European Research Council (ERC)
The European Research Council (ERC) in Horizon Europe

Randi Wallmichrath
National Contact Point ERC, EU Bureau of the BMBF, DLR-PT
Agenda

• ERC Basics

• Application Procedure and Evaluation Process

• General Hints
National Contact Point ERC – Services

• General information on the ERC
• Advice on grant application and grant management
• Proposal check (contact us 3 weeks before deadline)
• Events
• Newsletter & website

Close collaboration with EU liaison officers of host institutions
ERC Basics
Horizon Europe Programme Structure (2021-2027)

**Pillar 1**
- Excellent Science
  - European Research Council
  - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
  - Research Infrastructures

**Pillar 2**
- Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness
  - Health
  - Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society
  - Civil Security for Society
  - Digital, Industry and Space
  - Climate, Energy and Mobility
  - Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment
  - Joint Research Centre

**Pillar 3**
- Innovative Europe
  - European Innovation Council
  - European innovation ecosystems
  - European Institute of Innovation and Technology

**Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area**
- Widening participation and spreading excellence
- Reforming and Enhancing the European R&I system

*Status: Trilogue, 10.12.2020*

**Total budget 95,5 Bn EUR**

**16,1 Bn EUR**
ERC in Horizon Europe/Work Programme 2021

• **Core message:** Stability and continuity

• Slightly revised panels for 2021/22 calls (published [here](https://erc.europa.eu/))

• Advanced Grant: interview as part of the evaluation

• **Changes** to call calendar:
  - Opening of first calls delayed
  - Eligibility periods for StG and CoG **not affected**
  - No Synergy Grant & possibly no Proof of Concept call in 2021
  - return to “usual” calendar by WP 2023

Please check for updates! [https://erc.europa.eu/](https://erc.europa.eu/)
Principles of ERC Funding

- Scientific excellence as sole criterion
- Ground-breaking frontier research
- High risk – high gain
- Investigator-driven
- All research fields - “bottom-up”
- Portability of grants
- Funding regardless of nationality, age & gender
- Host Institution based in the EU/Associated Country
- No co-financing needed
- Scientific autonomy
# ERC Grant Schemes (I/II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Starting Grants StG</th>
<th>Consolidator Grants CoG</th>
<th>Advanced Grants AdG</th>
<th>Synergy Grants SyG</th>
<th>Proof of Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max. duration</strong></td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max. budget</strong></td>
<td>1.5 Mio. € (2.5 Mio. €)*</td>
<td>2 Mio. € (3 Mio. €)*</td>
<td>2.5 Mio. € (3.5 Mio. €)*</td>
<td>10 Mio. € (14 Mio. €)*</td>
<td>150 000 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* exception possible in case of high equipment costs or PI from Third Country, other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs
### ERC Grant Schemes (II/II)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Starting Grants StG</th>
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<th>Advanced Grants AdG</th>
<th>Synergy Grants SyG</th>
<th>Proof of Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI Time commitment project</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI Time commitment in EU / AC*</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Associated Country*
# Eligibility Period Work Programme 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Period: Date of the first PhD</th>
<th>Starting Grants StG</th>
<th>Consolidator Grants CoG</th>
<th>Advanced Grants AdG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 2 and ≤ 7 years prior to 1 January 2021</td>
<td>&gt; 7 and ≤ 12 years prior to 1 January 2021</td>
<td>No specific criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut-off dates: PhD awarded from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2018 (inclusive)</td>
<td>Cut-off dates: PhD awarded from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013 (inclusive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The date of the first PhD considered for the calculation of the eligibility period is the date of the actual award according to the national rules of the country where the degree was awarded.*

Different Rules for Medical Doctors
Eligibility of Medical Doctors (MD)

- German “Dr med” is not considered as reference date, 3. Staatsexamen is
- Eligibility period:
  - 4-9 years past MD/“3. Staatsexamen” for Starting Grants
  - 9-14 years past MD/“3. Staatsexamen” for Consolidator Grants
- Principal Investigators who are MDs need to have:
  - Appointment that requires doctoral equivalency (postdoc fellowship, professorship, ...)
  - Additional PhD
Extensions of the eligibility period

- Maternity before/after PhD: 18 months per child
- Extension by the documented time:
  - Maternity before/after PhD leave > 18 months
  - Paternity before/after PhD
  - Military/civil service after PhD
  - Long-term illness of the PI or a close family member (>90 days) after PhD
  - Clinical training after the award of the first eligible degree (up to 4 years)
Call Calendar 2021, tentative dates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Starting Grants (ERC-2021-StG)</th>
<th>Consolidator Grants (ERC-2021-CoG)</th>
<th>Advanced Grants (ERC-2021-AdG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open</strong></td>
<td>25-02-2021</td>
<td>11-03-2021</td>
<td>20-05-2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing</strong></td>
<td>24-03-2021</td>
<td>20-04-2021</td>
<td>31-08-2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates are subject to the adoption of Horizon Europe and the ERC Work Programme 2021.
Facts & Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting Grant 2020</th>
<th>Consolidator Grant 2020</th>
<th>Advanced Grant 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 3272 Proposals</td>
<td>- 2506 Proposals</td>
<td>- 2678 Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 436 Grants</td>
<td>- 327 Grants</td>
<td>(42% increase, 20% increase from UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Success rate: 13,3 %</td>
<td>- Success rate: 13 %</td>
<td>- Expect to fund: ~210 proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Median age grantee: 35*</td>
<td>- Median age grantee: 40*</td>
<td>- Expected success rate: ~7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- By far most proposals are submitted 6 years after PhD</td>
<td>- By far most proposals are submitted 11 years after PhD</td>
<td>- Median age grantee: 52*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2019

Statistics show that success rate is equal throughout most of the eligibility window! → Do not wait until the last moment
Application Procedure and Evaluation Process
Familiarize yourself early

• with the Funding & Tenders Portal and the submission system
  https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

• with the relevant documents such as the Information for Applicants of your call

• with the evaluation sub-criteria

2021 documents (pre-publication beginning of February https://erc.europa.eu/) Until then check out documents from 2020
The proposal

Administrative Forms (Part A)

1. General information including abstract
2. Participants & contacts
3. Budget table
4. Ethics
5. Call specific questions including excluded reviewers

Research Proposal (Part B)

B1
A. Extended Synopsis of the project (5 pages)
B. Curriculum vitae (2 pages)
Appendix: ongoing grants/grant applications
C. Track-record (2 pages)

B2 Scientific Proposal
A. State-of-the-art and objectives
B. Methodology
C. Resources and Time Commitment (2 pages)

Annexes
Host Institution Binding
Statement of Support
PhD record (StG & CoG)
Ethics documents (if applicable)
Extension of eligibility (if ap.)

Check with 2021 proposal template

2 audiences:
B1 - generalists &
B2 - experts of your field

2 February 2021
Peer Review Evaluation Procedure – Panels

Handled by 27 panels divided into 3 scientific domains
- 11 Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE) panels
- 9 Life Sciences (LS) panels
- 7 Social Sciences and Humanities (SH) panels

Panels consist of a panel chair & 10-15 members
- Names of panel chairs published on ERC website before call deadline, names of panel members after evaluation
- Panels alternate – most 2019 panel members are re-invited for 2021

- Check Panel structure for ERC calls 2021 and 2022 including descriptors
- Choose the panel that fits best, choose descriptors, keywords & target your proposal to that audience

Success rate is independent from the panel!
Evaluation Procedure

Proposal submission

Single submission of the full proposal

Part A
Part B1
Part B2
Annexes

Eligibility Check

Evaluation step 1

1. Remote: Panel members
2. Meeting: Panel members

Evaluation step 2

Proposals passing to step 2

1. Remote: Panel members & external referees
2. Meeting & Interview: Panel members

Part A (Budget)
Part B1
Part B2
Interviews

2 February 2021
Scores & Re-application rules

**Evaluation step 1**

A = sufficient quality
B = high quality but not sufficient
C = unsufficient

A: moves on to evaluation step 2
B: suspended for one call year
C: suspended for two call years

**Evaluation step 2**

A = sufficient quality
B = high quality but not sufficient
C = unsufficient

A unfunded &
B: no re-application restrictions
General Hints
Some questions on your proposal

• Can you explain your project idea **briefly and concisely**?
• Are the **goals** and the **novelty** clear from the beginning?
• Which **important challenges** will you tackle?
• Which are the **ground-breaking** or **novel** aspects?
• What makes the project **high risk but feasible**?
• What is the expected **impact** on your **research field**?
• Why are you the **right person** to carry out the project?

➢ **Propose a project that comes from your heart & be excited about it**
➢ **Use the expertise of your EU office and the NCP ERC**
Readability

• Easy to read and attractive
  – Understandable for non experts of your field
  – Leave no question & no evaluation criteria unanswered
  – Concise title, headings, sub-headings
  – Clear, comprehensible language, short sentences
  – Paragraphs, Bullet points, tables, graphics...
  – Time chart, roles of team members etc

Panel members receive 20-40 proposals – make their live easier
Typical Reviewer Comments you do not want to read about your proposal*

“solid track record … however, was not considered as internationally competitive”

“The novelty of insights is not always clear”

“serious doubts about the independence of the PI”

“Confusingly written proposal”

“I consider this proposal to be high risk, but I am not convinced that the potential gains are truly very high”

“neither the lead question nor the approaches are clearly defined”

“the principal investigator does not seem to have the capacity and is not prepared to execute the outlined project”

“Feasibility is hard to judge based on the information provided”

“rather incremental than groundbreaking”

“There is hardly any form of work plan”

Examples taken from StG 2019
Typical Reviewer Comments you may want to read about your proposal*

“The PI has an **excellent** track record of publishing in high impact journals and is first author on a significant number of these papers”

“Ground-breaking project that if successful could have a huge **impact** in the field”

“**originality** and **importance** of the proposal”

“incredibly **ambitious** proposal”

“highly **sophisticated** and **inventive** technology underlying this proposal”

“methods are on the **cutting edge** of work in this area”

“**scientific approach is feasible** but clearly **high risk/high gain**”

“The PI is an **eclectic, original thinker**”

Examples taken from StG 2019
Browse funded ERC Projects

https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects
Love to stream?

• 7 ERC Classes – „Step by step to the ERC Application process“
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfbFbzkVWgCU&list=PLtv6FnsXqnXAYRk6HCErwMxwML0ZKoMcy
Resources

• NCP ERC (extensive information) www.eubuero.de/erc.htm (DEU) & www.erc-germany.de (EN)

• ERC (extensive information) https://erc.europa.eu/

• Funding & Tenders Portal (calls, documents, proposal registration and submission) https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

• Your institution https://www.uni-regensburg.de/forschung/forschungsfoerderung/eu-service/index.html
National Contact Point ERC Germany  www.nks-erc.de

Liane Lewerentz  
Tel: 0228 3821-1652  
E-Mail: liane.lewerentz@dlr.de

Vitaliy Bondarenko  
Tel.: 0228 3821-1551  
E-Mail: vitaliy.Bondarenko@dlr.de

Dr. Andrea Hesse  
Tel: 0228 3821-1371  
E-Mail: andrea.hesse@dlr.de

Nicole Schröder  
Tel: 030 67055-788  
E-Mail: nicole.schroeder@dlr.de

Mareike Thillmann (Elternzeit)  
Tel: 0228 3821-1667  
E-Mail: mareike.thillmann@dlr.de

Randi Wallmichrath  
Tel: 0228 3821-1647  
E-Mail: randi.wallmichrath@dlr.de

Jennifer Striebeck  
Tel: 0228 95 997-10  
E-Mail: jennifer.striebeck@kowi.de

Dr. Claudia Breit (Elternzeit)  
Tel.:0228-95997-19  
E-Mail: claudia.breit@kowi.de

Isabel Herzhoff  
Tel: 0228 95 997-14  
E-Mail: isabel.herzhoff@kowi.de

Dunja Hofmann  
Tel: 0228 95997-26  
dunja.hofmann@kowi.de

Dominik Maas  
Tel: 0228 95 997-13  
E-Mail: dominik.maas@kowi.de

Katharina Spannhake  
Tel.:0228-95997-17  
E-Mail: katharina.spannhake@dlr.de

Dr. Kristina Wien  
Tel.: +49-228-95997-15  
E-Mail: kristina.wien@kowi.de

Martin Winger  
Tel: +32 2 54 802-21  
E-Mail: martin.winger@kowi.de

Erstinformation:  
Monika Schuler  
Tel: 0228 3821-1633  
E-Mail: monika.schuler@dlr.de

Thank you for listening!  
Any questions?
✓ **External funding incentive system:**
rewards application for external funding projects with up to 30,000 € in five different lines:
https://www.uni-regensburg.de/forschung/drittmittelanreizsystem/index.html

✓ Information and calls: **Newsletter research funding:**
Mail to webadmin.forschungsfoerderung@ur.de

✓ **Next events:**
- February 23 16:00: Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions
- March 2 10:00: The Future of Joint Research
 ✓ **Ref. IV/5 Research Support and External Funding:**
   for applications to the EU, please contact:

   Eva Birner  
eva.birner@ur.de  
0941 943 5509

   Dr. Stefanie Rumm  
stefanie.rumm@ur.de  
0941 943 5535

**Faculties:**
- Medicine
- Mathematics
- Physics
- Biology and Pre-Clinical Medicine
- Chemistry and Pharmacy

**Faculties:**
- Catholic Theology
- Law
- Business, Economics and Management Information Systems
- Philosophy, Art History, History and Humanities
- Human Sciences
- Languages, Literature and Cultures