



European Research Council
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Press release

29 July 2015

ERC announces its 2016 budget and grant competitions

The European Commission adopted yesterday the ERC Work Programme 2016. The [programme](#), established by the ERC Scientific Council, foresees €1.67 billion for grants to top researchers from anywhere in the world who are ready to come or to stay in Europe to pursue their breakthrough ideas.

Within the new series of competitions, the ERC has opened today the first one, the call for Starting Grants 2016, with a budget of €485 million and deadline of 17 November 2015. This scheme is open to researchers with 2 to 7 years of experience since completion of PhD and a promising scientific track record.

Other grant competitions will follow according to the work programme's calendar: on 15 October 2015 opens the call for Consolidator Grants (for mid-career researchers, with deadline of 2 February 2016) and on 24 May 2016 the call for Advanced Grants (for established research leaders, deadline of 1 September 2016).

ERC grant holders can also apply for "Proof of Concept" grants, a top-up scheme to verify the innovation potential of ideas arising from ERC-funded projects. There will be three rounds of this call in 2016.

Among other actions, the work programme introduces a new action to widen participation in ERC competitions: a support to a consortium of formally nominated ERC National Contact Points (NCPs) to identify and share good practices and raise the quality of support to applicants.

Compared to last year, the main novelty for ERC applicants is a relative "softening" of the resubmission rules. Applicants who scored B at step 2 of the evaluation in the last call will be able to reapply immediately, while under the 2015 work programme they had to wait for one year. There are also new restrictions for applications from applicants whose proposals have been rejected on grounds of breach of research integrity.

Background

Set up in 2007 by the European Commission, the European Research Council (ERC) is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. Every year it selects and funds the very best individual scientists to run five-year projects in Europe. Competitions are open to researchers of any nationality, age or scientific area, including humanities and social sciences, hosted



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in a university or research centre based in the EU or in one of the countries associated to Horizon 2020. The applications are evaluated and selected after a peer-review process involving every year hundreds of renowned scientists coming from all over the world. The scientific quality of the proposal, aiming for excellence, is the only selection criterion.

The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven" (or "bottom-up") approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research, without thematic priorities. From 2007 to 2013, under the seventh EU's Research Framework Programme (FP7), the ERC's budget was €7.5 billion. Under the first pillar ("Excellent science") of the new EU Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), Horizon 2020, the ERC has had a budget of approximately €1.6 billion for each of the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

To date, the ERC has funded more than 5,000 top researchers out of more than 50,000 applications) at a variety of stages in their careers, giving high priority to young researchers (the [5000th ERC grant](#) was celebrated on 16 June). The ERC has also supported over 40,000 team members, who benefit from cutting-edge research training opportunities. By offering them funding, autonomy and prestige, the ERC contributes to the development of a new generation of top researchers in Europe, who are competitive at a global level.

The ERC consists of an independent governing body, the Scientific Council, and an implementing body, the Executive Agency. Since January 2014, the ERC President is Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon.

For more information

[Work Programme 2016](#)

[ERC website](#)

[Striking ERC-funded projects](#)

[The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020](#)

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