The European Research Council

ERC Advanced Grants 2024

Applicants' Webinar

ERCEA, 19th August 2024

erc

European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Housekeeping

- This **webinar will be recorded** and made available for all applicants on the ERC website

- **Q&A** will be managed on the **Sli.do** tab

- **Chat** and **Raise hand** functions **disabled** due to number of participants and limited time
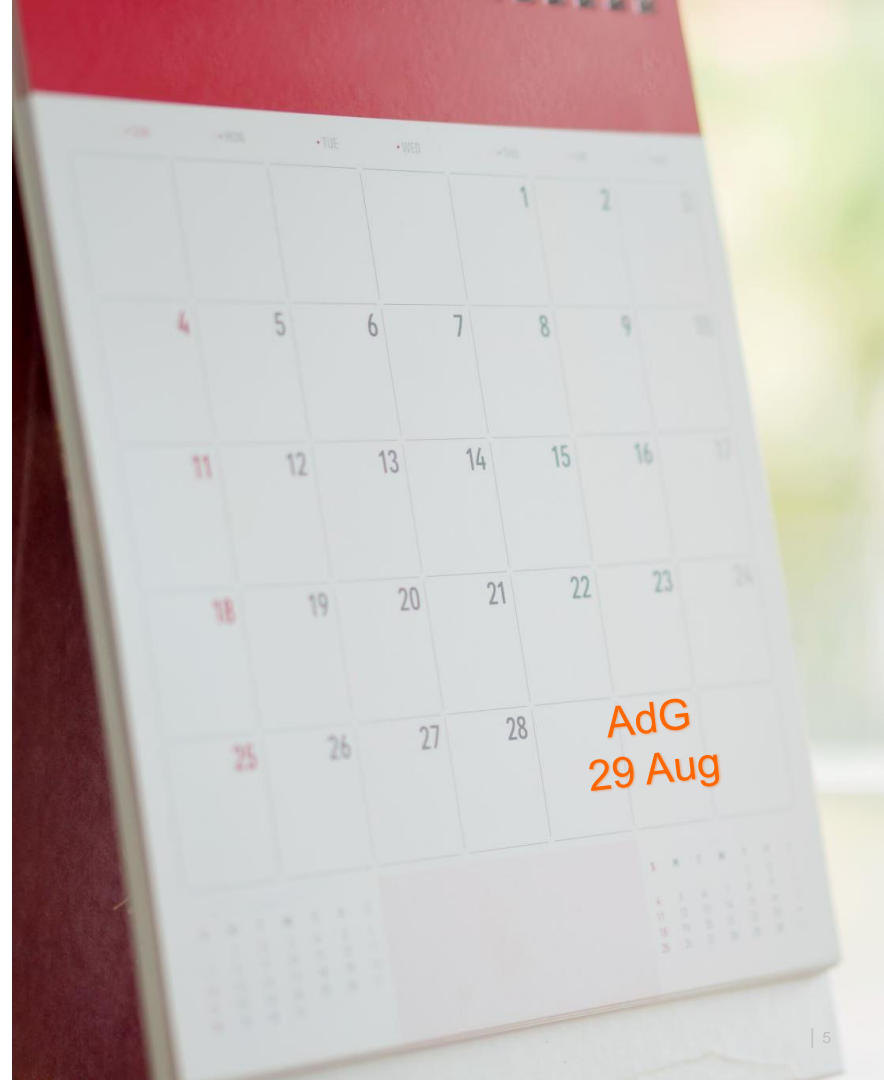
Agenda

- Introduction

  - Objectives
  - Information sources
  - ERC Work Programme 2024
  - Advanced Grant call
  - Lump Sum funding

- Proposal Submission / Questions received

- Proposal Evaluation / Questions received

- Extended Q&A session

Introduction

Objectives

- 10 days-before-deadline **troubleshooting**

- Answer any last **questions** from applicants and support offices

- Focus on:

  - **lump sums**-related changes,

  - **Proposal submission** and

  - **Evaluation**

AdG
29 Aug

Please use Slido for your questions

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Useful information

- [Updated ERC Work Programme 2024](#)

- Additional information:
  - ➤ Watch the [ERC AdG 2024 Applicants June webinar](#)
  - ➤ Read the [Information for AdG 2024 applicants'](#) document
  - ➤ Look up [Topic Q&As](#) on the Funding and Tender opportunities portal

- Personalised, specific help:
  - ➤ Write to ERC-2024-ADG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu
  - ➤ Contact [IT Helpdesk](#) or [+32 2 29 92222](#) for any technical issues

ERC Work Programme 2024
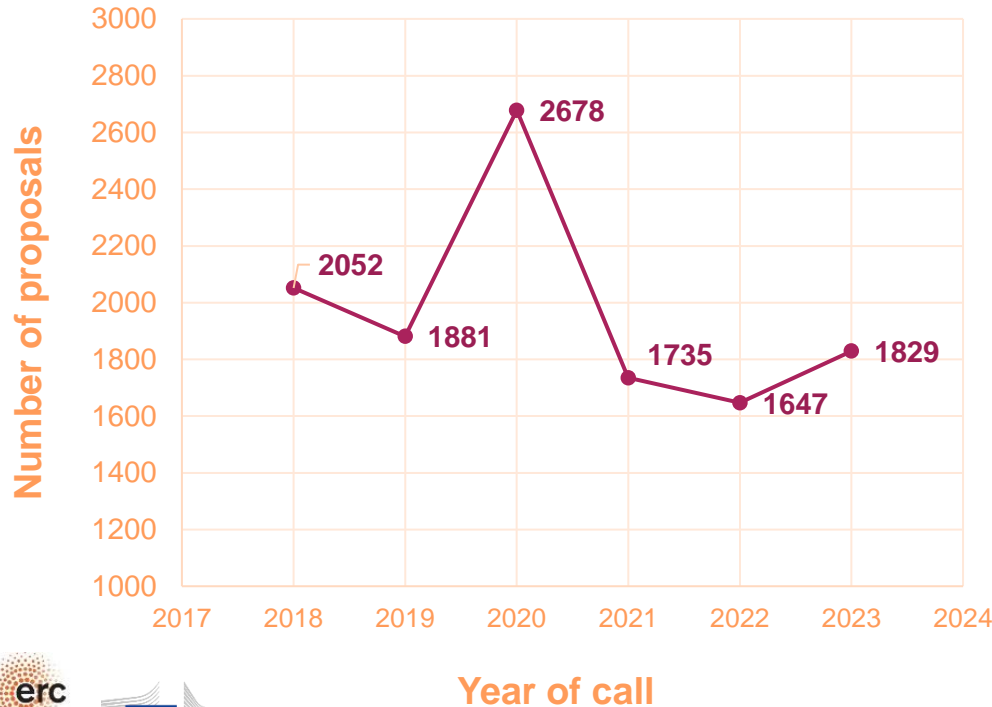
Lump sum financial model for Advanced grants 2024

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

AdG 2018-2023: Submissions by year

- The number of proposals submitted to the AdG call varies from year to year.

- The number of submitted and funded proposals (decided by the budget of the call) determines the success rate.

- Success rates in the past years have ranged around 13 – 14.6%.

ADG 2024 Call

- **AdG 2024 Call** → Budget of **EUR 703 M**

- We expect to fund **285** projects

- We anticipate a similar or slightly higher number of AdG proposals in 2024 compared to 2023.

- The bulk of proposals are submitted in the last week before deadline, so this is a tentative assessment.

Lump Sum funding for ERC AdG

- The 2024 Advanced grant call will **pilot a lump sum funding model** for the ERC

- The model been carefully developed and adapted to introduce **minimal changes**

- **ERC main principles are preserved**

- The model is expected to achieve a **major reduction of administrative burden**

- **No financial audit** on the projects

- The model requires **more structured information** on estimated budget and resources for each proposal

- Except financial reporting/payment process, other **processes remain similar to the actual costs model** (e.g. evaluation criteria, scientific reporting, project amendments)

ERC AdG Lump Sum principles

- **1 single lump sum contribution** for the entirety of the project (only broken down per beneficiary – NOT per work package)

- Proposals **budget based on activities estimated costs** (proxy of beneficiaries' underlying actual costs)

- 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

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**

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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

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 /€

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Budget narrative

Section C. Resources	
A. Personnel	**D. Internally invoiced goods and services**
Maximum 2500 characters allowed	Maximum 1000 characters allowed
B. Subcontracting (if applicable)	**Request for additional funding justification**
Maximum 1000 characters allowed	Maximum 1000 characters allowed
C. Purchase cost *(Travel - Equipment - Consumables - Field work - Animal costs - Publications - Other additional direct costs)*	**Funding from other sources**
Maximum 3500 characters allowed	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 character

Test Proposal

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)

- List **all equipment items** included in **budget table** (in line with expected use during the action duration). Total must correspond to total budget table (C2). **If no equipment budgeted, upload empty**

Beneficiary's/affiliated entity's name	Short name of the asset	Purchase cost per item (a)	Depreciation time (months) (b)	Expected percentage of usage for the grant (c)	Expected use time during the grant (months, cannot exceed the duration of the grant) (d)	Estimated depreciation costs per item (cannot exceed the purchase costs) (a/b)*c*d	Comments (e.g. depreciation policy, grouped items, full capitalised costs, etc......)
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	

Equipment depreciation table

- **Budgeted as depreciation costs** (in line with international accounting standards and beneficiary's usual accounting practices)
- **All fields** to be filled in, except automated (do not change formulas)
- Identical items can be **grouped (only if identical time and % use** – add # in "comments")
- Items declared as **fully capitalised costs** (exceptional) are to be reported **in "comments"**

Scientific justification NOT in table but in resources section of the proposal **(Section C. Resources >> C. Purchase costs)**

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**

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions received

- ## Single Work Package:

*Advanced Grant projects will comprise **one single formal work package** covering the entire project. Project implementation **assessed as a whole** for final payment, to maintain flexibility needed for frontier research projects. Applicants are free to structure their research proposal in any form they see fit (e.g. sub-projects, etc.)*

- ## Details of the budget narrative:

*Applicants should prepare their budget the same way that they did in the actual costs model, **providing explanation for the resources for each cost category** in the relevant text-boxes. The estimates must be a **reliable approximation of the actual costs and meet the eligibility criteria** of Horizon Europe. Do not forget to complete and **upload the equipment depreciation and use table***

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions received

- ## Part A budget table:

*Include the expected costs for all resources of the project implementation. If some **resources** are **not funded by ERC**, i.e. covered directly by beneficiaries or other sources of funding, the corresponding amounts is to be deducted from the Requested EU contribution.*

- ## Proposal resources section:

*The **scientific justification** of all project costs to be provided in the relevant text boxes of Section C. Resources with a maximum length of characters specified for each category of costs. **Part B2 overall** can be **maximum 14 pages** (not including budget table and description of resources (Part A, Section 3 - Budget) and the equipment depreciation and use table.*

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions received

- ## Calculation of person months:

*The standard definition of 1 **person-month is** the amount of time over a **month equivalent to one person working full-time**. To prepare your budget, divide the total estimated costs charged for each staff category by the number of months they will dedicate to the ERC project over its duration*

- ## ERC historical personnel costs data:

*Applicants should always estimate the costs in line with their own **institution's accounting practices and salary grids**. The ERC historical data is a **tool** which may be used by applicants to assess the need to **further justify** their estimated personnel costs (e.g. if estimated costs are significantly higher). ERC-2024-ADG applicants are advised not to use the European Commission Horizon dashboard*

Slido questions

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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)
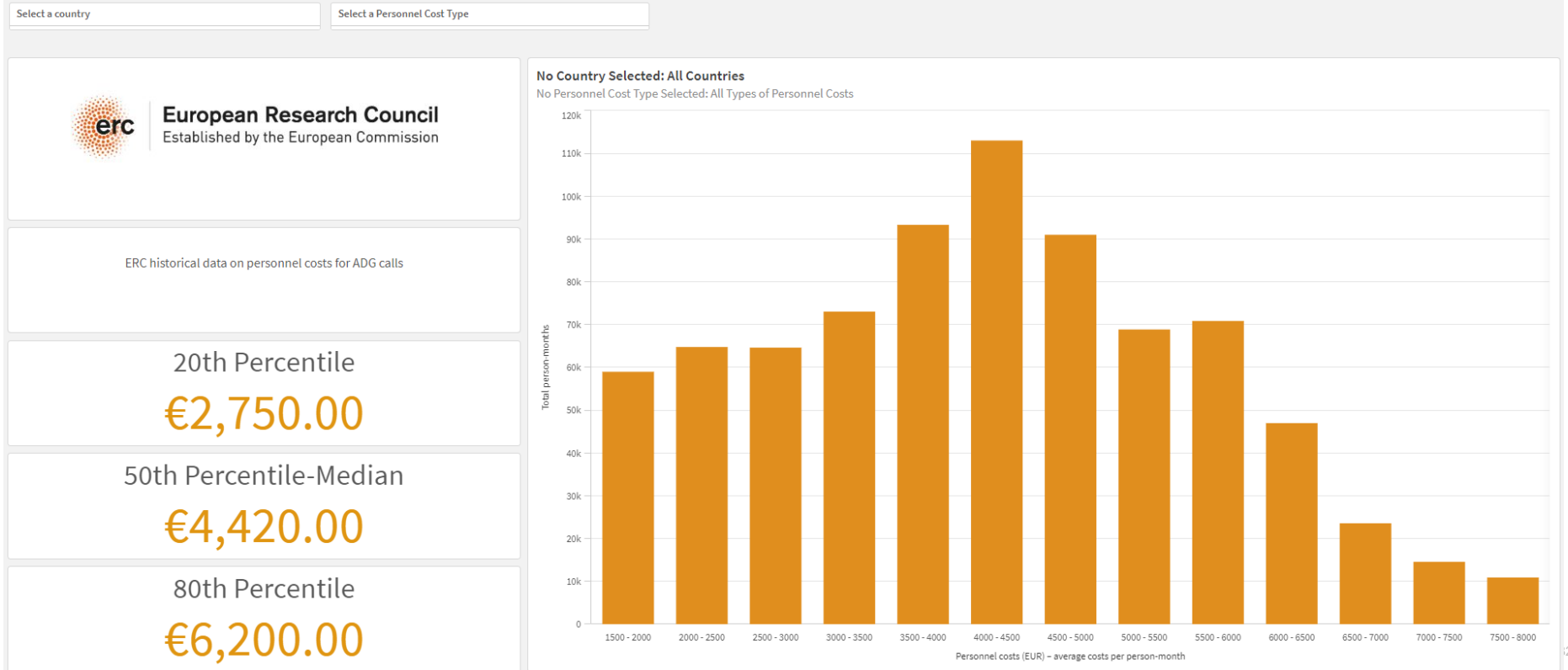
ERC historical personnel cost data

Available **for applicants and panel members** (ERC Website)

In line with "Horizon dashboard", <u>except</u>:

- 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

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions received

- ## Evaluation process:

*No change to the evaluation criteria (**scientific excellence only**). Focus remains on the scientific merits of the proposal. As in actual cost model, **panel** also **check** the **budget** estimates to assess whether the resources proposed are in line with the activities proposed, reasonable and non-excessive. The change of financial model should have no impact on the outcome of the evaluation.*

- ## Budget assessment:

*Under the lump sum model, the **assessment of the budget** by evaluators also **includes the estimated personnel <u>costs</u>** (not only the resources as in the actual cost model). If the panel considers the budget excessive or not reliable, it will make precise recommendations, to adapt the lump sum amount during grant preparation.*

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions received

- ## Budget of the administrative form (Part A):

Evaluators do not have access to the administrative form, except to the budget (Part A) containing the budget table and description of resources; the time commitment (extracted from section 5 of Part A) and the equipment depreciation and use table

- ## Applicants interview (Step 2):

Applicants retained for step 2 will be invited for an interview to present their proposal to the evaluation panel meeting. Questions and clarifications regarding the budget are possible

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions received

- ERC personnel costs Dashboard:

Experts will have access to the "ERC personnel costs data for lump sum evaluations", benchmark to assess that personnel costs per month included in the budget table are reasonable. Budgeted personnel cost can be higher than dashboard averages (e.g. inflation, pay rise), if justified.

Q&A session

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Research Enquiry Service

For questions about research and Horizon Europe, you can contact the Research Enquiry Service via the webform:

[Research Enquiry Service (europa.eu)](europa.eu)

Implementation & payment – Additional slides

ERC Lump Sum funding – Implementation

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)

➢ Portability maintained (amendment based on agreement between PI, former and new HI)

ERC Lump Sum funding – Implementation

Reporting and 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**

Ex-post controls:

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

Final reporting & payment

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

➢ 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/HI **and accepted** by ERCEA

Additional questions received to the Advanced grant mailbox

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions

- ## Use of the lump sum budget:

Once the lump sum contribution is established (at evaluation stage and finalized at granting stage), costs actually incurred are no longer relevant (no reporting on costs actually incurred). The PI/HI can use the funds as they deem appropriate to implement the project as per the Grant Agreement, in line with good accounting practices. Deviations are permitted as long as they are justified for the project.

- ## Change share between beneficiaries:

No detailed budget table in GA (breakdown of lump sum shares by beneficiary only). Share of a beneficiary can be changed through an amendment, if justified by the technical implementation of the action (e.g. changes in the work plan, addition or termination of beneficiaries).

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions

- Additional funding:

The budget flexibility for additional funding remains subject to the eligibility rules, related to the four kinds of items/activities (i.e. (a) "start-up" costs, (b) major equipment, (c) large facilities, and/or (d) other major experimental and field work. In case of deviations in the activities related to additional funding, ERCEA will need to assess if (i) new activities are still compliant and (ii) are equivalent and justified.

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions

- ## Portability – Mobility:

The right to portability is maintained. As under the actual-costs funding model, it will require an agreement between the PI, the former and the new host institution.

- ## PI Time Commitments:

Requirements identical under the lump sum funding model (at least 30% on the project and at least 50% in EU/AC over the project duration). To be reported twice, at mid-term and final scientific reporting, based on a declaration co-signed by PI & HI (template pending).

- ## Scientific Reporting:

Same as for actual cost ERC grants. One report at mid-term (month 30) and one at the end of the project (to which the final payment is linked).

ERC AdG 2024 Lump Sum – Questions

- ## Audit fees:

Audit fees are ineligible for AdG2024 Lump sum (no mandatory Certificate of Financial Statement (CFS) imposed by the Granting Authority), as clearly indicated in Annex 4.4 of the Information for Applicants to the 2024 Advanced grants call.

- ## Technical Reviews

In case of technical review, no more timesheets. Different documents can be provided to support the work done (e.g. technical documents, publications, prototypes, documentation required by good research practice such as lab books etc).