The European Research Council

ERC StG Applicants' Training

Euresearch Info Event

Odeta Limaj, PhD

ERC Scientific officer panel PE3 and Synergy

30/08/2022

Why Should one Apply for an ERC grant?

- Research topic of own choice, with a team of own choice
- True financial autonomy for 5 years
- Negotiate with the host institution the best conditions of work
- Attract top team members (EU and non-EU) and collaborators
- Portability of grants within Europe
- Attract additional funding

ERC Grant Schemes

Starting Grant

Up to €1.5 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
2-7 years of experience after PhD

Consolidator Grant

Up to €2 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
7-12 years of experience after PhD

Advanced 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

ERC Grant Schemes

Synergy grant

Size of the grant: €10 million + up to €4 million
Duration: up to 6 years
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

Evaluation: Panel Structure (2021-2023)

Life Sciences

- 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 Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
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Physical Sciences & Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
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- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

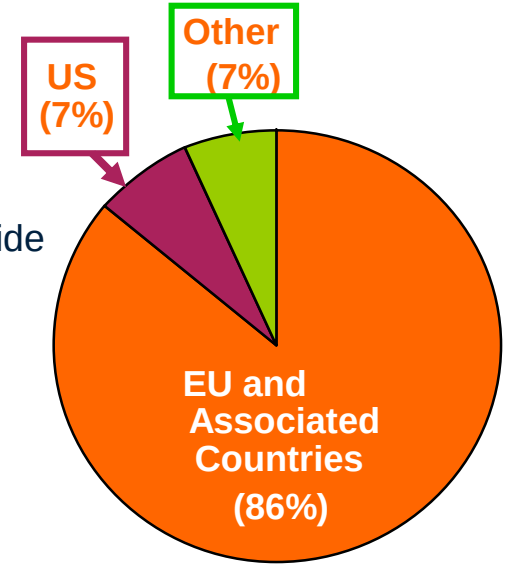
Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its 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

Who evaluates your proposal?

- **Panel members**: typically 600 PMs involved per call
  - ➔ High-level scientists
  - ➔ Nominated by the Scientific Council worldwide
  - ➔ About 11-16 per panel
  - ➔ Steps 1 and 2

- **Remote Referees**: typically 2000 / call
  - ➔ Step 2

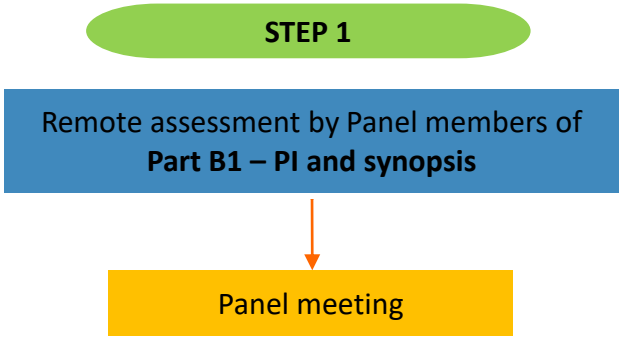


Evaluation process (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced)

STEP 1

Remote assessment by Panel members of **Part B1 – PI and synopsis**

Evaluation process (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced)



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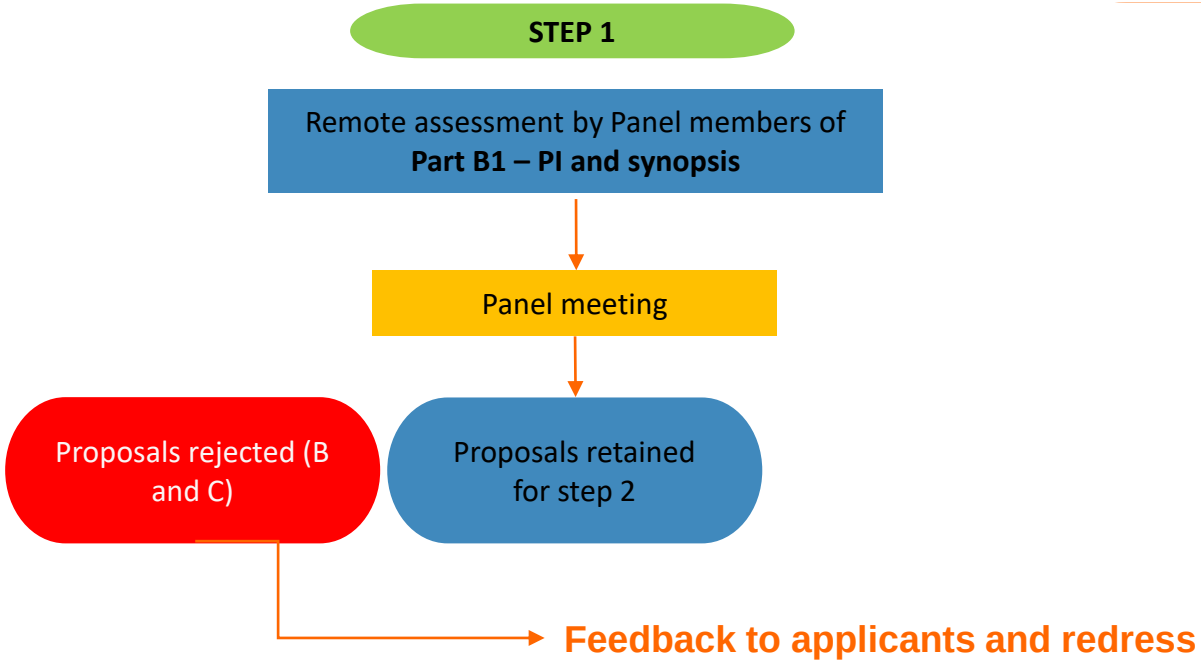

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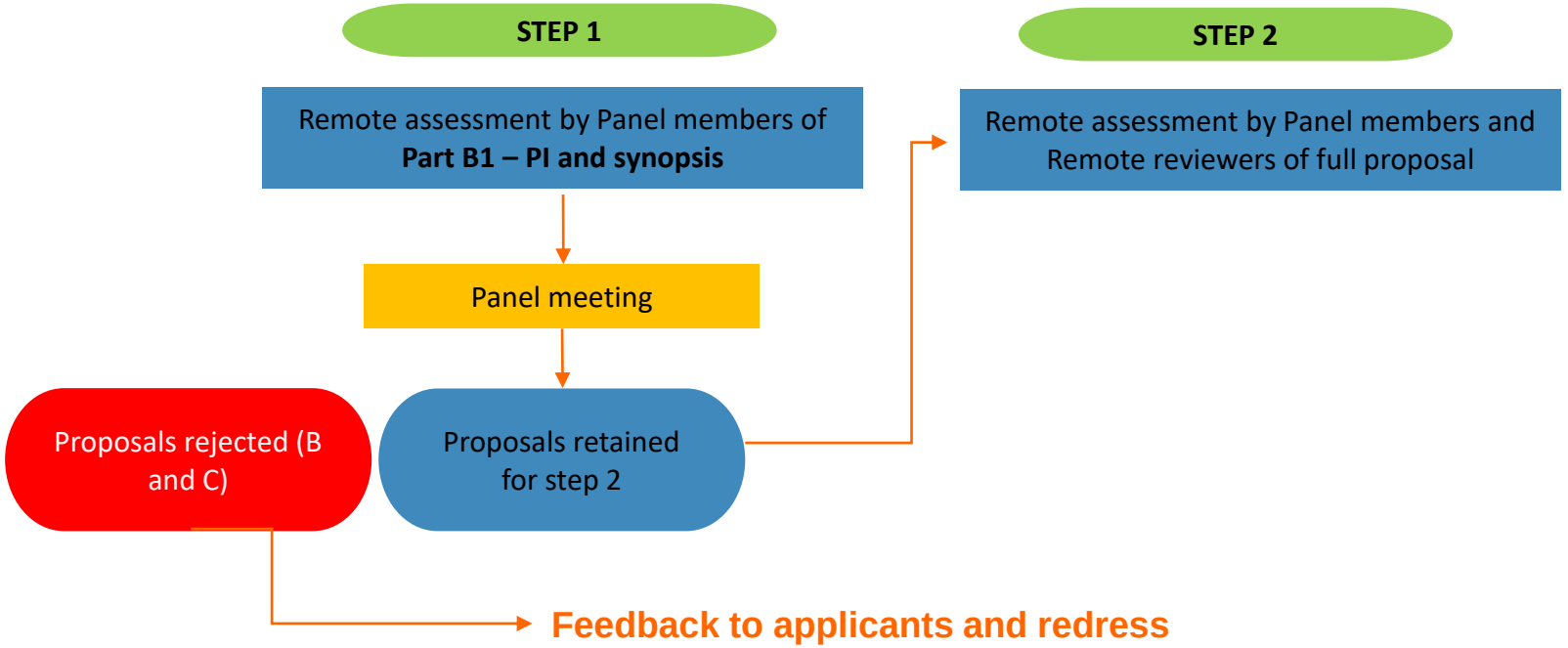

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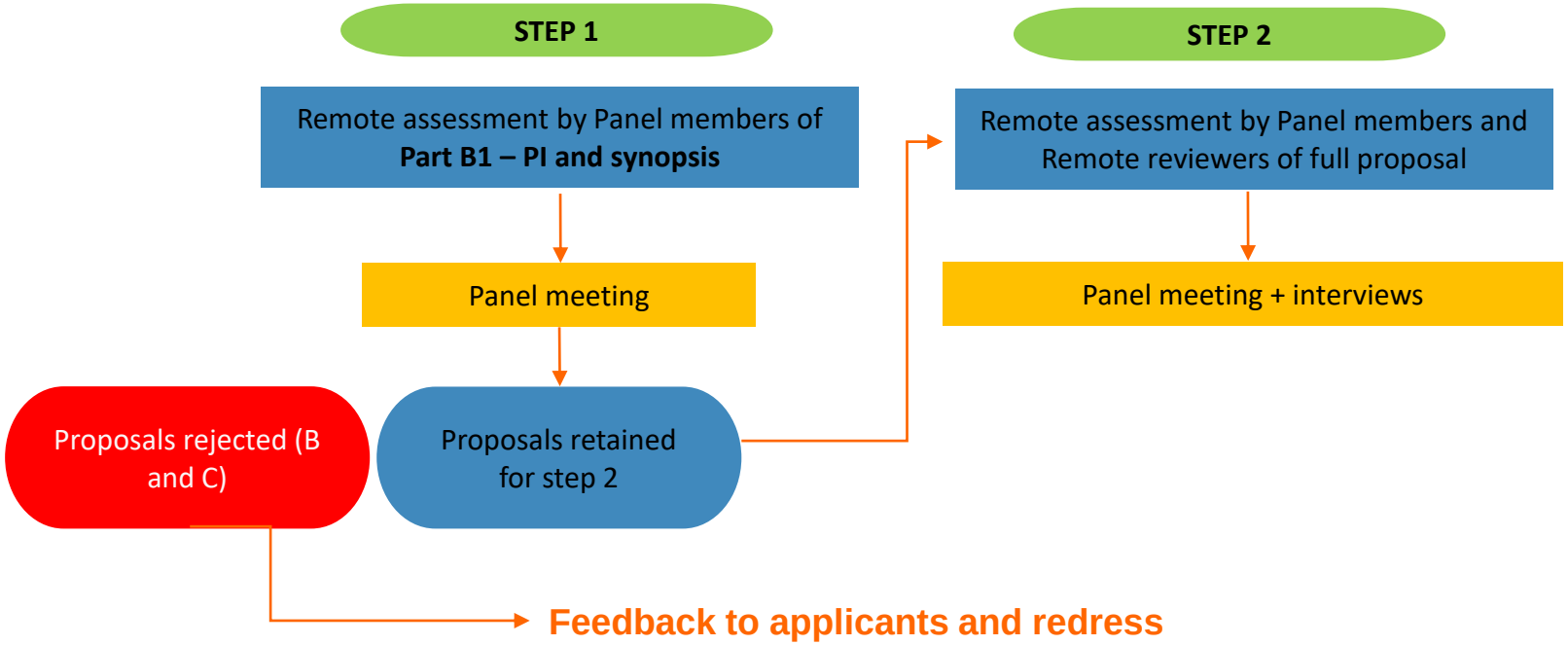

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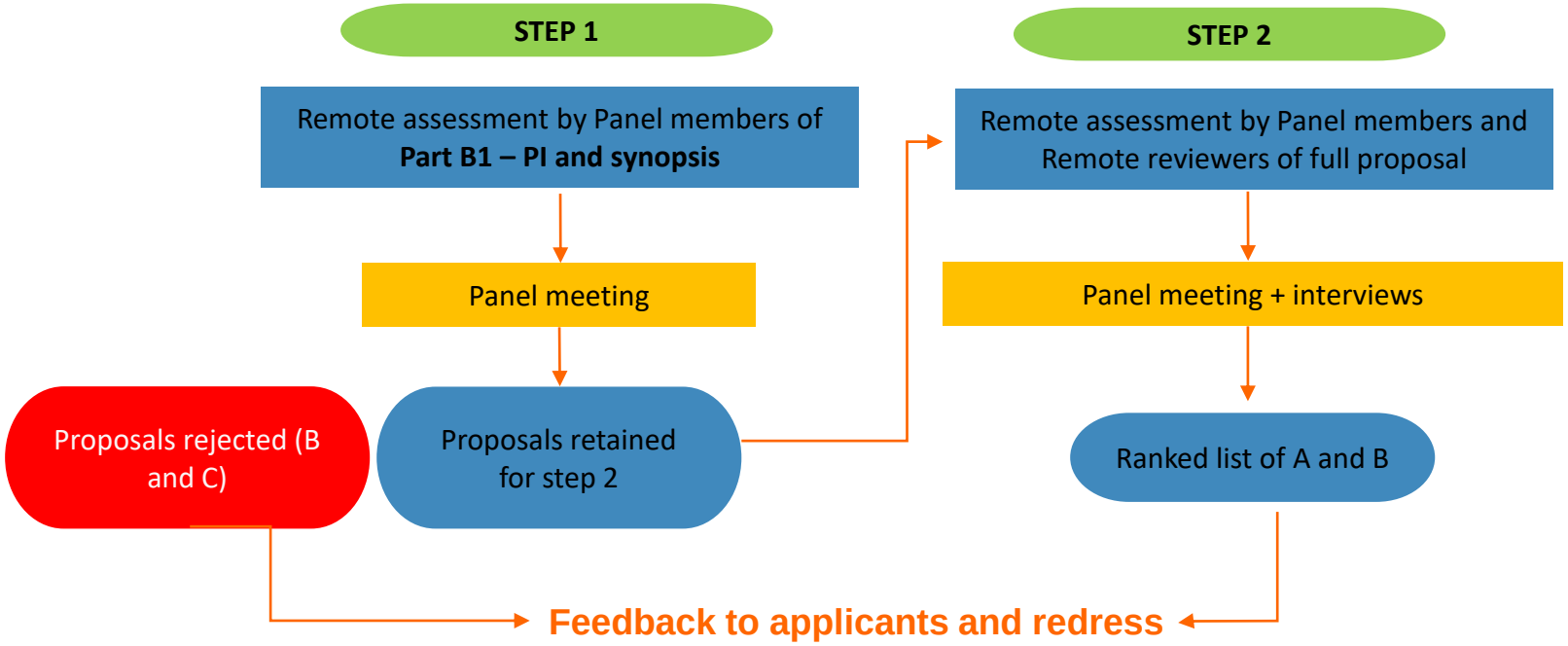

Evaluation Principles

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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Established by the European Commission

European Commission

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

- Design **a research project** to implement your **idea**
- Get **all the information** before starting
- Get a letter of support from a **Host Institution** where the project is to be carried out (in EU or any of the HE associated countries)
- Make sure to be '**visible**'
- **Write** your research proposal
- **Get feedback**
- **Fully electronic/web based submission system**

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

Get info!

- Check the **ERC website** for latest funding opportunities : https://erc.europa.eu/
- **Register early**, get familiar with the European Commission's Participant Portal system, download the templates and start filling in the forms

  http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html

- Use the **help tools and call documents** (**Information for Applicants**, Work Programme, Frequently Asked Questions) to prepare your proposal
  - Read the guidelines carefully
  - Find out about the formatting rules and page limits to respect
- **Talk to your Institution's grant office and other ERC grantees**
- **Contact your National Contact Point if you have questions**

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

Get info- on funded projects and previous panel members

https://erc.europa.eu/funding/starting-grants

STARTING GRANTS

Are you a talented early-career scientist who has already produced excellent supervised work, is ready to work independently and shows potential to be a research leader? The ERC Starting Grant could be for you.

Who can apply?

Researchers of any nationality with **2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD** (Extensions are possible under certain circumstances — see the latest ERC Work Programme), a scientific track record showing great promise and an excellent research proposal

Prospective applicants to the 2023 Starting and Consolidator Grant Calls should note that the ERC is aiming to change the PhD reference date for the calculation of the eligibility period from the date of the actual award according to the national rules of the country

OPEN CALL

- Starting Grants ERC-2023-STG
  - Information for Applicants
  - Timeframe Starting Grants 2023

  Deadline: 25 Oct 2022

ON-GOING EVALUATIONS

- Timeframe Starting Grant 2022

ERC FUNDING EXPLAINED

Watch our instructional videos

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

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Home » *Funding* » *Starting Grants*

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USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- ERC Work Programme 2023
- Information for Applicants: Starting and Consolidator Grant calls 2023
- ERC Work Programme 2022
- Information for Applicants: Starting and Consolidator Grant calls 2022
- Guide for peer reviewers 2022
- Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans

More documents are available in the ERC document library or on the Funding and Tenders Portal

CHOOSE YOUR PANEL

- Panel structure for ERC calls 2021 and 2022

COMPOSITION OF EVALUATION PANELS

ERC Starting Grant 2023:

- Panel Chairs
- Panel Members

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

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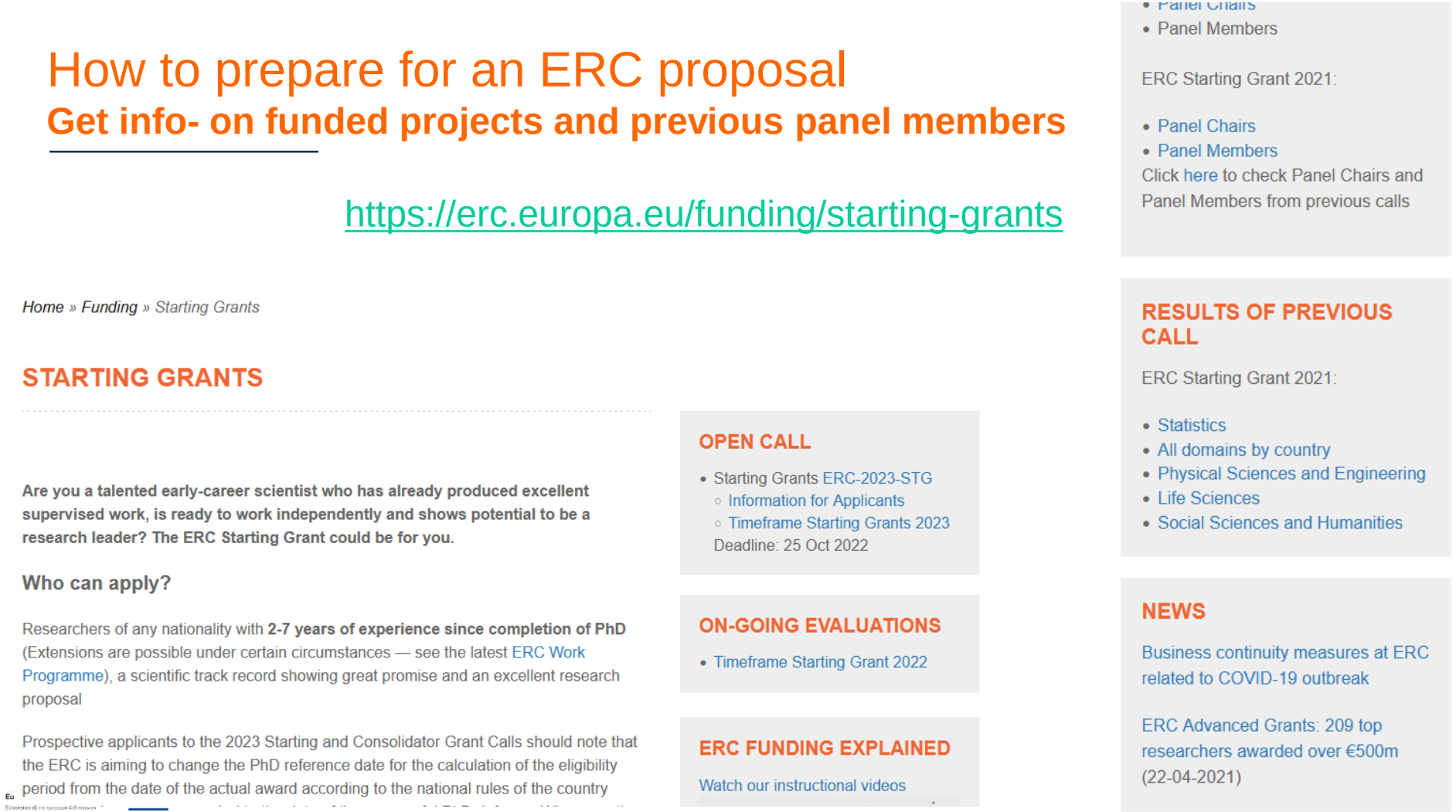

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- Panel Chairs
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ERC Starting Grant 2021:

- Panel Chairs
- Panel Members

Click here to check Panel Chairs and Panel Members from previous calls

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS CALL

ERC Starting Grant 2021:

- Statistics
- All domains by country
- Physical Sciences and Engineering
- Life Sciences
- Social Sciences and Humanities

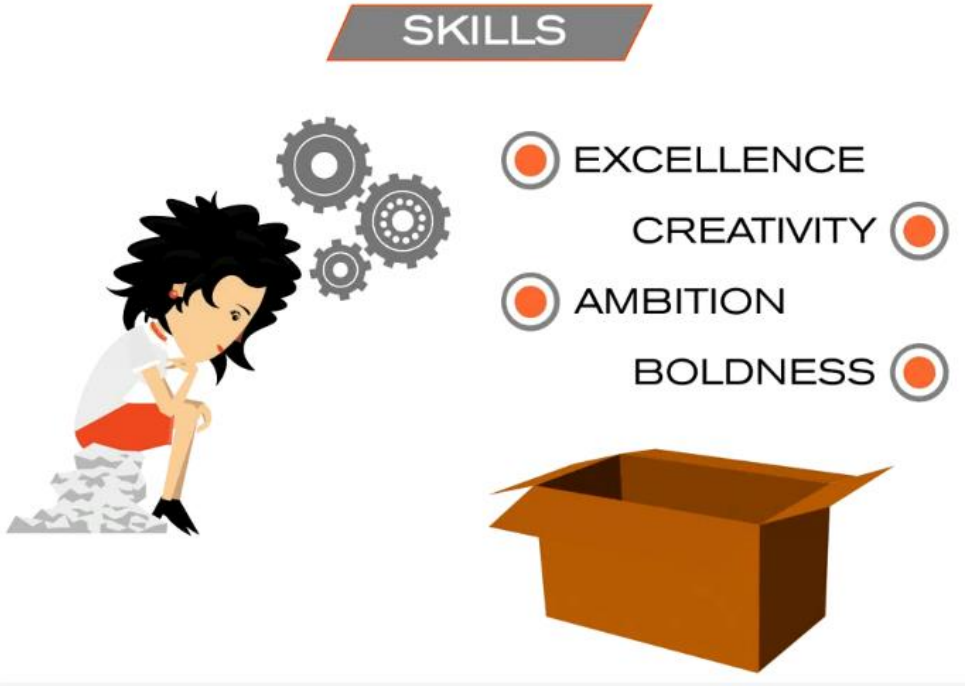
NEWS

Business continuity measures at ERC related to COVID-19 outbreak

ERC Advanced Grants: 209 top researchers awarded over €500m (22-04-2021)

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

Are you ready?



- Is my idea mature enough?
- Several PIs win after more than one attempt- do not give up
- Better not to try if not prepared- risk resubmission restrictions

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

Myth vs Reality

Myth: You can only apply for an ERC grant if you are a highly accomplished scientist/ published in Nature and Science
Reality: Accomplishments are appreciated in relation to your stage/seniority and giving some evidence of your capacity to conduct the research you propose

Myth: To be successful, you need to continue on an established research line, to prove continuity and credibility
Reality: Generally, the opposite is true. New research lines and new ideas are accepted.

Myth: The quality/fame of the HI is increasing my chances/scores.
Reality: the HI is not an evaluation criterion

Myth: If you have just "left" eligibility for one type of grant (Starting or Consolidator Grant) you must wait to accumulate seniority within the next bracket before applying
Reality: There is no evidence that older, more senior candidates have a higher acceptance rate

How to prepare for an ERC proposal

What you need to submit

PART A – administrative online forms

A1 Proposal and PI info

A2 Host Institution info

A3 Budget and resources description

ADMINISTRATIVE

PART B1 – submitted as .pdf

Abstract and Cross-domain explanation	1 p.
Extended Synopsis (excl. References)	5 p.
(Recommended Model) CV	2 p.
Funding ID	1 p.
Track Record	2 p.

Annexes – submitted as .pdf

- Statement of support of HI
- copy of PhD or equiv. (StG & CoG)

If applicable:

- document for extension of eligibility window (StG & CoG)
- explanatory information on ethical issues

PART B2 – submitted as .pdf

Scientific Proposal 15 p.
(excl. References)

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Preparing Part B1

- Make a careful choice of the panel and secondary panel (if any)
- Panel Members evaluate this part as generalist: make sure it is accessible to a broad audience.
- Make sure that all parts of the B1 are carefully drafted, since B1 will give the **first impression of your project/yourself** and will determine if you pass to Step 2

  - ➔ No excessive highlighting
  - ➔ This is a **ground-breaking idea**. It is the *first* time that this type of experiment has been tried. This represents ***high risk/high gain*** research.
  - ➔ Avoid jargon
  - ➔ Remember you are talking to scientists and not ‘selling’ a product

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Preparing Part B1

What to ask yourself

Research Project

- ❑ Do your homework- state of the art and literature search
- ❑ Is my project new, **innovative**, bringing in new solutions/theories?
- ❑ Does it promise to go **substantially beyond the state of the art**? – no incremental research.
- ❑ Dare to **risk**
- ❑ How can I **prove/support** my case? Have I proven the project's **feasibility**? Are my goals **realistic**?
- ❑ Is it **timely**? (Why wasn't it done in the past?)
- ❑ What's the **risk**? Do I have mitigation plans? Do not hide potential risks under the carpet

Principal Investigator

- ❑ Why am I the best/only person to carry it out?
- ❑ Am I able to work independently, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?
- ❑ Am I internationally competitive?
- ❑ Have I shown my scientific leadership in my CV?
- ❑ Explain gaps in CV if any/ publishing habits in your group
- ❑ Make it easy for the reviewer to find your track record and assess your scientific path

Preparing Part B2

In Step 2, both part B1 and B2 are read by Panel Members and specialists around the world (specialised external referees) so in Part B2:

- ❑ Do not repeat the synopsis (B1), go into details on your methodology and work plan
- ❑ Make sure that there is an obvious link between B1 and B2 – Panel Members do not want surprises
- ❑ Make sure you give full **references** (these are excluded from page count)
- ❑ Explain involvement of **team members and collaborators** (ERC are individual grants)
- ❑ Justify requested **resources – explain your budget properly (in Part A)**

How to prepare an ERC proposal

Myth vs Reality

Myth: Only complex and expensive projects get funded.
Reality: There are many areas where it may make little or no sense to ask for the maximum amount of funds. No proposal was ever rejected for asking too little funding.

Myth: If you have already obtained on ERC grant you are less/more likely to get another one.
Reality: 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.

Myth: ask as much budget as possible, it will be cut anyway
Reality: only unjustified resources are cut

How to prepare an ERC proposal

Typical reasons for rejection

Research Project

Scope: Too narrow ←→ too broad/unfocussed
Incremental research
Collaborative project, **several PIs**
Work plan not detailed enough/unclear

Principal Investigator (PI)

Insufficient **track-record**
Insufficient (potential for) **independence**

Before Redressing: see what you could you have done/explained/ presented better before blaming the process!

- Diverting scientific opinion is not a motivation for redress
- An obvious mistake however might result in a re-evaluation

How to prepare an ERC proposal

If I pass to Step 2?

You will have an interview

- You are notified ~2 months in advance
- Format of interviews decided by each panel: typically ~10 minute presentation followed by 10-15 minutes of questions.
- Panel members may ask you to address concerns raised from external reviewers, doubts on requested budget etc.
- Get up to date with advancements appeared in literature after submission
- Remember you are talking to scientists

2022 & 2023 Call Calendar

ERC calls	Call Opening	Submission Deadline
Starting Grants ERC-2023-StG	12/07/2022	25/10/2022
Synergy Grants ERC-2023-SyG	13/07/2022	08/11/2022
Consolidator Grants ERC-2023-CoG	28/09/2022	02/02/2023
Advanced Grants ERC-2023-AdG	08/12/2022	23/05/2023

Where Can You Find More Information?

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

Contacts

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ERC website
https://erc.europa.eu/


EuropeanResearchCouncil


ERC_Research

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erc-2023-cog-applicants@ec.europa.eu

erc-2023-adg-applicants@ec.europa.eu

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erc-scientific-follow-up@ec.europa.eu

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