



The construction of the National Bank of Slovakia headquarters

A pictorial chronicle of architectural growth



The NBS building in figures

Total height
111 metres

Storeys
33 above ground

Lifts
27 (including the panoramic lifts)

Construction started	Year of completion
1997	2002

Number of years as Bratislava's tallest building
18 (now the 7th tallest - 2026)

Building footprint	Usable area	Gross floor area
6 272 m²	56 492 m²	69 119 m²

Maximum number of employees
1,005

Construction cost
nearly 5 billion Slovak korunas (exceeding 160 M euros)

1. Visionary model - the story begins (1996)



The opening photograph presents the architectural model of the winning design by leading architects Martin Kusý and Pavel Panák, created in 1996. The model accurately reflects the final form of the complex, including its distinctive tower and horizontally extended podium. It remains on display on the building's 30th floor – a testament to a vision that became reality. The headquarters building has 33 above-ground storeys and three basement levels.

2. View of the future construction site



The next image shows the empty site (as seen from the nearby Ministry of Transport) where the NBS headquarters would soon start being built, based on a design selected in a high-level competition.

Preparation of the structural design documentation was entrusted to ELTER constructions, s.r.o., an engineering office based in Bratislava. The project was fully financed from the NBS budget. The main contractor was a consortium of three firms: Hydrostav, a.s. (Bratislava), Váhostav, a.s. (Žilina), and ZIPP, s.r.o. (Bratislava). Engineering services were provided by a consortium of Keramoprojekt, a.s. (Trenčín), Keraming, a.s. (Trenčín), and Chempik, a.s. (Bratislava).

3.

First steps – site preparation



As with all major construction projects, the first stage was site preparation. The photograph shows the clearing and fencing of the site, along with the start of excavation for the building's deep foundation. Construction formally began with the laying of the foundation stone on 16 May 1997.

4. – 5. Foundations – the bedrock of the building



The tower's foundation level lies mainly in sandy gravels, with the groundwater table located on average 4.5 metres below. Conditions were demanding and the foundation works complex. The building rests on a spread foundation: a 2.60 m thick slab beneath the tower section and 0.70 m under the other units. Settlement of the tower section was calculated not to exceed 80 mm, according to structural analyses confirmed by leading geotechnical engineer Professor Jozef Hulla. Later measurements proved these calculations accurate.



The tower includes three basement levels extending 12 m below ground and rises 33 storeys above. Its footprint is based on a square, with two sides replaced by a curve. The modular grid uses a 7.50 m module. At the third basement level, the square's side measures about 37.5 m, but the floor plan changes as the tower rises – notably at 7th, 11th and 21st floors. The number of modules decreases inward from the curved part, and in the upper section it is reduced along the straight sides as well. A typical storey is 3.45 m high, while the ground floor and basement storeys vary.

6. View from above - the first outline of the building



This aerial photograph, taken from the nearby Slovak Technical University (STU), captures the progress of the works. The foundation slab is already in place, and preparations are underway for basement and above-ground construction.

7. – 8.

Building the basement levels

The following photographs document the construction of the second and third basement levels, including the installation of the load-bearing structures that would support both the superstructure and the building's technical systems.



9. Reinforced concrete construction progresses



Image records the next stages: reinforcing and concreting the ceilings and erecting the formwork for the core and central section of the building. The process required immense quantities of concrete and steel.

10.

The foundation slab – the first fixed point of height



The photograph shows concreting of the massive foundation slab, carried out using conveyors. Steel reinforcement was placed to ensure the strength and durability of the load-bearing structures. Technically and symbolically, this step laid the firm base for the building's upward growth.

11.

The future atrium – a place of relaxation and culture



This photograph shows the formwork and reinforcement of the third storey's ceiling slab, forming the base of what would become the atrium. Initially designed as a green rest area for employees, the atrium was extensively renovated in 2019. Today, it also serves as a venue for cultural events, exhibitions, and social gatherings.

12.

Reinforced concrete construction progresses



The building's main load-bearing structures are reinforced concrete. The panoramic lift shafts (7th to 31st storeys) and the helipad above the 32nd storey are made of steel. These steel elements are not independent structural systems but are directly supported by the adjacent concrete frame.

To accelerate progress and ensure top quality, prefabricated elements were used wherever possible. After installation and integration, these functioned as if cast in place. Slender circular columns carrying large axial forces were reinforced not only with rebar but also with rigid circular steel cores, 210 and 240 mm in diameter.

13. – 16. Rapid vertical growth



The building rises step by step. The podium is completed up to the 6th storey, while the tower section reaches the 4th storey. The podium is then enclosed, and work focuses on completing the vertical landmark.



17. – 18.

The vertical landmark rises



Detailed views from the Slovak Technical University show the progress in the tower construction – the focal point of the entire complex.

19. – 20. Final stage of the load-bearing structure



These photographs chart the step-by-step construction of the load-bearing skeleton up to the 33rd storey. A helipad is already in place at the top level, but it has never been used owing to changes in technical standards.

According to official records, the NBS headquarters was built between July 1997 and December 2001, at a total cost of 4.9 billion Slovak korunas (162.6 million euros). It is a smart building, featuring a double-skinned core that forms a climate-controlled zone and significantly reduces operating energy costs.



In recognition of its architectural, technical, and user excellence, the NBS building won the Main Prize ('Hlavná cena') in the prestigious Building of the Year ('Stavba roka') competition in 2002. The structural design project also received an award from the Slovak Chamber of Civil Engineers.

21. The atrium – new life at the heart of the building



In this photograph, the planting of greenery in the atrium has begun, and the space is partially covered. This inner courtyard offers employees a pleasant environment for relaxation and doubles as a representative venue for cultural activities.

22. – 23. Facade and finishing works



The penultimate stages of construction feature the glazing of the tower section using a double-skin facade system, ensuring an optimal internal climate and energy efficiency. The final photograph shows the glazing nearing completion and the application of finishing touches prior to the building's certification of completion.



An aerial photograph of a tall, curved skyscraper with many windows, standing out among lower buildings in a city. The image has a warm, orange-brown tint. The text is overlaid in the center.

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