

SWOT analysis of the Institute of the Estonian Language (IEL), 10.05.2017

R&D activities		
The Institute has a clear responsibility to take care of the development of the Estonian language.		
	Short description	Remarks/Commentary
Strengths		
	The Institute of the Estonian Language is a centre of Estonian studies and development with strong and long-term traditions. 2017 is its 70th anniversary.	Long-term operation as an independent institution has brought the Institute an Estonia-wide reputation as the centre of Estonian studies (see the Corporate image Survey by TNS Emor, 2015).
	Currently, the Institute has one Institutional Research Funding and one Personal Research Funding. The Institute has the scientific competence to apply for additional research funding (14 PhDs, 8 doctoral students, 9 MAs). When applying for baseline grants, the Institute has mainly considered the needs of development activities: dictionary compilation, the fostering of language (corpus) planning, speech processing. The target of the current Institutional Research Funding “Speech styles, sentence prosody, phonological variation: description, theory and modelling (2015–2020)” has a direct application in synthetic speech systems.	Despite the very good ratings received from peer reviewers, the latest Personal Research Funding applications have remained unfunded due to lack of money.
	The Institute of the Estonian Language deals with speech studies and with the development of speech technology, in which it plays a key role in Estonia. In the past decade the analysis and recognition of emotional speech (note the defence dimension) has risen to the fore. We have the necessary infrastructure for speech processing.	
	The Institute of the Estonian Language participates in the Centre of Estonian Language Resources, which is a consortium designed to provide access to digital resources and technology concerning the Estonian language. The major resources of the Institute are (online) dictionaries, termbases, systems to compile and manage those dictionaries and termbases, speech processing software and speech corpora (e.g. software for speech synthesis, Estonian Emotional Speech Corpus).	
	The Institute of the Estonian Language compiles, collects and upgrades dictionaries and language archives of national importance.	Those activities do not match the key objectives of either university, nor are they noted for scientific value in the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS). Since the autumn of 2015, the Institute of the Estonian Language is the sole compiler of major dictionaries in Estonia. The name of the Institute of the Estonian Language on title pages and on the web has been a mark of quality.
	The Institute deals with language maintenance and corpus planning (incl. expert linguistic assessments), and coordinates the field in Estonia.	Those tasks do not match the key objectives of either university, nor are they noted for scientific value in the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS).
	The Institute of the Estonian Language is in charge of terminology work all over Estonia.	In 2015 the termbases Esterm and Militerm (together with working versions) were taken over from State Registers and Infosystems to be managed by the Institute.
	One of the tasks of the Institute is to guarantee the norms for standard Estonian. The Institute of the Estonian Language provides free public linguistic advice (incl. on names and special terms), deals with language maintenance and corpus planning (incl. linguistic expert assessments).	According to law, the norms are established by the latest edition of the Dictionary of Standard Estonian, written at the Institute (see “The Rules for the application of the norms of Standard Estonian”, RT I, 14.06.2011, 3).
	The Institute of the Estonian Language serves as the Office of Onomastic Expertise (RTL 2004, 87, 1376 ; RTL 2005, 28, 397). Its task is to provide expert assessments on names and conduct studies targeted at place names.	

	The Institute of the Estonian Language has the competence to use modern digital solutions in any task.	
Weaknesses		
	Project-based funding is precarious. Due to a lack of money, quite excellent applications have been turned down, which complicates budgeting. Also, the Institute has lost a number of highly qualified specialists (incl. PhDs) for the same reason.	The Institute applies for national and EU projects. As at the end of 2016, the institute hosts 3 EU projects and in 2017 the Institute applied for two more EU projects.
	Research in Estonia has become project-based, although Institutional Research Funding should support and express the strategic aims of a research institution.	No applications for Institutional Research Funding were accepted either in 2015 or 2016.
	The sustainability of the results gained by language technological projects is at risk due to the lack of funding for maintenance and development.	There is no national mechanism to guarantee the maintenance and development of the software and language technological systems created within projects.
	Financial constraints prevent the recruitment of young professionals (MA, PhD graduates), despite their availability and keen interest.	The institute is open to trainee programmes.
Opportunities		
	New development initiatives, such as the development of The Estonian Centre for Applied Linguistics at the Institute, its principal activities including (1) the development of placement tests in Estonian language proficiency and (2) the creation of an e-environment for tests (in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research and the Innove Foundation).	Systematic development of placement tests in Estonian language proficiency is still an unfilled niche in Estonia.
	Options of smart specialisation: Some business contacts have been developed.	The current programmes (e.g. speech technology) fail to set high priorities for applications targeted at smart specialisation. So far, only 4 of the 38 projects of integrated software have received funding (2 of the 4 were Institute projects).
	Collection of major bilingual dictionaries in the Institute's databases and provision for free access.	In June, 2015 the Institute signed an agreement with Valgus Publishers on the transfer of the manuscripts of major bilingual dictionaries to be collected in the Institute's databases. The agreement covers the unfinished manuscripts (in Word format) of the following nine dictionaries: French-Estonian, Estonian -French, Estonian-Swedish, Swedish-Estonian, Estonian-German, German-Estonian, Spanish-Estonian, Italian-Estonian and Finnish-Estonian. At the Institute the manuscripts will be converted to database (EELex) format to make possible their further online editing and free access when ready.
	Creation of a new dictionary writing and editing system and a web environment.	An application for the programme " Support for the Modernisation of the Research Equipment of Research Institutions " has been submitted.
	Modernization of infrastructure and setting up a cloud service.	
Threats		
	Dependence on possible administrative reforms. Research management could suffer at the expense of commercial considerations.	The Institute of the Estonian Language offers public services and public goods.
	The current system of research funding does not favour inter-agency joint research.	
	Work planning is hampered by the late arrival of a precise budget (end of January – February).	