Outline

✓ What is the ERC? & What does ERC offer?
✓ The ERC evaluation process
✓ How to apply? 10 steps
What is the ERC?
It is part of H2020 (€ 77 billion)

For 2019, the budget will be more than 2.0 billion euros, the highest ever since the beginning of the ERC
ERC after 11 Years, a Success Story

Over 8,000 top researchers funded since the ERC’s creation in 2007

Over 60,000 researchers and other professionals employed in ERC research teams

€13 billion ERC budget for 2014–2020 under Horizon 2020

Over 90,000 articles from ERC projects published in prestigious scientific journals

748 research institutions hosting ERC grantees – universities, public or private research centres in the EU or associated countries

74 nationalities of grant holders
Scientists in the Driver's Seat

Independent Scientific Council:

 ✓ 22 members including the ERC President
 ✓ full authority over funding strategy
 ✓ supported by the ERC Executive Agency (autonomous)
ERC Principles

Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion

NO THEMATIC PRIORITIES
NO CONSORTIA
NO CO-FINANCING

OPEN TO EXCELLENT & INDEPENDENT RESEARCHERS
REGARDLESS NATIONALITY, AGE & GENDER
What do ERC grants offer?

Creative Freedom of the Individual Grantee

ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility

- research topic of **own choice**, with a team of **own choice**
- true **financial autonomy** for 5 years
- **portability of the grant** within Europe
- ERC is a quality label:
  - ⇒ negotiate with the host institution the **best conditions** of work
  - ⇒ attract **top team members** (EU and non-EU) and **collaborators**
  - ⇒ attract **additional funding**
What does ERC offer?

ERC Grant Schemes

**Starting Grants**
- Starters
- 2-7 years after PhD
- (≥ 50% commitment)
- up to €1.5 Million for 5 years

**Consolidator Grants**
- Consolidators
- 7-12 years after PhD
- (≥ 40% commitment)
- up to €2 Million for 5 years

**Advanced Grants**
- Track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years
- (≥ 30% commitment)
- up to €2.5 Million for 5 years

**Proof-of-Concept**
- Bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
- up to €150,000 for ERC grant holders only

**Synergy Grants**
- 2-4 PIs up to €10 million for 6 years
- to lead to breakthroughs that cannot be achieved by a PI working alone

**Investing in the young**
- 2/3 of ERC grants go to early-stage Principal Investigators!

The ERC tackles the brain-drain by making Europe a more attractive place for bright minds - around 17% of ERC team members are from non-EU countries!
Additional funding

Additional funding:

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

- Up to €500 000 for Starting
- Up to €750 000 for Consolidator
- Up to €1 Million for Advanced grantees
- Up to €4 Million for Synergy PIs
Outline

- What is the ERC? & What does ERC offer?
- The ERC evaluation process
- How to apply? 10 steps
3 domains / 25 panels

Each panel:
- Panel Chair
- 10-16 Panel Members

*(top scientists in the fields covered by the panel)*
# Submission of the proposal

## PART A – online forms

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Proposal and PI info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Host Institution info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Ethics Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Call Specific Info</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## PART B1 – submitted as .pdf

- Extended Synopsis 5 p.
- CV 2 p.
- Early Achievements 2 p.
  (incl. up to 5-10 publications)

## Annexes – submitted as .pdf

- HI support letter
- copy of PhD title (StG, CoG);
- document for extension of eligibility window (StG, CoG)

## PART B2 – submitted as .pdf

- Scientific Proposal 15 p.
  State of the Art & Objectives
  Methodology
  Resources

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Read the Information to Applicants
Evaluation process (StG, CoG, AdG)

**STEP 1**
Remote assessment by Panel members see ONLY section 1 – Synopsis and CV (Part B1)

- Panel meeting

  - Proposals retained for step 2

**STEP 2**
Remote assessment by Panel members and Remote Reviewers of full proposals (Part B1+B2)

- Panel meeting (with interview for StG + CoG)

  - Ranked list of proposals

  - Feedback to applicants

  - Redress
Re-submission restrictions 2018 (StG, CoG, AdG)

STEP 2

A (unfunded)
- you can apply next year

STEP 1

B
- you can apply next year

B
- you have to wait 1 year before re-applying

C
- you have to wait 2 years before re-applying
Outline

- What is the ERC? & What does ERC offer?
- The ERC evaluation process
- How to apply? 10 steps
Preparing your proposal

# 1: Decide whether to apply or not

Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion
Preparing your proposal

# 2: Shall I apply now or wait another year?

2017 Grantees by age and success rate

- STG 2017 (median 35)
- COG 2017 (median 40)
- ADG 2017 (median 52)
- SR by age

Age of grantee on 1 January 2017
Preparing your proposal
# 3: Get information!

- **ERC website** for latest funding opportunities: [https://erc.europa.eu/](https://erc.europa.eu/)


- Use the **help tools and call documents** (Information for Applicants, Work Programme, FAQ) to prepare your proposal - **Read the guidelines carefully**!

- **Talk to your Institution's grant office**

- **Contact your National Contact Point**
Preparing your proposal

# 4: Make sure you are eligible

**Extensions of eligibility window possible** for **StG and CoG** for documented cases (started before call deadline) of:

- Maternity – 18 months per child (before or after PhD)
- Paternity – actual time taken off (before or after PhD)
- Military service Caring for seriously ill family members (after PhD)
- Medical speciality training after the award of 1st eligible degree & up to 4 yr

**No limit to the total extension**
Preparing your proposal
# 5: Host Institution (HI)

- You **can change** HI during the project's life
- **Negotiate** with the HI (your position, equipment, administrative support, access to infrastructure, etc.)
- Make sure to have the **HI letter** ready in time for the submission deadline

**Rumour:** *The quality/fame of the HI is increasing my chances/scores.*

✗ **NOT true:** the HI is not an evaluation criterion!
Proposals are (mostly) assigned to the Panel of the PI's choice.
The PI can flag one “Secondary Review Panel” ➔ explain the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal in Part B1.

Rumour: some panels are more successful than others
✗ NOT true: budget is allocated based on submitted proposals to each panel, so success rate is flat across different panels.

Rumour: The panel descriptors represent ERC scientific priorities
✗ NOT true: The panel descriptors are indicative so that applicants can see what expertise the Panel covers. It is the applicants that choose the subject of their proposal and the Panels use the excellence criterion to judge whether it should be funded.
Preparing your proposal
# 7: Talk to other ERC grantees in your field

ERC FUNDED PROJECTS
Search and access all information on ERC funded projects

https://erc.europa.eu/
Preparing your proposal
# 8: Part B1: the research project

• Is my project new, **innovative**, bringing in new solutions/theories?
• Does it goes **substantially beyond the state of the art**? – No incremental research!
• How can I **prove/support** my case? Have I proven the project's **feasibility**? Are my goals **realistic**?
• Is it **timely**? Why has it not been done in the past?
• What's the **risk**?
• Have I provided some **contingency plans** or proposed **alternatives**?
Preventing your proposal

# 9a: Part B1: the Principal Investigator

- Why am I the best person to carry it out? Know your competitors

**STG and COG applicants**

- Am I able to work independently, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?

- Am I competitive? Have I shown my scientific leadership in my CV?

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**Rumour:** you must have a paper in *Nature and Science*, otherwise you have no chances!!!

❌ **NOT true:** although a competitive CV is needed, several ERC grantees (particularly StG and CoG) did not have a paper in these journals at the time of applying and getting the grant
Prefering your proposal
# 9b: Part B1: the Principal Investigator

ADG applicants

- Active researchers
- track record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years
- exceptional leader in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions to the field
Preparing your proposal
# 10: Part B2

In Step 2, both part B1 and B2 are read by Panel Members and specialists around the world (remote referees) so in Part B2:

• **Do not repeat the synopsis**, go into details on your methodology and work plan

• Make sure that the quantitative and qualitative **differences to the state of the art are clear and referenced** - show you did your homework.

• Provide alternative strategies to **mitigate risk**

• Justify requested **resources – explain your budget properly**
Preparing your proposal
In a nutshell (1/2)

- Be ambitious and "daring", think big; panels seek out high-risk research
- Grab interest and attention of reviewers
- **Only Part B1 reviewed in Step 1**, read by "generalists" but make it count!
- If you make it to Step 2, reviewers see both B1 and B2, so **do not repeat / duplicate part B1 in part B2**
- Do not include unnecessary partners and collaborators; it is not supposed to be a "consortium"
Preparing your proposal
In a nutshell (2/2)

- **For interviews (StG and CoG):**
  - Practice thoroughly, several (many?) times, with a diverse audiences
    - Typically a 10 minute presentation and 10-15 minutes of questions
  - Panels want to see that these are *your* ideas, not those of your supervisor
  - Use the interview to get the Panel interested in what you are doing
  - It is normal to be nervous...
Indicative summary of 2019 calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call identifier</th>
<th>Starting Grant</th>
<th>Consolidator Grant</th>
<th>Advanced Grant</th>
<th>Synergy Grant</th>
<th>Proof of Concept Grant</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Call Opens</strong></td>
<td>Mid-September</td>
<td>24/10/2018</td>
<td>21/05/2019</td>
<td>Mid-September</td>
<td>16/10/2018</td>
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<td><strong>Call closes</strong></td>
<td>17/10/2018</td>
<td>07/02/2019</td>
<td>29/08/2019</td>
<td>08/11/2018</td>
<td>22/01/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>cut-off dates for PoC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>25/04/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Budget million EUR</strong></td>
<td>580 (390)</td>
<td>602 (314)</td>
<td>390 (166)</td>
<td>400 (48)</td>
<td>25 (167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>estimated number of grants</strong></td>
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Thank you!

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