

**National Eligibility Criteria for Grant Applications in Multilateral Partnership Initiative:
Towards Resilient International Collaborations.
*Integration of Ukrainian Researchers into Global Research Community (IMPRESS-U)***

The following eligibility criteria address Estonian applicants in Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) calls for transnational research projects. Each project is carried out by a consortium that consist of research institutions (partners) from different countries. Each partner in a funded project will be funded by their national Funding Organisation (except Ukrainian researchers). 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 Estonian Principal Investigator, the Host Institution and the Funding Organisation will enter into a trilateral agreement.

1. Project Participants

1.2. The Host Institution must be a positively evaluated R&D institution that is a legal entity registered in Estonia. List of evaluated institutions is provided in the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS) www.etis.ee.

The Host Institution is the institution to which the grant will be allocated.

After the submission deadline and upon the notice from the Funding Organisation, the Host Institution must confirm to the Funding Organisation in the written form 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 (see point 3).

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;

1.2.2. must hold a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification. The degree must be awarded by the submission deadline of the grant application 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.¹ International 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 pregnancy and maternity or parental leave or performed compulsory service in the Defence Forces, or has another good reason, 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 Center 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 Report².

2. Budget

2.1. The main part of the application submitted to Funding Organisation is the proposed budget, which must be submitted on the corresponding form (see Annex 1).

Research expenses consist of **direct costs** (personnel costs, travel costs and other direct costs) and **subcontracting costs**. The research expenses must be used to carry out the project and be separately identifiable.

2.2. Direct costs

2.2.1. Personnel costs are monthly salaries with social security charges and all other statutory costs of the project participants, calculated according to their commitment and in proportion to their total workload at their Host Institution. **NB!** Scholarships are not eligible.

2.2.2. Travel costs may cover expenses for transport, accommodation, daily allowances, and travel insurance.

¹ 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)*

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

2.2.3. Other direct costs are:

- consumables and minor equipment related to the project;
- publication and dissemination of project results;
- organising meetings, seminars, or conferences (room rent, catering);
- fees for participating in scientific forums, conferences and other events 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 comply with the eligible costs.

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

2.4. Indirect costs (overhead) may not exceed **15% of the personnel costs** and should cover the general expenses of the Host Institution. Costs for equipment and services intended for public use (e.g. a copy machine or a printer that is publicly used, phone bills, copy service, etc.) should be covered from the overhead.

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. State Aid

EU Regulations on State aid and de minimis aid must be taken into account when requesting funding.

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 project has ties to the non-economic activities of the Research (or Host) Institution, if the research and development activities and the related costs, funding and revenue can be clearly separated, thus avoiding the cross subsidisation of economic activity.

The criteria defined in Clauses 17–22 of Communication from the European Commission – Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01) forms the

basis for determining whether the activities carried out are economic activities and whether the Host Institution is a company 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.

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 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 34² 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.

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.

De minimis aid

If the funding is considered de minimis aid, then it is subject to Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1407/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (OJ L 352, 24.12.2013, pp. 1–8) (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 together with de minimis aid applied for must not exceed 200,000 euros during the current financial year and the two previous financial 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(1) of the De Minimis Aid Regulation.

4. Grant Agreement

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

5. Research on Human Subjects or Animals

If the proposed research involves activities which require an ethics committee approval or a previous authorisation from a national authority, the Principal Investigator must submit the positive resolution from the relevant committee or authority to the Funding Organisation by the start of the relevant activities.

6. 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.