European Research Council

ERC Grant Schemes

Guide for Applicants

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The Guide is published by the ERC Scientific Council on http://erc.europa.eu.
It can also be downloaded from the CORDIS page on http://cordis.europa.eu

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European Commission
FP7 Specific Programme IDEAS

ERC Grant Schemes

Guide for Applicants

Purpose of the Guide

This guide provides practical information to potential applicants in preparing and submitting an application for a European Research Council (ERC) grant. In addition, it provides a general overview the ERC peer review evaluation process, the ERC grant agreement and the underlying principles for 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:

- Guide for ERC Grant Holders[1]: 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.

- Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers[2]: This guide provides practical information to peer reviewers as well as detailed information on the peer review evaluation and project selection process.

Note: As with other parts of the Seventh Framework Programme, National Contact Points (ERC NCPs) have been set up across Europe[3] 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. Contact details are available at http://erc.europa.eu.

[1] In preparation, available in early 2007 at http://erc.europa.eu
[2] In preparation, available in early 2007 at http://erc.europa.eu
[3] This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

1. What is the ERC?

The European Research Council (ERC) is a newly-created pan-European funding organisation, 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 and funded through the Seventh Framework Programme, complements other funding schemes in Europe, such as those of research funding agencies operating at the national level and those within the Seventh EU 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 review experts.

1.2. The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure

The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure (ERC-DIS) 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 established by the Scientific Council, and establishes and manages grant agreements. Additionally, it provides information and support to applicants and grant holders.

The European Commission will set up the ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure (ERC-DIS) as an executive agency. Pending the establishment and operability of the executive agency, its implementation tasks shall be 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

The ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant scheme (ERC Starting Grant) aims to provide adequate support to researchers at the stage at which they are intending to establish or are already leading 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.

2.1.2 ERC Advanced Investigator Grant

The ERC Advanced Investigator Grant scheme (ERC Advanced Grant) aims to encourage and support excellent, innovative and investigator-initiated research projects carried out by leading advanced 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. The first call for the ERC Advanced Investigator Grant will be launched in mid 2007.

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" of any nationality and, if necessary, include additional team members[4]. The guiding principles of ERC grants are highlighted in Box 1.

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

The hosting 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.

[4] 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. Since the focus of ERC grants is on the Principal Investigator, the concept of an individual team is fundamentally different from that of a traditional “network” or “research consortium”; proposals of the latter type will not be acceptable under this scheme.

Box 1: Guiding principles of ERC funding schemes

- Scientific excellence is the sole selection criterion
- Projects in all fields of research are eligible for funding
- Individual teams led by independent Principal Investigators are supported
- Significant funding is provided to attract the best researchers

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 PI may also work alone.[4]

2.2.1 The Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator (PI) is the project's lead researcher. He/she can be of any age (see box 2), 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 independence[5] (i.e. starting or leading an independent research team) or, depending on the field, establishing an independent research programme. Further details are provided in Box 2.

Independence implies that the PI has the authority to[6]:

- Apply for funding independently of senior colleagues;
- Direct the project, manage the research funding and make appropriate resource allocation decisions;
- Publish as senior author and invite as co-author 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.

The Principal Investigator does not necessarily need to be employed by the hosting institution at the time when the proposal is submitted.

[5] The ERC peer review evaluation panels will assess whether the requested ERC Starting Grant and the conditions specified by the hosting institution will guarantee independence or will allow the PI to make the transition to independence.

[6] Note that the conditions of independence provided to the PI and his/her team are consistent with the "*The European Charter for Researchers" and "The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*", OJ C (2005) 576, 11.3.2005.

Box 2: Status of a Principal Investigator

ERC Starting Grant

The Principal Investigator must have been awarded[1] his/her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree) more than 2 and less than 9 years prior to the deadline of the call for proposals.

Extensions of 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.

ERC Advanced Grant

The Principal Investigator must be already established as in independent research leader in his/her own right The Principal Investigator may be at any career stage beyond that at which he / she would be eligible for an ERC Starting Grant.

[1] The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be based on the date of the actual award of the PhD or equivalent doctoral certificate as indicated in the document that will be attached to the proposal during the second stage.

2.2.2 The Hosting Institution

The PI must be supported by a legally established hosting institution. This is the "applicant legal entity" for the ERC grant, which is legally entitled to receive ERC funds on behalf of the PI. If not already employed by the hosting institution, the PI must be engaged by the latter at least for the duration of the grant and is committed to the PI's independence and to provide administrative support in managing the ERC research grant[7].

This hosting 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, research organisation or research-performing company.

The hosting institution must be situated in the European Union or in an Associated Country[8]. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation[9].

[7] The rules and obligations between the hosting organisation and the PI are set out in a supplementary agreement (see section 5).

[8] The Associated Countries are: a) Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway (subject to amendment procedure of EEA agreement); b) Switzerland, Israel (subject to satisfactory conclusion of bilateral S/T agreements); c) Turkey, Croatia, Serbia, FYR of Macedonia (subject to satisfactory completion of the decision-making procedure associating these countries via a Memorandum of Understanding).

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

2.2.3 The Team Members

The constitution of the individual research team is flexible. Commonly, it involves other researchers from the PI's research group or from the same organisation as "team members".

However, depending on the nature of a project the research team may also involve team members from other research organisations 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. Independence is not required for team members.

Hosting 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 competences and capacities.

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 may be made in any field of research - including the social sciences and humanities - with particular emphasis on the frontier of science and scholarship.[11]

In particular, proposals of an interdisciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, proposals in new and emerging fields and "high-risk, high-gain" proposals are encouraged.

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

Other countries may become associated during the course of FP7. The latest news will be posted on the CORDIS and ERC web site.

[9] e.g. CERN, EMBL, ILL, ESO, ESRF.

[10] Note: With the focus on the Principal Investigator, the concept of individual team is fundamentally different from that of a traditional "network" or "research consortium"; proposals of the latter type will not be acceptable for the ERC.

[11] Nuclear energy research on fission and fusion should be submitted to calls under the EURATOM Research Programme.

Some frontier research activities and methodologies may have ethical implications or may raise questions which will require a sound ethical assessment (see Box 3 and Annex 7). 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. 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 he 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 Commission's commitment to follow the practice of the Sixth framework programme and exclude from financial support 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. Where necessary, approval must be sought from the relevant national or local ethics committee prior to the start of the project.

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

ERC Starting Grants last up to five years and provide €100,000 to €400,000 of funding per year, amounting to a total of €0.5 to 2.0 million per grant.[12]

ERC Advanced Grants last up to five years and provide €100,000 to €500,000 of funding per year, amounting to a total of €0.5 to 2.5 million per grant.[12]

The costs which can be covered by an ERC grant are described in Box 4.

The requested budget should reflect the PI's estimation of the real project costs, taking account of the nature of the project and team and whether it is intended to set up a new team or add support to an established team.

The level of the grant offered will be assessed and determined by the ERC peer review evaluation panel on the basis of the essential requirements of the project, judged against the requested budget of the proposal.

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

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

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 hosting organisation's own accounting rules.

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 hosting institution (the "applicant legal entity").

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.

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[13] for the submission of ERC grant applications are specified in each “call for proposals” and in the latest ERC work programme.

3.2. How can I submit an ERC Starting Grant (ERC StG) application?

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

Box 5: Key features of ERC Starting Grant application procedure

- Two-stage application/evaluation procedure:
  - 1st stage – Outline Proposal (max 8 pages, see section 3.2.2)
  - 2nd stage – Full Proposal (max 16 pages, see section 3.2.2)
- Essential components of an ERC grant application (see annexes 1&2):
  a) CV + self-evaluation of the PI's research achievements + funding ID
  b) Brief description of scientific and technical aspects of the project proposal
  c) Description of the scientific environment and resources
- Electronic submission via EPSS only (see section 3.2.1 and 3.2.3)

3.2.1 Pre-Registration

Principal Investigators (PIs) need to pre-register their intention to submit a proposal via the web-based EPSS (the Electronic Proposal Submission System, see section 3.2.3) in

[13] See “Grants” page on ERC website at http://erc.europa.eu.

order to receive a login name and password for the proposal submission via EPSS. This should be done as early as possible and at least three weeks prior to the deadline for the submission of proposals.[14]

Pre-registration requires a short statement indicating the name of the PI, the title of the proposal and the preferred choice(s) of evaluation panels (using the codes indicated in Annex 6).[15]

Pre-registration is needed only before a stage 1 submission of an outline proposal. It is not required for a stage 2 submission since only those proposals which successfully pass stage 1 are invited to submit a stage 2 full proposal.

3.2.2 Preparing an ERC StG grant application

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 1) must be filled in via EPSS and include administrative details on the PI and the PI's hosting institution (if applicable also those of hosting institutions of team members). Basic financial information on the requested ERC Grant needs to be filled as well. Applicants should specify which ERC peer review evaluation panel they consider to be most relevant to their proposal (i.e. the core scientific field involved, see Annex 6) and indicate one or more keywords (i.e. other fields involved and selected from a drop-down list, see Annex 6). The assignment to peer reviewers will be made by the Panel Chairs on the basis of this information.

The Research Proposal

The research proposal needs to be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format. The components 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 2):

[14] Note: The three-week-limit is not applicable to the first call for proposals for the ERC Starting Grant.

[15] Pre-registration allows the ERC to estimate and provide the required resources and expertise for the ERC peer review evaluation process and to determine in advance the likely demand for funds.

Proposal Components – ERC StG Grant	Stage 1	Stage 2
a) CV and a self-evaluation of the Principal Investigator's research achievements, including a succinct "funding ID" which must specify any current research grants and any on going application for work related to the proposal.	3 pages	4 pages
b) Description of objectives and scientific and technical content of the project	4 pages	10 pages
c) Description of the scientific environment and resources	1 page	2 pages
TOTAL	8 pages	16 pages

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

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times Roman	12	1.0	At least 2.0 cm

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 components 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 5).

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 justified with supporting information. On this basis, the ERC peer review evaluation 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 provide explanatory information. Further guidelines are provided in Box 3 and a checklist is provided in Annex 7.

The three components of the research proposal must be submitted in one single PDF file (see Section 3.2.3).

Please note that the working language of the peer review evaluation 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 hosting institution must confirm its association and support to the project and PI (see Annex 3).
- The Ethical Issues Table (see Annex 7) needs to be provided as well.

In stage 2:
- The hosting 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 (see Annex 4).
- The PI should submit scanned copies of documents proving his/ her eligibility for the grant (i.e. for the ERC Starting Grant the PhD certificate and, if applicable, justification for the extension of the eligibility period (see Box 2)).
- The Ethical Issues Table (see Annex 7) needs to be provided as well.

These documents should be scanned and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. Two separate files may be submitted, the first containing the supporting statement from the hosting institution and, in stage 2, the second containing scanned copy(ies) of document(s) proving his/ her eligibility for the grant.

Box 6: Proposal submission - Important to know

- Proposals cannot be submitted without pre-registration (it is required to obtain an EPSS login name and password)
- Proposals sent by other means than EPSS will normally not be accepted.[16]
- **Only the material that the proposal contains within the page limits while respecting the indicated layout parameters will be evaluated.**

3.2.3 Electronic Proposal Submission

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

[16] In exceptional cases, if an applicant has absolutely no means of accessing the EPSS and if it is impossible to arrange to do so, it 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, send to 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

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 .

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

Before submitting a proposal using EPSS, applicants must pre-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.

EPSS will carry out a number of basic verification checks prior to submission, including that of completeness of the proposal, internal data consistency, absence of virus infection and conformity to the file types and size limitations which are specified. This automatic validation does not replace the more detailed eligibility check carried out later by the ERC.

Only upon successful completion of these checks will the EPSS allow the applicant to initiate the submission of the proposal (by clicking on the submission button).

If the 'SUBMIT' button is not pressed, the ERC considers that no proposal has been submitted.

The proposals and attached 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, supporting documentation, reports, audio, video; multimedia, etc.) sent electronically or by post, will be disregarded.

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

The EPSS will be closed at the call deadline. After this moment, access to the EPSS will be impossible.

Applicants are strongly advised to prepare their submission and upload the proposal in good time before the deadline.

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.

working days of receipt. If a derogation is granted, the ERC will send proposal forms for paper submission to the applicant concerned.

[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.

3.2.4 Reception

If the submission is technically successful, PIs receive 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.

3.2.5 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, 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, Rue du Bourget 1, BE-1140 Brussels, Belgium.

3.2.6 Reapplications and multiple applications

For reapplications or the submission of more than one application the following rules apply:

- No PI or team member 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 funding[18].
- Only one ERC grant by a PI can be active at any time.[19]

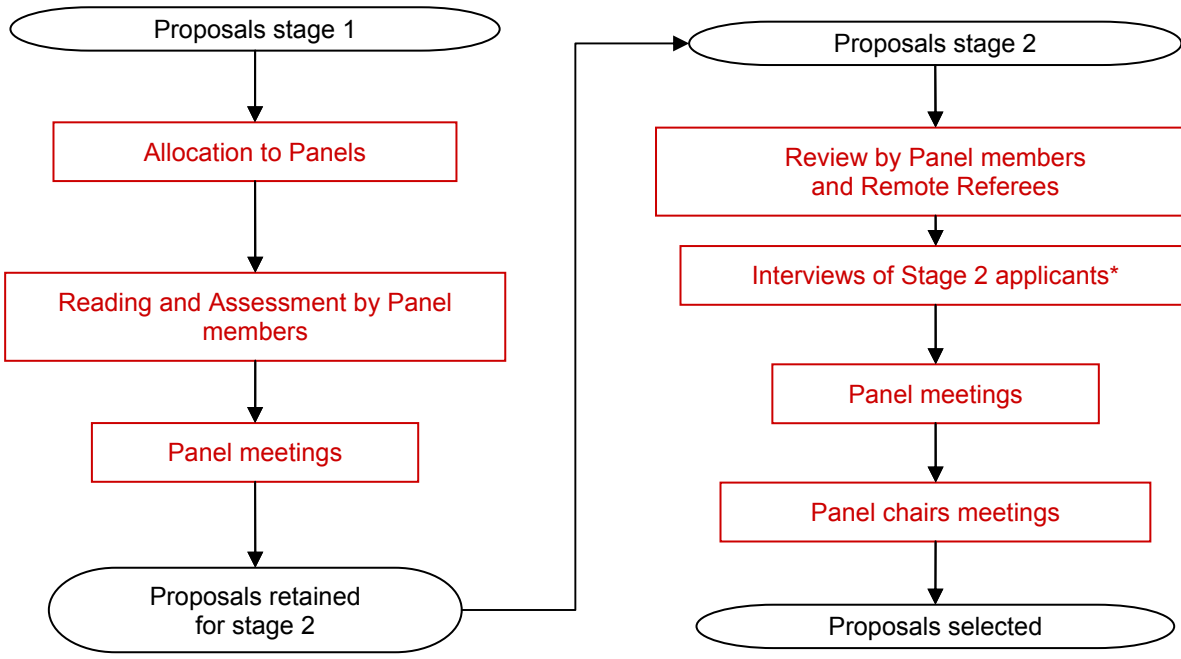
[18] Note: This rule will not apply to the second call for ERC Starting Grants.

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

- For ERC Starting Grants only: Applications by PIs who have successfully applied for similar type of funding (e.g. EURYI awards) will not be accepted unless the objectives of the proposed ERC project are clearly distinct.

4. Evaluation and selection of grant proposals[20]

The grant application procedure consists of two stages. In summary, these are as follows (see Box 7):



Box 7: Evaluation and selection of grant proposals

***Interviews with applicants will only be conducted for ERC Starting Grants.**

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 evaluation of their proposal. Applicants whose proposals meet the required level of quality are invited to proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2

[20] The *Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers* provides detailed information on ERC peer review evaluation and project selection processes. In preparation - available soon at http://erc.europa.eu

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. Applications which meet the quality thresholds are ranked in a list.

iii.) Feedback: Applicants are informed of the outcome of the 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 hosting institution and the ERC (see chapter 5).

4.1 How are proposals evaluated?

4.1.1 Eligibility Check

In order to be retained, a proposal must fulfil all of the following eligibility criteria:

- It must be submitted before the deadline.
- It must be complete (i.e. all of the requested components and forms must be present)
- Its content must relate to the ERC grant scheme which is subject of the call for proposals.
- Eligibility requirements of the respective ERC grant scheme as well as other criteria mentioned in the relevant call for proposals must be met.

An eligibility check is carried out at both stages of the two-stage application procedure.

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

4.1.2 Peer review evaluation and ranking

Proposals are evaluated by Panels mainly on the basis of:

- 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

Further details on the evaluation criteria for the ERC Starting Grant are provided in Annex 5. These criteria apply to both stage 1 and stage 2 of the application procedure. Criteria for the ERC Advanced Investigator Grant will be defined in 2007.

The composition of the Panels is outlined in Box 8. Proposals are assigned to Panels according to the keywords indicated in the application form. The Panels then assess whether each proposal meets the quality threshold, based on the evaluation criteria of the relevant ERC grant scheme.

For the ERC Starting Grant scheme, 20 Panels have been established covering all fields of science, engineering and scholarship. Details on the structure and composition of the ERC panels are provided in Annex 6. The panel structure for the ERC Advanced Investigator Grant will be defined in 2007.

Panels may be assisted by additional experts. As renowned specialists in particular research domains, these additional experts act as referees to provide individual assessments on a proposal-by-proposal basis.

Box 8: Composition of ERC Panels

- Each panel consists of one Panel Chair and 10-12 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 Procedures", which are defined by the ERC Scientific Council (see Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers[2]).

The ERC evaluation procedure includes a check of ethical issues raised by the proposals. After the evaluation and before any funding decision by the ERC 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 7).

In summary, the evaluation procedure is as follows:

Stage 1: Outline proposals are distributed to Panel members[21] who read them "remotely" (i.e. at their place of work). For each proposal, three or four Panel members are given particular responsibility for a preliminary assessment. Following this, proposals are discussed and scored by the whole Panel during a meeting.

[21] In cases where the number of proposals is exceptionally high, proposals can be evaluated additionally by external (non-Panel) reviewers designated by the ERC.

In order to avoid over-subscription at stage 2, the number of proposals that successfully pass stage 1 of the evaluation is limited. It is estimated that the number of proposals invited to proceed to stage 2 will be approximately double the number of grants available. This implies a success rate of around 50% at stage 2.

Stage 2: Full proposals are assessed and scored remotely by at least two Panel members as well as by at least two additional specialist referees. PIs with the highest ranked proposals will be invited for an interview by the relevant ERC panel. Following this, the Panels meet to decide on the final scoring and ranking.

For proposals which meet the required quality threshold, the Panel may make recommendations regarding the budget proposed by the PI and/or the methodology and time schedule of the work. These recommendations will be taken into account if a grant is subsequently offered to the PI.

A ranked list is drawn up for the proposals which meet the quality threshold and grants are offered for applications sufficiently high in the list for which budget is available.

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.

4.2 Feedback to applicants

Applicants are provided with feedback on the outcome of the evaluation after each stage of the application procedure 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) comments from the referees.

For those proposals rejected after failing an evaluation threshold, comments are only included for those criteria examined up to the point where the threshold was failed.

Proposals which meet the quality threshold in stage 1 are invited to proceed to stage 2. Proposals which meet the threshold in stage 2, and which are sufficiently high in the list for funding to be available, are invited to conclude an ERC grant agreement.

4.3 Redress

Appeals against the collective scientific judgement of the Panels will not be admissible. Appeals on procedural matters, matters regarding conflict of interest, or on factual errors may only be considered if they are well founded.

The ERC will indicate an official to whom PIs and/or applicant legal entities may address any questions or request for redress concerning the results of a particular peer review evaluation. Appeals should be addressed to ERC[22] within one month of receipt of the results of the evaluation, making reference to the name of the call for proposals, the proposal number (if any), the title of the proposal, and a description of the problems encountered.

For questions regarding eligibility, an eligibility review committee may be convened.

The applicant legal entities will receive a response within 2 weeks after reception of the redress request. If a definitive reply cannot be given at that stage, the reply will indicate when a full reply can be expected.

[22] 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, Rue du Bourget 1, BE-1140 Brussels, Belgium., Fax: +32-2-299.31.73 , email: rtd-erc-appeals@ec.europa.eu

5. Managing ERC grants[23]

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 hosting institution, the name of the PI, the duration and start date of the project, the maximum amount of financial contribution attributed to the project and the periodicity of submission of reports. It consists of a ERC Core Grant Agreement and its Annexes (General Conditions, Accession Form for new beneficiaries, Financial Statement Form).

The hosting institution and the PI shall conclude a Supplementary Agreement to ensure the minimum requirements for the project implementation, such as the hosting 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 Agreement[24] 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 prepares grant agreements for projects on the basis of the proposal and the recommendations of the ERC Panel (see Section 4.1.2), verifying also the legal status and financial capacity of the applicant legal entity[25].

Applicant legal entities that are offered a grant may accept or reject the grant and applicable rules and conditions as a "package".

If the conditions are accepted, the ERC 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 hosting institution)

[23] Detailed information and documentation, including the template structures and forms for financial and scientific reporting are provided in the *Guide for ERC Grant Holders*. In preparation – available soon at http://erc.europa.eu .

[24] A template with minimum requirements is provided with the ERC Core Grant Agreement.

[25] 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", to be adopted and published in mid 2007.*

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 always signs the agreement after having received the duly signed Supplementary Agreement and the signature by the PI's hosting institution.

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 revise 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 hosting 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 bring forward the reasons[26] for wishing to move to another institution. In such cases, and after a careful analysis of such request which may involve a review of the project, the PI will be entitled to request transfer of the remainder of the grant to a new hosting institution.[27]

The original hosting 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 hosting 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"*[2].

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

[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 hosting organisation 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 (for which the hosting institution is responsible).

5.4.1 Scientific Reporting

PIs are required to send a mid-term and final scientific report to the ERC. 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 panel convened by the ERC, which may also involve site visits. The panel will make recommendations as to the future course of the project.

5.4.2 Financial management reporting

The hosting 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 hosting 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 (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 shall not exceed 90% of the maximum Community financial contribution.

A final payment 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 European Research Council has provided financial support under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC grant agreement nº [xxxxxxxxx]."

For downloading the image files of the ERC logo and the European emblem, please consult http://erc.europa.eu and http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/download_en.htm .

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 hosting 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 hosting 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 a glossary and 'Frequently Asked Questions.'

As with other parts of the Seventh Framework Programme, **National Contact Points (ERC NCPs)** have been set up across Europe[29] 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. Contact details are available at http://erc.europa.eu/.

Questions related to the EPSS should be directed to the **EPSS Helpdesk** by e-mail support@epss-fp7.org or by phone +32-2-233 3760.

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 .

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

Annex 1: ERC grant application Submission Forms

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

Please note that as part of the start-up of FP7, the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS) is expected to become available at least four weeks before the call deadline. Further information will be given on the CORDIS website.

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS). The procedure is given in section 3.2.3 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 2 of this guide).

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

Please note:

- Please use English only to fill in the forms.
- 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 Hosting Institution[30]
- 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 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).*

[30] The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to the organisations of some team members, 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.

ERC GRANTS

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	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). The same acronym should appear on each page of the research proposal.
General Information on the Proposal	
Type of project	[pre-filled] Support for Frontier Research – ERC Starting Grant
Call identifier	[pre-filled] 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: *ERC-2007-StG*
Activity code	Should be: ERC Starting Grant
Proposal Title	The title should be no longer than 200 characters and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field.
Duration in months	The estimated duration of the project in full months.
ERC Review Panel	[drop-down menu] Please choose an option indicating the ERC panel(s) by which you would prefer your proposal to be evaluated. This information is mandatory for the 1st preference and optional for the 2nd and 3rd preferences.
ERC Keywords	[drop-down menu] Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal. You don't need to limit your choice of keywords to your choice of specific panel or panels. The choice of keyword 1 is mandatory; keywords 2, 3 and 4 are optional.
Free Keywords	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. There is a limit of 100 characters.
Abstract	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. There is a limit of 2000 characters.
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 2nd phone number is optional.
E-mail	Please insert your e-mail address. The 2nd 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)?	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 program, the eligibility conditions section. Wrong or missing information may cause your proposal to be ineligible.
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. 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).
Information on the Administrative Official of the Hosting 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 hosting 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 2nd phone number is optional.
E-mail	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2nd e-mail address is optional.
Section A2: Hosting 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	Not applicable to the first call.
Organisation legal name	**For Public Law Body,** it is the name under which the hosting 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 hosting institution is registered in the national Official Journal (or equivalent) or in the national company register.
Organisation short name	Choose an abbreviation of the hosting 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

This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC grant, as they are also presented in the Research proposal text.

The Hosting Institution[31] 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.

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".[32]

Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs

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 hosting institution's own accounting rules.

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 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.

Participant Number in this proposal	The **PI' Hosting Institution** of the proposal is always **number one**.
Organisation short name	The same name that as been used in form A2.
Personnel costs	Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project. Such persons must: – 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. 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. Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.

[31] Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2

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

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	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. Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled: - 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; 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. 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.
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 2: ERC Starting Grant: Proposal Template[33]

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

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times Roman	12	1.0	At least 2.0 cm

Cover page:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Name of the PI's hosting institution for the project
- Project full title
- Project short name
- Project duration
- Project summary (half page)

a) *The Principal Investigator* (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 2) 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

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

[33] *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.*

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 participation 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

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.

iv. Ethical issues

At stage 1: The Ethical Issues Table (see Annex 7) needs to be filled in and attached as Supporting Document to the Proposal.
At stage 2: The Ethical Issues Table (see Annex 7) needs to be filled in and attached as Supporting Document to the Proposal. In addition and if applicable, describe any ethically sensitive issues raised by the proposed research, and how they will be managed. For research requiring ethical or other regulatory review by competent local or national authorities, specify the name of the pertinent authority or review board.

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. Hosting institution
At stage 1 describe the hosting 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. Budget
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 (Annex 1).

iv. 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 3: ERC Starting Grant (Stage 1): Expression of Support of the Hosting Institution[34]

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

In this respect, the hosting 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"[35], 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

Name, Function, Email + Signature of legal representative

Stamp of institution

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

[35] 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 4: ERC Starting Grant (Stage 2): Commitment of the Hosting Institution[36]

When submitting a stage 2 proposal for an ERC Starting Grant, the hosting institution must reconfirm its commitment to supporting the Principal Investigator and facilitating his/her transition to independence.

In this respect, the hosting institution should submit a signed statement (on letterhead paper), as an attachment to the PI's proposal, confirming its intention to sign a Supplementary Agreement with the PI and stating the specific obligations of the hosting institution listed in the ERC's Grant Agreement (see Annex 8: Performance Obligations of the *beneficiary*, excerpt from the General Conditions of the ERC Core Grant Agreement).[37]

This statement needs to be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating his/her name, function and email address.

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

[36] A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format
[37] The ERC Grant Agreement will be available soon at http://erc.europa.eu.

Annex 5: ERC Starting Grants: Evaluation Criteria

Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation. It will be applied to the 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?

Hosting 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 score numerically 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 6: ERC Peer Review Panel Structure

For the ERC Grants, the following Panels have been established.

Social Sciences and Humanities

Panel SH1 - Individuals and organisations: economics, management, demography, geography, urban and environmental studies

SH1_1	Macroeconomics, growth, development, business cycles
SH1_2	Microeconomics, institutional economics
SH1_3	Environment, sustainability, social and industrial ecology
SH1_4	Econometrics, statistical methods
SH1_5	Financial markets, banking and corporate finance
SH1_6	Innovation, competitiveness, research and development
SH1_7	Consumer behaviour, marketing
SH1_8	Organization studies, strategy
SH1_9	Human resource management, employment and earnings
SH1_10	Public administration, public economics
SH1_11	Income distribution, poverty
SH1_12	International trade, economic geography
SH1_13	Human and social geography, spatial and regional planning
SH1_14	Population dynamics, health and population
SH1_15	Urbanization, urban planning, transport studies

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

SH2_1	Social structure, inequalities, mobility
SH2_2	Communication networks, media studies, information society
SH2_3	Ageing, work, social policies
SH2_4	Globalization, migration, interethnic relations
SH2_5	Identity, community, nation, religion
SH2_6	Legal systems, human rights, constitutions
SH2_7	Kinship, cultural dimensions of classification and cognition
SH2_8	Myth, ritual, symbolic representations
SH2_9	Ethnography
SH2_10	Political systems, legitimacy, political support
SH2_11	Global and transnational governance, civic participation
SH2_12	Transformation of societies, democratization, social movements
SH2_13	Scientific knowledge production, politics of knowledge
SH2_14	Technosciences and societies, mutual engagement
SH2_15	History of science and technology

Panel SH3 - The human mind and its complexity: cognition, linguistics, psychology, philosophy and education

SH3_1	Evolution of mind and cognitive functions
SH3_2	Formal, cognitive and functional linguistics
SH3_3	Neuro-, psycho-, sociolinguistics
SH3_4	Linguistic typology, comparative and historical linguistics
SH3_5	Human life-span development

SH3_6	Neuro and cognitive psychology
SH3_7	Clinical and experimental psychology
SH3_8	Education
SH3_9	Philosophy
SH3_10	Epistemology, logic
SH3_11	Ethics and morality

Panel SH4 - Cultures and cultural diversity: literature, visual and performing arts, music and cultural studies

SH4_1	Classics, classical literature, classical art
SH4_2	Literature, literary theory, analysis and criticism
SH4_3	Comparative literature
SH4_4	Textual philology and textual criticism
SH4_5	Visual arts
SH4_6	Performing arts
SH4_7	Museums and exhibitions
SH4_8	Music and musicology
SH4_9	Cultural studies, cultural diversity
SH4_10	Ethnic and postcolonial studies
SH4_11	Cultural heritage

Panel SH5 - The study of the past and of cultural artefacts: memory, history and archaeology

SH5_1	Modern and contemporary history
SH5_2	Ancient history, ancient cultures
SH5_3	Medieval history
SH5_4	National, transregional and transnational history
SH5_5	Entangled histories, global history
SH5_6	Social, economic, cultural, political history
SH5_7	Historiography
SH5_8	Archaeology, prehistory, protohistory
SH5_9	Collective memories and identities, lieux de memoire
SH5_10	History of art and architecture
SH5_11	History of ideas, intellectual history

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

Panel PE1 - Mathematical foundations: all areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical aspects of theoretical computer science, and mathematical physics

PE1_1	Foundations of mathematics and logic
PE1_2	Algorithms
PE1_3	Number theory
PE1_4	Combinatorial analysis
PE1_5	Algebra
PE1_6	Geometry
PE1_7	Topology

PE1_8	Analysis
PE1_9	Computational mathematics
PE1_10	Theoretical computer science
PE1_11	Numerical analysis
PE1_12	Probability and statistics
PE1_13	Applied mathematics
PE1_14	Operations research
PE1_15	Mathematical physics
PE1_16	Other areas of mathematics

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

PE2_1	High energy physics
PE2_2	Fundamental interactions and particles
PE2_3	Particle physics
PE2_4	Nuclear physics
PE2_5	Gas and plasma physics
PE2_6	Atomic, molecular physics
PE2_7	Optics and quantum optics
PE2_8	Relativity
PE2_9	Classical physics
PE2_10	Thermodynamics
PE2_11	Non-linear physics
PE2_12	General physics
PE2_13	Metrology

Panel PE3 - Condensed matter in physics and chemistry: condensed matter (structure, electronic properties, fluids,…), statistical physics, nanosciences, reactions

PE3_1	Biophysics
PE3_2	Condensed matter and solid state physics
PE3_3	Statistical physics
PE3_4	Phase transitions
PE3_5	Structural properties of materials
PE3_6	Electronic properties of materials and transport
PE3_7	Magnetism
PE3_8	Superconductivity
PE3_9	Semiconductors
PE3_10	Material sciences (physics related)
PE3_11	Nanosciences and nanotechnology (physics related)
PE3_12	Reaction mechanisms
PE3_13	Chemical reactions
PE3_14	Reaction dynamics
PE3_15	Theoretical and computational chemistry of condensed matter
PE3_16	Chemical physics, physical chemistry of condensed matter
PE3_17	Nanochemistry

Panel PE4 - Material and chemical sciences: material sciences, molecular architecture, chemical theory, analysis and synthesis (organic and inorganic), physical and environmental chemistry, method development

PE4_1	Physical chemistry of molecules
PE4_2	Environment chemistry

PE4_3	Homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis
PE4_4	Spectroscopic and spectrometric techniques
PE4_5	Molecular architecture
PE4_6	Molecular chemistry
PE4_7	Analytical chemistry
PE4_8	Organic chemistry
PE4_9	Inorganic chemistry
PE4_10	Instrumental techniques
PE4_11	Macromolecular chemistry, polymer chemistry
PE4_12	Solid state chemistry
PE4_13	Synthesis (organic and inorganic)
PE4_14	Material science (chemistry related)
PE4_15	Surface science
PE4_16	Colloid chemistry
PE4_17	Combinatorial chemistry
PE4_18	Theoretical and computational chemistry of molecules
PE4_19	Method development
PE4_20	Supramolecular chemistry
PE4_21	Chemistry of biological systems (biological chemistry)

Panel PE5 - Information and communication: informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, communication technology, intelligent systems

PE5_1	Computer architecture
PE5_2	Database management
PE5_3	Formal methods
PE5_4	Graphics
PE5_5	Human computer interaction and interface
PE5_6	Informatics and information systems
PE5_7	Theoretical computer science
PE5_8	Intelligent systems
PE5_9	Scientific Computing
PE5_10	Modelling tools
PE5_11	Multimedia
PE5_12	Networks
PE5_13	Parallel and Distributed Computing
PE5_14	Robotics
PE5_15	Signals, Speech and Image Processing
PE5_16	Systems and software

Panel PE6 - Engineering sciences: electronics, product design, process design and control, construction methods, fluid and solid mechanics, energy systems, bio-engineering

PE6_1	Aerospace engineering
PE6_2	Biomedical engineering and technology
PE6_3	Chemical engineering
PE6_4	Civil engineering
PE6_5	Control engineering
PE6_6	Electrical and electronic engineering
PE6_7	Computational engineering
PE6_8	Fluid dynamics
PE6_9	Energy systems
PE6_10	Maritime engineering
PE6_11	Microengineering

PE6_12	Mechanical engineering
PE6_13	Materials Engineering
PE6_14	Nuclear engineering
PE6_15	Process engineering
PE6_16	Product design
PE6_17	Simulation engineering and modelling
PE6_18	Systems engineering

Panel PE7 - Universe science: astro-physics/chemistry/biology/geology; solar system; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy, cosmology; space science, instrumentation

PE7_1	Solar and interplanetary physics
PE7_2	Planetary systems sciences
PE7_3	Interstellar medium
PE7_4	Formation of stars and planets
PE7_5	Astrobiology
PE7_6	Stars and stellar systems
PE7_7	The Galaxy
PE7_8	Formation and evolution of galaxies
PE7_9	Clusters of galaxies and large scale structures
PE7_10	High energy and particles astronomy – X-rays, cosmic rays, gamma rays, neutrinos
PE7_11	Relativistic Astrophysics
PE7_12	Dark matter, dark energy
PE7_13	Gravitational astronomy
PE7_14	Cosmology
PE7_15	Space Sciences
PE7_16	Very large data bases: archiving, handling and analysis
PE7_17	Instrumentation - telescopes, detectors and techniques

Panel PE8 - Earth system science: physical geography, geology, geophysics, meteorology, oceanography, climatology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, solar planets, natural resources management

PE8_1	Atmospheric chemistry and aeronomy
PE8_2	Meteorology and atmospheric sciences
PE8_3	Climatology (incl. paleo-climatology), climate modeling
PE8_4	Ecology, environmental chemistry, water, air and soil pollution
PE8_5	Geography, geology, geochemistry
PE8_6	Global environmental change
PE8_7	Geophysics, seismology, volcanology
PE8_8	Oceanography/marine sciences (physical, chemical, biological),
PE8_9	Biogeochemistry
PE8_10	Geophysics, geochemistry, mineralogy
PE8_11	Solar planetology
PE8_12	Petrology, sedimentology
PE8_13	Physical geography
PE8_14	Earth observations from space / remote sensing
PE8_15	Geomagnetism, paleomagnetism
PE8_16	Ozone and atmospheric composition
PE8_17	Soil science, tectonics
PE8_18	Waste disposal, water science

Life Sciences

Panel LS1 - Molecular, cellular and developmental biology: molecular biology, biochemistry, biophysics, structural biology, cell biology, cell physiology, signal transduction and pattern formation in plants and animals

LS1_1	Molecular biology and interactions
LS1_2	General biochemistry and metabolism
LS1_3	Nucleic acid biosynthesis, modification and degradation
LS1_4	RNA processing and modification
LS1_5	Protein synthesis, modification and turnover
LS1_6	Biophysics
LS1_7	Structural biology (crystallography, NMR, EM)
LS1_8	Morphology and functional imaging of cells
LS1_9	Cell biology and molecular transport mechanisms
LS1_10	Cell cycle and division
LS1_11	Apoptosis
LS1_12	Cell differentiation, physiology and dynamics
LS1_13	Organelle biology
LS1_14	Cell signalling and cellular interactions
LS1_15	Signal transduction
LS1_16	Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology

Panel LS2 - Genetics, genomics, bioinformatics and systems biology: molecular and cell genetics, genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, bioinformatics, computational biology, biostatistics, biological modelling and simulation, systems biology

LS2_1	Molecular genetics
LS2_2	Epigenetics and gene regulation
LS2_3	Quantitative genetics
LS2_4	Cell genetics
LS2_5	Comparative genetics
LS2_6	Human genetics
LS2_7	Reverse genetics and RNAi
LS2_8	Genomics, comparative genomics, functional genomics
LS2_9	Proteomics
LS2_10	Transcriptomics
LS2_11	Metabolomics
LS2_12	Glycomics
LS2_13	Bioinformatics
LS2_14	Computational biology
LS2_15	Biostatistics
LS2_16	Systems biology
LS2_17	Biological systems analysis, modelling and simulation

Panel LS3 - Organismic physiology, including infection and immunity: organogenesis, organ physiology, endocrinology, ageing, regeneration, metabolism, immunobiology, microbiology, virology, parasitology, toxicology

LS3_1	Organ physiology
LS3_2	Comparative physiology
LS3_3	Endocrinology
LS3_4	Ageing
LS3_5	Metabolism, biological basis of metabolism related disorders
LS3_6	Toxicology
LS3_7	Parasite biology
LS3_8	Microbiology, microbial genetics
LS3_9	Virology, viral genetics
LS3_10	Innate immunity
LS3_11	Adaptive immunity
LS3_12	Phagocytosis and cellular immunity
LS3_13	Immunosignalling
LS3_14	Immunological memory and tolerance
LS3_15	Immunogenetics
LS3_16	Biological basis of immunity related disorders

Panel LS4 -Neurosciences: neurobiology, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, neuropharmacology, neuroimaging, systems neuroscience, psychiatry

LS4_1	Neurobiology
LS4_2	Neuroanatomy
LS4_3	Neurophysiology
LS4_4	Neurochemistry and neuropharmacology
LS4_5	Systems neuroscience
LS4_6	Cognition
LS4_7	Behaviour
LS4_8	Brain and neuroimaging
LS4_9	Biological basis of neural and psychiatric disorders

Panel LS5 - Evolutionary, population and environmental biology: evolution, ecology, animal behaviour, population biology, biodiversity, biogeography, marine biology, ecotoxicology

LS5_1	Evolutionary biology, biological adaptation
LS5_2	Molecular evolution
LS5_3	Evolution and development
LS5_4	Population biology, population dynamics, population genetics
LS5_5	Ecology, environmental and conservation biology, biodiversity, ecotoxicology, marine biology, radiation biology
LS5_6	Environment and health risks including radiation biology, environmental medicine and toxicology

Panel LS6 - Medical and health science research: aetiology, diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health, epidemiology, pharmacology, regenerative medicine, veterinary medicine, medical ethics

LS6_1	Biological basis of non-communicable diseases, except for neural/psychiatric, immunity-related and metabolism-related disorders. E.g. cancer and cardiovascular diseases

LS6_2	Diagnostics
LS6_3	Therapies: drug therapies, gene therapy, surgery
LS6_4	Stem cell biology, regenerative medicine
LS6_5	Public health and epidemiology
LS6_6	Pharmacology and pharmacogenomics
LS6_7	Health services, health care research
LS6_8	Veterinary medicine
LS6_9	Ethics in medical and health sciences

Panel LS7 - Applied life sciences, biotechnology and bioengineering: agricultural, animal, fishery, forestry and food sciences; biotechnology, chemical biology, genetic engineering, synthetic biology, industrial biosciences; environmental biotechnology and remediation; bioethics

LS7_1	Genetic engineering, transgenic organisms, recombinant proteins, biosensors
LS7_2	Synthetic biology and new bio-engineering concepts
LS7_3	Chemical biology
LS7_4	Agriculture and food: animal husbandry, dairying, livestock raising, crop production, soil biology and cultivation, applied plant biology
LS7_5	Aquaculture, fisheries
LS7_6	Forestry, biomass production
LS7_7	Environmental biotechnology: bioremediation; biodegradation
LS7_8	Industrial biotechnology: bioreactors, industrial microbiology
LS7_9	Drug discovery, drug design
LS7_10	Biofuels, biomimetics
LS7_11	Biohazards, biological containment, biosafety, biosecurity
LS7_12	Ethics in life sciences (other than medical and health sciences)

Annex 7: Ethical Review

Introduction

The ERC 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.

Description of Ethical Issues in the Proposal

Ethical issues that may arise in a research project should be described in a proposal. In particular, the benefit and burden of such research and the effects it may have should be referred to.

Especially, the following ethical issues should be 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 identify 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.

Ethical issues table

ERC Grant proposals need to include the Ethical issues table below.

If "YES" is indicated on any issue, the pages in the proposal should be specified where t-his 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.

A web site is being prepared aiming to provide clear, helpful information on ethical issues.

ETHICAL ISSUES TABLE

	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)		
• Benefit to local community (capacity building ie access to healthcare, education etc)		
Dual Use		
• Research having potential military / terrorist application		
I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

Annex 8: Specific performance obligations of the *beneficiary* (i.e. the PI's Hosting institution)

Excerpt from the General Conditions (Annex 2) of the ERC Core Grant Agreement:

II.2 Specific performance obligations of the *beneficiary*

The *beneficiary* shall:

a) ensure that the work as specified in Annex I is carried out.

b) ensure that the work is performed under the scientific guidance of the *principal investigator.*

c) carry out the work to be performed, as identified in Annex I taking into consideration the specific role of the *principal investigator*. However, where it is necessary for the implementation of the *project* it may call upon third parties to carry out certain elements, according to the conditions established in Article II.7 or any special clause in Article 7. The *beneficiary* may use resources that are made available by third parties in order to carry out the work.

d) enter into a *supplementary agreement* with the *principal investigator,* which shall stipulate the applicable law to this *supplementary agreeme*nt and the country in which disputes arising from this *supplementary agreement* shall be settled. It shall further specify that the *beneficiary* 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,

      c. the advice on internal *beneficiary* 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, 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;

   iv) guarantee adequate contractual conditions to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:

      a. the provisions for annual, sickness and parental leaves,

b. the occupational health and safety standards,

c. the general social security scheme, such as pension rights.

v) ensure the necessary scientific autonomy to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:

a. the selection of other *team members,* hosted and engaged by the *beneficiary* or other legal entities, in line with profiles needed to conduct the research, including the appropriate advertisement;

b. 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* on any circumstances affecting the implementation of the *project* or leading potentially to a suspension or termination of the *grant agreement*;

vii) subject to the observance of applicable national law and to the agreement of the *Commission*, transfer the grant agreement as well as any pre-financing of the grant not covered by an accepted cost claim to a new *beneficiary*, should the *principal investigator* request to transfer the entire *project or part of it* to this new *beneficiary.*. The *beneficiary* shall submit a substantiated request for amendment or notify the *Commission* in case of its objection to the transfer.

e) ensure that any agreement or contract related to the project, entered into between the *beneficiary* and any third party contain provisions that this third party, including the auditor providing the certificate on the financial statements or on the methodology, shall have no rights vis-à-vis the *Commission* under this *grant agreement*;

f) ensure that the rights of the *Commission* and the Court of Auditors to carry out audits are extended to the right to carry out any such audit or control on any third party whose costs are reimbursed in full or in part by the *Community financial contribution*, on the same terms and conditions as those indicated in this *grant agreement*.

g) ensure that the conditions applicable to it under Articles II.4.5., II.10, II.11, II.12, II.13, II.14 and II.22 are also applicable to any third party whose costs are claimed under the *project* according to the provisions of this *grant agreement*;

h) inform the *Commission* in due time of

a - the name(s) and contact details of the main contact person(s) who shall provide administrative support to its work, as well as any change to that information;

b - any event which might affect the implementation of the *project* and the rights of the *Community;*

c - any change in its legal name, address and of its legal representatives, and any change with regards to its legal, financial, organisational or technical situation including change of control and, in particular, any change of status as regards non-profit public bodies, secondary and higher education establishments, research organisations and SMEs;

d -any circumstance affecting the conditions of participation referred to in the *Rules for Participation*[1], the *Financial Regulation*[2] and its *Implementing Rules*[3] or of any requirements of the *grant agreement*; especially if and when any eligibility criteria cease(s) to be met during the duration of the *project*.

i) provide the *Commission* including the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Court of Auditors directly with information requested in the framework of controls and audits;

j) take all necessary steps to avoid commitments that are incompatible with the obligations provided for in this *grant agreement* and inform the *Commission* of any unavoidable obligations which may arise during the duration of the *grant agreement* which may have implications for any of its obligations under the *grant agreement;*

k) ensure that it complies with the provisions of the State aid framework;

l) carry out the *project* in accordance with fundamental ethical principles;

m) endeavour in consultation with the *principal investigator* to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the *project;*

n) have regard to the general principles of the *Commission* Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, in particular concerning the working conditions, transparency of recruitment processes, and career development of the researchers recruited for the *project*.

o) take every necessary precaution to avoid any risk of conflict of interest relating to economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other interests liable to influence the impartial and objective performance of the *project*.

[1] European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 of 18 December 2006 OJ L391, 30.12.2006, p.1

[2] Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1 as last amended by Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) N° 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p. 1) and subsequent modifications

[3] Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 OJ L357, 31.12.2002, p.1, as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1248/2006 (OJ L 227, 19.8.2006, p. 3) and subsequent modifications.