My Experience with the ERC

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1. What have I gained from my ERC grant?

1. Research time.
   - 50% of my time is committed to the grant.
   - Reduced teaching and university administration.

2. Larger, longer term projects.
   - Cleaning and combining new datasets.
   - Running large-scale experiments.
   - Working with several RAs.

3. Opportunities to interact with others in my field.
   - Visitors’ program: regularly invite researchers for short visits.
   - Conferences: together with other ERC grantees we launched a new conference series on the economics of networks.

4. Focus in my research.
   - Grant application helped clarify my research agenda.
   - Grant is flexible enough to allow changes within that agenda.
2. Applying for an ERC grant

1. Writing the proposal.
   - Multiple projects that fit one general theme.
   - Why is topic important? What is the intended contribution?
   - Good to be specific about design.
   - I thought about projects for months and then took 3 weeks to write proposal.

2. Interview.
   - Questions about substance: which project is most important, what is the identification, what about external validity.
   - No debates, no trick questions; it is not an exam.
   - Panel seems to understand that at proposal stage not all questions have answers.
   - Cover one or two slides, have back-ups for questions.

   - Grant is hugely beneficial.
   - Writing proposal is directly useful for research.
   - Valuable feedback from reviews and panel.