

# European Research Council-ERC

ERC Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant

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# OVERVIEW

- ERC: Aims and funding principles
- Evaluation and proposal structure
- Tips for a competitive proposal
- ERC-NSF-Agreement
- Support & important weblinks



# ERC: MAIN FEATURES

- Funds potentially **groundbreaking research** (“frontier research”) by **individual researchers** (“Principal Investigators”) and their teams
- Open for **all areas of research**
- **Scientific excellence** is the **only** criterion for funding
- “By scientists for scientists”: Led by autonomous Scientific Council
- highly competitive : ~ 12% success rate



# ERC: FUNDING PRINCIPLES

1 Principal Investigator (PI) +

Host Institution (HI)



Target group: excellent scientists in all career stages

**“Starters”:** establish independent research team/programme

**“Consolidators”:** consolidate research team/programme

**“Advanced”:** novel, ambitious research programme

- Minimum time commitment by PI (50%/40%/30%)
- Funding goes to HI, but HI guarantees autonomy of PI
- ERC-Grants are portable – “Money follows researcher”

# MAIN ERC GRANT FAMILY MEMBERS



## STARTING GRANT

Eligibility time-window can be prolonged under defined circumstances (e.g. parental leave)

2-7 years post PhD  
max. 1,5 (-2,0) Mio  
€ for 5 years

## CONSOLIDATOR GRANT

7-12 yrs post PhD  
max. 2,0 (- 2,75)  
Mio € for 5 Years

## ADVANCED GRANT

outstanding track  
record in the last  
10 years

max. 2,5 (- 3,5) Mio  
€ for 5 years

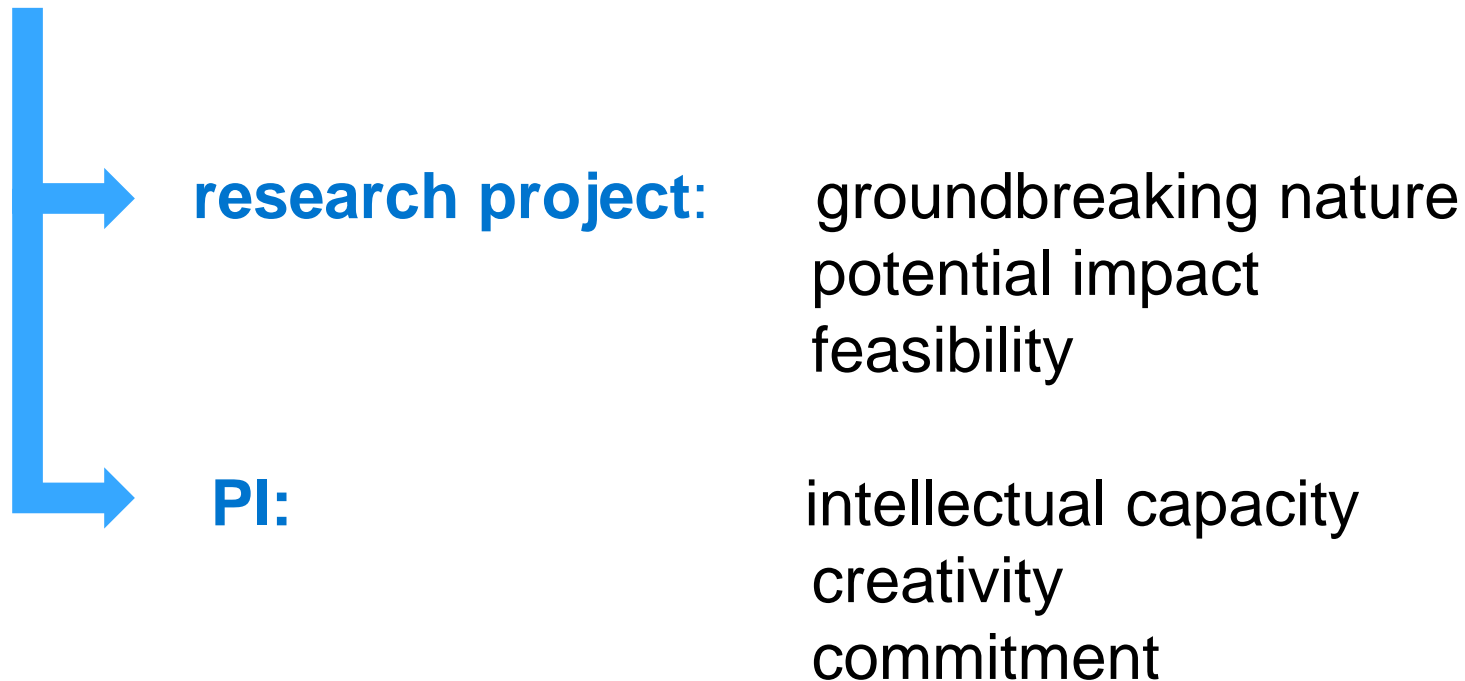
**Coming up: SYNERGY GRANT**  
2-4 Principle Investigators  
max 14 Mio EUR for 6 years

# FUNDING RATES AND IMPORTANT FURTHER RULES



- Horizon 2020 **funding rates** apply:  
100 % funding of direct costs,  
25% flat rate for overheads
- All documents and proposal submission online via **EU Research Participant Portal**
- **Open Access** mandatory for peer-reviewed ERC publications;  
research data sharing by default (possible to opt out any time)
- **Waiting time for resubmission** of non-funded ERC proposals  
(1-2 years depending on evaluation category)

## SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE





# HOW ARE ERC PROPOSALS STRUCTURED & EVALUATED?

**Social Sciences and Humanities**  
(6 Panels)

**Physical Sciences and Engineering**  
(10 Panels)

**Life Sciences (9 Panels)**

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

**Step 1:** part 1 (5 pages + CV + track record) is read by panel members only (+ online forms; incl. ethics)

**Step 2:** part 2 (15 pages) also becomes available to panel members and external referees

StG, CoG: Interview with panel members





# PROFILE OUTLINE OF A “STARTER”



- **PhD** awarded **2 – 7 years** before ERC Reference Date (**January 1<sup>st</sup>** in the year of the resp. ERC Work Programme)
- must have already shown the **potential for research independence** and evidence of maturity. E.g. at least **one important publication as main author or without the participation of the PhD supervisor**
- promising **track-record of early achievements** appropriate to the research field and career stage: publications, monographs, invited presentations, patents, prizes/award,...

# PROFILE OUTLINE OF A “CONSOLIDATOR”



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- **PhD** awarded **>7 – 12 years** before ERC Reference Date (**January 1<sup>st</sup>** in the year of the resp. ERC Work Programme)
- must have already **shown research independence and evidence of maturity**.  
E.g. **several** important publications as main author or without participation of the PhD supervisor.
- promising **track-record of early achievements** appropriate to the research field and career stage: publications, monographs, invited presentations, prizes/awards, patents,...

# “ADVANCED” PROFILE OUTLINE



- No specific eligibility criteria, but intense competition
- **active researchers** with a track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years; at least matching one or more of the following benchmarks:
- **10 publications as main author** in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals
- 3 major research **monographs**; organization of 3 well-established international **conferences** or congresses,...

# „ERC PROFILES“ FOR COMPARISON



**European Research Council**

ABOUT ERC | FUNDING | PROJECTS & FIGURES | NEWS | EVENTS | MANAGING YOUR PROJECT

Home > Projects & figures > ERC Funded Projects

## ERC FUNDED PROJECTS

The ERC operates according to a "curiosity-driven", or "bottom-up", approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. Accordingly the portfolio ERC funded projects spans a wide range of topics and research questions.

Since 2007, more than 7,000 projects have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the associated countries. The ERC has received over 65,000 project proposals for its calls.

Use the search facility to quickly and easily find examples of ERC funded projects.

### HOW CAN YOU SEARCH?

Projects can be filtered according to funding scheme, call year and/or country of host institution. You can also use the search box and enter free text words, for instance names of universities or principal investigators.

The filter for panels will be enabled soon again.

### WHERE DOES THE DATA COME FROM?

Information displayed is automatically updated through the information available on the **CORDIS** platform and can partially be exported in PDF format. Only funded projects, whose grant agreements have been signed, appear in this section.

Please note that the structure and descriptions of ERC panels have changed over the years. The panel structures for each year can be found in ERC annual work programmes. Panels displayed in this tool are the panels the projects were selected in.

### DATA PROTECTION

Individuals' personal information contained in this database is published for information concerning their involvement in an ERC project. It shall only be used to contact them for matters related to their function. Processing this information for others purposes (such as further transmission, further publication, direct marketing and requests for information, which differ from the matters indicated) is illegal and liable to consequences according to applicable legislation.

### SEARCH

Apply

### FILTER BY FUNDING SCHEME:

- Starting Grant (StG) (3410)
- Advanced Grant (AdG) (2180)
- Consolidator Grant (CoG) (1170)
- Proof of Concept (PoC) (549)
- Synergy Grants (SyG) (24)

### FILTER BY CALL YEAR:

- 2007 (305)
- 2008 (284)
- 2009 (492)
- 2010 (707)
- 2011 (838)
- 2012 (957)
- 2013 (985)
- 2014 (1068)
- 2015 (1089)
- 2016 (530)

### FILTER BY COUNTRY:

- Austria (190)
- Belgium (257)
- Bulgaria (3)
- Croatia (3)
- Cyprus (14)
- Czechia (25)

<https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>

Within few minutes, evaluators want to know:

- What is the **problem/research challenge**?
- Why is this problem **important**?
- Why was it **not solved until now**?
- What is your **new idea/approach**?
- Is this **groundbreaking** research?
- What are your concrete research **objectives**?
- Why can **you** succeed?

# YOUR PROPOSAL: A COMPELLING STORY



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What is the best **structure** for your narrative?

- **Key components:**  
State-of-the Art, Objectives/Aims, Impact, Methodology, Team/Resources
- Provide the “**big picture**” early
- Guide the reader by **subheaders**, e.g. Research Questions, Work leading up to this proposal,...
- Include high quality **figure(s)**

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- How does the project break new ground? What is its **core novelty**? What makes it unique?
- What are the main overarching **research questions/testable hypotheses**? (→ validation of results, interpretation)
- What are the central research **objectives**?
- What is your research **vision**?
- **Risk/gain**-balance/feasibility: Convincing preliminary data/results & contingency strategies?
- Which reviewer **panel** is best suited?
- Who can give you critical **feedback**?



# ADDITIONAL ROUTES TO ERC-FUNDING



You can develop your career through **public funding linked to ERC projects**, even if you do not receive an ERC Grant:



<https://erc.europa.eu/funding/additional-opportunities>

**Jobs in ERC teams:** Recipients of ERC grants can use their funding to recruit other researchers and team members for their project. On average, each team has 4-5 members.

**Visiting Research Fellowships:** A number of European countries fund research visits to established ERC projects in order to develop researchers' potential before they apply for their first ERC grant.

**International Arrangement funding:** International agreements with funding agencies and science ministries in China, South Africa, the **United States** and some other countries support **young researchers to temporarily join ERC** teams in Europe.

# VISITS BY US-BASED RESEARCHER TO ERC PROJECTS: TYPES OF VISITS



**NSF-EC agreement:** Cooperation between US-based scientists and EU-based scientists in terms of research visits to ERC funded projects.

- **NSF Career Awardees:**

Multiple short-term visits: should aggregate to an agreed-upon minimum (e.g., 6 months).

- **NSF Postdoctoral Fellows:**

- Single and long-term research visits (6-12 months).
- Time spent in Europe will be in addition to (rather than in lieu of) their NSF-funded postdoctoral fellowship.

- **ERC Principal Investigator:**

Hosts the US-based scientist as a member of the research team

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# VISITS BY US-BASED RESEARCHER TO ERC PROJECTS: CONDITIONS



- for **Career Awardees**:
  - The salary is covered by the NSF.
  - NSF also provides support for travel expenses of the visiting researcher and also for the travel expenses of accompanying family members in case of long-term visits.
  - ERC grant covers subsistence costs: a per diem or any other applicable modality of the Host Institution.
- for **Postdoctoral Fellows**:
  - NSF provides support for travel expenses of the visiting researcher and also those of accompanying family members.
  - The salary and any applicable social/health coverage expenses are covered from the ERC grant.

# KEEPING UP TO DATE & SUPPORT: IMPORTANT LINKS



ERC homepage: <http://erc.europa.eu/>

ERC National Contact Points:

<https://erc.europa.eu/national-contact-points>

Abstracts of granted ERC projects

<https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>

Previous ERC Panel Members:

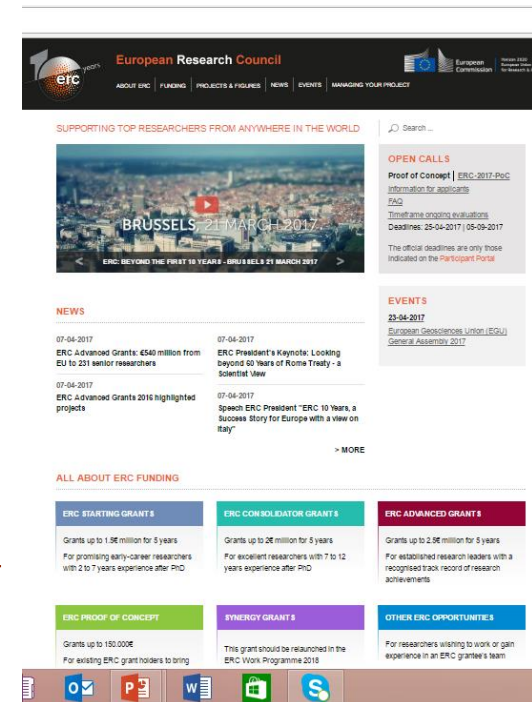
<https://erc.europa.eu/document-category/evaluation-panels>

EURAXESS - Support for „researchers in motion“:

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/>

EURAXESS North America:

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/north-america>



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## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS