



EU-LIFE ERC Masterclass

The EU-LIFE ERC Masterclass is organised annually by members of the Grants & Funding Strategies Working Group (Grants WG) with the main objective to support ERC starting and consolidator applicants from EU-LIFE research institutes.

The workshop includes a testimonial session and a project pitch session with leading scientists from EU-LIFE with experience in the ERC. It also has training sessions on topics such as general structure of an application, evaluation process, budget and CV, conducted by experts from the Grants WG.

GOALS



Support ERC applicants from EU-LIFE research institutes.



Share ERC grantees & panel members experiences with applicants.



Upskill grant officers in different resources and training style.



Foster a culture of collaboration and sharing.



Build up an international network of grant officers and researchers.



Promote greater efficiency, transparency and inclusivity.

ORGANISERS

"Obtaining an ERC grant is extremely competitive, and we see unfortunately many excellent projects that do not get funded. Therefore, it is extremely crucial to support researchers when applying for ERC Grants, learning from the expertise of grant officers, previous grantees and panel members from their institutes."

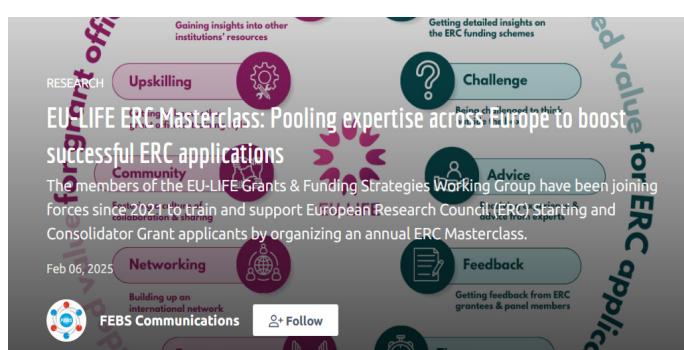
Cristina Bartocci

Head of the Pre-award Grants Office at Institut Curie Research Center
Member of the EU-LIFE Grants WG

As the members of the Grants WG became aware of the key role of the EU-LIFE ERC Masterclass among ERC applicants in their institutions, they have shared their experience in different forums beyond the EU-LIFE alliance, such as the EARMA Conference 2024, and the FEBS Communications journal.



EU-LIFE Grants & Funding Working Group, Brno, 2025



5 EU-LIFE Masterclass editions were organised 2021-2025

70 early-career researchers received training

44 ERC panel members and grantees shared their experience

14 member institutes strengthened internal capacity

Leila Akkari, The Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI), received an ERC Synergy Grant in 2023, together with researchers at the Universities of Amsterdam and Leiden. She attended the EU-LIFE ERC Masterclass 2021.



"The key aspect of this training was the interactive nature of it, where we were encouraged to participate and especially, it provided a very useful platform to discuss proposal ideas and how to present them with members of the ERC panels and grantees that reflected back with us on their successful applications and shared their feedback on our own projects to perfect them.

We also got the chance to hear from ERC panel chairs on the process of selection, and the ERC council member on the overarching goal of the organization. Such internal insights and guidance were instrumental in responding to both our very practical questions on how to prepare our proposal, but also to appreciate the larger purpose of the organization and shape our ideas in its fundamental core according to it, to enrich science with the best ideas and best people," said Leila Akkari, Group Leader and Associate Professor at The Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI).

Enzo Poirier, Institut Curie, received an ERC Starting Grant in 2022. He attended the EU-LIFE ERC Masterclass 2021.

"Understanding the type of research that is funded by the ERC and how to best present it can be tricky when applying for the first time. The Masterclass was pivotal to grasping if my research fitted the grant's criteria and also to having tips on how to structure the project. Having the opportunity to discuss with successful applicants and previous panel members was also extremely insightful. Getting an ERC Starting Grant provided my team with a stability that allowed us to start very interesting but risky projects that we wouldn't have been able to explore otherwise," said Enzo Poirier, Team Leader at the Institut Curie's Innate Immunity in Physiology and Cancer Team.

