ERC Work Programme 2014

(with indicative budget for 2015)



European Research Council

Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

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Who should read this document?

This document is the work programme for the implementation of the actions under Part I "Excellent science" which relate to the specific objective "Strengthening Europe's science base in frontier research" of the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014 – 2020. It is established by the Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) and subsequently adopted by the European Commission. As such it is the financing decision which specifies the activities which will be undertaken to implement the ERC's budget for 2014.

Principal Investigators who wish to apply to one of the ERC's calls will need to apply through the Participants Portal. This contains a full range of guidance for applying to each ERC call as well as details of your National Contact Point who can provide information and personalised support in your native language at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home

Potential applicants, and those interested in more information on the ERC in general can find out more about the ERC including the background to the ERC's mission and organisation, a description of the main funding schemes, a step by step guide to applying to the ERC and details of funded projects here:

http://erc.europa.eu/

Summary of main features in 2014

Three ERC frontier research grants will be available under Work Programme 2014: Starting; Consolidator; and Advanced Grants.

The two streams of what was previously known as the ERC Starting Grant were divided into two separate calls under Work Programme 2013.

The Scientific Council will analyse the pilot phase of the ERC Synergy Grant (calls were made under Work Programmes 2012 and 2013) before deciding on the scope and timing of future calls. There will be no call under Work Programme 2014.

Important extensions to the restrictions on applications will apply from the 2015 calls based on the outcome of the evaluation of the 2014 calls – see restrictions on submission of proposals under "Eligibility criteria" below.

ERC Principal Investigators will also continue to be able to apply for the Proof of Concept Grant, first introduced under the revised Work Programme 2011.

Indicative summary of main calls from the 2014 budget[1]

	Starting Grant	*Consolidator Grant*	*Advanced Grant*	*Proof of Concept Grant*
Call identifier	ERC-2014-StG	ERC-2014-CoG	ERC-2014-AdG	ERC-2014-PoC
Publication date	11 December 2013	11 December 2013	17 June 2014	11 December 2013
Deadline(s)	25 March 2014	20 May 2014	21 October 2014	1 April 2014 1 October 2014
Budget million EUR *(estimated number of grants)*	485 (370)	713 (400)	450 (200)	15 (100)
Planned dates to inform applicants	21 July 2014 21 November 2014	31 October 2014 15 January 2015	10 March 2015 28 April 2015	31 July 2014 13 January 2015

[1]The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication. The Director-General responsible may delay the envisaged deadline by up to two months. Subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the budget for 2014 by the budgetary authority or if the budget is not adopted as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

Indicative date for signature of grant agreements	21 March 2015	15 May 2015	28 August 2015	31 November 2014 13 May 2015

Indicative summary of main calls from the 2015 budget[2]

	Starting Grant	***Consolidator Grant***	***Advanced Grant***	***Proof of Concept Grant***
Call identifier	ERC-2015-StG	ERC-2015-CoG	ERC-2015-AdG	ERC-2015-PoC
Expected deadline(s)	3 February 2015	12 March 2015	2 June 2015	23 April 2015 1 October 2015
Budget million EUR *(estimated number of grants)*	411 (315)	603 (340)	640 (285)	15 (100)

[2] This summary is provided purely for planning purposes. The budget amounts are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2015. Depending on the Scientific Council's analysis of the pilot phase of the ERC Synergy Grant (calls were made under Work Programmes 2012 and 2013), there may be a Synergy Grant call in 2015.

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Objectives and principles of ERC funding

The fundamental activity of the ERC is to provide attractive, long-term funding to support excellent investigators and their research teams to pursue ground-breaking, high-gain/ high-risk research.

Research funded by the ERC is expected to lead to advances at the frontiers of knowledge and to set a clear and inspirational target for frontier research across Europe.

Scientific excellence is the sole criterion on the basis of which ERC frontier research grants are awarded

The evaluation of ERC grant applications is conducted by peer review panels composed of renowned scientists and scholars selected by the ERC Scientific Council. The panels may be assisted by remote referees.

The ERC's peer review evaluation process has been carefully designed to identify scientific excellence irrespective of the gender, age, nationality or institution of the Principal Investigator and other potential biases, and to take career breaks as well as unconventional research career paths into account. The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

Applications can be made in any field of research

The ERC's frontier research grants operate on a 'bottom-up' basis without predetermined priorities.

The ERC puts particular emphasis on the frontiers of science, scholarship and engineering. In particular, it encourages proposals of an interdisciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research or proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions.

Independent researchers of any age and career stage can apply for attractive long-term funding

The ERC awards funding to excellent investigators looking to set up or consolidate their own independent research team or programme, as well as already established research leaders.

The ERC awards generous, long-term funding for a period of up to five years for the Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants. The Scientific Council will review funding conditions regularly to make sure that grants remain attractive both at European and international level.

The maximum grant varies by grant type. An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution towards indirect costs.

ERC grants are portable[3] as described in the ERC Model Grant Agreement.

The ERC aims to use procedures that maintain the focus on excellence, encourage initiative and combine simplicity and flexibility with accountability. The ERC is continuously looking for further ways to improve its procedures in order to ensure that these principles are met.

Principal Investigators from anywhere in the world can apply for an ERC grant

ERC grants are open to researchers of any nationality who may reside in any country in the world at the time of the application.

However the host institution must be established in an EU Member State or Associated Country. In certain conditions team members may be based outside of the EU or an Associated Country (see "Eligible host institution" below).

*The ERC is particularly keen to encourage excellent proposals **from Principal Investigators based outside Europe** that wish to carry out a project with a host institution in the EU or the Associated Countries.*

ERC Principal Investigators do not have to be based full-time in Europe, may request additional funding to cover eligible "start-up" costs and projects may involve team members outside Europe.

The ERC's frontier research grants aim to empower individual researchers and provide the best settings to foster their creativity

The Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants will support projects carried out by individual teams which are headed by a single Principal Investigator. The constitution of the research teams is flexible. Depending on the nature of a project the research team may involve team members from other research organisations situated in the same or a different country (see "Eligible host institution" below).

*With the focus on the Principal Investigators, the concepts of the individual team is fundamentally different from that of a network or consortium of undertakings, universities, research centres or other legal entities. Proposals from such **consortia** should not be submitted to the ERC.*

[3] *Portability* means that the Principal Investigator may request to transfer the entire grant or part of it to a new beneficiary, under specific conditions included in the ERC Model Grant Agreement. These conditions may include provisions for the transfer of equipment purchased and used exclusively for the implementation of the project.

Host institutions must provide conditions for the Principal Investigator independently to direct the research and manage its funding

An ERC grant is awarded to the institution that engages and hosts the Principal Investigator[4]. Grants are awarded to the host institution with the explicit commitment that this institution offers appropriate conditions for the Principal Investigator to independently manage the ERC funded research. These conditions[5], including the '*portability*' of the grant, are the subject of a supplementary agreement between the Principal Investigator and the host institution[6] and must ensure that the Principal Investigator is able to:

- apply for funding independently
- manage the research and the funding for the project and make appropriate resource allocation decisions
- publish independently as senior author and include as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work
- supervise the work of the team members, including research students, doctoral students or others
- have access to appropriate space and facilities for conducting the research

Public or private institutions, including universities, research organisations and undertakings can host the Principal Investigator and his/her team as long as the principles indicated above are respected and the Principal Investigator is not constrained by the research strategy of the entity.

Host institutions are expected to make all appropriate efforts to provide the conditions to attract and retain

The ERC welcomes applications from Principal Investigators ***hosted by private for-profit research centres,*** *including industrial laboratories.*

[4] Normally the Principal Investigator will be employed by the Host Institution, but cases where, for duly justified reasons, the Principal Investigator's employer cannot become the host institution, or where the Principal Investigator is self-employed, can be accommodated. The specific conditions of engagement will be subject to clarification and approval during the granting procedure or during the amendment procedure for a change of host institution.

[5] These conditions are consistent with the 'The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers'.

[6] This is supplementary to the ERC Grant Agreement and is described in the ERC Model Grant Agreement.

scientists and scholars of the calibre to be awarded an ERC grant, within the framework provided by the ERC Model Grant Agreement and any other available administrative and legal possibilities.

ERC support for open access

The ERC supports the principle of open access to the published output of research, including peer-reviewed articles, monographs, data and data related products such as computer codes, as a fundamental part of its mission. The ERC considers that providing free online access can be the most effective way of ensuring that the fruits of the research it funds can be accessed, read and used as the basis for further research.

The terms and conditions laid down in the ERC Model Grant Agreement will address how scientific publications must be made available through open access. The ERC also considers it essential that data and data-related products, such as computer codes, be deposited in the relevant databases as soon as possible, although this is not a formal requirement of the Grant Agreement.

Ethical principles

The proposed research and innovation activities shall comply with ethical principles and relevant national, Union and international legislation, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols. Particular attention shall be paid to the principle of proportionality, the right to privacy, the right to the protection of personal data, the right to the physical and mental integrity of a person, the right to non-discrimination and the need to ensure high levels of human health protection. The proposed research and innovation activities shall have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

Funding of human embryonic stem cell research is possible within the ethical framework defined in the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014 – 2020.

Research Integrity

It is essential to maintain and promote a culture of research integrity at all stages of the evaluation and granting process to make ERC competitions fair and efficient and to maintain the trust of both the scientific community and society as a whole.

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data that may arise during the evaluation or throughout the life cycle of an ERC funded project will be addressed vigorously by the ERC within the applicable legal and procedural framework. Any breach of research integrity by Principal Investigators or beneficiaries may be sanctioned by measures such as the exclusion of proposals from

evaluation, requests for measures to be taken by the host institution, and suspension or termination of grants.

However, the host institutions that engage and host ERC Principal Investigators have the primary responsibility for the detection of scientific misconduct and for the investigation, and adjudication of any breaches of research integrity that may arise. Therefore host institutions are expected to have structures in place to uphold research integrity and to make all appropriate efforts to verify that no allegations of scientific misconduct are pending against any Principal Investigator applying for or participating in an ERC grant and to bring to the attention of the ERC any such allegations or cases of scientific misconduct.

The ERC applies the same rigour to ensuring that its evaluation process is governed by principles of research integrity, in particular through rules on confidentiality and conflict of interest.

ERC frontier research grants

Funding rates

Maximum size of grant and grant assessment

The maximum grant varies by grant type.

During the peer review evaluation, evaluation panels will assess the funding requested by the applicant against the needs of the project before making any recommendation for funding. The funding requested must be fully justified by an estimation of the real project cost. The panels may suggest modifications to the indicative budgetary breakdown in the application, particularly where they consider funding requests to be not properly justified. In such cases they shall explain in writing any such suggested modification. The Principal Investigator will have the freedom to modify the budgetary breakdown during the course of the project.

Union Contribution

The Union financial contribution will take the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and of flat-rate financing of indirect costs on the basis of 25% of the total eligible direct costs[7]. The level of the awarded grant represents a maximum overall figure – the final amount to be paid must be justified on the basis of the costs actually incurred for the project.

*The ERC strongly encourages **research proposals of a multi and inter disciplinary nature**. Proposals of this type are evaluated by the ERC's regular panels with the appropriate external expertise.*

Call budgets

For the Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant calls the ERC Scientific Council has established the following indicative percentage budgets for each of the three main research domains:

Physical Sciences & Engineering	***44%***
Life Sciences	***39%***
Social Sciences & Humanities	***17%***

[7] 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.

An indicative budget is then allocated to each panel within each domain, in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals.

Eligibility criteria

Eligible proposals

All proposals must be complete and be submitted before the relevant call deadline. A complete proposal entails all parts or sections (see *"Proposal submission and description"* below). Incomplete proposals may be declared ineligible.

The content of the proposal must relate to the objectives and to the grant type set out in the call, as defined in this work programme. A proposal will only be deemed ineligible on grounds of 'scope' in clear-cut cases.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal will be declared ineligible and not considered any further.

Eligible Scientific Fields

Applications may be made in any field of research[8].

Eligible Principal Investigator

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research activity in any Member State or Associated Country. Principal Investigators may be of any age and nationality and may reside in any country in the world at the time of the application. ERC Principal Investigators do not have to be based full-time in Europe (see profiles of Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant Principal Investigators below).

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant proposals are submitted by the Principal Investigator who has scientific responsibility for the project, on behalf of the host institution. There are specific eligibility criteria for a Principal Investigator applying to the Starting or Consolidator Grants based on the date of award of his/her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral

[8] Research proposals within the scope of Annex I to the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications, shall be submitted to relevant calls under the Euratom Framework Programme.

degree[9]) as below. This "streaming" allows applicants to be compared with researchers of a similar level.

	Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant	Advanced Grant
Specific Eligibility Criteria	Principal Investigator shall have been awarded his/her first PhD ≥ 2 and ≤ 7 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant	Principal Investigator shall have been awarded his/her first PhD > 7 and ≤ 12 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Consolidator Grant	none

The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be the date of the actual award according to the national rules in the country that the degree was awarded.

*However, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD can be reduced **in the following properly documented circumstances where they apply to the Principal Investigator (not family members).***

*For maternity, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by 18 months for each child born **before or after** the PhD award. For paternity, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by the actual amount of paternity leave taken for each child born **before or after** the PhD award.*

*For long-term illness[10], clinical training or national service the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by the actual amount of leave taken for each incident which occurred **after** the PhD award.*

The elapsed time since the award of the first PhD should not in any case surpass 11 years and six months for applicant Principal Investigators to the Starting Grant and 16 years and six months for applicant Principal Investigators to the Consolidator Grant.

[9] See ERC Scientific Council's note on 'PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degrees' at Annex 2, including specific provisions for holders of medical degrees.

[10] Over ninety days.

Eligible Host Institution[11]

The host institution (Applicant Legal Entity[12]) must engage the Principal Investigator for at least the duration of the project, as defined in the grant agreement. It must either be established in an EU Member State or Associated Country as a legal entity created under national law, or it may be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) or any other entity created under EU law. Any type of legal entity, public or private, including universities, research organisations and undertakings can host Principal Investigators and their teams.

It is expected that the research project will be implemented within the territory of the Member States or Associated Countries. This does not exclude field work or other research activities in cases where these must necessarily be conducted outside the EU or the Associated Countries in order to achieve the scientific objectives of the project/activity.

It is also expected that the host institution will be the only participating legal entity. However, where they bring scientific added value to the project, additional team members may be hosted by additional legal entities[13] which will be eligible for funding, and which may be legal entities established anywhere, including outside the European Union or Associated Countries, or international organisations. Legal entities established outside the European Union or Associated Countries shall be eligible for funding provided that their participation is deemed essential for carrying out the action.

[11] Please also refer to Annex 3 - Countries Associated to Horizon 2020 and Restrictions Applying to Some Legal Entities Established in Certain Third Countries.

[12] Please see important information for Principal Investigators, Candidates, Tenderers and Grant Applicants on possible registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED) on final page.

[13] Consortia agreements are not required for ERC multi-beneficiary grants.

Restrictions on submission of proposals

The ERC's calls are extremely competitive. Only exceptional proposals are likely to be funded and the number of applications has consistently risen faster than the available budget. In order to maintain the quality and integrity of the ERC's evaluation process the Scientific Council has therefore applied restrictions on applications since 2009.

The restrictions for submission under the ERC Work Programme 2014 are set out below. They may be modified in subsequent years by the Scientific Council in light of experience.

The year of an ERC call for proposals refers to the Work Programme under which the call was made and can be established by its call identifier. A 2012 ERC call for proposals is therefore one that was made under the Work Programme 2012 and will have 2012 in the call identifier (for example ERC-2012-StG).

Ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against any of the following restrictions.

- *A Principal Investigator may submit only one proposal to the ERC for ERC frontier research grant calls made under the same Work Programme.*
- *A Principal Investigator whose proposal was evaluated as **category C** in the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals under Work Programme 2013 may not submit a proposal to the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals made under Work Programme 2014.*
- *A researcher may participate as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator[14] in only one ERC frontier research project at any one time[15];*
- *A researcher participating as Principal Investigator in an ERC frontier research project may not submit a proposal for another ERC frontier research grant, unless the existing project ends[16] no more than two years after the call deadline;*
- *A Principal Investigator who is a serving Panel Member for a 2014 ERC call or who served as a Panel Member for a 2012 ERC call may not apply to a 2014 ERC call for the same type of grant[17].*

[14] Co-Investigator projects were supported under the Advanced Grant in Ideas Work Programmes from 2008 – 2011.

[15] A new frontier research project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous frontier research grant agreement has ended.

[16] According to the duration of the project fixed in the previous frontier research grant agreement.

[17] The members of the ERC's panels alternate to allow panel members to apply to the ERC's calls in alternate years.

As a result of very high and rising demand for ERC grants the Scientific Council has decided to extend the above restrictions in future as follows:

- *A Principal Investigator whose proposal is evaluated as **category C** in the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals under Work Programme 2014 may not submit a proposal to the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals made under Work Programme 2015 and 2016.*

- *A Principal Investigator whose proposal is finally evaluated as **category B** in the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals under Work Programme 2014 may not submit a proposal to the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals made under Work Programme 2015.*

These restrictions are designed to allow unsuccessful Principal Investigators the time necessary to develop a stronger proposal.

Starting Grant profile

Objectives

ERC Starting Grants are designed to support excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they are starting their own independent research team or programme. Applicant Principal Investigators must demonstrate the ground breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal.

Size of ERC Starting Grants

Starting Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of **EUR 1 500 000** for a period of **5 years**[18].

However, up to an **additional EUR 500 000** can be requested in the proposal to cover (a) eligible "start-up" costs for Principal Investigators moving to the EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant and/or (b) the purchase of major equipment and/or (c) access to large facilities[19].

Profile of the ERC Starting Grant Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator shall have been awarded their first PhD **at least 2 and up to 7 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant.** The effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD can be reduced in certain properly documented circumstances (see *"Eligible Principal Investigator"* above).

A competitive Starting Grant Principal Investigator must have already shown the potential for research independence and evidence of maturity. For example, it is expected that applicants will have produced **at least one important publication without the participation of their PhD supervisor.** Applicant Principal Investigators should also be able to demonstrate a promising track record of early achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage, including significant publications (as main author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals, or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field. They may also demonstrate a record of invited

[18] The maximum award is reduced pro rata for projects of a shorter duration. This does not apply to ongoing projects.

[19] As any additional funding is to cover major one-off costs it is not subject to pro-rata reduction for projects of shorter duration. All funding requested is assessed during evaluation.

presentations in well-established international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes etc.

Early achievements track record

In the proposal (see "Proposal description" below) the applicant Principal Investigator should list:

1. ***Publications*** *in* ***major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals*** *and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals, peer-reviewed conferences proceedings and/or monographs of their respective research fields, highlighting five representative publications, those without the presence as co-author of their PhD supervisor, and the number of citations (excluding self-citations) they have attracted (if applicable).*

2. ***Granted patent(s)*** *(if applicable).*

3. ***Invited presentations to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools*** *(if applicable).*

4. ***Prizes and Awards*** *(if applicable).*

Expected time commitment of the Starting Grant Principal Investigator

The question of whether the Principal Investigator is strongly committed to the project and demonstrates the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project forms a key part of the evaluation.

Principal Investigators funded through the ERC Starting Grants shall spend a minimum 50% of their total working time on the ERC project and a minimum of 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country.

Principal Investigators shall ensure a sufficient time commitment and presence throughout the course of the project to guarantee its proper execution.

Consolidator Grant profile

Objectives

ERC Consolidator Grants are designed to support excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they may still be consolidating their own independent research team or programme. Applicant Principal Investigators must demonstrate the ground breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal.

Size of ERC Consolidator Grants

Consolidator Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of **EUR 2 000 000** for a period of **5 years**[20].

However, up to an **additional EUR 750 000** can be requested in the proposal to cover (a) eligible "start-up" costs for Principal Investigators moving to the EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant and/or (b) the purchase of major equipment and/or (c) access to large facilities[21].

Profile of the ERC Consolidator Grant Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator shall have been awarded their first PhD **over 7 and up to 12 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Consolidator Grant**. The effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD can be reduced in certain properly documented circumstances (see *"Eligible Principal Investigator"* above).

A competitive Consolidator Grant Principal Investigator must have already shown research independence and evidence of maturity. For example, it is expected that applicant Principal Investigators will have produced **several important publications without the participation of their PhD supervisor**. Applicant Principal Investigators should also be able to demonstrate a promising track record of early achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage, including significant publications (as main author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals, or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field. They may also demonstrate a record of invited

[20] The maximum award is reduced pro rata for projects of a shorter duration. This does not apply to ongoing projects.

[21] As any additional funding is to cover major one-off costs it is not subject to pro-rata reduction for projects of shorter duration. All funding requested is assessed during evaluation.

presentations in well-established international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes etc.

Early achievements track record

In the proposal (see "Proposal description" below) the applicant Principal Investigator should list:

1. ***Publications*** *in* ***major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals*** *and/or in the* ***leading international peer-reviewed journals, peer-reviewed conferences proceedings and/or monographs*** *of their respective research fields, highlighting ten representative publications, those without the presence as co-author of their PhD supervisor, and the number of citations (excluding self-citations) they have attracted (if applicable).*

2. Granted ***patent(s)*** *(if applicable).*

3. ***Invited presentations to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences*** *and/or* ***international advanced schools*** *(if applicable).*

4. ***Prizes and Awards*** *(if applicable).*

Expected time commitment of the Consolidator Grant Principal Investigator

The question of whether the Principal Investigator is strongly committed to the project and demonstrates the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project forms a key part of the evaluation.

Principal Investigators funded through the ERC Consolidator Grants shall spend a minimum 50% of their total working time on the ERC project and a minimum of 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country.

Principal Investigators shall ensure a sufficient time commitment and presence throughout the course of the project to guarantee its proper execution.

Advanced Grant profile

Objectives

Advanced Grants are designed to support excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they are already established research leaders with a recognised track record of research achievements. Applicant Principal Investigators must demonstrate the ground breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal.

Size of ERC Advanced Grants

Advanced Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of **EUR 2 500 000** for a period of **5 years**[22].

However, up to an **additional EUR 1 000 000** can be requested in the proposal to cover (a) eligible "start-up" costs for Principal Investigators moving to the EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant, and/or (b) the purchase of major equipment and/or (c) access to large facilities[23].

Profile of the ERC Advanced Grant Principal Investigator

Principal Investigators for the prestigious ERC Advanced Grant are expected to be active researchers and to have a track record of significant research achievements **in the last 10 years** which must be presented in the application. There is little prospect of an application succeeding in the absence of such a record, which identifies investigators as exceptional leaders in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions.

Thus, in most fields, Principal Investigators of Advanced Grant proposals will be expected to demonstrate a record of achievements appropriate to the field and at least matching one or more of the following benchmarks:

- 10 publications as senior author (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary

[22] The maximum award is reduced pro rata for projects of a shorter duration. This does not apply to ongoing projects.

[23] As any additional funding is to cover major one-off costs it is not subject to pro-rata reduction for projects of shorter duration. All funding requested is assessed during evaluation.

scientific journals, and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals and peer-reviewed conferences proceedings of their respective field;

- 3 major research monographs, of which at least one is translated into another language. This benchmark is relevant to research fields where publication of monographs is the norm (e.g. humanities and social sciences).

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

- 5 granted patents;
- 10 invited presentations in well-established internationally organised conferences and advanced schools;
- 3 research expeditions led by the applicant Principal Investigator;
- 3 well-established international conferences or congresses where the applicant was involved in their organisation as a member of the steering and/or organising committee;
- International recognition through scientific or artistic prizes/awards or membership in well-regarded Academies or artefact with documented use (for example, architectural or engineering design, methods or tools);
- Major contributions to launching the careers of outstanding researchers;
- Recognised leadership in industrial innovation.

Ten-year track record

In the proposal (see "Proposal description" below) the applicant Principal Investigator should list his/her activity over the past 10 years as regards:

1. ***Highlight ten representative publications, as senior author*** *(or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in* ***major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals*** *and/or in the* ***leading international peer-reviewed journals and peer-reviewed conferences proceedings*** *of their respective research fields, also indicating the number of citations (excluding self-citations) they have attracted (if applicable).*

2. ***Research monographs and any translations thereof*** *(if applicable).*

3. Granted ***patents*** *(if applicable).*

4. ***Invited presentations to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences*** *and/or* ***international advanced schools*** *(if applicable).*

5. ***Research expeditions*** *that the applicant Principal Investigator has led (if applicable).*

6. Organisation of ***international conferences*** *in the field of the applicant (membership in the steering and/or organising committee) (if applicable).*

7. ***International Prizes/ Awards/ Academy memberships*** *(if applicable).*

8. ***Major contributions to the early careers of excellent researchers*** *(if applicable).*

9. ***Examples of leadership in industrial innovation or design*** *(if applicable).*

If a Principal Investigator so chooses, their achievements over a longer period than the past ten years can be considered in the following circumstances which should be highlighted in the CV.

For maternity, the track record considered can be extended by 18 months for each child born **before or during** the last ten years. For paternity, the track record considered can be extended by the actual amount of paternity leave taken for each child born **before or during** the last ten years. For long-term illness[24], clinical qualification or national service the track record considered can be extended by the amount of leave taken for each incident which occurred **during** the last ten years.

The track record considered should not in any case surpass 14 years and six months.

Expected time commitment of the Advanced Grant Principal Investigator

The question of whether the Principal Investigator demonstrates the level of commitment to the project necessary for its execution and demonstrates the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project forms a key part of the evaluation.

Principal Investigators funded through the ERC Advanced Grants shall spend a minimum 30% of their total working time on the ERC project and a minimum of 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country.

Principal Investigators shall ensure a sufficient time commitment and presence throughout the course of the project to guarantee its proper execution.

[24] Over ninety days.

Proposal submission and description

Proposal Submission

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant proposals are submitted by the Principal Investigator who has scientific responsibility for the project, on behalf of the host institution.

For each call, a Guide for Applicants is published on the ERC website and Participants Portal. These guides describe in detail how the electronic forms should be completed.

Proposal submission is made electronically. ***Early registration and submission is strongly recommended and should be done as early as possible in advance of the call deadline.***

Proposal description

A complete proposal shall consist of the following elements[25].

Extended Synopsis: 5 pages

Curriculum Vitae: 2 pages

Track Record: 2 pages

Scientific Proposal: 15 pages

Host Institution Binding Statement of Support

Ethics Review Table

PhD record and supporting documentation for eligibility checking (for Starting and Consolidator Grants only).

In fairness to all applicants, ***these page limits will be applied strictly****. Only the material that is presented within these limits will be evaluated (peer reviewers will only be asked, and will be under no obligation to read beyond, the material presented within the page limits).*

The host institution must confirm its association with and its support to the project and the Principal Investigator. As part of the application the institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence are already fulfilled or will be provided to the Principal Investigator if the application is successful, according to the template provided. Proposals that do not include this institutional statement may be declared ineligible.

[25] Incomplete proposals may be declared ineligible, see *"Eligibility criteria"* above.

Extended Synopsis: This should be a concise presentation of the full scientific proposal, with particular attention to the ground-breaking nature of the research project and the feasibility of the outlined scientific approach. At step 1 the full scientific proposal is not assessed so all essential information must be covered in the synopsis. The applicant will choose a primary evaluation panel and may also indicate a secondary evaluation panel. He/she should indicate when they believe that their proposal is of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature.

Curriculum Vitae: The CV should include the standard academic and research record as well as a succinct "funding ID" which must specify any current research grants and their subject, and any on-going application for work related to the proposal. Any research career gaps and/or unconventional paths should be clearly explained so that they can be fairly assessed by the evaluation panels.

Track Record: The Principal Investigator must provide a list of achievements reflecting their track record. The type of achievements expected for Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant applicant Principal Investigators are set out in the relevant profiles above.

Scientific Proposal: Description of the scientific and technical aspects of the project, demonstrating the ground-breaking nature of the research, its potential impact and research methodology. The proposal will also need to indicate the fraction of the applicant's research effort that will be devoted to this project including the working time to be spent in the EU or an Associated Country and a full estimation of the real project cost.

Evaluation procedure and criteria

Evaluation procedure

A **single submission of the full proposal** will be followed by a **two-step evaluation**. The evaluation will be conducted by means of a structure of high level peer review panels as listed in Annex 1. The panels may be assisted by remote referees.

Applicant Principal Investigators can request during the electronic proposal submission that up to three specific persons should not act as a peer reviewer in the evaluation of their proposal[26].

At step 1, the extended synopsis and the Principal Investigator's track record and CV will be assessed (and **not** the full scientific proposal). **At step 2** the complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed (including the full scientific proposal).

The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant Principal Investigator (see *"Proposal description"* above). Proposals may be allocated to a different panel with the agreement of both Panel Chairs concerned.

In cases where panels determine that a proposal is of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature, panels may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional remote referees.

Principal Investigators whose proposals are retained for step 2 of the evaluation for the Starting and Consolidator Grants may be invited for an interview to present their project to the evaluation panel meeting in Brussels.

[26] If any of the persons identified is an independent expert participating in the evaluation of the proposals for the call in question, they may be excluded from the evaluation of the proposal concerned, as long as it remains possible to have the proposal evaluated.

Evaluation criteria

For all ERC frontier research grants, **excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation**. It will be applied to the evaluation of both the research project and the Principal Investigator in conjunction.

During the evaluation, the phase of the Principal Investigator's transition to independence, possible breaks in the research career of the applicant and/or unconventional research career paths should be taken into account. Benchmarks set in the relevant profiles above including the expected minimum working time to be spent on the ERC project as well as the working time spent in the EU or Associated Country should also be taken into consideration.

In general, projects wholly or largely consisting in the collation and compilation of existing material in new databases, editions or collections are unlikely to constitute ground-breaking or "frontier" research in themselves, however useful such resources might be to subsequent original research. Such projects are therefore unlikely to be recommended for funding by the ERC's panels.

If an applicant submits a proposal which coincides, fully or in essence, with a proposal made by another applicant in the same or any other call, both the ground-breaking nature of the project and the Principal Investigator's capacity to carry it out may be seriously called into question. Plagiarism detection software may be used to analyse proposals submitted to the ERC.

The detailed evaluation elements applying to the excellence of the research project and the Principal Investigator are set out below.

1. Research Project

Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?

To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development across disciplines)?

To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain?

Scientific Approach

To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

To what extent is the proposed research methodology appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

To what extent are the proposed timescales and resources necessary and properly justified (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

2. Principal Investigator

Intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment

Starting and Consolidator

Intellectual capacity and creativity

To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research?

To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?

To what extent have the achievements of the PI typically gone beyond the state-of-the-art?

Commitment

To what extent does the PI demonstrate the level of commitment to the project necessary for its execution and the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project (min 50% of the total working time on it and min 50% in an EU Member State or Associated Country) (based on the full Scientific Proposal).

Advanced

Intellectual capacity and creativity

To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research?

To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?

To what extent have the achievements of the PI typically gone beyond the state-of-the-art?

To what extent has the PI demonstrated sound leadership in the training and advancement of young scientists?

Commitment

To what extent does the PI demonstrate the level of commitment to the project necessary for its execution and the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project (min 30% of the total working time on it and min 50% in an EU Member State or Associated Country) (based on the full Scientific Proposal).

Outcome of evaluation

At each evaluation step, each proposal will be evaluated and marked for each of the two main elements of the proposal: research project and Principal Investigator.

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

At the end of **step 1** of the evaluation applicants will be informed that their proposal:

A. is of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation;

B. is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to step 2 of the evaluation;

C. is not of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation.

At the end of **step 2** of the evaluation applicants will be informed that their proposal:

A. fully meets the ERC's excellence criterion and is recommended for funding **if sufficient funds are available**;

B. meets some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded.

In addition, once the evaluation of their proposal has been completed, applicants will receive an evaluation report which will include the ranking range of their proposal out of the proposals evaluated by the panel.

Projects recommended for funding will be funded by the ERC if sufficient funds are available. Proposals will be funded in priority order based on their rank.

Applicants may also be subject to restrictions on submitting proposals to future ERC calls based on the outcome of the evaluation. Applicants will need to check the restrictions in place for each call (for 2014 calls see restrictions on submission of proposals under "Eligibility criteria" above).

Proof of Concept Grant

for Principal Investigators of ERC frontier research grants

Objectives

Frontier research often generates unexpected or new opportunities for commercial or societal application. The ERC Proof of Concept Grants aim to maximise the value of the excellent research that the ERC funds, by funding further work (i.e. activities which were not scheduled to be funded by the original ERC frontier research grant) to verify the innovation potential of ideas arising from ERC funded projects. Proof of Concept Grants are therefore on offer only to Principal Investigators whose proposals draw substantially on their ERC funded research.

Ethical Principles

All proposals will be subject to ethics review as with proposals for the ERC's frontier research grants.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible projects

All proposals must be complete and be submitted before the relevant call deadline. Incomplete proposals may be declared ineligible.

The content of the proposal must relate to the objectives and to the grant type set out in the call, as defined in this work programme. A proposal will only be deemed ineligible on grounds of 'scope' in clear-cut cases.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal will be declared ineligible and not considered any further.

Applicants will need to demonstrate the relation between the idea to be taken to proof of concept and the ERC frontier research project (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced or Synergy) in question.

More than one Proof of Concept Grant may be awarded per ERC funded frontier research project but only one Proof of Concept project may be running at any one time for the same ERC frontier research project.

Eligible Principal Investigator

All Principal Investigators in an ERC frontier research project, that is either on going or has ended[27] less than 12 months before the publication date of this call, are eligible to participate and apply for an ERC Proof of Concept Grant.

Eligible Host Institution

The host institution (Applicant Legal Entity[28]) must engage the Principal Investigator for at least the duration of the proof of concept project as defined in the grant agreement and must be established in a Member State or an Associated Country[29].

Maximum size of grant and grant assessment

The financial contribution will be up to a maximum of **EUR 150 000** for a period of **18 months**. The ERC expects that normally, proof of concept projects should be completed within 12 months. However, to allow for those projects that require more preparation time, projects will be signed for 18 months. Given this initial flexibility, extensions of the duration of proof of concept projects may be granted only exceptionally.

The overall level of the funding offered will be assessed during the evaluation. The funding requested by the applicant will be judged against the needs of the proposed activity before award. The funding requested by the Principal Investigator must be fully justified by an estimation of the actual costs for the proposed activities.

The Union financial contribution will take the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and of flat-rate financing of indirect costs of a maximum of 25% of the total eligible direct costs[30]. The level of the awarded grant represents a maximum overall figure – the final amount to be paid must be justified on the basis of the costs actually incurred for the project.

[27] Where the duration of the project fixed in the ERC Grant Agreement has ended.

[28] Please see important information for Principal Investigators, Candidates, Tenderers and Grant Applicants on possible registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED) on final page.

[29] Please also refer to Annex 3 - Associated Countries and Restrictions Applying to Some Legal Entities from Certain Third Countries. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), or an entity created under EU law. Any type of legal entity, public or private, including universities, research organisations as well as undertakings can host the Principal Investigator and his/her team.

[30] 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.

The indicative budget for this call for 2014 is **EUR 15 000 000** (approximately half of which will be for each of the two evaluation rounds following two specific deadlines - proposals submitted before each cut-off date will be evaluated with the proposals submitted before the same cut-off date). There is no indicative breakdown by domain for this call.

ERC Proof of Concept Grant proposal submission and description

Proposal Submission

Funding for the Proof of Concept Grant will be awarded through a call for proposals. Proposals are submitted by the Principal Investigator, who has responsibility for the proposed activities, on behalf of the host institution which is the applicant legal entity.

Proposal submission is made electronically. ***Early registration and submission is strongly recommended and should be done as early as possible in advance of the call deadline.***

Applications can be submitted continuously from the date of publication of the call until the final deadline and will be evaluated and selected in two rounds, based on two specific deadlines.

Proposal description

The proposal will provide detailed descriptions of the project, its objectives, planning, execution, and required resources. It will comprise the following required elements:

In fairness to all applicants a ***strict limit of seven pages*** *will be applied to the length of proposals. Only the material that is presented within this limit will be evaluated (peer reviewers will only be asked to evaluate, and will be under no obligation to read beyond, the material presented within the page limit).*

a) A short **description of the idea** to be taken to proof of concept. This should include an indication of the ERC-funded project from which the idea is substantially drawn and briefly demonstrate the relation between the idea and the ERC-funded project in question.

b) Outline the **innovation potential of** the idea to be taken to proof of concept. This should include a clear description of how the proof of concept activities will lead to a commercial or social innovation.

c) Outline the **economic and/or societal impact** expected from the project, including the identification of customer and societal benefits; definition of the commercialisation process to be followed; initial steps of competitive analysis; and, where applicable, brief explanation of the activities to be undertaken in terms of clarification of IPR position and strategy, technical testing, plans for industry/sector contacts.

d) Outline a reasonable and plausible **plan of the activities** proposed for establishing the feasibility of the project, including a list of requested resources necessary for the implementation of the proposed project and a full estimation of the real project cost.

e) **Ethics Review** table.

ERC Proof of Concept Grant evaluation

A single-step submission and evaluation procedure will be used. The evaluation will be conducted by peer reviewers. These experts may work remotely and may if necessary meet as an evaluation panel as set out below on the application of the evaluation criteria.

Evaluation criteria

Proof of Concept Grants are awarded in relation to an existing ERC-funded project which has already been evaluated on the basis of excellence as the sole criterion.

The activities to be funded shall draw substantially on the outputs of scientifically excellent ERC-funded research. However the additional funding is not aimed at extending the original research or predominantly concerned with overcoming technical obstacles.

The funding will cover activities at the very early stage of turning research outputs into a commercial or socially valuable proposition, i.e. the initial steps of pre-competitive development.

Proof of Concept Grants are not ERC frontier research grants and may be evaluated against other evaluation criteria than excellence. The evaluation criteria for selection of proposals for Proof of Concept Grants are excellence, impact and quality and efficiency of the implementation as below:

1. Excellence (Innovation potential)

Does the proposed proof of concept activity greatly help move the output of research towards the initial steps of an innovation process leading to a new or significantly improved product, process or method of production, or form of organization or methodology (commercial innovation); or a new principle, a new piece of legislation, a new social movement, an intervention or a new form of participation (social innovation)?

2. Impact

2.1 Is the project to be taken to proof of concept expected to generate economic and/or societal benefits which are appropriately identified in the proposal?

2.2 Does the proposal indicate a suitable process designed either to generate a financial profit i.e. the commercialisation process to be followed (licenses to a new or existing company, a venture funded start-up, a spin-off company or other forms) or any other process designed to generate a social benefit?

2.3 Does the proposal include sound plans for undertaking competitive analysis to find out features which make the proposed technology/product/process innovative or distinctive compared to other technologies/products/processes? (Including plans for analysing the competitive advantage of the technology/product/process vs. alternate technologies/products/processes that can meet the same market/societal needs).

2.4 (Where applicable) Does the proposal include suitable plans for seeking confirmation of the technology/product/process (testing, technical reports) and a brief explanation of what testing is foreseen?

2.5 (Where applicable) Does the proposal comprise suitable plans to clarify the IPR position and strategy, including an evaluation on whether there is an opportunity for creating intellectual property protection (in terms of patents or other forms of protection)or a freedom-to-operate analysis)[31]. This includes plans for sufficient protection to get the technology/product/process to market and attain at least a temporal competitive advantage.

[31] Any application for funding of IPR activities under the ERC Proof of Concept will not discharge beneficiaries from their prior obligations under their pre-existing ERC Grant Agreement in respect of protecting IPR capable of industrial or commercial application. If any foreground was potentially protectable in the pre-existing ERC project, beneficiaries had the legal obligation to seek for adequate and effective protection according to the Rules for Participation and the ERC Model Grant Agreement.

2.6 (Where applicable) Does the proposal include suitable plans for industry/sector contacts, appropriateness of receptor company/organization, ability to further the development of the technology/product/process? Activities aimed at attracting further funding from non-ERC sources once the ERC-funded activities end will also be considered, including activities aimed at identifying specific companies for further financial commitments. If there are no "hard" commitments for funding (i.e. letters of support or intent), demonstration of a solid roadmap for pursuing the funding needed for future commercialisation is included.

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation (Quality of the proof of concept plan)

3.1 Is the proposed proof of concept based on a sound approach for establishing technical and commercial feasibility of the project?

3.2 Does the proposal provide a reasonable and acceptable plan of the proposed activities against clearly identified technical and commercial objectives?

3.3 Is a sound project-management plan presented in the proposal, including appropriate risk and contingency planning?

3.4 Does the proposal demonstrate that the proposed activities will be conducted by persons well qualified for the purpose?

3.5 Is the budget requested necessary for the implementation of the proposed project and properly justified in the proposal?

Outcome of evaluation

Peer reviewers will evaluate independently each eligible proposal on each of the three evaluation criteria above on a "pass/fail" basis.

In order to be considered for funding, proposals will have to be awarded a pass mark by a majority of peer reviewers on each of the three evaluation criteria. A proposal which fails one or more of the criteria will not be ranked and will not be funded.

If there is not enough budget to fund all the proposals which pass all three evaluation criteria, those proposals which pass all three evaluation criteria will be ranked according to the marks which they received from peer reviewers. Proposals will be funded in order of this ranking.

If necessary, the peer reviewers will meet as an evaluation panel in order to determine a priority order for proposals which have the same ranking.

Other actions

The different actions described in this chapter aim to allow the Scientific Council of the ERC to carry out its duties and mandate, including its obligations to establish the ERC's overall strategy and to monitor and quality control the programme's implementation from the scientific perspective.

Support to monitoring and evaluation

1. To develop and refine the key elements and quality standards of the ERC's Monitoring & Evaluation strategy.

An experts group will be set up support the further development of the ERC's M&E strategy, and in particular the activities of the ERC Scientific Council's Working Group on Key Performance Indicators.

The tasks of the experts group will include:

- to advise the ERC in the further development of its M&E Strategy;
- to assist the ERC in the design of studies and analysis which could be commissioned externally or undertaken by the internal capacity of the ERC for such studies and analysis;
- to conduct small scale analysis and studies on selected topics based mainly on the ERC's M&E strategy, but also taking into account good practice and experience from monitoring and evaluation activities of national research systems, in particular regarding the ERC's complementarity and added value.

Type of action: Experts group.

Indicative budget: EUR 120 000 from the 2014 budget.

2. Follow-up studies on ERC impact

In 2008 and 2009 the ERC funded projects covering:

- Exploratory and preparatory studies addressing the possible impacts of the ERC on the functioning and quality of the research environment in Europe, including on policy and research culture in European research, as well as addressing future developments of the ERC in a global context and relevant indicators;

- Novel and innovative methodologies and preliminary data collection for longitudinal assessment and evaluation of the direct and indirect impacts of the ERC.

Up to three further studies will be launched over the course of 2014. The focus of the new studies should be to follow-up the previous studies above in order to provide systematic empirical evidence of the direct and indirect impacts of the ERC.

Type of action: Public procurement (existing framework contract).

Indicative budget: EUR 630 000 from the 2014 budget.

Support to Open Access

3. Support to the Europe PMC initiative

The Open Access Guidelines for researchers funded by the ERC of June 2012 lists Europe PMC (Europe PubMed Central) as a recommended repository for Life Sciences.

The Europe PMC initiative is financed by a group of funding bodies, primarily from the biomedical field, from different European countries. It is managed by the Wellcome Trust.

In 2012, the ERC joined the Europe PMC initiative in order to enable ERC funded researchers to use the Europe PMC repository for their manuscripts. Funding was awarded to the initiative under the 2013 Work Programme, and it is intended to provide further support also in the future.

For this purpose the ERC Executive Agency will provide two grants to identified beneficiaries:

- A grant of EUR 230 000 to the Wellcome Trust Limited, Euston Road, London, UK to support the running of the Europe PMC initiative, in particular the operation and maintenance of the Europe PMC repository, the manuscript deposition service and the helpdesk;
- A low value grant of EUR 60 000 to the European Bioinformatics Institute, Hinxton, Cambridgeshire, UK which is part of European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), Heidelberg, Germany, to contribute to the further development of the Europe PMC repository, and to associated technical services to implement those developments.

The maximum duration of these grants will be 27 months.

Legal entities: as above.

Type of action: Grants to identified beneficiaries.

Indicative budget: EUR 290 000 from the 2014 budget.

Support to the ERC Scientific Council

4. ERC Scientific Council Standing Identification Committee

Future members of the Scientific Council shall be appointed by the Commission based on the factors and criteria set out in the ERC Decision following an independent and transparent procedure for their identification, agreed with the Scientific Council, including a consultation of the scientific community and a report to the European Parliament and the Council. For this purpose, a high level standing Identification Committee of independent experts has been set up as an expert group with honoraria paid under the operational budget of the Horizon 2020 Specific Programme.

Type of action: Experts group.

Indicative budget: EUR 45 000 from the 2014 budget.

This activity will be directly implemented by the Commission services (DG RTD).

5. Support to the Vice-Chairs

Support will be provided to the three Vice Chairs of the Scientific Council to ensure adequate local administrative assistance at their home institutes for their tasks of assisting the President of the ERC in representing the ERC and organising its work. For this purpose, the ERC Executive Agency will provide a grant to an identified beneficiary.

Legal entity: Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Uppsala University Biomedical Centre, Uppsala, Sweden.

Type of action: Grant to identified beneficiary.

Indicative budget: EUR 300 000 from the 2014 budget.

6. Honoraria and meeting expenses for Scientific Council members

In recognition of their personal commitment, the Scientific Council members shall be compensated for the tasks they perform by means of an honorarium for their attendance at Scientific Council plenary meetings, reflecting their responsibilities and benchmarked against similar provisions in similar entities and Member States. The honoraria and those travel and subsistence expenses related to the performance of tasks of the Scientific Council shall be charged to the operational budget allocated to the ERC.

Type of action: Experts group.

Indicative budget: EUR 555 000 from the 2014 budget.

Union Contribution

The Union financial contribution will take the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and of flat-rate financing of indirect costs on the basis of 25% of the total eligible direct costs[32]. The level of the awarded grant represents a maximum overall figure – the final amount to be paid must be justified on the basis of the costs actually incurred for the project.

Proposal Evaluation

Where necessary, proposals for actions under this part will be evaluated as follows.

Eligibility Criteria

Proposals under this part must be focused on requirements specified in the work programme and/or call for proposals.

Actions under this part are open to legal entities[33] established in a Member State or an Associated Country as a legal entity created under national law, International European Interest Organisations (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) or an entity created under EU law. Legal entities established in countries outside the EU or Associated Countries and international organisations are also eligible[34].

All proposals must be complete and be submitted before the relevant deadline. A complete proposal entails all requested elements. Incomplete proposals may be declared ineligible.

The content of the proposal must relate to the objectives of the grant and/or call for proposals, as defined in this work programme and/or call. A proposal will only be deemed ineligible on grounds of 'scope' in clear-cut cases.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal will be declared ineligible and not considered any further.

[32] 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. Exceptionally, the low value grant to the European Bioinformatics Institute will take the form of a lump-sum (covering direct and indirect costs).

[33] Please see important information for Principal Investigators, Candidates, Tenderers and Grant Applicants on possible registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED) on final page.

[34] Please also refer to Annex 3 - Countries Associated to Horizon 2020 and Restrictions Applying to Some Legal Entities Established in Certain Third Countries.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Excellence:

Are the objectives of the proposed project consistent with the requirements specified in the work programme and/or call for proposals? Do they, where appropriate, correspond to, or go beyond, best current practice?

2. Impact:

Will the project have a substantial impact in the context of the ERC strategic objectives?

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation:

Is the proposed methodology and work plan effective in reaching the goals of the project? Do they ensure the highest quality and/or utility of results?

Application of Evaluation Criteria

Each evaluation criterion will be marked on a scale of 0 to 5 and an overall quality threshold of 80% will be used to establish the retained list of proposals which will be ranked in order of priority for funding.

Budget

Calls	*2014 budget in EUR million (rounded)*
ERC-2014-StG	485.04
ERC-2014-CoG	712.59
ERC-2014-AdG	450
ERC-2014-PoC	15
Other Actions	
Experts (expert evaluators, expert groups, monitors)[35]	10.78
Grants to identified beneficiaries	0.59
Public procurement	0.63
Horizontal Activities[36]	
Dissemination activities (CORDIS support)	1.29
Corporate Communication	0.68
Estimated total budget	1676.6

[35] EUR 10.06 million of this amount correspond to the cost of the proposals evaluation. The rest correspond to the cost of expert groups and monitoring activities.

[36] These activities are subject to the 2014-2015 work programme adopted in the framework of the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020).

Subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the budget for 2014 by the budgetary authority or if the budget is not adopted as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

Budgetary figures given in this work programme are indicative. Unless otherwise stated, final budgets may vary following the evaluation of proposals. The final figures may vary by up to 20% with respect to those indicated in this work programme for the following budgeted activities:

- Total expenditure for each call for proposals;
- Any repartition of the call budget within a call, up to 20% of the total expenditure of the call;
- Evaluation and monitoring, up to 20% of the total expenditure for all these activities;
- Each other individual actions not implemented through calls for proposals.

The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal points.

Annexes

Annex 1

Primary panel structure and description

Physical Sciences & Engineering

PE1 Mathematics
All areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics.

PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
Particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics.

PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
Structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences, biophysics.

PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
Analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics.

PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
Materials synthesis, structure-properties relations, functional and advanced materials, molecular architecture, organic chemistry.

PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
Informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems.

PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
Electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering.

PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
Product design, process design and control, construction methods, civil engineering, energy systems, material engineering.

PE9 Universe Sciences
Astro-physics/chemistry/biology; solar system; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy, planetary systems, cosmology, space science, instrumentation.

PE10 Earth System Science
Physical geography, geology, geophysics, atmospheric sciences, oceanography, climatology, cryology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management.

Life Sciences

LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry
Molecular synthesis, modification and interaction, biochemistry, biophysics, structural biology, metabolism, signal transduction.

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

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

LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
Organ physiology, pathophysiology, endocrinology, metabolism, ageing, tumorigenesis, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome.

LS5 Neurosciences and Neural Disorders
Neurobiology, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, neuropharmacology, neuroimaging, systems neuroscience, neurological and psychiatric disorders.

LS6 Immunity and Infection
The immune system and related disorders, infectious agents and diseases, prevention and treatment of infection.

LS7 Diagnostic Tools, Therapies and Public Health
Aetiology, diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health, epidemiology, pharmacology, clinical medicine, regenerative medicine, medical ethics.

LS8 Evolutionary, Population and Environmental Biology
Evolution, ecology, animal behaviour, population biology, biodiversity, biogeography, marine biology, eco-toxicology, microbial ecology.

LS9 Applied Life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology
Agricultural, animal, fishery, forestry and food sciences, biotechnology, genetic engineering, synthetic and chemical biology, industrial biosciences; environmental biotechnology and remediation.

Social Sciences & Humanities

SH1 Markets, Individuals and Institutions
Economics, finance and management.

SH2 The Social World, Diversity and Common Ground
Sociology, social anthropology, political science, law, communication, science and technology studies.

SH3 Environment, Space and Population
Sustainability science, demography, geography, regional studies and planning.

SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
Cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, philosophy of mind, education.

SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production
Literature, philology, cultural studies, arts, philosophy.

SH6 The Study of the Human Past
Archaeology and history.

Annex 2

ERC Policy on PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degrees

1. The necessity of ascertaining PhD equivalence

In order to be eligible to apply to the ERC Starting or Consolidator Grant a Principal Investigator must have been awarded a PhD or equivalent doctoral degree. First-professional degrees will not be considered in themselves as PhD-equivalent, even if recipients carry the title "Doctor". See below for further guidelines on PhD degree equivalency.

2. PhD Degrees

The research doctorate is the highest earned academic degree. It is always awarded for **independent research** at a professional level in either academic disciplines or professional fields. Regardless of the entry point, doctoral studies involve several stages of academic work. These may include the completion of preliminary course, seminar, and laboratory studies and/or the passing of a battery of written examinations. The PhD student selects an academic adviser and a subject for the dissertation, is assigned a dissertation committee, and designs his/her research (some educators call the doctoral thesis a dissertation to distinguish it from lesser theses). The dissertation committee consists usually of 3-5 faculty members in the student's research field, including the adviser.

3. Independent research

Conducting the research and writing the dissertation usually requires one to several years depending upon the topic selected and the research work necessary to prepare the dissertation. In defending his/her thesis, **the PhD candidate must establish mastery of the subject matter, explain and justify his or her research findings, and answer all questions put by the committee**. A successful defence results in the award of the PhD degree.

4. Degrees equivalent to the PhD:

It is recognised that there are some other doctoral titles that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD in certain fields. All of them **have similar content requirements**. Potential applicants are invited to consult the following for useful references on degrees that will be considered equivalent to the PhD:

a. EURYDICE: "Examinations, qualifications and titles - Second edition, Volume 1, European glossary on education" published in 2004[37]. Please note that some titles that belong to the same category with doctoral degrees (ISCED 6) may correspond to the intermediate steps towards the completion of doctoral education and they should not be therefore considered as PhD-equivalent.

b. List of research doctorate titles awarded in the United States that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD within certain fields. These doctorate titles are also recognised as PhD-equivalent by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF)[38].

5. First Professional Degrees (for medical doctors please see below):

It is important to recognise that the initial professional degrees in various fields are **first degrees, not graduate research degrees**. Several degree titles in such fields include the term "Doctor", **but they are neither research doctorates nor equivalent to the PhD**.

6. Doctor of Medicine (MD):

For medical doctors, **an MD will not be accepted by itself as equivalent to a PhD award**. To be considered an eligible Principal Investigator medical doctors (MDs) need to provide the certificates of **both basic studies (MD) and a PhD or proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency** (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship, professorship appointment). Additionally, candidates must also provide information on their research experience (including peer reviewed publications) in order to further substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD. In these cases, the certified date of the MD completion plus two years is the time reference for calculation of the eligibility time-window (i.e. 4 - 9 years past MD for Starters, and over 9 - 14 years past MD for Consolidators).

For medical doctors who have been awarded both an MD and a PhD, **the date of the earliest degree that makes the applicant eligible** takes precedence in the calculation of the eligibility time-window (2 - 7 years after PhD or 4 - 9 years past MD for Starters, and over 7 - 12 years after PhD or 9 - 14 years past MD for Consolidators).

[37] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/thematic_studies_archives_en.php

[38] http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-structure-us.html

Annex 3

Countries Associated to Horizon 2020 and Restrictions Applying to Some Legal Entities Established in Certain Third Countries

At the date of the publication of the work programme, there are no countries associated to Horizon 2020. All countries associated to the Seventh Framework Programme[39] will in principle be associated to Horizon 2020 by the time the first grant agreements under Horizon 2020 are signed. This is, however, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the respective procedures adopting the association agreements for each of the countries concerned.

Please check the Funding Guide[40] for up-to-date information on the current position for Associated Countries[41].

Some legal entities established in certain third countries may face restrictions[42].

[39] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey.

[40] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/international-cooperation_en.htm

[41] The eligibility criteria formulated in Commission notice Nr. 2013/C 205/05 (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp.9-11) shall apply for all actions under this Work Programme**,** including with respect to third parties receiving financial support in the cases where the respective action involves financial support to third parties by grant beneficiaries in accordance with Article 137 of the EU's Financial Regulation, notably Programme Co-Fund actions.

[42] Some entities from third countries are covered by the Council sanctions in place and are not eligible to participate in Union programmes. Please see: the consolidated list of persons, groups and entities subject to EU financial sanctions, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/sanctions/consol-list_en.htm.

Prior Information of Principal Investigators, Candidates, Tenderers and Grant Applicants - registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED).

The Commission uses an internal information tool (EWS), as well as a database available to public authorities implementing EU funds (CED) to flag identified risks related to beneficiaries of contracts and grants with a view to protecting the EU's financial interests.

Principal Investigators, candidates, tenderers, grant applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125); or

Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12);

their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or decision.