

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

Guidelines for evaluating adaptation support applications

1. Scope of Application

- 1.1. These guidelines establish the evaluation criteria and the principles for evaluating and compiling the ranking lists of the adaptation support applications.
- 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 these guidelines.

2. Evaluation of the applications

- 2.1. The evaluation of the applications takes place in the Estonian Research Information System (hereinafter ETIS).
- 2.2. All applications are to be evaluated according to the same criteria and procedures in order to ensure equal treatment of all applications.
- 2.3. The final ranking list of the applications is formed by taking into consideration all relevant information and by comparing the applications in a single ranking list.
- 2.4. The evaluation process is carried out as follows:
 - 2.4.1. each application will receive a review by at least two independent reviewers, one of whom shall act as a rapporteur;
 - 2.4.2. the rapporteur will prepare the preliminary final evaluation for the application;
 - 2.4.3. the expert committee will confirm the preliminary final evaluation;
 - 2.4.4. the evaluation committee approves the final assessment for each application, based on the preliminary final assessment of the expert committee, and confirms the unified ranking of the applications;
 - 2.4.5. when establishing the ranking of applications with equal scores, the evaluation board follows the principles described in point 4.2.

3. Evaluation Criteria and Rating Scale

3.1. Evaluation criteria

When evaluating the applications, the following evaluation criteria are to be used and the scores have to be justified. The justification is based on sub-criteria (points 1.1, 1.2, etc.).

Evaluation criterion	Sub-criteria	Rating scale
1. Justification of the project.	1.1. How clear and justified is the project's objective? 1.2. How ambitious are the project's objectives? 1.3. What additional value does the application offer compared to the current state of development in the research field? 1.4. Other noteworthy observations to highlight.	From 1 - 5

2. The competence and potential of the researcher, including his/her research activities in the last five years.	2.1. What is the level of the researcher's scientific achievements in the last five years? 2.2. How suitable is the researcher's competence and previous research experience for the successful implementation of the proposed project? 2.3. Other noteworthy observations to highlight.	From 1 - 5
3. Integration of the researcher into the institution.	3.1. How clear and well-thought-out is the institution's vision for integrating the researcher? 3.2. How is the researcher and his/her project related to the institution's strategic objectives? 3.3. Other noteworthy observations to highlight.	From 1 - 5
4. Research ethics, incl. the potential ethical risks accompanying the implementation of the project <i>The criterion will be evaluated by the Council</i>	4.1. Has the applicant sufficiently, carefully, and properly assessed the potential ethical risks concerning research which may arise during research? 4.2. Has the applicant sufficiently, carefully, and properly described the measures and activities with which the risks concerning research ethics are mitigated? 4.3. Has the applicant sufficiently, carefully, and properly addressed the ethical and legal requirements applicable to the research (e.g., requirements related to the processing of personal data or ethics committee approvals) and how the requirements are to be met during the course of the project?	Appropriate, conditionally appropriate
5. Research data management <i>The criterion will be evaluated by the Council</i>	5.1. Has the applicant sufficiently, carefully, and properly described issues related to the management of research data and other research results throughout their life cycle? 5.2. Has the applicant sufficiently, carefully, and properly addressed the ethical and legal requirements regarding the storage or use of research results and research data (e.g., issues related to open science or intellectual property), and explained the fulfilment of the requirements?	Appropriate, conditionally appropriate

3.2. Rating scales and the formation of the final score.

3.2.1. For criteria 1, 2, and 3 a nine-point differentiated rating scale is used:

- Outstanding (5);
- Very good-Outstanding (4.5);
- Very good (4);
- Good-Very good (3.5);
- Good (3);
- Satisfactory-Good (2.5);
- Satisfactory (2);
- Unsatisfactory-Satisfactory (1.5);
- Unsatisfactory (1).

3.2.2. For criteria 4 and 5 a two-point differentiated rating scale is used:

- Appropriate;

- Conditionally appropriate.

3.2.3. Interpretation of ratings for criteria 1, 2, and 3:

- Unsatisfactory (1) – the application addresses many of the aspects of the evaluation criteria inadequately and/or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- Satisfactory (2) – the application addresses most of the aspects of the evaluation criteria in very general terms and there are significant weaknesses. Major revision and clarification would be needed to improve the application.
- Good (3) – the application addresses most of the relevant aspects of the evaluation criteria well, but a number of shortcomings are present. Some questions could be elaborated on more thoroughly and more clearly. A sound research project with some issues to be considered.
- Very good (4) – the application addresses most of the relevant aspects of the evaluation criteria very well and only a small number of shortcomings or issues to be considered are present. Minor revision and clarification would be suggested. The application is competitive on an international scale.
- Outstanding (5) – the application is remarkably well elaborated and all sub-criteria of the evaluation criteria have been met at an excellent level. The application is competitive on an international scale. An exceptionally strong application in all respects. The score “outstanding” is exceptional and it will be necessary to provide an additional justification for this score.

3.2.4. Interpretation of ratings for criteria 4 and 5:

- Appropriate – the evaluation is given to the application in which the topics mentioned in the evaluation criteria are adequately, accurately, and relevantly addressed. The application does not contain significant deficiencies or ambiguities.
- Conditionally appropriate - the evaluation is given to the application that contains significant deficiencies or ambiguities. A condition is set for the application to mitigate risks or adhere to necessary requirements.

3.2.5. The final score will be formed by summing up the scores given to the evaluation criteria. The final score can range from 1 to 15 points.

3.3. Threshold

3.3.1. The qualification threshold for criteria 1, 2 and 3 is 3 points (good).

3.3.2. The application will not be approved if it receives less than 80% of the maximum possible final score, i.e., if the application receives less than 12 points.

4. Basis for the formation of the ranking list

4.1. The applications which have not passed the qualification threshold or which have received less than 12 points as the final score will not be included in the ranking list.

4.2. The applications will be placed into the ranking list based on the final score given to each application. For ranking the applications with the same final score, the criteria to be used is as follows:

- 4.2.1. the applications of equal standing will be ranked according to the scores received during the evaluation process in the following order of the evaluation criteria: 2, 1, and 3;
- 4.2.2. the applications which sustain equal standing after the ranking procedure described in 4.2.1 will be prioritised according to the underrepresented institutions among the applicants whose applications rank above the applications of equal standing;
- 4.2.3. the applications which sustain equal standing after the ranking procedures described in 4.2.2 will be prioritised according to the underrepresented gender among the applications which rank above the applications of equal standing;
- 4.2.4. the applications which sustain equal standing after the ranking procedures described in 4.2.3 will be prioritised according to the underrepresented (sub-)field of research among the applications which rank above the applications of equal standing.