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Funders Conference, EUI Florence, 31 January 2018

Outline



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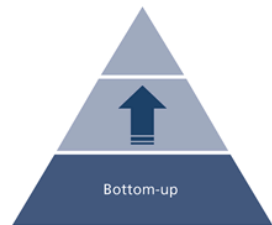
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- ✓ What is the ERC?
- ✓ How are ERC proposals evaluated?
- ✓ How to prepare & submit a proposal?
- ✓ Hints and tips
- ✓ Sources of further information

What is ERC?

The ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition

Budget: € 13 billion (2014-2020) - 1.9 billion €/year
€ 7.5 billion (2007-2013) - 1.1 billion €/year



Legislation

- Scientific governance: independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President; full authority over funding strategy
- Support by the ERC Executive Agency (autonomous)
- Excellence as the only criterion

Strategy

- Support for the individual scientist – no networks!
- Global peer-review
- No predetermined subjects (bottom-up)
- Support of frontier research in all fields of science and humanities

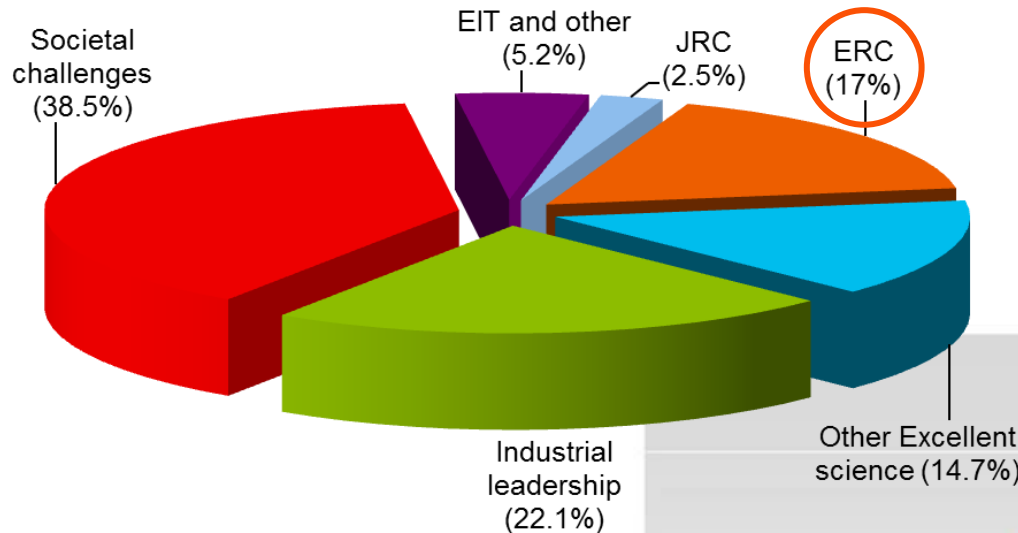
ERC is....

1. funding: it is part of H2020



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ERC Budget € 13 billion

For 2018, the budget is more than 1.8 billion euros, the highest ever since the beginning of the ERC.

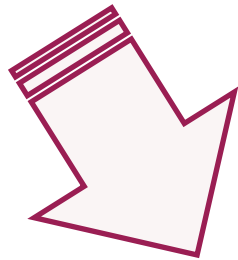


ERC is....

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

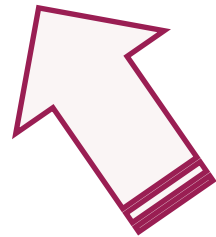


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The ERC Executive Agency

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



ERC Scientific Officers

- Work closely with the panel members
- Manage all practical aspects of the evaluations
- Carry out scientific follow-up

ERC Funding Schemes



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Starting Grant

- 2-7 years after PhD
- up to €1.5M (+0.5M)
- for 5 years

Consolidator Grant

- 7-12 years after PhD
- up to €2M (+ 0.75M)
- 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

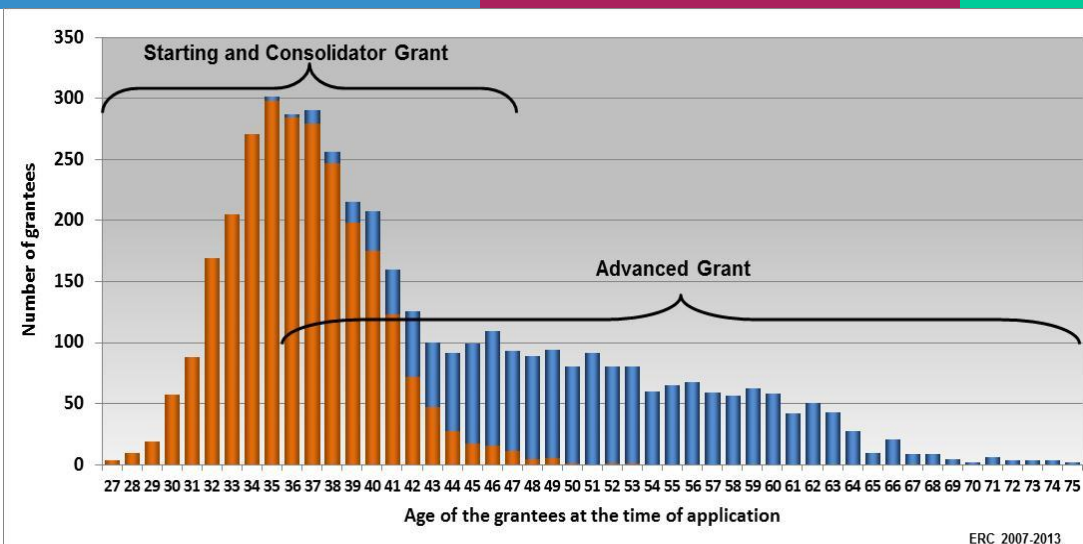
Re-launched 2018

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

ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility

- to work on a research topic of **own choice**, with a team of **own choice** ('bottom-up')
- to gain true **financial autonomy** for 5 years (6 for Synergy scheme)
- to negotiate with the host institution the **best conditions** of work
- to attract **top team members** (EU and non-EU) **and collaborators**
- to move with the grant to any place in EU and countries associated to H2020 if desired (**portability of grants**)
- **to attract additional funding and gain recognition**; ERC is a quality label
- Independence and freedom of research is fundamental

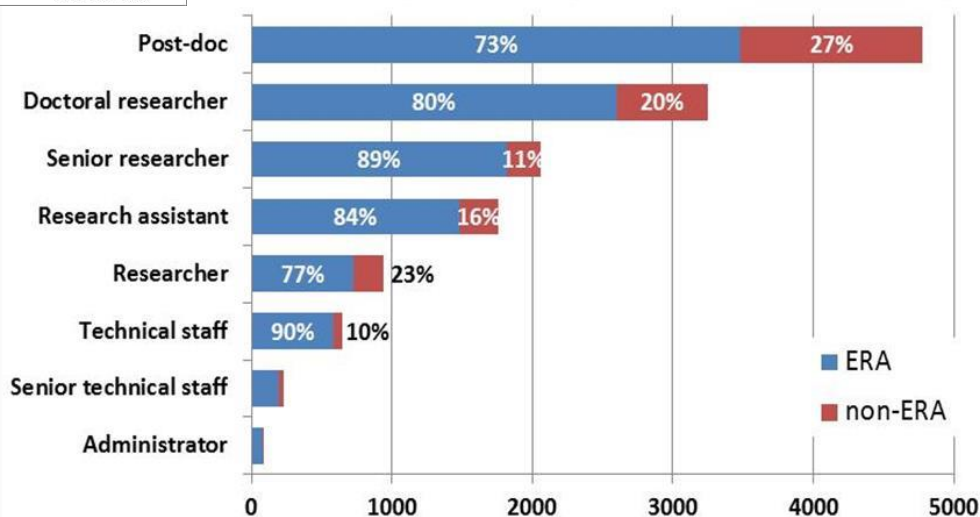
Priority to Young Scientists



+ 30 000 PhD and post-doc researchers working

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

Reported team members (2015)
head count (1901 projects; almost 14,000 team members)



2018 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

Evaluation of proposals: Review procedure for StG, CoG, AdG

STEP 1

Remote assessment by Panel members
of **section 1 – PI and synopsis (part B1)**

Panel meeting

Score:
B or C

Proposals retained
for step 2:
Score A

STEP 2

Remote assessment by Panel members
and reviewers of **full proposal (B1+B2)**

Panel meeting + interview (StG and CoG)

Score:
B

Ranked list of
proposals:
Score A

Feedback to
applicants

How are ERC research proposals evaluated?

Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion



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Excellence of the Research Project

- ✓ Ground breaking nature
- ✓ Potential impact
- ✓ Scientific Approach

• Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- ✓ Intellectual capacity
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Commitment

Note: Quality of the PI's institution (where they come from / where they go to) is not evaluated

Preparing an application



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- Have a bright, original, and exciting idea
- Design a research project to implement the idea
- Get a letter of support from a Host Institution where the project is to be carried out (located in the EU or a country associated to H2020)
- Read the Information for Applicants
- Fully electronic/web based submission system
- Familiarize yourself with the submission system well before the deadline



Online Submission

Proposal structure



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Administrative forms (Part A)

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

Administrative forms

Annexes

Commitment of the host institution, PhD certificate
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

Guidelines and Recommendations in the 2018 Information for Applicants

Submission of Proposals

Differences in Part B1 and Part B2



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Step 1: Panel members (generalists, multidisciplinary approaches) see only Part B1 of your proposal: Prepare it accordingly!

- Pay attention to the ground-breaking nature of the research project – no incremental research. State-of-the-art not enough. 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 all experts in the field)
- Outline of the methodological approach (in sufficient detail to convince the panel of feasibility)
- Show your scientific independence in your CV

Submission of Proposals

Differences in Part B1 and Part B2



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In Step 2: Both Part B1 and B2 are sent to specialists around the world (specialised external referees)

- Do not just repeat the synopsis
- Provide sufficient detail on methodology, work plan, selection of case studies etc. (15 pages)
- Check coherency of figures, justify requested resources
- Explain involvement of team members
- Provide alternative strategies to mitigate risk

Questions to ask yourself as an applicant

- Am I internationally competitive as a researcher at my career stage and in my discipline?
- Am I able to work independently, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?
- Why is my proposed project important?
- Does it promise to go substantially beyond the state of the art?
- Why am I the best/only person to carry it out?
- Is it timely? (Why wasn't it done in the past? Is it feasible now?)
- What's the risk? Is it justified by a substantial potential gain? Do I have a plan for managing the risk?

Contrary to what you may think.....



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- ✓ ERC funds "frontier research", including applied research.
- ✓ The budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand.
- ✓ The panel descriptors do not represent ERC scientific priorities.
- ✓ The success rate is virtually flat across the eligibility window (StG, CoG).
- ✓ Publication record is not decisive in selection decisions.
- ✓ The Host Institution is not an evaluation criterion.



Particular emphasis on.....



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Frontier of science, scholarship and engineering, i.e.

- ✓ Multi- or interdisciplinary proposals which cross boundaries between different fields of research, **or**
- ✓ Pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research, **or**
- ✓ Proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions.



Synergy Grants – Objectives



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ERC Synergy Grants aim to enable minimum 2 to maximum 4 Principal Investigators and their teams to bring together complementary skills, knowledge, and resources, in order to jointly address ambitious research problems.

The goals are:

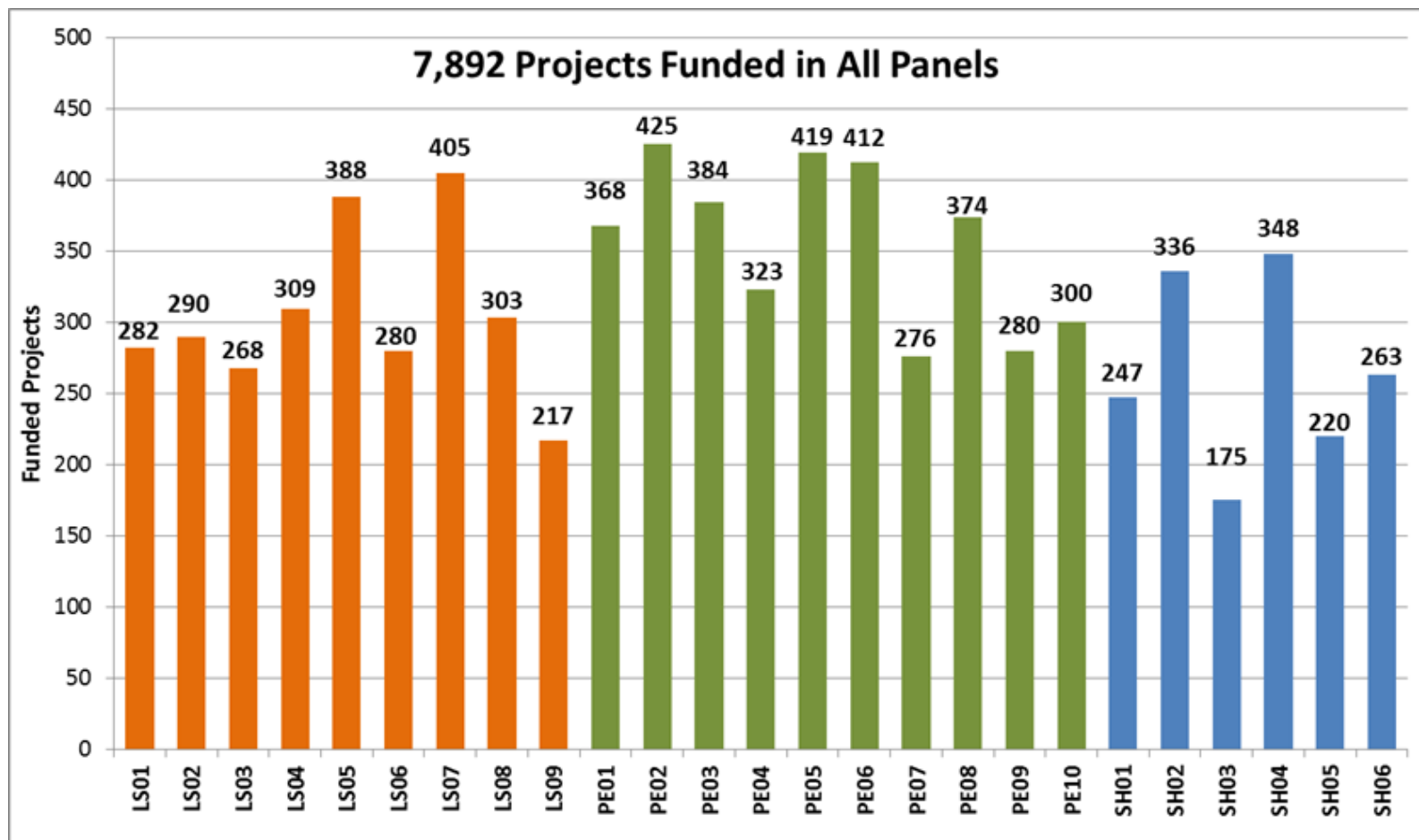
- to promote substantial advances at the frontiers of knowledge,
- to cross-fertilize scientific fields, and
- to encourage new productive lines of enquiry and new methods and techniques, including unconventional approaches and investigations at the interface between established disciplines.

ERC-funded projects in all panels (as of January 2018)



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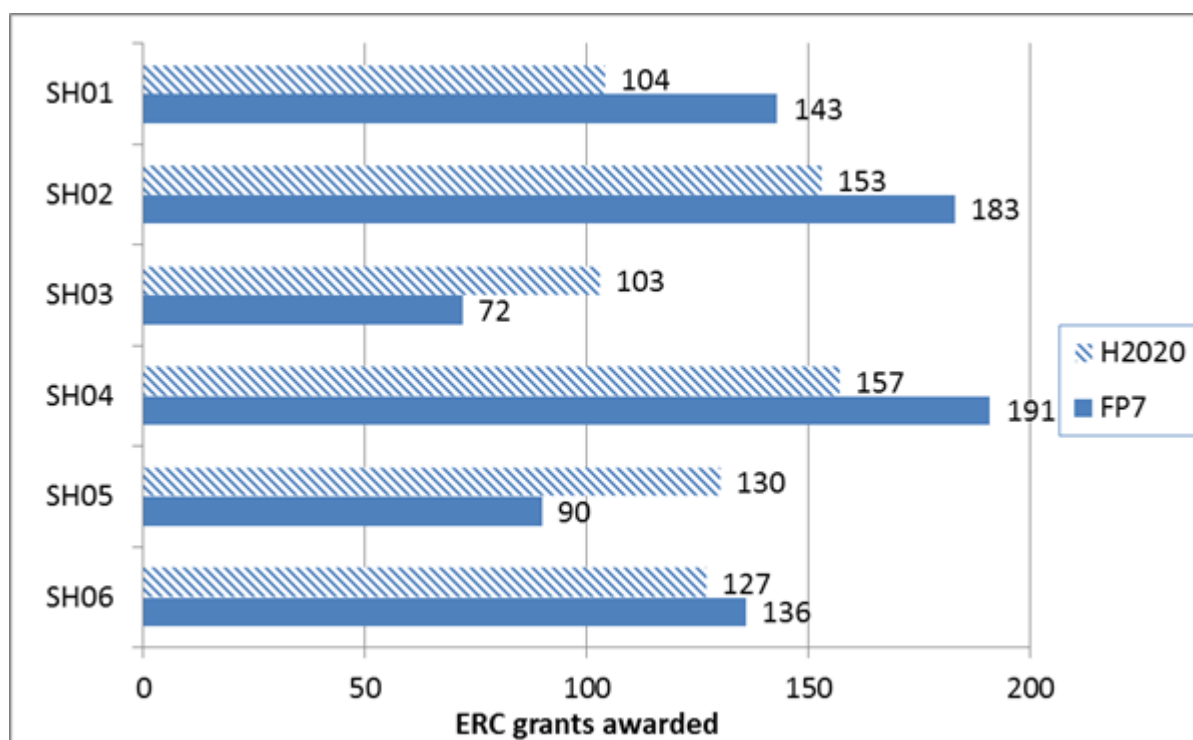
Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

1589 ERC-funded projects in SH (overall budget: over 2,4 billion Euro)



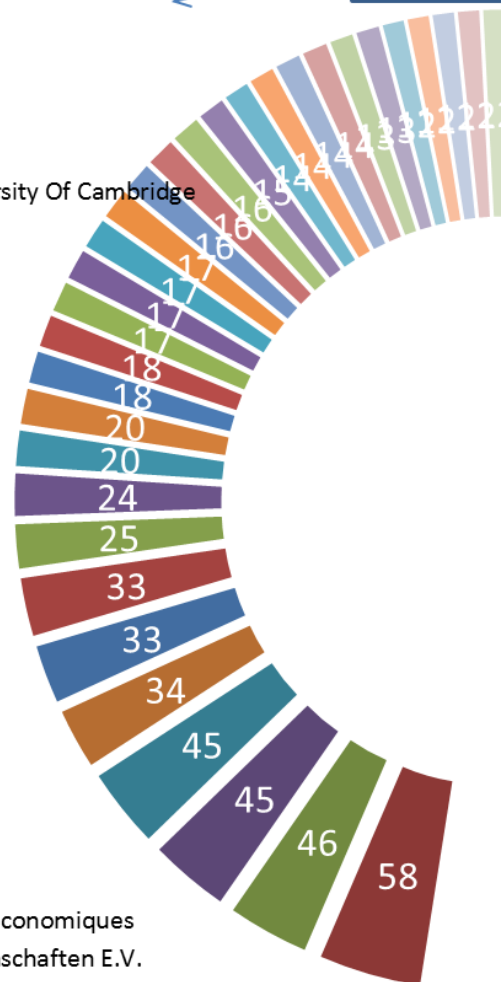
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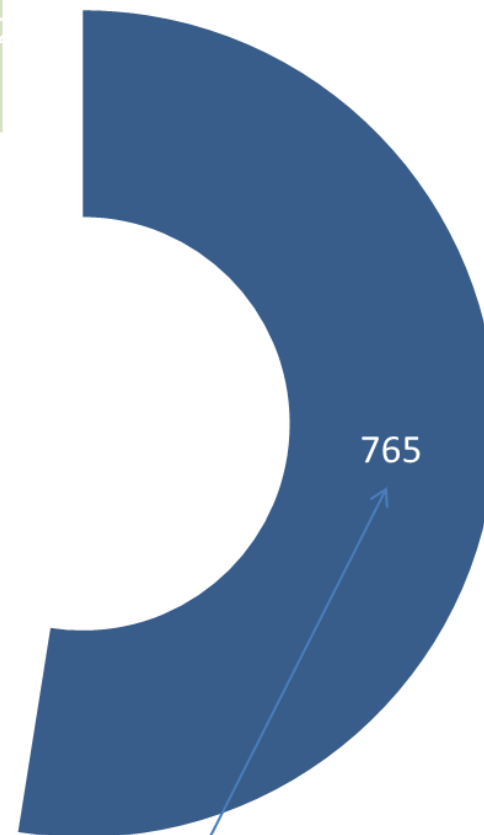


Number of ERC grants received by HIs in SH domain, 2007 - 2017

- 58 - The Chancellor, Masters And Scholars Of The University Of Oxford
- 46 - University College London
- 45 - Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique
- 45 - Universiteit Van Amsterdam
- 34 - London School Of Economics And Political Science
- 33 - Universiteit Leiden
- 33 - The Chancellor, Masters And Scholars Of The University Of Cambridge
- 25 - Universita Commerciale Luigi Bocconi
- 24 - The University Of Edinburgh
- 20 - Stichting Katholieke Universiteit
- 20 - Universiteit Utrecht
- 18 - Universitat Pompeu Fabra
- 18 - The University Of Exeter
- 17 - Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet Muenchen
- 17 - Stichting Vu
- 17 - European University Institute
- 17 - The Hebrew University Of Jerusalem.
- 16 - King'S College London
- 16 - Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
- 16 - Universitaet Zuerich
- 15 - Universiteit Gent
- 14 - Kobenhavns Universitet
- 14 - Fondation Nationale Des Sciences Politiques
- 14 - Universitetet I Oslo
- 14 - Goldsmiths' College
- 13 - Fondation Jean-Jacques Laffont,Toulouse Sciences Economiques
- 13 - Max Planck Gesellschaft Zur Foerderung Der Wissenschaften E.V.
- 12 - University Of Sussex
- The University Of Birmingham
- 12 - Oesterreichische Akademie Der Wissenschaften
- 12 - University Of York
- 12 - Kozep-Europai Egyetem



Number of ERC grants received by top HIs, 2007-2017



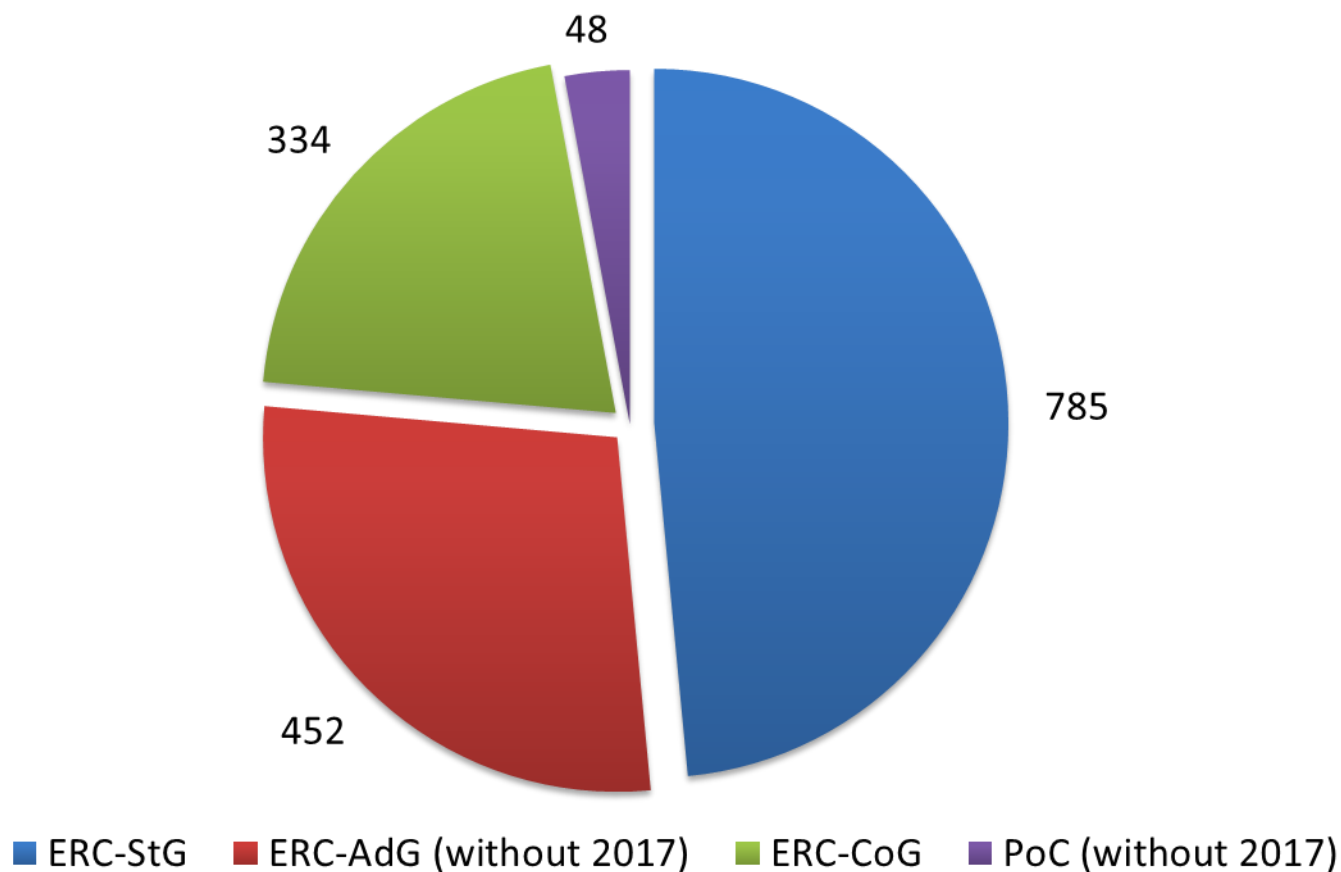
Number of HIs with 10 or less ERC grants, 2007-2017

ERC funded projects in SH domain by grant type, 2007 - 2017



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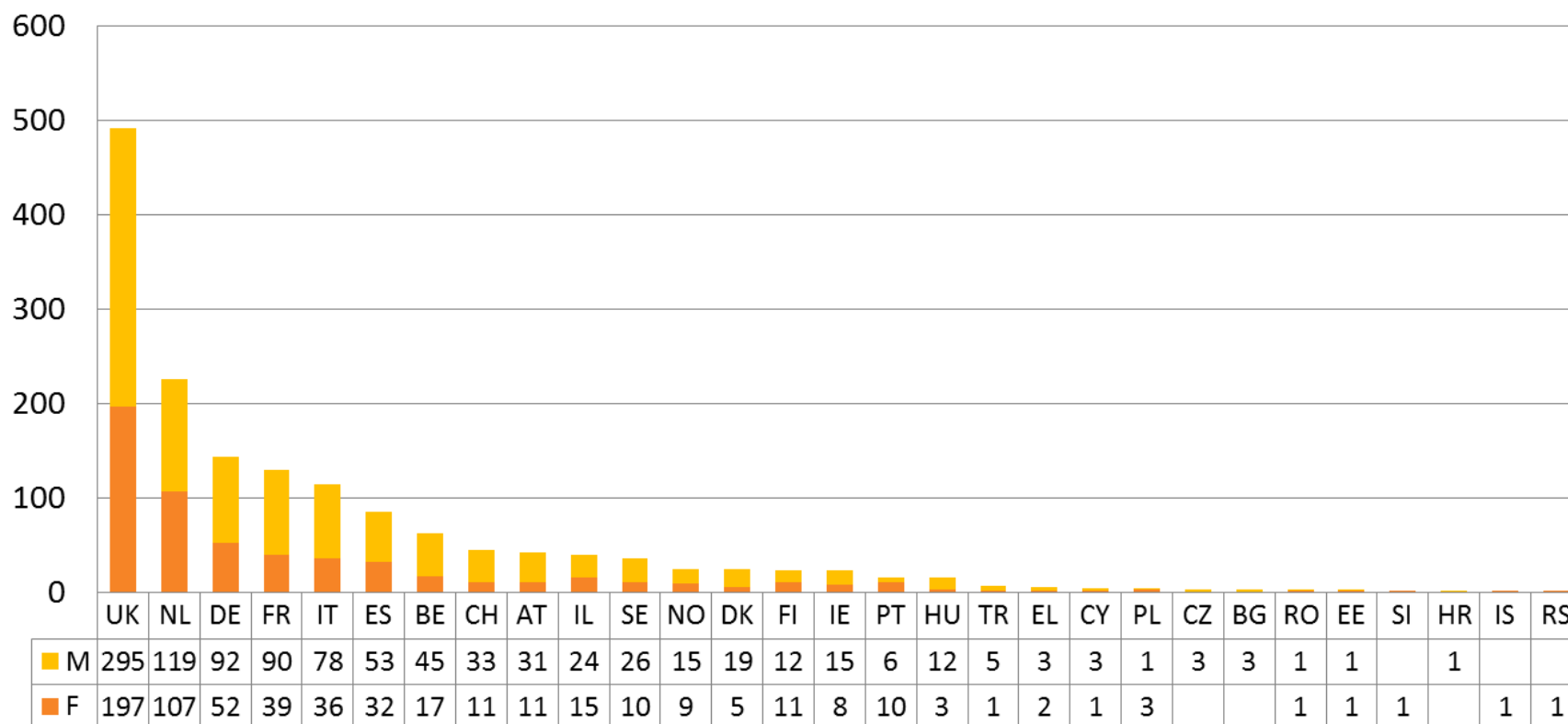
Number of ERC funded projects in SH domain by HI country and gender, 2007 - 2017



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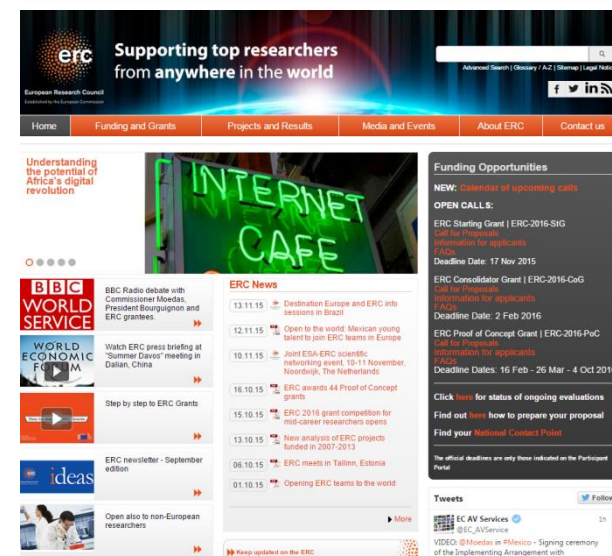
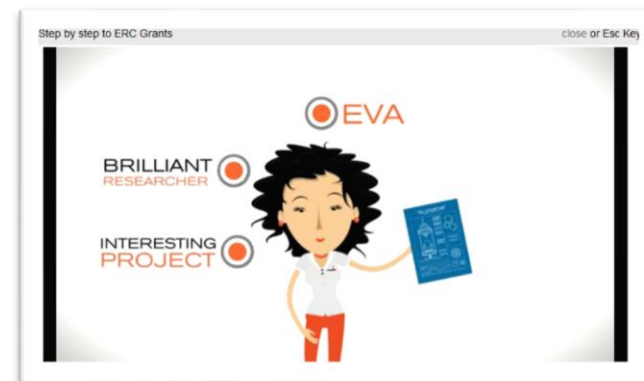
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Number of ERC funded projects in SH domain by HI and gender, 2007 - 2017*



Some useful tools and links

- 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



Preparing an application

Check the already Funded Projects



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ERC Funded Projects

Prizes and Awards

ERC Stories

Statistics

Funding Scheme

Research Area

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 **4,500 projects** have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the associated countries. The ERC has received over **43,000 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 (Panels/Domains), 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".

Menu allows searching by Funding Scheme, Research Area, Country of Host Institution.

Preparing an application

Check past panel members for the call



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Evaluation Panels

Tweet

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 that 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 are evaluated by the ERC's regular panels with the appropriate external expertise.

The European Research Council



- More information: erc.europa.eu
- National Contact Point: erc.europa.eu/national-contact-points
- Sign up for news alerts: erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc
- Where to apply:
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/>

2018 Call Calendar



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ERC calls	Budget	Call Opening	Submission Deadline(s)
Starting Grants ERC-2018-StG	581 M€ (391 grants)	3 August 2017	17 October 2017
Synergy Grants ERC-2018-SyG	250 M€ (30 grants)	3 August 2017	14 November 2017
Consolidator Grants ERC-2018-CoG	550 M€ (287 grants)	24 October 2017	15 February 2018
Advanced Grants ERC-2018-AdG	450 M€ (194 grants)	17 May 2018	30 August 2018
Proof of Concept ERC-2018-PoC	20 M€ (130 grants)	6 September 2017	16 January 2018 18 April 2018 11 September 2018



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Thank you!

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