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ERC evaluation criteria and gender
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ERCEA
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What is ERC

ERC Grant Schemes

Submission and Evaluation Process

Proposal Preparation: Hints and tips

Gender Dimension in ERC

ERC Basics - What is the ERC?

The ERC supports excellence in frontier research through a bottom-up, individual-based, pan-European competition

Budget: € 13 billion (2014-2020) - 1.9 billion €/year

Legislation

Scientific governance: independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President; full authority over funding strategy

Support by the ERC Executive Agency (autonomous)
Excellence as the only criterion

Strategy

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

ERC Structure



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The European Commission

- **Provides financing** through the EU framework programmes
- **Guarantees autonomy of the ERC**
- **Assures the integrity and accountability of the ERC**
- **Adopts annual work programmes** as established by the Scientific Council

The ERC Scientific Council

- **22 prominent researchers** proposed by an independent identification committee
- **Appointed by the Commission** (4 years, renewable once)
- **Establishes overall scientific strategy**; annual work programmes (incl. calls for proposals, evaluation criteria); peer review methodology; selection and accreditation of experts
- **Controls quality of operations and management**
- **Ensures communication with the scientific community**



The ERC Executive Agency

- **Executes annual work programme** as established by the Scientific Council
- **Implements calls for proposals** and provides information and support to applicants
- **Organises peer review evaluation**
- **Establishes and manages grant agreements**
- **Administers scientific and financial aspects** and follow-up of grant agreements
- **Carries out communications activities** and ensures information dissemination to ERC stakeholders



What does ERC offer?

Creative Freedom of the Individual Grantee



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ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility

- to work on a research topic of **own choice**, with a team of **own choice**
- to gain true **financial autonomy** for 5 years
- to negotiate with the host institution the **best conditions** of work
- to attract **top team members** (EU and non-EU) and **collaborators**
- to move with the grant to any place in Europe if necessary (**portability of grants**)
- **to attract additional funding and gain recognition; ERC is a quality label**

ERC 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

track-record of
significant research
achievements in the
last 10 years
up to € 3.5 Mio
for 5 years

Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research - earliest
stage of marketable innovation
up to €150,000 for ERC grant holders

Principal Investigator profile and commitment



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PI Profile:

Any current place of work but working or moving to work in Europe (EU member state or H2020 Associated Country)

Any nationality or age

StG: 2 and up to 7; CoG: 7 and up to 12 years of experience after PhD;
AdG: no constraints

Potential (StG) or evidence (CoG) for independence and maturity;
strong leadership (AdG)

Good track-record appropriate to their research field and career stage

PI Commitment:

Minimum 50% (StG), 40% (CoG), 30% (AdG) of PI working time on ERC project

Minimum 50% of PI working time in a EU Member State or Associated Country

Submission and Evaluation

ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants

The applicant's profile



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“Am I competitive enough?”

Potential for research independence

Evidence of scientific maturity

At least one (StG) /several (CoG) publications without participation of PhD supervisor

Condition StG: PhD at least 2 and up to 7 years before 1 January 2015

Condition CoG: PhD over 7 and up to 12 years before 1 January 2015

Promising track-record of early achievements

- Significant publications
- Invited presentations in conferences
- Funding, patents, awards, prizes

All these need to be shown in your proposal that will include your CV and an early achievements track record.

Extensions of eligibility window

Extensions of eligibility window possible for StG and CoG for documented situations of:

- **Maternity – 18 months per child**
- **Paternity – effective time taken off**
- **Military service**
- **Medical specialty training**
- **Long-term illness**
- **No limit to the total extension**

ERC Evaluation process (StG, CoG & AdG)



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Panel structure: 3 domains and 25 panels

Each panel :
Panel Chair and
10-15 Panel Members

Life Sciences (LS) - 9 panels

- LS1 Molecular & Structural Biology & Biochemistry
- LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics & Systems Biology
- LS3 Cellular & Developmental Biology
- LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology & Endocrinology
- LS5 Neurosciences & Neural disorders
- LS6 Immunity & Infection
- LS7 Diagnostic Tools, Therapies & Public health
- LS8 Evolutionary, Population & Environmental Biology
- LS9 Applied Life Sciences & Non-Medical Biotechnology

Social Sciences and Humanities (SH) - 6 panels

- SH1 Markets, Individuals & Institutions
- SH2 The Social World, Diversity & Common Ground
- SH3 Environment, Space & Population
- SH4 The Human Mind and its Complexity
- SH5 Cultures & Cultural Production
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past

Physical Sciences & Engineering (PE) - 10 panels

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical & Analytical Chemical sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry & Materials
- PE6 Computer Science & Informatics
- PE7 Systems & Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products & Process Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science

Submission to Panels

- Proposals are submitted to a *Targeted Panel* (of PI's choice)
 - Can flag one “*Secondary Review Panel*”
- **Applicant chooses his/her panel**, this panel is “responsible” and takes ownership for the evaluation of the particular proposal
- Switching proposals between panels not possible unless clear mistake on part of applicant, or due to the necessary expertise being available in a different panel
- **But:** In case of cross-panel or cross-domain proposals, evaluation by members of other panels possible

Online Submission

Proposal structure



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Administrative forms (Part A)

- 1 – General information
- 2 – Administrative data of participating organisations
- 3 – Budget
- 4 – Ethics
- 5 – Call specific questions

Administrative forms

Annexes

Commitment of the host institution
PhD certificates, etc

Part B1 (submitted as pdf)

Evaluated in Step 1 & Step 2

Text box - Cross-domain nature explanation

a – Extended synopsis 5 pages

b – Curriculum vitae 2 pages

Appendix – Funding ID

c - Track-record 2 pages

Part B2 (submitted as pdf)

Not evaluated in Step 1 (Step 2 only)

Scientific proposal 15 pages

a – State-of-the-art and objectives

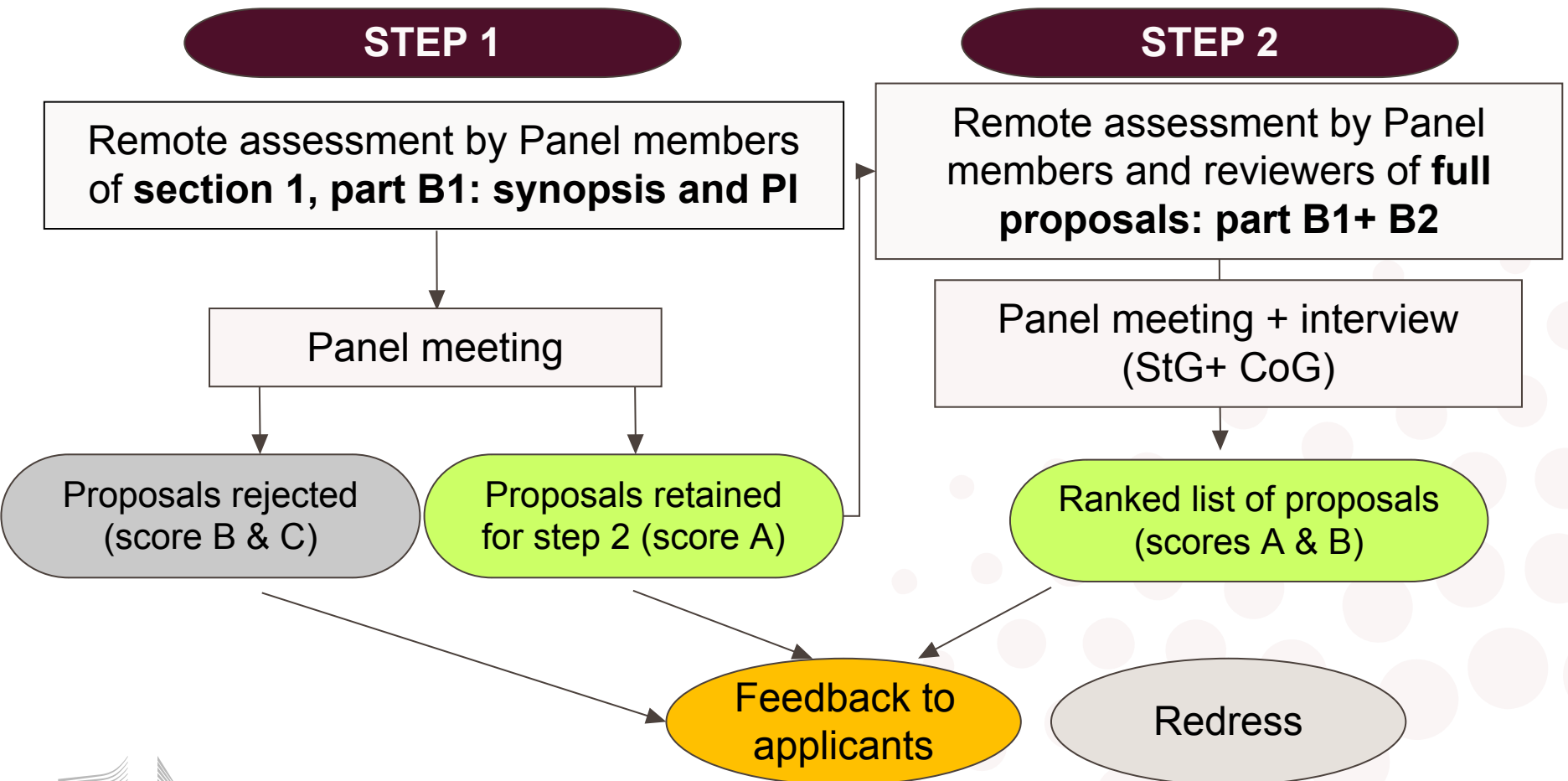
b – Methodology

c – Resources

Guidelines and Recommendations in the 2015 Information for Applicants

How are the proposals evaluated?

Evaluation procedure – StG, CoG and AdG calls
Single submission, but a two-step evaluation



What is evaluated?

Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion
check the criteria in the Work Programme!



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Excellence of the Research Project

Ground breaking nature Important challenge? Substantially beyond the current state of art? High-gain/high-risk balance

Potential impact Possibility of a major break-through?

Scientific Approach Feasibility, novel concepts/methodology

- **Excellence of the Principal Investigator**

Intellectual capacity: Track-record, capacity to go significantly beyond the state of the art, evidence of creative independent thinking

Creativity

Commitment : Willing to devote a significant part of PI's working time (minimum of 50% for Starting, minimum of 40% for Consolidator Grant, minimum of 30% for Advanced Grant)

Referees and panels **evaluate and score** each criterion, which results
in a ranking of the proposals.

Scoring scheme



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- **Score 'A':** Fully meets the ERC excellence criterion and is recommended for funding if sufficient funds are available.
- **Score 'B':** Meets some but not all of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded. **No resubmission next year**
- **Score 'C':** Proposal is not of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation. The applicant may also be subject to resubmission limitations in the next call. **No resubmission next 2 years**

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.

Make use of the **help tools and call documents** (Information for Applicants, Work Programme, Frequently asked questions) to prepare your proposal

Talk to the National Contact Points and your Institution's grant office

Submission of Proposals

Differences in Part B1 and Part B2

In Step 1: **Panel members** (generalists and with multidisciplinary approaches) see only **Part B1** of your proposal: Prepare it accordingly!

Pay particular attention to the **ground-breaking nature** of the research project – no incremental research. State-of-the-art is not enough. Think big!

Know your competitors – what is the **state of play** and why is your idea and scientific approach outstanding?

Only the extended Synopsis is read at Step 1: **concise and clear presentation** is crucial (evaluators are not necessarily all experts in the field)

Outline of the **methodological approach** (feasibility)

Show your **scientific independence** in your CV (model CV provided in the part B1 template)

Funding ID to be filled in

Submission of Proposals

Differences in Part B1 and Part B2



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In Step 2: Both **Part B1 and B2** are sent to specialists around the world (**specialised external referees**)

Do not just repeat the synopsis

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**

Questions to ask yourself as an applicant

- Am I internationally competitive as a researcher at my career stage and in my discipline?
- Am I able to work independently, and to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?
- Why is my proposed project important?
- Does it promise to go substantially beyond the state of the art?
- Why am I the best/only person to carry it out?
- Is it timely? (Why wasn't it done in the past? Is it feasible now?)
- What's the risk? Is it justified by a substantial potential gain? Do I have a plan for managing the risk?

Typical reasons for rejection

Principal investigator

Insufficient track-record

Insufficient (potential for) independence

Insufficient experience in leading projects

Proposed project

- Scope: Too narrow too broad/unfocussed
- Incremental research
- Work plan not detailed enough/unclear

Insufficient risk management

Preparing an application

Check the already Funded Projects



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Funding Scheme



Research Area



Country of Host
Institution



Free text search



Clear all

ERC Funded Projects



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 **4,500 projects** have been selected to receive ERC funding throughout the EU Member States and the associated countries. The ERC has received over **43,000 project proposals** for its calls.

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

Projects can be filtered according to: **Funding scheme**, **Research area (Panels/Domains)**, **Country of Host Institution** and/or **free keyword(s)**.

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.

For specific queries, please use this **contact form** and select the category "Web".

Menu allows
searching
by Funding
Scheme,
Research Area,
Country of Host
Institution.

Preparing an application

Check the statistics on granted projects and on submissions



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Prizes and Awards

ERC Stories

Statistics

View statistics by

Granted
projects

Evaluated
projects

Funding scheme

Call year

Domain / Panel

Show number of
grantees by

Start/Show

Clear all

Statistics

This page provides **basic statistics for ERC funding activities**.

Please note that the data reflects the current status of the granting process. Therefore the total number of grants and grant distribution might differ from the indicative statistics, published at the release of the results, which are based on the outcome of the evaluation process.

You can use the menu on the left to select different views on the data.

ERC Call	Applications received	Of which		
		Evaluated*	Funded	Success rates (%)**
Starting Grant 2007	9,167	8,787	299	3.4
Starting Grant 2009	2,503	2,392	245	10.2
Starting Grant 2010	2,873	2,767	436	15.8
Starting Grant 2011	4,080	4,005	486	12.1
Starting Grant 2012	4,741	4,652	566	12.2
Starting Grant 2013	3,329	3,266	300	9.2
Consolidator Grant 2013	3,673	3,604	313	8.7
Starting & Consolidator Grant total	30,366	29,462	2,645	10.3***

Preparing an application

Check past panel members for the call



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Evaluation Panels

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The selection of scientific and scholarly proposals for ERC funding is based on international peer review with excellence as the sole criterion. The ERC uses a typical panel-based system, in which panels of high-level scientists and/or scholars make recommendations for funding.

Domain and panel structure

The ERC panel structure consists of 25 panels.

The panels of each grant are grouped into three disciplinary domains that cover the entire spectrum of science, engineering and scholarship:

1. Social sciences and Humanities (SH)
2. Life sciences (LS)
3. Physical and Engineering Sciences (PE)

Research proposals of a multi and inter disciplinary nature are strongly encouraged throughout the ERC's schemes. Proposals of this type are evaluated by the ERC's regular panels with the appropriate external expertise.



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Forthcoming ERC Calls



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ERC calls	Budget	Call Publication	Submission Deadline(s)
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 Feb. 2015 DL2: 28 May 2015 DL3: 1 Oct. 2015

*) full-year budget

ERC and Gender

ERC Scientific Council

Working groups & Standing committees



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CoIME

(Conflict of Interest & Research integrity)



CoP

(Committee on Panels)



Gender balance



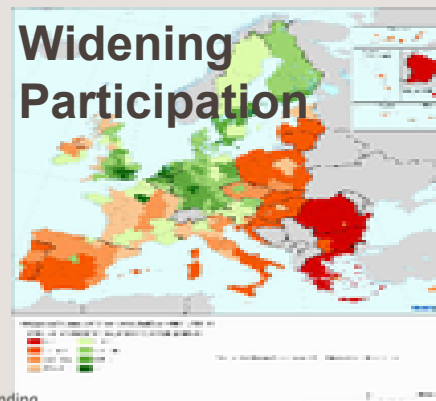
Open Access



Internationalisation



Widening Participation



Innovation and relations with industry



Key Performance Indicators



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Gender Balance Working Group



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In 2008, the ERC Scientific Council established the Working Group on Gender balance to promote gender mainstreaming at each level of the ERC procedures, aiming at

informing and raising awareness among both male and female excellent researchers of the opportunities of the ERC grants;

giving equal opportunities and treatment to men and women applying in all ERC grant competitions;

monitoring gender distribution within the ERC's peer review system;

taking into account the gender dimension in all ERC grants.

Members: Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon;
Prof. Athene Donald;

Prof. Reinhard Genzel



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Gender Balance Working Group

Gender Equality Plans 2007–2013 / 2014-2020



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Main objectives

raise awareness about the ERC gender policy;

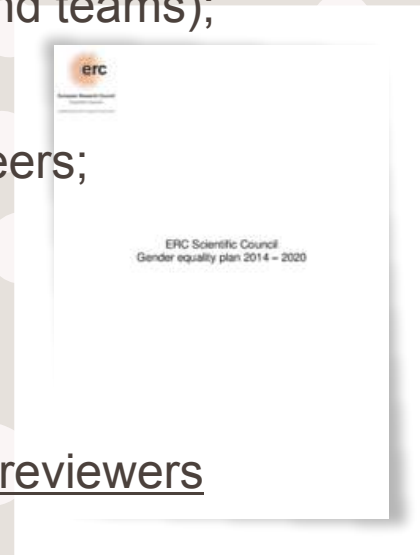
identify and remove gender bias in evaluation;

improve the gender balance in ERC calls (PIs and teams);

monitor differences in gender specific careers;

gender awareness in ERC processes;

strive for gender balance among the ERC peer reviewers



Gender Equality Plans

Actions implemented



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Gender mainstreaming with focus kept on excellence

ERC Scientific Council Gender Equality Plan

Awareness

Submission

Evaluation

Granting

Took an active role in the **gender debate**, gender equality networks and workshops

Made **targeted visits** to scientific meetings and workshops addressing gender topics, to inform about open ERC calls

Highlighted ERC women grantees as **role models** for potential ERC applicants

Monitored **submission rates** of women and men

Ensured **ERC evaluation criteria** encompass the situation of both women and men in research

Looked at **success rates** of and granted amounts to women and men

Analysed relation between ERC grants and gender structures in **research careers**

Highlighted good practice host institutions regarding coverage of **family related costs** (e.g. child care, moving with a family etc.)

Achieved a better **gender balance** in each ERC evaluation panel as compared to that panel's relevant scientific communities

Awareness

Gender debate



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ERC Workshop: *"On the way to the top: providing equal opportunities for men and women in science and technology"* Brussels, 2 December 2013

Recommendations:

At political level:

- Make use of gender mainstreaming
- Keep gender issues high in the agenda
- Continuous monitoring and analysis of results
- Prizes and encouragement from the top

At scientific level:

- Make use of gender mainstreaming
- Integration of gender knowledge in science
- Improve gender competence in funding organizations and administrations for both men and women

Evaluation and Granting

Gender studies



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Applications:

Consider unconventional career paths

- **ERCAREER** study looked into paths and patterns, differences and similarities in the career paths of women and men ERC grantees

Evaluation:

ERC practices and processes

- **gendERC** study (on-going) looks into ERC practices and processes in the context of gender mainstreaming and in particular during the proposals' submission and peer review

ERC Work Programmes

Evolution on gender-related issues

2007

Starting Grant (StG) introduced with 2 – 9 years eligibility and extensions possible including **12** months per child born ***after*** PhD;

2010

Extension of StG eligibility window to **18** months per child born ***before or after*** PhD award.

2013

- Reversing the order of evaluation criteria, evaluation criterion 1: project and evaluation criterion: 2 PI track record;
- Scientific leadership potential (self-evaluation) section removed

2014

Model CV template included in application forms

ERC Work Programme

New features for WP 2015



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Effective limit on the number of children that count towards the eligibility extension for Starting Grant and Consolidator Grant removed;

Care of sick relative now a reason for extension of the eligibility window for Starting Grant and Consolidator Grant;

Applicants now restricted to highlighting maximum 5/10 publications in their track record



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Evaluation

ERC evaluation panels



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Briefing panel chairs and panel members

Outcomes of **ERC calls** in terms of **gender balance**

Unconventional career paths

Unconscious bias in evaluation may come from:

CV styles;
Role of women in research teams;
Female researchers and career breaks;
Bias may apply equally regardless
of whether the evaluators are male or female.

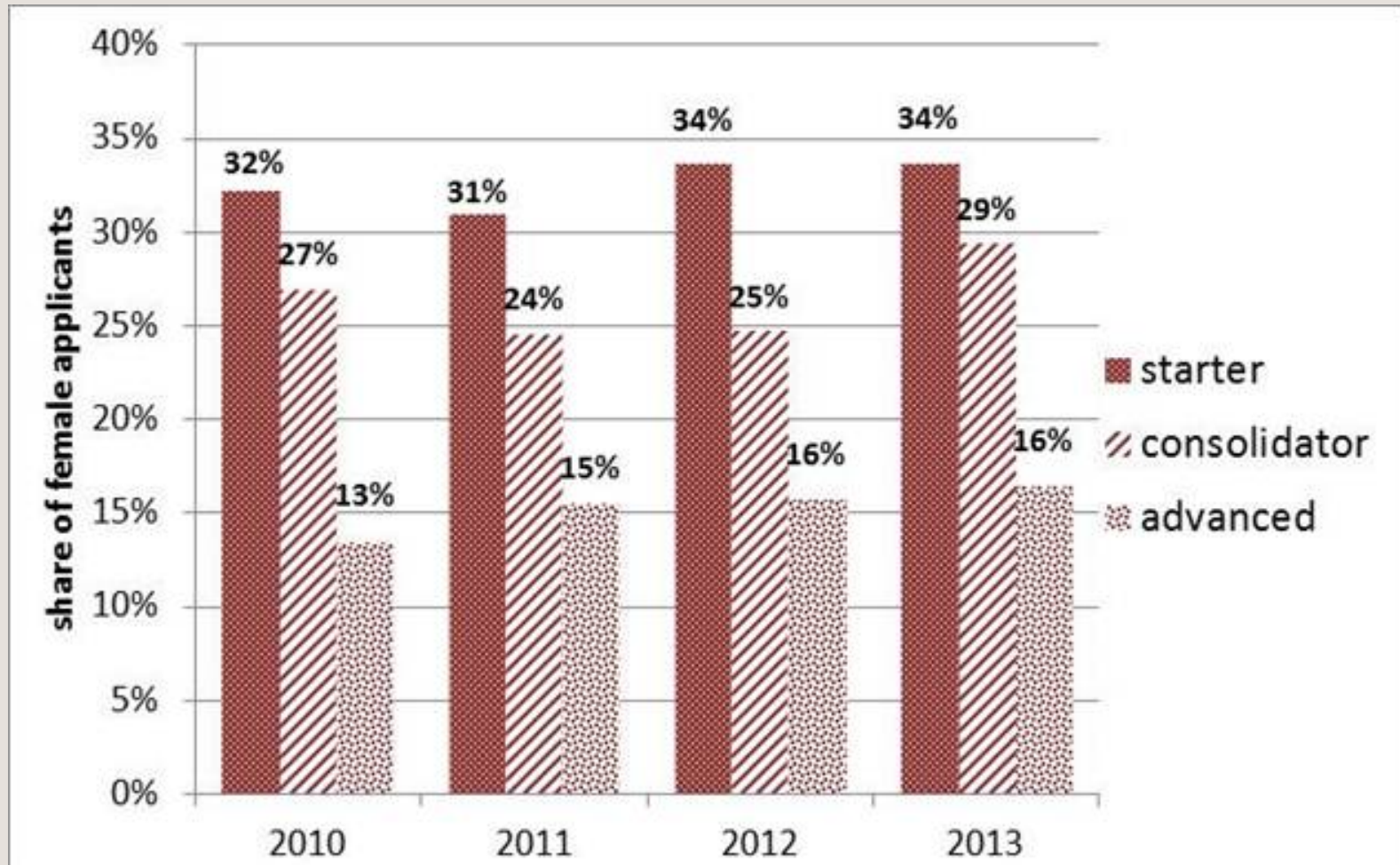


Evolution of the share of applicants by call 2010-2013



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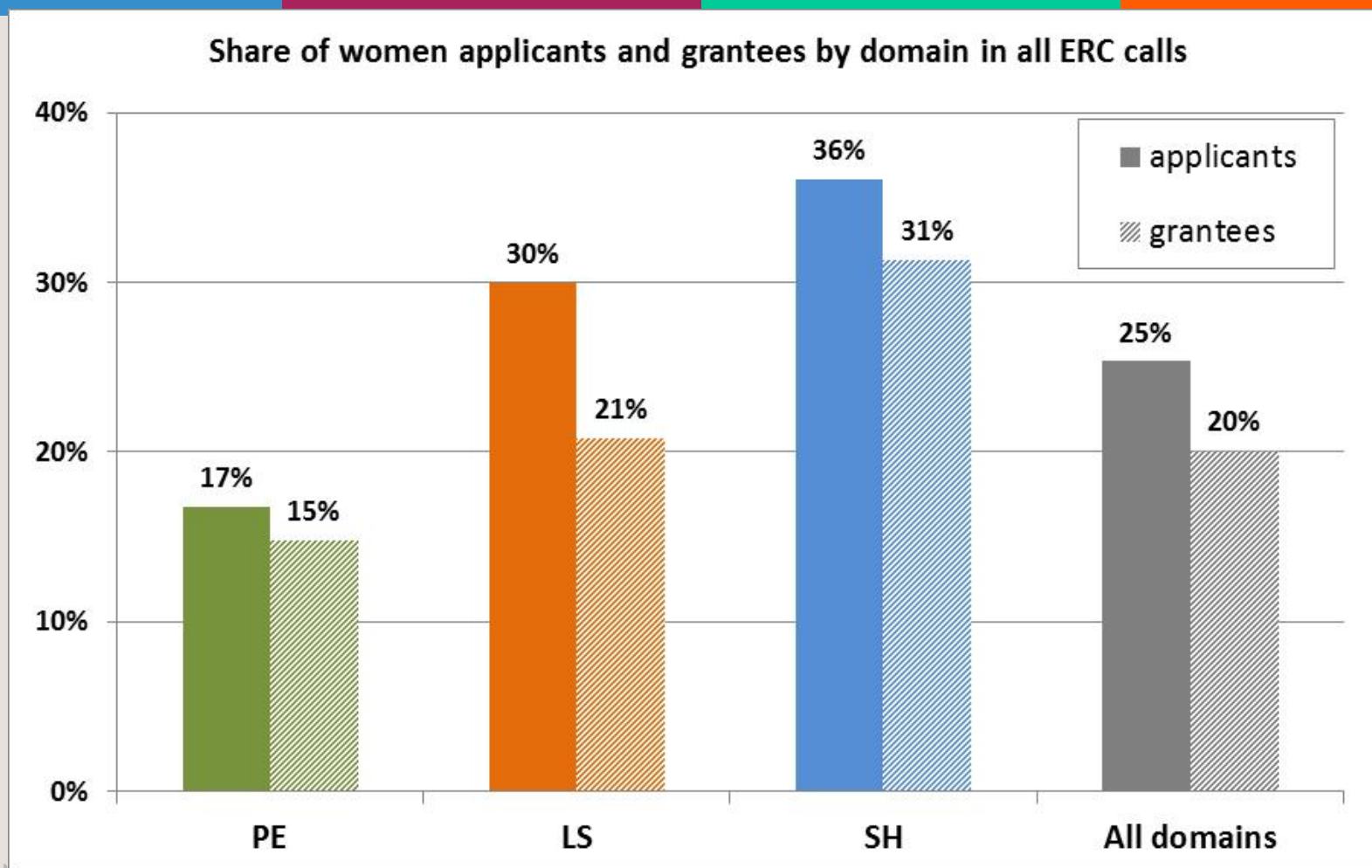
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Submission and Evaluation (ERC calls 2007-2013)

25 % of the applications from women

20 % of the grants to women



All ERC Starting/Consolidator Grants:

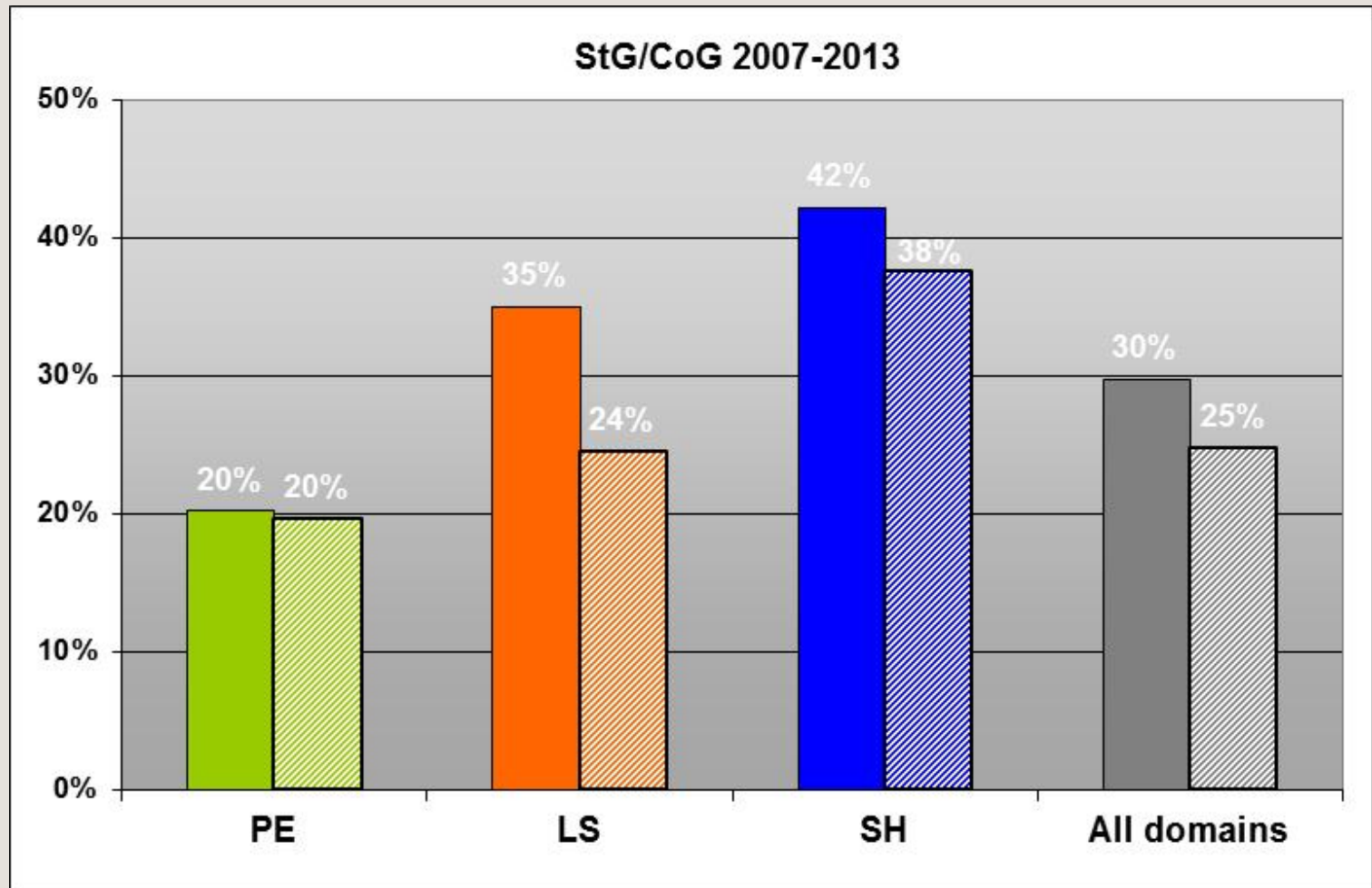
30 % of the applications from women

25 % of the grants to women



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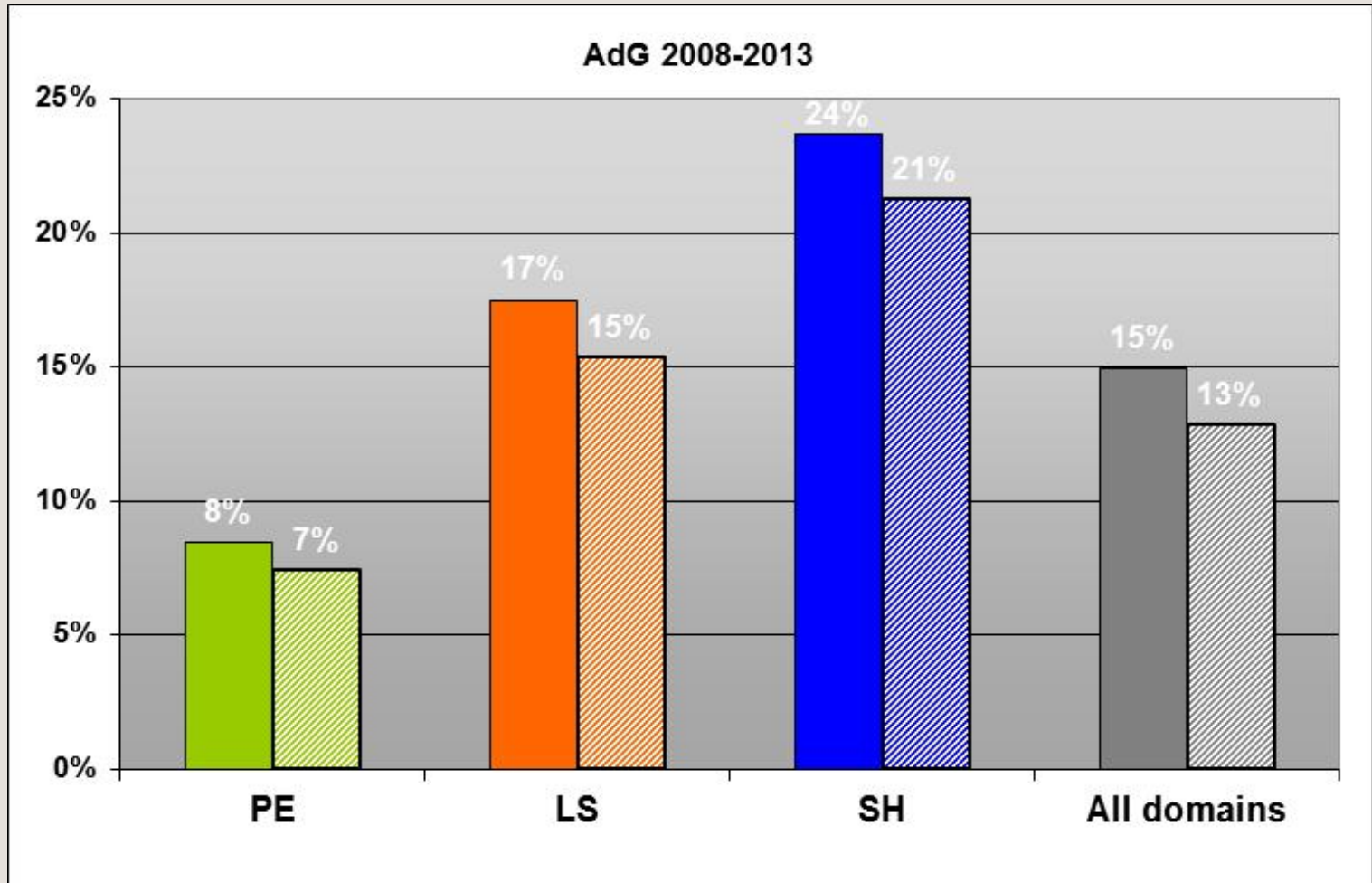
Withdrawn and ineligible proposals not taken into account

All ERC Advanced Grants:

15 % of the applications from women
13 % of the grants to women



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Withdrawn and ineligible proposals not taken into account

Developing a New Generation of researchers

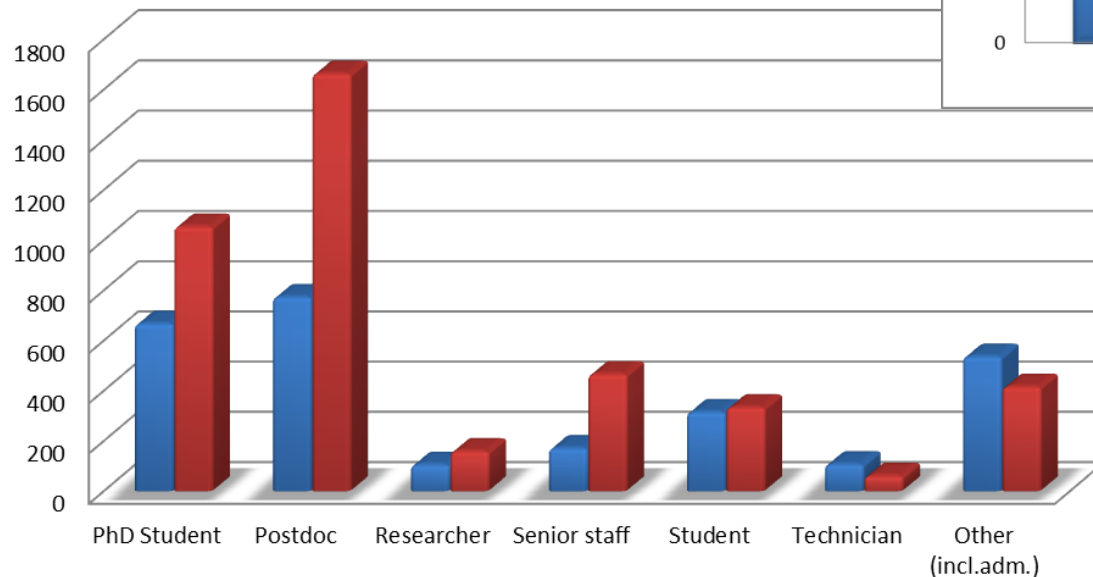


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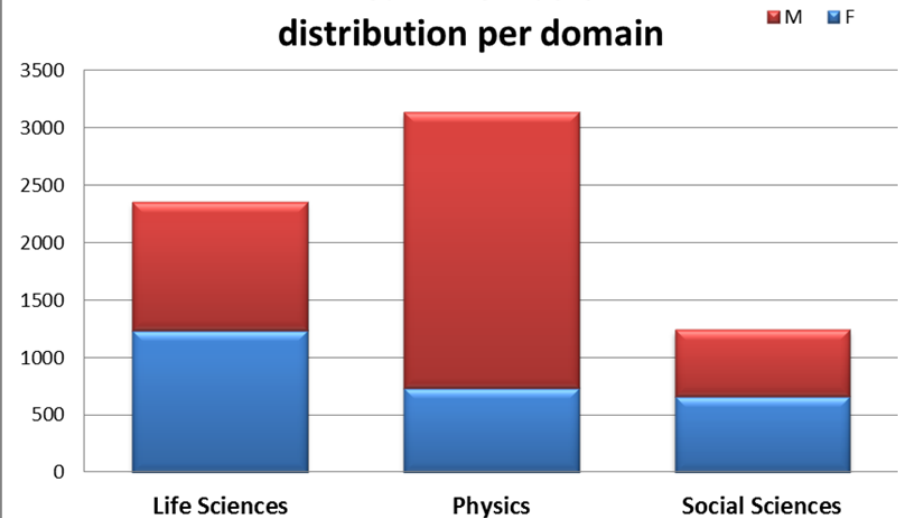
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+ 15 000 PhD and post-doc researchers working in ERC teams.

Team Members per role and gender



Team members distribution per domain



PIs and Team members per gender

Analysis of 995 Starting and Advanced Grants

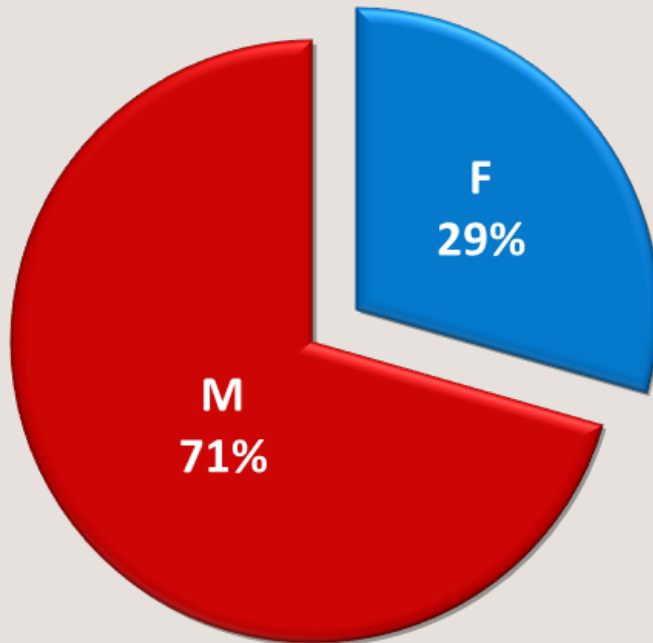
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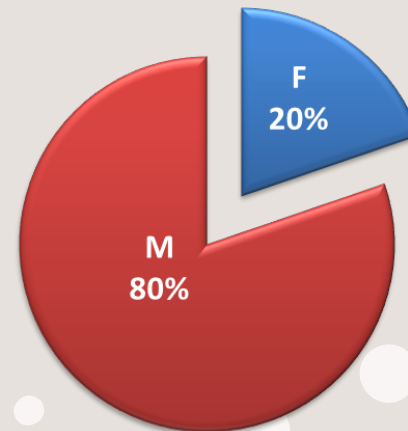
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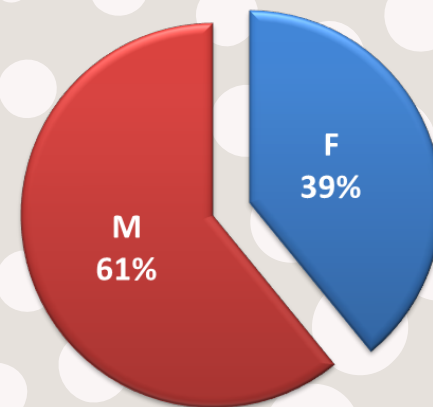
Principal Investigators and Team Members



Principal Investigators



Team Members



Team Members

Composition of ERC teams

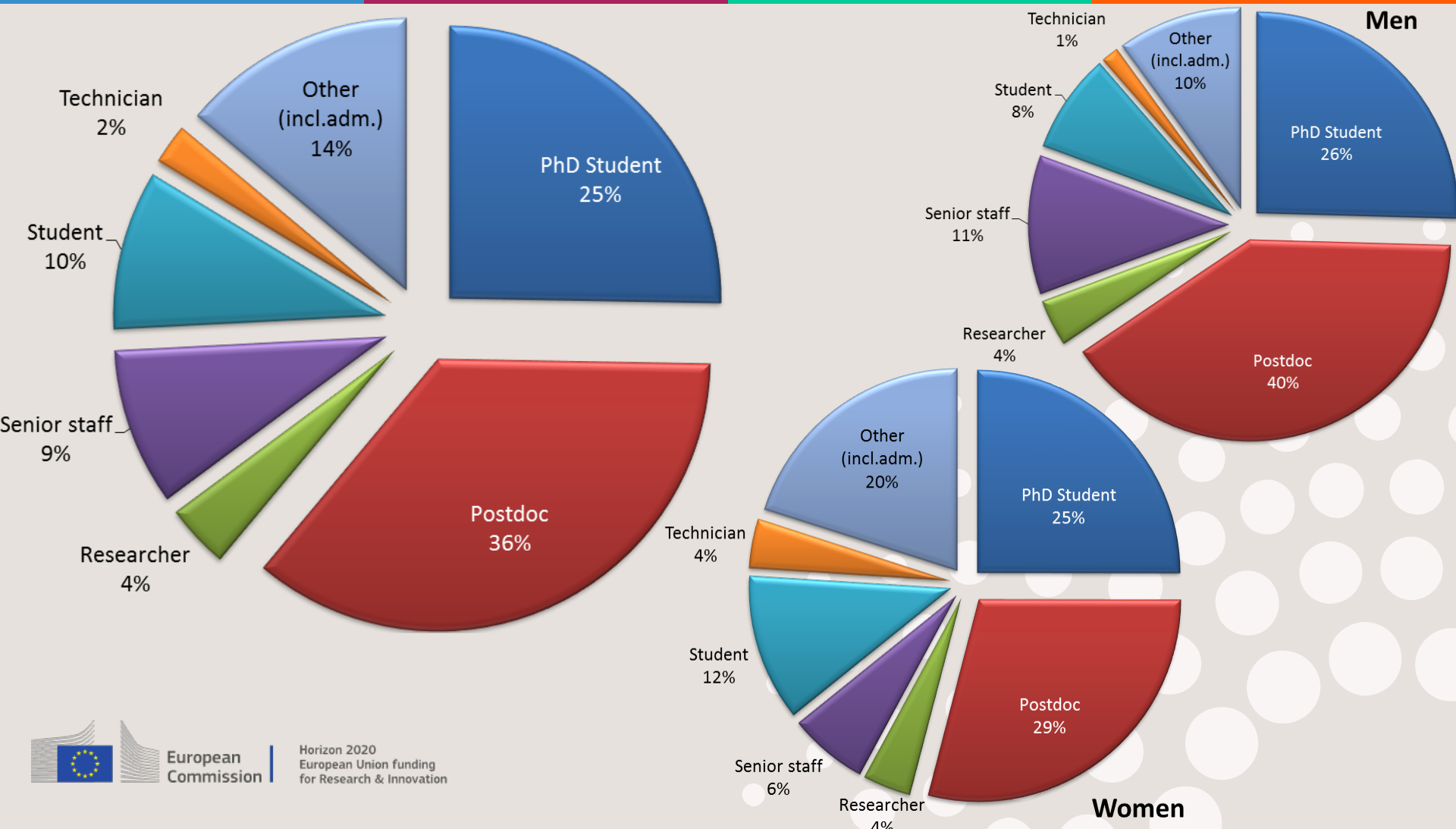
Analysis of 995 Starting and Advanced Grants (6800 team members)

*1% data unknown



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Further Information

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<http://erc.europa.eu>

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Where to apply

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