

**Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic
Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic for
Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights
and Minorities**

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Informatisation of Society



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1. DOCUMENT SUMMARY

The Operational Programme Informatisation of Society (hereinafter "OPIS") is a reference document to be used as a basis for the provision of assistance for all projects concerning eGovernment, and the digitisation and making accessible of the content of repository institutions and broadband Internet connection. It contains a description of the horizontal management of informatisation projects, which is also included in the NSRF and which will ensure the interoperability of all IS developed from SF funds in the 2007-2013 programming period. OPIS defines the global objective, priority axes, measures and activities that will be performed as part of the "Convergence" objective. In the case of projects whose recipients will include central bodies of state administration residing in Bratislava, these will be performed as part of the "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" objective.

From the formal standpoint, the content of the OPIS is divided into three interrelated key areas: analysis of the current situation in the area of the informatisation of society (chapters 1-3), strategy of the operational programme (chapters 4-8) and the implementation system (chapter 9), which are referring to annexes included as a separate part of the document.

The analysis of the current situation explores the level of informatisation in connection with the starting points defined in the NSRF and in areas that are essential for the overall successful convergence of Slovakia to the EU-15. Emphasis is placed on issues that can be addressed using assistance from structural funds. The analytical conclusions are also presented in the form of a SWOT analysis and eventuate in the specification of key disparities and factors of development of information society in the forthcoming programming period of 2007-2013.

The strategic section of the document defines the key starting points which provided a basis for the definition of OPIS objectives, priorities and interventions. The OPIS objectives build on the vision of long-term economic and social development of Slovakia formulated in the NSRF as "sustainable overall convergence of the Slovak economy to the EU-15 average." The OPIS strategy builds on the current state of informatisation in Slovakia, strategic EU¹ and Slovak documents adopted in the field of informatisation. Its interventions will realise Slovakia's vision in the 2007-2013 period through Slovakia's sustainable convergence to the EU-15 in the area of information society.

The OPIS strategy is based on 4 priority axes and 7 measures:

	<i>priority axis</i>	<i>measure</i>
1.	Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services	
1.1	Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services on the central level	
1.2	Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services on the local and regional level	
2.	Development repository institutions and renewal of their national infrastructure	
2.1	Improvement of the system of acquisition, processing and protection of content from the resources of repository institutions	
2.2	Digitisation of the content of repository institutions, archiving and provision of access to digital data	
3.	Improvement of broadband internet access	
3.1	Development of broadband access infrastructure	
4.	Technical assistance	

¹ The OPIS builds on strategic EU and Slovak documents, in particular the Community Strategic Guidelines, the Competitiveness Strategy for Slovakia until 2010 (the so-called National Lisbon Strategy), the Slovak National Reform Programme, the Concept for the Territorial Development of Slovakia of 2001 and the National Sustainable Development Strategy of 2001/SD Action Plan for 2005-2010. The specific priorities of the OPIS meet the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy for Slovakia/National Reform Programme in an interrelated manner and each of them has a specific place and function within the whole system of promotion of competitiveness through the development of information society.

4.1	Technical assistance for the MA OPIS
4.2	Technical assistance for IBMA OPIS

The OPIS strategy is built on an integration concept based on a comprehensive analysis. Therefore, the role of individual projects in the implementation of the strategy, which will play the role of key integration instruments, is emphasised especially under priority axes 1 and 2. In particular, solutions of a cross-sectional nature, common to all public administration units, will be supported within the framework of these projects. We expect that national projects will be the most efficient and effective OPIS interventions from the standpoint of implementation of the set objectives of the strategy. A project of integrated service points has been proposed for priority axis 1, which includes the creation of a municipalities data centre. The project of the Slovak Digital Library has been proposed for priority axis 2. All OPIS projects, in particular national projects, will be implemented in compliance with the principles of eGovernment, recognised by EU Member States and arising from the Decision² on the IDABC³. In line with these principles, emphasis will be placed on the use of open standards and adherence to technological and software neutrality. Each supported project will be based on a comprehensive analysis of its sustainability.

In accordance with Resolution No. 832/2006 of the Government of the Slovak Republic concerning the draft update of the National Strategic Reference Framework of the Slovak Republic for 2007-2013, €0.993 billion has been allocated for OPIS projects for the 2007-2013 programming period.

Overall, the Slovak Republic should receive €6.812 billion from structural funds and €3.424 billion from the Cohesion Fund in the 2007- 2013 programming period, which is €10.236 billion in total. Based on the required level of match funding, these resources will be supplemented with national public resources (state and self-government budgets) and private resources.⁴ The financial allocations are specified in fixed prices of 2004.

The Managing Authority for the OPIS is the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic. The function of the Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority is performed by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. The relevant managing authorities and intermediate bodies, such as the MC SR, MEc SR, MEd SR, MH SR, ML SAF SR, MEn SR, MTPT SR, MA SR, MCRD SR and HTUs, will participate in the implementation of informatisation projects under operational programmes carried out outside the OPIS, in the context of the NSRF horizontal priority under the title "Information Society". All informatisation projects within the NSRF operational programmes outside of the OPIS will be coordinated and carried out via the Managing Authority and Intermediate Body under the OPIS Managing Authority so as to ensure that all supported solutions make one whole and are in line with the valid legal framework in the area of informatisation of society.

² Decision No 2004/387/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on the interoperable delivery of pan-European eGovernment services to public administrations, businesses and citizens. (OJ L181, 18. 5. 2004, p. 25)

³ Interoperable Delivery of pan-European eGovernment services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens

⁴ The strategy for financing from structural funds and the Cohesion Fund, which contains a definition of the level of co-financing from national public resources, is laid down in the Concept of Financing Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund in the 2007-2013 programming period, which is a document under the responsibility of the MF SR.

2. PREPARATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

2.1 Process of preparation of the operational programme – applying the partnership principle

In the course of preparation of the Operational Programme Informatisation of Society, there were three basic development stages. In the 1st version of the NSRF, the specific priority of Informatisation of Society was part of the priority axes of the proposed *Operational Programme Knowledge Society*, which included the topics of research and development (now the OP R&D), competitiveness and growth (now the OP C&EG). Based on an update of the NSRF, the informatisation of society became a specific priority of the *Operational Programme Transport and Informatisation of Society*. In the course of inter-ministerial reviewing of the document, the update of the NSRF was modified and the second version of the NSRF⁵ was presented, which definitively placed informatisation of society under the separate *Operational programme Informatisation of Society*.

During the preparation of the OP, more than 70 working meetings, negotiations, presentations and seminars were organised, which were attended, in addition to organisations involved in the system of management of the OP, by all of the key socio-economic OPIS. A detailed timetable of the preparation of the OP can be found in Annex No. 2.

In accordance with Article 10 of Council's (EC) Regulation No. 1083/2006, the partnership principle was the central platform used to involve socio-economic partners in the process of programming of the NSRF's specific priority – Informatisation of society. Partnership is applied in all of the key milestones of the programming process. A broad social consensus on the strategy of the development of the information society demonstrated by active involvement of the broadest possible scope of partners is seen by the MA OPIS as a key factor for success of the strategy. Representatives of CSAAs, TO SR, the Government's Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, HTUs, ATVS, UTVS, the academic community and other professional and interest associations, such as the ITAS, PPP, ATO SR, SAEC, the CTF forum and others, participated in the programming process by commenting on output documents and through workshops, seminars, public presentations and issue-specific meetings. In the OP preparation phase, more than 150 organisations from the public and private sector were involved in the programming process.⁶ A list of the most important comments made by the socio-economic partners is included in Annex No. 10.

The socio-economic partners⁷ were involved in the programming process (the outcome of which are strategic and governing documents) by means of an official review procedure of the drafts of the above mentioned documents, and through participation in the OPIS Partnership and OPIS Working group, as well as various formal and informal meetings.

In the next stages of OPIS management, we will continue to develop the partnership in order to achieve a broad consensus on the key projects and processes of implementation of OPIS measures throughout the whole programming period.

The partners will be involved in the preparation of the planned feasibility studies, the outcome of which will be a detailed policy for the implementation of the OPIS in the field of eGovernment, digitisation of repository institutions and broadband Internet. The key socio-economic partners will become members of the Monitoring committee.

2.2 Ex ante evaluation

The ex ante evaluation of the OPIS was performed by an external assessor – a company by the name of Octigon, s.r.o. – and was conducted concurrently with the preparation of individual stages of the OPIS, until the elaboration of its final draft. Thus, the preparation of the OPIS and the processing of its ex ante evaluation was an interactive and iterative process. The ex ante assessor's goal was – in collaboration with the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic – to draw up evaluation statements and ideas concerning individual sections of the prepared

⁵ Based on Resolution of the Slovak Government No. 832 of 8 October 2006

⁶ The list of Partnership members of the OPIS and the Working Group for the OPIS is provided in Annex No. 11

⁷ Based on Resolution of the Slovak Government No. 457 of 17 May 2006

document and, in conclusion, to assess the entire OPIS proposal. The ex ante assessor took part in all consultation meetings with representatives of government departments and regions that were organized by the Office of the Government, actively monitored their comments and ideas, and presented his own standpoints.

The impact of the planned interventions in the economic area will become manifest – by means of raising the efficiency and quality of public administration – not only as a major time saving on the part of the public and the business community when communicating with public administration, but also as a significant increase in the overall innovativeness of the Slovak Republic. From the viewpoint of the social situation, informatisation of society and a thorough observation of interface standards will considerably promote equal opportunities for all groups of citizens. The implementation of new, efficient processes in public administration, will also foster the transparency of provided services, and thus also the relevant enforceability of law. The environmental impact is evident from the larger proportion of industries with a lower material and energy demands, and an overall shift to knowledge economy.

The suggested priority axes and their objectives are synergically interrelated and sufficiently cover the needs ensuing from the analysis. The amount and structure of investments are proposed in a manner allowing an execution of the defined strategy, that is, covering the needs of financing of activities within the suggested priorities – not only as far as the financing volume for individual activities is concerned, but also taking into account the time division of the funding.

The OPIS strategy is sufficiently coherent with the key policies and strategic documents of the Community, in particular with the *Community Strategic Guidelines*, the *Lisbon Strategy*, the *i2010 initiative – European Information Society 2010*, as well as with other strategic documents of the Slovak Republic and the EU mentioned in chapter 3.4. OPIS interventions are sufficiently synergically laid out in order to meet individual objectives of the EU cohesion policy. The implementation of OPIS measures will contribute to the creation of conditions that will enable Slovakia to get involved in international projects supported, for example, by communitarian programmes of the Community.

From the viewpoint of a successful implementation of the OPIS, it will be of utmost importance to build necessary capacities at the managing authority and the intermediate body, because in the previous programming period, OPIS issues were presented (as far as its implementation was concerned) only through individual measures of the Operational programme Basic Infrastructure under the auspices of MCRD SR. Since most of approved projects took the first specific implementation steps only at the end of 2006, and/or at the outset of 2007, there is presently no relevant information available on how the implementation of these projects has been running. As far as the supported activities of approved projects are concerned, they were focused mostly on internetisation of regions, setting up public Internet access points, internetisation of the educational process, information systems in health care, and the development of electronic services in self government. Most of the implemented projects were not coordinated with infrastructure development, and/or with services on the central level – therefore, we do not expect these projects to have a significant impact on the overall development of information society. We consider the initial state of building capacities at the MA and IBMA as an opportunity to introduce a well-arranged and simple implementation process, based on suggested starting points and principles, which could be based on tried-and-true methods of process management in ICT projects, e.g. RUP – Rational Unified Process. These types of projects are adjusted for the purposes of project implementation management in ICT, as well as in IS development within national projects.

The proposed implementation system (in the aspect of finding solutions to specific issues related to the implementation of measures of the first priority axis in the Bratislava region and with impact on the entire territory) is suitable for the purpose of achieving the objectives defined in the OPIS strategy. Efficiency and cost reduction can be achieved by means of the suggested measures in the management process of implementation subjects, and through close cooperation with all involved subjects of the expert public, CSAA units and regional structures.

The most important value added by the OPIS is its contribution to the implementation of strategic European goals defined, above all, by the following strategic documents:

- Cohesion policy for 2007-2013 defined by Council Regulation No. 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006;

- “i2010 – A European Information Society for Growth and Employment” – an initiative launched by the Commission on 1 June 2005;
- “The Lisbon Strategy” launched in March 2000, and re-launched on 22 March 2005.

The total added value of the OPIS includes partial contributions of the individual proposed priority axes:

Priority axis 1 Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services greatly contributes to the fulfilment of the objectives of priority 3 “to develop inclusion, improved public services and quality of life by means of using ICT” of the i2010 initiative, as it focuses on the development of public services in Slovakia, including the services provided by bodies of state and self-government administration.

Priority axis 2 Development and renewal of national infrastructure of repository institutions significantly contributes to the fulfilment of the objectives set by priority 1 “to create a common European information space promoting an open and competitive internal market of services of information society and the media” of the i2010 initiative, because it enables Slovak repository institutions to use ICT to make their collections fully accessible to all involved parties in the entire European Union.

Priority axis 3 The development of broadband Internet access reduces the so-called broadband gap and thus contributes to the reduction of this gap within the whole European Union; moreover, this aids in the fulfilment of the i2010 objectives listed in the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – “Bridging the Broadband Gap” of 20 March 2006. Priority axis 4 Technical assistance contributes in the areas of management policies of structural funds programming mostly by means of expanding best practice and acquired know-how, as well as through monitoring and assessment of aid impact. This priority axis represents added value in the form of managing aid provided by structural funds and disseminating information – acquired information is stored and evaluated against nuclear indicators and the proposed group of criteria, and then shared within the network of European regional policy actors.

On the basis of the findings presented in the Final report from the ex ante evaluation of the Operational Programme Informatisation of Society, and after considering the main proposed recommendations, the ex ante assessor recommends approving the OPIS to serve as the reference for the negotiations between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the European Commission.

In conclusion, the ex-ante assessor states that the OPIS makes it possible to achieve a well-balanced usage of structural interventions from several points of view:

1. The economic layer of sustainable development will be influenced by the improvements of efficiency and quality of public administration.
2. Principles of equality of opportunities for all citizens and population groups will be upheld by useful content and through accessible public services.
3. The environmental layer of sustainable development will be influenced indirectly by the development of electronic services mainly through enabling the usage of energetically and materially less demanding processes.

The development of the technological and application infrastructure in various industries, e. g. transportation, tourism, research and innovations, SME development, healthcare and education, will be boosted by the coordination of interventions of other operational programmes concerning information society at the horizontal level.

2.3 Strategic environmental assessment

The results of the process assessing the impact of the OPIS on the environment, the communication, the statements made about the communication, the specified scope of evaluation and the timetable for the report on evaluation, the report on evaluation and the OPIS, public discussion made for the report on evaluation and the OPIS, expert opinion and consultations, make it clear that there is no need for reworking, completing or adjusting the draft of the strategic document.

However, it is necessary to include in the OPIS the monitoring of environmental indicators and the following measures aimed at safeguarding environmental adequacy of the strategic document's implementation:

1. Ensuring a thorough implementation of assessing impact on the environment on the level of individual projects, in accordance with the legislation, and so as to safeguard an optimization of chosen solutions and their localisation, selection of environmentally acceptable technologies, temporal and factual succession of individual implementation steps, as well as a good balance of environmental, social and economic aspects of the implemented projects.
2. When selecting projects, paying close attention to the aspect of sustainability of the supported activity after the completion of the co-financed project, and the balance between short-term and long-term impact.
3. When selecting projects, paying attention to a balance between local, regional and national impact of the projects.
4. Ensuring transparency, including access to information, in the entire process of publishing bids, selecting and granting funds, as well as during monitoring and evaluation of projects, in individual priority axes and the programme, whilst respecting protection of economic competition.
5. Incorporating environmental criteria into the overall system of project evaluation and selection.
6. Incorporate criteria respecting protected territories and species according to Act No. 543/2002 Coll. on nature and landscape protection, as amended by later regulations, into the overall system of project evaluation and selection.
7. Perform environmental evaluation of projects with a monitoring of the impact of the OPIS implementation.
8. Ensure sufficient awareness among applicants about environmental issues, and about potential links between the submitted projects and the environment.

The overall impact of the operational programme on the environment in the various time frames will manifest itself as follows:

- In the short run, a slight increase in bad environmental impacts of the operational programme will occur,
- In the medium run, it will have a positive overall impact on the environment, which will result in a slight improvement of the state of the environment,
- In the long run, it will have a positive overall impact on the environment, which will result in a moderate improvement of the state of the environment.

3. CURRENT SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATISATION OF SOCIETY

3.1 General description of the situation in the field of informatisation of society

Over the past fifteen years, the Slovak economy has undergone changes which have substantially changed its character. The three most significant changes include the transformation from a centrally-planned to a market economy, full integration into the European Union (EU) and implementation of wide-ranging structural reforms. Thanks to these changes, the Slovak economy is now in a new development phase with new opportunities, problems and challenges.

Today, Slovakia is a leading EU member in the implementation of the most important part of the Lisbon Strategy - structural reforms. The key structural reforms that have been carried out include reforms of the general economic environment, such as public finance, tax and pension scheme reforms, as well as healthcare, social system and labour market reforms. The state of the economy and the economic policy setup is now demonstrated by a strong economic growth, increase in employment, as well as high inflow of foreign investment. On the other hand, the quality of the economic growth shows that Slovakia is considerably lagging behind all EU members in the area of structural reforms aimed at increasing the importance and performance of knowledge-oriented sectors.

Informatisation of society is one of the areas where the gap between Slovakia and EU member states is the greatest.

Today, Slovakia has a fully functional market environment and a quality business environment. Slovakia's is one of the fastest growing EU economies, together with Lithuania and Estonia.⁸ The performance of Slovakia's economy is reaching its potential.⁹ To a great extent, however, Slovakia's competitiveness is based on the advantage of relatively low labour cost, which is a result of the inherited structure of industry and services focused on raw material intensive sectors with a low added value and a low level of knowledge application, innovation and inclusion of ICT into economic and social processes.

This means that sustaining and translating the high economic growth into a higher quality of life in the next medium-term period depends on the development of a qualitatively different economic growth potential. This is a potential based on knowledge, information, people and their ability to make effective use of this information. The informatisation of society is a means for the development of this potential. Such potential is concentrated in innovative¹⁰ economic activities utilising sustainable resources and creating goods and services that are competitive on the domestic and foreign markets.

3.1.1 Analysis of the current situation

Slovakia is a small an open economy which is dependent on export and foreign investments. Its competitiveness in both areas is based mostly on the comparative advantages of relatively low labour costs. These, however, are slowly disappearing. In the forthcoming period, competitiveness will be increasingly more dependent on innovation performance, which is increasingly more conditional on the ability to effectively use information. Slovakia is currently one of the weakest EU members with respect to innovation.¹¹ It belongs to the group of countries losing ground or only very slowly catching up with the EU average. The reason lies in the lack¹² of knowledge-based economy potential which would increase the proportion of innovative activities in the society and translate them into sources of sustainable growth. Information society is the basic building block of a knowledge-based economy. Effective communication and work with information in a knowledge economy is hard to imagine without ICT. The fact that the IT sector is currently the most important source of innovation performance¹³ in the global economy demonstrates the importance of ICT.

Figure No. 1 Summary index of ICT¹⁴

Despite moderate progress in recent years, Slovakia is one of the least developed countries of the EU with regard to the level of informatisation of society.¹⁵ Slovakia lags behind the countries of the EU-15, as well as behind the majority of EU's new members. According to an assessment of the development of information society between 2001 and 2005 carried out by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)¹⁶ in 183 countries of the world, Slovakia is one of the least developed countries of the EU27. This index evaluates the level of broadband internet penetration (networks), digital skills and IT education and the degree of usage of ICT in processes (households,

⁸ Real and estimated (p) GDP growth in
2005, 2006(p) and 2007(p):
Estonia: 10,5; 8,9; 7,9;
Lithuania: 10,2; 8,5; 7,6;
Slovakia: 6,1; 6,1; 6,5.

source: Eurostat, 10/2006, GEB indicators, Growth rate of GDP volume - percentage change on previous year

⁹ Measured by the production gap; source: NBS, Convergence Report, May 2006, NBS

¹⁰ Also called knowledge-intensive activities. Eurostat classification, Knowledge-intensive high technology service and knowledge-intensive service industries (ISIC Revision 2 and NACE, Revision 1.1)

¹¹ Measured by the summary innovation index (SII) published by Eurostat in the European Innovation Scoreboard. Other significant indicators measuring innovation performance include the share of high-tech commodities in total exports or the number of patents registered with EPO (European Patent Office) per million inhabitants.

¹² Especially unprepared human resources, unavailability and low standard of technology, poor performance of science and research

¹³ Measured, for instance, by the number of patents registered with EPO per 1000 inhabitants. In 2003 and 2004, ICT (Electric communication technique + Computing) had the highest share (16.4%) of the top ten technical fields in the number of patents registered with EPO. The second most important field was medical or veterinary science and hygiene (11,1%). Source: EPO, 2005, http://annual-report.european-patent-office.org/facts_figures.

¹⁴ Summary index of ICT – an inclusive index measured across 183 countries by the International Telecommunications Union. It relies on ten indicators that help measure ICT networks, digital literacy and skills, uptake and intensity of the use of ICT. For analytical purposes, economies are grouped into four categories, ranging from high to low as regards levels of ICT Opportunities evaluation. The given values highlight relative movements between 2001 and 2005. A comparison of annual average growth rates shows which countries are making progress and how fast.

¹⁵ Expressed by the composite ICT Opportunity index, published by the ITU.

¹⁶ <http://www.itu.int/home/index.html>

businesses). Slovakia markedly lags behind the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway), which are EU leaders, but also behind some of the new EU member states, in particular the Baltic states (primarily Estonia). Slovakia not only lags behind in the level, but also in the dynamics of IS development.

Figure No. 2 The degree of convergence of Slovakia to the EU-15 in the field of information society (EU-15=100%)

According to the assessment of the level of Informatisation in the context of the i2010¹⁷ initiative, Internet penetration in Slovakia is generally very low. Nevertheless, Slovaks are active users of the Internet, restricted by the limits of the availability of infrastructure and e-services. Despite certain progress in recent years, the penetration of the Internet in Slovak households is among the lowest in Europe. The level of Internet usage (% of internet users from the whole population) is relatively high and reaches the EU average. Internet users are active above all in reading online newspapers and magazines. This trend can be interpreted as a consequence of the high degree of Internet usage outside households, i.e. at work, in schools and public places. The low Internet connection speed for the majority of users in Slovakia is the cause of the low proportion of usage of the Internet for music and video downloading and playback, which is a key factor for the development of commercial services and trade in digital content. As regards the standard of eBusiness, Slovakia ranks last among EU members today. Three eGovernment services are available today. Compared with the EU average, the level of usage of these services is relatively high in households and, in particular, in businesses. The distribution of digital skills is uneven and they are generally poor. The proportion of persons with expert skills in IT (6 of the 6 skills) by far exceeds the EU average. The proportion of persons with basic (user) skills is far below the EU average. While in the EU-15, 24% users have 5 of the 6 basic computer skills;¹⁸ this is only 19%¹⁹ in Slovakia.

Slovakia markedly lags behind in a whole spectrum of more detailed insights into information society. In 2006 Slovakia had only a half of broadband connections per 100 inhabitants (27) compared with the EU-15 average (54). This was almost three times less compared to e.g. Finland (65). The share of Slovak population using the Internet for communication²⁰ and when dealing²¹ with public institutions (26.9%) is higher than in the EU-15 (20.8%), especially in the 16-54 age group. Nevertheless, the proportion of Internet population in the total population in all age groups is less than half of that of Finland.

The penetration of the internet in businesses²² in Slovakia (90.7%) is comparable with the EU-15 average (90.9%). The inclusion of ICT in business processes, however, is considerably lower in Slovakia – only 26% of employees use an Internet-equipped PC as a regular work tool. The reasons why Slovakia lags behind the EU-15 (37%) and even more markedly behind Finland (56%) lie in the low technological standard and quality of business processes and their interconnection with ICT, rather than the physical unavailability or relatively²³ high cost of ICT. The advancement of information society in the business sector is also characterised by the low proportion of e-commerce sales in the total sales of businesses. The proportion of e-commerce in the total sales of businesses with more than 10 employees in Slovakia (0.8%) is less than a half of that in the EU-15 (2.8%). This is less than a tenth of the proportion in Finland (10%). Despite the high growth in this indicator in advanced EU countries, Slovakia has not been able to catch up with them significantly in recent years.

The level of informatisation in public administration in Slovakia is very low compared with both the highly-computerised EU members and the EU-15 average. This is documented especially by the limited offer of electronic services. The development of e-services in Slovakia has passed the initial stage of implementation of the Roadmap for the Introduction of 20 Electronic Public Administration Services. Slovakia (20%) reaches approximately a third of the EU-15 average (56%) in this respect. The situation in the electronisation of other eGovernment services, such as eLearning, eCulture, eInclusion, eWork, eHealth, or eTourism, is even worse.²⁴ Slovakia is one of the last EU Member States without a

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=246

¹⁸ 1. users able to use a mouse to launch programs such as internet browser or word processor; 2.: users able to copy or move a file or folder; 3.: users able to use copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information on screen; 4.: users able to use basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet; 5.: users able to compress files; 6.: users able to write a computer program using a specific programming language.

¹⁹ Best skilled are users in Iceland, where 42% of users can use five of the six basic computer skills. Source: OECD

²⁰ information e-services: acquisition of public information from the web, downloading of official forms from the websites of public institutions

²¹ handling all paperwork using the Internet, the so-called transaction services: sending completed forms

²² businesses with 10-49 employees

²³ from the standpoint of purchasing power (expressed in purchasing power parity)

²⁴ based on Eurostat data, DB Information Society, 10/2006

system of electronic prescription. eLearning services are used by less than 4% employees, which is around three times less than the EU-15 average.²⁵ The situation is similar in all areas of electronic services.

According to the assessment of progress in the implementation of the i2010 initiative carried out by the EC²⁶ and focused on an assessment of the level of development of eGovernment services, Slovakia ranks last but one. Of the 20 basic eGovernment services (benchmarked by the EC), Slovakia has only three fully functional services at the moment (which corresponds with a 20% benchmark). Slovakia ranks at the bottom of both the old and the new Europe. But we can take the example of the current eGovernment leaders - Austria and Estonia - who started to invest in this area relatively recently and worked their way from the bottom to the top. This happened over a period of several years and proves correct the theory that "the last can be the first". The later the development of eGovernment begins, the more experience can be obtained from other countries, while more modern technology can be used.

At the regional level, there are marked differences in innovation performance,²⁷ and hence informatisation, only between the Bratislava self-governing region²⁸ and other self-governing regions. The differences are a consequence of the geographical location of the region and the character of Bratislava, which is the economic, administrative and cultural centre of Slovakia. The Bratislava self-governing region, which is, according to the assessment of innovation performance of regions,²⁹ 27th of the 208 regions of EU25, is an innovation centre of European importance, which, together with Vienna (24th) and Budapest (34th) form one of the most important innovation regions of Central and Eastern Europe.³⁰ The rest of Slovakia's NUTS II regions: Western, Central and Eastern Slovakia, lag behind the Bratislava self-governing region in the level of innovation and Eastern Slovakia also lags behind the majority of other regions of EU25. Eastern Slovakia was 189th among the regions assessed in terms of their innovation performance. Informatisation is a cause and, at the same time, an effect of the current level of innovation activity in regions. According to a survey of the Statistical Office, regional differences can be found in particular with respect to the penetration of broadband internet which is lower compared to the other NUTS 3 regions in the Prešov, Trenčín and Banská Bystrica regions.³¹

The reasons for the current very low level of informatisation of society in Slovakia are on the side of both supply and demand for e-services, which is mainly related to the low penetration of the internet in Slovakia and the skills of ICT users. The key cause of the low penetration of broadband Internet and poor standard of information society in Slovakia in general is above all the insufficient supply of quality electronic services. The barrier to greater development of information society on the demand side is currently the poor affordability and inadequate physical availability of connections in the least advanced regions of Slovakia. To a great extent, the relatively low penetration of ICT can also be attributed to poor skills of a large proportion of the internet populations and low purchasing power.

In general, the reasons for Slovakia's lagging behind include:

- the fact that informatisation was not a real priority of the government in the preceding period (between 2000-2006, on average 7.3% of investments from European funds went to IS in the EU, while it was 0.9% in Slovakia)
- basic legislation that would make it possible to start conceptual development of eGovernment did not exist. The PAIS Act was not passed until 2006 and this is only the first step in the creation of a consistent legal framework. A large number of other laws and implementing regulations that would provide equal status to electronic and paper form of communication and allow for effective management of PAIS development are missing.
- A lack of effective legal framework and the fact that PAIS were developed evolutionally (chaotically) rather than revolutionarily. This approach has provided us with a large number of very expensive IS unable to communicate between each other and a large number of uncoordinated PA services that not only create a burden on the citizen but are also very costly. Therefore, PA is of poor quality for the citizen today and very non-transparent to the PA

²⁵ Source: Sibis, 2006, <http://www.sibis-eu.org/statistics/data/8-72.htm>

²⁶ Benchmarking in a Policy Perspective, Report No. 4, October 2006, Public Services, Source: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/europe/i2010/docs/studies/wp4_report_online_public_services_final.doc

²⁷ More detailed information about innovation performance of regions can be found in Annex No. 6 Maps

²⁸ Objective Regional Competitiveness and Employment

²⁹ On initiative of the EC, innovation performance of NUTS II regions is regularly evaluated in co-operation with Eurostat. Based on composite indicators of the Revealed Regional Summary Innovation Index (RRSII), 208 regions of EU25 are compared. The RRSII is a follow-up to the summary innovation index (SII) for the NUTS I level consisting of 26 indicators and uses 7 indicators quantifiable at the NUTS II level. Source: 2006 EUROPEAN REGIONAL INNOVATION SCOREBOARD (2006 RIS), November 15, 2006, <http://www.proinno-europe.eu>

³⁰ Another very important innovation region of Eastern Europe is Prague (15th), which is geographically situated in vicinity of an important innovation region of Germany - Dresden (18th).

³¹ More detailed information about innovation performance of regions can be found in Annex No. 6 Maps

itself. There is a lack of communication and harmonisation between individual authorities of central administration, not to mention the lack of co-ordination between state administration and the self-government.

- The result of the approach to informatisation of PA in Slovakia is that Slovakia is at the end of the ranking of EU members in eGovernment and electronic commerce. Basic eGovernment services are unavailable and there is a lack of quality content in Slovak that users would be willing to pay for. The non-existence of quality e-services and supply of useful digital content is the key cause of the low penetration of the internet in households, where Slovakia also occupies one of the last positions in the EU. The poor level of internetisation is further documented by the fact that a third of municipal councils do not have an Internet connection at all.

3.1.2 Priority topics

Informatisation of society is a systematic process of introducing and using information and communication technology in all processes enabling a more economical and efficient utilisation of all resources available within them. Informatisation stimulates economic growth and labour productivity, creates new jobs and economic activities, increases added value and concentrates the highest innovation potential.³² Utilisation of the opportunities provided by ICT removes geographical and human barriers, promotes competitiveness in the global economy and is ultimately the basic requirement and one of the essential stimuli for the development of a knowledge-based society. The Slovak economy lacks a sufficiently strong impulse that would initiate a more momentous development of information society and bring it closer to the trends in countries with a high level of informatisation. The current situation indicates that such an impulse can only be provided by the state through the creation of eGovernment and well-targeted and co-ordinated interventions to increase the penetration of broadband internet in areas where the market fails.

Therefore, as a matter of priority, the OPIS will concentrate on the creation and development of PAIS infrastructure and applications that will improve the efficiency of the functioning of public administration and develop eGovernment. The aim is to ensure that every clerk has access to basic personal productivity applications (Word, Excel, Internet, e-mail, etc.) and, depending on the type of work, to specialised eGovernment applications (cadastre, registers, taxes, human resources, accounting, procurement, etc.). A barrier to the intensive use of eGovernment services has been, and may continue to be in the future, the unavailability of broadband Internet in households. For this reason, the OPIS will invest in broadband connection infrastructure in areas where the market fails. A necessary component of the introduction of eGovernment is the legislative environment and the functioning of processes within public administration. Improving the efficiency of processes and enhancing the quality of human resource management is the subject of the OP E&SI, which will complement the OPIS and will be implemented in compliance with the OPIS. The area of legislative environment is not an eligible topic of SF and is therefore dealt with in the context of the agenda of the MF SR, which is the CSAA for the field of informatisation.

Since repository institutions are the most important source of quality digital content that can significantly increase the dynamics of the development of the whole knowledge sector and eGovernment, this topic will also be a subject of the OPIS. The availability and marketing of quality digital content in repository institutions (libraries, museums, galleries, archives and specialised institutions) is very poor. It is therefore necessary to achieve a high degree of interconnection and accessibility of data and information (in either physical or digital form) and safe long-term storage of data on a variety of carriers and support the broadest possible application of the data in the field of research, development, innovation, local and regional development and strategic planning at national or regional levels.

Very low penetration of broadband access in Slovakia is a major barrier to the accessibility of electronic services, the development of eGovernment and inclusion of ICT in the society. The present situation and long-term trends force the state to intervene in this area. The market is failing especially with regard to the affordability and physical availability of broadband access networks in selected regions or for selected groups of users. Some user groups lack motivation or digital skills necessary for a greater use of ICT in communication with public institutions, at work or for entertainment.

³² In 2003 and 2004, ICT (Electric communication technique + Computing) had the highest share (16.4%) of the ten technical fields in the number of patents registered with EPO. The second most important industry is health care, veterinary medicine and hygiene (11,1%). Source: EPO, 2005, http://annual-report.european-patent-office.org/facts_figures/

The area of human resources and education for the needs of information society forms one of the pillars of the strategy for the informatisation of society until 2013. It is necessary to ensure that the development of eGovernment and increasing the penetration of the internet is accompanied by measures to increase digital literacy and IT skills by modernising formal education oriented on IT and promoting lifelong learning in this area. The area of human resources is a topic of the ESF and a subject of the operational programme Education managed by the Ministry of Education and operational programme Employment and Social Inclusion managed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.³³

Analysis of the electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services

Expenditure on the basic functions of public administration accounts for approximately 70% of the public budget in Slovakia today. The remainder is made up of expenditures on development programmes and debt financing. Expenditure on public administration is constantly rising and requires increasingly effective communication and quality information. Insufficient interconnection of individual public administration services causes that they are non-transparent even to the public administration itself. As a result, it is not possible to make public administration services cheaper and satisfactorily manage their quality.

Due to this fact, an average Slovak spends five days a year dealing with public institutions, even though he pays approximately one third³⁴ of his income for public administration services. For instance, today, the purchase and re-registration of a vehicle from a different district regularly requires the owner to spend two days at the local traffic inspectorate – one day when de-registering and another day when re-registering the vehicle. If the paperwork is not processed until 4 pm, an additional day is needed.³⁵

The concept of effective electronic public administration envisages that public administration information and organisation systems will be standardised and interconnected. This means that when dealing with public administration, only a single electronic form will need to be completed and sent by citizens or businesses from an integrated service point, computer, mobile phone, kiosk or TV. Everything else will take place in the back office, without direct participation of the user, who can spend their time for work, with their family or go fishing. Nobody will be able to cheat or bribe at the offices - everybody will just do their job. A properly set-up service can save people's time, money and personnel. Modern public administration provides services where the taxpayers know precisely what they are paying for and only receive what they need or order. When a citizen wants to register a motor vehicle, he should only need to complete a single form at any integrated service point or send a form electronically. If the owner does not receive the registration plates and vehicle registration within the set period of time, he can trace where and who the matter has been delayed with.

The audit of PAIS³⁶ shows that the standard of electronic services provided by the public administration is characterised by the dominance of information³⁷ services (69% in CSAA) provided on internet websites of individual public administration organisations. Every public administration institution has its own website providing public access to basic information about the services provided, office hours, forms, etc. The whole public administration lacks an appropriate level of electronisation ensuring the availability of communication and transaction³⁸ functions of the services provided, i.e. services with a higher added value. Only 8 % of the e-services provided have a communication (interactive) function and only 23% have a transaction function (all paperwork can be completed electronically).

According to the specified levels of basic eGovernment services to citizens and businesses, eleven services are at the 1st level, two services at the 2nd level and two services at the 3rd level of eGovernment. Five services are at

³³ Cross-financing targeted at improving the quality of human resources directly related to the implementation of OPIS projects will be used within the framework of the OPIS

³⁴ According to Eurostat, the tax and insurance burden in Slovakia in 2005 was below 29%

³⁵ A review of the processes of other selected services for citizens or businesses can be found at: <http://portal.gov.sk>

³⁶ Conducted between 19.08.2004 and 31.12.2004 and 30.04.2005. Source: MTPT SR

³⁷ The visitors of the websites have access to structured information about the services provided, contact information, description of administrative procedures, organisational structure and competences of the organisation providing the service, laws, etc. Information services provided by public administration do not allow for active communication between the office, citizens or businesses and do not make it possible to conduct, or at least initiate, the administrative process related to the public administration service.

³⁸ These functions allow the user to conduct the complete administrative process and communication with public administration electronically, with the same validity as in the "paper" format. Transaction services are seen as the target function of e-government services.

the transaction level – which is the 4th level. This means that five of the 20 basic services are fully digitised and are provided directly on the Internet, two are at a preparatory stage and the remaining 14 services have not been sufficiently prepared for a direct provision of services on the Internet. Full operation of the public procurement system is being launched at the moment. The current progress in the introduction of basic services for citizens and businesses can be seen in Figure No. 3.

The majority of the transaction functions of electronic services provided by public administration require the on-line accessibility of data resources that can be used for legal purposes and the implementation of guaranteed electronic signature. Even though the legislation for the use of electronic signatures was adopted in 2002, they have yet to become widespread. The reason for this situation is not the cost of it, but the fact that the public administration is not prepared to offer useful services for which electronic signature could be used.

The scope and practical usability of G2P communication, and hence PA portals, is directly related to the scope and quality of G2G communication. Therefore, G2G links – the basic requirement for effective G2P communication – are the basic issue of eGovernment. G2P communication is the communication between PA and the public, i.e. the input/output to/from the "black box", which is the public administration system. G2G links cover the core activities – the process of administration. G2P communication is the "top of the pyramid" – PA e-services for the public.

The level of ICT infrastructure utilisation in public administration in CSAA organisations is relatively good with respect to the availability and spread of the Internet, but less so with respect to performance and poor with respect to ICT efficiency. The informatisation of the whole of public administration is far from the desired level with regard to efficiency, i.e. automation, security, interoperability and provision of e-services. This applies to both the functionality needed and security. The quality of the public administration information system is negatively affected by the high diversity of solutions implemented in individual PA organisations. The majority (57% in CSAAs) of existing and planned public administration information systems are not interoperable³⁹ and the share of automatically entered data is less than 10% (i.e. 90% of data is entered manually). The share of IS with cross-sectoral interoperability in CSAAs is only 5%. Only 22% IS in CSAAs is interoperable internally - i.e. interoperable within a single state administration organisation.

The level of ICT utilisation in the self-government is even lower than in CSAAs. Only around 66% of self-government offices⁴⁰ are connected to the Internet. Municipal offices in the Prešov and Banská Bystrica regions, where more than 40% of municipal offices are not connected to the Internet, are in the worst situation. In the Bratislava, Trnava and Nitra regions, around 80% of municipal offices are connected to the Internet. More than 70% of municipalities own between one to three computers, the majority of which are older than two years. The worst situation with respect to the availability of computers at municipal offices is in the Prešov and Banská Bystrica regions. Only around three quarters of municipal offices have their own website. More than 80% of municipal offices in the Prešov, Banská Bystrica and Košice regions have no website. The largest number (45%) of municipal offices with their own website is in the Bratislava region.

Only four of the small number of basic e-services provided, mostly introduced in connection with the implementation of the Roadmap, use an entirely electronic form today (environment-related permits, customs declarations, public libraries, and VAT), which make it possible to carry out the whole administrative process electronically. The majority of e-services provided involve an e-form that can be downloaded by the user from a website, but still needs to be physically delivered to the service provider after it has been completed. A relatively large number of services are provided using standardised paper forms that are purchased or given out and subsequently filled in and delivered to the relevant office. Five of the basic e-services provided use applications without a set format or precisely defined content and structure, which renders them unusable for further automated processing.



The digital and physical content used in public administration service processes today is unsuitable for the purposes of improving their efficiency. It lacks consistent quality or scope that would make it possible to develop it further and increase its value. Communication with and

communication systems to exchange and share data and information.

in the self-government in 2005. The level of participation of towns and villages was 80% (2,268

Collected results can be found in Annex No. 6 – maps.

within public administration is mostly conducted in the paper form and a large amount of, frequently very useful, data is never processed. The reason for this is the insufficient optimisation of PA processes and poor standard of documents. As a result of the low quality of public administration processes and a small level of ICT utilisation, offices request and collect an enormous amount of data, but still have only very little information.

At present, the public administration lacks a sufficient and stable environment for the integrated and effective use of ICT in the provision of public services. A legal framework that would give electronic communication the same status as to paper communication is absent. The absence of a system for the creation and application of a legal framework for the informatisation of public administration in Slovak legislation is a serious problem from the standpoint of the society's informatisation. Another reason is the poor standard of the public administration processes⁴¹ that are to be supported by the effective utilisation of the opportunities offered by ICT. The availability of ICT at territorial self-government authorities⁴² at the municipal level is even worse than at the level of state administration authorities. The majority of services are carried out in paper form, which means that the public service provider is either not online or its website contains only information that can be used to electronically initiate the delivery of the service (the information and communication function of the e-service provided). The user can download the form from the Internet, but he has to print, sign, and deliver or send it to the office. Since there are disparities between regions with respect to the accessibility of the Internet, offices and availability of technology and personnel, the access to services provided by public administration is not equal in the whole population. People from areas with low population density and low economic performance are in the worst situation.

At the NUTS III level, there are significant regional differences in particular in the availability of the Internet, where the Prešov and Trenčín⁴³ regions lag behind the most. In the case of the Prešov region, which is economically the weakest region of Slovakia, the affordability of the Internet plays the most important role compared to other regions. Due to the generally poor level of eGovernment services and limited development of services in the self-government, there are no significant differences in the supply of electronic services with the exception of the Bratislava and Košice regions. The demand for electronic services reflects economic performance and penetration of the Internet in regions and is therefore strongest in the Bratislava, Košice and Trnava regions. A condition for the provision of better and more accessible services to all users in towns and villages is the effective electronisation of services provided by the self-government and especially the fastest possible improvement of the efficiency of services provided by public administration at the central level.

Since the OPIS strategy in the field of electronisation of public administration and its implementation build on a comprehensive analysis of the services and infrastructure, a feasibility study analysing in detail all eGovernment components both at the central and regional levels, determined for several thousand public administration institutions, will be created as a follow-up to the analytical section of the OPIS. Its main outcome will be an eGovernment policy and a detailed eGovernment development strategy. The feasibility study will form part of the structure of OPIS programming documents and will, among other things, contain a detailed specification of the key projects and individual components. Only a global analysis is available today, the results of which are captured in the sections above.

3.3 Analysis in the area of repository institutions

Repository institutions include archives, libraries, museums, galleries, heritage protection organisations, specialised institutes (such as the Nation's Memory Institute), specialised organisations in the field of culture, universities, the SAS, organizations administering and protecting copyright and organisation protecting intellectual and industrial property. They deal with the preservation, protection and provision of access to social knowledge, knowledge of cultural heritage, art and culture, and unique information and objects for the professional and general public. Repository institutions play an irreplaceable role in the mediation of knowledge for the educational process, the public, the business sector, public administration, and research and development organisations.

⁴¹ These can be divided into primary processes (with a direct link to an external user), support processes (with a direct link to an internal user) and management processes (with a direct link to an internal user and the quality of primary and support processes).

⁴² Territorial self-government consists of: local territorial self-government - municipalities, and regional territorial self-government, the so-called higher territorial units - self-governing regions.

⁴³ According to data from the SO SR and MTPT SR, more detailed information can be found in Annex No. 7

The institutional framework of the protection of cultural heritage is made up of a comprehensive network of national, regional and local repository institutions. The decisive role in this process is played by national cultural institutions, such as the Slovak National Library, Slovak National Museum, Slovak National Gallery, Slovak National Archive, state archives, the Heritage Office, and the National Education Centre, as well as specialised professional and scientific repository institutions. The issue of repository institutions, in particular libraries, museums and galleries administered by the self-government, is complementarily dealt with in the Regional Operational Programme, as a measure of the priority axis focusing on strengthening the cultural potential of regions and tourism infrastructure.

The legal framework of the protection of cultural heritage is formed by the following key legal regulations:

- Resolution No. 91/2001 to the Declaration of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the protection of cultural heritage.
- National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No. 115/1998 Coll. on Museums and Galleries and on the Protection of Objects of Museum and Art Gallery Value, as amended
- National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No. 49/2002 Coll. on Heritage Protection, as amended
- National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No. 183/2000 Coll. on Heritage Protection, on amendments of Act No. 27/1987 Coll. on State Conservation of National Monuments, and on amendments of some laws, as amended
- Act No. 395/2002 Coll. on Archives and Registries, and on amendments of some laws, as amended

In the context of repository institutions, knowledge means tangible, intangible, immovable and movable valuables administered by repository institutions, as well as collection items and information in the form of image, sound and written or printed documents, or otherwise recorded information which these institutions collect, store and process. The following is the chain of operation of repository institutions: acquisition of knowledge ► processing of knowledge ► system of knowledge protection ► presentation ► provision of access to knowledge ► further processing and utilisation of knowledge. The development of repository institutions and the tasks in the field of digitisation, storage and access to information require that the technical infrastructure (buildings, offices, technology) directly related to the processing and protection of information is of a high standard. It can be said that the majority of repository institutions currently lack suitable conditions for the administration and protection of knowledge for which they have been created. They have very limited means and technology for the digitisation and archiving of digital content. A few examples to illustrate the unfavourable situation: the head office of the Slovak National Library was designed to hold 2.5 million library items. Today, there are more than 4 million library documents stored in the library. The unsatisfactory state of utility networks and air-conditioning in this building poses a threat to the library resources, as well as to the digitisation of these resources. The State Scientific Library in Prešov operates in eight different buildings in the city and its surroundings. The head office of this library is located in an unsuitable building, which is, just like the other buildings, in a bad technical condition hampering proper utilisation of this institution in this university city, which is the second most important pole of innovation in eastern Slovakia. Many other units of repository institutions are in an unsatisfactory condition. The storage capacity of state archives has been almost exhausted - their total free capacity is only 12.7 running kilometres; 18 of them have no free capacity left at all. The possibilities for the presentation and interpretation of knowledge acquired through systematic collection and long-term storage are very restricted. More than 95% of all documents and information collected by these institutions are placed in deposits without public access in physical or digital form.

The production of high-quality digital images available electronically reduces the wear of fragile and easily damageable documents and objects. Digitisation can help in the preservation of valuable materials and in the handling of these materials using, for instance, digital catalogues, registers, etc. The aim of digitisation is not to replace the originals, but to ensure that cultural, information and educational organisations provide better services. Digital files are non-permanent. Their purpose is to improve access to collections. Until the technical issues of long-term archiving of digital materials are reliably addressed, it is necessary to ensure that they are maintained and regularly converted into new formats. Digital copies cannot serve as a replacement of the original. Original documents and artefacts need to be taken care of even after digitisation.

The digitisation of collections will enable repository institutions to provide access to information previously available only to a narrow group of professionals. The following are the advantages of the provision of access to collections through digitisation:

1. Digital collections can be quickly, independently and comprehensively searched through by anyone, at any time and from any place via a computer network;
2. Answers to frequently asked questions on the web save employees time;
3. Digital images can be electronically improved so that they can be displayed and viewed in better quality and with better legibility;
4. Digitisation increases the utilisation of collections;
5. Digitisation contributes to education and exploration in that digital materials and rare and inaccessible digitised materials can be used in schools directly in the education process;
6. Digitisation with OCR allows for full-text searching (e.g. in historical newspapers and magazines, the content of the project of digitisation of graduation theses, doctoral theses, scientific reports, etc.);
7. Digitisation makes it possible to listen to/view digitised sound and video recordings;
8. Digitisation and quality enhancement provides access to the content of recordings on carriers that are not viewable/playable using regular devices (microfiches, negatives, etc.);
9. Digitisation allows for better intellectual control through the creation of new search tools, references to bibliographical records, development of indices (registers) and other tools;
10. Digitisation allows for better and enhanced usage of materials thanks to broad research, manipulation with images and texts and exploration of digital images in new contexts;
11. Digitisation can provide for better utilisation of collections thanks to improved image quality (for instance, better legibility of faded or stained documents);
12. Digitisation allows for the creation of "virtual collections" based on flexible integration and synthesis of various formats or thematically related documents from different locations;
13. Provision of access to memory and library resources of specialised professional units and institutions;
14. Digitisation can provide access to material resources through the creation of virtual museums (e.g. paleontological samples, extraordinary environmental entities, etc.);
15. The archiving of documents in text formats (txt, rtf, doc, html, pdf) and digitisation using OCR will allow users with disabilities and seniors to use collection resources with the help of assistance technology or conversion into formats legible to them (Braille, increased font size, text-to-speech conversion).

There were almost 6,000 libraries in Slovakia in 2005, of which 2956 were school, 38 academic, 2,615 public, 12 scientific, and 358 special libraries. Informatisation and internetisation in the network of public, scientific and special libraries is very low since, of the total of 2985 computers, only 606 computers accessible to the public in Slovak libraries were connected to the Internet in 2005. The Internet is available mostly at academic and scientific libraries and only at a small portion of other libraries (public, special and school libraries). The level of informatisation in the area of culture is generally inadequate. Several core information systems have been developed in the field of culture, such as KIS3G, CEMUZ, AISPF, CEDVU and others. A more comprehensive use of these systems, however, requires comprehensive co-ordination of processes in the fields of standardisation, interoperability of heterogeneous systems and digitisation. In order to improve the co-ordination of these processes, the Council of the Minister of Culture for the Informatisation of Culture was created at the MC SR in early 2006, which has discussed and approved the strategic framework for the informatisation of culture as a framework initial specification of the direction for the development of informatisation in the field of culture.

Since the OPIS strategy in the field of repository institutions and its implementation build on a comprehensive analysis of the available content, services and infrastructure of repository institutions, a feasibility study analysing in detail the conditions for the effective implementation of projects in this area will be created as a follow-up to the analytical section of the OPIS. Its main outcome will be the identification of information sources to be digitised and proposals of effective models for providing access to these sources. The feasibility study will form part of the structure of OPIS programming documents and it will need to be completed prior to the implementation of the programme or its key projects because only a global analysis is available today, the results of which are captured in the sections above.

3.4 Analysis in the area of broadband Internet access

Broadband access⁴⁴ should be seen as a technological platform that can be used as a basis for the development and operation of services that would otherwise be impossible or meaningless to develop. Therefore, broadband access should be looked at as a means opening up new opportunities for access (via computer, telephone, television, kiosk, chip cards, etc.) to the resources and services available (data, voice and video), placing no time, type, content, scope and quality restrictions on end users throughout the whole chain between the user and the provider.

Internet connectivity is a fully liberalised commodity in Slovakia. The Slovak Telecommunications Office is the national price regulator⁴⁵ in the field of electronic communications. It monitors the observation of conditions defining cost-oriented prices of access, the transparency of access and non-discrimination. The Office specifies relevant markets in the field of electronic communications based on the list of relevant markets recommended by the European Commission. At least once in two years, the Office analyses relevant markets and undertakings designated as having significant market power with the aim of identifying whether the competition on the market is effective and whether corrective measures under special regulations or legal acts of the EC in the field of competition law in the provision of networks and services are sufficient. The TO SR analyses compliance with the requirements for the cost-orientation of access prices, transparency of access, non-discrimination of access and, in justified cases, access to certain network resources in compliance with the regulatory framework of the EU. The Slovak Telecommunications Office has an irreplaceable role in regulating telecommunication activities. Its contributions to the state, and, in the end effect, also for the citizens include the following areas:

- a) Financial – based on payments for permits and licences, as well as from sanctions paid for violating valid regulations on the telecommunication market, in line with legal norms and regulations of the EU and the Slovak Republic
- b) Decision-making – its decisions create conditions for setting up and maintaining of a competitive environment on the electronic communications market. These activities exert pressure on telecommunication companies – this brings better services for people, services for competitive prices.
- c) Repressive – it performs state inspection. If the Office finds out about a breach of the law, it can penalize the perpetrator, thus preventing e.g. making business without an appropriate licence, and reducing financial evasions when fees for permits and licences are not paid,
- d) Correctional – orders elimination of detected faults and abandonment of activities that are against the law,
- e) Protective – protects against distortion of broadcasting, television and radio networks, and conducts arbitration in cases of disputes.

Based on an analysis of the relevant markets conducted in 2006, the TO SR issued a decision designating Slovak Telekom as an undertaking with significant market power. The market share of Slovak Telekom in terms of the number of end users using broadband access exceeded 80% at the end of 2006. The TO SR maintains that its market share is not expected to decline significantly over the next two years. For this reason, the TO SR imposed obligations on the dominant provider (including price regulation) promoting the creation of a competitive environment and effective competition on the broadband access provider market.

The national transmission network interconnects the points of connectivity supply with the specific place where the user is located. Its capacity in Slovakia is sufficient both on the part of the dominant provider and alternative providers. A number of optical networks independent of the dominant Slovak Telekom were built in recent years, which created competition in the market of intercity circuits. Due to this competition, there is fierce price competition on routes to larger towns leading to price drops. The national transmission network also includes backbone optical networks where the state has majority participation⁴⁶ and which were built using significant public investments in the past. However, these backbone optical networks mostly cover areas that are already covered by optical networks of commercial operators. The quality of the competitive environment could improve if they are used commercially, but these networks should be completed using regular market instruments (sale, financing through increasing equity, loans, etc.) and not through the OPIS.

⁴⁴ The definition of broadband access is changing overtime towards constantly higher speeds. In Slovakia, it is defined as permanent access with downstream speed of > 512kbit/s and upstream speed of > 256kbit/s.

⁴⁵ On the basis of Act No. 610/2003 Coll. on Electronic Communications. According to the statute of the office, it is responsible to the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

⁴⁶ In particular ŽSR Railway Telecommunications, the Slovak electricity grid company, the National Motorway Company, SPP, and Transpetrol.

The access network provides a connection between the exchange point, or the operator access point, and the specific location in a town or agglomeration where the customer is located – i.e. it brings the required service directly to the room specified by the user, the so-called last mile. And this is where the key problem of further spread of broadband Internet lies. This component makes up the main part of the cost of broadband access and will provide good opportunities for cost reduction in the forthcoming period. The construction of alternative infrastructure (parallel to the dominant operator's distribution lines) progresses slowly due to the vast number of locations that need to be covered and the high construction cost⁴⁷; moreover, some of the technologies used cannot fully compete with DSL-based broadband Internet (for instance, wireless networks have limited transmission capacity and the quality of connections using general frequencies is affected by other operations).

Thanks to technological advancement in the field of ICT, the Slovak telecommunications market is developing by leaps and bounds. Nevertheless, rapid internetisation comparable with advanced EU members has yet to take place and it still has not even reached a level comparable with the Baltic States (Estonia, Lithuania). The gap in broadband access penetration in households is easily visible in comparison with countries with similar or smaller population density than Slovakia. Slovakia is a country with one of the lowest densities of broadband internet connections per sq. km and despite the dynamic growth in the number of connections in recent years; Slovakia has long been one of the least advanced countries of Europe in this respect.

The availability of broadband Internet is very low especially in the mountainous areas of Slovakia, where connectivity is limited to backbone network routes in the valleys of rivers and rural settlements with low population density. The long transmission routes to remote rural areas cause differences in physical availability and cost of connections compared with the short routes in urban settlements. Based on the results of an analysis,⁴⁸ territories in the Slovak Republic not covered by sufficient transmission capacity from the point of view of current and especially future needs were identified. This is particularly apparent at the final leg of delivering connectivity from an access network to the end user (last mile). Lack of coverage can be usually seen in areas with low population and industry density, which are economically unattractive for commercial connectivity providers. Private businesses currently mostly invest in the construction of information and communication infrastructure in areas with a high concentration of the population and economic activities, i.e. in areas with a high potential of future end users. Therefore, in less attractive regions, all of the technical solutions at the individual levels of information and communication infrastructure are a compromise between quality and cost.

Figure No. 5 Internet penetration, Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

According to a survey of the SO SR covering the reference period of the first quarter of 2006 for surveys on information and communication technology in households, it can be stated that almost 450 thousand Internet connections were active at the end of the year (27% of households). The highest figures were recorded in the Bratislava (34%) and Košice (32%) regions. This is caused above all by the fact that the large urban centres of Bratislava and Košice are located in these regions. Internet penetration in peripheral and rural areas is far below this level. There are estimates that broadband access is unavailable to more than 605 thousand households, that is, to over 1.6 million people. If only the Internet population⁴⁹ is taken into account, there are around 1 million people unable to acquire access to broadband Internet. Medium values, from the standpoint of Slovakia, were recorded in the Trnava (29%), Žilina (27%) and Prešov (24%) regions. The survey recorded the lowest figures in the Trenčín (20%) and Banská Bystrica (21%) regions. The high level of broadband Internet penetration in certain regions, such as the Košice or Žilina region, is a result of the availability of cable and UMTS connection in urban centres, such as the cities of Košice, Žilina and Martin. For instance, 41 thousand households in the Košice region use this type of connection. On the other hand, this number is only 1400 in the Trenčín region.

Tab. 1 Broadband connection statistics

Region	Population to whom broadband	Households to which broadband	Number of municipalities in which
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⁴⁷ in the case of underground lines, this includes the installation of cables and the related construction and take-up permits, ownership relations, cabling in buildings; wireless connections require a large number of base stations, especially in the case technologies requiring direct visibility between base and terminal stations

⁴⁸ Creation of information and communication infrastructure for the development of information society services, Final Report from Project No. 127/2004

⁴⁹ Population in productive age - men between 15 and 59 and women between 15 and 54.

	access is unavailable in '000	access is unavailable in '000	broadband access is unavailable
Banská Bystrica	220	90	450
Bratislava	38	15	35
Košice	290	100	400
Nitra	270	110	290
Prešov	305	100	590
Trenčín	150	60	200
Trnava	148	60	170
Žilina	200	70	240
Total	1,621	605	2,375

Source: Slovak Telekom, 2007

In terms of the availability of equipment for accessing the Internet, personal desktop computers are most widely used. They are used by 29% of households in the Bratislava region, and by 27% in the Košice region. Less than 4% of households use a portable computer to connect to the Internet. From the regional point of view, this figure is highest in the Bratislava region, with almost 6% of households using this way of connection, and the Žilina region (5%). The lowest level was recorded in the Trnava, Trenčín and Nitra regions, where the percentage of households using a portable computer to connect to the Internet is below 3%.

With respect to the method of connection to the internet, the majority of household are connected via a modem (access over a standard telephone line or ISDN). 12% of households in Slovakia are connected in this way. The highest figures were recorded in the Bratislava (16%) and Trnava regions (16%). 12% households in Slovakia have a broadband Internet connection (cable, UMTS, DSL). From the regional view, the highest figures were recorded in the Košice region, where 19% of households are connected to broadband Internet; it is followed by the Bratislava (14%) and Žilina (13%) regions. The lowest broadband Internet access figures were recorded by the survey in the Trenčín (6%), Prešov (8%), Trnava (10%) and Nitra (10%) regions.

In addition to the technical and technological factors affecting the price of connection, the improvement of the penetration of broadband access is affected by the supply of services. The key reasons for the low penetration of broadband access include the lack of useful content and low purchasing power making it impossible for a section of the internet population to use the internet at the current price level of telecommunications services without restricting their ordinary consumption. On the supply side, there is currently a lack of quality and accessible digital content in Slovakia, for which the users would be willing to pay. This situation is above all a result of the technological and procedural underpreparedness of public administration for the introduction of eGovernment services or provision of access to useful content at a more massive level. Another factor affecting the demand for broadband access is the social structure of users. Despite the relatively great size of internet population in Slovakia compared with the EU-15 average, especially in the 16-54 age group, there are significant differences in the intensity of ICT utilisation between individual social groups compared with the EU-15 average. From the viewpoint of the intensity of ICT utilisation, Slovakia is among countries with relatively low user skills. While 24% of users have 5 of the 6 basic ICT skills⁵⁰ in the EU-15, this number is only in 19% Slovakia.⁵¹ With regard to the intensity of ICT utilisation, the gap between users with higher education and younger age and users with lower education and older age is widening. Nevertheless, this development is not surprising and follows the worldwide trend. From the territorial standpoint, broadband penetration is affected by the geographical characteristics of regions and the related differences in the cost of network infrastructure. The availability of broadband internet is therefore very low especially in the mountainous areas of Slovakia, where connectivity is limited to backbone network routes in the valleys of rivers and rural settlements with low population density. The long transmission routes to remote rural areas cause differences in physical availability and cost of connections compared with the short routes in urban settlements.

A subsidised Internet programme is being implemented within the framework of the Minerva programme action plan and the National Strategy for Broadband Access, which concludes that there is a good situation in Slovakia with respect to backbone networks and finds the area of access networks as problematic. Even though the penetration of broadband Internet has almost doubled in Slovakia since the adoption of the broadband strategy, Slovakia continues to be a member of the European Union with one of the lowest numbers of broadband connections. It is therefore necessary to increase the current pace of growth in the number of broadband connections, in particular with help from organisations operating on the electronic communications market and, as far as possible, using the resources from EU structural funds.

Since the strategy in the field of broadband access and its implementation build on a comprehensive analysis, a feasibility study analysing in detail the conditions for the effective implementation of projects in this area will be created as a follow-up to the analytical section of the OPIS in this area. Its main outcome will be the identification of municipalities and recommendation of optimal technology for interconnecting them, as well as business models of their operation identified as part of the feasibility study. The feasibility study will form part of the structure of OPIS programming documents and it will need to be completed prior to the implementation of the programme or its key projects because only a global analysis is available today, the results of which are captured in the sections above.

3.5 Results of measures implemented in the 2004-2006 programming period

Based on the latest available information on the implementation of measures under the Operational Programme Basic Infrastructure as part of which projects aimed at informatisation of public administration are implemented, not a single informatisation project co-financed from the SF has yet been implemented in the 2004-2006 programming period.

Tab. 2 Situation in the implementation of SF by priorities. Source: ITMS, situation as of 31 March 2007⁵²

⁵⁰ 1.: users able to use a mouse to launch programs such as internet browser or word processor; 2.: users able to copy or move a file or folder; 3.: users able to use copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information on screen; 4.: users able to use basic arithmetic formula in a spreadsheet; 5.: users able to compress files; 6.: users able to write a computer program using a specific programming language.

⁵¹ Users in Iceland, where 42% of users can use 5 of the 6 basic ICT skills, are the most skilled.

⁵² Source: ITMS

Operational programme Basic Infrastructure Measure: 3.2 Building and development of information society for the public sector

Allocation per measure in 2004-2006 period (EUR)	No. of received NFA applications (February 2007)	No. of granted NFA applications (February 2007)	contracted funds in % (June 2007)	spending funds in % (June 2007)
13 702,715	143	56	95.51	18.45

The greatest number of projects⁵³ (more than 60% of the total allocation) was implemented in the Nitra, Košice and Banská Bystrica regions. The smallest number of projects (approximately a quarter of that in the most active Nitra region) were implemented in the Trnava region. With regard to the structure of the approved projects in terms of size and volume, the most dominant were projects in the field of eLearning implemented by the Ministry of Education in individual HTUs totalling SKK 79.8 million. The second and the third biggest group with the greatest amount of contracted resources are various portals promoting eGovernment at the regional level and the introduction of broadband internet in municipalities or public administration facilities. Projects have been approved for the informatisation of certain libraries totalling SKK 44 million. Around SKK 34 million will be used to create hospital information systems in Levoča, Piešťany and Trstená. The greatest projects include:

- a Ministry of Education project focusing on the internetisation of the teaching process at primary and secondary schools (SKK 79.8 million)
- Informatisation of libraries carried out by the Ministry of Culture in the Banská Bystrica, Košice and Nitra regions (SKK 39 million)
- information system of the Healthcare Surveillance Authority implanted in the Banská Bystrica, Košice and Nitra regions (SKK 28.2 million).

No major⁵⁴ projects comprehensively dealing with the development of eGovernment are implemented in the 2004-2006 programming period. Low allocation and the fact that the management of informatisation projects from the resources of SF is under the competence of the MCRD SR, and instruments in the field of public administration informatisation were by law in the hands of the MTPT SR (today the MF SR) did not make it possible to implement projects with a major impact on the current low level of informatisation of public administration.

The proportion of ERDF expenditure on informatisation in EU countries reached 7.3% in the 2004-2006 programming period, while this number was only 0.96% in Slovakia. It is expected that 10% of the total expenditure from SF⁵⁵ will be allocated for the informatisation of society in the EU on average in the 2007-2013 programming period. As a result of the strategy defined for the programming period, the support for informatisation is objectively underfinanced and Slovakia is clearly lagging behind other EU member states in this respect.

Tab. 3 Proportion of SF expenditure on the informatisation of society in the EU and Slovakia

Programming period	Proportion of SF expenditure on the informatisation of society	
	EU average ⁵⁶	SR
1994-1999	2.0%	0.0%
2000-2006	7.3%	0.96% ⁵⁷
2007-2013	10%	8.0% ⁵⁸

⁵³ from the resources of the MCRD SR: Situation in the implementation of SF in individual HTUs by OPs and priorities as of 31.03.2007 (excluding TA, national and interregional projects)(source: ITMS), Publication: Projects implemented under the OP BI

⁵⁴ exceeding EUR 50 million EUR

⁵⁵ Source: Final Report for the Thematic Evaluation of the Information Society, http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/doc/information_society.pdf

⁵⁶ Source: Final Report for the Thematic Evaluation of the Information Society, http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/doc/information_society.pdf

⁵⁷ Source: www.strukturalnefondy.sk

3.6 SWOT analysis

The following key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been identified for all priority axes and regions at the NUTS III level on the basis of the results of an analysis conducted in relation to the NSRF strategy.⁵⁹ Despite the fact that the Bratislava region is not located in a region eligible for the OPIS, it is included in the overview below since selected internal and state administration electronisation projects will be implemented in Bratislava, which is the main administrative centre of Slovakia. The financing of this part of the activities will be subject to a special regime defined in EC Regulation No. 448/2004.

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>BB</i>	<i>KE</i>	<i>NR</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>TT</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>ZA</i>
▪ Relatively high Internet penetration in businesses	×		×	×	×	×		×
▪ Gradual introduction of eGovernment services and electronisation of state administration and self-government services	×		×	×		×		
▪ Good availability and performance of ICT infrastructure at CSAAAs	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ A broad network of repository institutions with accessible, extensive and valuable resources for quality digital content and e-services	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Relatively high penetration of broadband access in settlement centres	×		×	×	×			
<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>BB</i>	<i>KE</i>	<i>NR</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>TT</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>ZA</i>
▪ Availability of only two of the basic (online transaction) eGovernment services, low efficiency of other electronic public services for citizens, businesses and public administration, which usually only mimic paper services and ultimately provide little benefit to the public and businesses	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Prevailing traditional, paper-based public administration, which is relatively highly informatised, but the ICT is far below the required efficiency and security parameters and the information systems are not capable of online communication between each other and function autonomously	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ A high number of municipalities in which broadband access is unavailable		×	×	×	×		×	×
▪ Low penetration of the Internet at municipal councils		×		×	×		×	×
▪ Unavailability of quality digital content, databases cannot be used for legal purposes	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>BB</i>	<i>KE</i>	<i>NR</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>TT</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>ZA</i>
▪ High economic growth and relatively high ICT expenditure with respect to GDP	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Availability of a backbone network with sufficient capacity in the majority of Slovakia's territory	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Equal status of paper and electronic communication between public administration, the population and businesses and abolishment of the principle of local competence for the provision of documents and services by public	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

⁵⁸ Source: Update of the NSRF approved by the Government at its 14th extraordinary session

⁵⁹ Strengths - internal attributes helping us achieve our objective

Weaknesses - internal attributes preventing us from achieving our objective

Opportunities - external conditions helping us achieve our objective

Threats - external conditions preventing us from achieving our objective

administration through appropriate modification of the legal framework								
▪ Improvement of regulatory instruments on the telecommunications market and development of effective competition on the telecommunications market will increase the availability of affordable access	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Improvement of digital literacy and skills of the population and civil servants through the implementation of the OP E&SI and OP Edu	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Threats	BA	BB	KE	NR	TN	TT	PO	ZA
▪ Inadequate legal framework for the performance of public administration activities and development	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Lack of interest in computerising certain offices, increasing their transparency and efficiency and central management of the development of information systems (due to underestimation of the importance of quality IT instruments, lack of motivation to innovate established processes, corruption, pressure from suppliers, etc.)	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Digital divide, increasing disparities between regions and social groups in ICT utilisation, e.g. as a result of regional differences in economic performance and income levels		×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Growth of digital crime, disruption of privacy, education and personal data protection	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Bad technical condition of repository institutions can result in extensive irreversible damage to digital content resources		×	×	×	×	×	×	×

3.7 Key disparities and development factors

The following key disparities and development factors have been identified for all priority axes and region at the NUTS III level on the basis of the results of an analysis in relation to the NSRF. Despite the fact that the Bratislava region is not located in a region eligible for the OPIS, it included in the overview below since selected internal and state administration elektronisation projects will be implemented in Bratislava, which is the main administrative centre of Slovakia.⁶⁰

Key disparities	BA	BB	KE	NR	TN	TT	PO	ZA
1. Lack of quality G2G, G2B and G2P services at the central and regional levels available to all users under the same conditions	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
2. Low penetration of the Internet in households and a large number of municipalities in which broadband access is unavailable		×	×	×	×		×	×
3. Lack of quality digital content in the Slovak language	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
4. Insufficient competencies of ICT users	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Key development factors	BA	BB	KE	NR	TN	TT	PO	ZA
▪ Optimisation of processes and greater efficiency of PAIS in individual areas of public administration, which will integrate PA services and infrastructure and provide citizens with services at a single point, which can be the Internet or a	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

⁶⁰ More detailed information can be found in Chapter 4.3.2. Territorial concentration of contributions

traditional office (1,2,3,4)								
▪ Effective competition on the telecommunications services market and support for the development of access networks in municipalities in which broadband access is unavailable (2,1)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▪ creation of useful digital content and its accessibility through eGovernment services (3,1,2)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

4. STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

4.1 Foundations of the strategy for the Operational Programme Informatisation of Society

The foundations of the strategy for the Operational Programme are based on the vision of economic and social development and increase the overall convergence of Slovakia's economy to the EU-15 average by means of sustainable development built on the informatisation of society. The Operational Programme focuses on interventions increasing the overall sustainable convergence of Slovakia to the EU-15 in the area of information society. The OP interventions are based on:

- an analysis of the context of interventions, the needs identified in the SWOT analysis and the identified disparities and key development factors
- the NSRF, according to which the OPIS will:
 - o follow up on the strategic objective of Slovakia for 2007-2013, which is to "substantially increase the competitiveness and performance of regions and the Slovak economy until 2013, while respecting the principles of sustainable development".
 - o respect the thematic concentration of the contributions defined in the NSRF, which focuses on interventions in "innovation and informatisation contributing to the development of technology and improvement of processes, thereby developing the sources of economic growth for knowledge-based economy and improving the quality of economic growth driven by existing factors". Hence, the OPIS strategy will implement the objective to "create conditions stimulating the growth of competitiveness of industry and services based on better utilisation of the existing factors of economic growth and creation of new, knowledge-based sources of sustainable growth".
 - o respect the territorial concentration and the specific requirements of the informatisation of society, which involves measures covering the NUTS II regions of the Convergence objective, with the exception of implementation of electronic services and elektronisation of public administration on the central level, which will cover the entire territory of Slovakia. OPIS interventions aimed at increasing the penetration of broadband access will also support the least developed, sparsely populated areas. Other OPIS measures will be implemented mainly in innovation and cohesion growth poles.
- from coherent strategic Slovak and EU documents (for further details see Chapter 7)
- from valid legal framework for informatisation in Slovakia⁶¹ and the regulatory framework for the telecommunications market
- from the experience with the implementation of measure focused on the development of information society from the preceding period (for further details see Chapter 3.6) and experience of other countries from the introduction of eGovernment
- from consultations with representatives of the public sector, self-government, business and non-profit sector in the application of the Partnership principle
- from feasibility studies, which will form part of programming and governing documents of the OPIS and provide detailed specifications of projects prior to launching them.

⁶¹ specified in Annex No. 6

4.1.1 NSRF vision and strategy

If Slovakia wants to become a prospering country, long-term attractive as a place in which to invest and attractive for its current and future populations as a place in which to live, it has to make full use of the opportunities for further development and the related changes that will bring it closer to the most advanced members of the EU. When comparing Slovakia to the most advanced countries, we can see that, to a varying degree, it is lagging behind in a number of aspects. If we consider the EU-15 as the most advanced EU members, then Slovakia's vision focuses on getting closer to their standard of living and quality of economic growth. Therefore, the vision for the economic and social development of Slovakia is formulated as sustainable overall convergence of Slovakia's economy to the EU-15 average by means of sustainable development. The strategy for achieving this vision, in the 2007-2013 programming period, is to substantially increase the competitiveness and performance of regions and the Slovak economy and employment until 2013, while respecting the principles of sustainable development. The NSRF strategy is based on two key topics: infrastructure and regional accessibility, and knowledge-based society. The strategy for the knowledge-based society will be implemented through five operational programmes. The OPIS is one of them. Its key role is to eliminate the digital gap between Slovakia and advanced members of the EU and hence create the foundations for a dynamic development of knowledge-based society. It will not be possible to meet this role without close co-operation between all OPs in the area of knowledge-based society. From the standpoint of the OPIS, which focuses on two key topics – eGovernment and broadband Internet – this in particular means close co-operation with OP E&SI in the field of education of civil servants. The OP C&EG (eBusiness, eTourism, informatisation of businesses), OP E (education in IT) and OP R&D (research and development in the IT sector) influence each other mostly indirectly, at the level of their broader impacts.

The Operational Programme Informatisation of Society is a basic strategic document, which will be used in the 2007-2013 programming period as a basis for the provision of assistance for the informatisation of society using the resources of SF. The OPIS provides a framework for all informatisation projects co-financed from EC resources in the 2007-2013 programming period. Its objective is to reduce the key disparities identified as effectively as possible through investment in the identified development factors. The OPIS will, therefore, promote streamlining and improvement of the functioning of state administration and self-government and the provision of access to and creation of digital content using the resources of repository institutions. The OPIS will promote the development of broadband networks, stimulate demand for broadband access and enhance the competitive environment on the telecommunications market, which will lead to greater inclusion of ICT in social processes.

4.1.2 Basic strategic documents

The basic premise for the draft strategy for the OP IS was provided by international documents adopted by the EU in the context of strategic planning of structural funds and national documents concerning the functionality of the system of assistance in the area of informatisation of society in the Slovak Republic. An important step towards increasing the importance of knowledge-based economy was the adoption of framework and action plans, the goals of which need to be realised with an outlook to 2010. The support for programmes will be functional only if the programming is timed with sufficient margins and the proposed measures are deliverable within the set time frame.

Strategic documents of the EU

The indicative priorities of the Community in the area of cohesion policy for the 2007- 2013 programming period are provided by the *Community Strategic Guidelines*. They define the scope of operation of individual EU funds at the European level and enable Member States to focus on their economic, social, institutional and cultural conditions when proposing the key national priorities so that a suitable mix of policies, intertwined with the priorities of the Community on the one hand and the National Reform Programme on the other, is implemented. While placing emphasis on sustainable development and competitiveness of the economy and bearing compliance with the *Lisbon Strategy* in mind, the strategic documents attempt to get close to the objective of the European Union's vision until 2010 formulated at the March 2000 European Council in Lisbon, which is to make the European Union the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world.

The Financial Perspective 2007-2013 is an important link defining the structure of the EU budget and the binding ceilings for the Union's expenditure and revenues. The draft consists of a seven-year EU financial and

budgetary framework and is reflected in the proposed framework financial perspectives of individual EU Member States when planning the 2007- 2013 programming period.

The European Employment Strategy focuses on the creation of an "economy with sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". The key objective set in the strategy is full employment and the OPIS is also inclined towards this objective by increasing the competitiveness of businesses and services, thereby increasing the demand for qualified workforce, as well as by drawing attention of the younger generation, the driving force of the country's development, to science.

The discussion on the possibilities and means of achieving the objectives leading to investment in research and development was initiated by *the European Commission Communication "More Research for Europe: Towards 3% of GDP"*. The report identifies extensive areas of policies leading to the mobilisation of investment in a coherent way and defines the key goals for each area that will contribute to the intensification of activities carried out in the context of the Lisbon Strategy or other initiatives. Baring in mind the importance and prosperity of research, the European Commission published the *communication "Investing in Research: An Action Plan for Europe"* which set out four groups of action to improve the situation in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. With respect to research and development, it underlined the need to significantly improve public support to research and technological innovation, including fiscal measures. It emphasises the need for better interconnection between research and industry and the development of the potential of European and national public financial instruments.

Wim Kok's evaluation report provides room for criticism of the implementation of policies by EU members and highlights the need to focus on the overall objective to achieve the suggested level of investment in research and development of 3% of GDP, in compliance with the Lisbon Strategy until 2001, rather than on partial objectives.

Slovakia expressed its agreement with the defined strategy for the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises by joining the **European Charter for Small Enterprises**. It gives recommendations to governments of the member states with regard to areas defined as vital for their existence.

A far-sighted policy is needed in order to cope with the technological change required by the process of transformation of the economy into a knowledge-based society. The European Commission has proposed a new strategic framework defining a new broader political orientation based on the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy - the initiative **i2010: European Information Society 2010**. This initiative promotes open and competitive digital economy and points out that information and communication technology is the driving force of integration and better quality of life. In this context, the concept of development of information society in EU Member States is based on three common priority areas:

► **Single European Information Space**

The creation of a Single European Information Space needs to address four main challenges posed by digital convergence:

- speed: faster broadband services in Europe to deliver rich content such as high definition video,
- rich content: improved legal and economic framework conditions to encourage new services and on-line content,
- Interoperability: enhancing devices and platforms that "talk to one another" and services that are portable from platform to platform,
- security: making the Internet safer from fraudsters, harmful content and technology failures to increase trust amongst investors and consumers.

► **innovation and investment in ICT research**

The ICT sector makes a crucial contribution to growth in jobs and performance and productivity of the economy. Investment in research is needed so that the ICT sector can more intensively contribute to growth in jobs. These will be supported as part of priority topics and EC activities.

- activities of the 7th Framework Programme
- priority topics such as: integration between research and innovation, introduction and adoption of new information and communication technology, e-commerce.

► **inclusive information society**

Information and communication technology is used on an increasingly broader scale and provides benefits to an increasing number of people.

However, more than half of the EU population has only partial or no benefits from these technologies. Therefore, it is necessary to promote:

- accessibility of ICT to everyone
- digital literacy and skills
- more effective public e-services, including healthcare and social care
- protection of cultural heritage through ICT utilisation
- effective and environmentally-friendly production and transport thanks to ICT utilisation.

The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) is based on the current programmes of assistance, the medium-term review of the Lisbon Strategy and it is also greatly inspired by the conclusions of the Spring European Council (2005).

It aims to contribute to the improvement of competitiveness and sustainable development of the EU economy and its leitmotif is to provide a coherent framework of financial support for Community activities. At the same time, it should bridge the gap between research and innovation. The Programme is expected to boost the development of a competitive, innovative and inclusive information society, as well as support the effective use of energy and new and renewable energy source in all areas, including transport. It is a complementary programme to the 7th Framework Programme and structural funds.

It integrates several current programmes designed to support SME and innovation (in particular the MAP, the Innovation Action Plan, and the industry section of the LIFE programme). It focuses on the promotion of four specific fields: access to funding for starting up and growth of SME, support for co-operation between SME, promotion of innovation, promotion of eco-innovation, twinning.

The programme integrates the current programmes promoting ICT - eTEN, eContent^{plus} and Modinis. It focuses on three basic areas: the creation of a single European information space, promotion of innovation and investment in ICT, and promotion of information society.

The CIP programme will:

- ◀ stimulate new converging markets for electronic networks, content media and digital technology,
- ◀ test solutions to the bottleneck slowing down the spread of electronic services in Europe,
- ◀ support the modernisation of public sector services boosting productivity and enhancing services.

IDABC Decision

The basic strategic principles of informatisation of public administration arise from the principles of eGovernment generally recognised by EU Member States and the Decision on IDABC⁶² adopted on 21 April 2004 by the European Parliament, representing the citizens of the EU, and the EU Council, representing individual member states. This Decision entered into force on 1 January 2005.

The individual principles are discussed in more detail in the section below:

- **Services for citizens**

The services provided by public administration authorities should be centred on the citizens not aimed against them.

- **Efficiency**

The services provided on the Internet should be offered to citizens in a much more effective way than conventional services: they should not require a physical visit to the provider of the service or several offices, the office hours should be unlimited - 24 hours, 7 days a week, and the forms used should be easily accessible and easy to complete for everyone. In the effort to adapt to these new requirements, the public administration has to review extensive administrative processes within public administration organisations in order to meet these expectations.

- **Security**

Reliable information exchange needs to be carried out within the confines of the approved security policy that follows the rules and practices safeguarding the distribution and protection of information. This will be achieved

⁶² Decision No 2004/387/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on the interoperable delivery of pan-European eGovernment services to public administrations, businesses and citizens. (OJ L181, 18. 5. 2004, p. 25)

through qualitative estimation of risk prior to the introduction of the service and adequate security measures. This principle is applied to information exchange across Europe.

In this case, the individual public administration authorities need to align their own security policy with the common European security policy. The relevant measures are described in a document approved by the Council of the EU.⁶³

From the user's standpoint, these functions should be secure (identification, authentication, undeniability, confidentiality) and as transparent as possible.

- **Transparency**

The success of the solutions and their general acceptance depends on the degree of involvement of all interested groups in their implementation. It is important to ensure that all public administration organisations and businesses co-operate before the solutions are introduced. The transparency of the processes will provide a basis for co-operation and allow for greater participation of citizens in public affairs.

- **Accessibility**

It is necessary to ensure that the informatisation of public administration creates equal conditions for all by means of publicly accessible electronic services. In general, principles ensuring access of the disabled and the use of language support comprehensible to the user should be applied and the *"Web Accessibility Guidelines"*, specified as part of the Web accessibility initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium, should be taken into account. Informatisation should also bear in mind the differences in socio-economic situation between individual regions and population groups.

- **Protection of privacy**

Electronic services provided by the public administration should have a clear level of personal data protection, including situations where individuals decide whether their personal data can be used for purposes other than those for which they were originally collected.⁶⁴ In this case, information related to the use of the data should be available to the involved parties.

In this respect, a full compliance with the existing European and national regulations concerning data protection should be ensured.⁶⁵ In addition, the task of interoperability should be clearly coordinated with the existing procedures specified in Directive 95/46/EC (especially Article 29). This means that technologies ensuring greater protection of privacy should be used.

- **Multi-level co-operation**

The informatisation of public administration can progress smoothly only if public administration organisations co-operate with each other – co-operation is the basic principle for ensuring that the systems created to deliver the services are interconnected.

This approach requires co-operation and exchange of information between public administration authorities, where the individual bodies exchange experience from the implementation of projects related to the informatisation of public administration with the aim of achieving mutual solutions and agreements.

- **Interoperability**

IS must be capable of mutual communication. To this end, the proposals for the systems must follow the regulations specified by the European Interoperability Framework relating to the pan-European context of the services, as well as free, internationally accessible standards and solutions.

The regulations do not attempt to intervene in the internal system of public administration or European institutions, but serve as a basis for each member state and EU institutions ensuring the operability of information systems at the pan-European level.

The adoption of identical interoperability standards will create beneficial solutions leading to the satisfaction of both parties which will contribute to greater efficiency and lower costs.

⁶³ Council Decision 2001/264/EC of 19 March 2001 adopting the Council's security regulations (OJ L101, 11. 4. 2001, p. 1), see also Commission Decision of 29 November 2001 amending its internal Rules of Procedure (OJ L317, 3. 12. 2001, p. 1)

⁶⁴ The European Court of Justice has emphasised in its recent judgement of 20 May 2003 in the *Rechnungshof* case the importance of the cumulative application of articles 6 and 7 of Directive 95/46/EC

⁶⁵ Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector. (OJ L201, 31. 7. 2002, p. 37)

- **Application of “Open Standards”**

The application of freely accessible standards, internationally designated as “*Open Standards*”, contributes to the interoperability of pan-European electronic services provided by public administration. The term 'standard' has an extensive meaning: it covers the specifications arising from a standard process complying with the principles specified below. An open standard has to meet the following minimum specifications:

- the standard is adopted and will be maintained by organisations on the basis of an open decision-making procedure available to all interested parties (consensus or majority decision etc.),
- the standard has been published and the standard specification document is available either freely or at a nominal charge and can be freely distributed and used,
- there are no constraints on the re-use of the standard,
- intellectual property of the standard is available on a royalty-free basis.

- **Technology and software neutrality**

Information and communication technology is advancing very rapidly. It is therefore important to ensure that the solutions digitising public administration are future proof in order to ensure their technology and software neutrality. Unique solutions and solutions creating dependence on monopoly suppliers should be avoided.

National strategic documents

One of the essential documents promoting the mitigation of socio-economic differences between regions was the *Integrated Regional Development Plan* approved through Resolution No. 923/99 of the Slovak Government, which defined the priority regions for assistance from the PHARE pre-accession fund in 2000 and 2001. It placed emphasis on the Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica regions. *The National Regional Development Plan* approved through Resolution No. 133/2002 of the Slovak Government created the appropriate framework for the promotion of regional development in Slovakia as it defined the necessary solutions and laid down the development principles, objectives and priorities for drawing up regional development programmes. In the following stage of the use EU funds at the level of regions, the *National Development Plan 2004-2006* was drawn up and approved through Resolution No. 166/2003 of the Slovak Government. It made it possible to launch policies to increase the support for activities in the area of information society on a broader scope.

The Updated Convergence Programme of Slovakia for 2004-2010 approved through Resolution No. 1121/2004 of the Slovak Government outlined key structural reforms for the consolidation of public finance and encouraged the focus on the promotion of knowledge-based economy, information society and human resources in the next phase of economic policy.

In order to increase the competitiveness of Slovakia through informatisation, mobilisation of innovation in the national economy and development of science and education activities, the Government of the Slovak Republic prepared and approved in February 2005 (by Governmental Resolution No. 140/2005) *the Competitiveness Strategy for Slovakia until 2010 (the so-called National Lisbon Strategy)*. This document is based on the objectives and principles of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy and has become the official governmental programme for the development of knowledge-based economy in Slovakia. This economic strategy should form the basis of the Government's policy until 2010 and concentrates on those "Lisbon" objectives and priorities that are of the greatest importance for the further development of Slovakia, including information society objectives, which are concentrated into the following areas: information literacy, effective eGovernment and modern on-line public services, broad availability of the Internet. An Action Plan has been elaborated for the strategy. The tasks under the action plan are specific projects directly building on the **Action Plan for the Strategy for the Informatisation of the Society** and recommendations of the Lisbon Action Programme. They are directed at the following priority areas of development:

- Information and communication infrastructure
- Informatisation of public administration
- Education
- Electronic commerce and business
- Research and development
- Security and protection of the digital environment.

The OPIS focuses on the development of information and communication infrastructure, informatisation of public administration, and security and protection of the digital environment. In the context of the implementation of the Action Plan, analytical documents in the field of eGovernment, broadband Internet and security were elaborated, which were used as a basis for the OPIS.

The Slovak National Reform Programme for 2006-2008 adopted by the Slovak Government through Resolution No. 797/2005 identifies the need to create suitable conditions for the business environment at the microeconomic level in order to ensure long-term competitiveness. The programme contains a number of measures aimed at various areas of knowledge-based economy and, as a matter of priority, focuses on the development of five areas that can best promote the growth of the creative potential of the Slovak economy: education, employment, information society, science, research and innovation, and the business environment. The financial resources of structural funds and the Cohesion Fund are seen as essential for the implementation of the objectives of the National Reform Programme. In the context of the proposed measures, it specifies the need to improve the transparency of state aid through transition from sectoral state aid to horizontal priorities.

The National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 adopted by the Slovak Government through Resolution No. 457/2006 bridges Slovakia's sectoral policies and more closely defines the needs of support for the priority areas with the aim of meeting EU objectives in compliance with the Lisbon Strategy. The National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 is the basic strategic and integration instrument for the implementation of structural funds and the Cohesion Fund in 2007-2013, as well as an instrument to be used as a basis and guidance for the preparation of individual operational programmes.

National Public Administration Informatisation Policy in Slovakia In accordance with § 4, para. 1) of Act No. 275/2006 Coll. on public administration information systems, the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic prepares and submits to the Government for approval the national public administration informatisation policy. It is used as a basis for guidance and approval of PAIS development policies of obligated entities (public administration institutions) by the Ministry. The Ministry uses the policy to co-ordinate the development of PAIS at the national and international levels. The strategic objective of the policy is the creation of eGovernment. The public administration informatisation policy will be presented in October 2007.

Roadmap for the introduction of electronic public administration services This documents was elaborated in accordance with the "Strategy and Action Plan for the Informatisation of Society in Slovakia" and the "Competitiveness Strategy for Slovakia until 2010". The roadmap respects all of the functionality and organisational requirements, chronology and ability of the current public administration environment to absorb the new approach to the delivery of public administration services in the near future, which will support the process of informatisation of public administration. The roadmap covers activities related exclusively to the electronisation of the services provided on the internet, as well as an implementation timetable for the basic elements necessary for electronisation as such, e.g. the definition of standards, integration of central national registries, etc. It defines specific projects, the responsible bodies - CSAAs, estimated expenditure and deadlines.

Individual regions of Slovakia face various problems in the field of research and development, therefore, in order to ensure the correct interpretation of the problematic areas, it was necessary to build on the *economic and social development programmes of individual self-governing regions*, which reflect the current situation and provided a basis for the definition of OPIS objectives.

4.2 Global objective of the Operational Programme Informatisation of Society

In its NSRF, the Slovak Republic defined the vision to achieve overall convergence of the Slovak economy to the EU-15 average by means of sustainable development. In practice, this vision means the building of a prosperous country, long-term attractive as a place in which to invest and attractive for its current and future populations as a place in which to live, which is making full use of the opportunities for further development and the related changes that will bring it closer to the most advanced members of the EU.

Globalisation of the economy and the development of ICT are changing the nature of the economic environment. The period of costly technology and cheap labour is becoming a thing of the past. Today, technology constantly becomes cheaper and more ubiquitous. High-quality human resources capable of effectively using new technology are in short supply. The enormous technological progress of recent years is bringing about constant

changes on both the demand and supply side. Indeed, change is the only certainty in a global economy with permanent structural reforms. Information, generation of information and the ability to benefit from it are the key factors of change. The improvement of the competitiveness of regions is dependent on innovation. Innovation is impossible without the development of the information society. The development of the information society is not possible without greater inclusion of ICT in processes in businesses, households and public administration. Greater inclusion is not possible without quality eGovernment and electronic services, greater availability of the Internet and a greater number of competent users. This, in a nutshell, is the key outcome of the NSRF strategy in the field of informatisation, from which the OPIS was derived. The implementation of the strategy will significantly accelerate the process of overall convergence by speeding up convergence to the EU-15 in the field of the information society, which is a key part of structural convergence. It will also reduce the digital gap of Slovakia and its regions.

Hence, the global objective of the OPIS is to: **create an inclusive information society as a tool for development of a high-performance knowledge-based economy.**

The OPIS will thus have a great impact on the realisation of the vision of economic and social development of Slovakia,⁶⁶ its strategic objective for the 2007-2013⁶⁷ period and the objective of specific priority 2.2 Informatisation of Society,⁶⁸ defined in the National Strategic Reference Framework.

Tab. 4 Review of the OPIS context indicators at the level of the OP's global objective

Objective:		Creation of an inclusive information society as a tool for development of high-performance knowledge-based economy	Type	Unit	Starting values				Target values for 2013	
					EÚ15		SR		source	
Type and name of indicator					ye ar	value	yea r	value	value	
K	Summary innovation index		Impact	Sii	06	0.46	05	0.21	0.3	Eurostat
K	Summary index of ICT		Impact	ICT-OI	05	0.62	05	0.53	0.63	ITU
K	Share of ICT in the total added value generated by businesses		Impact	%	05	8.3	05	5.1	10.0	OECD
K	% share of e-services in turnover of businesses		Impact	%	05	2.8	05	0.02	4.0	OECD
P	Number of jobs created		Impact	no.	07	-	07	0	1.879	MF SR

4.3 Strategy for the achievement of the global objective as a result of thematic and territorial concentration

The OPIS strategy is based on an analysis of the current situation in the field of informatisation, the NSRF strategy and other relevant EU and Slovak documents in the field of informatisation of society.⁶⁹ The results of the analysis are summarised in the SWOT analysis, the key disparities and development factors – these provide the key starting points for the OPIS strategy. The objective of the strategy is to invest OPIS resources into the identified development factors so that the identified disparities in the field of informatisation are eliminated as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Based on the key points, the main outcome of the strategy are the specified priority thematic areas of informatisation and territories to be supported through projects. The projects will be planned so that they eliminate the identified disparities in the field of informatisation as effectively and efficiently as possible. For this reason, OPIS investments will be directed at topics stemming from the identified development factors. The key objective of the strategy is to increase the level of informatisation in Slovakia to that of the most advanced members of the EU and to ensure that, in the forthcoming period, the state and the self-government will meet the expectations of citizens and businesses.

Nevertheless, OPIS resources cannot be used to deal with all eligible areas of informatisation where Slovakia lags behind. Therefore, the strategy focuses on those groups of projects and those territories of implementation where the greatest added value can be expected to be generated from the invested EU and Slovak public

⁶⁶ Overall convergence of Slovakia's economy to the EU-15 average by means of sustainable development.

⁶⁷ Substantially increase the competitiveness and performance of regions and the Slovak economy until 2013, while respecting the principles of sustainable development

⁶⁸ Increase the competitiveness of the economy and regions through the development of information society

⁶⁹ The strategy's foundations are described in more detail in Chapter 4.1. An overview of the coherent documents can be found in Chapter 7.

resources. When identifying the topics and territories of implementation, the OPIS observes the 20:80 rule.⁷⁰ Based on this rule, the OPIS selects and invests in 20% of topics that are expected to resolve 80% of issues or expectations in informatisation areas eligible for using the resources of the programme in the 2007-2013 programming period.

Hence, the strategy is a result of a thematic and territorial perspective on the projects implemented through the programme. The OPIS strategy focuses and, in the following sections, elaborates in detail on the topic of eGovernment and internetisation. Under the topic of eGovernment, it will deal with the extensive area of digitisation and provision of access to the content of repository institutions as a separate eGovernment topic. It is expected that the development of these areas will not only bring about the electronisation of selected sections of public administration and create an accessible eGovernment, but it will also make it possible to go further and use eGovernment as a means of constant streamlining of public administration with an impact on the development of the information society and other components of the development of the knowledge society (education, innovation in businesses, research and development).

Topic	Territory of the Regional		Territory of the Convergence objective						
	Competitiveness and Employment objective								
	BA		BB	KE	NR	TN	TT	PO	ZA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective electronisation of public administration 71% 	<p>Optimisation and development of PAIS and public administration processes in the fields of central state administration.</p> <p>Basic components of the eGovernment architecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAIS infrastructure G2G applications <p>Specialised components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAIS G2G, G2P and G2B applications <p>The projects will be implemented as part of a separate measure focused on electronisation of public administration on the central level</p>		<p>Optimisation and development of PAIS and public administration processes in the fields of local state administration, specialised local state administration, and self-government.</p> <p>Basic components of the eGovernment architecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAIS infrastructure G2G applications <p>Specialised components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAIS G2G, G2P and G2B applications <p>The projects will be implemented as part of a separate measure focused on electronisation of public administration on the regional and local level</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> digitisation and providing access to the content of repository institutions 16% 	×		Digitisation and provision of access to the contents of archives, libraries, museums and galleries						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of broadband access 	×		Development of broadband access infrastructure and development of sustainable models of operating them in						

⁷⁰ Pareto Principle. A law of nature stating that the minority of causes, inputs and resources usually lead to the majority of effects, results and impacts.

networks		municipalities and municipal councils
▪ 10%		

The changing economic and social conditions put pressure on public administration, which has never faced such demands from citizens, businesses and the different public administration institutions before. Due to this fact, public administration throughout the EU is reorganising its procedures for the provision of services, cost management, strategic planning and communication with citizens. eGovernment is a comprehensive solution to effective public administration. It represents an easily scalable change in the performance of public administration that will help reduce operating costs and improve the standard of the services provided, stimulate electronic commerce and industry, prepare human resources for the needs of the knowledge society, and improve the communication with citizens. eGovernment represents a solution supporting the integration of processes and ICI, simplifies administration, improves the provision of services, reduces costs and creates and distributes information necessary for sound planning and decision-making.

The development of eGovernment is based on an integration concept derived from a comprehensive analysis. It is based on the national public administration informatisation policy in Slovakia and the related policies of individual obligated entities – that is, public administration organisations. In accordance with the PAIS Act, the national policy is elaborated by the MF SR, which also approves the individual policies of all obligated entities. OPIS projects in the field of eGovernment will be based on these policies. The creation and sustainable development of an integrated architecture requires that several information and organisational models, coinciding with the process of formation of the legal framework for public administration,⁷¹ be created with the aim of achieving an integrated, functional and co-operating set of services provided by public administration.

Quality eGovernment services that are absent today can be built and developed only in an environment of integrated architecture of public administration. Within the framework of the development of eGovernment, the OPIS will support the creation of methodical, technological, personnel and organisational conditions for informatisation, as well as the application of ICT, the outcome of which will be the services provided by public administration. The development of eGovernment will be based on individual components. The initial stages of implementation will, above all, see the implementation of individual projects,⁷² which will result in well-functioning and accepted basic components. These will create the infrastructural and application environment for launching and sustainable development of a variety of specialised G2G, G2P and G2B applications of public administration institutions. The objective is to create quality back and middle offices for the whole public administration and integrate the services provided by public administration into a single point – the front office, which can be either a central portal or a traditional office. The basic components of eGovernment will be mostly made up of G2G infrastructure and applications. Their environment will provide a basis for and will be used by the related specialised applications, mostly G2P and G2G applications. In the initial stages of implementation, in particular applications for the 20 basic eGovernment services defined in the roadmap for the introduction of electronic public administration services will be introduced.

Through interventions in these areas, the quality of public administration services will gradually radically change, the benefits of which, in addition to the public administration itself, will be felt the most by citizens, primarily municipalities with poor transport accessibility and unavailability of the Internet that are least competitive today. The development of electronic public administration services, provision of access to useful digital content, together with increased penetration of the internet will significantly increase the inclusion of ICT in social processes and initiate the development of electronic services provided by the commercial sphere.

The strategy is centred on the citizen who will have access to services at a single point: online via the Internet, DTV, mobile, kiosk, as well as physically, at integrated service points, which will be systematically built so as to

⁷¹ The legal framework for the informatisation of public administration is a functioning system for the creation and application of legislation, methodology and standards. This system is a set of interconnected regulations that set down the rules for the process of informatisation and create conditions for the application of ICT in administration processes. Through regulations, they specify the rules for the process of informatisation and create conditions for the application of ICT in public administration processes. The development of the legal framework is not an eligible activity of the OP, nevertheless, its strategy has to take this aspect into account and it will be dealt with in parallel with the implementation of the OPIS strategy, although this will be done outside of the supported activities.

⁷² The indicative list provided in Annex No. 4 will be updated on the basis of the feasibility study conducted prior to the implementation of OPIS measures in the field of eGovernment.

ensure their maximum physical availability. It will be possible to tailor the services to specific users and these will hence impose only the necessary burden on the user and provide maximum comfort.

Human potential is another important information society issue. It affects the informatisation process not only in how effectively electronic services are used, but also in the process of creating services and operating the infrastructure. Only qualified citizens and officers can use the services of information society and then implement and operate them. Human potential (users) creates a demand for electronic services, and thus also exerts a pressure on the supply and quality of services of information society. At the same time, a growing demand for quality services increases the need for skills, knowledge and administrative capacity of their providers.

Preparation at all levels of schools, including lifelong learning, as well as professional training for public administration employees, are considered as key in the field of acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills in the field of informatisation. The fact that public administration employees are not only users of electronic information, but also their creators is very important in this respect.

The NSRF strategy will promote the development of human resources through an operational programme focusing on the reform and improvement of the quality of formal education and lifelong learning for the needs of the knowledge-based society, and operational programme aimed at improving the skills of public administration employees, disadvantaged groups and the unemployed in the area of digital literacy and skills. The OPIS will be closely interrelated with ESF activities, in particular in the implementation process with OP E&SI in the area of increasing the quality of human resources in public administration, which is a separate measure of this OP.

4.3.1. Thematic concentration of contributions

The majority of interventions in the area of the informatisation of society that have been carried out using public funds were fragmented investments usually in autonomous systems and solutions that neither interact organisationally nor functionally. The level of their interconnectedness and interoperability is very low. The small amount of public resources invested in informatisation in the past compared to neighbouring countries did not allow for the implementation of fundamental solutions. As a result, Slovakia is now a country with poor eGovernment and the related poor overall level of informatisation.

Therefore, in the 2007-2013 programming period, it is necessary to ensure that public resources are invested in the informatisation of public administration as efficiently and effectively as possible so that:

- ▶ public administration services when dealing with paperwork related to life events are provided under the same conditions to all citizens and businesses, simply, quickly and without the need for exceptional knowledge of the competences of offices or exceptional technical skills of the users
- ▶ the provision of public administration services allows for the necessary degree of interaction between all actors and close co-operation between all components of public administration leading to the effective use of resources and the necessary synergetic effects between them
- ▶ the systemic architecture of PAIS and processes in public administration are standardised, interoperable and integrated into a single transparent, secure, technologically neutral and dynamic whole, which can be gradually developed and enhanced, and whose costs can be easily managed with respect to benefits.

Therefore, the main themes of the Operational Programme are:

- ◎ **the development of eGovernment, improvement of the efficiency of functioning of public administration through informatisation and the development of G2G, G2P, G2B electronic services**
- ◎ **Provision of access to useful content of repository institutions**
- ◎ **Greater access of public administration and households to broadband Internet**

Effective electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services

ICT is a very efficient tool for increasing the efficiency of processes, but that is not enough. Informatisation cannot be an end in itself. The essence of the processes and their alignment and embedment into an appropriate legal and methodical framework is crucial. Only then a real breakthrough result can be achieved.

This can only be achieved through integration of key solutions built on a central, service-oriented architecture of the public administration's information system. Hence, the key objective of the Operational Programme in the field

of effective electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services is to optimise the processes related to the services provided by public administration and integrate their technological and application information and communication infrastructure and use the possibilities offered by ICT to the benefit of the citizen to the maximum extent. The objective is to build effective public administration, which effectively delivers its tasks and places a minimum burden on citizens and businesses. Public administration which is more accessible, works fast and at a lower cost than today, and is capable of constant improvement.

Interventions concentrated into this topic will therefore promote the development of public administration information and organisation systems at the central and regional levels so that they are consistent and easily communicate between each other. Processes in public administration need to be well managed, optimally developed and they have to form a single, transparent whole enabling public administration to create maximum added value.⁷³ For the user this means public administration will ultimately only require the insertion of the electronic identification card into the reader or the completion of a single electronic, which will be sent from an integrated service point, computer, mobile phone, kiosk or TV. Everything else will take place in the back office, without direct participation of the user. The basic principle of modernisation of public administration is to develop services saving money, time and personnel and bringing benefits to all users.

Development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions

This priority axis focuses on the provision of access to and creation of digital content using the resources of repository institutions. The objective of the priority axis is to improve the system of acquisition, processing, protection and utilisation of knowledge and digital content, as well as the modernisation and completion of the infrastructure of repository institutions at the national level. Repository institutions are the bearers, keepers and intermediaries of social, technical, scientific and cultural knowledge. They face inadequate technical, technological and organisational conditions. The activities under this priority axis will focus on comprehensive development and inclusion of these institutions in all relevant knowledge-oriented areas of economic and social development. This priority axis will promote improving the quality of the processes of acquisition, storage and mediation of content, content digitisation and restoration of the infrastructure of national repository institutions. The key area of the priority axis is the provision of content of repository institutions and their inclusion in educational, innovation and social development processes.

Improvement of broadband Internet access

Broadband access⁷⁴ should be seen as a technological platform that can be used as a basis for the development and operation of services that would otherwise be impossible or meaningless to develop. Therefore, broadband access should be perceived as a tool for opening up of new opportunities for permanent access (via computer, telephone, television, kiosk, chip cards, etc.) to the resources and services available (data, voice and video) placing no type, content, scope and quality restrictions on end users across the whole chain between the end user and provider of the service.

The strategy in the area of broadband Internet access will therefore focus on increasing the motivation for the use of broadband technology. The objective of the priority axis is to achieve a high penetration of broadband Internet comparable to that of the advanced EU-15 countries. The priority axis will promote activities aimed at stimulating the demand of households and the population for broadband technologies supported by the improvement of regulatory instruments. Using indirect instruments, it will promote sustainable development of broadband access networks in regions unattractive to commercial providers and thus increase the quality of the competitive environment in the telecommunications market.

The area of **human resources** for the needs of information society forms one of the pillars of the strategy for the informatisation of the society until 2013. The development of eGovernment and increasing the penetration of the Internet will be accompanied by measures to increase digital literacy and IT skills by means of modernisation of formal education with orientation on IT, as well as the promotion of lifelong learning in this area, which are a topic

⁷³ The proportion between public resources used and financial or economic benefits (cost-benefit)

⁷⁴ The definition of broadband access is changing overtime towards constantly higher speeds and transmission capacity. In Slovakia, it is defined as permanent access with downstream speed of > 512kbit/s and upstream speed of > 256kbit/s.

of the ESF fund and a subject of the operational programme Education and operational programme Employment and Social Inclusion. In the case of OP E&SI and modernisation of the instruments of lifelong learning, the support will directly build upon OP IS activities and, by means of a separate measure, prepare public administration employees for the possibilities offered by modern ICT and guide them towards increasing the efficiency of their work. The projects will be implemented in a co-ordinated way so as to ensure complementarity between OPIS projects and measures aimed at increasing the quality of management in public administration and so that they are implemented in the same offices and organisations.

4.3.2. Territorial concentration of contributions

Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services on the central level

50% of the eGovernment funding allocation will be used for the development of eGovernment systems for central state administration residing in the Bratislava region.

Projects will focus on the development of eGovernment systems at the central level of state administration. Projects will be implemented in central state administration bodies seated in the Bratislava region, i.e. in a region not eligible for the use of OPIS funding. Therefore, in accordance with Commission Regulation No. 448/2004, the pro rata principle will be applied to these projects, based on which a proportion of the allocation pertaining to the population of the Bratislava region (11.4%) will be financed as ineligible expenditure from national public resources.

Other projects aimed at the development of eGovernment systems and intended for the self-government and specialised local administration will be implemented as part of the Convergence objective. Therefore, the pro rata principle need not be applied to them.

eGovernment services for the Bratislava self-governing region will be implemented through the OP Bratislava Region, which is a complementary OP to the OPIS in the field of informatisation.

Effective electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services on the regional and local level

50% of the eGovernment funding allocation will be used for the development of eGovernment systems for self-government and other public administration institutions (local state administration, specialised state administration, etc.) on the regional and local level, residing outside of the Bratislava region. These systems will be based on those used at the central level.

Projects will be implemented only within the Convergence objective, where the impacts of these solutions will also be concentrated. Back-office and front-office solutions will be supported in the context of the development of eGovernment systems at the regional level. As part of the implementation of these activities, the key project for a Municipalities Data Centre will be supported. It will be implemented in innovation growth poles. In relation to the central level projects, the key project of ISPs, which can be carried out across the Convergence objective regions, will be implemented. The impacts will relate to all people and civil servants in Convergence objective regions. Civil servants in every municipality will be provided access to the Internet and quality basic and specialised applications that they will be able to use, regardless of whether they are located in innovation or cohesion growth poles or not. The ISPs will be provided to those who will not want to or will not be able to use the Internet. The ISPs will be an important instrument for the elimination of regional disparities with respect to access to public services. The feasibility study, which will precede the launch of the implementation of projects in this area, will specify where, when, and under what conditions the ISPs will be made available. The vision is to build a functioning network of ISPs accessible to every citizen in, say, 15 minutes.

Development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions

The projects will focus on the digitisation and provision of access to the content of repository institutions. Interventions aimed at the development of repository institutions will be implemented in Convergence objective regions in organisations such as archives, libraries, museums, galleries, heritage protection organisations, specialised institutes and organisations in the field of culture, etc., in particular those located in innovation and cohesion growth poles. The digitised content will be accessible via applications supported within the framework of the development of eGovernment systems at the central and regional levels. The effects of the projects will be accessible under the same conditions to all citizens of municipalities in Convergence Objective regions with Internet access and gradually also in municipalities without access to broadband Internet today.

Improvement of broadband Internet access

Interventions aimed at increasing the accessibility of broadband Internet will be implemented across-the-board in all Convergence objective regions. They will focus on eliminating the digital gap between municipalities throughout the Convergence objective regions. The majority of the 2375 municipalities without access to high speed Internet are located outside innovation and cohesion growth poles. Therefore, the projects for the development of broadband infrastructure will be implemented across-the-board in all municipalities in Convergence objective regions. The precise list of municipalities, including the models of support, will be specified in detail in the feasibility study, which will be conducted prior to the implementation of projects in regions.

	<i>BA</i>	<i>BB</i>	<i>KE</i>	<i>NR</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>TT</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>ZA</i>
▪ Development of eGovernment, improvement of the efficiency of the functioning of public administration through informatisation and development of electronic services	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Provision of access to useful content of repository institutions		×	×	×	×	×	×	×
▪ Greater access of public administration and households to broadband Internet		×	×	×	×	×	×	×

5. PRIORITY AXES OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Global objective of the Operational Programme: *create an inclusive information society as a tool for development of a high-performance knowledge-based economy.*

Objective:	Creation of an inclusive information society as a tool for development of high-performance knowledge-based economy	Type	Unit	Starting values				Target values							source	
				EÚ15		SR		Year 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013		
				year	value	year	value	value								
Type and name of indicator				year	value	year	value	value								
Share of ICT in the total added value generated by businesses		context	%	2005	8.3	2005	5.1	5.2	5.4	6.1	6.5	7.3	8.4	10	OECD	
Summary innovation index (EIS)		context	ranking	2005	0.5	2005	0.22	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.27	0.29	0.32	0.35	Eurostat	
% share of e-services in turnover of businesses		context	%	2006	4.1	2004	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.7	2.3	3.1	4	Eurostat	
Number of projects		Output/core	number	-	-	2007	0	0	18	68	174	300	363	407	MF SR - ITMS	
Number of jobs created		Result/core	number	-	-	2007	0	0	23	175	595	1060	1425	1,800	MF SR - ITMS	
Number of created jobs that are occupied by men		Result/core	number	-	-	2007	0	0	9	76	255	465	600	730	MF SR - ITMS	
Number of created jobs that are occupied by women		Result/core	number	-	-	2007	0	0	14	99	340	595	825	1,070	MF SR - ITMS	
No. of citizens newly-connected to broadband Internet		Output/core	number	-	-	2007	0	0	0	70000	175000	350000	560000	700000	MF SR, ITMS	

The achievement of the global objective of the operational programme is based on three priority axes:

1. Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services
2. Development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions
3. Improvement of broadband Internet access

5.1 Priority axis "Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services"

5.1.1. Objective and focus of the priority axis:

Specific objective of the priority axis: *Effective public administration*

Quantification of priority axis objectives (progress indicators):

Objective:	Modern public administration	Type	Unit	Starting values				Target values							source
				EU15		SR		Year 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
				year	value	year	value	value							
Type and name of indicator															
Number of projects		core	no.	-	-	2007	0	0	8	33	96	168	183	192	MF SR, ITMS
The number of introduced electronic services available online		Output	no.	-	-	2007	0	0	0	3	12	41	115	192	MF SR, ITMS
No. of PA organisations implementing eGovernment systems		Output	no.	-	-	2007	0	0	5	48	220	570	924	1,224	MF SR, ITMS
No. of ISPs made accessible		Output	no.	-	-	2007	0	0	0	40	210	550	900	1,200	MF SR, ITMS
Online availability of the 20 basic public services		Result	%			2005	20	20	25	35	50	75	90	100	Eurostat
Time saving for people as a result of introducing 20 basic public services		Result	hours	-	-	2007	0	0	5	10	20	30	35	40	MF SR
Proportion of the population with access to integrated service points in total population		Result	%	-	-	2007	0	0	0	5	25	40	65	85	MF SR
Number of jobs created		Result/core	no.	-	-	2007	0	0	20	80	300	650	1000	1,370	MF SR, ITMS
Number of created jobs that are occupied by men		Result/core	no.	-	-	2007	0	0	8	35	130	290	420	548	MF SR, ITMS
Number of created jobs that are occupied by women		Result/core	no.	-	-	2007	0	0	12	45	170	360	580	822	MF SR, ITMS

5.1.1.1 Description of measures and supported activities

Measure 1.1: Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services on the central level

Framework activity

- the creation and sustainable development of the basic components of eGovernment, such as, above all, a quality back office of state administration through investments in shared HW, SW and mostly G2G applications supporting the effective performance of processes in state administration sections in compliance with the national public administration informatisation policy in Slovakia, which will allow for the integration of ICI and selected public administration processes into a single point - the front office
- creation and sustainable development of specialised components of eGovernment and introduction of 20 eGovernment services pursuant to the concept defined in the Roadmap for the Introduction of Electronic Public Administration Services and in conformity with the generally recognised eGovernment principles:

Name of central level service	Type of service
– Personal income tax	G2P
– Car registration	
– Personal documents	
– Reports to the police	
– Relocation notification	
– Enrolment in higher education	
– Social security benefits	
– Construction permits	
– Registry office documents	
– Public libraries	
– Job search	

– Customs declarations	G2B
– Value added tax	
– Corporate income tax	
– Personal income tax - sole traders	
– Environmental permits	
– Legal entity registration	
– Social benefits for employees	
– Public procurement	
– Statistical reporting	

- introduction of extended eGovernment services identified in the i2010 strategy and in accordance with the concept of electronic services provided by the public administration so that they are effective, useful, accessible and compliant with the generally recognised eGovernment principles.

Measure 1.2: Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services on the local and regional level

Framework activity

- the creation and sustainable development of a quality self-government back-office through investment in shared HW and SW supporting the performance of key regional and local administration processes in compliance with the concept for integrated architecture of PAIS, which will allow for the systematic development of a network of integrated service points so that the density of service points and accessibility of services significantly reduce the need for travel with respect to public administration services
- introduction of effective electronic services of the self-government so that they comply with the concept of electronic services provided by state administration and that they run concurrently with the state administration electronisation processes, which result from the new opportunities offered by electronisation of public administration and generally recognised eGovernment principles. These concern the following areas of administration in particular:

Name of local and regional level service

– Electronic applications to secondary schools
– Electronic applications for social services
– Electronic applications and decisions
– Housing and residence
– Transport
– Culture
– Registry office
– Businesses
– Land
– Self-government

- Social services
-
- Construction
-
- Education
-
- Pets/animals
-
- Environment
-
- creation and development of integrated service points which will provide full or partial access to electronic services provided by public administration at a single place.

The framework activities are based on the public administration informatisation policy, which will be elaborated in detail on the basis of the feasibility study and will precede the implementation of the priority axis. A preliminary proposal for projects is included in Annex No. 8. We expect that measures 1.1 and 1.2 will be mostly implemented through individual (large-scale or national) projects prepared on the basis of the aforementioned studies and will be translated into the national public administration informatisation policy and the related informatisation policies of each obligated public administration institution at the central, regional and local levels.

The implementation of the supported types of activities will include activities in the area of training for persons engaged in the implementation of the project. The activities will not support the improvement of digital literacy and skills of end users, the recipients of the services. The activities will focus on service providers and training – without these, effective and efficient introduction of the applications would not be possible.⁷⁵

5.1.2. Justification of the priority axis

Today, Slovakia is in the initial stage of implementing basic eGovernment services and connecting these to the central public administration portal. In 2006, the legal framework regulating the creation and development of public administration information systems entered into force. As a result of the absence of a functional legal framework for the development of PAIS until that period, many heterogeneous information systems have been implemented. Hence, many of them are now ineffective and unsafe, and most of them are isolated and disconnected from other public administration information systems or resources. Therefore, in the majority of cases, the electronisation of public services at individual institutions of public administration has only mimicked paper services and, ironically, has led to an even greater administrative burden.

The Roadmap for the Introduction of Electronic Public Administration Services specifies that the introduction of e-services can save Slovak citizens approx. one week of working time, which represents a direct financial effect in the form of savings amounting to around SKK 4,000 per working person. This time loss (as a result of low productivity of services) annually reduces state budget revenues from direct taxes by SKK 3,337 million and, at the current pace of economic growth, this figure will further increase by 4-5% every year.

Improvement of the efficiency of public administration is based on an integration concept derived from a comprehensive analysis of the processes of services provided by public administration and analysis of PAIS infrastructure. The outcome of the concept is a model of eGovernment architecture based on the services provided by PA. This means that the citizen is in the centre of interest of the development of infrastructure and processes. We want to bring more accessible, improved and more varied services that are less of a burden on the citizen, are less costly and provide much greater benefits than now. This can be achieved only by means of offering all services in one place (front office). The front office can be an Internet portal accessible via PC, mobile phone, kiosk, or DTV, or a traditional office located in almost all municipalities. Neither electronic nor paper-based communication is possible without a quality back office. All managerial and support activities take place here and all key IS are located in it.

⁷⁵ E.g. training for employees of HTUs with respect to testing, pilot operation, new information system, training for new information system trainers, etc.

The objective of this approach is to create a well-functioning and effective back-office and integrate applications into an effective front-office providing comprehensive IT support to all public administration institutions and creating a suitable environment for the integrated development of PAIS both at the central and regional levels.

Using the integration model as the only basis for the concept without systematic development of the quality of management in public administration would be pointless. Therefore, the implementation of the integrated model of public services and PAIS envisages the development of interconnected and co-operating information and organisation systems capable of constantly improving their quality and bringing added value to both the providers and recipients of public administration services.

The services should be accessible by citizens, businesses and the public administration itself in direct interaction with the provider, in the so-called front-office, via the Internet, other digital equipment, and even physically. An important instrument for the development of services is the gradual extension of the central public administration portal, which will increase the accessibility of services provided by public administration to internet populations. Services provided via the Internet will remain inaccessible for some public services and to certain categories of users. Therefore, it is also necessary to improve the physical provision of services. This is why the national project Integrated Service Points (ISP) will be implemented within the framework of the priority axis. The national project Integrated Service Points combines together the principles of eGovernment generally recognised by EU member states. It complies with the Roadmap for the Introduction of Electronic Public Administration Services, but goes beyond its framework in that it does not limit access to public administration services to the Internet. Its essence is to substantially improve and increase the accessibility of services to citizens in regions so that they can complete all paperwork at a single place through a single visit of an integrated service point. In addition, they can use a computer, kiosk or call centre. All alternatives will share the same infrastructure, a single back office. Thanks to the integration of all paperwork into a single point, it will be possible to dramatically increase the density of service points in Slovakia and thus increase their accessibility to citizens and reduce the need for travel when dealing with paperwork. While today, depending on the sector, individual areas of administration require between 50 to 130 offices (including branches), in the proposed model, joint municipal councils, post office and publicly accessible places could serve as service points.

In order to increase the efficiency of self-government services, it is necessary to improve the possibilities for processing the paperwork of municipal councils using suitable SW applications. It would be very expensive and practically unfeasible under the current conditions to equip all offices with the necessary infrastructure. A more suitable alternative, which will be supported by the OPIS, is the provision of SW applications as a service. The idea is to provide municipal councils with the necessary applications as a service, whose quality and cost will be guaranteed. A specialised data centre will need to be built for this purpose. Such a solution will help significantly mitigate the differences in the possibilities for the use of information technology, especially in smaller towns and villages.

5.2 Priority axis "Development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions"

5.2.1 Objective and focus of the priority axis:

Specific objective of the priority axis: *Improvement of the system of acquisition, processing, protection and utilisation of knowledge and digital content, as well as modernisation and completion of the infrastructure of repository institutions at the national level.*

Quantification of priority axis objectives (progress indicators):

Quantification of priority axis objectives (progress indicators):											
Objective:	Improvement of the system of acquisition, processing, protection and utilisation of knowledge and digital content, as well as modernisation and completion of the infrastructure of repository institutions at the national level.	Type	Unit	Target values							source
		SR	Year 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013		

Name of indicator			year	value	value							
Proportion of published digitised content of RI to the total RI content	Result	%	2006	0	0	0	2	6	14	21	30	MC SR
No. of services in culture available online	Output	no.	2006	0	0	0	1	2	4	5	5	MC SR
No. of digitised objects (images, text documents, audio recordings, audio-visual recordings, 3D objects)	Output	no. in '000	2007	142.3	142.3	156	250	600	1,200	2,100	3 433.5	MC SR
Number of projects	core	no.	2006	0	0	2	5	8	12	15	15	MF SR, ITMS
Number of jobs created	Result/core	no.	2006	0	0	0	80	260	350	350	350	MF SR, ITMS
Number of created jobs that are occupied by men	Result/core	no.	2006	0	0	0	35	110	150	150	150	MF SR, ITMS
Number of created jobs that are occupied by women	Result/core	no.	2006	0	0	0	45	150	200	200	200	MF SR, ITMS
Proportion of electronic services users in culture to the total number of Internet population	Result	%	2006	0	0	0	1	4	10	17	25	MF SR, ITMS
Number of specialised digitised workplaces created	Output	no.	2006	0	0	0	1	4	5	5	5	MF SR, ITMS

5.2.1.1 Description of measures and supported activities

Measure 2.1: Improvement of the system of acquisition, processing and protection of content from the resources of repository institutions

Framework activity

- support for the management of the systems for content acquisition, protection and processing
- electronisation of repository institutions (provision of the necessary hardware, software, networks and ICT technologies); improvement of the reliability of operation of information and communication systems, and improvement of database systems of repository institutions and systems in the field of culture
- purchase of information sources (databases, rights to the publication of information, etc.)
- documentation of immaterial cultural heritage, including the documentation of traditional skills and electronisation of this knowledge
- renewal of the buildings, offices and facilities of repository institutions at the national level and the creation of absent specialised units directly related to digitisation and the information and communication infrastructure of content acquisition, processing and protection; improvement of fire protection, electronic protection and internal conditions (air-conditioning and storage of collection items, library and archive documents, and other protected resources) in repository institutions directly related to digitisation
- improvement of the technological equipment of laboratories and conservation and preparation organisations for special treatment, conservation and restoration of objects and specialised (library, archive, etc.) resources closely related to the information and communication infrastructure of content acquisition, processing and protection; implementation of the results of research in the area of mass deacidification of lignocellulosic carriers of information in repository institutions directly related to digitisation
- informatisation of public libraries and multifunctional cultural and information centres; creation and interconnection of a network of selected academic, specialised, scientific and public libraries with science, research, and development of innovation and entrepreneurship, and curricular and education reform; building of a network of research, documentation and interpretation centres of Roma culture
- support of further processing, accessibility and utilisation of data and knowledge of repository institutions in practice, research and creation of innovative projects, as well as in education, training, planning and decision-making processes in schools and offices, as well as by the business sector and the public; preparation and reinstallation of permanent exhibitions of registered museums and galleries of national importance – innovation and presentation of content
- support of increasing public awareness of cultural, scientific and intellectual heritage of Slovakia and support of training, educational, information and professional activities related to the implementation of the measure

Measure 2.2: Digitisation of the content of repository institutions, archiving and provision of access to digital data

Framework activity

- creation of the Slovak Digital Library and a network of specialised digitisation units of repository institutions
- recording, collection and long-term archiving and protection of digital content, web-harvesting and web-archiving
- systematic support of the physical digitisation of cultural, scientific and intellectual heritage, including the digitisation of audio-visual resources (film and audio)
- digital restoration of film materials, as well as of audio and audio-visual recordings
- support for digital content management
- digitisation and providing access to the digital content by repository institutions

5.2.2. Justification of the priority axis:

Repository institutions, in which an enormous cultural, scientific and intellectual heritage of Slovakia is concentrated, will play an important role in the informatisation of society. There are almost 6,000 libraries in Slovakia, of which 2,956 are school, 38 academic, 2,615 public, 12 scientific, and 358 are special libraries. The level of informatisation and internetisation of the network of public, scientific and special libraries is very low – of the total number of libraries, only 606 computers connected to the Internet are accessible to the public. The Internet is available mostly at academic and scientific libraries and only at a small portion of other libraries (public, special and school libraries) most widely accessible in regions. The core of archiving activities in Slovakia is carried out by public archives, especially the network of ten state archives and their 37 branches, which archive documents resulting from the activities of public administration authorities. The provision of access to these resources plays an irreplaceable role as a basis for information continuity of decision-making processes in the public sector. Almost 182 running kilometres of archive documents form an integral part of information structures and resources of the society and, at the same time, are an important part of Slovakia's national cultural heritage. Archives started to develop a computer-based archive information system after 2003, however, they lack computers connected to the internet that would be accessible to the public. The implementation of pilot projects for the digitisation of archive resources started in 2005. With its unique complexity of semantic structure, cultural heritage presents one of the greatest challenges for applied information science, where the quantity, quality and accessibility of knowledge form the basis of a knowledge-based society.

The availability and marketing of quality digital content in repository institutions (libraries, museums, galleries, archives and specialised institutions) is very poor. Therefore, it is necessary to achieve a high level of interconnection and accessibility of data and information (in either physical or digital form) and safe long-term storage of data on a variety of carriers and support the broadest possible application of the data in the fields of research, development, innovation, local and regional development, and strategic planning at national or regional levels.

5.3 Priority axis "Improvement of broadband Internet access"

5.3.1. Objective and focus of the priority axis:

Specific objective of the priority axis: high penetration of broadband Internet

Objective:	High penetration of broadband connection High level of ICT inclusion	Type	Unit	Target values									source
				SR		Year 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
				year	value	value							
Penetration of broadband internet (connections per 100 inhabitants)	Result	no.	2006	3	5	7	11	15	21	26	30	OECD	
No. of citizens newly-connected to broadband Internet	Output/core	no.	2007	0	0	0	70000	175000	350000	560000	700000	MF SR, ITMS	
No. of households newly-connected to broadband Internet	Output	no.	2007	0	0	0	20000	50000	100000	160000	200000	MF SR, ITMS	
Number of projects	Output/core	no.	2007	0	0	8	30	70	120	165	200	MF SR, ITMS	
Number of jobs created	Result/core	no.	2007	0	0	3	15	35	60	75	80	MF SR, ITMS	
Number of created jobs that are occupied by men	Result/core	no.	2007	0		1	6	15	25	30	32	MF SR, ITMS	
Number of created jobs that are occupied by women	Result/core	no.	2007	0		2	9	20	35	45	48	MF SR, ITMS	

5.3.1.1 Description of measures and supported activities:

Measure 3.1: Development and support of sustainable use of broadband access infrastructure

Framework activity

- introduction, development and operation of modern network platforms providing for communication between state administration systems necessary for the development of eGovernment
- development of regional and local broadband networks in areas unattractive to commercial operators
 - development of metallic and wireless broadband access networks
 - development of metropolitan optical networks
 - development of FTTx broadband access networks

5.3.2. Justification of the priority axis:

Despite the dynamic growth in the number of connections in the past two years, Slovakia clearly remains one of the least developed countries of Europe in terms of broadband Internet availability. It can be realistically estimated that broadband Internet is unavailable to almost 1.2 million households and more than 2000 municipalities. Besides insufficient supply of quality e-services, the reason for the low penetration of the Internet is the inadequate development of access networks. This is true both of households and public administration, in particular municipal offices. According to surveys conducted by the ATVS, around a third of municipal offices have no connection to the Internet. Around 50% of offices connected to the Internet use the ISDN technology and around 10% use dial-up. Therefore, it is necessary to internetise the whole public administration and provide it with good quality broadband connection.

One of the main reasons for the low penetration of the Internet on the part of households and individuals is the high cost of PCs with internet connection and, in many cases, the cost of using the internet from the standpoint of the purchasing power of households in Slovakia compared to the 15 average. This factor plays an important role in particular in economically weak regions or regions in mountainous areas, where the cost of setting up and operating broadband access is higher than in other regions. The shortage of broadband connections is closely related to the cost of building broadband access networks, which progresses very slowly in Slovakia. Commercial operators build access networks in particular in municipalities with a high population density or concentration of business activity. Hence, rural areas, mountainous areas and economically weak regions are on the periphery of interest.

The objective of the OPIS is to provide access to broadband Internet for all citizens. While the strategy of commercial operators is to cover urban centres with the highest population density or highest concentration of business activity, the strategy of the OPIS is to take the opposite direction. Therefore, the least developed parts of Slovakia, i.e. areas unattractive to commercial operators today, will be in the centre of interest. If we wanted to bring the internet to all households where it is unavailable today, we would have to connect 790 thousand households in more than 2300 municipalities in Convergence Objective regions. We are planning to invest more than EUR 113 million in the implementation of the measure, which, according to estimates, together with the

resources reinvested from the Jeremie instrument, will make it possible to bring broadband internet to the majority of municipalities where it is unavailable today. The funding available under the operational programme represents around SKK 7 thousand for installation per household, or SKK 1.8 million for connecting an average municipality. It can be expected that at the time of launching the implementation of projects related to connecting households to the Internet, the number of municipalities and households without access to the internet will be smaller than the current data used as a basis for the priority axis. In addition, we expect a high leverage effect of IFI Jeremie, which will be used for the implementation of more than a third of the measures and which can increase the amount of revolving funds by a further EUR 30 million. Based on the above, we expect that the allocations for this priority axis, making up around 10% of the OPIS allocation, will suffice for the achievement of the programme's objective and enable us to bring the internet to all municipalities where it will not be possible on a commercial basis.

The development of broadband access in Slovakia will be approached in a special way. In particular, geographical and socio-economic conditions (mostly in rural areas and towns without suitable coverage) will need to be taken into account. Also, optimal technological and economic solutions must be selected, depending on the character of the environment. Investment in access networks from the resources of the OPIS should be mostly dealt with at the level of self-government, which would substantially speed up the building of the networks. However, it will be necessary to address also further issues related to the extension and operation of optical networks and the provision of broadband services as such. The implementation of this measure will build on a feasibility study, which will be reflected into the specific project packages offered from the resources of this priority axis to municipalities, network operators and providers of broadband services. All of the above and further issues will be dealt with by the feasibility study preceding the implementation of projects under this priority axis. The key outcome of the concept will be solution packages for specific regions. Preparation and monitoring of the implementation of projects will take place in close co-operation with the Telecommunication Office of the Slovak Republic, which will help ensure that the projects promote competition on the market in an effective way and comply with the generally recognised eGovernment principles.

5.4 Priority axis "Technical assistance"

5.4.1. Objective and focus of the priority axis:

Specific objective of the priority axis: high effectiveness and efficiency of OPIS interventions

Target values	High penetration of broadband connection	Type	Unit	Target values									source
				SR		Year 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
				year	value	value							
Ratio of planned and real results of indicators	Impact	%	2007	0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	ITMS	
Number of studies elaborated	Result	no.	2007	0	2	5	7	9	11	12	14	MF SR, OG SR ITMS	
% of the staff of MA/IBMA participating in the system of lifelong learning	Result	no.	2007	0	75	100	100	1000	100	100	100	MF SR, OG SR, ITMS	
Number of projects	Output/core	no.	2007	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	MF SR, OG SR, ITMS	
Number of jobs created	Result/core	no.	2007	0	50	80	80	80	80	80	80	MF SR, OG SR, ITMS	
Number of created jobs that are occupied by men	Result/core	no.	2007	0	21	34	34	34	34	34	34	MF SR, OG SR, ITMS	
created jobs that are occupied by women	Result/core	no.	2007	0	29	46	46	46	46	46	46	MF SR, OG SR, ITMS	

5.4.1.1 Description of measures and supported activities:

Measure 4.1: Technical assistance for the MA OPIS

Framework activity

- Ensuring administrative capacity of the OPIS MA, improving the quality of human resources
- Ensuring processes of management, programming, monitoring and evaluation of the OPIS
- Establishment and sustainable development of implementation structures for Informatisation projects
- Material and technical support for the OPIS MA
- Ensuring monitoring activities
- Evaluation reports, audit, surveys, analyses for OPIS needs
- IT support for processes within the OPIS MA
- Publicity and information of the public

Measure 4.2: Technical assistance for the IBMA OPIS

- Ensuring administrative capacity of the OPIS IBMA, improving the quality of human resources
- Ensuring processes of programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the OPIS
- Establishment and sustainable development of implementation structures for Informatisation projects
- Material and technical support for the OPIS IBMA
- Ensuring monitoring activities
- Preparation of feasibility studies and analyses related to the implementation of OPIS projects
- Evaluation reports, audit, surveys for OPIS needs
- IT support for processes within the OPIS IBMA
- Publicity and information of the public

5.4.2. Justification of the priority axis:

The OPIS strategy for the 2007-2013 programming period sees all the solutions which will result from informatisation projects as a single functional unit. This is the only possible approach to ensure high effectiveness and efficiency of interventions as regards the NSRF objectives, action plans and other strategic documents the OPIS is derived from.

A specific objective of the priority axis Technical assistance is to ensure an effective process of OPIS management and implementation, in line with the requirements for administrative structures responsible for the implementation of the operational programme, namely by means of supporting the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and inspection activities related to the OPIS, along with activities aimed at strengthening administrative capacities that are in charge of programming, implementation, financial management, evaluation, monitoring, inspection and auditing of the OPIS.

The operational aim of the priority axis Technical assistance is to ensure a support of activities and functions of bodies participating in the management and implementation of the OPIS (MA, IBMA, the Paying Unit, inspection and audit bodies) and their administrative capacity, provision of support for project preparation, as well as to inform the public, to ensure publicity and exchange of experience.

Technical assistance is a special priority of the OPIS whose aim is to support the implementation of other priority axes and activities stated in the operational programme. An effective implementation of the operational programme depends on the ability of the bodies that are involved in the implementation to perform their functions in line with the duties pursuant to EC regulations.

6. HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES

Each intervention carried out in the OPIS framework will respect the following four horizontal priorities in conformity with the National Strategic Reference Framework for 2007–2013:

1. Marginalised Roma communities
2. Equal opportunities
3. Sustainable development
4. Internet information society

6.1 *Marginalised Roma communities*

Marginalised Roma communities (hereinafter referred to as MRCs) constitute one of the most endangered groups of the population marked by a high degree of deprivation and social exclusion, mainly in the form of economic exclusion, spatial exclusion, cultural exclusion, symbolical exclusion, political exclusion or a combination of these forms of exclusion.

The objective of the horizontal priority Marginalised Roma Communities is to increase the employment rate and educational level of persons belonging to MRCs and improve their living conditions. The key *tool* to achieve this objective is a comprehensive approach. The comprehensive approach lays emphasis on interlinking the various activities and on active involvement of local communities in project implementation. Such all-inclusive approach to addressing the problems of marginalised Roma communities is imperative in view of the need to ensure a systemic solution to problems faced by marginalized Roma communities and to enable long-term strategic planning and management of their development, and to bring about positive changes.

The horizontal priority MRC offers the possibility of improving the effectiveness of Structural Funds interventions in addressing the problems of marginalised Roma communities using a comprehensive approach. The comprehensive approach will combine several activities and/or projects into an overall strategy of development of a specific locality, thus ensuring a logical sequence of their implementation and their contribution to the long-term development of the marginalised Roma community in the locality.

Support to marginalised Roma communities from structural funds of the European Union in the 2007–2013 programming period is aimed at the following four priority areas: education, employment, health and housing, and *three interrelated problem areas*: poverty, discrimination and gender equality.

The objective of the OP MRC is to strengthen cooperation and effective co-ordination of activities and financial resources aimed at improving living conditions of persons belonging to marginalised Roma communities.

The proposed tools for ensuring its impact and co-ordination are:

- a comprehensive approach to addressing the problems of MRCs through the following OPs (Regional OP, OP Employment and Social Inclusion, OP Education, OP Environment, OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth, OP Health, OP Informatisation of Society)
- individual projects (demand-oriented)

The tasks of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities (OGPRC), cooperation with the MA/IBMA, the scope and specific conditions of applying the above tools to implementing the OP MRC will be set out in a binding cooperation agreement concluded between the Plenipotentiary's Office and the MA or the IBMA.

The comprehensive approach will be applied as follows:

- presentation of local comprehensive approach strategies (hereinafter referred to as CASs) by municipalities or micro-regions (in line with the content of regional concepts of socio-economic inclusion of MRCs developed for the regions of Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica on the initiative of the OGPRC in 2006, calling for broad partnerships at the local level)

- evaluation and approval of local comprehensive development strategies
- development of projects under approved local comprehensive approach strategies
- approval and implementation of projects under the OP framework, including ISPs (integrated service points and their connection to the Internet)
- on-going monitoring and evaluation of the attainment of local strategy objectives through the implementation of individual projects
- evaluation of the contribution of comprehensive projects to the attainment of the objective of the horizontal priority

Measures 1 and 3 of the operational programme Informatisation of Society create the space for specifying the activities aimed at particular segments of the Roma community. The activities will be substantively oriented on providing support to the four priority areas of the horizontal priority Marginalised Roma Communities and on the comprehensive approach expected to produce synergic effects of support provided from EU structural funds.

The creation of integrated service points under the OP Information Society will ensure a more flexible access to public administration services for all segments of the population and, in combination with comprehensive projects carried out under the OP MRC, it can enhance support primarily for those applicants who – in line with the rules of co-ordination of the horizontal priority Marginalised Roma Communities – will obtain approval for their local comprehensive approach concepts (i.e. the concept of economic and social inclusion of MRCs and project outlines 3 and 4 that the prospective applicants may submit upon a call for proposals to be announced by the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, the Office of Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities) and will subsequently apply for a non-returnable financial contribution under the calls published by individual management authorities. The possibility of using integrated service points will be extended in the context of comprehensive approach by the provision and/or use of professional assistance provided to MRCs under the operational programme Education, enhancing the synergic effect of the comprehensive approach. In the context of building integrated service points under the operational programme Information Society, priority support will be provided to those applicants who use the above-mentioned comprehensive approach and implement it in at least one of the projects for which they were granted a non-returnable financial contribution.

In the framework of implementing special educational programmes for MRCs, training courses will be organised in the OPIS framework in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family on ICT and PC skills, using the “learning by doing” method.

In the framework of priority axis 2 of the OPIS, a specific project to be implemented for the benefit of MRCs is the project of a multifunctional library – information centre. The project involves the building of deposits in the State Scientific Library in Prešov, and a documentation and information centre for Roma culture – a professional department covering the full range of issues related to Roma culture in Slovakia; the project is the result of a long-lasting initiative of several state and public institutions, non-profit organisations and university departments.

The proposed seat of the centre reflects the current territorial structure of the Roma community, concentrated mainly in the Prešov self-governing region.

The documentation and information centre is to be integrated into the State Scientific Library as its organisational unit and is intended to improve access for state administration officials, students, professionals and general public to comprehensive information about history, life, traditions, and culture of the Roma living in Slovakia. The centre will have the task of carrying out basic administration of library holdings and digitisation of repositories, and ensuring access to and use of relevant information by the general public.

6.2 Equal opportunities

Support for basic rights, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, these are fundamental principles applied in the EU. The equal opportunity principle is embodied in the pillars of the European Employment Strategy and the European Framework Strategy on Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities for All; the horizontal priority Equal

Opportunities will contribute to combating discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, faith or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Special emphasis is laid on the principle of gender equality (equal opportunities between women and men); it is one of the basic objectives of the European Community and as such is pursued as a major objective of structural funds. Article 2 of the Amsterdam Treaty provides that the Community shall have as its task the promotion of equality between men and women, and Article 3 lays down the obligation to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women in all the activities using the gender mainstreaming method. This is a process whereby gender equality considerations are incorporated into all conceptual, strategic, decision-making and evaluation processes. In the SF context, this means that the contribution to implementing the principle of equal opportunities for all, and to supporting a balanced representation of women and men will be taken into account in the programming, monitoring and evaluation.

The horizontal priority Equal Opportunities will be applied and monitored in all operational programmes. The horizontal priority Equal Opportunities will be monitored only in the projects that will have a positive or negative impact on equal opportunities. This principle will not be considered in other projects (i.e. those that have no impact on equal opportunities).

This horizontal priority will be implemented also by means of improving accessibility of the physical environment, transport and public services for persons with limited mobility and orientation.

Frequently, a combination of several disadvantaging factors makes access to and maintenance of employment, access to vocational training and other life opportunities more difficult. Consequently, besides applying the principle of equal opportunities for all to each and every EU fund contribution, equal opportunities are also promoted by means of specific NSRF priorities: “support for employment and social inclusion” and “modern education for knowledge-based society”. The specific priority “support for employment and social inclusion” focuses on equal opportunities on the labour market and, *inter alia*, pursues equal opportunities in the labour market access and integration of disadvantaged groups, including support for mechanisms to eliminate gender inequality on the labour market. The specific priority “modern education for knowledge-based society” fosters equal opportunities across the board by means of concrete activities aimed at creating conditions for equal access to lifelong formal and informal education for all. Special attention is devoted to the issue of disadvantaged groups of the population.

6.3 Sustainable development

Sustainable development is one of the basic objectives of the EU, underpinning all its policies and activities. Sustainable development is a target-oriented, long-term (continuous), comprehensive and synergic process having an impact on the conditions and every aspect of life (cultural, social, economic, environmental and institutional) at all levels (local, regional, national), which leads to establishing such models of specific communities (local or regional community, country, international community) that ensure the full satisfaction of biological, material, spiritual and social needs and interests of people, while eliminating and significantly restricting interventions that endanger, harm or destroy the conditions for and the forms of life; it is a process that does not cause excessive burden to the landscape, makes sound use of available resources, and protects cultural and natural heritage.

The government of the Slovak Republic views sustainable development as one of the basic pillars of the knowledge-based society and therefore strives to ensure a balanced development by taking account of its social and environmental impacts.

Sustainable development is outlined in the National Strategic Reference Framework of the Slovak Republic for the years 2007–2013 as one of its key principles. The Framework is based on the respect for sustainable development as a key precondition for improving competitiveness and performance of the regions and of the Slovak economy in the 2007–2013 period. The achievement of the long-term vision of the NSRF, i.e. the process of convergence of the Slovak economy with the EU-15 average, will thus be pursued in the context of sustainable development.

The objective of the horizontal priority of sustainable development is to ensure that all interventions financed under the NSRF have the ultimate effect of synergic promotion of all components of sustainable development, i.e.

its environmental, economic and social components, in conformity with the objectives and indicators of the Revised Sustainable Development Strategy of the EU.

The co-ordination role in the implementation of the horizontal priority of sustainable development at the political level is performed by the Deputy Prime Minister for knowledge-based society, European affairs, human rights and minorities, acting as the chairman of the Government Council for Sustainable Development. The co-ordinator for this horizontal priority at the working level is the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

The SR Government Office ensures effective management and implementation of the horizontal priority in relation to all operational programmes and their priority axes; it monitors and evaluates the achievement of horizontal priority objectives also at the NSRF level.

A working group on the SD horizontal priority set up within the Government Office comprises the representatives all of relevant management authorities, the Central Co-ordination Body, the Ministry of Finance, and the representatives of socio-economic partners (representatives of regional and local government, academic community, research institutions, business and trade union organisations, special-interest associations, and the civil society).

The Government Council for Sustainable Development acts as advisory and co-ordination body for the government of the Slovak Republic in connection with the implementation of sustainable development principles. It gives comments on, *inter alia*, the documents submitted by the HP SD working group. The cooperating and advisory bodies to the Council, i.e. the representatives of the academic community, research institutes, self-governing bodies, trade unions and employers' associations, and of state administration bodies, examine the proposed solutions of relevant problems of sustainable development.

The key tools to be used for managing the interventions in keeping with the objectives of the horizontal priority of sustainable development are integration tools available under the policy, legal and institutional sustainable development framework, namely:

- Strategic and programming documents and concepts related to sustainable development
- Principles, priorities, objectives and indicators related to sustainable development

Using the above integration tools, the horizontal priority of sustainable development will be implemented in the following phases of the programming cycle:

- a) implementation
- b) monitoring and evaluation

a) Implementation

- In the phase of implementing operational programmes, the horizontal priority of sustainable development will be pursued by means of preparing a uniform text for all MA/IBMAs in the form of a manual for beneficiaries that will lay down the requirement for all the applicants for a non-returnable financial contribution to clearly state in their projects whether and how the project will promote sustainable development.
- Moreover, the attainment of the horizontal priority of sustainable development in the implementation phase will be ensured through the definition of project evaluation criteria in line with the objectives of the horizontal priority of sustainable development. Individual MA/IBMAs will present their proposals of criteria for the various horizontal priorities to the SR Government Office. The definition of evaluation criteria will be based on the abovementioned integration tools.

b) Monitoring and evaluation

- In the monitoring and evaluation phase, implementation of the horizontal priority SD will have the form of monitoring compliance with SD indicators at the level of priority axes and the operational programme level. In cooperation with the representatives of individual management authorities, the SR Government Office shall identify and select a set/group of indicators defined in the operational programme concerned or in the National System of Indicators that will be monitored from the SD perspective by the monitoring committee.

- The revised Sustainable Development Strategy of the EU is based on the EU SD strategy that has been detailed at national level in the SD Action Plan of the SR for 2005–2010, setting out the long-term priorities – integrated goals that are specified in 28 strategic objectives. The SR Government Office will cooperate with the MAs in defining those of the 28 strategic objectives that are relevant for their operational programmes. On this basis, the Government Office will evaluate the contribution of operational programmes to the attainment of strategic objectives of the SD Action Plan. The results of this evaluation will be published in annual reports on operational programmes and in the NSRF annual report. The SD evaluation reports will be submitted for approval to the SD working group and the Government Council for SD, and will be used for on-going evaluations of the SD Action Plan of the SR for 2005–2010.
- The SR Government Office will prepare a monitoring report on the SD horizontal priority that will comprise a regional overview of implemented activities and that will be incorporated into the NSRF annual report.
- On the basis of the reports and in cooperation with relevant partners, the SR Government Office plans to publish an analysis and/or study providing an overview of the implementation of sustainable development principles at the national level and in the regional breakdown.
- In agreement with MAs concerned, all outputs of the SR Government Office will be also used as inputs for the meetings of individual monitoring committees.
- The entities responsible for the SD HP will take part in the meetings of monitoring committees for individual operational programmes.

The provision of electronic services using e-government products will significantly contribute to environmental protection. Introduction of e-government services will have a direct bearing on administrative load caused by the use of paper form, and will bring about savings of natural resources (forests) and of energies used for the processing of raw materials and manufacturing of paper products. Reduced energy intensity will have a direct effect of lower emissions and will help ensure Slovakia's compliance with its commitments towards the EU. Furthermore, provision of electronic services will mean that the citizens will have access to services at one-stop-shops or directly in their homes. This means not only the savings of time that the citizens would otherwise have to devote to dealing with various life situations, but also environmental savings connected with reduced travel needs and savings of primary resources used for transport, as well as reduced emissions from the burning of fuels. (For more details see Chapter 2.3 on Strategic Environmental Assessment.)

6.4 Information society

The process of building a knowledge-based society brings about the gradual transformation of its traditional perception based on a knowledge triangle (education, research, innovation) to a knowledge quadrangle (with informatisation added as the fourth side). Introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT) and improved effectiveness resulting from their use significantly contribute to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing all elements of the knowledge-based society. The knowledge-based society and the information society thus do not represent two separate factors fostering sustainable economic growth and improving Slovakia's competitiveness. The objective of co-ordinating the activities in these areas is to ensure that they contribute also to the fulfilment of the objectives of the national Lisbon strategy.

The key objectives of the development of information society in Slovakia are, in line with the strategic documents on informatisation of society, defined as follows:

- information literacy
- effective electronisation of public administration
- broad accessibility of the Internet

The implementation of the horizontal priority will strengthen synergic linkages between operational programmes and will ensure that all aspects of information society be taken into account in the activities supported by means of specific projects.

At the political level, responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the horizontal priority lies with the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities. The co-ordinator of the horizontal priority at the working level is the SR Government Office. The body responsible for horizontal management and implementation of all projects on informatisation of society at the policy level and the substantive level is the Ministry of Finance, which is the central state administration authority in charge of informatisation pursuant to Act No. 275/2006 Coll. on Public Administration Information Systems amending and supplementing other laws.

The SR Government Office ensures effective management and implementation of the horizontal priority with regard to all operational programmes and their priority axes, and monitors and evaluates compliance with horizontal priority objectives at the NSRF level. To this end, a working group for the horizontal priority Information Society has been set up within the SR Government Office; its members include all relevant MAs/IBMAs, the Central Co-ordinating Authority, the Ministry of Finance, and the representatives of socio-economic partners (regional and local self-governing authorities, academic community, research institutions, special-interest associations, and the civil society). The Office of Government Plenipotentiary for Information Society also participates in the activities of the information society working group, where the plenipotentiary plays an advisory role as provided for in the Statute.

The key tools to be used for managing interventions with a view to pursuing the objectives of the horizontal priority Information Society are integration tools available under the policy, legal and institutional framework for informatisation of society, namely:

- strategic documents, action plans concerning informatisation of society
- the national policy document on informatisation of public administration and the related policy documents on the development of public administration information systems of relevant entities, i.e. public administration institutions
- national projects implemented under the OPIS framework
- data, technological and security standards
- methodology instructions, guidelines, manuals for applicants, possibly calls for proposals

These tools are available under the applicable legal and strategic framework; the power-sharing law and the law on public administration information systems assign responsibility for these tools to the Ministry of Finance, which is the central state administration body in charge of informatisation.

The implementation of the horizontal priority Information Society will be carried out using the integration tools in the following phases of the programming cycle:

- a) implementation
- b) monitoring and evaluation

a) Implementation

- In the phase of implementing operational programmes, the horizontal priority Information Society will be pursued by means of preparing a uniform text for all MAs/IBMAs in the form of a manual for beneficiaries that will lay down the requirement for all the applicants for a non-returnable financial contribution to clearly state in their projects whether and how the project will promote the development of information society.
- Moreover, the attainment of the horizontal priority Information Society in the implementation phase will be ensured through the definition of project evaluation criteria in line with the objectives of the horizontal priority Information Society. Individual MAs/IBMAs will present their proposals of criteria for the various horizontal priorities to the SR Government Office. The SR Government Office will examine the proposals of project evaluation criteria in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance in the light of the above mentioned integration tools.

b) Monitoring and evaluation

- In the phase of monitoring and evaluation, implementation of the horizontal priority Information Society will be carried out by monitoring compliance with information society indicators at the level of priority axes and of the operational programme. In cooperation with the representatives of individual management authorities, the SR Government Office shall identify and select a set/group of indicators defined in the operational programme concerned or in the National System of Indicators that will be monitored from the information society perspective by the monitoring committee.
- The Government Office will prepare a monitoring report on the IS horizontal priority that will comprise a regional overview of implemented activities that will be published in the NSRF annual report.
- The SR Government Office plans to publish an analysis and/or study in cooperation with relevant partners, providing an overview of the implementation of information society principles at the national level and in the regional breakdown.
- All outputs of the SR Government Office will be also used in agreement with individual MAs as inputs for the meetings of individual monitoring committees. The entities responsible for HP IS will participate in the meetings of monitoring committees for individual operational programmes.

7. COMPLIANCE OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME WITH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND DOCUMENTS

The OPIS strategy and individual measures have been proposed in conformity with the provisions of the EU Treaty and instruments adopted within its framework. The OPIS policy document also complies with methodology guidelines of the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, developed on the basis of draft regulations of the EC and methodology documents of the Community for the 2007–2013 programming documents. It complies with EU and SR rules governing the competition, public procurement, environmental protection, equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

The OPIS respects the need for co-ordination and complementarity in the provision of financial assistance between the various funds and operational programmes. It also lays down relations with selected banking institutions (the EIB and the EIF) in connection with the provision of indirect state aid.

7.1 Compliance with EU strategy documents and policies

7.1.1 Community Strategic Guidelines

Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) define the framework for Funds' operation on the European level with the objective of ensuring consistence and conformity of the strategic documents prepared by individual member states with Community priorities, policies and activities and are complementary to other Community financial instruments.

The OPIS strategy reflects the content of the Community Strategic Guidelines in accordance with priority 2 - Improving Knowledge and Innovation for Growth. In the OPIS framework, interventions in the venture capital market will be supported, in accordance with priority 2.4 of the CSG, only within priority axis 3 focused on the development of infrastructure for broadband connection. All measures of OPIS priority axes support the implementation of CSG priority 2.3 - Supporting Information Society for All. Interventions are focused on the support to increasing demand for and supply of ICT services. In the area of demand, they focus on sustainable development and availability of public e-services.

Through priority axis 1, which is focused on modernising public administration and introducing public e-services, the interventions will support, through increasing demand in and supply of information services and useful content, business environment quality improvements and the creation of a single information space with

accessible high-quality public services for businesses and citizens. Expected indirect impacts include an increase in investment into research and development in the field of ICT and support for a single information space of public organisations in the area of research and development, and the business sphere.

Through priority axis 2 aimed at obtaining and distributing digital content from repository institutions the strategy will support the stepping up of ICT supply and demand in both public and private services, and thus enhance support for information society for all.

7.1.2 Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy

In preparation of strategic documents, the Slovak Republic identifies with the main priorities of the Lisbon Strategy, which include ensuring adequate public funds, growth factor of employment and productivity, internal market development, high level of social cohesion, and sustainable development. Sustainable development means that employment, economic reforms, social policies and environmental policies must be designed in a manner that will ensure their mutually interconnected promotion. One of the main points of achieving the strategic objective of the Lisbon Strategy is the transition of countries to knowledge-based economy and society through supporting information society, as well as through speeding up the process of structural reforms for competitiveness and innovativeness and completing the single market.

All OPIS measures are in conformity with the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment with an emphasis on the support to innovations, business, competitiveness, economic growth and formation of new and permanent jobs and ensuring sustainable development.

The Gothenburg Strategy of sustainable development, similarly as the Lisbon Strategy, will be fulfilled through measures aimed at the basic idea of creating a knowledge-based economy, which will be capable of achieving objectives of permanent competitiveness and growth including support to employment as well as the use of technologies with ecologically positive impacts on the environment. Since the Lisbon Strategy, in Slovakia's circumstances, is reflected in the Competitiveness Strategy for the Slovak Republic until 2010 and in the National Reform Programme, the conformity aspects are detailed in section 7.2.3.

7.1.3 EC legislation in the area of cohesion policy

Regulation title: **ERDF Regulation**

Article: **4**

Paragraph: **1a**

Funds shall contribute to the "Convergence" objective.

Article: **5**

Paragraph: **1**

Regions eligible to financing from the structural funds according to the "Convergence" objective will be the regions corresponding to the level II of the Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units (hereinafter the "NUTS II level") in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003, whose per capita gross domestic product (GDP) measured in purchasing power standard and calculated on the basis of Community indicators for the last three years available at [...] is lower than 75% of the Community average.

Regulation title: **ESF Regulation**

In the framework of convergence objectives, the measures of the priority axis 2 NSRF Informatisation of Society will support ESF measures in accordance with these priorities:

Article: **3**

Paragraph: **1a**

◀ Expectations and positive management of economic changes, particularly through designing and expanding innovative and more productive forms of labour organisation, including better health condition and safety, determining future professional and qualification requirements and development of specific employment services, professional training and support in the context of enterprise and sector restructuring.

Article: 3

Paragraph: 2b, i), ii)

◀ Strengthening institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations and public services on national, regional, and local levels to adopt reforms and adequate management systems particularly in the field of economy, employment, social, and environmental area and judiciary.

Measures of the Informatisation of Society priority axis will, through supporting the introduction of basic public e-services, expand innovative and productive tools to support adaptability of employees and companies, such as job search services, social security benefits, personal documents, registration of new legal entities, etc. The projects supported within the priority axis measures will include those improving the efficiency of processes, organisation, and ICT infrastructure for the provision of public services in all public administration organisations. The expected improvement in the efficiency of public services and ICT infrastructure provision will enable the provision of integrated public services at a single point and enable horizontal management on the basis of the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness of public spending.

7.1.4 EC legislation in the area of competition rules

The OPIS is in accordance with the competition rules – Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2003 on the implementation of the rules on competition laid down in Articles 81 and 82 of the EC Treaty.

The Slovak Republic, being an EU member state, fully approximated EC directives in the field of state assistance into the national legislation, which is presently provided for by Act No. 231/2001 Coll. on State Assistance as amended.

Competition protection and support in the Slovak Republic is supervised through the Antimonopoly Office of the Slovak Republic as a central government authority.

7.1.5 EC legislation in the area of public procurement

The main principles of public procurement rules are based on the EC Treaty and on EC directives for the area of public procurement. This involves the principle of transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination, mutual recognition, and proportionality while complying with the principles of economy in the spending of funds.

The issue of public procurement and public contracting is provided for by Act No. 25/2006 on Public Procurement amending and supplementing certain laws, which introduces the system of public procurement reflecting Slovak Republic's commitments as a member of the EU. This Act provides for public procurement in goods delivery contracts, construction work contracts, service provision contracts, construction work concessions, bidding, and administration in public procurement.

Implementation of this Act achieves improved transparency in the public procurement process, increased competition and consequently development of competition and business environment in general. It also contributes to improved efficiency in control of public spending and limits the room for corruption. This Act provides for public procurement in goods delivery contracts, construction work contracts, service provision contracts, construction work concessions, bidding, and administration in public procurement. The central government authority for the field of public procurement is the Public Procurement Office. Activities not subject to the application of the Public Procurement Act, such as market survey, are performed on the basis of the Commercial Code through a public tender.

7.1.6 EC legislation in the area of environmental protection and improvement rules

Strategic environmental assessment is carried out for the OPIS under Act No 24/2006 Coll. on Environmental Impact Assessment amending and supplementing certain laws, which is in conformity with EU Directive No. 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, and is used in the evaluation of strategic documents.

No significant negative environmental impact is expected in connection with the activities proposed under the OPIS framework. Just the opposite, the OPIS and its implementation will have a favourable effect on the state of the environment in the Slovak Republic.

Act No. 24/2006 Coll. on Environmental Impact Assessment amending and supplementing other laws will be applied also in connection with the activities carried out under the projects supported within the OPIS framework.

Development and selection of projects in the process of implementing the operational programme will be conducted in harmony with the requirements of environmental protection and improvement principles set out in Nature and Landscape Protection Act No. 543/2002 Coll.

7.1.7 EC legislation in the area of equal opportunities, gender equality, and non-discrimination

The activities in project implementation will be conducted in accordance with EC legislation in the area of compliance with equal opportunities, gender equality, and non-discrimination.

Fundamental human rights and freedoms in the Slovak Republic are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. At the same time, the Slovak Republic is bound by international instruments, which aim at implementing equal opportunities in its legislation and practice. These include the International Labour Organisation conventions, the European Social Charter (ESC), Additional Protocol to the ESC, and other. In relation to implementing *acquis communautaire*, several provisions were incorporated into Slovak Republic's law strengthening the principle of equal treatment of women and men, eliminating, at the same time, several provisions from the legislation, which were at variance with the principle of equal opportunities (such as the abolishment of the prohibition of night work for women).

Since 2000, the Government of the Slovak Republic has been regularly passing a systematic instrument of prevention and fight against intolerance and discrimination entitled "Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Expressions of Intolerance". (The Action Plan for 2006–2008 has been the fourth in a row since 2000). The objective of the Action Plan is to assist the creation of a systematic and permanent attention to the issue of respect for the human rights and preventing discrimination within individual ministries and developing co-operation of the ministries with individual non-governmental organisations and other entities).

7.2 Conformity with Slovak Republic's strategy documents and policies

7.2.1 The NSRF and operational programmes

7.2.1.1 Harmony with the NSRF strategy and vision

The Slovak Republic's lagging behind the EU-15 in the field of competitiveness points at the slow progress in Slovakia's transition to knowledge economy. This is formed particularly by companies that use innovation and state-of-the-art technologies to increase their competitiveness. At the same time, each economy, throughout its development, must save and efficiently use the existing sources in the interests of future generations. All OP IS priority axes were assigned under the strategic priority of the NSRF "Innovations, Informatisation, and Knowledge Economy". This is how the OP IS fulfils the long-term vision of economic and strategic development of the country, which the NSRF defines as General Convergence of the Slovak Republic's Economy to the EU-15 Average through Sustainable Development. This is derived into a strategy to fulfil the vision outlined, defined as the Significant Increase, by 2013, of Competitiveness and Performance of Regions and Slovak Economy while Respecting Sustainable Development. The NSRF also emphasises one of the priority thematic areas to be the support to innovations and informatisation, which, through technology development and process quality improvement, develops the sources of economic growth for knowledge economy and increases the quality of economic growth built on the existing factors. The above orientation is in full compliance with the developed strategy and measures of the OPIS.

7.2.1.2 Synergy and complementarity with other operational programmes

7.2.1.2.1 Synergy of the OPIS with other operational programmes

Information society (OPIS) and Human resources (OP Edu, OP E&SI)

Human potential is one of the important pillars of information society. It affects the informatisation process not only in how effectively electronic services are used, but also in the process of creating services and operating the infrastructure. Only qualified citizens and officers can use the services of information society and then implement

and operate them. Human potential (users) creates a demand for electronic services, and thus also exerts a pressure on the supply and quality of services of information society. At the same time, a growing demand for quality services increases the need for skills, knowledge and administrative capacity of their providers.

The key aspect in the area of acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills in informatisation is preparation at all school levels including lifelong education, as well as professional training of public administration employees who not only use electronic information and services, but also create them. In this respect, the state ought to play a principal role in building human potential for the process of informatisation of society.

Operational Programme Education will support education reform, i.e. the adaptation of the education system to the needs of the knowledge society. This is reflected in priority axes 1, 2 and 4 of the above operational programme. One of the key instruments for achieving adaptability of graduates and workers on the labour market is the acquisition and development of key competences in the process of formal education and lifelong learning. One of the key competences is digital literacy (readiness of broad layers of the population for the use of modern ICT), which is supported by the following activities:

- Innovation of educational methods with emphasis on the use of ICT in the teaching process, including the possibility of extending the ICT infrastructure in schools,
- Creation and implementation of a new generation of multimedia teaching aids and interactive educational programmes (multimedia programmes, e-learning forms of education)
- Implementation of the strategy for the informatisation of regional education, lifelong learning of teachers and the use of ICT in the teaching process.

Programmes for the use of the latest ICT in university education will be co-financed in the context of support for universities and the development of human resources in the field of research and development. Priority axis 3 "Support for Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs" contains activities focused on the acquisition of key competences, including computer literacy.

The various groups of activities to increase employment focus on the promotion of the use of information technology and acquisition of basic skills in this area (priority axes 3 and 4). Preparation for entry to the labour market and maintaining jobs is directly related to the development and exploitation of information technology. The OP's ambition with respect to the modernisation of employment and social services is to create a modern system, which, thanks to the use of information technology, will be brought as close to the citizen as possible and will flexibly respond to changes in demand on the labour market.

The support for the reconciliation of working and family life (priority axis 2) is directly interconnected with the use of information technology, since the various activities are based on the need to extend basic skills during a period when the person is far-off from the labour market. At the same time, various forms of distance learning, such as e-learning, are used for many of the activities.

The basic objective of priority axis 4 is to increase the availability of client-oriented public services using ICT. Investments in the development of human resources will be made under this priority axis, which will assist in the implementation of the priority axes of the OPIS. Making processes more effective and raising the quality standards in the management of human resources in public administration is a topic of the OP E&SI, which will complement the OPIS. The OP E&SI will support the development of human resources in public administration organisations and in non-for-profit organisations, as well as an implementation of quality management systems (EFQM, CAF, etc.) in public administration institutions. The implementation of measures financed from the ESF will be co-ordinated with individual OPIS projects. This means that the projects aimed at implementing quality management systems will be executed in offices that will be more efficient owing to informatisation supported by the OPIS. ESF projects will support training and education of employees aimed at making use of ICT systems implemented in the computerised sections of public administration.

OPIS activities, financed from the ERDF, are linked to the funding of complementary activities from the ESF. This will result in a synergy effect in the fund contributions. The interconnection of ERDF and ESF interventions principally means that while OP IS interventions are focused on preparing material conditions to provide better educational, social, health care and other services, the main focus of ESF interventions is quality and content of these services. In relation to OPIS measures, the ESF measures will focus on formal education with an emphasis on the needs of information society (OP Education), and on lifelong education of public administration employees stressing the utilisation of the possibilities of modern ICT (OP Education and social inclusion).

Information society (OPIS), Research and Development (OP R&D), Innovation in Businesses (OP C&EG) and Transport (OPT)

The development of information society, as well as the character of knowledge-based economy, is markedly stimulated also by the development in individual IT businesses. By means of SF, this development will be supported by investments into research and development, which will affect the electrical engineering industry, including IT. The measures taken under the OP R&D may not have any direct connection with the OPIS, however, they will affect and synergistically improve knowledge society through impacts, that is, by means of increasing the importance of IT in the society.

Most innovations in business are related to information technologies. OP C&EG will support innovation in business which – along with the development of eGovernment – will increase the inclusion of ICT into economic processes both in public administration organizations and households (OPIS), as well as in businesses (OP C&EG).

The effects of the OP IS and of both the above mentioned programmes are mostly indirect and influence each other only on the level of long-term impacts of interventions that have a bearing on meeting the objectives of the NSRF.

The OPIS and the OP R&D are complementary, synergistically co-operating programmes, which do not overlap each other. The introduction of ICT, streamlining of processes and the creation of new e-services through the use of ICT significantly contribute to much higher effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the elements of knowledge society and penetration of the effects of the contributions throughout Slovakia and its sectors. The OP R&D will support ICT infrastructure of research and development organisations, including support for broadband networks between first-rate science, research and development institutions, so as to ensure quality communication between the different organisations and effective transfer of data related to special research tasks in the whole of Slovakia, as well as in the international context of co-operating institutions. At the same time, this will help implement the objective to increase international competitiveness of Slovak research and development and its potential for participation in international science and technology co-operation in the European research area. Under priority axis 3 “University Infrastructure”, academic libraries at colleges and universities will be equipped with computer technology, including broadband, which will increase the standard of services provided to students and assist in the processing and protection of their resources.

The OP C&EG will pay attention especially to electronic commerce, system of quality and informatisation in businesses, including training. Issues associated with information society also relate to support for investment objectives, which are increasing in importance with respect to science and research projects and consulting services for businesses.

The OPIS, which provides the environment for the development of electronic services (eGovernment, smart administration) and higher penetration of broadband access, is directly related to measures 1.1 and 1.2 of the OP C&EG (eBusiness, helping SMEs go digital, W@tach), as well as measure 2.2 (eTourism). At the same time, the OP C&EG intervenes in electrical engineering industry, including IT, for which the OPIS will present an important stimulus (eGovernment, eContent, broadband).

The OP Trans will be used to provide support to eTransport, which will become part of the integrated architecture of PAIS. eTransport applications will be accessible on the central portal. The greatest possible synergy between the OPIS and the OP Trans requires a close co-ordination between the Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications and the OPIS MA/IBMA provided for in the PAIS Act. At the same time, exchange of information at Co-ordination Meetings will create the conditions for a full utilisation of the effects of priority axis 3 Improvement of Broadband Internet Access and for the development of transport infrastructure, so that the capacities available under the real construction timetable can be effectively used also for the development of infrastructure under this priority axis.

Under the OP Env framework, the Ministry of Environment envisages the co-financing of activities involving the collection, processing and dissemination of information on the state of individual environmental sectors, the presentation of this information to the public, and the acquisition of data in digital form. The Slovak Republic has

the obligation to provide the Commission the data obtained in the monitoring of surface and ground waters including protected areas. The monitoring system will provide, verify, archive and subsequently evaluate these data. It is also planned to co-finance another IS, namely a flood alert and forecasting system. Using hydrological forecasting, the system will improve the flood alert scheme and, in particular, protect human lives. The system will provide hydrological forecasts for a 100-year period. The quality of the environment and increased support for emission and air quality monitoring in harmony with EU requirements will be enhanced by means of the National Emission Information System. Improvements in emission inventory and planning as well as publicity for emission reduction will also be supported. The plans in the area of waste or, more specifically, old environmental landfills, include the finalisation of the register of old environmental landfills.

All the aforesaid ISs will be complementary to the OPIS and, on the whole, will contribute to environmental improvements. The environmental monitoring information system will make it possible to combine all the existing data systems and geographical digital data through the GIS as a way to integrate all information. In the light of EU commitments related to sustainable development, security, filling the knowledge gap, improvements in the quality of life, the environmental dimension of each of these areas stands out into the foreground. OPIS outputs – created or finalised databases – will be, wherever possible, connected to the European monitoring of environmental and security projects, and to the GALILEO system.

OP Health will support informatisation of healthcare providers and specific eHealth-related applications. The eHealth system envisages cooperation between the systems of healthcare providers. Since eHealth applications will be part of the PAIS, very close co-ordination with the OPIS will be necessary.

Measure 2.2 Informatisation of Society of the OP Bratislava Region will be used to support interventions for the development of information society in the territory under objective Regional Competitiveness and Employment. This will apply mainly to the activities aimed at electronisation and development of electronic services provided by regional and local self-governing authorities in the Bratislava Region, building the system of integrated service points, and increasing accessibility of the broadband Internet. The activities carried out under this measure are complementary with OPIS activities, namely those of measure 1.2 involving the electronisation and development of electronic services provided by regional and local self-governing authorities on the territory under the Convergence objective, i.e. outside the Bratislava Region, and measure 3.1 activities expanding the accessibility of broadband Internet in that territory.

As regards the Regional Operational Programme, priority axis 1 of the Regional Operational Programme supports the infrastructure of kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, which may also include their informatisation. The OP Informatisation of Society promotes the building of the information society through thematic focus on electronisation of public administration, digital content, and access of population to the broadband Internet. The Regional Operational Programme also supports, as part of activities supported under priority axis 3 Strengthening the Cultural Potential of Regions and Tourist Infrastructure, interventions into the reconstruction and modernisation of repository institutions at local and regional level. Through priority axis 2, the OP Informatisation of Society supports the renewal of infrastructure of repository institutions at national level connected with the building and modernisation of the systems for acquisition, processing and protection of content from repository institutions.

7.2.1.2.2 Complementarity between the OPIS and other OP

Complementarity means ensuring that substantively similar solutions supported under different operational programmes be complementary to one another rather than mutually overlapping. In the case of OPIS, complementary projects are the projects whose outputs include eGovernment applications and network infrastructure (for broadband connection), covered by several OPs. These topics and relevant operational programmes require a precise definition of their demarcation lines.

The OPIS focuses on setting up the methodological, technological, application and organisational conditions for eGovernment. eGovernment applications supported under other OPs will have the form of modules that will be incorporated into the programme and integrated into the central portal. They will use the infrastructure and integration components developed on the basis of OPIS resources. Implementation of the projects related to

informatisation of society, supported under other programmes than the OPIS, requires close co-ordination between the OPIS IBMA and other management authorities and intermediate bodies. The dividing line between interventions supported under the OPIS framework and other OPs corresponds to the organisational and functional structure of public administration.

Measure 1.1 of the OPIS concentrates on the cross-cutting⁷⁶ processes and services provided by public administration and technological/application infrastructure operated particularly by: Ministry of Finance, Tax Directorate of the Slovak Republic, Customs Directorate of the Slovak Republic, district directorates of the Police Force, National Security Office, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic, Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing of the Slovak Republic, Civil Service Office of the Slovak Republic, Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic and state authorities established under separate legal provisions. The key task under this measure is to create the necessary technology, application and process environment for a sustainable development of the model of integrated public administration services.

Measure 1.2 of the OPIS focuses on the informatisation of self-governing authorities and the support for sustainable development of ICT infrastructure and of the services provided and operated by regional and local self-governing authorities. Informatisation of self-governing authorities is part of the architecture of integrated public administration services.

The measures taken under priority axis 1 will constitute the basis for introducing extended eGovernment services and for their integration into the central portal:

- in the eLearning area, supported under the OP Education
- in the area of intelligent transport systems (eTransport), supported under the OP Transport and the Regional OP
- in the area of environmental ISs, supported under the OP Environment
- in the area of electronisation of public services provided by self-governing authorities, supported under the OP Bratislava Region
- in the area of eBusiness services, to be implemented under the OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth
- in the area of employment and social inclusion (eSkills and eInclusion), supported under the OP Employment and Social Inclusion
- in the area of informatisation of healthcare providers, supported under the OP Healthcare, with linkages to eHealth services.

Measures 2.1 and 2.2 of the OPIS are focused on specific⁷⁷ processes related to services provided by public administration and on technology/application infrastructure of repository institutions, whose infrastructure is owned by the Ministry of Culture and partly by the Ministry of Interior.

Priority axis 2 of the OPIS is aimed primarily at creating the useful digital content from the sources of repository institutions and making it available to other knowledge-oriented industries. Measure 1.3 of the OP Education and measure 1.3 of the OP Research and Development will be also used to provide support to modern forms of lifelong learning and transfer of research and development knowledge to practice using the ICT. The OPIS will provide digital content or services, which will be used to develop and improve access to relevant services in the context of eLearning and eContent.

Measure 3.1 is focused on increasing the penetration of broadband connection by means of developing the infrastructure of broadband access networks and motivating their users.

Horizontal priority Informatisation of Society focuses on optimising specific⁷⁸ processes related to services provided by central state administration authorities, and on integration of technological application infrastructure owned by: Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications, and Ministry of Construction and Regional Development. In the framework of implementing the above horizontal priority, support will be

⁷⁶ Also referred to as supporting and management processes. According to the COFOG public administration expenditure classification, groups 01 and 03. According to CSAA code list: Civil Service Office, Antimonopoly Office of the Slovak Republic, National Security Office, Administration of State Material Reserves of the Slovak Republic, Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁷⁷ According to the COFOG public administration expenditure classification, group 04.6.

⁷⁸ According to COFOG classification, indicated as 04 – 10.

provided to the activities involving the purchase and operation of ICT infrastructure⁷⁹, local and specialised networks, and the development of electronic services in specific areas⁸⁰. A detailed overview of complementary measures for priority axes 1 and 3 of the OPIS, broken down by individual operational programmes, is given in Annex 4.

	OPIS		
Programme structure	Priority axis 1	Priority axis 2	Priority axis 3
OP INFORMATISATION OF SOCIETY (OPIS)	Development, purchase, consolidation, central administration of PAIS		
OP Bratislava Region	eGovernment applications for the Bratislava Self-Governing Region		
OP TRANSPORT	The OP Transport will support: eTransport , which will become part of the integrated architecture of PAIS. eTransport applications will be accessible on the central portal. Reaching maximum synergy between the OPIS and OP TRANS requires close cooperation between the MTPT SR and the MA/IBMA of the OP IS, in line with the act on PAIS.		In the construction of infrastructure, where it will be possible to install protection tubes and prepare them for blown installation of optical fibres financed from the OPIS in the context of the construction work financed from the OP Transport.
OP Competitiveness and economic growth (OP C&EG)	<p>The OP C&EG will support: eBusiness, eTourism. eTourism applications (G2B, G2P) are part of the integrated architecture of PAIS. eBusiness applications (B2B, B2P) are not part of the integrated architecture of PAIS. However, they will be able to use some of its components (e.g. registers). eTourism services will require close cooperation between the MA/IBMA of the OPIS and the MEc SR, in line with the act on PAIS and in all stages of the project cycle. eBusiness services do not require close cooperation.</p> <p>OP C&EG will support informatisation in businesses, thus stimulating their innovative performance. Informatised businesses will create new ICT users and in some cases also providers of services and IC technologies. In this case, no close cooperation between the MA/IBMA of the OPIS and the MEc SR is required in line with the act on PAIS.</p>	The digitised and accessible content of individual repository institutions will become an important source of information for businesses in the creative industry. In order to achieve maximum synergy between OPIS and OP C&EG, co-ordination of activities on the part of the MA/IBMA of the OP IS and the MEc SR is required, particularly in the preparation and implementation phase of projects aimed at increasing their innovative performance.	
OP Research and development	<p>The OP R&D will support basic and applied research in the IT sector. Its output can be reflected in new technologies to be used for eGovernment. Reaching maximum synergy between the OPIS and OP R&D does not require close cooperation between the ME SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.</p> <p>The OP R&D will support research and development applications. If applicants include public administration institutions, the supported solutions will become a part of the PAIS architecture. Therefore, the OP R&D and OPIS require close cooperation between the ME SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.</p>	The digitised and accessible content of individual repository institutions will become an important source of information for research and development processes and institutions. Reaching maximum synergy between the OPIS and OP R&D requires close cooperation between the ME SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.	OP R&D will support network infrastructure in R&D institutions and universities . These will mainly include public sector institutions, i.e. the network infrastructure will be a part of the PAIS architecture. As part of the exception granted by the EC, the OP R&D will finance these activities also in the Bratislava self-governing region. Therefore, it will be necessary to co-ordinate this type of OP R&D activities with the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.
OP Education	The OP Edu will support eLearning applications that are part of the PAIS architecture. Therefore, close cooperation between the ME SR and the MA/IBMA of the OP IS, in line with the act on PAIS, will be required during the entire project cycle.	The digitised and accessible content of individual repository institutions will become an important source of information for the system of formal education. In order to achieve	

⁷⁹ Except for broadband connection infrastructure supported in the framework of priority axis 3 of the OPIS.

⁸⁰ In the case of OP R&D, this will include primarily networking among research and development institutions.

	OPIS		
Programme structure	Priority axis 1	Priority axis 2	Priority axis 3
	<p>The OP Edu will support the content and process aspect of education aimed at the needs of knowledge society. This also includes the area of formal education in IT at all types of schools. Graduates will constitute the group of users of ICT and electronic services. Reaching maximum synergy between the OPIS and OP Edu does not require close cooperation between the ME SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.</p>	<p>maximum synergy between OPIS and OP Edu, a co-ordination of activities on the part of the MA/IBMA of the OP IS and the ME SR is required, particularly in the preparation and implementation phase of projects aimed at a content- and process-based modernisation of the education system.</p>	
OP Employment and Social Inclusion (OP E&SI)	<p>The OP E&SI will support the inclusion and eSkills applications. These applications will follow up on the OPIS eGovernment applications. If the recipient is the public sector, they will become a part of the integrated architecture of PAIS. In any case, close cooperation between the MLSAF SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS will be required.</p> <p>The OP E&SI will take a separate measure to support an improvement of the quality of public administration employees. Lifelong education in public administration and the implementation of quality management systems will be done primarily in those offices where eGovernment services will be developed (within OPIS). The activities within the OP E&SI will be closely linked (formally as well as organisationally) to the OPIS. This is why very close cooperation will be necessary between the MLSAF ST and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS in tasks aimed at making public administration more efficient. The OP E&SI will support lifelong education. In the area of increasing digital literacy and skills, all levels of ECDL will be implemented – not only in public administration, but also for individual citizens. Course graduates will constitute a new and more competent group of Internet users. The process of defining the content of education, target groups and regions will require close cooperation between the MLSAF SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.</p>	<p>The digitised and accessible content of individual repository institutions will become an important source of information for the system of lifelong learning. The process of defining the content of education, target groups and regions will require close cooperation between the MLSAF SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.</p>	<p>The OP E&SI applications, as well as activities aimed at increasing digital literacy and skills will stimulate the penetration of broadband Internet connections. Maximum synergy will require a co-ordination of the activities performed by the OP E&SI and OP IS, as for the target groups and territory on which the interventions of both OPs will be implemented.</p>
OP HEALTH	<p>Since eHealth applications will be part of the PAIS, very close co-ordination with the OPIS will be necessary. The OPIS is focused on the creation of technological, application and process environment for introducing effective electronic services of public administration and increasing their accessibility through broadband connection.</p> <p>The OPIS will create the preconditions for interconnecting internal information systems of healthcare providers and other healthcare system participants (health insurance companies, pharmacies...) in a manner enabling their integration into the central public administration portal and into the system of electronic services provided by public administration. Information systems and applications related to eHealth framework will be part of the architecture of public administration information systems, and will thus require a very close co-ordination between the OPIS and the OP Health.</p> <p>The OP Health will continue to support informatisation of healthcare providers in connection with internal informatisation of healthcare providers.</p>		
OP ENVIRONMENT (OP Env)	<p>Under the OP Env framework, the Ministry of Environment envisages the co-financing of the activities involving the collection, processing and dissemination of information on the state of individual environmental sectors, presentation of this information to the public, and acquisition of data in digital form. The Slovak Republic has the obligation to provide the Commission the data on the monitoring of surface and ground waters including protected areas. The monitoring system will provide, verify, archive and subsequently evaluate these data.</p>		

	OPIS		
Programme structure	Priority axis 1	Priority axis 2	Priority axis 3
	<p>Another IS considered for co-financing is the flood alert and forecasting system. Using hydrological forecasting, the system will make it possible to improve the flood alert procedure and, in particular, to protect human lives. The system will provide hydrological forecasts for a 100-year period.</p> <p>The quality of the environment and increased support for emission and air quality monitoring in harmony with EU requirements will be enhanced by means of the National Emission Information System. Improvements in emission inventory and planning as well as publicity on emission reduction will also be supported.</p> <p>In the waste area or, more specifically, old landfills, it is planned to finalise the register of old environmental landfills.</p> <p>All the aforesaid IS will be complementary to the OPIS and will, on the whole, contribute to environmental improvements. The environment monitoring information system will make it possible to combine all the existing data systems and geographical digital data through the GIS as a way to integrate all information.</p> <p>In the light of EU commitments in the area of sustainable development, security, filling the knowledge gap, improvements in the quality of life, the environmental dimension of each of these areas stands out into the foreground.</p> <p>OPIS outputs – created or finalised databases – will be, wherever possible, connected to the European monitoring of environmental and security projects, and to the GALILEO system.</p> <p>The OP Env will support the development of a monitoring system to protect the environment. eEnvironment applications will be supported as a part of the PAIS architecture. It will support eEnvironment applications that will be part of the PAIS architecture and that will therefore require close cooperation between the Ministry of Health and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS.</p>		
Regional OP (ROP)			<p>The ROP will support the creation of ICT infrastructure at elementary schools. Their infrastructure will be a part of the PAIS architecture. When performing the ROP activities, no close cooperation between the MCRD SR and the MA/IBMA of the OPIS will be required. Collaboration is expected mostly between the MCRD SR and ME SR who are responsible for eLearning activities.</p> <p>In the construction of infrastructure, where it will be possible to install protection tubes and prepare them for blown installation of optical fibres financed from the OPIS in the context of the construction work financed from the Regional OP.</p>

7.2.2 National Reform Programme/Action Plans of the Competitiveness Strategy for the Slovak Republic until 2010

Measures of the OP Informatisation of Society will directly support the tasks and objectives of the Information Society action plan with an emphasis on increasing efficiency and transparency of service provision on all levels of public administration in accordance with the concept of the roadmap for the introduction of informatised services.

Action plan task	Priority Axis		
	1	2	3
Information literacy			
Conduct a content and process conversion of the traditional school into a modern school; implement a content reform with respect to informatisation, content modernisation, incorporating preparation for information society and knowledge economy			
Ensure computer literacy of teachers on all school levels			
Close the gap on the European average in availability of information and communication technologies (ICT) at schools			
Support increasing computer literacy and lifelong education in ICT also in co-operation with the private sector			
Improve general awareness on the advantages of information society and information literacy with a focus on specific groups (e-inclusion)			
Effective e-government and modern on-line public services			
Interconnect basic information systems of public administration institutions in an effective, reliable, and safe manner, define standards and interfaces for data exchange among public administration authorities			
At the central public portal, make services accessible to citizens and specially for businesses that would use these services in the largest extent (see also the Business Environment section)			
Improve the operation of all public registers and databases through their complete informatisation and transfer to on-line services (see also the Business Environment section)			
Based on an audit of spending in the area of information and communication technologies and services in public administration, improve the efficiency of the public sector informatisation process, introduce conceptual approaches and monitor specific results of projects, consider possibilities of joint public procurement			
Ensure high-quality ICT equipment in public administration as well as information literacy of the staff			
Introduce safe electronic identification ID's, which are necessary for transactions within e-government			
Broad accessibility of the Internet			
Continue the liberalisation of the telecommunication market particularly through increasing the quality of this market regulation			
Support the building of access to the broadband Internet and its dissemination in less developed areas on the basis of the National Strategy for Broadband Access			
Support the development of publicly accessible Internet access locations			
Open all school multimedia classrooms for the public			
Support programmes based on partnership with the private sphere, whose objective is to provide computers connected to the broadband Internet for the general public			

Measures of the OP Informatisation of Society will indirectly, through impact, fulfil the priorities and tasks in the field of Human Resources, Science, Research and Innovations, and Business Environment through supporting the following priority areas of action plans.

Human resources and education

In the part of human resources and education, the OPIS will create an integration environment for electronic services provided by public administration in the field of education (eLearning⁸¹) and increase their availability through creating broadband access networks and increasing the penetration of broadband connection. It will indirectly support modernisation of education through increasing availability of broadband connection for households, which will be able to use it as a technological platform to use the electronic services in the field of education being developed in the framework of the OP Education. In cross-financing, the OPIS will support education in the field of digital literacy and skills of the users of solutions supported within the OPIS, to an extent, which is necessary for their functioning and effectiveness.

Modern education policy

⁸¹ Addressed in the ESF framework, more detailed information is given in Chapter 7.2.1.2.

- Introduce a general change in the contents of teaching from memorising information towards the ability to acquire, evaluate, and use information
- Strengthen and improve education in the field of foreign languages and information technology skills for each secondary school graduate (*for details see section Information Society*)
- Elimination of barriers to entry of providers to various segments of the education system

Science, research, innovations

Education and support to high-quality scientists

- Significantly increase the interconnection between scientific research and university education, primarily by applying the research university mode, which universities should, in co-operation with other research institutions, become the basis of scientific research in the Slovak Republic

International quality research with adequate links to the business sphere

- Establish efficient co-operation and joint responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy in public instruments and institutions to support applied research and development
- Introduce mechanisms of independent quality assessment for programmes and projects and the obligation of publishing the results of all research projects supported from public funds

Business environment

Public institutions as a partner rather than a burden

- Fully electronise information exchange concerning businesses among individual public institutions; no information in possession by a public institution may be requested directly from the business by another public institution – they must exchange the information among themselves electronically and automatically
- Simplify the requirements of public institutions with respect to businesses at entry to the market, particularly through full informatisation of the entire process and, as the case may be, by introducing the so-called one-stop shops (i.e., with respect to the future business by concentrating the entire registration process in a single location)
- Strengthen the transparency and efficiency of public procurement through gradual transition to fully electronic public procurement

7.2.3 National Sustainable Development Strategy/Sustainable Development Action Plan

The measures of the OP Informatisation of Society will indirectly, through impacts, fulfil the priorities of the National Sustainable Development Strategy primarily in the area of informatisation of the education system. It will directly support the objectives in the priority “Informatisation of Society” as part of the Slovak Republic’s national economic strategy.

Supporting the development of information society in the Slovak Republic

Informatisation in the education system

- Support active use of ICT in the educational process
- Ensure computer literacy of teachers on all school levels on the required level
- Close the gap on the European average in availability of ICT at schools
- Preparation of the Strategy for Informatisation of the Regional Education System in the Slovak Republic

Informatisation of the society as part of the Slovak Republic's national economic strategy

The fundamental objective of the informatisation of society (informatisation of the society as part of the Slovak Republic's national economic strategy until 2013) is to bring a new quality to all areas of political, economic, and social life by creating adequate conditions - an enabling environment - to increase efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness of the population.

When fulfilling the objective of the informatisation of society, it is necessary to respect the focus on the citizen (natural persons and legal entities, government and self-government authorities), to enable adaptation of programmes and projects to changing conditions and needs, to respect the patterns of the free market (supply and demand, competition-stimulated development), programme financing during the period necessary for project implementation, and structured and gradual approach in implementation.

The fundamental pillars of informatisation of the society include: content, which is accessible, based on standards, through a gateway or portal. The systematic building of a central public administration portal with all accessories is the key step of the public administration towards fulfilling the objective of informatisation of the society – Working with New Information and Communication Technologies, which is nowadays one of the so-called strategic skills in advanced countries. Subsequently we envisage that each public administration employee and each secondary school or apprentice school graduate should now have such strategic skill; and an access infrastructure having the ambition of providing low-cost, fast and secure access to information and services in an electronic form through the Internet.

7.2.4 Slovak Spatial Development Perspective

The OP Informatisation of Society will directly support the objectives of SSDP in the chapter Information Society, Information Technologies and Spatial Development of Slovakia.

The necessity for applying additional information society development principles in Slovakia

- Support universal financial services accessible to all so that all can benefit from new possibilities,
- Ensure a connection as fast as possible for each citizen, public or private institution, through a computer, mobile phone, or TV to the Internet,
- Support the creation of information networks and new services in the field of information by the private sector,
- Speed up fast Internet connections and on-line connections for research staff and students,
- Speed up introduction of the so-called smart cards for secure electronic access to services (healthcare services, electronic payments, mobile I-net, public transport, payments for the TV, etc.),
- Ensure better access to public information (simple access to a minimum of 4 basic types of public information: legislation and official information, information from the field of the environment and transport information) in real time,
- Serve cultural enrichment of all citizens through cultural and language diversity of the service content,
- Create electronic libraries and speed up multimedia digitisation of museums' and galleries' collections with a prospect of creating a network of global electronic library to capture all human knowledge accessible to the general public,
- Develop the so-called teleworking, i.e., working through a communication network,
- Improve the understanding of IS's positive impact on general quality of life (better quality of work, improvements in the field of healthcare, free-time education, and spatial development, higher involvement of persons with disabilities in the society),
- Support integration of information databases on the environment and natural resources,
- Increase the awareness and understanding of IS's by people and thus ensure the public support,
- Support the dialogue on global co-operation.

Indirectly, through impacts, the priority axis measures will support the following objectives:

- Co-operate in the formation of a global electronic market for SMEs including open and non-discriminating information exchange and co-operation (Global Marketplace),
- Speed up electronic business,
- Use the possibilities of information society in creation of an employment policy,
- Speed up the corresponding education and training by their introduction into routine school teaching and technical education (ensure the so-called digital literacy in school graduates).

7.2.5 Regional strategic documents

- The OPIS will provide direct support for the attainment of the objectives of economic and social development programmes of self-governing regions and economic and social development programmes of municipalities

7.2.6 JEREMIE

On 11 June 2007, the Ministry of Finance presented the document “Proposal of a Mandate between the Slovak Republic and the EIF on Cooperation in the Implementation of Innovative Financial Instruments in the Slovak Republic in the 2007–2013 Programming Period”. The document gives a mandate to the Minister of Finance to conduct negotiations with the EIF on relevant implementation documents concerning the JEREMIE initiative, and instructs the SR Government Office, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, and the Ministry of Environment to incorporate the text on the JEREMIE initiative into the relevant operational programmes, specifying the intended use of the allocation to be provided under the framework of the aforementioned initiative.

The approval of the document “Proposal of a Mandate between the Slovak Republic and the EIF on Cooperation in the Implementation of Innovative Financial Instruments in the Slovak Republic in the 2007–2013 Programming Period” will be followed by the drafting and approval of relevant implementation documents. This process will involve the above mentioned ministries.

In the context of this operational programme, the Slovak Republic is fully aware of the importance of the Lisbon agenda for creating the conditions for growth. Furthermore, it is of particular importance for Slovakia that the European Commission has recently presented a communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions entitled “Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: Financing SME Growth – Adding European Value”⁸². The communication states that the “partnership for growth and employment depends on Europe’s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which, achieving their potential, are crucial in fostering the entrepreneurship, competition and innovation that leads to sustainable growth and development.”

The Slovak Republic designs its policies and instruments with a view to the creation of the conditions that will enable the SMEs to prosper; independent studies have shown that macroeconomic conditions are truly competitive but, in spite of the developed banking sector, most SMEs suffer from the shortage of necessary development resources. The Slovak Republic must therefore continue to focus on this sector. Among other activities, the Slovak Republic conducts negotiations with the European Investment Fund on the possibility of implementing Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises (JEREMIE), with the EIF acting as the Holding Fund Manager.

Compared with direct assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the implementation of the JEREMIE initiative has the following advantages:

- a forward-looking form to improve the absorption of structural funds of the EU
- improving access of SMEs to funding
- attracting additional private investment and know-how
- revolving character of funds
- reducing administrative burden and public funds requirements through private sector involvement
- no market or competition distortions
- transparent use of funds

The transfer of the JEREMIE Holding Fund management to the EIF has also other advantages for the Slovak Republic:

- introduction of “best practices” through the renowned EU institution specialising in SMEs

⁸² Brussels, 29 June 2006 – EC (2006) 349, final

- possible increase in the amount of structural funds through the participation of well-known financial institutions from the public and private sectors

The future competitiveness depends on an integrated, open and competitive financial market that includes venture capital and credit financial instruments. In the course of 2006, the Slovak Republic started to assess specific market failures in the area of SME financing in close cooperation with the EIF.

In this connection, the EIF conducted a Gap Analysis on a request from the European Commission. The analysis revealed the problems of availability of funding for SMEs, and major gaps between the potential demand and the existing supply of innovative financial instruments on the market that simplify SME financing. These gaps hinder the creation and development of SMEs. The Slovak Republic recognises these deficiencies and appreciates the JEREMIE initiative that can become a catalyst helping to close these gaps by means of appropriate market-oriented instruments and that can attract private creditors and venture capital investors.

The proposed portfolio of financial instruments in the structure of the JEREMIE Holding Fund gives the Slovak government the possibility to create prerequisites for further high economic growth, rapid development and increased competitiveness compared with other European countries in the next few years.

The Gap Analysis identified the following market shortcomings connected with access to funding by SMEs in Slovakia; they justify the need to apply state aid measures in conformity with EU state aid rules:

- shortage of micro loans for sole traders and start-up entrepreneurs;
- low GDP share of domestic loans and credit activities for SMEs;
- low GDP share of factoring compared with the EU-25 average;
- low GDP share of venture fund activities compared with other central European member states;
- low GDP share of R&D, weak transfer of technologies to practice;
- non-existent network of Business Angels.

Because of its flexible structure, JEREMIE makes it possible to develop and adapt its instruments or to introduce new instruments in conformity with market developments in the Slovak Republic in the next few years, so as to best meet the needs of SMEs and thus strengthen the Slovak economy.

According to the National Strategic Reference Framework of the Slovak Republic, improvements in public infrastructure play an important role in the creation of conditions for economic growth, as reflected in this operational programme. The Slovak Republic will therefore explore the possibility of using public-private partnership to finance public infrastructure investment in accordance with the description in this operational programme in a manner that will ensure effectiveness and sustainability of public funding.

In its communication to the spring European Council "Working together for growth and jobs – A new start for the Lisbon strategy"⁸³, the European Commission acknowledged that there was insufficient risk capital for innovative start-up companies. In the communication, the EC observes that the future of European competitiveness depends on a unified, open and competitive financial market, which includes also risk capital (mainly the part of risk capital markets that is generally referred to as risk capital used for business⁸⁶).

Furthermore, it is of particular importance to Slovakia that the European Commission has recently presented a communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: Financing SME Growth – Adding European Value"⁸⁷. The communication states that the "partnership for growth and employment depends on Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which, achieving their potential, are crucial in fostering the entrepreneurship, competition and innovation that leads to sustainable growth and development."

⁸³ Brussels, 2 February 2005 EC (2005) 24, final

⁸⁶ Risk capital markets (risk capital funds and growing securities' markets) are covered by informal investors (Business Angels).

⁸⁷ Brussels, 29 June 2006 – EC (2006) 349 final

In line with the aforesaid documents, part of the OPIS resources will be implemented by means of the joint initiative of the EC, the EIB, the EIF and the EBRD called JEREMIE (Joint European Resources for Micro and Medium Enterprises). The aim of this initiative is to promote access to funding for small and medium-sized enterprises, especially in the area of science and research, and support for the attainment of the Lisbon strategy objectives.

In June 2006, the Slovak Republic signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the European Investment Fund and the Slovak Republic, which declares the interest of both sides to cooperate within the framework of the JEREMIE initiative.

In its Manifesto of August 2006, the Slovak government declared its intention to use, in the 2007–2013 programming period, innovative financial instruments – i.e. financial engineering instruments available under the JEREMIE initiative (in order to achieve a multiplier effect from the use of EU funds and state budget funds).

The Slovak Republic has stated its intention to implement a certain portion of funds from the EU budget in the 2007–2013 programming period through the JEREMIE initiative; this is also confirmed in the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) where the issue of innovative financial instruments (JEREMIE) is addressed in Annex 8.

In this context, the Slovak Government issued Resolution No. 836 of 8 October 2006 whereby it approved the Proposal of Innovative Financial Instruments for the NSRF for the 2007–2013 period (2nd stage). The Proposal presents a set of financial engineering instruments which could be used in the programming period of 2007–2013 (this background document had been drafted before the EIF carried out its analysis of market shortcomings in the area of financing small and medium-sized enterprises in the Slovak Republic – the Gap Analysis). In conformity with point B.2 of the SR Government's Resolution No. 836 of 8 October 2006, the Ministry of Finance prepared in cooperation with other relevant sectors a draft "Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the EIF on the Administration of the JEREMIE Holding Fund in the Slovak Republic", which is currently being negotiated with the EIF. In point B.3 of the Resolution, relevant ministers have been instructed to design appropriate measures in cooperation with the minister of finance aimed at the financing in the form of innovative financial instruments and public-private partnership (PPP), to set out financial allocations for these measures, to define appropriate financial instruments for implementing the allocated amounts, and to incorporate these matters into their operational programmes.

In the above Resolution No. 836 of 8 October 2006, the Slovak government also decided to create the Instrument of Technical Assistance for Public-Private Partnership with the objective of providing assistance in the development of quality PPP projects, to be implemented in conformity with the Policy for Implementing Public-Private Partnership Projects approved by the SR Government's Resolution No. 914 of 23 November 2005.

In the light of the above documents, part of OPIS resources will be implemented using the so-called innovative forms of financing. An indicative allocation of EUR 50 million has been assigned under priority axis 3. This amount reflects the actual requirement for the use of the JEREMIE instrument in the area covered by priority axis 3, i.e. improving access to the broadband Internet. Innovative forms of financing will not be used under priority axes 1 and 2, because relevant aid recipients are exclusively public sector entities.

7.3 Links to other EU financial instruments

7.3.1 Synergy and complementarity with programmes financed from EAFRD and EFF

Measures and activities under the OPIS are complementary to the activities of the National Strategic Plan of Rural Development (NSPRV) financed from the resources of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and activities of the Fisheries operational programme financed from the resources of the European Fisheries Fund as follows:

Complementarity exists under priority 1 of the National Strategic Rural Development Plan (NSRDP) 2007–2013, Improvement of Agricultural and Forest Management Industry's Competitiveness, and priority 3 Improving the Quality of Life in Rural Areas and Supporting Diversification, where the proposed interventions concern the

introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT) for final beneficiaries (HW and SW). After identifying the activities defined under the NSRDP and the OPIS, respectively, no collision or overlapping has been detected. In case of any other activities related to informatisation, both Management Authorities will closely cooperate with the aim of maintaining separate lines of operational programmes.

Complementarity exists within OP priority 2 Fisheries: Aquaculture, Processing and Marketing of Fishery and Aquaculture Products, where the proposed interventions also apply to the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT) for final beneficiaries (HW + SW). Should specialised IS or electronic services be supported from the EFF under the OP Slovak Fisheries 2007–2013, these would be governed by the rules set out in Council Regulation (EC) 1198/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) 498/2007, which lays down the detailed rules for the aforesaid Regulation. After identifying the activities defined under the OP Fisheries and the OPIS, respectively, no collision or overlapping was detected. In case of any other activities related to informatisation, both Management Authorities will closely cooperate with the aim of maintaining separate lines of operational programmes.

7.3.2 Synergy and complementarity with other EC financial instruments

Through interventions in all three priority axes, the OPIS will support the objectives of the following EC instruments.

i2010 Initiative

A strategic document of the European Union passed in May 2005, it supports open and competitive digital economy and underlines information and communication technologies as the drive of integration and improved quality of life. As a key element of an elaborate Lisbon partnership for growth and employment, the i2010 initiative will focus on creating an integrated European policy concept in the field of information society and audiovisual media.

On the basis of a thorough analysis of issues concerning information society and on the basis of extensive consulting with the involved parties concerning previous initiatives and tools, the Commission proposes three priorities for the European policy in the field of information society:

- ▶ Creating single European information space supporting open and competitive internal market in the field of information society and media,
- ▶ Intensifying innovation and investment in the field of information and communication technologies to achieve growth as well as more numerous and better jobs,
- ▶ Building European information society for all citizens, which supports the growth and employment in a manner that is in accordance with sustainable development and whose priorities include better public services and improved quality of life.

Programme for competitiveness and innovation

A sub programme of the ICT policy integrates the existing programmes in support of ICT - eTEN, Contentplus, and Modinis. The budget is approximately € 801.6 million. It will concentrate primarily on 3 fundamental areas:

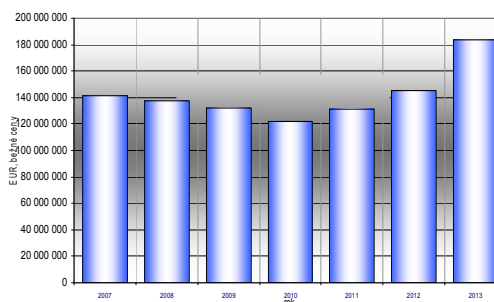
- ▶ Creating single information space
- ▶ Support to innovations and investing in ICT
- ▶ Support to information society

8. FINANCIAL PLAN

8.1 OPIS financial plan – annual commitments by Funds

(in EUR, in current prices)

	ERDF Structural Funds (1)	Cohesion Fund (2)	Total (3)=(1)+(2)
2007	141,243,286	0	141,243,286
2008	137,441,319	0	137,441,319
2009	132,265,485	0	132,265,485
2010	122,021,210	0	122,021,210
2011	131,390,682	0	131,390,682
2012	144,968,236	0	144,968,236
2013	183,765,187	0	183,765,187
Total	993,095,405	0	993,095,405



8.2 The OPIS Financial Plan by priority axes and sources of financing, indicative plan of regional allocations

(in EUR, in current prices)

	Community financing	Funds from the member state's budget	Indicative allocations of funds from the member state's budget		Total financing (e) = (a) + (b)	Share of co-financing (f) = (a) / (e)	For information	
	(a)	(b) = (c) + (d)	Financing from domestic public resources (c)	Financing from private resources (d)			EIB contributions	Other financing
Priority axis 1 ERDF (public eligible)	702,268,409	123,929,719	123,929,719		826,198,128	85%		53,152,701
Priority axis 2 ERDF (public eligible)	163,541,958	28,860,346	28,860,346		192,402,304	85%		
Priority axis 3 ERDF (public eligible)	96,201,152	16,976,674	16,976,674		113,177,826	85%		
Priority axis 4 ERDF (public eligible)	31,083,886	5,485,392	5,485,392		36,569,278	85%		
Total	993,095,405	175,252,131	175,252,131		1,168,347,536	85%		53,152,701

(in EUR, in current prices), Priority Axis 1 and its Measures 1.1 and 1.2

	Community financing	Funds from the member state's budget	Indicative allocations of funds from the member state's budget	Total financing (e) = (a) + (b)	Share of co-financing (f) = (a) / (e)	For information
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	(a)	(b) = (c) + (d)	Financing from domestic public resources (c)	Financing from private resources (d)			EIB contributions	Other financing
Measure 1.1. ERDF	351,134,204	61,946,859	61,946,859		413,099,063	85%		53,152,701
	Total		Western Slovakia		Central Slovakia		Eastern Slovakia	
Measure 1.1	351 134,204		136,820,651		99,281,041		115 032,513	
Measure 1.2	351 134,204		109,519,943		102,850,460		138 763,801	
Priority axis 1	702 268,409		246,340,594		202,131,501		253 796,314	
Priority axis 2	163 541,958		48,393,427		54,606,098		60 542,433	
Priority axis 3	96 201,152		27,959,779		28,568,544		39 627,829	
OPIS – not incl. TA	962 011,519		322,693,800		285,306,143		354 011,576	
Priority axis 4	31,083,886							
OPIS – total	993,095,405							
Measure 1.2. ERDF	351,134,205	61,964,860	61,964,860		413,099,065	85%		
Total	702,268,409	123,911,719	123,911,719		826,198,128	85%		53,152,701

(in EUR, in current prices)

Note: Regional allocations were calculated using the following formula:

- Measure 1.1: calculation on the basis of the number of inhabitants in NUTS 2 regions
- Measure 1.2: calculation on the basis of the number of inhabitants and the number of settlements in NUTS 2 regions
- Priority axis 2: calculation on the basis of the number of inhabitants and the number of settlements in the regions and also according to the preliminary estimate of the place of implementation of the largest projects
- Priority axis 3: calculation on the basis of the number of inhabitants and the number of settlements in NUTS 2 regions, taking account of unemployment in the regions

8.3 Division of grants from fund(s) into categories of assistance from the SF 2007 – 2013 on the level of the OP

Article 36(1)(d) of the General Regulation requires that the OP include an indicative breakdown of the planned use of the grant from fund(s) into categories under the first three categorisation dimensions of assistance from 2007–2013 SF in accordance with Article 11 of the Implementing Regulation.

In accordance with Article 8(2bis) of the General Regulation, it is required that assistance from funds be focused on EU priorities in the field of competitiveness and job creation (Lisbon Strategy), which, in the framework of the Convergence objective should receive 60% of Fund grants, and, within the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective, 75% of Fund grants.

In accordance with the above Regulation, this obligation applies only to the “old” member states of the EU; however, the Commissioner for Regional Policy, D. Hubner, calls also on the new member countries to define, in the OP, as to in what an extent the individual programmes will participate in the implementation of the Lisbon Objectives.

A list of categories contributing to the Lisbon Objectives and their codes is given in Annex 4 to the GR.

Table 5 Informative division of grants from fund(s) by the “Priority Topic” dimension

Code	Topic	Priority axis (in EUR, in current prices)				Total
		1	2	3	4	
10 ^b	Telephone infrastructures (including broadband networks)	0	0	75,734,945	0	75,734,945
11 [*]	Information and communication technologies (access, security, interoperability, preventing risks, research, innovation, e-content, etc.)	134,094,586	163,541,958	20,466,207	0	318,102,751

12*	Information and communication technologies (TEN-ICT)	0	0		0	0
13*	Services and applications for the citizen (state administration, electronic healthcare, learning, inclusion, etc.)	568,173,823	0	0	0	568,173,823
14*	Services and applications for SMEs (electronic business, education and technical training, network interconnection, etc.)	0	0	0	0	0
15*	Other measures to improve SMEs access to ICT and their efficient use	0	0	0	0	0
85	<i>Preparation, implementation, monitoring, and inspection</i>	0	0	0	15,541,943	15,541,943
86	<i>Evaluation and studies; information and communication</i>	0	0	0	15,541,943	15,541,943
Total		702,268,409	163,541,958	96,201,152	31,083,886	993,095,405

Key:

* categories contributing to the attainment of the Lisbon objectives under the Convergence objective and the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective (according to Annex 4 of the General Regulation)

■ categories contributing to the attainment of the Lisbon objectives under the Convergence objective (according to Annex 4 of the General Regulation)

Table 6 Informative division of grants from fund(s) by the “Priority Topic” dimension

Code	Form of financing	Priority axis (in EUR, in current prices)				Total
		1	2	3	4	
01	Non-repayable subsidy	702,268,409	163,541,958	46,201,152	31,083,886	943,095,405
02	Aid (loan, interest subsidy, guarantees)			15,000,000		15,000,000
03	Venture capital (participation, venture capital fund)			35,000,000		35,000,000
04	Other forms of financing					0
Total		702,268,409	163,541,958	96,201,152	31,083,886	993,095,405

Table 7 Informative division of grants from fund(s) by the “Priority Topic” dimension

Code	Territory type	Priority axis (in EUR, in current prices)
		1-3
01	Urban	692,344,738
02	Mountains	0
03	Islands	0
04	Sparsely and very sparsely populated areas	0
05	Rural areas (other than mountains, islands or sparsely and very sparsely populated areas)	269,666,781
06	Former EU external borders (after 30 April 2004)	0
07	Outermost regions	0
08	Cross-border co-operation area	0
09	Transnational co-operation area	0
10	Inter-regional co-operation area	0
00	Not applicable	31 083,886
Total		993,095,405

Informative division of grants from fund(s) by NUTS II regions

9. IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM

Chapter 9 describes the OP IS implementation system in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 (hereinafter the "General Regulation") and in accordance with the SF and CF Management System for the Programming Period of 2007 – 2013.

In general, the main purpose of the management system is to ensure the transformation of OPIS allocations to the added value through projects implemented under the OPIS in an efficient, effective and transparent manner. The activities that must be performed for this transformation to take place are called processes.

Based on the SF and CF management system concept, OPIS management processes are subdivided into three top process groups: programming process, implementation process, and monitoring and evaluation process. These consist of several layers of subprocesses. Their outputs are events (such as OP approval, call for proposals, ...) and various types of documents.

Responsibility for the creation and development of a sound management system lies with the MA and IBMA. These ensure, inter alia, communication and implementation of the processes that directly involve the European

Commission⁸⁴. The OP management system involves the monitoring committees, the Central Co-ordinating Body, the Audit Body and the Paying Unit. In the context of broader relationships, the OP management systems also include partnership institutions.

The following sections give a general description of crucial functional processes and responsibilities of institutions participating in the management of the programme.

9.1 Authorities involved in management and implementation of the programme

9.1.1 Central Co-ordinating Authority

On the basis of Government Resolution No. 832 of 8 October 2006, the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic as the Central Co-ordinating Authority for operational programmes in the National Strategic Reference Framework of the Slovak Republic for 2007 – 2013 (hereinafter the “CCA”) provides the strategic level of the NSRF management. In this respect, the CCA fulfils the following functions in the field of SF and CF assistance management:

- On the level of the NSRF, ensures programming, monitoring, evaluation, publicity, information, and training of administrative capacities in these areas;
- Ensures co-ordination of operational programme management and implementation in accordance with the SF and CF management system;
- Methodological guidance of entities involved in management and implementation of operational programmes;
- Responsibility for the ITMS development, operation, and maintenance;
- Fulfils the function of MA for the OP Technical Assistance.

9.1.2 Managing Authority

The operational programme Managing Authority (hereinafter the “MA”) represents the strategic level of the OPIS management. The Managing Authority is an authority appointed by a member state on the basis of Article 59(1) of the General Regulation, which is responsible for management and conduct of the programme in accordance with EU and Slovak Republic's regulations. In operational programme management, the MA proceeds in accordance with CCA methodological instructions and with those of the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority in the relevant areas.

On the basis of Government Resolution No. 832 of 8 October 2006, the Managing Authority for the OPIS is the Slovak Republic Government Office.

In accordance with Article 60 of the General Regulation, the MA is responsible for the management and implementation of the respective OP, particularly for:

- Preparation of the operational programme and programme manual;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme;
- Leading the Monitoring Committee and preparation of the annual and final report on the implementation, their presentation to the Monitoring Committee and to the European Commission;
- Publicity on assistance from the EU and information of the public on the EU funds in accordance with Article 69 of the General Regulation;
- Granting full power delegating tasks to the Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority and performance of control over the delegated tasks;
- Inspection under Article 59 of (EC) Regulation No. 1083/2006.

In accordance with Article 71 of the General Regulation, the internal structure and division (delegating) of MA responsibility for the OP IS will be described in the management and control system description, which the Member State shall submit to the EC before submitting the first interim payment request or not later than 12 months after approval of the OP.

⁸⁴ For instance in the area of programming until the approval of OPs, assessment of large projects (of more than MEUR 50), in the process of monitoring and evaluation until regular monitoring and audit of the management system, final evaluation, etc.

9.1.3 Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority

The function of the Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority for the OPIS is performed by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. In addition, the Ministry of Finance has the function of the certifying authority, paying unit and audit authority. Based on Regulation 1083/2006, accumulation of these functions within a single authority is permissible providing that these are clearly separated. The IBMA, CA, PA and AA are clearly functionally separated in the organisational structure of the MF SR. Each of them forms a separate section.

Specific tasks of the IB are detailed in the full power on delegating powers between the MA and IB. IB/MA is responsible particularly for:

- Ensuring procedures in the OPIS programming and implementation processes
- Creating strategic and governing documents for OPIS implementation, including financial plan and criteria for project selection
- Preparation of OPIS state aid schemes
- Creating an appropriate OPIS implementation system
- Guidance to the beneficiaries
- Receiving, evaluation, and approval of financial grant applications
- Making financial grant provision contracts with beneficiaries
- Verifying beneficiaries' expenditures in accordance with the respective EC and Slovak Republic's legislation
- Receiving and approving beneficiaries' payment requests
- Drafting an internal IBMA manual
- Proposing reallocation of funds among priority axes or measures within a priority axis
- Co-financing of the OPIS from the state budget

9.1.5 Monitoring committees

9.1.5.1 Monitoring Committee on Knowledge Economy

In accordance with Article 63 of the General Regulation, a Monitoring Committee (hereinafter "MC") must be appointed for each operational programme within three months following its approval by the European Commission. The objective of the Monitoring Committee is to oversee the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of programme implementation.

A Monitoring Committee on Knowledge Economy will be created to ensure effective co-ordination of contributions from funds for the knowledge economy area – a joint monitoring committee for three operational programmes implementing the strategic priority of the NSRF, the Knowledge Economy (OP Research and Development, OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth, and OP Information Society). The Monitoring Committee will be chaired by Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic for Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities

Members of the Monitoring Committee include the representatives of central state administration authorities (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, Ministry of Culture), National Audit Authority of the Slovak Republic, Telecommunications Office of the Slovak Republic and, in harmony with the partnership principles, the representatives of regional and local self-governing bodies, and of the business community and the non-profit sector. Advisory members of the MC may include representatives of the European Commission. Members of the monitoring committee are appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities. The competence, activities, composition, and structure of the monitoring committee are defined by the statute and rules of procedure, which are approved by the monitoring committee.

The main tasks of the Monitoring Committee, in accordance with Article 65 of the General Regulation, include:

- Approving project selection criteria (within six months of OP approval) and their revisions, if any;
- Assessing and approving proposed changes and additions to the operational programme contents;

- Regularly examining the programme implementation results, particularly the achievement of operational programme objectives and evaluations mentioned in Article 48(3) of the General Regulation;
- Assessing and approving annual and final reports on the implementation before they are sent to the European Commission;
- Receiving information on the annual inspection report or on such part of the report, which relates to the OP, and on all important comments, which the Commission may raise after its examination;
- At any time, it may propose any revision or examination of the OP to the Managing Authority, which could enable achievement of the respective Fund's objectives or improve the OP management including financial management.

9.1.5.3 National Monitoring Committee for the NSRF

The National Monitoring Committee for the NSRF (hereinafter the “NMC”) is chaired by the Minister of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic as the CCA representative for the NSRF. The function of the secretariat is held by the CCA. The statute and rules of procedure are to be approved by the NMC at its first session.

The National Monitoring Committee meets for sessions at least twice a year. The members of the NMC include representatives of central government authorities, municipalities and self-governing regions and other social and economic partners. The observers include the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic. The European Commission is in an advisory capacity.

The main activities of the National Monitoring Committee include, in particular:

- Monitoring NSRF implementation;
- Approving changes in the NSRF falling within its competence;
- Preparing a summary annual (or final) report for the NSRF;
- Approving strategic reports before they are sent to the European Commission;
- Formulating recommendations for the activity of the OP monitoring committees with the objective of achieving an efficient system of cohesion policy implementation monitoring in the Slovak Republic;
- Approving the redistribution of funds among operational programmes
- Fulfilling the function of a Monitoring Committee for the OP Technical Assistance

9.2 The programming process

The objective of this process is to create/adapt and publish strategic and management documents of the OPIS: The guarantor of the process is the MA OPIS. Responsibility for selected process areas has been assigned to the IBMA (Ministry of Finance, OPIS Management Department) based on the authorisation agreement.

Programming processes include all the activities that are related to the drawing up of strategic and management documents for the OPIS, i.e. the documents underpinning the implementation of SF transactions. Strategic documents in the OPIS context include, in particular, the operational programme and the programme manual that define mainly the subject and the location of projects. Management documents are, in particular, the internal manual, calls for proposals, manual for applicants, containing all the documents necessary for the applicant (forms, grant agreement, detailed specifications of the project, ...). Management documents define mainly who and how should manage the projects and the programme.

9.2.1 CCA's tasks in the field of monitoring:

- Drawing up the NSRF
- Providing methodology guidance and co-ordination for MAs, IBMAs in the elaboration of strategic and management documents

9.2.2 MA's tasks in the field of programming:

- Drawing up or revising strategic documents:
 - OPIS and its submission for approval to the EC
 - OPIS programme manual
- Drawing up or revising management documents:
 - Concluding the authorisation agreement
 - Preparing the internal manual for MAs
 - Drafting or revising the communication plan

9.2.2 IBMA's tasks in the field of programming:

Based on the authorisation agreement, the IBMA is responsible mainly for the following activities:

- Preparing strategic documents: operational programme, programme manual
- Drawing up or revising management documents:
- Preparing the internal manual for IBMAs
- Preparing the manual for applicants
- Drafting or revising the communication plan for programme calls
- Developing state aid schemes

In a broader context, which does not fall directly under OPIS management processes, the IBMA – which also acts as the CSAA in the area of informatisation – is responsible for preparing other strategic and management documents that are closely related to the OPIS in the area of electronisation of public administration provided for in the PAIS Act. They are, in particular:

- the national concept of PA informatisation, the concept of informatisation of responsible PA entities defined in the national concept and approved by the Ministry of Finance
- standards and methodology instructions for PAIS

9.3 The process of monitoring and evaluation

The objective of this process is to record and store all the data in the scope and quality required for sound management of the project or any group of projects. The monitoring and evaluation of the OPIS is a process area which is closely linked to other process areas of OPIS implementation. The guarantor for this process area is the MA which closely cooperates with IBMA mainly in the area of the collection and gathering of data necessary for OPIS monitoring and evaluation. The objective of the monitoring and the evaluation is to obtain, using the indicators defined at relevant levels of the programme, all the necessary data on the project(s) for the assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of projects and quality of the management system.

The monitoring process is based on a structured model of management on the NSRF level, OP level, and project level. The monitoring and evaluation are carried out by all the entities taking part in SF and CF management within the scope of their assigned tasks and responsibilities, and the entities drawing on the funds.

As provided for in the SF and CF management system, the evaluation is a process which systematically examines the effectiveness and efficiency of the OPIS and its compliance with the objectives set out in the OP and in the NSRF, and which analyses the efficiency of implementation processes and appropriateness of the design of individual programmes and measures, and prepares recommendations for improving their effectiveness. In accordance with Article 47 of the General Regulation, evaluations may be of a strategic nature (examining the development of a programme or a group of programmes with respect to Community priorities and national priorities) or of an operative nature (with the objective of providing support to the conduct of the operational programme). The evaluation is carried out before the beginning of the programming period (preliminary evaluation), in its course (interim evaluation), and after the conclusion of the programming period (final evaluation). Evaluations are performed under the responsibility of the Member State (CCA, MA) or of the Commission, in accordance with the principle of proportionality. The results are published pursuant to applicable regulations on information access.

The MA will draw up an evaluation plan aimed at improving OPIS management in the various phases of implementation, and at increasing the evaluation capacity. The evaluation plan will contain specific management structures responsible for the evaluation, indicative timetable of evaluation activities, planned financial resources, and mechanisms for the possible revision of evaluation plans. From the formal point of view, it will comprise

evaluations of both strategic and operational character. In conformity with the general regulation, it will comprise preliminary evaluation, interim evaluation, and evaluation after the conclusion of the implementation period. The evaluation plan shall be drawn up for the entire programming period and updated on a yearly basis, and shall be developed in more detail for the nearest calendar year.

An important source of data for evaluation is the monitoring system that will meet the requirements of effective operation and transparency. The monitoring will also be assessed with emphasis on reviewing the quality of the monitoring system and functioning of the procedures, including the fulfilment of indicators, aggregation of their values, their reliability, etc.

An important part of the evaluation plan will be the building of the evaluation capacity. This will involve mainly the building of the internal evaluation capacity within the MA and the IBMA. The areas to be developed include, e.g., the methodology basis for evaluation, organisation of seminars, workshops, conference, training of workers for the development of internal evaluation capacity, etc. Cooperation with EU countries and the DG Regio evaluation unit is also envisaged.

9.3.1 CCA's tasks in the field of monitoring and evaluation:

- Responsibility for the preparation of a national system of indicators for the NSRF in co-operation with individual Managing Authorities and its updates, if any;
- Co-ordination and methodological guidance of Managing Authorities in the field of monitoring;
- Monitoring on the level of the NSRF.
- Ensuring preliminary evaluation of the main strategic document for the programming period up to 2013;
- Ensuring, on a running basis, thematic evaluation at the central level;
- Co-ordination and methodological guidance of Managing Authorities in the field of monitoring;

9.3.2 OPIS MA's tasks in the field of monitoring and evaluation

- Proceeding in accordance with CCA methodology in the field of monitoring;;
- If necessary, presenting proposals for changes or additions to the national system of indicators to the CCA;
- Responsibility for data collection and analysis on the level of the programme and on that of the horizontal priority Informatisation of Society in the field of monitoring through a system of indicators as well as in the field of monitoring on the assistance category level;
- Responsibility for the preparation of annual and final reports on the performance of the OP, which it submits for approval to the MC for the given OP and, subsequently, to the European Commission.
- Proceeding in accordance with CCA methodology in the field of monitoring;
- Ensuring preliminary and interim evaluation of the OP and of the horizontal priority Informatisation of Society and submitting results of the interim evaluation to the OPIS Monitoring Committee and to the Commission;
- Ensuring communication with the EC and inputs for the subsequent OP evaluation and a strategic evaluation, if any, conducted by the EC.
- Preparing an evaluation plan for the relevant operational programme, which will include preliminary evaluation activities planned in individual phases of OP implementation
- Providing background documents/data for carrying out evaluations pursuant to Article 48 of Regulation No. 1083/2006;
- Ensuring collection and gathering of necessary data pursuant to Article 48 of Regulation No. 1083/2006 and using various types of information obtained from the monitoring system

9.3.3 IB/MA's tasks in the field of monitoring and evaluation:

- Responsibility for the collection of data and their analysis at the project and project group level in the framework of the programme in the area of monitoring, using the system of indicators, and in the area of monitoring at the aid category level;

- Cooperation in the drafting of annual, thematic and final evaluation reports on the implementation of the OP and its priority axis, which is submitted for approval to the Managing Authority.
- Provision of background documents for preliminary, interim, follow-up and thematic evaluation at the priority axis level

9.5 IT monitoring system for the SF and the CF

The IT monitoring system for the SF and CF (hereinafter "ITMS") is a central information system serving the registration, processing, export, and monitoring of data on programming, project and financial management, inspection and audit of the SF and CF. It comprises two subsystems, working in parallel, for the programming periods of 2004 – 2006 and 2007 – 2013. The subsystems for the two programming periods closely co-operate, use a common database, and a common registry of objects therein.

The ITMS is used by all operational programmes in the same extent. The common monitoring system is designed to ensure a uniform and compatible system of monitoring, control, and financial management of programmes financed from the SF and CF.

The system is divided into three main parts:

1. The non-public part of the ITMS ensuring programming, project, and financial management, inspection and audit with links to the FAIS accounting system and, through it, with the state treasury and budget information system;
2. The output part ensuring the generation of static and dynamic data exports;
3. The public part ensuring communication with the beneficiaries, with the European Commission's information system "SFC 2007", and with the monitoring systems of neighbouring countries for cross-border co-operation programmes.

Authorised users of the public part of the ITMS may include, on the basis of an application, all entities eligible to submit an application for a grant from the funds. The communication of the applicants/beneficiaries with the public part of the ITMS is provided using the SSL protocol. The CCA shall prepare a manual for beneficiaries for the use of the ITMS public part. The applicants/beneficiaries of grants from funds will be provided, through the public part of the ITMS, with the following options:

- Electronic filing and receipt of applications for grants from funds;
- Obtaining clearly arranged information on the status of processes in their projects, including applications for payments/expenditure refunds;
- Other options (updating data on the beneficiary, electronic receipt of applications for payment, electronic receipt of monitoring sheets).

The ITMS and the communication processes of project-level fund grant applicants are as follows:

- Creating an account, signing a use agreement between the MA and the fund grant beneficiary, activating an account;
- Entering data into electronic forms and their transfer to the public part of the ITMS, sending a verified paper version of the form by the beneficiary to the administrator and user of the non-public part of the ITMS;
- Verifying the conformity of the electronic and paper versions of the form by the user of the non-public part of the ITMS;
- Further processing of applications after checking and correcting discrepancies of the electronic and paper forms.

9.5.1 CCA's tasks with respect to the ITMS:

- Responsibility for the system development, operation, and maintenance, ensuring the operation of all parts of the ITMS;
- Managing a commission, in which each Managing Authority has a representative and which proposes the direction of development, communicating MA's requirements to the CCA, managing

and providing guidance to system users according to instructions and direction by the CCA, responsibility for system initialisation data;

- Developing guidelines for ITMS use;
- Maintaining initialisation data on the level of the NSRF in the current state.

9.5.2 MA's tasks for the IS with respect to the ITMS:

- Maintaining initialisation data of its programme in the current state;
- Responsibility for entering data on the programme, projects, and subordinate structures according to CCA's guidelines on the ITMS use;
- Responsibility for user role assignment in accordance with internal manuals;
- Providing first-level support to users of the public and non-public parts of the ITMS.

9.5.3 IB/MA's tasks with respect to the ITMS:

- Maintaining initialisation data of its programme in the current state;
- Responsibility for entering data on the programme, projects, and subordinate structures according to CCA's guidelines on the ITMS use;
- Responsibility for user role assignment in accordance with internal manuals;
- Providing first-level support to users of the public and non-public parts of the ITMS.

9.6 Electronic data interchange with the EC

Under Implementing Regulation, Title 7, electronic communication of Member States with the European Commission database SFC 2007 is mandatory.

The following forms of electronic communication are supported:

- SFC 2007 web interface;
- Integration of Member States' monitoring systems with SFC 2007.

The Slovak Republic opted for the second approach: ITMS II integration with the SFC 2007 system. ITMS II will provide data collection and communication with SFC 2007. The SFC 2007 web interface can be used by individual MA's, but the use of the ITMS II interface will ensure data integrity in both systems and saves data entry time. In the event of non-functioning of the ITMS or of the interface, after an approval by the CCA, the web interface can be used to enter data to the SFC 2007, however, the data enterer will be responsible for data reconciliation in both systems.

ITMS II and SFC 2007 interfaces:

- Import of the breakdown of the amount allocated from the SF and CF for the Slovak Republic per objectives in fixed prices of 2004 and in current prices;
- NSRF export;
- OP and priority axes export;
- Major project export;
- OP TA export;
- Import of EC decisions on the OP;
- Breakdown of EU funds categorisation;
- Export of estimated expected expenditures;
- Payment requests to the EC;
- Declaration on partial closure of the programme;
- Management and control system description export;
- Annual report export;
- Final report export;
- Final payment export;
- Reconciliation pursuant to the n+2 (n+3) rule;
- Non-structured data export: NSRF;
- Non-structured data import: EC decisions on the NSRF, OP.

ITMS II and SFC 2007 communication on the system level is secured using a guaranteed electronic signature to be issued for the ITMS II.

User and client system identification within the SFC 2007 is the responsibility of the so-called MS Liaison in each state. The role of the MS Liaison for the ERDF, ESF and CF in the Slovak Republic is held by a responsible employee of the CCA. All requests for access to the SFC 2007 web interface and for access right modifications are to be sent to the CCA. After formal and content check of the request, the MS Liaison communicates with the European Commission in creating and activating the user account. Access passwords from the European Commission are sent in two parts; one is received directly by the user, the other part is received by the MS Liaison.

9.7 Information and publicity

The objective of information and publicity is a transparent, early, complete and correct provision of information to EU citizens and beneficiaries with the aim of identifying and implementing effective and efficient projects in a transparent manner. Pursuant to Regulation 1083/2006, the purpose of information and publicity is mainly to enhance public awareness concerning the EU and information about the opportunities and advantages of using assistance from EU structural funds. Information and publicity do not mean a one-way communication between the MA, the IBMA and the public. Information and publicity also pursue the objective of identifying and helping to implement the projects or project groups that are the most effective and efficient for reaching the objectives of the OPIS. The background document for ensuring public information in the framework of OPIS implementation is the OPIS Communication Plan. For the purposes of ensuring information and publicity, the Managing Authority shall prepare a communication action plan for the respective operational programme and, within four months of the OP approval, submit the same to the EC. The communication plan (CP) is based on the communication plan for structural funds and the Cohesion Fund drawn up by the Central Co-ordinating Authority. The CCA is responsible for the co-ordination and methodology in the area of information and publicity. In CP implementation, the MA and the IBMA shall ensure the performance of all information and publicity measures in accordance with Articles 5 to 7 of the Implementing Regulation. It consists of two documents: the programme communication plan under the responsibility of the MA and the call for proposal communication plan under the responsibility of the IBMA.

9.7.1 CCA's tasks in the field of information and publicity:

- Preparation and implementation of the Central Communication Action Plan for the SR and CF (hereinafter "CCAP") including cross-cutting activities for all operational programmes;
- Co-ordination and methodological guidance of Managing Authorities in the field of information and publicity;
- Being a contact authority for the European Commission and for the Community communication networks and informing the Managing Authorities;

9.7.2 OPIS MA's tasks in the field of information and publicity:

- Preparation of a Communication Plan for the OP;
- Proceeding in accordance with the CCA methodology in preparation of the Communication Plan and other activities of information and publicity;
- Presenting the Communication Plan to the European Commission within 4 months after OP approval;
- Including the area of publicity and information in annual and final reports on performance of the OP;
- Informing the OP Monitoring Committee on the progress in Communication Plan implementation, on activities carried out and planned;
- Ensuring information and publicity at the operational programme level;
- Organising conferences, seminars, working meetings.

9.7.3 IBMA's tasks in the field of information and publicity:

- Drawing up a partial communication plan for OPIS calls in the 2007–2013 programming period for the IBMA, including indicative financial allocations,
- Proceeding in accordance with the CCA's methodology in drawing up the communication plan for calls and other information and publicity activities,
- Preparing and submitting for MA's approval the timetable of calls for the submission of applications for non-returnable financial contributions,

- Preparing and submitting for MA's approval the text of calls for the submission of applications for non-returnable financial contributions prior to their publication,
- Informing the MA about the progress in communication plan implementation, about the planned and performed activities;
- Ensuring compliance with the provisions of Articles 5 – 7 of (EC) Commission Regulation 1828/2006 by beneficiaries (obligation to inform the public about assistance provided from SF and EC funds), providing for these details in the contract with the beneficiaries;
- Ensuring information and publicity at all levels involved in the implementation;
- Organising conferences, seminars, working meetings at the regional and local level for prospective/final beneficiaries
- Drawing up and providing background documents to the MA for final and annual reports on the implementation of OPIS measures. Ensuring compliance with the provisions of Article 8 of the Implementing Regulation by the beneficiaries (the obligation of informing the public on assistance provided from funds), providing for these details in the contracts with beneficiaries.

9.8 Financial management and control

The Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund Financial Management System includes a complex of interlinked and interconnected subsystems and activities ensuring efficient financial planning, budgeting, accounting, reporting, payments to beneficiaries, cash flow monitoring and financial control and audit in implementation of assistance from the EC.

The operational programme financial management system involves the following entities:

- Managing Authority,
- Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority,
- Certifying Authority,
- Paying Unit,
- Audit Authority.

The functions of the Managing Authority are specified in section 9.1.2. The functions of the Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority are specified in section 9.1.3.

The functions of the Certifying Authority shall be performed by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. The Certifying Authority provides primarily the following:

- Co-ordination and methodological guidance concerning structural funds and Cohesion Fund financial management, including co-ordination of paying units' activities;
- Drafting and sending interim payment and final payment requests to the European Commission;
- Preliminary financial examination of the aggregate payment request by paying units;
- Certification verification on all levels of financial management, including the beneficiary, with the objective of ascertaining the procedures of the Managing Authority, Intermediate Body under the Managing Authority, and paying units;
- Certification of expenditure report to the EC;
- Receipt of EU funds in special extra-budgetary accounts of the MF SR;
- Transfer of EU funds to the beneficiary through a paying unit;
- Compilation and presentation of an estimate of envisaged expenditures for the respective and subsequent year to the European Commission on the basis of background documents from Managing Authorities every year by the end of April;
- Maintaining a book of debtors;
- By the 31 March, compiling and presenting a report of amounts as at 31 December of the preceding year, which amounts are to be returned, structured by years of starting the operation;
- Financial adjustments of EU funds as required by the European Commission;
- Return of funds used without eligibility or not used to the European Commission, including late charges;

- Introduction of a uniform accounting system for the Certifying Authority and paying units (Fund Accounting Information System – FAIS);
- Bookkeeping, reporting, and document keeping.

The functions of the Paying Unit shall be performed by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. The Paying Unit provides primarily the following:

- Transfer of EU and state budget funds for co-financing to the beneficiaries;
- Filling in and submitting aggregate payment requests and partial expenditure reports to the Certifying Authority;
- Bookkeeping, reporting, and document keeping.
- Maintaining a partial book of debtors.

The functions of the Audit Authority shall be performed by the MF SR. The main tasks of the Audit Authority include:

- Preparation of report on the report setting out the results of an assessment of the systems set up, in accordance with Article 71 (2) of Regulation 1083/2006;
 - Ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme;
 - Ensuring that audits are carried out on operations on the basis of an appropriate sample to verify the expenditures reported;
 - Presenting to the Commission within nine months of the approval of the operational programme an audit strategy covering the bodies which will perform the audits referred to under points (a) and (b), the method to be used, the sampling method for audits on operations and the indicative planning of audits to ensure that the main bodies are audited and that audits are spread evenly throughout the programming period. Where a common system applies to several operational programmes, a single audit strategy may be submitted.
- e) By 31 December each year from 2008 to 2015, it is responsible for:
- Submitting to the Commission an annual control report setting out the findings of the audits carried out during the previous 12 month-period ending on 30 June of the year concerned in accordance with the audit strategy of the operational programme and reporting any shortcomings found in the systems for the management and control of the programme. The first report to be submitted by 31 December 2008 shall cover the period from 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008. The information concerning the audits carried out after 1 July 2015 shall be included in the final control report supporting the closure declaration referred to in point (e);
 - Issuing an opinion, on the basis of the controls and audits that have been carried out under its responsibility, as to whether the management and control system functions effectively, so as to provide a reasonable assurance that statements of expenditure presented to the Commission are correct and as a consequence reasonable assurance that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;
 - iii) Submitting, where applicable under Article 88 of the General Regulation, a declaration for partial closure assessing the legality and regularity of the expenditure concerned. When a common system applies to several operational programmes, the information referred to in point (i) may be grouped in a single report, and the opinion and declaration issued under points (ii) and (iii) may cover all the operational programmes concerned;
- f) Submitting to the Commission at the latest by 31 March 2017 a closure declaration assessing the validity of the application for payment of the final balance and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions covered by the final statement of expenditure, which shall be supported by a final control report.

At the Ministry of Finance, these functions are performed by units that are not interconnected organisationally. The function of a certifying authority is performed by the European and International Affairs Section of the MF SR,

which is organisationally subordinated to the 1st State Secretary. The function of the audit authority is performed by the International Financial Resources Audit and Control Section of the MF SR, whose general director is directly responsible to the Minister of Finance.

Being the Audit Authority, the Ministry of Finance will sign agreements with individual ministries specifying the subject of the audits to be carried out by the independent units at ministries and financial control administrations at the latest by the end of August 2007. These units will follow the Audit Procedures for Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and the European Fisheries Fund for the 2007-2013 Programming Period, which will be elaborated by the International Financial Resources Audit and Control Section by 31.07.2007. The MF SR will oversee the activities of these authorities; detailed oversight procedures will form part of the Audit Procedures for Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and the European Fisheries Fund for the 2007–2013 Programming Period.

9.8.1 Cash flow system

The payments of EU funds are to be transferred from the European Commission to a special account of the Certifying Authority of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic with the State Treasury within the commitment adopted by the European Commission. The payments of EU funds to the beneficiaries shall be made through the state budget.

EU funds and state budget funds for co-financing shall be paid to the beneficiaries through the Paying Unit simultaneously on the basis of a Non-repayable Grant Contract in the ratio defined for the project.

The payments of EU and state budget funds for co-financing to beneficiaries will be made by the Paying Unit. In the case that the reimbursement system is used, the amounts will be approved by the Certifying Authority based on an aggregate disbursement request. In the case that the system of advance payments, or prepayment, is used, the amount of payments made by the Paying Unit will be as approved in the advance payment or prepayment applications, without prior approval of the Certifying Authority.

A detailed description of financial management is given in the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund Financial Management System for the Programming Period 2007–2013 approved by Slovak Republic Government Resolution No. 835/2006 of 8 October 2006 and published on www.finance.gov.sk.

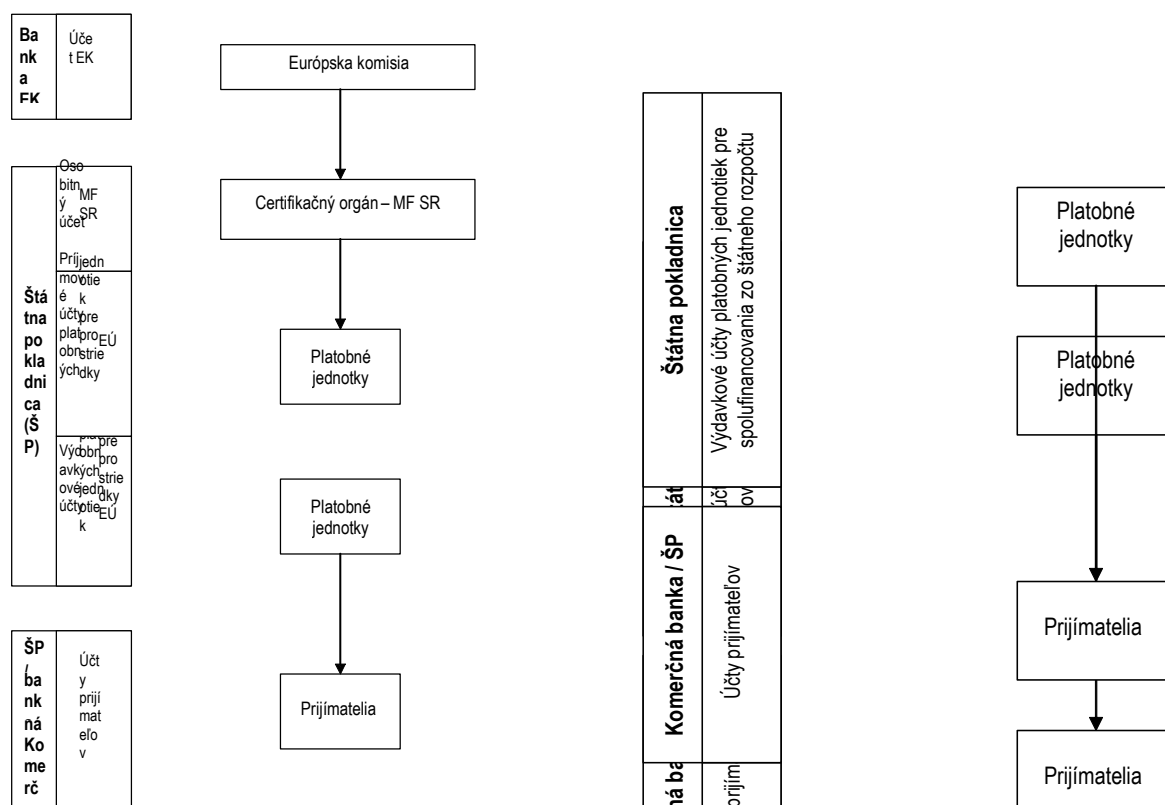


Figure 5 Scheme of financial flows of funds from structural funds and the Cohesion Fund

Figure 4 Scheme of financial flows of national co-financing from the state budget

to Fig. 6

EC Bank
EC Account

State Treasury (ST)
Paying Unit accounts for disbursements of EU funds
Paying Unit accounts for receipt of EU funds
Special account of the Ministry of Finance

Commercial bank / ST
Accounts of beneficiaries

European Commission
Certifying Authority – Ministry of Finance
Paying Units
Paying Units
Beneficiaries

to Fig. 5

State Treasury
Disbursement accounts of Paying Units for national co-financing
Commercial bank / ST
Account of beneficiaries

Paying Units
Beneficiaries

10. ANNEXES

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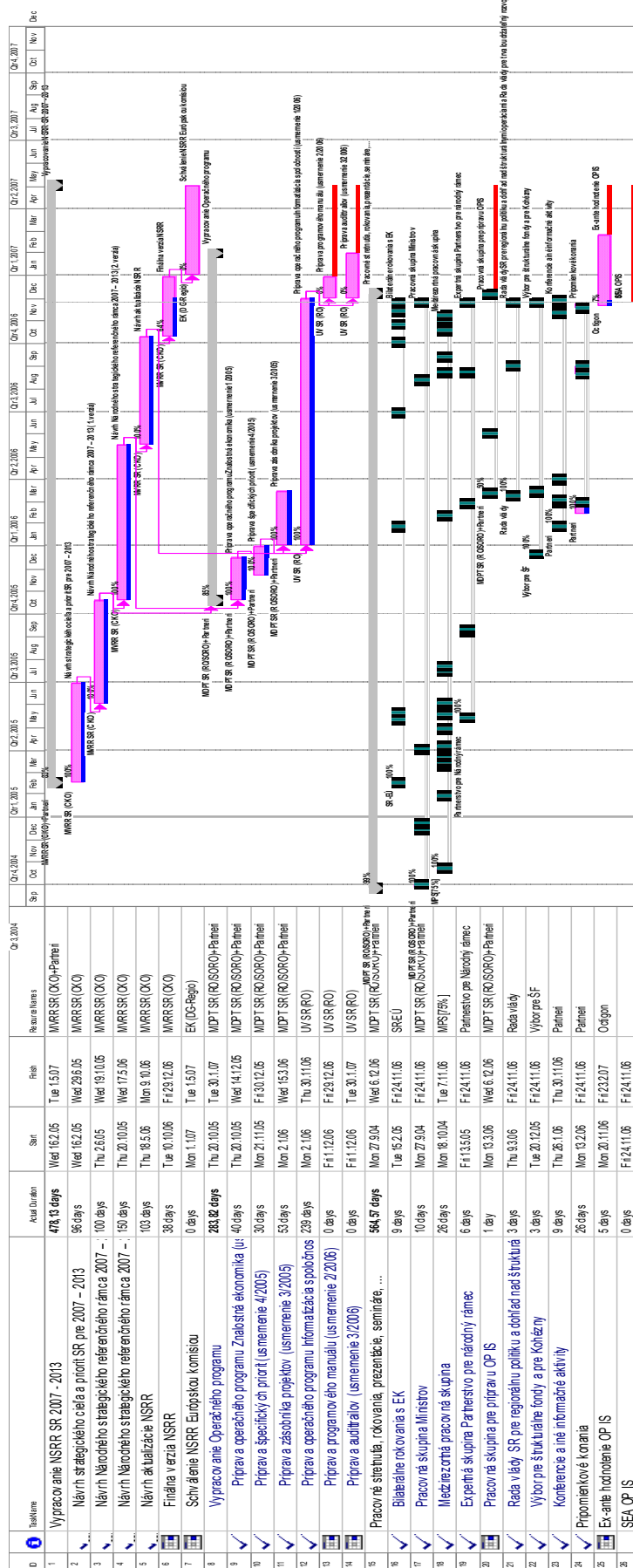
Annex 1 List of abbreviations

AA	Audit Authority
ATP	Active labour market policy
APVV	Research and Development Agency
ATO SR	Association of Telecommunications Operators of the Slovak Republic
Attribute	Attributes are current values assigned to individual entities
ATVS	Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia
B2B	Business to business, market services provided to businesses
B2C	Business to consumer, market services provided to citizens
BA	Bratislava
CA	Certifying Authority
CCA	Central Co-ordinating Authority
CCP	Central Communication Plan
CD SR	Customs Directorate
CF	Cohesion Fund
CIP	Competitiveness and Innovation Programme
CR	Tourism
CSAA	Central state administration authorities
CSG	Community Strategic Guidelines
CSO SR	Civil Service Office of the Slovak Republic
CTF	Communication Technology Forum
DD PF	District Directorate of the Police Force
DFI	Direct foreign investment
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
EFF	European Fisheries Fund
e-form	Official electronic form, which can be completed directly on a website
e-form	Official form in electronic format that can be downloaded and printed, or completed in a text editor.
eGovernment	A set of activities and instruments through which ICT is fully or partially integrated into the core functions of public administration. This means electronic government (administration), i.e. online application of ICT in public administration processes. In practice, this means the use of online e-communication: within PA institutions – G2E (government to employee), between PA institutions– G2G (government to government), and between PA and the public – G2P (government to public).
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
Entity	Entity means real or abstract objects of interest for a given segment of business tasks.
EPO	European Patent Office
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
e-services	Fully electronic processing of public services
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FAIS	Fund Accounting Information System
FTE	Full time equivalent
G2B	Government to business, public administration services provided to businesses
G2G	Government to government, public administration services provided to public administration
G2P	Government to public, public administration services provided to citizens
GCCO SR	Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Office of the Slovak Republic
GDP	Gross domestic product
GMES	Global Monitoring Environment and Security
GR	General Regulation
GT	Gross turnover
HTU	Higher territorial unit
IB	Intermediate Body
IBCA	Intermediate Body under a Certifying Authority
IBMA	Intermediate Body under a Managing Authority
ICI	information and communication infrastructure
ICT	Information and communication technology, comprising information systems, hardware, other systems, (peripherals), operation and connection to networks designed for carrying out information processes and communication functions.
IFI	innovative financial instruments
Informatisation of Society	A conceptually managed process aimed at the maximum utilization of the potential offered by ICT in all relevant areas of social, political and economic life

Instruction	Instruction (managerial document, code of conduct, etc.) is a documented procedure describing a process or activity conducted in an organisation. Instructions are part of bylaws in both the public and private sectors.
Internetisation	Expressed as penetration of the internet in households and businesses
Interoperability	Ability of information and communication systems to exchange and share data and information
IPC	International Patent Classification
IS	Information systems are systems with a human, technical and application component, which acquire, store, process, provide and transfer information
ISP	Integrated service point
ITAS	IT Association of Slovakia
ITMS	IT monitoring system
Link	The logical connection between entities is characterised by links the existence of which depends directly on the existence of the entities
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MC SR	Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic
MCRD SR	Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic
MEc SR	Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic
MEd SR	Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
MEEn SR	Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic
MF SR	Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic
MH SR	Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
MI SR	Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic
MJ SR	Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic
MLSAF SR	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
MTPT SR	Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of the Slovak Republic
NFA	Non-repayable financial assistance
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
NMC	National Monitoring Committee
NSA	National Security Authority
NSRDP	National Strategic Rural Development Plan
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
NUTS	Nomenclature of Statistic Territorial Units
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OG SR	Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic
Online	Directly on the internet (or direct connection to the internet)
OP BR	Operational Programme Bratislava Region
OP C&EG	Operational Programme Competitiveness and Economic Growth (MA: Ministry of Economy)
OP E&SI	Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion
OP Edu	Operational Programme Education
OP Env	Operational Programme Environment
OP KE	Operational Programme Knowledge Economy
OP R&D	Operational Programme Research and Development
OP TA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance
OP Trans	Operational Programme Transport
Open standard	Open standard is a publicly available standard specification used for achieving specific tasks. Since the specifications are publicly accessible, they allow for increasing the compatibility between various hardware and software components thanks to the public availability of the technical know-how.
OR	own resources
PAIS	Public administration information systems
PAIS conformity	Conformity assessment is a process evaluating the compliance of the valid standards of public administration information systems with information systems, or parts thereof, which are being prepared or implemented.
PES	Primary energy sources
PIAP	Public Internet Access Points
PPP	Public-private partnership
Process	Process is a set of interconnected activities transferred from one department to another with the aim of delivering (processing) a public service to a citizen or business.
PU	Paying Unit
Public administration	A component in the structure of the state ensuring the executive activities of the state
Public administration service	Public administration service or service provided by public administration. Service is a single product (output) of an organisational unit of public administration, which is in charge of the factual side of a service by law, meeting the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – it is created for the purpose of accomplishing a single task, – consists of a set partial interconnected activities,

	— it is independent of the fact whether the demand is voluntary or established on the basis of an obligation laid down by law.
RCI	Relative citation index
Recipient of public administration services	End consumer of public administration services (citizen, business, or non-profit organisation).
RES	Renewable energy sources
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
SAO SR	Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic
SAS	Slovak Academy of Sciences
SB	state budget
SD	Sustainable development
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
Service provider	Organisational unit of public administration providing a service.
Service recipient	Citizen or a business that is a direct user of a given service.
SFI	Slovak Film Institute
SK	Slovak Republic
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SMTO SR	Standardisation, Metrology and Testing Office of the Slovak Republic
SO SR	Statistical Office
SOA	service-oriented system architecture
SOPIS	Sectoral Operational Programme Industry and Services
SPD	Single Programming Document
SSDP	Slovak Spatial Development Perspective
Standard	Standards are rules defining the environment in which an IT product operates, the conditions of operation and method of execution of the product. They create a basis for reuse, interconnection with the external environment, co-operation and transferability.
STV	Slovak Television
TD SR	Tax Directorate
TEN-T	Trans-European transport networks
TO SR	Telecommunications Office of the Slovak Republic
USPTO	US Patent and Trademark Office
UTVS	Union of Towns and Villages of Slovakia
Website	Publicly accessible internet site available to users without restrictions and free of charge (with the exception of charged services) by an organisation processing a service or other authorised administrator

Annex 2 Timetable of the preparation of the OPIS



Annex 3 Overview of measures complementary to the OPIS

Programme	Priority axes of the programme	Measures	Fund	themes and extent of cooperation	
NSRDP SR	Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of rural economy	Creation of job opportunities in rural areas	EAFRD	L 1,2,3/	I 1,2,3/
	Leader	Improvement of administration and management, and mobilisation of the development potential in rural areas	EAFRD	E, L, B 1,2,/	I 1,2,3/
	Support for the modernisation, innovation and effectiveness of the agri-food and forestry sectors	Extending knowledge and increasing expertise in the food processing sector and forestry	EAFRD	E, L, B 1,2,/	
OP BR	1 Infrastructure	1.1 Renewal and development of school infrastructure	ERDF	L 4/	I 1,2,3/
	2 Innovation and informatisation	2.2 Informatisation of society	ERDF	T, B, L, W, H, E 1,2,3,4,/!	I 1,2,3/
	3 Technical assistance	Technical assistance	ERDF	1,2,3	
OP Trans	1 Railway infrastructure	1.1 Modernisation and development of rail tracks (TEN-T and other tracks in accordance with the Cohesion Fund Regulation)	CF	T1,2,3!	I 1,2,3/
	2 Road infrastructure (TEN -T)	2.1 Development of motorways (TEN -T)	CF	T1,2,3!	I 1,2,3/
	3 Intermodal transport infrastructure	3.1 Development of the network of basic public intermodal transport terminals	CF	T1,2,3!	I 1,2,3/
	4 Road infrastructure (high-speed and 1 st class roads)	4.1 Development of high-speed roads	ERDF	T1,2,3!	I 1,2,3/
		4.2 Modernisation and development of 1 st class roads	ERDF	T1,2,3!	I 1,2,3/
	5 Public railway passenger transport	5.1 Development of public railway passenger transport	ERDF	B,1,2,3/!	I 1,2,3/
OP C&EG	6 Technical assistance	Technical assistance	ERDF	1,2,3	I 1,2,3/
	1 Support for competitiveness of enterprises and services, mainly through innovation.	1.2 Support for joint services for businesses	ERDF	B1,2/	I 1,2,3/
		1.3 Support for innovation activities in enterprises	ERDF	B1,2,3!	I 1,2,3/
OP R&D		1.5 Support for business activities in tourism	ERDF	L1,2/!	I 1,2,3/
	2 Technical assistance	Technical assistance	ERDF	1,2,3	I 1,2,3/
	1 Research and development	1.3 Transfer of knowledge and technology acquired through R&D into practice	ERDF	W1,2,3/!	
OP Edu		2 Research and development in the Bratislava region	ERDF	W1,2,3/!	
		5 Technical assistance	ERDF	1,2,3	
	1 Reform of the system of education and vocational training	1.1 Transformation of traditional to modern school	ESF	L1,2,3,4/!	I 1,2,3/
OP E&SI		1.2 Universities and research and development as the driving forces of the development of knowledge society	ESF	L1,2,3/!	I 1,2,3/
	2 Lifelong education as the basic principle of knowledge-based society	2.1 Support for lifelong learning	ESF	L1,2,4/	
	3 Support for education of persons with special educational needs	3.1 Increasing the educational level of persons belonging to marginalised Roma communities	ESF	L1,2/!	
OP Health	4 Modern education for knowledge-based society in the Bratislava region	4.1 Transformation of traditional to modern school in the Bratislava region	ESF	L1,2,3!	I 1,2,3/
	5 Technical assistance	Technical assistance	ESF	1,2,3	
	1 Fostering growth of employment	1.4 Capacity building and improving the quality of public administration	ESF	W1,2,3/!	I 1,2,3/
OP Env	3 Fostering growth of employment and social inclusion in the Bratislava region	3.2 Promotion of social inclusion through the development of social services and support for integration of disadvantaged groups in the labour market in the Bratislava region	ESF	W1,2,3/!	
		3.3 Capacity building and improving the quality of public administration	ESF	W1,2,3/!	
	1 Modernisation of healthcare	1.1 Restructuring of the healthcare system	ERDF	B,1,2,3/!	
OP Env	1 Integrated protection and rational use of waters and flood protection	1.3 Comprehensive flood protection of the territory of Slovakia	CF/ERDF	E 1,2,3!	
		1.4 Monitoring and evaluation of surface and groundwater levels	CF/ERDF	E 1,2,3/!	
	2 Protection of air and ozone layer and minimisation of unfavourable impacts of climate change, including the promotion of renewable energy sources	2.1 Air protection	CF/ERDF	E 1,2,3/!	
	3 Waste management	3.1 Promotion of technologies minimising the generation of manufacturing waste	CF/ERDF	E 1/	
	4 Protection and recovery of the natural environment and landscape	4.1 Conservation programmes for protected areas, including NATURA 2000 areas, and programmes to save critically endangered flora and fauna, including monitoring of species and biotopes	ERDF	E 1/	
		4.2 Nature and landscape protection infrastructure	ERDF	E 1/	
		4.3 Information and publicity activities	ERDF	E 1/	
	5 Technical assistance	Technical assistance	CF/ERDF	1,2,3	I 1,2,3/
	1 Development of civil infrastructure facilities	1.1 Educational infrastructure	ERDF	I 1,2,3/	
		1.2 Infrastructure of social services and social and legal protection and social guardianship	ERDF	L 4/	
ROP		1.3 Infrastructure of repository institutions at local and regional levels and	ERDF	I 1,2,3/	

Programme	Priority axes of the programme	Measures	Fund	themes and extent of cooperation
		revitalisation and economic use of heritage objects in the territory		
	2 Strengthening the territorial capability	2.2 Regeneration of settlements	ERDF	I 1,2,3/
		2.3 Support and recovery of tourism infrastructure	ERDF	I 1,2,3/
	3 Technical assistance	Technical assistance	ERDF	1,2,3

Key:

theme: T: eTransport, eSafety, eTen , B: e-content, e-commerce, eSkills, Helping SMEs to Go Digital, e-Business W@tch, eTourism , L: eLearning, W: eSkills, eInclusion, eWork, H: eHealth, E: Global Monitoring Environment and Security (GMES)!, Galileo, Improving risk management,, I: information and communication infrastructure

project type: / demand driven, I national

degree of necessary cooperation of the MA/IB of the OPIS and other MA/IB: 1 – project phase (programme manual, handbook, project selection criteria), 2 – procurement (terms of reference, project selection and approval), 3 – implementation phase (participation in workgroups, cooperation in monitoring and control), 4 – operation (service connected to the central portal)

public administration organisation	eGovernment applications	broadband
A. STATE BUDGET CHAPTERS		
01 Office of the National Council of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
02 Office of the President of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
03 Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
05 Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
06 Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
07 General Prosecutor's Office of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
08 Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
09 Slovak Intelligence Service	OPIS	
10 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
11 Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic.	OPIS	
12 Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
13 Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
15 Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
18 Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic	OP Env	OP Env
20 Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic	OP Edu	ROP
21 Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic	OP Health	OP Health
22 Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic	OP E&SI	ROP
24 Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
26 Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic	OP C&EG	OP C&EG
27 Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic	NSRF	?
28 Ministry of Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
29 Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of the Slovak Republic	OP Trans	
31 Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Office of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
32 Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
33 Public Procurement Office	OPIS	
36 Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
37 Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
38 Office of Standardisation, Metrology and Testing of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
39 Civil Service Office	OPIS	
40 Anti-Monopoly Office	OPIS	
41 National Security Authority	OPIS	
42 State Material Reserves Administration of the Slovak Republic.	OPIS	
48 General Treasury Administration	OPIS	
51 Slovak Academy of Sciences	OP R&D	OP R&D
B. SPECIAL PURPOSE STATE FUNDS		
85 State Environmental Fund		
86 State Fund for the Decommissioning of Nuclear Energy Facilities and Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and Radioactive Waste		

public administration organisation	eGovernment applications	broadband
93 State Housing Development Fund		
C. MUNICIPALITIES		
800 Municipality	OPIS	OPIS
D. HIGHER TERRITORIAL UNITS (SELF-GOVERNING REGIONS)		
101 Bratislava self-governing region	OP Bratislava region	OP Bratislava region
12 Trnava self-governing region	OPIS	OPIS
103 Trenčín self-governing region	OPIS	OPIS
104 Nitra self-governing region	OPIS	OPIS
105 Žilina self-governing region	OPIS	OPIS
106 Banská Bystrica self-governing region	OPIS	OPIS
107 Prešov self-governing region	OPIS	OPIS
108 Košice self-governing region	OPIS	OPIS
E. SOCIAL AND HEALTH INSURANCE FUNDS		
300 Social Insurance Agency	OPIS	
401 Všeobecná zdravotná poisťovňa (health insurance company)	OPIS	
402 Vzájomná zdravotná poisťovňa (health insurance company)	OPIS	
403 Chemická zdravotná poisťovňa Apollo (health insurance company)	OPIS	
404 Spoločná zdravotná poisťovňa (health insurance company)	OPIS	
405 Zdravotná poisťovňa Sídéria-Istota (health insurance company)	OPIS	
F. PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES		
110 Public university	OP R&D	OP R&D
G. OTHER PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ORGANISATIONS		
600 National Property Fund of the Slovak Republic	OPIS	
900 Slovak Land Fund	OPIS	
120 Other public administration organizations entered in the register of organizations maintained by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and included in public administration in compliance with the uniform methodology valid in the European Union	OPIS	OPIS

Annex 4 List and purpose of the proposed national projects

National projects, providing an umbrella for diverse (political, legislative, economic, technical and other) measures related to increasing the efficiency of public administration, are the key integration instrument for achieving the objectives of electronisation of public administration. It is hard to imagine that these comprehensive and intertwined tasks could be carried out without demand driven projects that are equally closely interrelated. Demand driven projects are a suitable form of realisation of relatively isolated, partial or specific regional objectives.

Non-existence of national projects with feasibility studies prepared and approved in advance, thorough impact analysis, specific project plan and methodical project management is the key reason for the insufficient progress, state and quality of public administration services described in preceding chapters.

Even though they complement each other when performing their obligations towards citizens, from the standpoint of increasing their efficiency, they have specific characteristics that need to be respected. Ultimately, however, public services form a single whole that needs to be developed as such.

Therefore, the implementation of the OPIS strategy is based above all on national projects. The following projects were identified in the course of preparation of the OP:

National project Integrated Service Points (ISP)

The national project Integrated Service Points combines the principles of eGovernment generally recognised by EU Member States. It complies with the Roadmap for the Introduction of Electronic Public Administration Services, but goes beyond its framework in that it does not limit access to public administration services to the internet.

Its essence is to substantially improve and increase the accessibility of services to citizens so that they can complete all paperwork at a single place through a single visit to an integrated service point. In addition, they can use a computer, kiosk or call centre. All alternatives will share the same infrastructure, a single back office. Thanks to the integration of all paperwork into a single point, it will be possible to dramatically increase the density of service points in Slovakia and thus increase their accessibility to citizens and reduce the need for travel. While today, depending on the sector, individual areas of administration require between 50 and 130 offices (including branches), in the proposed model, joint municipal councils or, if necessary, also other places could be used as service points. Successful implementation of this project depends, among other things, on the sufficient availability of suitable computer technology in municipalities. It is very expensive and practically unfeasible under the current conditions to equip all offices with complete infrastructure. For this reason, a related project aimed at providing SW applications as a service will be carried out. Such an approach will help mitigate the differences in the possibilities for the use of information technology, especially in smaller towns and villages.

The first stage of the project is the elaboration of a feasibility study which will serve as a basis for further planning and implementation of the project. The study will include a plan of the necessary legislative changes and tasks of individual sectors in the context of the project. It is important to ensure that this platform is based on open standards allowing for co-operation between a spectrum of IS as described by the principles of eGovernment.

From the technological standpoint, the core of the system should be an integration platform enabling process-oriented integration of partial IS, which will form a single self-contained IS built on a service-oriented system architecture (SOA).

Municipalities Data Centre

The utilisation of information technology in municipal administration is far below the level corresponding to the opportunities it offers today. The self-government has an ambition to create the best possible conditions for significantly broader and more effective utilisation of information technology. When considering the various possibilities for actively helping accelerate the process of informatisation of municipal administration, it appears that the most effective way would be to provide the unified SW solutions needed by municipal administration as a service of a specialised Municipalities Data Centre (a working title).

OPIS funding should be used above all for the start-up phase, when initial investments will significantly exceed the returns. The situation should gradually improve with increasing number of clients, stabilisation of personnel, falling telecommunications charges and declining cost of HW. Therefore, the resources from structural funds should be used above all for start-up or transformation projects:

- Preparation of the project for the implementation of the plan (a consulting firm operating in the IT area, which should take the responsibility for the preparation of a realistic timetable, business plan, and public procurement assignments)
- The development of technical infrastructure for the computing centre, together with a security project (as specified by the Project Manager and outsourcing provider for the operation of the centre)
- Development of a top-notch call centre to support end users
- Temporary support for the operation of the computing centre and partial payment of telecommunications charges (the business plan should be designed so that in the target situation the charges for the use of SW applications as a service provided by municipal councils generate sufficient revenues to cover their operation and regular reproduction. During the first years, the number of clients will grow only gradually, even though the cost of the system will be virtually the same as in the target situation. Therefore, in the first three years after launching the project, the resources from structural funds should be used to cover this deficit in revenues).
- Migration projects at municipal councils (stimulation of the transition from local to central applications; to a large extent, this should involve advisory and consulting activities, training for users, and purchase of terminal equipment and security features).

National project to create the Slovak Digital Library

In order to preserve cultural heritage, including memory and media content, it is necessary to create a centralised publicly accessible digital archive well-suited to the process of systematic digitisation and informatisation of cultural infrastructure.

The project will make it possible to bring the decentralised archives of individual repository institutions (libraries, museums, galleries, etc.) together and support the strategy for digitisation of STV and SFI film archives and ensure their protection and accessibility in Slovakia (education at all levels, film and library clubs, television broadcasting, exchange of works) as well as abroad (a system of promotion and sale of the works) with emphasis on the protection of copyright. Thanks to the project, an open architecture will be created easily allowing for the involvement of various repository institutions, creation easy-to-use catalogues and generation of comprehensive statistics on the utilisation of cultural heritage.

The first stage of the project is the elaboration of a feasibility study which will serve as a basis for further planning and implementation of the project. The study will include a plan of the necessary legislative changes and tasks of individual sectors in the context of the project. It is important to ensure that this platform is based on open standards allowing for co-operation between a spectrum of IS as described by the principles of eGovernment.

National project Audit Information System (AIS)

The national project Audit Information System (AIS) integrates the strategic objectives of the Supreme Audit Office as an independent audit authority, generally recognised standards, good auditing practice and the principles recognised in the Member States of the European Union and countries associated in INTOSAI and EUROSAL, with the aim of increasing the contribution of audit activities to the improvement of the process of economical, effective and efficient use of public funds. The priority objectives of the national project include support for the work of auditors by providing them with a reliable connection to the available information on the audited organisations, interaction with the audit systems and auditors of the audited organisations (state administration organisations, municipalities, HTU), creating a database of audits carried out, recommendations and audit reports, and compliance of audit methodology with international audit standards and procedures.

Other national projects will be prepared and implemented as necessary throughout the programming period. At the time of preparation of this document, the above projects of Integrated Service Points and Municipalities Data Centre are the key national projects under priority axis 1 and the Slovak Digital Library the key national project under priority axis 2.

Annex 5 Beneficiaries and forms of assistance from OPIS measures

Measure 1.1: Electronisation of public administration

Measure 1.2: Electronisation of the self-government:

Beneficiaries⁸⁵:

Public sector:

- 321 Budgetary organisation and its institutions
- 331 Semi-budgetary organisation
- 332 Organisational unit of a semi-budgetary organisation with a derived legal personality
- 801 Municipality (municipal council)
- 803 Self-governing region (self-governing region office)

Public-private partnerships:

- 701 Association (union, society, club, etc.)
- 118 Non-investment fund
- 119 Non-profit organisation

Types of financial instruments:

Direct grants

Method of implementation of assistance:

National projects

Demand driven projects

Measure 2.1: Improvement of the system of acquisition, processing and protection of content from the resources of repository institutions

Measure 2.2: Digitisation of the content of repository institutions, archiving and provision of access to digital data

Beneficiaries:

Public sector:

- 321 Budgetary organisation and its institutions
- 331 Semi-budgetary organisation
- 332 Organisational unit of a semi-budgetary organisation with a derived legal personality
- 801 Municipality (municipal council)
- 803 Self-governing region (self-governing region office)

Public-private partnerships:

- 701 Association (union, society, club, etc.)
- 119 Non-profit organisation

Types of financial instruments:

Direct financial instruments

Indirect financial instruments

Method of implementation of assistance:

National projects

Demand driven projects

Measure 3.1: Development of broadband access infrastructure

Beneficiaries:

Public sector:

⁸⁵ Based on classification of legal forms of organisations updated on 01.06.2005. Source: <http://www.statistics.sk/webdata/slov/edicny/CISROmanual0056.doc>

- 321 Budgetary organisation and its facilities
- 331 Semi-budgetary organisation and its facilities
- 332 Organisational unit of a semi-budgetary organisation with a derived legal personality
- 801 Municipality (municipal council)
- 803 Self-governing region (self-governing region office)

Public-private partnerships:

- 701 Association (union, society, club, etc.)
- 118 Non-investment fund
- 119 Non-profit organisation

Types of financial instruments:

direct grants

indirect financial instruments

public-private partnerships

Method of implementation of assistance:

National projects

Demand driven projects

Annex 6 Legal framework for the informatisation of society in Slovakia

The legal framework for the informatisation of society in Slovakia consists of the following elements:

- Central public administration act (575/2001 Coll.)
- Act on Public administration information systems
- The Government's Plenipotentiary for Informatisation of Society

Based on the amendment of Act No. 575/2001 Coll. (from 29 November 2006) on organisation of the activities of the Government and organisation of the central public administration (central public administration act), § 8 (1) j), the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak republic is the central state administration body for the informatisation of society.

According to § 24 (2):

- The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic coordinates the meeting of tasks in the area of informatisation of society.
- The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic coordinates the implementation of policies of the European Communities and the European Union.

Based on Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Public administration information system, No. 275/2006 Coll.; according to § 4,

item (1), the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the following activities performed within the public administration information systems:

- a) drafting and submitting for approval of the Government of the Slovak Republic concepts of public administration informatisation,
- b) directing the creation of concepts aimed at a development of public administration information systems,
- c) issuing standards,
- d) monitoring the state of play and evaluating the development of public administration information systems, while at the same time informing the Government of the Slovak Republic about the achieved results,
- e) coordinating the creation of public administration information systems on both national and international level.

According to item (2), the Ministry:

- a) administers the central portal,
- b) publishes standards, decisions and other information on the central portal, related to public administration information systems,
- c) consults document drafts which affect the public administration information systems with persons involved,
- d) checks that duties stipulated by this act are fulfilled,
- e) takes measures aimed at remedying the detected faults, and imposes sanctions for breaching the duties stipulated by this act.

Based on the statute of the Government's Plenipotentiary for Informatisation of Society, Article 1, the Plenipotentiary has the position of an advisory body of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

In line with Article 4, and within the scope of his responsibility, the Plenipotentiary fulfils the tasks related to the implementation of the Strategy for the Informatisation of Society and Action Plan (approved by Governmental Resolution No. 43/2004) and the Operational Programme Informatisation of Society (approved by Governmental Resolution No. 1004/2006).

The above mentioned competences and responsibilities constitute a framework for the division of legislative and executive power in the area of informatisation of society, and informatisation of public administration. Based on the

Central public administration act and the Act on public administration information systems, this power is concentrated in a programme instrument managed by the MF SR. The management of this instrument is based on the cooperation and coordination of individual informational and organisational public administration systems, which are necessary if Slovakia wants to meet the objectives of developing an information society, as defined by the NSRF, the National reform Programme , and the National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Annex 7 Statistics

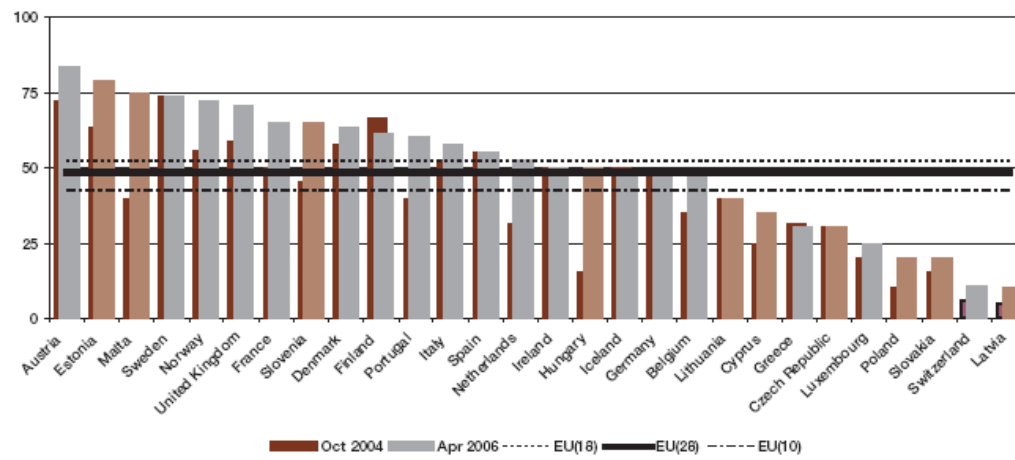
7.1 Information society indicators

Source: i2010, Benchmarking in a Policy Perspective, 2007 Annual Report of Slovakia

Broadband	2003	2004	2005	2006	EU25	Rank
Total DSL coverage (as % of total population)	18.3	44.0	60.7		87.4	25
DSL coverage in rural areas (as % of total population)			25.0		65.9	21
Broadband penetration (as % of population)		0.6	1.8	4.3	15.7	24
DSL penetration (as % of population)		0.5	1.5	2.9	12.8	25
Predominant download speed			LE 512kbits			
Households having broadband (as % of those having access to the internet at home)		15.2	31.0	43.0	62.1	24
% of enterprises with broadband access		24.8	47.6	60.8	74.5	20
Number of 3G subscribers per 100 inhabitants			0.0		5.0	22
Digital Television in households			12.7		30.6	13
Music: number of single downloads per 100 inhabitants						
Internet Usage						
% population who are regular internet users		39.8	42.8	43.1	46.7	16
Take up of internet services (as % of population)						
Sending emails		37.7	42.4	41.6	43.8	15
Looking for information about goods and services		26.6	30.1	33.5	42.9	19
Internet telephoning or videoconferencing		4.8	3.6	7.0	7.1	18
Playing/downloading games and music		18.5	16.1	18.5	18.2	16
Listening to the web radio/watching web tv		6.0	5.5	8.2	11.8	23
Reading online newspapers/magazines		22.6	23.2	25.4	19.0	12
Internet banking		10.1	10.1	12.6	22.0	20
Places of access						
% at home		22.4	20.1	23.6	42.6	25
% at work		26.0	27.0	25.7	23.0	13
% at educational place		10.5	11.0	11.4	8.0	8
% at PIAP		18.6	11.7	7.2	6.8	9
eGovernment Indicators						
% basic public services for citizens fully available online		8.3		8.3	36.8	23
% basic public services for enterprises fully available online		25.0		37.5	67.8	24
% of population using e-Government services		25.4	26.6	32.2	23.8	9
of which for returning filled in forms		4.9	6.5	7.2	8.1	13
% of enterprises using e-Government services		47.1	56.6	77.2	63.7	10
of which for returning filled in forms		18.2	16.3	44.6	44.8	17
ICT in schools						
Number of computers connected per 100 pupils				5.8	9.9	23
% of schools with broadband access				40.0	67.0	23
% of teachers having used the computer in class during the last 12 months				70.3	74.3	15
e-Commerce						
E-commerce as % of total turnover of enterprises			0.0	0.0	11.7	24
% enterprises receiving internet orders		6.5	6.5		13.9	
% enterprises purchasing on the internet		16.3	22.4		37.9	
e-business, % enterprises:						
with integrated internal business processes		21.2	25.5	22.2	37.3	20
with integrated external business processes		7.1	9.2	9.8	13.5	17
Security: % enterprises using Secure servers		13.2	20.9	15.2	41.0	23
% using digital signatures for authentication		5.6	10.4	14.6	14.3	7
Employment and Skills						
% employees using computers connected to the Internet		19.4	25.5	28.6	36.1	19
% of persons employed with ICT user skills	15.0	15.7	15.4	15.3	18.5	22
% of persons employed with ICT specialist skills	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.1	8
Indicators on growth of ICT sector and R&D						
ICT sector share of total GDP	7.1				5.5	4
ICT sector share of total employment	4.4				4.0	7
ICT sector growth (constant prices)	-2.0				3.6	18
R&D expenditure in ICT by the business sector, as % of GDP					0.3	
=== as % of total R&D expenditure					25.7	

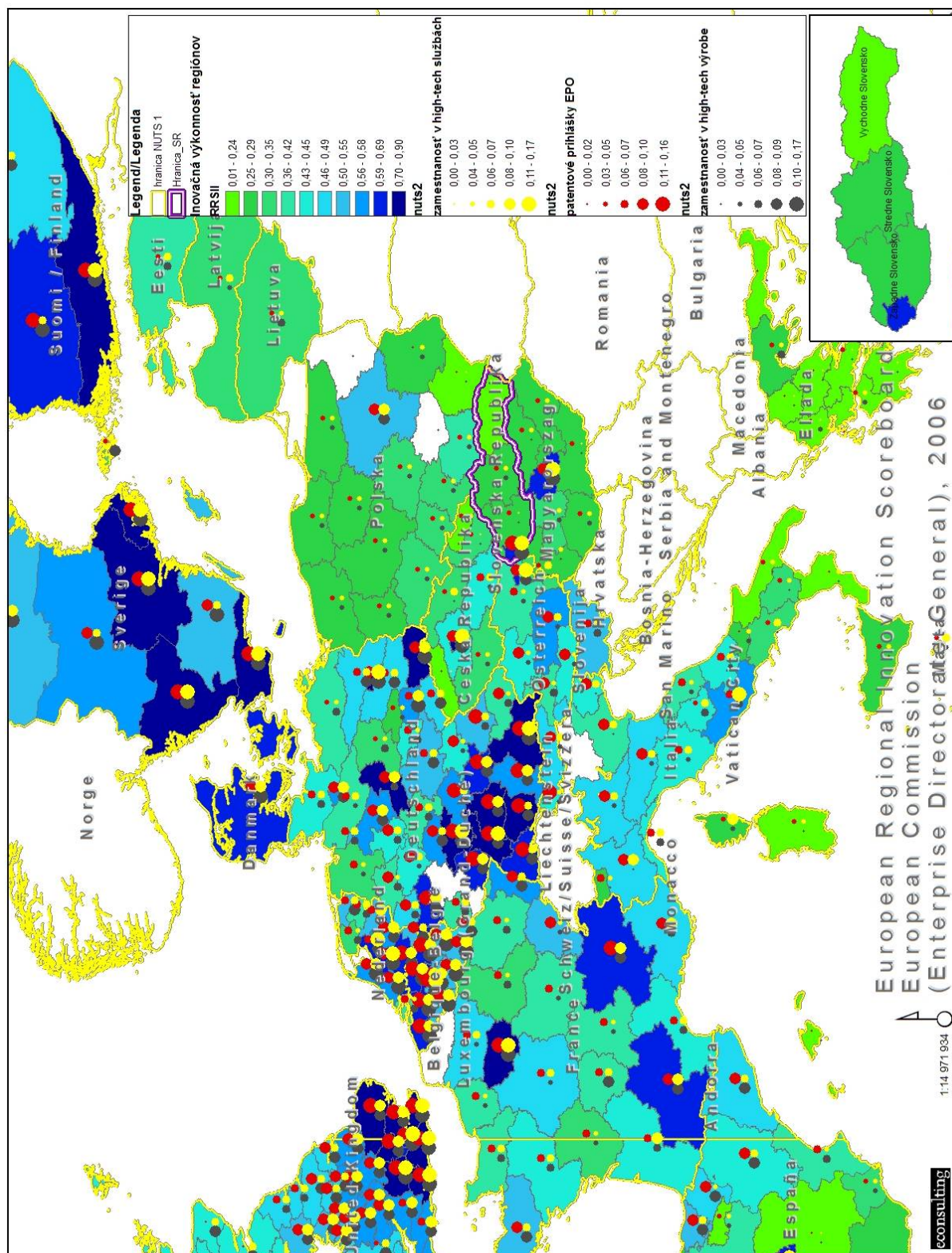
7.2 Availability of basic eGovernment services

Source: i2010 2007 Annual Report of Slovakia



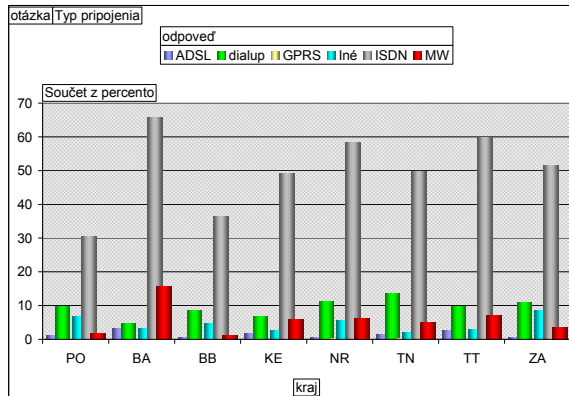
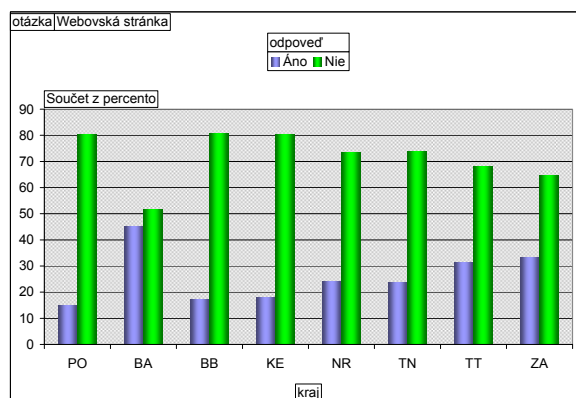
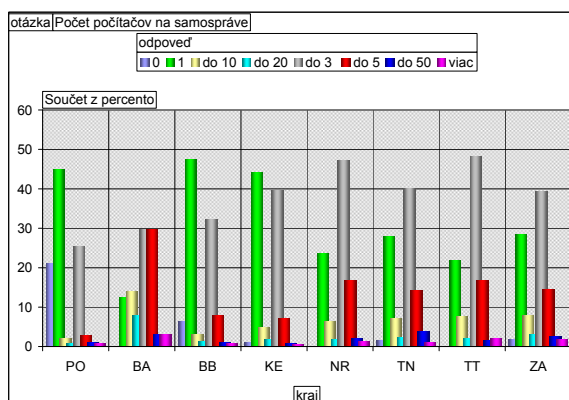
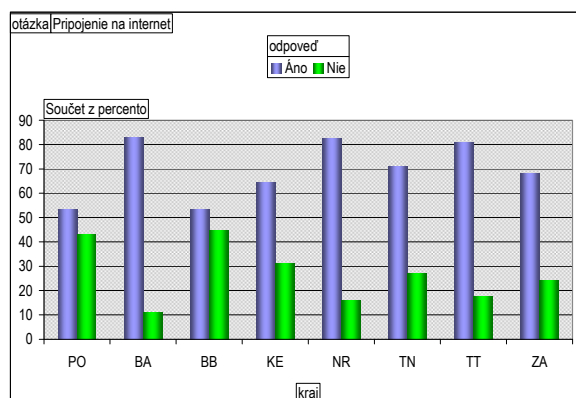
7.3 Regional summary innovation index

Source: EC, DG Enterprise, 2006



7.4 The level of informatisation of municipalities

Source: an ATVS survey conducted in 2006



Annex 8 Overview of a draft of public administration informatisation projects under priority axis 1

Horizontal eGovernment projects:

- central public administration portal
- registry administration
- electronic delivery
- electronic filing office
- identity verification, uniform identification
- editing system
- official electronic dossier
- civil servants calendar
- CPU
- ISP, Municipalities Data Centre

PAIS infrastructure projects:

- Population register
- Cadastre
- Commercial register
- Trades register
- Healthcare providers register
- Healthcare professionals register
- Register of health insurance policyholders
- Criminal register
- Municipalities register
- Addresses register
- Tax payer register
- Vehicle register
- Register of accredited educational institutions
- Register of public administration organisations
- Register of social insurance policyholders
- Public key infrastructure, electronic signatures
- Directory services
- Digital maps
- Call centre
- Data backup centre
- Card management system (eID)
- Security
- Operational standards

Specialised eGovernment projects at the central level

MTPT SR

- electronic subsidy applications and decisions
- electronic re-registration of vehicles, including roadworthiness licences
- electronic licences

MF SR

- electronic tax system
- electronic customs system
- iTreasury
- uniform state accounting system
- uniform state property administration system
- uniform personnel and remuneration system
- uniform tax and insurance collection system

MEc SR

- electronic subsidy applications and decisions

MC SR

- electronic subsidy applications and decisions

Slovak TV, Slovak Radio

- single concessionaire account

MA SR

- electronic subsidy applications and decisions

MLSAF SR

- job search
- unemployment benefits
- e-reports
- information on labour market measures

Social Insurance Agency

- e-reports for natural and legal persons
- social benefits
- individual accounts

MJ SR

- entry/updates in the Commercial Register
- electronic criminal register extracts
- electronic court filing and court decisions
- investigation and court files

MEd SR

- electronic enrolment in universities
- electronic services of education registers
- electronic R&D grant applications and decisions

MI SR

- electronic applications for personal documents (identity cards, passports, driver's licences, permanent residence, extracts from official documents)
- reports to the police
- entry/updates in the Trades Register

MCRD SR

- electronic subsidy applications and decisions
- electronic construction permit proceedings

MFA SR

- travel information

MH SR

- healthcare providers register
- healthcare professionals register
- publication of public health information

MEn SR

- environmental permits
- electronic services of environment registers
- publication of environmental information and early warning system

SO SR

- reports

Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Office

- cadastre (electronic cadastre extracts that can be used for legal purposes, electronic applications for the registration of owner's rights)
- access to digital resources

Specialised eGovernment projects for regional self-governments and municipalities

- electronic enrolment in secondary schools
- electronic applications for social services
- electronic applications and decisions
- Housing and residence
 - o special purpose apartments
 - o property tax
 - o tenancy
 - o sub-tenancy
 - o apartment exchange
 - o residence of foreigners
 - o temporary residence
 - o permanent residence
 - o apartment occupancy
 - o social service facilities
- Transport
 - o roads
 - o road signs
 - o facilities
 - o garages
 - o parking
- Culture
 - o civil ceremony
 - o donations
 - o culture subsidies
 - o loans
 - o culture facilities
 - o public events
 - o announcement in municipal radio/television
- Registry office
 - o child birth
 - o verification
 - o marriage
 - o deaths
 - o name and surname change
- Business activities
 - o municipal property
 - o rental agreements
 - o certificate of claims
 - o opening hours
 - o business premises
 - o approval of business plans
 - o accommodation capacity and recreational stays
 - o public events
 - o certificates for self-employed farmers
 - o gaming machines
 - o air pollution
 - o advertising, information and publicity facilities
- Land
 - o land purchase or lease
 - o building land certificate
 - o real estate auctions
 - o expropriation

- Self-government
 - o public assembly notices
 - o civil ceremony
 - o awards
 - o gifts
 - o municipal rewards or commendations
 - o filing of petitions
 - o filing of complaints
 - o council members
 - o use of municipal symbols
 - o penalty register
 - o access to information
 - o lost property office
 - o issuance of voter's cards
 - o lending
 - o
- Social services
 - o special purpose apartment
 - o homecare service
 - o donations
 - o subsidies and loans
 - o catering for pensioners
 - o social service facilities
- Construction
 - o roads
 - o road signs
 - o facilities
 - o garages
 - o construction approval
 - o construction removal
 - o small construction notice of intent
 - o provision of state construction subsidies
 - o certificate of construction completion
 - o building land certificate
 - o construction modification permit prior to completion
 - o construction location decision
 - o construction permit
 - o utility line permit
 - o construction plan approval
 - o building number assignment
 - o expropriation
 - o collection, transport and disposal of municipal waste and minor construction waste
 - o lawn and planting
 - o modification of the purpose of a building
- Education
 - o kindergarten
 - o nursery school
 - o donations
 - o subsidies
 - o loans
 - o elementary schools
- Healthcare
 - o opening hours
 - o approval of the hours of attendance
- Pets/animals
 - o deregistration of dogs

- tax exemption of dogs
 - registration of dogs
 - return of dogs from an animal shelter
 - dog adoption
 - fishing permit
- Environment
 - collection, transport and disposal of municipal waste and minor construction waste
 - lawn and planting
 - air pollution

Annex 9 List of organisations of the MC SR – implementation of the OPIS:

Institution	Seat	Location of implementation
Slovak National Theatre	Bratislava	
Bibiana	Bratislava	
State Theatre Košice	Košice	
Slovak Design Centre	Bratislava	
Nová scéna theatre	Bratislava	
Slovak National Gallery	Bratislava	Zvolen unit - galleries
State Opera Banská Bystrica	Banská Bystrica	Banská Bystrica
Slovak National Museum	Bratislava	the unit in Western Slovakia
Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra	Bratislava	
Slovak National Library	Martin	Martin, Vrútky - libraries
State Philharmonic Orchestra Košice	Košice	Košice
M. Hrebenda's Slovak Library for the Blind	Levoča	Levoča
Slovak Film Institute	Bratislava	Probably in co-operation with STV Košice
University Library in Bratislava	Bratislava	****
Lúčnica	Bratislava	
SNP Museum, Banská Bystrica	Banská Bystrica	Banská Bystrica
Institute for the Relations between the State and Churches	Bratislava	
Slovak Technical Museum Košice	Košice	Košice – the issue of technical parameters of the design, etc.
Theatre Institute	Bratislava	
Heritage Office	Bratislava	
Music Centre	Bratislava	
Slovak Central Observatory Hurbanovo	Hurbanovo	Hurbanovo
Literary Information Centre	Bratislava	
State Scientific Library Prešov	Prešov	Prešov
National Educational Centre	Bratislava	
Folk Art Production Headquarters	Bratislava	
Cultural Facilities Administration of the MC SR	Bratislava	
State Chamber Orchestra Žilina	Žilina	Žilina
State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica	Banská Bystrica	Banská Bystrica
State Scientific Library in Košice	Košice	Košice
SL'UK	Bratislava	
Hungarian Artistic Ensemble Young Hearts - Ifjú Szívek	Bratislava	
Press Agency of the Slovak Republic	Bratislava	

Annex 10 Selected key partner comments on the OPIS

Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic	In section 6.4. (Information society) it is stated that the funding in operational programmes in question will be executed from their own resources. As this is the Operational programme Informatisation of Society, where the education of up to one fifth of the population is safeguarded (this includes only pupils in primary and secondary schools), we recommend that financial resources be found within this OPIS to partially support OP Edu and OP R&D with an outlook for 2007 till 2010, and/or till 2013. We are drawing our position from the Strategy of informatisation in regional education that is being prepared (according to the Action plan for sustainable society). We request to partake in the financing by means of cross-funding, as the OP Edu and OP R&D cover the entire territory of the Slovak Republic.	As part of priority axis No. 1, financial means will be allocated amounting to 10% of the total allocation for priority projects as part of cross-funding of human resources projects that are directly related to the development, testing and implementation of eGovernment applications supported by OPIS.
Slovak Telecom	Until item 5.2.2. Role of national projects... to be filled in: Non-existence of national projects with feasibility studies prepared and approved in advance, thorough impact analysis, specific project plan and methodical project management are the key reasons for the insufficient progress, state and level of development of repository institutions. National project – Digital peering data centre In order to preserve cultural heritage, including memory and media content, it is necessary to create a centralised publicly accessible digital archive well-suited to the process of systematic digitisation and informatisation of cultural infrastructure. The project will make it possible to bring the decentralised archives of individual repository institutions (libraries, museums, galleries, etc.) together and support the strategy for digitisation of STV and SFI film archives and ensure their protection and accessibility in Slovakia (education at all levels, film and library clubs, television broadcasting, exchange of works) as well as abroad (a system of promotion and sale of the works) with an emphasis on the protection of copyrights. Thanks to the project, an open architecture will be created easily allowing for the involvement of various repository institutions, creation easy-to-use catalogues and generation of comprehensive statistics on the utilisation of cultural heritage.	OPIS has been supplemented by an indicative list of national projects. It is an open list. Incorporated in national projects of priority axis 3.
Košice self-governing region	Page 5 – the process of OP preparation – we request that the overview of collected project ideas be supplemented (the overview is done according to issues and individual regions)	OPIS has been supplemented by an indicative list of national projects. It is an open list.
Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic	Principally, the transition from the "paper" services environment into electronic services in public administration cannot be made by electronic modelling of paper processes (the motion of a motor vehicle and of a person is based on totally different mechanisms). Otherwise, the result will be ponderous and slow information processes. At the same time, it ought to be emphasised that the previous processes of public administration informatisation did not lead to a considerable downsizing of employees. Solving both mentioned aspects depends on changes in legislation, and/or its amendment adding solutions in electronic environments. At the end of Chapter 3.2 "Analysis of priority axis electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services" – state the necessity of analyzing the legislative environment of the Slovak Republic and European Union in the relevant areas, and formulate the proposals for a change in legislation with the aim to create a prerequisite for electronisation of public administration services.	The OPIS philosophy is based on the stated principle – the strategy focuses (besides ICT implementation) on a thorough change of the processes of how public administration functions. OPIS contains an analysis of the legislative environment in relation to the society's informatisation. It also defines the issues which need to be solved within the legislative framework.
	Part 3.2, Analysis of priority axis "Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services", states the following: "The majority of the transaction functions of electronic services provided by public administration require the accessibility of data resources that can be used for legal purposes and the implementation of guaranteed electronic signature." In the material in part 3.1.2 "Priority topics" and in part 6.4 "Information society", the listed bodies of state administration which "provide e-services of a general nature" include the National Security Authority. In the introduction to part 6.4 it is stated that "all interventions into activities related to the informatisation of society will be coordinated and centrally controlled by the MA OPIS, OPIS IB, and/or by the plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for informatisation of the society, within his defined province of authority based on the valid regulatory and strategic framework." The authority of the National Security Authority is stipulated by Act No. 215/2004 Coll. on the protection of classified information and Act No. 215/2002 Coll. on electronic signature. It does not provide public administration services to the public in either of these areas. This means that the material in question gives various authorities rights which are related to informational security in protecting confidential information and in the area of guaranteed electronic signature. It is a violation of the authority of the National Security Authority and a direct threat to the performance of its activities, if – under the pretext of covering PAIS standards – another unit will define the permitted standards and technologies in the area of confidential information protection and guaranteed electronic signature, which are a condition for accepting electronic exchange of information not only in PAIS home environment, but are also important for state administration force units in the environment of NATO and EU.	When defining standards and other specifications related to projects which will work with classified information, the valid legislative framework will be respected. Based on this framework, this area is in full responsibility of the National Security Authority.
Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and	The Operational programme Informatisation of Society (OPIS) focuses on problematic areas of service electronisation on the basis of broadband Internet connection (the main idea of the material) whose current penetration in Slovakia is 2.6%.	Other options for using electronic services will be also available, e.g. by means of integrated service locations (as long as the character of the service will allow it), which will

Family of the Slovak Republic	<p>No other alternatives of implementing electronic services are considered, for example, using mobile telephone services of which there is a high level of availability in Slovakia.</p> <p>Also, there are different degrees of the necessity to train people to use mobile phones, particularly when compared with the use of broadband Internet (PC skills).</p>	<p>make it possible to use a mobile telephone as an interactive communication device</p> <p>Electronic services will be available also via other technological means than just PCs (kiosks, digital TV, integrated service locations, mobile phones).</p>
IT Association of Slovakia	<p>The IT infrastructure and facilities with which bodies of territorial self-government, mainly smaller towns and villages, are equipped is insufficient and does not allow improving the quality of public services.</p> <p>4.1.1 The role of national projects when implementing the elektronisation of public administration.</p> <p>National projects, providing an umbrella for diverse (political, legislative, economic, technical and other) measures related to increasing the efficiency of public administration, are the fundamental instrument for achieving the objectives of elektronisation of public administration.</p> <p>It is hard to imagine that these comprehensive and intertwined tasks could be carried out without demand-driven projects that are equally closely interrelated. Demand-driven projects are a suitable form of realisation of relatively isolated, partial or specific regional objectives.</p> <p>Non-existence of national projects with feasibility studies prepared and approved in advance, thorough impact analysis, specific project plan and methodical project management is the key reason for the insufficient progress, state and quality of public administration services described in preceding chapters.</p>	<p>Fulfilling the OPIS strategy is based on the implementation of national projects which are its key integration instrument.</p>
	<p><u>National project – Municipal Data Centre</u></p> <p>The idea is to provide town and municipal councils with the necessary applications as a service whose quality and affordability will be guaranteed by the Association of Towns and Municipalities. A specialised Municipal Data Centre needs to be built for this purpose. The project will help mitigate the differences in the possibilities for the use of information technologies, especially in smaller towns and villages. In this case, it is also necessary to start with preparing a feasibility study which will analyze not only the implementation of the data centre, but also the commercial aspects of its long-term operation.</p>	<p>The project has been put on the list of national projects.</p>
	<p><u>page 10, chapter 3.1.2.2</u> – we suggest to supplement it as follows:</p> <p>The main task is to make the content of repository institutions electronically accessible to the public and to entrepreneurs. Emphasis ought to be laid upon knowledge, information, educational and professional literature (for studies, lifelong and professional education).</p> <p>We consider this to be the main priority of digitisation. Electronic access (ideally via the Internet) of educational and specialized literature. Accessibility of these extends knowledge and education, and support innovations on the part of entrepreneurs and citizens, which is the most efficient way towards a knowledge-based society.</p>	
Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic	<p>Another important aspect is the actual organization of public administration. The sub-section 3.1.2.1 states that "a lack of interconnection between PAIS and non-standardised public administration processes make horizontal (management and support) processes carried out by public administration (back-office) dysfunctional or considerably impair their quality." A key prerequisite for a functional operation of back-office, but mostly front-office processes, is an efficient and purposeful public administration organization. The Ministry of the Interior does not consider the current situation to be the most suitable, also in terms of the actual informatisation process.</p>	
	<p>We believe that in the priority axis "Development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions", it is mostly problems and needs of libraries that are emphasised, as well as other facilities that are in the domain of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. It needs to be balanced – the current situation ought to be taken into account, including the needs of archives, as well as the fact that the Ministry of the Interior is (according to the competence act – Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the organisation of the activities of the government and on the organisation of the central state administration) the central state administration body of the Slovak Republic for archives. For this reason, we suggest to amend chapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 as follows:</p>	<p>Archives and related issues were added into the framework activities of priority axis 2.</p>
	<p>We do not consider it suitable to narrow down the meaning of the term "increasing the penetration of broadband connection" as stated in chapter 3.1.2 as one of the priority topics of the operational programme, where it means just extending the access to broadband Internet services, specified in chapter 5.3 as a priority axis. At present, there is no concise concept for building a communication infrastructure covering the needs of public administration, which results in a number of isolated solutions at a departmental level. The problem is most visible at the level of territorial self-government, where this type of solutions is concentrated. For this reason, the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic suggests to change the name of the priority axis to "Increasing access to broadband connection" so that the communication infrastructure of public administration can be tackled as part of this priority axis.</p>	
Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic	<p>We consider the submitted Analysis to be an insufficiently prepared document for the proposed Operational programme. The Analysis is prepared on an abstract level – without specifying the causes for the existing situation, without assessing the efficiency of existing and implemented projects. Also, the suggested solution in priority axes is not</p>	<p>The Analysis has been supplemented with more detailed data, also including a regional projection of interventions.</p>

	based on a thorough analysis of the present state, analysis of the competitive environment, and support of implementing new technologies on the part of the state.	
GTS Nextra	Item 3.4 – leave out section beginning with the text “Rate and intensity of competition...” and ending with “... or their lease”, and replace it with the following text:	
	“The rate and intensity of competition on the telecommunication market in Slovakia is defined mainly by the existence and the range of access telecommunication networks that are available on the entire territory of the country. The three largest and most dominant providers are simultaneously the owners of the three largest and most extensive access networks in Slovakia. Therefore, increasing competition on the telecommunication market would require opening the market to other service providers. A suitable approach would be to improve the application of the regulatory framework of the European Commission, mostly by means of strengthening the independence and quality of the regulation authority (the Telecommunications Office of the Slovak republic), increasing its expertise and competence – mainly in the area of granting access to subscribers’ lines, as well as by allowing the use of available frequency bands for modern electronic communication services.”	
Communication Technology Forum	p. 39, chapter 5.3.1. Objective and focus of the priority axis: We propose an addition and division to be made with the aim to better specify the range of supported activities. We suggest two alternatives of the change. The best alternative can be chosen to be applied to the original text. Description of measures and supported activities: (suggested change)	For the purposes of the OP, the division into several measures and sub-measures is too detailed. A partial specification is given within the framework activities of the OP and a detailed division will be provided in the programme manual.
	Division alt. 1: 1. development of broadband access infrastructure for public administration 2. development of broadband access networks 2.1. metallic, with ADSL technology 2.2 wireless, with FWA technology 3. development of metropolitan optical networks 4. development of regional optical networks 5. development of optical access networks 5.1. optical access networks, type FTTx – Passive Optical Networks 5.2. optical access networks, type FTTx – Active Optical Networks 5.3. integrating FTTx access networks into metropolitan networks 6. marketing, promotional and educational activities focusing on increasing the demand for broadband connection, electronic services and ICT 7. marketing, integration and organisational activities aimed at increasing the availability of electronic services and ICT inclusion Division alt.2: 1. development of broadband access infrastructure for public administration 2. development of broadband access networks – metallic and wireless 3. development of metropolitan optical networks 4. development of regional optical networks 5. development of FTTx optical access networks 6. marketing, promotional and educational activities focusing on increasing the demand for broadband connection, electronic services and ICT 7. marketing, integration and organisational activities aimed at increasing the availability of electronic services and ICT inclusion	For the purposes of the OPIS, it suffices to define the measures on a more general level. Specific technologies will be used depending on the situation in concrete regions, where broadband connection will be supported.
	The development of broadband access in Slovakia needs to be approached in a special way. Above all, it is necessary to focus on geographical conditions, especially in rural areas, and build optical, wireless or metallic networks depending on the character of the environment. Optical access networks and metropolitan optical networks should be built in cities. Optical access networks and regional optical networks should be built in business areas outside cities. In general, it is necessary to create conditions for building networks using investments from EU SF at the level of territorial self-government, which would substantially speed up the construction of the networks. It will be also necessary to address further issues related to the extension and operation of optical networks and the provision of broadband services as such. To this end, a strategic document should be prepared to support their development at the regional level.	Using a specific technology and/or a combination of technologies for building broadband access will be defined based on a feasibility study prepared for priority axis 3.
Central Coordinating Authority	1. Page 4, chapter 1, states the following: “It defines the global objective, priority axes, measures and activities to be supported in the objectives Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment between 2007 and 2013. From the geographical standpoint, it will have an impact on the whole territory of the Slovak Republic.” As part of the Slovak Government’s resolution No. 832 from 8 October 2006, the material “Update of the National Strategic Reference Framework of the Slovak republic for 2007-2013.” According to this material, the OPIS includes only the Convergence objective. Only OP Employment and Social Inclusion, OP Education and OP Research and Development are common for both objectives – Convergence as well as Regional Competitiveness and Employment. We ask the entire document to be adjusted in line with this comment. 2. In accordance with resolution No. 832, the OPIS ought to include also informatisation of health care (e-health). Please, resolve this question in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic by incorporating e-health into OPIS or OP Health.	The issue of irregular activities which affect the objective Regional Competitiveness and Employment will be solved on a <i>pro rata</i> basis. A part of the activities that impact the above mentioned objective will be financed from the state budget of the Slovak Republic.
Partnerships for Prosperity	It is based on several government documents (many of which are not up-to-date anymore), for example on the National Strategy for Broadband access in Slovakia, or	The mentioned documents will be updated shortly.

	the Roadmap for the Introduction of Public Administration Electronic Services.	
	There is not enough documentation, in particular feasibility studies, for example in the area of public administration electronic services in territorial self-government (roadmap) and in the area of regional or metropolitan optical networks.	Feasibility studies will be conducted as soon as possible.
Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia	One of the prerequisites for improving public services is a well-functioning self-government. Besides other things, a functioning self-government depends of efficient city and municipal offices. An important condition for increasing their efficiency is the improvement of processes using information technologies. Many towns, but mostly villages, are only very poorly equipped with computer technology. We realize that extending the facilities and equipment is financially very demanding. The same applies to the connection (of approx. 40% of villages) to the Internet and thus also to the entire electronic communication. We believe that without starting to solve these fundamental issues, local self-government in Slovakia will continue to lag behind Europe, as well as state administration in Slovakia, which will considerably impede their future communication. We have reached the conclusion that the processes related to the elimination of this lagging behind can be started most effectively with large projects with an effective and blanket impact on the Slovak local self-government.	As part of measure 1.2, informatisation of self-government will be tackled by means of national project/projects on the local and regional level.
	We have prepared the project aimed at the creation of a Municipal Data Centre in collaboration with ITAS. The main idea of the project is to provide software applications needed to process individual agendas of municipal or city councils. The establishment of this kind of specialised municipalities data centre would – in the long term – save money for the local self-government, and would be of great importance mostly for smaller, insufficiently equipped municipal offices. The only suitable way how this kind of project could be implemented is making it a national project. It is hard to imagine that over 1,500 municipalities would apply for support in demand-driven projects.	see comment by ITAS
	Another thing that would have a significant impact on the life of the citizens is a simplification of procedures in various offices, which takes a lot of time and energy. In regions, there are groups of people who cannot really be assumed to use computers in these situations. Therefore, we have prepared the <i>Integrated service locations</i> project (in collaboration with ITAS). The aim of this project is to unify the services in order to make it possible to take care of them in one place, and that besides the Internet, people should have access to these services also through a sufficiently broad network of physical service locations. This may help significantly improve the quality and accessibility of public administration services.	The project has been put on the list of national OPIS projects.
	page 22, chapter 4.1. Insert the following: The main objective of the Operational programme is to radically improve the quality of services provided by various public administration units (state administration, regional and local self-government). ICT is a very efficient tool for increasing the efficiency of processes, but that is not enough. Informatisation cannot be an end in itself. The essence of the processes and their alignment and embedment into an appropriate legislative framework is crucial. Only then can a breakthrough result be achieved. This must be the fundamental goal of the Operational programme.	Within OPIS, this will include a re-structuring of public administration processes.

Annex 11 List of member of the Partnership for the OPIS

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| 1. Štefan Adamec | OG SR, advisor to the Prime Minister |
| 2. Ivan Zemko | OG SR, general director, European Policy Section |
| 3. Ivan Šiagi
Administration | OG SR, director, Department for Informatics and Rationalisation of State |
| 4. Ján Miškovský | OG SR, advisor to the Prime Minister |
| 5. Ivan Ištvanffy | OG SR, advisor to the Head of the Office |
| 6. Dušan Halgaš | MF SR, advisor to the Minister |
| 7. Peter Kažimír | MF SR, State Secretary |
| 8. Albert Németh | MF SR, director, EU Budget Department |
| 9. Peter Szczeczina | MF SR, Funds Methodology Department |
| 10. Mária Kompišová | MF SR, General Director, European Affairs Section |
| 11. Denisa Žiláková | MTPT SR, General Director, Information Society Section |
| 12. Miroslav Kukučka | MTPT SR, Government Plenipotentiary for Information Society |
| 13. Katarína Tomková | MCRD SR, director, Central Co-ordinating Authority |
| 14. Renáta Pečová | MCRD SR, SPD 2 Management Department |
| 15. Ivan Rybárik | MEc SR, State Secretary |
| 16. Miriam Kováčiková | MEd SR, General Director, European Integration Section |
| 14. Daniela Šipošová | MEd SR, director, Informatics Department |
| 15. Viera Tomanová | MLSAF SR, Minister |
| 16. Vladimír Čechot | MI SR, State Secretary |
| 17. Jaroslav Izák | MEEn SR, Minister |
| 18. Ladislav Šimko | MC SR, director, International Relations Department |
| 19. Anna Levčíková | MA SR, director, Informatics Department |
| 20. Juraj Karovič | MH SR, advisor to the Minister |
| 21. Zuzana Pikulová | MH SR, director, Foreign Assistance Project Unit |
| 22. Jozef Kaffka | MJ SR, general director, Justice Informatics and Statistics Section |
| 23. Ján Kubiš | MFA SR, Minister |

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| 24. Juraj Michňa | TO SR, vice-chairman |
| 25. Oliver Moravčík | STU, dean, Faculty of Material and Technology |
| 26. Ladislav Hluchý | SAS, director, Informatics Institute |
| 27. Vladimír Vojtek | STU, Faculty of Information and Information Technology |
| 28. Milan Ištván | Partnerships for Prosperity, executive director |
| 29. Juraj Sabaka | ITAS, president |
| 30. Ján Šebo | CTF, chairman |
| 31. Vladimír Ondrovič | ATO SR, chairman |
| 32. Marián Krško | Slovak Association for Electronic Commerce, executive director |
| 33. Tibor Papp | Lučenčania Civil Association, Lučenec |
| 34. Milan Rajčák | Bratislava self-governing region |
| 35. Eva Ďurovská | Nitra self-governing region |
| 36. Mária Karpátyová | Trnava self-governing region |
| 37. Róbert Galko | Trenčín self-governing region |
| 38. Erika Lamačková | Žilina self-governing region |
| 39. Vladimír Laššák | Banská Bystrica self-governing region |
| 40. Stanislav Kubánek | Prešov self-governing region |
| 41. Peter Ťapák | Košice self-governing region |
| 42. Miroslav Drobný | UTVS, chairman of the commission for the informatisation of the self-government |
| 43. Milan Muška | ATVS, vice-chairman |