

Rules of Procedure of the Agency Councils of the Slovak Research and Development Agency

Article 1

Introductory provision

- 1) The Rules of Procedure of the Agency Councils of the Slovak Research and Development Agency shall regulate the status, principles and method of discussion of the Agency Councils, International Expert Panels and Working Groups.

Article 2

Status of the Agency Council

- 1) The Agency Council of the Slovak Research and Development Agency (hereinafter referred to as "the Agency Council") is a professional body of the Slovak Research and Development Agency (hereinafter referred to as "SRDA") established for a designated area of SRDA's agenda for the assessment and approval of applications for funding of research and development projects and development projects through the SRDA (hereinafter referred to as "project proposals") and for the monitoring of the implementation of projects funded by the SRDA
- 2) The Council for one or more groups of fields of science and technology shall be a Field Council.
- 3) The designated part of SRDA established for dedicated form of support for research and development under Section 16(2)(a) Act No 172/2005 Coll. on the organisation of state support for research and development and on the amendment to Act No 575/2001 Coll. (hereinafter referred to as "Research and Development Support Act")¹ provided by the SRDA in order to meet selected aims and objectives in accordance with the national strategy shall be the Programme Council.
- 4) The designated part of SRDA established for projects within the framework of bilateral or multilateral agreements on international scientific and technical cooperation, projects within the framework of participation of the Slovak Republic in the international research and development programmes and projects within the framework of Community programmes and initiatives of the European Union in the field of research and development under Section 12(2)(c) of the Research and Development Support Act shall be the Council for International Scientific and Technical Cooperation.

¹ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2005/172/>

Article 3

Preparation of the Council Meeting

- 1) The Chairperson of the Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Chairperson”) shall propose the agenda for the Council meeting and convene the Council meeting as required.
- 2) The Chairperson shall also convene a meeting of the Council at the request of the Presidium or the Director within 14 calendar days of the request. The Chairperson shall include topics proposed and specified by the Presidium or the Director in the agenda of the Council meeting.
- 3) The Secretary of the Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Secretary”) shall send the invitation to the meeting, the agenda and the material to be deliberated to the members of the Council, normally, no later than 7 calendar days before the date of the meeting.
- 4) The Council shall meet as required.

Article 4

Council Meeting

- 1) The Council meetings shall be attended by the Council members and the Secretary of the Council. The Director, members of the Presidium and invited guests may attend the Council meetings.
- 2) A Council meeting may be held in person, online (by videoconference or other means of information and communication technology without the physical presence of the Council members) or in combination. Those in attendance at the meeting are required to confirm their presence by signing the attendance sheet, should this be a in-person meeting. In the case of an online or a hybrid meeting, the presence of participants shall be confirmed in a manner appropriate to the nature of the meeting (e.g. by a list of participants downloaded from a videoconferencing application, a screenshot of a list of participants, etc.).
- 3) Council members cannot appoint a third person as a substitute at a meeting of the Council. If a member of the Council is unable to attend a meeting, they are required to notify their absence in advance.
- 4) The Council meeting shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Council, or in his absence by the Vice-Chairperson of the Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Vice-Chairperson”) or by a member of the Council designated by the Chairperson.
- 5) A quorum shall be deemed to be present at a Council meeting if a majority of all members of the Council are present.
- 6) Only members of the Council shall have the right to vote.
- 7) Resolutions of the Council shall be adopted by public or secret ballot as the Council may decide. A resolution of the Council shall be adopted by a majority of the voting members of the Council.
- 8) Should the need arise, the Council may vote by letter or electronically.
- 9) In assessing project proposals, the Council shall take decisions in accordance with the generally applicable law and the procedure and criteria approved by the Presidium of the Agency.

- 10) A member of the Council shall, as soon as they become aware of a direct or indirect conflict of interest, notify the Chairperson of the Council and the Secretary of the Council of this fact.
- 11) If a Council member is an employee of the applicant or a co-applicant or has other conflicts of interest, they shall not be entitled to participate in the selection, assessment, approval and evaluation of the project implementation or in the vote on the granting of financial support for the project implementation and shall also refrain from influencing other members in favour of the project. Violation of this obligation will be considered as non-compliance with Section 27(1) of the Research and Development Support Act, which will result in the termination of membership of the Council on the basis of Section 14(7)(c)(3) of the above-mentioned Act.

Article 5

Bodies of the Council

- 1) The bodies of the Council shall be the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson.
- 2) The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson shall be elected and removed by secret ballot by the Council from among its members.
- 3) The term of office for the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson shall be two years.
- 4) The election of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson shall be held separately. Candidates for the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be proposed by the members of the Council.
- 5) The election of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson shall require a majority vote of all members of the Council.
- 6) In the event that no candidate secures a majority of votes in the initial round of elections, a second round shall be held. In this round, the two candidates with the highest number of votes shall proceed to the second round.
- 7) In the event that no candidate secures the requisite majority of votes in the second round of elections, a third round of elections shall be held, with the candidate with the highest number of votes proceeding.
- 8) In the event that no chairperson or vice-chairperson has been elected in the third round of elections, a new election shall be held with new candidates.

Article 6

Secretary of the Council

- 1) The Secretary shall be responsible for the administrative work of the Council.
- 2) The Secretary shall be approved by the Council on the proposal of the Director.

Article 7

Conclusions of the Council meeting

- 1) The Secretary of the Council shall prepare a record of each meeting of the Council (hereinafter referred to as “the record”), which shall contain in particular the resolutions, conclusions and opinions of the Council, and/or, where appropriate, the conflicting opinions of the members of the Council.
- 2) The Secretary of the Council shall, within 10 working days of the meeting of the Council ensure that the record is delivered to the Chairperson of the Council for comment and approval and shall forward the record approved by the Chairperson to the members of the Council and the Director within 7 working days of its approval.
- 3) Records shall be retained for a period of five years.

Article 8

International expert panels

- 1) The Council may establish international expert panels (hereinafter referred to as the “Panel”) for the purpose of conducting peer reviews of project proposals. The Panel shall comprise at least five members, all of whom shall be recognized experts in the field of competence of the Panel concerned. The Council will normally establish panels depending on the focus of the projects to be evaluated in the relevant public call.
- 2) Each panel shall be composed of a chair and members of the panel. The Director shall appoint and remove the chairperson and panel members, subject to the approval of the Presidium on the recommendation of the relevant Council. The chair of the panel shall be a member of the relevant Council. Should the Presidium decline to approve the proposed panel member or chair, the relevant Council shall submit a revised proposal. The Councils shall propose the panel members, normally based on an input provided by the Agency’s Bureau and in accordance with the established professional criteria. In the event of a resignation, removal or other vacancy on the panel, Councils may propose alternates, who will be submitted by the Agency’s Bureau to the Presidium for approval as panel members. Following this approval, the Director will make the subsequent appointment.
- 3) A panel member is prohibited from being in an employment relationship with a “legal person” or “natural person – entrepreneur” carrying out research or development with its registered office or place of business in the Slovak Republic or in the Czech Republic. This restriction does not apply to the chair of the panel. The chair of the Panel shall not have the right to vote.
- 4) Each Panel shall have an assigned coordinator, whose role it is to ensure the smooth running of the Panel’s activities. The coordinator shall be appointed by the Director.
- 5) Panel meetings shall be held as required and shall be closed to the public. Panel meetings shall be attended by the members of the Panel and the coordinator. The Panel meeting may be attended by the Director, members of the Presidium or invited guests.
- 6) These Rules of Procedure shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the discussions of panels under respective Councils.

Article 9

Special provisions

- 1) All discussions on project proposals, information on projects and their assessment shall be treated as confidential. All participants in the discussion of project proposals shall be obliged to maintain the confidentiality of all facts to which they have had access during the discussion of individual projects, the assessment of projects and the recommendations submitted, and shall not disclose this information to third parties in written, electronic or oral form. It is the responsibility of the Council and Panels members to take all necessary steps to ensure that this information is kept in a secure place.
- 2) Members of the Council and Panels shall sign a written declaration of confidentiality regarding matters related to the projects.
- 3) These Rules of Procedure shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the meetings of the working groups of the respective Councils.

Article 10

Effectiveness of the Rules of Procedure

- 1) The Rules of Procedure of the Councils shall enter into force on the date of their approval by the Presidium.
- 2) The Rules of Procedure of the Councils were approved by the Presidium on 15 May 2024.