



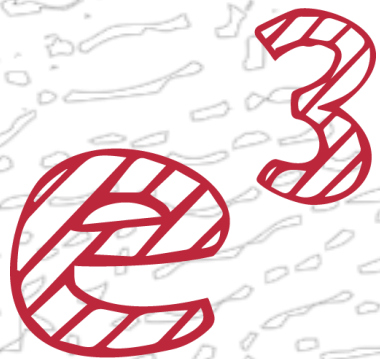
**Ensemble<sup>3</sup>  
Centre of Excellence**

for nanophotonics, advanced materials  
and novel crystal growth-based technologies

Hints and tips  
for  
a successful  
ERC application

**Dorota A. Pawlak**

PE11, PE8 Panel member



Centre of excellence  
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advanced materials and  
novel crystal growth-  
based technologies

# ENSEMBLE<sup>3</sup>



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→ TEAMING, H2020 (15 MEUR)

→ IRAP, FNP (10 MEUR)

→ Ministry (~5MEUR)

→ IMiF - in-kind contribution (>1 MEUR)

→ not-for-profit limited liability company

→ scientific unit in Warsaw, Poland

→ located at the premises of Łukasiewicz-IMiF



**Łukasiewicz**  
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## Get in Touch

**General:**

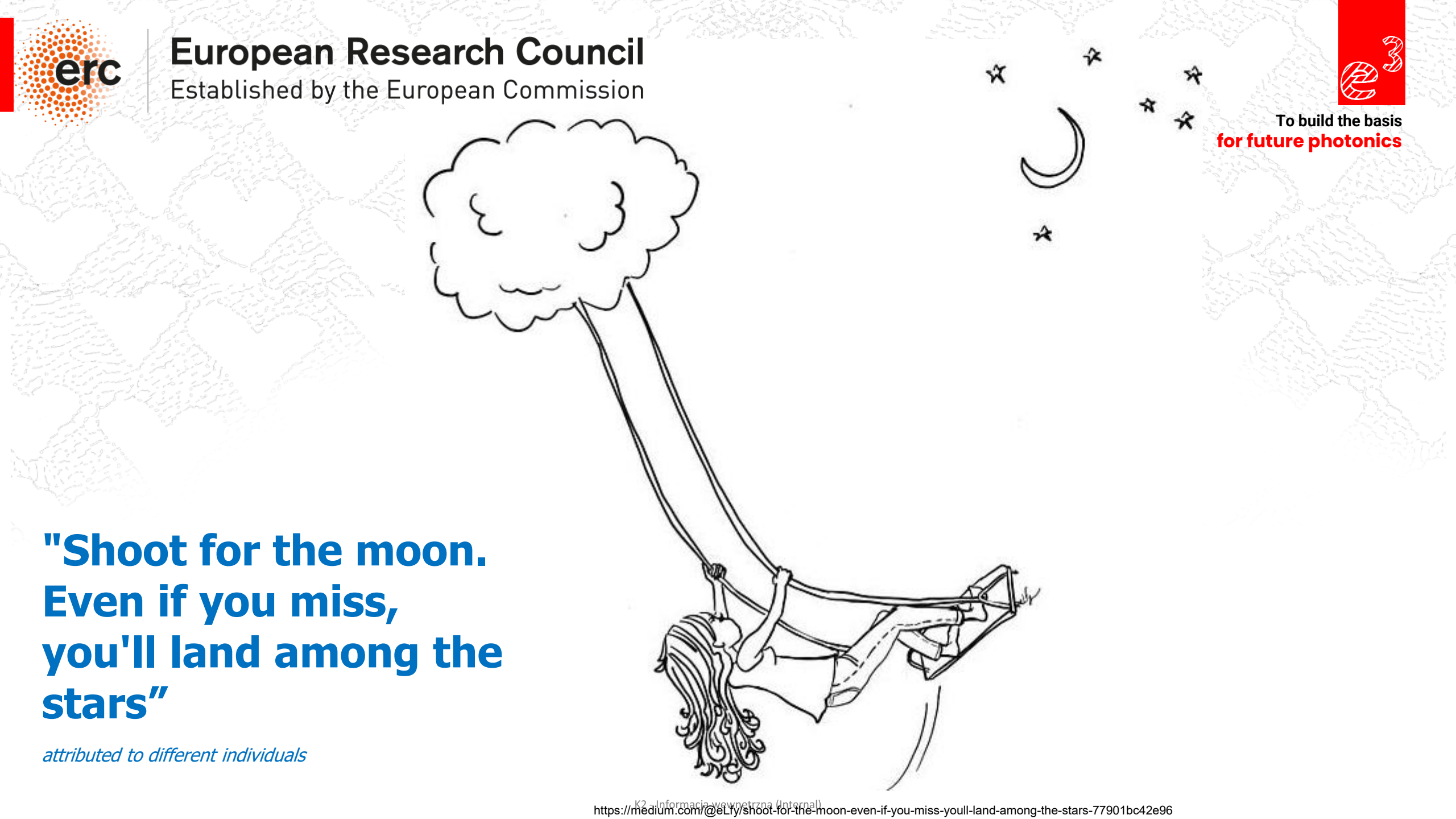
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**European Research Council**  
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**"Shoot for the moon.  
Even if you miss,  
you'll land among the  
stars"**

*attributed to different individuals*



# ERC applications

## What ERC projects are about?



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Ground-breaking nature



# ERC applications

## What ERC projects are about?



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**High-risk, high-gain!**



# ERC applications

## What ERC projects are about?



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Solving important societal  
challenge



<https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/442386-creative-solutions-to-europe-s-challenges-through-social-innovation>

# Criteria

## 1 – Research Project



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### Individual Evaluation Report - step 1

Status: Above

Total score: 10.00 Threshold: 0 Evaluation progress: 100.00%

Criterion 1 - RESEARCH PROJECT, Current score: 5.0 / 5.0 ; Threshold 0

Criterion 2 - PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, Current score: 5.0 / 5.0 ; Threshold 0

#### Criterion 1 - RESEARCH PROJECT

Current score: 5.0 / 5.0 ; Threshold 0

Your score:

5 - Exceptional

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?

To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?

To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain (i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a high risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims)?

Comments:

#### B2 Scientific Approach

To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high risk/high gain (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

Comments:

Read carefully!  
Answer the questions  
for the reviewers!

# Criteria

## 2 – Principal investigator



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### Criterion 2 - PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Current score: 5.0 / 5.0 ; Threshold 0

#### **Intellectual capacity and creativity**

*The questions below can have one of the following five responses: Exceptional/Excellent/Very Good/Good/Non-competitive*

**Your score:**

*5 - Exceptional*

**To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?**

*Exceptional*

**To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?**

*Exceptional*

**To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?**

*Exceptional*

**Comments:**





# Criteria

## 2 – Principal investigator



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Do not undermine your  
achievements!



### Criterion 2 - PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Current score: 5.0 / 5.0 ; Threshold 0

#### **Intellectual capacity and creativity**

*The questions below can have one of the following five responses: Exceptional/Excellent/Very Good/Good/Non-competitive*

**Your score:**

*5 - Exceptional*

**To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?**

*Exceptional*

**To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?**

*Exceptional*

**To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?**

*Exceptional*

**Comments:**

# Project proposal - panel

## What happens behind the closed door

- Panels include dozen or so experts
- Each expert gets **20 – 40 projects** to access in a short time
- Many experts are **generalists**, not exactly in your field
- Your project will be read by **3 – 4 experts**
- The most chance to get the project is if you **make reviewers understand** novelty, breakthrough character, societal challenge, impact of the proposal
- The most chance to get the project is if you **'excite'** most of the 3 – 4 experts with your proposal
- **Give the tools** to the reviewers **to defend** your project proposal!



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Deidentified image from peer-review panel meetings

Photo by Alicja Jozkowicz, UJ

**Make Your project  
proposal stand out!**



# Project proposal

## Tips for writing the proposal

- **Answer all the questions** the reviewer has to answer
- **Highlight** most important parts (**bold**, coloured textbox)
- **Write short summary** – about main points: Novelty, High-risk, high-gain
- Write the project in a **clear way**, self-explanatory
- Edit the project – **make it elegant**, clear, use colours, bold font
- Check **English – professional help**
- Citations – do not forget the newest
- Fill in all the space

**Help the reviewer!**  
**Answer all questions**  
**for reviewers!**



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**Reviewers are  
also humans!**



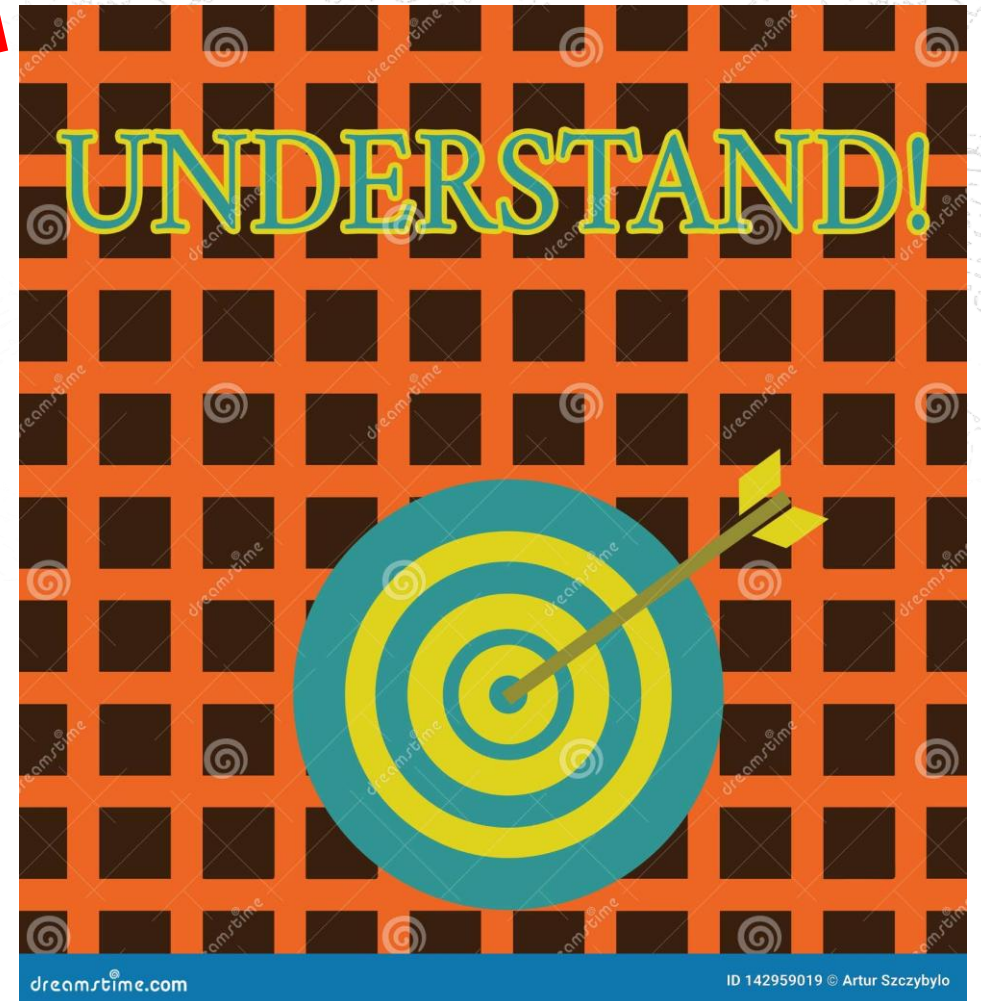
# Project proposal Illustrations

Self-explanatory pictures  
will make your proposal  
understandable  
at a blink of an eye!



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- Illustrate your project with figures
- **Self-explanatory** pictures
- **Enough big** pictures, letters and numbers
- Self-explanatory captions
- Remember – most of reviewers are **generalists**



<https://www.dreamstime.com/handwriting-text-understand-concept-meaning-ability-to-perceive-intended-something-someone-color-dart-board-conceptual-image142959019>



# Project proposal

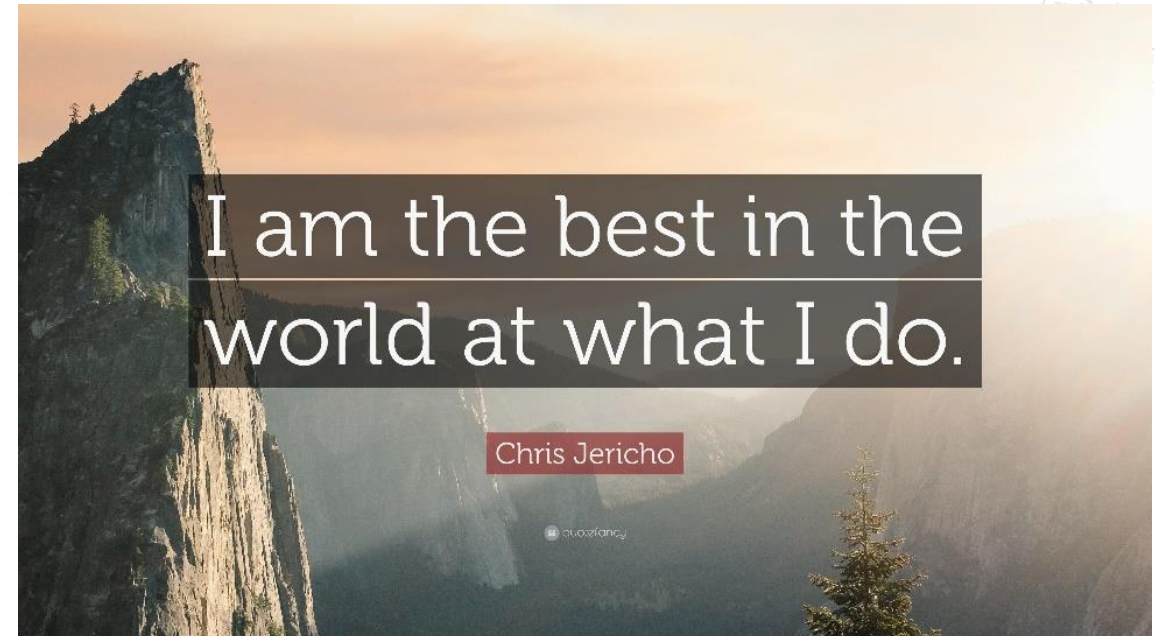
## Principal investigator



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- Describe well your achievements
- **Experience abroad**  
Which expertise you gained, how it will help the project
- **Best papers**  
Enough first/last author papers
- **Prizes/awards/special achievements,**  
All is important – why particular prize is important
- **Projects/leading groups/talking care of students**
- **Patents/patent applications**
- Anything making you **special/unique**  
How it will help realizing the project
- Use facts
- Write the truth

Some reviewers start to  
evaluate the proposal  
from reading the CV



# Project proposal

## Single or cross-panel proposals



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### Panel

Chose just one. Statistics shows the cross-panel project proposals have smaller change to get through.



# Presentation

## Tips for presentation for the panel

- Remember out of dozen or more panelists, **only 3 – 4 read your proposal**
- Presentation within this 5 minutes should explain the most important parts of the proposal:
  - (i) **WHY** it is important (societal challenge),
  - (ii) **WHAT** you are going to do (and what is the novelty),
  - (iii) **HOW** you are going to do it, and
  - (iv) **WHY** are **YOU** the best person to do it.
- Make the presentation **understandable to generalists**
- Make all the panel reviewers **turn their heads**
- The title slide and the „Thank you for your attention” slide – not needed
- If on-line – check all the technical issues (connection, Your voice)

**You give presentation to the whole panel. Make reviewers who read and did not read your proposal to understand its importance and novelty.**



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Deidentified image from peer-review panel meetings

Photo by Alicja Jozkowicz, UJ

# Panel

## The most chance to get the project...



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- The quality of your research proposal and your previous achievements must be the best
- Help Your proposal – make it easy for the reviewers to understand the proposal
- Help Your proposal – interest with your proposal and impress the whole panel
- Do not be shy, be convinced that Your proposal is the best
- Make reviewers notice and remember your project proposal and you



# Project proposal

## Guide for reviewes



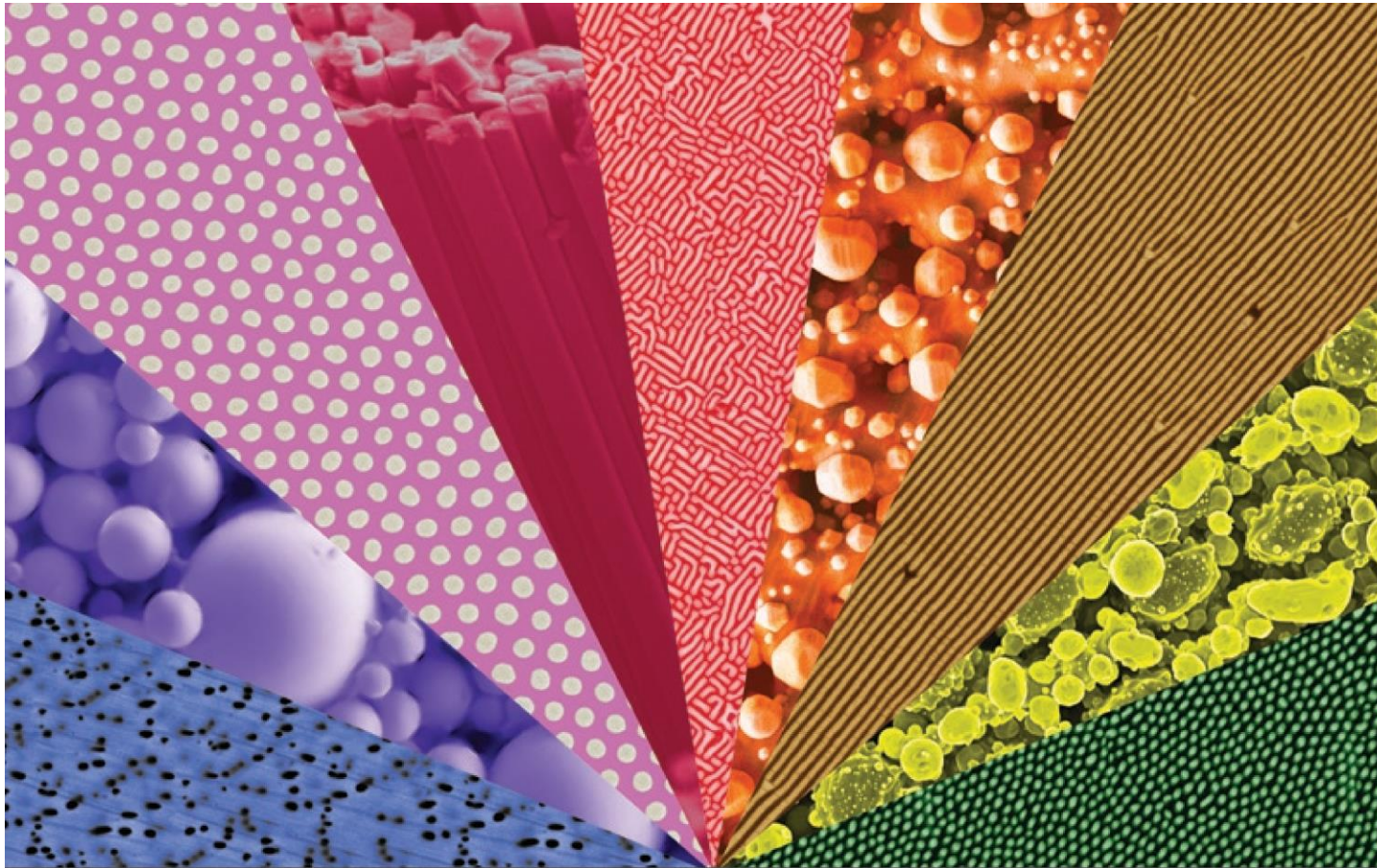
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### Guide for Peer Reviewers - Starting and Consolidator Grant Calls

# Thank You for Your attention

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Photonics  
**Crystallized**