

## ERC Starting Grant Call 2018: Notes and Tips for Applicants

Version Sep14th, 2017

**Quick overview: Starting Grant Call 2018**  
**Deadline: October 17th, 2017, 17:00 CET**

- **Reference date** for both the „Starter“ and „Consolidator“ eligibility window: [January 1st, 2018](#)
- „**Waiting time**“ for **resubmission** of ERC proposals that failed in **step 1** of the evaluation (1 year for proposals evaluated as category B, possibly 2 years for category C proposals)
- Proposals that proceed to **step 2** but are not funded can be resubmitted „immediately“ to the next open call
- **Literature References** do **not count towards page limits** (B1+B2)
- **Track Record**: Presentation of **up to 5** publications
- **Model CV-Template** provided by ERC (for guidance only)
- **Mandatory „Funding ID“ annex** to indicate running and submitted grants
- Dedicated **textbox to explain cross-panel/cross-domain nature** of proposal, if a second panel is selected (on cover page of B1)
- **MD/PhD-equivalency**: M.D. + **clinical training** alone does not render a M.D. degree a PhD–equivalent; a post-doctoral fellowship or professorship appointment is required in addition
- Request for **exclusion of up to three reviewers** possible without justification
- Several changes in **panel titles/keywords**
- „**You should avoid a repetition of the extended synopsis in B2**“ – Information for Applicants, p.29
- **Ethical issues table** needs to be completed online; **ethics self-assessment document** to be provided if any issue in the ethical issues table applies
- **Open Access** is mandatory as in other Horizon 2020 programmes, related costs can be charged to the project
- ERC beneficiaries will automatically be covered by the H2020 provisions on **research data sharing** unless they specifically decide to opt-out
- „**No contact with peer reviewers**“ rule during the evaluation process
- **Minimum 50% of the PIs total working time** needs to be committed to the ERC project
- ERC PIs need to spend minimum 50% of their total working time in the EU or Associated countries

## Important documents and links

Please read carefully the following two documents:

- **ERC Work Programme 2018 (legally binding)**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018\\_2020/erc/h2020-wp18-erc\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018_2020/erc/h2020-wp18-erc_en.pdf)
- **Information for applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant Calls 2018, including the detailed „panel descriptors“:**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides\\_for\\_applicants/h2020-guide18-erc-stg-cog\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides_for_applicants/h2020-guide18-erc-stg-cog_en.pdf)

- Participant Portal: Link to proposal submission for **StG 2018**:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/erc-2018-stg.html>
- **ERC Standard Proposal template** (pdf) for the Starting Grant, including administrative forms and Letter of Commitment of the Host Institute  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides\\_for\\_applicants/h2020-guide18-erc-stg-cog\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides_for_applicants/h2020-guide18-erc-stg-cog_en.pdf)  
 → **rtf-versions** available via online-submission tool (Participant Portal) after registration
- ERC Homepage: [erc.europa.eu](http://erc.europa.eu)
- ERC Starting Grant 2018 Applicant Mailbox for queries related to the call: [ERC-2018-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-2018-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu)
- Link to previous **ERC panel members**: <https://erc.europa.eu/document-category/evaluation-panels>  
 We highly recommend to use the lists of previous panel members to understand the different backgrounds and perspectives from which panel members may view your proposal. As ERC panel members tend to alternate between even and odd years also in the case of the Starting Grant Call (while several of the panel members will usually be replaced by new ones), it is advisable to check in particular the panel member lists for 2016 in order to arrive at an idea about the possible composition of panel members for 2018.
- Link to previous **ERC external referees („specialists“) members**:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference\\_docs.html#fp7](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#fp7) (→„Ideas“, FP7)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference\\_docs.html#h2020-expertslists-excellent-erc](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#h2020-expertslists-excellent-erc) (Horizon 2020; 2014/2015)

- Link to ERC **database of ERC-funded projects**:  
<https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>  
In this database you can search for abstracts and principle investigators of ERC grants. Search results can be filterd e.g. by panel and keywords. Project abstracts and the CVs of Principal Investigators funded by the panel you consider applying for may prove helpful for deciding on the most suitable evaluation panel, and for comparing CVs/track records of PIs.
- Revised **open access guidelines** by the ERC (Feb 2016):  
[https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC\\_Open\\_Access\\_Guidelines-revised\\_feb\\_2016.pdf](https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_Open_Access_Guidelines-revised_feb_2016.pdf)

## Remarks on the online submission of ERC proposals via PPSS

We strongly recommend to **pre-register early** in order to get acquainted with the system. Please follow the instructions as provided in the „Information for applicants“. As an example:

The name and e-mail of contact persons including the Principal Investigator and Host Institution contact are **read-only** in the administrative form. Only additional details of the contact persons can be edited here. **To give access rights and contact details of contact persons**, please save and close the form, and go back to Step 4 of the submission wizard and save the changes. By re-opening the form the data will be updated based on the Step 4 information. **Please note that the e-mail provisions the access rights, and therefore it cannot be changed here. The name of a contact person can be edited at Step 4.**

In case of problems with the PPSS, please **contact your host institution** (grant management/researchers' service), FFG ([ylva.huber@ffg.at](mailto:ylva.huber@ffg.at)) or directly the **PPSS Service Desk**: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/api/contact/index.html> or +32 (2) 29 92222.

It is advisable to upload and **submit a first version of your proposal around 1 week before the deadline**, in order to check for any „validation errors“ or other issues that may block proposal submission, layout changes in the uploaded versions, etc. Up to the call deadline, **you can continuously modify your proposal by submitting (not just uploading) a new version, which will overwrite the previous one.**

Please ensure that all the **required supporting documents are obtained** and submitted via PPSS in time (Commitment letter of the Host Institution, ethical issues annexes [ethical self-assessment and any additional documents related to ethics], PhD certificate, other supporting documents as required)

## Ethical issues

The **ethical issues table** needs to be completed online in the Participant Portal (PPSS). For each item that applies to your proposal, please tick the appropriate box in the list and add information on your approach to these issues in the so-called „**ethics self-assessment**“. As there is **no template** for the ethics self-assessment, we suggest to use a plain word-

document indicating the topic(s) from the online-ethics section in question and describe your strategy to deal diligently with these issues (e.g. which ethic approvals will you obtain, compliance with relevant national and European law/directives, anonymization of data, insurance, etc). Please convert the document into pdf format and upload it as „ethical self assessment“ annex in the PPSS. Furthermore, you can upload additional **annexes** with ethics-related documents (e.g. examples of informed consent forms)

A **guideline** on how to fill the ethical self assessment is available at [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/hi/ethics/h2020\\_hi\\_ethics-self-assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf)

**Please note:** The “ethical self assessment guide” also refers to documents that may not be available at the stage of proposal submission but need to be provided at the stage of preparing the grant management (e.g. ethics approvals). **The ethical issues section will not be evaluated** during proposal evaluation (see below).

We received some additional information by the ERC Executive Agency on ethical issues:

*“Any document related to ethics (including the ethics issues table) will not be made available to the ERC reviewers during the evaluation. Hence, they will not be instructed to look at them. The evaluators are not supposed to take ethic issues into account during evaluations. The ethics clearance is done by the ethics review after evaluation is final.”*

For proposals with immediate ethics issues, it is nonetheless *“advisable to include a short paragraph summarising how they will be dealt with and refer to ethics self assesement/annexes.”*

The page numbers to be indicated in the ethics table (online) refer to part B2. It is possible to indicate several page numbers divided by '/' (e.g. 12/14).

## „Scientific Excellence“: Subcriteria for the evaluation

### 1. Research Project

#### Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

#### Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy

##### *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 between or across disciplines)?*

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

##### *Scientific Approach*

*To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high risk/high gain (based on the Extended Synopsis)?*

*To what extent does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone (for Synergy Grants based on the Extended Synopsis)?*

*To what extent does the proposal require and demonstrate significant synergies, complementarities and scientific added-value to enable it to achieve its objectives (for Synergy Grants based on the Extended Synopsis)?*

*To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements 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**

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**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?*

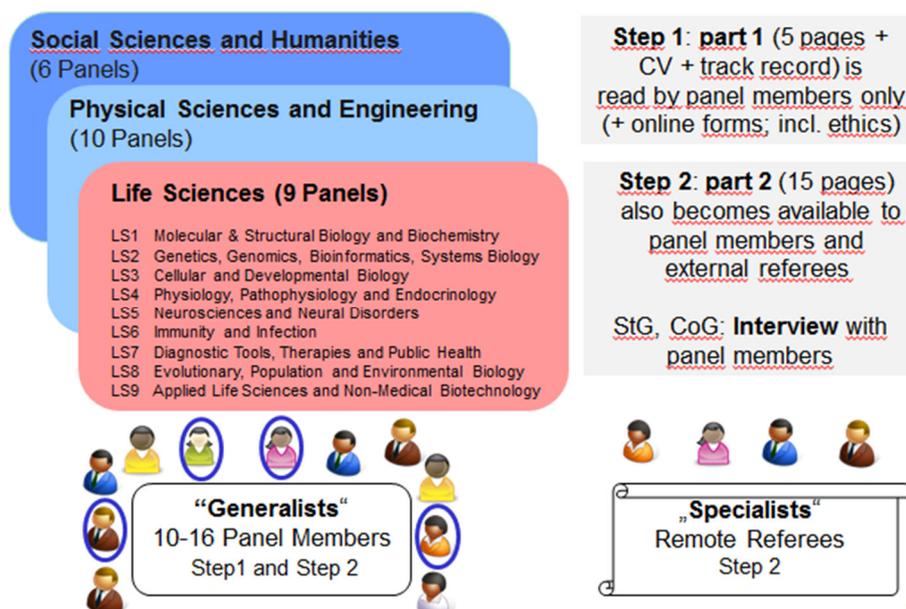
*To what extent have the achievements of the PI typically gone beyond the state of the art?*

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**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 (minimum 50% for Starting and 40% for Consolidator of the total working time) (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?*

(ERC Work Programme 2018, 37/38)



**Step 1:** At least 3 (usually 4) **Panel Members**, the majority of whom will often be „generalists“ rather than specialists in the field of your project, **read part B1 only** in detail. The remaining panel members will often only see the abstract of the proposal and possibly skim through the proposal during the panel meeting.

**Step 2:** The **full proposal (B1 and B2) becomes accessible** to panel members and „specialist“ external referees. The interview is an integral part of step 2. The decision on the recommendation of a project for funding lies with the panel members.

## Considerations for preparing a competitive Starting Grant proposal

Typically within few minutes, evaluators will arrive at an opinion about core aspects of the proposal:

- What is the problem/research challenge?
- Why is this problem important?
- Why was the problem not solved until now?
- What is the new idea/approach?
- Is this really groundbreaking research?
- What are the concrete aims of the project?
- Is this PI likely to succeed with the project?

### Structure

- Provide a **clear structure** and **narrative** throughout your proposal, so that your project reads as a compelling “story”.
- **Introduction/state of the art** are important sections to provide the „big picture“, describe the research challenge and to motivate your research goals. They should, however, not dominate the proposal (B1 and B2):
  - The **major part** of the proposal should explain your **novel approach**
- Present the concrete **aims/objectives** of your project early and in a highly visible manner (e.g. bullet points, bold fonts, text box). Panel Members like to see them at the first glance.

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Aim 1: Understand...</li><li>– Aim 2: Identify...</li><li>– Aim 3: ....</li></ul> |
|---|

- The perfect **match of aims/objectives** with the **methodology and the workplan** of the project should be easily evident to the reader (e.g. by referring to aims 1 & 2 when describing method x or workpackage y). This will support the notion of a well integrated, coherent proposal.

**Part B1** is a crucial element of the proposal. The success rate for step1 of the evaluation process, where only Part B1 is assessed, was approximately 25-30% in the last years.

The extended synopsis in B1 should contain **all important information** to evaluate both the “breakthrough character” and the feasibility of the project. This includes:

-key **preliminary data/results/”proof of principle”**

- risk management** (what are significant risks and your “plan B”)
- how will you **validate** the results of your project?

Based on ERC evaluation comments, we strongly recommend to also include a paragraph/sentence on the **team composition** in B1 (message: the necessary expertise will be assembled in your team), as well as a **brief timeplan** (1-2 sentences, or adding timing information in brackets, e.g. „Aim/Workpackage 1... [Year 1-3]“ / „key intermediate goal x [Year 3]“).

- 1 or a few high quality **figure(s)** can also be very helpful for B1.
- **References** to literature should be included, but they do not count anymore towards the 5 page-limit. The references in B1 may also support Panel Members in selecting the external „specialist“ referees to evaluate the proposal in step 2 of the evaluation

Please find here a fictional example for 5 sentences that capture the essence of an ERC proposal. This example was provided by an ERC Panel Member (mathematics) during a training for ERC applicants in order to emphasize the importance of a clear „novelty-message“. Panel Members should be able to extract a similar message from your proposal, without being specialists in your field.

*„I am interested in geodesic flows on a Kahler manifold. This subject is a very active research area („hot“) and has many novel applications/connections. However, previous works mostly concerned the hyperbolic case (the theory outlines in [Ref] and [Ref] give a fairly complete picture). Much less is known about the elliptic case, the main obstacle is the lack of a good correlation estimate. I have an idea how to break this barrier, using the Ricci flow. Thus, my main goal is to extend the theory from the hyperbolic to the elliptic case.“*

(Generally, however, we recommend to be careful with the expression „extend“, as „extension of previous work“ is a frequent critical comment by reviewers).

## **Part B2**

- B2 should provide the required details for the evaluation by „specialist“ reviewers in step 2. This concerns in particular the methodology, preliminary data, risks and contingency plans, resources/time planning, but also the team composition and information on infrastructure/scientific environment at the host institution. Part B2 also contains the budget table (see template)
- Please consider that the „specialist“ external referees in step 2 of the evaluation read the proposal for the first time and might thus question „everything“ again (including the groundbreaking nature of the project).
- Present also your **key intermediate goals** and expected **results** and how you will **validate/ interpret** results in more detail

- Highlight any **novel/unconventional methodology**
- Deal **appropriately with significant risks** (risk management/“plan B“). The essence of this information is also important for B1 to demonstrate feasibility
- At least in most cases, reviewers will likely expect a credible **timeplan** for an ERC project, it has meanwhile become standard in ERC proposals, e.g. Gantt chart, overview tables on key intermediate goals/milestones (see also example below). The time plan should however not be too detailed to be credible for a groundbreaking research agenda.
- Present the composition and expertise requirements for your **team** (PhDs, Post Docs), as well as **working arrangements** (e.g. supervision of PhD students supported by Post-Docs; overall supervision and guidance by PI). Please consider: What is the ideal combination of PhD students and PostDocs for your project, how should e.g. PhD students overlap timewise to ensure optimal continuity of the project, etc? Reviewers may question whether certain tasks could be „too demanding for a PhD student“ and should rather be allocated to a Post Doc; or conversely, whether the selected tasks constitute a convincing PhD project.
- Emphasize your **commitment** to the project as PI, including the percentage of total working time (in addition to the „time commitment“ line in the budget table)
- **References** to literature should be included (they do not count anymore towards the 15 page-limit)
- For the first time, also the “Information for Applicants” for the Starting and Consolidator Grant (in addition to the Advanced Grant) states that *“you should avoid a repetition of the extended synopsis in part B2. At step 2 of the evaluation process part B1 is evaluated together with B2”* (p.29). As part B1 should capture the essence of the entire proposal, B1 and B2 need to be consistent. However, panel members seem increasingly likely to disapprove of longer sections with identical wording in B1 and B2. We therefore recommend ensuring **consistency between B1 and B2 while avoiding “unnecessary” repetition**. You can e.g. refer to a figure in B1 instead of repeating it in B2.
- **Proposal Abstract**  
The abstract is an important part of the proposal, particularly during panel discussions. The majority of panel members may only read the abstract and possibly leaf through the proposals when they are discussed in the panel meetings. The abstract should therefore present the essence of your project in a nutshell: scientific challenge, innovative approach, objectives, potential impact, unique features of the project

## Clarity

- Your proposal needs to be **well understandable** also for **reviewers that are not specialists** in your own research field/topic. This is particularly relevant for step 1 of the evaluation process, where only part B1 is read by ERC panel members (frequently “generalists”) only.

- Important: **Precise wording**/descriptions, clear (working) **definitions**, concrete **examples**
- Helpful: high quality figure(s), including e.g. flow charts to support an intuitive understanding of the project
- Ensure a **reader-friendly layout**, with sufficient spaces, highlighting key messages (e.g. short summary of a section in a text box, bullet points; balanced use of bold fonts,...)

### Novelty/Originality/Competition

- Address explicitly the **groundbreaking nature** of the project (what is the “core novelty”?) and its potential **impact** - both the short-term impact on your field/other fields as well as your more **long-term vision** (~5-10 years).
- It should become evident for reviewers that your approach is **original, really novel** - not “an extension” of (your) previous research - and also **timely**. Explain the **unique features** of your project and the advantages of your approach compared to **competing approaches** worldwide.

### Hypothesis-driven project/clearly defined research questions?

- While there can be differences between research fields/disciplines, ERC reviewers frequently comment positively on the fact that a project is hypothesis-driven. In any case, however, the overarching research questions should be highly visible in the proposal. Proposals that apparently lack such question(s) and are perceived as largely technology-driven or methodology-driven will likely be at a disadvantage.

### Explanatory power/significance

- Critical comments/questions on the explanatory power of project results may come from various angles, depending on the field – e.g. correlation vs. causality, descriptive vs. experimental

### Scope of the project? - Justifying the approach

- As for any research proposal, the scope of an ERC project can be questioned by reviewers – either as being too broad/unfocused or too narrowly focused. It is therefore advisable to clearly explain the approach you have chosen - why are you convinced that this is the best approach, and that it is feasible within 5 years?

### Collaborations

- Provide a good balance when describing collaborations for the project: explain their importance for the project, but without giving the impression of being “too dependent” on them (message: due to excellent connections of the PI, s/he will have access to all required complementary expertise and infrastructure; targeted collaborations instead of a ‘consortium’“)

### Which panel?

- Consider thoroughly the **panel** for which you intend to submit (checking also the list of previous panel members, and abstracts of proposals submitted to that panel [ERC project database]). In **which area is the “groundbreaking nature”/core novelty of your project located**, and which panel would likely be in the best position to assess the latter? Which panel can best appreciate **your previous work/publications**?
- If you consider your proposal as **interdisciplinary** (cross-panel/cross-domain), you can indicate a secondary panel in the online-submission system (PPSS). In this case, please describe the cross-panel/cross-domain nature in the dedicated text box on the B1 cover page. However, we recommend to give some extra thought to this question, as the review of interdisciplinary proposals has also proven to be challenging for the ERC (so far the success rates of explicitly “cross-panel” interdisciplinary proposals has been significantly lower). An alternative can be to choose only one panel, but to add keywords from all other relevant panels (as well as free keywords). Exceptionally, the ERC may also choose to allocate a proposal to a different panel than that indicated by the PI.

### Demonstrating a competitive „Starter“ profile (see also below)

- **CV, Track Record, State of the art:**  
Make sure that your own contributions (e.g. in important co-authored papers) are clearly visible.  
„Research independence“ of the PI should be evident throughout the proposal, i.e. not only shown in the CV and Track Record, but also in B1 and B2, e.g. when presenting preliminary work data ( „As we could show in [ref.x]...“)
- Your **experience in team leadership** should be reflected in the CV/Track record (e.g. [co-]supervision of PhD students)
- **Up to 5 representative publications** should be listed in the track record for Starters (see Work Programme 2018 and comment below).

### Why is the ERC grant important for you now:

Describe the importance of the ERC grant as concretely as possible (e.g. to build an internationally competitive team/hire additional Post Docs/PhD, equipment; establish new line of research in the field of X;...). There should be no impression that the ERC grant is rather a "top-up" of existing funds/resources. However, where applicable it is useful to point out the complementarity of the ERC project with other grants/funds, to generate a "critical size" of efforts.

### Benefit from input by colleagues

Critical comments and questions of colleagues (both within and beyond your research field) on your proposal will be of enormous value. Ideally, colleagues evaluate your application using the evaluation subcriteria as presented in the ERC Work Programme.

**Further remarks on B1-CV, Track Record and B2-resources**

**B1, Section b: Curriculum vitae** (max. 2 pages)

- CV Template, for Guidance only (identical for Starting and Consolidator Grant), contained in template compilation at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/call\\_ptef/pt/2018-2020/h2020-call-pt-erc-stg-2018\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/call_ptef/pt/2018-2020/h2020-call-pt-erc-stg-2018_en.pdf)
- Education: Indicate also the title of your PhD thesis, and the name of your PhD supervisor for easier orientation of reviewers (→ comparing with list of papers without PhD supervisor as co-author)
- In addition to the suggestions provided by the CV template, please present also any activities as reviewer for **journals**

- **Appendix: All ongoing and submitted grants and funding of the PI (Funding ID)**  
 - Mandatory information not counting towards page limits

- According to information by the ERCEA, the information in this table is used to support the selection of reviewers for the proposal (avoiding potential conflicts of interest with reviewers that might be involved in running/submitted projects with the applicant).

However, if several ongoing grants are listed which will temporally overlap with the ERC project, it is advisable to also demonstrate that the PI will definitely be able to fulfill his/her time commitment to the ERC project, e.g. by indicating the % of time commitment of the PI for the other grants in the table.

- For submitted grant proposals which strongly overlap with the content of the ERC project, e.g. in the case of parallel FWF START applications, we strongly recommend to add an explanatory sentence, e.g.: ***In case both the X grant application and the ERC grant application are successful, I shall accept the ERC Grant and decline the X grant***
- Either in the CV or the Track Record , we recommend to also include a „Funding ID“-section to list **concluded grants** (full list, or selection). You can also indicate the total amount of funding obtained by the PI so far.

**On-going Grants**

<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Funding source</i>	<i>Amount (Euros)</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Role of the PI</i>	<i>Relation to current ERC proposal</i>

## Applications

<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Funding source</i>	<i>Amount (Euros)</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Role of the PI</i>	<i>Relation to current ERC proposal</i>

### B1, Section c: Early achievements track-record (max. 2 pages)

- StG 2018: In the early achievements track record, **up to 5 representative publications** should be presented. Highlight the publications without PhD supervisor. You can also add field relevant bibliometric indicators, e.g. citations without self-citations - see *ERC Work Programme 2018*

For CV and track record, we recommend to provide „**summary/overview information**“ for the reviewers (e.g. total number of publications, contributions to conferences, citations, h-index etc as applicable; weblink to full list of publications), as well as specific „**highlight information**“. For the list 5 of publications in the track record, it is advisable to **describe the key content and impact of selected publications and your contribution in 1-2 sentences** , e.g. in a textbox („Here, we could show for the first time...“)

We do not know how much attention ERC reviewers give to the provision of listing only "up to 5 publications" in the Track Record. At any rate, this limit is no formal criterion, but we would expect that reviewers appreciate a focus on 5 top papers in the track record. On this issue, we have received the following comment by the ERC Executive Agency: *“The ‘up to 5 publications’ is not an eligibility issue but how strictly each panel will look at this in the evaluation is their own decision and cannot be predicted.”*

We also strongly recommend to mention any **further important papers of particular relevance for your ERC project** (i.e. in addition to the top 5) in the proposal as well, e.g. by a brief additional running text section in the CV or Track record ("research profile", "research interests" or similar), and/or in the extended synopsis and B2.

### B2, Section c : Resources

Apart from explaining the project costs in the adequate detail (usually ~ 1 explanatory page for the main cost items, plus the budget table), this section is also suitable to present **detailed information on the team composition and expertise**, including the expertise requirements for Post Docs and PhD students that will be hired for the project. The strong **commitment of the PI** to the project should be visible, mentioning the percentage of time-commitment (which is also indicated in a box below the budget table (template)). In this context, please consider that reviewers will consider the composition of your team in terms of sufficient manpower or e.g. experience level of team members (e.g. „this task would seem more appropriate for a Post Doc than a PhD student?“).

We also recommend to present relevant information on the **host institution/research**

**environment** in section c), to strengthen the message of "the right project, PI and team in the right place".

The **time plan/overview** on timing of „key intermediate goals“ will usually either be presented in c) resources or at the end of b) methodology (e.g. Gantt chart and/or „simple“ table, please see below)

### Example table for "key intermediate goals"

	<b>Aim 1</b>	<b>Aim 2</b>	<b>Aim 3</b>
Years 1-2	Analysis of... Publication 1...	Purify...	Visualize... Conference...
Years 3-4	Maps...	Integration of...	...
Year 5	Model...	Correlation of findings...	...Publications,...

### Budget table:

➔ Please contact the grant management office at your ERC host institution for support with the budget calculation

- **Other direct costs („with overhead flat rate“):** This category includes contracts to purchase goods, works or services, e.g. contract for a computer; contract for an audit certificate on the financial statements; contract for the publication of brochures; contract for the creation of a project website, contract for organization of the rooms and catering for a meeting, contract for hiring IPR consultants/agents. These costs do not arise from directly implementing the „action tasks“ of the ERC project, but they are necessary to implement these tasks. Overheads apply to these costs in Horizon 2020, as opposed to the case for subcontracts ([http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/amga/h2020-amga\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-amga_en.pdf), p97/98)
- **Subcontracting costs („without overheads“):** Costs for subcontracts arise from the implementation of specific tasks which are part of the action (ERC project) by a third party. No overheads can be charged for these costs.
- **Equipment:** Please note that only **depreciation rates** (according to national rules) can be charged to the ERC for equipment
- Do not forget the possibility to include costs for publications, including **open access fees** (Article 29.2 of the ERC Model Grant Agreement: under Horizon 2020, each beneficiary must ensure open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results). Also costs related to **open access to research data** (Article 29.3. of the ERC Model Grant Agreement) can be charged ([http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference\\_docs.html#h2020-mga-erc](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#h2020-mga-erc))

- **Other direct costs with no overheads** : This category includes costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary (= host institution)
- **PI salary**: As a PI, you may request funding for your salary corresponding to the percentage of total working time dedicated to the ERC project (or a smaller fraction of that amount), even if you already receive a salary by your host institution. Funding of (part of) the PI's salary can also support the host institution in hiring a teaching replacement in case there is an agreement to reduce teaching obligations of a PI during the ERC project. Please consider, however, whether funding of the PI salary could result in a less-than-optimal number/experience level of team members due to budget constraints, this should of course be avoided.
- There is an additional short budget table in the template only to be used for requesting additional funding above EUR 1,500.000 EUR. If the table is not applicable, it should be deleted.

### Indicative evaluation schedule for Starting and Consolidator Grant 2018\*:

Starting Grant    Consolidator G.

<i>Planned dates to inform applicants (after each step or cut-off date)</i>	14/05/2018	06/07/2018	Step 1
	14/08/2018	30/11/2018	

<i>Indicative date for signature of grant agreements (by cut-off date for PoC)</i>	14/12/2018	30/03/2019
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\*according to ERC Work Programme 2018, p5.