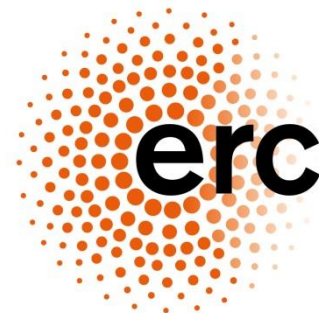


The European Research Council

An Introduction to the ERC

Benjamin Pelletier
Scientific Officer panels SH1 - SH2
12-10-2023

EURAXESS Australia & New Zealand



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Presentation outline

1. **What is the ERC and why should I apply?**
2. How does the ERC evaluate research proposals?
3. What are the ERC Implementing Arrangements with Australia?
4. What's new in 2024?



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“

The ERC awards long-term grants to researchers of any nationality and age, from anywhere in the world, who wish to carry out their research projects in a host institution based in Europe.

Scientific excellence is the sole evaluation criterion.

”

ERC is part of Horizon Europe



EUR 16 billion
ERC budget in Horizon Europe



17%
of the entire
Horizon Europe budget

About the ERC

Scientific governance

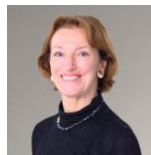
- Independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President, with full authority over strategy
- Supported by a Dedicated Implementation Structure, the ERC Executive Agency

Scientific freedom

- Scientific excellence as the sole criterion
- Support to the individual scientist – *no consortia*
- No predetermined subjects – *'bottom-up'*
- Support for frontier research in all fields of science and humanities
- International peer-review



ERC Scientific Council



Maria LEPTIN
(Biology)
ERC President



Eveline CRONE
(Psychology)
Vice-President



Eystein JANSEN
(Earth Science)
Vice-President



Jesper SVEJSTRUP
(Biology)
Vice-President



Geneviève ALMOUZI
(Biology)



Harriet BULKELEY
(Geography)



Ben FERINGA
(Organic Chemistry)



Mercedes GARCÍA-ARENAL
(History)



Gerd GIGERENZER
(Psychology)



Tom HENZINGER
(Computer Science)



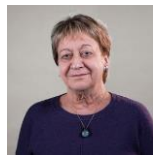
Liselotte HØJGAARD
(Medicine)



Dirk INZÉ
(Plant Biology)



László LOVÁSZ
(Mathematics)



Chryssa KOUVELIOTOU
(High-Energy Astrophysics)



Sylvie LORENTE
(Mechanical Engineering)



Luke O'NEILL
(Biochemistry & Immunology)



Björn OTTERSTEN
(Electric Engineering)



Giovanni SARTOR
(Law)



Nicola SPALDIN
(Materials Theory)



Alice VALKÁROVÁ
(Physics)



Milena ŽIC FUCHS
(Linguistics)



ERC structure

The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure - ERC Executive Agency

- Executes annual work programme as established by the Scientific Council
- Implements calls for proposals and provides information and support to applicants
- Organises peer review evaluation
- Establishes and manages grant agreements
- Administers scientific and financial aspects and follow-up of grant agreements
- Carries out communications activities and ensures information dissemination to ERC stakeholders



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ERC in figures



Over **13,000**
top researchers funded since
the ERC creation in 2007



Over **220,000**
articles from ERC projects published
in scientific journals



Over **90,000**
researchers and other professionals
employed in ERC research teams



Over **900** research institutions hosting
ERC grantees – universities, public or
private research centres in the EU or
Associated Countries



Over **2,400**
patents and other IPR applications
generated by ERC funding



89
nationalities of
grant holders



Over **400**
start-ups identified as founded
or co-founded by ERC grantees



14 Nobel Prizes, **6** Fields Medals, **11** Wolf Prizes
and other prizes awarded to ERC grantees



Why apply for an ERC grant?

ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility to:

- work on a research topic of own choice
- gain financial autonomy for five years ('long-term grants')
- negotiate the best conditions of work with the host institution
- attract excellent team members and collaborators from anywhere in the world
- move with the grant to any EU Member State or Associated Country ('portability of grants')



PIs from all over the World Can Apply to ERC

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
 - Grantee can move within Europe with the grant
- * ERA = European Research Area (EU + Associated Countries)



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Evaluation panel structure (2024)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- 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

Physical Sciences & Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and 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

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts



ERC grant schemes



Starting Grants

starters (2-7 years after PhD) up to € 1.5 Mio
for 5 years



Consolidator Grants

Consolidators (7-12 years after PhD) up to € 2 Mio
for 5 years



Advanced Grants

track-record of significant research achievements in the
last 10 years up to € 2.5 Mio
for 5 years



Synergy Grants

2 – 4 Principal Investigators up to € 10.0 Mio for 6
years
1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated
Countries



Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
lump sum €150,000 for ERC grant holders

Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground breaking nature
- Scientific impact
- Scientific Approach

Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment

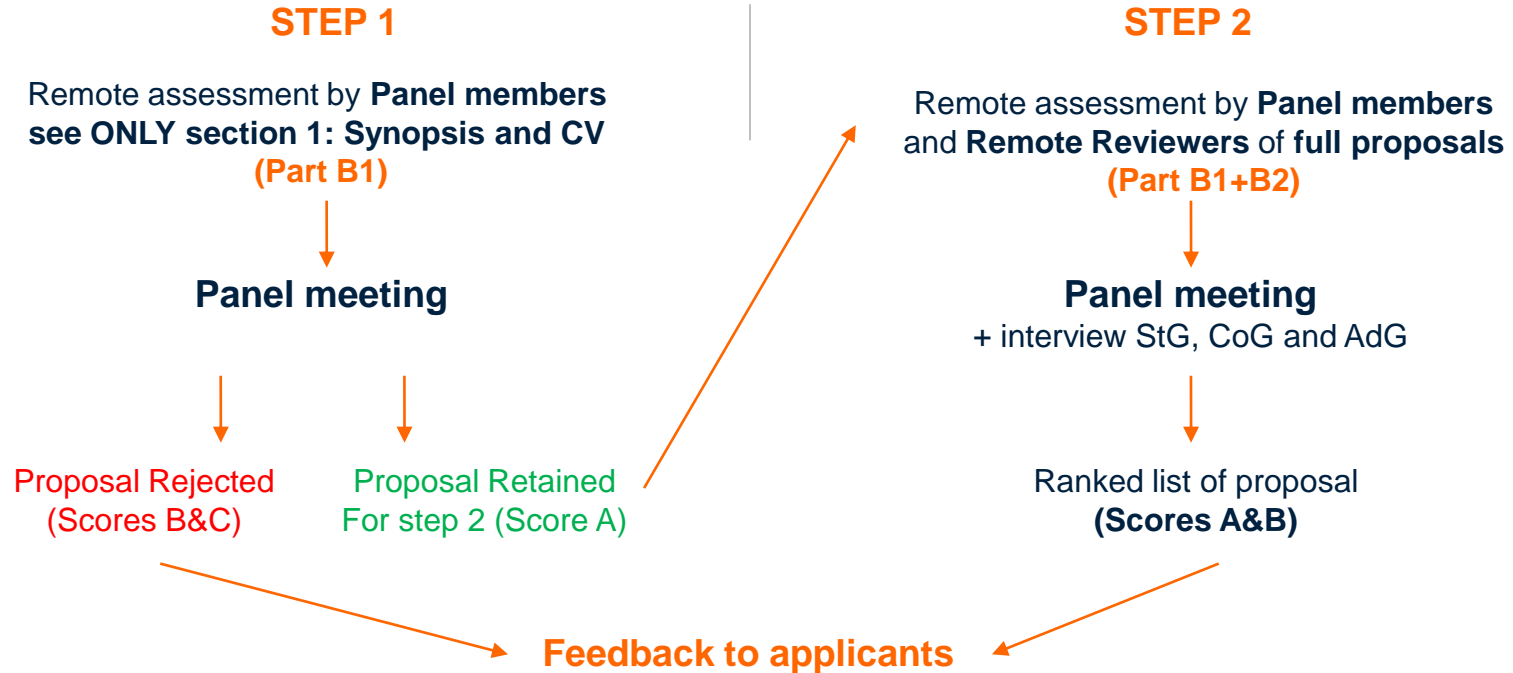
Proposal Structure

- Part A: Administrative forms and proposal budget
- Part B1: Extended synopsis: 5 pages & CV and Track Record (up to 4 pages)
- Part B2: Scientific proposal: 14 pages
 - State-of-the-art and objectives
 - Methodology
- Host Institution Support Letter
- PhD certificate (StG and CoG)



Evaluation: process

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



Contrary to what you may think

- 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.



Some rumours

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 irrespectively of the field and whether it has societal, medical or clinical applications.



Particular emphasis on...

Frontier of science, scholarship and engineering, i.e.

- Multi- or interdisciplinary proposals which cross boundaries between different fields of research, or
- Pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research, or
- Proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions.



Preparing your proposal

Starting and Consolidator applicants: make sure you are eligible!

1. Eligibility window is measured from the **1st of January of the year of the Call**
 - Extensions of eligibility window possible for documented cases (template annexed in the Information for Applicants)
2. If you previously applied to an ERC call, check resubmission restrictions
 - As of 2024, **restrictions will also apply** to Principal Investigators with successful proposals undergoing grant preparation in selected 2023 calls.
3. Time commitment: Min. 50% StG, 40% CoG, 30% AdG, 30% SyG
4. Minimum 50% of PI working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country



Preparing your proposal

1. Consult **call documents** (Work Programme, Information for Applicants)
2. **Register** early on the Funding and Tenders Portal
3. Have your **documentation ready** – proof read the proposal
4. Contact the ERCEA and **ask all your questions** well ahead of the submission deadline (dedicated mailboxes for each call) – e.g., Get the **written consent of your collaborators** before the submission deadline (a simple email exchange is OK)



Call Calendar – Work Programme 2024

	<i>Starting Grant</i>	<i>Consolidator Grant</i>	<i>Advanced Grant</i>	<i>Synergy Grant</i>	<i>Proof of Concept Grant</i>
<i>Call opens</i>	11/07/2023	12/09/2023	29/05/2024	12/07/2023	16/11/2023
<i>Call deadline (cut-off date)</i>	24/10/2023	12/12/2023	29/08/2024	08/11/2023	14/03/2024 17/09/2024
<i>Budget (m EUR)</i>	601	584	578	400	30



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Cooperation outside Europe

- **1** new AA signed in September 2022 with **Thai Programme Management Unit for Human Resources & Institutional Development, Research and Innovation (PMU-B)** of the National Higher Education, Science, Research & Innovation Policy Council
- **17** Implementing Arrangements signed with funding agencies from **13** different countries
- **600+** researchers visited an ERC project since 2012

All Implementing Arrangements signed since 2012



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List of all signed implementation agreements

USA, National Science Foundation (NSF)

Republic of Korea, National Research Foundation (NRF)

Argentina, Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCYT)

China, National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC)

Japan, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS); Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST); Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED)

South Africa, National Research Foundation (NRF)

Mexico, Mexican National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT)

Brazil, Brazilian National Council of the State funding agencies (CONFAP)

Canada, Canadian Tri-Agency Institutional Programmes Secretariat (TIPS)

India, Scientific Engineering Research Board (SERB); Indian Social Sciences Research Council (ISSRC)

Australia, **National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)**; **Australian Research Council (ARC)**

Singapore, National Research Foundation Singapore (NRF)

Thailand, Program Management Unit for Human Resources & Institutional Development, Research and Innovation of Thailand (PMU-B)

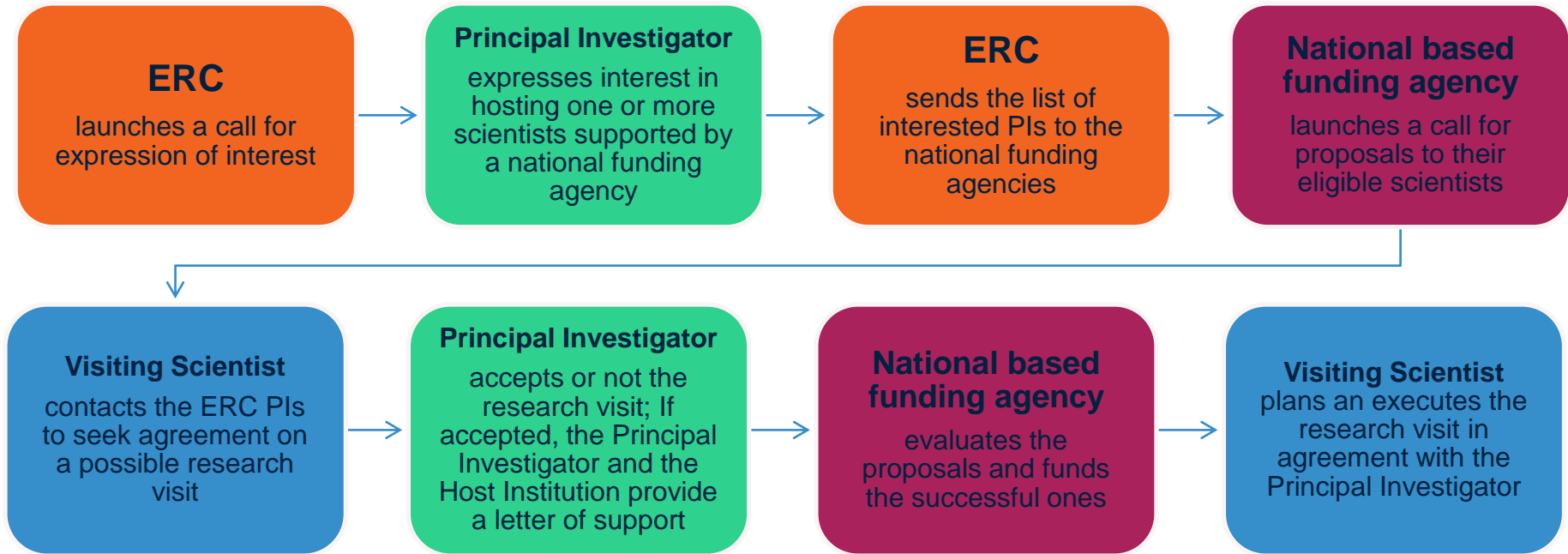


ERC-NHMRC and ERC-ARC IA

- Signed with the **National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)** on October 2018 and **Australian Research Council (ARC)** on February 2019.
- Provides opportunities for Australian researchers to pursue research collaboration with ERC grantees on **single long-term visits (3-12 months)** or **multiple short-term visits**.
- Australian researchers continue to receive **funding/stipend** during the period of the visit according to their supported grants/awards terms. **NHMRC and ARC also supports the international travel expenses**.
- The **ERC grant covers relevant expenses** occurred during the visit within the terms of the grant. **Eligible costs include subsistence costs on a per diem basis**, in accordance with the national law and regulation applicable on the HI.



Implementing/Administrative Arrangements (IA/AA) procedures



Action taken by

● ERC

● ERC Principal Investigator

● Funding agency

● Visiting scientist

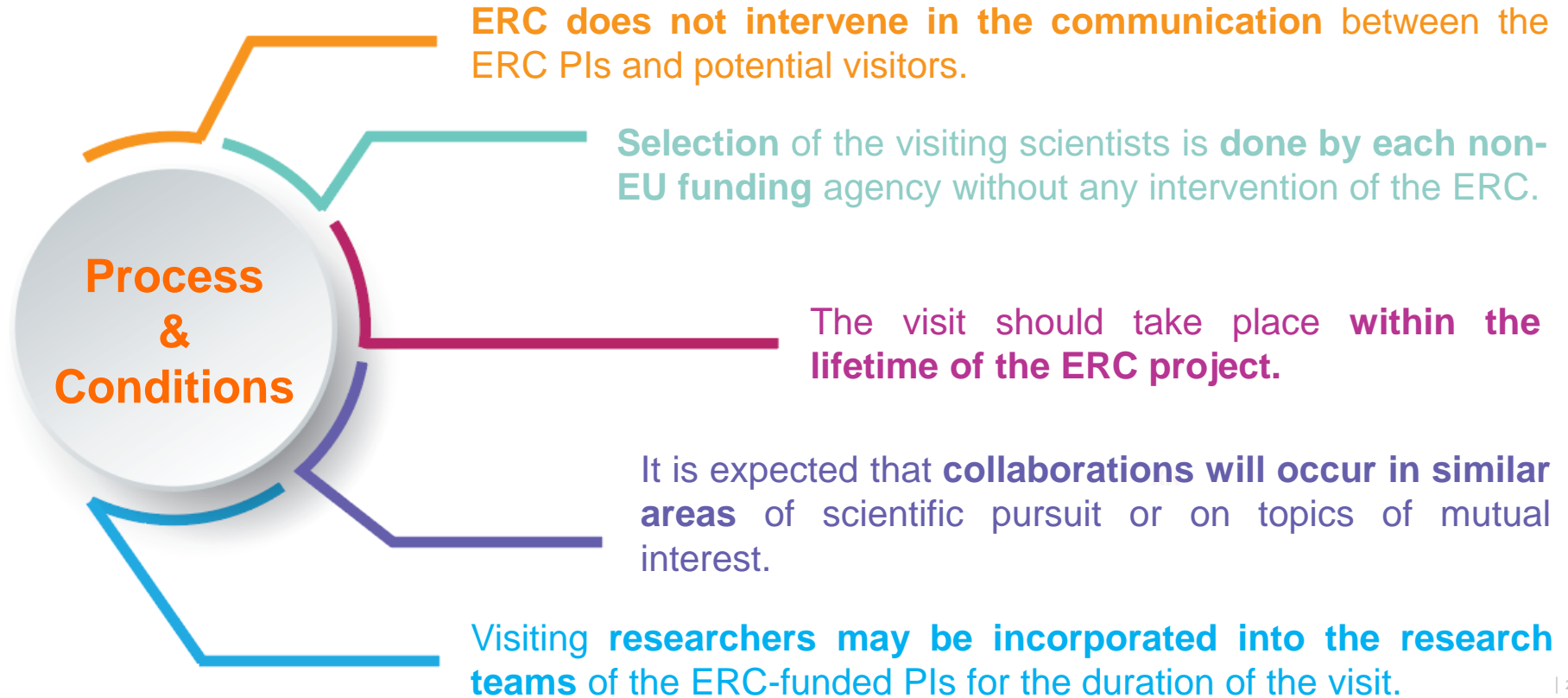


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IA/AA participation processes and conditions

Common to all agreements



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Summary of Novelties – ERC Work Programme 2024

FOCUS ON RESEARCH

- Ground-breaking
- Ambitious
- Feasible

Assessment

- Up to 10 research outputs
- Short narrative
- Career breaks, diverse paths

No prescriptive PI profiles

- Up to 44 proposals in step 2 (exc. SyG)
- 'A not invited' can reapply next year

Evaluation Procedure

- AdG only: One amount payment based on the work done (not success)
- Additional funding and portability

Lump Sum Pilot

- New Panel – SH8
- Changes in description of LS3/LS5 panels

Panels



Where can you find more information?



Videos - ERC Classes

- What to consider before applying
- How to fill in the application
- The interview
- How the evaluation works

[Click here to watch!](#)

Take a chance and apply!

Thank You!

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More information: erc.europa.eu



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Ask your questions to the call coordination teams:

ERC-2024-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

ERC-2024-COG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

ERC-2024-ADG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

erc-syg-applicants@ec.europa.eu

erc-poc-applicants@ec.europa.eu

