



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Main Changes Expected in the ERC Work Programme 2019

WP 2019 Main Changes

1. Evaluation criteria of Frontier Research Grants
2. Synergy Grant:
 - ✓ Synergy Grant Group can include up to one Principal Investigator based in a third country
 - ✓ Clarification on the impact of intervening changes to a Synergy Grant Group
3. Lump sum pilot for ERC Proof-of-Concept Grant
4. Calculation Adjustments for Starting and Consolidator Grants Eligibility Windows
5. Open Access:
 - ✓ Preprints are highlighted as accepted publication type as part of applicants' track records

1. Evaluation Criteria of Frontier Research Grants

Section 'Evaluation criteria'
under 'ERC Frontier Research Grants'

1. Research Project: "High Risk/High Gain Research"

- *To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain (i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a higher-than-normal risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims)?*
 - ✓ Evaluation criterion needed clarification at the request of ERC Panel Chairs
 - ✓ The opening paragraph of the ERC Work Programme states:
"The fundamental activity of the ERC is to provide attractive, long-term funding to support excellent investigators and their research teams to pursue ground-breaking, high-gain/high-risk research."
 - ✓ Definition comes from 2008-2013 ERC Work Programmes

1. Research Project:

Move of PI commitment criterion

- *To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?*
 - ✓ The ex-ante evaluation of Principal Investigator time commitment to the project is now performed as part of the 'Scientific Approach', together with the other planning and management aspects of the project
 - ✓ As a consequence, commitment to the project is removed from the evaluation criteria under '2. Principal Investigator'
 - ✓ Commitment minima that used to be in the evaluation question are also eligibility criteria on which reporting obligations and ex-post checks remain

2. Principal Investigator: A forward-looking approach

Frontier Research Grant	2018 WP Evaluation Question	2019 WP Evaluation Question
Starting Grant	To what extent have the achievements of the PI typically gone beyond the state of the art?	To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?
Consolidator Grant		
Advanced Grant		<i>Deleted</i>
Synergy Grant		<i>Deleted</i>
Advanced Grant	To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?	To what extent does/do the PI(s) have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?
Synergy Grant		

2. Synergy Grant

Section 'Synergy Grant profile'
under 'ERC Frontier Research Grants'

Synergy: Open to the World

At any one time, one Principal Investigator per Synergy Grant Group except the Corresponding one can be hosted or engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries

Synergy: Open to the World

- ✓ Enables EU/AC-based Principal Investigators to partner up with the best, most complementary and most relevant researchers around the world, regardless of where they are based
- ✓ Execution of part of a project in third countries was possible before exclusively via team members, field work, infrastructures, procurement and other research activities
- ✓ Novelty increases the visibility and profile of third country researchers including at evaluation
- ✓ The move of one single Principal Investigator in a Synergy Grant Group outside of the EU/AC will no longer automatically result in a failure to meet eligibility criteria
- ✓ Increase in global reach and standing of Synergy projects

Changes to a Synergy Grant Group

The ERC expects the composition of a Synergy Grant Group to remain unchanged throughout the lifetime of the grant. If a Principal Investigator leaves a Synergy Grant Group, the grant may be continued only exceptionally, contingent on scientific evaluation and provided that all eligibility criteria will continue to be met.

- Clarification on the consequences of intervening changes to a Group:
 - ✓ Single PI leaving a project or not respecting a time commitment
 - ✓ PI moves outside EU/AC: only up to one third country Host Institution at any one time allowed

3. Lump Sum Pilot for ERC Proof-of-Concept Grant

Sections 'Maximum size of grant and grant assessment'
and 'ERC Proof of Concept Grant proposal submission and
description'
under 'Proof of Concept Grants'

ERC and the Lump Sums Pilot

- ERC participating in a Horizon 2020 simplification pilot proposed by the European Commission
- Lump sums seen as a way to increase the performance and output-orientation of projects
- Objective is to test reduction of administrative burden and increase in implementation efficiency
- Proof-of-Concept (PoC) picked for pilot because PoC projects are focused, short-term and predictable

Features of ERC PoC Lump Sums

- ✓ Fixed lump sum of €150 000, applicants cannot request lower amounts
- ✓ Each PoC grant is considered as one single activity
- ✓ Applicants to provide a description of resources planned for implementation of proposed projects
- ✓ Evaluation experts asked to assess whether resources described in the proposal are appropriate for project implementation
- ✓ Payment not linked to actual costs: if project is implemented properly payment is due in full "regardless of the costs actually incurred"
- ✓ For multi-beneficiary grants, applicants need to provide a breakdown of the shares of the costs incurred by each partner

4. Calculation Adjustments for Starting and Consolidator Grants Eligibility Windows

Section 'Eligible Principal Investigator(s)'
in 'Eligibility criteria'
under 'ERC Frontier Research Grants'

Extension of Eligibility Window due to Documented Circumstances

- The adjustments affect the calculation of the **effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD taken into consideration for eligibility (EETE**, e.g. a Starting Grant applicant shall have been awarded his or her PhD between 2 and 7 years prior to the date set in the WP)
- The documented amount of **clinical training** received by the Principal Investigator is now considered only for the part taken **after** the award of the first eligible degree and **up to 4 years maximum**
- The time to be subtracted from EETE in cases that take the documented amount of leave or training into account may not exceed the time between the start date of the documented circumstance **and the call deadline** (previously the full duration of the documented circumstance would be taken into account)
- The **18 months** subtracted from the EETE for **maternity** are **not affected** because the 18 months do not take into account the documented amount of leave taken

5. Open Access

Text boxes 'Early achievements track record' in sections 'Profile of the ERC Starting Grant Principal Investigator' and 'Profile of the ERC Consolidator Grant Principal Investigator'; text box 'Ten-year track record' in 'Advanced Grant profile' under 'ERC Frontier Research Grants'

Preprints in Applicants' Track Record

...preprints may be included, if freely available from a preprint server (preprints should be properly referenced and either a link to the preprint or a DOI should be provided)

- ✓ This provision was previously contained only in the 'Information for Applicants'
- ✓ Scientific Council wishes to signal support to Open Access, but is keenly aware of field diversity in the use and role of preprints
- ✓ In some fields, especially for frontier research, the timeliness of scholarly communication is crucial –the publication cycle can be too long

Indicative summary of 2019 calls

	<i>Starting Grant</i>	<i>Consolidator Grant</i>	<i>Advanced Grant</i>	<i>Synergy Grant</i>	<i>Proof of Concept Grant</i>
<i>Call identifier</i>	ERC-2019-StG	ERC-2019-CoG	ERC-2019-AdG	ERC-2019-SyG	ERC-2019-PoC
<i>Call Opens</i>	Mid-September	24/10/2018	21/05/2019	Mid-September	16/10/2018
<i>Call closes (cut-off dates for PoC)</i>	17/10/2018	07/02/2019	29/08/2019	08/11/2018	22/01/2019 25/04/2019 19/09/2019
<i>Budget million EUR (estimated number of grants)</i>	580 (390)	602 (314)	390 (166)	400 (48)	25 (167)
<i>Planned dates to inform applicants (after each step or cut-off date)</i>	22/05/2019 28/08/2019	23/07/2019 18/12/2019	31/01/2020 17/04/2020	12/04/2019 30/08/2019 31/10/2019	02/05/2019 25/07/2019 18/12/2019
<i>Indicative date for signature of grant agreements (by cut-off date for PoC)</i>	05/01/2020	26/04/2020	25/08/2020	09/03/2020	09/09/2019 02/12/2019 26/04/2020

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