



Estonian Research Funding System

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Primary Sources



State Budget

Institutional & competitive grants



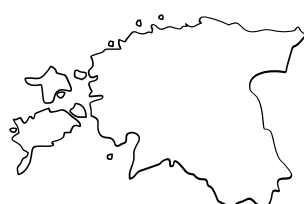
Private Sector

Industry collaborations



Foreign Funds

EU Structural Funds, Horizon Europe



Key Funding Instruments by the State

- Institutional, system and targeted support measures for R&D institutions' development
- Competition based funding for researchers and teams

Most of the competitive public instruments are open for all nationalities, provided the researcher is willing to work in an eligible Estonian R&D institution. Some schemes also require co-funding.



Personal Research Funding calls are organised by the Estonian Research Council (ETAG) yearly. The applications are evaluated by expert commissions and approved by ETAG. The process is organised in the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS).

- **Postdoctoral Research Grant** - for the launch of a career of the people with a PhD from an Estonian university at a foreign R&D institutions or among highly qualified research groups (outgoing mobility).
- **Starting Grant** - to launch independent career at an Estonian R&D institution, to set up research group, and to contribute to educating the next generation of researchers.
- **Team Grant** - for continuing a career at an Estonian R&D institution, ensuring high-quality research, leading a strong research group, and educating the next generation of researchers.



Incoming Postdoctoral Grant (Mobilitas 3.0) for the arrival of postdoctoral researchers to Estonia has two streams:

- for researchers who have received a positive result for the Marie Skłodowska Curie (MSCA) European Fellowship application for coming to Estonia, but have not received funding;
- for researchers who have received a Seal of Excellence (at least 85%) for the MSCA European Fellowship grant, but not funded, to transfer with their research to Estonia.



Mobility Support (Incoming) for recruiting researchers from abroad to Estonian R&D institutions. The support allows both foreign researchers and Estonian researchers who have moved abroad to continue their research careers in Estonia. The grant is aimed at positively evaluated R&D institutions in Estonia that wish to hire a researcher with relevant experience from abroad, for at least 24 months.



Cross-Sectoral Mobility Measure (SekMo) aims to increase the intersectoral movement of employees, foster knowledge exchange between fields and promote collaboration between Estonian R&D institutions, universities, and the public and private sectors. The measure allows one of the three:

- to hire a researcher in a company or public sector institution for applied research or experimental development projects;
- transition a top specialist from a company or public sector institution to a university, applied higher education institution, or research institution (to conduct teaching, research, or innovation activities, technology transfer);
- employ a knowledge transfer doctoral student in a company.

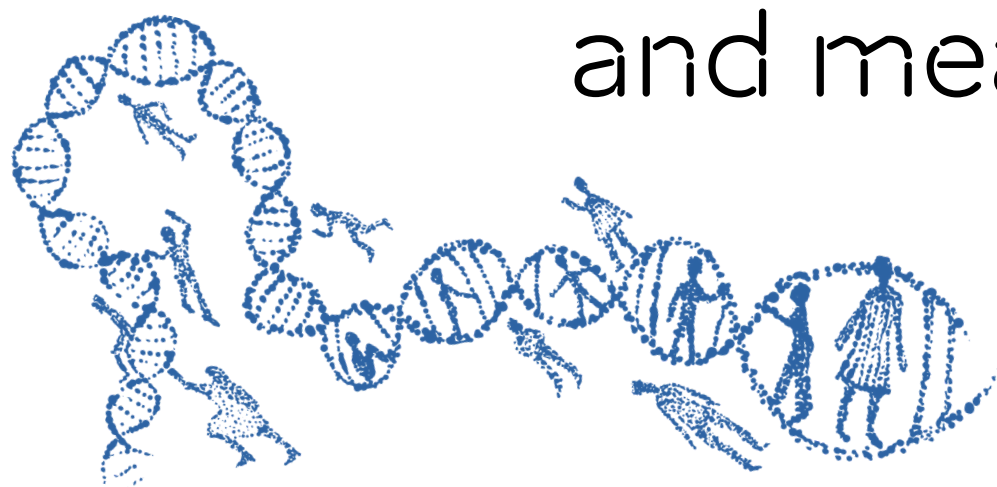


Support in (re-)applying for a European Research Council (ERC) Grant:

- short-term research funding of a researcher with a positive application result, but not funded by the ERC, with an aim to re-submit an application;
- for participating in the ERC applicants' mentoring scheme.

Additional schemes and measures

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Collaboration Programmes

International collaboration is a cornerstone to Estonia's Research, Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (RDIE)

Strategy 2021–2035, boosting research capacity, tackling global challenges, and advancing science diplomacy.

Estonia has research collaboration with Japan, France, Taiwan and Nordic countries, as well as participates in a trilateral scheme with Ukraine and the U.S.

Centres of Excellence

Specific funding programmes

Some specific funding programmes are run by the state.

TemTA programme supports increasing the capacities in R&D that would meet the thematic needs of companies and society.

TeaMe 3.0 promotes a science-based worldview to wider audiences, including children and youth.

Other programmes, such as Mobilitas 3.0, focus on the internationalisation of Estonian R&D, while RITA+ strengthens the capacity to implement R&D&I results in society and helps create a favourable policy environment.

There is also support for a specific Estonian RDIE focus area: Viable Estonian Society, Language and Culture.

Centres of Excellence in Estonia mean a specific development programme (2023–2030) of funding cooperation and joint activities of 10 scientific consortia of exceptionally high-level Estonian research groups.

The consortia were selected by public competition and their focus is on high-risk, high-reward research.



More information:



PhD Studies in Estonia

PhD Studies in Estonia were reformed in 2022.

- Most of the new PhD candidates enjoy a status of both employee and student, being employed as junior researchers either only in academia or in a trilateral agreement with academia and another sector institution.
- Alternatively, some options (also tuition-free) for PhD studies are provided, to be conducted without further support by the state.

Doctoral School in Estonia means a specific development programme (2024–2029) for doctoral students and their supervisors from all Estonian universities. They organise events and activities that support establishing scientific contacts and international cooperation, to gain interdisciplinary knowledge and to develop general skills. They also provide short-term mobility grant, co-supervision and mentoring for doctoral students.

More information:



Doctoral school

Infrastructure expenses

Infrastructure expenses of a public R&D institution can be covered from the state budget through the ministry under whose area of government the institution belongs. Investments are planned based on a long-term planning tool - the research infrastructure roadmap that involves both national and international participation (update in 2024).

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RESEARCHERS IN MOTION

[A comprehensive overview of all the funding schemes is available here:](#)

