



European Research Council

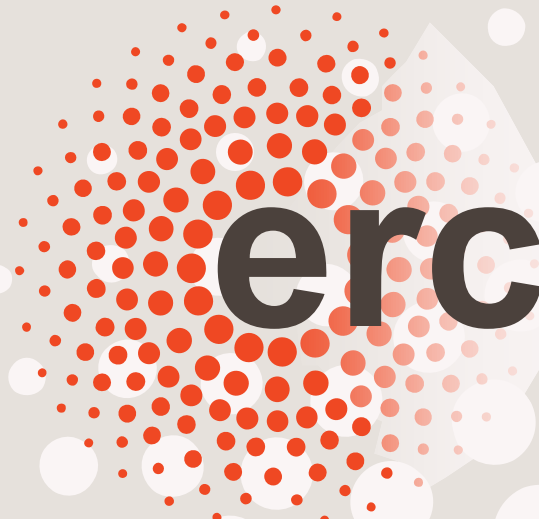
Funding Opportunities for Sociologists—SH Domain

Dr. Lionel THELEN

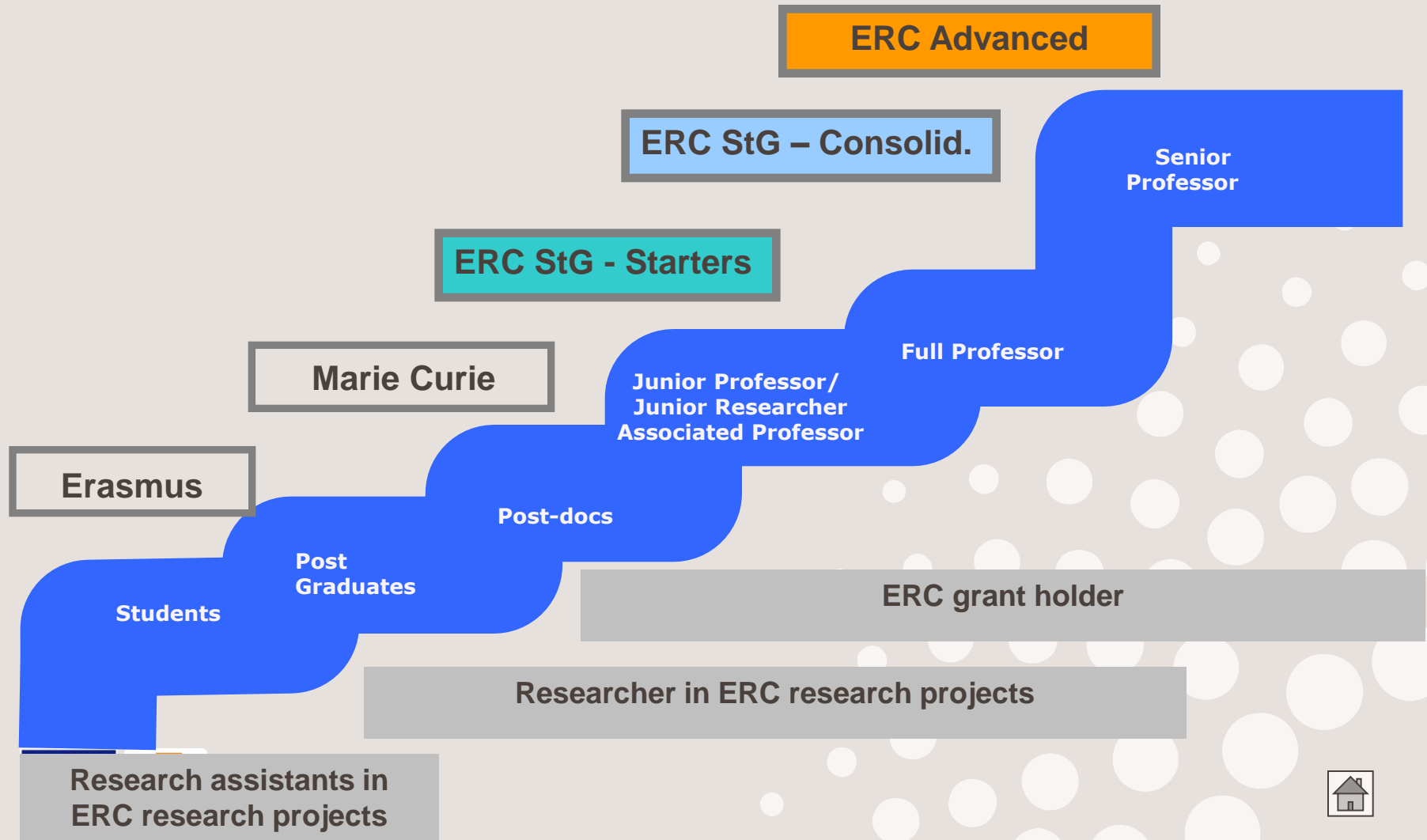
Research Programme Officer and... *Sociologist*
Panel Coordinator SH2 & SH5

ESA Meeting

ERC Presentation – Paris – 6 November 2014



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

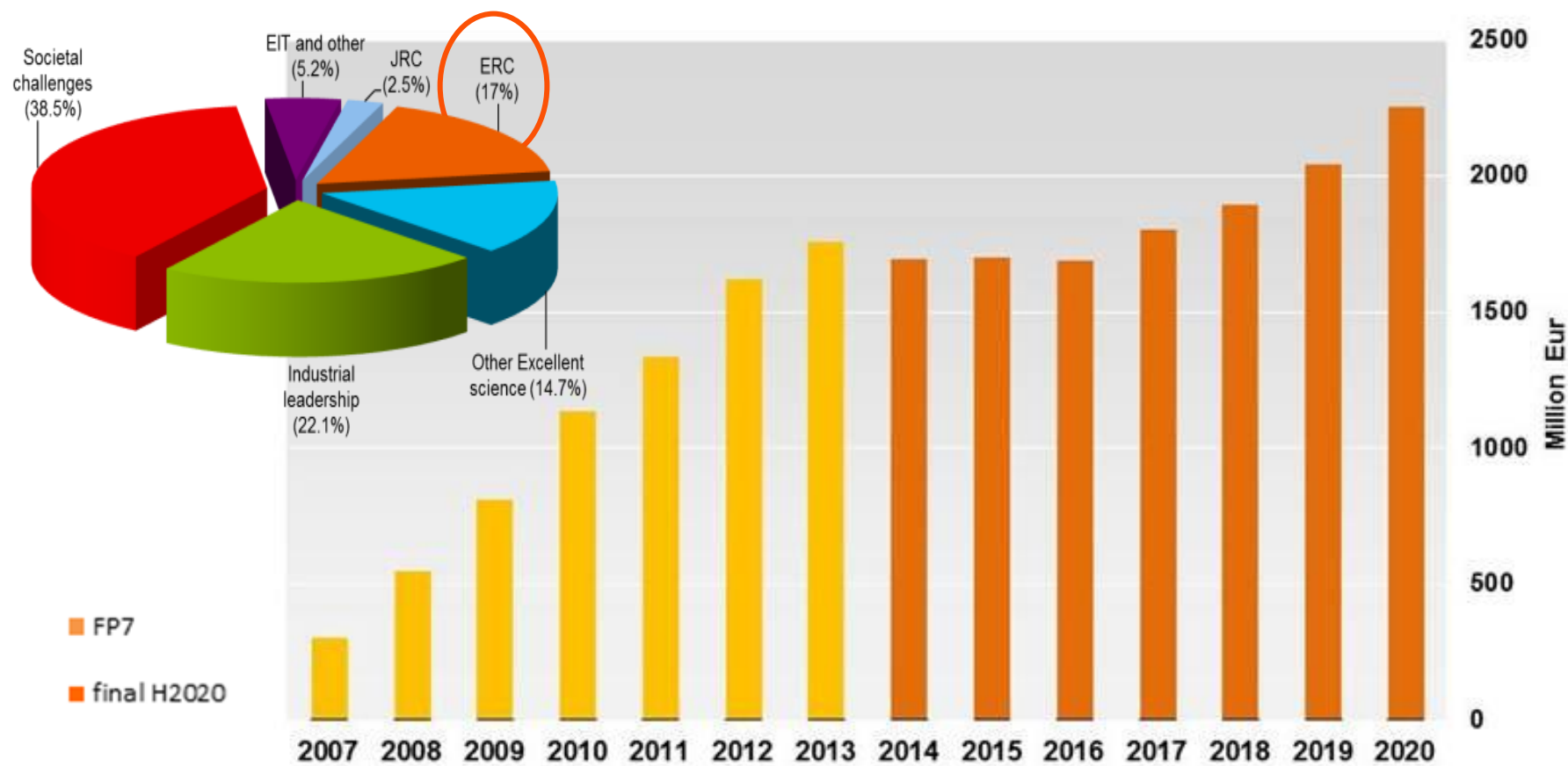
2013-2020 : H2020 budget € 77 billion

ERC budget € 13.1 billion



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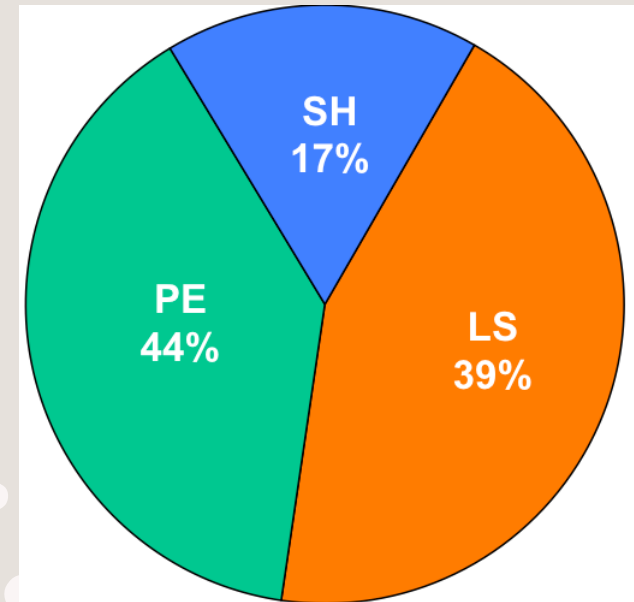
Call budget distribution for 2014 calls

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 €**



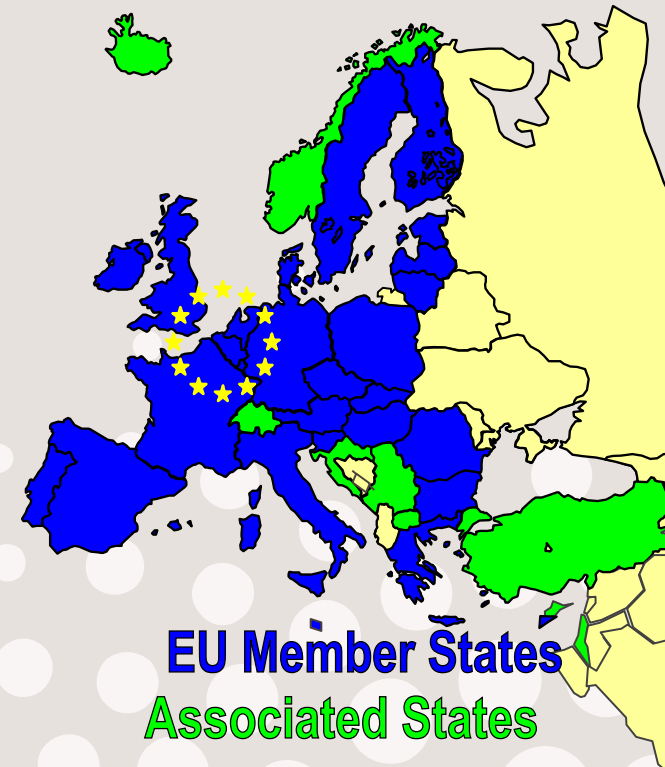
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ERC Grant Schemes

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

- $2 \text{ years} \leq \text{PhD date} \leq 7 \text{ years}$
- 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



- 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:

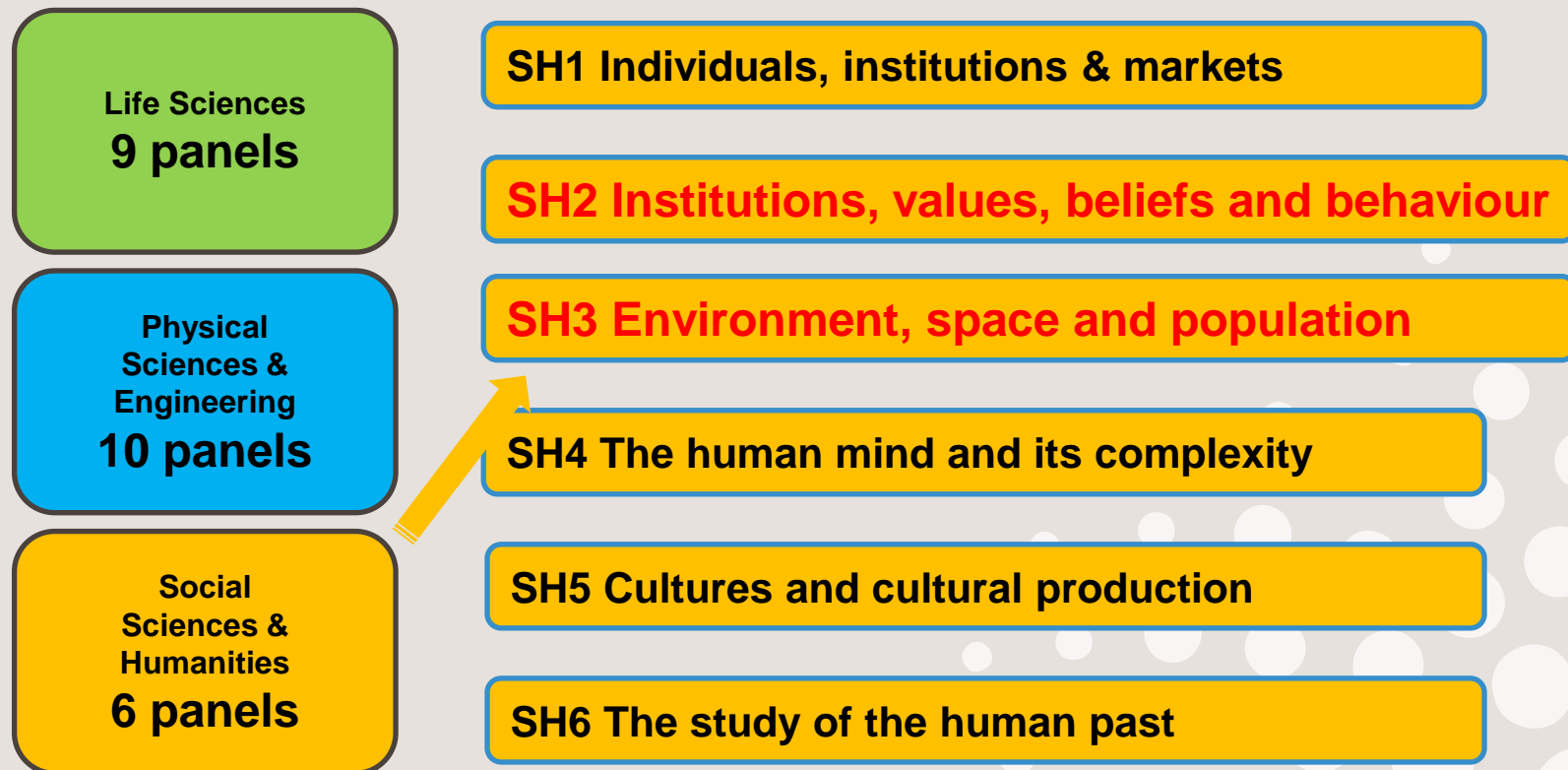
1. Quality of the research project

- **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: SH2

- **SH2 The Social World, Diversity, Institutions and Values:** Sociology, political science, law, communication, education
- SH2_1 **Social structure, social mobility**
- SH2_2 **Social inequalities, social exclusion, social integration**
- SH2_3 **Diversity and identities, gender, interethnic relations**
- SH2_4 **Social policies, educational policies, welfare**
- SH2_5 Democratisation, **social movements**
- SH2_6 Political systems, governance
- SH2_7 Conflict and conflict resolution, **violence**
- SH2_8 Legal studies, constitutions, comparative law
- SH2_9 Human rights
- SH2_10 International relations, global and transnational governance
- SH2_11 **Communication and information, networks, media**

Panel of core interest for Sociologists: SH3

- **SH3 Environment, Space and Population:** Sustainability science, demography, geography, regional studies and planning, science and technology studies
- SH3_1 Sustainability sciences, environment and resources
- SH3_2 Environmental and climate change, **societal impact**
- SH3_3 Environmental and climate policy
- SH3_4 Population dynamics; **households, family** and fertility
- SH3_5 **Health, ageing and society**
- SH3_6 Transportation and logistics, tourism
- SH3_7 Spatial development, land use, regional planning
- SH3_8 **Urban**, regional and rural **studies**
- SH3_9 Human, social and economic geography
- SH3_10 Geographic information systems, spatial data analysis
- SH3_11 **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?

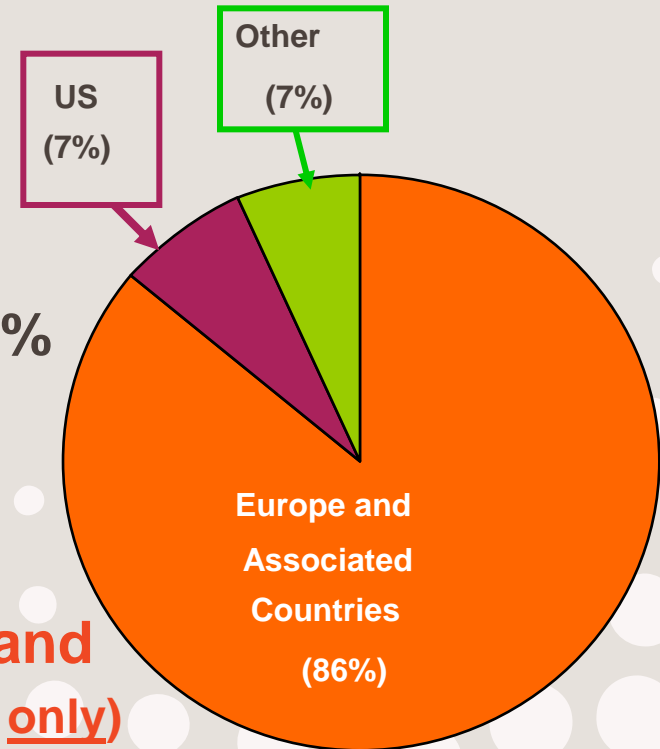
Panel Members: **typically ~350 per call**

- 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

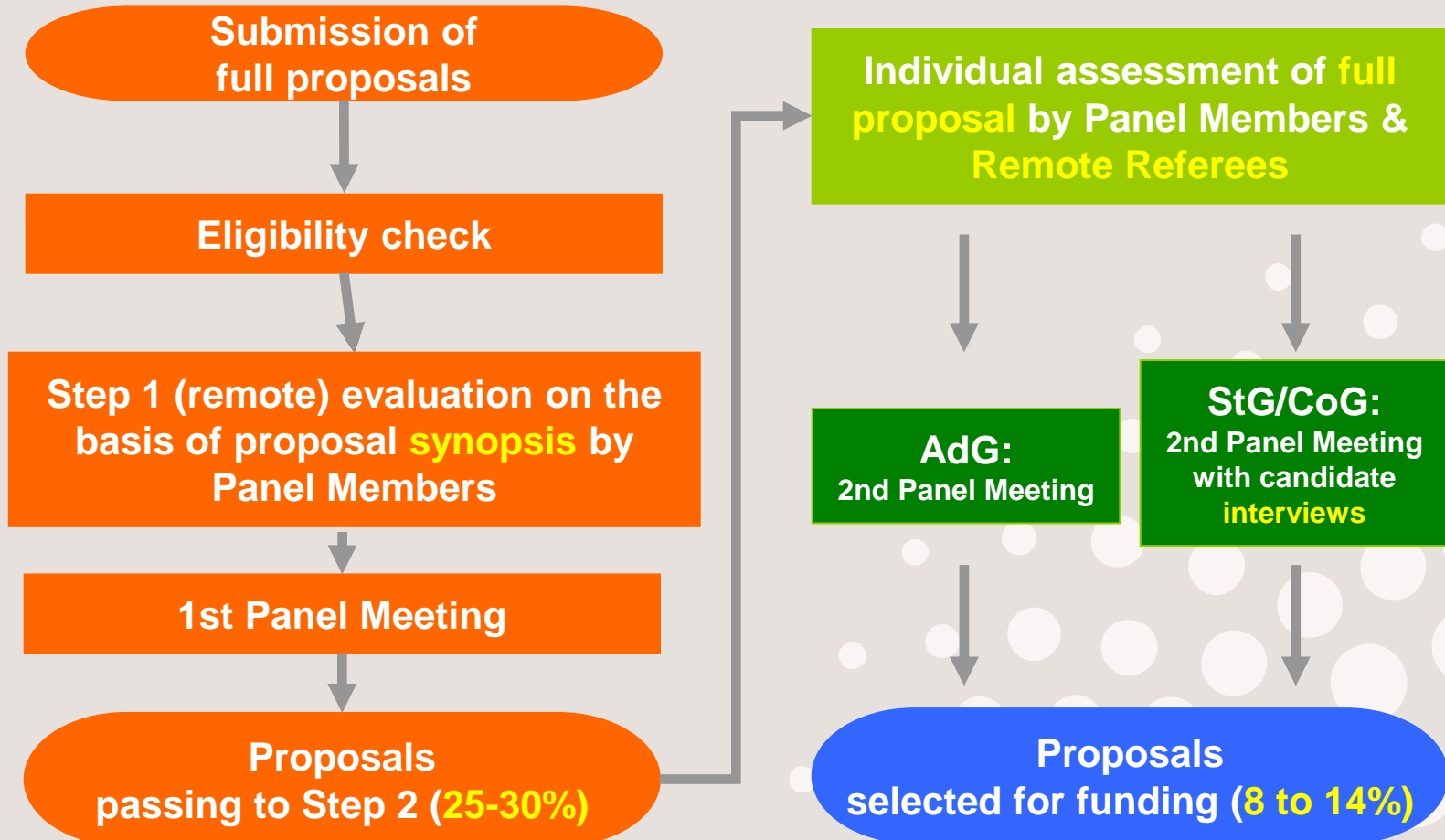
Part A: “Administrative forms” containing

- 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

Preparing an application

Hints and tips (Generalities)



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- **Register early**, get familiar with the system and templates and start filling in the forms
- A submitted proposal can be **revised until the call deadline** by submitting a new version and overwriting the previous one
- Follow the formatting rules and page limits.
- Download and proof-read the proposal before submitting.

Preparing an application

Hints and tips (Part B 1)



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- Pay particular attention to the **ground-breaking nature** of the research project – no incremental research!. State-of-the-art is not enough.
- Know your competitors – what is the **state of play** and why is your idea and scientific approach outstanding?
- Outline of the **methodological approach** (feasibility)
- Show your **scientific independence** in your CV
- Avoid any suspicion of **plagiarism**

Preparing an application

Hints and tips (Part B 1)



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- 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!

Preparing an application

Hints and tips (Part B 2)



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- Provide **sufficient detail** on methodology, work plan, selection of case studies etc. (15 pages)
- Check coherency of figures, **justify requested resources**
- Explain involvement of team members.
- Provide alternative strategies to mitigate risk.

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!

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



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

Preparing an application

Guidelines and other Resources



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- Read the Guide for Applicants and the Ideas Work Programme.
- Any doubts about your eligibility or any other questions, contact one of the NCPs or the ERCEA.
http://cordis.europa.eu/national_service/home_en.html
- subscribe to the ERC newsletter <http://erc.europa.eu/keep-updated-erc>

Preparing an application

Check the already Funded Projects



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<http://erc.europa.eu/erc-funded-projects>

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You are here: Homepage > Projects and Results > ERC Funded Projects

ERC Funded Projects

Browse ERC projects by

Funding Scheme

Call year

Country of Host Institution

Keywords

Search

Clear all

The system is currently being updated.
We are aware that some projects may not appear and we are working on a solution.

The ERC operates according to an "investigator-driven", or "bottom-up", approach, allowing researchers to identify new opportunities in any field of research. Accordingly the portfolio of ERC funded projects spans a wide range of topics and research questions.

Since 2007, more than **3,400 projects** have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the FP7 associated countries, representing over **€5.7 billion in grants**. In total, the ERC has received over **32 000 project proposals** for these calls.

You can use the menu on the left to search quickly and easy ERC funded projects.

Information displayed is automatically updated through the information available on the CORDIS platform. Please note that only funded projects, whose grant agreements have been signed, appear in this database. For this reason, the total number of projects in this database may differ from the figures provided in the statistics section which include also projects selected for funding whose grant agreements have not been signed yet.

Menu allows to search ERC projects by Funding Scheme, Call year, Country of Host Institution and panel

2015 Planning

ERC calls	Budget	Call Opening	Submission Deadlines
Starting Grants ERC-2015-StG	430 M€	7 October 2014	3 February 2015
Consolidator Grants ERC-2015-CoG	585 M€	13 November 2014	12 March 2015
Advanced Grants ERC-2015-AdG	630 M€	10 February 2015	2 June 2015
Proof of Concept ERC-2015-PoC	20 M€	7 November 2014	DL1: 5 February 2015 DL2: 28 May 2015 DL3 : 1 Oct. 2015

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)

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**

Questions?



Thank you 😊

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

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National initiatives in support of finalist projects in the ERC calls



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

NO: The Research Council
supports unfunded StG finalists

FI: support scheme
for finalists in reserve
lists since 2009 calls

SE: support for unfunded
finalists of StG calls since 2007

IE: New scheme opening
in 2012. Previous scheme
for StG2007 finalists

BE Flanders: FWO
supports the best
ranked PIs on the
ERC-StG reserve list

PL: Support scheme for
finalists of 2009 and 2010
calls. It might continue

CZ: opened
support scheme
for finalists in 2012

LU: FNR supports
unfunded StG and
AdG finalists since
2009 calls

HU: Call for unfunded
ERC finalists of
StG2007 and StG2009

RO: opened support scheme
for finalists in 2012

FR: ANR launched
an initiative to
support unfunded
StG2007 finalists

CH: SNSF launched
an initiative to back
unfunded StG2007
finalists

SI: Complementary
scheme for unfunded
finalists of 2010 calls

TR: Considers a
scheme to support
unfunded ERC finalists

PT: New national initiative
in support of ERC finalists
being developed

IT: Call open to all
unfunded StG2007
finalists

BG: Develops a
scheme to financially
support projects in the
ERC reserve list

CY: Research
Promotion
Foundation
supported StG
2009 finalists

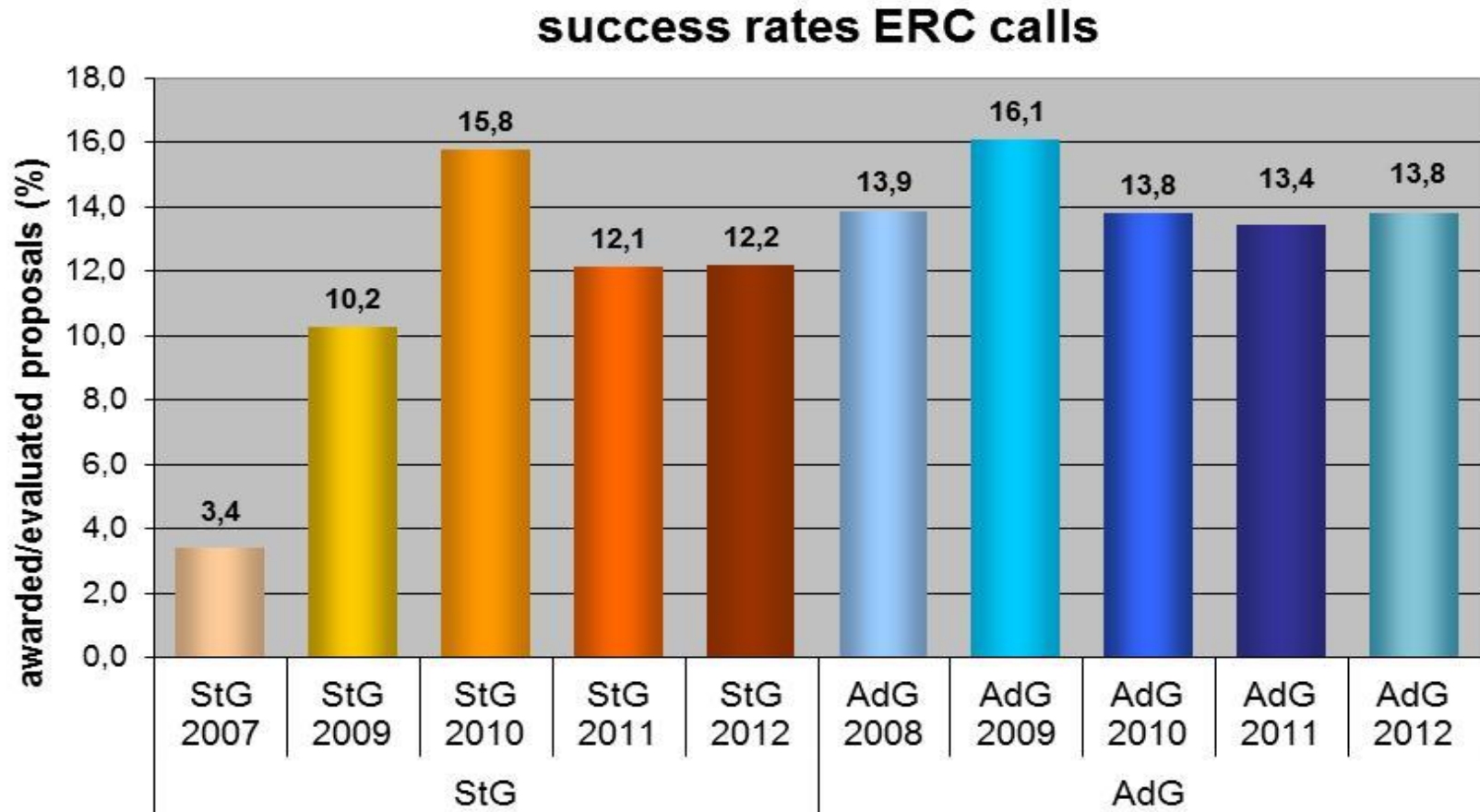
ES: support for unfunded
finalists of StG calls since 2007

EL: support for unfunded
StG and AdG finalists in
2010 and 2011 calls

ERC performance

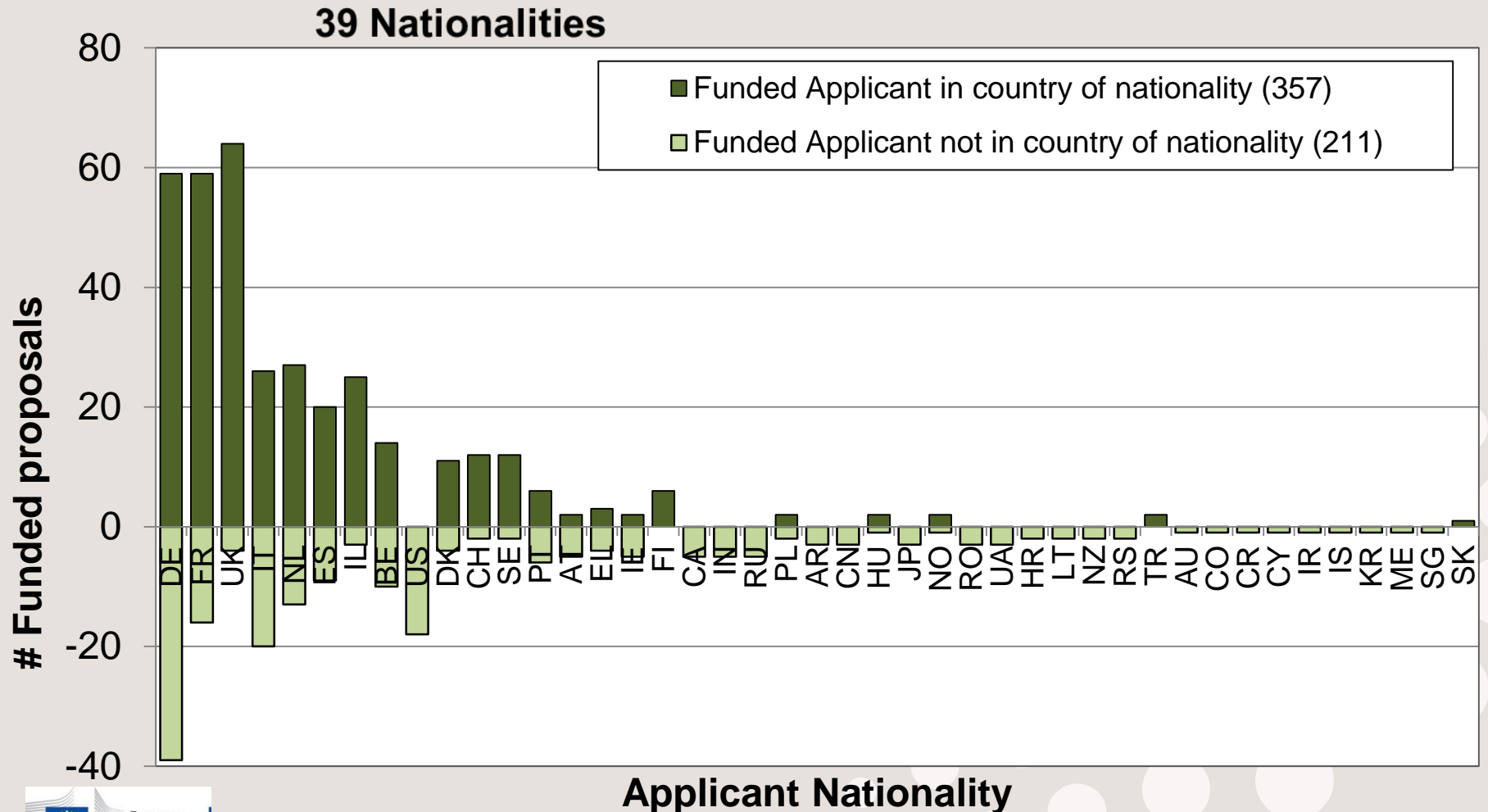
Success rates StG and AdG 2007 – 2012

Overall average success rate : 12%



STG 2012 Proposals for funding

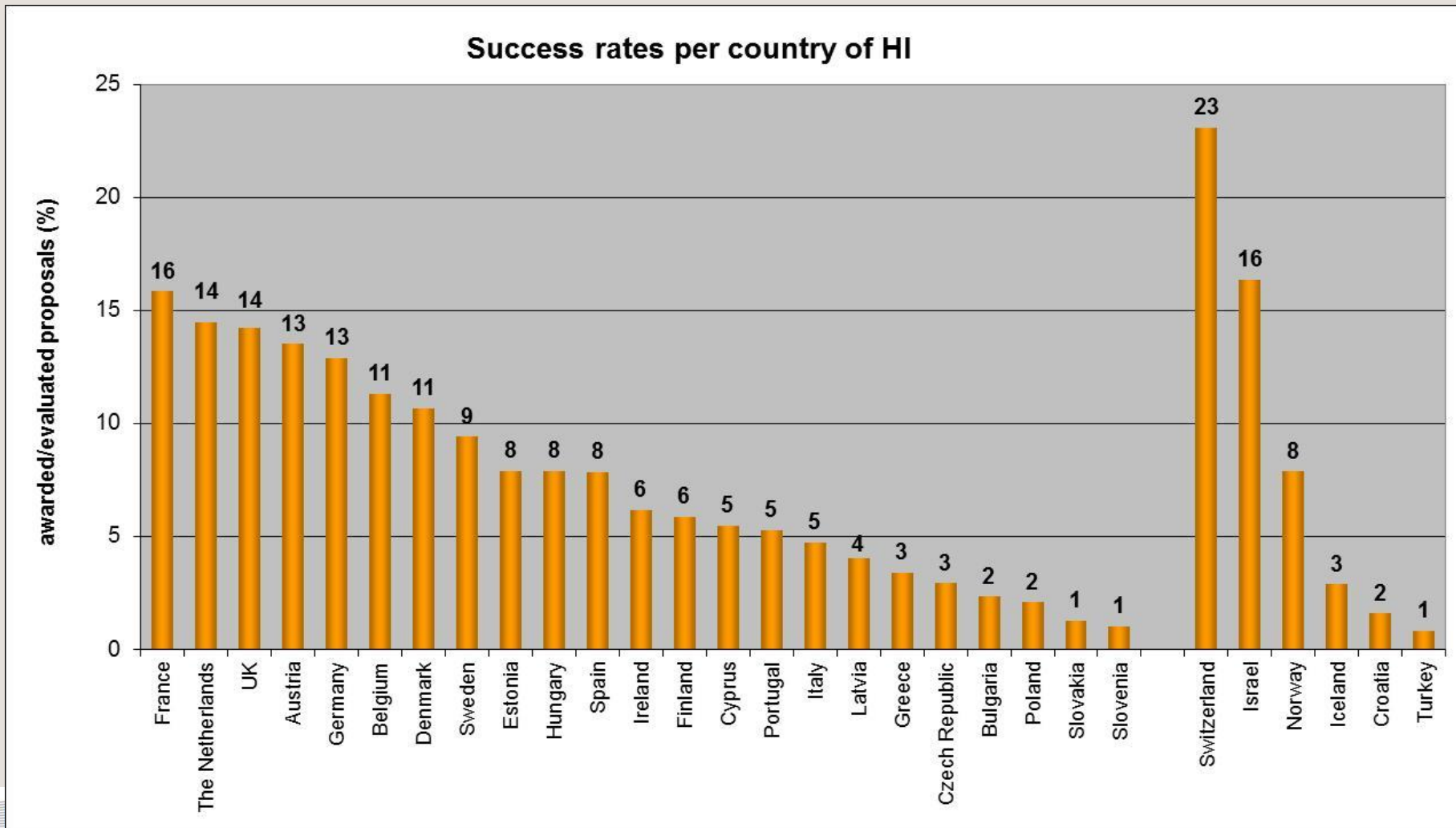
Applicant Nationality – applicant in own country



Success rates per country of Host Institution

ERC Starting & Advanced grant calls 2007 - 2012

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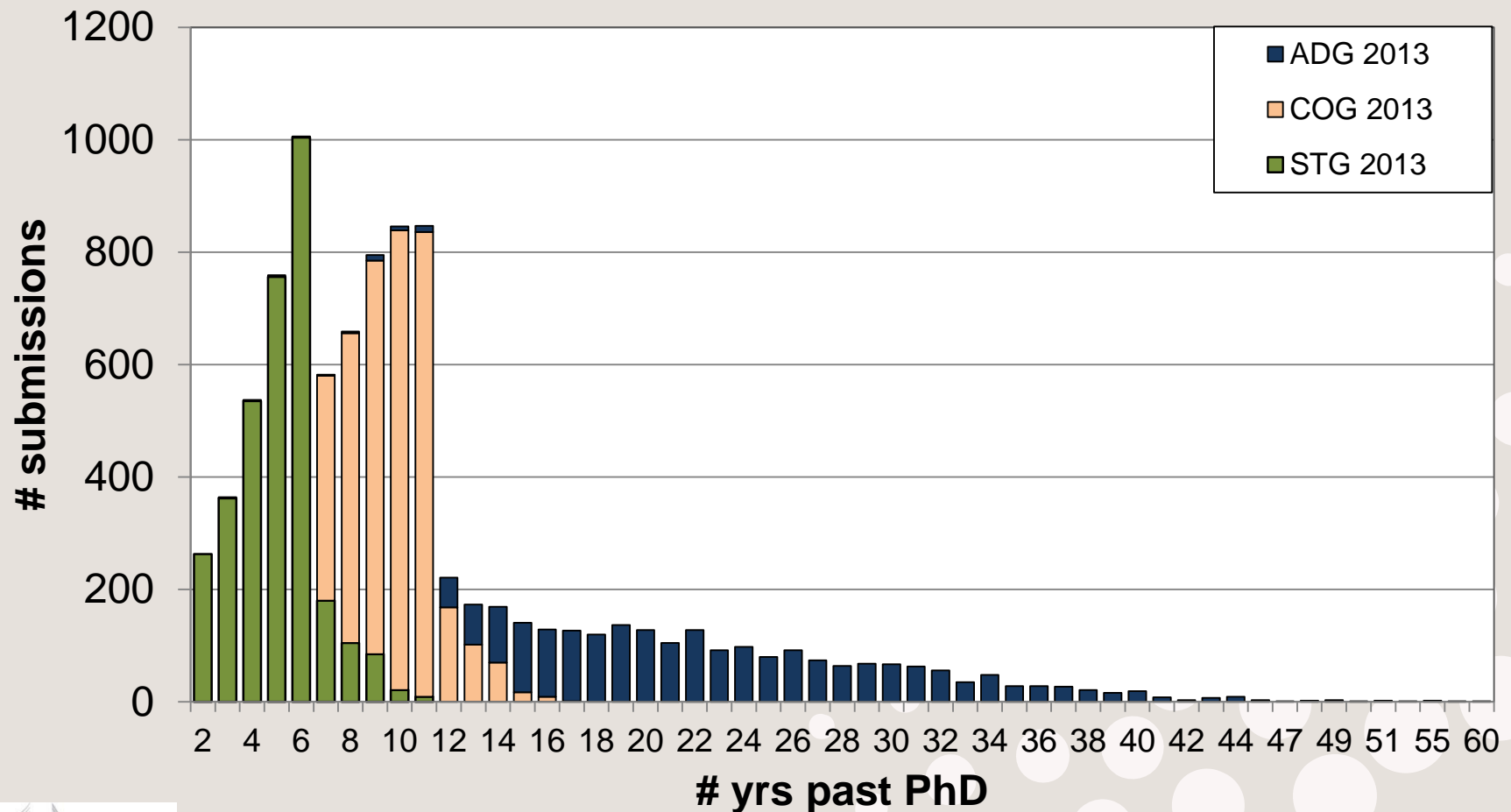


*) First legal signatories of the first grant agreement taken into

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

