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Estonian Research Council

RESEARCH FUNDING: EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING

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TARTU 2020

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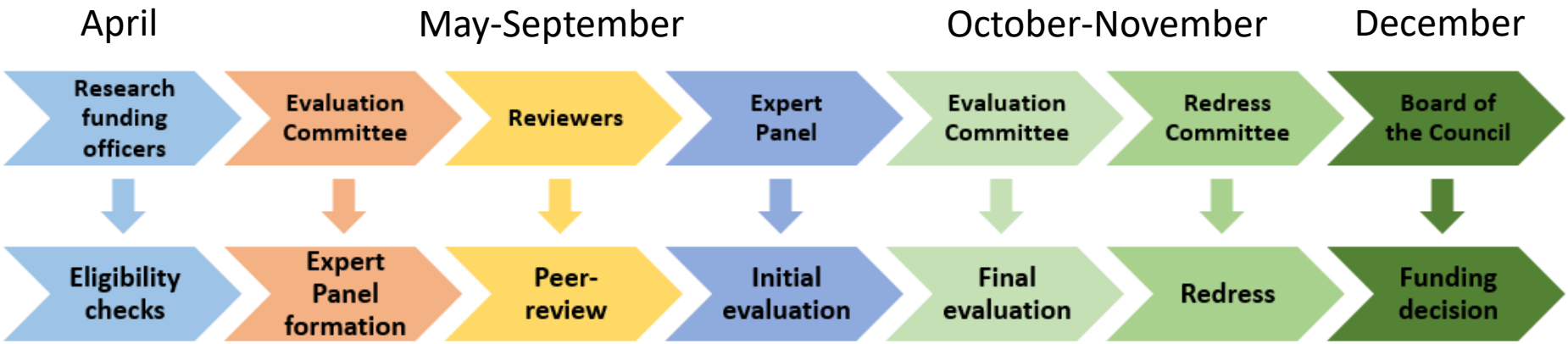
ANNUAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES



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The start of the call: APPLICATION

- The application will be completed only if submitted electronically on ETIS.

- Everyone can apply, just register on ETIS and get a personal account.
- The applicant applies for funding together with R&D institution.
- Research funding officers consult the applicants during the Call

- Application contains :
- - the scientific objectives, methods, research plan and expected results;
- - ethics and data managements;
- - research staff/the supervisor;
- - previous R&D results;
- - impact;
- - annual budget;
- - additional information.

THE ELIGIBILITY CHECK AND TECHNICAL CONTROL

The end of the Call: the applications distributed according to scientific field they belong to, undergo the eligibility check and the technical control;
Research funding officers perform the initial eligibility checks and technical control of the applications.

Eligibility Check:

The eligibility of the applicant is defined in *The Conditions and Procedure for Team/start-up/postdoctoral Grants;*
The applicant has 7 days to submit an eligibility decision redress request. The Evaluation Committee evaluates the request and makes a decision.

Technical Control:

- enhances the quality of the application helping to eliminate possible technical errors (invalid fails, aborted links), grammatical mistakes, misleading information, additional non-relevant fails…
- not concerned with the scientific content of the application
- performed in a tight cooperation with the applicant

THE EXPERT PANEL FORMATION

The Evaluation Committee looks through the applications and confirm the eligibility.

Based on the field of research spetiality the Evaluation Committee performs the final distribution of the applications between the 6 Expert Panels

Each application is evaluated, scored and ranked in one of the six Expert Panel

Six Expert Panels:

- Medical and health sciences
- Humanities and the arts
- Natural sciences
- Agricultural and veterinary sciences
- Social sciences
- Engineering and technology

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PEER-REVIEW

- The selection of the reviewers is organized to be in compliance with the principles of the European Charter & Code.
- Expert Panel suggests most experienced and recognized reviewers in the field of the application;
- Each application is reviewed by at least 2 reviewers from all over the world;

- The main criteria for choosing the reviewers:
- A) lack of conflict of interests (mutual Publications, projects, other benefits etc.)
- A) doctoral degree (PhD)
- B) scientific track record;

- Reviewing process takes place on ETIS: the reviewers sign an authorisation agreement. After that submit their scores and reviews using the evaluation guidelines. There is a remuneration per review for the contribution.

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INITIAL EVALUATION

- The reviewers evaluate the applications using the criteria established in the „*The Guidelines for Evaluating Personal Research Funding Applications for Team/Start-Up or Postdoctoral Grants*“ regardless of the disciplines and the specificity of the research field.

- All applications are to be evaluated according to the same rules and procedures and all of them are treated equally.

- The Expert Panels from different research fields hold a separate meetings where they discuss the evaluations from the reviewers, evaluate importance for Estonia and the grand type criteria, confirm the field-specific ranking lists.

- Separate ranking lists will be compiled for different research fields.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND RATING

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1. Justification for the research project
2. Feasibility of the project
3. Competence of the Principal Investigator and the team
4. Scientific impact

A 5-point rating scale with level of precision of 0,5 points:
from unsatisfactory (1) to outsatnding (5) for each criteria marked here in purple

5. Ethical issues
6. Data management

An undifferentiated rating scale is used for each criteria marked here in green
- Appropriate (1);
- Inappropriate (0).

7. Importance for Estonian culture, society, and/or economy

8. Justification for the grant type

The final score can range from 4.6 to 26 points.

EVALUATION THRESHOLDS: QUALIFY OR NOT QUALIFY FOR FUNDING

- qualification threshold:

3 points for 5-point rating scale criteria and 1 point (appropriate) for the criteria with undifferentiated rating scale

- quality threshold:

the field-specific quality thresholds set separately for team, start-up or postdoctoral grants applications.

FINAL EVALUATION

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Each application gets its final score - a sum of justified assessment scores for all criteria and the overall assessment composed by the Expert Panel and the Evaluation Committee.

Based on the final evaluation and scores, the Evaluation Committee will compile a final field-specific ranking lists for all applications.

If the budget is not enough for funding all the qualified applications the projects will be funded in the order they appear in the ranking list.

Special ranking rules for the applications with the similar final scores:

1. prioritised according to the scores in the very order of the evaluation criteria (1-8);
2. the underrepresented gender
3. in order to create more diversity of the R&D fields;
4. a lot.

PRELIMINARY FUNDING DECISION

After the Evaluation Committee confirms the final scores and the field-specific ranking lists, the Research Funding Officers reveal the preliminary funding decision to the applicants: the anonymous reviews, the evaluations, the overall assessments and the scores become available to the applicants on ETIS.

Each applicant receives a notification on ETIS comprising the information about the overall number of the applications, the position of the current application in the ranking list and the preliminary decision:

1. passed the threshold and qualified for funding (or in competition for funding)
2. not passed the threshold and not qualified for funding (end of competition)

FUNDING DECISION REDRESS

The Estonian Research Council organises all redress procedures according to the Estonian Administrative Procedure Act.

Together with the institution, the applicant have the right to submit a digitally signed joint opinion and objections regarding the evaluation results (i.e., hearing) via e-mail.

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 scientific evaluation given by the reviewers or by the Evaluation Committee will not be re-evaluated.

FUNDING DECISION

Considering the final evaluation, the results of the hearing, and the position of the applicant in the field-specific ranking list, the Evaluation Committee submits a proposal the Board of the Council:

a) to approve the application and award the grant;
b) to approve the application partially and award the grant for one year;
c) not to approve the application.

The results of the evaluation process and the final decision become available to the applicant on ETIS.
The respective notification will be sent by e-mail.
The list of funded proposals will be published on the ETAg homepage.

Thank You for Your attention!

Please ask Your questions!

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RESEARCH FUNDING: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

JULIA UUSNA, RESEARCH FUNDING OFFICER

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REPORTING

- The reporting process takes place on ETIS
- Annual contracts as a part of the reporting process;
- Interim report for the 4-5 years projects;
- Final report after the end of the project.

	Deadline for submission	Responsible for evaluation
Annual contracts	1. of January	Research funding officers
Interim reports	28. of February	Evaluation Committee
Final reports	31. of March or no later than 3 months after the end date of the project	Evaluation Committee and the Research funding officers

ANNUAL CONTRACT

The Principal Investigator enters onto the contract together with the institution and the Estonian Research Council.
The contract is signed annually for each budget year via ETIS.

The applicants receive the funding commonly for 5 years and get the money in 5 parts according to the annual contract.

In order to simplify the monitoring procedures the annual contracts serve also as the alternative to the annual reporting - in order to continue receiving funding, the PI has to submit the following information:

1. the changes (if any) in the research staff;
2. a summary of the main results and/or significant changes in the research plan;
3. the changes (if any) in the budget.

INTERIM REPORT

The PI of the 4-5 years project prepares an interim report during the 3rd year of the project.

The interim report includes:
1. a summary of the results of the project;
2. an overview of the public outreach activities;
3. information on changes in the project (changes in research staff, research plan…);
4. explanations on the sustainability of the project;

Based on the interim report the Evaluation Committee makes a decision:
a) to continue funding;
b) not to continue funding.

FINAL REPORT

The PI prepares the final report of the project, which has to be submitted to the Estonian Research Council via ETIS no later than 3 months after the end date of the project.

The final report includes:

1. the results (the articles containing a reference to the Council and grant number, IP);
2. the scientific and societal impact of the results (importance for Estonian)
3. public outreach activities;
4. report on the budget;
5. data management plan;

The Estonian Research Council either approves or not approves the final report. The decision and its justification gives a feedback to the PI and to the institution on the successful completion of the project. Negative feedback will be taken into account when applying for new grant…

RESEARCH IN ESTONIA

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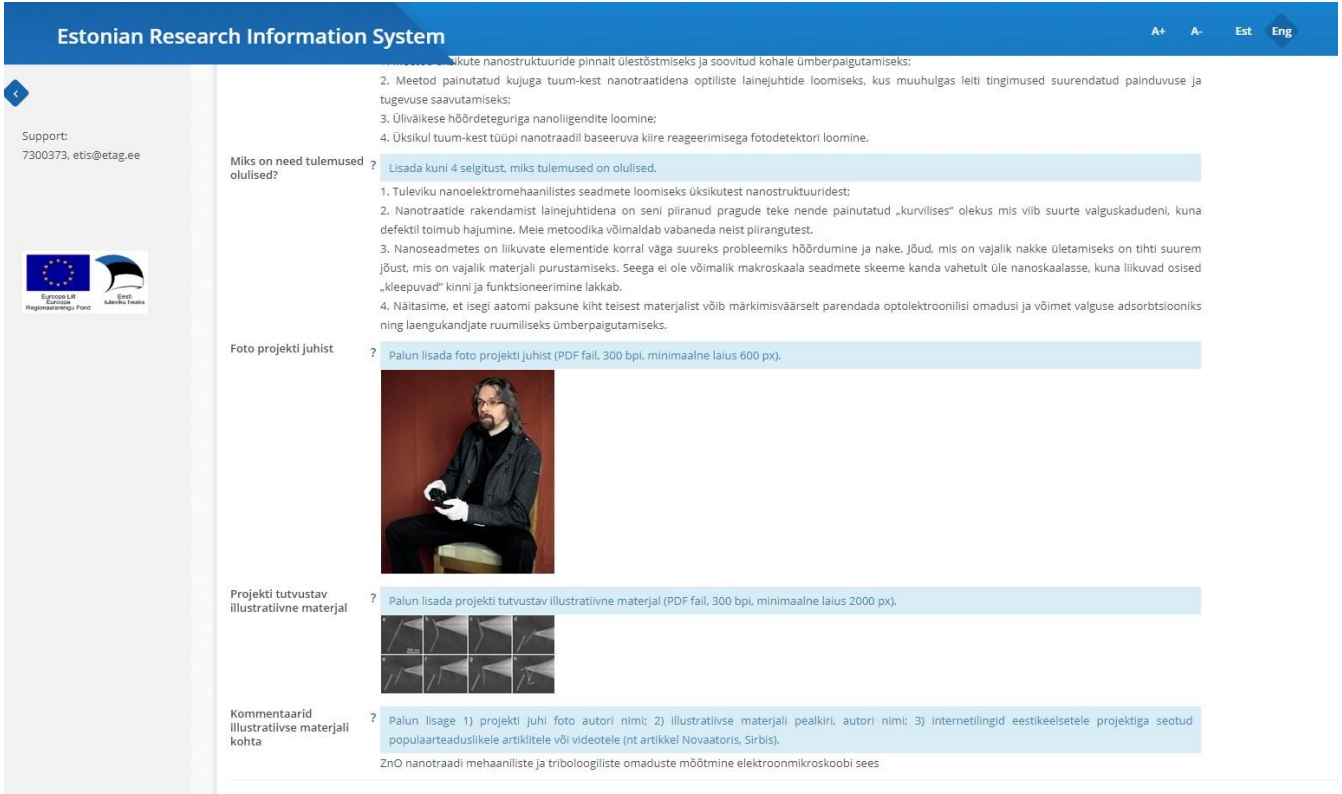
The final report has the addional function dedicated to the promotion of the research funded by the Estonian Research Council: Teadusrikas Eesti



Thank You for Your attention!

I am happy to answer to Your questions!