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Development Co-operation Directorate  
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## **DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics**

### **Peer Review on Development Finance Statistics of Slovenia**

WP-STAT informal meeting  
22-24 November – Hybrid meeting

The Statistical Peer Review of Slovenia was carried out on 9-12 February 2021 virtually. The review team consisted of representatives from Iceland and Poland as well as 10 staff from the DAC Secretariat. The review covered the seven dimensions outlined in the Guidance note for statistical peer reviews, namely: statistical policy issues; domestic data collection; statistical reporting; performance on DAC recommendations and international commitments; transparency; data accessibility; and publication of statistics.

This cancel and replace version has been issued to reflect the following changes :

- Table of contents: Section 3
- Executive summary (Page 4. No para. Number, Key recommendations in page 5. No para. Number)
- Para 28.
- Observations by the peer review team in page 16.

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## Executive Summary

**The Statistical Peer Review of Slovenia was carried out on 9-12 February 2021 virtually.** The review team consisted of representatives from Iceland and Poland as well as 10 staff from the DAC Secretariat. The review covered the seven dimensions outlined in the Guidance note for statistical peer reviews, namely: statistical policy issues; domestic data collection; statistical reporting; performance on DAC recommendations and international commitments; transparency; data accessibility; and publication of statistics.

The Department for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance sits within the Directorate for Multilateral Affairs and Development Co-operation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). It plans and coordinates strategies and policies, and prepares and monitors the regulatory framework in the area of the international development co-operation and humanitarian assistance for Slovenia. It is responsible for the operational planning and monitoring of the implementation of international development co-operation programmes and projects. Slovenia considers development co-operation as an important foreign policy instrument. It is included in all the foreign policy strategic documents and has its own strategic and legislative framework. In 2021, Slovenia's legal framework for development co-operation consisted of four documents, namely, Act on development co-operation and humanitarian aid of the Republic of Slovenia of 2018, Decree on implementing development co-operation and humanitarian aid of the Republic of Slovenia of November 2018, Resolution on development co-operation and humanitarian assistance of the Republic of Slovenia of September 2017 and Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia until 2030 of December 2018. Slovenia provides multilateral and bilateral aid. The former accounts for approximately 60% of the Slovenian total ODA, with the bulk provided to EU Institutions. There are two main documents on budget preparation: the Development Programmes Plan (DPP), which is prepared for four years and structured by budget users, and the Framework Programme (FP), which is prepared for the next two years as budgets are approved for a biennium in Slovenia. Indications of ODA spending for two additional years are also included. Slovenia commits to the target of 0.33% of GNI for ODA, which is widely acknowledged within the MFA and across the Ministries, including the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

The MFA as a national coordinator for development co-operation and humanitarian aid is responsible for the calculation of ODA and protection of the ODA boundaries. It carries out this responsibility by making use of various documents prepared by the OECD e.g. Reporting Directives, peace and security Casebook. Staff at Ministries are regularly reminded of the ODA definition. The MFA also engages in ad-hoc consultations on project proposals and provides assistance in finding relevant references in the Reporting Directives. The MFA has a methodology which sets conditions and criteria for the assessment and selection of project proposals. Projects are required to comply with the ODA definition.

Slovenia impressed with its very detailed approach to calculation of the administrative costs. DAC members have different reporting practices in this area i.e. calculating the administrative costs in an logical and appropriate manner is a challenge faced by many members.

Slovenia is gradually implementing reporting on Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD). The MFA keeps the other Ministries informed of developments related to TOSSD.

The MFA engages in a wide range of communication activities to secure transparency. The annual report is the MFA's key statistical publication with the data from the previous year and the summary of the data

for the last five years. It includes the key interpretations of the data as well as the summary of the results and achievements.

### **Key Recommendations:**

#### **ODA eligibility:**

- The diligent and thorough work conducted by the MFA to verify the eligibility of activities is commendable, especially in the context of capacity constraints and very limited resources. However, some of the activities in the field of migration might need further scrutiny.

#### **IT architecture:**

- The production of Slovenian aid statistics lies in the responsibility of a single staff member, who is very knowledgeable on the tasks related to data collection and tracking the WP-STAT discussions. However, there is risk involved, e.g. in case of absence or departure of the staff, and Slovenia should find ways to support this staff member and ensure the knowledge is transferred to other staff.

#### **Quality assurance:**

- Slovenia is encouraged to expand its data verification (e.g. improving project descriptions or expanding the verification of data) and there is some scope for improvement in the area of policy markers. Slovenia is encouraged to report more of policy markers rather than just the selected ones. Additional support from colleagues with expertise in the field would help ensuring that flags are applied correctly.

#### **TOSSD reporting:**

- Slovenia is encouraged to continue its efforts on TOSSD reporting. The fact that the MFA has already reached out to other Government agencies as well as its diligent work on assigning SDG(s) are commendable.

#### **Transparency:**

- In order to increase transparency, it is recommended to add a visualization of development and humanitarian aid (ODA) data on the website of the MFA, reflecting the full picture of the assistance financed from public funds.

#### **Data accessibility:**

- Slovenia is encouraged to increase transparency of data on Slovenian aid programme and engage in further open and transparent discussion with representatives of CSOs and academia.

#### **Publication of statistics:**

- Slovenia is encouraged to engage in communicating with the public more regularly.

# Introduction – Overview of Slovenia’s development co-operation

## Organisational structure and key stakeholders

1. The Department for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance (hereafter the “ZRH”) sits within the Directorate for Multilateral Affairs and Development Co-operation (hereafter the “ZDM”) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). It plans and coordinates strategies and policies, and prepares and monitors the regulatory framework in the area of international development co-operation and humanitarian assistance. It is responsible for the operational planning and monitoring of the implementation of international development co-operation programmes and projects.<sup>1</sup>

2. In 2015, there was a re-organisation of the MFA. Prior to that, two departments were responsible for development co-operation. After the re-organisation, they were merged as the ZRH and included in the ZDM, which in February 2021 also oversaw four other departments: Department for International Organisations, Department for NATO and International Security, Department for Global Challenges and Human Rights Department. The re-organisation progressively decreased the number of staff at the united ZRH to 14, but also advantages of the merger and common directorate have been reported (e.g. exchange of information, intensity of co-operation and policy coherence). The scope of work for the ZRH has increased as it includes coordination of the departments and communication. Despite the decrease in the number of staff, the ZRH tries to deliver at the same capacity by setting priorities, introducing innovative solutions, etc. Nevertheless, the ZRH faces inevitable challenges due to the limited human resources.

3. As of February 2021, the ZRH had fourteen employees including diplomats, civil servants and technical experts. The areas of work of the ZRH as well as the number of staff in each area are as follows:

- |                            |                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ▪ European Union (3)       | ▪ Communication and Awareness (1)    |
| ▪ Multilateral Affairs (1) | ▪ Statistics and Finance (1)         |
| ▪ Humanitarian Aid (2)     | ▪ Head of the ZRH and Evaluation (1) |
| ▪ Implementation (4)       | ▪ Secretary/Assistant (1)            |

4. In Slovenia’s development co-operation, there are six key institutional actors: National Assembly, Government, the MFA, other Ministries, Permanent Coordination Group and Expert Council.

5. The National Assembly oversees Slovenia’s development co-operation. It discusses the topic at least once a year, usually when the national annual development co-operation report<sup>2</sup> is published. The MFA serves as the national coordinator through planning, coordinating, and implementing development co-operation activities. According to the 2019 data, key financiers of development co-operation are the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the MFA and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MIZS). Each of them

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/ministries/ministry-of-foreign-affairs/about-the-ministry/directorate-for-multilateral-affairs-and-development-cooperation/department-for-development-cooperation-and-humanitarian-assistance/>

<sup>2</sup> Report on [Development Cooperation of the Republic Slovenia for 2019 \(gov.si\)](#) (available in Slovenian only)

contributed more than all the other financiers<sup>3</sup> combined. Among these three, the contribution by the MoF is the largest, more than double of the MFA, the second largest contributor. The Permanent Coordination Group is the main inter-ministerial body that consists of sixteen relevant ministries' representatives. The Expert Council is an advisory body composed of directors of the public foundations and the representatives of academia, NGOs, chamber of commerce and key ministries<sup>4</sup>.

6. Key external actors are other donors, diplomatic missions, public foundations, NGOs, the EU and other multilateral organisations. NGOs play important roles e.g. as project implementers, especially in countries where Slovenia does not have a diplomatic mission. Public calls (i.e. public calls for proposals) are published cyclically for three-year NGO projects and annually for co-financing of the EU selected projects (i.e. public calls for applications). Public foundations, which are established under private law, are also active in development co-operation. The MFA engages in consultations with them on technical assistance. Contracts are usually signed for a two-year timeline. The key public foundations and their main missions are listed below.

- ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF)
  - Enhancing safety, enabling the recovery & development of conflict-affected countries by addressing the immediate and long-term impact of mine/explosive remnants of war and other hazards following armed violence.
- Centre for European Perspective (CEP)
  - Enhancing the European perspective, including in democratisation, security, the rule of law, good governance and equal opportunities for young people.
- The Centre for International Co-operation and Development (CMSR)
  - Improving infrastructure: access to clean water and environmental infrastructure etc.
- Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF)<sup>5</sup>
  - Providing training in public financial management and central banking; carrying out special training programmes on auditing and accounting in the public sector.

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<sup>3</sup> The other financiers are:

- Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP),
- Ministry of Defence (MoD),
- Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants (UOIM),
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ),
- Ministry of the Interior (MoI),
- Ministry of Health (MoH),
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (MAFF),
- Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT)
- Others

<sup>4</sup> Key ministries include MoF, Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) and Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (GODECP).

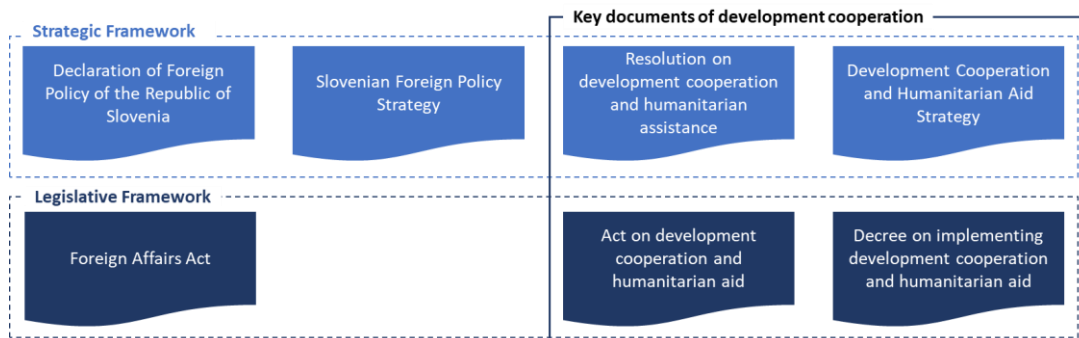
<sup>5</sup> The CEF was transformed into an international organisation in 2015.

## Strategic and legislative framework

7. Slovenia considers development co-operation as an important foreign policy instrument. It is included in all the foreign policy strategic documents and has its own strategic and legislative framework. See Figure 1. In 2021, Slovenia's legal framework for development co-operation consisted of four documents:

- 1 Act on development co-operation and humanitarian aid of the Republic of Slovenia of 2018<sup>6</sup> (hereafter the "Act"),
- 2 Decree on implementing development co-operation and humanitarian aid of the Republic of Slovenia of November 2018<sup>7</sup> (hereafter the "Decree"),
- 3 Resolution on development co-operation and humanitarian assistance of the Republic of Slovenia of September 2017<sup>8</sup> (hereafter the "Resolution"), and
- 4 Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia until 2030 of December 2018<sup>9</sup> (hereafter the "Strategy").

Figure 1. Key documents of development co-operation



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia

8. Slovenia has been an ODA provider since 2004 when it completed its graduation process with the World Bank and joined the EU. The Parliament adopted the first Act in 2006 and the first Resolution in 2008. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda at the United Nations, Slovenia decided to renew its legislative and strategic framework. The Parliament adopted the current Resolution in 2017 and the current Act in April 2018. Subsequently, the Decree as well as the Strategy were adopted in 2018.

9. The **Act** introduces key concepts i.e. definitions and sets the ground rules for development co-operation and humanitarian aid. Further, the latest Act adopted in 2018 enables the private sector to promote sustainable development of partner countries while attaining profit. It also introduces the concept of, and sets the legal basis for, multi-year strategic partnerships, which allow Slovenia to focus on long-

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZZ/Dokumenti/multilateral/razvojno-sodelovanje/ZMRSHP\\_EN-final.pdf](https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZZ/Dokumenti/multilateral/razvojno-sodelovanje/ZMRSHP_EN-final.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZZ/Dokumenti/multilateral/razvojno-sodelovanje/Uredba\\_MRS\\_EN-final.pdf](https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZZ/Dokumenti/multilateral/razvojno-sodelovanje/Uredba_MRS_EN-final.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZZ/Dokumenti/multilateral/razvojno-sodelovanje/Resolution-on-development-cooperation-and-humanitarian-assistance-of-the-Republic-of-Slovenia.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MZZ/Dokumenti/multilateral/razvojno-sodelovanje/Development-Cooperation-and-Humanitarian-Aid-Strategy-of-the-Republic-of-Slovenia.pdf>

term engagement. It also simplifies administrative procedures for the MFA and implementers and thus enables quick emergency response.

10. The **Decree** specifies the provisions of the Act. It sets the selection and drafting procedure for implementing partners by introducing a standard methodology with conditions and criteria. This was first used for the selection of NGO projects for 2020-23 period and has been gradually implemented for the selection of project proposals received by public foundations. For 2021-22 period, it has been used for two of the public foundations (ITF and CEP).

11. The **Resolution** sets a long-term basis for the role of Slovenia as a donor and the position of development co-operation in its foreign policy. It lays down the relevant information and orientation for development co-operation and humanitarian assistance in the long run i.e. objectives, basic premises and principles, geographic and thematic priorities (e.g. Western Balkans, European Neighbourhood and Sub-Saharan Africa as the priority regions), long-term planning and ensuring funds for the development co-operation system, etc.

12. The **Strategy** elaborates the objectives of Slovenia's development co-operation and humanitarian aid. It provides a general framework, defines policy priorities, streamlines thematic priorities into narrower priorities linked to four SDGs (Goals 8, 12, 13, and 16) and defines two cross-cutting areas (environmental protection and gender equality). It further defines geographic priorities (e.g. Montenegro and North Macedonia as programme countries) and the criteria for selecting partner countries. As it was prepared in co-operation with other Ministries, public foundations, NGOs, academia and the Expert Council, the whole-of-Government approach and a wide ownership are ensured. The document also reflects the recommendations of the OECD DAC Peer Review.

## Budget preparation

13. Slovenia provides both multilateral and bilateral aid. The former accounts for approximately 60% of the Slovenian total ODA, with the bulk provided to EU Institutions. Although there is a common understanding that the share of bilateral aid should be increased, and it has also been reflected in a draft action plan to gradually increase the ODA/GNI ratio, the decision has not been formally adopted. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting proposal from the MoF to cut expenditures by 30%, the MFA managed to protect most of the ODA funds by reprogramming the projects to make them COVID-related. The drop in bilateral aid is anticipated to be less than 5% with 2020 figures compared to the previous year.

14. The budget of the Republic of Slovenia is prepared for two consecutive years and structured by budget users. It consists of the general part, the special part and the Development Programmes Plan (DPP). The first, general part of the budget, contains information on how the state collects revenues and how it spends them. The special part explains who spends the funds and for which programme areas. As a third part of the budget, the DPP shows individual projects of budget users for the entire period of their duration.

15. The DPP contains the budget for different policy areas and provides a breakdown by programmes and sub-programmes (see Figure 2). Most ODA-eligible expenditures of the MFA are planned under 0303 programme. Ministries other than the MFA<sup>10</sup> also carry out their activities under the programme "0303 – Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid". Some of the funds under this programme are for membership fees to international organisations and thus partly ODA-eligible (recorded under 030302 – Membership in international institutions). The MFA manages a part of the budget dedicated to ODA, but as a national co-ordinator for the development co-operation, it prepares justification for the whole Slovenian development co-operation programme in the budget.

<sup>10</sup> MoF, MGRT, MAFF, MESP, Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration (SNSA), MoH and MIZS

16. The DPP lists and provides details of the so-called development programmes and projects (beyond development co-operation and humanitarian aid or ODA) for the next four years.

## Figure 2. Structure of the Development Programmes Plan (DPP)

Budget user: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- **Policy**
  - 03 – Foreign Policy and Development Co-operation
    - **Programme**
      - 0301 – Diplomacy and Consular affairs
      - 0302 – Economic Diplomacy
      - 0303 – Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid
        - **Sub-programme**
          - 030302 – Membership in international institutions<sup>11</sup>
          - 030303 – Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia

17. “030303 – Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid” is considered fully ODA-eligible in principle, and the MoF, MFA and the MGRT plan under this sub-programme. In 2019, the amount was approximately EUR 13 million for the MoF, EUR 12 million for the MFA, and EUR 0.12 million for the MGRT.

18. Budget planning of development co-operation is carried out also at the MoF and has three different levels i.e. multi annual (i.e. in DPP), biennial (in adopted budgets) and monthly.

19. The Framework Programme (FP) is a document where the MFA presents its predictable future ODA spending. It started as a document for the next two years, but the latest one covered four years (2016-19) and included Country Programmable Aid (CPA), humanitarian aid and awareness raising activities. In 2017, the MFA discussed its approach to programming within the DAC Peer Review and received recommendations to make this document more comprehensive and to include other types of aid e.g. multilateral aid. The MFA plans to implement the DAC recommendation but expects it to be challenging especially for the multilateral part, because the largest part of the Slovenian ODA is its contribution to the EU, which is only an estimate until the actual figures become available. Nevertheless, the MFA anticipates the next FP to be a more comprehensive one that includes also the unpredictable categories e.g. migration costs.

20. The FP provides an overview of the funds by year, institution, budgetary item<sup>12</sup>, budgetary measure<sup>13</sup>, and the volume of spending rights or appropriations. It is divided into three main parts: development co-operation, humanitarian aid and awareness-raising and capacity-building. The development co-operation part shows the total funds by partner country and the list of activities.

<sup>11</sup> MoF plans some of their expenditures under this sub-programme.

<sup>12</sup> Rules on the procedures for implementing the budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette, No. 50/07, 61/08, 99/09 – ZIPRS1011, 3/13 in 81/16) defines the budgetary item as “a part of a sub-program showing all or part of an activity, project or economic purpose of spending funds from the scope of work of one direct user.”

<sup>13</sup> According to the Rules mentioned in the above footnote, the DPP is the third part of the budget, in which the DPP projects (also measures) are set. A DPP project (also a measure) is defined as “an economically indivisible set of activities that fulfil a certain technical function and have defined objectives, on the basis of which it is possible to assess whether the project meets predetermined criteria. The project has a predetermined duration, which is limited by the start and end dates.”

Humanitarian aid is for emergency response to crises, either sudden or protracted. For the former, the FP indicates that the MFA may reach out to the MoF and request for the use of the reserve funds as needed. The MFA has funds for the latter. Awareness-raising and capacity-building represent a small share; these funds are dedicated to awareness-raising and capacity building events but also strategic communication.

21. The MFA prepares the FP for the next two years as budgets are approved for a biennium in Slovenia. The MFA also prepares indications for the following two years. Both the predictable future ODA spending and indications are in the same FP and undergo the same procedure to be adopted, but the latter is less detailed and binding.

22. The ZRH regularly reviews the expected payments. Payments to the international organisations are tracked and reviewed either through the adopted FP or based on multiannual pledges. Regarding the public foundations and NGOs, the ZRH reviews all the implementation and examines the implementation rate of bilateral technical assistance and communication and awareness raising activities. The payments are executed early in the first quarter. Transfers among the budgetary items and budgetary measures are possible throughout the year as needed. Utilising this flexibility, when the ZRH has the funds in the budget secured for ODA, it tries to make full use of them to achieve the goals of the Slovenian development co-operation. If activities under the bilateral technical assistance programme do not meet the planned volume of the MFA, the ZRH would try to redirect the funds to either international organisations or the additional projects of public foundations, with which the ZRH can conclude direct contracts. As such, Slovenia strives to ensure full implementation rate.

***Observations by the peer review team:***

- There is only one statistical staff at the ZRH responsible for ODA forecasting and preparing of the FP. Given that the process is long and difficult to carry out in parallel with other tasks, the MFA occasionally faces delays. In order to avoid such delays, the MFA tries to draft and adopt the FP for the next four years.

## ODA/GNI ratio

23. Slovenia is committed to the ODA/GNI target of 0.33%, which is widely acknowledged within the MFA, and across the Ministries, including the MoF.

24. The Resolution requires the MFA to prepare an action plan to increase the ODA/GNI ratio to 0.33%. The MFA found that to reach the target additional EUR 17.6 million each year until 2030 would be needed, but at the operational level, it elaborated a proposal for additional EUR 10 million per year from 2022, leading to a ratio 0.26% instead of 0.33% by 2030. In 2019, the Expert Council advised that it would not be credible for the current Government to adopt the document that plans the raise of ODA from 2022. In addition, at the time, it was not possible to ensure additional funds for ODA in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Therefore, further discussion on the action plan was halted.

***Observations by the peer review team:***

- The peer review team would like to commend Slovenia's commitment to an ODA/GNI target of 0.33%, in the context of funding difficulties and reductions in the number of staff dedicated to the Slovenian aid programme. The review team acknowledged the heavy workload of the statistical staff and expressed that consideration needs to be given to ensuring that necessary resources are allocated to this task especially as the aid programme grows.

# 1. What are the main statistical policy issues?

## 1.1. ODA-eligibility

26. The MFA is responsible for the calculation of ODA and protection of the ODA boundaries. It carries out this responsibility by making use of various documents prepared by the OECD e.g. Reporting Directives, peace and security Casebook. Staff at Ministries are regularly reminded of the ODA definition. A short leaflet explaining development co-operation was also produced a few years ago to invite institutions to report on activities such as technical assistance. The MFA also engages in ad-hoc consultations on project proposals and provides assistance in finding relevant references in the Reporting Directives. The MFA has a methodology, which sets conditions and criteria for the assessment and selection of project proposals. Projects are required to comply with the ODA definition.

### 1.1.1. Peace and Security

27. Following the clarifications of rules on peace and security agreed at the 2016 DAC High Level Meeting (HLM), the MFA had regular meetings with the MoI and MoD to identify the impacts on Slovenian ODA reporting. When the activities are not ODA-eligible, the MFA still includes them in CRS reporting as “other flows” as they could possibly be in the scope of TOSSD.

28. The Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (ACPDR) is a constituent body of the MoD. It is active in the area of disaster preparedness and prevention and provides core contribution to ITF, which exclusively works on ODA-eligible demining activities and rehabilitation in partner countries. It was clarified that, although the ACPDR is part of the MoD, it exclusively deals with civilian matters (civilian protection and disaster relief) and does not use defence capacities. The rules allow these activities to be reported as ODA (as is the case for e.g. firefighters). The ACPDR does not use defence assets or budget to carry out these projects, except in extraordinary cases as foreseen in ODA rules (e.g. use of military helicopter in rescue activities (forest fires) in Albania in 2012).

29. The Slovenian police is involved in bilateral development co-operation. The MoI is responsible for the deployment of the police in partner countries, and priority is given to the EU-sponsored missions. The contribution of the Slovenian police to ODA includes: 1. Participation in the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS); 2. Deployment of Slovenian police officers to Serbia and North Macedonia for border management assistance; and 3. Secondment of a police attaché and liaison officer on immigration to Serbia and North Macedonia.

30. With regard to the MoI activities, EULEX had to reduce the number of staff in line with its new mandate. In this context, EULEX requested Slovenia for assistance, and in response, the MoI extended the period of secondment of police officers. As Slovenia is part of the EU support to Palestinian Authority, the Slovenian police has been participating also to EUPOL COPPS, which implements various projects to help build the security system in the territory of Palestinian Authority. Slovenia also conducted an official

training visit of representatives of the Palestinian Civil Police in Slovenia. The main goal was to transfer the knowledge on the code of ethics. The activity was recognised by EUPOL COPPS as an important factor in the development of Palestinian Authority's capacities.

31. The final responsibility for determining ODA-eligibility of these projects sits with the MFA, and the ZRH explained the importance of the hierarchy's trust in their work and of regular updates to the ministries concerned as staff changes regularly.

### **1.1.2. Migration**

32. Slovenia supports the ongoing discussions in the DAC on the ODA eligibility of migration-related activities. It considers it would be important to have a clear picture of eligibility in this field and that an exchange of approaches or a casebook would be useful in this respect. The Slovenian NGO platform – SLOGA – follows this topic closely.

33. Slovenia has reported a few activities under the new CRS code on migration. They described two main areas of intervention.

- Their contribution to the EU trust fund for Africa.
- Police officers' deployment in Serbia and North Macedonia. In 2015, the countries of the Western Balkans faced mass migration and, in this context, the Ministers of Interior of Serbia and North Macedonia requested Slovenia to provide border management assistance. In response, Slovenia deployed some police officers to the borders for joint operation and managing the influx of migrants. Slovenia also sent its first police attaché to Serbia in 2006 to promote and strengthen international police co-operation. The work conducted by the police attaché also includes the fight against illegal immigration. Slovenia seconded a police attaché also in North Macedonia in 2020. Police officers have been deployed until today with an aim of enhancing multilateral co-operation and exchanging information on cross-border illegal immigration.

34. The Secretariat noted that, beside the fact that the activities were about transfer of knowledge from the Slovenian police and that Serbia and North Macedonia had requested this type of assistance from Slovenia, there was also a benefit to Slovenia from these activities. Some activities were joint operations, and the migration crisis had affected Slovenia as well. According to the definition of ODA, for an activity to be counted as ODA, it needs to have a benefit to the recipient country as a primary objective. Therefore, the Secretariat considered that the Mol activities were good examples of cases where eligibility was not necessarily straightforward. It invited Slovenia to take part in the survey on migration-related activities to share their view on the boundaries between eligible and non-eligible activities. It also added that the SLOGA in the past had sent a letter to the Chair of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD and expressed its interest to be involved in discussions on the eligibility boundaries. Slovenia confirmed its willingness to engage in the discussions and respond to the survey.

### **1.1.3. Imputed student costs**

35. In Slovenian ODA, imputed student costs have risen and represent a substantial share of bilateral ODA (44% in 2019). The MFA expressed its concern about the trend. There is no ceiling for imputed student costs in the ODA budget as such, but the evolution of the share is regularly monitored. In any case, with gradual growth of other modalities and a larger ODA budget, the share of such costs should diminish in ODA as the MFA does not see more potential for further growth of the programme, especially when partner countries concerned become EU members and are no longer ODA recipients.

36. Imputed student costs are calculated using the following methodology:

cost per student per year in a faculty<sup>14</sup> times number of students from partner countries in the study programmes.

37. Slovenia well justified that “the presence of students reflects the implementation of a conscious policy of development co-operation” which is a requirement specified in the Reporting Directives for counting imputed student costs in ODA<sup>15</sup>. The terms of study of partner countries’ students are agreed at the highest political level and included in agreements with individual partner countries. According to the report that the MFA receives from its ambassadors, these programmes are highly valued, and it was, for instance, explicitly mentioned in the external evaluation of the developmental programme in Montenegro. The programme is part of a comprehensive approach to student mobility in the Balkans.

38. With regard to granularity of the data, the MFA has so far received the data from the MIZS disaggregated by recipient countries only. The Directives ask to report if possible by recipient and sector, and the MFA could possibly approach the MIZS to obtain this further disaggregation.

#### **1.1.4. In-donor refugee costs**

39. The share of in-donor refugee costs in the Slovenian ODA was 2.6% in 2019. When the costs peaked in 2016, the figure reached approximately 10%. In-donor refugee costs are not paid from ODA budgets but covered by separate budgetary items of the government institutions concerned. They are calculated ex-post. As the costs are additional to ODA budgets, they do not affect funds available for development co-operation.

40. Before 2015, a considerable part of the in-donor refugee costs, including the cost of personnel dealing with refugees, was reported under administrative costs of the MoI and the police, and only direct costs for sustenance, food, translations or similar items were reported under the H02 co-operation modality (in-donor refugee costs) in the CRS. Due to the massive influx of migrants in 2015, the costs of temporary shelters, transport and personnel drastically increased. The majority of the costs are covered by the UOIM, and only a few specific cost categories remained in other Ministries. In order to implement the clarifications for reporting on in-donor refugee costs agreed by the DAC HLM in 2017, the MFA worked in collaboration with the UOIM. This in-depth work resulted in removing a number of items from ODA reporting:

- Costs of participating to Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean Sea, as the rescue of refugees was not the sole purpose of the mission, and the Slovenian personnel were not directly involved in the rescuing activity.
- Costs attached to persons with a refugee status, as they are all considered to be involved in integration programmes, and therefore the costs are not ODA-eligible.
- Costs beyond 12 months of stay: when reviewing the methodology, the MFA found that the average time to arrive to the final decision on status by the MoI is more than a year and decided to apply a coefficient of 80% to costs attached to asylum seekers, to deduct costs beyond 12 months. The estimate of 80% was set based on the 2019 data provided by the MoI, and would be reviewed every three to five years.
- Health costs for immigrants: another finding during the review was that the MoH used to report costs (e.g. emergency care) related to applicants for international protection but also to illegal immigrants. The MoH found a way to separate these costs and deduct them from ODA reporting in future, starting with 2019 data.

<sup>14</sup> In 2019, the cost per student per year in faculty was EUR 3,500.

<sup>15</sup> See paragraph 95 in [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT\(2020\)44/FINAL/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT(2020)44/FINAL/en/pdf).

41. Slovenia was also able to implement the recommendation for more granular data on in-donor refugee costs, and now reports data disaggregated by categories of refugees and types of expenditures. The MFA also keeps NGOs informed of their methodology for calculating these costs.

42. It is generally difficult for members to change longstanding reporting practices, and the Secretariat congratulated Slovenia for its thorough work in adjusting its methodology in accordance with the clarifications. The results – more transparent data and removal of non-eligible items from ODA – are outstanding.

### **1.1.5. Administrative costs**

43. Slovenia calculates administrative costs separately for each Ministry. The methodology was introduced in 2010. Before, a fixed percentage had been applied. After an external evaluation in 2016, which revealed that Slovenia's effort in bilateral technical assistance field had been undervalued and pointed out that salaries paid for the employees to carry out tasks for the benefit of the partner countries should be taken into account, the methodology was upgraded to include additional administrative costs of the sending institutions.

44. The methodology takes into account the overhead costs i.e. salaries and travel costs, representation costs (e.g. coffee) and other operating costs (e.g. electricity and water). The overhead costs and representation costs are directly measured and the other operating costs are based on the share of employees (i.e. the share ZRH in total MFA staff) assigned to the ZRH. The average cost per person/hour and per person/day is then calculated based on the number of employees on the last day of the previous year and the number of working hours in the previous year. Other ministries report the number of employees and hours spent by them on development co-operation work, and the ZRH calculates the costs for them using the calculated average cost and includes the figures in the administrative costs.

45. The administrative costs for the missions and embassies abroad are calculated separately and differently. Based on salaries, travel costs, rents, regular maintenance costs, material costs etc., the cost per person abroad is calculated. Approximation is used to determine how much of their time was spent on the development co-operation related work. When other Ministries provide technical assistance, all the material costs are covered by the MFA's technical assistance programme, recorded in the MFA's financial record and reported as D01 in type of aid. When these Ministries have several missions in the same year, the costs of the staff involved are recorded as administrative costs of the corresponding Ministries.

46. Administrative costs represented about 4% of the Slovenian ODA in 2019. The share had peaked in 2013 to approximately 10% but has been stable around 4% for the last few years. This is mostly due to the smaller number of staff at the ZRH.

### **Observations by the peer review team:**

- The Secretariat explained that members have different reporting practices, and it is keen to know how these costs are calculated. As a matter of example, Poland indicated that it has a different approach where it reports only the actual costs and salaries of the MFA's department working on development co-operation, i.e. no estimated figures are included. Slovenia used to report the salary cost of other Ministries' experts as G01 in the past and at present records them as D01 whenever these can be directly attributed to specific technical assistance activities in individual partner countries. The Secretariat further explained that there is the ceiling of 50% on administrative costs mentioned in the Reporting Directives for diplomatic staff that are engaged in development co-operation work. Members should not count more than 50% of diplomats' salaries in their ODA, unless the actual costs can be ascertained in the form of a charge to the aid budget<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> See paragraph 80 in [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT\(2020\)44/FINAL/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT(2020)44/FINAL/en/pdf)

The MFA confirms that it does not report such shares for the diplomatic staff abroad, except for the diplomats at Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the EU in Brussels, dealing specifically on development co-operation issues e.g. The Working Party on Development Cooperation and International Partnerships (CODEV - PI) and African, Caribbean and Pacific Working Party (ACP WP).

## 1.2. Private sector instruments (PSI)

47. Slovenia considers that it is important to acknowledge and encourage the private sector's participation in development co-operation. In this context, Slovenia developed a strategic framework for private sector engagement and launched a dialogue with the Chamber of Commerce as well as private companies. As a result, the private sector participates in some NGO projects, providing expertise, finance, or in-kind support. The MFA also raises awareness on development co-operation issues among the private sector.

48. On the topic of PSI, the MFA and the MGRT<sup>17</sup> rely on the expertise of UNIDO and to some extent also on the SID Bank as well as other Slovenian institutions. For instance, Slovenia launched a pilot project in Egypt to build domes and warehouses in co-operation with UNIDO and Slovenian enterprises, leveraging the Slovenian technology. The project was implemented in alignment with all the international rules. UNIDO selected private companies, as there was no need for open tenders, and the private sector invested 40% of the total project cost. UNIDO then led the whole project and ensured the development nature of the project.

49. Going forward, participating companies will not be limited to Slovenian enterprises. Slovenia also has started discussing the potential for creating a Slovenian guarantee vehicle.

## 1.3. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 1

- The review team was impressed by the scope of activities taken care of by a statistical staff at the ZRH in a thorough manner. The large participation of external stakeholders during the review sessions is a testimony of the good collaboration maintained to collect all the necessary information. These are commendable, however, the activities conducted by the statistical staff would benefit from a stronger back-up from one or two colleagues within the Ministry or from additional knowledge sharing.

### ***ODA-eligibility:***

- The diligent and thorough work conducted by the ZRH to verify the eligibility of activities is commendable, especially in the context of capacity constraints and very limited resources. This is true for all components of ODA. However, some of the activities in the field of migration might need further scrutiny.

### ***In-donor refugee costs:***

- Slovenia was able to share good practice by communicating with the Secretariat and NGOs on the topic of in-donor refugee costs in a transparent manner and also to disaggregate the costs by type of refugees and type of costs. These are commendable.

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<sup>17</sup> MGRT is the responsible institution for co-operation with UNIDO on development co-operation projects.

***Administrative costs:***

- Slovenia's very detailed approach to calculation of the administrative costs is commendable. Some costs e.g. costs of diplomatic staff might require further investigation on their consistency with the rules defined in the Reporting Directives.

## 2. How to make domestic data collection more effective and efficient?

50. This dimension describes how Slovenia's aid data are collected and managed by the MFA.

### 2.1. Data collection

51. The MFA is responsible for the data collection, quality control, reporting and publication of Slovenian aid statistics. A single staff member manages these processes. The statistical staff member is responsible for compiling the ODA statistics and reporting to the OECD and the EU, as well as drafting the annual report and submitting data to parliament. In addition to the data collection and compilation, this staff member is responsible for training other staff how to use the data as well as guiding and responding to ODA-eligibility questions.

52. Each year (in early January), the MFA reaches out to other Government departments or Ministries for collecting data on ODA expenditures via Excel templates. In order to prepare for the data collection from other Government departments, the file is accompanied by a PDF file with about 20 pages of instructions for desk officers. Some fields in the template have only limited, pre-defined possible selections and others are free to be filled.

53. In addition, the MFA statistical staff organises a workshop in mid-January for budget users (attendance to this is in general low). The deadline for collecting data from other departments is mid-February.

54. In addition to the MFA reporting on its bilateral aid, the following Ministries or departments report on a regular basis:

- MoF: reports on multilateral aid, primarily IFIs contributions and investment-type projects through the CMSR
- MESP: reports on Slovenia's membership in international conventions concerned with the environment
- MGRT: reports on support to SMEs through UNIDO and the CMSR
- MoI: reports on police officers' secondments
- MIZS: reports on scholarships, imputed student costs, contributions to UNESCO
- MoH: reports mostly on multilateral aid to WHO
- MoD: reports mostly on contributions to UNDPO and Civil Protection and Disaster Relief

### 2.2. Data management process and tools

55. The MFA does not have a dedicated database to manage statistical data. The data are collected through questionnaires in Excel. The template has three worksheets: one for bilateral aid, one for multilateral aid and one for administrative costs. When the data are received they are inserted into a main Excel spreadsheet at the MFA, which contains all the data on Slovenian aid programmes since 2010.

56. Within the MFA the documentation, related to the management of ODA funds, is stored in an archives database called SPIS 4 (IBM Lotus Notes) and includes information on the contracts concluded with the implementing partners, including information on partner country and financial plan as well as descriptive information. Similar practice of storing official data exists on each ministry.

57. Staff must use this system to leave an audit trail. The centralised data are linked to the national financial execution system.

58. When the data on activities, implemented in previous year, are submitted to the MFA from other Government departments, the statistical officer cross-checks the data with reporting done in previous years as many activities undertaken by other Ministries are regular and multi-year activities. ODA-eligibility as well as trends in ODA are verified by the one statistical officer. Data from the various ministries are harmonised, such as marker data reported to the CRS. Contributions to multilateral organisations are verified to ensure that any relevant ODA coefficients have been applied.

59. The data from the MFA and other Government departments are transferred into a file in Excel format, which offers a high degree of flexibility, enables easy access to the data and requires little IT expertise. The data are stored on an internal shared T:\ drive in the MFA, which could pose a threat in terms of system security and other potential risks. Periodically, the file is stored in SPIS 4 to lower this risk. The files are backed up during regular server backups, but the data officer keeps a copy of the database on her computer, and asks other users to warn her when changes may have been made so she can update her local version. This implies keeping track of different versions of the database. The MFA has considered putting into place a platform for continuous data collection (using sharepoint), but there is little demand from users for this. Furthermore, the additional work connected to this set-up does not seem to provide enough added-value and more comprehensive solutions are being sought.

### 2.3. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 2

- The production of Slovenian aid statistics lies in the responsibility of a single staff member, who is very knowledgeable on the tasks related to data collection and tracking the WP-STAT discussions. However, there is risk involved, e.g. in case of absence or departure of the staff, and Slovenia should find ways to support this staff member and ensure the knowledge is transferred to other staff.
- The MFA's data stored in Excel format on a shared drive may be flexible and require little IT expertise, however it poses a threat in terms of the system security and creates numerous potential challenges (e.g. remote access). The MFA is encouraged to look into a more robust data management system.

## 3. How to improve reporting to the OECD and how to consolidate quality reporting over time?

### 3.1. Quality assurance process and DAC reporting

60. The MFA is required to submit preliminary figures for the previous year to the OECD by mid-March and the main questionnaire by mid-July. It is supposed to implement all corrections proposed by the OECD to the main questionnaire and submit the final data.

61. There are two IT systems in use to store the collected data: one is SPIS 4 for the MFA, and the other is MFERAC<sup>18</sup> for other Government departments. When the data are copied from these systems into the main Excel sheet, the MFA statistical officer provides quality assurance of collected information, this includes: verifying the trends with previous years' reporting, identifying the discrepancies and correcting them accordingly with reporting agencies' agreement.

62. Slovenia takes into account feedback provided by the OECD, stores it into the SPIS 4 and integrates it into the Main Excel database so that it can feature in future reporting, which helps improve the quality of Slovenian data over time.

63. ODA eligibility is checked and discussed together with reporting institutions, whenever need arises.

64. CRS markers are also reviewed by the statistical officer, however only selected markers are verified by MFA or other ministries' experts in the field (e.g. for gender, climate, DRR and environment markers).

### 3.2. Data quality and specific reporting issue

#### ***Tying status***

65. Tying status was reported for the first time just before the first DAC Peer Review of Slovenia in 2017 to allow for a discussion on the issue. Due to the fact that the majority of Slovenian aid is multilateral and that a large part of bilateral aid is in a form of free-standing technical co-operation (FTC) and imputed student costs, where reporting of the tying status has so far not been mandatory, Slovenia has been reporting the tying status only on a limited number of activities. The Secretariat emphasised that although not obligatory, the reporting on the tying status of FTC is strongly encouraged for transparency purposes, as emphasised in the DAC Directives (paragraph 430) and also in the commitment made by DAC members in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation signed in 2011, to "improve the quality,

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/storitve/mferac/>

consistency and transparency of reporting on the tying status of aid.” DAC members have made considerable progress in reducing the share of aid for which tying status is not reported, and with the exception of two members, all report the tying status of FTC.

66. The CMSR, which administers grants to partner countries for investment-type projects, practices procurement through partner countries’ systems and procedures. When there are public calls for NGO projects, due to administrative reasons, Slovenian national NGOs are called for. However, they are obliged to partner with local actors and procure locally. The MFA mentioned that Slovenian NGOs’ local partners are important implementing partners, but the approach to reporting tying status remains unclear.

67. The Secretariat clarified that a key distinction is between aid to and through NGOs.<sup>19</sup> While core contributions to NGOs are considered untied by default, funding NGOs to implement specific projects and programmes developed by the donor and on behalf of the donor, can be tied, partially untied or untied without any default instruction. In addition, the Secretariat clarified that according to the current rules, if part of the funding is tied to donor’s suppliers, the whole funding is considered tied.<sup>20</sup> However, the Secretariat agreed that there may be a need to clarify the tying status reporting for certain contributions where the line between aid to and through NGOs may not be very clear. This issue will be proposed for discussion at the WP-STAT.

### 3.3. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 3

- Slovenia is encouraged to expand its data verification (e.g. improving project descriptions or expanding the verification of data) and there is some scope for improvement in the area of policy markers. Slovenia is encouraged to report more of policy markers rather than just the selected ones. Additional support from colleagues with expertise in the field would help ensuring that flags are applied correctly.
- The data collection process for CRS reporting seems to be well-organised. However, additional resources to this task could be dedicated.
- Slovenia is encouraged to expand the scope of its reporting on tying status with the aim of reporting fully in the future, noting that such reporting is not obligatory but strongly encouraged.

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<sup>19</sup> ‘Aid to NGOs covers official funds paid over to non-governmental organisations for use at the latter’s discretion. Aid through NGOs covers official funds made available to NGOs for use on behalf of the official sector, in connection with purposes designated by the official sector, or known to and approved by the official sector. Aid to NGOs means official contributions to programmes and activities which NGOs have developed themselves, and which they implement on their own authority and responsibility. Aid through NGOs means payments by the official sector for NGOs to implement projects and programmes which the official sector has developed, and for which it is ultimately responsible. The latter includes “joint financing” schemes where government agencies and NGOs consult about activities, jointly approve them and/or share their funding.’ (see Box 5 in the DAC Statistical Directives)

<sup>20</sup> Untied aid is defined as ‘loans and grants whose proceeds are fully and freely available to finance procurement from all OECD countries and substantially all developing countries’.

## 4. How to better monitor recommendations and commitments in the field of development co-operation?

### 4.1. TOSSD

68. Slovenia is gradually implementing reporting on Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD). The MFA keeps the other Ministries informed of developments related to TOSSD.

69. It firstly contacted the MoD, as the eligibility criteria for TOSSD in the field of peace and security are wider than those for ODA. Non-eligible activities of the MoD that can be considered as TOSSD-eligible are reported as “other flows” in the CRS.

70. The MFA also contacted the SID Bank, as export credits contributing to sustainable development can be reported in TOSSD. The SID Bank has strict rules with regard to environment, but does not impose the definition of sustainable development per se; therefore the MFA reached the conclusion that their export credits should not be included in TOSSD until the discussion possibly evolves in various export credits communities e.g. in relation with the EU Taxonomy.

71. The MFA has reached out to the MIZS as well, mainly on questions of eligibility (R&D, including in connection to COVID-19) as there was a large increase of financial flows into this area. They discussed how to capture the support provided to entities that perform research and development activities.

72. In terms of the legislative framework, Slovenia was happy to indicate that they now have a basis for reporting on TOSSD. While in the first Act development co-operation was defined quite narrowly as ODA, in the most recent version of the Act, the definition has been broadened to include, in addition to ODA, OOF and private funds mobilised by official interventions. This change provides the MFA with a legal basis to request data also on activities beyond ODA.

73. Furthermore, the peer review team was interested to learn that, in the Decree, Slovenia introduced a prohibition to finance projects that promote the use of fossil fuel. Although such projects were largely already filtered out during the project selection process, there was no concrete legal basis to completely exclude them.

74. Slovenia has started to include SDGs in its reporting at a very early stage, even before they were adopted in CRS and TOSSD reporting. The MFA found it difficult and ambiguous to assign SDG(s) to their multilateral contributions. In response, the Secretariat explained that, in principle, providers are not supposed to include multilateral contributions in their TOSSD reporting, as TOSSD data are collected directly from the multilateral organisations concerned. However, pending complete reporting by the organisations, providers still report their contributions and assign SDGs to them. The Secretariat agrees that the possibility of proposing a uniform way of assigning SDGs to multilateral contributions should be discussed, in order to avoid different reporting practices among providers.

## 4.2. Export credits

75. The SID Bank is a bank with several public mandates e.g. export tasks (export financing), promotion tasks (supporting domestic project development) and development tasks (development finance). On export tasks, SID Bank serves as a financier of the export loans. It also runs an insurance scheme as a governmental agency. In the area of development co-operation, it in the past provided export credits combined with grants, given by the CMSR. The SID Bank is in line and follows the common approaches of the OECD on the climate, environmental and social issues.

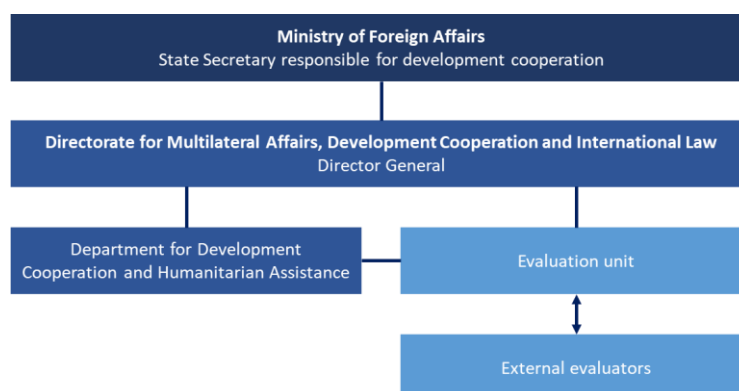
76. In an effort to report flows beyond ODA to the DAC, the MFA has reached out to the SID Bank for information on export credits. The SID Bank sent the relevant data for 2018 to the MFA for the first time. The MFA communicated with the Secretariat on how to report on different modalities e.g. the case where SID Bank provides only an insurance or guarantee for an export credit and there is no actual flow and the case where SID Bank provides the loan. The MFA believes that it is now ready to continue its reporting in this area.

77. Slovenia puts much emphasis on export credits. In 2021, Slovenia holds presidency of the council working group on export credits of the EU. SID Bank reports regularly to the OECD, on behalf of the MGRT, all of their export credits that fall under the Arrangement on officially supported export credits. SID Bank has never come across any problem in reporting so far.

78. In response, the Secretariat explained the importance of reporting on export credits to DAC statistical system and stressed that DAC statistics do not focus only on ODA flows but capture total official and private assistance flows to developing countries, and thus provide a whole-of-government picture of the resources going into developing countries.

## 4.3. Evaluation and monitoring of implementation

Figure 3. Organisational Structure and Reporting Lines



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia

79. In Slovenia, evaluations of development co-operation projects are required by law. The organisational structure and related reporting lines are shown in the Figure 3. Focus is mainly put on inputs, as evaluating the outputs/results/achievements is a relatively new concept in Slovenia.

80. Slovenia commenced its project evaluations when it joined the DAC in 2013. With assistance from Finland, it drafted an evaluation policy and guidelines in the same year, the former having been adopted in 2014 and the latter in 2015. The **evaluation policy** is the legal framework for the project evaluations in the field of development co-operation. The mandate covers all Slovenian ODA funds, and the policy

describes the concept, purpose, criteria, etc. of evaluation as well as the use of evaluation results. The evaluation policy mandates the MFA to function as a national coordinator in this field. The Strategy also requires the MFA not only to function as a national coordinator but also to foster the evaluation culture. The MFA carries out this responsibility by disseminating the evaluation results and organising awareness raising events. Slovenia adopts the human rights based approach. In every project fiche, there is a field on reasoning for their contributions towards human rights.

81. In the Strategy, a set of indicators e.g. ODA/GNI ratio is mentioned. Many of these indicators are connected to inputs. The MFA tries to develop the indicators in key areas but has difficulty setting specific targets in advance.

82. Monitoring at project level is the task of project managers, who need to check whether or not the targets mentioned in the project proposal are achieved. However, there is not a specific framework to conduct this monitoring. The MFA feels like such a framework would be needed in future.

83. In terms of risk management and quality assurance, the MFA has introduced the SWOT analysis to assess NGOs' project proposals. SWOT analysis is carried out after the project is selected via public calls for proposals, because otherwise the SWOT matrix would not be filled with useful information. There is a lack of knowledge on NGOs' end, and therefore, the matrix is prepared in close collaboration with the MFA.

84. In the annual report, the MFA drafts a chapter dedicated to results achieved, in which it provides information on the achievements of concluded projects. The MFA has therefore started monitoring achievements closely on project level. In many areas, the number of Slovenian activities is not large, and therefore it is relatively easy to monitor the project achievements. However, the MFA clarified that it uses the information and analysis provided by international organisations e.g. the OECD and EU to monitor multilateral activities. As Slovenian ODA is disbursed in many different areas, the MFA feels like it needs to find a way to design a more comprehensive framework.

#### 4.4. Humanitarian aid

85. The legal and strategic bases for Slovenian humanitarian aid are the same as for its development co-operation i.e. Act, Decree, Resolution and Strategy. Slovenia adheres to international principles e.g. Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) and European consensus on humanitarian aid, and also is part of international initiatives e.g. Grand Bargain, Call to Action on GBV and Food Assistance Convention. It also engages in political dialogue with international organisations.

86. The thematic priorities defined in the Strategy focus on (i) emergency response, (ii) reconstruction, rehabilitation, (iii) preventive action and resilience building. Emergency response is granted regardless of thematic and geographic priorities and accounted for 77% of the total Slovenian humanitarian assistance in 2018 and 68% in 2019. The implementing partners are international organisations. Reconstruction and rehabilitation primarily focus on human security and protection, mine victim assistance and assistance in the aftermath of armed conflicts. The implementers in this field are ITF and NGOs. The MFA provides direct funding to the former, and the latter is selected through public call for proposals. No numerical target is set in these two areas. Preventive action and resilience building aims to improve access to drinking water and food security. ITF and NGOs serve as the implementing partners, and ITF receives direct funding while the NGOs are selected through public call for proposal. Spending of at least 10% of the humanitarian funds is set as the numerical target in this area in the Strategy and as committed in the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016. Slovenia achieved this goal in 2018 (12%) and 2019 (11%).

87. Slovenia has two sources of funding for humanitarian aid. One is the annual humanitarian budget, which is a part of national budgets. The allocation of these funds is based on the defined priorities and lessons learned. Funds are also allocated to respond to long-term humanitarian crises in the Middle East.

The second source is a budgetary reserve. In the event of unforeseen humanitarian crises (e.g. sudden natural disasters), the MFA may reach out to the MoF to request for funds from the national budget reserve. These resources dedicated for emergency response are limited, but are expected to increase, as the MFA managed to secure within its ODA funds, the extra budget of EUR 500,000 annually for emergency response starting from 2021 onwards.

88. The composition of the funds in 2019 is as follows:

- Emergency aid (46%)
- Aid in the aftermath of humanitarian crisis – priorities (40%)
- Aid in the aftermath of humanitarian crisis – outside priorities (2%)
- Preventive action and resilience-building – priorities (2%)
- Preventive action and resilience-building – outside priorities (9%)

89. Thus, emergency response and rehabilitation aid activities account for the largest share of humanitarian aid amounting to 46% and 42% of the total humanitarian aid provided in 2019.

90. In addition to the aforementioned implementers, Slovenia implements humanitarian aid in co-operation with private funds and also with support from the ACPDR, in the event of sudden humanitarian crises in the neighbourhood. Most of the funds are provided through contributions to international organisations that have the capacity to respond effectively to humanitarian emergencies.

91. The Act introduced the concept of strategic partnership for several areas including humanitarian assistance. Strategic partnership complements the international organisations in the field of emergency response and also upgrades the level of Slovenia's co-operation with them. It can be made with NGO consortium for all three areas of Slovenian humanitarian aid. At the time of the review, the MFA expected there to be a public call for 3-year pilot projects adding up to EUR 365,000. Slovenia also plans to expand its co-operation with the ICRC and strengthen the involvement of NGOs by using strategic partnerships.

92. To secure the transparency, humanitarian aid data are reported to the OECD, EDRIS, FTS and IATI and published on the MFA website.

#### 4.5. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 4

##### ***TOSSD reporting:***

- Slovenia is encouraged to continue its efforts on TOSSD reporting. The fact that the MFA has already reached out to other Government agencies as well as its diligent work on assigning SDG(s) are commendable.

## 5. How to improve transparency and the related performance on transparency indicators and indices?

### 5.1. Transparency

93. Slovenia has no on-line tool to disseminate data on its aid programme. The MFA publishes the annual report, and used to present this to CSOs, academia etc., through an annual event, Slovenian Co-operation Days. However, since this event has not been held over the past two years because of the COVID-19 outbreak, the annual report is not widely disseminated to general public. However, the MFA sends the report to all ministries and members of the “Permanent Coordination Group on Development Cooperation” and members of “Expert Council for Development Cooperation”, including NGOs, academia, Chamber of Commerce, public foundations etc. The report is published on the MFA’s website and presented to the relevant Parliamentary committee.

### 5.2. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 5

- Slovenia is encouraged to examine how to disseminate data on its aid programme in a timely and transparent manner.
- In order to increase transparency, it is recommended to add a visualization of development and humanitarian aid (ODA) data on the website of the MFA, reflecting the full picture of the assistance financed from public funds.

## 6. Are the data fit for purpose?

### 6.1. An external user perspective

94. The MFA publishes the annual report. In the past, it used to organise Slovenian Co-operation Days to discuss the report with CSOs and academia, but this event has not taken place over the past two years due to COVID-19 outbreak. Despite such challenge, the MFA managed to send the report to all ministries and the external stakeholders, publish it on the MFA's website and to present it to the relevant Parliamentary committee.

#### ***Meeting with CSOs***

95. During this session, the peer review team met with representatives of SLOGA, the umbrella organisation of Slovenian CSOs, which comprises 38 members and works on developmental topics especially in the areas of global education and humanitarian aid.

96. Financial support for activities on advocacy and development awareness have been cut, which puts CSOs in a difficult position. They felt that there is a low level of understanding and awareness of development co-operation by the general Slovenian society, but indicated that due to their low levels of Government funding, they have limited capacity to engage more, including with developing countries. However, they do obtain some funding from the EU, which is complemented with Slovenian government funding, and need to report back on their activities through a transparent process.

97. From their perspective and given the knowledge they have from the field, they felt that they could be more involved to improve Slovenia's development co-operation and humanitarian aid. They used to meet on an annual basis with the State Secretary, acting in his capacity of Development Minister. The MFA confirmed the meeting with the responsible State Secretary did not take place recently, but despite the circumstances, heavily influenced by COVID-19 and Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2021, key government representatives do regularly meet with the representatives of NGOs and participate in their events and vice-versa.

98. One of their roles is to monitor Slovenian ODA and provide inputs to AIDWATCH. However, they can obtain transparent data on Slovenia's aid activities only by sending a questionnaire to the MFA. They therefore rely on the preliminary ODA figures published by the OECD. They have raised questions on certain expenditures, such as imputed student costs or migration. The MFA has confirmed that it has reported such costs according to the OECD DAC rules, but CSOs would like to have access to the specific criteria the MFA has used to report these data.

#### ***Meeting with academia***

99. During this session, the peer review team met with representatives of the academia. They referred to the fact that they used to be part of the Expert Council, which used to meet with the Government to discuss the orientation of Slovenian development co-operation. The status of the Expert Council was somewhat unclear in February 2021 due to COVID-19 and the workload connected to the preparations for

the EU presidency, and has not met since January 2019. This has frustrated several representatives of the academia as they feel they are not being heard by the Government.

## 6.2. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 6

- Slovenia is encouraged to increase transparency of data on Slovenian aid programme and engage in further open and transparent discussion with representatives of CSOs and academia.

## 7. How are the data disseminated?

### 7.1. Communication and dissemination

100. The goal of awareness raising and communication in Slovenia is to inform, educate and raise awareness among Slovenian public about development co-operation and related policies, and foster active interest in international development co-operation; emphasise the importance of development co-operation and its indirect impact on everyday life in Slovenia.

101. The main thematic areas in communication are awareness raising and global education, and the target groups defined in the Strategy are general public, children and youth, experts, decision makers and private sector. To communicate with the general public, the MFA uses the government website, social media and events. Children and youth are the subject of global education. Communication with the experts takes place at various events. Decision makers are the Permanent Coordination Group, with which the MFA has regular meetings and discusses not only the relevant policies but also matters related to communication. Communication with the private sector is a new concept, and the MFA co-operates with it at working level.

102. The MFA engages in a wide range of communication activities to secure transparency. The annual report is the MFA's key statistical publication with the data from the previous year and the summary of the data for the last five years. It includes the key interpretation of the data as well as the summary of the results and achievements. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter as well as the mailing list where the Expert Council, Permanent Coordination group, or NGOs can share the data and other information, are also in use. The MFA also uses the new unified Government website, which provides the opportunity to publish activities of different Ministries in one place. On the website, users can filter the projects by region, country, implementation status (i.e. concluded or ongoing), assigned SDGs, etc. When a project is selected, the website displays the relevant information e.g. assigned SDGs, targets, timeline, etc. There is also the field of project description, in which the MFA tries to focus on (anticipated) results and achievements. The website brings not only benefits but also challenges to the MFA. Unlike before, it does not allow the ZRH to autonomously publish information, except for publishing projects. Also, as there is only one person who is in charge of the management of this website, publishing is often delayed.

103. Regarding the management of communication at project level, one of the criteria for assessing project proposals requires the applicants to show the planned communication activities. Applicants also have obligations in the contracts, which require them to include in the relevant website, social media, documents and public events the Slovenian Development Co-operation logo, clear statement saying Slovenia is the donor, links to the MFA website, etc. The MFA monitors the implementation of these obligations.

104. During the session with the NGOs, the Review team heard that public calls for proposals for awareness raising and global education had been suspended in 2021. The MFA explained that there was a high-level decision to dedicate the funds to projects addressing basic needs (water, food, shelter) in the field for this specific year, due to the pandemics. The MFA still strives to work in co-operation with the NGOs, including through the EU/Slovenia co-funded projects. Also, there is currently no established forum where the MFA regularly engages with the general public on the communication matter such as newsletter.

## 7.2. Proposed recommendations – Dimension 7

- Slovenia is encouraged to engage in communicating with the public more regularly.