How to win an ERC grant... and live to tell the tale

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Crash Course on Research Funding
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ERC starting grants
http://erc.europa.eu/starting-grants

- For researchers of any nationality with 2-12 years of experience since completion of PhD and scientific track record showing great promise
- An excellent research proposal
- Research must be conducted in a public or private research organisation located in one of the EU Member State or Associated Countries
- Funding per grant: up to €1.5 million (in some circumstances up to €2 million)
- Duration: up to 5 years
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● Evaluation criterion: scientific excellence
● Calls for proposals: published once a year in summer with deadlines in autumn
● Two-step evaluation process
● Skip-1-year rule
● Starters vs consolidators
ERC starting grants 2011
http://erc.europa.eu/starting-grants

Life Sciences
- LS1 Molecular & Structural Biology & Biochemistry
- LS2 Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics & Systems Biology
- LS3 Cellular and 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 & biotechnology

Social Sciences & Humanities
- SH1 Individuals, institutions & markets
- SH2 Institutions, values, beliefs and behaviour
- 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
- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental constituents of matter
- PE3 Condensed matter physics
- PE4 Physical & Analytical Chemical sciences
- PE5 Materials & Synthesis
- PE6 Computer science & informatics
- PE7 Systems & communication engineering
- PE8 Products & process engineering
- PE9 Universe sciences
- PE10 Earth system science
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Submitted proposals</th>
<th>Selected proposals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
<td>1440 (35.3%)</td>
<td>169 (35.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>1690 (41.4%)</td>
<td>222 (46.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>950 (23.3%)</td>
<td>89 (18.6%)</td>
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</tbody>
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Total = 4080  Success rate ~ 12%  Total = 480
Outline

• Introducing myself and my project
• On becoming a competitive ERC candidate
  • Before
  • During
  • After (... and live to tell the tale!)
Before

- Science
- Scientific community
- Funding processes
- Popular dissemination
During

When Scientists Discuss Papers

I don’t think this inference is entirely reasonable. If you’re using several non-independent variables you’re liable to accumulate more error than your model accounts for.

When Scientists Discuss Grants

A guy who worked at the NSF once told me if we light a candle within this Jackal Skull, the Funders will smile upon our hopes.

I’ll get the altar!
After... living to tell the tale!

- Bargaining with the host institution
- Building and managing a team
- Managing your time
- Know what you are bargaining for!