

ERC application and evaluation procedure



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Outline



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- **Evaluation process**
- **Submission of proposals**
- **Proposal preparation: Hints and tips**

ERC Grant schemes



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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

Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research – earliest
stage of marketable innovation
up to €150,000 for ERC grant holders

ERC Evaluation process (StG, CoG & AdG)

Panel structure: 3 domains and 25 panels



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Each panel :
Panel Chair and
11-15 Panel Members

Life Sciences (LS) - 9 panels

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



Social Sciences and Humanities (SH) - 6 panels

- SH1 Individuals, Markets & Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Values, Environment & Space
- SH3 The Social World, Diversity, Population
- SH4 The Human Mind and its Complexity
- SH5 Cultures & Cultural Production
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past

Physical Sciences & Engineering (PE) - 10 panels

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical & Analytical Chemical sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry & Materials
- PE6 Computer Science & Informatics
- PE7 Systems & Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products & Process Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science

How are ERC research proposals evaluated?

Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion



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Evaluation of *excellence* at two levels:

- **Excellence of the Research Project**

- ✓ Ground breaking nature
- ✓ Potential impact
- ✓ Scientific Approach

- **Excellence of the Principal Investigator**

- ✓ Intellectual capacity
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Commitment



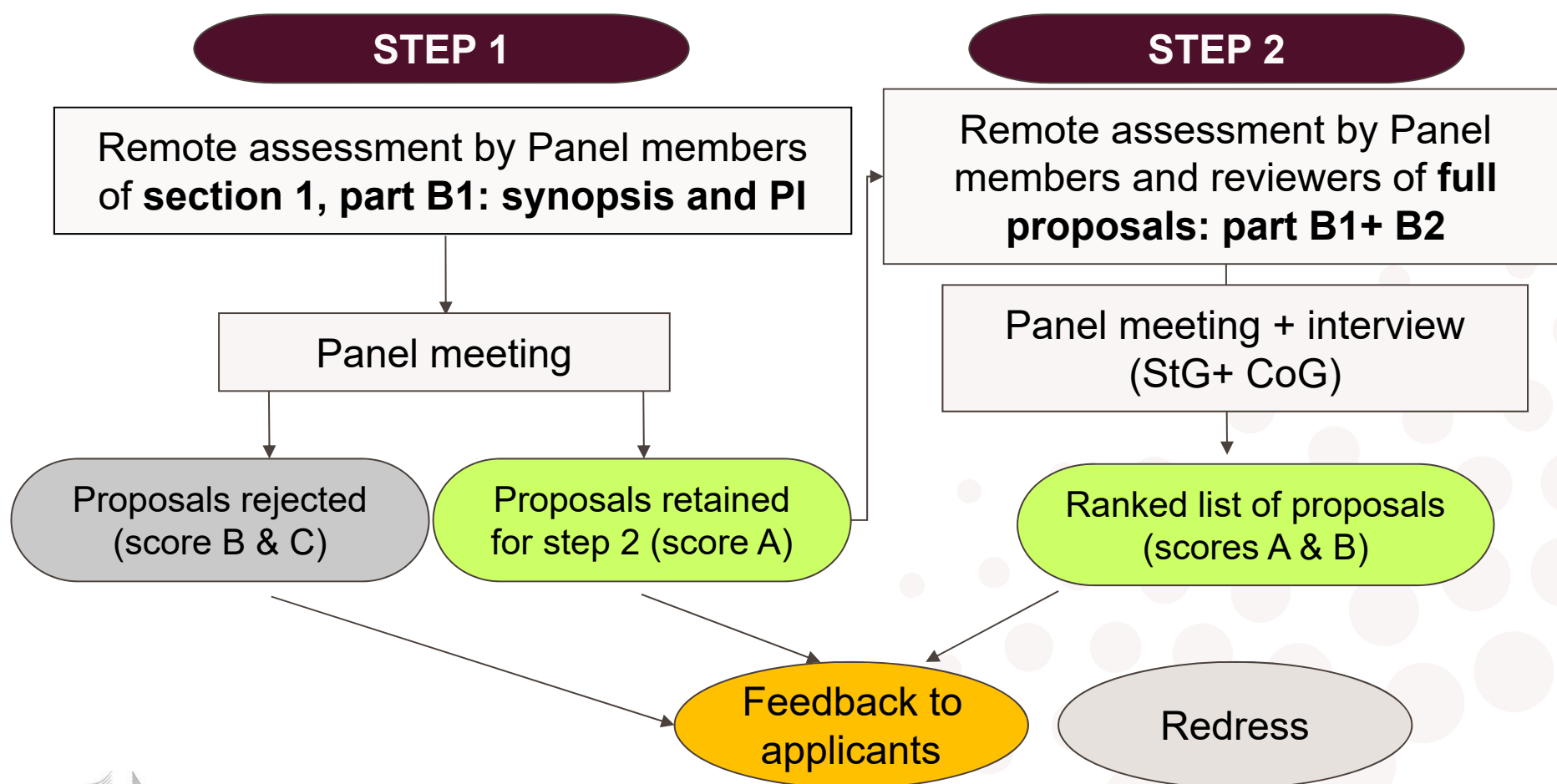
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How are the proposals evaluated?

Evaluation procedure – StG, CoG and AdG calls

Single submission, but a two-step evaluation



Scoring scheme



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- **Score 'A'**: Fully meets the ERC excellence criterion and is recommended for funding if sufficient funds are available.
- **Score 'B'**: Meets some but not all of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded. **If score B is awarded in step 1, PI may not submit a proposal to any call in 2018!**
- **Score 'C'**: Proposal is not of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation. The applicant may also be subject to resubmission limitations in the next call. **PI may not submit a proposal to any call in 2018 and 2019!**



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Typical reasons for rejection

Principal investigator

- Insufficient track-record
- Insufficient (potential for) independence
- Insufficient experience in leading projects

Proposed project

- Scope: Too narrow \leftrightarrow too broad/unfocussed
- Incremental research
- Work plan not detailed enough/unclear
- Insufficient risk management

Submission of Proposals

ERC Work Programme 2017 calendar and tentative dates for 2018 Work Programme



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ERC calls	Budget	Call Opening	Submission Deadline(s)
Advanced Grants ERC-2017-AdG	567 M€	16 May 2017	<u>31 August 2017</u>
Proof of Concept ERC-2017-PoC	20 M€	2 August 2016	<i>19 January 2017</i> <u>25 April 2017</u> <u>5 September 2017</u>
Starting Grants ERC-2018-StG	<i>tbd</i>	<i>July 2017</i>	<i>October 2017</i>
Consolidator Grants ERC-2018-CoG	<i>tbd</i>	<i>October 2017</i>	<i>February 2018</i>

How to prepare and submit an ERC research proposal?



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- Have a **bright, original and exciting idea**
- Design a **research project** to implement the idea
- Get a letter of support from a **Host Institution** where the project is to be carried out (the HI must be located in the EU or any of the H2020 associated countries)
- Write your **research proposal**
- **Fully electronic/web based submission system**
- **Submit** your research proposal **before the deadline**



Eligibility window for Starting and Consolidator Grants and possible extensions



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- Condition StG: PhD at least 2 and up to 7 years before 1 January 2018
- Condition CoG: PhD at least 7 and up to 12 years before 1 January 2018

Extensions of eligibility window possible for documented cases of:

- Maternity – 18 months per child (before or after PhD)
- Paternity – actual time taken off
- Military service
- Medical speciality training
- Caring for seriously ill family members
- No limit to the total extension

Submission to Panels



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- Proposals are submitted to a *Targeted Panel* (of PI's choice)
 - Can flag one “*Secondary Review Panel*”
- **Applicant chooses his/her panel**, this panel is “responsible” and takes ownership for the evaluation of the particular proposal
- Switching proposals between panels not possible unless clear mistake on part of applicant, or due to the necessary expertise being available in a different panel
- **But:** In case of cross-panel or cross-domain proposals, evaluation by members of other panels possible

Online Submission Proposal structure



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Administrative forms (Part A)

- 1 – General information
- 2 – Administrative data of participating organisations
- 3 – Budget
- 4 – Ethics
- 5 – Call specific questions

Administrative forms

Annexes

Commitment of the host institution
PhD certificates, etc

Part B1 (submitted as pdf) *Evaluated in Step 1 & Step 2*

Text box - Cross-domain nature explanation

a – Extended synopsis	5 pages
b – Curriculum vitae	2 pages

Appendix – Funding ID

c - Track-record	2 pages
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Part B2 (submitted as pdf) *Not evaluated in Step 1 (Step 2 only)*

Scientific proposal	15 pages
a – State-of-the-art and objectives	
b – Methodology	
c – Resources	

Guidelines and Recommendations in the 2017 Information for Applicants



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Submission of Proposals

Differences in Part B1 and Part B2

In Step 1: **Panel members** (generalists and with multidisciplinary approaches) see only Part B1 of your proposal: Prepare it accordingly!

- Pay particular attention to the **ground-breaking nature** of the research project – no incremental research. State-of-the-art is not enough. Think big!
- Know your competitors – what is the **state of play** and why is your idea and scientific approach outstanding?
- Only the extended Synopsis is read at Step 1: **concise and clear presentation** is crucial (evaluators are not necessarily all experts in the field)
- Outline of the **methodological approach** (feasibility)
- Show your **scientific independence** in your CV (model CV provided in the part B1 template)
- Funding ID to be filled in

Submission of Proposals

Differences in Part B1 and Part B2



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- In Step 2: Both **Part B1 and B2** are sent to specialists around the world (**specialised external referees**)
 - Do not just repeat the synopsis
 - Provide **sufficient detail** on methodology, work plan, selection of case studies etc. (15 pages)
 - Check coherency of figures, **justify requested resources**
 - Explain **involvement of team members**
 - Provide alternative strategies to **mitigate risk**

Preparing an application

Hints and tips (Generalities)



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- **Register early**, get familiar with the system and templates and start filling in the forms
- A submitted proposal can be **revised until the call deadline** by submitting a new version and overwriting the previous one
- Follow the formatting rules and page limits.
- Download and proof-read the proposal before submitting.
- Make use of the **help tools and call documents** (Information for Applicants, Work Programme, Frequently asked questions) to prepare your proposal
- Talk to the National Contact Points and your Institution's grant office

Questions to ask yourself as an applicant



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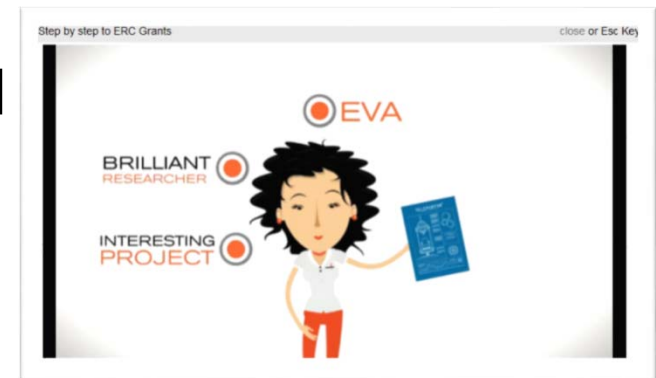
- Am I internationally competitive as a researcher at my career stage and in my discipline?
- Am I able to work independently, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?
- Why is my proposed project important?
- Does it promise to go substantially beyond the state of the art?
- Why am I the best/only person to carry it out?
- Is it timely? (Why wasn't it done in the past? Is it feasible now?)
- What's the risk? Is it justified by a substantial potential gain? Do I have a plan for managing the risk?

Some useful tools and links



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- Read **Information for Applicants** and **Work Programme**
- View the **step-by-step video** Introduction to application process, including tips & tricks for the interview
<https://vimeo.com/94179654>
- Consult **ERC website** for latest funding opportunities, view ERC funded projects



Preparing an application

Check the already Funded Projects



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The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the ERC website. It features the ERC 10 years logo, the text 'European Research Council', and the European Commission logo. A horizontal menu includes 'ABOUT ERC', 'FUNDING', 'PROJECTS & FIGURES', 'NEWS', and 'EVENTS'. Below this is a secondary menu with 'MANAGING YOUR PROJECT'. A breadcrumb trail at the bottom of the header shows 'Home > Projects & figures > ERC Funded Projects'. A search icon is located on the right side of the header.

Menu allows searching by Funding Scheme, Research Area, Country of Host Institution.

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

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)

Preparing an application

Check the statistics on granted projects and on submissions



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ABOUT ERC

FUNDING

PROJECTS &
FIGURES

NEWS

EVENTS

MANAGING YOUR
PROJECT

European
Commission

distribution might differ from the indicative statistics, published at the release of the results, which are based on the outcome of the evaluation process.

ERC Call	Applications received	Of which		
		Evaluated*	Funded	Success rates (%)**
Starting Grant 2007	9,167	8,787	299	3.4
Starting Grant 2009	2,503	2,392	245	10.2
Starting Grant 2010	2,873	2,767	436	15.8
Starting Grant 2011	4,080	4,005	486	12.1
Starting Grant 2012	4,741	4,652	566	12.2
Starting Grant 2013	3,329	3,266	300	9.2
Starting Grant 2014	3,273	3,204	375	11.7
Starting Grant 2015	2,920	2,862	349	12.2
Starting Grant 2016	2,935	2,887	325	11.3
Starting Grant total	35,821	34,822	3,381	9.7
Consolidator Grant 2013	3,673	3,604	313	8.7
Consolidator Grant 2014	2,528	2,485	371	14.9
Consolidator Grant 2015	2,051	2,023	302	14.9
Consolidator Grant 2016	2,305	2,274	314	13.8
Consolidator Grant total	10,557	10,386	1,300	13.1
Advanced Grant 2008	2,167	2,034	282	13.9

Preparing an application

Check past panel members for the call



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Supervised work, is ready to work independently and shows potential to be a research leader? The ERC Starting Grant could be for you.



Who can apply?

Researchers of any nationality with **2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD** (Extensions are possible under certain circumstances — see the latest **ERC Work Programme**), a scientific track record showing great promise and an excellent research proposal



What proposals are eligible?

- ➔ **Criteria**
Applications can be made in **any field of research**
The ERC's grants operate on a 'bottom-up' basis without predetermined priorities.
- ➔ **Location**
Research must be conducted in a **public or private research organisation** (known as a Host Institution/HI). It could be the HI where the applicant already works, or any other HI located in one of the **EU Member States or Associated Countries**
- ➔ **Host Institution**

Information for applicants

All Horizon 2020 reference documents are available on the [Participants Portal](#)

COMPOSITION OF EVALUATION PANELS

ERC Starting Grant 2017:
[Panel Chairs](#)

ERC Starting Grant 2016:
[Panel Chairs](#)
[Panel Members](#)

CHOOSE YOUR PANEL

[ERC peer review evaluation panels \(2017 calls\)](#)

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS



Information sources



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More information on

<http://erc.europa.eu>

To subscribe to the ERC newsletter

<http://erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc>

National Contact Point

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

Where to apply

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html>

Your grant offices



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Thank you!



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What does ERC offer?

Creative Freedom of the Individual Grantee

ERC offers selective and generous grants, independence, recognition & visibility

- Work on any research topic: **completely bottom-up**
- Gain **financial autonomy** for 5 years
- Negotiate the **best work conditions** with the host institution
- Attract **top team members and collaborators** (EU and non-EU)
- **Portability of grants**
- **Attract additional funding and gain recognition:** ERC is a quality label





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After 9 Years, a Success Story



Over **6,000**
top researchers funded since
the ERC's creation in 2007



Over **90,000**
articles from ERC projects published
in prestigious scientific journals



Over **40,000**
researchers and other professionals
employed in ERC research teams



677 research institutions
hosting ERC grantees – universities,
public or private research centres in
the EU or associated countries



€ 13 billion
ERC budget for 2014-2020 under
Horizon 2020



67
nationalities of
grant holders

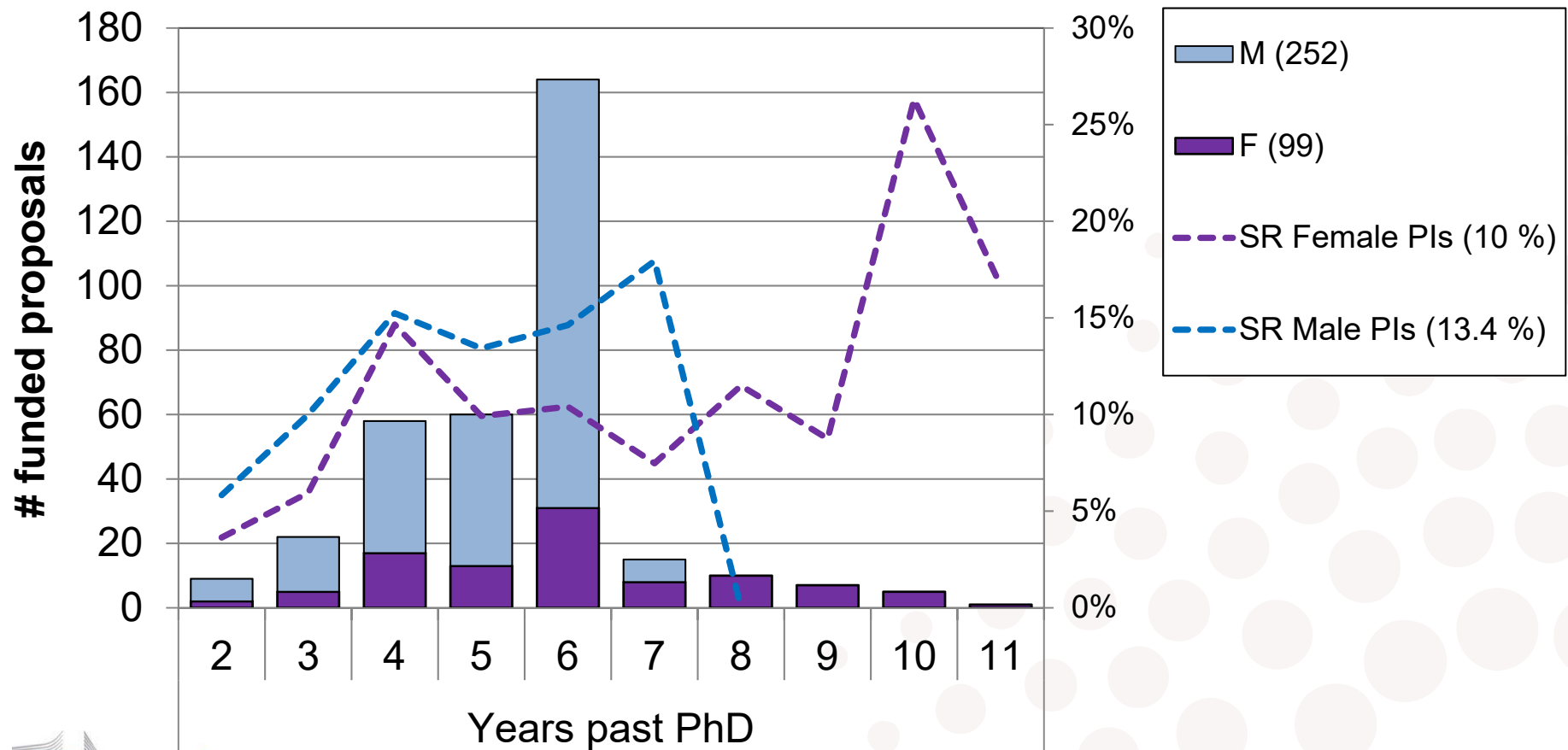
StG 2015 Funded proposals by gender

Success rates by years past PhD



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STG 2015 funded PIs by years past PhD



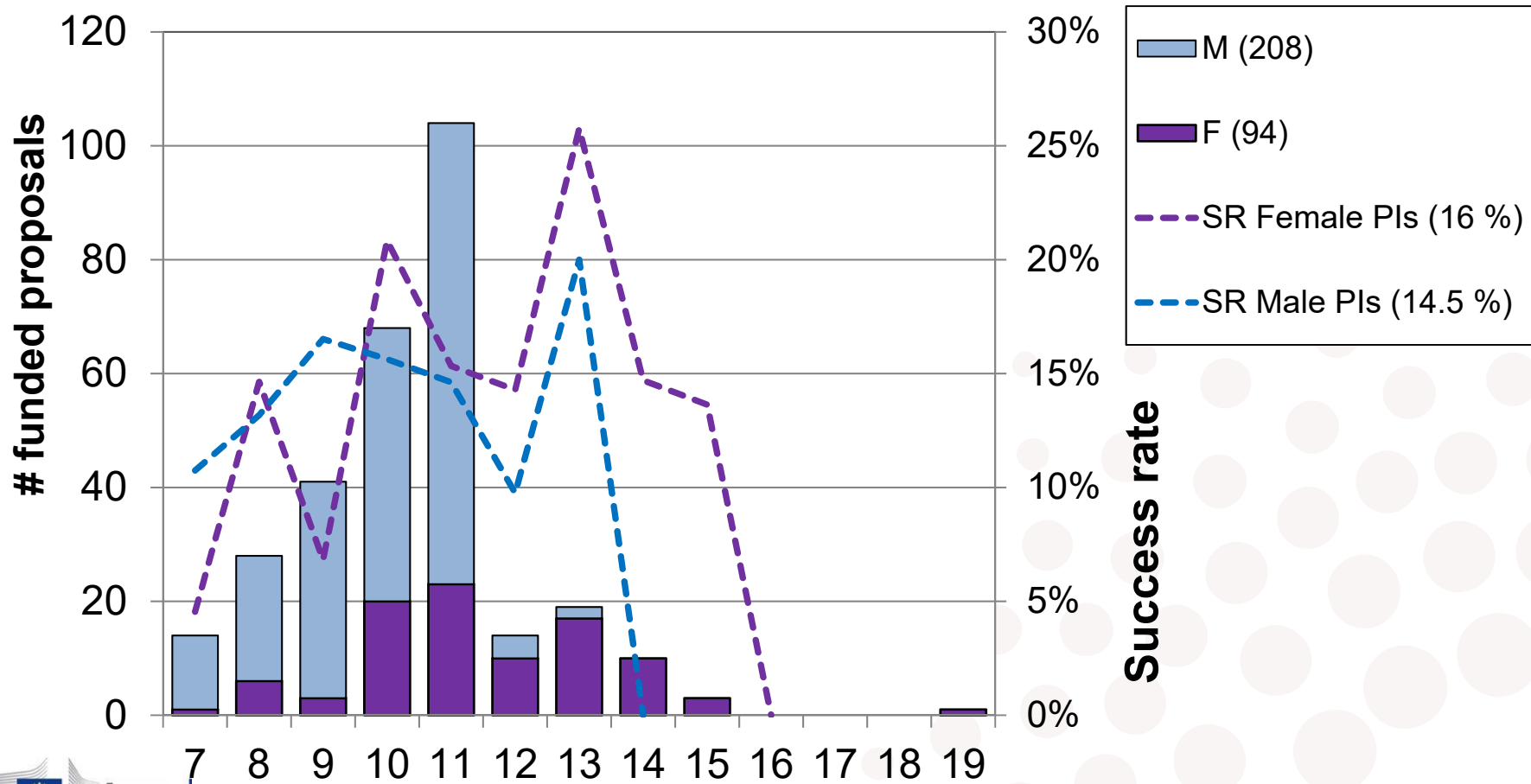
CoG 2015 funded by proposals gender

Success rates by years past PhD



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CoG 2015 funded PIs by years past PhD



Scoring Scheme



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A score: within panel budget



Proposals for immediate funding.

A score: outside panel budget



One or more reserve list proposals may be funded. Unfunded applicants can resubmit next year.

B score: not funded



Proposals rejected (Step 1 or 2). No resubmission next year if B awarded in step 1

C score: non fundable



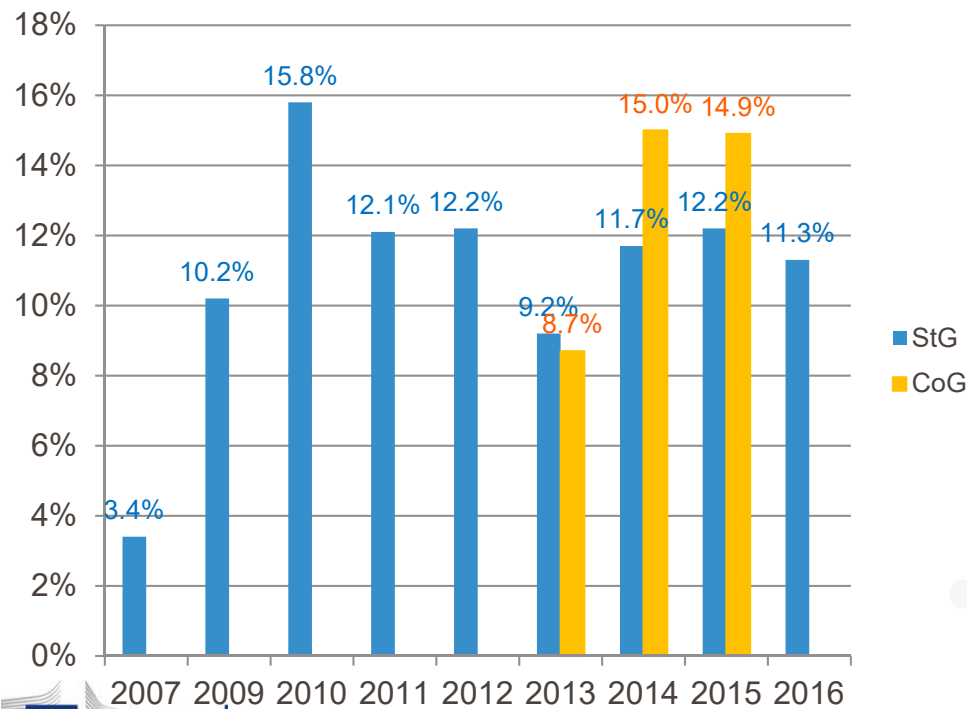
Proposals rejected (Step 1). No resubmission next 2 years



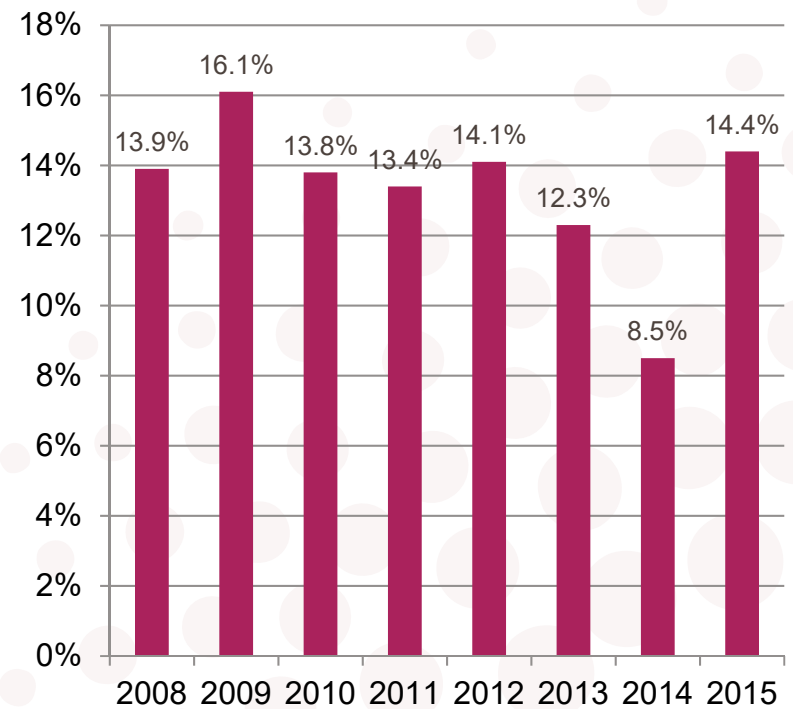
ERC schemes are highly competitive!

Average success rate 12%

Starting/Consolidator Grant



Advanced Grant





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ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants 2017

The applicant's profile

“Am I competitive enough?”

- Potential for research independence
- Evidence of scientific maturity
- At least one (StG) /several (CoG) publications without participation of PhD supervisor

Condition StG: PhD **at least 2 and up to 7 years before 1 January 2017**

Condition CoG: PhD **over 7 and up to 12 years before 1 January 2017**

Promising track-record of early achievements

- Significant publications
- Invited presentations in conferences
- Funding, patents, awards, prizes

All these need to be shown in your proposal that will include your CV and an early achievements track record.



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ERC Advanced Grants

The applicant's profile

“Am I competitive enough?”

- Exceptional leader in terms of originality and significance of your research
- Excellent track record and achievements during the last 10 years (this time window can be extended in case of eligible career breaks)

Substantial track-record of significant research achievements

- **as appropriate for the field**
- publications in peer-reviewed journals, monographs, invited presentations, funding, patents, awards, prizes
- Organisation of international conferences
- Major contributions to the early careers of excellent researchers
- Bibliometry may be one of the proxies used (where appropriate) among many others

Proposal budget considerations



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- Budget analysis carried out in Step 2 evaluation (meeting)
- Panels have responsibility to ensure that resources requested are reasonable and well justified
- Budget cuts need to be justified on a proposal by proposal basis (no across-the-board cuts)
- Panels to recommend a final maximum budget based on the resources allocated/ removed
- Panels do not “micro-manage” project finances
- Awards made on a “take-it-or-leave-it” basis: no negotiations