

European Research Council (ERC)



erc

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JOURNEE DES DU INSB – Paris, 30.10.2018

Outline



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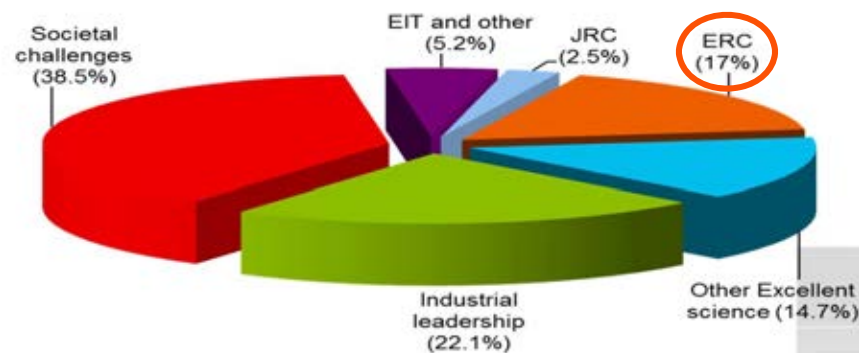
- ✓ What is the ERC? & What does ERC offer?
- ✓ The ERC evaluation process
- ✓ How to apply? 10 steps

What is the ERC?

It is part of H2020 (€ 77 billion)

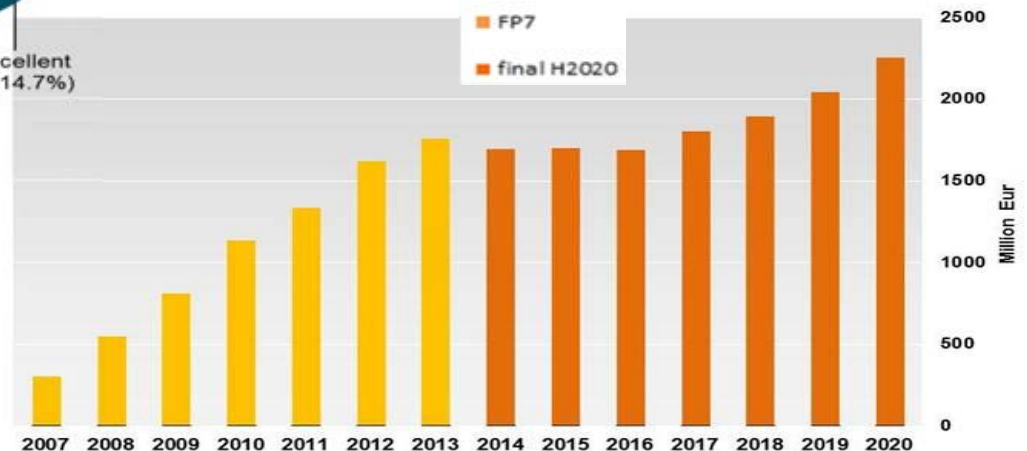


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ERC Budget
€ 13 billion

For 2019, the budget will be more than **2.0 billion euros**, the highest ever since the beginning of the ERC



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ERC after 11 Years, a Success Story



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Over **8,000**
top researchers funded since
the ERC's creation in 2007



Over **90,000**
articles from ERC projects published
in prestigious scientific journals



Over **60,000**
researchers and other professionals
employed in ERC research teams



748 research institutions
hosting ERC grantees – universities,
public or private research centres in
the EU or associated countries



€ 13 billion
ERC budget for 2014-2020 under
Horizon 2020



74
nationalities of
grant holders



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Scientists in the Driver's Seat

Independent Scientific Council:

- ✓ 22 members including the ERC President
- ✓ full authority over funding strategy
- ✓ supported by the ERC Executive Agency (autonomous)



ERC Principles



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Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion

NO THEMATIC PRIORITIES
NO CONSORTIA
NO CO-FINANCING

PAN-EUROPEAN
COMPETITIONS



OPEN TO
**EXCELLENT
& INDEPENDENT
RESEARCHERS**

REGARDLESS
**NATIONALITY
AGE & GENDER**



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What do ERC grants offer?

Creative Freedom of the Individual Grantee



ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility

- research topic of **own choice**, with a team of **own choice**
- true **financial autonomy** for 5 years
- **portability of the grant** within Europe
- **ERC is a quality label:**
 - ⇒ negotiate with the host institution **the best conditions** of work
 - ⇒ attract **top team members** (EU and non-EU) and **collaborators**
 - ⇒ attract **additional funding**

What does ERC offer?

ERC Grant Schemes



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Starting Grants

starters
2-7 years after PhD
(≥ 50% commitment)
up to **€1.5 Million**
for 5 years

Consolidator Grants

consolidators
7-12 years after PhD
(≥ 40% commitment)
up to **€2 Million**
for 5 years

Advanced Grants

track-record of
significant research
achievements in the
last 10 years
(≥ 30% commitment)
up to **€2.5 Million**
for 5 years

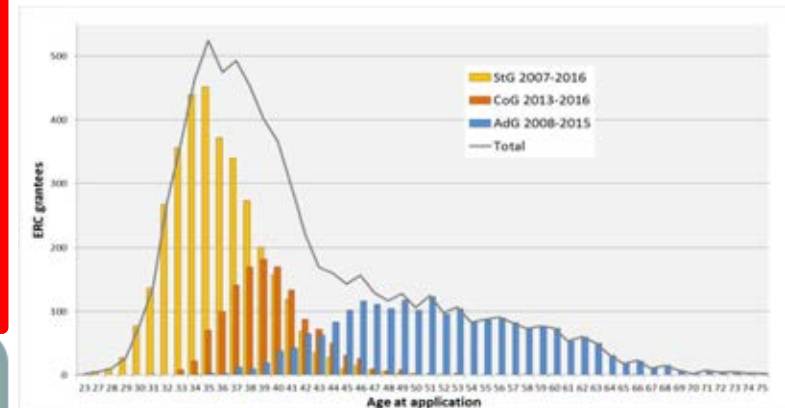
Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research - earliest stage
of marketable innovation
up to €150,000 for ERC grant holders only

Synergy Grants

2-4 PIs up to €10 million for 6 years
to lead to breakthroughs that cannot be
achieved by a PI working alone

Investing in the young - 2/3 of ERC
grants go to early-stage Principal
Investigators!



The ERC tackles the brain-drain by making Europe a
more attractive place for bright minds - around 17%
of ERC team members are from non-EU countries!



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Additional funding



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Additional funding:

- Start-Up costs for scientists moving to EU / Associated Countries
- Purchase of major equipment
- Access to large facilities
- ✓ Up to €500 000 for Starting
- ✓ Up to €750 000 for Consolidator
- ✓ Up to €1 Million for Advanced grantees
- ✓ Up to €4 Million for Synergy PIs



Outline



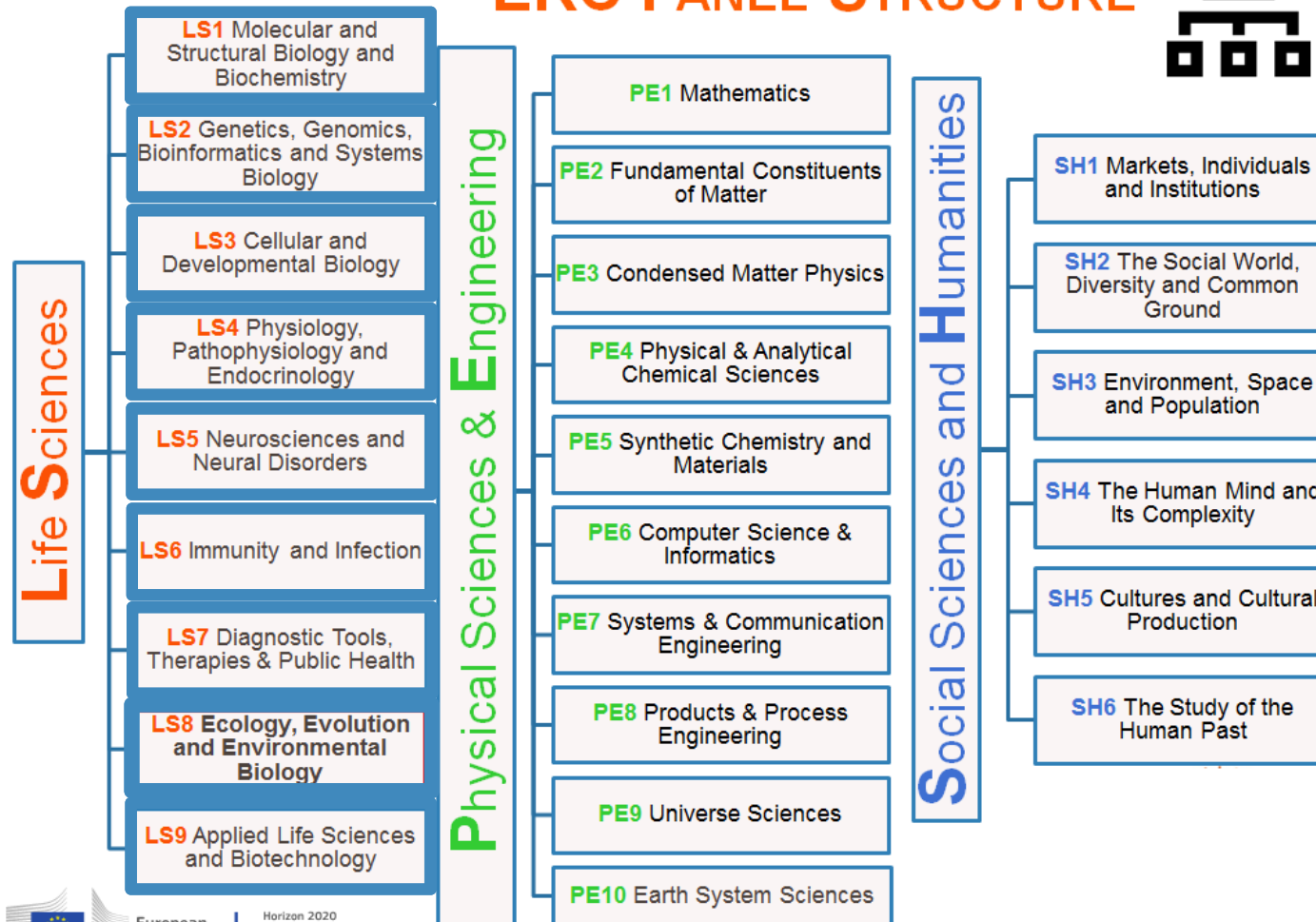
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ERC PANEL STRUCTURE



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3 domains / 25 panels

Each panel:

- Panel Chair
- 10-16 Panel Members

(top scientists in the fields covered by the panel)



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Submission of the proposal



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PART A – online forms

- A1** Proposal and PI info
- A2** Host Institution info
- A3** Budget
- A4** Ethics Issues
- A5** Call Specific Info

Annexes – submitted as .pdf

- HI support letter
- copy of PhD title (StG, CoG);
- document for extension of eligibility window (StG, CoG)

PART B1 – submitted as .pdf

- Extended Synopsis 5 p.
- CV 2 p.
- Early Achievements 2 p.
(incl. up to 5-10 publications)

PART B2 – submitted as .pdf

- Scientific Proposal 15 p.
State of the Art & Objectives
Methodology
Resources



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Read the Information to Applicants

Evaluation process (StG, CoG, AdG)



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STEP 1

Remote assessment by Panel members see
ONLY section 1 – Synopsis and CV (**Part B1**)

Panel meeting

Proposals retained
for step 2

A

B

C

Feedback to
applicants

STEP 2

Remote assessment by Panel members and
Remote Reviewers of full proposals
(**Part B1+B2**)

Panel meeting
(with interview for StG + CoG)

Ranked list of
proposals

A

B

Redress



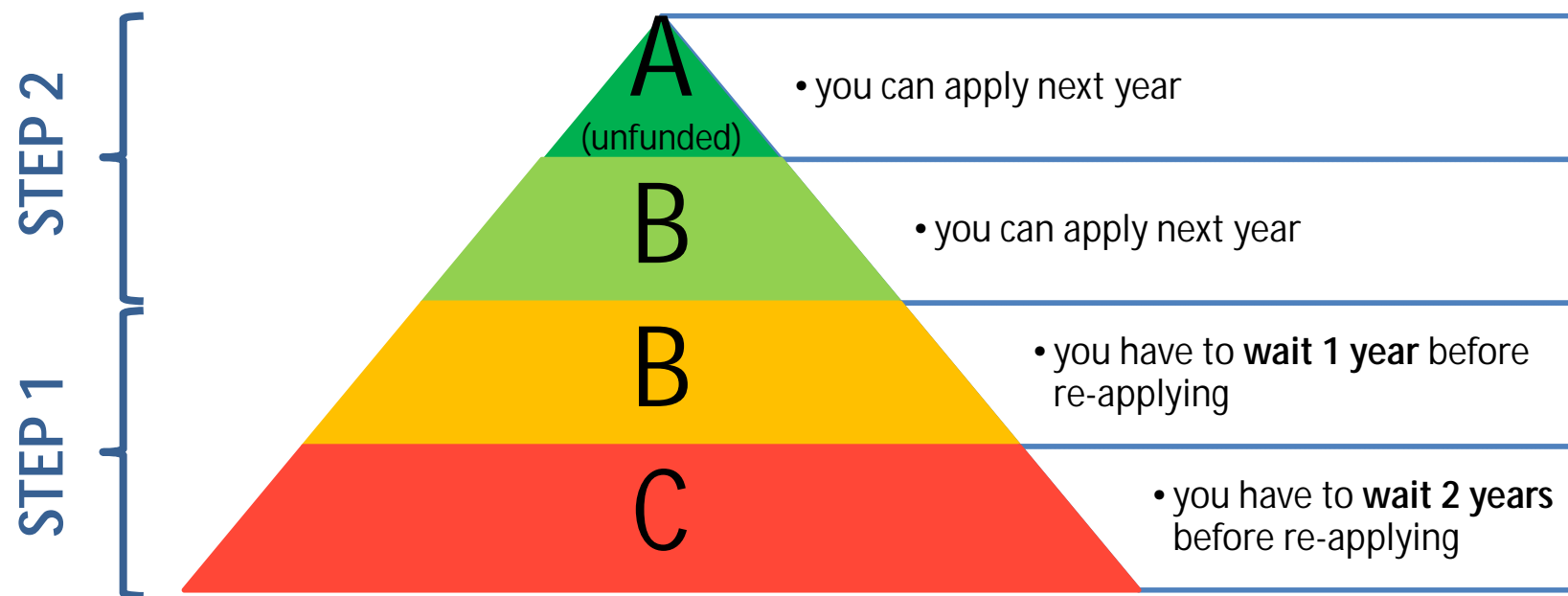
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Re-submission restrictions 2018 (StG, CoG, AdG)



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Preparing your proposal

1: Decide whether to apply or not



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Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion

SKILLS



- EXCELLENCE
- CREATIVITY
- AMBITION
- BOLDNESS



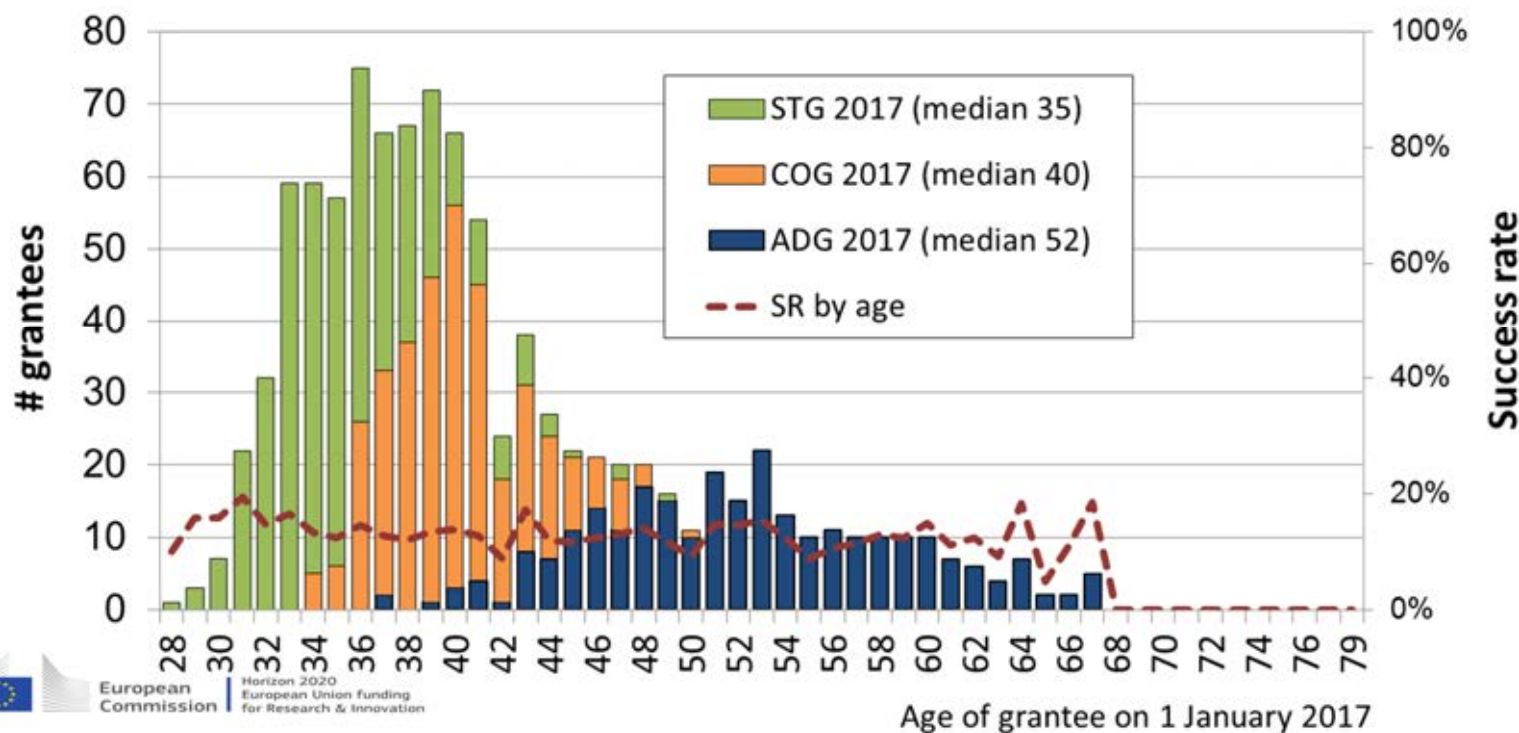
Preparing your proposal

2: Shall I apply now or wait another year?



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2017 Grantees by age and success rate



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Preparing your proposal

3: Get information!



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- **ERC website** for latest funding opportunities : <https://erc.europa.eu/>
- **Register early**, get familiar with the European Commission's Participant Portal system, download the templates and start filling in the forms
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>
- Use the **help tools and call documents** (Information for Applicants, Work Programme, FAQ) to prepare your proposal - **Read the guidelines carefully!**
- **Talk to your Institution's grant office**
- **Contact your National Contact Point**

Preparing your proposal

4: Make sure you are eligible



Extensions of eligibility window possible for StG and CoG for documented cases (started before call deadline) of:

- Maternity – 18 months per child (before or after PhD)
- Paternity – actual time taken off (before or after PhD)
- Military service Caring for seriously ill family members (after PhD)
- Medical speciality training after the award of 1st eligible degree & up to 4 yr

No limit to the total extension

Preparing your proposal

5: Host Institution (HI)



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- You **can change** HI during the project's life
- **Negotiate** with the HI (your position, equipment, administrative support, access to infrastructure, etc.)
- Make sure to have the **HI letter** ready in time for the submission deadline

Rumour: The quality/fame of the HI is increasing my chances/scores.

✗ NOT true: the HI is not an evaluation criterion!

Preparing your proposal

6: Choose the appropriate panel



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- Proposals are (mostly) assigned to the Panel of the PI's choice.
- The PI can flag one “Secondary Review Panel” → **explain the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal in Part B1.**

Rumour: some panels are more successful than others

✗ **NOT true:** budget is allocated based on submitted proposals to each panel, so success rate is flat across different panels.

Rumour: The panel descriptors represent ERC scientific priorities

✗ **NOT true:** The panel descriptors are indicative so that applicants can see what expertise the Panel covers. It is the applicants that choose the subject of their proposal and the Panels use the excellence criterion to judge whether it should be funded.



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Preparing your proposal

7: Talk to other ERC grantees in your field



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ERC FUNDED PROJECTS

Search and access all information on ERC funded projects



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<https://erc.europa.eu/>

Preparing your proposal

8: Part B1: the research project



- Is my project new, **innovative**, bringing in new solutions/theories?
- Does it goes **substantially beyond the state of the art**? – No incremental research!
- How can I **prove/support** my case? Have I proven the project's **feasibility**? Are my goals **realistic**?
- Is it **timely**? Why has it not been done in the past?
- What's the **risk**?
- Have I provided some **contingency plans** or proposed **alternatives**?

Preparing your proposal

9a: Part B1: the Principal Investigator



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- Why am I the **best person** to carry it out? Know your competitors

STG and COG applicants

- Am I able to work **independently**, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?
- Am I **competitive**? Have I shown my **scientific leadership** in my CV?

*Rumour: you must have a paper in **Nature and Science**, otherwise you have no chances!!!*

✗ **NOT true:** although a competitive CV is needed, **several ERC grantees** (particularly StG and CoG) **did not have a paper in these journals** at the time of applying and getting the grant



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9b: Part B1: the Principal Investigator



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ADG applicants

- Active researchers
- track record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years
- exceptional leader in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions to the field

Preparing your proposal

10: Part B2



In Step 2, both part B1 and B2 are read by Panel Members and specialists around the world (remote referees) so in Part B2:

- **Do not repeat the synopsis**, go into details on your methodology and work plan
- Make sure that the quantitative and qualitative **differences to the state of the art are clear and referenced** - show you did your homework.
- Provide alternative strategies to **mitigate risk**
- Justify requested **resources** – **explain your budget properly**

Preparing your proposal

In a nutshell (1/2)



- Be ambitious and "daring", think big; panels seek out high-risk research
- Grab interest and attention of reviewers
- **Only Part B1 reviewed in Step 1**, read by "generalists" but make it count!
- If you make it to Step 2, reviewers see both B1 and B2, so **do not repeat / duplicate part B1 in part B2**
- Do not include unnecessary partners and collaborators; it is not supposed to be a "consortium"

Preparing your proposal

In a nutshell (2/2)



- For interviews (StG and CoG):
 - Practice thoroughly, several (many?) times, with a diverse audiences
 - ⇒ Typically a 10 minute presentation and 10-15 minutes of questions
 - Panels want to see that these are *your* ideas, not those of your supervisor
 - Use the interview to get the Panel interested in what you are doing
 - It is normal to be nervous...

Indicative summary of 2019 calls



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	<i>Starting Grant</i>	<i>Consolidator Grant</i>	<i>Advanced Grant</i>	<i>Synergy Grant</i>	<i>Proof of Concept Grant</i>
<i>Call identifier</i>	ERC-2019-StG	ERC-2019-CoG	ERC-2019-AdG	ERC-2019-SyG	ERC-2019-PoC
<i>Call Opens</i>	Mid-September	24/10/2018	21/05/2019	Mid-September	16/10/2018
<i>Call closes (cut-off dates for PoC)</i>	17/10/2018	07/02/2019	29/08/2019	08/11/2018	22/01/2019 25/04/2019 19/09/2019
<i>Budget million EUR (estimated number of grants)</i>	580 (390)	602 (314)	390 (166)	400 (48)	25 (167)





Thank you!

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