The European Research Council
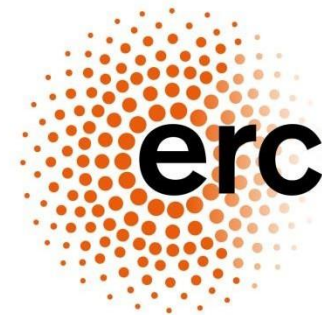
ERC 2023 Proof of Concept

Line Fredslund Volkers (ERCEA)
Call and Project Follow-up Coordination
26 October 2022
NCP ERC DE Webinar

European Research Council
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Proof of Concept

ERC supplementary funding for PIs

Proof of Concept

Size of the grant: **€150 000** (lump sum)
Duration: **18 months**

Demonstrate that the idea funded by the original ERC grant has innovation potential and significant economic or societal benefits

- **One continuous open call**
- **Three cut-off deadlines**
- **30M EUR PoC call budget in 2023 (budget split equally over 3 cut-off deadlines)**

Proof of Concept: Eligibility

- Eligible Principal Investigators **have an ERC grant**, which is either **running** or has **ended/ends after 1 January 2022**

- The PoC idea has to **draw substantially on the ERC funded research**

- Only **one eligible application per PI per year** = per PoC call

- Maximum **3 PoC grants** per ERC StG, CoG or AdG grant (can run in parallel)

- Maximum **6 PoC grants** per ERC SyG (with consent of all SyG PIs)

- The **host institution can be different** than for the main grant; **Additional beneficaries are allowed** as for ERC main grants

- **Same rules regarding portability** of the PoC grant as for main grants

Proof of Concept: Proposal

10 page proposal (excluding references):

1. **The idea** – breakthrough innovation potential (max. 3 pages)
2. **Approach and Methodology** (max. 6 pages)
3. **Principal Investigator - strategic lead and project management** (max. 1 page)

Online administrative submission form A (similar to ERC main grant applications)

Supplementary documents (e.g., Host Institution Support letter, Letters of support or letters of intent)

How to apply for your ERC Proof of Concept Grant

HOW TO APPLY FOR YOUR ERC PROOF OF CONCEPT GRANT

ERC CLASSES

Watch on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_WAkrKgWKs

**Read more:
https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/proof-concept**

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Proof of Concept: Evaluation procedure

Single step evaluation procedure (~100 days from submission to notification):

- Remote evaluation by 5 independent experts in technology transfer and social innovation

- Each evaluation element receives a comment and a mark: *very good*, *good* (*pass*) or *fail*

- No panel meeting discussion – only individual reviews

- Rank listed proposals have to pass all evaluation elements (pass-mark by majority of experts)

- Ranked list established by the marks given by experts to evaluation elements 1, 2 and 3

- Highest weight is given to evaluation element 1 followed by element 2 and then

- Highest ranked proposals within the budget for the evaluation round are main listed

- A short reserve list is created in case of granting failure among the main list projects

PoC revision and novelties
What's new in Horizon Europe PoC?

- <u>Objective</u>: facilitating the exploration of the commercial and social innovation potential of ERC-funded research**.**
  - ➢ **Less of a focus on achieving economic or social impact as a direct result of the grant**;

- <u>Scope enlarged</u>
  - ➢ **to include further research activities needed to explore the innovation potential of the idea proposed;**

- <u>Evaluation based on the sole criterion of excellence</u>, comprising:
  - ➢ **Breakthrough innovation potential,**
  - ➢ **Approach and methodology,**
  - ➢ **Principal Investigator: capacity and commitmen**t;

- <u>Data Management Plan</u> now required (within 6 months from project start).

- <u>Gender Equality Plan</u> required at the signature of the grant

PoC changes in 2023 WP

1. In correspondence with the first evaluation element (1.a) "high risk/high gain" <u>of the idea,</u> Part B of the proposal was actually referring to the "risk mitigation plan":
   - ✓ text of the WP on high-risk/high-gain simplified and text of Part B moved to the question on management of the project

2. Element 1.b "Approach and methodology" of the WP:
   - ➢ simplified through deletion of the first sentence on feasibility -reference to feasibility added to the question on timescale and resources
   - ➢ in the corresponding point in Part B, added request to describe the choice of pathway from research to innovation (asked by many of the evaluators)

3. Last evaluation element ("PI Capacity and Commitment"):
   - • in WP changed to "Principal Investigator - Strategic Lead and Project-management" and addition of the "risk and contingency measure"

PoC changes in 2023 WP – Seal of Excellence

- [ERC Work Programme 2023 p. 54](#)

> 'A Seal of Excellence will be awarded to proposals that have received a pass mark in all three of the evaluation elements set out in this Work Programme, but cannot be funded due to lack of budget available to the call.'

The Seal of Excellence will be provided automatically to the applicants when they receive the evaluation outcome in the F & T Portal (with the rejection letter). To be eligible for a Seal of Excellence you must give consent to sharing some basic information about your application with other funding and support organisations.

Guidance from RTD will be provided as to where the applicants can search for funding of their project from other sources.

Information on funding bodies that recognise and support Seal of Excellence projects is available at:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/seal excellence/

Proof of Concept: Calendar for 2023

ERC calls	Call Opening	Submission Deadline
Starting Grants ERC-2023-StG	**12/07/2022**	**25/10/2022**
Consolidator Grants ERC-2023-CoG	**28/09/2022**	**02/02/2023**
Advanced Grants ERC-2023-AdG	08/12/2022	23/05/2023
Proof of Concept ERC-2023-PoC	20/10/2022	24/01/2023 20/04/2023 14/09/2023
Synergy Grants ERC-2023-SyG	13/07/2022	08/11/2022

Proof of Concept and EIC

PoC grantees are eligible for EIC Transition calls

Single applicants (SMEs, spin-offs, start-ups, research organisations, universities) or small consortia (max 5 partners) may apply. Consortia can apply for 2.5 M€ grants (or more if justified). Call budget in 2022 is 131 M€.

Applicationsare restricted to results generated by the following eligible projects:

• EIC Pathfinder projects

• ERANETs projects under the FET programme

• European Research Council (ERC) Proof of Concept projects

Applicants will need to demonstrate that are the owner or holder of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), or have the necessary rights to commercialise the results from one of these eligible projects. EIC provides a list of potential eligible projects every year. More information on EIC Transition (europa.eu) including on the EIC Business Acceleration Services support.

PoC eligibility for EIC Transition calls – 2021 results

	PoC	PATHFINDER (and ERAnet)	TOTAL
ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS	104	127	231
FUNDED PROJECTS	25	17 (Pathfinder)	42
SUCCESS RATE (funded/total eligible proposals)	10.8%	7.4%	18.2%
RELATIVE SUCCESS RATE	24%	13%	

EIC – 2021 succesful proposals by origin

Stemming from PoC 60%

Stemming from Pathfinder 40%
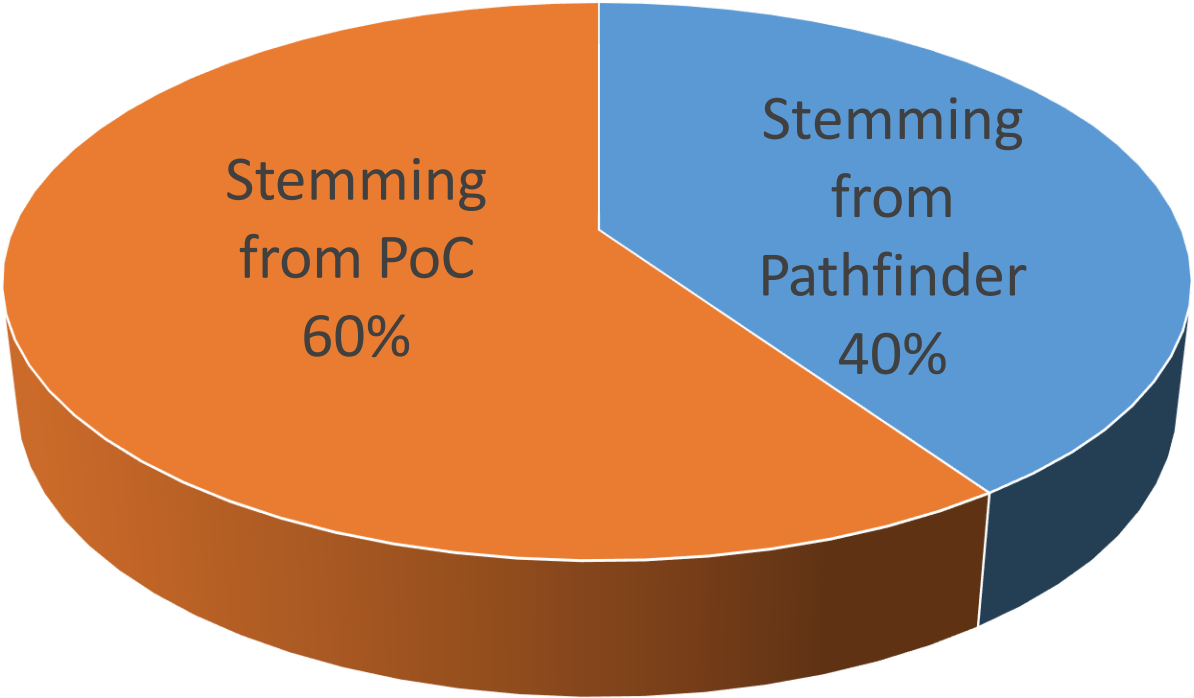
EIC – 2021 succesful proposals of PoC origin by original main grant
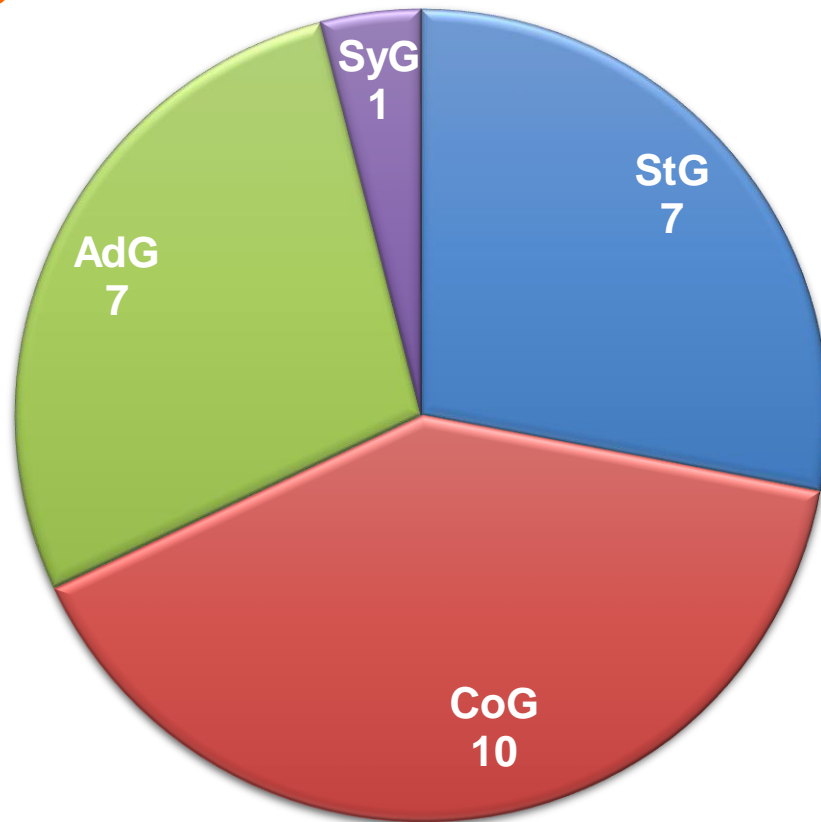
ERC survey on start-up creation and knowledge transfer
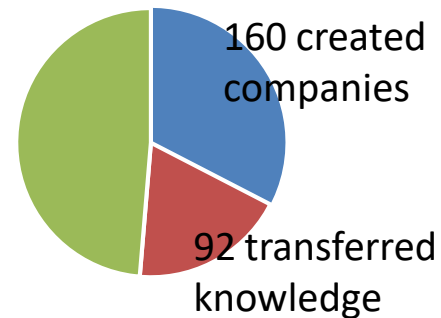
Two main questions:

1. *Have the results of your ERC-funded research directly contributed to the creation of a new company?*

2. *Have the results of your ERC-funded research been transferred to a preexisting company?*

4875 PIs responded to the Survey

4384 without PoC

113 created companies

199 transferred knowledge

491 with PoC

160 created companies

92 transferred knowledge
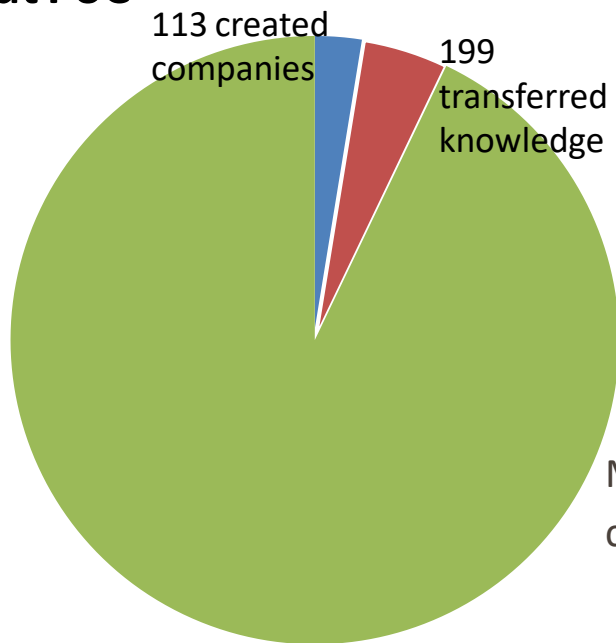
More than 11% of respondents either created companies or transferred the results

➢ More than 50% of PIs with a PoC

➢ Around 7% of PIs without a PoC

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Number of companies created

- 273 PIs (5.6% of respondents) reported creation of **317 companies** (9 of them being established or be started soon)

  ➢ 160 PoC holders (33%) created 195 companies (2 established soon)

  ➢ 113 Grantees without PoC (3%) created 122 companies (7 in the process of creation)
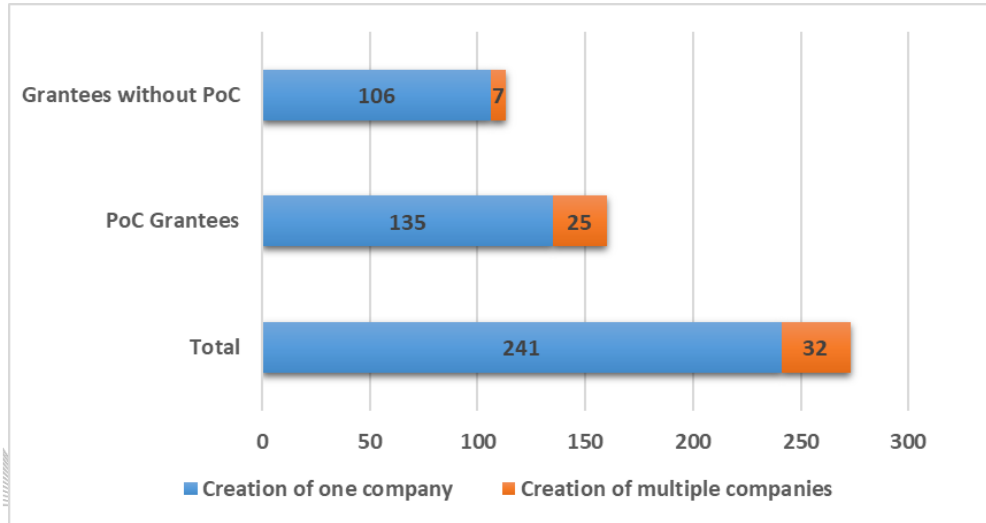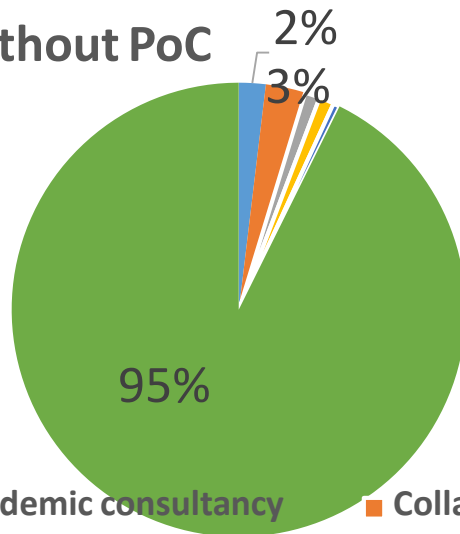
32 PIs created more than one company (11.7%),

25 of them are PoC holders (15.6%) and

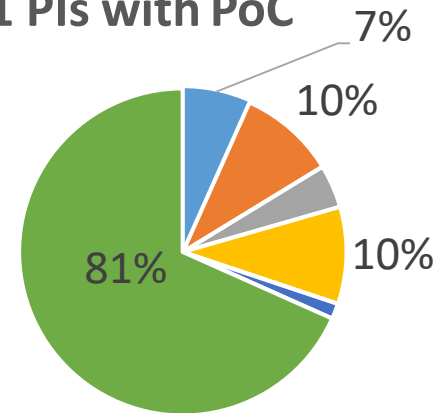7 of them are grantees without PoC (6.2%)

Have the results of your ERC-funded research been transferred to a preexisting company?

291 PIs (6% of respondents) reported transfer of results to a pre-existing company
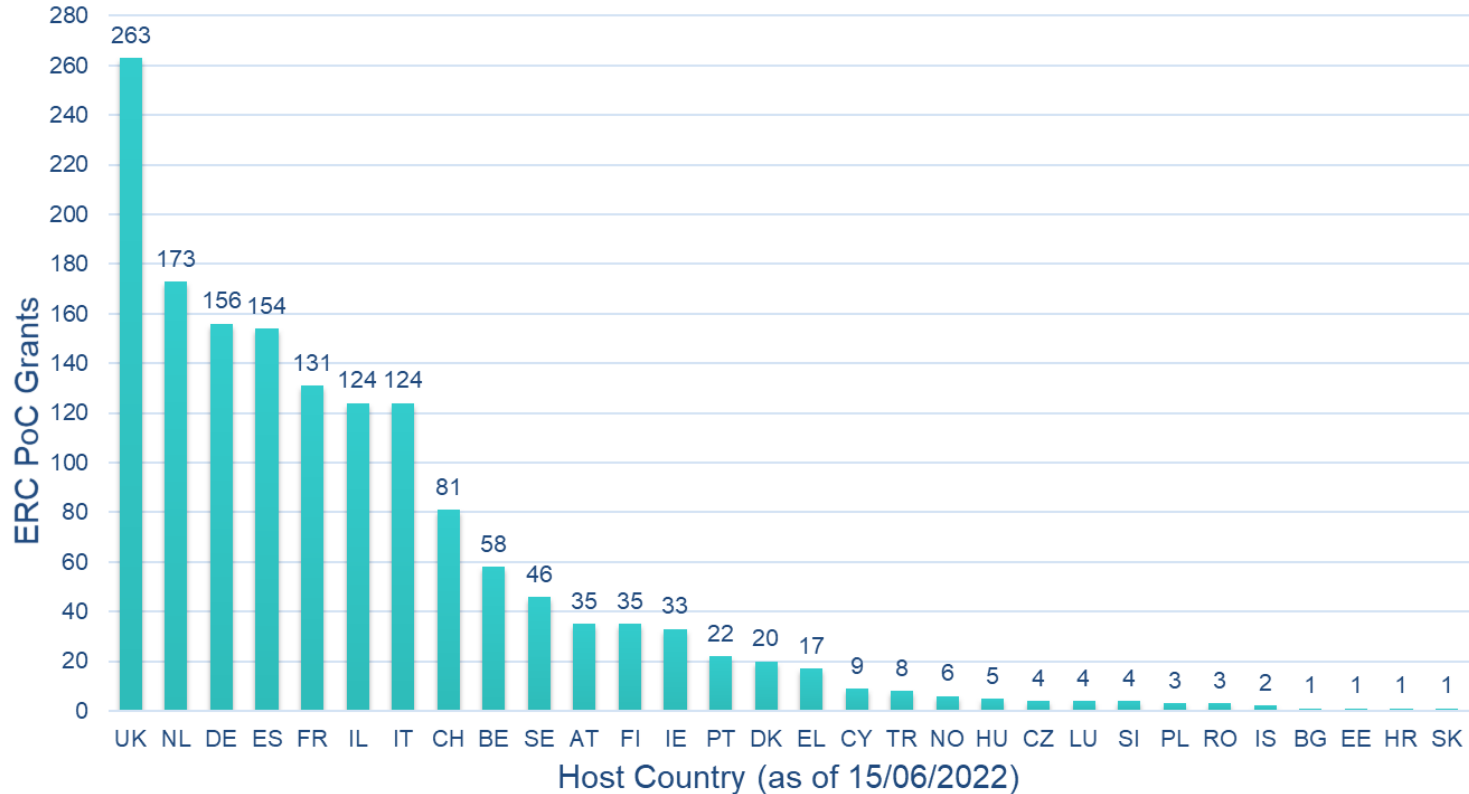
4384 PIs without PoC

2%
3%
95%

491 PIs with PoC

7%
10%
10%
81%

■ Academic consultancy ■ Collaborative research
■ Contract research ■ IP licensing
■ Other ■ None

Proof of Concept Statistics

Proof of Concept: Funded projects 2011-2022

# PoC 2022-1 submissions and results

Call budget: 25 M€

| Domain of grant	Evaluated	Ineligible	Funded	Gender success rate		
				F	M	X
Physical Sciences and Engineering	180		91	63.3%	48.3%	0.0%
Life Sciences	111		54	54.5%	45.5%	50.0%
Social Sciences and Humanities	52		18	47.8%	25.9%	0.0%
Synergy	5		3		60.0%	
Total	348	3	166	55.8%	45.3%	25.0%
Success rate			48%			

PoC 2022-1 funded proposals by host country
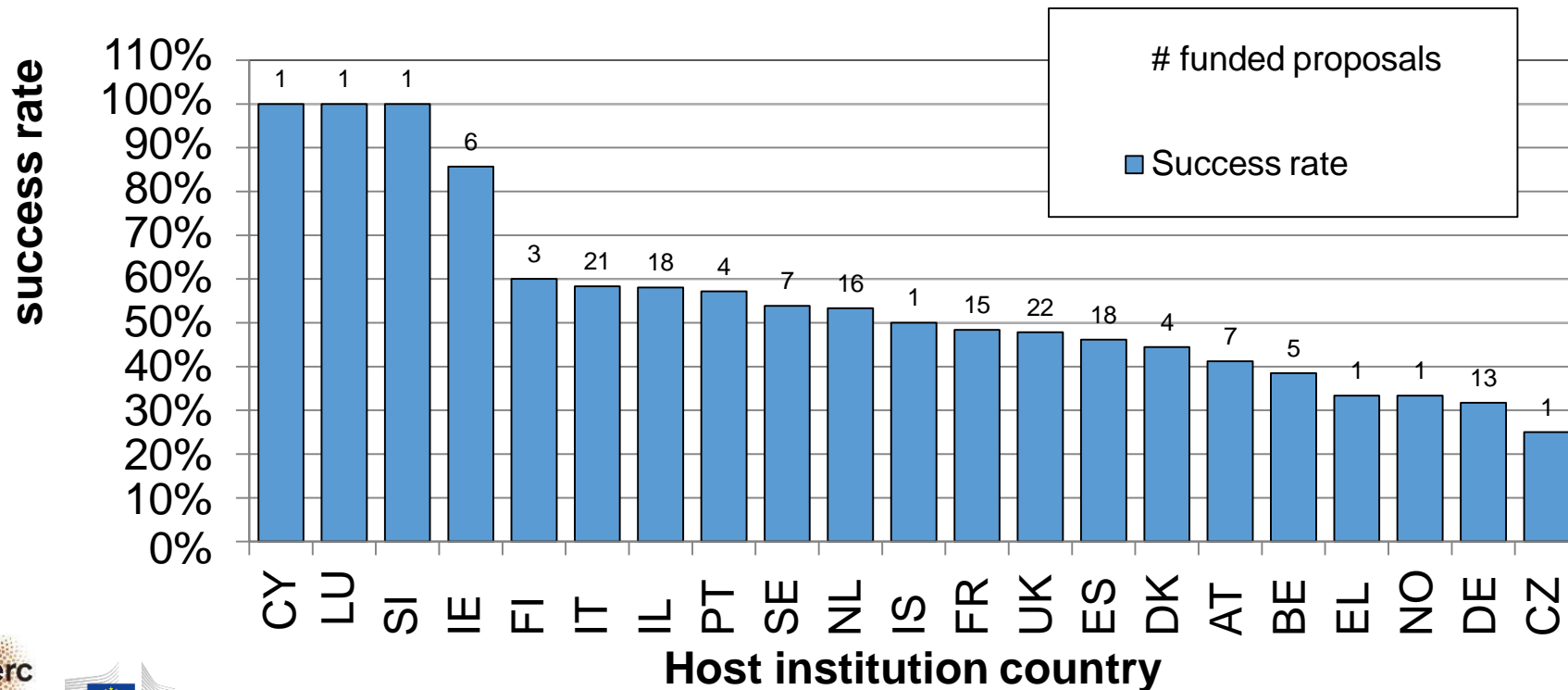
PoC 2022-1 funded proposals by panel
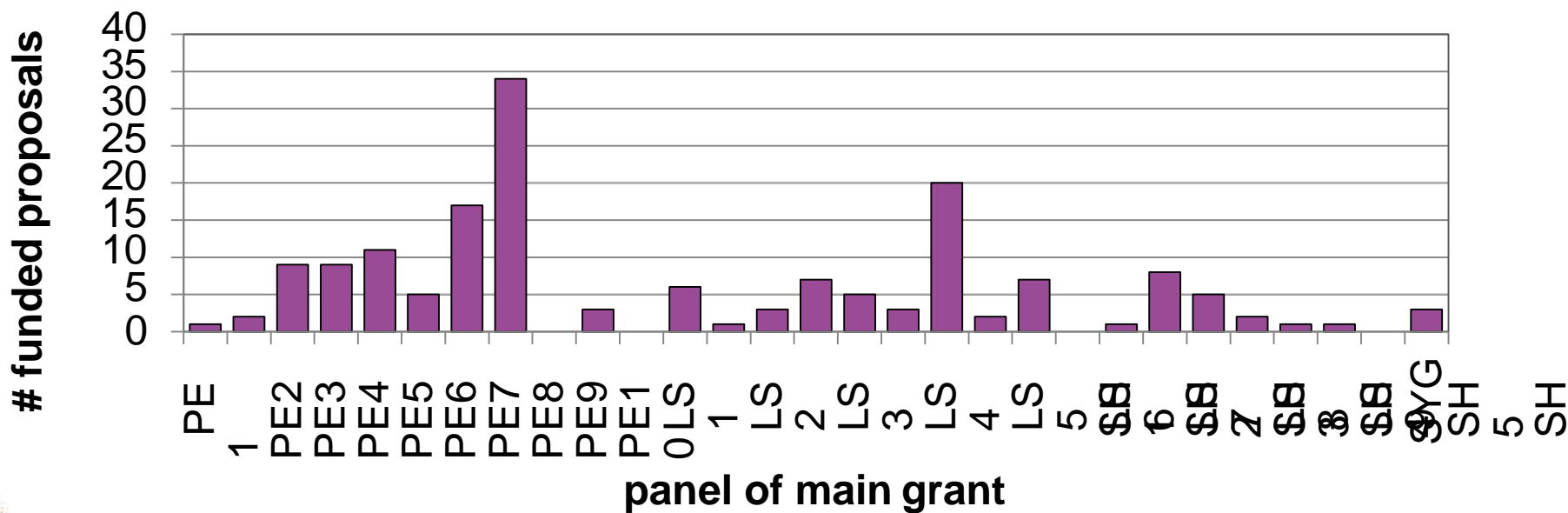
PoC 2022-1 funded proposals by call of original grant
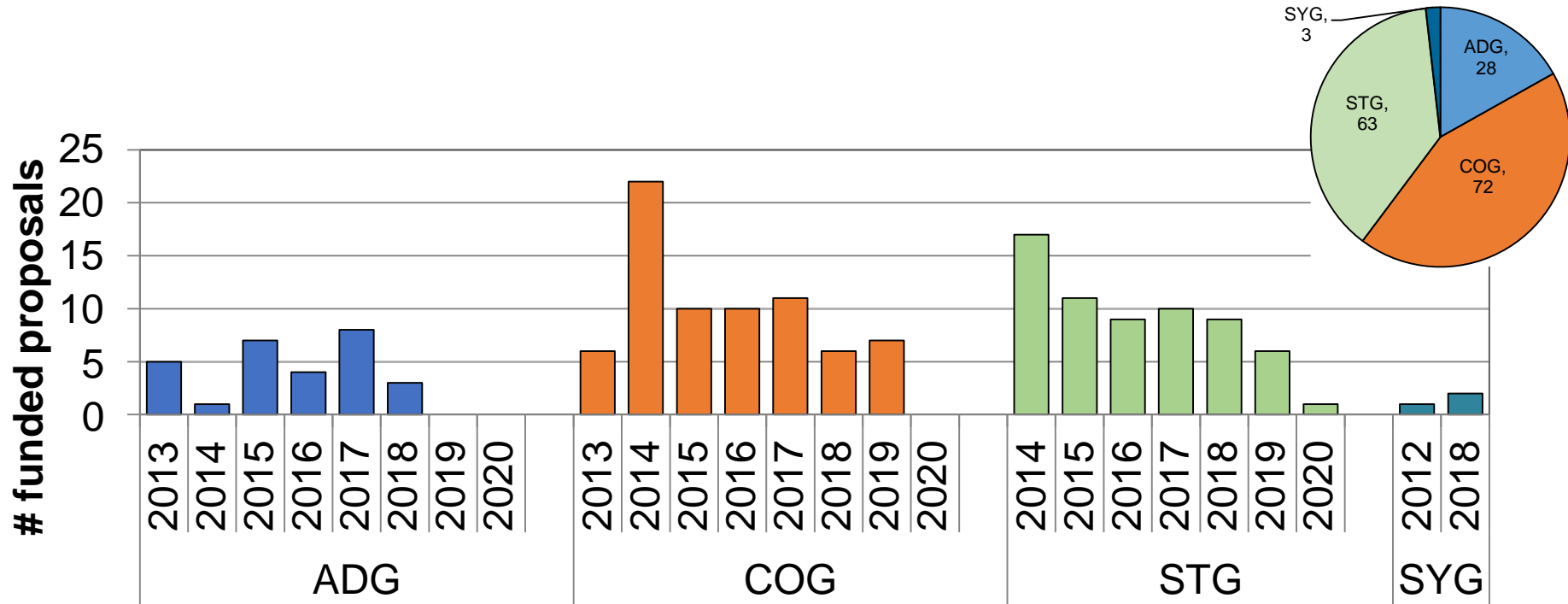
Thank You!

Contact the ERC Proof of Concept team on
ERC-POC-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

More information: erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/proof-concept

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