

# SLOVAKIA



**0.12%** GENUINE AID/GNI

**0.13%** TOTAL AID/GNI



**One often imagines humanitarian aid in a far foreign country, however this is not true for Slovakia anymore. We have to defend Ukrainian freedom and solidarity.”**

The prime minister Eduard Heger,  
Ambreila Development Forum, 24 May 2022

## MAIN CHANGES IN 2021

In 2021, total Slovak spending on ODA equaled EUR 131 million, or 0.14% of GNI, with bilateral aid of EUR 31 million. The increase from 2020 was mainly due to the increase in contributions to the EU in multilateral aid and non systematic aid related to the COVID-19 response.

Disregarding the inflated aid and COVID-19 related activities, bilateral aid is only 13% of total aid. This imbalance not only stands out against the percentages for the majority of DAC OECD members but leaves the Slovak Republic with very limited space to significantly boost its international programmes.

Major changes occurred in geographic priorities that might seem to solve the geographic fragmentation. Nevertheless, a number of countries were delisted without a proper reasoning, consultation with CSOs or a phasing out process. These changes seriously question the predictability and consistency of the SlovakAid strategy.

Evacuation of military and Western personnel from Kabul in August 2021 was a death knell for the SlovakAid endeavour in Afghanistan that had started in 2003, and that was fading out in recent years with no strategy. Slovakia's only LDC partner country in Africa, Ethiopia, was removed from the partner country list at the end of 2021. Ethiopia was not among the partner countries in the first programme cycle (2003–2008) but became one starting in 2009–2013, only to be delisted in 2014–2018 and then back in 2019–2023, before being delisted again in 2021.

Later on, the government confirmed it would abandon the regional approach to Sub-Saharan Africa. Given that scarce resources are being fragmented over a number of countries, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia,

Burundi, Rwanda and Eritrea are not expected to be seen on the list any any time soon.

The above not only means that Slovakia has no single LDC among its partners but also that in general its focus has shifted even more onto Europe. It also showed a lukewarm approach to poverty eradication and the leaving no one behind principle.

The COVID-19 pandemic was not a wake up call to reform the Slovak humanitarian aid system which is outdated, with limited strategic, financial, personnel and expertise capacities. The long term need for a humanitarian strategy started in autumn 2021 but in spite of the relatively intense meetings of the working group, the process affected by interministerial misunderstandings about the process and structure of the strategy, was stopped in December 2021.

## THE GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CSOS

Civil society and NGOs a longstanding SlovakAid partners. However, in the 2013–2021 year-on-year comparison, there was no significant increase in the grant budget for NGOs, although total aid increased from EUR 64 million to EUR 127 million, and bilateral aid went from EUR 12 million to EUR 30 million. This is undoubtedly a painful point in the SlovakAid and NGO partnership. It is not clear how the Foreign Ministry reallocates funds from NGO grants to other tools not accessible for NGOs nor to what extent the Annual Bilateral Aid Programme budget can be relied on or how binding it is. Overall communication with government representatives is open but it is proving to be very difficult to make significant improvements in the space and conditions in which civil society operates.

## TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS FOR 2022 AND BEYOND

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing humanitarian crisis is a potential game changer for the Slovak ODA landscape. So far, the official humanitarian aid of Slovakia was rather low. However, the dynamics between CSOs might partly change given that the largest CSOs, thanks to public solidarity, now operate with a bigger budget than the annual budget of the SlovakAid agency.

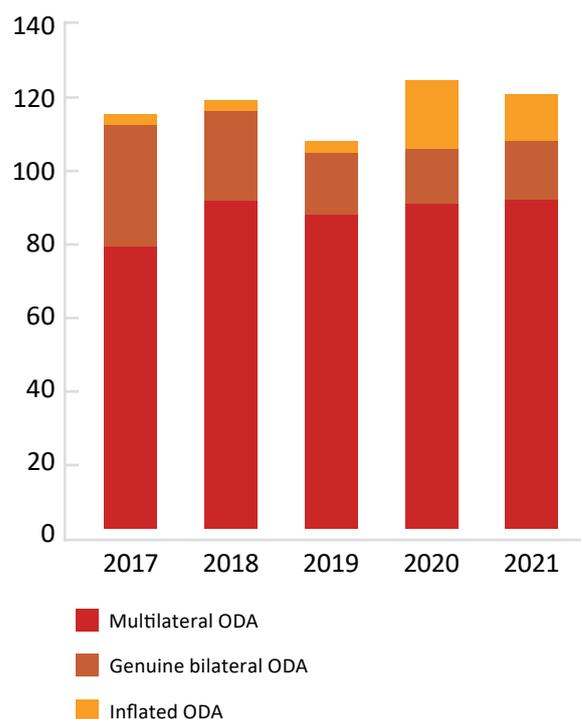
It can be reasonably expected that ODA will be spoiled by in-donor refugee costs. Political instability and unpredictability must also be taken into consideration. The advocacy work might be harder in the context of the present energy crisis and austerity measures. It is difficult to expect a genuine increase in the volume of the Slovak ODA in order to reach 0.33% ODA by 2030. So far, even the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine did not cause any major increase in the budget. In autumn 2022 a consultation process with the CSOs on the new five year Slovak ODA strategy is supposed to start.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SLOVAK GOVERNMENT

- Focus on poverty eradication and leaving no one behind.
- Reform the humanitarian aid system, adopt a humanitarian strategy, improve the overall rapid response capacity and flexibility in project implementation.
- Create and approve a realistic plan for increasing the Slovak development cooperation bilateral aid budget.
- Introduce a strategic dialogue, based on data and evaluations and focused on results, with the main actors of development cooperation.
- Finalise the National Strategy for Global citizenship education (GCE) and the transfer of the GCE agenda from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of education with proper expertise and financial backing.

## SLOVAKIA – GENUINE AND INFLATED ODA

(€ million, constant 2019)



## ODA TO LDCS (€ million, constant 2020)

Year	ODA to LDCs	%GNI	% ODA
2017	17.34	0.02	15.16
2018	18.00	0.02	15.22
2019	19.34	0.02	17.95
2020	18.70	0.02	15.09

## AID MODALITY (€ million, constant 2020)

Year	Bilateral (gross)	Grants	Loans	Loans (% of gross bilateral)
2017	34.0	34.0	0.0	0.0
2018	27.8	27.8	0.0	0.0
2019	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
2020	32.8	32.8	0.0	0.0

**ODA TO CLIMATE FINANCE (€ million, constant 2020)**

	ODA for mitigation	ODA for adaptation	Total climate finance	Adaptation finance as % of climate finance	Climate finance as % of ODA
2017	0.0	0.1	0.2	74.4	0.1
2018	0.0	0.0	0.1	55.2	0.1
2019	0.7	0.7	1.3	50.7	1.3
2020	0.3	0.2	0.5	34.2	0.4

**ODA TO SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY (€ million, constant 2020)**

	Bilateral allocable	Total screened	Not screened	None	Significant	Principal	Significant (% of screened)	Principal (% of screened)
2017	29.8	28.5	1.3	16.6	11.8	0.2	41.3	0.6
2018	24.9	24.9	0.0	12.2	12.8	0.0	51.2	0.0
2019	17.1	17.1	0.0	10.9	5.9	0.2	34.7	1.3
2020	13.4	13.4	0.0	8.8	4.3	0.4	31.7	2.8

**ODA TO SUPPORT CSOs (€ million, constant 2020)**

	Non-CSO	CSO Earmarked	CSO Core funding	Total bilateral CSO support (% bilateral)	Total bilateral CSO support (% ODA)	Core bilateral CSO support (% bilateral)	Core bilateral CSO support (% ODA)
2017	27.7	5.3	1.0	18.6	5.5	2.9	0.9
2018	24.5	3.1	0.1	11.6	2.7	0.5	0.1
2019	15.2	4.6	0.2	24.1	4.5	1.1	0.2
2020	29.0	3.6	0.1	11.4	3.0	0.4	0.1