



European Research Council

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ERC Highlight:

ERC invests €1.7 billion in top researchers in 2014

11 December 2013

A total budget of €1.7 billion was announced today by the European Commission to support projects to be selected by the European Research Council (ERC) in 2014. Open to individual researchers of any age or nationality, the new ERC calls will provide funding to around 1,000 top scientists to pursue cutting-edge research in Europe. Excellent researchers working in any field (Physical Sciences and Engineering, Life Sciences, and Social Sciences and Humanities) can now apply for ERC 2014 ‘Starting Grants’ and ‘Consolidator Grants’. These calls are part of the “Excellent Science” pillar of the new EU Research and Innovation programme *Horizon 2020*.

ERC President Prof. Helga Nowotny said: “*With the publication of these first calls, Horizon 2020 is becoming a reality for many scientists. Competition in the ERC calls will remain fierce in the next seven years and only exceptional proposals are likely to be funded, with scientific excellence as the only criterion for selection. More than ever, I encourage researchers to submit their proposal only if they feel ready to take up the challenge*”.

The main novelty in this year’s calls is the extension of the current restrictions on the submission of proposals. Applicants may be restricted from submitting a new proposal to the calls published in 2015 and 2016, depending on the grade they received in 2014. (For details, see the link to the ERC 2014 Work Programme below).

These rules are viewed as a means of maintaining the quality and the sustainability of the ERC’s evaluation process, which is facing a constantly rising number of applications. They should also allow unsuccessful researchers the necessary time to develop a stronger proposal.

Summary of main calls from the 2014 budget:

	Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant	Advanced Grant	Proof of Concept Grant (*)
Publication date	11 December 2013	11 December 2013	17 June 2014	11 December 2013
Deadline(s)	25 March 2014	20 May 2014	21 October 2014	1 April 2014 1 October 2014
Budget million EUR (estimated number of grants)	485 (370)	713 (400)	450 (200)	15 (100)

**Calls open to ERC grantees only*

Researchers who wish to apply to one of the ERC’s calls will need to apply through the [Research and Innovation Participant Portal](#). The official deadlines are only those indicated on this Participant Portal.

The ERC Scientific Council will analyse the pilot phase of the ERC Synergy Grant before deciding on the scope and timing of future calls. As a consequence, there will be no call for the Synergy grant under the 2014 Work Programme. ERC grantees will continue to be able to apply for the Proof of Concept Grants under the 2014 Work Programme.



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The ERC Scientific Council has maintained the existing budget split between each of the three scientific domains: Physical Sciences and Engineering (44%), Life Sciences (39%) and Social Sciences & Humanities (17%).

The budget foreseen for the ERC 2015 calls is expected to be around €1.7 billion.

The ERC Work Programme is established by the ERC Scientific Council and subsequently adopted by the European Commission.

More information

- [ERC funding schemes and new calls](#)
- [ERC Work Programme 2014](#) (see pp. 18 and 19 on the new submission rules).
- European Commission's [Press release](#) and [MEMO - Statement of ERC President regarding the European Parliament's vote on the adoption of Horizon 2020](#)

Background

Set up in 2007 by the European Union, the European Research Council (ERC) aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers. Applicants can be of any nationality and age, and from anywhere in the world.

The ERC is part of *Horizon 2020*, the new EU Programme for Research and Innovation for 2014 to 2020. It is part of the first pillar of *Horizon 2020*, which is 'Excellent Science'. With a budget of nearly €80 billion, *Horizon 2020* is a key component of Europe's strategy to create economic growth and to reinforce its global competitiveness. The ERC has received over €13 billion, which represents around 17% of *Horizon 2020's* total budget. Compared to the previous seven-year programme, this is a substantial increase of its budget.

The ERC has adopted an 'investigator-driven', 'bottom-up' approach, which allows researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research, without any predetermined priorities. Since its launch, it has funded some 4,000 research projects throughout Europe, and has become a "benchmark" of the competitiveness of national research systems, complementing existing funding schemes at national and European levels. By the end of 2013, the ERC will, in addition, have supported some 23,500 team members, offering cutting-edge research training for nearly 7,000 doctoral students and 9,000 post-doctoral researchers.

The ERC is composed of an Executive Agency and a Scientific Council. The latter sets the ERC scientific strategy and consists of 22 top scientists and scholars. The ERC is led by President Prof. Helga Nowotny and the Scientific Council is represented in Brussels by Secretary General Prof. Donald Dingwell.

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