PRBB Intervals Course Proposal

Course Title How to write a grant proposal for Horizon Europe

Proposed date(s): 25th November, 2nd & 4th December 2025, and 13th March 2026 (feedback session)

Course Language English

Course Leader(s) and brief summary of relevant qualifications and experience (no more than 2 lines for each trainer)

Gabriele Picarella holds a postgraduate degree in project planning and development management from Université Catholique de Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium. With a career spanning Italy, the UK and Spain, he has extensive experience in fundraising and managing sponsored research programmes in biomedical research centres. He currently leads the Pre-award area at the Strategy and Funding (SaF) department at the CRG, where he has taken a key role in supporting the centre's participation under the H2020 and Horizon Europe programmes as well as other international funding schemes. In particular, he provides coaching for ERC, MSCA-PF and Pillar II calls, and has organized seminars on topics such as ERC proposal preparation, ethical aspects of EU projects and EU-U.S. cooperation programmes

Natalia Dave holds a PhD in Biophysics from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and has over 15 years of research experience in biophysics, proteomics, and molecular biology. With nine years in scientific project management, she is currently Head of the Strategy and Funding (SaF) department at the CRG, where she supports strategic planning, ensures competitive funding, and leads institutional efforts to enhance research quality and impact. Her expertise includes open science, research data management, ethics, and responsible research assessment. She serves as expert reviewer for the European Commission and, since 2024, for CoARA-aligned cascade funding calls. She also contributes to shaping European research policies through CRG's involvement in EU-LIFE.

Rationale for course (why is this course of interest for the PRBB staff?)
Each year, many European grant proposals are submitted each year, but only a few receive funding. The course will offer a structured approach and practical tools to help applicants to identify the right funding opportunities, understand call texts and plan and write compelling research proposals in Horizon Europe. Participants will also have the chance to receive a mock evaluation of a short proposal to gather direct feedback on their ongoing or prospective project proposals.

Course aim - general
The course will offer key tips and strategies to write a successful grant application in Horizon Europe. The learning outcomes may also be useful to write successful proposals for other funding agencies.

Specific learning outcomes (what new skills, knowledge &/or attitudes will participants to take away from the course?)
You will learn:

- Funding opportunities for junior researchers in Horizon Europe, with a focus on the European Research Council (ERC) and collaborative projects under the European Innovation Council (EIC)
- The European Commission's outlined plans for the next framework programme (FP10) for the period 2028-2034
- The review process of a grant
- The goal and the impact of the narrative CV format in ERC proposals
- Tips and tricks to write the different sections of a grant proposal: abstract, objectives, methodology, research data management plans, etc.
- Understand how research quality elements (e.g., open science, research ethics, RRI) are integrated into proposals
- Discover how AI tools are increasingly used in grant writing and research evaluation
- Plan and prepare a budget

Course contents (outline of topics to be covered)
The course will cover the following topics:
- What is Horizon Europe? What is there for me as junior researcher (junior PIs and postdocs)?
- How are grant proposals reviewed?
- What are the sections in a grant proposal I need to write?
- How to prepare a credible and compliant budget?
- How to craft a compelling narrative CV for ERC applications, highlighting achievements beyond traditional metrics?
- How to write the Impact section: how to frame the expected outcomes and contributions to science, society, and the economy
- How research quality is assessed in competitive calls (excellence criteria, novelty, feasibility, gender and diversity considerations, open science, etc.)
- Emerging applications of AI in research evaluation and grant writing: emerging use cases and critical considerations

Training methods
The course consists of theoretical and practical lectures from experts in grant applications as well as hands-on exercises and testimonials from previous grant evaluators. The course consists of four half-day sessions. You should be able to attend all of them and write a short proposal that will be the subject of a mock evaluation.

Target group in PRBB (senior scientists, postdocs, management/admin staff, all residents)
Junior PIs, senior postdocs who want to apply for independent grants, management staff dedicated to support scientists in grant proposal writing.

Number of participants (maximum) 12

Total course hours (Please specify direct training with instructor present and required self-study)
Note: only the direct training hours will be included in the post-course certificate.
 Number of hours of class time: 13,5h
 Number of hours of self-study: 2-3h aprox
 Total number of course hours: 15-16h

Distribution of course (hours/days)

3 sessions of 3,5 hours and 1 final session of 3 hours

Pre-course preparation and/or between sessions?

Participants must submit title and abstract of your potential proposal for a grant (max. 250 words) to intervals@prbb.org. Abstracts should be submitted by Monday, 11th November at the latest.

Additionally, we encourage participants not to miss the opportunity to get feedback from experts on preparing their own project! To this aim, a specific template will be provided in due time to prepare a short proposal. Participants submitting their proposals by the 13th February 2026 will have the chance to take part in the last session of the course (March-6) and get feedback directly from the evaluators as well as receive written comments.

Material participants need to bring (laptops, etc…)

Participants can bring notebooks or laptops if they prefer but it is not required.

Relevant background reading/audiovisual/websites or other materials

You can familiarize with Horizon Europe at the following website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en