UNIVERZITA KARLOVA

How to write a good ERC proposal

Quick Guide

What is ERC?

- ERC supports excellent frontier research across scientific disciplines.
- ERC supports individual researchers, not consortia (not collaborative projects).
- Bottom–up approach (research topics are not predefined)
- Research excellence is the only criterion.
- For more information on individual grant schemes, see the **brochure on the web.**

Where to get the information?

- You can find currently opened calls at **https://erc.europa.eu**
- Sign up to participant portal to see the proposal template, each step is shown below.
- Read carefully the project documentation, especially **ERC Work Programme** for current year and **Information for Applicants.**
- You can always ask a contact person for ERC at the European Centre (**ec@cuni.cz**).
- Take a look at our website: **www.ec.cuni.cz**

Choosing the right scheme

- If you consider applying for ERC, first check the **eligibility** for the scheme.
- **ERC StG** 2-7 years from PhD. (from the date of the award of PhD. until the 1st of January of the current year, always check the eligibility in the work programme).
- **ERC CoG** 7-12 years from PhD.
- **Extensions** of these time slots:
    - Maternity leave (18 months per child)
    - Parental leave
    - Military service
    - Serious illness, care for a seriously ill family member

Choosing the host institution

- You can change the host institution during the project.

- **Myth #1:**
  - ✕ the quality of the host institution determines the evaluation of the application
  - ✓ the evaluation of the application depends only on the scientific quality of the project and the PI

Structure of the proposal

Part A – online
- A1 Information about PI and the proposal
- Information about the host institution
- Budget

Part B1 – must be saved into the system as a PDF
- Abstract   (1 p.)
- Extended synopsis   (5 p.)
- CV   (2 p.)
- Funding ID   (1.p)
- Track Record   (2 p.)

Annexes – must be saved into the system as a PDF
- Letter of Commitment
- Copy of PhD. diploma
- other information

Part B2 – must be saved into the system as a PDF
- scientific part of the proposal (15 p.)

Choosing the evaluation panel

Life Sciences:

- **LS1** Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry
- **LS2** Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
- **LS3** Cellular and Developmental Biology
- **LS4** Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
- **LS5** Neurosciences and Neural Disorders
- **LS6** Immunity and Infection
- **LS7** Diagnostics, Therapies, Applied Medical Technology and Public Health
- **LS8** Evolutionary, Population and Environmental Biology
- **LS9** Applied Life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology

Physical Sciences and Engineering:

- **PE1** Mathematics
- **PE2** Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- **PE3** Condensed Matter Physics
- **PE4** Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- **PE5** Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- **PE6** Computer Science and Informatics
- **PE7** Systems and Communication Engineering
- **PE8** Products and Process Engineering
- **PE9** Universe Sciences
- **PE10** Earth System Science

Social Sciences and Humanities:

- **SH1** Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- **SH2** Institutions, Values, Environment and Space
- **SH3** The Social World, Diversity, Population
- **SH4** The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- **SH5** Cultures and Cultural Production
- **SH6** The Study of the Human Past

- If you are not sure which panel to choose check out the previously supported **ERC projects**:

ERC FUNDED PROJECTS

The ERC operates according to a "curiosity-driven", or "bottom-up", approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. Accordingly the portfolio ERC funded projects spans a wide range of topics and research questions.

Since 2007, more than 7,000 projects have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the associated countries. The ERC has received over 65,000 project proposals for its calls.

Use the search facility to quickly and easily find examples of ERC funded projects.

HOW CAN YOU SEARCH?

Projects can be filtered according to funding scheme, call year, panel and/or country of host institution.
You can also use the search box and enter free text words, for instance names of universities or principal investigators.

WHERE DOES THE DATA COME FROM?

Information displayed is automatically updated through the information available on the CORDIS platform.
Only funded projects, whose grant agreements have been signed, appear in this section.

Please note that the structure and descriptions of ERC panels have changed over the years. The panel structures for each year can be found in ERC annual work programmes. Panels displayed in this tool are the panels the projects were selected in.

SEARCH

Apply

FUNDING SCHEME

Starting Grant (StG) (3760)
Consolidator Grant (CoG) (1265)
Advanced Grant (AdG) (2388)
Proof of Concept (PoC) (689)
Synergy Grants (SyG) (24)

CALL YEAR

RESEARCH DOMAIN

(PE) Physical Sciences & Engineering (3198)

PE1 (340)   PE2 (382)
PE3 (346)   PE4 (266)

You can also look at the evaluators at the individual panels in the past years. Do not contact them in the context of submission of your grant proposal!

The descriptors and keywords that you specify in Part A may affect your reassignment to another panel or the assignment of the evaluation panel members.

- **Myth #2:**
  ✕ The more descriptors (covering multiple panels) I state, the better because the project will seem multi-disciplinary.
  ✓ Abstract has the essential importance. This abstract is not a summary in the sense of the article abstract, but the explanation of the whole project in several sentences.

- Part B1 contains an extended synopsis, CV and track record of the PI.
- The synopsis must be written in a way to invite the evaluator for reading Part B2. You should get an enthusiatic attention of the evaluator.
- The CV must contain important facts such as: achieved results, experience gained abroad, invited lectures, successful students, etc.
- The Track Record must explain your achievements showing how you influenced your discipline.

- **Myth #3:**
  ✗ If I don't have a publication in Nature or Science, there is no point in proposing for the ERC.
  ✓ The only

Which questions must be answered?

- **WHAT?**
    - What is the fundamental problem to be investigated? Show that you are an expert in your field. Needs to be sufficiently clear for experts and non-experts in the panel.
- **WHY?**
    - Why is the proposed work on the problem worth funding?
    - What would be the specific and broader impact of your solution? Be specific instead of vague.
    - What is the state-of-the-art, what are the limitations, what is the substantial step behind the horizon proposed in the project?
- **HOW?**
    - How the problem can be approached so that a substantial progress towards the goals can be expected? Describe the risks as well as the possible contingency plan.
    - Outline the work plan, clearly formulated sub-tasks.
    - Methodology should be elaborated into more thorough description in Part B2.
- **WHO?**
    - Who are the PI and his team? Has this PI chance to achieve breakthrough results?

ERC Consolidator Grant 2018
Research proposal [Part B1]
(Part B1 is evaluated both in Step 1 and Step 2,
Part B2 is evaluated in Step 2 only)

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

Text highlighted in grey should be deleted.

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).

Part B2
- More thorough description of the research objectives, methodology and resources.
- Do not repeat copy and paste what you have already described in B1, focus on developing methodology and project implementation.
- Elaborate more on the risk management.
- Justify the required resources - properly explain your budget.

Applicant's last name   Part B2   ACRONYM

ERC Consolidator Grant 2018
Research proposal [Part B2][1]
(_not_ evaluated in Step 1)

Part B2: _The scientific proposal_ (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.

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

Section b. Methodology

to complete

What is the evaluator looking for?

- Originality!
- Evaluator is looking for vision, ambitious goals and well justified risk.
- Not all goals need to be achieved but what is needed is to create the best possible conditions for doing so.
- Methodology: you must convince the evaluator about the feasibility of your plan (B1) and well-thought-out methodology (B2).
- The grant proposal must offer evaluators the answers they are looking for.

Look at the Work Programme and keep in mind these questions about the 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?
- 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 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)?

and about the PI…

- 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/have the PI(s) demonstrated the ability to propose and conduct ground- breaking research?
- To what extent does/do the PI(s) provide evidence of creative independent thinking?
- To what extent have the achievements of the PI(s) 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 (for Advanced Grant applicants)?
- 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 30% for Advanced and Synergy of the total working time) (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

Frequent comments of evaluators

- The project framework is either too narrow or, on the contrary, it is a free connection of several ideas without clear sense.
- It is just a continuation of the on going research.
- It is a collaborative project where the role of PI is not sufficiently explained.
- The work plan is not clear or insufficiently described.
- Inadequate description of the risks and the way they are limited or the possibility of a backup plan.
- PI has insufficient track record.
- PI did not achieve the required independence on its PhD. Supervisor.

Please confirm your choice of the topic and type of action for the call, as these cannot be changed subsequently in the submission system.

Topic: ERC Proof of Concept Grant - ERC-2016-PoC

Type of Action: Proof of Concept Grant (ERC-POC)

Call: Call for proposals for ERC Proof of Concept Grant

CANCEL   CONFIRM

Select the ERC scheme and confirm your choice.

Your organisation

PIC* [ ]   Short name* [ ]

Organisations you have been previously associated with. Click to select

PIC: 999925434
CHARLES UNIVERSITY
OVOCNY TRH 5/3
PRAHA 1, CZ
VAT: CZ00216208

This is the PIC number, once you fill it in, some of data are automatically written into the form.

Search for your organisation PIC **search**

Your Role

Please indicate your role in this proposal

Specify your role in the project, probably PI-Principal Investigator.

○ Principal Investigator

○ Main Host Institution Contact

○ Contact person

Provide an acronym, short summary, and choose the panel to which you want to submit your proposal. You can return to this information later on and edit it further. Then click on "Next".

Your Proposal

Please choose an acronym for your proposal
section of the submission form Part A and can also be updated there.

Acronym* [ ]   Please restrict acronym to latin characters only

Short Summary (max. 2000 characters)* [ ]
Character count:

Submission and Evaluation of Proposals Assent Disclaimer

Please read and accept this disclaimer to proceed with the creation of your draft proposal:

Proposal pre-registration data

1. In order to plan the evaluations, the Commission services need access to a limited amount of information about your draft proposal (the so called pre-registration data) prior to call deadline. The pre-registration data is limited to: call, topic, type of action, Participant Identification (PIC) code of the participating organisation(s), project acronym, short summary and - where applicable - panel and keywords. **Neither the Part B nor any annexe(s) form part of the pre-registration data that can be accessed by the European Commission services before the call deadline.**

2. You do not have to list sensitive/confidential information in the 'Short Summary' (entered on Step 3). Where relevant, sensitive/confidential information can be added to the 'Abstract' field in the Part A administrative form at a later stage in the submission process; this Abstract is not included in the pre-registration data. Therefore, please provide as the 'short summary' the relevant information (keywords, non-confidential information) for the planning of the evaluation.

○ *I agree that the pre-registration data becomes available to the European Commission services prior to call closure.*

○ *I wish that the pre-registration data does not become available to the European Commission services prior to call closure. (Applicants are advised to use this option only in well justified cases, as it hinders the planning of the evaluation process and the timely processing of proposals).*

Part B

3. **File format:** For the Technical Annex (part B) you must use exclusively PDF ("portable document format", compatible with Adobe Acrobat version 5 or higher, with embedded fonts). Annexes might have an obligatory page limit. Please check for the number and type of mandatory or optional annexes for the call in the relevant call documentation. Annexes with excess pages where page limit applies, will receive a watermark upon upload to the system. Users will receive a warning when trying to submit an annex with excess pages.

4. **Time constraints:** Preparation and uploading of the PDF formatted technical annex may take some time. You should ensure that this has been completed in time, well before the call closure deadline.

Submission

5. Proposals must be submitted prior to the call closure deadline. Likewise, modifications to proposals or uploaded attachments are also required to be submitted prior to the call closure deadline or they will not be taken into account. Proposals may be submitted or withdrawn at any time prior to the call closure deadline. There is only ever one version of a submitted proposal, as submission over-writes the previous version.

Personal Data

6. We will process personal data in accordance with Regulation No 45/2001 and according to the "notifications of the processing operations" to the Data Protection Officer (DPO) of the Commission/Agency (publicly accessible in the DPO register). Read more on the Legal Notice of the Participant Portal.

[accept]   [decline]

If possible, check this option and click on "accept" below.

Draft proposal xy created ✕

Dear ADELA JIROUDKOVA,
You have successfully created a draft proposal **xy** for the call **ERC-2018-PoC**.
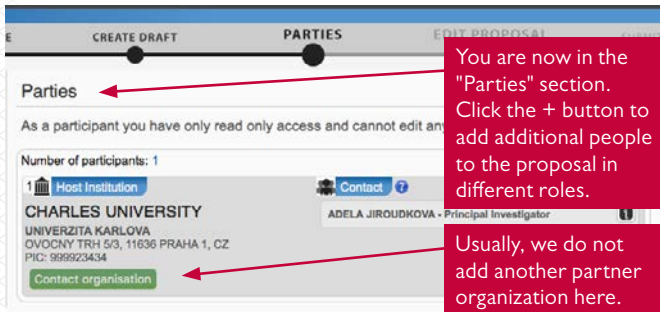
You can continue editing your draft proposal now or access it at a later time (before the deadline **2018-04-18 17:00:00** Brussels Local Time) from the Participant Portal by accessing the My Proposals tab.

An email containing this information has been sent to this email address: *adela.jiroudkova@ruk.cuni.cz* (which is associated with your ECAS account *njiroade*).

Go to My Proposals ⬈   Continue with this proposal

As a next step this window will appear (with the date and time of the dadline). Click on "continue with this proposal".

CREATE DRAFT   PARTIES   EDIT PROPOSAL

Parties

As a participant you have only read only access and cannot edit any

Number of participants: 1

1 🏛 Host Institution   🕸 Contact ❼
CHARLES UNIVERSITY
UNIVERZITA KARLOVA
OVOCNY TRH 5/3, 11636 PRAHA 1, CZ
PIC: 999923434   ADELA JIROUDKOVA - Principal Investigator
Contact organisation

You are now in the "Parties" section. Click the + button to add additional people to the proposal in different roles.

Usually, we do not add another partner organization here.

Depending on the role you choose, the person will have full or limited access to your project proposal.

Add contact ✖

🏛 CHARLES UNIVERSITY

Please enter the contact name and details: ❓

Project Role	Main Host Institution Contact ⬍
Access rights	Coordinator contact (full access) ⬍
First Name *	
Last Name *	
Email Address *	

* required field

OK   Cancel

You are now in the section "Edit proposal".

By clicking on "edit forms" you can edit Part A, which we will introduce you below.

LOGIN   FUNDING SCHEME   CREATE DRAFT   PARTIES   EDIT PROPOSAL   SUBMIT

Step 5
Edit Proposal

ERC-2018-PoC

USER NAME
ADELA JIROUDKOVA

TOPIC
ERC-2018-PoC

TYPE OF ACTION
ERC-POC

ACRONYM
xy

DRAFT ID | SEP-210508567

DEADLINE (Brussels Local Time)
18 April 2018 17:00:00

37 days left until closure

Configuration OK

Download Part B Templates ⬇

Visit our 'How to' user guide ↗

Visit our 'H2020 Online Manual' ↗

Edit Proposals' Forms

In this step you can edit the administrative forms and upload the proposal itself. ❓

WARNING: This proposal contains changes that have not yet been submitted...

Administrative Forms

Edit will open the forms. ❓

[edit forms]   [view history]   [print preview]

Part B and Annexes

In this section you may upload the technical annex of the proposal (in PDF format only) and any other requested attachments. ❓

Part B	upload	❌ ❓
Host Support Letter	upload	❌ ❓
Extra Annex 3	upload	❓
Extra Annex 4	upload	❓
Extra Annex 5	upload	❓
Extra Annex 6	upload	❓
Extra Annex 7	upload	❓
Extra Annex 8	upload	❓
Extra Annex 9	upload	❓
Extra Annex 10	upload	❓

<< Step 4 - Parties   validate   submit

Click here to download the attachments below (Part B1 and B2, Letter of Commitment of the Host Institution), then upload them back here.

Whenever you can also go step back. Once you click on submit, even if you are not finished with the project proposal, you can always come back and edit the proposal again till the deadline.

Proposal Submission Forms
European Research Council Executive Agency

Horizon 2020

Whenever you leave the form, save it.

You are now in Part A, you can get here by clicking on "edit forms" (previous step).

Topic:
Type of action:
()
Proposal number:
Proposal acronym:
Deadline Id:
Table of contents

Proposal ID	Acronym

1 - General information

You can edit the acronym here.

Topic	
Call Identifier	
Type of Action	
Deadline Id	

Fill in the panel to which your research belongs. If appropriate, you can also fill in the secondary review panel below.

Acronym

Proposal title* *The title should be no longer than 200 ch... to the non-specialist in your field.*

*Note that for technical reasons, the following characters are not accepted in the Proposal Title and will be removed: < > * &*

Duration in months* *Duration must be between 1 - 60 months*

Primary ERC Review Panel*

Secondary ERC Review Panel (if applicable)

ERC Keyword 1* *As first keyword please choose one which is linked to the Primary Review Panel.*

Please select, if applicable, the ERC keyword(s) that best characterise the subject of your proposal in order of priority.

It is up to you whether you want to write here as a contact rectorate of research support dpt. of your faculty. You can assign more people to the role of contact persons in a project.

European Commission -
Research & Innovation - Participant Portal
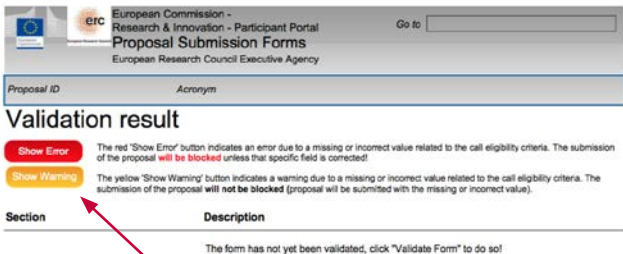**Proposal Submission Forms**
European Research Council Executive Agency

erc

Go to

Proposal ID   Acronym

4 - Ethics

1. HUMAN EMBRYOS/FOETUSES		Page
Does your research involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	○ Yes ● No	
Does your research involve the use of human embryos?	○ Yes ● No	
Does your research involve the use of human foetal tissues / cells?	○ Yes ● No	
2. HUMANS		Page
Does your research involve human participants?	○ Yes ● No	
Does your research involve physical interventions on the study participants?	○ Yes ● No	
3. HUMAN CELLS / TISSUES		Page
Does your research involve human cells or tissues (other than from Human Embryos/ Foetuses, i.e. section 1)?	○ Yes ● No	
4. PERSONAL DATA		Page
Does your research involve personal data collection and/or processing?	○ Yes ● No	

Once you answer "YES" to any of these questions, it is necessary to duly justify this in the project proposal. Indicate which page contains the justification, or attach appropriate authorizations or permission to the project proposal.

European Commission -
Research & Innovation - Participant Portal
Proposal Submission Forms
European Research Council Executive Agency

_Go to_

Proposal ID   _Acronym_

Validation result

Show Error The red 'Show Error' button indicates an error due to a missing or incorrect value related to the call eligibility criteria. The submission of the proposal **will be blocked** unless that specific field is corrected!

Show Warning The yellow 'Show Warning' button indicates a warning due to a missing or incorrect value related to the call eligibility criteria. The submission of the proposal **will not be blocked** (proposal will be submitted with the missing or incorrect value).

Section   **Description**

The form has not yet been validated, click "Validate Form" to do so!

You are at the end of Part A. If you are not sure whether you have completed everything correctly, click on "show error" or "validate form". Do not forget to save the modified data again.

Print on paper bearing the official letterhead of the host institution

Commitment of the host institution for ERC Calls 2018[i, 2, 3]

The <<please fill in here the name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the principal investigator and the project (action) in case the application is successful>>, which is the applicant legal entity,

confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with
<<please fill in here the name of the principal investigator>>

in which the obligations listed below will be addressed should the proposal entitled
<<acronym>> : <<title of the proposal>>

be retained.

Performance obligations of the *applicant legal entity* that will become the beneficiary of the H2020 ERC Grant Agreement (hereafter referred to as the Agreement), should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the Agreement be successfully concluded:

The *applicant legal entity* commits itself to hosting *[and engaging]* the *principal investigator* for the duration of the grant to:

a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the *principal investigator* who is expected to devote:

- in the case of a *Starting Grant* at least 50% of her/his total working time to the ERC-funded project (action) and spend a[...]
time in an EU Member State or Associated[...]
- in the case of a *Consolidator Grant* at lea[...]
the ERC-funded project (action) and s[...]
working time in an EU Member State or A[...]
- in the case of an *Advanced Grant* at lea[...]
the ERC funded project (action) and spend at least 50% of her/his total

This is a Letter of Commitment (LoC), which you downloaded as one of the B Part documents in the "edit proposal" section.

We will need to know the acronym and name of the project. After signing the document, we will send you a scan which has to be uploaded to the system with other annexes.

LoC should be signed by the rector, please contact the team of the European Center or Research Support Office at your faculty.

- The budget consists of several categories:
  - A: direct costs
  - B: indirect costs
  - C: subcontracting
- Direct costs are divided into personal (several categories according to classification: PI, senior staff, administration, PhD. students ...), travel, equipment and other goods and services.
- Indirect costs are fixed as a flat rate: 25% of all direct costs.
- Subcontracting: you fill it in just in case you are hiring a third party for work related to the research.

- All salaries should be estimated in so-called "super-gross salary".
- by adding 9% (health insurance) and 25% (social insurance) to the gross salary you will get the "super-gross-salary".
- For the correct budgeting, you need to know your gross monthly salary, including personal supplement without remuneration from other projects
- For an idea of the basic salary (without personal supplement) you can apply for, it is possible to look into the **CUNI salary regulation,** which sets the maximum salary threshold for each category.
- Estimate the travel costs realistically and do not forget to include per diems in the calculation.
- You can include consumables, such as chemicals etc., into other direct costs, similarly open access costs.
- In case the amount of your grant exceeds € 325,000, your project must be audited. The audit fee can also be included into other direct costs (up to € 6,000).
- You can contact the European Center team at any time, we will help you with the appropriate budgeting.

Budget breakdown – indirect costs
- Indirect costs are 25% of all direct costs, and these costs are not subject to audit.

European Centre
Ovocný trh 560/5, 116 36 Praha 1

More information:
www.ec.cuni.cz

Want to get news about the latest research calls?
Send an email to ec@cuni.cz

European Centre

✉ ec@cuni.cz   📞 +420 224 491 731

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