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## 240 researchers supported to turn their science into practice

PRESS RELEASE [#RESEARCH FUNDING](#) [#PROOF OF CONCEPT GRANTS](#)

**Under embargo until 12.00 noon CET on 18 January 2024**

The European Research Council (ERC) has announced another 102 Proof of Concept grants, bringing the total number of researchers receiving such funding to 240 in last year's three competition rounds. Each grant is worth €150,000 and helps ERC grantees to bridge the gap between the results of their pioneering research and the early phases of its commercialisation. In this competition, a total of €36 million in top-up innovation funding has been awarded. The grant scheme is part of the EU's research and innovation programme, Horizon Europe.

Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: "It takes courage and skill to take an idea from the lab into the world of business. The Proof of Concept grants announced today are designed to enable researchers to take this brave step and transform groundbreaking research into tangible innovations. I commend these researchers for driving excellence across the European Union and wish them all success in their new ventures."

President of the European Research Council, Prof. Maria Leptin, said: "With the help of ERC Proof of Concept grants, our grantees can go one step further and test the market potential of their basic research projects. Curiosity-driven research and innovation go hand in hand and the ERC is proud to fund both. I am also happy to see that researchers from all fields are applying to this grant scheme, which shows the innovation potential of all areas of the sciences and humanities."

In the 2023 Proof of Concept (PoC) rounds, a variety of projects have been funded. For example, a Polish philologist will design a classical antiquity handbook for highschoolers in a game format; a researcher in Italy will create a photo-responsive storage system to combine solar energy conversion and storage into one; and a neuroscientist in Czechia will work on a new non-invasive electrical stimulation technology to improve sleep disorder treatment. [Read more.](#)

The ERC's 2023 [work programme](#) included three rounds of the Proof of Concept call. In total, 564 proposals were evaluated, and 240 projects were selected with the success rate of 43%. The new grantees work in 20 different countries across Europe<sup>1</sup>. The highest number of grants will be hosted in Germany (40), followed by Spain (30), the UK (26), Italy (25), France (22), the Netherlands (20), Israel (18), Belgium (15), Denmark (9), Austria (8),

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<sup>1</sup> The statistics are based on the projects that were initially selected for funding in the three 2023 Proof of Concept rounds. They do not reflect any changes in host institutions that may have occurred since then.



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Sweden (8), Ireland (4), Portugal (4), Norway (3). Additionally, Czechia and Finland will host two grants each and Luxemburg, Hungary, Poland, and Greece one grant each.

The winners of the first round of the competition were announced in May and of the second round in July.

- List of winners in the third 2023 PoC round
- Winners in previous 2023 rounds:
  - ERC PoC 2023-1
  - ERC PoC 2023-2

To be eligible for the Proof of Concept grant scheme, researchers need to already have been awarded an ERC frontier research grant. The PoC funding is used to develop findings they have made during former or current research projects. The main goal is to explore the commercial and social innovation potential of ERC-funded research. As with other ERC grants, the funding supports research projects in all scientific disciplines, from physical science and engineering to life sciences, and social sciences to humanities.

The statistics and list of successful candidates are provisional. The European Commission and the UK Government have reached an agreement in principle on the association of the UK to Horizon Europe. This means that the UK has been formally associated to Horizon Europe as of 1 January 2024 and that the association would apply only for award procedures implementing 2024 budget and onwards. Entities established in the UK can continue to apply to Horizon Europe grant award procedures funded from budget appropriations of the year 2023, but they will not be covered by the association of the UK to Horizon Europe and thus they will not be eligible to receive EU funding. For this and other calls from the 2023 Work Programme, the transitional arrangement applies and the UK-based applicants may receive EU funding only if they transfer their proposal to an eligible host institution.

## About the ERC

The ERC, set up by the European Union in 2007, is the premier European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. It funds creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based across Europe. The ERC offers four core grant schemes: Starting Grants, Consolidator Grants, Advanced Grants and Synergy Grants. With its additional Proof of Concept Grant scheme, the ERC helps grantees to bridge the gap between their pioneering research and early phases of its commercialisation. The ERC is led by an independent governing body, the Scientific Council. Since November 2021, Maria Leptin is the President of the ERC. The overall ERC budget from 2021 to 2027 is more than €16 billion, as part of the Horizon Europe programme, under the responsibility of European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Iliana Ivanova.

Interested in applying for ERC funding? Join our Whatsapp Channel dedicated to news about grant competitions and hands-on funding advice.



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