

# How to write a successful ERC proposal

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# Overview

- Getting Started
- Proposal
- Resubmission Rules
- Documents and Links

**Disclaimer:** Information in this presentation is based on the 2017 calls. Information on 2018 calls not published yet.

# Getting Started

# Getting Started

- How to find Host Institution?
- Contact your NCP early
- You need signed Host Support Letter
- Many institutions have internal procedures and deadlines for HI Letter
- Check HI internal services, e.g. regarding budget check



# Getting Started

- Start early – your proposal must be excellent in all aspects (including layout, language etc.)
- Study «[Work Programme](#)» and «[Information for Applicants](#)» (documents for the 2018 call expected in summer)
- Use templates available from EC Participants Portal (downloadable after call opening and after registration)
- Decide on evaluation panel(s) and study panel disciplinary composition



# Evaluation Panels

- 25 evaluation panels in 3 domains
- Panel descriptions: Annex I of «Information for Applicants»
- Panels chairs published on ERC website before call deadline; panel members after call deadline
- Two sets of evaluation panels alternate
- Scientists evaluate scientists! No quota.

# Evaluation Panels – Working Mode

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

# Proposal



# Composition of Application

## **PART A – online forms to complete in PPSS**

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

## **Annexes – submitted as pdf**

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

## **PART B1 - submitted as pdf**

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

## **PART B2 – submitted as pdf**

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

# Composition of Application

## Evaluation step 1

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# Composition of Application

## Evaluation step 2

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**+ Interviews with panel**

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# CV and Track-Record

## 2. Principal Investigator

### Intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment

#### *Starting and Consolidator*

#### *Intellectual capacity and creativity*

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

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

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

#### *Commitment*

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

# CV

- Suggestion for structure in template
- Explicitly mention career gaps
- Contains «funding ID»: ongoing grants and funding applications
- Note that it is legitimate to apply with a similar project to different funding agencies
- Tables on ongoing grants and applications do not count towards page limit

# Track-Record

- List up to 5/10 representative publications
- Consider commenting on key publications
- Mention total number of publications
- Make sure online full publication lists online are up to date

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

## **PART B2 - submitted as pdf**

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



# Characteristics of ERC Projects

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

# Characteristics of ERC Projects cont.

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

# High-Risk High-Gain and Feasibility

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

# High-Risk High-Gain and Feasibility

Demonstrate feasibility through

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

# Synopsis

## 1. Research Project

### Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

#### Starting, Consolidator and Advanced

##### *Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project*

*To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?*

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

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

##### **Scientific Approach**

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

# Full Proposal

## 1. Research Project

### Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

#### Starting, Consolidator and Advanced

##### *Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project*

*To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?*

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

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

##### **Scientific Approach**

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

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

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

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

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# Resources

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

- You complete the budget twice: in the proposal and in the A3 form
- Check the budget with your Host Institution
- Short description of ERC team, profile of team members needed
- Overview over timescales (e.g. simple Gant chart)
- Mention other resources needed for the project
- Specific justification in case of request of additional budget
- Include brief description of team in Synopsis



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# Ethical Issues

- All applicants: obligation to complete «Ethics Issues table» (Form A4)
- If answer to one or more questions is YES, «Ethics Self-Assessment» needs to be provided
- Flow-text of unlimited pages (pdf), submitted with Supporting Documentation section
- Option to submit additional supporting documents (e.g. approvals of similar research)
- [Information for Applicants Annex 4 \(p. 62–75\)](#)
- EC Guidance: [How to complete your ethics self-assessment](#)

# Resubmission Rules

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Probably same resubmission rules as in previous calls:

## Evaluation step 1

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

## Evaluation step 2

- Eligible in subsequent call

# Documents and Links

# Documents and Links

- [Work Programme 2017](#) (WP 2018 expected in July 2017)
- [Information for Applicants StG & CoG 2017](#)
- ERC projects:
  - [ERC website](#)
  - [Cordis](#)
- [ERC StG](#)
- [ERC CoG](#) (including info on panels, open calls, docs...)

# Euresearch = Swiss Guide to European Research & Innovation



Euresearch is the Swiss network mandated by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) to provide targeted information, hands-on advice and transnational partnering related to European research and innovation programmes.

# Questions?