



European Research Council

ERC Grant Schemes

Guide for Applicants for the Advanced Grant 2010 Call

November 2009

The Guide is published by the ERC Scientific Council on <http://erc.europa.eu>

It can also be downloaded from the CORDIS page on <http://cordis.europa.eu>



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
FP7 Specific Programme
IDEAS



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Following the experience with previous calls, some adjustments and improvements have been introduced to this guide. Notably, changes were introduced with regard to i) the information to be provided on ethical issues for any proposal and for proposals involving ethical issues (see Annex 2), and ii) the application forms on the Electronic Proposal Submission Service EPSS.

The changes are introduced and applicable for the 2010 call for ERC Advanced Grant proposals. As these adjustments have an impact on the proposal preparation and submission with EPSS, applicants are requested to consult the EPSS website and CORDIS call page for any further information.

Apart from that, changes have been introduced to increase the comprehensibility and readability of the guide.

Purpose of the Guide

This guide provides practical information to potential applicants in preparing and submitting an application for an ERC Advanced Grant. In addition, it provides a general overview on the ERC peer review evaluation process and presents the main features of the ERC grant agreement and the management of ERC grants.

The ERC Guide for Applicants for the Advanced Grant call is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Applying for an ERC Advanced Grant

Part 2: Managing ERC grants

Part 3: Annexes

The Guide for Applicants may be further modified based on the experiences gained from preceding calls for proposals, on changes applied to the grant schemes and the submission processes. Updated versions of the Guide for Applicants may be published with the publication of the future calls for proposals.

For detailed information on the ERC peer review evaluation process, the ERC grant agreement and the management of ERC grants, the following documents are available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23> :

- Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers: This guide provides practical information to peer reviewers as well as detailed information on the peer review evaluation and project selection process.
- ERC Model Grant Agreement: The grant agreement, which will be concluded between the ERC and the Principal Investigator's host institution. A template for the 'Supplementary Agreement' between the Principal Investigator and the host institution is available on the ERC website as well.
- Guide for ERC Grant Holders: This guide provides practical information to ERC grant holders, whether individual researchers or host institutions, on the administration and management of ERC grants, including monitoring and claiming of project costs, the scientific and financial reporting procedure, and the process for making changes to the project. It includes also information to applicants that have been offered an ERC grant on the process to prepare the grant agreement and the associated terms and conditions. It is divided into two parts: part 1 is relevant for both the Principal Investigator and his/her host institution, whereas part 2 is relevant mainly for the host institution's administration.

The present guide is based on the legal documents setting the rules and conditions for the ERC grant schemes, in particular the ERC Work Programme, the ERC Rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme, and the ERC Model Grant Agreement. This guide does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding. The European Commission, the ERC Executive Agency or any person or body acting on their behalf cannot be held responsible for the use made of the guide.

Note: As with other parts of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme, National Contact Points (ERC NCPs) have been set up across Europe¹ by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications. For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/ncp>.

¹ This applies to EU Member States and Associated countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

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PART 1: Applying for an ERC Advanced Grant

I. The European Research Council

The European Research Council (ERC) is a newly-created European funding initiative, designed to support the best scientists, engineers and scholars in Europe.

The ERC's mandate is to encourage the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator-initiated frontier research across all fields of research, on the basis of scientific excellence.

Grants are awarded and managed according to simple procedures that maintain the focus on excellence, encourage creativity and combine flexibility with accountability.

The ERC, which is established by the European Commission and funded through the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme with a budget of EUR 7.51 bn for 7 years (FP7, 2007-2013), complements other funding schemes in Europe, such as those of research funding agencies operating at the national level and those within the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme.

The ERC consists of a Scientific Council and Executive Agency. It operates under conditions of autonomy and integrity, guaranteed by the European Commission, to which it is accountable.

I.a The role of the ERC Scientific Council

The Scientific Council establishes the overall scientific strategy of the ERC, including the annual Work Programme where the calls for proposals and the corresponding funding rules and selection criteria are defined.

The Scientific Council establishes and oversees the ERC's scientific management and the implementation of the Work Programme, including the peer review and project selection processes and the selection of peer reviewers.

I.b The ERC Executive Agency

The ERC Executive Agency implements the FP7 Specific Programme IDEAS and manages ERC operations. It executes the annual Work Programme as established by the Scientific Council, implements calls for proposals and organises peer review evaluation in accordance with methodologies designed by the Scientific Council, and establishes and manages grant agreements. Additionally, it provides information and support to applicants and grant holders.

1. About the ERC Advanced Grant funding scheme

Advanced Grants are intended to promote substantial advances in the frontiers of knowledge, and to encourage new productive lines of enquiry and new methods and techniques, including unconventional approaches and investigations at the interface between established disciplines.

The objective of the Advanced Grant is to encourage and support excellent, innovative investigator-initiated research projects by leading advanced investigators across the EU Member States² and Associated Countries³. This funding scheme targets the population of researchers who have already established themselves as being independent research leaders in their own right and who would like to pursue frontier research of their choice.

The aim is to fund **individual teams** led by established, innovative and active **advanced investigators** - called **Principal Investigators (PI)** in the funding scheme - **regardless of nationality, age or current location**. They will include, for example, leading contributors to research advances in Europe, leading scientists of the European 'diaspora' or non-EU nationals who wish to establish themselves in Europe and pursue ground-breaking, high-risk research that opens new directions in their respective research fields or other domains.

Being highly competitive and awarded on the sole criterion of excellence without restriction to particular areas of research⁴, **these grants will support the very best of research to be conducted in any EU Member State² or Associated Country³**, adding value to research investments at the national level.

To encourage interdisciplinarity, when an interdisciplinary Advanced Grant proposal is grounded in the necessary combination of knowledge and skills from more than one discipline, a PI may identify a member or members of his/her individual team, who are active in these disciplines, as Co-Investigators, as an exception to the rule that consortia-style applications are not permitted ('Co-Investigator project').

1.1 Who can apply for an ERC Advanced Grant?

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to establish and conduct their research activity in any EU Member State² or Associated Country³. The PI may be of any age and nationality and may reside in any country in the world at the time of the application.

The guiding principles of the ERC Advanced Grant are highlighted in Box 1.

² The EU Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

³ The Associated Countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey. Note that the association agreement between the EC and the Faroe Islands is expected to become provisionally applicable as of 1 January 2010. Other countries may become associated during the course of FP7. The latest news will be posted on the CORDIS web site.

⁴ Research proposals within the scope of Annex I of the EURATOM Treaty directed toward nuclear energy applications should be submitted to relevant calls under the Seventh EURATOM Research Framework Programme (this annex is available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12006A/12006A_AN1.htm).

Box 1: Guiding principles of the ERC Advanced Grant

- Scientific excellence is the sole selection criterion
- Projects in all fields of research are eligible for funding⁴
- Individual research teams led by a single PI are supported
- Significant funding is provided to attract exceptional research leaders
- Grants are awarded to the host institution that engages the PI
- The host institution guarantees the PI's independence and provides the research environment to carry out the project and manage its funding

1.2 What is the level of funding of the ERC Advanced Grants?

Depending on the specific project and field, the level of these grants may be up to EUR 3 500 000 for a period of 5 years⁵ (pro rata for projects of shorter duration). Normally, however, grants will be limited to a maximum of EUR 2 500 000 unless the application involves specific features requiring a higher level of support: a 'Co-Investigator project'⁶; requirement to purchase major research equipment, or a PI who is coming from a third country to establish a research team and activity at a host institution in a EU Member State² or Associated Country³.

An ERC grant can cover **up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution up to 20% of the total eligible costs** (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the host institution) towards indirect costs. The costs which can be covered by an ERC grant are described in Box 2. Please note that the above mentioned limits include indirect costs.

The overall level of the grant offered will be determined on the basis of the needs of the project and judged by the peer review evaluation panel against the requested grant to the budget (see Annex 1 for the panel structure and descriptions). In all cases, the evaluation panels will review the requested grant and recommend the total amount to be granted, using rounded figures. The panels may also suggest a modification to the indicative budgetary breakdown in the application but the PI has the freedom to re-budget during the course of the project.

⁵ The level of the grant represents a maximum overall figure – payments must be justified on the basis of the amounts actually disbursed for the project.

⁶ 'Co-Investigator project': When an interdisciplinary Advanced Grant proposal is grounded in the necessary combination of knowledge and skills from more than one discipline, a PI may identify a member or members of his/her individual team, who are active in these disciplines, as Co-Investigators, as an exception to the rule stated in the ERC Work Programme 2010 that consortia-style applications are not permitted (http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ERC-WP_2010.pdf Section 2, pg 5).

Box 2: Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs

Direct eligible costs are those which support all the research, management, training and dissemination activities necessary for the conduct of the project, such as:

- Personnel Costs;
- Equipment Costs;
- Consumables;
- Travel and Subsistence Costs;
- Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results).

Indirect eligible costs are those which cannot be identified as directly attributable to the project, but which are incurred in direct relationship with the project's direct eligible costs, such as:

- Costs related to general administration and management;
- Costs of office or laboratory space, including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditure such as water, heating, electricity;
- Maintenance, insurance and safety costs;
- Communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office supplies;
- Common office equipment such as PC's, laptops, office software;
- Miscellaneous recurring consumables.

Non-eligible costs, in particular:

- Any identifiable indirect taxes, including VAT or duties;
- Interest owed;
- Provisions for possible future losses or charges;
- Exchange losses;
- Costs declared, incurred or reimbursed in respect of another Community project;
- Costs related to return on capital;
- Debt and debt service charges;
- Excessive or reckless expenditure;

can not be reimbursed through the ERC grant.

Normally, an ERC grant covers all eligible costs of a project. However, it is possible, that specific cost items are covered partially or in full by the host institution or by third party funding.

Project costs covered by third parties are allowed but **need to be declared** and will be deducted from the total of eligible costs covered by the ERC grant. Nevertheless, ERC grants are expected to be significant and cover a major part of the project and its costs. Thus, ERC funding is **neither aiming at topping up the funding of running projects, nor providing a means for co-funding.**

The actual project costs claimed should be presented in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.

1.3 Who could be a competitive candidate for the ERC Advanced Grant?

1.3.1 *The Principal Investigator (PI)*

ERC grants support projects which are carried out by individual **research teams⁷ headed by a single Principal Investigator (PI)** of any nationality and, if necessary, include additional team members. These teams may be of national or trans-national character. With the focus on the PI, the concept of individual team is fundamentally different from that of a traditional 'network' or 'research consortium'; **proposals of the latter type will not be accepted.**

The PI does not necessarily need to be employed by the host institution at the time when the proposal is submitted.

If not already employed by the host institution, the PI must be engaged by the latter at least for the duration of the grant.

ERC-funded PIs must be strongly committed to the project and devote a significant amount of time to it. In the case of the Advanced Grant **the PI should devote at least 30% of his/her workload to the ERC-funded project while spending at least 50% of his/her total workload in Europe** (EU Member State² or Associated Country³).

Applicants for the prestigious ERC Advanced Grant are expected to be active researchers and to have a track-record of **significant research achievements in the last 10 years** which must be presented in the application. There is little prospect of an application succeeding in the absence of such a record, which identifies investigators as exceptional leaders in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions.

Thus, in most fields, PIs of Advanced Grant proposals will be expected to demonstrate a record of achievements appropriate to the field and at least matching one or more of the following benchmarks:

- Normally 10 publications as senior author (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals, and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field.
- Normally 3 major research monographs, of which at least one is translated into another language. This benchmark is relevant to research fields where publication of monographs is the norm (e.g. humanities and social sciences).

Other alternative benchmarks that may be considered (individually or in combination) as indicative of an exceptional record and recognition in the last 10 years:

- Normally 5 granted patents.
- Normally 10 invited presentations in well-established internationally organised conferences and advanced schools.
- Normally 3 research expeditions led by the applicant.
- Normally 3 well-established international conferences or congresses where the applicant was involved in their organisation as a member of the steering and/or organising committee.

⁷ In certain fields (e.g. in the humanities and mathematics), research is often performed individually, aside from guiding research students. The term 'team' is therefore used in the broadest sense. It includes cases where an individual works independently.

- International recognition through scientific prizes/awards or membership in well-regarded Academies.

Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their track-record and leadership potential against the benchmarks that have been adopted by the ERC Scientific Council, in order to decide for themselves their likelihood for success, thus reducing unnecessary loss of time and effort on applications that are very unlikely to succeed.

1.3.2 Individual Team, Team Members, Co-Investigators

The constitution of the individual research team is flexible. Commonly, it involves other researchers - such as senior researchers, post docs, graduate students and PhD researchers - from the PI's research group or from the same institution as **'team members'**. However, depending on the nature of a project the research team may also involve team members from other research institutions situated in the same or a different country. Therefore, research teams can be of national or trans-national character. Team members can be of any age, nationality and country of residence. Team members operate under the leadership of the PI, including those team members hosted by other institutions.

Institutions of team members may be located in any country, including third countries⁸. Their participation (and possible funding to support the work of the respective team members) is subject to appraisal by the ERC peer review evaluation panels, which assess whether their involvement is properly justified and essential in terms of scientific competence and capacities.

Non-academic staff may also be involved as constituents of an individual team, such as technicians, or secretarial support staff, but are not considered as team members.

For the ERC Advanced Grants applications, when an interdisciplinary proposal is grounded in the necessary combination of knowledge and skills from more than one discipline, a PI may identify members of his/her individual team, who are active in these disciplines, as **'Co-Investigators'**. Co-Investigators are team members who have specific complementary expertise in rather different scientific areas or disciplines than the PI. However, similar to the PI of an Advanced Grant application, its Co-Investigator(s) are expected to be active researchers with an outstanding track record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years. Co-Investigators enable the realisation of unconventional methodological approaches beyond established disciplinary areas.

To further promote and support such interdisciplinary research proposals, the ERC introduced the option to propose larger projects: PIs of such 'Co-Investigator projects' may request larger ERC grants for their interdisciplinary project proposal. The host institution of a Co-Investigator must be located in an EU Member State² or an Associated Country³.

The peer review evaluation panel will carefully assess the interdisciplinary nature of a proposed 'Co-Investigator project' and the scientific added value and expertise of any Co-Investigator to the project; in particular the participation of any additional institution (legal entity) will only be permitted if it is clearly necessary from the scientific perspective.

1.4 What kind of research can be funded?

ERC grants aim to support 'Frontier Research', in other words the pursuit of questions at or beyond the frontiers of knowledge, without regard for established disciplinary boundaries. Applications may be made in **any field of research**⁴ including physical sciences and engineering, life sciences, and social sciences and humanities.

⁸ Third countries are neither EU Member States nor Associated Countries.

In particular, proposals of an interdisciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research or proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions are encouraged, as long as the expected impact on science, scholarship or engineering is significant. In addition, research supported by an ERC grant must respect fundamental ethical principles (see Box 3 below).

The peer review evaluation of proposals will therefore give emphasis to these aspects, in full understanding that such research has a high-gain/high-risk profile, i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a higher-than-normal risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims.

Some frontier research activities and methodologies may have ethical implications or may raise questions which will require sound ethical assessment (see Box 3 and Annex 2).

Box 3: Dealing with ethical issues

Fundamental ethical principles must be respected, including those reflected in the Charter* of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. These principles include the need to ensure the freedom of research and the need to protect the physical and moral integrity of individuals and the welfare of animals. The opinions of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)** are and will be taken into account. Furthermore, due account should be taken of the Protocol*** on the Protection and Welfare of Animals, to reduce the use of animals in research and testing (with a view to ultimately replacing animal use), to involve animals with the lowest degree of neuropsychological sensitivity, and to cause the least pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Applicants should indicate whether the proposed research raises sensitive ethical questions such as research involving human beings, human biological samples, personal data, genetic information or animals.

According to Article 6 of FP7 Decision and Article 3 of the Specific Programme Ideas, the following activities cannot be funded:

- research activities aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes;
- research activities intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable;
- research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

As regards human embryonic stem cell research, the ERC is bound by the European Commission's commitment to follow the practice of the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme (see OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42) and exclude from financial support any research activities destroying human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent ERC funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Applicants must ensure that the research proposed respects all national rules and procedures of the relevant country where the proposed research is conducted. Where necessary, approval must be sought from the relevant national or local ethics committee prior to the start of the project.

* see http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default_en.htm

** see http://ec.europa.eu/european_group_ethics/activities/docs/opinion_22_final_follow_up_en.pdf

*** see http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/references_en.htm

1.5 Where can the Principal Investigator run an ERC-funded research activity?

The contribution of the PI must be substantially carried out in the EU Member States² or the Associated Countries³. This does not exclude field work or other research activities in cases where these must necessarily be conducted outside the EU Member States or the Associated Countries in order to achieve the scientific objectives of the project/activity.

An ERC grant is awarded to the host institution (applicant legal entity) that engages and hosts the PI, with the attached **commitment that this host institution offers appropriate conditions for the PI to direct independently the research and manage its funding for the duration of the project**⁹ (see Annex 3). These conditions, including the '*portability*' of the project, are the subject of an agreement between the PI and the host institution (supplementary to the ERC Grant Agreement) and are described in the ERC Model Grant Agreement¹⁰.

Normally, the PI's host institution will be the only participating legal entity. Other legal entities, including those located in third countries⁸, may however be involved and receive funding to support the work of additional team members, if so specified in the grant agreement or subsequent amendments to the original grant agreement.

It is a condition for all ERC funding that the host institution commits to the following **conditions of independence**¹¹, ensuring that the PI may:

- **apply for funding independently**
- **manage the research and the funding for the project and make appropriate resource allocation decisions**
- **publish independently as senior author and invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work**
- **supervise team members, including research students, doctoral students or others**
- **have access to reasonable space and facilities for conducting the research.**

The host institution can be any legal entity (public or private), which has the infrastructure and capacity to carry out a frontier research project, such as a university, a research organisation or a research-performing company. Research-performing companies can host a PI as long as the PI's independence is not constrained by the research strategy of the company.

The host institution must be situated in a Member State² of the European Union or in an Associated Country³. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation¹².

⁹ This does not exclude cases where the PI's employer is not the host institution. In these cases, the specific conditions of engagement will also be subject to clarification and approval during the granting procedure.

¹⁰ Available on the ERC website at 'library'/practical info' or 'library'/legal framework' and published in the Official Journal of the EU, C (2007)1625, 16.04.2007.

¹¹ Note that the conditions of independence provided to the PI and his/her team are consistent with the 'The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers', C(2005)576, 11.03.2005.

¹² Such as: CERN, EMBL, ESA, ESO, ESRF, ILL, JRC.

Registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED)

To protect the EU's financial interests, the Commission uses an internal information tool, the Early Warning System (EWS) to flag identified risks related to beneficiaries of centrally managed contracts and grants. Through systematic registration of financial and other risks the EWS enables the Commission services to take the necessary precautionary measures to ensure a sound financial management¹³.

EWS registrations are not publicly disclosed. However, registrations will be transferred to the Central Exclusion Database (CED) if they relate to entities that have been excluded from EU funding because they are insolvent or have been convicted of a serious professional misconduct or criminal offense detrimental to EU financial interests. The data in CED are available to **all public authorities implementing EU funds**, i.e. European institutions, national agencies or authorities in Member States, and, subject to conditions for personal data protection, to third countries and international organisations.

The Work Programme informs you that the details of your organisation (or those of a person who has powers of representation, decision-making or control over it) may be registered in the EWS and the CED and be shared with public authorities as described in the relevant legal texts¹⁴.

More information on the EWS and CED can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/sound_fin_mgt/ews_en.htm

1.6 What are the re-applications and multiple applications rules?

Rules apply to reapplications for ERC grants by individual researchers who apply as Principal Investigators and/or Co-Investigators, and whose eligible proposals are not judged to meet the threshold of quality¹⁵, as well as for multiple eligible applications¹⁶ within the same or different type of ERC grants. The current rules, which may subsequently be modified by the Scientific Council in light of experience, are as follows:

- Only one ERC grant managed by a PI and/or a Co-Investigator can be active at any time.
- No PI and/or a Co-Investigator may be associated with more than one application to the ERC during the same year.
- No Principal Investigator who has submitted an eligible proposal to an Advanced Grant call (ERC-2010-AdG) may apply to the following Advanced Grant call (ERC-2011-AdG), unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold during the 2nd step but not funded due to insufficient available budget.
- A Principal Investigator or a Co-Investigator associated with an eligible proposal for an ERC Advanced Grant to either of the first two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG) may not apply for the third ERC Advanced Grant call (ERC-

¹³ The EWS covers situations such as significantly overdue recovery orders, judicial proceedings pending for serious administrative errors/fraud, findings of serious administrative errors/fraud, legal situations which exclude the beneficiary from funding.

¹⁴ The basis of registrations in EWS and CED is laid out in:
- the Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125),
and
- the Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12).

¹⁵ For more information on the subject, section 3.2.7 'Application of Criteria' in PART 1: Applying for an ERC Advanced Grant

¹⁶ Applications submitted to the first and second Advanced Grant call for proposals and which were not eligible are not subject to the resubmission restrictions.

2010-AdG) unless the eligible proposal to the first or second call has met the quality threshold on both evaluation criteria - Principal Investigator, Research Project - at the end of step 1 of the evaluation.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: these rules must be taken very seriously into account by the potential applicants. Any violation of these rules during the submission of a proposal will be brought to the attention of the ERC eligibility committee which will assess and decide on the eligibility of the proposal.

2. Preparing and submitting an ERC Advanced Grant application¹⁷

An ERC grant application should be submitted by a single PI in conjunction with and on behalf of her/his host institution (the 'applicant legal entity')¹⁸.

Grant applications are assessed by peer review evaluation panels (ERC panels), which may be supported by additional remote reviewers. These ERC panels assess and score the proposals on the basis of the individual evaluations.

Depending on the call budget available a budgetary cut-off applies to the ranking list and only the highest ranked proposals are offered an ERC grant until the call budget is consumed.

2.1 When can I apply?

ERC grant applications can be submitted only in response to a 'call for proposals'. Calls announced in the ERC Work Programme 2010 are published on the ERC website¹⁹, the CORDIS website²⁰ and in the Official Journal of the European Union²¹.

Deadlines for the submission of ERC grant applications are specified in each 'call for proposals'.

The ERC publishes annual calls for proposals for the ERC Advanced Grant scheme²². The provisional timing of these calls for proposals is indicated in the table below. It is expected that the call budgets will be gradually increased each year.

ERC Advanced Grant Calls Provisional Schedule 2010 - 2011

	Call open	Call Deadline	Evaluation
ERC-2010-AdG	Autumn 09	Spring 10	Spring 10 - Autumn 10
ERC-2011-AdG	Autumn 10	Spring 11	Spring 11 - Autumn 11

¹⁷ The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts. An English translation of the abstract must be included in your proposal.

¹⁸ Exceptionally, the PI may himself/herself act as the 'applicant legal entity', if he/she is acting in the capacity of the legal entity in his/her own right.

¹⁹ <http://erc.europa.eu/>

²⁰ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html

²¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en>

²² The budget breakdown for ERC calls that will be funded by the annual budgets of 2012 and 2013 (ca EURO 3.2 bn) will be established at a later stage by the ERC Scientific Council.

The publication date foreseen for the next call for Advanced Grant proposals (ERC-2010-AdG) is 29 October 2009 and the deadlines are:

Panels: PE1 – PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering), 24 February 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences), 17 March 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities), 7 April 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

2.2 How can I submit an ERC grant application?

The key features of the ERC Grant application procedure are highlighted in Box 4.

Box 4: Key features of the ERC grant application procedure

- Applications should be submitted by a single PI in conjunction with and on behalf of her/his host institution.
- Proposal formats and page numbers are strictly limited.
- Submission is accepted only via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service EPSS. The application procedure consists of a **single submission stage using EPSS**.
- Strict rules apply for re-applications and multiple applications.

2.2.1 EPSS registration

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS)²³.

PIs need first to register their intention to submit a proposal via the web-based EPSS (the Electronic Proposal Submission Service) in order to receive a login name and password and thus to get access to EPSS for preparing, uploading and submitting a proposal. This should be done as early as possible before the call deadline for the submission of proposals.

EPSS can be accessed via the ERC website²⁴ and the call page on CORDIS²⁵, or directly at <https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/welcome.jsp>. Full instructions will be found in the 'EPSS preparation and submission guide' at <https://www.epss-fp7.org/epss/EPSS-Userguide.pdf>.

Please consult the CORDIS call page²⁵ regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail support@epss-fp7.org, or by phone +32 2233 3760.

2.2.2 EPSS proposal submission

Following registration and agreement to the conditions of use of EPSS (see above section 2.2.1), the application can be prepared, uploaded and submitted via EPSS. Further

²³ In exceptional cases, when an applicant has absolutely no means of accessing the EPSS, and when it is impossible to arrange to do so, an applicant may request permission from the ERC to submit on paper. Such a request, which must clearly explain the circumstances of the case, must be received by the ERC no later than one month before the call deadline, at the following address: European Commission, European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)/ Unit B, COV2 21/127, 1049 Brussels, Belgium. The ERC will reply to such a request within five working days of receipt. If derogation is granted, the ERC will send proposal forms for paper submission to the applicant concerned.

²⁴ [ERC: European Research Council - Submit an ERC Grant Proposal](http://erc.europa.eu)

²⁵ <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls>

information on the preparation of the application (A and B forms) is given in Part 1, section 2.3 of this guide.

- **Completing the Part A forms in the EPSS and uploading a Part B does not yet mean that your proposal is submitted.** Once there is a consolidated version of the proposal, you must press the button “SUBMIT NOW”. (If you don't see the button “SUBMIT NOW”, first select the “SUBMIT” tag at the top of the screen). **Please note that “SUBMIT NOW” starts the final steps for submission; it does not in itself cause the proposal to be submitted.**
- After reading the information page that then appears, it is possible to submit the proposal using the button marked “*Press this button to submit the proposal*”.
- The EPSS then performs an automatic validation of the proposal. A list of any problems (“validation error message”) such as missing data, viruses, wrong file format or excessive file size will then appear on the screen. **Submission is blocked until these problems are corrected.** Once corrected, the applicant must then repeat the above steps to achieve submission.
- If successfully submitted, the applicant receives a message that indicates that the proposal has been received. This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt (see section 2.4.2).
- The applicant may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up until the deadline. The sequence above must be repeated each time (see also below section 2.4.3).
- If the submission sequence described above is not followed, the ERC considers that no proposal has been submitted.
- The research proposal and attached supporting documentation must exclusively use PDF ('Portable Document Format', compatible with Adobe version 3 or higher, with embedded fonts)²⁶. Other file formats will not be accepted by the system. Unless specified in the call, embedded material and any other documents (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video, multimedia, etc.) sent electronically or by post, will be disregarded. However, panel members and/or referees are free to access relevant web pages in order to further assess the applicants' previous work (including openly accessible published manuscripts of the applicant).
- Proposals must be **submitted before the deadline** specified in the call for proposals²⁷.
- EPSS will be closed for a relevant call at its call deadline. After this moment, it will be impossible to access EPSS for the relevant call.

Applicants, who wait until too near to the close of the call to start uploading their proposal, take a serious risk that the uploading is not concluded in time and thus the “SUBMIT NOW” button is not active anymore in order to conclude the submission process.

²⁶ Irrespective of the page limits specified above, there is an overall limit of 10 MB to the size of the PDF proposal file. There are also restrictions to the file name you give to the PDF proposal - use alphanumeric characters only. Special characters and spaces must be avoided.

²⁷ In the unlikely event of a failure of the EPSS service due to a breakdown of the ERC server during the last 24 hours of a call, the deadline will be extended by a further 24 hours. This will be notified by e-mail to all applicants who had registered in EPSS for this call, and also by a notice on the call page on the ERC website (<http://erc.europa.eu/>) and CORDIS (<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls>) as well as on the website of EPSS. Such a failure is a rare and exceptional event. Therefore, it should not be assumed that there will be such an extension of a call. If an applicant encounters difficulties in submitting a proposal, it should not be assumed that it is because of a problem with the ERC server. In most cases, other bottlenecks on the 'data highways' may occur and slow down or block the uploading of your proposal on the ERC server. For technical inquiries on the use of EPSS, please contact the EPSS helpdesk (see PART 2, section 1.6 of this guide).

Please note that the ERC will not extend deadlines for system failures that are not its own responsibility. In all circumstances, you should aim to submit your proposal well before the deadline to have time to solve any problems.

2.3 How do I complete the grant application?

A complete ERC AdG grant application involves the following three separate components:

- **The administrative forms (Part A)**
- **The research proposal (Part B)**
- **The supporting documentation**

2.3.1 Instructions for completing 'Part A' of the proposal

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission Service EPSS (see Part 1, section 2.2 of this guide).

In the A forms, the applicant will be asked for administrative data that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal. The A forms are an integral part of the proposal. Details of the work the PI intends to carry out will be described in the research proposal (Parts B1 and B2).

Section A1 gives a snapshot of the proposal and of the PI, section A2 concerns the PI's host institution, while section A3 deals with financial matters.

Please note:

- Section A1 concerns information about the research proposal and PI, including an abstract of the project proposal and the chosen ERC panel for evaluation. The applicant must indicate the most relevant ERC panel for evaluation of their proposal and choose one or more descriptors of the research fields involved from a drop-down menu (see Annex 1).

It is the PI's responsibility to choose the most relevant ERC panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research. The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals (incl. Co-Investigator projects) the PI may indicate a 'secondary evaluation panel'. The primary panel will then decide whether the proposal is interdisciplinary (cross-panel or even cross-domain) and if its evaluation requires expertise from other panels.

- Section A2 concerns information about the PI's Host Institution²⁸.
- Subcontractors are not required to fill in section A2 and should not be listed separately in section A3.
- Section A3 concerns information about the estimated project costs and grant required.

Please ensure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).

Please ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (Part B2, Section 2c, Resources). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

Participant Identification Code (PIC):

Those who are familiar with the proposal submission and grant preparation forms know that in the past, participants had to provide to the Commission their legal and financial information every time they submit a proposal or negotiate a contract. To eliminate these redundant requests for information, we invite you to register your organisational data once in the

²⁸ The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to other institutions of team members ('additional participants'), may be necessary.

Unique Registration Facility (URF) which is hosted in the [Participant Portal](#)^{29,30}. This self-registration will lead to a request by the Commission to the organisation to provide supporting documents and to nominate a Legal Entity Authorised Representative (LEAR).

The LEAR is a person nominated in each legal entity participating in FP7. This person is the contact for the ERC Executive Agency related to all questions on legal status. He/she has access to the online database of legal entities with a possibility to view the data stored on his/her entity and to initiate updates and corrections to these data. After the validation of the entity has been finalised, the contact person/authorized representative named in the URF receives the PIC number. Once the LEAR is validated, he/she becomes the main contact point for ERC Executive Agency, manages the modifications of the entity-related information in the URF and distributes the PIC number within his/her organisation, which can be used in all proposals submission and negotiations

If you think your organisation already has registered in URF and you wish to retrieve the PIC, please query online the PIC database by using the PIC search functionality³¹. Please do not forget to visit the 'Frequently Asked Questions' of the URF page should you want any additional general information.

Applicants possessing a Participant Identification Code (PIC) can use this number to identify themselves in the Electronic Proposal Submission System.

On entering the PIC, parts of the A forms will be filled in automatically. Please note that in the cases where a PIC is not available it will always be possible to submit a proposal by entering the organisation details manually. However, the use of PICs will lead to more efficient handling of the proposal.

²⁹ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp_en.html

³⁰ For participants not yet having a Participant Identification Code (PIC), i.e. not yet being registered and validated in the Commission's Unique Registration Facility (URF) their existence as legal entities and their legal status will have to be validated before a grant agreement can be signed.

³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=myorganisations

The following notes are for information only. They should assist you in completing the A forms of your proposal. On-line guidance will also be available. The precise questions and options presented on EPSS may differ slightly from these below. Please consult the CORDIS call page²⁵ regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail, or by phone +32 2 233 3760.

Section A1: Proposal and PI information

Proposal Number	[pre-filled by the system]
Proposal Acronym	The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently in this call. It should be of <u>no more than 20 characters</u> (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no spaces, symbols or special characters please). The same acronym should appear on each page of the research proposal.

General Information on the Proposal

Type of project	[pre-filled] Support for Frontier Research – ERC Advanced Grant
Call identifier	[pre-filled] The call identifier is the reference number given in the call or part of the call you are addressing, as indicated in the publication of the call in the CORDIS call page. A call identifier looks like this: <i>ERC-2010-AdG</i>
Activity code	[pre-filled] ERC Advanced Grant
Proposal Title (max 180 char.) (Non Confidential Information)	The title should be <u>no longer than 180 characters</u> and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field. In order to best review your application, your agreement is needed below so that this non-confidential title can be used when contacting potential reviewers, should you proposal be retained for step 2 of the evaluation process.
Duration in months	The estimated duration of the project in full months.
Primary ERC Review Panel (linked to call deadline)	[drop-down menu] – <i>mandatory, different for every deadline</i> Please choose the primary ERC review panel ('Targeted Review Panel') by which you would like your proposal to be evaluated. This information is <u>mandatory for 'Primary ERC Review Panel'</u> .
Secondary ERC Review Panel (if applicable)	[drop-down menu] Please choose a secondary ERC review panel that you consider most relevant to your proposal. This information is <u>optional for a 'Secondary ERC Review Panel'</u> .
ERC Keyword 1 (please choose this keyword from those linked to the Primary ERC Review Panel)	[drop-down menu] - mandatory Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal. <u>As first keyword please choose one which is linked to the Primary Review Panel.</u> Keyword 1 is <u>mandatory</u> .
ERC Keywords 2, 3, 4	[drop-down menu] Please select keywords that best characterise the subject of your proposal. You don't need to limit your choice of keywords to your choice of specific review panel(s). Keywords 2, 3 and 4 are <u>optional</u> .

Free Keywords [mandatory field to be filled]	In addition, please enter free text keywords that you consider best characterise the scope of your research proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multi-disciplinary aspects of the proposal. There is a <u>limit of 90 characters</u> .
Is this a 'co-investigator' project?	[Yes/No] – See section 4.2 of ERC 2010 Work programme for the definition of a 'Co-Investigator' project
Abstract (max. 1800 char.) (non confidential information)	<p>The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as the short description of your research proposal in the evaluation process and in communications to the programme management committees and other interested parties. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information.</p> <p>In order to best review your application, your agreement is needed below so this non-confidential abstract can be used when contacting potential reviewers, should your proposal be retained for step 2 of the evaluation process.</p> <p>Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. The abstract must be written in English¹⁷. There is a <u>limit of 1800 characters</u> (Space and line breaks included).</p>
In order to best review your application, do you agree that the above proposal title and abstract can be used, without disclosing your identity, when contacting potential reviewers?	[Yes/No] – In the course of the evaluation procedure, the non-confidential title and abstract of your proposal may be communicated to potential external referees, should your proposal be retained for step 2 of the evaluation process. Please specify your agreement or disagreement.

Information on the Principal Investigator

Family Name	Last name as given in Passport or Identity Card.
Family Name at Birth	Your last name at birth.
First Name(s)	Your first name.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Nationality	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
Country of residence	[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which you legally reside.
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).
Country of Birth	[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which you were born.
Town of Birth	The town in which you were born. Insert the name of the town in English (please avoid any district codes).

Contact Address	
Current Organisation name (if applicable)	Name under which your organisation is registered.
Current Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory name (if applicable)	Name under which your Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The street number.
Town	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Country	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
Phone 1, 2	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
E-mail 1, 2	Please insert your e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional.

Academic Training	
Date of first PhD (or equivalent) award	Please specify the date of award of your doctoral degree. This should correspond to the date on the actual original PhD certificate.
Rules as regards multiple applications and re-applications	<p>[Yes/No] Only one ERC grant managed by a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator can be active at any time.</p> <p>No Principal or Co-Investigator may be associated with more than one application to the ERC calls with deadlines during the same calendar year.</p> <p>No Principal Investigator who has submitted an eligible proposal to an Advanced Grant call (ERC-2010-AdG) may apply to the following Advanced Grant call (ERC-2011-AdG), unless his/her proposal was evaluated above the quality threshold during the 2nd step but not funded due to insufficient available budget.</p> <p>A Principal Investigator or a Co-Investigator associated with an eligible proposal for an ERC-Advanced Grant to either of the first two Advanced Grant calls (ERC-2008-AdG or ERC-2009-AdG) may not apply for the third ERC-Advanced Grant call (ERC-2010-AdG) unless the eligible proposal to the first or second call has met the quality threshold on both evaluation criteria - Principal Investigator, Research Project - at the end of step 1 of the evaluation.</p>
Publication of data	[Yes/No] For communication purposes only, the ERC asks for your permission to publish your name, the proposal title, and the proposal acronym, should you proposal be above quality threshold at step 2 of the evaluation process.
Percentage PI working time	[Yes/No] The PI must agree to devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project while spending at least 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country (see ERC Work Programme 2010, section 4.8.3).
Does the proposal raise any ethical issues, as specified in the Ethical Issues Table at the end of Part B2?	<p>[Yes/No] The Ethical Issues Table has to be completed even if there are no issues (simply respond with "No" to all relevant questions).</p> <p>If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table (in Part B2) is "Yes", you must provide a brief explanation of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately.</p> <p>An Ethical Issues Annex template is provided in EPSS (with Part B2 templates).</p> <p>See Part 1, section 1.4, Box 3 of this guide.</p>

The Administrative Official of the Host Organisation

Person in charge of administration, legal and financial aspects in the host organisation who can commit the host institution according to the requirements of the ERC Model Grant Agreement (C(2007)1625, 16/04/2007)

Person in charge of administration, legal and financial aspects in the host organisation	
Family Name	Last name as given in the Passport or ID card.
First Name(s)	First name.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Position in the host organisation	e.g. senior administrative officer
Contact address of the host organisation and contact person for the ERC	
Organisation legal name	Name under which your organisation is registered.
Department/Faculty/ Institute/Laboratory name	The name under which the host Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Family Name (contact person)	Last name as given in the Passport or ID card.
First name(s) (contact person)	First name.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The street number.
Town	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Country	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
Phone 1, 2	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
E-mail 1, 2	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional.

Section A2: Host Organisation information

One form for the host organisation.

If other organisations are involved, please add one of these forms per organisation

Proposal Number	[pre-filled by the system]
Proposal Acronym	[filled in from A1]
Organisation Number [pre-filled]	The number allocated by the consortium (if it is the case) to each organisation. The PI of the proposal is always number one .
The Host Organisation	
If your organisation has already registered for FP7, enter your Participant Identity Code	Applicants possessing a Participant Identification Code (PIC) can use this number to identify themselves in the Electronic Proposal Submission system. On entering the PIC, parts of the A forms will be filled in automatically. Please note that in the cases where a PIC is not available it will always be possible to submit a proposal by entering the organisation details manually. However, the use of PICs will lead to more efficient handling of the proposal. The process for assigning a PIC is triggered by a self-registration of an organisation at the following website: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/pp-pic_en.html . On this website you will also find a search tool for checking if your organisation is already registered (and has thus a PIC).
Organisation legal name	For Public Law Body , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the Resolution text, Law, Decree/Decision establishing the Public Entity, or in any other document established at the constitution of the Public Law Body; For Private Law Body , it is the name under which the host institution is registered in the national Official Journal (or equivalent) or in the national company register.
Organisation short name	Choose an abbreviation of the host institution Legal Name, only for use in this proposal and in all relating documents. This short name should not be more than 20 characters exclusive of special characters (./;...), e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, e.g. IBM and not Int.Bus.Mac.
Organisation Town	Town where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Organisation Country	The country where the Organisation is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Name	The name under which the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Town	The town where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Country	The country where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any additional regional or district code or information).
Internet Homepage	Insert the address of the Organisation internet homepage.

Section A3: Budget

Financial information (in euros) – whole duration of the project

This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC grant, as they are also presented in the Research proposal text (Part B2, Section 2c, Resources)

The host institution³² should enter the different types of costs (Personnel, other direct, indirect and subcontracting). Please ensure the table contains the correct amount of the different types of costs and the correct total eligible costs and requested grant.

If you are participating as legal entity from International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC), you can opt for lump sum funding instead of reimbursement of eligible costs. In this case you should complete only the box on 'requested grant'.³³

Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution up to 20% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary) towards indirect costs. Costs claimed should be in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.

Direct eligible costs are those which support all the research, management, training and dissemination activities necessary for the conduct of the project, such as: Personnel Costs; Equipment Costs; Consumables; Travel and Subsistence Costs; Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results).

Indirect eligible costs are those which cannot be identified as directly attributable to the project, but which are incurred in direct relationship with the project's direct eligible costs, such as: Costs related to general administration and management; Costs of office or laboratory space, including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditure such as water, heating, electricity; Maintenance, insurance and safety costs; Communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office; Supplies; Common office equipment such as PC's, laptops, office software; Miscellaneous recurring consumables.

Non-eligible costs cannot be reimbursed through the ERC grant, such as: Any identifiable indirect taxes, including VAT or duties; Interest owed; Provisions for possible future losses or charges; Exchange losses; Costs declared, incurred or reimbursed in respect of another Community project; Costs related to return on capital; Debt and debt service charges; Excessive or reckless expenditure.

- Please ensure that the amount given in this form correspond precisely to the information provided in the research proposal text (Part B2, Section 2c, Resources). In case of discrepancy, the data contained in this A3 form will prevail.
- Please make sure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).

Participant Number in this proposal	The <u>PI's Host Institution</u> of the proposal is always <u>number one</u> .
Organisation short name	The same name that as been used in form A2.
Personnel costs	Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project and must correspond to the percentage of dedicated working time (minimum 30% for the PI) to run the ERC project. Such persons must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be directly hired by the beneficiary in accordance with its national legislation, – work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the latter, and – be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant. Participants may opt to declare average personnel costs if certified in accordance with a methodology approved by the Commission and consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant. Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.

³² Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2.

³³ More information on ICPC lump sums can be found in the section II.18 of the "Guide to financial issues" http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html

Other direct costs (- subcontracting)	Means direct costs not covered by the above mentioned categories of costs.
Indirect costs (max. 20 % of direct costs)	Indirect costs are all those eligible costs which cannot be identified by the participant as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs.
Subcontracting	<p>A subcontractor is a third party which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with one or more participants, in order to carry out part of the work of the project without the direct supervision of the participant and without a relationship of subordination.</p> <p>Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project; - recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified in Part B of the proposal having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation; - recourse to the award of subcontract by a participant may not affect the rights and obligations of the participants regarding background and foreground; - Part B of the proposal must indicate the task to be subcontracted and an estimation of the costs; <p>Any subcontract, the costs of which are to be claimed as an eligible cost, must be awarded according to the principles of best value for money (best price-quality ratio), transparency and equal treatment. Framework contracts between a participant and a subcontractor, entered into prior to the beginning of the project that are according to the participant's usual management principles may also be accepted.</p> <p>Participants may use external support services for assistance with minor tasks that do not represent per se project tasks as identified in Part B of the proposal.</p>
Total Eligible Costs	The sum of direct costs (personnel and others), indirect costs and subcontracting.
Requested Grant	The total budget that you are requesting as the ERC grant (in Euros).

In case of a Co-Investigator proposal please complete **Annex 4: Co-Investigator annex**. Please upload this annex in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section in the EPSS tab 'Part B & Annexes'.

2.3.2 Instructions for completing 'Part B' of the proposal

The research proposal consists of two parts: Part B1 (including cover page, sections 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d) and Part B2 (including sections 2 and 3). **The templates of these two parts are provided in EPSS and their use is mandatory.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Please be aware that at step 1 of the evaluation only Part B1 is evaluated by the panel members, while at step 2 both Parts B1 and B2 are evaluated.

The information to be included in each of the sections is described below. The maximum length of each section or its component, which needs to be respected strictly, is described below. The research proposal needs to be uploaded and submitted via EPSS (see Part 1, section 2.2 of this guide).

Only the material that the proposal contains within the page limits mentioned below while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated. It should provide sufficient evidence to the peer reviewers to assess the evaluation criteria.

Each proposal page **must** carry a **header** presenting the **applicant's last name**, the **acronym**, and the reference to the respective proposal Part (**Part B1** or **Part B2**).

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11	Single	2 cm

Part B1 – Cover page:

Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
 Name of the PI's host institution for the project
 Proposal full title
 Proposal short name
 Proposal duration in months
 Proposal summary (half page, possibly copy/paste of abstract from administrative part A1)

Part B1 - Section 1 (a, b and c):

The Principal Investigator

a. Scientific Leadership Profile (max 2 pages):

A factual list of career achievements should be provided by the applicant including the following:

- a presentation of the **content and impact of the major scientific or scholarly contributions** of the applicant to his or her own research field and/or neighbouring research fields and, if applicable, their wider societal impact.
- the **international recognition and diffusion** that these major contributions have received from others (publications, citations or appropriate equivalents/additional funding/ students/international prizes and awards/ institution-building/other).
- evidence of **efforts and ability to inspire younger researchers** towards high quality research (highlights of research mentoring record, information on the careers of supervised graduate and post-doctoral students, etc.).
- **where applicable: proven ability to productively change research fields and/or to establish new interdisciplinary approaches.**

b. Curriculum Vitae (max 2 pages):

In addition to the standard academic and research record, the CV **should include a succinct 'funding ID'** which must specify any current research grants and their subject, as well as any ongoing application for work related to the proposal. This facilitates the proper assessment of the proposal and the granting process in case the proposal is retained for funding.

c. 10-Year-Track-Record (max 2 pages):

The applicant should list his/her activity over the **past 10 years** (dated from the deadline of the call) as regards:

1. A list of the **top 10 publications, as senior author** (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author), listing all authors, in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals and/or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals and/or peer-reviewed conferences proceedings of their respective research fields, also indicating the number of citations (excluding auto-citations) they have attracted and possibly the h-index.
2. **Research monographs, chapters in collective volumes and any translations** thereof (if applicable).
3. **Granted patents** (if applicable).
4. **Invited presentations** to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools (if applicable)
5. **Research expeditions** that the applicant has led (if applicable).
6. **Organisation of International conferences** in the field of the applicant (membership in the steering and/or programme committee) (if applicable)
7. **International Prizes/Awards/Academy memberships** (if applicable)
8. **Memberships to Editorials Boards of International Journals** (if applicable).

In the case of interdisciplinary proposals involving Co-Investigator(s) alongside with the PI ('**Co-Investigator Projects**') it is required that the information listed under section 1a is provided for each Co-Investigator (scientific leadership profile, CV, 10-year-track-record). In this case, the above mentioned page limits for section apply individually, i.e. maximum 6 pages per Co-Investigator.

It is important that the applicant should also report on any significant career breaks. Peer reviewers will take it into consideration during the assessment of the quality of the Principal Investigator and his/her career progression.

Part B1 - Section 1d:

d. The Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal (max 5 pages)

The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to its ground-breaking nature and how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for research. Describe the proposed work in the context of the state of the art of the field. Key references to relevant literature should also be included.

Part B2 - Section 2

The scientific proposal (max 15 pages, excluding Ethical Issues Table and Annex)

This part is evaluated only in step 2 of the peer review evaluation.

The project proposal should provide detailed descriptions on the project's aim, planning, execution, and required resources. Additionally, an appreciation of the research environment provided by the host institution for the execution of the proposed project must be included.

a. State of the art and objectives: Specify clearly the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state of the art in the field. When describing the envisaged research it should be indicated how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi - or inter-disciplinary aspects.

b. Methodology

Describe the proposed methodology in detail including, as appropriate, key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state of the art, including any particularly novel or unconventional aspects. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.

c. Resources (incl. project costs)

It is strongly recommended to use the costing table template to facilitate the assessment of resources by the panels.

Describe the size and nature of the team, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project. It is advisable to include a short technical description of the equipment requested, a justification of its need as well as the intensity of its planned use.

State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. This should be a reasoned estimate of the projects costs. Take into account the percentage of your dedicated time (minimum 30%) to run the ERC funded activity when calculating your personnel costs. Include the direct costs of the project and also a contribution of up to 20% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding subcontracting) towards overheads. Furthermore, include a breakdown of the budget subdivided in personnel costs, equipment and infrastructure, consumables, travel, publication costs, and any envisaged subcontracts. State how the costs will be distributed over the duration of the project. These

figures should be summarised in the financial information form A3 as well as in the costing table provided as a template.

d. Ethical Issues

The Ethical Issues Table serves to identify any ethical aspects of the proposed work. This table has to be completed even if there are no issues (simply respond with "No" to all relevant questions).

If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table (in Part B2) is "Yes", you **must** provide a brief explanation of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. Annex 2 of this guide describes the ethical screening process and gives guidance on the completion of the Ethical Issues Table. An Ethical Issues Annex template is provided in EPSS (with Part B2 templates).

Optionally you may wish to include any supporting documentation, such as any authorization you may already have. This will allow a more effective ethical clearance and an accelerated granting process if the proposal is chosen for possible funding.

Please upload this Ethical Issues Annex and any related documents in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section included in the EPSS tab 'Part B & Annexes'.

The pages of the Ethical Issues Table (included in Part B2) and Ethical Issues Annex (separate document) will not count towards the maximum page limit for Part B.

A dedicated website that aims to provide helpful information on ethical issues is now available at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html

Part B2 - Section 3:

Research Environment (max 2 pages)

a. PI's Host institution

Describe the host institution and specify what facilities and assistance it will provide to the project, illustrating its capacity to support the proposal, including in terms of broader intellectual support.

b. Additional institutions (additional participants)

If more than one organisation will be included as a participant in the project, you should justify clearly the scientific added value of this additional participant to the proposal. For each additional host organisation an additional A2 form needs to be filled in.

2.3.3 Supporting Documentation

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically on EPSS in PDF format using the corresponding template available on EPSS (see Annex 3 of this guide).

The host institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence set out in the supplementary agreement to the ERC Grant agreement are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful. This document needs to be originally signed, stamped and dated by the institution's legal representative.

Please provide only the documents requested above. Unless specified in the call, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material, and any other documents (company brochures, supporting documentation, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) will be disregarded.

2.4 Is my proposal ready for evaluation?

Incomplete proposals (where parts of the proposal and/or the host institution's commitment statement are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated³⁴. The proposal must be submitted to the appropriate primary ERC panel (i.e. the panel which covers the main scientific areas of the research proposed) before the respective deadline.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

Checklist – Is your proposal complete?

For the submission of a complete Advanced Grant proposal, the following components have to be prepared:

The Administrative Forms (Part A): to be completed in EPSS

- on-line forms A1, A2, A3

The Research Proposal:

Part B1 (to be evaluated at step 1 and step 2):

- **Section 1a,b,c – The Principal Investigator. The 'funding ID' should be specified.**
- **Section 1d – The Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal.**

Part B2 (to be evaluated at step 2 only):

- **Section 2 – The scientific proposal including the ethical issues table (and, when necessary, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated).**
- **Section 3 – The research environment.**

The Supplementary Documents:

- **The supporting statement from the host institution: originally signed, stamped and dated by institution's legal representative (see Annex 3).**
- **If applicable, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated (Ethical Issues Annex, see Annex 2 of this guide).**

Please ensure that all forms and supplementary documents are uploaded correctly in the EPSS system before the final submission. It is strongly recommended that you do so by downloading them and checking their completeness.

2.4.1 How do I submit the proposal via EPSS?

The research proposal (Parts B1 and B2) and the supporting documentation should be uploaded and submitted via EPSS as PDF files. For more information on EPSS and the uploading/submission of the grant application, please consult Part 1, section 2.2 of this guide.

Please ensure that the file names contain the "Proposal Short Name", such as:

- *PartB1_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*
- *Host-Letter_[Proposal-Short-Name].pdf*

³⁴ See also 'eligibility check' in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme (http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/erc-evrules_en.pdf).

Box 5: Proposal submission - important to know:

- Proposals cannot be submitted without prior registration, which is required to obtain an EPSS login name and password.
- Proposals sent by means other than EPSS will not be accepted.
- Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. So long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.
- **After the call deadline no updates of the proposal will be accepted. Only the material that the proposal contains within the given page limits while respecting the indicated layout parameters will be evaluated.**
- Submission is deemed to occur only if the submission sequence described in section 2.2.2 has been followed. It is not the point at which the applicant starts uploading the proposal.
- Proposals are kept under secure conditions at all times. When no longer needed, all copies are destroyed except those required for archiving and/or auditing purposes.

2.4.2 Is my proposal received by the ERC?

If the submission is technically successful, the applicant receives an automatic computer-generated acknowledgement from EPSS. Acknowledgement of receipt is subsequently provided by e-mail after the call deadline.

Subsequent to submission, and only in exceptional cases, the ERC may contact the PI if this is necessary to clarify questions of eligibility or to verify administrative or legal data contained in the proposal.

2.4.3 How do I modify or withdraw a proposal?

Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. So long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.

Once the deadline has passed, however, the ERC cannot accept any further additions, corrections or re-submissions. The last eligible version of your proposal received before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated, and no later material can be submitted.

Proposals may be withdrawn before the call deadline by submitting a revised version of the administrative form A, with the following words entered into the abstract field:

"The applicant wishes to withdraw this proposal. It should not be evaluated by the ERC".

After the call deadline, a proposal may be withdrawn only by sending a signed letter to: European Commission, European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)/ Unit B3, COV2 21/127, BE-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

Please consult the CORDIS pages regularly for updated information or contact the EPSS HELPDESK by e-mail, or by phone +32 2233 3760.

3. Evaluation and selection of grant proposals³⁵

3.1 Eligibility Check

Proposals are first checked to ensure that all of the eligibility criteria are met.

A proposal must fulfil all of the following eligibility criteria:

- It must be submitted to an appropriate ERC panel (i.e. a panel, which is covering the main scientific areas of the research proposal, see Part 1, section 3.2.1 and Annex 1 of this guide).
- It must be submitted before the deadline of the appropriate primary panel/domain. In case of the PI indicating 2 panels, the proposal must be submitted before the deadline of the primary panel (see Part 1, section 3.2.2 of this guide).
- It must be complete (i.e. all of the requested forms, proposal components, and supporting documents must be completed or present).
- Its content must relate to the ERC grant scheme which is subject of the call for proposals.
- It must meet the eligibility requirements of the respective ERC grant scheme as well as other criteria mentioned in the relevant call for proposals).
- It must be in compliance with the re-applications and multiple applications rules (see Part 1, section 1.6 of this guide).

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee.

The eligibility is checked on the basis of the information given by the PI in the proposal. If at a later stage, an eligibility criterion is found not to be fulfilled (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will be immediately rejected.

3.2 Peer review evaluation of proposals

3.2.1 *What are the ERC evaluation panels?*

The peer review evaluation of ERC Advanced Grant proposals is in the hand of panels (ERC panels), covering all fields of science, engineering and scholarship. There are two separate sets of panels for the ERC Advanced Grant, alternating each call.

Both sets involve 25 individual ERC panels, which for operational reasons are subdivided into three main research domains:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| ▪ Life Sciences | 9 Panels |
| ▪ Social Sciences and Humanities | 6 Panels |
| ▪ Physical Sciences and Engineering | 10 Panels |

Details on the structure of the ERC panels are provided in Annex 1. The panel chair and members have been selected by the ERC Scientific Council on the basis of their scientific reputation. Before the deadline of a call, the names of the panel chairs selected by the ERC

³⁵ The Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers provides detailed information on ERC peer review evaluation and project selection processes. See ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>

Scientific Council are published on the ERC website. Similarly, the names of panel members are published, however, after the evaluation process is concluded.

Furthermore, the ERC Scientific Council decided for operational reasons to pre-allocate the budget available for a call for proposals according to the following indicative percentages for each of the three main research domains:

- **Physical Sciences & Engineering:** 39%
- **Life Sciences:** 34%
- **Social Sciences & Humanities:** 14%

and to allocate an indicative budget of 13% to an **Interdisciplinary**³⁶ domain.

The goal of the ERC is to mainstream interdisciplinary proposals during the evaluation. Additional funding (via the interdisciplinary domain) is provided to facilitate funding of interdisciplinary, high risk innovative proposals.

Box 6: Composition of ERC Panels

- Each Panel consists of one Panel Chair and 10-15 Panel Members.
- The Panel Chair and Members are selected by the ERC Scientific Council.
- The Panel Chair manages and ensures the quality of the evaluation process for the proposals assigned to his/her Panel.
- The Panels work on the basis of common "Rules of Procedure", which are defined by the ERC Scientific Council (see Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers³⁵).

3.2.2 Two-step peer review evaluation

A single submission of an ERC Advanced Grant proposal will be followed by a two-step peer review evaluation.

Proposal Allocation: It is the PI's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant ERC panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research (administrative form A1, see section 2.3.1 of this guide), and indicate one or more panel descriptors (i.e. research fields involved, see Annex 1). The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In case that the applicant has indicated a secondary evaluation panel, the primary panel will determine whether the proposal is indeed interdisciplinary and, if this is confirmed, shall request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees.

Step 1: Proposals which fulfil the eligibility criteria are evaluated by the ERC panels, which in the first step assess, score and comment on the quality of Section 1 (**Part B1 only**) of the proposal. The assignment of proposals to panel members will be made by the panel chairs on the basis of the panel descriptors indicated by the PI in the proposal (administrative form A1). The ERC ensures that each proposal is assessed by at least three reviewers.

The proposals are first evaluated by panel members. At this point, panel members are acting individually; they do not discuss the proposal with each other, nor with any other person. The panel members record their opinions in individual reports, giving scores and comments against the evaluation criteria (see below section 3.2.6 of this guide).

After the completion of the individual reviews, the panels meet to discuss and assess the proposals based on the evaluation criteria, arbitrate controversial opinions in individual

³⁶ Including cross-panel and/or cross-domain research projects.

reviews, calibrate final marks and establish a ranking list of those proposals meeting the quality threshold.

Proposals with a mark passing the quality thresholds (see below section 3.2.7 of this guide) and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level will be retained and pass to step 2 of peer review evaluation. Those proposals failing to reach the quality threshold on any of the evaluation criteria or ranked below the budgetary cut-off described above will be rejected (see Part 1, section 1.6 of this guide for information on re-applications).

Step 2: During this step, **Parts B1 and B2** are considered and evaluated by panel members and remote referees, which assess, score and comment against the evaluation criteria. The remote referees provide individual assessments on a proposal-by-proposal basis. Both remote referees and panel members work independently and deliver their individual reviews by electronic means.

As in step 1, after the completion of the individual reviews, the panels meet to discuss and assess the proposals based on the evaluation criteria, arbitrate controversial opinions in individual reviews, calibrate final marks and establish a ranking list of those proposals meeting the quality threshold.

For more details on the evaluation procedure and the handling of interdisciplinary proposals, applicants are invited to consult Annex 3 of the ERC Work Programme 2010.

3.2.3 Ethical review

The objective of the ethical evaluation is to ensure that the ERC does not support research which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles (see Box 3 and Annex 2). After the peer review evaluation and before any funding decision is taken, all proposals retained for funding will be considered for ethical issues. The proposals involving sensitive ethical issues may undergo an ethical review.

3.2.4 Feedback to applicants

Applicants are provided with feedback on the outcome of the peer review evaluation in the form of an evaluation report.

This indicates whether the proposal meets the quality threshold and is retained, and provides the score and corresponding comments given by the panel as well as the comments given by the individual reviewers.

Please note that the comments by the individual reviewers may not necessarily be convergent – controversy and differences in opinion about the merits of a proposal are part of the 'scientific method' and are legitimate.

Furthermore, the ERC panel may take a position that is different from what could be inferred from the comments of the individual reviewers. This is the case for example, if the panel discussion reveals an important weakness in a proposal that had not been identified by the individual reviewers. The panel comments reflect the consensus decision taken by the panel as a whole based on prior remote individual assessments from independent reviewers, which can be remote referees as well as panel members, and on a thorough discussion and on the ranking against other proposals during the panel meeting.

3.2.5 Redress

Upon reception of the initial information letter with the evaluation report or with the results of the eligibility check, the PI and/or the PI's host institution (applicant legal entity) may wish to introduce a request for redress, if there is an indication that there has been a shortcoming in the way a proposal has been evaluated, or that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect. The redress procedure is not meant to call into question the scientific judgement made by the peer review panel; it will mainly look into procedural shortcomings.

Such requests for redress should be raised within one month of the date of the initial information letter sent by the ERC Executive Agency, and should be introduced via the web-based mailing system at http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/redress_en.html.

Requests must be:

- related to the peer review evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the call and funding scheme in question;
- set out using the online form via the above-mentioned web-based mailing system, including a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
- received within the time limit specified on the information letter;
- sent by the PI and/or the PI's host institution.

An initial reply will be sent to complainants no later than three weeks after the deadline for redress requests. This initial reply will indicate when a definitive reply will be provided.

A redress committee of the ERC Executive Agency may be convened to examine the peer review evaluation process for the case in question. The redress committee will bring together staff with the requisite scientific/technical and legal expertise. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and equal treatment of applicants. The redress committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report, the individual comments and examine the CVs of the experts. In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action to the ERC Executive Agency. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated. Unless there is clear evidence of a shortcoming there will be no follow-up or re-evaluation.

Please note:

- This procedure is concerned with the peer review evaluation and/or eligibility checking process.
- The **committee will not call into question the scientific judgment** of the individual peer reviewers, who are appropriately qualified experts.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on the other criteria.
- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.
- Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee.
- All requests for redress will be treated in confidence.

3.2.6 Evaluation criteria

Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation. It will be applied to the evaluation of both the Principal Investigator (and Co-Investigator if applicable) and the research project. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the research environment enables the excellence of the project to be achieved.

The detailed elements applying to the 3 sections of the proposal are as follows:

1. Principal Investigator

Quality of research output/track-record: *How well qualified is the Principal Investigator (and any Co-Investigator if applicable) to conduct the project (reviewers are expected to evaluate the quality of the prior work such as published results in top peer review journals as well as other elements of the Principal Investigator's CV). Reviewers should also take into account possible breaks in the research career of the applicant and/or unconventional research career paths, especially in the case of women scientists.*

To what extent are the publications and achievements of the Principal Investigator ground-breaking and demonstrative of independent creative thinking and capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art?

To what extent does the quality and quantity of funding the Principal Investigator has attracted during the last ten years demonstrate his/her reputation as a performer of ground-breaking research?

Intellectual capacity and creativity: *To what extent does the Principal Investigator's record of research, collaborations, project conception, supervision of students and publications demonstrate that he/she is able to confront major research challenges in the field, and to initiate new productive lines of thinking?*

2. Research project

Ground-breaking nature of the research: *Does the proposed research address important challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) addressed? Does it have suitably ambitious objectives, which go substantially beyond the current state of the art (e.g. including inter- and trans-disciplinary developments and novel or unconventional concepts and/or approaches)? How well conceived and organised is the proposed activity?*

Potential impact:

- (a) *Does the research open new and important, scientific, technological or scholarly horizons?*
- (b) *Will the project significantly enhance the research environment and capabilities for frontier research in Europe (in particular as regards the immediate host environment)?*

Methodology:

- a) *is the outlined scientific approach (including the activities to be undertaken by the individual team members) feasible?(step 1)*
- b) *is the proposed research methodology (including when pertinent the use of instrumentation, other type of infrastructures etc.) comprehensive and appropriate to the project? Will it enable the goals of the project convincingly to be achieved within the proposed timescales and resources (including the costs of the Principal Investigator and the members of the team who will be engaged in the project) and the level of risk associated with a challenging research project? (step 2)*

High-gain/High-risk balance:

- a) *does the proposed research involve highly novel and/or unconventional methodologies, whose high risk is justified by the possibility of a major breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific research domain/discipline?*

3. Research Environment (to be assessed only during step 2 of the evaluation)

Contribution of the research environment to the project: *Does the host environment³⁷ provide most of the infrastructure necessary for the research to be carried out? Is it in a position to provide an appropriate intellectual environment and infrastructural support and to assist in achieving the ambitions for the project and the Principal Investigator?*

Participation of other legal entities³⁸: *If it is proposed that other legal entities participate in the project, in addition to the applicant legal entity, is their participation fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project?*

3.2.7 Application of criteria

Panels and referees will evaluate and mark numerically the proposals under the criteria of Heading 1: *Principal Investigator* and Heading 2: *Research project*. Proposals will be evaluated under Heading 3 on a 'pass/fail' basis and commented but not marked during step 2 of the evaluation. The evaluation panels will review the level of the requested grant and, as appropriate, suggest adjustments.

Each proposal will receive a mark on a scale of 1 to 4 for each of the 2 evaluation criteria (Heading 1 and 2):

- 4: Outstanding**
- 3: Excellent**
- 2: Very Good**
- 1: Non-competitive**

At each step of the evaluation and on the basis of their average mark (at least three independent panel members), proposals will be ranked by the panels (domains) in order of priority. If a proposal, in any step of the evaluation, is marked below the quality threshold of ≥ 2 on any of the first two headings, it will not be further evaluated.

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 an overall appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses.

³⁷ The term 'research environment' corresponds to the immediate setting of the research team, such as the department (rather than the sponsoring institution as a whole), and when appropriate, the wider 'milieu' of the team's operation, including collaborating laboratories, groups, departments etc.

³⁸ As the ERC schemes are addressed to individual investigators, usually the participation of more than one legal entity will not improve the chances of success. Participation of investigator(s) from another legal entity would be acceptable if they clearly and substantially enhance the scientific value of the proposal.

PART 2: Managing ERC grants

1.1 Preparation of a grant agreement³⁹

The ERC Executive Agency prepares grant agreements for projects on the basis of the proposal and the recommendations of the ERC panel. The grant preparation involves no negotiation of scientific/technical substance. Applicant legal entities and PIs are expected to provide, if requested, further information on the project and its envisaged management in view of the rules applicable to ERC grants and if needed on the legal and financial capacity of the legal applicant entity.

If the conditions are accepted, the ERC Executive Agency prepares the draft grant agreement: the template of the grant agreement and its annexes can be found at the following link:

<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=129>.

Additionally to the standard text of the grant agreement the host institution and the PI shall conclude a 'Supplementary Agreement' to ensure the minimum requirements for the project implementation, such as the host institution's commitment to grant the PI the requisite basic support and the independence to manage the research funding for the duration of the project, amongst others. Any provisions of the supplementary agreement⁴⁰ which are not in accordance with the ERC grant agreement shall be deemed to be void for the purposes of the ERC grant agreement.

The start of the project normally takes place the month following conclusion of the grant agreement. Due to the ground-breaking nature of frontier research projects, it is expected that all projects start within 6 months from the award of the grant. ERC reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

1.2 Flexibility within an ERC grant agreement

1.2.1 *Change of scientific strategy and/or objectives*

The PI is expected to carry out the project as described in the grant agreement, however, it is possible to adjust the scientific strategy and reallocate expenditure (e.g. regarding staff, equipment, consumables) accordingly, provided the research performed is still in line with the original scientific or scholarly objectives.

1.2.2 *Grant portability*

It is expected that the PI establishes and concludes the funded research project in association with the original host institution (applicant legal entity). However, the ERC grant scheme allows PIs having received a frontier research grant to transfer their projects from one host to another in the course of the project. The PI should then present the reasons⁴¹ for wishing to move to another institution. In many cases, in order to facilitate mobility of researchers, when there is a common agreement between the PI and the original and the new host institutions, such a request will be dealt with by the ERC Executive Agency in a straightforward manner^{42,43}.

³⁹ Detailed information and documentation, including the template structures and forms for financial and scientific reporting are provided in the *Guide for ERC Grant Holders* available at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>.

⁴⁰ See template with minimum requirements available at <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>.

⁴¹ This may, for example be necessary if the provisions for the PI's leadership of the research have not been respected.

⁴² However, in some cases, only after a careful analysis of the request by the ERC Executive Agency, which may involve a review of the project, will the PI be entitled to request transfer of the remainder of the grant to the new host institution.

⁴³ This would not normally be done within the first two years of the start of the project.

The original host institution is expected to transfer funds other than those that have already been consumed or irretrievably committed to resources required for the project (on personnel, consumables, etc). It is expected to take all reasonable steps to transfer equipment and other purchases made for the benefit of the project, such that the aims of the project can be secured⁴⁴.

If more than one beneficiary is involved in the project, only that part of the grant that is assigned to the host institution of the PI is transferable (unless otherwise agreed with the other beneficiaries).

1.3 Project progress reporting

Project reporting is carried out in two streams: scientific reporting (for which PIs are responsible) and financial management reporting including use of resources (for which the host institution is responsible).

1.3.1 Scientific reporting

PIs are required to send scientific reports to the ERC Executive Agency (mid-term and at the end of the project). These reports inform the ERC on progress and achievements of the project. Specific outputs from the project should be included (e.g. publications).

The scientific reports may be subject to review by a pertinent scientific review panel convened by the ERC, which may also involve site visits. The review panel will make recommendations as to the future course of the project.

1.3.2 Financial management reporting

The host institution is required to send periodic financial management reports (normally every 18 months) justifying the use of any expenditure. Declarations of costs exceeding a cumulative total of EUR 375 000 must be accompanied by a certificate on financial statements. Where the project involves more than one legal entity, the host institution must provide a consolidated cost claim.

Applicants are reminded that the Commission's Research DGs have adopted a new and reinforced audit strategy aimed at detecting and correcting errors in cost claims submitted in projects on the basis of professional auditing standards. As a result the number of audits and participants audited will increase significantly and the Commission's services will assure appropriate mutual exchange of information within its relevant internal departments in order to fully coordinate any corrective actions to be taken in a consistent way. More information can be found here: http://cordis.europa.eu/audit-certification/home_en.html

1.4 Payment of ERC grants

Grants are paid in several instalments: an advance payment (as pre-financing) is made within a maximum of 45 days of the date of entry into force of the ERC grant agreement. Interim payments are made on the basis of actual expenditures accepted for each financial management reporting period.

The total amount of the pre-financing and the interim payments paid out to the beneficiary shall not exceed 85% of the maximum amount of the financial contribution attributed to the project.

A final payment is made corresponding to the last financial management reporting period plus any adjustment needed.

⁴⁴ In some countries, equipment is formally owned by the State and the consent of the host institution alone may not be sufficient.

1.5 Publication and exploitation of results

1.5.1 *Acknowledging ERC support*

Whenever achievements resulting from ERC-funded research are published (such as in journals, patents, presentations, etc.) the PI should highlight the ERC's financial support under the Seventh Framework Programme. This may imply a written acknowledgment and/or the application of the ERC logo and the European emblem:

“The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC Grant agreement n° [xxxxxx]”

For downloading the image files of the ERC logo and the European emblem, please consult <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=128>.

1.5.2 *Dissemination, exploitation and IPR*

A strategy to disseminate and exploit project results should be developed, with due regard to applicable local and national regulations and the rules regarding Intellectual Property Rights described in detail in the ERC grant agreement.

The ERC Executive Agency may publish information on projects which it supports financially. This could include the name of the PI and host institution, the project's objectives, the amount of funding awarded, and the location of the project and the project reports. However, in clearly justified cases, the host institution may request that the ERC Executive Agency does not make this information public.

1.6 Further information and support

General information and key documents are available on the **ERC website** at <http://erc.europa.eu> and on CORDIS at <http://cordis.europa.eu>. The ERC website also includes 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

As with other parts of the Seventh Framework Programme, **National Contact Points (ERC NCPs)** have been set up across Europe⁴⁵ by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications⁴⁶. For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/ncp>.

Technical questions related to the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS) should be directed to the **EPSS Helpdesk** by e-mail support@epss-fp7.org, by phone +32-2-233 3760 or via its [webportal](#)⁴⁷ on CORDIS. A general **ERC Helpdesk** is also available and accessible via the Europe Direct Contact Centre at <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries>

Information events (seminars, conferences, exhibitions) on the ERC or with participation of ERC speakers are published on the ERC website.

⁴⁵ This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

⁴⁶ Note: The ERC will provide the coordinating NCP organisations with information and statistics on the outcome of calls and the evaluation of each proposal. This information is given under strict conditions of confidentiality and allows NCP organisations to customize their service.

⁴⁷ <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7SubmitProposalPage>

PART 3: Annexes

ANNEX 1: ERC PEER REVIEW EVALUATION PANELS (ERC PANELS)

For the planning and operation of the evaluation of ERC grant proposals by panels, the following panel structure applies. There are 25 ERC panels to cover all fields of science, engineering and scholarship assigned to three research domains: Social Sciences and Humanities (6 Panels, SH1–SH6), Physical Sciences and Engineering (10 Panels, PE1–PE10), Life Sciences (9 Panels, LS1–LS9).

The panel names are accompanied by a list of panel descriptors indicating the fields of research covered by the respective ERC panels.

Social Sciences and Humanities

SH1 Individuals, institutions and markets: economics, finance and management

- SH1_1 Macroeconomics, growth, business cycles
- SH1_2 Microeconomics, institutional economics
- SH1_3 Econometrics, statistical methods
- SH1_4 Financial markets, banking and corporate finance
- SH1_5 Competitiveness, innovation, research and development
- SH1_6 Consumer choice, behavioural economics, marketing
- SH1_7 Organization studies, strategy
- SH1_8 Human resource management, employment and earnings
- SH1_9 Public administration, public economics
- SH1_10 Income distribution, poverty
- SH1_11 International trade, economic geography
- SH1_12 Economic history, development

SH2 Institutions, values, beliefs and behaviour: sociology, social anthropology, political science, law, communication, social studies of science and technology

- SH2_1 Social structure, inequalities, social mobility
- SH2_2 Ageing, work, social policies
- SH2_3 Kinship, cultural dimensions of classification and cognition, individual and social identity, gender
- SH2_4 Myth, ritual, symbolic representations, religious studies
- SH2_5 Ethnography
- SH2_6 Globalization, migration, interethnic relations
- SH2_7 Transformation of societies, democratization, social movements
- SH2_8 Political systems, legitimacy of governance
- SH2_9 Legal systems, constitutions, foundations of law
- SH2_10 Private, public and social law
- SH2_11 Global and transnational governance, international law, human rights
- SH2_12 Communication networks, media, information society
- SH2_13 Social studies of science and technology, S&T policies, science and society
- SH2_14 History of science and technology

SH3 Environment and society: environmental studies, demography, social geography, urban and regional studies

- SH3_1 Environment and sustainability
- SH3_2 Environmental regulation and mediation
- SH3_3 Social and industrial ecology
- SH3_4 Geographical information systems, cartography
- SH3_5 Human and social geography

- SH3_6 Spatial and regional planning
- SH3_7 Population dynamics
- SH3_8 Urbanization and urban planning, cities
- SH3_9 Mobility and transportation

SH4 The Human Mind and its complexity: cognition, psychology, linguistics, philosophy and education

- SH4_1 Evolution of mind and cognitive functions, animal communication
- SH4_2 Human life-span development
- SH4_3 Neuropsychology and cognitive psychology
- SH4_4 Clinical and experimental psychology
- SH4_5 Formal, cognitive, functional and computational linguistics
- SH4_6 Typological, historical and comparative linguistics
- SH4_7 Acquisition and knowledge of language: psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics
- SH4_8 Use of language: pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis
- SH4_9 Second language teaching and learning, language pathologies, lexicography, terminology
- SH4_10 Philosophy, history of philosophy
- SH4_11 Epistemology, logic, philosophy of science
- SH4_12 Ethics and morality, bioethics
- SH4_13 Education: principles, techniques, typologies

SH5 Cultures and cultural production: literature, visual and performing arts, music, cultural and comparative studies

- SH5_1 Classics
- SH5_2 History of literature
- SH5_3 Literary theory and comparative literature, literary styles
- SH5_4 Textual philology and palaeography
- SH5_5 Visual arts
- SH5_6 Performing arts
- SH5_7 Museums and exhibitions
- SH5_8 Numismatics, epigraphy
- SH5_9 Music and musicology, history of music
- SH5_10 History of art and architecture
- SH5_11 Cultural studies, cultural diversity
- SH5_12 Cultural memory, intangible cultural heritage

SH6 The study of the human past: archaeology, history and memory

- SH6_1 Archaeology, archaeometry, landscape archaeology
- SH6_2 Prehistory and protohistory
- SH6_3 Ancient history, ancient cultures
- SH6_4 Medieval history
- SH6_5 Modern and contemporary history
- SH6_6 Colonial history, entangled histories, global history
- SH6_7 Military history
- SH6_8 Historiography, theory and methods of history
- SH6_9 History of ideas, intellectual history
- SH6_10 Social, economic, cultural and political history
- SH6_11 Collective memories, identities, lieux de mémoire, oral history
- SH6_12 Cultural heritage

Physical Sciences and Engineering

PE1 Mathematical foundations: all areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics

- PE1_1 Logic and foundations
- PE1_2 Algebra
- PE1_3 Number theory
- PE1_4 Algebraic and complex geometry
- PE1_5 Geometry
- PE1_6 Topology
- PE1_7 Lie groups, Lie algebras
- PE1_8 Analysis
- PE1_9 Operator algebras and functional analysis
- PE1_10 ODE and dynamical systems
- PE1_11 Partial differential equations
- PE1_12 Mathematical physics
- PE1_13 Probability and statistics
- PE1_14 Combinatorics
- PE1_15 Mathematical aspects of computer science
- PE1_16 Numerical analysis and scientific computing
- PE1_17 Control theory and optimization
- PE1_18 Application of mathematics in sciences

PE2 Fundamental constituents of matter: particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics

- PE2_1 Fundamental interactions and fields
- PE2_2 Particle physics
- PE2_3 Nuclear physics
- PE2_4 Nuclear astrophysics
- PE2_5 Gas and plasma physics
- PE2_6 Electromagnetism
- PE2_7 Atomic, molecular physics
- PE2_8 Optics and quantum optics
- PE2_9 Lasers and laser physics
- PE2_10 Acoustics
- PE2_11 Relativity
- PE2_12 Classical physics
- PE2_13 Thermodynamics
- PE2_14 Non-linear physics
- PE2_15 General physics
- PE2_16 Metrology and measurement
- PE2_17 Statistical physics (gases)

PE3 Condensed matter physics: structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences

- PE3_1 Structure of solids and liquids
- PE3_2 Mechanical and acoustical properties of condensed matter
- PE3_3 Thermal properties of condensed matter
- PE3_4 Transport properties of condensed matter
- PE3_5 Electronic properties of materials and transport
- PE3_6 Lattice dynamics

- PE3_7 Semiconductors
- PE3_8 Superconductivity
- PE3_9 Superfluids
- PE3_10 Spintronics
- PE3_11 Magnetism
- PE3_12 Nanophysics: nanoelectronics, nanophotonics, nanomagnetism
- PE3_13 Mesoscopic physics
- PE3_14 Molecular electronics
- PE3_15 Soft condensed matter (liquid crystals...)
- PE3_16 Fluid dynamics (physics)
- PE3_17 Statistical physics (condensed matter)
- PE3_18 Phase transitions, phase equilibria
- PE3_19 Biophysics

PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical sciences: analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics

- PE4_1 Physical chemistry
- PE4_2 Nanochemistry
- PE4_3 Spectroscopic and spectrometric techniques
- PE4_4 Molecular architecture and Structure
- PE4_5 Surface science
- PE4_6 Analytical chemistry
- PE4_7 Chemical physics
- PE4_8 Chemical instrumentation
- PE4_9 Electrochemistry, electrodialysis, microfluidics
- PE4_10 Combinatorial chemistry
- PE4_11 Method development in chemistry
- PE4_12 Catalysis
- PE4_13 Physical chemistry of biological systems
- PE4_14 Chemical reactions: mechanisms, dynamics, kinetics and catalytic reactions
- PE4_15 Theoretical and computational chemistry
- PE4_16 Radiation chemistry
- PE4_17 Nuclear chemistry
- PE4_18 Photochemistry

PE5 Materials and Synthesis: materials synthesis, structure-properties relations, functional and advanced materials, molecular architecture, organic chemistry

- PE5_1 Structural properties of materials
- PE5_2 Solid state materials
- PE5_3 Surface modification
- PE5_4 Thin films
- PE5_5 Corrosion
- PE5_6 Porous materials
- PE5_7 Ionic liquids
- PE5_8 New materials: oxides, alloys, composite, organic-inorganic hybrid, superconductors
- PE5_9 Materials for sensors
- PE5_10 Nanomaterials: nanoparticles, nanotubes
- PE5_11 Biomaterials synthesis
- PE5_12 Intelligent materials – self assembled materials
- PE5_13 Environment chemistry

- PE5_14 Coordination chemistry
- PE5_15 Colloid chemistry
- PE5_16 Biological chemistry
- PE5_17 Chemistry of condensed matter
- PE5_18 Homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis
- PE5_19 Characterization methods of materials
- PE5_20 Macromolecular chemistry
- PE5_21 Polymer chemistry
- PE5_22 Supramolecular chemistry
- PE5_23 Organic chemistry
- PE5_24 Molecular chemistry

PE6 Computer science and informatics: informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems

- PE6_1 Computer architecture
- PE6_2 Database management
- PE6_3 Formal methods
- PE6_4 Graphics and image processing
- PE6_5 Human computer interaction and interface
- PE6_6 Informatics and information systems
- PE6_7 Theoretical computer science including quantum information
- PE6_8 Intelligent systems
- PE6_9 Scientific computing
- PE6_10 Modelling tools
- PE6_11 Multimedia
- PE6_12 Parallel and Distributed Computing
- PE6_13 Speech recognition
- PE6_14 Systems and software

PE7 Systems and communication engineering: electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering

- PE7_1 Control engineering
- PE7_2 Electrical and electronic engineering: semiconductors, components, systems
- PE7_4 Simulation engineering and modelling
- PE7_5 Systems engineering, sensorics, actorics, automation
- PE7_6 Micro- and nanoelectronics, optoelectronics
- PE7_7 Communication technology, high-frequency technology
- PE7_8 Signal processing
- PE7_9 Networks
- PE7_10 Man-machine-interfaces
- PE7_11 Robotics

PE8 Products and process engineering: product design, process design and control, construction methods, civil engineering, energy systems, material engineering

- PE8_1 Aerospace engineering
- PE8_2 Chemical engineering, technical chemistry
- PE8_3 Civil engineering, maritime/hydraulic engineering, geotechnics, waste treatment
- PE8_4 Computational engineering
- PE8_5 Fluid mechanics, hydraulic-, turbo-, and piston engines
- PE8_6 Energy systems (production, distribution, application)
- PE8_7 Micro(system) engineering,

- PE8_8 Mechanical and manufacturing engineering (shaping, mounting, joining, separation)
- PE8_9 Materials engineering (biomaterials, metals, ceramics, polymers, composites, ...)
- PE8_10 Production technology, process engineering
- PE8_11 Product design, ergonomics, man-machine interfaces
- PE8_12 Lightweight construction, textile technology
- PE8_13 Industrial bioengineering
- PE8_14 Industrial biofuel production

PE9 Universe sciences: astro-physics/chemistry/biology; solar system; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy, planetary systems, cosmology; space science, instrumentation

- PE9_1 Solar and interplanetary physics
- PE9_2 Planetary systems sciences
- PE9_3 Interstellar medium
- PE9_4 Formation of stars and planets
- PE9_5 Astrobiology
- PE9_6 Stars and stellar systems
- PE9_7 The Galaxy
- PE9_8 Formation and evolution of galaxies
- PE9_9 Clusters of galaxies and large scale structures
- PE9_10 High energy and particles astronomy – X-rays, cosmic rays, gamma rays, neutrinos
- PE9_11 Relativistic astrophysics
- PE9_12 Dark matter, dark energy
- PE9_13 Gravitational astronomy
- PE9_14 Cosmology
- PE9_15 Space Sciences
- PE9_16 Very large data bases: archiving, handling and analysis
- PE9_17 Instrumentation - telescopes, detectors and techniques
- PE9_18 Solar planetology

PE10 Earth system science: physical geography, geology, geophysics, meteorology, oceanography, climatology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management

- PE10_1 Atmospheric chemistry, atmospheric composition, air pollution
- PE10_2 Meteorology, atmospheric physics and dynamics
- PE10_3 Climatology and climate change
- PE10_4 Terrestrial ecology, land cover change,
- PE10_5 Geology, tectonics, volcanology,
- PE10_6 Paleoclimatology, paleoecology
- PE10_7 Physics of earth's interior, seismology, volcanology
- PE10_8 Oceanography (physical, chemical, biological)
- PE10_9 Biogeochemistry, biogeochemical cycles, environmental chemistry
- PE10_10 Mineralogy, petrology, igneous petrology, metamorphic petrology
- PE10_11 Geochemistry, crystal chemistry, isotope geochemistry, thermodynamics,
- PE10_13 Sedimentology, soil science, palaeontology, earth evolution
- PE10_14 Physical geography
- PE10_15 Earth observations from space/remote sensing
- PE10_16 Geomagnetism, paleomagnetism
- PE10_17 Ozone, upper atmosphere, ionosphere
- PE10_18 Hydrology, water and soil pollution

Life Sciences

LS1 Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry: molecular biology, biochemistry, biophysics, structural biology, biochemistry of signal transduction

- LS1_1 Molecular biology and interactions
- LS1_2 General biochemistry and metabolism
- LS1_3 DNA biosynthesis, modification, repair and degradation
- LS1_4 RNA synthesis, processing, modification and degradation
- LS1_5 Protein synthesis, modification and turnover
- LS1_6 Biophysics
- LS1_7 Structural biology (crystallography, NMR, EM)
- LS1_8 Biochemistry of signal transduction

LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology: genetics, population genetics, molecular genetics, genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, bioinformatics, computational biology, biostatistics, biological modelling and simulation, systems biology, genetic epidemiology

- LS2_1 Genomics, comparative genomics, functional genomics
- LS2_2 Transcriptomics
- LS2_3 Proteomics
- LS2_4 Metabolomics
- LS2_5 Glycomics
- LS2_6 Molecular genetics, reverse genetics and RNAi
- LS2_7 Quantitative genetics
- LS2_8 Epigenetics and gene regulation
- LS2_9 Genetic epidemiology
- LS2_10 Bioinformatics
- LS2_11 Computational biology
- LS2_12 Biostatistics
- LS2_13 Systems biology
- LS2_14 Biological systems analysis, modelling and simulation

LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology: cell biology, cell physiology, signal transduction, organogenesis, developmental genetics, pattern formation in plants and animals

- LS3_1 Morphology and functional imaging of cells
- LS3_2 Cell biology and molecular transport mechanisms
- LS3_3 Cell cycle and division
- LS3_4 Apoptosis
- LS3_5 Cell differentiation, physiology and dynamics
- LS3_6 Organelle biology
- LS3_7 Cell signalling and cellular interactions
- LS3_8 Signal transduction
- LS3_9 Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology in animals
- LS3_10 Development, developmental genetics, pattern formation and embryology in plants
- LS3_11 Cell genetics
- LS3_12 Stem cell biology

LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology: organ physiology, pathophysiology, endocrinology, metabolism, ageing, regeneration, tumorigenesis, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome

- LS4_1 Organ physiology
- LS4_2 Comparative physiology
- LS4_3 Endocrinology
- LS4_4 Ageing
- LS4_5 Metabolism, biological basis of metabolism related disorders
- LS4_6 Cancer and its biological basis
- LS4_7 Cardiovascular diseases
- LS4_8 Non-communicable diseases (except for neural/psychiatric, immunity-related, metabolism-related disorders, cancer and cardiovascular diseases)

LS5 Neurosciences and neural disorders: neurobiology, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, neuropharmacology, neuroimaging, systems neuroscience, neurological disorders, psychiatry

- LS5_1 Neuroanatomy and neurosurgery
- LS5_2 Neurophysiology
- LS5_3 Neurochemistry and neuropharmacology
- LS5_4 Sensory systems (e.g. visual system, auditory system)
- LS5_5 Mechanisms of pain
- LS5_6 Developmental neurobiology
- LS5_7 Cognition (e.g. learning, memory, emotions, speech)
- LS5_8 Behavioral neuroscience (e.g. sleep, consciousness, handedness)
- LS5_9 Systems neuroscience
- LS5_10 Neuroimaging and computational neuroscience
- LS5_11 Neurological disorders (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease)
- LS5_12 Psychiatric disorders (e.g. schizophrenia, autism, Tourette's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)

LS6 Immunity and infection: immunobiology, aetiology of immune disorders, microbiology, virology, parasitology, global and other infectious diseases, population dynamics of infectious diseases, veterinary medicine

- LS6_1 Innate immunity
- LS6_2 Adaptive immunity
- LS6_3 Phagocytosis and cellular immunity
- LS6_4 Immunosignalling
- LS6_5 Immunological memory and tolerance
- LS6_6 Immunogenetics
- LS6_7 Microbiology
- LS6_8 Virology
- LS6_9 Bacteriology
- LS6_10 Parasitology
- LS6_11 Prevention and treatment of infection by pathogens (e.g. vaccination, antibiotics, fungicide)
- LS6_12 Biological basis of immunity related disorders
- LS6_13 Veterinary medicine

LS7 Diagnostic tools, therapies and public health: aetiology, diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health, epidemiology, pharmacology, clinical medicine, regenerative medicine, medical ethics

- LS7_1 Medical engineering and technology
- LS7_2 Diagnostic tools (e.g. genetic, imaging)
- LS7_3 Pharmacology, pharmacogenomics, drug discovery and design, drug therapy
- LS7_4 Analgesia
- LS7_5 Toxicology
- LS7_6 Gene therapy, stem cell therapy, regenerative medicine
- LS7_7 Surgery
- LS7_8 Radiation therapy
- LS7_9 Health services, health care research
- LS7_10 Public health and epidemiology
- LS7_11 Environment and health risks including radiation
- LS7_12 Occupational medicine
- LS7_13 Medical ethics

LS8 Evolutionary, population and environmental biology: evolution, ecology, animal behaviour, population biology, biodiversity, biogeography, marine biology, ecotoxicology, prokaryotic biology

- LS8_1 Ecology (theoretical, community, population, microbial, evolutionary ecology)
- LS8_2 Population biology, population dynamics, population genetics, plant-animal interactions
- LS8_3 Systems eEvolution, biological adaptation, phylogenetics, systematics
- LS8_4 Biodiversity, comparative biology
- LS8_5 Conservation biology, ecology, genetics
- LS8_6 Biogeography
- LS8_7 Animal behaviour (behavioural ecology, animal communication)
- LS8_8 Environmental and marine biology
- LS8_9 Environmental toxicology
- LS8_10 Prokaryotic biology
- LS8_11 Symbiosis

LS9 Applied life sciences and biotechnology: agricultural, animal, fishery, forestry and food sciences; biotechnology, chemical biology, genetic engineering, synthetic biology, industrial biosciences; environmental biotechnology and remediation

- LS9_1 Genetic engineering, transgenic organisms, recombinant proteins, biosensors
- LS9_2 Synthetic biology and new bio-engineering concepts
- LS9_3 Agriculture related to animal husbandry, dairying, livestock raising
- LS9_4 Aquaculture, fisheries
- LS9_5 Agriculture related to crop production, soil biology and cultivation, applied plant biology
- LS9_6 Food sciences
- LS9_7 Forestry, biomass production (e.g. for biofuels)
- LS9_8 Environmental biotechnology, bioremediation, biodegradation
- LS9_9 Biotechnology, bioreactors, applied microbiology
- LS9_10 Biomimetics
- LS9_11 Biohazards, biological containment, biosafety, biosecurity

ANNEX 2: ETHICAL ISSUES

Annex 2a: Specific Information on Ethical Issues

The objective of the ethical evaluation is to ensure that the ERC does not support research which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles (see Box 3). All proposals retained for funding, regardless of the applicant having identified any ethical issues, will be considered after the peer review evaluation. The proposals identified as having ethical implications (see Annex 2b) will undergo an ethical evaluation that can take up to several weeks to be completed, according to the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved. Applicants need to be aware that no grant agreement can be signed by the ERC prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethical evaluation.

Proposals raising specific ethical issues such as research intervention on human beings⁴⁸, research on human embryos and human embryonic stem cells and non-human primates are automatically submitted to a more in depth ethical clearance.

Ethical Issues Table and description of ethical issues in the research proposal (Part B2)

The Ethical Issues Table (see Annex 2b) has to be completed **even if there are no ethical issues** (simply respond with “No” to all relevant questions) (in Part B2).

If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table is “YES”, you must provide a brief description of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately using the **Ethical Issues Annex** provided in EPSS (together with the Part B2 template). In particular, it should outline the **benefit** and **burden** of such research, the effects it may have and how the ethical issues will be managed.

The applicants may wish to include copies of any existing authorization for the proposed work (these copies do not count towards the page limit).

The following special issues, among others, should be taken into account:

Informed consent: When describing issues relating to informed consent, it will be necessary to illustrate an appropriate level of ethical sensitivity, and consider issues of insurance, incidental findings and the consequences of leaving the study.

Data protection issues: Avoid the unnecessary collection and use of personal data. Identify the source of the data, describing whether it is collected as part of the research or is previously collected data being used. Consider issues of informed consent for any data being used. Describe how personal identify of the data is protected.

Use of animals: Where animals are used in research the application of the 3Rs (Replace, Reduce, Refine) must be convincingly addressed. Numbers of animals should be specified. Describe what happens to the animals after the research experiments.

Human embryonic stem cells: Research proposals that will involve human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) will have to address all the following specific points:

- the applicants should demonstrate that the project serves important research aims to advance scientific knowledge in basic research or to increase medical knowledge for the development of diagnostic, preventive or therapeutic methods to be applied to humans.

⁴⁸ Such as research and clinical trials, and research involving invasive techniques on persons (e.g. taking of tissue samples, examinations of the brain).

- the necessity to use hESCs in order to achieve the scientific objectives set forth in the proposal. In particular, applicants must document that appropriate validated alternatives (in particular, stem cells from other sources or origins) are not suitable and/or available to achieve the expected goals of the proposal. This latter provision does not apply to research comparing hESCs with other human stem cells.
- the applicants should take into account the legislation, regulations, ethical rules and/or codes of conduct in place in the country(ies) where the research using hESC is to take place, including the procedures for obtaining informed consent;
- the applicants should ensure that for all hESC lines to be used in the project were derived from embryo's
 - of which the donor(s)' express, written and informed consent was provided freely, in accordance with national legislation prior to the procurement of the cells.
 - that result from medically-assisted *in vitro* fertilisation designed to induce pregnancy, and were no longer to be used for that purpose.
 - of which the measures to protect personal data and privacy of donor(s), including genetic data, are in place during the procurement and for any use thereafter. Researchers must accordingly present all data in such a way as to ensure donor anonymity;
 - of which the conditions of donation are adequate, and namely that no pressure was put on the donor(s) at any stage, that no financial inducement was offered to donation for research at any stage and that the infertility treatment and research activities were kept appropriately separate;

Note: Only in exceptional cases will additional information be sought for clarification, which means that any ethical review will be performed **solely on the basis of the information available in the proposal.**

To ensure compliance with ethical principles, the Commission Services and/or the ERC Executive Agency will undertake ethics audit(s) of selected projects at its discretion.

A dedicated website that aims to provide clear, helpful information on ethical issues is now available at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html

Annex 2b: Ethical Issues Table (template)

Research on Human Embryo/ Foetus		YES	NO
*	Does the proposed research involve human Embryos?		
*	Does the proposed research involve human Foetal Tissues/ Cells?		
*	Does the proposed research involve human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?		
*	Does the proposed research on human Embryonic Stem Cells involve cells in culture?		
*	Does the proposed research on Human Embryonic Stem Cells involve the derivation of cells from Embryos?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

Research on Humans		YES	NO
*	Does the proposed research involve children?		
*	Does the proposed research involve patients?		
*	Does the proposed research involve persons not able to give consent?		
*	Does the proposed research involve adult healthy volunteers?		
	Does the proposed research involve Human genetic material?		
	Does the proposed research involve Human biological samples?		
	Does the proposed research involve Human data collection?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

Privacy		YES	NO
	Does the proposed research involve processing of genetic information or personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)?		
	Does the proposed research involve tracking the location or observation of people?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

Research on Animals		YES	NO
	Does the proposed research involve research on animals?		
	Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?		
	Are those animals transgenic farm animals?		
*	Are those animals non-human primates?		
	Are those animals cloned farm animals?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

Research Involving Developing Countries		YES	NO
	Does the proposed research involve the use of local resources (genetic, animal, plant, etc)?		
	Is the proposed research of benefit to local communities (e.g. capacity building, access to healthcare, education, etc)?		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

Dual Use		YES	NO
	Research having direct military use		
	Research having the potential for terrorist abuse		
	DO ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		

Other Ethical Issues		YES	NO
	Are there OTHER activities that may raise Ethical Issues ?		
If YES please specify:			

If the answer to any of the questions in the Ethical Issues Table (in Part B2) is “Yes”, you are required to complete and upload the 'B2_Ethical Issues Annex' (template available on EPSS). The **Ethical Issues Annex (max 2 pages) must provide a brief explanation on the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. Please specify as well any authorization or permission you already have for the proposed work and include copies (these copies do not count towards the 2-page-limit). The Ethical Issues Annex will allow a proper ethical screening if the proposal is chosen for possible funding. **Without it, your application cannot be reviewed properly.****

Please upload this Ethical Issues Annex and any related documents in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section included in the EPSS tab 'Part B & Annexes'.

The pages of the Ethical Issues Table (included in Part B2) and Ethical Issues Annex (separate document) will not count towards the maximum page limit for Part B.

(to be printed on the official letterhead of the host institution)

Annex 3: Commitment of the host institution^{49, 50, 51}

The name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the principal investigator and the project in case the application is successful, which is the *applicant legal entity*, confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with name of the principal investigator in which the obligations listed below will be addressed, should the proposal entitled acronym : title of the proposal be retained.

Performance obligations of the applicant legal entity that will become the beneficiary of the grant agreement, should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the grant agreement be successfully concluded:

The *applicant legal entity* commits itself to:

- a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the *principal investigator* who will need to devote in the case of an Advanced Grant *at least 30% of her/his working time to the ERC-funded project.*
- b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex I of the ERC Grant Agreement, taking into consideration the specific role of the *principal investigator.*
- c) establish a *supplementary agreement* with the *principal investigator* which specifies that the *applicant legal entity* shall:
 - i) support the *principal investigator* in the management of the *team* and provide reasonable administrative assistance to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
 - a. the timeliness and clarity of financial information,
 - b. the general management and reporting of finances,
 - c. the advice on internal *applicant legal entity* strategies and *ERC Executive Agency or Commission* policies,
 - d. the organisation of *project* meetings as well as the general logistics of the *project.*
 - ii) provide research support to the *principal investigator* and his/her *team members* throughout the duration of the *project* in accordance with Annex I ERC Grant Agreement, in particular as regards infrastructure, equipment, products and other services as necessary for the conduct of the research;

⁴⁹ A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically on EPSS in PDF format. More information can be found in the Guide for Applicants on ERC Grant Schemes.

⁵⁰ The statement of commitment of the host institution refers to most obligations of the host institution, which are stated in the ERC grant agreement (see article II.2 of the grant agreement). The ERC grant agreement is available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu>.

⁵¹ This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating his/her name, function, email address and stamp of the institution.

- iii) ensure that the *principal investigator* and his/her *team members* enjoy, on a royalty-free basis, access rights to the *background* and the *foreground* needed for their activities under the *project* as specified in Annex I ERC Grant Agreement;
- iv) guarantee adequate contractual conditions to the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
 - a. the provisions for annual, sickness and parental leave,
 - b. occupational health and safety standards,
 - c. the general social security scheme, such as pension rights.
- v) ensure the necessary scientific autonomy of the *principal investigator*, in particular as regards:
 - a. the selection of other *team members*, hosted and engaged by the *applicant legal entity* or other legal entities, in line with profiles needed to conduct the research, including the appropriate advertisement;
 - b. the control over the budget in terms of its use to achieve the scientific objectives;
 - c. the authority to deliver scientific reports to the *ERC Executive Agency*;
 - d. the authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work.
- vi) inform the *principal investigator* of any circumstances affecting the implementation of the *project* or leading potentially to a suspension or termination of the ERC Grant Agreement;
- vii) subject to the observance of applicable national law and to the agreement of the *ERC Executive Agency*, the transfer of the grant agreement as well as any pre-financing of the grant not covered by an accepted cost claim to a new legal entity, should the *principal investigator* request to transfer the entire *project* or part of it to this new legal entity. The *applicant legal entity* shall submit a substantiated request for amendment or notify the *ERC Executive Agency* in case of its objection to the transfer.

For the institution (applicant legal entity)

Name, Function, Email +Signature of legal representative

Stamp of institution (applicant legal entity)

IMPORTANT NOTE: All the above mentioned items are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the host institution.

Annex 4: Co-Investigator Annex

ERC Advanced Grant 2010 Co-Investigator Annex (Please complete a separate form for each Co-Investigator)

PROPOSAL DATA	
PI's Family Name	Last name as given in Passport or Identity Card.
PI's First Name(s)	Your first name.
Proposal acronym	Use the same acronym as in the A1 form.
CO-INVESTIGATOR	
Family Name	Last name as given in Passport or Identity Card.
Family Name at Birth	Last name at birth.
First Name(s)	First name.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Nationality	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
Country of residence	[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which the Co-Investigator legally resides.
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).
Country of Birth	[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which the Co-Investigator was born.
Town of Birth	The town in which the Co-Investigator was born. Insert the name of the town, in English (please avoid any district codes).

ANNEX 5: TIMETABLE AND SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR THE 2010 ERC ADG CALL

Advanced Investigator Grant Call for Proposals

Call Title: Call for proposals for *ERC Advanced Investigators Grant*

Call identifier: ERC-2010-AdG

Date of publication⁵²: 29 October 2009

Electronic proposal submission deadlines⁵³ (single submission of full proposal): ⁵⁴

Panels: PE1 - PE10 (Physical Sciences & Engineering), 24 February 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

Panels: LS1 – LS9 (Life Sciences), 17 March 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

Panels: SH1 – SH6 (Social Sciences & Humanities), 7 April 2010, 17.00.00 (Brussels local time)

Indicative budget: EUR 590 052 000 from 2010 budget⁵⁵

N.B.: The ERC Scientific Council has established the following indicative percentage budgets for each of the 3 main research domains:

Physical Sciences & Engineering: 39%

Life Sciences: 34%

Social Sciences & Humanities: 14%

and an Interdisciplinary⁵⁶ domain with an indicative budget of 13%.

The Community financial contribution shall be in the form of a grant to the budget corresponding to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and a contribution of 20% of the total eligible direct costs. Indicative budgets may permit a variation of the budget for each domain by a maximum of 10% of the total budget for the call; however the budget proportions allocated to projects in the three main research domains will be no lower than the percentages indicated. In addition, the final budget awarded per ERC call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call if additional appropriations become available.

Activity: European Research Council Advanced Grant

Minimum number of participants: At least 1 independent legal entity established in one of the Member States, or one of the Associated countries (in the case of the participation of

⁵² The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication

⁵³ The Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months

⁵⁴ please consult Annex 1 of the Ideas Work Programme for the panel description

⁵⁵ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2010 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority

⁵⁶ Including cross-panel and/or cross-domain research projects and research with the potential to open new fields

more than one legal entity the participants are not obliged to establish a consortium agreement)

Restrictions on participation: see eligibility criteria in the Work Programme

Grant Portability: applicants should be aware of the portability features of ERC grants as described in the ERC Model Grant Agreement (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html)

Grant starting date: due to the ground-breaking nature of frontier research projects, it is expected that all projects start within 6 months from the award of the grant. ERC reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

Eligibility criteria (see also section 4.7 of the Work Programme for other possible reapplications and multiple applications restrictions):

Incomplete proposals (where parts of the proposal and/or the host institution's binding statement of support are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated⁵⁷. The proposal must be submitted to the appropriate primary ERC panel (i.e. the panel which covers the main scientific areas of the research proposed) before the respective deadline. In addition, only proposals which satisfy the rules for reapplication and multiple applications (as specified in section 4.7 of this WP) will be considered eligible to be evaluated.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

Eligible Scientific Fields

Applications may be made in any field of research⁵⁸, other than those specifically excluded from the 7th framework programme.

Funding of human embryonic stem cell research will be possible within the ethical framework defined in the EC 7th Framework Programme⁵⁹ as well as the Ideas Specific Programme.

Eligible Principal Investigator

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who would like to establish their research activity up in any Member State as well as any Associated Country.

The Principal Investigator can be of any age and nationality and he/she can reside in any country in the world at the time of the application.

⁵⁷ See also 'eligibility check' in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures for indirect actions under the Ideas Specific Programme of the Seventh Framework Programme, (C(2007)2286 of 6 June 2007) and C(2007)4429 of 27 September 2007.

⁵⁸ Research proposals within the scope of Annex I of the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications should be submitted to relevant calls under the Euratom 7th Framework Programme

⁵⁹ In accordance with Commission statement, OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42, proposals which will include research activities which destroy human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells, will not be submitted to the Regulatory Committee. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Eligible Host Institution (Applicant Legal Entity)

The contribution of Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators must be substantially carried out in the EU or Associated Countries. This does not exclude field work or other research activities in cases where these must necessarily be conducted outside the EU or the Associated Countries in order to achieve the scientific objectives of the project/activity.

Advanced Grant Principal Investigators must be strongly committed to the project and devote a significant amount of time to it (they will need to devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project while spending at least 50% of their total working time in a EU Member State or Associated Country).

The host institution will host and engage the Principal Investigator for at least the duration of the grant. It must be situated in one of the Member States, or one of the associated countries. It may also be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.) or the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Normally, the applicant legal entity will be the only participating legal entity. Other legal entities that host other team members, including those located in third countries, may however be involved and receive funding to support the work of additional team members, if so specified in the grant award or subsequent amendments to the original grant.

Evaluation procedure (see also section 4.6 of the Work Programme):

- The evaluation will take place **in two steps** following the **single submission of a full proposal**.
- The evaluation is carried out through evaluation panels that may be assisted by referees.
- The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. In case of interdisciplinary proposals the panel, if it confirms the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal, shall request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees who act as reserve evaluators.
- **Step 1:** Following the submission of the proposal, Section 1 of the proposal (see section 4.5) will be assessed and marked.
- Proposals may be evaluated remotely.
- At the end of this evaluation of step 1, the panel will rank the proposals according to their marks. An indicative budget will be allocated to each panel, in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals. This indicative budget is calculated as the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the panel divided by the cumulative grant request of all proposals to the domain of the call, multiplied by the total indicative budget of the domain.
- Each panel will determine its budgetary cut-off level as a multiple of its indicative budget. The budgetary cut-off level should be approximately 3 times the panel's indicative budget. Proposals with a mark passing the quality threshold and which lie above the budgetary cut-off level will be retained and pass to step 2 of evaluation (all proposals with identical marks at the cut off level will pass through to the second step of evaluation). Those proposals failing to reach the quality threshold on any of the evaluation criteria or ranked below the budgetary cut-off described above will be rejected.
- The complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed and ranked by the panels during **step 2** of the evaluation. Interdisciplinary proposals within a domain or across domains will be flagged as such, and the panel may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees who act as reserve evaluators.
- Following the conclusion of the panel evaluations the following additional steps will be taken with the participation of the evaluation peer review evaluation panel chairs:

Step 2a: Acting in concert, the peer review evaluation panel chairs of each research domain or their deputies, representing their panels, will prepare a consolidated ranked list for the domain's proposals which are above the quality threshold and can be funded in order of priority from the respective domain budgets⁶⁰.

Step 2b: Acting in concert across the 3 main research domains, taking account of the forward looking and innovative nature of the programme, all the peer review evaluation panel chairs or their deputies will bring forth and specifically discuss, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the scientific added value of proposals above the quality threshold which are of interdisciplinary nature. In order to establish the ranked list of the **Interdisciplinary Research** domain, all peer review evaluation panel chairs will further assess these proposals on the basis of the second evaluation criterion (Research project).

Any funds still available in any of the 4 domains, after exhausting the list of proposals over the quality threshold, will be distributed to the other 3 domains according to the initial call budget breakdown.

Finally, a number of proposals (over the quality threshold) in the 4 domain lists may also be kept in reserve to allow for eventualities such as the failure of the granting procedure to projects, the withdrawal of proposals, budget savings agreed during the granting procedure, or the availability of additional budget from other sources. Additional funds will also be distributed according to the initial call budget breakdown.

Evaluation criteria: See the Work Programme for the applicable criteria

Information on the modalities of the call and guidance to applicants on how to submit projects is available on:

<http://erc.europa.eu>, http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ideas/home_en.html

⁶⁰ In accordance with the ERC rules for the Submission of Proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme, (C(2007)2286 of 6 June 2007) and C(2007)4429 of 27 September 2007.