

Essential ERC

A quick introduction for beginners to the European Research Council grants

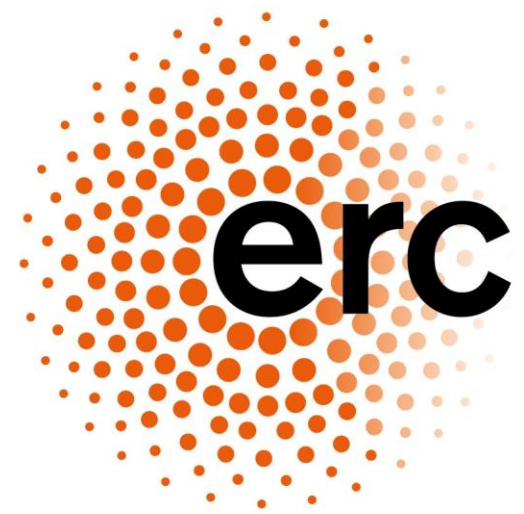
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ERC is a part of Horizon Europe



Horizon Europe 2021 - 2027		
Total budget: EUR 94.1 billion		
Excellent Science (EUR 25.8 billion)	Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness (EUR 52.7 billion)	Innovative Europe (EUR 13.5 billion)
European Research Council (ERC)	Clusters 1. Health 2. Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Societies 3. Civil Security for Society 4. Digital, Industry & Space 5. Climate, Energy and Mobility 6. Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment EU Joint Research Centre (JRC)	European Innovation Council (EIC)
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)		Innovation ecosystems
Research Infrastructures		European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
Widening participation and strengthening the European research area (EUR 2.1 billion)		
Widening participation and spreading excellence. Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system.		



ERC grants: the basics

Support to investigator-driven frontier research (not collaborative), by a Principal Investigator (PI) and his or her team, to do a research project that moves the research front

Generous long-lasting projects (up to 5 or 6 years)

All scientific areas covered, bottom-up approach

The sole evaluation criterion is scientific excellence, of:

- *Research Proposal (idea)*
- *Researcher (PI)*

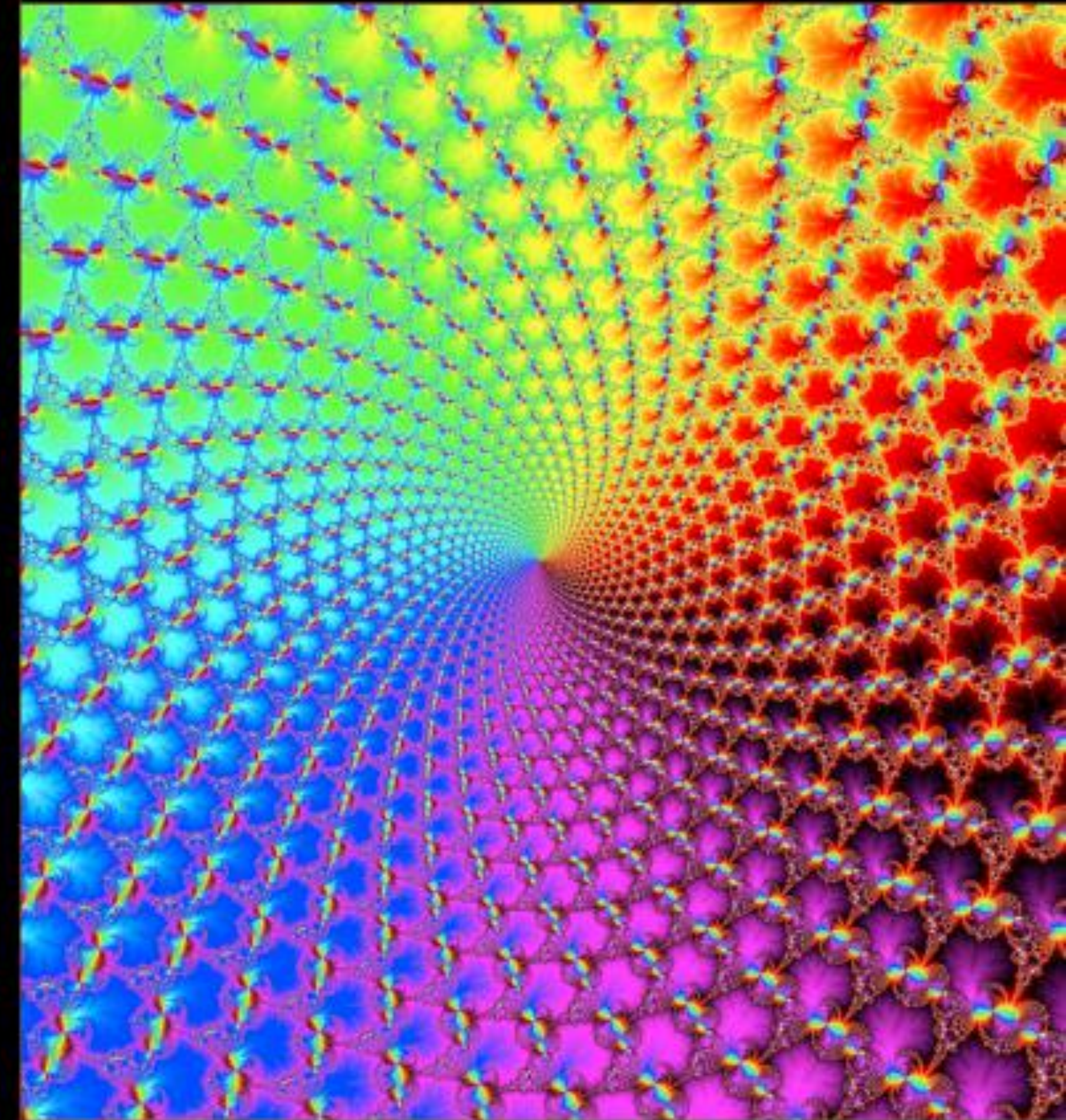
Encourages cross-disciplinary proposals, new and emerging fields, unconventional and innovative approaches

The European Research Council



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

UNLOCKING **BRILLIANT IDEAS**



<http://erc.europa.eu>



Annual calls of the ERC - Types of grants

Starting Grants (StG)

- starters (2-7 years after PhD)
- up to € 1,5 Mio for 5 years
- Min. 50% dedicated working time on ERC project

Consolidator Grants (CoG)

- consolidators (7-12 years after PhD)
- up to € 2,0 Mio for 5 years
- Min. 40% dedicated working time on ERC project

Advanced Grants (AdG)

- track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years
- up to € 2,5 Mio for 5 years
- Min. 30% dedicated working time on ERC project

Synergy Grants (SyG)

- 2 – 4 Principal Investigators (all experience levels)
- Synergy effect is the key
- One PI can have host institution in 3rd country (outside of EU/AC)
- up to € 10.0 (+4) Mio for 6 years

Proof-of-Concept (PoC)

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

*The PI can also ask for up to 1 million euro in **additional costs** to cover:*

- *eligible “start-up” costs for researchers moving from a third country to the EU or an associated country and/or*
- *the purchase of major equipment and/or*
- *access to large facilities and/or*
- *other major experimental and field work cost*



Eligibility and required experience

- PhD degree (StG and CoG)
 - PhD defense date. Reference date is 1st. Jan. in work programme year
 - Extension of eligibility time for children and long-term sick leave
- Research maturity:
 - StG: At least one important publication as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor
 - CoG: Should have shown evidence of research independence
 - AdG: An active researcher and have a track record of significant research achievements
- In the track record: list up to ten research outputs that demonstrate how the applicant has advanced knowledge in their field, with an emphasis on more recent achievements
- Min. 50% working time in EU member states or associated countries during ERC project

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WHERE **EXCELLENCE** MEETS **CREATIVITY**



<http://erc.europa.eu>





Evaluation criterion and elements

For Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, and Synergy grants, **scientific excellence is the sole criterion** of evaluation.

The panels will **primarily** evaluate:

- the ground-breaking nature, ambition, and feasibility of the research project.

At the same time, the panels will evaluate:

- the intellectual capacity, creativity, and commitment of the Principal Investigator(s), with a focus on the extent to which the Principal Investigator(s) has the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project.



ERC Proposal Structure (indv. Grants): 1-Stage Submission and 2-Stage Evaluation

Part A

Administrative Form

- General Information (keywords, panel, abstract)
- Participants (HI and PI)
- Budget and Resources (8000 characters)
- Ethics/security (self assessment)
- Other questions

Part B1

Proposal Overview and PI Track Record

- Cover Page with Abstract
- Extended Synopsis: 5 pages
- CV and Track Record: 4 pages

Part B2

Detailed Research Proposal

- State of the Art and Objectives
 - Methodology
- Total of 14 pages
- Funding ID

Annexes

Host Institution Support Letter, Ethics, Security, Eligibility (PhD certificate/extensions for StG/CoG)



The ERC panels

You select the most suitable evaluation panel:

- Physical Sciences and Engineering (11 Panels),
- Life Sciences (9 Panels),
- Social Sciences and Humanities (8 Panels).

The list of the panels and keywords can be found in the Work Programmes and in the Information for Applicants

<https://erc.europa.eu/homepage>





Evaluation process – StG, CoG, AdG

Evaluation preparation

- I. Admissibility and eligibility checks
- II. Initial Panel Chairs meeting
- III. Proposals assignment to panel members

Step 1

- I. Remote evaluation of Part B1 by Panel Members
- II. Panel meeting
- III. Score A - invited: Proposals retained for Step 2 (max 44)
- IV. Score A - not invited, B and C: the proposal is rejected

Step 2

- I. Remote evaluation of Parts B1 and B2, resources and time commitment by Panel Members and Remote Referees
- II. Panel meeting with interview
- III. Ranked list of Proposals
- IV. The highest ranked proposals will receive funding

For Synergy grant: Similar process, but in three steps

To apply or not to apply?

- **Lots of work**
- **Success rate 8-14%**

Project idea suitable for ERC?

Sufficiently experienced PI?

**Only one criterion:
Excellence**



Not all research ideas are suited for an ERC proposal

- Significant advances to current knowledge
- Impact the future research of other scientists
- Ten year perspective

- Incremental research
- Continuation of on-going research
- Collaborative projects

YES

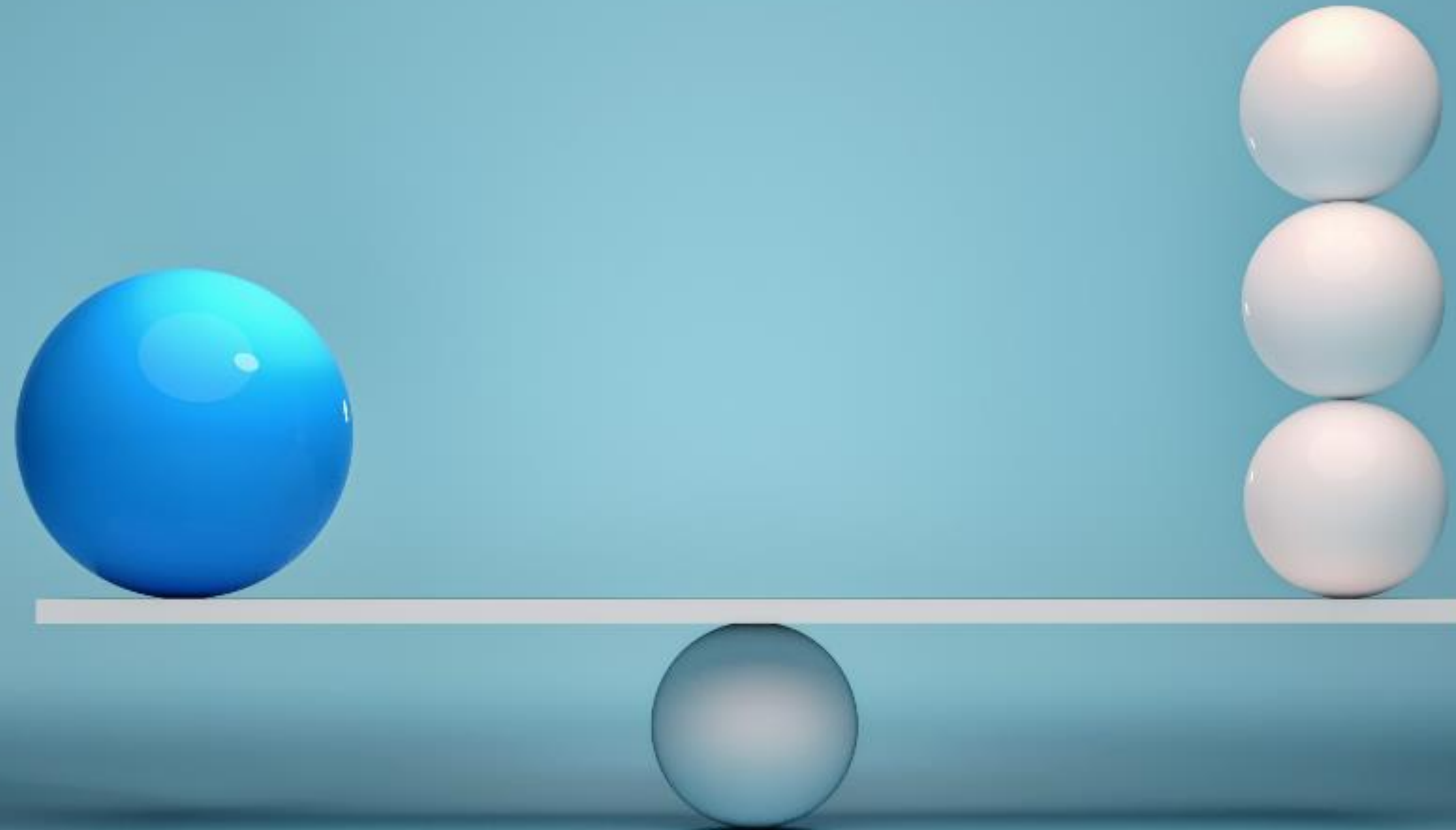
NO



When to apply?

Tweak, think,
discuss and
investigate
till your idea is
mature for ERC

Resubmission
restrictions!



Success rate
increases with
reapplications

Don't wait too
long.

Success rate is
fairly equal
from year 4
after PhD (StG)
and through
CoG period



Benchmark yourself/Browse through funded projects

- <https://erc.europa.eu/projects-statistics>

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. PI name
4. Host institution
5. Note: Panel structure has changed over the years
6. Google CV (NB: pre-ERC status!)
7. Note: Number and type of publications vary with research field end experience level

Projec...	Call	Acronym	EU contribution	Re
101118656	ERC-2023-SYG	4D-BioSTEM	€7,489,397	Carsten Sachse, Henning Stahlberg, Knut Müller-Caspary
101118999	ERC-2023-SYG	Cat4CanCenter	€10,603,994	Alexander Kros, Joost Reek, Leila Akkari
101118768	ERC-2023-SYG	DEMI	€9,973,679	Alfred Ludwig, Jan Rossmeisl, Karl Mayrhofer, Matthias Ar
101115663	ERC-2023-SYG	NEMESIS	€7,818,782	Daniele Di Pietro, Jerome Droniou, Lourenço Beirao Da Ve
101119062	ERC-2023-SYG	SWIMS	€13,525,608	Denis Flandre, Elisabetta Chicca, Gerhard Paul Fettweis, M



What's next

- Start preparing early
- Check annual deadlines
- Contact your local EU-advisor (workshops etc)
- Discuss your idea with your peers/research group
- Information on ERC web page <https://erc.europa.eu> :
 - Annual work programme
 - Information for Applicants
 - ERC Classes on YouTube:
(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtv6FnsXqnXAYRk6HCEr wMxwML0ZKoMcy>)





Support from the ERC National Contact Points

See our web page for announcements under “*Events*”:

- ERC application writing courses – in collaboration with universities
- ERC Proposal Reading Days
- Assistance with interview training
- Any other questions
- Project Establishment Support (PES), speak to the EU-advisers!



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