How to Prepare an ERC Grant Proposal
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Preparing a Proposal

- Start planning many months in advance
  - started 18 months before
- Reserve *lots of time* for writing proposal
  - 2-3 weeks (consider a retreat)
- Get as much *feedback* as possible
  - 12 internal + 12 external
  - give talks and lobby for your idea
Proposal Guides

- Important ERC Documents:
  - Guide for Applicants - your bible
  - Guide for Reviewers - check this too

- All details at http://erc.europa.eu/

- Rely on local EU support for formalities
Sell Yourself
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- Collect and provide irrefutable evidence for *impact* and *excellence*
- Papers, talks, students, tools…
- Lasting impact in academia and industry
- Quality as networker and advisor
- Don’t forget a single achievement!
## Sell Yourself

Search for *unique selling points*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t just say…</th>
<th>But say…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACM Fellow</td>
<td><em>Youngest European ACM Fellow ever</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Paper Award</td>
<td><em>First Best Paper Award for a debugging paper</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700+ citations</td>
<td><em>Most-cited Software Engineering paper of 2005</em></td>
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</tbody>
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Project Proposal

- ERC funds *high-risk, high-gain* projects
  - Risks should be substantial, but manageable
- Focus on *novelty* and *potential impact*
  - Why is this new? Why is this needed?
- Prepare *talks* to sharpen your message
  - For a starting grant, you will be interviewed
Project Writing

• Have a clear title and abstract
  - get the interest of the reviewer

• Have a clear structure and plan
  - you know how to organize things, don’t you?

• Get to the point
  - no buzzwords, no yada yada, no lingo

• Polish. Polish. Polish. - and polish again.
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