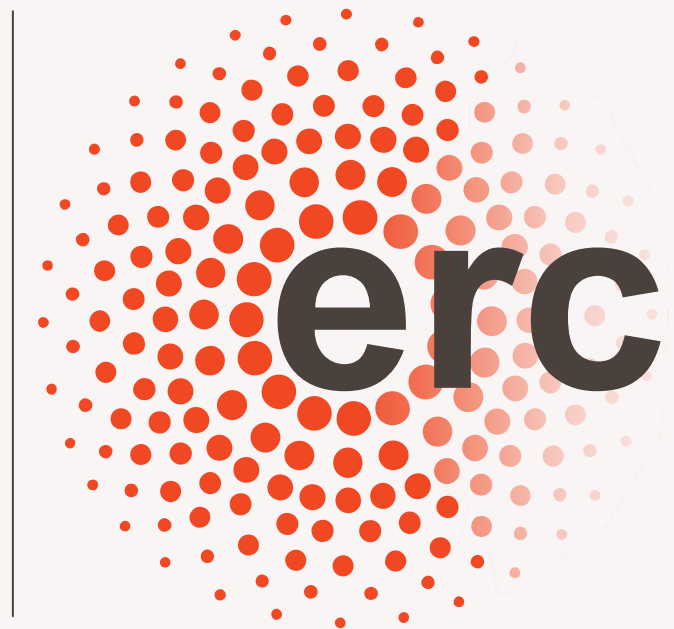# ERC - Advance Grant Call 2008

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Athens, 11 April 2008

Overall Goal of Advanced Grants

- **Flexible grants** for ground-breaking, high-risk/high-gain research that opens new opportunities and directions including those of a multi- and inter-disciplinary nature

- Aimed at are already **established independent research leaders**

- **for up to 5 years, i.e. normally up to ~2,500,000 Euro per grant** (may go up to ~3.5 MEuro in specific cases)

ERC Grants: Who can apply?

➔ **Individual Research Teams**:

- headed by a single "**Principal Investigator**" (team leader)
- any nationality / no age limitations
- if necessary, including additional team members.

➔ The **PI** has the freedom to choose the **research topic** and the power to assemble his/her **research team** (including "*co-Investigators*") meeting the needs of the project.

➔ Teams can be of **national or trans-national** character

➔ **Hosting institution** located in an EU member state or associated country

ERC Advanced Grants: First Call

- Call published 30 November 2007

- Three different deadlines by domain
  - ➔ PE: 28 Feb 2008 (now closed)
  - ➔ SH: 18 March 2008 (now closed)
  - ➔ LS: 22 April 2008 (still open)

- Breakdown by domain is for practical purposes only : this is one single call and one programme!

Call budget breakdown

- Total budget for Call: €517M

- Indicative call budget

  - Physical Sciences – 39%

  - Social Sciences – 14%

  - Life Sciences – 34%

  - + 13% for Interdisciplinary – Cross Panel / Cross domain

  ➔ Within each domain, budget breakdown is, in principle, broken down by demand (equal chance in each panel)

Panel structure

- 3 domains – 25 panels
  - ➔ 10 PE panels
  - ➔ 9 LS Panels
  - ➔ 6 SH Panels
- AdG Panels distinct from StG Panels
- Two sets of panels, meeting on alternative years
- Members of "*alternative panels*" for given year may be used for remote evaluation in particular cases

Overall calendar of ERC AdG Evaluation

	ERC-2008-AG-1	ERC-2008-AG-2	ERC-2008-AG-3
Domain	Physical Sciences	Social Sciences	Life Sciences
Deadline	28/02/08	18/03/08	22/04/08
Panel Chairs meeting	7/03/2008 (week 10)		
Phone conference (panel members)	10/03 to 14/03/08 (week 11)	31/03 to 04/04/08 (week 14)	29/04 to 30/04 (week 18)
Step 1 Panel meetings (3 days)	21/04 to 30/04/08 (weeks 17-18)	13/05 to 16/05/08 (week 20)	09/06 to 20/06/08 (weeks 24-25)
Step 2 Panel meetings (3 days)	23/06 to 04/07/08 (weeks 26-27)	07/07 to 11/07/08 (week 28)	01/09 to 12/09/08 (weeks 36-37)
ID Panel meeting (Chairs or deputies)	22/09 to 26/09 (week 39, exact date TBD)		

Submission of proposals

- Single submission
  - ➔ "1 stage, 2 step"
- Electronic submission via EPSS only
- Deadlines strictly enforced
- Proposals have two parts:
  - ➔ Part A: Administrative forms + A1T
    - Structured information
  - ➔ Part B: Scientific proposal itself
    - Free form pdf file

Submission is to Panels

- Applicant submits to a *Targeted Panel* (of PI choice)

  ➔ Can flag one "*Alternative Review Panel*"

- **Applicant chooses his panel**, that panels is "responsible" for the evaluation of that proposals

- Switching proposals between panels not possible for practical purposes

- But: In case cross-panel or cross-domain proposals, evaluation by members of other panels possible

"Co-Investigator projects"

- Exceptionally, for Interdisciplinary proposals, the PI can include one or more "Co-Investigators"

- These projects are subject to a higher financial limit (3.5 M€) **BUT** the Co-Is are subject to the same re-submission rules as PIs!

- Co-Is do not complete the A1T form, but have to complete Scientific leadership profile, CV and 10 year track record in Part B

- Scientific added value of including the CO-I to be assessed by evaluation panel

- No formal link between Co-Is (scientific issue) and existence of partners (administrative issue)

Proposal structure: Part A

- **Part A**: "Administrative forms" containing
  - ➔ A1 Information on PI
  - ➔ A2 Information on Host Institution
  - ➔ A3 Budget breakdown by year and partner

  - ➔ Plus additional "A1T": "*Track Record*"
    - Summary of Scientific Leadership profile
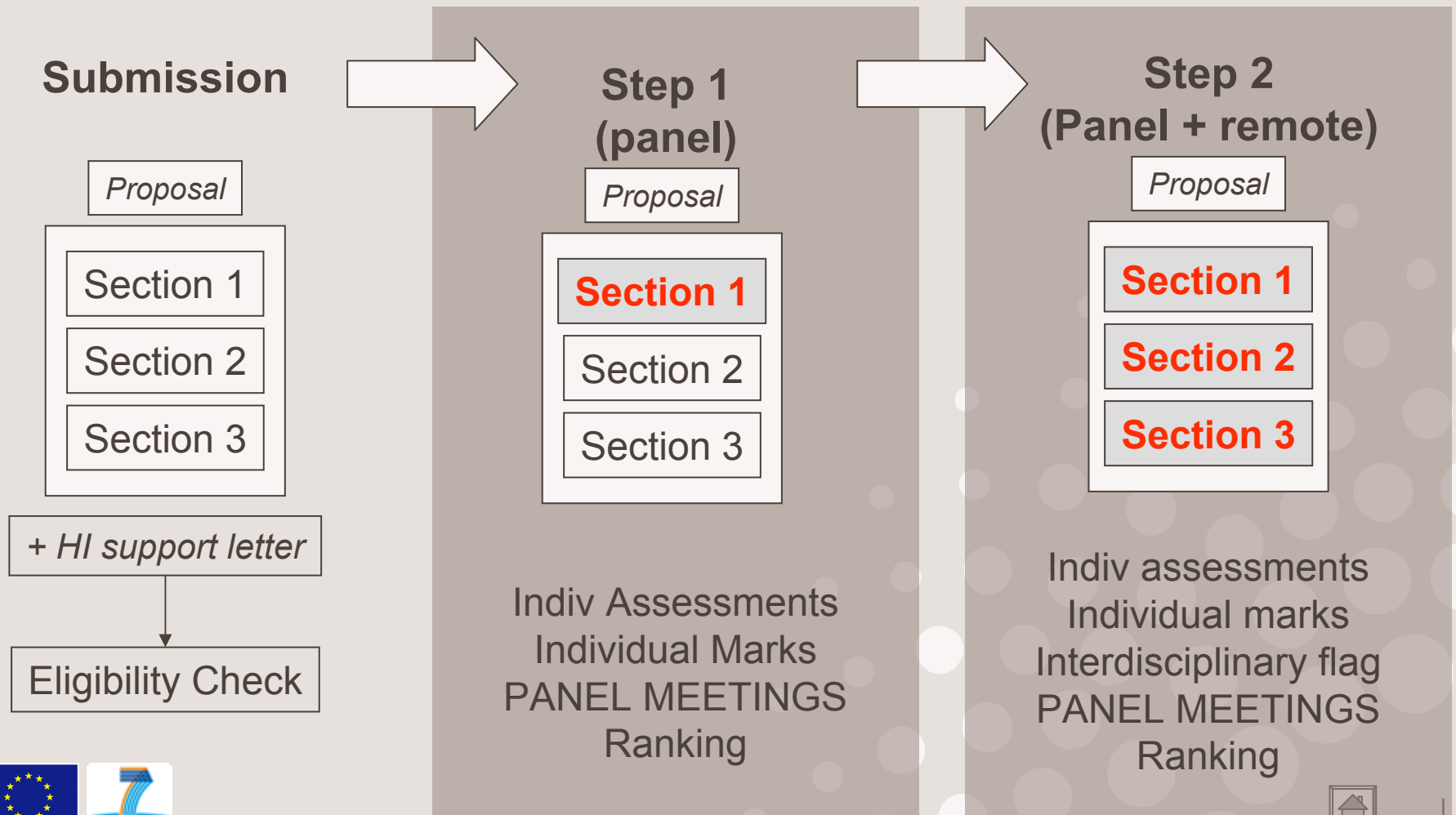   - Summary table of 10 year Track Record

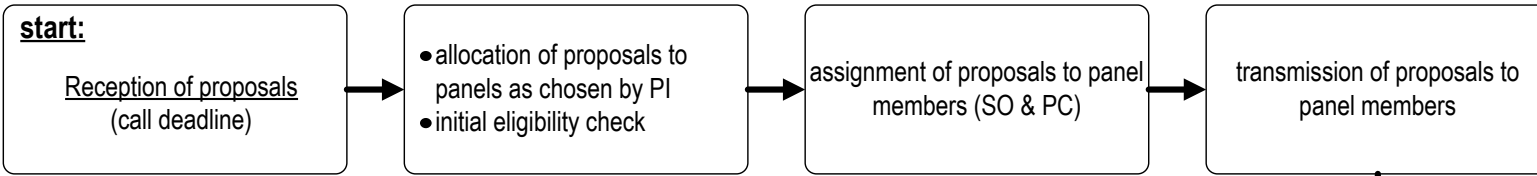# Proposal Structure: Part B

- **Section 1 = "The PI"**
  - Scientific Leadership profile (2 pages)
  - CV (including "funding ID")
  - 10-years track record
  - Extended synopsis
- **Section 2** = **Full Scientific proposal** (15 pages)
- **Section 3** = **Research Environment** description
- Statement of support from the Host Institution
- Ethical Review information

Two step evaluation

- Step 1:
  - ➔ <u>Section 1</u> of Part B evaluated against Criterion 1 (PI) and 2 (Research Project)
  - ➔ Proposal needs to pass threshold for <u>both criteria</u> to pass to second step
    - Panels have information extracted from Form A1T (Track Record) to *assist* them in their decisions
  - ➔ Evaluated by Panel Members + possibly "alternate" panel members where necessary
- Step 2:
  - ➔ All three sections evaluated against all three evaluation criteria
  - ➔ Evaluated by Panel Members + Remote Evaluators

Evaluation process

Submission

Proposal

Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

+ HI support letter

Eligibility Check

Step 1 (panel)

Proposal

Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

Indiv Assessments
Individual Marks
PANEL MEETINGS
Ranking

Step 2 (Panel + remote)

Proposal

Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

Indiv assessments
Individual marks
Interdisciplinary flag
PANEL MEETINGS
Ranking

The Advanced Grant Process Flow

start:
Reception of proposals
(call deadline)

→

- allocation of proposals to panels as chosen by PI
- initial eligibility check

→

assignment of proposals to panel members (SO & PC)

→

transmission of proposals to panel members

Results:
- **final ranked list**
- **full reviewers statements**

- **approved** (within budget)

- **reserve** (exceed budget)

- **rejected** (below quality threshold)
(possibility to resubmit in 2010)

Step 2:
- **part B - sections 1, 2, and 3**
  - CV and 10 year track record
  - scientific leadership profile
  - scientific proposal
  - research environment
- **remote evaluation (PM+RR):**
- **min. 3 readings** per proposal
- **3 criteria**: PI, project, and research environment
- **panel meeting (PM):**
  - adjustment and ranking

analysis based on **track record** information given in **part A1T**

result:
- pre-sorted list of proposals as additional infomation

Step 1:
- **part B - section 1**
  - CV and 10 year track record
  - (summary of the) scientific leadership profile (part A1T)
  - extended synopsis
- **remote evaluation (PM):**
  - **min. 3 readings** per proposal
  - **2 criteria** (PI, project)
  - (nomination of remote referees?)
- **panel meeting (PM):**
  - discussion and final ranking

result:
- ranked list of proposals
- reviewers statements, IARs
- candidate list of remote referees (RR)

pass budgetary cut-off?

yes

no

pass **both** quality thresholds?

yes

no

rejections
(possibility to resubmit in 2010)

rejections
(no re-submission before 2011)

Legend:
- process step
- step 1
- decision
- step 2
- document

PC: Panel Chair,
PM: Panel Members,
RR: Remote Referee,
SO: Scientific Officer

04 March 2008

Marking scheme

- Criteria 1 and 2 will be marked according to the following scheme:
    - 4: Outstanding
    - 3 Excellent
    - 2 Very good
    - 1 Non-fundable / fail
- Criteria 3 is pass fail
- Quality threshold of: >=2;   ½ marks allowed
- Proposals below the quality threshold for either of the two criteria are eliminated (in Step 1) / "not fundable" (in Step 2)
- Proposals passing from Step 1 to Step 2 have to pass all thresholds, but also will be limited according to a given multiple of the funding available for that panel (~x3)
- Only those proposals that pass both quality thresholds in step 1 will be allowed to re-submit in 2010. Others have to wait to 2011.
- Eliminates the link between "proposal quality" and "passing to Step 2" that existed with the StG

Transmission of Proposals to PMs

- All proposals for evaluation will be placed on the ERC Web site for download

- Each PM will be sent an individualized User Name and Password

- Each PM will have an individualized "Zip File" to download containing al the files assigned to him for evaluation

- Note different deadlines for different reviews! This will be managed with the help of your Panel Coordinator

Remote part of evaluation

- Remote part of evaluation will take part completely electronically
- Different Individual Assessment Reports (IARs) sent to each PM for return electronically (e-mail) **for each deadline**
- **Step 1:** proposals sent to (4) PMs
- **Step 2:** proposals also sent to specialized remote experts (to be determined at/ following Step 1 meeting)
- IARs are (protected) excel sheets with the proposals to be reviewed specified on them
- IARs will be read electronically in preparation for Panel Meeting
- Panel Coordinators will assist PMs in keeping track of what reviews are due for which deadlines

Panel Meetings

- Step 1 and Step 2 Panel meetings similar
- Objective is to take decisions on which are the successful proposals, document these decisions, and to finalise marks and feedback to applicants.
- Goal: to have done as much as possible of this work remotely ahead of time: basis of feed back is the (4) Individual Assessments
- May be a **lead reviewer**, who presents the proposal and reviews opinions to panel, and is primarily responsible for drafting panel comment
- Suggest that you work by process of elimination, to concentrate time and discussion on the strongest proposals, not weakest
- In the end it is a panel decision, based on information provided y the Individual Assessments, for each proposal

Interdisciplinary Proposals / Domain

- Interdisciplinary Research domain (cross-domain & cross-panel) → indicative budget of 13% total budget
- Proposal submitted to a <u>target panel</u> primarily responsible for its evaluation
- Step 1 & Step 2:
  - ➔ Assigned for reviews from PMs outside primary panel, if necessary
- Step 2:
  - ➔ Proposals that "pass" but not within panel budget will be considered for Interdisciplinary Domain / Budget
- Decision taken by combined panel of all Panel Chairs (September 2008; exact date to be determined)

Financial limits

- Normal limit: 2.5 M€ for five years (pro-rata)

- Certain cases, limit raised to 3.5 M€ (pro-rata)

  ➜ Co-investigator projects

  ➜ Proposals that require the purchase of major research equipment

  ➜ PI coming from third country to establish him/her self in the EU or Associated state

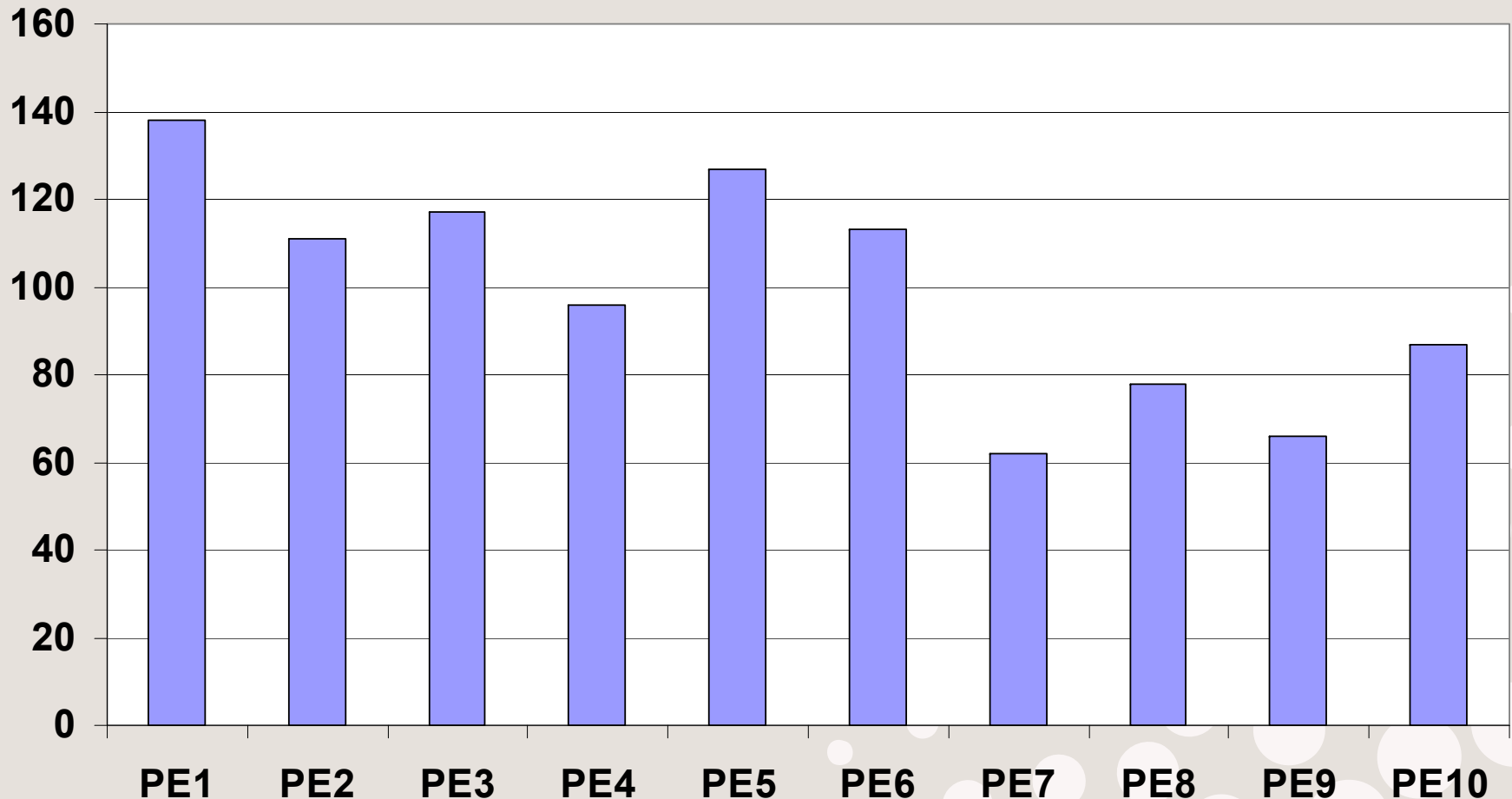- Up to panel to decide whether this is justified or not.

Budget considerations of proposals

- Budget considerations arise (mainly) in Step 2 evaluation

- Panels have responsibility to ensure that resources requested are reasonable and well justified

- Panels to recommend a final maximum EC budget based on the resources allocated/ removed

- Awards made on a "take it or leave it" basis: no "negotiations"

Resubmission rules

- Only one AdG application for 2008 and 2009 calls (combined)

- Can only re-apply for 2010 AdG call if you are <u>above threshold</u> in Step 1 in 2008 or 2009 AdG Call

- If you apply for AdG in 2008 or 2009, cannot apply for a StG during same period

PE Domain: Proposals received per panel (total 997)

SH Domain: Proposals received per panel. (Total 403)