The European Research Council

ERC funding schemes and 2024 calls

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11 June 2023

CYPRUS INFO-DAY ON THE 2024 ERC CALLS

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European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

European Commission

ERC

Funding: is part of Horizon Europe

HORIZON EUROPE

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 - 2027

#HorizonEU — EUROPEAN UNION

EUR 16 billion
ERC budget in Horizon Europe
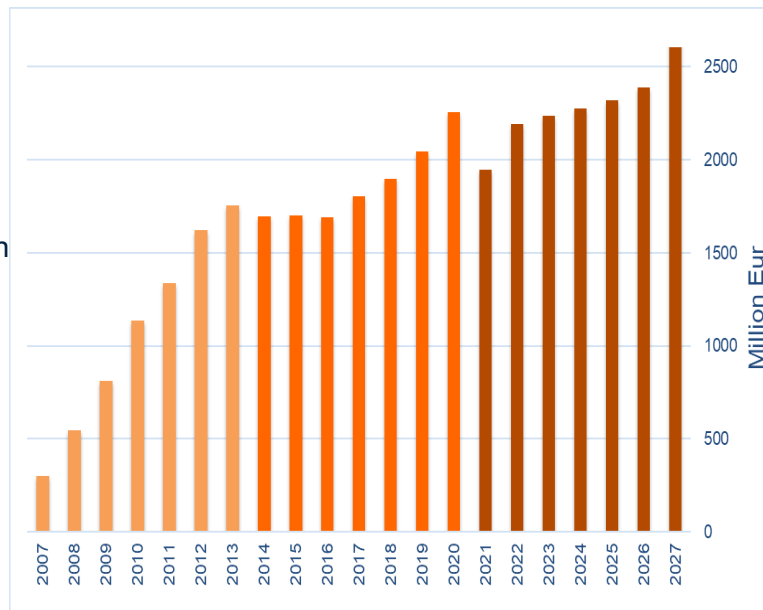
17%
of the Horizon Europe budget

FP7
2007-2013
€7,5 billion

HORIZON 2020
2014-2020
€13 billion

HORIZON EUROPE
2021-2027
€16 billion

ERC budget 2007 – 2027: EUR 36.5 billion

FP7: €7.5 billion

H2020: €13 billion

HE: €16 billion

Million Eur

2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027

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ERC Scientific Council
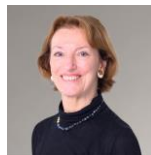
Maria LEPTIN
(Biology)
ERC President

Eveline CRONE
(Psychology)
Vice-President

Eystein JANSEN
(Earth Science)
Vice-President

Jesper SVEJSTRUP
(Biology)
Vice-President

Geneviève ALMOUZNI
(Biology)

Harriet BULKELEY
(Geography)

Ben FERINGA
(Organic Chemistry)

Mercedes GARCÍA-ARENAL
(History)

Gerd GIGERENZER
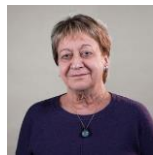(Psychology)

Tom HENZINGER
(Computer Science)

Liselotte HØJGAARD
(Medicine)

Dirk INZÉ
(Plant Biology)

László LOVÁSZ
(Mathematics)

Chryssa KOUVELIOTOU
(High-Energy Astrophysics)

Sylvie LORENTE
(Mechanical Engineering)

Luke O'NEILL
(Biochemistry & Immunology)

Björn OTTERSTEN
(Electrical Engineering)

Giovanni SARTOR
(Law)

Nicola SPALDIN
(Materials Theory)

Alice VALKÁROVÁ
(Physics)

Milena ŽIC FUCHS
(Linguistics)

ERC in figures

Over **13,000** top researchers funded since the ERC creation in 2007

Over **90,000** researchers and other professionals employed in ERC research teams

Over **2,400** patents and other IPR applications generated by ERC funding

Over **400** start-ups identified as founded or co-founded by ERC grantees

Over **220,000** articles from ERC projects published in scientific journals

Over **900** research institutions hosting ERC grantees – universities, public or private research centres in the EU or Associated Countries

89 nationalities of grant holders

12 Nobel Prizes, **6** Fields Medals, **11** Wolf Prizes and other prizes awarded to ERC grantees

ERC basics

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

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LONG TERM **GRANTS**

TO HIGH-RISK/HIGH-GAIN PIONEERING PROJECTS IN ANY FIELD OF FRONTIER RESEARCH

Life Sciences

Physical Sciences and Engineering

Social Sciences and Humanities

Evaluation panel structure (2024)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

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 Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts

Evaluation panel structure (2024)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and ...
- LS2 Integrative ... Systems
- LS3 Cell Biolog... Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology ...
- LS5 Neuroscie... System
- LS6 Immunity, ...
- LS7 Prevention ... Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

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
- ... Engineering
- ... neering

The budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand.

The panel descriptors do not represent ERC scientific priorities.

- ... nisations
- ... Legal Systems
- ... actions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts

Why should you apply? ERC grants provide independence, recognition & visibility

Work on a research topic of your **own choice**, with a team of your **own choice.**

Attract **excellent team members** and **collaborators** from anywhere in the world**.**

Gain **financial autonomy** during project duration.

Win **additional funding.**

Negotiate the **best conditions** with the Host Institution.

Can move with the grant to other place in Europe **("portability of grants")**

ERC grant schemes

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

Synergy Grants
2 – 4 Principal Investigators up to € 10.0 Mio for 6
years
1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated
Countries

Proof-of-Concept
bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
lump sum €150,000 for ERC grant holders

Eligibility period for 2024 calls

Starting Grant
- 2 and ≤ 7 years prior to 1 January 2024
- Successful defence of first PhD between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2021 (inclusive)

Consolidator Grant
- 7 and ≤ 12 years prior to 1 January 2024
- Successful defence of first PhD between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2016 (inclusive)

Advanced and Synergy Grant: No specific criteria

Additional funding

- up to EUR 1 000 000 for StG, CoG and AdG
- up to EUR 4 000 000 for SyG

a) "start-up" costs for Principal Investigators moving to the EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant, and/or
b) the purchase of major equipment, and/or
c) access to large facilities, and/or
d) other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs.

Additional funding is not subject to pro rata temporis reduction for projects of shorter duration.

Evaluation

Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

The Host Institution
is not an evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground breaking nature
- Scientific impact
- Scientific approach

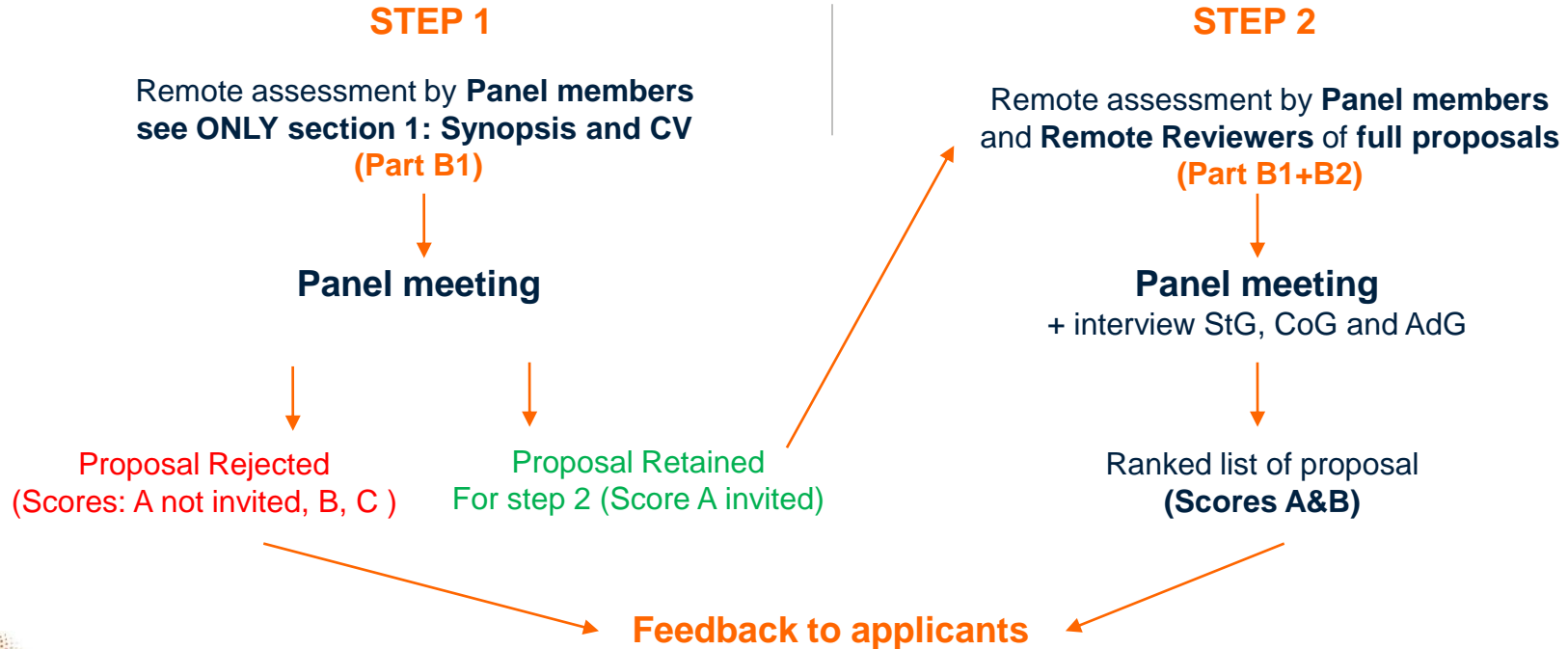**Excellence of the Principal Investigator**

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment

ERC funds "frontier research", including proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions.

Evaluation: process

For individuals calls: a single submission but a two-step evaluation

STEP 1

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

↓

Panel meeting

↓   ↓

Proposal Rejected
(Scores: A not invited, B, C)

Proposal Retained
For step 2 (Score A invited)

STEP 2

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

↓

Panel meeting
+ interview StG, CoG and AdG

↓

Ranked list of proposal
(Scores A&B)

**Feedback to applicants**

Anyone from anywhere in the world can apply

Opportunities for researchers outside EU/Associated Countries:

- Additional "start-up" funding for researchers moving to Europe (€ 1 Mio irrespective of grant scheme)

- Grantees can keep affiliation with home institute outside Europe ("significant part" of work time in Europe: at least 50%)

- Team members can be based outside Europe

- Grantees can move within Europe with the grant

Submitting an ERC proposal
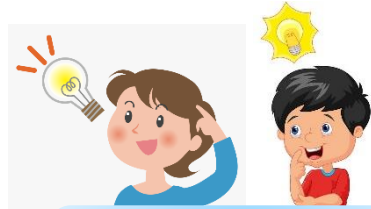
Cross-panel/domain?

Descriptors?

StG/CoG/AdG?

Domain & Panel?

Excellent Idea

Write part B1 & B2

Get acquainted with system

Prepare Annexes

Submit on time

| 17

... **Choosing the right Panel is very important**

- Proposals are assigned to the Panel of the PI's choice.

- The PI can flag one "Secondary Review Panel": the PI **must explain the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal in Part B1.**

- **Choose your descriptors/free keywords carefully**!

- **Transfer of proposals between panels may occur if**:

    - there is a clear mistake on the PI's side.

    - the necessary expertise is available in a different panel.

Rumour: Choose the panel "strategically" in order to increase chances of success

✖ **NOT true** because the budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand - the success rate is equal amongst panels therefore choose the Panel that is right for your proposal!

☀ Questions to ask yourself when writing your proposal

Research Project

Is my project new, **innovative**, bringing in new solutions/theories?

Does it go **substantially beyond the state of the art**?

Why is my project **important? Think Big**!

How can I **prove/support** my case? Have I proven the project's **feasibility**? Is it feasible now?

Is it **timely**? (Why wasn't it done in the past?)

What's the **risk**? Have I proposed **alternatives?**

Have I given a realistic picture of my **collaborations**? Show that it is you who will be leading the project.

☀ Questions to ask yourself when writing your proposal

Principal Investigator

Why am I the **right person** to carry it out? Know your competitors

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

Am I **internationally competitive** (at your career stage) ?

Have I shown my **scientific capacity** in my CV?

Some Hints & Tips

In Step 1: Panel members see <u>only</u> **Part B1** of the proposal (prepare it accordingly!)

In Step 2: Part B1 and B2 and **Budget section** are read by Panel Members & Remote Referees

Part B1: Find the right balance
- ✓ Innovative? Beyond state-of-art? High risk/High gain? Realistic/feasible?
- ✓ Outline state-of-art (incl. competition)
- ✓ Be concise & clear (also for generalists)
- ✓ Think about risk mitigation

Part B2: Fill in the details
- ✓ No verbatim repetition of synopsis
- ✓ Extensive methodology and work plan
- ✓ Provide risk mitigation strategies
- ✓ Explain involvement of team
- ✓ Justify requested resources

Explain your budget properly

Panels have to ensure that the requested resources are reasonable and well justified.

Unexplained costs may (will) be cut.

Granting is made on a 'take-it-or-leave-it' basis: no negotiations.

Ensure coherence between the description of **resources** and the **budget table**.

Ask for funding for Open Access – **OA is obligatory** and these costs are eligible.

Follow *Information for Applicants* on how to fill the budget table.

In case of Additional budget explain and justify clearly.

I have been invited for an interview .. now what?

➢ Have clear and representative slides and focus on SCIENCE! Don't try to make a business presentation – you are talking to scientists.

- Get panel interested in YOUR ideas & proposal
- Present & defend YOUR ideas (panels want to see that these are your ideas)
- Don't over-explain your CV!

➢ Anticipate questions

➢ Know the details of your proposal and methods, as well as your research area – who are your main competitors/collaborators?

➢ Practice thoroughly, several (many?) times; Keep the time; typically a few minute presentation followed by more minutes of questions/answers

Typical reasons for rejection

Research Project

- Scope: Too narrow vs too broad/unfocussed

- Incremental research

- Collaborative project, several PIs

- Work plan not detailed enough/unclear

- Insufficient risk management

Principle Investigator (PI)

- Insufficient track-record

- Insufficient (potential for) independence

2023 Call calendar

ERC calls	Call Opening	Submission Deadline
Proof of Concept ERC-2023-PoC	20/10/2022	20/04/2023, 14/09/2023

2024 (tentative) call calendar

ERC calls	Call Opening	Submission Deadline
Starting Grants ERC-2024-StG	11/07/2023	24/10/2023
Consolidator Grants ERC-2024-CoG	12/09/2023	12/12/2023
Advanced Grants ERC-2024-AdG	29/05/2024	29/08/2024
Synergy Grants ERC-2024-SyG	12/07/2023	8/11/2023

Preparing your proposal
Get information!

- **ERC website**: https://erc.europa.eu/

- **Register early**, get familiar with the European Commission's submission system (funding and tender portal), download the templates and start filling in the forms.

- Make use of the **help tools and call documents** (Information for Applicants, Work Programme, Frequently Asked Questions) to prepare your proposal:
  - ➢ Read the guidelines carefully!
  - ➢ Follow the formatting rules and page limits

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

- **ERC application process** – 7 short videos

Additional links

- A database that allows you to search for panel members from ERC calls under H2020&Horizon Europe: https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/panel-members

- A new tool for accessing data on ERC grants and proposals, which replaces the previous datahub: https://erc.europa.eu/projects-statistics/erc-dashboard

Where can you find more information?

Videos - ERC Classes

- Step by Step to the ERC application process
- How to get started with your ERC proposal
- How to write part 1 of your ERC proposal
- How to write part 2 of your ERC proposal
- How do we evaluate your ERC proposal
- How to prepare for your ERC interview
- How to apply for your ERC Proof of Concept Grant

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbFbzkVWgCU&list=PLtv6FnsXqnXAYRk6HCErwMxwML0ZKoMcy

Thank You!

More information: erc.europa.eu

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