

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING THE HUMAN RESOURCE SURVEY OF THE ESTONIAN MILITARY ACADEMY**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **1. Source documents**

- 1.1. Estonian Ministry of Defence research and innovation policy (Directive No. 66 of the Minister of Defence of 24 March 2022).
- 1.2. Development plan for the Ministry of Defence area of governance for 2023–2026.
- 1.3. Research and development project “Human resource survey in the Estonian Defence Forces” (registered 5 December 2017, No. KVÜÕA-0.1-2.7/17/49393).
- 1.4. Personal data processing and protection policy of the Estonian Defence Forces (Directive No. 52 of the Commander of Estonian Defence Forces of 26 February 2019).
- 1.5. Regulations for managing information in the Estonian Defence Forces (Directive No. 131 of the Commander of Estonian Defence Forces of 28 May 2019).
- 1.6. Estonian Military Academy research and development policy (Directive No. 66 of the Commandant of the Estonian Military Academy of 9 September 2019).
- 1.7. Data management agreement for the human resource survey 2016–2017 (registered 4 May 2019, No. KVA-0.4-2.5/19/448).
- 1.8. Grant Agreement 2022–2026 “Human resource survey in the Estonian Defence Forces (registered 3 May 2022, No. KV-0.4-2.5/22/345).

#### **2. Terms and concepts**

- 2.1. Human resource survey – an annual survey conducted among the conscripts and reservists of the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF).
- 2.2. Project manager – the research-survey coordinator of the Estonian Military Academy (EMA) Department of Applied Research responsible for coordinating the human research survey and the rightful processing and protection of personal data used in the survey.
- 2.3. Research group – representatives of the EMA Department of Applied Research and Department of Academic Studies and representatives of their partner, the University of Tartu (UT) Faculty of Social Sciences. Members of the research group are listed in the Estonian Research Information System (Eesti Teadusinfosüsteem, ETIS) as principal investigators, senior research staff and other research staff. The research group may also consult other persons in the area of governance of the Estonian Ministry of Defence who were involved in planning the survey and analysing its results, and researchers from other universities and research institutions.
- 2.4. Database – a collection of information that reflects the research results after the survey is carried out.
- 2.5. Database user – a member of the research group or a person who wishes to use the database to conduct their research (academic papers, publications, or other) or data analysis in the area of governance and in accordance with the job description and to whom EDF has granted permission to use the database.
- 2.6. Data using agreement – a non-disclosure agreement made with the database user to allow them to use the data (for the purpose of writing an academic paper, a publication or compiling other research or data analysis in the area of governance and in accordance with the job description) that involves an agreement for using, storing and destroying the data after a relevant publication, thesis or data analysis is

completed (form available in Annex 1). The need to enter into a non-disclosure agreement with members of the research group is decided by the project manager.

- 2.7. Longitudinal study – a survey conducted with the same participants in different periods, whereas variables are interconnected for participants. A longitudinal study is used to study the changes in a person's perception and analyse relevant reasons.

### **3. Objective**

The general overview regulates the organisation of the human resource survey and the policy for processing the personal data used in the survey in the Estonian Defence Forces. The objective of the human resource survey is to annually study conscripts and reservists to guarantee that all personnel-related decisions in the field of defence, including the organisation of training and leadership in service, are thoroughly thought through and research-based.

## **II. ORGANISATION OF SURVEY**

### **4. Preparing the survey**

#### **4.1. Compiling and coordinating the questionnaire**

- 4.1.1. Compiling the questionnaire is the responsibility of the research group. The questionnaire consists of a primary part, which includes questions on social-demographic information, attitudes, motivation, health and physical capabilities, along with assessments and feedback on service, and a specialised part, the content of which is annually laid down in the research plan. The primary part is present in each annual questionnaire to guarantee consistency and time series. The specialised part may include one-time or repeated topical subjects (e.g. every two years). If necessary, the survey may include smaller sub-studies, e.g. interviews, observations, etc., conducted with qualitative research methods to best guarantee the fulfilment of objectives and the necessity of the human resource survey.

#### **4.2. Preparing the questionnaire**

- 4.2.1. The questionnaire is in Estonian and Russian. The University of Tartu is responsible for translating it and making it available electronically.
- 4.2.2. To prepare the list of participants, the units of EDF will forward the names of conscripts to the project manager, who will then add impersonal codes to the names in the list. Enquirers will mark down the impersonal codes in the questionnaires. Surveys conducted with reservists do not require special lists.
- 4.2.3. The enquirers are appointed by the University of Tartu. Background check for enquirers is organised by the project manager.
- 4.2.4. Coordinating the training for enquirers, agreeing on the schedule for enquiries in different units, and coordinating their conduction is the responsibility of the project manager.
- 4.2.5. The Communication and IT Group of EMA is responsible for the tablets used for enquiries, the reliability of relevant software and hardware, and the administration of assets.

### **5. Conduction of survey**

#### **5.1. Schedule**

- 5.1.1. The human resource survey is conducted twice per service, i.e. in the beginning and the end, and under the following schedule:
- Winter draft – first enquiry in January-February, second enquiry in November-December
  - July draft – first enquiry in July, second enquiry in May-June
  - October draft – first enquiry in October, second enquiry in May-June
- 5.1.2. The primary part of the reservist survey is conducted annually in May towards the end of the spring exercise. Additional surveys are conducted throughout the year during exercises.

## 5.2. **Participants**

- 5.2.1. The survey uses total population sampling. This means that enquiries are conducted in all military units, and all conscripts can participate (except the Intelligence Centre).
- 5.2.2. All reservists who have been drafted for exercises can participate in the reservist survey.

## 5.3. **Administrative organisation**

- 5.3.1. Conscripts are submitted to enquiries according to schedule in different units of the EDF. Enquiries are conducted with tablets connected to the internet, and electronic questionnaires available in a specialised environment. Equipping units with tablets and internet connection is the responsibility of EMA. Enquirers have undergone specialised training and signed a non-disclosure agreement. Enquirers explain to the conscripts the purpose of the survey and the principles of personal data and survey data protection, and hand out tablets for participants to answer the questionnaire. Depending on the questionnaire length, it will take up to 45 minutes to fill out. Groups submitted to enquiries can consist of 40–50 conscripts.
- 5.3.2. Depending on the nature of the exercises, the reservist survey can be conducted with a questionnaire on paper or online. The number of participants and organisation of enquiries determine the optimal solution.
- 5.3.3. The tablets and relevant support systems for conducting enquiries are given to the participants and collected from them by the project manager.

## 6. **Ethical aspects of the survey**

- 6.1. Participation in the survey is confidential; no answers will be traced back to a specific person, and no extracts that enable the identification of participants will be made from the database. Codes are necessary for the survey to correlate separate interviews; codes are used only during enquiries. The codes and names of participants will not be connected in the analysis. The project manager will destroy the list of codes after the survey is finished and the data has undergone technical control.
- 6.2. Participation is voluntary, and participants can withdraw at any time. Before filling out the questionnaire, participants must give consent for participation. Consent is given in a format that can be reproduced in writing.
- 6.3. For better time management, the database can include administrative information regarding the service of participants in the area of governance of the Ministry of Defence, e.g. information about attrition from conscription or results of assessments of physical abilities from the registries of EDF. To include this information in the database, participants are asked to give consent before filling out the questionnaire. Consent for processing personal data will be given in a format that can be reproduced in writing. If participants refuse to give consent, their information will not be included in the survey database.
- 6.4. The survey requires permission from the University of Tartu Research Ethics Committee.

## 7. **Data processing, analysis and storage**

### 7.1. **Data processing**

- 7.1.1. The technical control of the database and processing of data is the responsibility of the University of Tartu.
- 7.1.2. Information from the registries and databases of the EDF are connected with the impersonal codes; this is the responsibility of the project manager.

### 7.2. **Data analysis**

- 7.2.1. Data analysis is conducted, and reports are compiled by the University of Tartu.
- 7.2.2. Reports on the results of the survey are compiled in EDF. These will be published on the intranet of the Defence Forces according to the following schedule:

- Report for the winter draft – 15 February of the year following the second enquiry, at the latest
  - July and October draft – 15 September of the year of the second enquiry, at the latest
  - Deep analysis of the conscript survey, including a comparative overview of the interviews conducted at the beginning and end of conscription and of changes in attitudes, motivation etc. during conscription and changes in attitudes etc. over the years – 31 January on conscripts who began service two years ago, at the latest
  - Reservist survey report – in four months as of the end of the enquiry
- 7.2.3. If necessary, the database can also serve as a basis for additional analyses.

### 7.3. **Data storage and giving access for researchers (including for academic papers)**

- 7.3.1. Preservation of databases is the responsibility of the research group. Databases are preserved in the information system of the University of Tartu.
- 7.3.2. Giving access to the database for research (academic papers, publications, data analyses) and data analyses made in the area of governance and in accordance with the job description is coordinated by the project manager, who also keeps track of access given to databases. The extent of access depends on research objectives; the database will not be made fully available. The database user will have to sign a data using agreement. Complete databases (including information that directly or indirectly enables identification of participants) are only made accessible with a written permission of the Head of the EMA Department of Applied Research.
- 7.3.3. If someone outside of the research group wishes to publish the survey results, they will require a written confirmation of EDF, which is coordinated by the project manager. Publishing the survey results or making them public in any other way must include a reference to the copyright of the human resource survey.
- 7.3.4. A data protection audit will be performed once a year by a joint committee of the EDF, the Ministry of Defence, and the University of Tartu, or a third party by order of the EDF, to confirm that data are properly stored and no personal data processing requirements have been violated.

## III. PRINCIPLES FOR PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA USED IN THE SURVEY

The databases that contain personal data used in the survey and the specifics of their processing are divided into three groups according to personalisation and contents that enable identification.

### 8. **Databases and processing specifics**

#### 8.1. **Group I**

Data that directly enables identification (directly personalised data). This information includes people's names and personal identification numbers that allow identification of participants. Such data are processed in the EDF and are only accessible by the project manager. When conducting enquiries, enquirers have access to the names and impersonal codes of participants.

#### 8.2. **Group II**

Data that is indirectly connected with a physical person and enables identification (indirectly personalised data). This information includes people's gender, county, unit, etc., which may allow to identify participants (complete database of the survey). Such data are processed by members of the research group from the Defence Forces and their partner, the University of Tartu Faculty of Social Sciences.

#### 8.3. **Group III**

Completely anonymised data (impersonal data). Any information that enables identification is completely erased from such data (for example, data issued for

writing academic papers). Database users process such data in accordance with the rules established in a data using agreement.

**9. Preparing and conducting the survey: data of group I**

- 9.1. The project manager compiles lists of conscripts submitted for enquiries, including their names and impersonal codes (a four-digit numerical code only used in the interviewing phase). These lists are destroyed after the enquiries and technical control of data are completed. Reservist surveys do not require special lists.
- 9.2. For enquiries with conscripts, enquirers will add the impersonal codes of participants to the questionnaire. Enquiries conducted at the beginning and end of conscription will use the same codes to guarantee the longitude of the survey.
- 9.3. Electronic enquiries will result in a database that only contains the impersonal codes of participants (no names or other directly personalised data). The paper questionnaires used for reservist surveys are destroyed after the answers are transferred into digital form and technical control is completed.

**10. Processing and analysing survey data: groups II and III**

- 10.1. The technical control of survey data entails verification that the database does not include directly personalised data (e.g. information submitted by participants).
- 10.2. If indirectly personalised data are used in analysis, results that enable to identify participants through small analysing units (e.g. analysis of the results from a specific unit) are excluded.
- 10.3. Impersonal data are used for academic research and data analysis conducted in the area of governance and in accordance with the job description only with a valid data using agreement.

**11. Storing survey data: groups II and III**

- 11.1. Indirectly personalised data are stored in the Defence Forces and the University of Tartu Faculty of Social Studies as underlying data that can be used to make extracts for issuing impersonal data for academic research. In EDF, ensuring that the data are in intended use and properly preserved and destroyed is the responsibility of the project manager.
- 11.2. No database user has the right to preserve the data issued to them; all issued data must be destroyed as specified in the data using agreement.

Annex 1: Data using agreement on one page