



The European Research Council

The ERC Proof of Concept funding opportunity

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ERC Executive Agency

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Currently our granting schemes support 2 critical stages in scientific careers

Selected grantees by age in 2009

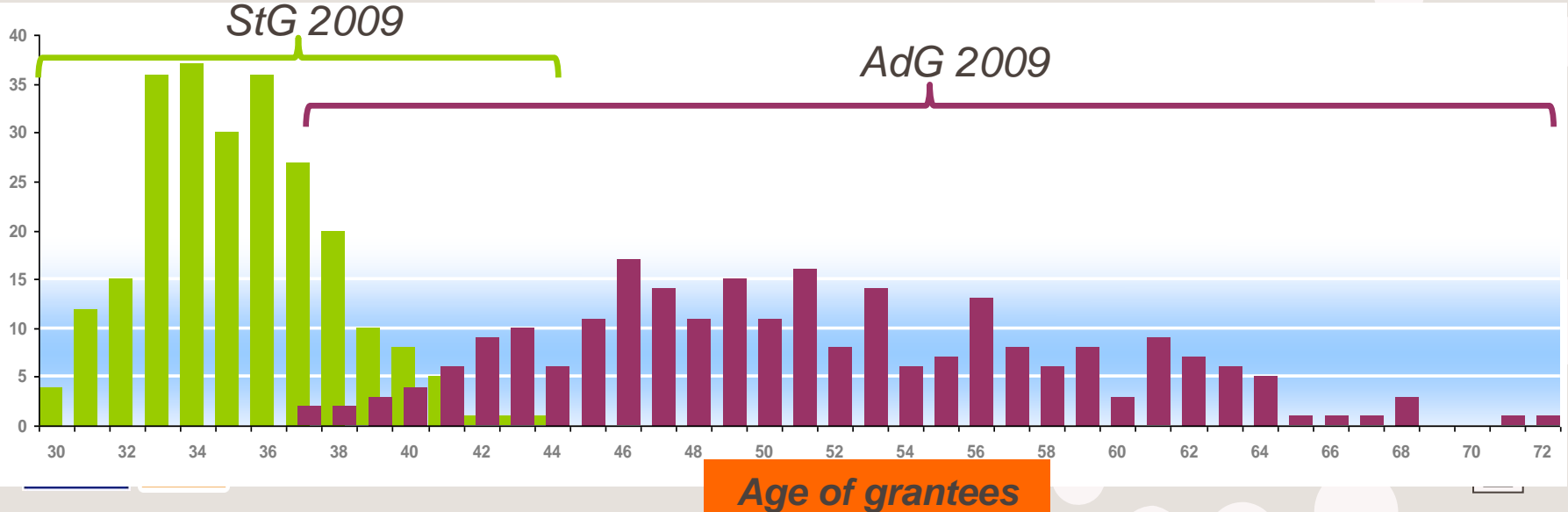


Starting Grants

- Attract/retain **next-generation leaders**
- Address **funding gap** early in independent career
- Establish independent **research team & program**
- up to € 2.0 Mio for 5 years

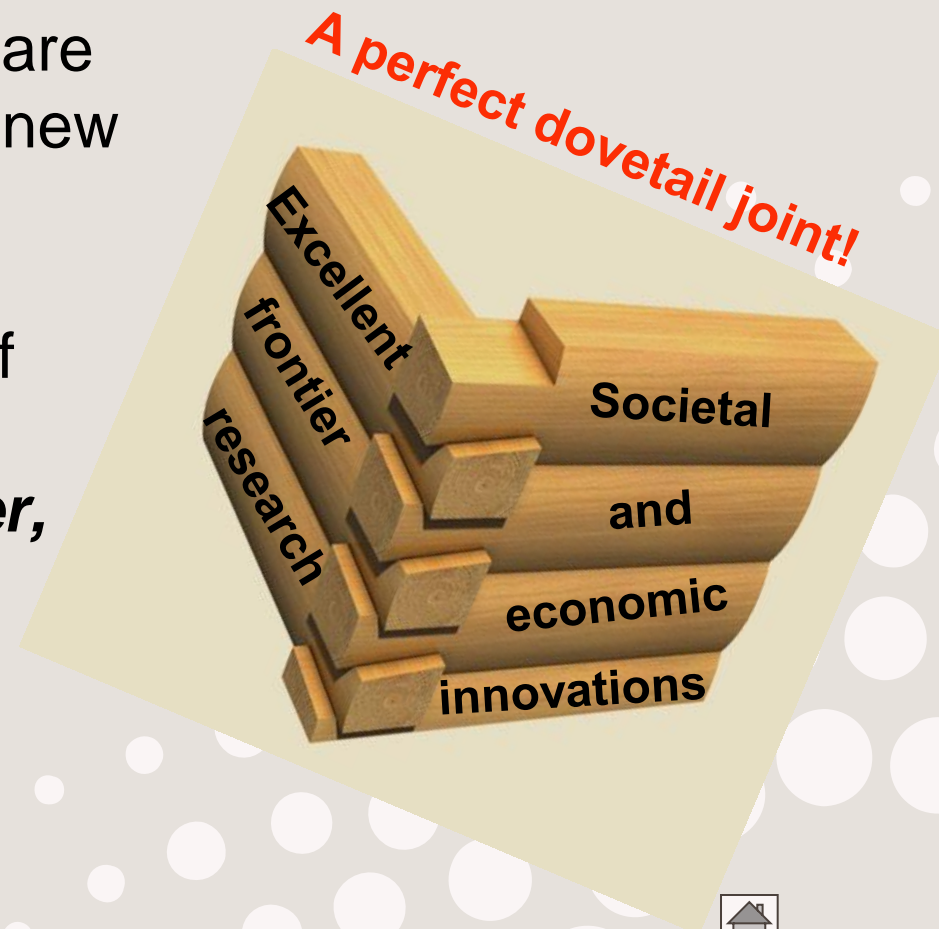
Advanced Grants

- Attract/retain **current world-leaders**
- Stimulate investigator-driven, **breakthrough research**
- up to € 3.5 Mio for 5 years



Innovation requires excellent research

"New products and new processes do not appear full-grown. They are founded on new principles and new conceptions, which in turn are painstakingly developed by research in the purest realms of science!" **Vannevar Bush, *Science, The Endless Frontier*, 1945**



Excellent research bears excellent fruits- recent Nobel Prizes



2009 Nobel Prize in Physics

The 2009 Nobel Prize in Physics goes to [Charles K. Kao](#), [Willard S. Boyle](#) and [George E. Smith](#), the fathers of fiber optics and digital imaging.

Fibre optics and digital imaging: frontier research 40 years ago, today communication industry

2008 Nobel Prize in Physics

The 2008 Nobel Prize in Physics has been awarded to [Yoichiro Nambu](#), [Makoto Kobayashi](#) and [Toshihide Maskawa](#).

Giant magneto resistance: frontier research in 1988, ten years later computer storage technology

2007 Nobel Prize in Physics

The 2007 Nobel Prize in Physics has been awarded to [Albert Fert](#) and [Peter Grünberg](#) "for the discovery of giant magnetoresistance".

Papilloma virus: 1983 frontier research, today vaccine against high risk types of the virus

2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine goes to [Elizabeth H. Blackburn](#), [Carol W. Greider](#) and [Jack W. Szostak](#) "for the discovery of how chromosomes are protected by telomeres and the enzyme telomerase".

2009 Prize in Economic Sciences

The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel goes to [Elinor Ostrom](#) and [Oliver E. Williamson](#), who both analyse economic transactions occurring outside the markets".

2008 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine has been awarded to [Harald zur Hausen](#), [Françoise Barré-Sinoussi](#) and [Luc Montagnier](#) "for their discovery of human immunodeficiency virus".

2008 Prize in Economic Sciences

The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel has been awarded to [Paul Krugman](#) "for his analysis of trade patterns and location of economic activity".

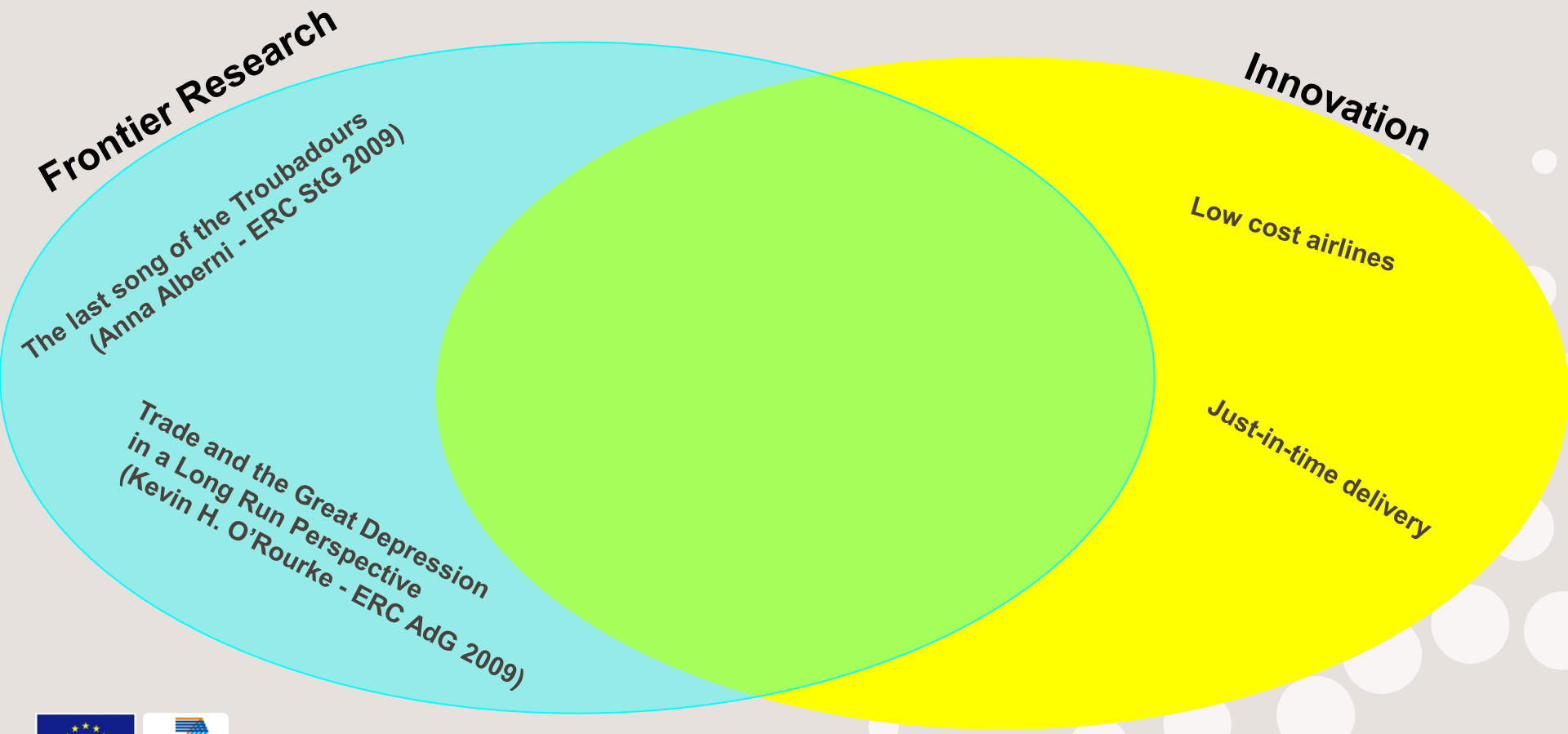
2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

The Medicine Prize has been awarded to [Mario R. Capecchi](#), [Martin J. Evans](#) and [Oliver Smithies](#) for "discoveries of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells".

2007 Prize in Economic Sciences

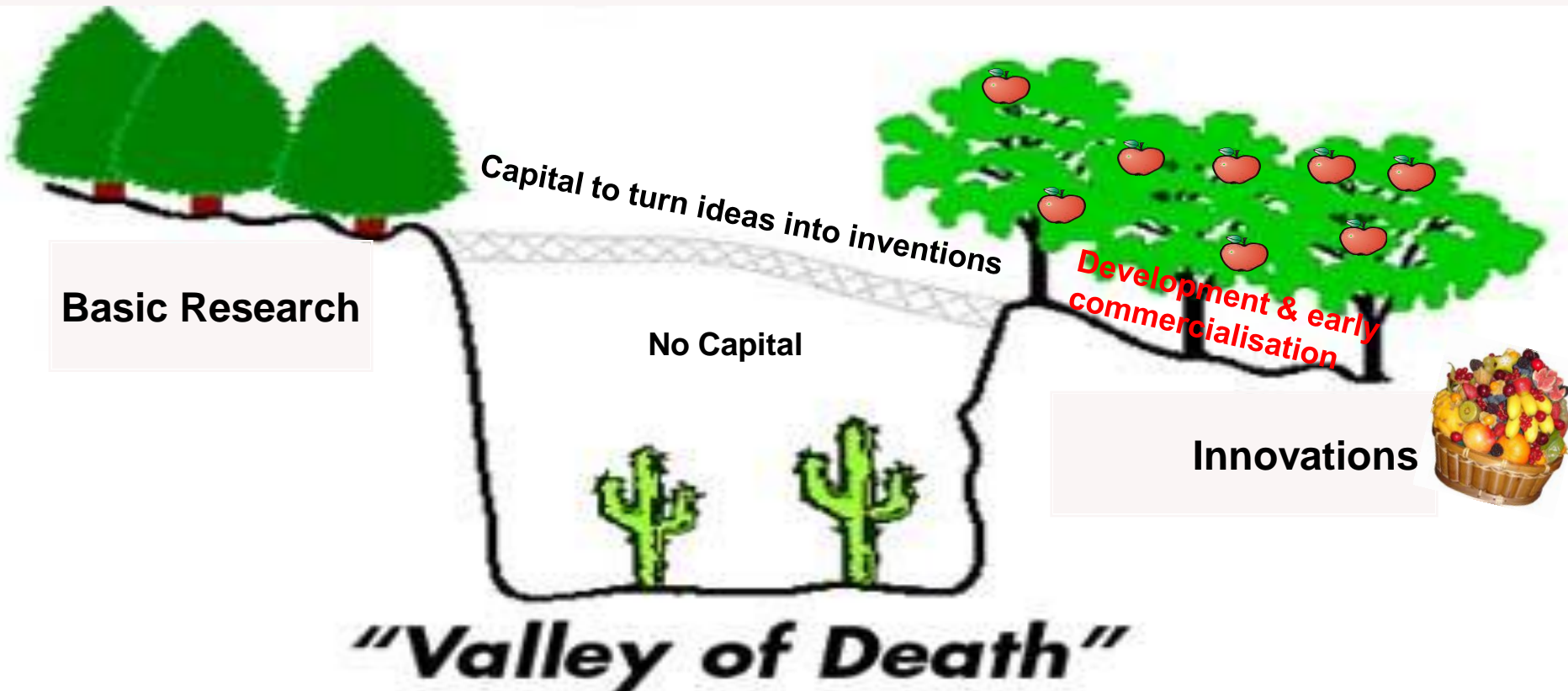
The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel has been awarded to [Leonid Hurwicz](#), [Eric S. Maskin](#) and [Roger B. Myerson](#) "for having laid the foundations of mechanism design theory".

ERC research and innovation



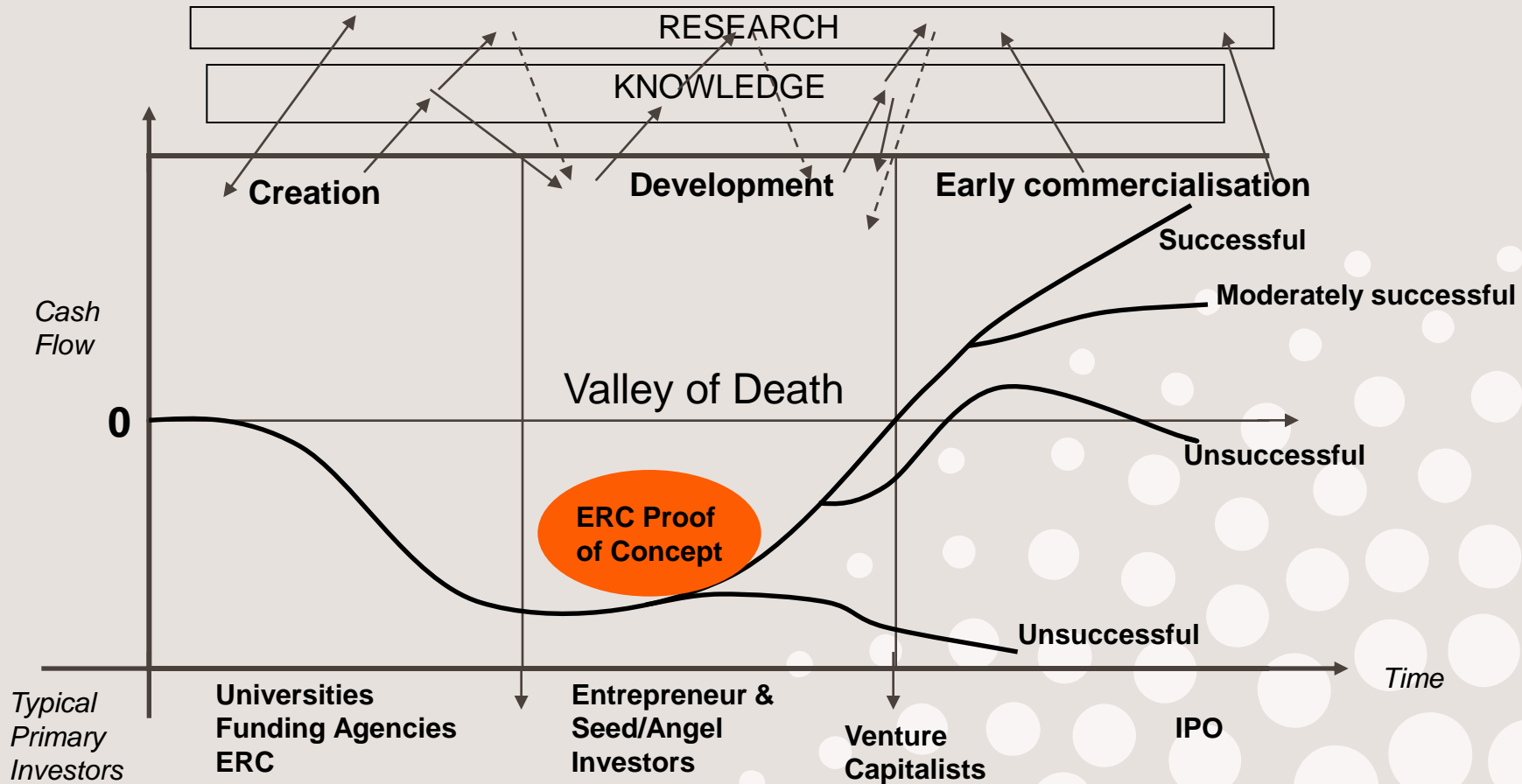
The “Valley of Death”

Bridging the gap: from basic research to innovation

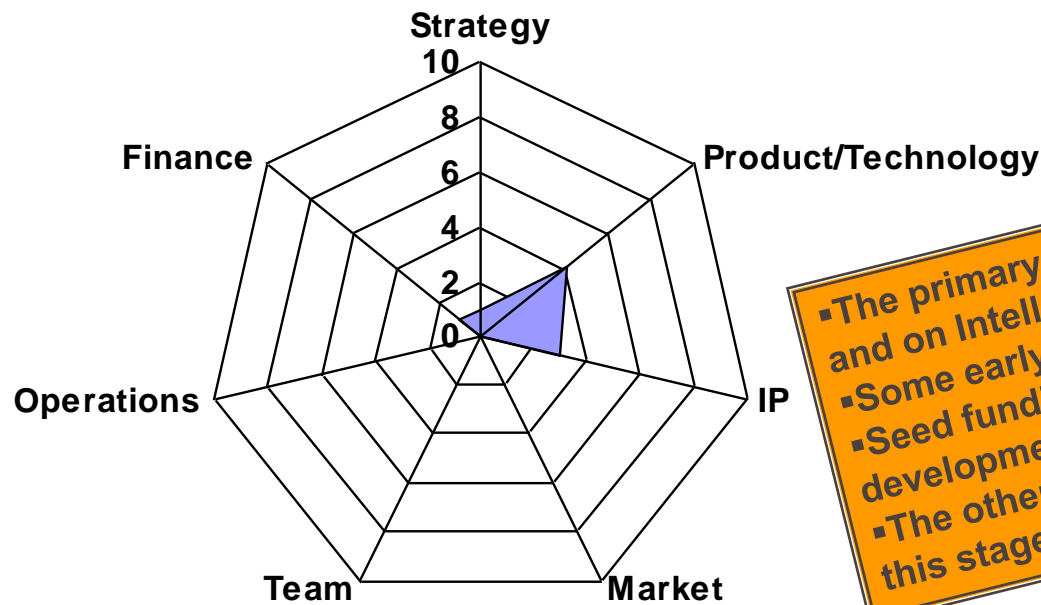




Strengthening the ERC's role in the innovation chain: from blue sky research to commercialisation



Proof of concept stage



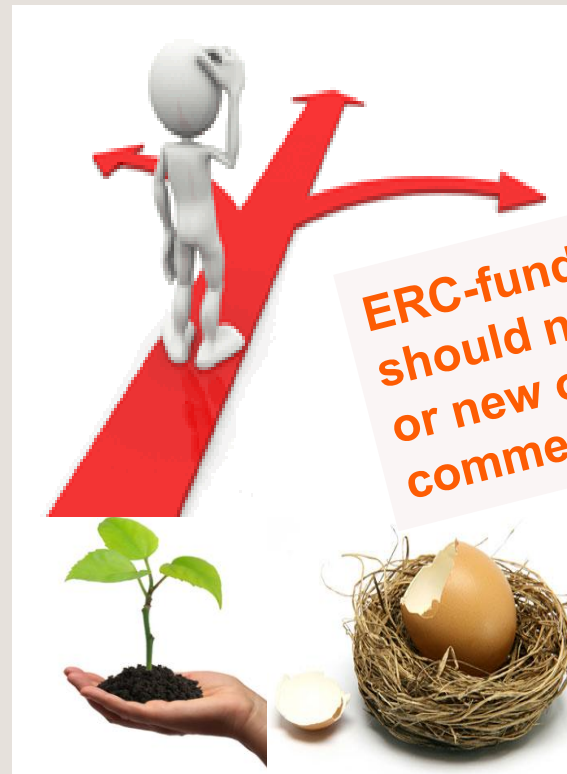
■ Proof of Concept

- The primary focus is on the product / technology and on Intellectual Properties
- Some early business strategy will be undertaken
- Seed funding may be needed for product development, testing and IP strategy development
- The other elements will essentially be dormant at this stage



The funding gap

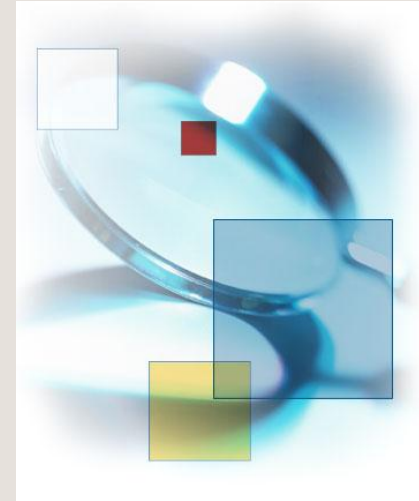
An efficient way of moving excellent ideas towards their first steps in the direction of the marketplace



**ERC-funded excellent ideas
should not miss unexpected
or new opportunities for future
commercial application**

March 2011: launch of the ERC “proof of concept” funding

What for: establish the innovation potential of an ERC-funded idea a: technical validation, market research, clarifying IPR strategy, investigating business opportunities



Timing:

- **Publication:** 15 March 2011
- **First Deadline:** 15 June 2011
- **Second deadline:** 8 November 2011

The ERC “proof of concept” funding

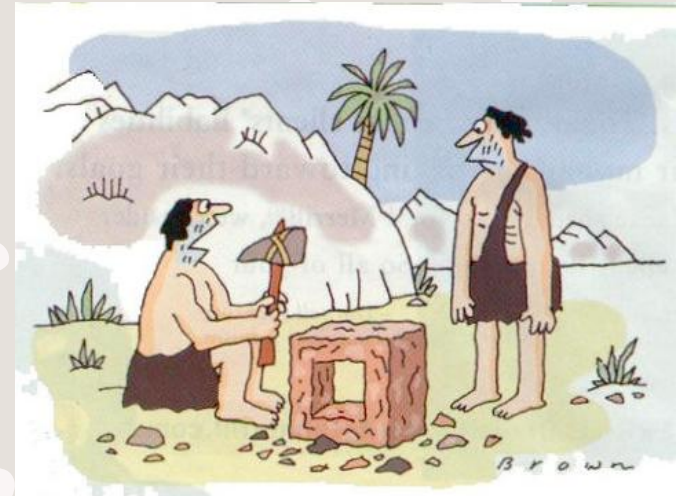
Eligibility: Holders of an ERC grant with an idea substantially drawn from an ERC-funded project



Size: up to €150,000 over 12 months
Total budget for 2011: €10 million



Outcome: A "package" to be presented to venture capitalists



"I call my invention 'The Wheel,' but so far I've been unable to attract any venture capital."

Proposal description

- A short **description of the idea** and its relation to the previous ERC grant
- Outline an **early-stage innovation strategy** for the idea
- Outline a reasonable and plausible **plan of the activities**
- **Budget:** list of requested resources and proper justification



Evaluation

Evaluation: External experts will check that the proof of concept plan is reasonable and acceptable
No scientific evaluation

Evaluation criteria:

1. Innovation potential
2. Quality of the proof of concept plan
3. Budget



Evaluation criteria (1)

1. Innovation potential: move the output of research towards the initial steps of pre-commercialisation

- 1.1 **economic and societal benefits** of the project
- 1.2 **commercialisation process** to be followed
- 1.3 plans for **testing, technical reports**, etc
- 1.4 initial steps of **market research**
- 1.5 clarification of **IPR position and strategy**
- 1.6 **industry/sector contacts**

Evaluation criteria (2 & 3)

2. Quality of the proof of concept plan: sound approach for establishing technical and commercial feasibility

- 2.1 reasonable and acceptable plan of activities
- 2.2. sound project-management plan
- 2.3 team well qualified for the purpose

3. Budget: necessary for the implementation of the proof of concept and properly justified

Application of evaluation criteria

- Evaluation on “**pass/fail**” basis on each evaluation criterion
- **Considered for funding:** only proposals with a pass mark by a majority of evaluators on each criteria



- If **not enough budget:** selected proposals ranked according to number of pass marks
- If necessary, evaluators meet to determine priority order for **ex-æquo**



Evaluators

Independent experts working remotely and if necessary meeting as an evaluation committee



From key innovation stakeholders (national public agencies, government/ministry departments, technology transfer offices of Universities, etc)