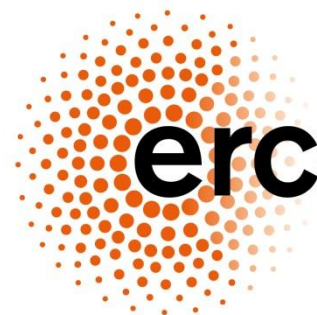


The European Research Council

ERC: Work Programme Novelties in 2026

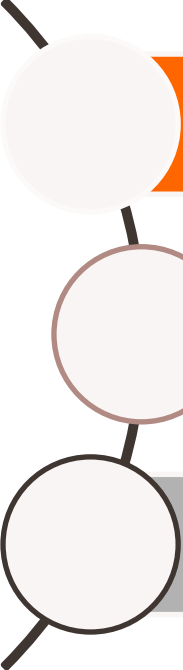
Ulrike Kainz-Fernández de la Reguera
Call Coordinator Consolidator Call
Unit B2
28 October 2025



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Overview



ERC Grant Schemes

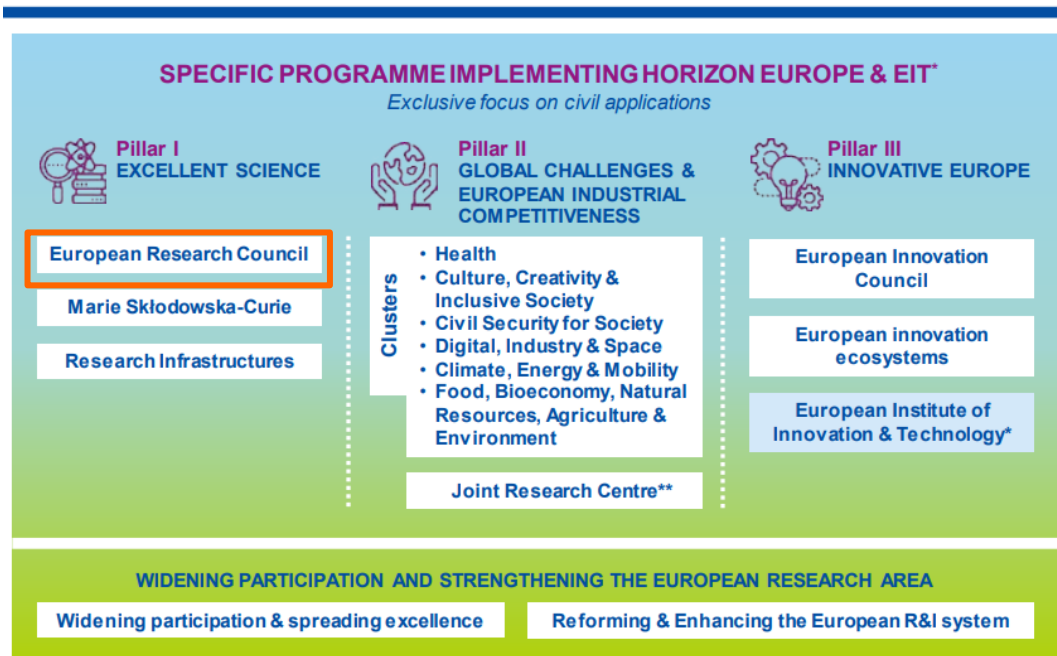
Eligibility

Evaluation process



ERC is part of Horizon Europe

HORIZON EUROPE



EUR 16 billion
ERC budget in Horizon Europe



17%
of the entire
Horizon Europe budget

About the ERC

ERC Scientific Council

Life Sciences



Geneviève
Almouzni
Molecular Cell
Biology



Liselotte
Højgaard
Medicine



Leszek
Kaczmarek
Neurobiology



Dirk
Inzé
Plant Biology



Luke
O'Neill
Biochemistry and
Immunology



Jesper
Svejstrup
Vice-President
Biochemistry



Maria Leptin
ERC President
Cell Biology



Gerd
Gigerenzer
Vice-President
Psychology



Eystein
Jansen
Vice-President
Earth Science

Social Sciences and Humanities



Harriet
Bulkeley
Geography



Mercedes
García-Arenal
History



Torsten
Persson
Economics



Giovanni
Sartor
Law



Milena
Žic Fuchs
Linguistics

Physical Sciences and Engineering



Conny
Aerts
Astrophysics



Tom
Henzinger
Computer
Science



Maarit
Karppinen
Chemistry



Sylvie
Lorente
Mechanical
Engineering



Björn
Ottersten
Electrical
Engineering



Tomaž Prosen
Physics



Nicola
Spaldin
Materials Theory



András
Stipsicz
Mathematics



Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground-breaking nature and ambition

Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity and creativity

*Since 2024 calls – panels will primarily
evaluate the excellence of the project*

ERC funding schemes



Starting Grants

Starters (2-7 years after PhD)
up to € 1.5 Mio for 5 years



Advanced Grants

Already established research leaders with a
recognized track record of research achievements
lump sum up to € 2.5 Mio for 5 years

*New
instrument (€7
Mio for 7 years)
as from WP2027,
tbc*



Proof-of-Concept (ERC grant holders)

bridging gap between frontier research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
lump sum €150,000 for 18 months



Consolidator Grants

Consolidators (7-12 years after PhD)
up to € 2 Mio for 5 years



Synergy Grants

2 – 4 Principal Investigators
up to € 10.0 Mio for 6 years
1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated Countries



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



Additional funding (+ new features as from WP2026)

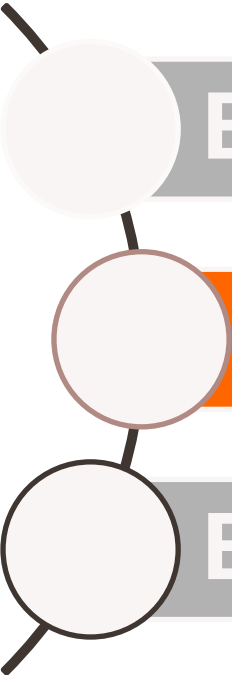
- **up to 1M €:** Applicants already based in an EU Member State or country associated to HE

Additional funding can be requested to cover, e.g. *purchase of major equipment, access to large facilities, other major experimental and field work costs, etc.*

- **up to 2M €:** Applicants currently based outside Europe (WP2026)

to facilitate the start-up/relocation of their laboratory/team to the EU/associated country.

Overview



ERC Grant Schemes

Eligibility

Evaluation process



Preparing your proposal

...make sure you are eligible!

1. Reference date for the calculation of the Eligibility window: 1st of January of the year of the Call
StG2026: 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2023
CoG2026: 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018
 - *Extensions of eligibility window possible for documented cases*
2. If you previously applied to an ERC call, check resubmission restrictions
 - *Indicative submission restrictions for the StG, CoG and AdG2026 calls same as in the past*
 - *For SyG2026: Applicants to Synergy Grant 2025 call who have obtained a score 'B' at Step 1 will not be eligible for the Synergy Grant 2026 call*
3. Time **commitment on the project**: Min. 50% (StG), **40% (CoG)**, 30% (AdG + SyG)
4. Minimum 50% of PI working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country, for SyG: this only applies to PIs engaged and hosted by an institution in the EU or an AC



Since WP2023

Change in PhD eligibility reference date



➤ New “PhD eligibility reference date” rule:

*The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period shall be the **certified date of the successful defence**. Document provided by the awarding institution.*

- Allows for the eligibility window to reflect the *real **academic age*** instead of the “administrative age” of the PI;
- Puts an end to confusion about “award according to national rules” - brings clarity to applicants;
- Most PhD certificates include the defence date;
- If the PhD certificate does not show defence date, the candidate has to ask for **written confirmation from the awarding institution**.

StG and CoG: Extension of the Eligibility windows

For documented situations occurring before the call deadline

- **Maternity leave:** +18 months for each child born before/after the date of the successful defence of PhD degree;
- **Paternity/parental leave:** documented time taken for each child born before or after the date of the successful defence of PhD degree;
- **Long-term illness** (>90 days for the PI or a close family member) or **national service:** documented amount of leave taken for each incident that occurred after the date of the successful defence of PhD degree;
- **Disability:** Extension corresponding to the reduced amount of working time (including leave taken) and/or the degree of disability as documented by the applicant
- **Clinical training:** documented amount of clinical training received **after** the reference date of the 1st eligible degree, **up to a maximum of 4 years**;
- **Major disaster** and for **seeking asylum**;
- **Victims of gender-based violence, or any other form of violence (as from WP2026)**

Envisaged changes from WP2027

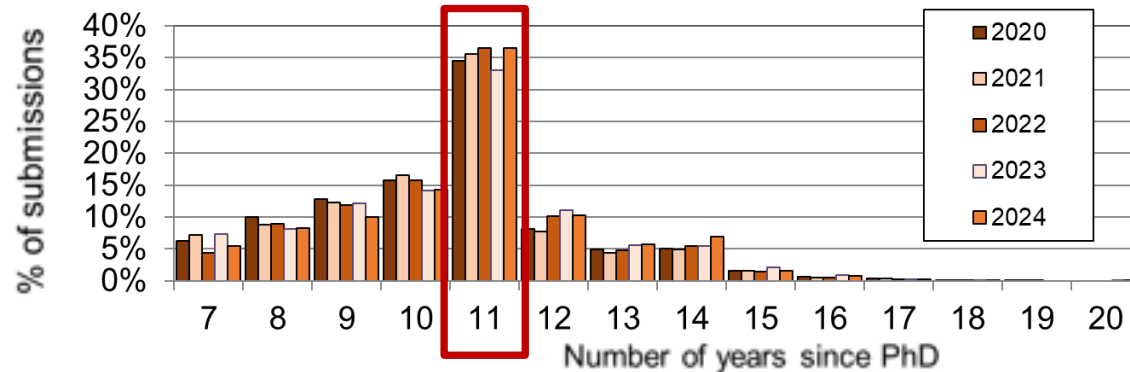
Widening of the eligibility period for StG and CoG



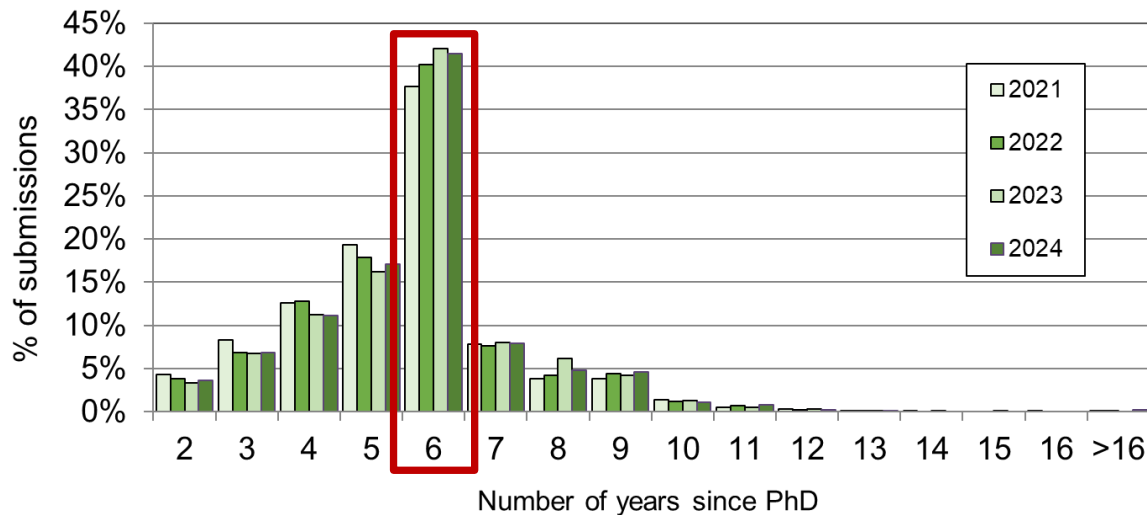
- **StG:** applicants will be eligible to apply immediately after successfully defending their PhD, and at any time within the **following 10-year** period.
- **CoG:** applicants will be eligible to apply **between 5 and 15 years** after defending their PhD.
- All current policies for the extension of the eligibility periods will remain in force.
- Researchers will be awarded **no more than one StG and one CoG during their career.**

Submissions by years since PhD

COG 2020-2024



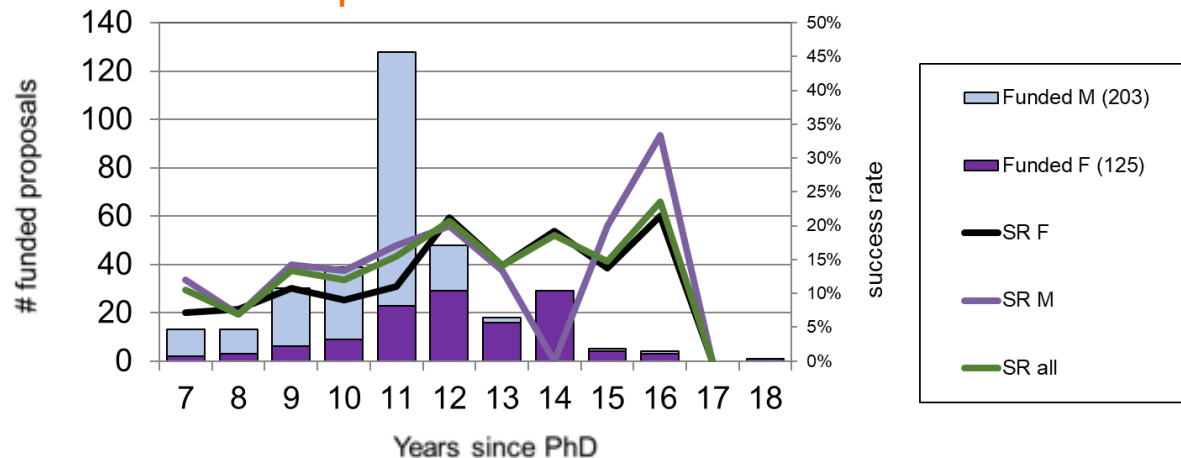
STG 2021-2024



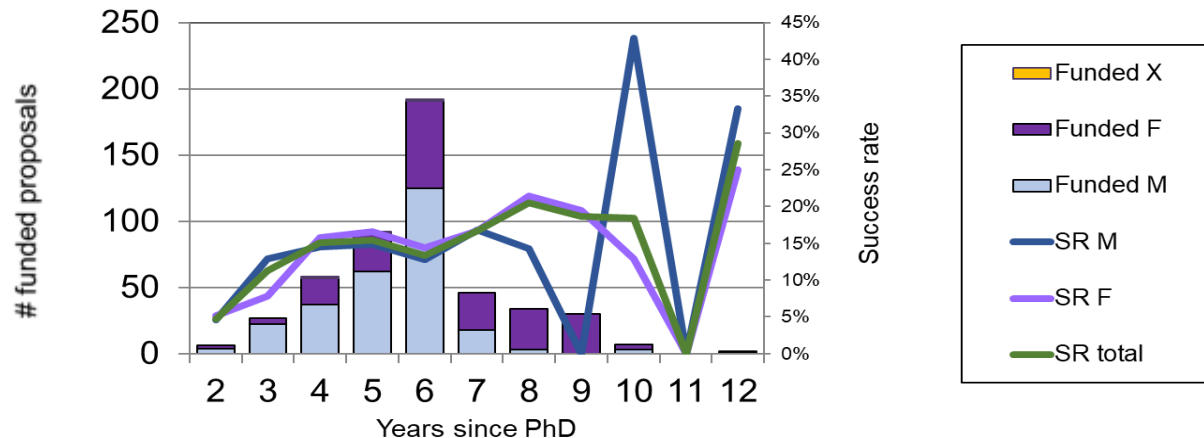
Shall I apply now or wait another year?

STG and COG 2024 - Results of step 2

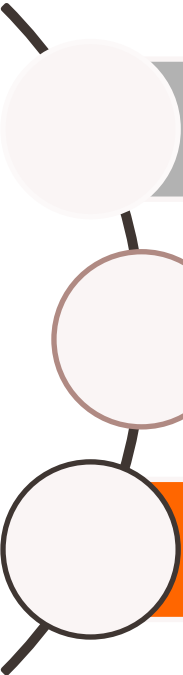
COG 2024



STG 2024



Overview



ERC Grant Schemes

Eligibility

Evaluation process



2026 Call Calendar

	Starting Grant Call	Consolidator Grant Call	Advanced Grant Call	Synergy Grant Call
Call	ERC-2026-StG	ERC-2026-CoG	ERC-2026-AdG	ERC-2026-SyG
Opening Date	9 July 2025	25 September 2025	28 May 2026	10 July 2025
Deadline	14 October 2025	13 January 2026	27 August 2026	5 November 2025
Budget (EUR, m)	705	673	747	500
Estimated Number of Grants	450	328	294	49



Evaluation panel structure (2025)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

Physical Sciences & Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts



Proposal Structure – Changes as from WP2026

(<https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/changes-2026-and-2027-work-programmes>)

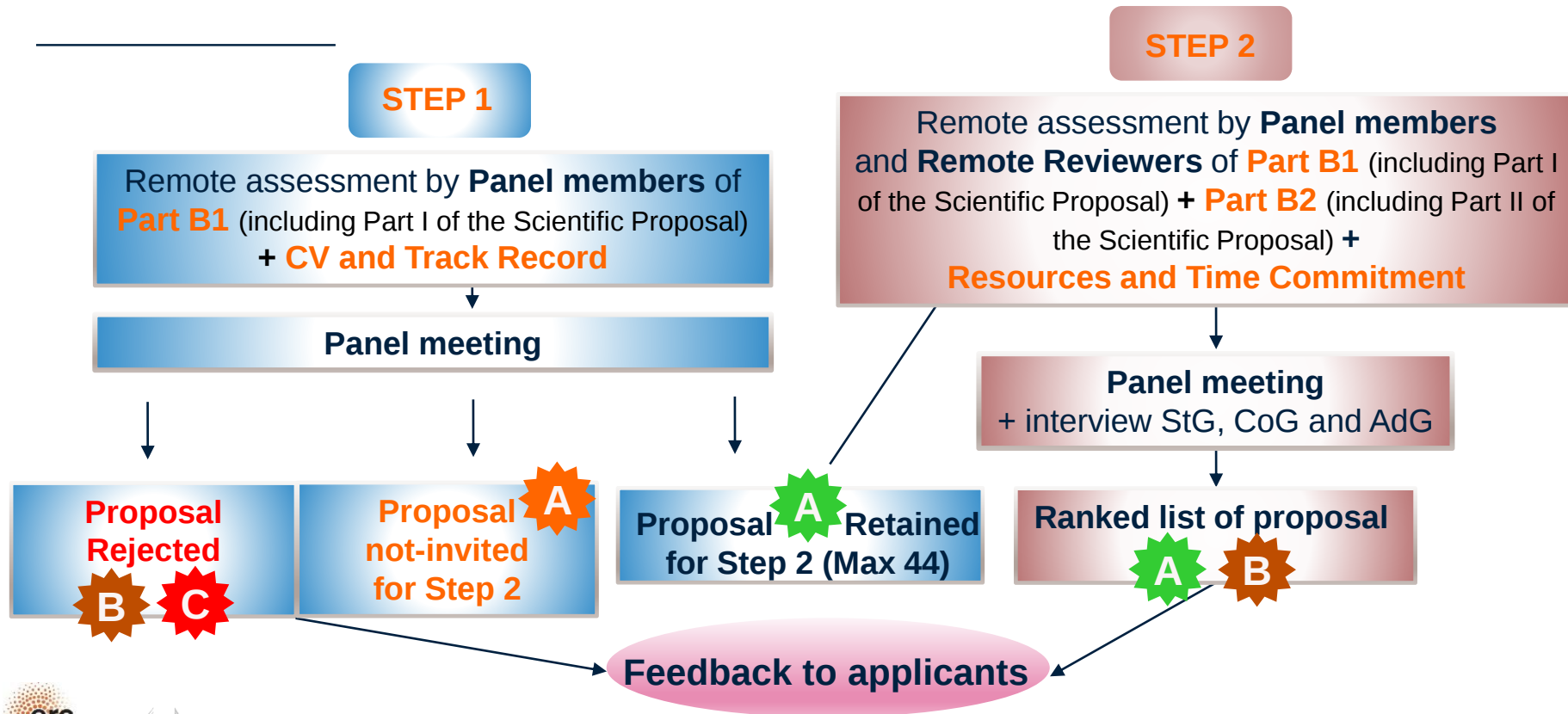
- Part A: Administrative form, including requested budget and resources
- **Part B1:** - Part I of the Scientific Proposal (5 pages): **overall idea, objectives and approach/research strategy**
 - CV+Track Record (up to 4 pages)
- **Part B2:** - Part II of the Scientific Proposal (**7 pages**): Implementation and Methodology (including feasibility, risk assessment and mitigating measures)
 - Funding ID
- Host Institution support Letter
- PhD certificate (+ additional document to support PhD defence date, if needed)

Annexes: Extension request documents in 1 pdf, including cover page (new form), ethics, etc.



Evaluation: process

For individuals calls: a single submission but a two-step evaluation



Proposal scored A not-invited for step 2: no reapplication restrictions

Research assessment

Focus on the research project



- First and foremost, applicants will be assessed on the **ambition of their idea** in advancing present-day knowledge in the field.
- The ERC panels will also evaluate the intellectual capacity, creativity, and commitment of the applicant, with a focus on the extent to which they have the excellence and required scientific expertise to successfully execute the proposed project.

Broad assessment of the applicant



- Curriculum Vitae and Track Record: one document, structured.
- **Up to 10 research outputs** that demonstrate how the applicant has advanced knowledge.
- Selected **examples of significant peer recognition**.
- Noteworthy **contributions** to the research community, **career breaks** or unusual **career paths**. These will not in themselves be evaluated but are important to provide context.

Preparing your proposal

In Step 1: Panel members:
Part + CV and Track record

In Step 2: Panel Members & Remote Referees: Part
+ CV and Track record and Part II of the Scientific
Proposal + Resources and Time commitment

Is this a great **idea** that would be worth pursuing?

- ✓ Outline the **current state of knowledge**
- ✓ Is the research idea **advancing** it?
- ✓ Is the research idea **original, creative, ambitious**?
- ✓ Explain **scientific question** and **objectives**
- ✓ What is the **overall approach**/research strategy?
- ✓ Be concise & clear (for generalists)

Can that idea be **implemented** realistically, and if so, in the manner and with the approach that the applicant proposes?

- ✓ Complementary to, but not redundant with Part I
- ✓ Detail the **implementation** (including feasibility)
- ✓ Provide extensive **methodology**
- ✓ Detail the **work plan**
- ✓ Provide **risk assessment**
- ✓ Provide **mitigation** measures
- ✓ Justification requested budget and resources

I have been invited for an interview .. now what?

- Have clear and representative slides and focus on SCIENCE! Don't try to make a business presentation – you are talking to scientists.
 - Get panel interested in **your** ideas & proposal
 - Don't over-explain your CV!
- Anticipate questions
- Know the details of your proposal and methods, as well as your research area – who are your main competitors/collaborators?
- Practice thoroughly; Keep the time; typically, a 5-10 min. presentation followed by 15-20 min. of questions.



Key messages

- If you have an idea that you think will make a significant change in your field of research or some other area, don't exclude yourself from participating in ERC calls
- Be ambitious and "daring", take risks, explain your project's expected high scientific impact, and provide evidence that you can do it
- Look at funded projects in your field (search tool on ERC website), testimonials, tutorials ([ERC homepage](#));
- If you fail, try again! Gain experience from evaluation. Panel feedback is useful and resubmissions have higher success rate - typically 1.5 times higher



Where to find more information?

Videos - [ERC CLASSES - YouTube](#)

- 1 

STARTING YOUR ERC APPLICATION
How can you get started with your ERC proposal?
European Research Council • 8.1K views • 2 months ago
- 2 

WRITING YOUR ERC PROPOSAL
How can you write your ERC proposal?
European Research Council • 9.5K views • 2 months ago
- 3 

EVALUATING YOUR ERC PROPOSAL
How do we evaluate your ERC proposal?
European Research Council • 4.8K views • 2 months ago

- 4 

ERC SYNERGY GRANTS EXPLAINED
What do you need to know about the ERC Synergy Grants?
European Research Council • 2.8K views • 2 months ago
- 5 

PREPARING FOR YOUR ERC INTERVIEW
How can you best prepare for your ERC interview?
European Research Council • 2.3K views • 2 months ago
- 6 

ETHICS AND THE ERC PROPOSAL
Why care about ethics in your ERC proposal?
European Research Council • 1.3K views • 2 months ago
- 7 

HOW TO COMMUNICATE ON YOUR SCIENCE PROJECT
How to communicate on your ERC science project?
European Research Council • 3K views • 2 years ago

Thank You!

More information: erc.europa.eu



Follow us on social media



@ERC_Research



@ERC_Research



European-Research-Council



European Research Council



European Research Council