



International Scientific Conference for Doctoral Students

organized by

Faculty of Economics, Technical University of Košice

StEP Award

Student Economic Paper Award

Competition Statutes

Objective of the Competition

The aim of the StEP Award (Student Economic Paper Award) is to motivate doctoral students and young researchers under the age of 35 to produce high-quality scientific outputs and to recognize their contributions to scientific knowledge. The competition is designed to facilitate the publication of outstanding research in an indexed scientific journal, focusing on new trends and methodologies within the following four thematic areas:

- Finance, Banking, and Investment
- Economics and Regional Development
- Management and Marketing
- Economic Informatics

Eligibility and Participation

The competition is open to students currently enrolled in a PhD program (full-time or part-time) at the time of the conference, as well as to young researchers under the age of 35. The contestant must be the lead author (first author) of the submitted paper. The paper must not have been published in any other journal or submitted to any other peer-review process at the time of submission. Participation is contingent upon formal registration for the conference and the in-person (or online) presentation of the paper.

To be included in the official conference outputs, participants must upload a contribution in accordance with the guidelines provided on the conference website (idea.ekf.tuke.sk). This contribution will be published in the Proceedings of the conference.

Awards and Recognition

The winner will receive the StEP Award Certificate and the opportunity to publish their paper in the partner journal E&M Economics and Management (ISSN 1212-3609), indexed in Web of Science and Scopus.

Peer-Review & Publication:

- The publication is subject to a successful peer-review process. To streamline this, the first review report is provided by the IDEA Conference Organizers, while the Editor of E&M Economics and Management manages the second.
- The author is strictly required to incorporate any revisions and suggestions from both reviewers to meet the journal's publication standards.
- The final publication of the winning paper is free of charge (the standard Article Processing Charge is waived for the StEP winner).

The jury and the editorial board reserve the right not to award first prize or to decline publication if the paper does not meet the journal's high qualitative and ethical standards.

Formal Requirements

Language: The paper must be written exclusively in English (British or American, but consistent throughout).

Originality: The submission must be an original work that has not been published elsewhere and is not currently under review by another journal. All submissions will be screened for plagiarism.

Length and Formatting: The paper should not exceed 7,500 words (including references, tables, and charts). The paper must strictly adhere to the official E&M Journal Template (available on the journal's website <https://www.ekonomie-management.cz/>).

Evaluation Committee and Criteria

The evaluation process is overseen by the Guarantors of the IDEA Conference, who will appoint a formal StEP Jury consisting of three distinguished members selected from the Conference Scientific Committee.

To ensure maximum objectivity and impartiality, the jury will evaluate the papers in blind versions. Authors are required to remove all identifying information (names, affiliations, or self-references) from the initial submission intended for the competition.

Evaluation Criteria (Score of 0–10 points for each category):

- **Scientific Contribution:** Originality of research findings, innovative approach, and the overall significance for both economic theory and practice.
- **Methodology:** Rigor and correctness of the applied scientific methods, data processing quality, and the logical consistency of the research design.
- **Literature Review:** Depth of the theoretical background, relevance of the cited sources, and the ability to critically engage with current state-of-the-art research.
- **Formal Quality:** High level of English language proficiency, logical structure of the paper, and strict adherence to the required citation standards (APA).

Scoring and Ranking:

- Each juror can award a maximum of 40 points per paper.
- The final score for each paper is the sum of points from all three jurors, with a maximum total of 120 points.
- The ranking of the participants will be determined by the total number of points earned. In the event of a tie, the Jury and the Conference Guarantors will make the final decision based on the paper's specific contribution to the journal's focus.

Publication Rights and Conference Proceedings

Conference Proceedings: All accepted submissions for the IDEA conference will be published in the Conference Proceedings (with an ISBN).

Full Paper Rights: Except for the StEP Award winner, the organizers will not publish full papers in the conference proceedings or the partner journal.

Authors of non-winning papers retain full copyrights to their work. They are free to submit and publish their full research papers in any other scientific journal or publications of their choice after the conference.

Winner's Commitment: By accepting the StEP Award, the winner agrees to provide the full paper exclusively to the partner's journal E&M Economics and Management and follow its publication process.

Final Provisions

The organizer reserves the right to amend the rules or cancel the competition in the event of an insufficient number of participants or if the submitted papers do not meet the required scientific and qualitative standards set by the Conference Scientific Committee and the partner journal.

The Jury's and the Conference Guarantors' decisions regarding the winners are final and cannot be legally challenged.

By submitting a paper to the conference and opting for the competition, the participant explicitly agrees to the terms and conditions of these StEP Award Statutes.

Validity and Approval

These statutes take effect on April 27, 2026.

The document and the terms of the competition have been officially approved by:

- The Organizing Committee and Guarantors of the IDEA Conference.
- The Editorial Board representatives of the partner journal E&M Economics and Management.

Any amendments or updates to these statutes will be published on the official conference website: idea.ekf.tuke.sk.