The intriguing case?

Source: European Commission, CORDA data, cut-off date January 1, 2017

Among EU-13 countries, Estonian R&D are doing well on a number of comparative charts per capita – including on getting funding from H2020.

These numbers are a result of an increase since FP7: by now, H2020 has contributed more than the whole FP7 to Estonia.
As always: multiple factors + some coincidences

Factors and coincidences

From researcher’s perspective:

- Head start: early “learning of English” (including learning English)
  - early international evaluations, early publish or perish policy, early need to apply for grants, incl. in English
- Continuing combination of pressure and encouraging networking on many possible levels:
  - various mobility schemes
  - timely introduction of WoS-SSCI-etc. publications as one of the main “currencies” in research
  - scarce and largely project-based funding
  - national grant applications in English, similarities with international calls
  - grant evaluations in English
  - mostly article-based PhD theses, mostly in English
- Specifically FP-related policies and actions
Factors of growing participation under H2020
Estonia’s strategic framework for participation

**National RDI Strategy 2014-2020** “Knowledge-based Estonia” (approved by the Parliament)

→ **Strategic framework document for** Estonia’s participation in the RDI **partnerships of the EU**
  - part of the general strategy’s implementation plan, approved by the Government 2015
  - encompasses Article 185, JPIs, JTIs, KICs of the EIT, FET partnerships, objects on the roadmap of ESFRI, and ERA-NETs

→ **A detailed participation programme** since 2016
  - lists all actual public sector partnerships
  - thus coordinates participation in H2020 instruments

The detailed participation programme
The detailed participation programme (2)

- Since 2016
- Not just for one year, but renewed yearly or as needed
- Enables public sector’s coordinated participation in H2020

Involved parties:
- ETAg
- sectoral ministries, RD institutions, Enterprise Estonia (companies)
- Research Policy Committee (advisory body to Ministry of Education and Research)
- Government in case of large partnerships

Guidelines for the detailed participation programme

**National RDI strategy:**

**Smart specialisation:**

1. Information and communication technology (ICT) – horizontally
2. Health technologies and services
3. More effective use of resources

But also:

**high level and diverse research** in general; serving the interests of **society and economy**; making economy more **knowledge-intensive**; making Estonia **visible in international RDI cooperation** [a number of potentially visible fields are mentioned as examples].

**The strategic framework document for EU partnerships:**

- **tackling of socio-economic problems for which Estonia’s own resources are insufficient** and which require international cooperation; furthering the objectives of the **sectoral development plan**

- furthering the objectives related to the development of the **society, economy and science**; facilitating **capacity building** of R&D institutions and institutions of higher education to serve the interests of the society and economy; **development of competencies** and support to **internationalisation** and research excellence
ETAg’s role

- **ETAg = one central research funding agency** (since 2012), separate from Ministry of Education and Research. Covers both national and international research funding

- **Centralised NCP system** – all based at ETAg; each is specialist in their field

- **Detailed participation programmes** (since 2016)

- **Scientific councillors at sectoral ministries** (mainly since 2015/16)

- **Sectoral ministries as (co)funders in ERA-NET Cofunds** (more than in FP7)

- **Strategic use of EU Structural Funds’ means**

Synergies: the detailed participation programme and the scientific councillors

- **Scientific councillors at sectoral ministries** help to engage ministries
  - Pilots since 2013, by now in most ministries. Partly funded by EU structural funds’ means
  - Participation in preparing the detailed participation programme also helps the ministries to formulate their research priorities
  - Ministries are encouraged to participate in partnerships - particularly ERA-NETs (incl. as co-funders with ETAg)
  - All this and being involved in ERA-NET Cofunds are stepping stones for ministries in international research cooperation and help them to set longer-term research priorities
  - All this has enhanced ministries’ input into Estonian FP9 positions
Strategic use of EU Structural Funds’ means – aiming at synergy with H2020 means

Scientific councillors at sectoral ministries (RITA Programme)

Mobilitas Pluss Programme (10% of all structural fund’s means for RD in Estonia 2014-2020) supports

• ERC application preparation (trainings and study visits)
  + up to 1,5 year support (about 80k€ per year) for applicants who reached the second stage of evaluation, but didn’t receive funding
• EIT KIC partners (about 30k€ per year for up to two years)
• ERA CHAIR projects (up to 200k€)
• ETAg’s participation in ERA-NETs’ non-cofunded calls (2*150k€ per call)

(+ in- and outward mobility grants)

Links to materials in English

http://www.etag.ee/en/cooperation/eu-partnerships/ Description of the strategic framework for Estonia’s participation R&I partnerships of the EU - at different levels, incl. the procedure of drafting the detailed participation programme
http://www.etag.ee/en/funding/partnership-funding/ ERA Chair, ERA-Net, EIT support schemes under Mobilitas Pluss
http://www.etag.ee/en/funding/research-funding/grant-for-applying-for-an-erc-grant Support for applying for an ERC grant
http://www.etag.ee/en/funding/programmes/rita/ About RITA Programme
Thank you!

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