

Performance Audit of Preparedness for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak
Republic



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Audit Objective 1 – To what extent has the government adapted the Agenda 2030 into its national context?

The Agenda 2030 has not yet been yet adapted into national long-term strategy of sustainable development of the Slovak Republic to full extent.

Audit Objective 2 – Has the government identified and secured the resources and capacities (means of implementation) needed to implement the Agenda 2030?

The government identified and secured financial resources and capacities (means of implementation) only by 2020. This will cover the preparation process for the implementation the Agenda 2030.

Audit Objective 3 – Has the government established a mechanism to monitor, follow-up, review and report on progress towards the implementation of the Agenda 2030?

The government has assigned responsibilities to monitor, follow-up, review and report on the progress towards the implementation of Agenda 2030. The Statistical Office of the SR is responsible for monitoring and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the SR is responsible for reporting on progress towards the implementation of the Agenda 2030. Both institutions have taken initial steps regarding their responsibilities.

Executive summary

The Slovak Republic **made a commitment in September 2015 to implement Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.**

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the SR was identified to lead the preparations on behalf of the Slovak Government. The Statistical Office of the SR is a responsible body for monitoring the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the Slovak Republic. Therefore, these two institutions were included in our audit.

The audit examined whether the Government of the Slovak Republic represented by these institutions was prepared to implement the Agenda 2030.

The audit concluded that **the Government of the Slovak Republic at the end of the audit in August 2018 is not adequately prepared to implement Agenda 2030; however, the effective initial steps have already been done:**

- the **Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the SR has been assigned as the overall coordination body** of Agenda 2030 implementation in the Slovak Republic,
- the process of implementation at the national level is supported by the **Government Council for Agenda 2030**, which is the main forum providing consultation and building new partnerships among the various stakeholders in the field of sustainable development. It consists of 33 members. Most of members are line ministries represented by ministers, but there are also representatives of civil society organizations, academic and employer associations, associations represented local and regional authorities,
- the study called **Baselines for National Priorities of Agenda 2030**, which covered the full range of Agenda 2030 topics in five key areas has been elaborated by the Institute for Forecasting of Slovak Academy of Science. The Government Council for Agenda 2030 approved the study during its first session on December 12, 2017. It identified these priority areas: **silver economy; education; health, environment and the quality of life; transport, energy and the cities in the context of climate change; fighting poverty,**
- the **five key areas were discussed among the state, academics, and the private and the non-profit sectors,**
- during the discussion **the sixth key area** was proposed: **justice, democracy and security.** These areas were approved by the Government Council for Agenda 2030 on May 15, 2018 and by the Slovak Government on June 13, 2018,

- the Statistical Office of the SR founded the **Expert Group for Indicators and Monitoring** and now coordinates the cooperation of relevant data producers
- already in December 2016 the Statistical Office of the SR issued a publication on the national indicators *Slovak Republic and Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030* and recently has mapped the **availability and quality of indicators included in the list of global indicators** created by UN and identified the missing indicators.

National process to set relevant and realistic targets and indicators for SR has not been finished. The Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Informatization is responsible for preparation the document „**Vision and Strategy Development of Slovakia by 2030**“ by the April 30, 2019. The line ministries are responsible for detailed review of existing strategies.

As the Statistical Office of the SR has mapped the availability and quality of global indicators at the national level, they are prepared to define indicators in national targets. However, there is a risk that some of the data for national indicators will be not available and it can demand for some additional sources for the Statistical Office of the SR.

As the process of identification of national targets have not been yet completed, **the respective costs** will be specified afterwards.

The Government **identified and secured sufficient resources and capacities** (means of implementation) necessary to coordinate the preparation process for the implementation the Agenda 2030. The financial resources for overall coordination of Agenda 2030 at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office are secured within the projects financed under the EU funds. The Statistical Office of SR is also benefiting from the EU funded projects however not directly related to the Agenda 2030. **The financing at both institution is secured only till the end of 2020.**

As Agenda 2030 is people-centered, the government needs to hold public awareness campaigns to communicate Agenda 2030 to the public. However, the **public campaign has not been launched yet.**

The main **recommendations** are following:

To the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR (overall coordination body for Agenda 2030):

- To develop the communication strategy, which would be tailored for each specific group, coordinate activities to involve Parliament and President of the Slovak Republic into the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and focus the communication on individual citizens too.
- To initiate closer communication with the Ministry of Finance of the SR and identify national sources of financial allocation for national targets of Agenda 2030.

- To initiative closer internal communication with the Central Coordination Body (respective department at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office) to specify allocations of EU funds in the programming period 2021 - 2027 and get these allocations into compliance with the national targets of Agenda 2030.

To the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (overall coordination body for Agenda 2030) and to the Statistical Office of the SR (responsible body for monitoring of implementation Agenda 2030):

- To cooperate closely while elaborating the document *Vision and Strategy Development of Slovakia by 2030*. The cooperation should aim to identify relevant national targets and related measurable national indicators.
- So far, both coordination bodies secured the financial support for their activities related to Agenda 2030 only out of European Funds. For the sustainability of Agenda 2030 implementation the SAO SR recommended to both these institutions envisage a possible need to increase their budget for tasks related to Agenda 2030, increase of human resources and ask Ministry of Finance of the SR to secure adequate national sources.

Figure 1 SDGs semaphore of preparedness for implementation of SDGs in SR



The audit results are illustrated by the colours of the semaphore:

- the process which is sufficiently secured is highlighted in **green colour**,
- if some initial steps have been done, the process is highlighted in **orange colour**,
- if no significant steps have been done, the process is highlighted in **red colour**.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Audit topic

This audit focused on preparedness for implementation the Agenda 2030. We needed to understand how the Government of the Slovak Republic adapted the Agenda 2030 into national context. We reviewed:

- planning processes,
- setting specialized institutional arrangements for implementation of Agenda 2030,
- raising public awareness,
- tailoring sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030 (SDGs) to country context,
- multi-stakeholder approaches for SDGs integration,
- enabling horizontal and vertical policy coherence,
- budgeting and capacity to implement Agenda 2030,
- data collection and monitoring of progress towards the implementation of Agenda 2030.

Why the audit was conducted

Since the Government of the SR signed up for Agenda 2030 in September 2015, the Supreme Audit Office of the SR considered the year 2018 to be the right time to review the level of preparedness for Agenda 2030 implementation.

Audit objectives and audit questions

Audit Objective 1 – To what extent has the government adapted the Agenda 2030 into its national context?

- Audit question 1: Have the institutional arrangements for implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda been set?
- Audit question 2: Has the government tailored global SDG targets and indicators to the national context, taking into account national circumstances?
- Audit question 3: Has the government informed and involved citizens and stakeholders in the processes and institutional arrangement to integrate the 2030 Agenda, including national and local government, legislative bodies, the public, civil societies and the private sector?

Audit Objective 2 – Has the government identified and secured the resources and capacities (means of implementation) needed to implement the Agenda 2030?

- Audit question 1: Has the government identified and secured funding sources for the implementation of the Agenda 2030?
- Audit question 2: Have the means of implementation been mobilized?

Audit Objective 3 – Has the government established a mechanism to monitor, follow-up, review and report on progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

- Audit question 1: Has the government assigned responsibilities to monitor, follow-up, review and report on the progress towards the implementation?
- Audit question 2: Have the processes to ensure the quality, availability and required level of disaggregation of data been in place?

Audit scope

The audit team assessed the level of preparedness of the whole of the government for implementation of Agenda 2030 in the Slovak Republic by analyzing its performance and activities since September 2015.

A whole government approach requires all ministries and government institutions to work in combination to achieve results that they cannot achieve when acting in isolation. The audit is a combination of system and result oriented approach.

The audit evaluated the activities (and outcome of activities) of the respective departments at the audited entities, government council and working groups.

Entities covered during the audit:

1. Deputy Prime Minister’s Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization
Respective departments: Investment Management Section (Department of Agenda 2030 Coordination, Strategic Planning Department)
2. Statistical Office of the SR
Respective departments: General Methodology and Registers Directorate

Audited period: 09/2015 – 8/2018

The audit team consisted of:

- Lubica Gazdova, General Director of Audit Department I. (middle management supervisor)
- Iveta Faberova, Strategy Department (team leader)
- Jana Juriova, Strategy Department, Director of Analytical Unit (team member)
- Vladimir Matus, Audit Department I, Environment and Agriculture Unit (team member)

Audit criteria and their sources

The audit criteria were based on **general expectations – what “should be done”** to secure successful implementation of Agenda 2030 in Slovak Republic.

Audit methodology, sources of data, data gathering and analysis applied

Data collection used:

- desk review of documents submitted by the auditees,
- interviews with the respective managers at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization and Statistical Office of the SR,
- interviews with the experts and NGOs.

Data analysis procedures used:

- analysis of documents,
- content analysis of the interviews,
- RACI analysis,
- stakeholder mapping.

Standards used for the audit.

Planning, conducting and reporting an audit of preparedness has been conducted in compliance with the ISSAIS in performance audit.

Chapter 2 – Overview

The current mandate for implementation of Agenda 2030 in Slovak Republic is derived from the following **government decisions**:

- Government Decision No. 95/2016, which enshrined in it the principle of shared responsibility for the implementation of sustainable development between the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investment and Infomatization alongside the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic,
- Government Decision No. 350/2017, which approved the Action Plan submitted by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the SR on support to the implementation of Agenda 2030 in relation to global issues,
- Government Decision No. 11/2017, which tasked the Deputy Prime Minister's Office to draft a National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030 to support the national implementation of Agenda 2030 and to deliver a draft national implementation strategy for Agenda 2030 on May 31, 2017,
- Government Decision No. 273/2018, which approved six key priority areas for sustainable development of Slovakia by 2030 and tasked the Deputy Prime Minister's Office to draft document „**Vision and Strategy Development of Slovakia by 2030**“ by April 30, 2019.

The implementation of Agenda 2030 at the international level is coordinated by the **Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the SR.**

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the SR coordinates the implementation of Agenda 2030 at the national level. In compliance with the Act of Competencies this office is responsible for strategic planning and development of a national strategic investment framework.

- **Investment Management Section** of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and its respective departments are playing a key role in the implementation of Agenda 2030.
 - **Department of Agenda 2030 Coordination** is responsible for overall coordination and monitoring the tasks related to Agenda 2030.
 - **Strategic Planning Department** is responsible for identification of the financial support for national priorities implementation (financial allocation and sources).

The process of implementation at the national level is supported by the **Government Council for Agenda 2030**. The Council is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The technical support for Council is provided by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office. The Council is supported by a mirror committee of officials called *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan*, which is directly subordinated to the Council. There is also *Expert group for indicators and monitoring* coordinated by the Statistical Office of the SR.

The Council serves as the main forum providing consultation and building new partnerships among the various stakeholders in the field of sustainable development. It is a minister-level oversight body; all the sector ministries are represented at the Council.

The first session of Government Council for Agenda 2030 took place in Bratislava on December 12, 2017. The council approved the study elaborated by the **Institute for Forecasting of Slovak Academy of Science** called *Baselines for national priorities of Agenda 2030* and also timetable for discussion on the baselines among the state, academics, and the private and the non-profit sectors in various Slovak regions.

After the discussion (participative process), six key areas for sustainable development for Slovakia by 2030 were proposed. These key areas were approved by the Government Council for Agenda 2030 on May 15, 2018 and by the Slovak Government on June 13, 2018.

Chapter 3 – Integration of the 2030 Agenda into the national context

Theme 1: Integration of the SDGs into national planning strategies, policies and processes

The national targets of sustainable development of Slovakia by 2030 have not been defined by the end of the audit in August 2018, but the overall coordination body (Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR) has made effective measures for their identification by April 30, 2019.

Actually, Slovakia has not one overall long-term strategy (long-term vision). There are over 300 resort strategies existing that indicates the risk of overlapping or contradiction. These partial strategies are often not sufficiently monitored and do not have measurable impact indicators.

Last year (2017) the Slovak government started to integrate the Agenda 2030 into the national context. Firstly, it decided to define the national priority areas. The starting point of this work was done by the *Institute for Forecasting of Slovak Academy of Science* that cooperated with resort analytical units. SAO SR appreciated the involvement of these internal units in the process. Based on results of previous audits the line ministries in most cases outsourced costly expert analysis.

They elaborated the study *Baselines for National Priorities of Agenda 2030* that covered the Agenda 2030 topics in following five key priority areas:

- silver economy (in the context of ageing population),
- education,
- health, environment and the quality of life,
- transport, energy and the cities in the context of climate change,
- fighting poverty.

These areas were discussed among the various stakeholders: state, academics, and the private and the non-profit sectors. The participative process was coordinated by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR. During the discussion the sixth key area was proposed: justice, democracy and security. The Government Council for Agenda 2030 approved all six key areas during the second session on May 15, 2018 and the Slovak Government on June 13, 2018.

The Slovak government tasked the Deputy Prime Minister to draft document *Vision and Strategy Development of Slovakia by 2030* by April 30, 2019. The document should set the national targets and measurable national indicators in the approved six key priority areas.

Theme 2: Alignment of budgets, policies and programs to the SDGs

There is no evidence on securing the national budget allocation to achieve the national targets against national indicators for the time being with clear assignment “what to finance from which source.”

However, it is important to say that within the existing numerous national sector policies and sectorial programs the European Investment Structural Funds financing is currently available. This financing is tailored to support many particular targets which are included in the Agenda 2030.

The Government of the SR is in initial stage of preparation for implementation of the Agenda 2030. A complex analysis of financing of SDGs has not been elaborated yet because it is not finalized what has to be done in different sectors.

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office envisages the financial support for the national targets of Agenda 2030 from different sources – national budget, EU funds and non-state financing.

The financial allocations will be specified in the National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030. The Deputy Prime Minister was tasked by the Government Decision No. 111/2017 to draft a National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030 by the end of June 2018. The pilot version of the plan includes list of indicative projects that resulted from existing sector strategies. The only source of financial allocation to support these projects are EU funds allocated for the Slovak Republic in the programming period 2014 - 2020. There is a risk that sufficient financial resources for national targets by 2030 will not be secured.

That's why the Deputy Prime Minister's Office was recommended to initiate closer communication with the Ministry of Finance of the SR and identify national sources of financial allocation for national targets of Agenda 2030.

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office was also recommended to initiate closer internal communication with the Central Coordination Body (respective department at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office) to specify allocations of EU funds for the programming period 2021 - 2027 and get these allocations into compliance with the national targets of Agenda 2030.

Theme 3: Policy integration and coordination

The Slovak government established sufficient institutional framework for implementation of Agenda 2030. The implementation of Agenda 2030 at national level is coordinated by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization. Effective mechanism for promoting coherence across sectors and across levels of government has been developed by establishing the *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan*. The process of implementation is supported by the oversight body - Government Council for Agenda 2030.

The following respective departments responsible for the tasks related to Agenda 2030 are at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization: Department of Agenda 2030 Coordination and Strategic Planning Department within the Investment Management Section.

The *Government Council for Agenda 2030* was established in July 24, 2017 by the Government Decision No. 350/2017. This minister-level oversight consists of 33 members – sector ministers, heads of associations of local authorities, employer and regional self-government associations, civil society and academic organizations.

The Deputy Prime Minister established committee of officials called “*Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan*”, which is directly subordinated to the Government Council for Agenda 2030.

The Deputy Prime Minister’s Office initiated establishment of *Expert Group on Monitoring and Indicators*, which is coordinated by the Statistical Office of the SR.

Theme 4: Creating ownership and engaging stakeholders in integrating the SDGs into the national context

Various stakeholders in the field of sustainable development are integrated in the *Government Council for Agenda 2030* and *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030*.

Since 2017 they focused mainly on the definition of national priority areas, national targets and indicators and preparation of National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030.

The first session of Government Council for Agenda 2030 took place in Bratislava on December 12, 2017. The Council approved the study elaborated by the Institute for Forecasting of Slovak Academy of Science *Baselines for national priorities of Agenda 2030* and timetable of discussion on the baselines with among the state, academics, and the private and the non-profit sectors in various Slovak regions.

After the discussion (participative process), the sixth key area was proposed: justice, democracy and security. These areas were discussed and approved by the Government Council for Agenda 2030 during the second session on May 15, 2018.

The *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan for 2018 – 2030* is directly subordinated to the Government Council for Agenda 2030. The group at the working level discussed the issues related to the process of identification of national priority areas, national targets and indicators and National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2020.

Involvement of various stakeholders to the process of identification of national targets by 2030 through the membership in the Council and working group is creating the ownership of the sustainable development goals in Slovakia.

Theme 5: Inclusiveness and leaving no one behind

Different government officials and non-state stakeholders at national, regional and local level were integrated at the *Government Council for Agenda 2030* and *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan*.

The proposal of national priorities, national targets and indicators for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030 were discussed among the state, academics, private and non-profit stakeholders.

The Government Council for Agenda 2030 was established in July 24, 2017 by the Government Decision No. 350/2017. This minister – level oversight body consists of 33 members – line ministers, civil society and academic organizations, employer associations and representatives of local and regional self-government.

Local authorities are represented by the heads of two associations:

1. Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia

The Union consists of almost all large and medium-large cities, in total 78 – full members, 9 municipalities and 5 special members – municipal parts of Bratislava and Košice.

2. Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS).

It is the largest non-governmental organization in Slovakia associating cities and municipalities. Approximately 95% of Slovak local governments are members of ZMOS.

Regional self-government is represented by the head of association of eight self-governing regions called SK8.

The Deputy Prime Minister established committee of officials called “*Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan*”, which is directly subordinated to the Government Council for Agenda 2030. The working group consists of 15 representatives of central government institutions and 42 representatives of various society organizations, academic and employer associations (called chamber of major stakeholders).

The Council and working group are involved in the process of identification of national priority areas, national targets and indicators and National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030. The broad discussion on development challenges with different stakeholders will help to set relevant national targets for sustainable development of the SR and create ownership and engaging stakeholders in integrating the SDGs into the national context. The principle “leaving no one behind” will be implemented.

Chapter 4 – Resources and capacities for implementing the 2030 Agenda

Theme 1: Identification of needs and required resources and capacities for implementing the SDGs.

The government identified and secured financial resources and capacities (means of implementation) for implementing the SDGs only by the year 2020. This will cover the preparation process for implementation the Agenda 2030.

The financial resources for overall coordination of Agenda 2030 at the Deputy Prime Minister´s Office of the SR are secured within the projects financed under the EU funds. The Statistical Office of SR is also benefiting from the EU funded projects, however not directly related to the Agenda 2030.

The financial allocation needs to implement the SDGs have not been secured in the national budget. As the process of identification of national targets have not been yet completed, the respective costs will be specified afterwards.

The overall coordination of Agenda 2030 is provided by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR. This is a regular state administration organisation, but all its activities related to Agenda 2030 are covered by the project financed from the European Investment and Structural Funds.

The project covers the wages of the staff of Department of Agenda 2030 Coordination (head of the department and three managers), necessary IT and other technical equipment an external experts.

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the SR hired experts from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (“OECD”) to provide technical assistance in the field of strategic planning by Central Government Authorities. The project started July 1, 2017 and was completed by June 30, 2018. During the period the OECD experts provided proposals for the legal and institutional framework of Agenda 2030, strategic planning, strategic foresight, goals and indicators, analysis of methodology and measurement framework, priority setting framework for the National Investment Plan, financing aspects and investment packages.

Experts from NGO called PDCS were organizing discussions among the state, academics, private and the non-profit sectors on national priority areas.

The total budget of the mentioned project is 942 164 eur and the project should be completed by January 2021.

After this date financing, human resources and technical support is not identified and assured.

That´s why the SAO SR recommended to the Deputy Prime Minister´s Office of the SR to secure financing of the Department of Agenda 2030 Coordination primarily from national budget, as it is the strategic priority of the Slovak Republic.

Statistical Office of the SR, which is an entity responsible for monitoring on progress towards the implementation of Agenda 2030 as well as for the related data processing is financed directly by state budget, allocated annually. The significant downsize in state budget allocation has occurred in the period 2007 - 2017. The total budget in 2016 was 22 mil. eur.

In the current stage, the Statistical Office of SR is carrying out their tasks related to Agenda 2030, data processing and monitoring, employing one person on full time devoted exclusively to Agenda 2030 and further 40 employers working alongside on other tasks. For the time being the employers and IT available are in the adequate quality and quantity. As the Agenda 2030 contains as well the indicators for which data do not exist (Tier 3) and /or the indicators for which methodology and data needs are not known yet (Tier 2), it is not known the possible additional ICT comparing to the current ICT, and additional qualified staff. Both these factors could potentially evoke increase of cost accordingly.

That's why the SAO SR recommended to Statistical Office of the SR to communicate with the Ministry of Finance of the SR in order to assure sustainability of the Agenda 2030 monitoring to envisage a possible need to increase its budget to comply with eventual increase of tasks related to data processing and necessary human resources increase.

Theme 2: Mobilizing partnerships

The Government Council for Agenda 2030 and Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan for 2018 – 2030 serve as the main forums providing consultation and building new partnerships among the various stakeholders in the field of sustainable development.

The Government Decision No. 350/2017 established the *Government Council for Agenda 2030* in July 24, 2017. This minister-level oversight consists of 33 members – line ministers, heads of associations of local authorities, employer and regional self-government associations, civil society and academic organizations.

The Deputy Prime Minister established committee of officials called *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan*, which is directly subordinated to the Government Council for Agenda 2030. The working group consists of two sub-groups: representatives of central government institutions and chamber of major stakeholders.

The members of both bodies have been involved in the process of identification of national priority areas, national targets and indicators and National Investment Plan for 2018 - 2030.

Theme 3: Managing risks

Actually, there is no current risk assessment at the level of government.

However, due to the fact that Agenda 2030 is very complex and its planning and implementation requires the **whole government approach** including the involvement of

municipalities, regions and private sector, the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR is preparing a long term conceptual system to overcome the risk of fragmentation. Except the fact that there is in place the *Government Council for Agenda 2030* appointed by Government Decision No. 350 by July, 24 2017.

Particular task forces have been established to integrate individual sector policies, a new long-term strategy for the development of the Slovak Republic by 2030 will be elaborated under the coordination of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR. The new strategy will define development goals for each priority area. The individual sectors and other stakeholders will get their policies and programs into compliance with the national overall strategy accordingly.

Chapter 5 – Monitoring, follow-up, review and reporting on progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Theme 1: Responsibilities, mechanisms and processes for monitoring, follow-up, review and reporting

The Statistical Office of the SR (SO SR) is responsible for coordinating the monitoring of the fulfilment of the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in the Slovak Republic; it has taken the first steps to identify the responsibilities of relevant data producers.

The responsibility was imposed by the Government Decision No. 350/2017 on July 24, 2017 on the President of the SO SR in cooperation with respective ministries to develop and monitor the set of national indicators (until May 31, 2018). According to the same decision, the responsibility for review and reporting was given to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization. Interviews with directors at the SO SR and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization confirmed that they cooperate closely to set up the monitoring process for progress in implementing Agenda 2030.

The General Methodology and Registers Directorate at the SO SR coordinates the whole process of developing a set of national indicators. The staff working on the related tasks has adequate education and skills, though there is only one employee whose capacity is allocated solely on Agenda 2030 and whose job description contains activities connected to Agenda 2030.

The Act on State Statistics (Act No. 540/2001 Coll.) regulates the cooperation of the SO SR with the line ministries, which is carried out based on the approved State Statistical Surveys Program, currently for period 2018 - 2020. Moreover, SO SR founded the *Expert group for indicators and monitoring* and now coordinates the cooperation of relevant data producers. The President of the SO SR approved and signed the statute of the *Expert group for indicators and monitoring*.

Theme 2: Performance indicators and data

The list of national indicators is still in the preparatory phase, as the national targets in priority areas have not yet been defined. Therefore, deadline for the preparation of the list of national indicators has been postponed to April 30, 2019. Meanwhile, the SO SR focused on mapping the availability of global indicators.

In government decision No. 273/2018 of June 13, 2018, the original deadline for the President of the SO SR to cooperate on the development of indicators for the national priorities and on the monitoring of these indicators shifts from "until May 31, 2018" to "until April 30, 2019".

Simultaneously with the identification of national targets in the six approved national priority areas, the SO SR will identify and propose national target indicators. National targets and indicators will be prepared at the same time as the creation of the long-term vision and strategy for the development of the SR, which is the responsibility of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization and should reflect the objectives of the Agenda 2030.

However, SO SR already in December 2016 issued a publication on the national indicators *Slovak Republic and Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030*. There are included several available indicators for each goal of Agenda 2030.

Recently, the SO SR has mapped the situation regarding the availability and quality of indicators in the list of global indicators created by UN. The General Methodology and Registers Directorate at SO SR, as a national contact point for SDGs, provided information and data on the list of global indicators, and in this context also cooperated with experts from the OECD, UNECE and UN.

The methodology of auditing global indicators ensures the identification of the missing data or data with poor quality and identifies the data producer too if any. However, only 96 of all 241 indicators have the exact definition and methodology.

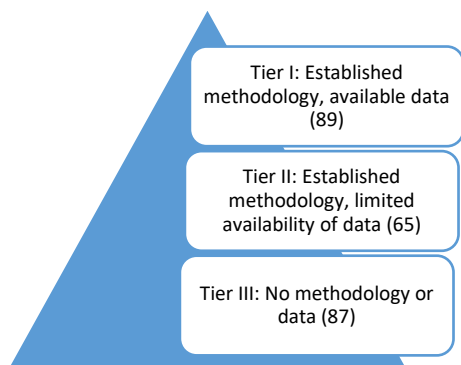
The indicators are divided into three groups:

Tier 1 - the indicator is precisely defined, has established methodology and is regularly published in min. 50% of all countries,

Tier 2 - the indicator is precisely defined, it has an established methodology, but it is not published on a regular basis,

Tier 3 - for the indicator, there is no methodology yet, but it is evolving.

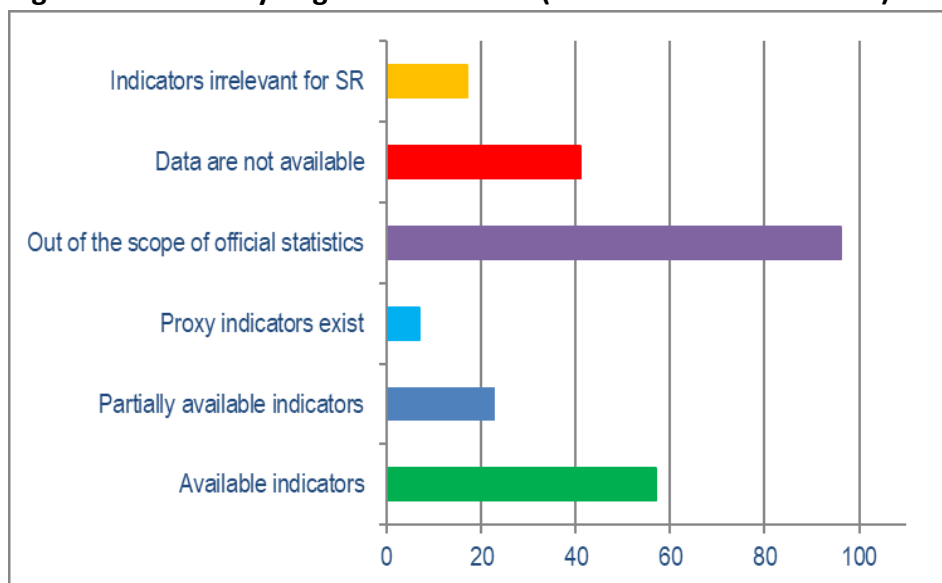
Figure 2 Global indicators in the SR



Source: SO SR

The audit of the SO SR showed that 57 global indicators could be calculated from the available sources. 23 can be constructed partially and for 7 indicators it is possible to calculate a proxy indicator that approximates the desired SDG indicator due to a different specification (e.g. different age groups). 96 indicators were identified outside of the scope of official statistics. There are no data available for 41 indicators and 17 indicators are considered irrelevant for SR. Most of 41 indicators that are not available are included in the Tier 3 group.

Figure 3 Availability of global indicators (the number of indicators)



Source: SO SR

This list of global indicators can represent the starting point for developing the list of national indicators. It will come to it together with the finalization of national targets. However, there is a risk that data for some indicators in national priorities have not been surveyed yet and that to collect them could demand for additional sources and capacities.

Theme 3: Communication to stakeholders.

The awareness of the Agenda 2030 has been raised among the government officials and non-state stakeholders who are integrated at the *Government Council for Agenda 2030* and *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan*. The public national campaign has not been launched yet.

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the SR published at its website information related to Agenda 2030 – government decisions, meetings of the Government Council on Agenda 2030 and working group, relevant documents and minutes.

The Statistical Office of the SR is currently working on the preparation of own web page where they will publish the available global indicators.

As Agenda 2030 is people-centered, the government needs to hold public awareness campaigns (including Audio/Visual/Print Media) to communicate 2030 Agenda to the public. However, the public campaign has not been launched yet.

Expected benefits of the campaign is better awareness of the Agenda 2030 key principles. The public will be aware of the importance of Agenda 2030.

That's why the SAO SR recommends to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office:

- to develop the communication strategy tailored for each specific group - government officials, representatives of self-government institutions, academic and non-government organizations and private sector,
- coordinate its activities to involve Parliament and President of the Slovak Republic into the implementation of the Agenda 2030,
- focus the communication on individual citizens.

Chapter 6 – Analysis of audited entities comments

All comments were solved during the discussions and interviews with audited entities. The auditees accepted the SAO SR recommendations. The remedial actions taken will be monitored by the SAO SR.

Chapter 7 – Conclusions

Audit Objective 1 – To what extent has the government adapted the 2030 Agenda into its national context?

The government has set the **sufficient institutional arrangements** for implementation of Agenda 2030. The Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR for Investments and Informatization coordinates the implementation of Agenda 2030 at the national level.

The minister - level oversight body - *Government Council for Agenda 2030* supports this process. A mirror committee of officials called *Working group for Agenda 2030 and National Investment Plan for 2018 – 2030* supports the Council. There is also *Expert Group on indicators and monitoring* coordinated by the Statistical Office of the SR.

The global SDGs targets have not been yet tailored to the national long-term strategy of sustainable development; however, there are several positive steps that had been done:

- completed brief inventory of the national development plans and strategies,
- goals and targets of existing sector strategic plan have been compared with the global SDGs and gaps have been identified,
- six key priority areas which cover the full range of Agenda 2030 have been identified,
- six key priority areas were discussed among the state, academics, private and the non-profit sectors and approved by the Government Council for Agenda 2030 a Slovak Government afterwards,
- the Slovak Government tasked the Deputy Prime Minister to elaborate by April 30, 2019 the document *Vision and Strategy Development of Slovakia by 2030*, which should set relevant national targets and related measurable national indicators in the approved six key priority areas.

As Agenda 2030 is people-centered, the government needs to hold public awareness campaigns (including Audio/Visual/Print Media) to communicate 2030 Agenda to the public. However, the public campaign has not been launched yet.

Audit Objective 2 – Has the government identified and secured the resources and capacities (means of implementation) needed to implement the 2030 Agenda?

The financial allocation needs to implement the 2030 Agenda have not been secured in the national budget. As the process of identification of national targets have not been yet completed, the respective costs will be specified afterwards. The Deputy Prime Minister's Office envisages the financial support for achieving the national targets also with the support of EU funds and non-state financing.

The Government identified and secured sufficient resources and capacities (means of implementation) necessary to coordinate the preparation process for the implementation the 2030 Agenda. However, the financing is secured only till the end of 2020.

Audit Objective 3 – Has the government established a mechanism to monitor, follow-up, review and report on progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

The government has taken initial steps to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the progress of SDGs implementation. The Statistical Office of the SR is responsible for monitoring and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the SR is responsible for follow-up, review and reporting on the progress. The first summary report on progress in implementation in Agenda 2030 must be issued by June 30, 2020 and then every second year by 2030.

Statistical Office of the SR in December 2016 issued a publication on the national indicators *Slovak Republic and Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030* and recently has mapped the **availability and quality of indicators included in the list of global indicators** created by UN and identified the missing indicators.

National targets and measurable national indicators are supposed to be defined in the document *Vision and Strategy Development of Slovakia by 2030*. This document has to be completed by April 30, 2019. Parallel elaboration of national targets and national indicators is demanding for close cooperation of responsible bodies.

Chapter 8 – Recommendations

Audit Objective 1 – To what extent has the government adapted the 2030 agenda into its national context?

To the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR (overall coordination body for Agenda 2030):

- To develop the communication strategy tailored for each specific group: government officials, representatives of self-government bodies, academic and non-government organizations and private sector.
- To coordinate its activities to involve Parliament and President of the Slovak Republic into the implementation of the Agenda 2030.
- To focus the communication on Agenda 2030 also on individual citizens.

To the Deputy Prime Minister's Office of the SR (overall coordination body for Agenda 2030) and to the Statistical Office of the SR (responsible body for monitoring SDGs):

- To cooperate closely while elaborating the document *Vision and Strategy Development of Slovakia by 2030*. The cooperation should aim to identify relevant national targets and related measurable national indicators.

Audit Objective 2 – Has the government identified and secured the resources and capacities (means of implementation) needed to implement the 2030 Agenda?

To the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (overall coordination body for Agenda 2030):

- To initiate closer communication with the Ministry of Finance of the SR and identify national sources of financial allocation for national targets of Agenda 2030.
- To initiate closer internal communication with the Central Coordination Body (respective department at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office) to specify allocations of EU funds for the programming period 2021 - 2027 and get these allocations into compliance with the national targets of Agenda 2030.

- To initiate closer communication with the Ministry of Finance of the SR to assure national financing connected to the national overall coordination after 2020 when the financing from EU funds will expire.

Audit Objective 3 – Has the government established a mechanism to monitor, follow-up, review and report on progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

To the Statistical Office of the SR (responsible body for monitoring SDGs):

- To communicate with the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic in order to assure sustainability of the Agenda 2030 monitoring to envisage a possible need to increase its budget to comply with eventual increase of tasks related to data processing and necessary human resources increase.