

The European Research Council



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Call Coordinator ERC Proof of Concept
ERC Scientific Management Department

Preparing for ERC - StG & CoG

ERC workshop OsloMet 08 October 2019

ERC has a unique mission



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"The ERC's mission is to encourage the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator-driven frontier research across all fields, on the basis of scientific excellence."

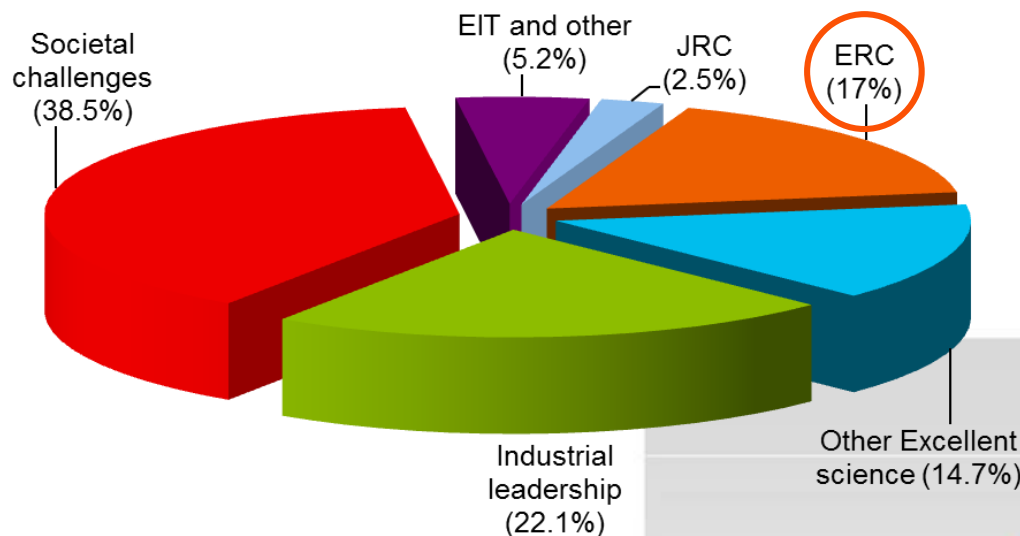
ERC is....

1. funding: it is part of H2020



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ERC Budget € 13 billion

For 2019, the budget is more than 2 billion euros, the highest ever since the beginning of the ERC.

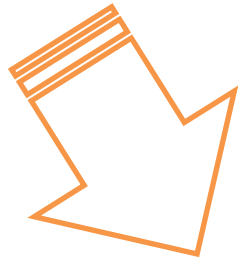


ERC is....

2. the Scientific Council

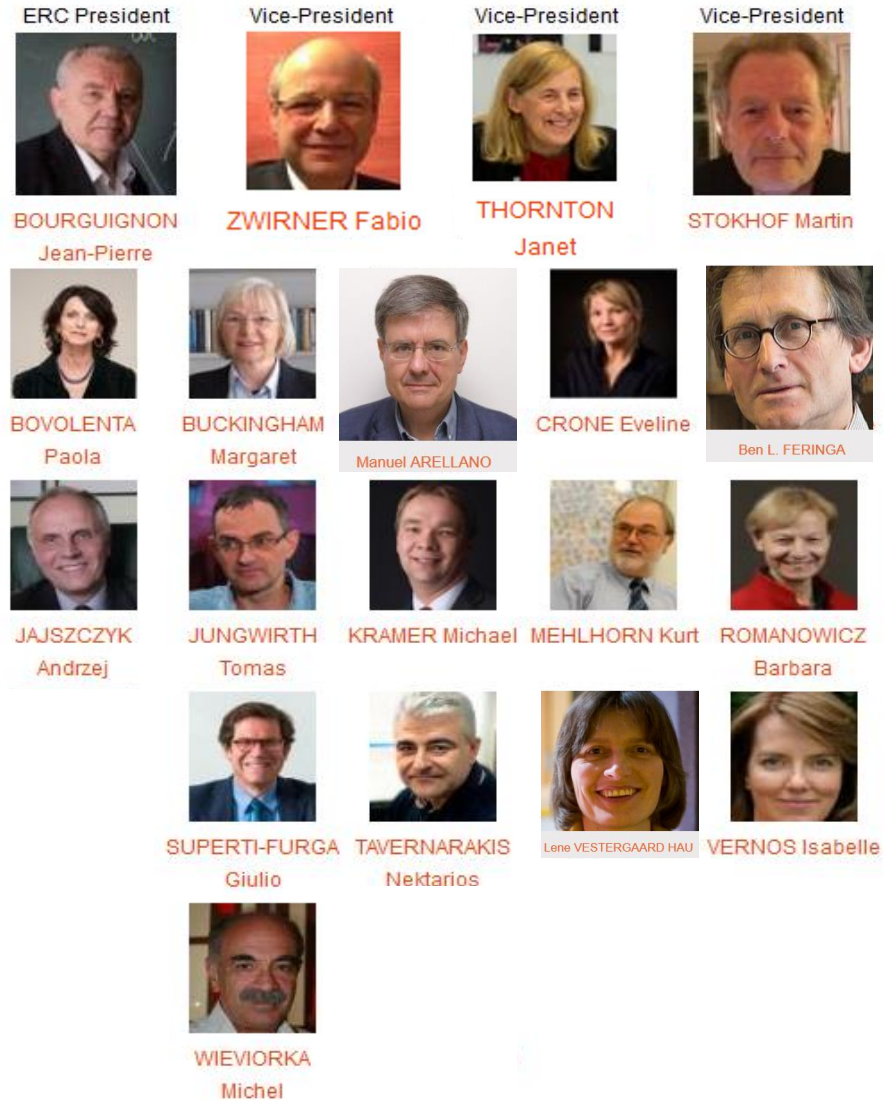
The ERC Scientific Council

- 22 prominent researchers appointed by the Commission
- Establishes overall scientific strategy
- Controls quality of operations and management
- Ensures communication with the scientific community



Panel Members

- Appointed by the Scientific Council
- Full independence in the evaluation and ranking of the proposals
- Appoint remote referees



ERC is....

3. the ERCEA



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The ERC Executive Agency

- Implements calls for proposals
- Organises peer review evaluation
- Establishes and manages grant agreements
- Administers scientific and financial aspects
- Carries out communications activities

ERC Basics



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INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

LONG TERM GRANTS

TO HIGH-RISK/HIGH-GAIN PIONEERING PROJECTS
IN ANY FIELD OF FRONTIER RESEARCH



Life Sciences



Physical Sciences and Engineering



Social Sciences and Humanities

After 11 Years, a Success Story



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Over **9,000**
top researchers funded since
the ERC's creation in 2007



Over **110,000**
articles from ERC projects published
in prestigious scientific journals



Over **60,000**
researchers and other professionals
employed in ERC research teams



748 research institutions
hosting ERC grantees – universities,
public or private research centres in
the EU or associated countries



€ 13 billion
ERC budget for 2014-2020 under
Horizon 2020



74
nationalities of
grant holders

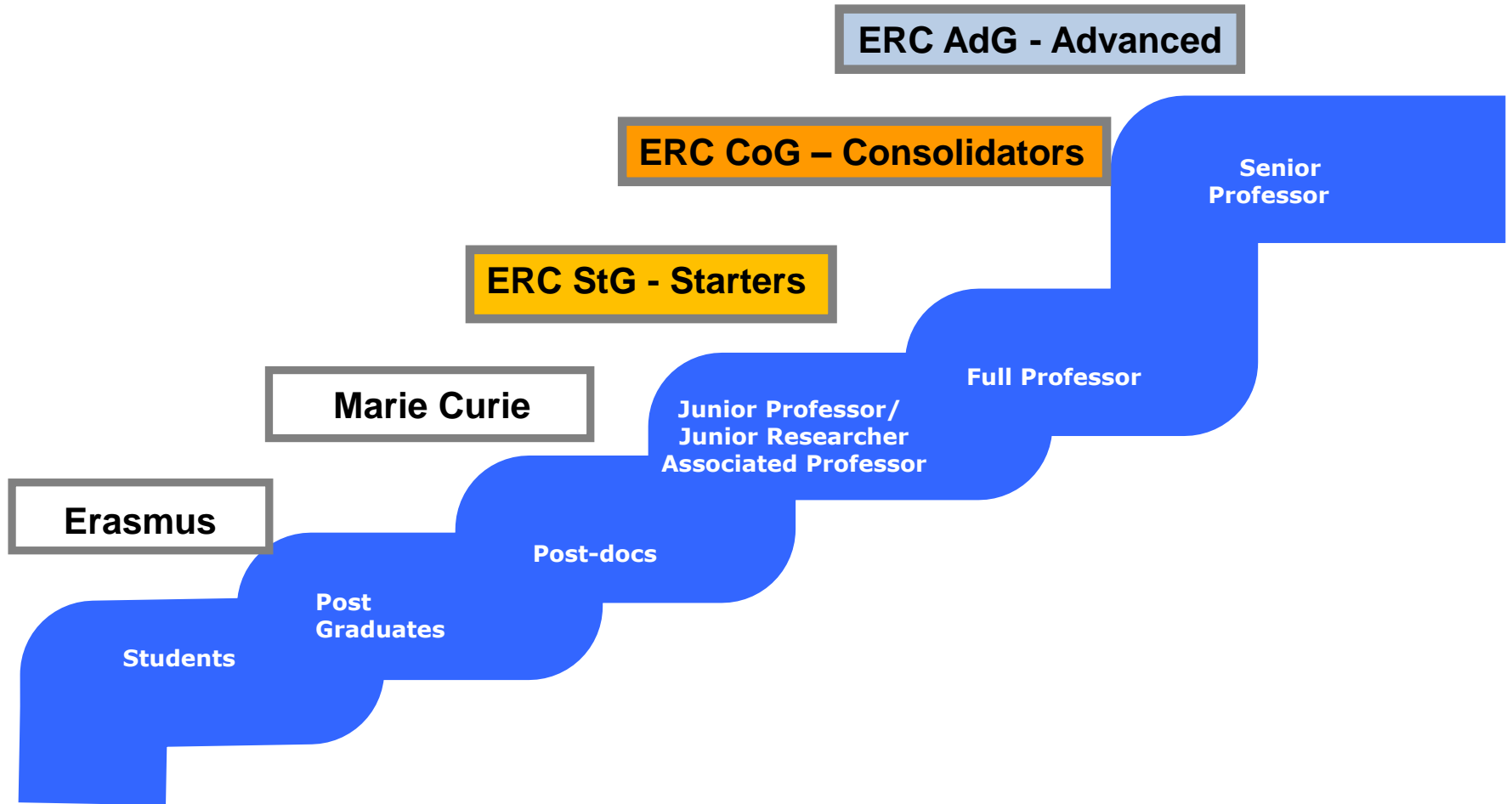


ERC funding opportunities and the submission and evaluation process

Researchers career development and complementary funding schemes



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ERC Funding Schemes



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Starting Grant

- 2-7 years after PhD
- up to €1.5M (+1M)
- for 5 years

Consolidator Grant

- 7-12 years after PhD
- up to €2M (+ 1M)
- for 5 years

Advanced Grant

- 10 year track-record of significant research achievements
- up to € 2.5M (+1M)
- for 5 years

Proof-of-Concept

for ERC grant holders only

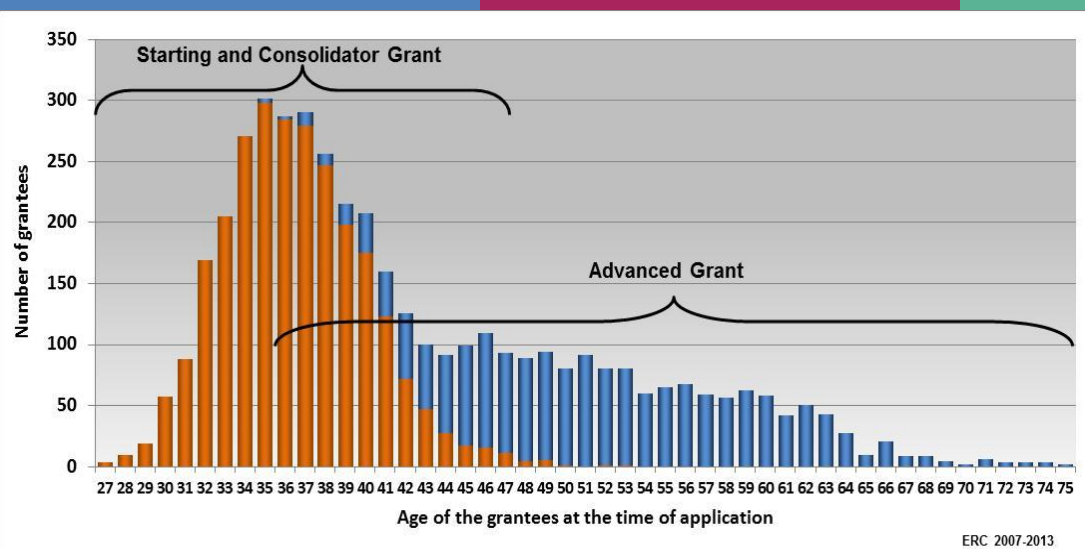
- Supporting innovative potential of ideas from ERC projects
- up to €150,000
- for 1 year

Synergy Grant

Re-launched 2018

- 2-4 PIs at any career stage
- up to €10 M (+4M)
- for 6 years

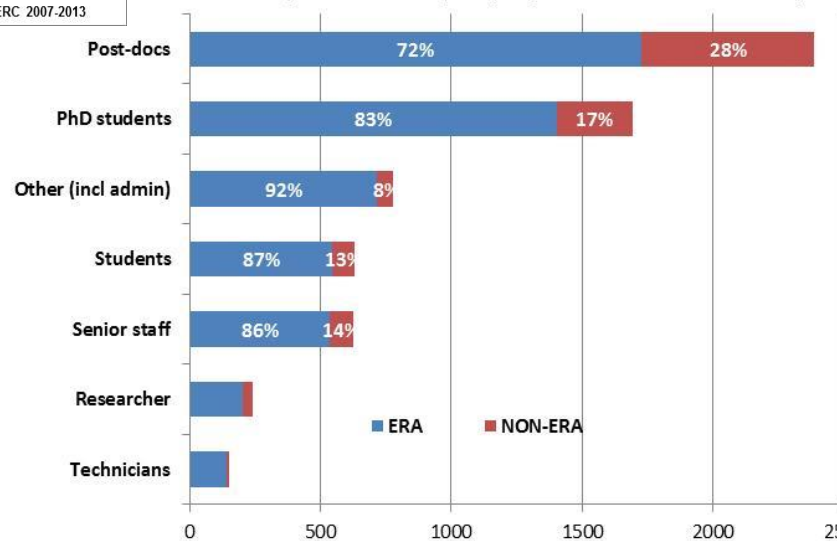
ERC: A strong focus on Young Scientists



+ 50 000 PhD and post-doc researchers working in ERC teams.

Two-thirds of ERC grants go to early-stage Principal Investigators.

Reported ERC team members (May 2013)
*simple head count (995 projects; 6800 team members)



What does ERC grants offer?

Creative Freedom of the Individual Grantee



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ERC offers selective and generous grants, independence, recognition & visibility

- Fund research on any topic: **completely bottom-up**
- Gain **financial autonomy** for 5 years
- Negotiate the **best work conditions** with the host institution
- Attract **top team members and collaborators** (EU and non-EU)
- **Portability of grants**
- **Attract additional funding and gain recognition:** ERC is a quality label



Who can apply?



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Excellent Researchers of

- any nationality,
- any age
- any current working place in the world
- any topic
- Only requirement - a letter of support from a Host Institution based in Europe, **EU or associated countries**



2019 Panel Structure



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Each panel:
Panel Chair and 12-16 Panel Members

Life Sciences

- **LS1** Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Structural Biology and Molecular Biophysics
- **LS2** Genetics, 'Omics', Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
- **LS3** Cellular and Developmental Biology
- **LS4** Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
- **LS5** Neuroscience and Neural Disorders
- **LS6** Immunity and Infection
- **LS7** Applied Medical Technologies, Diagnostics, Therapies, and Public Health
- **LS8** Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology
- **LS9** Applied Life Sciences, Biotechnology and Molecular and Biosystems Engineering

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

Physical Sciences & Engineering

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

Submission to Panels

- Proposals are submitted to a *Targeted Panel* (of PI's choice)
 - Can flag one “*Secondary Review Panel*”
- **Applicant chooses his/her panel**, this panel is “responsible” and takes ownership for the evaluation of the particular proposal
- Switching proposals between panels not possible unless clear mistake on part of applicant, or due to the necessary expertise being available in a different panel
- **But:** In case of cross-panel or cross-domain proposals, evaluation by members of other panels possible

Online Submission

Proposal structure



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Administrative forms (Part A)

- 1 – General information
- 2 – Administrative data of participating organisations
- 3 – Budget
- 4 – Ethics
- 5 – Call specific questions

Administrative forms

Annexes

Commitment of the host institution
PhD certificates, certificates on extension of eligibility, ethics issues etc

Part B1 (submitted as pdf) ***Evaluated in Step 1 & Step 2***

- Text box - Cross-domain nature explanation
- a – Extended synopsis 5 pages
 - b – Curriculum vitae 2 pages
Appendix – Funding ID
 - c - Track-record 2 pages

Part B2 (submitted as pdf) ***NOT evaluated in Step 1 (Step 2 only)***

- Scientific proposal 15 pages
- a – State-of-the-art and objectives
 - b – Methodology
 - c – Resources

[→ Read the Information for Applicants](#)

How are ERC research proposals evaluated?

***Excellence* is the sole evaluation criterion**



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Evaluation of *excellence* at two levels:

- **Excellence of the Research Project**
 - ✓ Ground breaking nature
 - ✓ Potential impact
 - ✓ Scientific Approach

- **Excellence of the Principal Investigator**
 - ✓ Intellectual capacity
 - ✓ Creativity
 - ✓ Commitment

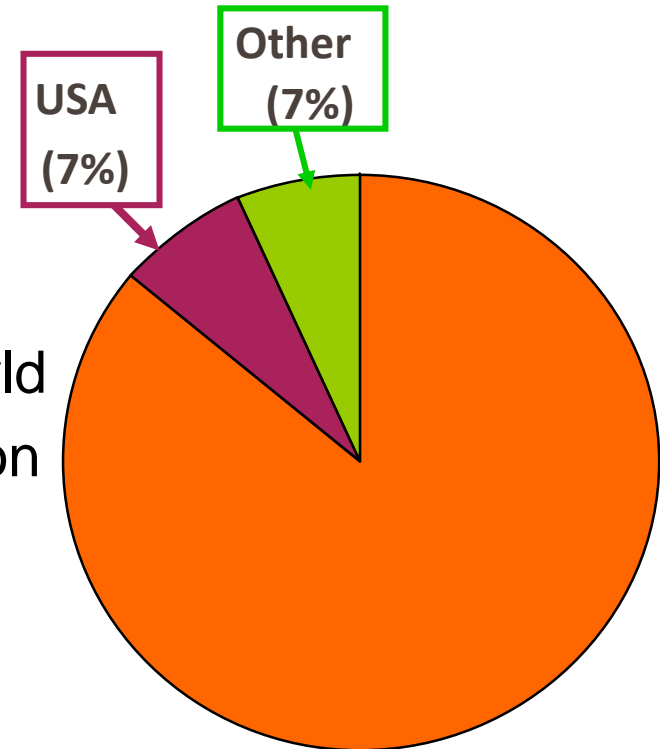
Who evaluates the proposals?

Panel members: typically 600 PMs
involved per call

- High-level scientists
- Recruited by ScC from all over the world
- About 10-15 members plus chair person

Remote Referees: typically 2000 / call

- Each evaluate only a small number of proposals

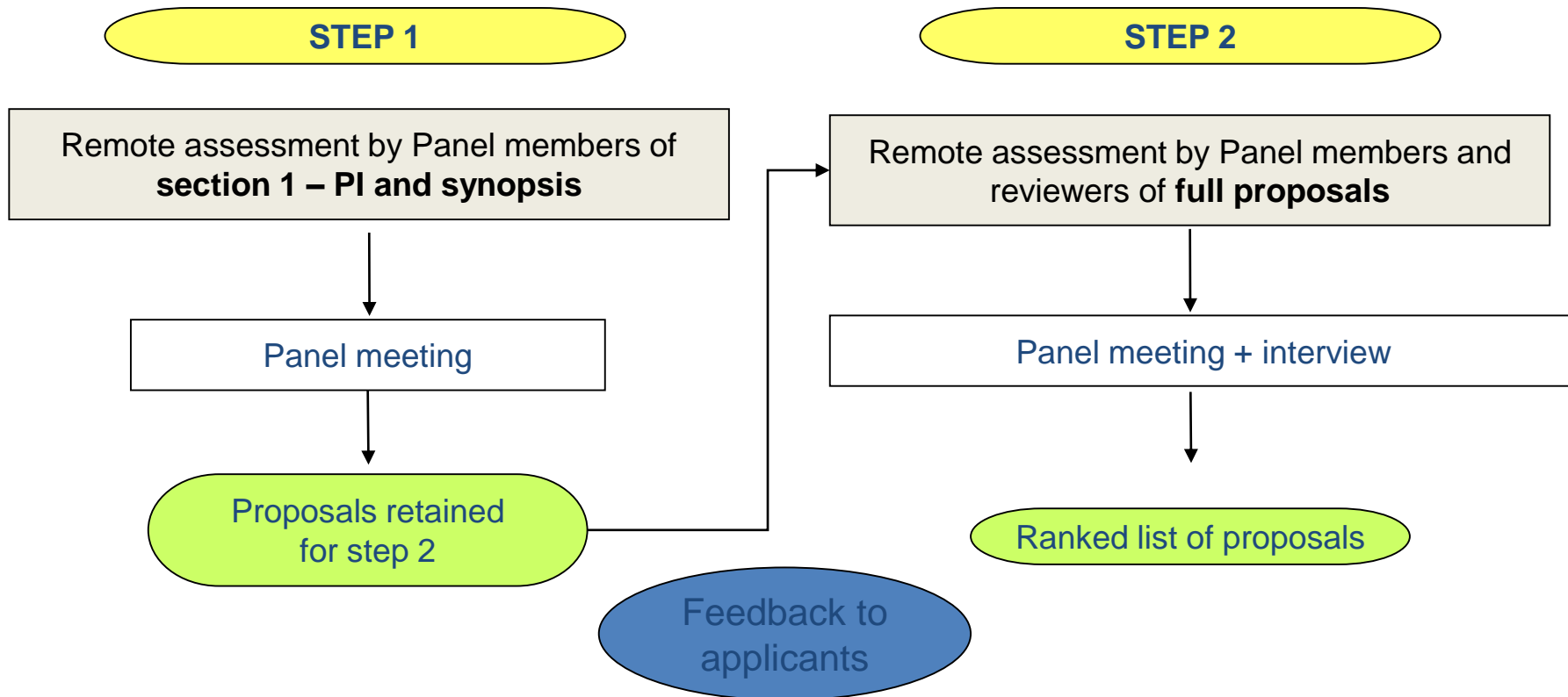


Evaluation

Review procedure (StG and CoG)



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- Right balance between generalist + specialized review
- Appropriate treatment of interdisciplinary proposals
- Good cost-benefit ratio

Scoring Scheme

A score: within panel budget

➔ Proposals for immediate funding.

A score: outside panel budget

➔ One or more reserve list proposals may be funded. Unfunded applicants can resubmit next year.

B score: not funded

➔ Proposals rejected (Step 1 or 2). No resubmission next year if B awarded in step 1

C score: non fundable

➔ Proposals rejected (Step 1). No resubmission next 2 years

ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants 2017 - The applicant's profile



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“Am I competitive enough?”

- Potential for research **independence**
- Evidence of scientific maturity and creativity
- At least one (StG) /several (CoG) important publications as main author or without the participation of PhD supervisor

Condition StG: PhD **at least 2 and up to 7 years before 1 January 2017**

Condition CoG: PhD **over 7 and up to 12 years before 1 January 2017**

Promising track-record of early achievements

- Significant publications
- Invited presentations in conferences
- Funding, patents, awards, prizes

Preparing the proposal (1)

Hints and tips (Generalities)



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- **Register early**, get familiar with the system and templates and start filling in the forms
- A submitted proposal can be **revised until the call deadline** by submitting a new version and overwriting the previous one
- Follow the formatting rules and page limits.
- Download and proof-read the proposal before submitting.
- Make use of the **help tools and call documents** (Information for Applicants, Work Programme, Frequently asked questions) to prepare your proposal
- Talk to the National Contact Points and your Institution's grant office

Preparing the proposal (2): Decide whether to apply.



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SKILLS

- EXCELLENCE
- CREATIVITY
- AMBITION
- BOLDNESS



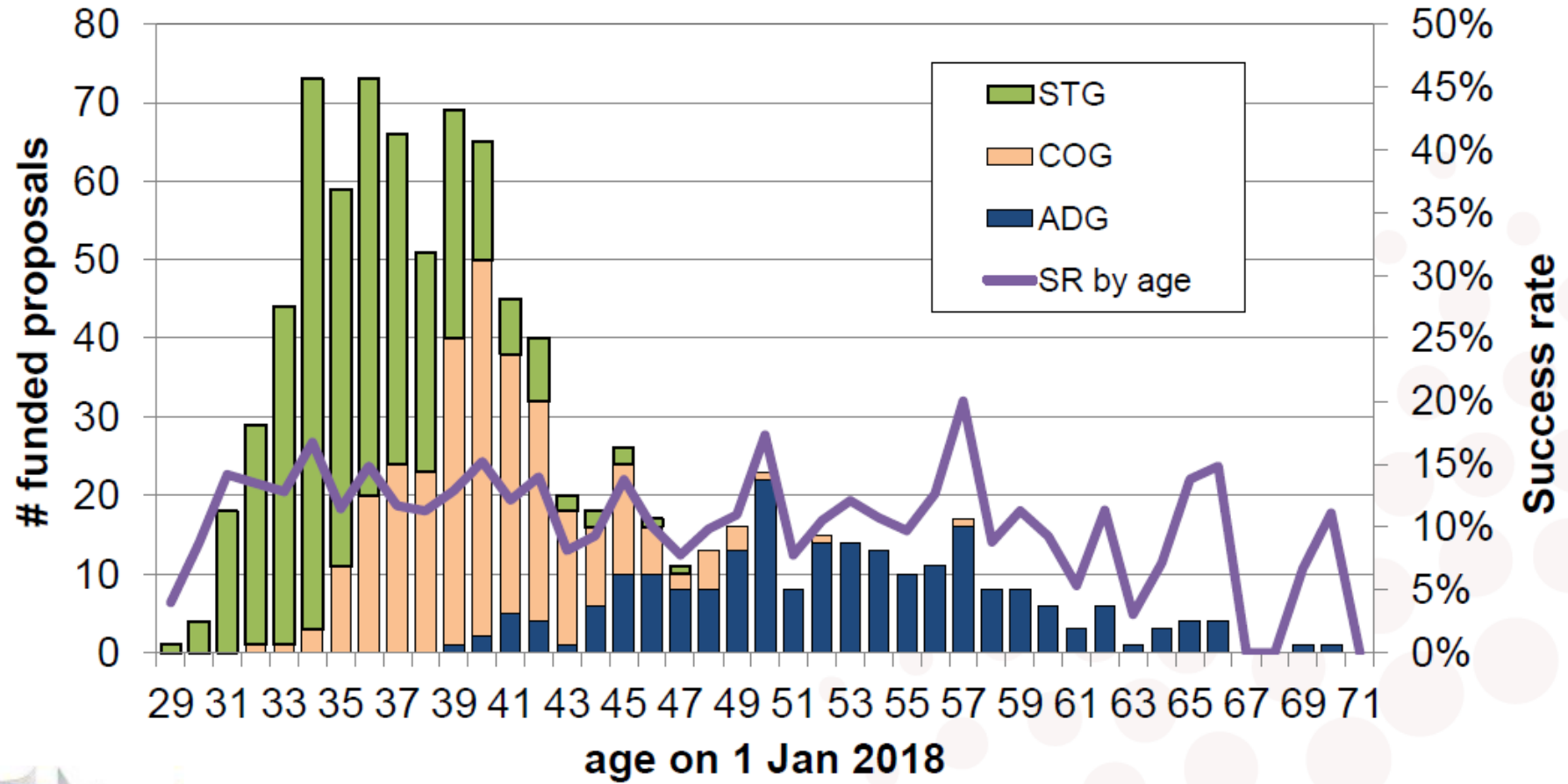
2018 STG-COG-ADG Calls

Age of Grantees



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2018 Grantees by age and success rate



Preparing the proposal (3): For StG or CoG, check eligibility rules!



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Extensions of eligibility window possible for StG and CoG for documented cases of:

- Maternity – 18 months per child (before or after PhD)
- Paternity – actual time taken off
- Military service
- Medical specialty training
- Long-term illness
- Caring for seriously ill family members

No limit to the total extension

Preparing the proposal (4): Host Institution



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- **PI can change** Host Institution during the project's life
- **Host Institutions are competing as well** for the best PIs (PI's position, equipment, administrative support, access to infrastructure, etc.)

Rumour 1: *The quality/fame of the HI is increasing my chances/scores.*

✗ NOT true: the HI is not an evaluation criterion!

Preparing the proposal (5): Choosing the Panel



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<https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>

Home » Projects & figures » ERC Funded Projects

ERC FUNDED PROJECTS

Search in ERC Funded Projects



FILTER

FUNDING SCHEME ▶

CALL YEAR ▶

RESEARCH DOMAIN ▶

COUNTRY OF HOST INSTITUTION ▶

Reset

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 9,000 projects have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the associated countries.

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.

Menu allows searching by Funding Scheme, Research Area, Panel/Domain Country of Host Institution etc.

Preparing the proposal (6)

Check past panel members for the call



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ABOUT ERC

FUNDING

PROJECTS &
FIGURES

NEWS & EVENTS

MANAGING YOUR
PROJECT



Who can apply?

Researchers of any nationality with **2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD**. Extensions are possible for researchers who have spent significant periods of time in an ERC programme), a successful proposal



What proposals

- ▶ *Criteria*
Applications
The ERC's g
- ▶ *Location*
Research must be conducted at a Host Institution as a Host Institution or other HI located in one of the EU member states (see also eligibility of ERC legal entities) or **Associated Countries**
- ▶ *Host Institution*

IMPORTANT: You are not allowed to contact panel members about the evaluation! Any such contact can lead to exclusion from the call.

CHOOSE YOUR PANEL

ERC peer review evaluation panels (2019 calls)

COMPOSITION OF EVALUATION PANELS

ERC Starting Grant 2019:

Panel Chairs

Panel Members

ERC Starting Grant 2018:

Panel Chairs

Panel Members

Click [here](#) to check Panel Chairs and

Panel Members from previous calls

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS

Preparing the proposal (7): Part B1: the research project



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- Is my project new, **innovative**, bringing new solutions/theories?
- Does it promise to go **substantially beyond the state of the art?** – no incremental research. **Think big!**
- Know your competitors – what is the **state of play** and why is your idea and scientific approach outstanding?
- Only the extended Synopsis is read at Step 1: **concise and clear presentation** is crucial (evaluators are not necessarily all experts in the field)
- How can I **prove/support** my case? Have I proven the project's **feasibility**?
Are my goals **realistic**?
- What's the **risk**?

Preparing the proposal (8): Part B1: the principal investigator



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- Why am I the **best/only person** to carry it out? Know your competitors
- Am I able to work **independently**, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?
- Am I **competitive**?
- Have I shown my **scientific leadership** in my CV?

***Rumour** : One needs publications in Nature/Science/High Impact Factor journals to succeed.*

✗ NOT true

Preparing the proposal (9): Part B2



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In Step 2, both part B1 and B2 are read by Panel Members and specialists around the world (specialised external referees) so in Part B2:

- Do not repeat the synopsis, provide sufficient details on your methodology and work plan
- Make sure that the quantitative and qualitative differences to the state of the art are clear and referenced - show you did your homework.
- Provide alternative strategies to mitigate risks
- Explain **involvement of team members**
- Justify requested **resources** – **explain your budget properly**

Preparing the proposal (10): Proposal budget considerations



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- Budget analysis carried out in Step 2 evaluation (meeting)
- Panels have responsibility to ensure that resources requested are reasonable and well justified
- Budget cuts need to be justified on a proposal by proposal basis (no across-the-board cuts)
- Panels to recommend a final maximum budget based on the resources allocated/ removed
- Panels do not “micro-manage” project finances
- Awards made on a “take-it-or-leave-it” basis: no negotiations

The new online budget table

3 - Budget


Beneficiary Short Name	Direct costs														A. Total Direct Costs	B. Indirect Costs	C1. Subcontracting Costs	C2. Costs of inkind contributions not used on the beneficiary's premises	Total Estimated Eligible Costs	Requested EU contribution
	Personnel						Other direct costs							A.3 Internally invoiced goods and services						
	PI	Senior Staff	Postdocs	Students	Other Personnel costs	A.1. Total direct costs for personnel	Travel	Equipment - including major equipment	Other goods and services				A.2. Total Other Direct Costs							
?				?				Consumables incl. fieldwork and animal costs	Publications (incl. Open Access fees) and dissemination	Other additional direct costs	Total other goods and services		?							
The Chancellor, Masters And Scholars Of The University Of Oxford	150000	152000	365000	123000	0	790000.00	60000	395000	106000	35000	0	141000.00	596000.00	96000	1623000.00	405750.00	10000	25000	2063750.00	0.00
Total	150000	152000	365000	123000	0	790000.00	60000	395000	106000	35000	0	141000.00	596000.00	96000	1623000.00	405750.00	10000	25000	2063750.00	0.00

- ONE budget line per beneficiary / linked third party
- All costs have to be described and justified in the text box below the budget table
- Justify requested resources / Explain involvement of team members

Resources – the narrative part



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	Proposal Submission Forms European Research Council Executive Agency
<i>Proposal ID</i> SEP-210591201	<i>Acronym</i> vivarc
Section C. Recources ?	
<p>Important: This section replaces the former section 'C. Resources' of the Part B2. The information explaining your resources and the budget should not appear in your Part B2 document.</p> <p>State and fully justify the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully; unjustified budgets will be consequently reduced. Maximum 5000 characters allowed.</p> <p>Please specify the cost items covered by your 'Other personnel costs' category if applicable. Please also specify the cost items covered by your 'Other additional direct costs' category if applicable.</p> <p>Request for additional funding if applicable (All items MUST be included in the overall budget table above): (Cost in EUR) Justification:</p> <p>Please indicate the % of working time the PI dedicates to the project over the period of the grant: %</p>	

- Organize explanations heading by heading (use terminology of the budget table)
- If you request additional funding - you must describe and justify this request clearly in a separate paragraph
- Remember to list the PI's time commitment!

Typical reasons for rejection

Principal investigator

- Insufficient track-record
- Insufficient (potential for) independence
- Insufficient experience in leading projects

Proposed project

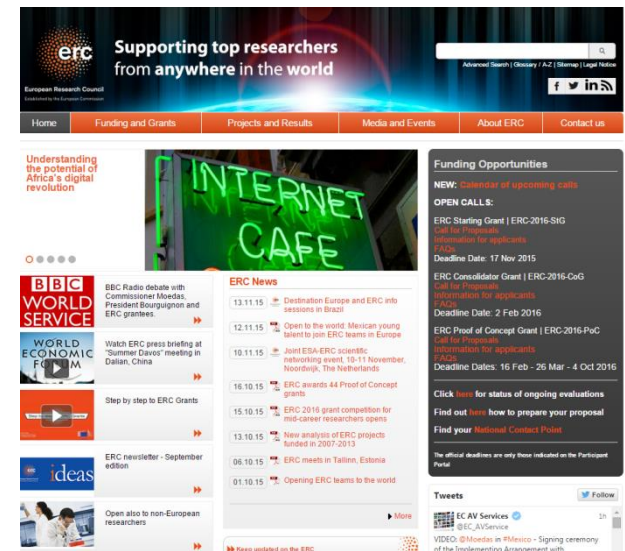
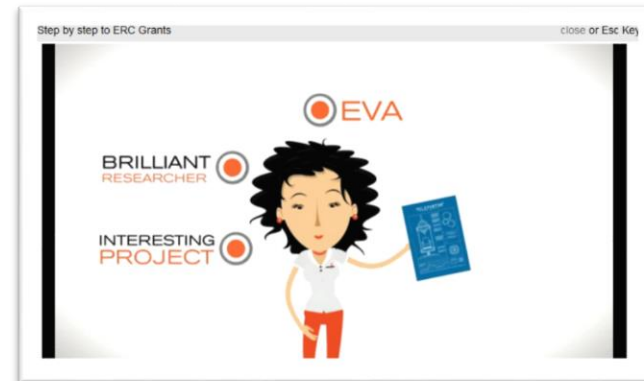
- Scope: Too narrow \leftrightarrow too broad/unfocussed
- Incremental research
- Work plan not detailed enough/unclear
- Insufficient risk management

Some useful tools and links



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- Read **Information for Applicants** and **Work Programme**
- View the **step-by-step video** Introduction to application process, including tips & tricks for the interview <https://vimeo.com/94179654>
- Consult **ERC website** for latest funding opportunities, view ERC funded projects
- Talk to your **National Contact Point (NCP)**



Preparing an application

Check the statistics on granted projects and on submissions



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You are here: [Homepage](#) > [Projects and Results](#) > [Statistics](#)

- ERC Funded Projects
- Prizes and Awards
- ERC Stories
- Statistics

View statistics by

Granted projects Evaluated projects

Funding scheme

Call year

Domain / Panel

Show number of grantees by

Statistics

This page provides **basic statistics for ERC funding activities**.

Please note that the data reflects the current status of the granting process. Therefore the total number of grants and grant distribution might differ from the indicative statistics, published at the release of the results, which are based on the outcome of evaluation process.

You can use the menu on the left to select different views on the data.

ERC Call	Applications received	Of which		
		Evaluated*	Funded	Success rates (%)**
Starting Grant 2007	9,167	8,787	299	3.4
Starting Grant 2009	2,503	2,392	245	10.2
Starting Grant 2010	2,873	2,767	436	15.8
Starting Grant 2011	4,080	4,005	486	12.1
Starting Grant 2012	4,741	4,652	566	12.2
Starting Grant 2013	3,329	3,266	300	9.2
Consolidator Grant 2013	3,673	3,604	313	8.7
Starting & Consolidator Grant total	30,366	29,462	2,645	10.3***

Menu allows searching by Funding Scheme, Call year, Domain/Panel and Grantees by Country of Host Institution.



Browse ERC projects



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



- ERC Funded Projects
- Prizes and Awards
- ERC Stories
- Statistics
- View projects by**

Funding Scheme

- Starting Grant (2689)
- Consolidator Grants (615)
- Advanced Grant (1802)
- Proof of Concept (308)
- Synergy Grants (24)

Call Year

Domain/Panel

Country of Host Institution

Free text search

Clear all

ERC Funded Projects



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 **5,000 projects** have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the associated countries. The ERC has received over **50,000 project proposals** for its calls.

You can use the menu on the left to search quickly and easy ERC funded projects.

Projects can be filtered according to: Funding scheme, Research area (Panel / Domain), Country of Host Institution and/or free keyword(s).

Information displayed is automatically updated through the information available on the **CORDIS** platform.

Please note that only funded projects, whose grant agreements have been signed, appear in this database. For this reason, the total number of projects in this database may differ from the figures provided in the statistics section which include also projects selected for funding whose grant agreements have not been signed yet.

For specific queries, please use this **contact form** and select the category 'Web'.

Searchable repository of ERC signed projects

- Menu allows searching by
- Funding Scheme
 - Call Year
 - Domain/panel
 - Country of Host Institution



Evaluation panels

<http://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/apply-funding/evaluation-panels>



- Funding Schemes
- Apply for Funding
 - Step by Step
 - Call for Proposals
 - Evaluation Panels**
 - Host Institutions
 - For Non-European Researchers
- National Contact Points
- FAQ

Evaluation Panels



The selection of scientific and scholarly proposals for ERC funding is based on international peer review with excellence as the sole criterion. The ERC uses a typical panel-based system, in which panels of high-level scientists and/or scholars make recommendations for funding.

Domain and panel structure

The ERC panel structure consists of 25 panels.

The panels of each grant are grouped into three disciplinary domains cover the entire spectrum of science, engineering and scholarship:

1. Social sciences and Humanities (SH)
2. Life sciences (LS)
3. Physical and Engineering Sciences (PE)

Research proposals of a multi and inter disciplinary nature are strongly encouraged throughout the ERC's schemes. Proposals of this type evaluated by the ERC's regular panels with the appropriate external expertise.

Composition of the panels

Panel Chairs and Panel Members from the ERC Starting Grant calls

ERC-2015-StG	Panel Chairs
ERC-2014-StG	Panel Chairs Panel Members
ERC-2013-StG	Panel Chairs Panel Members
ERC-2012-StG	Panel Chairs Panel Members
ERC-2011-StG	Panel Chairs Panel Members
ERC-2010-StG	Panel Chairs Panel Members
ERC-2009-StG	Panel Chairs Panel Members
ERC-2007-StG	Panel Chairs Panel Members

Proposal submission

ERC dates of the 2020 Work Programme



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ERC calls	Budget	Call Opening	Submission Deadline(s)
Starting Grants ERC-2020-StG	677 M€ (455 grants)	Mid-July 2019	16 October 2019
Synergy Grants ERC-2020-SyG	350 M€ (39 grants)	Mid-July 2019	5 November 2019
Consolidator Grants ERC-2020-CoG	657 M€ (343 grants)	24 October 2019	4 February 2020
Advanced Grants ERC-2019-AdG	391 M€ (166 grants)	14 May 2020	26 August 2020
Proof of Concept ERC-2020-PoC	25 M€ (167 grants)	15 October 2019	21 January 2019 23 April 2019 17 September 2019



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ERC-2020-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

ERC-2020-COG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

Thank you!



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Additional slides



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ERC Synergy Grants

Background

- **2012-2013:** two pilot Synergy grant calls
 - 1.5 - 3% success rate: 24 projects funded
- **2016:** Following a detailed analysis of the funded SyG projects, the Scientific Council decided to re-launch the scheme
- **2018:** First Horizon 2020 Synergy call currently at the stage of proposal evaluation (budget 250 Million EUR)



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Synergy Grant – Objectives

- **Minimum two to maximum four Principal Investigators** and their teams
- To bring together **complementary skills, knowledge, and resources** in new ways, in order to **jointly** address **ambitious** research problems.
- **Transformative research** not only at the forefront of European science but also to become a benchmark **on a global scale**.
- Applicants Principal Investigators must demonstrate the synergies, complementarities and added value that could lead to **breakthroughs that would not be possible by the individual Principal Investigators working alone**.

Design of the Synergy call

- Budget for the 2019 call: 400 M€
 - To select 45-50 projects
- 2, 3 or 4 Principal Investigators
- **Including up to 1 PI based anywhere in the world**
- Next call deadline: 8 November 2018

The Synergy Grant



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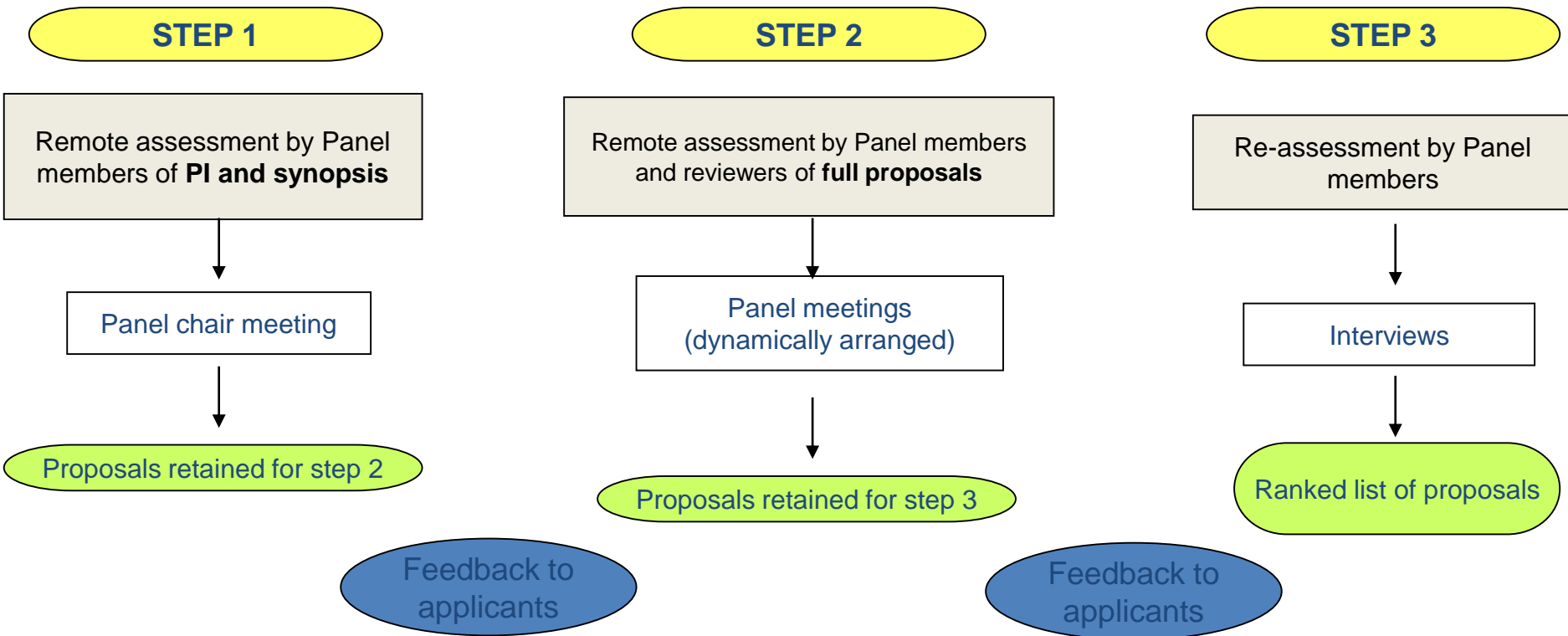
- Minimum two to maximum four Principal Investigators
- To bring together complementary skills, knowledge, and resources in new ways, in order to jointly address ambitious research problems.
- 2018 first call since reintroduction – Evaluation finished last month – 27 projects selected for funding, worth 250 M€
- 2019 Work Programme budget increased to €400 M
- New in 2019: At any one time, one Principal Investigator per Synergy Grant Group can be hosted or engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries

Evaluation

Review procedure (SyG)



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* Dynamically arranged



- Right balance between generalist + specialized review
- Appropriate treatment of interdisciplinary proposals
- Good cost-benefit ratio

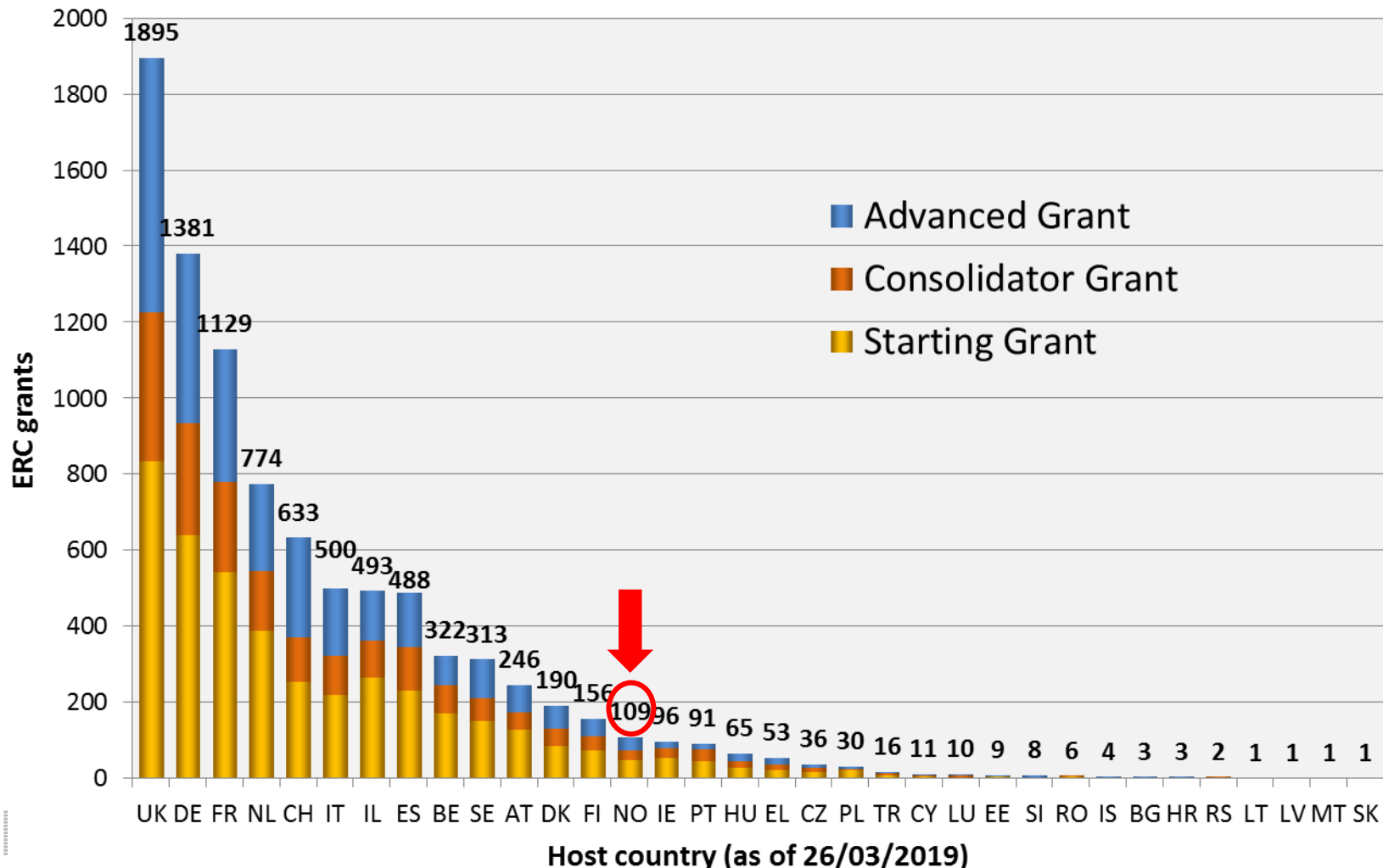


ERC and Norway

ERC Grants by Call



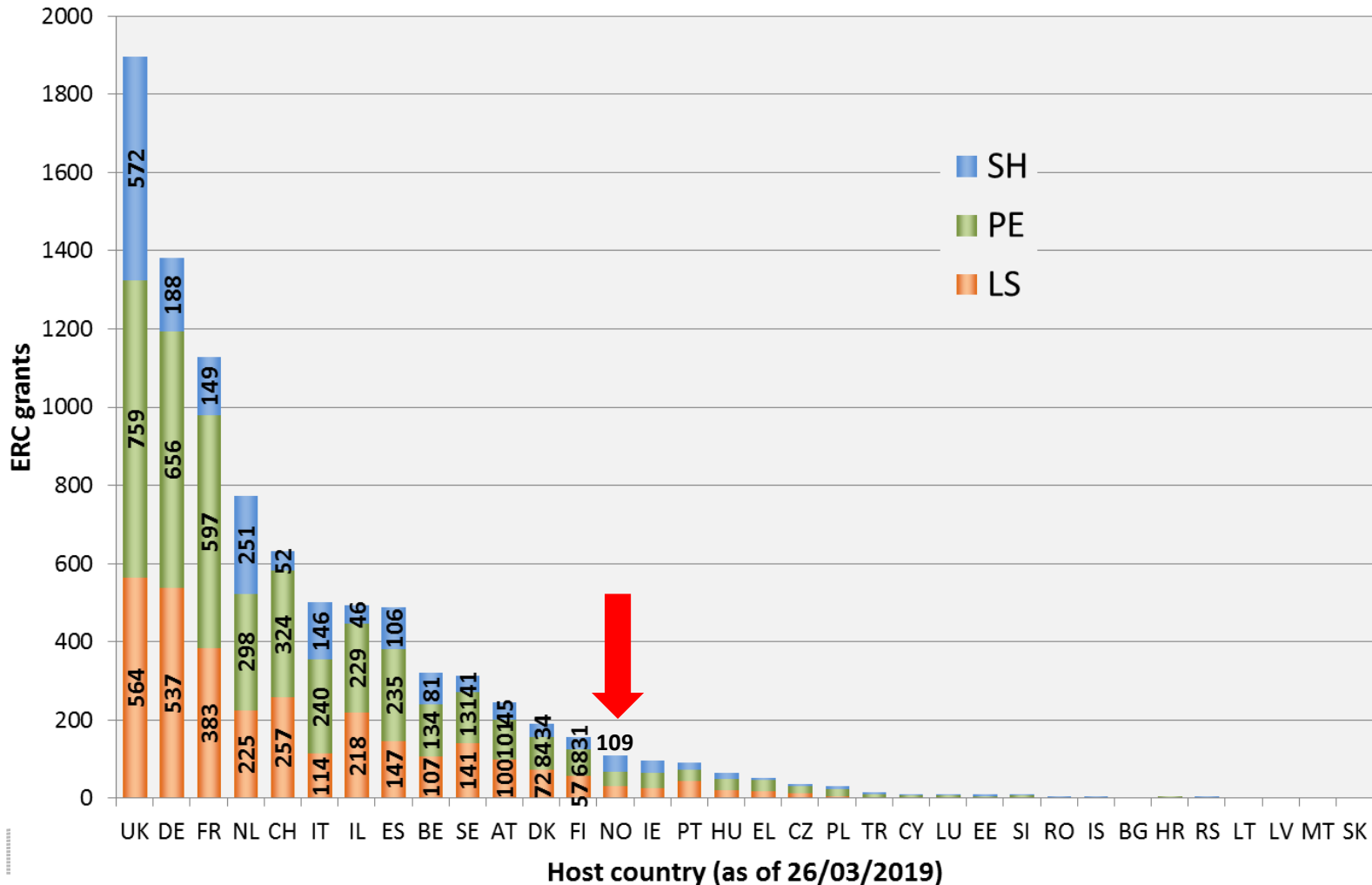
European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



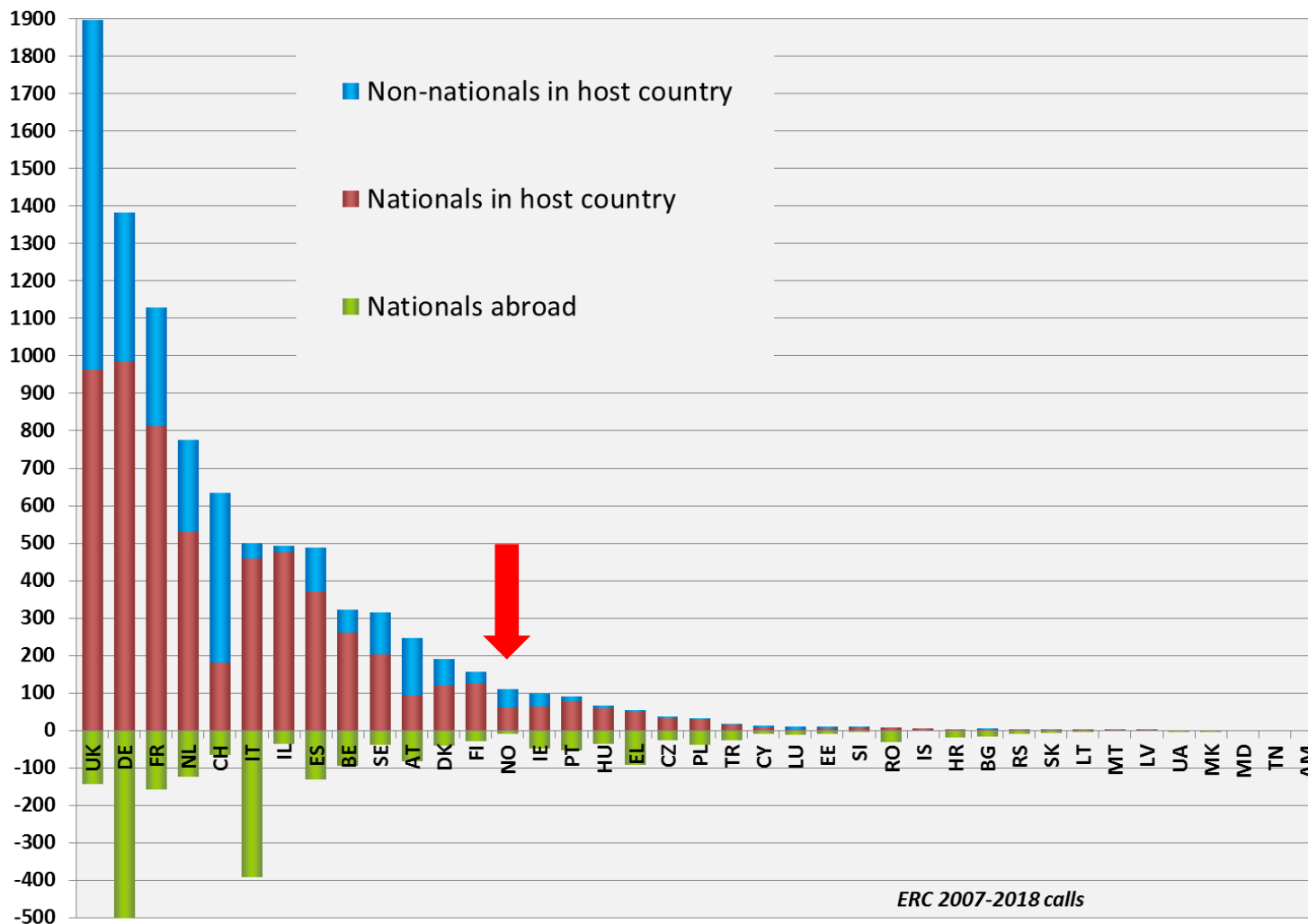
ERC Grants by Domain



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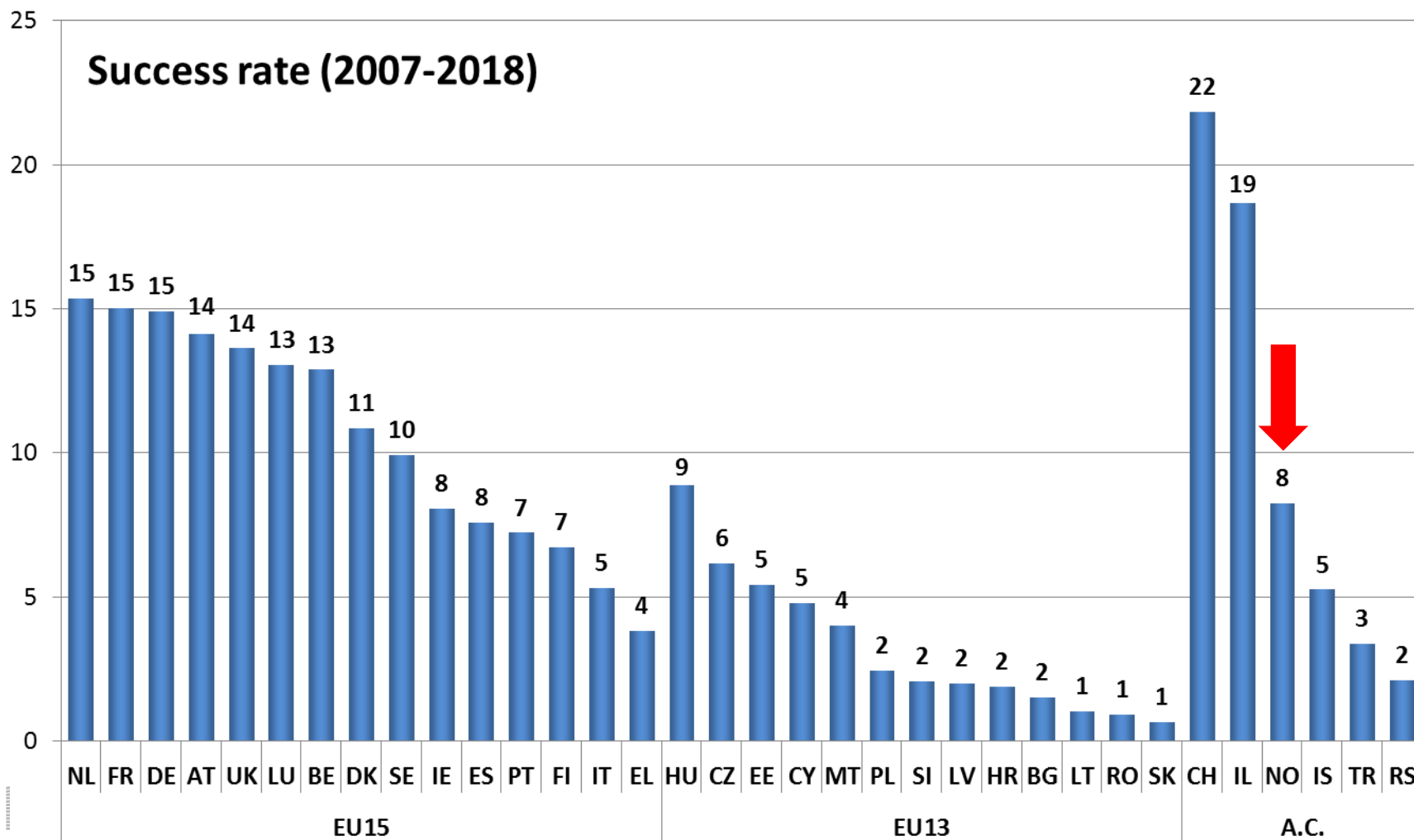
Grantees at Home and Abroad



Success Rate by Country



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Difference of Success Rates between H2020 Calls and FP7 Calls



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