

The aim of the guidelines is to ensure the experts' and the evaluation committees' similar approach to the proposal evaluation process.

All criteria are evaluated with the following rating scale: 1 – poor; 2 – satisfactory; 3 – good; 4 – very good; 5 – excellent. (It is allowed to use also the ratings 1.5; 2.5; 3.5 and 4.5.)

We ask the evaluators to bear in mind that ideally, no more than 10% of all proposals should be rated as “excellent”, and no more than 25% as “very good”. As general practice, the proposals with average overall rating “3.5” and below will not receive financing.

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According to the *Guidelines on Application on Postdoctoral Research Grant* the evaluation criteria are divided into following sub-criteria.

**1. Scientific quality and innovativeness of the proposed research project.**

- **Novelty of the project and the potential for the creation of new knowledge.**  
Proposal is evaluated foremost for its general (international) level and the innovativeness of research plans and ideas as well as interest to science and feasibility of exploitation.
- **Relevance of the research topic and contribution of the expected results to the development of science, technology and/or social sphere**  
Proposal is evaluated for the timeliness of research topic and its relevance both internationally and locally and if the prospective results make a substantial contribution to the development of science, technology, and/or society.
- **The degree of elaboration of the project plan and validity of the methodology to be used and the quality of the project implementation plan**  
Proposal is evaluated for the elaboration of project (comprehensiveness, versatility etc); level of planned methodology, its appropriateness to the implementing of project as well as if the actions and timeline attaining objectives are realistic.

**2. Competence of the postdoctoral researcher**

- **The quality and results of the applicant's previous research activities, and the capacity of the applicant to carry out the proposed project**  
The capacity to carry out his/her work is evaluated in the light of researcher's previous scientific work and results (on international level), the number and level of publications of his/her articles and monographs, (peer-reviewed) journals or compendiums.

- **The experience of the applicant in (international) research-related cooperation and his or her teamwork skills**

The experience is evaluated by cooperation competence and the scope of scientific communication according to previous positions, participation in conferences and other activities, as well as cited research, list of co writers, and citations to his/her own articles.

- **Potential contribution of the applicant to the research activities carried out in the receiving institution, training aspects of the proposal and impact of the project on his/her research career.**

Contribution of the proposal is evaluated in the context of the scientific research level in prospective receiving institution, if the project will bring along complementary competence to this institution, and the other way round, what are the enhancing aspects and does working in this institute promote his/her scientific career.

### **3. Overall evaluation. (Not based on the mathematical average of the above ratings.)**



#### **Procedural Rules of Conflict of Interests**

*Approved at the meeting of the Council of the Estonian Science Foundation on 23 February 2007 (Minutes 23)*

This document stipulates the conduct of the experts of the Estonian Science Foundation in the event of a conflict of interests. Expert shall herein mean reviewers of the applications submitted to the Science Foundation, members of the different evaluation boards and members of the Council and expert commissions.

The Estonian Science Foundation presumes that when processing any applications and making decisions, the concerned persons adhere to generally accepted ethical rules and proceed from the Code of Ethics of Estonian Scientists.

- If an expert has a conflict of interests with respect to an item on the agenda, the expert must declare this at the start of the meeting and remove him or herself from discussions of such an item on the agenda and leave the meeting room for the time of discussion.
- At the beginning of every application evaluation round, experts must submit a list of applications with respect to which they have a conflict of interests.
- In the event an expert can benefit with respect to an application in any manner whatsoever if such an application is satisfied (e.g. as the applicant or main contractor) or rejected, then the expert must remove himself or herself fully from the processing of such an application and leave the meeting room for the time of processing.
- An expert must remove himself or herself from the processing of the application and leave the meeting room during the time of processing if the applicant or a member of

the research group of the project applied for is a close colleague of the expert (e.g. joint publications within the last three years, cooperation in the preparation of the application, etc.).

- An expert must remove him or herself from the processing of an application and leave the meeting room for the time of processing if he or she has had a manager-employee or tutor-tutee relationship with the applicant or a member of the research group of the project applied for.
- An expert must remove him or herself from the processing of an application and leave the meeting room for the time of processing if the applicant or a member of the research group of the project applied for is a close person of the expert. Close persons are:
  - ✓ a family member of the expert (spouse, partner, child, grandchild, sister, brother, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather) or the spouse/partner of a family member
  - ✓ uncle, aunt, cousin of the expert or their spouse/partner
  - ✓ any other person closely related to the expert (e.g. friend, former spouse/partner)
  - ✓ the child, grandchild, sister, brother, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather of the expert's spouse/partner or their spouse/partner

**If an expert breaches the requirements stipulated in this document and fails to declare their conflict of interests, the Science Foundation shall have the right to annul the opinion(s) given by the expert to the application(s) and refer the funding decision for a new review.**