



The EU Framework Programme
for Research and Innovation

HORIZON 2020



ERC Standard Eligibility Conditions

Extract from the ERC Work Programme

Version 1.0
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Eligibility criteria

Eligible proposals

All proposals must be complete and be submitted before the relevant call deadline. A complete proposal entails all parts or sections (see “*Proposal submission and description*” below). Incomplete proposals may be declared ineligible.

The content of the proposal must relate to the objectives and to the grant type set out in the call, as defined in this work programme. A proposal will only be deemed ineligible on grounds of ‘scope’ in clear-cut cases.

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 will be declared ineligible and not considered any further.

Eligible Scientific Fields

Applications may be made in any field of research⁸.

Eligible Principal Investigator

The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research activity in any Member State or Associated Country. Principal Investigators may be of any age and nationality and may reside in any country in the world at the time of the application. ERC Principal Investigators do not have to be based full-time in Europe (see profiles of Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant Principal Investigators below).

Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant proposals are submitted by the Principal Investigator who has scientific responsibility for the project, on behalf of the host institution. There are specific eligibility criteria for a Principal Investigator applying to the Starting or Consolidator Grants based on the date of award of his/her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral

⁸ Research proposals within the scope of Annex I to the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications, shall be submitted to relevant calls under the Euratom Framework Programme.

degree⁹) as below. This “streaming” allows applicants to be compared with researchers of a similar level.

	Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant	Advanced Grant
Specific Eligibility Criteria	<p>Principal Investigator shall have been awarded his/her first PhD</p> <p>≥ 2 and ≤ 7 years</p> <p>prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant</p>	<p>Principal Investigator shall have been awarded his/her first PhD</p> <p>> 7 and ≤ 12 years</p> <p>prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Consolidator Grant</p>	<p>none</p>

The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be the date of the actual award according to the national rules in the country that the degree was awarded.

*However, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD can be reduced **in the following properly documented circumstances where they apply to the Principal Investigator (not family members).***

*For maternity, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by 18 months for each child born **before or after** the PhD award. For paternity, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by the actual amount of paternity leave taken for each child born **before or after** the PhD award.*

*For long-term illness¹⁰, clinical training or national service the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by the actual amount of leave taken for each incident which occurred **after** the PhD award.*

The elapsed time since the award of the first PhD should not in any case surpass 11 years and six months for applicant Principal Investigators to the Starting Grant and 16 years and six months for applicant Principal Investigators to the Consolidator Grant.

⁹ See ERC Scientific Council's note on 'PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degrees' at Annex 2, including specific provisions for holders of medical degrees.

¹⁰ Over ninety days.

Eligible Host Institution¹¹

The host institution (Applicant Legal Entity¹²) must engage the Principal Investigator for at least the duration of the project, as defined in the grant agreement. It must either be established in an EU Member State or Associated Country as a legal entity created under national law, or it may be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) or any other entity created under EU law. Any type of legal entity, public or private, including universities, research organisations and undertakings can host Principal Investigators and their teams.

It is expected that the research project will be implemented within the territory of the Member States 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.

It is also expected that the host institution will be the only participating legal entity. However, where they bring scientific added value to the project, additional team members may be hosted by additional legal entities¹³ which will be eligible for funding, and which may be legal entities established anywhere, including outside the European Union or Associated Countries, or international organisations. Legal entities established outside the European Union or Associated Countries shall be eligible for funding provided that their participation is deemed essential for carrying out the action.

¹¹ Please also refer to Annex 3 - Countries Associated to Horizon 2020 and Restrictions Applying to Some Legal Entities Established in Certain Third Countries.

¹² Please see important information for Principal Investigators, Candidates, Tenderers and Grant Applicants on possible registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED) on final page.

¹³ Consortia agreements are not required for ERC multi-beneficiary grants.

Restrictions on submission of proposals

The ERC's calls are extremely competitive. Only exceptional proposals are likely to be funded and the number of applications has consistently risen faster than the available budget. In order to maintain the quality and integrity of the ERC's evaluation process the Scientific Council has therefore applied restrictions on applications since 2009.

The restrictions for submission under the ERC Work Programme 2014 are set out below. They may be modified in subsequent years by the Scientific Council in light of experience.

The year of an ERC call for proposals refers to the Work Programme under which the call was made and can be established by its call identifier. A 2012 ERC call for proposals is therefore one that was made under the Work Programme 2012 and will have 2012 in the call identifier (for example ERC-2012-StG).

Ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against any of the following restrictions.

- *A Principal Investigator may submit only one proposal to the ERC for ERC frontier research grant calls made under the same Work Programme.*
- *A Principal Investigator whose proposal was evaluated as **category C** in the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals under Work Programme 2013 may not submit a proposal to the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals made under Work Programme 2014.*
- *A researcher may participate as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator¹⁴ in only one ERC frontier research project at any one time¹⁵;*
- *A researcher participating as Principal Investigator in an ERC frontier research project may not submit a proposal for another ERC frontier research grant, unless the existing project ends¹⁶ no more than two years after the call deadline;*
- *A Principal Investigator who is a serving Panel Member for a 2014 ERC call or who served as a Panel Member for a 2012 ERC call may not apply to a 2014 ERC call for the same type of grant¹⁷.*

¹⁴ Co-Investigator projects were supported under the Advanced Grant in Ideas Work Programmes from 2008 – 2011.

¹⁵ A new frontier research project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous frontier research grant agreement has ended.

¹⁶ According to the duration of the project fixed in the previous frontier research grant agreement.

¹⁷ The members of the ERC's panels alternate to allow panel members to apply to the ERC's calls in alternate years.

As a result of very high and rising demand for ERC grants the Scientific Council has decided to extend the above restrictions in future as follows:

- *A Principal Investigator whose proposal is evaluated as **category C** in the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals under Work Programme 2014 may not submit a proposal to the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals made under Work Programme 2015 and 2016.*
- *A Principal Investigator whose proposal is finally evaluated as **category B** in the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals under Work Programme 2014 may not submit a proposal to the Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant calls for proposals made under Work Programme 2015.*

These restrictions are designed to allow unsuccessful Principal Investigators the time necessary to develop a stronger proposal.