

ESTONIA

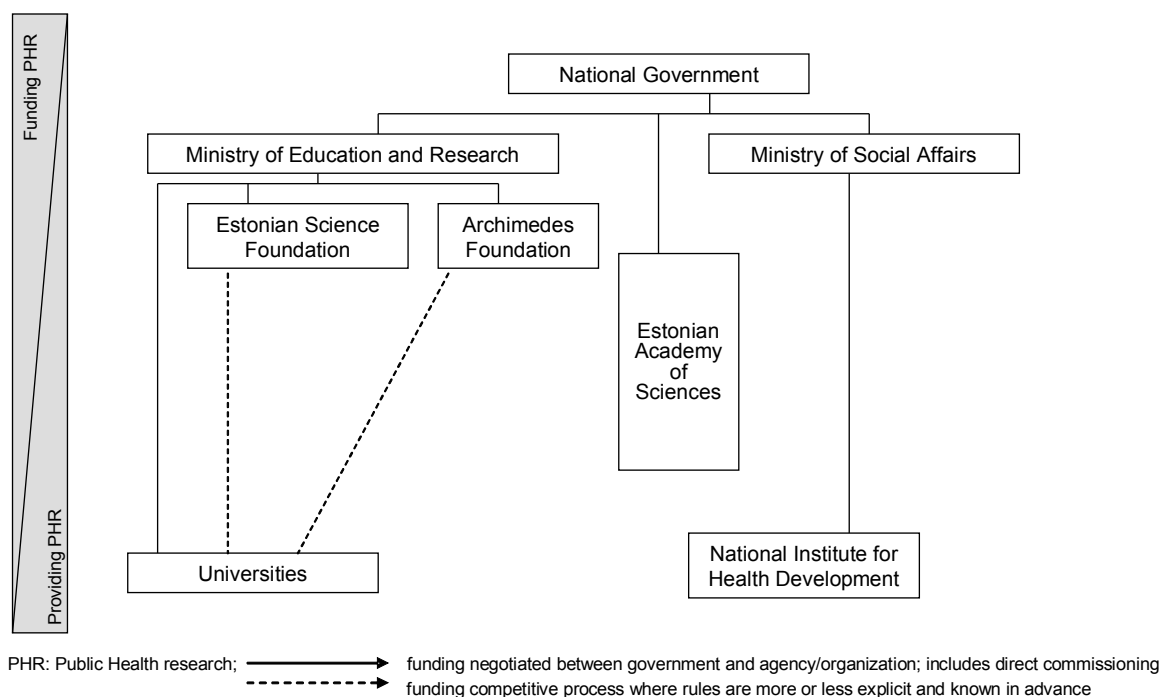
This information on national public-health research structures has been gained from country key informants and internet searches for STEPS (Strengthening Engagement in Public Health Research www.steps-ph.eu), a project funded by the European Commission Seventh Framework Research Programme. It builds on the country profiles and reports from Ministries of Health and Ministries of Science that were created previously for SPHERE (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-health/sphere/sphereprofiles.htm>).



The organogram shows the structure for managing and providing public-health research from the perspective of financial flows. The main organisations are also briefly described, with their URLs, and other relevant national documents and information on public-health research.

Note: 'Public-health research' includes all health research at population, organisation and system level broadly relevant to health and health-care policy and practice. It excludes clinical and laboratory (biomedical) research.

1. Organogram



2. Research Commissioners

"Estonia is a knowledge-based society where new knowledge, the application of knowledge and skills, as well as the development of human capital, constitute the source of economic and labour force competitiveness and an enhanced quality of life." (<http://www.riigikantselei.ee/?id=73433>)

The Estonian Research Portal is the public section of the Estonian Research Information System. Estonian Research Portal concentrates information on Estonian R&D and offers an environment for operative information exchange (<https://www.etis.ee/index.aspx>). It has been established by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the Estonian Science Foundation, Scientific Competence Council, public universities, R&D institutions, R&D funding institutions and the Archimedes Foundation. The portal provides details on institutions, people, projects and publications.

2.1 Ministry of Health

Ministry of Social Affairs, www.sm.ee/eng

The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for health, labour policy and social affairs. The Deputy Secretary for Health has five divisions - healthcare, medicine, public health, information and e-health. Independently under the ministry are the National Institute for Health Development, the Health Board and the State Agency for Medicines. A Structural Funds division serves the three responsible areas together through the Secretary General.

The Health Board, established in 2010, provides leadership, surveillance and enforcement for health care; communicable diseases and control; environmental health; chemical safety; medical devices. (<http://www.terviseamet.ee/en/information/about-hb.html>)

2.2. Ministry of Science

The Ministry of Education and Research (MER, <http://www.hm.ee/?1>) implements national research and education policies, organises financing and evaluation of research institutes and coordinates international cooperation in research. It has two permanent advisory bodies - the Research Policy Commission and the Scientific Competence Council.

The Research and Development Council (<http://www.riigikantselei.ee/?id=3710>), chaired by the Prime Minister, advises the Government through two permanent committees, chaired by the Minister for Education and Research focusing on research policy and by the Minister for Economic Affairs and Communications on innovation policy, with the State Chancellery (Strategy Office unit) as the secretariat.

The Research and Development Council organises the peer-reviewing of submitted applications and advises the Minister on opening funding for new research themes and the continuation of funding for previously-approved ones. The funding period for approved research topics is up to 6 years, subject to periodical assessment of progress. All of the research topics that have been approved for targeted financing are assessed each year. 34 new research topics with a total budget of €3.7m were approved in 2007. Data on targeted financing and EstSF grants is available at the Estonian Research Information System (<https://www.etis.ee/Portaal/etasrs.aspx?lang=en>).

Baseline financing: universities and research organisations receive annual baseline funding on the basis of their R&D performance evaluation results (in 2009, ca. €83m). Infrastructure expenses (electricity, heating, etc.) are allocated through the responsible ministry, comparable with the baseline funding.

Competitive financing from the state budget includes targeted financing, open to research groups competitively (in 2009, 209 projects for a total of €24.9m). R&D grants from the

Estonian Science Fund and competitive for several types of individual grants (funding from the MER). These are not pre-determined thematically.

Only the National (State) Research Programmes have a thematic focus. In 2009 there were four national programmes managed by the MER, (and two by the Ministry of Agriculture).

2.2.1. The implementing agencies of the MER include the Archimedes Foundation (<http://archimedes.ee/index.php?language=2>) which is responsible for national activities related to the European Research Area, international research, academic mobility; and several other roles including coordinator of COST (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research), provides a helpdesk for applicants, leads science communication initiatives. It also implements the Structural Funds 2007-2013 for research: Priority axis 'Improving the competitiveness of Estonian R&D' through the research programmes and modernisation of higher education and R&D institutions; Priority axis for 'Developing the Human Resource for R&D'. The budget of €12.3m. in 2007 grew to €114.7m in 2009. The Foundation does not have specific scientific priorities, but its sub-units follow the priorities of the EU programmes.

2.2.2. Estonian Science Foundation (ETF, <http://www.etf.ee/>) allocates more than €8,3 m to 'high-level' research annually, about one-fifth of the total of the Estonian government's research funding. Every year over 2000 professional researchers, as well as post-graduate and doctoral students at universities and research institutions, work on more than 650 ETF-funded projects, overall sum of granting in 2007 €6.4m. Once a year, the ETF announces a call for research project proposals of duration up to four years. The final decisions on funding are made by the ETF Council. Also Individual Postdoctoral research grants (in 2008, €0.3m 24 grants) and Most Promising Young Scholars - in 2008, 11 new projects received funding.

2.3. Other ministries

2.3.1. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (MEAC) has competence for policy and funding of industrial R&D, as well as planning, coordination and implementation of innovation policy. The main implementing agency of the MEAC is the Enterprise Estonia Foundation, which is responsible for managing innovation and technology programmes.

2.4. Regions

2.5. Foundations

3. Research Performers

3.1. State Institutes

3.1.1. National Institute for Health Development (<http://www.tai.ee/?lang=en>) was established in 2003 as a governmental organisation under the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia. The main activities include: fundamental, applied and evaluation research on public health and life quality (including biomedicine, epidemiology, bio statistics, health economics, occupational health and behaviour, measurement of the health status of population groups, examination of impact of health hazards resulting from outdoor environment); creation and maintenance of databases needed for the performance of research, development and management of health and social protection, the collection of

data for research, analysis and organisation of accessibility of data; making of proposals for the creation of policies necessary for achieving the objective, the preparation of relevant forecasts and development plans, participation in creating strategies for implementing policies within the administration of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

3.2. Mixed organizations

3.2.1. The Estonian Academy of Sciences (<http://www.akadeemia.ee/en/>) was established in 1938. Up to 1990 it was the umbrella organisation for various research institutes. After independence, the institutes were reorganised and united with universities. Now the Academy is an association for scientists in the formulation of science policy and foresight. There are 58 members and 19 foreign members, and an annual budget of €1.5m from the national government. The Academy works through four divisions, organises regular events and conferences and works collaboratively with other research organisations.

3.3. Universities

There are six public (state) universities and four private universities. The four largest public research universities are the University of Tartu, followed by Tallinn University of Technology, Tallinn University and the Estonian University of Life Sciences. Virtually all academic research in Estonia is performed at the public universities.

3.4. Health Services

3.5. Independent organizations

4. Research Strategies

4.1. Parliament has twice adopted a national strategy for R&D development: Knowledge-Based Estonia I. Research and Development Strategy for 2003-2006; and Knowledge-Based Estonia II. Research, Development and Innovation Strategy for 2007-2013.

(Available at http://www.akadeemia.ee/_repository/File/ALUSDOKUD/Knowledge-based%20Estonia%20II.pdf, assessed in October 2010)

In the Structural Funds 2007-13 the Operational Programmes Economic Environment includes the priority axis “Improving the competitiveness of Estonian R&D through the research programmes and modernisation of higher education and R&D institutions.” In the OP “Human Resource Development,” the second priority axis is “Developing human resources for R&D”.

5. Programmes and calls

5.1. Programme managed by the Estonian Science Foundation

Opened call for applications of the researcher mobility programme “Mobilitas” of the measure “Preferential development of key areas of research and development, innovation strategy and educational science” of priority axis “Development of the Human Resources of Research and Development Activities” of “Operational Programme for Human Resource Development”. Applications by November 2010.

6. European contacts

6.1. National FP7 Contact point (Health area)

6.1.1. Inga Sarand, Archimedes Foundation Innovation Center, inga@archimedes.ee

6.2. National DGSANCO Contact point¹

6.2.1. Liis Rooväli, Head of Health Information and Analysis Department, Public Health Department, Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia, liis.roovali@sm.ee

6.2.2. Annika Veimer, Director of Public Health Programs, National Institute for Health Development, annika.veimer@tai.ee

¹ Source: http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/index_en.htm assessed in October 2010