Funder: European Commission   Scheme: ERC Consolidator Grant 2018

ERC Consolidator Grant 2018
Research proposal [Part B2] [1]
(<u>not</u> evaluated in Step 1)

Part B2: <u>*The scientific proposal*</u> (max. 15 pages, references do not count towards the page limits)

Text highlighted in grey should be deleted.

Please respect the following formatting constraints: Times New Roman, Arial or similar, at least font size 11, margins (2.0 cm side and 1.5 cm top and bottom), single line spacing.

> **European Team Advice:**
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> The entire proposal should be developed based on the evaluation criteria (found in the "Guide for Applicants" and the "Compiled Feedback from the Commission for ERC-CoG-Jan2018.pdf" documents).

Section a. State-of-the-art and objectives

> **European Team Advice:**
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> From the Guide for applicants: Specify clearly the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state of the art in the field. When describing the envisaged research it should be indicated how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi - or inter-disciplinary aspects. References to literature should also be included. Please use a reference style that is commonly used in your discipline such as American Chemical Society (ACS) style, American Medical Association (AMA) style, Modern Language Association (MLA) style, etc. <u>and</u> that allows the evaluators to easily retrieve each reference. **References do not count towards the page limits**.
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> **In General**: aim for going beyond the state of the art, using appropriate methods, even if what you plan may not work as long as it sounds plausible you are on a good track, need to break new ground, need a realistic

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[1] Instructions for completing Part B2 can be found in the '*Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2018 Call*'.

hypothesis. Interdisciplinarity is a KEY word. Also need to show Impact, who stands to benefit from this research.

- Keep the headings the same as in the original template.
- Choose your Panel carefully! Aim for a panel that is most likely to understand your work ("speaks the same language" as you).
- Make sure you provide answers to all the evaluation criteria.
- Successful proposals are usually those that identify a major problem/question in a particular field and devise a work plan on how to reach the answer.
- This section should clearly describe the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state of the art. For more see [Information for Applicants](#).
- The ERC funds basic research projects that are novel, creative, go significantly beyond the state of the art, make substantial advances in the frontiers of knowledge, use new methods and techniques, are interdisciplinary, and high-risk/high-gain projects. Emphasise these aspects in your proposal.
- Describe why you need an ERC grant and why this research needs to be done NOW! **This is very important!**
- The proposal has to be understandable for experts as well as for generalists (applies also for abbreviations and non-English terms). Have a look at the panel composition to better judge and match to the level of understanding of subject by panel members.
- Use graphs, figures and photographs to break the text and convey the message easier.
- High risk projects are encouraged but you need to show that you are aware of the risks and that you have contingency plans in place. FEASIBILITY is very important and you need to clearly show that.
- Some points to keep in mind when writing section a :
  - clearly state why and how the proposed work is novel and important in your field
  - what are your objectives,
  - What are the key challenges/open questions in your field that need to be answered
  - how will you go about it, clearly explain how you propose to address these questions.
  - what are the expected outcomes?
  - explain the impact of your work- if you are successful-, on the research area and beyond and your long term vision.
- In your first sentence start by giving some background information to the problem (to set the scene), you can also provide some statistics or financial information i.e. current cost of the disease to the health system, purification of water etc. Follow this by what is the current situation and what your ground breaking solution is to this problem. Does this need a coordinated effort across a number of different disciplines? Also stress here why you are uniquely placed to answer this problem.
- You could also use a two column table having the questions you have set to answer on one side and the respective objectives for each question on the second column (Just a recommendation of the things you could do to make reading your proposal more pleasant for the evaluator).
- Provide the state of the art for all questions and relate it to what you are proposing to do. Is there a long standing controversy that needs to be solved? If anything that you propose is unconventional you need to emphasise that and make it clear.
- Explain the risks of your project and how you plan to address those risks should they materialise.
- At the end of this section you can include some sub headings on:
  Research Vision and aims

  Justification of why your vision and aims are important

  Where will your field be at the end of the funding period in terms of new knowledge? If you can explain this in some sort of schematic diagramme it would be even better.

Section b. Methodology

Section c. Resources (including project costs)

(Note: State and fully justify the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. To facilitate the assessment of resources by the panels, the use of the following budget table is strongly suggested. All eligible costs requested, should be included in the budget. **Please use whole euro values only**.)

Cost Category			Total in euro
Direct Costs[2]	**Personnel**	PI[3]	
		Senior Staff	
		Postdocs	
		Students	
		Other	
	i. Total Direct costs for Personnel (in euro)		
	Travel		
	Equipment		
	Other goods and services	Consumables	
		Publications (including Open Access fees), dissemination activities, etc.	
		Other (please specify)	
	ii. Total Other Direct Costs (in euro)		
A – Total Direct Costs (i + ii) (in euro)			
B – Indirect Costs (overheads) 25% of Direct Costs[4] (in euro)			
C1 – Subcontracting Costs (no overheads) (in euro)			
C2 – Other Direct Costs with no overheads[5] (in euro)			
Total Estimated Eligible Costs (A + B + C) (in euro)			
Total Requested Grant (in euro)			

The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. Significant mathematical mistakes may reflect poorly on the credibility of the budget table and the proposal overall. The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully; unjustified budgets will be consequently reduced. The Total Estimated Eligible Costs and the Total Requested Grant amounts in the table MUST match those presented in the online proposal submission form, section 3 – Budget.

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[2] An additional cost category 'Direct costing for Large Research Infrastructures' applicable to H2020 can be added to this table (below 'Other Goods and services') for PIs who are hosted by institutions with Large Research Infrastructures of a value of at least EUR 20 million and **only** after having received a positive ex-ante assessment from the Commission's services.

[3] When calculating the salary, please take into account the percentage of your dedicated working time to run the ERC funded project (i.e. minimum 50% of your total working time).

[4] Please note that the overheads are fixed to a flat rate of exactly 25%.

[5] Such as the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary.

In case you are requesting additional funding above the normal EUR 2 000 000, fully justify your request by filling in the table below (please delete the table if not applicable). **Include these costs in the above budget table.**

Request for additional funding above EUR 2 000 000 for	Justification
Keep only that category(ies) that apply to the project. (a) covering eligible 'start-up' costs for a PI moving from another country to the EU or an Associated Country as a consequence of receiving an ERC grant and/or, (b) the purchase of major equipment and/or, (c) access to large facilities.	

The requested contribution should be in proportion to the actual needs to fulfil the objectives of the project.

Please indicate the duration of the project in months:[6]	
Please indicate the % of working time the PI dedicates to the project over the period of the grant:	%

Specify briefly your commitment to the project and how much time you are willing to devote to the proposed project in the resources section. Please note that you are expected to devote at least 40% of your total working time to the ERC project.

> **European Team Advice:**
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> - Use the table template provided in the original ERC forms. You need to explain all costing in the text as well.

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[6] The maximum award is reduced pro rata temporis for projects of a shorter duration (e.g. for a project of 48 months duration the maximum requested EU contribution allowed is EUR 1.6 million). Additional funding to cover major one-off costs is not subject to pro-rata temporis reduction for projects of shorter duration (e.g. with additional funding it is possible to request a maximum EU contribution of EUR 2.35 million for a project of 48 months duration).

- Describe your research team. Start by emphasising that you will coordinate and lead the whole project and stress your X years' experience in the field. State the time you will commit to this project. If in a particular year you expect to dedicate a bit more time, state that as well. Also describe the size and composition of your team. For example will you hire a technician, Postdocs, PhDs? Say what % of time will they be working on the project and when will they be hired e.g. recruited in year 1 and employed for years 1-3. If you know who they are name them and justify why them specifically. For example does the named postdoc have a specific expertise needed for the project and similarly for others.
- Take into account the % of your dedicated time to run the ERC funded activity when calculating personnel costs.
- When estimating costs for travel consider participation of the PI and team members in conferences/dissemination events etc.
- Remember it is mandatory to provide Open Access to all peer reviewed resulting from your ERC project publications. The Gold or Green route can be used but open access must be ensured through a repository at the latest 6 months after publication of 12 months for Social sciences and humanities. Costs to cover open access charges are eligible and can be charged to the ERC grant but must be incurred during the lifetime of the project.
- Include the direct costs of the project plus a flat-rate financing of indirect costs calculated as 25% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding subcontracting) towards overheads. Furthermore, include a breakdown of the budget subdivided in personnel costs, travel, equipment, consumables, publication costs (including any costs related to Open Access), other direct costs, and any envisaged subcontracting costs.
- If you request the additional funding of € 750,000 for the purchase of major equipment including access to large infrastructure or for start-up costs when moving from a third country, you have to fully justify it. Specify any existing resources that will contribute towards the project. Include a short description of the equipment you are requesting, strong justification for the need and also frequency of usage.
- The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. There's no advantage in having a low or a high budget, budget what you need for your project. Think big, ERC is different from other funding schemes.
- There is no minimum contribution per year; the requested contribution should be in proportion to the actual needs to fulfil the objectives of the project.
- Your research support office should be able to help you with costs.

European Team Advice:

Some Key points from the information for Applicants:

Supporting Documentation
A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically in PPSS in PDF format:
- The host institution (applicant legal entity) 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. The host institution support letter (template available on PPSS, or please see Annex 2 to this document) needs to be originally signed, stamped and dated by the institution's legal representative. Proposals that do not include this institutional statement may be declared ineligible.
- The PI should submit scanned copies of documents proving his/her eligibility for the grant, i.e. the PhD certificate (or equivalent doctoral degree, see Annex 3 to this document) clearly indicating the date of award and, in case of an extension of the eligibility period has been requested (beyond 7

years for Starting Grant applicants and 12 years for Consolidator Grant applicants), the relevant documentary evidence.
➢ Any additional supporting documents which may be required following the indications provided in this document (i.e. ethical self-assessment and supporting documentation for the ethics review procedure).

Ethical Issues

➢ Self-assessment table needs to be completed even if there are no ethical issues associated with your research.
➢ If any of the ethical issues apply to your proposal you MUST provide an explanation of the issue and describe how this will be dealt with. See Annex 2 in the guide for applicants for more guidance.
➢ Provide any supporting material you have as an annex i.e. Home licence to work with animals etc.
➢ Some useful guidance on ethics can be found here.
➢ The main areas addressed in an ethics review are: Human protection (including study participants and researchers), Animal protection and welfare, Data protection and privacy, Environment protection and safety, Participation of non-EU countries and malevolent use of research results.
➢ For more specific guidance on the different ethical issues look at Annex 4 of the Information for Applicants.
➢ Guidance and self-assessment ethics table here.

European Team Advice:

➢ Are both B1 and B2 within the page limit?
➢ Is your proposal clearly written and easy to follow without tiring the evaluator?
➢ Have you followed a logical structure in presenting your idea(s)?
➢ Have you answered in the proposal: What, Why, how, When, Why you?
➢ Have you emphasised why this needs to be an ERC project and how this will help you advance you career?
➢ Did you include both in B1 and B2 what the risks are and how will you handle them (contingency plan).
➢ Is it crystal clear who is doing what and when from your team?
➢ Can you proposal be understood by both experts and non-experts?
➢ If you have coloured figures/table sin your proposal are those equally clear in black and white?
➢ Does your proposal provide answers to the evaluation criteria?
➢ Does your budget in B2 agree with the figure on the online forms?
➢ Did you add 25% overheads?
➢ Did you complete the ethics self-assessment and provided an explanation to all questions you answered YES.