European Research Council and SSH

Information Event

5 December 2019
Jennifer Morgan
Agenda

- Introduction
- ERC: a scheme overview
- Consolidator Grants
- Common SSH Questions
UK Research Office

The Office, Our Mission and Our Services
About UKRO

Mission

• Maximise UK engagement in EU-funded research, innovation and higher education activities

Our office

• Based in Brussels
• European office of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
• Delivers subscription-based advisory services for around 150 research organisations in the UK and beyond
• Provides ERC and MSCA National Contact Point services on behalf of the UK Government
UKRO National Contact Points

UKRO hosts the UK NCPs for:

European Research Council

www.ukro.ac.uk/erc

erc-uk@bbsrc.ac.uk

Phone: 0032 2289 6121

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

www.ukro.ac.uk/mariecurie

mariecurie-uk@bbsrc.ac.uk

Phone: 0032 2 230 0318
Introduction to the ERC
Horizon 2020 structure

- **Excellent Science**
  - European Research Council (ERC)
  - Future and Emerging Technologies (FET)
  - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)
  - Research Infrastructures

- **Industrial Leadership**
  - Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies (LEIT) - ICT, NMBP, Space
  - Access to Risk Finance
  - Innovation in SMEs

- **Societal Challenges**
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Food security
  - Transport
  - Energy
  - Climate action
  - Societies
  - Security

- **Widening Participation; Science with and for Society, Mainstreaming of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and ICT, Fast Track to Innovation**

- **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)**
- **EURATOM**
- **Joint Research Centre (JRC)**

- **EURATOM**
What is the ERC?

The ERC’s mission:

• encourage the **highest quality research** in Europe
• support **investigator-driven**, frontier research **across all fields**
• fund projects **purely** on the basis of **scientific excellence**

What makes the ERC unique:

• funding split based on **number of applications**, **not** field/discipline/topic
• freedom to collaborate with and fund **team** members **anywhere in the world**
• projects **not judged on** socioeconomic **impact** or alignment to policy priorities – purely scientific impact and excellence
ERC Budget in Horizon 2020

ERC allocated around €12.7 billion for Horizon 2020 (~ 60% increase in real terms compared to FP7). Largest amount of funding will go to the Starting Grants and Consolidator Grants schemes.

Source: ERC
ERC Grant Schemes

Years post-PhD

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Starting Grant
€1.5M (+ €1M additional)
Lasts up to 5 years

Consolidator Grant
€2M (+ €1M additional)
Lasts up to 5 years

No PhD Requirements

Advanced Grant
€2.5M (+ €1M additional)
Lasts up to 5 years

Synergy Grant
€10M (+ €4M additional)
Lasts up to 6 years
2-4 PIs

Proof Of Concept Grant
€150k Lump Sum
Lasts for 1.5 years
Top-up grants for current ERC grantees
Types of research funded

Proposals:
• can be in **ANY** field of research
• must be **very ambitious** in **risk** and in **scope**
• are based around a **central Principal Investigator**, who can be supported by “team members”
• must be “**frontier research**”, and should not be incremental advances
• are judged only on their **scientific excellence** and the excellence of the PI
• must be based in an **EU country** or **Associated Country**-based host institution
Host Institution

- Can be **any type of legal entity**
- Must be based in the territory of an EU Member State or Associated Country
- Has the **infrastructure** and **capacity** to allow the PI to independently direct the research and manage ERC funding
- Must **not constrain the PI** to the institution’s research strategy
- Normally employs the PI, if grant is successful
- Not assessed as a separate criterion during peer review but must sign a **letter of commitment** as part of application
- If funded:
  - signs up to the Grant Agreement
  - signs a ‘Supplementary Agreement’ with the PI
Team Members

The PI leads the research project (there are no “Co-Is”) and the PI has the freedom to choose appropriate ‘team members’

Team members can be;

• **research staff** of any level, PhDs, technicians, specialists, etc.
• at the host institution or at another institution.
• of any **age, nationality** or country of **residence**
• **hosted in non-EU/Associated Country institutions** for the project
• defined as **specific individuals** in the proposal, or as **job roles** to be recruited

Team members **must be assigned to project outputs** and should not have purely supervisory or mentor-style roles. Their participation must be fully justified in the proposal.
Proposal Submission

Funding & tender opportunities

Horizon 2020 Framework Programme (H2020)

There will be issues with accessing and uploading of documents in the Grants and Audits Management and in the Participant Register Services on Thursday, 05.12.2019, between 07:30 and 08:10 CET
The Legal Entity, Bank Account, Contracts and Payments functionalities in the Experts Area of the F&T Portal will be unavailable on Thursday, 05.12.2019, between 07:30 and 08:10 CET.

Funding and tenders
2 results

See all calls for tenders published by EC

Grant
Call for proposals for ERC Proof of Concept Grant ERC-2020-POC
Types of action: ERC Proof of Concept Lump Sum Pilot | Programme: Horizon 2020
Open for submission
Opening date: 15 October 2019

Grant
ERC CONSOLIDATOR GRANTS ERC-2020-COG
Types of action: Consolidator Grant | Programme: Horizon 2020
Open for submission
Opening date: 24 October 2019

Download all funding and tender opportunities to your calendar or subscribe to the RSS feed (unfiltered).

Online manual
"Find a grant"
ERC Proposal Structure

1-Step Submission
Part A is filled in online and B1, B2 and annexes are submitted as PDFs all together by the call deadline

Part A
Administrative Forms and Abstract
- General Info
- Participating Institutions
- Budget & Resources
- Ethics Check

Part B1
Proposal Overview and PI Track Record
- Cover page and summary
- Extended Synopsis (5 pgs)
- CV (2 pgs)
- Track Record (2 pgs)
- Funding ID

Part B2
Detailed Research Proposal
- State of the art
- Objectives
- Methodology (Total of 15 pgs – includes resources from part A)

Annexes
Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents
## ERC Panel Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Sciences and Humanities</th>
<th>Physical Sciences and Engineering</th>
<th>Life Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SH1: <em>Individuals, Markets and Organisations</em></td>
<td>PE1: <em>Mathematics</em></td>
<td>LS1: <em>Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Structural Biology and Molecular Biophysics</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH4: <em>The Human Mind and Its Complexity</em></td>
<td>PE4: <em>Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences</em></td>
<td>LS4: <em>Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH5: <em>Cultures and Cultural Production</em></td>
<td>PE5: <em>Synthetic Chemistry and Materials</em></td>
<td>LS5: <em>Neurosciences and Neural Disorders</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE7: <em>Systems and Communication Engineering</em></td>
<td>LS7: <em>Applied Medical Technologies, Diagnostics, Therapies, and Public Health</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE8: <em>Products and Processes Engineering</em></td>
<td>LS8: <em>Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE9: <em>Universe Sciences</em></td>
<td>LS9: <em>Applied Life Sciences, Biotechnology and Molecular and Biosystems Engineering</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE10: <em>Earth System Science</em></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
## Evaluation Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal Grading</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Funded?</th>
<th>Reapplication Restrictions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>If sufficient budget</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2 Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposals which do not progress to Stage 2 in the evaluation have “demand management” restrictions. PIs for proposals which score a B are prevented from reapplying the following year, and PIs for proposals which score a C are prevented from reapplying for the following 2 years. This applies to Starting, Consolidator and Advanced, but not to Synergy.
UK Success Rate vs Average Success Rate

Success Rate for UK Frontier Grants

Source: ERC
UK Submissions vs Total Submissions

UK Submissions Against Total Submissions (StG+CoG+AdG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Evaluated Grants</th>
<th>Source: ERC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Non-UK Proposals Evaluated**
- **UK Proposals Evaluated**
UK Awards vs Total Awards

UK Awards Against Total Awards (StG+CoG+AdG)

# of Awarded Grants

Year

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

Source: ERC
Funded Projects by Domain

UK Awards by Domain

Year

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

Total Number of Grants

Life Sciences  Physical Sciences and Engineering  Social Sciences and Humanities

Source: ERC
ERC Consolidator Grants
Main Features
ERC Grant Schemes

**Starting Grant**
€1.5M (+ €1M additional)
Lasts up to 5 years

**Consolidator Grant**
€2M (+ €1M additional)
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**Advanced Grant**
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**Proof Of Concept Grant**
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Lasts for 1.5 years
Top-up grants for current ERC grantees
# ERC 2020 Calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Type</th>
<th>Starting Grant</th>
<th>Consolidator Grant</th>
<th>Advanced Grant</th>
<th>Proof of Concept</th>
<th>Synergy Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERC-2020-StG</td>
<td>ERC-2020-CoG</td>
<td>ERC-2020-AdG</td>
<td>ERC-2020-PoC</td>
<td>ERC-2020-SyG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call Opens</td>
<td>17/07/2019</td>
<td>24/10/2019</td>
<td>14/05/2020</td>
<td>15/10/2019</td>
<td>18/07/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>16/10/2019</td>
<td>04/02/2020</td>
<td>26/08/2020</td>
<td>21/01/2020</td>
<td>05/11/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned dates to inform applicants</td>
<td>20/05/2020 07/08/2020</td>
<td>17/07/2020 11/12/2020</td>
<td>25/01/2021 23/04/2021</td>
<td>02/05/2020 31/07/2020 18/12/2020</td>
<td>20/04/2020 17/08/2020 09/11/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget €M (grants)</td>
<td>677 (455)</td>
<td>657 (343)</td>
<td>492 (209)</td>
<td>25 (167)</td>
<td>350 (39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PI Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Type</th>
<th>Minimum % of Working Time on Grant</th>
<th>Minimum % of time in EU MS/AC*</th>
<th>Years since PhD Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidator</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no restrictions based on age, nationality, current location or current employment/contract status.

Must have an EU MS/AC institution willing to host them.

*Does include fieldwork/work on ERC project abroad*
Extending Eligibility

Starting and Consolidator Grant eligibility window can be extended for:

– Maternity leave (18 months per child or longer with documentation) before or after PhD award
– Paternity leave (actual amount of documented leave taken) before or after PhD award
– National service, after PhD award
– Long-term illness (over 90 days) of PI or a close family member (child, spouse, parent or sibling), after PhD award.
– Clinical training

Please see Work Programme for details (p 17)

No extensions for part time working, non-research careers, travel etc, unless linked to illness/maternity (but this is taken into account for evaluation of the PI’s track record).
Competitive Candidates for CoG

*Each candidate is evaluated on independent merit and there are no hard metrics that must be achieved.*

• Must have already demonstrated research independence and evidence of maturity

• For example, it is expected that applicants:
  – will have produced *several important publications as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor*
  – can demonstrate a promising track record of early achievements appropriate to their field and career stage, including:
    • Significant publications (as main author) in major international peer-reviewed major multidisciplinary scientific journals or in leading international peer-reviewed journals in their field
    • monographs, invited presentations, granted patents, awards, prizes, etc.
Integrating SSH into ERC: Common questions
Common Questions (1)

- Principle Investigator Excellence:
  - *What makes an excellent PI in SSH?*
    - No ‘one size fits all’ approach
    - Highlight achievements that support the specific tasks you are proposing
    - Evidence that your time commitment and skillset are sufficient to run the project

  - *I’m not sure I/my research is good enough – what should my CV and Track record look like?*
    - Compare like for like – subject area, career stage
    - What has previously been funded within your field? Look at the ERC website, find out about previous grantees
    - Ask colleagues, peers, research offices
    - Highlight how your track record and CV demonstrate creativity and researcher independence
Common Questions (2)

- **Novelty & Risk** :
  - *What does ‘high risk-high gain’ mean?*
    - If successful, the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a higher-than-normal risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims
    - Projects should be ambitious enough to be risky, but risks should always be necessary and well-mitigated
    - Think big! (but achievable)

- **Project Management** :
  - *Is ‘training the next generation of researchers’ valued and evaluated in ERC grants?*
    - Yes, to a certain extent but be careful with respect to teaching
    - Research takes precedence
Common Questions (3)

- **Scope:**
  - *Can desk research with a small team (perhaps only the PI and one other team member) be considered excellent?*
    - It is possible for one PI to manage and run a grant both on their own or with a very small team – it really depends on what the research requires. However, there are important caveats.
  
  - *Should projects seek to be interdisciplinary?*
    - Interdisciplinarity is often used as a source of novelty/ground-breaking research.

  - *Is a proposal which deals with ‘the topic of the day’ evaluated more favourably?*
    - No. Research can be focused on any area of interest provided it meets the evaluation criteria.
Research Project : General Tips

- What excites you about the research? Convey this in your application
- Explain how the research will open new horizons or opportunities
- Think about your audience - explain UK-specific terminology
- Provide a clear, concise work-plan, giving details of the intermediate goals
- Explain what each team member is doing (and their background/recruitment profile)
- 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?
  - Is every cost justified in relation to the research project (not teaching/training/etc.)?
Thank you, any questions?

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