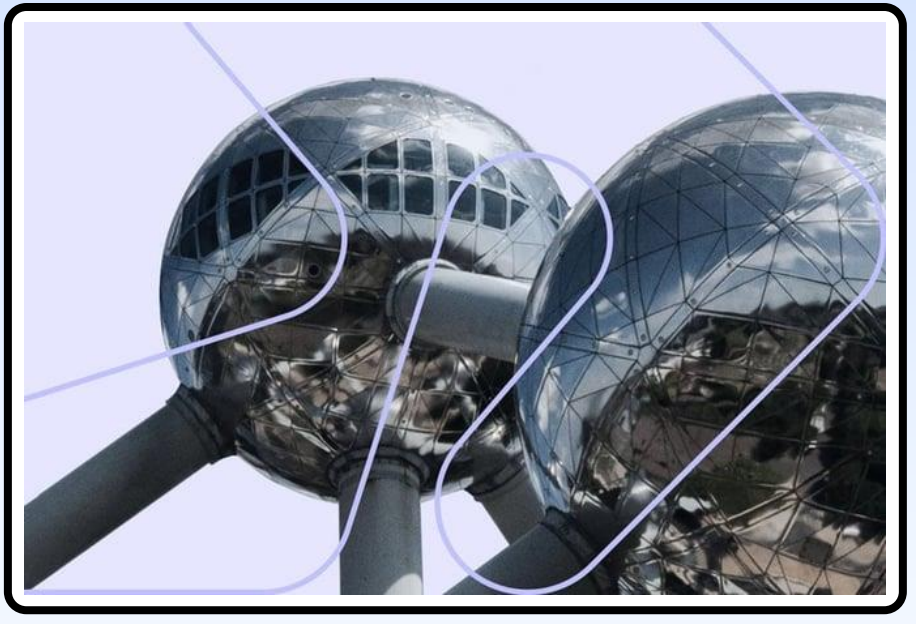
Forskningsrådet



WEBINAR

ERC Proof of Concept;

Innovation from excellent science

My experience with applying (and getting) an ERC PoC

Kyrre Eeg Emblem, PhD

Head of Department
Department of Physics and Computational Radiology
Division of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine
Oslo University Hospital

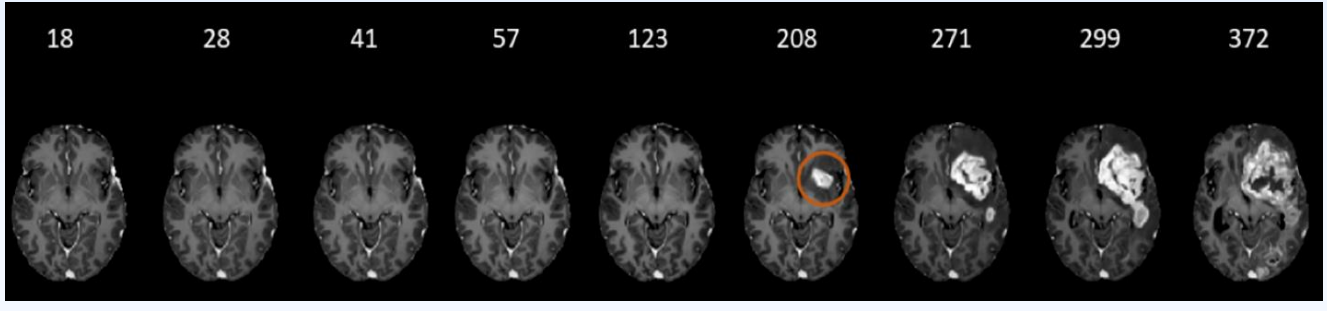
Jan 30, 2026

ImPRESS

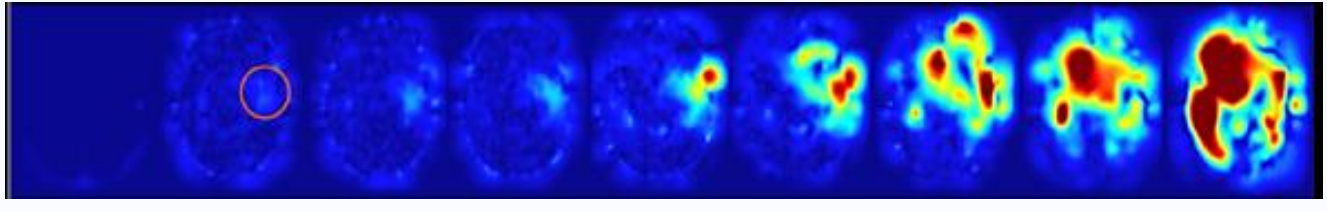
"Imaging Perfusion Restriction from Extracellular Solid Stress"

ERC StG Grant 758657 (2017 – LS7)

Traditional MRIs (days)



«Hidden» information



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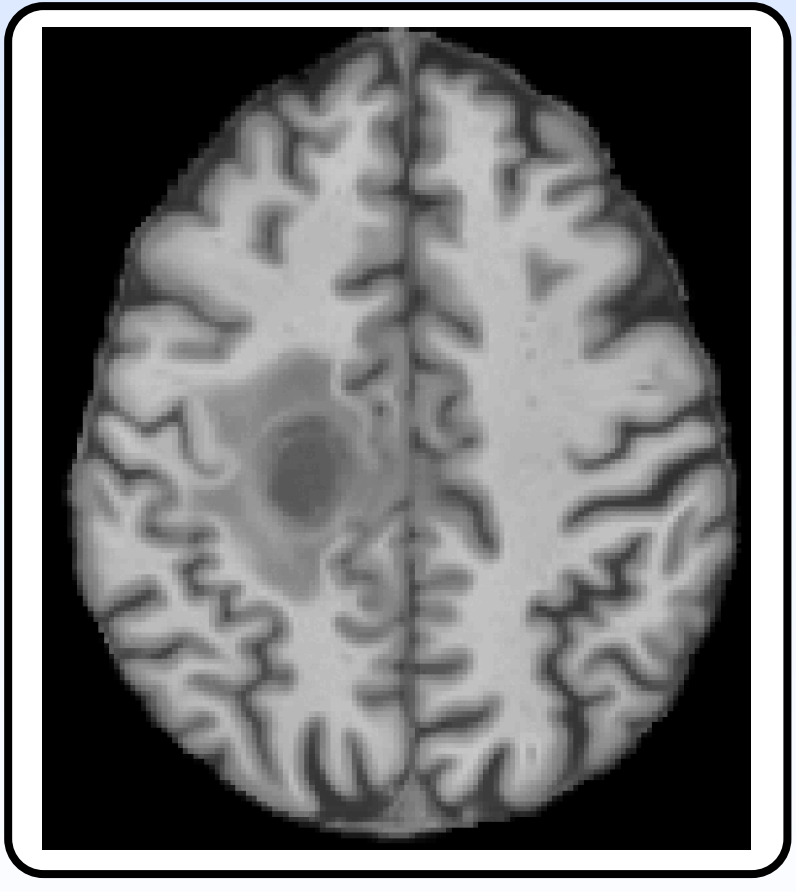
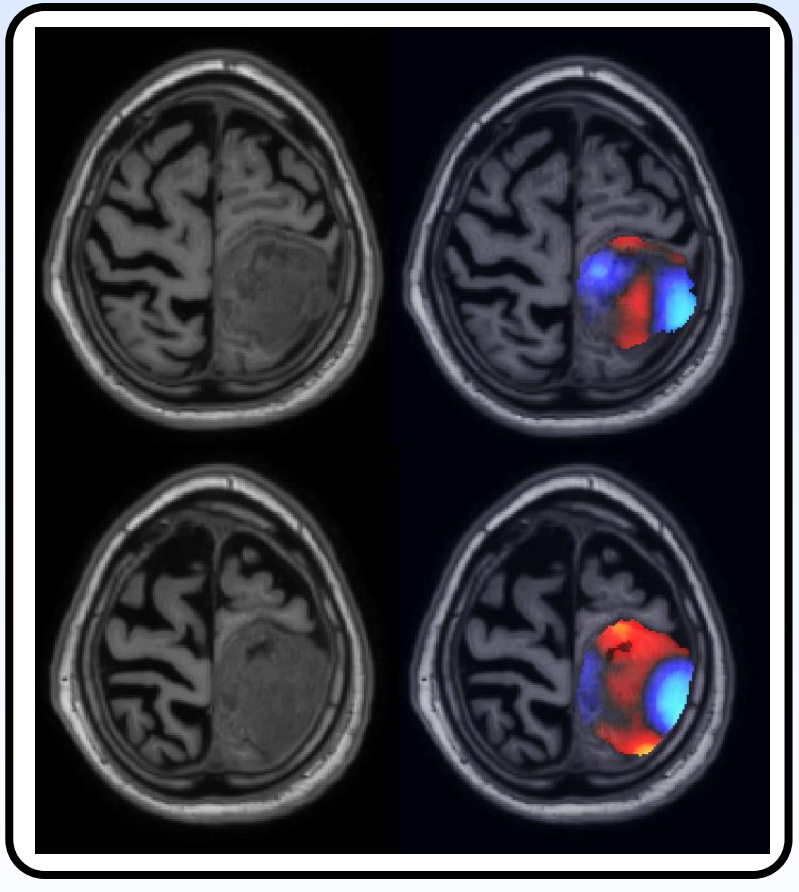
«CHRONOS» - US Patent App. 18/729,640, 2025

Expansion
Compression





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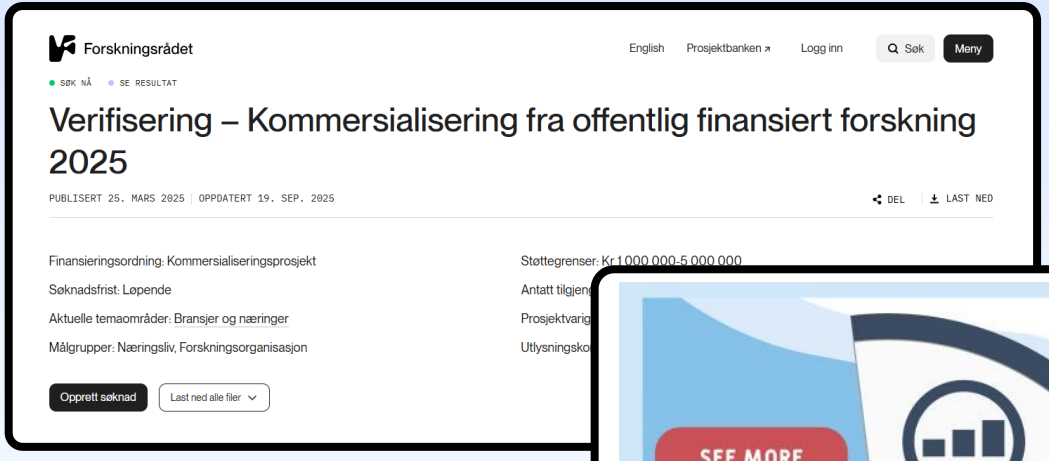
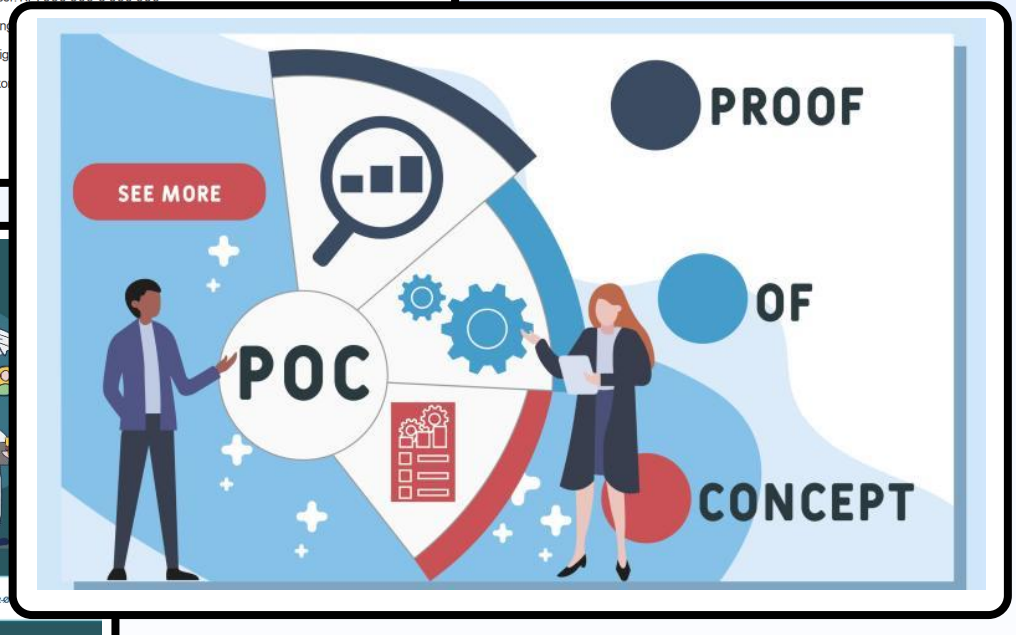
Now what? *- Need people, money, time, focus …*





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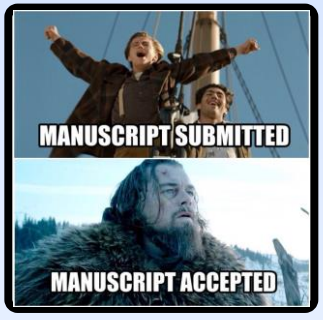
My ERC PoC experience



Attempt #1

Proposal Submission Forms

European Research Council Executive Agency

Please check our wiki for help on navigating the form.

Horizon 2020

Call: ERC-2019-PoC

(Call for proposals for ERC Proof of Concept Grant)

Topic: ERC-2019-POC

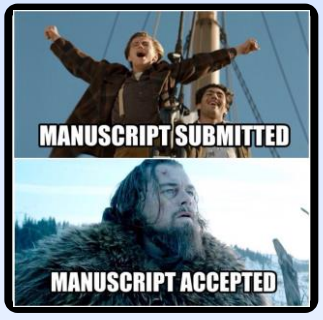
Type of action: ERC-POC-LS

Proposal number: 899854

Proposal acronym: DeepDynamic

Jan 30, 2026

My ERC PoC experience



Attempt #1

Proposal Submission Forms

European Research Council Executive Agency

Please check our wiki for help on navigating the form.

Horizon 2020

Call: ERC-2019-PoC

(Call for proposals for ERC Proof of Concept Grant)

Topic: ERC-2

Type of action:

Proposal numb

Proposal acronym

ERC/JPB/2019

Dear Applicant,

On behalf of the European Research Council, I thank you very much for your application to the ERC- Proof of Concept-2019 call.

This Proof of Concept Grant call had again a very significant number of applicants while the evaluation panel appreciated the generally high quality of the proposals received. This is very encouraging for the ERC and for its effort to address the needs of the scientific community and of the European society at large.

The reviewers very much appreciated the opportunity to examine the proposal you submitted which passed all evaluation thresholds.

However, in view of the budget available for this call, the ranking of your proposal does not allow for immediate funding. Your proposal will be placed on a reserve list and may be supported in case more funds become available.

Jan 30, 2026

My ERC PoC experience

Attempt #1

Reviewer 3

1. Excellence (Innovation potential)

There is a tremendous amount of research conducted in the field of deep learning and medical imaging. The application does not provide evidence that Deep Dynamic has a distinctive innovation potential.

2. Impact

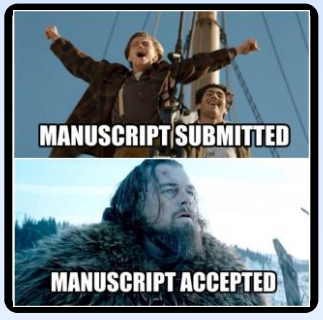
Due to the lack of proof of innovation potential the claimed impact is not credible

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation (Quality of the proof of concept plan)

It is unclear what the invention is and what the status of the invention is. What is developed and what has been tested and demonstrated. Is clinical relevance validated or made plausible. Deep learning is a powerful tool to identify unknown patterns. However, it is not evident that heterogeneity in brain cancers manifest itself in a detectable way in MRI, even by deep leaning. It may be that only DNA mapping can provide relevant data.
The industrial partner is a specialist in tools for fMRI and has no specific experience in cancer diagnosis.

Jan 30, 2026

My ERC PoC experience



Attempt #2

Proposal Submission Forms

European Research Council Executive Agency

Please check our wiki for help on navigating the form.

Horizon 2020

Call: ERC-2020-PoC

(Call for proposals for ERC Proof of Concept Grant)

Topic: ERC-2020-POC

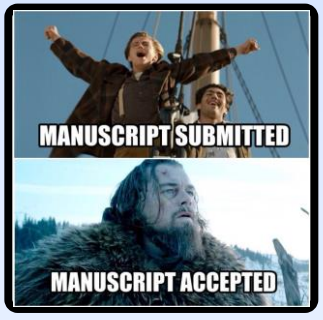
Type of action: ERC-POC-LS

Proposal number: 966571

Proposal acronym: TrackGrowth

Jan 30, 2026

My ERC PoC experience



Attempt #2

Proposal Submission Forms

European Research Council Executive Agency

Please check our wiki for help on navigating the form.

Horizon 2020

Call: ERC-2020-PoC

(Call for proposals for ERC Proof of Concept Grant)

Topic: ERC-2

Type of action: E

Proposal numb

Proposal acronym

ERC/JPB/2020

Dear Applicant,

On behalf of the European Research Council, I thank you very much for your application to the ERC Proof of Concept 2020 call.

This Proof of Concept Grant call had again a very significant number of applicants while the evaluation panel appreciated the generally high quality of the proposals received. This is very encouraging for the ERC and for its effort to address the needs of the scientific community and of the European society at large.

The reviewers very much appreciated the opportunity to examine the proposal you submitted which passed all evaluation thresholds.

However, in view of the budget available for this call, the ranking of your proposal does not allow for immediate funding. Your proposal will be placed on a reserve list and may be supported in case more funds become available.

Jan 30, 2026

My ERC PoC experience

Attempt #2

Reviewer 1

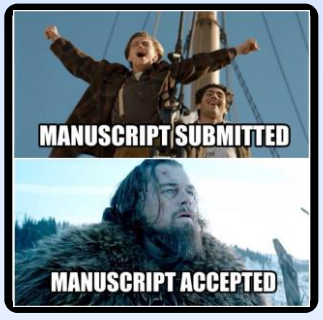
1. Excellence (Innovation potential)	Fail
There is no detail regarding the type of experiments or work that would prove the clinical value of the proposed software. The parameters chosen to compare between products of existing companies and the proposed innovation are not very comprehensive. The score provided gives the closest comparison to the proposed innovation and not the performance of the competitors. Since the project relates to a specific form of cancer it should mainly be compared to oncology products and not neuroimaging...	

2. Impact	Fail
The proposed work is expected to reduce some of the workload physicians phase in their everyday clinical practice. There is not enough detail of how this will be achieved. It is also going to reduce the duration of a clinical trial. Something that can lead to optimized costs. Yet, there is again no explanation of how the information provided by the software can help achieve this goal.	

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation (Quality of the proof of concept	Good
There is a competent team around the PI and the project will have all the necessary infrastructure in order to be completed in time and according to plan. The proposed work though provides little certainty regarding the actual validation of the innovation. Comparing with just standard clinical practice should not be enough. There should have been provision to compare with other existing solutions.	

Jan 30, 2026

My ERC PoC experience



Attempt #3

HORIZON

Call: ERC-2024-POC

(Call for proposals for ERC Proof of Concept Grant)

Topic: ERC-2024-POC

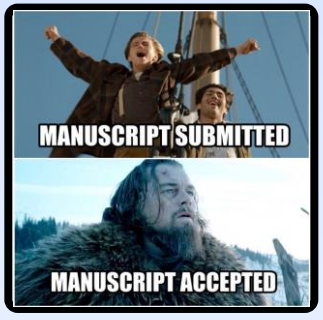
Type of Action: HORIZON-ERC-POC

Proposal number: 101213953

Proposal acronym: CHRONOS

Jan 30, 2026

My ERC PoC experience



Attempt #3

HORIZON

Call: ERC-2024-POC

(Call for p

Type

Pr

Pr

Brussels, January 2025

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your application for an ERC Proof of Concept Grant.

The response to this year's second Proof of Concept call deadline was high and the evaluation panel was impressed by the quality of the proposals received. This is encouraging for the ERC and for its effort to address the needs of the scientific community and the citizens of Europe.

The evaluation panel appreciated the opportunity to evaluate your proposal, and I am pleased to inform you that your proposal passed all evaluation thresholds and was ranked at a position that allows it to be funded. I warmly congratulate you on this success.

Jan 30, 2026

… third time's the charm?

Attempt #3 – lessons learned

- ✓ **An innovation grant is *not* the same as a «traditional» science grant**
  - think like an entrepreneur - aka - what are you "selling"? What does a start-up need? Where do you want to end up? How to get there? What kind of people do you need?

- ✓ **The "idea" should be somewhat developed**
  "Reduction to practice". This is not the place to fund new discoveries …

- ✓ **Focus on feasibility**
  End-users are correctly defined. Timescales, milestones and deliverables are adequate. Resources (including the team) are appropriated to develop the project.

Note-to-self in 2019: *know your limits!*

- ✓ **You do not speak "the language" – so team up with smarter people who are skilled in the go-to-marked pathway (EIR - Entrepreneur in Residence, TTO's)**

Elin Melby, Ph.D

Technology Strategy Manager
Innovation

Chris Rétif

Business Development Manager
Innovation

invent2

Jan 30, 2026

Note-to-self in 2019: *know your limits!*

- ✓ **You do not speak "the language" – so team up with smarter people who are skilled in the go-to-marked pathway (EIR - Entrepreneur in Residence, TTO's)**

… do not underestimate the power of ***the Regulatory Manager!***

Subheadings in proposal:
(attempt #3)

Spinouts
Regulations
Market insight
Revenue streams
Regulatory strategy
Users and customers
Conditions and rights
Sales and distribution
Intellectual properties
Strategy for realization
Innovation significance
Reimbursement strategy
Technology readiness level
Commercialization and market strategy

Jan 30, 2026

Regulatory manager = a happy marriage!

* SoftExpert

Jan 30, 2026