The following presentation was made to researchers at a meeting in Strathclyde University on 16 September 2010. Comments have been added below some of the slides.

15% of ERC funding is released through this channel.

Comments in these slides are specific to this current call. Each call can vary – it is important to check.
UKRO’s Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Core' subscriber* services</th>
<th>Open to non-subscribers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Query service</td>
<td>(Majority of) training courses and information events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual briefing visits</td>
<td>Annual Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for UK subscribers)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail updates</td>
<td>Marie Curie Actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>(&amp; searchable database)</td>
<td>UK National Contact Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriber website</td>
<td>European Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.ukro.ac.uk/subscriber_services">www.ukro.ac.uk/subscriber_services</a></td>
<td>UK National Contact Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting room in Brussels</td>
<td>British Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European RTD Insight publication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* List of subscribing institutions: [http://www.ukro.ac.uk/about/our_subscribers.htm](http://www.ukro.ac.uk/about/our_subscribers.htm)

Remember to sign up for emails!

European Research Council National Contact Point Helpdesk

- Website  
  [http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc](http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc)

- ERC mailing list for events and key updates  
  (sign up at [http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc/events_ukro/events_alerts.htm](http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc/events_ukro/events_alerts.htm))

- Helpdesk via email and telephone  
  (email [erc-uk@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:erc-uk@bbsrc.ac.uk) or phone 0032 2289 6121)

- Advice on applying for ERC actions
  - Eligibility
  - Application help
  - Results
  - Contractual issues

- Advice to those with ERC grants

- Specialist training courses and information events

ERC Introduction to the ERC: Aims and Structure
What is the ERC?

What is the European Research Council (ERC)?
• New pan-European funding organisation
• Supports the best in Europe - scientists, engineers and scholars
• Funding of €7.51 billion (2007-13)

What are the aims of the ERC?
• Encourage highest quality research in Europe
• Excellence is the sole criterion
• Competitive, flexible funding
• Retain, repatriate and recruit (career support)

What are the ERC Grant Schemes?
• Currently - Starting Grants and Advanced Grants
  • Support for a PI and (if necessary) team members
  • Investigator-initiated frontier research across all fields of research, on the basis of scientific excellence
• New (pilot) scheme – 2012 Work Programme in Spring 2011?
• The ERC also has calls for tender for studies on the ERC itself

Nuclear Energy research is not eligible for support.

Excellence is the sole criterion. Assessment 50% project and 50% person

ERC Spending Profile

Success rates were 3% in 2007 but rising year on year.

• 2012 new programme will permit consortium awards – press release soon.
ERC Grant Schemes

Starting Independent Researcher Grants (Starting Grants)
• boost the independent careers of excellent researchers
• by providing adequate support
• at the critical stage where they are starting or consolidating
• their own independent research team or programme.

• Now 50% of Annual ERC Call Budget
• Annual calls: open late spring and close in autumn
• Grants of up to €2 million over 5 yrs (but normally €1.5 million)

Awards will meet 100% of direct costs and 20% of indirect costs.

Researcher must be independent – involvement of a former supervisor is likely to count against a bid

ERC Starting Grant Calls

Indicative Call Schedule 2007-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Programme (published on)</th>
<th>ERC Action</th>
<th>Call Open</th>
<th>Call Deadlines</th>
<th>Call Value (€ M)</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 - Spring 07</td>
<td>ERC-2008-SIG</td>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>Autumn 2008</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>Winter 08 - Spring 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 - Spring 09</td>
<td>ERC-2010-SIG</td>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>Autumn 2009</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>Winter 09 - Spring 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (Spring 2011)</td>
<td>ERC-2012-SIG</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>Autumn 2011</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td>Winter 11 - Spring 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that resubmission and multiple application rules apply
ERC Grant Schemes

**Advanced Investigator Grants (Advanced Grants)**

- encourage **substantial advances at the frontier of knowledge**
- by supporting excellent, **leading advanced investigators**
- to pursue **ground breaking, high-risk/high gain research**

- Now 50% of Annual ERC Call Budget
- Annual calls: open in autumn and close in spring
- Grants of up to €2.5 million over 5 yrs
  (€3.5 million in certain cases)

ERC Advanced Grants Calls

**Indicative Call Schedule 2007-12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Programme (published)</th>
<th>ERC Action</th>
<th>Call Open</th>
<th>Call Deadlines</th>
<th>Estimated Call Value (€ M)</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 (Spring 2009)</td>
<td>ERC-2010-AdG</td>
<td>Autumn 2009</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>Spring - Autumn 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note that resubmission and multiple application rules apply*

2010 award statistics due soon.

European Research Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERC-2007-SIG</th>
<th>ERC-2009-SIG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funded ERC grants with UK Host Institutions</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20% of all grants)</td>
<td>(21% of all grants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success rate overall:</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- success rate for grants with a UK Host Institution</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- success rate for grants with a UK Host Institution</td>
<td>12.4% so far*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success rate overall:</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- success rate for grants with a UK Host Institution</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success rate overall:</td>
<td>15.3% *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further statistics and access to information on funded projects on the UKRO website.
ERC Starting Grants

Starting Grants (StG)

Aims to...

- Improve career opportunities and independence start of their independent research career
- Provide structure for transition from working under a supervisor to independent research
- Enable PIs to create excellent new teams to bring energy and new ideas to their disciplines
- Retain, Repatriate, Recruit

Will support

- Excellent, innovative and investigator-initiated research projects
- Flexible projects to promote substantial advances in "frontier research" such as:
  - Knowledge pursuit of questions at or beyond the frontiers of knowledge
  - Any field of research*
  - Interdisciplinary proposals crossing the boundaries between different research fields
  - Pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research
  - Proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions
  - But must have a significant impact on science, scholarship or engineering
  - Should aim to broaden scientific and technological knowledge

*All fields of science and scholarship are eligible, except nuclear research

Check UKRO website for information on successful projects.

Research can be basic or applied.

‘Risky’ projects are acceptable.

Application can be linked to commercial objectives

Aim must be a substantial advance
**Should I apply?**

**Am I a Competitive Candidate?**

- Expected to have:
  - already shown potential for research independence & evidence of maturity
  - produced independently at least one important publication without the participation of their PhD supervisor
  - Be able to demonstrate a promising track record of early achievements appropriate to their field and career stage, including:
    - significant publications (as main author) in peer-reviewed major international multidisciplinary journals or leading international journals in their field
    - May have monographs, invited presentations, granted patents, awards, prizes
    - Have good leadership potential

All this needs to be shown in your application….

…which will include:
- scientific leadership profile
- a cv
- an early achievements track record

Highlight any independent activity

---

**PI Eligibility**

**Am I Eligible as a PI?**

- 2-12 yrs from award of first PhD or equivalent* (as at 20 July 2010)
- Extensions (up to 16.5 years in total) for properly documented eligible career breaks only: maternity/paternity leave, national service, long term illness and clinical qualifications. For other 'unavoidable statutory reasons' please contact us for advice.
- No extensions for part time working, non-research careers, travel etc

**Am I a ‘Starter’ or ‘Consolidator’?**

- During evaluations, applicants will be split into two streams:
  - “Starter” (2-7 years post PhD)
  - “Consolidator” (Over 7 and up to 12 years post PhD)
- Budget split for each panel will be proportional to demand in each category
- Why were the two streams introduced?
- Was this ‘streaming’ successful in the last call?
- How are extensions dealt with?
  - “Starters” can ask for extensions to the normal 7 year post PhD limit for the reasons listed above (up to a maximum of 4.5 years extension)
  - Reason for extension must have taken place before 7 years post PhD and supporting documentation must be provided (and eligible events that take place during the extension can lead to further extension)
  - Supporting material (official documents) must be provided
  - Applicant is responsible for making a clear case (in Part B1, Section 1A)
- Final decision on stream is made by the panel

---

Phd date is the graduation date.

Panels advised to distinguish between starter and consolidating to ensure an even field for applicants.
PI Independence

Host must give PI independence to:

- Apply for funding independently
- Manage the research and funding for the project and make appropriate resource allocation decisions
- Publish as senior authors and invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work
- Supervise & recruit team members, including research students, doctoral students and others
- Have access to reasonable facilities and space for research

- Statement from Host (do not modify the set text!)
- Does not apply to team members

'Individual Team' Concept

Overview

Diagram provided by the European Commission

Requires total working time.
Fieldwork can be outwith the EU.

Awardees should not change institution once a project has started.

Advanced grants require a minimum of 30 staff time

**‘Individual Team’ Concept**

- PI’s Host Institution
  - Can be any type of legal entity
  - Must be in an EU Member State or Associated Country
  - The PI does not have to be based there at the time of application
  - Has the infrastructure and capacity to carry out frontier research project
  - Must not constrain the PI to the research strategy of the institution
  - Must provide appropriate conditions for the PI to:
    - Direct independently the research and manage the ERC funding
    - Has appropriate intellectual environment and infrastructural support
    - But now no longer assessed as a separate criterion during Peer Review
  - Is the ‘applicant legal entity’
  - Normally employs the PI
  - Signs a Supporting Statement as part of application
  - If funded signs up to the Grant Agreement
  - If funded, signs a ‘Supplementary Agreement’ with the PI
  - Host institution should not really be changed during review process but researchers can move once funded under certain conditions

- Team Members
  - Constitution of individual research team is flexible, commonly includes:
    - Other researchers from the PI’s research group or institution (senior researchers, post docs, graduate and PhD students …)
    - Non-academic staff such as technicians/support staff can also be funded
  - Normally, the PI’s host institution will be the only institution
    - But could have team members from other institutions in the same or different countries
      - If in EU/AC – can be funded
      - If outside EU/AC – GFA says ERC only fund if they do not dispose of sufficient own financial resources to finance the participation in the ERC project (new, but not part of the evaluation – looked at afterwards if you are successful)
      - Also, if separate legal entities are involved their participation (and funding) will be assessed during peer review – “is their participation fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project?”
  - Team (including any team members at other institutions) led by, and centred around, the PI so NOT a traditional network or research consortium
  - PI has freedom to choose appropriate team members
  - Team members do not need to be independent
  - Smaller role in application forms and review than the PI
  - Named vs un-named?
  - Resubmission rules do not apply to team members
  - Institution(s) where team based sign up to Grant Agreement

If you have a senior member on your team you must make clear that you a Make clear what the roles of members will be.
Funding Levels and Duration of Grant

Normally:
- Up to €1.5 million over 5 years. ERC contribution (or pro-rata for shorter projects)

Can be higher, but only to cover:
- eligible “start-up” costs for PIs moving from a third country to the EU or an Associated Country
- the purchase of major equipment.

If so, up to €2 million over 5 yrs. ERC contribution (or pro-rata)

Limit includes direct and indirect costs!

Direct Costs
- 100% of eligible and approved direct costs funded

Indirect Costs:
- 20% flat rate
  - of the total direct costs excluding subcontracting and third-party resources not used on premises
  - is allocated and charged (for all institutions no proof needed of how spent)

ERC – StG

A third country can be a non EU one. re the leader of the project.

ERC Starting Grants Submission and Evaluation Process

Peer Review Structure and Funding Levels

Submission
- Single Stage Submission, but 2-Step Peer Review (with interviews)
- Electronic Submission via EPSS

Peer Review
- 4 research domains
  - 25 panels (StG - 2 separate sets of panel members (new), AdG – 2 separate sets)

Domain | Panels | Budget | Deadline
--- | --- | --- | ---
Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE) | 10 | 40% | 14 October 2010*
Life Sciences (LS) | 9 | 35% | 9 November 2010*
Social Sciences and Humanities (SH) | 6 | 15% | 24 November 2010*

*Strictly 17:00, Brussels time!

Remember time difference between the UK and Brussels
Structure of Application Forms

Part A – Administrative and Summary Forms (completed directly onto EPSS)
- A1 Proposal & PI information & HI Legal Representative (including abstract)
- A2 Host Institution(s) information & PIC (one A2 form per institution)
- A3 Budget (summary financial information)
- (no A1T form for this call)

Part B1 – Proposal Details (template from EPSS, submitted as .pdf)
- Cover page & proposal summary
- Section 1a: The PI
  - 1a) Scientific Leadership Potential (1 page)
  - 1b) CV, including Funding ID (2 pages)
  - 1c) Early Achievement Track Record (2 pages)
- Section 1d: Extended Synopsis (5 pages)

Part B2 – Proposal Details (template from EPSS, submitted as .pdf)
- Section 2: Scientific Proposal (15 pages, excluding ethical issues table and annex)
  - State-of-the-art and objectives
  - Methodology
  - Resources (including project costs)
- Ethical issues table
  - (Note: No Research Environment section)

Annexes
- Commitment of the Host Institution (template from EPSS, submitted as .pdf)
- PhD Certificate, and if applicable, evidence of extensions
- Ethical Issues Annex (if applicable) (template on EPSS, 2 pages, excl. copies of authorisations)

Ist stage peer review worth half the marks,

There is a submit button!

Proposals outstrip the funds available by 3: 1

Peer Review Panels

Examples:
- PE10 - Earth System Science (deadline 14 October 2010)
  physical geography, geology, geophysics, atmospheric sciences, oceanography, climatology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management
- LS8 - Evolutionary, Population & Environmental Biology (deadline 9 November 2010)
  evolution, ecology, animal behaviour, population biology, biodiversity, biogeography, marine biology, ecotoxicology, prokaryotic biology
- SH3 – Environment, space and population (deadline 24 November 2010)
  environmental studies, demography, social geography, urban and regional studies

For full list of all 25 panels and keywords see the Guide for Applicants

If resubmitting, please note there many changes to panel descriptions!

Use relevant key words
Reapplication and Multiple Application Rules (for ERC-2011-StG call)

Apply to:
- PIs (and/or Co-I for Advanced Grants proposals, but not team members)
- whose eligible proposals are not judged to meet the quality threshold
- as well as for multiple eligible applications within the same or different type of ERC grants

Current restrictions on application:
- A PI who served as a panel member on a panel for a previous Starting Grant call may not apply to the Starting Grant call 2011
- Only one ERC grant managed by a PI or Co-I can be active at any time
- A PI or Co-I may not be associated with more than one application to the ERC calls with deadlines during the same calendar year
- A PI who has submitted an eligible proposal to the Starting Grant call 2010 may not apply to the Starting Grant call 2011, unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold* at the end of step 1.

*The quality threshold is scoring 2 or more out of 4 for BOTH the PI criterion AND the Research Project criterion.

Registering on the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS)


1. Click on the relevant call identifier (the deadlines are shown on the right-hand side)
2. About halfway down the web page, click the “+” sign by “Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS)"
3. Click on “Go"

Check the ‘Ideas tabs."
It is recommended data is submitted o week before deadline.
Evaluation Criteria

Principal Investigator
- Intellectual capacity and creativity
- Commitment

Research Project
- Ground-breaking nature & potential impact of the research
- Methodology

Each evaluation criterion (Heading 1 and 2) will be marked on a scale of 1 to 4:
4 = Outstanding, 3 = Excellent, 2 = Very Good, 1 = Non-fundable

- A quality threshold of ≥2 will be applied to these criteria
- Proposals are ranked by the panels on the basis of the marks they have received and an overall appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses

Structure of Application Forms

Part A – Administrative and Summary Forms (completed directly onto EPSS)
- A1 Proposal & PI information & HI Legal Representative (including abstract)
- A2 Host Institution(s) information & PIC (one A2 form per institution)
- A3 Budget (summary financial information)
- (no A1T form for this call)

Part B1 – Proposal Details (template from EPSS, submitted as .pdf)
- Cover page & proposal summary
- Section 1a: The PI
  - 1a) Scientific Leadership Potential (1 page (new page limit)
  - 1b) CV, including Funding ID (2 pages)
  - 1c) Early Achievement Track Record (2 pages)
- Section 1d: Extended Synopsis (5 pages)

Part B2 – Proposal Details (template from EPSS, submitted as .pdf)
- Section 2: Scientific Proposal (15 pages, excluding ethical issues table and annexes)
  - State-of-the-art and objectives
  - Methodology
  - Resources (including project costs)
  - Ethical issues table
  - (New: no Research Environment section)

Annexes
- Commitment of the Host Institution (template from EPSS, submitted as .pdf)
- PhD Certificate, and, if applicable, evidence of extensions
- Ethical Issues Annex (if applicable) (template on EPSS, 2 pages, excl. copies of authorisations)

Need 7-8 pages for funding
ERC Starting Grants
Writing Your Application
- Principal Investigator

APPLICATION

• B1: Section 1a) Scientific Leadership Potential (now 1 page)
  1b) CV, including ‘Funding ID’ (2 pages)
  1c) Early Achievements Track Record (2 pages)

CRITERIA (For StG)

• Intellectual capacity and creativity:
  • To what extent are the achievements and publications of the Principal Investigator groundbreaking and demonstrative of independent creative thinking and capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art?
  • To what extent will an ERC Starting Grant make a significant contribution to the establishment or consolidation of independence?

• Commitment:
  • Is the PI strongly committed to the project and willing to devote a significant amount of time to it (they will be expected to devote at least 50% of their working time to the ERC-funded project)?

Write a before and after position

Scientific Leadership Potential
(now 1 page max)

A factual list of career achievements should be provided by the PI including:

i. a presentation of the content of the early scientific or scholarly contributions of the applicant to his or her own research field, demonstrating the PI’s qualifications and potential to go significantly beyond the state of the art;

ii. the recognition and diffusion that these early contributions have received from others:
   • publications
   • citations or appropriate equivalents
   • additional funding
   • students
   • international prizes and awards
   • institution-building
   • Other

iii. Assessment by the applicant of the specific stage of her/his research career at the time of the application as a ‘starter’ (award of PhD from 2-7 years) or a ‘consolidator’ (award of PhD more than 7 to 12 years):
   • The applicant can bring to the attention of the panel a career break that may create an exception to the above rule, justify an extension of the eligibility time window or explain the reasons why he/she considers that his/her situation does not follow the rule.
It is important that the PI should also report on any significant career breaks and/or unconventional career paths. Peer reviewers will take it into consideration during the assessment of the quality of the PI and his/her career progression.

Early Achievements Track Record

Benchmarks

- Publications, as main author
  - indicating those without the presence as co-author of their PhD supervisor
  - in major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals and/or
  - in the leading international peer-reviewed journals and/or
  - peer-reviewed conferences proceedings and/or
  - research monographs of their respective research fields.
  - also indicating the number of citations (excluding self-citations) they have attracted.
- Granted patent(s)*
- Invited presentations to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools*
- Prizes and Awards*

(*if applicable)

Hints and Tips

- Remember the Funding ID section in the CV is important
- Make sure you address the full requirements of the track record, and consider what makes you stand out
- Clarify specific points to strengthen your application and give additional relevant details
- Explain anything that is UK specific
- The evaluators will review the PI on the basis of their experience and information the PI provides on the application form!
- If you refer to journal impact factors, state which one you are using
- Add a link to your website, and then keep your website UP TO DATE!
FAQ

PI Criteria

• Is there a set style for the CV and what should I include in the CV?
• What if I have changed research fields?
• I’ve mainly been teaching for the last 2 years, but before that I was an active researcher – can I still apply?
• Which publications are considered to be high quality?
• What about papers that are yet to be published?
• What if my experience does not match the profile of the PI?

Structure of the Proposal

You must explain the feasibility of the project.
Research Project (1)

APPLICATION

- Part B1 (Section 1d) Extended Synopsis (5 pages): concise presentation of the scientific proposal, incl. scientific feasibility of the project, with particular attention to its ground-breaking nature and how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for research. Describe the proposed work in the context of the state of the art of the field.
- Part B2 (Section 2): Scientific Proposal (15 pages): detailed descriptions of the project's aim, planning, execution, and required resources.

CRITERIA

- Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research:
  - To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) addressed?
  - To what extent does it have suitably ambitious objectives, which go substantially beyond the current state of the art (e.g. including inter- and trans-disciplinary developments and novel or unconventional concepts and/or approaches)?

Research Project (2)

APPLICATION

- Part B1 (Section 1d) Extended Synopsis (5 pages)
- Part B2 (Section 2): Scientific Proposal (15 pages)

CRITERIA

- Methodology:
  - To what extent does the possibility of a major breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific research domain/discipline justify any highly novel and/or unconventional methodologies ("high-gain/high-risk balance")?
  - To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible?
  - To what extent is the proposed research methodology (including the proposed timescales and resources) appropriate to achieve the goals of the project? To what extent are the resources requested necessary and properly justified?
  - If it is proposed that team members engaged by another host institution participate in the project is their participation fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project?

Hints and Tips

- Consider what excites you about the research and convey this in your application (and at your interview!)
- Think about your audience and remember to explain UK specific terminology
- Explain how the research will open new horizons or opportunities
- Provide a clear, concise work-plan which gives details of the intermediate goals
- Explain what each team member is doing (and their background/recruitment profile)
- Highlight any intermediate stages where you may need to adjust your project planning
- Clearly explain how you will manage and disseminate your project
- Justify the resources you need for your research proposal and ensure the resources are appropriate.
  - Have you included all staff costs?
  - Have you clearly shown the links between the costs and the research/methodology?
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
College of Science & Engineering
European Research Council - Independent Researcher Grants

FAQs
Research Project Criteria

• Does it have to be a totally new project?
• What level of knowledge should I expect from the evaluators?
• Why do I need to provide a synopsis as well as the full proposal?
• Should I name my team members in my application?
• Should I include a Plan B?
• How much time am I expected to spend on the project?
• Do I have to carry out my research in the EU?
• Can I give links to information about my work?

Ethical Issues Table and Annex

APPLICATION
• Part B2 (Section 2d – Ethical Issues Table)
• Ethical Issues Table (provided, doesn’t count towards page limit for B2)
• Annex (only if answered Yes to any questions on ethical issues table)
  • Brief explanation the ethical issue(s) involved & how it will be dealt with appropriately. Benefit and burden of research. (2 pages max)
  • You may include supporting documentation, such as authorisations already received. (Not counted in page limit)

Resources on Research Ethics


• Guide to Ethics in FP7 - FP7 Ethics for Researchers
• Ethics Guidance Notes
  • Informed Consent
  • Research on Human embryos/foetus
  • Privacy
  • Research on Animals
  • Research Involving Developing Countries
  • Dual Use
• Slides and training notes on a range of topics
FAQs
Ethical Issues
• Does everyone need to complete the ethical issues table?
• Where do I describe the ethically sensitive issues?
• Do I need to attach national legislation documents?
• Are there any resources available to help with this section?
• Who looks at ethics during Peer Review?
• What is an ‘ethical audit’?

There is a separate ‘light touch panel for these proposal

Background Finance information (1)

- Direct costs: up to 100% of eligible costs
- Indirect costs: Flat rate of 20% (of eligible direct costs)
  *Excludes subcontracting & third party resources not used on premises
- Overall level of grant offered determined by peer review panels

Direct eligible costs are those which support all the research, management, training and dissemination activities necessary for the conduct of the project such as Personnel, Equipment, Consumables, Travel and Subsistence & Publication Costs

How are eligible costs defined?
• Actual
• Incurred by the beneficiary during the project
• Determined according to host’s usual accounting and management principles
• Used solely for project objectives
• Consistent with principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
• Recorded in accounts
• Exclusive of non-eligible costs
Background Finance information (2)

Non-eligible costs, in particular:
- Any identifiable indirect taxes, including VAT or duties
- Interest owed
- Provisions for possible future losses or charges
- Exchange losses
- Costs declared, incurred or reimbursed in respect of another EU project
- Costs related to return on capita
- Debt and debt service charges
- Excessive or reckless expenditure
- Any costs not related to the project
- Others? …

PhD tuition fees are bon included in any funding

Indirect eligible costs are those which cannot be identified as directly attributable to the project, but which are incurred in direct relationship with the project's direct eligible costs, such as:
- Costs related to general administration and management
- Costs of office or laboratory space, including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditure such as water, heating, electricity
- Maintenance, insurance and safety costs
- Communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office supplies
- Common office equipment such as PCs, laptops, office software
- Miscellaneous recurring consumables

Indirect costs are allocated and charged as a 20% flat rate.

Standard computers not included.
A3 Budget Form

- A3 Form provides an overview of the budget, broken down into:
  - Personnel costs, other direct costs (excluding subcontracts), indirect costs, subcontracts, eligible costs, and requested grant.

- Each institution involved (other than subcontractors) will have a line on this form.
- Budget must be in whole Euros (not thousands) and exclude VAT.

Important! — The figures must match in the A3 and B2 forms (otherwise the figure from the A3 form will be used!)

Part B2, Section (2c)
Research Project – Resources (including project costs)

- Describe the size and nature of the team, key team members and their roles.
- Participation of team members at other host institutions should be justified in relation to the additional financial cost it may impose.
- Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project.
- It is advisable to include a short technical description of the equipment requested, a justification of its need as well as the intensity of its planned use.
- State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfill the objectives:
  - Take into account the percentage of your dedicated time (you are expected to devote at least 50% of your working time to the ERC-funded project) to run the ERC-funded activity when calculating your personnel costs.
- Include the direct costs of the project and also a contribution of up to 20% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding subcontracting) towards overheads.
- The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible.
- The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully; unjustified budgets will be consequently reduced.
- There is no minimum contribution per year; the requested contribution should be in proportion to the actual needs to fulfill the objectives of the project.
Hints and Tips

Budgets

• The overall level of the grant offered is determined by the peer review panels
• Work Closely with your ELO or Finance Office!
• If your team members are at other institutions, those institutions will need to be involved in costing their part of the proposal
• ERC is part of FP7 - FP7 Rules of Participation apply.
• All costs must be calculated and claimed according to your host organisations own accounting rules.
• Remember you can only budget for costs directly related to carrying out the project
• Link your budgets clearly to your activities
• Financial rules are in the ERC Guide to Grant Holders Part II at http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc/legal_financial.htm

FAQs

Budgets

• Is there a list of standard costs published anywhere?
• How do I handle inflation?
• How do I handle exchange rates?
• What about my salary – what level will this be?
• What rules apply to subcontracting?
• Should I include patent costs and audit costs?
• Can the evaluators cut my budget?
• Can I claim my salary from the grant, and what % time is reasonable? What about claiming salary for a team member, technicians...? And what % time?
• How does the flat rate work for indirect costs in the ERC?
• Is there a minimum budget?
• If I have teaching activities can the ERC grant pay someone for teaching in my place?
• Can I attach quotes for equipment, or proof of pay scales?

Make sure figures are correct
Supporting Documentation

1. Commitment of the Host Institution (.pdf)
   - Binds Host to conditions of independence for PI
   - Template provided on EPSS
   - Originally signed, stamped and dated by institution’s legal representative
   - File name format: Host_letter_[proposal_short-name].pdf

2. Evidence of eligibility for grant (.pdf)
   - Scanned copy of documents proving eligibility for grant, e.g.
     - PhD certificate (or equivalent degree) – with date of award/defence
     - If an extension to the eligibility window beyond 12 years has been requested include relevant documentary evidence (on maternity, paternity leave, national service, long-term illness, unavoidable leave for statutory reasons)
     - If an extension to the 27 year “starter” window has been requested also include evidence.
   - File name format: PhD_[ProposalShort-Name].pdf

3. Ethical Issues Annex (.pdf)
   - Template provided on EPSS
   - Official documents can be submitted in any of the EU official languages.
   - Documents in any other language (including Latin) must be provided together with a certified translation into English.
   - All of these must be uploaded electronically on EPSS

FAQs

- Where do you find the Commitment of the Host letter?
- Who should sign the Commitment of the Host letter?
- Can we/should we make any changes to the Commitment of the Host letter?
- Is the ERC looking for an explicit financial commitment from the host institution?
- What will happen if I do not attach the letter of Commitment from the Host Institution before the deadline?
- I had my viva on 4 May 03 and graduated on 2 October 04. Which date should I use?
- I don’t have a copy of my PhD certificate - can I send it later?
What is a Grant Agreement?

- Core Grant Agreement (between ERC and principal beneficiary)
- Description of work (Annex I)
  - Scientific/technical section taking into account panel’s recommendations
- General Conditions (Annex II)
- Accession Form (if more than one beneficiary - Annex III)
- Financial Statement Form (Annex IV)
- Terms of reference for the certification of costs and on the methodology (Annex V)
- Supplementary Agreement (between PI and principal beneficiary)
- Special Clauses

All available at www.ukro.ac.uk/erc along with:

- Guidance Notes for preparing the ERC Grant Agreement
- ERC Guide for Grant Holders

Management Issues to consider when preparing your application

- Grant Agreement
  - Technical annex – description of work
- Flexibility
  - Scientific
  - Portability
- Progress reporting
  - Scientific – submitted by the PI
  - Financial – submitted by the beneficiary
- Publication and exploitation of results
  - Open Access
- European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

What Happens Next?

- After review process
  - Funding decision and feedback
  - (Redress? Seek advice from UKRO? Redress requests should be raised within one month of the date of the initial information letter, see http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/redress_en.html)
  - Preparation of the grant agreement between the host and the ERC
  - No project negotiations as such
  - Grant agreement based on the proposal and the peer review decision (budget)
  - Can accept/reject the offered grant

- When the project starts
  - Sign grant agreement
  - Also supplementary agreement between PI and host
  - Set up project account
  - Recruit staff onto project
  - “Expected that all projects start within 6 months from the award of the grant”
### Description of Work (DOW table)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key intermediate goal or work package</th>
<th>Estimated % of total requested grant</th>
<th>Detail* (optional)</th>
<th>Expected to be completed on month:</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key intermediate goal 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*If available, a detail by categories of costs (personnel, equipment, travel etc) may be provided here.

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### IPR in ERC Grant Agreement

**"background"**
- Information which is held by beneficiaries prior to their accession to the grant agreement, as well as copyrights or other intellectual property rights pertaining to such information, the application for which has been filed before their accession to the agreement, and which is needed for carrying out the project or for using foreground.

**"foreground"**
- The results, including information, whether or not they can be protected, which are generated under the project. Such results include rights related to copyright, design rights, patent rights, plant variety rights, or similar forms of protection.
  - Foreground shall be the property of the beneficiary carrying out the work and generating that foreground.
  - Employees or other personnel working for a beneficiary are entitled to claim rights to foreground.
  - Where foreground is capable of industrial or commercial application, its owner shall provide for its adequate and effective protection.
  - Access to foreground and background is royalty free if it is needed to carry out the work.

See Annex 2 of the Model ERC Grant Agreement for more information.
Summary of Key Points for ERC Grants

- Support for a PI and (if necessary) team members
  - No need for collaboration or to work with other countries
  - Team usually based at the same institution (in EU/AC), but possible to have team members in other organizations if strongly justified (anywhere in the World - not just EU, AC and ICPC)
  - Also for Advanced Grants can have a Co-I (must be from a different discipline to the PI)
  - No nationality or mobility requirements

- Investigator driven (bottom-up) substantial advances “Frontier Research”
  - Knowledge pursuit of questions at or beyond the frontiers of knowledge
  - Any field of research (except nuclear)
  - Interdisciplinary proposals crossing the boundaries between different research fields
  - Pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research
  - Proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions
  - Must have a significant impact on science, scholarship or engineering
  - Reviewers understand the high-risk/high-gain profile

- Excellence is only peer review criterion
  - 50% for the PI (and any Co-I)
    - Must have an outstanding CV, (potential) leadership profile & track record
  - 50% for the Research Project

Positive ESR comments - PI Criteria
Typical comments from highly-ranked, funded proposals

- “his work has been rather influential in his field”
- “has been successful at raising funds for his work”
- “PI has a strong publication record in high-quality journals”
- “is now recognised as an International leader”
- “regularly published in the best journals in the field”
- “the PI has established herself as one of the leading young researchers worldwide in the area of…”
- “there is no doubt that she is a first-class research leader”
- “papers emanating from the PI’s group have been published in the most prestigious journals”
- “her work and that of her collaborators is highly respected indeed and very widely quoted”
- “absolutely no doubt that the candidate is one of the World’s leading scientists in her field”
- “has already supervised a number of PhD students”
- “Outstanding publication record (2 papers in Nature, 2 in Science…”)

Negative ESR comments - PI Criteria
Typical comments from low-ranked, unfunded proposals

- “The PI has a solid track record of good quality papers. These reports however, remain in the mainstream of the senior PIs in whose laboratories this work was carried out, and do not demonstrate the initiation of new lines of thinking”
- “Fairly good CV, but not competitive at this level”
- “The publications are rather specialized in medium/good quality journal”
- “The PI has group leader experience but the papers are not impressive”
- “Good potential of this PI. However, the bulk of this persons research has been directed towards improving existing systems, rather than developing new ideas or concepts.”
- “This PI has had a restricted background. He needs to benefit from visiting other institutions to expand his horizons”
- “Fair publication record with little impact on the field”
- “Their research has not yet lead to a distinct contribution in the research area”
Positive ESR comments - Research Criteria
Typical comments from highly-ranked, funded proposals

“the proposal addresses fundamental questions”
“an exciting proposal, which is at the cutting edge”
“the two elements would constitute major advances in the field, but together they would really set a new standard”
“the implications of this work would be far reaching”
“the proposal addresses important questions….it will greatly contribute to increase our knowledge”
“the proposal outlines original, important and ambitious research”
“an appropriate mix of safe and risky research questions”
“proposed research tackles important issues and is based on sound methodology”
“project is ambitious and wide-ranging”

“will attract the interest of both the academic and policy communities”

Negative ESR comments - Research Criteria
Typical comments from low-ranked, unfunded proposals

“Well written proposal, but the questions asked are not original and innovative”
“The proposal is unclear, unfocused, and the techniques to be applied are not very well defined. The road to success is vague.”
“The project is feasible, but not very original.”
“The idea is rather original but overall the project remains generic and the link between the experimental steps is unclear”
“Methodology not tightly specified”
“This would not be a major step forward in science and not develop new concepts or ideas, but rather lead to better application of XX technologies and incremental step forward.”
“The subject matter is solid but the proposal did not make a case for it being topical and at the cutting edge of their field”
“Many of the essential experiments will be actually carried out in the collaborating laboratory and not in the PI’s lab.”
“Link between conceptual framework and case studies is a bit unclear”
“The project description is too vague and too generic to really evaluate the contributions to the field.”
Lessons learned (StG)

- Often applicants did not fully understand ERC concepts (frontier research, ‘individual team’)
- Applicants often not ambitious enough
- Often applicants did not explain why the research is important or what the impacts would be
- Many StG applications resembled job description written by a supervisor rather than showing the PI’s ideas
- ERC StGs have funded both fairly experienced (i.e. having UK fellowships/grants) PIs and those where the ERC grant is their first grant.
- Applicants should aim their proposal at generalist reviewers (panel members) in Step 1
- Although the top ranked proposals were outstanding, many average ones were also submitted

Tips on Writing your Application

1. Liaise with your HoD and Research Office
2. Use clear and concise language
3. Pay careful attention to each section
4. Be ambitious, but show awareness of cutting edge
5. Look at examples of successful applications
6. Read all the documentation, including the Grant Agreement
7. Be realistic with the budget, clearly link your budget to activities. Has your institution agreed your budget?
8. Proof read your application
9. Get application reviewed by colleagues? (StG - Mock Interview?)
10. Stick to page, font size, budget limits and format
11. Check submission checklist from Guide for Applicants
12. Remember you can submit your proposal on EPSS as many times as you wish before the deadline.
13. Make sure you press submit on EPSS!

Checklist (for reference)

- Have you submitted all parts to your applications
  - Administrative Forms A1, A2 (each institution), A3
  - Part B1 - Sections 1a-1d
  - Part B2 - Section 2 (including ethical issues table) and 3
  - Supplementary Documents:
    - Commitment of Host Letter
    - Documents proving eligibility (incl. PhD certificate and evidence for an extension if applicable)
    - Ethical Issues Annex, including any ethical approval already received (if applicable)
- Has your institution agreed your budget?
- Can you clearly answer questions about your proposal and how you will manage your team?
- Remember you can submit your proposal on EPSS as many times as you wish before the deadline.
- Make sure you press submit on EPSS!
Interviews

- PIs with proposals taken to the second step of the review process will be interviewed by the Peer Review Panel or Sub-Panel
- Must attend in person
  - although in very exceptional cases (pregnancy, immobility due to illness, out in research fieldwork) video or telephone conferencing are offered.
- Interviews last approximately 30 minutes (depending on panel)
  - Start with a presentation by the PI on the outline of the research project
  - Followed by a question and answer session
- Panels will take into account the results of the interviews alongside the individual reviews.
- Travel is reimbursed

Other FP7 Funding Sources to Explore
(For reference only)

FP7 Funding Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-operation – collaborative research</th>
<th>Capacities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Research Infrastructures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Biotechnology (FAFB/KBBE)</td>
<td>Research for the Benefit Of SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)</td>
<td>Regions of Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies (NMP)</td>
<td>Research Potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Science in Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment (including Climate Change)</td>
<td>Activities of International Co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Scientific Development Of Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Sciences and the Humanities (SESH)</td>
<td>People – Marie Curie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Security</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

People – European Research Council

- Starting Independent Researcher Grants
- Advanced Investigator Grants
- Call for Tenders on ERC
### FP7 Programmes - European Research Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research areas</th>
<th>Types of activity</th>
<th>Key points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation</td>
<td>Aims to build research collaborations across Europe &amp; beyond</td>
<td>- No requirement to move - Normally requires collaboration with other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacities</td>
<td>Aims to build research capacity</td>
<td>- No requirement to move - Normally requires collaboration with other countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Marie Curie Actions (People)

- **Overview:** Marie Curie Actions
- **Co-Fund:** NEW, Researchers Night

#### Host Actions
- Initial Training Networks (ITN)
- Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP)
- International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRESES)

#### Individual Actions
- Intra-European Fellowships
- Incoming International Fellowships
- Outgoing International Fellowships
- Career Integration Grants

### European Research Council (Ideas)

- **Overview:** European Research Council
- **Definition of researchers:**
  - **Early-Stage Researchers:** 0 - 4 years (FTE) from obtaining degree that qualified them to embark on a doctorate
  - **Experienced Researchers:**
    - i) in possession of a PhD
    - i) at least 4 years experience (FTE)

### Euratom

- **Overview:** Euratom
- **Definition of researchers:**
  - Some top-down, some bottom up
  - Nuclear research (fission, fusion, uses of radiation…)
  - Research, training, technology transfer, dissemination…

- Nuclear research is not eligible under other FP7 Programmes and is only funded through Euratom.
Marie Curie
National Contact Point Helpdesk

- Website http://www.ukro.ac.uk/mariecurie
- Helpdesk via email and telephone (email mariecurie-uk@bbsrc.ac.uk or phone 0032 230 0318)
- Advice on applying for Marie Curie actions
  - Eligibility
  - Application help
  - Results
  - Contractual issues
- Advice to those with Marie Curie funding
- Specialist training courses and information events (to be notified of events, sign up at http://www.ukro.ac.uk/mariecurie/events/)

ERC Grants
Further Information

- Website http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc
- ERC mailing list for events and key updates http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc/events_ukro/events_alerts.htm
- Helpdesk via email and telephone (erc-uk@bbsrc.ac.uk or 0032 2289 6121)
- Advice on applying for ERC actions
  - Eligibility
  - Application help
  - Results
  - Contractual issues
- Advice to those with ERC grants
- Specialist training courses and information events
Further Information (1)

- **UK ERC NCP Website**
  - [http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc](http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc)
  - UK ERC NCP Newsletter
  - [http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc/events_ukro/events_alerts.htm](http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc/events_ukro/events_alerts.htm)

- **ERC Website**
  - [http://erc.europa.eu](http://erc.europa.eu)
  - ERC Newsletter
  - ERC Europa Helpdesk

- **UKRO Information Services** (For UKRO subscribers)
  - [http://im0.ukro.ac.uk](http://im0.ukro.ac.uk)

Further Information (2)

- **EPSS Helpdesk**
  - E-mail: support@epss-fp7.org
  - Tel: +32 2 233 3760

- **IPR helpdesk Website**
  - [www.ipr-helpdesk.org](http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org)

- **European Commission FP7 Ethics Website**

- **Cordis FP7 pages**