted under investment 1 of component 8 has been awarded to the consortia of universities under call No. 08I01-20-V05. Article 3.1 of the contracts concluded under call No. 08I01-20-V05 (Annex 6 in the table of evidence, “*Zmluva*”) state the financial allocation to the consortia *excluding* value added tax: EUR 17,357,700.56 for the consortium led by Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra (“*Slovenská poľnohospodárska univerzita v Nitre*”), EUR 20,398,101.83 for the consortium led by Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica (“*Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici*”), EUR 42,058,567.21 for the consortium led by the Slovak Technical University of Bratislava (“*Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave*”), and EUR 20,185,629.31 for the consortium led by the University of St. Cyrila and Metoda in Trnava (“*Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave*”). In total, EUR 99,999,998.91 was awarded under call No. 08I01-20-V05.

As regards the other calls corresponding to investment 1: The summation of the amounts *excluding* value added tax as stated in Article 3.1 of the contracts concluded under call No. 08I01-20-V04 (Annex 6 in the table of evidence, “*Zmluva*”), provides that EUR 23,887,206.49 has been contracted under call No. 08I01-20-V04. Some of the contracts corresponding to call No. 08I01-20-V07 are still in the process of being signed at the time this preliminary assessment is conducted but the call states on page 3 that it has a budget of EUR 20,000,000 *excluding* value added tax (Annex 2 in the table of evidence “*Výzva*”). As explained above in this preliminary assessment, no funding will be disbursed under calls No. 08I01-20-V01, No. 08I01-20-V02 and No. 08I01-20-V03, because the first two calls did not receive any application, and third call was for expression of interest.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled

SK-C[C9]-I[I3]-T[C9.10]: Number of excellent researchers supported

Related Measure: C9.I3 Excellent science

Quantitative Indicator: Number of researchers

Baseline: 0

Target: 650

Time: Q1 2024

1. Context:

The investment aims to create an internationally competitive environment for the best scientists, both in terms of salaries and the availability of attractive research schemes. The investment provides researchers with financial support via the disbursement of grants.

The target requires that, of the overall objective to support 715 researchers, at least 650 excellent researchers, are supported under the calls and expected to result in a selection of 15 large grants to excellent researcher teams and in support of 425 fellowships for researchers at different career stages (R1-R4), 200 “Early stage” research grants for young researchers and 90 projects under capital booster.

Target C9.T10 is the second step of the implementation of the investment, and it follows the completion of milestone C9.M9, related to the launch of calls for projects to support excellent researchers. It will be followed by the completion of target C9.T11, related to the final number of excellent researchers supported. The investment has a final expected date for implementation on 31 March 2026.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Annex 1 - List of supported projects/beneficiaries with signed grant contracts (submitted 3 January 2025)	A document listing all projects that have been contracted in addition to all relevant information about each project, including the name of the supported researchers, the name of the research institution, the title of the research project, the type of grant, and links to the grant contracts available online.
3	Annex 2 - Published lists of applicants who met and did not meet the conditions for	Links to all relevant information about the completed calls, including the contracted number

	granting the Facility and lists of beneficiaries in each call, not dated	of financial resources, the list of eligible applicants, and the list of successful applicants.
4	Annex 3 – VAIA Methodological Guidance on selected aspects of the assessment of Facility Applications (dated 15 July 2024)	Document establishing the criteria for the assessment of requests for the provision of the Facility and establishing the procedures related to the expert evaluations, including the selection of expert evaluators.
5	In the context of the sampling analysis, additional evidence provided for a sample of 60 units, including grant contracts per project supporting researcher(s) dated between 3 November 2022 and 31 July 2024	The contracts set out the contractual relationship between the government and the universities or research institutes. Moreover, they set out the researcher(s) supported, the type and the name of the research project as well as the milestone to be followed by each researcher.

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the target.

Of the overall objective to support 715 researchers, at least 650 excellent researchers, are supported under the calls.

As evidenced by Annex 1, the authorities submitted a list of names of 1 126 supported researchers with the links to the individual contracts available online. The Commission services verified the list of researchers and identified nine of 1 126 researchers who received combined support under two of the calls (the combinations identified were: five instances where a researcher was supported under the calls Capital Booster and Scholarships for researchers at different career stages (R1-R4), two instances of combined support under the calls Capital Booster and Large grants to excellent researcher teams, and two instances of combined support under the calls Scholarships for researchers at different career stages (R1-R4) and “Early stage” research grants for young researchers). In other words, 1 117 individual researchers are supported, and the target has been overachieved.

Following the selection of a random sample of 60 projects, Slovakia submitted grant agreements for each project. These agreements were concluded between the Slovak government and the university or research institution. In each contract (see Article 2 of the submitted contracts), university or research institution the Slovak government commits to support selected researchers eligible for the support under one of the six calls assessed under the 3rd payment request (and as also outlined below). In the sample of 60 signed contracts, the Commission services’ verifications identified three discrepancies in the name of the researcher submitted in Annex 1 which did not match the name in the contract. These three units are considered invalid. In addition, minor discrepancies were identified in the names of researchers and

universities which are considered as results of misspelling or imprecise transcript from the Cyrillic alphabet. As these discrepancies allow for the identification of the researchers and universities mentioned in the contracts, these units are considered valid. Furthermore, the analysis of the sample showed that none of the researchers in the sample are recipients of combined support under different calls. All researchers of the sample only receive support under one of the six calls. The evidence provided for the sample confirms that the requirements of the target have been met, and that Slovakia has supported 1 117 researchers with grants, thus exceeding the target of 650 by 467 researchers supported. Based on the above, and taking into account the significant overachievement of the target, the result of the sample is concluded to be statistically significant despite three invalid units identified in the sample. This has been confirmed by the sampling network. Moreover, there is statistical assurance that the target of at least 650 excellent researchers has been achieved.

Moreover, as part of the sample of 60 units, the authorities provided additional documentation for one project which was terminated early, showing the partial completion of the project (project closing monitoring report) along with the proof of payment of the corresponding support to the researcher (request for payments and the financial control/approval of the request for payment). As the researcher received financial support for the partial completion of the project, this unit is considered valid, and the researcher is counted within the total of 1 117 supported researchers.

The vast majority of contracts were e-signed. Due to the inoperability of the Slovak electronic file with the supported electronic format in the European Commission, the authorities submitted such contracts in a version that was not signed and dated. The Commission services conducted an on-the-spot check on 3 February 2025 to verify the date and electronic signatures of all selected contracts. This check was completed successfully, confirming that 1 117 researchers were supported under the calls.

Excellent researchers were selected under one of the six calls assessed under previous Milestone C9.M9 as part of the 3rd payment request. These calls were categorised with the view to reflect that the individual researchers with different levels of academic excellence can receive support irrespective of the stage of their scientific career. The support was intended for (i) fellowships for first stage researchers – R1, (ii) fellowships for recognised researchers – R2, (iii) fellowships for established researchers – R3, (iv) fellowships for leading researchers - R4, (v) Large projects for excellent researchers, but (vi) also for kick-starting careers of young researchers and doctoral candidates “Early stage” research grants and (vii) for complementary support intended for the purchase of infrastructure under the Capital booster for existing R&D support. Each of the calls established minimum standards at the level of either the researchers or the research institution. For example, the standards required at the level of researchers were the number of scientific publications or citations as set out for example in the Call “Scholarships for excellent researchers at risk of conflict in Ukraine”, p. 4). By way of another example, the standards required at the level of research institution were global and international quality of outputs of the institution as set out in the call for “Scholarship for excellent PhD students – R1”, p. 5). Higher standards for excellence were applied in the case of “Scholarships for Excellent Researchers R2-R4” and “Large projects for excellent researchers” where a trio of experts evaluated excellence at the level of the researcher, research project, as well as the research institution. Some criteria assessed by the experts to define the level of excellence include for instance: the relevance of the project in terms of its focus and planned activities, the existence of a demand for a solution to the problem/area in question, and the quality and suitability of the researcher’s mentoring/supervision (Annex 3). The outcome of this assessment, whether a project is eligible for support under each call, is evidenced in Annex 2. The latter lists all eligible beneficiaries for each call which met the eligibility criteria and, in some cases, those who have not met such criteria. Some examples of research projects that are being supported under the calls include studies on “3D bioactive

natural bone-imitating glass implants with therapeutic effects”, “The effects of warming and drought on the photosynthetic productivity of crop genetic resources” and “Rubber materials with higher ecological and economic value”.

The investment is expected to result in:

- **Selection of 15 large grants to excellent researcher teams**

Support of:

- **425 fellowships for researchers at different career stages (R1-R4)**
- **200 “Early stage” research grants for young researchers**
- **90 projects under capital booster**

As evidenced by Annex 1, which provides the list of selected projects supporting researchers, the target has been met because the investment resulted in:

- 19 large grants for excellent research teams, supporting a total of 31 researchers;
- 474 fellowships for researchers at different career stages (R1-R4), supporting a total of 544 researchers;
- 432 young researchers supported under in total 12 “Early stage” research grants;
- 131 capital “booster” projects, supporting a total of 131 researchers.

All the above categories are represented in the random sample of 60 units selected.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C9]-I[I6]-M[C9.18]: Launch and implementation of financial instruments to support innovation

Related Measure: C9.I6 Financial instruments to support innovation

Qualitative Indicator: Launch of the investment phase of financial instruments to support innovation in line with the investment strategy

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The investment intends to considerably increase the share of innovative businesses and invest in companies with significant technological and innovative potential. The capital investment shall cover an early stage (seed phase) as well as the growth phase (such as venture capital funds) of the companies’ life cycle and shall be implemented through financial intermediaries. The investment strategy, including “Do no significant harm” requirements shall be properly reflected in a contractual agreement between Slovak authorities and the implementing partners/financial intermediaries. Of the overall objective to support 40 companies, at least 36 companies are supported by financial instruments in the form of capital inputs.

This milestone requires the launch of at least two financial instruments in the investment phase, in line with the “Do no significant harm” principle, that support innovation in enterprises and include the following two schemes, i.e. Capital input early in business lifecycle and Capital input to growth stage companies.

This milestone is the first step of the implementation of this investment and will be followed by target C9.T19, related to the number of companies supported by financial instruments under this milestone. This investment has a final expected date for implementation on 30 June 2026.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence.	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Annexes 1 and 1a – Agreement No. 332/2023 of 17 October 2023 on financing the financial instrument concerning Early life-cycle capital input and concluded between the Government Office of the Slovak Government and the Slovak Investment Holding, a.s.	This contract concluded on 17 October 2023, as amended by addendum No 332/2023 of 7 June 2024, specifies the rights and obligations of the contracting parties, the duration of the contract and target number of companies to be supported by this financial instrument as well as the investment strategy, outlined in Annex 1 of the contract (p. 18).
3	Annexes 2 and 2a - Agreement No. 232/2023 of 30 May 2023 on financing the financial instrument concerning Capital input in enterprise growth phase and concluded between the Government Office of the Slovak Government and the Slovak Investment Holding, a.s.	This contract concluded on 30 May 2023, as amended by addendum No 232/2023 of 27 March 2024, specifies the rights and obligations of the contracting parties, the duration of the contract and target number of companies to be supported by this financial instrument as well as the investment strategy, outlined in Annex 1 of the contract (p. 16).
4	Annexes 2b – Press releases of 28 May and 27 June 2024	The documents communicate the launch of the financial instrument in the Seed and growth phase by the Slovak Investment Holding by increasing financial resources in the existing investment fund Venture to Future Fund

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

At least two financial instruments shall be launched in the investment phase in line with an investment strategy/contractual agreement.

Two financial instruments were launched in the investment phase. This is demonstrated by two implementing agreements concluded on 17 October 2023 and 30 May 2023 between the Slovak government and the Slovak Investment Holding, a publicly owned company and in its capacity of an implementing authority in charge of financial instruments, and as amended on 27 March and 7 June 2024. These agreements provide that the financial instruments should be launched and implemented in Q2 2024 and Q1 2023 (p. 24, Annex 1, p. 14 Annex 2b; and p. 20 of Annex 2). The press releases of 28 May and 27 June 2024 corroborate the launch and implementation of each instrument, communicated to the potential interested businesses. The financial instruments are implemented through financial intermediary. The latter is the Venture to Future Fund whose investors are the Slovak Investment Holding and the European Investment Bank (as also set out demonstrated in in the provided press releases).

The agreements submitted set out the contractual relationship between the government and the implementing authority. They provide for example for the obligations of the implementing authority to comply with the investment strategy and to evaluate its performance on annual basis (Article 6 and attachment 1 of each contract) or to refinance the repaid financial resources in line with that investment strategy (see Article 5 of the contract). Article 11 of each agreement specifies the duration of the contracts until 31 December 2036, unless specified otherwise or terminated earlier.

The investment strategy is outlined in attachment 1 of each agreement. It sets out the investment gaps on the Slovak market, insufficient size of the Slovak capital market in the area of pre-seed, seed and growth capital, the types of financial instruments used, and the amount allocated to the financial instrument for pre-seed and growth phase capital until 2026 (see page 20).

[...] which comply with “Do no significant harm” Technical Guidance (2021/C58/01) principles requiring exclusion criteria of the investment and compliance with the relevant EU and national environmental legislation.

The investment strategy stipulates the requirement of all involved parties, including the implementing authority and the supported enterprises in their capacity of beneficiaries of the financial instruments, to comply with the “Do no significant harm” principle (on p. 19 and 20). It refers to the Technical Guidance (2021/C58/01) and sets out the exclusion criteria and activities of the investment and the required compliance with the relevant EU and national environmental legislation (page 19 of the contracts).

This is in line with the description of the measure, which states that **to comply with the “Do no significant harm” Technical Guidance (2021/C58/01), investment strategies outlining the use of financial instruments shall require the application of the Commission technical guidance on the exclusion list and compliance with the relevant EU and national environmental legislation.**

DNSH aspects shall be properly reflected in the contractual agreement between Slovak authorities and the implementing partners/financial intermediaries.

The aspects related to the compliance of the “Do no significant harm” principle are detailed in each contract (on p. 17) concluded between the Slovak authorities and the Slovak Investment Holding. Moreover, these aspects are binding for all implementing partners and financial intermediaries, including the businesses that benefit from capital inputs under the financial instruments. It is considered that those aspects are properly reflected as required in the guidance. In fact, in line with the guidance, the agreement does not allow harmful investments according to the DNSH principles, namely those related to fossil fuels (with specific exceptions complying with DNSH guidelines), certain emissions under the EU Emission Trading System, waste management practices that may be damaging, and long-term waste disposal that could harm the environment. Further, the agreement also requires no significant harm to the six environmental objectives outlined in Article 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation, namely climate change mitigation, adaptation, water and marine resources, circular economy, pollution prevention, and biodiversity. In addition, the contractual agreement reflects the consideration of the life cycle impacts of an activity, as it highlights assessment from production through to the end-of-life phase, as requested by the guidelines

The financial instruments shall support innovation in enterprises

As evidenced in Attachment 1 of each agreement, the agreements require the financial instruments to target small and medium-sized enterprises that are engaging in innovative products or services.

The financial instruments shall include the following schemes: • Capital input early in business lifecycle • Capital input to growth stage companies.

The two agreements submitted as Annexes 1 and 1a, 2 and 2a demonstrate that two separate instruments have been set up to provide financing support to companies in their early stage (seed phase) as well as their growth phase (such as venture capital funds) of the companies’ life cycle. As specified in the investment strategy outlined on pages 23 and 24 of each contract, the two financial instruments take different forms of capital input, ranging from equity, quasi-equity such as subordinated or mezzanine loans or the form of acquisition of shares of innovative enterprises from third parties.

In the case of the capital input early in business cycle, the beneficiaries supported are small and medium enterprises in early-stage business cycle (seed and start-up) that develop innovative product or service, including social innovations, and which do not have sufficient access to financial and capital markets (p. 24 of the contract and 14 of the addendum). In relation to each instrument, the instrument defines on p. 23 the conditions for beneficiaries such as prior existence of the company for least 5 years and the type of company, being either a start-up created for purposes of innovative product or support or spin-off created for the purpose of commercialisation of results from research and development or intellectual property.

In the case of the capital input in growth phase, the beneficiaries supported are either small and medium enterprises, or to limited extent companies (so called MidCaps) with less than 3 000 employees that have a meaningful, developed product or service, or companies prior to marketing their product or service, companies in the growth phase (with regular revenues) that strive to expand their business in particular on new markets (p. 20 of the contract), ready to enter the market or companies including social innovations, and which do not have sufficient access to financial and capital markets (p. 24 of the contract and 14 of the addendum).

Furthermore, in line with the description of the measure, **the capital investment shall cover an early stage (seed phase) as well as the growth phase (such as venture capital funds) of the companies’ life cycle and shall be implemented through financial intermediaries.**

As evidenced in Annexes 1, 2 and 2b, the financial instruments are implemented through a financial intermediary, namely the Venture to Future Fund whose investors are the Slovak Investment Holding and the European Investment Bank. The beneficiaries of these financial instruments are early-stage and growth-stage companies.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily Fulfilled

SK-C[C11]-R[R3]-M[C11.4]: Establishment of a central hospital management body from an organisational, operational and economic point of view

Related Measure: C11.R3 Centralization of the management of the largest hospitals

Qualitative Indicator: Central Hospital Management Authority approved by the Ministry of Health and fully operational

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The measure aims to centralize the management of state-owned hospitals through a single system, covering areas such as central controlling, budgeting, monitoring, purchasing of medical products, and human resources. The reform will be tested through a pilot project involving 19 hospitals.

Milestone C11.M4 concerns the establishment of a governing authority for the 19 hospitals in the pilot phase, managing and guiding their planning and performance. The authority will focus on areas such as financial control, compliance control, HR, quality and risk management, and provide recommendations for optimizing expenditures and inventories of medicines and medical devices.

Milestone C11.M4 is the only milestone of this reform, and it will be followed by target C11.T5 on the number of hospitals involved in central management system. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 30 June 2025.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document (dated 1 October 2024)	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Act No. 201/2024 Coll. amending – Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the organisation of government activities and the organisation of central state administration as amended and amending certain acts. It	This act amends Act No. 575/2001 Coll., Act No. 576/2004 Coll. and Act No. 578/2004 Coll. It is published in the in the Official Journal at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2024/201/20241001.html

	was adopted on 27 June 2024 and entered into force on 1 January 2025 in line with Article 13 of the Act.	
3	Annex 1 – Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the organisation of government activities and the organisation of central state administration as amended by Act No. 201/2024 Coll. The Act entered into force on 1 October 2024.	The act is published in in the Official Journal and available at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2001/575/20241001.html#paragraf-19.nadpis (Príloha 8 in the Summary document)
4	Annex 2 – Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on healthcare and healthcare-related services and amending certain acts, as amended by Act No. 201/2024 Coll. The act entered into force on 1 October 2024.	This Act is published in the Official journal and available at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2004/576/?ucinnost=01.01.2025 (Príloha 9 in the Summary document)
5	Annex 3 – Act No. 578/2004 Coll. on healthcare providers, health workers and professional organisations in the health sector and amending certain acts, as amended by Act No. 201/2024 Coll. The Act entered into force on 1 October 2024.	The Act is published in the Official Journal and available at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2004/578/20241001.html (Príloha 10 in the Summary document)
6	Annex 4 – Joint explanatory memorandum on amended acts. (Dated 12 June 2024)	Joint explanatory memorandum by the committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the Act amending Acts No. 575/2001 Coll.; Act No. 576/2004 Coll.; and Act No. 578/2004 Coll.. (Príloha 11 in the Summary document)
7	Annex 5 – Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health. (Dated 31 May 2024)	Organisational Rules and Establishment Plan of the Ministry of Health. (Príloha 4 in the Summary document)
8	Annex 5.1 – Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health, with entry into force on 1 October 2024.	Addendum to the Organisational Rules and Establishment Plan of the Ministry of Health, establishing the “Central Management and Coordination Section” and its competences. (Príloha 4a in the Summary document)

9	Annex 5.2 – Addendum No. 5 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health, with entry into force on 15 January 2025.	Addendum to the Organisational Rules and Establishment Plan of the Ministry of Health, establishing some competences of the Central Management and Coordination Section. (1_Dodatok č. 5 k Organizačnému poriadku MZ SR)
10	Annex 6 - List of 19 hospitals participating in the Central Integration Platform of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic.	Excel file including the 19 hospitals included in the pilot phase, i.e. under the authority of the Central Management and Coordination Section of the Ministry of Health. (Príloha 5 in the Summary document)
11	Annex 7 - Extracts from the Commercial Register of the Slovak Republic. (Dated 12 December 2024)	This annex contains the extracts from the Commercial register for each hospital with the legal entity of a joint stock company, showing the Ministry of Health as the sole shareholder. (Príloha 26 in the Summary document)
12	Annex 8 - Decision to change the Faculty Hospital with Policlinica J.A. Reiman in Prešov for the National Institute of Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and Thoracic Surgery Vyšné Hagy (Dated 20 June 2024)	The document reports the decision to replace, in the context of the pilot phase, the Policlinica J.A. Reiman in Prešov with the National Institute of Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and Thoracic Surgery Vyšné Hagy. (Príloha 3 in the Summary document)
13	Annex 9 - Timetable of the meetings held on Central Hospital Management	Excel file providing dates and main topic discussed in the meetings held by the Central Management and Coordination Section with the 19 hospitals between 12 September 2024 and 11 December 2024. (Príloha 7 in the Summary document)
14	Annex 10 - Report on the staff capacities of the Central Management and Coordination Section of the sub-organisations	Report including details on the planned staffing for each department/unit under the control of the Central Management and Coordination Section. Information on each post's duty, grade and remuneration. (Príloha 6 in the Summary document)
15	Annex 11 - CV Marián Povolný	Curriculum Vitae of the Director of the Central Purchase and Transversal Activity Coordination

		Department, under the Central Management and Coordination Section. (Príloha 12 in the Summary document)
16	Annex 12 - CV Kristín Grochova	Curriculum Vitae of the external Power BI specialist employed in the Central Management and Coordination Section. (Príloha 23 in the Summary document)
17	Annex 13 – Letter from the general secretary of the Ministry of Health regarding the implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning system by the Section (dated 9 December 2024)	The document informs about the launch of the introduction of the ERP system in the 19 hospitals within different phases. (Implementacia ERP systému)
18	Annex 14 – Procurement requests	List of hospitals' procurement requests on medicines and medical materials with the corresponding costs handled by the Central Management and Coordination Section through the EMA-EVO software. (Lieký EMA EVO schvaľovanie)
19	Annex 15 - Request factually correct – vote Nitra Faculty 2024-00976 (Dated 12 December 2024)	Email exchange providing an example of the procurement request from the Nitra Faculty Hospital to the Central Management and Coordination Section. (Príloha 13 in the Summary document)
20	Annex 16 - Collection of data and documentation for completion (Dated 22 November 2024)	Email request of the Director General of the Central Management and Coordination Section to the hospitals to obtain financial, personnel and medical data. (Príloha 14 in the Summary document)
21	Annex 17 - Medicinal products and special medical supplies	Excel files including information on the cost of medical products and medical supplies. (Príloha 15 in the Summary document)

22	Annex 18 - Purchases – Procurement – Faculty Hospital with Žilina Policlinic (Dated 13 December 2024)	Email exchange between the Director-General of the Central management and Coordination Section and the Faculty Hospital with Žilina Policlinic, including recommendation on optimization of expenditures. (Príloha 16 in the Summary document)
23	Annex 19 to 21 – Financial data	Excel files including hospitals’ financial information: • profit and loss accounts (Annex 19); • Cash flows (Annex 20); • Liabilities (Annex 21). (Príloha 18-20 in the Summary document)
24	Annex 22 - Professional engagements data	Excel files including hospitals’ data on personnel and staffing capacity based on healthcare expertise. (Príloha 21 in the Summary document)
25	Annex 23 - Bed and patient data	Excel files including hospitals’ data on number of beds and patients. (Príloha 22 in the Summary document)
26	Annex 24 - 2025 activity plans	Hospitals’ 2025 Activity Plans including management and performance information for the upcoming year. (Príloha 23 in the Summary document)
27	Annex 25 - Financial, personnel and medical summary deductions (Q3 2024)	Excel files including hospitals’ financial, personnel and medical data. (Príloha 24 in the Summary document)
28	Annex 26 - Funding of the Central Management and Coordination Section of sub-organisations (Dated 12 December 2024)	Email exchange confirming the Central Management and Coordination Section will be financed in 2025 with funds from the apparatus of the Ministry of Health from the State Budget of the Slovak Republic. (Príloha 25 in the Summary document)
29	Annex 27/28 - National Institute for Children’s Diseases - use of additional funds	Email exchanges between the Director-General of the Central Management and Coordination Section and the National Institute for Children’s Diseases on the use of its additional funds.

	(Between 28 November and 3 December 2024)	(Príloha 27-28 in the Summary document)
30	Annex 29 - Appointment letter in electronic form to the post of member of the Public Procurement Commission for organisations under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (Dated 2 December 2024)	Appointment letter for the Director-General of the Management and Coordination Section as a member of the Public Procurement Commission under the Ministry of Health. (Príloha 29 in the Summary document)
31	Annex 30 – Approval of hospitals’ activity plans for 2025 (Dated 23 December 2024)	Approval of hospitals’ activity plans for 2025 by the Central Management and Coordination Section. (Schvaľovací dekrét - Schválenie plánov činností na rok 2025)
32	Annex 31 – Request of the Section of the Ministry of Health for launching centralised public procurement for medicines, medical products and equipment (Dated 10 January 2025)	Approval of the request to launch a public procurement of medical items by the Central Management and Coordination Section, in line with the dynamic purchasing system. (Požiadavka na VO)
33	Annex 32 – List of the civil servants employed in the Central Management and Coordination Section as of 1 January 2025	Excel file including names and specific department/unit of the employed civil servants within the Central Management and Coordination Section. (Systemizácia k 1.1.2025 Sekcia centrálného riadenia a KPO)
34	Annex 33 – Three employment contracts starting from the 1 February 2025	These employment contracts show progress in the staffing made by the Central Management and Coordination Section. (Štátnozamestnanecká zmluva č. 1, 2, 3 in the summary document)
35	Annex 34 - Approval of the activity plans for 2025 by the Management and Coordination Section (dated 23 December 2024)	Approval document of the hospitals’ activity plans for 2025 by the Central Management and Coordination Section.

		(Schvaľovací dekrét - Schválenie plánov činností na rok 2025)
36	Annex 35 - Recommendations for hospitals for Q3 2024	Document including the recommendations set by the Central Management and Coordination Section for Q3 2024. (Odporúčania pre nemocnice za Q3 2024)

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

According to the qualitative indicator description: **Central Hospital Management Authority approved by the Ministry of Health and fully operational.**

The Central Hospital Management Authority has been established through the Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (Annex 5.1). It was named the *Central Management and Coordination Section of subordinate organisations*, hereinafter referenced as the *Section*.

At a legal level, the Article 19 of Act No. 575/2001 Coll. (Annex 1), as amended by Article 1(11) of Act No. 201/2024 Coll., which entered into force on 1 October 2024 (as specified in Article 8 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll.), empowers a “separate organisational unit” of the Ministry of Health to centrally coordinate the management processes of hospital permit holders. In addition, the amended Article 45 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll. (Annex 2), as amended by Article 5 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll., enables a “separate organisational unit” of the Ministry of Health to centrally coordinate the management processes of hospital permit holders, by directing and controlling their activities and analytically processing data in accordance with specific regulations. Furthermore, the amended Article 79c, 81 and 82 of Act No. 578/2004 Coll., as amended by Article 6 of Act 201/2024, specify that hospital permit holders must draw up and implement a strategic plan in accordance with the Ministry of Health's guidelines and cooperate with the Ministry in monitoring compliance with economic, personnel, and medical indicators. More details on the amendments presented are available in the Joint Explanatory Memorandum (Annex 4). Taken together, these amendments confirm that the Authority has been established and approved by the Ministry of Health.

The Council Implementing Decision states that the Central Hospital Management Authority must be fully operational. The Council Implementing Decision also states in the name of the milestone “establishment of a central hospital management body from an organisational, operational and economic point of view”. For the purpose of this assessment, the Commission services verified whether the Authority is fully operational “from an organizational, operational and economic point of view” as specified.

To demonstrate that the authority is fully operational from an organizational and operational point of view, the authorities also submitted the Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of

Health (Annex 5.1). This Addendum, amending the establishment plan of the Ministry of Health (Annex 5), entered into force on 1 October 2024 (as specified in Section 21 of the Addendum).

The organizational operativity is also evidenced by the report on the staff capacities (Annex 10), which specifies the numbers of civil servants per each department of the section. The employed civil servants have professional profiles in the areas of health, a financial planning, control management, accounting and control, and public procurement. The report also provides details on each post's duty, grade and remuneration. Based on the evidence from the list of the employed civil servants (Annex 32) and employment contracts (Annex 33), the Section has 16 people actively working as of February 2025. In addition to the civil servants, an external specialist is also hired by the *Section* (Annex 12) for big data processing tasks.

The organizational operativity is also evidenced by the timetable of meetings held by the Central Hospital Management (Annex 9) with the 19 hospitals in the pilot phase. These meetings cover topics such as:

- presentation of the central management system;
- overviews of the IT system, processes and cooperation readiness;
- workshops on audit and on the set-up of KPIs.

The authorities have also evidence that each of the 3 departments is organizationally operational.

First, the “Management Department of Subordinate Organisations” ensures overall management and monitoring of centrally managed hospital. It focuses on analysing hospital management, financial performance, and medical operations. For instance, it:

- collects for monitoring and analysis the hospitals’ action plans (Annex 24);
- approves action plans (Annex 30).

Second, the “Control and Reporting Unit”, under the Management Department of Subordinate Organisations, carries out its monitoring functions by collecting:

- financial data, such as profit and loss accounts (Annex 19), cash flows (Annex 20) and liabilities (Annex 21);
- data on personnel and staffing capacity based on healthcare expertise (Annex 22);
- financial, personnel and medical summary deductions (Annex 25).

Third, the “Central Purchase and Transversal Activities Coordination Department” is responsible of monitoring hospitals and provide them with recommendation in the context of the purchase of medicines and medical devices:

- an example of such recommendations is provided by Annex 18, where the Department identified a price discrepancy for a medical item purchased by Faculty Hospital Žilina and advised them to negotiate a lower price.
- another example is provided by Annex 13, which outlines the role of the Department and the Director-General in reviewing and approving procurement requests through the approval committee, ensuring centralised oversight of all procurements.

The Section's operativity from a “economic point of view” is ensured by the State Budget of the Slovak Republic. The State Budget Act for 2025, approved by the Slovak Government on 15 October 2024, includes provisions for the budget of the Ministry of Health. In turn, the Ministry of Health has allocated its funds to fully finance the *Section*, as demonstrated by the correspondence (Annex 26) between Petra Aláčová, Director General of the Personal Office of the Ministry of Health, and Dávid Mézes, Director

General of the Section. This email exchange confirms that the Section will be financed in 2025 with funds from the apparatus of the Ministry of Health through the state budget of the Slovak Republic.

Taking into account the civil servants employed, the interactions with the hospitals in the pilot phase, and the allocated funds, the Section's organizational, operational, and economic full functionality is demonstrated, in line with the Commission interpretation of the Council Implementing Decision. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

This authority shall effectively provide the governing structure for the 19 hospitals that shall consist of the hospital network being in the pilot phase (see target below).

Article 19 of the Act No. 575/2001 Coll. , as amended by Article 1(11) of Act No. 201/2024 Coll. (Annex 1), which enters into force on 1 October 2024 (as specified in Article 8 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll.), introduces the governance competences of the Ministry of Health to exercise coordination over the management processes of hospital permit holders. The Ministry of Health provided extracts from the commercial register (Annex 7) confirming that it is the sole shareholder of the five joint stock company hospitals included in the pilot phase. This confirms the Ministry's legal authority to establish the governing structure. The established governance structure is evidenced in both the Addendum No. 1 of the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health (Annex 5.1) and in the report on the staff capacities (Annex 10).

The 19 hospitals of the hospital network included in the pilot phase is evidenced by Annex 6. Annex 8 also shows that during the pilot phase, the *Faculty Hospital with Policlinica J.A. Reiman in Prešov* was replaced by the *National Institute of Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and Thoracic Surgery Vyšné Hagy*, as a hospital included in the pilot project (Annex 8). This hospital is a contributing organisation of the Ministry of Health.

This means that it would: manage, guide and evaluate hospitals' planning and performance [...].

The amendments adopted to Act No. 576/2004 Coll. (Annex 2) - Article 45, as amended by Act No. 201/2024 - enable a "separate establishment" of the Ministry of Health to centrally coordinate hospital management processes, assist hospitals in strategic plan development, approving and guiding strategic investment and financial planning, and monitor and evaluate hospital performance based on economic, personnel, and medical indicators. These competences are then specifically attributed by the Ministry of Health to the *Section* through Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health (Annex 5.1).

The *Section* manages, guides and evaluates hospitals' planning using, in particular, the strategic plan. Each hospital is responsible to draft its own strategic plan, which includes a set of strategic objectives, priorities, measures, programmes and organisational, technical and technological tools, the purpose of which is to identify economic, personnel and medical indicators. The *Section* has the responsibility to assist hospitals in the drafting of the plan, approve it and monitor its execution based on the data shared by the hospitals. In view of the preparation of the strategic plans, the hospitals under the *Section* management have already drafted "Activity plans", which will be extended to the level of strategic plans. Activity plans (Annex 24) are designed to help hospitals predict their management and performance for the upcoming year. These plans include financial indicators like profit and loss accounts and performance metrics by segment. They provide a comprehensive set of information for budgeting and implementing measures to prevent negative outcomes. The activity plans must be submitted to the Section for analysis and approval. The approval document (Annex 34) for the 2025 activity plans was issued on 23 December 2024 and

signed by the Director-General of the Section, Dávid Mézes, and the Head of Unit of the Control and Reporting Unit of the Section, Zuzana Kucerová.

Data collection is also conducted to give insight into hospital management, debt, performance, and staffing (Annexes 19-23). Based on this data, the "Control and Reporting Unit" produces supporting documents, including financial, personnel and medical information (Annex 25), which are used to identify and discuss inconsistencies with hospitals during quarterly meetings. During these meetings the Section shares also with the hospitals tailored recommendations. Supporting evidence for these recommendations is provided in Annex 35, on the recommendation prepared for the quarterly meetings of Q3 2024. More details about collected data and recommendations will be provided in the following sections of this analysis.

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states **that the reform shall introduce the central hospital management system for the 19 state-owned hospital that includes: 1) central controlling, budgeting, performance planning and monitoring; [...].**

[...] such as financial control, [...].

Article 45 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll., as amended by Act No. 201/2024 Coll., designates a separate establishment of the Ministry of Health as responsible for guiding hospital operators in strategic investment and development planning, financial planning, and optimisation and standardisation of management and support processes (Annex 2). According to Article 94 of Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health (Annex 5.1), the "Management Department of subordinate organisations" under the *Section* is responsible for guiding hospitals in financial management. Article 95 of this Addendum also specifies that "Control and Reporting Unit" under the "Management Department of subordinate organisations" of the Section is responsible for coordinating accounting. Hospitals submit monthly profit and loss accounts to the "Control and Reporting Unit". Examples of such profit and loss accounts revised by the "Control and Reporting Unit" are available in Annex 19, providing detailed breakdown of assets and liabilities, as well as revenue and expenditure.

Similarly, monthly cash flow statements (Annex 20) and liabilities (Annex 21), categorized as current or overdue, are provided by hospitals to the "Management Department of subordinate organisations" under the *Section*. This data is essential to understand hospitals' cash movements and to predict the hospitals' ability to meet liabilities and track debt developments. Based on this data, the "Control and Reporting Unit" produces supporting documents, including financial information (Annex 25), which are used during quarterly meeting with hospitals to identify inconsistencies and discuss recommendations issued by the Section. Annex 25 contains several Excel files, each specific to one of the managed hospitals. Within each file, the sheet "Výkaz ziskov a strát" provides a detailed breakdown of the hospitals' costs. Furthermore, Annex 35 provides supporting evidence for the recommendations proposed during the quarterly meetings, specifically the recommendations prepared for the Q3 2024 quarterly meeting. These recommendations, for instance, suggest for the Children's Faculty Hospital Banská Bystrica Policlinic (DFN BB) the reduction of overdue liabilities, or for the Faculty Hospital with Žilina Policlinic (FNsP NZ) the need to conclude co-financing with all health insurance companies.

Additionally, hospitals create annual action plans, which include budgeting processes and outline their intended management and performance goals for the coming year. These plans are reviewed and

approved by the Section, followed by the Ministry of Health. The approval of the 2025 action plans by the Section is available in Annex 34.

[...], compliance control, [...and] quality and risk management with a link to clinical processes.

Article 79c(d) of Act No. 578/2004 Coll., as amended by Article 6 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll., which entered into force on 1 October 2024 (as specified in Article 8 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll.), introduces the requirement for hospitals to provide the Ministry of Health with economic, personnel and medical indicators, in line with the guidelines of the Ministry (Annex 3). In addition, Article 45 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll., as amended by Act No. 201/2024 Coll., specifies that a “separate establishment” of the Ministry of Health is responsible for guiding the hospital operators in “...optimisation and standardisation of management and support processes (Annex 2)”.

A more concrete reference to these competences, is provided by Article 95(e-f) of the Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health (Annex 5.1), as amended by Addendum No. 5 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health. Specifically, this article assigns the following responsibilities to the Control and Reporting Unit under the Section:

- conducting compliance control oversight in the managed hospitals;
- ensuring quality and risk management in connection with clinical procedures in the managed hospitals.

As the Control and Reporting Unit has the specific remit of control and reporting, it regularly collects data from the hospitals including information on patients and beds, and medicines and medical supplies (Annexes 17 and 23). The Control and Reporting Unit then produces supporting documents, including financial, personnel and medical summary conclusions (Annex 25), used to identify inconsistencies and discuss recommendations issued by the Section. Supporting evidence for these recommendations is provided in Annex 35, on the recommendation prepared for the quarterly meetings of Q3 2024. These recommendations, for instance, include:

- compliance with personnel regulation for the F.D. Roosevelta Banská Bystrica faculty hospital (FNsP NZ);
- extension of the bed capacities for the Children’s Faculty Hospital Banská Bystrica Policlinic (DFN BB);
- addressing the problem of reporting intervention radiology performance in the L. Pasteura Košice University Hospital (UNLP KE).

[...], HR, [...].

Article 45 (5d) of the Act No. 576/2004 Coll., as amended by Act No. 201/2024 Coll., designates a separate establishment of the Ministry of Health as responsible for guiding hospital operators in fulfilling “...personnel,... indicators” (Annex 2). The Article 45 (5f) also requires hospital to draft strategic plans that are to reflect the aforementioned personnel indicators.

According to Article 94 of the Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health (Annex 5.1), the "Management Department of subordinate organisations" under the Section is responsible for

guiding hospital operators in fulfilling economic, personnel, and medical indicators, monitoring, evaluating, and controlling the implementation of these indicators as set out in the hospital's strategic plan and guidelines. The same Addendum at Article 95 defines the remit of the "Control and Reporting Unit" under the "Management Department of subordinate organisations", which includes coordinating accounting and human resources management processes in centrally managed organisations.

The "Control and Reporting Unit" of the Section collects and analyses personnel data, such as staffing capacity based on healthcare expertise, as demonstrated by the monthly hours of professional engagement collected from the managed hospitals (Annex 22). Based on this data, the "Control and Reporting Unit" produces supporting documents, including personnel information (Annex 25), which are used during quarterly meeting with hospitals to identify inconsistencies and discuss recommendation issued by the Section. Supporting evidence for these recommendations is provided in Annex 35, on the recommendation prepared for the quarterly meetings of Q3 2024. These recommendations, for instance, include: Annex 25 contains several Excel files, each specific to one of the managed hospitals. Within each file, the sheet "Medicínske dáta" provides details on the number of doctors, nurses and patients. Furthermore, Annex 35 provides supporting evidence for the recommendations proposed during the quarterly meetings, specifically the recommendations prepared for the Q3 2024 quarterly meeting. These recommendations, for instance, include:

- introduction of incentive measures for the recruitment of new nurses in the Children's Faculty Hospital Banská Bystrica Policlinic (DFN BB);
- provision of information on changes in the parameters of the collective agreement in the Bratislava National Oncology Institute.

It shall also make the recommendations for optimization of expenditures and inventories of medicines and medical devices.

The competence to make such recommendations is based on Article 45(5) of the Act No. 576/2004 Coll., as amended by Article 5 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll. (Annex 2), which entered into force on 1 October 2024 (as specified in Article 8 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll.). This Article specifies that the Ministry of Health is responsible for guiding hospital operators in "strategic investment and development planning, financial planning, and optimisation and standardisation of management and support processes". Furthermore, Article 94 of the Addendum No. 1 to the Organisational Rules of the Ministry of Health (Annex 5.1), provides the "Management Department of subordinate organisations" under the *Section* with the mandate to guide the hospital operator in strategic investment and development planning, financial planning, optimisation and standardisation of management and support processes; increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, efficiency and economy of using the funds managed by the hospital operator. Additionally, Article 96 of the Addendum specifies that the "Department of Coordination of Central Purchases and Transversal Activities", under the *Section*, is responsible for providing analytical support for central purchasing of equipment, medicines, and medical materials for centrally managed organisations, and participates in the preparation of public procurement plans. On this basis, it is considered that the Section has the necessary mandate to provide recommendations for optimization of expenditures and inventories of medicines and medical devices.

An example of such recommendations is provided by Annex 18, showing that the Section identified that the Faculty Hospital Žilina bought a specific medical item for EUR 143 per unit in 2023, while other hospitals in the network purchased the same item for EUR 42 to EUR 61.2. Upon discovering this price discrepancy, the Department contacted the Žilina Polyclinic to explain the higher cost and advised them to negotiate with Medtronic Slovakia s.r.o. a lower price. Another example of the existence of such recommendations is provided by Annex 15. This document shows that the Director-General of the Section receives procurement requests and can either agree or disagree with the procurement in question within the approval committee. Similar procurement requests from other managed hospitals are also included in Annex 14, in which for each request the type of medical product and its costs are specified. This process ensures that all procurements are reviewed and approved centrally by the Section.

Furthermore, in line with the description of the measure. [...] **2) processes for central purchasing of medicinal products, medical materials, equipment;** [...].

The responsibility for central purchasing within the *Section* is assigned to the *Department for Central Purchase and Transversal Activities Coordination*. As explained in the summary document, processes for the dynamic purchasing system for “medicinal products, medical materials, equipment” have been put in place by this department. Annex 31 shows that on 10 January 2025, the Section’s request to launch a public procurement for “medicinal products, medical materials and equipment” based on the dynamic purchasing system was launched and approved by the Director of the Section (Mr. Mézeš) and Secretary-General of the Ministry of Health (Mr. Lorenc). The procurement has an estimated contract value of €387 289 014.09, covering four years, and it set to cover medical items such as bandages, wet dressings, incontinence aids, syringes, needles and diagnostic sets, which qualify as “medicinal products, medical materials, equipment” (see Annex 31).

[...] **3) centralisation of support services such as accounting.**

The Ministry of Health, and consequently the *Section*, derives its competence for centralisation of support services from the legal basis provided by Act No. 576/2004 Coll., as amended by Article 5 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll (Annex 2) which entered into force on 1 October 2024 (as specified in Article 8 of Act No. 201/2024 Coll.). Article 45 (5c) specifies that the Ministry of Health has competence in “support services” towards the hospitals. The centralisation of support services is primarily carried out by the "Control and Reporting Unit" within the Section. This unit centralises support services such as the standardisation of data management and reporting procedures by collecting data provided by the hospitals, and generating financial, personnel, and medical information (Annex 25), which are then used to identify and address inconsistencies with hospitals (Annex 35). Furthermore, the unit has started to implement the centralisation of accounting with the introduction of the Enterprise Resource Planning system.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C13]-R[R1]-M[C13.2]: Publication of the concept of financing social services for public debate

Related Measure: C13.2.R1 Integration and financing of long-term social and health care

Qualitative Indicator: Published concept on the financing of social services

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of the reform is to improve the coordination and financing of long-term social and health care by establishing a coherent framework that combines social and health care into a single, integrated system. A key aspect of the reform is the introduction of personal budgets for individuals with care needs, replacing the current fragmented financing of care providers. This change is expected to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of care, while also promoting de-institutionalisation by providing incentives for home-based and community-based care.

Milestone C13.M2 requires the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic to publish a new concept for the financing of social services for public debate.

The milestone C13.M2 is the second step in the implementation of Reform 1. It was preceded by milestone C13.M1 which concerned the entry into force of a new law on long-term and palliative care and of the regulation of financing of palliative and nursing care, assessed under the fourth payment request. Milestone C13.M2 will be followed by milestone C13.M3 which requires the entry into force of the act on the financing of social services and the introduction of a personal budget, as the final element in the implementation of Reform 1. The reform has a final expected date for implementation by 31 December 2025.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Annex 1 – Concept of financing of social services and its annexes (dated December 2024)	The concept was published by the Ministry of Labour in its website at: https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/uvodna-stranka/plan-obnovy-odolnosti/komponent-13-dostupna-kvalitna-dlhodoba-socialno-zdravotna-starostlivost/
3	Annex 2 – List of members of the Working Group	The document lists the members of the working group created to participate in the preparation of the concept of the financing of social services, set up in 2022.
4	Annex 3 –Summary of the Working Group meeting (dated 17 October 2024)	Summary of the Working Group meeting held on 17 October 2024, where members endorsed the concept for the financing of social services.
5	Annex 4 – List of stakeholders consulted	The document identifies the stakeholders represented by the Working Group members, additional experts consulted and conferences where the concept was discussed between 2023 and 2024.
6	Annex 5 - Report on the comments from key	This document provides an overview of the comments received from key stakeholders and

	stakeholders received between 15-28 November 2024	outlines how these have been incorporated, addressed or rejected in the drafting of the concepts.
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3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

According to the qualitative indicator: **Published concept on the financing of social services.**

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family started preparing the concept in November 2022 and published its initial versions in October and December 2023. This version went through a revision of the working group of stakeholders and interdepartmental consultation. After the consultations were completed, the final concept was published in December 2024 alongside the three annexes to the concept: i) analysis of social services, ii) social services of crisis intervention, and iii) assessment of the impacts on the budget. It can be accessed at the webpage of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (evidence 2).

As a result of the first phase of the preparation of the reform of the financing of social services, a new concept for the financing of social services shall be proposed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic for stakeholder consultation.

As a result of the first phase of the preparation of the reform of the financing of social services, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family proposed and developed the Concept on the Financing of Social Services in consultation with several stakeholders. The stakeholder consultation involved:

- a Working Group established by the Ministry for Labour in September 2022;
- expert stakeholders invited to the meetings of the Working Group;
- public conferences and discussions.

The objective of the Working Group was to contribute to the preparation of the Concept on the Financing of Social Services, while ensuring that the objectives defined by the RRP are met. The Working Group has a total of 26 members, including notably 11 representatives of the Ministry of Labour and 14 members representing various stakeholders (Annex 2). The consulted stakeholders are detailed in Annex 4 and include local and regional self-government (e.g. *Union of Cities of Slovakia* - comprising 48 cities), organizations of social service providers (e.g. *Slovak Chamber of Social Workers and Assistants for Social Work* – representing 10 000 employees) and other relevant associations (e.g. *Independent Platform SocioFórum* – including 120 NGOs, and the *Platform of families of children with health disadvantages*).

The Working Group's meetings have been attended also by several experts, as specified in the list of consulted stakeholders (Annex 4). These experts include representatives of the Ministry of Labour, of the Ministry of Health, of local and regional self-government (e.g. *SK 8 – Association of Self-governing Regions*) and members of the Committee of the Social Affairs of the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

In addition to the working group's meetings, representatives of the Social Services Department of the Ministry of Labour publicly presented the Concept for the Financing of Social Services at 21 events, including conferences and round tables, between September 2023 and November 2024 (Annex 4). The

list of consulted stakeholders (Annex 4) identifies all the events, with dates and number of participants, for instance the concept was presented at the *Expert conference of the Association of Social Service providers in Slovakia* on 12 November 2024, and the conference was attended by 250 participants.

According to the Summary of the Working Group meeting of 17 October 2024 (Annex 3), the majority of the members voted in favour of submitting the developed Concept to the interdepartmental consultation procedure. Around 200 comments were submitted during this procedure, of which 63 have been accepted, 77 partially accepted and 60 non accepted (Annex 5). The resulting Concept has been published by the Ministry of Labour in December 2024.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C13]-R[R2]-M[C13.4]: Unification of the assessment system

Related Measure: Accessible and high-quality long-term socio-health care – Reform 2: Available and high-quality long-term socio-health care – Assessment of care needs

Qualitative Indicator: Entry into force of the act on social services and amending Act 447/2008 on compensation of severely disabled persons

Time: Q1 2024

1. Context:

This reform aims at improving and streamlining the way persons with severe disabilities are recognised, consolidating work across bodies, and introducing uniform criteria for sub-dependency to enhance transparency.

Milestone C13.M4 requires entry into force of legislation on social services which brings together the assessment work carried out so far by various bodies and, at the same time, amending Act 447/2008, on compensation of severely disabled persons. It includes digitalisation through the e-health system and allocates financial resources for equipment for 200 assessment staff to ensure efficient implementation.

Milestone C13.M4 is the only milestone of this reform. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 March 2024.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all essential elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled,
2	Act No. 376/2024 Coll. of 28 November 2024, on integrated assessment activities and amending certain acts	This law was published in the Official Journal on 12 December 2024 and will enter into force partly on 1 August and on 1 September 2025 (see Article XII). The later applicability concerns the provisions relevant for this assessment.

3	Decree No. 51/2025 adopted on 13 March 2025 by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, implementing certain provisions of Act No. 376/2024 Coll. on integrated assessment activities and amending certain acts and Act No. 447/2008 Coll. on cash allowances to compensate for severe disability and amending certain acts, as amended by No. 376/2024 Coll.	The decree was published in the Official Journal on 13 March 2025 and will enter into force on 1 September 2025. The later applicability concerns the provision relevant for this assessment
4	List of offices which received equipment	Excel file containing the list of 46 branch offices that received the equipment, as specified in the measure description. The list includes the address of the offices and the furniture. The document is entitled as Annex 2.
5	List of IT equipment	Excel file containing the list of IT equipment provided for 200 assessment staff. The document is entitled Annex 3.
6	Delivery notes for furniture - Annex 4	The document includes delivery notes for each furniture and information related to the purchase and transfer of the equipment.
7	Delivery notes for laptops - Annex 5	The document includes delivery notes for each laptop and information related to the purchase and transfer of the equipment. It details the delivery dates (21/03/2024) and the recipients to whom the devices were delivered.
8	Purchase Contract No. 164/OI/2024 - Annex 6	The purchase contract for IT equipment includes Annex1 (technical specification of the subject of the contract and a structured budget of the price) and Annex 2 (list of persons authorised to take over the goods for the buyer and the delivery locations).
9	Purchase Contract No UPS/US1/SSVROPPKPC/BEZ/2024/1 4252; 2024/75900 - Annex 7	The purchase contract for furniture includes Annex 1 (technical specification and unit prices) and Annex 2 (a list of 46 branch offices that received the equipment. The list includes the addresses of the offices and the furniture).

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

Entry into force of legislation on social services which shall [...] amend Act No 447/2008 on compensation of severely disabled people.

The Council Implementing Decision required the entry into force of legislation on (i) social services and (ii) amending Act No. 447/2008 Coll. on compensation of severely disabled persons by Q1 2024. Slovakia adopted Act No. 376/2024 Coll. on the integrated assessment activities (see Annex 2) published in the Official Journal on 20 December 2024, which also amended Act No. 447/2008 Coll, and which was supplemented by an implementing decree No. 51/2025 (see Annex 3). Both the Act No. 376/2024 Coll. and the Decree No. 51/2025 will enter into force and become fully applicable on 1 September 2025 (See Article XII). Whilst this constitutes a minimal temporal deviation from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, the delay between the adoption of the law and the decree and the entry into force is considered both limited and proportional in order to allow sufficient time to roll out this systemic reform on the ground, notably for (i) hiring 140 social workers and 100 medical assessors newly in charge of integrated assessments, (ii) securing workspace/premises, and organising professional trainings for approximately 800 staff, (iii) to adapt IT systems and integrate them with all involved entities, including labour and social affairs offices and (iv) finalising the template questionnaires as specified in the implementing decree. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

Furthermore, the Council Implementing Decision required the entry into force of the act on social services and amending Act 447/2008 on compensation of severely disabled persons. For the fulfilment of this requirement, Slovakia has adopted an Act No. 376/2024 Coll. and an (ii) the implementing decree. Whilst this constitutes a minimal formal deviation from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, this deviation arises from internal legislative procedures that necessitated the adoption of an implementing decree as a more flexible legal instrument regulating the details related to unified assessment. As of this, this minimal deviation does not affect the progress towards achieving the reform that the milestone represents the same results were achieved through different means. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

This is also in line with the qualitative indicator, which states **entry into force of the act on social services and amending Act 447/2008 on compensation of severely disabled persons.**

[...] which shall bring together the assessment work carried out so far by various bodies [...].

Section 5 of the Act No. 376/2024 Coll. (see Annex 2) stipulates that the main integrated assessment decision shall be taken, at first instance, by the offices of labour, social affairs and family. Prior to the adoption of this Act, the assessment work was carried out by multiple bodies (Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, municipalities, and/or higher territorial units) and as part of distinct administrative processes under three different laws (Act No. 447/2008 Coll.; Act No. 448/2008 Coll.; Act No. 112/2018), as amended by Act No. 376/2024 Coll (see Annex 2). For example, under Act No. 448/2008, municipalities or higher territorial units conducted medical and social assessments to determine reliance on social services. Long-term disability assessment was governed by a different legislation – Act No. 112/2018. The Act No. 376/2024 has integrated these assessments under a single legislation under the competence of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Furthermore, Article 2 of Act No.376/2024 Coll. (see Annex 2) amends the Act No.453/2003 Coll. on state administration bodies in the field of social affairs, family, and employment services to reflect the remit of the Office within the new integrated assessment system.

Article I of the Act provides for the new features of the unified framework and assessment system. These include the legal definition, the procedure leading to the issuance of the integrated assessment, the mandatory content of the integrated assessment, and the right of appeal. The purpose of integrated

assessment is to determine (i) the eligibility of a person for the social allowance to compensate social consequences of severe health handicap and for related social services, including personal assistance, as well as (ii) the long-term health handicap preventing persons with severe disabilities from participating in work environment (see Section 1). A new procedure leading to the issuance of the integrated assessment is introduced in Sections 7 to 12 of the Act (see Annex 2). Compared to previous legislation, social and medical assessments form a single basis for the integrated assessment; new rules clarify that medical assessment is subsequent to the social assessment and that a new expert council is created to resolve a contradiction between the two, if necessary (Section 9). The mandatory content of the integrated assessment is specified in Section 12: it shall determine in particular the type of health handicap, degree of dependency, activities that a person can carry out independently or with the help of another person, the extent of personal assistance and the right for social allowance or appropriate social service.

Decree No. 51/2025 (see Annex 3) provides for additional elements operationalising the unified framework and assessment system for personal assistance and care to persons with severe disabilities by defining structured assessment procedures and standardised criteria.

Sections 1 to 9 of Decree No. 51/2025 further specify the performance of social and medical assessment activities to ensure consistency in evaluating an individual's needs. In addition, the Decree includes structured template questionnaires (Annexes 1 to 6 of the Decree), reports, and assessment criteria, which create a uniform standard to evaluate assistance needs. The integration of the social assessments, medical evaluations, and self-reported data ensure a comprehensive determination of assistance needs, thereby providing for a coherent, unified framework and assessment system, where support is allocated based on clearly defined parameters.

This is also in line with the measure description, which states that **it [i.e. the reform] shall (ii) introduce a unified framework and assessment system for personal assistance and care to persons with severe disabilities. The main assessment shall be carried out by labour, social and family office [....].**

The reform of the assessment work shall remove inefficiencies and red tape for medical assessors and assessors.

The inefficiency of medical assessment activities mainly consisted in the fragmentation of entities competent for assessment (Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, municipalities, and/or higher territorial units) and multiple administrative procedures under three different legislations (Act No. 447/2008 Coll.; Act 448/2008 Coll.; and Act No 112/2018). Sections 5 and 13 of the Act No. 376/2024 Coll. remove inefficiencies by concentrating the performance of the assessment work in the hands of one authority, i.e. Offices of labour, family and social affairs, and by providing one deadline of 60 days for the whole procedure containing both social and medical assessments (see sections 5 and 13 of Act No. 376/2024 Coll.). The creation of an expert panel should resolve contradictions between social and medical reports, preventing unnecessary reassessments (Section 9 of the law and 12 of the Decree).

The red tape will be reduced through the following provisions. Section 1 of the Decree describes details of the performance of social assessment activities, which will unify previously separate assessments into a unified framework. Medical assessors will rely on existing records and will not be able to ask for documents older than six months from the assessed person, as defined in Section 5. If no significant health change is expected (e.g., chronic conditions), reassessment is waived under Section 7, further cutting

administrative workload. In Sections 2(2) and 6(2), the Decree also defines acceptable performance standards for daily activities, making assessments more predictable.

As set out in Section 10 of the Act (Annex 2), medical assessors are granted access to more extensive information about the client, including information provided in a self-assessment questionnaire, findings of a social worker, and in the case of persons with intellectual disabilities, neurodevelopmental disorders or mental disorders, a clinical-psychological finding of functional capacity. Furthermore, as outlined in Section 8 of the Decree (Annex 3), medical officers do not always need to see the patient in person, except in specific cases, streamlining the assessment process and eliminating unnecessary in-person consultations.

Annexes 1-7 of the Decree No. 51/2025 (see Annex 3) provide template questionnaires for social and medical assessments and standardized self-assessment. These questionnaires minimise subjective interpretation and eliminate unnecessary administrative tasks and repetitive procedures. Previously the assessment was conducted by different local authorities without sufficient coordination or supervision of consistency across patients, resulting in uncertainty, arbitrary decisions or need for appeals.

New uniform criteria for sub-dependency shall be defined to make the assessment more transparent.

Act No. 376/2024 Coll. (Annex 2) provides for new uniform criteria for sub-dependency which will ensure a more transparent assessment for social workers and medical examiners. Section 2 of the Act provides a definition of severe disability. This provision cross-refers to Annex 1 of the Act which establishes detailed criteria for determining who qualifies as a severely disabled person which will be now uniformly applied across different assessments reducing heterogeneity of decision-making and application of different support for same disabilities. Section 3 of the Act specifies the criteria and the degrees of sub-dependency. This provision cross-refers to Annexes 2 and 3 which provide further details, including on the levels of reliance on assistance from another person.

The assessment work shall be digitalised – medical assessors shall use the e-health system.

The Council Implementing Decision states that the assessment work shall be digitalised, and medical assessors shall use the e-health system. The Slovak Recovery and Resilience Plan (p. 184) provides that the assessment is insufficiently digitalized, creating unnecessary bureaucratic burdens and that assessment physicians do not use the electronic health system or e-government tools, resulting in extra administrative work for doctors, applicants, and their families. Slovakia requires, under the new Section 11 of Act No. 376/2024 Coll., medical assessors to rely on electronic health records maintained within the electronic health record system. Similarly, Article VII and Section 10 provide that electronic health records serve as the primary resource for medical officers in carrying out their duties. Granting access to e-health records is in line with the contextual interpretation. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

Under Act No. 376/2024 Coll., electronic medical records are among the mandatory sources of information for medical examiners about the health status of the persons being examined. The possibility of submitting medical findings in paper form has also been retained according to Article I (11)(2). The

integrated medical examination procedure will be an administrative procedure and the party to the proceedings may propose any evidence known to him to support his claims.

This is also in line with the description of the measure, which states **to reduce administrative burden and as part of digitalisation efforts, assessors shall use the e-health system.**

To ensure efficient implementation of the reform, the financial resources under this reform shall be used to provide computer and office equipment for 200 assessment staff.

The authorities provided the list of 200 computers, including the serial number of each computer, the primary user, and the offices to which this equipment was assigned (submitted as Annex 3) as well as the purchase contract No. 164/OI/2024 (see Annex 6)

Purchase Contract No. 164/OI/2024 (attachments 1 and 2) includes technical specifications of the subject of the contract and a structured budget of the price) and a detailed table containing the following information:

- The city and the address of each office
- The number of computers allocated per office
- The name of the authorized person for each office

In addition, a full inventory list of each equipment (Annex 4) as handed over for each of 46 branch offices, including their addresses and cities, signed at delivery, demonstrates that the equipment was received by the assessors across the 46 branch offices. This allocation ensures that each branch office is adequately equipped to carry out its activities effectively.

- Work tables: 108 units
- Shelves: 115 units
- Working chairs: 124 units
- Conference chairs: 119 units
- Racks: 81 units
- Metal A4 binders: 107 units

This is also in line with the measure description, which states that **assessors across the 46 branch offices shall receive the equipment necessary to carry out their work.**

Furthermore, in line with the measure description, **this reform shall improve and streamline the way persons with severe disabilities are recognised.**

Under Sections 3 and 12 of Act No. 376/2024 Coll., an integrated assessment system consolidates various types of evaluations (social, medical, employment-related) into a single framework. This directly contributes to streamlining the process by reducing the administrative burden and avoiding duplicate assessments for persons with severe disabilities.

Section 10 of Act No. 376/2024 Coll. enhances clarity in the process of disability assessment by integrating both medical and social evaluations, rather than relying solely on medical diagnoses. The clear criteria for eligibility outlined in the article help streamline decision-making and ensure that the process is consistent.

Section 11 of Act No. 376/2024 Coll. sets out the medical criteria used to evaluate the degree of disability, ensuring that the assessment focuses on the actual impact of the disability on the individual's daily functioning. This reduces ambiguity in the evaluation process and helps make the recognition of severe disabilities more accurate. The focus on functionality rather than just medical conditions ensures that people who face significant barriers to participation in society due to their disability are properly recognized and supported.

Section 12 of Act No. 376/2024 Coll. establishes a detailed, integrated assessment covering severity of the disability, the need for personal assistance, the need for assistive devices, and eligibility for financial support or social services. This ensures that all relevant factors are taken into account, providing a complete and accurate picture of the person's situation. The integrated assessment process in this section creates a unified methodology for evaluating persons with disabilities, streamlining the procedure by combining medical, social, and functional assessments into one comprehensive report.

The main assessment shall be carried out (...) according to a uniform methodology based on the World Health Organisation Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0.

The World Health Organisation Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0) is a standardised tool to measure health-related disability across six life-areas: cognition, mobility, self-care, getting along, life activities, and participation. It comes in 36-item, 12-item, and proxy versions and uses a Likert scale for scoring.

Section 10 of Act No. 376/2024 Coll. provides that social assessment activity takes into account the individual circumstances of the disabled person, his/her family environment, participation in the society and degree of difficulties when carrying out specific activities. The social worker is also required to complete the questionnaire in cooperation with the disabled person. Moreover, the disabled persons' self-assessment questionnaire is also a mandatory annex to the request for integrated assessment which is consistent with the WHODAS methodology.

Moreover, the Decree No. 51/2025 contains template questionnaires to be used by social workers, medical assessors as well as by the disabled persons. The questionnaires are based on WHODAS 2.0, structured into six life areas and the method of responses. They ensure that the integrated assessment will be issued according to a uniform methodology.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled

SK-C[C13]-R[R3]-T[C13.6]: Establishment of a unified supervisory system with headquarter and 8 branches

Related Measure: C13.R3 Reform of the supervision of social care

Quantitative Indicator: Establishment of a unified supervisory system with headquarter and 8 branches

Baseline: 0

Target: 9 (headquarter and 8 branches)

Time: Q1 2024

1. Context:

The measure aims to consolidate supervision under a unified supervisory authority responsible for overseeing the quality and provision of social and healthcare services. This reform should improve efficiency and accountability in social care supervision and enhance quality of care and service delivery. For this purpose, a central supervisory authority with eight regional branches is established which requires infrastructure - vehicles, IT equipment and furniture.

Target C13.T6 requires the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic to complete a headquarter and 8 regional branches of the supervision of social care.

Target C13.T6 is the second and last target of the Reform 3, and it follows the completion of milestone C13.M5 under the Reform 3. C13.M5 introduced a law in the area of social care supervision unifying the power of supervision and creating the legislative basis for the functioning of the new social welfare inspection. The reform has final expected date of implementation by 31 March 2024.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence.	Short description
1	Annex 1 - Description of supervisory body buildings	Summary document presenting all of the evidence and providing description with pictures of each branch and the headquarter
2	Annex 2 - Notification of the award	Detailed description of the conditions for procurement of buildings
3	Annexes 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19- Building handover protocols	Building handover protocol for the following locations: Žilina, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Košice, Prešov
4	Annexes 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 - Cadastral registration protocols	Cadastral registration protocol of each building certifying sale to the ministry, locations: Žilina, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Košice, Prešov
5	Annex 21 -Vehicles, furniture and computer equipment	Links to the central contract registry for vehicles, furniture and computer equipment
6	Annexes 22, 23 - Vehicle handover protocol and inventory cards	Handover protocol for 42 vehicles and inventory cards for 42 vehicles
7	Annexes 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 - Invoices and orders of furniture	Invoice and order of furniture, locations: Žilina, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Košice, Prešov
8	Annex 33 - Invoice and order of computers and electronic equipment	Invoice and order of computers and electronic equipment

9	Annex 34 - Links to the procurement documents and registered contracts for the purchase of buildings and equipment	Document contains links to the central registry of contracts for all of the buildings and equipment, locations: Žilina, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Košice, Presov
10	Annex 35 - List of employees	Employee overview by location – summary table

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

Completion of the necessary infrastructure for the functioning of the supervisory body – headquarters and 8 regional branches.

Slovakia submitted a description of the premises of the headquarters and of 8 regional branches (Annex 1), certificates proving that the premises have been acquired (Annexes 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19), cadastre registration protocols (Annexes 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20) and official references to certificates proving that the relevant buildings, furniture, and equipment have been purchased (Annexes 22 to 34).

A unified supervision system has been established with a headquarters and eight branch offices across Slovakia. The offices are located as follows:

- Western Slovakia: Headquarters in Bratislava, with branch offices in Trnava, Trenčín, and Nitra.
- Central Slovakia: Branch offices in Banská Bystrica and Žilina.
- Eastern Slovakia: Branch offices in Prešov and Košice.

Evidence was provided for each building as a handover protocol and cadastral registration protocol (Annexes 5 to 20).

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that **the measure shall also provide the necessary infrastructure for the new system of supervision, composed of the headquarters and eight regional branches, [...]**.

Costs include premises, vehicles, computer equipment and other prerequisites.

The public procurement for the purchase of motor vehicles for the needs of the Inspectorate for Social Affairs in the amount of 42 units was completed in May 2023. Slovakia provided links to the central registry of public contracts (Annex 21), handover protocols and inventory cards (Annexes 22 and 23). The cars were distributed to individual workplaces.

Slovakia provided links to the central registry of public contracts (Annex 21) and invoices for the purchase of IT equipment (Annexes 33 and 34). It is gradually distributed to individual ISV employees according to their employment.

The public procurement for the purchase of furniture for workplaces in the cities of Žilina, Nitra, Trnava and Trenčín was signed on 5 June 2023. Another tender was finished in October 2023 for the purchase of furniture for workplaces in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, Košice and Prešov. The furniture was gradually

distributed to workplaces in cities of Žilina, Nitra, Trnava, Trenčín, Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, Košice and Prešov according to the purchase of buildings and their use, except for the building in Košice (Annexes 24 to 33).

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that **the measure shall also provide the necessary infrastructure for the new system of supervision, [...] including premises, vehicles and IT equipment.**

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C16]-I[I1]-M[C16.2]: Providing necessary Infrastructure to support the fight against money laundering and corruption

Related Measure: C16.I1 Tools and capacity for the fight against corruption and money laundering

Qualitative Indicator: AML-related and whistleblower infrastructure is fully operational

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of the measure is to strengthen the capacity of the police to implement financial investigations, to improve the fight against corruption and money laundering. It includes the provision of specialised trainings and technical equipment. In addition, steps shall be taken to make the whistleblower's office fully operational, in order to support the fight against corruption.

Milestone C16.M2 concerns the delivery and full functioning of infrastructure and equipment for the staff in charge of the anti-money laundering (AML) and the whistle-blowing protection office.

Milestones C16.M2 together with Target C16.T3, also presented under this payment request, constitute the two milestone and target under this investment. The investment has final expected date of implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document providing justification on how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Explanatory document on the use of go AML software for money laundering, signed by a representative of the Finance Intelligence Unit of Praesidium of the Police Force (Annex 6 to the summary document)	The document presents the purpose, the operational entities, the functionalities and other technical points of the go AML software.
3	Service level agreement 2021/UNODC/GOAML-EE/SK/001 signed on 15 December 2022 by the	

	Ministry of interior (Slovakia Financial Intelligence Unit) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Annex 3 to the summary document)	The service level agreement relates to the installation of the goAML system and related support.
4	Completion report on the go AML signed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on 9 December 2024. (Annex 2 to the summary document)	The document certifies that the go-AML software was installed and ready for use, and that the training of its users was completed.
5	Act No. 123/2022 on the central register of accounts and amending certain acts as published in the collection of Acts of the Slovak Republic on 13 April 2022, entered into force on 1 May 2022. (Annex 9 to the summary document)	The Act governs the establishment of a central register of accounts and the rights and obligations relating to its establishment and operation.
6	Contract No. 2022/169 for the supply of software work signed on 6 September 2022 by representatives of the Ministry of Finance (contracting authority) and the Slovak Technical University of Bratislava. (Annex 22 to the summary document)	The supply work consists in the development of the central register of accounts, in line with the requirements of the Act No. 123/2022
7	User acceptance testing for the Central Accounts Register, dated 29 March 2024. (Annex 7 to the summary document)	The document from lists all tests performed (requirements and expected outcomes), as well as the actual evaluation of the tests.
8	Final Acceptance Protocol to the Contract No. 2022/169 for the supply of the software work for the Central Account Register Information, signed on 14 August 2024 by authorised representatives of the Ministry of Finance (the contracting authority) and the Faculty of the Information and Information Technology in the Slovak Technical University of Bratislav (contractor). (Annex 8 to the summary document)	The Protocol confirms the full acceptance of the delivered products and services in full compliance with the requirements and the contract in force under No 2022/169, including its testing, pre-production and production environment.
9	Ordinance No. 15/2024 of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic implementing the Law on the Central Register of Accounts and on Amendment certain acts, published on the collection of Acts of the Slovak Republic on 12 February 2024, entered into force on 15 February 2024 (Annex 10 to the summary document)	The Ordinance sets out the modalities for the transmission of data in the Central Register of Accounts (Article 1) and the conditions for assigning and using a unique user identifier to a natural person requesting on behalf on an authorised authority the provision of data from the central register of accounts (Article 2).
10	Copy of an e-mail between representatives of the SK Recovery and Resilience Plan	This email provides an estimation by a representative of the project management Unit

	Implementation Unit and the project management unit for the Central Register of Accounts, dated 21 November 2024. (Annex 18 to the summary document)	in the Ministry of Finance on the population of required financial data in the Central Register of Accounts,
11	Weblink to the first annual report of the whistleblower protection office, published in the official website of the authority, https://www.oznamovatelia.sk/aktuality/	The annual report reports on its activities performed during its first year of activity
12	Letter of the Chairwoman of the whistle-blowing office dated 15 January 2025 (Document "Confirmation_letter_Whistle-blower office.pdf")	The annex to the letter provides information on the organisation chart of the whistle-blowing office, the posts and the vacancies
13	"Verification mechanism table" for the equipment and reconstruction works of the premises of the whistle-blowing protection office (Document "substain_evidence_summary_UOO_v2.xlsx" and specific documents identified under its "file name" column)	Detailed list of the equipment purchased and the reconstruction works. Copies of related delivery notes/acceptance protocols or equivalent.
14	"Verification mechanism table" for the equipment and adaptation of the premises of NCODK and NAKA/UBOK (Document "Príloha č. 15 Prehľad k verifikačnému mechanizmu K16_I01_C16-2_updated_20250117.xlsx" and evidence documents posted in it).	Detailed list of the equipment purchased and the works for the adaptation of the premises, with copies of delivery notes/acceptance protocols (with exception of actions related to the security of objects in NCODK offices, for security reasons).

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

Purchase of the "go AML" software tool until Q4/2022 and implementing it by Q3/2023.

The goAML software was implemented by the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) in the Ministry of interior to generate the financial intelligence necessary to detect economic crime, money laundering, and terrorist financing. It consists in an integrated database system with smart analytical tools functionalities. It provides an IT solution to collect data sourced from the banking and financial institutions, analyse the data collected (elaboration of risk-score and risk-profiling), and facilitate the exchange of financial intelligence between the financial intelligence unit and other relevant authorities at national, European and global levels (EgmontGroup, FIUnet) (Annex. 2, introduction, page 2).

The Ministry of interior signed an agreement with the United Nations on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the purchase, installation, support and maintenance of a goAML software (Annex. 3). The goAML has been developed to "assist Member States fight financial crime, including money laundering and terrorist financing" (evidence No. 3, Article 1.1). The UNODC completion report certifies that the goAML software

was customized to the needs of the FIU, installed and made ready for use as from 27 September 2024 (Annex. 4).

The is also in line with the description of the measure, which stated that **this shall include digital software solutions for financial investigations [...]**.

Launch of a test version of the central accounts register with all in the Act predefined functionalities with access to data up to Q2/2022 and subsequent launch of the final version in Q4/2022.

The register of central accounts established under the Act No. 123/2022 Coll. on the central register of accounts (Annex 5) consists in a public administration information system operated by the Ministry of Finance (Article 1, Section 3(3)). It facilitates the access by designated authorities (Article 1, Section 5(1)) to data on accounts and safe deposit boxes held or leased in the territory of the Slovak Republic within the scope of its Article 1, Section 4(1).

The procurement contract for the supply of the Public Administration Information System sets out that the System facilitates access by the competent authorities as set out in Section 5(1) of the Act No 123/2022, to data on accounts and security boxes held or leased in the territory of the Slovak Republic, thereby speeding up the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of perpetrators of economic crime offences (Annex 6, preamble, point C). It also provides that the contractor undertakes that the software work complies with the applicable and effective legislation, including the provisions of the Act 123/2022 (Annex 6, Article 4 (2) (m)).

The user acceptance tests of the central account register were launched and completed (Annex 7). The acceptance protocol confirms the full acceptance of the delivered products and services in full compliance with the requirements and the procurement contract, including its testing, pre-production and production environment (Annex 8, section “subject of acceptance”, point 1).

Following the adoption of the Ordinance 15/2024 (Annex 9), the Ministry of Finance signed a set of agreements with financial institutions for them to upload data into the Central Account Register system. The Ministry of Finance provided an estimation of 97.03 % population of the required data was populated in the system (Annex 10).

This is also in line with the description of the measure, which states that **this shall include digital software solutions for [...] the central accounts register.**

Operationalisation and full technical equipment of the whistle-blower protection office until Q3/2022.

The Whistleblower Protection Authority started its operations in 2021, as evidenced by the publication of its first annual report on its official website (Annex 11). The Office counts a President elected and 26 posts (Annex 12).

The premises of the Whistleblower Protection Office were adapted with energy-savings measures (replacement of windows, installation of a green roof, replacement of the lighting and other small equipment by energy-saving ones), the removal of sanitary and technical defects of the building (replacement of water distribution and sewer systems), as well as the provision of necessary security equipment (Annex 13). Furthermore, hardware equipment was procured and delivered (monitors, notebooks, printers, multimedia equipment) and software (secured notification platform, website for the Office), and a vehicle was delivered (Annex 13).

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that [...] **steps shall be taken to make the whistleblower's office fully operational, in order to support the fight against corruption. This includes the provision of technical equipment.**

Adaptation of premises and ICT equipment of NCODK and NAKA units for financial investigation and verification of the origin of assets by regional level (model 1 + 4) to Q4/2023.

The adaptation of premises concerned: 1) seven units in four buildings hosting the horizontal units of the Financial Investigation Department of the National Centre for Special Crimes (OFV NCODK): its coordination units based in Bratislava including the Assets recovery Unit, and its regional units based in Bratislava, Nitra, Košice and Žilina); and 2) two units in the building hosting the staff Financial Investigation and Analytical Units of the Bratislava regional department of the National Criminal Agency (NAKA), which became the Central Department of the Office for the Fight against Organised Crime (ÚBOK) as from 1 September 2024. The adaptation of the buildings comprised the fitting-out of the premises (installation of structured pre-cabling, installation and configuration of network elements, security equipment and small maintenance), the installation of sanitary facilities and kitchenettes, the installation of air conditioning and the delivery of basic office equipment (Annex 14).

The staff of analytical and financial investigation units of the NAKA (transferred to the ÚBOK as from 1st September 2024) and the OFV NCODK were equipped with new ICT equipment for the use of the SecuCOMM information system. SecuCOMM is an electronic platform to facilitate the communication and data exchanges between the Presidium of the Police Force, and other law enforcement authorities whose cooperation is necessary for the actions of the financial investigations. The equipment procured and delivered consist in PC kits (notebooks, monitors, docks, keyboards, mice and bags), external USB discs, printer, and mobile phones (Annex 14).

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that financial **investigations capacities in the police force shall be strengthened through [...] equipment.**

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C16]-I[I1]-T[C16.3]: Retraining police officers in financial investigations and analytical activities

Related Measure: C16.I1 Tools and capacity for the fight against corruption and money laundering

Quantitative Indicator: % of staff trained

Baseline: 0

Target: 100

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of the investment is to strengthen the capacity of the police to implement financial investigations, to improve the fight against corruption and money laundering. It includes the provision of specialised trainings and technical equipment.

Milestone C16.T3 concerns the establishment of a central analysis office of the National Criminal Agency (NAKA) and regional analysis and financial investigation offices of the NAKA, the establishment of regional analytical and financial investigation offices of the National Centre for Special Crimes (NCODK), as well as the training of all appointed staff of these newly established units.

Milestone C16.T3 complements Milestone C16.T2 related to infrastructure for the anti-money laundering and whistle-blower protection also presented under this payment request. Milestones C16.T2 and C16.T3 are the only milestone and targets under the investment. The investment has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Regulation No. 92/2021 of the Presidium of the Police Force of 1 December 2021, amending Regulation No. 84/2019 of the Presidium of the Police Force on the establishment plan of the Presidium of the Police Force. Entered into force on 1 February 2022 as set out in Article 2.	The Regulation amends the organisation of the Presidium of the Police Force as set out in Regulation No. 84/2019. It sets out the reorganisation of the National Criminal Agency (NAKA) and establishes the National Centre of Special Crimes. (Annex 4 to the summary document)
3	Regulation No. 34/2022 of the Presidium of the Police Force of 30 March 2022 on the establishment plan of the Presidium of the Police Force, entered into force on 1 April 2022 as set out in its Article 53.	The Regulation sets out the revised mandate of the National Criminal Agency (NAKA) following its reorganisation under the Regulation No 92/2021 (evidence No. 3). (Annex 5 to the summary document)
4	Staffing plan of the analytical unit of the National Criminal Agency (NAKA) and the National Centre for Special Crimes (NCODK), valid as of 1 February 2022.	The staffing plan clarifies the internal organisation of the NAKA and NCODK, the staffing posts and the tasks of the officers per staff profile. (Annex 10 to the summary document, and document "OL_Centrálna_analytika_NAKA.doc").
5	Regulation No. 87/2024 of the Presidium of the Police Force of 13 September 2024 on the establishment plan of the Presidium of the Police Force, entered into force on 13 September 2024 as set out in its article 55.	The Regulation amends the organisation of the Presidium of the Police Force, abolishing the National Criminal Agency (NAKA) and establishing the Office for the Fight against Organised Crime (ÚBOK). (Annex 8 to the summary document).

6	Order of the President of the Police Force defining the material competence of selected units of the police force	The Order defines the material competence of selected units of the police force, following the organisational changes in the structure of the Praesidium of the Police Force on 1 September 2024 following the adoption of Regulation No. 87/2024. (Document "PPZ-OKP1-2024044646-001")
7	Staffing plan of the Financial Investigation and Analysis Unit of the ÚBOK, valid as from 1 September 2024	The staffing plan clarifies the internal organisation of the ÚBOK, the staffing posts and tasks of the officers per staff profile. (Annex 12 to the summary document and document "OL_Personálny plán ÚBOK_20250117.docx").
8	List of the training courses carried out for the new units of the NAKA and NCODK	The document includes a copy of the training certificates for each participant under each training session. (Annex 2 to the summary document, version dated 24 January 2025).
9	List of the recruited officers in OFV NCODK and NAKA/UBOK since the establishment of the new units, and as of 6 December 2024, with information on the training session(s) successfully attended by each of them	This list is consistent with the list above (evidence No. 9) as regards the training session successfully passed. (Annex 14 to the summary document, version dated 24 January 2025).
10	List of the training sessions held	It includes a copy of the training material used in the session (when non protected for security reasons). (Annex 1 to the summary document).

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the target.

Establishment of the NAKA Analytical Centre and the Regional Analytical and Financial Investigation Offices of the NAKA [...] in Q1/2022.

With effect from 1 February 2022, the National Criminal Agency (NAKA) of the Praesidium of the Police Force was reorganised. The Regulation No. 92/2021 (see Annex 2) of the Praesidium of the Police Force (Article 1 (10)) demonstrates that new specialised units in charge of analytical activities and financial investigations were established both at central level and at regional level, i.e. in each of its four regional departments. The staffing plan of the NAKA dated 1 February 2022 (see Annex 4) indicates that the specialised units of the regional departments count 31 posts of analytical experts and 48 posts of financial investigators.

With effect from 13 September 2024, the NAKA ceased to exist and its units were transferred to the Office for the Fight against Organised Crime (ÚBOK) (see Annex 6; Article 24 (1)). The ÚBOK is currently organised as a central unit for the coordination ('the Management Support Department'), and two specialised units

in each of three regional departments (the former “central” and “Bratislava” NAKA regional department were merged). The staffing plan of the ÚBOK dated 1 September 2024 (see Annex 7) also indicates that the specialised units of the regional departments count 31 analysts and 48 financial investigators.

The ÚBOK, like its predecessor NAKA, specializes in detecting and investigating the most serious crimes. (see Annex 4, Article 23 and Annex 6, Article 30). The ÚBOK assumes its responsibilities on a more selective basis than the NAKA, investigating and detecting criminal activities committed by an organised group or a dangerous group pursuant to Section 141 of the Criminal Code (see Annex 7; point 2 (a)).

As of 1 February 2022, two reorganisations of the Presidium of the Police have entered into force. The final and currently valid reorganisation, which entered into force on 13 September 2024 (see Annex 4), led to the establishment of the new central analytical department at ÚBOK, and of the specialised analytical and financial investigation regional units in each of the regional departments. As a result, when compared to the period before 1 February 2022, the financial investigations capacities in the police force have been strengthened through the creation of additional, specialised regional offices and analytical services.

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that financial **investigations capacities in the police force shall be strengthened through the creation [...] of the regional offices and analytical services of the National Criminal Agency (NAKA).**

[...] and the establishment of Regional Analytical and Financial Investigation Offices of the National Centre for Special Crimes (NCODK) in Q1/2022.

With effect from 1 February 2022, the National Centre of Special Crimes (NCODK) was established under Regulation No 92/2021 of the Presidium of the Police Force (see Annex 2; Article 1 (11)). The NCODK is competent to “direct, manage, coordinate and control the activities of the criminal police service in the financial investigation and anti-money laundering sector” (see Annex 2; Article 1 (11)a).

It comprises a financial investigation Department (OFV-NCODK) including three thematic units (detection and coordination unit, Asset Recovery unit, risk management and statistics) and four units established in the regions (Bratislava, West, East and Central departments) which correspond to the regional analytical and financial investigation offices. The Department OFV-NCODK is staffed with 168 posts, including 85 financial investigators and 68 analysts (Annex 4).

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that financial **investigations capacities in the police force shall be strengthened through the creation [...] of the National Centre for Special Crimes (NCODK).**

All appointed staff in the newly established units of the police force attended trainings, workshops and seminars with the participation of foreign and national lecturers, cooperation in training with CEPOL and Europol.

On 6 December 2024, in total, 122 experts were appointed in the newly established central and regional units outlined in the analysis above (87 experts in OFV NCODK and 35 experts in ÚBOK). Out of these, 117 or 95,9% (86 in OFV NCODK and 31 in ÚBOK) received at least one training certificate (see Annexes 8 and 9). The Council Implementing Decision required that all (i.e. 100%) of the appointed staff in the newly established units are trained. Whilst this constitutes a minimal numerical deviation of 4,1% from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, the overall objective of this target is considered met

notwithstanding this minor deviation. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the target is satisfactorily fulfilled.

The trainings aim at increasing the financial analytical and investigative knowledge and skills of the staff in the new units established at regional and central levels of the NAKA (now ÚBOK) and the departments of the OFV NCODK as identified above. During the period between 2022 and 2024, trainings, workshops and seminars were carried out in Slovakia and abroad with the intervention of foreign (American and European) and/or national lecturers (Annex 10), either “face-to-face” or through online modules. The trainings focused on specialized training sessions for analysts and financial investigators, the fight against fraud and money-laundering, the tracing and seizure of assets (organized by the CEPOL, Europol and other relevant organizations) and the tax and financial analysis (Annex 10). The experts participated in the trainings on demand, depending on their work profile and expert needs. On average, each expert successfully attended 3 training sessions (see Annex 9). While only 19 out of the 56 staff recruited and trained in NAKA were transferred to ÚBOK after the reorganisation of the Praesidium of the Police in September 2024; 16 new staff were appointed and trained in the ÚBOK as from after September 2024.

In line with the description of the measure, **the investment shall provide [...] capacity building measures to support reform 1. Financial investigations capacities in the police force shall be strengthened through trainings [...] as well as a reorganisation.**

Target 16.T3 under Investment 16.I1 contributes to the objective of the Reform 16.I1 aimed at enhancing the fight against money laundering and corruption, through capacity-building measures consisting in the set-up of expert units for financial analysis and investigation in the OFV-NCODK and the NAKA, the appointment of experts and their expert training.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C17]-R[R1]-M[C17.2]: Roadmap of the priority life situations

Related Measure: C17.R1 Creating eGovernment solutions for priority life situations

Qualitative Indicator: Publication of the roadmap

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of this reform is to unify and increase the use of eGovernment services in Slovakia. In particular, the reform aims to prepare an investment plan to enable Slovak individuals and businesses to administratively resolve 16 priority “life situations” through eGovernment solutions quickly and easily.

Milestone C17.M2 requires the publication of the roadmap of the priority life situations, which contains the analysis of service design and identification of deficiencies (roadmap) for their improvement through all public administrations concerned.

Milestone C17.M2 is the second and last milestone of the reform, and it follows the completion of milestone C17.M1, related to the publication of the list of priority electronic services for life situations approved by the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development, and Informatization of the Slovak Republic (*hereinafter referred to as “MIRRI”*), based on the eGov benchmark and taking into account the

Annex II of the Single Digital Gateway Regulation. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled
2	Annex 1 - Investment plan for priority life situations	A roadmap for the priority life situations, including an investment plan; the Slovak authorities labelled it officially as "Investment Plan"
3	Annex 2 – Minutes of meeting of the Steering Committee for priority life situations	The investment plan for priority life situations was approved on 20 December 2023 by the Steering Committee for priority life situations
4	Annex 3 – Confirmation by MIRRI in the form of a letter of the approval of the investment plan	State Secretary of MIRRI confirms on 4 December 2024 that the approval of the investment plan on behalf of MIRRI was done through the Steering Committee for priority life situations of 20 December 2023

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

Analysis of service design [...] In line with the qualitative indicator: **publication of the roadmap.**

As demonstrated by Annex 1, Slovakia submitted the roadmap including an investment plan for priority life situations. The roadmap identifies individual steps on the customer journey for citizens and businesses related to each priority life situation (Annex 1, Chapter 4, pages 15-57). The customer journey starts at the point when the citizen/business has a need to use the service and ends at the point when the customer stops using it. The roadmap defines areas of action throughout the journey and the necessary steps to be undertaken within those actions, which serve for the design of future eGovernment services. Under each priority life situation, the roadmap includes a link to detailed customer journey infographic, which explains the current state of play, as well as the future design of the services (Annex 1, page 134).

[...] and the identification of deficiencies (roadmap) [...]

The roadmap contains a detailed list of deficiencies identified for each of the 16 priority life situations and the recommended investment actions to address them (Annex 1, Chapter 5, pages 58-90). The identified gaps serve as the basis for identification of a roadmap of actions (specific business requirements) for the future design of each priority life situation.

[...] for their improvement through all public institutions concerned The roadmap aims to address the gaps identified and improve the current practices by proposing a future design of the 16 priority life situations (Annex 1, Chapter 5, pages 91-122). Stakeholder consultations were carried out to identify problems, as well as the positive aspects that citizens encounter in a particular life situation, with the

overall goal of increasing satisfaction with future design of eGovernment services (Annex 1, Table 3, pages 11-13).

The roadmap was drawn up in cooperation with a number of partner administrative entities: Ministry of Health; Ministry of Transport; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Youth; Social Security Agency; The Office of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastral of the Slovak Republic; The National Health Information Centre; Statistical Office; Public Health Authority; Financial Administration; State Veterinary and Food Administration; Data Centre for the Electronification of Local Government; The National Labour Inspectorate; National Motorway Company; Slovak Insurance Association; Slovak Insurers' Bureau (Annex 1, pages 8-9). As evidenced in the statute of the committee, most of these entities are also represented in the Steering Committee for priority life situations, which approved the investment plan.

Furthermore, in line with the description of the measure, **this reform shall lead to the preparation and adoption by the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatisation (MIRRI) of an investment plan for priority “life situations” of citizens and businesses. [...] The investment plan shall identify 16 priority life situations, describe the current and future status of processes, and list investment actions that need to be carried out in the administrative entities and their information systems.**

The Council Implementing Decision required MIRRI to adopt a roadmap for priority life situations. The roadmap was approved on 20 December 2023 through a decision of the Steering Committee for priority life situations. In accordance with its statute, the Steering Committee is set up by MIRRI, chaired by the Secretary of State of MIRRI, but has voting members from other ministries and partner institutions. The minutes of the Steering Committee from 20 December 2023 record the approval (Annex 2, p.4) and the State Secretary from MIRRI confirms the approval of the roadmap in the form of a letter, as evidenced in Annex 3. Whilst this constitutes a minimal formal deviation from the requirement of the Council Implementing Decision, it concerns internal procedures of Slovakia where MIRRI decided to have the roadmap approved by a wider group of concerned ministries and partner institutions. As of this, this minimal deviation does not affect the progress towards achieving the reform that the milestone represents. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

The roadmap describes the current and future status of processes (Annex 1, Chapters 4 and 6). It also contains a detailed list of deficiencies identified for each of the 16 priority life situations and the recommended investment actions to address them (Annex 1, Chapter 5, pages 58-90).

The selection and final list of priority life situations, as well as introduction of a package of legislative amendments to deploy new digital public services on a unified design was assessed as satisfactorily fulfilled under the related milestone C17.1.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C17]-R[R2]-M[C17.3]: Central platform for the use of IT resources (digital market place)

Related measure: C17.R2 Central management of IT resources

Qualitative Indicator: Launch of the platform

Time: Q4 2023

1. Context:

The objective of this reform is to deploy a central procurement platform for purchasing and using IT resources. These resources are then made available to deploy information systems in the public administration, with the overarching objective of reducing the time and costs of such developments.

Milestone C17.M3 requires entry into service of a platform of tools and policies for a new way to buy and use IT commodities, expertise, cloud services and open source code. The services shall be procured centrally (framework contract), and the users of the services shall have the possibility to dynamically draw on the central platform as needed.

Milestone C17.M3 is the only milestone of the reform. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2023.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence.	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled
2	Annex 1 – Minutes of meeting recording vote in the Steering Committee for the project on the platform for the use of IT resources	Voting members of the Steering Committee set up by the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development, and Informatization of the Slovak Republic (<i>hereinafter referred to as "MIRRI"</i>) for the project platform for the use of IT resources (" <i>PITZ</i> ") voted on 20 February 2024 to unanimously approve the delivery of the platform
3	Annex 2 – Acceptance and testing protocol of the platform for the use of IT resources	The Steering Committee of the project on the platform for the use of IT resources also approved on 20 February the acceptance and testing protocol confirming the delivery, quality and functionality of the platform; the platform for the use of IT resources is available (after logging in) on the following link: https://pitz-mirri.powerappsportals.com/

4	Annex 3 – List of central framework contracts and central dynamic purchasing systems	The central framework contract and the dynamic purchasing systems are available on the platform to allow users to buy and use IT resources
5	Annex 4 – Example of search for IT resources per vendor and type of product	Print screen to show how to search for IT resources (software licenses) on the platform per vendor and type of product
6	Annex 5 – List of framework agreements within a central dynamic purchasing system for IT roles	List of framework agreements concluded as part of the central dynamic purchasing system to buy and use IT roles; the annex also provides an estimation of % of savings that can be achieved by making the use of the dynamic purchasing system
7	Annex 6 – Example of how to submit a request in the platform for the use of IT resources	Print screen to show how a user can submit a request for IT resources after logging in
8	Annex 7 – List of procedural steps on the platform for the use of IT resources	List of procedural steps that can be undertaken on the platform to procure IT resources by a user
9	Annex 8 – User manual for submitting a request on the platform for the use of IT resources	The user manual describes detailed steps to be undertaken when submitting a request for IT resources on the platform
10	Annex 9 – Roadmap for IT resources platform	Main document for the implementation of the platform for the use of IT resources; the roadmap is available on the following link: https://mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Roadmapa_PITZ_160922.pdf
11	Annex 10 – Public Procurement Act of the Slovak Republic of 18 November 2015	The platform for the use of IT resources must respect requirements in the Public Procurement Act; the Public Procurement Act notably allows for the possibility to award contracts based on a dynamic purchasing system; the Public Procurement Act is available on the following website: https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2015/343/
12	Annex 11 – Example of savings made through the Microsoft dynamic purchasing system	An example of savings made when purchasing resources on the platform through the Microsoft dynamic purchasing

		system (savings calculated against average contract value on the market)
13	Annex 12 – Confirmation by MIRRI in the form of a letter of the entry into force of the platform for the use of IT resources as of 20 February 2024	State Secretary of MIRRI confirms on 13 December 2024 that the platform for the use of IT resources entered into service and was made available for user entities on 20 February 2024
14	Annex 13 – Statute of the Steering Committee of the project on the platform for the use of IT resources	The document describes the role, tasks and members of the Steering Committee of the project on the platform for the use of IT resources
15	Annex 14 – Overview of absorption of central framework contracts and dynamic purchasing systems	Screenshot of the platform showing a table with data on the current absorption of central framework contracts and dynamic purchasing systems
16	Annex 15 – Additional information	Links to the evaluation functionality integrated in the platform and screen shots of monitoring tables and graphs, also calculating savings based on the monitoring of costs, filings, transactions and returns

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

Entry into service of a platform of tools and policies for a new way to buy and use IT commodities, expertise, use of cloud services and open source code. [...]

As evidenced in Annex 1, voting members of the Steering Committee set up by the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MIRRI”) for the project platform for the use of IT resources voted on 20 February 2024 to approve the delivery of the platform (“PITZ”). In accordance with its statute (Annex 13), the Steering Committee is set up by MIRRI and chaired by the Secretary of State of MIRRI. On 20 February 2024, the Steering Committee also approved the acceptance and testing protocol (Annex 2), which confirms the readiness and entry into service of the platform. The protocol notably contains 5 testing scenarios confirming different functionalities of the platform (Annex 2, p. 3-9). The State Secretary of MIRRI confirms in Annex 12 in the form of a letter the effective entry into service of the platform and its availability to user entities, including the list of available resources and services as of 20 February 2024. The platform is available on the link indicated in Annex 2.

The Commission services performed an on-the-spot check on 27 January 2025 to verify that the platform for a new way to buy and use IT commodities, expertise, use of cloud services and open source code entered into service. This check was completed successfully, confirming that the platform entered into service and is available to user entities.

As stated on the website of the platform, its main objectives are to optimize or reduce IT costs and enable more efficient preparation, implementation and management of IT projects in public administration in the form of centralization of procurement processes and management of selected information and communication technologies (commodities, services). For this purpose, the platform puts in place tools and a policy for a new way of procuring (buying) and using IT resources. The platform's main tools are central dynamic purchasing systems, central framework agreements and business intelligence systems. IT commodities, expertise, use of cloud services and open source code are offered on the platform through four main areas of products, i.e. hardware, IT personnel, cloud services and software licenses (Annex 9, p.4). Products within those areas can be procured on the platform itself, as evidenced by Annex 4. The Commission services conducted an on-the-spot check on 27 January 2025 to verify that all types of products can be procured on the platform itself. This check was completed successfully, confirming that a new way to buy and use IT commodities, expertise, cloud services and open source code exists. The roadmap for the IT resources platform submitted as Annex 9 sets out the core policies, namely: criteria for the inclusion in the IT resource platform (Chapter 9, p. 17-20), the life-cycle of commodities and sub-commodities on the platform (Chapter 10, p. 20-22), and role management (definition of roles and responsibilities, Chapter 11, p. 22).

This is also in line with the qualitative indicator, which states **launch of the platform** and the description of the measure, which states that **under this reform a central procurement platform shall be deployed for purchasing and using IT resources**.

[...] The services shall be procured centrally (framework contract) [...]

IT resources are procured centrally on the platform, via a central framework agreement and central dynamic purchasing systems, listed in Annex 3. Annex 3 reflects the situation by 31 December 2024 and contains reports on the establishment of the dynamic purchasing systems, as well as a copy of the SAP central framework agreement.

In addition, as specified in the summary document, two new central dynamic purchasing systems have been set up and one central dynamic purchasing system, already established, has been extended:

- Dynamic purchasing system for IT roles (set up on 1 March 2023)
- Dynamic purchasing system for cloud services (set up on 29 May 2023)
- Renewal/extension of Microsoft's dynamic purchasing system for licenses (renewed on 28 August 2024)

Annex 5 lists the framework agreements concluded under the central dynamic purchasing system for IT roles by 31 December 2024.

The list of central framework contracts is constantly expanding. As evidenced in the links provided in Annex 3, Annex 5 and the summary document, the contracts have been established or renewed at different points in time.

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that **IT resources shall be procured centrally through a framework contract [...]**.

[...] and the users of the services shall have the possibility to dynamically draw on the central platform as needed.

The Commission services conducted an on-the-spot check on 27 January 2025 to verify that the users of the services can register and then dynamically draw on the central platform and that the platform provides an overview of the current take-up of central contracts and dynamic purchasing systems. This check was completed successfully, confirming that the users of the services have the possibility to dynamically draw on the central platform as needed.

As stated on the platform itself, the users of the platform are all public authorities in Slovakia. They can draw upon the platform by registering an account, which is then approved centrally (as evidenced in the user manual in Annex 8 and during the on-the-spot check).

The platform for the use of IT resources allows making requests online for the procurement of IT resources. The user manual (Annex 8) explains the steps needed after logging in to dynamically draw on the central platform. The platform also provides an overview of the current take-up of central contracts and dynamic purchasing systems (Annex 14, shown also live during the on-the-spot check).

Annex 11 provides information on the purchases made by different public authorities (indicated in the column “*rezort*”) within the Microsoft’s dynamic purchasing system for licenses, which are subsequently made available for the development of their information systems. As an example, Annex 11 provides a link to a specific contract with the Ministry of Transport of Slovakia through which the Ministry acquires Microsoft CAL licence.

The platform for the use of IT resources is the equivalent of “Digital Marketplace” referred to in the Council Implementing Decision in the name of the milestone and the description of the measure, as it is an online space where you can purchase and use IT resources.

This is also in line with description of the measure, which states that [...] **public administration entities shall be entitled to draw upon them using a central platform, a Digital Marketplace** and that **these resources** [read: the resources made available on the platform] **shall subsequently be made available for the development of information systems in the public administration [...]**

Furthermore, in line with the description of the measure, [...] **with the overarching objective to reduce time and costs of such developments. [...] Cost reductions shall be achieved through more efficient purchase and allocation of IT capacities.**

The roadmap for IT resources platform (Annex 9, Chapter 4) provides evidence on the overarching objectives defined for the platform, which are amongst others increased efficiency of the purchase of IT resources, reduction in costs, time and administrative burden linked to the purchase and criteria for placing selected products and services under central procurement (Chapter 9), which cite amongst others time and cost reduction.

Regarding time reductions, the platform makes extensive use of the central dynamic purchasing systems, which compared to the usual procurement deadline of 30 days have a deadline for the submission of tenders of only 10 days (Annex 10, paragraph 60), which significantly reduces the tendering period.

As evidenced in the user manual (Annex 9), users can procure IT resources online, by registering on the platform and searching through an online catalogue before making a request, thus shortening the time needed for the overall procurement procedure, compared to a fully paper-based system.

As for the cost reduction, Annex 11 provides an example of IT resources effectively drawn by different public authorities (column 1, “*rezort*”) in the Microsoft central dynamic purchasing system and the savings in % they were able to make (column 9, “*úspora v %*”) as compared to the average contract value (column 6, “*PHZ - priemerná hodnota zákazky*”). Annex 5 provides another example of savings made for contracts concluded under the central dynamic purchasing system for IT roles, which leads to more efficient purchase and allocation of IT capacities.

The Commission services conducted an on-the-spot check on 27 January 2025 to verify that cost reductions are achieved through more efficient purchase and allocation of IT capacities. This check was completed successfully, confirming that templates displayed on the platform for each central framework agreement and dynamic purchasing system, can be used during the procurement process, thereby saving time. MIRRI further explained that they are in direct contact with the user and can advise throughout the entire procurement procedure on the selection of the product, or other aspects to achieve the best possible value for money. If relevant, the procurement documents are also assessed by the Value for Money unit of the Ministry of Finance before the procurement is launched – as set out in the roadmap for IT resources platform (Annex 9, Chapter 10).

The platform shall be introduced in two steps: First, a catalogue shall be created for IT resources on the basis of clear eligibility conditions under which resources may be recorded in the catalogue. The security of the systems, the requirements of the reference architecture and the quality of services and commodities shall be taken into account.

The Commission services conducted an on-the-spot check on 27 January 2025 to verify that a catalogue of IT resources was created. This check was completed successfully, confirming that the platform itself contains in the request form the catalogue of software licenses, while the catalogue of cloud services, hardware vendors, and IT roles are available on separate websites and methodological guidance notes (the exact links are available in the on-the-spot check report).

The Commission services conducted an on-the-spot check on 27 January 2025 to verify that a catalogue of IT resources was created on the basis of clear eligibility conditions under which resources may be recorded in the catalogue and that the security of the systems, the requirements of the reference architecture and the quality of services and commodities were taken into account. This check was completed successfully, confirming that a catalogue of IT resources was created on the basis of clear eligibility conditions. MIRRI explained that they work with available information regarding the security of products and services from vendors included in the platform.

In the case of software licenses and hardware, security requirements were assessed during the roadmap phase and the initial evaluation, where MIRRI determined which IT resource vendors would be included in the catalogue on the platform. Vendor selection itself ensured fundamental security requirements, as each vendor already possessed security certifications. These security certifications are available on each vendor’s website, as demonstrated by the authorities during the on-the-spot check and evidenced in the in the on-the-spot check report.

MIRRI further explained that in the case of cloud services that are not vendor-oriented, such as software licenses or hardware, the process requires a request for inclusion in the platform's IT services catalogue. There is a clearly defined methodology for classifying cloud services based on a precisely determined security level classification. This requirement stems from the necessary procedures for including cloud services in the catalogue, which are outlined in the methodological guidelines available on MIRRI's website. Based on this information, it is important to note that being listed in the cloud services catalogue is a prerequisite for a cloud service to be eligible for public procurement.

The security of information technologies and information systems of public administration and the related link to the reference architecture and the quality of services itself is defined at the highest level in the legislation of the Slovak Republic, specifically in Sections 18 to 22 of Act No. 95/2019 Coll. on information technologies in public administration, with emphasis placed not only on the implementation of secure technologies, but also on security testing on the part of suppliers, as well as on the introduction of rules for the secure use, management and operation of information technologies.

Additionally, further criteria are applied for the establishment of a dynamic purchasing system/public procurement announcements, ensuring that the applicant is a verified entity demonstrating its professional competence to supply the defined products and services in the dynamic purchasing system. Applicants in the public procurement process must demonstrate authorization to supply vendor products and services. This is a second stage of security verification, ensuring that only certified suppliers provide these products. For example, in the case of Oracle products, this requirement is met via a "Public Sector Addendum", which must be confirmed and signed by the vendor.

Second, procurement of these resources shall be completed by MIRRI with the aim to make them available in the necessary quality and quantity to users.

IT resources are procured centrally on the platform, via a central framework agreement and central dynamic purchasing systems, listed in Annex 3. These dynamic purchasing systems and central framework agreements were procured by MIRRI (as evidenced in the links in Annex 3). The Dynamic purchasing system for IT roles and Dynamic purchasing system for cloud services were also procured by MIRRI (as evidenced in the links in the summary document).

The Commission services conducted an on-the-spot check on 27 January 2025 to verify that the resources are available in the necessary quality and quantity to users. This check was completed successfully, confirming that demand tracking is carried out based on previous requests from public authorities to plan and manage future demand, thus allowing capacity to be allocated to future expected demands. The dynamic purchasing systems and central framework agreements provide the necessary quality and quantity to users.

A user can see on the platform in real time the absorption of different central framework agreements and dynamic purchasing systems directly, in the section "overview of procurements" (Annex 14). MIRRI further explained that they have a systematic review process in place to assess the overall capacities at least once per year and decide whether to extend, terminate or conclude new central framework agreements and dynamic purchasing systems.

The platform shall provide an evaluation functionality of the value of IT investments by monitoring costs, filings, transactions and returns.

The Commission services accessed the link provided by the authorities on 24 March 2025 (Annex 15) to verify that a functionality that monitors the requests for procurements of IT resources made by individual public authorities (filings), costs, transactions (i.e. individual procurements) and returns (i.e., savings) of each transaction is integrated in the platform and evaluates the value of IT investments. This check was completed successfully, confirming that the platform provides an evaluation functionality of the value of IT investments by monitoring costs, filings, transactions and returns.

Annex 15 shows the evaluation functionality live on the website of the platform. The table called *“Monitoring nakladov a navratnosti”* (“Monitoring of costs and returns”), column *“PHZ”*, which stands for *“priemerná hodnota zákazky”* (“average contract value” on the market) shows the market price of the products and column *“Hodnota výzvy”* (“call value”) shows the cost at which the license has been procured. Column *“Uspora”* (“Savings”) shows the difference between the market price and the procured price and column *“Navratnost %”* (“Returns %”) shows the savings in %. Furthermore, Annex 5 provides an evaluation of savings made for contracts concluded under the central dynamic purchasing system for IT roles.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C19]-R[R2]-M[C19.10]: Publication of Hydrogen Action Plan

Related Measure: C19.R2 Action Plan of the National Hydrogen Strategy of the Slovak Republic and enabling conditions for the development of hydrogen economy in Slovakia

Qualitative Indicator: Adoption by the Government of the Action Plan

Time: Q2 2024

1. Context

The reform envisages the adoption of the Hydrogen Action Plan, which is to align the policy priorities of Slovakia with the EU policy framework related to hydrogen.

Milestone C19.M10 concerns the adoption of Slovakia’s Hydrogen Action Plan by the Government. The Action Plan is to define the priorities of the developing a primarily renewable hydrogen ecosystem in Slovakia, set out public financing priorities for different segments of the Slovak hydrogen ecosystem, and to be accompanied with a list of legislative and technical measures, with their adoption and entry into force envisaged under a subsequent milestone.

Milestone C19.M10 is the first milestone of the reform, and it will be followed by milestones C19.M11, related to the adoption of legislative and technical norms. The reform has a final expected date for implementation on 31 December 2025.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the target (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled;
2	Annex 1 – Copy of Government Resolution Nr 307/2023, adopted on 12 June 2023.	The Government resolution adopted the revised Hydrogen Action Plan on 12 June 2023, published on 12 June 2023 at link: https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Resolution/20930/1 .
3	Annex 2 – Copy of the Hydrogen Action Plan Strategy, adopted on adopted by the Government on 12 June 2023.	Copy of the adopted Hydrogen Action Plan, link: https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/28497/1
4	Annex 3 – “Copy of the Analytical Annex to the Hydrogen Action Plan titled: “Balance of production, consumption, import and export of hydrogen in the Slovak Republic and possible scenarios for the development of the hydrogen ecosystem by 2030 and 2050”, published on 13 December 2024.	Annex to the Hydrogen Action Plan, adopted subsequently by the Ministry of Economy. The document was published on the website of the Ministry of Economy https://www.mhsr.sk/uploads/files/1N239BZZ.pdf?csrt=11342202811459905953
5	Annex 4 - Copy of an administrative act of the Ministry of Economy adopting and publishing the Analytical Annex; Letter from the Minister of Economy to Director General of the National Coordination Authority for RRP (NIKA)	An administrative act of the Minister of Economy of 13 December 2024 to publish the Analytical Annex and communicate it for the purposes of the Verification Mechanism of milestone C19.10.
6	Annex 5 – List of planned legislative measures and technical norms to align with Eu legislative framework.	A list of expected legislative measures and technical norms that Slovakia is to adopt for the purpose of the subsequent milestone.
7	Annex 6 - Copy of the Hydrogen Action Plan Strategy, published at the Ministry of Economy website	The strategy is publicly available at https://www.economy.gov.sk/inovacie/strategie-a-politiky/narodna-vodikova-strategia-a-jej-akcny-plan?csrt=7184783914622826063 .

8	Annex 7 – Email from National Coordination Authority for RRP (NIKA)	Email providing information on public financing calls launched based on the measures of the Action Plan and their timelines
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3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities covers all constitutive elements of the target.

According to the qualitative indicator description: **Adoption by the Government of the Action Plan.**

The Slovak Government adopted the Resolution No. 307/2023 on 12 June 2023, as evidenced by Annex 1. Annex 2 presents the subject of Resolution, namely the *Hydrogen Action Plan measures for the successful implementation of the National Hydrogen Strategy by 2026* (hereinafter the Hydrogen Action Plan).

The Analytical Annex to the Hydrogen Action Plan, as evidenced by Annex 3 was adopted through an administrative decision on 13 December 2024 by the Ministry of Economy as the Ministry responsible for the preparation of the Action Plan. This Analytical Annex considerably expands on the Action Plan originally adopted by the Slovak Government and as the subsequent sections shows, proves necessary for the fulfilment of milestone requirement.

The Council Implementing Decision required the adoption by the Government of the Action Plan. Although the Action Plan was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in June 2023, the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic adopted a supplementary Analytical Annex to the Hydrogen Action Plan in December 2024. Whilst this constitutes a minimal substantive deviation from the requirement of adopting the full Hydrogen Action Plan by the Government of Slovakia, the adoption of the Analytical Annex solely by the Ministry of Economy is considered proportional. First, the Ministry of Economy was the Ministry responsible for the preparation of the entirety of the Hydrogen Action Plan and is the leading Ministry with regards to the hydrogen economy. Second, the Analytical Annex is a response to the substantive requirements of the milestone, as Annex 2 (Hydrogen Action Plan) was not sufficient to fully meet the substantive requirements of the milestone. As of this, this minimal deviation does not change the nature of the measure and does not affect the progress towards achieving the reform that the milestone represents. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

Publication of Hydrogen Action Plan

The Ministry of Economy published the adopted Hydrogen Action Plan at the Ministry's website, as evidenced by Annex 6. On this basis, it is considered that this constitutive element of the milestone is satisfactorily fulfilled.

The Action Plan shall define the priorities of the developing a primarily renewable hydrogen ecosystem in Slovakia.

The Analytical Annex of Hydrogen Action Plan (see Annex 3) defines the priorities of developing a primarily renewable hydrogen ecosystem.

The Hydrogen Action Plan builds on the Slovak Hydrogen Strategy, adopted by the Slovak Government on 23 August 2021 through Resolution No. 356/2021 as a key policy document which the Hydrogen Action Plan seeks to operationalise for the period until year-end 2026. Building on the priorities Section C of the Hydrogen Strategy, the Analytical Annex of the Hydrogen Action Plan builds on this and notes on page 9 that the rapid decline in renewable energy prices, technological developments and the urgency to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions are bringing new opportunities.

The Analytical Annex highlights both uses of hydrogen as replacement for fossil fuel use in industry (especially those using fossil hydrogen currently such as fertiliser production and refining) and transport. In particular, it notes priorities such as the production of hydrogen buses in Spišská Nová Ves and in Orechová Potôň, and utilisation of hydrogen trains in on regional lines. Further priorities include setting up hydrogen valleys in Trnava self-governing region, Upper Nitra region, Košice Self-Governing Region, Bratislava and Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Regions, creating local hydrogen valleys that would serve as a springboard for the development of a European hydrogen economy. The Analytical Annex importantly identifies the Upper Nitra region as a key site of production of renewable hydrogen, to expand the hydrogen chain and use hydrogen from chlorine production in the chemical industry. The Analytical Annex expects that renewable hydrogen produced there will be used in public transport not only locally, but also in the entire transforming Upper Nitra region and the Trenčín self-governing region.

The Action Plan shall analyse the various segments of the Slovak hydrogen economy.

Page 21 of the Analytical Annex notes that the assessment is based on the information provided by 11 companies currently representing 99% of production and consumption of hydrogen in Slovakia. Results of this assessment (pages 4-6) show the current balance of hydrogen production and consumption in Slovakia, describe production processes in Slovak industry and the energy intensity of hydrogen production, also including the industrial sectors in which hydrogen is most often utilised. While fossil-based hydrogen is the main type of hydrogen produced and used in Slovakia, Slovak undertakings produced 151 100 tonnes of hydrogen in 2023, of which 150 500 tonnes were consumed within Slovakia (p. 6). Further, the Annex also focuses on the potential for hydrogen import and export in the Slovak Republic in connection with the future development of hydrogen infrastructure and international hydrogen trade (pages 6-7).

The Action Plan shall align the supply and demand of renewable hydrogen with EU legislative framework.

This milestone requirement refers to the targets of the EU Renewable Energy Directive (REDIII), as this is the primary EU legislation that Member States need to transpose to set out supply and demand of renewable hydrogen. This Directive sets targets for the use of Renewable Fuel of Non-Biological Origin (RFNBO), namely renewable hydrogen and its derivatives, in the mobility and industrial sectors. More specifically, the Directive (REDIII) sets a minimum supply target to be met by 31 December 2030 of 1% of all fuels supplied in the transport sector to be met by RFNBOs as well as a combined supply target of 5.5% of all transport fuels to be met by RFNBOs and advanced biofuels.

The Analytical Annex provides for the alignment of supply and demand of renewable hydrogen. This is evidenced by page 8, which anticipates that in line with supply targets, between 48 000 and 55 000 tonnes of renewable hydrogen and other RFNBO products will be consumed in 2030. The Analytical Annex notes that 186 600 tonnes of hydrogen are expected to be consumed, and 188 300 tonnes of hydrogen expected to be produced by 2050. This means that there is expected to be sufficient renewable hydrogen that will be available to cover domestic consumption.

The Action Plan shall set out public financing priorities for different segments of the Slovak hydrogen ecosystem and set out timelines for launching relevant funding calls.

The Hydrogen Action Plan (Annex 2) contains public financing priorities across different hydrogen segments, as well as detailed financing measures to support those priorities.

First, Section B (pages 8-10) notes that financing should focus across the entire hydrogen value chain (energy production, hydrogen production, transportation/distribution/storage of hydrogen, and the utilisation of hydrogen in industry, energy production, transport). In light of this priority, this section sets out measures 4, 5 and 6 to support the Important Projects of Common European Interest in hydrogen, support for pilot projects for the production and utilisation of hydrogen (especially in the so-called hydrogen valleys), as well as hydrogen refuelling infrastructure to fuel hydrogen fuelled vehicles. These measures are funded by subsequent milestones under the RRF, in particular under Components 1, 3, and 9.

Second, Section C (pages 11-14) notes that the financing must also prioritise research and development associated with innovation and education in the field of hydrogen technologies. In particular, the Hydrogen Action Plan notes on page 11 that hydrogen R&D will be one of the strategic areas of the energy and industrial policy of the Slovak Republic in the future. In light of this priority, the Hydrogen Action Plan includes measures for support for the Centrum of hydrogen technology research in Košice (measure 7); measure 8 related to lifelong learning programme and vocational training programmes in secondary and higher education related to hydrogen technologies; measure 9 related to preparing a support scheme for projects in the field of safety in hydrogen use; and lastly measure 10 related to supporting hydrogen startups in hydrogen valleys.

The financing measures (measures 4-10) set out above include timelines for completion, the Ministry responsible for the measures, various institutions and organisations collaborating on the measure, the source of funding (be it EU funding or the state budgets), the allocation, and the qualitative/quantitative indicator for the fulfilment of the measure. This means that these timelines go beyond publication of funding calls and focus on the fulfilment of the measures. Furthermore, according to Annex 7, the Slovak authorities have already published a number of public funding calls within the timelines indicated. In particular, public calls for measure 4 on Important Projects for Common European Interest, measure 5 on pilot projects for the hydrogen ecosystem, measure 6 on hydrogen transport infrastructure, and for measure 10 for support of startups and spin-offs in the hydrogen sector were launched in 2024.

The Action Plan shall be accompanied by a list of primary legislation, secondary legislation, and binding technical norms which shall be adopted to align with EU legal framework. This is further specified in the in the Operational Arrangements, which require **that for the purposes of these operational arrangements, description of the milestone stating “[t]he Action Plan shall be accompanied by a list of primary legislation and technical norms which shall be adopted to align with EU legal framework”, which is to be understood as “Action Plan shall be accompanied by a list of legislative measures and technical norms to be adopted in the context of milestone C19-11 to align with EU legal framework”.**

Slovakia provided a list of future measures to be adopted and enter into force for the purposes of the subsequent milestone C19-11, submitted as Annex 5. As demonstrated by Annex 5, the measures provided proposals for legislative measures and technical measures.

As regards legislative measures, Annex 5 demonstrates that the Slovak Government intends to propose and adopt three legislative revisions to align with the EU legislative framework. First, Annex 5 demonstrates that the Government intends to revise Act No.251/2022 Coll. regarding energy, which seeks to align Slovak law with the EU Gas Market Regulation of 2024 (Directive 2024/1788 on common rules for the internal markets for renewable gas, natural gas and hydrogen, and in particular definitions outline in Article 2). The document notes that the full transposition will be achieved later (the legal deadline is 5 August 2026). Second, Annex 5 demonstrates that Slovakia intends to revise Act No. 309/2009 Coll. on the promotion of renewable energy sources and high-efficiency cogeneration to align with the REDII, namely the definitions of RFNBO, guarantees of origin for RFNBO, and the targets for transport and industry sectors (see sections above). Lastly, the list in Annex 5 demonstrates that Slovakia also intends to amend the implementation of the EIA Directive to account for criteria when hydrogen-related projects need to undergo an environmental impact assessment.

As regards the alignment with relevant technical norms, Annex 5 elaborates on five different technical norms specifying the standards and methodologies for handling hydrogen. This includes the use of hydrogen at refuelling stations (general requirements for safety and operation, norms for valves, dispenser hoses, and fuel quality control), as well as s a technical specification on methodologies for determining the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the production, conditioning, and transport of hydrogen.

Based on this evidence, it is demonstrated that Slovakia has put forward a list of legislative measures and technical norms to be adopted in the context of milestone C19-11 to align with EU legal framework.

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.

SK-C[C19]-I[I1]-M[C19.16]: Modernisation and digitalisation of transmission system and regional distribution systems

Related Measure: C19.I1.4.M16 Entry into operation of the Energy Data Centre

Qualitative Indicator: The commissioning of production operation of the Energy Data Centre.

Time: Q3 2024

1. Context:

The investment C19.T1 has the objective to contribute to the modernisation and digitalisation of the electricity networks in Slovakia and, in particular, to a better integration of intermittent renewable energy sources into the grid.

Milestone C19.M16 requires implementing information system of the Energy Data Centre (EDC) to start its production operation. The EDC is expected to facilitate new activities and access of the new market participants, including the renewable energy sources, into the electricity market.

Milestone C19.M16 is the first and the smallest investment under the investment C19.T1, complementing the three larger investments into the transmission and distribution networks. Investment 1 (part 4) has a final expected date for implementation on 30 September 2024.

2. Evidence provided:

	Name of the evidence	Short description
1	Summary document	Summary document duly justifying how the milestone (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled.
2	Annex 1 – Delivery contract between OKTE a.s. and IPESOFT spol. s.r.o. for the supply of a software work on the EDC with seven sub-parts including : • Annex 1.1 (Contract for the supply of a software work dated 25.1.2023); • Annex 1.2 (Appendix 1 to the works contract for the supply of software work of 19.4.2023); • Annex 1.3 (Appendix 2 to the works contract for the supply of a	The delivery contract serves as a reference document for acceptance/deployment protocols included in Annex 2.

	software work of 13 December 2023); • Annex 1.4 (Appendix 3 to the works contract for the supply of a software work of 13 December 2023); • Annex 1.5 (Appendix 4 to the works contract for the supply of a software work of 13 December 2023); Annex 1.6 (Appendix 5 to the works contract for the supply of software work of 8.2.2024); Annex 1.7 (Appendix 6 to the works contract for the supply of software work of 24.9.2024).	
3	Annex 2 – Final and acceptance protocols for the EDC demonstrating acceptance and commissioning of the work by the beneficiaries: • Annex 2.1 (Protocol on deployment to pilot operations of 31.5.2023) • Annex 2.2 (Acceptance protocol for handover and acceptance of the work or completed part thereof of 31.8.2023) • Annex 2.3 (Deployment protocol of the	The documents provide evidence that the Energy Data Centre started its production operation.

	EDC dated 1.9.2024)	
4	Annex 3: Expert report on the EDC (by the Institute of Forensic Engineering of the Zilina University in Zilina), No 150/2024	The report provides evidence on operation and functionalities of the EDC.
5	Annex 4: Screenshots from the EDC Information System with individual functionalities	The screenshots provide additional evidence on implementation of the technical functionalities of the EDC.

3. Analysis:

The justification and substantiating evidence provided by the Slovak authorities cover all constitutive elements of the milestone.

The Energy Data Centre starts its production operation.

In line with the description of the milestone, Slovakia submitted evidence on starting production operation of the Energy Data Centre as of 1 September 2024. The deployment protocol on starting 'routine operations' of the EDC (annex 2.3) makes a reference to the delivery contract commissioned by OKTE a.s. (the Slovak short-term electricity operator) with contractor IPESOFT spol for supply of a software work on the EDC, including six appendixes (annex 1). Following the 'pilot deployment' of the software (on 31 May 2023, Annex 2.1), the acceptance protocol for handover and acceptance of the work – as signed by the representatives of contracting authority and manufacturer – confirmed the EDC system's availability on the 24/7 basis and that all major defects from the pilot phase were rectified (Annex 2.2). The expert report by the Institute of Forensic Engineering of the Zilina University in Zilina (Annex 3) on the EDC provides evidence on operation of the EDC, including through verification of the EDC in a fully functional environment carried out in the OKTE a.s. premises (page 57-67).

Furthermore, in line with the description of the measure, **the EDC shall improve the preconditions for the connection of renewable energy sources by streamlining required data.**

The report prepared by independent experts (Annex 3, page 7) confirms that the key function of the Energy Data Centre (EDC) is establishing a central platform for the data exchange, which helps OKTE a.s. (the Slovak short-term electricity operator) to better align both daily and intraday markets with the electricity. The independent report includes justifications claiming that the EDC helps, in particular, to market participants to explore possibilities such as of aggregation of flexibility, sharing energy, registration of balance for energy storage. It also confirms that the EDC is helping the energy sector in transformation towards intermittent sources, including solar and wind energy.

The independent expert's report carried out an assessment and confirmed all individual functionalities of the EDC (Annex 3, summary in pages 67-68), including on 'management of core data'. The section 3.7 of the report (pages 49-51) notes that the EDC creates central and unified register of data, which eliminates data duplicities and allows for sharing data with other market participants, in line with legislative framework of the Slovak Republic.

In particular, the investment shall address the issues such as aggregating flexibility; energy communities and sharing energy from RES; accumulation, management of core data; data from smart metering systems; sharing electricity generation data (supporting invoicing, clearing and imbalance settlement) and reporting.

The independent experts' report by the Institute of Forensic Engineering of the University of Žilina (USI, No 150/2024) of 31 October 2024, submitted under Annex 3, confirms the completion of all eight key functionalities of the Energy Data Centre as requested under the CID Annex and is summarized in pages 67-68):

- **Aggregating flexibility** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 24-33. This, for instance, includes the system's ability to manage aggregating flexibility by enabling the addition, removal, and modification of aggregators, with automatic data validation and error notifications to Short-term electricity Market Operator (OKTE). It handles the assignment and abrogation of supply and delivery points (OOMs thereof) to aggregators, ensuring checks for completeness and correctness. It also facilitates the disposal of conditionally decommissioned aggregators and the revocation of conditionally delisted OOMs, performing automatic validations to ensure compliance. Furthermore, it allows the change of OOM data, balance responsible parties, and origin diagrams, and supports the addition of flexibility activation, with successful validations resulting in updates to the register and notifications to the aggregator.
- **Energy communities** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 42-43. This, for instance, includes a possibility of adding the energy community to the register, possibility of adding required data through the portal, receiving notification after successful registration after checking by the OKTE, enabling automatic verification of data accuracy or automatic data updates, the removal of an OOM involves selection via the portal, resolution of obligations, notifications by OKTE, and final deregistration.
- **Sharing renewable energy** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 35 and 44. This, for instance, includes that the system allows for the modification of technical core data (TKU thereof) and the percentage of shared electricity by enabling the Energy Community Responsible Person to update OOM data via the portal, with automatic validation by the EDC and error notifications, if necessary. In addition, it facilitates the calculation of final consumption for tariffs by enabling the EDC to process and validate relevant data, calculate consumption components, and export the results to the OKTE information system.
- **Accumulation** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 35-40. This, for instance, includes that the system enables the addition, removal, and modification of battery data, with automatic validation by the EDC and error notifications to OKTE for corrections. It manages the conditional and complete removal of batteries and facilitates the export of required data for accumulation calculations. In addition, it calculates tariffs components by processing and validating relevant data, ensuring accurate updates and seamless integration into the OKTE system.
- **Management of core data** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 45-47, 54 and 64. This, for instance, includes a system option to manage core data by facilitating the contract conclusion process, where market participant data is entered and automatically validated by the EDC. In case of errors, OKTE is notified. Upon successful validation, the draft contract is sent for signature, and once signed, it is finalized in the EDC. Once all conditions are met, the market participant's core data is stored in the Central Core Data Record. Additionally, the EDC module includes the "Central Core Data Recording" feature, which stores information on all market participants. Some examples of functionalities for obtaining data from smart metering systems include: adding, modifying, removing, or deactivating an aggregator in the registry;

administration of OOM, changing the TKU of the settlement entity and the baseline diagram, adding flexibility activation to the registry, calculating the normalized BL, calculating inputs for tariffs, and many others.

- **Data from smart metering systems** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 54 and 64. This, for instance, includes that the system includes a module in the EDC for managing data from smart metering systems, specifically for measured and calculated calculation data related to demand and delivery points.
- **Sharing electricity generation data** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 31 and 44, allowing in particular export of the data for various calculations. This, for instance, includes ability of the system to allow the export of necessary data for calculations, which is selected by the EDC or OKTE officers and stored for baseline calculations. It also enables the Energy Community Responsible Person to amend OOM information via the portal, with automatic EDC validation, error notifications, and updates upon successful validation. The key features of the EDC in terms of production of documents for **invoicing, clearing, and imbalance settlement** are presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 (page 11, 'point 5.37), as well as through verification of the EDC's functionalities carried out in the OKTE a.s. premises (page 57-67).**Reporting** - this functionality is presented in Expert Report No 150/2024 on pages 54 and 64. This, for instance, includes that the system includes a reporting and statistics module in the EDC, which contains contract lists and other related data. The system also includes a separate module designed for the dynamic creation of reports and their presentation in a user-friendly format.

The independent report by the Institute of Judiciary Engineering states that USI employees were checking all the functionalities at the OKTE a.s. premises. All the functionalities were confirmed during the production operation through a set of screenshots from the EDC information system in annex 4 (as well as in annex 8-12 of the experts' report). The independent report also ascertains that the functionalities and parameters of the EDC are in line with the delivery contract commissioned by OKTE a.s. with contractor IPESOFT spol for supply of a software work on the EDC (annex 1).

4. Commission Preliminary Assessment: Satisfactorily fulfilled.