



Approved by the Programme Committee
18.12.2012

Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation Programme

Guide for Applicants

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAMME AND CALL

The terms and conditions of the Guide for Applicants have been prepared on the basis of the **“Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009 – 2014”** adopted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs pursuant to Article 8.8 of the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on a Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2009-2014 on 11 February 2011, as amended on 15 December 2011 (hereafter “the Regulation”), and **Annex 12 “Rules for the establishment and implementation of donor partnership programmes falling under the Programme Areas “Research within Priority sectors” and “Bilateral Research Cooperation”**”.

The Programme Operator is the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, the Donor Programme Partner is the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and the Implementing Agency is the Estonian Research Council.

1.1. Objectives of research programme

The overall objective of the **Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation Programme** is to enhance research-based knowledge development in Estonia through research cooperation between Norway and Estonia. The Programme, through a single call for proposals for academic research projects, is designed to ensure the quality and high level of research. The Programme shall strengthen bilateral relations with the aim of stimulating long-term cooperation, capacity and competence-building. An important objective of the Programme is to strengthen human resources in research through facilitating international relations and involving PhD and master’s students in the projects. The Programme will be implemented in close cooperation with the Norwegian/EEA Scholarship Programme.

The aim of the Programme is to foster the exchange of scientific knowledge between Norwegian and Estonian researchers and to establish advanced and synergistic collaborative research between research institutions in Norway and Estonia. The Programme will be implemented through joint research projects, enabling research teams bring together complementary skills, knowledge, and resources in order to jointly address research problems. The Programme shall contribute to the strengthening of existing, and the creation of new, long-term scientific relations between Estonian and Norwegian research institutions and research teams. **Some examples of what is expected to be achieved by the cooperation projects:**

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- Internationally refereed (*joint*) publications published on the basis of the results of the project;
- New scientific methods acquired/training in relation to the scientific methods as part of the project, developing scientific methodology;
- Active involvement of PhD students in the project;
- Preparation of joint proposals to be submitted to the European financing initiatives (FP, JPI, ERA-NET) as part of the project;
- Close cooperation between the partners involved in the project from Estonia and Norway with the aim of building sustainable cooperation for future activities;
- Knowledge transfer, sharing of experiences and best practices.

The Programme is open to projects

- with or without additional funding from other sources;
- with different kind and number of project partners involved;
- with already established cooperation with the project partner(s) to be involved as well as projects with the aim of establishing and building up new partnerships;
- with or without a link to other programmes (including other Norway/EEA Grants programmes).

Please note that these conditions (existing additional funding, number of partners, etc.) will not place any project automatically in a more favourable position compared to others in the evaluation process. No additional points will be added based on these conditions.

The project may be additionally financed from other sources and/or be a part of another project, but in that case the **budget of the project and project activities financed by the Research Cooperation Programme must be clearly separated from the other activities and financial sources, have clear aims and focus, and deliver concrete results which will be independently evaluated.**

There can be no double financing of any part of the project by any other source of funds.

1.2. Areas and topics called

Proposals for research projects are invited **in all areas of research**. The subject of the research projects has not been prescribed.

1.3. Allocation for projects

Overall allocation for the call: 2 958 333 EUR

The minimum amount of project grants is 50 000 EUR; the maximum amount is 300 000 EUR (including overhead costs).

1.4. Types of research and projects

Type of research: basic and/or applied research

Type of projects: joint research projects involving at least one Estonian partner (**Project Promoter**) and one Norwegian partner (**donor project partner**) (see section 1.5.2.).

Activities promoting measures to increase mobility of researchers and doctoral students participating in the research projects are encouraged in order to facilitate cooperation between the partners and to provide a good platform for future cooperation.

1.5. Eligibility criteria

1.5.1. Minimum number of partners

Cooperation with at least one research project partner from Norway (**donor project partner**) is a mandatory criterion for the projects.

1.5.2. Eligibility criteria for Project Promoters

Eligible applicants are research and development institutions. Application is submitted by an Estonian research and development institution (**Project Promoter**). The research team consists of a **principal investigator** (researcher in charge) and **research staff** (main participants, including doctoral students, and other participants (master's candidates)).

Eligibility criteria for principal investigator (researcher in charge):

- must be a holder of a doctoral degree of Estonia or an equivalent academic degree (awarded by the deadline of submission of the grant application at the latest)

Eligibility criteria for main participants:

- The main participant of the project is a person who participates in the substantial performance of the project. The main participant of the project shall have at least a master's degree or the respective qualification.

1.5.3. Eligibility criteria for project partner(s)

Project partners have to be public or private research and development institutions or private law enterprises (see also section 1.5.1.). Information about the project partner institution(s) (name and their role in the project) has to be provided in the application.

Project partner(s) from Norway should be listed under 'Project partners in Norway' in the application form (the official name of the institution in English is mandatory).

Institutions established in countries outside of Estonia or Norway (third countries) can participate as **additional project partners**. Project costs will not be covered for third country partners from the project grant, except for the travel costs for the participants from their institution. Indicative estimation of travel costs for them has to be provided in the application (see also section 1.7.1.).

Other project partner(s) should be listed under the scientific rationale of the project (under 'institutions and persons participating in the project', see section 2.2. (1) 5). The official name of the institution(s) in English is mandatory.

Adding project partners during the project is not allowed.

The Project Promoter shall sign a partnership agreement with the project partner(s). The partnership agreement shall be submitted to the Estonian Research Council before the signing of the project contract.

1.5.4. Involving external experts

In justified cases, any experts outside the project partner(s) institution(s) whose involvement in the research project is important and necessary may be involved in the project. Preliminary information about and justification for involving expert(s) in the project has to be provided in the application with the indicative estimation of travel costs for them (see sections 1.7.1. 'travel costs' and 2.2. (1) 5 'institutions and persons participating in the project').

1.6. Eligible duration of projects

The minimum eligible duration of the projects is 24 months. The end of the period of eligibility of expenditures in the projects is 30 April 2016.

1.7. Budget

1.7.1. Eligible costs

- personnel costs

The cost of staff assigned to the project (including personnel costs for postdoctoral fellows) comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this corresponds to the Project Promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration.

Additional remuneration shall not be paid to leading research fellows, senior research fellows and other research fellows and professors and docents who get paid for full-time employment from other financing sources.

- scholarships (stipends) for master's and doctoral students assigned to the project and studying in Estonian universities

Scholarship equalling the state grant may be paid to doctoral and master's candidates. The upper limit of the scholarship for a master's candidate shall be 300 euros and for a doctoral candidate 400 euros a month, considering that the scholarship of the doctoral candidate along with the state education allowance may not exceed 600 euros a month. The scholarship may only be paid during the studies of the first equivalent degree. Remuneration may not be paid to the doctoral and master's candidates at the same time when the scholarship is paid. Should a doctoral or master's candidate participate in several projects financed by the Estonian Research Council, the total amount of the scholarship received from different projects may not exceed the aforementioned amounts.

- subcontracting

Generally only additional or complementary tasks (for example translation, costs of analyses, etc.) could be subcontracted to third parties. Core project research tasks should not be subcontracted.

The need for a subcontract must be detailed and justified in the **financial background**. The subcontractor is neither a project participant nor a signatory to the project contract or the consortium agreement.

- travel costs

Travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the Project Promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs and do not exceed the relevant national scales.

Travel costs should be limited to the necessity of the project. Any conference presentation or related publication must acknowledge the support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014.

As a general rule, the travel cost should be calculated on the basis of economy class travel on public transport.

Please note that no other costs besides travel costs for partners from third countries and external experts will be covered by the project grant (see also section 1.5.3. and 1.5.4.).

Travel costs for students, partners from third countries and external experts involved in the project will be indicated under **other costs**.

- other costs

- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project; maintenance costs of equipment;
- costs of laboratory animals;
- costs of publishing and disseminating project results;

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- costs of scientific forums (organisation or participation);
- reimbursement of travel costs to the PhD students and master's candidates who do not have an employment contract, external experts, and partners from third countries (see also sections 1.5.3. and 1.5.4.);
- all other costs which are clearly required for the implementation of the project and respectively identifiable (e.g. costs of any financial services).

Please note that the Research Cooperation Programme is not intended for the acquisition of equipment with a unit cost equal to or exceeding the cost of fixed assets (as specified by the relevant applicant institution).

- institutional overhead to cover the research institution's infrastructure costs:

- 60 percent of the research expenses (excluding subcontracting) for Norwegian institutions;
- 20 percent of the research expenses (excluding subcontracting) for Estonian institutions.

Please note that non-recoverable value added tax is an eligible project cost.

1.7.2. Division of budget between partners

Division of the budget between the partners will not be fixed in advance and will be a matter of agreement between the partners. The costs listed under section 1.7.1. are eligible costs for the project promoter and project partner(s).

1.7.4. Information about additional support for mobility

It is possible to apply for additional funding from the **Norway/EEA Scholarship Programme** (implemented by the Archimedes Foundation) for degree student and staff mobility related to the research cooperation projects. Further information about the programme and conditions and calls can be found on <http://eeagrants.archimedes.ee/>.

The Scholarship Programme will offer opportunities to apply for an additional support if there is increased need for student and staff mobility in the projects.

If the research project gets funding, research staff and students are not automatically entitled to the mobility grants and have to compete with other candidates.

There should be no double financing (mobility financed from the research project and from the Scholarship Programme).

1.7.5. Payment model

Project funds will be transferred into the bank account of the Project Promoter (legal body) specified in the project contract. Payments to Project Promoters will be made in the form of advance payments, interim payments and a final payment. The Project Promoters will have an opportunity to apply for an advance payment of up to 60% in the application submitted. At least 10% of the grant shall be withheld until the completion report has been approved.

Payment model will be specified in the project contract.

Co-financing requirements: Grants from the programme may be up to 95% of the total eligible project costs, provided that all applicable national and EU rules on state aid are complied with. Any remaining costs of the project shall be provided or obtained by the Project Promoter and the project partners, according to their respective shares of the project budget. Co-financing shall be in the form of cash, including electronic transfers.

2. HOW TO APPLY

2.1. The Project Promoter and the project partners

Applications are submitted electronically via the Estonian Research Information System (hereinafter referred to as “the ETIS”) by Estonian research and development institutions (by Project Promoters).

The Project Promoter has the main responsibility for initiating, preparing and submitting the application, taking care of the administrative and management tasks of the project, and ensuring the active involvement of the Project partner(s) in the preparation of the application and implementation of the project. Project partners will have to discuss and further define the role of the project coordinator according to their needs.

2.2. Planned work

The following materials must be added to the application form (as doc or pdf files):

- (1) Scientific rationale of the project;**
- (2) Financial background of the project**
- (3) CVs**
- (4) Upon formalising the application in the ETIS, it shall be noted whether human research or animal testing is conducted within the given project and the permit granted therefore shall be added.**

(1) The scientific rationale of the project shall clearly set out the following as separately titled sub-clauses:

1. duration and expected total cost of the project;

2. general theoretical background of the project along with references to the work done so far here and elsewhere; the relationship of the project to the research of the same direction of the applicant and other researchers;

3. main objectives and working hypotheses of the project, ethical aspects of research
Ethical aspects shall always be described in the research plan. If a research permit or a statement by an ethics committee is required for the implementation of the project, applicants shall provide information on the permits or applications for permits (as described in 2.2. (4));

4. outline of the research methods;

The text of sub-clauses 1–4 shall be limited to 15,000 characters (in English with spaces).
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5. institutions and persons participating in the project;

If applicable, please add the European Framework Programme **Participant Identification Code (PIC) of the Project Promoter and project partner(s).**

Project Promoter

Principal investigator (researcher in charge) and research staff (**main participants, including doctoral students**): please describe the responsibilities of the Project Promoter research staff (listed in the administrative form of application in the ETIS under “Principal investigator and research staff” (including doctoral students), with CVs submitted via the ETIS).

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Doctoral students involved in the project – please describe in which way the subject(s) of the dissertation(s) are related to the grant project. The research topic of the doctoral student, the name and academic degree of the supervisor and the time of admittance to the degree studies and expected time of graduation shall also be specified. Please describe the expected contribution of doctoral students in the performance of the project.

Master's students involved in the project – if possible, please list the master's students by name; if not, please give your estimation as to how many master's students will be involved in the project. Please describe the expected contribution of master's students in the performance of the project.

Please note that master's students are not considered the main participants and they are not listed in the administrative form of application in the ETIS under "Principal investigator and research staff" (no CVs required)), but in case of project funding they should be listed (by name) in the Project Contract.

Project partner(s) from Estonia

Project partners from Estonia should be registered in the ETIS and the main participants should have their CVs in the system (will be inserted in the application form's table 'Principal investigator and research staff').

If applicable, the name of the project partner institution(s) and the role in the project has to be provided. Please describe the role of project partner(s) in the project. What will be achieved through the partnership? What is the project partner's technical/professional contribution to the project? Are wider effects of the partnership expected? Please describe the research staff and their responsibilities.

Donor project partner(s)

The name of the project partner institution(s) and the role in the project has to be provided. Project partner(s) from Norway should be listed under 'Project partners from Norway' in the application form (the official name of the institution in English is mandatory).

Please describe the role of donor project partner(s) in the project. What will be achieved through the partnership? What is the project partner's technical/professional contribution to the project? Are wider effects of the partnership expected?

Please provide information about the members of the research group in the table below and describe their roles and responsibilities in the project. The principal investigator's CV should be added to the application form (please note the special field on the first page of the form).

Person	Start date (dd/mm/yyyy)	End date (dd/mm/yyyy)	Degree	Occupation and estimated workload in person months	R&D institution

Project partner(s) from third countries

If applicable, the name of the project partner institution(s) and the role in the project has to be provided (the official name of the institution in English is mandatory). Please describe the role of project partner(s) from third countries in the project. What will be achieved through the

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partnership? What is the project partner's technical/professional contribution to the project? Are wider effects of the partnership expected?

Please provide information about the members of the research group in the table below and describe their roles and responsibilities.

Person	Start date (dd/mm/yyyy)	End date (dd/mm/yyyy)	Degree	Occupation and estimated workload in person months	R&D institution

External experts

If applicable, please provide justification for involving expert(s) in the project. Please describe the role of external expert(s) in the project. What will be achieved through the involvement of the expert(s)? What is the expert's technical/professional contribution to the project?

Please provide a list of experts (name, full affiliation) and describe their roles and responsibilities.

6. forecast about the publications, including *joint* publications with the Norwegian researchers (project partner(s)); use and potential application of the results of the grant project;

7. expected significance of the project with respect to science, national economy, social sphere, culture, international level, etc.; description of expected results, their potential applicability, as well as possible future research directions;

8. description of research environment (including the infrastructure related to the proposed research);

Please note that the Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation Programme is not intended for the acquisition of fixed assets.

9. expected time schedule of the research by years;

10. list of bibliography.

(2) The financial background of the project should include a justification and calculations for the funding applied for and intended expenses by budget lines during the whole project (by project years and by the Project Promoter and project partner(s)). Please note that no other costs besides travel costs for partners from third countries will be covered by the project grant (see also section 1.5.3.).

For the Project Promoter and each project partner a separate budget should be planned (eligible costs are described under section 1.7.1.) and prepared in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules. Costs should be stated in euros.

For **budget calculations**, please use the tables in Annex I as examples. Please note that requested budgets may differ by years. Under 'Budget justification' (Budget reason in English) it is possible to add **only one file** (the file should include requested budgets as well as justifications).

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The total requested budget is the sum of the budgets of the Project Promoter and project partner(s).

Please add the total sums for Estonia and Norway in the relevant table in the application form (Requested project budget).

(3) CVs

Project Promoter's research team members and research team members of Estonian project partners should have their CVs in the ETIS.

Donor project partner's principal investigator's CV is added to the application form (under the heading 'Project Partners in Norway') as a separate pdf or doc file.

The CVs shall include a list of significant scientific publications (up to 10 publications within the last ten years, preferably related to the subject of the project).

(4) Upon formalising the application in the ETIS, it shall be noted whether human research or animal testing is conducted within the given project and the permit granted therefore shall be added.

If human research or animal testing is intended in the research, the approval of the Ethics Review Committee or permit committee of the conduct of animal testing with respect to the performance of the project shall be added to the application.

If the applicant obtains the permit after the submission deadline, it shall be submitted to the Estonian Research Council before the project starts.

2.3. Proposal language

The proposal must be written in English (summary and title should be written also in Estonian).

3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

3.1. Rules and procedures for submission of proposals

The grant application shall be submitted electronically via the ETIS (www.etis.ee) from 14 January 2013 to 14 March 2013.

The grant application shall be submitted only electronically via the ETIS. To submit an application via the ETIS, the applicant must be registered as a user of the system and follow the instructions given in the ETIS. The basis of the realisation of the grant project is a legal person (hereinafter referred to as "the Institution"). Proposals are presented via the ETIS to the responsible persons nominated by the Institutions. The responsible persons shall approve the application electronically via the ETIS.

3.2. About the ETIS

Each application has a unique identification code (assigned by the ETIS) which will remain the same throughout the duration of the grant.

Any technical issues about using the ETIS can be resolved by contacting technical support. Their contact details are available on both the opening page of the ETIS and the application's page.

3.3. Call closure date

The deadline for submitting the grant applications for projects is 14 March 2013 at 16.00 (EET). The application shall be deemed submitted when approved by the Institution.

3.4. Correcting or revising a proposal

Once the call has closed, correcting or revising a proposal is not applicable.

3.5. Withdrawing a proposal

Applications can be withdrawn at any time prior to the approval by the Institution.

4. CHECKLIST

In order to be evaluated, proposals must be:

- 1) submitted via the online application form before the submission deadline;
- 2) submitted by an eligible Project Promoter;
- 3) completed following the prescribed format.

Make sure your proposal fulfils the eligibility criteria of the call.

- Respect the length limitations set out for the scientific rationale.
- Enter the requested information on the submission site as soon as possible.
- Give your institution enough time to approve and sign the application electronically via the ETIS.

5. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- Eligibility check

Proposals must fulfil all of the eligibility criteria if they are to be retained for evaluation.

The following eligibility criteria apply to all proposals submitted under a call:

- receipt of the proposal before the deadline and time established in the call;
- cooperation with at least one research team of Norway (donor project partner);
- completeness of the form and the presence of all requested files (N.B. the completeness of the information contained in the proposal will be evaluated by experts; the eligibility checks only apply to the presence of the appropriate parts of the proposal).

If it becomes clear that one or more of the eligibility criteria have not been fulfilled, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

If a proposal fails to meet the requirements, the applicant will be notified of this within twenty working days after the due date for submission of applications. Applications and all relevant documentation will be maintained in the databases of the ETIS and the Estonian Research Council.

- Evaluation of submitted proposals (a detailed description of the evaluation process is provided in the “Guide for Evaluators”):

Eligible proposals are submitted to independent international external peer evaluation. All proposals shall be evaluated by at least three independent experts with a doctoral degree or an equivalent academic degree. All experts are required to sign a Conflict of Interest Declaration to confirm that they have no conflict of interest for each proposal they are asked to examine. Individual evaluations will be available for the applicants (without the experts' names). Based on the three evaluations, a consensus report for each proposal will be written.

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Proposals are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Scientific and/or technical excellence;
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including added value from international cooperation;
- Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results.

Based on the evaluations of independent experts, a ranking list is prepared. The ranking list shall be submitted to the Programme Committee for a recommendation as to which proposals should be selected for funding and the final awarding of grants.

- Selection process

Within the groups of equally scored proposals, the criteria for ranking are applied in the following order:

- (i) proposals are prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion "Scientific and/or technical excellence".
- (ii) proposals are prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion "Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including added value from international cooperation", paying special attention to the quality and sustainability of the cooperation;
- (iii) relevance in relation to the priority areas of the Estonian RD&I Strategy.
- (iv) proposals submitted by the less represented gender among the higher ranked proposals are considered to have the priority.

The Programme Operator in cooperation with the Programme Committee will make its decision to finance/refuse to finance an application on the basis of the ranking list and recommendations received from the Programme Committee.

The applicant will be notified of the results of the evaluation of applications within two weeks of the final decision of the Programme Committee (tentatively by the end of August 2013). Each applicant will receive a notice regarding the decision. The applicant can read the final evaluation reports of his/her proposal in the ETIS.

All materials relating to the evaluation of application will be confidential until the adoption of financing decisions. Projects to be financed will be disclosed in the ETIS.

- Negotiation and award process

The Project Promoters of proposals that have not been rejected, and for which funding is available, are invited to begin negotiations.

In addition to any points raised in the evaluation summary report, the applicants may receive requests for further administrative, legal, technical and financial information necessary for the preparation of a project contract. Changes, possibly including modifications to the budget may be requested. All requested changes shall be justified.

With regard to each grant, a trilateral project contract between the Estonian Research Council, Project Promoter and the principal investigator will be concluded for the term of the grant.

The project contract will establish mutual rights, obligations and liabilities of the parties.

The Project Promoter shall also sign a partnership agreement with the project partner(s).

6. TENTATIVE TIMETABLE AND SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR THIS CALL

Matchmaking event for Project Promoters and project partners: 21 September 2012

Open call publication: 14 January 2013

End of the open call: 14 March 2013

Planned start of the selection period: 15 March 2013

Planned end of the selection period: 15 July 2013

Planned start of the projects: September 2013

Seminar for the Project Promoters (the start-up event for the projects funded): August/
September 2013

Planned end of the projects: April 2016

Final conference: November 2016

7. FURTHER INFORMATION AND HELP

Reference to:

- Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009 – 2014
http://www.eeagrants.org/asset/4443/1/4443_1.pdf

- Annex 12 Rules for the establishment and implementation of donor partnership programmes falling under the Programme Areas “Research within Priority sectors” and “Bilateral Research Cooperation” http://www.eeagrants.org/asset/3667/1/3667_1.pdf

Annex I Budget calculations

Contact details for further information and support:

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