The European Research Council

An Introduction to the ERC

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ERC is….
1. Funding: it is part of Horizon Europe

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EUR 16 billion
ERC budget in Horizon Europe

17%
of the entire
Horizon Europe budget

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ERC is….
2. The Scientific Council

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Prof. Rodrigo
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(Materials, Nanotechnologies, Electronics)

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MEHLHORN
(Computer Science)

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(Materials Theory)

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ERC is….
3. The ERCEA

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ERC basics

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INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

LONG TERM
GRANTS

TO HIGH-RISK/HIGH-GAIN PIONEERING PROJECTS
IN ANY FIELD OF FRONTIER RESEARCH

- Life Sciences
- Physical Sciences and Engineering
- Social Sciences and Humanities

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What does ERC offer?

Creative Freedom of the Individual Grantee

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Generous grants, Independence, Recognition & Visibility

- Work on any research topic: completely **bottom-up**, with a team of own choice
- Gain **financial autonomy** for up to 5 years
- Host Institution can be in **any EU Member State** / **Associated Country**
- **Portability of grants**: negotiate the best work conditions with the Host Institution
- Attract **top team members** and **collaborators** from worldwide
- Attract additional funding and gain **recognition:** ERC is a quality label

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ERC funding schemes

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Starting Grant

Size of the grant: up to €1.5 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
2-7 years of experience since completion of their PhD

Consolidator Grant

Size of the grant: up to €2 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
7-12 years of experience since completion of their PhD

Advanced Grant

Size of the grant: up to €2.5 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
An excellent scientific track record of recognized achievements in the last 10 years

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ERC funding schemes

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Synergy grant

Size of the grant: €10 million + up to €4 million
Duration: up to 6 years
Be composed of 2 to 4 researchers and their research groups
(**one researcher can be based outside EU/AC**)

Proof of Concept

Size of the grant: €150 000
Duration: up to 18 months
Demonstrate that the idea funded by the original ERC grant has innovation potential and significant economic or societal benefits

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Synergy Grants

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- A group of **two to maximum four Principal Investigators (PIs)** – of which one will be designated as the corresponding PI (cPI) – working together and bringing different skills and resources to tackle ambitious research problems. **No specific eligibility criteria regarding the academic training** are foreseen for ERC Synergy Grants. PIs must present an **early achievement track-record** or a **ten-year track-record**, whichever is most appropriate.
- Proposals will be evaluated on the **sole criterion of scientific excellence** which, in the case the ERC Synergy Grants, takes on the additional meaning of **outstanding intrinsic synergetic effect**.
- Three-step evaluation process

Principal investigator and commitment

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PI Profile:

- Any current place of work but working or moving to work in Europe (EU member state or H2020/HE Associated Country)
- Any nationality or age
- StG: 2-7; CoG: 7-12 years of experience after PhD; AdG: no constraints
- Potential (StG) / evidence (CoG) for independence and maturity; strong leadership (AdG)
- Good track-record appropriate to their research field and career stage

PI Commitment:

- Minimum 50% (StG), 40% (CoG), 30% (AdG) of PI working time on ERC project
- Minimum 50% of PI working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country

Additional funding

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Additional funding can be requested to cover the costs below:

- Up to € 1.0m for Starting / Consolidator / Advanced grants
- Up to € 4.0m for Synergy grants

(a) "start-up" costs for Principal Investigators moving to the EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant and/or

(b) the purchase of major equipment and/or

(c) access to large facilities and/or

*(d) other **major experimental** and **field work costs**, excluding personnel costs.*

PIs from all over the World Can Apply to ERC

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Opportunities for non ERA* researchers:

- Additional “start-up” funding for researchers moving to Europe (1 M€ irrespective of call scheme)
- Grantee can keep affiliation with home institute outside Europe (“significant part” of work time in Europe, at least 50%)
- Team members can be based outside Europe
- Grantees can move within Europe with the grant

* **ERA = European Research Area (EU + Associated Countries)**

48 Non EU/AC Nationalities

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Over 8% of all ERC grants have principal investigators of non-EU/AC nationality

Non-EU/AC Principal Investigators	Starting and Consolidator grants	Advanced grants	Total grants
USA	236	128	364
Canada	87	16	103
India	59	3	62
Russia	53	9	62
Australia	49	11	60
China	52	1	53
Japan	29	8	37
New Zealand	17	6	23
Argentina	19	1	20
Other	111	13	124
Total	712	196	908

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Australia

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ERC evaluated proposals from Australia nationals, by call scheme and domain:

	Life Sciences	Physical Sciences and Engineering	Social Sciences and Humanities	Grand Total
Starting	72	86	60	218
Consolidators	20	41	32	93
Advanced	22	46	37	105
Grand Total	**114**	**173**	**129**	**416**

ERC grants to Australia nationals, by call scheme and domain:

	Life Sciences	Physical Sciences and Engineering	Social Sciences	Grand Total
Starting	13	9	8	30
Consolidators	5	5	9	19
Advanced	4	2	5	11

Number of Australian PIs based in Australia at the time of application: 55 out of 416 Australian applicants (of which 3 successful).

New Zealand

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ERC Evaluated proposals from NZ nationals, by call scheme and domain:

	Life Sciences	Physical Sciences and Engineering	Social Sciences and Engineering	Grand Total
Starting	24	22	18	64
Consolidators	5	13	4	22
Advanced	9	15	12	36
Grand Total	**38**	**50**	**34**	**122**

ERC grants to NZ nationals, by call scheme and domain:

	Life Sciences	Physical Sciences and Engineering	Social Sciences and Engineering	Grand Total
Starting	4	2	6	12
Consolidators	2	2	1	5
Advanced	2	2	2	6
Grand Total	**8**	**6**	**9**	**23**

Number of NZ PIs based in New Zealand at the time of application: 1 out of 122 applicants (application not successful).

2022 Call Calendar

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ERC calls	Call Opening	Submission Deadline
Starting Grants ERC-2022-StG	23/09/2021	13/01/2022
Consolidator Grants ERC-2022-CoG	19/10/2021	17/03/2022
Advanced Grants ERC-2022-AdG	20/01/2022	28/04/2022
Synergy Grants ERC-2022-SyG	15/07/2021	10/11/2021
Proof of Concept ERC-2022-PoC1 ERC-2022-PoC2	15/07/2021 16/11/2021	14/10/2021 15/02/2022, 19/05/2022, 29/09/2022

ERC Panel structure

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Life Sciences (LS)

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: from Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cellular, Developmental and Regenerative Biology
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Aging
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

- 3 Domains / 27 Panels
- Operated by the Scientific Department B

Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Diversity
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space

Physical Sciences & Engineering (PSE)

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical & Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

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Structure of the application

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- ✓ **Part A**
  - ✓ General information, budget, ethics review
- ✓ **Part B1**
  - ✓ 5 pages of project synopsis
  - ✓ Include brief methodology and feasibility
  - ✓ CV and track record
- ✓ **Part B2**
  - ✓ 15 pages
  - ✓ Include extensive methodology and work plan
  - ✓ Cover: risks mitigation, open access costs, team
- ✓ **Host institution letter**

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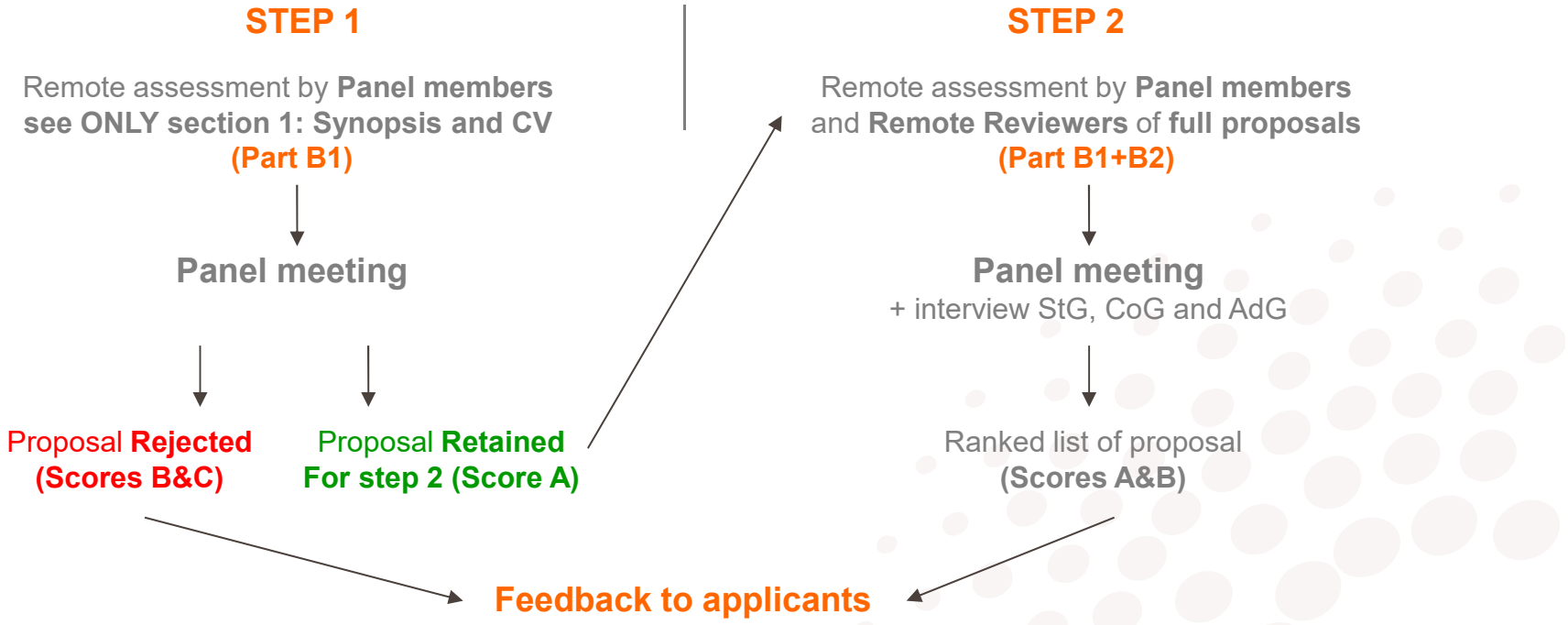
How are the ERC proposals evaluated

For individuals calls: a single submission but a two step evaluation



Contrary to what you may think

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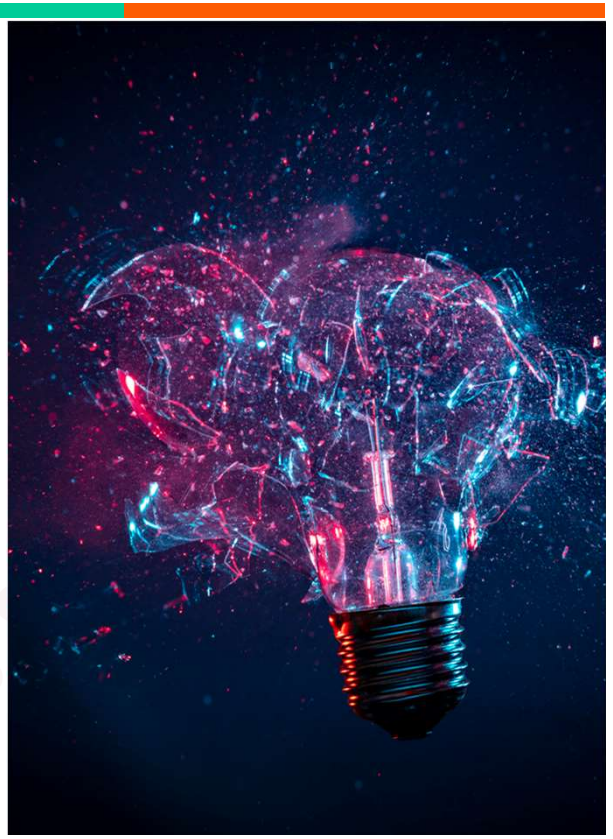
- ERC funds "frontier research", including applied research.
- The budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand.
- The panel descriptors do not represent ERC scientific priorities.
- The success rate is virtually flat across the eligibility window (StG, CoG).
- Publication record is not decisive in selection decisions.
- The Host Institution is not an evaluation criterion.



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Evaluation process

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Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground breaking nature
- Potential impact
- Scientific Approach

Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment

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How to prepare a successful ERC proposal?

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- Have a **bright, original idea**
- Design **a research project** to implement the idea
- Get a letter of support from a **Host Institution** where the project is to be carried out (EU/AC)
- Make sure you are **eligible** (StG/CoG extensions!)
- **Register early**, get familiar with the system and templates and start filling in the forms
- Consider the balance between addressing **generalists and specialists**, and the difference between part B1 and part B2 of the written proposal
- Seek for **feedback /** Organize **mock interviews** (StG/CoG)
- If rejected, **keep trying**! (reapplications have a much higher success rate – feedback from panels is valuable both for resubmitting and to advance your own research)

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What are the panel members looking for?
In your proposal

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Fund frontier research projects:

- Does the project go substantially **beyond the state of the art**?
- **Why** is the proposed project important?
- Is it **timely**? (Why wasn't it done in the past? Is it feasible now?)
- What's the **risk**? Is it justified by a substantial potential **gain**? Is there **a plan** for managing the risk?

Fund the future leaders in the field:

- **Why** is the PI the best person to carry it out?
- Is the PI internationally competitive as a researcher **at his/her career stage** and in his/her discipline? (up to 5 publications for StG, up to 10 for CoG, 10 publications in major scientific journals for AgG)
- Is there **evidence** that the PI is able to work independently, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?

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Some rumours

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Rumour 1: You can only apply for an ERC grant if you are a highly accomplished scientist.

✘ NOT true: Accomplishments are appreciated in relation to your stage/seniority as giving some evidence of your capacity to conduct the research you propose and of creativity within the past 10-12 years of your career.

Rumour 2: To be successful, you need to continue on an established research line, to prove continuity and credibility

✘ NOT true: Generally, the opposite is true.

Rumour 3: If you have already obtained an ERC grant you are less/more likely to get another one.

✘ NOT true: Panels look at each proposal on its own merit and in comparison with the other applications, irrespectively of whether you have or have not obtained an ERC grant in the past. (Of course this does not apply for applications to a Proof of Concept grant.)

Rumour 4: The more socially or medically relevant a grant proposal is, the higher the chances of it getting funded.

✘ NOT true: ERC funds frontier research, not research that promises to be only an incremental advancement of knowledge. This is irrespective of the field and whether it has societal, medical or clinical applications.

Where can you find more information?

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Videos - ERC Classes

- What to consider before applying
- How to fill in the application (Part B1 and B2)
- The interview
- How the evaluation works

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbFbzkVWgCU&list=PLtv6FnsXqnXAYRk6HCErwMxwML0ZKoMcy

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Where can you find more information?

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Our website:

erc.europa.eu

Our social media channels:

National Contact Points (NCP):

https://erc.europa.eu/funding/national-contact-points

Funding & Tender Opportunities:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

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Thank you!

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https://erc.europa.eu

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Horizon 2020
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