

**Call Title: Call for proposals for ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant**

**Call identifier:** ERC-2011-StG

**Date of publication:** 20 July 2010.

**Electronic proposal submission deadlines<sup>1</sup> (single submission of full proposal):<sup>2</sup>**

**Panels PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering):** 14 October 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Panels LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences):** 9 November 2010 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Panels SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities):** 24 November 2010 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

**Indicative budget:** EUR 661.4m from 2011 budget<sup>3</sup>

The ERC Scientific Council has established the following indicative percentage budgets for each of the 3 main research domains:

Physical Sciences & Engineering: 40%

Life Sciences: 35%

Social Sciences & Humanities: 15%

In addition a "**fourth domain**" with an indicative budget of 10% has been established to fund research projects of a cross-panel and/or cross-domain nature.

The Union financial contribution shall be in the form of a grant to the budget corresponding to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and a reimbursement of a flat-rate of 20% of the total eligible direct costs<sup>4</sup>towards indirect costs.. Indicative budgets may permit a variation of the budget for each domain by a maximum of 10% of the total budget for the call; however the budget proportions allocated to projects in the three main research domains will be no lower than the percentages indicated. In addition, the final budget awarded per ERC call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call if additional appropriations become available.

**Activity:** European Research Council Starting Grant

**Minimum number of participants:** At least 1 independent legal entity established in one of the Member States, or one of the associated countries (in the case of the participation of more than one legal entity the participants are not obliged to establish a consortium agreement)

**Eligibility criteria:** see eligibility criteria in the work programme. Normally, the Principal Investigator must have been awarded their first PhD **at least 2 and up to 12 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant.** However,

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<sup>1</sup> The Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months

<sup>2</sup> Please consult Annex 1 to the Ideas Work Programme for the panel description

<sup>3</sup> Under the condition that the draft budget for 2011 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority.

<sup>4</sup> Excluding the direct costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the host institution.

Principal Investigators who were awarded their first PhD more than 12 years prior to the publication date of the call may still be eligible in certain properly documented circumstances such as maternity.

**Grant Portability:** applicants should be aware of the portability features of ERC grants as described in the ERC model grant agreement.

**Grant starting date:** due to the ground-breaking nature of frontier research projects, it is expected that all projects start within 6 months from the award of the grant. ERC reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

**Evaluation procedure (see also section 3 of the work programme):**

The evaluation will take place **in two steps** following the **single submission of a full proposal**.

The evaluation is carried out through evaluation panels<sup>5</sup> that may be assisted by referees.

Proposals may be evaluated remotely.

The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. Proposals may be allocated to a different panel with the agreement of both panel chairs concerned.

An indicative budget will be allocated to each panel, in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals. This indicative budget is calculated as the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the panel<sup>6</sup> divided by the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the domain of the call, multiplied by the total indicative budget of the domain.

Following the same rationale and in order to assure comparable success rate for the "starters" and the "consolidators", the indicative budget of each panel will be further divided in proportion to the budgetary demand of the proposals submitted in these two categories ("starters" and "consolidators").

**Step 1:** Following the submission of the proposal, Section 1 of the proposal (see section 3.5) will be assessed and marked.

Cross-panel or cross domain proposals will be identified as such, and the panel may request additional reviews by experts.

Each panel will determine its budgetary cut-off level as a multiple of its indicative budget. The budgetary cut-off level may be set by each panel anywhere up to 3 times the panel's indicative budget.

The Principal Investigators will be assessed by the evaluation panels as either "starters" or "consolidators". The allocation of the proposals to the two streams will be based on the number of years since the award of their PhD. "Starters" being normally those awarded their PhD from 2 up to 7 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication, and "consolidators" being normally those awarded their PhD over 7 and up to 12 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication. However, the final

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<sup>5</sup> Panel members will be compensated on the evaluation tasks they perform. Additional reimbursement of travel and subsistence will be made for assignments involving travel. Referees who may assist the evaluation panels will not be compensated.

<sup>6</sup> Proposals containing grant requests above the maximum limit will be treated as at the limit for the purpose of calculating these indicative budgets.

streaming decision will also take into account the specific stage of their research career at the time of the application based on the information and supporting documents provided.

At the end of step 1, the panel will rank the proposals according to their marks. Proposals will be retained for Step 2 based on the ranked list and the determined budgetary cut-off level.

**Step 2:** The complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed and marked. The panel will agree on a ranked list.

Principal Investigators whose proposals will be retained for the second step of the evaluation may be invited for an interview to present their project to the evaluation panel meeting in Brussels. They will be accordingly reimbursed for their travel and subsistence expenses<sup>7</sup>.

Following the conclusion of the panel evaluations the following additional steps will be taken with the appropriate participation of the panel chairs:

**Step 2a:** Acting in concert across the three main domains, all the panel chairs or their deputies will specifically discuss, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the scientific added value of proposals which have been identified as being of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature. In order to establish the ranked list of the "**Fourth**" domain, all panel chairs will further assess these proposals on the basis of the second evaluation criterion (Research project).

**Step 2b:** In accordance with the panel evaluations a consolidated ranked list for proposals which are above the quality threshold will be prepared for each research domain. These proposals can be funded in order of priority from the respective domain budgets.

Any funds still available in any of the four domains, after exhausting the list of proposals over the quality threshold, will be distributed to the other domains according to the initial call budget breakdown.

Finally, a number of proposals (over the quality threshold) in the three main domain lists may also be kept in reserve to allow for eventualities such as the failure of the granting procedure to projects, the withdrawal of proposals, budget savings agreed during the granting procedure, or the availability of additional budget from other sources. Additional funds will also be distributed according to the initial call budget breakdown.

In addition the results of evaluations may be shared with relevant national agencies who may under certain conditions wish to fund specific ERC applicants themselves.

**Evaluation criteria:** See section 3 of the work programme for the applicable criteria.

Information on the modalities of the call and guidance to applicants on how to submit projects is available on:

<http://erc.europa.eu>

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal>

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<sup>7</sup> In duly justified and exceptional cases, the ERCEA may agree, subject to technical feasibility, on other ways of interviewing successful Principal Investigators such as video link, teleconference or similar means, and on the reimbursement of their possible related travel and subsistence expenses. Relevant provisions for the reimbursement of expenses incurred in relation to Principal Investigators' interviews are included in the ERC Rules for submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures for indirect actions under the Ideas Specific Programme of the 7th Framework Programme.