Yellow Research

Writing a Competitive ERC Grant Proposal

Are you considering applying for ERC Starting or Consolidator Grant in the coming few years? Then it is time to attend this master class and understand what ERC panels are looking for and how the latest ERC revisions acknowledge the different types of 1) research proposed addressing scientific challenges across the world and 2) Principal Investigator (**PI**) track records. The information provided will enable you to develop an excellent conceptual idea and scientific approach and to enhance the likelihood of funding. Now is the right moment to prepare yourself.

The ERC selection criteria contain terms which have become familiar jargon, such as important challenge, ground-breaking nature, scientific approach and feasibility. Most of these terms are also used by other funding agencies but they are interpreted and applied differently. This master class will explain in detail not only what these terms mean and imply under the ERC umbrella but also how the ERC panel members use these terms to assess, discuss and select sufficient mature and innovative project proposals. For example, assessing the feasibility of the scientific approach depends on the focus and the proposed research objectives, the strategy and methodologies proposed but also how the presented preliminary findings underpin the feasibility of the scientific approach. Similarly, the term (scientific) challenge is interpreted differently across the panels and research fields. What does this imply in your case? This training programme will supply you with the necessary knowledge to write a successful ERC proposal and will be an invaluable aid in meeting the ERC standards and getting one step closer to an ERC award. We will also discuss profiles of competitive PIs and the weighing of the proposed research and PI track record.

Using the ERC guide "*Instructions for Applicants*" we will explain how you can address the ERC selection criteria questions and the panel specifics and draft a competitive project proposal. For example, we will examine terminology used in the ERC guide and templates and explain how to present a competitive proposal by focusing on high-quality science and research. We will discuss what defines scientific quality and how the ERC evaluation criteria can be used to translate your project idea into high-quality research. How can the term '*ground-breaking nature*' be used to mark the innovativeness or originality of the proposed research and the term '*ambition*' to demonstrate the potential breakthrough and impact on science? How can you balance your ambition with factual evidence for feasibility of the scientific approach and provide contingency plans? How to show that you have the right scientific/scholarly expertise and experience required for successfully executing the proposed research?

We will explain in detail how to address the evaluation criteria and writing instructions and in particular innovativeness and feasibility in view of the disciplinary scope of ERC panels.

1. Training objectives

To provide researchers with a good understanding of:
- the evaluation criteria and how to analyse them;
- how to write a competitive scientific proposal considering ERC panels, scientific challenge and type of research; and
- what evidence makes a PI "excellent" according to the reviewers in different domains/panels.

2. Who should attend?

The webinars will be of value for applicants who plan to submit an ERC proposal. Depending on the scientific backgrounds of the participants we will highlight domain-specific issues.

3. Methodology

The webinars will be in English, with no translation. The trainer(s) will provide practical information and discuss with the participants the requested information, the evaluation criteria and the best strategy for drafting the proposal.

The webinars are interactive and include moments for discussion to promote an exchange of views between participants and trainer(s). Each participant receives an extensive yellow research guide with information on the topics listed.

4. Trainer

Mette Skraastad MSc, PhD, is a founder of Yellow Research and has successfully trained candidates in writing ERC proposals since the 2008. She has extensive experience both in running ERC workshops, interview trainings and in pre-submission reviewing of ERC grants. Her knowledge and experience in pre-submission reviewing of ERC proposals is an important aspect of our success in ERC proposal writing training.

5. Programme of ERC workshop

Part I — **ERC in a nutshell**
What makes ERC different from any other funding agency?

Part II — **What are ERC panels looking for?**
Scientific Excellence is the sole selection criterion. We will discuss what defines excellent proposed research in the context of ERC and how to balance ambition and a major significant progress. We will discuss the different terms used by the ERC to clarify what kind of research is being funded, addressing the writing instructions for State-of-the-Art and Objectives (B2 part).

Part III — **How to present Methodology + Appropriateness?**
The ERC panels are assessing the appropriateness of the methodologies for achieving the goals. Hereto they assess whether the proposed research and methodologies are feasible based on the information you provide on research objectives, strategy and key intermediate goals (milestones). We will discuss matureness of the proposed research in the context of the proposed research and different disciplines, addressing the writing instructions for the Methodology of the B2 part.

Part IV — **Selecting an appropriate ERC panel and keywords**
The panel decides to whom the grant is awarded. We will discuss the role of the panel and how to select the most appropriate ERC panel and keywords for your proposal and your track record.

Part V — **How to design an implementation plan and justify costs**
We will discuss how to structure the B2 part and add a logical work and implementation plan in view of the risks taken to force a potential breakthrough in knowledge. We will also discuss how to put together a good team including expertise and design working arrangements, addressing the writing instructions for feasibility, key intermediate goals, intermediate stages and working arrangements of the B2 part.

Part VI — **How to write the Abstract and Extended Synopsis?**
Based on the B1 part the selected ERC panel will decide whether your proposal will progress to step 2. We will discuss how to summarise the B2 part information in the abstract and the Extended Synopsis (B1 part) and present concisely the proposed research (B2 part) and what information could or should be presented in each section and why.

Part VII — **What PI profile is required?**
The ERC panels use mainly qualitative parameters for assessing your CV and track record. We will discuss what panels are looking for in the PI part considering the evaluation criteria and your research field.

INFO — **DATE, TIME LOCATION and CONTACT**
Master class webinars: Tuesday 10 June 2025: from 10.00 till 12.15 (Part I-III) and 13.30 till 16.00 (Part IV-VII)
Contact: jodie.guy.claesson@ki.se