



**KIT** Royal  
Tropical  
Institute

## **RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

# Terms of reference and composition of the KIT Royal Tropical Institute Research Ethics Committee (KIT REC)

April 2023

### **Terms of reference**

The KIT REC's responsibility is to:

- Review all research proposals on human subjects proposed by members of staff, students or associated workers of the Department not subject to the Dutch WMO
- Protect the subjects, volunteers or patients, from possible harm or danger, to preserve their rights and to reassure the community (and sponsoring organizations) that this is being done
- Ensure that procedures are following the recommendations of the Declaration of Helsinki and other important international ethical guidelines

### **Constitution**

The committee consists of a pool of multi-disciplinary technical advisors specialized in the various areas in which KIT conducts research, an external ethicist and another independent individual not working at KIT. The technical advisors that are part of the REC are the reviewers of the research proposals. They either work in Health or Sustainable Economic Development and Gender and have experience with conducting quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research. The external ethicist and the independent individual are part of the REC in order to maintain the KIT REC's independence and legitimacy and to prevent possible conflicts of interests. The independent individual can have a scientific background and be a former staff member of KIT, as long as currently he or she is not working at KIT (anymore). The REC is led by a Chair, who appoints a vice-Chair with relevant expertise from among the members to take over the duties of the Chair when the Chair is absent.

The REC technical advisors are appointed for a three-year term with a maximum of three consecutive terms. The Chair is appointed for a three-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

### **Review procedure**

The type and content of research decides whether a research proposal needs to go through ethical review, can get a waiver for ethical review or does not need any ethical clearance at all.

In case of an ethical review, the Chair, at his/her discretion, nominates two technical advisors to review the proposal (in case of a student proposal only one technical advisor).

When there is *no more than minimal risk* to the participants, the proposal may be reviewed in an **expedited review** procedure, in which the two reviewers decide on the approval of the research proposal – in consultation with the Chair.

When there is *more than minimal risk* to the participants, a **full review** is needed, in which the two reviewers review and present the sticky issues of the proposal to a quorum of the REC in a meeting or through email. The quorum of the REC then decides on the approval of the proposal and gives ethical clearance when deemed appropriate.

In principle, each staff research proposal shall be submitted in the REC format available on virtual grounds and submitted to the secretariat with cc to the KIT Chair at least 10 working days in advance of a REC review meeting. When, for some reason, this is not possible and a proposal requiring full review is submitted way before a REC meeting, the Chair can call for an additional meeting or arrange an online review in order to prevent undue delay. When it concerns an expedited review, the researcher will be informed about the reviewer's decision *within three weeks* after submitting the research proposal; for full reviews this will take place *within four weeks* after submitting the research proposal.

Protocols that are refused approval may be resubmitted with revisions that take into account the Committee's comments.

A general meeting with the whole REC takes place at least once a year to retrospectively discuss review procedures and other tools and challenges.

All proposals reviewed by the REC will be registered.

The Chair will convey to the Head of the Knowledge unit or CEO advice on matters related to ethics of research involving human participants

### **Review procedure for students**

Reviews for KIT students are processed in batches at a discounted fee. There are 3 deadlines per year for submission of student proposals (apx April, May and November). Student proposals only need to be reviewed by one REC reviewer (since they have already been reviewed by the supervisor) and are discussed in batch in a REC review meeting organized by the REC chairs. Students wishing to submit outside the student deadlines will be charged the full fee. They need to have approval from the course program as this has financial implications for the course program and/or the student themselves.

Student deadlines consist of an 'intention to submit' deadline and a full proposal submission deadline 2 weeks later. In their intention to submit students should provide an overview of their objectives and state whether they plan to use primarily qualitative or quantitative methods so as to allow REC chairs to identify reviewers ahead of time.

### Composition of the REC

The current composition as of 2023 of the Committee is as follows:

<b>Co-chairs</b>	Sandra Alba and Rob Kuijpers						
<b>External ethicist</b>	Rose Bernabe						
<b>Technical advisors</b>							
<i>Experience</i>	<i>Health</i>				<i>Sustainable Economic Development and Gender</i>		
Quantitative expertise	<b>Epidemiology</b>	<b>HSS</b>	<b>SRHR</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>IE</b>	<b>FAB</b>	<b>Gender</b>
	Mirjam Bakker	Fernando Maldonado		Lisanne Gerstel	Hector Chavez Rik Habraken		
Qualitative expertise		Marjolein Dieleman	Anke van der Kwaak	Mahdi Abdelwahab		Greetje Schouten	Ana Portocarrero
		Eelco Jacobs	Pam Baatsen			Marthe Diallo	
			Irene de Vries				
			Maryse Kok Tasneem Kakal				Diana Lopez