European Research Council (ERC)

General Overview

Visit us @ perin.pt
European Research Council

NCPs and National Delegates

Rui Munhá (FCT)
ruimunha@fct.pt

David Marçal (FCT)
david.marcal@fct.pt
Investigator-driven programme supporting frontier research through a bottom-up, pan-European competition in all fields of science

- 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

EXCELLENCE IS THE SOLE EVALUATION CRITERION!
European Research Council: Introduction

- **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)

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.

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
**Evaluation: General Process for StG, CoG, AdG**

**STEP 1 - EVALUATION**
- Eligibility Check
  - Part A
- Independent, remote reviews by panel members
  - Part B1
- Panel Meetings and Ranking
  - Part B1
- Proposals Retained for Step 2 or Rejected
  - A
  - B
  - C

**STEP 2 - EVALUATION**
- Independent, remote reviews by panel members and other referees of full proposal
  - Part B1
  - Part B2
- Interviews of PIs (StG, CoG, AdG), panel meetings and ranking
- Proposals Selected
  - A
  - B
- Ethics Check

**Feedback to Applicants**

**Redress**
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

**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)

**Horizon Europe**

**Interviews with Advanced Grants**
- B2 with 14 pages!!!

Budget to allow for 13-16% success rates
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)
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.

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

**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.

**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
**European Research Council: Starting Grants**

**Starting Grants**

**Early Stage Career**

2-7 years after PhD.  
(≥ 50% commitment)

Up to 1.5 M€, 5 years

---

**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;

---

**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
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

**Call Opens:** 20 May 2021  
**Call Closes:** 31 August 2021

### Advanced Grants

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

**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.
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;
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)
NCPs and National Delegates

Rui Munhá (FCT)
ruimunha@fct.pt

David Marçal (FCT)
david.marcal@fct.pt