



European Research Council

Funding Opportunities for Social Scientists & Humanists – SSH Domain

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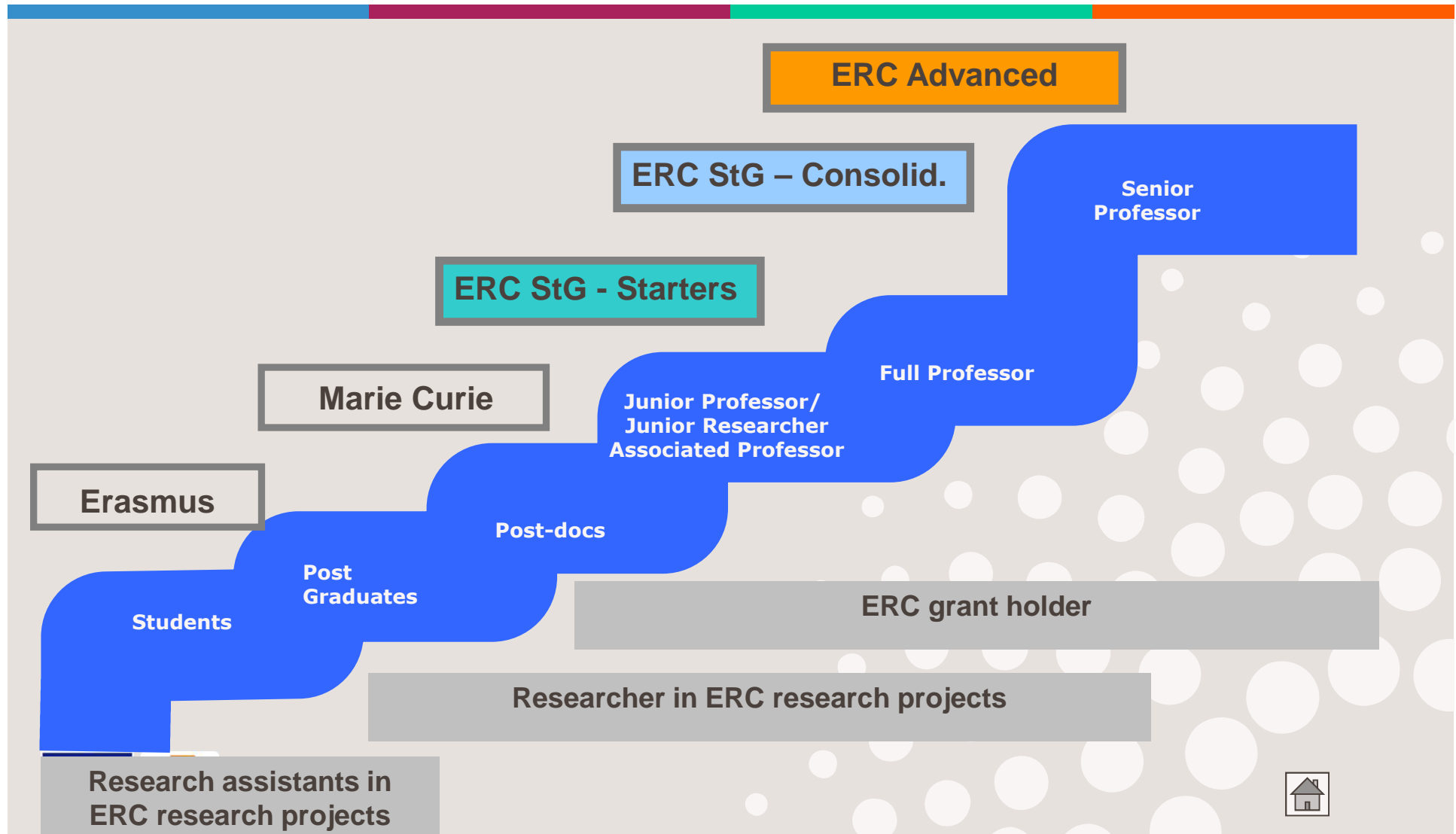
*9th Academic careers Observatory
Conference*

ERC Presentation – EUI – 26 February 2013





Researchers Career development and complementary funding schemes





Potential contributions of SH Scientists to Horizon 2020

Excellent Science

- **European Research Council - Support of the most talented and creative individual researchers**
- Collaborative research for Future and Emerging Technologies
- Training and career development through Marie Curie Actions
- Research Infrastructures

Tackling Societal Challenges

- Health, demographic change and wellbeing;
- Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research, and the bio-economy;
- Secure, clean and efficient energy;
- Smart, green and integrated transport;
- **Inclusive, innovative societies;**
- Secure Societies
- Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials.





The *European Research Council*

What is the ERC?





What is the ERC?

ERC is a new type of funding body in Europe to support excellence in frontier research, a bottom-up, individual-team, pan-European competition

Legislation

- Scientific Council with 22 members
- Support by the ERC Executive Agency
- Significant budget (1.7 billion €/year in 2014)
- Excellence as the only valid criterion

Strategy

- Support for the individual scientist
- International peer-review
- No predetermined subjects (bottom-up)
- Support of frontier research in all fields of science and humanities

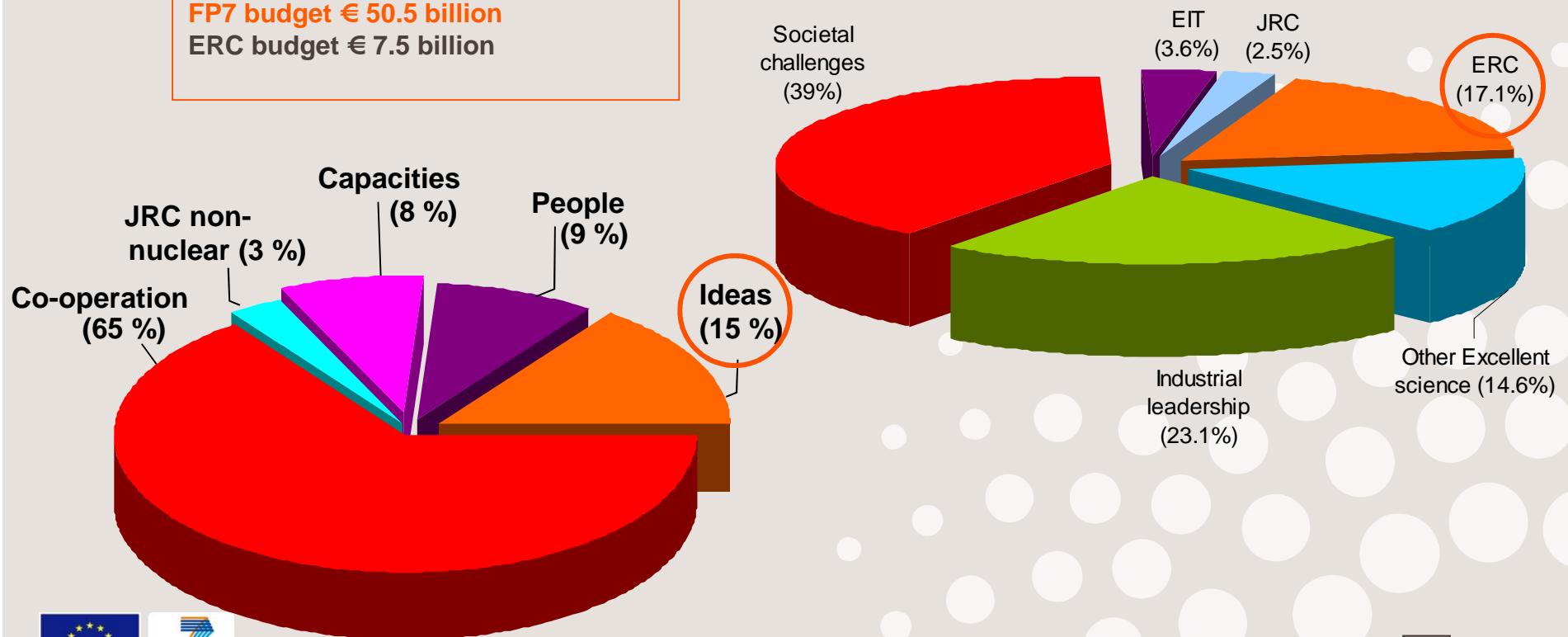


Budget under H2020



H2020 budget € 76,5 billion (88 billion)
ERC budget € 13,1 billion (15 billion)

FP7 budget € 50.5 billion
ERC budget € 7.5 billion



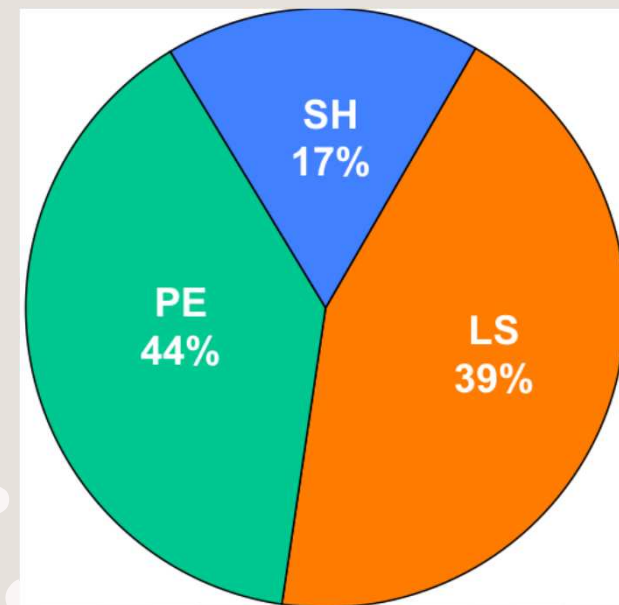
Call budget distribution for 2014 calls

ERC 2014 Budget: **1.7 Billion €**

Breakdown per domain

- **LS** : Life Sciences
- **PE** : Physical Sciences & Engineering
- **SH** : Social Sciences & Humanities

→ Within each domain, budget is broken down according to total funding requested per panel (equal chance in each panel)



SH Budget: **290 Million €**



The *European Research Council*

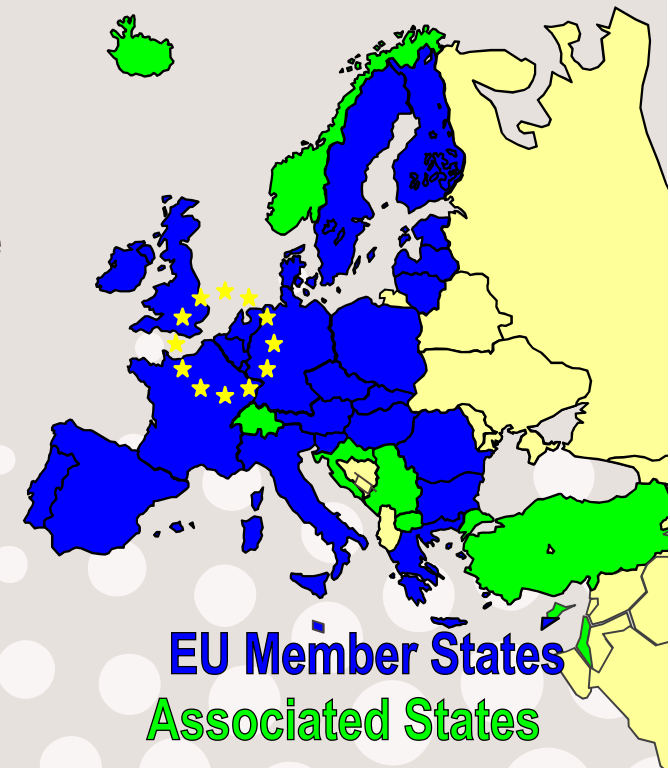
ERC Grant Schemes



ERC Grant schemes:

Who can apply? What type of research – General requirements

- Excellent Researchers (PIs)
 - **Any nationality, age or current place of work**
- In conjunction with a Host Institution
 - **Based in EU or associated countries** (but huge possibilities to stay in touch with your country)
- Individual research team
 - Under control of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- All fields of science and scholarship are eligible
 - Investigator-driven, bottom-up (**no thematic priorities**)
- **Excellent** research
 - Innovative **breakthrough research**: high risk/high gain





Starting, Consolidator & Advanced Grants



ERC core grant schemes

Starting Grants

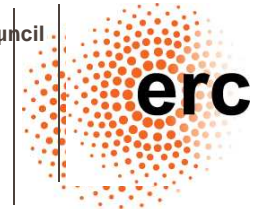
starters
(2-7 years after PhD) up to € 2.0
Mio for 5 years

Consolidator Grants

consolidators
(7-12 years after PhD) up to €
2.75 Mio for 5 years

Advanced Grants

Last 10 years into account
Advanced Scholars
up to € 3.5 Mio
for 5 years



ERC Starting Grants

Objective

“... to support researchers (Principal Investigators) at the stage at which they are **starting** their own independent research team or programme.”



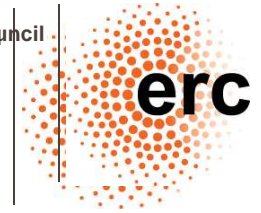
ERC Starting Grants

PI profile



- Potential for research independence
- At least one publication without PhD supervisor
- invited presentations in conferences
- funding, patents, awards, prizes



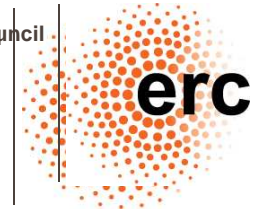


ERC Starting Grants

Eligibility

- 2 years \leq PhD date \leq 7 years
- Extensions to this period are possible
 - paternity leave, maternity leave, long-term illness, national military service





ERC Starting Grants

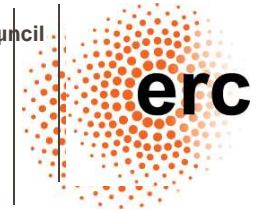
Maximum funding amount

→ €1.5M for 5 years

→ extra €0.5M

- "start-up" costs PI moving from outside Europe
- purchase of major equipment
- access to large facilities





ERC Consolidator Grants

Objective

“...to support researchers (Principal Investigators) at the stage at which they are **consolidating** their own independent research team or programme.”

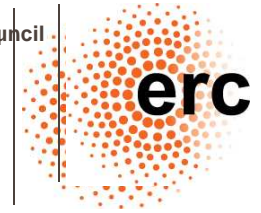
ERC Work Programme 2013



ERC Consolidator Grants

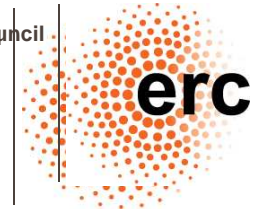
PI profile

European Research Council



- Has already achieved certain degree of research independence (very often already working with own group)
- Promising track-record of early achievements:
 - Some publications with significant impact
 - invited presentations in conferences
 - funding, patents, awards, prizes



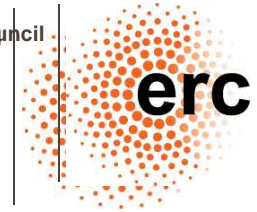


ERC Consolidators Grant

Eligibility

- 7 years < PhD date ≤ 12 years
- Extensions to this period are possible
 - paternity leave, maternity leave, long-term illness, national military service





ERC Consolidator Grants

Possible requested amount

→ €2M for 5 years

→ extra €0.75M

- "start-up" costs PI moving from outside Europe
- purchase of major equipment
- access to large facilities



Evaluation Criteria

Excellence as sole criterion, to apply to:

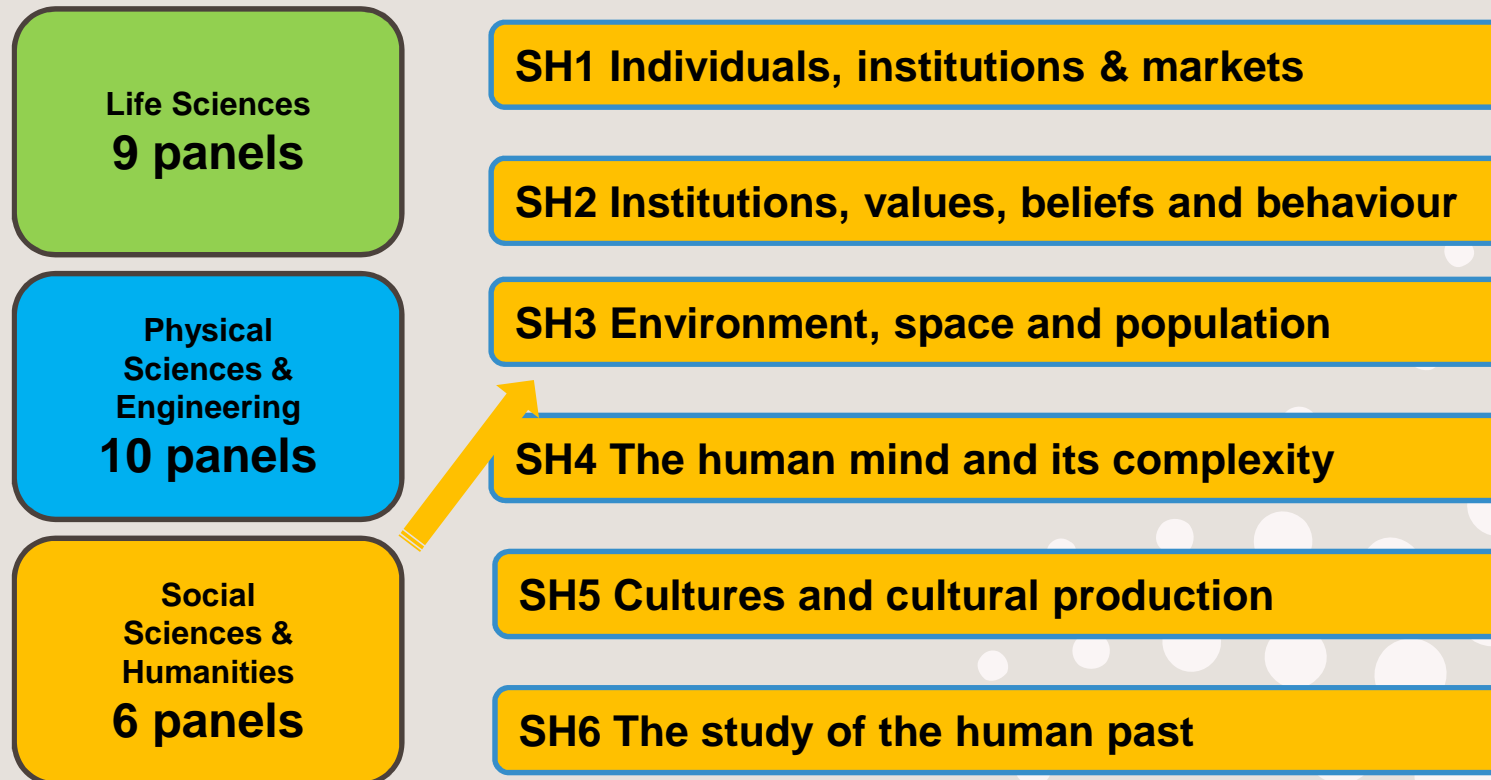
1. Quality of the research project

- **Ground-breaking nature of the research:** Important challenge? Substantially beyond the current state of art?
- **Potential impact:** Possibility of a major break-through?
- **Methodology:** Feasibility, high-gain/high-risk balance

2. Principal Investigator

- **Intellectual capacity and creativity:** Track-record, capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art.
- **Commitment:** Willing to devote a significant part of PI's working time (minimum of 50% for Starting and Consolidator Grant, 30% for Advanced Grant)

The SH Domain in the ERC panel structure



Panel of core interest for Sociologists, Political Scientists & Lawyers: SH2

- **SH2 The Social World, Diversity and Common Ground:**
Sociology, social anthropology, political science, law, communication, science and technology studies

- SH2_1 Social structure, inequalities, social mobility
- SH2_2 Diversity and identities, gender, interethnic relations
- SH2_3 Social policies, welfare and educational systems
- SH2_4 Democratisation, social movements, social integration
- SH2_5 Political systems and institutions, governance
- SH2_6 Conflict and conflict resolution, violence
- SH2_7 Legal studies, constitutions, human rights, comparative law
- SH2_8 International relations, global and transnational governance
- SH2_9 Communication and information, networks, media
- SH2_10 Social studies of science and technology



Evaluation Principles



Submission to Panels

- Applicant submits to a *Targeted Panel* (of PI choice)
 - ➔ Can flag one “*Alternative Review Panel*”
- **Applicant chooses his/her panel**, that panel is “responsible” and takes ownership for the evaluation of that proposals
- Only switch proposals between panels in case of clear mistake on part of applicant (must be agreed by both panels)
- Switching proposals between domains (deadlines) not possible
- But: In case of cross-panel or cross-domain proposals, evaluation by members of other panels is requested.

Host institution

Applicant legal entity: institution that engages and hosts the PI for the duration of the project

Any type of legal entity: universities, research centres, business research units ... **as long as it is in EU MS or AC**

Commitment of HI: to ensure that the PI may

- apply for funding independently
- manage research and funding for the project
- publish independently as senior author
- have access to reasonable space and facilities



Who evaluates the proposals?

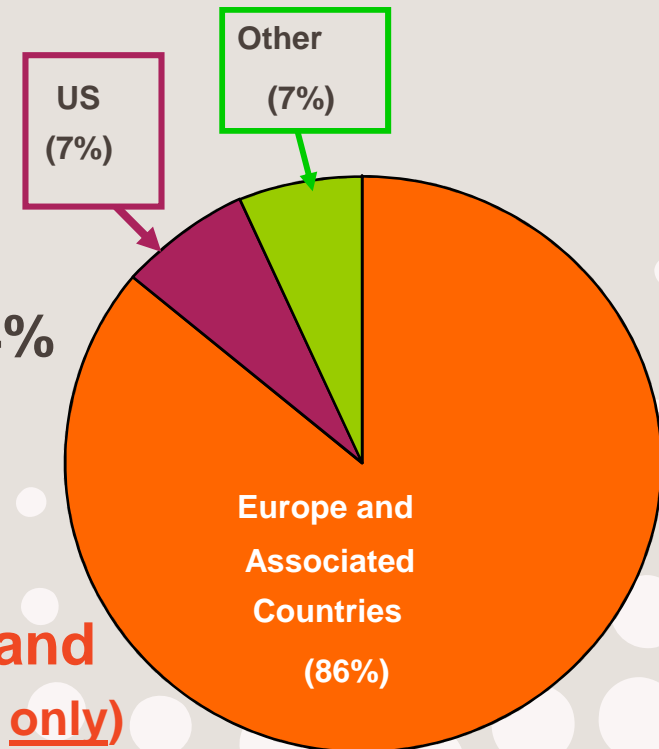
Panel Members: **typically ~350 per call**

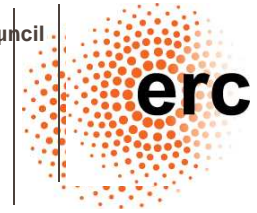
- High-level scientists
- Recruited by ScC & ERC Scientific Officers from all over the world: ~14% from outside Europe
- About 12-15 members plus a chair

Remote Referees: **typically several thousand per call (more than 400 invited for SH2 CoG 2013 only)**

- Evaluate only a small number of proposals

Similar to normal practise in peer-reviewed journals





ERC Grant agreements

- **Simple and flexible**, no negotiations – take it or leave it
- Are portable
- Additional funding for StG or AdG for researchers moving to Europe or Associated Countries or for purchase of major equipment
- Cover 100% total eligible costs plus 25% indirect costs ('overheads' for host institutions)



Proposal structure: Part A

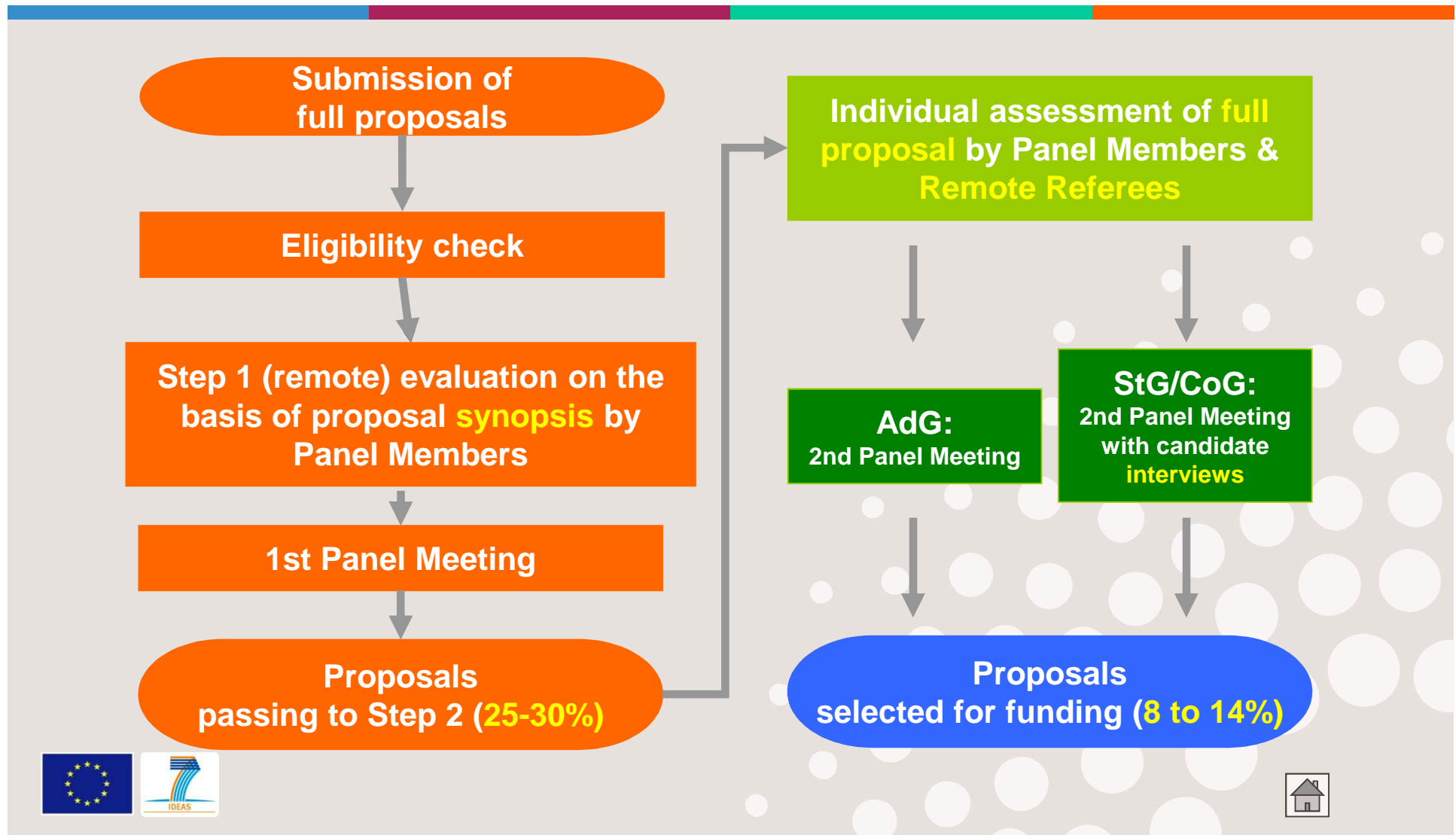
Part A: “Administrative forms” containing

- A1 Structured information on proposal, PI and contact details of host institution
- A2 Information on Host Institution
- A3 Budget table

Proposal Structure: Part B

- **Section 1 = The Principal Investigator and a synopsis of the proposal**
 - ~~Scientific Leadership profile (1 page)~~ — **abolished**
 - CV (including “funding ID”) (2 pages)
 - 10-year track record (2 pages)
 - Extended synopsis (5 pages)
- **Section 2 = Full Scientific proposal (15 pages, not accessible for referees in step 1!)**
- Ethical Review information (where appropriate)
- Host Institution Support Letter (compulsory)

Selection of proposals



- What is the ERC?
- ERC Grant Schemes
- ERC Evaluation Principles
- Overview of Previous Calls
- **Recommendations & Advises**

ERC Grants 2014

few advises for future calls

- Synopsis of Part B 1 should be carefully written (this is the only proposal information that is accessible & assessed at step 1!)
- Coherency of budget figures (A3 and Part B2, in case of doubt usually A3 figures serves as a reference)
- Individual reviews are done remotely and are not harmonised (PIs sometimes do not seem to be aware of that)
- Evaluation report ⇒ Evaluation report consists of **panel comments** summarising the Panel decision (incl. key strength and weaknesses) and **individual comments** (Panel Members, remote referees) which may not be necessarily convergent!

What are Panel Members looking for in an interview? (StG & CoG)

- Maturity, leadership and vision
- Proposal is the applicant's (not his/her supervisor's)
- Answer lagging technical questions and uncertainties / feasibility
- Mastery of detail



ERC Grants 2014 in SH

Advises concerning the proposal's **ethical annex**

- The ethical evaluation – peculiarly in the SH Domain - is quite often disregarded by PIs. They should pay peculiar attention to:
 - Data Protection;
 - Informed consent;
 - The need for *ethical approval forms* in case of studies in developing countries, use/interviews of children,...
- The underestimation of the ethical part can lead to a postponement of the signature of the grant agreement up to four (or more!) months!



Some take-home messages....

ERC Awards are:



- **Very competitive: ~10% success rates**
- **Significant: €1.5M – €2M for Starters / Consolidators**
- **Bottom-up: Open to any topic**
- **Ambitious: Achieve or boost independence; form a group**
- **Looking for High-risk/ High-gain research**
- **Flexible: can re-budget as necessary**
- **Portable: Can be moved anywhere in Europe**
- **Prestigious: will boost a research career**



Indicative calls for proposals 2014

Main calls:

- Starting Grant – **Deadline: 25/03/2014**
- Consolidator Grant – **Deadline: 20/05/2014**
- Advanced Grant – fourth quarter of 2014

Proof of Concept – **Deadline: 01/04/2014 and
01/10/2014**

(Final FP7 PoC deadline coming up on October 3,
2013)

No call for Synergy Grants foreseen in 2014



Proposal Submission

Electronic – via PPSS

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

One deadline per year per call

Submit to a specific panel

Electronic forms (Part A) and the proposal (Part B)

Questions?

European Research Council



Thank you 😊

**We support ideas
that can change
Europe **and the World****

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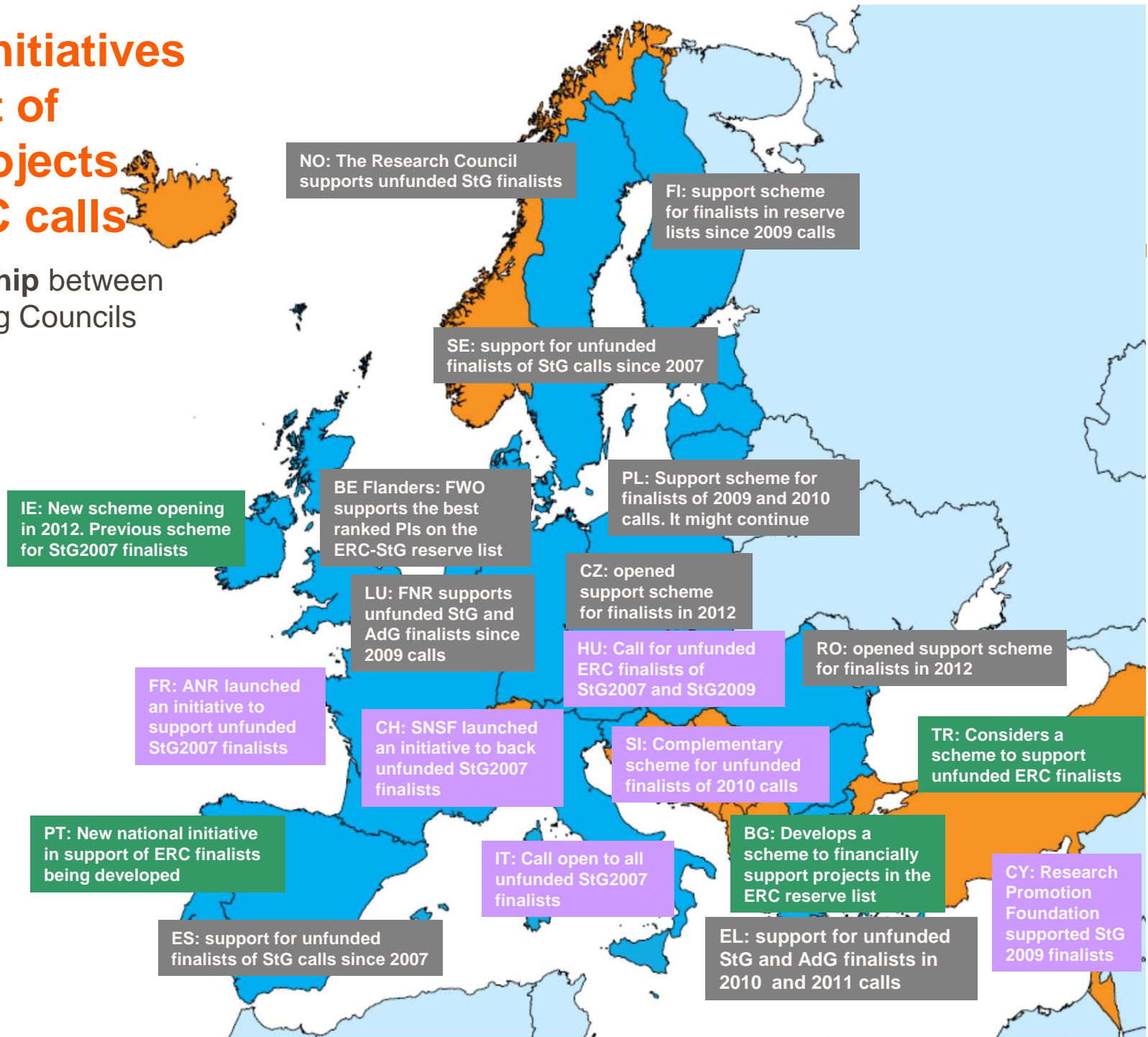
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National initiatives in support of finalist projects in the ERC calls

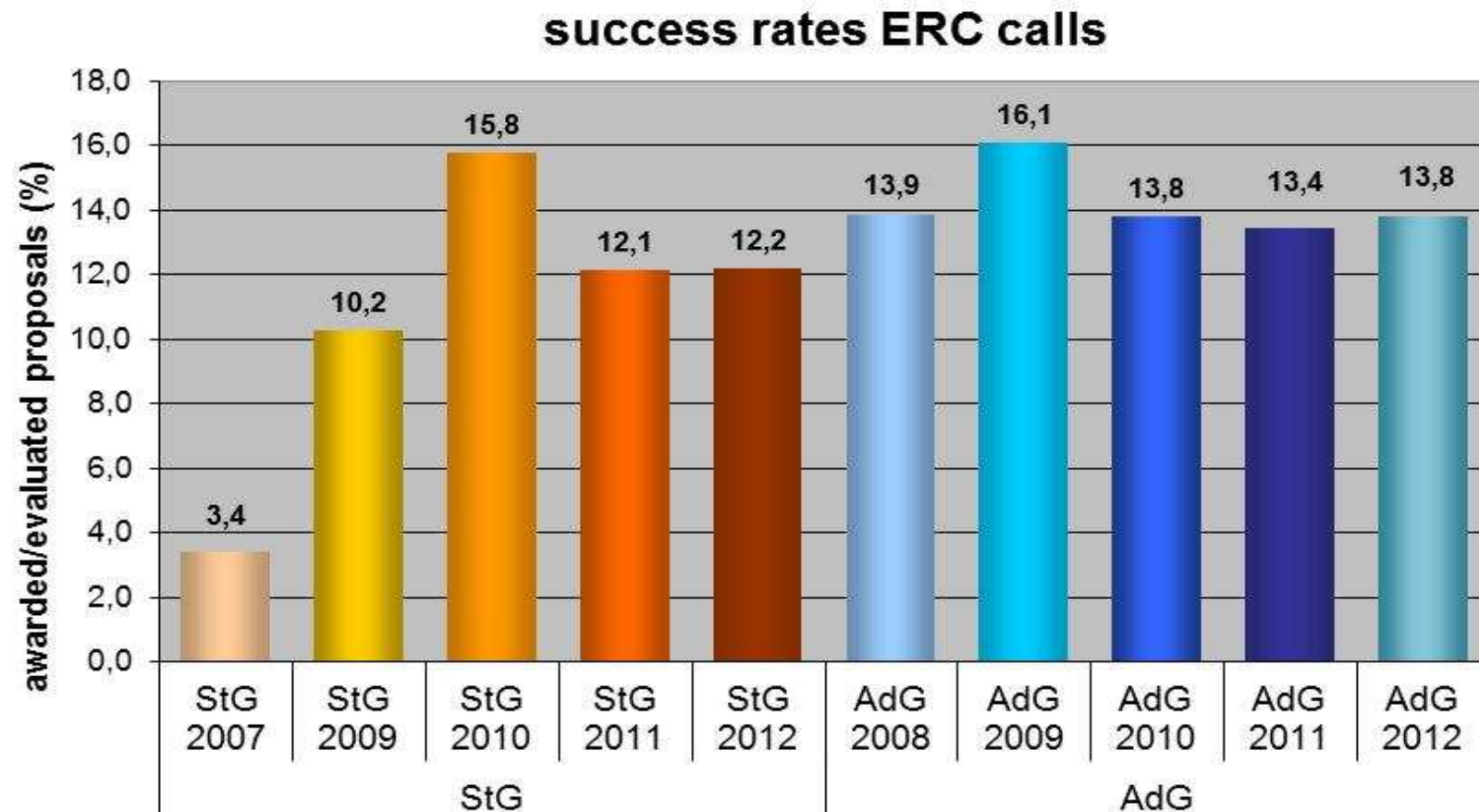
A new **partnership** between National Funding Councils and ERC



ERC performance

Success rates StG and AdG 2007 – 2012

Overall average success rate : 12%

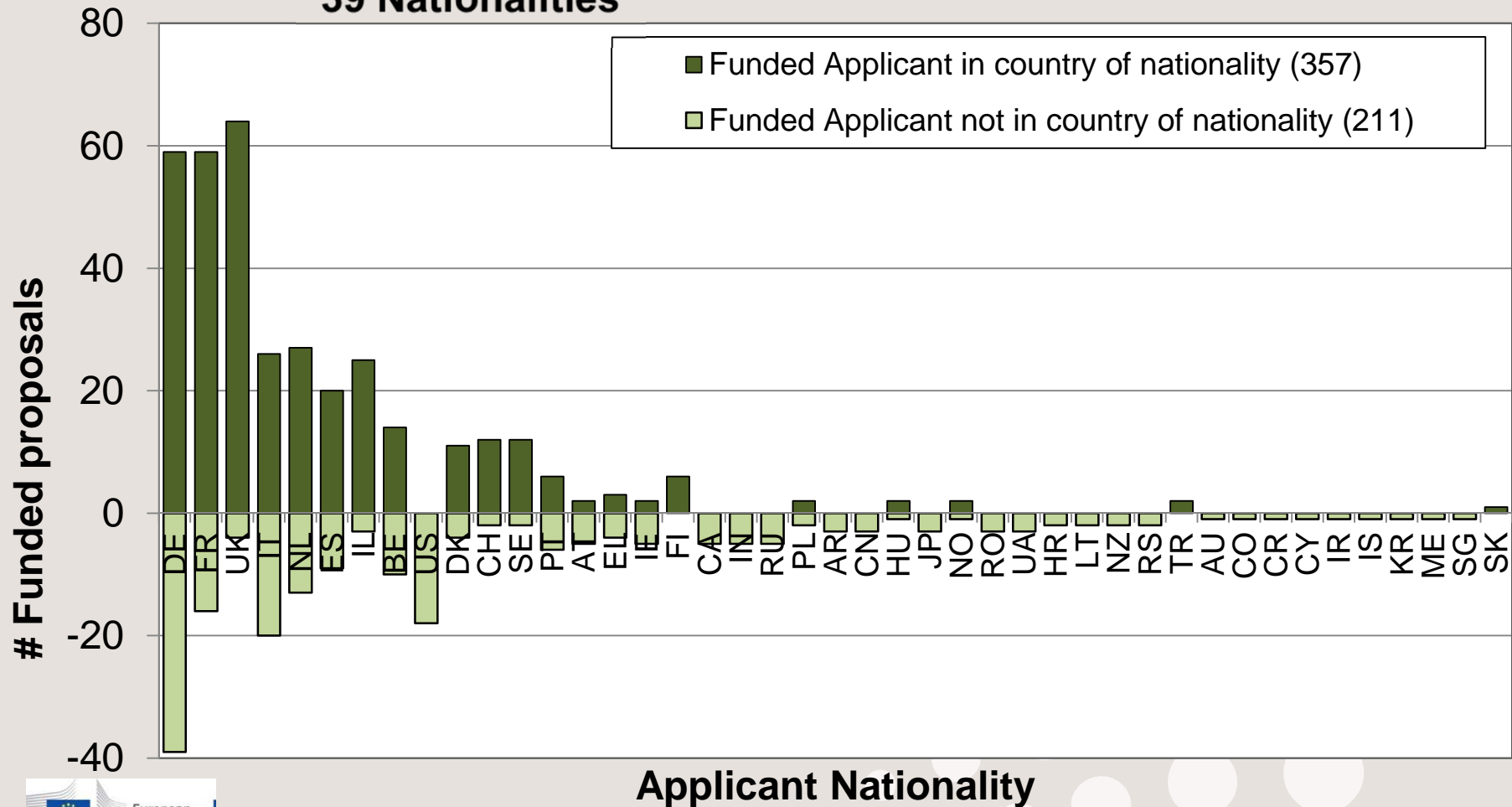


STG 2012 Proposals for funding

Applicant Nationality – applicant in own country



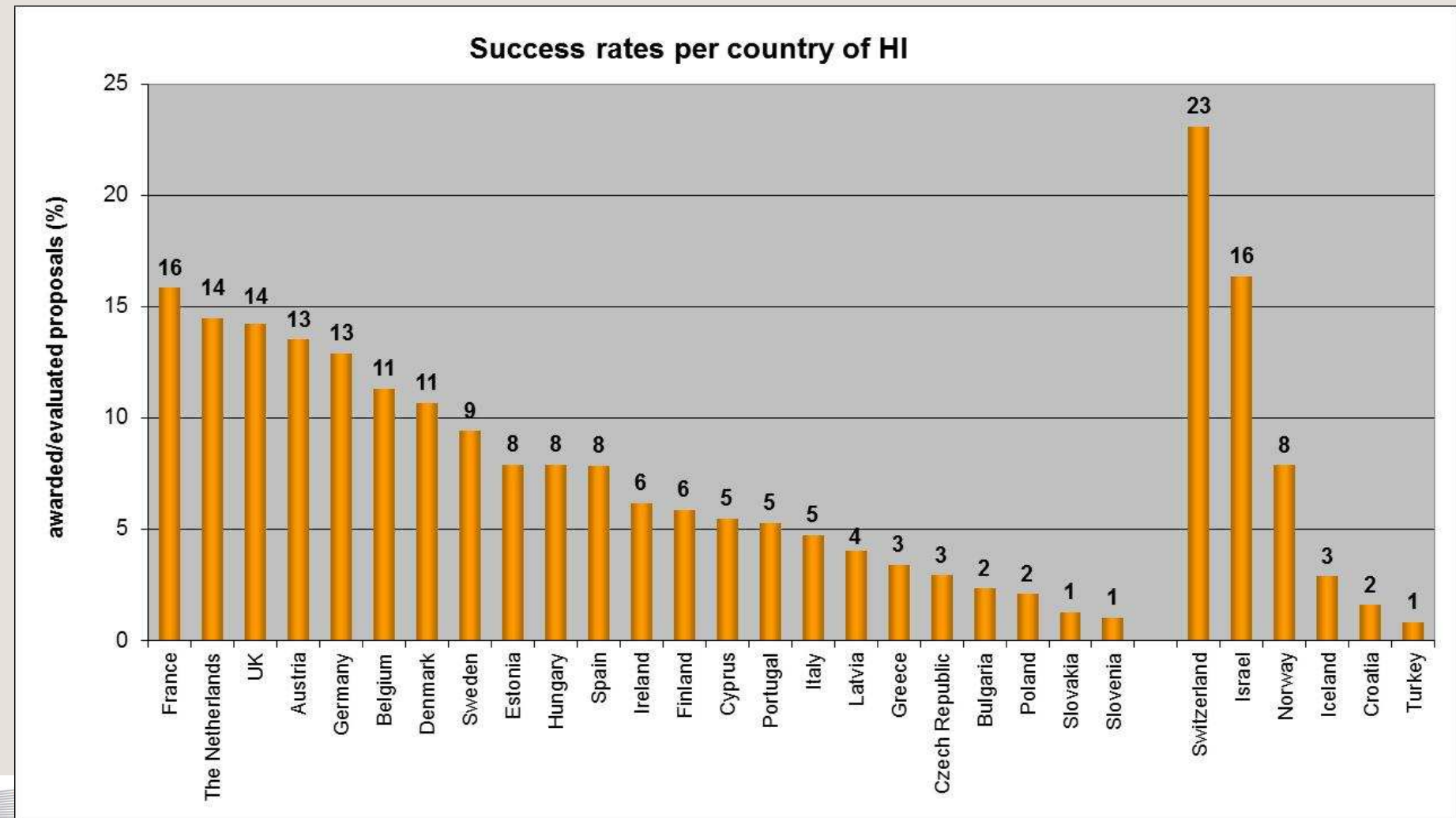
39 Nationalities



Success rates per country of Host Institution

ERC Starting & Advanced grant calls 2007 - 2012

European Research Council



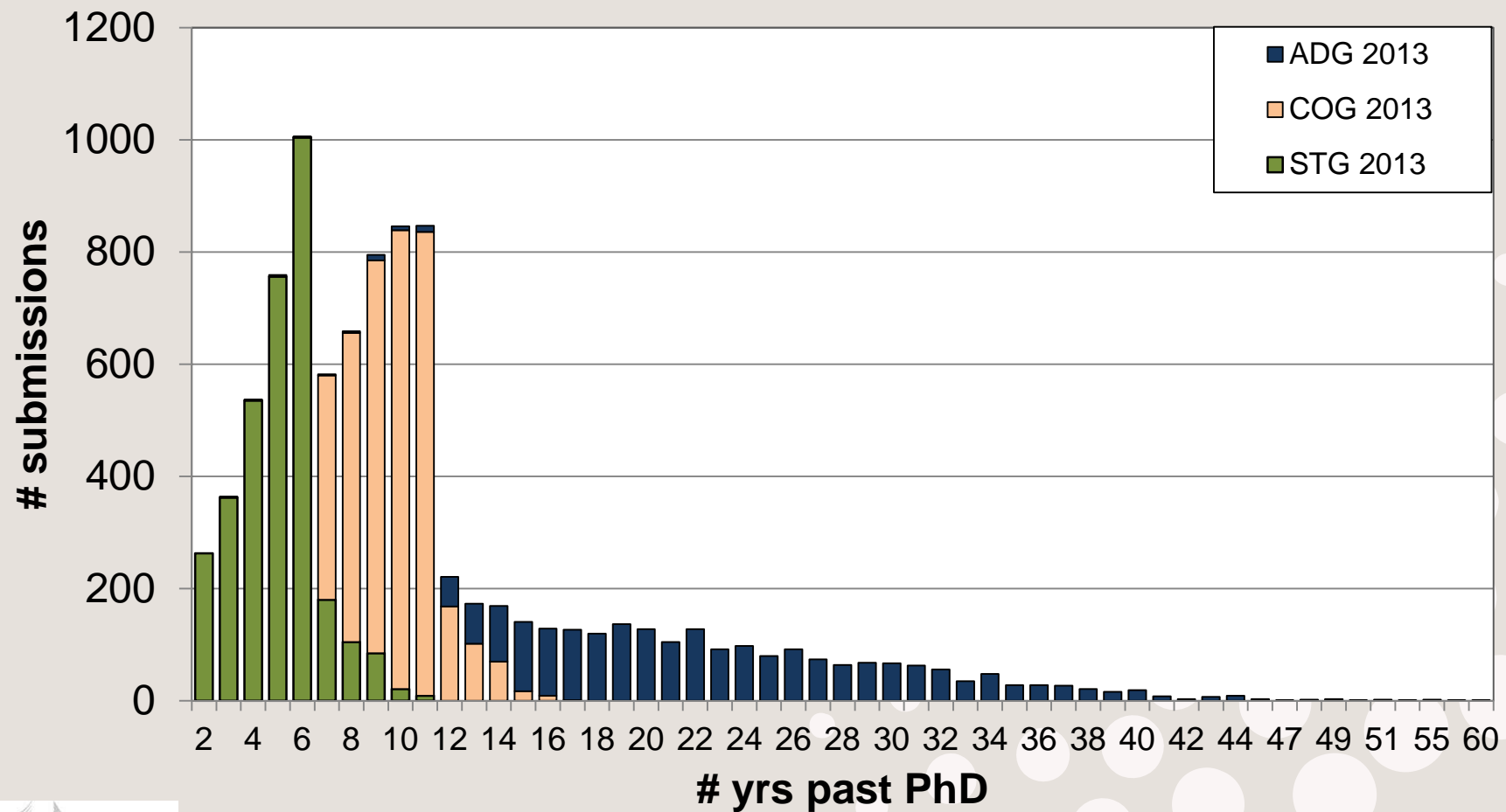
*) First legal signatories of the first grant agreement taken into



ERC StG, CoG, AdG 2013

Applications by years past PhD

at call publication date





ERC StG, CoG, AdG 2013

Age of applicants at call publication date

