

Estonia, a very small and agile country with networks in place instead of rigid structures, organised a whole-of-government response to COVID-19 with scientific guidance from a scientific advisory board – comprising professors from the University of Tartu, doctors from regional hospitals and a representative of the National Institute of Health Development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be the most significant disruption to health systems in recent decades. It has shed light on the vulnerabilities and challenges within countries' emergency preparedness strategies and on their ability to provide healthcare services to their populations. In response to the enduring effects of the pandemic, Estonia is implementing policies to fortify its preparedness for future shocks.

The Emergency Act in Estonia, that provides the legal framework for managing emergencies, including public health emergencies, in Estonia and grants authorities certain powers and responsibilities to effectively respond to crises and ensure coordination across sectors. See <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/526072023006/consolide>. The Act also allows the government to issue additional regulations, guidelines, and orders to manage specific emergencies. The Act as amended in 2022, is compliant with Art. 6 of the EU Regulation on Serious Cross-border Health Threats.

Estonia has also the "Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Act" that establishes the legal framework for communicable disease prevention and control measures at the national level. It also links with policies and regulations at the intermediate public health response level to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to disease control see <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/515032023009/consolide>.

Immunisation rates in Estonia are persistently lower than the EU averages. Estonia is making some progress on tackling challenges such as antimicrobial resistance and climate change. Progress is also being made on crises that are unfolding at a slower pace, such as antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and climate change. Antibiotic consumption in the community is low in Estonia compared to other European countries. However, consumption of broad-spectrum antibiotics is high and rising, indicating a need to review prescribing patterns (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2022).

While the rate of AMR is low in Estonia compared to other European countries, multisectoral collaboration between the health, veterinary and agricultural sectors is also weaker (WHO Regional Office for Europe/ECDC, 2022). To date, Estonia is not enrolled in the WHO Global AMR Surveillance System.

The climate change adaptation plan has been merged with the environmental strategy to form the Environmental Development Plan 2030 (Ministry of the Environment, 2023). Health goals of this strategy focus on monitoring, risk management and rescue capacity. (from State of Health in the EU - Estonia - Country Health Profile 2021

https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-12/2021_chp_et_english.pdf and State of Health in the EU - Estonia - Country Health Profile 2023 https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-12/2023_chp_ee_english.pdf)

In the context of One Health strategic framework, Estonia has recently published the [Estonian National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance](#) that takes into account the One Health approach.

In the context of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and what Estonia has done so far, several assessments have been concluded in the context of the readiness for different types of health crises that also take into account pandemic preparedness:

- in 2023 the [WHO Joint External Evaluation](#) was undertaken. The main objective of the assessment was to compile a comprehensive array of evidence and other relevant insights that Estonia could later incorporate into a potential National Action Plan for Health Security;
- in 2024 a similar [public health emergency assessment](#) was undertaken that is now mandatory with regular intervals for all EU countries according to the [Regulation \(EU\) 2022/2371 on SCBTH](#);
- Republic of Estonia Health Board also compiled all the [main learning points of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) into one comprehensive document.

R&I Policies and Strategies

The information is not exhaustive and should be updated regularly.

Country has a dedicated strategy for research and innovation related to pandemic threat? No

Country has an open science portal with information on publicly financed scientific research? Yes

R&I portal www.etis.ee

Country has R&I webpage on COVID-19; AMR; Mpox

Website open science/ open data initiative with respect to pandemic threats, such as COVID-19 open

Name	URL	Short Description
AMR	https://terviseamet.ee/nakkushaigused/info-nakkushaiguste-kohta/antimikroobne-resistentsus-amr	
Estonian open data portal	https://avaandmed.eesti.ee/	Estonia is small and there is no specific databases. All data are in one storage
Health Board Coronavirus dataset	https://www.terviseamet.ee/nakkushaigused/covid-19	
Infectious disease research	https://www.tai.ee/et/teadustoo/teadustoo-ulevaade/nakkushaiguste-uuringud	
Mpox	https://www.terviseamet.ee/nakkushaigused/ahvirouged	
Statistical data on the incidence of infectious diseases	https://www.terviseamet.ee/nakkushaigused/statistika	
Country has coordinating structures to link public health needs and research needs?	Yes, Estonia has an interministerial coordinating network, that involves all bodies, as well as there is a scientific advisory committee at the Ministry of Social Affairs	

R&I Infrastructures, Initiatives and Clinical Trials The initiatives are listed in alphabetical order, are not exhaustive and should be updated regularly

Country has the following research infrastructure for infectious diseases and outbreaks available, or under construction

Name Infrastructure	Type Infrastructure	URL	Max Capacity	Available for	Open to
Estonian Compute Infrastructure (ETAIS) - PARI - Nordic Pandemic Research Infrastructure		https://neic.no/pari/			
Health Board Public Health Laboratory	Open genome deposits (viruses, bacteria, AMR)	https://terviseamet.ee/labor/rahvatervise-labor		Yes	Yes
Health Board Public Health Laboratory	BSL3	https://terviseamet.ee/labor/rahvatervise-labor		Yes	Yes
National Centre for Laboratory Research and Risk Assessment		https://labris.agri.ee/en/food-safety/national-reference-laboratory		Yes	Yes
SIME ABSL3 laboratory (Institute of Biomedicine and Translational Medicine)		https://biomeditsiin.ut.ee/en/content/bsl-laboratories-maarjamoisa-field			
Tartu University Hospital	Clinical Trials	https://www.kliinikum.ee/en/research-and-teaching/clinical-research-centre/		Yes	Yes
University of Tartu	BSL3	https://tuit.ut.ee/et/sisu/bioohutuse-tuumiklabor-absl3		Yes	Yes

Country supporting the participation to the following ESFRI initiatives **BBMRI; EATRIS; ELIXIR**

Website network of clinical trials (e.g. to facilitate the access to clinical trials) the country is involved in [Clinical Research Centre - Tartu Ülikooli Kliinikum](#)

Budget mobilisation mechanisms and funding sources *The information is not exhaustive and should be updated regularly.*

Basic Research

url www.etag.ee
www.etis.ee .

source of funding Public (research) agencies

Applied Research

url www.etag.ee and all ministries

funding for applied research accessible for industry? Yes

source of funding Public (research) agencies

Translational Research

url www.etag.ee

funding accessible for industry? Yes

source of funding Public (research) agencies

Clinical Research (in general)

url www.etag.ee

funding accessible for industry? Yes

source of funding Public (research) agencies

phase funded? Phase 2; Phase 3; Phase 4

Clinical Research (in pandemic phase)

url <https://ravimiamet.ee/>

accessible for industry? Yes

source of funding Public (research) agencies

phase funded ? Phase 2; Phase 3; Phase 4

Innovation Projects

url www.eas.ee/en

funding for innovation projects accessible for industry?

source of funding Public (research) agencies

Flexible funding in case of emergency possible

R&I actors, authorities and activated processes that are activated in case of a health threat

The information is not exhaustive and should be updated regularly.

R&I actors, authorities and
processes activated

ministries involved in case of an outbreak; mobilisation processes of research forces; (existing) national or regional structures that advise governments on R&I during emergencies; administrative procedures to diminish the administrative burden for researchers and funding administrations; incentives ensuring qualitative scientific dissemination during a crisis; international scientific collaboration in case of an outbreak

Name	Description	url
all ministries	fund applied policy related R&D	
Emergency Act	Provides the legal framework for managing emergencies, including public health emergencies, in Estonia. It grants authorities certain powers and responsibilities to effectively respond to crises and ensure coordination across sectors. The Act also allows the government to issue additional regulations, guidelines, and orders to manage specific emergencies	https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/526072023006/consolide
Enterprise Estonia	funds R&D support for enterprises	www.eas.ee/en

Estonian Research Council (ETAG)	ETAG is the only research funding body in Estonia; funds all types R&D; Estonian Research Council facilitates and funds research activities across various disciplines to promote scientific excellence and innovation within Estonia	https://www.etag.ee/en/estonian-research-council/
Estonian Stockpiling Agency (Eesti Varude Keskus)	Estonian Stockpiling Agency is a state-owned strategic commercial undertaking that is responsible for maintaining an operation stockpile required for responding to emergencies and ensuring security of supply, national security, and subsistence to the population, as well as the establishment and deployment of infrastructure.	https://varudekeskus.ee/en
Health Insurance Fund (Tervisekassa)	Responsible for administering the national health insurance system, collecting contributions, and providing access to healthcare services for insured individuals	https://www.tervisekassa.ee/en
Ministry of Education and Research	prepares national R&D development plans; submits them to the (parliament): approves national R&D programmes; ensures the cooperation between the ministries and enacts legislation.	https://hm.ee/en
Ministry of social affairs	Responsible for developing and implementing social policies, healthcare, and welfare programs to promote the well-being and social protection of the population	https://sm.ee/en
National Institute for Health Development (TAI)	Focused on public health research, health promotion, and the development of health policies and strategies to improve the well-being of the population	https://tai.ee/en
State Agency of Medicines (Ravimiamet)	State Agency of Medicines is a governmental body under the Ministry of Social Affairs. Its main responsibility is the protection and promotion of public and animal health, through the supervision of medicines for human and veterinary use. Responsible for regulating and overseeing the safety, quality, and effectiveness of medicines and medical devices in the country	https://ravimiamet.ee/
The Health Board (Terviseamet)	Competent authority for Surveillance, prevention, and control of communicable diseases, risk analysis in epidemiology. Responsible for public health and healthcare-related matters, including disease control, health promotion, healthcare quality oversight, and management of health emergencies	https://www.terviseamet.ee/en

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