



European Research Council

# ERC Grant Schemes Guide for Applicants

July 2009

The Guide is published by the ERC Scientific Council on <http://erc.europa.eu>

It can also be downloaded from the CORDIS page on <http://cordis.europa.eu>



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

FP7 Specific Programme  
IDEAS



## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

### **ERC Starting Grant**

Following the experience with previous calls, some adjustments and improvements have been introduced to this guide. Notably, changes were introduced with regard to i) the specific stage of the research career of the Principal Investigators (defined as "starters" or "consolidators"), ii) the information to be provided on ethical issues for any proposal and for proposals involving ethical issues (see Annex 2a and 2b), and iii) the application forms on the Electronic Proposal Submission Service EPSS. The changes are introduced and applicable for the 2010 call for ERC Starting Grant proposals and onwards (see part 2). As these adjustments have an impact on the proposal preparation and submission with EPSS, applicants are requested to consult the EPSS website and CORDIS call page for any further information.

Apart from that, minor changes have been introduced to increase the comprehensibility and readability of the guide.

An updated version of the Guide for Applicants may be published for the ERC Advanced Grant call 2010.

#### **List of corrections to the Guide for Applicants: July 2009 (revision 1.01)**

##### **CORRIGENDUM**

**Page 40:** Point 2.2 – Layout parameters - the margins of the Part B template should be 2 cm instead of 1.5 cm.

**Page 41:** Part B1 - Section 1 (a, b and c) – the last but one paragraph has been removed - no summary of the PIs Scientific Leadership Potential/Curriculum Vitae/Early achievements track-Record needs to be provided in the A1 form.

**Page 42:** Part B2 - Section 2 – Point c, last paragraph – the parenthesis "(see administrative forms at the end)" has been removed; these are not included in the Guide for Applicants.

## **Purpose of the Guide**

This guide provides practical information to potential applicants in preparing and submitting an application for an ERC grant. In addition, it provides a general overview on the ERC peer review evaluation process and presents the main features of the ERC grant agreement and the management of ERC grants.

For detailed information on the ERC peer review evaluation process, the ERC grant agreement and the management of ERC grants, the following documents are available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23> :

- Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers: This guide provides practical information to peer reviewers as well as detailed information on the peer review evaluation and project selection process.
- ERC Model Grant Agreement: The grant agreement, which will be concluded between the ERC and the Principal Investigator's host institution. A template for the "Supplementary Agreement" between the Principal Investigator and the host institution is available on the ERC website as well.
- Guide for ERC Grant Holders: This guide provides practical information to ERC grant holders, whether individual researchers or host institutions, on the administration and management of ERC grants, including monitoring and claiming of project costs, the scientific and financial reporting procedure, and the process for making changes to the project. It includes also information to applicants that have been offered an ERC grant on the process to prepare the grant agreement and the associated terms and conditions. It is divided into two parts: part 1 is relevant for both the Principal Investigator and his/her host institution, whereas part 2 is relevant mainly for the host institutions' administration.

The ERC Guide for Applicants is divided into four parts:

Part 1: General Principles (common for Starting and Advanced Grant)

Part 2: ERC Starting Grant

Part 3: ERC Advanced Grant

Part 4: Annexes

Potential applicants are invited to read the parts relevant to the call they are interested in (e.g. applicants to an ERC Starting Grant call should read parts 1, 2 and 4).

The Guide for Applicants may be further modified based on the experiences gained from preceding calls for proposals, on changes applied to the grant schemes and the submission processes. Updated versions of the Guide for Applicants may be published with the publication of the future calls for proposals.

The present guide is based on the legal documents setting the rules and conditions for the ERC grant schemes, in particular the ERC Work Programme, the ERC Rules for the submission of proposals and the related Evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme, and the ERC Model Grant Agreement. This guide does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding. Neither the European Commission nor any person or body acting on its behalf can be held responsible for the use made of the guide.

Note: As with other parts of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme, National Contact Points (ERC NCPs) have been set up across Europe<sup>1</sup> by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications. For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/ncp>.

---

<sup>1</sup> This applies to EU Member States and Associated countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>PART 1: ERC GRANT SCHEMES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1. THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1.1 THE ROLE OF THE ERC SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL .....	8
1.2 THE ERC EXECUTIVE AGENCY (ERCEA).....	8
<b>2. ERC GRANT SCHEMES</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 WHAT KINDS OF ERC GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE? .....	8
2.1.1 <i>ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant (ERC Starting Grant)</i> .....	8
2.1.2 <i>ERC Advanced Investigator Grant (ERC Advanced Grant)</i> .....	9
2.2 WHO CAN APPLY FOR AN ERC GRANT? .....	9
2.2.1 <i>The Principal Investigator (PI)</i> .....	9
2.2.2 <i>The host institution</i> .....	10
2.2.3 <i>Individual Team, Team Members, Co-Investigators</i> .....	11
2.3 WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH CAN BE FUNDED?.....	12
2.4 WHAT COSTS ARE COVERED BY AN ERC GRANT? .....	13
<b>3. APPLYING FOR AN ERC GRANT</b> .....	<b>15</b>
3.1 WHEN CAN I APPLY? .....	15
3.2 HOW CAN I SUBMIT AN ERC GRANT APPLICATION? .....	16
3.2.1 <i>EPSS registration</i> .....	16
3.2.2 <i>EPSS proposal submission</i> .....	17
3.2.3 <i>Reception</i> .....	18
3.2.4 <i>Modifying or withdrawing a proposal</i> .....	18
<b>4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF GRANT PROPOSALS</b> .....	<b>19</b>
4.1 ELIGIBILITY CHECK.....	19
4.2 GENERAL RE-APPLICATIONS AND MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS RULES .....	19
4.3 ERC PEER REVIEW EVALUATION .....	20
4.3.1 <i>What are the ERC evaluation panels?</i> .....	20
4.3.2 <i>How do the panels operate?</i> .....	20
4.3.3 <i>Ethical review</i> .....	21
4.3.4 <i>Feedback to applicants</i> .....	21
4.3.5 <i>Redress</i> .....	22
<b>5. MANAGING ERC GRANTS</b> .....	<b>23</b>
5.1 HOW IS A GRANT AGREEMENT PREPARED? .....	23
5.2 HOW MUCH FLEXIBILITY IS ALLOWED WITHIN AN ERC GRANT AGREEMENT?.....	23
5.2.1 <i>Change of scientific strategy and/or objectives</i> .....	23
5.2.2 <i>Grant portability</i> .....	24
5.3 HOW IS PROJECT PROGRESS REPORTED?.....	24
5.3.1 <i>Scientific reporting</i> .....	24
5.3.2 <i>Financial management reporting</i> .....	24
5.4 WHEN AND HOW ARE ERC GRANTS PAID? .....	24
<b>6. PUBLICATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS</b> .....	<b>25</b>
6.1 ACKNOWLEDGING ERC SUPPORT .....	25
6.2 DISSEMINATION, EXPLOITATION AND IPR.....	25
<b>7. FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>PART 2: ERC STARTING GRANT</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>1. ABOUT THE ERC STARTING GRANT FUNDING SCHEME</b> .....	<b>28</b>
1.1 WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF FUNDING OF THE ERC STARTING GRANTS? .....	28
1.2 WHO CAN APPLY FOR AN ERC STARTING GRANT? .....	28
1.3 WHO COULD BE A COMPETITIVE CANDIDATE FOR THE ERC STARTING GRANT? .....	29

1.4	CAREER STAGE: WILL I BE EVALUATED AS A "STARTER" OR "CONSOLIDATOR"?	30
1.5	CAN I APPLY TO FUND ANY TYPE OF RESEARCH?	31
1.6	IS MY PROPOSAL READY FOR EVALUATION?	31
1.7	WHERE CAN I RUN MY RESEARCH ACTIVITY THAT IS FUNDED BY ERC?	31
1.8	HOW MANY TIMES CAN I APPLY FOR AN ERC STARTING GRANT?	31
<b>2.</b>	<b>PREPARING AN ERC STARTING GRANT APPLICATION</b>	<b>32</b>
2.1	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING "PART A" OF THE PROPOSAL	32
2.2	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING "PART B" OF THE PROPOSAL	40
2.3	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	43
2.4	SUBMISSION VIA EPSS	43
	<b>CHECKLIST – IS YOUR PROPOSAL COMPLETE?</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>EVALUATION OF ERC STARTING GRANT PROPOSALS</b>	<b>44</b>
3.1	STEP 1	45
3.2	STEP 2	45
3.3	EVALUATION CRITERIA	46
3.4	APPLICATION OF CRITERIA	47
	<b>PART 3: ERC ADVANCED GRANT</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>ABOUT THE ERC ADVANCED GRANT FUNDING SCHEME</b>	<b>49</b>
1.1	WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF FUNDING OF THE ERC ADVANCED GRANTS?	49
1.2	WHO CAN APPLY FOR AN ERC ADVANCED GRANT?	50
1.3	WHO COULD BE A COMPETITIVE CANDIDATE FOR THE ERC ADVANCED GRANT?	50
1.4	CAN I APPLY TO FUND ANY TYPE OF RESEARCH?	51
1.5	IS MY PROPOSAL READY FOR EVALUATION?	51
1.6	WHERE CAN I RUN AN ERC-FUNDED RESEARCH ACTIVITY?	51
1.7	HOW MANY TIMES CAN I APPLY FOR AN ERC ADVANCED GRANT?	51
<b>2.</b>	<b>PREPARING AN ERC ADVANCED GRANT APPLICATION</b>	<b>52</b>
2.1	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING "PART A" OF THE PROPOSAL	52
2.2	INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING "PART B" OF THE PROPOSAL	54
2.3	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	54
2.4	SUBMISSION VIA EPSS	54
	<b>CHECKLIST – IS YOUR PROPOSAL COMPLETE?</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>EVALUATION OF ERC ADVANCED GRANT PROPOSALS</b>	<b>55</b>
3.1	STEP 1	55
3.2	STEP 2	56
3.3	EVALUATION CRITERIA	56
3.4	APPLICATION OF CRITERIA	58
	<b>PART 4: ANNEXES</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>ANNEX 1: ERC PEER REVIEW EVALUATION PANELS (ERC PANELS)</b>	<b>60</b>
	<i>Social Sciences and Humanities</i>	60
	<i>Mathematics, physical sciences, information and communication, engineering, universe and earth sciences</i>	62
	<i>Life Sciences</i>	66
	<b>ANNEX 2: ETHICAL ISSUES</b>	<b>69</b>
	<i>Annex 2a: Specific Information on Ethical Issues</i>	69
	<i>Annex 2b: Ethical Issues Table (template)</i>	71
	<b>ANNEX 3: COMMITMENT OF THE HOST INSTITUTION</b>	<b>73</b>
	<b>ANNEX 4: TIMETABLE AND SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR THE 2010 ERC CALLS</b>	<b>75</b>
	<i>Annex 4a: Starting Independent Researcher Grant Call for Proposals</i>	76
	<i>Annex 4b: Advanced Investigator Grant Call for Proposals</i>	81

## **PART 1: ERC grant schemes**

# **1. The European Research Council**

The European Research Council (ERC) is a newly-created European funding initiative, designed to support the best scientists, engineers and scholars in Europe.

The ERC's mandate is to encourage the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator-initiated frontier research across all fields of research, on the basis of scientific excellence.

Grants are awarded and managed according to simple procedures that maintain the focus on excellence, encourage creativity and combine flexibility with accountability.

The ERC, which is established by the European Commission and funded through the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme with a budget of € 7.51 bn for 7 years (FP7, 2007-2013), complements other funding schemes in Europe, such as those of research funding agencies operating at the national level and those within the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme.

The ERC consists of a Scientific Council and Executive Agency. It operates under conditions of autonomy and integrity, guaranteed by the European Commission, to which it is accountable.

## **1.1 The role of the ERC Scientific Council**

The Scientific Council establishes the overall scientific strategy of the ERC, including the annual Work Programme where the calls for proposals and the corresponding funding rules and selection criteria are defined.

The Scientific Council establishes and oversees the ERC's scientific management and the implementation of the Work Programme, including the peer review and project selection processes and the selection of peer reviewers.

## **1.2 The ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA)**

The ERCEA implements the FP7 Specific Programme IDEAS and manages ERC operations. It executes the annual Work Programme as established by the Scientific Council, implements calls for proposals and organises peer review evaluation in accordance with methodologies designed by the Scientific Council, and establishes and manages grant agreements. Additionally, it provides information and support to applicants and grant holders.

# **2. ERC grant schemes**

## **2.1 What kinds of ERC grants are available?**

Two types of ERC grants are available to support researchers in carrying out frontier research projects:

### **2.1.1 *ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant (ERC Starting Grant)***

The objective of the Starting Grant is to provide critical and adequate support to the independent careers of excellent researchers, whatever their nationality, located in or moving

to the EU Member States<sup>2</sup> and Associated Countries<sup>3</sup>, who are at the stage of starting or consolidating their own independent research team or, depending on the field, their independent research programme.

### 2.1.2 *ERC Advanced Investigator Grant (ERC Advanced Grant)*

The objective of the Advanced Grant is to encourage and support excellent, innovative investigator-initiated research projects by leading advanced investigators across the EU Member States<sup>2</sup> and Associated Countries<sup>3</sup>. This funding scheme complements the Starting Grant scheme by targeting the population of researchers who have already established themselves as being independent research leaders in their own right.

## 2.2 Who can apply for an ERC grant?

The guiding principles of the ERC grant schemes are highlighted in Box 1.

### **Box 1: Guiding principles of ERC grant schemes**

- Scientific excellence is the sole selection criterion
- Projects in all fields of research are eligible for funding
- Individual research teams led by a single PI are supported
- Significant funding is provided to attract the established and next generation of exceptional research leaders
- Grants are awarded to the host institution that engages the PI
- The host institution guarantees the PI's independence and provides the research environment to carry out the project and manage its funding

### 2.2.1 *The Principal Investigator (PI)*

ERC grants support projects which are carried out by individual **research teams<sup>4</sup> headed by a single Principal Investigator (PI)** of any nationality and, if necessary, include additional team members. These teams may be of national or trans-national character. With the focus on the PI, the concept of individual team is fundamentally different from that of a traditional 'network' or 'research consortium'; **proposals of the latter type will not be accepted.**

The PI does not necessarily need to be employed by the host institution at the time when the proposal is submitted.

If not already employed by the host institution, the PI must be engaged by the latter at least for the duration of the grant.

ERC-funded PIs are supposed to be strongly committed to the project and devote a significant amount of time to the project: in the case of the Starting Grant the ERC-funded project should represent the PI's main workload (at least 50% of their working time), whereas

---

<sup>2</sup> The EU Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> The Associated Countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Faroe Islands, FYR Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey.

<sup>4</sup> In certain fields (e.g. in the humanities and mathematics), research is often performed individually, aside from guiding research students. The term "team" is therefore used in the broadest sense. It includes cases where an individual works independently.

in the case of the Advanced Grant the Scientific Council would expect the PI to devote at least 30% of his/her workload to the ERC-funded project while spending at least 50% of his/her total workload in Europe (EU Member State<sup>2</sup> or Associated Country<sup>3</sup>).

### 2.2.2 The host institution

An ERC grant is awarded to the host institution (applicant legal entity) that engages and hosts the PI, with the attached **commitment that this host institution offers appropriate conditions for the PI to direct independently the research and manage its funding for the duration of the project**<sup>5</sup>. These conditions, including the '*portability*' of the project, are the subject of an agreement between the PI and the host institution (supplementary to the ERC Grant Agreement) and are described in the ERC Model Grant Agreement<sup>6</sup>.

It is a condition for all ERC funding that the host institution commits to the following **conditions of independence**<sup>7</sup>, ensuring that the PI may:

- **apply for funding independently**
- **manage the research and the funding for the project and make appropriate resource allocation decisions**
- **publish independently as senior author and invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work**
- **supervise team members, including research students, doctoral students or others**
- **have access to reasonable space and facilities for conducting the research**

The host institution can be any legal entity (public or private), which has the infrastructure and capacity to carry out a frontier research project, such as a university, a research organisation or a research-performing company. Research-performing companies can host a PI as long as the PI's independence is not constrained by the research strategy of the company.

The host institution must be situated in a Member State<sup>2</sup> of the European Union or in an Associated Country<sup>3</sup>. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation<sup>8</sup>.

In most cases, the PI's host institution is the only legal entity which participates in the project.

### **Registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED)**

To protect the EU's financial interests, the Commission uses an internal information tool, the Early Warning System (EWS) to flag identified risks related to beneficiaries of centrally managed contracts and grants. Through systematic registration of financial and other risks

---

<sup>5</sup> This does not exclude cases where the PI's employer is not the host institution. In these cases, the specific conditions of engagement will also be subject to clarification and approval during the granting procedure.

<sup>6</sup> Available on the ERC website at 'library'/practical info' or 'library'/legal framework' and published in the Official Journal of the EU on 16/04/2007, C (2007)1625)

<sup>7</sup> Note that the conditions of independence provided to the PI and his/her team are consistent with the 'The European Charter for Researchers' and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers', C(2005)576, 11.3.2005

<sup>8</sup> such as: CERN, EMBL, ESA, ESO, ESRF, ILL, JRC.

the EWS enables the Commission services to take the necessary precautionary measures to ensure a sound financial management<sup>9</sup>.

EWS registrations are not publicly disclosed. However, registrations will be transferred to the Central Exclusion Database (CED) if they relate to entities that have been excluded from EU funding because they are insolvent or have been convicted of a serious professional misconduct or criminal offense detrimental to EU financial interests. The data in CED are available to **all public authorities implementing EU funds**, i.e. European institutions, national agencies or authorities in Member States, and, subject to conditions for personal data protection, to third countries and international organisations.

The Work Programme informs you that the details of your organisation (or those of a person who has powers of representation, decision-making or control over it) may be registered in the EWS and the CED and be shared with public authorities as described in the relevant legal texts<sup>10</sup>.

More information on the EWS and CED can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/sound\\_fin\\_mgt/ews\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/sound_fin_mgt/ews_en.htm)

### *2.2.3 Individual Team, Team Members, Co-Investigators*

The constitution of the individual research team is flexible. Commonly, it involves other researchers - such as senior researchers, post docs, graduate students and PhD researchers - from the PI's research group or from the same institution as "**team members**". However, depending on the nature of a project the research team may also involve team members from other research institutions situated in the same or a different country. Therefore, research teams can be of national or trans-national character. Team members can be of any age, nationality and country of residence. Team members operate under the leadership of the PI, including those team members hosted by other institutions.

Institutions of team members may be located in any country, including non-European Third countries<sup>11</sup>. Their participation (and possible funding to support the work of the respective team members) is subject to appraisal by the ERC peer review evaluation panels, which assess whether their involvement is properly justified and essential in terms of scientific competence and capacities.

**Non-academic staff** may also be involved as constituents of an individual team, such as technicians, or secretarial support staff, but are not considered as team members.

As an **exception for ERC Advanced Grants applications** (see also Part 3), when an interdisciplinary proposal is grounded in the necessary combination of knowledge and skills from more than one discipline, a PI may identify members of his/her individual team, who are active in these disciplines, as "**co-investigators**". Co-investigators are team members who have specific complementary expertise in rather different scientific areas or disciplines than the PI. However, similar to the PI of an Advanced Grant application, its co-investigator(s) are expected to be active researchers with an outstanding track record of significant research

---

<sup>9</sup> The EWS covers situations such as significantly overdue recovery orders, judicial proceedings pending for serious administrative errors/fraud, findings of serious administrative errors/fraud, legal situations which exclude the beneficiary from funding.

<sup>10</sup> The basis of registrations in EWS and CED is laid out in:  
- the Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125),  
and  
- the Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12).

<sup>11</sup> Third countries are neither EU Member States nor Associated countries.

achievements in the last 10 years. Co-investigators enable the realisation of unconventional methodological approaches beyond established disciplinary areas.

To further promote and support such interdisciplinary research proposals, the ERC introduced the option to propose larger projects: PIs of such “co-investigator projects” may request larger ERC grants for their interdisciplinary project proposal. The host institution of a co-investigator must be located in an EU Member State<sup>2</sup> or an Associated Country<sup>3</sup>.

The peer review evaluation panel will carefully assess the interdisciplinary nature of a proposed co-investigator project and the scientific added value and expertise of any co-investigator to the project; in particular the participation of any additional institution (legal entity) will only be permitted if it is clearly necessary from the scientific perspective.

## **2.3 What kind of research can be funded?**

ERC grants aim to support "Frontier Research", in other words the pursuit of questions at or beyond the frontiers of knowledge, without regard for established disciplinary boundaries. Applications can be made in any field of research - including the social sciences and humanities - with particular emphasis on the frontier of science, scholarship and engineering. In particular, proposals of an interdisciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research or proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions are encouraged, as long as the expected impact on science, scholarship or engineering is significant.

The ERC peer review evaluation panels will look carefully at these aspects, in the full understanding that such research has a high-gain/high-risk profile, i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a higher-than-normal risk that such research projects may not achieve their objectives.

## Box 2: Dealing with ethical issues

Applicants should indicate whether the proposed research raises sensitive ethical questions such as research involving human beings, human biological samples, personal data, genetic information or animals.

Research supported by an ERC grant must respect fundamental ethical principles. Fundamental ethical principles which must be respected include those reflected in the Charter\* of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. These principles include the need to ensure the freedom of research and the need to protect the physical and moral integrity of individuals and the welfare of animals. The opinions of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)\*\* are and will be taken into account. Furthermore, due account should be taken of the Protocol\*\*\* on the Protection and Welfare of Animals, to reduce the use of animals in research and testing (with a view to ultimately replacing animal use), to involve animals with the lowest degree of neuropsychological sensitivity, and to cause the least pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

The following activities cannot be funded:

- research activities aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes;
- research activities intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable;
- research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

As regards human embryonic stem cell research, the ERC is bound by the European Commission's commitment to follow the practice of the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme (see OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42) and exclude from financial support any research activities destroying human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent ERC funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Applicants must ensure that the research proposed respects all national rules and procedures of the relevant country where the proposed research is conducted. Where necessary, approval must be sought from the relevant national or local ethics committee prior to the start of the project.

\* see [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default_en.htm)

\*\* see [http://ec.europa.eu/european\\_group\\_ethics/activities/docs/opinion\\_22\\_final\\_follow\\_up\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/european_group_ethics/activities/docs/opinion_22_final_follow_up_en.pdf)

\*\*\* see [http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/references\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/references_en.htm)

In essence, ERC-supported research should aim to broaden scientific and technological knowledge. As such, projects should not be linked to commercial objectives.

Some frontier research activities and methodologies may have ethical implications or may raise questions which will require sound ethical assessment (see Box 2 and Annexes 2a and 2b). This may result in proposals not being accepted or being accepted only under certain conditions.

## 2.4 What costs are covered by an ERC grant?

An ERC grant can cover **up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution up to 20% of the total eligible costs** (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the host institution) towards indirect costs. The costs which can be covered by an ERC grant are described in Box 3.

### **Box 3: Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs**

**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 Costs;
- Equipment Costs;
- Consumables;
- Travel and Subsistence Costs
- Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results).

**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 PC's, laptops, office software;
- Miscellaneous recurring consumables.

**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 Community project;
- Costs related to return on capital;
- Debt and debt service charges;
- Excessive or reckless expenditure;

can not be reimbursed through the ERC grant.

Normally, an ERC grant covers all eligible costs of a project. However, it is possible, that specific cost items are covered partially or in full by the host institution or by third party funding.

**Project costs covered by third parties** are allowed but **need to be declared** and will be deducted from the total of eligible costs covered by the ERC grant. Nevertheless, ERC grants are expected to be significant and cover a major part of the project and its costs. Thus, ERC funding is **neither aiming at topping up the funding of running projects, nor providing a means for co-funding.**

The actual project costs claimed should be presented in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.

### 3. Applying for an ERC grant

An ERC grant application should be submitted by a single PI in conjunction with and on behalf of her/his host institution (the "applicant legal entity").<sup>12</sup>

Grant applications are assessed by peer review evaluation panels (ERC panels), which may be supported by additional remote reviewers. These ERC panels assess and score the proposals on the basis of the individual evaluations.

Depending on the call budget available a budgetary cut-off applies to the ranking list and only the highest ranked proposals are offered an ERC grant until the call budget is consumed.

#### 3.1 When can I apply?

ERC grant applications can be submitted only in response to a "call for proposals". Calls are published on the ERC website<sup>13</sup>, the CORDIS website<sup>14</sup> and in the Official Journal of the European Union<sup>15</sup>.

Deadlines for the submission of ERC grant applications are specified in each "call for proposals".

The ERC envisages to publish annual calls for proposals for both the ERC Starting Grant and ERC Advanced Grant scheme<sup>16</sup>. The provisional timing of these calls for proposals is indicated in the table below. It is expected that the call budgets will be gradually increased each year.

#### ERC Starting Grant Calls Provisional Schedule 2009 - 2011

	Call open	Call Deadline	Evaluation
ERC-2010-StG	Summer 09	Autumn 09	Winter 09 - Spring 10
ERC-2011-StG	Summer 10	Autumn 10	Winter 10 - Spring 11

#### ERC Advanced Grant Calls Provisional Schedule 2009 - 2011

	Call open	Call Deadline	Evaluation
ERC-2010-AdG	Autumn 09	Spring 10	Spring 10 - Autumn 10
ERC-2011-AdG	Autumn 10	Spring 11	Spring 11 - Autumn 11

The ERC calls that are announced in the ERC Work Programme 2010 have the following publication dates and deadlines:

The publication date foreseen for the next Call for Starting Grant proposals (ERC-2010-StG) is **30 July 2009** and the deadlines are:

---

<sup>12</sup> Exceptionally, the PI may himself/herself act as the "applicant legal entity", if he/she is acting in the capacity of the legal entity in his/her own right.

<sup>13</sup> <http://erc.europa.eu/>

<sup>14</sup> [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html)

<sup>15</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en>

<sup>16</sup> The budget breakdown for ERC calls that will be funded by the annual budgets of 2012 and 2013 (ca €3.2 bn) will be established at a later stage by the ERC Scientific Council.

- **Panels: PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering)**, 28 October 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences)**, 18 November 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities)**, 9 December 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

The publication date foreseen for the next call for Advanced Grant proposals (ERC-2010-AdG) is **29 October 2009** and the deadlines are:

- **Panels: PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering)**, 24 February 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences)**, 17 March 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities)**, 7 April 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

## 3.2 How can I submit an ERC grant application?

The key features of the ERC Grant application procedure are highlighted in Box 4.

### Box 4: Key features of the ERC grant application procedure

- Applications should be submitted by a single PI in conjunction with and on behalf of her/his host institution
- Proposal formats and page numbers are strictly limited
- Submission is accepted only via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service EPSS
- Strict rules apply for re-applications and multiple applications

### 3.2.1 *EPSS registration*

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS).<sup>17</sup>

PIs need first to register their intention to submit a proposal via the web-based EPSS (the Electronic Proposal Submission Service) in order to receive a login name and password and thus to get access to EPSS for preparing, uploading and submitting a proposal. This should be done as early as possible before the call deadline for the submission of proposals.

EPSS can be accessed via the ERC website<sup>18</sup> and the call page on CORDIS<sup>19</sup>, or directly at <https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/welcome.jsp>. Full instructions will be found in the “EPSS preparation and submission guide” at <https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/EPSS-Userguide.pdf>.

**Please consult the CORDIS call page<sup>19</sup> regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail [support@epss-fp7.org](mailto:support@epss-fp7.org), or by phone +32 2233 3760.**

<sup>17</sup> In exceptional cases, when an applicant has absolutely no means of accessing the EPSS, and when it is impossible to arrange to do so, an applicant may request permission from the ERC to submit on paper. Such a request, which must clearly explain the circumstances of the case, must be received by the ERC no later than one month before the call deadline, at the following address: European Commission, European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)/ Unit B, COV2 21/127, 1049 Brussels, Belgium. The ERC will reply to such a request within five working days of receipt. If derogation is granted, the ERC will send proposal forms for paper submission to the applicant concerned.

<sup>18</sup> <http://erc.europa.eu/callforproposals>

<sup>19</sup> <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls>

### 3.2.2 EPSS proposal submission

Following registration and agreement to the conditions of use of EPSS (see above 3.2.1), the application can be prepared, uploaded and submitted via EPSS. Further information on the preparation of the application (A and B forms) is given in Part 2 (Starting Grant) and Part 3 (Advanced Grant) of this guide.

**Completing the Part A forms in the EPSS and uploading a Part B does not yet mean that your proposal is submitted.** Once there is a consolidated version of the proposal, you must press the button "SUBMIT NOW". (If you don't see the button "SUBMIT NOW", first select the "SUBMIT" tag at the top of the screen). **Please note that "SUBMIT NOW" starts the final steps for submission; it does not in itself cause the proposal to be submitted.**

After reading the information page that then appears, it is possible to submit the proposal using the button marked "*Press this button to submit the proposal*".

The EPSS then performs an automatic validation of the proposal. A list of any problems ("validation error message") such as missing data, viruses, wrong file format or excessive file size will then appear on the screen. **Submission is blocked until these problems are corrected.** Once corrected, the applicant must then repeat the above steps to achieve submission.

If successfully submitted, the applicant receives a message that indicates that the proposal has been received. This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt (see below 3.2.3).

The applicant may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up until the deadline. The sequence above must be repeated each time (see also below 3.2.4).

If the submission sequence described above is not followed, the ERC considers that no proposal has been submitted.

The research proposal and attached supporting documentation must exclusively use PDF ("Portable Document Format", compatible with Adobe version 3 or higher, with embedded fonts).<sup>20</sup> Other file formats will not be accepted by the system. Unless specified in the call, embedded material and any other documents (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video, multimedia, etc.) sent electronically or by post, will be disregarded. However, panel members and/or referees are free to access relevant web pages in order to further assess the applicants' previous work (including openly accessible published manuscripts of the applicant).

Proposals must be **submitted before the deadline** specified in the call for proposals.<sup>21</sup>

EPSS will be closed for a relevant call at its call deadline. After this moment, it will be impossible to access EPSS for the relevant call.

---

<sup>20</sup> Irrespective of the page limits specified above, there is an overall limit of 10 MB to the size of the PDF proposal file. There are also restrictions to the file name you give to the PDF proposal - use alphanumeric characters only. Special characters and spaces must be avoided.

<sup>21</sup> In the unlikely event of a failure of the EPSS service due to a breakdown of the ERC server during the last 24 hours of a call, the deadline will be extended by a further 24 hours. This will be notified by e-mail to all applicants who had registered in EPSS for this call, and also by a notice on the call page on the ERC website<sup>18</sup> and CORDIS<sup>19</sup> as well as on the website of EPSS. Such a failure is a rare and exceptional event. Therefore, it should not be assumed that there will be such an extension of a call. If an applicant encounters difficulties in submitting a proposal, it should not be assumed that it is because of a problem with the ERC server. In most cases, other bottlenecks on the "data highways" may occur and slow down or block the uploading of your proposal on the ERC server. For technical inquiries on the use of EPSS, please contact the EPSS helpdesk (see Part 1 Section 7 of this guide).

Please note that the ERC will not extend deadlines for system failures that are not its own responsibility. In all circumstances, you should aim to submit your proposal well before the deadline to have time to solve any problems.

**Applicants, who wait until too near to the close of the call to start uploading their proposal, take a serious risk that the uploading is not concluded in time and thus the 'SUBMIT NOW' button is not active anymore in order to conclude the submission process.**

**Box 5: Proposal submission - important to know**

- Proposals cannot be submitted without prior registration, which is required to obtain an EPSS login name and password
- Proposals sent by means other than EPSS will not be accepted.
- Only the material that the proposal contains within the given page limits while respecting the indicated layout parameters will be evaluated.
- Submission is deemed to occur only if the submission sequence described in section 3.2.2 has been followed. It is not the point at which the applicant starts uploading the proposal.
- Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. So long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.
- Proposals are kept under secure conditions at all times. When no longer needed, all copies are destroyed except those required for archiving and/or auditing purposes.

### 3.2.3 Reception

If the submission is technically successful, the applicant receives an automatic computer-generated acknowledgement from EPSS. Acknowledgement of receipt is subsequently provided by e-mail after the call deadline.

Subsequent to submission, the ERC may contact the PI if this is necessary to clarify questions of eligibility or to verify administrative or legal data contained in the proposal.

### 3.2.4 Modifying or withdrawing a proposal

Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. So long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.

Once the deadline has passed, however, the ERC cannot accept any further additions, corrections or re-submissions. The last eligible version of your proposal received before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated, and no later material can be submitted.

Proposals may be withdrawn before the call deadline by submitting a revised version of the administrative form A, with the following words entered into the abstract field:

*"The applicant wishes to withdraw this proposal. It should not be evaluated by the ERC".*

**After the call deadline**, a proposal may be withdrawn only by sending a signed letter to: European Commission, European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)/ Unit B, COV2 21/127, BE-1049 Brussels, Belgium

## 4. Evaluation and selection of grant proposals<sup>22</sup>

### 4.1 Eligibility check

A proposal must fulfil all of the following eligibility criteria:

- It must be submitted to an appropriate ERC panel (i.e. a panel, which is covering the main scientific areas of the research proposal, see section 4.3.1 and Annex 1).
- It must be submitted before the deadline of the appropriate primary panel/domain. In case of the PI indicating 2 panels, the proposal must be submitted before the deadline of the primary panel (see section 4.3.2).
- It must be complete (i.e. all of the requested forms, proposal components, and supporting documents must be completed or present).
- Its content must relate to the ERC grant scheme which is subject of the call for proposals.
- It must meet the eligibility requirements of the respective ERC grant scheme as well as other criteria mentioned in the relevant call for proposals (see Part 2 for the ERC Starting Grant and Part 3 for the ERC Advanced Grant).

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee.

The eligibility is checked on the basis of the information given by the PI in the proposal. If at a later stage, an eligibility criterion is found not to be fulfilled (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will be immediately rejected.

### 4.2 General re-applications and multiple applications rules

The current general rules, which may subsequently be modified by the ERC Scientific Council in light of experience, are as follows:

- Only one ERC grant managed by a PI (and/or a co-investigator in an Advanced Grant) can be active at any time.
- No PI (and/or a co-investigator in an Advanced Grant) may be associated with more than one application to the ERC during the same year.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** these rules must be taken very seriously into account by the potential applicants. Any violation of these rules during the submission of a proposal will be brought to the attention of the ERC eligibility committee which will assess and decide on the eligibility of the proposal<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> The Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers provides detailed information on ERC peer review evaluation and project selection processes. See ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>

<sup>23</sup> Please refer to the specific sections on resubmission rules for the Starting Grant (See Part 2, Section 1.8 of this Guide) and the Advanced Grant (See Part 3, Section 1.7 of this Guide)

## 4.3 ERC peer review evaluation

### 4.3.1 *What are the ERC evaluation panels?*

The peer review evaluation of ERC Grant proposals is in the hand of panels (ERC panels), covering all fields of science, engineering and scholarship. There are two separate sets of ERC panels, one for the ERC Starting Grant and one for the ERC Advanced Grant<sup>24</sup>.

Both sets involve 25 individual ERC panels, which for operational reasons are subdivided into three main research domains:

§	<b>Life Sciences</b>	<b>9 Panels</b>
§	<b>Social Sciences and Humanities</b>	<b>6 Panels</b>
§	<b>Physical Sciences and Engineering</b>	<b>10 Panels</b>

Details on the structure of the ERC panels are provided in Annex 1. The panel chair and members have been selected by the ERC Scientific Council on the basis of their scientific reputation. Before the deadline of a call, the names of the panel chairs selected by the ERC Scientific Council are published on the ERC website. Similarly, the names of panel members are published, however, after the evaluation process is concluded.

Furthermore, the ERC Scientific Council decided for operational reasons to pre-allocate the budget available for a call for proposals according to the following indicative percentages for each of the three main research domains:

§	<b>Physical Sciences &amp; Engineering:</b>	<b>39%</b>
§	<b>Life Sciences:</b>	<b>34%</b>
§	<b>Social Sciences &amp; Humanities:</b>	<b>14%</b>

and to allocate an indicative budget of **13%** to an **Interdisciplinary**<sup>25</sup> domain.

The goal of the ERC is to mainstream interdisciplinary proposals during the evaluation. Additional funding (via the interdisciplinary domain) is provided to facilitate funding of interdisciplinary, high risk innovative proposals.

### 4.3.2 *How do the panels operate?*

It is the PI's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant ERC panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research (administrative form A1, see Part 2 or 3), and indicate one or more panel descriptors (i.e. research fields involved, see Annex 1). The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals the PI may indicate a secondary evaluation panel. The primary panel will then decide whether the proposal is interdisciplinary (cross-panel or even cross-domain) and if its evaluation requires expertise from other panels.

---

<sup>24</sup> For Advanced Grants, there are two sub-sets of panels (Panel A and panel B alternating each call)

<sup>25</sup> Including cross-panel and/or cross-domain research projects.

**Box 6: Composition of ERC Panels**

- Each Panel consists of one Panel Chair and 10-15 Panel Members.
- The Panel Chair and Members are selected by the ERC Scientific Council.
- The Panel Chair manages and ensures the quality of the evaluation process for the proposals assigned to his/her Panel.
- The Panels work on the basis of common "Rules of Procedure", which are defined by the ERC Scientific Council (see Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers<sup>22</sup>).

Panels may be assisted by additional reviewers. As renowned specialists in particular research domains, these additional reviewers act as referees to provide individual assessments on a proposal-by-proposal basis. Referees work remotely and deliver their individual reviews by electronic means. The names of the referees will be published on the ERC website after the evaluation process is concluded.

The assignment of proposals to panel members and referees will be made by the panel chairs on the basis of the panel descriptors indicated by the PI in the proposal (administrative form A1). Individual reviews are carried out prior to panel meetings. The ERC ensures that each proposal is assessed by at least three reviewers.

Based on the individual reviews, the panels will meet to discuss and assess the proposals, based on the evaluation criteria of the relevant ERC grant scheme, arbitrate controversial opinions in individual reviews, calibrate final marks and establish a ranking list of those proposals meeting the quality threshold. In case of interdisciplinary proposals the panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional reviewers.

ERC Grant proposals are evaluated on the basis of scientific excellence as sole criterion, which is examined on three distinct key aspects of the research proposal:

§ **The PI**

§ **The research project**

In addition, the panels consider (as a pass/fail criterion):

§ **The research environment**

For more information the potential applicant is invited to consult the ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers<sup>22</sup> relevant to the grant scheme.

#### ***4.3.3 Ethical review***

The ERC peer review evaluation procedure includes a check of ethical issues raised by the proposals. After the peer review evaluation and before any funding decision by the ERC is taken, an ethical review of proposals involving sensitive ethical issues may take place. The objective of this ethical review is to make sure that the ERC does not support research which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles (see Box 2 and Annex 2a and 2b).

#### ***4.3.4 Feedback to applicants***

Applicants are provided with feedback on the outcome of the peer review evaluation in the form of an evaluation report.

This indicates whether the proposal meets the quality threshold and is retained, and provides the score and corresponding comments given by the panel as well as (where applicable) the comments given by the individual reviewers.

Please note that the comments by the individual reviewers may not necessarily be convergent – controversy and differences in opinion about the merits of a proposal are part of the "scientific method" and are legitimate.

Furthermore, the ERC panel may take a position that is different from what could be inferred from the comments of the individual reviewers. This is the case for example, if the panel discussion reveals an important weakness in a proposal that had not been identified by the individual reviewers.

#### 4.3.5 Redress

Upon reception of the initial information letter with the evaluation report or with the results of the eligibility check, the PI and/or the PI's host institution (applicant legal entity) may wish to introduce a request for redress, if there is an indication that there has been a shortcoming in the way a proposal has been evaluated, or that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect.

Such requests for redress should be raised within one month of the date of the initial information letter sent by the ERC Executive Agency, and should be introduced via the web-based mailing system at [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/redress\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/redress_en.html).

Requests must be:

- related to the peer review evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the call and funding scheme in question;
- set out using the online form via the above-mentioned web-based mailing system, including a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
- received within the time limit specified on the information letter;
- sent by the PI and/or the PI's host institution.

An initial reply will be sent to complainants no later than three weeks after the deadline for redress requests. This initial reply will indicate when a definitive reply will be provided.

A redress committee of the ERC Executive Agency may be convened to examine the peer review evaluation process for the case in question. The redress committee will bring together staff with the requisite scientific/technical and legal expertise. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and equal treatment of applicants. The redress committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report, the individual comments and examine the CVs of the experts. In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action to the ERC Executive Agency. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated. Unless there is clear evidence of a shortcoming there will be no follow-up or re-evaluation.

Please note:

- This procedure is concerned with the peer review evaluation and/or eligibility checking process.
- The **committee will not call into question the scientific judgment** of the individual peer reviewers, who are appropriately qualified experts.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on the other criteria.

- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.
- Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee.
- All requests for redress will be treated in confidence.

## **5. Managing ERC grants**<sup>26</sup>

### **5.1 How is a grant agreement prepared?**

The ERC Executive Agency prepares grant agreements for projects on the basis of the proposal and the recommendations of the ERC panel (see section 4.3). The grant preparation involves no negotiation of scientific/technical substance. Applicant legal entities and PIs are expected to provide, if requested, further information on the project and its envisaged management in view of the rules applicable to ERC grants and if needed on the legal and financial capacity of the legal applicant entity.

If the conditions are accepted, the ERC Executive Agency prepares the draft grant agreement: the template of the grant agreement and its annexes can be found at the following link:

<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=129>.

Additionally to the standard text of the grant agreement the host institution and the PI shall conclude a 'Supplementary Agreement' to ensure the minimum requirements for the project implementation, such as the host institution's commitment to grant the PI the requisite basic support and the independence to manage the research funding for the duration of the project, amongst others. Any provisions of the supplementary agreement<sup>27</sup> which are not in accordance with the ERC grant agreement shall be deemed to be void for the purposes of the ERC grant agreement.

The start of the project normally takes place the month following conclusion of the grant agreement. Due to the ground-breaking nature of frontier research projects, it is expected that all projects start within 6 months from the award of the grant. ERC reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

### **5.2 How much flexibility is allowed within an ERC grant agreement?**

#### ***5.2.1 Change of scientific strategy and/or objectives***

The PI is expected to carry out the project as described in the grant agreement, however, it is possible to adjust the scientific strategy and allocate expenditure (e.g. regarding staff, equipment, consumables) accordingly, provided the research performed is still in line with the original scientific or scholarly objectives.

---

<sup>26</sup> Detailed information and documentation, including the template structures and forms for financial and scientific reporting are provided in the *Guide for ERC Grant Holders* available at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>.

<sup>27</sup> See template with minimum requirements available at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>.

### 5.2.2 Grant portability

It is expected that the PI establishes and concludes the funded research project in association with the original host institution (applicant legal entity). However, the ERC grant scheme allows PIs having received a frontier research grant to transfer their projects from one host to another in the course of the project. The PI should then present the reasons<sup>28</sup> for wishing to move to another institution. In many cases, in order to facilitate mobility of researchers, when there is a common agreement between the PI and the original and the new host institutions, such a request will be dealt with by the ERC Executive Agency in a straightforward manner.<sup>29,30</sup>

The original host institution is expected to transfer funds other than those that have already been consumed or irretrievably committed to resources required for the project (on personnel, consumables, etc). It is expected to take all reasonable steps to transfer equipment and other purchases made for the benefit of the project, such that the aims of the project can be secured.<sup>31</sup>

If more than one beneficiary is involved in the project, only that part of the grant that is assigned to the host institution of the PI is transferable (unless otherwise agreed with the other beneficiaries).

## 5.3 How is project progress reported?

Project reporting is carried out in two streams: scientific reporting (for which PIs are responsible) and financial management reporting including use of resources (for which the host institution is responsible).

### 5.3.1 Scientific reporting

PIs are required to send scientific reports to the ERC Executive Agency (mid-term and at the end of the project). These reports inform the ERC on progress and achievements of the project. Specific outputs from the project should be included (e.g. publications).

The scientific reports may be subject to review by a pertinent scientific review panel convened by the ERC, which may also involve site visits. The review panel will make recommendations as to the future course of the project.

### 5.3.2 Financial management reporting

The host institution is required to send periodic financial management reports (normally every 18 months) justifying the use of any expenditure. Declarations of costs exceeding a cumulative total of €375 000 must be accompanied by a certificate on financial statements. Where the project involves more than one legal entity, the host institution must provide a consolidated cost claim.

## 5.4 When and how are ERC grants paid?

Grants are paid in several instalments: an advance payment (as pre-financing) is made within a maximum of 45 days of the date of entry into force of the ERC grant agreement.

---

<sup>28</sup> This may, for example be necessary if the provisions for the PI's leadership of the research have not been respected

<sup>29</sup> However, in some cases, only after a careful analysis of the request by the ERC Executive Agency, which may involve a review of the project, will the PI be entitled to request transfer of the remainder of the grant to the new host institution.

<sup>30</sup> This would not normally be done within the first two years of the start of the project.

<sup>31</sup> In some countries, equipment is formally owned by the State and the consent of the host institution alone may not be sufficient.

Interim payments are made on the basis of actual expenditures accepted for each financial management reporting period (see section 5.4.2).

The total amount of the pre-financing and the interim payments paid out to the beneficiary shall not exceed 85% of the maximum amount of the financial contribution attributed to the project.

A final payment is made corresponding to the last financial management reporting period plus any adjustment needed.

## **6. Publication and exploitation of results**

### **6.1 Acknowledging ERC support**

Whenever achievements resulting from ERC-funded research are published (such as in journals, patents, presentations, etc.) the PI should highlight the ERC's financial support under the Seventh Framework Programme.

This may imply a written acknowledgment and/or the application of the ERC logo and the European emblem:

*"The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC Grant agreement n° [xxxxxx]"*

For downloading the image files of the ERC logo and the European emblem, please consult <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=128>.

### **6.2 Dissemination, exploitation and IPR**

A strategy to disseminate and exploit project results should be developed, with due regard to applicable local and national regulations and the rules regarding Intellectual Property Rights described in detail in the ERC grant agreement.

The ERC may publish information on projects which it supports financially. This could include the name of the PI and host institution, the project's objectives, the amount of funding awarded, and the location of the project and the project reports. However, in clearly justified cases, the host institution may request that the ERC does not make this information public.

## **7. Further information and support**

General information and key documents are available on the **ERC website** at <http://erc.europa.eu> and on CORDIS at <http://cordis.europa.eu>. The ERC website also includes 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

As with other parts of the Seventh Framework Programme, **National Contact Points (ERC NCPs)** have been set up across Europe<sup>32</sup> by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the

---

<sup>32</sup> This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications.<sup>33</sup>

For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/ncp>.

Technical questions related to the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS) should be directed to the **EPSS Helpdesk** by e-mail [support@epss-fp7.org](mailto:support@epss-fp7.org), by phone +32-2-233 3760 or via its [webportal](#)<sup>34</sup> on CORDIS.

A general **ERC Helpdesk** is also available and accessible via the Europe Direct Contact Centre at <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries>

**Information events** (seminars, conferences, exhibitions) on the ERC or with participation of ERC speakers are published on the ERC website.

---

<sup>33</sup> Note: The ERC will provide the coordinating NCP organisations with information and statistics on the outcome of calls and the evaluation of each proposal. This information is given under strict conditions of confidentiality and allows NCP organisations to customize their service.

<sup>34</sup> <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7SubmitProposalPage>

## **PART 2: ERC Starting Grant**

# **1. About the ERC Starting Grant funding Scheme**

ERC Starting Grants are designed to support researchers (Principal Investigators) at the stage at which they are starting or consolidating their own independent research team or, depending on the field, establishing their independent research programme. The scheme will support the creation of independent and excellent new individual research teams and will strengthen others that have been recently created.

Applicants will be assessed in two streams, those starting their transition to independence (so called "starters") or those applying to consolidate their own independent team/activity (so called "consolidators". Applicants will be required to present and explain their situation (career stage) in the proposal. The evaluation panels will then assess the proposals taking into account the stage of the career (see section 1.4 of this Guide : Career Stage: Will I be evaluated as a "starter" or "consolidator"? for more details).

The peer review evaluation panels will be empowered to conclude whether the grant and the conditions specified by the host institution will allow the PI to make or consolidate the transition to independence.

## **1.1 What is the level of funding of the ERC Starting Grants?**

Depending on the specific project and field, the level of ERC Starting Grants may be up to EUR 2 000 000 for a period of 5 years<sup>35</sup> (pro rata for projects of shorter duration). Normally, the level of the grant is expected to be limited to a maximum of around EUR 1 500 000. However, an additional EUR 500 000 may be applied for if the application involves the establishment of a new research activity in the EU or the associated countries by a Principal Investigator who is moving there from a third country.

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution of up to 20% towards indirect costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary). Please note that the above mentioned limits include these indirect costs.

The overall level of the grant offered will be determined by the peer review evaluation panels, on the basis of the needs of the project, judged by the panel against the requested grant to the budget. In all cases, the panels will review the requested grant and recommend the total amount to be granted, using rounded figures. The panels may also suggest a modification to the indicative budgetary breakdown in the application but the PI has the freedom to re-budget during the course of the project.

## **1.2 Who can apply for an ERC Starting Grant?**

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to establish and conduct their research activity in any EU Member State or Associated Country<sup>36</sup>.

The PI may be of any age and nationality and may reside in any country in the world at the time of the application.

---

<sup>35</sup> The level of the grant represents a maximum overall figure - payments must be justified on the basis of the amounts actually disbursed for the project.

<sup>36</sup> See footnotes 2 & 3 (page 9) of this Guide

With the support of the host institution, successful PI's (Starting Grantees) will be expected to lead their individual teams and be fully engaged in the running of the ERC grant which will enable them to establish or consolidate their independent research activity.

Peer reviewers will therefore assess during evaluation whether PIs who have already been entrusted to lead important research teams/activities during the next few years and have already committed for this period significant time and effort will be able to simultaneously manage the significant ERC funding.

For more information, see Part 1, Section 2 of this Guide.

#### **Box 7: ERC Starting Grant - Eligible Principal Investigator (PI)**

The PI must have been awarded his/her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree) at least 2 and up to 10 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant.

Extensions to this period may be allowed in case of eligible career breaks which must be properly documented. Eligible career breaks are: maternity leave (18 months per child born before or after the PhD award upon submission of birth certificate), paternity leave (with proof of accumulation of actual time off for children born before or after the PhD award), and leave taken for long-term illness or national service. Leave taken for unavoidable statutory reasons (e.g. clinical qualifications) may also count as an extension.

No allowance will be made for part-time working (2 years of half-time working count as 2 full-time years).

The cumulative eligibility period should not in any case surpass 14.5 years following the award of the first PhD.

**Note1:** The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be the date of the actual award according to the national rules in the country that the degree was awarded

**Note2:** See also the statement of the ERC Scientific Council on **ERC Policy on PhD and equivalent degrees** at: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=24>

### **1.3 Who could be a competitive candidate for the ERC Starting Grant?**

A competitive PI is expected to have already shown the potential for research independence and evidence of maturity including producing independently **at least one important publication without the participation of their PhD supervisor**. Applicants should also be able to demonstrate a promising track-record of early achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage, including **significant publications (as main author)** in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals, or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field. They may also refer monographs or demonstrate a record of invited presentations in well-established international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes etc.

Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their track-record and leadership potential against the above-mentioned benchmarks that have been adopted by the Scientific Council, in order to decide for themselves their likelihood for success, thus reducing unnecessary loss of time and effort on applications that are very unlikely to succeed.

The evaluation panels will assess the applicants taking into account the specific stage of the research career they are at the time of the application.

## 1.4 Career Stage: Will I be evaluated as a "starter" or "consolidator"?

There is no distinction in the application forms between "starters" and "consolidators". Principal Investigators will be sub-divided during the evaluation into two main streams (see Annex II of the ERC Work Programme 2010).

Principal Investigators will be assessed by the evaluation panels as being "starters" (award of PhD from 2 to 6 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication) or "consolidators" (award of PhD over 6 and up to 10 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication) taking into account the specific stage of their research career at the time of the application.

In order to assure comparable success rates for the broadly called "starters" and for the "consolidators" the indicative budget of each panel will be divided in proportion to the budgetary demand of the proposals submitted by these two categories ("starters" and "consolidators").

- **Can an applicant more than six years past the Ph.D. still be assessed as a "starter"?**

The same situations and conditions that allow an extension to the overall eligibility window (i.e. past the 10 year limit) will be applied to an extension of the six year limit for the distinction between starters and consolidators (see Box 7 above), with the same limit of a maximum of 4.5 years of extension. The same justifying documentation needs to be uploaded together with the application.

Events that would warrant a change of consideration from "consolidator" to "starter" need to have taken place *prior* to the maximum six year limit after Ph.D. for "starters" (see Box 8).

Exceptionally, applicants who have experienced significant career breaks due to other circumstances may draw them to the attention of the panels for consideration. Clear supporting material (official documents) need to be uploaded with the application in these cases as well.

Note that the responsibility lies with the **applicant** to make a clear case for such a change in career stage consideration

**The final decision for such a change in career stage status is always the judgment and responsibility of the panel.**

### **Box 8: ERC Starting Grant - Research Career stage**

By default, a PI from 2 up to 6 years past PhD will be considered as a "starter" and a PI over 6 to 10 years past PhD as a "consolidator".

Exceptions to this definition are possible in certain cases.

Applicants who would like to bring to the attention of the panels a situation that may be considered as a career break should provide the necessary justification in Part B1 – Section 1a of the application.

Note that requests for changing career stage will only be considered if the timing of the event which gives rise to the request is *prior* to 6 years past the date of PhD.

Appropriate supporting information needs to be provided and uploaded in a similar manner to requests for extension of the overall eligibility window (e.g. official documents giving evidence of the time taken for childcare, military service, etc).

For example, a woman scientist who gives birth to a child 7 years past Ph.D. would be eligible for an 18 months extension to her overall eligibility window (in a future call), but this should not change her from consideration as a consolidator to that of a starter.

On the other hand, a female scientist 7 years past Ph.D. who gave birth to a child 3 years after Ph.D. can make a credible case to the panels that this event has slowed her career down and therefore should be considered as a starter.

## 1.5 Can I apply to fund any type of research?

Applications may be made in any field of research<sup>37</sup>. Funding of human embryonic stem cell research will be possible within the ethical framework defined in the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme<sup>38</sup> as well as its Specific Programme IDEAS.

For more information, see Part 1, Section 2 of this Guide.

## 1.6 Is my proposal ready for evaluation?

Incomplete proposals (where parts of the proposal and/or the PhD-related documents and/or the host institution's commitment statement are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated<sup>39</sup>. The proposal must be submitted to the appropriate primary ERC panel (i.e. the panel which covers the main scientific areas of the research proposed) before the respective deadline (see also Part 1, Section 4 of this Guide).

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

## 1.7 Where can I run my research activity that is funded by ERC?

The contribution of the PI must be substantially carried out in the EU or Associated Countries and has to represent at least 50% of his/her working time. This does not exclude field work or other research activities in cases where these must necessarily be conducted outside the EU or the Associated Countries in order to achieve the scientific objectives of the project/activity.

The host institution is the institution which hosts and engages<sup>40</sup> the PI for at least the duration of the grant. It must be situated in one of the EU Member States, or one of the Associated Countries. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation<sup>41</sup> or the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Normally, the applicant legal entity will be the only participating legal entity. Other legal entities, including those located in third countries<sup>42</sup>, may however be involved and receive funding to support the work of additional team members, if so specified in the grant agreement or in subsequent amendments to the original grant agreement (see also Part 1, Section 2 of this Guide).

## 1.8 How many times can I apply for an ERC Starting Grant?

Rules apply to reapplications for ERC grants by individual researchers who apply as PI and whose eligible proposals are not judged to meet the threshold of quality<sup>43</sup>, as well as for

---

<sup>37</sup> Research proposals within the scope of Annex I of the EURATOM Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications, should be submitted to relevant calls under the Seventh EURATOM Framework Programme.

<sup>38</sup> In accordance with Commission statement, OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42, proposals which will include research activities which destroy human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells, will not be submitted to the Regulatory Committee. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

<sup>39</sup> See also 'eligibility check' in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme.

<sup>40</sup> This does not exclude cases where the PI's employer is not the host institution. In these cases, the specific conditions of engagement will also be subject to clarification and approval during the granting procedure.

<sup>41</sup> See footnote 8 of this Guide.

<sup>42</sup> Third countries are neither EU Member States nor Associated Countries.

<sup>43</sup> For more information on the subject, see section 'Application of Criteria' in PART2: ERC STARTING GRANT

multiple eligible applications within the same or different type of ERC grants. The current ERC Starting Grant-specific rules, which may subsequently be modified by the Scientific Council in light of experience, are as follows:

- No Principal Investigator who has submitted an eligible proposal to a Starting Grant call (ERC-2010-StG) may apply to the following Starting Grant call (ERC-2011-StG), unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold at the end of step 1 of the evaluation.
- As already specified in the Work Programme 2009, no Principal Investigator who has submitted an eligible proposal to the Starting Grant call ERC-2009-StG can apply to the Starting Grant call ERC-2010-StG, unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold during the 2nd step but not funded due to insufficient available budget.
- It will be possible for ERC Starting Grant Principal Investigators to apply for an Advanced Investigator Grant within the last two years of their Starting Grant to allow for uninterrupted funding of their project/activity.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** these rules must be taken very seriously into account by the potential applicants. Any violation of these rules during the submission of a proposal will be brought to the attention of the ERC eligibility committee which will assess and decide on the eligibility of the proposal.

## **2. Preparing an ERC Starting Grant application**<sup>44</sup>

**Please consult the CORDIS Call page<sup>19</sup> regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail, or by phone +32 2233 3760.**

The application procedure consists of a **single submission stage** using EPSS<sup>45</sup>.

A complete ERC Starting Grant application involves the following three separate components:

- **The administrative forms (Part A)**
- **The research proposal (Part B)**
- **The supporting documentation**

### **2.1 Instructions for completing "Part A" of the proposal**

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service EPSS (see Part 1, section 3.2 of this guide).

In the A forms, the applicant will be asked for administrative data that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal. The A forms are an integral part of the proposal. Details of the work the PI intends to carry out will be described in the research proposal.

Please note:

<sup>44</sup> The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts. An English translation of the abstract must be included in your proposal.

<sup>45</sup> See part 1, section 3.2.1 of the Guide

- Section A1 concerns information about the research proposal and PI, including a non-confidential abstract of the project proposal and the chosen ERC panel for evaluation PIs must indicate the most relevant ERC panel for evaluation of their proposal and choose one or more descriptors of the research fields involved from a drop-down menu (see Annex 1).

It is the PI's responsibility to choose the most relevant ERC panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research. The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals the PI may indicate a 'secondary evaluation panel'. The primary panel will then decide whether the proposal is interdisciplinary (cross-panel or even cross-domain) and if its evaluation requires expertise from other panels.

- Section A2 concerns information about the PI's Host Institution<sup>46</sup>.

Subcontractors are not required to fill in section A2 and should not be listed separately in section A3.

- Section A3 concerns information about the estimated project costs and grant required. Basic financial information on the requested ERC Grant needs to be filled in as well.

**Please make sure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).**

Please ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (Form B, Part B2, Section 2c - Resources section). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

#### Participant Identification Code (PIC):

Those who are familiar with the proposal and negotiation submission forms know that in the past, participants had to provide to the Commission their legal and financial information every time they submit a proposal or negotiate a contract. To eliminate these redundant requests for information, we invite you to register your organisational data once in the **Unique Registration Facility (URF)** which is hosted in the Participant Portal<sup>47</sup>. Your organisation will receive after registration a Participant Identification Code (or PIC) which you will be able to use in all proposals submissions and negotiations.

If you think your organisation already has registered in URF and you wish to retrieve the PIC, please query online the PIC database by using the PIC search functionality<sup>48</sup>. Please do not forget to visit the 'Frequently Asked Questions' of the URF page should you want any additional general information.

Applicants possessing a Participant Identification Code (PIC) can use this number to identify themselves in the Electronic Proposal Submission System.

**On entering the PIC, parts of the A forms will be filled in automatically. Please note that in the cases where a PIC is not available it will always be possible to submit a proposal by entering the organisation details manually.** However, the use of PICs will lead to more efficient handling of the proposal.

---

<sup>46</sup> The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to other institutions of team members ('additional participants'), may be necessary

<sup>47</sup> [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp_en.html)

<sup>48</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf/public/search/searchPIC.do>

The following notes are for information only. They should assist you in completing the A forms of your proposal. On-line guidance will also be available. The precise questions and options presented on EPSS may differ slightly from these below. Please consult the CORDIS call page<sup>19</sup> regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail, or by phone +32 2 233 3760.

### **Section A1: Proposal and PI information**

<b>Proposal Number</b>	[pre-filled by the system]
<b>Proposal Acronym</b>	The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently in this call. It should be of <u>no more than 20 characters</u> (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no spaces, symbols or special characters please).  The same acronym should appear on each page of the research proposal.

### **General Information on the Proposal**

<b>Type of project</b>	[pre-filled] Support for Frontier Research – ERC Starting Grant
<b>Call identifier</b>	[pre-filled] The call identifier is the reference number given in the call or part of the call you are addressing, as indicated in the publication of the call in the CORDIS call page. A call identifier looks like this: <i>ERC-2010-StG</i>
<b>Activity code</b>	[pre-filled] ERC Starting Grant
<b>Proposal Title (Non Confidential Information)</b>	The title should be <u>no longer than 180 characters</u> and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field.  In order to best review your application, your agreement is needed below so that this non-confidential title can be used when contacting potential reviewers, should you proposal be retained for step 2 of the evaluation process.
<b>Duration in months</b>	The estimated duration of the project in full months.
<b>Primary ERC Review Panel (linked to call deadline)</b>	[drop-down menu] Please choose the primary ERC review panel ('Targeted Review Panel') by which you would like your proposal to be evaluated. This information is <u>mandatory</u> for "Primary ERC Review Panel".
<b>Secondary ERC Review Panel (if applicable)</b>	[drop-down menu] Please choose a secondary ERC review panel that you consider most relevant to your proposal. This information is <u>optional</u> for a "Secondary ERC Review Panel".
<b>ERC Keywords 1 (please choose this keyword from those linked to the primary ERC review panel)</b>	[drop-down menu] Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal. <u>As first keyword please choose one which is linked to the Primary Review Panel.</u> Keyword 1 is <u>mandatory</u> .
<b>ERC Keywords 2, 3, 4</b>	[drop-down menu] Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal. You don't need to limit your choice of keywords to your choice of specific review panel(s). Keywords 2, 3 and 4 are <u>optional</u> .

<p><b>Free Keywords</b> [mandatory field to be filled]</p>	<p>In addition please enter free text keywords that you consider best characterise the scope of your research proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multi-disciplinary aspects of the proposal. There is <u>a limit of 90 characters</u>.</p>
<p><b>Abstract</b> (Non Confidential information)</p>	<p>The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as the short description of your research proposal in the evaluation process and in communications to the programme management committees and other interested parties. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information.</p> <p>In order to best review your application, your agreement is needed below so this non-confidential abstract can be used when contacting potential reviewers, should your proposal be retained for step 2 of the evaluation process.</p> <p>Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. The abstract must be written in English (see footnote 64). There is <u>a limit of 1800 characters</u> (Space and line breaks included).</p>
<p><b>In order to best review your application, do you agree that the above non-confidential proposal title and abstract can be sent, without disclosing your identity, to potential reviewers?</b></p>	<p>[Yes/No] – In the process of the evaluation procedure, the non-confidential title and abstract of your proposal may be communicated to potential external referees, should your proposal be retained for step 2 of the evaluation process. Please specify your agreement or disagreement.</p>

### Information on the Principal Investigator

<p><b>Family Name</b></p>	<p>Last name as given in Passport or Identity Card</p>
<p><b>Family Name at Birth</b></p>	<p>Your last name at birth.</p>
<p><b>First Name(s)</b></p>	<p>Your first name.</p>
<p><b>Title</b></p>	<p>Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.</p>
<p><b>Gender</b> Female(F)/Male(M)</p>	<p>This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Nationality</b></p>	<p>[drop-down menu] Please select one country.</p>
<p><b>Country of residence</b></p>	<p>[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which you legally reside.</p>
<p><b>Date of Birth</b> (DD/MM/YYYY)</p>	<p>Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).</p>
<p><b>Country of Birth</b></p>	<p>[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which you were born.</p>
<p><b>Town of Birth</b></p>	<p>The town in which you were born. Insert the name of the town, in English (please avoid any district codes).</p>

<b>Current Organisation name (if applicable)</b>	Name under which your organisation is registered.
<b>Current Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory name (if applicable)</b>	Name under which your Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
<b>Street name</b>	The street name.
<b>Number</b>	The street number.
<b>Town</b>	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<b>Postal Code/ Cedex</b>	The Postal code.
<b>Country</b>	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
<b>Phone 1, 2</b>	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> phone number is optional.
<b>Fax</b>	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
<b>E-mail 1, 2</b>	Please insert your e-mail address. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> e-mail address is optional.

<b>Date of first PhD (or equivalent) award</b>	[drop-down menu] Please specify the date of award of your doctoral degree (using the drop-down menu). This should correspond to the date on the actual original PhD certificate. Wrong or missing information may cause your proposal to be ineligible.
<b>Extension of the eligibility window</b>	Based on an eligible career break (see Part 2, Section 1.2, Box 7 of this guide) an applicant can ask for an extension of the eligibility window. Please specify the requested extension <b>in number of days</b> .
<b>Rules as regards multiple applications and re-applications</b>	No PI who has submitted an eligible proposal to a Starting Grant call (ERC-2010-StG) may apply to the following Starting Grant call (ERC-2011-StG), unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold at the end of step 1 of the evaluation.  As already specified in the Work Programme 2009, no Principal Investigator who has submitted an eligible proposal to the Starting Grant call ERC-2009-StG may apply to the Starting Grant call ERC-2010-StG, unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold during the 2nd step but not funded due to insufficient available budget.  See ERC Work Programme 2010.
<b>By default, applicants 2 to 6 years past PhD will be considered "starters" and 6-10 years past PhD "consolidators". In order to assist the panel evaluators to assess you as a "starter" or a "consolidator", would you like to indicate any career break to them?</b>	If yes, this needs to be explained and justified in Part B1 – section 1a of the EPSS application (see Part B, section 1.4 of this Guide for specific conditions). Appropriate supporting information (official documents - e.g. evidence of the time taken for childcare, military service, etc.) will also need to be provided and uploaded along with the PhD certificate (or equivalent).

<b>Publication of data</b>	For communication purposes only, the ERC asks for your permission to publish your name, the proposal title, and the proposal acronym, should you proposal be above quality threshold at step 2 of the evaluation process
<b>Does the proposal raise any ethical issues, as specified in the Ethical Issues Table at the end of Part B2?</b>	<p>The Ethical Issues Table has to be completed even if there are no issues (simply respond with "No" to all relevant questions).</p> <p>If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table (in part B2) is "Yes", you <b>must</b> provide a brief explanation of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. An Ethical Issues Annex template is provided in EPSS (with Part B2 templates).</p> <p>See Part 1, Section 2.3, Box 2 of this Guide.</p>

### The Legal Representative of the Host Institution

The person who can commit the host institution according to the requirements of the ERC Model Grant Agreement (C(2007)1625, 16/04/2007).

<b>Family Name</b>	Last name as given in the Passport or ID card.
<b>Family Name at Birth</b>	Last name at birth.
<b>First Name(s)</b>	First name.
<b>Title</b>	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
<b>Gender Female(F)/Male(M)</b>	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
<b>Position in the host institution</b>	e.g. senior administrative officer
<b>Contact Address</b>	
<b>Department/Faculty/ Institute/Laboratory name</b>	The name under which the host Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
<b>Street name</b>	The street name.
<b>Number</b>	The street number.
<b>Town</b>	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<b>Postal Code/ Cedex</b>	The Postal code.
<b>Country</b>	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
<b>Phone 1, 2</b>	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> phone number is optional.
<b>Fax</b>	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
<b>E-mail 1, 2</b>	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> e-mail address is optional.

## Section A2: Host institution information

<b>Organisation Number [pre-filled]</b>	The number allocated by the consortium (if it is the case) to each organisation. The <b>PI</b> of the proposal is always <b>number one</b> .
<b>The Organisation</b>	
<b>If your organisation has already registered for FP7, enter your Participant Identity Code</b>	Applicants possessing a Participant Identification Code (PIC) can use this number to identify themselves in the Electronic Proposal Submission system. On entering the PIC, parts of the A forms will be filled in automatically. Please note that in the cases where a PIC is not available it will always be possible to submit a proposal by entering the organisation details manually. However, the use of PICs will lead to more efficient handling of the proposal. The process for assigning a PIC is triggered by a self-registration of an organisation at the following website: <a href="http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp-pic_en.html">http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp-pic_en.html</a> . On this website you will also find a search tool for checking if your organisation is already registered (and has thus a PIC).
<b>Organisation legal name</b>	<b>For Public Law Body</b> , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the Resolution text, Law, Decree/Decision establishing the Public Entity, or in any other document established at the constitution of the Public Law Body; <b>For Private Law Body</b> , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the national Official Journal (or equivalent) or in the national company register.
<b>Organisation short name</b>	Choose an abbreviation of the host institution Legal Name, only for use in this proposal and in all relating documents. This short name should not be more than 20 characters exclusive of special characters (./;...), e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, e.g. IBM and not Int.Bus.Mac.
<b>Organisation Town</b>	Town where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<b>Country</b>	The country where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
<b>Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Name</b>	The name under which the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
<b>Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Town</b>	The town where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<b>Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Country</b>	The country where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
<b>Internet Homepage</b>	Insert the address of the Organisation internet homepage.

## Section A3: Budget

### Financial information – whole duration of the project

This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC grant, as they are also presented in the Research proposal text (Part B2 , Section 2cResources)

The Host Institution<sup>49</sup> should enter the different type of costs (Personnel, other direct, indirect and subcontracting). Please ensure the table contains the correct amount of the different type of costs and the correct total eligible costs and requested grant.

If you are participating as legal entity from International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC), you can opt for lump sum funding instead of reimbursement of eligible costs. In this case you should complete only the box on "requested grant".<sup>50</sup>

#### Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution of 20% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary) towards indirect costs. Costs claimed should be in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.

**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 Costs; Equipment Costs; Consumables; Travel and Subsistence Costs; Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results).

**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 PC's, laptops, office software; Miscellaneous recurring consumables.

**Non-eligible costs** cannot be reimbursed through the ERC grant, such as: 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 Community project; Costs related to return on capital; Debt and debt service charges; Excessive or reckless expenditure.

- Please ensure that the amount given in this form correspond precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (Part B2 c), resources section). In case of discrepancy, the data contained in this A3 form will prevail.
- Please make sure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).

<b>Participant Number in this proposal</b>	The <u>PI's Host Institution</u> of the proposal is always <u>number one</u> .
<b>Organisation short name</b>	The same name that as been used in form A2.
<b>Personnel costs</b>	<p>Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project and must correspond to the percentage of dedicated working time (minimum 50 % for the PI) to run the ERC project. Such persons must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– be directly hired by the beneficiary in accordance with its national legislation,</li> <li>– work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the latter, and</li> <li>– be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant.</li> </ul> <p>Participants may opt to declare average personnel costs if certified in accordance with a methodology approved by the Commission and consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant.</p> <p>Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.</p>

<sup>49</sup> Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2

<sup>50</sup> More information on ICPC lump sums can be found in the section II.18 of the "Guide to financial issues"

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html)

<b>Other direct costs (- subcontracting)</b>	Means direct costs not covered by the above mentioned categories of costs.
<b>Indirect costs (max. 20 % of direct costs)</b>	Indirect costs are all those eligible costs which cannot be identified by the participant as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs.
<b>Subcontracting</b>	<p>A subcontractor is a third party which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with one or more participants, in order to carry out part of the work of the project without the direct supervision of the participant and without a relationship of subordination.</p> <p>Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project;</li> <li>- recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified in Part B of the proposal having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation;</li> <li>- recourse to the award of subcontract by a participant may not affect the rights and obligations of the participants regarding background and foreground;</li> <li>- Part B of the proposal must indicate the task to be subcontracted and an estimation of the costs;</li> </ul> <p>Any subcontract, the costs of which are to be claimed as an eligible cost, must be awarded according to the principles of best value for money (best price-quality ratio), transparency and equal treatment. Framework contracts between a participant and a subcontractor, entered into prior to the beginning of the project that are according to the participant's usual management principles may also be accepted.</p> <p>Participants may use external support services for assistance with minor tasks that do not represent per se project tasks as identified in Part B of the proposal.</p>
<b>Eligible Costs</b>	The sum of direct costs (personnel and others), indirect costs and subcontracting.
<b>Requested Grant</b>	The total budget that you are requesting as the ERC grant (in Euros).

## 2.2 Instructions for completing "Part B" of the proposal

The research proposal consists of two parts: Part B1 (including cover page and section 1) and Part B2 (including sections 2 and 3). **The templates of these two parts are provided in EPSS and their use is mandatory.**

The information to be included in each of the sections is described below. The maximum length of each section or its component, which needs to be respected strictly, is described below. The research proposal needs to be uploaded and submitted via EPSS (see Part 1, section 3.2 of this guide).

**Only the material that the proposal contains within the page limits mentioned below while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated (evaluators will only be asked, and will be under no obligation to read beyond, the material presented within the page limits). It should provide sufficient evidence to the peer reviewers to assess the evaluation criteria.**

Each proposal page **must** carry a **header** presenting the **applicant's last name**, the **acronym**, and the reference to the respective proposal part (**Part B1** or **Part B2**).

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11	Single	2 cm

## **Part B1 – Cover page:**

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Name of the PI's host institution for the project
- Proposal full title
- Proposal short name
- Proposal duration in months
- Proposal summary (half page)

## **Part B1 - Section 1 (a, b and c):**

### **The Principal Investigator**

#### **a. Scientific Leadership Potential (max 2 pages):**

- i. presentation of the content of the **early scientific or scholarly contributions** of the applicant to his or her own research field;
- ii. **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 up to 6 years) or a 'consolidator' (award of PhD over 6 to 10 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<sup>51</sup>.

#### **b. Curriculum Vitae (max 2 pages):**

In addition to the standard academic and research record, the CV should **include a succinct "funding ID"** which must specify current research grants as well as ongoing applications (see also Box 9).

#### **c. Early achievements track-Record (max 2 pages):**

The applicant should list his/her activity as regards:

1. **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, peer-reviewed conferences proceedings** of their respective research fields, also indicating the number of citations (excluding self-citations) they have attracted.
2. Granted **patent(s)** (if applicable).
3. **Invited presentations to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences** and/or **international advanced schools** (if applicable).
4. Prizes and Awards (if applicable).

**It is important that the applicant should also report on any significant career breaks. Peer-reviewers will take it into consideration during the assessment of the quality and potential of the Principal Investigator and his/her career progression.**

---

<sup>51</sup> See part Part A – Section A1: **Information on the Principal Investigator**

## **Part B1 - Section 1d:**

### **d. The Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal (max 5 pages)**

The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to its ground-breaking nature and how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for research.

## **Part B2 - Section 2**

### **The scientific proposal (max 15 pages, excluding Ethical Issues Table and Annex)**

The project proposal should provide detailed descriptions on the project's aim, planning, execution, and required resources. Additionally, an appreciation of the research environment provided by the host institution for the execution of the proposed project must be included.

**a. State-of-the-art and objectives:** Specify clearly the objectives of the project, in the context of the state-of-the-art in the field. Describing the project it should be indicated how and why the project is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the project, including multi- or inter-disciplinary aspects.

#### **b. Methodology**

Describe the proposed methodology in detail including, as appropriate, key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state-of-the-art, including any particularly novel or unconventional aspects. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.

#### **c. Resources (incl. project costs)**

Describe the size and nature of the team, indicating, as appropriate, the roles of key team members. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project.

State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. This should be a reasoned estimate of the projects costs. Take into account the percentage of your dedicated time (minimum 50%) to run the ERC funded activity when calculating your salary. Include the direct costs of the project and also a contribution of 20% of the direct costs (excluding subcontracting) towards overheads. Furthermore, include a breakdown of the budget subdivided in personnel costs, equipment and infrastructure, consumables, travel, publication costs, and any envisaged subcontracts. State how the costs will be distributed over the duration of the project. These figures should be summarised in the financial information form A3.

#### **d. Ethical Issues (see annex 2b of this guide)**

The Ethical Issues Table has to be completed even if there are no issues (simply respond with "No" to all relevant questions).

If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table (in Part B2) is "Yes", you **must** provide a brief explanation of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. An Ethical Issues Annex template is provided in EPSS (with Part B2 templates). In the annex, please specify as well any authorization or permission you already have for the proposed work and include copies. This will allow proper Ethical Screening if the proposal is chosen for possible funding.

Please upload this Ethical Issues Annex and any related documents in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section included in the EPSS tab 'Part B & Annexes'.

**The pages of the Ethical Issues Table (included in Part B2) and Ethical Issues Annex (separate document) will not count towards the maximum page limit for Part B.**

## **Part B2 - Section 3:**

### **Research Environment (max 2 pages)**

#### **a. PI's Host institution**

Describe the host institution and specify what facilities and assistance it will provide to the project, illustrating its capacity to support the project, including in terms of broader intellectual support.

#### **b. Additional institutions (additional participants)**

If more than one institution will be included as a participant in the project, you should justify clearly the scientific added value of this additional participant to the project. For each additional host institution an additional A2 form needs to be filled in (see administrative forms at the end).

### **Box 9: Funding ID and significant funding**

PIs must report in their "funding ID" current research grants as well as ongoing applications.

If the funds they have already obtained are both substantially comparable in size and duration with the ERC Starting Grant award and have a similar goal (to assist them in the establishment or consolidation of their independent research team/activity), they are encouraged not to submit a proposal for additional funding from ERC during the same period.

## **2.3 Supporting Documentation**

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically on EPSS in PDF format using the corresponding template available on EPSS (see annex 3):

- The host institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence set out in the supplementary agreement to the ERC Grant agreement are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful (template on EPSS, see Annex 3).
- The PI should submit scanned copies of documents proving his/her eligibility for the grant, i.e. the PhD certificate<sup>1</sup> (or equivalent degree) clearly indicating the date of award/defence and, in case of an extension of the eligibility period beyond 10 years has been requested, the relevant documentary evidence.

## **2.4 Submission via EPSS**

The research proposal (Part B1 and B2) and the supporting documentation should be uploaded and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. For more information on EPSS and the uploading/submission of the grant application, please consult Part 1, section 3.2 of this guide.

Please ensure that the file names contain the "Proposal Short Name", such as:

- *PartB1\_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*
- *ERC-2010-StG-Host\_support\_letter\_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*
- *PhD\_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*

## Checklist – Is your proposal complete?

For the submission of a complete Starting Grant proposal, the following components have to be prepared

The Administrative Forms (Part A): to be completed in EPSS

- on-line forms A1, A2, A3

The Research Proposal:

Part B1:

- Section 1a, 1b, 1c – The Principal Investigator
- Section 1d – The Extended Synopsis on the scientific proposal

Part B2:

- Section 2 – The scientific proposal including the Ethical Issues Table (and, when necessary, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated)
- Section 3 – The research environment

The Supplementary Documents:

- The supporting statement from the host institution: on letterhead, originally signed, stamped and dated by institute's legal representative (see Annex 3)
- PhD certificate (or equivalent doctoral degree<sup>52</sup>) and, in case of requested extension of eligibility period, the documentary evidence (e.g. maternity, paternity leave, national service, long-term illness, unavoidable leave for statutory reasons, etc.)
- If applicable, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated (Ethical Issues Annex).

**PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THE DOCUMENTS UPLOADED ARE READABLE.**

### 3. Evaluation of ERC Starting Grant proposals

A single submission of an ERC Starting Grant proposal will be followed by a two-step peer review evaluation.

The Principal Investigators will be assessed by the evaluation panels as "starters" or "consolidators" taking into account the specific stage of their research career at the time of the application.

Following the same rationale and in order to assure comparable success rate for the broadly called "starters" (award of PhD from 2 up to 6 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication) and the "consolidators" (award of PhD over 6 and up to 10 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication), the indicative budget of each panel will be further divided in proportion to the budgetary demand of the proposals submitted by these two categories ("starters" and "consolidators").

Only the material that is presented within the page limits will be evaluated (evaluators will only be asked, and will be under no obligation to read beyond, the material presented within the page limits).

---

<sup>52</sup> See Scientific Council's strategic note 'PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degrees' on ERC web site: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=24>, including specific provisions for holders of medical degrees.

Please note that at Step 1 of the evaluation, only Part B1 will be made available to the Panel Members for review. Part B2 will be reviewed only for proposals selected for Step2 evaluation.

The Two-step peer review evaluation is summarized below:

### 3.1 Step 1

- i.) Eligibility Check: Proposals are checked to ensure that all of the eligibility criteria are met.
- ii.) Peer Review Evaluation: Proposals which fulfil these criteria are evaluated by high level peer review evaluation panels, which assess, score and comment on the quality of Part B1 of the proposal (Part B2 of the proposal will not be evaluated at this stage). Proposals with a mark passing the quality thresholds<sup>53</sup> and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level (should normally be 2.5 times the panel's indicative budget) will be retained and pass to step 2 of peer review evaluation. Those proposals failing to reach the quality threshold on any of the evaluation criteria or ranked below the budgetary cut-off described above will be rejected and the applicants will be informed.

#### **Box 10: Interviews with Principal Investigators**

The review methodology for the ERC Starting Grant includes interviews with all PIs of proposals at step 2 conducted by the relevant ERC evaluation panel.

Depending on the panel, interviews will last between 20 and 30 minutes in total. The first 5 to 10 minutes will be devoted to a presentation on the outline of the research project by the PI. The remaining 15 to 20 minutes will be devoted to a question and answer session.

Panels or sub-panels will express their appreciation of the PI in the form of a score (i.e. the interview is not a yes/no factor). In the subsequent panel meeting, panels will take into account the results of the interviews alongside the other elements; the individual review and the preliminary ranking.

The ERC will reimburse the PI's travel expenditures for the interview in Brussels (see ERC rules for proposal submission, <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>). Travel costs will be reimbursed upon presentation of the appropriate supporting documents. For travel >100 km, a flat rate will be paid to cover living expenses (including costs for overnight stay).

Alternatives to interviews: For those candidates who are, in very exceptional cases, unable to attend the interviews (pregnancy, immobility due to illness, out in research fieldwork), two alternatives are offered: i) video-conferencing, ii) telephone-conferencing.

### 3.2 Step 2

- iii.) Peer Review Evaluation: All three sections of the proposal are considered and evaluated by remote referees and panels, which assess, score and comment on the quality of the proposal. Interdisciplinary proposals within a domain or across domains will be flagged as such, and the panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or reserve evaluators. PI will also be invited for an interview (see Box 10). Applications which meet the quality thresholds are ranked in a list.
- iv.) Feedback: Applicants are informed of the outcome of the evaluation of their proposal.

**For more details and the handling of interdisciplinary proposals applicants are invited to consult Annex 2 of the ERC Work Programme 2010.**

---

<sup>53</sup> For more information on the subject, see section 'Application of Criteria' in PART2: ERC STARTING GRANT

### 3.3 Evaluation criteria

**Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation.** It will be applied to the evaluation of both the Principal Investigator and the research project. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the research environment enables the excellence of the project to be achieved. The detailed elements applying to the 3 sections of the proposal are as follows:

#### **1. Principal Investigator**

**Quality of research output/track-record:** *How well qualified is the Principal Investigator to conduct the project (reviewers are expected to evaluate the quality of the prior work such as published results in top peer review journals as well as other elements of the Principal Investigator's CV), taking into account the early or more mature phase of his/her transition to independence, as well as prior career breaks and/or unconventional research career paths (especially in the case of women scientists).*

*To what extent are the publications and achievements of the Principal Investigator ground-breaking and demonstrative of independent creative thinking and capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art?*

*Taking account of the particular circumstances of the Principal Investigator and the proposed research, including any funding already secured, to what extent will an ERC Starting Grant make a significant contribution to the establishment or consolidation of independence?*

**To note:** Applicants (Principal Investigators) will be requested to state (funding ID, see Box 9) current research grants as well as ongoing applications.

#### **2. Research project**

**Ground-breaking nature of the research:** *Does the proposed research address important challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) addressed? 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)? How well conceived and organised is the proposed activity?*

**Potential impact:**

- (a) *Does the research open new and important, scientific, technological or scholarly horizons?*
- (b) *Will the project significantly enhance the research environment and capabilities for frontier research in Europe (in particular as regards the immediate host environment)?*

**Methodology:**

- a) *Is the outlined scientific approach (including the activities to be undertaken by the individual team members) feasible? (step 1)*
- b) *Is the proposed research methodology (including when pertinent the use of instrumentation, other type of infrastructures etc.) comprehensive and appropriate to the project? Will it enable the goals of the project convincingly to be achieved within the proposed timescales and resources (including the costs of the Principal Investigator and the members of the team who will be engaged in the project) and the level of risk associated with a challenging research project? (step 2)*

**High-gain/High-risk balance:**

- a) *Does the proposed research involve highly novel and/or unconventional methodologies, whose high risk is justified by the possibility of a major breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific research domain/discipline?*

### **3. Research Environment (to be assessed only during step 2 of the evaluation)**

**Contribution of the research environment to the project:** Does the host environment<sup>54</sup> provide most of the infrastructure necessary for the research to be carried out? Is it in a position to provide an appropriate intellectual environment and infrastructural support and to assist in achieving the ambitions for the project and the Principal Investigator?

**Participation of other legal entities<sup>55</sup>:** If it is proposed that other legal entities participate in the project, in addition to the applicant legal entity, is their participation fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project?

## **3.4 Application of Criteria**

Panels and referees will evaluate and mark numerically the proposals under the criteria of Heading 1: *Principal Investigator* and Heading 2: *Research project*. Proposals will be evaluated under Heading 3 on a 'pass/fail' basis and commented but not marked during step 2 of the evaluation. The evaluation panels will review the level of the requested grant and, as appropriate, suggest adjustments.

Each proposal will receive a mark on a scale of 1 to 4 for each of the 2 evaluation criteria (Heading 1 and 2):

- 4: Outstanding**
- 3: Excellent**
- 2: Very Good**
- 1: Non-competitive**

At each step of the evaluation and on the basis of their average mark (at least three independent panel members), proposals will be ranked by the panels in order of priority. If a proposal, in any step of the evaluation, is marked below the quality threshold of **=2** on any of the first two headings, it will not be further evaluated.

At the end of each evaluation step, the proposals will be ranked by the panels on the basis of the marks they have received and an overall appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses.

For more detailed information on the evaluation and selection process, please consult the relevant Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers<sup>22</sup>.

---

<sup>54</sup> The term 'research environment' corresponds to the immediate setting of the research team, such as Department (rather than the sponsoring institution as a whole), and when appropriate, the wider 'milieu' of the team's operation, including collaborating laboratories, groups, departments etc.

<sup>55</sup> As the ERC schemes are addressed to individual investigators, usually the participation of more than one legal entity will not improve the chances of success. Participation of investigator(s) from another legal entity would be acceptable if they clearly and substantially enhance the scientific value of the proposal.

## **PART 3: ERC Advanced Grant**

# **1. About the ERC Advanced Grant funding Scheme**

ERC Advanced Grants provide an opportunity to established scientists and scholars (Principal Investigators) to pursue frontier research of their choice. Being highly competitive and awarded on the sole criterion of excellence without restriction to particular areas of research, these grants will support the very best of research to be conducted in any EU Member State<sup>2</sup> or Associated Country<sup>3</sup>, adding value to research investments at the national level.

Advanced Grants are intended to promote substantial advances in the frontiers of knowledge, and to encourage new productive lines of enquiry and new methods and techniques, including unconventional approaches and investigations at the interface between established disciplines.

The peer review evaluation of proposals will therefore give emphasis to these aspects, in full understanding that such research has a high-gain/high-risk profile, i.e. 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.

The aim is to fund individual teams led by established, innovative and active PIs, regardless of nationality, age or current location. They will include, for example, leading contributors to research advances in Europe, leading scientists of the European 'diaspora' or non-EU nationals who wish to establish themselves in Europe and pursue ground-breaking, high-risk research that opens new directions in their respective research fields or other domains.

To encourage interdisciplinarity, when an interdisciplinary Advanced Grant proposal is grounded in the necessary combination of knowledge and skills from more than one discipline, a PI may identify a member or members of his/her individual team, who are active in these disciplines, as Co-Investigators, as an exception to the rule that consortia-style applications are not permitted ('Co-Investigator project').

## **1.1 What is the level of funding of the ERC Advanced Grants?**

Depending on the specific project and field, the level of these grants may be up to EUR 3 500 000 for a period of 5 years<sup>56</sup> (pro rata for projects of shorter duration). Normally, however, grants will be limited to a maximum of EUR 2 500 000 unless the application involves specific features requiring a higher level of support: a 'Co-Investigator project'; requirement to purchase major research equipment, or a PI who is coming from a third country to establish a research team and activity at a host institution in a EU Member State<sup>2</sup> or Associated Country<sup>3</sup>.

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution up to 20% towards indirect costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary). For more information on eligible costs, see Part 1, Section 2.4 of the Guide. Please note that the above mentioned limits include indirect costs.

The overall level of the grant offered will be determined on the basis of the needs of the project and judged by the peer review evaluation panel against the requested grant to the budget (see Annex 1 for the panel structure and descriptions). In all cases, the evaluation panels will review the requested grant and recommend the total amount to be granted, using rounded figures. The panels may also suggest a modification to the indicative budgetary

---

<sup>56</sup> The level of the grant represents a maximum overall figure – payments must be justified on the basis of the amounts actually disbursed for the project.

breakdown in the application but the PI has the freedom to re-budget during the course of the project.

## 1.2 Who can apply for an ERC Advanced Grant?

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to establish and conduct their research activity in any EU Member State<sup>2</sup> or Associated Country<sup>3</sup>. The PI may be of any age and nationality and may reside in any country in the world at the time of the application.

For more information, see Part 1, Section 2.2 of this Guide.

## 1.3 Who could be a competitive candidate for the ERC Advanced Grant?

Applicants for the prestigious ERC Advanced Grant are expected to be active researchers and to have a track-record of **significant research achievements in the last 10 years** which must be presented in the application. There is little prospect of an application succeeding in the absence of such a record, which identifies investigators as exceptional leaders in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions.

Thus, in most fields, PIs of Advanced Grant proposals will be expected to demonstrate a record of achievements appropriate to the field and at least matching one or more of the following benchmarks:

- Normally 10 publications as senior author (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals, and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field.
- Normally 3 major research monographs, of which at least one is translated into another language. This benchmark is relevant to research fields where publication of monographs is the norm (e.g. humanities and social sciences).

Other alternative benchmarks that may be considered (individually or in combination) as indicative of an exceptional record and recognition in the last 10 years:

- Normally 5 granted patents
- Normally 10 invited presentations in well-established internationally organised conferences and advanced schools
- Normally 3 research expeditions led by the applicant
- Normally 3 well-established international conferences or congresses where the applicant was involved in their organisation as a member of the steering and/or organising committee
- International recognition through scientific prizes/awards or membership in well-regarded Academies

Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their track-record and leadership potential against the benchmarks that have been adopted by the ERC Scientific Council, in order to decide for themselves their likelihood for success, thus reducing unnecessary loss of time and effort on applications that are very unlikely to succeed.

## 1.4 Can I apply to fund any type of research?

Applications may be made in any field of research<sup>57</sup>. Funding of human embryonic stem cell research will be possible within the ethical framework defined in the Seventh Research Framework Programme<sup>58</sup>, including the FP7 Specific Programme IDEAS. For more information, see Part 1, Section 2.3 of the Guide.

## 1.5 Is my proposal ready for evaluation?

Incomplete proposals (where parts of the proposal and/or the host institution's commitment statement are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated<sup>59</sup>. The proposal must be submitted to the appropriate primary ERC panel (i.e. the panel which covers the main scientific areas of the research proposed) before the respective deadline.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

## 1.6 Where can I run an ERC-funded research activity?

The contribution of PIs must be substantially carried out in the EU Member States or the Associated Countries. This does not exclude field work or other research activities in cases where these must necessarily be conducted outside the EU Member States or the Associated Countries in order to achieve the scientific objectives of the project/activity.

The host institution is the institution which hosts and engages<sup>60</sup> the PI for at least the duration of the grant. It must be situated in one of the EU Member States<sup>2</sup>, or one of the Associated Countries<sup>3</sup>. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation<sup>8</sup>. Normally, the PI's host institution will be the only participating legal entity. Other legal entities, including those located in third countries<sup>61</sup>, may however be involved and receive funding to support the work of additional team members, if so specified in the grant agreement or subsequent amendments to the original grant agreement.

## 1.7 How many times can I apply for an ERC Advanced Grant?

Rules apply to reapplications for ERC grants by individual researchers who apply as Principal Investigators and/or co-Investigators, and whose eligible proposals are not judged to meet the threshold of quality<sup>62</sup>, as well as for multiple eligible applications<sup>63</sup> within the

---

<sup>57</sup> Research proposals within the scope of Annex I of the EURATOM Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications should be submitted to relevant calls under the Seventh EURATOM Research Framework Programme.

<sup>58</sup> In accordance with the Commission's position (published on 30.12.2006 in the Official Journal of the EU, Series L, 412 (2006), p. 42), proposals which will include research activities which destroy human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells, will not be submitted to the Regulatory Committee. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

<sup>59</sup> See also 'eligibility check' in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme.

<sup>60</sup> This does not exclude cases where the Principal Investigator's employer is not the host institution. In these cases, the specific conditions of engagement will also be subject to clarification and approval during the granting procedure.

<sup>61</sup> Third countries are neither Member nor Associated States

<sup>62</sup> For more information on the subject, see section 'Application of Criteria' in PART3: ERC ADVANCED GRANT

<sup>63</sup> Application submitted to the first Advanced Grant call for proposals and which were not eligible are not subject to the resubmission restrictions.

same or different type of ERC grants. The current ERC Advanced Grant-specific rules, which may subsequently be modified by the Scientific Council in light of experience, are as follows:

- No Principal Investigator who has submitted an eligible proposal to an Advanced Grant call (ERC-2010-AdG) may apply to the following Advanced Grant call (ERC-2011-AdG), unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold during the 2nd step but not funded due to insufficient available budget.
- A Principal Investigator or a Co-Investigator associated with an eligible proposal for an ERC-Advanced Grant to either of the first two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG) may not apply for the third ERC-Advanced Grant call (ERC-2010-AdG) unless the eligible proposal to the first or second call has met the quality threshold on both evaluation criteria - Principal Investigator, Research Project - at the end of step 1 of the evaluation.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** these rules must be taken very seriously into account by the potential applicants. Any violation of these rules during the submission of a proposal will be brought to the attention of the ERC eligibility committee which will assess and decide on the eligibility of the proposal.

## **2. Preparing an ERC Advanced Grant application**<sup>64</sup>

**Please consult the CORDIS pages regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail, or by phone +32 2233 3760.**

The application procedure consists of a **single submission stage using EPSS**<sup>65</sup>.

A complete ERC AdG grant application involves the following three separate components:

- **The administrative forms (Part A)**
- **The research proposal (Part B)**
- **The supporting documentation**

### **2.1 Instructions for completing "Part A" of the proposal**

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service EPSS (see Part 1, section 3.2 of this guide).

In the A forms the applicant will be asked for administrative data that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal. The A forms are an integral part of the proposal. Details of the work the PI intend to carry out will be described in the research proposal.

Section A1 gives a snapshot of the proposal and of the PI, section A2 concerns the PI host institution, while section A3 deals with money matters.

Please note:

- Section A1 concerns information about the research proposal and PI, including an abstract of the project proposal and the chosen ERC panel for evaluation. PIs must

<sup>64</sup> The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts. An English translation of the abstract must be included in your proposal.

<sup>65</sup> See part 1, section 3.2.1 of the Guide

indicate the most relevant ERC panel for evaluation of their proposal and choose one or more descriptors of the research fields involved from a drop-down menu (see Annex 1).

It is the PI's responsibility to choose the most relevant ERC panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research. The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals (incl. co-investigator projects) the PI may indicate a 'secondary evaluation panel'. The primary panel will then decide whether the proposal is interdisciplinary (cross-panel or even cross-domain) and if its evaluation requires expertise from other panels.

- Section A2 concerns information about the PI's Host Institution<sup>66</sup>.
- Subcontractors are not required to fill in section A2 and should not be listed separately in section A3.
- Section A3 concerns information about the estimated project costs and grant required.

**Please make sure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).**

Please ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (Form B, Part B2, Section 2c - Resources section). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

### **Participant Identification Code (PIC):**

Those who are familiar with the proposal submission and grant preparation forms know that in the past, participants had to provide to the Commission their legal and financial information every time they submit a proposal or negotiate a contract. To eliminate these redundant requests for information, we invite you to register your organisational data once in the **Unique Registration Facility (URF)** which is hosted in the [Participant Portal](#)<sup>67</sup>. Your organisation will receive after registration a Participant Identification Code (or PIC) which you will be able to use in all proposals submissions and negotiations.

If you think your organisation already has registered in URF and you wish to retrieve the PIC, please query online the PIC database by using the PIC search functionality<sup>68</sup>. Please do not forget to visit the 'Frequently Asked Questions' of the URF page should you want any additional general information.

Applicants possessing a Participant Identification Code (PIC) can use this number to identify themselves in the Electronic Proposal Submission System.

On entering the PIC, parts of the A forms will be filled in automatically. Please note that in the cases where a PIC is not available it will always be possible to submit a proposal by entering the organisation details manually. However, the use of PICs will lead to more efficient handling of the proposal.

---

<sup>66</sup> The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to other institutions of team members ('additional participants'), may be necessary

<sup>67</sup> [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp_en.html)

<sup>68</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf/public/search/searchPIC.do>

**Submission forms (Parts A and B) for the ERC Advanced Grant Call are currently under revision and will be made available when publishing the ERC-2010-ADG Call.**

## 2.2 Instructions for completing "Part B" of the proposal

The research proposal consists of two parts: Part B1 (including cover page, sections 1a and 1b) and Part B2 (including sections 2 and 3). **The templates of these two parts are provided in EPSS and their use is mandatory.**

The information to be included in each of the sections is described below. The maximum length of each section or its component, which needs to be respected strictly, is described below. The research proposal needs to be uploaded and submitted via EPSS (see Part 1, Section 3.2 of this guide).

**Only the material that the proposal contains within the page limits mentioned below while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated. It should provide sufficient evidence to the peer reviewers to assess the evaluation criteria.**

Each proposal page **must** carry a header presenting the applicant's last name, the acronym, and the reference to the respective proposal Part (**Part B1** or **Part B2**).

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11	Single	At least 1.5 cm

**Submission forms (Parts A and B) for the ERC Advanced Grant Call are currently under revision and will be made available when publishing the ERC-2010-ADG Call.**

## 2.3 Supporting Documentation

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically on EPSS in PDF format using the corresponding template available on EPSS (see annex 3):

- The host institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence set out in the supplementary agreement to the ERC Grant agreement are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful (template on EPSS, see Annex 3). This document needs to be originally signed, stamped and dated by the institution's legal representative

## 2.4 Submission via EPSS

The research proposal (Part B1 and B2) and the supporting documentation should be uploaded and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. For more information on EPSS and the uploading/submission of the grant application, please consult Part 1, section 3.2 of this guide.

Please ensure that the file names contain the "Proposal Short Name", such as:

- *PartB1\_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*
- *Host-Letter\_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*

## Checklist – Is your proposal complete?

For the submission of a complete **Advanced Grant proposal**, the following components have to be prepared

**The Administrative Forms (Part A): to be completed in EPSS**

- on-line forms A1, A2, A3

**The Research Proposal:**

**Part B1:**

- **Section 1a – The Principal Investigator**
- **Section 1b – The Extended Synopsis on the scientific proposal**

**Part B2:**

- **Section 2 – The scientific proposal including the ethical issues table (and, when necessary, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated)**
- **Section 3 – The research environment**

**The Supplementary Documents:**

- **The supporting statement from the host institution: originally signed, stamped and dated by institution's legal representative (see Annex 3)**
- **If applicable, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated (Ethical Issues Annex).**

## 3. Evaluation of ERC Advanced Grant proposals

A single submission of an ERC Advanced Grant proposal will be followed by a two-step peer review evaluation. In summary, these are as follows:

### 3.1 Step 1

- i.) **Eligibility Check:** Proposals are checked to ensure that all of the eligibility criteria are met.
- ii.) **Peer Review Evaluation:** Proposals which fulfil these criteria are evaluated by high level peer review evaluation panels, which assess, score and comment on the quality of Section 1 of the proposal. Proposals with a mark passing the quality thresholds<sup>69</sup> and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level (approximately 3 times the panel's indicative budget) will be retained and pass to step 2 of peer review evaluation. Those proposals failing to reach the quality threshold on any of the evaluation criteria or ranked below the budgetary cut-off described above will be rejected.

<sup>69</sup> For more information on the subject, see section 'Application of Criteria' in PART3: ERC ADVANCED GRANT

## 3.2 Step 2

- iii.) Peer Review Evaluation: All three sections of the proposal are considered and evaluated by remote referees and panels, which assess, score and comment on the quality of the proposal. Interdisciplinary proposals within a domain or across domains will be flagged as such, and the panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or reserve evaluators. Applications which meet the quality thresholds are ranked in a list.
- iv.) Feedback: Applicants are informed of the outcome of the evaluation of their proposal.

**For more details on the evaluation procedure and the handling of interdisciplinary proposals applicants are invited to consult annex 3 of the ERC Work Programme 2010.**

## 3.3 Evaluation criteria

**Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation.** It will be applied to the evaluation of both the Principal Investigator (and Co-Investigator if applicable) and the research project. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the research environment enables the excellence of the project to be achieved.

The detailed elements applying to the 3 sections of the proposal are as follows:

### **1. Principal Investigator**

**Quality of research output/track-record:** *How well qualified is the Principal Investigator (and any Co-Investigator if applicable) to conduct the project (reviewers are expected to evaluate the quality of the prior work such as published results in top peer review journals as well as other elements of the Principal Investigator's CV). Reviewers should also take into account possible breaks in the research career of the applicant and/or unconventional research career paths, especially in the case of women scientists.*

*To what extent are the publications and achievements of the Principal Investigator ground-breaking and demonstrative of independent creative thinking and capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art?*

*To what extent does the quality and quantity of funding the Principal Investigator has attracted during the last ten years demonstrate his/her reputation as a performer of ground-breaking research?*

**Intellectual capacity and creativity:** *To what extent does the Principal Investigator's record of research, collaborations, project conception, supervision of students and publications demonstrate that he/she is able to confront major research challenges in the field, and to initiate new productive lines of thinking?*

### **2. Research project**

**Ground-breaking nature of the research:** *Does the proposed research address important challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) addressed? 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)? How well conceived and organised is the proposed activity?*

**Potential impact:**

- (a) *Does the research open new and important, scientific, technological or scholarly horizons?*
- (b) *Will the project significantly enhance the research environment and capabilities for frontier research in Europe (in particular as regards the immediate host environment)?*

**Methodology:**

- a) *is the outlined scientific approach (including the activities to be undertaken by the individual team members) feasible?(step 1)*
- b) *is the proposed research methodology (including when pertinent the use of instrumentation, other type of infrastructures etc.) comprehensive and appropriate to the project? Will it enable the goals of the project convincingly to be achieved within the proposed timescales and resources (including the costs of the Principal Investigator and the members of the team who will be engaged in the project) and the level of risk associated with a challenging research project? (step 2)*

**High-gain/High-risk balance:**

- a) *does the proposed research involve highly novel and/or unconventional methodologies, whose high risk is justified by the possibility of a major breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific research domain/discipline?*

### **3. Research Environment (to be assessed only during step 2 of the evaluation)**

***Contribution of the research environment to the project:*** Does the host environment<sup>70</sup> provide most of the infrastructure necessary for the research to be carried out? Is it in a position to provide an appropriate intellectual environment and infrastructural support and to assist in achieving the ambitions for the project and the Principal Investigator?

***Participation of other legal entities***<sup>71</sup>: If it is proposed that other legal entities participate in the project, in addition to the applicant legal entity, is their participation fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project?

## **3.4 Application of Criteria**

Panels and referees will evaluate and mark numerically the proposals under the criteria of Heading 1: *Principal Investigator* and Heading 2: *Research project*. Proposals will be evaluated under Heading 3 on a 'pass/fail' basis and commented but not marked during step 2 of the evaluation. The evaluation panels will review the level of the requested grant and, as appropriate, suggest adjustments.

Each proposal will receive a mark on a scale of 1 to 4 for each of the 2 evaluation criteria (Heading 1 and 2):

- 4: Outstanding**
- 3: Excellent**
- 2: Very Good**
- 1: Non-competitive**

At each step of the evaluation and on the basis of their average mark (at least three independent panel members), proposals will be ranked by the panels (domains) in order of priority. If a proposal, in any step of the evaluation, is marked below the quality threshold of =2 on any of the first two headings, it will not be further evaluated.

At the end of each evaluation step, the proposals will be ranked by the panels on the basis of the marks they have received and an overall appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses.

---

<sup>70</sup> The term 'research environment' corresponds to the immediate setting of the research team, such as Department (rather than the sponsoring institution as a whole), and when appropriate, the wider 'milieu' of the team's operation, including collaborating laboratories, groups, departments etc.

<sup>71</sup> As the ERC schemes are addressed to individual investigators, usually the participation of more than one legal entity will not improve the chances of success. Participation of investigator(s) from another legal entity would be acceptable if they clearly and substantially enhance the scientific value of the proposal.

## **PART 4: Annexes**

## **ANNEX 1: ERC PEER REVIEW EVALUATION PANELS (ERC PANELS)**

For the planning and operation of the evaluation of ERC grant proposals by panels, the following panel structure applies. There are 25 ERC panels to cover all fields of science, engineering and scholarship assigned to three research domains: Social Sciences and Humanities (6 Panels, SH1–SH6), Physical Sciences and Engineering (10 Panels, PE1–PE10), Life Sciences (9 Panels, LS1–LS9).

The panel names are accompanied by a list of panel descriptors indicating the fields of research covered by the respective ERC panels.

### **Social Sciences and Humanities**

<b>SH1 <u>Individuals, institutions and markets:</u></b> economics, finance and management
SH1_1 Macroeconomics, growth, business cycles
SH1_2 Microeconomics, institutional economics
SH1_3 Econometrics, statistical methods
SH1_4 Financial markets, banking and corporate finance
SH1_5 Competitiveness, innovation, research and development
SH1_6 Consumer choice, behavioural economics, marketing
SH1_7 Organization studies, strategy
SH1_8 Human resource management, employment and earnings
SH1_9 Public administration, public economics
SH1_10 Income distribution, poverty
SH1_11 International trade, economic geography
SH1_12 Economic history, development
<b>SH2 <u>Institutions, values, beliefs and behaviour:</u></b> sociology, social anthropology, political science, law, communication, social studies of science and technology
SH2_1 Social structure, inequalities, social mobility
SH2_2 Ageing, work, social policies
SH2_3 Kinship, cultural dimensions of classification and cognition, individual and social identity, gender
SH2_4 Myth, ritual, symbolic representations, religious studies
SH2_5 Ethnography
SH2_6 Globalization, migration, interethnic relations
SH2_7 Transformation of societies, democratization, social movements
SH2_8 Political systems, legitimacy of governance
SH2_9 Legal systems, constitutions, foundations of law
SH2_10 Private, public and social law
SH2_11 Global and transnational governance, international law, human rights
SH2_12 Communication networks, media, information society
SH2_13 Social studies of science and technology, S&T policies, science and society
SH2_14 History of science and technology
<b>SH3 <u>Environment and society:</u></b> environmental studies, demography, social geography, urban and regional studies
SH3_1 Environment and sustainability
SH3_2 Environmental regulation and mediation
SH3_3 Social and industrial ecology
SH3_4 Geographical information systems, cartography
SH3_5 Human and social geography

SH3_6 Spatial and regional planning
SH3_7 Population dynamics
SH3_8 Urbanization and urban planning, cities
SH3_9 Mobility and transportation
<b>SH4 The Human Mind and its complexity:</b> cognition, psychology, linguistics, philosophy and education
SH4_1 Evolution of mind and cognitive functions, animal communication
SH4_2 Human life-span development
SH4_3 Neuropsychology and cognitive psychology
SH4_4 Clinical and experimental psychology,
SH4_5 Formal, cognitive, functional and computational linguistics
SH4_6 Typological, historical and comparative linguistics
SH4_7 Acquisition and knowledge of language: psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics
SH4_8 Use of language: pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis
SH4_9 second language teaching and learning, language pathologies, lexicography, terminology
SH4_10 Philosophy, history of philosophy
SH4_11 Epistemology, logic, philosophy of science
SH4_12 Ethics and morality, bioethics
SH4_13 Education: principles, techniques, typologies
<b>SH5 Cultures and cultural production:</b> literature, visual and performing arts, music, cultural and comparative studies
SH5_1 Classics
SH5_2 History of literature
SH5_3 Literary theory and comparative literature, literary styles
SH5_4 Textual philology and palaeography
SH5_5 Visual arts
SH5_6 Performing arts
SH5_7 Museums and exhibitions
SH5_8 Numismatics, epigraphy
SH5_9 Music and musicology, history of music
SH5_10 History of art and architecture
SH5_11 Cultural studies, cultural diversity
SH5_12 Cultural memory, intangible cultural heritage
<b>SH6 The study of the human past:</b> archaeology, history and memory
SH6_1 Archaeology, archaeometry, landscape archaeology
SH6_2 Prehistory and protohistory
SH6_3 Ancient history, ancient cultures
SH6_4 Medieval history
SH6_5 Modern and contemporary history
SH6_6 Colonial history, entangled histories, global history
SH6_7 Military history,
SH6_8 Historiography, theory and methods of history
SH6_9 History of ideas, intellectual history
SH6_10 Social, economic, cultural and political history
SH6_11 Collective memories, identities, lieux de mémoire, oral history
SH6_12 Cultural heritage

# Mathematics, physical sciences, information and communication, engineering, universe and earth sciences

<p><b>PE1 Mathematical foundations:</b> all areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics</p> <p>PE1_1 Logic and foundations</p> <p>PE1_2 Algebra</p>
<p>PE1_3 Number theory</p> <p>PE1_4 Algebraic and complex geometry</p> <p>PE1_5 Geometry</p> <p>PE1_6 Topology</p> <p>PE1_7 Lie groups, Lie algebras</p>
<p>PE1_8 Analysis</p> <p>PE1_9 Operator algebras and functional analysis</p> <p>PE1_10 ODE and dynamical systems</p>
<p>PE1_11 Partial differential equations</p> <p>PE1_12 Mathematical physics</p> <p>PE1_13 Probability and statistics</p> <p>PE1_14 Combinatorics</p>
<p>PE1_15 Mathematical aspects of computer science</p> <p>PE1_16 Numerical analysis and scientific computing</p> <p>PE1_17 Control theory and optimization</p> <p>PE1_18 Application of mathematics in sciences</p>
<p><b>PE2 Fundamental constituents of matter:</b> particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics</p> <p>PE2_1 Fundamental interactions and fields</p> <p>PE2_2 Particle physics</p> <p>PE2_3 Nuclear physics</p> <p>PE2_4 Nuclear astrophysics</p> <p>PE2_5 Gas and plasma physics</p> <p>PE2_6 Electromagnetism</p>
<p>PE2_7 Atomic, molecular physics</p> <p>PE2_8 Optics and quantum optics</p> <p>PE2_9 Lasers and laser physics</p>
<p>PE2_10 Acoustics</p> <p>PE2_11 Relativity</p> <p>PE2_12 Classical physics</p> <p>PE2_13 Thermodynamics</p>
<p>PE2_14 Non-linear physics</p> <p>PE2_15 General physics</p> <p>PE2_16 Metrology and measurement</p> <p>PE2_17 Statistical physics (gases)</p>
<p><b>PE3 Condensed matter physics:</b> structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences</p> <p>PE3_1 Structure of solids and liquids</p> <p>PE3_2 Mechanical and acoustical properties of condensed matter</p> <p>PE3_3 Thermal properties of condensed matter</p> <p>PE3_4 Transport properties of condensed matter,</p>

PE3_5 Electronic properties of materials and transport
PE3_6 Lattice dynamics
PE3_7 Semiconductors
PE3_8 Superconductivity
PE3_9 Superfluids
PE3_10 Spintronics
PE3_11 Magnetism
PE3_12 Nanophysics: nanoelectronics, nanophotonics, nanomagnetism
PE3_13 Mesoscopic physics
PE3_14 Molecular electronics
PE3_15 Soft condensed matter (liquid crystals...)
PE3_16 Fluid dynamics (physics)
PE3_17 Statistical physics (condensed matter)
PE3_18 Phase transitions, phase equilibria
PE3_19 Biophysics
<b>PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical sciences:</b> analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics
PE4_1 Physical chemistry
PE4_2 Nanochemistry
PE4_3 Spectroscopic and spectrometric techniques
PE4_4 Molecular architecture and Structure
PE4_5 Surface science
PE4_6 Analytical chemistry
PE4_7 Chemical physics
PE4_8 Chemical instrumentation
PE4_9 Electrochemistry, electrodialysis, microfluidics
PE4_10 Combinatorial chemistry
PE4_11 Method development in chemistry
PE4_12 Catalysis
PE4_13 Physical chemistry of biological systems
PE4_14 Chemical reactions: mechanisms, dynamics, kinetics and catalytic reactions
PE4_15 Theoretical and computational chemistry
PE4_16 Radiation chemistry
PE4_17 Nuclear chemistry
PE4_18 Photochemistry
<b>PE5 Materials and Synthesis:</b> materials synthesis, structure-properties relations, functional and advanced materials, molecular architecture, organic chemistry
PE5_1 Structural properties of materials
PE5_2 Solid state materials
PE5_3 Surface modification
PE5_4 Thin films
PE5_5 Corrosion
PE5_6 Porous materials
PE5_7 Ionic liquids
PE5_8 New materials: oxides, alloys, composite, organic-inorganic hybrid, superconductors
PE5_9 Materials for sensors
PE5_10 Nanomaterials : nanoparticles, nanotubes
PE5_11 Biomaterials synthesis

PE5_12 Intelligent materials – self assembled materials
PE5_13 Environment chemistry
PE5_14 Coordination chemistry
PE5_15 Colloid chemistry
PE5_16 Biological chemistry
PE5_17 Chemistry of condensed matter
PE5_18 Homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis
PE5_19 Characterization methods of materials
PE5_20 Macromolecular chemistry,
PE5_21 Polymer chemistry
PE5_22 Supramolecular chemistry
PE5_23 Organic chemistry
PE5_24 Molecular chemistry
<b><u>PE6 Computer science and informatics:</u></b> informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems
PE6_1 Computer architecture
PE6_2 Database management
PE6_3 Formal methods
PE6_4 Graphics and image processing
PE6_5 Human computer interaction and interface
PE6_6 Informatics and information systems
PE6_7 Theoretical computer science including quantum information
PE6_8 Intelligent systems
PE6_9 Scientific computing
PE6_10 Modelling tools
PE6_11 Multimedia
PE6_12 Parallel and Distributed Computing
PE6_13 Speech recognition
PE6_14 Systems and software
<b><u>PE7 Systems and communication engineering:</u></b> electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering
PE7_1 Control engineering
PE7_2 Electrical and electronic engineering: semiconductors, components, systems
PE7_4 Simulation engineering and modelling
PE7_5 Systems engineering, sensorics, actorics, automation
PE7_6 Micro- and nanoelectronics, optoelectronics
PE7_7 Communication technology, high-frequency technology
PE7_8 Signal processing
PE7_9 Networks
PE7_10 Man-machine-interfaces
PE7_11 Robotics
<b><u>PE8 Products and process engineering:</u></b> product design, process design and control, construction methods, civil engineering, energy systems, material engineering
PE8_1 Aerospace engineering
PE8_2 Chemical engineering, technical chemistry
PE8_3 Civil engineering, maritime/hydraulic engineering, geotechnics, waste treatment
PE8_4 Computational engineering

PE8_5	Fluid mechanics, hydraulic-, turbo-, and piston engines
PE8_6	Energy systems (production, distribution, application)
PE8_7	Micro(system) engineering,
PE8_8	Mechanical and manufacturing engineering (shaping, mounting, joining, separation)
PE8_9	Materials engineering (biomaterials, metals, ceramics, polymers, composites, ...)
PE8_10	Production technology, process engineering
PE8_11	Product design, ergonomics, man-machine interfaces
PE8_12	Lightweight construction, textile technology
PE8_13	Industrial bioengineering
PE8_14	Industrial biofuel production
<b>PE9 Universe sciences:</b> astro-physics/chemistry/biology; solar system; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy, planetary systems, cosmology; space science, instrumentation	
PE9_1	Solar and interplanetary physics
PE9_2	Planetary systems sciences
PE9_3	Interstellar medium
PE9_4	Formation of stars and planets
PE9_5	Astrobiology
PE9_6	Stars and stellar systems
PE9_7	The Galaxy
PE9_8	Formation and evolution of galaxies
PE9_9	Clusters of galaxies and large scale structures
PE9_10	High energy and particles astronomy – X-rays, cosmic rays, gamma rays, neutrinos
PE9_11	Relativistic astrophysics
PE9_12	Dark matter, dark energy
PE9_13	Gravitational astronomy
PE9_14	Cosmology
PE9_15	Space Sciences
PE9_16	Very large data bases: archiving, handling and analysis
PE9_17	Instrumentation - telescopes, detectors and techniques
PE9_18	Solar planetology
<b>PE10 Earth system science:</b> physical geography, geology, geophysics, meteorology, oceanography, climatology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management	
PE10_1	Atmospheric chemistry, atmospheric composition, air pollution
PE10_2	Meteorology, atmospheric physics and dynamics
PE10_3	Climatology and climate change
PE10_4	Terrestrial ecology, land cover change,
PE10_5	Geology, tectonics, volcanology,
PE10_6	Paleoclimatology, paleoecology
PE10_7	Physics of earth's interior, seismology, volcanology
PE10_8	Oceanography (physical, chemical, biological)
PE10_9	Biogeochemistry, biogeochemical cycles, environmental chemistry
PE10_10	Mineralogy, petrology, igneous petrology, metamorphic petrology
PE10_11	Geochemistry, crystal chemistry, isotope geochemistry, thermodynamics,
PE10_13	Sedimentology, soil science, palaeontology, earth evolution
PE10_14	Physical geography
PE10_15	Earth observations from space/remote sensing

PE10\_16 Geomagnetism, paleomagnetism  
PE10\_17 Ozone, upper atmosphere, ionosphere  
PE10\_18 Hydrology, water and soil pollution

## Life Sciences

**LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry:** molecular biology, biochemistry, biophysics, structural biology, biochemistry of signal transduction

- LS1\_1 Molecular biology and interactions
- LS1\_2 General biochemistry and metabolism
- LS1\_3 DNA biosynthesis, modification, repair and degradation
- LS1\_4 RNA synthesis, processing, modification and degradation
- LS1\_5 Protein synthesis, modification and turnover
- LS1\_6 Biophysics
- LS1\_7 Structural biology (crystallography, NMR, EM)
- LS1\_8 Biochemistry of signal transduction

**LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology:** genetics, population genetics, molecular genetics, genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, bioinformatics, computational biology, biostatistics, biological modelling and simulation, systems biology, genetic epidemiology

- LS2\_1 Genomics, comparative genomics, functional genomics
- LS2\_2 Transcriptomics
- LS2\_3 Proteomics
- LS2\_4 Metabolomics
- LS2\_5 Glycomics
- LS2\_6 Molecular genetics, reverse genetics and RNAi
- LS2\_7 Quantitative genetics
- LS2\_8 Epigenetics and gene regulation
- LS2\_9 Genetic epidemiology
- LS2\_10 Bioinformatics
- LS2\_11 Computational biology
- LS2\_12 Biostatistics
- LS2\_13 Systems biology
- LS2\_14 Biological systems analysis, modelling and simulation

**LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology:** cell biology, cell physiology, signal transduction, organogenesis, developmental genetics, pattern formation in plants and animals

- LS3\_1 Morphology and functional imaging of cells
- LS3\_2 Cell biology and molecular transport mechanisms
- LS3\_3 Cell cycle and division
- LS3\_4 Apoptosis
- LS3\_5 Cell differentiation, physiology and dynamics
- LS3\_6 Organelle biology
- LS3\_7 Cell signalling and cellular interactions
- LS3\_8 Signal transduction
- LS3\_9 Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology in animals
- LS3\_10 Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology in plants
- LS3\_11 Cell genetics
- LS3\_12 Stem cell biology

**LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology:** organ physiology, pathophysiology, endocrinology, metabolism, ageing, regeneration, tumorigenesis, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome

LS4\_1 Organ physiology

LS4\_2 Comparative physiology

LS4\_3 Endocrinology

LS4\_4 Ageing

LS4\_5 Metabolism, biological basis of metabolism related disorders

LS4\_6 Cancer and its biological basis

LS4\_7 Cardiovascular diseases

LS4\_8 Non-communicable diseases (except for neural/psychiatric, immunity-related, metabolism-related disorders, cancer and cardiovascular diseases)

**LS5 Neurosciences and neural disorders:** neurobiology, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, neuropharmacology, neuroimaging, systems neuroscience, neurological disorders, psychiatry

LS5\_1 Neuroanatomy and neurosurgery

LS5\_2 Neurophysiology

LS5\_3 Neurochemistry and neuropharmacology

LS5\_4 Sensory systems (e.g. visual system, auditory system)

LS5\_5 Mechanisms of pain

LS5\_6 Developmental neurobiology

LS5\_7 Cognition (e.g. learning, memory, emotions, speech)

LS5\_8 Behavioral neuroscience (e.g. sleep, consciousness, handedness)

LS5\_9 Systems neuroscience

LS5\_10 Neuroimaging and computational neuroscience

LS5\_11 Neurological disorders (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease)

LS5\_12 Psychiatric disorders (e.g. schizophrenia, autism, Tourette's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)

**LS6 Immunity and infection:** immunobiology, aetiology of immune disorders, microbiology, virology, parasitology, global and other infectious diseases, population dynamics of infectious diseases, veterinary medicine

LS6\_1 Innate immunity

LS6\_2 Adaptive immunity

LS6\_3 Phagocytosis and cellular immunity

LS6\_4 Immunosignalling

LS6\_5 Immunological memory and tolerance

LS6\_6 Immunogenetics

LS6\_7 Microbiology

LS6\_8 Virology

LS6\_9 Bacteriology

LS6\_10 Parasitology

LS6\_11 Prevention and treatment of infection by pathogens (e.g. vaccination, antibiotics, fungicide)

LS6\_12 Biological basis of immunity related disorders

LS6\_13 Veterinary medicine

**LS7 Diagnostic tools, therapies and public health:** aetiology, diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health, epidemiology, pharmacology, clinical medicine, regenerative medicine, medical ethics

LS7\_1 Medical engineering and technology

LS7\_2 Diagnostic tools (e.g. genetic, imaging)

LS7\_3 Pharmacology, pharmacogenomics, drug discovery and design, drug therapy

LS7\_4 Analgesia

LS7\_5 Toxicology

LS7\_6 Gene therapy, stem cell therapy, regenerative medicine

LS7\_7 Surgery

LS7\_8 Radiation therapy

LS7\_9 Health services, health care research

LS7\_10 Public health and epidemiology

LS7\_11 Environment and health risks including radiation

LS7\_12 Occupational medicine

LS7\_13 Medical ethics

**LS8 Evolutionary, population and environmental biology:** evolution, ecology, animal behaviour, population biology, biodiversity, biogeography, marine biology, eco-toxicology, prokaryotic biology

LS8\_1 Ecology (theoretical, community, population, microbial, evolutionary ecology)

LS8\_2 Population biology, population dynamics, population genetics, plant-animal interactions

LS8\_3 Systems eEvolution, biological adaptation, phylogenetics, systematics

LS8\_4 Biodiversity, comparative biology

LS8\_5 Conservation biology, ecology, genetics

LS8\_6 Biogeography

LS8\_7 Animal behaviour (behavioural ecology, animal communication)

LS8\_8 Environmental and marine biology

LS8\_9 Environmental toxicology

LS8\_10 Prokaryotic biology

LS8\_11 Symbiosis

**LS9 Applied life sciences and biotechnology:** agricultural, animal, fishery, forestry and food sciences; biotechnology, chemical biology, genetic engineering, synthetic biology, industrial biosciences; environmental biotechnology and remediation

LS9\_1 Genetic engineering, transgenic organisms, recombinant proteins, biosensors

LS9\_2 Synthetic biology and new bio-engineering concepts

LS9\_3 Agriculture related to animal husbandry, dairying, livestock raising

LS9\_4 Aquaculture, fisheries

LS9\_5 Agriculture related to crop production, soil biology and cultivation, applied plant biology

LS9\_6 Food sciences

LS9\_7 Forestry, biomass production (e.g. for biofuels)

LS9\_8 Environmental biotechnology, bioremediation, biodegradation

LS9\_9 Biotechnology, bioreactors, applied microbiology

LS9\_10 Biomimetics

LS9\_11 Biohazards, biological containment, biosafety, biosecurity

## **ANNEX 2: ETHICAL ISSUES**

### **Annex 2a: Specific Information on Ethical Issues**

The ERC peer review evaluation procedure includes an ethical evaluation of the proposals. A full ethical review of proposals involving sensitive ethical issues will take place after the evaluation and before any funding decision by the ERC.

Projects raising specific ethical issues such as research intervention on human beings<sup>72</sup>; research on human embryos and human embryonic stem cells and non-human primates are automatically submitted for a full ethical review.

The objective of this ethical review is to make sure that the ERC does not support research which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles.

#### **Ethical Issues Table and description of ethical issues in the research proposal (part B2)**

The Ethical Issues Table (see annex 2b) has to be completed **even if there are no ethical issues**. (simply respond with "no" to all relevant questions) (in part B2)

If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table is YES, you must provide a brief description of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately using the **Ethical Issues Annex** provided in EPSS (together with Part B2 template). In particular, it should outline the benefit and burden of such research, the effects it may have and how the ethical issues will be managed.

Please specify as well any authorization or permission you already have for the proposed work and include copies (the copies do not count towards the page limit).

On this basis, a proper ethical evaluation is possible if the proposal is considered for possible funding.

The following special issues should be taken into account:

**Informed consent:** When describing issues relating to informed consent, it will be necessary to illustrate an appropriate level of ethical sensitivity, and consider issues of insurance, incidental findings and the consequences of leaving the study.

**Data protection issues:** Avoid the unnecessary collection and use of personal data. Identify the source of the data, describing whether it is collected as part of the research or is previously collected data being used. Consider issues of informed consent for any data being used. Describe how personal identify of the data is protected.

**Use of animals:** Where animals are used in research the application of the 3Rs (Replace, Reduce, Refine) must be convincingly addressed. Numbers of animals should be specified. Describe what happens to the animals after the research experiments.

**Human embryonic stem cells:** Research proposals that will involve human embryonic stem cells (hESC) will have to address all the following specific points:

- the applicants should demonstrate that the project serves important research aims to advance scientific knowledge in basic research or to increase medical knowledge for the development of diagnostic, preventive or therapeutic methods to be applied to humans.

---

<sup>72</sup> Such as research and clinical trials, and research involving invasive techniques on persons (e.g. taking of tissue samples, examinations of the brain).

- the necessity to use hESC in order to achieve the scientific objectives set forth in the proposal. In particular, applicants must document that appropriate validated alternatives (in particular, stem cells from other sources or origins) are not suitable and/or available to achieve the expected goals of the proposal. This latter provision does not apply to research comparing hESC with other human stem cells.
- the applicants should take into account the legislation, regulations, ethical rules and/or codes of conduct in place in the country(ies) where the research using hESC is to take place, including the procedures for obtaining informed consent;
- the applicants should ensure that for all hESC lines to be used in the project were derived from embryo's
  - of which the donor(s)' express, written and informed consent was provided freely, in accordance with national legislation prior to the procurement of the cells.
  - that result from medically-assisted *in vitro* fertilisation designed to induce pregnancy, and were no longer to be used for that purpose.
  - of which the measures to protect personal data and privacy of donor(s), including genetic data, are in place during the procurement and for any use thereafter. Researchers must accordingly present all data in such a way as to ensure donor anonymity;
  - of which the conditions of donation are adequate, and namely that no pressure was put on the donor(s) at any stage, that no financial inducement was offered to donation for research at any stage and that the infertility treatment and research activities were kept appropriately separate;

Identify the countries where research will be undertaken and which ethical committees and regulatory organisations will need to be approached during the life of the project.

Note: Only in exceptional cases will additional information be sought for clarification, which means that any ethical review will be performed **solely on the basis of the information available in the proposal.**

To ensure compliance with ethical principles, the Commission Services will undertake ethics audit(s) of selected projects at its discretion.

A dedicated website that aims to provide clear, helpful information on ethical issues is now available at: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html)

## Annex 2b: Ethical Issues Table (template)

	<b>Research on Human Embryo/ Foetus</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
*	Does the proposed research involve human Embryos?		
*	Does the proposed research involve human Foetal Tissues/ Cells?		
*	Does the proposed research involve human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?		
*	Does the proposed research on human Embryonic Stem Cells involve cells in culture?		
*	Does the proposed research on Human Embryonic Stem Cells involve the derivation of cells from Embryos?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

	<b>Research on Humans</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
*	Does the proposed research involve children?		
*	Does the proposed research involve patients?		
*	Does the proposed research involve persons not able to give consent?		
*	Does the proposed research involve adult healthy volunteers?		
	Does the proposed research involve Human genetic material?		
	Does the proposed research involve Human biological samples?		
	Does the proposed research involve Human data collection?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

	<b>Privacy</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	Does the proposed research involve processing of genetic information or personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)?		
	Does the proposed research involve tracking the location or observation of people?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

	<b>Research on Animals</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	Does the proposed research involve research on animals?		
	Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?		
	Are those animals transgenic farm animals?		
*	Are those animals non-human primates?		
	Are those animals cloned farm animals?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

	<b>Research Involving Developing Countries</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
	Does the proposed research involve the use of local resources (genetic, animal, plant, etc)?		
	Is the proposed research of benefit to local communities (e.g. capacity building, access to healthcare, education, etc)?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

	Dual Use	YES	NO
	Research having direct military use		
	Research having the potential for terrorist abuse		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

	Other Ethical Issues	YES	NO
	Are there <b>OTHER</b> activities that may raise <b>Ethical Issues</b> ?		
	If <b>YES</b> please specify:		

**If the answer to any of the questions in the Ethical Issues Table (in part B2) is “Yes”, you are required to complete and upload the "B2\_Ethical Issues Annex" (template available on EPSS). The **Ethical Issues Annex** (max 2 pages<sup>73</sup>) must provide a brief explanation on the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. Please specify as well any authorization or permission you already have for the proposed work and include copies (these copies do not count towards the 2-page-limit). The Ethical Issues Annex will allow proper ethical screening if the proposal is chosen for possible funding. **Without it, your application cannot be reviewed properly.****

Please upload this Ethical Issues Annex and any related documents in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section included in the EPSS tab 'Part B & Annexes'.

**The pages of the Ethical Issues Table (included in Part B2) and Ethical Issues Annex (separate document) will not count towards the maximum page limit for part B.**

---

<sup>73</sup> The pages of Ethical Issues Annex do not count towards 15 page limit of the research proposal.

## **Annex 3: Commitment of the host institution**<sup>74, 75, 76</sup>

The name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the principal investigator and the project in case the application is successful, which is the *applicant legal entity*, confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with name of the principal investigator in which the obligations listed below will be addressed, should the proposal entitled acronym : title of the proposal be retained.

Performance obligations of the applicant legal entity that will become the beneficiary of the grant agreement, should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the grant agreement be successfully concluded:

The *applicant legal entity* commits itself to:

- a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the *principal investigator* who will need to devote, *in the case of a Starting Grant* at least 50% of her/his working time to the ERC-funded project *and, in the case of an Advanced Grant* at least 30% of her/his working time.
- b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex I of the ERC Grant Agreement, taking into consideration the specific role of the *principal investigator*.
- c) establish a *supplementary agreement* with the *principal investigator* which specifies that the *applicant legal entity* shall:
  - i) support the *principal investigator* in the management of the *team* and provide reasonable administrative assistance to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
    - a. the timeliness and clarity of financial information,
    - b. the general management and reporting of finances,
    - c. the advice on internal *applicant legal entity* strategies and *ERC Executive Agency or Commission* policies,
    - d. the organisation of *project* meetings as well as the general logistics of the *project*.
  - ii) provide research support to the *principal investigator* and his/her *team members* throughout the duration of the *project* in accordance with Annex I ERC Grant Agreement, in particular as regards infrastructure, equipment, products and other services as necessary for the conduct of the research;

---

<sup>74</sup> A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format. More information can be found in the Guide for Applicants on ERC Grant Schemes.

<sup>75</sup> The statement of commitment of the host institution refers to most obligations of the host institution, which are stated in the ERC grant agreement (see article II.2 of the grant agreement). The ERC grant agreement is available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu>.

<sup>76</sup> This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating his/her name, function, email address and stamp of the institution.

- iii) ensure that the *principal investigator* and his/her *team members* enjoy, on a royalty-free basis, access rights to the *background* and the *foreground* needed for their activities under the *project* as specified in Annex I ERC Grant Agreement;
- iv) guarantee adequate contractual conditions to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
  - a. the provisions for annual, sickness and parental leave,
  - b. occupational health and safety standards,
  - c. the general social security scheme, such as pension rights.
- v) ensure the necessary scientific autonomy of the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
  - a. the selection of other *team members*, hosted and engaged by the *applicant legal entity* or other legal entities, in line with profiles needed to conduct the research, including the appropriate advertisement;
  - b. the control over the budget in terms of its use to achieve the scientific objectives;
  - c. the authority to deliver scientific reports to the *ERC Executive Agency*;
  - d. the authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work.
- vi) inform the *principal investigator* of any circumstances affecting the implementation of the *project* or leading potentially to a suspension or termination of the ERC Grant Agreement;
- vii) subject to the observance of applicable national law and to the agreement of the *ERC Executive Agency*, the transfer of the grant agreement as well as any pre-financing of the grant not covered by an accepted cost claim to a new legal entity, should the *principal investigator* request to transfer the entire *project* or part of it to this new legal entity. The *applicant legal entity* shall submit a substantiated request for amendment or notify the *ERC Executive Agency* in case of its objection to the transfer.

For the institution (applicant legal entity)

Name, Function, Email +Signature of legal representative

Stamp of institution (applicant legal entity)

IMPORTANT NOTE: All the above mentioned items are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the host institution.

**ANNEX 4: TIMETABLE AND SPECIFIC  
INFORMATION FOR THE 2010 ERC CALLS**

## **Annex 4a: Starting Independent Researcher Grant Call for Proposals**

**Call Title:** Call for proposals for ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant

**Call identifier:** ERC-2010-StG

**Date of publication**<sup>77</sup>: 30 July 2009

**Electronic proposal submission deadlines**<sup>78</sup> (single submission of full proposal): <sup>79</sup>

**Panels: PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering)**, 28 October 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences)**, 18 November 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities)**, 9 December 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Indicative budget:** EUR 528 237 600 from 2010 budget<sup>80</sup>

**N.B.:** The ERC Scientific Council has established the following indicative percentage budgets for each of the 3 main research domains:

Physical Sciences & Engineering: 39%

Life Sciences: 34%

Social Sciences & Humanities: 14%

and an Interdisciplinary<sup>81</sup> domain with an indicative budget of 13%.

The Community financial contribution shall be in the form of a grant to the budget corresponding to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and a contribution of 20% of the total eligible direct costs. Indicative budgets may permit a variation of the budget for each domain by a maximum of 10% of the total budget for the call; however the budget proportions allocated to projects in the three main research domains will be no lower than the percentages indicated. In addition, the final budget awarded per ERC call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call if additional appropriations become available.

**Activity:** European Research Council Starting Grant

**Minimum number of participants:** At least 1 independent legal entity established in one of the Member States, or one of the Associated countries (in the case of the participation of

---

<sup>77</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication

<sup>78</sup> The Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months

<sup>79</sup> please consult Annex 1 of the Ideas Work Programme for the panel description

<sup>80</sup> Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2010 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority

<sup>81</sup> Including cross-panel and/or cross-domain research projects and research with the potential to open new fields

more than one legal entity the participants are not obliged to establish a consortium agreement)

**Restrictions on participation:** see eligibility criteria in the Work Programme

**Grant Portability:** applicants should be aware of the portability features of ERC grants as described in the ERC model grant agreement ([http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html))

**Grant starting date:** due to the ground-breaking nature of frontier research projects, it is expected that all projects start within 6 months from the award of the grant. ERC reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

**Eligibility criteria (see also section 3.7 of the Work Programme for other possible reapplications and multiple applications restrictions):**

Incomplete proposals (where parts or sections of the proposal and/or the PhD-related support documents and/or supporting documentation justifying the extension of the eligibility period (see below) and/or the host institution's binding statement of support are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated<sup>82</sup>. The proposal must be submitted to the appropriate primary ERC panel (i.e. the panel which covers the main scientific areas of the research proposed) before the respective deadline. In addition, only proposals which satisfy the rules for reapplication and multiple applications (as specified in section 3.7 of this WP) will be considered eligible to be evaluated.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

### **Eligible Scientific Fields**

Applications may be made in any field of research<sup>83</sup>, other than those specifically excluded from the 7<sup>th</sup> framework programme.

Funding of human embryonic stem cell research will be possible within the ethical framework defined in the EC 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme<sup>84</sup> as well as the Ideas Specific Programme.

### **Eligible Principal Investigator**

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who would like to establish their research activity in any Member State as well as any Associated Country.

The Principal Investigator can be of any age and nationality and he/she can reside in any country in the world at the time of the application

---

<sup>82</sup> See also 'eligibility check' in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures for indirect actions under the Ideas Specific Programme of the Seventh Framework Programme, (C(2007)2286 of 6 June 2007) and C(2007)4429 of 27 September 2007.

<sup>83</sup> Research proposals within the scope of Annex I of the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications should be submitted to relevant calls under the Euratom 7th Framework Programme

<sup>84</sup> In accordance with Commission statement, OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42, proposals which will include research activities which destroy human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells, will not be submitted to the Regulatory Committee. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

The ERC Starting Grant Principal Investigator must have been awarded<sup>85</sup> his/her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree<sup>86</sup>) at least 2 and up to 10 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant.

Extensions of this period may be allowed only in case of eligible career breaks which must be properly documented: maternity (18 months per child born before or after the PhD award) & paternity leave (accumulation of actual time off for children born before or after the PhD award) and leave taken for long-term illness, national service. Leave taken for unavoidable statutory reasons (e.g. clinical qualifications) may also count as an extension.

The cumulative eligibility period should not in any case surpass 14.5 years following the award of the first PhD. No allowance will be made for part-time working (2 years of half-time working count as 2 full-time years).

Principal Investigators are sub-divided during evaluation in two main streams, with applicants being awarded their PhD at least 2 and no more than 6 years (broadly described as "starters") or over 6 but no more than 10 years (broadly described as "consolidators") prior to the call publication.

### **Eligible Host Institution (Applicant Legal Entity)**

The contribution of Principal Investigators must be substantially carried out in the EU or Associated countries. This does not exclude field work or other research activities in cases where these must necessarily be conducted outside the EU or the associated countries in order to achieve the scientific objectives of the project/activity. Starting Grant Principal Investigators must be strongly committed to the project and devote a significant amount of time to it (they will need to devote at least 50% of their working time in the ERC-funded project).

The host institution will host and engage<sup>87</sup> the Principal Investigator for at least the duration of the grant. It must be situated in one of the Member States, or one of the associated countries. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.) or the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Normally, the applicant legal entity will be the only participating legal entity. Other legal entities that host other team members, including those located in third countries, may however be involved and receive funding to support the work of additional team members, if so specified in the grant award or subsequent amendments to the original grant.

### **Evaluation procedure (see also section 3.6 of the Work Programme):**

- The evaluation will take place **in two steps** following the **single submission of a full proposal**.
- The evaluation is carried out through evaluation panels that may be assisted by referees.
- The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In case of interdisciplinary proposals the panel, if it confirms the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal, shall request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees who act as reserve evaluators.

---

<sup>85</sup> The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be the date of the actual award according to the national rules in the country that the degree was awarded.

<sup>86</sup> See Scientific Council's strategic note 'PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degrees' on ERC web site: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=24>, including specific provisions for holders of medical degrees.

<sup>87</sup> See also footnote 3

- **Step 1:** Following the submission of the proposal, Section 1 of the proposal (see section 3.5) will be assessed and marked.
- Proposals may be evaluated remotely.
- At the end of this evaluation of step 1, the panel will rank the proposals according to their marks. An indicative budget will be allocated to each panel, in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals. This indicative budget is calculated as the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the panel divided by the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the domain of the call, multiplied by the total indicative budget of the domain.
- Following the same rationale and in order to assure comparable success rate for the broadly called "starters" (award of PhD from 2 up to 6 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication) and the "consolidators" (award of PhD over 6 and up to 10 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication), the indicative budget of each panel will be further divided in proportion to the budgetary demand of the proposals submitted by these two categories ("starters" and "consolidators").
- Each panel will determine its budgetary cut-off level as a multiple of its indicative budget. The budgetary cut-off level should normally be 2.5 times the panel's indicative budget (slight variations of this factor may be allowed but the cut-off level must never exceed 3 times the panel's indicative budget). Proposals with a mark passing the quality threshold and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level will be retained and pass to step 2 of evaluation (all proposals with identical marks at the cut off level will pass through to the second step of evaluation). Those proposals failing to reach the quality threshold on any of the evaluation criteria or ranked below the budgetary cut-off described above will be rejected.
- The complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed and ranked by the panels during **step 2** of the evaluation. Interdisciplinary proposals within a domain or across domains will be flagged as such, and the panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees who act as reserve evaluators.
- Principal Investigators whose proposals will be retained for the second step of the evaluation may be invited for an interview to present their project to the evaluation panel meeting in Brussels. They will be accordingly reimbursed for their travel and subsistence expenses<sup>88</sup>.
- Following the conclusion of the panel evaluations the following additional steps will be taken with the participation of the evaluation peer review evaluation panel chairs:

**Step 2a:** Acting in concert, the peer review evaluation panel chairs of each research domain or their deputies, representing their panels, will prepare a consolidated ranked list for the domain's proposals which are above the quality threshold and can be funded in order of priority from the respective domain budgets<sup>89</sup>.

**Step 2b:** Acting in concert across the 3 main research domains, taking account of the forward looking and innovative nature of the programme, all the peer review evaluation panel chairs or their deputies will bring forth and specifically discuss, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the scientific added value of proposals above the quality threshold which are of interdisciplinary nature. In order to establish the ranked list of the ***Interdisciplinary Research***

---

<sup>88</sup> In duly justified and exceptional cases, and with the consent of the Scientific Council, the Commission/ERC DIS may agree, subject to technical feasibility, on other ways of interviewing successful Principal Investigators such as a video link, teleconference or similar means, and on the reimbursement of their possible related travel and subsistence expenses. Relevant provisions for the reimbursement of expenses incurred in relation to Principal Investigators' interviews are included in the ERC Rules for submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures for indirect actions under the Ideas Specific Programme of the 7th Framework Programme.

<sup>89</sup> In accordance with the ERC Rules for the Submission of Proposals and the related valuation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme, (C(2007)2286 of 6 June 2007) and C(2007)4429 of 27 September 2007

domain, all peer review evaluation panel chairs will further assess these proposals on the basis of the second evaluation criterion (Research project).

Any funds still available in any of the 4 domains, after exhausting the list of proposals over the quality threshold, will be distributed to the other 3 domains according to the initial call budget breakdown.

Finally, a number of proposals (over the quality threshold) in the 4 domain lists may also be kept in reserve to allow for eventualities such as the failure of the granting procedure to projects, the withdrawal of proposals, budget savings agreed during the granting procedure, or the availability of additional budget from other sources. Additional funds will also be distributed according to the initial call budget breakdown.

**Evaluation criteria:** See the Work Programme for the applicable criteria

Information on the modalities of the call and guidance to applicants on how to submit projects is available on:

<http://erc.europa.eu>, [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/home_en.html)

## **Annex 4b: Advanced Investigator Grant Call for Proposals**

**Call Title:** Call for proposals for *ERC Advanced Investigators Grant*

**Call identifier:** ERC-2010-AdG

**Date of publication**<sup>90</sup>: 29 October 2009

**Electronic proposal submission deadlines**<sup>91</sup> (single submission of full proposal): <sup>92</sup>

**Panels: PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering)**, 24 February 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences)**, 17 March 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities)**, 7 April 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Indicative budget:** EUR 590 052 000 from 2010 budget<sup>93</sup>

**N.B.:** The ERC Scientific Council has established the following indicative percentage budgets for each of the 3 main research domains:

Physical Sciences & Engineering: 39%

Life Sciences: 34%

Social Sciences & Humanities: 14%

and an Interdisciplinary<sup>94</sup> domain with an indicative budget of 13%.

The Community financial contribution shall be in the form of a grant to the budget corresponding to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and a contribution of 20% of the total eligible direct costs. Indicative budgets may permit a variation of the budget for each domain by a maximum of 10% of the total budget for the call; however the budget proportions allocated to projects in the three main research domains will be no lower than the percentages indicated. In addition, the final budget awarded per ERC call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call if additional appropriations become available.

**Activity:** European Research Council Advanced Grant

**Minimum number of participants:** At least 1 independent legal entity established in one of the Member States, or one of the Associated countries (in the case of the participation of more than one legal entity the participants are not obliged to establish a consortium agreement)

**Restrictions on participation:** see eligibility criteria in the Work Programme

---

<sup>90</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication

<sup>91</sup> The Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months

<sup>92</sup> please consult Annex 1 of the Ideas Work Programme for the panel description

<sup>93</sup> Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2010 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority

<sup>94</sup> Including cross-panel and/or cross-domain research projects and research with the potential to open new fields

**Grant Portability:** applicants should be aware of the portability features of ERC grants as described in the ERC model grant agreement ([http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html))

**Grant starting date:** due to the ground-breaking nature of frontier research projects, it is expected that all projects start within 6 months from the award of the grant. ERC reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

**Eligibility criteria (see also section 4.7 of the Work Programme for other possible reapplications and multiple applications restrictions):**

Incomplete proposals (where parts of the proposal and/or the host institution's binding statement of support are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated<sup>95</sup>. The proposal must be submitted to the appropriate primary ERC panel (i.e. the panel which covers the main scientific areas of the research proposed) before the respective deadline. In addition, only proposals which satisfy the rules for reapplication and multiple applications (as specified in section 4.7 of this WP) will be considered eligible to be evaluated.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

**Eligible Scientific Fields**

Applications may be made in any field of research<sup>96</sup>, other than those specifically excluded from the 7<sup>th</sup> framework programme.

Funding of human embryonic stem cell research will be possible within the ethical framework defined in the EC 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme<sup>97</sup> as well as the Ideas Specific Programme.

**Eligible Principal Investigator**

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who would like to establish their research activity up in any Member State as well as any Associated country.

The Principal Investigator can be of any age and nationality and he/she can reside in any country in the world at the time of the application.

**Eligible Host Institution (Applicant Legal Entity)**

The contribution of Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators must be substantially carried out in the EU or Associated countries. This does not exclude field work or other research activities in cases where these must necessarily be conducted outside the EU or the associated countries in order to achieve the scientific objectives of the project/activity.

---

<sup>95</sup> See also 'eligibility check' in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures for indirect actions under the Ideas Specific Programme of the Seventh Framework Programme, (C(2007)2286 of 6 June 2007) and C(2007)4429 of 27 September 2007.

<sup>96</sup> Research proposals within the scope of Annex I of the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications should be submitted to relevant calls under the Euratom 7th Framework Programme

<sup>97</sup> In accordance with Commission statement, OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42, proposals which will include research activities which destroy human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells, will not be submitted to the Regulatory Committee. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Advanced Grant Principal Investigators must be strongly committed to the project and devote a significant amount of time to it (they will need to devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project while spending at least 50% of their total working time in a EU Member State or Associated Country).

The host institution will host and engage<sup>98</sup> the Principal Investigator for at least the duration of the grant. It must be situated in one of the Member States, or one of the associated countries. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.) or the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Normally, the applicant legal entity will be the only participating legal entity. Other legal entities that host other team members, including those located in third countries, may however be involved and receive funding to support the work of additional team members, if so specified in the grant award or subsequent amendments to the original grant.

**Evaluation procedure (see also section 4.6 of the Work Programme):**

- The evaluation will take place **in two steps** following the **single submission of a full proposal**.
- The evaluation is carried out through evaluation panels that may be assisted by referees.
- The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In case of interdisciplinary proposals the panel, if it confirms the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal, shall request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees who act as reserve evaluators.
- **Step 1:** Following the submission of the proposal, Section 1 of the proposal (see section 4.5) will be assessed and marked.
- Proposals may be evaluated remotely.
- At the end of this evaluation of step 1, the panel will rank the proposals according to their marks. An indicative budget will be allocated to each panel, in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals. This indicative budget is calculated as the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the panel divided by the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the domain of the call, multiplied by the total indicative budget of the domain.
- Each panel will determine its budgetary cut-off level as a multiple of its indicative budget. The budgetary cut-off level should be approximately 3 times the panel's indicative budget. Proposals with a mark passing the quality threshold and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level will be retained and pass to step 2 of evaluation (all proposals with identical marks at the cut off level will pass through to the second step of evaluation). Those proposals failing to reach the quality threshold on any of the evaluation criteria or ranked below the budgetary cut-off described above will be rejected.
- The complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed and ranked by the panels during **step 2** of the evaluation. Interdisciplinary proposals within a domain or across domains will be flagged as such, and the panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees who act as reserve evaluators.
- Following the conclusion of the panel evaluations the following additional steps will be taken with the participation of the evaluation peer review evaluation panel chairs:
  - **Step 2a:** Acting in concert, the peer review evaluation panel chairs of each research domain or their deputies, representing their panels, will prepare a consolidated ranked list for the domain's proposals which are above the

---

<sup>98</sup> See also footnote 3

quality threshold and can be funded in order of priority from the respective domain budgets<sup>99</sup>.

**Step 2b:** Acting in concert across the 3 main research domains, taking account of the forward looking and innovative nature of the programme, all the peer review evaluation panel chairs or their deputies will bring forth and specifically discuss, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the scientific added value of proposals above the quality threshold which are of interdisciplinary nature. In order to establish the ranked list of the ***Interdisciplinary Research*** domain, all peer review evaluation panel chairs will further assess these proposals on the basis of the second evaluation criterion (Research project).

Any funds still available in any of the 4 domains, after exhausting the list of proposals over the quality threshold, will be distributed to the other 3 domains according to the initial call budget breakdown.

Finally, a number of proposals (over the quality threshold) in the 4 domain lists may also be kept in reserve to allow for eventualities such as the failure of the granting procedure to projects, the withdrawal of proposals, budget savings agreed during the granting procedure, or the availability of additional budget from other sources. Additional funds will also be distributed according to the initial call budget breakdown.

**Evaluation criteria:** See the Work Programme for the applicable criteria

Information on the modalities of the call and guidance to applicants on how to submit projects is available on:

<http://erc.europa.eu>, [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/home_en.html)

---

<sup>99</sup> In accordance with the ERC rules for the Submission of Proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme, (C(2007)2286 of 6 June 2007) and C(2007)4429 of 27 September 2007.