

EIT Food Guide

FIRST STEPS FOR YOUR STARTUP IN SLOVAKIA

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Executive Summary

Slovakia:

- GDP, 115,47 billion USD in 2022
- Registered Unemployment Rate (end year, %) 6,1 %, 2022
- Member of the European Union, NATO, OECD, WTO, and Schengen zone
- Total area: 49 033 908 sq. km
- Slovakia is the second country in the world with the largest supply of drinking water
- The only country in the V4 region with EURO currency
- According to the fDi Markets ranking, Slovakia is an attractive FDI destination due to a relatively low-cost yet skilled labour force, and a favourable geographic location in the heart of Central Europe.
- GDP per Capita (Current PPP), 20 578,59 USD in 2022
- In the Slovak economy, agriculture create about 2% of gross value added and employs about 2.8% of the workforce.
- Slovakia has the highest average area of monocultures in the EU. The average size of the field in Slovakia is up to 12 hectares (ha) according to satellites.

1. How to set up a company in Slovakia

1.1. Introduction

Since 2002, Slovakia has been the fastest growing economy among all central European countries and one of the fastest growing economies of all 30 OECD member countries. As a result, we are gradually catching up with the standard of living of the most advanced countries. Slovak has actual A+ rating by Standard & Poor's and A2 rating by Moody's.

The traditional driver of the Slovak economy, which accounts for about 27% of GDP, is industrial production. Slovakia's strong industrial tradition and long-term focus on technical skills are currently reflected in the dominant position of the automotive industry (Slovakia is the largest car producer per capita in the world) and other closely related sectors, such as engineering or electrotechnical industries, in the Slovak economy. In addition to traditional sectors, new sectors such as the information and communication technology sector or the shared and corporate services centres sector have also taken a significant position in our economy.

Thanks to gradual automation and innovation, the modern food sector has maintained a strong position in the Slovak economy. Development in private companies takes place in close cooperation with public research institutions such as the AgroBioTech Research Center, the National Agricultural and Food Center or the Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. The food industry has a strong presence in all regions of Slovakia and produces a wide range of food products, from meat processing through bakery, dairy and other products, to the production of various types of beverages.

Why invest in Slovakia – top 10 reason¹:

1. CONVENIENT LOCATION

Slovakia has not only a strategic location in the heart of Europe, but above all excellent motorway and rail connections to the main European sales and supply markets. There are 600 million potential consumers within a radius of 2,000 km from the Slovak border. For shared service centers, the time zone (GMT+1) is also an advantage, which allows you to collaborate with clients around the world.

2. SECURITY AND STABILITY

According to data from Credit Insurance Group Credendo, Slovakia is one of the safest and most politically stable countries in Europe. Slovakia has the lowest risk from EU countries specifically in the following categories: risk of political unrest, risk of state interference in private property, currency and transfer risks (Credit Insurance Group Credendo).

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE EURO AREA

Slovakia, as one of the few countries in the region, has been a member of the euro area since 2009. The introduction of the euro as the official currency means reduced transaction costs for investors, reduced risk from currency volatility and increased economic and financial stability.

4. SKILLED AND AVAILABLE WORKFORCE

¹ <https://www.sario.sk/sk/investujte-na-slovensku/sektorove-prehlady/potravinarsky-priemysel>

The workforce in the Slovak Republic is characterized by quality, qualifications, loyalty to the employer or excellent language skills. Compared to the countries of Western Europe, the cost of this labor is still relatively low.

5. LABOR PRODUCTIVITY

According to OECD data, Slovakia has the highest labour productivity in the region. This allows investors to achieve higher output rates at the same labour costs compared to other Central and Eastern European countries (OECD).

6. IMPROVING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The growing competitiveness of the Slovak economy is also reflected in the long-term progression in the Global Competitiveness Ranking (World Economic Forum). Progress in the ranking is the result of long-term and systematic implementation of measures in favour of entrepreneurs. Examples of such measures are regular anti-bureaucratic packages (the so-called entrepreneurial kilometre, the introduction of the "one year - one rules" rule or the introduction of the so-called Kurzarbeit.

7. INNOVATIVE ECONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Slovakia is not only a regional leader in the number of installed industrial robots per employee in industry (International Federation of Robotics), but also in the ability of the workforce to adopt and adapt to new technologies (World Economic Forum). Statistics show a high potential for technologically demanding industrial projects and technology centers.

8. OPENNESS OF THE ECONOMY

Slovakia has long been one of the most open economies in the world. When comparing countries based on the ratio of the value of exports of goods to the GDP of a country, Slovakia is the most open country in the EU (Eurostat).

9. DEVELOPED INFRASTRUCTURE

Several EU major transport corridors pass through Slovakia. In connection with the advanced and constantly developing road and rail infrastructure, it can be concluded that Slovakia has the potential to become one of the most important logistics hubs in Europe.

10. SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Investors in Slovakia can benefit from an attractive regional investment aid scheme, a preferential tax regime for research and development activities and other support mechanisms.

1.2 Being self-employed in Slovakia

In Slovakia, a physical person can carry out a business activity as a self-employed person (SZČO), ie as:

- a) self-employed person (according to the Trade Licensing Act), who does business on the basis of a trade license - e.g. mason, hairdresser
- b) liberal profession which a person carries out on the basis of a license other than a trade license (according to special regulations)
- c) a self-employed farmer (according to the law on private enterprise of citizens) who carries out agricultural production.

Establishing a self-employed person (gaining a license) must meet three general conditions:

- I) legal integrity
- II) legal capacity
- III) minimum age 18 years.
- IV) in the case of establishing a craft or mortgaged self-employed person, it must also meet special conditions (eg professional experience, education)

Brief description of the basic advantages and disadvantages of business in the form of SZČO:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast and cheap establishment of a company The owner retains the entire profit and after its taxation is not subject to additional tax burden Independence The possibility to use the so-called flat - rate taxation expenses Possibility to choose the accounting system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liability with all its assets Difficulties in raising capital High tax burden of a profitable company

The self-employed person is established by notification and by filling in a simple form. Registration fees are:

5 EUR for each free trade

15 EUR for each craft trade or each mortgaged trade.

If the trade is registered electronically via a guaranteed electronic signature, the correct fee for a craft or mortgaged trade is halved. Free trades are not charged at all for electronic reporting.

1.3. Setting up a legal entity in Slovakia

Since a legal person has legal personality (legal capacity), it must be represented by someone, someone must be its founder and must meet the conditions prescribed by law at the beginning of its creation.

o Establishment of Legal Entity

The establishment of a legal entity consists in the writing of founding agreements, which according to the law and the selected legal form can be called different. It is important that such a founding document must be written in Slovak language. The foreign founder of the company must therefore look for a professionally qualified person who will prepare the documentation for him. However, as this is a relatively simple procedure, it is also cheap and the processing of founding documents usually does not exceed € 200. It is expensive to set up a European Company. But this legal form is not typical of startups.

The establishment of a legal entity is subject to administrative court fees for registration:

- a) Joint-stock Company 700eur / using electronic way 375 EUR
- b) Other legal entities EUR 300 / using electronic way 150 EUR
- c) Organizational Unit of the legal entity 300 EUR / in case of electronic submission 150 EUR
- d) An enterprise or an organizational unit of an enterprise of a foreign person 300 EUR 300 / in the case of electronic submission 150 EUR

Conditions for the establishment of individual legal forms of a legal entity:

All legal entities are registered as entrepreneurs in the Commercial Register, which is kept by the district courts at the registered office of the established legal entity.

Public Trading Company (VOS)

VOS is defined in the Commercial Code (Act No. 513/1991 Coll.) in § 76 - § 92. Conditions for the establishment:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to set up No capital is required There is a ban on competition for all partners Simple organizational structure (bodies are created only by agreement, they are not created by law) Profit is not taxed and is passed on to shareholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two partners They are fully liable for the company's liabilities They all bear the profit and the loss equally Although VOS does not pay income tax, it must file a tax declaration The partners who admit their share in the profit of VOS also submit to tax declaration This profit is subject to levies

Documents required for registration in the Commercial Register:

- Company establishment contract
- Authorization to do business in the subject of business

The articles of association must contain:

- Business name and registered office of the company
- Names and residences of the partners
- Type of business
- The application for registration is submitted and signed by all founders, and their signatures must be officially certified

Limited Partnership (KS)

KS is defined in the Commercial Code (Act No. 513/1991 Coll.) in § 93 - § 104 Conditions for the establishment:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to set up • No capital is required • In a limited partnership, the prohibition of competition applies to the limited partner. This only applies if the memorandum of association is not stated otherwise. • General partners guarantee all their property. • The limited partners guarantee the amount of their unpaid deposit. • Simple organizational structure (bodies are created only by agreement, they are not created by law) • Profit is not taxed and is passed on to shareholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two partners • Although KOS does not pay income tax, it must file a tax declaration • The partners who admit their share in KOS's profit also submit to tax declaration • This profit is subject to levies

The Business register shall prove:

- Memorandum of Association - signed by all founders with officially certified signatures
- Authorization to do business in the subject of business
- Declaration of the deposit administrator - according to a special law (§ 60 par. 4 of the Commercial Code)

Limited Liability Company (s. r. o.)

S. r. o. is defined in the Commercial Code (Act No. 513/1991 Coll.) in § 105 - § 153.

Advantages	Disadvantages

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRO can also be established by one physical or legal person (fee € 331.50) • The partner is liable for the breach of obligations only up to the amount of unpaid share capital • The company guarantees all its assets • The value of capital is only 5,000 €, and these funds are intended for business • The minimum deposit of one partner is € 750 • The deposit can be repaid gradually • The share in SRO can be inherited • SRO has no obligation to create a reserve fund It has a simple organizational structure • The directors and members of the SRO Supervisory Board are subject to the prohibition of competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRO company may have a maximum of 50 partners • SRO company with one partner cannot be the sole founder or sole partner of another SRO • If the company is founded by one founder, the entire share capital must be paid up upon its registration in the Business Register • The partner cannot withdraw from the limited liability company by a unilateral legal act • Profit after tax in the case of dividend payments is subject to additional taxation
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Documents and steps to be disposed for registration purposes:

- Authorization to do business in the subject of business
- Memorandum of Association - in the case of a single founder with an officially certified signature or the Memorandum of Association - in the case of several founders with their officially certified signatures, or the Articles of Association - if they have been adopted
- If there is only one founder, then he submits a Single Shareholder Statement -the single founder confirms that he is not the only shareholder in more than two s. r. o.
- Depositor's statement on the repayment of deposits - that the share capital of EUR 5,000 was paid in cash at the hands of the depositor. The administrator of the deposit is one of the founders of the company, which is listed in the articles of association (charter)
- If the share capital is invested by a non-monetary contribution, then an Expert Opinion is also submitted - it proves that the value of the non-monetary contribution corresponds to the value of the assumed liability for the contribution to the company's assets, if a non-monetary contribution was made to the company.
- Signature specimen of the manager or managers
- Lease agreement or consent of the property owner - required for registration of the property address, or Letter of ownership - to the property
- The completed form "Proposal for registration of a limited liability company in the Business Register" is submitted to the Business Register

Joint Stock Company (a. s.)

A.s. is defined in the Commercial Code (Act No. 513/1991 Coll.) in § 154 - § 220.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint stock companies are attractive for entrepreneurs who plan to do business or do business in capital-intensive industries (unlimited number of shareholders) • The shareholder is not liable for the company's liabilities at all • It gives the impression that a joint stock company can withstand market turbulence for longer than a limited liability company • In the eyes of financial institutions such as banks, it can act as a strong entity that will be allowed to lend rather than limited liability companies. • Relative anonymity of shareholders in a joint-stock company (The list of shareholders in the Central Securities Depository is not accessible to the public). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least EUR 25,000 is required as a contribution to the share capital when it is set up • Already at its inception, it must have created a reserve fund of at least 10% of the share capital • It can be established by one founder only if the founder is a legal entity • The complex structure of the company's bodies + members of the Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board elect for a maximum period of 5 years • More expensive company formation (€ 829.50) • Profit after tax in the case of dividend payments is subject to additional taxation

Conditions and steps for registration a.s. to Business register:

- Subscription of the entire value of the registered capital
 - Repayment of all non-cash deposits to which the founders have committed
 - Repayment of at least 30% of all cash deposits
- Documents required for establishment a. s.:
- Founder contract - in the form of a notarial record in the case of a single founder (only a person with legal personality can be the sole founder)
 - Memorandum of Association - in the form of a notarial record in the case of several founders
 - Statutes
 - Decision of the Supervisory Board on the election of the Board of Directors -if the Board of Directors is elected by the Supervisory Board on the basis of the Articles of Association
 - Written statement of the deposit manager
 - Expert opinion - proves that the value of the non-monetary contribution corresponds to the issue price of the shares paid up by this deposit, if a non-monetary deposit was made in the company
 - Authorization to do business in the subject of business
 - Other documents - which certify the facts according to special regulations

Simple Stock Company

Simple Stock Company (j. s. a.) is a new type of business company regulated by Act No. 513/1991 Coll. Commercial Code as amended. This type of business company can be established from 2017.

Simple Stock Company is an capital trading company which combines elements of s.r.o. (low capital requirements, simple company structure) and a.s. (the share in the registered capital is determined

by the share with a certain (nominal) value, the sum of the values of the shares corresponds to the registered capital).

Cooperative Legal Entity

Cooperative Legal Entity is defined in the Commercial Code (Act No. 513/1991 Coll.) in § 221 - § 260.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry capital only 1250, - € • In legal relations with third parties, the cooperative is liable for breach of its obligations with all its assets • The members of the cooperative do not guarantee the obligations of the cooperative • Anonymity of ownership - The owners of the cooperative (its members) do not register in the commercial register or in any state records • "Openness" of the cooperative - membership can be transferred without the need to comply with legal formalism. The transfer of membership does not even have to be approved by any bodies of the cooperative or its members • There is no need to change the articles of association or the statutes • No entry in the registers is required. From day to day, a person can be a member of a team, resp. may leave it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It must have at least 5 members, this does not apply if its members are at least two legal entities • His "image", prejudices in understanding the name of the team. However, this disadvantage is questionable when making a serious comparison.

Documents required for registration in the Commercial Register:

- Notary summary - from the inaugural membership meeting
- Statutes - are attached to the notarial minutes
- Proof of repayment of a specified part of the registered capital
- Proof of trade or other business license

1.4. Opening a branch of a foreign entrepreneur

A Branch is the best way of business, in cases where foreign company want start bussiness in Slovakia. Main feature of Branch office is that parent company is fully liable for the branches liabilities. A branch established in Slovakia is not considered a legal entity and the foreign company is entirely responsible for its actions.

The Slovak branch office must present every year the balance sheet and the statements on losses and profits of the foreign parent company. Also, it must keep its own statements of account and deposit it every year, like a regular local company.

Usually a trade permit must be received before starting certain types of business by the local companies but also by the branches. The license may be a free trade license, conditional trade licenses or trade certificates (for business which requires a higher degree of performance).

The trade licenses or certificates are received from the one stop shop after paying a fee and are release in maximum one month.

It is mandatory for the branches opened in Slovakia to apply with the relevant documents at the one stop shop before beginning any activities. A registration fee must also be paid.

Requirements for setting up a branch office in Slovakia in 2022

Even if it is a rather simple business form, there are still specific requirements which must be respected upon the creation of a branch in Slovakia in 2022. The following aspects must be considered when setting up a branch office in this country:

- a) The branch office can be registered by a single foreign entity, therefore, it is not permitted for two companies to join their efforts in a branch office.
- b) It is a mandatory requirement for the branch office to have a registered address in Slovakia.
- c) The branch must have at least one director who is a natural person and who is a resident of an EU country.
- d) In case the director is from a non-EU country, he or she must obtain a Slovak residence permit.
- e) There are no share capital requirements imposed on the foreign company for the creation of a branch office.
- f) The parent company will bear all the liability for the Slovak branch office's debts and obligations.
- g) All companies in Slovakia, including branch offices are required to have e-mail addresses starting with 2017.

1.5. Required permits for agrifood businesses

Doing business in the field of agriculture is not a mortgaged trade and therefore a legal entity does not need to obtain any authorization for such a business. However, he must register it in the Business Register.

In the field of food as well as in the production of own products from crops that the farmer grows, or from animals that he keeps himself, they already require a business license. It is food production that is subject to strict hygiene standards. Therefore, in addition to the authorization to conduct business in this area, it is necessary to have permits from the Regional Office of Public Health, and in the case of production located in real estate (which is most cases of food production), it is necessary to have these premises approved. A number of state institutions are commenting on the approval, taking into account not only food safety, but also the processes that take place in food production in order to protect not only the consumer but also the producer's employees.

<https://www.ruvz.sk/>

The State Veterinary and Food Administration of the Slovak Republic is another state body that enters the food trade.

<https://www.svps.sk/>

The Central Agricultural Inspection and Testing Institute in Bratislava certifies the biodegradability of a product that the manufacturer claims is biodegradable.

<https://www.uksup.sk/>

1.6. Organizations providing support in setting up company in Hub country

In addition to a number of commercial consulting companies, there are also state-organized forms of support for business start-ups. The activity of commercial consultants differs significantly from the support of state organizations.

Private consulting companies provide assistance mainly in orienting oneself in the legal environment, in the field of taxation, in the field of employment and establishment of legal entities.

State forms of support focus on specific financial and non-financial support mechanisms:

- 1) **The Labor, Social Affairs and Family Offices** provide a Contribution to self-employment pursuant to Section 49 of the Employment Services Act. <https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/>

- 2) A major player in the field of business support in Slovakia is **the Slovak Business Agency**, which within the network of branches has created a highly organized and functional structure of free consulting services, micro-loans and service services that directly support the development of start-ups. <http://www.sbagency.sk/>

2. Local agrifood market insights

2.1. Local agri-food market statistics

In the Slovak economy, agriculture create about 2% of gross value added and employs about 2.8% of the workforce. It is the issue of high areas of monocultures in Slovakia that resonates in professional circles as an element disturbing biodiversity in the agricultural country. Slovakia has the highest average area of monocultures in the EU. The average size of the field in Slovakia is up to 12 hectares (ha) according to satellites. The EU average is 3.9 ha. We see the contradiction between direct support to farmers, which is paid on the basis of acreage and biodiversity requirements of the country, but which does not enjoy financial protection between farmers, as the reason for this policy. There are only a few farms that systematically reduce monocultures and plant trees and along country roads at their own expense in order to restore the biodiversity of the environment. Such farmers are rather the exception.

The second interesting phenomenon is the gradual increase in the share of growing industrial crops that are not intended for consumption, but especially as a component of biofuels.

Despite the fact that Slovakia has relatively large areas of fields and pastures, Slovakia is not self-sufficient in the field of food production. In addition, Slovakia is beginning to experience more significant climate change, which is manifested especially in the spring and summer months by long periods of drought.

In the case of livestock production, there has been a decline in pigs (mainly due to swine fever). In the EU Member States, 143 million pigs, 77 million cattle, 62 million sheep and 12 million goats were kept in 2019. Numbers of all four most common species livestock has been declining in the last two years. Their breeding in Slovakia has the same curve. The amount of cattle has been decreasing since 2012 - from 471 thousand to 432 thousand in 2019.

The support of BIO breeding and BIO cultivation is very low, and this type of business is not financially interesting. Therefore, it is rather typical for small farmers and households.

Direct and indirect subsidies to farmers are paid by the Agricultural Paying Agency. Available resources in English (link and references):

<https://www.apa.sk/en/>

The food industry is distributed relatively evenly throughout the Slovak Republic. Some unions are represented mainly in cities, at the point of consumption, such as breweries, meat industry, confectionery, others are linked to the production areas of agricultural crops, which are processed raw materials of the sector, such as distilleries, canneries, wineries, meat, bakery and sweets, although they do not avoid investment in novelties. The balance of Slovakia's foreign trade in the food category traditionally shows a

relatively high negative balance. Thus, more food will be imported to Slovakia than exported from Slovakia. In addition to the unbalanced balance, the structure of cross-border food trade is also a problem. Food, which could come from domestic production, also accounts for a significant share of almost four and a half billion imports, as agriculture is too focused on growing cereals and oilseeds. Fruits, vegetables, but also meats are imported in large quantities. In addition, basic raw materials predominate in exports. Exports of finished food with higher added value are relatively low. The share of value added in food production is less than six percent.

3. Main stakeholders in the local agrifood industry

3.1. Key slovak private and public companies

The main trend in the food industry is the evident increase in demand for products suitable for a specific lifestyle. This, given the trend of alternative foods, has put specific pressure on the growing supply of plant-based foods. Significant innovative elements are gradually penetrating food production, not only in the field of food production automation, but also in energy saving and greening of production processes.

In Slovakia, companies that have been able to innovate and introduce products that are healthier or respect the specific lifestyle of their customers have been gaining ground recently. This pressure is exerted mainly from below - from the customer. The high proportion of allergy sufferers and people with various food intolerances is gradually changing the market and is trying to return to healthier production while reducing the proportion of stabilizers and emulsifiers. These trends are already reflected at the level of retail chains, which want to ensure higher sales and customer satisfaction through such products. And it is the retail food chains that make up the largest share of sales of food products by Slovak food producers. The largest food producers are:

1. Among the largest producers of meat products we can include:

Tauris Group – cca 155 mil. EUR of turnover in 2022
 MECOM GROUP – cca 175 mil. EUR turnover in 2022
 HYZA – cca 125 mil. EUR turnover in 2022

2. The largest milk producers are:

AGRO TAMI – cca 95 mil. EUR turnover in 2022
 Zvolenská mliekareň – cca 42 mil. EUR turnover in 2022
 Levické mliekarne – cca 23 mil. EUR turnover in 2022

It is interesting that cattle breeding and thus milk production have been declining in Slovakia for a long time, yet all larger dairies can survive. The reason is the possibility of importing cheaper foreign milk, which domestic producers are often unable to compete with. Again, this is an anomaly in farmers' subsidy policy, which is causing disproportionate foreign milk production.

The largest bakeries in Slovakia are:

Penam – cca 80 mil. EUR turnover in 2022
 VAMEX – cca 24 mil. EUR turnover in 2022

However, the trend of establishing smaller bakeries, which offer healthier pastries, although at higher prices, is very interesting.

Finally, we would like to mention other important segments that are moving the food market. It is mainly hotel restaurants and public catering businesses that consume a large part of food production. And it is for them that it is important to know the origin of food and be sure of its origin. In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend that better restaurants buy food from local producers and see this approach as a marketing tool through which they can gain but also retain customers. Much worse impacts are those catering establishments that rely on the purchase of the cheapest foodstuffs (school catering entities, hospitals, large entities, large kitchens, variations for larger entities), which perceive food quality as a secondary issue. There is also no support for the procurement of food from local suppliers, small producers and holders of the regional product brand, which guarantees not only the origin of the food but also the quality.

Another important component of agri-food sector are research organizations:

Slovak Center for Agricultural Research based in Nitra. National Agricultural and Food Center including the research institutes:

- Research Institute of Plant Production in Piešťany
- Research Institute of Animal Production in Nitra
- Research Institute of Grasslands and Mountain Agriculture in Banská Bystrica
- Research Institute of Soil Science and Soil Protection in Bratislava
- Food Research Institute in Bratislava
- Research Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics in Bratislava
- Research Institute of Agroecology Michalovce

AgroBioTech is a research center focused on applied research in agriculture and food.

This regional competence center of applied research and development in Nitra integrates top applied research through a partnership of three institutions: Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and Center for Plant Biology and Biodiversity SAS. AgroBioTech is a research center equipped with a modern research infrastructure that enables the implementation of research at the international level.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the new trend of food production by traditional non-automated processes. These include, in particular, craft breweries, distilleries, producers of healthy confectionery, poultry farmers and small vegetable growers. It is vegetables that make up a very high share of imported production to Slovakia from abroad due to the very low subsidy support for vegetable growers.

4. Agrifood Ecosystem

4.1. Funding opportunities for agrifood start-ups

Opportunity name / investor / organization	Type of aid (risk capital financing, angel investors, government financing, EU funding, start-up loans, incubator / accelerator financing, competition for cash prizes, etc.)	Brief description of the opportunity, target group (vertical and phase), eligibility requirement, amount of funding or average ticket size, etc.)	Link	Timeline (application deadline, important dates, etc.)
Ministry of Economy of the SR	Non-repayable financial assistance	Scheme to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the Slovak Republic Scheme to support the development of the creative industries Family business support scheme Program to support successful business practice and business education Startup support program Internet Economy Support Program	http://www.sbagency.sk/statne-programy	Some calls are already closed but are expected to open
Slovak Business Agency	Non-financial assistance - various types of counseling and education	Non-financial assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business consulting • Management consulting • Legal advice • Accounting advice • Tax advice • Financial advice • Web campaigns • Support in obtaining grants, loans and financial contributions • Economic and technological research • Support for participation in research and development programs • Commercialization of the results of research and development programs • Technology marketing • Protection of intellectual property • Regional innovation strategies • Networking 	Non-financial assistance http://www.sbagency.sk/nefinancne-sluzby-pre-zaujemcov-o-podnikanie	Assistance is ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry into European markets • Targeted international company meetings • Services for foreign companies in investment consulting 		
	Financial aid: Start up Sharks	<p>Start up Sharks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is implemented through the Start-up Support Scheme (de minimis aid scheme) and the Start-up Support Program announced by the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic and financed from the state budget of the Slovak Republic. The support provided under Startup Sharks will contribute to a more economically suitable setting of business plans and thus reduce the risk of startups failing. 	<p>Startup Sharks https://www.sbagency.sk/startup-sharks-0</p>	Assistance is ongoing
	Microloans	<p>Microloans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loan amount: from EUR 2,500 to EUR 50,000 • loan maturity: 6 months to 4 years (possibility of deferred payments by 6 months) • interest rate: from 1.26% to 9.16% • almost 2 thousand have been provided so far loans for more than 31 mil. EUR, created almost 3 thous. jobs and 5 thousand maintained. 	<p>Microloans: http://www.sbagency.sk/mikropozicky</p>	Assistance is ongoing
	Innovation and Technology Fund	<p>Innovation and Technology Fund</p> <p>- The mission of the Innovation and Technology Fund is to support entrepreneurial initiative by providing risk capital and thus to develop entrepreneurship, employment and the economy towards an innovative economy. It was created in response to the emerging demand for venture capital to support</p>	<p>Innovation and Technology Fund http://www.fondfit.sk/</p>	Assistance is ongoing
	Venture capital fund	<p>Venture capital fund, – Národný holdingový fond s.r.o.</p>	<p>Venture capital</p>	Assistance

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a specialized subsidiary of Slovak Business Agency, which implements support in the form of risk capital • support for growth- oriented business projects in the form of providing risk capital (contribution to the share capital of companies) • directs the activities of individual funds so as to stimulate the development of the SME sector in the whole territory of the Slovak Republic • manages funds directly under the management of the company (without legal personality) and funds in which private investors have invested capital together with the NH Fund - Slovak Growth and Capital Fund, Slovak 	<p>fund,http://www.nhfond.sk/</p>	<p>e is ongoing</p>
	Eterus Capital	<p>The aim is to acquire majority and minority business shares and provide a contribution to the equity of successful Slovak companies and projects that provide an adequate return and risk profile.</p>	<p>Eterus Capital https://eterus.sk/</p>	<p>Assistance is ongoing</p>
SIEA - Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency	Digital voucher	<p>Digital vouchers will be able to be used to develop proposals for individualized solutions for businesses in specific areas, for example in automation, optimization of internal processes, digitization of industry, production, or finance, but also in ensuring cyber security or using artificial intelligence.</p>	<p>https://www.siea.sk</p> <p>https://vaia.gov.sk/sk/2023/07/14/vyzva-digitalne-vouchery/</p>	<p>From 14.7.2023</p> <p>calls are published on an ongoing basis</p>
	Innovation voucher	<p>Support within the call for innovation vouchers will be aimed at the cooperation of small and medium-sized enterprises with the potential to increase their competitiveness through the innovation of their own products, services, and processes</p>	<p>https://vaia.gov.sk/sk/2023/07/14/vyzva-inovacne-vouchery/</p>	

	Technology help	<p>with research institutions, universities, private providers of research and development services, and municipalities. Innovation vouchers can also be used to pay fees related to the protection of industrial property.</p> <p>At the same time, the SIEA provides non-repayable financial assistance through various types of calls..</p>	<p>https://www.siea.sk/strukturalne-fondy-eu/aktualne-vyzvy-implementovane-siea/</p>	
Seal of excellence	Exceptional projects that have received the European Seal of Excellence mark can apply for support from Eurofunds.	<p>Funding can be obtained from R&D projects of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises that have been awarded the Seal of Excellence mark after 1 January 2018 under the Horizon 2020 EIC Accelerator Pilot scheme for their technological innovation and have not been directly involved. managed by the European Commission. The mark of excellence for quality is awarded to projects based on evaluation and ranking by independent experts, and these projects are considered to be excellent and worthy of public funding. In terms of focus, these are industrial research and experimental development projects in various sectors of the economy, while directly contributing to the achievement of the Green Deal and / or Digital Europe objectives.</p>	<p>https://www.opvai.sk/vyzvy</p> <p>https://vaia.gov.sk/sk/2023/08/08/podpora-excelentnych-projektov-horizontu-europa-ktore-ziskali-ocenenie-seal-of-excellence-alebo-presli-uspesne-hodnotenim-zo-strany-ek/</p>	Assistance is ongoing from 8.8.2023 to 31.12.2023
Agricultural Paying Agency (PPA)	Non-repayable aid EU aid for young farmers	<p>Support for the start of farming up to 50,000 €.</p> <p>There is currently no challenge and it is not certain when and if such a challenge will take place. However, we expect that the pressure of young farmers on PPA will perhaps renew the challenge, and that is why we present this information.</p> <p>Non-repayable financial assistance for farmers for</p>	<p>www.apa.sk</p> <p>https://www.apa.sk</p>	Agricultural Paying Agency (PPA)

	Innovative technologies in agriculture	innovation in production technologies and energy savings. Unfortunately, these challenges are not active at the moment, but we expect them to open in the near future.	a.sk/aktualne-vyzvy	
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4.2. Local incubators and accelerators that support agrifood startups

The most important center of science and research in the field of agro-bio technologies is **AgroBioTech in Nitra**. It is equipped with a modern research infrastructure, thus enabling the implementation of high-level research, applicable in practice, linked to the key needs of priority themes in agrobiolgy, agricultural processing technology and agri-food, biotechnology, genetic technologies, agroecology, bioenergy and bioeconomics. Its mission is to act as a regional center of applied research, integrating crucial research activities, which will allow to achieve a synergic effect in the use and increase of the research potential of SUA.

The role of the AgroBioTech Research Center is to carry out top research, but especially research with a direct impact on social practice, the emergence of innovations, the development of modern technologies and consulting services for the implementation of research and development results into practice.

The AgroBioTech SPU Research Center in Nitra focuses on the following main areas:

- agrobiolgy
- applied ecology and bioenergy
- bioeconomics
- biosystem engineering
- biotechnology and landscape modeling
- food technology and biotechnology

Výskumné centrum AgroBioTech SPU v Nitre,

Trieda A. Hlinku 2, 949 76 Nitra

<https://www.agrobiotech.sk/>

Another important entity in Slovakia is the **Slovak Business Agency**, which offers the services of a business incubator. The incubators provide a wide range of services, which vary according to the type and

specialization of the incubator, its capacity, adapts to demand, regional requirements and the local level of development, the structure of the local business environment and the business infrastructure. As part of their consulting services, they offer a wide range of advice in several interesting and necessary areas for successful business.

Most successful incubators provide complete services through a combination of internal resources (provided by incubator staff) and external suppliers and partners. The basic services of the incubator according to their focus include: rental of non-residential premises, information services and consulting services. According to the payment for the service, we distinguish between services included in the lease, services provided on a commercial basis and intermediary services provided on a commercial basis.

Incubators provide services free of charge or for a fee to entrepreneurs in the pre-incubation stage in order to create the basic conditions for meeting the conditions of entry into the incubator, e.g. provision of basic information and advisory services for business registration, development of business and financial plan. However, the largest range of different services is available to existing entrepreneurs - incubator tenants. But even former tenants can use some special services such as. project elaboration, project management, project involvement, sponsorship, website promotion, etc.

4.3. Contact details for the Hub organisation

Slovak Business Agency

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811 09 Bratislava

Phone: +421220363100

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<http://www.sbagency.sk/kontakt>