

Generally: two Types of Grants

- **Personal Grant**



- **Collaborative Grant**



The start and *sine qua non* of most academic careers:

A prestigious personal grant

- Excellent CV
- Excellent innovative idea **Cutting Edge Science**
- Belong to the top 10% of your peer group

Funding agencies like to invest in young people:

- Creative, innovative, frontier research
- Selection of the most promising scientists
- Scientific leadership of the future

A series of Personal Grants

Name	Duration	Intention	When
Rubicon	2 yr	Dutch scientist go abroad	< 1 yr after PhD
Marie Curie	1-2 yr	(Intra European) mobility	after PhD
VENI	3 yr	Innovation, start of independence	< 3 yr after PhD
ERC StG	5 yr	Excellence	< 7 yr after PhD
VIDI	5 yr	Innovation, start of research line	< 8 yr after PhD
ERC CoG	5 yr	Excellence	7-12 yr after PhD
VICI	5 yr	Innovation, consolidation	< 15 yr after PhD
ERC AdG	5 yr	Excellence	no limits

Impact of Personal Grants

- Direct Impact on the development of a **scientific field**
- Direct Impact on the **career perspective** and independence of the lead scientist
- Direct Impact on the **funding capacity** of the lead scientist and his team
- Direct Impact on the **career perspective** of his/her **group members**
- Direct and Indirect Impact on **research organisations**
- Indirect Impact on **national funding landscape**
- Indirect Impact on **EU funding landscape**

Some Differences between NWO and ERC

NWO:

- National competition
- Evaluators and Committee know you and your environment
- Scientific excellence AND National Scientific Leadership (politics)

ERC:

- International competition
- Committee generally does not know you
- Scientific Excellence is the sole criterion

Excellent Science

- Goal: foster **scientific excellence**: *science for science's sake; pioneering, frontier research*
- Attractive, long-term funding: 5 years
- Excellent **investigators** *and* their research **teams**
- Ground-breaking, **high-gain / high-risk** research
- **Independence**, creativity, leadership, scientific impact
- One criterion: **Excellence** (consistently top 5-10%)
- Bottom up, all disciplines, all nationalities



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Established by the European Commission

ERC: dealmakers (StG candidates)

- Show ability to **propose** (grant) and **conduct** (paper) ground-breaking research (high novelty) and achievements going **beyond the state-of-the-art** (with durable scientific impact)
- Show abundant evidence of creative **independent thinking** (e.g. review/paper as main/senior author; without thesis supervisor)
- Contribute significantly to the **establishment** of the PI's **independence** (make explicit how ERC would further foster independence; make leadership potential explicit)

ERC: dealmakers (CoG candidates)

- Show ability to **propose** (several grants) and **conduct** (several important papers) ground-breaking research (high novelty) and achievements going **beyond the state-of-the-art** (with durable scientific impact; high citation scores)
- Show abundant evidence of creative **independent thinking** (e.g. several reviews/papers as senior author)
- Contribute significantly to the **consolidation** of the PI's **independence** (make explicit how ERC would further foster independence; show early leadership; at least 1 PhD; invited contributions; international reputation)
- Project should ideally be based on a ground-breaking discovery (recent high impact paper; pilot data) and explicitly expand or deepen or provide important deviation **from existing research line**

ERC: dealmakers (all ERC instruments)

- Elegant and sexy idea; novel concept or dogma or approach; truly innovative and important
- Clear synergy between subprojects. Activities should be related and not independently fundable
- Good balance between high risk / high gain and feasibility. Cover the most risky aspects by convincing pilot data
- Innovative at the meta-level (*'this has never been tested before'* is not good enough)

ERC: dealmakers (all ERC instruments)

- Firmly based on an excellent ongoing research line
- Therefore, preferably
 - interdisciplinary projects crossing boundaries between different fields of research
 - pioneering proposals addressing new, emerging and important fields of research
 - proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions
 - Proposals that could otherwise not be funded (e.g. because of size)

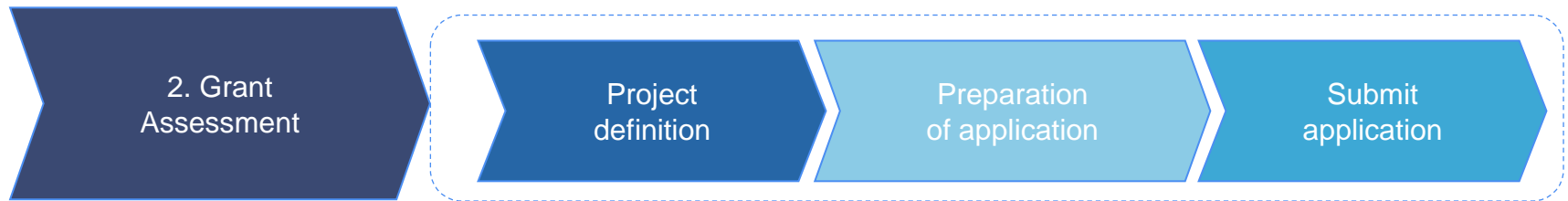
Tips

- **ERC grant only when fully committed and after informed Go / no GO**
You, your team, department, dean and faculty
- **Understand the ERC funding instruments:**
The guide for applicants is your best friend
The evaluation criteria are crystal clear
You have read a number of successful proposals and evaluation reports
- **Start many months before the deadline**
- **Reserve 4-6 weeks fte for writing the application**
- **Proactively arrange sufficient feedback**
Peers for content; Grants Desk for general readability
- **Align with other personal funding instruments**
Be aware of the differences between national and EU grants
- **Mobilize your stamina: in many cases it takes two years to get funded**

Tips

- **Reserve at least 10% of your time and that of your team members to pursue risky projects**
- **Don't publish in low impact journals**
- **Involve your team**
and provide appropriate credit for all the work
- **Take responsibility**
be prepared to act as the flagship of your team/faculty
- **Invest in a “school” of researchers**
Scout and recruit the best and most highly motivated (international) people
Guide and motivate your MSc, PhD, postdocs to excellent subsequent
academic positions
- **Capacity building**
ERC laureates attract ERC laureates and other excellent people

The process

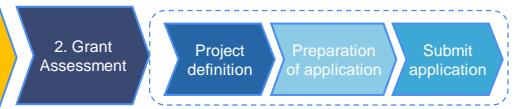


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The process

1. Preparatory phase

- Building your CV
- Establishing and expanding your research line
- Obtaining pilot data
- Creating a network
- Etcetera



How to obtain a grant like that (1)?

Key decisions and Key “must haves”:

- Chose your **subject** right

- Relevant**
- Unique**, but sufficiently complementary
- Chose the **best place** to be; be aware of your **environment**
- Cutting Edge** (major impact on the field)
- With potential for scientific **output** AND **input**

- **Excellent** in something; good in everything

- Academic qualifications including **leadership** and the potential to **collaborate**

- The **first** one is the toughest one

- Be **good** and make sure **everybody** knows it

- Grant writing requires **training** and **practice**

1. Preparatory phase

Building your CV
Establishing and expanding your research line
Obtaining pilot data
Creating a network
Etcetera

**EXCELLENT!**



How to obtain a grant like that (2)?

1. Preparatory phase

Building your CV
Establishing and expanding your research line
Obtaining pilot data
Creating a network
Etcetera

- Requires a **vision** for the development of your scientific career and your subject
- Acquisition of money should **always** be in your mind **from the start**; your next grant is as important as your next paper
- Grants are more about **organizing** and **talking** than about writing
- Writing a grant takes **several years**
 - Creating the hypotheses and specific aims
 - Pilot data and collaborations
 - CV building
 - Networking
- Make sure you are well **supported**
 - Your own supervisor, your dean and a coach outside your direct department
 - Grants Desk and the Technology Transfer Office
 - Peers



How to obtain a grant like that (3)?

1. Preparatory phase

Building your CV
Establishing and expanding your research line
Obtaining pilot data
Creating a network
Etcetera

- Move away from your thesis supervisor: show **independence**
- Preferably do your postdoctoral training in an **excellent institution abroad**
- Use your postdoc to develop a **subject of your own**
- Try to raise **grant support** for your postdoc (eg Marie Curie)
- Build your **network**
- Think about **leadership** skills
- Take **initiatives** to discuss personal development towards independence
- Arrange to **take** (part of) **project** to start own group
- Making sure to get **credit** for all your work
- Acquire **skills** for subsequent career; **Academic leadership courses**
- Talk to your **grant adviser**; follow **courses**

- Science is **fun**; show your enthusiasm and dedication

Take command of your own career:

- Research is essential to **advance all fields**
- Universities are unique in their **combination** of:
Societal Service – Research - Teaching
- Combining Teaching, Societal service and Research is **rewarding** and **challenging**

BUT:

- There are excellent PhDs that never receive an ERC grant
- Most of these are very happy and productive

Therefore: Make a Choice



Don't waste your time: check your chances

2. Grant Assessment



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Extensive feasibility assessment based on:

- Detailed **CV**
- Summary of ongoing **research line** (250 words)
- Summary of **career perspectives and ambitions** (250 words) (StG and CoG)
- Summary of **project concept** (250 words)
- Explication of **innovative aspects** and **scientific advancement** (250 words)

Goal of feasibility test: **Strategic decision: Go Wait & Improve no Go**

Writing = Thinking, Talking and Conceiving!



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Scoping the project and defining the process: **the importance of timing!**

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
First draft of Scope / idea	█	█	█					
First draft of <i>Part B1</i>		█	█	█	█			
First draft of <i>Part B2</i>				█	█	█		
First draft administrative A forms					█			
Improving B1/B2: second draft					█	█	█	
Finishing A forms + req. appendices						█	█	
advisory session							█	
Circulation of the pre-final proposal							█	█
Finalisation and submission								█
Deadline								█

Aspects that should be explicitly worked out



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Project
definition

Scoping the project:

- Define the scientific **field**
- What is needed to significantly **advance the state of the art**? What **groundbreaking** research is urgently needed to have **sustainable scientific impact** on the field
- **Organize**: Translate to specific Aim, Specific Objectives, Expected Results and Activities
- Explicitly focus on **novelty** and **interdisciplinary** aspects
- Define **balance** between high risk-high gain and feasibility
- Chose **evaluation panel**

- Identify your **unique selling points** and **weaknesses in your track record**
- How will you **sell yourself** as the unique person for the project?

Writing the proposal

Preparation
of application



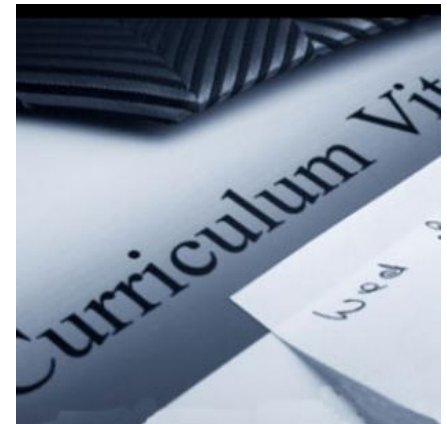
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Writing the application:

- Principal Investigator is in the lead; involve your team
- Peers who understand the ERC schemes for advice on the content
- Grants Desk for clarity; readability; consistency; EU language
- Financial Administration for budget

Tips for drafting the CV

- Show **Command** of your **Career**; your **Ambition** is part of your **CV**
 - The best **Proof of your Potential** is your **Track Record**
 - **Good** performance – **Unique** performance – **Distinguishing** from your peers
 - In line with your **Research Aims**. “The right person for the job”
 - **Number** of publications and **Impact** achieved by those publications
 - Not only **Scientific**, but also some **Societal Contributions**
 - List all relevant contributions and achievements **from the Viewpoint of the Funding Agency**
-
- Don't list your publications without **explaining their Impact**
 - Explain **Gaps** in your education or scientific career





Leo Klomp	National, European and international grants
Guido Leerdam	European and international grants
Christiaan Vis	National, European and international grants
Jeroen van Leur	Legal advice
Bart Jordi	Support Trajectories NWO IRIS and ERC
Marco Last	Support Trajectories NWO IRIS and ERC
Vacancy	Project Manager
Vacancy	Secretary

E: subsidiedesk@vu.nl; Ph: 020-4449923

W: <http://www.vu.nl/nl/onderzoek/subsidie-fondsen/index.asp>

Different parts of the Support Programme for Personal Grants:

1. An information day organised by the Grants desk.
2. Feasibility check using a “feasibility assessment form”, structured feedback report and a personal advice by the Grants Desk.
3. A workshop "successful grant writing".
4. Advice (brainstorm session) on the general scope of the proposal.
5. Lecture on drafting the knowledge utilisation paragraph.
6. In some cases, critical feedback on your proposal
7. Advisory sessions by a group of relevant researchers from the VU/VUmc.
8. Rebuttal training (under development)
9. Help with writing a rebuttal for Veni, Vidi and Vici applications.
10. A presentation training if you are invited for an interview.
11. Mock interview if you are invited for an interview.

For information, E-mail: supportprogrammes@vu.nl

Contact Marco Last (+31(0)20 4449923) for α - and γ -sciences and Bart Jordi (+31 (0)20 4445476) for β - and Life sciences

<http://www.vu.nl/en/research/support/grants-desk/index.asp>

8 Types of advice and support:

- 1 Generic advice** templates, examples, corporate information through intranet (toolbox)
- 2 Grants scan** **Research Professional database**
- 3 Specific advice** CV scan, extensive grants possibility and feasibility study (related to career)
- 4 Support Trajectories** Series of training sessions for **Personal Grants**
- 5 Read and write** advice on **content** of grants; write impact, implementation and administrative parts of grants
- 6 Legal-financial** Interpretation of guidelines; (help) write your grant agreements and consortium agreements
- 7 Tactic, strategic** advice university and departments on grants-policy
- 8 Redirect** Act as go-between to most adequate external agency

! But not: !

- 1 Small money (< 200 k€); e.g travel grants; thesis print support
- 2 Valorization grants
- 3 Drafting the budget, financial administration, project management

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https://www.researchprofessional.com/0/r/home

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Funding searches

- [ALL EU Funding](#)
- [ALL Global Funding](#)
- [ALL National Funding](#)

Expressions of Interest

Researchers from your institution who have expressed an interest in applying for a funding opportunity.

Grants for targets

Bayer, DE
David Cucchi ✉
01 Aug 14

Student research grants

Clay Minerals Society, US
End User ✉
04 Jun 14

Questionnaire research in youth healthcare

Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development – ZonMw, NL
Alida van der Steeg ✉
20 Sep 13

28 June to 1 July 2015
Leiden University,
Leiden, the Netherlands

University of Salford
MANCHESTER



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

- Improving Human Resource Potential
- Bottom-up approach
- Innovative Training Networks
- Individual Fellowships
- Intersectoral and International Staff Exchange
- Co-funding





Individual Fellowships (IF)

- **Objective:**
 - Support the career development of Experienced Researchers
 - Diversification of skills
- **European Fellowships (EF)**
 - MC fellow applies in collaboration with host
 - Fellow goes to host organisation in Europe for 12 – 24 months
 - Also researchers from non-EU country coming to the EU
- Funding for: full salary of Experienced Researcher + contribution to host organisation



Global Fellowships

- **Global Fellowship (GF)**
 - Experienced Researcher applies in collaboration with host
 - Outgoing phase: 12-24 months, mandatory return phase: 12 months
 - Fellow goes to host organisation outside Europe, and comes back to host organisation in Europe (secondment)
 - Any nationality, but previously long-term EU resident (>5 yrs)



Succes rates 2012/ 2013 calls

Intra-European Fellowship

2012: **16,5%** (NL: 16,5%)

2013: **12,5%**

International Outgoing Fellowship

2012: **16,4%** (NL: 22,0%)

2013: **12,4%**



Evaluation criteria

1. Excellence 50%

(Are the research and training excellent?)

2. Impact 30%

(What will the training/ fellowship contribute to the career of the fellow?)

3. Implementation 20%

(Are the management and the workplan OK?)



Indicative timeline IF

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Call publication | March 2015 |
| 2. Submission deadline | Sept 2015 |
| 3. Evaluation process | Oct-Nov 2015 |
| 4. Information on outcome | February 2016 |
| 5. Signing of GA | May 2016 |
| 6. Start of project | June 2016 – May 2017 |

1-1 1/2 Years

Thank you for attending

