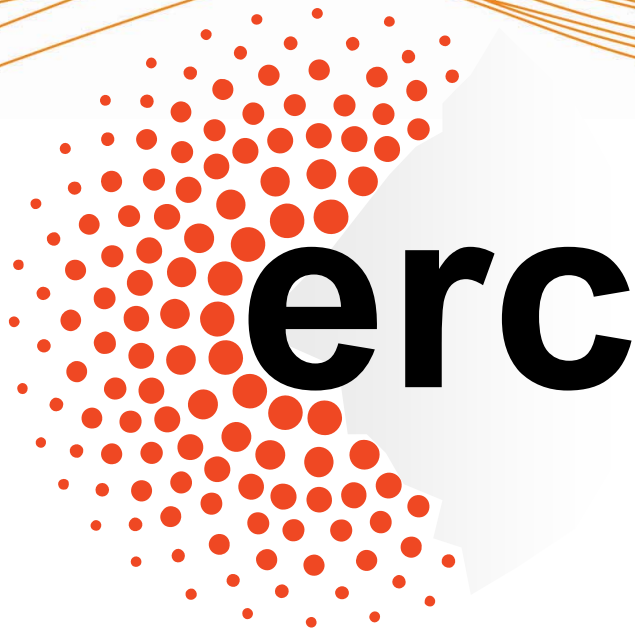




# FP7 IDEAS The European Research Council



**European Commission  
Research DG**

**William Cannell**



# ERC Strategic Objectives

## **Boost European excellence in frontier research**

- by investing in the best researchers and ideas
- through competition at European level
- on the basis of excellence as the sole criterion
- raising incentives towards quality and aspirations of individual researchers
- providing benchmarks and leverage towards broader (structural) improvements in European research

# ERC, “Ideas” and FP7

- The ERC is a new institution for Community research funding
- It is part of the “family” of FP7:
  - Co-operation
  - Ideas
  - People
  - Capacities
- It complements other FP7 activities (bottom-up vs. targeted research)



# Key elements of the ERC

- **Operational autonomy (Executive Agency)**
- **Independent scientific governance (Scientific Council)**
- **Single teams (not international consortia)**
- **Excellence as the only funding criterion**



# FP7 Ideas Programme

- **Creates ERC**
- **Provides funding**
  - **Budget (2007-2013) : € 7.51 bn**  
(around 15% of FP7 budget)
  - **Average budget: € ~1 bn per year**
- **Sets overall objectives for research and operating principles**



## **The Scientific Council**

*Independent scientific governance*

## **The Agency**

*Practical implementation and management of operations*

## **The Commission**

*Ensuring autonomy and accountability*



# The Scientific Council

## Members & Role

**22 most respected researchers** reflecting the full scope of European research and scholarship

- proposed by an independent identification committee
- appointed by the Commission (for 4 years, renewable once)

**Chair: Prof. Fotis Kafatos, Vice-Chairs: Prof. Helga Nowotny and Dr Daniel Estève**

### Role:

- **Establishes overall scientific strategy**  
establishes annual work programmes (incl. calls for proposals, evaluation criteria); defines peer review methodology; ensures selection and accreditation of experts
- **Controls quality of operations and management**
- **Ensures communication with the scientific community**



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



# Strategy & Activities ERC Scientific Council

- **Retain – Repatriate – Recruit**
- **Keep (young) researchers in Europe**
  - improve **career opportunities and independence** - especially for young researchers
  - **ERC Starting Grant**: attract & retain the next generation of independent research leaders
- Favour “**brain gain**” and “**reverse brain drain**”
  - increase **competition, recognition and international visibility** for excellent individual scientists and scholars in Europe
  - **ERC Advanced Grant**: attract & reward established independent research leaders

- **Total (FP7 Ideas budget): € 7.51 bn**
  - ≈1/3 Starting Grants, ≈ 2/3 Advanced Grants
  - Less than 5% for operational ERC management
- **1st Call**
  - StG only, Jan 2007, € 300 Mio.
  - Budget allocated to three areas (for operational reasons)
- **2nd Call**
  - AdG only, August 2007, € 550 Mio.
- **3rd call onwards:**
  - StG + AdG ≈ € 1.0 bn per year



# ERC Grants

## Strategic principles

- **All fields of science and scholarship are eligible**
  - ☞ investigator-driven, bottom-up
- **Excellence is the only criterion**
  - ☞ individual team + research project
- **Investment in research talent**
  - ☞ Attractive, flexible grants, up to five years
  - ☞ under control of the lead researcher (PI)
- **Independent individual teams in Europe**
  - ☞ nationality of researchers is not relevant
  - ☞ host organisation to be located in EU or AS

# ERC Grants Operational Principles

- **Application in response to calls for proposals**
- **Two-step application Procedure**  
due to large number of expected applications
- **Panel-based peer review evaluation process based**  
panels select proposals to be funded and recommend budgets



# ERC Grants

## Who can apply

- Individual Research Teams:
  - headed by a single “**Principal Investigator**” (team leader)
  - of any nationality
  - if necessary, including additional team members.
- The “Principal Investigator” has the freedom to choose the **research topic** and the power to assemble his/her **research team** meeting the needs of the project.
- Teams can be of **national or trans-national** character.

Two grant schemes are available:

**1. ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant scheme (ERC Starting Grant)**

→ 1<sup>st</sup> call for proposals published, deadline 25 April 2007

**2. ERC Advanced Investigator Researcher Grant scheme (ERC Advanced Grant)**

→ 1<sup>st</sup> call for proposals published later in 2007



# ERC Starting Grant (ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant)

- support researchers at the start of their independent research career and **establishing or consolidating their own independent research team** (or research programme)
- provide a structure for transition from working under a supervisor to an independent research leader
- **~ €100 000 – €400 000 per year**
- **for up to 5 years, i.e. ~ €500 000- €2 000 000 per Grant**
- ~ €300M per call (~ 1/3 of ERC annual budget, annual calls)
- ~200 Starting Grants per year, ~1200 + Starting Grants over 7 years of FP7 (2007-2013)



# ERC Advanced Grants (ERC Advanced Investigator Researcher Grants)

- Designed to support excellent investigator-initiated research projects by **established independent research leaders**
- Complement the ERC Starting Grant scheme by targeting researchers who have already established their independence as team leaders
- **~ €100 000- €500 000 per year**
- **for up to 5 years, i.e. ~ €500 000 - €2 500 000 per grant**
- ~ €600M per call (~ $\frac{2}{3}$  of ERC annual budget, annual calls)
- ~ 300 Advanced Grants per year



# ERC Starting Grant Requirements

## → Principal Investigator (PI)

- 2-9 years since completion of PhD: Special circumstances will be taken into account, such as maternity/paternity leave, military/civil service (+3 years max.)

## → PI and team members

- Any nationality
- Only one ERC Grant per investigator may be active at any one time

## → Hosting institution

- Located in a EU member state or associated country



# ERC Starting Grant Submission of Proposals

- **Two-step application procedure** (risk of oversubscription)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> stage - Outline Proposal: max 8 Pages
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> stage – Full Proposal: max 16 Pages
- **Electronic Submission** only (via EPSS)
- **Pre-registration** (via EPSS)
  - Providing ERC with indication on number & area of proposals
- **Proposal Components**
  - a) CV + self-evaluation + funding ID (3/4 pages)
  - b) Description of research project (4/10 pages)
  - c) Description of scientific environment + resources (1/2 pages)



# ERC Starting Grant

20 peer review panels in 3 domains

**Area 1: Physical Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Universe and Earth Sciences (8 panels)**

**Area 2: Biological and Life Sciences (7 panels)**

**Area 3: Social Sciences and Humanities (5 panels)**

- Each panel consists of one Panel Chair and 10-12 panel members
- Panel Chair oversees evaluation process for the proposals assigned to his/her panel in collaboration with the ERC staff
- The Panel Chair gives high level stamp of credibility and visibility to the whole evaluation process



# Evaluation Criteria

## Scientific Excellence is the sole Criterion

- 1. Potential of Principal Investigator**
  - 2. Quality of research project**
  - 3. Research Environment and Resources**
- Referees and panels evaluate and score criteria under Heading 1 and Heading 2 numerically which will result in the ranking of the projects:
    - 0-5 points, in increments of 0.5
    - Threshold 8 / 10
  - Criteria under Heading 3 will be considered as "pass/fail" and commented but not scored



# ERC Starting Grants Budget Allocation

- ERC covers **all fields of science, engineering and scholarship**
- For operational reasons the ScC agreed on **3 main research domains**:
  - **Physical Sciences & Engineering**
  - **Biological & Life Sciences**
  - **Social Sciences and Humanities**
- The **first call budget for ERC Starting Grants** has been **pre-allocated to these areas** as follows:
  - **45% - 40% - 15%**



# ERC Grant Agreement Concept

- **Agreement between ERC and Principal Investigator's (PI's) hosting organisation (*beneficiary*)**
  - Rights/obligations on scientific, financial, ethical conduct and monitoring, eligible costs, IPR, modifications, grant portability
- **Supplementary Agreement between PI and its hosting organisation**
  - Rights/obligations: administration, project execution, IPR
- **Single grant holder approach**
  - PI and members from same organisation
  - But: multi-partner/multi-national teams are possible
- **There will be no “project negotiations”**
  - Grant agreement based on the proposal and the peer review decision (budget)
  - PI can accept/reject the offered grant



# ERC Grant Agreement Main Elements

- **Core Grant Agreement** (*between ERC and hosting organisation*)
- **Description of work** (*Annex I to the Grant Agreement*)
- **General Conditions** (*Annex II to the Grant Agreement*)
- **Supplementary Agreement** (*between PI and hosting organisation*)
- **Accession Form** (*if more than one hosting organisation - Annex III*)
- **Special clause** (*if more than one hosting organisation for team members*)



# The first home for the ERC



## Madou Plaza – Tour Madou Brussels

- 2 dedicated floors (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>)
- 140 work places
- 5 meeting rooms
- 1 auditorium (192 seats)

- **ERC Starting Grants only**
- **What? Any field of science, engineering and scholarship**
- **Who? Principal Investigator (Individual Team) + Hosting Organisation**
- **By when ? Deadline Stage 1 submission: April 25, 2007**
- **How? Consult « ERC Guide for Applicants »**
- **Note:**
  - Submission via EPSS only (no paper submission)
  - Respect page limits and format
  - Indicate keywords describing the subject area (panel assignment)
  - Stage 2 submission: on invitation only if stage 1 proposal evaluated positively

- **Specific text of “Call for Proposal”**
- **ERC Work Programme 2007**
- **ERC Guide for Applicants**
- **ERC Grant agreement**

Other:

- ERC Guide for Grant Holders
- ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers
- ERC Rules on submission, evaluation, selection and award procedures

- **ERC National Contact Points**  
inform, raise awareness and provide advice on ERC funding opportunities, application, follow-up
- **ERC helpdesk**
- **EPSS helpdesk**  
technical support on electronic proposal submission
- **ERC website: <http://erc.europa.eu>**  
News Alert, Publicity Material

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# Thank you !