

The European Research Council

How to apply for an ERC grant
WORKSHOP

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25 May 2023

VI International Congress on Risks



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Presentation outline

1. ERC and Horizon Europe
2. ERC basics
3. ERC calls
4. ERC evaluation process
5. Successful ERC projects
6. Tips and tricks for proposal preparation



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“

The ERC awards long-term grants to researchers of any nationality and age, from anywhere in the world, who wish to carry out their research projects in a host institution based in Europe.

Scientific excellence is the sole evaluation criterion.

”

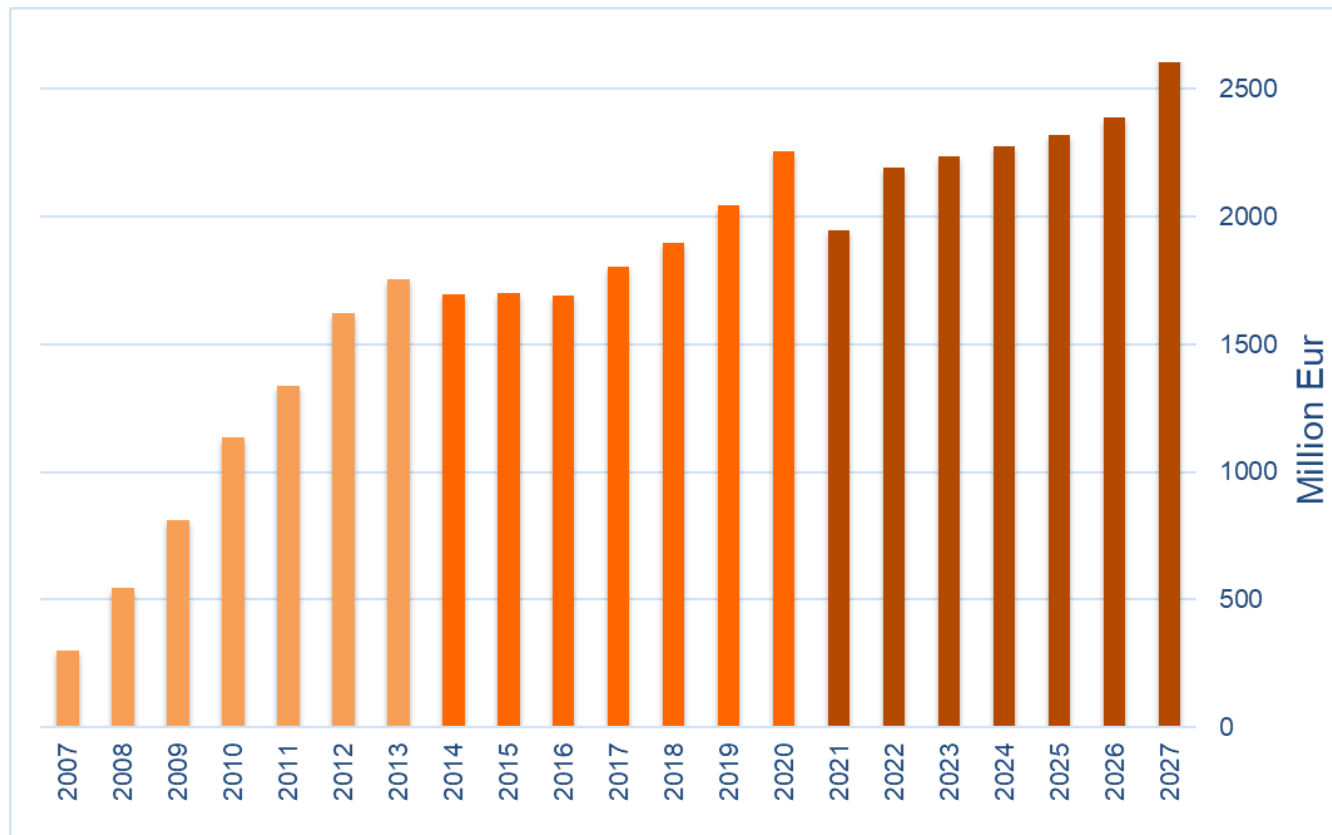


ERC in Horizon Europe



ERC budget

- FP7: €7.5 billion
- H2020: €13 billion
- HE: €16 billion



ERC structure



The European Commission

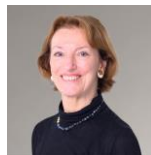
- Provides financing through the EU framework programmes
- Guarantees autonomy of the ERC
- Assures the integrity and accountability of the ERC
- Adopts annual work programmes as established by the Scientific Council

The ERC Scientific Council

- 21 prominent researchers proposed by an independent identification committee
- President appointed following recommendation of an independent committee
- Appointed by the Commission (4 years, renewable once)
- Establishes overall scientific strategy; annual work programmes (incl. calls for proposals, evaluation criteria); peer review methodology; selection and accreditation of experts
- Controls quality of operations and management
- Ensures communication with the scientific community



ERC Scientific Council



Maria LEPTIN
(Biology)
ERC President



Eveline CRONE
(Psychology)
Vice-President



Eystein JANSEN
(Earth Science)
Vice-President



Jesper SVEJSTRUP
(Biology)
Vice-President



Geneviève ALMOUZI
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(Geography)



Ben FERINGA
(Organic Chemistry)



Mercedes GARCÍA-ARENAL
(History)



Gerd GIGERENZER
(Psychology)



Tom HENZINGER
(Computer Science)



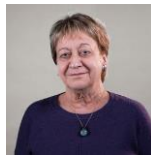
Liselotte HØJGAARD
(Medicine)



Dirk INZÉ
(Plant Biology)



László LOVÁSZ
(Mathematics)



Chryssa KOUVELIOTOU
(High-Energy Astrophysics)



Sylvie LORENTE
(Mechanical Engineering)



Luke O'NEILL
(Biochemistry & Immunology)



Björn OTTERSTEN
(Electric Engineering)



Giovanni SARTOR
(Law)



Nicola SPALDIN
(Materials Theory)



Alice VALKÁROVÁ
(Physics)



Milena ŽIC FUCHS
(Linguistics)



ERC in figures



Over **13,000**
top researchers funded since
the ERC creation in 2007



Over **220,000**
articles from ERC projects published
in scientific journals



Over **90,000**
researchers and other professionals
employed in ERC research teams



Over **900** research institutions hosting
ERC grantees – universities, public or
private research centres in the EU or
Associated Countries



Over **2,400**
patents and other IPR applications
generated by ERC funding



89
nationalities of
grant holders



Over **400**
start-ups identified as founded
or co-founded by ERC grantees



12 Nobel Prizes, **6** Fields Medals, **11** Wolf Prizes
and other prizes awarded to ERC grantees

ERC Basics



European Research Council
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INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
**LONG TERM
GRANTS**

TO HIGH-RISK/HIGH-GAIN PIONEERING PROJECTS
IN ANY FIELD OF FRONTIER RESEARCH



Life Sciences



Physical Sciences and Engineering



Social Sciences and Humanities



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Why should one apply for an ERC grant?

- Research topic of **own choice**, with a **team of own choice**



Evaluation panel structure (2024)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

Physical Sciences & Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts



Why should one apply for an ERC grant?

- Attract top **team members** (EU and non-EU) and collaborators

PIs from all over the world can apply to ERC

Opportunities for non ERA* researchers:

- Additional “start-up” funding for researchers moving to Europe (1 M€ irrespective of call scheme)
- Grantee can keep affiliation with home institute outside Europe (“significant part” of work time in Europe, at least 50%)
- Team members can be based outside Europe
- Grantee can move within Europe with the grant

* ERA = European Research Area (EU + Associated Countries)

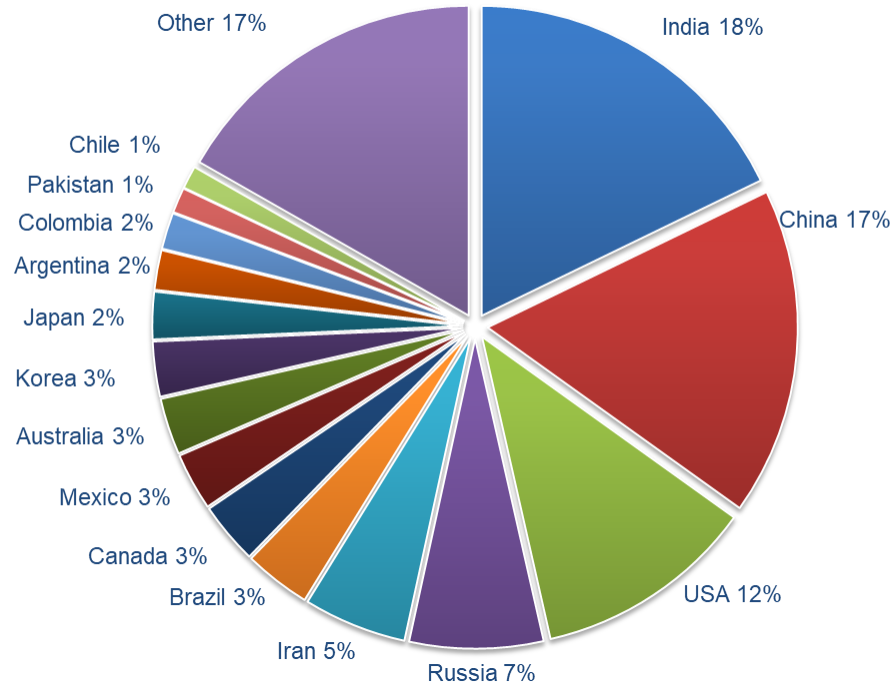


48 non-EU/Associated Country grantee nationalities - 8% of all ERC grants

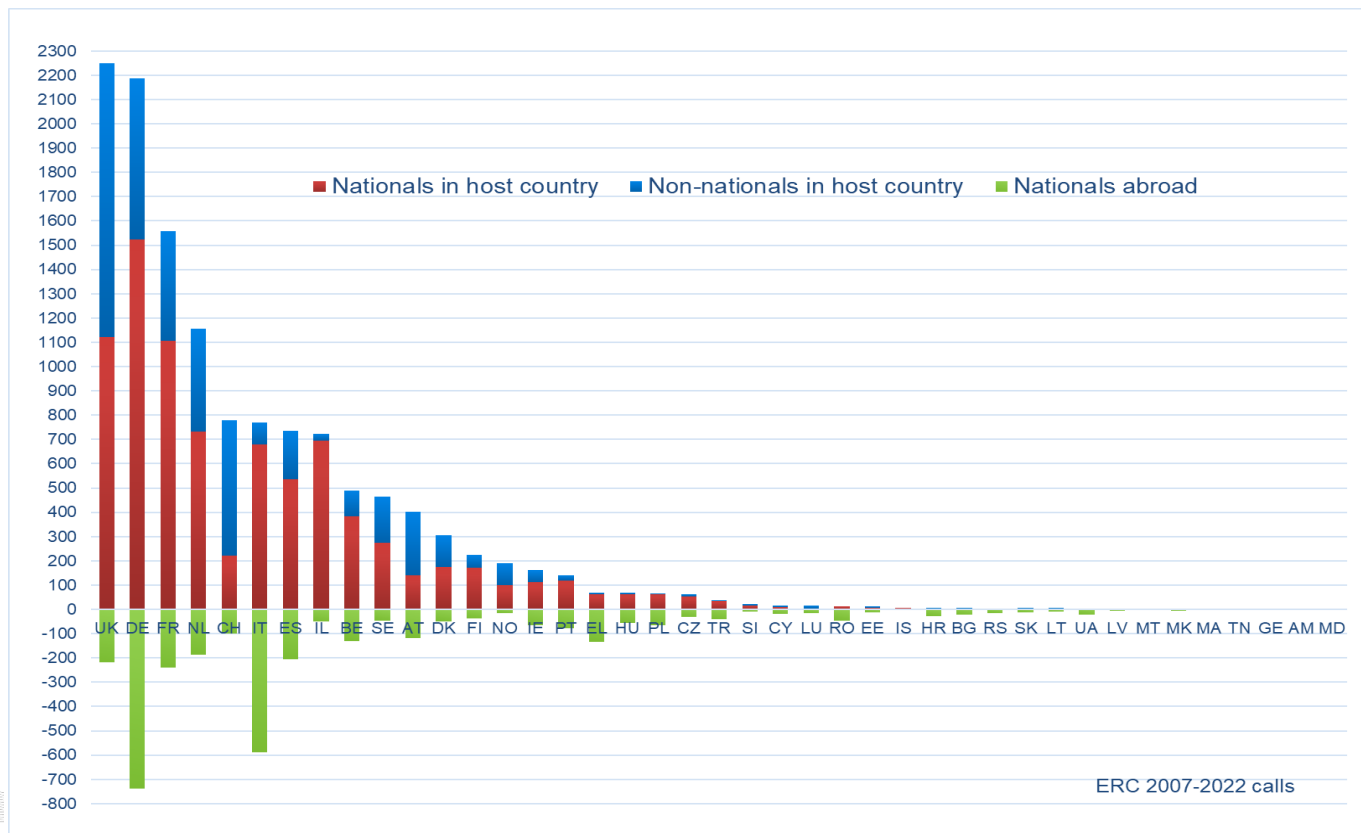
Non-EU/AC Principal Investigators	Starting and Consolidator grants	Advanced grants	Total grants
USA	276	142	418
Canada	100	21	121
China	77	2	79
India	73	3	76
Australia	59	16	75
Russia	62	11	73
Japan	32	9	41
New Zealand	19	6	25
Argentina	23	2	25
Other	141	13	154
Total	862	225	1087

Attracting researchers to Europe

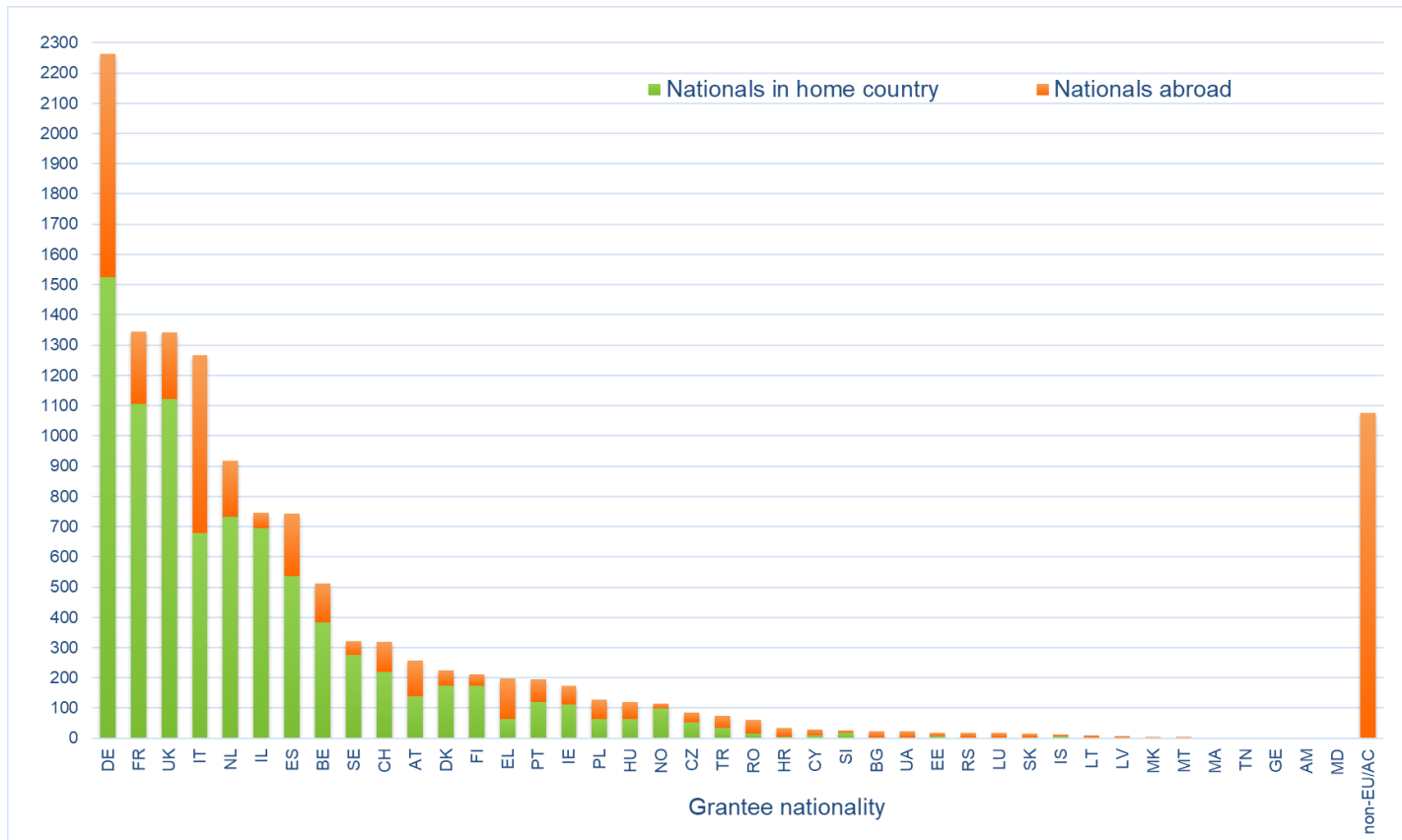
In ~2,000 H2020 grants, over 18% team members were from:



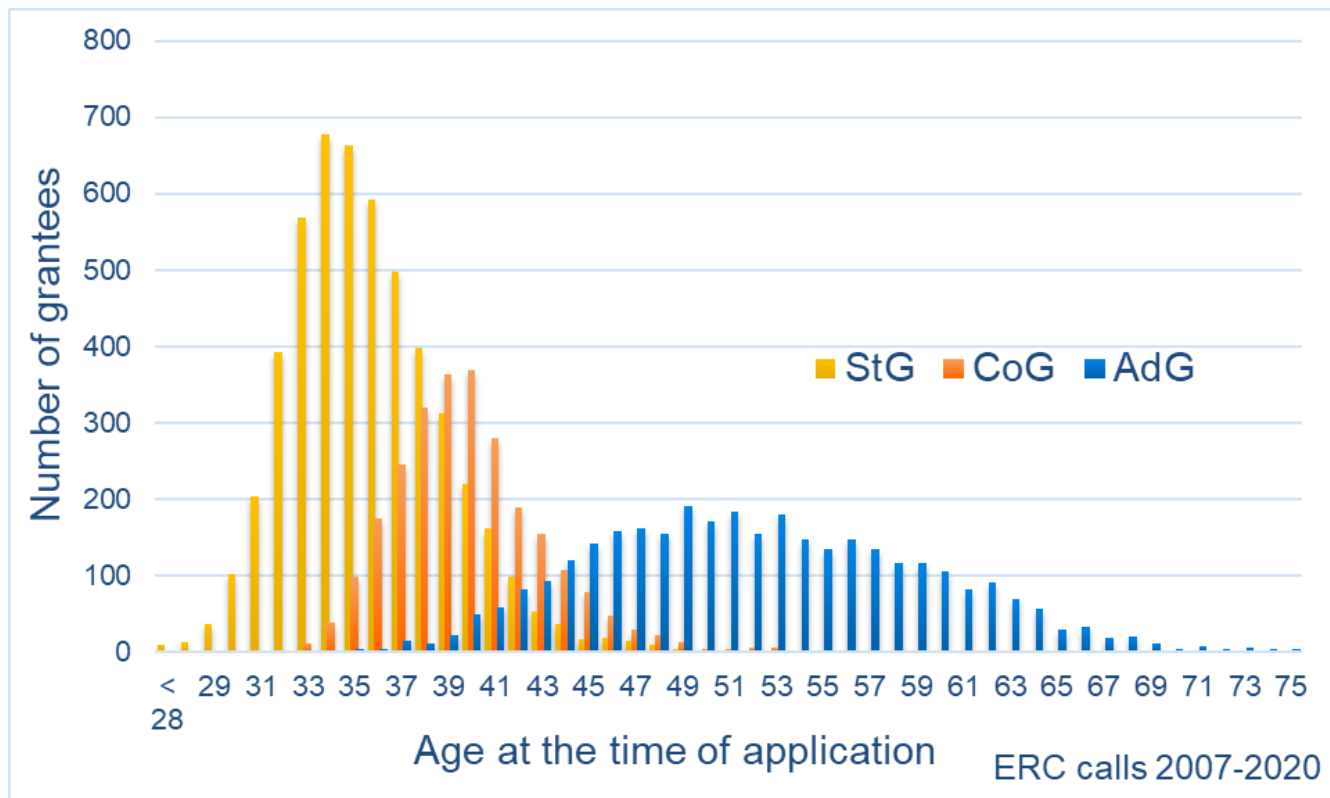
Grantees at home and abroad



Nationals at home and abroad



Two-thirds of ERC grants awarded to early-stage researchers

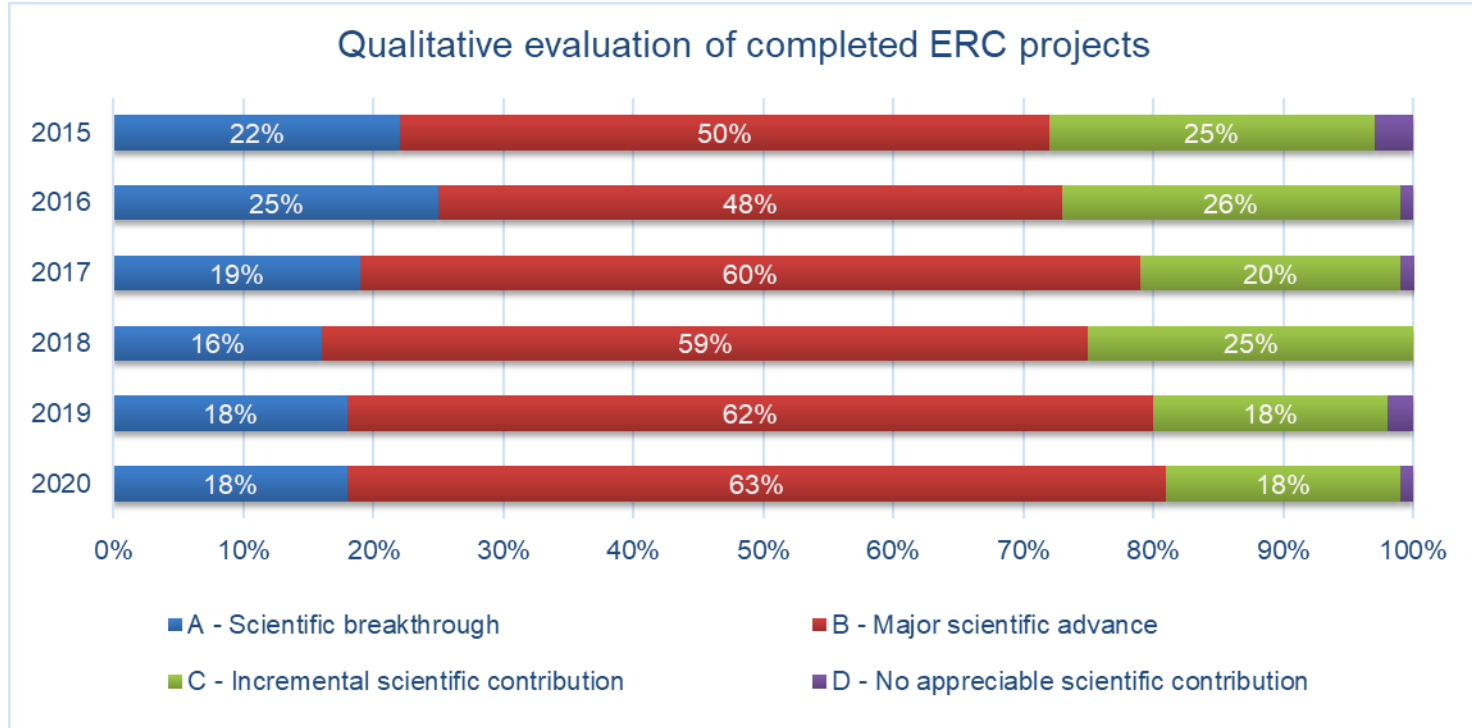


Why should one apply for an ERC grant?

- True financial **autonomy** for 5 years
- Negotiate with the host institution the **best conditions of work**
- **Portability** of grants within Europe



20% of the ERC-funded projects deliver scientific breakthroughs



Nobel Prizes to ERC grantees



Benjamin List
Nobel 2021
ERC Grantee
AdG 2010
ERC Grantee
AdG 2015

The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2021 was awarded jointly to Benjamin List and David W.C. MacMillan “for the development of asymmetric organocatalysis”.



Giorgio Parisi
Nobel 2021
ERC Grantee
AdG 2009
ERC Grantee
AdG 2015

The Nobel Prize in Physics 2021 was awarded jointly to Syukuro Manabe, Klaus Hasselmann and Giorgio Parisi “for ground-breaking contributions to our understanding of complex physical systems”.



Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe
Nobel 2019
ERC Grantee
AdG 2008



Bernard Feringa
Nobel 2016
ERC Grantee
AdG 2008
ERC Grantee
AdG 2015



May-Britt Moser
Nobel 2014
ERC Grantee
AdG 2010



Edvard Moser
Nobel 2014
ERC Grantee
AdG 2008
ERC Grantee
AdG 2013



Jean Tirole
Nobel 2014
ERC Grantee
AdG 2009



Serge Haroche
Nobel 2012
ERC Grantee
AdG 2009



Konstantin Novoselov
Nobel 2010
ERC Grantee
StG 2007
ERC Grantee
SyG 2012

Other 7 ERC grantees were already Nobel laureates at the moment they received the ERC grant

ERC Grant Schemes



Starting Grant

Up to €1.5 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
2-7 years of experience after PhD



Consolidator Grant

Up to €2 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
7-12 years of experience after PhD



Advanced Grant

Up to €2.5 million + up to €1 million
Duration: up to 5 years
An excellent scientific track record of recognized achievements in the last 10 years



Synergy grant

Size of the grant: €10 million + up to €4 million
Duration: up to 6 years
2 to 4 researchers and their research groups
(one researcher can be based outside EU/AC)



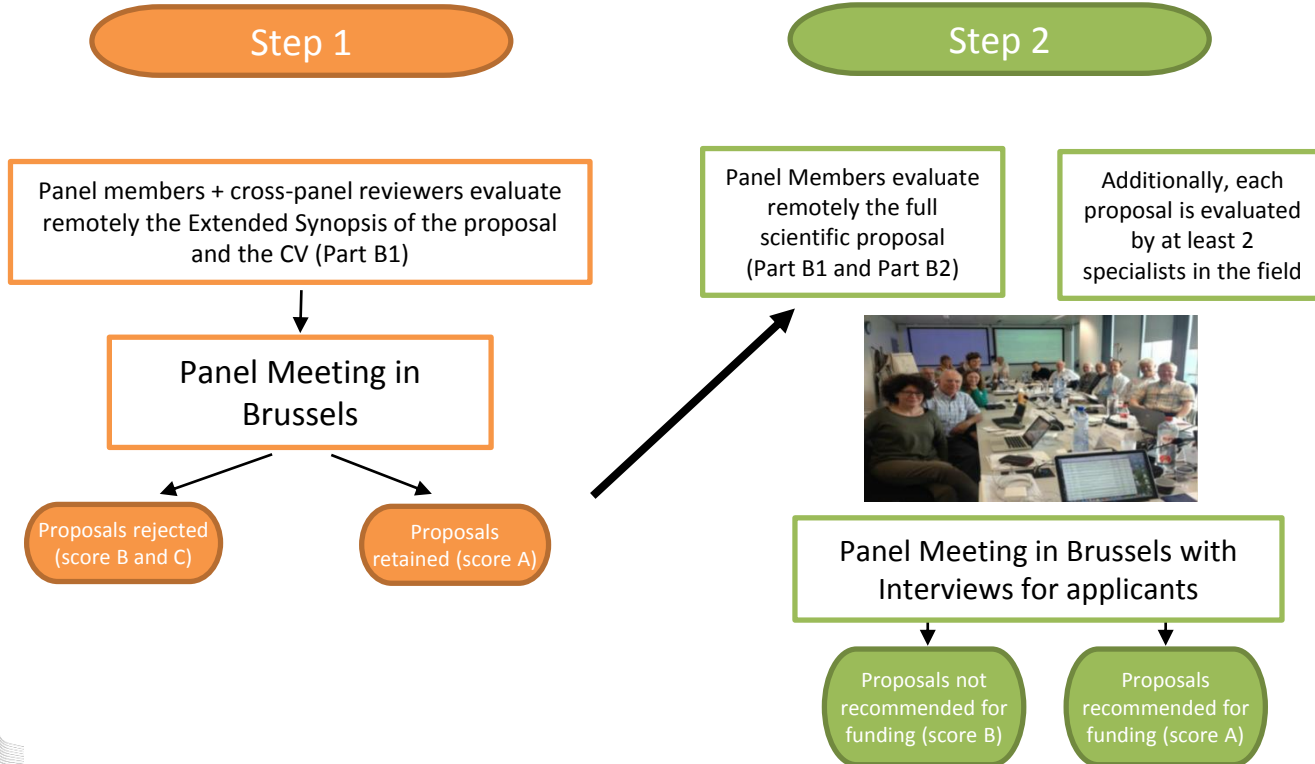
Proof of Concept

Size of the grant: €150 000
Duration: up to 18 months
Demonstrate that the idea funded by the original ERC grant has innovation potential and significant economic or societal benefits



Evaluation: Process

For individuals calls: a single submission but a two step evaluation



Evaluation: Principle



Excellence
is the sole evaluation criterion

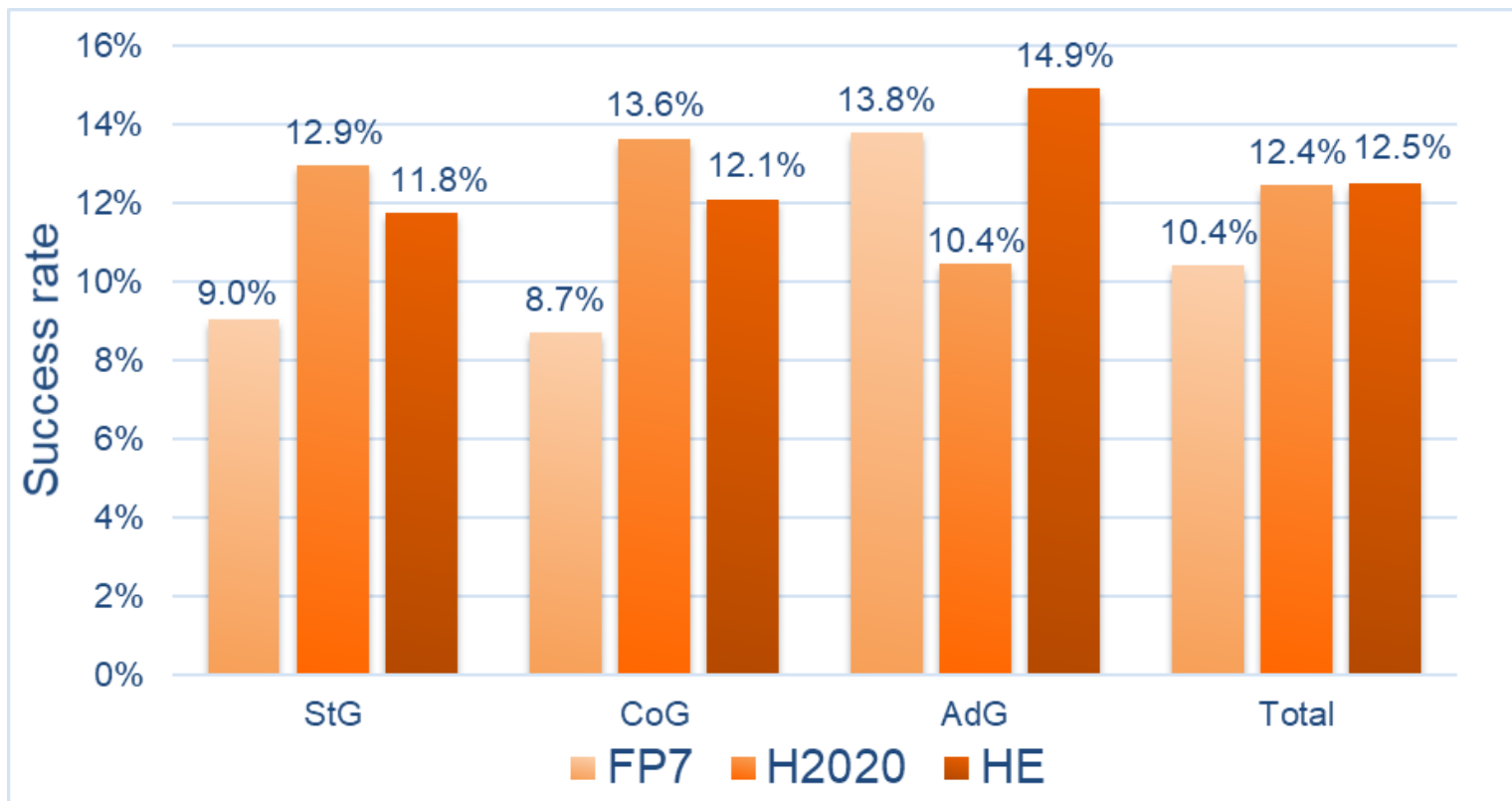
Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground breaking nature
- Potential impact
- Scientific Approach

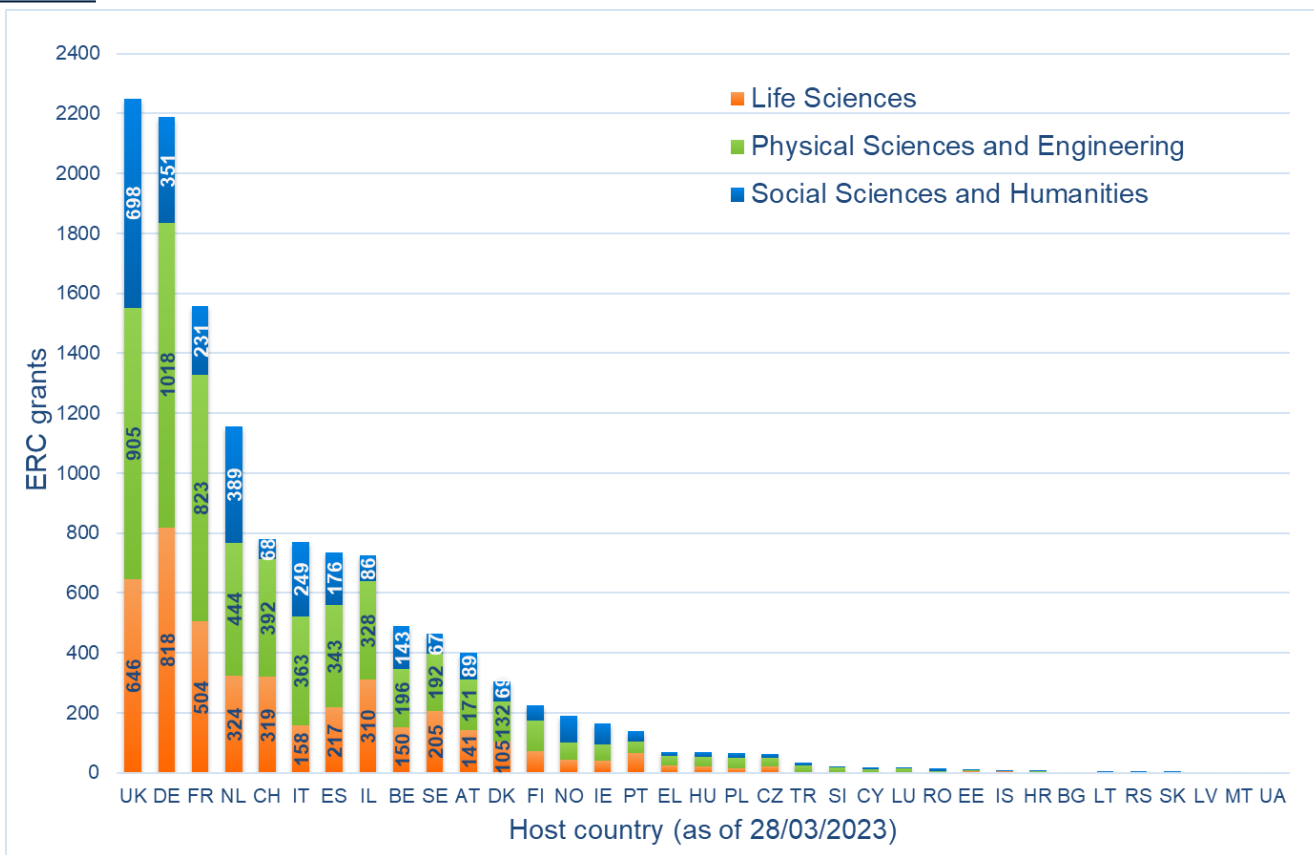
Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment

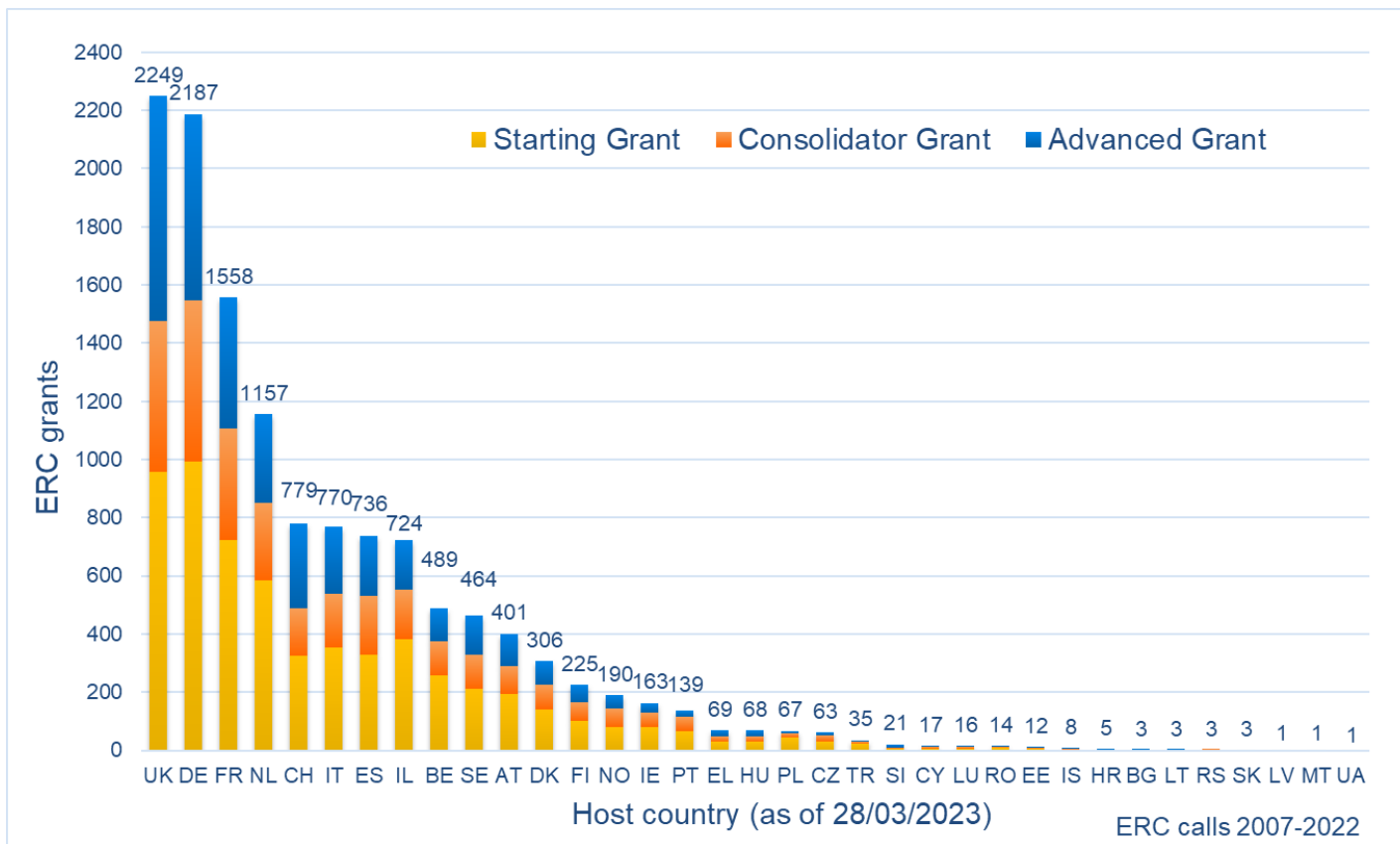
ERC success rate



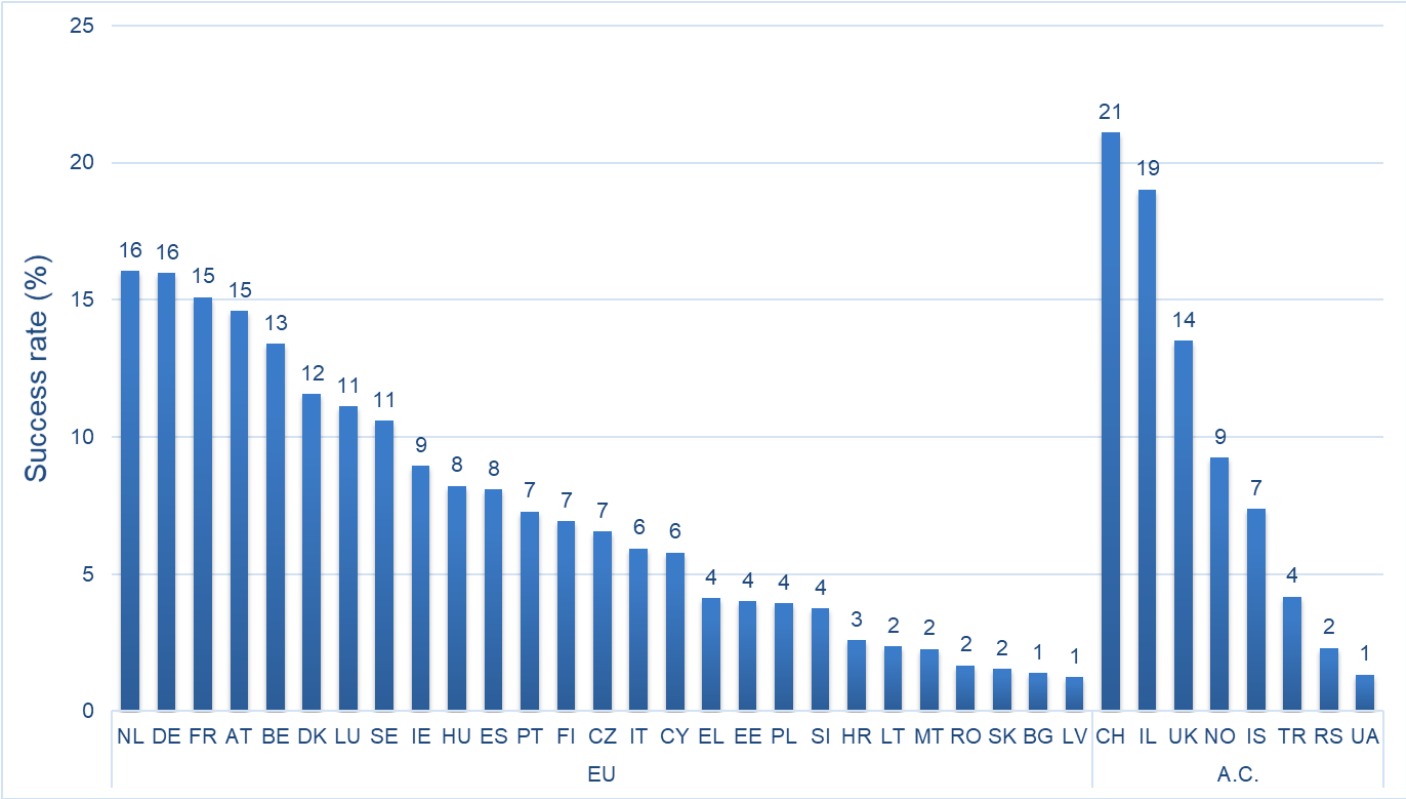
ERC-funded projects by domain



ERC-funded projects by country of Host Institution



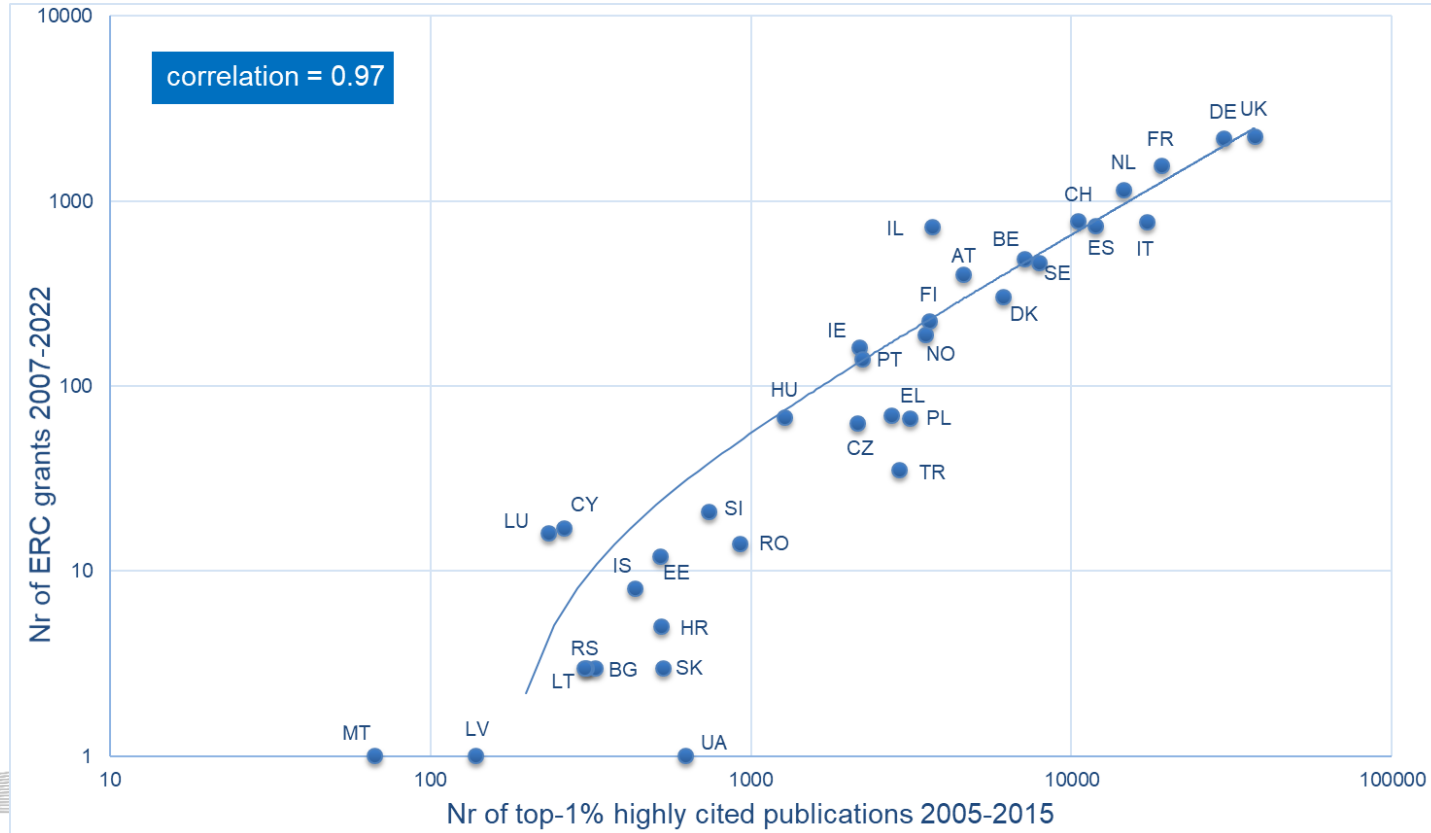
Success rate by country of Host Institution



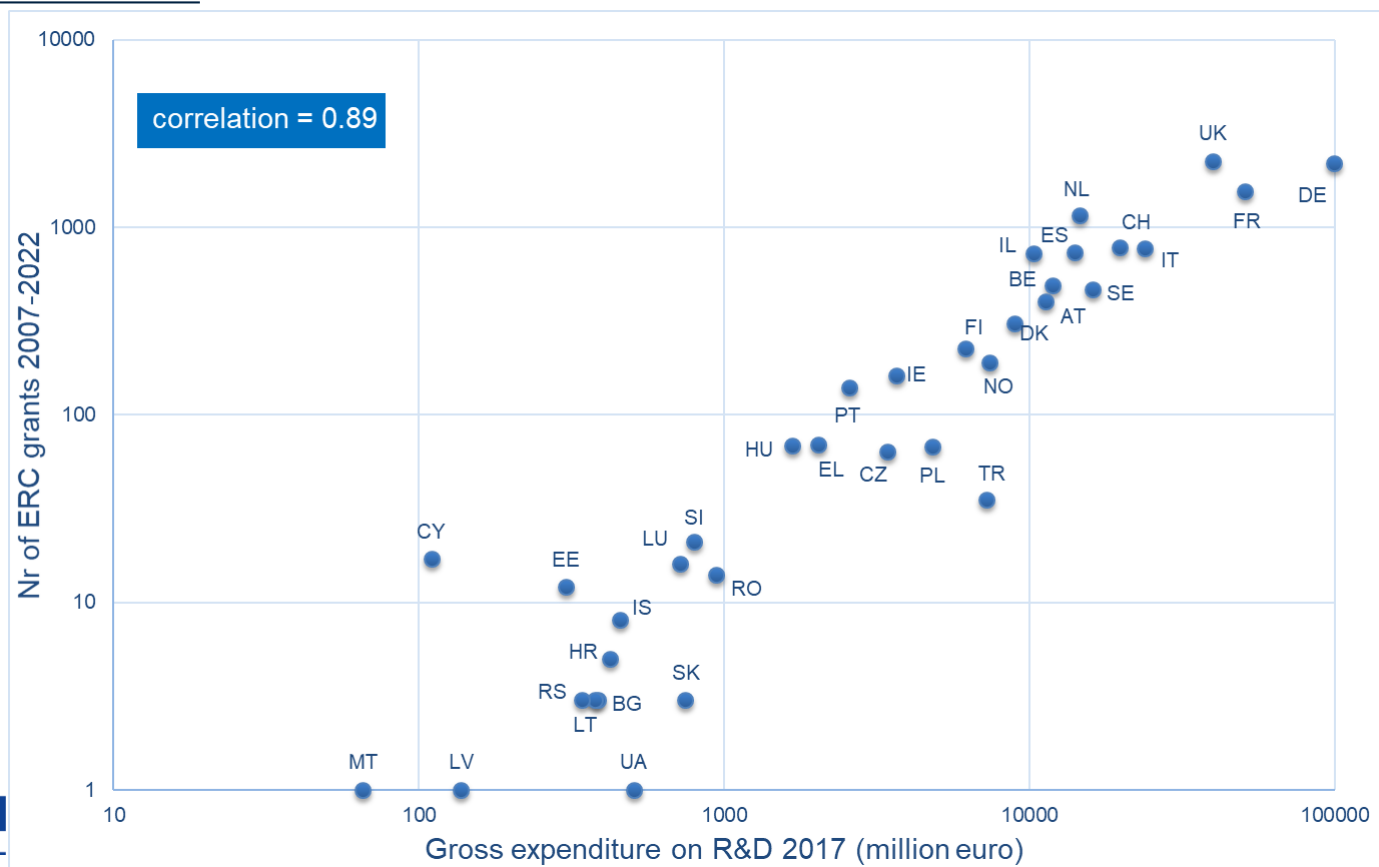
Success rate (2007-2022)



ERC grants versus top publications

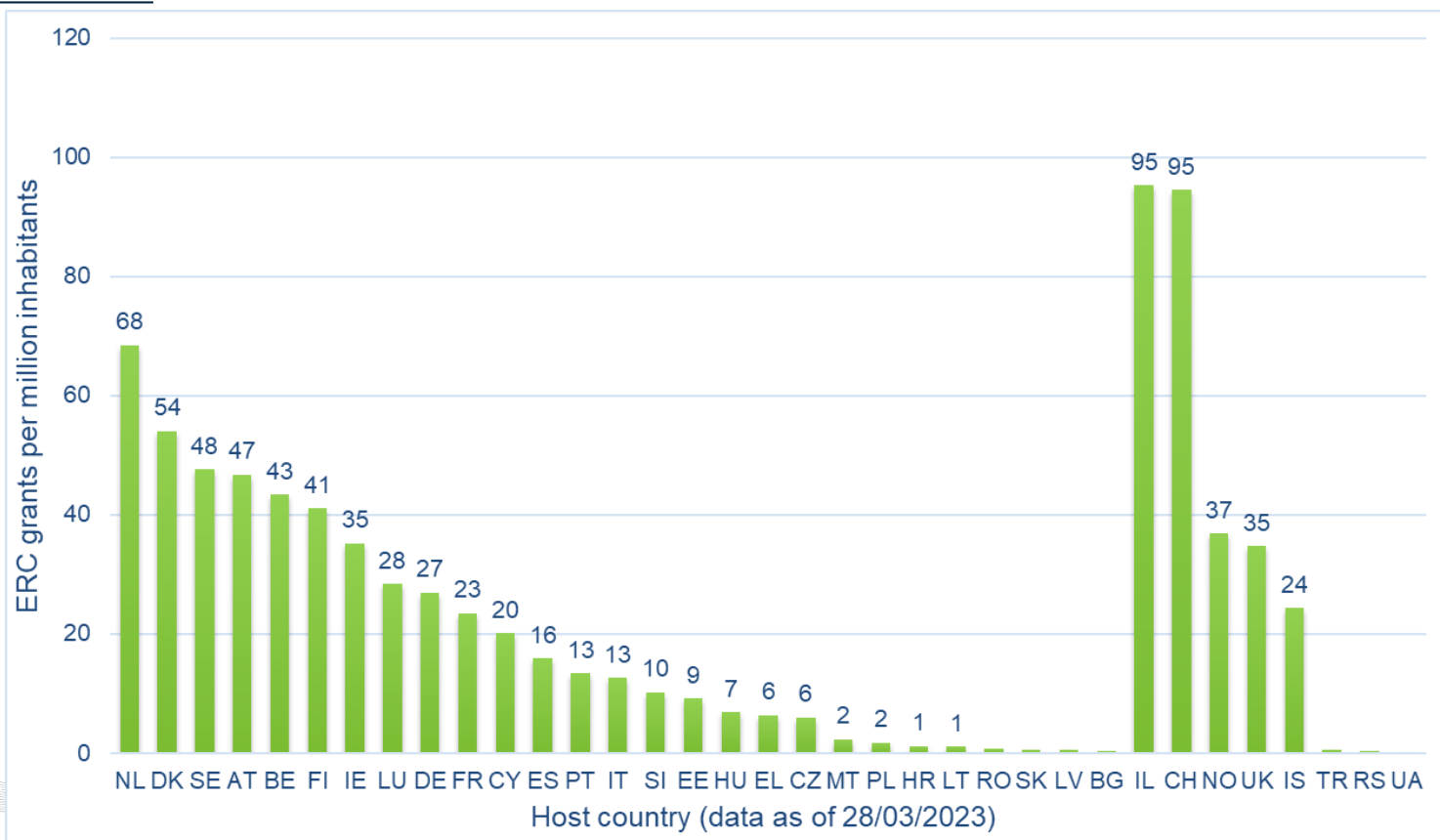


ERC grants versus gross expenditure on R&D



Host countries as of
28/03/2023

ERC grants per population



ERC Stories

ENTANGLED BALKANS

Balkan Histories: Shared, Connected, Entangled

Researcher: Prof. Roumen Daskalov
ERC Advanced Grant 2008
HI: New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria



"I can imagine such research as promoting good neighbor relations rather than fostering divisiveness and separation".



<http://www.su.se>

ERA

Earth Resilience in the Anthropocene (ERA) Integrating non-linear biophysical and social determinants of Earth-system stability for global sustainability through a novel community modelling platform



Researcher:

Johan Rockström

Host institution:

Stockholms Universitet,
Sweden

Call details

ERC-2016-ADG, SH2

ERC Funding

2 492 834 €



<http://www.uni-muenchen.de>

Highland Connections

Remoteness and Connectivity: Highland Asia in the World



Researcher:

Martin Saxer

Host institution:

Ludwig Maximilians
Universitaet Muenchen
Germany

Call details

ERC-2014-STG, SH2

ERC Funding

1 499 875 €

FORESTDIET



Researcher:

Laura Vang Rasmussen

Host institution:

Kobenhavns Universitet,
Denmark

Call details

ERC-2020-STG, SH2

ERC Funding

1 447 389 €

 **Project website**

Low Carbon Action in Ordinary Cities



Researcher:

Vanesa Castán Broto

Host institution:

Urban Institute, University of
Sheffield
United Kingdom

Photo credit: © Vanesa Castán Broto

Call details

ERC-2018-STG, SH2

ERC Funding

1 393 979 €

MOCHA

Understanding and leveraging 'moments of change' for pro-environmental behaviour shifts



Researcher:

Lorraine Whitmarsh

Host institution:

UNIVERSITY OF BATH,
United Kingdom

 <http://www.sciencespo.fr>

NUCLEAR

Nuclear Weapons Choices Governing vulnerabilities between past and future



Researcher:

Benoît Pelopidas

Host institution:

Fondation Nationale des
Sciences Politiques
France

Call details

ERC-2018-COG, SH2

ERC Funding

1 999 125 €

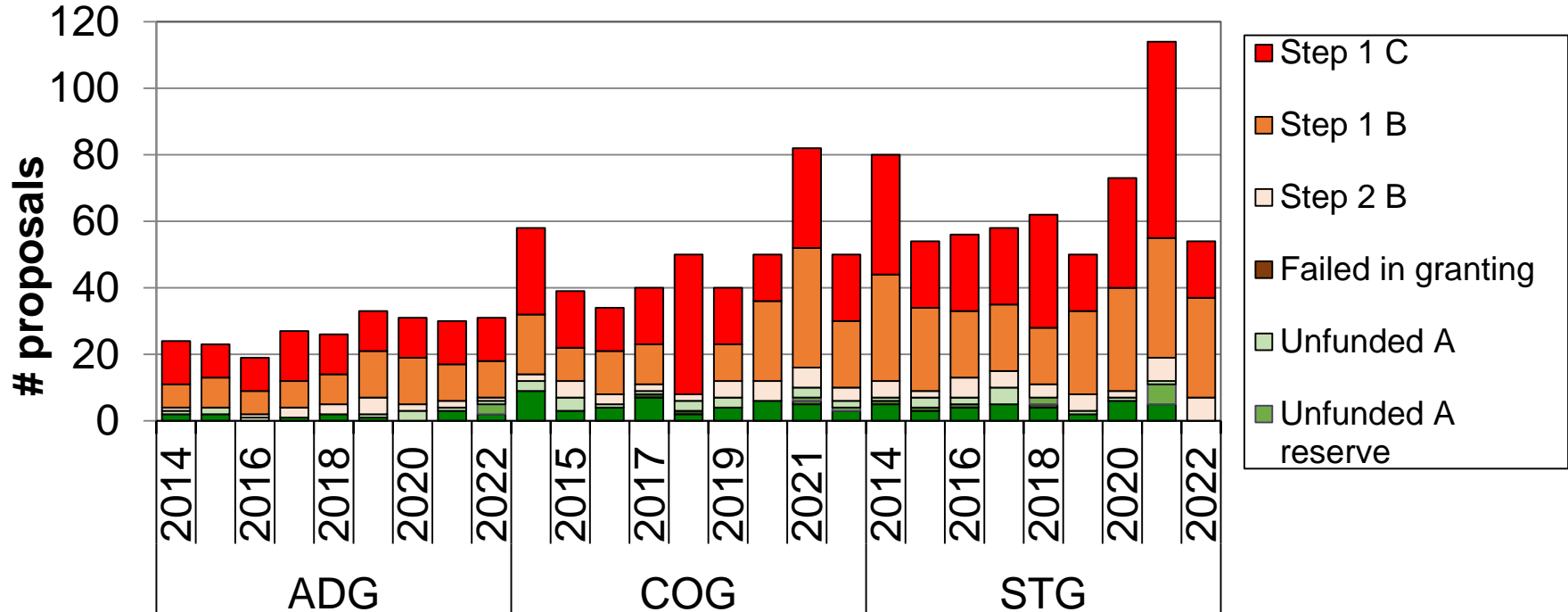
Call details

ERC-2017-STG, SH2

ERC Funding

1 480 145 €

Evaluation history Portugal



Contrary to what you may think

- ERC funds "frontier research", including applied research.
- The budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand.
- The panel descriptors do not represent ERC scientific priorities.
- The success rate is virtually flat across the eligibility window (StG, CoG).
- Publication record is not decisive in selection decisions.
- The Host Institution is not an evaluation criterion.



Some rumours

Rumour 1: You can only apply for an ERC grant if you are a highly accomplished scientist.

✗ **NOT true:** Accomplishments are appreciated in relation to your stage/seniority as giving some evidence of your capacity to conduct the research you propose and of creativity within the past 10-12 years of your career.

Rumour 2: To be successful, you need to continue on an established research line, to prove continuity and credibility

✗ **NOT true:** Generally, the opposite is true.

Rumour 3: If you have already obtained an ERC grant you are less/more likely to get another one.

✗ **NOT true:** Panels look at each proposal on its own merit and in comparison with the other applications, irrespectively of whether you have or have not obtained an ERC grant in the past. (Of course this does not apply for applications to a Proof of Concept grant.)

Rumour 4: The more socially or medically relevant a grant proposal is, the higher the chances of it getting funded.

✗ **NOT true:** ERC funds frontier research, not research that promises to be only an incremental advancement of knowledge. This is irrespectively of the field and whether it has societal, medical or clinical applications.



2024 Tentative call calendar

	Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant	Advanced Grant	Synergy Grant	Proof of Concept Grant
Call opens	11/07/2023	12/09/2023	29/05/2024	12/07/2023	16/11/2023
Deadline to submit applications	24/10/2023	12/12/2023	29/08/2024	08/11/2023	14/03/2024 17/09/2024

Where can you find more information?

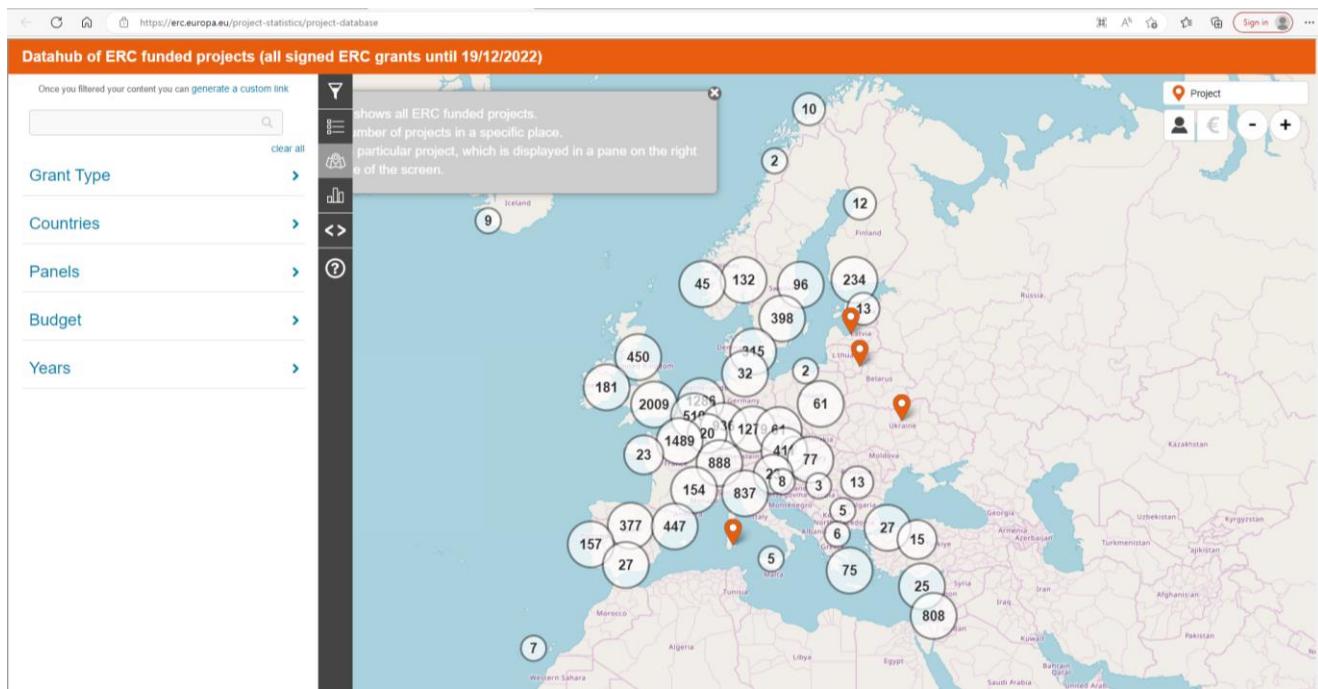


Videos - ERC Classes

- What to consider before applying
- How to fill in the application (Part B1 and B2)
- The interview
- How the evaluation works

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbFbz kVWgCU&list=PLtv6FnsXqnXAYRk6HCEr wMxwML0ZKoMcy>

Get inspired by browsing through the ERC-funded projects on our website – <https://erc.europa.eu>



National Contact Points: erc.europa.eu/national-contact-points
Sign up for news alerts: erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc
Funding & Tender Opportunities: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

More information: erc.europa.eu



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Thank you!

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