

# Environmental education

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVAKIA

## Timeline



ID number 28577

## Background

The importance of environmental education is generally perceived positively. In addition to the education sector, other players, such as the environment ministry, are active.

## Objectives

The environment ministry initiated a new grant scheme (Green education fund) to support projects of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) promoting environmental education. This complements the scheme of the education ministry, which supports school projects. A new strategy paper on environmental education can harmonise efforts in this field.

## Description

Since October 2017, the Green education fund (GEF), managed by the Slovak Environment Agency and financed from the State budget and private companies, has been active in supporting environmental education. EUR 155 000 were earmarked for 28 NGO-projects at national (11) and regional (17) level. Grants of EUR 10 000 and EUR 5 000, respectively, with 5% joint financing by beneficiaries, supports the provision of class-ready materials and supporting actions (competitions, games, outdoor activities) aiming to raise learners' sensitivity to environmental issues and develop their citizenship competences. 25 of these projects (with a total budget of EUR 142 000) were carried out. This grant scheme was evaluated positively.

Since its revitalisation in 2022, it is financed by the Environmental Fund which receives means also from charging environmental polluters. The Environmental Fund was established by law (587/2004) for the purpose of implementing state support for the care of the environment on the principles of sustainable development. The main mission of the fund is to provide financial resources to applicants in the form of grants or loans to support projects in seven areas, including education.

In addition to direct funding schemes, the ŠIŠKA festival serves as an important platform for networking and knowledge exchange in environmental education. Organised annually in the autumn, the festival brings together teachers, coordinators, experts, and environmental education supporters to showcase projects, activities, and tools while fostering

collaboration. The event, now in its 26th year as of 2024, is organised by the Slovak Environment Agency and plays a key role in facilitating peer learning and promoting best practices in environmental education.

### **2017 Implementation**

### **2018 Implementation**

### **2019 Implementation**

In the first two years of the Green education fund, aimed at promoting out-of-school environmental education of children and adults, EUR 313 000 was dispersed to more than 50 projects. In November 2019, another call was launched, resulting in support for 17 regional and eight national projects. This grant scheme, initiated by the environment ministry, is managed by the Slovak Environment Agency (SEA), which is the main player supporting out-of-school environmental education. An internet portal, run by SEA, collects and shares information in the field of environmental education.

Each year, small grants are available for schools supporting environmental education. In 2019, 30 projects with a total budget of EUR 50 000 were financed by the education ministry.

In 2019, the policy paper Greener Slovakia: strategy of the environmental policy of the Slovak Republic until 2030, was also published. It is wide and only tackles environmental education briefly.

### **2020 Implementation**

In January 2020, SEA published the final version of the Concept paper for the development of environmental education and public awareness actions 2030. It contains 46 measures in four areas (capacity building, education supply, further development of the Environmental Education Centre, national coordination).

The action plan of the SEA concept paper addresses two important activities:

- (a) development of environmental educational programmes (EEP) for kindergartens, primary and secondary education, including secondary VET;
- (b) development of interactive digital applications in cooperation with schools.

The experience with piloting EEP in the Banská Bystrica region resulted in the development of specific know-how prioritising outdoor activities. The respective manual was completed in December 2020 and submitted for evaluation. After approval, it will be used for the development of methodologies for teachers and the in-service training course Environmental education for sustainable development.

In cooperation with secondary VET schools, interactive digital applications related to plastic or textile footprints, reducing waste, circular economy and climate change are in progress but hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projects under the umbrella of the Green Education Fund are in progress, as well as new 2020 projects financed by the education ministry. Of 99 projects submitted, 29, including seven VET projects, were approved and funded by the education ministry with a total budget of EUR 50 000. A Norwegian fund also supports projects in this area: 28 projects (out of 123 submitted proposals) were approved, including three VET projects, with a total budget of EUR 1 000 000.

### **2021 Implementation**

In April 2021, the Institute for Environmental Policy and the Educational Policy Institute published a common analysis of environmental education in formal education. Based on this analysis, four recommendations were set by the education ministry:

- (a) adoption of the national strategy of environmental education and introduction of

- periodical national research to collect relevant data;
- (b) updating educational content, themes, goals and teaching methods and expanding the network of environmental education centres;
- (c) supporting school coordinators by a supply of methodologies and improved remuneration;
- (d) introduction of obligatory environmental minimum in graduates' profiles of all teacher training programmes and ensuring appropriate in-service courses.

In 2021, within the annual grant scheme of the education ministry, 396 projects were submitted, of which 27, including three VET projects, were approved and funded by the ministry with a total budget of EUR 49 541. Earlier projects supported by the Norwegian fund were in progress, but no new projects were initiated. The Green education fund is in process of transformation after incorporation into larger existing environmental funds.

Five working groups were created to cover the respective priorities of global education. The working group Environment recommended focusing on participation in activities of communities (local/regional or specific) aimed at solving current problems, thus interlinking environmental education with active citizenship. Suggestions from these working groups will be translated into a new global education strategy to be completed by June 2022. Stronger emphasis on non-formal and informal learning and cooperation between schools with NGOs is also visible in the education ministry's school year guide (formerly titled pedagogical-organisational instructions) for the 2021/22 school year. This has recommendations and links to relevant methodologies, such as a Guide to non-formal environmental education for sustainable development: inspiration for teachers and youth workers, issued by the environment ministry, and to environmental stakeholders.

Support from the environment ministry, such as further development of the environmental portal EWOBBOX, disseminating best practice examples, creating additional centres of environmental education serving learners regardless of age, and offering stays of experiential learning, has been confirmed. The portal of environmental education EWOBBOX is maintained by the Slovak Environment Agency (SEA) and focuses on networking between people and institutions, including schools. A new environmental online campaign, SEA, composed of 10 thematic activities has been launched. 10 calls are published every month from September 2021 to July 2022. Within each monthly topic, the Teacher in action component of the campaign presents materials and initiatives that are ready for exploitation for teachers and schools from kindergartens to secondary schools.

In 2021, the Department of Ecochemistry and Radioecology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava with the support of the State Institute of Vocational Education, organised the fourth Green angel award for secondary students for the best projects addressing the issues of protection and regeneration of the environment. This competition accompanies the national Students' professional activities contest organised by the State Institute of Vocational Education for secondary students interested in science. This traditional competition focuses on excellence, as winners take part in Expo-Sciences International and Expo-Sciences Europe. The Green angel competition is a complementary activity aimed at attracting secondary students in environmental studies via their cooperation with university staff.

## **2022 Implementation**

The environmental web portal EWOBBOX, maintained by the Slovak Environment Agency (SEA), continues its activities, informing about events and disseminating examples of the best practice.

In May 2022, the Green education fund was relaunched. A total of EUR 150 000 was available for NGOs and schools to apply for grants of from EUR 1 000 to EUR 5 000 co-financed at 5%. Schools can support learning activities and training of staff in the following themes: waste and the transition to a circular economy, mitigation and adaptation to the adverse consequences of climate change and air protection, and

support and protection of biodiversity, including coexistence with the fauna of the Carpathian Basin. Finally, 44 projects were approved for a total sum of EUR 208 007, of which 40 materialised.

In 2022, within the annual grant scheme of the education ministry, 27 projects, including four projects of VET schools, were supported by the ministry with a total budget of EUR 50 000.

The fifth Green angel competition for secondary students attracted 34 projects and launched the competition for next year.

In December, the education ministry launched the Global education strategy 2023-30 to public debate. The Strategy was delayed to reflect the European declaration on global education to 2050 adopted at the European congress on global education on 3 and 4 November 2022 in Dublin. The Global education action plan 2023-26, which sets out the actions to be taken in relation to the strategy, is under preparation with expected submission to the government in June 2023. The strategy highlights the importance of education for sustainable development necessary for the transition to a green and circular economy and for building a just society for current and future generations in line with Agenda 2030. At the same time, the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation is preparing the Development strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2050, which also aims to update the goals of the national implementation process of the Agenda 2030 in the field of education for sustainable development.

### **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, within the annual grant scheme of the education ministry, 28 projects, including 9 projects from VET schools, received support with a total budget of EUR 52 000. Project priorities included preventing the consequences of climate change, restoring local ecosystems, reducing air pollution, and maintaining school gardens.

The sixth Green angel competition for secondary students attracted 41 projects.

The Slovak Environment Agency (SEA) launched a call for projects within the Green Education Fund, ultimately approving 151 projects with a total funding of about EUR 1.06 million.

### **2024 Implementation**

The seventh Green angel competition for secondary students attracted 41 projects. The call for the annual grant scheme of the education ministry was not launched in 2024 due to the changed priority. Available means were redirected to support NGOs in a disseminating innovations scheme aimed inter alia at improving key competences. On the other hand, the Slovak Environment Agency (SEA) launched a call for projects within the Green Education Fund in a total amount of EUR 500 thousand, within which only schools (or a founder of a school if a school is not a legal entity), including VET schools, were eligible applicants. They could apply for project funding of up to EUR 8 000 (with 1% co-financing) for educational activities targeting children and youth, the public, and teaching staff. The activities focused on three topics:

- (a) waste management and transition to a circular economy;
- (b) mitigating and adapting to the adverse consequences of climate change; as well as air protection;
- (c) presenting and supporting the protection of biodiversity and geodiversity (abiotic components).

69 projects were supported, and in December, an additional call within the Green Education Fund was launched to support environmental education via lectures and excursions at institutions active in the three aforementioned areas. Schools are entitled to receive a contribution of up to EUR 3 000.

On 30 August 2024, the Environment Education Centre 'Dropie' was opened, which

was renovated within the project, Climate change and environment education centre (Living lab) in Dropie, financed by the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway grant of EUR 1.2 million. In addition to investments in infrastructure, the project delivered an educational programme, titled Climate change living lab for all types of schools, including VET schools, and a methodological manual for schools prepared in cooperation with Norwegian partners.

Certification of environmental education providers based on quality standards related to four areas: governance, personnel, activity offerings, and operational ecological footprint, is offered under the surveillance of the SEA.

As a follow-up to the revision of the National recovery and resilience plan, the 2023-26 project, RepowerEU - Development of green skills, is being implemented by the State Institute of Vocational Education. The project consists of three parts:

- (a) adaptation of existing VET programmes in secondary VET schools: this phase has been completed with curriculum changes approved by the education ministry, affecting the 'Building energy equipment technician' study programme in six schools and the 'Autotronics technician' programme in eight schools;
- (b) development of new continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for pedagogical staff;
- (c) creation of modular continuing VET programmes for adults, focusing on green skills.

Two aforementioned programmes were selected for piloting due to their high impact and potential to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, with additional green programmes to follow. The 'Autotronics technician' programme is expected to expand significantly to other VET schools, while no further expansion is planned for the 'Building energy equipment technician' programme, as the pilot schools can meet the existing demand.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Slovak Environmental Agency
- Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

### **Education professionals**

Teachers  
Trainers  
School leaders

### **Other**

Environmental non-governmental organisations

## **Thematic categories**

### **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Coordinating VET and other policies

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

## **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Developing and updating learning resources and materials

Acquiring key competences

Integrating green transition and sustainability in VET curricula and programmes

## **Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences**

Supporting teachers and trainers for green transition and sustainability

## **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## **Further reading**

[Green education fund](#)

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[Concept paper for the development of environmental education and public awareness actions in SEA up to 2030 \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Sectoral concept paper for environmental education and public awareness actions up to 2025 \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Greener Slovakia: strategy of the environmental policy of the Slovak Republic until 2030](#)

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[The new environmental campaign](#)

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[EWOBOX portal](#)

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[Analysis of the situation in formal environmental education in Slovakia \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Green angel award competition](#)

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[Students' professional activities contest](#)

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[School year guide 2021/22 \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Guide to non-formal environmental education for sustainable development: inspiration for teachers and youth workers \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Global education strategy 2023-30 for public discussion \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Environmental Fund](#)

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[National recovery and resilience plan REPowerEU chapter \(in Slovak\)](#)

## **Related policy developments**

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**2024 Implementation**

### **National recovery and resilience plan**

The National recovery and resilience plan sets out a package of reforms and public investments to be implemented by 2026.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## Projects promoting key competences in IVET

In 2019, ESF-funded projects were launched aiming to improve learners' literacy, mathematics and science competences. They were also carried out in VET schools.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Environmental education: Slovakia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28577>