

/// TTOPSTART



ERC Funding Guide

How to enhance your
research career with
personal excellence
grants

info@ttopstart.com | www.ttopstart.com | +31 (0)30-7370779

Table of contents

- 3. ERC Funding Services
- 4. ERC Competitiveness
- 5. Our Mission / Why ttopstart
- 7. What we offer
- 8. Applying
- 9. Client case

ERC FUNDING SERVICES

As the largest and most prestigious individual excellence grants in Europe, ERC funding provides the means for outstanding scientists to accelerate their game-changing research lines and transform our world. Are you ready to take your research to the next level? Let us help you reach that goal!

Are you looking to enhance your research career with personal excellence grants?

Across the European funding landscape, there are several individual research and personal excellence grants available, but European Research Council (ERC) grants are amongst the most prestigious. Here are the facts:

What?

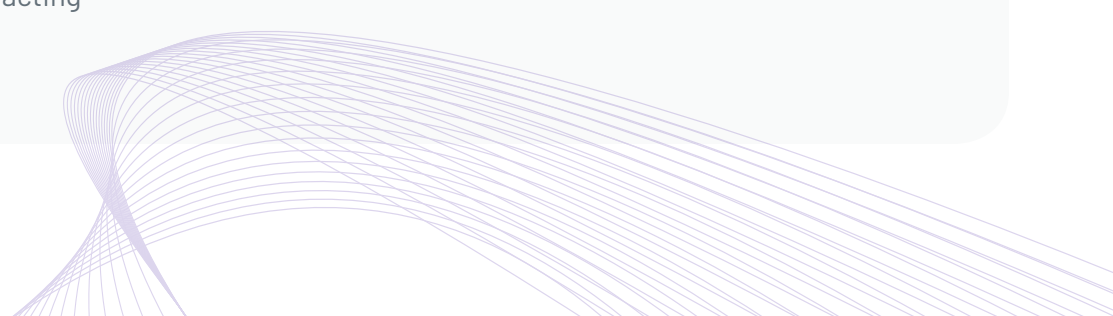
The ERC is a funding body of the European Commission created to boost the scientific excellence of outstanding individual researchers. Why? It encourages Europe’s brightest minds to develop high-risk, ground-breaking projects of a fundamental nature which prepare us for the needs of a knowledge-based society, address global challenges, and raise the global profile of European frontier research. The aim here is to recognise the best ideas and confer status and visibility on the best brains in Europe, whilst also attracting talent from abroad.

How

ERC grants are awarded through open competition to both starting and established researchers, irrespective of their origins, either based in Europe or soon to be based in Europe. The projects are assessed by expert evaluation panels spread across 3 broad disciplines: Life Sciences, Physical Sciences & Engineering, and Social Sciences & Humanities. The sole criterion for selection is scientific excellence.

For Whom?

The grants and funding available depend on career stage. Early stage researchers can apply for Starting Grants (€1.5M, 2-7 years post PhD) or Consolidator Grants (€2M, 7-12 years post PhD). Established researchers with a 10-year track record can apply for an Advanced Grant or as part of a consortium of 3-4 PIs with blended experience levels in a Synergy Grant (€10M). Proof of Concept grants (€150K) are only open to ERC laureates on the boundary between fundamental research and commercialisation.



ERC funding is extremely competitive, but we can help you succeed.

Whilst ERC grants represent an immense career opportunity, acquiring ERC funding is no small feat. They are extremely popular and require a considerable intellectual effort to stand out from the crowd. Our experience at ttopstart shows us that successful projects and candidates largely adhere to the following criteria. Thankfully, we are experienced in ensuring you develop and highlight all of them:

YOUR PROJECT MUST BE:



Highly Ambitious:

ERC research should aim high regarding the ambition of the envisaged scientific achievements, as well as the creativity and originality of the approach. However, the goals should be plausibly attainable within the lifetime of the proposed project.



Visionary:

ERC research should take crucial steps towards achieving a long-term vision for the researcher, the field in question, and beyond. The ideal candidate should have an iron-cast vision for how this funding would transform their career and upend current dogma.



Pioneering:

Proposals should rise to pioneering and far-reaching challenges at the frontiers of the field(s) in question, going well beyond the current state of the art.



Unconventional:

They should involve new, ground-breaking, or unconventional methodologies, whose risky outlook is justified by the possibility of a breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific research domain.



Scientifically Multiplying:

The project should generate more questions at the end than answers. Therefore, the end goal should not be a specific application, but rather a novel paradigm at the frontiers of the relevant field, yielding fuel for further research.



Be independent

– Young researchers should demonstrate independence from their PhD supervisors and should show mobility, if this benefits their research. Senior researchers should have a clear track record, having established their own successful and innovative research line.



Have made unique contributions to science

– ERC research should take crucial steps towards achieving a long-term vision for the researcher, the field in question, and beyond. The ideal candidate should have an iron-cast vision for how this funding would transform their career and upend current dogma.



Demonstrate sound leadership

– Your independence and excellence as a researcher should be reflected by the number of PhDs and/or postdocs you have supervised, your H-index, your established collaborations, involvement in international conferences, and even (at later stages) by the set-up of your own company.

YOU MUST:

“

Co-developing competitive ERC projects with some of the brightest scientists in the field is undoubtedly one of the most rewarding aspects of working at ttopstart. Ensuring clients' ideas coalesce into coherent research questions is both intellectually challenging and immensely satisfying, as it gives us a sneak peek at the scientific breakthroughs of tomorrow.

”

– RÓNÁN PATRICK MCLAUGHLIN, PHD – CONSULTANT
AT TTOPSTART

OUR MISSION

It is our mission to enable leading academic researchers to pursue ambitious research goals that will disrupt diverse scientific fields. At ttopstart, we empower and strategically guide excellent researchers by assisting them in acquiring prestigious grants. By ensuring pioneering academics are rewarded, we aim to overcome the barriers they face and thereby strengthen the European research landscape.

WHY TTOPSTART?

We are the go-to source for top academics wishing to acquire ERC funding. Our expert consultants possess diverse scientific backgrounds up to PhD level, and have experience with all types of ERC grants from myriad scientific disciplines.

Our team is therefore uniquely and ideally placed to challenge and transform your ideas into an ERC-worthy concept. We provide robust intellectual and writing capacity, coupled with hands-on guidance on how to translate innovative concepts into an appealing and personal research grant with a high chance of success.

Our expertise spans the full gamut of ERC project development, allowing us to take you from early-stage concepts to full proposals and beyond to interview training. Drawing upon our extensive ERC skills, we help you with CV optimisation, selecting the appropriate evaluation panel, constructing an attractive and compelling research proposal, providing a coherent structure, plus defining a clear impact on science and society.



“

ttopstart excelled in assisting me prepare my ERC Advanced Grant (AdG) application. Their textual and conceptual input was crucial in shaping, structuring and positioning the project's core, refining my innovative vision, and in highlighting the broader impact of my research. I was surprised by that level of support, particularly given the intellectually challenging nature of my work which traverses the boundaries between nuclear physics, engineering, and radiobiology.

”

– PROF. MARCO DURANTE, BIOPHYSICS DEPARTMENT,
DIRECTOR, GSI HELMHOLTZ CENTRE FOR HEAVY ION
RESEARCH, DARMSTADT, GERMANY

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

ttopstart has an excellent track record in developing successful ERC projects. We offer three end-to-end ERC service levels: Review, Basic, and Full Service. All of these incorporate our tried and tested Fast Forward (FFWD) methodology, best practices, and winning writing strategies.



Fit: Firstly, we analyse the fit based on an assessment and benchmarking of the applicant’s CV against concrete ERC eligibility criteria per evaluation panel.

Framework & writing: Pending a positive evaluation, we co-develop the research framework together with the researcher, define the core research questions, and support the entirety of the writing process through to submission. Here, we place particular focus on refining the candidate’s personal vision, elucidating the project’s broader scientific impact within and beyond the field, and defining the proposed scientific novelty in contrast to the current state of the art.

Development: After submission, we provide personalised intensive interview training for those candidates invited to interview. This includes a thorough qualitative assessment of the proposal and CV, multiple pitch sessions, mock Q&A sessions, and communication skills. Our trainings are designed to reflect the challenging reality of an ERC interview. For ERC Proof of Concept applications, we even go beyond grant writing by providing our tailored commercial intelligence and business development services to assess commercial feasibility within the project itself.

Strategy: For those who do not pass the fit phase, we redirect candidates to our Academic Leadership service, whereby we cultivate concrete strategies, visions, and funding roadmaps to ensure candidates realise their research goals, with a view to future ERC acquisition.

CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR ERC FUNDING?

Let us help you co-develop a competitive proposal to facilitate this pivotal next step in your career. Before beginning the long road of proposal development, contact us for a free CV assessment. This provides qualitative and quantitative feedback that can help you to decide whether this is the right moment to apply and, if not, what aspects of your profile should be improved before you do.

Should you have any questions related to ERC funding or would like to discuss your needs with us, please contact us at info@ttopstart.com or +31(0)30 737 07 79

www.ttopstart.com

/// TTOPSTART



/// TTOPSTART



ERC Funding Guide

How to enhance your research career
with personal excellence grants