

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

## Conditions and procedure for applying for and processing support for participation in the ERC mentoring initiative

### 1. Scope

1.1. These arrangements establish the conditions and procedures for applying for, processing and allocating support for participation in the ERC mentoring initiative.

1.2. The support indicated in this guide is financed from the programme "Supporting the internationalisation of R&D: connecting to the international knowledge market" (hereinafter *Mobilitas 3.0*), approved by the Directive of the Minister of Education and Research no. 1.1-2/23/291 of 26.10.2023.

### 2. Goal

The aim of this activity is to support researchers in applying for an ERC grant.

### 3. Definitions

**The European Research Council (ERC)** – the European Union research funding institution that supports frontier science and fresh scientific reflections in new scientific fields with a novel and innovative approach. The mission of the ERC is to support excellent science in Europe, to achieve this objective, the Scientific Council awards five types of grants, open to researchers from all scientific fields, with scientific excellence as the sole evaluation criterion.

**ERC Mentoring Initiative** – an ERC initiative aimed at involving international mentors to support researchers in applying for an ERC grant.

**Application for support for participation in the ERC mentoring initiative** (hereinafter *the application*) - application form for the ERC mentoring initiative support through the Estonian Research Information System (hereinafter *ETIS*).

**Applicant for the support, i.e. institution** – a research and development institution registered in Estonia, a higher education institution or a private or public sector institution operating in Estonia, where the participant of the ERC mentoring initiative works during the use of the support.

**Participant in the ERC mentoring initiative** (hereinafter referred to as "*researcher*") - a researcher from an institution who is applying for an ERC grant and for whom the institution is applying for support to participate in a mentoring initiative.

**Mentor** - a former or current ERC grant holder or a former member of the ERC evaluation panel who is on the list of mentors made available by the ERC to ETAG through the mentoring initiative or selected by the applicant together with the researcher.

### 4. Eligibility period and duration of the support to participate in the ERC mentoring initiative

4.1. The support is available until 31 December 2028.

4.2. Participation in the ERC mentoring initiative must take place within two months of the application being approved by ETAG.

### 5. Requirements for participants in the ERC mentoring initiative

5.1. The institution may apply for support to a researcher who has:

5.1.1. prepared an ERC grant application and would like to receive feedback from a mentor;

- 5.1.2. submitted an ERC grant application, has been invited to the interview and would like to involve a mentor in a practice interview.
- 5.2. It is not possible to apply for support to a researcher who is receiving support from Mobilitas 3.0 activity 2.1. "Increasing the success of applying for an ERC grant".
- 5.3. The researcher cannot be changed after the application has been submitted.
- 5.4. An applicant can apply for support up to two times per researcher during one ERC grant application round, up to one time for both cases described under 5.1.1 and 5.1.2..

## **6. Applying for support to participate in the ERC mentoring initiative**

- 6.1. Applications can be submitted on an ongoing basis.
- 6.2. In order to apply for support, the institution shall submit to ETAG the name of the researcher by e-mail not later than three weeks before the deadline for submitting the ERC grant application or before the ERC interview is scheduled to take place.
- 6.3. Not later than five working days after receiving the e-mail referred to in point 6.2, ETAG shall submit the list of potential mentors to the institution by e-mail.
- 6.4. The institution, in cooperation with the researcher, will select a mentor and contact them. The institution shall ask the mentor for (1) confirmation of participation in the ERC mentoring initiative, (2) their date of birth or personal identification code, and (3) bank details, informing the mentor of the following:
- 6.4.1. that, if the application is approved, ETAG shall enter into an authorisation agreement with the mentor;
  - 6.4.2. what is the deadline for completing the task.
- 6.5. The institution shall forward to ETAG the date of birth or personal identification code and bank details of the mentor specified in clause 6.4 by e-mail.
- 6.6. Not later than five working days after point 6.5. receipt of this e-mail, ETAG shall open the application form in ETIS .
- 6.7. The institution, in cooperation with the researcher, prepares the application, and submits it to ETAG via the ETIS application form.
- 6.8. The application shall be submitted in English.
- 6.9. The application shall indicate:
- 6.9.1. Institution;
  - 6.9.2. researcher;
  - 6.9.3. Mentor;
  - 6.9.4. What type of mentoring is desired for a researcher, whether:
    - 6.9.4.1. feedback on the ERC grant application or
    - 6.9.4.2. practice interview;
  - 6.9.5. a brief description of the idea of the researcher's ERC grant application in Estonian and English;
  - 6.9.6. the type of ERC grant applied for.
- 6.10. If the applicant or researcher has applied for support for the project or parts thereof contained in the application at the same time from several actions or from other state budget, European Union or external aid instruments, the applicant must provide the relevant information.

## **7. De minimis aid**

- 7.1. Support shall be granted to the undertaking in the form of de minimis aid. An entrepreneur is a person or institution that is engaged in economic activity, that is, offers goods or services on the market.

7.2. De minimis aid is granted in accordance with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (hereinafter the VTA Regulation) (OJ L, 2023/2831, 15.12.2023) and § 33 of the Competition Act.

7.3. The total amount of de minimis aid granted to anyone undertaking may not exceed EUR 300 000 over any period of three years. Where de minimis aid has been or will be granted to one undertaking under different Commission de minimis regulations, de minimis aid granted under other regulations must also be considered. The undertakings referred to in Article 2(2) of the VTA Regulation shall be considered as a single undertaking.

7.4. If the de minimis ceiling is reached, the aid application will be rejected.

## **8. Processing of applications for support for participation in the ERC mentoring initiative**

8.1. Applications for support are processed by ETAG.

8.2. The processing of the application consists of the following steps:

8.2.1. registration of the application;

8.2.2. verification of the compliance of the application, during which the ETAG verifies the compliance of the application, institution, researcher and mentor with the requirements established in this guide;

8.3. If there are deficiencies in the application, ETAG shall request the rectification of the deficiencies and set a deadline of up to ten working days for this purpose. If the deficiency is remedied within the time limit, the application shall be deemed to have been submitted within the time limit.

8.4. During the proceedings, ETAG may request from the institution and the researcher explanations, additional data and documents concerning the data provided in the application.

## **9. Declaration of conformity of the application**

9.1. ETAG shall carry out a check on the eligibility of the aid application.

9.1.1. If the application complies with the requirements, ETAG will conclude the contract referred to in point 11.2.

9.1.2. If the application does not meet the requirements, ETAG will terminate its processing and will not conclude the contract referred to in point 11.2.

9.2. Information on the compliance or non-compliance of the application is forwarded to the institution and the researcher via ETIS.

## **10. Tasks of the mentor participating in the ERC mentoring initiative**

10.1. According to the choice made by the institution in the application, the mentor participating in the ERC mentoring initiative will:

10.1.1. prepare and forward to the researcher their feedback on the ERC grant application, and/or

10.1.2. conducts a practice interview with the researcher.

## **11. Payment of mentors' fees related to the support for participation in the ERC mentoring initiative.**

11.1. An institution may apply for the remuneration of one mentor in the context of one of the cases of participation in ERC mentoring initiatives referred to in points 5.1.1 and/or 5.1.2.

11.2. Through ETIS, ETAG enters into an authorisation agreement with a mentor, in which the tasks for participating in a specific ERC mentoring initiative, the conditions and deadline for the transfer of work and the mentoring fee of EUR 500 (five hundred) (gross) are agreed upon for one of the cases of participation in ERC mentoring initiatives referred to in points 5.1.1 and/or 5.1.2.

## **12. Confirmation of the use of the ERC mentoring initiative support**

12.1. Not later than two weeks after the end of the mentoring, the institution submits a confirmation to ETAG via ETIS, certifying that the mentoring has taken place.