



Meet the researcher

Interview with Brazilian researchers working in ERC-funded projects

[Daniel Porto](#), Brazilian PhD candidate. Team member of the ERC-funded project [DependableCloud](#) led by Prof. Rodrigo Rodrigues in Portugal.

More about Daniel's research on his webpage:

<http://sites.google.com/site/danielporto/>.

What encouraged you to apply for a position in an ERC - funded project research team? Why did you apply?

I wanted a big challenge. While I was doing research in Brazil I felt there was a gap between the work we do in academia and its impact on the world/society. Research funds come mainly from the Government and the research topics are chosen on the basis of government priorities.

Particularly, in my research field, we hardly even work on problems that address the challenges faced by companies. Companies, on the other hand, make very little use of the novelty produced in academia and prefer a safer bet, reusing established and dated technologies, missing the chance to innovate. As a result, with a few exceptions, the great advances in technology seem to be happening in a distant world. I wanted to understand how this world works. A friend of mine, already doing research in Europe, told me about the ERC and its support for high-risk/high-impact projects. He shared his personal experience and encouraged me to apply for a team member position in an ERC- funded project.

What will be the major impact of such an experience on your research career development?

I believe that the research culture would have the most significant impact. I learned a lot from working in a multicultural environment, collaborating with teams distributed across several countries, companies, and activities dedicated to disseminating research results. It definitely widened my horizon.

One of the greatest benefits to me is being able to discuss my research work with authors of papers and books about the foundations of my research field that I read during my undergraduate studies. I learned a lot from their feedback and their reasoning process. Had I not had the chance to be part of this programme, I would have had little chance to talk to them, even at conferences in Brazil, as I imagine that on these occasions they would have been very busy.



Research in Europe has a great advantage: You might be based in a place, but you're not limited to that one location. Collaboration is really common and encouraged.

Language is a challenge in the beginning, but all non-native speakers face the same problems. With dedication, language barriers are overcome in a few months.

How would you encourage other Brazilian researchers to apply for a position in an ERC-funded project? Which tips would you suggest to your peers to fulfil this plan?

There are a lot of information and tips on the ERC website and on social media. That's a good place to start. Prepare your CV. The "Lattes" format, commonly used by the Brazilian academic community, can be too long-winded and not focused enough on essentials. A simple version with your strongest achievements is often preferred. Don't be afraid to contact people, professors are always looking for strong candidates to apply. If you are not confident enough (often a problem with Brazilians), you can still learn from the process. In a word: Apply!

Interview with [Saulo Meirelles](#), PhD candidate. Team member of the ERC-funded project NEMO led by Prof Marcellinus Stive The Netherlands

What encouraged you to apply for a position in an ERC-funded project research team? Why did you apply?

The scope of the ERC-funded project I applied for, is very exciting and challenging. This encouraged me because as I was working for the Brazilian Oil & Gas industry which is well-established and therefore there is little space for innovation regarding coastal oceanography, which is my specialty.

What will be the major impact of such an experience on your research career development?

It is hard to pick one major impact, but being part of an ERC-funded project allowed me to be in a top-notch university with a group working in cutting-edge research. The impact of such an experience is enormous not only for my personal development as a researcher, but also for the potential collaborations that might follow in the future.

How would you encourage other Brazilian researchers to apply for a position in an ERC-funded project? Which tips would you suggest to your peers to fulfil this plan?

Two main elements helped me to get my position: [1] Publications. Although my publication list was modest, I managed to publish my previous research in several conferences; [2] Work experience. This shows maturity and independence, which is a plus if you want to work as a researcher.



Interview with Rafael Sanpaio de Rezende, PhD Candidate. Team member of the ERC- funded project VIDEOWORLD led by Prof Jean Ponce in France

What encouraged you to apply for a position in an ERC-funded project research team? Why did you apply?

The excellence of the researchers involved in this project was the key factor in my decision. Not long after I started working in this team, and learned that three (and today, four) of these Principal investigators are funded by ERC grants.

Which will be the major impact of such an experience on your research career development?

By being included in a network of many distinct projects, my ERC project allowed me to discover similarly high-level research in different domains. As far as I know, this domain exchange is much rarer in Brazilian research and highlights the interdisciplinarity of European research. As someone who prefers interdisciplinary research activities, I wish to use the bridges built by ERC to work with specialists of many different fields.

How would you encourage other Brazilian researchers to apply for a position in a ERC-funded project? Which tips would you suggest to your peers to fulfil this plan?

I would definitely recommend a ERC-funded project to any Brazilian researcher worried about the proper funding of his/her research. In a time when funds for scientific development in Brazil are under threat, an ERC grant offers a safe way for cutting-edge scientific projects to flourish. ERC funds also praise diversity in its projects, so Brazilian projects of high quality are in demand.