ERC STARTING GRANT SUPPORT PROGRAM 2024

Program designed by IXA-GO in collaboration with and for the Faculty of Science

About this document

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ERC STARTING GRANT SUPPORT PROGRAM 2024

BETA FACULTY

STEP 1: OPEN INFORMATION SESSION "*IS THIS THE RIGHT CALL FOR YOU?*"

What: This information session from RVO provides general information about the ERC Starting Grant call, including what is requested in terms of researcher's profile and research idea. We will discuss examples of funded proposals to give an idea about what it takes to receive a grant. It is open to everyone within the university.

Expected outcome: Prospective participants can assess their fit for the ERC eligibility/criteria and whether they would have a good/decent chance in successfully securing the grant for the upcoming round.

Delivered by: IXA-GO in collaboration with RVO

STEP 2: PRE-SELECTION

What: The current program is designed to support maximum 10 participants from the BETA faculty. In this second step, the selection of participants who will be supported by the program takes place. The selection will be based on C.V., abstract, and letter of support from the department head of the participant.

Expected outcome: With this process, we expect to select participants who have a very high chance to secure the grant and who are fully supported by their department.

Delivered by: The director of valorization and portfolio-holder research of the BETA faculty make an internal preselection based on the proposals of department heads and inform the selected participants to IXA-GO.

STEP 3: MEET YOUR SUPPORT GROUP

What: After the selection, the ERC support program participants will be introduced to their dedicated grant advisor and their assigned BETA committee members*. They will support their application throughout the preparation, writing and submission process. Grant advisors and participants will initially plan a meeting to discuss their profile and research idea, and discuss how they would like to collaborate.

Expected outcome: Throughout the application process, the participants will be guided by their grant advisor "hands-on" – the grant advisor will be the "go-to-person", whenever the participants have any questions. After the initial meetings, the participants will have a pitch or project summary ready, which will be needed for the first workshop (in step 4).

Delivered by: Grant advisors will make the initial contact to the participants and introduce the participants to the BETA committee members.

STEP 4: OPEN WORKSHOP "*WRITE YOUR PROPOSAL LIKE A PRO*"

What: The workshop provides detailed information about the evaluation criteria, ERC jargon, and the application form, including suggestions on how to structure it, how to use headlines and figures, and how to write the planning and narrative C.V.. General writing tips & tricks, do's and don'ts, best-practices will be given by the organizers and a laureate will join as a guest speaker.

Expected outcome: The workshop will provide ample information for the participants to write a strong proposal (B1&B2) with a better use of visuals, planning tools, and phrasing that will make the application stronger. The participant will also be able to write a convincing narrative of fundamental aspects of the proposal, such as the 'track record' and 'curriculum vitae' sections.

Delivered by: IXA-GO and guest speaker (ERC laureate).

STEP 5: GUIDELINES ON ETHICS AND DATA MANAGEMENT

What: The participants will receive written guidelines with detailed information about the ethical dimension of the proposal and the data management practices. Practical examples will be provided, along with more general information.

Expected outcome: After reading the guidelines participants will know how to create a well thought-out ethical paragraph and data management section. They will know which rules and regulations of the VU and the EU they have to follow and which services the VU offers. Additionally, they will know who they can contact with ethical and data management questions.

Delivered by: LEAR, IXA-GO, BETHCIE, RDM

STEP 6: BUDGET & ERC PANELS

What: Information about how to design a 5-year ERC StG budget, including several examples. The session provides information about the different types of costs. The participants will learn more about the steps they have to follow when designing their budget. This session also provides information about the composition of ERC panels. Participants will learn how to analyze the composition of their ERC panel and how to choose the right panel.

Expected outcome: At the end of the meeting each participant knows how to start with making their budget and who to contact to discuss their individual ERC StG budget plan. Additionally, the participants obtained understanding about the differences between the ERC panels and how to fine-tune certain (related) parts of the proposal that will be essential to fully convince the chosen ERC panel.

Delivered by: IXA-GO and project control

STEP 7: INTERNAL REVIEW WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT (FOCUS: SCIENTIFIC CONTENT (B1&B2)

What: Each participant is strongly encouraged to look for one or two senior researchers supported by the department head who could look into the scientific content of the proposal.

Expected outcome: It is expected that, after receiving feedback on the scientific content, the participant will be able to sharpen his/her proposal.

Delivered by: This one-on-one feedback step has to be organized at the department level. The participant will be responsible to find and contact the suitable reviewer(s).

STEP 8: PEER-TO-PEER DISCUSSION SESSION

What: In this meeting, the participants are brought together to discuss any challenges they may have with their application (urgency, budget like personnel, panel choices, writing process etc.) and give feedback/suggestions to each other.

Expected outcome: At the end of the meeting, the participants know more about each other's projects and they exchanged ideas about any issues they may have.

Delivered by: IXA-GO

STEP 9: FIRST EXTERNAL REVIEW FROM BETA COMMITTEE MEMBERS & GRANTS OFFICE

What: The ERC BETA committee members (ERC laureates or equivalent) and IXA-GO grant advisor will review B1&B2. They will give feedback to each participant, in written format and in personal meeting(s). The BETA committee members will organize a meeting with the participant together with the grant advisor to provide detailed feedback. The focus will be on the overall presentation of the proposal (layout/structure, readability (i.e., understandable, convincing and logical)) and whether the evaluation criteria have been met (i.e., ground-breaking nature, high-risk/high-gain, frontier science, feasibility etc.). The grant advisor will also be involved in the review/feedback meetings from the BETA committee members to align the feedback from all the reviewers (i.e., department reviews, BETA committee members and grant advisors).

Expected outcome: It is expected that, after receiving feedback from the BETA committee members and IXA-GO, the participant will be able to sharpen his/her proposal.

Delivered by: 2 ERC BETA committee members per project and at least 1 grant advisor (IXA-GO)

STEP 10: STARTING SUBMISSION, ENTERING PIC CODE IN THE EC PORTAL

What: Participants will start the submission in the portal (demo: entering the PIC code, etc.).

Expected outcome: The goal of this session is to avoid last-minute EC portal questions.

Delivered by: LEAR

STEP 11: FINAL FEEDBACK

What: The participant will send his/her final draft of the proposal to the internal reviewers (from the department), ERC BETA committee members and grant advisors to receive a very last one-on-one feedback moment (minor corrections).

Expected outcome: The goal of this last step before submission is to fine-tune the very last details of the proposal.

Delivered by: ERC BETA committee members and IXA-GO (and ideally, internal reviewers from the department as well).

FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE SELECTED FOR THE INTERVIEW

STEP 12: WORKSHOP: "*PITCH LIKE A PRO*"

What: During this workshop, the participants will be coached on how to prepare for their presentation and how to deliver it immaculately. The workshop will include peer-to-peer feedback.

Expected outcome: After this workshop, the participants will have a better understanding of what a solid presentation should look like in preparation for the interview.

Delivered by: Rikkert Stuve.

STEP 13: MOCK INTERVIEW

What: The participant will have an opportunity to experience a realistic simulation of the interview stage prior to the big day. The mock interview will be followed up by critical and thorough feedback from mock panel members (ERC BETA committee members, grant advisor and potentially RVO).

Expected outcome: The mock interview aims to sharpen the narrative of the pitch, expose the participant for the frequently asked questions, and boost the participant's confidence.

Delivered by: ERC BETA committee members and IXA-GO

Planning VU - ERC Starting Grant Training Program round 2024

Submission deadline full proposal: expected October 2023

Step	What	Date	Time	Location
1	OPEN INFORMATION SESSION "IS THIS THE RIGHT CALL FOR YOU?"	13-3-2023	10:00 – 12:00	(Agora 1) Subject to availability
2	PRE-SELECTION	27-3-2023	x	x
3	MEET YOUR SUPPORT GROUP	First week of April	Individual planning	Individual planning
4	OPEN WORKSHOP "WRITE YOUR PROPOSAL LIKE A PRO"	17-4-2023	10:00 – 12:00	t.b.d./online
5	GUIDELINES ON ETHICS AND DATA MANAGEMENT	24-4-2023	x	x
6	INFORMATION SESSION ON BUDGET AND ERC PANELS	8-5-2023	10:00 – 11:30	
7	INTERNAL REVIEW, FOCUS ON SCIENTIFIC CONTENT (B1 & B2)	12-6-2023	Individual planning	Individual planning
8	PEER-TO-PEER DISCUSSION SESSION	26-6-2023	10:00 – 12:00	t.b.d.
9	FIRST EXTERNAL REVIEW FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS & GRANTS OFFICE	10-7-2023	Individual planning	Individual planning
9	STARTING SUBMISSION, ENTERING PIC CODE IN THE EC PORTAL	4-9-2023	10:00 – 11:00	t.b.d.
10	FINAL FEEDBACK	2-10-2023	Individual planning	Individual planning
	Deadline submission step 1	October 2023	17:00	EU portal

	If invited for step 2 - interviews			
11	WORKSHOP: "PITCH LIKE A PRO"	t.b.d.	t.b.d.	t.b.d.
12	MOCK INTERVIEW	t.b.d.	t.b.d.	t.b.d.

*ERC BETA COMMITTEE MEMBERS & DISCIPLINE

Jasmin Blanchette: Theoretical Computer Science
Wouter Halfwerk: Animal Ecology
Davide Iannuzzi: Biophotonics and Medical Imaging
Anne van Loon: Water and Climate Risk
Sander Veraverbeke: Earth and Climate
Guido van de Werf: Earth Sciences
Roberta Croce: Biophysics Photosynthesis/Energy

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