

*The following is a translation from Estonian. In case of disputes, the Estonian text shall prevail.*

## **Conditions and Procedure for Adaptation Support**

### **Chapter 1**

#### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

##### **1. Scope of Application**

- 1.1. The guidelines establish the conditions and procedures for applying for, processing, approving, disbursing, and reporting adaptation support (hereinafter referred to as the support) are established with this regulation.
- 1.2. The Estonian Research Council (hereinafter Council) is entitled to make well-considered decisions and consult experts where necessary in relation to matters not covered by this directive.

##### **2. Aim**

- 2.1. The aim of the support is to engage researchers from foreign countries in Estonian research and development institutions, bringing new knowledge to Estonian research, thereby enhancing research and development activities in Estonia, and improving their quality.
- 2.2. The support provides financial support to incoming researchers from foreign countries to initiate high-level research and development projects in Estonia.
- 2.3. The support is not intended for covering own contribution of other research projects.

##### **3. Definitions**

- 3.1. Researcher - an individual with a doctoral degree whose responsibilities include conducting research and development activities in the host institution.
- 3.2. Host institution - an Estonian research and development institution that has been positively evaluated and enters an employment contract with the researcher upon granting the support.
- 3.3. Research project - research and development activities carried out in Estonia within the framework of the action plan, resulting in the necessary input to prepare for the submission of a funding application in research and development funding rounds or for further research and development activities conducted in Estonia in other ways.

##### **4. Requirements for the applicants**

- 4.1. The support can be applied for by the host institution (hereinafter also referred to as the applicant) to hire a researcher coming to Estonia and to cover the costs of research and development activities.
- 4.2. The support can be applied for a researcher who:
  - 4.2.1. has not permanently resided or worked in Estonia for the last 12 months. This condition does not apply to recipients of post-doctoral grants (PUTJD) awarded by the Council for researchers going from Estonia to foreign countries;

- 4.2.2. has completed a postdoctoral fellowship or an equivalent level of research in a foreign country;
  - 4.2.3. does not apply for a post-doctoral, starting, or group grant from the Council in the year of application, nor is listed as the (main) executor in any starting or group grant application.
- 4.3. Upon receiving the support, the host institution is obligated to enter into a permanent employment contract with the researcher or a contract with a duration of at least 24 months.

## **Chapter 2**

### **CONDITIONS FOR APPLYING FOR A GRANT**

#### **5. Applying for the support**

- 5.1. The Council announces the call for proposals by publishing a relevant announcement and the documents regulating the application process on its website.
- 5.2. Applications are submitted continuously.
- 5.3. The host institution submits a signed letter of intent to the Council via email for applying for the support, which the Council registers in its document management system.
- 5.4. The application is prepared by the host institution in collaboration with the researcher and is submitted to the Council through the ETIS system.
- 5.5. The application is prepared in Estonian or English.
- 5.6. In the application, the following information is provided:
  - 5.6.1. name of the researcher;
  - 5.6.2. host institution;
  - 5.6.3. the field and specialization of research and development;
  - 5.6.4. researcher's CV, including explanations indicating his/her research and development activities over the past five years, as well as their work and residence during the 12 months preceding the application;
  - 5.6.5. description of the project along with an activity and timeline plan outlining the activities to be carried out during the support period at the host institution, specifying the research and development activities planned to be conducted in Estonia;
  - 5.6.6. description of the host institution's collaboration with the recruited researcher, including how the researcher will be integrated into the institution, how the researcher's work aligns with the strategic objectives of the host institution, etc.;
  - 5.6.7. confirmation from the host institution that an employment contract will be signed with the researcher for at least the period mentioned in point 4.3, including a clear indication of the position the researcher will be working in.
- 5.7. The Council has the right to request additional information and documents from both the researcher and the host institution during the application process.

#### **6. Researcher**

- 6.1. During the support period, the researcher must work full-time at the host institution, with the work location being in Estonia.
- 6.2. During the support period, the researcher must engage in research and development activities at the host institution according to the provided activity and timeline plan.
- 6.3. During the support period mentioned in point 8.1, the researcher cannot be:
  - 6.3.1. a recipient of a post-doctoral grant from the Council;
  - 6.3.2. the PI or the member of the (senior) research staff of a starting or team project.

## **7. Budget of the support**

- 7.1. The amount of the adaptation support is 72,000 euros per year (6,000 euros per month). The support is not provided for periods shorter than one month.
- 7.2. The host institution ensures co-financing, which is at least 50% of the amount stated in point 7.1.
- 7.3. The support includes direct costs (salary, state taxes, and research expenses) as well as overhead costs:
  - 7.3.1. the salary fund includes the researcher's salary along with all applicable taxes, contributions, and statutory benefits;
  - 7.3.2. research expenses include purchased research and development services, costs related to the dissemination and popularization (open) of research and development results, expenses associated with intellectual property protection, travel expenses, expenses related to settling in Estonia, and other direct costs necessary for conducting research, based on the specifics of the action plan;
  - 7.3.3. overhead costs refer to the expenses of the host institution related to ensuring a high-quality research environment for the researcher. Indirect costs constitute 25% of the total direct costs.

## **8. Support period**

- 8.1. The support period is 24 months from the beginning of the support contract.
- 8.2. The support period begins on the date agreed upon in the support contract, but no later than six months from the date of notification of the decision to grant the support.

## **Chapter 3**

### **EVALUATION AND GRANTING OF APPLICATIONS**

## **9. Processing the adaptation support**

- 9.1. The Council is responsible for processing the applications.
- 9.2. The application process takes place quarterly throughout the year. Applications received during the quarter are evaluated within the following month of the quarter.
- 9.3. The application process takes place in the Estonian Research Information System (hereinafter ETIS).
- 9.4. The submission of the application and the communication with the applicant is conducted via ETIS. The decisions made during the stages of the application process, incl. the decision

to approve or reject the application, will be announced via ETIS. The researcher and the host institution are required to monitor the messages sent via ETIS regularly and keep the contact information up to date.

## **10. Checking the Technical Details of the Applications**

- 10.1. The Council is responsible for checking the technical details of the applications.
- 10.2. When checking the technical details of the applications, it will be determined if the researcher, the application, and the host institution meet the necessary requirements.
- 10.3. The content of the applications will not be evaluated.
- 10.4. In case of formal inaccuracies which can be corrected without changing the content of the application are present, the Council will set a deadline of up to ten working days for correcting the mistakes.
- 10.5. The Council is entitled to reject the application without processing it if:
  - 10.5.1. the researcher, the application, or the host institution do not meet the requirements, and the non-compliance could not be rectified in the manner specified in point 10.4;
  - 10.5.2. the host institution and the researcher did not correct the inaccuracies within the time limit established by the Council.

## **11. Evaluation of Applications**

- 11.1. The applications are evaluated based on the evaluation guidelines for adaptation support applications (hereinafter evaluation guidelines) established by the Council.
- 11.2. After the technical check, the application is processed by an expert committee formed by a directive of the Management of the Council.
- 11.3. The expert committee evaluates:
  - 11.3.1. the justification, feasibility, and ambition of the project's activities and schedule outlined in the application;
  - 11.3.2. the competence and potential of the researcher, i.e., whether and how the researcher can implement the proposed activities and schedule;
  - 11.3.3. the clarity and thoroughness of the researcher's integration idea into the institution.
- 11.4. The expert committee confirms an initial final assessment for each application, based on the scores and their justifications.
- 11.5. An application is not accepted if it receives less than 80% of the maximum final score.
- 11.6. The researcher and the host institution have the right to jointly submit in writing their opinion and objections regarding the initial final assessment by the deadline set by the Council (hearing). During the hearing, compliance with procedural rules is assessed, and possible factual errors are checked.
- 11.7. Based on the results of the initial final assessment and the hearing process, the Evaluation Committee confirms the final assessments of the applications and their ranking.
- 11.8. The Council is entitled to reject the application if intentional false information, plagiarism, or fraudulent activities become evident.

## **12. Granting of Applications**

- 12.1. The Evaluation Committee will submit a justified and impartial proposal to the Council:
  - 12.1.1. to approve the application and allocate funding:
  - 12.1.2. to reject the application.
- 12.2. Applications are funded in order of the ranking until the allocated financial resources are exhausted.
- 12.3. The decision regarding the application is communicated to the researcher and the receiving institution within ten working days from the date of the decision through the ETIS environment.
- 12.4. The decision mentioned in point 12.1 is made by a directive of the Management of the Council.
- 12.5. The Evaluation Committee may impose conditions that the researcher and the host institution are obligated to fulfill in order to receive the funding.

## **Chapter 4**

### **ALLOCATION OF THE SUPPORT**

#### **13. Allocation of the support**

- 13.1. The Council will enter into a tripartite agreement (hereinafter agreement) with the host institution and the researcher. The grant agreement entails the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of the parties.
- 13.2. The support is allocated to the host institution, which is obligated to allow the researcher to use the allocated funds in accordance with the application.
- 13.3. The agreement is concluded for the period mentioned in point 8.1.
- 13.4. The disbursement of the support occurs in accordance with the terms stipulated in the tripartite grant agreement.
- 13.5. In the event of allocation of the support, the host institution enters into an employment contract with the researcher according to point 4.3.
- 13.6. If it becomes apparent before the agreement is concluded that the researcher, host institution, or application no longer meets the requirements, the Council reserves the right not to conclude the grant agreement.

## **Chapter 5**

### **TEMPORARY SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT**

#### **14. Temporary suspension of the agreement**

- 14.1. Temporary suspension of the agreement may be requested in case of researcher's pregnancy, maternity or parental leave, compulsory military service, serious illness, or other exceptional circumstances, which make it impossible or significantly more difficult to implement the agreement.

- 14.2. The agreement can be temporarily suspended on the basis of a reasoned joint application from the host institution and the researcher, which must be submitted to the Council. If necessary, a members of the Evaluation Committee will provide the Council with an assessment of the justification for the temporary suspension of the project.
- 14.3. The agreement can be temporarily suspended for up to three years. The end date of the agreement will be extended by the suspension period.

## **15. Termination of the agreement**

- 15.1. The agreement will end on the end date of the agreement.
- 15.2. All the activities financed with the support must be carried out by the end date of the agreement.
- 15.3. The host institution is obligated to transfer the unused portion of the support, along with the proportional overhead costs, to the Council's bank account no later than seven calendar days from the day of receiving the respective refund request from the Council. The researcher and the institution are also obligated to submit the final project report.

## **16. Reporting**

- 16.1. At the end of the support period or in the event of early termination of the agreement, the host institution, in collaboration with the researcher, is obligated to submit the final report.
- 16.2. The host institution, in collaboration with the researcher, prepares the final report in Estonian or English, and the host institution submits it to the Council through ETIS by the deadline specified by the Council.
- 16.3. The final report includes the following:
- 16.3.1. an overview of the completion of activities outlined in points 5.6.5. and 5.6.6.;
  - 16.3.2. report on the use of the support;
  - 16.3.3. other matters considered important by the host institution and the researcher.
- 16.4. The Council approves or disapproves the final report. The Council disapproves the report if it does not meet the requirements stipulated in this regulation, and the non-compliance has not been rectified by the deadline set by the Council. The decision and its justification are communicated to the researcher and the host institution through ETIS.

## **Chapter 6**

### **EARLY TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT AND RECLAMATION OF THE SUPPORT**

## **17. Early Termination of the Agreement**

- 17.1. The Council has the right to terminate the grant prematurely if:
- 17.1.1. the host institution or the researcher have submitted a respective request;
  - 17.1.2. the host institution or the researcher have fundamentally violated the requirements stipulated by the legislation or in these guidelines;

- 17.1.3. the researcher is unable to implement the project (the death of the researcher, serious illness, transitioning to other employment, or other substantial and justified circumstances);
  - 17.1.4. the host institution or the researcher no longer meets the requirements;
  - 17.1.5. the host institution or the researcher has intentionally provided false information;
  - 17.1.6. there are other significant and justified circumstances.
- 17.2. Before declaring the decision to terminate the support, the Council provides the host institution and the researcher with an opportunity to present their views.
  - 17.3. After the termination of the support, the host institution is obliged to repay the unused portion of the grant to the Council.
  - 17.4. If the support is terminated retrospectively, the Council may demand the repayment of the support funds allocated to the host institution.

## **18. Audit and Reclamation of the support**

- 18.1. Support not used for the intended purpose will be reclaimed by the Council from the host institution.
- 18.2. The host institution is required to allow the Council or a person authorized by the Council to audit the use of the support and provide necessary assistance, incl. allowing access to the premises and the territory of the host institution and submitting all the requested documents for the purpose of verifying the correctness of the information provided.