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European Research Council
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IDEAS Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
Call identifier: **ERC-2013-SUPPORT-1**
'ERC proposal submission, peer review and gender mainstreaming'

Guide for Applicants

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European Commission
FP7 Specific Programme
IDEAS

Foreword

This Guide for Applicants provides practical information to potential applicants in preparing and submitting an application for a Coordination and Support Action (CSA). The guide provides information specific to the call: ERC-2013-Support-1 within the Ideas Work Programme 2013.

The present guide is based on the legal documents setting the rules and conditions for the ERC grant schemes, in particular the Ideas Work Programme 2013, 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-CSA Model Grant Agreement, all of which can be consulted via the ERC and the Research and Innovation Participant Portal web-site.

<u>This guide does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding.</u> 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 Europe[1] 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/national-contact-points

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

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The European Research Council

The European Research Council (ERC) is a 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 Framework Programme with a budget of € 7.51 bn for 7 years (2007-2013), complements other research funding streams in Europe, such as those of research funding agencies operating at the national level and those within the EU's Seventh Framework Programme.

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

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.

The ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA)

The ERCEA 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 Call and its funding scheme

1.1 What are Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs)?

Coordination and support actions[2] are defined as the funding scheme which provides "support for activities aimed at coordinating or supporting research activities and policies (networking, exchanges, trans-national access to infrastructures, studies, conferences, etc.)."

Therefore research, technological development or demonstration activities are not to be supported under CSAs.

The minimum condition for supporting actions is the participation of one legal entity. In general, depending on their specific objectives, support actions may have duration from some months up to a few years. The Union financial contribution will take the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and of flat-rate financing of indirect costs on the basis of 7% of the total eligible direct costs. The level of the awarded grant represents a maximum overall figure – the final amount to be paid must be justified on the basis of the costs actually incurred for the project[3].

1.2 Focus of CSAs under the ERC-2013-SUPPORT-1 call on "ERC proposal submission, peer review and gender mainstreaming"

The ERC is an ambitious and autonomous entity which aims to establish itself as a world-leading institution for science funding. Expectations about what it can and will achieve are very high. It is therefore necessary for the ERC to develop methods to assess progress towards its objectives.

The Scientific Council has developed a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy in order to help it fulfil its obligations under the Ideas Specific Programme to establish the ERC's overall strategy and to monitor and quality control the programme's implementation from the scientific perspective. Its M&E strategy will:

- provide a sound evidence base to assess objectively the performance and impact of the ERC and make necessary adjustments;
- enhance the understanding of the dynamics in the research landscape in Europe (and beyond) in order to recalibrate ERC strategies in view of changes in the wider context in which the ERC operates;
- be both robust (in terms of the reliability of data basis and the rigour of its analysis) and flexible (in terms of manageable burden on budget and data providers such as ERC grantees).

While aiming at the specific needs of the ERC, the strategy has been developed – and continues to be refined - in liaison with the other programmes of the 7th Framework Programme, to draw experience from the latter and to meet, in a co-ordinated way, the

[2] See Annex III to the Decision No 1982/2006/EC concerning the Seventh Framework Programme.
[3] Commission Decision C(2009)1942 of 23 March 2009 on the use of flat rates to cover subsistence costs incurred by beneficiaries during travel carried out within grants for indirect actions shall apply to grants awarded under this work programme.

Commission's obligations for programme monitoring and evaluation, as well as the specific evaluation requirements established in the legislation for the ERC.
The Scientific Council has initiated a range of projects and studies to support this strategy. These have been implemented through Coordination and Support Actions (CSA), to solicit proposals for relevant studies and analysis, to issue calls tenders for services on specific topics and to draw on external expertise through expert group contracts.

The focus of the studies to be funded by the ERC-2013-Support 1 call should be on the ERC practices and processes in the context of gender mainstreaming and in particular during the proposals' submission and peer review.

In addition, the studies may review and analyse various dimensions of the issue such as:

- The ERC documents (Work Programme, ERC guides for applicants, ERC rules for submission, model grant agreement etc.);
- The ERC rules and procedures for the selection of reviewers (panel chairs, panel members, remote reviewers);
- The mechanisms, practices and selection procedures of the ERC peer review process.

The studies should take into account the experience from both the Starting and Advanced frontier research grants. Projects duration could be up to 18 months.

It is foreseen that a range of different methods could be appropriate, recognising that different approaches may be appropriate for different scientific domains. In all cases, the output of the studies should be compatible with the basic principles of ERC, it should feed the strategic orientations of the Scientific Council and it is expected to be in a form that could be applicable to the ERC's operations.

1.3 Data available

The ERCEA will supply data on ERC frontier research grant calls under the specific programme "Ideas". Any personal data supplied by ERCEA has to be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. It is recalled that strict requirements apply on the confidentiality and protection of personal data of the documents and information provided by the ERCEA for the purposes of the work of this CSA project. The beneficiary of the ERC-2013-SUPPORT-1 call shall undertake appropriate technical and organisation security measures in regard to the risks inherent in the processing and to the nature of personal data concerned.

European Research Council

2 Applying for the CSA

2.1 Who can apply?

Co-ordination and support actions are open to legal entities established in a Member State or an Associated Country as a legal entity created under national law, International European Interest Organisations[4] (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) or an entity created under EU law. Legal entities established in countries outside the EU or Associated Countries and international organisations are also eligible.

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/Agency 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 management[5].

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 offence 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 texts[6]. More information on the EWS and CED can be found here:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm

2.2 When can I apply?

ERC Grant application can be submitted only in response to a "call for proposals". Calls announced in the "Ideas" Work Programme 2013 are published on the ERC website[7], the Research and Innovation Participant Portal[8] and in the Official Journal of the European

[4] As defined by Article 2.11 of the FP7 Rules for participation Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 of 18 December 2006.
[5] 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.
[6] The basis for 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 (EC, Euratom) No 1302/2008 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12).
[7] http://erc.europa.eu/
[8] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home

Union[9]. The provisional timing of this call is indicated in the table below and will be updated on a regular basis on the ERC website.

Indicative timetable for this call:

Publication of call	**2 October 2012**
Deadline for submission of proposals	**16 January 2013**
	17.00 Brussels local time
Evaluation of proposals	**April 2013**
Grant agreement preparation	**July 2013**

2.3 How to apply? Technicalities

Proposals must be submitted electronically, using the **Electronic Submission Services** of the Commission, a single entry for all activities in the field of research: finding opportunities, finding partners for your proposal, submitting proposals, defining the grant agreement with the European Commission services and managing costs statements, reports and payments.

The Electronic Submission Services of the Commission is to be found on the Research and Innovation Participant Portal: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home

Proposals arriving at the Agency by any other means than the Research and Innovation Participant Portal are regarded as 'not submitted', and will not be evaluated[10]. All the data that the proposal coordinator uploads is securely stored on a server to which only the proposal coordinator and the other participants in the proposal have access until after the call deadline.

Box 1: Proposal submission - Important to know

- Proposals cannot be submitted without prior registration (pre-registration), which is required to obtain an ID and PIC login names and passwords.
- Proposals sent by other means than Electronic Submission Service will not be accepted.
- Proposal formats and page numbers are limited strictly.
- Only the material that the proposal contains within the page limits while respecting the indicated layout parameters will be evaluated.
- Evaluation is based on a peer review process with a panel composed of internationally renowned scientists and scholars.
- Please note that the working language of the peer review evaluation Panel is English[11].

[9] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en

[10] In exceptional cases, when a proposal co-ordinator has absolutely no means of accessing the Research and Innovation Participant Portal Submission Service, and when it is impossible to arrange for another member of the consortium to do so, an applicant may request permission from the Commission to submit on paper. A request should be sent via the FP7 enquiry service (see annex 1), indicating in the subject line "Paper submission request". (You can telephone the enquiry service if web access is not possible: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 from Europe; or 32 2 299 96 96 from anywhere in the world. A postal or e-mail address will then be given to you). Such a request, which must clearly explain the circumstances of the case, must be received by the Commission no later than one month before the call deadline. The Commission will reply within five working days of receipt. Only if a derogation is granted, a proposal on paper may be submitted by mail, courier or hand delivery. The delivery address will be given in the derogation letter.

[11] Proposals may be prepared in any official language of the European Union. 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 may be included in Part B of the proposal.

2.3.1 About the Electronic Submission Services of the Commission:

The proposal coordinator can access the Electronic Submission Services from the call page on the Research and Innovation Participant Portal http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home
Other participants must be invited by the coordinator in order to access the service.

As this is a web application, an Internet connection is required. An Internet browser and version 9 (or above) of the Adobe reader are needed. To check the requirements, click on https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/submission/manage/diagnostics.

Full instructions are found in the *"10 Minute guide to the Electronic Submission"*, available from the submission service website (click on "Starter Manual" to download the user guide): http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/ShowDoc/Participant+Portal/portal_content/docs/submission/10_minutes_guide_to_the_submission.pdf

Please consult the Research and Innovation Participant Portal call page regularly for updated information or contact the dedicated service by phone +32 (2) 2992222 or by e-mail: DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu

2.3.2 Participant Identification Code (PIC)[12]:

Those who are familiar with the proposal submission and grant preparation forms know that in the past, participants had to provide to the European Commission their legal and financial information every time they submitted a proposal or negotiated a contract. To eliminate these redundant requests for information, we invite you to register your organisational data once in the **Unique Registration Facility (URF)** which is hosted in the Participant Portal[13]. This self-registration will lead to a request by the European Commission for 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/authorised representative named in the URF receives the PIC number. Once the LEAR is validated, he/she 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 functionality[14].
Please do not forget to visit also the related 'Frequently Asked Questions'[15] of the URF page should you want any additional general information.

[12] The Participant Identification Code is a unique 9 digit number that helps the Agency identify a participant organisation. It is used in all grant-related interactions between the organisation and the Agency.
[13] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal
[14] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=myorganisations
[15] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=faq

Applicant legal entities possessing a Participant Identification Code (PIC) can use this number to identify themselves in the Electronic Submission Services[16].

2.3.3 Proposal submission steps

Step one: getting a user ID with the Commission

To begin using the system you must get a personal user ID with the European Commission Authentication Service (ECAS). ECAS is the European Commission's users authentication service: it allows authorised user to login to a wide range of commission information systems, using a single user name and password. To learn more about ECAS go to: https://www.cc.cec/cas/help.html

The personal ID is mandatory in order to complete the information requested from partners or in order for the proposal coordinator to submit the proposal. The system will request it for every partner and the steps to get one are easy. The same user ID will be used for all later interactions with the Commission/Agency in the field of Research.

Step two: choosing a funding scheme

For each call, a list of available funding schemes will be presented by the Electronic Submission Services. The proposal coordinator must choose the appropriate one for the proposal. Refer to the call fiche and work programme for the various conditions applicable to each funding scheme.

At this step, the system will request to select the PIC number of the proposal coordinator (prime organisation). If you already know the PIC number of the proposal coordinator (prime organisation), enter it at the PIC field. The details of the organisation will be displayed and the short name of the organisation will be automatically filled in.

If, after entering your PIC, the data which appears for your organisation is incorrect, you should contact the LEAR of your organisation to correct it through the Unique Registration Facility (URF)[17]. It is also possible for you to change the data prefilled from the PIC in your forms, but these changes would remain **local** to the Electronic Submission Services for this proposal only. The original incorrect data would always re-appear the next time the PIC was used, until corrected by the LEAR of your organisation in the URF.

Step three: creating a draft proposal

Once the funding scheme is selected, basic proposal information must be entered in order to create e placeholder for all elements (forms and proposal text).

Once the prime organisation (proposal coordinator) is known and identified, the service will request the essential details of the proposal. These details will be used by the Agency services in order to plan the evaluation. In general, the following details are requested:

- *The proposal acronym*. This is the name of the proposal and it will be used throughout the lifetime of the project, if funded. No more than 20 characters are

[16] 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.
[17] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/myorganisations

allowed (standard alphabet and numbers only; no symbols or special characters, except underscore, space, hyphen or dot).
- *The proposal abstract*, which describes briefly the purpose of the proposal with a maximum of 2,000 characters.
- *Activity code* (i.e. the identification of the objective addressed by the proposal).

Step four: managing other participants to the proposal

At this step the proposal coordinator sets up the consortium. The proposal coordinator can:
- *Add other participants to the proposal*. A search function is offered, in order to insert the participant code in the administrative forms and copy the most up to date information for you. This information will be completed with contact details – multiple contacts can be added. Other participants will be invited to access to the proposal (the contact person will receive an email with a link to access the system and update the participating organisation information).
- *Delete a participant.*
- *Reorder the participants*. The order of the participants in the administrative forms will be adjusted.

The proposal coordinator however cannot be deleted, and is always the first participant.

Step five: forms, files and submission

This step is the core of the process, as, from this step, the proposal coordinator can:
- *Fill in the administrative forms*, part A of the proposal (see section 2.4.1 of this Guide)
- Forms are completed using a PDF reader (e.g. Adobe Reader, see above section 2.3.1). The proposal coordinator can complete all the forms, including the budget table and the administrative details of the coordinator. Proposal partners can only complete their own administrative details (form A2).
- *Download the template of the part B of the proposal and other information files* (see section 2.4.2. of this Guide)
- Upload the file that will be the part B of the proposal.
- Submit the proposal package.

Completing the Part A forms in the Electronic Submission Services and uploading a Part B does not yet mean that the proposal is submitted. Once there is a consolidated version of the proposal, the "SUBMIT" button must be pressed.

At this point the service performs a limited automatic validation of the proposal. A list of discovered problems, such as missing data, is given on the last page of the proposal submission forms. In some cases users are allowed to submit incomplete administrative information but for significant omissions, proposal submission will be blocked until the problems are corrected. Therefore you are strongly advised, when preparing your proposal, to regularly click on 'validate' at the bottom of any page of the Part A to obtain updated validation messages and to review them on the last page of the proposal submission forms.

When errors or omissions are corrected, the coordinator must then repeat the above step to finally achieve the proposal submission.

If the submission sequence described above is not followed, the Agency considers that no proposal has been submitted.

When the proposal has been successfully submitted, the service will proceed to Step six where the coordinator sees a message that indicates that the proposal has been received. (This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt - see Section 2.4.3.1).

Step six: proposal status page

Reaching this step means that the proposal is submitted (i.e. sent to the Commission/Agency services for evaluation). It does not mean that the proposal is valid, complete, eligible in all respects or that it will be funded.

In Step six you can:

- *Download the proposal*. It is advised to download the proposal once submitted to check that it has been correctly sent. The downloaded proposal will be digitally signed and time stamped.
- *Re-edit the proposal*, going back to step five. The coordinator may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up until the deadline.
- *Withdraw the proposal.* If the proposal is withdrawn, it will not be considered for evaluation. A reason for the withdrawal will be requested by the service.
  (Note: Your proposal draft is not deleted from the server and this withdrawal action can be reversed, but only before the deadline, by simply submitting it again).

Correcting or revising your proposal

Errors discovered in proposals submitted can be rectified by simply submitting a corrected version before the submission deadline; the new proposal package (part A and B) will overwrite the old one. Once the deadline has passed, however, the Agency can accept **no** further additions, corrections or re-submissions.

The last version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one which will be taken into consideration; no later version can be substituted and no earlier version can be recovered.

Ancillary material

Only a single PDF file comprising the complete Part B can be uploaded. Unless specified in the call for proposals, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material, and any other documents (company brochures, supporting documentation, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) sent electronically or by post will be disregarded.

About the deadline

Proposals must be submitted on or before the deadline specified in the call for proposal. It is your responsibility to ensure the timely submission of your proposal.

The Electronic Submission Services of the Commission will be closed for this call at the call deadline. After this moment, the proposal can no longer be modified. It is however visible in a read-only version.

Do not wait until the last moment before submitting your proposal!
Call deadlines are absolutely firm and are strictly enforced.

In the unlikely event of a failure of the Electronic Submission Services due to breakdown of the Commission server during the last 24 hours of this call, the deadline will be extended by a further 24 hours. This will be notified by e-mail to all proposal coordinators who had registered for this call by the time of the original deadline, and also by a notice on the Call pages on the Participant Portal. Such a failure is a rare and exceptional event; therefore do not assume that there will be an extension to this call. If you have difficulty in submitting your proposal, you should not assume that it is because of a problem with the Commission servers, as this is rarely the case. Contact the Electronic Submission Service Help-desk if in doubt (DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu by e-mail, or by phone +32 (2) 2992222)

Please note that the Agency 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.

2.4 How to apply – completing the CSA application?

As mentioned above, the application involves two distinct components:

- **Part A** contains the administrative information about the proposal and the participants. The information in part A is entered through a set of on-line forms.

- **Part B** is in the form of a "template", or list of headings, rather than an administrative form. Part B of the proposal is uploaded by the applicant into the Electronic Submission Services described above.

In the A forms you will be asked for administrative details that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of your proposal. The A forms are an integral part of the proposal. Details of the project itself which the applicant intends to carry out will be described in the "Part B" of the proposal.

2.4.1. Instructions for completing "Part A" of the proposal

Form A1 gives a snapshot of the proposal, form A2 concerns ´the applicant and the applicant's organisation, and while form A3 deals with financial matters.

Please note:

- The coordinator fills in the section A1 and section A3.
- The participants already identified at the time of proposal submission (including the coordinator) each fill in their respective section A2.
- Subcontractors shall not be required to fill in section A2 and should not be listed separately in section A3.
- The estimated budget planned for any future participants (not yet identified at the time of the proposal) is not shown separately in form A3 but should be added to the coordinator's budget. Their role, profile and tasks are described in Part B of the proposal.

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 proposal text. In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

The following notes are for information only. They should assist you in completing the 'A' forms of your proposal. Online guidance will also be available. The precise questions and options presented on the Electronic Submission Service may differ slightly from these below.

Please consult the Research and Innovation Participant Portal call page regularly for updated information or contact the dedicated service by phone +32 (2) 2992222 or by e-mail: DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu

Form A1: General Information on the Proposal

Proposal Number	[pre-filled by the system]
Type of project	CSA Support [*filled in by system*]
Proposal Acronym	The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently in this call. It should consist of no more than 20 characters (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no spaces, symbols or special characters please). The same acronym should appear on each page of the proposal.
Call identifier	*[filled in via Research and Innovation Participant Portal call page]* The call identifier is the reference number given in the call or part of the call you are applying for, as indicated in the publication of the call in the *Research and Innovation Participant Portal* call page. A call identifier looks like this: ERC-2013-Support-1 followed by a number.
Proposal Title (max 180 char.) **(Non Confidential Information)**	The title should be no longer than 180 characters 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.**
Duration in months	The estimated duration of the project in full months. [MAXIMUM 18]
Abstract (non confidential information)	**The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the proposal and how they will be achieved.** The abstract will be used as the short description of your proposal in the evaluation process and in communications to inform the European Commission and/or the programme management committees (provided you give permission to do so where requested below). It must therefore be short and precise and shall not contain confidential information. Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. **The abstract must be written in English**[18]. There is a limit of 2000 characters (spaces and line breaks included).
Similar proposals or signed contracts	A 'similar' proposal or contract is one that differs from the current one in minor ways, and in which participant(s) are involved.

[18] The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. Please note that accordingly the panel reports will be available in English only. If the 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 the proposal.

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Form A2: Participants

Participant number	The number allocated to the participant for this proposal. The co-ordinator of a proposal is always number one.
Participant Identify Code	The Participant Identification Code (PIC) enables organisations to take advantage of the Research and Innovation Participant Portal. Organisations who have received a PIC from the Commission are encouraged to use it when submitting proposals. By entering a PIC, parts of section A2 will be filled in automatically. An online tool to search for existing PICs and the related organisations is available at http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal. Organisations not yet having a PIC are strongly encouraged to self-register (at http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal) before submitting the proposal and insert in section A2 the temporary PIC received at the end of the self-registration.
Legal name	For Public Law Body, it is the name under which your organisation 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 your organisation is registered in the national Official Journal (or equivalent) or in the national company register. For a natural person, it is for e.g. Mr Adam JOHNSON, Mrs Anna KUZARA, and Ms Alicia DUPONT.
Organisation Short Name	Choose an abbreviation of your Organisation 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 (./;…), for e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, for e.g. IBM and not Int.Bus.Mac.
Legal address	For Public and Private Law Bodies, it is the address of the entity's Head Office. For Individuals it is the Official Address. If your address is specified by an indicator of location other than a street name and number, please insert this instead under the "street name" field and "N/A" under the "number" field.
Non-profit organisation	Non-profit organisation is a legal entity qualified as such when it is recognised by national or, international law.
Public body	Public body means any legal entity established as such by national law, and international organisations.
Research organisation	Research organisation means a legal entity established as a non-profit organisation which carries out research or technological development as one of its main objectives.
NACE code	NACE means " Nomenclature des Activités économiques dans la Communauté Européenne". Please select one activity from the list that best describes your professional and economic ventures. If you are involved in more than one economic activity, please select the one activity that is most relevant in the context of your contribution to the proposed project. For more information on the methodology, structure and full content of NACE (rev. 1.1) classification please consult EUROSTAT at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_CLS_DLD&StrNom=NACE_1_1&StrLanguageCode=EN&StrLayoutCode=HIERARCHIC .
Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises	SMEs are micro, small and medium-sized enterprises within the meaning of Recommendation 2003/361/EC in the version of 6 May 2003. The full definition and a guidance booklet can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm .

(SMEs)	To find out if your organisation corresponds to the definition of an SME you can use the on-ine tool at http://ec.europa.eu/research/sme-techweb/index_en.cfm
Dependencies with (an) other participant(s)	Two participants (legal entities) are dependent on each other where there is a controlling relationship between them: – A legal entity is under the same direct or indirect control as another legal entity (SG); or – A legal entity directly or indirectly controls another legal entity (CLS); or – A legal entity is directly or indirectly controlled by another legal entity (CLB). *Control:* Legal entity A controls legal entity B if: – A, directly or indirectly, holds more than 50% of the nominal value of the issued share capital or a majority of the voting rights of the shareholders or associates of B, or – A, directly or indirectly, holds in fact or in law the decision-making powers in B. The following relationships between legal entities shall not in themselves be deemed to constitute controlling relationships: (a) the same public investment corporation, institutional investor or venture-capital company has a direct or indirect holding of more than 50 % of the nominal value of the issued share capital or a majority of voting rights of the shareholders or associates; (b) the legal entities concerned are owned or supervised by the same public body.
Character of dependence	According to the explanation above mentioned, please insert the appropriate abbreviation according to the list below to characterise the relation between your organisation and the other participant(s) you are related with: • SG: Same group: if your organisation and the other participant are controlled by the same third party; • CLS: Controls: if your organisation controls the other participant; • CLB: Controlled by: if your organisation is controlled by the other participant.
Contact point	It is the main scientist or team leader in charge of the proposal for the participant. For participant number 1 (the coordinator), this will be the person the ERCEA will contact concerning this proposal (e.g. for additional information, invitation to hearings, sending of evaluation results, convocation to negotiations).
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.
Phone and fax numbers	Please insert the full numbers including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.

Form A3: Budget

Financial information (in Euros) – whole duration of the project
This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC contribution, also presented in the proposal text (Part B). The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. There is no minimum contribution; the requested contribution should be in proportion to the actual needs to fulfil the objectives of the project. The participants 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.

Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs	
Costs claimed should be in line with the host institution's own accounting rules. The Union financial contribution will take the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and of flat-rate financing of indirect costs on the basis of 7% of the total eligible direct costs[19]. The level of the awarded grant represents a maximum overall figure – the final amount to be paid must be justified on the basis of the costs actually incurred for the project[20]. ***Direct eligible costs*** are those which support the action, management and other activities necessary for 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 PCs, laptops, office software; Miscellaneous recurring consumables. Non-eligible costs cannot be reimbursed through the ERC contribution, 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 with respect to another Community project; Costs related to return on capital; Debt and debt service charges; Excessive or reckless expenditure. • Please ensure that the amounts given in this form correspond precisely to the information provided in the proposal text (Part B). 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. All costs must be given excluding the value added tax (VAT). • For further questions about the budget please consult the FAQs on the ERC website.	
International Cooperation Partner Country (ICPC)	International Cooperation Partner Country means a third country which the Commission classifies as a low-income, lower-middle income or upper-middle-income country and which is identified as such in the work programmes.
Lump sum funding method	Legal entities established in an ICPC may opt for lump sums. In that case the contribution is based on the amounts shown below, multiplied by the total number of person-years for the project requested by the ICPC legal entity. • Low-income ICPC: 8,000 Euro/researcher/year • Lower middle income ICPC: 9,800 Euro/researcher/year • Upper middle income ICPC 20,700 Euro/researcher/year The maximum EC contribution is calculated by applying the normal upper funding limits shown under "requested EC contribution". This amount is all inclusive, covering support towards both the direct and the indirect costs. More information on ICPC lump sums can be found in the section II.18 of the "Guide to financial issues" on the Research and Innovation Participant Portal http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/fp7_documentation
Personnel Costs (in €)	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 to run the ERC project. Such persons must: – 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 cost if consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant. Average personnel costs charged by a participant are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.

[19] Excluding the direct costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the host institution.
[20] Commission Decision C(2009)1942 of 23 March 2009 on the use of flat rates to cover subsistence costs incurred by beneficiaries during travel carried out within grants for indirect actions shall apply to grants awarded under this work programme.

Other direct costs (excluding subcontracting) (in €)	Means direct costs not covered by the above-mentioned categories of costs.
Indirect costs (max. 7 % of direct costs) (in €)	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 (in €)	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. Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled: - 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; 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. 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. Costs incurred by third parties that make available resources are included under the category of subcontracting costs (provided that these costs are not related to core tasks of the project).
Total Eligible Costs (in €)	The sum of direct costs (personnel and others), indirect costs and subcontracting.
Requested ERC contribution (in €)	The requested ERC contribution (in Euros).

2.4.2 Instructions for completing "Part B" of the proposal

The proposal in itself has to be presented in the form of the so-called 'Part B', **following the template provided by the Electronic Submission Services of the Commission.** The use of the template is mandatory and it should be uploaded in PDF format via the web-based Electronic Submission Services. Please be aware that there is only one evaluation step. The "Part B" must contain all the information required to evaluate your proposal.

The sections to be included in the proposal Part B are:

1. **Objectives and impact (max. 7 pages)**
2. **Quality and effectiveness (max. 8 pages plus tables)**
3. **Resources (max. 5 pages) including the costing table.**

For the proposal Part B you must use exclusively PDF ("portable document format", compatible with Adobe version 3 or higher, with embedded fonts). Other file formats will not be accepted by the system.

There are also restrictions to the name given to the Part B file: use alphanumeric characters; special characters and spaces must be avoided.

Additionally, the following parameters must be respected for the layout:

- Page Format: A4
- Font Type: Times New Roman
- Font Size: At least 11
- Line Spacing Margins: Single, at least 1.5 cm

Only the material that the proposal contains within the above-mentioned page limits while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated. Experts will be instructed to disregard any excess pages. The information provided on each of these components should be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the peer reviewers to assess the proposal (Please see Article 15.1.c of the Rules for Participants which states as follows: For coordination and support actions project-related criteria may apply during the evaluation).

Each proposal page **must** carry a **header** presenting the **coordinator's last name**, and the **acronym** of the proposal.

Cover Page

- Proposal full title:
- Proposal acronym:
- Name of the coordinating person:
- List of participants:

Participant no. *	Participant organisation name	Country
1 (Coordinator)		
2		
3		

**Please use the same participant numbering as that used in section A2 of the administrative forms*

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Proposal

1. Objectives and impact
(Maximum length for the whole of Section 1: – 7 pages)

1.1 Are the objectives of the proposed project consistent with the requirements specified in the Work Programme and Call for Proposals?
Explain the concept of your project. What are the main ideas that led you to propose this work?

Describe in detail the objectives. Show how they relate to the topics addressed by the call for proposals. The objectives should be those achievable within the project, not through subsequent development. They should be stated in a measurable and verifiable form, including through the milestones that will be indicated below.

1.2 Will the project have a substantial impact in the context of the ERC strategic objectives?
Describe how your study will contribute towards the expected impacts listed in the Work Programme in relation to the topic or topics in question. Mention the steps that will be needed to bring about these impacts. Indicate how account is taken of other national or international research activities. Mention any assumptions and external factors that may determine whether the impacts will be achieved.

2. Quality and effectiveness
(Maximum length for the whole of Section 2 – 8 pages, plus the tables)

2.1 Is the proposed methodology and work plan effective in reaching the goals of the project?
A detailed work plan should be presented, broken down into work packages[21] (WPs) which should follow the logical phases of the implementation of the project, and include consortium management and assessment of progress and results.

Please present your plans as follows:

i) Describe the overall strategy of the work plan.
ii) Show the timing of the different WPs and their components (Gantt chart or similar).
iii) Provide a detailed work description broken down into work packages:

- Work package list (table A, see below);
- Deliverables list (table B, see below);
- Description of each work package, and summary (table C, see below)
- Summary effort table (table D, see below)
- List of milestones (table E, see below)

iv) Provide a graphical presentation of the components showing their interdependencies (Pert diagram or similar)

[21] A work package is a major sub-division of the proposed project with a verifiable end-point - normally a deliverable or a milestone in the overall project.

Note:

- The number of work packages used must be appropriate to the complexity of the work and the overall value of the proposed project. The planning should be sufficiently detailed to justify the proposed effort and allow progress monitoring by the ERCEA.
- Any significant risks should be identified, and contingency plans described.

2.2 Does it ensure the highest quality and/or utility of results?

2.3 Does it, where appropriate, correspond to, or go beyond, best current practice?

3. Resources

(Maximum length for Section 3 – 5 pages)

3.1 Are the resources (personnel, experience, equipment, other) appropriate for the goals of the project?

Describe the organisational structure and decision-making mechanisms of the study. Show how they are matched to the complexity and scale of the project.

Individual participants

For each participant in the proposed project, provide a brief description of the organisation, the main tasks they have been attributed, and the previous experience relevant to those tasks. Provide also a short profile of the staff members who will be undertaking the work.

Consortium as a whole (only if relevant)

Describe how the participants collectively constitute a consortium capable of achieving the project objectives, and how they are suited and are committed to the tasks assigned to them. Show the complementarities between participants. Explain how the composition of the consortium is well-balanced in relation to the objectives of the project.

i) Sub-contracting: If any part of the work is to be sub-contracted by the participant responsible for it, describe the work involved and explain why a sub-contract approach has been chosen for it.

ii) Other countries: If one or more of the participants requesting EU funding is based in a country that is outside the EU, and is not an associated country, and is not on the list of International Cooperation Partner Countries[22], explain in terms of the project's objectives why such funding would be essential.

In addition to the costs indicated in part A3 of the proposal, and the staff effort shown in table D above, please indicate any other major costs (e.g. equipment).

[22] See Research and Innovation Participant Portal web-site (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home)

3.2 Will they be used effectively? Are they properly justified?

Describe how the totality of the necessary resources will be mobilised, including any resources that will complement the EC contribution. Show how the resources will be integrated in a coherent way, and show how the overall financial plan for the project is adequate.

Table A: Work package list

Work package No[23]	Work package title	Type of activity[24]	Lead participant No[25]	Person-months[26]	Start month[27]	End month
	TOTAL					

Table B: Deliverables List

Del. no.[28]	Deliverable name	WP no.	Nature[29]	Dissemination level[30]	Delivery date[31]

Table C: Work package description for each work package:

Work package number		Start date or starting event:	
Work package title			
Activity Type[32]			

[23] WP number: WP 1 – WP n.

[24] Please indicate <u>one</u> activity per work package:
Supp = Support activities (including any activities to prepare for the dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and coordination activities); MGT = Management of the consortium; Other specific activities, if applicable in this call.

[25] Number of the participant leading the work in this work package

[26] The total number of person-months allocated to each work package

[27] Measured in months from the project start date (month 1)

[28] Deliverable numbers in order of delivery dates. Please use the numbering convention <WP number>.<number of deliverable within that WP>. For example, deliverable 4.2 would be the second deliverable from work package 4.

[29] Please indicate the nature of the deliverable using one of the following codes:
R = Report, **P** = Prototype, **D** = Demonstrator, **O** = Other

[30] Please indicate the dissemination level using one of the following codes:
PU = Public
PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services).
RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services).
CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services).

[31] Measured in months from the project start date (month 1).

[32] Please indicate <u>one</u> activity per work package:

Participant number							
Person-months per participant:							
Objectives							
Description of work (possibly broken down into tasks), and role of participants							
Deliverables (brief description and month of delivery)							

Summary of staff effort

A summary of the staff effort is useful for the evaluators. Please indicate in the table the number of person months over the whole duration of the planned work, for each work package, for each participant. Identify the work-package leader for each WP by showing the relevant person-month figure in bold.

Table D: Efforts

Participant no./short name	WP1	WP2	WP3	…	Total person months
Part.1 short name					
…					
…					
…					
Total					

Milestones

Milestones are control points where decisions are needed with regard to the next stage of the study. For example, a milestone may occur when a major result has been achieved, if its successful attainment is required for the next phase of work. Another example would be a point when the consortium must decide which of several technologies to adopt for further development.

Table E: List of Milestones

Milestone number	Milestone name	Work package(s) involved	Expected date [33]	Means of verification[34]

RTD = Research and technological development (including any activities to prepare for the dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and coordination activities); DEM = Demonstration; MGT = Management of the consortium; OTHER = Other specific activities, if applicable.

[33] Measured in months from the start date (month 1)

[34] Show how you will confirm that the milestone has been attained. Refer to indicators if appropriate. For example: a laboratory prototype completed and running flawlessly; software released and validated by a user group; field survey complete and data quality validated.

a. Costing Table:

This section is about describing the resources needed for the project. You should demonstrate that the requested budget is necessary for the implementation of the proposed activities and properly justified.

Please separate the costs of management activities from the ones of other activities. Please note that management costs refer only to multi-beneficiary grants and shall relate to the management of the consortium.

Please make sure that the indirect costs are calculated as a flat-rate of 7% of the total eligible direct costs. Justification must be provided to deviate from the 7% flat rate and will then have to be maintained without change throughout the duration of the grant.

Please ensure that for each type of direct cost included in the costing table, a corresponding description of what this funding concerns is provided.

Table F: Costing table
(Note: To facilitate the assessment of resources by the panels, the use of the following costing table is strongly suggested.)

	Cost Category	Management[35]	Other Activities	Total (in €)
Direct eligible Costs:	***Personnel:***			
	PI Other			
	Total Personnel:			
	Other Direct Costs:			
	Equipment Consumables Travel Other			
	Total Other Direct Costs:			
	Total Direct Costs:			
Indirect eligible Costs (overheads):	Max 7% of Direct Costs			
Subcontracting Costs:	(No overheads)			
Total eligible Costs of project:				
Requested Grant:				

[35] See Art. II.16/ Upper Funding limits of the FP7 model grant agreement which describes management activities - this type of costs concerns *inter alia* consortium agreement management as well as legal, ethical, financial and administrative management costs (where applicable).

b. Justification (description of the budget)

Describe the necessary resources and specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project. It is advisable to include a short technical description of any equipment (where applicable) requested, a justification of its need as well as the intensity of its planned use.

Subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project and recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation. Hence in the case of subcontracting please include the tasks and budget for each subcontract as well as a brief justification for this.

Attention is also drawn to the specificities of the conditions which apply to subcontracting in terms of the award of the contract and implementation. It is therefore noted that in certain specific contexts it may be appropriate to consider what the most suitable modality to include the costs for third parties may be (where applicable).

Ethical issues

Any ethical issues that may arise should be mentioned in the proposal. The Ethical Issues Table (see Annex 1) serves to identify any ethical aspects of the proposed work. <u>This table has to be completed even if there are no issues</u> (by confirming in the table that none of the ethical issues apply to the proposal). In particular, the following special issues 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. Take into account that the use of ERC call data is limited due to data protection issues.

Further information regarding ethical review is available at the Cordis Webpage: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html

<u>2.4.3. Is my proposal ready for evaluation?</u>

Incomplete proposals (where parts of the proposal are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated. The proposal must be submitted **before the Call deadline**.

<u>Box 2</u>: Checklist – Is your proposal complete?

For the submission of a complete proposal to the ERC-2013-Support-1 Call, the following components have to be prepared:

The Administrative Forms (Part A) to be completed in the Electronic Submission Services:

1. A1 (General information),
2. A2 (Participants),
3. A3 (Budget)

The Project Proposal (Part B):

1. Objectives and impact (max. 7 pages)
2. Quality and effectiveness (max. 8 pages plus tables)
3. Resources (max. 5 pages)

The Supplementary Documents:
If applicable, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated (Ethical Issues, see Annex 1 of this guide).

Please ensure that all forms and documents are in PDF format and are uploaded correctly in the Electronic Submission Service system before the final submission. It is strongly recommended to double-check by downloading them and verifying their completeness.

2.4.3.1. Has my proposal been received by the ERCEA?

Shortly after the call deadline, the Agency will send an **acknowledgement of receipt** to the e-mail address of the proposal coordinator given in the submitted proposal. This is assumed to be the individual named on the A2 form for participant no. 1. Please note that the brief electronic message given by the Electronic Submission Services of the Commission after each submission is **not** the official acknowledgement of receipt.

The sending of an acknowledgement of receipt does not imply that a proposal has been accepted as eligible for evaluation.

2.4.3.2. 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. As long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one. The last version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated, and no later material can be submitted.

Once the deadline has passed, the ERCEA cannot accept any further additions, corrections or re-submissions. However a read-only access to the submitted proposal is granted in case the coordinator wishes to verify what has been submitted.

You may withdraw a proposal before the call deadline by simply submitting a revised version with an empty Part B section, and with the following text in the abstract field of form A1:
"The applicants wish to withdraw this proposal. It should not be evaluated by the ERCEA".

You may also withdraw a proposal after the call deadline, by accessing the 'My Proposals' tab when you log in to the participant portal. With the action 'view submitted' the coordinator will move to Step six, where the proposal can be withdrawn.

Please consult the Research and Innovation Participant Portal call page regularly for updated information or contact the dedicated service by phone +32 (2) 2992222 or by e-mail: DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu

3 Evaluation and selection of proposals

3.1 Eligibility Check

On receipt by the ERCEA, proposals are registered and acknowledged and their contents entered into a database to support the evaluation process. Eligibility criteria for each proposal are also checked by ERCEA before the evaluation begins. Proposals which do not fulfil these criteria will not be included in the evaluation.

For this call a proposal will only be considered eligible if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is submitted via the Electronic Submission Service before the <u>deadline</u> of the call ;
- It is <u>complete</u> (i.e. both the requested administrative forms and the proposal description are present);
- Its content must <u>relate to the topic and the funding scheme</u> which is subject to the call for proposal;
- Any other additional eligibility criteria mentioned in the call for proposals;

The eligibility is checked on the basis of the information provided in the proposal. Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed with the evaluation 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.

3.2 Peer Review Evaluation

A one-step evaluation procedure will be followed. The evaluation will be conducted by peer reviewers[36]. These experts may work remotely and may if necessary meet as an evaluation panel on the application of the evaluation criteria for selection of proposals for this call for proposals. The Panel Members are selected by the ERCEA on the basis of their excellence in relevant field of science.

Box 3: Composition of ERC Panel

- The Panel consists of up to 8 Panel Members moderated by the ERCEA.
- The ERCEA establishes a list of experts capable of evaluating the proposals that have been received. ERCEA staff allocates proposals to individual experts, taking account of the fields of expertise of the experts, and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- ERCEA manages and ensures the quality of the evaluation process.

<u>Conflicts of interest:</u> Under the terms of the appointment letter, peer reviewers must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest, and must immediately inform an ERCEA staff member if one becomes apparent during the course of the evaluation. In case of potential conflict of interest (CoI), ERCEA will make decision whether the situation in question constitutes an actual CoI - or no CoI.

[36] According to section 3.1.6.3 of the ERC Rules for the submission of proposals

Confidentiality: The appointment letter requires peer reviewers to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process. They must follow any instruction given by the ERCEA to ensure this. Under no circumstance may an expert attempt to contact an applicant on his own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

Peer reviewer will evaluate on three criteria (see Box 4). Each criterion will be marked on a scale 0 to 5 (half marks can be given) and an overall quality threshold of 80% (12/15) will be used to establish the retained list of proposals which will be ranked in order of priority for funding.

Box 4: Evaluation criteria

1. Objectives and impact (award)
Are the objectives of the proposed project consistent with the requirements specified in the Work Programme and/or call for proposals? Will the project have a substantial impact in the context of the ERC strategy?

2. Quality and effectiveness (award)
Is the proposed methodology and work plan effective in reaching the goals of the project? Does it ensure the highest quality and/or utility of results? Does it, where appropriate, correspond to, or go beyond, best current practice?

3. Resources (selection)
Are the resources (personnel, experience, equipment, other) appropriate for the goals of the project? Will they be used effectively? Are they properly justified?

Individual Assessment

Proposals are distributed to Panel Members who read them "remotely" (i.e. at their place of work). Each proposal will be reviewed by at least three Panel Members.

The peer reviewers record their individual opinions in an Individual Assessment Report (IAR), giving scores and also justification against the evaluation criteria. When scoring proposals, peer reviewers must *only* apply the above evaluation criteria.

Peer reviewers will assess and mark the proposal exactly as it is described and presented. They do not make any assumption or interpretation about the project beyond what is in the proposal.

Concise but explicit justification will be given for each score in the comments accompanying the marks. Recommendations for improvements to be discussed as part of a possible negotiation phase will be given, if needed. The peer reviewers will also indicate whether, in their view, the proposal deals with sensitive ethical issues, or if it requires further scrutiny with regard to security considerations.

It is possible that a proposal is found to be completely out of scope of the call during the course of the individual evaluation, and therefore not relevant. If an expert suspects that this may be the case, an ERCEA staff member will be informed immediately, and the views of the other peer reviewers will be sought. If the consensus view is that the main part of the proposal is not relevant to the topics of the call, the proposal will be withdrawn from the evaluation, and the proposal will be deemed ineligible.

Expert panel evaluation

After the individual assessment, proposals are discussed in a plenary session by the Panel during a meeting. The Panel discussion is moderated by ERCEA. The role of the moderator is to seek to arrive at a consensus between the individual views of peer reviewers without any prejudice for or against particular proposals or the organisations involved, and to ensure a confidential, fair and equitable evaluation of each proposal according to the required evaluation criteria. In addition, a Member of the ERC Scientific Council may take part as observer.

The peer reviewers attempt to agree on a consensus score for each of the criteria that have been evaluated and suitable comments to justify the scores. Comments should be suitable for feedback to the applicant. Scores and comments are set out in a consensus report. They also come to a common view on the questions of scope, ethics and security.

At the end of the review procedure the Panel formulates its recommendations and draws up the final ranked list of proposals for possible funding. The final selection of the projects will be done by ERCEA based on the panel's recommendations, taking account of the available budget.

3.3 Ethics Review

The objective of the ethics review is to ensure that the ERC does not support actions which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles and to examine whether the work complies with the rules relating to research ethics set out in the Seventh Framework Programme and the related statement of the Commission, the Rules for Participation and the Specific Programme 'Ideas'. After the peer review evaluation and before any funding decision is taken, all proposals retained for funding will undergo an ethical clearance. The proposals involving sensitive ethical issues will undergo an ethics review 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 ERCEA prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethics review. Proposals raising specific ethical issues such as intervention on human beings; work on human embryos and human embryonic stem cells and non-human primates are automatically submitted to a more in-depth ethics review.

3.4 Feedback to applicants

Official communications and feedbacks from the ERCEA to the applicant and the applicant legal entity might be done via an ERCEA secured web-mail account. The applicants may receive an e-mail with the evaluation results. Applicants and applicant legal entities are provided with feedback on the outcome of the peer review evaluation in the form of an evaluation report. This indicates whether the proposal is retained for funding or not, and provides the passed/failed status for each of the three criteria, with corresponding comments given by the panel.

3.5 Redress

Upon reception of the feedback on the outcome of the peer review evaluation with the evaluation report or with the results of the eligibility check, the coordinator and/or the coordinators host institution 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 judgement made by the peer review panel; it will look procedural shortcomings and – in rare cases – into factual errors. Such requests for redress should be raised within one month of the date of the feedback on the outcome of the evaluation sent by the ERCEA, 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 coordinator and/or the coordinators applicant legal entity.

Box 5: Please Note

- This procedure is concerned with the peer review evaluation and/or eligibility checking process.
- The committee will not call into question the 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 other criteria.
- The output of any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive.
- Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee.
- All requests for redress will be treated in confidence.

An initial reply will be sent to complainants no later than two weeks after the deadline for redress requests. This initial reply will indicate when a definitive reply will be provided. A redress committee of the ERCEA may be convened to examine the peer review evaluation process for the case in question. The redress committee will bring together staff of the ERCEA with the requisite 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. In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action to the ERCEA. 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.

4 Managing ERC - CSA grants

4.1 Preparation of a grant agreement

The ERC Executive Agency prepares grant agreements for projects on the basis of the proposal and the recommendations of the ERC panel. The grant agreement and its annexes will be based on the FP7 model grant agreement (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html#ideas_ga).

The start of the project normally takes place the first calendar day of the month following conclusion of the grant agreement. In the case there is no ethical review ongoing; projects are expected to start within 6 months of the date of the invitation to start the granting process. Only in duly justified exceptional circumstances will the ERCEA consider to deviate from this[37]. The ERC reserves the right to withdraw from the granting process in the event there is no exception granted to the 6 month period and this timeframe is surpassed.

4.2 Project reporting

Given the length of the CSAs to be financed under this call, the Project reporting will be required only once, at the end of the project, combining elements of technical and of financial management nature.

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[38].

4.3 Payment of ERC-CSA grants

The ERC-CSA Grants are paid in 2 instalments:

1. An advance payment (pre-financing) of 80% of the maximum EU contributions made within a maximum of 45 days of the date of entry into force of the ERC-CSA grant agreement. A percentage of 5% of the maximum financial contribution shall be transferred by the ERCEA into the Guarantee Fund in their name, corresponding to the provisions of Article II.20 of the general conditions of the ERC-CSA grant agreement.

2. A final payment will be made on the basis of eligible expenditures accepted at the end of the project, after the approval of the project report.

[37] A written request should be made ASAP after the invitation to start the granting process outlining what are the prevailing circumstances which would justify a later start date.
[38] More information can be found here: http://cordis.europa.eu/audit-certification/home_en.html

4.4 Dissemination, Exploitation and IPR

The ERC Executive Agency may publish information on projects which it supports financially. This could include the name of the participants and organisations, the project's objectives, the amount of funding awarded, and the location of the project and the project reports.

4.5 Acknowledging ERC support

Publications resulting from research supported the ERC-SUPPORT-2013-1 call need approval by the ERC. Whenever such achievements are published (such as in journals, patents, presentations, etc.) the ERC's financial support under the Seventh Framework Programme should be highlighted. 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 7th Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC grant agreement n° [xxxxxx][39]

For downloading the image files of the ERC logo and the European emblem, please consult http://erc.europa.eu/logos-and-banners.

[39] This statement will have to be made in the language of the dissemination activity.

5 Further information and support

General information and key documents are available on the ERC website at http://erc.europa.eu, or on the 'Frequently Asked Questions'. http://erc.europa.eu/faq on the Research and Innovation Participant Portal at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal

As with other parts of the Seventh Framework Programme, National Contact Points (ERC NCPs) have been set up across Europe 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.

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.

Technical questions related to the Electronic Submission Service should be directed to the DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu by e-mail, or by phone +32 (2) 2992222. or via its web portal on Research and Innovation Participant Portal[40].

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

[40] http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/

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Annex 1: Ethical Issues Table

<u>ETHICS ISSUES TABLE</u>

Areas Excluded From Funding Under FP7 *(Art. 6)*

(i) Research activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes;

(ii) Research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (Research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads can be financed);

(iii) 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;

All FP7 funded research shall comply with the relevant national, EU and international ethics-related rules and professional codes of conduct. Where necessary, the beneficiary(ies) shall provide the responsible Commission services with a written confirmation that it has received (a) favourable opinion(s) of the relevant ethics committee(s) and, if applicable, the regulatory approval(s) of the competent national or local authority(ies) in the country in which the research is to be carried out, before beginning any Commission approved research requiring such opinions or approvals. The copy of the official approval from the relevant national or local ethics committees must also be provided to the responsible Commission services.

<u>Guidance notes on informed consent, dual use, animal welfare, data protection and cooperation with non-EU countries are available at :</u>
<u>http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html#ethics_sd</u>

<u>For real time updated information on Animal welfare also see:</u>
<u>http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/home_en.htm</u>
<u>For real time updated information on Data Protection also see:</u>
<u>http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/index_en.htm</u>

	Research on Human Embryo/ Foetus	YES	Page
	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?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

	Research on Humans	YES	Page
	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?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

	Privacy	YES	Page
	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?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

	Research on Animals	YES	Page
	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?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

	Research Involving non-EU Countries (ICPC Countries[41])	YES	Page
	Is the proposed research (or parts of it) going to take place in one or more of the ICPC Countries?		
	Is any material used in the research (e.g. personal data, animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, etc) : a) Collected and processed in any of the ICPC countries?		
	b) Exported to any other country (including ICPC and EU Member States)?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

[41] In accordance with Article 12(1) of the Rules for Participation in FP7, 'International Cooperation Partner Country (ICPC) means a third country which the Commission classifies as a low-income (L), lower-middle-income (LM) or upper-middle-income (UM) country. Countries associated to the Seventh EC Framework Programme do not qualify as ICP Countries and therefore do not appear in this list.

	Dual Use	YES	Page
	Research having direct military use		
	Research having the potential for terrorist abuse		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		