



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SLOVENIA'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS



**MEDNARODNO RAZVOJNO
SODELOVANJE SLOVENIJE**
SLOVENIA'S DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

SLOVENIA'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS

Slovenia's international development cooperation
with the Western Balkans 2010–2015



Cover photo: Sports hall in Žabljak
(Source: Centre for International Cooperation and Development)

WESTERN BALKANS

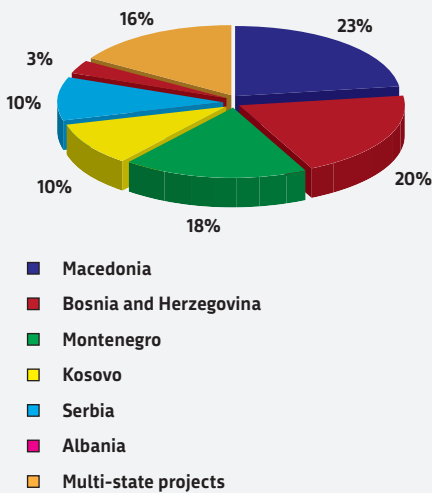
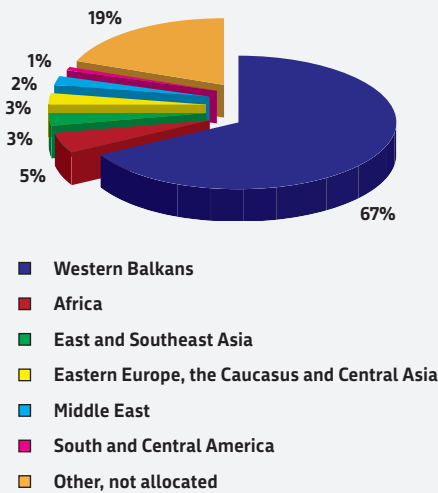
International development cooperation is one of the key foreign policy instruments whereby developed countries foster the economic, social and political progress of partner countries, thus contributing to the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality in the international community. A member of the European Union and of the international donor community, Slovenia is committed to addressing the most pressing challenges of developing countries and achieving more equitable global development.

The Western Balkans is the first geographical priority for development cooperation determined by the Resolution on International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia for the period until 2015. Accordingly, Slovenia has been contributing to the peace, security, stability, prosperity, and sustainable development of

Western Balkan countries, thereby enhancing the stability in its own neighbourhood, fostering all-round cooperation with these countries and the region, and implementing the goals stipulated in the 2015 Declaration on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia.

The level of political, economic and diplomatic relations with the countries of the region, their institutional development and absorption capacity are all factors underlying the decision to focus development cooperation efforts on the Western Balkans. Historical, cultural and economic ties, the size of partner countries and the presence of other donors have also been taken into account. Slovenia has concluded bilateral agreements on development cooperation with all the Western Balkan countries.

Slovenia's bilateral development assistance 2010–2015 by region and by Western Balkan country



Western Balkan countries were allocated 67 per cent of available funding for bilateral development cooperation in the relevant period, amounting to over EUR 51 million, with Macedonia (23%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (20%) and Montenegro (18%) ranking first among recipients, followed by projects run in several countries (16%), Serbia (10%), Kosovo (10%), and Albania (3%).

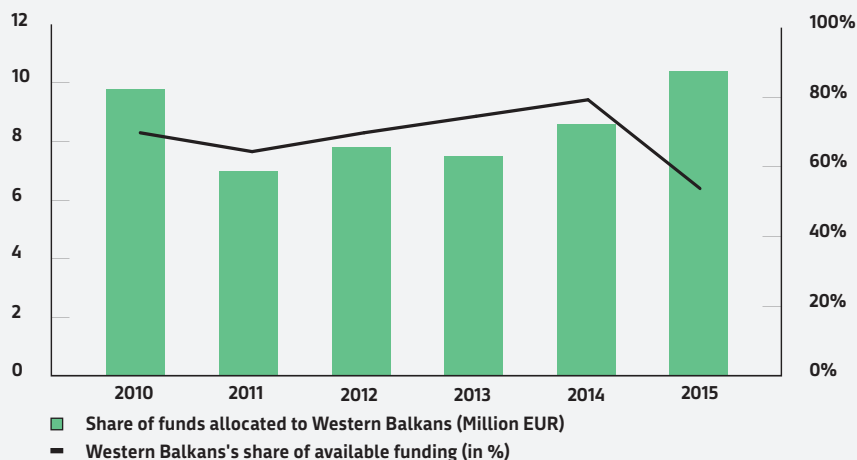
WESTERN BALKANS

In the 2010–2015 period, Slovenia supported projects in areas included in the national development strategies of partner countries and consistent with substantive priorities of Slovenian development cooperation. The areas of focus included strengthening good governance and the rule of law, particularly in the context of EU integration, environmental protection, especially through sustainable water management, and improving the technical expertise of civil servants in target countries, especially on the harmonisation of legislation with the EU acquis. All Western Balkan countries were included in the Slovenian regional project of professional training on public finance and central banking. The empowerment of women and children's welfare were at the heart of projects concerning human rights education and the acquisition of useful knowledge and skills. Slovenia contributed to mitigating the consequences of natural disasters in the region and, in the aftermath of the 2014 floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, was one of the first countries to offer assistance, which totalled one million euros. Undergraduate

and post-graduate studies for students from Western Balkan countries were also enabled, by providing them with scholarships and exemption from tuition fees.

Development projects were implemented by line ministries, non-commercial public services, implementing institutions (Centre for European Perspective, Centre for International Cooperation and Development, ITF Enhancing Human Security, and the Foundation Together until 2011 and Centre for e-Governance Development for South East Europe until 2012), a Slovenia-based international organisation (Center of Excellence in Finance) and Slovenian NGOs (Ekvilib Institute; Slovene Philanthropy, Association for the Promotion of Volunteer Work; Caritas Slovenia; Danilo Kiš Serbian Cultural Centre; International relief and development, Global; Institute Circle, education, development, charities, and others). In the 2010–2015 period, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-financed 123 projects of Slovenian institutions and organisations and 31 projects of Slovenian NGOs.

Amount of funding allocated to the Western Balkans from 2010 to 2015



The share of bilateral development cooperation funds allocated to the Western Balkans was at its highest in 2014, exceeding 80% of the total.

ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Albania

Slovenia's official development assistance to Albania, totalling EUR 1.4 million in the past five year period, was aimed at facilitating the country's progress in its EU integration process. Several training courses fostering the independence of the central election commission were carried out, enhancing the exchange of experience and practices between the two countries. Training programmes to build the capacity of civil servants at various levels to secure and manage EU funds extended over several years, targeting representatives of both public institutions and local authorities, NGOs and social partners. A 20-kilowatt water-to-water

heat pump was constructed for a nursery school in Korçë, and children and their teachers were given a presentation of the use of renewables. In 2012, the Balkan Center for Cooperation and Development (BCCD) was registered as a non-profit organisation in Tirana, acting as the implementing partner for Slovenian development cooperation in Albania and a promoter of Slovenian businesses, experience and know-how. A new vocational education centre was inaugurated, providing modern educational methods, which will contribute in the long term to increased effectiveness in agriculture and also promote employment in this sector.

Strengthened democratic institutions

Strengthened democratic institutions are essential for Albania as an EU candidate country. As the electoral system is one of the foundations of a democratic state governed by the rule of law, Slovenia supported the reform of Albanian electoral legislation, particularly through the exchange of experience and good practice, stressing primarily the independence of the central election commission. The project was mainly conducted by Slovenian experts who passed on their know-how and good practices to members of the central election commission, political parties, NGOs involved in elections, experts on election processes, and members of the parliamentary legislative commission. The project implemented by the Centre for European Perspective was supported with EUR 26,000.

*Training on strengthening the independence
of electoral bodies
(Source: Centre for European Perspective)*



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Slovenia earmarked almost EUR 9.9 million in official development assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing on environmental infrastructure projects, with an emphasis on

sustainable water management, support of reforms and EU integration, as well as respect for human rights, psycho-social assistance to children and the empowerment of women.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Slovenia-funded projects included the construction of treatment plants and sewage systems, as well as an ecoremediation plant for waste water treatment, and awareness raising on irresponsible waste disposal, thereby contributing to the protection of natural resources. Laboratories for quality certification of products, laboratories within the national metrology infrastructure and a reference accreditation laboratory for the quality of petroleum derivatives were set up and the exploitation of mineral resources modernised, which increased the number of qualified experts and led to the

breakthrough of high-tech companies from Bosnia and Herzegovina in foreign markets. The projects also enhanced the development of modern technologies, and created new jobs and safer working conditions.

By constructing and equipping nursery schools, a retirement home, and multi-purpose sports halls, Slovenia contributed to improving the conditions of pre-school education, the quality of life of older persons and the lives of the general population and their social involvement.

Mine action

Many areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still contaminated with mines and unexploded ordnance, which remains a major problem for the personal security of residents. Although the authorities are striving to clear the area, activities are behind schedule due to financial constraints. In the 2010–2015 period, Slovenia earmarked EUR 350,000 for the operation of the ITF Implementation Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus enabling the effective implementation of mine action projects and programmes in the region. The Office is responsible for the smooth operation of ITF and the implementation of public tenders; it is involved in the financing, monitoring and implementation of demining projects, and it offers support for national structures and provides assessments of humanitarian and socio-economic aspects of the projects, as well as reports for donors. It also liaises and coordinates among all mine-action actors in the country.

Demining site: testing of detectors and monitoring > of activities

(Source: ITF Enhancing Human Security)



Slovenia provided assistance in the internal affairs' and police reforms, which are made more complex owing to the administrative division of the state. Particular attention was devoted to empowering young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas who are considering an independent

business career and start-up projects. Activities focusing on young people contribute to the implementation of the Positive Agenda for the Youth in the Western Balkans, launched on Slovenia's initiative.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, KOSOVO

In 2014, Slovenia responded to Bosnia and Herzegovina's needs in mitigating the consequences of severe flooding providing a grant for the purchase of a specialised vehicle and thus increasing the effectiveness of public utilities in the Cazin municipality. Following the shifting of mines from uncleared areas during the flooding,

a review of the situation was conducted and the previously cleared minefields in the Brčko, Lopare and Travnik municipalities re-cleared. The health centre and the fire station in Vidovice were renovated, as well as the infrastructure of three elementary schools and roads.

Kosovo

Slovenia earmarked EUR 5.1 million in official development assistance to Kosovo through projects promoting its European perspective, enhancing reforms and contributing to meeting the conditions for EU integration.

Multiannual projects were aimed at strengthening Kosovo's institutions and expertise on visa liberalisation. Training to enhance the efficiency of public administration was carried out, including courses on border control, illegal migration, and procedures involving aliens.

Slovenia allocated official development assistance to Kosovo municipalities' participation in international development projects. The focus

was on the exchange of Slovenian good practices relative to the coordination and preparation of strategic guidelines at the national level, as well as on the implementation of specific projects at the local level.

As part of cooperation with Switzerland, Austria and Liechtenstein, Slovenia supported the third phase of the project in the Djakovica municipality aimed at improving the living conditions and social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptian communities. It also funded a project to prevent peer violence in schools and to develop positive inter-ethnic relations between young people.

Positive inter-ethnic relations

The project aimed at preventing peer violence in schools and at developing positive inter-ethnic relations between young people in Kosovo, carried out by Slovene Philanthropy in the 2011–2013 period, received EUR 96,000. The activities focused on training teachers for educational psycho-pedagogical work to prevent peer violence, and develop positive relations, tolerance and solidarity among students. They contributed to creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, encouraging voluntary work, and establishing cooperation between teachers and students of different ethnic backgrounds. The project included ten elementary schools from Prizren, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Lipjan/Lipljan, an area with a majority Albanian population, which is home to several ethnic minorities.



Students during workshops
(Source: Slovenian Philanthropy)

MACEDONIA

Macedonia

Pursuant to three development cooperation programmes concluded between the two countries, Slovenia allocated EUR 11.6 million in official development assistance to Macedonia. Based on a bilateral agreement, development cooperation focused on environmental protection, particularly protection of water resources and wastewater treatment, and energy efficiency. The emphasis was on strengthening economic development and balanced regional development, modernising the public administration, and EU integration efforts.

The greatest share of funds was earmarked for infrastructure projects aimed at securing a sustainable drinking water supply, preventing the harmful effects of pollution on human health,

and fostering social and economic development. The construction of waste water treatment plants in the municipalities of Štip, Probištip and Gjorče Petrov improved the drinking water for the local population.

One of the more successful and high-profile projects in Macedonia was the construction of an energy-efficient modular school for 250 students in the Ilinden municipality; the modern technologies used contribute to protecting the living environment and energy efficiency. World-ranking Slovenian companies in terms of ecology and energy efficiency were involved in the project. The new, energy-efficient school premises improved the conditions for education in the Ilinden municipality.

Public finance management

In cooperation with the US-funded Emerging Donors Challenge Fund, the Center of Excellence in Finance successfully carried out a project to train internal auditors from the Macedonian public sector, with Slovenia's contribution amounting to EUR 130,000. The aim of the project was to improve public finance management and accountability, transparency and effectiveness in the public sector. The training programme contributed to enhancing the capacity of civil servants and to the implementation of institutional reforms needed for Macedonia to successfully conclude accession negotiations with the European Union.

*Formal diploma ceremony of the training programme > for internal auditors and accountants of the Macedonian public sector
(Source: Centre of Excellence in Finance)*



Slovenia also assisted Macedonia in the harmonisation of its legislation with the EU acquis. The focus was on enhancing good governance and the rule of law, rural and regional development, cohesion policy and structural funds, finance, customs, preventing

money laundering, justice and internal affairs, the environment, human, animal and plant health, and the fight against drugs. Equally successful were projects setting up a statistical database for the sustainable development of the municipalities in the eastern mountainous region,

MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO

the early detection of cancer, improving the capacity of border control authorities and the implementation of the Schengen acquis in the area of police cooperation.

Development cooperation with Macedonia contributed to raising awareness among young

people on accepting diversity and cooperation between adolescents from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. The opening of a craft centre in the rural Vardar Valley enabled local women to sell their hand-made products, thus improving their socio-economic standing.

Montenegro

Through three development cooperation programmes concluded between the two countries, Slovenia allocated EUR 9 million for assistance to Montenegro. In accordance with these agreements, development cooperation focused on energy, environment protection and the sustainable development of the least developed parts of the country, training on EU integration and harmonisation with the acquis. Montenegro's economic priorities include the development of a high-quality tourist offer and ecotourism, especially in the north of the country.

In planning Slovenia's development cooperation efforts, a multiannual project was thus selected dedicated to developing mountain tourism in the Žabljak municipality. Slovenia's projects in this municipality, situated in the Durmitor National Park, established tourist and environmental infrastructure fostering the all-round development of Žabljak. Its grant for eco-friendly rowing tours on the Tara contributed to involving local communities in the development of tourism and promoting entrepreneurship in connection with sports and environment protection.

Mountain tourism

In accordance with the country's economic priorities, Slovenia devoted considerable attention to developing mountain tourism in the Žabljak municipality in the least developed northern Montenegro. Through projects coordinated by the Centre for International Cooperation and Development, almost EUR 3.5 million in official development assistance were allocated to the Žabljak municipality for the reconstruction of the Gorske Oči hotel, the construction of a sports hall, a receiving canal for the regulation of wastewater treatment and a waste sorting plant, and the restoration of a landfill. The modernisation of the environmental and tourist infrastructure opened up many opportunities for the tourist offer to meet international standards and created the conditions for further strengthening the economy, particularly in tourism.



Waste sorting plant >

and

< Sports hall in Žabljak

(Source: Centre for
International Cooperation and
Development)



MONTENEGRO, SERBIA

A Slovenian-funded ecoremediation project enabled the restoration and preventive protection of Montenegro's degraded natural resources. By introducing a system of separate waste collection, the Herceg Novi municipality effectively reduced the volume of waste. Through Slovenia's grants, a playground in the town of Bar and a sports hall of the Danilovgrad Police Academy were equipped, and new premises for the Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices of Montenegro were constructed and fully equipped. Sixty socially disadvantaged children from the rural north of the country came to Slovenia for recuperation breaks, which contributed to improving their psycho-physical condition by way of interactive workshops and social activities. Representatives of civil society and public institutions were

trained to provide expert counselling and training on gender equality and women's rights. Slovenia actively supports Montenegro's European perspective, its EU integration and adoption of the EU acquis and its values. Since 2012, it has been providing assistance for the accession process according to the country's needs. The most acclaimed bilateral project was counselling the authorities in the individual phases of EU accession negotiations (screening, gaining insight into EU legislation, action programmes to meet requirements, assistance in drafting negotiating positions etc.). According to the Montenegrin side, the project significantly contributed to the success of the negotiating process. Several other training projects related to EU integration were successfully implemented in various areas.

Serbia

Slovenia earmarked EUR 5.3 million in official development assistance to Serbia. Development cooperation with the country focused on

environmental protection, the empowerment of women, children's welfare and building the capacity of state institutions for EU integration.

Wood-processing industry

In recent years, the wood-processing industry has developed in the well-forested Medvedja municipality. A grant worth EUR 290,000 went towards the construction and equipment of a production plant for wood briquettes from wood biomass with an annual capacity of 8,000 tonnes, which will also produce briquettes from industrial wood waste. A plant was opened for generating energy from biomass, which is more environmentally-friendly than traditional fuels. The project bolstered the economic development of the area and the adjoining infrastructure and reduced unemployment. Besides 15 new jobs opening up in the new plant, employment in associated businesses will be boosted. Project activities coordinated by the Centre for International Cooperation and Development were implemented by Slovenian companies.



Production plant for wood briquettes from wood biomass
(Source: Centre for International Cooperation and Development)

SERBIA

The construction of a production plant for wood briquettes was funded in the Medvedja municipality. Seminars and trainings on environmental protection and intercultural dialogue were held for teachers and students in Niš, Aleksinac and Leskovac. The schools holding environmental workshops and taking part in prize competitions were equipped with containers for waste sorting. As part of the project, all illegal waste dumps in the Niš and Jablanica districts were identified. Slovenian experts cooperated with the Serbian police in the prevention, detection and investigation of organised crime and in the tasks of traffic police. Slovenia also promoted the development of rescue services.

In 2014, Slovenia responded to Serbia's needs in the aftermath of devastating floods. A grant to purchase a specialised vehicle was provided for the Obrenovac municipality in 2015, thus increasing the efficiency of waste collection and enabling the faster rehabilitation of the flooded area. An elementary school in Barić and part of the road infrastructure in the Krupanj municipality were reconstructed. As a result of the severe flooding, some explosive devices shifted to already cleared areas, which had to be re-examined.



Training for securing EU funding, Albania
(Source: Centre for European Perspective)

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