The European Research Council

ERC Funding Opportunities

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Outline

• What does ERC offer?
• ERC Funding Schemes
• The Evaluation Procedure
What does ERC offer?
Creative Freedom of the Individual Grantee

ERC offers selective and generous grants, independence, recognition & visibility

- Work on any research topic: completely bottom-up
- Gain financial autonomy for 5 years
- Negotiate the best work conditions with the host institution
- Attract top team members and collaborators (EU and non-EU)
- Portability of grants
- Attract additional funding and gain recognition: ERC is a quality label
After 9 (10) Years a Success Story

- Over 6,000 top researchers funded since the ERC’s creation in 2007
- Over 40,000 researchers and other professionals employed in ERC research teams
- ERC budget for 2014-2020 under Horizon 2020 (€ 13 billion)
- Over 90,000 articles from ERC projects published in prestigious scientific journals
- 677 research institutions hosting ERC grantees – universities, public or private research centres in the EU or associated countries
- 67 nationalities of grant holders
Who can apply?

Excellent Researchers of

- any nationality,
- any age
- any current working place in the world
- any topic
- Only requirement - a letter of support from a Host Institution based in Europe, EU or associated countries
ERC Funding Schemes 2017

Starting Grants
- starters (2-7 years after PhD)
- up to €1.5 Mio for 5 years

Consolidator Grants
- consolidators (7-12 years after PhD)
- up to €2 Mio for 5 years

Advanced Grants
- track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years
- up to €2.5 Mio for 5 years

Proof-of-Concept
- bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
- up to €150,000 for ERC grant holders
ERC: A strong focus on Young Scientists

Two-thirds of ERC grants go to early-stage Principal Investigators.

+ 15 000 PhD and post-doc researchers working in ERC teams.

Reported ERC team members (May 2013)
*simple head count (995 projects; 6800 team members)
2015 Calls: Age of applicants
2015 Calls: Age of grantees

STG COG ADG 2015 Age of grantees on 1 Jan 2015 with success rate
ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants 2017 - The applicant’s profile

“Am I competitive enough?”

- Potential for research independence
- Evidence of scientific maturity and creativity
- At least one (StG) /several (CoG) important publications as main author or without the participation of PhD supervisor

Condition StG: PhD at least 2 and up to 7 years before 1 January 2017
Condition CoG: PhD over 7 and up to 12 years before 1 January 2017

Promising track-record of early achievements

- Significant publications
- Invited presentations in conferences
- Funding, patents, awards, prizes
How to prepare and submit an ERC research proposal?

- Have a **bright, original and exciting idea**
- Design a **research project** to implement the idea
- Get a letter of support from a **Host Institution** where the project is to be carried out (the HI must be located in the EU or any of the H2020 associated countries)
- Write your **research proposal**
- **Fully electronic/web based submission system**
- **Submit** your research proposal **before the deadline**
Evaluation Panel Structure (WP2017)
Panel structure: 3 domains and 25 panels

Life Sciences
- LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry
- LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
- LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology
- LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
- LS5 Neurosciences and Neural Disorders
- LS6 Immunity and Infection
- LS7 Diagnostic, Therapies, Applied Medical Technology and Public Health
- LS8 Evolutionary, Population and Environmental Biology
- LS9 Applied Life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology

Physical Sciences & Engineering
- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Process Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science

Social Sciences and Humanities
- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Values, Environment and Space
- SH3 The Social World, Diversity, Population
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
## ERC Evaluation Procedure
### Submission of proposals: proposal structure

**Administrative documentation**
- **Part A** - online forms
  - General information on research proposal
  - Host Institution (HI) and applicant
  - Budget
  - Ethics
  - Call specific questions

**Annexes** - submitted as .pdf
- Host Institution support letter
- Copy of PhD (or equivalent degree) certificate (StG & CoG)
- If applicable document for extension of eligibility window (StG & CoG)
- If applicable explanatory information on ethical issues

**Documents sent to the panel members:**

**Part B1** – submitted as .pdf
a) Extended Synopsis 5p
b) CV 2p
c) Early achievements (StG & CoG) or 10-year track-record 2p

**Part B2** – submitted as .pdf
Full Scientific Proposal 15p
a) State-of-the-art and objectives
b) Methodology
c) Resources (incl project cost)

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Read the Information for Applicants
Preparing an application

Hints and tips (Generalities)

- **Register early**, get familiar with the system and templates and start filling in the forms

- A submitted proposal can be revised until the call deadline by submitting a new version and overwriting the previous one

- Follow the formatting rules and page limits

- Download and proof-read the proposal before submitting
Evaluation Criteria: What is evaluated?
Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

- **Ground breaking nature** Important challenge? Substantially beyond the current state of art? High-gain/high-risk balance
- **Potential impact** Possibility of a major break-through?
- **Scientific Approach Feasibility, novel concepts/methodology**

Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- **Intellectual capacity**: Track-record, capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art, evidence of creative independent thinking
- **Creativity**
- **Commitment**: Willing to devote a significant part of PI's working time (minimum of 50% for Starting, minimum of 40% for Consolidator and minimum of 30% for Advance Grant)
Who evaluates the proposals?

**Panel members:** typically 300 PMs involved per call
- High-level scientists
- Recruited by ScC from all over the world
- About 10-15 members plus chair person

**Remote Referees:** typically 2000 / call
- Each evaluate only a small number of proposals
Established by the European Commission

Number of instances that experts of a certain country of origin are contributing to the ERC peer review

* Number of instances that experts of a certain country of origin are contributing to the ERC peer review

**ERC Panel Members by Country of HI and Gender**

Averaged over the first 19 ERC calls, 27% of the ERC panel members were women.

Based on the ERC StG, CoG and AdG calls 2007 - 2015
ERC Evaluation process

Evaluation of proposals: review procedure

**STEP 1**

Remote assessment by Panel members of section 1 – PI and synopsis

Panel meeting

Proposals retained for step 2: Score A

Feedback to applicants

- Right balance between generalist + specialized review
- Appropriate treatment of interdisciplinary proposals

**STEP 2**

Remote assessment by Panel members and reviewers of full proposals

Panel meeting + interview (StG and CoG)

Ranked list of proposals: Score A

Score: B or C

Score: B
ERC Evaluation process
Evaluation of proposals: review procedure

STEP 1
Remote assessment by Panel members of section 1 – PI and synopsis
Panel meeting

Score: B or C

Proposals retained for step 2: Score A

Feedback to applicants

STEP 2
Remote assessment by Panel members and reviewers of full proposals
Panel meeting + interview (StG and CoG)

Ranked list of proposals: Score A

Score: B

- Right balance between generalist + specialized review
- Appropriate treatment of interdisciplinary proposals
Resubmission restrictions

Increasing number of applications results in low success rates and high panel workload

- Applicants with a B at Step 1 will have to wait out one year
- Applicants with a C will have to wait out two years
Preparation of an Application
Guidelines and other Resources

- Read the **Information for Applicants** and the Work Programme ([erc.europa.eu](http://erc.europa.eu))

- Any doubts about your eligibility or any other questions, contact your National Contact Point or the ERCEA [http://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/national-contact-points](http://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/national-contact-points) or ERC-2017-ADG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

- View the **step-by-step** video Introduction to application process, including tips & tricks for the interview [https://vimeo.com/94179654](https://vimeo.com/94179654)

Some tips and advice

• For interviews (StG and CoG):
  ➔ Get Panel Members interested in you and what you are doing
  ➔ Practice thoroughly, several (many?) times; typically a 10 minute presentation followed by 10-15 minutes of questions
  ➔ Panels want to see that these are your ideas, not those of your supervisor
  ➔ It is normal to be nervous…
Typical reasons for rejection

Principal investigator
- Insufficient track-record
- Insufficient (potential for) independence
- Insufficient experience in leading projects

Proposed project
- Scope: Too narrow ↔ too broad/unfocussed
- Incremental research/continuation of previous work
- Work plan not detailed enough/unclear
- Insufficient risk management

Interview
- Discussions/addressing the questions
- Presentation
Evaluated ERC Proposals by HI Country

- **AdG 2008-2015**
- **CoG 2013-2015**
- **StG 2007-2015**
Grantees at Home and Abroad

- Non-nationals in host country
- Nationals in host country
- Nationals abroad

ERC 2007-2015 calls
ERC Funded Projects by Country of HI
## Forthcoming ERC Calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERC calls</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Call Opening</th>
<th>Submission Deadline(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting Grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ERC-2017-StG</td>
<td>605 M€</td>
<td>26 July 2016</td>
<td>Closed (18 Oct 2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidator Grants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERC-2017-AdG</td>
<td>567 M€</td>
<td>16 May 2017</td>
<td>31 August 2017</td>
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<td>Proof of Concept</td>
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*) full-year budget
Information about calls and projects

Check the ERC website

Menu allows searching by Funding Scheme, Research Area, Country of Host Institution.
The European Research Council

- More information: erc.europa.eu
- National Contact Point: erc.europa.eu/national-contact-points
- Sign up for news alerts: erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc
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Thank you

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