

**THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR  
LANGUAGE AND TECHNOLOGY  
2020-2023**

RULES OF THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR LANGUAGE AND  
TECHNOLOGY

FOR

APPLICANTS AND EXPERT PANEL

Version 2



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## PREFACE

This is the second version of the handbook for the Strategic Research and Development Programme for Language and Technology for Applicants and Expert Panels for the 2020 grant year. The objective of the handbook is to increase the transparency of the process for all parties involved, from the publication of the deadline for submitting applications to the funding decision. The handbook contains the rules of the Strategic Programme and various other useful information such as the rights and obligations of the grant recipients.

For the handbook to serve its purpose, it is important that everyone involved in the process read it in its entirety.

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# 1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR LANGUAGE AND TECHNOLOGY

## 1.1 THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC PROGRAMME

The Strategic Research and Development Programme for Language and Technology (the Strategic Programme) is an open, competitive research and development fund that operates according to the Act on Public Support for Scientific Research (no. 3/2003 with later amendments). The priorities of the Strategic Programme are determined by the Icelandic Science and Technology Policy Council (STPC). The Programme is funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and administered by the Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNÍS).

The Strategic Programme supports projects in language technology that aim to make Icelandic suitable for digital information technology and to promote its use in the field. The Strategic Programme's objective is to facilitate and optimise the usage of new communication technology in

Icelandic society, for the benefit of the public, institutions, and enterprises.

The Programme awards grants in accordance with its defined priorities and based on expert assessment of the quality of the project, the need for the project's deliverables, the competences of the of the individuals carrying out the research, and facilities to carry out the project.

## 1.2 THE STRATEGIC PROGRAMME 2020

Special emphasis is placed on valorisation projects aimed at developing language technology devices, tools and language technology environment for specific situations or usages. Furthermore, the Programme emphasis is placed on projects utilising the infrastructure created in core projects of the [Language Technology Plan for Icelandic 2018-2022](#). Accordingly, applicants need to familiarise themselves with the work plan of the [Language Technology Plan for Icelandic 2018-2022](#), and in particular with the part of the work plan that is supported by Almannarómur. Reference is made to Chapter 2 of the work plan (pp. 36-124), which is development of infrastructure of the language technology plan and is divided into five core projects:

- Speech recognition (Chapter 2.1)
- Speech synthesis (Chapter 2.2)
- Machine translation (Chapter 2.3)
- Language checking (Chapter 2.4)
- Language resources (Chapter 2.5)

The Strategic Programme call is for both small and large projects.

Cooperation between enterprises and institutions that intend to pursue technological development in language technology is encouraged.

Furthermore, cooperation between those working on the development of language technology infrastructures is also encouraged (c.f. the core projects of the [Language Technology Plan for Icelandic 2018-2022](#)).

### 1.3 TIMELINE

The deadline for applications to the Strategic Programme is 15 October 2020 and the call will be published at least 6 weeks prior the deadline.

### 1.4 BOARD OF THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture appoints the six-member Board of the Strategic Research Programme. Three members are selected from the Board of Directors of the Icelandic Research Fund and three members of the Board of Directors from the Technology Development Fund. When appointed, the [names of the Board members](#) are published on the Rannís website. The Board issues rules and guidelines for the Strategic Programme and makes funding decisions based on the evaluations by the Expert Panels.

### 1.5 GENERAL INFORMATION

General enquiries about the Strategic Programme and applications under review should be directed to the expert staff members of the Strategic Programme at Rannís. The staff of Rannís provides information and assistance on weekdays from 9:00 – 16:00.

Applicants may not under any circumstances contact members of the Expert Panels or members of the Board of the Strategic Programme during the review process. If an applicant contacts a member of an Expert Panels or the Board regarding an application, the application will be removed from the review process.

### 1.6 ETHICS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

The Members of the Board of the Strategic Programme, Expert Panels, the expert staff of the Strategic Programme, and others who administer programme applications are bound by strict confidentiality. Applications, including all enclosed material and review sheets, are treated as confidential information. The confidential

information is not to be used for any purpose other than the review process and may not be disclosed, published, or otherwise made available to third parties. No copies of any confidential information shall be made available in any format except for purposes of review. After completion of the review, a copy of the application and review documents will be stored in the electronic registry of Rannís in accordance with the Regulation on electronic records management. Members of the Board, the Expert Panels and Rannís staff are aware of that any disclosure or misuse of any of this confidential information may cause the owner irreversible harm.

### 1.7 RULES REGARDING CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members of the Programme Board and the Expert Panels are disqualified from reviewing an application if any of the following conditions apply:

- General disqualification reasons listed in the [Administrative Procedures Act No. 37/1993](#).
- Close friendship, family ties or affinity by marriage between an Expert Panel member or a Board member and an applicant.
- Personal conflicts exist between an Expert Panel member or a Board member and an applicant.
- If an Expert Panel member or a Board member is in a professional competition or in close collaboration with the applicant.
- Members of the Expert Panels cannot be principal investigators of an application to the Programme.
- If a Board member is a party to an application to the Strategic Programme, that Board member must resign from their role on the Board for the relevant grant year and a deputy Board member will take their place.

Expert Panel members and Board members who are considered disqualified pursuant to the above must recuse themselves from meetings where the relevant application is considered and a decision

about the grant is taken. This shall be recorded in the minutes of meetings.

If a member of the Board or a member of an Expert Panel is employed by an applicant, the intimacy of the relationship between the employee that is involved in the application process and the directors of the relevant body must be assessed. This type of relationship does not automatically lead to disqualification due to conflict of interests.

Members of the Board and the Expert Panels are responsible for identifying circumstances which might create a conflict of interests that could influence their judgment of applications submitted to the Strategic Programme.

### 1.8 CODE OF CONDUCT AND APPROPRIATE LICENSES

The applicant shall indicate in the application if there are aspects of the project which need to be examined specifically against the general code of ethics. In such cases, it is imperative to clarify what the ethical components entail and how they will be addressed. Appropriate licenses must be available (e.g. [Science Ethics Committee](#), [Privacy](#), etc.). If a license application is still pending by the Programme application deadline it should be stated in the application. As soon as the license is obtained, it should be submitted to the expert staff of the Strategic Programme. If the license will not be obtained, the expert staff should be notified. A grant agreement is not concluded until necessary licenses have been obtained.

The applicant must comply with international rules and regulations where applicable, for example on use of patents.

### 1.9 MISCONDUCT

Should suspicion arise of misconduct, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misappropriation in connection with an application or a funded project, during or after the grant period, the relevant institute/enterprise and the Board of the Strategic Programme will be notified without exception.

Suspicion of misconduct during the review process will result in the withdrawal of an application from the process during investigation. Should suspicion of misconduct be deemed baseless, the application will be returned to the review process. If misconduct is proven, the application will be removed from the review process and the applicant institute/enterprise will be responsible for taking appropriate actions.

The Board of the Strategic Programme can also initiate an independent investigation into accusations of misconduct.

If misconduct is discovered during the application phase, during or after the funding period the Board Strategic Programme may decide on a specific penalty such as a partial or full repayment of the grant or barring the applicant from submitting future applications to the Programme.

### 1.10 OPEN ACCESS TO RESULTS

According to the Act on Public Support for Scientific Research no. 3/2003 with later amendments, results of research funded by public funds shall be published through open access. The above-mentioned law on open access only applies to the publication of results in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Grant recipients should mention the Strategic Programme and the grant number in all publications of the results in the following manner: *“This work was supported by The Icelandic Strategic Research and Development Programme for Language and Technology, grant number...”*.

## 2 INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Only applications received before the submission deadline through the Rannís electronic application system are accepted.

International collaboration in projects is encouraged but grants will only be paid into bank accounts of Icelandic institutes or enterprises. Applicants are institutions or enterprises, but principal investigators are individuals (experts, researchers, etc.). Accounting responsibility therefore lies with the relevant institutions or

enterprises. The application must also specify the person who can confirm the obligations undertaken by the institution or enterprise as stated in the application (CEO, director, department manager, division manager or equivalent).

Applications must meet all the eligibility requirements in order to be reviewed by experts. If it is discovered during the review process that one or more conditions are not met, the application will be withdrawn from the review process.

Principal Investigator of large application which qualify for funding may be invited to a meeting to present the project in more details.

## 2.1 SCOPE

The maximum grant amount for a project is ISK 70 million but the call is for both large and small projects.

The maximum project period is 36 months. Each grant agreement is for one year at a time and payment arrangements are based on the submission of progress reports.

The grant from the Strategic Programme may fund up to 85% of the total project cost for a university or a research institute.

For the project costs of companies, the rules of the Technology Development Fund on counter-contributions apply, see Appendix 2.

## 2.2 APPROVED EXPENSES

### 2.2.1 SALARY COSTS

Grants awarded by the Strategic Programme may be used for the salaries of scientists, project managers, graduate students, and experts. Not all participants need to be named when an application is submitted, but the work contribution of all participants who are to receive payments must be specified in the application. The grants may not be used to pay overtime costs or salaries to individuals who already receive full salaries for other activities.

### 2.2.2 OPERATING COSTS

It is possible to apply for expenses for necessary resources for the project, but not for overhead costs and facilities, including general office equipment such as computers. All operating expenses must be reported in the box below the table in the online application system. Unexplained costs will not be accepted for reimbursement.

Expenses for the purchase of tools and equipment may be registered as operating costs for up to ISK 2 million for each application. An offer from the seller / manufacturer for the purchase of equipment must accompany the application.

### 2.2.3 TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

Here, the total cost of travel necessary for the progress of the project shall be entered. The explanatory notes shall state the reasons for all trips and in what way they are related to the project.

### 2.2.4 CONTRACTED SERVICES

This section includes work which is not carried out by project participants but is necessary for its progress. All costs for purchased services must be accounted for in the box below the table in the application system.

It is not possible to apply for overheads, indirect costs, or facilities for purchased services.

### 2.2.5 OVERHEADS AND FACILITIES

It is possible to request for up to 25% of the total cost, except for purchased services, for overheads, indirect costs, and facilities. These are office and research facilities expense such rent, heating, electricity, management of business units, book and periodicals purchases, purchases and operation of computer equipment and related purchases. The total amount for overhead, indirect costs and facilities shall be included in the total amount of the requested grant which is limited to ISK 70 million.

## 2.3 WHAT AN APPLICATION SHOULD ENTAIL

To be considered eligible, an application must contain:

- project description using the Strategic Fund's template
- applicant CV

The following must be included where applicable:

- declaration of cooperation if other participants are registered in the application

The expert review of an application is based solely on the information provided in the application and its annexes. **No documents will be accepted after the application deadline. Applications where the correct project description template is not used will be rejected.** This can happen at any time during the review process.

### Project description

Use a custom form (template) which can be found in the application system under project description.

The template uses 12 pt. Times/Times New Roman font with a line spacing of 1.5 and 2.5 cm margin. These settings should not be changed.

The project description is divided into the following sections which may not be changed:

- 1) The project objectives and novelty
- 2) Current state of knowledge in the field and links to the core projects of the [Language Technology Plan for Icelandic 2018-2022](#)
- 3) Project management (time and work schedule), open source software and CLARIN standards
- 4) Milestones and outputs
- 5) Cooperation (domestic / international)
- 6) Contribution of doctoral and master students (if applicable)
- 7) The project impacts
- 8) Possible publication of results (including publication in open access)

- 9) Continuation of the project and further development of outputs after the funding period.

**To ensure equal treatment of all applicants, applications where the correct form and template are not used are rejected.**

The project description can be a maximum of 15 pages. A cover page and a table of content page may be added. Consequently, the application system will accept a 17-page PDF file to be uploaded (excluding bibliography).

Additional background materials may be sent, but the members of the Expert Panels are not required to familiarise themselves with any such materials.

To facilitate the review of an application, it is important that the project description is of high quality. Factors to be considered in the evaluation are listed in annex 1. Keep the following in mind:

- It is important that the project has clearly defined objectives and that the project is divided into well-defined sections of work. Main milestones must be described in the time and work schedule which distinguish between the phases of the project.
- Each work section must be described separately. Connections to other work sections in the project and the estimated time dedicated to each work section must be described.
- The methods applied and why they are applied in each instance must be clarified.
- Describe collaborations within the project, such as whether there is active collaboration between universities, schools, institutions, and companies. International cooperation in the project should be described.
- If applicable, inform which parts of the project are doctoral or master projects, at which school and department the students are studying and what their contribution to the project entails.
- Describe and rationalise the foreseen benefits of optimisation obtained from project results.

The results of projects are measurable "units" deriving from the project.

- Describe how project results will be presented and published in professional journals, reports, conferences, etc. Describe if and how the ownership of the results will be protected. Explain how the law on open access to project results will be applied.
- Applicants should describe to which extent the project's outputs will be open source, and how CLARIN standards will be considered. Also, it should be stated if, and then how, the ownership of the results will be protected.
- If applicable, ethical components should be clarified and how compliance with laws and regulations on privacy will be ensured.

### ***Curriculum vitae***

A curriculum vitae (CV) shall include information on the current status of the applicant. It shall also include information on the applicant's education and training; previous positions; awards / prizes; list of publications, completed software, patents, etc. The CVs should be concise; it is unnecessary to mention items that are not relevant to the evaluation of the application.

### ***Statement of cooperation***

Signed confirmation by those registered as "other participants" in the application stating their role in the project.

Other participants do not need to submit such a confirmation, as their CV accompanies the application and they will be notified once the application is submitted.

Applicants are encouraged to read Chapter 3 - Review Process and evaluation criteria (Annex 1) followed by the Expert Panels is set out.

Applications are screened before they are forwarded to the Expert Panels. Incomplete applications and application which do not comply with the rules of the Strategic Programme are

rejected and the relevant applicants are informed of that outcome.

## **3 REVIEW PROCESS**

### **3.1 APPOINTMENT OF EXPERT PANEL**

The Board of the Strategic Programme appoints Expert Panel with at least 3 members and at least one them shall be employed outside Iceland. When the Expert Panel members are appointed, care is taken to ensure that the gender ratio is as equal as possible.

The Board of the Strategic Programme appoints one member of the Expert Panels as its chairperson. The chair is responsible, with the assistance of the Panel supervisor, for coordinating the work of the Panel and that the work complies with the Strategic Programme's policy and objective and general Code of Ethics. Once appointed, the names of the Expert Panel members are published on the Programme webpage on the Rannís website.

### **3.2 THE ROLE OF THE EXPERT PANEL**

The role of the Expert Panels is to review all applications submitted to the Strategic Programme. The Expert Panels can, if needed, seek an opinion of an external expert. The same rules regarding conflict of interests and disqualification apply to external experts as to members of the Expert Panels.

The Expert Panels processes each application with a reasoned written report and prioritises the applications based on expert evaluation.

### **3.3 THE REVIEW PROCESS**

Applications received by the Programme are divided between the members of the Expert Panels. Three members within the Expert Panels are assigned for each application, but all members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with all the applications.

Once all the applications have been reviewed by the assigned members of the Expert Panels, a review

report is drafted. The Expert Panel then meets at the premises of Rannís to discuss all applications and deliberate on their ranking. Applicants will receive the Expert Panels review report once the Board of the Strategic Programme has decided on grant allocation for the year.

The evaluation criteria can be found in Annex 1.

## 4 GRANT AWARDED

### 4.1 FUNDING DECISION

When the Expert Panels have finalised their review, the Chair of the Panel meets with the Board of the Strategic Programme and presents the review process and whether any issues have arisen concerning the evaluation of applications. Having received the review of the Expert Panel, the Board of the Strategic Programme decides on grant funding. In addition to the expert evaluation submitted by the Expert Panel, the Board of the Strategic Programme shall base its appraisal on the Science and Technology Policy Council's 2017-2019 policy and the financial contributions to the Programme. Once the allocation is decided, applicants receive a reply letter with a final assessment by the Expert Panel.

Grant decisions are published on the Rannís website.

The Board decisions are final. According to Article 4 of Act No 3/2003, the Board's decisions on funding are not subject to administrative complaints.

### 4.2 GRANT AGREEMENT

Rannís completes grant agreements with the grant recipients on behalf of the Strategic Programme for one year at a time. An agreement must be concluded within 2 months of the notification of the grant, otherwise the grant will be cancelled. It is possible to request a prolonged deadline to conclude an agreement, but the request must be made well in advance. By 1 January 2021, all grants for which grant agreements have not been concluded are written off.

### 4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF PAYMENTS FOR FUNDED PROJECTS

- First payment (40%) upon signing the grant agreement.
- Second payment (40%) 6 months after the signing of the grant agreement.
- Third payment (20%) upon approval of the progress/final report.

### 4.4 REPORTS

The project principal investigator is responsible for submitting progress reports in accordance with the agreement. The reports are reviewed by the Strategic Programme's expert staff at Rannís who submit recommendations to the Board on how to continue support to the project. The Strategic Programme's expert staff may request further information and explanations from the beneficiaries and, if needed, consult with the Expert Panels. The final payment, 20%, is paid upon approval of the report. If a report is not approved, the Board of the Strategic Programme may cancel the grant agreement with the grant recipient and request a refund of paid grants. The final report shall state the progress of the project, results, and outcomes. A detailed cost statement (itemised table and a list of transfers) must accompany the report and any deviations from the original plan must be explained. Templates for annual reports and final reports can be found on the Strategic Programme's website.

**Annex 1**

**Assessment criteria**

**THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
FOR ICELANDIC LANGUAGE and TECHNOLOGY  
(SRDP-LT) 2020**

EVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWERS

**Introduction**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the questions below and on the following criteria:

- 1) Relevance to core projects in Language Technology Plan for Icelandic 2018-2022 and state of the art
- 2) Scope/generalality
- 3) Need
- 4) Likelihood of project meeting its proposed target

Each question weighs equally towards a final score.

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1. Relevance to core projects in Language Technology Plan for Icelandic 2018-2022 and state of the art

1-A. Relevance to core projects in Language Technology Plan for Icelandic 2018-2022

- (1) Irrelevant
- (2) Somewhat relevant
- (3) Rather relevant
- (4) Truly relevant
- (5) relevant

1-B. Description of state of the art

- (1) Minimal
- (2) Limited
- (3) Good
- (4) Particularly good
- (5) Outstanding

## 2. SCOPE / GENERALITY

*2-A. How likely is the proposed work to result in increased use of the Icelandic language in information technology systems?*

- (1) Not likely
- (2) Somewhat likely
- (3) Rather likely
- (4) Highly likely
- (5) Exceptional likely

*2-B. Is the output of the project likely to be of general-purpose?*

- (1) Not likely
- (2) Somewhat likely
- (3) Rather likely
- (4) Highly likely
- (5) Exceptional likely

*2-C. What is the potential of the work for producing something that will be used by, or directly benefit, many users?*

- (1) Minimal
- (2) Limited
- (3) Good
- (4) Particularly good
- (5) Outstanding

## 3. NEED

*How much potential does the project have to increase the use of the Icelandic language in technology / systems?*

- (1) Minimal
- (2) Limited
- (3) Good
- (4) Particularly good
- (5) Outstanding

## 4. LIKELIHOOD OF PROJECT MEETING ITS PROPOSED TARGET

*4-A. Considering the stated goals and objectives, is the proposed work plan and timeline adequate and well described?*

- (1) Not well
- (2) Somewhat well
- (3) Rather well
- (4) Very well
- (5) Exceptional well

*4-B. How well do the skills of the team and the available resources match the stated goals and objectives of the project proposal?*

- (1) Not well
- (2) Somewhat well
- (3) Rather well
- (4) Very well
- (5) Exceptional well

## Annex 2

### Rules on matching funds

For a university or research institute, a grant from the Strategic Programme can amount to a maximum of 85% of the total project cost.

For companies, the rules of the Technology Development Fund on match funding apply.

Requirements for match funding vary depending on the size of the company, the type of applicant and the type of project, see: Table 1. The accounted cost of the project must be at least as high as the grant amount provided for the project. An application is required to specify how the match fund will be made.

Table 1: Minimum requirement for matching funding from the applicant of the total cost of the project in each grant year. Definitions of types of projects can be found in the guidelines of the EFTA Surveillance Authority.

	Small enterprises	Medium size enterprises	Large enterprises
Industrial research	30%	40%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ subject to effective cooperation between enterprises (in the case of a large enterprise, cross-border cooperation or with at least one small or medium-sized enterprises) or between an enterprise and a research institute; or</li> <li>○ subject to extensive dissemination of results</li> </ul>	20%	25%	35%
Development	55%	65%	75%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ subject to effective cooperation between enterprises (in the case of a large enterprise, cross-border cooperation or with at least one small or medium-sized enterprises) or between an enterprise and a research institute; or</li> <li>○ subject to extensive dissemination of results</li> </ul>	40%	50%	60%