

# **Statute and Rules of Procedure of the Research Ethics Committee of the National Bank of Slovakia**

## **Annotation**

This internal regulation establishes the **Research Ethics Committee of the National Bank of Slovakia** (hereinafter also referred to as the “REC”), whose purpose is to contribute to the protection of the dignity, rights, and safety of all actual or potential participants in research. The core activity of the REC is oversight of compliance with ethical standards applicable to research conducted within the National Bank of Slovakia or by persons cooperating with the Bank, where such research involves human participants or data relating to individuals.

## **Part I: Statute of the Research Ethics Committee**

### **Preamble**

The purpose of the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the National Bank of Slovakia is to contribute to the protection of the dignity, rights, and safety of all actual or potential research participants. Research objectives must never justify arbitrary endangerment of the physical, psychological, or social well-being of research participants.

The REC takes into account considerations of justice, particularly where ethical concerns may arise due to experimental manipulation, asymmetric information, or power imbalances between researchers and participants. Justice requires that the benefits and burdens of research be distributed fairly across social groups, with due regard to age, gender, economic status, cultural background, and other relevant characteristics.

The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence serve as fundamental ethical anchors, imposing an obligation to maximize anticipated benefits and minimize potential harm to research participants.

The Research Ethics Committee provides independent, expert, and timely ethical review of proposed and ongoing research projects. In its composition, procedures, and decision-making, the REC acts independently of political, institutional, professional, and market influences.

The anticipated benefits of a research project must outweigh the potential risks. Research may not be considered ethically justified where there is a particularly high risk of serious harm to participants. Risks must always be minimized, especially in cases where the research does not yield a direct societal or policy-relevant benefit.

### **Article 1: Establishment of the REC**

The Research Ethics Committee of the National Bank of Slovakia is hereby established.

#### **Article 2: Scope of Authority of the REC**

1. The REC forms an integral part of the system for ensuring quality, integrity, and ethical compliance of research conducted within the National Bank of Slovakia and by persons cooperating with the Bank.
2. The REC assesses ethical aspects of research conducted by the National Bank of Slovakia or by persons cooperating with it that involves human participants.
3. The REC acts upon applications submitted by employees of the National Bank of Slovakia or cooperating researchers, or on its own initiative.
4. Proceedings of the REC are governed by these Rules of Procedure.

#### **Article 3: Membership of the REC**

1. Membership in the REC arises by appointment. The Chair and members of the REC are appointed and dismissed by the **Executive Director for Research, Statistics and Economic Education of the National Bank of Slovakia**, upon proposal of the competent organizational unit responsible for research or analysis.
2. The REC shall consist of at least five members. Members may include employees of the National Bank of Slovakia and external experts not employed by the Bank. At least one member shall be external.
3. Only a person who:
  - a) gives consent to membership in the REC,
  - b) undertakes to maintain confidentiality regarding reviewed materials, and
  - c) commits to declaring any conflict of interest in relation to assessed proposals,may be appointed as a member of the REC.
4. The term of office of REC members is four years. Members may be reappointed. The list of REC members is published internally or on the Bank's website, as appropriate.
5. The activities of the REC are directed by the Chair or by a member authorized by the Chair.
6. Membership terminates upon expiration of the term of office, dismissal, or written resignation submitted to the Executive Director for Research, Statistics and Economic Education.

#### **Article 4: Activities of the REC**

1. The REC contributes to the protection of the dignity, rights, and safety of all actual or potential research participants.
2. The core activity of the REC is oversight of ethical standards applicable to research conducted within the National Bank of Slovakia or by persons cooperating with it, where such research involves human participants.
3. Within its scope, the REC in particular:
  - a) ensures that research projects requiring ethical review are assessed through a competent, objective, independent, and timely process;
  - b) evaluates compliance of research proposals with ethical standards and issues written opinions;
  - c) may monitor the conduct of research projects for which it has issued a favorable opinion;

- d) pays particular attention to the protection of vulnerable or dependent participants;
- e) assesses research design and methodology with respect to minimization of ethical risks.

## **Part II: Rules of Procedure of the Research Ethics Committee**

### **Article 5: Meetings of the REC**

1. Meetings of the REC are convened and chaired by the Chair or a member authorized by the Chair.
2. The REC has a quorum if at least one half of its members, including the Chair, participate in voting.
3. Meetings are not public unless the Chair decides otherwise.
4. Meetings and voting are conducted in person unless the Chair decides otherwise. Hybrid or per rollam procedures may be used. Per rollam voting must be documented and annexed to the minutes.
5. Minutes of meetings are prepared by a member designated by the Chair and stored in accordance with internal document-management rules. Documentation may be maintained electronically.

### **Article 6: Submission of Proposals**

1. Research proposals are submitted for REC assessment via an email.
2. All application materials must be in English, apart from potential participant debriefing documents, which should additionally be provided in Slovak.
3. Applicants submit materials with particular emphasis on informed consent, research methodology, and feasibility, covering in particular:

#### **A) Research design and methods**

- A1) objectives, research questions or hypotheses, methodology, and statistical considerations;
- A2) justification of foreseeable risks in relation to expected benefits;
- A3) justification for use of control groups;
- A4) criteria for suspension or termination of research;
- A5) handling of research data and results;
- A6) handling of personal data;
- A7) source of funding.

#### **B) Recruitment of participants**

- B1) characteristics of the target population;
- B2) recruitment methods;
- B3) provision of information to participants;
- B4) inclusion criteria;
- B5) exclusion criteria.

#### **C) Protection of participant data**

- C1) persons with access to personal data;
- C2) measures ensuring confidentiality and data security.

#### **D) Informed consent**

- D1) adequacy and comprehensibility of information;

D2) justification for inclusion of persons unable to consent;

D3) communication of research results to participants.

**E) Benefits of the research**

E1) contribution to society, public policy, or institutional knowledge.

3. Projects involving minimal or no risk use a simplified application form. Projects involving moderate or high risk require a full application, including justification of risk-increasing procedures, mitigation measures, and detailed debriefing arrangements.

**Article 7: Assessment of Proposals**

1. REC members have two calendar weeks to review submitted materials.
2. Members then have one calendar week to vote.
3. The REC issues a written opinion signed by the Chair or authorized member.
4. The Chair may recommend that a proposal does not require REC review or that materials be supplemented; such recommendations are non-binding.

**Article 8: Voting**

1. Members with conflicts of interest may not vote and must declare conflicts without delay.
2. Decisions are taken by a simple majority of participating members.
3. The REC may approve, approve with recommendations, or reject a proposal.
4. Rejected proposals may be revised and resubmitted.
5. The REC may monitor compliance with issued recommendations.