

ERC Grant Agreement: Legal and financial specificities

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Presentation Overview

- The « Ideas » Programme and ERC within FP 7
- Specific features of ERC Grant Agreements
- Legal and financial issues





ERC, “Ideas” and FP7

- A new “structural feature” of the EU-research Framework Programme(s)
 - Scientific Council, Executive Agency, Commission’s supervision
- ...which is part of the “family” of FP7 Specific Programmes:
 - Co-operation
 - **Ideas**
 - People
 - Capacities
- ...which is subject to the same basic rules as other parts of FP7 but supports bottom-up research (vs. targeted research)





EU FP7 Ideas Programme

- The EU created the European Research Council (ERC) as means to implement the programme; the ERC is composed of a *Scientific Council* and an *Executive Agency*
- The EU provides funding for 2007 - 2013
 - **Budget (2007-2013) : € 7.51 bn** (around 15% of FP7 budget)
 - **Average budget: € ~1 bn per year**
- The EU defined the general objectives for content (“frontier research”) and operating principles (“peer review” of scientific excellence) of the ERC

Strategy & Activities

...views of ERC Scientific Council



- **Retain – Repatriate – Recruit**

- Favour “**brain gain**” and “**reverse brain drain**”
 - **ERC Advanced Grant**: to increase **competition, recognition and international visibility** for excellent established individual scientists and scholars in Europe

- **Keep (young) researchers in Europe**
 - **ERC Starting Grant**: to improve **career opportunities and independence** - especially for young researchers; thus to attract & retain the next generation of independent research leaders



ERC Starting Grant

(ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant)

- Flexible grants to support researchers at the **start of their independent research career**
 - establishing or consolidating their own independent research team
- **Principal Investigator:**
 - (2007) 2 to 9 years after PhD; (2009 onward) 3 to 8 years after PhD;
- **for up to 5 years; normally up to ~1,5 M€ per grant**
- **Annual calls from year 2009 onward for about ~ 1/3 of ERC annual budget**



ERC Advanced Grant

(ERC Advanced Investigator Researcher Grant)

- 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
- Complement to the ERC Starting Grants, **targeting researchers who are already established independent research leaders**
- **for up to 5 years; normally up to ~2,500,000 Euro per grant**
annual calls from year 2009 onward for about $\sim 2/3$ of ERC annual budget



ERC Grant Agreement – Specificities (1)

- **Mainly mono-beneficiary grants**
- **Mainly 5-years projects**
- **Portability of the Grant**
 - 19 cases of grant transfers among StG projects
- **Significant amounts of pre-financing**
 - Special attention to interest-bearing accounts
- **Excellence is the only criterion of evaluation, few changes in content; amount of grant is a result of the evaluation**
 - "Preparation of grant" instead of "negotiation"
 - Technical annex very similar to proposal
 - No Workpackages, Milestones, etc...



ERC Grant Agreement – Specificities (2)

- **Specific relation Principal Investigator / Host Institution (= beneficiary)**
 - ➔ Additional documentation (Supplementary agreement)
 - ➔ Check of condition "HI engages the PI"
- **Different reporting streams financial / scientific**
 - ➔ Double "échéancier" for reception of deliverables
 - ➔ Approval of financial report based on management report + financial statement only
 - ➔ Approval of scientific report based on periodic report + peer review only
- **Single reimbursement rate and only one option for indirect costs**

Grant Agreement

Legal & Financial Issues



- **Legal status of beneficiary**

→ ERC uses the central participant data management system (PDM)

- **Length of financial reporting periods**

- **The start date of the project**

→ 122 cases of fixed start dates among 300 StG Grant Agreements

- **Interest/non-interest-bearing nature of bank account**

→ no practical problems: the number of grants which run on non-interest bearing accounts is small (10% of StG and 16% of AdG)

→ mainly concerned: Universities in GB