

# "Ideas" & the European Research Council

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# FP7 (EC)

- 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP7)
- “Family” of FP7 Specific Programmes
  - Co-operation
  - **Ideas**
  - People
  - Capacities
- **Ideas**: complementary to other FP7 support  
policy vs. science-driven, bottom-up vs. targeted research



# FP7 Ideas Programme

- **Creates the ERC (new “institution”):**
  - Scientific Council (ScC)
  - Dedicated Implementation Structure (DIS)
- **Provides funding:**
  - €7.51 bn (2007-2013), around 15% of FP7 budget
  - Average budget: € ~1 bn per year
- **Sets overall objectives for research and operating principles**
- **By 2010: review of ERC structure and mechanisms**

# Strategic Aims

## Overview



## Boost European excellence in "Frontier Research"

- by investing in the best researchers and ideas
- through competition at European level
- on the basis of scientific excellence as the sole criterion
- raising incentives towards quality and aspirations of individual researchers
- providing benchmarks and leverage towards broader (structural) improvements in European research



# Why “Frontier Research”?

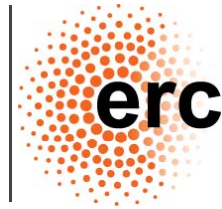
**Traditional terminology** (“basic” / “applied” research “science” vs. “technology”) **is no longer appropriate:**

- Research at the frontiers is characterised by an absence of disciplinary boundaries
- New discoveries are often triggered by real world problems (and vice-versa)
- Progress in understanding phenomena and techniques for investigation go hand in hand

# ERC Grants

## Strategic principles

- **All fields of science and scholarship are eligible**
  - ☞ investigator-driven, bottom-up
- **Excellence is the only valid criterion**
  - ☞ individual team + research project
- **Investment in research talent**
  - ☞ Attractive, flexible grants, up to five years
  - ☞ under control of the lead researcher (PI)
- **Independent individual teams in Europe**
  - ☞ nationality of researchers is not relevant
  - ☞ host organisation to be located in EU or AS



# ERC Grant Schemes

## Launch Strategy of ERC Scientific Council

- **Retain – Repatriate – Recruit**
- Favour “**brain gain**” and “**reverse brain drain**”
  - increase **competition, recognition and international visibility** for excellent individual scientists and scholars in Europe
  - **ERC Advanced Grant**: attract & reward established independent research leaders, up to 5 years, up to € 2.5 Mio.
- **Keep (young) researchers in Europe**
  - improve **career opportunities and independence** - especially for young researchers
  - **ERC Starting Grant**: attract & retain the next generation of independent research leaders, up to 5 years, up to € 2.0 Mio.

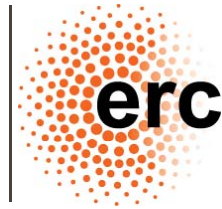


# ERC Grant schemes

## Who can apply ?

### ➤ Individual Research Teams

- headed by a single “**Principal Investigator**” (team leader)
  - of any nationality
  - if necessary, including additional team members.
- The “Principal Investigator” has the freedom to choose the **research topic** and the power to assemble his/her **research team** meeting the needs of the project.
- Teams can be of **national or trans-national** character.



# ERC Grant schemes

## Budget Allocation

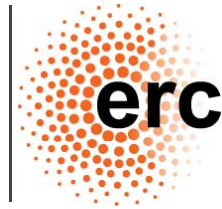
- ERC covers **all fields of science, engineering and scholarship**
- For operational reasons the ScC agreed on **3 main research domains**:
  - **Domain 1: Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Information and Communication, Engineering Sciences, Universe and Earth Sciences (PE)**
  - **Domain 2: Life Sciences (LS)**
  - **Domain 3: Social Sciences and Humanities (SH)**
- Pre-allocation of **call budget for ERC Grants** per domain.



# ERC Grant Schemes

Budget 2007-2013

- **Total (FP7 Ideas budget): € 7.51 bn**
  - ≈1/3 Starting Grants, ≈ 2/3 Advanced Grants
  - Less than 5% for operational ERC management
- **1st Call**
  - StG only, € 300 Mio., call closed on 25 April 2007
  - Budget allocated to three areas (for operational reasons)
- **2nd Call**
  - AdG only, Winter 2007, € 550 Mio.
- **3rd call onwards:**
  - StG + AdG ≈ € 1.0 bn per year



# ERC Advanced Grant

## (ERC Advanced Investigator Researcher Grant)

- Designed to support excellent investigator-initiated research projects by **established independent research leaders**
- Targeting researchers who have already established their independence as team leaders and are **exceptional leaders in terms of significance of their research achievements** (in the last 10 years)

up to 5 years,  
up to €2,5 million per  
grant

~3000 Advanced Grants  
over 7 years of FP7  
(2007-2013)





Thank you !

