

# Initial Solar System Composition and Early Planetary Differentiation

ISoSyC



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## Should I consider applying for Starting Grant in ERC?

### Paradoxes to solve:

- Pioneering idea AND still feasible
- Work on your own AND work with a network of collaborators to help you
- High gain AND low risk (impossible)
- No incremental research AND no certainty when it comes to results

IS IT POSSIBLE?

YES, IT IS

Re-think the presentation of your scientific ideas in order to solve the paradoxes

An ERC proposal is very different from any other proposal : Science is important, presenting your project is also important

## Tactics

- Sell yourself : not really a familiar concept in European culture
- There is a weakness in your project? Describe it as being high risk and high gain
- Do not disperse yourself too much in the proposal [je ne comprends pas]
- Highlight important scientific points in the proposal and in your CV: catch the attention of the evaluators
- Explain all your decisions: It is OK to ask funds for 15 PhD or only one post-doc, but explain why it is your decision in the best interest of the project
- Need space? Put your schedule in an excel table

## My experience:

**Year 1:** 3 positive to very positive reviews, one fairly positive, finishing by:

« Yet the project is not much structured and detailed: the work of the two post-docs and one PhD is not distributed, the precise analytical operations to test the 4 hypotheses on the 142 Nd paradox is not given. The implications of these hypotheses for the Earth should also be developed and the link with Mars evolution (last line) be made. » → improved structure, stayed focus on one final goal: why finishing the project with the planet Mars while I did not really talk about it previously?

**Year 2:** 1 very positive, 3 fairly positive reviews, with unfair sentences:

« It is unclear from the proposal where the impact is likely to go beyond those interested in planetary formation and early history of Earth differentiation. » (nice...)

« I believe that the investigations planned in this proposal are of relevance, but I would not define them groundbreaking. Despite the proposed research has ambitious objectives, which might improve the current knowledge, I think that it contains a relevant amount of incremental research promoted by the availability of more accurate laboratory facilities. » → nothing to tell people saying there are not interested in the topic. BUT had to think how to make incremental research OK...

**Year 3:** Yeah! Going to the interview !

## Interview

- Quite terrible: I had the feeling I was getting back to school! ;o)
- Waiting in the same room as other applicants: others can be terrifying
- Then going in a second room: second level of stress!
- Most important: sell yourself. Tell the evaluators why you are the best candidate for this project, why you want hire so many people etc etc...)
- Many many thanks to Yellow Research (and to ULB for participating to it!)
- I had only a few very general questions about science but they were similar to those asked during the mock interview!
- Bring water, there are no drinks available on the spot



# Research Experience

**Since 2010:** Research permanent position (FNRS) at the Free University of Brussels-ULB

**Updated CV:**

Publications:

H-factor: 8

Publications: 17 articles (7 as first author),  
including *Nature*, *Science*, *Nature Geosciences*, *Geology*

The Team

PhD students



G. Hublet



N. Van Roosbroek

Post-doc researchers

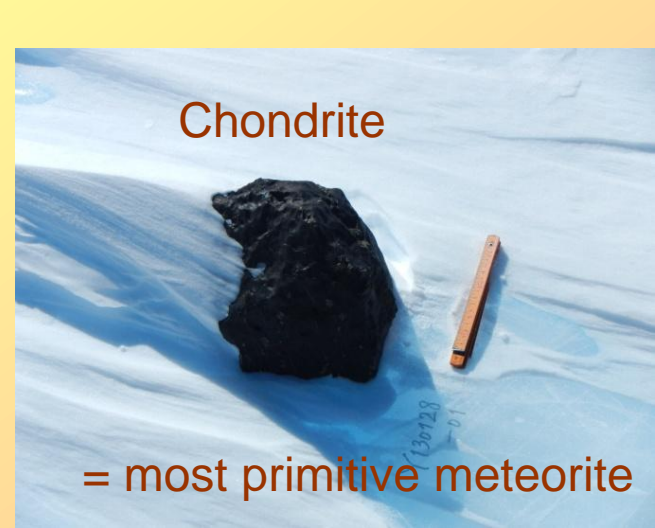


I. Petrov



F. El Atrassi

Belgian Leader of the 2012-2013 field mission for collecting meteorites in Antarctica



Thanks for your attention!

Some fun, not too much!



Me!