

## Vastavusnõuded partnerluste ühiskonkurssidel toetuse taotlejatele

### National Eligibility Criteria for grant applications in partnership calls for transnational research projects

The following eligibility criteria address Estonian applicants in European partnership calls for transnational research projects. Each project is carried out by a consortium that consists of research institutions (partners) from different countries. Each partner in a funded project will be funded by their national Funding Organisation. It is mandatory for all Estonian applicants to follow the national eligibility criteria. Please note that if one of the partners is not eligible, the entire proposal might be considered ineligible.

In case of a positive funding decision the Host Institution, the Principal Investigator and the Funding Organisation will enter into a trilateral agreement.

#### 1. Project Participants

1.1. **The Host Institution** may be any legal entity that is registered and located in Estonia and has an Estonian bank account.

The Host Institution (the final recipient) is the institution to which the grant will be allocated.

After the submission deadline (in case of two-stage application, after the preproposal deadline) and upon the notice from the Funding Organisation, the Host Institution must confirm to the Funding Organisation in writing that the project can be carried out on their premises in Estonia and that they will employ the Principal Investigator during the proposed project, should the project receive funding.

If the Host Institution is a for-profit institution, the State aid and de minimis aid regulations must be taken into account.

1.2 **The Principal Investigator** is a researcher who acts as the Estonian team leader in the project proposal. He/she will be responsible for how the grant is used and how the Estonian part in the project is executed.

The Principal Investigator:

1.2.1 must have an updated public profile in the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS) by the submission deadline (in case of two-stage application, by the preproposal deadline);

1.2.2 must hold a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification. The degree must be awarded by the submission deadline (in case of two-stage application, by the preproposal deadline) at the latest;

1.2.3 must have published at least three articles that comply with the requirements of Clause 1.1 of the ETIS classification of publications, or at least five articles that comply with the requirements of Clauses 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 or 3.1, within the last five calendar years prior to the proposal submission deadline (in case of two-stage application, prior to the preproposal deadline).<sup>1</sup> Patents are equalled with publications specified under Clause 1.1. A monograph (ETIS Clause 2.1) is equalled with three publications specified in Clause 1.1 if the number of authors is three or fewer. If the applicant has been on maternity, paternity, or parental leave, in compulsory military service, or there have been other exceptional circumstances (e.g., serious illness), they can request the publication period requirement to be extended by the relevant period of time.

If the Principal Investigator has received the PhD degree outside Estonia, its correspondence to an Estonian doctoral degree must be recognised by either the Estonian ENIC-NARIC Centre or the Host Institution in accordance with the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of April 6, 2006, No. 89 "Evaluation and academic recognition of documents proving foreign education and the name of the qualification awarded in the foreign education system terms and conditions of use". The Funding Organisation may ask for a relevant Evaluation Report<sup>2</sup>.

If several Estonian institutions participate in a proposal, all institutions must have a Principal Investigator who meets the national eligibility requirements.

## 2. Budget

2.1. The budget contains costs directly related to the implementation of the project (**direct costs**) and **indirect (overhead) costs**. The **direct costs** must be used to carry out the project and be separately identifiable.

### 2.2. Direct costs:

2.2.1. **Personnel costs** are monthly salaries (along with all state taxes, contributions, and compensations arising from law) of the project participants, calculated according

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<sup>1</sup> ETIS classification: **1.1.** *Scholarly articles indexed by Web of Science, Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Emerging Sources Citation Index and/or indexed by Scopus (excluding chapters in books); 1.2.* *Peer-reviewed articles in other international research journals with an ISSN code and international editorial board, which are circulated internationally and open to international contributions; 2.1.* *Scholarly monographs; 3.1.* *Articles/chapters in books published by the publishers listed in Annex (including collections indexed by the Web of Science Book Citation Index, Web of Science Conference Proceedings Citation Index, Scopus)*

<sup>2</sup> The required documents and procedure, including the application form can be found on the web page <https://www.harmo.ee/en/enicnarc>. The evaluation period can take up to 30 days.

to their commitment and in proportion to their total workload at their Host Institution.

#### 2.2.2. Other direct costs are:

- travel costs that may cover expenses for transport, accommodation, daily allowances and travel Insurance only for travels abroad;
- where the project is funded from the European Regional Development Fund (Mobilitas 3.0) resources, travel and accommodation costs are eligible only for travels abroad;
- consumables and minor equipment directly and fully related to the project;
- publication and dissemination of project results;
- organising meetings, seminars or conferences (e.g. room rent, catering, equipment rental and related costs);
- fees for participating in scientific forums, conferences and other events directly and fully related to the project;
- patent costs;
- all other costs that are identifiable as clearly required for carrying out the project (e.g. translation, copy editing, webpage hosting, etc.) and are directly and fully related to the project.

**2.3. Indirect costs (overhead)** are costs that cannot be identified as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action and/or should cover the general expenses of the Host Institution related to the management of the grant. Office consumables and costs for equipment and services intended for general use (e.g., phone bills, copy service, printer) should be covered from the indirect costs. **Indirect costs** may not exceed 15% of **the personnel costs**.

**2.4. Subcontracting costs** are direct costs. Subcontracting costs should cover only additional or complementary research related tasks (e.g. analyses, conducting surveys, building a prototype, etc.) performed by third parties. Subcontracting costs should not be included in the overhead calculation. The activities and budget should be described in the proposal. Core project tasks should not be subcontracted. **Subcontracting costs** may not exceed **15% of the total costs**.

**2.5. Double funding** of activities is not acceptable.

**2.6.** If several Estonian institutions participate in one proposal, the sum of their requested budgets may not exceed the maximum contribution of the respective national Funding Organisation indicated in the call documents.

### 3. Exclusion from the scope of the ERDF (Mobilitas 3.0) funding

Following the restrictions laid down in Article 7 of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council No 2021/1058 of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund<sup>3</sup> research and other activities related to fossil fuels and their use, as well as

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<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1058>

other activities not eligible as per Article 7 of the Regulation, cannot be funded from the European Regional Development Fund (Mobilitas 3.0) resources.

#### 4. State Aid

If the Host Institution is an undertaking, EU Regulations on State aid and de minimis aid must be taken into account when requesting funding. An undertaking is any entity, be it a natural or a legal person, engaged in an economic activity, regardless of its legal status and the way in which it is financed.

If the State aid or de minimis aid regulations apply, the funding will not be granted to a Host Institution who has been subject to a funding withdrawal decision pursuant to a previous European Commission decision that deemed the aid illegal and incompatible with the common market, if that decision has not been complied with.

The funding is not considered State aid for research and development if the Host Institution is a research and development institution that has been positively evaluated. Additionally, the funding of research and development project is not considered State aid, if the Host Institution is a research and knowledge dissemination organisation and its research and development activities and their costs, funding and revenues can be clearly separated so that cross-subsidisation of the economic activity is effectively avoided.

The criteria defined in Clauses 18–24 of Communication from the European Commission – Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01<sup>4</sup>) forms the basis for determining whether the activities carried out are economic activities and whether the Host Institution is an undertaking that is considered to be a State aid recipient when it receives funding.

If the institution applies for State aid or de minimis aid, it must fill in the **State aid form**. No tax arrears are allowed on the proposal submission date.

If State aid or de minimis aid is given, the documents related to the funding must be kept for 10 years as of the date when the agreement was entered into.

##### 4.1. State aid pursuant to the Block Exemption Regulation

If the funding is considered to be State aid, then it is given on the basis of Article 25 or 25c of the Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014<sup>5</sup> that declares certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, pp. 1–78) (hereinafter the Block Exemption Regulation), and the provisions of the Commission Regulation and Section 34<sup>2</sup> of the Estonian Competition Act apply.

State aid is not given in cases specified under Articles 1(2) to (5) of the Block Exemption Regulation.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022XC1028\(03\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022XC1028(03))

<sup>5</sup> Consolidated version: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02014R0651-20230701>

In case of State aid, the eligible costs of the project activities must comply with the requirements specified under Article 25(3) of the Block Exemption Regulation (except clause (c)), and the maximum aid intensity must comply with Articles 25(5) and (6).

If applicable the State aid is given according to the rules specified in Article 25c – aid involved in co-funded research and development projects.

If the funding can be considered to be State aid, the application must include the information specified in Article 6(2) of the Block Exemption Regulation, and the application has to be submitted before the start of the activities.

If State aid is given, then the costs of the activities carried out before application submission will not be eligible for aid.

#### **4.2. De minimis aid**

If the funding is considered de minimis aid, then it is subject to Commission Regulation (EU) No. 2023/2831 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid<sup>6</sup> (OJ L 352, 2023/2831, 15.12.2023) (hereinafter the De Minimis Aid Regulation), and the provisions of the Regulation and Section 33 of the Estonian Competition Act apply.

De minimis aid is not given in cases specified under Article 1(1) of the De Minimis Aid Regulation.

In case of de minimis aid, the maximum aid intensity must comply with Article 3 of the De Minimis Aid Regulation.

De minimis aid given to the Host Institution as a single undertaking together with de minimis aid applied for shall not exceed EUR 300 000 over any period of 3 years.

Article 5 of the De Minimis Aid Regulation applies to cumulating de minimis aid.

A single undertaking is an undertaking specified in Article 2(2) of the De Minimis Aid Regulation.

### **5. Grant Agreement**

If a positive funding decision is made, the Funding Organisation enters into a grant agreement with the Host Institution and Principal Investigator. Information on the transnational project must be entered into ETIS once the agreement has been signed.

The Consortium Agreement should be signed six months after the grant agreement has been signed at the latest. If one year has elapsed and the CA has not been signed, the next instalment of funding will not be paid out.

### **6. Research Involving Human Subjects or Animal Testing**

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<sup>6</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ET/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L\\_202302831](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ET/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302831)

If human research or animal testing are intended in the project, a positive resolution by the Human Research Ethics Committee or the Authorisation Committee for Animal Experiments must be submitted to the Funding Organisation by the start of the relevant activities.

## **7. Nagoya Protocol**

By applying for funding by the Funding Organisation, the applicants commit to consider the relevance of the Nagoya protocol for their research, and to submit the Due Diligence Declaration, if applicable.