
Preparing Horizon Europe European Research Council (ERC) Individual Grants Project Proposals

7 May 2026, online (MS Teams)

Training Course goal: This training course provides researchers with the knowledge and guidance needed to prepare a competitive ERC proposal. It covers the essential aspects of the ERC programme and its evaluation process, offers initial reflections to help participants assess their research idea and principal investigator profile, and provides strategic guidance for the preparation of the proposal. Tips, recommendations and common mistakes are highlighted throughout to help strengthen the overall quality and competitiveness of the submission.

AGENDA:

9:00-9:10 - Greeting and Opening Address

(Prof. dr. Dean Korošak (PhD), Vice-Rector for Science and Research at the University of Maribor)

9:10-10:10 - Session 1. ERC Essentials and Evaluation Process (60 minutes)

- *ERC essentials: what it is, what it funds, funding schemes*
- *Results from recent calls and calendar*
- *Evaluation criterion: scientific excellence*
- *The 2-step evaluation process and its implications for proposal writing*
- *The interview stage*
- *Common reasons for non-funding*
- *Real evaluation report examples*
- *Strategic panel selection and use of the ERC dashboard*

10:10-11:10 - Session 2. Initial Reflections and Proposal overview. Preparation of Part A and Part B1 (Cover page, as well as state of the art and scientific questions of Part I) (60 minutes)

- *What ERC is really looking for*
- *Initial reflections before preparing the proposal*
- *Overview of the ERC proposal structure*
- *Part A: administrative data, budget, ethics and security*
- *Structure and purpose of Part B1*
- *The cover page: title, acronym, abstract and visual abstract*
- *Examples of abstracts from funded projects*
- *Part I: state of the art and scientific questions*

11:10 – 11:25 – Short break

11:25-13:25 - Session 3. Preparation of Part B1 (Objectives, Overall approach/research strategy, and CV/Track record of the applicant) (120 minutes)

- *The objectives: general and specific*
- *The overall approach or research strategy*
- *Optional content*
- *The PI's CV/Track record: structure, expected content and narratives*

13:25-14:00 – Lunch break

14:00 – 15:00 - Session 4. Preparation of Part B2 and Final Tips (60 minutes)

- *Structure and purpose of Part B2*
- *Methodology and Work plan*
- Risk assessment: how to make it convincing
- Elements that reinforce the feasibility of the research
- The Funding ID Annex
- Final tips and key messages
- Q&A

About the training:

The training will combine structured presentations with reflections and examples drawn from our direct experience assisting ERC applicants. Throughout the session, participants will be exposed to real proposal examples, common mistakes and useful resources to help them strengthen their own proposals. This approach aims to create a learning environment that mirrors the reasoning process researchers must undertake when developing an ERC proposal.

About the trainers:***Alba de la Vara – Senior R&D consultant, expert in European scientific Excellence programmes and Head of the ERC area at Kveloce***

PhD in Climate Modelling from Utrecht University (Netherlands), MSc in Analysis and Management of Mediterranean Ecosystems with a specialisation in marine ecosystems from the University of Alicante (Spain), and BSc in Marine Sciences with distinction for academic performance from the same institution. Since 2011, she has been actively involved in research in Oceanography and Climate, with a specific focus on Climate Change since 2016. She co-supervised a doctoral thesis on the assessment of climate models and climate change scenarios at the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain). In 2021, she joined Kveloce, where she has actively participated in the implementation of various

Horizon Europe projects. Since 2024 she has been Head of the ERC Area at Kveloce, coordinating and providing proposal review services, ERC mock-up interviews and training activities for international institutions. She provides strategic and technical guidance for the writing and review of ERC proposals (StG, CoG, AdG, SyG, PoC) and has extensive experience in preparing mock-up interviews for ERC StG, CoG and AdG calls, bringing a perspective from both scientific and science communication standpoints. She has designed and delivered numerous training activities related to ERC, covering programme objectives, evaluation criteria, proposal preparation, and communication strategies for the interview.

Maite Ferrando – CEO and European Commission expert, specialist in the ERC programme

Extraordinary Prize for BSc in Psychology and PhD with Cum Laude distinction from the University of Valencia (Spain). She has completed multiple research stays, including at the University of Washington (2001) and the University of Berkeley, California (2009). She has more than 25 scientific publications in high-impact journals (JCR) and has participated as a speaker at numerous international conferences. She has been directly involved in the successful preparation and subsequent management and knowledge transfer of more than 70 international projects, including those funded under the Framework Programme (Horizon Europe, Horizon 2020). Evaluator, reviewer and

rapporteur for the European Commission since 2009 under the Horizon Europe, H2020, FP7 and CIP

programmes. Her experience in the ERC programme includes more than 100 proposal reviews and mock-up interviews since 2016.

José Benedicto – Senior R&D Consultant and researcher in sustainable development



PhD in Human Geography from Brunel University London and BSc in Business Administration and Management from the University of Valencia (Spain). His doctoral thesis focuses on the analysis of alternative scenarios for sustainable development planning of a small island (Flores, Azores, Portugal). He has experience in both project management (including INTERREG and Horizon 2020) and research on topics related to ecosystem services, circular economy, multi-criteria analysis, public participation, and sustainable development. He is co-author of a dozen scientific articles, reports and book chapters. Since 2023, he has been part of the Kveloce team, with a particular focus on technical support and proposal writing for R&D&I projects. At Kveloce, he is

directly involved in the implementation of Horizon Europe projects, as well as in proposal review, interview simulations and training activities in the ERC programme.

About KVELOCE

Kveloce is a consultancy company with extensive consolidated experience in supporting researchers in the ERC programme. For over 15 years, we have specialised in helping researchers promote and materialise their ideas into funded R&D&I projects. Our mission is to support scientists of excellence, providing them with the knowledge, experience and tools needed to secure funding for their research and contribute to scientific advancement.

Key achievements of our team in the ERC programme:

- +400 ERC services delivered for ERC calls.
- +60 ERC proposals funded across the main funding schemes, including:
 - 15 Starting Grants
 - 29 Consolidator Grants
 - 18 Advanced Grants
 - 3 Synergy Grants

Our ERC services have been highly valued by both researchers and institutions, reflecting our ability to guide and support the development of innovative, high-quality scientific projects.