

Technology Centre Prague together with the Expert Group for supporting ERC applicants are pleased to invite you to the

ON-LINE workshop for ERC applicants on the PREPARATION OF A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL (PART 1)

This interactive workshop series is focused on the preparation of an ERC proposal. It is composed of three interconnected parts to be held in May, June and September 2023. The precondition for being eligible to participate in the training is having selected a host institution based in the Czech Republic.

To maximize the impact and effectiveness, the workshop is opened **in particular to competitive ERC Starting/Consolidator, but possibly also Advanced and Synergy grant applicants who are intensively working on their project proposal**, which they intend to submit to the respective ERC 2024 call, and who are not restricted by resubmission limitations from the previous calls.

DATES:

- **The 1st part of the workshop series will take place between 16 and 18 May 2023, namely:**

16 May 2023: PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

17 May 2023: SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

18 May 2023: LIFE SCIENCES

The workshop will consist of individual presentations of the applicants' project ideas and a discussion with members of the Expert Group for supporting ERC applicants (EG) and other ERC evaluators as well as ERC grantees.

More specifically, participants will give **a five-minute presentation** of their intended project which will address two questions:

- 1. What is the project's main original idea that makes it competitive in the ERC terms?**
- 2. Why are you credible to achieve substantial results in the given direction?**

The participants are not requested to send their presentations beforehand. The length limitation of 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?" In the annex, you will find the ERC evaluation criteria/elements, which evaluators of ERC proposals are obliged to consider when assessing your proposal and also tips for the presentation as well as for the proposal itself. From our experience, it is indeed useful to pay attention to these recommendations.

- **The 2nd part of the workshop will be held on 20, 22 and 23 June 2023.**

You will have the opportunity to get acquainted with a successful ERC proposal from the scientific domain of your preference (PE/LS/SSH), and to meet its principal investigator. This part should help you better understand the evaluation process and its implications for writing your own proposal.

- **The 3rd part of the workshop will be held in September 2023.**

It will consist of individual presentations of the draft B1 part of the ERC proposal and discussions with members of the EG as well as other ERC evaluators and grantees.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS:

Only those who submit competitive materials requested at the registration phase will be admitted to the workshop series. Applicants will be informed about their admission/rejection to the workshops at the beginning of May 2023. Individual feedback to applicants cannot be provided by the Expert group due to capacity limitations.

The on-line workshop will be held in English without interpretation.

REQUIREMENTS:

In order to attend the workshop series, the applicants are required to

- 1. fill in a registration form [HERE](#)**
- 2. send the title of the 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).
- 3. Applicants are supposed to inform their future host institution about their intention to apply for an ERC grant as soon as possible. Such institutions are expected to assist their applicants with the preparation of the requested materials for the workshop purposes. The institutions are kindly asked to send (through their ERC contact person) a list of their applicants who have registered for the workshop by 2 April 2023 to erc.es@tc.cz.**

All the documents should be sent **to the Expert Group mailbox (erc.es@tc.cz) by 2 April 2023** in **one pdf file** and **in the form fully respecting the instructions** in the [Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2023 Calls](#), the [Information for Applicants to the Advanced Grant 2023 Call](#) or the [Information for Applicants to the Synergy Grant 2023 Call](#) (using the 2023 ERC templates). In order to allow further processing of the materials, **this deadline will be strictly reinforced.**

We kindly ask you to **register online 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 **based on 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 a limited number of applicants that we can work with, preference will be given to applications that can be ready for submission to the 2024 calls. Evaluators will consider clarity of the abstract that should indicate the 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 TR.

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 depth understanding your proposal as well as generalists – you **must be able to convince both groups**.
- ✓ **Allow time for a mock presentation** before you come to the workshop/**several mock presentations** before your interview with ERC panel members.
- ✓ Show passion for science and the topic! 😊