

# The European Research Council

ERC and some novelties in the  
Work Programme 2024

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Head of the Scientific Department  
European Research Council Executive Agency  
National Info Day Italy, 19 June 2023



**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

# ERC is part of Horizon Europe

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**EUR 16 billion**  
ERC budget in Horizon Europe



**17%**  
of the entire  
Horizon Europe budget

# ERC mission

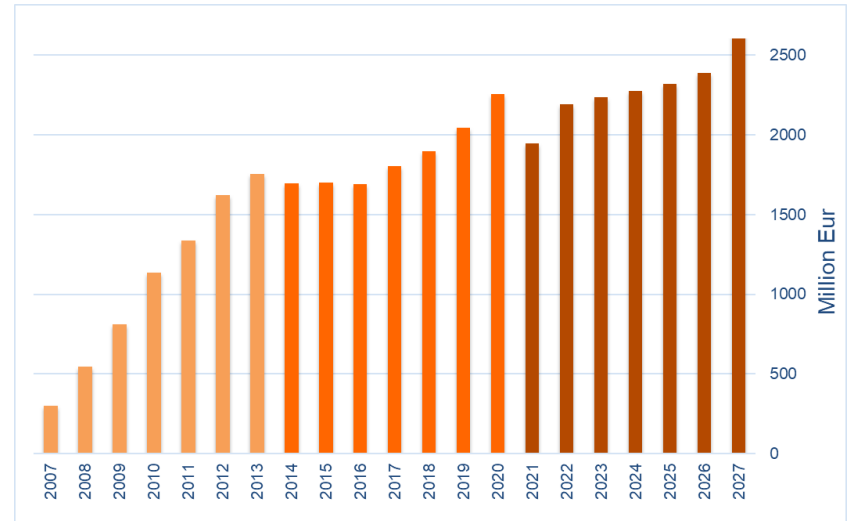
Established by the EU in 2007 “to reinforce excellence, dynamism and creativity in European research”, ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition.

## Budget

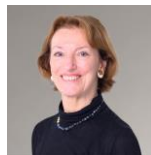
- € 16 billion (2021-2027) – 2.3 billion €/year
- € 13 billion (2014-2020) - 1.9 billion €/year
- € 7.5 billion (2007-2013) - 1.1 billion €/year

## Scientific freedom

- Scientific excellence as the sole criterion
- Support to the individual scientist – *no consortia!*
- No predetermined subjects – “bottom-up”
- Support for frontier research in all fields of science and humanities
- International peer-review



# ERC Scientific Council



Maria LEPTIN  
(Biology)  
ERC President



Eveline CRONE  
(Psychology)  
Vice-President



Eystein JANSEN  
(Earth Science)  
Vice-President



Jesper SVEJSTRUP  
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(History)



Gerd GIGERENZER  
(Psychology)



Tom HENZINGER  
(Computer Science)



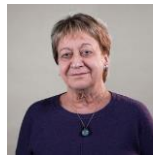
Liselotte HØJGAARD  
(Medicine)



Dirk INZÉ  
(Plant Biology)



László LOVÁSZ  
(Mathematics)



Chryssa KOUVELIOTOU  
(High-Energy Astrophysics)



Sylvie LORENTE  
(Mechanical Engineering)



Luke O'NEILL  
(Biochemistry & Immunology)



Björn OTTERSTEN  
(Electrical Engineering)



Giovanni SARTOR  
(Law)



Nicola SPALDIN  
(Materials Theory)



Alice VALKÁROVÁ  
(Physics)



Milena ŽIC FUCHS  
(Linguistics)



# ERC structure

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## The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure - ERC Executive Agency

- Executes annual work programme as established by the Scientific Council
- Implements calls for proposals and provides information and support to applicants
- Organises peer review evaluation
- Establishes and manages grant agreements
- Administers scientific and financial aspects and follow-up of grant agreements
- Carries out communications activities and ensures information dissemination to ERC stakeholders



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# ERC grant schemes

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## Starting Grants

starters (2-7 years after PhD) up to € 1.5 Mio  
for 5 years



## Consolidator Grants

Consolidators (7-12 years after PhD) up to € 2 Mio  
for 5 years



## Advanced Grants

track-record of significant research achievements in the  
last 10 years up to € 2.5 Mio  
for 5 years



## Synergy Grants

2 – 4 Principal Investigators up to € 10.0 Mio for 6  
years  
1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated  
Countries



## Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation  
lump sum €150,000 for ERC grant holders

# Why to apply for ERC grant?

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ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility to:

- work on a research topic of own choice
- gain financial autonomy for five years
- negotiate the best conditions of work with the host institution
- attract excellent team members and collaborators from anywhere in the world
- move with the grant to any place in Europe if desired (“portability of grants”)
- win additional funding

# Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

## Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground breaking nature
- Scientific impact
- Scientific Approach

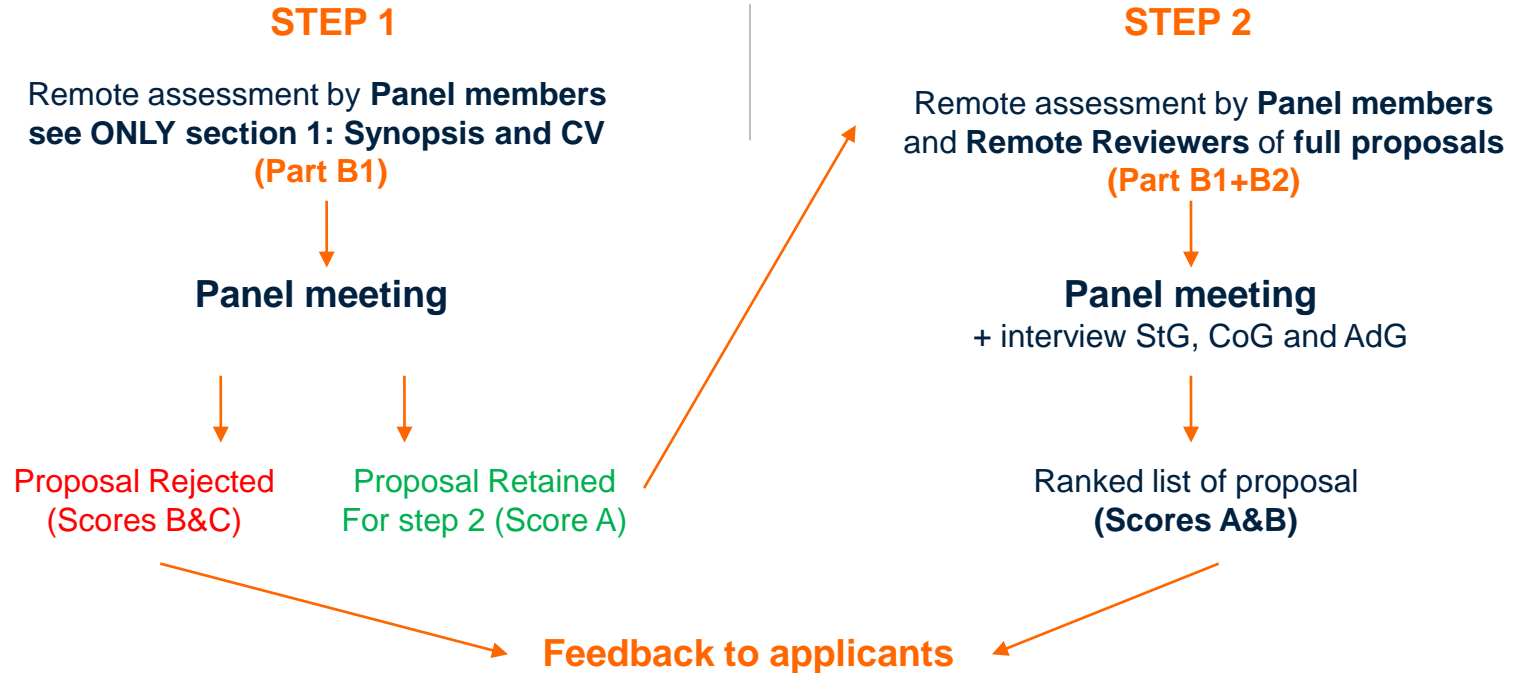
## Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment



# Evaluation: process

For individuals calls: a single submission but a two-step evaluation



# Evaluation panel structure (2024)

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## Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

## Physical Sciences & Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

## Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts (new in WP 2024)



# ERC in figures



Over **13,000**  
top researchers funded since  
the ERC creation in 2007



Over **220,000**  
articles from ERC projects published  
in scientific journals



Over **90,000**  
researchers and other professionals  
employed in ERC research teams



Over **900** research institutions hosting  
ERC grantees – universities, public or  
private research centres in the EU or  
Associated Countries



Over **2,400**  
patents and other IPR applications  
generated by ERC funding



**89**  
nationalities of  
grant holders



Over **400**  
start-ups identified as founded  
or co-founded by ERC grantees



**12** Nobel Prizes, **6** Fields Medals, **11** Wolf Prizes  
and other prizes awarded to ERC grantees



# Italian participation in ERC: some facts and figures

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Italy hosts **770 ERC** grants, total grant value of over **1.3 billion euro**

**84 institutions** based in Italy host ERC main grants. Top HI: Bocconi (52 main grants), University of Padua (51), Sapienza University Rome (43), University of Bologna (41), University of Milan (41), Polytechnic University of Milan (37).

**Italian nationals (1,268)** are the third most numerous ERC grantees of all EU nationalities, after German and French nationals.

**ERC grants produced 'brain gain' rather than 'brain drain' in Italy:** of the 770 grantees based in Italy, 20% (i.e. 153) were resident abroad at the time of application and moved to Italy with the ERC grant (104 Italian nationals and 49 foreign nationals). Only 65 researchers resident in Italy at the time of application, work now outside Italy with their ERC grants (42 Italians and 23 foreign nationals).

# Novelties in the ERC Work Programme 2024 (I)

## Research assessment

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### Focus on the research project



- ERC panels will primarily evaluate the ground-breaking nature, ambition, and feasibility of the project.
- They will also evaluate the intellectual capacity, creativity, and commitment of the applicant, with a focus on the extent to which she/he has the excellence and required scientific expertise to successfully execute the proposed project.

### Broad assessment of the applicant



- Curriculum Vitae and Track Record: one document, structured
- Up to 10 research outputs that demonstrate how the applicant has advanced knowledge
- Selected examples of significant peer recognition
- Noteworthy contributions to the research community, career breaks or unusual career paths. These will not in themselves be evaluated but are important to provide context.

# Novelties in the ERC Work Programme 2024 (II)

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## Evaluation procedure



- At most 44 proposals to step 2
- Proposals scored A at step 1 but not taken to interview may be re-submitted the following year.

## Lump-sum funding for Advanced grants



- 2024 Advanced grants: awarded as a **single lump sum**
- Final payment will be based on the work carried out and reported, irrespective of the “successful” outcome of the project activities.
- Additional funding (equipment, access to research facilities) remains available and will be made part of the lump sum.
- Portability of grant maintained.

# Calendar WP 2024 (tbc)

|                                 | Starting Grant | Consolidator Grant | Advanced Grant | Synergy Grant | Proof of Concept Grant   |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Call opens                      | 11/07/2023     | 12/09/2023         | 29/05/2024     | 12/07/2023    | 16/11/2023               |
| Deadline to submit applications | 24/10/2023     | 12/12/2023         | 29/08/2024     | 08/11/2023    | 14/03/2024<br>17/09/2024 |
| Budget                          | €601m          | €584m              | €578m          | €400m         | €30m                     |



# Where can you find more information?

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## Videos - ERC Classes

- What to consider before applying
- How to fill in the application
- The interview
- How the evaluation works.

[Click here to watch!](#)

On WP 2024 see:  
[Evaluation of ERC grant proposals: what to expect in 2024 | ERC \(europa.eu\)](#)



# Thank You!

More information: [erc.europa.eu](https://erc.europa.eu)



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