



Estonia is a small North European country. It has been a member of the European Union since 2004.



Promotional page about Estonia is www.estonia.ee.



[University of Tartu](http://www.ut.ee)



[Research in Estonia](http://www.research-estonia.ee) initiative carries out International marketing activities with the aim to introduce Estonian research on an international level and for international audience. The portal offers information and news for professionals, scholars, and students interested in research opportunities in Estonia.

[The Estonian Academy of Sciences](http://www.ea.ee) is an umbrella organisation uniting researchers, scholars and intellectuals.

EURAXESS Country in Focus: ESTONIA – a place for independent minds

Did you know that Skype was programmed in Estonia in 2003? Or that Estonia has used legally binding digital signatures since the year 2000? These facts illustrate the innovative attitude of the small North European country called Estonia perfectly. Estonia has an attractive environment for research, top-level infrastructure, a collaborative research community and excellent research achievements.

Research and Development in Estonia

Estonian researchers are good partners in international collaboration projects and the number of international co-publications is rising. Research in Estonia is becoming more international as the number of foreign researchers from 2005 to 2014 has increased **sevenfold** [1]. The impact of papers authored by Estonian researchers is growing rapidly; average citations per paper exceed the Thomson Reuters' Essential Science Indicators (ESI) mean citation rate by 5% [2].

There are 20 R&D institutions in Estonia, including [6 public universities](http://www.ut.ee) where most research is performed. The leading scientific institution in Estonia is the [University of Tartu](http://www.ut.ee).

The ratio of total R&D expenditure to GDP in 2015 was 1.5%, with nearly half of R&D expenditure in 2015 coming from the state budget [3].

Research Excellence in Estonia

Biological sciences are at the forefront of Estonian research – 2/3 of the top researchers (among 1% most cited in their field worldwide) who are affiliated with an Estonian research institution are **biologists** and **ecologists** [2]. Each Estonian paper published in environment/ecology and plant and animal science receives about 40% more citations than papers in these fields in general. Additionally, clinical medicine, molecular biology and genetics, physics, pharmacology and toxicology, and psychiatry/psychology are also above global average [2].

There are 9 [Research Centres of Excellence](http://www.research-estonia.ee) in Estonia, composed of **internationally highly regarded research groups**. Featured topics are: terrestrial ecosystems in the context of global change from molecular to biome-level responses, genomics and translational medicine, information and communication technologies (ICT), molecular cell engineering, space studies.

[1] <http://www.stat.ee/science-technology-innovation> [2] <http://blog.ut.ee/how-successful-is-estonian-science/> [3] <http://www.stat.ee/news-release-2016-132>



EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion is an initiative of the European Research Area (ERA) that addresses barriers to the mobility of researchers and seeks to enhance their career development. This pan-European effort is currently supported by 40 countries, of which we will profile one in our quarterly e-newsletter. In this edition, we zoom in on Estonia



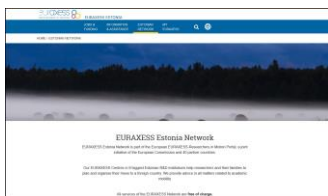
How Skype started in Estonia, read [The Story of Skype](#)

[e-Estonia – The Digital Society](#)

[Enterprise Estonia](#) supporting and advising entrepreneurs



The main funding body is the [Estonian Research Council](#).



Information and support for incoming researchers on [EURAXESS Estonia](#)

Estonian R&D Strategy

The Estonian R&D strategy document **Knowledge-based Estonia 2014–2020** outlines four objectives: 1) Research in Estonia is of high level and diverse 2) RD functions in the interest of Estonian society and economy 3) RD makes the structure of economy more knowledge-intensive 4) Estonia is active and visible in international RDI cooperation. The strategy foresees that by 2020 investments in R&D **will reach 3% of GDP** [4].

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Innovation and the start-up ecosystem in Estonia are growing rapidly. Notable recent success stories backed by R&D in the IT field include [Skype](#), [TransferWise](#), [Lingvist](#), [Starship Technologies](#) and [Guardtime](#).

Estonia is standing out as a **digital society**. We have developed highly innovative and practical solutions for digital **public services** including online tax-declarations (in use since 2000), digital signatures (2000), online voting (2005), digital recipes (2010), and most recently the e-residency (2016) for anyone in the world (you can become an [e-resident](#) of Estonia in order to register your business in Estonia).

[Competence Centres \(8\)](#) are designed to improve the competitiveness of enterprises through strategic cooperation between Estonian science, industry and the public sectors. Main topics are health and food technologies and ICT services.

[Enterprise Estonia](#) promotes business and provides financial assistance, counselling, cooperation opportunities and training for entrepreneurs, research institutions and the public and non-profit sectors.

Funding and Recruitment Opportunities

Research in Estonia is primarily financed on the basis of **quality competition**. Financing comes from the state budget, foreign funds (mostly EU H2020 and other means) and companies. The [Estonian Research Council](#) is the principal funding body of R&D in Estonia, consolidating different grants and types of funding and giving research more visibility within society. There are also several **mobility grants**. [Click here](#) for the funding calls.

As most research is performed in the public universities, most research jobs are also available in public universities. PhD students are regarded as regular students and receive a monthly scholarship.

Important Information for Incoming Researchers

[EURAXESS Estonia](#) provides information and support to international researchers for free. We provide information about **entry conditions**, visas and **residence permits**, Estonia in general, the Estonian research landscape, **job & funding offers**, events for researchers and much more!

There are three Estonian Embassies in Asia – in Beijing, China (serving also Mongolia and Vietnam), New Delhi, India (Myanmar and Sri Lanka) and in Tokyo, Japan (South-Korea). One is to be opened in Thailand soon. [See here for all Estonian foreign representations](#). [4] Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020 “Knowledge-based Estonia”

Research collaboration with ASEAN

Strategy and Key agencies

[Asian Research Centre in Estonia](#) a project based effort by three leading Estonian universities – **Tallinn University, University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology** – to bring together all contemporary Asia related research and activities in Estonia.

The Centre serves as a platform for cross-sector cooperation between a range of actors from academia and civil society to state and entrepreneurs to facilitate knowledge transfer, research and network building, aimed at strengthening the relationship between Estonia and Asia. It is an umbrella for the listed universities' individual research centres on Asia.

Research collaboration between Estonia and ASEAN countries is mostly based on relations between researchers with particular interest on a specific topic and but also through bilateral agreements and through participation in European Union - Asia multilateral cooperation agreements. Many researchers have individual research projects in with Asian partners without institutional collaboration. Partners who are actively seeking for research collaboration with EU institutions and have corresponding experience are preferred as it is easier to collaborate with them.

There are also several state level agreements between the governments of ASEAN countries and Estonia. For example, between the governments of Estonia and **Philippines**, there is an agreement for cultural and educational collaboration (2005); between the governments of Estonia and **Sri Lanka**, agreement for cultural, educational and scientific collaboration (2004); between governments of Estonia and **Thailand**, agreement for cultural and educational collaboration (2012); and between governments of Estonia and **Indonesia**, agreement for cultural collaboration (2002).

Most Asian studies programmes in Estonia are based in [Tallinn University](#). The [Asian Research Centre in Estonia](#) focuses on promoting collaboration with Asian countries and organises various events and seminars.

Funding tools

Funding is key to conducting research on Asia due to the costs of travel (fieldwork, meetings, conferences, etc) involved. Thus most used funding options available are the grants offered by the Estonian Research Council; Cultural Endowment of Estonia; the European Commission's various projects; various EU or US based foundations, including private ones or the funding organizations of various governments (opened occasionally).



See [Estonian Research Council](#) portal for funding calls in Estonia.

All researchers from Asian countries can apply to Estonian Research Council mobility grants.

Examples of successful collaborations with ASEAN

There are examples of successful institutional collaboration with many countries in Southeast Asia. Tallinn University had Estonian Research Council funded a research project on power relations in Myanmar (2011—13); was a part of 7th Framework Programme (SEATIDE; 2013—16) on socio-political inegration in Southeast Asia involving 5 EU and 5 ASEAN institutions. Student and staff exchange is developed through Erasmus Plus with Myanmar's Mandalay University; also new research projects are pending (an ERC grant and Estonian Research Council grant) on Myanmar.

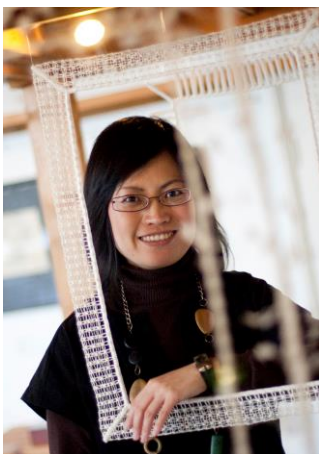
The orthopaedists of the University of Tartu have cooperated with Hue University in Vietnam since 2012 by performing of model operations, conducting seminars and courses.

Authors: Hanna Raig,
EURAXESS Estonia and
AUKE (Centre for Asian
Research in Estonia).



Estonia EU presidency in 2017

Estonia will be holding the EU Council presidency in the second half of 2017. The focal themes for Estonia will be the single and digital markets, the energy union and closer integration of our Eastern partners into Europe. We also want to focus on the promotion of e-solutions and the information society in EU policy areas. See [Estonia EU presidency programme](#).



Dr Nithikul Nilmkulrat

Professor of Textile Design

Head of Department of Textile Design

Estonian Academy of Arts



[Estonian Academy of Arts](#)

Tallinn University of Technology jointly with the University of Lausanne economics and law researchers, and the researchers from the National University of Laos (Laos), Ho Chi Minh City University of Law (Vietnam) and Royal University of Law and Economics (Cambodia) run a Horizon 2020 project „Institutions for Knowledge Intensive Development: Economic and Regulatory Aspects in South-East Asian Transition Economies.“

Interview with researcher from Thailand

1. How did you hear about Estonia and why did you decide to work in Estonia?

I heard about Estonia for the first time when I studied at the University of Arts and Design Helsinki (now Aalto University school of Arts, Design and Architecture) for my MA. After finishing my PhD from Aalto I did my postdoc there, I relocated to the UK to take up the position of Lecturer in Textiles at Loughborough University, School of the Arts. It was a good position as I could do both teaching and research. However, the student number was overwhelming due to the reputation of the Textiles: Innovation and Design programme. It made me be proud of but at the same time it was getting more difficult to manage with time. When I noticed the position of Professor of Textile Design became available at the [Estonian Academy of Arts](#), I therefore gave it a try and got it. It was my choice because I would like to move to the north again as I feel I am familiar with the climate and culture.

2. Name three characteristic things about research work in Estonia or about Estonia in general.

Freedom, flexibility, but limited funding for design and arts research.

3. A message to anyone from your country who is considering research work with Estonian partners or moving to Estonia for work.

If a researcher seeks for a good environment to focus on research, Estonia is a good choice to consider for a number of reasons: 1) people are creative and quite cooperative, 2) the major cities where universities are located have good infrastructure and are of relaxing, cultural environment, 3) good quality of life (although the earning is not very high).