The European Research Council

Funding Opportunities in the Social Sciences and Humanities

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European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

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What is the ERC?

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

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
- Excellence as the only evaluation criterion

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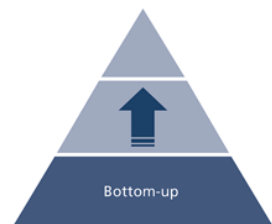
ERC Structure

The European Commission

- **Provides financing** through the EU framework programmes
- **Guarantees autonomy of the ERC**
- **Assures the integrity and accountability of the ERC**
- **Adopts annual work programmes** as established by the Scientific Council

The ERC Scientific Council

- **22 prominent researchers** proposed by an independent identification committee
- **Appointed by the Commission** (4 years, renewable once)
- **Establishes overall scientific strategy;** annual work programmes (incl. calls for proposals, evaluation criteria); peer review methodology; selection and accreditation of experts
- **Controls quality of operations and management**
- **Ensures communication with the scientific community**

The ERC Executive Agency

- **Executes annual work programme** as established by the Scientific Council
- **Implements calls for proposals** and provides information and support to applicants
- **Organises peer review evaluation**
- **Establishes and manages grant agreements**
- **Administers scientific and financial aspects** and follow-up of grant agreements
- **Carries out communications activities** and ensures information dissemination to ERC stakeholders

Scientific Governance by the Scientific Council

ERC President — BOURGUIGNON Jean-Pierre

Vice-President — BOCK Klaus

Vice-President — KONDOROSI Eva

Vice-President — STOKHOF Martin

BOVOLENTA Paola

BUCKINGHAM Margaret

CLARK Christopher

CRONE Eveline

DONALD Athene

JAJSZCZYK Andrzej

JUNGWIRTH Tomas

KRAMER Michael

MEHLHORN Kurt

ROMANOWICZ Barbara

STENSETH Nils Chr.

SUPERTI-FURGA Giulio

TAVERNARAKIS Nektarios

THORNTON Janet

VERNOS Isabelle

VEUGELERS Reinhilde

WIEVIORKA Michel

ZWIRNER Fabio

Scientific breakthroughs

21% | **71%**

of completed projects led to

Scientific breakthroughs | Major advances

Key figures

6,500
projects funded

40,000
researchers and experts
employed in ERC teams

Scientific impact

> 3,900
articles among
1% most cited
scientific journals

erc
European Research Council
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**Funding top talent
from anywhere
in the world**

Supporting young talent

64%
of grants
for early-career researchers

Prestigious prizes including

6
Nobel
Prizes

5
Wolf
Prizes

2
Fields
Medals

ERC as a model in Member States

15
EU countries set up
ERC-like structures/funding
schemes

ERC Budget
Within the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme

Societal challenges (38.5%)

EIT and other (5.2%)

JRC (2.5%)

ERC (17%)

Industrial leadership (22.1%)

Other Excellent science (14.7%)

ERC Budget
€ 13 billion

FP7

final H2020

Million Eur

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020
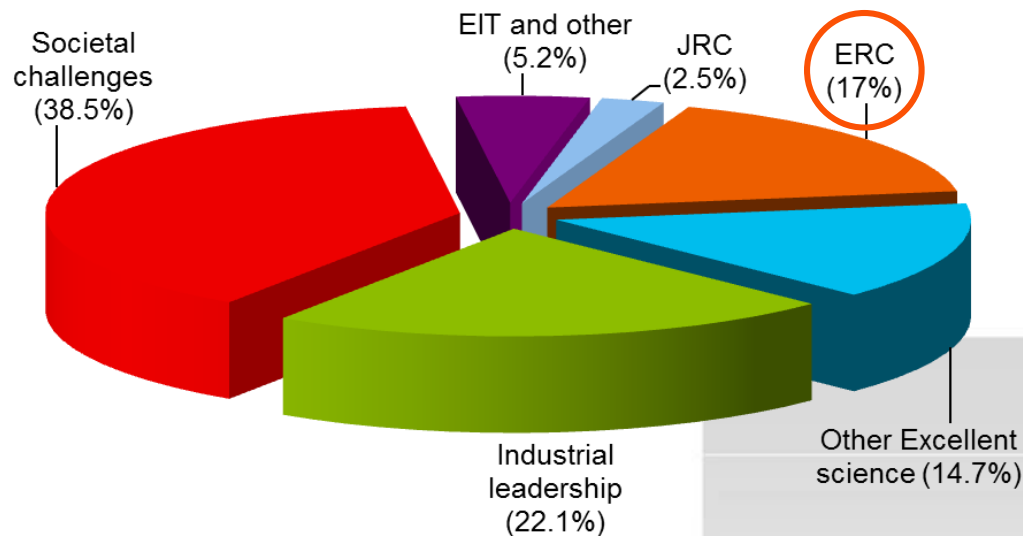
ERC – structure of calls

Starting Grants

starters
(2-7 years after PhD)
up to € 1.5 Mio
for 5 years

Consolidator Grants

consolidators
(7-12 years after PhD)
up to € 2 Mio
for 5 years

Advanced Grants
track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years
up to € 2.5 Mio
for 5 years

Proof-of-Concept
bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
up to €150,000 for ERC grant holders

Creative Freedom to Individual PIs

ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility

- to work on a research topic of **own choice**, with a team of **own choice**

- to gain true **financial autonomy** for 5 years

- 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 / associated countries if necessary (**portability of grants**)

- **to attract additional funding and gain recognition;** ERC funding is a quality label

- **Open** to applicant PIs of any nationality

European Commission

Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

How are ERC research proposals evaluated?
Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

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

• Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- ✓ **Intellectual capacity**
- ✓ **Creativity**
- ✓ **Commitment**

Note: The excellence of the Host Institution (where PIs come from/where they go to) is not an evaluation criterion.

Scientific Domains (ERC WP2017)

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Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry
- LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
- LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology
- LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
- LS5 Neurosciences and Neural Disorders
- LS6 Immunity and Infection
- LS7 Diagnostics, Therapies, Applied Medical Technology and Public Health
- LS8 Evolutionary, Population and Environmental Biology
- LS9 Applied Life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology

Physical Sciences & Engineering

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

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

How are the proposals evaluated?

Single submission, but a two-step evaluation

STEP 1

Remote assessment by Panel members of **section 1, part B1: synopsis and PI**

Panel meeting

Proposals rejected (score B & C)

Proposals retained for step 2 (score A)

STEP 2

Remote assessment by Panel members and reviewers of **full proposals: part B1+ B2**

Panel meeting + interview (StG+ CoG)

Ranked list of proposals (scores A & B)

Feedback to applicants

Redress
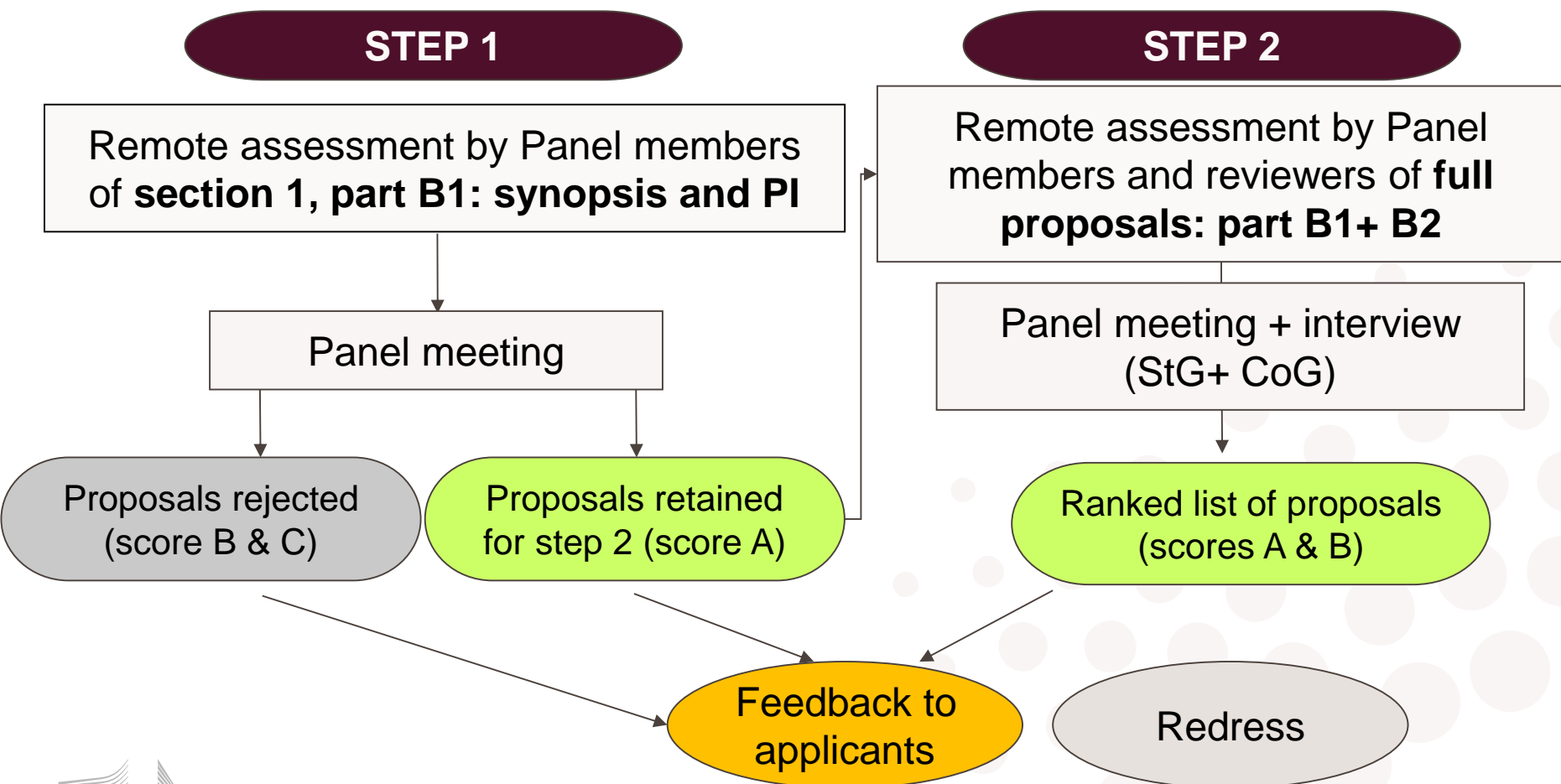
Priority to Young Scientists
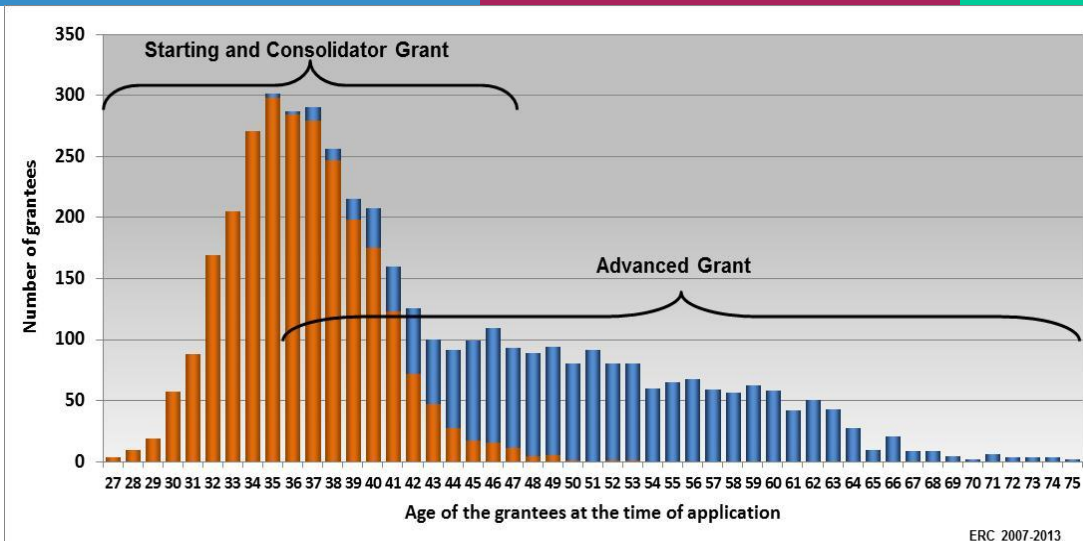
+ 30 000 PhD and post-doc researchers working in ERC teams.

Two-thirds of ERC grants to early-stage Principal Investigators.
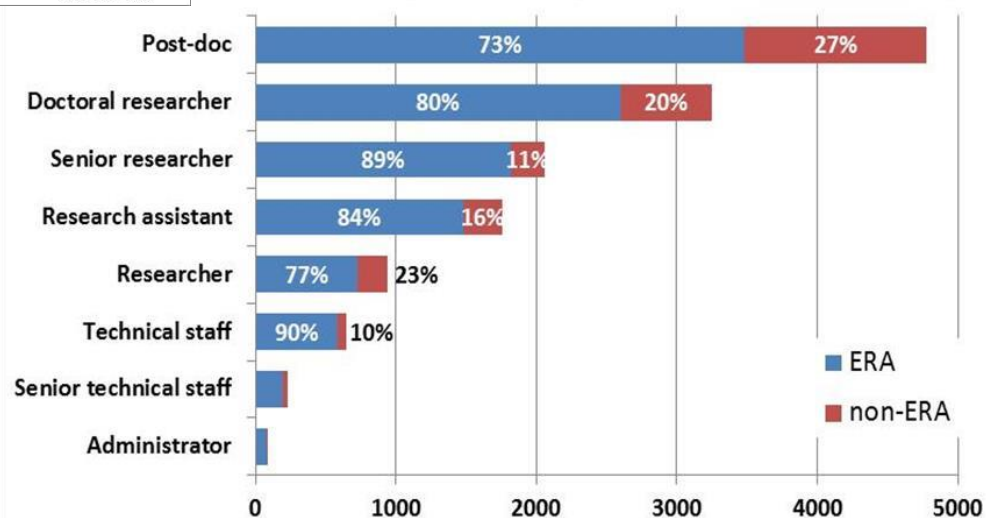
Funding Social Sciences and Humanities

➤ Over 800 projects funded in the SH domain 2007 - 2013

➤ Over 1.2 Billion Euro allocated to these projects

236 M€ in 2014
359 M€ in 2015
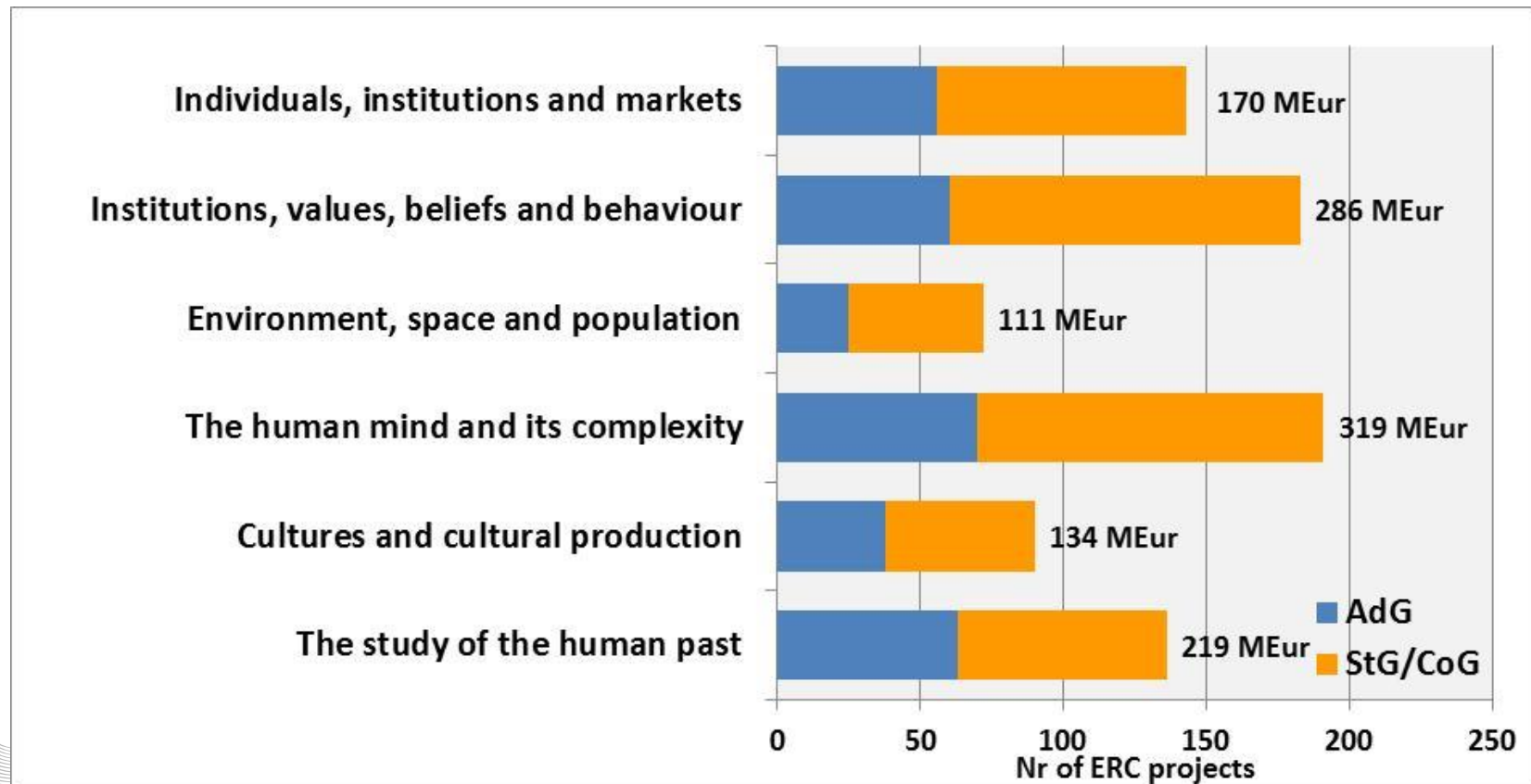
ERC-funded Research
at the European University Institute

Research topics by project first keyword
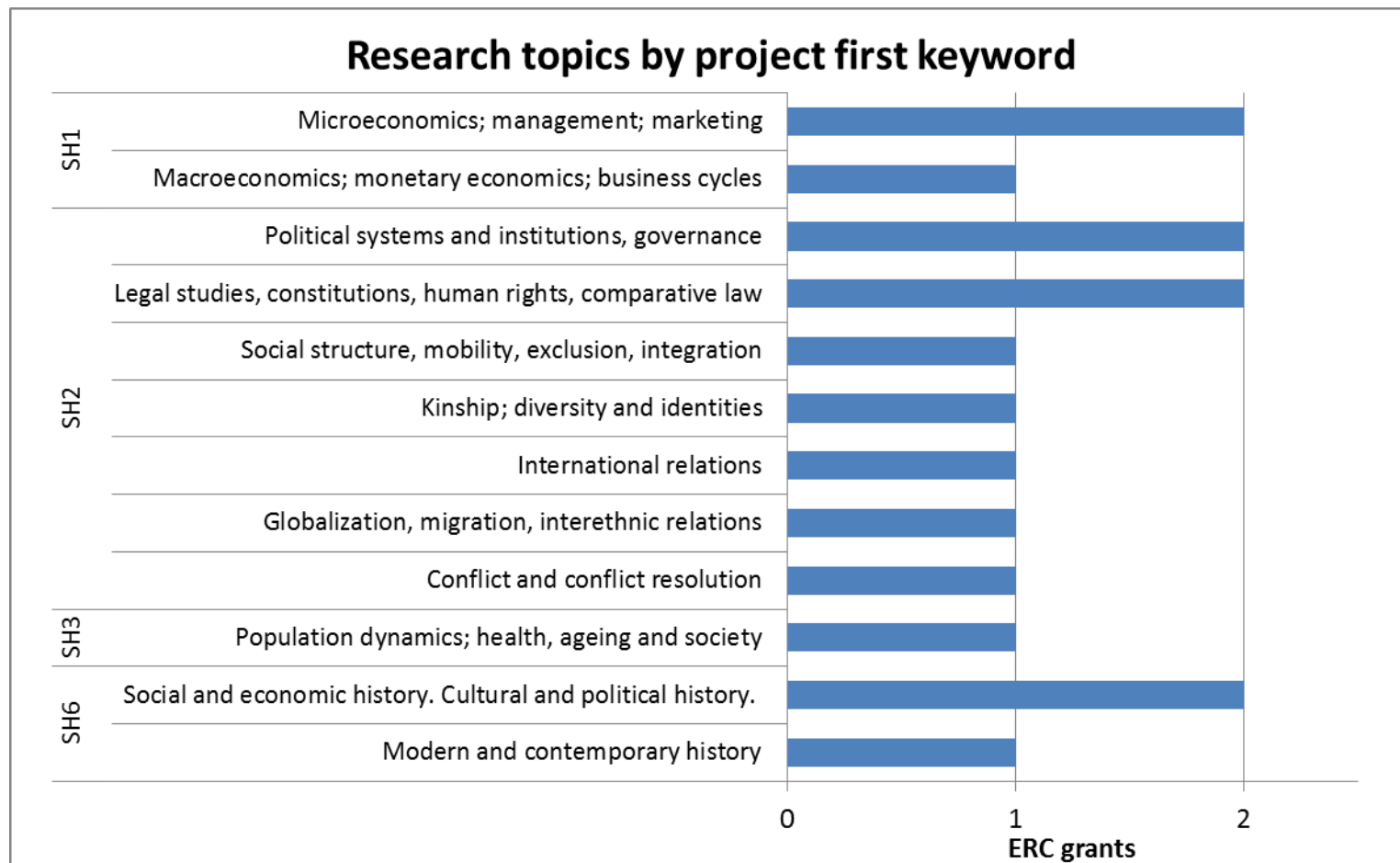
Top Host Institutions in Italy

Current Host Institutions (data as of 14/12/2016)

StG, CoG, AdG, PoC

Bocconi University Milan: 12, 3, 10
National Research Council (CNR): 14, 5, 1, 2
University of Roma - La Sapienza: 9, 2, 9, 1
University of Trento: 9, 3, 5, 3
Polytechnic University of Milan: 4, 8, 6, 1
University of Padua: 11, 4, 3, 1
International School for Advanced Studies: 6, 3, 8, 1
16 projects European University Institute: 6, 1, 9
University of Milan: 4, 4, 6, 1
Italian Institute of Technology: 8, 5, 1, 1
University of Rome - Tor Vergata: 4, 1, 8, 2
National Institute for Nuclear Physics: 5, 2, 4

Questions to ask yourself as an applicant PI

- Why is my proposed project important?

- Does it promise to go substantially beyond the state of the art?

- 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?

- Why am I the best/only person to carry it out?

- Am I able to work independently, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?

- Am I internationally competitive/visible as a researcher at my career stage and in my discipline?

Preparing an application
Hints and tips (Generalities I)

- **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** (Work Programme, Information for Applicants, Frequently asked questions) to prepare your proposal

Preparing an application
Hints and tips (Generalities II)

- **Chose the right panel**

- **Talk with ERC PIs at your Host Institution**

- Involve your Host Institution's grant office

- Talk to the National Contact Points

Submission of Proposals
Differences in Part B1 and Part B2

In 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 is not enough – be specific how your proposal will make the difference.

- Know your field – what is the **state of play** and why are your idea and scientific approach **outstandin**g?

- 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 **scientific approach** (feasibility)

- Show your **scientific independence** in your CV

Submission of Proposals
Differences in Part B1 and Part B2

In Step 2: <u>Both</u> **Part B1 and B2** are sent to specialists around the world (**specialised external remote referees**)

- Fully elaborate your proposal

- 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**

- **Avoid unnessecary repetions of Part B1 in Part B2**

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
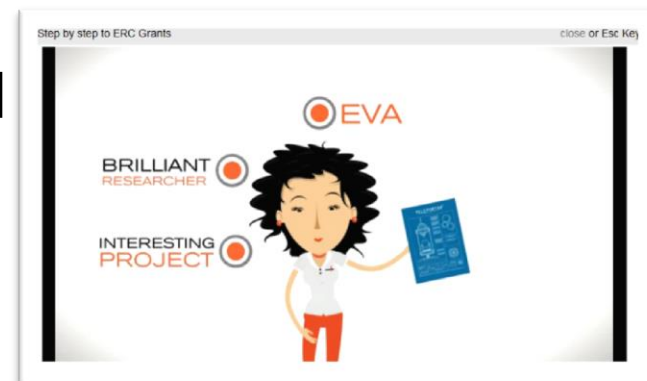
Preparing an application
Check the already Funded Projects

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

Preparing an application
Check past panel members for the call

Submission of Proposals
ERC Work Programme 2017 calendar

ERC calls	Budget	Call Opening	Submission Deadline(s)
Starting Grants ERC-2017-StG	605 M€	26 July 2016	**18 October 2016**
Consolidator Grants ERC-2017-CoG	575 M€	20 October 2016	**9 February 2017**
Advanced Grants ERC-2017-AdG	567 M€	16 May 2017	**31 August 2017**
Proof of Concept ERC-2017-PoC	20 M€	2 August 2016	19 January 2017 25 April 2017 5 September 2017

European Commission
Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

The European Research Council

- More information: erc.europa.eu

- National Contact Point: erc.europa.eu/national-contact-points

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Thank you!