



European Research Council

IDEAS Coordination and Support Action (CSA)
Call identifier: ERC Proof of Concept 2013

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

The Guide is published by the ERC Scientific Council on <http://erc.europa.eu>
It can also be downloaded from the Participant Portal page on <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/>



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
FP7 Specific Programme
IDEAS



Purpose of the Guide

This guide provides practical information to potential applicants in preparing and submitting an application for an ERC Proof of Concept call in the context of a Coordination and Support Action. In addition, it provides a general overview on the ERC peer review evaluation process and presents the main features of the management of ERC-CSA grants.

This ERC Guide for Applicants is divided into three parts:

- 1: About the ERC Proof of Concept Call for proposals
- 2: Managing ERC-CSA grants
- 3: Annexes

For detailed information on the ERC peer review evaluation process, the ERC-CSA grant agreement and the management of ERC grants, the following documents are available on the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/document-library>:

- Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers: This guide provides practical information to peer reviewers as well as detailed information on the peer review evaluation and project selection process.
- ERC-CSA Model Grant Agreement: The grant agreement, which will be concluded between the ERC and the Principal Investigator's host institution. -

The present guide is based on the legal documents setting the rules and conditions for the ERC grant schemes, in particular the ERC Work Programme, the ERC Rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the 'Ideas' Specific Programme, and the ERC-CSA Model Grant Agreement. This guide does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding. The European Commission, the ERC Executive Agency or any person or body acting on their behalf cannot be held responsible for the use made of the guide.

Note: As with other parts of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme, National Contact Points (ERC NCPs) have been set up across Europe¹ by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications. For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/national-contact-points> .

¹ This applies to EU Member States and Associated countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

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The European Research Council

The European Research Council (ERC) is a European funding initiative, designed to support the best scientists, engineers and scholars in Europe.

The ERC mandate is to encourage the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator-initiated frontier research across all fields of research, on the basis of scientific excellence.

Four types of ERC grants are currently available to support researchers in carrying out frontier research projects: ERC Starting Grant, ERC Consolidator Grant, ERC Advanced Grant and ERC Synergy Grant. In addition, ERC grant holders can now apply for additional funding through a Coordination and Support Action ("Proof of Concept") to establish the innovation potential of ideas arising from their ERC-funded frontier research projects.

Grants are awarded and managed according to simple procedures that maintain the focus on excellence, encourage creativity and combine flexibility with accountability.

The ERC, which is established by the European Commission and funded through the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme with a budget of EUR 7.51 bn for 7 years (FP7, 2007-2013), complements other funding schemes in Europe, such as those of research funding agencies operating at the national level and those within the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme.

The ERC consists of a Scientific Council and an Executive Agency. It operates under conditions of autonomy and integrity, guaranteed by the European Commission, to which it is accountable.

The role of the ERC Scientific Council

The Scientific Council establishes the overall scientific strategy of the ERC, including the annual Work Programme where the calls for proposals and the corresponding funding rules and selection criteria are defined.

The Scientific Council establishes and oversees the ERC scientific management and the implementation of the Work Programme, including the peer review and project selection processes and the selection of peer reviewers.

The ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA)

The ERCEA implements the FP7 Specific Programme 'Ideas' and manages ERC operations. It executes the annual Work Programme as established by the Scientific Council, implements calls for proposals and organises peer review evaluation in accordance with methodologies designed by the Scientific Council, and establishes and manages grant agreements. Additionally, it provides information and support to applicants and grant holders.

1 About the ERC Proof of Concept Call for proposals

1.1 About the Call and its grants

1.1.1 Focus of the ERC Proof of Concept Grant

As established in the ERC WP 2013, the ERC Proof of concept grant, to be implemented through CSAs, provides additional funding to ERC grant holders to establish proof of concept, identify a development path and an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) strategy for ideas arising from an ERC-funded project. The objective is to provide funds to enable ERC-funded ideas to be brought to a pre-demonstration stage where potential commercialisation opportunities have been identified.

Innovations can be commercialised through licenses to a new or existing company or through a venture funded start-up, depending on the nature of the invention/idea, its potential markets, and the inventor's plans for future involvement in the commercialisation. Innovations can also feed into ventures aimed at addressing social and environmental goals including by social entrepreneurs and the voluntary and not-for-profit sectors.

The ERC Proof of concept grant aims at supporting an ERC grant-holder during the pre-demonstration phase to prepare a "package" to be presented to venture capitalists or companies that might invest in its technology and take it through the early commercialisation phase.

The aim is that of conducting a proof of concept of an idea that was generated in the course of the ERC-funded project, i.e. to undertake further work to verify whether, in principle, this idea has near term market potential. This would help:

- establishing viability, technical issues and overall direction
- clarifying IPR position and strategy²
- providing feedback for budgeting and other forms of commercial discussion
- providing connections to later stage funding
- covering initial expenses for establishing a company

The contribution under an ERC Proof of concept grant will be in the form of Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs). It may be used for conducting further work (i.e. activities which were not scheduled to be funded by the ERC Starting and Advanced Grants) to verify the innovation potential of an idea arising from an ERC-funded project.

1.1.2 What are Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs)?

Annex III to the Decision No 1982/2006/EC concerning the Seventh Framework Programme defines Coordination and Support Actions as the funding scheme which provides "support for activities aimed at coordinating or supporting research activities and policies (networking, exchanges, trans-national access to infrastructures, studies, conferences, etc.)."

Therefore research, technological development or demonstration activities cannot be supported under CSAs.

² Any application for funding of IPR activities under the ERC Proof of concept will not discharge beneficiaries from their prior obligations under their pre-existing ERC Advanced/Starting Grant in respect of protecting IPR capable of industrial or commercial application. If any foreground was potentially protectable in the pre-existing ERC Grant, beneficiaries had the legal obligation to seek for adequate and effective protection according to Article 44 of the Rules for Participation and Article II.28 of the ERC Model Grant Agreement (MGA) (see: ERC website at URL: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>)

The minimum condition for supporting actions is the participation of one legal entity. In general, depending on their specific objectives, support actions may have duration from some months up to a few years. The Union financial contribution will take the form of the reimbursement of up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and of flat-rate financing of indirect costs on the basis of 7% of the total eligible direct costs. 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 project³

³ Commission Decision C(2009)1942 of 23 March 2009 on the use of flat rates to cover subsistence costs incurred by beneficiaries during travel carried out within grants for indirect actions shall apply to grants awarded under this work programme.

1.2 Applying for an ERC Proof of Concept Grant

1.2.1 Who can apply?

1.2.1.1 The Principle Investigator (PI)

As stated in the ERC Work Programme 2013, any Principal Investigator (PI)⁴ of an ERC granted project that is either on-going or where the project has ended⁵, less than 12 months before the publication date of this Call, is eligible to apply for proof of concept grant. In their application, candidates will need to indicate the ID number⁶ of the related ERC Grant and demonstrate that the idea to be taken to proof of concept is substantially drawn on the outputs of previous ERC-funded research. Proposals may be brought to the attention of the ERC eligibility review committee⁷ which will assess and decide on the eligibility of the proposal.

1.2.1.2 The Host Institution (Applicant Legal Entity)

The applicant will need to be supported by a "Host Institution". Any type of legal entity, including universities, research organisations as well as undertakings can host the PI and his/her team, provided they are established in a Member State or an associated country. The host institution must confirm its association with and its support to the project and the Principal Investigator. As part of the application, the institution must provide a binding statement according to the template provided⁸, proving its engagement to the Principal Investigator for at least the duration of the proof of concept activity. Proposals that do not include this institutional statement **will be ruled ineligible and not considered for evaluation.**

The support letter of the host institution must offer appropriate conditions for the PI to direct independently the proposed project and manage its funding for the duration of the project. The ERC-CSA Grant Agreement itself will be concluded between the ERCEA and the host institution, the latter becoming hereby the beneficiary of the ERC-CSA grant.

⁴ Co-Investigator and team members are not eligible to apply.

⁵ The end date of the project which is indicated in the ERC Grant Agreement

⁶ Or reference number. This number can be found in the Grant Agreement or, alternatively, on our website <http://erc.europa.eu> under the "Funded Projects" link.

⁷ This committee is composed of ERCEA staff, and where necessary other Commission staff having the requisite expertise in legal matters and/or information systems. It examines the proposal and the circumstances surrounding its submission and provides specialist advice to support the decision on whether or not to reject the proposal on eligibility grounds. The committee may decide to contact the PI and the applicant legal entity in order to clarify a particular issue. (section 2.2.6 Eligibility check of the Rules for Submission, COMMISSION DECISION of 9 December 2010 amending Decision C(2007) 2286 on the adoption of ERC Rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures for indirect actions under the Ideas Specific Programme of the Seventh Framework Programme (2007 to 2013) (Text with EEA relevance) (2010/767/EU))

⁸ The statement must be on an official letter (organisation letterhead), signed by the legal representative of the host institution. The letter should be scanned and uploaded to the Participant Portal Submission Service (PPSS) with the proposal (template provided as Annex I of this guide).

Registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED)

To protect the EU's financial interests, the Commission uses an internal information tool, the Early Warning System (EWS) to flag identified risks related to beneficiaries of centrally managed contracts and grants. Through systematic registration of financial and other risks the EWS enables the Commission services to take the necessary precautionary measures to ensure a sound financial management⁹.

EWS registrations are not publicly disclosed. However, registrations will be transferred to the Central Exclusion Database (CED) if they relate to entities that have been excluded from EU funding because they are insolvent or have been convicted of a serious professional misconduct or criminal offence detrimental to EU financial interests. The data in CED are available to **all public authorities implementing EU funds**, i.e. European institutions, national agencies or authorities in Member States, and, subject to conditions for personal data protection, to third countries and international organisations.

This guide informs the applicant that the details of their organisation (or those of a person who has powers of representation, decision-making or control over it) may be registered in the EWS and the CED and be shared with public authorities as described in the relevant legal texts¹⁰.

More information on the EWS and CED can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm

1.2.1.3 Individual Team, Team Members

The composition of the project team is flexible. Team members operate under the leadership of the PI; they can be of any age, nationality and country of residence. Although mono-beneficiary proposals are preferred, team members may be exceptionally hosted by other institutions that can be located in any country, including third countries¹¹. Their participation (and possible funding to support the work of the respective team members) is subject to appraisal by the ERC peer review evaluation panel, which will assess whether their involvement is properly justified and essential in terms of competence, capacities and additional financial implications.

1.2.2 What kind of projects can be funded?

The ERC Proof of Concept Grant aims at providing additional funding to ERC grant holders in order to support them in bringing the ideas arising from their ERC-funded project closer to the commercialisation phase. Ideas submitted to the Proof of Concept grant are expected to lead to social and/or technological innovations with potential economic and/or societal benefits for Europe.

⁹ The EWS covers situations such as significantly overdue recovery orders, judicial proceedings pending for serious administrative errors/fraud, findings of serious administrative errors/fraud, legal situations which exclude the beneficiary from funding.

¹⁰ The basis for registrations in EWS and CED is laid out in:
- the Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125), and
- the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1302/2008 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12).

¹¹ Third countries are neither EU Member States nor Associated Countries.

The proposed activities should probe the expected near-term market potential of the idea and help clarify the commercialisation strategy to be followed (viability, scalability, IPR strategy...) ¹².

A clear separation between activities to be funded and activities already funded under an ERC grant is needed. Proposed activities should not cross over with any activities already included for funding in the related ERC Grant.

The maximum EU financial contribution per grant will be up to EUR 150 000 for a period of 12 months. This represents a maximum overall figure; payments will need to be justified on the basis of the actual costs of the project. The funding requested by the Principal Investigator must be fully justified by an estimation of the actual costs for the proposed activities, which will be assessed during the evaluation of the proposal.

Project costs funded by third parties are allowed but **need to be declared** and will be deducted from the total of eligible costs covered by the ERC Proof of Concept Grant.

The actual project costs claimed should be presented in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.

Box 1: Guiding principles of the ERC Proof of Concept Grant

- Only Principal Investigators of an ERC Grant may apply.
- Aim is to verify the innovation potential of an idea arising from an ERC-funded project.
- Clear separation between activities to be funded and activities already funded under the ERC frontier research grant is needed.
- Grants are awarded to the host institution that engages the PI.
- Grants up to 150.000€ for a duration of 12 months

1.2.2.1 'Main activities' in the frame of a Proof of Concept project

As explained in the Work Programme:

The ERC Proof of Concept Grant provides additional funding to ERC frontier research grant holders to establish proof of concept, identify a development path and an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) strategy for ideas arising from an ERC funded project. The objective is to provide funds to enable ERC funded ideas to be brought to a pre-demonstration stage where potential opportunities for exploitation have been identified.

As a general principle of the 7th Framework Programme, the funded activity should mostly relay on the Host Institutions. However, considering the heterogeneous nature of the proof of concept activities, the PoC project could not always be implemented only by the HI own innovation and development units. Indeed it could require that important parts of the activities to be carried out by third parties, inter alia subcontractors.

According to the model Grant Agreement (Annex II.7), subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project and recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation.

¹² See section 1.1 About the ERC Proof of Concept Grant

As explained in the Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions, "the subcontracted parts should in principle not be **"core" parts** of the project work". The Guide also specifies that in projects where research is not the main purpose (like in CSAs), as it is the case for the PoC, the core part should be understood as referring to the **"main activity"**.

In this context, "main activity" has to be understood as "establishing proof of concept of an ERC-funded idea", i.e. "making evident to the market the innovation potential of an ERC funded idea, securing thereof potential commercialisation opportunities". Therefore in case of a proof of concept grant, **the main activities foreseen should as a minimum include the management of the project, the consolidation of information and data needed to take strategic decisions and to put together a reasonable and acceptable development plan.**

The implementation of the PoC main activity may need to be supported by **other activities** such as finding, gathering, analysing and treating the information needed by the PI to propose strategic decisions and prepare a robust business plan. These activities, (e.g. conducting surveys and analyses, consultancy, technical testing, etc), although crucial for the success of the PoC grant and although constituting a relevant part of the workload and costs, are not to be defined as "core" parts of the project.

Carrying out these 'other activities' may require important contributions from third parties in order to attain the objectives sought. In determining the most appropriate mode of implementation for third parties, the nature of their tasks and the modalities that will apply need to be given careful consideration.

It should be noted that **the quality of the PoC plan and the proper justification of the requested budget are part of the evaluation criteria. This implies that all proposed activities, including possible subcontracted activities, will be subject to the assessment of the evaluators.**

1.2.2.2 Handling of ethical issues

Some ERC actions may have ethical implications or may raise questions which will require sound ethical assessment in order to ensure that actions supported by an ERC grant respects the fundamental ethical principles (see Box 2 and Annex 2).

Box 2: Dealing with ethical issues

Fundamental ethical principles must be respected, including those reflected in the Charter* of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. These principles include the need to ensure the freedom of research and the need to protect the physical and moral integrity of individuals and the welfare of animals. The opinions of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)** are and will be taken into account. Furthermore, due account should be taken of the Protocol*** on the Protection and Welfare of Animals, to reduce the use of animals in research and testing (with a view to ultimately replacing animal use), to involve animals with the lowest degree of neuropsychological sensitivity, and to cause the least pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Applicants should indicate whether the proposed research and/or its outcomes raise sensitive ethical questions such as research involving human beings, human biological samples, personal data, genetic information or animals****.

According to Article 6 of the FP7 Decision and Article 3 of the Specific Programme Ideas, the following activities cannot be funded:

- research activities aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes;

- research activities intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable;
- research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

As regards human embryonic stem cell research, the ERC is bound by the European Commission's commitment to follow the practice of the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme (see OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006, p. 42) and exclude from financial support any research activities destroying human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent ERC funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Applicants must ensure that the research proposed respects all national rules and procedures of the relevant country where the proposed research is conducted. Where necessary, approval must be sought from the relevant national or local ethics committee prior to the start of the project.

* see http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default_en.htm

** see http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/european-group-ethics/docs/publications/opinion_22_final_follow_up_en.pdf

*** see http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/references_en.htm

**** a dedicated website that aims to provide helpful information on ethical issues is available at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html.

1.2.2.3 Handling of Security sensitive ERC actions

Additionally, as established in the *ERC Rules for submission- Annex D¹³*, ERC actions addressing security-sensitive subjects need to be identified and scrutinised according to the applicable legislation (see Box 3 and Annex 3).

Box 3: Scrutiny of security sensitive ERC actions¹⁴

ERC grants addressing security-sensitive subjects must undergo a security scrutiny procedure. In order to ensure this, any successful ERC proposal will be scrutinised for security aspects prior to granting.

A security 'sensitive' proposal is a proposal for an action that may need to handle classified information. Proposals submitted to ERC calls must not contain any classified information. However, it is possible that the output of an action ('Foreground') needs to be classified, or that classified inputs ('Background') are required. In addition, a proposal may also be considered as sensitive if it is planned to exchange material which is subject to transfer or export licensing.

The first step of this scrutiny (security scrutiny clearance) will be carried out by ERCEA staff, who will identify all proposals that clearly have no associated security issues and which therefore should proceed with granting immediately.

The remaining proposals (i.e. those that clearly are or that may be security-sensitive) will be scrutinised, according to legislation, by a '**Security Scrutiny Committee**'. This committee consists of representatives of national security authorities, supported, if appropriate, by representatives of the relevant members of the Programme Committees. The scrutiny will be carried out by Committee members of the same country(ies) as that of the prospective grant beneficiaries (i.e. the host organisation and other organisations involved in the proposal).

The outcome of the scrutiny process results in a recommendation of the committee:

¹³ See ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/erc-evrules_en.pdf

¹⁴ See Annex 3

- That no EU classification is needed;
- That an EU classification at some level is needed (references);
- That the proposal is too sensitive to be financed.

During the subsequent granting process, ERCEA will put in place the recommendations of the committee.

1.2.3 Preparing a Proof of Concept application

ERC grant applications can be submitted only in response to a '**call for proposals**'. Calls announced in the ERC Work Programme 2013 are published on the ERC website¹⁵, the Research and Innovation Participant Portal,¹⁶ and in the Official Journal of the European Union¹⁷.

The ERC publishes an annual call for proposals for the ERC Proof of Concept, to be implemented through the CSAs funding scheme. It is a continuous call with two deadlines; applicants who miss the first deadline can still submit their proposal to the second deadline. The provisional timing of this call is indicated in the table below and will be updated on a regularly basis on the ERC website.

ERC Proof of Concept Grant Call Provisional Schedule – 2013

	Call open	1 st deadline	Evaluation	2 nd deadline	Evaluation
ERC-2013-PoC	10 January 2013	24 April 2013	Summer 2013	3 October 2013	Autumn 2013

Box 4: Key features of the ERC grant application procedure

- Applications should be submitted by a single PI in conjunction with and on behalf of a host institution (applicant legal entity).
- A complete proposal consists of **administrative forms (Part A), a project proposal (Part B) and supporting documentation (Host Institution support letter and, where applicable, Ethical and Security annexes)**.
- Proposal formats and page numbers are strictly limited.
- Submission of all the documents is accepted only via the web-based **Participant Portal Submission Service (PPSS)**..
- The application procedure consists of a **single submission stage**.

1.2.3.1 Overview of the grant application

A complete ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) grant application involves the following three separate components:

¹⁵ <http://erc.europa.eu/>

¹⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home>

¹⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en>

- **The administrative forms (Part A)**
- **The PoC proposal (Part B)**
- **The supporting documentation**

1.2.3.2 Instructions for completing 'Part A' of the proposal

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Participant Portal Submission Service (PPSS) (see paragraph 1.2.4 of this guide). In the A forms, the PI is asked for administrative data that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of the proposal. The A forms are an integral part of the proposal.¹⁸ Part A1 gives a snapshot of the proposal and of the PI, section A2 concerns the host institution, while section A3 deals with financial matters.

Please note:

- Form A1 includes a non-confidential abstract of the proposal.
- The PI must indicate the ID number of the related ERC Starting or Advanced grant of which he/she is the Principal Investigator.
- Form A2 concerns information about the PI's host institution¹⁹.
- Subcontractors are not required to fill in section A2 and should not be listed separately in section A3.
- Form A3 concerns information about the estimated project costs and grant required.

Please ensure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros, and must exclude value added tax (VAT).

Please ensure that the amount given in the financial section A3 corresponds precisely to the information provided in the proposal text (Part B Section 4, The budget). In case of discrepancy, the A3 data will prevail.

The following notes are for information only. They should assist you in completing the A forms of your proposal. Online guidance will also be available. The precise questions and options presented on PPSS may differ slightly from these below.

Please consult regularly the Research and Innovation Participant Portal call page for updated information or contact the PPSS HELPDESK by e-mail DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu or by phone +32 2 29 922222.

Section A1: Proposal and PI information

Proposal Number	[pre-filled by the system]
------------------------	----------------------------

¹⁸ Details of the project itself which the applicant intends to carry out will be described in the 'Part B' of the proposal.

¹⁹ The filling of additional A2 forms, corresponding to other institutions of Co-Investigators and/or team members ('additional participants'), may be necessary.

Proposal Acronym	<p>The short title or acronym will be used to identify your proposal efficiently in this call. It should consist of <u>no more than 20 characters</u> (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no spaces, symbols or special characters please).</p> <p>The same acronym should appear on each page of the proposal.</p>
Project Type	[pre-filled] PoC

General Information on the Proposal

Call identifier	<p><i>[filled in]</i></p> <p>The call identifier is the reference number given in the call or part of the call you are applying for, as indicated in the publication of the call in the Participant Portal call page. A call identifier looks like this: <i>ERC-2013-PoC</i> followed by a number.</p>
Proposal Title (max 180 char.) (Non Confidential Information)	<p>The title should be <u>no longer than 180 characters</u> and should be understandable to the non-specialist in your field.</p> <p>In order to best review your application, your agreement is needed below so that this non-confidential title can be used when contacting potential reviewers.</p>
Duration in months	<p>The estimated duration of the project in full months. [MAXIMUM 12]</p>
Related ERC project ID number	<p><i>Mandatory</i> - This is the reference number (6-digit ID number) of the related ERC project This number can be found in the Grant Agreement or, alternatively, on our website http://erc.europa.eu under the "Funded Projects" link.</p>
Abstract (min.100/ max. 2000 char.) (non confidential information)	<p>The abstract (summary) should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as the short description of your proposal in the evaluation process and in communications to inform the European Commission and/or the programme management committees (provided you give permission to do so where requested below). It must therefore be short and precise and shall not contain confidential information.</p> <p>Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters. The abstract must be written in English²⁰. There is a <u>limit of 2000 characters</u> (spaces and line breaks included).</p>
In order to best review your application, do you agree that the above non confidential proposal title and abstract can be used, without disclosing your identity, when contacting potential reviewers?	<p>[Yes/No] – In the course of the evaluation procedure, the non-confidential title and abstract of your proposal may be communicated to potential external referees. Please specify your agreement or disagreement.</p>

Information on the Principal Investigator

²⁰ The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. Please note that accordingly the panel reports will be available in English only. If the proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts. An English translation of the abstract must be included in the proposal.

Family Name	Last name as given in Passport or Identity Card.
Family Name at Birth	Your last name at birth.
First Name(s)	Your first name(s) as given in Passport or Identity Card.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Nationality	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
Country of residence	[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which you legally reside.
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	Please specify your date of birth using the format (DD/MM/YYYY).
Country of Birth	[drop-down menu] Please select the country in which you were born.
Town of Birth	Insert the name of the town in which you were born in English (please avoid any district codes).

Contact Address	
Current Organisation name (if applicable)	Name under which your organisation is registered.
Current Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory name (if applicable)	Name under which your Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The street number.
Town	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Country	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
Phone 1, 2	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
E-mail 1, 2	Please insert your e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional. Please note that E-mail 1 is the main channel of communication between the ERCEA and the PI and will be used to generate the PI's ERC web account where official communication from ERCEA to the PI may be posted, therefore please verify that the E-mail 1 provided is correct. The first e-mail should be identical to the e-mail used as a login ID for ECAS.

<p>I allow the ERCEA to make my name as well as my proposal's title and acronym public in case my proposal is successful after the evaluation process</p>	<p>[Yes/No] For communication purposes only, the ERC EA asks for your permission to publish your name, the proposal title and acronym, the Host Institution name and country should your proposal be successful after the evaluation process.</p> <p><u>The decision about this permission will not affect in any manner the outcome of the evaluation and will not be communicated to the reviewers.</u></p>
<p>This proposal submission is in compliance with the eligibility criteria (please consult the ad-hoc Work Programme and Guide for Applicants for further details).</p>	<p>[Yes/No]</p>
<p>Does the proposal raise any ethical issues, as specified in the Ethical Issues Table at the end of Part B?</p>	<p>[Yes/No] -The Ethical Issues Table has to be completed even if there are no issues (by confirming in the table that none of the ethical issues apply)</p> <p>If any of the issues in the Ethical Issues Table (in part B) apply to your proposal, you must provide a brief explanation of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately in the Ethical Issues Annex . This annex should be uploaded in PPSS together with Part B).</p> <p>See point 1.2.2.2 (Box 2) and Annex 2 of this guide.</p>

The Host Institution

The Authorised Legal Representative of the Host Institution	
Person who can commit the host institution according to the requirements of the ERC Model Grant Agreement.	
Family Name	Last name as given in the Passport or ID card.
First Name(s)	First name(s) as given in the Passport or ID card.
Title	Please choose one of the following: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.
Gender Female(F)/Male(M)	This information is required for statistical and mailing purposes. Indicate F or M as appropriate.
Position in the host organisation	e.g. senior administrative officer
Contact address of the Host Institution and administrative contact person for the ERCEA	
Institution legal name	Name under which your institution is registered.
	The name under which the host Office/Section/Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is

Office/ Section/ Department/ Faculty	registered.
Family Name (contact person)	Last name as given in the Passport or ID card.
First name(s) (contact person)	First name.
Street name	The street name.
Number	The street number.
Town	The town, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Postal Code/ Cedex	The Postal code.
Country	[drop-down menu] Please select one country.
Phone 1, 2	Please insert the full phone number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111. The 2 nd phone number is optional.
Fax	Please insert the full fax number including country and city/area code. Example +32-2-2991111.
E-mail 1, 2	Please insert the e-mail address. The 2 nd e-mail address is optional. Please note that E-mail 1 is the main channel of communication between the ERCEA and the Host Institution; therefore please verify the E-mail 1 provided is correct. Additionally, E-mail 1 will be used to generate the Host Institution's ERC web account where official communication from ERCEA to the Host Institution may be posted.

Section A2: Host Organisation

One form for the host institution. If other organisations are involved, please generate and fill in another A2 form by adding another participant (in PPSS the button is called 'Add Partner Organisation').

Proposal Number	[pre-filled by the system]
Proposal Acronym	[pre-filled from A1]
Organisation Number	[pre-filled] The number allocated to each organisation. The PI's host institution is always number one .
The Organisation	
Participant Identification Code (PIC)	For information on the PIC, please see paragraph 1.2.4.1 'Step 3: Create a Draft Proposal'. For the host institution, the PIC is pre-filled from Step 3. For any additional organisation, if the organisation has already registered for FP7, the PIC is optional but recommended. On the A2 form, you will find a search tool for checking if the organisation is already registered (and thus has a PIC).
Organisation legal name	For the host institution, this field is pre-filled from Step 3. For any additional organisation, please insert this information. For a Public Law Body , it is the name under which the organisation is registered in the Resolution text, Law, Decree/Decision establishing the Public Entity, or in any other document established at the constitution of the Public Law

	<p>Body;</p> <p>For a Private Law Body, it is the name under which the organisation is registered in the national Official Journal (or equivalent) or in the national company register.</p>
Organisation short name	<p>For the host institution, this field is pre-filled from Step 3.</p> <p>For any additional organisation, please insert this information.</p> <p>Choose an abbreviation of the organisation legal name, only for use in this proposal and in all relating documents.</p> <p>This short name should not be more than 20 characters exclusive of special characters (./;...), e.g. CNRS and not C.N.R.S. It should be preferably the one as commonly used, e.g. IBM and not Int.Bus.Mac.</p>
Organisation Town	Town where the organisation is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Organisation Country	The country where the organisation is located, in English.
Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Name	The name under which the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is registered.
Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Town	The town where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English (please avoid any district codes).
Department/Faculty/Institute/Lab Country	The country where the Department/Faculty/Institute/Laboratory is located, in English.
Internet Homepage	Insert the address of the organisation internet homepage.

Section A3: Budget

Financial information (in Euros) – whole duration of the project	
<p>This financial data summarises the total costs and the requested ERC grant, also presented in the proposal text (Part B, Section 4 – The Budget). The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. There is no minimum contribution; the requested contribution should be in proportion to the actual needs to fulfil the objectives of the project.</p> <p>The host institution²¹ should enter the different types of costs (Personnel, other direct, indirect and subcontracting). Please ensure the table contains the correct amount of the different types of costs and the correct total eligible costs and requested grant.</p> <p>Eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs</p> <p>An ERC PoC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the project plus a reimbursement of a flat rate of 7% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of reimbursement of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary) towards indirect costs. Costs claimed should be in line with the host institution's own accounting rules.</p> <p>Direct eligible costs are those which support the action, management and other activities necessary for the project, such as: Personnel Costs; Equipment Costs; Consumables; Travel and Subsistence Costs; Publication Costs (page charges and related fees for publication of results).</p> <p>Indirect eligible costs are those which cannot be identified as directly attributable to the project, but which are incurred in direct relationship with the project's direct eligible costs, such as: Costs related to general administration and management; Costs of office or laboratory space, including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditure such as water, heating, electricity; Maintenance, insurance and safety costs; Communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office; Supplies; Common office equipment such as PCs, laptops, office software; Miscellaneous recurring consumables.</p> <p>Non-eligible costs cannot be reimbursed through the ERC grant, such as: Any identifiable indirect taxes, including VAT or duties; Interest owed; Provisions for possible future losses or charges; Exchange losses; Costs declared, incurred or reimbursed in respect of another Community project; Costs related to return on capital; Debt and debt service charges; Excessive or reckless expenditure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please ensure that the amounts given in this form correspond precisely to the information provided in the proposal text (Part B, Section 4- The Budget). In case of discrepancy, the data contained in this A3 form will prevail. • Please make sure that all costs are given in <u>whole Euros (integer)</u>, not thousands of Euros. All costs must be given <u>excluding the value added tax (VAT)</u>. • For further questions about the budget please consult the FAQs on the ERC website. 	
Participant Number in this proposal	The <u>PI's Host Institution</u> for the proposal is always <u>number one</u> .
Organisation short name	The same name that has been used in form A2.
Personnel Costs (in €)	<p>Personnel costs are only the costs of the actual hours worked by the persons directly carrying out work under the project and must correspond to the percentage of dedicated working time to run the ERC project. Such persons must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be directly hired by the beneficiary in accordance with its national legislation, – work under the sole technical supervision and responsibility of the latter, and – be remunerated in accordance with the normal practices of the participant. <p>Participants may opt to declare average personnel costs if consistent with the management principles and usual accounting practices of the participant.</p> <p>Average personnel costs charged by a participant are deemed not to significantly differ from actual personnel costs.</p>
Other direct costs (excluding subcontracting) (in €)	Means direct costs not covered by the above-mentioned categories of costs.

²¹ Additional lines should correspond to any legal entities that have filled form A2.

<p>Indirect costs (max. 7 % of direct costs) (in €)</p>	<p>Indirect costs are all those eligible costs which cannot be identified by the participant as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs.</p>
<p>Subcontracting (in €)</p>	<p>A subcontractor is a third party which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with one or more participants, in order to carry out part of the work of the project without the direct supervision of the participant and without a relationship of subordination.</p> <p>Where it is necessary for the participants to subcontract certain elements of the work to be carried out, the following conditions must be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project; - recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified in Part B of the proposal having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation; - recourse to the award of subcontract by a participant may not affect the rights and obligations of the participants regarding background and foreground; - Part B of the proposal must indicate the task to be subcontracted and an estimation of the costs; <p>Any subcontract, the costs of which are to be claimed as an eligible cost, must be awarded according to the principles of best value for money (best price-quality ratio), transparency and equal treatment. Framework contracts between a participant and a subcontractor, entered into prior to the beginning of the project that are according to the participant's usual management principles may also be accepted.</p> <p>Participants may use external support services for assistance with minor tasks that do not represent per se project tasks as identified in Part B of the proposal.</p> <p>If applicable, actual direct costs and real overhead costs of third parties that make available to the proposal resources otherwise unavailable within the consortium, can also be included under the category of subcontracting costs (provided that these costs are not related to proposal's core tasks).</p>
<p>Total Eligible Costs (in €)</p>	<p>The sum of direct costs (personnel and others), indirect costs and subcontracting.</p>
<p>Requested Grant (in €)</p>	<p>The total budget that you are requesting as the ERC grant (in Euros).</p>

1.2.3.3 Instructions for completing 'Part B' of the proposal

The proposal in itself has to be presented in the form of the so-called 'Part B', **following the template provided in PPSS (the use of the template is mandatory)**. There is only one 'Part B' (+annexes) to be filled in, and this will be the information available to the evaluators during the one-step evaluation, please keep this in mind when drafting your 'Part B'. It needs to be uploaded in PDF format via PPSS (see point 1.2.4.2 of this guide).

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Please be aware that there is only one evaluation step. The "Part B" must contain all the information required to evaluate your proposal.

The information to be included in each of the sections is described below. The maximum length of each section, which needs to be respected strictly, is described below.

Only the material contained within the page limits mentioned below while respecting the layout parameters will be evaluated. It should provide sufficient information to the peer reviewers to assess the proposal according to the evaluation criteria.

Each proposal page **must** carry a **header** presenting the **PI's last name**, and the **acronym** of the proposal.

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman	At least 11	Single	2 cm right and left side, 1.5 cm bottom 1 cm header 1 cm footer

The activities to be funded should draw substantially on the outputs of the ERC-funded research project (whose ID number has to be indicated in PPSS 'A1 form'), but they are not aimed at extending the original research or predominantly concerned with overcoming technical obstacles. The grant will cover activities at the very early stage of turning research outputs into a commercial proposition, i.e. the initial steps of pre-competitive development of commercial potential.

The description of the proposal in the 'Part B' template is structured according to the evaluation criteria as described in the Work Programme. By drafting your proposal you should always keep these evaluation criteria in mind, each section addresses one particular criterion:

- Section1 – The idea: This section addresses the following **eligibility** criterion "The proposal should draw substantially on the outputs of previous ERC-funded research."
- Section2 – Early-stage innovation strategy: This section addresses the first evaluation criterion "Innovation potential - Proposals demonstrate that the proposed proof of concept activity could greatly help move the output of research towards the initial steps of pre-commercialisation."
- Section3 – Plan of the activities: This section addresses the second evaluation criterion "Quality of the proof of concept plan - The proposed proof of concept is based on a sound approach for establishing technical and commercial feasibility of the project."
- Section4 – The budget: This section addresses the third evaluation criterion "Budget - The requested budget shall be necessary for the implementation of the proposed proof of concept and properly justified."
- Section5 – Ethical and security issues: This section addresses to any proposal subject to ethical or security clearance.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: "In order to be considered for funding, proposals will have to be awarded a pass mark by a majority of peer reviewers on each of the three evaluation criteria. A proposal which fails one or more of the criteria will not be ranked and will not be funded."

Section 1 – The idea:

This section is about describing the idea to be taken to proof of concept in a few words (abstract) and demonstrating its link to the related ERC project. It will be used to assess the eligibility of the proposal regarding the relationship between the idea and the related ERC-funded project.

The maximal length of this section is 1 page.

a. Succinct description of the idea to be taken to proof of concept

Write here an "abstract-like" description of your project, explaining what the idea is all about and what are the expected outcomes of the project. This description should be understandable for a non-specialist in your field

b. Demonstration of the relationship between the idea and the related ERC-funded project

Please demonstrate the relation between the idea and the related ERC-funded project (whose ID number has to be indicated in PPSS 'A1 form'). The Work Programme²² reads that "Proof of Concept Grants look to build upon ideas which draw substantially from research that has been or are currently funded by the ERC and it is therefore an offer only to Principal Investigators whose proposals draw substantially on the outputs of their ERC funded research." This part will be used to assess this eligibility criterion.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE: The evaluation criteria for the Proof of Concept proposals are not assessing the scientific excellence (as for the evaluation of the ERC related project). The reviewers are recruited on the basis of their technical expertise in assessing the evaluation

²² Section 9.4.1, second paragraph.

criteria. Please also note that the evaluation of Proof of Concept proposals is done by a single panel, not restricted to one scientific field or domain.

Section 2 – Early-stage innovation strategy:

This section is about describing the innovation potential of the idea and demonstrating how the proposed activities will help move the idea towards the initial steps of pre-commercialisation.

It will be used to assess the evaluation criterion #1: 'Innovation potential'.

The maximal length of this section is 2 pages.

a. Description of the innovation potential

b. Economic and societal benefits

c. Commercialisation process

d. Proposed plans of the (where applicable):

- Testing, technical reports
- Market Research
- IPR position and strategy²³
- Industry/sector contacts

Please refer to the Work Programme (9.8. **Evaluation criteria – 1. Innovation Potential**) for the explanation of these sub-criteria.

Important: Point d) states *where applicable*, this does not mean you should skip these points if not applicable. In this case, please explain why it does not apply to the project (is it out of scope? has it already been achieved?) in order for the evaluators to understand why this issue is not addressed in the frame of the Proof of Concept project.

Section 3 – Plan of the activities

This section is about describing the planning of the proposed activities, the project-management plan and the team that will conduct the activities. You should demonstrate the relevance of the approach chosen for establishing the technical and commercial feasibility of the project.

It will be used to assess the evaluation criterion #2: 'Quality of the proof of concept plan'.

The maximal length of this section is 2 pages.

a. Plan of the activities

b. Project-management plan

c. Description of the team

Please refer to the Work Programme (9.8 **Evaluation criteria – 2. Quality of the proof of concept plan**) for the explanation of these sub-criteria.

²³ If any foreground was potentially protectable in the pre-existing ERC Advanced/Starting Grant, beneficiaries have the legal obligation to seek for adequate and effective protection according to Article 44 of the Rules for Participation and Article II.28 of the ERC Model Grant Agreement (MGA) – see ERC Website at URL: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=23>

Section 4 – The budget

This section is about describing the resources needed for the project. You should demonstrate that the requested budget is necessary for the implementation of the proposed activities and properly justified.

It will be used to assess the evaluation criterion #3: 'Budget'.

The maximal length of this section is 1 page.

a. Resources:

It is strongly recommended to use the costing table provided in the 'Part B' template. The costing table does not count in the page limit.

b. Justification (description of the budget)

Describe the necessary resources and specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project. It is advisable to include a short technical description of the equipment requested, a justification of its need as well as the intensity of its planned use. **Please note that a properly and correctly compiled budget with a sufficiently detailed and reasoned justification is necessary to facilitate the evaluation on criterion #3.**

Subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project and recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation. Hence in the case of subcontracting please include the tasks and budget for each subcontract as well as a brief justification for this.

Attention is also drawn to the specificities of the conditions which apply to subcontracting in terms of the award of the contract and implementation. It is therefore noted that in certain specific contexts it may be appropriate to consider what the most suitable modality to include the costs for third parties may be.

About the Costing Table:

Please separate the costs of management activities from the ones of other activities. Please make sure that the indirect costs are calculated as a flat-rate of **7%** of the total eligible direct costs.

Please ensure that for each type of direct cost included in the costing table, a corresponding description of what this funding concerns is provided.

Section 5: Ethical and Security issues

This section is about reporting any ethical or security issue your proposal may be involved with.

a. Ethical Issues²⁴

The Ethical Issues Table (in PPSS part B Section 5.a) serves to identify any ethical aspects of the proposed work. This table has to be completed even if there are no issues (by confirming in the table that none of the ethical issues apply to the proposal). Annex 2 of this guide describes the ethics review process and gives guidance on the completion of the Ethical Issues Table.

If any of the issues in the Ethical Issues Table apply to your proposal, you **must** provide a brief explanation of the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. An Ethical Issues Annex has to be uploaded in case there are any ethical implications in the

²⁴ A dedicated website that aims to provide helpful information on ethical issues is now available at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html

proposal. Information on how to draft this 'Ethical Issues Annex' is provided in Annex 2b of this guide.

We encourage you to include any supporting documentation, such as any authorisation you may already have. This will allow a more effective ethical clearance and an accelerated granting process if the proposal is retained for possible funding²⁵.

Please upload this Ethical Issues Annex and any related documents in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section included in the PPSS tab 'Part B & Annexes'.

You need to be aware that no grant agreement can be signed by ERCEA prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethical review.

b. Security sensitivity Issues

ERC actions may be classified if they are considered as security sensitive. The proposal can be considered security-sensitive for a variety of reasons, most notably:

- if it proposed action may need to handle classified information as background;
- if some foreground is planned to be classified.

In addition, a proposal may also be considered as sensitive, independently of any security classification, if it plans to exchange material subject to transfer or export licensing. If export licences (or intra EU licences) are required for carrying out the planned work, applicants must clarify the requirement to have such export or transfer licences and must provide a copy of export or transfer licences (or of the requests). For further information on security sensitive issues relevant to this Call, see Annex 4 to this guide.

If your proposal is security sensitive, describe (in section 2 d) why, which are the participants concerned by the sensitivity and what are the measures foreseen to cope with it. Please annex to your proposal a first version of the Security Aspects Letter (SAL) and its annex, the Security Classification Guide, as part of the proposal using the template provided in Annex 4.

Describe also your experience in managing security sensitive projects, if relevant.

Please note that this security related parts of the proposal are not considered as part of the scientific evaluation. These will only be considered in the scrutiny of security sensitive actions.

The pages of the Ethical Issues Table included in Part B Section 5.a and the Ethical Issues Annex and the SAL (separate documents) will not count towards the maximum page limit for Part B.

1.2.3.4 Supporting Documentation

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically in PPSS in PDF format using the corresponding template available on PPSS (see Annex 1: 'Commitment of the host institution' of this guide).

The host institution (applicant legal entity) must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence set out in the supplementary agreement to the ERC Grant agreement are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful. This document needs to be originally signed, stamped and dated by the institution's legal

²⁵ A full description of the Ethics Review is provided in the in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme (http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ercevrules_en.pdf)

representative. Proposals that do not include this institutional statement will not be considered for evaluation.

Please provide only the documents requested above. Unless specified in the call, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material, and any other documents (company brochures, supporting documentation, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) will be disregarded.

Where applicable, ethical and security annexes should also be uploaded in PPSS as separate PDF documents.

1.2.4 Submitting a Proof of Concept application

1.2.4.1 Getting started with PPSS

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the web-based Participant Portal Submission Service (PPSS)²⁶ which is to be found on the call page of the Research and Innovation Participant Portal²⁷ – or via the ERC website²⁸.

An Internet browser and version 9 (or above) of the Adobe reader are needed. Please note that some internet browsers and/or Operating Systems (OS) may not be supported by the PPSS. To check the requirements, click on:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/submission/manage/diagnostics>

Full instructions are found in the '10 minute guide to the proposal submission', available from the PPSS website (click on 'Starter Manual' to download the user guide).

Step 1: 'Login' - Getting a user ID with the Commission

Getting a user ID with the **European Commission Authentication Service (ECAS)** is mandatory in order to login to the Participant Portal and to be able to use the different functions of the Portal, including the proposal submission. Each time you access the proposal for editing, this user ID is requested. The same user ID is used for all later interactions with the ERCEA, including notification of the results of the evaluation²⁹.

Step 2: 'Funding scheme'

For each call, a list of available funding schemes is presented by PPSS. For this call, there is only one choice available – select 'ERC-PoC-2013'.

Step 3: 'Create a draft proposal'

²⁶ In exceptional cases, if an applicant has absolutely no means of accessing the PPSS and if it is impossible to arrange to do so, he/she may request permission from the ERCEA to submit on paper. Such a request, which must clearly explain the circumstances of the case, must be received by the ERCEA no later than one month before the call deadline. The ERCEA will reply to such a request within five working days of receipt. If derogation is granted, the ERCEA will send proposal forms for paper submission to the applicant concerned. Such a request should be sent to the following address: European Commission, European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)/ Unit B 2, COV2 21/057, 1049 Brussels, Belgium.

²⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home>

²⁸ ERC: European Research Council - Submit an ERC Grant Proposal: <http://erc.europa.eu/step-step>

²⁹ Further details are available here: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/eim/external/help.cgi>

On this page, you fill in pre-registration data for the proposal. These details will be used by the ERCEA in order to plan the evaluation. You will not have access to this page again once it is completed and you have progressed to Step 4.

- Acronym: This is used to identify your proposal efficiently in the call. It should be no more than 20 characters (use standard alphabet and numbers only; no symbols or special characters, except underscore, space, hyphen or dot).
- Short summary: This should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved (non-confidential information). It should be no more than 2000 characters.

At this step, the host institution **must be identified with a Participant Identification Code (PIC)**. Failure to do so blocks the submission of the proposal! The PIC is a unique 9 digit number that helps the ERCEA identify a participant (organisation). It is used in all grant-related interactions between the organisation and the ERCEA. Once an organisation is registered (once in the Unique Registration Facility, which is hosted in the Participant Portal⁴¹), it eliminates redundant requests for information.

If your host institution has already participated in a 7th Framework Programme proposal, it is likely that you already have a PIC number. You can check this on the Participant Portal: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/myorganisations>

If a PIC is not yet available for an organisation, it can be obtained by registering the organisation in the Unique Registration Facility. A PIC is then given, which can then be used in PPSS³⁰. More information on how to register is available here: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/myorganisations>

You are strongly advised to register your proposal well in advance of the call deadline to verify if the PIC is available for your host institution. If it is not, you then have sufficient time to register and contact your host institution or the PPSS helpdesk if needed.

After entering the PIC, sections of the A forms are filled in automatically.

If the data retrieved upon PIC entry appears to be incorrect, you have the possibility to change some details. These changes will be valid only for the proposal. The objective of the PIC is to identify the organisation and validation of the information will happen at a later stage, if the proposal is retained for funding.

Note:

- If an organisation has a participant identification code, it may be likely that it has a person in charge of the administrative questions with the European Commission (the legal entity appointed representative – LEAR³¹). Identifying this person inside your organisation may help you in the proposal submission process.

³⁰ This self-registration will lead to a request by the ERCEA to the organisation to provide supporting documents and to nominate a Legal Entity Authorised Representative (LEAR). However, this PIC code does not need to be validated for proposal submission. If your proposal is selected, this additional information and validation will be completed at a later stage before a grant agreement can be signed.

³¹ The LEAR is a person nominated in each legal entity participating in FP7. This person is the contact for the ERCEA related to all questions on legal status. He/she has access to the on-line database of legal entities with a possibility to view the data stored on his/her entity and to initiate updates and corrections to these data. After the validation of the entity has been finalised, the contact person/authorised representative named in the Research and Innovation Participant Portal receives the PIC number. Once the LEAR is validated, he/she manages the modifications of the entity-related information in the Research and Innovation Participant Portal and distributes the PIC number within his/her organisation, which can be used in all proposals submission and negotiations.

1.2.4.2 PPSS proposal submission

Once Steps 1 to 3 are completed, the proposal is created. You can continue to Step 4 or return later to edit this already created proposal. This is done by doing the following:

1. Go to the Participant Portal
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home>
2. Click on the login button and provide your ECAS username and password
3. Click on the 'My Proposals' tab
4. Depending on the status of the proposal, you jump either to Step 5 'Edit draft' or to Step 6 'View submitted'.

Step 4 'Manage Your Related Parties'

Here you see the name and details of the **host organisation** (always participant number '1') and your own name. At this step, you cannot add additional organisations – this can be only be done by adding an additional A2 form at Step 5.

However, you can add **additional contact persons**, who receive an email with the proposal details and a link to access (**and edit – with all the same rights as you**) the proposal via the Participant Portal.

Step 5: 'Edit Proposal'

This step is the core of the submission process, as from this step, you can edit forms, view the history, print the draft proposal, download templates, upload files and submit the proposal by clicking on the relevant buttons.

Further information on the preparation of the application (Parts A and B) is given in paragraph 1.2.3 of this guide.

- **For Part B you must only use PDF ('portable document format') compatible with Adobe version 3 or higher, with embedded fonts. Other file formats will not be accepted by the system.** Irrespective of any page limits specified in this guide, there is an **overall limit of 10 Mbytes to the size of each uploaded document (Part B etc.)**. However, it is advised to limit the size of Part B to 2 Mbytes each.
- Unless specified in the call, embedded material and any other documents (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video, multimedia, etc.) sent electronically or by post, will be disregarded. However, panel members and/or referees may (but are not obliged to) access relevant web pages (that you may refer to in Part B) in order to further assess your previous work (including openly accessible published manuscripts).
- There are also restrictions to the name given to the Part B files: use alphanumeric characters; special characters and spaces must be avoided.

You are advised to clean your document before converting it to PDF (e.g. accept all tracked changes, delete notes).

Check that your conversion software has successfully converted all the pages of your original document (e.g. there is no problem with page limits).

Check that your conversion software has not cut down landscape format pages to fit them into portrait format. Check that captions and labels have not been lost from your diagrams.

Please note that the ERCEA prints out proposals in black and white on plain A4 paper. The printable zone on the print engine is bounded by 1.5 cm right, left, top bottom. No scaling is applied to make the page "fit" the window. Printing is done at 300 dots per inch.

- **Completing the Part A forms in the PPSS and uploading all the necessary files (Part B, host institution support letter, and – if applicable – Ethical Issues and/or Security-Sensitive Issues Annexes) does not yet mean that your proposal is submitted.** Once there is a consolidated version of the proposal, the 'SUBMIT' button must be pressed. The system performs a limited automatic validation of the proposal. A list of any problems such as missing data, wrong file format or excessive file size will then appear on the screen. **Submission is blocked until these problems are corrected.** However, these checks do not replace the formal eligibility checks described in paragraph 1.3.1 of this guide and cannot guarantee that the contents of these files respond to the requirements of the call. When corrected, you must then repeat the above steps to achieve submission.

If the submission sequence described above is not followed, the ERCEA considers that no proposal has been submitted.

- When the proposal is successfully submitted, the system will proceed to Step 6 where a message that indicates that the proposal has been received is displayed. The system also sends a submission confirmation e-mail to you, with the details of the submitted proposal. The mail can end up in the spam folder or be blocked by the anti-spam system of your organisation. This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt (see point 1.2.4.3 of this guide ('*Has my proposal been received by the ERCEA?*')).

Step 6: 'Submit'

Reaching this step means that the proposal is submitted (i.e. sent to the ERCEA for evaluation). It does not mean that the proposal is valid, complete and eligible in all respects.

In Step 6 you can:

- *Download the proposal.* It is advised to download the proposal once submitted to check that it has been correctly sent. The downloaded proposal is digitally signed and time stamped.
- *Re-edit the proposal,* going back to Step 5. **You may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up until the deadline.** The sequence above must be repeated each time.
- *Withdraw the proposal.* If the proposal is withdrawn, it is not considered for evaluation. A reason for the withdrawal will be requested by the service. (Note: Your proposal draft is not deleted from the server and this withdrawal action can be reversed, but only before the deadline, by simply submitting it again).

Once submitted, it is recommended to verify the proposal and its content by downloading all the submitted files.

- Proposals must be **submitted before the deadline** specified in the call for proposals³².
- PPSS will be closed for a relevant call at its call deadline. After this moment, it will be impossible to access PPSS for the relevant call.

Early registration and submission in PPSS is strongly recommended and should be done as early as possible in advance of the call deadline. Applicants, who wait until too near to the close of the call to start uploading their proposal, take a serious risk that the uploading will not be concluded in time and thus the 'SUBMIT' button will not be active anymore in order to conclude the submission process.

Box 5: Proposal submission - important to know:

- Proposals cannot be submitted without prior registration, which is required to obtain a PPSS login name and password.
- Proposals sent by means other than PPSS will not be accepted (unless exceptional derogation is granted by the ERCEA, see footnote 26).
- Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. So long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.
- **After the call deadline no updates of the proposal will be accepted. Only the material that the proposal contains within the given page limits while respecting the indicated layout parameters will be evaluated.**
- Submission is deemed to occur only if the submission sequence described in point 1.2.4.2 has been followed.
- Proposals are kept under secure conditions at all times. When no longer needed, all copies are destroyed except those required for archiving and/or auditing purposes.
- In some rare occasions the proposal may be altered while in transit on the Internet. To check that the uploaded proposal has been received unaltered, please download and verify all uploaded files.

1.2.4.3 Has my proposal been received by the ERCEA?

If the submission is technically successful, the applicant receives an automatic computer-generated acknowledgement from PPSS. Acknowledgement of receipt is subsequently provided by e-mail after the call deadline.

³² In the unlikely event of a failure of the PPSS service due to a breakdown of the Commission server during the last 24 hours of a call, the deadline will be extended by a further 24 hours. This will be notified by e-mail to all applicants who had registered for this call by the time of the original deadline, and also by a notice on the call page on the Participant Portal: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal> Such a failure is a rare and exceptional event; therefore do not assume that there will be an extension to this call. If you have difficulty in submitting your proposal, you should not assume that it is because of a problem with the Commission server, as this is rarely the case. For technical inquiries on the use of PPSS, please contact the helpdesk (see point 1.2.3.4 of this guide). Please note that the ERCEA will not extend deadlines for system failures that are not its own responsibility. In all circumstances, you should aim to submit your proposal well before the deadline to have time to solve any problems.

Subsequent to submission, and only in exceptional cases, the ERC may contact the PI if this is necessary to clarify questions of eligibility or to verify administrative or legal data contained in the proposal.

1.2.4.4 How do I modify or withdraw a proposal?

Up to the call deadline, it is possible to modify a proposal simply by submitting a new version. As long as the call has not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the old one.

The last version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated, and no later material can be submitted.

Once the deadline has passed, the ERCEA cannot accept any further additions, corrections or re-submissions. However a read-only access to the submitted proposal is granted in case the PI wishes to verify what has been submitted. This possibility is available for 90 days after the call deadline.

Proposals may be withdrawn before the call deadline at Step 6 using the 'Withdraw' button.

A proposal may be **withdrawn after the call deadline** until the ERCEA has notified the PI about the final outcome of the peer review evaluation. The withdrawal of a proposal must be done by sending a signed letter to: European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA)/ Unit B2, COV2 21/057, BE-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

Please consult regularly the Research and Innovation Participant Portal call page for updated information or contact the PPSS HELPDESK by e-mail DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu or by phone +32 2 29 922222.

1.2.5 Is my proposal ready for evaluation?

Incomplete proposals (where parts of the proposal and/or the host institution's commitment statement are missing) are considered ineligible and will not be evaluated³³. The proposal must be submitted **before the Call deadline**.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision by an eligibility review committee. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the eligibility criteria has not been met, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

Box 6: Checklist – Is your proposal complete?

For the submission of a complete proposal to the Proof of Concept Grant, the following components have to be prepared:

³³ See also 'eligibility check' in ERC rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme (http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/erc-evrules_en.pdf).

The Administrative Forms (Part A): to be completed in PPSS

- on-line forms A1 (Proposal and PI), A2 (Host Institution), A3 (Budget)

The Project Proposal (Part B):

- Section 1 – The idea
- Section 2 – Early-stage innovation strategy
- Section 3 – Plan of the activities
- Section 4 – The budget
- Section 5 – Ethical and security issues

The Supplementary Documents:

- The supporting statement from the host institution: originally signed, stamped and dated by the host institution's legal representative (see Annex 1 of this guide).
- If applicable, the explanatory information on ethical issues and how they will be treated (Ethical Issues Annex, see Annex 2b of this guide).
- If applicable, the explanatory information on security sensitivity issues and how they will be treated (Security Sensitivity Issues Annex, see Annex 3 of this guide).

Please ensure that all forms, parts and supplementary documents are in PDF format and are uploaded correctly in PPSS before the final submission. It is strongly recommended to double-check by downloading them and verifying their completeness.

1.3 Evaluation and selection of grant proposals

1.3.1 Eligibility Check

Proposals are first checked to ensure that all of the eligibility criteria are met.

A proposal must fulfil all of the following eligibility criteria:

- It must be submitted before the deadline of the Call.
- It must be complete (i.e. all of the requested forms, parts of the proposal, and supporting documents must be completed or present).
- Its content must relate to the ERC grant scheme which is subject of the call for proposals.
- It must meet the eligibility requirements of the ERC Proof of Concept grant as well as other criteria mentioned in the relevant call for proposals.

The eligibility is checked on the basis of the information given by the PI in the proposal. If at a later stage, an eligibility criterion is found not to be fulfilled (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will immediately be declared ineligible.

Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed with the evaluation pending a decision by an eligibility review committee.

1.3.2 Peer review evaluation of proposals

The proof of concept is a grant awarded in relation to an existing ERC-funded project which has already been evaluated on the basis of **excellence as the sole criterion**. The proof of concept opportunity to be funded will have arisen from scientifically excellent ERC-funded research that has already been subject to rigorous peer review. The activities to be funded draw substantially on the outputs of ERC-supported research, but they are not aimed at extending the original research or predominantly concerned with overcoming technical obstacles.

Per each deadline, a one-step submission and evaluation procedure will be used. The evaluation will be conducted by peer reviewers³⁴. These experts may work remotely and may if necessary meet as an evaluation panel on the application of the evaluation criteria for selection of proposals for proof of concept funding (as described in the amended ERC Work Programme).

- Innovation potential;

- Quality of the proof of concept plan;

- Budget.

Peer reviewers will evaluate independently each eligible proposal on each of the three evaluation criteria on a “pass/fail” basis.

In order to be considered for funding, proposals will have to be awarded a pass mark by a majority of peer reviewers on each of the three evaluation criteria.

A proposal which fails one or more of the criteria will not be ranked and will not be funded.

If there is not enough budget to fund all the proposals which pass all three evaluation criteria, those proposals which pass all three evaluation criteria will be ranked according to the number of pass marks which they received from peer reviewers. Proposals will be funded in

³⁴ According to section 3.1.6.3 of the ERC Rules for the submission of proposals.

order of this ranking until depletion of the available budget³⁵ per evaluation round. Rankings resulting from each of the two evaluation rounds which follow the two submission deadlines are to be considered independent.

If necessary, the peer reviewers will meet as an evaluation panel in order to determine a priority order for proposals which have the same number of pass marks.

PLEASE NOTE: Any direct or indirect contact about the peer review evaluation of a call between the PI and/or applicant legal entity submitting a proposal under the same call on the one side and any independent expert involved in that peer review evaluation on the other side may result in the decision of the ERCEA to exclude the proposal concerned from the call in question.

1.3.3 Ethics review

The objective of the ethics review is to ensure that the ERC does not support actions which would be contrary to fundamental ethical principles (see Box 2 and Annex2 of this guide) and to examine whether the work complies with the rules relating to research ethics set out in the Seventh Framework Programme and the related statement of the Commission, the Rules for Participation and the Specific Programme 'Ideas'. After the peer review evaluation and before any funding decision is taken, all proposals retained for funding will undergo an ethical clearance. The proposals involving ethical issues will undergo an ethics review that can take up to several weeks to be completed, according to the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved. Applicants need to be aware that no grant agreement can be signed by the ERCEA prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethics review.

Proposals raising specific ethical issues such as intervention on human beings³⁶; work on human embryos and human embryonic stem cells and non-human primates are automatically submitted to a ethics review.

1.3.4 Security scrutiny procedure

The objective of the Security sensitivity review is to ensure that the ERC does not support actions which would be contrary to the ad-hoc legislation³⁷ (see Box 3 and Annex 3 of this guide). After the peer review evaluation and before any funding decision is taken, all proposals retained for funding will undergo a security scrutiny clearance. The proposals involving security sensitive issues will undergo a security sensitivity review.

1.3.5 Feedback to applicants

Official communications and feedback from the ERCEA to the PI and the Host Institution may be done via an ERCEA secured web-mail account. At the time of the first communication or feedback, the PI and the administrative contact person of the host institution will receive an activation email (at the address "*Email 1*" provided in *form A1*) inviting them to activate their ERC web-mail account. Following this first activation the ERC web-mail account will be maintained for any further communications or feedback.

³⁵ Approximately half of the call budget will be available for each of the two evaluation rounds following the two specific deadlines.

³⁶ Such as research and clinical trials, and research involving invasive techniques on persons (e.g. taking of tissue samples, examinations of the brain).

³⁷ Commission decision n°2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom of 29 November 2001 amending its internal rules of procedure (OJ, L 317, 3.12.2001)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2001D0844:20060805:EN:PDF>

PIs and applicant legal entities are provided with feedback on the outcome of the peer review evaluation in the form of an evaluation report. This indicates whether the proposal is retained for funding or not, and provides the passed/failed status for each of the three criteria, with corresponding comments given by the panel.

1.3.6 Redress

Upon reception of the feedback on the outcome of the peer review evaluation with the evaluation report or with the results of the eligibility check, the PI and/or the PI's host institution (applicant legal entity) may wish to introduce a request for redress, if there is an indication that there has been a shortcoming in the way a proposal has been evaluated, or that the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect. The redress procedure is not meant to call into question the judgement made by the peer review panel; it will look procedural shortcomings and – in rare cases – into factual errors.

Such requests for redress should be raised within one month of the date of the feedback on the outcome of the evaluation sent by the ERCEA, and should be introduced via the web-based mailing system (at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/research/participants/redress>).

Requests must be:

- related to the peer review evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the call and funding scheme in question;
- set out using the online form via the above-mentioned web-based mailing system, including a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
- received within the time limit specified on the information letter;
- sent by the PI and/or the PI's host institution (as the applicant legal entity).

An initial reply will be sent to complainants no later than two weeks after the deadline for redress requests. This initial reply will indicate when a definitive reply will be provided.

A redress committee of the ERCEA may be convened to examine the peer review evaluation process for the case in question. The redress committee will bring together staff of the ERCEA with the requisite technical and legal expertise. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and equal treatment of applicants. The redress committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report. In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action to the ERCEA. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated. Unless there is clear evidence of a shortcoming there will be no follow-up or re-evaluation.

Please Note:

- This procedure is concerned with the peer review evaluation and/or eligibility checking process.
- The committee will not call into question the judgment of the individual peer reviewers, who are appropriately qualified experts.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.
- The output of any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive.
- Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee.
- All requests for redress will be treated in confidence.

2 Managing ERC-CSA grants

2.1 Preparation of a grant agreement

The ERC Executive Agency prepares grant agreements for projects on the basis of the proposal and the recommendations of the ERC panel. The grant preparation involves no negotiation of scientific/technical substance. However during the grant agreement preparation, the contact person from the beneficiary and Principal Investigator concerned are expected to provide, if requested, further information on the project and its envisaged management in view of the rules & procedures applicable to ERC grants and if needed on the legal and financial capacity of the legal applicant entity.

If the conditions are accepted, the ERC Executive Agency prepares the draft grant agreement: the grant agreement and its annexes will be based on the FP7 model grant agreement http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html#ideas_ga

The start of the project normally takes place the first calendar day of the month following conclusion of the grant agreement. In the case there is no ethical review ongoing, projects are expected to start within 6 months of the date of the invitation to start the granting process. Only in duly justified exceptional circumstances will the ERCEA consider to deviate from this³⁸. The ERC reserves the right to withdraw from the granting process in the event there is no exception granted to the 6 month period and this timeframe is surpassed.

2.2 Project reporting

Given the length of the CSAs to be financed under this call, the Project reporting will be required only once, at the end of the project.

Contrary to ERC starting or advanced grants reporting will be carried out in a single stream, namely through a single document.

Elements of technical reporting and of financial management reporting including the use of resources will be combined in a single submission.

Applicants are reminded that the Commission's Research DGs have adopted a new and reinforced audit strategy aimed at detecting and correcting errors in cost claims submitted in projects on the basis of professional auditing standards. As a result, the number of audits and participants audited will increase significantly and the Commission's services will assure appropriate mutual exchange of information within its relevant internal departments in order to fully coordinate any corrective actions to be taken in a consistent way.³⁹

2.3 Payment of ERC-CSA grants

Grants are paid in 2 instalments:

1. An advance payment (as pre-financing) is made within a maximum of 45 days of the date of entry into force of the ERC grant agreement.
2. A final payment will be made to on the basis of actual expenditures accepted at the end of the project, after the approval of the project report.

³⁸ A written request should be made ASAP after the invitation to start the granting process outlining what are the prevailing circumstances which would justify a later start date.

³⁹ More information can be found here: http://cordis.europa.eu/audit-certification/home_en.html

2.4 Acknowledging ERC support

Whenever achievements resulting from ERC-funded activities are made public (such as in journals, patents, presentations, etc.) the PI should highlight the ERC's financial support under the Seventh Framework Programme. This may imply a written acknowledgment and/or the application of the ERC logo and the European emblem:

For downloading the image files of the ERC logo and the European emblem, please consult <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=128>.

2.5 Further information and support

General information and key documents are available on the **ERC website** at <http://erc.europa.eu> or on the Research and Innovation Participant Portal (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal>) The ERC website also includes 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

As with other parts of the Seventh Framework Programme, **National Contact Points (ERC NCPs)** have been set up across Europe⁴⁰ by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications⁴¹. For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the ERC website at <http://erc.europa.eu/ncp>.

Technical questions related to the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (PPSS) should be directed to the **PPSS Helpdesk** by e-mail **DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu** or **by phone +32 2 29 922222** or via its web portal on Research and Innovation participant Portal.

A general **ERC Helpdesk** is also available and accessible via the Europe Direct Contact Centre at <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries>

Information events (seminars, conferences, exhibitions) on the ERC or with participation of ERC speakers are published on the ERC website.

⁴⁰ This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some third countries also provide this service.

⁴¹ Note: The ERC will provide the coordinating NCP organisations with information and statistics on the outcome of calls and the evaluation of each proposal. This information is given under strict conditions of confidentiality and allows NCP organisations to customise their service.

3 ANNEXES

Annex 1: Commitment of the host institution^{42, 43}

(to be printed on the official letterhead of the host institution)

Commitment of the host institution

The **(Please fill in here the name of the legal entity that is associated with the proposal and may host the principal investigator and the project in case the application is successful)**, which is the **applicant legal entity**, confirms its intention to engage **(Please fill in here the name of the principal investigator)** throughout the duration of the grant, should the proposal entitled **(acronym) : (title of the proposal)** be retained.

Performance obligations of the applicant legal entity that will become the beneficiary of the grant agreement, should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the grant agreement be successfully concluded:

The applicant legal entity commits itself to:

- a) ensure that the work will be performed under the guidance of the *principal investigator*.
- b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex I of the ERC Grant Agreement, taking into consideration the specific role of the *principal investigator*.

For the institution (applicant legal entity)

Name, Function, Email +Signature of legal representative

Stamp of institution (applicant legal entity)

IMPORTANT NOTE: All the above mentioned items are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the host institution.

⁴² A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically on PPSS in PDF format. More information can be found in point 1.2.3.3 of this guide.

⁴³ This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating his/her name, function, email address and stamp of the institution.

Annex 2: Ethical Issues

Annex 2a: Ethical Issues Table

Areas Excluded From Funding Under FP7 (Art. 6)

- (i) Activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes;
- (ii) Activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (Research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads can be financed);
- (iii) Activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

All FP7 funded action shall comply with the relevant national, EU and international ethics-related rules and professional codes of conduct. Where necessary, the beneficiary(ies) shall provide the responsible Commission services with a written confirmation that it has received (a) favourable opinion(s) of the relevant ethics committee(s) and, if applicable, the regulatory approval(s) of the competent national or local authority(ies) in the country in which the research is to be carried out, before beginning any Commission approved research requiring such opinions or approvals. The copy of the official approval from the relevant national or local ethics committees must also be provided to the responsible Commission services.

Guidance notes on informed consent, dual use, animal welfare, data protection and cooperation with non-EU countries are available at :

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html#ethics_sd

For real time updated information on Animal welfare also see:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/home_en.htm

For real time updated information on Data Protection also see: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/index_en.htm

Work on Human Embryo/ Foetus		YES	Page
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work involve human Embryos?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work involve human Foetal Tissues/ Cells?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work involve human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work on human Embryonic Stem Cells involve cells in culture?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work on Human Embryonic Stem Cells involve the derivation of cells from Embryos?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

Work on Humans		YES	Page
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work involve children?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work involve patients?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed work involve persons not able to give consent?		

	Does the proposed work involve adult healthy volunteers?		
	Does the proposed work involve Human genetic material?		
	Does the proposed work involve Human biological samples?		
	Does the proposed work involve Human data collection?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

Privacy		YES	Page
	Does the proposed work involve processing of genetic information or personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)?		
	Does the proposed work involve tracking the location or observation of people?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

Work on Animals⁴⁴		YES	Page
	Does the proposed proposal involve work on animals?		
	Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?		
	Are those animals transgenic farm animals?		
	Are those animals non-human primates?		
	Are those animals cloned farm animals?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

Work Involving non-EU Countries (ICPC Countries⁴⁵)⁴⁶		YES	Page
	Is the proposed work (or parts of it) going to take place in one or more of the ICPC Countries?		
	Is any material used in the work (e.g. personal data, animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, etc) :		
	a) Collected in any of the ICPC countries?		
	b) Exported to any other country (including ICPC and EU Member States)?		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

Dual Use		YES	Page
	Work having direct military use		
	Work having the potential for terrorist abuse		
	I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL		

⁴⁴ The type of animals involved in the research that fall under the scope of the Commission's Ethical Scrutiny procedures are defined in the Council Directive 86/609/EEC of 24 November 1986 on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States regarding the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes Official Journal L 358 , 18/12/1986 p. 0001 - 0028

⁴⁵ In accordance with Article 12(1) of the Rules for Participation in FP7, 'International Cooperation Partner Country (ICPC) means a third country which the Commission classifies as a low-income (L), lower-middle-income (LM) or upper-middle-income (UM) country. Countries associated to the Seventh EC Framework Programme do not qualify as ICP Countries and therefore do not appear in this list.

⁴⁶ A guidance note on how to deal with ethical issues arising out of the involvement of non-EU countries is available at: ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/ftp7/docs/developing-countries_en.pdf

	PROPOSAL		
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If any of the above issues apply to your proposal, you are required to upload an "Ethical Issues Annex" (see Annex 2b to the Guide for Applicants). The Ethical Issues Annex (max 2 pages) must provide a brief explanation on the ethical issue involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately. Please specify as well any authorization or permission you already have for the proposed work and include copies (these copies do not count towards the 2-page-limit). The Ethical Issues Annex will allow a proper ethical review if the proposal is chosen for possible funding. **Without it, your application cannot be reviewed properly. If your proposal is retained for funding, you may be contacted to give further information on the ethics issues in order to facilitate the ethics review of your proposal.**

Please upload this Ethical Issues Annex and any related documents in the 'Extra Annexes Upload' section included in the PPSS tab 'Part B & Annexes' as a PDF document.

Please see the Guide for Applicants for the 2011 Proof of Concept Call for further details and CORDIS http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html for further information on how to deal with Ethical Issues in your proposal.

The pages of the Ethical Issues Table (included in Part B Section 5.a) and the Ethical Issues Annex (separate document) will not count towards the maximum page limit for Part B.

Annex 2b: The Ethical Issues Annex

If the answer to any of the questions of the Ethical Issues Table (EIT) is "YES" or there is any other ethical issue applicable, the PI must provide a brief description of the ethical issues involved and how it will be dealt with appropriately on the **Ethical Issues Annex**. In particular, it should outline the **benefit** and **burden** of such work for participants, the societal impact of the product that would be commercialised and how the ethical issues will be managed.

The PI may wish to include copies of any existing authorisation for the proposed work (these copies do not count towards the page limit).

The following special issues, among others, should be taken into account:

Informed consent: When describing issues relating to informed consent, it will be necessary to demonstrate an appropriate level of ethical sensitivity and to consider issues of insurance, incidental findings and the consequences of withdrawing from the action.

Data protection issues: Avoid the unnecessary collection and use of personal data. Identify the source of the data, describing whether it is collected as part of the project or if previously collected data is being used. Consider issues of informed consent for any data being used. Describe how personal identification data is protected.

Use of animals: Where animals are used in the work the application of the 3Rs (Replace, Reduce, Refine) must be convincingly addressed. The number of animals used should be specified. Describe what happens to the animals after the action done.

Human embryonic stem cells: Proposals that will involve human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) will have to address all the following specific points:

- The PI as well as, where appropriate, the Host Institution (the applicant legal entity) should demonstrate that the project fulfils important action aims to advance scientific

knowledge in basic research or to increase medical knowledge for the development of diagnostic, preventive or therapeutic methods to be applied to humans.

- The necessity to use hESCs in order to achieve the scientific objectives set forth in the proposal. In particular, applicants must document that appropriate validated alternatives (in particular, stem cells from other sources or origins) are not suitable and/or available to achieve the expected goals of the proposal. This latter provision does not apply to actions comparing hESCs with other human stem cells.
- The PI as well as the Host Institution (the applicant legal entity) should take into account the legislation, regulations, ethical rules and/or codes of conduct in place in the country(ies) where the action using hESC is to take place, including the procedures for obtaining informed consent;
- The PI as well as the Host Institution (the applicant legal entity) should ensure that for all hESC lines to be used in the project were derived from embryos
 - of which the donor(s) express, written and informed consent was provided freely, in accordance with national legislation prior to the procurement of the cells.
 - that result from medically-assisted in vitro fertilisation designed to induce pregnancy, and were no longer to be used for that purpose.
 - of which the measures to protect personal data and privacy of donor(s), including genetic data, are in place during the procurement and for any use thereafter. Researchers must accordingly present all data in such a way as to ensure donor anonymity;
 - of which the conditions of donation are adequate, and namely that no pressure was put on the donor(s) at any stage, that no financial inducement was offered to donation for research at any stage and that the infertility treatment and research activities were kept appropriately separate.

Ethical considerations when field work is performed in non-EU Countries

The proposed action is expected to be responsive to the needs of the country where work is carried out (e.g. the study must be of added value for the health and welfare of the intended participants, their community, and/or their country).

Applicable legislation

The PI as well as the Host Institution (the applicant legal entity) must abide by European standards of research ethics, as it is expressed in the applicable legislation / regulations of the host countries. They should also comply with internationally accepted guidance documents, such as the Declaration of Helsinki.

Benefit sharing

Projects where possible, must seek to provide direct benefits to participants and their community, and also for local researchers. The PI should address whether and how the action might impact on the local population.

Healthy volunteers

As healthy volunteers can represent a particularly vulnerable population in emerging economies - and developing countries, specific attention should be paid to ensure that they are able to provide genuine informed consent, and to ensure their safety.

Data protection

Data protection and privacy must be ensured, in compliance with EU/national legislation. If cross-country transmission is anticipated, a formal legal agreement, such as a Material Transfer Agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding is recommended so as to

safeguard the rights of developing countries, but also those of the stakeholders of the developed country.

Animal welfare

Projects must comply with the applicable EU/national legislation governing animal experimentation. The proposed action should also contribute to the capacity building of the host country (e.g. in terms of training on animal experiments and/or facilities).

Note: Only in exceptional cases additional information will be sought for clarification, which means that any ethics review will be performed **solely on the basis of the information available in the proposal**.

To ensure compliance with ethical principles, the Commission Services will undertake ethics audit(s) of selected projects at its discretion.

A dedicated website that aims to provide clear and helpful information on ethical issues is now available at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ethics_en.html

Annex 3: Security Issues

Security sensitive proposals are required to follow special procedures. ERC actions may be classified⁴⁷ if they are considered as sensitive. These procedures are described in this guide. They will apply to all ERC actions if so specified in the relevant call, or when the subjects addressed are considered as sensitive.

A security 'sensitive' proposal is a proposal for an action that may need to handle classified information. **Proposals submitted to ERC calls must not contain any classified information.** However, it is possible that the output of an action ('Foreground') needs to be classified, or that classified inputs ('Background') are required. In such cases, applicants have to declare their proposal as 'sensitive' and provide a Security Aspects Letter (SAL)⁴⁸ and its annex Security Classification Guide (SCG)⁴⁹ as part of their proposals.

A 'security considerations' flag will be associated with a proposal:

- when the applicant declares a proposal as sensitive;
- if the expert evaluators or the ERCEA detect or suspect any of the following conditions:
 - Classified information is, or may be, used as background information,
 - Some foreground is planned to be classified,

The SCG will cover:

- The level of classification of background and foreground;
- Which participant will have access to what information;

In addition, the following documents are required as part of the proposal:

- A copy of the Facility Security Clearances (FSC) (or the FSC requests). The validity of the FSC will be checked by the European Commission's Security Directorate through the appropriate formal channel with the National Security Authorities (NSAs) involved;
- Formal written authorization by the relevant security authorities to use the classified background;

In addition, a proposal may also be considered as sensitive, independently of any security classification, if it is planned to exchange material subject to transfer or export licensing. In that context, applicants must comply with national laws and EU regulation⁵⁰. If export licences (or intra EU licences) are required for carrying the planned work, applicants must

⁴⁷ As defined in the Commission Decision 2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom of 29 November 2001 amending its internal rules of procedure (OJ, L 317, 3.12.2001).

⁴⁸ 'Security Aspects Letter (SAL)': "a set of special contractual conditions, issued by the contracting authority, which forms an integral part of a classified contract involving access to or generation of EU classified information, and that identifies the security requirements or those elements of the classified contract requiring security protection", as defined in section 27 of Commission Decision 2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom.

⁴⁹ As defined in section 27 of Commission Decision 2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom.

⁵⁰ Council Regulation (EC) No 428/2009 of 5 May 2009 setting up a Community regime for the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items (OJ L 134, 29.5.2009, p.1).

clarify the requirement to have such export or transfer licences and must provide a copy of export or transfer licences (or of the requests).

Annex 3a - Security Aspects Letter (SAL) TEMPLATE

The following security requirements shall be complied with for handling and storage of the elements and parts of the grant agreement that are mentioned in the Security Classification Guide in Appendix to this SAL for the grant agreement.

- The performance of the grant agreement will involve information classified "EU restricted", "EU confidential" or "EU secret".
- A Facility Security Clearance is [or is not] required.
- Persons who need to access EU classified information (EUCI) must have an EU personal security clearance and be briefed as to their responsibility for security⁵¹.
- The beneficiaries concerned shall take all measures prescribed by the National Security Authority/Designated Security Authority (NSA/DSA) for safeguarding EUCI.
- The beneficiaries concerned shall appoint a Facility Security Officer (FSO).
- The beneficiaries concerned, through the FSO, shall maintain a continuing relationship with their NSA/DSA.
- The beneficiaries concerned shall maintain a record of their employees taking part in the project and who have been cleared for access to EUCI.
- EU classified information for the purpose of these instructions is to be understood as information classified and marked "EU restricted", "EU confidential" or "EU secret" or its equivalent national classification.
- Information generated by the beneficiaries concerned will require EU classification and marking.
- The beneficiaries concerned must obtain the approval of the Contracting Authority before beginning negotiations with a view to subcontract.
- The Commission Security Directorate may - in co-ordination with the responsible NSA/DSA - conduct inspections at concerned beneficiaries' facilities to verify the implementation of the security requirements for the handling of EUCI.
- The beneficiaries concerned shall report all cases of unauthorised disclosure or loss of EUCI to the responsible NSA/DSA, the Commission Security Directorate and the Contracting Authority.
- All EUCI provided or generated under this grant agreement shall continue to be protected in the event of termination of the grant agreement.
- The beneficiaries concerned shall undertake not to use, other than for the specific purpose of the grant agreement No ... [to be completed].
- Handling and storage instructions for information classified "EU restricted", "EU confidential" or "EU secret".

⁵¹ Commission decision n°2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom of 29 November 2001 amending its internal rules of procedure (OJ, L 317, 3.12.2001), Section 19.1

Annex 3b - Security Classification Guide (SCG) TEMPLATE

Annex to the Security Aspects Letter

This template should be filled in for all sensitive projects and will be part of the grant agreement.

Handling of classified Background				
Subject	Classification level	Beneficiaries involved in handling or wanting to access		Comments including purpose of the access and planned use
		Responsibility	Date of handling or request of access	
number and name of the reports	Classification level	entities name only		
		owner		
		entities name only		
		reader		
		...		
		...		

Production of classified Foreground				
Subject	Classification level	Beneficiaries involved in production or wanting to access		Comments including purpose of the access and planned use
		Responsibility	Date of production or request of access	
number and name of the deliverable	proposed Classification level	entities name only		
		owner		
		entities name only		
		contributor		
		entities name only		
		reader		
		...		
		...		

Please see the Commission decision No 2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom of 29 November 2001 amending its internal rules of procedure (OJ, L 317, 3.12.2001).

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2001D0844:20060805:EN:PDF>