



# ERC Public Engagement with Research Award 2020



**European Research Council**  
Established by the European Commission





# ERC Public Engagement with Research **Award 2020**

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## Guide for Applicants

The European Research Council's (ERC) Public Engagement with Research Award 2020 is designed to recognise and celebrate ERC grantees who have demonstrated excellence in public engagement and outreach.

ERC grantees have a contractual obligation to communicate about their project and many of them are outstanding science communicators. Due to the nature of frontier research, which can deliver unpredictable results at any time during the 5-year grant, ERC beneficiaries do not have to submit a Communication plan in their grant application. The ERC would like to recognise those who make the extra effort to engage with audiences outside their research domain.

The winners will be invited to attend the award ceremony, which is planned to take place at the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) in Trieste during the week 5-9 July 2020.

The prize for each winner includes a trophy, complimentary registration to ESOF, reimbursement for reasonable travel and hotel expenses for attending the award ceremony and visibility at the award ceremony. In addition, winning projects will be featured prominently on the ERC communication channels, expanding the visibility of the project beyond the national level, to EU audiences, for several months after the award.

This Guide for Applicants provides ERC grantees with all the necessary information to submit a winning entry. Next to the detailed description of this year's award categories, the eligibility and award criteria, this Guide contains a practical handbook to guide them through the process.



## Introduction

For the purpose of this award we understand “Public Engagement with Research” to mean the many ways that the public can be involved in the design, conduct or dissemination of the research process.

Researchers can choose to engage with the public for:

- Communication: to inform and inspire the public about research.
- Consultation: for projects that have engaged in two-way conversations about research and listened to public views.
- Collaboration: for research projects that have involved collaborating with the public, including co-creation, co-production of knowledge and citizen science.

## Award categories 2020

### Category 1 – Public Outreach

The objective of this category is to identify projects that have engaged with the public.

High-quality engagement involves interaction between researchers and the relevant public audiences or participants (who can be local, regional, national or international), with the aim of benefitting both parties and the ultimate goal of shaping or enhancing the quality or impact of the research.

Benefits might include learning, developing new skills, gaining new insights or ideas, developing better research, raising aspiration, or being inspired.

It can be helpful to break the public down into different target groups based on categories such as age, gender, location or interests.

To reach the target audience, engagement could be achieved in partnership with other organisations, which have strong links and networks in the community. These include schools, festivals, museums and galleries, and voluntary sector organisations and charities.

One winner will be selected for this category.



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## Category 2 - Press and media relations

The objective of this category is to focus on projects, which were communicated to the public through engagement with journalists or collaboration with media outlets.

Such collaborations should provide access to information, opinions, advice on science whilst giving professional journalists editorial freedom. Paid-for advertising in the media is not considered eligible for this category.

Working with the media can be a great way to reach a wide audience with news about research development. It can help to inform and educate different groups about a complicated or contentious issue, inspire people about new discoveries, explain poorly understood issues, empower the audience to contribute to ongoing public debates, combat disinformation and fake news, attract interest from potential funders or partners and even increase the number of people entering careers in the field.

One winner will be selected for this category.

## Category 3 - Social Media

The objective of this category is to reward social media interaction with the public outside the researcher's field of work.

In this category any forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos) will be considered. Technologies include: social networking, blogs, picture-sharing, vlogs, crowdsourcing, etc.

Social media is highly participative and dissemination is very fast. Using them can serve a number of purposes for public engagement for instance : reaching specific audiences; fostering interaction online; running large-scale 'citizen science' projects or marketing projects and events.

One winner will be selected for this category.



## Eligibility and Award Criteria

1. Applications for the ERC Public Engagement with Research Award 2020 shall meet the following eligibility criteria:
  - The application shall be submitted via the online application form no later than 10 January 2020, 17:00 CET.
  - Applications must be in one of the official EU languages.
  - Only one application can be submitted per ERC funded research project.
  - The application shall refer to a research project, which has received funding from the European Research Council and which is either running or finished less than two years prior to the Award deadline.
  - The Public Engagement Activity must clearly refer to one of the three award categories of 2020. The same Activity cannot be submitted for several categories.
  - The Activity should be either fully implemented or should be in a sufficiently mature state for the jury to assess it (i.e. physical implementation should be progressed enough to demonstrate achievement of objectives).
  
2. All eligible applications will be assessed by the jury against the following award criteria:
  1. Quality: clarity and completeness of the proposal, clear strategy for the public engagement activity; implementation approach, use of partnership; quality of material used.
  2. Creativity and originality: innovative character of the activity in the selected award category. Activities should demonstrate new approaches, new organisational methods or the development of new (or significantly) improved ways to communicate their research to a target audience. Creativity of tools or approach, or the combination of both; use of resources.
  3. Impact of the Activity in relation to its initial objectives and target audience. Activities shall demonstrate their impact and show their results against the initially set targets and objectives.
    1. What were the benefits to the researcher, their research and any other researchers involved?
    2. What were the benefits to the public audiences/participants?
    3. Were there other benefits, outcomes and impacts that occurred as a result of the Activity?
    4. How did the researcher/the team evaluate the Activity?
    5. Will the Activity be sustained in any way or leave a legacy?



## Practical Guide to the ERC Public Engagement with Research Award 2020

### 1. Is my project a good candidate for the ERC Public Engagement with Research Award 2020 competition?

- *What is the European Research Council looking for in this competition?*  
The European Research Council would like to recognise grantees who make the extra effort to engage with audiences outside their research domain by rewarding those who undertake high-quality Public Engagement with Research.
- *Which types of ERC projects are eligible?*  
All projects which received funding from the European Research Council grants (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, Synergy, Proof-of-Concept) under the EU's Seventh (2007-2013) and Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation are eligible. Projects should still be running or finished less than two years prior to the Award deadline.
- *Can I submit a recently completed public engagement activity?*  
Yes. However, please consider that the activity should be sufficiently mature (i.e. in order for it to demonstrate progress in the achievement of the original objectives).
- *Is there a maximum number of applications?*  
Yes. One application per ERC funded project.
- *Is my project mature enough to be submitted?*  
The independent jury is going to assess your public engagement activity based on results already achieved. They will not be able to award your innovative ideas in case you cannot provide evidence they work (if, for example, your activity is still in the preparatory phase).

### 2. How do I submit my application?

- *How does it work in a nutshell?*  
You must fill in the on-line form.
- *Where do I submit the application?*  
On the ERC Public Engagement with Research Award [online platform](#).
- *When is the deadline for submission?*  
Monday 10 January 2020 17:00 CET



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- *Who should submit the application?*  
Applications must be submitted by the ERC grantee/Principal Investigator or one of their team members.
- *How do I choose the category if my public engagement activity used several communication channels?*  
It is up to the applicant to decide in which category to submit the entry taking into account the award criteria. When the Public Engagement with Research activity could fit in several categories, please choose the category that fits best. You can explain your choice in the application form.
- *In which language can I submit the application?*  
The application form is available in English. However, you can submit your project in any other official EU language.

If needed, you can get free of charge a machine translation into English via this [web page](#).

Applications submitted in another language than English and retained for the jury selection will be translated prior to the jury evaluation.

- *Can I also send the application by email?*  
No. Only online applications are eligible.
- *Does the application have to be submitted in one step? Can the application be saved and completed later?*  
Yes. You can save a draft by pressing the button 'Save as draft' on the top right of this form. A hyperlink will be created. You will get the option to email the hyperlink, to save it to favorites/bookmarks or to copy the link to your clipboard. Please keep this hyperlink carefully.
- *Who can I contact if I have questions?*  
Please send your enquiries about the application process by [e-mail](#).
- *Are there any limitations concerning the number of applications by Host Institution?*  
No, any PI is welcome to apply.

### **3. How is my project assessed - and what happens after?**

- *What happens once my application is submitted?*  
The ERCEA staff will carry out eligibility checks of all submitted proposals and inform applicants by email. The Jury will evaluate up to ten (10) entries in each category. Should the total number of entries per category exceed ten, then the ERCEA staff from the communication unit will pre-select the ten best entries based on the award criteria described in the Guide for Applicants.
- *How does the jury evaluation process look like?*  
Only applications which satisfy the first phase of the evaluation (eligibility) will be admitted to the



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second phase.

The jury will select the best entry in each category based on the award criteria.

- *Who sits in the jury?*

The jury will be composed of some members of the ERC Scientific Council, member(s) of the European Parliament, science journalist(s), specialist(s) in science communication and public engagement and specialist(s) in social media.

- *When will I know if I won?*

All candidates will be informed about the decision regarding their application by the end of April 2020.

- *What happens if my project wins?*

The three winners will be invited to the award ceremony to receive their prize.

- *When will the award ceremony take place?*

The award ceremony is planned to take place at the 2020 EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) in Trieste during the week 5-9 July 2020. The exact date will be announced on the [ERC website](#).

The ERC will inform the winners directly by email or regular post.

- *What is the prize?*

The winners will receive a trophy, complimentary registration for ESOF, reimbursement for travel and a flat fee for hotel expenses to attend the award ceremony.

In addition, winning projects will be featured prominently in the ERC communication channels, expanding the visibility of the project beyond the traditional national level, including at EU level, for several months after the award.