

## Selection of tips to succeed in *ERC Advanced Grant 2019*

ERC funding schemes are open to top researchers of any nationality or age who wish to carry out their frontier research in the 28 EU Member States or associated countries.

ERC funding with its conceptual scientific high risk / high-gain, novel non-collaborative, frontier excellent research is unique. It also means that most of your earlier written proposals cannot fit the ERC work programme. Therefore, writing an ERC proposal is very challenging so please consider the odds and the effort to be invested.

The nature and requirements of the ERC demand a good time planning, logical strategy and concept crystallization. Secure that your research concept and scope meet the criteria in the latest [ERC work programme](#) **before** drafting the proposal. Be aware that the re-submission rules are very strict and might i.a. lead to ERC personal blocking of one or even two deadlines (years). The ERC publishes [Guide for Applicants](#) as well as [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#) and both are highly recommended to be studied carefully.

AdG is designed to support excellent PIs at the career stage at which they are already established research leaders with a recognized track record of research achievements. In order to meet the requirement of reaching new heights in your scientific career, you, as a competitive AdG applicant, must propose an ambitious, ground-breaking research project in ERC standards. Be aware that a competitive AdG applicant should be an active and productive researcher which has not passed the career peak, which should be reflected in an updated steady scientific track record.

Here are some tips which might constitute a competitive ERC-AdG proposal:

### I. Basics and principles

- As many other high quality proposals, you need to clearly explain the following:
  - Why you?
  - Why now?
  - Why this project?
- ERC's panel structure essentially remains the same, covering all research topics, and the application format is modified only slightly from year to year. It means that you can start preparing your application at any time, the sooner the better.
- ERC expects the applicants to reach out and dramatically expand the existing knowledge, which in many cases requires stepping out of the research 'comfort zone'.
- ERC-projects are expected to center on the PI's expertise and not to rely on collaboration for core parts of the research. In case when team member(s) engaged by another host institution participate(s) in the project, their participation has to be fully justified.

- ERC's peer reviewers can be from anywhere in the world. Therefore bear in mind both, the current status of research internationally and writing your proposal in a clear manner. Make the proposal look typographically nice, easy to read (clearly identified aims and hypotheses, structured text using subheadings and bullets, tables and diagrams in black and white etc) and without buzzwords. Choose a clear and comprehensible title and abstract.
- Put no claims that cannot be verified independently.
- Please be aware that in case of the approved proposal, as PI you will have an obligation to ensure open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications related to the results of the ERC project. More information is available [here](#).
- To avoid technical risks and time constraints, prepare the formal supporting letter early and register your proposal in advance since you have a possibility to upload, store and re-submit the documents/proposal in the Participation Portal.
- If you have an on-going ERC project, please be aware of the following:
  - A researcher may participate as PI in only one ERC frontier research project at any one time (a new frontier research project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous frontier research grant agreement has ended);
  - A researcher participating as PI in an ERC frontier research project may not submit a proposal for another ERC frontier research grant, unless the existing project ends (according to GA) no more than two years after the call deadline.

## II. Writing part B1

- This part is read only by three panel members and most of them might not be experts in your research field. Therefore, consider carefully which review panel to choose: the most of panel members are replaced every second year so look at the disciplines represented on chosen panel and at the panel members in two years ago to get an idea of the level of prior knowledge within panel. It will also help you to write the Part B1 on “a proper level”.
- Concrete questions of general appeal are good here.
- Non-expert should be able not only to easily understand it but also find something to get excited about!
- Do not spend too much space on the background to convince the reader that you know area. Your CV and part B2 take care of this.
- If you don't pass part B1, nobody will read part B2.
- Get feedback from someone who doesn't know your area that well and proof-read the proposal. KTH Research Office has some [support available](#).

## III. Writing part B2

- Do not refer part B1 to B2 and vice versa and do not “copy” them. Reviewers that read B1 might not be the same as those reading B2 and those that read B2 might not see B1.

- B2 is read by experts and hence higher “standard” is required. However bear in mind that it is also read by panel members so try to give them some parts which are easy to understand.

#### IV. CV

- Make sure that evaluators do not miss your strong points.
- Help the panel to identify top credentials (top venues, top journals etc).
- Might be good to say “12 invited talks” and describe the level but not give too long lists.
- Mentoring of young scientists and keynote addresses at leading conferences are another examples.
- The golden rule here is “Less is more”.