

The European Research Council

ERC Advanced Grants
Lump Sums Webinar
UKRO - Brussels
12th June 2024



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC Work Programme 2024

Lump sum financial model for Advanced grants 2024

Focus of this webinar

Other changes introduced in Work Programme 2024, e.g.

- clearer focus on research project
- changes to structure of CV and track record
- changes to evaluation procedure

@ applicants: do not forget to familiarise yourself with the ERC Work Programme 2024 and all changes. Details also in the Information for Applicants to AdG 2024 document !



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Bloc 1 - General principles

Lump Sum models

Two main models:

1. **Fixed lump sum amount** (in Call for proposals). Same amount for all projects => **ERC Proof of Concept (since ERC WP 2019)**
2. **Lump sum amount** is defined by the proposal activities and resources needed (i.e. **different for each project**) => **AdG as from ERC WP 2024**



Lump Sum principles

- Proposals **budget based on estimated costs** related to activities
- Budget **assessed during evaluation** (resources & costs)
- Lump sum **amount defined by project** (different for each project) and **capped at funding scheme ceiling** (2.5 M€ + 1 M€ **additional funding**)
- **Payment based on work completion.** Not linked to successful outcome
- **No financial reporting anymore** (e.g. submission of cost claims, time sheets, ...)



ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum

- **1 single lump sum contribution** for the entirety of the project (only broken down per beneficiary – NOT per work package)
- No change to evaluation criteria: **Scientific excellence only!**
- Right for **grant portability** remains for PIs
- Except financial reporting/payment process, other **processes remain similar to actual costs model** (e.g. evaluation criteria, scientific reporting, project amendments)



Important messages to applicants

Applicants should not change

- **The way they think up their idea and imagine their project**
- **The way they structure their project**

Basic principles of ERC funding remain untouched

- The **evaluation criteria**
- Principles of **flexibility and serendipity**, i.e. how changes and deviations to the original work plan are handled during the course of a project
- The principle of **portability**



Bloc 2 - Proposal submission



Minor changes to application forms

➤ **More structured information on budget**

- Budget table: person-months per staff category
- Budget narrative: structured in six boxes
- Equipment depreciation table

➤ Additional Declaration 10

➔ **Importance of a well-done budget, but within limit of what makes sense for a 5-year frontier research project**



Budget table

Beneficiary Short Name	PI			Senior staff			Post docs			Students			Other staff			A. Total personnel costs/€
	Person Months	Cost/€	Average Monthly Cost	Person Months	Cost/€	Average Monthly Cost	Person Months	Cost/€	Average Monthly Cost	Person Months	Cost/€	Average Monthly Cost	Person Months	Cost/€	Average Monthly Cost	
Participant X																
Participant Y																
Affiliated entity X																
Affiliated entity Y																
Total																

B. Subcontracting Costs/€ (No indirect costs)	C.1 Travel and subsistence	C.2 Equipment - including major equipment	Consumables incl. fieldwork and animal costs	Publications (incl. Open Access fees) and dissemination	Other additional direct costs	C.3 Total other goods, works and services	C. Total Purchase costs/€	D. Internally invoiced goods and services/€ (No indirect costs)	E. Indirect Cost/€	Total Eligible Costs	Requested EU contribution /€



Budget narrative

Section C. Resources

A. Personnel

Maximum 2500 characters allowed

D. Internally invoiced goods and services

Maximum 1000 characters allowed

B. Subcontracting (if applicable)

Maximum 1000 characters allowed

Request for additional funding justification

Maximum 1000 characters allowed

C. Purchase cost (*Travel - Equipment - Consumables - Field work - Animal costs - Publications - Other additional direct costs*)

Maximum 3500 characters allowed

Funding from other sources

Maximum 1000 characters allowed

- Single box split in 6 sub-sections (text boxes) to provide a more structured format for PIs to justify
- Overall character limit to justify resources extended from 8.000 to 10.000 characters



Equipment depreciation table

- Excel table **mandatory attachment** to be uploaded at submission (temporary solution, in future will become part of online submission forms and linked to budget table)
- Guidance provided on how to fill in (e.g. several units of same equipment, fully capitalised cost items...)

<i>Beneficiary's/affiliated entity's name</i>	<i>Short name of the asset</i>	<i>Purchase cost per item (a)</i>	<i>Depreciation time (months) (b)</i>	<i>Expected percentage of usage for the grant (c)</i>	<i>Expected use time during the grant (months, cannot exceed the duration of the grant) (d)</i>	<i>Estimated depreciation costs per item (cannot exceed the purchase costs) (a/b)*c*d</i>	<i>Comments (e.g. depreciation policy, grouped items, full capitalised costs, etc.....)</i>
Example 1	Equipment 1	€ 100,000.00	60	100%	48	€ 80,000.00	
Example 2	Equipment 2	€ 10,000.00	36	100%	36	€ 10,000.00	
Example 3	Equipment 3	€ 50,000.00	60	50%	48	€ 20,000.00	

Additional declaration 10

New declaration specific to Lump Sum proposal, under Point 1 of the Application forms (1 - General information)

Applicants to declare that **cost estimates** have been **established in compliance with:**

- **usual accounting practices** of their institution &
- **basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants**



Bloc 3 - Evaluation

Evaluation

- Evaluation criteria remains **Scientific Excellence only**.
Focus of the evaluation remains on the scientific merits of the proposal
- **Assessment of costs estimates** to define Lump Sum Contribution **at evaluation** (sound financial management):
 - ✓ **eligible** (same eligibility conditions as actual costs)
 - ✓ **reasonable, non-excessive**

Personnel costs assessment

- Panel will not only assess resource (i.e. number of staff), but **also associated personnel cost** (*NEW*)
- Panel (and applicants) have access to **historical ERC personnel cost data** to serve as benchmark ([ERC website](#))
- Applicants do not need to follow historical data, but should **plan according to what they expect to incur**
- Personnel costs **significantly higher** than historical data are **acceptable if justified** (e.g. nature of the tasks, need for senior or highly qualified staff, significant increases in personnel costs)

ERC historical personnel cost data

Available **for applicants and panel members** ([ERC Website](#))

In line with “Horizon dashboard”, except:

- Based on **ERC historical data** - actual personnel costs paid since 2018 (to be updated for each Advanced Grant call)
- Displayed **by Country and Staff Category**

ERC historical personnel cost data (2)

Average personnel costs per month- Utilize filters to segment by country, and type of personnel expenses.

Select a country Select a Personnel Cost Type



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ERC historical data on personnel costs for ADG calls

20th Percentile

€2,750.00

50th Percentile-Median

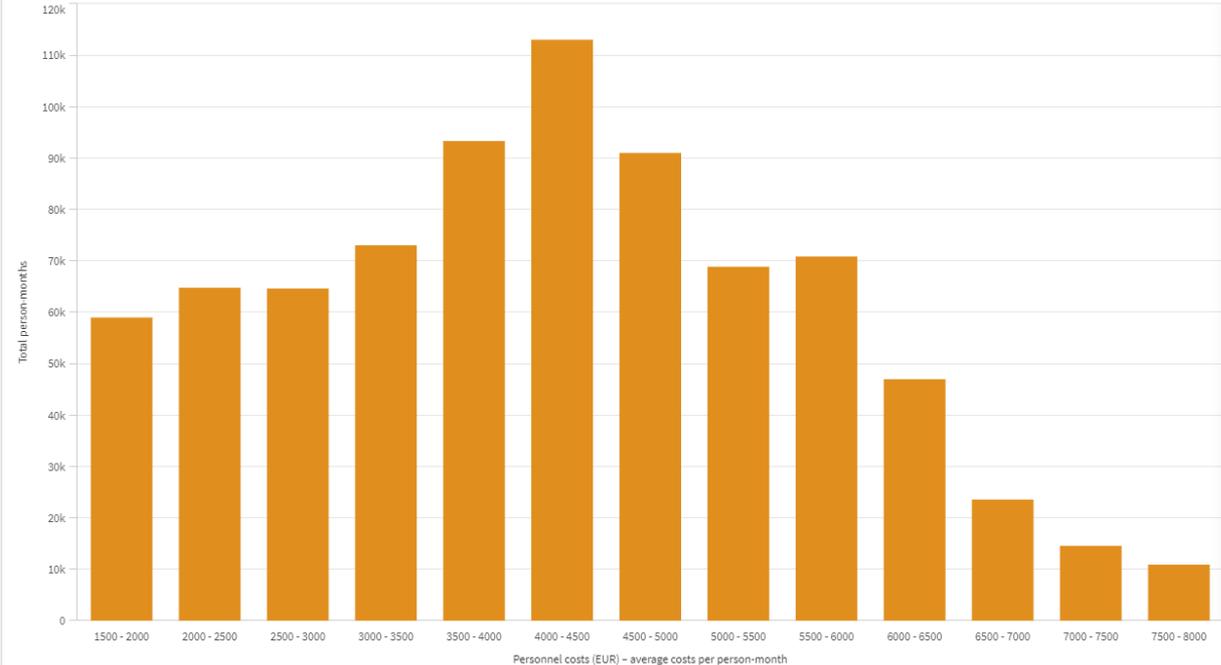
€4,420.00

80th Percentile

€6,200.00

No Country Selected: All Countries

No Personnel Cost Type Selected: All Types of Personnel Costs



Bloc 4 - Implementation & payment

Implementation phase

Grant Preparation:

- **Budget table** included in the proposal is **removed** from the GA (full flexibility regarding transfer between costs categories)

Amendments:

- **Deviations are possible** (grant agreement can be amended, if does not call into question the award decision, in the same way as for actual cost grants)



Reporting & payment

- **80% prefinancing** to ensure cash-flow
- **1 scientific mid-term report** to assess progress and deviations
- **1 single payment** at the end of the project



Final reporting & payment

Lump sum fully paid when **all the work** has been carried out as described in the DoA, and also if

- all **essential tasks** completed, and/or
- **equivalent tasks** have been carried out, and/or
- deviations have been **duly justified**.

If one of the above conditions is met (irrespective of results obtained or objectives achieved) = 100 % completion

In cases where project could not be conducted as planned (e.g. due to early termination), **PI can declare partial completion:**

- Lump sum paid in line with the **degree of completion declared** by PI/PI and **accepted** by ERCEA



Ex-post control

- **No financial audits**, no certificate of financial statements (CFS)
- Technical **reviews possible only on proper implementation & compliance with non-financial obligations** (e.g. ethics, PI time commitments)

Keeping records:

- Technical documents; publications, prototypes, deliverables; documentation required by good research practice (e.g. lab books etc.)



Conclusion/wrap-up

Simplifications

Major reduction of administrative burden:

- Remove all obligations on costs reporting (incl. personnel costs)
- No more time-sheets or other document supporting actual costs incurred
- No more financial audits



Timeline ERC AdG WP 2024

Call Opens:
29th May 2024

STEP 1 Evaluation:
Sept-Dec 2024

Applicants Informed:
June 2025

Call Deadline:
19th August 2024

STEP 2 Evaluation:
Jan-Mar 2025

Thank You!

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