

Reflections on applying for an ERC fellowship

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RISer

Rates of Interglacial Sea-level Change, and Responses

How great is the long-term sea-level rise hazard for Europe?



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission



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The problem: sea-level will continue to rise well beyond 2100. Long-term regional hazards (and risks) are unknown and dependent on the source and rate of ice-sheet melt.

RISeR will develop a dataset of Last Interglacial sea-level change in the North Sea, to constrain the source and rate of ice-sheet melt when polar temperatures were 3-5°C warmer.

RISeR will provide the **first** worse-case, regional sea-level projections for Europe for the next 1000 years.



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Fugro



Fugro



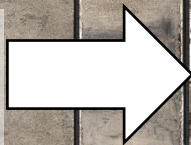
BOSCORG



Fugro



Formation of the North
Sea ~125,000 years ago



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Who I was in 2017?

- 7 years post PhD
- Tenure-track research fellow
- 20 papers (discipline specific CV)
- ~€375,000 of research funding
- Some invited talks/seminar
- Conference co-organisation
- Experience of PhD supervision
- Key first authored papers
- Growing research network





Developing the proposal

- This doesn't happen overnight!
- Attended a ERC event in 2011 (applied 2017!) to understand the call

Frequently Asked Questions: ERC 2021 Starting Grant call

Which publications should be included in a proposal?

The publications included in a proposal will be used to demonstrate the PI's Intellectual capacity and creativity as part of an excellent track record.

An applicant's choice of publication will be a very specific judgment of what best reflects that person's track record according to the ERC criteria and in coherence with the project proposed.

The 2021 ERC Work Programme states on page 17: "A competitive Starting Grant Principal Investigator must have already shown the potential for research independence and evidence of maturity, for example by having produced at least one important publication as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor."

Developing the proposal

- Built upon and extended my postdoc research (the ‘why me’ part)
- Spent 1.5 years planning
- Research visits to lay the groundwork
- ‘Beyond state-of-the-art’ & ‘high-risk high-gain’
- In my case there was a clear fit into PE10 panel



Resolving meter-scale sea-level variability during the MIS 5e highstand will require precise chronologies and stratigraphy of sea-level indicators, as well as improved precision in the ver-

tical uncertainties of RSL indicators. Coastal geomorphological features, although compelling, are difficult to date. Fossil corals can potentially provide robust chronologies, if challenges asso-

The Team!



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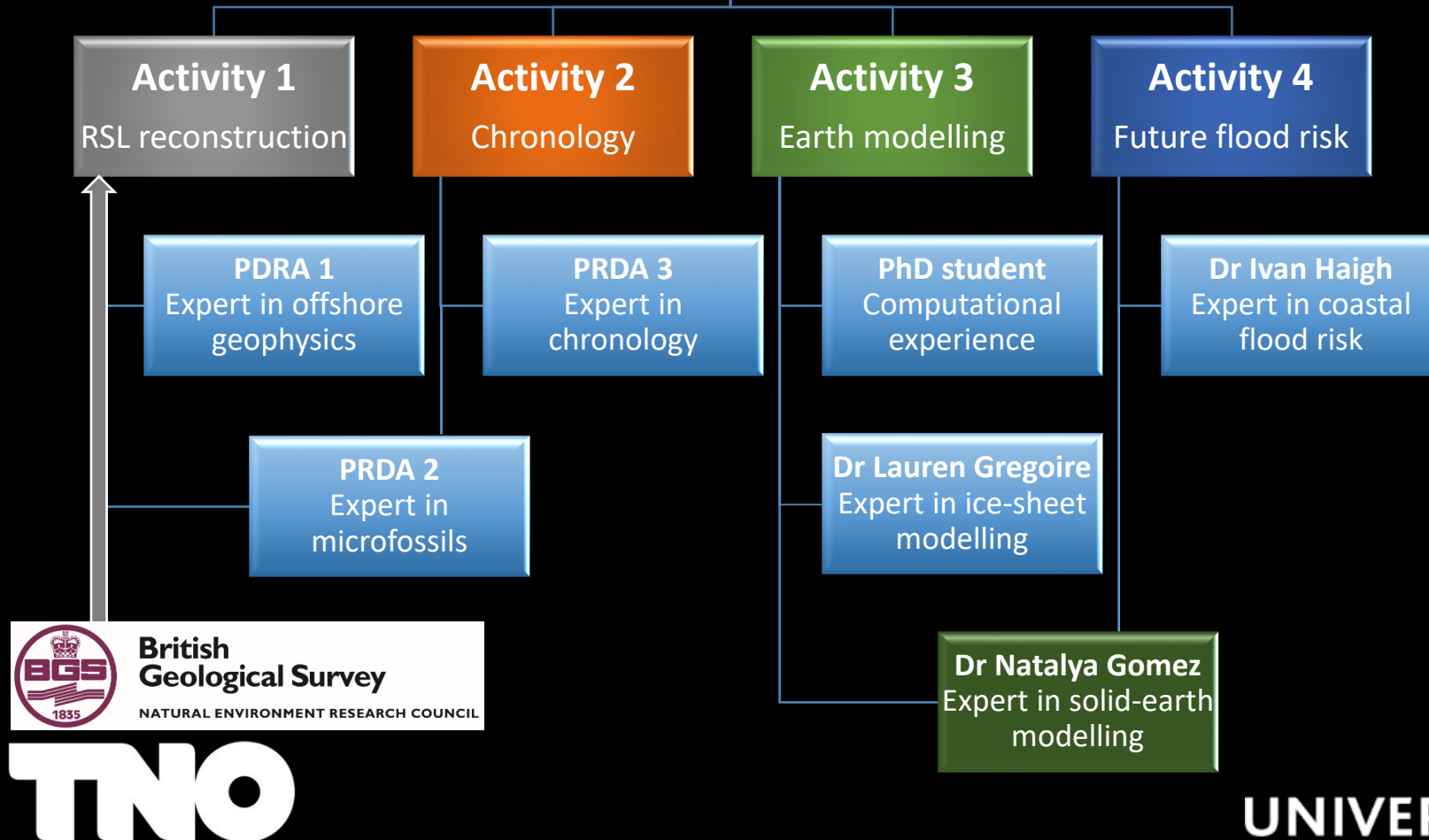


RISeR



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€2 million (including €0.5 m large facilities extension)



Dr Natalya Gomez
Expert in solid-earth modelling

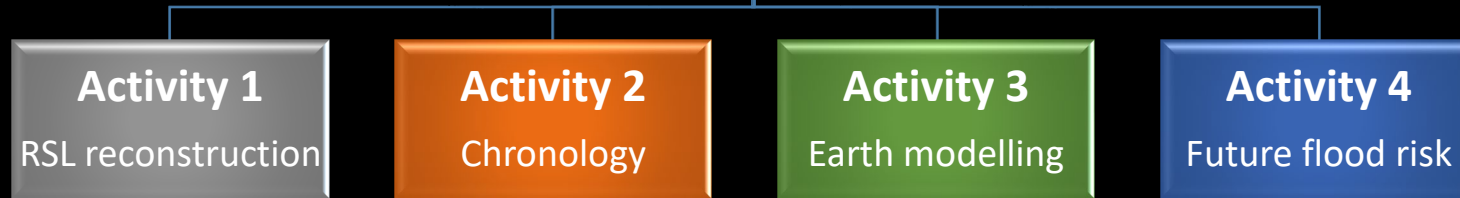


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Expert in offshore
seismics
PDRA 1

RA in borehole
databases

Expert in
palynology
PDRA 2

Expert in
foraminifera
PDRA 3

Placement
students

Ice sheet and solid
earth modelling
PhD student

Dr Lauren Gregoire
Expert in ice-sheet
modelling

Dr Natalya Gomez
Expert in solid-earth
modelling

Dr Ivan Haigh
Expert in coastal
flood risk

Wider team

- Masters students
- Utrecht PhD student
- JSPS-ERC fellow
- Leeds colleagues





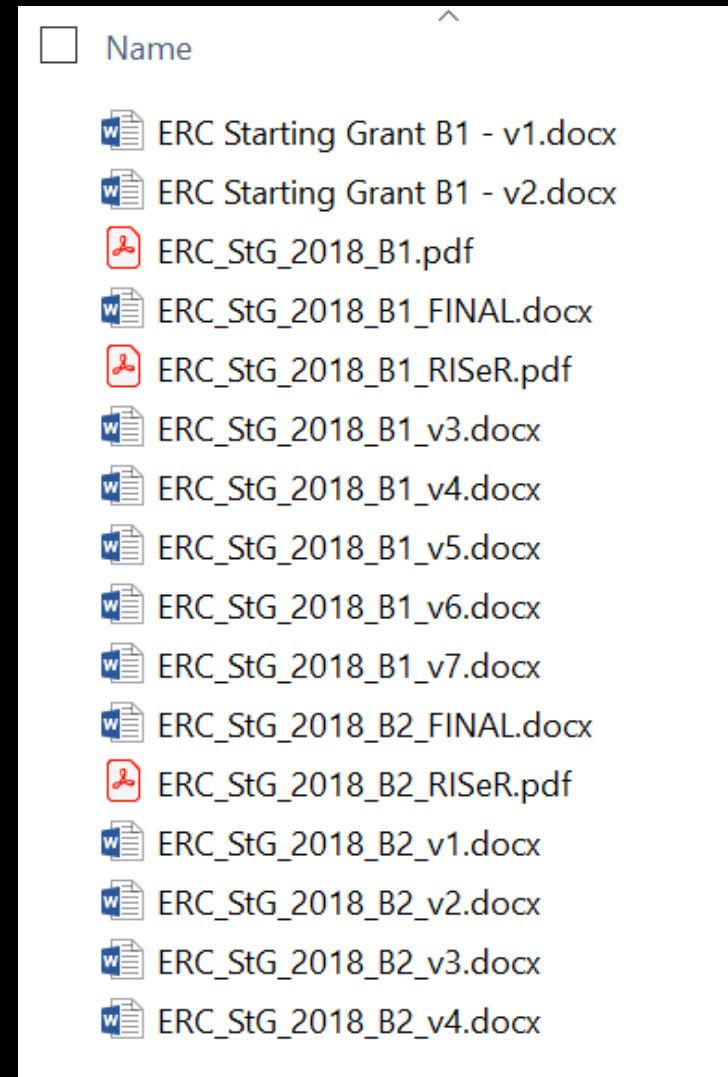
Writing!

- Give yourself lots of time!
- 4 months (~80% of my time) writing
- Set out of office and manage other peoples expectations
- Plan time for A LOT of feedback (from a wide range of people)
- B1 v B2 time management
- Make it readable – help the evaluators!
- Take a break!

Attached are my thoughts re your grant application - please take or ignore whatever you feel is required - I've tried to put a comment alongside each one so you can see my thinking.

Journalist – The Newsroom BBC World Service
Newsreader - BBC World Service

Food, Rural and Agricultural Specialisms



Thing I wish someone had told me about being an ERC PI





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<https://doi.org/10.5194/esurf-9-1399-2021>
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Earth Surface Dynamics  Open Access

Sedimentary architecture and landforms of the late Saalian (MIS 6) ice sheet margin offshore of the Netherlands

Victor Cartelle¹, Natasha L. M. Barlow¹, David M. Hodgson¹, Freek S. Busschers², Kim M. Cohen³, Bart M. L. Meijninger², and Wessel P. van Kesteren⁴



LQL The London Quaternary Lectures

Wednesday 6th November 2019

16:00
Dr Natasha Barlow
School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds
“Unearthing the ups and downs of late Quaternary sea level”
[LQL No.105]

WCRP SEA LEVEL CONFERENCE



Natasha Barlow

SCIENTIST

My research focus is late Quaternary environmental change and in particular relative sea-level change along both active and passive coasts, on both recent and interglacial timescales.

Thing I wish someone had told me about being an ERC PI





- Name
- Contracts
- Expenses
- Finance
- Grant agreement
- Personell
- Photos
- Recruitment
- Reporting
- Timesheets
- Website content
- 802281 RISer Response to Ethics Requirements.pdf

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- ERC is very supportive – helped me to travel to the stage 2 interview following surgery
- Flexibility round science and staffing
- Covid extension was granted very simply
- Get to know your institution's EU team well!

RISER



- Seek advice (University, national contacts, current PI's)
- Look at successful proposals
- Be ambitious (you don't need to be as cautious as with UKRI!)
- Be confident in your skills
- Test out your 'sales pitch' on a wide range of people
- All of this also applies to Stage 2

