

## ESTONIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL: OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER ASSESSMENT REPORT

### Estonian research council

ESTONIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL (ETAg) is the main research funding organisation in Estonia. It facilitates national as well as international grants to researchers in Estonia, manages the Estonian Research Information System, coordinates participation in international cooperation programmes, raises public awareness about the importance of science and analyses research information and the impact of funding decisions.

### National Context

#### Policy framework on gender equality in research and higher education institutions

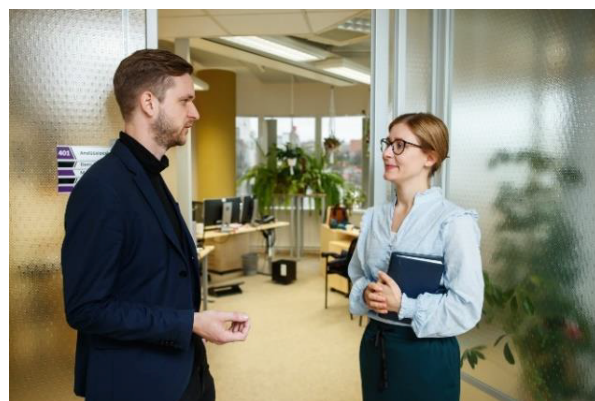
Country	Policy strategies and documents	Scope of policy strategies and documents	Policy support to GEPs	Gender equality policy in research funding
EE	Yes	Gender balance in decision-making positions; equal opportunities in allocating grants	No	Yes (access to grants)
ES	Yes	Career development; parity in decision-making positions; training; work-life balance; fighting gender-based violence	No	Yes (funding of research on gender in social sciences and humanities)
PT	Yes	Production of sex-disaggregated data; partnership between equality body and research governance body	Yes (limited: potential use of European Structural Funds for funding GEPs)	Yes (funding of research on gender)
UK	Yes	Implementation of the 'equality duty' by public institutions, including research and higher education institutions, derives from a legal obligation; scope determined at institutional level (broader than gender equality)	Yes (public organisations are compelled to have equality objectives and equality schemes)	Yes (United Kingdom Research Council integrated the assessment of gender equality policies in its research excellence framework to accede funding; National Institute for Health Research included scores in the Athena SWAN scheme as eligibility criteria for funding)
SI	Yes (low intensive)	Access to decision-making positions; enrolment of women in research; feminist knowledge transfer	No	Yes (rules for (co)financing and monitoring of research consider gender balance in decisionmaking positions)
TR	—	—	—	—

Source: EIGE; information collected through the study's fieldwork





Estonia is a small country located in North Eastern Europe with a modest population of 1.3 million people. In a study conducted by the European Council, Estonia was classified as a post-soviet country where women are provided with a high rate of employment and adequate childcare but higher, decision making positions are still dominated by men. Post-soviet countries were characterized as having a weak political will to tackle the issues of gender inequality.<sup>1</sup> Estonia is also the country with one of the highest gender wage gaps in the European Union: in 2017, women earned an average of 21% less than men.<sup>2</sup> This also applies to academia where there's additionally a lot of vertical segregation: while most assisting positions are filled by women, the top positions are more commonly taken by men. In 2017, less than one third (30%) of the leaders of higher education institutions were women and only less than one fourth (24%) of grade A positions were filled by women.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the share of women with a doctoral degree is equal to that of men: in 2017, there were 8 600 people with a doctorate in Estonia, 50% of them men and 50% of them women.<sup>4</sup> In 2018, 56% of all doctoral students in Estonia were women.<sup>5</sup>



## Used methodology

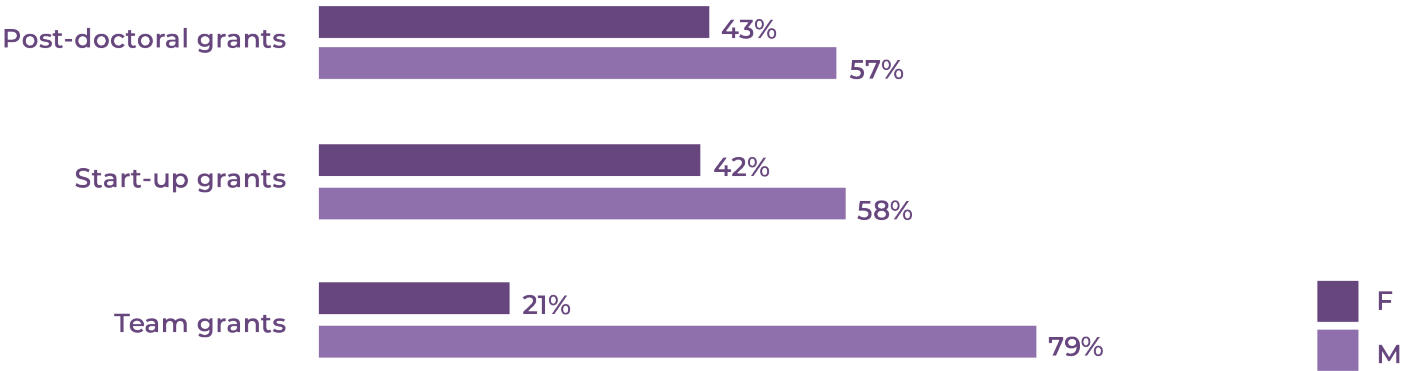
In the report, three different methodological approaches were used: (1) statistical analysis of available gender data; (2) qualitative interviews; and (3) document analysis. To give an overview of the national pool of researchers and grant statistics of ETAg, statistical data was used. The data was collected from the database of Statistics Estonia<sup>6</sup> and from the departments of ETAg (organisation-specific data; grant statistics). To gain insight of the attitudes on gender equality and gender mainstreaming prevalent at ETAg, 7 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the management. Aside from the analysed statistical data and the conducted interviews, also document analysis was conducted: the main higher education and research acts and other relevant documents were observed to record the extent of gender-related policies and official stands regarding gender equality.

## Main findings & key issues

The national pool of researchers in Estonia included 7 300 people in 2017 – 42% of them women and 58% men. Looking at non-profit institutional sectors, employing most (70%) of all researchers working in Estonia (50% men, 50% women), also differences in the fields of research practiced by men and women can be seen. In 2018, in the fields of engineering and natural sciences, men were greatly dominating (making up 71% and 64% of researchers, respectively) whereas in the fields of medical sciences, social sciences and humanities, there were significantly more women researchers (making up 71%, 62% and 60% of all researchers, respectively). The field with least gender imbalance was agricultural sciences where 56% of all researchers were women and 44% men.

In grant statistics, it can be seen the success rate for male applicants is higher. The biggest gender imbalance among grant receivers can be seen in the case of team grants: in 2019, the share of women among team grant receivers was 21% (applicants 28%) and in 2018, 29% of grantees were women, whereas 30% of team grant applicants were women. In post-doctoral and start-up grants, gender differences are less remarkable, but still visible.

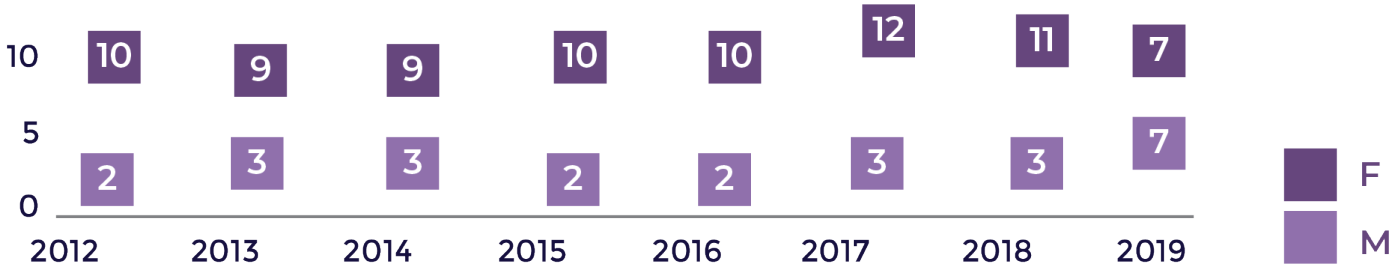




Graph 2: Share of women and men grantees in 2019

Gender imbalance also exists among remote peer reviewers. In 2018, male peer reviewers dominated in each of the four fields of science (natural sciences and engineering – 97%, biosciences and environment – 81%, health – 70%, culture and society – 61%. Similar trends can be seen in previous years, whereas the share of women peer reviewers has always been under 25% in the case of biosciences and environment and under 15% in the case of natural sciences and engineering.)

The main decision-making body responsible for choosing the grantees, the Evaluation Committee, has also been dominated by men but as of 2019 consists of 50% men and 50% women. In the context of scientific boards in Estonia still dominated by men, this is a remarkable achievement.



Graph 3: Number of women & men in the Evaluation Committee

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document\\_library/pdf\\_06/mapping-the-maze-getting-more-women-to-the-top-in-research\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/mapping-the-maze-getting-more-women-to-the-top-in-research_en.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> [https://www.stat.ee/valjaanne-2018\\_saatva-arengu-naitajad](https://www.stat.ee/valjaanne-2018_saatva-arengu-naitajad)  
<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/era\\_en#era-progress-reports](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/era_en#era-progress-reports)  
<sup>4</sup> Statistics Estonia. Table RV0231: At least 15-year-old persons by education, sex, age group and county  
<sup>5</sup> Statistics Estonia. Table HT305: Percentage of female students by level of study  
<sup>6</sup> Database of Statistics Estonia. <http://andmebaas.stat.ee>

