

ERC Advanced Grants Call 2024

Lump Sum

Frequently Asked Questions



Update July 2024

July, 2024

Document elaborat de Unitatea Horizon Europe NCP din cadrul UEFISCDI ©. Octombrie 2023.

Autor: Laura Chirilă

Coordonator: Antoaneta Victoria Folea

Contact:

Unitatea Horizon Europe NCP

Unitatea Executivă pentru Finanțarea Învățământului Superior, a Cercetării, Dezvoltării și Inovării –
UEFISCDI

Str. Frumoasă 30 (parter), București

ncp@uefiscdi.ro

<http://www.ncp.uefiscdi.ro>

Disclaimer:

Acest raport are exclusiv scop informativ, furnizând exemple și recomandări.

Acest document a fost întocmit de Unitatea Horizon Europe-NCP-UEFISCDI, cu toate acestea reflectă doar punctul de vedere al autorilor, iar UEFISCDI nu poate fi făcut responsabil pentru nicio utilizare a informațiilor conținute în acesta.



Dacă nu se menționează altfel, reutilizarea acestui document este autorizată sub licența Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Aceasta înseamnă că reutilizarea este permisă, cu condiția creditării corecte și corespunzătoare a autorilor.

Pentru orice utilizare sau reproducere a elementelor care nu sunt deținute de UEFISCDI, poate fi necesar să se solicite permisiunea direct de la deținătorii de drepturi respectivi. UEFISCDI nu deține drepturile de autor în legătură cu următoarele elemente:

Citate și extrase din documentele Comisiei Europene – Horizon Europe

Contents

Lump Sum

Q1. ERC-2024-ADG: For ERC Advanced Grants, what is the main difference between the lump sum model and the actual cost model?	5
Q2: Under call ERC-2024-AdG, what is the page limit of the scientific proposal and how will the budget table and justification of resources be counted?	5
Q3. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, where should the applicant include the budget table and justification of resources?	6
Q4. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, will there be a change to how lump sum proposals will be evaluated?.....	6
Q5. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, how will the introduction of the lump sum funding model affect the proposal submission templates?	7
Q6. ERC-2024-ADG: Will the frontier science character of ERC Advanced Grants change with lump sums?	7
Q7. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, once the lump sum is determined, how flexible is the budget of the project?	7
Q8. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, given the lump sum budget flexibility, can Host Institutions increase their overheads during the lifetime of the project?	8
Q9. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, how do payments work in lump sum projects?	8
Q10. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, will ERC lump sum grants be portable?	8
Q11. ERC-2024-ADG: For ERC Advanced Grants, will there still be audits under the lump sum model?	8
Q12. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, can applicants choose between the lump sum and the actual cost model?	9

- Q13. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, can applicants choose between one lump sum work package encompassing the entire project or several lump sum work packages?9
- Q14. Is the lump sum model envisaged for the ERC Advanced Grant 2024 (ERC-2024-ADG) the same as the ERC Proof-of-Concept (PoC) scheme?9

ERC Advanced Grants Call 2024 Lump Sum

Frequently Asked Questions Update July, 2024

Q1. ERC-2024-ADG: For ERC Advanced Grants, what is the main difference between the lump sum model and the actual cost model?

Both under the actual cost model and under the lump sum model, ERC expert panels assess the budget of the proposed projects. Under the actual cost model, the ERC Executive Agency reimburses beneficiaries up to the maximum grant amount approved by the evaluation panel, based on the actually incurred eligible costs claimed in the periodic reports. Under the lump sum model, however, once the panel approves the budget of the proposal based upon reasonable and non-excessive cost estimates, the ERC Executive Agency will pay the full grant amount in two instalments: a pre-financing payment of 80% at the start, and a second payment of 20% upon completion of the project. Beneficiaries do not have to submit cost claims, but they do have to report on the scientific progress and implementation of the project.

Q2: Under call ERC-2024-AdG, what is the page limit of the scientific proposal and how will the budget table and justification of resources be counted?

Under the ERC-2024-AdG call, the Scientific Proposal (Part B2) can be maximum 14 pages. The budget table and description of resources (Part A, Section 3 - Budget) together with the equipment depreciation and use table (Excel template to be completed and uploaded in Excel format as a separate annex) are part of the administrative form and do not count towards the page limit of the Scientific Proposal (Part B2).

The justification of the project costs and description of time commitment (Resources and Time Commitment) should be provided in the relevant text boxes of Section C. Resources with a maximum length of characters specified for each category of costs, including spaces. Please note

that 4000 characters, font size 11, single line spacing, correspond to one A4 text page. The budget table itself does not count towards the page limit.

Q3. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, where should the applicant include the budget table and justification of resources?

Under the ERC-2024-AdG call, the budget table and description of resources are part of the administrative form (Part A, Section 3 - Budget). All the resources have to be described and justified in the text box under the budget table (Section C. Resources). The equipment depreciation and use table (Excel template to be completed) has to be uploaded in Excel format as a separate annex. The applicant should NOT include any description of resources or budget details in Part B2 (scientific proposal).

Q4. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, will there be a change to how lump sum proposals will be evaluated?

There is no change to the evaluation criteria that will be applied by the panel when assessing proposals under the lump sum model. Scientific excellence remains the sole evaluation criterion. The focus of the evaluation remains on the scientific merits of the proposal. The change of financial model should have no impact on the outcome of the evaluation for a specific proposal. Similar to the actual cost model, the panel will also check the budget estimates for the project and assess whether the resources proposed are in line with the activities proposed, reasonable and non-excessive. Under the lump sum model, the assessment by the panel includes the estimated personnel costs, while under the actual cost model, the panel assessed only the resource, i.e. the number of planned staff. Historical ERC personnel cost data will be available to the panel as a benchmark to help them assess personnel costs. The historical ERC personnel cost data will be publicly available on the [ERC Advanced Grant 2024 web page](#). To help the panel assess the budget and to ensure sound financial management of EU funds, applicants will be asked to provide structured information on certain components of the budget. For example, personnel costs will have to be specified in person-months in each staff category, and equipment costs will have to include information on the depreciation rules that have been applied. The panel should not start to micromanage the budget because of the change to the lump sum model.

Q5. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, how will the introduction of the lump sum funding model affect the proposal submission templates?

Part A (Section 3 – Budget) contains a table with two additional columns for each staff category under Personnel costs to report the number of Person Months and the Average monthly salary (which will be automatically calculated by the system). A description and justification of resources should be provided in the relevant text boxes under the budget table. The Section Resources comprises 6 text boxes:

- A. Personnel – 2.500 characters max.
- B. Subcontracting (if applicable) – 1.000 characters max.
- C. Purchase costs – 3.500 characters max.
- D. Internally invoiced goods and services (if applicable) – 1.000 characters max.
- Request for additional funding (if applicable) – 1.000 characters max.
- Funding from other sources (if applicable) – 1.000 characters max.

Additionally, an Excel file with complete information on depreciation and usage of all equipment items needs to be completed and uploaded as a separate annex (if no equipment costs are budgeted, an empty table is to be uploaded).

Q6. ERC-2024-ADG: Will the frontier science character of ERC Advanced Grants change with lump sums?

Advanced Grant applicants should not change the way they plan and think about their research proposal. The ERC will continue to fund frontier research, the ground-breaking and ambitious research nature of ERC grants will not change, and evaluation criterion will remain the same. Thus, proposals should not change in terms of their ground-breaking and ambitious nature. Also, the flexibility during project implementation will not change.

Q7. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, once the lump sum is determined, how flexible is the budget of the project?

Once the grant agreement is signed, only the overall lump sum amount is relevant. The detailed budget breakdown in different cost categories is no longer available and is not annexed to the grant agreement. As long as the project is implemented in line with the objectives of the proposal

as evaluated and described in the signed grant agreement, there is flexibility for applicants to use the available funds as they see fit and they do not need to worry about budget categories. Deviations from the original work plan are permitted as long as they are justified or acceptable serving the agreed scientific goals of the project, and do not call into question the original award decision (including, where applicable, the award of additional funding).

Q8. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, given the lump sum budget flexibility, can Host Institutions increase their overheads during the lifetime of the project?

The Host Institution in ERC lump sum grants has the contractual obligation to guarantee the principal investigator scientific independence, in particular for the use of the budget to achieve the scientific objectives as described in the signed grant agreement. Consequently, the HI should not claim overheads beyond to the 25% of the EU contribution set out in Article 35 of the Regulation establishing the HE programme.

Q9. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, how do payments work in lump sum projects?

At the start of the project, the ERC grant beneficiaries will receive 80% of the total grant as pre-financing to ensure the cash flow for the project, and the rest will be paid upon completion of the project. The lump sum will be fully paid when all the work has been carried out as described in the Description of Action, and also if: i) all essential tasks have been completed, and/or; ii) equivalent tasks have been carried out, and/or; iii) deviations have been duly justified. If the above is met, irrespective of results obtained or objectives achieved, 100% completion can be declared and accepted (resulting in 100% payment of the lump sum).

Q10. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, will ERC lump sum grants be portable?

The right to portability, that is the possibility for the Principal Investigators to move with their grant to a different Host Institution, as defined in the ERC Work Programme 2024, will be maintained under the ERC lump sum model.

Q11. ERC-2024-ADG: For ERC Advanced Grants, will there still be audits under the lump sum model?

There will be no financial audits of invoices, personnel costs, time sheets, and no certificate of financial statements requested. However, technical reviews may still be conducted, as they have been in the past, in cases where issues with the implementation of the project arise, for example, relating to compliance with ethics, procurement procedures, or time commitment of the Principal Investigator. The scientific and technical documentation required for lump sum grants is the same as for the non-financial technical reviews that can currently be performed under actual costs grants and for POC grants (e.g. technical documents, publications, prototypes, documentation required by good research practice such as lab books etc). Applicant legal entities will remain accountable for the information (including financial) provided with their application.

Q12. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, can applicants choose between the lump sum and the actual cost model?

No, applicants cannot choose between the actual cost model and the lump sum funding model. Projects selected for funding under the ERC Advanced grant 2024 (ERC-2024-AdG) call for proposals will run under the lump sum funding model. The Starting grant, Consolidator grant and Synergy grants calls will continue to run under the actual cost model.

Q13. Under call ERC-2024-AdG, can applicants choose between one lump sum work package encompassing the entire project or several lump sum work packages?

In line with a decision of the ERC Scientific Council, Advanced Grant 2024 (ERC-2024-AdG) projects will comprise one single formal work package covering the entire project. This means that the project as a whole will be assessed for implementation and final payment, an aspect that was deemed important to maintain the flexibility necessary for frontier research projects.

The principle of a single lump sum work package does not restrict the applicant's freedom to plan and structure their research proposal in any form they see fit (e.g. research lines, objectives, different sub-projects, etc.).

Q14. Is the lump sum model envisaged for the ERC Advanced Grant 2024 (ERC-2024-ADG) the same as the ERC Proof-of-Concept (PoC) scheme?

No. For the 2024 ERC Advanced Grants (ERC-2024-ADG), the size of the lump sum is defined by the proposed activities and the resources needed and will therefore vary between proposals.

The maximum grant amount for Advanced Grants is €2.5 million, to which a further €1 million can be requested as additional funding where justified.

ERC Proof of Concept (POC) grants are implemented under a fixed lump sum model where every funded project has the same budget, currently € 150,000.