

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 (PART 1)**

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 **in particular for competitive ERC Starting/Consolidator (eventually also Synergy and Advanced) grant applicants who already seriously work on a grant proposal**, which they intend to submit within the **2023 ERC Work Programme calls and those who are not restricted by resubmission limitations from the previous calls.**

### **DATES:**

**25 May 2022:** SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

**26 May 2022:** LIFE SCIENCES

**27 May 2022:** PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

The workshop 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 with other experts from the applicants' fields of research. **Please read carefully the REQUIREMENTS in the section below.**

- **The second part of the workshop will be held between 27 and 29 June 2022.**

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 help 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 September 2022.**

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. The workshop is part of our training module „How to successfully participate in Horizon Europe?” and is held within the project Czech Republic in the European Research Area (CZERA – MS2103) supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic.

## INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING FIRST PART OF THE WORKSHOP (25 – 27 May 2022)

Submission of non-competitive materials would mean that the applicants **will not be admitted to the workshop**. Applicants will be informed about their admission/non-admission to the workshop no later than **13 May 2022**. Individual feedback to the applicants cannot be provided by the Expert group due to the capacity limitations. The on-line workshop will be held in English without interpretation.

### REQUIREMENTS

**In order to attend the workshop, the applicants are required to fill in a registration form [HERE](#) and send the title of their project, its acronym, the indicative choice of the panel (as filled in in the registration form), short abstract of the proposal (max. 2 000 characters), CV (max. 2 pages), and early achievements track-record (TR) for the ERC StG and the ERC CoG applicants or 10 years track-record (TR) for the ERC AdG applicants (max. 2 pages). All should be sent in one pdf file and in the form fully respecting the instructions in the [Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2022 Calls](#), the [Information for Applicants to the Advanced Grant 2022 Call](#) or the [Information for Applicants to the Synergy Grant 2022 Call](#) (using the [ERC templates](#)) to the Expert Group ([erc.es@tc.cz](mailto:erc.es@tc.cz)) by 11 April 2022. In order to allow further processing of the materials, this deadline will be strictly reinforced.**

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 the ERC standards (please see the ERC evaluation criteria in Annex I)** by members of the Expert group and other experts (ERC evaluators and grantees without conflict of interest). Due to limited number of applicants we can work with, preference will be given to the applications that seem ready for submission of a competitive ERC 2023 grant proposal. The evaluators will consider clarity of the abstract that should indicate an idea that can be developed into a promising scientific high-risk/high-gain project going substantially beyond the state of the art in a clearly non-incremental fashion, as well as the submitted CV and informative TR.

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 are kindly asked to send (through their ERC contact persons) a list of their applicants who have registered for the workshop by 11 April to [erc.es@tc.cz](mailto:erc.es@tc.cz).**

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?**

The participants are not requested to send their presentations beforehand. The restriction to 5 minutes is intentional and fully in line with the purpose of the workshop. Presentations should focus on the essentials and on presenting the main idea (a lengthy overview of the state-of-the-art would not serve this goal well). While preparing the presentation, the applicant should repeatedly ask her/himself: "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 the presentation/proposal. From our experience, it is indeed useful to pay attention to them when preparing the presentation and the 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/do the PI(s) 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! 😊