Preliminary and unofficial translation

**Annex 3 to**

directive no. 1.1-4/14/58 of the Management Board of the Estonian Research Council of 16 June 2014

**Terms and Conditions for Postdoctoral Funding Application**

**SECTION 1**

**GENERAL CONDITIONS**

1. **Introduction**

This document establishes the terms and conditions for the application for, the assessment and evaluation of, and the reporting about postdoctoral funding.

1. **Aim**

The aim of postdoctoral funding is to support Estonian doctorates or those with equivalent international research qualifications to continue their independent research careers with the strong collaboration of colleagues.

# 3. Postdoctoral Funding

3.1. Postdoctoral funding (hereinafter *funding*) is funding for an academic staff member of a research and development institution for carrying out of a specific research and development project (hereinafter *postdoctoral project*), of which there are two types:

3.1.1. Funding for a postdoctoral scholar from outside of Estonia;

3.1.2. Funding for a postdoctoral scholar sent abroad from Estonia.

3.2. In the appointment of postdoctoral applicants coming to Estonia from abroad, individuals who have previously received Estonian State scholarship funding in order to obtain a doctoral degree from abroad, with the requirement to return to Estonia to continue their research, will be preferred.

3.3. The Estonian Research Council (hereinafter *Council*) has the right to establish research and development priorities according to discipline for applicants for funding to carry out postdoctoral studies abroad.

1. **The Postdoctoral Project**

The postdoctoral project is a description of an academic research study which has a clearly defined research topic and a basic or applied plan for the investigation of the topic.

1. **The Applicant**

5.1. An applicant can apply for funding on the basis of an agreement with an Estonian research and development institution (hereinafter *the host institution*). The agreement should include a confirmation that the host institution will sign a work contract with the applicant for carrying out the postdoctoral study, should the applicant not have such a contract at the time of submitting the application.

5.2. The following individuals can submit an application:

5.2.1. Those that, by the due date for submission, have not held their first Estonian doctoral degree or the foreign equivalent thereof for more than five years. If the person has been on maternity or paternity leave or had compulsory military service after obtaining their first Estonian doctorate or equivalent foreign qualification, then the maximum period will be extended accordingly in full month rounded up to a bigger amount of months;

5.2.2. Those who have not received their doctorate from the same institution at which the postdoctoral project is being applied for.

5.3 An individual who has received their doctorate in Estonia cannot apply for a postdoctoral project at an Estonian research and development institution.

# 6. Host Institution, Collaborating Institution, and Postdoctoral Supervisor

6.1 The host institution is an Estonian research and development institution which has signed a work contract with the researcher in order to complete the postdoctoral project.

6.2. A collaborating institution is a foreign research and development institution attended by a funding recipient to carry out the postdoctoral project.

6.3. The leader or principal investigator of a large-scale research project (a project that has received an institutional research grant or personal research grant, a target financed research topic, a European Framework programme project, etc.) may be the postdoctoral project supervisor (hereinafter *supervisor*). The supervisor must be a staff member of the host institution (or the foreign collaborating institution). The supervisor must have an Estonian doctorate or foreign equivalent.

# Processing of the Application

# The Council will arrange the processing of funding applications.

# Contract for the Payment of Funding

8.1. The Council will sign a tri-partite contract (hereinafter *contract*) with the host institution established on the basis of Section 6.1. and the recipient of the funding which establishes the mutual rights, obligations, and responsibilities. The contract will be signed within 60 calendar days of the funding decision described in Section 13.2.

8.2. The funding will be paid yearly to the host institution, which has the obligation to allow the funding recipient to use the funding to cover direct costs related to the fulfilment of the postdoctoral project, in accordance with the application.

8.3. The host institution will sign a work contract for the carrying out the postdoctoral project with the funding recipient on the payment of the funding if such a contract has not already been signed prior to the payment of the funds. Alternatively, an existing work contract may be modified to suit the requirements of the postdoctoral project funding herein.

**SECTION 2**

**CONDITIONS FOR APPLYING FOR FUNDING**

**9. Applying for Funding**

9.1. The applicant completes and the host institution submits the application to the Council via the Estonian Research Information System (hereinafter *ETIS*). Submissions can take place the year preceding the postdoctoral project from 1 September until 17:00 on 30 September (Estonian time).

9.2. Applications must be in English.

9.3 The application should specify:

9.3.1. The postdoctoral candidate and the supervisor(s)’s name(s);

9.3.2. The title of the postdoctoral project;

9.3.3. A short summary of the postdoctoral project;

9.3.4. The period of requested funding;

9.3.5. The planned postdoctoral project’s general theoretical background and the connection with the postdoctoral applicant’s and supervisor(s)’s related research;

9.3.6. The postdoctoral project’s basic goals, hypotheses, and methodology, as well as anticipated timeframe for completion in yearly blocks (including an explanation of how ethical requirements for any animal and human testing will be followed and fulfilled).

9.3.7. The expected outcomes of the postdoctoral project, their potential application, and possible future directions;

9.3.8. The postdoctoral project applicant’s and the supervisor(s)’s research and development activity to date;

9.3.9. The conditions of the infrastructure at the host or collaborating institution in connection with the postdoctoral project.

9.4. A postdoctoral applicant going abroad from Estonia for the project must include an invitation or letter of confirmation from the collaborating institution with the application.

9.5. If human or animal studies are to take place within the framework of the postdoctoral project, then proof of approval of a human research or animal testing ethics committee should be submitted to the Council at the latest by the signing of the payment of funding agreement.

9.6. The Council has the right to require the applicant and the host institution to provide further information about the application where required.

# 10. Funding Budget

# 10.1 Postdoctoral project budgets include expenses directly pertaining to the fulfilment of the postdoctoral project, as well as overhead expenses.

# 10.2 Direct expenses are the following:

# 10.2.1. The postdoctoral candidate’s salary along with any and all state taxes, contributions, benefits and compensations arising from law;

# 10.2.2. Other research expenses.

# 10.3. Overhead expenses make up 5% of the direct expenses.

# 10.4. The postdoctoral candidate may request a non-recurrent relocation allowance. The merits of payment of a relocation allowance will be considered by the Evaluation Committee of the Council (hereinafter *Evaluation Committee*). The relocation allowance is a one-off payment to the host institution. The taxes prescribed by Estonian law shall apply to the relocation allowance.

# 10.5. The Council establishes the amount for the postdoctoral salary, the research expenses, and the relocation allowance. The amount changes according to the allocation from the annual Estonian budget.

# 11. Period of Funding

11.1 The postdoctoral candidate should fulfil the requirements for enrolment within one year of acceptance of the proposal. The beginning of the funding period will be agreed between the Council and the postdoctoral candidate.

11.2. The postdoctoral funding period is a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months. A recipient of a postdoctoral funding to carry out a project abroad has the right to apply for a 12-month extension to work at an Estonian research and development institution within three years of having completed the postdoctoral project at the collaborating institution.

**SECTION 3**

**ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS AND EVALUATION OF FUNDING**

**12. Assessment of funding applications**

12.1. The assessment of funding applications is organised by the Council.

12.2. Applications are assessed by the Evaluation Committee based on section 12, paragraph 5 of the “The organisation of research and development law”, established by the Ministry of Education on 27.12. 2011 from regulation no. 74 “Estonian Research Council Evaluation Committee terms of formation and work terms” and the Council’s approved evaluation guidelines.

12.3. An expert committee will be formed to evaluate applications. The committee will have representatives from all of the disciplines contained in the submitted applications.

12.4. The expert committee will make use of independent experts (remote reviewers) to evaluate the applications. For every application, at least two independent experts give their expert evaluation. One such expert must be from abroad. These evaluations are not binding for the expert committee.

12.5. The expert committee will provide their justified evaluations of the applications to the Evaluation Committee. These evaluations are not binding for the Evaluation Committee.

12.6. The Evaluation Committee evaluates the applications and provides a final assessment of each application taking into consideration the opinion of the expert committee.

The Evaluation Committee will take into account:

12.6.1. The merits of the postdoctoral project and expected outcomes, including disciplinary and applied specificities;

12.6.2. The qualifications of the applicant and supervisor(s);

12.6.3. The host or collaborating institution’s present status and infrastructure in relation to what is necessary for carrying out the postdoctoral project;

12.6.4. The postdoctoral project’s potential contribution to the host or collaborating institution’s current research work.

12.7. The Council has the right to require further information from the applicant in regards to the details provided in Section 12.6.

12.8. The Evaluation Committee will establish a single ranking of all applications from the funding call based on the scores and evaluations given to the applications and will provide these, along with the final evaluations and recommendations to the Management Board of the Council to make a decision.

12.9. The Council makes the evaluations of the application mentioned in Sections 12.4. and 12.6. and the initial proposal of the Evaluation Committee (hereinafter *proposal*) available to the applicant and the host institution who have the right to submit a joint written opinion on the proposal within the time limit established by the Council.

# 13. Evaluation of Funding

# 13.1. The Evaluation Committee will submit its final assessment, taking into account the justified and objective recommendations to the Management Board of the Council:

# 13.1.1. To approve the funding;

# 13.1.2. To decline the funding.

# 13.2. The Management Board of the Council has the right on the basis of its own decision to send the recommendations back to the Evaluation Committee for review.

13.3. Acceptance or non-acceptance of the decision is made by the Management Board of the Council by decree, indicating, in the case of acceptance, the period and budget of funding.

13.4. The Council will make the final assessment available to the applicant and the host institution.

**SECTION 4**

**CONTINUATION OF FUNDING PAYMENT, TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF FUNDING PAYMENT, AND CANCELLATION OF FUNDING PAYMENT.**

1. **Continuation of Funding Payment**

The funding is transferred the following year provided the required annual report has been submitted.

**15. Cancellation of Funding Payments**

15.1. The Council has the right to determine the decision to fund the application invalid and cancel the contract if:

15.1.1. The required annual report described in Section 17.2. has not been submitted on time;

15.1.2. The host institution and postdoctoral candidate have submitted a similar application elsewhere;

15.1.3. The host institution or postdoctoral candidate have in some important way violated the requirements of the “Research and Development Organisation Act” or the requirements set out in this document;

15.1.4. The postdoctoral candidate is no longer able or no longer wishes to continue the project;

15.1.5. Other important and justified circumstances arise.

15.2. After the decision to declare the acceptance of the application invalid has been made and the contract has been cancelled, the host institution must pay all unused funds back to the Council.

1. **Temporary Suspension of Funding Payment**

16.1. The payment of the funding can be temporarily suspended only on the basis of a justified application from the funding recipient and in agreement with the host institution, submitted to the Management Board of the Council. Where necessary, the expert committee of the Evaluation Committee will give its evaluation of the reasonableness of the requested period of suspension.

16.2. A temporary suspension can only be applied for once by the funding recipient during the period of the postdoctoral project.

16.3. Temporary suspension of the funding period can be applied for when the funding recipient’s current work contract at the host institution has been suspended temporarily due to maternity or paternity leave, compulsory military service, serious illness, or other justified reasons.

16.4. Based on the conditions specified in Section 16.3., the funding period can be suspended by up to three years, however the originally specified amount of funding will not change because of the temporary suspension of funding.

**SECTION 5**

**REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE OF POSTDOCTORAL PROJECT FINDINGS**

1. **Reporting**
   1. The funding recipient will submit a report every calendar year in which funding is received which summarises the study results of the reporting year.
   2. The funding recipient prepares the report in English and the host institution submits it to the Council via ETIS by 1 February of the following year. It is not required to submit a report on the final year of the postdoctoral project, as this information is contained in the postdoctoral project final report.
   3. The funding recipient prepares the final report in English and the host institution submits it to the Council via ETIS during the three months following the end of the funding period.

17.4. The following are presented in the final report:

17.4.1. Results (including an essay in Estonian about the main results) pertaining to the research goals contained in the application;

17.4.2. Other facts considered important by the host institution or the funding recipient;

17.4.3. A report on the usage of the funding.

17.5. If the postdoctoral project is completed early, the funding recipient and the host institution must submit the final report according to 17.3.

17.6. If the funding recipient is unable to prepare the final report, the host institution does so and then submits the report to the Council.

# Disclosure of Postdoctoral Project Findings

18.1. The funding recipient will make publications prepared from the results of having carried out the postdoctoral project freely available in full text format on ETIS, as long as publication, author rights, or intellectual property conditions do not otherwise prohibit this.

18.2. If a publisher temporarily prohibits public access to publications, the funding recipient will make publications prepared from the results of having carried out the postdoctoral project freely available in full text format after the ban has passed.

18.3. In publications of the results of carrying out of the postdoctoral project, sources of funding for the carrying out the project should be acknowledged.

18.4. The final report will be made available to the public by the Council via ETIS.

# Return of Funds

19.1. Unapproved usage of postdoctoral project funds must be repaid to the Council by the host institution, along with the proportion of the overhead costs.

19.2. The host institution must allow the Council or its appointed representative to review the usage of the postdoctoral project funds and to provide any required assistance for this, including access to the rooms and property of the host institution in order to allow checking of the data provided, as well the provision of any requested documents.