



The Governance of Land Use

Country fact sheet Slovak Republic

The planning system

Levels of government and their responsibilities

The Slovak Republic is a unitary state with three levels of government. It has 8 regional and 2 926 municipal governments. The national government is primarily involved in land-use policy through the *Ministry for Transport, Construction and Regional Development*. The ministry guides lower level planning processes and ascertains that planning documents correspond to the legal requirements. It also procures the *Slovak Spatial Development Perspective* that forms the national spatial development strategy and allocates funding for major infrastructure projects. Besides the *Ministry for Transport, Construction and Regional Development*, the *Ministry of the Environment* plays an important role in land-use policies, as it declares environmental protection areas, issues exemptions to environmental regulations and decides on appeals against decisions by regional environmental authorities.

Regions have wide-ranging responsibilities (on education, health, road transport, and social services). Their central task related to land use is the preparation and approval of *Regional Land Use Plans*. Typically, regions work with external experts that co-ordinate the participation of public stakeholders (municipalities, national authorities and other public sector organisations). Furthermore, regions review local plans and planning regulations.

Municipalities in the Slovak Republic are among the smallest in the OECD with an average number of just 1 854 inhabitants. Nevertheless, they have significant responsibilities and competencies. With respect to land use, several functions are important. Most directly, municipalities affect land use by issuing binding local land-use plans. Typically, plans are commissioned by municipalities and prepared by certified independent experts. Indirectly, municipalities affect land use through taxes on land and buildings. They can determine the tax rate and differentiate taxes on land according to uses. Furthermore, municipalities are responsible for social housing and urban regeneration.

Spatial and land-use plans

The Slovak Republic has a hierarchical planning system with four levels of plans. The long-term strategic document for spatial development at the national level is the *Slovak Spatial Development Perspective*. It is closely connected to the *National Plan for Regional Development* that addresses regional disparities. The *Slovak Spatial Development Perspective* defines a hierarchy of settlements and their national and international connections. It also outlines the main urban axes within the Slovak Republic. Furthermore, it provides directions that aim at creating equal living conditions in the entire country and at preserving the natural and cultural heritage. The *Slovak Spatial Development Perspective* contains binding and guiding parts. Lower level land-use plans must conform to the binding parts and this conformity is generally well enforced.

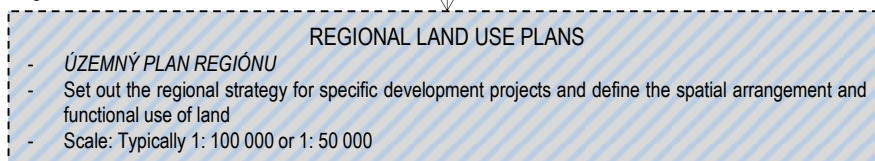
Organisation of spatial and land-use planning in Slovak Republic

General framework

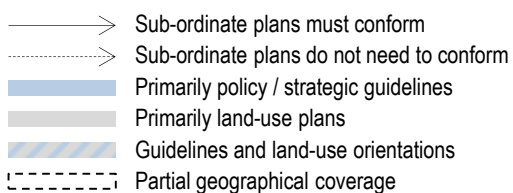
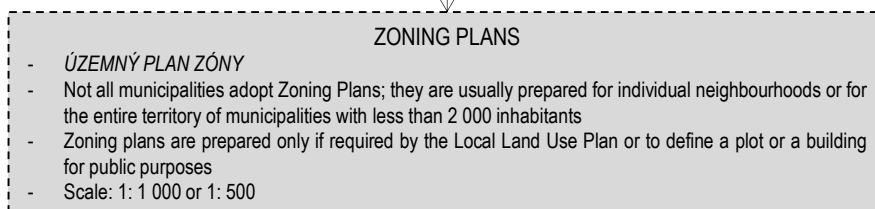
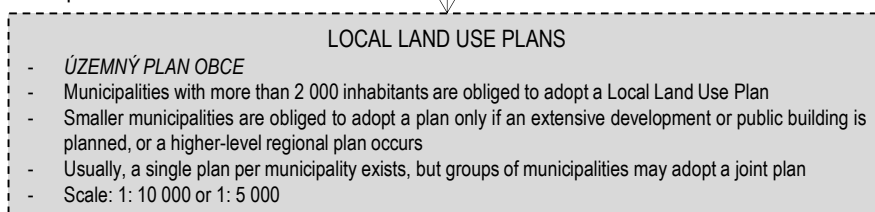
National



Regional



Municipal



Below the *Slovak Spatial Development Perspective*, three levels of land-use plans exist. A *Regional Land Use Plan* exists in each of the eight regions and combines strategic principles for spatial development with land-use plans for the region. It also determines the location of major infrastructure, technical facilities and contains directions for the protection of natural and cultural heritage sites. The overarching aim of *Regional Land Use Plans* is to guide local land-use planning towards sustainable and effective development. They are legally binding for subordinate *Local Land Use Plans*.

On the local level, two land-use plans exist. *Local Land Use Plans* must be adopted by municipalities with more than 2 000 inhabitants. They contain land-use plans at a scale of 1: 10 000, 1: 5 000 or 1: 2 880 that are binding for land owners. They are typically commissioned by municipalities and prepared by certified experts from the private sector. Sectoral plans for issues such as transport, agriculture and waste management are integrated in the *Local Land Use Plan*. As municipalities tend to be very small in the Slovak Republic, a large number of municipalities with less than 2 000 inhabitants exist. They can adopt a *Local Land Use Plan*, but do not have to do so unless they plan extensive developments, public buildings or are obliged by regional plans. Municipalities may also be obliged to adopt a *Local Land Use Plan* if important infrastructure or public buildings exist within their territory. Current trends indicate that many municipalities with fewer than 2 000 inhabitants that are not required to adopt a *Local Land Use Plan* have adopted one or are in the process of doing so.

The second local land-use plan is the local *Zoning Plan*. It is a highly detailed plan (typically drawn at a scale of 1: 1 000 or 1: 500) that describes permitted land use on plots and includes the footprints of individual buildings. The creation of *Zoning Plans* is mandatory only if it is required by *Local Land Use Plans* or when a public building is planned in the area. *Zoning Plans* exist mostly in larger cities and for areas where large public developments occur or that are environmentally sensitive.

Major laws and regulations

The *Building Act* provides the legal basis for land-use planning in the Slovak Republic. It is a comprehensive framework law that has several functions. It establishes land-use plans and provides guidelines on their content. It covers issues such as the spatial distribution of land uses, protected areas for development control, impact evaluation of proposed developments and the exploitation of natural resources. Furthermore, it contains building code regulations that provide architectural and technical guidelines for permitted developments. Together with environmental protection legislation, the act provides the basis for planning decisions.

The *Environmental Impact Assessment Act* specifies the requirement for developers to carry out such assessments. The importance of this process is limited because environmental impact assessments have only an indicative role and are not binding for the permitting process.

Other important laws are the *Nature and Landscape Protection Act* and the *Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments*. Furthermore, the *Supporting Regional Development Act* sets out requirements for strategic local planning for economic development. It emphasises particularly co-operation between the regional and local level and between local governments.

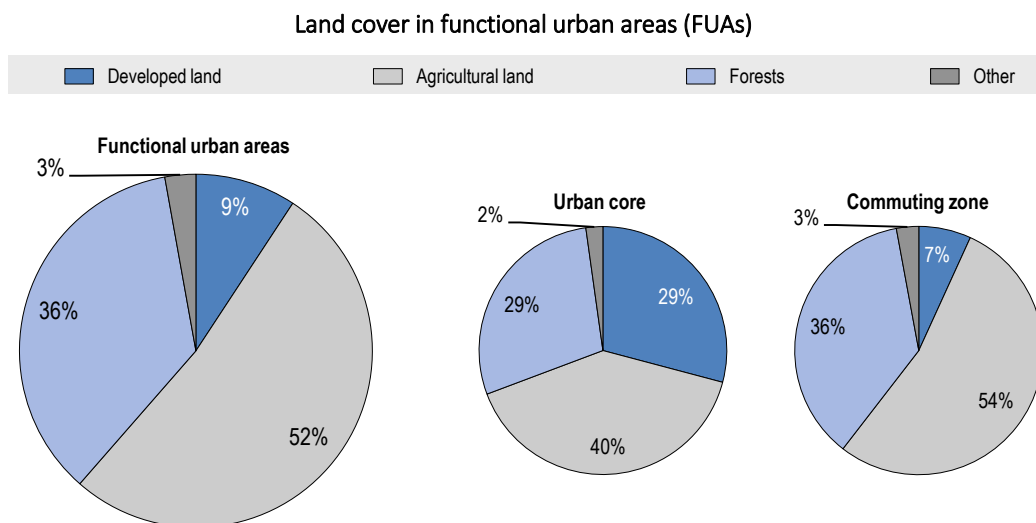
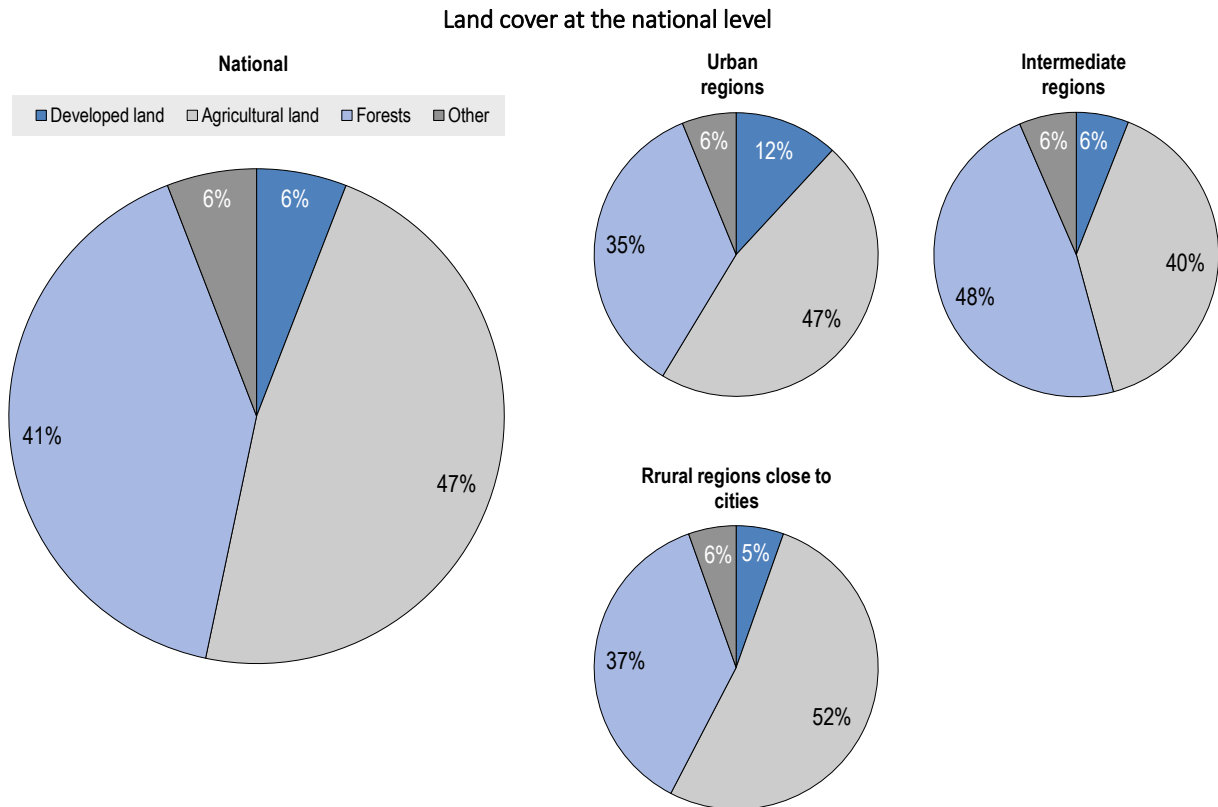
Co-ordination mechanisms

Vertical co-ordination of land-use related policies is ensured by the hierarchical nature of the planning system with the *Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development* as the central authority overseeing the process. No formal mechanisms for strategic horizontal co-ordination between policy fields exist, but public stakeholders from different sectors may provide input for the preparation of *Local Land Use Plans*.

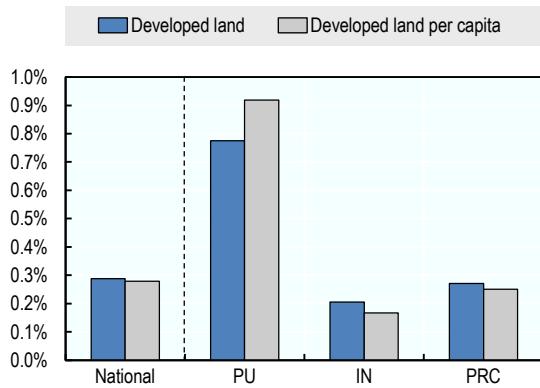
Recent and planned reforms to the system of land-use planning

The main elements of the Slovak planning system were introduced in conjunction with the establishment of the current system of subnational governments. Municipal governments as autonomous authorities were established in 1990 as part of the transition towards democracy. Regional governments were established in 2001 via the *Act on Self-governing Regions*.

Land cover in Slovak Republic

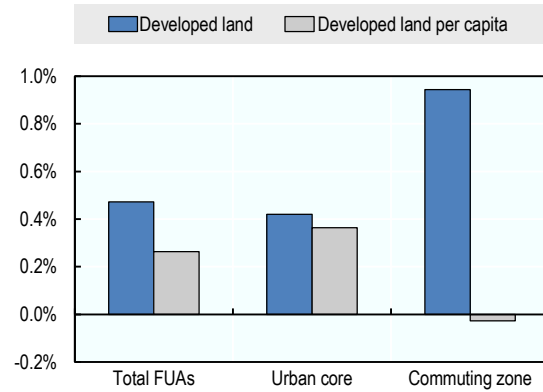


Annual change in developed land, 2000-12



Note: PU: urban regions, IN: intermediate regions, PRC: rural regions close to cities, PRR: rural remote regions.

Annual change in developed land in functional urban areas from 2000 to 2012



Note: Values for urban cores and commuting zones refer only to FUAs with more than 500 000 inhabitants.

Land-use trends in Slovak Republic

With 534 square metres of developed land per capita, land consumption in the Slovak Republic is slightly higher than the OECD average. Since 2000, it has grown slightly less than the OECD average in absolute terms, but slightly more than average in per capita terms. Growth of developed land has been particularly strong in urban regions. It occurred primarily within the commuting zones of functional urban areas, which also experienced strong population growth. The Slovak Republic has a comparatively high share of forested land, even though its size has declined by approximately 3.6% between 2000 and 2012.

Source: OECD calculations based on *Corine Land Cover dataset*.

Land cover at the national level in Slovak Republic

Land cover (km ²)	National	Urban regions	Intermediate regions	Rural regions close to cities	Rural remote regions
Total area	49 084	2 056	18 089	28 939	
Total developed land	2 888	244	1 079	1 566	
Percentage of total	5.9%	11.9%	6.0%	5.4%	
Annual change in developed land, 2000-12	8.2	1.8	2.2	4.2	
Annual percentage change in developed land, 2000-12	0.29%	0.78%	0.21%	0.27%	
Agricultural land	23 274	962	7 204	15 108	
Percentage of total	47.4%	46.8%	39.8%	52.2%	
Annual change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-12.0	-1.7	-3.9	-6.4	
Annual percentage change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-0.05%	-0.18%	-0.05%	-0.04%	
Forests	20 046	723	8 630	10 693	
Percentage of total	40.8%	35.2%	47.7%	36.9%	
Annual change in forests, 2000-12	-62.5	-2.1	-26.5	-33.9	
Annual percentage change in forests, 2000-12	-0.31%	-0.29%	-0.30%	-0.31%	
Land cover per capita (m²)					
Total developed land per capita	534	402	519	576	
Annual percentage change in developed land per capita, 2000-12	0.28%	0.92%	0.17%	0.25%	
Agricultural land per capita	4 307	1 586	3 469	5 552	
Annual percentage change in agricultural land per capita, 2000-12	-0.06%	-0.03%	-0.09%	-0.06%	
Forests per capita	3 709	1 192	4 156	3 930	
Annual percentage change in forests per capita, 2000-12	-0.31%	-0.14%	-0.34%	-0.33%	

Land cover in functional urban areas (FUAs)

Land cover in FUAs (km ²)	FUAs	Urban core	Commuting zone
Total area	10 234	1 118	9 116
Total developed land	947	326	622
Percentage of total	9.3%	29.1%	6.8%
Annual change in developed land, 2000-12	4.3	1.3	3.0
Annual percentage change in developed land, 2000-12	0.47%	0.42%	0.50%
Agricultural land	5 340	449	4 891
Percentage of total	52.2%	40.2%	53.7%
Annual change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-4.6	-1.3	-3.3
Annual percentage change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-0.09%	-0.29%	-0.07%
Forests	3 657	319	3 339
Percentage of total	35.7%	28.5%	36.6%
Annual change in forests, 2000-12	-5.8	-0.3	-5.5
Annual percentage change in forests, 2000-12	-0.16%	-0.08%	-0.16%
Land cover per capita in FUAs (m²)	FUAs (50 000+ inhabitants)	Urban core (only FUAs 500 000+)	Commuting zone (only FUAs 500 000+)
Total developed land per capita	467	277	642
Annual percentage change in developed land per capita, 2000-12	0.26%	0.36%	-0.03%
Agricultural land per capita	2 634	319	4 957
Annual percentage change in agricultural land per capita, 2000-12	-0.29%	-0.40%	-1.07%
Forests per capita	1 804	206	1 841
Annual percentage change in forests per capita, 2000-12	-0.36%	0.01%	-1.29%

Source: All land cover statistics for Slovak Republic are based on OECD calculations based on *Corine Land Cover dataset*.