European Research Council (ERC): Funding opportunities for Top Researchers
What is the ERC?

ERC is a new type of funding body in Europe to support excellence in frontier research, a bottom-up, individual-team, pan-European competition.

**Legislation**
- Scientific Council with 22 members
- Support by the ERC Executive Agency
- Significant budget (1.2 billion €/year)
- Excellence as the only valid criterion

**Strategy**
- Support for the individual scientist
- International peer-review
- No predetermined subjects (bottom-up)
- Support of frontier research in all fields of science and humanities
FP7 budget € 50.5 billion
ERC budget € 7.5 billion; Increase by € 250 M/year
After 5 years of existence...

- ~2 600 researchers funded (58% are at early-career stage)
- 53 nationalities represented
- Working in >480 different institutions in 26 countries
- average success rate 12%
- 50% of grantees in 50 institutions; “Excellence attracts excellence”
The European Research Council

ERC grant schemes
Researchers Career development and complementary funding schemes

European Research Council

- Post-docs
- Students
- Post-graduates
- Marie Curie
- Erasmus

- Researchers in ERC research projects
- Research assistants in ERC research projects
- ERC grant holder
- Full Professor
- Associated Professor
- Junior Professor/Junior Researcher
- ERC StG - Starters
- ERC StG – Consolid.
- ERC Advanced
- Synergy
- Senior Professor
- ERC Synergy projects

- ERC grant holder
- Researcher in ERC research projects
- Junior Professor/Junior Researcher
- Associated Professor
- Full Professor
- Senior Professor

- ERC Synergy projects
- ERC Advanced
- ERC StG – Consolid.
- ERC StG - Starters
- Marie Curie
- Erasmus
Starting Grants
- starters (2-7 years after PhD)
- consolidators (7-12 years after PhD) up to € 2.0 Mio for 5 years

Advanced Grants
- track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years
- up to € 3.5 Mio for 5 years

Synergy Grants
- 2 – 4 Principal Investigators
- up to € 15.0 Mio for 6 years

Proof-of-Concept
- bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
- up to €150,000 for ERC grant holders
ERC grant schemes

2013 total budget: €1,754M

AdG: Advanced Grants
StG: Starter Grants
CoG: Consolidator Grants
Syn: ERC Synergy
PoC: Proof of Concept

PoC: €10M
SyG: €150M

AdG: €662M
StG: €398M
CoG: €523M
Indicative call budget

- Life Sciences – LS
- Physical Sciences & Engineering – PE
- Social Sciences & Humanities – SH

Within each domain, budget is broken down according to total funding requested per panel (equal chance in each panel)
ERC Grant Schemes
Panel structure: 3 domains and 25 panels

Social Sciences and Humanities
- 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

Physical Sciences & Engineering
- 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

Life Sciences
- 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

[Diagram showing the 3 domains and 25 panels]
ERC Granting schemes

**Starting Grants**

- Attract/retain next-generation top scientists
- Address funding gap early in independent career
- Establish or consolidate an independent research team & program
- Up to € 2.0 Mio

**Advanced Grants**

- Attract/retain current world-top scientists
- Stimulate investigator-driven, breakthrough research
- Up to € 3.5 Mio
2566 projects have been selected, one fifth corresponding to women PIs.

*) Host institution refers to the organisation with which the first grant agreement was signed.
ERC Grant schemes:  
Who can apply?

- Excellent Researchers (PIs)
  - Any nationality, any age or any current place of work
- In conjunction with a Host Institution
  - Based in EU or associated countries
Host institution

Not evaluated during evaluation process!

Applicant legal entity: institution that engages and hosts the PI for the duration of the project

Any type of legal entity: universities, research centres, business research units ... as long as it is in MS or AC

Commitment of HI: to ensure that the PI may
- apply for funding independently
- manage research and funding for the project
- publish independently as senior author
- have access to reasonable space and facilities
Attractive features for researchers from outside Europe

**Incentive:**
- Additional “start-up” funding for scientists moving to Europe (EUR 500,000 for Starter and Consolidator and EUR 1 Million for Advanced grantees)

**Flexibility:**
- Host institution shall be in an EU member state or AC
- Grantee can keep affiliation with home institute outside Europe (“significant part” of work time in Europe)
- Team members can be based outside Europe
- Grantee can move within Europe with the grant

**Negotiation:**
- Several European countries/host institutes assist applicants and reward grantees with top-up funds or long-term professorships
Simple and flexible grants for researchers from outside Europe

Coming to Europe doesn’t mean burning bridges:

• Grantee can keep affiliation with home institute outside Europe
• Grantee must spend a “significant part” (min. 50 %) of the work time in Europe

Example: use of the flexibility
Creative freedom for the individual grantee

ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility

- to work on a research topic of own choice, with a team of own choice
- to gain true financial autonomy for 5 years
- to move with the grant to any place in Europe if necessary (portability of grants)
Excellence as sole criterion, to apply to:

1. Research Project (RP)
   - Ground breaking nature
   - Potential impact
   - Scientific Approach
   - Added value of the Group (only SyG)

2. Principle Investigator (PI)
   - Intellectual capacity
   - Creativity
   - Commitment
The profile of a StG applicant

“Am I competitive enough?”

Potential for research independence

- evidence of scientific maturity
- track-record of early research achievements appropriate to the research field and career stage
- at least one publication without participation of PhD supervisor

Promising **track-record of early achievements**

- significant publications
- invited presentations in conferences, …

Specific stage of research career at time of application

- starters
- consolidators

Streaming – comparable success rates
ERC Grants: how does it operate? Submission, evaluation and selection

Submission of full proposals → Step 1 (remote) evaluation on the basis of Part B1 of proposal by panel members → 1st Panel meeting → Proposals passing to step 2 → Individual assessment of full proposal by panel members & remote reviewers → AdG: 2nd Panel meeting → CoG and StG: 2nd Panel meeting incl. interviews of applicants → Proposals selected for funding
How to apply?
Submission of proposals

- Single submission
  - “1 stage, 2 step” evaluation
- Electronic submission
- Deadlines strictly enforced
- Proposals have two parts:
  - Part A: Administrative forms
  - Part B: Scientific proposal itself
Proposal structure: Part A

- **Part A**: “Administrative forms” containing
  - A1 Information on PI
  - A2 Information on Host Institution
  - A3 Budget breakdown by year and partner
    - Not detailed
Submission of proposals
Details of Part B

Part B1 = Section 1 of Part B = “The PI”

- Scientific Leadership Potential (1 page)
- CV (2 pages): academic and research record, funding, career breaks
- Early achievements track record (2 pages: publications, patents, conferences, prizes and awards)

- Extended synopsis (5 pages)
  - Ground breaking nature of research
  - Feasibility

Only part B1 is evaluated in Step1!
Submission of proposals
Details on Part B

• Part B2 = Section 2 of part B = Full Scientific proposal (15 page):
  ➔ More detailed description and methodology
  ➔ Potential Impact
  ➔ Costs
  ➔ Dedication

• Annexes:
  o Ethical Review information (only where appropriate)
  o Separate additional documents:
    • Host Institution Support Letter
    • Copy of Ph.D.
    • Documents to prove extension to eligibility window
New instrument: ERC Synergy Grant

- For small groups of 2 to 4 excellent Principal Investigators (PIs) with complementary skills, knowledge and resources.
- Unique configuration of PIs to jointly identify and tackle exciting research problems aiming at breakthrough discoveries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERC Call Name</th>
<th>Call Budget</th>
<th>Grant Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERC Synergy Grant ERC-2013-SyG</td>
<td>€150M</td>
<td>Max. €15M for up to six years</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# Timetable of 2013 ERC calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERC calls</th>
<th>Call Publication</th>
<th>Submission Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starting Grants</strong>&lt;br&gt; ERC-2013-StG</td>
<td>10 July 2012</td>
<td>17 Oct. 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synergy Grants</strong>&lt;br&gt; ERC-2013-SyG</td>
<td>10 October 2012</td>
<td>10 Jan. 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidator Grant</strong>&lt;br&gt; ERC-2013-CoG</td>
<td>7 November 2012</td>
<td>21 Feb. 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International participation
Potential applicants from the whole world!

Nationality, current place of work, and age are not relevant!
Submitted proposals from researchers with non-ERA nationality
ERC Starting grant calls 2009 - 2011
Submitted proposals from researchers with non-ERA nationality
ERC Advanced grant calls 2008 - 2011

Number of applications by nationality and year:
- **US**: Highest number in 2008, decreasing in subsequent years.
- **RU**: Consistent number from 2008 to 2011.
- **CN** and **CA**: Low numbers throughout the years.

Nationality shares:
- **US**: 5% in 2008, increasing to 7% in 2011.
- **RU**: 5.4% in 2008 and 2009, decreasing to 6.0% in 2011.
- **Others**: Steady share throughout the years, with a peak of 6.3% in 2010.

Advanced grant applications by year:
- **2008**: 200 proposals
- **2009**: 300 proposals
- **2010**: 400 proposals
- **2011**: 500 proposals
Submitted proposals by Indian researchers

- 11 Indian applicants were resident in India at the time of application
- 3 applied from US, 3 from Turkey, 1 from Norway and all the rest from various EU countries (46 from UK, 15 from Germany, 14 from France, 13 from The Netherlands etc).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>StG calls</th>
<th>AdG Calls</th>
<th>All ERC calls</th>
<th>Life Sci</th>
<th>Phys&amp;Eng</th>
<th>Soc&amp;Hum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submitted applications from Indian researchers</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Host Institution</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ERC grantees with a non-ERA nationality
ERC Starting and Advanced Calls 2007 – 2011

ERA = EU Member States and FP7 Associated Countries

TOTAL number of grantees with non-ERA nationality: 101 StG and 57 AdG

*) nationality as last declared by the principal investigator
## Grantees with Indian nationality

**ERC Starting Calls 2007 – 2011**
**ERC Advanced Calls 2008 - 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country*</th>
<th>Host Institution**</th>
<th>HI Country</th>
<th>ERC Call</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Grantees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich)</td>
<td>CH</td>
<td>StG 2010</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Molecular Biology Laboratory</td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>StG 2010</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institute of Science and Technology Austria</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td>StG 2011</td>
<td>Phys Sci &amp; Eng.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>StG 2010</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Southampton</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>StG 2011</td>
<td>Phys Sci &amp; Eng.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*) nationality as last declared by the principal investigator  
**) current host institution (data as of 03/05/2012)  
Basis: ERC calls Starting Grants and Advance Grants 2007-2011

- all Indian grantees were resident outside India at the time of application
Where to find more information

**Ideas NCP (National Contact Points)**

**ERC Website**
http://erc.europa.eu/

SPECIFIC INFO FOR NON-EUROPEAN RESEARCHERS: http://erc.europa.eu/non-european-researchers

**ERC on Facebook**
http://www.facebook.com/pages/ERC/109690865723702#!/EuropeanResearchCouncil

#ERC on Twitter

**Quarterly e-newsletter and e-News Alerts**
Register on http://erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc

**Vacancies for team member of an ERC project - EURAXESS**
http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/jobs/index

**Any other question**
http://erc.europa.eu/send-us-message
Thank you 😊

We support ideas that can change Europe and the World

ERC: http://erc.europa.eu/
Participant Portal: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal
Rising applications
Submitted proposals by domain
ERC Starting grant calls 2007 - 2012
Submitted proposals by domain
ERC Advanced grant calls 2008 - 2012

Advanced Grant

- Physical Sciences and Engineering
- Life Sciences
- Social Sciences and Humanities

ERC 2012

2,167 -27% 1,583 +27% 2,009 +14% 2,284 +1% 2,304

Advanced Grant 2008
997
766
404

Advanced Grant 2009
736
512
335

Advanced Grant 2010
902
621
486

Advanced Grant 2011
917
789
578

Advanced Grant 2012
978
773
553