

The DOs and DON'Ts of applying for ERC grants

Mirjam Fried

Charles University
Faculty of Arts



PROJECT 'COMPONENTS'

- ◉ New, original idea
- ◉ Part B1 - project description Step 1
- ◉ Part B2 - project description Step 2
- ◉ Quality of team & collaborators
- ◉ CV & track record
- ◉ Research environment

PROJECT 'COMPONENTS'

⦿ NEW idea - what does it mean?



- Methodology
- Theoretical approach
- Significantly new data
- Interdisciplinary perspective

⦿ - what does it *not* mean?



- Synthesis of existing research
- Continuation of an on-going project
- Enhancing local/national research
- New tools/infrastructure
- Societal impact as the main/only contribution

PROJECT 'COMPONENTS'

⦿ 'Short' description (Part B1)

- Clearly formulated research questions
- Well defined goals (& alternatives)
- Excellent grasp of the state of the art, internationally
- Risks and their handling



⦿ Bad ideas:

- Vague generalities
- Excessive technical details



PROJECT 'COMPONENTS'

⦿ 'Long' description (Part B2)

- Elaboration of B1
- Specifics of proposed research, including a realistic and convincing plan
- Risks and their handling in more detail



- Repetition of B1 with some extra stuff



PROJECT 'COMPONENTS'

- ◎ Quality of team and collaborators
 - Show integration in international networks
 - In interdisciplinary projects, ensure representative coverage of all areas
 - Sense of the workload distribution

PROJECT 'COMPONENTS'

◎ CV & track record:

- Stellar publication record
- International experience:
 - research visits abroad (top institutions)
 - participation in international networks or international projects
- Leadership experience:
 - prestigious grants
 - team leader in projects

◎ Career gaps

PROJECT 'COMPONENTS'

⦿ Research environment

- Lab quality, local infrastructure
- Data sources
- Local team
- History of research in the relevant area
- Access to other relevant institutions, teams, researchers
- Collaboration with best institutions abroad

INTERVIEW

- ◎ Who are the panel members?
 - Researchers like you, except more senior
 - Experts in the fields covered by the panel
 - Genuinely interested in your work
- ◎ What do they do?
 - Everybody reads all proposals
 - Subset writes feedback for applicants
 - Every proposal is discussed by entire panel

INTERVIEW

◉ Format of the interview:

- brief presentation by applicant
- intense Q&A session:
 - picking out potential weaknesses of the proposal
 - clarification of anything unclear in B2
 - novelty and impact
 - handling of risks; feasibility

ERGO, you have to show:

- ability to assess your proposal from the outside, with an objective & critical eye !!
- ability to anticipate questions

INTERVIEW

⦿ Things to do:



- ppt presentation (handouts, optionally)
 - less is more
 - reader-friendliness
- stick to time allotment!
- project self-confidence

⦿ Things *not* to do:



- ramble on and on
- read from a paper
- look nervous

Good luck!