

### What is it?

The European Research Council (ERC) was set up in 2007 as a pan-European funding body for frontier research under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7 2007-2013). Under H2020, ERC is part of Pillar I, with a total budget allocated to the ERC for the period 2014-2020 is € 13.095 billion, an increase of 60% compared to FP7.

**The aim of the ERC is to fund ground-breaking frontier, high gain/high risk research projects across all fields of science, in order to support European leadership in world-class research.** Support is given to individual outstanding Principal Investigators (and their teams, where applicable) on the basis of scientific excellence. Research must be conducted in a public or private research organisation (known as a Host Institution) located in one of the EU Member States or Associated Countries.

There are **3 main types of funding schemes**:

- Starting Grant (StG)
- Consolidator Grant (CoG)
- Advanced Grant (AdG)

Additionally, there are **2 smaller additional funding schemes**:

- Proof of Concept Grant (PoC)
- Synergy Grant

### Why should I do it?

ERC grants allow Principal Investigators to identify new opportunities and directions in any field of research (bottom-up). Funds are channelled into new and promising areas of research with a greater degree of flexibility. The sole criterion for selection is scientific excellence. Grants recognise the best ideas, and confer status and visibility on the best brains in Europe, while also attracting talent from abroad. Grants help to bring about new and unpredictable scientific and technological discoveries - the kind that can form the basis of new industries, markets, and broader social innovations of the future.

### Who can apply?

ERC funding schemes are open to top researchers of any nationality or age who wish to carry out their frontier research in the 28 EU Member States or Associated Countries.

- **Starting Grants (StG):** Researchers with a promising track record of early achievements, having produced at least one important publication without the participation of their PhD supervisor. 2-7 years after award of first PhD.
- **Consolidator Grants (CoG):** Researchers with a promising track record of early achievements, having produced several important publications without the participation of their PhD supervisor. 7-12 years after award of PhD.
- **Advanced Grants (AdG):** Scientifically independent and established research leaders with a recognised track record of research achievements in the last 10 years.
- **Proof of Concept (POC):** Only ERC grant holders wishing to apply for top-up funding.
- **Synergy Grants:** Groups of 2-4 principal investigators (PIs), possibly their teams.

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## Restrictions on submission of proposals

1. A Principal Investigator may submit only one proposal to the ERC for ERC frontier research grant calls made under the same Work Programme.
2. A Principal Investigator whose proposal was evaluated as category C in the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals under a previous Work Programme may not be able to submit a proposal to the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals made under a future Work Programme.
3. A researcher may participate as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator in only one ERC frontier research project at any one time.

## Eligibility criteria for researchers

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant proposals are submitted by the Principal Investigator who has scientific responsibility for the project, on behalf of the host institution. There are no specific eligibility criteria for a Principal Investigator applying to the AdG. As for StG and CoG, specific eligibility criteria apply based on the date of award of the first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree) of the PI:

- **Starting Grants (StG):** Principal Investigator shall have been awarded his/her first PhD  $\geq 2$  and  $\leq 7$  years prior to the publication date of the respective call for proposals.
- **Consolidator Grants (CoG):** Principal Investigator shall have been awarded his/her first PhD  $> 7$  and  $\leq 12$  years prior to the publication date of the respective call for proposals.
- **Advanced Grants (ADG):** Applicants must be scientifically independent and have a recent research track-record and profile which identifies them as leaders in their respective field(s) of research.
- **Proof of Concept (PoC):** All Principal Investigators in an ERC frontier research project, that is either on going or has ended less than 12 months before the publication date of the call, are eligible to participate and apply for an ERC Proof of Concept Grant.
- **Synergy Grants:** No specific eligibility criteria are foreseen for PIs applying for the ERC Synergy Grants, but only exceptional proposals are likely to be funded in what are expected to be extremely competitive calls

The effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD can be reduced in certain circumstances (eg. maternity leave, long-term illness, etc) but that must be properly documented.

## How can I apply?

Find out the right ERC grant and call for you. Inform yourself about the application timeline and familiarise yourself with the main guidance documents (work programme, information for applicants, specific rules, etc). Identify and contact your Host Institution early. As proposals must be submitted electronically, make yourself familiar with the Participant Portal Submission Service (PPSS) in time. For questions, get in touch with the Project Management Office at U.Porto or the National Contact Point for the ERC.

## When can I apply?

ERC grant applications can be submitted only in response to a 'Call for Proposals'. Calls for the ERC funding schemes are published on the ERC website, the Research Participant Portal

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and in the Official Journal of the European Union. Normally calls for proposal for **StG,CoG** and **AdG** are published once a year with one deadline. **PoC** are published once a year, but with two deadlines. **Synergy grants** are published annually, normally with one deadline. Check out these sources regularly to see open or forthcoming Calls for Proposals.

### How much funding can I expect?

The maximum grant varies by grant type.

- **Starting Grant (StG):** up to € 1.5 million (exceptionally 2 million), 5 years
- **Consolidator Grant (CoG):** up to € 2 million (exceptionally 2.75 million), 5 years
- **Advanced Grant (AdG):** up to € 2.5 million (exceptionally 3.5 million), 5 years
- **Proof of Concept (PoC):** up to € 150.000, 18 months
- **Synergy Grants:** up to 15 million euro for a period up to 6 years (pro rata for projects of shorter duration).

The Union financial contribution takes the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and of flat-rate financing of indirect costs of a maximum of 25% of the total eligible direct costs.