

# TUBITAK ERC Training

## 9th- 10th September 2019

Dr. Maria Maunula  
University of Turku, Finland  
INVEST- flagship

# Morning agenda

Intro

- Session I:

Intro and Opportunities

Process Review and Interviews

Part 2: Researcher



# What is ERC?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWLNqRykvC8>



**ERC:**

<http://erc.europa.eu/>

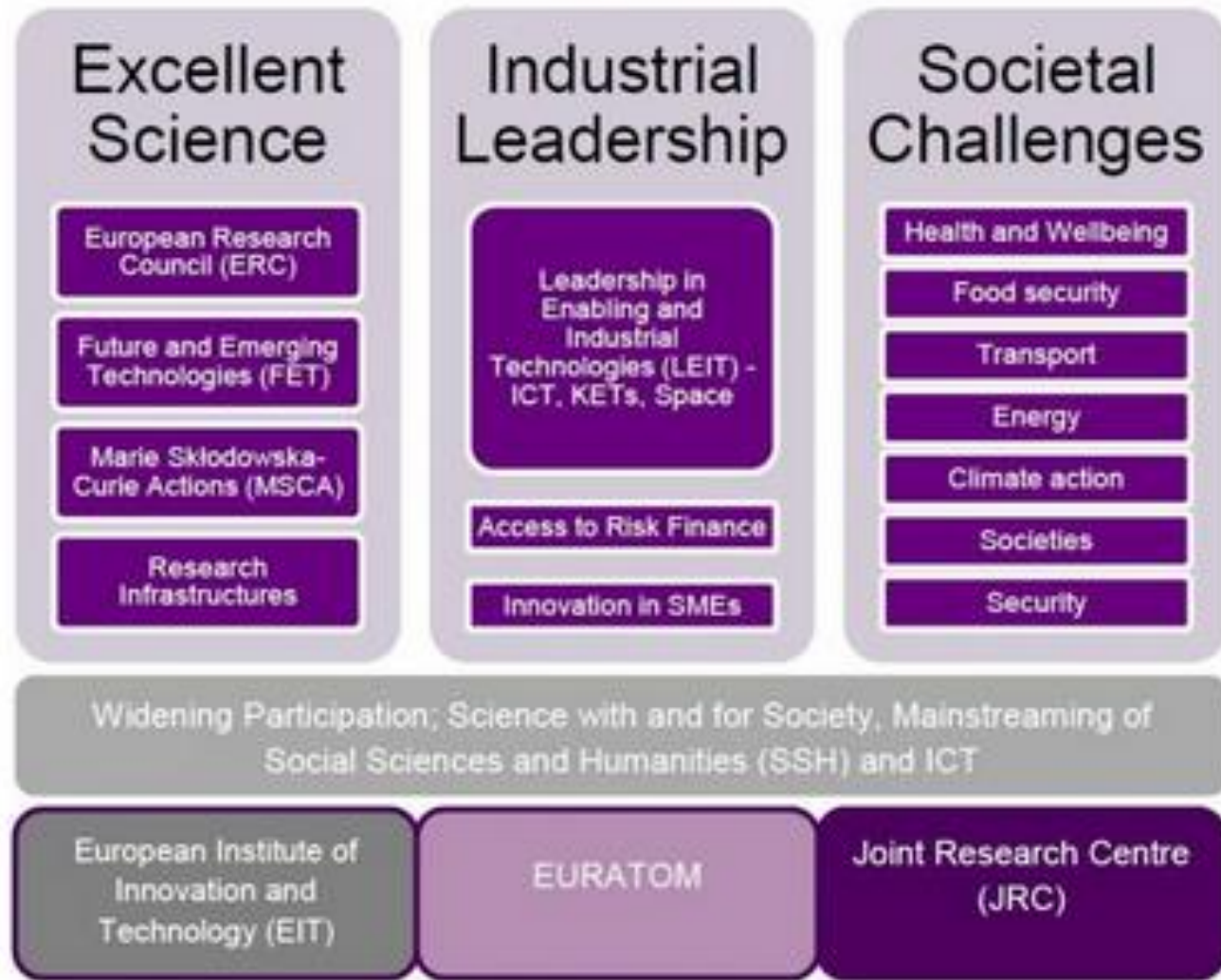
# Why am I here to talk about it?

- 10 years as a researcher
- 7 years as a research funding specialist
- Over 20 ERC proposals advised
- 4 successful and 2 more into the interviews
- Passion for grant writing and blue-sky-research

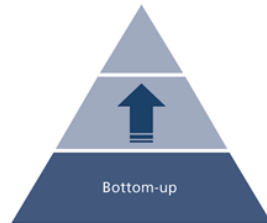
# Small introduction round

- Your name
- Field of research
- How many years since your PhD?
- Ever applied for ERC?

# ERC in H2020



# What is ERC (European Research Council)?



**The ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition**

**Budget:** € 13 billion (2014-2020) - 1.9 billion €/year  
€ 7.5 billion (2007-2013) - 1.1 billion €/year

## Legislation

- Scientific governance: independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President; full authority over funding strategy
- Support by the ERC Executive Agency (autonomous)
- Excellence as the only criterion

## Strategy

- Support for the individual scientist – no networks!
- Global peer-review
- No predetermined subjects (bottom-up)
- Support of frontier research in all fields of science and humanities

# What is ERC?

- **The main goal and mission** of the European Research Council (ERC) is to **encourage high quality research** in Europe through competitive funding and to support **investigator-driven frontier** research across all fields, on the basis of scientific excellence.

## **The ERC aims to:**

- Support the **best of the best** in Europe across all fields of science, scholarship and engineering
- Promote wholly **investigator-driven**, or 'bottom-up' frontier research
- Encourage the work of the established and next generation of independent **top research leaders** in Europe
- Reward innovative proposals by placing emphasis on the quality of the **idea** rather than the research area
- Raise the status and visibility of **European frontier research** and the very best researchers of today and tomorrow



# ERC Grant schemes

## Starting Grants

2-7 years after PhD  
prior to 1 Jan 2016

Up to € 1.5 Mio  
for 5 years

## Consolidator Grants

7-12 years after PhD  
prior to 1 Jan 2016

Up to € 2.0 Mio  
for 5 years

## Advanced Grants

track-record of  
significant research  
achievements in the  
last 10 years  
Up to € 2.5 Mio  
for 5 years

## Synergy Grants

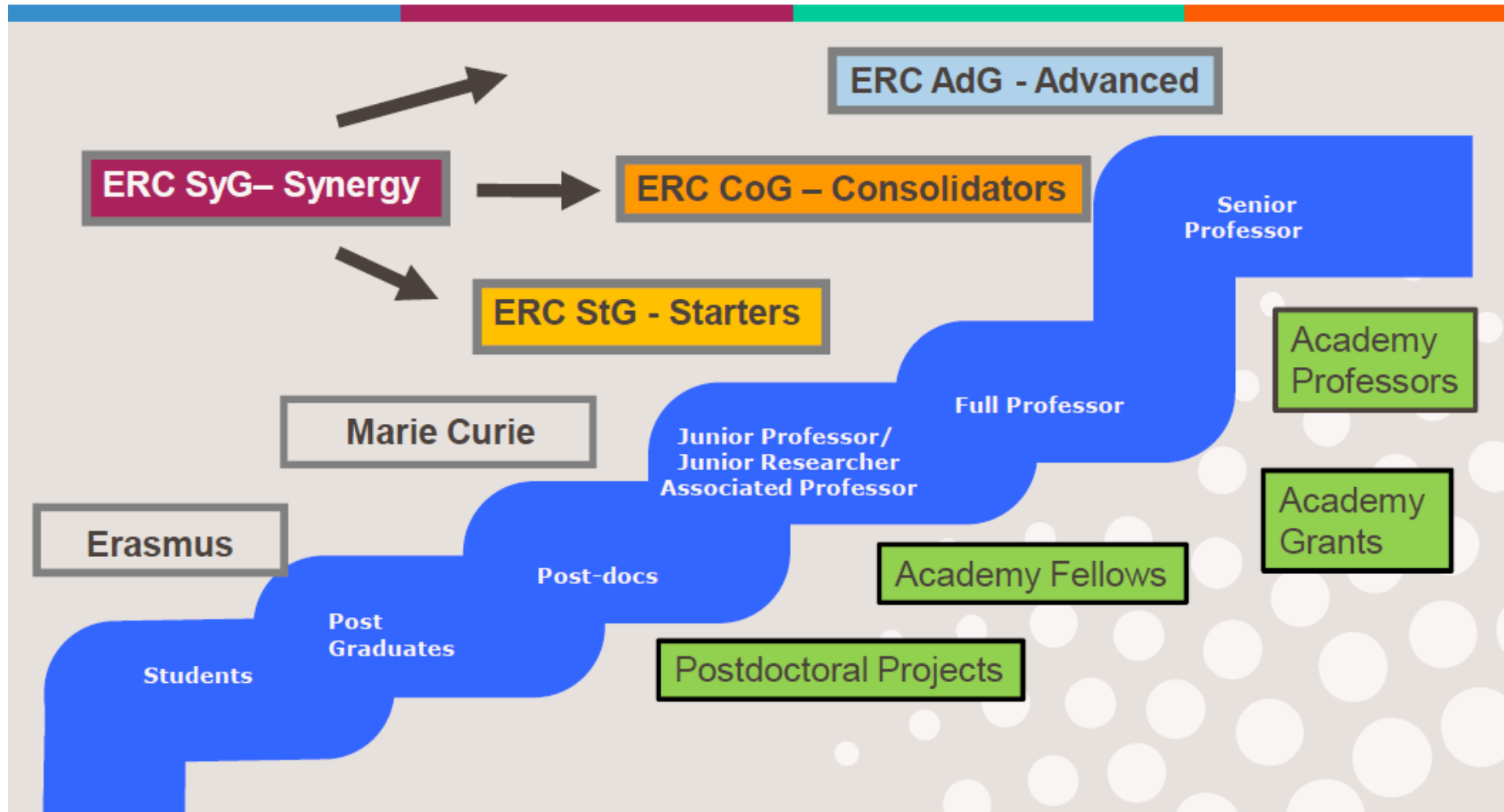
## Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research – earliest stage of marketable  
innovation

up to € 150.000 for ERC grant holders

	<i>Starting Grant</i>	<i>Consolidator Grant</i>	<i>Advanced Grant</i>	<i>Synergy Grant</i>	<i>Proof of Concept Grant</i>
<i>Call identifier</i>	ERC-2020-StG	ERC-2020-CoG	ERC-2020-AdG	ERC-2020-SyG	ERC-2020-PoC
<i>Call Opens</i>	17/07/2019	24/10/2019	14/05/2020	18/07/2019	15/10/2019
<i>Call closes (cut-off dates for PoC)</i>	16/10/2019	04/02/2020	26/08/2020	05/11/2019	21/01/2020 23/04/2020 17/09/2020

# Researchers career development and complementary funding schemes



# Applications per country

Country	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2007
Albania	2										
Austria	88	74	53	57	87	78	89	89	64	52	148
Denmark	99	111	79	86	88	52	93	87	49	44	165
Estonia	9	14	13	2	10	5	5	2	2	2	11
Finland	101	85	109	99	107	128	170	128	66	48	226
France	253	275	256	206	256	210	403	319	264	222	691
Netherlands	246	226	204	197	212	263	338	277	161	129	525
Norway	73	55	39	39	55	71	73	62	39	29	86
Sweden	142	107	121	91	120	162	212	152	120	85	454
Switzerland	124	136	129	124	1	130	147	108	99	60	195
The Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia		1	1	2	2		1	1	1		
Turkey	18	29	19	28	16	22	41	18	24	35	164
Ukraine	2	1	8	3							
United Kingdom	470	544	483	489	566	533	865	784	443	333	1109

# Grants awarded

Country	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2007
Austria	10	14	16	10	14	13	9	16	15	7	5
Belgium	17	12	21	11	12	16	24	20	14	14	10
Denmark	13	7	4	8	12	2	13	10	6	7	3
Estonia	1	1						1		1	
Finland	10	7	6	5	9	3	8	9	4	6	7
France	36	52	52	37	49	30	84	57	73	33	41
Romania	1	1	1	1	1						
Serbia					1						
Slovakia							1				
Slovenia	1							1			
Spain	18	22	24	14	22	12	25	27	25	19	22
Sweden	17	15	16	13	9	6	21	15	21	6	11
Switzerland	24	24	25	29	2	23	37	23	28	22	17
Turkey		2	1	2	1	1	2				
United Kingdom	64	75	65	62	65	65	143	120	75	43	57

# By domain

from: <https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects/results>

Country	LS	PE	SH
Finland	26	30	18
Israel	119	125	21
Switzerland	110	125	19
Turkey	2	5	2
United Kingdom	230	346	258

## FUNDING SCHEME

- ☐ Starting Grant (StG) (9)
- ☐ Consolidator Grant (CoG) (5)
- ☐ Advanced Grant (AdG) (2)
- ☐ Proof of Concept (PoC) (3)
- ☐ Synergy Grants (SyG) (0)

# EVALUATION CRITERIA: Research Project

For each of the four statements below, reviewers were asked to choose one of the following four responses: Fully agree/Agree partially/Disagree partially/Strongly disagree

## 1. 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 across disciplines)?
- How much is the proposed research **high risk/high gain**?

## 2. 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 B1)?
- To what extent is the proposed research **methodology** appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on B2)?
- To what extent does the proposal involve **the development of novel methodology** (based on B2) ?
- To what extent are the proposed **timescales and resources** necessary and properly justified (based on B2) ?

# EVALUATION CRITERIA: Principal Investigator

*For each of the statements below, reviewers were asked to choose one of the following four responses: Outstanding / Excellent / Very good / Non-competitive*

- To what extent has the PI **demonstrated** the ability to propose and conduct **ground-breaking** research?
- To what extent does the PI **provide evidence** of creative **independent** thinking?
- To what extent have the **achievements** of the PI typically gone beyond **the state of the art**?

## ***Commitment***

The **PI is strongly committed** to the project and demonstrates the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project



# Great Idea of a great scholar

- The match of the two is essential
- Your idea, Your team, Your project, Your funding
- Not a spin-off of an national project!
- A problem you barely dare to promise to solve (but still you can)
- High risk – High gain means it can fail (not likely), but a success would be ground-breaking
- Not a collection of interesting ideas, but

**Have one really good idea!**

# Application structure

## Part A The administrative forms

Part A: form A1 gives a snapshot of the proposal and of the PI, form A2 concerns the PI's host institution, while form A3 deals with financial matters.

## Part B The research proposal

The research proposal (Part B) consists of two parts: Part B1 (including cover page, sections a, b and c) and Part B2 (including Sections a, b, c and d). The templates for these two sections are provided in EPSS and their use is mandatory.

### Part B1 section a, b and c:

- a. *Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal (max 5 pages)*
- b. Curriculum Vitae (max 2 pages)
- c. Early achievements track-Record (max 2 pages)

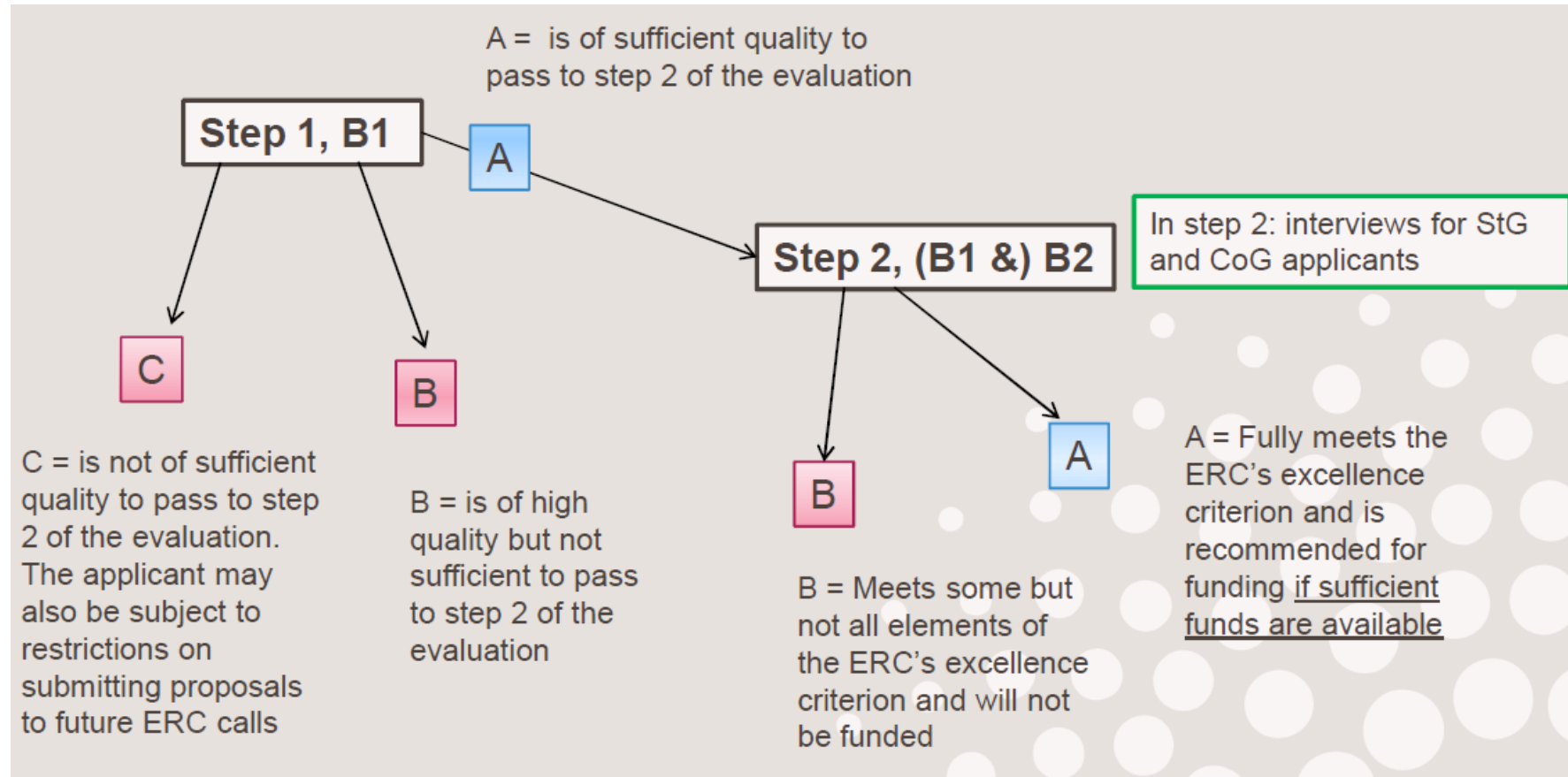
### Part B2 Section a, b, c and d:

*The scientific proposal (max 15 pages, excluding Ethical Issues Table and Annex)*

- a. State of the art and objectives
- b. Methodology
- c. Resources (incl. project costs)
- d. Ethical and Security sensitivity Issues

Since 2019 in  
admin forms

# EVALUATION: Panel score and ranking range



# Restrictions

Call to which the Principal Investigator applied under previous ERC Work Programmes and proposal evaluation outcome		2020 ERC calls to which a Principal Investigator is <u>not</u> eligible
2018 and 2019 Starting, Consolidator, Advanced Grant or Synergy	Rejected on the grounds of a breach of research integrity	Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy
2018 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant	C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced
2018 Synergy Grant	A, or B at Step 3	No restriction
	B at Step 1 or 2	No restriction
	C at Step 1	Advanced and Synergy Grant
2019 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant	A, or B at Step 2	No restriction
	B, or C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant
2019 Synergy Grant	A, or B at Step 3	No restriction
	B at Step 2	No restriction
	B at Step 1	Synergy
	C at Step 1	Advanced and Synergy Grant

# Try to answer to these questions...

- Why this project? Why it is important to study this topic (for academia and Europe)?
- Why you and not somebody else?
- Why now?
- What preliminary data?
- Is your IDEA new, risky, innovative, something which haven't been done before and needs to be studied NOW by YOU?
- Have you presented the above issues in a clear and interesting manner in your research plan?
- Also: check the previous panel members and funded projects
- Ask scientific comments from your colleagues

# Budget

- The Union financial contribution will take the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs
- flat-rate financing of indirect costs on the basis of 25% of the total eligible direct costs.
- No overheads for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the host institution.
- The level of the awarded grant represents a maximum overall figure – the final amount to be paid must be justified on the basis of the costs actually incurred for the project.
- All opportunities include an extra part
- The Principal Investigator will have the freedom to modify the budgetary breakdown during the course of the project.

# Budge cont.

\* Budget what you need. A small budget is not an advantage per se. It has to be reasonable.

- The salary rules of your organisation are applied.
- The salary of the PI can be included, if not covered otherwise.
- Note that new equipment is only financed by depreciation costs.
- Contact your Regional Office for further advice.
- The ERC does not want to reimburse travel costs for invited researchers outside the chore team if these were not clearly mentioned in the budget.
- Include costs for international / overseas conferences in your budget

# Remember

This (applying ERC) is completely up to YOU. You need to be interested and MOTIVATED! Otherwise you are just wasting YOUR time.

Reward (getting ERC) is a major boost to your career and to your work



# Getting Started

- Start early -> the deadline is very strict!
- Read well all important ERC documents
  - ✓ • Work Programme
  - ✓ • Guide for Applicants
  - ✓ • Guide for Peer Reviewers
- Read well the evaluation criteria
- Register on Funding and Tenders portal
- Use the mandatory templates (to download from FTP)
- Prepare the supporting documents early (annexes: HI letter; annexes on ethical issues, PhD certificate, extension papers if applicable)
- If you have questions, contact your Regional Office or your National Contact Point early

# Review

- B1: Panel + external reviewers
  - Not all in your field or even close
- For Starter, Consolidator and Synergy: Interviews in Brussels
  - They will have all the material (B1+ B2)
  - They will ask questions
  - Forms of interview depend on the panel

# Prepare for the interview

- Internal mock-panels
- Talk to your non-expert friends
- Do not try to have everything about the project in 5 mins
- Be engaging
- About 40% of the interviewed will be funded