

## ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

### Strategy Note

#### ERC peer review panel structure – Fundamental Principles

The ERC's peer review process will be carried out by panels of independent high level scientists and scholars, supported by written reports of referees. The Scientific Council has come to an agreement on the structure of panels for the evaluation ERC call for proposals. This structure responds to a series of *overriding principles* that were taken into account in the decision making process.

***Coherence*** is essential in the design of all structures and operations of the ERC. The mandate of the ERC covers research in all fields of sciences and humanities, with funding decisions based only on excellence. This reflects an overarching vision of research as a unitary activity of the creative mind transcending the particularities of broad domains and individual disciplines. It also reflects the critical role of interdisciplinarity and the constantly evolving nature of disciplines.

The ERC has been set up with high hopes and great ambitions, and has set amongst its goals the instigation of ***transformative changes*** in the European research landscape. The Scientific Council aims to set new examples and standards by sending forceful signals for such transformative changes that track and support changes in the sciences themselves.

The panel structure chosen reflects a ***forward-looking approach*** to science and research. The focus is on bottom-up top quality, leading edge, innovative research, as reflected in the term that describes the ERC's remit: frontier research. The innovative structure of the panels signals openness to changes in paradigm and revolutionary rather than ordinary science.

The ongoing evolution of scientific disciplines also demands that the panel structure includes an appreciation for ***interdisciplinarity***. Early on, the Scientific Council decided to keep the number of panels low, to promote such interdisciplinarity and a wide breadth of viewpoints within each panel.

The emphasis on excellence, independent of any other priority, leads naturally to a ***funding allocation independent of panel structure***. This will be further guaranteed by retaining sufficient unallocated funds to support on a competitive basis highly meritorious proposals that bridge panels.

The panels themselves are to be interpreted in a ***flexible and inclusive*** manner with adequate space and arrangements for cross panel and interdisciplinary proposals. Furthermore the panel themselves will be adapted as necessary to the realities faced by the ERC during the evaluation process itself, including the number and distribution of proposals received. The Scientific Council is confident that the fundamental principles used in designing the panel structure are sound and robust and will enable an optimal evaluation process.