

The following is a translation from Estonian. In case of disputes, the Estonian text shall prevail.

Conditions and Procedure for Target Grants in 2020

Chapter 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Scope

- 1.1. This directive establishes the conditions and procedure for applying for, evaluating, awarding, allocating, and reporting on target grants (hereinafter also *grant*) related to solving the problems caused by the SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- 1.2. The Estonian Research Council (hereinafter *Council*) is entitled to make well-considered decisions and consult experts where necessary in relation to matters not covered by this directive.

2. Goal

- 2.1. A target grant is aimed at enhancing the capacity of the society to hinder the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and other similar viruses as well as at preventing and solving the problems caused by viruses through supporting applied research and experimental development projects in the thematic areas stipulated in clause 8 of this directive.
- 2.2. A target grant is awarded for the implementation of an independent applied research or experimental development project based on previous or ongoing research at an Estonian R&D institution, which has been regularly positively evaluated in at least one research field, and its purpose is not funding self-financed research projects.

3. Applied Research and Experimental Development

- 3.1. **Applied research** is original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge directed primarily towards a specific and practical aim.
- 3.2. **Experimental development** is systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience and producing additional knowledge, which is directed to producing new products or processes or to improving existing products or processes. The development of new products or processes qualifies as experimental development if it meets the criteria for identifying R&D activity.

4. Processing Grant Applications and Reports

- 4.1. The period of the call for target grant applications is established and announced by the Council.
- 4.2. The application process takes place in the Estonian Research Information System (hereinafter *ETIS*). The submission of the application and the communication with the applicant is conducted via ETIS. The decisions made during the stages of the application process, incl. the decision to approve or not to approve the application, will be announced via ETIS. The applicant is required

to monitor the messages sent via ETIS regularly and keep the contact information up to date.

4.3. The Council is responsible for processing target grant applications and reports.

Chapter 2

CONDITIONS FOR APPLYING FOR A GRANT

5. Applicant of the Grant

- 5.1. A person (hereinafter also *applicant*) can apply for funding upon receiving consent from a positively evaluated Estonian R&D institution (hereinafter also *institution*). The institution will give the consent for submitting the application and for fulfilling its obligations by confirming the application.
- 5.2. An applicant can simultaneously apply for one target grant. The applicant cannot simultaneously be listed as a member of the senior research staff in another target grant application.
- 5.3. A person cannot apply for the grant if
 - 5.3.1. he/she has, during the three years before applying for the grant, failed to submit the report on a previous project funded by the Council by the deadline without a valid reason or the report has not been accepted by the Council;
 - 5.3.2. a serious breach of contract, intentional false information, plagiarism, or fraudulent activities have become evident in the previous project led by him/her which was funded by the Council and if less than three years have passed since the discovery of the breach of contract by 1 January of the year of the call.
- 5.4. The applicant must be the Principal Investigator (hereinafter also *PI*) of the project for which the grant is applied for.

6. Principal Investigator of the Grant Project

- 6.1. The PI may be an applicant who:
 - 6.1.1. has been awarded a doctoral degree or has equivalent qualification;
 - 6.1.2. is employed for at least 0.2 workload at an Estonian R&D institution and has a place of work in Estonia at the time of implementing the project;
 - 6.1.3. has, during the three years before applying for the grant, been the PI or the member of the senior research staff of the project on which the idea for this project is based on.
- 6.2. In justified cases, it is possible to request the replacement of the PI during the grant period (e.g., in case of pregnancy, maternity and/or parental leave, suspension of the employment contract, long-term incapacity to work, relocation to another country, or death). The Evaluation Committee shall consider the qualifications and abilities of the proposed new PI to continue implementing the project.
- 6.3. The decision to approve or not to approve the application requesting the replacement of the PI is concluded by a directive of the Board of the Council based on the evaluations given by the Evaluation Committee. If the Board of the Council does not approve the application requesting the replacement of the PI, the grant contract shall be terminated prematurely pursuant to clause

7. Participants of the Grant Project

7.1. In addition to the PI, the following people can participate in the implementation of the project:

7.1.1. members of the senior research staff who are employed at the institution or at a different institution or at an enterprise in Estonia which is instrumental in the implementation of the project at the time of submitting the application and during the implementation of the project, and who have the necessary qualification for carrying out the research tasks foreseen in the project;

7.1.2. students, whose work is related to the topic of the project.

7.2. The members of the senior research staff and students listed in the application cannot be simultaneously listed as members of the senior research staff or students in any other target grant application.

7.3. It is advisable to include the representatives of the potential implementing bodies of the outcomes in the execution of the project (if applicable).

8. Thematic areas of target grants and technology readiness levels

8.1. It is possible to apply for a target grant for conducting applied research and experimental development projects in the following thematic areas:

8.1.1. materials and surface treatment agents inhibiting the spread of the virus;

8.1.2. new types of personal protective equipment (e.g., textiles, masks, etc.) for reducing the spread of respiratory viruses, incl. SARS-CoV-2;

8.1.3. technological solutions for the reduction of virus (incl. SARS-CoV-2) particles in indoor air;

8.1.4. technological solutions to reduce the workload on the health care sector, incl. the automation of services and processes;

8.1.5. solutions based on data analysis to assess the spread of the virus and to predict the impact of the measures.

8.2. The Council is responsible for evaluating the compliance between the application and the thematic area. When checking the technical details of the applications, non-compliant applications will be rejected pursuant to clause 12.4.

8.3. It is possible to apply for a target grant for conducting applied research and experimental development projects if the technology readiness level (hereinafter *TRL*) of the outcomes of the previous research is at least 3 and not higher than 5.

8.4. The applications in which the starting *TRL* is less than 3 or greater than 5 do not qualify for funding.

9. Grant Amount

9.1. The grant contains costs directly related to the implementation of the project and overhead costs. Direct costs consist of staff costs and research costs:

9.1.1. Staff costs consist of the salary for the members of the senior research staff and scholarships for the students, along with any and all state taxes, contributions, and compensations arising

from law, that are directly related to fulfilling the tasks necessary for the implementation of the project;

9.1.2. Research costs are the acquisition costs of fixed assets directly related to the implementation of the project (in accordance with the definition established by the institution), subcontracting costs as well as engineering and design solutions, costs related to the publication and popularisation of the R&D results obtained during the implementation of the project, costs related to the protection of intellectual property, and other direct costs that are necessary for conducting research and stem from the characteristics of the project.

9.2. Overhead costs are ongoing operational costs incurred by the institution that are related to the management of the grant by the institution and are aimed at providing a high-quality research environment for the participants of the project. The overhead costs account for 25% of the amount of direct costs.

9.3. Depending on the length of the project, scope of the activities, size of the research team, and specifics of the research (experimental or non-experimental research), grants are divided into four fixed-amount grant types:

	Direct costs	Overhead costs	Total fixed amount
Small non-experimental target grant (COVSG)	48,000	12,000	60,000
Small experimental COVSG	80,000	20,000	100,000
Large non-experimental COVSG	96,000	24,000	120,000
Large experimental COVSG	160,000	40,000	200,000

10. Funding Period of the Grant Project

10.1. The period of the grant project begins and ends on the dates agreed upon in the grant contract, yet the project has to begin no later than on 1 December 2020 and end no later than on 31 December 2021.

10.2. It is not possible to temporarily suspend the period of the target grant.

Chapter 3

EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS AND AWARD OF GRANTS

11. Application

11.1. The applicant is to submit the application, which has been approved by the institution, to the Council via ETIS.

11.2. The application is to be written in Estonian. The application can be submitted in English if the applicant and/or the member(s) of the research team have no knowledge of Estonian.

11.3. The application shall specify the following:

11.3.1. the applicant;

- 11.3.2.the title of the project in Estonian and in English;
- 11.3.3.a summary of the project in Estonian and in English;
- 11.3.4.thematic area pursuant to clause 8 under which the grant is applied for, and a justification for that selection;
- 11.3.5.research type (applied research or experimental development);
- 11.3.6.the requested grant period;
- 11.3.7.the requested grant amount pursuant to the fixed amounts set out in clause 9.3.
- 11.3.8.the scientific background of the project, incl. the outcomes of the research which the PI and/or the member(s) of the senior research staff have conducted during the three years before applying for the grant and on which the idea for this project is based on, and the TRL of these outcomes in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Council;
- 11.3.9.a description of how the outcomes of the project will be innovative and distinctive compared to the previous research on which the idea is based on, incl. the main objectives, methods, work plan, possible risks together with risk reduction measures, and methods and criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the project;
- 11.3.10.the expected outcomes, incl. their estimated TRL, and the innovation and applicability potential along the entire value chain;
- 11.3.11.potential impact, incl. to what extent do the outcomes of the project contribute to enhancing the capacity of the society to hinder the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and other similar viruses as well as to preventing and solving the problems caused by viruses, how large is the volume of direct beneficiaries estimated to be, how large is the (socio-)economic impact of the project estimated to be, what is the expected timeframe of the potential impact to manifest itself (immediate, short, medium, long); what are the potential ways of achieving this impact or benefit;
- 11.3.12.an explanation about how the results of the project will be disseminated to the wider public;
- 11.3.13.an explanation about how the compliance with ethical issues will be secured during the implementation of the project and a comment on whether the project requires a licence from a specific ethics committee or the licence has already been obtained, and if the project necessitates compliance with the Nagoya Protocol, an explanation about which genetic resources will be used and whether the project requires the due diligence declaration or the due diligence declaration has already been submitted;
- 11.3.14.an explanation about which data will be generated during the implementation of the project, how the data will be managed, and how the data will be shared and made public in SARS-CoV-2 data portals;
- 11.3.15.an explanation about how intellectual property and knowledge transfer issues will be managed;
- 11.3.16.a justification of the requested grant amount, incl. a justification of the distribution of direct costs (why is it necessary to involve this particular number of senior or other members of the research staff, i.e., what are their roles and tasks; the necessity of external services, cost of materials, need to rent equipment, experiments, etc.) and co-funding instruments provided by an enterprise interested in the project or by a public sector institution (if present);
- 11.3.17.national and/or international cooperation envisaged to achieve the objectives of the project, incl.

- the involvement of (entrepreneurial) partners and experts (if applicable), and the availability of the infrastructure necessary for achieving the objectives of the project;
- 11.3.18. the member(s) of the senior research staff and other research staff (students), incl. their role and the distribution of their tasks;
- 11.3.19. if necessary, additional documents, incl. substantiated letters of confirmation from the partners involved;
- 11.3.20. a confirmation that the principles of research ethics and good research practice will be adhered to during the conception and implementation of the project.
- 11.4. The Council is entitled to demand additional information and documents from the applicant and the institution.

12. Checking the Technical Details of the Applications

- 12.1. The Council is responsible for checking the technical details of the applications.
- 12.2. When checking the technical details of the applications, it will be determined if the application, the applicant, and the institution meet all the necessary requirements, incl. if the application is in compliance with the aim of target grants pursuant to clause 2 and with the thematic areas pursuant to clause 8. The content of the applications will not be evaluated.
- 12.3. In case formal inaccuracies which can be corrected without changing the content of the application are present, the Council will set a deadline of up to ten working days for correcting the mistakes.
- 12.4. If the applicant, the institution, or the application does not meet the requirements and it has been impossible to correct the inaccuracies stipulated in clause 12.3., then the Council will reject the application without processing it.

13. Evaluation of Applications

- 13.1. The applications are evaluated on the basis of the "Guidelines for Evaluating Target Grant Applications" (hereinafter *evaluation guidelines*) established by the Council.
- 13.2. The Council may set thresholds in the evaluation guidelines for evaluating the applications. The grant will not be awarded if the application does not pass the threshold in at least one evaluation criterion.
- 13.3. Each application will be given justified evaluations and scores by at least two independent reviewers.
- 13.4. Although non-binding, the Expert Panel shall rely on the evaluations and scores given by the reviewers.
- 13.5. The Expert Panel will submit the combined evaluations given to each application to the Evaluation Committee and compile a ranking list in each thematic area as well as a cross-thematic ranking list. In the combined evaluation, the Expert Panel may prescribe certain conditions that the PI and the institution are required to fulfil upon receiving the grant.
- 13.6. The Council will make the evaluations and scores stipulated in clauses 13.3. and 13.5., and the position of the applicant in the cross-thematic ranking list of the applications known to the

applicant and to the institution.

- 13.7. The applicant and the institution are entitled to submit a written joint opinion and make objections regarding the reviews and the preliminary scores within the time limit established by the Council (hearing). At the hearing, attention will primarily be paid to the assessment of the adherence to procedural rules and to the correction of possible factual errors. The evaluation given by the reviewers or by the Expert Panel will not be re-evaluated. If the Expert Panel has prescribed certain conditions in their evaluation that must be fulfilled in order to receive the grant, the applicant and the institution have to submit a consent to secure the compliance with these conditions.
- 13.8. The Evaluation Committee is responsible for giving each application its final evaluation and score, and will also approve the cross-thematic ranking list of the applications. Although non-binding in justified cases, the Evaluation Committee shall rely on the combined evaluations given by the Expert Panel, the position of the application in the cross-thematic ranking list, and on the outcomes of the hearing (if applicable).
- 13.9. The applications of equal standing will be ranked and the financing proposals made by the Evaluation Committee according to the principles described in the evaluation guidelines.
- 13.10. The Council is entitled to reject the application if intentional false information, plagiarism, or fraudulent activities become evident.

14. Award of the Grant

- 14.1. Considering the final evaluation, the position of the applicant in the cross-thematic ranking list of the applications, and (if applicable) the consent to fulfil the prescribed conditions to receive the grant, the Evaluation Committee will submit a justified and impartial proposal the Board of the Council:
 - 14.1.1. to approve the application and award the grant;
 - 14.1.2. not to approve the application.
- 14.2. The decision to approve or not to approve the application is concluded by a directive of the Board of the Council. In case of approval, the directive shall indicate the grant period and the grant amount.
- 14.3. If an applicant whose application was to be approved by the Board of the Council based on the proposal made by the Evaluation Committee or who has been awarded a grant by the Board of the Council waives the grant, then the grant will be awarded to the next applicant in the ranking list.

Chapter 4 ALLOCATION OF GRANTS

15. Allocation of the Grant

- 15.1. The grant is allocated to the institution based on a tripartite contract (hereinafter *grant contract*) entered into by the Council, the institution, and the PI that is signed via ETIS. The grant contract entails the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of the parties.

- 15.2. The grant contract shall be entered into no later than one month after the decision stipulated in clause 14.2. has been made.
- 15.3. The PI shall report on the use of the grant in the middle of the project within the time period and in the form established by the Council, and after the end of the project pursuant to clause 17.

Chapter 5

TERMINATION OF A PROJECT

16. Termination of the Project

- 16.1. The project will end on the end date of the grant period.
- 16.2. All the costs of the activities financed with the grant money must be paid by the end date of the project, with the exception of carrying out public outreach activities, which is allowed until the submission of the final report.
- 16.3. The institution is required to refund the unused grant money along with a proportional fee of overhead costs to the Council's bank account no later than seven calendar days upon receiving the corresponding claim for refund from the Council. The PI and the institution are required to submit the final report of the project pursuant to clause 17.

17. Submission of the Final Report

- 17.1. The PI shall prepare the final report of the project in Estonian. The final report (except the summary in Estonian stipulated in clause 17.2.1.) can be submitted in English if the applicant and/or the member(s) of the research team have no knowledge of Estonian. The final report, after having been approved by the institution, has to be submitted to the Council via ETIS no later than two months after the end date of the project.
- 17.2. The final report shall include the following:
 - 17.2.1. the outcomes, incl. the main outcomes of the project in the form of a popular science summary both in Estonian and in English;
 - 17.2.2. the TRL of the achieved outcomes and their potential applicability and importance for Estonian economy, society, politics and/or public services as well as possible directions for future research;
 - 17.2.3. a report on the usage of the grant in accordance with the accounting data of the institution;
 - 17.2.4. the fulfilment of the conditions stipulated in clause 13.5.;
 - 17.2.5. if the project necessitated compliance with the Nagoya Protocol, the due diligence declaration;
 - 17.2.6. the full texts of the articles that have been published as a result of implementing the project and also contain a reference to the grant as well as the industrial property items in accordance with the objectives set in the application. Pursuant to clause 18.1., publications that do not contain a reference to the grant must not be included in the final report;

- 17.2.7. future activities resulting directly from the project;
 - 17.2.8. overview about data management activities;
 - 17.2.9. public outreach activities;
 - 17.2.10. additional information directly related to the project that the PI and the institution deem relevant;
 - 17.2.11. other materials necessary for introducing the project requested by the Council in the ETIS form.
- 17.3. If the PI fails to submit the final report by the deadline, the final report shall be prepared and submitted by the institution.
- 17.4. Based on the final report, the Expert Panel will assess the implementation of the project. The Council will either approve or not approve the final report. The Council will not approve the report if the report does not meet the requirements established by this directive and the inaccuracies have not been corrected within the time limit established by the Council. Neither will the final report be approved if the requirements for the use of the grant have been violated, incl. the circumstances described in clauses 19.1.3., 19.1.4., or 19.1.6. The decision and its justification will be made available to the PI and to the institution via ETIS.

18. Making the Results of the Project Public

- 18.1. Upon the publication of the results of the project, a reference to the grant that was used for funding the project must be included.
- 18.2. The full texts of the articles that have been published as a result of implementing the project and also contain a reference to the grant will be made freely available by the institution via ETIS, unless limited by publishing restrictions, copyright, or intellectual property laws.
- 18.3. If a publishing house restricts access to the articles temporarily, the institution will make the full texts of the articles published as a result of implementing the project freely available via ETIS once the restriction has expired.
- 18.4. The main outcomes of the project in the form of a popular science summary both in Estonian and in English will be made available to the public by the Council via ETIS.
- 18.5. In collaboration with the Council, the PI shall prepare the materials for introducing the outcomes of the project to the general public during three months after the end date of the project, and shall participate in the public event dedicated to introducing the outcomes of target grant projects organised by the Council.

Chapter 6

PREMATURE TERMINATION OF THE GRANT CONTRACT AND RECLAMATION OF A GRANT

19. Premature Termination of the Grant Contract

- 19.1. The Council is entitled to revoke the decision of awarding the grant or the decision to continue funding and terminate the grant contract if:
- 19.1.1. the PI or the institution have submitted a request to terminate the grant contract;

- 19.1.2. the PI does not meet the requirements stipulated in clause 6.1., or is unable to continue with the project (the death of the PI, serious illness, transitioning to other employment, moving to another country, or other substantial and justified circumstances) and the PI of the project will not be replaced;
 - 19.1.3. the PI, the participant(s) of the project, or the institution have fundamentally violated the requirements stipulated in this directive or by the legislation;
 - 19.1.4. the licence from a specific ethics committee has not been submitted prior to the beginning of human or animal experiments or it has become evident the due diligence declaration stemming from the Nagoya Protocol has been disregarded;
 - 19.1.5. the PI or the institution have intentionally presented false information, or plagiarism or fraudulent activities have become evident in the project-related activities;
 - 19.1.6. there are other adverse and justified circumstances.
- 19.2. After the revocation of the decision to award the grant or to continue funding the project and after the premature termination of the grant contract, the institution is required to refund the unused grant money along with a proportional fee of overhead costs to the Council's bank account no later than seven calendar days upon receiving the corresponding claim for refund from the Council. The PI and the institution are required to submit the final report pursuant to clause 17.
 - 19.3. If the decision of awarding the grant or the decision to continue funding is repealed retrospectively, the Council may reclaim the grant from the institution.

20. Audit and Reclamation of the Grant

- 20.1. The institution is required to allow the Council or a person authorised by the Council to audit the use of the grant and provide necessary assistance, including allowing access to the premises and the territory of the institution and submitting all the requested documents for the purpose of verifying the correctness of the information provided.
- 20.2. A grant not used for the intended purpose may be reclaimed by the Council from the institution along with a proportional fee of overhead costs.