

Selection of tips to succeed in ERC Starting- or Consolidator 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.

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). Moreover, choose the proper funding scheme and check the eligibility criteria accordingly - see the [ERC-homepage](#) for details. The ERC publishes [Guide for Applicants](#) as well as [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#) and both are highly recommended to be studied carefully.

Here are some principles of what might constitute a competitive ERC proposal:

1. ERC funding with its conceptual scientific high risk / high-gain, non-collaborative, frontier excellent research etc is unique. It also means that most of your earlier written proposals cannot fit the ERC work programme.
2. Your proposal should challenge current paradigm(s) in research and suggest a frontier solution.
3. Be aware to mitigate some of the risk through, for example, a brief discussion of a backup-plan.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. As many other high quality proposals, you need to clearly explain the following:
 - Why you?
 - Why now?
 - Why this project?
7. Choose a clear and comprehensible title and abstract.
8. Put no claims that cannot be verified independently.
9. 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. Moreover, the proposal in general must be 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.

10. 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”.
11. 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 will not see B1.
12. Demonstrate clearly and bring, if relevant, attention to your independence, international experience and leadership. In case when team member(s) engaged by another host institution participate(s) in the project, their participation has to be fully justified.
13. 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](#).
14. If you have an on-going ERC project, please be aware of the following:
 - A researcher may participate as Principal Investigator 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 Principal Investigator 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.
15. Get advice and feedback from others and proof-read the proposal. KTH Research Office has some [support available](#).