

# Rules of Procedure for the Selection Committee

## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Selection Committee (hereinafter – SC) is an independent collegial body responsible for making the final decision on the awarding of the Investigative Journalism Award.
2. The members of the Selection Committee are appointed by the Foundation's Board, which does not participate in the award selection decisions. Selection Committee members are selected to ensure professional, thematic, and experiential diversity and independence from the foundation's founders and sponsors.
3. The requirements of Chapter VI of the Investigative Journalism Award Regulations regarding the eligibility of persons, including established restrictions on participation in the evaluation and decision-making process, shall apply when forming the Selection Committee.
4. The SC shall operate in accordance with:
  1. The Investigative Journalism Award Regulations,
  2. The Rules of Procedure for the Selection Committee,
  3. The principles of independence, impartiality, transparency, and accountability.
5. The work of the SC is based on the premise that expert evaluation is the main and decisive stage of the selection process, and the role of the SC is to ensure that the final decision aligns with public interest, professional ethics, and democratic principles.
6. SC members sign declarations of impartiality, conflict of interest, and confidentiality before commencing work; in the event of a conflict of interest, the member must recuse themselves, and the recusal is recorded in the minutes.

## CHAPTER II

### FUNCTIONS OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

1. To review the expert evaluation rankings, expert comments and arguments, and other selection-related material provided to the SC by the administrator.
2. To apply the Selection Committee's evaluation criteria, defined in this Regulation (Chapter IV), guided by the provisions of Chapter V of the Investigative Journalism Award Regulations.
3. To approve the final decision on the Award, based on the expert evaluation.
4. In exceptional cases, to deviate from the expert ranking with motivation, in accordance with the conditions set forth in the Award Regulations and Chapter VII of this document.
5. To ensure that decisions are substantiated, documented, and resilient to reputational and public criticism. The SC does not evaluate works from scratch and does not conduct a repeated expert evaluation.

## CHAPTER III

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SC AND EXPERTS

1. Expert evaluation is considered the backbone of the decision and the initial reference point for the work of the SC.
2. The SC may not:
  1. freely reorder the expert ranking;
  2. change the decision based on personal preferences;
  3. make decisions that contradict the expert evaluation unless there are grounds provided for in the Regulation.
3. The SC has the right to raise questions regarding the consistency of the experts' assessment, the adequacy of their arguments, and their compliance with the principles of the Award.
4. An SC decision is considered compliant with the Regulation and procedurally justified when it is adopted in accordance with the principles and procedure set forth in this Regulation and the Investigative Journalism Award Regulations.

# CHAPTER IV

## EVALUATION CRITERIA APPLIED BY THE SC

1. The Selection Committee, in making the final decision on the awarding of the Investigative Journalism Award, applies evaluation criteria that complement the expert evaluation and allow for the assessment of the significance of investigations within the broader context of public interest and democracy.
2. The SC evaluation criteria are not intended for repeated expert evaluation and are not applied to re-assess the methodology of the investigation, the reliability of facts, or the quality of professional execution, which are evaluated by the experts.
3. In applying the evaluation criteria, the SC assesses:
  1. **The significance of the investigation to the public interest** – whether the investigation reveals systemic problems, abuse of power, corruption, or other phenomena of essential significance to the public's right to know. In evaluating this aspect, consideration is also given to whether the investigation has or may have an impact on a broader segment of society.
  2. **Democratic and societal significance** – whether the investigation, considering its topic and context, contributes to the strengthening of democratic accountability, transparency, civil control, and the quality of public discourse.
  3. **Consistency and justification of the expert evaluation** – whether the evaluations and arguments presented by the experts are clear, consistent, and sufficiently substantiated to make the final decision.
4. The SC evaluation criteria are applied equally to all investigations under consideration, regardless of their place in the ranking compiled by the experts.
5. The application of the SC evaluation criteria does not provide grounds to independently change the expert ranking, except when at least one exceptional case provided for in the Award Regulations is simultaneously established.
6. In every case, the SC decision must be based on a clear connection between the applied evaluation criteria and the logic of the final decision, and this connection must be documented in the decision's minutes.

# CHAPTER V

## EXCEPTIONAL CASES IN SC WORK

1. The SC may consider a deviation from the expert ranking only if at least one of the following grounds is established:
  1. **Protection of public interest** – when, based on expert evaluations and submitted material, the Selection Committee determines that another investigation more clearly aligns with the public interest or democratic principles, and this aspect is insufficiently reflected in the overall expert ranking; the factual or potential impact of the investigation on the public may also be considered as a contextual circumstance.
  2. **Ethical aspects** – when reasonable and documented ethical doubts exist that were not or could not have been sufficiently evaluated at the expert stage.
  3. **New significant circumstances come to light** – when, after the expert evaluation, new, reliable facts emerge that substantially change the evaluation of the investigation.
2. These cases are not additional evaluation criteria but procedural grounds for reviewing the decision.

# CHAPTER VI

## PROCEDURE FOR DECISION-MAKING

1. Prior to the meeting, the Award Administrator provides the Selection Committee members with information regarding the expert evaluations: the final scores submitted by the experts, summary comments, and a ranking of the works based on the final evaluations. Members of the Selection Committee review the submitted information individually, including expert evaluations and comments, and examine the content of the highest-rated works in detail. This is done to ensure a fully informed discussion and does not constitute a re-evaluation of the works.
2. The Selection Committee meeting begins with the Award Administrator presenting a summary of the submitted works. The ranking of the works, based on the experts' evaluations, and a summary of the works are also presented.
3. The discussion focuses on the five works that received the highest ratings from the experts, which are presented and discussed in greater detail during the

meeting. The Selection Committee may decide to consider other works as well if it deems it necessary.

4. The discussion begins with the question, "Is the ranking compiled by the experts, based on the SC evaluation criteria (Chapter 4), sufficiently well-founded and consistent with the objective of the Award, as well as its public interest and democratic principles?". If the answer is yes, the decision is confirmed. If doubts arise, the SC decision scheme "Is this an exceptional case?" is applied.
5. Decisions are made at the Selection Committee meeting by voting. The voting procedure and results are recorded in the meeting minutes.

## CHAPTER VII

### SC DECISION SCHEME "IS THIS AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE?"

1. The decision-making of the Selection Committee is based on the premise that the ranking compiled by the experts is the main and decisive reference point of the selection process, and the highest-rated investigation is considered a potential recipient of the Award.
2. Before making the final decision, the SC applies this decision scheme to assess whether there is a basis for deviating from the expert ranking.
3. The first step of the decision is for the SC to assess whether, by applying the SC evaluation criteria (Chapter IV, paragraph 3), they agree with the experts' choice of the highest-rated investigation.
4. If the SC decision aligns with the expert ranking, the decision is confirmed, and the subsequent decision scheme is not applied.
5. If the SC decision does not align with the expert ranking or if reasonable doubts arise regarding the choice of the highest-rated investigation, the SC must assess whether at least one of the exceptional grounds provided for in the Award Regulations exists.
6. Only the following cases are considered exceptional grounds:
  1. **Protection of public interest** – when the investigation highest rated by the experts, in the SC's opinion, insufficiently reflects the essential public interest or democratic principles compared to another investigation.
  2. **Ethical aspects** – when reasonable and documented doubts about professional ethics are identified that were not or could not have been sufficiently evaluated at the expert evaluation stage.
  3. **New significant circumstances come to light** – when, after the expert evaluation, new, reliable facts emerge that substantially change the evaluation of the investigation.

7. If none of the grounds specified in paragraph 6 of this chapter is established, the SC does not have the right to deviate from the expert ranking.
8. If at least one exceptional ground is established, the SC must additionally assess whether the decision to deviate from the expert ranking can be clearly and argumentatively justified by the SC evaluation criteria.
9. A decision to deviate from the expert ranking is considered legitimate only if the SC:
  1. clearly indicates the applied exceptional ground;
  2. presents specific factual arguments justifying the application of the exceptional ground;
  3. documents how the application of the SC evaluation criteria led to the final decision.
10. All decisions made using this decision scheme must be recorded in the Selection Committee meeting minutes or a meeting transcript, which are considered sufficient substantiation for the decision and allow the decision logic to be clearly traced.
11. This decision scheme is not applied to change expert evaluations or to re-assess the professional quality of investigations but is applied only to ensure the legitimacy and justification of the decision.
12. The application of this decision scheme is mandatory in all cases where the SC considers the possibility of deviating from the expert ranking.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FINAL PROVISIONS

1. These rules of procedure apply to all SC members from the moment of their appointment.
2. The Regulation may be changed only by a decision of the Foundation's Board.
3. In case of ambiguities, the provisions of the Award Regulations shall apply.