FP7 IDEAS Programme
The European Research Council
... and its funding schemes.

Starting Grant

Gabor Nagy
European Research Council Executive Agency

Research Connection
Prague, 7 May 2009
**ERC Grant schemes**

3R and 2 schemes

**Aim**: Retain – Repatriate – Recruit

⇒ Favour “brain gain” and “reverse brain drain”

⇒ improve career opportunities and independence - especially for young researchers

⇒ increase competition, recognition and international visibility - for excellent individual scientists and scholars in Europe

⇒ Raise aspiration and achievement of basic research in Europe - comparability/benchmark for researchers and research systems

**Activities**: Two complementary funding schemes

⇒ ERC Starting Grant (StG)

⇒ ERC Advanced Grant (AdG)
What is frontier research?

- Research **at the frontiers** is:
  - Intrinsically risky
  - Characterised by an absence of disciplinary boundaries

- The ERC wants to avoid outmoded distinctions:
  - Between “basic” and “applied” research
  - Between “science” and “technology”
  - Between “traditional” disciplines
**ERC Grant schemes**
Who can apply? – General requirements

1. **Principal Investigator (PI)**
   - Nationality, age or current place of work not relevant

2. In conjunction with a **Host organisation**
   - To be located in MS or AC

3. **Frontier Research Project**
   - All fields of science, engineering and scholarship are eligible (investigator-driven, bottom-up)

4. **Individual research team**
   - PI has freedom to choose National or trans-national character, if scientific added value proven
ERC Grant schemes
Operational Principles

- Application in response to calls for proposals
  - Principal Investigators applies in conjunction and on behalf of a research-performing host institution
  - Electronic Proposals Submission System (EPSS)

- Single submission, staged evaluation procedure
  - to manage a large number of applications

- Panel-based international peer review process
  - Scientific Council selects panels and peer reviewers
  - Panels assess and select proposals
ERC Budget 2007 – 2013: €7.51 bn
Annual budget distribution (prospective schedule)
ERC Grant schemes
All fields, budget pre-allocation in 3 + 1 areas

- ERC covers **all fields of science, engineering and scholarship**
- For operational reasons the ScC agreed on **3 main research domains + interdisciplinary research:**
  - **Physical Sciences & Engineering** – 10 Panels
  - **Life Sciences** (incl. medical) – 9 Panels
  - **Social Sciences & Humanities** – 6 Panels
  - **Interdisciplinary Research** (cross-panel / cross-domain) – Panel Chairs meeting
- The call budget will be pre-allocated to these areas as follows:
  - **39% - 34% - 14% - 13%**
## ERC Panel structure

### Social Sciences and Humanities (SH)
- SH1 - Individuals, institutions & markets
- SH2 - Institutions, values, beliefs and behaviour
- SH3 - Environment & society
- SH4 - The Human Mind and its complexity
- SH5 - Cultures & cultural production
- SH6 - The study of the human past

### Life Sciences (LS)
- LS1 - Molecular & Structural Biology & Biochemistry
- LS2 - Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics & Systems Biology
- LS3 - Cellular and Developmental Biology
- LS4 - Physiology, Pathophysiology & Endocrinology
- LS5 - Neurosciences & neural disorders
- LS6 - Immunity & infection
- LS7 - Diagnostic tools, therapies & public health
- LS8 - Evolutionary, population & environmental biology
- LS9 - Applied life sciences & biotechnology

### Physical Sciences & Engineering (PE)
- PE1 - Mathematical foundations
- PE2 - Fundamental constituents of matter
- PE3 - Condensed matter physics
- PE4 - Physical & Analytical Chemical sciences
- PE5 - Materials & Synthesis
- PE6 - Computer science & informatics
- PE7 - Systems & communication engineering
- PE8 - Products & process engineering
- PE9 - Universe sciences
- PE10 - Earth system science
Evaluation of *Excellence* at three levels:

- Quality of Principal Investigator
- Quality of Research Project
- Research Environment

Referees and panels evaluate and score criteria under **Heading 1** and **Heading 2** numerically which will result in the ranking of the projects:
  - 1-4 per criterion
  - Threshold ≥ 2 per criterion

Criteria under **Heading 3** will be considered as "pass/fail" and commented but not scored.
ERC Grant Agreement

Concept

- **Agreement between ERC and Principal Investigator’s (PI’s) hosting organisation** *(beneficiary)*
  - Rights/obligations on scientific, financial, ethical conduct and monitoring, eligible costs, IPR, modifications, grant portability

- **Supplementary Agreement between PI and its hosting organisation**
  - Rights/obligations: administration, project execution, IPR

- **Single grant holder approach**
  - PI and members from same organisation
  - But: multi-partner/multi-national teams are possible
ERC Grant
The concept of ‘portability’

- “Money follows the researcher”
- The Principal Investigator (PI) is entitled to transfer the grant to another institution
  - normally after a minimum 2 years at the sponsoring institution
- Proper justification and ERC approval required
ERC Starting Grant
Profile of the PI

• Attract & retain the next generation of independent research leaders - up to €2.0 Mio for 5 years
• Any nationality or age
• Any current place of work – but: working or moving to work in Europe (EU member state, FP7 Associated Country)
• 2-10 years after PhD award - certain types of career breaks are accepted up to a maximum of 2 years read the Guide for Applicants!
• Potential for research independence and evidence of maturity
  ⇒ at least one important publication without participation of PhD supervisor
• Track-record of early research achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage ⇒ Starters vs Consolidators
• StG 2007 call (9167 proposals received, 559 interviews conducted, 299 grants, 21 host countries, 32 nationalities, 170 host institutes)
  ⇒ Average Age: 35 years (spans from 28 to 44y)
  ⇒ Average experience: 6-7 years
  ⇒ Average grant size: €1.1 Mio.
  ⇒ Gender: 26% women (as low as 12% in LS2 up to 71% in SH4)
## ERC Starting Grant 2007

Number of proposals and selected projects by domain

Note: 9167 submissions and 299 selected proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Submitted proposals</th>
<th>Selected proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>3399 (37.1%)</td>
<td>105 (35.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>4406 (48%)</td>
<td>137 (45.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>1362 (14.9%)</td>
<td>57 (19.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\sum = 9167\]

\[\sum = 299\]
ERC Starting Grant 2007
Successful proposals
by country of host institution
Source: 299 selected proposals
Published July 2008
Results expected in Summer 2009
Indicative Budget: € 296 Mio.
Single submission (1 stage, 2 steps)
Electronic submission via EPSS
   Early (pre-)registration strongly recommended
3 deadlines, 3 domains, 25 panels (10 PE, 9 LS, 6 SH)
   Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE) on 29th October 2008
   Social Sciences and Humanities (SH) on 19th November 2008
   Life Sciences (LS) on 10th December 2008
ERC Starting Grant 2009

Number of submitted proposals

Source: 2503 submissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Submitted proposals</th>
<th>Selected proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>927 (37%)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>1112 (44.4%)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>464 (18.6%)</td>
<td>?</td>
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∑ = 2503
# Future Calls for ERC Starting Grant proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call ID</th>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Indicative Budget (€ M)</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERC-2010-StG</td>
<td>Summer 09</td>
<td>Autumn 09</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>Winter 09 - Spring 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERC-2011-StG</td>
<td>Summer 10</td>
<td>Autumn 10</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Winter 10 - Spring 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documentation

- Specific text of “Call for Proposal”
- ERC Work Programme
- ERC Guide for Applicants (!)
- ERC Grant agreement

Other:
- ERC Guide for Grant Holders
- ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers
- ERC Rules on submission, evaluation, selection and award procedures

Read always the last published versions!
available at http://erc.europa.eu
# Up-to-date Information


## NEW SECTION

### Funded Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What's New</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- List of Panel members for the ERC Advanced Grants 2008 published - 17/02/2009 -</td>
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<tr>
<td>- List of Panel chairs for the ERC Starting Grants 2009 published - 17/02/2009 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reminder to Advanced Grant applicants - 26/02/2009 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The European Commission publishes press release on the Review of the ERC - 24/02/2009 -</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Updated Guide for Applicants published - 17/12/2008 -</td>
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<tr>
<td>- ERC Advanced Grant 2009: New Call for Proposals published - 19/11/2008 - ERC Advanced Grant call 2009 poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brochure: &quot;The ERC Starting Grant: Supporting the next generation of research leaders in Europe.&quot; - 25/09/2008 -</td>
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## Message from the President of the European Research Council

The creation of the European Research Council (ERC) by the common action of the political Institutions of the European Union (the Commission, the Parliament and the Council of Ministers) represents a landmark event for science policy in our continent. By this sober, Europe is taking a decisive step towards the formation of a common European Research Area.

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**Professor Felicja Kafarska, PHD**
ERC President and Chairman of its Scientific Council.
ERC-funded Grantees
Information and case studies - available or coming soon

• ERC website ‘Funded projects’ section:
  ➢ List with names of StG PIs and host institutions, grant size, duration of 299 funded projects
  ➢ ERC Starting Grant brochure with Case Studies http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ERCStarting_Grant_CS.pdf

• Various brochures on Starting Grant case studies produced/published by national actors (such as in DE, AT, BE, FR)

• ERC event, 7 October 2008, Paris
  Video of presentations and two discussion roundtables with 10 Starting Grantees http://www.canalc2.tv/video.asp?idEvenement=423

• FP7 project database (FP IDEAS projects) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/projects
Applicants Services
Information and helpdesks

• ERC News Alert
  http://erc.europa.eu/newsalert

• ERC National Contact Points
  inform, raise awareness and provide advice on ERC funding
  opportunities, application, follow-up
  http://erc.europa.eu/ncp

• ERC helpdesk
  http://ec.europa.eu/research/enquiries

• EPSS helpdesk
  technical support on electronic proposal submission
  https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/helpdesk.jsp
Complementary missions and synergies
- NFO responsible for building up excellence in the national research community (‘National League’)
- ERC responsible for building up excellence across Europe without regard to nationality (‘European Champions League’)
- ERC as benchmark/indicator for excellence in frontier research
- NFOs annual budget: ca €20 bn in total (DFG: €1733.8 Mio, NSF: €6430 Mio, SNF: €295 Mio, NWO: €385Mio)
- ERC annual budget: ca €1.1bn in average (for 2007-2013)

Mutual support and cooperation
- National support for StG runners-up (CH, IT, SE, FR, CY, AT, Flanders, HU, ES, NO, …)
- NFO contribute National Detached Experts