Evaluation of Recent Reforms on the Research and Innovation (R&I) Governance of Slovenia

Final report

30 June 2026

This evaluation was commissioned by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI) as part of the Slovenian Resilience and Recovery Plan.

Due to the reorganisation of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia from 4 June 2026, the new name of the ministry is Ministry of Education, Science and Youth (MIZM).

NAČRT ZA OKREVANJE IN ODPORNOST

Financira Evropska unija NextGenerationEU

Foreword

This report provides the final results of the OECD Evaluation of Recent Reforms on the Research and Innovation Governance of Slovenia. This evaluation was commissioned by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI) as part of the Slovenian Resilience and Recovery Plan.

It is based on evidence gathered through interviews, document review, and a consultation workshop. A draft version of this report was circulated to all interviewees, focus groups and workshop attendees to collect further information and comments. The OECD team performed two missions in Slovenia over the course of the project.

The OECD is grateful to all the Slovenian stakeholders who have actively participated in this project and in the production and discussion of its results.

The OECD would also like to thank the team at MVZI for their effective support to this work, providing access to all needed materials and interviewees, while preserving the independence of the evaluators.

The names of ministries referenced in this document reflect those in use prior to reorganisation of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia from 4 June 2026. The views expressed herein only reflect the opinions of the OECD evaluators.

Executive Summary

Slovenia has undertaken an ambitious and comprehensive programme of governance reforms aimed at creating a more coherent, whole-of-government research and innovation (R&I) system. It has leveraged the opportunity provided by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) not only to increase funding for research and innovation performers – impacts that can be significant but are often temporary – but, more importantly, to drive lasting structural changes in how priorities are set, policies are coordinated, funding is allocated, and outcomes are evaluated. The experience of Slovenia is unique in that respect, in both the scope and depth of the reforms undertaken. These reform efforts have been acknowledged in the latest Council Recommendation on the economic, social, employment, structural and budgetary policies of Slovenia. The European Commission, however, added that "*although these reforms have been implemented, their impact is not yet tangible, and the mechanisms may require adding a monitoring component to track progress and possible reinforcement"* (European Commission, 2026[1]).

This report responds to this concern by taking stock of the reforms' progress and assessing their effects. It evaluates the institutional and structural reforms that Slovenia has undertaken since 2021 to strengthen the governance of its research, development, and innovation (R&I) system. It assesses these reforms against the OECD Framework for R&I governance, covering three levels: strategic orientation, planning and programming, and implementation and learning. Findings draw on an extensive desk review of documentary sources and engagement with a total of 47 participants through online interviews, in-person interviews, focus-group discussions, a workshop held in Ljubljana in February 2026, as well as further interviews in Ljubljana and online in June 2026.

The evaluation finds that the reform programme is ambitious and comprehensive. It has resulted in concrete progress across all three governance levels, but persistent gaps in implementation mean that the system's benefits are still to fully materialise.

- At the level of **strategic orientation**, the Act on Scientific Research and Innovation Activities (ZZrID), the Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 (ReZrIS30) the Development Council together provide a unifying legislative and institutional framework, and the introduction of systematic monitoring is a marked advance on the previous strategy cycle. In practice, the Development Council has not yet established the political engagement, legitimacy or analytical capacity to drive strategic decisions; the ReZrIS30 continues to be perceived across government as the strategy of MVZI (MIZM from 4 June 2026) rather than a whole-of-government instrument; and strategic priorities remain broad.
- At the level of **planning and programming**, the integration of research and innovation under a single ministry is a significant positive change. Stakeholders identify the visible co-location of research and innovation portfolios within MVZI as a signal that Slovenia is treating R&I as a single, connected agenda. The Programme Committee has established regular cross-ministerial dialogue and is producing concrete outputs, including the coordination of the forthcoming R&I Pact, which aims to further improve predictability and consistency. MVZI's innovation capacity remains limited relative to its research capacity, however, and cross-ministerial coordination outside the Programme Committee is still weak. R&I funding has increased in nominal terms but has stagnated relative to GDP, and the legislative growth target was missed in both 2023 and 2024 without consequence. Public national (non-EU) support for research and particularly innovation remains modest, while the system continues to rely heavily on foreign funding, notably EU Structural Funds and the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

- At the level of **implementation and learning**, the consolidation of the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) as a single agency with a mandate across the full technology readiness level (TRL) scale is recognised as a "game shifter", laying the ground for more continuous and consistent support as well as improved policy learning. New instruments such as Gravitacija and the Strategic Projects scheme signal a shift towards thematic directionality, and reformed evaluation of research organisations has deepened ARIS's relationship with the research community. The forthcoming RDI Hub is planned to improve coordination and policy analysis, contributing to a more coherent R&I system. At the same time, the agency's capacity has not yet caught up with its expanded mandate: its capacity is still developing, business stakeholders do not yet feel well understood or served by the agency, and the RDI Hub has been delayed and narrowed in scope. It is recognised that changes in the agency's scope, leadership, and structure during this period – alongside the challenge of assuming responsibility for the implementation of the European structural and investment funds – have placed it under considerable pressure, leaving limited time and resources for strategic reflection and formative activities. As the bulk of the administrative burden associated with the transition has now been addressed, the agency is in a position to focus on adapting its processes and practices, with particular emphasis on strengthening the integration of its research and innovation interventions.

Overall, the reforms enable more effective and consistent steering, coordination, implementation and have the potential for more positive effects. However, structural and institutional changes require time, continuity, and sustained political support to produce lasting improvements in processes, capabilities, and outcomes. **Fully realising the system benefits from the reforms will depend on continuing current reform efforts in a stable environment, robust to political changes**. This includes notably that no new structural changes (e.g., new changes of ministerial scope, "demerger") come in the way of the adaptation of processes and learning. The benefits from mergers take time to manifest themselves: continuous investment and monitoring, high-level support, and political patience will be key.

Following these overarching principles of continuity of efforts, careful monitoring and patience, Slovenia could undertake the following recommendations, presented in more detail and with international examples in the last chapter.

Recommendation 1: Entrust the Development Council with dedicated tasks, processes and resources to perform its high-level advisory mission.

1.1. The Council should agree on an annual programme of topics to address, as well as a process to ensure the cross-ministerial legitimacy of this programme;

1.2. The Council should lead the development of a 'State of the R&I system' report (e.g., every two years), encompassing relevant R&I statistics and policy topics;

1.3. The report and all the recommendations of the Council should be available on a dedicated website, alongside meeting minutes;

1.4. The process for the Council to request specific analyses to support its discussions (and those of its working groups) and recommendations should be clarified;

1.5. The Council should hold prerogatives regarding the cross-ministerial programmes.

Recommendation 2: Launch cross-ministerial, mission-like, R&I programmes from "ideas to usage", in selected challenge and opportunity areas.

Slovenia could begin with two such cross-ministerial missions, following broad consultations and validation by the Development Council. These programmes should have the following characteristics:

2.1. Driven by concrete objectives in line with national priorities and EU priorities;

2.2. Directed towards the resolution of key societal and economic problems;

2.3. A dedicated, central, multiannual budget, with some necessary co-funding by the relevant ministries and the possibility of additional EU funding;

2.4. A dual leadership by MVZI and one other relevant ministry;

2.5. Be led by cross-ministerial and cross-agency coordination groups for, respectively, collective strategic and operational decisions;

2.6. Be framed by a clear underpinning roadmap/theory of change to achieve the objectives, revised every two years;

2.7. Regular reporting to the Programme Committee and Development Council (see recommendation 1).

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the consistency of public support for research and innovation activities

3.1. Increase the number of staff in MVZI with relevant expertise in innovation while maintaining the existing number of staff working on research, including staff employed through the RRF;

3.2. Establish a structured coordination mechanism within MVZI to bring together staff from the three divisions of the Science and Innovation Directorate;

3.3. Establish a one-stop-shop funding scheme, with stage-gated mechanisms to facilitate the 'journey' of projects from research to innovation and deployment, provided they successfully achieve pre-established milestones;

3.4. Expand the scope of existing ARIS instruments or create a new instrument to cover a wider TRL range;

3.5. Integrate downstream market requirements in upstream research projects and encourage relationships with users in research projects;

3.6. Strengthen linkages between research and innovation teams at ARIS;

3.7. Strengthen capacity at ARIS through upskilling of staff to support innovation;

3.8. Deepen relationships with the private sector;

3.9. Improve regularity and reduce delays of innovation calls;

3.10. Develop and streamline services to sectoral ministries.

Recommendation 4: Consolidate the efforts to improve cross-ministerial coordination

Make the R&I Pact an ex-ante cross-ministerial planning tool, including by taking the following actions:

4.1. Develop and discuss the R&I Pact in a cross-ministerial setting;

4.2. Highlight cross-sectoral policy issues in the R&I Pact;

4.3. Add key performance indicators (KPIs) and monitor regularly the implementation of the programmed activities;

4.4. Create joint ARIS calls gathering the demands from two ministries or more.

Create a network of research and innovation advisors in ministries:

4.5. Establish R&I advisors in all ministries with research and innovation activities to improve their participation in R&I;

4.6. Coordinate a cross-ministerial network gathering R&I advisors to strengthen the connections between their respective institutions;

4.7. Leverage the cross-ministerial programmes to raise R&I engagement and capacity in R&I in sectoral ministries.

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1 Introduction and context

This chapter is structured in two sections. The first introduces the objectives and scope of the evaluation as well as the main evaluation questions. The second provides an overview of the study's methodology, including a description of the OECD Framework for assessing research and innovation governance.

1.1 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation sets out to assess the implementation and effects of the last wave of Slovenia's governance reforms in the research and innovation (R&I) area. It aims to provide an understanding of the extent to which these reforms have contributed to the establishment of a coherent and stable support system throughout the innovation chain, from research to innovation and scaling-up, how they have contributed, and what gaps and challenges remain.

Sound R&I governance enables the numerous actors contributing to research, innovation and deployment activities in a country to function as a cohesive system, rather than simply as a collection of disparate organisations interacting and cooperating on an opportunistic basis. Effective R&I governance has become increasingly critical in the context of complex societal and economic challenges and the emergence of new priorities such as sustainability. These shifting demands and expectations are bringing new actors with different mandates and instruments into the innovation ecosystem, requiring governance arrangements that go beyond traditional coordination mechanisms.

In Slovenia, several past studies have shown that the loose coordination of policies implemented by different policy bodies and insufficient connections with the multiple R&I stakeholders were among the main challenges of the national R&I system, resulting in discontinuity and fragmentation of policy interventions, missed opportunities for cooperation, and lower engagement of public and private partners in areas of national interest (see Box 1.1).

Box 1.1 R&I governance challenges highlighted in previous reports

Recurring concerns about the effectiveness of Slovenia's R&I governance have been documented across several OECD reviews and other evaluations.

The **OECD Review of Slovenia's Innovation Policy (2012)** (OECD, 2012[2]) highlighted a fragmented governance structure for R&I policy, with weak strategic steering and coordination across ministries and agencies; a weak evaluation culture; an 'overpopulation' of the innovation policy mix, with duplications in the support for technology transfer, entrepreneurship, science-industry cooperation and R&D funding. It also noted frequent institutional re-organisations and recommended a single, coherent governance framework and stronger policy evaluation capacity.

The **Research and Innovation Observatory (RIO) Country Report on Slovenia of 2017** (Bucar, Jaklic and Gonzalez Verdesoto, 2018[3]) identified three main challenges for Slovenia's R&I system: R&D intensity (GERD) declined to 2.0% of GDP by 2016 – well below the Europe 2020 target of 3% – driven primarily by declining business sector funding; on governance, Slovenia lacked an effective governance structure for R&I due to weak coordination across responsible departments and stakeholders in innovation policy. On human resources, diminishing public resources for R&D led to a large outflow of PhDs, resulting in brain drain and unemployment among the highly skilled.

The **report by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (2019) on the Implementation of the Resolution on the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia for the period 2015-2017** (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2019[4]) concluded that progress was partial and uneven. While some steps were taken to clarify institutional roles and enhance strategic planning, the governance and coordination of the national R&I system remained fragmented due to insufficient funding and limited systemic reform.

The **DG REFORM report 'Strengthening the Innovation Ecosystem in Slovenia' (2021)** (European Commission, 2021[5]) concluded that Slovenia did not have a central research, development and innovation coordination function and was structured along 'two key coordination verticals': a 'research and development vertical' led by the former Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS) and the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS); and a 'growth, smart specialisation and start-up vertical' under the former Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MEDT) and its implementing institutions (e.g., SPIRIT, SEF, SIO network, SRIPs and their network).

The project **'Improving the Governance Model of the Research and Innovation System in Slovenia' (2024)** (OECD, 2024[6]), undertaken by the OECD and produced under the EU's Technical Support Instrument (TSI) found a fragmented strategic framework with an overly broad range of priorities; obstacles to inter-ministerial coordination due to little staff dedicated to R&I matters and agencies confined to an execution role; a critical gap in support at mid-range technology readiness levels; and a risk-averse public administration culture that left little room for policy experimentation or learning; among others.

These observations provide an important baseline against which the recent governance reforms examined in the present evaluation can be assessed.

Scope of the evaluation

Since 2021, Slovenia has engaged in an ambitious wave of institutional and structural reforms to address these challenges (see section 2.3). This evaluation focuses on the implementation and impact of these changes. In line with the scope agreed with MVZI, particular attention is given to their effects on innovation,

knowledge transfer, the completeness of the innovation policy mix, cross-ministerial coordination and the whole-of-government approach, and the stability, predictability and complementarity of innovation measures.

Institutional reforms include the adoption of the ZZrID Act (2021) and subsequent amendments (ZZrID-A in 2023, ZZrID-B, and ZZrID-C in 2025), the ReZrIS30 strategy (2022), the Recovery and Resilience Plan, and the 2023 agreement between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS), KOsRIS (Coordination of Independent Research Institutes) and the Government: “For a smart, sustainable and competitive Slovenia”.

Structural reforms established new governance bodies: the Development Council for strategic oversight and the Programme Committee for operational cross-ministerial coordination. They also introduced instruments such as stable funding contracts and the RDI Hub (RRI Stičišče), an analytical and coordination platform for R&I support that is scheduled for launch in 2026. The research and innovation portfolios at both ministry and agency levels have been merged: the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport became the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI), and the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) became the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS), with an expanded mandate covering innovation instruments, cohesion policy funds, and challenge-based approaches such as Gravitacija calls.

Evaluation questions

Based on the OECD Framework for R&I governance (see section 1.2), the evaluation asks specific questions about the effect of these reforms on the functioning of the R&I support system in order to address overarching questions about the contribution of reforms to Slovenia’s national goals.

Specific questions:

- To what extent and how have the recent institutional and structural changes in Slovenia contributed to:
  - Strategic orientation: Setting clear directions, responding to and anticipating needs?
  - Planning and programming: Establishing structures and mechanisms for aligning the plans across areas and levels of government?
  - Implementation and learning: Ensuring a consistent mix of policy and regulatory interventions that covers all the needs and allows continuous support to projects across the different stages of the innovation chain?

Overarching questions:

- To what extent have the recent institutional and structural changes in Slovenia enabled R&I activities to contribute more effectively to the realisation of national priorities and, more generally, strengthen their economic and social impacts?
- In what ways might the design and implementation of R&I governance reforms be improved in order to effectively steer, coordinate and implement R&I activities?

The report addresses these questions to develop recommendations (see section 6).

1.2 Methodology of the evaluation

Evaluation fieldwork activities

The findings detailed in this report have been produced through a multi-stage assessment process encompassing desk review, online interviews, and interviews and workshops conducted in-person during missions to Slovenia in February and June 2026. While some ministry names and the structure of government have changed following the Slovenian elections in March 2026, the names referenced in this document reflect those in use prior to the formation of the new Government.

Online interviews with 12 stakeholders were conducted in the pre-mission phase to establish an initial understanding of the reform landscape and identify areas requiring deeper investigation. A mission to Ljubljana in February 2026 involved 9 in-person group interviews and workshops with 33 representatives from ARIS, MVZI, sectoral ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Digital Transformation), the research community (KOsRIS, Rectors' Conference), Strategic Research and Innovation Partnerships (SRIPs), and other R&I policy stakeholders. Interviews were semi-structured, organised around the OECD R&I Governance Framework dimensions. A second mission to Ljubljana in June 2026 to gather feedback on draft analysis and recommendations engaged 26 stakeholders through 6 focus groups, with 8 additional stakeholders interviewed subsequently online. Interviewees are anonymous when quoted in this report, but for the sake of robustness and transparency interviews are identified with a specific code. Only the team of evaluators retains the matrix of corresponding interviewees to codes. The full list of interviewees can be found in Annex C.

The desk review covered over 50 documentary sources, including Slovenian legislation (the ZZrID Act and its three amendments), national strategies (ReZrIS30, S5, the Slovenian Industrial Strategy), government minutes (Development Council sessions 1–7, Programme Committee records), implementation reports (ReZrIS30 implementation reports for 2022–2023 and 2024), independent evaluations (the 2025 *Evaluation of the implementation of the Resolution on the Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2030 (ReZrIS30)* that was performed by the Institute for Economic Research and University of Ljubljana, Faculty for Social Sciences), ARIS institutional documents (Annual Report 2024, Strategy 2024–2027, briefing materials), stakeholder consultation outputs (KPMG RDI Hub consultation report), and previous OECD publications.

The analysis was supported by AI tools, which were used to extract key elements from publicly available documentary sources and interview transcripts, provide translations of Slovenian-language documents, and assist in cross-referencing evidence across the source base. All AI-supported extractions were manually verified against the original source texts, and assessments were undertaken using the evaluators' own judgement.

Evaluation framework

The evaluation uses the OECD Framework for R&I governance. This framework systematically examines governance arrangements in a given country by looking at actors and structures, strategies and plans, mechanisms, processes and practices, legal frameworks and financial resources at three main levels of governance (see Figure 1.1).

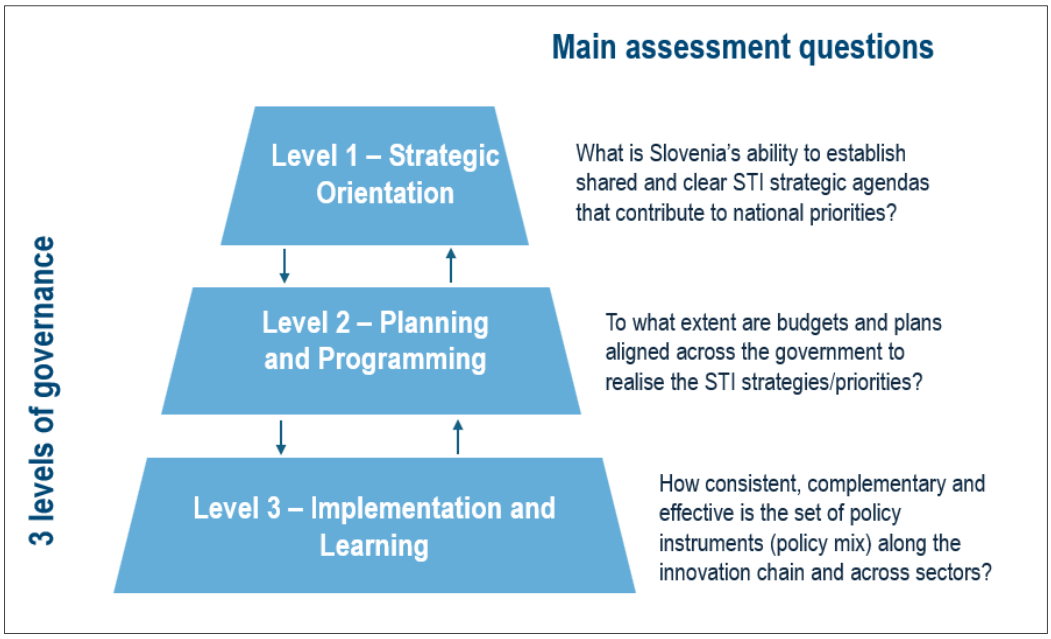
R&I governance is defined in this framework as follows:

> *R&I governance is the set of formal and informal arrangements and mechanisms to set and align goals, allocate and manage resources, as well as assign and exercise public decision-making authority with regard to research and innovation activities, across the government and with stakeholders.*

Building upon this definition and based on previous assessments and analyses of national research and innovation systems, three main functions of governance are distinguished:

- **Strategic orientation:** setting national priorities and directions that guide R&I public interventions, drawing on interactions with relevant stakeholders;
- **Planning and programming**: developing and aligning plans of different actors across the government and set a commensurate level of resources to achieve the strategic directions;
- **Implementation and learning:** enabling the consistent implementation of R&I policy interventions to achieve set plans and ensuring that information about public actions and their effects is produced, analysed, and used to inform decision-making.

Figure 1.1. The three R&I governance levels and main assessment questions



Source: OECD authors' elaboration.

The three functions ensure, as much as possible and when relevant, a whole-of-government approach to govern the contribution of R&I to economic and societal impacts.

The following table describes in more detail the criteria used for each governance level and the desired ideal state that underpins the assessment. The definitions of the criteria are presented in Annex A.

Table 1.1. Desired ideal state and assessment criteria by governance function

Function	Ideal state	Assessment criteria
1. Strategic orientation	Strategic policy directions should clearly define the desired end points at different time horizons to concretely guide public action. They should have strong political backing and their definition should draw on the expertise, interests and values of a broad range of stakeholders across R&I and non-R&I communities, possibly citizens. They also factor in knowledge about possible futures so that alternative directions and their potential impacts are explored. While being flexible to adapt to new conditions and evolving consensus they should be stable and robust, extending beyond political terms to	Intentionality Legitimacy Relevance External consistency

		address ambitious and long-term challenges.	
2.	Planning and programming	The high-level directions set through *Strategic Orientation* should be taken up in ministry and agency plans. These plans should be aligned across policy sectors (and therefore administrative boundaries) and levels of government (national, subnational, etc.) in order to minimise duplications and set the ground for joint action of different policy and regulatory authorities. There should be structures and mechanisms for aligning the plans across areas and levels of government. Based on the results of monitoring activities and other information (for example, anticipatory knowledge from foresight exercises), the plans should be revised regularly.	Horizontal/Vertical Consistency Predictability and Stability Efficiency
3.	Implementation and learning	The objectives and rationales of the different policy instruments are clearly linked to the high-level strategic frameworks and the different ensuing ministry and agency plans. These instruments realise their respective goals but also, when relevant, contribute together to systemic objectives. In some cases, they can be articulated or even jointly managed and implemented. The instruments are interconnected as much as needed to leverage complementarities and avoid conflictual effects. The results of their monitoring and evaluation feed into decision-making processes. There are mechanisms, regulations and 'safe spaces' in place to allow the experimentation of novel approaches.	Policy Mix Coverage and Coherence Exploratory governance Private Sector and Stakeholder Engagement Reflexivity

Evaluation Baseline

This evaluation uses as baseline the knowledge available on the main strengths and weaknesses of the Slovenian R&I governance before the last wave of reforms, which began in 2021. This baseline is reconstructed using several relevant evaluations and studies, primarily the 2023-2024 project 'Improving the Governance Model of the Research and Innovation System in Slovenia', undertaken by the OECD and produced under the EU's Technical Support Instrument (TSI) (Project 22SI02, hereafter '2023-2024 OECD TSI study') (OECD, 2024[6]). This study included a comprehensive diagnostic of Slovenia's R&I governance system at the point when the reforms were taking shape, providing insights both into the pre-reform context and into the dynamics that shaped the reforms at their inception. It assessed the system against OECD comparators, identified structural weaknesses in coordination, funding predictability, and analytical capacity, and issued a set of recommendations that have since guided reform implementation.

Subsequent evaluations have been used as source material for the present evaluation, providing useful information and analysis at different stages of the reform rollout:

- The 2025 ReZrIS30 evaluation, commissioned by MVZI and MGTŠ and undertaken by the Institute for Economic Research (IER) and University of Ljubljana Faculty for Social Sciences (FDV), assessed the implementation of Slovenia's national R&I strategy (ReZrIS30) against its own indicators, activities, and milestones. Its scope is the strategy's delivery (whether activities were carried out, targets met, and recommendations acted upon) rather than the governance system. Where the ReZrIS30 evaluation identifies coordination weaknesses or implementation gaps, these findings inform this evaluation's assessment. However, the analytical frame is different: the evaluation of this current project assesses institutional and structural reforms, not strategy delivery (IER and FDV, 2025[7]).
- The 2025 OECD Industrial Strategy Review examined Slovenia's industrial strategy design, governance, and policy instruments from an economic competitiveness perspective, and is used to inform this current assessment (OECD, 2025[8]).

- The IMAD Development Report 2025 provides econometric and survey evidence on innovation outcomes and is used similarly as a source of independent quantitative findings (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]).

The “baseline picture” is presented at the beginning of each of the three evaluative chapters.

2 Overview of R&I governance in Slovenia

This chapter provides an overview of Slovenia's research and innovation (R&I) system. It identifies the actors involved in its governance and the main coordination spaces, describes the country's R&I investment and performance through key figures on research and development (R&D) expenditure, funding sources, and international comparisons, and concludes with an overview of recent R&I governance reforms.

2.1 The governance of the Slovenian R&I system in early 2026

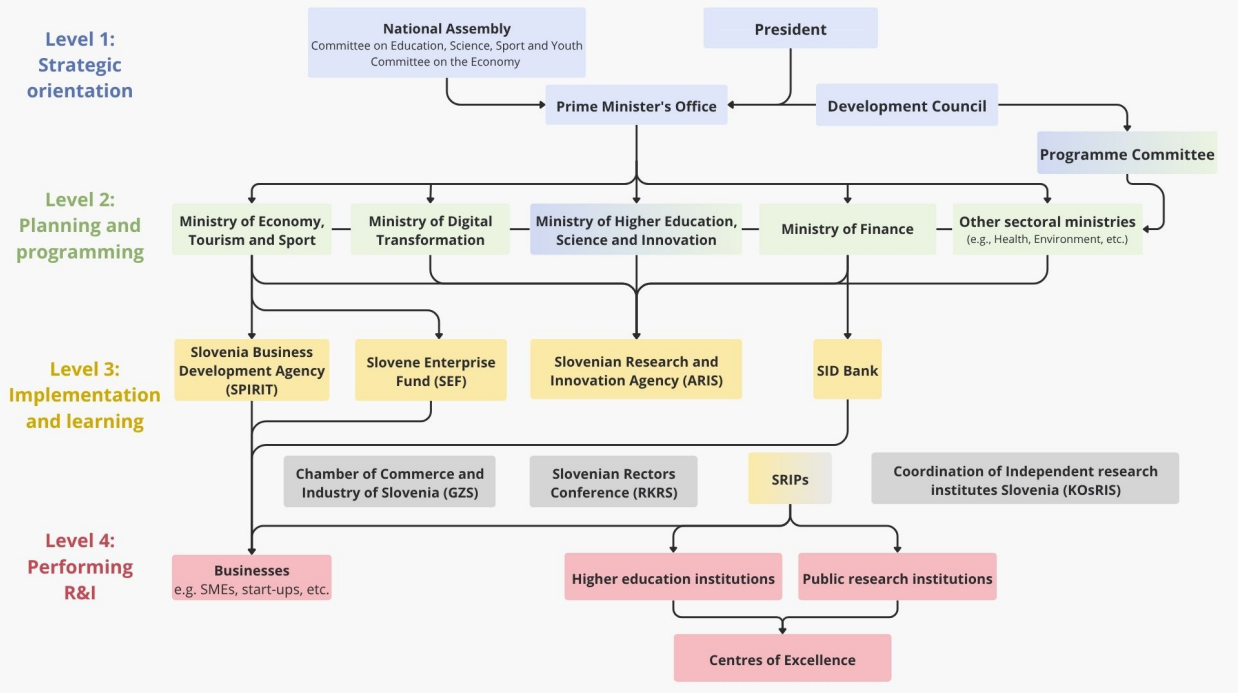
Using the OECD Framework for R&I governance, three main governance levels are distinguished in Slovenia's research and innovation system: strategic orientation, planning and programming, and implementation and learning. Figure 2.1, which shows the main actors involved in each governance level, also includes a fourth level which encompasses the organisations that perform research and innovation activities, including public research institutions, higher education institutions, centres of excellence, the business sector.

At the strategic orientation level, the government – including the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI) – sets national R&I priorities. The Development Council serves as the government's main advisory body on R&I, proposing measures and monitoring R&I results. The National Assembly adopts national R&I strategies and laws – such as Slovenia's main Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 (ReZrIS30) and the Scientific Research and Innovation Activities (ZZrID) Act – and approves the annual state budget.

At the planning and programming level, MVZI coordinates the translation of strategic priorities into plans and instruments across ministries. It works alongside the Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport (MGTŠ) and other sectoral ministries. A cross-governmental Programme Committee provides a coordination space at Director-General level to share information and align the timing and content of R&I instruments across ministries.

At the implementation level, the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) is the main body responsible for operating most R&I policy instruments, while the Slovenia Business Development Agency (SPIRIT), the Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF) and SID Bank provide complementary measures of a different nature to support R&I. Across the implementation and performer level, a range of intermediary organisations play an important role in knowledge transfer, coordination and representation, including Strategic Research and Innovation Partnerships (SRIPs), Knowledge Transfer Offices (KTOs), the Coordination of Independent Research Institutes (KOsRIS), the Slovenian Rectors' Conference (RKRS), and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS).

Figure 2.1. Overview of Slovenia's R&I governance system



Note: this is a simplified representation of the governance structure of Slovenia's R&I system and is not comprehensive. The following colours are used to represent the respective institutions and actors: i) blue for Level 1 (Strategic Orientation); ii) green for Level 2 (Planning and programming); iii) yellow for Level 3 (Implementation and learning); iv) red for Level 4 (Performing R&I); v) grey for key intermediary institutions. The bi-colour boxes represent overlaps between levels.
Source: OECD authors' elaboration.

2.2. Investment and performance of the Slovenian R&I system

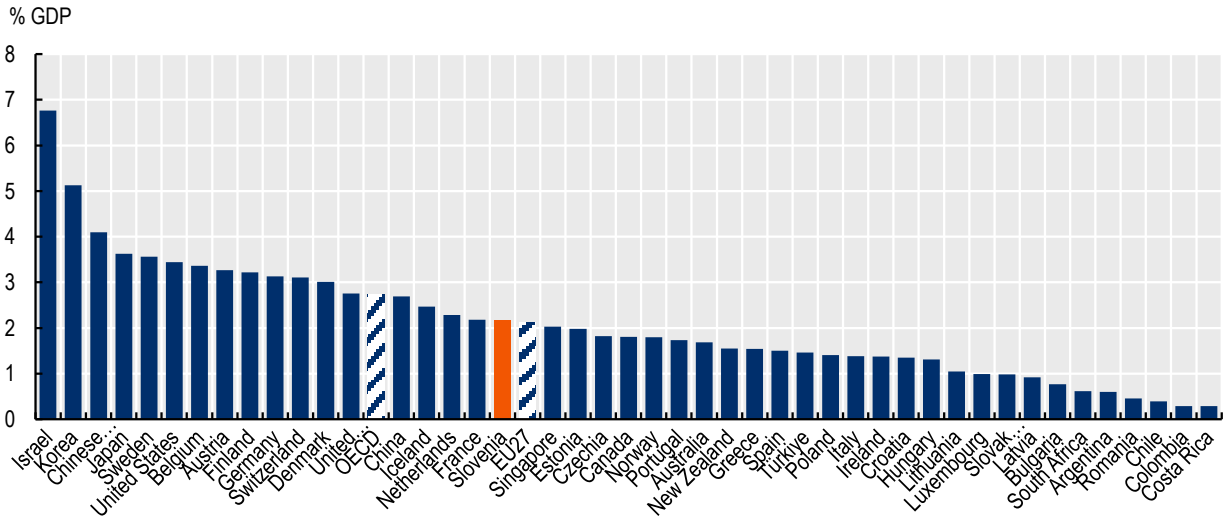
The STI governance of a country cannot be understood independently of the main features of its national innovation system, notably the amount of R&D performed and funded by different groups of actors. This section provides a brief overview of recent trends and salient features in international comparison:

- At 2.16% of GDP (2024) the GERD is above EU average but below the OECD average. It has grown modestly since 2017, but the pace is insufficient to meet the national 3.5% target for 2030;
- The business sector dominates R&D performance (69%) but its share has declined since 2017 (from 75%);
- Business self-financing is weak in international comparison (60% vs. 82% EU average), indicating limited private R&D commitment;
- Slovenia heavily relies on foreign funding (30% of GERD), mainly EU Structural Funds and RRF - well above comparable countries;
- Public national (non-EU) funding for research and especially innovation is rather low;
- Government support to business R&D leans toward tax incentives (58%) over direct funding (42%).

Slovenia's R&D intensity has grown over the past decade but remains far from its national ambition and leading economies. The total level of R&D expenditure (GERD) reached 2.16% of GDP in 2024, which is slightly above the EU average of 2.13% and superior to comparator countries in the region, but below the

OECD average of 2.72% and under the world's most intensive economies such as Israel (6.76%) or Korea (5.13%) (Figure 2.2).

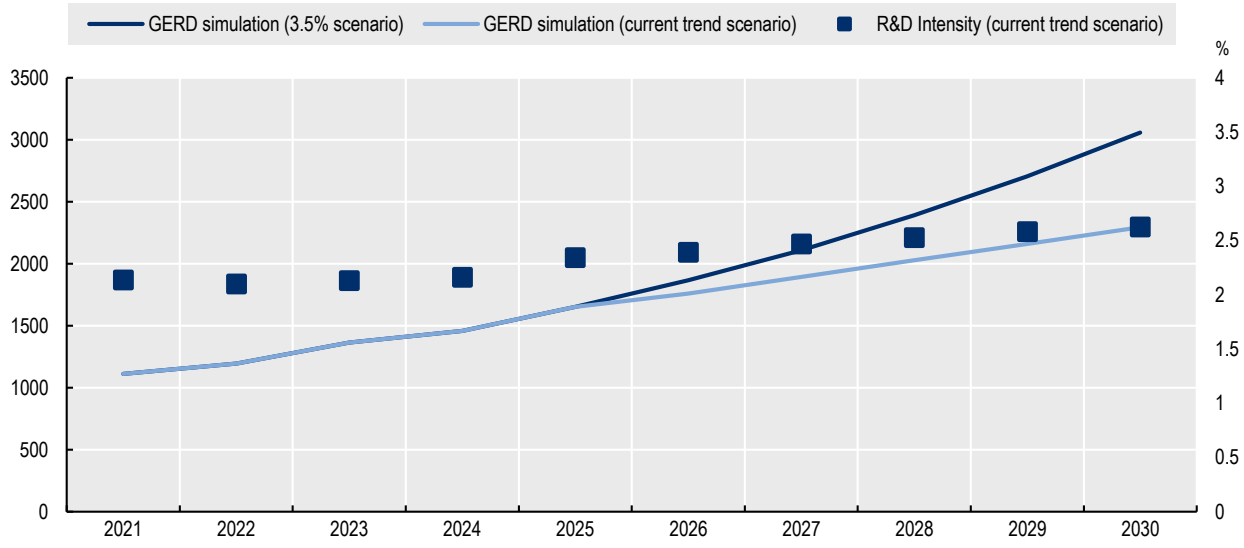
Figure 2.2. Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) in Slovenia and selected economies, 2024 or latest year available, as a percentage of GDP



Source: Source: (OECD, 2026[10])

Slovenia's R&D intensity increased moderately from 1.88% of GDP in 2017 to 2.16% of GDP in 2024, a similar upward trend to other countries like the Netherlands, Austria, and Sweden. Despite this increase, Slovenia's total expenditure on R&D remains below the 3.5% target set by ReZrIS30 for 2030. Reaching this goal will require a significant acceleration of the growth of R&D expenditures, as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3. GERD and R&D intensity under two scenarios (current trend and 3.5% goal) in Slovenia, 2021 to 2030

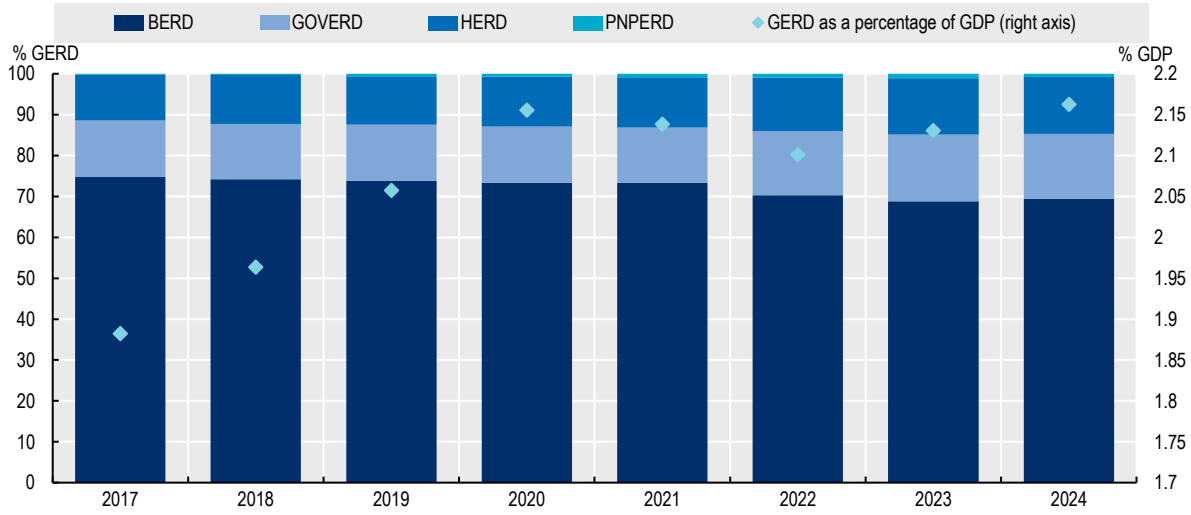


Source: (OECD, 2026[10]). Estimates for Slovenian GDP growth are those of the IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO), (International Monetary Fund, 2026[11]).

Most of Slovenia's R&D is performed by the business sector (69.4%) (BERD), followed by government research institutes (15.9%) (GOVERD), higher education institutions (13.9%) (HERD), and private non-profits (0.8%) (PNPERD) in 2024. The proportion of business sector expenditure is similar to that seen in many OECD and European Union countries, with the business sector accounting for 73% and 66% of the total R&D expenditure in the OECD area and in the EU27 respectively, in 2024 (see Figure B.1 in Annex B for a comparison of GERD by performing sectors in selected countries). It is noteworthy that the share of the business sector's expenditures in the GERD has decreased in recent years, from 74.8% in 2017 to 69.4% in 2024 (Figure 2.4).

The public expenditure on R&D shows a more mixed picture. While Slovenia's GOVERD share (15.9%) exceeds both the OECD (8.7%) and EU27 (11%) averages, its higher education sector (HERD) contributes a comparatively smaller share of GERD (13.9%) than the OECD (15.8%) and EU27 (21.6%) averages. Combined public performers (GOVERD + HERD) account for 0.6% of GDP, slightly below the EU average of 0.7% and the OECD average of 0.7% (OECD, 2026[10]).

Figure 2.4. Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) by performance sectors in Slovenia, 2017 to 2024, as a percentage of GERD



Source: (OECD, 2026[10])

Although the greatest R&D performer in Slovenia is the business sector, R&D funding from businesses is weak compared to international standards. The business enterprise sector funds 42.6% of total R&D expenditures (GERD) in Slovenia, which is lower than countries such as Switzerland (63.7%), the Netherlands (58.6%) and Hungary (49.4%) (Figure 2.5). Most of the business expenditure on R&D is self-financed in OECD countries (85.9%, latest year available) and EU countries (81.5%), but in Slovenia this figure is lower (59.9%) (OECD, 2026[10]).

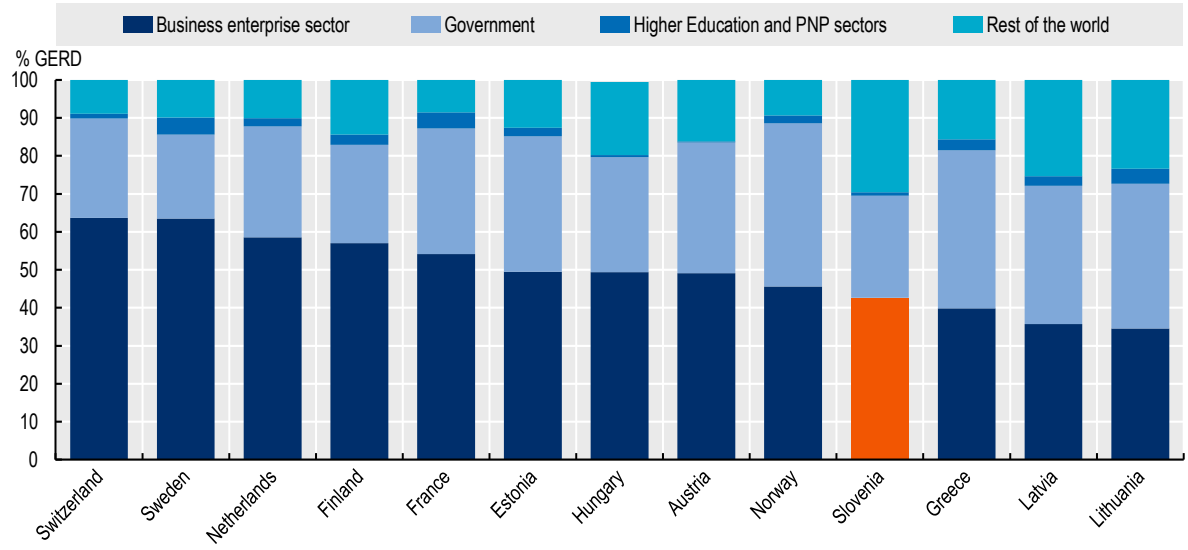
Most R&D funding in Slovenia comes from the government and the rest of the world (56.5% of GERD), the latter including supranational authorities' funding (i.e., EU funding). Compared to other countries, Slovenia has a high share of R&D funding from abroad ('rest of the world', 29.6%). This figure is well above countries such as Norway (9.4%) and France (8.6%). This reflects the significant role of EU funds in Slovenia, which relies substantially on EU Structural Funds and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). This figure

has been increasing overall since 2017 (364 constant USD ppp million in 2017, compared to 651 in 2024) (OECD, 2026[10]). More specifically, the rest of the world is particularly important to fund R&D performed by businesses (35.3% of BERD), well above EU (12%) and OECD (8.8%) averages, showing Slovenia's reliance on foreign funding sources to finance business R&D.

As EU funds are accounted for in the 'rest of the world' as a source of funding, government funding appears weak in international comparison as it mainly includes national funds. A structural feature of Slovenia's R&I financing is the distinction between research – predominantly funded through the national budget – and innovation support, which relies substantially on EU Structural Funds and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), particularly at higher technology readiness levels.

Cohesion Policy is one of the main sources of public investment in Slovenia. EU Cohesion Policy funds are providing EUR 3.24 billion to Slovenia in the 2021-2027 programming period, representing 4.8% of GDP in 2024. The amount is higher if national co-financing is taken into account (EUR 4.32 billion). Of these Cohesion Policy funds, nearly EUR 775 million has been allocated for research, innovation and SMEs' competitiveness (European Commission, 2026[12]).

Figure 2.5. Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) by source of funds in Slovenia and selected economies, 2024 or latest year available, as a percentage of GERD



Source: (OECD, 2026[10])

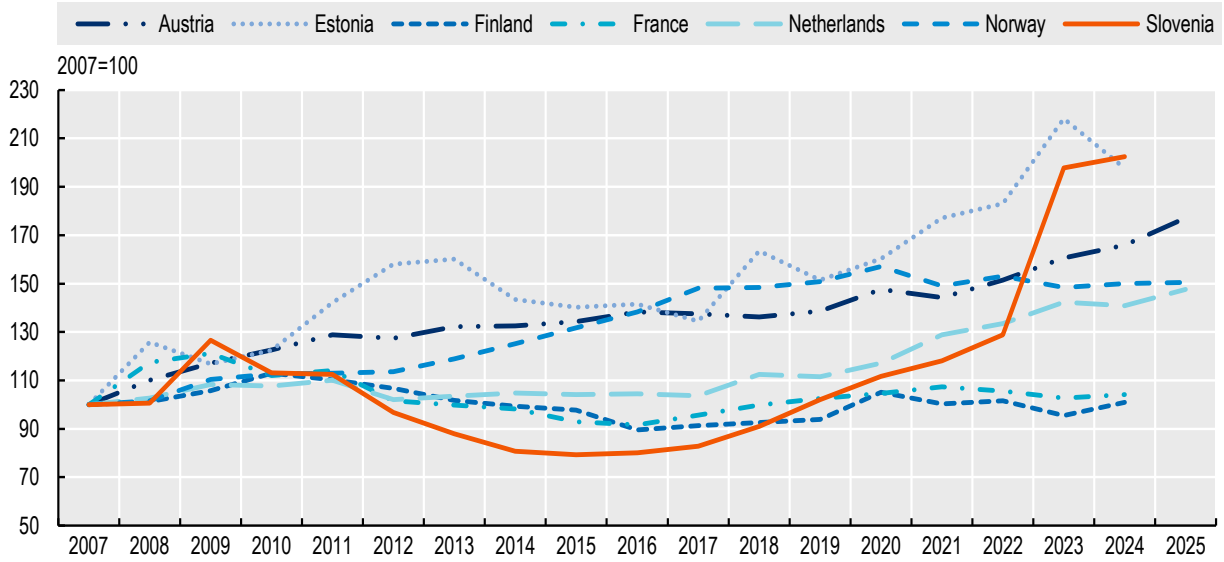
The composition of government support to business R&D is relatively balanced between direct funding and indirect support (tax incentives), at 42% and 58% respectively in 2023. This balance distinguishes Slovenia from countries that lean more toward direct support, such as Sweden (75% direct, 25% indirect), Norway (60% direct, 40% indirect) and Hungary (64% direct, 36% indirect) (OECD, 2026[13]).

Government budget allocations for R&D (GBARD) have increased steadily since 2019, doubling compared to 2007 (Figure 2.6). This increase is higher compared to other countries like Austria (77% increase from 2007), Norway (51%), the Netherlands (48%), France (4%) and Finland (1%). It is noteworthy that there was a strong increase in 2022, driven by high Cohesion Policy funding and the entry into force of the ZZrID Act in that same year.

However, Slovenia's public R&D sources of funding remain lower than the 1.25% target and ceiling set by the ZZrID Act (about 0.6% of GDP in 2024). The legislative growth target of minimum 0.08% annual growth

rate in R&D spending as a share of GDP until it reaches 1% of GDP for research and 0.25% for innovation was missed in both 2023 and 2024. Nevertheless, the current method for calculating the government funding for R&D does not include other sources than MVZI. Based on the 2025 amendment of the ZZrID Act, a new, more comprehensive calculation method is under development, including all EU and sectoral ministries' funding. This will bring the indicator closer to the 1.25% ceiling. The estimate derived from the Pact for Research and Innovation for the year 2026 is that funding for scientific research and innovation amounts to 0.7% of GDP.

Figure 2.6. Government budget allocations (GBARD) in Slovenia and selected economies, index 2007=100, 2007 to latest year available



Source: (OECD, 2026[10])

2.3 Overview of recent governance reforms

The need for R&I governance reforms

Slovenia's R&I governance has undergone significant reforms since 2021, driven by the momentum of a newly elected government and supported by the resources of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) (European Commission, 2026[14]). These reforms were acknowledged in the Council Recommendation on the economic, social, employment, structural and budgetary policies of Slovenia which highlights the "*efforts to improve the governance of the R&I by consolidating most R&I policies into one ministry, updating the Act on Research, Development and Innovation Activities and creating horizontal coordination mechanisms to streamline policy initiatives*" (European Commission, 2026[1]).

Several of these reforms were directly included or at least connected to Slovenia's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP). This plan of €2.139 bn included 48 investment streams and 36 reforms, to be implemented over the period 2020-2030. As set out in the European Commission's analysis of the RRP, it addresses Slovenia's long-standing, structural challenges, notably in the areas of long-term care, healthcare, pensions and labour market, education and skills, research, development and innovation, green and digital transition, business environment and public procurement. In the field of R&I, the RRP set out to establish a "new management model" consisting of the Development Council, the Programme

Committee, and various working groups, to strengthen science and innovation and improve the efficiency of investments in R&I (Republic of Slovenia, 2023[15]).

The reforms in Slovenia were undertaken against the backdrop of a severe decline in the national innovation performance between 2012 and 2019. According to the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) 2020, innovation performance since 2012 increased in 24 EU Member States and decreased only in three, including Slovenia (European Commission, 2026[16]). This might be explained by the low (and decreasing during the period 2010-19) levels of public and private investment in R&D relative to national wealth. More generally, structural weaknesses hindering innovation results, as identified in the annual exercise of the European Semester, include notably low levels of academia-business cooperation and low research and development digital capacities among firms, notably domestic SMEs (European Commission, 2026[16]).

The need for continued governance reform persists today, as underscored by Slovenia's most recent performance in the European Innovation Scoreboard 2025. The EIS 2025 classifies Slovenia as a Moderate Innovator, performing at 94.7% of the EU average, placing it 13th among EU Member States and 17th among the EU and neighbouring countries (European Commission, 2025[17]). While Slovenia's performance has improved by 16.8 percentage points since 2018 and 3.4 points since 2024, it remains below the EU average. Persistent weaknesses remain, notably lower levels of process innovation and collaboration among SMEs, as well as underperformance in knowledge-intensive services exports.

The comprehensiveness of R&I reforms

While many countries engage regularly in reforms to improve the governance of R&I activities or reflect strategic and political changes, the specificity of these reforms in Slovenia is that they cover all aspects of the national innovation system, from the way the highest level strategic decisions are taken to the programming of funding and actions and, finally, the implementation and monitoring of activities. They therefore span across the three main governance levels:

1. At the level of strategic orientation, a new legal framework (ZZrID 2021) and national R&I strategy (ReZrIS30), along with a new advisory body, established the overarching basis for change at the two other levels;
2. At the level of planning and programming, new coordination bodies were created to improve strategic alignment and policy coherence across ministries; ministries were restructured to better integrate research and innovation policy;
3. At the level of implementation and learning, measures were introduced to consolidate agencies and grant greater autonomy to research-performing organisations, strengthen incentives for science-industry collaboration, improve internationalisation of research organisations, and strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system for R&I.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the main reforms undertaken between 2021 and 2026. It indicates the main governance level to which each reform pertains.

Table 2.1. Overview of R&I governance reforms in Slovenia (2021-2026)

Governance Level	Year	Reform	Type	Description
Level 1 – Strategic Orientation	2021-2025	Scientific Research and Innovation Activities (ZZrID) Act and amendments	Legal framework	Main binding legal framework for R&I in Slovenia. Establishes the Development Council, sets a 1.25% GDP target for public R&I investment (including 1% for research and 0.25% for innovation), introduces results-based funding and greater autonomy for public research institutes. The amendment to

				the Act in 2023 (ZZrID-A) expands Slovenia's principal funding agency's mandate to include innovation, and the amendment in 2025 (ZZrID-C) adds provisions for third-party evaluation of research programmes and secondary publishing rights for open access, as well as setting targets for public R&I funding.
	2022	Slovenian Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy (ReZrIS30) 2030	Strategy	Main strategic document for R&I, setting the vision and long-term objectives until 2030. Sets targets including GERD of 3.5% of GDP and public R&I investment of 1.25% of GDP by 2030.
	2022	Development Council	Institutional reform	Advisory body to the government established under the ZZrID Act, bringing together ministries and key R&I stakeholders to advise on strategy, propose R&I measures and monitor results.
Level 2 – Planning and Programming	2022	Ministry restructuring	Structural reform	Innovation policy transferred to the new Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI), which becomes the lead ministry for R&I.
	2022	Programme Committee	Institutional reform	Cross-governmental coordination body established at Director-General level to coordinate R&I policy planning and implementation across ministries.
	2023	R&D Agreement	Financial/investment reform	Government agreement with research and business communities to jointly increase investments in R&I to at least 2.8% of GDP by 2027.
	2026	Research and Innovation Pact	Institutional reform	Inter-ministerial document prepared by MVZI in collaboration with sectoral ministries, providing an overview of R&I measures and instruments across government that are already in place and funded, to promote cross-government coordination.
Level 3 – Implementation and Learning	2022	RDI Hub (RRI Stičišče)	Institutional reform	A national platform and central digital entry point for R&I information and services. It is currently under development and aims to map stakeholders within the R&I ecosystem, support the development of analytics for R&I, and facilitate cooperation across all governance levels.
	2023	Agency restructuring	Structural reform	The Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) becomes the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS), with a new Innovation Council covering TRLs 1-9.
	2024	New instrument portfolio	Structural reform	Introduction of new funding instruments, including ARIS 'Gravity calls' targeting challenge-based research consortia and R&I vouchers for industry to foster collaboration between research organisations and industry.

Note: This table provides an overview of the main research and innovation governance reforms in Slovenia (2021-2026) and is not exhaustive.

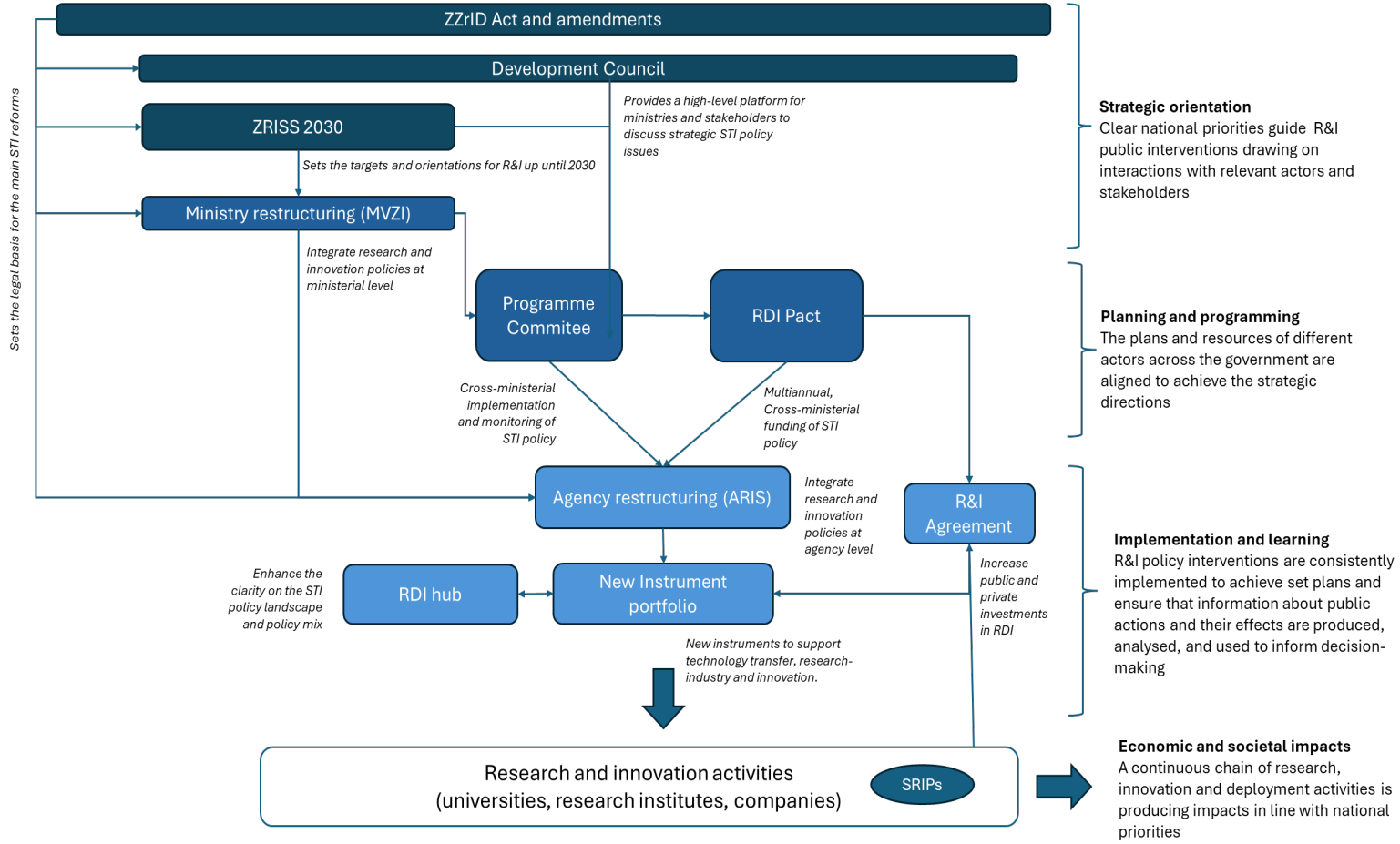
The theory of change underpinning the STI reforms

Reforms were rolled out at different times, and some originated from different parts of the innovation system. However, even accounting for a degree of unavoidable ex-post rationalisation, interviews clearly

revealed an overall logic to these reforms. They were aimed at addressing the national innovation performance deficit by supporting interactions between research and innovation activities and reducing the well-known “valley of death”. Such an endeavour requires several changes run in parallel, including prioritisation of efforts, greater synergies and coordination between research and innovation policies from strategy to implementation, increasing and more predictable public financial resources for tech transfer and innovation, greater clarity of the policy landscape, higher leverage effect of public funding on private R&D expenditures.

Figure 2.7 presents an attempt to reconstruct the theory of change, documenting the intended causal links leading from the reforms to their desired impacts across the three levels of governance described above.

Figure 2.7. The theory of change of Slovenia's STI governance reforms



Source: OECD authors' elaboration.

3 Strategic orientation: collectively developing R&I strategic agendas in Slovenia

This section assesses the ability of the R&I governance system to set **relevant directions that guide R&I public interventions across the government structure to realise national priorities.**

The chapter is structured in four sections. The first presents Slovenia's capacity for strategic orientation prior to the reforms, drawing on past diagnostics, including the assessment produced as part of the 2023-2024 OECD TSI project. Section 3.2 describes the reforms that have been implemented in order to improve this capacity. Section 3.3 presents an assessment of the effects of relevant reforms on Slovenia's strategic orientation for R&I. Finally, 3.4 summarises the advances as well as the gaps and issues that remain to be resolved, using the assessment criteria presented in Table 1.1.

3.1 What was Slovenia's strategic orientation capacity before the reforms?[1]

As in many small countries, Slovenia has traditionally not set explicit priorities to guide its R&I system. The limited size of both its economy and research landscape makes it challenging to identify domains with sufficient critical mass. While Slovenia demonstrates strong performance in several niche areas, an overly restrictive approach to prioritisation could risk undermining activities that fall outside the selected focus areas.

Strategies have therefore focused on transversal and capacity issues, as in the former Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia covering the period 2015-2017. The latter focused notably on strengthening excellence in research, improving the efficiency and governance of the research and innovation system and enhancing knowledge transfer. The monitoring report of this strategy recommended notably clearer prioritisation. Earlier on, the 2012 OECD Innovation Policy Review highlighted the absence of a strong centre of strategic steering.

A point repeatedly made in several reports was the co-existence of parallel strategies without strong connections. In 2014, for instance, the European Commission Research and Innovation performance country profile of Slovenia called for a coordination of the National Research and Innovation Strategy 2011-2020 with the 2013 Industrial Policy as well as with the Smart Specialisation Strategy (European Commission, 2014[18]).

[1] As set out in Chapter 2, this evaluation uses as a baseline the knowledge available on the main strengths and weaknesses of the Slovenian R&I governance before the last wave of reforms, which began in 2021. This section therefore covers the period up to 2021.

The 2023-2024 OECD TSI study found that Slovenia had set out an ambitious legislative and strategic architecture for R&I, including the 2021 ZZrID Act and the new national R&I strategy. While these were important advances, two years into the reform, the system's capacity to set and pursue clear strategic directions was still undermined by fragmentation, limited political engagement, and the absence of analytical infrastructure (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1. Insights from the past – Slovenia's Strategic Orientation in 2023

Multiple strategies created challenges for alignment. Three main R&I strategies (the national R&I strategy (ReZrIS30), the Slovenian Industrial Strategy (SIS), and the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S4)) were led by three separate bodies. This arrangement tended to "entrench the siloes between the different actors" with "a lack of spaces for the discussion of strategic synergies and trade-offs across government departments". Research policy sat in the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS), innovation policy in the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MEDT), and smart specialisation under the Government Office for Development and Cohesion Policy, meaning that no single institution held responsibility for R&I as a whole. The strategies had "broad and consistent objectives and targets but also some inconsistencies": the ReZrIS30 targeted 3.5% R&D intensity by 2030, while the SIS set a 3% target alongside different TRL coverage ambitions.

Strategic advisory function lacked political engagement. Prior to the reforms, there had been "little space for discussing R&I issues at a high level". The Council for Science and Technology, the former high-level advisory body, had suffered from "infrequent meetings and poor attendance from ministers". R&I had been "in practice side-lined as a policy priority" despite formal recognition of its importance, reflecting a "perceived lack of interest and engagement of politicians in STI policy issues". The S4 had "suffered from low political back up and commitment".

Ad-hoc use of policy intelligence and lack of analytical platform. The diagnostic identified the absence of "an analytical platform to systematically provide relevant, up-to-date information for use with strategic orientation, programming and implementation" as a fundamental limitation. Neither MESS nor MEDT had a "significant internal analytical department to systematically support R&I policy development". Consistent and systematic analysis employing foresight was "felt to be lacking", and Slovenia had "not made any significant use of tailored foresight in recent years". Feedback from implementing agencies to their line ministries remained "too limited and formal (via annual reports)", and decision-makers showed "a lack of appetite" for the analytics that were available.

No monitoring or evaluation culture to ensure relevance. There was "no overall and systematic monitoring of R&I actions and their effects across the government structure". Policy or instrument evaluations were few, "except those related to the use of EU funds". The Development Council had been assigned a monitoring responsibility in the ReZrIS30, but no process, indicators, regularity, outputs, or resources were defined.

Priorities were too numerous. Funding was "mainly allocated bottom-up, driven toward research excellence". The S4's nine priority areas were "too numerous…and broad, basically covering all potential activities, resulting in R&D funding being too dispersed and fragmented to have impact". Few thematic research and innovation programmes existed, and ARRS targeted research had collapsed from EUR 9 million in 2008 to approximately EUR 0.6 million by 2014. The limited pool of organisations in Slovenia means that "any call that would be too narrowly targeted would clearly designate ex ante the future recipient of the funding", so the openness of calls is used as a way to preserve competitive allocation. The challenge is compounded by the dominance of ERDF as the main source of innovation funding, meaning that any domain "'excluded' from the S4 would be likely to receive no public support".

Stakeholder engagement for strategic orientation was strong in smart specialisation but weaker elsewhere. The S4 Entrepreneurial Discovery Process was noted as good practice involving broad participation, the SRIPs had "promoted a quadruple helix strategic dialogue", and the ReZrIS30 was supported by broad consultations. However, outside the S4 process, stakeholder involvement in strategic orientation was "considered insufficient", and it remained "unclear what has been the impact of these consultations on decisions and actions". Research institutions perceived that their input was "not really heard" by government, and growing disillusionment among SRIP actors was linked to "the lack of follow up actions by the government".

Source: (OECD, 2024[61])

3.2 What have been the main reforms of Slovenia's R&I strategic orientation and their aims?

This section describes the reforms affecting Slovenia's R&I strategic orientation and their aims. The programme of R&I governance reforms since 2021 has been oriented around a set of clear objectives, with ongoing amendments made to address issues and opportunities as they arise. The central aim, set out in Article 4 of the ZZrID Act, is to "ensure a modern scientific research and innovation system that will enable a higher quality of life for all, through critical reflection on societal issues, effective resolution of societal challenges, and raising the competitiveness of the Slovenian economy".

The ZZrID Act has established the legislative framework for integrated R&I governance

The ZZrID Act (2021) positioned R&I as a horizontal concern across government, intended to "transcend silo-based understanding of sectoral policies and address various activities and development phases leading to market commercialisation", and created the institutional architecture of the Development Council, Programme Committee and reformed agency. Three subsequent amendments have progressively refined the framework: ZZrID-A established the Innovation Council within ARIS; ZZrID-B addressed technical adjustments; and ZZrID-C expanded Development Council membership, granted the Innovation Council decision-making authority over innovation evaluation methodology, and mandated a minimum 0.08% annual growth rate in R&D spending as a share of GDP until it reaches 1% of GDP for research and 0.25% of GDP for innovation.

The ReZrIS30 Strategy defines goals and indicators for the R&I system

The ReZrIS30 Strategy (adopted 2022) operates through an Activity, Indicator and Milestone Plan covering 101 activities, 31 indicators and 25 milestones, with periodic reporting to the Development Council (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[19]) (see Boxes 3.2 and 3.3). It is intended as a joint 'whole of government' strategy to address fragmentation. It has introduced a structured monitoring framework over the period of its operation, with annual implementation reports delivered to the Government and National Assembly of Slovenia.

Box 3.2. The Slovenian Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 (ReZrIS30)

The Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy (ReZrIS30) is the principal strategic document for research and innovation in Slovenia. Adopted by the National Assembly in the form of a resolution in 2022, it sets the vision, long-term objectives, and measures for R&I activities through 2030.

The Strategy's overarching objective is to place Slovenia among the leading innovators in the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) by 2030. It targets an increase in public investment in R&I to 1.25% of GDP and total R&I investment to 3.5% of GDP by 2030, while addressing key sustainable development priorities through alignment with the 2030 Agenda and the green and digital transitions.

The Strategy pursues these goals through five core policy objectives:

1. Effective governance of the scientific R&I system
2. Enhanced investment in R&I
3. Researcher career development and excellent science
4. Excellent and internationally competitive research infrastructure
5. Accelerated cooperation between science and industry, knowledge transfer and innovation

These objectives are complemented by four horizontal objectives that cut across all areas of the Strategy: openness and participation in the international space; open science to improve research quality, efficiency and responsiveness; socially responsible science; and ensuring gender equality in R&I.

Effective governance as an objective of the Strategy

Governance is the first objective of ReZrIS30, encompassing 14 measures organised around several key priorities. These include: embedding R&I as a horizontal development policy; establishing a national information hub; integrating research, higher education and innovation into a single coherent system at the operational and institutional levels; increasing the autonomy of research organisations (ROs) while ensuring accountability and reducing administrative burdens; carrying out international evaluations of the R&I system and establishing independent research performance assessment frameworks for ROs; coordinating funding instruments across the entire R&D cycle and technology readiness levels (TRL 1-9); securing dedicated resources to popularise R&I activities; strengthening human resource capacities for R&I and integration with the European Research Area; incentivising active participation of ROs in international cooperation programmes; and establishing a unified state aid system for R&I.

Source: (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2023[20])

Box 3.3. Monitoring the Slovenian Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 (ReZrIS30)

The ReZrIS30 Strategy is monitored through annual implementation reports submitted to the Government and the National Assembly and reviewed by the Programme Committee, the Development Council and the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. These reports are based on a structured "Activity, Indicator and Milestone Plan" that MVZI developed to track progress against the strategy's goals. To date, two implementation reports have been produced – the first covering the years 2022 and 2023 and the second covering 2024.

The reports are organised around the nine goals of the strategy: five core policy objectives and four horizontal objectives. For each goal, they set out the corresponding measures, the activities undertaken to deliver them, and the status of those activities (whether realised, in progress, or not yet implemented).

Qualitative indicators and milestones are defined for each goal. These were developed in 2023 through a consultative process organised into working groups – one for each goal – under the leadership of MVZI's Directorate for Science and Innovation. The Action Plans under the strategy have their own set of indicators, to avoid duplication.

Nine coordinators, each aligned with one of the nine goals, are responsible for collecting data from MVZI, MGTŠ and ARIS. A dedicated person then harmonises these inputs and prepares the final monitoring report.

The following paragraphs highlight the main achievements of the strategy and activities in progress reported for 2024, the reference year of the most recent implementation report.

Main achievements

According to the implementation reports, activities continued towards a "more unified and less fragmented R&I system". Among the main achievements of the first goal of the Strategy (on governance) is the establishment of ARIS in 2023, which enables "more effective and consistent implementation" of scientific research and innovation policy measures and "uninterrupted support" to activities across the entire technology readiness level (TRL) scale (2022-2023). Several agreements were signed transferring the implementation of R&I policy instruments to ARIS (including transfers from MVZI and MGTŠ under the RRF and 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy Programme). A cooperation protocol was prepared setting out how different ministries and their instruments are to be integrated into ARIS's measures.

The Development Council and Programme Committee were established in 2022 and have met regularly. The R&D Agreement was signed between the Government and key stakeholders of the research community and industry, and the Knowledge Platform was established in 2022 along with thematic groups to coordinate on EU dossiers. Ministry restructuring led to the creation of MVZI in 2023. A contractor for the systematic evaluation of the ReZrIS30 implementation was selected and the OECD TSI evaluation on improving the governance model of the R&I system was published in 2024.

In progress

Several activities to implement the strategy remain in progress. The first R&I Pact was adopted in June 2026, and the RDI Hub pilot phase is to be implemented by June 2026. On the innovation side, work began on developing instruments to complement the co-financing chain at higher TRL levels. A new evaluation model for research projects that complies with ZZrID requirements and European Research Area (development standards is being prepared by ARIS, as well as a pilot framework for performance-based financing of research organisations by MVZI.

Source: (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2024[21]) and (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22])

The Development Council has been established in the ZZrID Act as a cross-sectoral advisory body

The Development Council is a cross-sectoral advisory body "that should oversee the country's development policy over a longer period" (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[23]). Its statutory mandate covers a wide range of activities, including proposing measures to the government, monitoring of the effects of research and innovation activities and public research organisations, and appointing members of the ARIS Scientific and Innovation Councils. Its broad composition, including representatives from across academia, industry and ministers, and rotating secretariat between MVZI, MGTŠ and the ministry for Cohesion, were intended to lay the foundations for cross-sectoral ownership and legitimacy of the strategic direction for research and innovation.

The smart specialisation strategy is expected to be more aligned with the national strategies

The transition from S4 to S5 continued the smart specialisation approach, with Slovenia's stakeholder-led EDP process noted by a 2021 European Commission study as an example of best practice. The S5 strategy is designed to be coherent with the ZZrID and complementary to the ReZrIS30, the Slovenian Industrial Strategy 2021-2030, Digital Slovenia, the AI programme and Skills Strategy Guidelines.

3.3 Have the reforms improved Slovenia's strategic orientation capacity?

As shown above, the reforms are intended to directly address the limited ability of the R&I system to substantiate, set and monitor the implementation of priorities, including thematic or impact-based ('mission-like') priorities. The Development Council has offered useful forums for discussion and targeted problem-solving, but its impact is constrained by weak political engagement, limited legitimacy, and insufficient analytical capacity. The new ReZrIS30 Strategy expected to guide public intervention well beyond the sole R&I authorities is hindered by the very problem it is expected to address: the R&I governance fragmentation across ministries. It is indeed still perceived largely as MVZI-led. Furthermore, prioritisation is hampered by broad strategic scopes and capacity constraints.

The Development Council has provided opportunities to address specific policy problems, but lacks the legitimacy and capacity to deliver impact

Like its predecessor (see Box 3.1), the Development Council lacks the political engagement and legitimacy for influence. The Council was received positively as an update of the former Council for Science and Technology, which was considered overly focused on research issues and suffered from poor attendance from ministers (OECD, 2024[6]). Interviewees note that Council meetings and working groups established by the Council are an effective platform for open and honest discussion. However, the 2025 ReZrIS30 evaluation noted that "the Development Council is apparently not yet recognised by members, especially ministries, as an expert advisory body to the government for scientific research and innovation" (IER and FDV, 2025[7]), highlighting that only one meeting took place in 2024, below the statutory minimum of two (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]). Ministers and their deputies are rarely present, meaning that sessions can fail to meet quorum (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[24]). In spite of an extensive mandate and efforts to address specific policy problems, notably through

two working groups on spinoffs and academia-industry relationships, the lack of political engagement and resulting gap in legitimacy prevents the Council from having a concrete impact.

The Council lacks financial resource and analytical capacity necessary to inform strategic decisions. The 2023-2024 OECD TSI study recommended the creation of a secretariat for the strategic steering bodies of the Development Council and Programme Committee, a proposal that was supported by the subsequent 2025 ReZrIS30 evaluation. This has not been implemented, and the Council does not have dedicated funds to commission analysis which can be used to improve the responsiveness of strategy and policy. In practice, interviews undertaken as part of this evaluation revealed that the secretariat function is performed by one official in MVZI, with additional analysis undertaken by the Council chair[2]. While MVZI may commission analysis on behalf of the Council, there has been little demand for this. Without effective analytical input, the Council will be unable to take the step from shared information to collective analytical reflection, jointly interrogating evidence, revising strategy, adjusting policy.

In spite of efforts to engage external stakeholders and connect R&I to national and EU strategies, sectoral ministries perceive ReZrIS30 as the responsibility of MVZI

Formal alignment between strategies is strong. The ReZrIS30 evaluation concluded that the strategy is "strongly aligned with European and national ERA strengthening strategy and its priorities" and that the Slovenian Industrial Strategy is substantively consistent with ReZrIS30 (IER and FDV, 2025[7]). According to the S5 strategy, the ZZrID Act was designed to "transcend silo-based understanding of sectoral policies" so that R&I would sit across, rather than alongside, the priorities of environment, economy and digital transformation, and the strategy is coherent with ZZrID (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023[25]) and complementary to the ReZrIS30, the Slovenian Industrial Strategy 2021–2030 (SIS), Digital Slovenia, the AI programme (NpUI) and Skills Strategy Guidelines. Elsewhere, the Slovenian FP10 strategy notes that positions were co-formed through interministerial coordination, and the Programme Committee was valuable in this respect (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2024[26]).

However, R&I stakeholders perceive the ReZrIS30 as primarily the strategy of MVZI, and cross-sectoral consistency is difficult to achieve. SRIPs representatives report 'thin' coordination across strategies and ministries, while both interviewees and the ReZrIS30 evaluation find that communication between ministries is often unproductive[3] (IER and FDV, 2025[7]) and measures are fragmented as a result of siloed portfolios. This fragmentation also stems from the rigid and stringent administrative rules that apply to EU structural funds, which limit the opportunities for closer integration of research and innovation measures.

Slovenia's strategic agenda for R&I remains overly broad

Slovenia's smart specialisation priorities have not narrowed since the transition from S4 to S5. The nine priority areas (later 10) covered by the Strategic Research and Innovation Partnerships (SRIPs) continue to give R&I funding a very broad target, and stakeholders describe the result as an "everything strategy" rather than a specialisation strategy (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023[25]). Nonetheless, stakeholders anticipate the forthcoming Entrepreneurial Discovery Process cycle as an opportunity to reduce priorities based on "an assessment of successful fields over the past decade"[4]. A new call for four innovative clusters is additionally expected to concentrate the activities of the SRIPs.

[2] Interview 221 (Interviewees are anonymous when quoted in this report, but for the sake of robustness and transparency interviews are identified with a specific code. Only the team of evaluators retains the matrix of corresponding interviewees to codes.)

[3] Interview 154

[4] Interview 1

Prioritisation is identified as contrary to the research-based culture of MVZI. Interviewees noted that the dominant research-oriented culture among decision-makers results in discomfort with the logic of prioritisation[5]. Ministries have also been unsystematic in their engagement of SRIPs to support prioritisation, in spite of a positive assessment of their relationships with business and research communities (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]).

The capacity to implement thematic priorities has been strengthened through new instruments, systematic monitoring and complementary evaluations

The capacity of a country to set priorities is of limited use if there are no mechanisms or instruments to implement these priorities via adequate funding instruments, incentives and monitoring.

New instruments indicate an emerging openness to directionality. The introduction of thematic funding instruments since 2023 represents a small shift towards the implementation of strategic directionality. The Gravitacija scheme, designed for large consortia conducting breakthrough research in defined thematic areas (climate/energy, medical technologies, advanced GIS, quantum), was described by one senior official as having "broke[n] the ice in quite a number of things: it is thematically oriented, with large consortia and an intention to go beyond basic research"[6].

A pilot framework for performance-based financing of research organisations signals a shift towards incentive structures more explicitly linked to strategic priorities, though it has not yet been formally adopted. This framework is currently being developed by ARIS and MVZI and relies on a set of tailored key performance indicators (KPIs) for each institution, calibrated to their size and disciplinary profile (e.g., whether it's a natural science or social science and humanities institution). Annual plans and progress of these institutions will be reviewed against these KPIs by MVZI and ARIS over a six-year horizon, allowing for continuity and accountability over time.

A dedicated system for monitoring the strategy rollout and effects is instrumental in supporting its implementation by different parts of the government. In line with this consideration, the ReZrIS30 strategy committed to developing "a system for monitoring and evaluation of R&I activities" together with regular consideration of "joint reports and executed evaluations" by the coordination bodies (Programme Committee, 2026[27]). MVZI has established a continuous monitoring framework to track the implementation of the ReZrIS30 strategy (delivering, for instance, every year a "ReZrIS30 implementation report").

Multiple evaluations enable progress to be assessed against strategic objectives. The Slovenian government has commissioned three successive external evaluations of its R&I system in as many years: the 2023-2024 TSI study, which diagnosed issues in the system's governance and proposed recommendations; the 2025 ReZrIS30 evaluation, which examined implementation against the strategy's own indicators; and the current 2026 OECD evaluation of the 2021–2025 institutional reforms. Each has a distinct scope, giving government a multi-layered analysis of the system that was previously not available. The forthcoming R&I Pact sets out additional evaluations alongside funding plans for the 2026-2028 period.

Another positive development is that ARIS is leveraging its position as the central implementation body for R&I instruments, to host the RDI Hub online and analytical portal, intended to "provide a structured overview of the R&I ecosystem, its stakeholders [and] funding", and has co-designed "a robust research evaluation system with stakeholders" with two complementary external evaluations within its six-year stable funding (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]).

[5] Interview 154

[6] Interview M19

3.4 Summary assessment

This section presents a summary of the assessment of the governance reforms at the level of strategic orientation. This summary uses the assessment criteria described in Table 1.1 and defined in Annex A to respond to the following questions:

- Intentionality: To what extent have reforms contributed to setting clear directions, responding to and anticipating needs of the R&I system?
- Legitimacy: To what extent have reforms achieved robust consensus on R&I objectives beyond R&I communities?
- Relevance: To what extent have reforms enabled collectively designing relevant, balanced, and evidence-informed strategic agendas and pathways?
- External consistency: To what extent have reforms connected R&I and sustainability agendas?

Strategic orientation assessment by criteria

The reforms have established a coherent legislative and institutional framework for strategic orientation. The ZZrID provides a unifying legislative basis, the ReZrIS30 introduces systematic monitoring, and the Development Council has established a forum for high-level R&I discussion. Thematic instruments such as Gravitacija and Strategic Projects signal a shift towards greater directionality.

In practice, however, the architecture is not translating into effective strategic orientation. The Development Council lacks political engagement and analytical support, the ReZrIS30 is still perceived as the strategy of one ministry rather than a whole-of-government instrument, strategic priorities remain broad, and insights from assessments of the system have not been consistently acted on.

The result is improvement across all dimensions of strategic orientation, with legitimacy remaining a key challenge, and a remaining need to act on the growing supply of data from monitoring and evaluation by increasing the demand for and application of analysis (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Summary assessment – Strategic orientation level

Criterion	Pre-reform baseline	2026 Assessment	Rating*
Intentionality	Ambitious legislative architecture but funding overwhelmingly bottom-up; no thematic programmes; ARRS targeted research collapsed to EUR 0.6M; S4 priorities "too numerous and broad"	ZZrID positions R&I as horizontal concern; Gravitacija and Strategic Projects introduce thematic instruments; but new instruments are marginal in budget terms and priorities have not narrowed	3. Moderate improvement
Legitimacy	R&I “side-lined as a policy priority”; Council for Science and Technology suffered “infrequent meetings and poor attendance from ministers”; S4 lacked political backup	Development Council created with broader composition; but “not yet recognised by members, especially ministries”; stakeholder participation in action plans valued but political engagement absent	2. Limited improvement
Relevance	No analytical platform; no foresight capacity; decision-makers showed “lack of appetite” for available analysis; S4 priorities broad and non-selective	Three successive external evaluations commissioned (TSI, ReZrIS30, OECD); ReZrIS30 monitoring tracks 101 activities, 31 indicators, 25 milestones. However no internal analytical capacity built within the Development Council; neither the Development Council nor the Programme	3. Moderate improvement in monitoring 2. Limited improvement in analytical use

		Committee has requested evidence from ARIS	
External consistency	Three overlapping strategies led by three bodies; “lack of spaces for discussion of strategic synergies”; strategies primarily owned by one ministry	Formal alignment strengthened - ReZrIS30 evaluation finds strategy "strongly aligned" with ERA priorities; S5 coherent with ZZrID, SIS, NpUI;. However, in practice, R&I remains perceived as MVZI's domain.	3. Moderate improvement

Note: quotations in the baseline column are from the OECD 2024 diagnostic.
*Ratings are based on evaluators’ own judgement. They range from 1. No improvement to 5. Very significant improvement

From strategic orientation assessment criteria to impacts

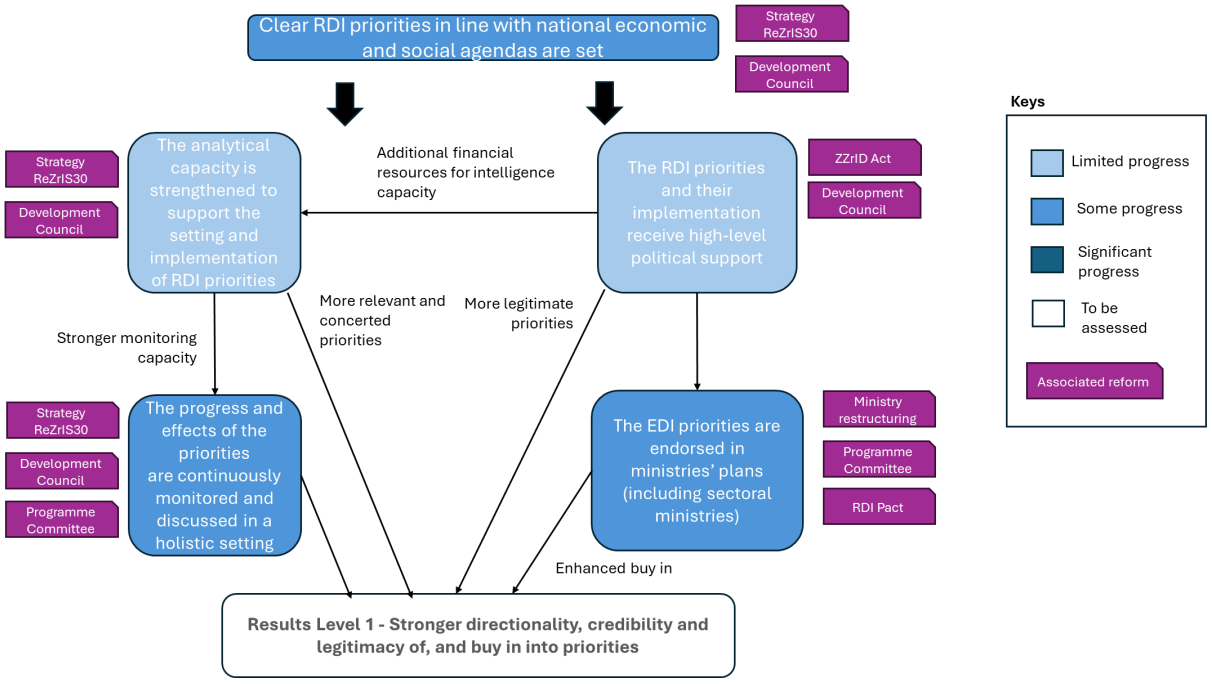
Figure 3.1 presents a graphical assessment of the reforms, illustrating the expected impact pathways at the level of strategic orientation, aimed at enhancing directionality, legitimacy, relevance, and external consistency. These types of graphs show the logic underpinning the reforms – and how reality departs from this logic. They are also a way to identify potential leverage points to improve the reform process.

The R&I priorities, along with the conditions for their effective implementation, are anchored in the ReZrIS30 framework and the ZZrID Act, and are further complemented by continuous advice from the Development Council. Their implementation and monitoring require dedicated analytical capacities and a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities, particularly for the Development Council. However, as evidenced in this chapter, this has only been realised to a limited extent. The Development Council has not yet fully assumed its intended role as a platform to assess progress and to facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue between public – including at a high political level – and private stakeholders on the actions needed to adjust and steer the course of implementation.

While the Programme Committee (detailed in Section 4) is instrumental in discussing the different R&I-relevant interventions across ministries, it is not clear that all sectors follow the same and unique agenda.

Recent improvements in the capacity to implement and monitor strategic priorities could, in the future, strengthen the credibility of these priorities, hence initiating a virtuous circle between priorities and impacts.

Figure 3.1. Impact diagram – Strategic orientation level



Source: OECD authors' elaboration

4 Planning and programming: aligning R&I plans and budgets across the government structure in Slovenia

This section assesses the ability of the R&I governance system to **align the plans of different actors across the government and set a commensurate level of resources to achieve the strategic directions**. This stage of planning and programming is essential to translate priorities into policies. The governance at this level determines in great part the interventions to be rolled out (or not) at the level of implementation.

The chapter is structured in four sections. The first presents Slovenia's capacity for planning and programming prior to the reforms, drawing on previous studies including the diagnostic produced as part of the 2023-2024 TSI project. Section 4.2 describes the reforms that have been implemented in order to improve this capacity. Section 4.3 presents an assessment of the effects of relevant reforms on Slovenia's planning and programming for R&I. Finally, 4.4 summarises the advances as well as the gaps and issues that remain to be resolved, using the assessment criteria presented in Table 1.1.

4.1 What was Slovenia's planning and programming capacity before the reforms?[7]

Cross-ministerial coordination has been a long-standing issue in Slovenia. The 2012 OECD Review of Slovenia's Innovation Policy highlighted fragmented governance of research and innovation resulted in poor implementation of the adopted strategic documents (OECD, 2012[2]). It was one of the ambitions of the 2011 R&I strategy of Slovenia to provide the framework for a wide-spanning coordination of R&I issues, paving the way for a consistent planning and implementation of research, innovation, industrial policy and sectoral policies (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 2011[29]). Yet, the European Commission noted in 2017 that no change had been observed in this area, except for the new coordination body for the implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategy, resulting in weak coordination across responsible departments and limited collaborative links between major stakeholders in innovation policy.

Complicating things further, the addition of dedicated governance arrangements for the Smart Specialisation Strategy created a third 'vertical' in the system, in addition to the previous R&I and industrial

[7] As set out in the Chapter 2, this evaluation uses as baseline the knowledge available on the main strengths and weaknesses of the Slovenian R&I governance before the last wave of reforms, which began in 2021. This section therefore the period up to 2021.

policy ones. Each vertical has its own strategy, lead ministry, coordination body, and implementation organisations (agencies, SRIPs, etc.) (European Commission, 2021[5]).

The 2024 diagnostic produced as part of the 2023-2024 OECD TSI study found that Slovenia's R&I planning and programming landscape still suffered from institutional fragmentation, weak and unpredictable funding, and an inefficient division of labour between agencies and ministries. However, a willingness to endow ARIS with a greater strategic role, commitment to funding through the ReZrIS30 Strategy, ZZrID Act and the introduction of the Programme Committee set a path to improvement (See Box 4.1).

Box 4.1. Main results from the OECD's 2024 diagnostic – Planning and programming

Cross-ministerial coordination was limited. Coordination between R&I institutions had been "very weak in recent years" and "particularly problematic since 2012-13", with significant siloes even between departments within the same ministry or agency. There was no central coordination, and R&I operated along three separate verticals: research, innovation, and ERDF. Cross-ministerial R&I coordination was "limited and ad-hoc". Sectoral ministries had very limited financial and human resources for R&I, with staff "disseminated in different departments… [with] no clear mandate". Critically, sectoral ministries did "not consider research and innovation activities as part of their mandate," redirecting SRIPs to MESS or MEDT when approached. Cross-government interactions relied on personal relationships rather than institutional linkages. The introduction of the Programme Committee, ARIS and MVZI were cited as positive developments.

The division of labour between ministries and agencies was inefficient, and agencies did not cooperate. Agencies, particularly ARRS, were "overly confined in an execution role, with too little leverage of their strategic capacity". Conversely, ministries were "overly involved in policy implementation tasks, notably the operation of calls for proposals and the management of project contracts," distracting them from strategic orientation and policy-making. Cooperation between ARRS and SPIRIT was "very scarce and limited," with "no formal cooperative initiative" and even informal staff interactions described as "scarce, which is more unusual in a small country". SPIRIT lacked innovation-dedicated personnel, limiting cross-agency collaboration.

Funding was allocated through bottom-up instruments, with no dedicated thematic funding. ARRS operated some targeted research programmes in cooperation with sectoral ministries, but these had declined dramatically, from EUR 9 million in 2008 to approximately EUR 0.6 million by 2014, representing only 1% of the ARRS budget. No dedicated thematic or challenge-led research and innovation programmes existed; "the bulk of funding is allocated through bottom-up instruments""

Funding was comparatively low and unpredictable. Government R&D funding was "among the lowest in international comparison relative to general government expenditures" and had "significantly decreased after 2012 as the result of budget restrictions in the wake of the 2008 financial and debt crisis". R&I support actions had been "characterised by a lack of continuity" driven by changes in government and reshuffling of priorities. Innovation funding had been "particularly irregular and unpredictable," generating "significant frustration and mistrust among innovation actors, notably those involved in the SRIPs". The commitment in the ReZrIS30 act to increase funding was cited as a key achievement to address funding issues.

Funding unpredictability was noted to be as detrimental as low levels of funding, allowing knowledge accumulated over years to be lost when funding ceased. Instability had eroded trust in future policy announcements, strategies, and plans. The problem of continuity was "more in the funding and implementation than in the strategic orientation"; long-term strategic plans existed, but they were not backed by reliable resources.

Source: (OECD, 2024[6])

4.2 What have been the main reforms of Slovenia's R&I planning and programming and their aims?

This section describes the reforms affecting Slovenia's R&I planning and programming and their aims. In an effort to enable a coordinated, continuous, whole-of-government approach to R&I, the government of Slovenia has implemented ambitious and comprehensive reforms intended to reduce fragmentation and support systematic collaboration between stakeholders.

The research and innovation portfolios are under a single Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)

Research sat in the former Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS), while innovation policy was managed by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MEDT), with a third vertical for smart specialisation under the Government Office for Development and Cohesion Policy (OECD, 2024[6]). Merging the portfolios into a single ministry in 2022 was intended to bring research and innovation "closer together" (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2023[20]).

The consolidation of ARIS is intended to improve efficiency and consistency

The ARIS consolidation combined research and innovation funding within a single agency under MVZI. Its mandate extends beyond the administration of competitive calls to instrument design across both research and innovation, and the provision of expertise and support to multiple ministries. The agency consolidation is covered in more detail in Section 5.

A new DG-level cross-ministerial body enables coordination on R&I policy

The Programme Committee (2022) was mandated to coordinate at DG-level the planning of R&I policy, review joint reports and evaluations, discuss implementation issues, and report to the Development Council (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023[25]). Initially composed of representatives from MVZI (MIZM from 4 June 2026), MGTŠ (MGDŠ from 4 June 2026), MKGP (MK from 4 June 2026), MKRR/SVRK (MLSKRR from 4 June 2026), ARIS, SPIRIT and SID Bank, its scope and membership has since broadened to include the ministries responsible for the fields of Environment, Defence, and Digital Transformation.

Legislative commitments and agreements set out a clear framework for stable growth in funding

The ZZrID was also instrumental in providing mechanisms for a stable and predictable increase in funding, a priori shielded from shorter-term political interferences. It established a minimum annual growth rate of 0.08% of GDP for R&D spending, while the 2025 ZZrID-C amendment established new target goals for research (1%) and innovation (0.25%).

Commitments to funding for R&I are not limited to public budgets from MVZI and ARIS. The R&D Agreement, entitled 'For a smart, sustainable and competitive Slovenia' (April 2023) committed the government, the Chamber of Commerce (GZS), the Rectors' Conference (RKRS) and the Coordination of Independent Research Institutes (KOsRIS) to a shared objectives including raising combined public and private R&D investment to at least 2.8% of GDP by 2027, alongside R&D tax relief, deregulation, and the establishment of a technology-innovation hub with the aim of addressing the 'valley of death' in innovation (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023[30]).

The stable funding model also includes six-year contracts for research organisations, replacing the previous system of project-based and historically allocated programme funding. The reforms have provided increased funding and autonomy to research institutions, balanced by new requirements for evaluation, with the aim of stimulating more strategic management and self-reflection to deliver on broader objectives for innovation (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]).

A multi-year R&I planning agreement ('R&I Pact') between multiple ministries is intended to support predictability and consistency

A multi-year R&I Pact ('Zavezništvo za raziskave in inovacije 2026–2028') has been developed as a cross-ministerial financial framework modelled on the Austrian system.[8] The Programme Committee served as the coordination body for this agreement, with all member ministries asked to submit their R&I plans; a first draft was presented to ministries prior to discussion at the Development Council and the Pact was adopted in June 2026.

4.3 Have the reforms improved Slovenia's R&I planning and programming capacity?

The integration of research and innovation within MVZI is recognised as a valuable reform, but capabilities are skewed towards research

The structural reform to connect research and innovation is acknowledged as a necessary change to the R&I governance system and interpreted as a clear signal that Slovenia is treating R&I as a single, connected agenda. Stakeholders have broadly welcomed the reform: an academic stakeholder identified it as "the most significant change" in the system[9], and the impact of an integrated ministry-agency system was described as "being felt across the governance architecture"[10].

However, innovation capacity within MVZI is lacking. The 2023-2024 OECD TSI study had anticipated this risk in the four conditions for the merger's success: (i) strengthening the human and financial resources available for innovation within the new ministry, (ii) building internal science-innovation connections, (iii) maintaining links with the former MEDT, and (iv) reflecting the integration at agency level. Regarding these conditions:

(i) The integration has meant that five people moved from the former MEDT to MVZI. The MVZI Directorate for Science and Innovation has 50 employees as of 9 April 2026. Alongside the five people in the Innovation Division, 28 sit within the Science Division, of whom 8 are on temporary employment status that comes to a close at the end of the RRF funding; 11 are in the Division for R&D programmes. The directorate's capacity is therefore skewed towards science, which stakeholders have identified as resulting in a limited capacity for innovation support[11].

[8] The Austrian government decided in 2020 to negotiate every three years an agreement based on the Research Financing Act on priorities between the three ministries with most significant research and innovation budgets. In a cross-ministerial setting, the 2021-2023 RTI Pact operationalises the targets and fields of activity that are set out in the RTI Strategy 2030 and defines the corresponding priorities and concrete measures to be implemented for the coming 3-year period. The Pact also serves to establish a multiannual (three-year) stable funding framework (amounting to Euro 3.9bn) and to reduce duplications between the three ministries (OECD, 2025[50]).

[9] Interview M14

[10] Interview 92

[11] Interview M15

(i) Science and innovation are now under a common directorate, with a dedicated division for science, another one for innovation, and a third one for R&D structural funds.

(ii) The relationships with MEDT (MGTŠ at the time of this sudy) have been improved as a result of the Programme Committee, with the R&I Pact laying an additional foundation for further coordination.

(iii) The integration at agency level has been realised (see 5.3)

As discussed in the assessment, reaping the benefits of these structural reforms requires stability to enable the necessary adaptation of processes, capabilities, and mindsets within both the newly integrated ministry and agency. In many countries, this has been a challenge as new governments can be tempted to reshuffle the scope of ministries and agencies.

Cross-ministerial dialogue has been improved by the development of the Programme Committee, but it remains a forum for information sharing rather than coordinated action

The expansion of the Programme Committee demonstrates the value that stakeholders perceive it provides. The Committee was created in 2022 with mandates to coordinate planning of R&I policy, review joint reports and evaluations, discuss implementation issues, and report to the Development Council. It is composed of DG-level representatives, initially from MVZI, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGTŠ), the Ministry of Agriculture (MKGP), the Government Office for Development and Cohesion (MKRR/SVRK), ARIS, SPIRIT Slovenija, and SID Bank. Its scope and membership has broadened, with the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy (MOPE), Ministry of Defence (MORS), and Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDP) recently joining.

The ReZrIS30 evaluation assessed that the Committee "operates well" (IER and FDV, 2025[7]), and participants value it for enabling regular contact. Stakeholders explained that regular Programme Committee meetings improve mutual understanding of plans and issues"[12]. However, some find that the Programme Committee remains a forum for information sharing rather than coordinated decision-making[13].

The Programme Committee has enabled the creation of valuable concrete outputs through cross-ministerial coordination. All ministries on the Committee were asked for their R&I plans; a first draft of the RDI Pact was presented to them prior to presentation to the Development Council[14]. The Committee was also used to co-shape Slovenia's position on FP10, the next EU Framework Programme (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2024[26]). Stakeholders see activities such as these as steps towards a stronger role for the Programme Committee to shape decisions.

Cross-ministerial coordination outside of the Programme Committee is weak. The ReZrIS30 evaluation found "communication between responsible ministries and other constituent bodies is poor". This is reflected in interviews conducted for this study. One interview described an inter-ministerial meeting that ended without decisions as participants could not find alignment[15]. A sectoral ministry official noted that the absence of coordination is producing duplication of effort in instrument funding, while lack of R&I capacity in sectoral ministries means that coordination is difficult to maintain outside of the meetings[16]. SRIP representatives experience the outcomes of a lack of coordination, describing a lack of harmonisation and particular issues at the TRL boundary between ministries[17].

[12] Interview 39
[13] Interview 92
[14] Interview 189
[15] Interview189
[16] Interview M17
[17] Interview M15

An impediment lies in the limited financial and human resources of sectoral ministries to engage consistently with R&I. While their representatives acknowledge that the Programme Committee has enabled greater information sharing on R&I, they note that their limited capacity makes engagement difficult. Stakeholders highlighted the value of regular opportunities for informal discussion, noting 'R&D coffees' and 'innovation breakfasts' that took place in previous years.

Some efficiencies have been realised by the creation of ARIS

The Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport now prepares calls in cooperation with ARIS while the agency handles execution and project oversight. This arrangement has freed the ministry to work on "other measures we never did before" and is perceived as improving system-level efficiency by having a single agency implement measures for multiple ministries[18]. The Ministry of Digital Transformation works with ARIS on specific AI calls where researcher inclusion is needed, noting that ARIS has "all these connections with the research community". The impact of agency consolidation in ARIS is covered in more detail in Section 5, noting that transition costs have created some challenges regarding efficiency.

The R&I Pact has potential to become a valuable holistic planning and monitoring tool

The R&I Pact represents a significant step forward in supporting coordinated planning and monitoring, enabling gaps and overlaps between ministries' plans to be visible. It has been made possible by the trust created, at least in part, in the Programme Committee. To achieve its objective of providing a holistic overview of forthcoming priorities and investments it must evolve in the coming years from a juxtaposition of programmes of different ministries towards an ex ante cross-ministerial planning tool.

In spite of increased funding in absolute terms, spending is stagnating relative to GDP

Funding for R&I has increased but is not meeting mandated growth rates. Total public funding for research and innovation in Slovenia has increased in nominal terms, reaching EUR 853 million (1.21% of GDP) in 2025 and EUR 889 million (1.19% of GDP) in 2026, but R&D spending as a share of GDP has stagnated at approximately 2.1% for four years, remaining below both the EU average (2.22%) and the level of innovation leaders (2.71%) (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]) (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[23]). The ZZrID-C mandates a 0.08% growth rate until public research and innovation funding reaches 1.25% of GDP, but specifies no sanction or corrective mechanism for non-compliance; the target was missed in both 2023 and 2024 without documented consequence.[19] Business-sector R&D has moved in the wrong direction, declining from 1.57% to 1.47% of GDP between 2021 and 2023, taking the 1.8% private-sector target from the R&D Agreement further away than when it was signed (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023[30]) (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]). A large portion of R&D funding is spent on increasing salary costs (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[24]).

4.4 Summary assessment

This section presents a summary of the assessment of the governance reforms at the level of planning and programming. This summary used the assessment criteria described in Table 1.1 and defined in Annex A and aims to respond to the following questions:

[18] Interview M17

[19] As discussed in section 2.2, a new, more comprehensive calculation method is under development, including all EU and sectoral ministries' funding. This will bring the indicator closer to the 1.25% ceiling.

- Horizontal and vertical consistency: To what extent have reforms established structures and mechanisms for aligning plans across areas and levels of government?
- Predictability and stability: To what extent have reforms ensured that plans and funding conditions are stable and consistent over time despite immediate political pressures, allowing researchers, firms, and investors to form reliable expectations and make long-term innovation decisions with reduced uncertainty
- Efficiency: To what extent have reforms balanced the costs and benefits of coordination?

Planning and programming assessment by criteria

Institutional changes such as the integration of research and innovation within MVZI and the establishment of the Programme Committee have sought to address fragmentation and are recognised by stakeholders both as preconditions for improvements to the R&I support landscape in Slovenia, and as a strong signal of the government's investment in a holistic approach to supporting R&I. This is leading to a deepening of reforms, with initiatives like the R&I Pact.

However, the operational integration behind them is incomplete. MVZI's capacity is skewed towards research and the multi-year cross-ministerial budget framework that would give the system predictability has not yet been used as a planning tool. Funding has increased in nominal terms but stagnated relative to GDP, and the legislative growth target has been missed without consequence (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Summary assessment – Planning and programming level

Criterion	Pre-reform baseline	2026 Assessment	Preliminary rating*
Horizontal and Vertical Consistency	Weak coordination particularly since 2012-13; three separate policy verticals; ARRS-SPIRIT cooperation very limited with little formal cooperative initiative; sectoral ministries did not consider R&I as part of their mandate"	MVZI merger integrated research and innovation portfolios; ARIS consolidation addressed agency fragmentation. Programme Committee enables regular cross-ministerial dialogue and has produced concrete outputs (instrument timeline, FP10 position, R&I Pact coordination). MVZI capabilities skewed towards research; Programme Committee remains information-sharing rather than coordinated planning; ministerial coordination is weak.	3. Moderate improvement
Predictability and Stability	Government R&D funding "among the lowest in international comparison"; innovation funding "particularly irregular and unpredictable"; instability eroded trust; "it takes years to accumulate knowledge... whereas it takes only one or two years without funding to waste these efforts"	Nominal funding increased (EUR 853M / 1.21% GDP in 2025) but R&D/GDP stagnant at ~2.1% for four years; 0.08% growth target missed in 2023 and 2024 without consequence; innovation funding overwhelmingly cohesion-dependent with no predictability; Stable funding for ROs is a positive exception; R&I Pact outlining instruments for two years.	2. Limited improvement
Efficiency	Agencies "overly confined in an execution role"; ministries "overly involved in policy implementation tasks"; programme funding allocated on historical basis; over-reliance on competitive project funding	ARIS strategic role expanded; MGTŠ freed to work on new measures by shifting execution to ARIS. However, transition costs significant, with the ARIS capacity gap contributing to delays (see Section 5 for more detail).	2. Limited improvement, as transition issues have reduced efficiency

Note: quotations in the baseline column are from the OECD 2024 diagnostic.

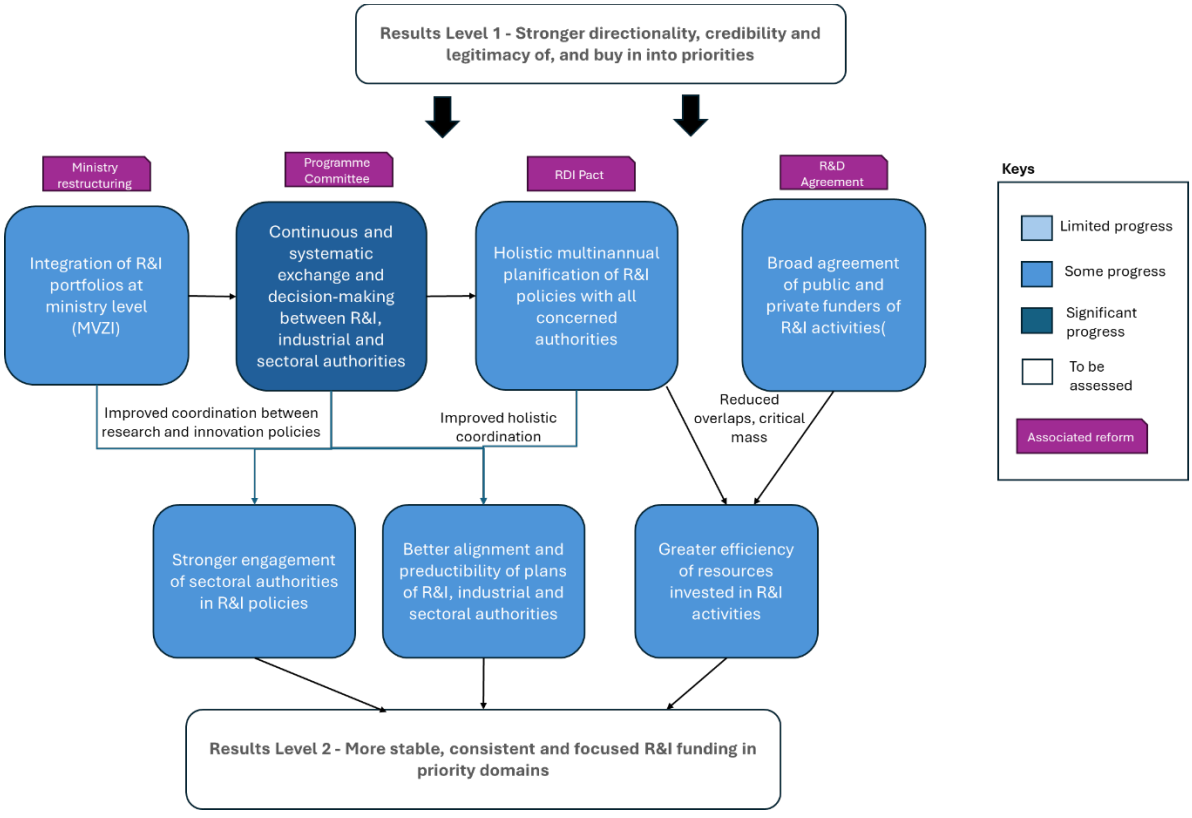
* Ratings are based on evaluators' own judgement. They range from 1. No improvement to 5. Very significant improvement

From programming and planning assessment criteria to impacts

Figure 4.1 presents a graphical assessment of the reforms, illustrating the expected impact pathways at the level of planning and programming, aimed at enhancing consistency, predictability and stability, and efficiency. It shows that the reforms of Slovenia's governance have established more formal and systematic arrangements for holistic coordination and planning of activities aligned with national priorities, not least the ministry restructuring for closer integration of research and innovation policies, and the Programme Committee and the recent R&I Pact for a broader holistic coordination. This has created the conditions for enhanced trust, engagement and predictability, which are key conditions for greater investment and cooperation, and, in the end, impacts in line with the national priorities (see Figure 3.1).

However, previous reports and evaluations show that these are not the first wave of reforms that address the issue of R&I coordination and stability. While the ones covered in this report are certainly the most ambitious, their effects will depend on their longevity and progressive integration in daily practices and mindsets. Numerous examples in national innovation systems show that coordination bodies lose momentum and focus after a certain number of years. The Programme Committee will have to avoid this pitfall, including when the funding from the RRF will fade out.

Figure 4.1. Impact diagram – Planning and programming level



Source: OECD authors' elaboration.

5 Implementing and learning from R&I policy interventions and reforms in Slovenia

This section assesses the ability of the R&I governance system to **enable the consistent implementation, monitoring and evaluation of R&I policy interventions (including through joint action when relevant) to achieve set plans.**

The chapter is structured in four sections. The first presents Slovenia's capacity for implementation and learning prior to the reforms, drawing on sources including the diagnostic produced as part of the 2023-2024 TSI project. Section 5.2 describes the reforms that have been implemented in order to improve this capacity. Section 5.3 presents an assessment of the effects of relevant reforms on Slovenia's implementation and learning for R&I. Finally, 5.4 summarises the advances as well as the gaps and issues that remain to be resolved using the assessment criteria presented in Table 1.1.

5.1 What was Slovenia's R&I implementation and learning capacity before the reforms?[20]

Weaknesses in implementation and policy learning have been persistent features of Slovenia's R&I system. The 2012 OECD Review identified a weak evaluation culture and an overpopulated policy mix marked by duplications in R&D funding, technology transfer, entrepreneurship, and science to industry collaboration (OECD, 2012[2]). By 2017, the RIO Country Report noted that little had changed, with declining business sector funding for R&D and an "implementation deficit". The 2021 DG Reform report further highlighted long delays in the publication of calls for tenders and a non-transparent planning of these calls.

The 2023-2024 OECD TSI study found that Slovenia's R&I system suffered from a fragmented policy mix skewed towards bottom-up research funding, weak knowledge transfer, limited private-sector engagement mechanisms, and an almost complete absence of monitoring, evaluation and learning infrastructure (See Box 5.1).

[20] As set out in the Chapter 2, this evaluation uses as baseline the knowledge available on the main strengths and weaknesses of the Slovenian R&I governance before the last wave of reforms, which began in 2021. This section therefore the period up to 2021.

Box 5.1. Main results from the OECD's 2024 diagnostic – Implementation and Learning

A split model of funding produced a structural 'valley of death'. Slovenia had a split funding model in which research was funded from the national budget and innovation from EU Structural Funds, "limiting the possibility of creating joint actions and integrating the policy instruments to support projects throughout the innovation chain". No dedicated thematic or challenge-led R&I programmes existed; the bulk of funding was allocated through bottom-up instruments. This produced a structural 'valley of death' at TRL 4-6, with limited support hindering the transition from laboratory proof-of-concept to validated systems. EUR 96.8 million in ESIF had been delivered for TRL 3-6 programmes between 2016 and 2018, but the TSI study found that over the full 2014-2022 period, ESIF delivered only 9 programmes and 24 projects at TRL 3-6, a low rate for a seven-year period. Inconsistent funding negatively impacted the viability of projects and the launch of follow-up work.

Venture capital and downstream support were minimal. The diagnostic identified insufficient private-sector financing of innovation, with green VC attracting only 0.01% of GDP (2017-2021) against an OECD average of 0.3%, and government VC representing only 5% of all VC deals. At TRL 7-9, the support available was minimal.

Knowledge transfer was weak, partially as a result of misaligned incentives. Long-term cooperation between research and industry was low, with partnerships "set up on an ad hoc basis". Researchers lacked incentives to contribute to knowledge transfer beyond publication, and "expertise, incentives, skills, and facilities" gaps inhibited research-industry knowledge exchange and collaboration. The SRIPs had struggled to move from strategic dialogue to implementation due to limited and irregular follow-up innovation funding.

SRIPs were the main mechanism for private-sector engagement. Nine SRIPs covering S4 priority areas were the principal instrument for stakeholder engagement and research-industry connection. They were "broadly praised for having promoted a quadruple helix strategic dialogue" and had developed strategic agendas and roadmaps. However, they differed significantly in maturity, and a "considerable amount of disillusionment" existed "due to the lack of follow up actions by the government". Their potential for bottom-up directionality, comparable to Swedish Strategic Innovation Programmes or Wallonia's S3, had not been realised.

Evaluation was described as a box-checking exercise for research organisations. ARRS's evaluation of research institutions was considered too quantitative, excellence-driven, with "too little attention on impact, incentivising "a box checking exercise" approach. ARRS had signed the DORA declaration in 2019, but evaluation practice was not yet aligned. Ex-post project evaluation was "limited to project final report, with most of the time no feedback from the agency".

A lack of systematic monitoring had a detrimental effect on policy learning and reorientation. There was no systematic monitoring of R&I actions across government beyond EU-fund requirements, no analytical platform, and no feedback loops. The OECD summarised that monitoring and evaluation being limited, "there are few opportunities for systematic policy learning or reorientation". The system's weaknesses lay "in the implementation of reforms and new initiatives, not in their design," and "the lack of proper monitoring of reforms often allows such a gap between intentions and achievements".

Source: (OECD, 2024[6])

5.2 What have been the main reforms of Slovenia's R&I implementation and learning?

This section describes the reforms affecting Slovenia's R&I implementation and learning and their aims. A wide range of changes have occurred in the R&I policy landscape, more or less directly connected to the reforms under evaluation.

The newly consolidated ARIS provides support across the entire TRL scale

The ARIS consolidation (2022, ongoing) expanded the mandate of the former research agency ARRS to provide support across the entire TRL scale from basic research to commercialisation, and address the 'valley of death' from TRLs 3-6, to improve coherence and harmonise instruments by managing calls on behalf of multiple ministries, and to address the inefficiencies associated with having multiple agencies targeting a small number of organisations[21].

The ZZrID-A amendment established the Innovation Council within ARIS to ensure legitimacy and relevance of the agency's innovation mandate, and the subsequent ZZrID-C amendment gave it decision-making authority over innovation evaluation methodology. ARIS's 2024-2027 strategy sets out three core goals: "1. Comprehensive support for research and innovation: establishment of a Slovenian ERC + EIC system and supporting instruments; 2. Defragmentation of implementation and simplification of measures: portfolios of measures, research space and research results; 3. Excellence of results and operational excellence of instrument implementation" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2023[31]).

The ZZrID established knowledge transfer as a legal obligation of publicly funded research

Under the ZZrID knowledge transfer provisions, research organisations and researchers must promote the use, protection and transfer of results to society and the economy. Article 77(2) explicitly permitted public research organisations to establish commercial companies for the purpose of knowledge transfer. The 2025 ZZrID-C amendment improved the definition of innovation actions and project support with an aim to strengthen knowledge transfer, and expanded the description of the statutory innovation support environment further to include innovation accelerators, open innovation, and explicit linking of research organisations with industry.

Knowledge transfer provision has been strengthened

A public call was launched for EUR 4.3 million in 2023 to set up and upgrade Knowledge Transfer Offices, funding two consortia from 2024-2029. One is led by the Jozef Stefan Institute covering ten research organisations, the other by the University of Ljubljana covering three universities (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]). Stable funding has enabled consistent human resource development in these Offices.

The R&D Agreement (2023) committed key national stakeholders to accelerating research-industry linkages and bridging the innovation funding gap

The R&D Agreement between the Government, the Chamber of Commerce (GZS), the Coordination of Independent Research Institutes (KOsRIS) and the Rectors' Conference committed to "accelerating linkages between research organisations, higher education and the economy" with emphasis on competence transfer and improved infrastructure with stable funding, and foresaw "a special fund and

[21] Interview 84

mechanisms for financing all phases of development of innovative companies" to bridge the 'valley of death' (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023[30]).

The evaluation of research organisations is being reformed

The reform to the evaluation of research organisations replaced the previous quantitative assessment with a formative evaluation framework that emphasises qualitative assessment, societal engagement and institutional capacity alongside research outputs. Research organisations were actively involved in developing the framework and its indicators. A pilot framework for performance-based financing of research organisations is being developed with tailored key performance indicators for each institution (see section 3.3).

The first pilot evaluation was performed in 2025. The first year of the new contract period is 2028, a full evaluation based on organisations' self-evaluation will be performed, with four experienced foreign evaluators with management experience.

Specific provisions have been made to limit funding instability. Only 5% can be redistributed between organisations overall, and no organisation can lose more than 3% for the first wave. In the next evaluation, the limit will be set at 10% maximum.

The Innovation Council (created under ZZrID-A, strengthened by ZZrID-C) was created to bring business and innovation perspectives into ARIS's governance structure, with decision-making authority over innovation evaluation methodology, but specific indicators for innovation still have to be introduced.

New funding instruments have been introduced

New funding instruments include:

- Gravitacija (Gravity projects) and Strateški projekti (Strategic projects): the first thematic public calls of the reform period, with EUR 12 million for Gravitacija (2025-2028) and EUR 15 million for Strategic projects (2025-2030), established as permanent financial mechanisms in the ARIS general act;
- A TRL 3-6 call was published in February 2025 at EUR 58.7 million, highlighted by IMAD as the type of "Higher-risk, disruptive R&I programmes" that are necessary in Slovenia (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]);
- The STEP technology platform (EUR 130 million through cohesion) (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[24]);
- The Vesna regional venture capital fund (established June 2024) (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2024[21]);
- The CEETT pre-seed fund, launched by SID Bank, HBOR and EIF, targeting research spin-offs (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[32]);
- ERC Proof-of-Concept Seal of Excellence co-financing scheme (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2025[33]).

The SRIPs were re-selected for 2023-2026

The Strategic Research and Innovation Partnerships (SRIPs) have been renewed, with nine partnerships re-selected in December 2023 for co-financing of EUR 7.4 million. A tenth partnership, GoDigital, is now in its third year of continuous operation.

During the implementation of the S5, Strategic Development and Innovation Partnerships (SRIPs) have significantly contributed to strengthening the Slovenian innovation ecosystem by connecting the economy, research organisations and the state and establishing permanent development partnerships to promote

cooperation, knowledge transfer, and research and innovation projects. SRIPs have prepared action plans in their priority areas, strengthened cooperation in international partnerships and projects, and contributed to the implementation of strategic goals agreed between the economy, science, and politics. Their activities have encouraged the development of joint development initiatives, connecting stakeholders in the areas of key enabling technologies, and creating guidelines for more effective integration of Slovenia into European initiatives, primarily Horizon, IPCEI, and now also the STEP Regulation. In addition, SRIPs have also highlighted the need for further development of demonstration centres or technological infrastructures, a stable system of public incentives for innovation projects, and further strengthening of partnerships as a key mechanism for increasing the competitiveness of the Slovenian economy and more effective transfer of knowledge to the economy and society.

After 2026, the continued systemic operation of Strategic Development and Innovation Partnerships (SRIP) is planned within the new programming period 2026–2030. The new operating model aims to build on the achievements of previous partnerships, while additionally emphasising the coordination of development priorities, the preparation of joint development initiatives in four key areas to support the technological breakthrough of companies, and the strengthening of the international competitiveness of the Slovenian innovation system.

The RDI Hub aims to fill the gap of a missing analytical and coordination platform for R&I information and services

The planned RDI Hub (RRI Stičišče) has potential to address the missing analytical platform identified in the 2023-2024 OECD TSI study. A formal stakeholder consultation from November 2023 to April 2024 involving 50 participants from 25 organisations produced a three-pillar design (physical hub, online platform, unified data system), to be staffed by five FTE. The Hub was envisaged as a single instrument addressing all four implementation and learning dimensions: making the policy mix navigable, supporting instrument interconnection through secretariat functions to the Programme Committee, convening stakeholders through a physical forum, and enabling reflexivity through unified data collection and monitoring.

The ReZrIS30 monitoring framework was introduced

The ReZrIS30 monitoring framework introduced systematic tracking of 101 activities, 31 indicators and 25 milestones, with periodic reporting to the Development Council (see Box 3.3 for further detail).

5.3 Have the reforms improved Slovenia's R&I interventions' implementation and learning capacity?

New instruments signal a shift to more strategic R&I support, but funding at higher TRLs remains unpredictable and Cohesion-dependent

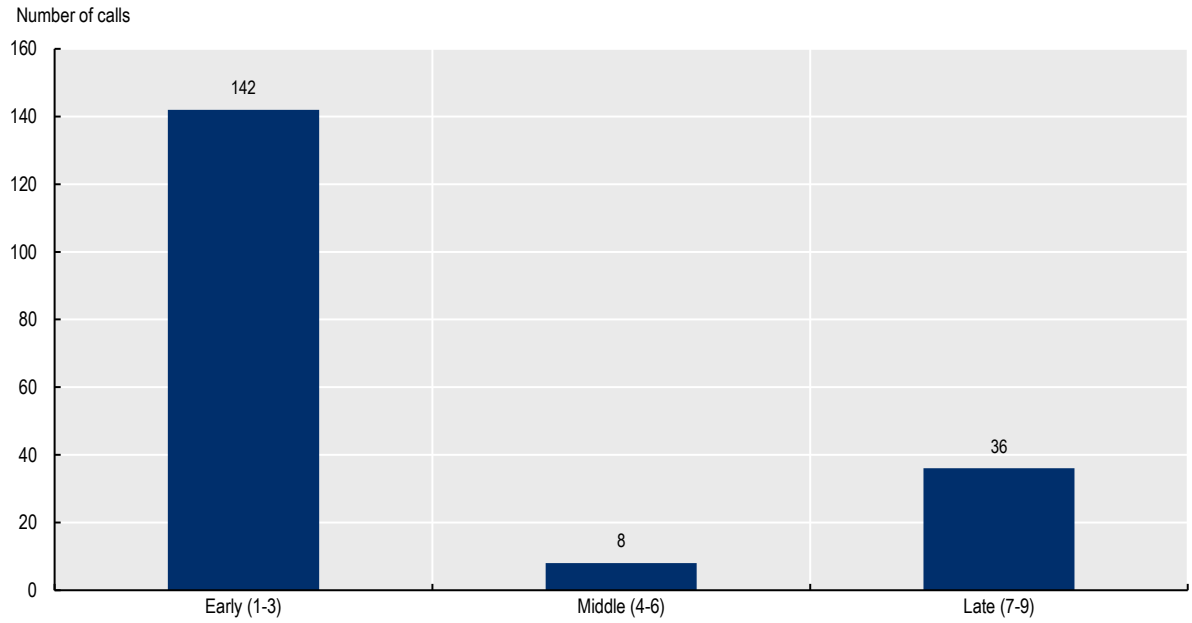
The ARIS consolidation has been designed to enable support across the entire technology readiness scale. In its 2024-2027 strategy, the organisation established a four-sector structure that is mapped to TRL bands, but acknowledged that the fourth sector (TRL 7-9) "does not exist or is partly merged in the department managing cohesion funds" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2023[31]). A planned long-term TRL 6-8 call remains listed as "in preparation", pending confirmation with the 2026 work plan (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2024[34]). The Innovation Council called for "a more harmonised set of incentives covering the whole innovation cycle - from research to market" and "emphasised the importance of including innovative SMEs and start-ups", while flagging "fragmentation

and disconnection of measures" that are "often temporally out of sync with the development cycles of companies" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2025[33]).

Instruments for higher TRLs remain infrequent, partially due to dependence on Cohesion funding, which is characterised by long and rigid procedures. Stakeholders interviewed as part of this evaluation expressed frustration at what they perceived as the infrequent calls above TRL 3, and a lack of a clear and continuous pathway from lower to higher TRLs. This aligns with the ReZrIS30 evaluation and OECD analysis (see Figure 5.1), which found that "instruments still poorly cover higher TRL, specifically TRL above 6. When TRL 3-6 projects conclude, there are no incentives available for continued development at TRL 6-9"[93].

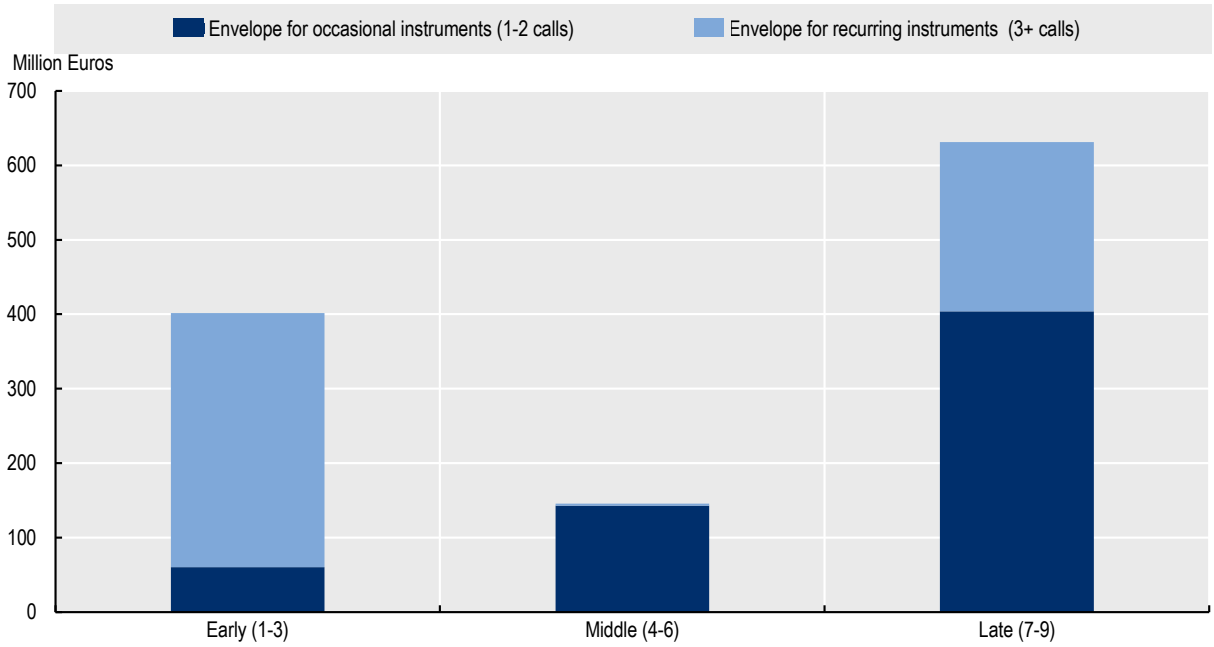
OECD analysis of the Programme Committee timetable of instruments between 2023-2026 shows a gap in provision for middle TRLs (4-6) with just 8 calls versus 146 for early (1-3) and 46 for late (7-9) when accounting for calls that were suspended or delayed (see Figure 5.1). Funding for middle TRLs significantly trails others, while at middle and late TRLs, only a minority of instruments recur, demonstrating limited predictability (Figure 5.2). Only 1.7% of the funding envelope scheduled for the middle band is attributed to instruments that recur 3 or more times in the period, and 35.9% for late TRLs. Notably, 40.3% of funding in the middle band comes through a single call. This is a marked contrast to the 85.9% of funding in recurring instruments for early TRLs.

Figure 5.1. Total number of calls, 2023-2026, by technology readiness level (TRL), adjusted to account for delayed and duplicated calls



Source: OECD analysis, based on (Republic of Slovenia, 2026[35]).

Figure 5.2. Funding envelope for occasional and recurring instruments, 2023-2026, by technology readiness level (TRL), adjusted to account for delayed and duplicated calls



Source: OECD analysis, based on (Republic of Slovenia, 2026[35]).

ARIS attributes a 2024 gap in higher-TRL calls to delays resulting from "difficulties in aligning the legal bases for Cohesion Policy implementation", which "weakened continuity for firms and intermediaries" and "created uncertainty and may have weakened trust in continuity of support" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]). The eight innovation calls published by ARIS in 2025 were mainly funded through European Cohesion Policy"[22]. Innovation received only EUR 24 million from the national integral budget for 2025-2026 combined (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[23]), and the ZZrID limits innovation funding to only 20% of total allocation (IER and FDV, 2025[7]). Stakeholders have additionally highlighted that instruments other than grant funding are under-developed and that the predominance of grant-funding discourages innovators from drawing on repayable instruments such as loans. An illustration of this is Slovenia's thin venture capital ecosystem: green VC attracted only 0.01% of GDP (2017-2021) versus 0.3% for the OECD average, and government VC (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]) only 5% of all VC deals (OECD, 2025[8]) .

The downstream weakness is visible in market outcomes and international comparators. Only 3.7% of Slovenian company revenue comes from products new to the market, ranking 20th in the EU alongside Romania, while the Visegrad Group achieves 6.7% and innovation leaders 8.2% (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]). IMAD concludes this "suggests that Slovenian companies focus too much on incremental and not enough on radical and creative innovations" (ibid.). The country produced only 50 funded startups per million inhabitants between 2017 and 2021, compared to 170 in small European countries (OECD, 2025[8]).

New directional instruments have begun to partially address the challenge of predictability in lower TRLs. Gravitacija and Strategic Projects were established as permanent financial mechanisms in the ARIS general act (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]). First-year disbursement,

[22] Interview M16

however, was EUR 0.6 million against a total ARIS budget of approximately EUR 346.5 million; a signal of directional intent rather than a shift in the funding mix. Mid-TRL innovation instruments funded under the RRP are temporary, with “transition to stable budget instruments or discontinuation envisaged, depending on evaluation results”. Whether the new instruments represent the beginning of a structural rebalancing or remain isolated additions to a predominantly bottom-up, cohesion-dependent system is yet to be demonstrated (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2023[31]).

Knowledge transfer provision has improved, but research-industry collaboration indicators are yet to follow

In 2023, MVZI published a public call for EUR 4.3 million to establish and upgrade Knowledge Transfer Offices (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2024[21]). Two consortia were selected in 2024: one led by the Jozef Stefan Institute covering ten research organisations, one led by the University of Ljubljana covering three universities. Each receives EUR 2.15 million for 2024-2029 (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]).The two consortia cooperate through annual events and a common website that acts as a national “one-stop-shop” for companies covering all thirteen institutions[23]. An initially unexpected outcome has been closer collaboration between KTOs and the Chambers of Commerce, which MVZI leadership describes as intentional and part of the general strategy[24].

The ten SRIPs are the primary mechanism for research-industry connection and show evidence of impact. According to a 2024 company survey, 71% of surveyed firms report that the innovation environment has improved since 2015, attributing this mainly to SRIPs and the smart specialisation incentive ecosystem (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]). Econometric analysis using counterfactuals finds that recipients of smart specialisation incentives are 23-26% more likely to engage in innovation cooperation over the following four years (ibid.). They are described by one stakeholder representing industry as “a good instrument”, with others noting how they have delivered real value through the creation of trust and long-term collaborative networks that cross different sectors.

Despite the SRIPs and expanded provision for knowledge transfer, collaboration indicators have moved in the wrong direction. The share of innovative companies cooperating with research institutions fell from 13.3% to 4.0% (though partly attributable to a CIS2022 methodology change) (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]). The business sector share in financing public R&D declined from 5.8% to 3.6% in the first year of the reforms (ibid.). Business R&D expenditure as a share of GDP fell from 1.57% to 1.47% between 2021 and 2023, even as absolute spending rose (ibid.). The ReZrIS30 evaluation stated that “effective measures aimed at stimulating private sector R&I expenditure have not yet been established”, and that state incentives have increased cooperation but "not every cooperation stimulated by state measures developed into long-term and effective cooperation that would result in knowledge transfer, innovations and impacts on employment and sales” (IER and FDV, 2025[7]). IMAD independently identifies the ”absence of (strategic) cooperation between the business sector and the state” as a key issue in creating a supportive environment for research and innovation (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, 2025[9]). Some observed that trust is an issue between industry on one side, and research and government on the other side.

Researcher incentives have been highlighted as a key barrier to industry collaboration and knowledge valorisation. The Development Council notes that career advancement in academia is based on publication, while applied work, such as patents, is not equally valued in habilitation processes (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[24]). Interviewees highlighted this as a continued issue, confirming the Council’s assessment that careers remain "incompatible with running spin-off companies, which hinders many researchers in transitioning to entrepreneurship” (Development Council

[23] Interview 116; Interview 68
[24] Interview 116; Interview 68

of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[36]). Within some institutions, research departments operate as "independent island[s]" and do not engage with knowledge transfer[25]. ARIS's new evaluation system, which explicitly includes knowledge transfer indicators and assesses "mechanisms that support collaboration with external actors", represents a response to this gap, along with a planned portfolio of training and support to encourage knowledge valorisation (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2023[31]).

The ZZrID Act's enablement of spin-offs has not yet translated into results either. Zero spin-off companies were established by PROs under the Act by 2024, despite a target of five by 2030 (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]). The implementing regulations have been blocked at the Ministry of Finance, which has stalled the framework needed to reconcile ZZrID Article 77 with public finance law prohibiting public institutions from holding equity in business entities (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[24]). A cross-ministerial working group was established in 2025 to address the blockage, and the Development Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for an EIC-like mechanism for supporting breakthrough ideas to market (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[37]) (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[38]). The 2025 working group on spin-offs confirmed that the legal basis exists, but entry is "currently extremely difficult" in practice (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[37]).

ARIS's broad new mandate has reduced fragmentation, but the capacity to fully deliver on it requires development

Several interviewees identify the ARIS consolidation as one of the most important changes to the system. Chamber of Commerce representatives described it as "one of the biggest game shifters", observing that it provides a better overview of instruments and activities[26]. An MVZI official stated that the most significant change "was that innovation is also merged in the agency... one agency that is looking after all of the instruments"[27].

Formal coordination between ARIS and other ecosystem actors has improved. ARIS leadership reports that cooperation with SPIRIT has improved since the reforms, and thirteen joint ARIS-SPIRIT training events were conducted by April 2026 (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[39]). However, representatives of other innovation funders and agencies report that informal connections with ARIS have declined and could be improved[28]. Unfortunately, the agency's capacity has not kept pace with new expectations as transitional challenges have emerged. ARIS grew from approximately 50 staff in 2023 to more than 100 by early 2026, but "did not receive a transfer of staff who previously implemented innovation calls; innovation funding capacity had to be built largely from scratch", a fact confirmed in ARIS's 2024-2027 strategy, which identifies upskilling of staff as a central enabling factor (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]) (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2023[31]). Over half of current staff are new employees who "still have a lot to learn"[29], and the agency has a number of open positions that it cannot fill. External stakeholders describe ARIS staff as lacking the knowledge to support innovation[30], noting that this exists in SPIRIT and the ministries and that the expertise and experience of the current director of ARIS is vital to development in this area.

[25] Interview 1
[26] Interview 1
[27] Interview 189
[28] Interview M18
[29] Interview M16
[30] Interview M15

Call timelines have become a friction point between the agency and the government. The agreement with the Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport took almost a year to conclude, resulting in delayed calls[31]. A minister described the gap between the call publication for STEP in November 2025 with conclusion only in December 2026 as "unacceptable", and evaluations are not being completed within the required six-month period[32], while other ministerial representatives have expressed frustration at the pace and complexity of ARIS's processes. Evaluation quality has improved through the introduction of random reviewer assignment and the use of external reviewers for innovation calls[33], but these reforms have extended evaluation timelines as reviewer cancellations increased due to content incompatibility.

Legal harmonisation has created bottlenecks. ARIS's internal acts must be aligned with the amended ZZrID through the Innovation Council, Scientific Council and MVZI, a process taking approximately one year. The agency will be fully operational in terms of both innovation and scientific activities, with the Innovation Council being granted equal powers to the Scientific Council by the end of September 2026.

The Innovation Council, designed to ensure legitimacy and relevance of ARIS's innovation mandate, is not yet considered effective. The ZZrID-A amendment established the Innovation Council, and ZZrID-C gave it decision-making authority it previously lacked, including the power to set evaluation methodology for innovation activities as an implementing act (Republic of Slovenia, 2024[40])[34]. However, the Council operated for most of 2024 "without a clear legal and financial basis" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2025[33]). Stakeholders have highlighted that innovation expertise and industry are not sufficiently represented in the Council, and that confidentiality restrictions prevent members from consulting their institutional networks to provide valuable advice[35]. In addition, the strict regulations concerning the 2-year length of mandate for members have been highlighted as an issue for achieving practical outcomes[36]. Efforts to improve the governance structures and better integrate stakeholders in the second mandate of the Innovation Council, including its new powers, are expected to improve its functioning and impact going forward.

ARIS's share of the state budget has declined despite absolute growth, falling from 2.48% in 2023 to 2.23% in 2024, while its share of GDP remained flat at 0.5%, "interrupting the trend of growing share which had applied since 2017" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2025[33]). This sits uneasily with the Historic Agreement's commitment to "additional funding" for the new agency and with the TSI's 2023 observation that Slovenian government R&D funding was already "among the lowest in international comparison relative to general government expenditures" (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023[30]) (OECD, 2024[6]). The TSI diagnostic had cautioned that the agency would need "adequate institutional and funding mechanisms between the agency and ministries other than MESS [MVZI at the time of this study]" to function as a "multi-principals agency".

The change in ARIS's role has positively reshaped relationships with public stakeholders, but private sector engagement deserves further attention to build trust

The change in evaluation approaches for research organisations (ROs) has deepened ARIS's relationship with them. ARIS has established a new formative evaluation framework for ROs that emphasises qualitative assessment, societal engagement and institutional capacity alongside research outputs (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]). ROs were actively involved in developing the

[31] Interview 1

[32] Interview M14

[33] Interview 84

[34] Interview 84

[35] Interview 1, Interview M19

[36] InterviewM2

framework, providing feedback on the selection of indicators (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]). The approach is producing early behavioural change: according to ARIS, the Jozef Stefan Institute began restructuring "simply because they were asked to show their performance across different institutional elements, not only research outputs", and the University of Ljubljana developed a comprehensive self-evaluation system in direct response[37] (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]). Research stakeholders have welcomed the new approach to evaluation, but state that its introduction has resulted in a duplication of evaluation for universities, which are subject both to accreditation by the national quality agency and ARIS's institutional evaluation.

ARIS has also strengthened its role shaping evaluation procedures: it has introduced random reviewer assignment within sub-fields, while using exclusively foreign reviewers for innovation calls in an attempt to eliminate bias[38].

Businesses, however, state that their needs are not effectively understood by ARIS, and they lack representation in key bodies. Companies report that ARIS remains "far away from the needs of the companies" with staff who "are not even aware of the new business models", and that the agency is "focusing on scientific [issues], not on companies"[39]. The innovation scope has narrowed under ARIS: where SPIRIT previously covered general innovation support, ARIS is "more focused on knowledge transfer from research institutions - deep tech"[40]; stakeholders note that the transfer of 'softer' support and convening functions, such as workshops and information events, from SPRIT to ARIS has also been unclear, resulting in less systematic engagement of innovators. Stricter tender procedures are described by an interviewee as "very, very difficult, complicated"[41], with co-financing mandatory for applied projects functioning as a barrier and calls increasingly requiring applicants to be public research institutions, excluding private universities and companies (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[23]) (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025[24]). ARIS states that business stakeholders report that "their views and interests are not sufficiently reflected in current working bodies" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]). The Innovation Council, designed to bring business perspective into ARIS governance, includes economy-side representation, has been described as dominated by university and research views[42].

ARIS is taking action to improve relationships and collaboration with industry stakeholders. The annual Dan ARIS 2024 event, dedicated to strengthening science-economy cooperation, drew more than 250 participants from research, education, innovation and business institutions in 2024 (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2025[33]). ARIS now conducts a regular Service Quality Survey to collect user feedback from research organisations, and reports that "more structured outreach through information days and consultations has surfaced implementation frictions earlier, improving the system's capacity to learn and adjust" (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]).

The RDI Hub establishes a valuable analytical and coordination function, but its mandate and resourcing require clarification

The RDI Hub (RRI Stičišče) was conceived to contribute across all four of the implementation and learning dimensions. The Hub was envisaged as a single instrument that would make the policy mix navigable by

[37] Interview M16

[38] Interview 84

[39] Interview 1

[40] Interview M16

[41] Interview M15

[42] Interview 6

exposing funding opportunities by entity type, goals and TRL level (KPMG, 2024[41]), support instrument interconnection by providing "expert, procedural and technical support to the Programme Committee... with the preparation of proposals, baselines and background materials" (ibid.), convene private sector and stakeholders through a physical hub operating as an "institutionalised form of stakeholder cooperation through expert working groups and a discussion forum" (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[42]), and support reflexivity through a unified data collection system for monitoring key RRI indicators (ibid.). The Goal 5 Action Plan anchored it as measure U5.1.5 with a 2026 delivery milestone (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[43]).

A formal consultation involving 50 participants from 25 organisations across state bodies, science and economy organisations, and support-environment representatives (KPMG, 2024[41]) gave legitimacy and weight to the proposed structure and activities of the Hub. The proposed design resulting from this process was a three-pillar structure (physical hub, online hub, unified data system), staffed by five FTE across defined roles (manager, expert working groups coordinator, online Hub coordinator, analytics and evaluation specialist, analytics and evaluation coordinator) with establishment requiring an investment of EUR 1.2-1.5 million over approximately 26 months (ibid.) (Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 2024[42]). The Hub was intended by the consultation group as a distinct unit within an existing organisation with "maximum autonomy so that it can equally integrate the objectives of all R&I stakeholders" (KPMG, 2024[41]). To ensure connection to the key coordination and decision-making bodies, the Hub manager was to be appointed by the host organisation but approved by the Programme Committee, providing secretariat-adjacent support to both the Programme Committee and, in the recommendation of the ReZrIS30 evaluators and OECD TSI study, to the Development Council (KPMG, 2024[41]).

Implementation has diverged from the consulted design, with the Hub currently lacking a mandate and capacity to support decision-making by the Programme Committee and Development Council. ARIS explains that "the coordination-support role to the Programme Committee, envisaged during the consultation, remains undefined", while the Development Council narrowed the scope to focus on a digital platform, a data hub and evaluations, with the envisaged secretariat function remaining in the ministries (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28])[43]. The task of establishing the Hub was transferred from SPIRIT to ARIS in the second half of 2024, creating sense of disruption and delay among external stakeholders (Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2025[22]). ARIS is now delivering the Hub as "a national online and analytical platform" and working within a tight timeline to implement an initial pilot under RRF funding (Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, 2026[28]). Post-RRF, ARIS leadership indicated the Hub will operate with "around two or three people plus analytical capacity" against the consulted five FTE, and integral funding beyond the RRF period has not been secured (KPMG, 2024[41]).

As of mid-June 2026, a prototype of the online platform shown to consultation stakeholders was well received, and its launch expected at the end of June with progressive updating to follow. An event was held on 10 June covering knowledge transfer and the lessons of recent TRL 3-6 programmes, representing the first step in the development of the physical convening pillar of the Hub. Two staff are being recruited, with the Hub expected to be fully operational in September.

An increase in stable funding and the introduction of self-evaluation has built the strategic capabilities of ROs

Six-year stable funding and self-evaluation have begun to promote longer-term strategic planning within research institutions. ARIS describes that this approach has already led to concrete impact in the University of Ljubljana, which has established a system for self-evaluation that enables the identification of strategic

[43] Interview 99

priorities, and the Jozef Stefan Institute, which has undertaken internal reforms. The organisation states that stable funding has stimulated governance changes including “increasing the proportion of permanent staff”, “enhancing employment opportunities and empowerment of early-career researchers” and “promoting institutional profiling and specialisation”.

5.4 Summary assessment

This section presents a summary of the assessment of the governance reforms at the level of implementation and learning. This summary uses the assessment criteria described in Table 1.1 and defined in Annex A in order to respond to the following questions:

- Policy mix: To what extent have reforms ensured a consistent mix of interventions covering all needs across innovation chain stages?
- Exploratory governance: To what extent have reforms enabled interconnecting different instruments to leverage complementarities?
- Private sector and stakeholder engagement: To what extent have reforms set mechanisms and spaces for experimenting with the private sector and stakeholders?
- Reflexivity: To what extent have reforms enabled monitoring, evaluating, learning and improving?

The reforms have introduced new instruments, reshaped evaluation practices, and expanded the provision for knowledge transfer. However, implementation remains an area of many challenges: the valley of death at higher TRLs has not been closed, business stakeholders feel less well served under ARIS than under SPIRIT, headline collaboration indicators have declined, and the analytical platform that would support policy learning has been delayed and has an unclear mandate (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Summary assessment – Implementation and learning level

Criterion	Pre-reform baseline	2026 Assessment	Rating*
Policy mix coverage and coherence	Research-national / innovation-ERDF split; no thematic programmes; “valley of death” at TRL 4-6; ESIF delivered only 9 programmes at TRL 3-6 over 2014-2022	New instruments introduced (Gravitacija, Strategic Projects, TRL 3-6 call at EUR 58.7M, STEP EUR 130M, Vesna fund, CEETT, ERC PoC Seal). However, limited TRL 7-9 sector within ARIS; TRL 3-6 and 6-9 calls not sequenced; only 3.7% of company revenue from new-to-market products, 20th in EU; 50 funded startups per million inhabitants vs 170 in small European countries.	2. Limited improvement
Exploratory governance	No capacity for anticipatory analysis; “high level of risk-aversion in public administrations”; no test beds or policy pilot frameworks	Programme Committee enables information exchange across ministries; but instruments are not interconnected; no evidence of systematic leveraging of complementarities; no policy experimentation infrastructure established.	2. Limited improvement
Private sector and stakeholder engagement	SRIPs promoted "quadruple helix strategic dialogue" but partnerships "ad hoc"; researcher incentives misaligned; "valley of death" constrained cooperative projects	ARIS evaluation reform deepened RO relationships (positive); KTOs operational with national one-stop-shop; SRIPs re-selected with econometric evidence of impact — recipients 23-26% more likely to cooperate; 71% of surveyed firms report improved innovation environment. However, business stakeholders do not feel well	Mixed – 2. Moderate improvement for ROs, deterioration for business

		served by ARIS; stricter tender procedures are perceived as overly complicated; innovation scope narrowed to 'deep tech'; cooperation indicators declined; "effective measures aimed at stimulating private sector R&I expenditure have not yet been established"; zero spin-offs established.	
Reflexivity	"No overall and systematic monitoring"; policy evaluations few "except those related to EU funds"; ex-post evaluation "limited to project final report"; no feedback loops; "few opportunities for systematic policy learning"	ReZrIS30 monitoring is progress compared to previous strategy; three successive external evaluations commissioned. Analytical capacity within ARIS still developing; RDI Hub delayed, narrowed to digital platform, 2-3 FTE vs consulted 5; no established link from ARIS analysis to Development Council or Programme Committee; ARIS overwhelmed and unable to reflect and improve.	2. Moderate improvement in monitoring; 1. Limited improvement in learning

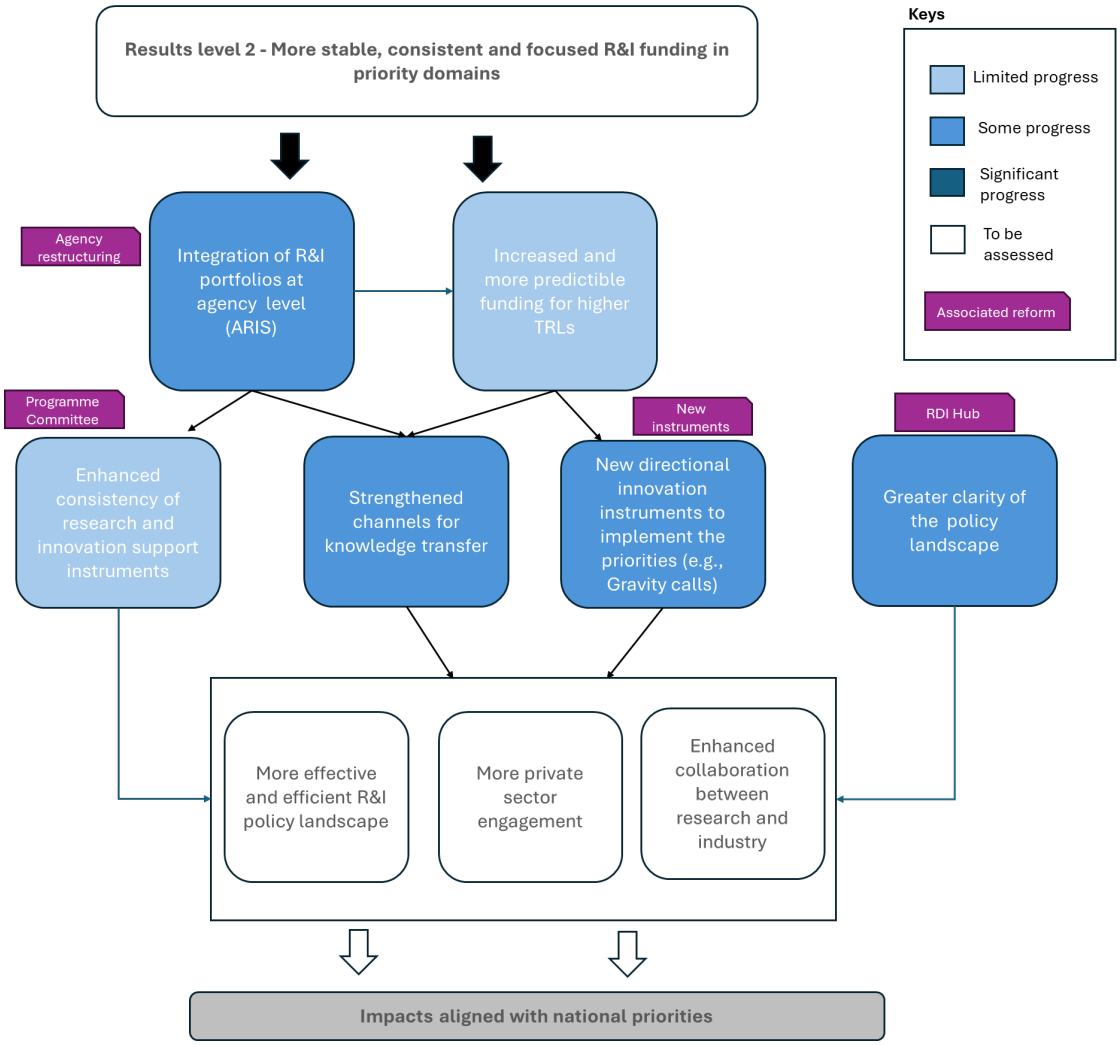
Note: quotations in the baseline column are from the OECD 2024 diagnostic.
* Ratings are based on evaluators' own judgement. They range from 1. No improvement to 5. Very significant improvement

From implementation and learning assessment criteria to impacts

Figure 5.3 presents a graphical assessment of the reforms, illustrating the expected impact pathways at the level of implementing and learning, aimed at enhancing the coverage and coherence of the policy mix, exploratory governance, private-sector and stakeholder engagement, and reflexivity. It shows that the integration of research and innovation support instruments in a single agency represents an ambitious and potentially valuable structural reform, but the predictability of innovation support is still considered to be limited by the potential beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the merger of the agencies should be complemented by actions within the agency to more closely connect the research and innovation support instruments. Experience shows that while the structures can be modified rather rapidly, adapting the processes, capabilities and mindsets to better integrate research and innovation support takes time, hence the need for continuous efforts and engagements. In the coming years, stability in organisational arrangements at both ministerial and agency levels will be essential to fully realise the benefits of the ongoing reforms. This will require resisting the risk of frequent restructuring driven by short-term political considerations.

Figure 5.3. Impact diagram – Implementation and learning level



Source: OECD authors' elaboration.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

Slovenia has undertaken an ambitious and comprehensive programme of governance reforms aimed at creating a more coherent, whole-of-government research and innovation (R&I) system. It has leveraged the opportunity provided by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) not only to increase funding for research and innovation performers – impacts that can be significant but are often temporary – but, more importantly, to drive lasting structural changes in how priorities are set, policies are coordinated, funding is allocated, and outcomes are evaluated. The experience of Slovenia is quite unique in that respect, in both the scope and depth of the reforms undertaken.

Overall, the evaluation shows that reforms have enabled more effective and consistent steering, coordination, implementation and have the potential for more positive effects. However, persistent gaps in implementation mean that the system's benefits are still to fully materialise. Fully realising the system benefits from the reforms will depend on continuing current reform efforts in a stable environment, robust to political changes. This includes notably that no new structural changes (e.g., new changes of ministerial scope, “demerger”) come in the way of the adaptation of processes and learning. The benefits from mergers take time to manifest themselves: continuous investment and monitoring, high-level support, and political patience will be key.

Following these overarching principles of continuity of efforts, careful monitoring and patience, Slovenia could undertake the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Entrust the Development Council with dedicated tasks, processes and resources to perform its high-level advisory mission.

Rationale

The Development Council has yet to establish the legitimacy, political engagement, and analytical capacity needed to influence strategic decision-making. A self-reinforcing cycle has taken hold: the Council perceives itself as insufficiently valued by policymakers – evidenced by the low uptake of its recommendations and ministers' infrequent attendance at its meetings – while policymakers, in turn, view the Council as offering limited practical value. This mutual disengagement compounds over time, leaving the Council unable to demonstrate the impact that would otherwise attract greater political attention.

Resource constraints deepen the problem. Analytically, the Council remains weakly equipped, despite some discretionary funding held by MVZI that is available on request to commission analytical work. If strengthened and better utilised, these resources could meaningfully strengthen the evidence base underpinning strategy and policy, hence also reinforcing the legitimacy of the Council and its advice.

The main thrust of this recommendation is to provide the Council with a few clear and important responsibilities in the Slovenian R&I system, which will strengthen its legitimacy and allow it to show its usefulness. These responsibilities are, for the most part, already in the Council mandate but have not been carried out so far. This recommendation points to precise and tangible initiatives and processes where the Council can deliver its expertise on concrete matters, exercise an influence on high-level strategic issues and become a recognised institution for the discussion of the future of the Slovenian R&I system. It is

expected that this 'upgrade' of the responsibilities of the Council will encourage regular engagement of ministers at the Development Council's meeting.

Implementation guidelines

1.1. The Council should agree on an annual programme of topics to address, as well as a process to ensure the cross-ministerial legitimacy of this programme – including discussion and endorsement at cabinet level – while retaining the flexibility to incorporate emerging topics throughout the year;

1.2. The Council should lead the development of a 'State of the R&I system' report (e.g., every two years), encompassing relevant R&I statistics and policy topics (not least those addressed by the Council during the period covered by the report). An important component of the report could be the monitoring of the implementation of the ReZrIS30 (currently performed by the Institute for Economic Research (IER)). This report would include recommendations for addressing gaps and leveraging opportunities. A process should be established for discussing this report with relevant public authorities first (notably in the Programme Committee) and the R&I community at large in a dedicated event;

> *According to the Research and Technology Promotion Act, the Austrian Council is assigned to establish innovation monitoring and examine the step-by-step implementation of an Austrian RTI strategy. In 2010, the Cabinet commissioned the Austrian Council to compile an annual report on Austria's scientific and technological capability. This report records the results of the analysis of the objectives of the RTI Strategy 2030 and the analysis of the current strengths and weaknesses of the Austrian RTI system in the international comparison.*
>
> *In Finland, the Research and Innovation Council (RIC) was significantly strengthened through a revision of its governing decree in 2023, with the objective of enhancing strategic steering, cross-ministerial coordination, and the overall impact of research and innovation policy. The Council's core responsibilities now include:*
> *- supporting the Government in developing long-term, comprehensive STI policy,*
> *- formulating and proposing national strategic priorities ("strategic choices"),*
> *- monitoring changes in the domestic and international operating environment,*
> *- coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the Act on Research and Development Funding and the associated multiannual R&D funding plan,*
> *- preparing initiatives related to research and innovation policy, and*
> *- advising on and proposing the allocation of public R&D funding.*
> *It functions through a two-step decision-making process, enabled by the secretariat: i) preparatory meetings (civil servants & stakeholders); ii) formal ministerial meetings*

> *In Estonia, the Steering Committee for the Research, Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (RDIE) Strategy, a central governance body responsible for steering, monitoring, and adjusting Estonia's national STI strategy (2021–2035). The latter was created specifically for the RDIE Strategy, replacing the earlier Research Policy Committee, Innovation Policy Committee, and Smart Specialisation Steering Committee.*
> *The RDIE Steering Committee holds a strategic management role at the ministerial level. Its primary responsibilities are to:*
> *- Monitor the implementation of the RDIE Strategy and assess progress in RDIE focus areas.*
> *- Make recommendations for adjustments to the Strategy and its programmes when needed.*
> *- Propose evaluations and improvement plans to strengthen strategic coherence.*
> *- Review the implementation programmes annually before the national budget process.*

1.3. The report and all the recommendations of the Council should be available on a dedicated website, alongside meeting minutes;

1.4. The process for the Council to request specific analyses to support its discussions (and those of its working groups) and recommendations should be clarified. This could be reinforced by the establishment of an externalised analytical support capacity for the Development Council and Programme Committee, with a dedicated budget to support strategic and analytical work (e.g. data, foresight, background research, etc.);

1.5. The Council should hold prerogatives regarding the cross-ministerial programmes (see recommendation 2) under the model of the Japanese Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (CSTI);

> *The CSTI has a concrete role in the operation of the Japanese Cross-ministerial Strategic Innovation Promotion Program (SIP). The SIP is a large multiannual national STI initiative created in 2014 to promote research, innovation and demonstration activities in an integrated way. It aims to both address societal challenges and foster economic growth, in areas where strong interministerial coordination is needed. Interministeriality is seen as a way to implement continuous, end–to–end activities from laboratories to early application, and better connect research and innovation activities with the social demand and sectoral context. The CSTI selects the SIP programmes (i.e., the missions) and the Program Directors for each programme. The Council also validates the SIP Governing Board's decisions, the SIP's highest decision-making body. The programmes also regularly report their progress to the CSTI. The CSTI's 'hands-on' responsibilities in the SIP might be considered too comprehensive, blurring the frontier between strategy and execution. It has also generated an important workload for its executive members, to the detriment of some of its core functions in the orientation and coordination of the whole STI system. It has, however, clearly anchored the council to an essential cross-ministerial programme at the core of the national innovation system, providing it with a high-level legitimacy and a policy lever to exercise real influence (Larrue, 2021[44]).*

The cross-ministerial programmes proposed in Recommendation 2 offer an opportunity to position the Development Council at the core of the Slovenian innovation system, strengthen its legitimacy across all ministries, and give it agency over research and innovation activities. This will be beneficial to all the tasks of the Council, including those beyond the cross-ministerial programmes. The prerogatives could include notably the validation of the choice of the cross-ministerial programmes and their main strategic and monitoring documents (strategic roadmaps for each programme and annual implementation reports).

Recommendation 2: Launch cross-ministerial, mission-like, R&I programmes from "ideas to usage", in selected challenge and opportunity areas.

Rationale

While instrumental, the ReZrIS30 has not yet become the 'whole-of-government' strategy to guide research and innovation activities across all policy areas and sectors. Its scope of influence is particularly strong within MVZI's remit and less so among other ministries whose support to (often limited) research and innovation activities remains chiefly driven by their sectoral policies. Furthermore, the Strategy, like its predecessor, does not set explicit thematic priorities. The limited size of both its economy and research landscape makes it challenging to identify domains with sufficient critical mass. An overly restrictive approach to prioritisation could risk undermining the strong niches that would fall outside the selected focus areas.

This report, therefore, does not recommend another strategy, plan or other list of priorities, which would add to an already crowded strategic landscape and, in the end, would certainly suffer from the same limitations as the ReZrIS30. Alternatively, it is proposed to establish cross-ministerial programmes which would engage all relevant authorities around shared objectives, with dedicated funding, incentives and commitments. These mission initiatives have the power to federate public and private actors from different disciplines and sectors ton contribute to these shared objectives, therefore building on the Slovenian strengths dispersed in various niche areas.

Implementation guidelines

Each programme (adopting to a greater or lesser extent a mission-oriented policy approach) could have the following characteristics:

2.1. Driven by concrete objectives in line with national priorities and EU priorities (the new Framework Program, European Competitiveness Fund and Slovenian priorities in Structural Funds);

2.2. Directed towards the resolution of key societal and economic problems (not only advancing knowledge and producing innovations), defined with stakeholders and citizens. They should not be defined in technocratic terms but be “inspiring” and “speak to people”;

2.3. A dedicated, central, multiannual budget, with some necessary co-funding by the relevant ministries and the possibility of additional EU funding. The central budget will provide incentives for engagement of sectoral ministries and the co-funding requirement will guarantee their strong commitment;

2.4. A dual leadership by MVZI and one other relevant ministry (depending on the programme/mission);

2.5. Cross-ministerial and cross-agency coordination groups for, respectively, collective strategic and operational decisions;

2.6. A clear underpinning roadmap/theory of change to achieve the objectives, revised every two years;

2.7. Regular reporting to Programme Committee and Development Council (see recommendation 1);

2.8. Specific processes and practices for notably selecting and managing projects (e.g., proactive portfolio management as opposed to arms-length project-based management). This will require adapting some rules and incentives (e.g., types of calls, selection criteria) and training ministry and agency staff and partners (e.g., in design and system thinking; also training of experts so that they are “embedded” in the mission, not only judging proposals on the basis of the research excellence).

When successful, these mission-like programmes have two types of effects in practice: 1) they are effective in realising their objectives, tightly connected to national long-lasting economic and societal challenges; 2) they serve as a test-ground and demonstrator for a new type of holistic approach to supporting R&I and connecting it to sectoral policies. New processes (e.g., cross-ministerial steering and funding), practices (cooperative), and mindsets (less siloed) can be nurtured in these programmes. They can also be effective as science communication initiatives, as their “inspiring” objectives directly relate to public concerns. While they in principle abide to the main principles of mission-orientation (directionality, cross-sectoral coordination, integrated implementation), there exist many forms of mission-oriented policies and programmes. The OECD MOIP online toolkit provides detailed information on about 40 different MOIP initiatives. The French Acceleration Strategies stand out for their wide scope of intervention from research to deployment and their

> *France 2030 is a EUR 54 billion investment programme launched in October 2021 by the President of the French Republic. It aims to accelerate the transformation of key sectors of the economy through innovation and to position France as a leader in strategic future domains. It mobilises significant resources around about 20 missions called “Stratégies d’Accélération” (SAs) targeting priority areas such as circular materials, decarbonised hydrogen, sustainable agriculture, biotherapies, and industrial decarbonisation. Each SA relies on a co-developed roadmap with targets and milestones, broad and systematic cross-government coordination via a dedicated cross-*

> *ministerial steering committee (CPMO), central steering from a dedicated agency under the Prime Minister's office (SGPI), and a set of intervention tools to realise shared objectives from research to deployment (including the regulations, infrastructure and skills needed to scale up new solutions). Each SA brings together intervention tools and levers from several ministries and agencies, which meet regularly (about once a month) in the CPMO to collectively validate the call for proposals and support initiatives, provide their agreement on the final list of selected projects proposed by experts and juries, monitor progress and discuss issues and ways forward.*

Slovenia could begin with two such cross-ministerial missions, following broad consultations and validation by the Development Council.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the consistency of public support for research and innovation activities

Rationale

The creation of MVZI at the ministry level and ARIS at the agency level, with remits that include both research and innovation, are important steps towards better coordination of plans and integration of policy instruments across the TRL scale. Yet experience shows that these structural changes are insufficient without accompanying changes in processes and practices within the new institutions. This requires specific investments to consolidate teams, new incentives to change behaviours and reduce siloes between departments, and new policy instruments to cover the whole scope of research and innovation.

Implementation guidelines

This recommendation calls for reflection and mobilisation, notably within MVZI and ARIS, to complement the structural reforms with relevant changes to processes and practices, thereby better coordinating plans and integrating actions across the innovation chain.

At the ministry level, this includes notably (non-exhaustive list):

3.1. Increase in the number of staff in MVZI with relevant expertise in innovation while maintaining the existing number of staff working on research, including staff employed through RRF;

3.2. Establish a structured coordination mechanism within MVZI to bring together staff from the three divisions of the Science and Innovation Directorate (Science Division, Innovation Division, Division for R&D Structural Funds), for instance, to manage the cross-ministerial programmes and, more generally, to systematically exchange information and coordinate actions to ensure their consistency;

At the agency level, this includes notably (non-exhaustive list):

3.3. Establish a one-stop-shop funding scheme, with stage-gated mechanisms to facilitate the 'journey' of projects from research to innovation and deployment, provided they successfully achieve pre-established milestones;

> *In Norway, Pilot E is a comprehensive research and innovation support package offered collectively by three Norwegian agencies (Research Council of Norway (RCN), Innovation Norway and Enova). The main objective is to fast-track projects across the whole innovation cycle from basic research to market deployment. The three agencies systematically coordinate their actions to provide tailored and seamless support to industry-led consortia along the entire pathway from research to market deployment. The scheme is governed by a dedicated structure of governance involving representatives of the three agencies. They also collectively hire and share the cost of a secretary supporting the implementation of the scheme. Pilot-E functions as a joint funding instrument,*

> *gathering technology push and market pull funding instruments of the three agencies to provide comprehensive support along the innovation chain.*

3.4. Expand the scope of existing ARIS instruments or create a new instrument to cover a wider TRL range;

> *Austria's Initiative for the Transformation of Industry combines funding from two agencies, one responsible for investment and another for STI. The agencies then issue one call, covering both investment and STI activities. This approach allows applicants to use one proposal, which is particularly helpful for later-stage demonstration projects. This stage of projects is expensive for many STI authorities to fund alone, but are on the smaller end of the scale for what the investment agency supports*

3.5. Integrate downstream market requirements in upstream research projects and encourage relationships with users in research projects;

> *In Research Ireland Challenge Research Programmes, project applicants are strongly encouraged to include stakeholders and end-users in the proposal. Even during the early "concept phase", Research Ireland promotes interactions between the "challenge teams" and potential "solution beneficiaries" so that they can test whether their ambitions are realistic, and also navigate non-technical issues relating to challenges (e.g., stakeholder engagement) and solutions (e.g., barrier identification). A "societal impact champion" is nominated for each project, to provide a strong societal perspective for team members as they develop their solutions and build relationships between scientific researchers and their stakeholders and beneficiaries.*

3.6. Strengthen linkages between research and innovation teams at ARIS. This also involves building common (or at least interoperable) information systems (e.g. databases to track projects across the innovation chain);

3.7. Strengthen capacity at ARIS through upskilling of staff to support innovation;

3.8. Deepen relationships with the private sector;

3.9. Improve regularity and reduce delays of innovation calls;

3.10. Develop and streamline services to sectoral ministries;

3.11. Strengthen ARIS result-based monitoring and evaluation culture (as opposed to activity-focused administrative reporting).

Besides these measures (and others that would emerge from the brainstorming within MVZI and ARIS), **the most important condition for reaping the benefits of the past changes is the stability of the new structures**. The mergers at the ministerial and agency levels have demanded significant efforts from the administration and have raised high expectations in terms of improved service and delivery. To realise these expectations, it is essential that no new structural changes (e.g., new changes of ministerial scope, "demerger") come in the way of the adaptation of processes and learning. The benefits from mergers take time to manifest themselves: continuous investment and monitoring, high-level support, and political patience will be key.

Recommendation 4: Consolidate the efforts to improve cross-ministerial coordination

Rationale

The evaluation shows that the governance reforms undertaken since 2020 have significantly improved the cross-ministerial coordination of research and innovation policies. The Programme Committee has created a space for discussion between a range of ministries involved in the research and innovation activities, including several sectoral ministries (e.g., agriculture, defense). The R&I Pact provides a single formal

document where the main interventions and initiatives of the different ministries planned for the next three years are presented. Finally, ARIS, can now operate calls of different ministries, not only those of MVZI or MGDS. These are important steps that need to be continued and strengthened in coming years until they become established so that cross-ministerial coordination becomes a mainstream practice, deeply entrenched in structures, processes and mindsets.

Implementation guidelines

The R&I Pact should be strengthened to make it an ex-ante cross-ministerial planning tool: the R&I Pact now reports what has already been decided within each ministry, but it could be progressively 'upgraded' to decide how resources are allocated in the future to improve the predictability of funding. It is particularly important to ensure that funding for R&I remains stable once European recovery funds have run out. In this respect the next R&I Pact should be used as a roadmap with the various measures and steps to be taken to ensure a smooth transition to the post-RRF period. Several actions could be taken to firmly establish the R&I Pact as a key cross-ministerial planning tool in the R&I area, for instance:

4.1. Develop and discuss the R&I Pact in a cross-ministerial setting (e.g., in the Programme Committee, while the Development Council could review and endorse it);

4.2. Highlight cross-sectoral policy issues in the R&I Pact;

4.3. Add KPIs and monitor regularly the implementation of the programmed activities;

> *Finland has established cross-party parliamentary mechanisms to ensure long-term continuity and political commitment in STI policy. The Parliamentary RDI Working Group (active notably in 2022–2023) brought together representatives from all major political parties to prepare the long-term RDI funding framework and broader system reforms. Its work laid the foundation for the R&D Funding Act and for strengthening the strategic governance of the STI system. Building on this, a Parliamentary monitoring function has been established to follow the implementation of the R&D funding framework and assess the effectiveness of increased public investment. This mechanism aims to ensure that STI policy remains stable across electoral cycles and benefits from sustained political consensus. Together, these parliamentary arrangements play a crucial role in anchoring STI policy in long-term political commitment ("beyond one government"), which is a distinctive feature of the Finnish governance model.*

4.4. Create joint ARIS calls gathering the demands from two ministries or more. Currently, different ministries require ARIS to operate their own calls. In the future, ministries could, when possible and their needs are compatible, agree on joint calls to be operated by ARIS;

> *In Ireland, the number of Government Departments and agencies that are research-active has increased over the last two decades. Through Impact 2030 (the national R&I strategy), Ireland intends to strengthen policy direction and collaboration on R&I and ensure implementation of the Strategy with the establishment of an Impact 2030 Steering Group and an Impact 2030 Implementation Forum to underpin the whole-of-Government nature of this Strategy. The Impact 2030 Steering Group is comprised of the five largest R&I funding Departments (Ministries of: Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Health; Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Environment, Climate and Communications), which account for 95% of public funding for R&I .The Steering Group launches joint calls across the five largest R&I funding departments and then the funders determine which instruments are best suited for supporting the different proposals.*

Create a network of R&I advisors in ministries, following the examples of Estonia and Spain:

4.5. Establish research and innovation advisors in all ministries with R&I activities to improve their participation in R&I (e.g., Health, Digital). Provided they have an adequate profile (covering both research and innovation issues), some of these advisors could be the staff already dealing with related matters (for instance, Horizon Europe) in these institutions.

4.6. Coordinate a cross-ministerial network gathering R&I advisors to strengthen the connections between their respective institutions (e.g., regular meetings, email lists, etc.)

4.7. Leverage the cross-ministerial programmes to raise R&I engagement and capacity in R&I in sectoral ministries. Linking the advisors to these programmes could also provide incentives for sectoral ministries to recruit and invest in such profiles.

> *RITA is a programme in Estonia that aims to strengthen sectoral R&D by providing funding, strategic policy intelligence, a framework for strategic cooperation and capabilities to undertake socially relevant research. The programme is cofounded by ESIF, with 15% coming from Estonian State budget, incl. co-financing from different ministries. RITA was meant as a response to two governance problems: i) several sectoral ministries did not have suitable staff to discuss R&I issues with the Ministry of Education and Research. ii), various evaluations and reviews revealed overlaps in the STI policy landscape and recommended improving STI policy coordination. The RITA programme supports a network of science and development advisors across sectoral ministries. They play a key role in integrating all activities in an interministerial setting. Their role is notably to: Advise ministries on R&D issues; Plan national and international R&D cooperation; Develop plans of R&D needs in their ministries and coordinate their implementation; Act as representatives or assist formal advisory meetings on interministerial R&D topics; Organise interactions with scientists; Represent Estonia in International R&D actions; Participate as Members of advisory bodies like Horizon 2020 programme committees, science policy committee, etc. They also encourage and support participation in framework programme activities; participated in the collection of strategic priorities from their ministries to identify common issues and propose topics for R&D that encompass a range of priorities; support interministerial R&I programmes, which require a combined application from a minimum of two ministries.*

This recommendation was already made by OECD in the context of the 2024 DG reform TSI study. A measure was included in the Slovenian Cohesion Policy Programme Specific objective 1.4. “Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship (ERDF)” to raise capacity in sectoral ministries and other stakeholders via dedicated training in “social innovation and systemic innovation”. This measure was not implemented (Republic of Slovenia, 2022[45]).

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Annex A. Definition of assessment criteria

1. Governance Level 1 – Strategic Orientation of R&I Activities

1. Intentionality: Setting clear directions, responding to and anticipating needs
2. Legitimacy: Achieving robust consensus on R&I objectives beyond R&I communities
3. Relevance: Collectively designing relevant and balanced strategic agendas and pathways
4. External Consistency: Connecting R&I agendas

2. Governance Level 2 – Planning and Programming of R&I Activities

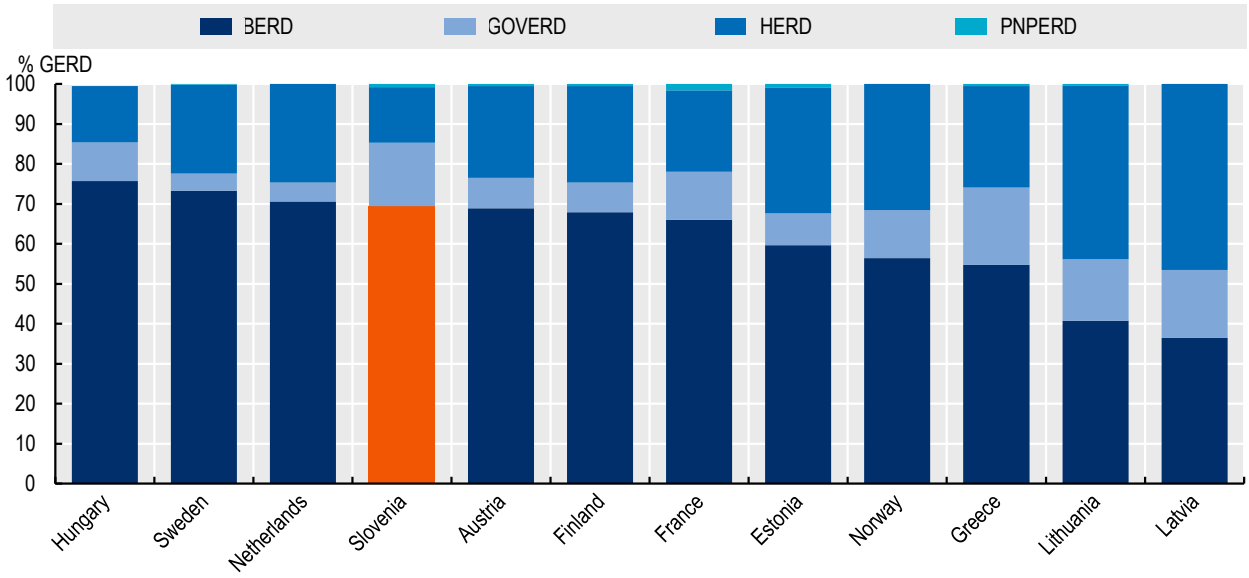
5. Horizontal/Vertical Consistency: Establishing structures and mechanisms for aligning plans across areas and levels of government
6. Predictability & Stability: Securing budgets commensurate with objectives' level of ambition and time frame
7. Efficiency: Balancing the costs and benefits of coordination

3. Governance Level 3 – Implementation of and Learning from R&I Activities

8. Policy Mix Coverage & Coherence: Ensuring a consistent mix of interventions covering all needs across innovation chain stages
9. Exploratory: Interconnecting different instruments to leverage complementarities
10. Private Sector and Stakeholder Engagement: Setting mechanisms and spaces for experimenting with private sector and stakeholders
11. Reflexivity: Monitoring, evaluating, learning and improving

Annex B. Statistics on R&D performance in Slovenia

Figure B.1. Gross domestic expenditures on R&D (GERD) by performing sectors in Slovenia and selected economies, 2024, as a percentage of total GERD



Source: (OECD, 2026[10])

Annex C. List of contributors to the evaluation

Table 2. Stakeholders who contributed to the evaluation

Institution type	Name	Specific institution
Ministries	Tomaž Boh	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)
	Tanja Vertelj	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)
	Nataša Vrhovec	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)
	Davor Kozmus	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)
	Mateja Struna	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)
	Matic Korun	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)
	Tamara Mali Kosi	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)
	Tjaša Rotar Kokalj	Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport (MGTŠ)
	Matej Skočir	Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport (MGTŠ)
	Marija Čebular Zajec	Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport (MGTŠ)
	Maruša Vidmar	Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport (MGTŠ)
	Katarina Krek Hudoklin	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
	Marko Hren	Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development
	Peter Medica	Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development
	Anja Cibej Andlovec	Ministry of Defence
	Ajda Vodlan	Ministry of Defence
	Mojca Štruc	Ministry of Digital Transformation
	Janez Blaž	Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy
Development Council	Denis Đonlagić	Development Council of the Republic of Slovenia
Research and innovation agency	Tjaša Dobnik	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS)
	Levin Pal	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS)
	Mito Žnidarko	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS)
	Lidija Tičar Padar	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS)
	Klemen Miklavic	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS)
	Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik	Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS)

Funders and agencies	Irena Meterc	Slovenia Business Development Agency (SPIRIT)
	Igor Milek	Slovenia Business Development Agency (SPIRIT)
	Vladimir Milovanović	Slovenia Business Development Agency (SPIRIT)
	Simona Grobelnik	Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF)
	Ana Vele	Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF)
	Maja Tomanič Vidovič	Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF)
	Matej Zalar	SID Bank
	Sibil Klancar	SID Bank
Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Žiga Lampe	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS)
	Vesna Nahtigal	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS)
	Marjana Majerič	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS)
Strategic Research and Innovation Partnerships	Niko Herakovič	SRIP Top
	Igor Kovač	SRIP Top
	Tanja Mohorič	SRIP ACS+
	Andreja Lampe	SRIP GoDigital
Research and Knowledge Transfer	Zdravko Kačič	Slovenian Rectors' Conference (RKRS)
	Roberto Biloslavo	Slovenian Rector's Conference (RKRS)
	Andrej Pančur	Coordination of Independent Research Institutes (KOsRIS)
	Urša Jerše	Knowledge Transfer Office – UNIK@TT
	Peter Alešnik	Knowledge Transfer Office – UNIK@TT
	Robert Blatnik	Knowledge Tansfer Office – KTO3 consortia
	Peter Wostner	Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development