

## ***Call for applications: „ERC – Get Started!“***

### ***Legal notice:***

***This English-language manual is an information service provided by the Science and Research Unit of the Styrian Provincial Government. It should be noted that in the event of any ambiguities and translation errors, only the German version of this manual is legally binding.***

### **Key points in brief**

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The new funding programme of the Province of Styria ‘ERC - Get Started!’ aims to provide targeted and efficient support to scientists from Styrian universities and Styrian non-university research institutions when applying for a Starting Grant from the European Research Council (ERC).

The ERC Starting Grant is designed to support researchers of outstanding calibre at an early stage of their careers, facilitating their transition to scientific independence. The primary objective of this funding programme is to increase the success rate of Styrian applications for ERC Starting Grants, a vital component in the fostering of research excellence in the province of Styria.

The funding programme is open to all researchers working at Styrian universities and non-university research institutions who will apply for an ERC Starting Grant in 2026 (and who are eligible according to the ERC regulations). The researcher must be employed at a Styrian university or non-university research institution for at least the duration of the project and has access to the infrastructure required for the research project.

Eligible projects will be selected by a panel of experts familiar with the ERC evaluation process. This is to ensure that the funding is targeted as precisely as possible.

The support includes 20,000 euros for individual support measures in the immediate run-up to the application.

The project funds are intended to provide researchers with additional resources for the preparation of their ERC proposal in order to improve the framework conditions for the submission and the respective chances in the ERC evaluation procedure. The support (material costs, personnel costs) for which the

funds (max. EUR 20,000) granted under this funding programme can be individually adapted to the needs and requirements and must be presented and justified in the 'ERC - Get Started' proposal. In any case, the funding should be provided in addition to the support offered by Styrian universities and non-university research institutions (e.g. mentoring, counselling) and not replace them.

### **Formal project criteria**

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- Endowment of the call: EUR 200,000
- Project duration: 6 – 8 months
- Amount of funding: max. EUR 20,000
- The call for proposals is open to all disciplines
- Location of the workplace: Styria
- Universities and non-university research institutions based in Styria which are non-profit oriented and based in Styria are eligible to apply and to receive funding
- Only projects in the non-economic sector are eligible for funding

### **Decision-making and assessment criteria**

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The decision-making process consists of two steps:

- (1) The proposal undergoes formal examination and assessment by the jury (a process of pre-selection).
- (2) The most highly rated projects are invited to deliver a short presentation as part of a jury meeting.

The decisive criteria for the assessment are the following:

- Scientific quality and excellence of the proposal
- Excellence of the applicant ('Principal Investigator')
- Suitability of the project for an ERC Starting Grant

### **Eligibility of expenses**

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#### *a Sparing use - Economic efficiency - Effectiveness*

In line with the principles of sparing use, economic efficiency and effectiveness, expenditure is only eligible for funding to the extent that it is necessary and appropriate in terms of its type and amount to achieve the purpose of the funding. Appropriateness is based on the individual case and in particular on the following criteria: Amount of total funding/total project costs, type of beneficiary, sector.

#### *b Cost categories*

The following categories of costs are generally considered eligible:

- Personnel costs
- Overheads (maximum 20% on the basis of personnel costs if these are demonstrably incurred)
- Material costs
- Machine hours

*c Actual cost basis*

- (1) Only expenditure actually incurred in the form of monetary contributions (payments) made to realise the funded project is eligible for funding. Thereof excluded is the acquisition of tangible assets worth more than a low-value asset.
- (2) The expenses incurred must be verified by invoices (fee notes) or payroll accounts and proof of payment. In the case of cash payments, the cash receipt and a payment receipt for the account/hand cash register must be submitted in any case.

*d Non-eligible expenditure*

The following expenses are not eligible:

- acquisition of movable assets not clearly project-related
- acquisition of research infrastructure
- costs for entertainment or hospitality
- expenditure passed on to third parties
- expenditure not clearly linked to the funding recipient
- expenditure that does not match with the approved content
- expenditure charged twice
- unpaid or not to be paid invoice amounts (in particular discounts, rebates, guarantees)
- in case of input tax deduction: value added tax
- acquisition of used assets
- general construction measures
- project-internal hospitality costs
- alcoholic beverages in the context of hospitality

*e Personnel costs*

- (1) Eligible personnel costs are gross salaries and wages as well as the related taxes for those employees who were deployed for the subsidised project. Other payments or non-cash benefits are only eligible for funding if they are provided for by law, collective agreement (special payments) or in a general and legally binding company agreement. Additional annual fees are only eligible for funding on a pro rata basis for projects during the year.
- (2) Personnel costs of employees who were deployed exclusively for the project applied for as part of their employment are eligible for funding in any case. In cases where employees were only partially deployed in the project, the personnel costs must be verified in the following manner:

- ✓ It is necessary to submit a time record that clearly identifies the total working time and the time attributable to the funded project. The latter should include a concise description of the activities.
  - ✓ An hourly rate is to be calculated from the record of working and project hours in such a way that the total personnel costs (excluding remuneration for overtime) of a partially employed person are divided by their total working hours (excluding overtime). To calculate the eligible personnel costs, the hourly rate calculated in this way is multiplied by the number of project hours.
- (3) Remuneration components in compensation for overtime are not eligible for subsidisation under any circumstances.

*f Overheads (Gemeinkosten)*

- (1) If the Recipient incurs overheads, these can be claimed at a flat rate of 20% of the eligible personnel costs without supporting documentation. That means that although costs for leased (personnel) services are eligible costs, they do not form the basis for calculating overheads.
- (2) This fixed rate covers the following cost items, which cannot be charged as direct costs:
- general activities in management (except: demonstrably project specific activities), office management, accounting, controlling, payroll accounting, HR department, IT department, marketing and all other central services
  - taxes and other duties
  - maintenance, cleaning, waste disposal and energy
  - telecommunications and internet charges
  - postal charges
  - office supplies
  - insurance
  - legal advice, consulting and auditing expenses
  - membership fees and chamber levies
  - copying costs
- (3) The following costs are usually part of the overheads, but can be charged directly if: (a) the project-specific context was presented in the application, (b) the costs were included in the funding agreement and (c) corresponding proof (see point c.2) is possible:
- Expenses for rent, leasing and licences
  - Printing costs
  - Specialist literature
  - Training and further education costs

*g Travel costs*

- (1) Travel expenses (daily allowances, accommodation costs, travel/flight costs - train: 2nd class, flight: economy) are eligible for funding if they can be claimed as business expenditure in accordance with the tax regulations in Austria or comply with the provisions of employment law (collective agreement or company agreement).

(2) Expenses for private consumption do not qualify for travelling expenses in addition to daily allowances.

(3) The travelling time charged for the daily allowances must be objectively justified and refer to the travel receipts.

## **Reporting**

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A confirmation of the submission for the ERC Starting Grant application must be submitted by the end of the project. **If no application is submitted to the ERC, the funding must be repaid.**

## **Accounting documents**

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(1) The standardised accounting directory of the Department 12: Economy, Tourism, Science and Research („Belegverzeichnis der Abteilung 12 Wirtschaft, Tourismus, Wissenschaft und Forschung“) has to be used for your cost accounts..

(2) Personnel costs: The following documents must be enclosed to the final payroll statement for verification purposes for all employees:

- Annual salary account
- Transfer documents for the payment of the salary
- Copy of the employment contract
- Time records (accuracy: 0:30 hours) for the total working time and the times attributable to the funded project (exception: employees who work exclusively for the funded project do not need to submit time records)

(3) Material costs/investments: The following documents must be enclosed as proof:

- Original invoice (VAT must be shown separately for amounts exceeding € 150.00) and
- proof of payment

(4) The following are accepted as proof of payment:

- for bank transfers: transfer orders from banks or savings banks or for telebanking: order confirmation always in conjunction with the corresponding account statement (original)
- for cash purchases: till receipt (receipt)

In the case of fully electronic accounting (“paperless accounting”), equivalent accounting documents or accounting lists may be submitted in place of original invoices and payment receipts, the accuracy of which must be confirmed in writing by a person liable to the funding agency for this purpose.

## Deadline and submission procedure

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Proposals have to be submitted by

**12.02.2026, 12:00 am**

to the Department 12: Economy, Tourism, Science and Research (Science and Research Unit).

Proposals have to be submitted in German. If the Principal Investigator is not a native German speaker, some parts of the proposal can be submitted in English (sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.6.2 of the application form). Attachments (CV, list of publications, letter of support) can be submitted in English.

For submissions in the context of this call for applications, please use the application form available at

[„ERC – Get Started!“ - Wissenschaft - Land Steiermark](#)

This call for applications is based on the 'Guidelines for the Promotion of Science and Research' („Richtlinie zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Forschung“).

These can be found under the following link:

[Richtlinie zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Forschung - Wissenschaft - Land Steiermark](#)

The application may only be submitted in electronic form to the Science and Research Unit of Department 12: Economy, Tourism, Science and Research by the stated deadline:

[\*\*wissenschaft-forschung@stmk.gv.at\*\*](mailto:wissenschaft-forschung@stmk.gv.at)

The application documents must include

- (1) Application form (as pdf and Word file) - signed exclusively by the rector or the member of the rectorate responsible for research at universities or the managing director or the authorised signatory
- (2) budget
- (3) Curriculum vitae in tabular form
- (4) Declaration of support from the university / non-university research institution

### General information

- *on the rights to information, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, cancellation and objection as well as data portability to which the funding applicant is entitled,*
- *the right to lodge a complaint with the Austrian Data Protection Authority to which the funding applicant is entitled and*
- *on the data controller and the data protection officer can be found on the data protection information page of the Styrian Provincial Administration at <https://datenschutz.stmk.gv.at>.*