

Grant program to support the participation of researchers from the Politehnica University of Bucharest (UPB) in international research teams carrying out ERC grants

Guidelines for Applicants

Call name: Visit Start Research (**VizStar Grants**)

Call for Proposals VizStar Grants

to Support the Participation in International Research Teams Working on ERC Grants

This program is addressed to researchers intending to apply for a research grant to the calls launched by the European Research Council (ERC).

The objective of the program is to provide support to UPB researchers for preparing their proposals in view of applying to ERC calls and to increase the number of UPB applicants who win ERC Grants.

VizStar Grants are provided to support the participation of UPB researchers in research teams of ERC-funded Principal Investigators. The UPB grant aims to increase the academic profile of candidates who intend to participate in ERC-funded competitions, giving them the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and experience required for applying to ERC calls for proposals.

This UPB program and its calls are in line with the ERC Guidelines for "Fellowship to Visit ERC Grantee" whereby the ERC creates the opportunity for potential ERC candidates to visit, through a nationally or through an organizationally funded program, the teams of ERC Principal Investigators for acquiring knowledge and strengthening their research profile and vision in internationally competitive research environments.

Conditions for submitting a proposal for VizStar Grants

Proposals are submitted by researchers working at UPB. The proposals must involve frontier research in any field of science.

In order to be eligible for the grant, *the candidate* must:

- have a PhD degree;
- be employed on the basis of an employment contract at UPB;
- have carried out a research project funded by the National RDI Plan II, the National RDI Plan III or by international programs;
- not be or not have been an ERC Principal Investigator;
- undertake to submit a project proposal having UPB as Host Institution to an ERC call within 12 months of the end of the VizStar project.

Proposals are eligible if they:

- contain a draft project proposal intended for an ERC call, in which the candidate is Principal Investigator, and which will be improved during the visit;

- present the plan for a visit of min. 1 month and up-to 2 months to an international research team led by an ERC Principal Investigator conducting research funded by an ERC grant;
- chose an ERC Principal Investigator from the list of all potential hosts and principal investigators as resulted from the survey launched by ERC;
- demonstrate that a potential ERC Principal Investigator will act as a host by presenting a letter of support of the proposed ERC Principal Investigator and his/her Host Institution.

The VizStar grant

UPB will award to the selected applicant a VizStar grant of max. € 5,000 for the duration of the visit to the research team conducting research funded by an ERC grant to cover the subsistence costs and the travel costs.

Failure to comply with the applicant's obligation to submit a proposal to the ERC within 12 months after the end of the visit will constrain the applicant to return to the UPB all funds received through this grant.

At the end of the visit, the VizStar applicant must present to UPB a short report of the activities undertaken during the visit, which needs to have the approval of the ERC Principal Investigator, who hosted the visit.

Procedure and deadline for submitting the proposal

The proposal with all the necessary annexes must be submitted in electronic format between:

1 September- 15 November 2022 via EasyChair:

<https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=vizstar2022>

The evaluation procedure

The eligibility is checked first and then each eligible proposal is evaluated by peer review.

The evaluation of proposals takes into account the following criteria:

- the candidate's results in the research activity;
- the potential of the draft project proposal to eventually lead into a competitive proposal in one of the future ERC calls, including the ground-breaking nature of the research, its scientific impact on the advancement of knowledge and the feasibility assessment of the proposed research with due regard for high-risk/high-gain research.

Each criterion is scored from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good).

The formal and the eligibility assessment are carried out by the UPB VizStar Grants management team, while the peer-review evaluation is carried out by a team of experts (external or internal of UPB, designated by UPB) with support from internal or external researchers who had / have ongoing ERC or Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe projects.

Proposals are subject to a ***two-stage peer review***:

Stage I - The preliminary evaluation takes place on the basis of the information provided in the proposal together with the annexes. Each proposal is evaluated by two experts, proposed by the VizStar Grants management team. This implies two independent evaluations by two members of the expert team. Proposals qualify for the second stage of evaluation based on their position on the ranking list. The proposals will be selected following the scoring order of the proposals. The number of the proposals selected for phase II will have a total budget requested by the proposals which cannot exceed twice the budget allocated by UPB for the call.

Stage II - The evaluation is based on the information provided in the proposal together with the annexes. It involves evaluations performed by evaluators, who had / have ongoing ERC or Horizon 2020 projects, who take into consideration the Stage I evaluation reports, conduct an interview with the candidate in English and write a final evaluation report. The stage I I- evaluators are proposed by the VizStar Grants management team.

Subsequently, the expert team shall establish the final ranking list of project proposals.

The potential applicants to VizStar will be provided with a list of all Principal Investigators who have agreed to host a visiting fellow in their university/institution to consolidate a project proposal that will be submitted to the next calls launched by ERC. To have access to this information, please *contact Dana Violeta Gheorghe at the Office of the President of the Senate, Cam. 214 Rectorate, e-mail: dana.gheorghe@upb.ro*