

ERC Starting Grant Applicants Training

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Judith Zbinden, PhD
National Contact Point (NCP) ERC
Euresearch Head Office
judith.zbinden@euresearch.ch
031 380 60 16

Presentation Outline

- ERC Starting and Consolidator Grant calls 2018
- Getting started
 - Panels
 - Evaluation
- Application
 - CV and track-record
 - Synopsis and proposal
 - Ethical issues
- Post-deadline



Calls 2018

| | <i>Starting Grant</i> | <i>Consolidator Grant</i> |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Call identifier</i> | ERC-2018-StG | ERC-2018-CoG |
| <i>Call Opens</i> | 03/08/2017 | 24/10/2017 |
| <i>Deadline or cut-off dates for PoC</i> | 17/10/2017 | 15/02/2018 |

Who Can Apply?

- Starting Grant: PhD award 2-7 years before 1 January 2018
- Consolidator Grant: PhD award >7-12 years before 1 January 2018
- Extension of eligibility time window possible:
 - Maternity, paternity
 - Clinical training
 - Military service
 - Long illness
- Special conditions for Medical Doctors

Who Can/Should Apply?

- Eligibility with regards to research age enforced very strictly
- Excellence and potential of PI
- Excellence of project
- Commitment to ERC project
 - StG: $\geq 50\%$ of working time on ERC project
 - CoG: $\geq 40\%$ of working time on ERC project
- Support of Host Institution

Getting Started

- Start early – your proposal must be excellent in all aspects (including layout, language etc.)
- Study «[Work Programme 2018](#)» and «[Information for Applicants](#)»
- Use templates available from [EC Participants Portal](#) (downloadable once registered)
- Decide on evaluation panel(s) and study panel disciplinary composition
- Contact Host Institution to arrange receiving Host Support Letter
- Contact ERC NCPs and/or [Euresearch Regional Office](#) whenever questions arise

Evaluation Panels

- 25 evaluation panels in 3 domains (Physical Sciences & Engineering (PE), Life Sciences (LS) & Social Sciences & Humanities (SH))
- Panel descriptions: Annex I of [«Information for Applicants»](#) (p. 51-60)
- [Panels chairs](#) published before call deadline; panel members after call deadline
- Two sets of evaluation panels alternate

Evaluation Panels - Working Mode

- Normally 2-3 panel members deal in depth with a proposal and will lead discussion and interview
- But: All panel members have a say and will get more heavily involved the more your proposal ends up on the edge of getting invited to the interview/getting funded
 - Very important that all panel members are convinced at least on broad concept and impact of project
 - Layout should allow to grasp main aspects without reading entire documents

Composition of Application

PART A – online forms to complete in PPSS

- A1 General info
- A2 Administrative Data
- A3 Budget
- A4 Ethics
- A5 Call specific questions

Annexes – submitted as pdf

- Letter of HI
- PhD certificate (incl. supporting documents if applicable)
- Ethics self-assessment (if applicable)
- Supporting documents related to ethics (if applicable)

PART B1 - submitted as pdf

- a) Extended synopsis 5 p.
- b) CV 2 p.
- c) Track record 2 p.

PART B2 – submitted as pdf

- Scientific proposal 15 p.
- a) State of the art & objectives
- b) Methodology
- c) Resources

Composition of Application

Evaluation step 1

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Composition of Application

Evaluation step 2

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& interview in Brussels

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CV and Track-Record

2. Principal Investigator

Intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment

Starting and Consolidator

Intellectual capacity and creativity

To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research?

To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?

To what extent have the achievements of the PI typically gone beyond the state of the art?

Commitment

To what extent does the PI demonstrate the level of commitment to the project necessary for its execution and the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project (minimum 50% for Starting and 40% for Consolidator of the total working time on it) (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

CV

- Suggestion for structure in template
- Explicitly mention career gaps
- Contains «funding ID»: ongoing grants and funding applications
- Tables on ongoing grants and applications do not count towards page limit
- Concluded projects with competitive funding as additional achievement

Track-Record

- Highlight up to 5 representative publications
- Consider commenting on key publications
- Mention total number of publications
- Make sure online full publication lists online are up to date

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Characteristics of ERC Projects

- Clearly defined projects (not programs)
- Novel, creative, innovative; significant advancement beyond state of the art
- Often of interdisciplinary nature
- Often high-risk high-gain
- Yet feasible
- Mature “out of the box” idea

Characteristics of ERC Projects cont.

- Needs to be clear that PI is the right person to perform the project
- Complementarity of ERC to national research funding: normally ERC projects could not be easily funded otherwise due to nature and size of projects

Characteristics of ERC Projects

- Clearly defined projects (not programs)
- Novel, creative, innovative; significant advancement beyond state of the art
- Often of **interdisciplinary** nature
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Interdisciplinarity

- Mentioned as an asset in the official documents
- NOT a factor that is per se looked upon favorably
- Research evaluation systems struggle to fairly treat interdisciplinary proposals
- Interdisciplinary within single ERC evaluation panel vs. spanning several panels

Characteristics of ERC Projects

- Clearly defined projects (not programs)
- Novel, creative, innovative; significant advancement beyond state of the art
- Often of interdisciplinary nature
- **Often high-risk high-gain**
- **Yet feasible**
- Mature “out of the box” idea

High-Risk High-Gain and Feasibility

- Find balance between risk and feasibility
- Risk in itself is not desirable – proposals with minimal risks welcome
- Risk is tolerated if matched by potentially high gain
- Demonstrate why you need to take risks
- Describe risks and contingency plans overall and by subproject
- Ideally, the proposal is composed of subprojects with different levels and risks

High-Risk High-Gain and Feasibility

Demonstrate feasibility through

- Principle Investigator
- Host Institution
- Scientific approach
- Preliminary data
- (External experts)
- ...

Synopsis

1. Research Project

Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?

To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?

To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain?

Scientific Approach

To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high risk/high gain (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

Full Proposal

1. Research Project

Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?

To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?

To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain?

Scientific Approach

To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high risk/high gain (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

To what extent is the proposed research methodology appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

To what extent are the proposed timescales and resources necessary and properly justified (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

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Resources

To what extent are the proposed timescales and resources necessary and properly justified (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

- Description of ERC team, profile of team members
- Overview over timescales (e.g. simple Gant chart)
- Explanation of costs requested by category
- Mention other resources needed for the project
- Specific justification in case of request of additional budget
- Include brief description of team in Synopsis

Keeping Evaluators in Mind

- Keep panel composition in mind – presentation of concept and overall objectives should be understandable to all panel members
- Full proposal not available at evaluation step 1
- Avoid copy-paste between synopsis and proposal
- Introduce overall concept and objectives early in text

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Ethical Issues

- All applicants: obligation to complete «Ethics Issues table» (Form A4)
- If answer to one or more questions is YES, «Ethics Self-Assessment» needs to be provided
- Flow-text of unlimited pages (pdf), submitted with Supporting Documentation section
- Option to submit additional supporting documents (e.g. approvals of similar research)
- Information for Applicants Annex 4 (p. 67-80)
- EC Guidance: [How to complete your ethics self-assessment](#)

Documents and Links

- [Work Programme 2018](#)
- [Information for Applicants StG & CoG 2018](#)
- [ERC-StG-2018 on Participant Portal](#)
- ERC projects:
 - [ERC website](#)
 - [Cordis](#)
- [Past panel members](#)

Post-Deadline

- Results of step 1 evaluation: May 2018
- Interviews: Summer 2018
- Final evaluation results: August-September 2018
- Earliest project start: Jan 2019

Expected Resubmission Rules

Evaluation step 1

- Researchers with proposals categorised **C** not eligible in next 2 calls
- Researchers with proposals categorised **B** not eligible in next call
- Researchers with proposals categorised **A** can submit in next call

Evaluation step 2

- Eligible in subsequent call