



Strategy of the Slovak Republic
for Development Cooperation with the Islamic
Republic of Afghanistan for 2014 - 2018



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



SUMMARY

The Slovak Republic is part of the international donor community and as an EU Member State it is involved in providing development assistance. The basic incentive is sharing responsibility for global development and Slovakia's financial, political and legal commitments. Development cooperation is a standard foreign policy tool and is regulated by Act no. 617/2007 Coll. on official development assistance.

Bilateral development assistance is an area of Slovak Official Development Assistance (ODA) which focuses on selected countries and regions and the efficient use of financial, material and human resources. Since bilateral development assistance was first implemented (2003), the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been one of the priority countries. Since 2003, Slovakia has supported development projects in Afghanistan totalling 3.8 million EUR. Moreover, it has helped fund a number of development activities in the country, thereby bringing the total contribution to Afghanistan to approx. 9.3 million EUR.

The internal political stabilisation of Afghanistan is vital for strengthening the stability of the whole region. The Slovak Republic, as an EU Member State and member of the wider international community, is committed long-term to supporting political processes, good governance and democratisation in Afghanistan. Participating in Afghanistan's reconstruction, stabilisation and development have been an essential part of Slovakia's ISAF contribution. Given the above, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is one of Slovakia's programme countries for development cooperation, as demonstrated in the Medium-Term Development Cooperation Strategy of the Slovak Republic for 2014–2018.

The Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Development Cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for 2014–2018 seeks to shift cooperation to a higher level, using a coordinated and policy-driven approach based on an analysis of the needs of Afghan society and the comparative advantages and experience Slovakia has in defined sectors. The strategy is based on the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS – Afghan National Development Strategy) for 2008–2013, which is the primary document used to implement poverty reduction strategies in Afghanistan.

The strategy has been elaborated in consultation with stakeholders from the Slovak Republic and in line with NGO recommendations. It also gives an overview of Slovakia's current development activities and initiatives in Afghanistan and defines basic principles, priority areas and development cooperation objectives shared by Slovakia and Afghanistan in 2014 – 2018. The strategy applies a more systematic approach to development cooperation that defines the objectives and results to be achieved by the various development interventions. In order to ensure effective implementation and transparent supervision of the use of public finances, a regular monitoring and evaluation mechanism is also included in the strategy.

In line with the Medium-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation for 2014–2018, the priority areas for development cooperation between Slovakia and Afghanistan are:

Education – education for entry into the labour market and self-employment targeted at women and young people, specialist education for healthcare personnel and education in agriculture, efficient public administration and good governance;
Agriculture - food security, modernisation of the agricultural sector (production and processing);
Security Sector Reform – particularly in the form of financial contributions to multi-donor funds.

¹ Act on official development assistance and the amendment to Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the organisation of government activities and the organisation of central state administration as amended

² More details in "Slovakia's engagement and experiences gained to date in Afghanistan".

³ Adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 15 January 2014

⁴ ANDS also applies to the current period. Afghanistan has yet to make available a more recent document.

Political, economic and social context

The years 2014 and 2015 will have a decisive impact on the future development of Afghanistan. The 2014 presidential election is extremely important for the establishment of legitimate political leadership and for the continued ongoing process of transition. Parliamentary elections will follow in 2015.

2014 marks the beginning of the "Decade of Transformation" (2015–2024), which will start with the handover of responsibility for the country's security from ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) to the Afghan National Security Forces – ANSF.

The Tokyo Framework (Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework – TMAF) adopted in June 2012 remains the basis for engaging the wider international community in Afghanistan during the 2015–2024 transitional decade and its implementation is fundamental to politically resolving Afghanistan's long-term security and development. Under the Tokyo framework the international community has pledged 16 billion EUR to Afghanistan for the Decade of Transformation. The Afghan government has reciprocally committed itself to making progress in five areas: 1) representative democracy and fair elections; 2) good governance, rule of law and human rights; 3) integrity of public finances and commercial banking; 4) governmental revenues, budget implementation and local administration; 5) inclusive and sustainable growth and development. The emphasis is on the international community continuing to exert pressure to maintain the conditionality framework and establish early dialogue with the new government as the basis for planning the international community's further action in Afghanistan.

The EU's long-term commitment to engagement in Afghanistan will be embodied in the expected Cooperation Agreement for Partnership and Development (CAPD). The agreement will be the first coherent, legally binding document stipulating the long-term commitments of EU cooperation with Afghanistan, covering most areas of civic cooperation, including development, trade, investment and human rights.

In the short- and medium-term, EU activity in Afghanistan will develop on the basis of the EU Strategy for Afghanistan for 2014–2016, building on the 2009 Action Plan. The document will be a strategic framework for the non-military involvement of the EU and EU MS in Afghanistan and will outline the objectives, resources, timeframes and division of labour. The EU sees its upcoming role in Afghanistan primarily in terms of providing assistance in building governmental institutions to maintain the progress made in political, economic, security and development areas in recent years.



In addition to the EU there are a further 45 donors active in Afghanistan (according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan database). The largest donors besides the EU are the USA, Germany, the UK and Japan. Their chief aim is to strengthen institutions and infrastructure including energy, health, education, agriculture and food security (USA); support good governance, rural development, and the social sector (EU); and provide humanitarian assistance to the most affected population groups and help with reconstruction (Germany).

The international community's main operating principle in the country is that the transition must take place under Afghan leadership and ownership. The greatest need is for Afghan institutions to receive support so they can improve capacities and adopt responsibility for the transformation processes in all areas - including good governance, security, economic development, social welfare and poverty reduction.

The economic situation in Afghanistan has improved slightly in recent years, mainly due to international assistance, whether through investment or development aid, but also due to the gradual restoration of agriculture and the growth of the service sector. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. Gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 was estimated at 1100 USD/per capita and economic growth at around 10%. Many unemployed people live below the poverty line and lack access to basic living standards, drinking water and electricity. It is estimated that inflation was 7.7% in 2013. Agriculture represents 20% of GDP, while industry is 26% and services are 54% (these figures do not include opium production). The country is rich in mineral resources, but effective use is hampered by the lack of industrial development and the poor infrastructure. Afghanistan is an agricultural country; however, only 12% of the country constitutes fertile land and only 6% of it is cultivated. In recent years there has been an increase in agricultural production.

One of the key challenges for the country's economic and social development is to improve the level of education, harness acquired knowledge and integrate young people into the labour market. Up to 42% of the population are under 15 years of age and only 28% of the over 15 population can read and write.


Eliminating large regional and social disparities and building sufficient infrastructure present important challenges. Depending on the province, from 10% to 70% of the population lives on or below the poverty line.

It is estimated that the country currently has over 32 million inhabitants. However, its economic performance is strongly influenced by the long-term destruction, large-scale migration and low literacy. Up to 78.6% of the population are involved in agriculture and only 5.7% work in industry, with the remaining 15.7% working in services.

In the past, Afghan agriculture produced enough food and part of the production was exported. The main crops (excluding poppies for opium production) are corn, rice, oats, wheat, fruit and nuts. Industrial crops, include cotton, tobacco, dye mordants, pulses, and sugar beet. Industry is partly linked to agricultural production with textiles, furniture, fertilisers, cement, and shoes also being produced. There is sheep farming and wool and sheepskins are exported. Afghanistan has significant reserves of minerals, ores and fuel, including gas, but most are located in the mountains and in inaccessible areas. The infrastructure is under-developed and a large area of the country is inaccessible in winter.

Migration is another issue significantly impacting on the situation in the country. The number of returnees following the fall of the Taliban in 2002 is 5.6 million, increasing the population of the country by 20%. These migrants represent a potential source of conflict due to the lack of resources (land, water, labour market, education, health and so forth).



A woman wearing a vibrant blue burqa with a white floral pattern on the headscarf is walking away from the camera down a narrow, dusty alleyway. The alleyway is flanked by tall, weathered mud-brick walls. In the background, more traditional buildings and a clear blue sky are visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. *

Many unemployed are living below the poverty line lacking access to basic living standards, drinking water and energy.

* The gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 was estimated at 1 100 USD/per capita, economic growth of around 10%.

Afghan National Development Strategy

The Afghan National Development Strategy for 2008–2013 (ANDS – Afghan National Development Strategy) is a comprehensive document and an important milestone in efforts to reconstruct and build a country devastated by years of military conflict and the Taliban regime. The strategy is based on key internationally agreed documents and frameworks (Bonn Agreement, MDGs, Afghanistan Compact). It lays out objectives and is the basis for developments in security, governance, rule of law and human rights, economic development and poverty reduction, and it also serves as a basic document for all donors. The Strategy for Development Cooperation between the Slovak Republic and Afghanistan was based upon it since there was no more recent strategy document available.

The ANDS priorities are based on three strategic objectives:

- **Security** – achieving stabilisation and security policy reform, establishing a national security policy and strategy, consolidating law, -fighting against drug trafficking, and improving security;
- **Governance, rule of law and human rights** – consolidating democratic processes and institutions, human rights, government responsibility for the management of public affairs, strengthening public administration and the fight against corruption;
- **Economic and social development** – reducing poverty, ensuring sustainability through the private sector in a market economy, improving human development indicators, promoting investment, and better allocation of resources.

Implementing these objectives should lead to sustainable and inclusive development.



The Afghan National Development Strategy for 2008 -2013 is a comprehensive document and an important milestone in efforts to reconstruct and build a country devastated by years of military conflict and the Taliban regime.

SLOVAK DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN AND LESSONS LEARNED

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Slovakia's development cooperation with Afghanistan is based on its international position, political and economic commitments, and broader cooperation with Afghanistan in the past. In the coming years, Slovakia will concentrate on aid effectiveness and support areas in which it can share its expertise and experience and where it can build on previous achievements. This is the basis for the Slovak Strategy for Development Cooperation with Afghanistan for 2014–2018.

Since 2003, the Slovak Republic has provided ODA funding of more than 3.8 million EUR in support of 23 bilateral development projects in Afghanistan.

The projects were aimed mainly at improving healthcare and education at all levels, promoting socio-economic development and building democratic institutions, including security sector reform (SSR). The Slovak Republic has established projects such as the gastroenterology centre in Kabul, shelters for refugees and IDPs, food microbiology and a chemical engineering laboratory at Kabul Polytechnic University, emergency departments at

Lodin hospital in Logar province, a multifunctional centre in Kunduz and a system of higher vocational education through accredited study programmes in the province of Parawan.

Slovak Development Assistance for Afghanistan includes a wide range of projects, not just bilateral ones. For example, the Slovak government provides annual scholarships to state universities in Slovakia. In recent years, it has provided two scholarships annually for Afghanistan, increasing to three in 2013 and six (five for masters' degrees and one for doctoral studies) in 2014. In response to the current situation in Afghanistan and its rapid post-conflict reconstruction requirements, the Slovak Republic made an extraordinary contribution of 1 million EUR to Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme (World Bank) in 2013. In the preceding period, Slovakia mitigated Afghan debts of nearly 3 million EUR, sent two experts to join the civic German Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kunduz province, contributed 40 thousand EUR to eradicating polio, and provided material humanitarian aid worth 100 thousand EUR, etc.

Most of the projects were implemented in central Afghanistan near Kabul and also in the north-east of the country. The majority were implemented by non-governmental organisations, but a university and three businesses participated—as well. The best results were achieved by projects relating to rural development, health and infrastructure and higher education support. The participation of Afghans living in Slovakia in projects was of great benefit.



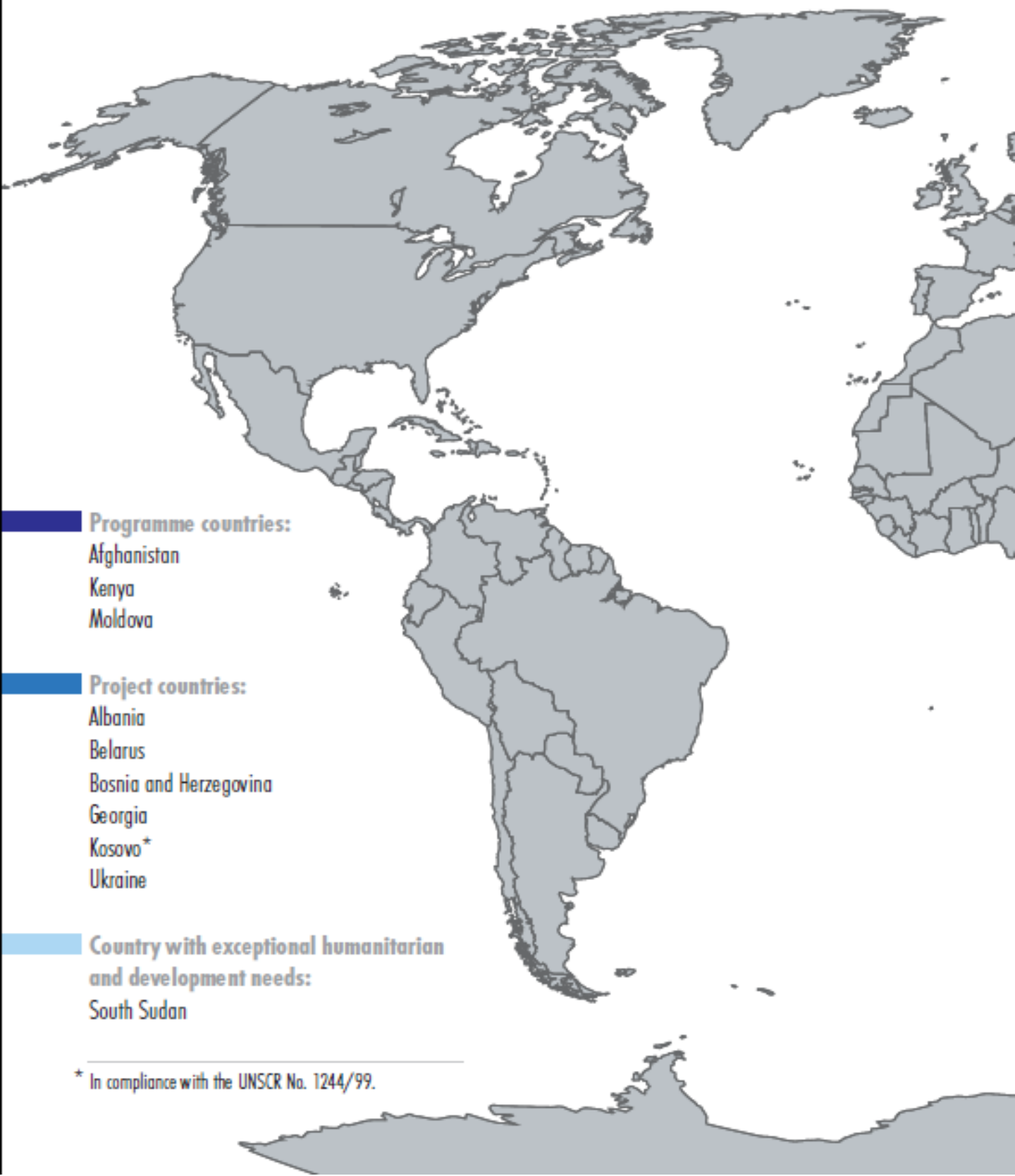
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5 Further details are provided in the evaluation report on projects implemented as part of Slovak ODA in Afghanistan, funded in 2011 by the Trust Fund of the Slovak Republic – UNDP (Evaluation report on projects implemented within the Slovak Official Development Assistance in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan).

A high-angle photograph of a person walking through a vast, terraced agricultural field. The field is divided into numerous small, rectangular plots, some of which are planted with crops, while others are bare or have sparse vegetation. The person is wearing a light-colored jacket and a hat, and is walking along a narrow path. The overall scene is one of rural agriculture in a mountainous region.

Since 2003, the Slovak Republic supported 23 bilateral development projects in Afghanistan totalling over 3.8 million EUR from the ODA funds.

Territorial Priorities of the Slovak Deve



Programme countries:

Afghanistan
Kenya
Moldova

Project countries:

Albania
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Georgia
Kosovo*
Ukraine

Country with exceptional humanitarian and development needs:

South Sudan

* In compliance with the UNSCR No. 1244/99.

Development Cooperation for 2014 - 2018



Basic approach and principles of development cooperation between the Slovak Republic and Afghanistan

It is Slovakia's intention that preparations for and implementation of the Strategy for Development Cooperation with Afghanistan for 2014–2018 should where possible reflect principles of aid effectiveness. In order to strengthen the legitimacy of the development strategies and ensure ownership lies with Afghanistan, Slovakia has based this programme document on the Afghan National Development Strategy. Working multilaterally and trilaterally with other donors operating in Afghanistan should also help harmonise and improve Slovak development cooperation. Given the limited financial and human resources, Slovakia will stress the synergy and complementarity of individual interventions in Afghanistan. Local capacity building will be important in all Slovakia's development interventions in Afghanistan.

Sector priorities and objectives of the strategic program

Development cooperation between Slovakia and Afghanistan is primarily based on the requirements and needs of the partner country, the current security situation, past experiences in implementing development projects, and concentrates on achieving sustainable results, implementing effective development interventions and placing ownership in the hands of the recipients. Given the Afghan security situation and limited funds, Slovakia is concentrating on areas it has comparative advantages in, where there will be a long-term positive impact and where development interventions can produce substantial and visible changes despite the limited funding.

Most cooperation will be targeted at vocational education. Slovak projects will concentrate on capacity building. Vocational education can be implemented in agriculture, health, engineering, natural sciences, the environment, in efficient public administration and good governance. The key criteria should be successful entry into the labour market and the use of Slovak know-how.

In line with the Medium-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic for 2014–2018, the priority areas for development cooperation between Slovakia and Afghanistan are:

Sectoral priorities of the Development Cooperation Strategy	
Education	education for gaining access to the labour market and for running a business (targeting women and young people), vocational training and capacity building for health care and agriculture, and public administration and good governance;
Agriculture	food security, modernising the agricultural sector (production and processing);
Security Sector Reform	particularly in the form of financial contributions to multi-donor funds.

Territorial focus

Slovak development activities will focus on three regions Slovakia has worked in previously: the north east (Kunduz, Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, possibly also Laghman and Nangarhar) and the west (Herat). Projects are always selected in relation to the security situation in the region where the project is to be implemented.



Objectives of the strategic program

Main objective 1:

Supporting education

Specific aims:

- Vocational training for women and girls
- Specialised training (especially in education, health, agriculture, public administration and good governance)
- Higher education (including vocational university collaboration)
- Education of marginalised groups (displaced persons, women, children, the disabled, etc.)

Education is fundamental to the sustainable development of Afghan society. Under the Taliban regime, education was difficult to access and was strongly influenced by religious dogmas. Women had virtually no access to education. The high correlation between poverty and literacy is also attested in the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS). At present, free access to education for all citizens is guaranteed by the Constitution of Afghanistan. The Constitution also obliges the state to design and implement effective programmes to ensure the balanced expansion of education throughout Afghanistan (Article 43).

Supporting education - Intervention results

Result No.1	Improved quality of academic education in state secondary schools and universities
Result No.2	Introduction of basic standards for improving teachers' qualifications in vocational and higher education.
Result No.3	Improved professional teachers' skills in different types of educational establishments and at different levels
Result No.4	Improved conditions in higher education and specialised training courses (building libraries, supplying equipment and instruments for specialised teaching, supplying medical equipment to university hospitals, increasing the capacity of educational institutions).
Result No.5	Improved staff expertise and qualifications in health care,, technology and public administration.





Education is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development of Afghan society. At present, free access to education for all citizens is guaranteed by the Constitution of Afghanistan.

Main objective 2:

Supporting agricultural development

Specific aims:

- To ensure food security
- To modernise the agricultural sector (particularly production and processing)
- To ensure socioeconomic development of rural areas
- To provide training on the effective use of resources essential to survival (land use, natural resources and food processing, conservation of resources and environmental protection, etc.)

Supporting agricultural development is essential for the inclusive and sustainable development of rural communities (over 70% of the population) and for fostering the integration of rural communities into the national economy of Afghanistan. The agricultural sector employs 78.6% of the workforce. In addition to improving the use of available resources these objectives require the expansion and commercialisation of agricultural production, which would lead to job creation and income generation. The focus will be on supporting poor areas and the most vulnerable groups. The environmental sustainability of the work will be an important part of the cooperation.

Support for agricultural development – Intervention results

Result No.1 Improved use of fertile land to ensure basic food supply, more efficient livestock farming

Result No.2 Converting agricultural crops and livestock production into products with higher added value, developing the agricultural product trade, targeting support for small farmers and vulnerable populations (women-led households, displaced persons, ethnic minorities, etc.)

Result No.3 improved use of available water resources (drinking water, irrigation, etc.), raising rural population awareness of environmental protection and methods contributing to the stability and sustainability of resource use (water, land, minerals, etc.)

Result No.4 Improved educational level of the population (mainly rural) in areas that develop the skills required to secure basic needs



Main objective 3:
Security Sector Reform

Security sector reform activities will be funded through financial contributions to multi-donor funds. At the NATO summit in Chicago (20–21 May 2012), the Slovak Republic committed itself to providing 1.5 million USD in 2015–2017 (i.e. 0.5 million USD per year) to fund a sustainable Afghan National Security Force after 2014. The funding for the Afghan National Security Forces (Afghan National Security Forces – ANSF) is to be channelled through two existing funds: NATO (ANA Trust Fund) and UNDP (Law and Order Trust Fund – LOFTA) and other bilateral programmes. The exact mechanism and the financing for the Slovak commitment have yet to be specified and will be subject to consultation between the relevant Slovak ministries (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior) in 2014.



Cross cutting priorities

Development cooperation between Afghanistan and Slovakia for 2014–2018 will involve the following cross-cutting priorities being applied in line with the Medium-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic for 2014–2018:

Environmental protection/climate change adaptation – environmental protection and climate change adaptation– must be included in development cooperation to ensure the sustainable development of partner countries. Slovakia will devote greater attention to this issue in keeping with its obligations to mitigate climate change, improve adaptation to climate change, and protect biodiversity in developing countries.

Gender equality - promoting gender equality and improving the position of women in particular are key to reducing poverty and fostering economic growth and social development.

Good governance - a responsible, efficient and effective government sector, an independent judiciary, the rule of law, and an effective and fair public administration are fundamental to the global development of a society.

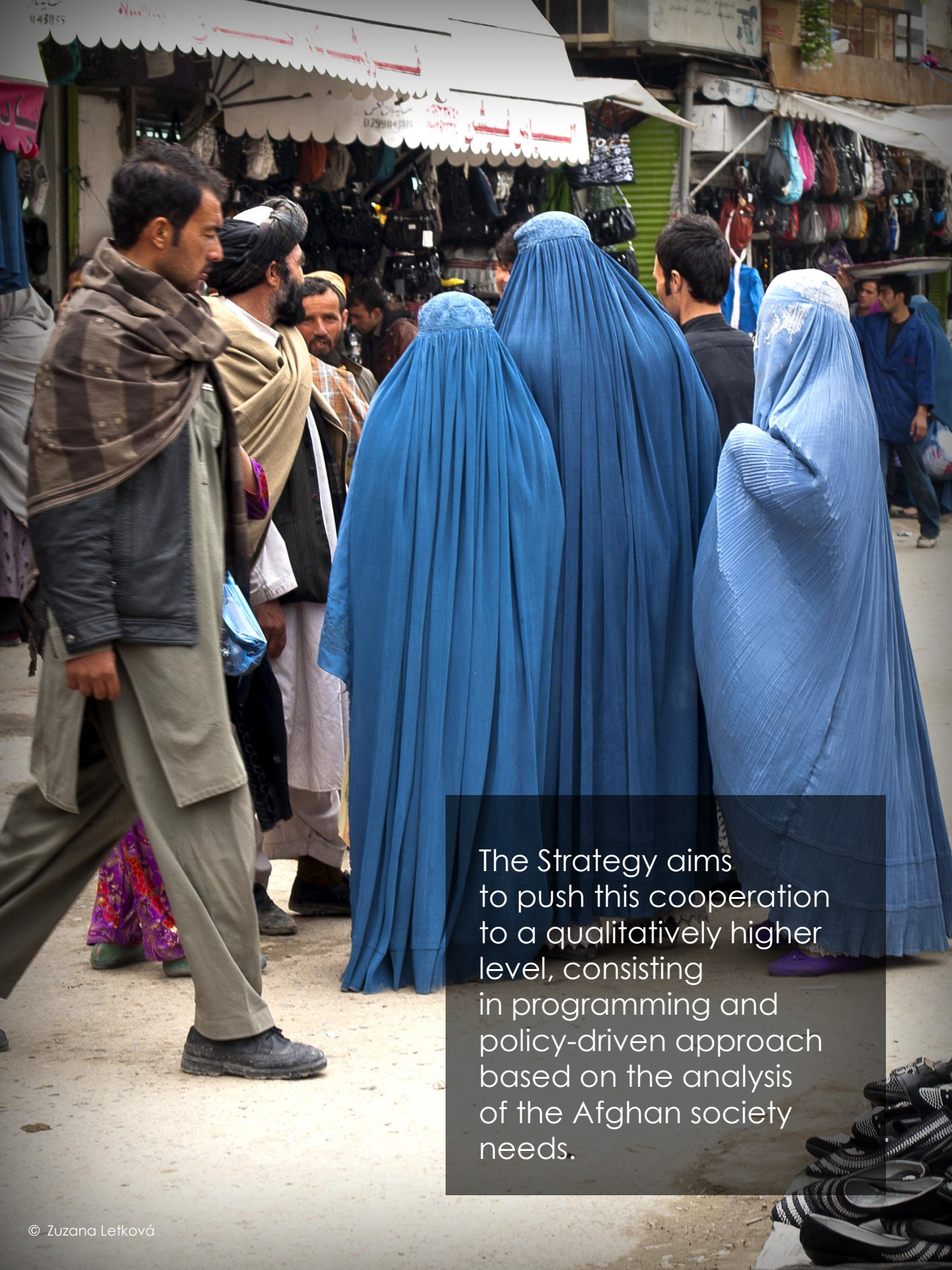
Human rights and human dignity – emphasis on respecting human rights and strengthening the role of civil society when enforcing human rights and implementing democratic reforms.

Slovakia will have the following tools and procedures laid out in the Slovak Republic's Medium-Term Development Cooperation Strategy for 2014–2018 at its disposal for implementing its strategies:

development intervention block grants, a small grant scheme, financial funds provided by Slovak Embassies (micro-grants), supply of goods and services, CETIR (Centre for Experience Transfer in Integration and Reforms), support for Start-Up business partnerships, trilateral cooperation, financial contributions, the UNDP and Slovak Republic instrument for cooperation, the Slovak Republic Technical Cooperation Fund and EBRD.

In practice procedures that have previously proved to be effective and are applicable in the security conditions will generally be used in Afghanistan, - in particular, development intervention block grants, small subsidy scheme, trilateral cooperation and financial contributions.





The Strategy aims to push this cooperation to a qualitatively higher level, consisting in programming and policy-driven approach based on the analysis of the Afghan society needs.

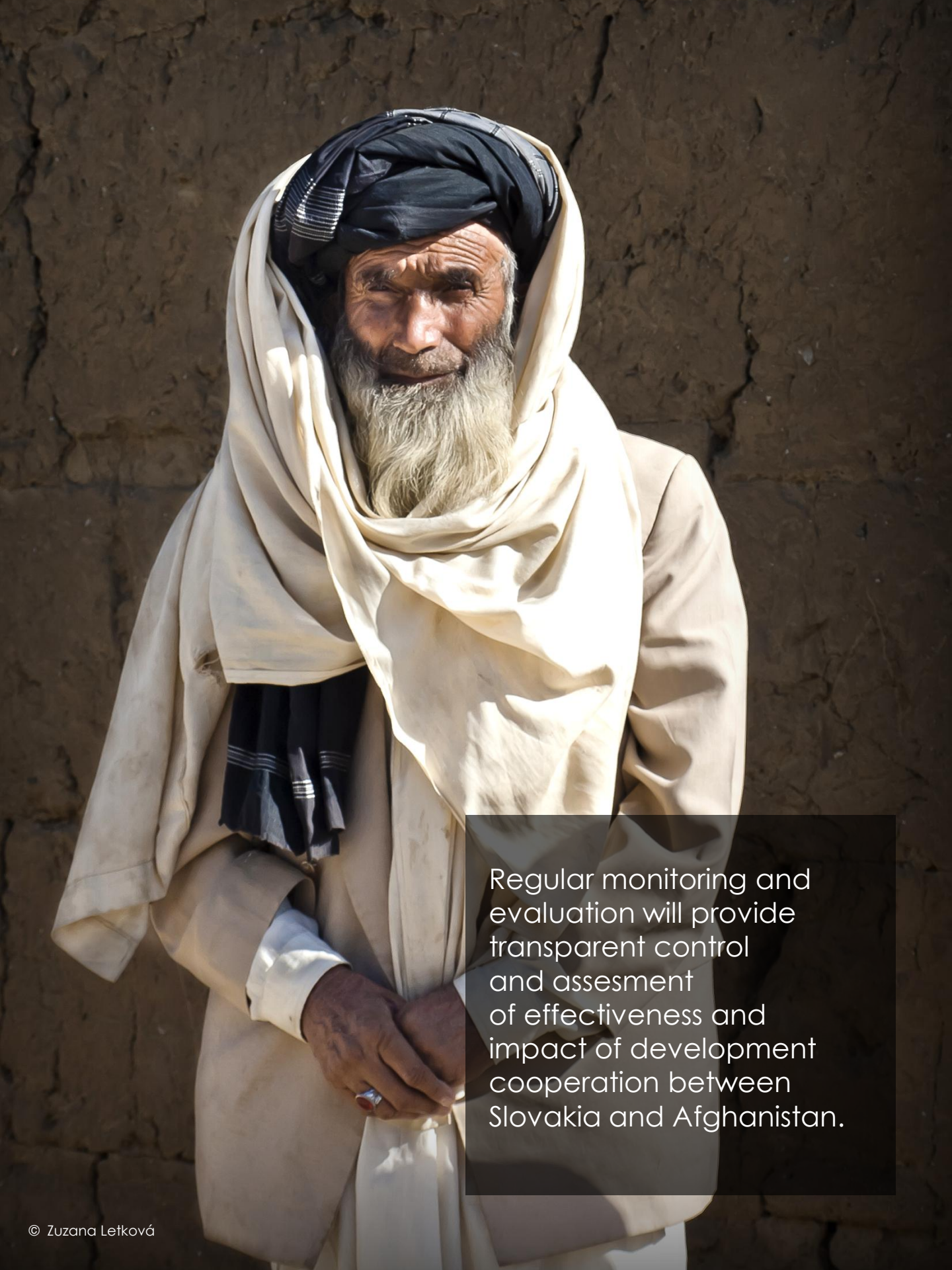
The regular programme and project level monitoring and evaluation system is an important part of Slovak development cooperation with Afghanistan, enabling evaluation of the effective use of Slovak ODA funds. This system also enables transparent checks and evaluation of the implementation of the programme strategy, the effective use of financial resources and the impact of development cooperation between Slovakia and Afghanistan. Evaluation mechanisms at programme and project level mean that feedback can be obtained on Slovak development cooperation with Afghanistan and used to determine its future trajectory.

Programme level

Development interventions will be evaluated in relation to the fulfilment of the objectives. Every year the Ministry evaluates the development activities and summaries are included in the Report on Official Development Assistance for the previous year (approved by the Slovak Government). The data and information required to monitor progress in priority areas is based on government resources in partner countries as well as narrative reports from SlovakAid projects and programmes, monitoring findings, etc. An interim evaluation of the Strategy will be conducted in 2016. Independent experts will subsequently prepare an assessment report with recommendations and possible corrective proposals. Once the programme strategy has been completed in 2018, a final evaluation will be carried out to objectively evaluate the impact of Slovak development cooperation with Afghanistan, primarily from the viewpoint of the beneficiaries. Monitoring and evaluation in Afghanistan will, however, depend on the security situation.

Project level

Given the security situation and the fact that the Slovak Republic does not have an embassy in Afghanistan, regular monitoring and evaluation of ODA projects cannot be conducted within Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the Slovak Embassy in Tehran will work alongside SAIDC to endeavour to perform regular monitoring so each project implemented under the programme will be monitored at least once during the implementation period, if the financial situation and personal capacities permit. SAIDC will monitor the implementation of project activities and effective use of financial resources in accordance with internal regulations on the rules and procedures for applying for, approving and using grants/funding, including accounting methods that comply with the Slovak legislation.



Regular monitoring and evaluation will provide transparent control and assesment of effectiveness and impact of development cooperation between Slovakia and Afghanistan.

List of abbreviations used

ANA Trust Fund	ANA - Afghanistan National Army
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
CAPD	Cooperation Agreement for Partnership and Development
CETIR	Centre for Experience Transfer in Integration and Reforms
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
EBOR	European bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
IDP	Internally displaced person
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force – military mission
LOFTA	Law and Order Trust Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFEA	Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
SAIDC	Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation
SSR	Security sector reform
SR	Slovak Republic





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