



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC Mentoring Initiative

ERC Guidelines

10-02-2021

The mission of the European Research Council (ERC) is to support frontier research in all fields of science and scholarship. Research funded by the ERC is therefore expected to lead to advances at the boundaries of knowledge, but also to set a clear and inspirational target for the organisation of frontier research across Europe. To achieve this goal the ERC must enhance the full potential for frontier research available across Europe. Throughout the years, the European Research Council has implemented a number of measures to encourage quality applications from researchers in countries where the levels of participation and success rates in ERC calls has been so far modest. Some national research agencies/host institutions have put in place programmes to support ERC applicants. These programmes struggle to identify international experts to provide coaching and advice.

ERC Mentoring Initiative

ERC will provide mentoring support to such local arrangements. The support will consist of identifying ERC grantees and former panel members who could serve as external mentors to help national programmes. Such support will help the selected candidates to strengthen the quality of their application.

General Guidelines for the ERC Mentoring Initiative:

- 1) The local offices in charge of the national/regional support programme should coordinate their participation in the ERC Mentoring Initiative with the National Contact Points; National Contact Points will serve as the primary contact to the ERC concerning the local offices' participation.
- 2) This initiative targets local offices in the EU Member States and Associated Countries that organize, region/nation-wide, hands-on sessions for pre-selected Principal Investigators (PIs) preparing an ERC research proposal, enabling them to get expert scientific feedback on their proposal (or mock interviews) before submission. National/regional offices are envisaged to participate. The programme is not intended to serve individual research organizations.
- 3) The local offices should specify the expected workload (and potential compensations) of the external mentors. ERC will not compensate the mentors and any costs linked to this initiative.
- 4) It is understood that mentors on the list provided by ERC only agree to be contacted by the local offices and/or the NCPs. The presence on the ERC's Mentoring Initiative list is not a commitment to participate in a given local program.
- 5) The ERC Mentoring Initiative will be fully in line with the ERC's rules of conflict of interest, excluding, e.g., active panel members from participating in the initiative. ERC conflict of interest rules and code of conduct for any ERC independent experts will apply.

6) The local offices will annually provide the list of supported researchers (and their mentors) to the ERC through the NCPs.

The ERC will undertake to:

- promote the support programmes that are notified to the ERC grantees and former ERC panel members;
- encourage ERC grantees and former ERC panel members to enroll in the Mentoring Initiative and contribute to the development of science in Europe.

The ERC underlines that the decision to accept is for each ERC-funded Principal Investigator and former evaluator to make on a purely voluntary basis. Such programmes will be managed by the relevant national or regional authority or organisation.

The expectation of the ERC is that the extra costs of the implementation of the initiative will be fully covered by its promoters.