

Press release

19 July 2013

New ERC Starting Grant results: 287 early-career top researchers supported with €400 Mio

The European Research Council (ERC) has selected 287 top scientists in its sixth Starting Grant competition, which is the last one under the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7). They are awarded nearly €400 Million, with grants being worth up to €2 million each. This coveted funding will enable early-career talent to develop their best, innovative ideas across the European Research Area (ERA). This competition saw an increase in the share of successful female researchers. The demand for these grants also rose by 50% this year, which is a continuing trend. The next Starting Grant calls will fall under the new Framework Programme 'Horizon 2020'.

The projects selected cover a wide range of topics, such as designing a unique coastal defence against tsunamis, developing high-tech radiotherapy that can potentially help patients with head-and-neck cancer, investigating real-time monitoring of air pollution by means of GPS technology, or producing new low-cost and more effective photovoltaics. (For further information, click [here](#).)

Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn commented: "The European Research Council has changed the research landscape for young talent, and raised the level of science across Europe. It is funding blue-sky research that is advancing human knowledge, but also producing breakthroughs that could make their way into our daily lives in future. The ERC is now an established label of excellence, and it will go from strength to strength under Horizon 2020."

ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny said: "With this ERC Starting Grant call, we are adding a new group of very bright young researchers to the over 2,300 ERC-funded starting and consolidator grantees. This means that almost two-thirds of the overall 3,860 top scientists funded by the ERC since 2007 belong to the age group that will shape the scientific future of Europe. Their ground-breaking ideas and the growing stream of research results we see so far will make a difference – for science, for innovation and for society at large. For the first time ever, the proportion of women amongst the grantees went up to 30%. This is a very encouraging and augurs well for the future."

The share of women amongst the successful candidates in this Starting Grant call (30%) increased from last year (24%). This is a continuing trend over the past years. This call attracted 3,329 applications, which is a 50% increase compared to the corresponding group last year. Due to the substantially increased number of applications, the overall success rate dropped to around 9%.

The ERC calls are targeting top researchers of any nationality, based in, or willing to move to Europe. In this call, grants are awarded to researchers of 34 different nationalities, hosted in 162 different institutions throughout Europe, with 13 of them hosting five grantees or more. The average age of selected researchers is about 34 years. Furthermore, around 44% of the applicants were selected in the domain 'Physical Sciences and Engineering', nearly 38% in 'Life Sciences' and just over 18% in 'Social Sciences and Humanities'. (See statistics [here](#)).

These grants will also allow the scientists selected to build their own research teams, engaging in total over 1,000 postdocs and PhD students as ERC team members. The ERC thereby also contributes to supporting a new generation of top researchers in Europe.

Lists of selected researchers

The lists below show the proposals selected for funding. Some additional funds are expected to be confirmed, which will enable the ERC to support some more projects that are presently on a reserve list.

[LIST of all selected researchers by country](#) of host institution (alphabetical order within each country group)

Lists of selected researchers [by domain](#) (in alphabetical order):

- [Physical Sciences and Engineering](#)
- [Life Sciences](#)
- [Social Sciences and Humanities](#)

[STATISTICS](#) - Starting Grants call 2013 (indicative)

[DISCOVER MORE PROJECTS](#) in the Starting Grants calls 2013

Background

Set up in 2007 by the **European Research Council** is the first pan-European funding organisation for frontier research. It aims to stimulate scientific excellence in Europe by encouraging competition for funding between the very best, creative researchers of any nationality and age. The ERC also strives to attract top researchers from anywhere in the world to come to Europe. It funds young, early-career top researchers ('ERC Starting grants'), already independent excellent scientists ('ERC Consolidator Grants'), and senior research leaders ('ERC Advanced Grants'). The substantial funding is awarded based on peer review evaluation and can amount to maximum €2 million for a Starting Grant, €2.75 million for a Consolidator Grant and €3.5 million for an Advanced Grant.

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. The ERC, which is a pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme ('Ideas' Specific Programme), has a total budget of €7.5 billion from 2007 to 2013. The European Commission has proposed a significant boost of the ERC budget to over €13 billion in the new framework programme 'Horizon 2020' (2014-2020). Research institutions hosting ERC grantees must be situated within the European Research Area (ERA), which comprises the 28 EU Member States and 13 countries associated to the FP7. These associated countries contribute to the ERC budget every year.

The ERC is led by the ERC Scientific Council, composed of 22 top scientists and scholars. Professor Helga Nowotny is the ERC President. The ERC Executive Agency implements the 'Ideas' Specific Programme and is led by Director Pablo Amor.

Since 2013, the ERC Starting grant scheme has been split in two: the ERC Starting Grant, targeted at researchers with at least 2 and up to 7 years of experience after their PhD, and the new ERC Consolidator Grant for researchers with over 7 and up to 12 years of experience after their PhD. However, the previous Starting Grant call (2012) had two sub-streams ('starters' and 'consolidators'), which corresponded to the current division. Any comparative analyses made in this press release are based on the equivalent categories in previous calls (i.e. 2 – 7 years post-PhD experience).

The ERC Starting Grant in brief

- For early-career top researchers of any nationality and age, with at least 2 and up to 7 years of experience after PhD
- Based on a simple approach : 1 researcher, 1 host institution, 1 project, 1 selection criterion: excellence
- Host institution should be based in the European Research Area. No consortia, no co-funding are requested
- Funding: up to €2 million per grant for up to 5 years
- Calls for proposals: published annually. See updated information on the upcoming calls [here](#)

For more information

[ERC Press Release on outcome of the fifth Starting Grant call \(2012\)](#)

[Striking ERC-funded projects](#)

[ERC website](#)

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