



European Research Council

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Press release

ERC to invest record budget in 2017

25 July 2016

Today the European Research Council (ERC) announces its 2017 grant competitions with a total budget of around €1.8 billion, the highest ever since the ERC's inception in 2007. It is also the record ERC annual funding reserved for young researchers with two to seven years of post-PhD experience (Starting grants).

This was outlined in the [ERC Work Programme 2017](#), established by the ERC Scientific Council and adopted today by the European Commission.

This is the first increase of the ERC annual budget since 2013, when it amounted to €1.75 billion. Some 1,070 new grantees are expected to benefit from ERC funding next year across all schemes. They are expected to employ another estimated 6,500 post-docs, PhD students and other members as part of their research teams.

The first 2017 grant competition opens tomorrow, the Starting Grants 2017 with an 18 October 2016 application deadline. It is expected that this call, with a budget of €605 million, will provide some 415 grants, worth up to €1.5 million each. The other competitions will open according to the Work Programme calendar: the Consolidator Grants will open on 20 October 2016 with a 9 February 2017 deadline, which is anticipated to provide €575 million to approximately 320 researchers, and on 16 May 2017 the Advanced Grants call will open, with a 31 August 2017 deadline and a €567 million budget expected to provide around 245 grants. Proof of Concept grants will also be available for ERC grant holders to bring the ideas from their ERC-funded projects closer to market. The call will have 3 rounds in 2017.

Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: "*The ERC is one of the best success stories for Europe, in terms of scientific impact, researchers' career and innovation. This is why the EU has decided to invest growing resources into this very successful programme that is highly praised by scientists around the world. With this record budget, the ERC grant competitions can provide even more researchers with the opportunity to pursue their careers and ambitions in Europe.*"

The President of the ERC, Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, said: "*The ERC Scientific Council consistently gives a high priority to supporting young researchers by awarding them more than two thirds of its annual budget through its Starting and Consolidator grants. Giving early independence to ambitious researchers contributes significantly to making their creativity flourish. The 2017 ERC budget is the highest ever for researchers with two to seven years of experience after their PhD, the 'Starters'. Thanks to these five-year grants, more early-career researchers across Europe will have a midterm perspective. This is one more step forward to back young researchers.*"



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The ERC grants, part of the EU's research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, support ambitious researchers from anywhere in the world, who are ready to carry out their research projects in the EU or associated countries.

Apart from the amount of funding, this is new in the Work Programme 2017:

- **Open data:** ERC grantees must take appropriate measures to ensure open access to the data generated by their project, unless they specifically decide to opt-out.
- **Gender balance:** Firstly, the obligation of the ERC grantees to take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women, and aim for gender balance of personnel assigned to their project, is emphasised. Secondly, the current eligibility window for applicants can be further extended for maternity leaves if appropriately documented.
- **Evaluation of ERC-funded research:** The ERC will continue the work to qualitatively analyse the scientific output of its funded projects with a particular focus on any potential breakthroughs and discoveries. There is currently a similar analysis ongoing, and the results of the 2015 pilot study on the qualitative evaluation of the first completed ERC-funded projects will be presented at an ERC press conference at ESOF 2016 in Manchester tomorrow 26 July.

Background

The European Research Council, set up by the European Union in 2007, is the first European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. It offers three core grant schemes: Starting grants (up to €1.5 Million each), Consolidator grants (up to €2 Million each) and Advanced grants (up to €2.5 Million each). Every year, it selects and funds ambitious and creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based in Europe.

The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. To date, the ERC has funded more than 6,500 top researchers at various stages of their careers. The funding also helped them employ around 30,000 members of their research teams.

ERC grantees can recruit talent from around the world to their research teams. This is further encouraged through a set of international agreements with non-European counterparts of the ERC, promoting young researchers to come on research visits and temporarily join ERC teams in Europe. Agreements have been signed to date with the United States (NSF), South Korea, Argentina, Japan, China, South Africa and Mexico.

ERC grants are substantial, but also very competitive (between 10 to 15 % of applicants are awarded grants). The winners can use the money to recruit other researchers and team members, and cover 100% of the direct costs of their research projects for up to five years.

The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the [Scientific Council](#), composed of 22 renowned scientists and chaired by ERC President Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. The ERC has a budget of over €13 billion for the years 2014 to 2020 and is part of the EU research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for which European Commissioner Carlos Moedas is responsible.

Together with the ERC Work Programme, the Commission today also adopted the updated [Work Programme](#) for 2017 of other parts of Horizon 2020.



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For more information

[ERC Work Programme 2017](#)

[ERC website](#)

[Striking ERC-funded projects](#)

[EU Horizon 2020 Framework Programme](#)

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