Practical aspects of the Evaluation Process in the Advanced Grant Programme

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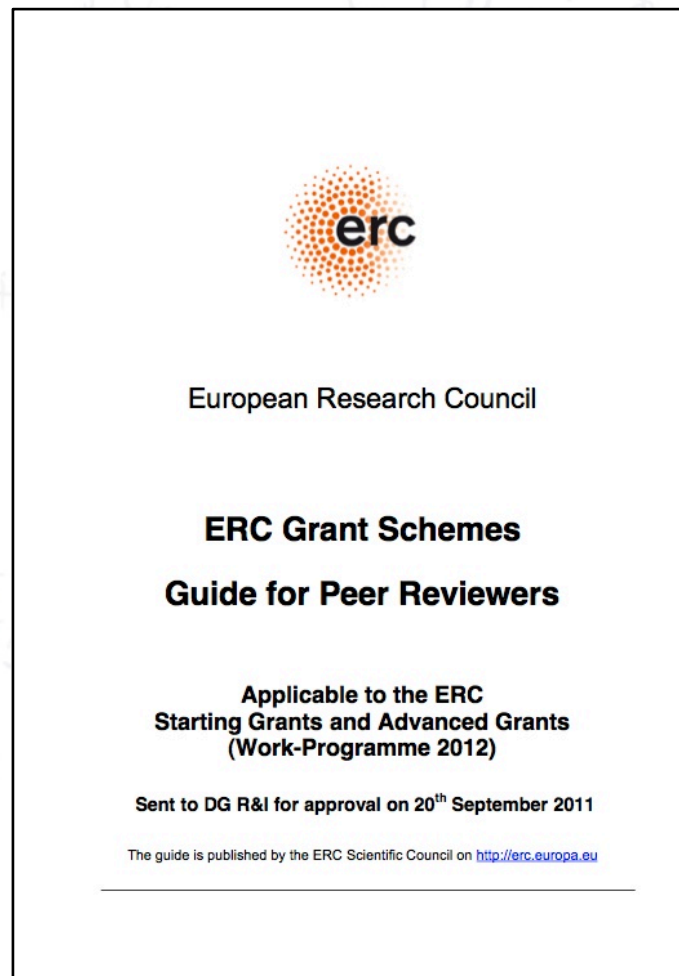ERC-Mathematics Advanced Grant Panel A Chair
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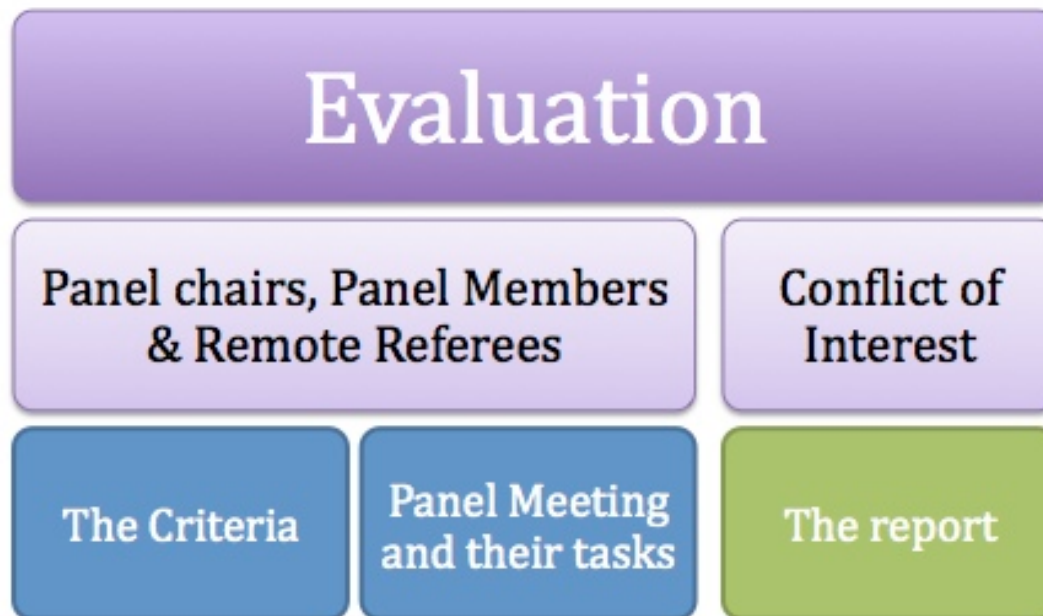# 1. The ERC Scheme: Guide for Peer Reviews

➡️ **Public guide**

➡️ **Clear process**

ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/
docs/guideforercpeerreviewers-
adg_en.pdf

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European Research Council

ERC Grant Schemes

Guide for Peer Reviewers

Applicable to the ERC
Starting Grants and Advanced Grants
(Work-Programme 2012)

Sent to DG R&I for approval on 20th September 2011

The guide is published by the ERC Scientific Council on http://erc.europa.eu

1. The Scheme

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2. Panel Chairs, Panel Members and remote Referees

Panel Chairs

E R C's Scientific Officer: **Carlos Martín-Vide**

Panel Members

1. Individual remote review – by electronic means – of a subset of those proposals in preparation of the panel meeting.

2. Participation in the panel meetings

1. To chair the panel meetings.
2. To (re-)allocate proposals to review panels.
3. To assign proposals to Panel Members (and to remote Referees) .
4. To ensure the panels
5. To attend the Panel Chairs' meeting in order to assess the response to the call for proposals and plan the work of the panel accordingly.

Remote Referees

1. The ERC evaluations rely on input from remote Referees.
2. They are scientists and scholars who bring in the necessary specialised expertise.
3. Remote Referees work remotely and deliver their individual reviews by electronic means

3. Conflict of Interest (CoI)

Peer-reviewers should not be put in a situation in which their impartiality might be questioned, or where the suspicion could arise that recommendations are affected by elements that lie outside the scope of the review. To that effect, the ERC has formulated a clear set of rules pertaining to conflict of interest (CoI). These rules are incorporated in the Appointment Letter, in the form of the need for disclosure by the reviewer of any actual (disqualifying) or potential conflict of interest regarding the proposals.

The Panel Chairs will pay particular attention to the rules on conflict of interest and exclusion of experts (e.g. the concerned member of a Panel will be informed by the relevant Panel Chair on a bilateral ground - in the presence of an ERC's Scientific Officer).

4. Individual assesment: The Criteria

Eligibility Criteria

Evaluation Criteria

Eligibility criteria are simple, factual and legally-binding rules

The evaluation criteria for each step and their interpretation are described in the applicable ERC Work Programme:

The **PI** (intellectual capacity, creative, etc) and the **feasibility** of the scientific approach is assessed at step 1.

The **detailed research methodology** (timescales and resources included) is assessed at step 2.

4. Individual assesment: Questionnaire

✓ To what extent is the Principal Investigator's record of research, collaborations, project conception, supervision of students and publications **ground-breaking** and demonstrative of independent **creative thinking** and the capacity to **go significantly beyond the state of the art**?

✓ To what extent does the proposed research address **important challenges** at the frontiers of the field(s) addressed? To what extent does it have suitably **ambitious objectives**, which go substantially beyond the current state of the art (e.g. including inter- and trans-disciplinary developments and novel or unconventional concepts and/or approaches)?

✓ To what extent does the possibility of a **major breakthrough** with an impact beyond a specific research domain/discipline justify any highly novel and/or unconventional methodologies ("high-gain/high-risk balance")? To what extent is the proposed **research methodology** (including the proposed timescales and resources) appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?

5. Panel Meetings

✓   Autonomy of Panel Chairs

✓   Re-allocation of proposals to a different panel

✓   The efficiency of meetings and preparation

✓   Ranking methodology

✓   The possible use of a voting system

✓   Outputs of the panel meetings

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5. The tasks of the Panel Meetings (step 1)

In step 1 of the evaluation process part B section 1 of the proposal is assessed, marked and ranked.

A

Proposals that should go forward to the second step, scored A. The number of proposals selected for step 2 may correspond to up to 3.0 times the panel's indicative budget.

B

Proposals of high quality but not sufficient to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation, scored B. These proposals are not further evaluated and will not be recommended for funding.

C

Proposals that are not of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation, scored C. In this case applicants may also be subject to resubmission limitations in future calls if specified in the relevant Work Programme of those calls.

5. The tasks of the Panel Meetings (step 2)

In step 2 of the evaluation all sections of the retained proposals (i.e. Part B section 1 and 2) are assessed and ranked by the panel.

A

Those proposals which fully meet the ERC's excellence criterion and are therefore recommended for funding if sufficient funds are available, scored A;

B

Those proposals which meet some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and therefore will not be funded, scored B

5. The evaluation report (Feeback to applicants)

Elements of the **Evaluation Report.** The Evaluation Report of any proposal comprises three components:

▶ The decision of the panel (A, B or C grade plus ranking range).

▶ A comment by the panel, usually written by the "lead reviewer" and approved by the panel.

▶ The comments from the individual reviews given by remote Referees and Panel Members prior to the panel meeting.

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6. Other roles

Scientific Council

The ERC ScC may delegate its members to attend panel meetings. The role of the ScC delegates relates to ensure and promote coherence of reviews between panels, to identify best practices, and to gather information for future reviews of the procedures by the ScC.

Independient Observers

Under the Rules, the ERCEA has an obligation to invite Independent Observers to monitor at regular intervals its reviewing sessions. The Independent Observers are independent of the ERCEA and of the ScC

7. Algunas sugerencias (1)

- Si tienes una buena idea de proyecto trabájala y sométela al ERC. No siempre se gana a la primera (la tasa de éxito es del 15% aproximadamente) pero recibirás sugerencias constructivas.

- El ERC está muy bien organizado. Casi todo lo que necesitas saber está en la guía. ¡Léela!

- La familia ERC es ya muy grande. Cada año 1000 personas trabajan en sus paneles. Seguro que conoces a alguien que puede ayudarte. No dudes en asesorarte al preparar tu proyecto.

- En los "Advanced Grants" no hay entrevista. Te lo juegas todo en la memoria.

- Manda tu propuesta al panel más natural, aquél en el que los miembros del mismo te reconocerán como miembro del área. Puedes guiarte, por ejemplo, por las áreas de las revistas donde has publicado tus trabajos más importantes en los últimos 10 años.

- Piensa que serás evaluado por expertos muy próximos a tu área y otros más alejados. A todos ellos tu proyecto les debe parecer excelente. Escríbelo pensando en los dos tipos de lectores.

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7. Algunas sugerencias (2)

- Trabaja el "leadership profile". El evaluador, al acabar su lectura, debe estar convencido de que eres un investigador de primera fila y con gran potencial.

- Tu proyecto debe girar en torno a ideas y metodologías claras e innovadoras. Asegúrate de que están claramente presentes ya en el resumen y después de que sus contornos se definen tanto en la propuesta larga como en la abreviada.

- La abreviada es clave pues es la que se analiza en la fase 1.

- La detallada también pues se toma en cuenta en la decisión final.

- Organiza tu proyecto en torno a paquetes de trabajo bien identificados e interconectados, definiendo un área de trabajo concreta pero capaz de generar la dinámica (volumen y calidad) que exige un proyecto ERC.

- En el presupuesto destina gran parte de los recursos a jóvenes investigadores a los que darás oportunidad de incorporarse a tu proyecto a través de llamadas públicas con buena difusión y una evaluación rigurosa. Para poder hacerlo necesitas un buen plan de trabajo y cronograma.

- Todos los centros son elegibles pero asegúrate que en torno al tuyo eres capaz de crear la imagen de un entorno de excelencia, adecuado para el proyecto.

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7. Algunas sugerencias (3)

- Debes de referirte a tus colaboradores en el campo con el objeto de reafirmar tu liderazgo y que el proyecto se desarrollará en un contexto internacional de gran potencial. Pero recuerda que no estás montando una red temática.

- Intenta describir el avance que puede suponer el proyecto en el campo. Si tu proyecto se concede tiene que haber un antes y un después.

- Piensa que si ganas el "Advanced Grant" luego puedes pedir un PoC pero no es necesario ni conveniente que te refieras a ello en la solicitud. Cada cosa a su tiempo.

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