



**ERC - supporting excellent researchers all over Europe  
Eastern Partnership countries regional event**

**Challenges and opportunities for Georgian  
researchers**

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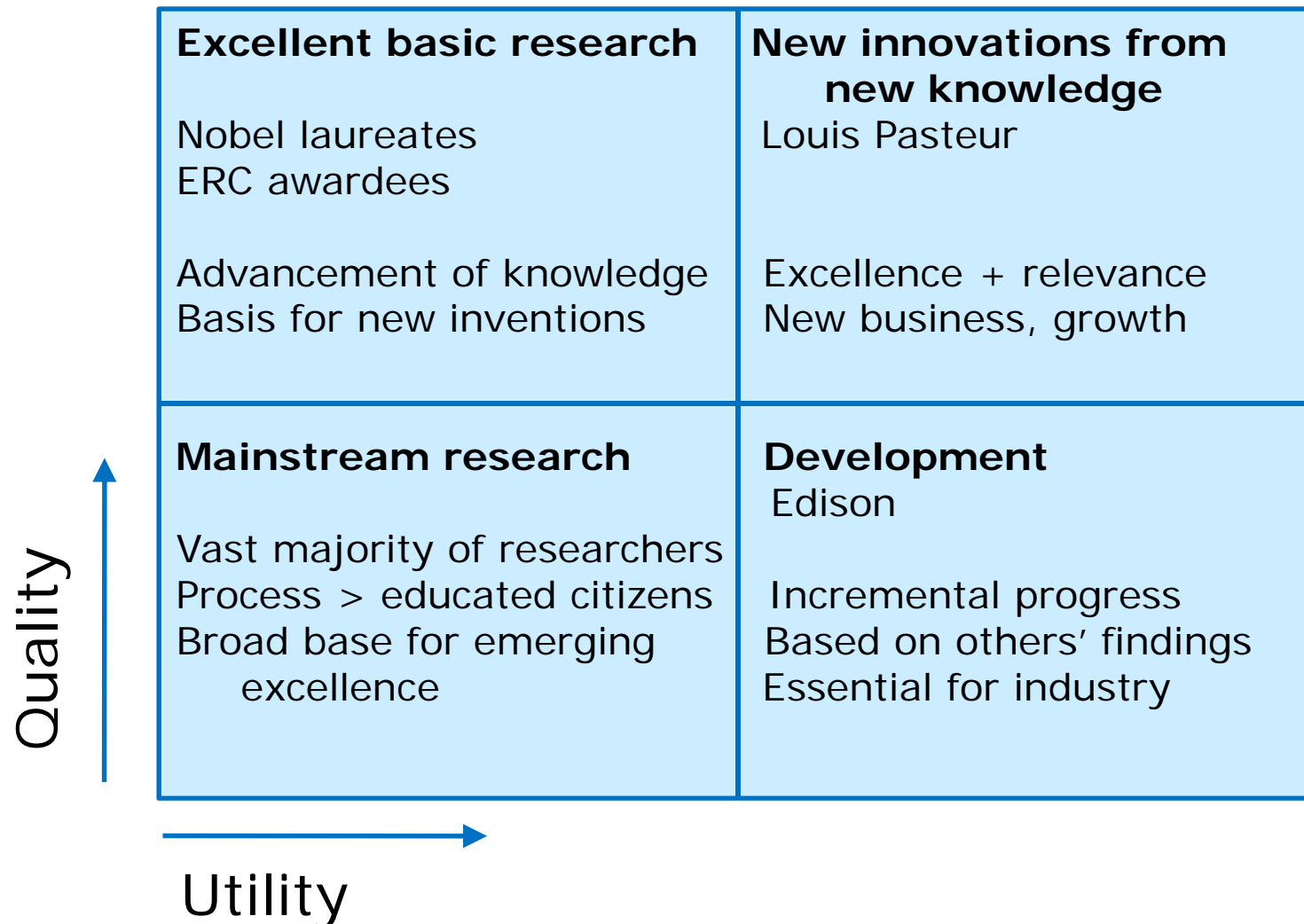
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## **Young generation of researchers: Create a career strategy! You are one of the most valuable assets of your country**

- Define your research ambition
- Choose your research topic
- Know your university and your funding opportunities
- Ensure availability of the research infrastructure you need
- Become an excellent proposal writer
- Get yourself a mentor

# Define your research ambition



## How do you approach the excellence category?

- Choose your **PhD** supervisor carefully, quality of research, research environment
- Accomplish your PhD in max 4 years taking advantage of doctoral training programs at home and abroad, demand full attention from your supervisor, support group
- Do your **post-doc** abroad, in the best possible environment, approach Georgian expatriotes, look at opportunities provided by SRNSF's partnership organisations
- After post-doc **launch independent career** in Georgian research environment with a "culture of excellence" using SRNSF funding instruments, choose your own scientific niche
- When ready, apply for **ERC Starting Grant**, re-apply, learn from evaluations
- **Trust** your talent and creativity, work hard to get them flourish

## What I learnt from my post-doc at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory EMBL

- I understood
  - The all-importance of **excellence** in research
  - The crucial role of state-of-the art **research infrastructure**
  - The importance of **early independence** of young researchers
  - The benefits of an international researchers' **network**
  - The importance of institutional **collaboration with politicians and policy makers**
- My post-doc experience has supported me throughout my career in
  - Research
  - In university leadership positions
  - National and European science policy tasks

## Choosing your research topic

- Can you make a difference: Original new risky topic instead of incremental research
- Can your research benefit from multi-disciplinarity, reach out to collaborators
- Can you take advantage of data accessible in open sources
- Is the research infrastructure available at home/abroad
- Is your research topic important for society/mankind, consider this and learn to explain the impact of your research

## At all stages of your career: Know your host organisation/university

### Does it have

- A clear mission and research strategy
- Prioritized research domains relevant to your research topic
- The research infrastructure you need
- Passionate talented scientists and motivated students
- Peers from whom you can learn
- International research collaborations
- Efficient doctoral training system
- A career structure for attractive perspectives for the future

## Get yourself a mentor - an outstanding researcher and a wise, generous human being

- To discuss your research and get scientific advice
- To get strategic advice on funding, collaborators, career issues
- To pre-read your grant applications and manuscripts
- To rehearse your presentations and interviews
- To encourage and support you
- To help you build a national and international network
- A mentor-mentoree relationship is a two-way street:  
Your experiences and development will enrich your mentor



## My ERC panel experience on mistakes to be avoided

- Application is CV-focussed rather than proposal-focussed
  - Proposal is key, CV proves you can accomplish the proposed research
- Research is incremental rather than original
- State-of-the-art weakly presented
- Own research and methods weakly presented
- Availability of essential research infrastructure not explained
- Lack of plan B for research proposal, should research hypothesis fail
- No independence after post-doc
  - Get rid of supervisors from PhD/post-doc periods
  - Use them as mentors, not bosses

## ERC Starting Grant process involves an interview

- You need to be mentored in proposal writing and rehearsed for interviews by your senior peers
- Be bold and confident – interviewee in ERC call belongs to elite

# Aiming at an ERC grant is not your private business but a national priority

## Important for Government/Ministry/Country

- Return on investment in EU the Frame Work Programme
- EU funds liberate national funds for others
- International competitive funds is success indicator for a national research system

## Important for universities

- All research universities' ultimate goal to belong to the best
- European universities' ranking list based on ERC success
- Best researchers seek ERC-loaded universities - can move with ERC grant
- ERC grantees in a university attract international researchers
- Therefore, universities must support ERC applicants
  - Technical help with applications
  - National contact points' (NCP) advice on EU programmes

- **Universities** in Bologna structure since > 10 y
  - Better integration of education and research needed
  - University ecosystem fragmented, heterogeneous
    - 75 HEI, 32 research universities, public and private
  - Funding model unsustainable, based on (mobile) students' vouchers
  - Collaboration between universities to be strengthened for synergies
- **National Academy of Sciences** disassembled
  - 80% of 66 institutes moved to universities
  - Thereby funding shifted from earmarks to competition (EU MS)
  - Host university-research institute collaboration to be further deepened

- **No national strategy and long-term plan for research infrastructure**
  - No formalized links to European research infrastructures
- **International** research collaboration and networking needs to be urgently enhanced
- **Existing research niches** should be capitalized on
  - They provide competitive edge
  - Examples:
    - National Centre of Manuscripts' invaluable documents from first millennium on history of Christianity
    - Biodiversity: plants, microbes, climate

- **National funding agency for research SRNSF**
  - Priorities
    - High quality research
    - International research
    - Young scientists' development
  - Up-to-date strategies, processes of high quality, essential funding instruments
  - SRNSF best friend of all Georgian researchers, young or established
    - Take advantage of the professional staff, they are there to help you
- **SRNSF needs and merits considerably more funding**
  - To be able to support Georgia's development and growth

## **Public understanding and appreciation of research**

As basis of development of civil society

As foundation for innovations essential for growth and well-being

**Must be furthered**

**GOOD LUCK AND THANK YOU!**