

WRITING A COMPETITIVE ERC ADVANCED GRANT PROPOSAL



FFG-ACADEMY, 20.04.2016



TODAY'S PROGRAMME



Morning Session, 9:30-12:15

- Welcome
- General Information: Rules, Changes
- Presenting the Principal Investigator
- The ERC evaluation process from the ERCEA perspective
- Presenting the Research Project

Lunch Break: 12:15 – 13:15

Afternoon Session 13:15-16:30

- Experiences by an ERC Panel Member and AdG Grantee
- Group Work: Evaluation of example proposals

16:30 Get-together

ERC-RELATED SERVICES BY FFG



- ERC Grant Proposal writing trainings
- Individual consultancy
- Proposal checks
- Information packages
- Interview Trainings
- Close cooperation with FWF
- Homepage: <https://www.ffg.at/Europa/Horizon2020>
- ERC: <https://www.ffg.at/erc>

ERC CALLS AND BUDGET



Advanced Grants in FP7

CALL ID	CALL BUDGET Mio €	No of Proposals	No of Grants EU/AT
ERC-AdG-2008	€ 553	2167	282/9
ERC-AdG-2009	€ 515	1584	245/7
ERC-AdG-2010	€ 590	2009	271/6
ERC-AdG-2011	€ 660	2284	301/7
ERC-AdG-2012	€ 661	2304	313/3
ERC-AdG-2013	€ 662	2408	285/6

Advanced Grants in Horizon 2014/15

CALL ID	CALL BUDGET Mio €	No of Proposals	No of Grants EU/AT
ERC-AdG-2014	450	2250	192/3
ERC-AdG-2015	630	1953	277/13
ERC-AdG-2016	540	tbd	tbd

1

General Information Rules, Changes

ERC: AIMS AND MAIN PRINCIPLES

- Funds potentially **groundbreaking research** (“frontier research”) by individual researchers (PIs) and their teams
- Open for **all areas of research**
- **Scientific excellence** is the only criterion for funding
- Led by autonomous Scientific Council
- **highly competitive** : ~ 12% success rate



ERC: FUNDING PRINCIPLES

1 Principal Investigator (PI)

+

1 Host Institution (HI)



Target group: excellent scientists in all career stages

“Starters”: establish independent res. team/programme - 1,5 Mio €

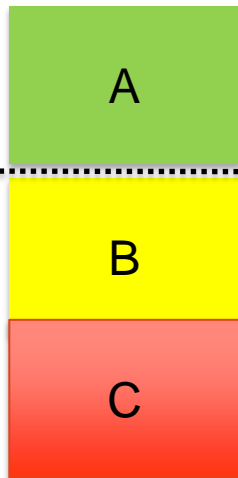
“Consolidators”: consolidate research team/programme - 2,0 Mio €

“Advanced”: novel, ambitious research programme - 2,5 (3,5) Mio € for 5 years

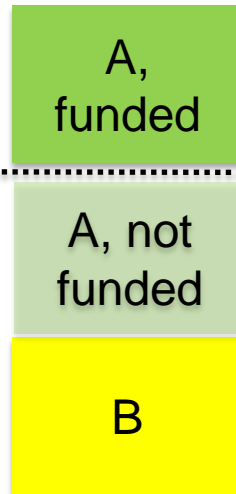
- Minimum time commitment by PI (AdG: **30%/50%**)
- Funding goes to HI, but HI guarantees autonomy of PI
- ERC-Grants are portable – “Money follows researcher”

A-B-C EVALUATION CATEGORIES ADG

step 1



step 2



1 year waiting time for new ERC application

only for step1

2 years waiting time for new ERC application

IMPORTANT RULES/CHANGES FOR ERC APPLICATIONS, 2016 (1)



(Re)Submission rules for 2016:

- A PI may submit only one proposal to the ERC for ERC frontier research grant calls made under the same Work Programme
- AdG 2015, category **B** at evaluation (step 1 or 2): PI not eligible for ERC Call 2016
- AdG 2015, category **C** at evaluation (step 1): PI not eligible for ERC Calls 2016 and 2017
- Panel Member in AdG 2014 or 2016 call:
PI not eligible to submit a proposal for the same grant type in 2016
- ERC Grantee: may not submit a proposal for another ERC frontier research grant, unless the existing project ends no more than two years after the call deadline

RULES/CHANGES FOR ERC APPLICATIONS, 2016 (2)



- Horizon 2020 **funding rates** apply:
100 % funding of direct costs, 25% flat rate for overheads
- All documents for proposal submission on EU Participant Portal
- **CV**: Example template provided by ERC
- Possible to request exclusion of up to 3 potential reviewers
- Evaluation **panels**: Some changes in expertise keywords
- Evaluation **domains** (Physical sciences and engineering, Life Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities): **no pre-defined budget** allocation anymore
- **Open Access** rules of Horizon 2020 apply; open access fees fundable by ERC

ADG: PROPOSAL STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION PROCESS



Administrative Forms

- 1 General info, abstract
- 2 Participants & contacts
- 3 Budget
- 4 Ethics
- 5 Call-specific questions

+ Annexes:

- Commitment letter of HI
- Supporting documents if required

 **Eligibility check**

PART B1 – pdf

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| CV | 2 p. |
| Track record | 2 p. |
| Extended synopsis | 5 p. |

PART B2 – pdf

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Scientific proposal | 15 p |
|----------------------------|------|

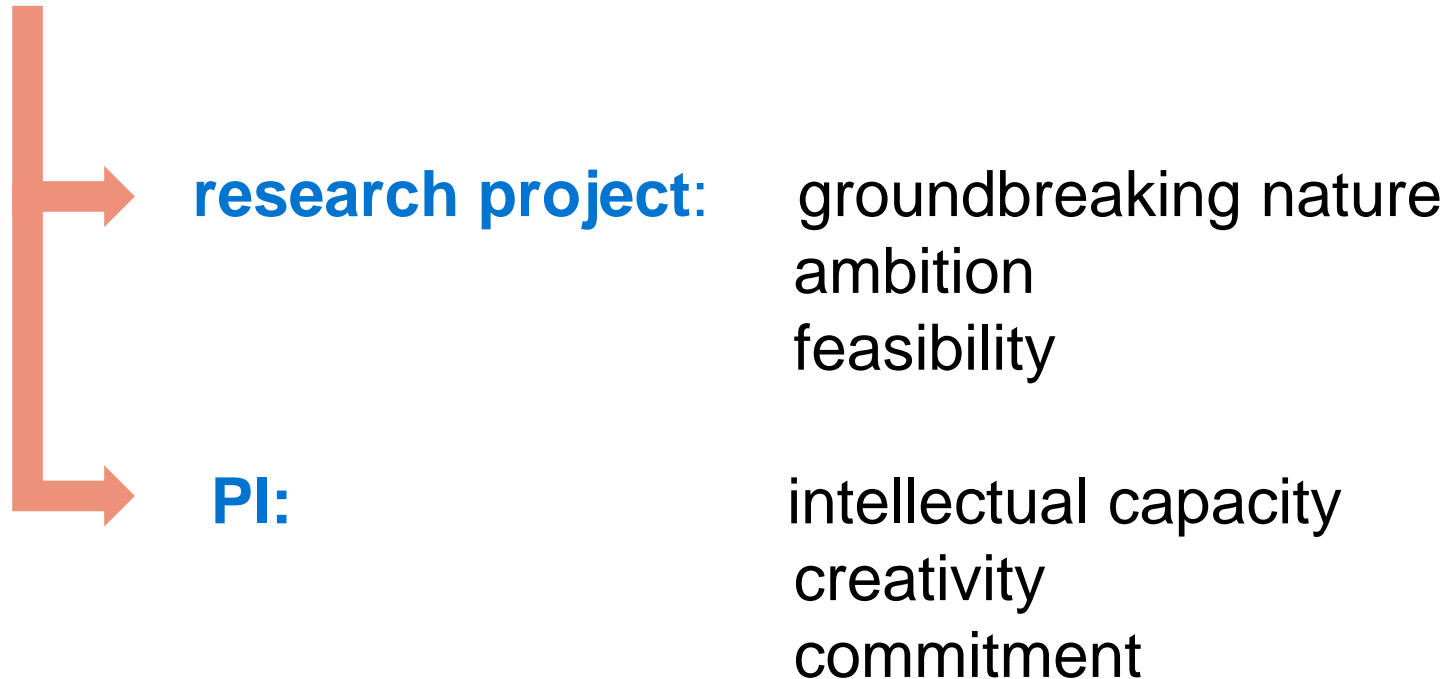


Step 1:
only **B1** is
evaluated
by **Panel**
Members
(„**Generalists**“)
only



Step 2:
B1 + B2 are
evaluated
by **Panel +**
external
Referees
(„**Specialists**“)

SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE



2

principal investigator

“ADVANCED” PROFILE OUTLINE



- No formal eligibility criteria, but intense competition
- active researchers with a track-record of significant research achievements **in the last 10 years***; at least matching one or more of the following **benchmarks**:
 - **10 publications as senior author** (or joint author, depending on the field) in
 - major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals
 - and/or in the leading international peer reviewed journals and peer-reviewed conferences in the field

* **extension** of time-window possible under defined circumstances, e.g. maternity/parental leave, long-term illness, clinical qualification

“ADVANCED” PROFILE OUTLINE (2)

- 3 major research monographs, of which at least one is translated into another language (e.g. humanities, social sciences)



Other alternative benchmarks may be considered, e.g:

- 5 granted patents
- 10 invited presentations in well-established international conferences
- 3 research expeditions led by PI
- organisation of international conferences/congresses
- awards, prizes
- major contributions to launching careers of outstanding researchers
- recognised leadership in industrial innovation

„ADVANCED“ PROFILES FOR COMPARISON



FFG

The screenshot displays the European Research Council (ERC) website. The header features the ERC logo and the tagline "Supporting top researchers from anywhere in the world". A navigation bar includes links for Home, Funding and Grants, Projects and Results, Media and Events, About ERC, and Contact us. The main content area is titled "ERC Funded Projects" and features a grid of 25 small images representing various research projects. To the left of the grid is a sidebar with filters: "Filter by funding scheme:", "Filter by subpanel:", and "Filter by country:". Below these filters is a "Free text search" box and a "Clear all" button. The text below the grid states: "The ERC operates according to an 'investigator-driven', or 'bottom-up', approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. Accordingly the portfolio of ERC funded projects spans a wide range of topics and research questions. Since 2007, more than 4,500 projects have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the associated countries. The ERC has received over 43,000 project proposals for its calls. You can use the menu on the left to search quickly and easy ERC funded projects under FP7. Projects can be filtered according to: Funding scheme, Research area (Panel / Domain), Country of Host Institution and/or free keyword(s). Horizon 2020 projects are available on the EU Open Data Portal. The projects will also be available in the search in the next

<http://erc.europa.eu/projects-and-results/erc-funded-projects>

CV: ERC TEMPLATE AS EXAMPLE



Applicant's last name

Part B1

ACRONYM

Section b: Curriculum vitae (max. 2 pages)

[The template below is provided only for guidance. It may be modified as necessary and appropriate.]

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Family name, First name:

Researcher unique identifier(s) (such as ORCID, Research ID, etc. ...):

Date of birth:

URL for web site:

• EDUCATION

199? PhD

Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution, Country

199? Master

Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution, Country

- **CURRENT POSITION(S)**

201? – 201? Current Position
 Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – Current Position (please specify if supervision)
 Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

- **PREVIOUS POSITIONS**

200? – 200? Position held (please specify if supervision)
 Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – 200? Position held (please specify if supervision)
 Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

- **FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

200? – 200? Name of Faculty/ Department/Centre, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? Award received from Name of Institution/ Country

198? – 199? Scholarship, Name of Faculty/ Department/Centre, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

- **SUPERVISION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS**

200? – 200? Number of Postdocs/ PhD/ Master Students
 Name of Faculty/ Department/ Centre, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

- **TEACHING ACTIVITIES (if applicable)**

200? – Teaching position – Topic, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – 200? Teaching position – Topic, Name of University/ Institution/ Country



- **ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS (if applicable)**

201? Please specify your role and the name of event / Country

200? Please specify type of event / number of participants / Country

- **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES (if applicable)**

201? – Faculty member, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

201? – 201? Graduate Student Advisor, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – 200? Member of the Faculty Committee, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – 200? Organizer of the Internal Seminar, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – 200? Member of a Committee; role, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

- **COMMISSIONS OF TRUST (if applicable)**

201? – Scientific Advisory Board, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

201? – Review Board, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

201? – Review panel member, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

201? – Editorial Board, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – Scientific Advisory Board, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – Reviewer, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – Scientific Evaluation, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

200? – Evaluator, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

Add:
journal reviews



- **MEMBERSHIPS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES (if applicable)**

201? – Member, Research Network “*Name of Research Network*”

200? – Associated Member, Name of Faculty/ Department/Centre, Name of University/
Institution/ Country

200? – Funding Member, Name of Faculty/ Department/Centre, Name of University/ Institution/
Country

- **MAJOR COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)**

Name of collaborators, Topic, Name of Faculty/ Department/Centre, Name of University/
Institution/ Country

- **CAREER BREAKS (if applicable)**

Exact dates Please indicate the reason and the duration in months.



Appendix: All on-going and submitted grants and funding of the PI (Funding ID)
Mandatory information (does not count towards page limits)

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 proposal²</i>

Grant 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 proposal²</i>

10 YEARS TRACK RECORD



- **Publications:**

Major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals, and/or leading international peer reviewed-journals, peer-reviewed conferences proceedings, monographs,...

→ **up to 10** representative publications from the **last 10 years**, as main author/joint author

- **Invited presentations:** Conferences, international advanced schools
- **Prizes and awards**
- **Patents**

Overview information + highlights

Ten years track record (max 2 pages)

Key publications as main author

The applicant has published **one book** “beyond the mind bits” as editor and **42 articles as main author** mostly in high-ranked peer-reviewed journals. Five articles with short descriptions below are especially relevant to the proposed projects. All together, these present key publications of the applicant.

- 1) Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapy(2008), 34, 203-224, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Martin Baumgartner, Ingrid Mayer, Kim Possible

Psychoanalytic matter in the context of everyday life, sidestepping the experience of neurosis. In this paper, we have discussed first time about few allusions to infantile sexuality and its impact on adult pathology. This theoretical aspect was practically non-existent before. Very often cited since the publication, so far 320 citation.

- 2) **Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience**, Kim Possible, Nicolas Sidis, Beyond the Pleasure Principle 18(2006), R919-R977

It marked a turning point and a major modification of my previous theoretical approach. In Going “beyond” the simple pleasure principle, the PI developed her theory of drives, by adding the death instinct. Awarded as **the best paper of the year 2006**.

- 3) Kim Possible, Johannes Sorz, *The Analysis of the Ego*, 96(2006) 025072, **Psychological Review** 46, 115-123

3

how to present your research proposal?

WITHIN FEW MINUTES, EVALUATORS WANT TO KNOW:



- What is the **research problem**?
- Why is this problem **important**?
- Why was it **not solved until now**?
- What is your **new idea/approach**?
- Is this **groundbreaking** research?
- What are your concrete research **objectives**?
- Why can **you** succeed?

- ➔ What is the optimal **structure** to tell your story?
- **Key components** of your narrative: State-of-the Art, Objectives/Aims, Methods, Impact, Team/Resources
 - Provide the **big picture** first
 - Guide the reader by additional **subheaders**
e.g. Research Questions
Work leading up to this proposal
Scientific Impact
Research Design
 - **visual material** such as images/ graphs

PROPOSAL STRUCTURE – PART B1

COMMUNICATING THE ESSENCE

Extended synopsis (5 pages)

research challenge; aims,
groundbreaking nature vs. state of the art;
originality, feasibility, impact,
methodology, expertise of PI & team,
brief time plan
+ references

- convince „**generalist**“ and „**specialist**“ panel members
- careful choice of panel(s)



Abstract (2000 characters)

PART B2: CONVINCING “GENERALIST” AND “SPECIALIST” REVIEWERS



Scientific proposal (15 pages)

- a) **State of the art and objectives:** objectives clearly specified in context of state of the art; importance & impact of proposed research
- b) **Methodology:** detailed; key intermediate goals; novel/unconventional aspects, key risks and contingency plans, work and time plan
- c) **Resources:** team members, expertise, explanation for all cost categories, budget table; (time) commitment of PI

Note: This is for information only. The definitive template for your call will be available in the submission system, which you can then use when writing your proposal.

Research proposal [Part B1]¹
(to be evaluated in Step 1 and Step 2)

Proposal Full Title

PROPOSAL ACRONYM

Cover Page:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Name of the PI's host institution for the project
- Proposal duration in months

Proposal summary (identical to the abstract from the online proposal submission forms, section 1).

The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as the short description of your research proposal in the evaluation process and in communications to contact in particular the potential remote referees and/or inform the Commission and/or the programme management committees and/or relevant national funding agencies (provided you give permission to do so where requested in the online proposal submission forms, section 1). It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information.

Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. The abstract must be written in English. There is a limit of 2000 characters (spaces and line breaks included).

Explanation/justification of cross-panel or cross domain nature, if a secondary panel is indicated in the online proposal submission forms. There is a limit of 1000 characters, spaces and line breaks included.

Is

- for setting the context
- to present the key research questions/research "frontier"
- to define your own objectives clearly

Do's

- Make it interesting to attract your audience
- Articulate the relations to own/other research areas
- Cite papers where meaningful
- Keep balance with respect to overall page numbers

AIMS / OBJECTIVES

- Visible at first glance?

Possible

Part B1

SUPER-EGO

Our goals of the proposed project are / We want to tackle above mentioned questions and set following goals.

Aim 1: extensive analysis of the Symptom reported in the last 10 years.

Aim 2: creation of a new model of mind structure.

The new model will consider the critical factor F_x which was overlooked in the last decade and thus, as shown in some of our research result, is a critical evidence to disprove the existing model. ...

Aim 3: production of an intrinsic generic model.

example

Is

- about your work process and strategy to achieve the project goals
- to convince that your goals are achievable
- differently defined in every research area

Do's

- Ensure coherence with your goals
- Emphasize innovative aspects, your related past work and possible collaborations for every specific method

- **Identify and describe risks and contingencies** to deal with these risks: what is your plan B?
 - The limitation of the proposed approaches is that.....
 - We will compromise/complement
 - Further possible variation is already experienced by the group B with whom we have strong collaboration....
- Often part of the methodology
- Approach with well-founded **confidence**: I am optimistic, because of our experience, results out of the project A, ...etc

IMPACT: SIGNIFICANT CHANGE BY YOUR PROJECT



If some of our approaches are successful, we can expect within the next few years a **detailed understanding of.....**

The proposed project should provide a rich set of scientific data on X, which will suggest new research experiment in the area of X.

The expected result **will open a new research area** emerged by X and Y. / ...can open up new perspectives for analyzing ...

The results are to drastically advance not only the fields of X systems and Y but also the current understanding of Z which is of **great importance far beyond the borders** of...

example

MILESTONES / TIME TABLE



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

- **Summary box**
 - at the beginning and/or end of a chapter, put a **short résumé** (text box)
- **Use the **questions of your colleagues** for your proposal**
 - To talk about the risks
 - To make the title more attractive
 - To describe the topics you want to tackle → goals/aims
- **Balanced use**
 - High quality graphics
 - Spaces, Breaks
 - Short summaries
- **Avoid:** Typos, vague expressions

4

**What else is important:
Resources
Ethical issues**

SIMPLE BUDGET TEMPLATE: PART B2

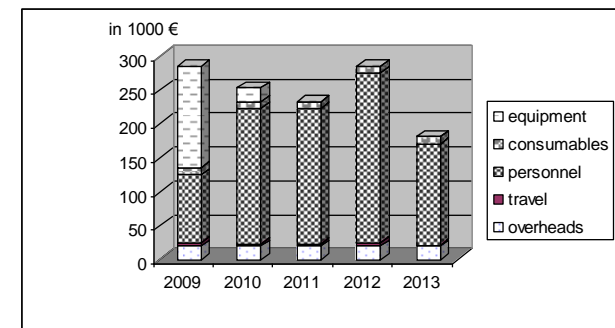
Cost Category			Total in Euro
Direct Costs ²	Personnel	PI ³	
		Senior Staff	
		Postdocs	
		Students	
		Other	
	i. Total Direct costs for Personnel (in Euro)		
	Travel		
	Equipment		
	Other goods and services	Consumables	
		Publications (including Open Access fees), etc.	
		Other (please specify)	
ii. 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) ⁶			
Total Requested EU Contribution (in Euro) ⁶			

Personnel costs:
Host Institution-specific value
or FWF-rates:
<https://www.fwf.ac.at/de/forschungsfoerderung/personalkosten/aetze/>

RESOURCES

- Visualize your resources
- Describe your **team members' expertise and tasks** and additional assets to the project
- Double **check with bookkeeper's eye**:
Can it be done with two senior researchers instead of three?
Is the requested equipment necessary?

Work package (see the milestones in the methodology)	planned human resource, to be hired	Key staff	External Counsellors (no funding requested)	Internal Counsellors (partly funding requested)
1. Numerical solution of Model A	1 senior researcher	M. Sorz	Prof. W. Amadeus	P. Reiter
2. Solution of Model B	½ senior researcher, 2 phd students	T. Lindahl		A. Höglinger (1/2 experts)
....				



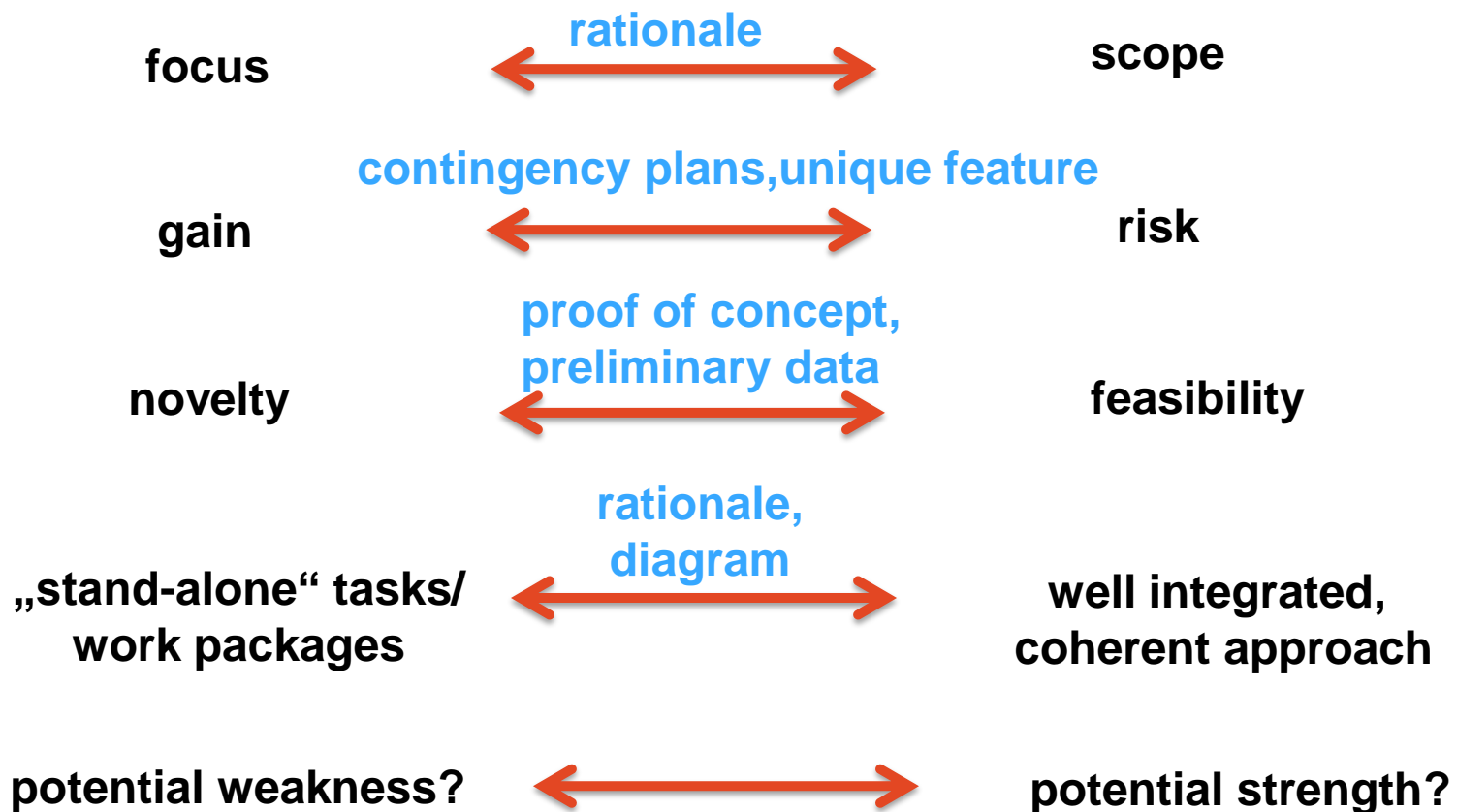
- Complete the **ethics issues table** (online) and, if applicable, upload your ethical self-assessment form
- Ethical self-assessment (annex): Discuss in detail how the ethics issues identified in the ethics issues table will be addressed
- Describe how the proposal **meets the national legal and ethical requirements of the country(ies)** where the tasks raising ethical issues will be performed, indicate which particular **authorisations** will be obtained

SUMMARY: KEY CONSIDERATIONS



- How does the project break new ground? What is its „core novelty“?
- What are the main overarching research questions/ testable hypotheses? (-> validation of results, interpretation)
- What are the central research objectives?
- Risk/gain-balance
- Which panel is best suited?
- What is the best structure for the proposal?
- Who can give you critical feedback?

SUMMARY: KEY CONSIDERATIONS



KEEPING UP TO DATE: IMPORTANT LINKS



FFG

ERC homepage

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

Abstracts, PIs, Panels of granted ERC projects

<http://erc.europa.eu/projects-and-results/erc-funded-projects>

Previous ERC Panel Members:

<http://erc.europa.eu/evaluation-panels>

ERC Newsletter

<http://erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc>