

Research and development in Estonia

research estonia

Research and innovation

Estonia has a broad, innovative and diverse research landscape. Research is primarily carried out by universities and other public and private sector education and research institutions.



9.5 researchers

per thousand employed¹



Excellent conditions

for carrying out research projects



Highly Qualified

staff at the research institutes



Upper 50% in the world

Estonian research is in the world's top 50% in all 22 fields.²

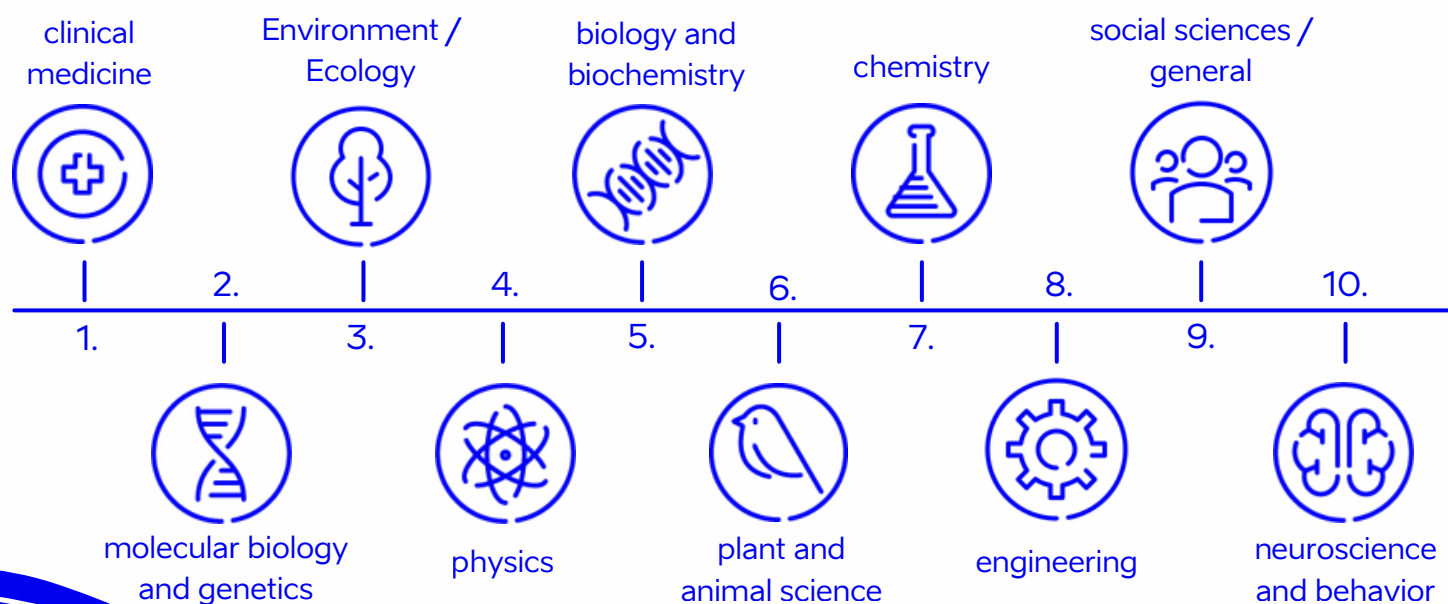
¹ OECD. Main Science and Technology Indicators Database (latest 2023).

² Clarivate Essential Science Indicators (ESI) database

Did you know Estonia is home to these science-driven companies?

- Right Step Health OÜ is developing space-tested bone health technologies with partners across Europe, advancing treatments for osteoporosis on Earth while supporting astronauts on long-duration missions.
- ÄIO is turning sawdust and agricultural by-products into sustainable fats and oils, offering the food industry a faster, healthier, and eco-friendly alternative to palm oil and animal fats.
- Nanordica Medical is using breakthrough nanoparticle-fiber technology to both prevent infection and accelerate wound healing, setting a new scientific standard in advanced wound care.

Between 2015 and 2025, 16% of publications by Estonian authors ranked among the world's top 10% most cited, placing Estonia #6 in the EU!¹



The top 10 most cited fields

Source: InCites Essential Science Indicators dataset. Jan 08, 2026. (Top papers)

¹ Source: Clarivate Incites, schema: Web of Science, article+review. 03.02.2026

Our path to success

According to the latest OECD PISA (2022) tests, Estonia's students are the top performers in Europe and rank among the top eight globally in mathematics, science, and reading, outperforming most OECD countries and rivaling leading Asian education systems.

In Europe, Estonia holds 1st place in science, 1st–2nd place in mathematics (tied with Switzerland) and 1st–2nd place in reading (tied with Ireland).³

AI LEAP is an education innovation programme developed through public-private collaboration. This programme provides Estonian students and teachers with access to world-class AI-based educational applications, along with the necessary skills to use them effectively in learning and teaching. AI Leap ensures that all Estonian youth have equal opportunities to use artificial intelligence wisely.⁴



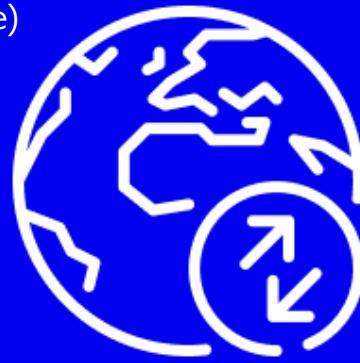
³ oecd.org/en/topics/student-performance-pisa.html
⁴ thp.voog.com

International cooperation

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.

Highlights of Estonia's International Research Cooperation

- EU, Bilateral and Multilateral programs
Active in ERA, Horizon Europe, Nordic-Baltic cooperation, PARROT (France), Taiwan-Estonia, JSPS (Japan), IMPRESS-U (USA–Ukraine)
- Major Memberships
CERN, ESA, EUMETSAT, OECD, NATO DIANA, Arctic Council (observer candidate)
- Key Networks
EURAXESS, ISC, ALLEA, ELIXIR, EMBL



HORIZON EUROPE⁵

294,4 mln Funding received	600 Number of projects
785 Number of participants	219 Number of unique participants

⁵ etis.ee/teadussilm as of [20.01.2026]

Smart specialisation

Smart specialisation is focused on the following areas, which form one part of Estonia's national focus areas for R&D (incl. funding), innovation, and business until 2035:

- I. DIGITAL SOLUTIONS ACROSS ALL AREAS OF LIFE
- II. HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES AND SERVICES
- III. VALORISATION OF LOCAL RESOURCES
- IV. SMART AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS



More info:

Funding

Primary Sources:

- State Budget - Institutional & competitive grants
- Private Sector - Industry collaborations
- Foreign Funds - EU Structural Funds, Horizon Europe

More info:



First point of contact for relocation: euraxess@etag.ee

Why choose Estonia for science?

- 1** High scientific level

We punch way above our weight when it comes to scientific citations, as well as received funding from European Union research and innovation programmes.
- 2** Grow your career

In Estonia, things move quickly. Make new connections and meet the decision-makers in no time. With less workplace hierarchy and competition, this is the place to fulfil your potential.
- 3** Less red tape

In a country where 99% of state services are online, we are not fond of paperwork. You will be surprised by the ease of grant application submissions and general low level of bureaucracy.
- 4** Society for science

Estonians believe in the positive effects of science and show strong respect for academic institutions. Scientists are highly trusted in our society.
- 5** Clean & safe

The country quietly captivates you with clean air, low population density and abundant nature. Thanks to the very low crime rate, a sauna is the only place you'll ever sweat in.
- 6** Family-friendly

Short commute distances leave more time for friends and family. Children get to benefit from the top-ranked education system in Europe.
- 7** Easy communication

Estonian is one of the world's smallest official national languages. While we are really proud of the fact, English is widely spoken and used on all official websites.

Important webpages:



Get monthly updates on Estonian Research and job offers



Estonian Research Council www.etag.ee/en



Research in Estonia www.researchinestonia.eu



EURAXESS Estonia www.euraxess.ee



Estonian science statistics www.etis.ee/Teadussilm