

## European Research Council (ERC)

### General Overview

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# European Research Council

**PERIN** Portugal in Europe  
Research and Innovation Network

## NCPs and National Delegates



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**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

# European Research Council: Introduction

*Investigator-driven programme supporting **frontier research** through a **bottom-up, pan-European** competition in **all fields** of science*

**EXCELLENCE IS THE SOLE  
EVALUATION CRITERION !**

## ERC GRANTS

- Develop your own ideas
- Financial autonomy
- Leadership and Independence to choose your research team and collaborators (without country restrictions)
- Negotiate working conditions with Host Institution
- Grant Portability inside the EU (and Associated Countries)
- Attract additional funding

**One possible window for independence, recognition and visibility**

# European Research Council: Introduction

## TYPE OF PROPOSALS

- **Interdisciplinary** research
- **New and emerging** research topics, beyond the current state-of-the-art, including applied research
- **High risk / High gain** approach
- **Audacious**, unconventional, innovative
- **Viable** and with sound implementation

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

- All Nationalities
- All Ages
- All Genders
- All Career Stages

## HOST INSTITUTION

- **Public or Private**
- From an **EU Member State or Associated Country**
- **Host institution is not an evaluation criterion**
- Assure all the working conditions for the PI to develop her/his research and manage the funds
- Research team and Collaborators can be from anywhere in the world
- It the 'applicant legal entity'
- Signs a Supporting Statement as part of application
- If funded signs up to the Grant Agreement
- If funded, signs a 'Supplementary Agreement' with the PI
- Host institution should not really be changed during review process but researchers can move once funded

# European Research Council: Grants

## Starting Grants

Early Stage Career  
2-7 years after PhD.  
(≥ 50% commitment)  
Up to 1.5 M€, 5 years

## Consolidator Grants

Career Consolidation  
7-12 years after PhD.  
(≥ 40% commitment)  
Up to 2.0 M€, 5 years

## Advanced Grants

Significant track record  
Achievements in the last 10 years  
(≥ 30% commitment)  
Up to 2.5 M€, 5 years

## Proof-Of-Concept

Bridging research and earliest  
stage of marketable innovation  
150 K€ for ERC Grant Holders  
ONLY

## Synergy Grants

Joint breakthrough knowledge which cannot  
be achieved by a single PI  
2-4 PIs, Up to 10 M€, 6 years

### NOTE

**UNDERSTAND WHAT  
THE ERC IS ABOUT  
AND WHAT'S  
BEHIND THIS  
TRADITIONAL SLIDE**

# European Research Council: Additional Funds

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING

- Start-Up costs for scientists moving to EU/Associated countries;
- Purchase of major equipment;
- Access to large facilities;

### Starting Grants

Up to 1.0 M€

### Consolidator Grants

Up to 1.0 M€

### Advanced Grants

Up to 1.0 M€

### Synergy Grants

Up to 4 M€

# Application Process: General Aspects

## PART A ADMINISTRATIVE

### ONLINE FORMS

- A1 Proposal and PI info
- A2 Host Institution info
- A3 Budget
- A4 Ethics Issues
- A5 Call Specific Info

## PART A ANNEXES

### SUBMITTED AS .PDF

- Host Institution Support Letter
- Proof of PhD. Degree
- Documents for extension of eligibility window (if applicable)

## PART B1 PHASE 1 & 2

### SUBMITTED AS .PDF

- Extended Synopsis (5 p.)
- CV (2 p.)
- Early Achievements, Track Record, including relevant publications (2 p.)

## PART B2 PHASE 2

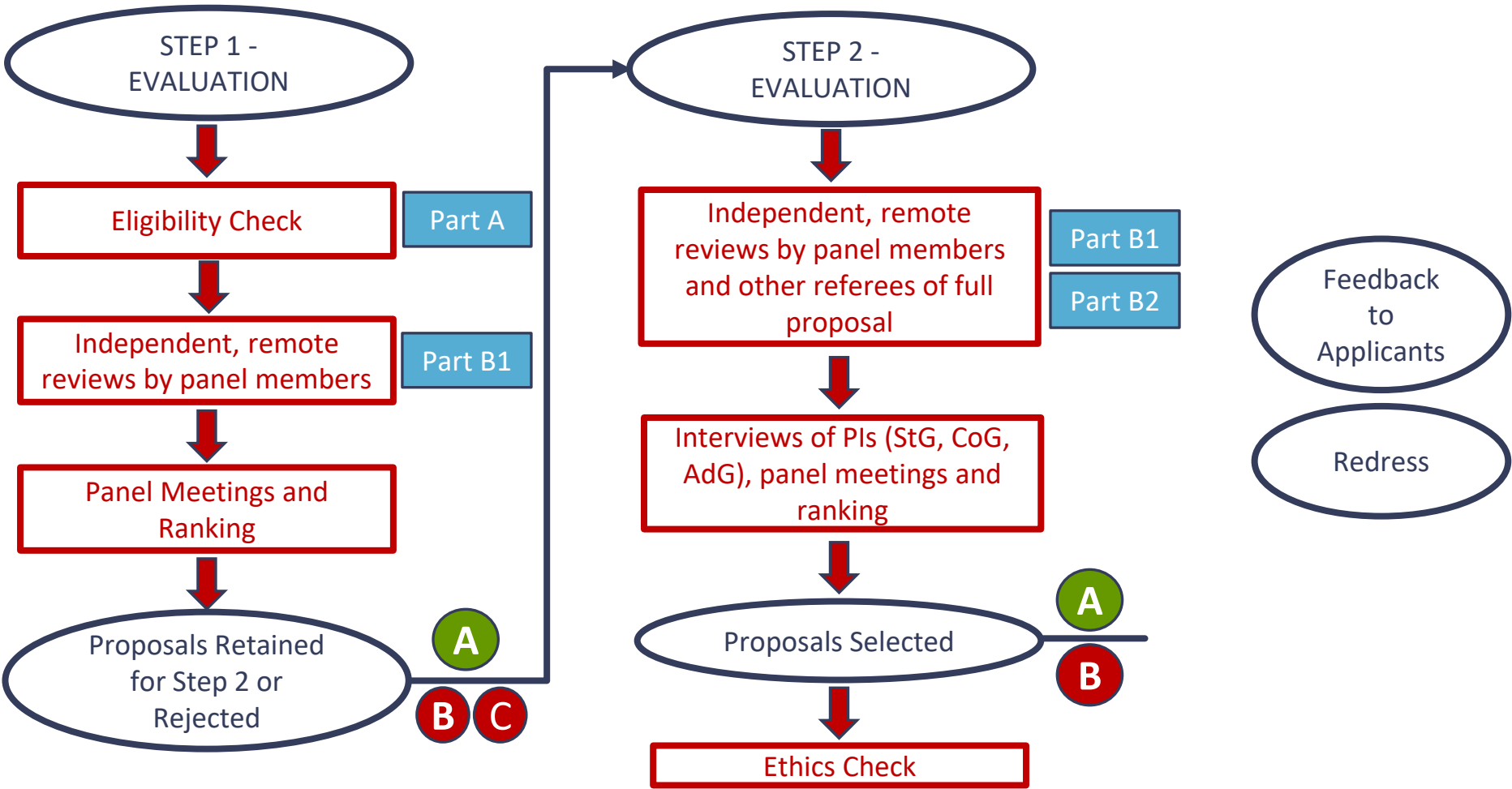
### SUBMITTED AS .PDF

- Scientific Proposal (14 p.)
  - State of the Art & Objectives
  - Methodology
  - Justification of Resources

## TIPS

- Start ahead of time;
- Can revise and resubmit until deadline (“Submit” saves a proposal on the system);
- Ensure Budget in Part A and Part B2 agree (Part A is used if inconsistent);
- Read, Read, Read all the documents of the Call.

# Evaluation: General Process for StG, CoG, AdG





# European Research Council: novelties

## PANEL STRUCTURE

- “Whole Science Approach”
- Panels to welcome innovative approaches, new paradigms, emerging research areas, interdisciplinarity
- Panels do not classify science fields nor reflect priorities
- Any topic welcome (even if not listed)
- Proposals can fall between two or more Panels and evaluation is adapted accordingly
- Panel structure regularly revised

## HORIZON EUROPE

### REGULATION: NOVELTIES

- Provisions on **Open Access**
- Obligation to establish a **Research Data Management Plan**
- Protection of Classified Data (minor impact on ERC)
- Programme Monitoring and Reporting (ERC keeps its own independent strategy)

## HOST ORGANISATIONS

- **Eligibility of INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**
- Definition: intergovernmental organisations with legal personality under international public law
- International Organisations headquartered in the EU or Associated Countries (from 28 to ca. 80)

**NEW!**

**Interviews with Advanced Grants**

**B2 with 14 pages!!!**

**Budget to allow for 13-16% success rates**

# European Research Council: Applications

## CANDIDATES

- **Central to the grant** and to the review criteria;
- Must have the **potential to be a future independent research leader** in their own right;
- Has the power to **assemble a research group of team members** & freedom to chose the research topic;
- Expected **to lead their team and be fully engaged** in the running of the grant;
- Expected to spend a minimum of total working time on the ERC project and a minimum of total working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country (this does not exclude fieldwork/research outside Europe needed to achieve research objectives);
- Chooses a host institution in EU Member State or Associated Country (or an ‘International European Interest Organisation’);
- Applies in conjunction with host institution and, if funded, signs ‘supplementary agreement’ with the host;
- Resubmission rules apply to PI only (not to team members)

# European Research Council: Applications

## TEAM MEMBERS

- The PI leads the research project (there are no “Co-Is”) and the PI has the freedom to choose appropriate ‘team members’
- Team members can be:
  - research staff of any level, PhDs, technicians, specialists, etc.
  - at the host institution or at another institution
  - of any age, nationality or country of residence
  - hosted in non-EU/AC institutions for the project
  - defined as specific individuals in the proposal, or as job roles to be recruited

**Note:** Team members must be assigned to project outputs and should not have purely supervisory or mentor-style roles. Their participation must be fully justified in the proposal.

## HOST INSTITUTION

- The PI does not have to be based there at the time of application;
- Institution has the infrastructure and capacity to carry out frontier research project, and must provide appropriate conditions for the PI to direct independently the research and manage the ERC funding;
- Must not constrain the PI to the research strategy of the institution;
- Normally employs the PI;

# European Research Council: Starting Grants

## Starting Grants

Early Stage Career  
2-7 years after PhD.

(≥ 50% commitment)

**Up to 1.5 M€, 5 years**

**PhD. awarded between  
1 January 2014 and  
31 December 2018\***

*\*Extensions for Maternity,  
Paternity, Illness, and Clinical  
Training*

**\*\*Call Opens:  
12 January 2021  
\*\*Call Closes:  
9 March 2021**

## APPLICANT PROFILE

- Demonstrated potential to conduct independent research. Important to have at least a high-level publication (**as main author**) or **without the PhD. supervisor**;
- Ability to adapt and face challenges (mobility and international experience);
- Up to 5 peer-reviewed publications in highly relevant international journals, multidisciplinary journals, conference proceedings or books in the given scientific field;
- Invited presentations in conferences, funding, patents, awards, prizes;
- CV and career stage aligned with the ambitions of the Starting Grant level;
- 50% commitment: at the level of the project, and time spent in the EU or Associated Country.

# European Research Council: Starting Grants

## Starting Grants

Early Stage Career  
2-7 years after PhD.  
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9 March 2021**

## APPLICANT PROFILE

- **Demonstrated potential** to conduct independent research;
- **Evidence** of maturity;
- **Promising** track record of early achievements (depending on research field and career stage);
- **High risk / high gain** (aiming at the moon) approach is **debatable** (not everything in the proposal should be high risk); HOWEVER
- One **MUST avoid an incremental** approach;

# European Research Council: Consolidator Grants

## Consolidator Grants

Career Consolidation  
7-12 years after PhD.  
(≥ 40% commitment)  
**Up to 2.0 M€, 5 years**

**PhD. awarded between  
1 January 2009 and  
31 December 2013\***

*\*Extensions for Maternity,  
Paternity, Illness, and Clinical  
Training*

**\*\*Call Opens:  
21 January 2021  
\*\*Call Closes:  
20 April 2021**

## APPLICANT PROFILE

- Demonstrated **independent research career**. Important to have several high-level publications as main author or without the PhD. supervisor;
- Up to 10 peer-reviewed publications in highly relevant international journals, multidisciplinary journals, conference proceedings or books in the given scientific field;
- Invited presentations in conferences;
- Funding, patents, awards, prizes, **mentoring**;
- CV and career stage aligned with the ambitions of the Consolidator Grant;
- 40% commitment at the level of the project, and 50% commitment at the level of time spent in the EU or Associated Country.

# European Research Council: Advanced Grants

## Advanced Grants

Significant track record

Achievements in the  
last 10 years

(≥ 30% commitment)

Up to 2.5 M€, 5 years

**\*\*Call Opens:**

**20 May 2021**

**\*\*Call Closes:**

**31 August 2021**

### APPLICANT PROFILE

- **Active and with a proven track record** of achievements in the last 10 years;
- Exceptional record and recognition in terms of novelty and breakthrough knowledge in a given scientific field (including innovation leadership);
- 10 peer-reviewed publications in highly relevant international journals, multidisciplinary journals, conference proceedings in the given scientific field or 3 research monographs as main author;
- Invited presentations, **organisation of major conferences**;
- Funding, patents, awards, prizes, mentoring;
- CV and career stage aligned with the ambitions of the Advanced Grant;
- 30% commitment at the level of the project, and 50% commitment at the level of time spent in the EU or Associated Country.

# European Research Council: General Remarks

## QUESTION YOURSELF

- Does the proposal go substantially beyond the state of art?
- Is this an emerging or relatively new topic? Am I aiming at the current bottlenecks of this topic and is there a huge gain from overcoming them?
- Is it timely (topic and objectives)? (why wasn't this done in the past? Why is it feasible now?);
- What are the risks associated? What are the risk management plan(s)?
- Why is it important?
- Have you explained your collaborations? This is not a collaborative project (you are the driver) but you are not an island
- Do I consider myself capable of carrying this project out?
- Am I internationally competitive compared to others at my career stage and within my field of research?
- Is the timing right (to apply)?
- Is the idea so clear that a non-specialist will understand it?



# European Research Council: General Remarks

WORK CLOSELY WITH YOUR RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICE

## TIPS

- **Read all the guidelines and the work programme;**
- Benchmark your CV and check your competition;
- Seek advice from other ERC Grantees in your research field;
- Try to defend your CV by describing your research environment (the pace of the career development varies from country to country);
- Check the ERC Youtube Channel and seek Youtube videos on proposal writing;
- Take time off to think about your proposal: you are aiming at a medium- long-term project and quite possibly at a defining moment in your career;
- If you feel you are ready: APPLY;
- ERC Applicants who were not awarded the grant describe the period of proposal writing as highly rewarding and impactful on their careers;

# European Research Council: Synergy Grants

## Synergy Grants

Joint breakthrough knowledge which cannot be achieved by a single PI

**2-4 PIs, Up to 10 M€, 6 years**

**Call foreseen in 2022**

## APPLICANTS PROFILES

- Level of ambition aligned with a project which can only be implemented through a joint collaborative effort between 2 to 4 Principal Investigators;
- Substantial innovative ideas are expected;
- Synergic effect between Principal Investigators has to be demonstrated, highlighting the complementary activities and the clear added-value of the consortium;
- Principal Investigator and research teams have to be consistent with the career stage, with similar principals being applied for the StG, CoG or AdG;
- 30% commitment at the level of the project, and 50% commitment at the level of time spent in the EU or Associated Country. No restriction on their location. One Principal Investigator may not have a EU or Associated Country Host Institution.

# European Research Council: Proof-of-Concept Grants

## Proof-Of-Concept

Bridging research and earliest stage of marketable innovation

150 K€ for ERC Grant Holders  
ONLY

### APPLICANT PROFILE

- ERC Grantees **ONLY**. Ongoing ERC Grant or Grant Terminated < 12 months;
- Apply to “seed funds” in order to perform a market study or assess the innovation potential of the ERC project;
- Up to 150 K€ for 12-18 months;
- Eligibility to apply multiple times during the ERC Grant

# Evaluation: General Process

## DOMAINS

- LIFE SCIENCES
- PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING
- SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

## PANELS

- LIFE SCIENCES: 9 PANELS (revised)
- PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING: 11 PANELS (NEW! Materials Engineering)
- SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES: 7 PANELS (NEW! Human Mobility, Environment, Space)

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