

## Frequently Asked Questions

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## Grant Schemes - General

### Principal Investigator

Question text	Answer text
Can third country nationals apply for ERC funding?	ERC actions are open to PIs of any nationality who would like to set up their research activity in an EU Member State or an Associated Country. Please refer to the ERC Work Programme available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>

<p>Is it possible for a researcher working at a research institution on a fixed term contract to apply as PI for ERC funding? Does he/she need to be a permanent employee?</p>	<p>At the time when the proposal is submitted, the PI can but does not necessarily need to be employed by the host institution. In any case, the host institution must confirm its association and support to the PI and her/his proposal. In the case the proposal is successful and following the signature of the grant agreement, the PI must be engaged by the host institution for the duration of the grant.</p>
<p>Can a PI appear in more than one proposal to the ERC at the same time? Would you be funded in such a case for both participations?</p>	<p>A PI may not be associated with more than one application to the ERC during the same calendar year. Only one ERC grant managed by a PI can be active at any time. The same applies to Co-Investigators in interdisciplinary ERC Advanced Grant proposals. Please refer to the ERC Work Programme available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a></p>
<p>How much time must a PI dedicate to an ERC-funded project?</p>	<p>It is stated in the ERC Model Grant Agreement that the researcher must "take all appropriate steps towards the effective supervision of the scientific and technological execution of the project". The ERC wishes to attract the best researchers to Europe and pioneering frontier research projects. ERC-funded PIs are supposed to be strongly committed to the project and devote a significant amount of their total working time to the project: in the case of the Starting Grant the ERC-funded project should represent the PI's main workload (at least 50% of the total working time), whereas in the case of the Advanced Grant the Scientific Council would expect the PI to devote at least 30% of its total workload to the ERC-funded project while spending at least 50% of his/her total workload in Europe (EU Member State or Associated Country). For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.</p>

Can a researcher (or any other collaborator) participate in more than one ERC-funded project?

A researcher (or any other collaborator) can belong to more than one ERC-funded project team as long as (1) he/she is not the lead researcher (PI or Co-PI) of the projects, and (2) her/his total number of hours worked across the projects per week does not exceed the ones of a full time contract. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: [http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101\\_en.pdf](http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf)), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.

Is it OK to use the tool "Google Scholar" for finding relevant citations?

Yes, "Google Scholar" can be used for finding relevant citations. In the case of humanities, Google Scholar offers a more or less reliable picture. To extract data from Google Scholar exhaustively (including citation counts, H-index, etc.), one may use the freeware Harzing Publish or Perish. Humanities is a particular area in terms of ways of checking the impact of scientific production. First, there is a variety of disciplines each one with its specific tradition: while for a few of them journals are the main publication venue, for many others book chapters, books or conference proceedings count more. Well-known tools like Thomson Web of Science are less relevant for humanities than for natural sciences. SCImago may be more adequate.

## Team

Question text

Answer text

Should the team members be identified already at the time of the submission?	This is not required, but the roles/profiles and expertise of team members required and the distribution of tasks should be clarified in the project proposal. However, if the PI intends to involve team members of other legal entities than his/her host organisation, it is necessary to indicate it at the time of application by filling in a second A2 form in EPSS. In the case of co-investigator projects (only applicable to ADG Call), the co-investigator(s) must be specified in the A1 form and presented in the proposal, in order to be properly assessed by the ERC peer review evaluation panels.
Can other employees from the host institution be members of the PI's research team?	It is up to the PI to decide on the composition of the team; he/she may include team members from the same or other research institutions. In cases where team members from other research institutions participate, the scientific added value must have been properly justified and accepted during evaluation by the ERC peer review evaluation panels. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), or the relevant ERC Guide.
Can the team include members who do not have a PhD degree? Can technicians or other staff necessary to carry out the project be supported?	The PI can freely decide on the composition of his/her research team as long as this is coherent with the needs of the research project. The scientific added value must have been properly justified and accepted during evaluation by the ERC peer review evaluation panels. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), or the relevant ERC Guide.



## Project

Question text	Answer text
<p>Can the duration of the research project be less than 5 years?</p> <p>With reference to chapter 3.2 paragraph 3 / chapter 4.2 paragraph 4 of the ERC Work programme 2011, under which conditions an additional 500 000 (for StG)/1M Euros could be requested for a PI moving from a third country to the EU or an associated country?</p>	<p>ERC funding can be granted for projects up to 5 years that means it can be less than 5 years (the level of funding is pro rata for projects of shorter duration).</p> <p>For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.</p> <p>The additional funding for a PI moving from a third country to the EU or an associated country can only be granted if the reason for moving is exclusively linked to the StG / AdG project. No preceding appointment by, or move to, the potential Host Institution before the <u>awarding</u> of the grant can therefore give rise to such an additional financial assistance." The additional amount which would increase the maximum size of the grant (500.000 EUR for StG/1 million EUR for AdG) should be read as a <u>maximum</u> amount. That is to say that the § 3.3.1 and 4.3.1 of WP 2011 should be read as follows:</p> <p><i>For the StG: "Normally, the maximum grant will be € 1 500 000 for a period of 5 years (pro rate for projects of shorter duration. However, an additional amount of up to € 500 000 can be made available to cover (a) eligible "start-up" costs for Principle Investigators moving from a third country to the EU or an associated country or (b) the purchase of major equipment".</i></p> <p><i>For the AdG: "Normally, the maximum grant will be € 2 500 000 for a period of 5 years (pro rate for projects of shorter duration. However, an additional amount of up to € 1 000 000 can be made available to cover (a) eligible "start-up" costs for Principle Investigators moving from a third country to the EU or an associated country or (b) the purchase of major</i></p>

*equipment".*

## Host Institution

Question text	Answer text
Are potential host institutions allowed to give their support to more than one ERC application of different PIs at the same time?	It is up to the host institution to decide whether it intends to support one or more ERC grant applications at the same time.

## Grant Schemes - ERC Starting Grant

### Principal Investigator (PI)

Question text	Answer text
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Could you clarify the 2 to 12 years eligibility requirement (does it include or exclude the end points between 2 and 12 years)?	If the call for proposal is published on 20 July 2010 candidates having received the PhD or equivalent between (including) 20 July 1998 and (including) 20 July 2008 are eligible. Please note that extensions may be allowed in case of eligible career breaks (maximum of 4.5 years of extension). In the case of eligible extensions the accumulation of these extensions cannot surpass an earlier date than (including) 20 January 1994.
What is the date to be considered for the PhD (or equivalent degree) being granted?	The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be the date of the actual award according to the national rules in the country that the degree was awarded. In the case of applicants having been awarded several PhDs, the reference date is of the award of the first PhD.
What will happen if I do not submit my PhD certificate?	As long as no document is uploaded in EPSS, it will not be possible to validate/submit the proposal. A warning message will inform the applicant accordingly. If another document is uploaded instead and the PhD certificate is finally missing in the proposal, the proposal is not eligible and will not be evaluated.
Will I be evaluated as a "starter" or "consolidator"?	Applicants will be assessed in two streams, those starting their transition to independence (so called "starters") or those applying to consolidate their own independent team/activity (so called "consolidators"). There is no distinction in the application forms between "starters" and "consolidators". Principal Investigators will be sub-divided during the evaluation into two main streams (see Annex II of the ERC Work Programme 2011). Principal Investigators will be assessed by the evaluation panels as being "starters" (award of PhD from 2 to 7 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication) or "consolidators" (award of PhD over 7 and up to 12 years prior to the Starting Grant call publication) taking into account the specific stage of their research career at the time of the application. In order to assure comparable success rates for the broadly called "starters" and for the "consolidators" the indicative budget of each panel will be divided in proportion to the budgetary demand of the proposals submitted by these two categories ("starters" and "consolidators").
Can I still be assessed as a "starter" even though I obtained my PhD over 7 years ago?	Yes. The same situations and conditions that allow an extension to the overall eligibility window (i.e. past the 12 year limit) will be applied to an extension of the seven year limit for the distinction between starters and consolidators with the same limit of a maximum of 4.5 years of extension. Applicants who would like to bring to the attention of the panels a situation that may be considered as a career break should provide the necessary justification in Part B – Section 1a of the



application. Note that requests for changing career stage will only be considered if the timing of the event which gives rise to the request is prior to 7 years past the date of PhD. Appropriate supporting information needs to be provided and uploaded in a similar manner to requests for extension of the overall eligibility window (e.g. official documents giving evidence of the time taken for childcare, military service, etc).

## PhD Equivalent degrees, MD

Question text	Answer text
Is an MD degree equivalent to a PhD degree?	For medical doctors, an MD will not be accepted by itself as equivalent to a PhD award. To be considered an eligible Principal Investigator medical doctors (MDs) need to provide the certificates of both basic studies (MD) and a PhD or completion of clinical specialty training or proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency (i.e. post-doctoral fellowship, professorship appointment). Additionally, candidates must also provide information on their research experience (including peer reviewed publications) in order to further substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD. In these cases, the certified date of the MD completion plus two years is the time reference for calculation of the eligibility time-window (i.e. 4-14 years past MD).
Could you provide additional information on "PhD and equivalent degrees"?	The ERC Work Programme clearly states that the eligible PI must be a holder of a PhD degree or equivalent. It is however recognised that there is a number of other doctoral titles that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD within certain fields. All of them have similar content requirements. These cases will not be automatically considered eligible (nor considered ineligible) but they will be examined individually, before the ERC decision on eligibility. First professional degrees will not be considered in themselves as PhD-equivalent, even if recipients carry the title "Doctor". For more information please consult the ERC policy on PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degree (ERC Work Program 2011, Annex 4).

In some countries, "habilitation" is a scientific degree awarded to formally acknowledge the achievement of research independence. Are holders of this degree eligible to apply for an ERC Starting Grant if they are within the eligibility window of 2 - 12 years after the PhD award?	There is no eligibility restriction to holders of a "habilitation". However, the evaluation will consider the strategic need in supporting the PI in consolidating her/his scientific independence. For more information please consult the ERC policy on PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degree (ERC Work Programme 2011, Annex 4).
I only have a Masters Degree and no PhD but I have enough experience and publications. Can I apply?	For StG Call, the eligible principal investigator must be a holder of a PhD degree or equivalent. First-professional degrees will not be considered in themselves as PhD-equivalent, even if recipients carry the title "Doctor". For more information please consult the ERC policy on PhD and Equivalent Doctoral Degree (ERC Work Program 2011, Annex 4). For AdG Call, excellence is the sole criterion (see ERC Work programme and also Guide for Applicants).
Although I have extensive research experience (and publications etc), my PhD award does not fall within the 2 to 12 years eligibility requirement for PIs. Can I apply?	No, unless an eligible career break applies. Only proposals of PIs, which fulfil the eligibility requirement, will proceed to the evaluation stage.

## Eligible Career Breaks

Question text	Answer text
What is needed to document the maternity leaves?	The birth certificate of the child is sufficient. This allows for an extension of 18 months per child up to a maximum of 4.5 years (i.e. for 3 or more children).
What is needed to document the paternity leaves?	For paternity leave only the actual time off counts and has to be formally certified or proven by documentary evidence, such as a duly signed letter from the relevant employer or medical insurance company, or a medical certificate.

Which document does the PI need to provide to prove his/her long-term sickness leave?	A clear 'institutional' proof that the PI was unable to perform research during the claimed period, such as a duly signed letter from the relevant employer or medical insurance company, or a medical certificate.
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## Similar Funding Schemes

Question text	Answer text
The National Research Council in XYZ has a type of funding similar to the Starting Grants aiming at young and promising scientists at the stage of establishing or consolidating scientific independence. Will it be possible for PIs who have this kind of funding to apply for ERC Starting Grants if the objectives of the proposed ERC project are clearly different?	The PI can apply. However, please note that the main strategic aim of the ERC Starting Grant funding scheme is to provide to the most promising starting researchers in Europe the financial means to establish research independence or consolidate their role as independent research leaders. The ERC review panels will consequently review the PI's current support and assess whether the ERC Starting Grant will substantially assist the transition to independence. At the same time the PI's capacity to manage additional work and funding will need to be considered.
Some EURYI Grants have been awarded a few years ago. Their PIs will look for new funding opportunities. Are they eligible to apply if they fulfil the 2-12 years' criteria?	The PI can apply. However, please note that the main strategic aim for ERC Starting Grant funding scheme is to provide to the most promising starting researchers in Europe the financial means to establish research independence or consolidate their role as independent research leaders. Since the objectives of the EURYI grants are similar to the ERC Starting Grant (supporting PI to make transition to and/or consolidate their research independence), it is therefore expected that - like a PI supported by an ERC Starting Grant - a former EURYI awardee has established research independence.
Is the FP6 "Marie Curie Excellence Grant" scheme similar to the ERC Starting Grant?	Although the objectives of the "Marie Curie Excellence Grant" are not identical there are similarities between the two schemes. It is therefore expected that - like a PI supported by an ERC Starting Grant - a "Marie Curie Excellence Grant" team leader has established research independence.

## Grant Schemes - ERC Advanced Grant

## Principal Investigator (PI)

Question text	Answer text
Can a PI who holds a permanent position in a research organisation in the US apply for an ERC Advanced Grant with a host institution located in Europe?	<p>This is possible as long as the PI will be engaged and hosted by the Host Institution based in an EU Member State or an FP7 Associated Country for the whole duration of the Grant.</p> <p>The Principal Investigator should be strongly committed to the project and willing to devote a significant amount of time to it (at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project and spend at least 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or Associated country. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>)</p>
Can a PI who is engaged part-time by two research organization (e.g. 50% + 50%) and holds at both organizations a research group apply for an ERC Advanced Grant with the two research groups executing the proposed frontier research project as an individual team? Both research organizations are situated in Europe, i.e. in one of the EU member states and/or an associated country?	<p>Yes, that is possible as long as the PI is supported by one of the two research organizations as 'host organisation' (applicant legal entity) for the full duration of the grant. The other research organization should be referred to as additional organization of other team members (additional beneficiary) in an additional A2 form and in the research proposal. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.</p>

Can PI be an SME?

No, the PI (Principal Investigator)\*\* is an individual. The HI (Host Institution) could be a SME. Additionally as part of the evaluation, the Evaluation Panel may assess whether the SME provides the appropriate resources to carry out the specific project

\*\* According to the definition given in the Grant Agreement, "principal investigator" means the individual that may assemble a team to carry out the project under his/her scientific guidance.

\*\* As explained in the ERC 2011 Work programme (URL: [http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101\\_en.pdf](http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf) - chapter 2.6)

## Co-Investigator (optional, for Advanced Grant proposals only)

Question text	Answer text
<p>I have a question regarding Co-PI-Projects for the AdG. Does the applicant need to provide 2 commitments of the host institution, i.e. one for the PI and one for the Co-PI? Or only one for the PI?</p>	<p>No, only the PI has to fill in the Commitment of the HI template. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals involving co-investigator(s) alongside with the PI ("co-investigator projects") the information listed under sections 1(a) to 1(c) must be provided for each co-investigator (CV, scientific leadership profile, 10-year-track-record). In this case, sections 1(a) to 1(c) should be repeated for each co-investigator, and the page limits for these sections mentioned in the Guide for Applicants apply individually, i.e. maximum 5 pages per co-investigator. Please refer to the Guide for Applicants relevant to the call in question and to the ERC 2011 Work Programme, [section 4.2], available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>). In case a proposal is successfully evaluated and will be granted, this issue will be checked when preparing the Grant Agreement: it will be checked where and how the co-investigator is employed, and whether it should become a multi-beneficiary grant agreement.</p>
<p>Can a co-investigator of an ERC Advanced Grant project led by a European PI be based in a non-European country?</p>	<p>Since the ERC work programme states that "The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who would like to establish their research activity in any Member State as well as Associated Country" it is expected, as indicated in the Guide for Applicants, that also the Co-Investigator should be engaged for his/her contribution in the ERC funded project by a research organisation situated in a Member State or Associated Country. Please refer to the ERC Work Programme available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a></p>

<p>Does the Co-Investigator need to complete a Form?</p>	<p>Yes, in case of 'Co-Investigator projects', some basic information need to be inserted in the A1 and a separate Co-Investigator Annex needs to be filled in and uploaded in the Annex section in EPSS. This form is needed to get additional information about the Co-Investigator's affiliation (such as the current and/or future research institution) in addition to the scientific leadership profile, CV and the 10-year track record that should be provided for each designated Co-Investigator in Part B1. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.</p>
<p>If the Co-Investigator is engaged by a research organisation, which is different from the PI's host organisation, does he/she need to provide a commitment letter from his/her organisation?</p>	<p>No, this is not required. However, the Co-Investigator's organisation and any other organisation involved with team members in the proposed research projects have to be referred to in the A2 form(s) (one per organisation). The participation of these organisations will be assessed on the basis of the scientific added value. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants..</p>

## Team

Question text	Answer text
In case of an ERC Advanced grant, how shall be understood the term ' <i>team</i> '?	<p>As stated in the General Features of ERC Grants, the constitution of the research team is flexible. Commonly, it involves researchers from the PI's research group or from the same organisation as "team members". However, depending on the nature of a project the research team may also involve team members from other research organisations situated in the same or a different country.</p> <p>According to the ERC Grant Agreement, "<i>team</i>": means the individual team that consists of a single principal investigator and, as appropriate, other individuals, members of the team; "team members" mean contributing investigators to the project under the scientific guidance of the principal investigator.</p> <p>Full description of this term is clearly explained in the ERC ADG Guide for Applicants (available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/">http://erc.europa.eu/</a>.) NB: It is up to the PI to decide on the composition of the team; he/she may include team members from the same or other research institutions. In cases where team members from other (in particular overseas) research institutions participate, the scientific added value must have been properly justified and accepted during evaluation by the ERC peer review evaluation panels.</p>
If there is one PI having his team members in different institutions in one or more countries, how does it work in practice?	<p>The PI's host institution (the applicant legal entity) will be normally the only participating legal entity. However, depending on the nature of a project the PI's research team may also involve individuals from other research institutions (legal entities) located in the same or a different country, including those located in third countries. In such cases the scientific added value must have been properly justified and accepted during evaluation by the ERC peer review evaluation panels. More information can be found in the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants..</p>



## Proposal

Question text	Answer text
Choice of ERC panel(s)? Can I select LS1 as first choice panel and PE5 as second choice panel and, if this is possible, which application/deadline date applies: for PE domain or for LS domain?	<p>As stated in the ERC 2011 Work Programme (available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>):</p> <p>"...The allocation of the proposals to the various panels will be based on the expressed preference of the applicant. The applicant must submit the proposal to his/her chosen primary evaluation panel before the submission deadline of this panel. The applicant may also indicate a secondary evaluation panel. In cases where panels determine that a proposal is of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature, panels may request additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional referees."...</p> <p>Therefore, if you select LS1 panel as the primary panel, you should respect the deadline of the LS domain. Your proposal will be allocated to the primary panel, and this panel will decide whether it will need more expertise from other panel(s).</p>

## Ethical Issues

Question text	Answer text
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<p>Is the Ethical Issues Table and the Ethical Issues Annex included in the 15-page-limit of the project proposal (part B)?</p>	<p>The pages of the Ethical Issues Table (included in Part B2) and Ethical Issues Annex (separate document) will not count towards the maximum page limit for part B. If you have answered "YES" to any of the questions identified in the Part B2, you are required to complete and upload the "B2_Ethical Issues Annex" (template provided). Without this Annex, your application cannot be properly evaluated and even if successful the granting process will not proceed. Please see the ERC Guide for Applicants relevant to the funding schemes of this Call for further details, and CORDIS <a href="http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html">http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html</a> for further information on how to deal with Ethical Issues in your proposal.</p>
<p>Is there a page-limit or set format for the Ethical Issues Description?</p>	<p>Yes, there is a 2-page-limit for the B2 Ethical Issues Annex). If the answer to any of the questions in the Ethical Issues Table (in part B2) is YES, you must provide a brief explanation of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. Please also specify any authorization or permission you already have for the proposed work and include copies (the copies do not count towards the page limit). Please upload this Ethical Issues Annex and any related documents in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section included in the EPSS tab 'Part B &amp; Annexes'. Please see the Guide for Applicants for the funding scheme you are applying to and CORDIS <a href="http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html">http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html</a> for further information on how to deal with Ethical Issues in your proposal. Information is also available from the European Commission Research - Participant Portal at URL: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal">http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal</a>.</p>

Is it necessary to complete and submit the Ethical Issues Table in any case, i.e. even if there are no ethical issues involved with the proposed research project?	Yes, it is compulsory to include the Ethical Issues Table (Submission Form - Part B2) in the proposal in any case. If there are no ethical issues, the applicant should declare so in the table by putting "no" in the relevant boxes. More information can be found in the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ) and the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.
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## Track record / References

Question text	Answer text
If a researcher has less than ten years experience, can he/she apply to the AdG?	The applying PI is expected to demonstrate a significant record of research achievements and scientific leadership in the last ten years. The emphasis lies on recent outstanding research results. This means that a PI does not need necessarily ten years experience but rather recent outstanding research results, i.e. results which are not older than 10 years. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.
Can only PhD holders apply to the Advanced Grant?	A PhD is not formally required to submit a proposal to the ERC Advanced Grant Call. As specified in the Work Programme and Guide for Applicants, excellence is the sole criterion. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.

Could a researcher who is nearing retirement apply for the ERC Advanced Grant?	<p>The aim of the ERC Advanced Grant is to "fund individual teams led by established, innovative and active Principal Investigators ... [who] pursue ground-breaking, high-risk research that opens new directions in their respective research fields or other domains." Therefore, if the applicant can prove - independently of his/her age - that this is the case, then he/she is welcome to apply. The commitment and official support of the host institution is nevertheless required for the whole duration of the grant.</p> <p>For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.</p>
How can a candidate, who was not continuously engaged in research or other professional activities during the previous ten years due to maternity/paternity leave, demonstrate her/his merit for the ERC Advanced Grant?	<p>We would recommend that the researcher provides evidence of recent achievements of intellectual productivity and creativity. If the researcher in question returned to his/her original or new project(s) following a sabbatical leave, the reviewers will take such circumstances into consideration. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme, page 23 - chapter 4.4 Profile of the ERC Advanced Grant Applicant (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants..</p>

## Proposal Preparation and Submission Commitment of the Host Institution

Question text	Answer text
Section 1a:"The Principal Investigator" of the research proposal for Advanced Grants requires up to 10 publications in the 10-Year-Track sub-section. Is it possible to quote more publications in the Scientific Leadership Profile sub-section?	Yes. However, the page limit for 'leadership profile' must be respected. Please refer to the explanations indicated in the ERC Guide for Applicants, available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/">http://erc.europa.eu/</a>

Do I need to provide an English translation of my proposal?	The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. Please note that accordingly the panel reports will be available in English only. If the proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts.
Should I include references in my proposal?	1), The PI needs to indicate his/her most important scientific publications which underline his/her capacity or potential to perform world class research, which will be assessed by the ERC Panel according to Evaluation Criteria 1 "Quality of Principal Investigator". 2) References to scientific key publications might be necessary to highlight and demonstrate the scientific value of the proposed research project and its objectives, and/or the feasibility of the chosen approach and methodology. It is up to the PI to decide if, what and how many references need to be referred to while respecting the given page limits for the research proposal. 3) Concerning the PI, no reference letters are needed or accepted.
Is there a tool to check citations in humanities?	Humanities is a particular area in terms of ways of checking the impact of scientific production. First, there is a variety of disciplines each one with its specific tradition: while for a few of them journals are the main publication venue, for many others book chapters, books or conference proceedings count more. Well-known tools like Thomson Web of Science are less relevant for humanities than for natural sciences. Instead, SCImago may be more adequate. Google Scholar offers a more or less reliable picture in the case of humanities. To extract data from Google Scholar exhaustively (including citation counts, H-index, etc.), one may use the freeware Harzing Publish or Perish.
What will happen if I do not submit the commitment letter of the host institution?	As long as no document is uploaded in EPSS, it will not be possible to validate/submit the proposal. A warning message will inform the applicant accordingly. If another document is uploaded instead and the commitment letter is finally missing in the proposal, the proposal is not eligible and will not be evaluated. Please refer to the ERC Guide for Applicants, available at ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/">http://erc.europa.eu/</a> .
Is there a list of standard costs published anywhere?	It is compulsory to fill in the budget table in Part B section 2 which is provided in EPSS as a template.

My research project involves two host institutions. How can I submit my proposal?	The applicant should choose the main host institution based on his/her own preferences and/or employment situation. For the main host institution (applicant legal entity), the administrative details in form A2 must be provided. For the second host institution (other participant/legal entity) a second A2 form should be filled in. The commitment letter of the host institution is formally required only from the main host but it is possible to include a second commitment letter from the other host institution, which can be uploaded as annex (supporting document). In addition, any involvement of an additional legal entity needs to be properly addressed and justified in part B of the proposal. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.
Should I provide the names and the CV of my team members in the proposal?	For both ERC Schemes, the proposal should only mention the profile of the team members and other staff needed to perform the research. It is not necessary to provide the CV of individual team members and other staff. However, in case of a Co-Investigator in an Advanced Grant proposal, the CV of the Co-Investigator must also be submitted. Please refer to the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants, available on the ERC website and in the information package on the submission page on Cordis website.
Do I need to present a detailed budget planning?	Please follow instructions given in the ERC Guide for Applicants relevant to the funding schemes used in this call: The submission form A3 should provide financial information for the whole duration of the project. Furthermore, in Part B section 2 in the budget planning should be indicated and justified in more detail, with a breakdown by cost items and distribution of the budget over the duration of the project (in the section "resources" of the research proposal).
What is exactly meant by "senior author"?	As there is no universal convention on senior authors, the understanding is that the norms and interpretation of the research field in question applies.
What is meant by auto-citations? Is it the same as self-citations?	Yes

Can we make changes to the letter of support of the host institution?	The commitment letter of the host institution has relevance in the context of the proposal's eligibility. Thus, the commitments stated in the template (Annex in the Guide for Applicants) should not be changed. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants..
Where do I find the template for the commitment of the host institution?	The statement that the host institutions must sign can be found in the Annex section of the Guide for Applicants, and it is also available in an electronic format in EPSS, the Electronic Proposal Submission Service webpage linked to this Call.
Is it possible to attach an additional document to the proposal, which is listing all relevant references?	No, this will not be accepted. As explained in the ERC Work Programme and Guide for Applicants relevant to the funding schemes used in this Call: Only the material that is presented within these limits will be evaluated (evaluators will only be asked, and will be under no obligation to read beyond, the material presented within the page limits). Information on the modalities of the call and guidance to applicants on how to submit projects is available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu">http://erc.europa.eu</a> , and on the European Commission Research - Participant Portal at URL: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal">http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal</a> .
How shall publications or monographs be referred to in the part B section 1?	Use established abbreviations for the name of a scientific journal or a publisher (such as Phys. Rev. for Physical Review, Adv. Mat. For Advanced Materials, CUP for Cambridge University Press).

Who should sign the letter of support of the host institution?	It shall be signed by the Applicant Legal Entity, the legal representative of the host institution who can commit the host institution according to the requirements of the applicable ERC Model Grant Agreement, stating his/her name, function, email address with stamp of the institution, on an official letter (organisation letterhead). For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), or the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants..
Among the publications to be listed in the 10-year-track-record some researchers from the humanities have publications in non-roman type (such as Hebrew, Cyrillic, etc) in scientific journals in their field (for example history). Can these be listed?	Yes, the reference should be provided with a brief explanation.
Within the ERC Advanced Grant call, and in case of success in the selection, will it be possible to charge on the ERC funds the costs paid for the translation of the submitted proposal into another language (i.e. English)?	There is no need to mention translation costs in general. The cost would incur BEFORE the implementation period, so would be ineligible for funding. Please note that Applicants may submit their proposal in any official language of the European Union, and it is recommended to include a full translation in English. In any case, an English translation of the abstract should be included in the proposal. For more information, please refer to the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> ), and the relevant ERC Guide for Applicants.



# Peer Review Evaluation

Question text	Answer text
Are the members of the ERC peer review evaluation panels only recruited from Europe?	They are recruited from both within and outside of Europe. More information on the modalities of the call and peer review evaluation (such as the ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers) is available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu">http://erc.europa.eu</a> , and on the European Commission Research - Participant Portal at URL: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal">http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal</a> .
Is it up to the PI to choose an appropriate ERC peer review evaluation panel?	Yes, the PI is responsible for choosing and indicating the most appropriate ERC evaluation panel in the Proposal Submission Form A1 ('General information on the Proposal'). The choice of the appropriate evaluation panel should be based upon the Panel descriptors (i.e. ERC keywords listed in the Annex 1 of the relevant ERC 2011 Guide for Applicants, available on the ERC website) If the PI has chosen an ERC evaluation panel, which is not matching the scientific field of the proposal the Panel can, in exceptional cases, declare the proposal as being "out of scope". Such a proposal would not be evaluated.
Do peer reviewers receive all parts of my proposal (part A, Part B- section 1 and 2 annexes)?	Step 1 of the peer review evaluation process is based on Part B - section 1 only. In step 2, the peer reviewers base their assessment on part B - section 1 and 2. Part A forms and the annexes such as the commitment letter of the host institution are used for administrative purposes the initial eligibility check. The ethical issues annex will be used to assess the ethical aspects of proposals at the end of the evaluation process.

## Grant Management (Legal and financial issues)

Question text	Answer text
If a PI or collaborating investigator has teaching activities, is it possible to use the ERC grant to pay somebody else for teaching in their place ("teaching buy-out")?	The grant can only be used to support activities which are necessary for the conduct of the project (including personnel costs for the project team). It is up to the host institutions to ensure a proper balance of the PI's research and teaching duties, and that may entail the employment of substitute teachers. In such cases, the accounting arrangements of the host institution must ensure that substitute teachers do not appear as project costs.
Do other team members need to fill-in time sheets?	Only the costs of the actual hours worked by a team member for the project can be charged. Working time being charged to the project must be recorded throughout the duration of the project by any reasonable means (i.e. timesheets). It is up to the institution to decide on how this needs to be recorded (e.g. time-sheets) following its internal rules and practice. The time-records have to be authorised by the project manager or other superior.
Is the VAT an eligible cost?	No. The direct eligible costs are: personnel costs, equipments, travel and subsistence costs and publications costs. More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions ( <a href="ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf">ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf</a> ) in general, or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ( <a href="ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf">ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf</a> ) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues, including the eligibility of costs.

Does the host institution need to open a dedicated interest-bearing account for the ERC-funded project?	Yes, it is an obligation to open an interest-bearing bank account. The bank account proposed by the beneficiary should allow for clear identification of payments made for project purposes and of the interests yielded by the pre-financing. It is important to know the exact amount of interest earned on the EU's pre-financing. An average amount would not be acceptable.
Does the PI need to fill in time-sheets?	If the granted budget includes the salary of the PI, only the costs of the actual hours worked by the PI for the project can be charged. It is up to the institution to decide on how this needs to be recorded (e.g. time-sheets) following its internal rules and practice.
Will the ERC pay a salary to the PI?	<p>The ERC will not directly pay the salary of the PI. The PI is engaged by the host institution and consequently the salary is paid by the HI. Personnel costs related to the proposed research project can be covered by the ERC Grant. Therefore, the host institution is allowed to charge part or all of the PI's salary to the ERC Grant. Only the costs of the actual hours worked by a person carrying out work for the project may be charged</p> <p>More information can also be found in the Guide for Financial Issues, available at URL:  <a href="ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf">ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf</a>.</p>

<p>What is meant by "portability"? Can I change my host institution and take the grant with me?</p>	<p>The PI is expected to establish and conclude the funded research project in the original Host Institution, which supported the PI's grant application (applicant legal entity). However, the PI can move from one Host Institution to another if there is a specific and justifiable reason to do so. An agreement between the current and the new Host Institution should be provided. The portability applies only to the PI and not to the Host Institution. There is no formal requirement regarding the time of transfer of the Grant from one institution to another.</p> <p>However, the ERC expects that this would not normally be done within the first two years of the start of the project. Therefore, before providing its approval to such a transfer, the ERC will take into consideration if the time of the transfer is acceptable on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>Is the contribution towards the indirect costs a flat 20% or a max of 20%?</p>	<p>It is a flat 20%. More information can be found in the ERC Work Programme (available at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a>), the ERC Guide for Applicants, relevant to the funding schemes used in this call, as well as in the Guide for Financial Issues, available at URL: <a href="ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf">ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf</a>.</p>

What services can be typically subcontracted (can you give some concrete examples)? If e.g. there is a clinical research done by several hospitals/clinics (not the PI), would this be considered as subcontract? Can even human resources working in other legal entities than the PI be subcontracted?

It is only the core activity that cannot be subcontracted. If it is a core activity, the PI might consider associating these hospitals as partners/other beneficiaries/consortium members to the project. The ERC Guide for Applicants relevant to the funding schemes used in this call (available on the ERC website at URL: <http://erc.europa.eu/>, provides explanation about subcontracting: see under which conditions subcontract is allowed and you will be able to analyze whether some specific needs of your project can be accepted as such. "... A subcontractor is a third party which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with one or more participants, in order to carry out part of the work of the project without the direct supervision of the participant and without a relationship of subordination. Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled: - subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project; - recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified in Part B of the proposal having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation; - recourse to the award of subcontract by a participant may not affect the rights and obligations of the participants regarding background and foreground; - Part B of the proposal must indicate the task to be subcontracted and an estimation of the costs; Any subcontract, the costs of which are to be claimed as an eligible cost, must be awarded according to the principles of best value for money (best price-quality ratio), transparency and equal treatment. Framework contracts between a participant and a subcontractor, entered into prior to the beginning of the project that are according to the participant's usual management principles may also be accepted. Participants may use external support services for assistance with minor tasks that do not represent per se project tasks as identified in Part B of the proposal. ...". More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf)) in general or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf)) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues, including the eligibility of costs.

<p>There is some confusion here on setting up the budget for an ERC AdG proposal. In the Guide for applicants, it is mentioned: "take into account the percentage of your dedicated time (min 30%) to run the ERC funded activity when calculating your personnel costs". However, if the wage of a PI is already paid for by the host institution, is it absolutely mandatory to include his/her wage in the ERC budget? Or can the budget be set up only by personnel costs for additional researchers?</p>	<p>It is not a requirement to apply for the (partial) reimbursement of the salary of the PI. The ERC Guide for applicants obviously refers to the rule that reimbursement of salary is possible to the extent of the time actually spent on project related activities.</p> <p>So, if the wage of the PI is already paid for by the host institution, is it not absolutely mandatory to include his/her wage in the ERC budget. The budget could be set up only by personnel costs for additional researchers. As stated in the ERC Work Programme (available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf">http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf</a> , chapter 4.10, in the evaluation criteria: the Principal Investigator should be strongly committed to the project and willing to devote a significant amount of time to it (they will be expected to devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project and spend at least 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or associated country.</p>
<p>Please confirm if Student Fees and Student Maintenance qualify as eligible Direct costs and also would be included in the calculation for Indirects.</p> <p>Please also confirm if audit fees are eligible Direct costs and also would be included in the calculation of Indirects.</p>	<p>In order for costs to be eligible, they must be determined in accordance with the usual accounting and management principles and practices of the beneficiary, necessary for the conduct of the project and they have to be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected results. Therefore, it has to be ensured that the tuition fees costs satisfy the criteria above mentioned in order to be eligible.</p> <p>As for audit fees, they are eligible for financing. However, in case they are outsourced and therefore indicated under subcontracting, the costs are excluded from the calculation of the indirect costs of 20%. In case of in-house service (e.g. internal auditors), the cost can be personnel and 20% is calculated on the top of these.</p> <p>More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions (<a href="ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf">ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf</a>) in general or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders (<a href="ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf">ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf</a>) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues, including the eligibility of costs.</p>

I'm confused by the language of this statement from "ERC Grant Schemes Guide for Applicants for the Advanced Grant Call" about the funding "An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution up to 20% of the total eligible costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the host institution) towards indirect costs." Does it mean that a grant may cover all direct costs of the project (including, e.g. management and dissemination) plus indirect costs calculated as 20% (maximum) of direct costs? Or alternatively, does it mean that the grant cover only RESEARCH direct costs plus ONLY up to 20 % of other direct costs (e.g. dissemination and management) plus indirect costs calculated as 20% (maximum) of indirect costs? For example, will be the cost of a workshop aiming disseminate the results of the project, be covered in full or only up to 20%? Will it be covered in full the publication of monographies, which summarize the results of projects in full or only up to 20%? Please clarify (better with the reference on document of FP7).

Regarding the budget for a research project submitted for EU funding:

1. Some items might cost more over the period of the project if we subcontract than as opposed to buying them, should I in these cases request for a grant for the purchase of the equipment or should we still subcontract?
2. Some costs change and it is impossible to know the exact costs of something after 2 years for example, what will happen if the cost of something is considerably more in the second or third year? (ie will result in us exceeding the requested amount)
3. May I apply for a full grant for the research project or will we need to find other funding? If we may not apply for a full grant, what is the maximum percentage we can apply for?

As far as management and dissemination is concerned, it depends on the nature of the costs. They are either implemented by HI's own staff (i.e. personnel costs) or are outsourced (subcontracting). Regarding the calculation of the indirect costs: In order for costs to be eligible, they must be determined in accordance with the usual accounting and management principles and practices of the beneficiary, necessary for the conduct of the project and they have to be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected results. Therefore, it has to be ensured that the tuition fees costs satisfy the criteria above mentioned in order to be eligible. As for audit fees, they are eligible for financing. However, in case they are outsourced and therefore indicated under subcontracting, the costs are excluded from the calculation of the indirect costs of 20%. In case of in-house service (e.g. internal auditors), the cost can be personnel and 20% is calculated on the top of these. More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf)) in general, or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf)) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues, including the eligibility of costs.

1. If by subcontracting you mean hiring/leasing: Host Institutions should always seek value for money in subcontracting, so most probably it is better to purchase. It is worth noting that only the depreciation cost of durable equipment is eligible for financing.
2. The budget is estimation only. In case of change later on during the implementation, general rules for amendment (of the budget) are applied. The maximum EU contribution cannot be increased in any case.
3. The general reimbursement rate is 100% of the direct eligible costs. More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf)) in general, or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf)) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues,

	including the eligibility of costs.
Can a PI spend a higher percentage of their time on the grant than the salary costs that they claim? For example, if they spend 30% of their time on the grant and claim 0% of their salary – if their salary is already covered and they are free to spend time on the ERC grant?	<p>PIs could spend a higher percentage of their time on the grant than the salary costs that they claim. In fact it is the free choice of the HI to charge less salary than actually worked on the project.</p> <p>Nevertheless, they still have to be able to prove that they dedicated at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project while spending at least 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country. In any case, the percentage worked on the project has to be supported by documents (normally timesheets). See also in the ERC Work Programme (chapter 4.10 - Evaluation criteria) and in the ERC Guide for Applicants relevant to the funding schemes used in this call. (see at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu">http://erc.europa.eu</a>)</p> <p>NB: the rule refers to the fact that the HI cannot charge more than actually worked. So if in this case, the HI charges less salary, this is not a problem.</p> <p>Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project and must correspond to the percentage of dedicated working time (minimum 30% for the PI) to run the ERC project. Such persons must: – be directly hired by the beneficiary in accordance with its national legislation, – work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the latter, and – be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant. Participants may opt to declare average personnel costs if certified in accordance with a methodology approved by the Commission and</p>



consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant. Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.

More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf)) in general or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf)) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues, including the eligibility of costs.

I am submitting an ERC Grant Proposal. It is not clear to me how the proposed budget should be filled in.

Should we make a global budget with the financial need of all participants included? Or should we detail the financial needs of all participants, i.e. make a budget for each participant?

As explained in the ERC Guide for Applicants relevant to the funding schemes used in this call (available on the ERC website at URL: <http://erc.europa.eu/>): Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project and must correspond to the percentage of dedicated working time (minimum 30% for AdG and at least 50% for StG) to run the ERC project.

Such persons must:

- be directly hired by the beneficiary in accordance with its national legislation,
- work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the latter, and
- be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant.

Participants may opt to declare average personnel cost if certified in accordance with a methodology approved by the Commission and consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant.

Average personnel costs charged by a participant having provided a certification on the methodology are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.

It is up to the Principal Investigator to decide whether or not to include the names of team members in the proposal. For example, you may indeed do so if it will bring added value to your application. You can request budget for salaries of your team members under Personnel costs. More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf)) in general or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf)) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues, including the eligibility of costs.

An applicant for an ERC advanced grant wants to include a second legal entity as participant in the project. 1. How shall the costs of the second legal entity be identified/specified in form B2, section 2 in the budget? Separately for each institution or only as total costs (in this case how would be the total budget distributed between the two institutions - where should this be specified)? 2. Do services of a third party involved in the project always have to be subcontracted (even in case of very low costs paid to this third party)? 3. Depreciation: Does all equipment (even if its costs are lower than 1500 EUR) need to be amortized before the end of the project? Are there any exceptions?

We presume that your first question concerns multi-beneficiary contracts. There can be only one budget table and the distribution of budget is up to the agreement between the partners. 2. The answer to your second question can be found in the financial guide relating to FP7 Indirect Actions ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf)) : "In the case of third parties carrying out part of the work which are not subcontractors, the beneficiaries will be entitled to charge their costs only in the cases covered by the special clause [...]. It is essential therefore to discuss these cases during the negotiations, and if they are accepted, to include the relevant special clause in the grant agreement." 3. Please refer to the financial guide: To be considered as eligible, a cost must be determined according to the beneficiary's usual accounting practice and each beneficiary must apply its usual depreciation system for durable equipment. If the purchase cost of the equipment is recorded as an expense in the beneficiary's accounting system and if this is its usual accounting practice and is in line with the national accounting regulation/law, it is acceptable to charge the entire purchase cost to the project. However, please note that under no circumstances the grant may result in a profit to the beneficiary. NB: The costing table template, it is part of the standard application package (Part B2). More information can also be found in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-grantholders-partII_en.pdf)).

In the Guide for Applicants for ERC AdG, the following paragraph under heading "Personnel" states that "Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project and must correspond to the percentage of dedicated working time (minimum 30% for the PI) to run the ERC project."

Does this mean that the PI also must charge the cost for the salary on a minimum of 30%? Or can he/she work a minimum of 30% (proved by timesheets) and charge the salary on other funding?

There is no obligation that the HI should charge any part of PI salary. Time sheets are strongly recommended to prove time spent on the project. The PI should keep timesheets (or any properly working time-recording system proving the working time) to prove his/her time dedicated to the project even if the PI salary is not paid by the EC Grant, because the ERC Grant is based on the granting of a Individual and timesheets is a way to prove the PI's implication in his/her Project. Evidently, if HI does not want to charge any part of the PI's salary, no salary should be included in the requested Grant. Please also refer to the evaluation criteria, as indicated in the ERC Work Programme (available on the ERC website at URL: [http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101\\_en.pdf](http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/l-wp-201101_en.pdf), chapter 4.10: the Principal Investigator should be strongly committed to the project and willing to devote a significant amount of time to it (they will be expected to devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project and spend at least 50% of their total working time in an EU Member State or associated country.)

<p>The PI can ask for one additional Mio Euro if he needs major research equipment. Do the depreciation rules of the HI apply also to this equipment? What exactly are the rules for this additional Mio?</p>	<p>Referring to a piece of equipment under direct costs, the general answer is that it is only the proportionate depreciation that is eligible for funding. A higher pre-financing payment may be made at the beginning of the project to ease the temporary cash flow problems of the beneficiary but the eligibility rules will remain the same.</p> <p>More information can be found in the Guide for Financial Issues, available at URL: <a href="ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf">ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf</a>. (Article II.15 of ECGA – Identification of direct and indirect costs - from page 42 onwards).</p> <p>In case the budget table shows possible cash flow problems at the beginning of the project and this due to a heavy equipment purchase at the start, the option for a higher prefinancing could be discussed. Please note that this is more an exception than a rule, and that it should be carefully looked into this on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>In practice the ERC Financial Unit first discuss this issue with the PI - HI and always ask them for a detailed request upon which they discuss the issue internally. It would be recommended in such case to advice the PI to contact the Financial Officer of his/her project for this issue.</p>
<p>1. Can a larger budget also be requested in order to purchase access to high-tech equipment for the project, rather than for purchasing the actual equipment itself? (The estimated cost of using the equipment for the proposed project over four years, based on a standard rate per minute, would take the total requested EC contribution over the normal €2.5 million limit).</p> <p>2. In the ERC's view, for an ERC AdG proposal, would it be acceptable in principle for a PI to request a larger budget in order to purchase major research equipment that will be destroyed during the course of the experiments conducted for the project?</p>	<p>1) Please refer to the ERC Guide to Applicants (available on the ERC website at URL: <a href="http://erc.europa.eu">http://erc.europa.eu</a>):</p> <p>"Depending on the specific project and field, the level of these grants may be up to EUR 3 500 000 for a period of 5 years (pro rata for projects of shorter duration). Normally, however, grants will be limited to a maximum of EUR 2 500 000 unless the application involves specific features requiring a higher level of support: a 'Co-Investigator project'; requirement to purchase major research equipment...". The scientific added value must have been properly justified and accepted during evaluation by the ERC peer review evaluation panels.</p> <p>2) This question has two aspects:</p> <p>a) The proportionate depreciation amount for the equipment can be reimbursed anyway, but not the purchase price of the equipment. However, it depends on how the depreciation rules will change -according to the national legislation and the regulation of the HI- if equipment is destroyed. This issue should be checked with the HI.</p> <p>b) It has to be clearly explained and justified in the proposal that such</p>

action is directly linked to the implementation of the project and it is done for the interest of the project.

Additional information as for the depreciation:

In case it is the normal course of use that the equipment is destroyed by the end of the project (normal wear and tear) because it is completely useless, most probably the equipment will be depreciated over the lifetime of the project. However, if the HI wants to destroy the equipment only because they want to have full reimbursement of purchase price, the reply would definitely be no. Again, it is up to the accounting policy of the HI.

More information can also be found in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions

([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/financialguide_en.pdf)) in general, or in the Part II of the Guide for ERC Grant Holders ([ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-granholders-partII\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-guide-granholders-partII_en.pdf)) in particular. Even if they are not legally binding, as the name indicates, they provide you guidance about the financial issues, including the eligibility of costs.