The Slovak Republic and FAO
Partnering for sustainable development

Slovakia joined the Organization in 1993. During the 1990s FAO assistance in the country was focused mainly on forestry and integrated pest management (IPM). The Organization also provided technical support for the development and harmonization of national policies, particularly in the area of forestry and agriculture. Today Slovakia is a resource partner, providing support to a number of activities in the areas of FAO’s mandate, including forestry and food safety.

Supporting forestry sector development
Forestry has always been a major feature of cooperation between Slovakia and FAO. With forests covering almost 40 percent of the country’s territory, it is understandable that a major effort has been made to ensure the sustainable management and use of this valuable resource. Forestry is a major source of employment and contributes to the country’s GDP.

An early FAO project was designed to assist the country in developing the legal instruments and institutional capabilities necessary for identifying investment priorities and formulating investment projects of benefit to the forest sector. Within this context, support was also provided to harmonize the country’s forestry policy and legislation with those of the European Union.

Today, as in the past, Slovakia contributes to FAO’s activities in sustainable forest management by supporting the negotiations of the legally binding agreement on forests (LBA) in Europe. Both Slovakia and FAO recognize the crucial role that forests play in generating employment and income, particularly in rural areas, while also making an important contribution to the mitigation of climate change.


Development cooperation
Slovakia offers development cooperation to partner countries with the aim of contributing to sustainable development, mainly via reducing poverty and strengthening democracy and good governance. For the period 2014-2018 Slovakia has focused its development activities on specific countries and sectors.

With respect to FAO’s mandate, priority areas of Slovak development cooperation include:

- **Agriculture and forestry**, aiming to introduce new techniques and procedures, supporting processing and marketing of agricultural products, food security and soil protection
- **Water and sanitation**, with an emphasis on drinking water supply and water and waste management
- **Energy**, focusing on energy security and alternative sources
- **Support for the creation of market environment and small and medium enterprises**

Slovak support to FAO’s activities in the field spans the five regions, targeting a number of countries, including but not limited to Albania, Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kenya, Moldova, South Sudan and Ukraine.
Promoting a participatory approach to integrated pest management

Over the last decade, maize production in Central and Eastern Europe has been hampered by the spread of the Western Corn Rootworm (WCR), one of the major maize pests in the United States of America. Building on WCR research results from the USA and Europe, FAO launched a regional project in 2003 to assist a number of countries – including Slovakia – of the affected area in the development of integrated pest management (IPM) strategies.

It was understood that farmers’ involvement in monitoring was paramount for the detection, control and eventual eradication of the disease. For this reason, participatory research and training approaches were the key components of this three-year project, the goal of which was to ensure effective management of the pest at the field level and to stop its spreading. Specific objectives included: i) establishing an IPM participatory training and research programme based on the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) model; ii) increasing knowledge of WCR, particularly its likely spread in Europe, depending on different local agrobiodiversity conditions; iii) building an understanding of the socio-economic aspects of WCR management strategies and providing tools for improved policy and decision making.

Season-long training sessions were a crucial component of this initiative. Facilitators and farmers from each country involved in the project were trained in WCR biology and management. As part of national participatory activities, research and field studies on biodiversity and WCR risk estimation were conducted, along with a pilot socio-economic survey.

The project proved to be successful. It demonstrated that the threat of WCR could be managed without using chemical treatment or GMO cultivars. Rather, general as well as location-specific examples of effective integrated pest management solutions were effectively applied. Another crucial aspect was the promotion of Farmer Field Schools and Student Field Schools, which emphasized the value of collaboration among farmers.

Project: Integrated Pest Management for Western Corn Rootworm in Central and Eastern Europe. Funded by Italy. Implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Slovakia.

Promoting food safety

Recognizing the importance of harmonized international food standards for the protection of consumer health and promotion of fair practices in the food trade, Slovakia has been a member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) since 1994. The country’s active participation and contributions to Codex discussions are in line with its membership of the European Union.

Combating foot-and-mouth disease

Like its neighbouring countries, Slovakia is affected by animal diseases, which pose a threat to food and nutrition security, sources of livelihood and domestic as well as international trade.

In addition to the country’s own efforts to address this challenge, Slovakia is a member of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD). Slovakia and FAO advocate the need for collective action to develop preparedness and implement sustainable control programmes in all regions covered by the Global FMD Control Strategy, which was prepared by FAO and OIE under the umbrella of their Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs).

"Food security and adequate nutrition for all is where sustainable development starts."
José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General