



European Research Council

ERC Grant Schemes

Guide for Applicants

12 December 2007

[This revised version includes details on the ERC Advanced Grant scheme, which is subject to a first call for proposals. The general principles and information on the ERC grant schemes have been adapted accordingly. Further modifications will be introduced before the next call for ERC Starting Grants in summer 2008, taking into account the experience from the first calls]

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European Commission
FP7 Specific Programme IDEAS





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Changes compared to the version dated 01.08.2007

The present version of the ERC Guide for Applicants is a major upgrade of the version dated 1.8.2007. The content structure has been modified to accommodate both ERC grant schemes. Detailed information on the Advanced Grant scheme has been included.

The chapter 2 “ERC Grant schemes” has been modified and extended to provide more clarity on the basic principles on which the ERC Starting Grant and ERC Advanced Grant scheme are based. Chapter 3 “Applying for an ERC Grant” and Chapter 4 “Evaluation and selection of grant proposals” have been modified: each chapter contains now general sections applicable to both grant schemes, and with specific sections on the individual grant schemes. A provisional call overview table (2006-2010) has been introduced in section 3.1. The section 4.4 “Redress” has been modified as requests for redress need now to be introduced via the web-based FP7 redress portal. The annexes have been re-structured and extended to take into account the Advanced Grant scheme.

Purpose of the Guide

This guide provides practical information to potential applicants in preparing and submitting an application for an ERC grant. In addition, it provides a general overview on the ERC peer review evaluation process and presents the main features of the ERC grant agreement and the management of ERC grants.

For detailed information on the ERC peer review evaluation process, the ERC grant agreement and the management of ERC grants, the following documents are available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23> :

- Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers: This guide provides practical information to peer reviewers as well as detailed information on the peer review evaluation and project selection process.
- ERC Model Grant Agreement: The grant agreement, which will be concluded between the ERC and the Principal Investigator's host institution. A template for the "Supplementary Agreement" between the Principal Investigator and the host institution is available on the ERC website as well.
- Guide for ERC Grant Holders: This guide provides practical information to ERC grant holders on the administration and management of ERC grants, including monitoring and claiming of project costs, the scientific and financial reporting procedure, and the process for making changes to the project. It includes also information to applicants that have been offered an ERC grant on the process to prepare the grant agreement and the associated terms and conditions.

The present guide is based on the legal documents setting the rules and conditions for the ERC Grant schemes, in particular the ERC work programmes, the ERC Rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme, the ERC model grant agreement. This guide does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding. Neither the European Commission nor any person or body acting on its behalf can be held responsible for the use made of the guide.

Note: As with other parts of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme, National Contact Points (ERC NCPs) have been set up across Europe¹ by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications. For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.ncpList>.

¹ This applies to EU member states and associated countries. Some third countries also provide this service.



1. The European Research Council

The European Research Council (ERC) is a newly-created European funding initiative, designed to support the best scientists, engineers and scholars in Europe.

The ERC's mandate is to encourage the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator-initiated frontier research across all fields of research, on the basis of scientific excellence.

Grants are awarded and managed according to simple procedures that maintain the focus on excellence, encourage creativity and combine flexibility with accountability.

The ERC, which is established by the European Commission and funded through the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme with a budget of € 7.51 bn for 7 years (2007-2013), complements other funding schemes in Europe, such as those of research funding agencies operating at the national level and those within the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme.

The ERC consists of a Scientific Council and a Dedicated Implementation Structure. It operates under conditions of autonomy and integrity, guaranteed by the European Commission, to which it is accountable.

1.1. The role of the ERC Scientific Council

The Scientific Council establishes the overall scientific strategy of the ERC, including the annual work programme where the calls for proposals and the corresponding funding rules and selection criteria are defined.

The Scientific Council establishes and oversees the ERC's scientific management and the implementation of the work programme, including the peer review and project selection processes and the selection of peer reviewers.

1.2. The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure (ERC-DIS)

The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure implements and manages ERC operations. It executes the annual work programme as established by the Scientific Council, implements calls for proposals and organises peer review evaluation in accordance with methodologies designed by the Scientific Council, and establishes and manages grant agreements. Additionally, it provides information and support to applicants and grant holders.

The European Commission is setting up the ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure as an executive agency. Pending the establishment and operability of the executive agency, its implementation tasks are executed by a dedicated service of the European Commission.

2. ERC Grant Schemes

2.1. What kinds of ERC grants are available?

Two types of ERC grants are available to support researchers in carrying out frontier research projects:

2.1.1 ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant (ERC Starting Grant)

The ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant (ERC Starting Grant) aims to provide adequate support to researchers at the stage at which they are intending to establish or have already established an independent research team or, depending on the field, developing an independent research programme. Researchers applying for an ERC Starting Grant must be able to demonstrate their potential to perform world-class research.

ERC Starting Grants allow the most promising (young) investigators to make the transition from working under a supervisor to an independent research leader at an early stage in their research career.

In its funding strategy the Scientific Council envisages that about one third of the ERC's frontier research funding 2007-2010 will be allocated to this grant scheme.

2.1.2 ERC Advanced Investigator Grant (ERC Advanced Grant)

The ERC Advanced Investigator Grant (ERC Advanced Grant) aims to encourage and support excellent, innovative and investigator-initiated research projects carried out by leading investigators. This funding scheme complements the ERC Starting Grant scheme by targeting researchers who have already established themselves as being independent research leaders in their own right.

ERC Advanced Grants allow exceptional established research leaders in science, engineering and scholarship to pursue frontier research of their choice.

In its funding strategy the Scientific Council envisages that about two thirds of the ERC's frontier research funding 2007-2010 will be allocated to this grant scheme.

2.2. Who can apply for an ERC grant?

ERC Grants support projects which are carried out by individual research teams headed by a single "Principal Investigator" and, if necessary, include additional team members². The guiding principles of ERC grants are highlighted in Box 1.

² In certain fields (e.g. in the humanities and mathematics), research is often performed individually, aside from guiding research students. The term "team" is therefore used in the broadest sense. It includes cases where an individual works independently.

An application for a grant should be submitted by a single “Principal Investigator” in conjunction with and on behalf of her/his “host institution.”

The host institution (e.g. a university, a research organisation or a research-performing company) is the applicant legal entity which engages and hosts the Principal Investigator, with the attached commitment that this institution will grant the Principal Investigator the independence to direct the project and manage the research funding.

To apply for an ERC grant, the Principal Investigator presents a frontier research project and an individual research team, which will work under his/her responsibility. Depending on the field, a Principal Investigator may also work alone.²

Box 1: Guiding principles of ERC grant schemes

- Scientific excellence is the sole selection criterion.
- Projects in all fields of research are eligible for funding (see section 2.3)
- Individual research teams led by a single Principal Investigator are supported (see section 2.2).
- Significant funding is provided to attract the established and next generation of exceptional research leaders (see section 2.4).
- Grants are awarded to the host institution that engages the Principal Investigator (see chapter 5).
- The host institution guarantees the Principal Investigator’s independence and provides the research environment to carry out the project and manage its funding (see section 2.2, chapter 5 and Annex 3).

2.2.1 The Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI is the team's lead researcher who has the scientific responsibility for the corresponding project. He/she can be of any age, nationality or country of residence.

In order to be eligible for a grant, the PI must be independent or, for the ERC Starting Grant, at the stage at which she/he is establishing independence³ (i.e. beginning to lead or leading an independent research team) or, depending on the field, establishing an independent research programme. Further details on the profile of the PI are provided in Box 2a (ERC Starting Grant)^{4,5} and Box 2b (ERC Advanced Grant).

Independence⁶ implies that the PI has the authority to:

- Apply for funding independently of senior colleagues;

³ The ERC peer review evaluation panels will assess whether the conditions specified by the host institution will guarantee independence and/or the requested grant will allow the PI to make the transition to independence.

⁴ PIs applying for an ERC Starting Grant must have been awarded a PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree). For more information on the “ERC policy on PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degrees” please consult the corresponding document at http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/phd-and-equivalent-doctoral-degrees-the-erc-policy_en.pdf.

⁵ For the next calls for Starting Grant proposals, the required PI profile – i.e. the eligible time window after PhD award – may be adapted based on the experience with the 1st call for Starting Grant proposals.

⁶ Note that the conditions of independence provided to the PI are consistent with the “The European Charter for Researchers” and “The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”, see Official Journal of the EU OJ C (2005) 576, 11.3.2005, or http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/index_en.cfm?l1=29&CFID=108452&CFTOKEN=13509334.

- Direct the research project, manage the funding and make appropriate resource allocation decisions;
- Publish as senior author and invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work;
- Supervise team members, including research students or others;
- Have access to reasonable space and facilities for conducting the research.

Box 2a: ERC Starting Grant - Profile of the Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI must have been awarded his/her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree⁴) more than 2 and less than 9 years prior to the deadline of the call for proposals.

Extensions to this period may be allowed in case of eligible career breaks which must be properly documented: maternity (1 year per child born after the PhD award) & paternity leave (accumulation of actual time off, max. 1 year per child born after the PhD award) and leave taken for long-term illness, national service. Leave taken for unavoidable statutory reasons (e.g. clinical qualifications) may also count as an extension. No allowance will be made for part-time working (2 years of half-time working count as 2 full-time years).

The cumulative eligibility period should not in any case surpass 12 years following the award of the first PhD.

For the next calls for Starting Grant proposals, the required PI profile – i.e. the eligible time window after PhD award – may be adapted based on the experience with the 1st call for Starting Grant proposals.

Note: The reference date for the PhD award is the date referred to on the PhD certificate as the date of actual award. The PhD certificate needs to be included as supporting document with the Stage 2 proposal.

Box 2b: ERC Advanced Grant - Profile of the Principal Investigator (PI)

PIs applying for the ERC Advanced Grant must be established research leaders who have made exceptional contributions to research in terms of originality and significance. They must be active researchers with an outstanding track record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years. There is little prospect of an application succeeding in the absence of such an outstanding track record.

In most fields, PIs of ERC Advanced Grant proposals are expected to demonstrate a record of research achievements in the last 10 years matching at least one or more of the following benchmarks (depending on the field):

- Normally 10 publications as senior author (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals, and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective fields;
- Normally 3 major research monographs, of which at least one is translated into another language. This benchmark is relevant to research fields where publication of monographs is the norm (e.g. humanities and social sciences).

Other alternative benchmarks that may be considered (individually or in combination) as indicative of an exceptional record and recognition in the last 10 years:

- Normally 5 granted patents;
- Normally 10 invited presentations in well-established internationally organised conferences and advanced schools;
- Normally 3 research expeditions led by the applicant;
- Normally 3 well-established international conferences or congresses where the applicant was involved in their organisation as a member of the steering and/or organising committee;
- Internationally recognition through scientific prizes/awards or membership in well-recognised Academies.

Please note:

These benchmarks require intelligent interpretation and will be considered by the ERC peer review evaluation panels individually or in combination.

PIs of Advanced Grant proposals are expected to demonstrate a record of research achievements in the last 10 years. This does not imply that PIs need at least 10 years of research experience. The emphasis lies on recent research achievements, i.e. which are not older than 10 years counted from the date of the deadline of the relevant call for proposals.

The PI may be at any career stage, including that at which he/she would be eligible for an ERC Starting Grant. However, PIs cannot apply for both Starting Grants and Advanced Grants in the same year.

Even though, a PhD (or equivalent degree) is not formally required, the ERC expects that only in exceptional cases a PI without PhD can meet the above-mentioned benchmarks.

2.2.2 The Host Institution

The PI must be supported by a legally established host institution. This is the "applicant legal entity" for the ERC grant, which is legally entitled to receive ERC funds on behalf of the PI.

The PI does not necessarily need to be employed by the host institution at the time when the proposal is submitted.

If not already employed by the host institution, the PI must be engaged by the latter at least for the duration of the grant.

The host institution needs to guarantee the PI's independence, and provide the appropriate conditions and administrative support to the PI for directing the ERC research project and managing the funding.⁷

The host institution can be any legal entity (public or private), which has the infrastructure and capacity to carry out a frontier research project, such as a university, a research organisation or a research-performing company. Research-performing companies can host a PI as long as the PI's independence is not constrained by the research strategy of the company.

The host institution must be situated in a member state of the European Union or in an associated country⁸. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation⁹.

In most cases, the PI's host institution is the only legal entity which participates in the project.

2.2.3 Individual Team, Team Members, Co-Investigators

The constitution of the individual research team is flexible. Commonly, it involves other researchers - such as senior researchers, post docs, graduate and PhD students - from the PI's research group or from the same institution as "team members".

However, depending on the nature of a project the research team may also involve team members from other research institutions situated in the same or a different country. Therefore, research teams can be of national or trans-national character.¹⁰

Team members can be of any age, nationality and country of residence. Team members operate under the leadership of the PI, including those team members hosted by other institutions.

Institutions of team members may be located in any country, including non-European third countries. Their participation (and possible funding to support the work of the respective team members) is subject to appraisal by the ERC peer review evaluation panels, which assess whether their involvement is properly justified and essential in terms of scientific competence and capacities.

Non-academic staff may also be involved as constituents of an individual team, such as technicians, or secretarial support staff, but are not considered as team members.

⁷ These conditions, including provisions related to the "portability" of the grant, will be the subject of a Supplementary Agreement between the PI and the host institution (supplementary to the ERC Grant Agreement) as described in the ERC Model Grant Agreement (see also chapter 5 in this Guide). The ERC Model Grant agreement is available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=129>.

⁸ The associated countries are: Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, FYR of Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, and Turkey. From 1 January 2008 Albania and the Republic of Montenegro are associated countries as well. Other countries may become associated to EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme. The latest news will be posted on the CORDIS and ERC website.

⁹ such as CERN, EMBL, ILL, ESO, ESRF, JRC, ESA.

¹⁰ Note: With the focus of ERC grants on the PI, the concept of individual teams is fundamentally different from that of a traditional "network" or "research consortium"; proposals of the latter type will not be acceptable under the ERC grant schemes.

As an exception for ERC Advanced Grants applications, when an interdisciplinary proposal is grounded in the necessary combination of knowledge and skills from more than one discipline, a PI may identify members of his/her individual team, who are active in these disciplines, as “co-investigators”.

Co-investigators are team members who have specific complementary expertise in rather different scientific areas or disciplines than the PI. However, similar to the PI, co-investigators are expected to be active researchers with an outstanding track record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years (see box 2b). Co-investigators enable the realisation of unconventional methodological approaches beyond established disciplinary areas.

To further promote and support such interdisciplinary research proposals, the ERC introduced the notion of co-investigators in the ERC Advanced Grant scheme with the option to propose larger projects: PIs of such “co-investigator projects” may request larger ERC grants for their interdisciplinary project proposal (see section 2.4). The host institution of a co-investigator must be located in an EU member state or an associated country.

The peer review evaluation panel will carefully assess the interdisciplinary nature of a proposed co-investigator project and the scientific added value and expertise of any co-investigator to the project; in particular the participation of any additional institution (legal entity) will only be permitted if it is clearly necessary from the scientific perspective.

2.3. What kind of research can be funded?

ERC grants aim to support “frontier research”, in other words the pursuit of questions at or beyond the frontiers of knowledge, without regard for established disciplinary boundaries. Applications can be made in any field of research- including the social sciences and humanities- with particular emphasis on the frontier of science, scholarship and engineering.¹¹

In particular, proposals of an interdisciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research or proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions are encouraged, as long as the expected impact on science, scholarship or engineering is significant.

The ERC peer review evaluation panels will look carefully at these aspects, in the full understanding that such research has a high-gain/high-risk profile, i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a higher-than-normal risk that such research projects may not achieve their objectives

¹¹ Research proposals within the scope of Annex I of the EURATOM treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications (such as on fission and fusion), should be submitted to relevant calls under the Seventh EURATOM Framework Programme. For more information: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/euratom/home_en.html.

In essence, ERC-supported research should aim to broaden scientific and technological knowledge. As such, projects should not be linked to commercial objectives.

Some frontier research activities and methodologies may have ethical implications or may raise questions which will require sound ethical assessment (see Box 3 and Annex 2). This may result in proposals not being accepted or being accepted only under certain conditions.

Box 3: Dealing with ethical issues

Applicants should indicate whether the proposed research raises sensitive ethical questions such as research involving human beings, human biological samples, personal data, genetic information or animals.

Research supported by an ERC grant must respect fundamental ethical principles. Fundamental ethical principles which must be respected include those reflected in the Charter* of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The opinions of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)** are and will be taken into account. Furthermore, due account should be taken of the Protocol*** on the Protection and Welfare of Animals, to reduce the use of animals in research and testing (with a view to ultimately replacing animal use), to involve animals with the lowest degree of neuropsychological sensitivity, and to cause the least pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

The following activities cannot be funded:

- Research activities aimed at human cloning for reproductive purposes.
- Research activities intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable.
- Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

As regards human embryonic stem cell research, the ERC is bound by the European Commission's commitment to follow the practice of the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme (see OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42) and exclude from financial support any research activities destroying human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent ERC funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Applicants must ensure that the research proposed respects all national rules and procedures of the relevant country where the proposed research is conducted. Where necessary, approval must be sought from the relevant national or local ethics committee prior to the start of the project.

* see http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default_en.htm

** see http://ec.europa.eu/european_group_ethics/activities/docs/opinion_22_final_follow_up_en.pdf

*** see http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/references_en.htm

2.4. What is the typical size of an ERC grant?

Depending on the subject of the proposed project, ERC Starting Grants may last up to five years and provide a total of up to € 2.0 million for a five-year-grant (pro rata for projects of shorter duration).¹²

Similarly, ERC Advanced Grants may last up to five years and provide a total of up to € 3.5 million for a five-year-grant (pro rata for projects of shorter duration).¹² Normally, however, ERC Advanced Grants will be limited to a maximum of € 2.5 million unless the application involves specific features requiring a higher level of support: a "co-investigator project" (see section 2.2.3); a project which requires the purchase of major research equipment, or when the PI is currently engaged in a third country but intends to move to a host institution in a member state or associated country in order to build up a new research team and activity.

The requested grant should be based on a reasoned estimate of the project costs. There is no explicit minimum size for an ERC grant with regard to its duration or funding.

The level of the grant offered will be determined by the ERC peer review evaluation panel using rounded figures, judged against the requested grant on the basis of the requirements and nature of the project and whether it is intended to set up a new team or add support to an established team.

¹² The level of the ERC grant represents a maximum overall figure. Costs will be reimbursed on the basis of the amounts actually disbursed for the project

2.5 What costs are covered by an ERC grant?

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution towards indirect costs, which cannot exceed 20% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary). The costs which can be covered by an ERC grant are described in Box 4.

Normally, an ERC grant covers all eligible costs of a project. However, it is possible, that specific cost items are covered partially or in full by the host institution or by third party funding .

Project costs covered by third parties are allowed but need to be declared and will be deduced from the total of eligible costs covered by the ERC grant. Nevertheless, ERC grants are expected to be significant and cover a major part of the project and its costs. ERC funding is not aiming at topping up the funding of running projects, or providing a means for co-funding.

The actual project costs claimed should be presented in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.

Box 4: Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs

Direct eligible costs are those which support all the research, management, training and dissemination activities necessary for the conduct of the project, such as:

- Personnel Costs
- Equipment Costs
- Consumables
- Travel and Subsistence Costs
- Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results)

Indirect eligible costs are those which cannot be identified as directly attributable to the project, but which are incurred in direct relationship with the project's direct eligible costs, such as:

- Costs related to general administration and management;
- Costs of office or laboratory space, including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditure such as water, heating, electricity,
- Maintenance, insurance and safety costs;
- Communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office
- Supplies;
- Common office equipment such as PC's, laptops, office software;
- Miscellaneous recurring consumables.

Non-eligible costs, in particular:

- Any identifiable indirect taxes, including VAT or duties;
- Interest owed;
- Provisions for possible future losses or charges;
- Exchange losses;
- Costs declared, incurred or reimbursed in respect of another Community project;
- Costs related to return on capital;
- Debt and debt service charges;
- Excessive or reckless expenditure;

cannot be reimbursed through the ERC grant.

3. Applying for an ERC Grant

An ERC grant application should be submitted by a single Principal Investigator (PI) in conjunction with and on behalf of her/his host institution (the "applicant legal entity").¹³

To apply for an ERC grant, the PI presents a frontier research project and in most cases an individual research team, which will work under his/her responsibility.

Grant applications are assessed by peer review evaluation panels (ERC panels), which may be supported by additional remote reviewers. These ERC panels assess and score the proposals on the basis of the individual evaluations and those who passed the quality threshold are ranked.

Depending on the call budget available a budgetary cut-off applies to the ranking list and only the highest ranked proposals are offered an ERC grant until the call budget is consumed.

3.1. When can I apply?

ERC grant applications can be submitted only in response to a "call for proposals". Calls are published on the ERC website (<http://erc.europa.eu>), the CORDIS website (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html) and in the Official Journal of the European Union (<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/oj>).

Deadlines for the submission of ERC grant applications are specified in each "call for proposals".

The ERC envisages to publish – from 2008 onwards – annual calls for proposals for both the ERC Starting Grant and ERC Advanced Grant scheme. The provisional timing of these calls for proposals is indicated in the table below. It is expected that the call budgets will be gradually increased each year.

Table: ERC Starting Grant Calls Provisional Schedule 2007 - 2010

ERC Action	Call open	Call Deadline	Evaluation
StG1	Winter 06	Spring 07	Spring - Autumn 07
StG2	Summer 08	Autumn 08	Winter 08 - Spring 09
StG3	Summer 09	Autumn 09	Winter 09 - Spring 10
StG4	Summer 10	Autumn 10	Winter 10 - Spring 11

¹³ Exceptionally, the Principal Investigator may himself/herself act as the "applicant legal entity", if he/she is acting in the capacity of the legal entity in his/her own right.

Table: ERC Advanced Grant Calls Provisional Schedule 2007 - 2010

ERC Action	Call open	Call Deadline	Evaluation
AdG1	Autumn 07	Spring 08	Spring 08 - Autumn 08
AdG2	Autumn 08	Spring 09	Spring 09 - Autumn 09
AdG3	Autumn 09	Spring 10	Spring 10 - Autumn 10
AdG4	Autumn 10	Spring 11	Spring 11 - Autumn 11

3.2. How can I submit an ERC Grant application?

The key features of the ERC Grant application procedure are highlighted in Box 5.

Box 5: Key features of ERC Grant application procedure

- Applications should be submitted by a single PI in conjunction with and on behalf of her/his host institution
- Proposal formats and page numbers are strictly limited (see 3.2.2 and 3.2.3)
- Submission is accepted only via EPSS (see section 3.2.4)
- Strict rules apply for re-applications and multiple applications (see section 3.2.7)

3.2.1 (Pre-) Registration

PIs need first to (pre-)register their intention to submit a proposal via the web-based EPSS (the Electronic Proposal Submission Service, see section 3.2.4) in order to receive a login name and password and thus to get access to EPSS for preparing, uploading and submitting a proposal. This should be done as early as possible before the call deadline for the submission of proposals.

3.2.2 Preparing an ERC Starting Grant application

Warning: For the next call for Starting Grant proposals in summer 2008, the details for application may be changed based on the experience with the 1st call for StG proposals. An updated Guide for Applicants will be published then.

The application procedure consists of two stages. In stage 1, a proposal should describe the project and the qualifications of the PI. Successful PIs in stage 1 are invited to submit a more detailed proposal by the deadline of stage 2.

In both stages, a complete ERC StG grant application involves three distinct components:

- **The administrative forms**
- **The research proposal**
- **The supporting documentation**

The Administrative Forms

These web-based forms (Annex 4b) must be filled in via EPSS and include information on i) the proposal and the PI (form A1), ii) the PI's host institution and, if different, those of team members (form A2). Basic financial information on the requested ERC Grant needs to be filled in as well (form A3).

Applicants need to choose and indicate the most relevant ERC panel for evaluation of their proposal and indicate one or more descriptors (see Annex 1).

The Research Proposal

The research proposal needs to be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format. The sections to be included in the research proposal in each stage and the maximum length of each are listed in the table below (more detailed information/templates are provided in Annex 4c):

	Proposal Sections – ERC StG Grant	Stage 1	Stage 2
Section 1	The Principal Investigator: Curriculum Vitae Self-evaluation of research achievements, including a "funding ID"	3 pages	4 pages
Section 2	The Project proposal: Description of objectives and scientific and technical content of the project	4 pages	10 pages
Section 3	The research environment: Description of the scientific environment	1 page	2 pages
	TOTAL (Section 1 + 2 + 3)	8 pages	16 pages

Additionally, the following parameters **must** be respected for the layout¹⁴:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11 pt	single	At least 1.5 cm

¹⁴ Use of colours: It is recommended to use only black/white (or grey tone shadings) in the research proposal (including the presentation of graphics, diagrams, and pictures). Even though proposals are received and managed electronically in the first instance, substantial parts of the evaluation process will be conducted against black/white print-outs (peer reviewers may print the proposals for an in-depth reading and evaluation and this typically in black/white).

Only the material that the proposal contains within the above-mentioned page limits while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated.

The information provided on each of these sections should be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the peer reviewers to assess the scientific excellence of the proposal according to the evaluation criteria (the evaluation criteria are listed in Annex 4a).

In order to determine the required level of funding for a project, PIs should determine the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil their objectives and the duration of the project in both stage 1 and stage 2 of the application procedure. This should be based on a reasoned estimate of the projects costs and explained clearly in the proposal. On this basis, the ERC panel will recommend the level of funding and duration of the grant, taking into account the needs of the project (e.g. research field, size of the team) and whether it is intended to set up a new, or add support to an established or newly established team (see Box 4 for information on eligible and non-eligible costs).

Applications which involve research activities that raise ethical issues should at stage 1 fill in the Ethical Issues Table and at stage 2 provide explanatory information in a separate document (see "supporting documents" below). Further guidelines are provided in Box 3 and in Annex 2.

The three sections of the research proposal must be submitted in one single PDF file (see Section 3.2.4).

Please note that the working language of the ERC panels is English.

Supporting Documentation

Scanned copies of the following supporting documentation need to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically on EPSS in PDF format.

In stage 1:

- The host institution must confirm its association with and support of the project and the PI (template on EPSS, see Annex 4d).
- The Ethical Issues Table needs to be provided as well (template on EPSS, see Annex 2b).

In stage 2:

- The host institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence set out in the supplementary agreement to the ERC Grant agreement and outlined in section 2.2.1 are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful (template on EPSS, see Annex 3).
- The PI should submit scanned copies of documents proving his/ her eligibility for the grant, i.e. the PhD certificate¹⁵ (or equivalent degree) clearly indicating the date of award/defence and, in case of an extension of the eligibility period beyond 9 years has been requested, the relevant documentary evidence (see Box 2a).
- If the proposed research involves ethical issues or potential ethical issues have been identified by the ERC Panels, a description with explanatory information on how these issues will be managed needs to be provided in a separate document (see Annex 2a).

¹⁵ Certificates of PhD award (or equivalent degree) need to be provided preferably in English or, at least, in one of the official EU languages. Certificates in other languages need to be accompanied by a certified translation into an official EU language.

These documents should be scanned and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. Three separate files may be submitted. The first containing the supporting statement from the host institution, the second containing scanned copy(ies) of document(s) proving his/ her eligibility for the grant (for stage 2 only) and the third containing the Ethical Issues Table (for stage 1 only) or the explanatory information on ethical issues (for stage 2 only). Please ensure that the file names contain the "Proposal Short Name", such as *PartB_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*, *Host-Letter_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*, *PhD_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*, *Ethics-Table_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*, *Ethics-Description_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*.

Checklist – Is your proposal complete?

For the submission of a complete **StG proposal**, the following components have to be prepared:

The Administrative Forms (Part A): to be completed in EPSS

- **Online forms A1, A2, A3**

The Research Proposal (Part B): 1 integral PDF file

- **Section 1: The Principal Investigator**
- **Section 2: The research proposal** (outline for stage 1, full for stage 2)
- **Section 3: The research environment**

The Supplementary Documents: 2-3 individual PDF files

- **The ethical issues table** (for stage 1 only, see Annex 2b)
- **The supporting statement from the host institution: originally signed, stamped and dated by institute's legal representative** (for Stage 1: see Annex 4d, for Stage 2: see Annex 3)
- **PhD certificate (or equivalent) and, in case of requested extension of eligibility period, the documentary evidence on maternity, paternity leave, national service, long-term illness, unavoidable leave for statutory reasons** (for stage 2 only)
- **If applicable: explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated** (for stage 2 only, see annex 2a)

3.2.3 Preparing an ERC Advanced Grant application

The application procedure consists of a single submission stage.

A complete ERC AdG grant application involves the following three separate components:

- **The administrative forms**
- **The research proposal**
- **The supporting documentation**

The Administrative Forms

These web-based forms (Annex 5b) must be filled in via EPSS and include information on i) the proposal and the PI (form A1), ii) the PI's host institution and, if different, those of team

members (form A2). Basic financial information on the requested ERC Grant needs to be filled in as well (from A3). Furthermore, the PI must provide a summary of his/her scientific leadership profile and 10-year-track-record (form A1T, see also below and annex 5c). This information will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal.

On form A1, PIs must indicate the most relevant ERC panel for evaluation of their proposal and choose one or more descriptors of the research fields involved from a drop-down menu (see Annex 1). It is the PI's responsibility to choose the most relevant ERC Panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research. The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals (incl. co-investigator projects) the PI may indicate a 'secondary evaluation panel'. The primary panel will then decide whether the proposal is interdisciplinary (cross-panel or even cross-domain) and if its evaluation requires expertise from other panels.

The Research Proposal

The research proposal needs to be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format. The sections to be included in the research proposal and the page limits are listed in the table below (more detailed information are provided in Annex 5c):

	Proposal sections – ERC AdG Grant	Page Limits
Section 1	The Principal Investigator: (Section 1a) Curriculum Vitae (CV) Scientific Leadership Profile (summary to be provided in form A1T, see above) 10-year-track-record (summary to be provided in form A1T, see above) The Extended Synopsis of the project proposal (Section 1b)	max 2 pages max 2 pages max 2 pages max 5 pages
Section 2	The Project proposal: Description of scientific and technical aspects of the project, demonstrating the ground-breaking nature of the research, its potential impact and research methodology.	max 15 pages
Section 3	The Research Environment: Description of the research environment, its contribution to the research project/activity, as well as any potential contribution of the research project to the enhancement of the research environment.	max 2 pages

Additionally, the following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11 pt	single	At least 1.5 cm

Only the material that the proposal contains within the above-mentioned page limits while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated.

In the case of interdisciplinary proposals involving co-investigator(s) alongside the PI ("**co-investigator projects**", see section 2.2.3) it is required that the information listed under section 1a is provided for each co-investigator (CV + scientific leadership profile + 10-year-track-

record). In this case, the above-mentioned page limits for section 1a apply individually, i.e. maximum 6 pages per co-investigator.

The information provided on each of these sections should be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the peer reviewers to assess the scientific excellence of the proposal according to the evaluation criteria (the evaluation criteria are listed in Annex 5a).

In order to determine the required level of funding for a project, PIs should determine the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil their objectives and the duration of the project. This should be based on a reasoned estimate of the projects costs and explained clearly in the research proposal. On this basis, the ERC panel will recommend the level of funding and duration of the grant taking into account the needs of the project and team (see section 2.4 and 2.5).

Please note that the working language of the ERC panels is English.

Applications which involve research activities that raise ethical issues should fill in the Ethical Issues Table and provide explanatory information in a separate document (see below "supporting documents"). Further guidelines are provided in Box 3 and in Annex 2.

The three sections of the research proposal must be uploaded electronically on EPSS in one single PDF file (see Section 3.2.4).

Supporting Documentation

Scanned copies of the following supporting documentation need to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically on EPSS in PDF format.

- The host institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence set out in the supplementary agreement to the ERC Grant agreement and outlined in section 2.2.1 are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful (template on EPSS, see Annex 3). Proposals that do not include this statement will not be considered for evaluation.
- The Ethical Issues Table needs to be provided (template on EPSS, see Annex 2).
- If the proposed research involves ethical issues, a description with explanatory information on how these issues will be managed needs to be provided in a separate document (see Annex 2a).

These documents should be scanned and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. Three separate files may be submitted. The first containing the supporting statement from the host institution, the second containing the Ethical Issues Table and the third – in case ethical issues are involved – containing a description with explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated. Please ensure that the file names contain the "Proposal Short Name", such as PartB_[Proposal-Short-Name], Host-Letter_[Proposal-Short-Name], Ethics-Table_[Proposal-Short-Name], Ethics-Description_[Proposal-Short-Name].

Checklist – Is your proposal complete?

For the submission of a complete **AdG proposal**, the following components have to be prepared

The Administrative Forms (Part A): to be completed in EPSS

- on-line forms A1, A1T, A2, A3

The Research Proposal (Part B): 1 integral PDF file

- Section 1a – The Principal Investigator
- Section 1b – The Extended Synopsis on the project proposal
- Section 2 – The project proposal
- Section 3 – The research environment

The Supplementary Documents: 2-3 individual PDF files

- The supporting statement from the host institution: originally signed, stamped and dated by institute's legal representative (see Annex 3)
- The ethical issues table (see Annex 2b)
- If applicable: explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated (see annex 2a)

3.2.4 Electronic Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS).¹⁶

EPSS can be accessed via the ERC website and the call page on CORDIS, or directly at <https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/welcome.jsp>.

Box 6: Proposal submission - Important to know

- Proposals cannot be submitted without prior registration (pre-registration), which is required to obtain an EPSS login name and password
- Proposals sent by means other than EPSS will not be accepted.¹⁶
- Only the material that the proposal contains within the given page limits while respecting the indicated layout parameters will be evaluated.
- Submission is deemed to occur only if the submission sequence described in section 3.2.4 has been followed. It is not the point at which the applicant starts uploading the proposal.
- Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. So long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.

¹⁶ In exceptional cases, when an applicant has absolutely no means of accessing the EPSS, and when it is impossible to arrange to do so, an applicant may request permission from the ERC to submit on paper. Such a request, which must clearly explain the circumstances of the case, must be received by the ERC no later than one month before the call deadline, at the following address: European Research Council (ERC), Madou Plaza n°1, Office: MADO 5/64, 1049 Brussels. The ERC will reply to such a request within five working days of receipt. If derogation is granted, the ERC will send proposal forms for paper submission to the applicant concerned.

Full instructions will be found in the “EPSS preparation and submission guide” at <https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/EPSS-Userguide.pdf>.

Please note that the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS) will be unavailable from 30 November 2007. The EPSS is expected to resume online on 24 December 2007. Please consult the CORDIS pages regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail, or by phone +32 2233 3760.

Before submitting a proposal using EPSS, applicants must register (to obtain a login name and password) and must agree to the conditions of use of EPSS. Following this, the application can be prepared, uploaded and submitted via EPSS.

Completing the Part A forms in the EPSS and uploading a Part B does not yet mean that the proposal is submitted. Once there is a consolidated version of the proposal, the applicant must press the button "SUBMIT NOW".

(If there is no button "SUBMIT NOW", the "SUBMIT" tag at the top of the screen needs to be selected)

Please note that "SUBMIT NOW" starts the final steps for submission; it does not in itself cause the proposal to be submitted.

After reading the information page that then appears, it is possible to submit the proposal using the button marked “*Press this button to submit the proposal*”.

The EPSS then performs an automatic validation of the proposal. A list of any problems ("validation error message") such as missing data, viruses, wrong file format or excessive file size will then appear on the screen. **Submission is blocked until these problems are corrected.** Once corrected, the applicant must then repeat the above steps to achieve submission. The automatic validation does not replace the more detailed eligibility check carried out later by the ERC.

If successfully submitted, the applicant receives a message that indicates that the proposal has been received. This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt.

The applicant may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up until the deadline. The sequence above must be repeated each time.

If the submission sequence described above is not followed, the ERC considers that no proposal has been submitted.

The research proposal and attached supporting documentation must exclusively use PDF ("Portable Document Format", compatible with Adobe version 3 or higher, with embedded fonts).¹⁷ Other file formats will not be accepted by the system. Unless specified in the call, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material and any other documents (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video; multimedia, etc.) sent electronically or by post, will be disregarded.

¹⁷ Irrespective of the page limits specified above, there is an overall limit of 10 Mbyte to the size of the PDF proposal file. There are also restrictions to the file name you give to the PDF proposal - use alphanumeric characters only. Special characters and spaces must be avoided.

Proposals must be **submitted before the deadline** specified in the Call for Proposals.¹⁸

EPSS will be closed for a relevant call at its call deadline. After this moment, it will be impossible to access EPSS for the relevant call.

Applicants, who wait until too near to the close of the call to start uploading their proposal, take a serious risk that the uploading is not concluded in time and thus the 'SUBMIT NOW' button is not active anymore in order to conclude the submission process.

Proposals are kept under secure conditions at all times. When no longer needed, all copies are destroyed except those required for archiving and/or auditing purposes.

3.2.5 Reception

If the submission is technically successful, the applicant receives an automatic computer-generated acknowledgement from EPSS. Acknowledgement of receipt is subsequently provided by e-mail after the call deadline.

Subsequent to submission, the ERC may contact the PI if this is necessary to clarify questions of eligibility or to verify administrative or legal data contained in the proposal.

3.2.6 Modifying or withdrawing a proposal

Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. So long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.

Once the deadline has passed, however, the ERC can accept no further additions, corrections or re-submissions. The last eligible version of your proposal received before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated, and no later material can be submitted.

Proposals may be withdrawn up to the call deadline by submitting a revised version of the administrative form A, with the following words entered into the abstract field:

"The applicant wishes to withdraw this proposal. It should not be evaluated by the ERC".

After the call deadline, a proposal may be withdrawn only by sending a signed letter to the European Research Council (ERC): Madou Plaza n°1, Office: MADO 5/64, BE-1049 Brussels, Belgium. For deliveries by hand or by representatives (including by private courier), the delivery should be to the following address, and labelled as follows: European Commission, Office: MADO 5/64, Rue du Bourget 1, BE-1140 Brussels, Belgium.

¹⁸ In the unlikely event of a failure of the EPSS service due to a breakdown of the ERC server during the last 24 hours of a call, the deadline will be extended by a further 24 hours. This will be notified by e-mail to all applicants who had registered in EPSS for this call, and also by a notice on the call page on the ERC website (<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=67>) and CORDIS (<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls>), as well as on the website of EPSS.

Such a failure is a rare and exceptional event. Therefore, it should not be assumed that there will be such an extension of a call. If an applicant encounters difficulties in submitting a proposal, it should not be assumed that it is because of a problem with the ERC server. In most cases, other bottlenecks on the "data highways" may occur and slow down or block the uploading of your proposal on the ERC server. For technical inquiries on the use of EPSS, please contact the EPSS helpdesk (see Chapter 7).

Please note that the ERC will not extend deadlines for system failures that are not its own responsibility. In all circumstances, you should aim to submit your proposal well before the deadline to have time to solve any problems.

3.2.7 Reapplications and multiple applications

In order to ensure that only high quality applications are submitted to the ERC, strict rules apply to reapplications by PIs whose previous proposals were not judged to meet the threshold of quality, as well as for multiple applications within the same or different type of ERC grant scheme.

As a general rule, only one ERC grant managed by a PI can be active at any time.¹⁹

For reapplications or the submission of more than one application to the Starting Grant Scheme the following rules apply:

- No PI may be associated with more than one application to the ERC during the same calendar year.
- A PI may not submit an application for an ERC grant during the calendar year following the submission of an unsuccessful application, unless that application was judged to meet the quality threshold for funding²⁰.
- Applications by PIs who have successfully applied for similar type of funding (e.g. EURI awards) will not be accepted unless the objectives of the proposed ERC project are clearly distinct.

For reapplications or the submission of more than one application to the Advanced Grant Scheme the following rules apply:

- No Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator may be associated with more than one proposal for an Advanced Grant to either of the first two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG).
- A Principal Investigator or a Co-Investigator associated with a proposal for an Advanced Grant to either of the first two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG) may not apply for the third Advanced Grant call (ERC-2010-AdG) expected in 2010 unless the proposal to the first or second call has met the quality threshold on both evaluation criteria (Quality of the PI, Quality of the Research Project) at the end of step 1 of the peer review evaluation process (see 4.2.5 and Annex 5a).
- A Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator who has submitted a proposal for an Advanced Grant in either of the two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG) may not apply for a Starting Grant during the same period (2008-2009).

These rules may be modified subsequently by the ERC in light of experience.

¹⁹ However, to secure continuity of funding, applicants that have been awarded an ERC Starting Grant may apply for an ERC Advanced Grant during the last calendar year of their grant.

²⁰ Note: This rule will not apply to the second call for ERC Starting Grants, which is expected to be published in Summer 2008.

4. Evaluation and selection of grant proposals²¹

4.1 Eligibility Check

A proposal must fulfil all of the following eligibility criteria:

- It must be submitted before the deadline.
- It must be submitted to an appropriate ERC panel (i.e. a panel, which is covering the main scientific areas of the research proposed, see section 4.2).
- It must be complete (i.e. all of the requested forms, proposal components, and supporting documents must be completed or present)
- Its content must relate to the ERC grant scheme which is subject of the call for proposals.
- It must meet the eligibility requirements of the respective ERC grant scheme (see Chapter 2) as well as other criteria mentioned in the relevant call for proposals.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee (see Chapter 4.4).

The eligibility is checked based on the information given by the PI in the proposal. If at a later stage, an eligibility criterion is found not to be fulfilled (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will be immediately rejected.

4.2 ERC Peer Review Evaluation

4.2.1 ERC peer review evaluation panels (ERC Panels)

The peer review evaluation of ERC Grant proposals is in the hand of panels (ERC panels), covering all fields of science, engineering and scholarship. There are two separate sets of ERC panels, one for the ERC Starting Grant and one for the ERC Advanced Grant.

Both sets involve 25 individual ERC panels, which for operational reasons are subdivided into three main research domains:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| ▪ Life Sciences | 9 Panels |
| ▪ Social Sciences and Humanities | 6 Panels |
| ▪ Physical Sciences and Engineering | 10 Panels |

Details on the structure of the ERC panels are provided in Annex 1.

The composition of the individual ERC Panels is outlined in Box 7. The Panel Chair and Members have been selected by the ERC Scientific Council on the basis of their excellent scientific reputation. Before the deadline of a call, the names of the Panel Chairs are published

²¹ The *Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers* provides detailed information on ERC peer review evaluation and project selection processes. See ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>.

on the ERC website. Similarly, the names of Panel Members are published, however, only in the form of a consolidated alphabetical list.

Box 7: Composition of ERC Panels

- Each Panel consists of one Panel Chair and 10-15 Panel Members.
- The Panel Chair and Members are selected by the ERC Scientific Council.
- The Panel Chair manages and ensures the quality of the evaluation process for the proposals assigned to his/her Panel.
- The Panels work on the basis of common "Rules of Procedure", which are defined by the ERC Scientific Council (see Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers²¹).

4.2.2 Individual reviews and panel meetings

It is the PI's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant ERC Panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research (administrative form A1), and indicate one or more Panel descriptors (i.e. research fields involved, see Annex 1). The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals the PI may indicate a secondary evaluation panel. The primary panel will then decide whether the proposal is interdisciplinary (cross-panel or even cross-domain) and if its evaluation requires expertise from other panels.

Panels may be assisted by additional reviewers. As renowned specialists in particular research domains, these additional reviewers act as referees to provide individual assessments on a proposal-by-proposal basis. Referees work remotely and deliver their individual reviews by electronic means. The referees are approved by the ERC Scientific Council. The names of the referees will be made public at the end of each year.

The assignment of proposals to Panel Members and referees will be made by the Panel Chairs on the basis of the Panel descriptors indicated by the PI in the proposal (administrative form A1). Individual reviews are carried out prior to Panel meetings. The ERC ensures that each proposal is assessed by at least 3 reviewers.

Based on the individual reviews, the Panels will meet to discuss and assess the proposals, based on the evaluation criteria of the relevant ERC grant scheme, arbitrate controversial opinions in individual reviews, calibrate final marks and establish a ranking list of those proposals meeting the quality threshold. In case of interdisciplinary proposals the Panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other Panel(s) or additional reviewers.

ERC Grant proposals are evaluated on the basis of scientific excellence as sole criterion, which is examined on three distinct key aspects of the research proposal:

- **The potential of the Principal Investigator**
- **The quality of the proposed research project**

In addition, the Panels consider (as a pass/fail criterion):

- **The research environment**

4.2.3 Ethical Review

The ERC peer review evaluation procedure includes a check of ethical issues raised by the proposals. After the peer review evaluation and before any funding decision by the ERC is taken, an ethical review of proposals involving sensitive ethical issues may take place. The objective of this ethical review is to make sure that the ERC does not support research which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles (see Box 3 and Annex 2).

4.2.4 Evaluation of ERC Starting Grant proposals

The StG grant submission and peer review evaluation procedure consists of two stages. In summary, these are as follows:

Stage 1

- i.) Eligibility Check: Proposals are checked to ensure that all of the eligibility criteria are met.
- ii.) Peer Review Evaluation: Proposals which fulfil these criteria are evaluated by high level peer review evaluation panels (“Panels”), which assess, score and comment on the quality of the proposal.
- iii.) Feedback: Applicants are informed of the outcome of the peer review evaluation of their proposal. Applicants whose proposals meet the required level of quality are invited to proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2

- i.) Eligibility Check: Proposals are checked to ensure that all of the eligibility criteria are met.
- ii.) Peer Review Evaluation: Proposals which fulfil these criteria are evaluated by remote referees and Panels, which assess, score and comment on the quality of the proposal. Additionally, interviews with applicants may be conducted by these Panels (see Box 8). Applications which meet the quality thresholds are ranked in a list.
- iii.) Feedback: Applicants are informed of the outcome of the peer review evaluation of their proposal.
- iv.) Selection: An ERC grant is offered to proposals which are sufficiently high in the ranked list such that ERC funding is available.
- v.) Grant Preparation: If an applicant accepts the offer, a grant agreement is prepared. This defines the terms and conditions applicable to the PI, the host institution and the ERC (see chapter 5).

Please note that if the research project described in a stage 2 full proposal deviates substantially from the corresponding stage 1 outline proposal, it may be excluded from further evaluation.

Further details on the evaluation criteria for the ERC Starting Grant are provided in Annex 4a. These criteria apply to both stage 1 and stage 2 of the application procedure.

For more detailed information on the evaluation and selection process, please consult the Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers²¹.

Box 8: Interviews with Principal Investigators

The review methodology for the ERC Starting Grant includes interviews with all PIs of stage 2 proposals conducted by the relevant ERC evaluation panel.

Depending on the panel, interviews will last between 20 and 30 minutes in total. The first 5 to 10 minutes will be devoted to a presentation on the outline of the research project by the PI. The remaining 15 to 20 minutes will be devoted to a question and answer session.

Panels or sub-panels will express their appreciation of the applicant in the form of a score (i.e. the interview is not a yes/no factor). In the subsequent panel meeting, panels will take into account the results of the interviews alongside the other elements; the individual review and the preliminary ranking.

The ERC may reimburse (see ERC rules for proposal submission) the travel expenditures of the PI for the interview in Brussels. Travel costs will be reimbursed upon presentation of the appropriate supporting documents. For travel >100 km, a flat rate will be paid to cover living expenses (including costs for overnight stay).

Alternatives to interviews

For those candidates who are, in very exceptional cases, unable to attend the interviews (pregnancy, immobility due to illness, expedition), two alternatives are offered: i) video-conferencing, ii) telephone-conferencing.

4.2.5 Evaluation of ERC Advanced Grant proposals

A single submission of an ERC Advanced Grant proposal will be followed by a two-step peer review evaluation. In summary, these are as follows:

Step 1

- i.) Eligibility Check: Proposals are checked to ensure that all of the eligibility criteria are met.
- ii.) Peer Review Evaluation: Proposals which fulfil these criteria are evaluated by high level peer review evaluation panels, which assess, score and comment on the quality of Section 1 of the proposal. Proposals with a mark passing the quality thresholds and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level will be retained and pass to step 2 of peer review evaluation. Those proposals failing to reach the quality threshold on any of the evaluation criteria or ranked below the budgetary cut-off described above will be rejected.

Step 2

- iii.) Peer Review Evaluation: All three sections of the proposal are considered and evaluated by remote referees and Panels, which assess, score and comment on the quality of the proposal. Interdisciplinary proposals within a domain or across domains will be flagged as such, and the panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or reserve evaluators. Applications which meet the quality thresholds are ranked in a list.
- iv.) Feedback: Applicants are informed of the outcome of the evaluation of their proposal.

- v.) Selection: An ERC grant is offered to proposals which are sufficiently high in the ranked list such that ERC funding is available.
- vi.) Grant Preparation: If an applicant accepts the offer, a grant agreement is prepared. This defines the terms and conditions applicable to the PI, the host institution and the ERC (see chapter 5).

Further details on the evaluation criteria for the ERC Advanced Grant are provided in Annex 5a. These criteria apply to both step 1 and step 2 of the application procedure.

For more detailed information on the evaluation and selection process, please consult the Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers²¹.

4.3 Feedback to applicants

Applicants are provided with feedback on the outcome of the peer review evaluation in the form of an Evaluation Report.

This indicates whether the proposal meets the quality threshold and is retained, and provides the score and corresponding comments given by the Panel as well as (where applicable) the comments given by the individual reviewers/referees.

Please note that the comments by the individual reviewers may not necessarily be convergent – differences of opinion about the merits of a proposal happen and are legitimate.

Furthermore, the ERC panel may take a position that is different from what could be inferred from the comments of the individual reviewers. For example, if the panel discussion reveals an important weakness in a proposal that had not been identified by the individual reviewers.

4.4 Redress

Upon reception of the initial information letter with the Evaluation Report or with the results of the eligibility check, the PI and/or the PI's host institution (applicant legal entity) may wish to introduce a request for redress, if there is an indication that there has been a shortcoming in the way a proposal has been evaluated, or that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect.

Such requests for redress should be raised within one month of the date of the initial information letter sent by the ERC DIS, and should be introduced via the web-based mailing system at http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/redress_en.html#fn_02.

Requests must be:

- Related to the peer review evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the call and funding scheme in question;
- Set out using the online form via the above-mentioned web-based mailing system, including a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
- Received within the time limit specified on the information letter;
- Sent by the PI and/or the PI's host institution.

A reply will be sent to the PI and/or the PI's host institution within two weeks of the date of reception of the request for redress. If a definitive response cannot be given at that stage, this reply will indicate when a definitive response will be provided.

A review committee of the ERC DIS may be convened to examine the peer review evaluation process for the case in question. The review committee will bring together staff with the requisite scientific/technical and legal expertise. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and equal treatment of applicants. The review committee itself, however, does not evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the Evaluation Report, the individual comments and examine the CVs of the experts. In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action to the ERC DIS. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated. Unless there is clear evidence of a shortcoming there will be no follow-up or re-evaluation.

Please note:

- This procedure is concerned with the peer review evaluation and/or eligibility checking process.
- **The committee will not call into question the scientific judgment of the individual peer reviewers, who are appropriately qualified experts.**
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on the other criteria.
- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.
- Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee.
- All requests for redress will be treated in confidence.

5. Managing ERC grants²²

5.1 What is an ERC grant agreement?

A 'grant agreement' is the document which establishes the rights and obligations of the parties and specifies, amongst other things, the name of the PI's host institution (applicant legal entity), the name of the PI, the duration and start date of the project, the maximum amount of the financial contribution attributed to the project and the periodicity of submission of reports.

The host institution and the PI shall conclude a Supplementary Agreement to ensure the minimum requirements for the project implementation, such as the host institution's commitment to grant the PI the requisite basic support and the independence to manage the research funding for the duration of the project, amongst others. The provisions of the Supplementary Agreement²³ which are not in accordance with the ERC grant agreement shall be deemed to be void for the purposes of the ERC grant agreement.

5.2 How is a grant agreement prepared?

The ERC-DIS prepares grant agreements for projects on the basis of the proposal and the recommendations of the ERC panel (see section 4.2), also verifying the legal status and financial capacity of the applicant legal entity²⁴.

The grant preparation involves no negotiation of scientific/technical substance. Applicant legal entities and PIs are expected to provide, if requested, further information on the project and its envisaged management in view of the rules applicable to ERC grants.

If the conditions are accepted, the ERC-DIS prepares the relevant documents. In addition to the two agreements mentioned in Section 5.1 the following annexes are included in the grant agreement:

- Annex I: Description of work (the Stage 2 project proposal taking into account the ERC Panel's recommendations)
- Annex II: General conditions
- Annex III: Accession Form (if more than one host institution)

The general conditions include the arrangements for the scientific, financial and ethical conduct as well as procedures for dealing with changes in the team composition and managing Intellectual Property Rights.

The agreements are concluded following signature by the relevant parties; the ERC-DIS always signs the agreement after having received the duly signed Supplementary Agreement and the signature by the PI's host institution.

²² Detailed information and documentation, including the template structures and forms for financial and scientific reporting are provided in the *Guide for ERC Grant Holders*. Available soon at <http://erc.europa.eu>.

²³ See template with minimum requirements on ERC website: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>.

²⁴ See Commission's decision on "FP7 Rules to ensure consistent verification of the existence and legal status of participants, as well as their financial capacity", ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/rules-verif_en.pdf.

The start of the project normally takes place the month following conclusion of the grant agreement.

5.3 How much flexibility is allowed within an ERC Grant Agreement?

5.3.1 Change of scientific strategy and/or objectives

The PI is expected to carry out the project as described in the grant agreement, however, it is possible to adjust the scientific strategy and allocate expenditure (e.g. regarding staff, equipment, consumables) accordingly, provided the research performed is still in line with the original scientific or scholarly objectives.

5.3.2 Portability

It is expected that the PI establishes and concludes the funded research project in association with the original host Institution (applicant legal entity). However, the ERC grant scheme allows PIs having received a frontier research grant to transfer their projects from one host to another in the course of the project. The PI should then present the reasons²⁵ for wishing to move to another institution. In many cases, in order to facilitate mobility of researchers, when there is a common agreement between the PI and the original and the new host institutions, such a request will be dealt with by the ERC-DIS in a straightforward manner.^{26,27}

The original host institution is expected to transfer funds other than those that have already been consumed or irretrievably committed to resources required for the project (on personnel, consumables, etc). It is expected to take all reasonable steps to transfer equipment and other purchases made for the benefit of the project, such that the aims of the project can be secured.²⁸

If more than one beneficiary is involved in the project, only that part of the grant that is assigned to the host institution of the PI is transferable (unless otherwise agreed with the other beneficiaries).

The detailed rules for transferring grants are included in the *"Guide for ERC Grant Holders"*.²⁹

²⁵ This may, for example be necessary if the provisions for the PI's leadership of the research have not been respected

²⁶ However, in some cases, only after a careful analysis of the request by the ERC-DIS, which may involve a review of the project, will the PI be entitled to request transfer of the remainder of the grant to the new host institution.

²⁷ This would not normally be done within the first two years of the start of the project.

²⁸ In some countries, equipment is formally owned by the State and the consent of the host institution alone may not be sufficient.

5.4 How is project progress reported?

Project reporting is carried out in two streams: scientific reporting (for which PIs are responsible) and financial management reporting including use of resources (for which the host institution is responsible).

5.4.1 Scientific Reporting

PIs are required to send scientific reports to the ERC-DIS. These reports inform the ERC on progress and achievements of the project. Specific outputs from the project should be included (e.g. publications).

The scientific reports may be subject to review by a pertinent scientific review panel convened by the ERC, which may also involve site visits. The review panel will make recommendations as to the future course of the project.

5.4.2 Financial management reporting

The host institution is required to send periodic financial management reports justifying the use of any expenditure. Declarations of costs exceeding a cumulative total of € 375 000 must be accompanied by a certificate on financial statements. Where the project involves more than one legal entity, the host institution must provide a consolidated cost claim.

5.5 When and how are ERC Grants paid?

Grants are paid in several instalments: an advance payment (as pre-financing) is made within a maximum of 45 days of the date of entry into force of the ERC grant agreement, which is the date of the last signature by the "applicant legal entity" and the ERC-DIS (whichever is the last).

Interim payments are made on the basis of actual expenditures accepted for each financial management reporting period (see section 5.4.2).

The total amount of the pre-financing and the interim payments paid out to the beneficiary shall not exceed 85% of the maximum amount of the financial contribution attributed to the project.

A final payment is made corresponding to the last financial management reporting period plus any adjustment needed.

6. Publication and exploitation of results

6.1 Acknowledging ERC support

Whenever achievements resulting from ERC-funded research are published (such as in journals, patents, presentations, etc.) the PI should highlight the ERC's financial support under the Seventh Framework Programme.

This may imply a written acknowledgment and/or the application of the ERC logo and the European emblem:

"The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC grant agreement n° [xxxxxx]"

For downloading the image files of the ERC logo and the European emblem, please consult <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=128>.

6.2 Dissemination, Exploitation and IPR

A strategy to disseminate and exploit project results should be developed, with due regard to applicable local and national regulations and the rules regarding Intellectual Property Rights described in detail in the ERC Grant Agreement.

The ERC may publish information on projects which it supports financially. This could include the name of the PI and host institution, the project's objectives, the amount of funding awarded, and the location of the project and the project reports. However, in clearly justified cases, the host institution may request that the ERC does not make this information public.

7. Further Information and Support

General information and key documents are available on the **ERC website** at <http://erc.europa.eu> and CORDIS at <http://cordis.europa.eu>. The website also includes 'Frequently Asked Questions.'

As with other parts of the Seventh Framework Programme, **National Contact Points (ERC NCPs)** have been set up across Europe²⁹ by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications.³⁰

For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.ncpList>.

Technical questions related to the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS) should be directed to the **EPSS Helpdesk** by e-mail support@epss-fp7.org, by phone +32-2-233 3760 or via its [webportal](#) on CORDIS.

A general **ERC Helpdesk** is also available and accessible via the Europe Direct Contact Centre at <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries>.

Information events (seminars, conferences, exhibitions) on the ERC or with participation of ERC speakers are published on the ERC website.

²⁹ This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

³⁰ **Note:** The ERC will provide the coordinating NCP organisations with information and statistics on the outcome of calls and the evaluation of each proposal. This information is given under strict conditions of confidentiality and allows NCP organisations to customize their service.

Annex 1: ERC peer review evaluation panels (ERC Panels)

For the planning and operation of the evaluation of ERC grant proposals by panels, the following panel structure applies. There are 25 ERC panels to cover all fields of science, engineering and scholarship assigned to three research domains: Social Sciences and Humanities (6 Panels, SH1–SH6), Physical Sciences and Engineering (10 Panels, PE1–PE10), Life Sciences (9 Panels, LS1–LS9).

The panel names are accompanied by a list of panel descriptors indicating the fields of research covered by the respective ERC panels.

Social Sciences and Humanities

SH1 Individuals, institutions and markets: economics, finance and management

- SH1_1 Macroeconomics, growth, development, business cycles
- SH1_2 Microeconomics, institutional economics
- SH1_3 Econometrics, statistical methods
- SH1_4 Financial markets, banking and corporate finance
- SH1_5 Competitiveness, innovation, research and development
- SH1_6 Consumer behaviour, marketing
- SH1_7 Organization studies, strategy
- SH1_8 Human resource management, employment and earnings
- SH1_9 Public administration, public economics
- SH1_10 Income distribution, poverty
- SH1_11 International trade, economic geography

SH2 Institutions, values, beliefs and behaviour: sociology, social anthropology, political science, law, communication, social studies of science and technology

- SH2_1 Social structure, inequalities, social mobility
- SH2_2 Ageing, work, social policies
- SH2_3 Kinship, cultural dimensions of classification and cognition, individual and social identity, gender
- SH2_4 Myth, ritual, symbolic representations, religious studies
- SH2_5 Ethnography
- SH2_6 Globalization, migration, interethnic relations
- SH2_7 Transformation of societies, democratization, social movements
- SH2_8 Political systems, legitimacy of governance
- SH2_9 Legal systems, constitutions, foundations of law
- SH2_10 Private, public and social law
- SH2_11 Global and transnational governance, international law, human rights
- SH2_12 Communication networks, media, information society
- SH2_13 Social studies of science and technology, S&T policies, science and society
- SH2_14 History of science and technology

SH3 Environment and society: environmental studies, demography, social geography, urban and regional studies

- SH3_1 Environment and sustainability

- SH3_2 Environmental regulation and mediation
- SH3_3 Social and industrial ecology
- SH3_4 Geographical information systems, cartography
- SH3_5 Human and social geography
- SH3_6 Spatial and regional planning
- SH3_7 Population dynamics
- SH3_8 Urbanization and urban planning, cities
- SH3_9 Mobility and transportation

SH4 The Human Mind and its complexity: cognition, psychology, linguistics, philosophy and education

- SH4_1 Evolution of mind and cognitive functions, animal communication
- SH4_2 Human life-span development
- SH4_3 Neuropsychology and cognitive psychology
- SH4_4 Clinical and experimental psychology,
- SH4_5 Formal, cognitive, functional and computational linguistics
- SH4_6 Typological, historical and comparative linguistics
- SH4_7 Acquisition and knowledge of language: psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics
- SH4_8 Use of language: pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis
- SH4_9 second language teaching and learning, language pathologies, lexicography, terminology
- SH4_10 Philosophy, history of philosophy
- SH4_11 Epistemology, logic, philosophy of science
- SH4_12 Ethics and morality, bioethics
- SH4_13 Education: principles, techniques, typologies

SH5 Cultures and cultural production: literature, visual and performing arts, music, cultural and comparative studies

- SH5_1 Classics
- SH5_2 History of literature
- SH5_3 Literary theory and comparative literature, literary styles
- SH5_4 Textual philology and palaeography
- SH5_5 Visual arts
- SH5_6 Performing arts
- SH5_7 Museums and exhibitions
- SH5_8 Numismatics, epigraphy
- SH5_9 Music and musicology, history of music
- SH5_10 History of art and architecture
- SH5_11 Cultural studies, cultural diversity
- SH5_12 Cultural memory, intangible cultural heritage

SH6 The study of the human past: archaeology, history and memory

- SH6_1 Archaeology, archaeometry, landscape archaeology
- SH6_2 Prehistory and protohistory
- SH6_3 Ancient history, ancient cultures
- SH6_4 Medieval history
- SH6_5 Modern and contemporary history
- SH6_6 Colonial history, entangled histories, global history
- SH6_7 Military history,

SH6_8 Historiography, theory and methods of history
 SH6_9 History of ideas, intellectual history
 SH6_10 Social, economic, cultural and political history
 SH6_11 Collective memories, identities, lieux de mémoire, oral history
 SH6_12 Cultural heritage

Mathematics, physical sciences, information and communication, engineering, universe and earth sciences

PE1 Mathematical foundations: all areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics

PE1_1 Logic and foundations
 PE1_2 Algebra
 PE1_3 Number theory
 PE1_4 Algebraic and complex geometry
 PE1_5 Geometry
 PE1_6 Topology
 PE1_7 Lie groups, Lie algebras
 PE1_8 Analysis
 PE1_9 Operator algebras and functional analysis
 PE1_10 ODE and dynamical systems
 PE1_11 Partial differential equations
 PE1_12 Mathematical physics
 PE1_13 Probability and statistics
 PE1_14 Combinatorics
 PE1_15 Mathematical aspects of computer science
 PE1_16 Numerical analysis and scientific computing
 PE1_17 Control theory and optimization
 PE1_18 Application of mathematics in sciences

PE2 Fundamental constituents of matter: particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics

PE2_1 Fundamental interactions and fields
 PE2_2 Particle physics
 PE2_3 Nuclear physics
 PE2_4 Nuclear astrophysics
 PE2_5 Gas and plasma physics
 PE2_6 Electromagnetism
 PE2_7 Atomic, molecular physics
 PE2_8 Optics and quantum optics
 PE2_9 Lasers and laser physics
 PE2_10 Acoustics
 PE2_11 Relativity
 PE2_12 Classical physics
 PE2_13 Thermodynamics
 PE2_14 Non-linear physics

- PE2_15 General physics
- PE2_16 Metrology and measurement
- PE2_17 Statistical physics (gases)

PE3 Condensed matter physics: structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences

- PE3_1 Structure of solids and liquids
- PE3_2 Mechanical and acoustical properties of condensed matter
- PE3_3 Thermal properties of condensed matter
- PE3_4 Transport properties of condensed matter,
- PE3_5 Electronic properties of materials and transport
- PE3_6 Lattice dynamics
- PE3_7 Semiconductors
- PE3_8 Superconductivity
- PE3_9 Superfluids
- PE3_10 Spintronics
- PE3_11 Magnetism
- PE3_12 Nanophysics: nanoelectronics, nanophotonics, nanomagnetism
- PE3_13 Mesoscopic physics
- PE3_14 Molecular electronics
- PE3_15 Soft condensed matter (liquid crystals...)
- PE3_16 Fluid dynamics (physics)
- PE3_17 Statistical physics (condensed matter)
- PE3_18 Phase transitions, phase equilibria
- PE3_19 Biophysics

PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical sciences: analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics

- PE4_1 Physical chemistry
- PE4_2 Nanochemistry
- PE4_3 Spectroscopic and spectrometric techniques
- PE4_4 Molecular architecture and Structure
- PE4_5 Surface science
- PE4_6 Analytical chemistry
- PE4_7 Chemical physics
- PE4_8 Chemical instrumentation
- PE4_9 Electrochemistry, electrodialysis, microfluidics
- PE4_10 Combinatorial chemistry
- PE4_11 Method development in chemistry
- PE4_12 Catalysis
- PE4_13 Physical chemistry of biological systems
- PE4_14 Chemical reactions: mechanisms, dynamics, kinetics and catalytic reactions
- PE4_15 Theoretical and computational chemistry
- PE4_16 Radiation chemistry
- PE4_17 Nuclear chemistry
- PE4_18 Photochemistry

PE5 Materials and Synthesis: materials synthesis, structure-properties relations, functional and advanced materials, molecular architecture, organic chemistry

- PE5_1 Structural properties of materials
- PE5_2 Solid state materials
- PE5_3 Surface modification
- PE5_4 Thin films
- PE5_5 Corrosion
- PE5_6 Porous materials
- PE5_7 Ionic liquids
- PE5_8 New materials: oxides, alloys, composite, organic-inorganic hybrid, superconductors
- PE5_9 Materials for sensors
- PE5_10 Nanomaterials : nanoparticles, nanotubes
- PE5_11 Biomaterials synthesis
- PE5_12 Intelligent materials – self assembled materials
- PE5_13 Environment chemistry
- PE5_14 Coordination chemistry
- PE5_15 Colloid chemistry
- PE5_16 Biological chemistry
- PE5_17 Chemistry of condensed matter
- PE5_18 Homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis
- PE5_19 Characterization methods of materials
- PE5_20 Macromolecular chemistry,
- PE5_21 Polymer chemistry
- PE5_22 Supramolecular chemistry
- PE5_23 Organic chemistry
- PE5_24 Molecular chemistry

PE6 Computer science and informatics: informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems

- PE6_1 Computer architecture
- PE6_2 Database management
- PE6_3 Formal methods
- PE6_4 Graphics and image processing
- PE6_5 Human computer interaction and interface
- PE6_6 Informatics and information systems
- PE6_7 Theoretical computer science including quantum information
- PE6_8 Intelligent systems
- PE6_9 Scientific computing
- PE6_10 Modelling tools
- PE6_11 Multimedia
- PE6_12 Parallel and Distributed Computing
- PE6_13 Speech recognition
- PE6_14 Systems and software

PE7 Systems and communication engineering: electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering

- PE7_1 Control engineering

- PE7_2 Electrical and electronic engineering: semiconductors, components, systems
- PE7_4 Simulation engineering and modelling
- PE7_5 Systems engineering, sensorics, actorics, automation
- PE7_6 Micro- and nanoelectronics, optoelectronics
- PE7_7 Communication technology, high-frequency technology
- PE7_8 Signal processing
- PE7_9 Networks
- PE7_10 Man-machine-interfaces
- PE7_11 Robotics

PE8 Products and process engineering: product design, process design and control, construction methods, civil engineering, energy systems, material engineering

- PE8_1 Aerospace engineering
- PE8_2 Chemical engineering, technical chemistry
- PE8_3 Civil engineering, maritime/hydraulic engineering, geotechnics, waste treatment
- PE8_4 Computational engineering
- PE8_5 Fluid mechanics, hydraulic-, turbo-, and piston engines
- PE8_6 Energy systems (production, distribution, application)
- PE8_7 Micro(system) engineering,
- PE8_8 Mechanical and manufacturing engineering (shaping, mounting, joining, separation)
- PE8_9 Materials engineering (biomaterials, metals, ceramics, polymers, composites, ...)
- PE8_10 Production technology, process engineering
- PE8_11 Product design, ergonomics, man-machine interfaces
- PE8_12 Lightweight construction, textile technology
- PE8_13 Industrial bioengineering
- PE8_14 Industrial biofuel production

PE9 Universe sciences: astro-physics/chemistry/biology; solar system; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy, planetary systems, cosmology; space science, instrumentation

- PE9_1 Solar and interplanetary physics
- PE9_2 Planetary systems sciences
- PE9_3 Interstellar medium
- PE9_4 Formation of stars and planets
- PE9_5 Astrobiology
- PE9_6 Stars and stellar systems
- PE9_7 The Galaxy
- PE9_8 Formation and evolution of galaxies
- PE9_9 Clusters of galaxies and large scale structures
- PE9_10 High energy and particles astronomy – X-rays, cosmic rays, gamma rays, neutrinos
- PE9_11 Relativistic astrophysics
- PE9_12 Dark matter, dark energy
- PE9_13 Gravitational astronomy
- PE9_14 Cosmology
- PE9_15 Space Sciences
- PE9_16 Very large data bases: archiving, handling and analysis
- PE9_17 Instrumentation - telescopes, detectors and techniques

PE9_18 Solar planetology

PE10 Earth system science: physical geography, geology, geophysics, meteorology, oceanography, climatology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management

PE10_1 Atmospheric chemistry, atmospheric composition, air pollution

PE10_2 Meteorology, atmospheric physics and dynamics

PE10_3 Climatology and climate change

PE10_4 Terrestrial ecology, land cover change,

PE10_5 Geology, tectonics, volcanology,

PE10_6 Paleoclimatology, paleoecology

PE10_7 Physics of earth's interior, seismology, volcanology

PE10_8 Oceanography (physical, chemical, biological)

PE10_9 Biogeochemistry, biogeochemical cycles, environmental chemistry

PE10_10 Mineralogy, petrology, igneous petrology, metamorphic petrology

PE10_11 Geochemistry, crystal chemistry, isotope geochemistry, thermodynamics,

PE10_13 Sedimentology, soil science, palaeontology, earth evolution

PE10_14 Physical geography

PE10_15 Earth observations from space/remote sensing

PE10_16 Geomagnetism, paleomagnetism

PE10_17 Ozone, upper atmosphere, ionosphere

PE10_18 Hydrology, water and soil pollution

Life Sciences

LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry: molecular biology, biochemistry, biophysics, structural biology, biochemistry of signal transduction

LS1_1 Molecular biology and interactions

LS1_2 General biochemistry and metabolism

LS1_3 DNA biosynthesis, modification, repair and degradation

LS1_4 RNA synthesis, processing, modification and degradation

LS1_5 Protein synthesis, modification and turnover

LS1_6 Biophysics

LS1_7 Structural biology (crystallography, NMR, EM)

LS1_8 Biochemistry of signal transduction

LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology: genetics, population genetics, molecular genetics, genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, bioinformatics, computational biology, biostatistics, biological modelling and simulation, systems biology, genetic epidemiology

LS2_1 Genomics, comparative genomics, functional genomics

LS2_2 Transcriptomics

LS2_3 Proteomics

LS2_4 Metabolomics

LS2_5 Glycomics

LS2_6 Molecular genetics, reverse genetics and RNAi

LS2_7 Quantitative genetics

- LS2_8 Epigenetics and gene regulation
- LS2_9 Genetic epidemiology
- LS2_10 Bioinformatics
- LS2_11 Computational biology
- LS2_12 Biostatistics
- LS2_13 Systems biology
- LS2_14 Biological systems analysis, modelling and simulation

LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology: cell biology, cell physiology, signal transduction, organogenesis, developmental genetics, pattern formation in plants and animals

- LS3_1 Morphology and functional imaging of cells
- LS3_2 Cell biology and molecular transport mechanisms
- LS3_3 Cell cycle and division
- LS3_4 Apoptosis
- LS3_5 Cell differentiation, physiology and dynamics
- LS3_6 Organelle biology
- LS3_7 Cell signalling and cellular interactions
- LS3_8 Signal transduction
- LS3_9 Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology in animals
- LS3_10 Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology in plants
- LS3_11 Cell genetics
- LS3_12 Stem cell biology

LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology: organ physiology, pathophysiology, endocrinology, metabolism, ageing, regeneration, tumorigenesis, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome

- LS4_1 Organ physiology
- LS4_2 Comparative physiology
- LS4_3 Endocrinology
- LS4_4 Ageing
- LS4_5 Metabolism, biological basis of metabolism related disorders
- LS4_6 Cancer and its biological basis
- LS4_7 Cardiovascular diseases
- LS4_8 Non-communicable diseases (except for neural/psychiatric, immunity-related, metabolism-related disorders, cancer and cardiovascular diseases)

LS5 Neurosciences and neural disorders: neurobiology, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, neuropharmacology, neuroimaging, systems neuroscience, neurological disorders, psychiatry

- LS5_1 Neuroanatomy and neurosurgery
- LS5_2 Neurophysiology
- LS5_3 Neurochemistry and neuropharmacology
- LS5_4 Sensory systems (e.g. visual system, auditory system)
- LS5_5 Mechanisms of pain
- LS5_6 Developmental neurobiology
- LS5_7 Cognition (e.g. learning, memory, emotions, speech)
- LS5_8 Behavioral neuroscience (e.g. sleep, consciousness, handedness)
- LS5_9 Systems neuroscience
- LS5_10 Neuroimaging and computational neuroscience

LS5_11 Neurological disorders (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease)

LS5_12 Psychiatric disorders (e.g. schizophrenia, autism, Tourette's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)

LS6 Immunity and infection: immunobiology, aetiology of immune disorders, microbiology, virology, parasitology, global and other infectious diseases, population dynamics of infectious diseases, veterinary medicine

LS6_1 Innate immunity

LS6_2 Adaptive immunity

LS6_3 Phagocytosis and cellular immunity

LS6_4 Immunosignalling

LS6_5 Immunological memory and tolerance

LS6_6 Immunogenetics

LS6_7 Microbiology

LS6_8 Virology

LS6_9 Bacteriology

LS6_10 Parasitology

LS6_11 Prevention and treatment of infection by pathogens (e.g. vaccination, antibiotics, fungicide)

LS6_12 Biological basis of immunity related disorders

LS6_13 Veterinary medicine

LS7 Diagnostic tools, therapies and public health: aetiology, diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health, epidemiology, pharmacology, clinical medicine, regenerative medicine, medical ethics

LS7_1 Medical engineering and technology

LS7_2 Diagnostic tools (e.g. genetic, imaging)

LS7_3 Pharmacology, pharmacogenomics, drug discovery and design, drug therapy

LS7_4 Analgesia

LS7_5 Toxicology

LS7_6 Gene therapy, stem cell therapy, regenerative medicine

LS7_7 Surgery

LS7_8 Radiation therapy

LS7_9 Health services, health care research

LS7_10 Public health and epidemiology

LS7_11 Environment and health risks including radiation

LS7_12 Occupational medicine

LS7_13 Medical ethics

LS8 Evolutionary, population and environmental biology: evolution, ecology, animal behaviour, population biology, biodiversity, biogeography, marine biology, ecotoxicology, prokaryotic biology

LS8_1 Ecology (theoretical, community, population, microbial, evolutionary ecology)

LS8_2 Population biology, population dynamics, population genetics, plant-animal interactions

LS8_3 Systems eEvolution, biological adaptation, phylogenetics, systematics

LS8_4 Biodiversity, comparative biology

LS8_5 Conservation biology, ecology, genetics

LS8_6 Biogeography
LS8_7 Animal behaviour (behavioural ecology, animal communication)
LS8_8 Environmental and marine biology
LS8_9 Environmental toxicology
LS8_10 Prokaryotic biology
LS8_11 Symbiosis

LS9 Applied life sciences and biotechnology: agricultural, animal, fishery, forestry and food sciences; biotechnology, chemical biology, genetic engineering, synthetic biology, industrial biosciences; environmental biotechnology and remediation

LS9_1 Genetic engineering, transgenic organisms, recombinant proteins, biosensors
LS9_2 Synthetic biology and new bio-engineering concepts
LS9_3 Agriculture related to animal husbandry, dairying, livestock raising
LS9_4 Aquaculture, fisheries
LS9_5 Agriculture related to crop production, soil biology and cultivation, applied plant biology
LS9_6 Food sciences
LS9_7 Forestry, biomass production (e.g. for biofuels)
LS9_8 Environmental biotechnology, bioremediation, biodegradation
LS9_9 Biotechnology, bioreactors, applied microbiology
LS9_10 Biomimetics
LS9_11 Biohazards, biological containment, biosafety, biosecurity

Annex 2a: Ethical Issues

Introduction

The ERC peer review evaluation procedure includes a check of ethical issues raised by the proposals. An ethical review of proposals involving sensitive ethical issues may take place after the evaluation and before any funding decision by the ERC.

The objective of this ethical review is to make sure that the ERC does not support research which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles.

Ethical issues table

ERC grant proposals need to include the Ethical issues table below as a separate supporting document.

If "YES" is indicated on any issue, the pages in the proposal should be specified where this ethical issue is described.

Answering 'YES' to some of these boxes does not automatically lead to an ethical review. It enables the independent experts to decide if an ethical review is required.

If it is sure that none of the issues apply to a proposal, "YES" needs to be indicated in the box in the last row.

Projects raising specific ethical issues such as research intervention on human beings; research on human embryos and human embryonic stem cells and non-human primates are automatically submitted for ethical review.

Note:

Only in exceptional cases will additional information be sought for clarification, which means that any ethical review will be performed solely on the basis of the information available in the proposal.

To ensure compliance with ethical principles, the ERC will undertake ethics audit(s) of selected projects at its discretion.

Helpful information on ethical issues and the conduct of ethical reviews are provided on the following website at http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html.

Description of ethical issues in the proposal

If applicable, any ethically sensitive issues raised by the proposed research project should be described in an additional separate document, which shall be provided as supporting document with the ERC grant proposal. In particular, it should outline the benefit and burden of such research, the effects it may have and how the ethical issues will be managed.

The following ethical issues should be especially taken into account:

- **Informed consent:** When describing issues relating to informed consent, it will be necessary to illustrate an appropriate level of ethical sensitivity, and consider issues of insurance, incidental findings and the consequences of leaving the study.
- **Data protection issues:** Avoid the unnecessary collection and use of personal data. Identify the source of the data, describing whether it is collected as part of the research or is previously collected data being used. Consider issues of informed consent for any data being used. Describe how personal identity of the data is protected.
- **Use of animals:** Where animals are used in research the application of the 3Rs (Replace, Reduce, Refine) must be convincingly addressed. Numbers of animals should be specified. Describe what happens to the animals after the research experiments.
- **Human embryonic stem cells:** Research proposals that will involve human embryonic stem cells (hESC) will have to address all the following specific points:
 - the necessity to use hESC in order to achieve the scientific objectives set forth in the proposal.
 - whether the applicants have taken into account the legislation, regulations, ethical rules and/or codes of conduct in place in the country(ies) where the research using hESC is to take place, including the procedures for obtaining informed consent;
 - the source of the hESC
 - the measures taken to protect personal data, including genetic data, and privacy;
 - the nature of financial inducements, if any.

Furthermore, the research proposal should list the countries where research will be undertaken and indicate which ethical committees and regulatory organisations will need to be approached during the life of the project.

Annex 2b: Ethical Issues Table (template)

	YES	PAGE
Informed Consent		
• Does the proposal involve children?		
• Does the proposal involve patients or persons not able to give consent?		
• Does the proposal involve adult healthy volunteers?		
• Does the proposal involve Human Genetic Material?		
• Does the proposal involve Human biological samples?		
• Does the proposal involve Human data collection?		
Research on Human embryo/foetus		
• Does the proposal involve Human Embryos?		
• Does the proposal involve Human Foetal Tissue / Cells?		
• Does the proposal involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells?		
Privacy		
• Does the proposal involve processing of genetic information or personal data (eg. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)		
• Does the proposal involve tracking the location or observation of people?		
Research on Animals		
• Does the proposal involve research on animals?		
• Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?		
• Are those animals transgenic farm animals?		
• Are those animals cloning farm animals?		
• Are those animals non-human primates?		
Research Involving Developing Countries		
• Use of local resources (genetic, animal, plant etc)		
• Impact on local community		
•		
Dual Use and potential for terrorist abuse		
• Research having direct military application		
• Research having the potential for terrorist abuse		
I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		



Annex 3: Commitment of the Host Institution^{31,32}

When submitting an ERC grant proposal, the host institution must confirm its commitment to supporting the Principal Investigator and facilitating his/her transition to independence. In this respect, the host institution should submit a signed statement (on letterhead paper), as an attachment to the PI's proposal. For the submission of Stage 1 Starting Grant proposals (outline proposals) a letter of support is sufficient (see template, Annex 4d).³³

The peer review evaluation panels are empowered to determine whether the grant and the signed statement by the host institution will allow the Principal Investigator to make or consolidate the transition to independence.

The statement (on letterhead paper) should read as follows:

The [name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the principal investigator and the project in case the application is successful], which is the "applicant legal entity", confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with [name of the principal investigator] in which the obligations listed below will be addressed, should the proposal entitled "[acronym]: [title of the proposal]" be retained.

Performance obligations of the applicant legal entity that will become the beneficiary of the grant agreement, should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the grant agreement be successfully concluded:

The *applicant legal entity* commits itself to:

- a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the *principal investigator*.
- b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex I ERC GA, taking into consideration the specific role of the *principal investigator*.
- c) establish a *supplementary agreement* with the *principal investigator* which specifies that the *applicant legal entity* shall:
 - i) support the *principal investigator* in the management of the *team* and provide reasonable administrative assistance to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
 - a. the timeliness and clarity of financial information,
 - b. the general management and reporting of finances,

³¹ A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format

³² The statement of commitment of the host institution refers to most obligations of the host institution, which are stated in the ERC grant agreement (see article II.2 of the grant agreement). The ERC grant agreement is available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu>.

³³ This statement shall be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating his/her name, function, email address and stamp of the institution.

- c. the advice on internal *applicant legal entity* strategies and *ERC or Commission* policies,
 - d. the organisation of *project* meetings as well as the general logistics of the *project*.
- ii) provide research support to the *principal investigator* and his/her *team members* throughout the duration of the *project* in accordance with Annex I ERC GA, in particular as regards infrastructure, equipment, products and other services as necessary for the conduct of the research;
- iii) ensure that the *principal investigator* and his/her *team members* enjoy, on a royalty-free basis, access rights to the *background* and the *foreground* needed for their activities under the *project* as specified in Annex I ERC GA;
- iv) guarantee adequate contractual conditions to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
 - a. the provisions for annual, sickness and parental leave,
 - b. occupational health and safety standards,
 - c. the general social security scheme, such as pension rights.
- v) ensure the necessary scientific autonomy of the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
 - a. the selection of other *team members*, hosted and engaged by the *applicant legal entity* or other legal entities, in line with profiles needed to conduct the research, including the appropriate advertisement;
 - b. the control over the budget in terms of its use to achieve the scientific objectives;
- c. the authority to deliver scientific reports to the *Commission*;
 - d. the authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work.
- vi) inform the *principal investigator* of any circumstances affecting the implementation of the *project* or leading potentially to a suspension or termination of the ERC GA;
- vii) subject to the observance of applicable national law and to the agreement of the *Commission*, the transfer of the grant agreement as well as any pre-financing of the grant not covered by an accepted cost claim to a new legal



entity, should the *principal investigator* request to transfer the entire *project* or *part of it* to this new legal entity. The *applicant legal entity* shall submit a substantiated request for amendment or notify the *Commission* in case of its objection to the transfer.

For the institution (applicant legal entity)

Name, Function, Email +Signature of legal representative

Stamp of institution (applicant legal entity)

<p>All the above mentioned items are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the host institution.</p>
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Annex 4a: ERC Starting Grant – Evaluation Criteria

Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation. It will be applied to the peer review evaluation of both the Principal Investigator and the proposed research project. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the research environment enables the excellence of the project to be achieved.

The detailed criteria applying to these 3 elements of the proposal are as follows:

1. Principal Investigator: Potential to perform world-class research

Quality of research output: Has the Principal Investigator published in high quality peer reviewed journals or the equivalent? To what extent are these publications ground-breaking and demonstrative of independent creative thinking and capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art?

Intellectual capacity and creativity: To what extent does the Principal Investigator's record of research, collaborations, project conception, supervision of students and publications demonstrate that he/she is able to confront major research challenges in the field, and to initiate new productive lines of thinking?

2. Quality of the proposed research project

Ground-breaking nature of the research: Does the proposed research address important challenges in the field(s) addressed? Does it have suitably ambitious objectives, which go substantially beyond the current state of the art (e.g. including trans-disciplinary developments and novel or unconventional approaches)?

Potential impact: Does the research open new and important scientific, technological or scholarly horizons?

Methodology:

a) is the outlined scientific approach (including the activities to be undertaken by the individual team members) feasible? (*Stage 1*)

b) is the proposed research methodology (including when pertinent the use of instrumentation, other type of infrastructures etc.) comprehensive and appropriate for to the project? Will it enable the goals of the project convincingly to be achieved within the timescales and resources proposed and the level of risk associated with a challenging research project? (*Stage 2*)

3. Research Environment

Transition to independence: Will the proposed project enable the Principal Investigator to make or consolidate the transition to independence?

Host institution (normally applicant legal entity): Does the institution hosting the project have most of the infrastructure necessary for the research to be carried out? Is it in a position to provide an appropriate intellectual environment and infrastructural support and to assist in achieving the ambitions for the project and the Principal Investigator?

Participation of other legal entities: If it is proposed that other legal entities participate in the project, in addition to the applicant legal entity, is their participation fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project?



Application of Criteria

- Panels and referees will evaluate, comment and numerically score the proposals under the criteria of Heading 1: *Potential of the Principal Investigator* and Heading 2: *Quality of the proposed research project*.
- Proposals will be evaluated under Heading 3 criteria (*Research Environment*) on a "pass/fail" basis and commented during stage 2 of the evaluation.
- The overall scoring of the proposals will integrate the strengths and weaknesses including these scores as well as an overall appreciation of the proposal.
- Each evaluation criterion (heading 1 and 2) will be marked on a scale of 0 to 5. The full proposal will be evaluated on a scale of 0 to 10 and an overall quality threshold of 8/10 will be used to establish the "retained list" of proposal which will be ranked in order of priority for funding.
- Panels will establish a recommended budget for each of the proposals retained at stage 2.



Annex 4b: ERC Starting Grant – Administrative Submission Forms

Instructions for completing the "administrative forms" (A forms) of the ERC grant application

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS). The procedure is given in section 3.2.4 of this guide.

In the A forms the applicant will be asked for administrative data that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal. The A forms are an integral part of the proposal. Details of the work the PI intend to carry out will be described in the research proposal (see annex 4c).

Section A1 gives a snapshot of the proposal and of the PI, section A2 concerns the PI host institution, while section A3 deals with money matters.

Please note:

- Section A1 and section A3 concern information about the research proposal, about the PI and on estimation of the resources;
- Section A2 concerns information about the PI's Host Institution³⁴;
- Subcontractors are not required to fill in section A2 and should not be listed separately in section A3;
- Please ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (resources section). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

When you complete the A forms, please make sure that:

- *All costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).*

³⁴ The filling of additional A2 forms may be necessary if there are additional host organisations of team members ("additional participants").

**Note:**

The following notes are for information only. They should assist you in completing the A forms of your proposal. On-line guidance will also be available. The precise questions and options presented on EPSS may differ slightly from these below.

Section A1: Proposal and PI information (To be completed for Stage 1 and stage 2 proposals)

Proposal Number	[pre-filled by the system]
Proposal Acronym	<p>The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently in this call. It should be of no more than 20 characters (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no spaces, symbols or special characters please).</p> <p>The same acronym should appear on each page of the research proposal.</p>
General Information on the Proposal	
Type of project	<p>[pre-filled]</p> <p>Support for Frontier Research – ERC Starting Grant</p>
Call identifier	<p>[pre-filled]</p> <p>The call identifier is the reference number given in the call or part of the call you are addressing, as indicated in the publication of the call in the CORDIS call page. A call identifier looks like this: <i>ERC-2007-StG</i></p>
Activity code	<p>Should be:</p> <p>ERC Starting Grant</p>
Proposal Title	<p>The title should be <u>no longer than 200 characters</u> and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field.</p>
Duration in months	<p>The estimated duration of the project in full months.</p>
ERC Review Panel	<p>[drop-down menu]</p> <p>Please choose an option indicating the ERC panel(s) by which you would prefer your proposal to be evaluated.</p> <p>This information is <u>mandatory for the 1st preference</u> and optional for the 2nd and 3rd preferences.</p>
ERC Keywords	<p>[drop-down menu]</p> <p>Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal.</p> <p>You do not need to limit your choice of keywords to your choice of specific panel or panels.</p> <p>The choice of keyword 1 is mandatory; keywords 2, 3 and 4 are optional.</p>
Free Keywords	<p>In addition please enter free text keywords that you consider necessary to characterise the scope of your research proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multiple-disciplinary aspects of the proposal.</p> <p>There is <u>a limit of 100 characters</u>.</p>



Abstract	<p>The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as the short description of your research proposal in the evaluation process and in communications to the programme management committees and other interested parties. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information. Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters.</p> <p>There is a limit of 2000 characters. Add "Space and line breaks included"</p>
Information on the Principal Investigator	
Family Name	Last name as given in your PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree) documentation.
Birth Family Name	Your last name at birth.
First Name(s)	Your first name.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Nationality	Insert your Nationality, in English.
Country of residence	The country in which you legally reside. Insert the name of the country, in English.
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).
Country of Birth	The country in which you were born. Insert the name of the country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Town of Birth	The town in which you were born. Insert the name of the town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Current Organisation name (if applicable)	Name under which your organisation is registered.
Current Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory name (if applicable)	Name under which your Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The building number.
Town	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.



Country	The country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Phone	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
E-mail	Please insert your e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional.
Date of first PhD or Doctorate award (DD/MM/YYYY)	Please specify the date of award of your doctoral degree using the format (DD/MM/YYYY). This should correspond to the date on the actual original PhD certificate. Wrong or missing information may cause your proposal to be ineligible
If this date is more than 9 years prior to the call deadline: do you qualify for an extension of the eligibility period (of maximum 3 years)?	<p>Researchers must have obtained a PhD or equivalent doctoral degree at the earliest 9 years prior to the date of the deadline for submission of proposals. Extensions of this period are possible in certain cases. Please consult the work programme (eligibility conditions section).</p> <p>Wrong or missing information may cause your proposal to be ineligible.</p>
During the last calendar year, have you submitted any other proposal for an ERC grant?	<p>No PI or team member may be associated with more than one application to the ERC during the same calendar year.</p> <p>A PI may not submit an application for an ERC grant during the calendar year following the submission of an unsuccessful application, unless that application was judged to meet the quality threshold for funding (not applicable to the first/second StG calls).</p>
Information on the Administrative Official of the Host Institution	
Family Name	Last name as given in the Passport or ID card.
Birth Family Name	Last name at birth.
First Name(s)	First name.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Position in the host institution	e.g. senior administrative officer
Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory name	The name under which the host Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The building number.
Town	



	The town, in English.
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
Country	The country, in English.
Phone	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
E-mail	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional.
Section A2: Host institution information (To be completed for Stage 1 and stage 2 proposals)	
Organisation Number	The number allocated by the consortium (if it is the case) to each organisation. The PI of the proposal is always number one .
The Organisation	
If your organisation has already registered for FP7, enter your Participant Identity Code	
Organisation legal name	For a Public Law Body , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the Resolution text, Law, Decree/Decision establishing the Public Entity, or in any other document established at the constitution of the Public Law Body; For a Private Law Body , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the national Official Journal (or equivalent) or in the national company register.
Organisation short name	Choose an abbreviation of the host institution Legal Name, only for use in this proposal and in all relating documents. This short name should not be more than 20 characters exclusive of special characters (./;...), for e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, for e.g. IBM and not Int.Bus.Mac.
Organisation Town	Town where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Organisation Country	The country where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Department/Faculty/ Institute/Lab Name	The name under which the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Department/Faculty/ Institute/Lab Town	The town where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).



Department/Faculty/ Institute/Lab Country	The country where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Internet Homepage	Insert the address of the Organisation internet homepage.
Section A3: Budget (To be completed for Stage 1 and stage 2 proposals)	
Financial information – whole duration of the project	
<p>This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC grant, as they are also presented in the research proposal text.</p> <p>The Host Institution³⁵ should enter the different type of costs (Personnel, other direct, indirect and subcontracting). Please ensure the table contains the correct amount of the different type of costs and the correct total eligible costs and requested grant.</p> <p>If you are participating as a legal entity from International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC), you can opt for lump sum funding instead of the reimbursement of eligible costs. In this case you should only complete the box on "requested grant".³⁶</p> <p>Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs</p> <p>An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution towards indirect costs, which cannot exceed 20% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary). Costs claimed should be in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.</p> <p>Direct eligible costs are those which support all the research, management, training and dissemination activities necessary for the conduct of the project, such as: Personnel Costs; Equipment Costs; Consumables; Travel and Subsistence Costs; Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results).</p> <p>Indirect eligible costs are those which cannot be identified as directly attributable to the project, but which are incurred in direct relationship with the project's direct eligible costs, such as: Costs related to general administration and management; Costs of office or laboratory space, including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditure such as water, heating, electricity; Maintenance, insurance and safety costs; Communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office; Supplies; Common office equipment such as PC's, laptops, office software; Miscellaneous recurring consumables.</p> <p>Non-eligible costs cannot be reimbursed through the ERC grant. These include: Any identifiable indirect taxes, including VAT or duties; Interest owed; Provisions for possible future losses or charges; Exchange losses; Costs declared, incurred or reimbursed in respect of another Community project; Costs related to return on capital; Debt and debt service charges; Excessive or reckless expenditure.</p>	
Participant Number in this proposal	The PI' Host Institution of the proposal is always number one .
	The same name that as been used in form A2.

³⁵ Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2

³⁶ The lump sum calculation method will be subject to a specific Commission decision, published in early 2007.??????



Organisation short name	
Personnel costs	<p>Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project. Such persons must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be directly hired by the beneficiary in accordance with its national legislation, – work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the latter, and – be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant. <p>Participants may opt to declare average personnel costs if certified in accordance with a methodology approved by the Commission and consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant.</p> <p>Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.</p>
Other direct costs (- subcontracting)	Means direct costs not covered by the above mentioned categories of costs.
Indirect costs	Indirect costs are all those eligible costs which cannot be identified by the participant as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs.
Subcontracting	<p>A subcontractor is a third party which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with one or more participants, in order to carry out part of the work of the project without the direct supervision of the participant and without a relationship of subordination.</p> <p>Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project; - recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified in Part B of the proposal having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation; - recourse to the award of subcontract by a participant may not affect the rights and obligations of the participants regarding background and foreground; - Part B of the proposal must indicate the task to be subcontracted and an estimation of the costs; <p>Any subcontract, the costs of which are to be claimed as an eligible cost, must be awarded according to the principles of best value for money (best price-quality ratio), transparency and equal treatment. Framework contracts between a participant and a subcontractor, entered into prior to the beginning of the project that are according to the participant's usual management principles may also be accepted.</p> <p>Participants may use external support services for assistance with minor tasks that do not represent per se project tasks as identified in Part B of the proposal.</p>
Eligible Costs	The sum of direct costs (personnel and others), indirect costs and subcontracting.
Requested Grant	The total budget that you are requesting as the ERC grant.



Annex 4c: ERC Starting Grant – Research Proposal Template³⁷

Format of the proposal:

The proposal consists of a cover page and three components. The information to be included in each of these sections and the maximum length (page number) is described below.

Only the material that the proposal contains within the below-mentioned page limits while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated.

It should provide sufficient evidence to the peer reviewers to assess the evaluation criteria as described in Annex 4a.

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11 pt	Single	At least 1.5 cm

Cover page (not included in the count of proposal length/page numbers):

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Name of the PI's host institution for the project
- Proposal full title
- Proposal short name
- Proposal duration in months
- Proposal summary (half page, possibly copy/paste of abstract from administrative part A)

a) The Principal Investigator (PI) (Stage 1: max. 3 pages, Stage 2: max. 4 pages)

i. CV

Outline your education (including training), key qualifications and professional experience. State the exact date of award of your PhD. State clearly any extensions of the eligibility period (see Box 2a) that you are claiming for eligible career breaks. Supporting documents must accompany the proposal at stage 2.

Describe your principal scientific activities and responsibilities (past and present), your participation in research projects, your experience in scientific collaboration and any international experience.

List your 5 main publications relevant to this proposal and any other relevant achievements (such as patents, books, awards, invited key lectures given, etc.). In stage 2, you may specify additional publications.

State any other skills and experience you consider relevant to the proposal.

ii. Self Evaluation

³⁷ If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts. An English translation of the abstract must be included in your proposal.



Describe how your skills and achievements demonstrate your potential as an independent research leader.

iii. Funding ID

State clearly and accurately any current research grants, scholarships, bursaries etc. from which you benefit, for work related to the ERC grant application, as well as any ongoing or foreseen future applications. Describe how you envisage an ERC grant will complement any existing funding.

For each source of funding, you should specify:

- Full title of the research grant, scholarship, bursary etc.
- Name of the funding scheme and organisation responsible
- Your role in it (e.g. Principal Investigator, co-investigator, etc.)
- Size and duration of the funding.

You may use a tabular format.

b) The Research Project (Stage 1: max. 4 pages, Stage 2: max. 10 pages)

i. State-of-the-art and objectives

Specify clearly the objectives of the project, in the context of the state-of-the-art in the field. Outlining the project it should be indicated how and why the project is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the project, including multi - or inter-disciplinary aspects.

ii. Methodology

Stage 1

Describe the key elements of the proposed research methodology, indicating how and why it is appropriate.

Stage 2

Describe the proposed methodology in detail, including as appropriate key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state-of-the-art, including any particularly novel or unconventional aspects. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.

iii. Resources and Budget

Describe the size and nature of the team, illustrating the role of any key team member. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project.

State the overall budget requested. This should include the direct costs of the project and also a contribution of 20% of the direct costs (excluding subcontracting) towards overheads. At stage 2 include a breakdown of the budget including personnel costs, equipment and infrastructure, consumables, travel, publication costs, and any envisaged subcontracts. State how the costs will be distributed over the duration of the project. These figures should be summarised in the financial information form A3 (see Annex 4a).



c) Research Environment (Stage 1: max. 1 page, Stage 2: max. 2 pages)

i. Transition to independence

Describe how the project will enable you to make or consolidate the transition to becoming an independent research leader

ii. Host institution

At stage 1 describe the host institution. At stage 2 also specify what facilities and assistance it will provide to the project, illustrating its capacity to support the project, including in terms of broader intellectual support.

iii. Additional participants

If more than one institution will be included as a participant in the project, you should justify clearly the scientific added value of this additional participant to the project.



Annex 4d: ERC Starting Grant (Stage 1) – Expression of Support of the Host Institution³⁸

When submitting a stage 1 proposal for an ERC Starting Grant, the host institution must confirm its association and support to the Principal Investigator and her/his proposal.

In this respect, the host institution should provide a signed statement, which shall be attached as supporting documentation to the Principal Investigator's proposal. The statement (on letterhead paper) should read as follows:

***The [name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the Principal Investigator and the project in case the application is successful], which is the "applicant legal entity"*³⁹, confirms its association and support to the submission of the proposal entitled "[Acronym]: [Title of the proposal]" by [name of the Principal Investigator], who has the full scientific responsibility of the project.**

For the institution (applicant legal entity)

***Name + Function + Email + Signature of legal representative
+ Stamp of institution (applicant legal entity)***

³⁸ A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically as supporting document on EPSS in PDF format

³⁹ Exceptionally, the Principal Investigator may himself/herself act as the "applicant legal entity", if he/she is acting in the capacity of the legal entity in his/her own right.



Annex 5a: ERC Advanced Grant – Evaluation Criteria

Excellence is the sole award criterion of evaluation. It will be applied to the evaluation of both the Principal Investigator and the research project. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the research environment enables the excellence of the project to be achieved.

The detailed criteria applying to the 3 sections of the proposal are as follows:

1. Principal Investigator⁴⁰

Quality of research output/track-record:

How well qualified is the Principal Investigator (and any co-Investigator if applicable) to conduct the project (reviewers are expected to evaluate the quality of the prior work such as published results in top peer review journals as well as other elements of the Principal Investigator's CV). To what extent are the publications and achievements of the Principal Investigator ground-breaking and demonstrative of independent creative thinking and capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art? To what extent does the quality and quantity of funding the Principal Investigator has attracted during the last ten years demonstrate his/her reputation as a performer of ground-breaking research?

Intellectual capacity and creativity:

To what extent does the Principal Investigator's record of research, collaborations, project conception, supervision of students and publications demonstrate that he/she is able to confront major research challenges in the field, and to initiate new productive lines of thinking?

2. Research project

Ground-breaking nature of the research: Does the proposed research address important challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) addressed? Does it have suitably ambitious objectives, which go substantially beyond the current state of the art (e.g. including inter- and trans-disciplinary developments and novel or unconventional concepts and/or approaches)? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity?

Potential impact:

- (a) Does the research open new and important, scientific, technological or scholarly horizons?
- (b) Will the project significantly enhance the research environment and capabilities for frontier research in Europe (including the host institution)?

Methodology:

- a) Is the outlined scientific approach (including the activities to be undertaken by the individual team members) feasible? (Step 1)
- b) Is the proposed research methodology (including when pertinent the use of instrumentation, other type of infrastructures etc.) comprehensive and appropriate to the project? Will it enable the goals of the project convincingly to be achieved within the timescales and resources proposed and the level of risk associated with a challenging research project? (Step 2)

High-gain/High-risk balance:

- a) Does the proposed research involve highly novel and/or unconventional methodologies, whose high risk is justified by the possibility of a major breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific research domain/discipline?

⁴⁰ Evaluation panel members should also take into consideration the benchmarks for the 10-Year-Track-Record as described in Box 2b.



3. Research Environment (to be assessed only during step 2 of the evaluation)

Contribution of the research environment to the project: Does the host environment⁴¹ provide most of the infrastructure necessary for the research to be carried out? Is it in a position to provide an appropriate intellectual environment and infrastructural support and to assist in achieving the ambitions for the project and the Principal Investigator?

Participation of other legal entities⁴²: If it is proposed that other legal entities participate in the project, in addition to the applicant legal entity, is their participation fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project?

Application of Criteria

Panels and referees will evaluate and mark numerically the proposals under the criteria of Heading 1 "Principal Investigator" and Heading 2 "Research project". The proposals will be evaluated under Heading 3 "Research environment" on a "pass/fail" basis and commented but not marked during step 2 of the evaluation. The evaluation panels will review the level of the requested grant and, as appropriate, suggest adjustments.

Each proposal will receive a mark on a scale of 1 to 4 for both, the criteria under heading 1 and heading 2:

- 4: Outstanding**
- 3: Excellent**
- 2: Very Good**
- 1: Non-fundable**

A quality threshold of ≥ 2 will be applied on these evaluation criteria. If a proposal is marked below the quality threshold on any of the 2 evaluation criteria, it will not be further evaluated and will be rejected.

The proposals massing the quality threshold used to establish the "retained list" of proposals which will be ranked in order of priority for funding

At the end of each evaluation step, the proposals will be ranked by the panels on the basis of the marks they have received and an overall appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses.

In case of over-subscription, where an ERC panel decides to apply during step 1 of the evaluation the assessment procedure described in section 4.2.5, the proposals submitted by less competitive Principal Investigators will be immediately rejected.

⁴¹ The term "research environment" corresponds to the immediate setting of the research team, such as Department (rather than the sponsoring institution as a whole), and when appropriate, the wider "milieu" of the team's operation, including collaborating laboratories, groups, departments etc.

⁴² As the AdG scheme is addressed to individual investigators, usually the participation of more than one legal entity will not improve the chances of success. Participation of investigator(s) from another legal entity would be acceptable if they clearly and substantially enhance the scientific value of the proposal.



Annex 5b: ERC Advanced Grant – Administrative Submission Forms

Please note that the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS) will be unavailable from 30 November 2007. The EPSS is expected to resume online on 24 December 2007. Please consult the CORDIS pages regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail, or by phone +32 2233 3760.

Instructions for completing the "administrative forms" (A forms) of the ERC grant application

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS). The procedure is given in section 3.2.4 of this guide.

In the A forms the applicant will be asked for administrative data that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal. The A forms are an integral part of the proposal. Details of the work the PI intend to carry out will be described in the research proposal (annex 5c of this guide).

Section A1 (and A1T) gives a snapshot of the proposal and of the PI, section A2 concerns the PI host institution, while section A3 deals with money matters.

Please note:

- Section A1 concerns information about the research proposal and PI, including an abstract of the project proposal and the chosen ERC Panel for evaluation.
- Section A1T contains the summary of the scientific leadership profile and the 10-year-track-record.
- Section A2 concerns information about the PI's Host Institution⁴³
- Subcontractors are not required to fill in section A2 and should not be listed separately in section A3.
- Section A3 concerns information about the estimated project costs and grant required.
- Please ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (resources section). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

When you complete part A, please make sure that:

- *All costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).*

⁴³ The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to other institutions of team members ('additional participants'), may be necessary

**Note:**

The following notes are for information only. They should assist you in completing the A forms of your proposal. On-line guidance will also be available. The precise questions and options presented on EPSS may differ slightly from these below.

Section A1: Proposal and PI information

Proposal Number	[pre-filled by the system]
Proposal Acronym	<p>The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently in this call. It should be of no more than 20 characters (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no spaces, symbols or special characters please).</p> <p>The same acronym should appear on each page of the research proposal.</p>
General Information on the Proposal	
Type of project	<p>[pre-filled]</p> <p>Support for Frontier Research – ERC Advanced Grant</p>
Call identifier	<p>[pre-filled]</p> <p>The call identifier is the reference number given in the call or part of the call you are addressing, as indicated in the publication of the call in the CORDIS call page. A call identifier looks like this: <i>ERC-2008-AdG</i></p>
Activity code	<p>Should be:</p> <p>ERC Advanced Grant</p>
Proposal Title	<p>The title should be <u>no longer than 200 characters</u> and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field.</p>
Duration in months	<p>The estimated duration of the project in full months.</p>
ERC Panel	<p>[drop-down menu]</p> <p>Please choose an option indicating the ERC panel(s) by which you would prefer your proposal to be evaluated.</p> <p>This information is <u>mandatory for the 1st preference</u> and optional for the 2nd and 3rd preferences.</p>
ERC Keywords	<p>[drop-down menu]</p> <p>Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal.</p> <p>You don't need to limit your choice of keywords to your choice of specific panel or panels.</p> <p>The choice of keyword 1 is mandatory; keywords 2, 3 and 4 are optional.</p>
Free Keywords	<p>In addition please enter free text keywords that you consider necessary to characterise the scope of your research proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multiple-disciplinary aspects of the proposal.</p> <p>There is <u>a limit of 100 characters</u>.</p>
Abstract	



	<p>The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as the short description of your research proposal in the evaluation process and in communications to the programme management committees and other interested parties. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information. Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters.</p> <p>There is a limit of 2000 characters. Add "Space and line breaks included"</p>
Information on the Principal Investigator	
Family Name	Last name as given in your PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree) documentation.
Birth Family Name	Your last name at birth.
First Name(s)	Your first name.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Nationality	Insert your Nationality, in English.
Country of residence	The country in which you legally reside. Insert the name of the country, in English.
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).
Country of Birth	The country in which you were born. Insert the name of the country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Town of Birth	The town in which you were born. Insert the name of the town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Current Organisation name (if applicable)	Name under which your organisation is registered.
Current Department/Faculty/ Institute/Laboratory name (if applicable)	Name under which your Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The building number.
Town	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
Country	



	The country, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Phone	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
E-mail	Please insert your e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional.
During the last calendar year, have you submitted any other proposal for an ERC grant?	No PI or team member may be associated with more than one application to the ERC during the same calendar year.
Information on the Administrative Official of the Host Institution	
Family Name	Last name as given in the Passport or ID card.
Birth Family Name	Last name at birth.
First Name(s)	First name.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Position in the host institution	e.g. senior administrative officer
Department/Faculty/ Institute/Laboratory name	The name under which the host Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The building number.
Town	The town, in English.
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
Country	The country, in English.
Phone	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
E-mail	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional.



Section A1T: The Track Record of the Principal Investigator

Summary of Your Scientific Leadership Profile	Please describe your most important scientific achievements (max 2.000 characters)
1) Publications in Scientific Journals	
Please list up to 10 of your most important publications as senior author in leading international peer reviewed scientific journals since 1 January 1997.	
Title of publication	The full titles of your most important publications in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Journal	Please enter either the full journal title or – where appropriate - the typically used abbreviation. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Year	The year when the article has been published in this journal (YYYY).
Pub. details	Please give the precise identification of the particular journal and your article, such as e.g. journal volume, issue, page numbers of your article, ...
Cit.	Please indicate how often this article has been quoted by other(!) scientists than yourself in international peer reviewed journals
2) Publication of Monographs	
Please list up to 10 of your most important publications since 1 January 1997. Please list your major books and other major publications, such as e.g. monographs, editions, critical editions, ...	
Title	Please insert the full titles of your most important publications in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Title of monograph, publisher, ISBN	Please enter either the full title of the monograph or – where applicable – the title of the book you made a contribution to. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Transl.	Please indicate whether your publication has been translated into other languages. Please give the number of translations (No.) and the languages it has been translated into (Lang.).
RR	Number of reviews and recensions: Please indicate how often this particular publication has been reviewed by other scientists.
3) Patents	
Please list up to 5 of the most important Patents having been granted to you since 1 January 1997.	
Title of patent	Please insert the full titles of the most important patents having been granted to you in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Patent office	Please indicate the patent office which granted the patent.
Patent number	Please give the full patent number.
Y	



	Please enter the year the patent has been granted.
LC	Please indicate how many licenses have been granted to this patent.
4) Publications in Conference Proceedings	
Please list up to 10 of your most important invited lectures at peer reviewed internationally established scientific conferences and/or international advanced schools since 1 January 1997.	
Title of contribution	Please insert the full titles of your most important contributions peer reviewed internationally established scientific conferences and/or international advanced schools in the past ten years in a chronological order. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Name of proceeding	Please enter either the full journal title or – where appropriate - the typically used abbreviation. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Year	Please enter the year when the article has been published in this proceeding.
Pub. details	Please give the precise identification of the particular journal and your article, such as e.g. journal volume, issue, page numbers of your article, ...
Cit.	Please indicate how often this article has been quoted by other(!) scientists in international peer reviewed journals or proceedings.
5) Leadership of Research Expeditions	
Please list up to 5 scientific Research expeditions under your scientific leadership (since 1 January 1997).	
Expedition	Please insert the full title and/or scope of the expedition. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Funded by	Please indicate who funded/sponsored the expedition. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Your function	Please name your function with respect to this particular expedition.
Destination	Please give the geographic destination of this expedition.
Y	Please give the year in which the expedition took place (YYYY-YYYY)
6) Scientific Contribution to the Organisation of International Conferences	
Please list up to 5 memberships in steering and/or organising committees (since 1 January 1997).	
Title of conference	Please insert the full title of the conference you (co-)organised. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Responsible sc. society	Please indicate under whose auspices and/or behalf the conference has been organised. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Your function	Please name your function with respect to this particular conference (e.g. member of scientific board).



Place	Please give the venue of the conference (city and country).
Y	Please give the year in which the conference took place (YYYY)
7) Prizes, Awards, or Memberships	
Please list up to 5 of your most important international prizes, awards, or memberships in scientific academies.	
Title	Please name the prize or the type of membership you have been awarded. The data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Institution	Please name the institution awarding the prize or membership.. Please note that the data entry in this field is limited to 50 characters.
Y	Please give the year in which the award / the membership was received.
Section A2: Host institution information	
Organisation Number	The number allocated by the consortium (if it is the case) to each organisation. The PI of the proposal is always number one .
The Organisation	
If your organisation has already registered for FP7, enter your Participant Identity Code	Not applicable to the first call.
Organisation legal name	For Public Law Body , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the Resolution text, Law, Decree/Decision establishing the Public Entity, or in any other document established at the constitution of the Public Law Body; For Private Law Body , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the national Official Journal (or equivalent) or in the national company register.
Organisation short name	Choose an abbreviation of the host institution Legal Name, only for use in this proposal and in all relating documents. This short name should not be more than 20 characters exclusive of special characters (./;...), for e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, for e.g. IBM and not Int.Bus.Mac.
Organisation Town	Town where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Organisation Country	The country where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Name	The name under which the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.



Department/Faculty/ Institute/Lab Town	The town where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Department/Faculty/ Institute/Lab Country	The country where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Internet Homepage	Insert the address of the Organisation internet homepage.
Section A3: Budget	
Financial information – whole duration of the project	
<p>This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC grant, as they are also presented in the Research proposal text.</p> <p>The Host Institution⁴⁴ should enter the different type of costs (Personnel, other direct, indirect and subcontracting). Please ensure the table contains the correct amount of the different type of costs and the correct total eligible costs and requested grant.</p> <p>If you are participating as legal entity from International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC), you can opt for lump sum funding instead of reimbursement of eligible costs. In this case you should complete only the box on "requested grant".⁴⁵</p> <p>Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs</p> <p>An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution towards indirect costs, which cannot exceed 20% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary). Costs claimed should be in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.</p> <p>Direct eligible costs are those which support all the research, management, training and dissemination activities necessary for the conduct of the project, such as: Personnel Costs; Equipment Costs; Consumables; Travel and Subsistence Costs; Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results).</p> <p>Indirect eligible costs are those which cannot be identified as directly attributable to the project, but which are incurred in direct relationship with the project's direct eligible costs, such as: Costs related to general administration and management; Costs of office or laboratory space, including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditure such as water, heating, electricity; Maintenance, insurance and safety costs; Communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office; Supplies; Common office equipment such as PC's, laptops, office software; Miscellaneous recurring consumables.</p> <p>Non-eligible costs cannot be reimbursed through the ERC grant, such as: Any identifiable indirect taxes, including VAT or duties; Interest owed; Provisions for possible future losses or charges; Exchange losses; Costs declared, incurred or reimbursed in respect of another Community project; Costs related to return on capital; Debt and debt service charges; Excessive or reckless expenditure.</p>	

⁴⁴ Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2

⁴⁵ The lump sum calculation method will be subject to a specific Commission decision, published in early 2007.



Participant Number in this proposal	The PI' Host Institution of the proposal is always number one .
Organisation short name	The same name that as been used in form A2.
Personnel costs	<p>Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project. Such persons must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be directly hired by the beneficiary in accordance with its national legislation, – work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the latter, and – be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant. <p>Participants may opt to declare average personnel costs if certified in accordance with a methodology approved by the Commission and consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant.</p> <p>Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.</p>
Other direct costs (- subcontracting)	Means direct costs not covered by the above mentioned categories of costs.
Indirect costs	Indirect costs are all those eligible costs which cannot be identified by the participant as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs.
Subcontracting	<p>A subcontractor is a third party which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with one or more participants, in order to carry out part of the work of the project without the direct supervision of the participant and without a relationship of subordination.</p> <p>Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project; - recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified in Part B of the proposal having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation; - recourse to the award of subcontract by a participant may not affect the rights and obligations of the participants regarding background and foreground; - Part B of the proposal must indicate the task to be subcontracted and an estimation of the costs; <p>Any subcontract, the costs of which are to be claimed as an eligible cost, must be awarded according to the principles of best value for money (best price-quality ratio), transparency and equal treatment. Framework contracts between a participant and a subcontractor, entered into prior to the beginning of the project that are according to the participant's usual management principles may also be accepted.</p> <p>Participants may use external support services for assistance with minor tasks that do not represent per se project tasks as identified in Part B of the proposal.</p>
Eligible Costs	The sum of direct costs (personnel and others), indirect costs and subcontracting.
Requested Grant	The total budget that you are requesting as the ERC grant.



Annex 5c: ERC Advanced Grant – Research Proposal Template⁴⁶

Format of the proposal:

The research proposal consists of a cover page and three sections. The information to be included in each of these sections is described below. The maximum length of each section or its component, which needs to be respected strictly, is described in section 3.2.3). The research proposal needs to be uploaded and submitted via EPSS as a single PDF-file (see section 3.2.4).

Only the material that the proposal contains within the below-mentioned page limits while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated. It should provide sufficient evidence to the peer reviewers to assess the evaluation criteria as described in Annex 5a.

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11 pt	Single	At least 1.5 cm

Cover page:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Name of the PI's host institution for the project
- Proposal full title
- Proposal short name
- Proposal duration in months
- Proposal summary (half page, possibly copy/paste of abstract from administrative part A1)

Section 1a: *The Principal Investigator*

Section 1a consists of 3 components:

- the **Curriculum Vitae**;
- the **Scientific Leadership Profile**;
- the **10-Year-Track-Record**.

Curriculum Vitae (max 2 pages):

In addition to the standard academic and research record, the CV should **include a succinct "funding ID"** which must specify any current research grants and their subject, as well as any ongoing application for work related to the proposal.

Scientific Leadership Profile (max 2 pages):

The PI's scientific leadership profile should include:

- a **"self-evaluation"** of research career achievements demonstrating the applicant's capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art;

⁴⁶ If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts. An English translation of the abstract must be included in your proposal.



- a presentation of the **content and impact of the major scientific or scholarly contributions** of the applicant to his or her own research field and/or neighbouring research fields and, if applicable, their wider societal impact;
- the **international recognition and diffusion** that these major contributions have received from others (publications, citations or appropriate equivalents/additional funding/ students/international prizes and awards/ institution-building/other);
- evidence of **efforts and ability to inspire younger researchers** towards high quality research (highlights of research mentoring record, information on the careers of supervised graduate and post-doctoral students, etc.);
- **where applicable: proven ability to productively change research fields and/or to establish new interdisciplinary approaches.**

A summary of this data needs to be introduced in the administrative form A1T of the application (see Annex 5b).

10-Year-Track-Record (max 2 pages):

The applicant should list his/her activity over the past 10 years (dated from the deadline of the call) as regards:

1. The **top 10 publications, as senior author** (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective research fields, also indicating the number of citations (excluding auto-citations) they have attracted.
2. **Research monographs and any translations** thereof (if applicable).
3. **Granted patents** (if applicable).
4. **Invited presentations** to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools (if applicable)
5. **Research expeditions** that the applicant has led (if applicable).
6. **Organisation of International conferences** in the field of the applicant (membership in the steering and/or organising committee) (if applicable)
7. **International Prizes/Awards/Academy memberships** (if applicable)

A summary of this data needs to be introduced in the administrative form A1 of the application (see Annex 5b).

In the case of interdisciplinary proposals involving co-investigator(s) alongside with the PI ("**co-investigator projects**") it is required that the information listed under section 1a is provided for each co-investigator (CV, scientific leadership profile, 10-year-track-record). In this case, the above-mentioned page limits for section apply individually, i.e. maximum 6 pages per co-investigator.

Section 1b: The Extended Synopsis of the project proposal (max 5 pages)

The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to its ground-breaking nature and how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for research.



Section 2: The Project proposal (max 15 pages)

The project proposal should provide detailed descriptions on the project's aim, planning, execution, and required resources. Additionally, an appreciation of the research environment provided by the host institution for the execution of the proposed project must be included.

i. State-of-the-art and objectives: Specify clearly the objectives of the project, in the context of the state-of-the-art in the field. Outlining the project it should be indicated how and why the project is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the project, including multi - or interdisciplinary aspects.

ii. Methodology

Describe the proposed methodology in detail, including as appropriate key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state-of-the-art, including any particularly novel or unconventional aspects. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.

iii. Resources (incl. project costs)

Describe the size and nature of the team, illustrating the role of any key team member. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project.

Determine and indicate the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. This should be a reasoned estimate of the projects costs – please specify and explain. Include the direct costs of the project and also a contribution of 20% of the direct costs (excluding subcontracting) towards overheads. Furthermore, include a breakdown of the budget subdivided in personnel costs, equipment and infrastructure, consumables, travel, publication costs, and any envisaged subcontracts. State how the costs will be distributed over the duration of the project. These figures should be summarised in the financial information form A3 (see Annex 5b).

Section 3: Research Environment (max 2 pages)

i. PI's Host institution

Describe the host institution and specify what facilities and assistance it will provide to the project, illustrating its capacity to support the project, including in terms of broader intellectual support.

ii. Additional institutions (additional participants)

If more than one institution will be included as a participant in the project, you should justify clearly the scientific added value of this additional participant to the project. For each additional host institution an additional A2 form needs to be filled in (see Annex 5b).