

SECOND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT OF THE PROGRAMME OF LANDSCAPE REVITALISATION AND INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT FOR 2011

Introduction

The second implementation project (hereinafter 2nd IP) of the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management in the SR for 2011 complies with point B.2 of the Government SR provision No. 744/2010 of 27 October 2010. Financing of the second implementation project is provided within the approved limits of the State budget, within the budget chapter of the Government Office SR and the European Social Fund, managed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR.

Revitalisation of the damaged parts of the landscape within the 2nd IP creates the opportunity to employ more than 3,500 people directly from municipalities. The first implementation project of the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management SR for 2011 (hereinafter 1st IP) confirmed that creating conditions for new jobs directly in municipalities can significantly improve revitalisation of damaged parts of the landscape and therefore reduce flood risks and risks of drought as well as climate change. *Therefore, the aim of the 2nd IP is also to create conditions for 4,200 seasonal job opportunities in a further 350 municipalities in Slovakia.*

Experience gained in the implementation of the 1st IP

The 1st IP approved by the provision of the Government SR No. 183 of 9 March 2011 attracted great interest from municipalities in revitalising the landscape and preventing local floods. A total of 833 municipalities applied for the 1st IP from which, on the basis of stated criteria and priorities, 200 municipalities were selected. Contracts were signed with 190 municipalities. According to preliminary monitoring in these villages, the implementation of projects is already taking place and approximately 55% of works have been carried out. In compliance with §50j of Act No. 5/2004 coll. on employment services, more than 2,500 jobseekers and another 1,000 workers are working on the project, mainly on the contractor's side but also villages. The majority expect that the project shall continue and they will again be employed for restoration of the damaged parts of the landscape in their municipality, and will have the opportunity to protect their village against floods. It must be emphasised that *significant social changes* have been created in villages which made the decision to implement the revitalisation projects. Jobseekers who found this type of employment lost their frustration with feeling socially redundant, family relationships improved within villages and communities have become more cohesive since after mutual discussions, they focused their attention on resolving the issue of protecting their village against floods, and not upon being traumatised because of insecurity and fear regarding when the next flood wave arrives.

Other positives related to the 1st IP arose from preliminary monitoring. Self-governing municipalities feel that in contrast with their entire history, the method of financing the proposed measures is now more transparent than any other schemes because *the criteria which provide municipalities with space for effective use of financial means were precisely given*, and finances are not being wasted on unsuccessful projects. If the

criteria had been set as previously, 633 municipalities which applied for the project and were unsuccessful would have spent more than 1.5 million EUR on projects which were not possible to be supported at that time. Effective use of means is mainly important for economically weaker municipalities where there is high unemployment, a lack of finances and frequent flooding. In terms of regional division, projects within the 1st IP are being implemented in 86 municipalities in the Prešov region, 40 municipalities in the Žilina region, 32 municipalities in the Banská Bystrica region, 17 municipalities in the Košice region, 7 municipalities in the Trenčín region, 5 municipalities in the Nitra region and 4 municipalities in the Trnava region.

Another significant contribution by the 1st IP is that municipalities could start to implement projects before the summer rainy period. **Measures implemented even during this year's storms significantly contributed to the protection of villages against local flooding** and a reduction in flood risk. The amount of sediment from water erosion of soil and beds, which flooded villages in the past, remains in constructed objects far away from villages, to which much cleaner water flows, with a far less volume of mud and gravel than in the past. In many cases, citizens are more afraid of washed down mud than water since the incoming water will flow away but the mud remains and devalues the flooded properties.

The Government Office SR signed contracts with 190 municipalities for implementation of **6.097m.m³** of water retention measures with a financial volume of **17,552,665 EUR**. This means that the State budget allocated **2.88 EUR per 1 m³**. At the same time, each municipality obtained a contribution towards the creation of new jobs for the unemployed, in accordance with §50j of the Act regarding employment services, from the appropriate Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The above shows that costs for the construction of 1 m³ of a water retention measure represent 3.85 EUR, which is 0.15 EUR less than that proposed in the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management in the SR. From 190 municipalities, 20 municipalities are implementing the project themselves and 170 municipalities via contractors. Each of the villages in their cadastre area are creating an average of 32,089 m³ of water retention measures. Within implementation of the landscape revitalisation project, many municipalities have achieved another bonus. Apart from repair of damaged parts of the landscape, illegal dumps have been removed, and new attractive zones for the development of tourism have been created in those villages, together with the potential for the development of ponds. The great interest from municipalities in being included in the 1st IP, as well as the results achieved to date, the organisation of work and the contribution of local jobseekers confirms the suitability of the selected strategy for project implementation and the good basis for using the experience obtained and its technological development in the 2nd IP.

1. Aim of the second implementation project

The aim of the 2nd IP is to implement projects for revitalisation of the landscape in the damaged parts of forest, agricultural and urban land, which will improve the single cyclical **catchment and retaining of a minimum 3.5m.m³ of rainwater**, contributing towards the elimination of flood risk, start the process of restoring damaged

parts of the landscape and water resources together with improving climate conditions in locations where revitalisation measures are implemented.

A. Revitalisation of damaged parts of the landscape in areas outside villages will be implemented in a maximum of 350 municipalities under the following conditions:

1. The municipality undertakes to implement the project for revitalisation of damaged parts of the landscape which will be able to increase single cyclic retention or slowing drainage of 10,000m³ of rainwater in whole sections of the damaged part of the cadastre.
2. The municipality undertakes to create a minimum of ten seasonal jobs.
3. For implementation of the project, the village shall obtain financial support from the Government Office SR in the maximum amount of 20,000 EUR, and circa 3,000 EUR from the European Social Fund for each created job, for a period of six months in accordance with §50j of the Act regarding employment services.

B. Revitalisation of the damaged parts of inner areas of villages will be implemented in 20 municipalities included in the 2nd IP under the following conditions:

- Ten villages in which the transport infrastructure was damaged by floods in 2010 and 2011 and for restoration, they will utilise the technological solutions for rainwater management using the principle of the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management SR, shall obtain 4 EUR for each created m³ of water retention measure, to a maximum of 100,000 EUR.
- Ten villages which are planning to reconstruct the roofs of public buildings and during this reconstruction, are planning to use the technological solutions for rainwater management using the principle of the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management SR, shall obtain 4 EUR for each created m³ of water retention measure, to a maximum of 20,000 EUR.

2. Criteria for selection of municipalities and their inclusion in the 2nd IP

After approval of the 2nd IP by the Government SR, all municipalities in Slovakia shall be requested to apply for inclusion in this project, as follows:

1. in the application, municipalities undertake to implement the revitalisation project in their cadastre, with the consent of owners, administrators or land users
2. in the application, municipalities undertake to create at least ten seasonal jobs for implementation of water retention measures

Selection of municipalities and their inclusion in the 2nd IP, in the category focusing upon revitalisation of the outer areas of villages shall be carried out on the basis of the following criteria:

- **one point** for each declared grade of flood activity in 2010 and 2011 (*for example, if the village declared 2nd or 3rd degree of flood activity, they will obtain two or three points*).
- **one point** for each small waterway (of local significance) springing up in the village cadastre (*for example, if six streams spring from the ground, they will obtain six points*).
- **one point** for each commenced 5% of documented unemployment in the district (*for*

example, if the district records 14.8% unemployment, they shall obtain three points).

- **one point** if the village submits suitably prepared project documentation detailing measures for revitalisation of the landscape together with their application.
- **one point** if the village submits a landscaping project together with their application.
- **one point** if the village submits a decision regarding utilisation of the area, necessary for implementation of the project, together with their application.

Selection of municipalities and their inclusion in the 2nd IP in the category focusing upon revitalisation of inner areas of villages, shall be carried out on the basis of the following criteria:

- the level of flood damage sustained by village property in 2010 and 2011 (with details of damage to the transport infrastructure).
- a declaration that within the 2nd IP, the village is interested in restoring the transport infrastructure or reconstructing the roofs of public buildings

On the basis of the defined criteria, a list of villages which will implement the project for revitalisation of the landscape in their outer-urban areas will be made, as well as a list of villages which will focus their projects for revitalisation of the landscape upon their urban areas. The first 348 villages with the highest number of points shall be included in the 2nd IP (funds available for 348 villages). These villages must prepare a ***project for revitalisation of the landscape***, which shall mainly include local revitalisation, recultivation, anti-erosion and water retention measures in continuous section (sections) of the cadastre. In the draft of revitalisation measures, municipalities, together with the project specialist sponsor, shall apply the following where necessary: the appropriate legal provisions (Act No. 50/1976 coll. on land planning and building regulations, Act No. 24/2006 coll. regarding environmental impact assessment, Act No. 364/2004 coll. regarding water, Act No. 326/2005 coll. regarding forests, Act No. 543/2002 coll. regarding the protection of nature and the landscape, Act No. 220/2004 coll. regarding the protection of agricultural land and Act No. 7/2010 coll. regarding protection against floods, or other Acts) and shall have project consultation with the appropriate person authorised for performing geological works. A project prepared in this way shall be submitted by the municipality to the Government Office SR for preparation of the contract.

3. Time and general programme for implementation of the 2nd IP

1. After publishing the invitation, a municipality should apply using the electronic form on the website of the Government Office SR (ÚV SR). At the same time, the municipality shall confirm in writing that they undertake to meet the criteria arising from participation in the 2nd IP (The invitation shall be announced after approval of the 2nd IP by the Government of SR and shall be valid for one week);
2. After completion of applications and processing the applications, the Government Office SR shall immediately inform municipalities of their inclusion in the 2nd IP. If some villages withdraw or are excluded from the 2nd IP (for example, at their own request or for not submitting the documentation within the stated term or within an extended term),

another village shall be approached following their place in the list. In case of municipalities with the same number of points, their placement shall be determined by the total of verified flood damage to village property in 2010 and 2011;

3. The municipality shall request certification from the appropriate bodies (health insurance companies, tax office, etc) in order to prepare a contract between the ÚV SR and the municipality;
4. The municipality shall submit a request to the appropriate local Office for Labour, Social Affairs and Family for a contribution to support the employment of at least ten jobseekers in accordance with §50j of the Act regarding employment services;
5. The municipality shall select a specialist sponsor for the project and a suitable candidate for the position of Water Supervisor;
6. The specialist sponsor shall prepare the project for revitalisation of the landscape for the municipality, on the basis of which the Building Office shall be required to issue a decision on utilisation of the area; depending upon the nature of the project, further legal provisions shall be adequately applied;
7. It is recommended that revitalisation projects be implemented on municipality land. If the project is implemented on land belonging to other owners, the written consent of the owner or land administrator is required;
8. The municipality shall submit the following to the Government Office SR: documents required in accordance with §6 paras. 2) and 3) of Act No. 524/2010 coll. regarding the provision of grants within the authorisation of the Government Office SR, project documentation, a copy of the submitted application for issuing a decision on land use by the appropriate Building Office, as well as the budget for using the granted financial means;
9. After submission of all documentation, the Government Office SR shall prepare a draft contract regarding the provision of financial means and shall sign a contract with the municipality. Contracts regarding the provision of financial means shall be signed with municipalities continuously until exhaustion of the allocation of financial means for the 2nd IP;
10. After closing a contract regarding the provision of financial means for implementation of works within the 2nd IP, the Government Office SR shall transfer funds to the municipality's bank account following issue of the decision regarding utilisation of the area. The provided financial means shall be earmarked for use by the municipality in accordance with § 19 paras. 1) and 3) of Act No. 523/2004 coll. regarding budgetary regulations of public administration as amended (hereafter "Act regarding public administration budgetary regulations");
11. Implementation of the project for revitalisation of damaged parts of the landscape shall take place;
12. After completion of works, the municipality shall submit a financial account to the Government Office SR in compliance with Act No. 431/2002 coll. regarding accounting

as amended, together with submission of a written preview and legible photocopies of documentation proving the use of the financial means in compliance with the project. Within its balance of accounts and project evaluation, the municipality shall submit project documentation of the actual works carried out and a final report regarding implementation of the works to the Government Office SR.

The deadline for completion of works and use of financial means is **31 March 2012**. The Government Office SR shall carry out continuous inspections of the status of implemented works (during and after termination of works), and hold methodology and coordination meetings. The balance of financial means shall be submitted by the municipality within 15 days from the stated deadline for completion of works and the use of financial means, i.e. by **15 April 2012**.

4. Subject of projects for landscape revitalisation

Types of damaged landscape which is the subject of revitalisation, as well as binding methodology, are documented in Appendix No. 3 and No. 4 which form part of the 1st IP approved on 9 March 2011 by the provision of the Government No. 183/2011 and are also binding for the 2nd IP. These Appendices also include recommendations and suitable types of revitalisation measures for individual types of damaged landscape, such as:

- skidding lines and slopes in forests;
- eroded roads in forests and in agricultural land;
- eroded ridges, ravines and gorges in forests, agricultural land and in settlements;
- poorly managed permanent grasslands and meadows, fading and abandoned areas;
- mono-cultural agricultural soil without segmentation and a suitable landscape structure;
- damaged nameless streams, small waterways and melioration systems;
- urban areas in which rainwater and vegetation is improperly handled;
- flood damaged transport infrastructure in urban areas of municipalities;
- roofs of public buildings which require reconstruction or repair.

The following revitalisation measures shall be implemented in individual municipality cadastres, under the condition that the appropriate minimum capacity of water retention measures are created:

In forest locations, mainly:

1. barriers on slopes, skidding lines and forest roads;
2. sink holes and tracks on roadsides;
3. transverse aeration of erosion lines along contour lines;
4. retention ponds in road ditches
5. barriers of waste wood on slopes;
6. irrigation strips between forests and agricultural land;
7. increase forest land in the area;
8. sealing and damming of gullies;
9. a combination of the above measures.

On agricultural land, which is outside the direct payment system, mainly:

1. planted willow, restoration of boundaries, establishment of strips of fast growing trees;
2. contour irrigation lines, pits, retention ponds, wetland restoration;
3. sealing and damming of gullies, vegetation measures;
4. application of suitable crops and plough-free methods;
5. revitalisation of unsuitably designed, artificial drainage channels;
6. a combination of the above measures.

In a built up area, mainly:

1. building rain gardens (depressions on land covered by vegetation, for soaking or infiltration of rainwater);
2. diversion of rainwater from sealed areas into green spaces;
3. building green roofs, harvesting and using rainwater on roofs.

After mutual agreement between municipalities and administrators of small waterways, the following measures may also be implemented in the form of lateral objects on small waterways, for example:

1. thresholds (height up to 30 cm - providing providing necessary vertical alignment of beds against erosion);
2. steps (height up to 100 cm - levelling, catchment of sediment);
3. barriers (height up to 3 m - such as dry polders or partially filled with water, or water reservoirs);
4. restoration of old tributaries, reservoirs and meanders.

5. Management and monitoring of the 2nd IP

Management of the 2nd IP shall be provided by an Executive Manager for the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management SR and their team, in cooperation with the Government Representative for regional self-government, integrated management of river basins and the landscape, and other related departments of the Government Office SR:

- coordination, monitoring and inspection of 2nd IP projects;
- creation of a database of technological solutions for revitalisation of damaged parts of the landscape;
- distributing information and exchanging experience regarding technological methods for revitalisation of the landscape;
- creating conditions for social discussions by interested parties;
- building capacities, education and methodological directions for implementation of projects;
- developing framework programmes for revitalisation of the landscape;
- creation of legislative, financial and institutional frameworks for implementation of projects for revitalisation of the landscape.

Information on the progress of the implementation of revitalisation works and measures will be published on the web portal of the Government Office SR and the Government Representative for local government and for integrated river basin and landscape management. The web portal shall fulfil the following functions:

- a. create conditions for informing, promoting and exchanging experience from implementation of projects;
- b. support communication between stakeholders (public administration, specialists, the public, entrepreneurs);
- c. create feedback from stakeholders within implementation of projects;
- d. distribute, collect and store information about projects.

In order to support and promote the programme for revitalisation of the landscape, the Executive Manager and their team shall support, force and create space for the organisation of workshops, inspection days and joint observations of projects for greater inclusion of specialists, the public and entrepreneurs into processes for revitalisation of the landscape. The monitored indicators of the impact of implemented measures in the area shall include:

1. types and number of implemented projects for revitalisation of the landscape;
2. water retention volume of revitalisation projects;
3. number of people involved in revitalisation projects;
4. monitoring the influence of implemented projects upon social, economic and cultural environment of municipalities;
5. technological and economic effectiveness and lifetime of implemented projects.

Inclusion of public specialist institutions in monitoring, research and development

Part of implementation of the 2nd IP is also development of the capacities of the entire programme for landscape revitalisation and integrated river basin management via processing several methodological tools which shall widen the possibilities of technological solutions for revitalisation of damaged parts of the landscape, in all types of land, as well as methods for monitoring the impact of land revitalisation in order to protect water resources, natural production potential, biodiversity and the climate. This is mainly:

1. monitoring methods and scientific cooperation in recognising the impact of revitalisation of damaged parts of the landscape upon water, vegetation and the climate;
2. technological solutions for revitalisation of damaged parts of forests and agricultural land;
3. technological solutions for rainwater management in urban areas, transport and water infrastructure.

Various departmental specialist institutions, academic institutions and appropriate experts may participate in processing these methodology tools.

6. Budget, financial sources and forms for setting tasks

For 2011, the 2nd IP shall be secured using means from the State budget, approved by Act No. 498/2010 coll. regarding the State budget for 2011, Appendix No. 3 - State budget expenses for 2011, Chapter of the Government Office SR programme: 06P020H Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management, and in the provision of the Government SR No. 667/2010 point C.1. and schedule of mandatory indexes of the State budget No. 06/05/2011-EO of 12 January 2011. From 26,310,000 EUR in the budget chapter of the Government Office, 17,552,665 EUR was used for the 1st IP and 495,000 EUR was used via transfer to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development SR. All financial resources within the 1st IP are being used for implementation of projects in 190 municipalities with a water catchment volume of 6.097m.m³, apart from financial resources transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development SR.

The 1st IP was also adjusted to create new jobs and was supported by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR and financed from ESF means. Suitable setting of public procurement rules for selecting suppliers resulted in implementation costs for 1m³ of water catchment measure are 0.15 EUR lower than proposed in the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management SR (saving 3.75%).

Resources available in 2011 allowed the Government Office SR to support the creation of only **6.45m.m³** water catchment measures, but with the contribution of ESF resources, via the 1st IP and 2nd IP, it will be possible to increase the volume of created water retention measures to as much as **9.597m.m³**, which is **149%** of the original plan. In total, implementation projects in 2011 shall create 3.8% of water retention measures from the total landscape revitalisation programme plan (250 m.m³). The stated parameters for the 1st IP and 2nd IP can only be achieved by more thorough, systematic inspection and monitoring, so works agreed in contracts between municipalities as well as in contracts between municipalities and suppliers will actually be carried out and their quality and technological methods for implementation of revitalisation projects will be maintained. For this purpose, it is necessary to develop a capacity for thorough inspection which will not be carried out from the State budget but from saved financial resources obtained via public procurement. Within the 1st IP, 658,225 EUR was saved, from which we suggest using part for development of thorough, systematic inspection of the 1st IP and 2nd IP projects (inspection and monitoring of circa 540 projects). A total of 8,161,035 EUR shall be allocated for supporting projects in 348 municipalities.

Table No. 1: Preview of withdrawn costs for the Landscape Revitalisation Programme

Financial volume	Use of financial means
26,310,000 EUR	Total allocation for Programme No. 06P020H for 2011
495,000 EUR	Transfer to Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development SR
17,552,665 EUR	Support of projects for municipalities included in the 1st IP (190 municipalities)
8,161,035 EUR	Support of projects for municipalities included in the 2nd IP (max. 348 municipalities)

101,300 EUR	Inspection of implementation of works in locations includes in the 1st IP and 2nd IP, communication activities, publication, coordination
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Authorised expenses include costs created during implementation of the project from September 2011 to March 2012, i.e. costs for the purchase of materials, rental of machinery, costs related to processing project documentation, other salary costs (e.g. remuneration for the Water Supervisor, remuneration for the Specialist Project Sponsor), 5% co-financing of the total cost for work per stated number of created seasonal jobs in accordance with §50j of the Act regarding employment services, travel costs, training, presentation materials regarding implemented projects and other costs related to employment of jobseekers.

When purchasing goods and services, the municipality shall proceed in accordance with Act No. 25/2006 coll. on public procurement as amended.

From funds for implementation of water retention measures in an amount of 20,000 EUR, municipalities included in the 2nd IP may use 300 EUR for expenses related to the employment of one employed jobseeker (e.g. costs for the purchase of protective personal equipment - clothing, footwear, costs for initial medical examination, work aids, catering, etc).

7. Benefits of the second implementation project

Projects implemented within the 2nd IP will slow the drainage of rainwater from the area, decrease soil and bed erosion, increase the proportion of permanent vegetation cover in the area, increase infiltration of rainwater into the soil and bed, increase evaporation of water mainly via vegetation and support drainage of only natural excess water from the landscape into the river network. Implemented projects will also contribute to reducing flood risk and risk of drought in villages located lower in the river basin. A widespread increase in water retention ability will have a positive impact upon the restoration of ecosystem functions of the landscape, the restoration of biodiversity of the area and upon the reduction of sedimentation of waterways and water structures by alluviation and silting. The 2nd IP contributes synergically in implementation of Green Growth Strategy (OECD), Europe 2020 Strategy (EU) and EU Strategy for the Danube Region as well as several environmental, economic and social targets, addressing local needs and the need for development of the local economy in Slovakia. Foreign subjects shall also be included in cooperation without the support of financial means from 2nd IP resources - Antwerpen University, Getidos - Greifswald University and Natural Sequence Farming. There are ongoing negotiations to obtain an independent expert from UN University, who will evaluate the setting, feasibility and efficiency of the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management SR, as well as its implementation projects.

During implementation of the 2nd IP, sufficient time shall be created for the preparation of projects, their negotiation and implementation of agreed, necessary parts of measures. Current experience in employing jobseekers, as well as the creation of seasonal jobs within implementation projects of the Programme for Landscape Revitalisation and Integrated River Basin Management including employment of Roma citizens, is a significant contribution as well as a challenge to connect environmental and social programmes which could be an important, innovative feature for the creation of synergic effects in the current complicated economic situation, when demand exceeds supply on the job market. Employing people for the preparation, implementation and maintenance of anti-erosion and water retention measures in cadastral areas will create a new standard of strengthening responsibility of communities in Slovakia for caring for the environment. During implementation of projects in the 1st IP, this phenomenon has already shown to be a very strong feature of the programme. This will significantly support an increase in the competitiveness of municipalities in which projects will be implemented. Implementation of measures contained within the 2nd IP will, in the given municipalities and areas during its implementation, create more than 4,200 new seasonal jobs (circa 3,500 employed jobseekers, 350 water supervisors, 350 designers and specialist sponsors). The 2nd IP will allow the creation of seasonal jobs in economically weaker as well as often flood damaged villages in Slovakia, during revitalisation of the landscape and its ecological restoration.