

Technology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences together with Charles University and Expert Group for supporting ERC applicants take pleasure to inform you on the

ON-LINE European Research Council (ERC) applicants´ workshop: PREPARATION OF A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL

This interactive workshop will be focused on ERC proposal preparation. The workshop will be composed of three subsequent parts.

To maximize the impact and effectiveness, the workshop is opened **only for ERC Starting/Consolidator (eventually also Synergy and Advanced) grant applicants who already seriously work on a grant proposal**, which they intend to submit to the **2022 ERC Work Programme calls**.

- **The first part will be (tentatively) held on 27 and 29 September 2021.**

The dates will be confirmed based on the number of invited participants

27 September: Life Sciences and Physical Sciences and Engineering (LS, PE)
29 September: Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)

It will consist of individual presentations of the applicants´ ideas and a discussion with members of the Expert Group for supporting ERC applicants (EG) and other ERC evaluators non-active in the particular call, possibly also other experts from the applicants´ fields of research. In order to be admitted to this workshop, you are requested to send us in advance the abstract of your planned proposal, your CV and track-record. For more details, please check carefully the *Requirements* section below.

- **The second part of the workshop will be held in October 2021.**

You will have an opportunity to work with a successful ERC project from the field of LS/PE/SSH (depending on your choice), and to meet its principal investigator. This part should serve you to clearly understand the evaluation process with the consequences for writing your own proposal.

- **The third part of the workshop will be held in November 2021.**

It will consist of individual presentations of the draft proposal of your B1 part and discussions with members of the EG, other ERC evaluators non-active in the particular call as well as other participants.

The event is free of charge, however, a registration is required. The capacity is limited (first come, first served). The workshop is part of our training module „How to successfully participate in Horizon Europe?“ and is held within Czech Republic in the European Research Area 3 project framework (CZERA 3 - LTI18020) supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. Contact for more information about the programme: capkova@tc.cz.

FIRST PART OF THE WORKSHOP (27 and 29 September)

Non-competitive materials would mean that the applicants will **not be admitted to the workshop**. Admission will be confirmed no later than **15 September 2021**.

The on-line workshop will be held in English, translation will not be provided.

REQUIREMENTS:

1) In order to attend the workshop, the applicants are required to **send the name of their project, chosen panel** (as in the registration), **short abstract of the proposal** (max. 2 000 characters), **their CV** (max. 2 pages), and **early achievements track-record** for the ERC StG and the ERC CoG applicants or **10 years track-record** for the ERC AdG applicants (max. 2 pages). All should be sent in one pdf file and **strictly according to the instructions** in the [Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2021 Calls](#) or [Information for Applicants to the Advanced Grant 2021 Call](#) (using the ERC templates: [Starting](#), [Consolidator](#) and [Advanced](#)) **to Ms Hana Luzumová (luzumova@tc.cz) by 22 August 2021**.

We kindly ask you to register as soon as possible, even if you have not yet finalised the materials requested. All materials will be considered confidential. The quality of the received materials will be evaluated using ERC standards.

You are supposed to inform your future host institution about your intention to apply for an ERC grant as soon as possible. The institution is expected to assist you with the preparation of the requested materials for the workshop purposes. The institutions (through their ERC contact persons) are kindly asked to send a list of their applicants by 22 August to erc.es@tc.cz.

2) Participants of the first part of the workshop will give **a five-minute presentation of their project** which will address two questions:

- 1. What is the main original idea of the intended proposal that makes it ERC competitive?**
- 2. Why are you credible to achieve substantial results in the given direction?**

You are not requested to send your presentations beforehand. The aim is to find out whether the intended proposal can be developed into a fully competitive ERC application.

You will only have 5 minutes, thus please focus on the essentials (do not provide a lengthy overview of the state-of-the-art). While preparing your presentation, ask repeatedly yourself: "How could I describe the main idea in one sentence? What is the main selling point of my proposal? On the following pages, you will find the evaluation criteria/elements, which the evaluators have to consider when assessing your proposal and also some tips for your presentation/proposal from our experience – please pay adequate attention to them when preparing your presentation and when writing your proposal.

Annex I: EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Research Project

Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?

To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?

To what extent is the proposed research high risk-high gain (i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a high risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims)?

Scientific Approach

To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high risk/high gain (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

*To what extent does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone (**for Synergy Grants**, based on the Extended Synopsis)?*

*To what extent do the Principal Investigators succeed in proposing a combination of scientific approaches that are crucial to address the scope and complexity of the research questions to be tackled (**for Synergy Grants**, based on the Extended Synopsis)?*

To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the research proposal)?

To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology (based on the research proposal)?

To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified (based on the research proposal)?

2. Principal Investigator(s)

Intellectual capacity and creativity

Starting and Consolidator

To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?

To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?

To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

Intellectual capacity and creativity

Advanced and Synergy

To what extent has/have the PI(s) demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?

To what extent does the PI has/have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

*To what extent has the PI demonstrated sound leadership in the training and advancement of young scientists (**for Advanced Grant applicants**)?*

Synergy Grant Group

Synergy

To what extent does the Synergy Grant Group successfully demonstrate in the proposal that it brings together the know-how – such as skills, experience, expertise, disciplines, teams – necessary to address the proposed research question (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

Annex II: HOW TO PRESENT YOUR PROPOSAL

- ✓ Do not provide a lengthy overview of the state-of-the-art, focus on the basic questions:
 - WHAT** is the challenge?
 - WHY** is it important (expected broader impact on the field, adjacent fields, society ...) and why right now?
 - HOW** are you going to achieve your goals?
 - WHO?** Why do YOU have the best qualifications to successfully address the project objectives globally?
- ✓ **In the first 60 seconds** (presentation/interview)/ **5 minutes** (project proposal) **it must be clear, what your main idea is**, what you are going to do **and why**.
- ✓ Set your project goals based on a **burning scientific question of fundamental importance/a working hypothesis/a** substantially new idea on a worldwide scale (your project should not be a simple synthesis or improvement of current methods, techniques, approaches, knowledge. It should not aim at building of infrastructures, research centres, equipment, a microscope, a bioreactor etc.
- ✓ Your project should be **risky, yet feasible**.
- ✓ You will only have 5 minutes – your slides should **not be too busy**. Do not try to say everything, **less is sometimes more** – think about, what **your selling point** is.
- ✓ Be **ambitious, self-confident** (but not arrogant) **and convincing** („not just good, but excellent“) it must be **pleasant** (make the evaluators life easier – provide them with clear answers to the questions/evaluation elements we have sent you, use simple clear text, charts, diagrams, figures, pictures, highlighting where appropriate, avoid jargon, explain abbreviations ...) **and exciting** to read your proposal/listen to you (eye contact, clear simple sentences, loud voice, **understandable English, do not speak too fast ...**)
- ✓ **Be consistent throughout the proposal!**
- ✓ Show that you are the right person, who has **the best qualifications to successfully address the project objectives globally** – highlight **your best achievements**, showing the ability to think out of the box and to conduct ground-breaking research as well as your leadership qualities.
- ✓ Prepare for a **heterogeneous audience**. The panels are usually very broad, consisting of experts in the particular area of your proposal as well as generalists – you **must be able to convince both of them**.
- ✓ **Allow time for a mock presentation** before you come to the workshop/**several mock presentations** before your interview in Brussels.
- ✓ **Show passion for science and the topic!** 😊