

Guidelines for applying grants 2011

Approved by the Council of the Estonian Science Foundation

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Minutes No. 88

Guidelines of the Estonian Science Foundation for Applying for Grants for the Year 2011

The activities of the Estonian Science Foundation upon allocating research support or grants and the form of advancing and supporting research shall be provided for in the Organisation of Research and Development Act.

General Definitions and Principles

1. The research support or **grant** is an amount of money that the Estonian Science Foundation (hereinafter referred to as the Foundation) shall allocate to an applicant within an open competition to perform a certain research project in the field of basic and/or applied research. The Foundation shall not prescribe the subject of the research projects.

The grants shall be primarily allocated to:

- approbate new research ideas and carry out research work based on searching;
- support the involvement of the new generation of researchers as well as master's and doctoral candidates in research work;
- to develop international cooperation between researchers.

2. With an objective to encourage persons who have recently been awarded the doctoral degree to perform independent research, their applications shall compete in a separate competition titled **My First Grant**. The said competition is open for applications, whose presenters have defended their first doctoral degree after 01 January 2005 and have previously not been grant holders of the Foundation. If the person has been on the parental leave(s) or in the compulsory military service after the award of the degree, the deadline shall be extended by that time. Other terms and conditions of the competition are identical to those of an ordinary grant. If the application is not financed within the My First Grant competition, the application shall compete on an equal basis with the applications for an ordinary grant of the respective expert commission.

3. **The grant project** shall have certain and clearly defined objective and output and a fixed date of commencement and expected termination. The project shall be carried out by a single researcher or a research group and the project shall be managed by a responsible participant – **the grant holder**. The Foundation shall allocate grants to projects lasting for up to 4 years.

4. The basis of the realisation of the grant project is a legal person (hereinafter referred to as the Institution), through which the grant shall be allocated to the applicant/holder. The applicant/grant holder has usually entered into an employment relationship with the Institution. The participants in the project may also work in several different institutions, but, as a rule, the party to the grant agreement shall only be one Institution.

5. **The grant holder** is the applicant of the grant, to whom the grant has been allocated within an open competition and who shall be responsible for the use of the grant for specified purpose and for the productive realisation of the research project.

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Each grant project may only have one holder, with whom the Foundation shall enter into a **grant agreement**.

The grant holder must be a holder of the doctoral degree of Estonia or an equivalent academic degree (awarded by the deadline of submission of the grant application, at the latest) and the grant holder must have published at least three publications within the last five years (2005-2010), which comply with the requirements of clauses 1.1 of the classification of publications of the Estonian Research Information System ETIS (hereinafter referred to as the ETIS), or at least five publications, which comply with the requirements of clauses 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1 of the classification of publications of the ETIS.

If the applicant for a grant has been on the parental leave or in the compulsory military service within the last five years, the deadline of the publication requirement shall be extended by the time stayed on the parental leave or compulsory military service.

The grant holder should work at least 6 months during a year in Estonia¹. Foundation has the right to ask the head of institution for written proof about complying with this requirement.

6. The main participant of the project is a person who participates in the substantial performance of the project. The main participant of the project shall either (1) have at least the master's degree or the respective qualification and he or she must have published at least one publication within the last three years (2007-2010), which comply with the requirements of clauses 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1 of the classification of publications of the ETIS; or (2) be a doctoral candidate.

7. One and the same person may only be a holder of one grant at a time and participate in one more grant project as a main participant. The person, who is not a holder of a grant, may be a main participant in two grant projects at the same time².

Procedure for Application for the Grant

8. The Foundation shall organize the competition to apply for the grants once a year, specifying at the same time the terms and conditions of the competition. The Foundation shall arrange for an expert assessment of the applications and open the financing of successful projects.

9. The deadline of submitting the grant applications for projects opened in 2011 is 05 May 2010 at 16.00. The application shall be deemed submitted, if it is approved by the Institution. The notice on the competition shall be published in a national daily newspaper, on the homepage of the Foundation (www.etf.ee) and in the Estonian Research Portal (www.etis.ee) at least two months before the submission deadline.

The grant competition is open for the permanent residents of the Republic of Estonia, whose active legal capacity is not limited. The grant shall be allocated to the citizens of a foreign country, provided that the application is submitted through an Estonian Institution.

An application for financing a new project shall be submitted to the Foundation by the announced deadline in Estonian and in English, and the additional materials of the application (scientific rationale and budgetary rationale) shall only be submitted in English.

¹ Requirement applies to grants starting from 2010.

² Requirement does not apply to other projects financed by the Foundation (postdoctoral grants, projects in EUROCORES programme; projects in ERA-NET, etc)

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10. The grant application shall be submitted electronically via the ETIS from 04 April 2010 to 05 May 2010. To submit an application via the ETIS, the applicant must register as a user of the system and follow the instructions given in the ETIS. The Institutions shall also approve and sign the application electronically via the ETIS.

11. Applicants can ask the Foundation for technical support and consultation via e-mail or phone from a chief specialist of their expert field. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses can be found on the web page of the Foundation. Any technical issues about using ETIS can be resolved by contacting technical support. Their contact details are available on both the opening page as well as the application's page.

12. Upon the preparation of the **budget** of the grant application, the **budget rules** disclosed on the homepage of the Foundation (www.etf.ee) and approved by the Council shall be followed. **The minimum** annual financing for the grants applied for the year 2011 is EEK 192,000 (EEK 160,000 for the expenses on research and EEK 32,000 for the overheads of the Institution)³).

13. The following materials shall be added to the application:

(1) **The scientific rationale** of the project, which shall clearly set out the following as separately titled sub-clauses:

1. duration and expected total cost of the project;
2. general theoretical background of the project along with references to the hitherto work here and elsewhere; the connection of the project with the research of the same direction of the applicant and other researchers;
3. main objectives and working hypotheses of the project;
4. research methods, equipment and apparatus to be used, incl. existence or absence thereof;
5. institutions and persons participating in the project, scientific qualification of the main participants in the project;
6. doctoral and master's candidates involved in the project: the explanatory letter of the application shall show what the expected contribution of all master's and doctoral candidates is in the performance of the project and in which way the subject(s) of the dissertation(s) are related to the grant project. The title of the dissertation, the name and academic degree of the supervisor and the time of admittance to the degree studies and expected time of graduation shall also be specified;
7. international cooperation carried out within the project;
8. forecast on the publication, use and potential application of the results of the grant project;
9. expected significance of the project with respect to the science, national economy, social sphere, culture, etc.;
10. expected time schedule of the research by years;
11. list of bibliography;

The text of sub-clauses 1–4 shall be limited to 15,000 characters (with spaces). If this limit has been exceeded, the Foundation shall send the application back to the applicant.

(2) **The financial background** of the project and intended expenses by items of expenditure during the first year of the project pursuant to the guidelines of the preparation of the budget. The existing

³ Statistics on the grant size is disclosed on the homepage of the Foundation (www.etf.ee)

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financing and expected financing of the project from other sources (incl. targeted financing) shall also be set out;

(3) If the applicant of a new grant is also a holder of a terminating grant, a brief overview of the results gained during the pending project and list of published publications shall be added;

(4) **The CVs** of the applicant and main participants in the project. The CV shall include the list of significant scientific publications (up to 10 names preferably related to the subject of the project). The list of the applicant's publications shall also include the publications complying with the requirements described in clause 5;

(5) If **human research or animal experiments** are intended in the research, the positive resolution of the Ethics Review Committee or permit committee of the conduct of animal experiments with respect to the performance of the project addressed to the Foundation shall be added to the application. Upon formalising the application in the ETIS, it shall be noted whether human research or animal experiments are conducted within the given project and the permit granted therefore shall be added. If the applicant obtain the permit after the submission deadline, it shall be submitted to the Foundation by 01 December 2010, at the latest.

Acceptance of Grant Applications for Processing

14. Applications which are late and which do not comply with the requirements of these guidelines shall not be accepted for processing.

15. If the applicant has not submitted to the Foundation the final reports of earlier grant projects in a satisfactory form by the deadline specified, the new application shall not be accepted for processing.

16. The applicant for a grant shall be notified of the issue that the application or applicant does not comply with the requirements within 20 days after the deadline of submitting the application.

17. If application is incomplete or has other deficiencies, the Foundation will send the application back and assign the deadline for completing the application. If the applicant fails to complete the application by deadline, the Foundation will not take it for processing and applicant is notified within 20 days after the deadline of submitting the completed application.

18. The applications shall be assigned an identification number which will remain the same throughout the duration of the project. The basic information concerning the applications is maintained in the databases of the Foundation and the ETIS.

Criteria for Evaluation of Applications and Rules of Expert Assessment

19. The guideline and criteria for evaluation of applications are available on the homepage of the Foundation.

20. The applications for a grant and the evaluations shall be reviewed and a evaluation summary report concerning the applications shall be rendered by the expert commissions of the Foundation. In addition to permanent expert commissions, the Council may also form *ad hoc* expert commissions to make the expert assessment more efficient. The rules of the expert assessment of a grant and the time schedule shall be specified by the Council.

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21. Each application for a new grant shall be given for evaluation to at least two independent reviewers with a doctoral degree or an equivalent academic degree (incl. preferably to at least one expert from a foreign country), who comply with the terms and conditions established for an applicant of a grant (see clause 5). The applicant has the right to name up to 5 reviewers he/she would recommend as an evaluator. The Foundation may but is not obliged to send the applications to named reviewers. The applicant has as well the right to name inapplicable evaluators. Evaluations and opinions that have not asked for by the Foundation shall not be taken into account upon evaluation.
22. The reviewers and experts undertake to comply with the Rules of Procedure of Conflict of Interests approved by the Council of the Foundation.
23. The applications of the Council of the Foundation and the members of the expert commissions shall be sent by the Management Board of the Foundation to the outside expert assessment.
24. Both applications and reviews are confidential. Reviewers are not allowed to disclose information contained in applications or use it for the benefit of themselves or any other person or to the detriment of any person.
25. The expert commission shall compile a ranking list of applications and submit it to the Council for a resolution.
26. The Council shall make a resolution to finance/refuse to finance a project on the basis of the ranking lists and recommendations prepared by the expert commissions. Unless otherwise decided by the Council, **the same amount of funds** shall be allocated for the project **for all years**.
27. A notice of the resolution of the Council shall be sent to each applicant via the ETIS and in case of new applications the reviews written on the application shall be made available for the applicant. The names of the reviewers shall not be disclosed. The resolution will be announced in 10 workdays after publishing the 2011 State Budget Act in State Gazette. Applicants have the right to submit the complaint according the Redress procedure in two weeks after receiving a notification of the resolution.
28. All materials relating to the expert assessment are confidential until approved by the Council. Applications not satisfied by the Foundation are confidential until the end of the term of archiving. The data on the projects financed by the Foundation (i.e. title, summary, annual financing, main participants) is disclosed in the ETIS.
29. The Council shall consider the opinions of the applicant or other persons or organizations, which include principal proposals and recommendations to improve the expert assessment processing.

Continuing Projects

30. Resolutions on the further financing of projects lasting for several years (continuing projects) shall be made by the Foundation before each new financial year, taking into account the results of the hitherto work and the budget of the Foundation.
31. In case of a project carried out in a non-satisfactory manner, the expert commission may make a motivated proposal to reduce or close the financing of the project.

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32. The Council of the Foundation has the right to change the financing of ongoing projects in the circumstances of changes in financing the Foundation from state budget.

33. Upon the wish of the grant holder, the project may be suspended for up to a year (in case of parental leave for up to two years) or closed. Upon suspension the grant holder has to submit the application indicating the reason for suspension. Upon closure the grant holder shall submit a final report within two months after the closure of the grant.

Entry into Grant Agreement

34. A grant agreement shall be entered into for each grant for a year, for which the grant has been allocated. The grant agreement shall be multilateral: between the Foundation, grant holder and Institution(s) mediating financing of the project via the ETIS, and shall contain the duties, rights and liabilities of the parties. In case of a project lasting for several years, the grant agreement shall be entered into again each year.

35. The grant holder shall submit to the Foundation a grant agreement signed by the Institution within 15 days after the Foundation has issued the respective notification. If the grant holder fails to submit the agreement by the required deadline, the grant may be cancelled or closed upon the resolution of the Council.

36. The contractual Institution shall be the same institution that approved the application for the grant. If the grant holder has changed the Institution, through which the project is realized, during the expert assessment, the holder shall submit an application for the change of the Institution, which has been signed by the manager of the Institution that has approved the application for the grant and the manager of the new institution.

37. The grant holder and the Institution responsible for the grant can only be changed on the basis of the application by way of entry into a new multilateral agreement. The grant holder who has commenced work abroad may only apply for the entry into the grant agreement and for the partial transfer of the grant into the bank account of the foreign institution, if the country of location of the foreign institution has joined with the Memorandum of *Money Follows Researcher* of EUROHORCS (<http://eurohorcs.drift.senselogic.se/initiatives/moneyfollowsresearcher>).

38. The grant agreement shall include the detailed budget of the project and the list of participants in the project. The application for a grant shall be an integral part of the agreement. The detailed budget of the project shall be prepared on the basis of the amount of funds allocated for the project and the recommendations of the expert commissions, and it shall be approved by the Institution. The table of the persons performing the agreement shall include all main participants of the project (incl. the grant holder) and master's and doctoral candidates as well as the remuneration and/or scholarship intended to them. All main participants of the projects and the degree students shall be included in the list, irrespective of the issue whether or not they receive any remuneration/scholarship.

39. Grant agreements and materials appended thereto shall be permanently maintained.

40. The grant shall be transferred into the bank account(s) of the Institution(s) who have entered into the agreement. The budget of the agreement shall show the exact distribution of the budget of the grant between the relevant Institutions, if there are many of them.

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41. In exceptional cases (a long-term assignment abroad of the researcher, change in duties or employment, illness) the grant holder may be changed during the performance of the grant project. For that purpose the Institution shall submit a respective request to the Foundation. The expert commission shall make a resolution on the change of the grant holder and upon a negative resolution the project shall be closed.

Use of Grant

42. The Foundation will transfer the grant after signing the grant agreement by the Foundation. The funds shall be transferred in instalments during the financial year pursuant to the receipt of the funds from the State Treasury to the bank account of the Foundation.

43. All arrangements for using the grant shall be made by the grant holder personally. The Institution shall not be entitled to withhold the grant funds transferred by the Foundation to its bank account. The grant holder along with the Institution shall be responsible for using the grant for the specified purpose and accurately and for the normal progress of the research.

44. Upon the publication of the results of the research, a notation shall be added on the publication (article, book, the Internet page) specifying that the research has been carried out with the financial support of the Estonian Science Foundation and the numbers of the respective grant or grants shall also be set out. **Without the notation publications are not considered as being the result of the grant project upon the expert assessment of reports.**

Intellectual Property Rights to the Result of the Project

45. The intellectual property created within the grant projects of the Foundation shall be subject to copyright in works created in execution of duties of employment (§32 of the Copyright Act, State Gazette I 2000, 16, 109).

46. The Institution shall agree to the principle of the Foundation that after the end of the project the result thereof shall usually become a public domain.

47. The Institution along with the grant holder may apply from the Foundation that the proprietary rights created with respect to the result of the project be reserved to the Institution, i.e. the results do not become a public domain. If the Foundation accepts the application, the Institution shall reserve the right to apply for the registration of a patent or utility model, to protect the work under the Copyright Act, etc.

48. The grant holder and the Institution shall agree that the Foundation may receive remuneration on income received for the use of the proprietary rights of intellectual property of the Institution, if the parties to the agreement agree thereon and on the rate of the remuneration. The use of the proprietary rights is, for instance, the transfer of the rights, grant of license, etc.

Reporting and Examining

49. During the entire project the Foundation and persons authorized by the Foundation shall be entitled to examine the use of the grant and the substantial progress of the work as well as to demand reports on the use of the grant. Upon the violation of the financial regime or non-satisfactory performance of the project, the Council may make a resolution on the suspension or closure of the grant project and demand the refund of the funds used for non-specified purposes.

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50. The Foundation shall apply the following reports for its grant projects:

- interim report on the work performed within the project;
- report on the use of the grant;
- final report of the project.

The reports shall be submitted via the ETIS.

51. The holders of the grants of several years shall submit the substantial interim report every two years. In 2010 the deadline of the submission of interim reports is **28 October 2010 at 16:00**. The interim report shall set out an overview of the hitherto work performed within the project, results and general status of the project. A list of works on the subject noting the support of the Foundation published during the performance of the project or accepted by the editorial boards along with the details of publication or name of the magazine/collection/publishing house where the manuscripts have been sent shall be added to the report. If the interim report is not submitted by the deadline, the grant shall be closed.

52. The following structure shall be followed upon writing the text file of the interim report (maximum of 8000 characters (with spaces)):

- subject and objectives of the project (objectives shall comply with the ones specified in the original application);
- initial results by objectives;
- which objective set in the application the publications appended to the report comply with;
- activities of the degree students (master's/doctoral candidates) participating in the application for grant;
- evaluation of the grant holder on the progress of the grant and forecast for the future;
- forecast on the use of the funds of the second half of the project.

53. The grant holders shall submit the report on the use of the grant by **20 January 2011**. The financing of a continuing project in the new financial year shall not be opened until the report on the use of the grant in the previous year has been received.

54. The **final report** of the project shall be submitted to the Foundation within 3 months after the deadline of the expiry of the project. If the grant project lasting for several years has been closed prior to the intended final deadline upon the resolution of the Council, the grant holder shall submit the final report for the part of the project carried out with the support of the grant.

55. Upon the preparation of the final report, the guidelines for the preparation and evaluation of the final report approved by the Council of the Foundation shall be followed (see www.etf.ee).

56. If the final report of the project does not comply with the requirements established, the Foundation shall send the report back to the grant holder, demanding the submission of an accurate report. At the same time the transfer of the pending support of the Foundation to the grant holder shall be suspended until the proper final report has been submitted.

57. The final report shall be reviewed and evaluated by the expert commission of the respective specialty and approved the Council of the Foundation.

58. The success of previous grant projects and accuracy of the form of the final report are an important prerequisite for the allocation of the next grants to the same applicant.