

Grant Projects

Support of international cooperation for acquisition of ERC grants (“Support of ERC grant applicants”)

1. Title of grant projects

Support of international cooperation for acquisition of ERC grants (“Support of ERC grant applicants”), (hereinafter referred to as the “Support of ERC grant applicants”).

2. Grantor

The Czech Science Foundation, GACR (Grantová agentura České republiky, GA ČR) is the provider of the financial support.

3. Duration of the grant projects

“Support of ERC grant applicants” projects will be provided in period of 2016-2022.

In order to fulfil the intent and goal of these projects, the length of the projects is set to 3 - 6 months.

4. Announcement deadline of the calls for proposals

The call for “Support of ERC grant applicants” projects is submitted based on the ERC initiative published on ERC website. The call will be announced for the first time in 2016 with the first financial support provided also in 2016. Furthermore the GACR expects the call to be open continuously in the period of 2016-2022.

The call will be announced through GACR website.

5. Eligibility of applicants

The support can be provided only to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria of the § 18 of the Act No 130/2002.

Every applicant will be obliged to find a suitable ERC grantee, who will agree to act as a mentor on the project. The project will be realised at a foreign institution, where the ERC grant is carried out. A written declaration of the foreign host institution and of the ERC grantee agreeing on the acceptance of the “Support of ERC grant applicants” proposer is a compulsory part of the application.

The proposer of the “Support of ERC grant applicants” project has to be a principal investigator of a running GACR Junior project or a principal investigator of a completed GACR Junior project, which received an evaluation ‘Excellent’ or ‘Fulfilled’. One person can be a principal investigator of the “Support of ERC grant applicants” project only once. The principal investigator of the “Support of ERC grant applicants” project is obliged to submit an application for the ERC grant (StG, CoG, AdG) with a host institution in the Czech Republic in one of the ERC calls announced after the “Support of ERC grant applicants” project is finalized. The application for ERC grant must be submitted no later

than 700 days after the “Support of ERC grant applicants“ project is finalized. Maternity or parental leave do not count into the time limit. If the principal investigator of the “Support of ERC grant applicants“ project does not fulfil this obligation in given time frame, he/she will be excluded from applying for a GACR grant in the role of a principal investigator or a co-investigator for consecutive three years.

6. Focus and goals of the grant projects

At the beginning of 2016, ERC stated in its report that certain countries of the European Union have considerably lower representation of scientists in ERC calls, which among others leads to an unused research potential. ERC therefore appealed to responsible national agencies to set up programmes of national fellowships to visit ERC projects. These programmes would enable future ERC applicants to visit current ERC principle investigators and their teams. According to ERC such programmes should help chosen candidates to improve the quality of their research profile and also widen their perspective of a competitive environment of international research. Finally it should help the future applicants with activities leading to a successful application for ERC grants.

GACR participates in the ERC recommendation through the new “Support of ERC grant applicants“ programme which is set as an addition to the existing Junior Grant scheme of GACR, with an aim to improve the success rate of young investigators in ERC calls and to increase the volume of applications for ERC grants. Proposed grant programme should help applicants to acquire new experience in obtaining funds from the EU, as well as strengthen the excellence of scientific research in the Czech Republic, which will subsequently lead to an increased competitiveness of the country. The secondary goal of the programme is to increase the cross border mobility of Czech scientists through their stay at the excellent research institutions abroad, as well as acquiring new contacts, improving the quality of ERC applications and improving the ability to lead the ERC projects.

The programme is based on open and transparent evaluation, with the scientific excellence being the main criterion. External evaluators are used and the selection is based on the potential of applicant receiving an ERC grant. The applicants will be obliged to prepare an outline of intended ERC project before applying for the “Support of ERC grant applicants“ grant.

The “Support of ERC grant applicants“ programme will be open for all scientific fields in accordance to GACR status:

- a) Technical Sciences;
- b) Physical Sciences;
- c) Medical and Biological Sciences;
- d) Social Sciences and Humanities;
- e) Agricultural and Biological-Environmental Sciences.

7. Evaluation process:

The evaluation of “Support of ERC grant applicants“ projects will be carried out by three member expert committees. The host/principle investigator of the ERC grant project willing to host the proposer will be a member of the committee. The other two members of the committee will be experts experienced in ERC schemes, with at least one of them being a foreigner.

The committees will be working remotely via email, hence their members will not be overloaded by their participation in the evaluation process. The committees will not have to evaluate

the applicant's track record and research in great depth since this has already been done during the international and panel-based review of the respective Junior grant. The role of the committee will be straightforward, focusing primarily on the outline of the intended ERC grant application.

The role of the hosting ERC grantee is then twofold: Firstly, he/she will be expected to express the agreement with hosting the young scientist who will be bringing his own funding to cover the stay. Secondly, since the hosting ERC grantee is expected to help the visiting young scientist with the preparation of his/her own ERC application, it is important for GACR to know whether the hosting ERC grantee finds the outline plausible and promising. GACR will be expecting only a brief (a few sentences to a paragraph) assessment of the outline.

The GACR Presidium is the deciding authority.

The evaluation will be carried out based on these criteria:

- evaluation of truthfulness, completeness and correctness of data in project applications in order to evaluate the fulfilment of all the essentials stipulated by the law and tender documentation
- evaluation of scientific standard including the evaluation of originality and quality of the proposed grant project. This includes evaluation of the proposer's disposition to submit an ERC grant application in the future (evaluated is proposer's scientific competency, contribution to science and existing scientific results)
- evaluation of proposed costs of the project
- evaluation of the planned ERC project (maximum of 5 pages).

The evaluation process is designed to reduce and prevent conflict of interest at all levels of the evaluation process.

Specific procedures for evaluation project proposals will be stipulated in the call announcement for the „Support of ERC grant applicants“ grants.

8. Evaluation of project results (ex post):

Evaluation of completed projects will be carried out by respective committee on the grounds of projects' final report assessment and on the grounds of results of checks carried out by the Control Division on the resource management.

The main evaluation criteria are:

- fulfilment of the declared purpose of the “Support of ERC grant applicants“ project
- evaluation of the budget management (how were the funds spent, efficiency of funds expenditure and fulfilment of budget distribution).

Results of evaluation will be presented in the evaluation protocol. Results will be evaluated either as *met* or *not met*.