



The EU Framework Programme
for Research and Innovation

HORIZON 2020



ERC Evaluation Procedure and Criteria

Extract from the ERC Work Programme

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Evaluation procedure and criteria

Evaluation procedure

A **single submission of the full proposal** will be followed by a **two-step evaluation**. The evaluation will be conducted by means of a structure of high level peer review panels as listed in Annex 1. The panels may be assisted by remote referees.

Applicant Principal Investigators can request during the electronic proposal submission that up to three specific persons should not act as a peer reviewer in the evaluation of their proposal²⁶.

At step 1, the extended synopsis and the Principal Investigator's track record and CV will be assessed (and **not** the full scientific proposal). **At step 2** the complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed (including the full scientific proposal).

The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant Principal Investigator (see "*Proposal description*" above). Proposals may be allocated to a different panel with the agreement of both Panel Chairs concerned.

In cases where panels determine that a proposal is of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature, panels may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional remote referees.

Principal Investigators whose proposals are retained for step 2 of the evaluation for the Starting and Consolidator Grants may be invited for an interview to present their project to the evaluation panel meeting in Brussels.

²⁶ If any of the persons identified is an independent expert participating in the evaluation of the proposals for the call in question, they may be excluded from the evaluation of the proposal concerned, as long as it remains possible to have the proposal evaluated.

Evaluation criteria

For all ERC frontier research grants, **excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation**. It will be applied to the evaluation of both the research project and the Principal Investigator in conjunction.

During the evaluation, the phase of the Principal Investigator's transition to independence, possible breaks in the research career of the applicant and/or unconventional research career paths should be taken into account. Benchmarks set in the relevant profiles above including the expected minimum working time to be spent on the ERC project as well as the working time spent in the EU or Associated Country should also be taken into consideration.

In general, projects wholly or largely consisting in the collation and compilation of existing material in new databases, editions or collections are unlikely to constitute ground-breaking or "frontier" research in themselves, however useful such resources might be to subsequent original research. Such projects are therefore unlikely to be recommended for funding by the ERC's panels.

If an applicant submits a proposal which coincides, fully or in essence, with a proposal made by another applicant in the same or any other call, both the ground-breaking nature of the project and the Principal Investigator's capacity to carry it out may be seriously called into question. Plagiarism detection software may be used to analyse proposals submitted to the ERC.

The detailed evaluation elements applying to the excellence of the research project and the Principal Investigator are set out below.

1. Research Project

Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research 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 across disciplines)?

To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain?

Scientific Approach

To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

To what extent is the proposed research methodology 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)?

2. Principal Investigator

Intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment

Starting and Consolidator

Intellectual capacity and creativity

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?

Commitment

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 (min 50% of the total working time on it and min 50% in an EU Member State or Associated Country) (based on the full Scientific Proposal).

Advanced

Intellectual capacity and creativity

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 the PI demonstrated sound leadership in the training and advancement of young scientists?

Commitment

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 (min 30% of the total working time on it and min 50% in an EU Member State or Associated Country) (based on the full Scientific Proposal).

Outcome of evaluation

At each evaluation step, each proposal will be evaluated and marked for each of the two main elements of the proposal: research project and Principal Investigator.

At the end of each evaluation step, the proposals will be ranked by the panels on the basis of the marks they have received and the panels' overall appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses.

At the end of **step 1** of the evaluation applicants will be informed that their proposal:

- A.** is of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation;
- B.** is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to step 2 of the evaluation;
- C.** is not of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation.

At the end of **step 2** of the evaluation applicants will be informed that their proposal:

- A.** fully meets the ERC's excellence criterion and is recommended for funding **if sufficient funds are available**;
- B.** meets some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded.

In addition, once the evaluation of their proposal has been completed, applicants will receive an evaluation report which will include the ranking range of their proposal out of the proposals evaluated by the panel.

Projects recommended for funding will be funded by the ERC if sufficient funds are available. Proposals will be funded in priority order based on their rank.

Applicants may also be subject to restrictions on submitting proposals to future ERC calls based on the outcome of the evaluation. Applicants will need to check the restrictions in place for each call (for 2014 calls see restrictions on submission of proposals under "Eligibility criteria" above).