



European Research Council

# ERC Grant Schemes

## Guide for Applicants

July 2008

*(A revised Guide for Applicants will be published with the next call for Advanced Grant proposals in November 2008. That revised version will mainly reflect changes in the submission forms for the ERC Advanced Grant scheme.)*

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

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IDEAS



## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Potential applicants must be aware that there are several adjustments that will be implemented in the 2008 call for ERC Starting Grant proposals and they should consult the relevant parts of this guide (especially part 2 and the annexes).

The main adjustments are the following:

### **Starting Grant scheme and submission process**

1. Minimal and symmetric reduction of eligibility window (**3-8 years post PhD** with justifiable extensions of this period still possible) and assessment of Principal Investigator taking into account the stage of evolution of his/her career and the research team
2. Indications on the expected profile of a competitive ERC Starting Grant applicant ("benchmarks")
3. Implementation of the "Principal Investigator can apply every other year" rule for the ERC Starting Grants (with some exemptions)

### **Evaluation process**

4. Single submission of full proposal (2-step evaluation, including interviews in step 2)
5. Re-distribution of scientific coverage of the Starting Grant evaluation panels (alignment with Advanced Grant evaluation)
6. Assessment of interdisciplinary proposals (towards evaluation "mainstreaming" of interdisciplinary proposals)

**These adjustments may have an impact in the format of the EPSS applications forms. Applicants are therefore requested to consult the EPSS web pages for any further information, which is accessible as soon as the call has been published.**

## **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 its host institution, whereas part 2 is relevant mainly for the host institutions' administration.

The ERC Guide for Applicants is divided in 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 precedent 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, 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/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.ncpList>.

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

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# **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 (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 a Dedicated Implementation Structure. 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 Dedicated Implementation Structure (ERC-DIS)**

The ERC-DIS implements the Ideas Specific Programme 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.

The European Commission is setting up the ERC-DIS as an Executive Agency. Pending the establishment and operability of the Executive Agency, its implementation tasks are executed by a dedicated service of the European Commission.

# **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 and Associated Countries, 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 and Associated Countries. 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>2</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, whereas in the case of the Advanced Grant the Scientific Council would expect the PI to devote at least 30% of its workload to the ERC-

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<sup>2</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.

funded project while spending at least 50% of his/her total workload in Europe (EU Member State or Associated Country<sup>5</sup>).

## 2.2.2 The host institution

An ERC grant is awarded to the institution (applicant legal entity) that engages and hosts the PI, with the attached **commitment that this institution offers appropriate conditions for the PI to direct independently the research and manage its funding for the duration of the project**<sup>3</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 (C (2007)1625, 16/04/2007).

It is a condition for all ERC funding that the host institution commits to the following **conditions of independence**<sup>4</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 of the European Union or in an Associated Country<sup>5</sup>. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation<sup>6</sup>.

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

## 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 and PhD students - 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

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<sup>3</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>4</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>5</sup> The Associated Countries are: Albania, Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, FYR of Macedonia, Norway, Rep. of Montenegro, Serbia, Switzerland, and Turkey.

<sup>6</sup> such as CERN, EMBL, ILL, ESO, ESRF, JRC, ESA.

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. 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**, 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, co-investigators are expected to be active researchers with an outstanding track record of significant research 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 or an Associated Country.

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 towards indirect costs**, which cannot exceed 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). 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>7</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 and those who passed the quality threshold are ranked.

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 (<http://erc.europa.eu>), the CORDIS website ([http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html)) and in the Official Journal of the European Union (<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/oj>).

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

The ERC envisages to publish – from 2008 onwards – annual calls for proposals for both the ERC Starting Grant and ERC Advanced Grant scheme<sup>8</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 2008 - 2010**

	<b>Call open</b>	<b>Call Deadline</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>ERC-2009-StG</b>	<b>Summer 08</b>	<b>Autumn 08</b>	<b>Winter 08 - Spring 09</b>
<b>ERC-2010-StG</b>	<b>Summer 09</b>	<b>Autumn 09</b>	<b>Winter 09 - Spring 10</b>
<b>ERC-2011-StG</b>	<b>Summer 10</b>	<b>Autumn 10</b>	<b>Winter 10 - Spring 11</b>

#### **ERC Advanced Grant Calls Provisional Schedule 2008 - 2010**

	<b>Call open</b>	<b>Call Deadline</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>ERC-2009-AdG</b>	<b>Autumn 08</b>	<b>Spring 09</b>	<b>Spring 09 - Autumn 09</b>
<b>ERC-2010-AdG</b>	<b>Autumn 09</b>	<b>Spring 10</b>	<b>Spring 10 - Autumn 10</b>
<b>ERC-2011-AdG</b>	<b>Autumn 10</b>	<b>Spring 11</b>	<b>Spring 11 - Autumn 11</b>

The ERC calls that are announced in the ERC Work Programme 2009 have the following publication dates and deadlines:

<sup>7</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>8</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

The publication date foreseen for the next Call for Starting Grant proposals (ERC-2009-StG) is **24 July 2008** and the deadlines are:

- **Panels: PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering)**, 29 October 2008, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities)**, 19 November 2008, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences)**, 10 December 2008, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

The publication date foreseen for the next call for Advanced Grant proposals (ERC-2009-AdG) is **19 November 2008** and the deadlines are:

- **Panels: PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering)**, 25 March 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities)**, 15 April 2009, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)
- **Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences)**, 6 May 2009, 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>9</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 and the call page on CORDIS, 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>.

<sup>9</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 Research Council (ERC), Madou Plaza n°1, Office: MADO 5/64, 1049 Brussels. 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.

Please consult the CORDIS pages 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.

### 3.2.2 EPSS proposal submission

Before submitting a proposal using EPSS, applicants must register (to obtain a login name and password) and must agree to the conditions of use of EPSS (see above 3.2.1). Following this, the application can be prepared, uploaded and submitted via EPSS.

**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>10</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>11</sup>

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<sup>10</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>11</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 (<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=67>) and CORDIS (<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls>), 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 Chapter 7).

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.



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.

**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 can accept no 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 the European Research Council (ERC): Madou Plaza n°1, Office: MADO 5/64, BE-1049 Brussels, Belgium. For deliveries by hand or by representatives (including by private courier), the delivery should be to the following address, and labelled as follows: European Commission, Office: MADO 5/64, Rue du Bourget 1, BE-1140 Brussels, Belgium.

## **4. Evaluation and selection of grant proposals<sup>12</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**

Rules apply to reapplications for ERC grants by individual researchers who apply as PIs (and/or co-investigators with regard to Advanced Grant proposals) and whose eligible proposals are not judged to meet the threshold of quality, as well as for multiple eligible applications within the same or different type of ERC grants. The current general rules, which may subsequently be modified by the Scientific Council in light of experience, are as follows:

- Only one ERC grant managed by the PI and/or a co-investigator can be active at any time.
- No PI or co-Investigator 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.

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<sup>12</sup> The Guides for ERC Peer Reviewers provide 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>

## 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.

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

- **Life Sciences** **9 Panels;**
- **Social Sciences and Humanities** **6 Panels;**
- **Physical Sciences and Engineering** **10 Panels.**

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 excellent scientific reputation. Before the deadline of a call, the names of the panel chairs are published on the ERC website. Similarly, the names of panel members are published later, however, only in the form of a consolidated alphabetical list.

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:

- **Physical Sciences & Engineering:** **39%;**
- **Life Sciences:** **34%;**
- **Social Sciences & Humanities:** **14%;**

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

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<sup>13</sup> Including cross-panel and/or cross-domain research projects and research with the potential to open new fields

**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 at the ERC web site: <http://erc.europa.eu>).

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 referees are approved by the ERC Scientific Council. The names of the referees will be made public at the end of each year.

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 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. 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-DIS, 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 of the deadline for redress requests. This initial reply will indicate when a definitive reply will be provided.

A review committee of the ERC-DIS may be convened to examine the peer review evaluation process for the case in question. The review 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 review 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-DIS. 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>14</sup>

### **5.1 What is an ERC grant agreement?**

A 'grant agreement' is the document which establishes the rights and obligations of the parties and specifies, amongst other things, the name of the PI's host institution (applicant legal entity), the name of the PI, the duration and start date of the project, the maximum amount of the financial contribution attributed to the project and the periodicity of submission of reports.

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. The provisions of the Supplementary Agreement<sup>15</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.

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

The ERC-DIS prepares grant agreements for projects on the basis of the proposal and the recommendations of the ERC panel (see section 4.3), also verifying the legal status and financial capacity of the applicant legal entity<sup>16</sup>.

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.

If the conditions are accepted, the ERC-DIS prepares the relevant documents. In addition to the two agreements mentioned in Section 5.1 the following annexes are included in the grant agreement:

- Annex I: Description of work (the scientific/technical section of the proposal taking into account the ERC panel's recommendations)
- Annex II: General conditions
- Annex III: Accession Form (if more than one host institution)

The general conditions include the arrangements for the scientific, financial and ethical conduct as well as procedures for dealing with changes in the team composition and managing Intellectual Property Rights.

The agreements are concluded following signature by the relevant parties; the ERC-DIS always signs the agreement after having received the duly signed Supplementary Agreement and the signature by the PI's host institution.

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<sup>14</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>15</sup> See template with minimum requirements available at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>.

<sup>16</sup> See Commission's decision on "FP7 Rules to ensure consistent verification of the existence and legal status of participants, as well as their financial capacity", [ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/ftp7/docs/rules-verif\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/ftp7/docs/rules-verif_en.pdf).

The start of the project normally takes place the month following conclusion of the grant agreement.

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

### **5.3.1 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.

### **5.3.2 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>17</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-DIS in a straightforward manner.<sup>18,19</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>20</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).

The detailed rules for transferring grants are included in the *"Guide for ERC Grant Holders"*<sup>14</sup>.

## **5.4 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).

### **5.4.1 Scientific reporting**

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

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<sup>17</sup> This may, for example be necessary if the provisions for the PI's leadership of the research have not been respected

<sup>18</sup> However, in some cases, only after a careful analysis of the request by the ERC-DIS, 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>19</sup> This would not normally be done within the first two years of the start of the project.

<sup>20</sup> In some countries, equipment is formally owned by the State and the consent of the host institution alone may not be sufficient.

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.

#### **5.4.2 Financial management reporting**

The host institution is required to send periodic financial management reports 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.

#### **5.5 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, which is the date of the last signature by the "applicant legal entity" and the ERC-DIS (whichever is the last).

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 CORDIS at <http://cordis.europa.eu>. The 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>21</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.<sup>22</sup>

For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.ncpList>.

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](#) 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.

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<sup>21</sup> This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

<sup>22</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.

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

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 who are applying to consolidate their own independent team/activity (rather than to start their transition to independence) will be required to indicate this situation in the proposal. This will enable the evaluation panels to assess those proposals taking into account the more advanced stage of the career of these applicants.

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.

## **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 €2,000,000 for a period of 5 years<sup>23</sup> (pro rata for projects of shorter duration)

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution towards indirect costs, which cannot exceed 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).

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.

## **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.

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

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, Chapter 2 of the Guide.

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<sup>23</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.

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

A competitive PI must 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.

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

Applications may be made in any field of research<sup>24</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>25</sup> as well as its Specific Programme IDEAS.

For more information, see Part 1, Chapter 2 of the Guide.

## 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>26</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 I, Chapter 4 of the 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.

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<sup>24</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>25</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>26</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.

### **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 3 and less than 8 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals.

Extensions to this period may be allowed in case of eligible career breaks which must be properly documented. Eligible career breaks are: maternity leave (birth certificate, 1 year per child born after the PhD award), paternity leave (proof of accumulation of actual time off, max. 1 year per child born 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 11 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>

## **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. 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>27</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 (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, 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 agreement or in subsequent amendments to the original grant agreement (see also Part 1, Chapter 2 of this Guide).

## **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, as well as for 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 PI who has submitted an eligible proposal to a Starting Grant call may apply to the next Starting Grant call, unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold during the 2<sup>nd</sup> step but not funded due to insufficient available budget.

**To note: As already announced in the ERC Work Programme 2007, applicants of the ERC-2007-StG call are exempted from this rule and can, therefore, apply in the ERC-2009-StG.**

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<sup>27</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.

- It will be possible for ERC Starting Grantees to compete within the last two years of their Starting Grant for an Advanced 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.

## Preparing an ERC Starting Grant application<sup>28</sup>

The application procedure consists of a **single submission stage**.

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

- **The administrative forms**
- **The research proposal**
- **The supporting documentation**

### The administrative forms

These web-based forms must be filled in via EPSS and include information on i) the proposal and the PI (form A1), ii) the PI's host institution and, if different, those of team members (form A2). Basic financial information on the requested ERC Grant needs to be filled in as well (from A3). Furthermore, the PI must provide a summary of his/her scientific leadership profile and early achievements track-record (form A1T of administrative forms). This information will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal.

On form A1, 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.

Participant Identification Code (PIC): 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: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf>. On this website you will also find a search tool for checking if your organisation is already registered (and has thus a PIC).

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<sup>28</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.

## The research proposal

The research proposal consists of two parts, a Part B1 (cover page, Section 1) and Part B2 (Section 2 and 3). 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 3.2).

**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.**

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

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**).

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11	Single	At least 1.5 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, possibly copy/paste of abstract from administrative part A1)

### Section 1

#### The Principal Investigator

**Scientific Leadership Potential (max 2 pages):** The PI's scientific leadership profile should include:

- o a '*self-evaluation*' of early **research career achievements** demonstrating the applicant's potential to go significantly beyond the state of the art;
- o a presentation of the content of the **early scientific or scholarly contributions** of the applicant to his or her own research field;
- o the **recognition** and diffusion that these early contributions have received from others (publications, citations or appropriate equivalents/additional funding/ students/international prizes and awards/ institution-building/other);

A summary of this data needs to be introduced in the administrative form A1T of the application (see administrative forms at the end).

**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 any current research grants and their subject, as well as any ongoing application for work related to the proposal (see also box 8).

**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. **Research monographs, chapters in collective volumes and any translations** thereof

(if applicable).

3. Granted **patent(s)** (if applicable).

4. **Invited presentations to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools** (if applicable).

5. **Research expeditions** that the applicant has led (if applicable).

6. **Organisation of International conferences** in the field of the applicant (membership in the steering and/or programme committee) (if applicable).

7. **International Prizes/Awards/Academy memberships** (if applicable).

8. **Memberships to Editorial Boards of International Journals** (if applicable).

A summary of this data needs to be introduced in the administrative form A1 of the application (see administrative forms at the end of this part).

**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.**

**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 + Ethical Issues )**

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.

**i. 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.

#### **ii. 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.

#### **iii. 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. 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 (see administrative forms at the end).

#### **iv. Ethical Issues (see annex 2b)**

Ethical Issues Table and the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated

### **Section 3**

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

##### **i. 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.

##### **ii. 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 8: Funding ID and significant funding**

PIs must report in their “funding ID” on any other funding they have already secured or are applying for via national or other research funding agencies.

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.

## **Supporting Documentation**

Scanned copies of the following supporting documentation need to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically on EPSS in PDF format.

- 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 8 years has been requested, the relevant documentary evidence (see Box 7).

These documents should be scanned and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. Two separate files may be submitted. The first containing the supporting statement from the host institution and the second containing scanned copy(ies) of document(s) proving his/ her eligibility for the grant.

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

- *PartB1\_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*
- *Host-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, A1T, 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, when necessary, the Ethical Issues Table and 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) and, in case of requested extension of eligibility period, the documentary evidence on maternity, paternity leave, national service, long-term illness, unavoidable leave for statutory reasons**

# 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. In summary, these are as follows:

## 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 and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level (approximately 2 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.

### Box 9: 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.

## 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 9). 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 2009.**

## 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).*

*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 8) any funding they have already secured via national or other research funding agencies.

### **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 (including the host institution)?*

**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>29</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>30</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?

## 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>12</sup>.

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<sup>29</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>30</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.

## ERC Starting Grant Administrative Submission Forms

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

### Instructions for completing the "administrative forms" (A forms) of the ERC grant application

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS). The procedure is given in 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 (and A1T) gives a snapshot of the proposal and of the PI, section A2 concerns the PI's host institution, while section A3 deals with money matters.

Please note:

- Although the forms are similar for the ERC Advanced Grants and ERC Starting Grants applications, the applicants should complete them following the instructions in this annex and after having consulted this Guide.
- Section A1 concerns information about the research proposal and PI, including an abstract of the project proposal and the chosen ERC panel for evaluation.
- Section A1T contains the summary of the scientific leadership potential and the early achievements track-record.
- Section A2 concerns information about the PI's Host Institution<sup>31</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 ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (resources section). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

When you complete part A, please make sure that:

- All costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).

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<sup>31</sup> The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to other institutions of team members ('additional participants'), may be necessary

**Note:**  
**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.**

<b>Section A1: Proposal and PI information</b>	
<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 no more than 20 characters (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.
<b>General Information on the Proposal</b>	
<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-2009-StG</i>
<b>Activity code</b>	Should be: ERC Starting Grant
<b>Proposal Title</b>	The title should be <u>no longer than 180 characters</u> and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field.
<b>Duration in months</b>	The estimated duration of the project in full months.
<b>ERC Review Panel</b>	[drop-down menu] Please choose an option indicating the ERC panel(s) by which you would prefer your proposal to be evaluated. This information <u>is mandatory</u> for "Targeted Review Panel" and <u>optional</u> for an "Alternative Review Panel".
<b>ERC Keywords</b>	[drop-down menu] Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal. <b>As first keyword please choose one which is linked to the Targeted Review Panel.</b> You don't need to limit your choice of keywords to your choice of specific panel or panels. The choice of keyword 1 is mandatory; keywords 2, 3 and 4 are optional.
<b>Free Keywords</b>	In addition please enter free text keywords that you consider necessary to characterise the scope of your research proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multiple-disciplinary aspects of the proposal. There is a <u>limit of 100 characters</u> .
<b>Abstract</b>	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.

	Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. There is a limit of 1800 characters (including "space" and "line breaks").
<b>Information on the Principal Investigator</b>	
<b>Family Name</b>	Last name as given in Passport or Identity Card
<b>Family Name at Birth</b>	Your last name at birth.
<b>First Name(s)</b>	Your 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>Nationality</b>	Insert your Nationality, in English.
<b>Country of residence</b>	The country in which you legally reside. Insert the name of the country, in English.
<b>Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)</b>	Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).
<b>Country of Birth</b>	The country in which you were born. Insert the name of the country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
<b>Town of Birth</b>	The town in which you were born. Insert the name of the town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<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 building number.
<b>Town</b>	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<b>Postal Code/ Cedex</b>	The Postal code.
<b>Fax</b>	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
<b>Country</b>	The country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
<b>Phone</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>E-mail</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>	For eligibility purposes (DD/MM/YYYY)



<b>Extension of the eligibility window</b>	Based on an eligible career break (see Box 7) an applicant can ask for an extension of the eligibility window. Requested extension in <b>number of days</b> .
<b>Rules as regards multiple applications and re-applications</b>	A PI or Co-Investigator who has submitted a proposal for an Advanced Grant in either of the two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG) may not apply for a Starting Grant during the same period (2008-2009).
<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 your proposal be retained for step 2 of the evaluation process.
<b>Information on the Administrative Official of the Host Institution</b>	
<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>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 building number.
<b>Town</b>	The town, in English.
<b>Postal Code/ Cedex</b>	The Postal code.
<b>Fax</b>	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
<b>Country</b>	The country, in English.
<b>Phone</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>E-mail</b>	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> e-mail address is optional.
<b>Section A1T: The early achievements track record of the Principal Investigator :</b>	
<b>Summary of Your Scientific Leadership Potential</b>	Please describe your most important scientific achievements (max 1.800 characters)
<b>1) Publications in Scientific Journals</b>	

Please list up to 10 of your most important publications <u>as main author</u> in leading international peer reviewed scientific journals or peer reviewed international conferences.	
<b>Title of publication</b>	The full titles of your most important publications in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Author(s)</b>	
<b>Journal</b>	Please enter either the full journal title or – where appropriate - the typically used abbreviation. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Year</b>	The year when the article has been published in this journal (YYYY).
<b>Pub. details</b>	Please give the precise identification of the particular journal and your article, such as e.g. journal volume, issue, page numbers of your article, ...
<b>Cit.</b>	Please indicate how often this article has been quoted by <b>other(!) scientists than yourself</b> in international peer reviewed journals
<b>2) Publication of Research Monographs</b>	
Please list up to 5 of your most important publications. Please list your major books and other major publications, such as e.g. monographs, editions, critical editions, ...	
<b>Title</b>	Please insert the full titles of your most important publications in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Author(s)</b>	
<b>Title of monograph, publisher, ISBN</b>	Please enter either the full title of the monograph or – where applicable – the title of the book you made a contribution to. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Transl.</b>	Please indicate whether your publication has been translated into other languages. Please give the number of translations (No.) and the languages it has been translated into (Lang.).
<b>RR</b>	Number of reviews and recensions: Please indicate how often this particular publication has been reviewed by other scientists.
<b>3) Patents</b>	
Please list up to 5 of the most important Patents having been granted to you.	
<b>Title of patent</b>	Please insert the full titles of the most important patents having been granted to you in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Patent office</b>	Please indicate the patent office which granted the patent.
<b>Patent number</b>	Please give the full patent number.
<b>Y</b>	Please enter the year the patent has been granted.
<b>LC</b>	Please indicate how many licenses have been granted to this patent.
<b>4) Publication of Chapters in Collective Volumes</b>	
Please list up to 5 of your most important publications. Please list your major publications, such as chapters to e.g. editions, critical editions, ...	

<b>Title</b>	Please insert the full titles of your most important publications in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Author(s)</b>	
<b>Title of collective volume, publisher, ISBN</b>	Please enter either the full title of the collective volume. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Transl.</b>	Please indicate whether your publication has been translated into other languages. Please give the number of translations (No.) and the languages it has been translated into (Lang.).
<b>RR</b>	Number of reviews and recensions: Please indicate how often this particular publication has been reviewed by other scientists.
<b>5) Publications in Refereed Conference Proceedings</b>	
Please list up to 10 of your most important invited lectures at peer reviewed internationally established scientific conferences and/or international advanced schools.	
<b>Title of contribution</b>	Please insert the full titles of your most important contributions peer reviewed internationally established scientific conferences and/or international advanced schools in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Name of proceeding</b>	Please enter either the full journal title or – where appropriate - the typically used abbreviation. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Year</b>	Please enter the year when the article has been published in this proceeding.
<b>Pub. details</b>	Please give the precise identification of the particular journal and your article, such as e.g. journal volume, issue, page numbers of your article, ...
<b>Cit.</b>	Please indicate how often this article has been quoted by <b>other(!)</b> scientists in international peer reviewed journals or proceedings.
<b>6) Leadership of Research Expeditions</b>	
Please list up to 5 scientific research expeditions under your scientific leadership.	
<b>Expedition</b>	Please insert the full title and/or scope of the expedition. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Funded by</b>	Please indicate who funded/sponsored the expedition. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Your function</b>	Please name your function with respect to this particular expedition.
<b>Destination</b>	Please give the geographic destination of this expedition.
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which the expedition took place (YYYY)
<b>7) Membership to Steering Committees or Programme Committees of International Conferences</b>	
Please list up to 5 memberships in steering and/or programme committees.	
<b>Title of conference</b>	Please insert the full title of the conference. The data entry in this field is limited to 50

	characters.
<b>Responsible sc. society</b>	Please indicate under whose auspices and/or behalf the conference has been organised. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Your function</b>	Please name your function with respect to this particular conference (e.g. member of scientific board).
<b>Place</b>	Please give the venue of the conference (city and country).
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which the conference took place (YYYY)
<b>8) Prizes, Awards</b>	
Please list up to 5 of your most important international prizes, awards, or <u>memberships in scientific academies</u> .	
<b>Title</b>	Please name the prize or the type of membership you have been awarded. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Institution</b>	Please name the institution awarding the prize or membership. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 20 characters.
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which the award / the membership was received.
<b>9) Memberships to Editorial Boards of International Journals</b>	
Please list up to 5 memberships	
<b>Title</b>	Please name the title of the international journal. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Institution</b>	Please name your function with respect to your membership. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 20 characters.
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which you became member.
<b>Section A2: Host institution information</b>	
<b>Organisation Number</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://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf">http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf</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 (./:;...), for e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, for 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>Organisation 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.
<b>Section A3: Budget</b>	
<b>Financial information – whole duration of the project</b>	
<p>This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC grant, as they are also presented in the Research proposal text.</p> <p>The Host Institution<sup>32</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.</p> <p>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>33</sup></p> <p><b>Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs</b></p> <p>An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution towards indirect costs, which cannot exceed 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). Costs claimed should be in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.</p> <p><b>Direct eligible costs</b> 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).</p>	

<sup>32</sup> Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2

<sup>33</sup> The lump sum calculation method will be subject to a specific Commission decision, published in early 2007.

**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.

<b>Participant Number in this proposal</b>	The PI' <b>Host Institution</b> of the proposal is always <b>number one</b> .
<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. 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>
<b>Other direct costs (- subcontracting)</b>	Means direct costs not covered by the above mentioned categories of costs.
<b>Indirect 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.

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



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 or Associated Country<sup>5</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 ('Co-Investigator project'), 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.

## **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>34</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 or Associated Country.

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution towards indirect costs, which cannot exceed 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).

The overall level of the grant offered will be determined by the peer review evaluation, on the basis of the needs of the project, judged by the panel (see Annex 1 for panel structure and descriptions) against the requested grant to the budget. 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 breakdown in the application but the PI has the freedom to re-budget during the course of the project.

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<sup>34</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.

## 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 or Associated Country.

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 the Guide.

## 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 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.

## 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>35</sup>. The proposal

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<sup>35</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.

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.

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

Applications may be made in any field of research<sup>36</sup>. Funding of human embryonic stem cell research will be possible within the ethical framework defined in the EC 7th Framework Programme<sup>37</sup> as well as the Ideas Specific Programme.

For more information, see Part 1, Section 2.3 of the Guide.

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

The contribution of PIs must be substantially carried out in the EU 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 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>38</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<sup>5</sup>. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.) or the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Normally, the PI's host institution will be the only participating legal entity. Other legal entities, 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 agreement or subsequent amendments to the original grant agreement.

## **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, as well as for multiple eligible applications within the 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 or Co-Investigator may be associated with more than one eligible proposal for an ERC-Advanced Grant to either of the first two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG).

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<sup>36</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>37</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>38</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.

- 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, expected in 2010) 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 evaluation.
- A Principal Investigator or Co-investigator who has submitted an eligible proposal for an ERC-Advanced Grant in either of the first two Advanced Grant calls may not apply for an ERC Starting Grant during the same period (2008-2009)

**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.

## Preparing an ERC Advanced Grant application<sup>39</sup>

The application procedure consists of a **single submission stage**.

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

- **The administrative forms**
- **The research proposal**
- **The supporting documentation**

### The administrative forms

These web-based forms (see forms at the end) must be filled in via EPSS and include information on i) the proposal and the PI (form A1), ii) the PI's host institution and, if different, those of team members (form A2). Basic financial information on the requested ERC Grant needs to be filled in as well (form A3). Furthermore, the PI must provide a summary of his/her scientific leadership profile and 10-year-track-record (form A1T, see also below). This information will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal.

On form A1, 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 (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.

**Participant Identification Code (PIC):** 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

<sup>39</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.

by entering the organisation details manually. However, the use of PICs will lead to more efficient handling of the proposal.

## The Research Proposal

The research proposal consists of two parts, a Part B1 (cover page, Section 1) and Part B2 (Section 2 and 3). 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 3.2).

**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.**

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

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**).

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

## Part B1

### Cover page:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)</li><li>- Name of the PI's host institution for the project</li><li>- Proposal full title</li><li>- Proposal short name</li><li>- Proposal duration in months</li><li>- Proposal summary (half page, possibly copy/paste of abstract from administrative part A1)</li></ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Section 1

### **The Principal Investigator**

#### **Scientific Leadership Profile (max 2 pages):**

- a "**self-evaluation**" of research career achievements demonstrating the applicant's capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art;
- a presentation of the **content and impact of the major scientific or scholarly contributions** of the applicant to his or her own research field and/or neighbouring research fields and, if applicable, their wider societal impact;
- the **international recognition and diffusion** that these major contributions have received from others (publications, citations or appropriate equivalents/additional funding/ students/international prizes and awards/ institution-building/other);
- evidence of **efforts and ability to inspire younger researchers** towards high quality research (highlights of research mentoring record, information on the careers of supervised graduate and post-doctoral students, etc.);
- **where applicable: proven ability to productively change research fields and/or to establish new interdisciplinary approaches.**

A summary of this data needs to be introduced in the administrative form A1T of the application (see administrative forms at the end). **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 any current research grants and their subject, as well as any ongoing application for work related to the proposal. **10-Year-Track-Record (max 2 pages):**

The applicant should list his/her activity over the past 10 years (dated from the deadline of the call) as regards:

1. The **top 10 publications, as senior author** (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals and/or peer-reviewed conferences proceedings of their respective research fields, also indicating the number of citations (excluding auto-citations) they have attracted.
2. **Research monographs, chapters in collective volumes and any translations** thereof (if applicable).
3. **Granted patents** (if applicable).
4. **Invited presentations** to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools (if applicable)
5. **Research expeditions** that the applicant has led (if applicable).
6. **Organisation of International conferences** in the field of the applicant (membership in the steering and/or programme committee) (if applicable)
7. **International Prizes/Awards/Academy memberships** (if applicable)
8. **Memberships to Editorials Boards of International Journals** (if applicable).

A summary of this data needs to be introduced in the administrative form A1 of the application (see administrative forms at the end).

In the case of interdisciplinary proposals involving co-investigator(s) alongside with the PI ("**co-investigator projects**") it is required that the information listed under section 1a is provided for each co-investigator (CV, scientific leadership profile, 10-year-track-record). In this case, the above-mentioned page limits for section apply individually, i.e. maximum 6 pages per co-investigator.

**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 of the Principal Investigator and his/her career progression.**

### **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 + Ethical Issues)**

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.

**i. 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. Outlining 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.

#### **ii. 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.

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

Describe the size and nature of the team, illustrating the role of any key team member. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project.

Determine and indicate 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 – please specify and explain. 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 application (see administrative forms at the end).

#### **iv. Ethical Issues (see annex 2b)**

Ethical Issues Table and the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated.

### **Section 3**

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

#### **i. 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.

#### **ii. 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 application (see administrative forms at the end).

## Supporting Documentation

Scanned copies of the following supporting documentation need to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically on EPSS in PDF format.

- 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 should be scanned and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. One separate file may be submitted containing the supporting statement from the host institution.

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 StG proposal, the following components have to be prepared

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

- on-line forms A1, A1T, 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, when necessary, the ethical issues table and the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated)**
- **Section 3 – The research environment**

**The Supplementary Document:**

- **The supporting statement from the host institution: originally signed, stamped and dated by institute's legal representative (see 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:

### 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 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.

### 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. Principal Investigators may be invited for an interview. 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 2009.**

## 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).*

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

To what extent 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 (including the host institution)?

### **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>40</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>41</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?

<sup>40</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>41</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.

## **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  $\geq 2$  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.

## ERC Advanced Grant Administrative Submission Forms

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

### Instructions for completing the "administrative forms" (A forms) of the ERC grant application

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS). The procedure is given in 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 (and A1T) 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:

- Although the forms are similar for the ERC Advanced Grants and ERC Starting Grants applications, the applicants should complete them following the instructions in this annex and after having consulted the ERC Work Programme and this guide. Some sections of form A1T are only applicable to the ERC Advanced Grant
- Section A1 concerns information about the research proposal and PI, including an abstract of the project proposal and the chosen ERC panel for evaluation.
- Section A1T contains the summary of the scientific leadership profile/potential and the track-record (10-years or early achievements).
- Section A2 concerns information about the PI's Host Institution<sup>42</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 ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (resources section). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

When you complete part A, please make sure that:

- *All costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).*

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<sup>42</sup> The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to other institutions of team members ('additional participants'), may be necessary

**Note:**

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.

<b>Section A1: Proposal and PI information</b>	
<b>Proposal Number</b>	[pre-filled by the system]
<b>Proposal Acronym</b>	<p>The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently in this call. It should be of no more than 20 characters (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no spaces, symbols or special characters please).</p> <p>The same acronym should appear on each page of the research proposal.</p>
<b>General Information on the Proposal</b>	
<b>Type of project</b>	<p>[pre-filled]</p> <p>Support for Frontier Research – ERC Advanced Grant/Starting Grant</p>
<b>Call identifier</b>	<p>[pre-filled]</p> <p>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-2009-AdG</i></p>
<b>Activity code</b>	<p>Should be:</p> <p>ERC Advanced Grant</p>
<b>Proposal Title</b>	<p>The title should be <u>no longer than 200 characters</u> and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field.</p>
<b>Duration in months</b>	<p>The estimated duration of the project in full months.</p>
<b>ERC Review Panel</b>	<p>[drop-down menu]</p> <p>Please choose an option indicating the ERC panel(s) by which you would prefer your proposal to be evaluated.</p> <p>This information <u>is mandatory</u> for "Targeted Review Panel" and <u>optional</u> for an "Alternative Review Panel".</p>
<b>ERC Keywords</b>	<p>[drop-down menu]</p> <p>Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal. <b>As first keyword please choose one which is linked to the Targeted Review Panel.</b></p> <p>You don't need to limit your choice of keywords to your choice of specific panel or panels. The choice of keyword 1 is mandatory; keywords 2, 3 and 4 are optional.</p>
<b>Free Keywords</b>	<p>In addition please enter free text keywords that you consider necessary to characterise the scope of your research proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multiple-disciplinary aspects of the proposal.</p> <p>There is a <u>limit of 100 characters</u>.</p>
<b>Abstract</b>	<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>

	Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. There is a <u>limit of 1800 characters</u> . Add "Space and line breaks included"
<b>Information on the Principal Investigator</b>	
<b>Family Name</b>	Last name as given in Passport or Identity Card
<b>Family Name at Birth</b>	Your last name at birth.
<b>First Name(s)</b>	Your 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>Nationality</b>	Insert your Nationality, in English.
<b>Country of residence</b>	The country in which you legally reside. Insert the name of the country, in English.
<b>Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)</b>	Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).
<b>Country of Birth</b>	The country in which you were born. Insert the name of the country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
<b>Town of Birth</b>	The town in which you were born. Insert the name of the town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<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 building number.
<b>Town</b>	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
<b>Postal Code/ Cedex</b>	The Postal code.
<b>Fax</b>	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
<b>Country</b>	The country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
<b>Phone</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>E-mail</b>	Please insert your e-mail address. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> e-mail address is optional.
<b>If applicable, date of first PhD or Doctorate</b>	For informational purposes only (DD/MM/YYYY)

<b>Rules as regards multiple applications and re-applications</b>	Please note: No Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator may be associated with more than one proposal for an Advanced Grant to either of the first two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG). A Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator who has submitted a proposal for an Advanced Grant in either of the two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG) may not apply for a Starting Grant during the same period (2008-2009).
<b>Information on the Administrative Official of the Host Institution</b>	
<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>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 building number.
<b>Town</b>	The town, in English.
<b>Postal Code/ Cedex</b>	The Postal code.
<b>Fax</b>	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
<b>Country</b>	The country, in English.
<b>Phone</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>E-mail</b>	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> e-mail address is optional.
<b>Section A1T: The 10-years track record of the Principal Investigator (earliest date is January 1 of the 10th year before the publication of the Advanced Grant call)</b>	
<b>Summary of Your Scientific Leadership Profile</b>	Please describe your most important scientific achievements (max 2.000 characters)
<b>1) Publications in Scientific Journals</b>	
Please list up to 10 of your most important publications as senior author in leading international peer reviewed scientific journals.	
<b>Title of publication</b>	

	The full titles of your most important publications in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Author(s)</b>	
<b>Journal</b>	Please enter either the full journal title or – where appropriate - the typically used abbreviation. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Year</b>	The year when the article has been published in this journal (YYYY).
<b>Pub. details</b>	Please give the precise identification of the particular journal and your article, such as e.g. journal volume, issue, page numbers of your article, ...
<b>Cit.</b>	Please indicate how often this article has been quoted by <b>other(!) scientists than yourself</b> in international peer reviewed journals
<b>2) Publication of Research Monographs</b>	
Please list up to 5 of your most important publications. Please list your major books and other major publications, such as e.g. monographs, editions, critical editions, ...	
<b>Title</b>	Please insert the full titles of your most important publications in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Author(s)</b>	
<b>Title of monograph, publisher, ISBN</b>	Please enter either the full title of the monograph or – where applicable – the title of the book you made a contribution to. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Transl.</b>	Please indicate whether your publication has been translated into other languages. Please give the number of translations (No.) and the languages it has been translated into (Lang.).
<b>RR</b>	Number of reviews and recensions: Please indicate how often this particular publication has been reviewed by other scientists.
<b>3) Patents</b>	
Please list up to 5 of the most important Patents having been granted to you.	
<b>Title of patent</b>	Please insert the full titles of the most important patents having been granted to you in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Patent office</b>	Please indicate the patent office which granted the patent.
<b>Patent number</b>	Please give the full patent number.
<b>Y</b>	Please enter the year the patent has been granted.
<b>LC</b>	Please indicate how many licenses have been granted to this patent.
<b>4) Publication of Chapters in Collective Volumes</b>	
Please list up to 5 of your most important publications. Please list your major publications, such as chapters to e.g. editions, critical editions, ...	
<b>Title</b>	Please insert the full titles of your most important publications in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.



<b>Author(s)</b>	
<b>Title of collective volume, publisher, ISBN</b>	Please enter either the full title of the collective volume. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Transl.</b>	Please indicate whether your publication has been translated into other languages. Please give the number of translations (No.) and the languages it has been translated into (Lang.).
<b>RR</b>	Number of reviews and recensions: Please indicate how often this particular publication has been reviewed by other scientists.
<b>5) Publications in Refereed Conference Proceedings</b>	
Please list up to 10 of your most important invited lectures at peer reviewed internationally established scientific conferences and/or international advanced schools.	
<b>Title of contribution</b>	Please insert the full titles of your most important contributions peer reviewed internationally established scientific conferences and/or international advanced schools in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Name of proceeding</b>	Please enter either the full journal title or – where appropriate - the typically used abbreviation. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Year</b>	Please enter the year when the article has been published in this proceeding.
<b>Pub. details</b>	Please give the precise identification of the particular journal and your article, such as e.g. journal volume, issue, page numbers of your article, ...
<b>Cit.</b>	Please indicate how often this article has been quoted by <b>other(!)</b> scientists in international peer reviewed journals or proceedings.
<b>6) Leadership of Research Expeditions</b>	
Please list up to 5 scientific Research expeditions under your scientific leadership.	
<b>Expedition</b>	Please insert the full title and/or scope of the expedition. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Funded by</b>	Please indicate who funded/sponsored the expedition. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Your function</b>	Please name your function with respect to this particular expedition.
<b>Destination</b>	Please give the geographic destination of this expedition.
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which the expedition took place (YYYY)
<b>7) Membership to Steering Committees or Programme Committees of International Conferences</b>	
Please list up to 5 memberships in steering and/or programme committees.	
<b>Title of conference</b>	Please insert the full title of the conference. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Responsible sc.</b>	

<b>society</b>	Please indicate under whose auspices and/or behalf the conference has been organised. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Your function</b>	Please name your function with respect to this particular conference (e.g. member of scientific board).
<b>Place</b>	Please give the venue of the conference (city and country).
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which the conference took place (YYYY)
<b>8) Prizes, Awards</b>	
Please list up to 5 of your most important international prizes, awards, or <u>memberships in scientific academies</u> .	
<b>Title</b>	Please name the prize or the type of membership you have been awarded. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Institution</b>	Please name the institution awarding the prize or membership. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 20 characters.
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which the award / the membership was received.
<b>9) Memberships to Editorial Boards of International Journals</b>	
Please list up to 5 memberships	
<b>Title</b>	Please name the title of the international journal. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
<b>Institution</b>	Please name your function with respect to your membership. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 20 characters.
<b>Y</b>	Please give the year in which you became member.
<b>Section A2: Host institution information</b>	
<b>Organisation Number</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://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf">http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf</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 (./;...),

	for e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, for 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>Organisation 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.

The Host Institution<sup>43</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>44</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 towards indirect costs, which cannot exceed 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). 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

<sup>43</sup> Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2

<sup>44</sup> The lump sum calculation method will be subject to a specific Commission decision, published in early 2007.

office equipment such as PC's, laptops, office software; Miscellaneous recurring consumables.	
<b>Non-eligible costs</b> 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.	
<b>Participant Number in this proposal</b>	The PI' <b>Host Institution</b> of the proposal is always <b>number one</b> .
<b>Organisation short name</b>	The same name that as been used in form A2.
<b>Personnel costs</b>	Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project. Such persons must: <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> 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. Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.
<b>Other direct costs (- subcontracting)</b>	Means direct costs not covered by the above mentioned categories of costs.
<b>Indirect 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>	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. Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled: <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> 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. 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.
<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.

## **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**

#### **SH1 Individuals, institutions and markets:** 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

#### **SH2 Institutions, values, beliefs and behaviour:** 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

#### **SH3 Environment and society:** 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

**SH4 The Human Mind and its complexity:** 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

**SH5 Cultures and cultural production:** 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

**SH6 The study of the human past:** 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

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

**PE1 Mathematical foundations:** all areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics

- PE1\_1 Logic and foundations
- PE1\_2 Algebra
- PE1\_3 Number theory
- PE1\_4 Algebraic and complex geometry
- PE1\_5 Geometry
- PE1\_6 Topology
- PE1\_7 Lie groups, Lie algebras
- PE1\_8 Analysis
- PE1\_9 Operator algebras and functional analysis
- PE1\_10 ODE and dynamical systems
- PE1\_11 Partial differential equations
- PE1\_12 Mathematical physics
- PE1\_13 Probability and statistics
- PE1\_14 Combinatorics
- PE1\_15 Mathematical aspects of computer science
- PE1\_16 Numerical analysis and scientific computing
- PE1\_17 Control theory and optimization
- PE1\_18 Application of mathematics in sciences

**PE2 Fundamental constituents of matter:** particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics

- PE2\_1 Fundamental interactions and fields
- PE2\_2 Particle physics
- PE2\_3 Nuclear physics
- PE2\_4 Nuclear astrophysics
- PE2\_5 Gas and plasma physics
- PE2\_6 Electromagnetism
- PE2\_7 Atomic, molecular physics
- PE2\_8 Optics and quantum optics
- PE2\_9 Lasers and laser physics
- PE2\_10 Acoustics
- PE2\_11 Relativity
- PE2\_12 Classical physics
- PE2\_13 Thermodynamics
- PE2\_14 Non-linear physics
- PE2\_15 General physics
- PE2\_16 Metrology and measurement
- PE2\_17 Statistical physics (gases)



**PE3 Condensed matter physics:** structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences

- PE3\_1 Structure of solids and liquids
- PE3\_2 Mechanical and acoustical properties of condensed matter
- PE3\_3 Thermal properties of condensed matter
- PE3\_4 Transport properties of condensed matter,
- 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

**PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical sciences:** 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

**PE5 Materials and Synthesis:** 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

**PE6 Computer science and informatics:** 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

**PE7 Systems and communication engineering:** 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

**PE8 Products and process engineering:** 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

**PE9 Universe sciences:** 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

**PE10 Earth system science:** 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 2a: Ethical Issues**

### **Introduction**

The ERC peer review evaluation procedure includes a check of ethical issues raised by the proposals. An ethical review of proposals involving sensitive ethical issues may take place after the evaluation and before any funding decision by the ERC.

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**

Include the Ethical issues table in Annex 2b. If you indicate YES to any issue, please identify the pages in the proposal where this ethical issue is described.

Answering 'YES' to some of these boxes does not automatically lead to an ethical review. It enables the independent experts to decide if an ethical review is required. If you are sure that none of the issues apply to your proposal, simply tick the YES box in the last row.

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**.

Projects raising specific ethical issues such as research intervention on human beings<sup>45</sup>, research on human embryos and human embryonic stem cells and non-human primates are automatically submitted for ethical review.

### **Description of ethical issues in the proposal**

If applicable, any ethically sensitive issues raised by the proposed research project should be described in the ERC grant proposal, appended to the Ethical Issues Table. 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.

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.

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<sup>45</sup> Such as research and clinical trials, and research involving invasive techniques on persons (e.g. taking of tissue samples, examinations of the brain).





**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.
- 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.



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>Page</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?		
I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL			

<b>Research on Humans</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>Page</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?		
I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL			

<b>Privacy</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>Page</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?		
I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL			

<b>Research on Animals</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>Page</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?		
I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL			

<b>Research Involving Developing Countries</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>Page</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)?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

<b>Dual Use</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>Page</b>
	Research having direct military use		
	Research having the potential for terrorist abuse		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		



## **Annex 3: Commitment of the host institution**<sup>46,47, 48</sup>

When submitting an ERC grant proposal, the host institution must confirm its commitment to supporting the PI. In this respect, the host institution should submit a signed statement (on letterhead paper), as an attachment to the PI's proposal.

The peer review evaluation panels are empowered to determine whether the grant and the signed statement by the host institution will allow the PI to conduct the research project independently.

The statement (on letterhead paper) should read as follows:

**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*.
- b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex I ERC GA, 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,

<sup>46</sup> A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format

<sup>47</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>48</sup> This statement shall be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating his/her name, function, email address and stamp of the institution.



- c. the advice on internal *applicant legal entity* strategies and *ERC 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 GA, in particular as regards infrastructure, equipment, products and other services as necessary for the conduct of the research;
  - 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 GA;
  - 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 *Commission*;
    - 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 GA;
  - vii) subject to the observance of applicable national law and to the agreement of the *Commission*, 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 *Commission* 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.**