Overview of Regulation: Large and Small Project Support (2023–2027)

Sheet 1: General Information

This regulation establishes the conditions and procedures for granting support to large and small projects under the EU Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023–2027, intervention 0.3 “Innovation cooperation projects – EIP operational group projects”. It was adopted by the Minister of Regional and Agricultural Affairs (13.08.2025, No. 72) and entered into force on 18.08.2025.

Purpose: To enable agricultural and forestry enterprises to develop innovative solutions, including along the supply chain, focusing on higher added-value products, services, and technologies that improve competitiveness.

Support type: Provided as state aid or de minimis aid depending on project nature and previous aid received.

Sheet 2: Eligible Applicants and Cooperation

Applicants: • Entrepreneurs registered under the Estonian Commercial Code in specific agricultural, forestry, and food production sectors (EMTAK codes). • For small projects: one or several enterprises, non-profit associations, cooperatives, or land improvement associations. • For large projects: at least three independent applicants working under a cooperation agreement. • Applicants must involve at least one research/development partner (university, research institute).

Additional conditions: • Applicants must meet financial and legal eligibility requirements (no significant tax debts, no bankruptcy, not under liquidation). • Minimum turnover requirement: at least €20,000 from marketed production in the year prior to application.

Transnational cooperation: Yes, allowed. Projects may involve cross-border partners. At least two partners from different countries must participate, with clearly divided costs. Estonian applicants can only receive support for activities carried out in Estonia. One partner acts as lead coordinator.

Sheet 3: Supported Activities and Costs

Supported activities: • Applied research and product development. • Feasibility studies. • First-time intellectual property protection. • Consulting related to research, development, or feasibility. • Literature reviews linked to the project.

Not supported: Stand-alone research without practical output, promotional activities, business model creation, websites, general consulting, or purely desk research.

Funding rates: • Up to 80% of eligible costs. • Max €350,000 for small projects; €800,000 for large projects. • Special rules apply for state aid (depending on company size). • Extra +15% co-financing available for effective collaboration or wide dissemination of results.

Eligible costs: • Salaries (up to 15% of total eligible costs). • Materials, services, works necessary for project. • Dissemination of results. • Indirect costs up to 15% of staff costs (if not state aid). Not eligible: investments in machinery/buildings, VAT (if refundable), training, marketing, land or property acquisition, fines, taxes, normal operational costs.

Sheet 4: Application and Implementation

Application: Submitted electronically via PRIA e-service during announced calls. Applications must include project plan, budget, cooperation agreements, partner CVs, and proof of cost reasonableness.

Evaluation: • Managed by PRIA. • Projects scored on: (1) Relevance and contribution to objectives (40%), (2) Applicant's capacity and team competence (35%), (3) Project quality (25%). • Minimum requirements: overall score ≥2.5 and ≥2 points in each category.

Implementation: • Project duration up to 42 months, but no later than June 30, 2029. • Must start within 30 days after approval. • Mid-term and final reports required. • Payments made based on actual eligible costs. • PRIA may also pre-finance under certain conditions.

Obligations: Beneficiaries must cooperate with audits, maintain separate accounts for project costs, disseminate results, and acknowledge EAFRD funding in communications.