

The European Research Council

Tengo una idea, ¿y ahora cómo me preparo
para el ERC?

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European Research Council

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Before going hands on...

- **Workshop intended to those not having written any ERC proposal**
 - Dynamic: your comments/feedback are welcome at any moment
 - Sharing moment: some of your texts may be shared in this room
 - PLEASE KEEP ALL THE INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL
- 40' questions – practical exercises (4x10')
 - 20' anonymous reading exercise
 - 15' DOS & DON'TS
 - 15 Q&A



Q1. Describe in three sentences your ground-breaking idea



- **Which is the component of novelty?**
- Bullet points for main objectives:
 - Consider this is a 5-year project
 - State them very clearly

Fill-in form. You can print your contribution by clicking on the printer icon on the top right corner once you submit.



<https://online.forms.app/lauralobato/untitled-form>

Q2. Identify your panel(s)

- Go to: https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-03/ERC_panel_structure_2024_calls.pdf

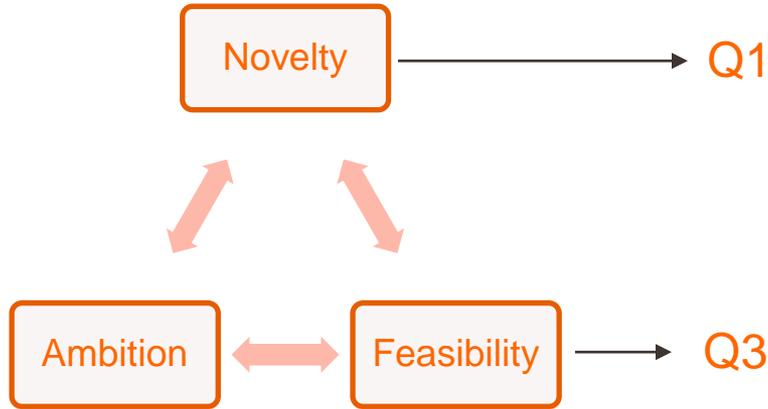


- Choose 2 to 4 descriptors and justify the choice.
- If you chose 2 panels, justify it.

Function of panel structure

- Provide guidance to applicants
- Not meant to be a complete scientific classification
- Panel titles, subtitles, descriptors do not reflect priorities
- Any topic is welcome, regardless of whether it is explicitly stated
- Proposals can fall in between panels; evaluation will be adapted
- Panel structure is revised regularly (scientific and/or operational reasons)

Q3. Explain the main risks associated to your research and propose some mitigation actions



Reasoning pathway

- Why is it ambitious?
- Does ambition make the project risky?
- Risk mitigation
- Feasibility elements

Risk
assessment

Q4. Write down 10 main outcomes of your research career. At the end, explain why you think you are the good researcher to lead your project.

- Sole criterion of scientific excellence → At the same time, they will evaluate the **intellectual capacity, creativity, and commitment of the applicant**

CV & Track Record templates will be combined + simplified (4 pages)

- Short standard biographical information
- **List of up to ten research outputs**
- Applicants will be able to **add short narrative descriptions** to explain info provided
- Applicants are invited to explain **career breaks or unconventional career paths** & to describe **exceptional contributions** to research community



Feedback about the exercise

- Q1 → Difficult to judge if one is not the in the field and has not knowledge of the state-of-the-art
- Q2 → Has it been difficult for you to identify the panel(s)?
How many asked for 2 panels?
Did you use any “strategy”?
Reading of some answers
- Q3 → Does the risk come from the non-expertise of the PI in some aspects of the proposal?
Is it mainly a technological risk? Or lack of access to specific facilities?
Is it the size of the sample?
Is it just too many unknown variables (no preliminary data)
Other risks
Reading of some answers



Feedback about the exercise

- Q4→ Do these merits reflect the scientific independence of the applicant? (StG & CoG criterion)
“Why me and now” question not to be included, but can serve as a guide: Think about competitors. How many?

There should be few because you need to prove that you bring some “unique” value based on your background and novel ideas.

Reading of some answers

DOS: Preparing your proposal

In Step 1: Panel members see only Part B1 of the proposal (prepare it accordingly!)

Part B1: Find the right balance

- ✓ Innovative? Beyond state-of-art?
Realistic/feasible?
- ✓ Outline state of play (incl. competition)
- ✓ Goals realistic? Think about risk mitigation
- ✓ Be concise & clear
(also for generalists)
- ✓ Feasibility (scientific approach)

In Step 2: Part B1 and B2 and **Budget section** are evaluated by Panel Members & Remote Referees

Part B2: Fill in the details

- ✓ No verbatim repetition of synopsis
- ✓ Detailed state-of-art
- ✓ Extensive methodology and work plan
- ✓ Provide risk mitigation strategies
- ✓ Explain involvement of team members & collaborators
- ✓ Justify requested resources - Panels have to ensure that the requested resources are reasonable and well justified.



I have been invited for an interview .. now what?



- Have clear and representative slides and focus on SCIENCE! Don't try to make a business presentation – you are talking to scientists.
 - Get the Panel interested in YOUR ideas & proposal
 - Present & defend YOUR ideas (Panels want to see that these are your ideas)
 - Don't over-explain your CV!
- Anticipate questions
- Know the details of your proposal and methods, as well as your research area – who are your main competitors/collaborators?
- Practice thoroughly, several (many?) times; keep the time (typically a 5-10 minute presentation followed by 15-20 minutes of questions)



DON'TS (as from a several times applicant)

- Avoid writing a project that clearly looks like an extension of the PI's current research topic
- Avoid introducing too many technicalities in part B1
- Avoid a complicated formatting
- Do not use – over-use – buzzwords
- Avoid extending the PI's leadership to areas where they have no prior background, since this will immediately question the feasibility of the project
- Do not oversize the project's objectives or ambition, since this will lead to questioning the feasibility
- Avoid a list of disconnected tasks with marginal connection and synergies

Any question?



Thank You!

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