

How to write a good European Research Council Grant proposal (in 15 minutes!)

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Mission impossible → in 15 minutes:

- The idea behind the ERC
- Eligibility of Host Institutions and Researchers
- Funding Schemes // Deadlines // Who is eligible for what?
- Application and Evaluation Process
- Budget Calculation & Administrative Issues
- Proposal Writing
- Outlook: The Interview



Research quality as sole criterion Aiming at excellence

All research fields

Investigator-driven

“Bottom-Up”

European Research Council



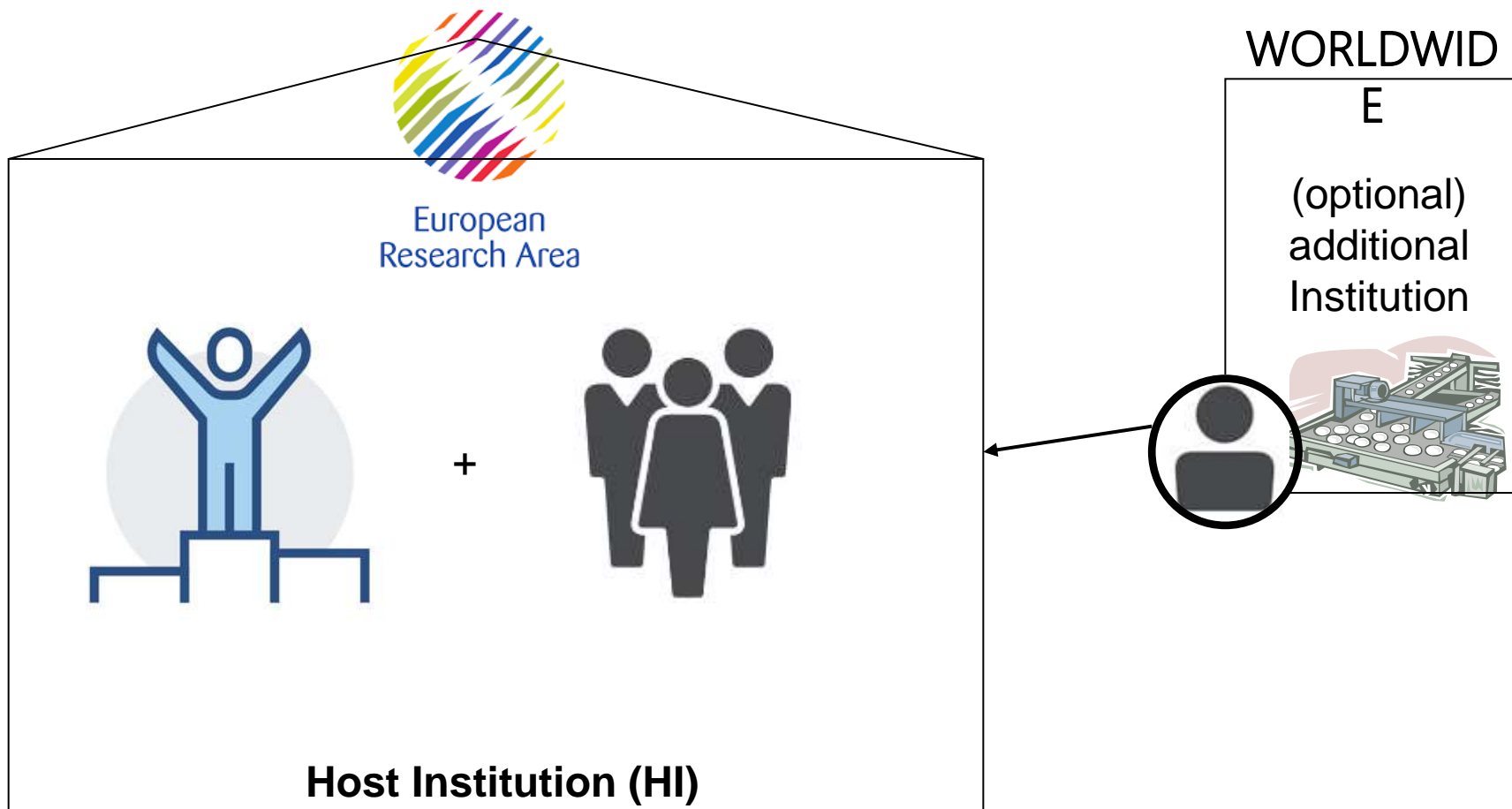
Portability of grants

Groundbreaking
Frontier Research

Scientific Autonomy



Principal Investigator (PI) + Team





Bottom-Up

- All fields of science, all topics
- 3 scientific domains:
 - Physical Sciences & Engineering (PE)
 - Life Sciences (LS)
 - Social Sciences and Humanities (SH)



What is most important for your proposal?



Your idea!

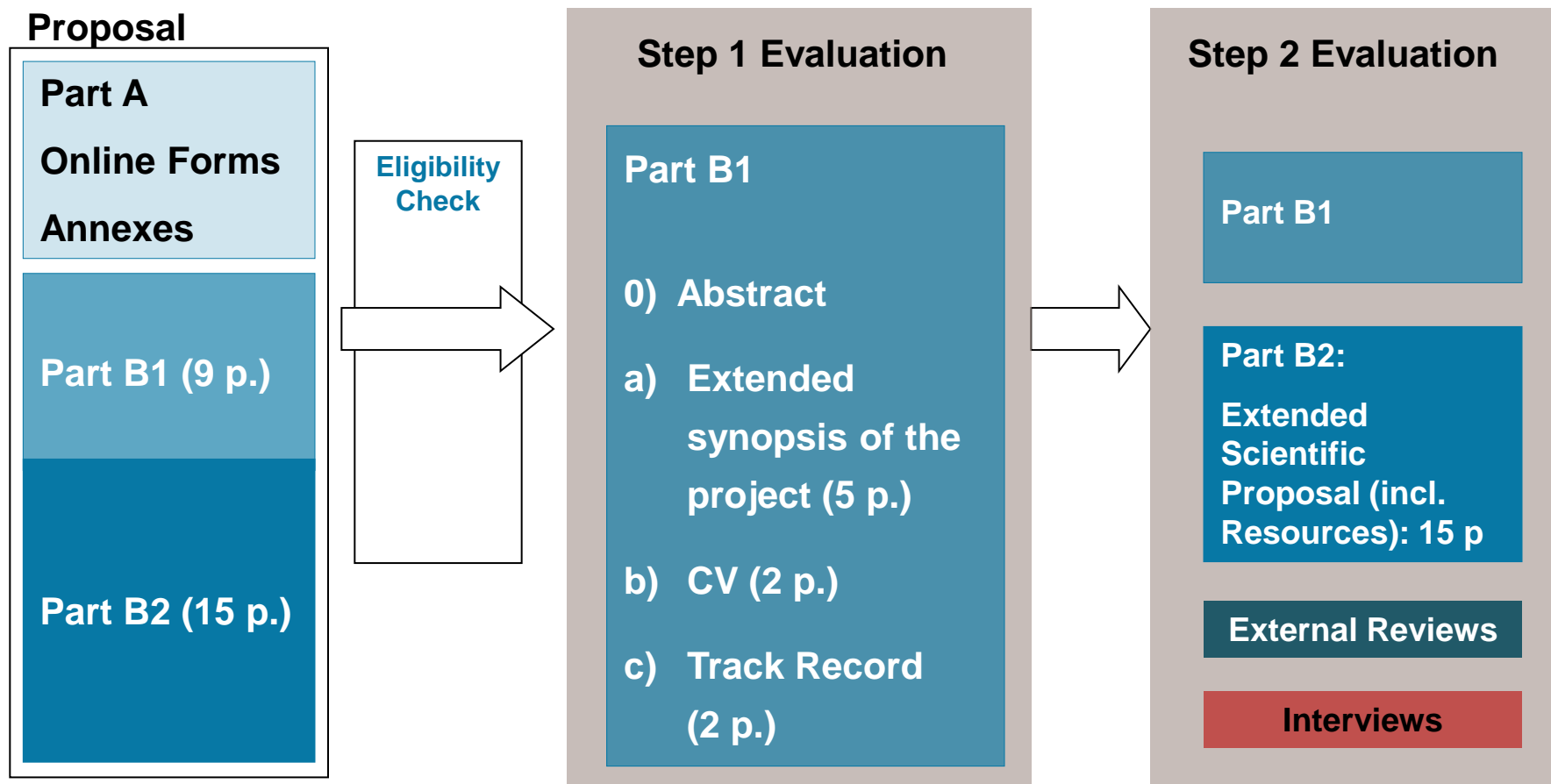
Choosing a topic

- “Propose a project that comes from your heart”
- “Be excited about your project”
- Creative, innovative, feasible
- An important challenge of your field
- Balance between “not ambitious enough” and “too ambitious” – fitting to your profile
- Opportunity to define *your* research field
- Unique selling proposition





Application and Evaluation Process



CHECK & USE OFFICIAL TEMPLATE!

Marks & Re-application rules

1st step

A = excellent

B = good but not sufficient

C = insufficient



B: wait 1 Call!
C: wait 2 Calls !

2nd step – Final Result

A = excellent



A: funded

A: unfunded

B = good but not sufficient



If not funded, direct re-application possible



25 panels for all disciplines

Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE)

- PE1: Mathematics
- PE2: Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3: Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4: Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5: Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6: Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7: Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8: Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9: Universe Sciences
- PE10: Earth System Science

Life Sciences (LS)

- LS1: Molecular and Structural Biology and Biochemistry
- LS2: Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
- LS3: Cellular and Developmental Biology
- LS4: Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology
- LS5: Neurosciences and Neural Disorders
- LS6: Immunity and Infection
- LS7: Diagnostic Tools, Therapies and Public Health
- LS8: Evolutionary, Population and Environmental Biology
- LS9: Applied Life Sciences and Biotechnology

Social Sciences & Humanities (SH)

- SH1: Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2: Institutions, Values, Environment and Space
- SH3: The Social World, Diversity, Population
- SH4: Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5: Culture and Cultural Production
- SH 6: The Study of the Human Past

Panel composition

- 12–16 panel members
- From all over the world
- Multi-disciplinary
- At least 3 reviews from panel members (generalists)
 - In Step 2 also external referees (specialists in your field)
- Panel discussions in Brussels (before & after interview)





What is evaluated?

1. Excellence of the Research project

- Ground-breaking nature and potential impact
 - Address important challenges
 - Objectives ambitious & beyond the state of the art
 - High risk / high gain
- Scientific Approach
 - Feasibility
 - Research methodology appropriate to achieve goals
 - Development of novel methodology?
 - Timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate & properly justified?



What is evaluated?

2. Excellence of the Principal Investigator (PI)

- Ability to conduct ground-breaking research
- Starting/Consolidator: Evidence of creative independent thinking
- Have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?
- Advanced: Demonstration of sound leadership in the training and advancement of young scientists



Remember

- Evaluators are human beings and scientists like you
- It can vary from person to person if they
 - take a lot of time / have very little time
 - are motivated / are unmotivated to read your proposal
 - are close to your field / are far from your field
 - are willing to take risks / are hesitant to spend tax payer's money on risky projects
 - are English native speakers / are not completely fluent
 - value more the person / value more the idea
 - value unconventional CV 's / want to see big names
 - value methodological details / only interested in the big picture
 - like to be impressed / very much dislike exaggerations
 - like visuals / prefer texts

CHECK THE 'DECRESIM' PROPOSAL!



3 versions of your project description

Part	Target group
Abstract 2000 Characters	All (incl. public)
Part B1 5 pages	Panel
Part B2 15 pages	Panel, + external referees



In all parts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State of the Art
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hypothesis
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goals
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frontier Research
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impact
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your Vision
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interdisciplinarity
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Risks / Challenges



What do you need to start writing?

- Templates B1 / B2
- Information for Applicants for your Call
- Electronic Submission System via the Participant Portal:
- <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/>
➔ H2020 ➔ ERC ➔ forthcoming
- ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides_for_applicants/h2020-guide19-erc-adg_en.pdf



Not ready for your own application yet?

- Work in an already established ERC team in Europe for some weeks or months
- Researchers affiliated to a Korean Higher Education or Research Institution eligible
- Further information:
 - <https://erc.europa.eu/funding/additional-opportunities#International%20Arrangement%20funding>
 - Contact the NRF international office!





Lessons learnt today

- You need to have a really good scientific idea
- Talk to your contacts in Europe soon about it (scientists, host institution, national contact point)
- Always remember the situation and perspective of the reviewer when writing your proposal
- Be excited about your project 😊
- Ask us if you need more detail @ korea@euraxess.net!!



Take-away exercise: Key Questions on your project → You must be able to do this in 15'

Answer the following questions for yourself

1. Describe the idea of your research project as concise and comprehensive as possible.
2. Which major challenge/problem is going to be solved?
3. What are the ground-breaking/visionary aspects of your research project?
4. What would be the impact on your research field?
5. What makes you the right person to lead the project?
(background, competitors)
6. Keep it short and simple

Thank you for your attention!

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