

The European Research Council

ERC Synergy grants & Novelties in 2026 call

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ERC.B.2 - Call and Project Follow-up Co-ordination Unit

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European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Overview

- About the ERC and its funding schemes
- Data on funded proposals of the Synergy 2024 call
- Changes in the Work Programme 2025 and 2026
- ERC Synergy grant features & proposal structure
- Evaluation criteria, process and timeline
- Hints and tips



ERC Grant Schemes

Starting Grants

2-7 years after PhD
up to € 1.5 + 2 Mio
for 5 years



50%



50%

Consolidator Grants

7-12 years after PhD
up to € 2 + 2 Mio
for 5 years



40%



50%

Advanced Grants

track-record of significant
research achievements
up to € 2.5 + 2 Mio
for 5 years



30%



50%

Synergy Grants

2 – 4 Principal Investigators
any career stage
up to € 10.0 + 4 Mio for 6 years

1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated Country



30%



50%, except
non-EU/AC PI

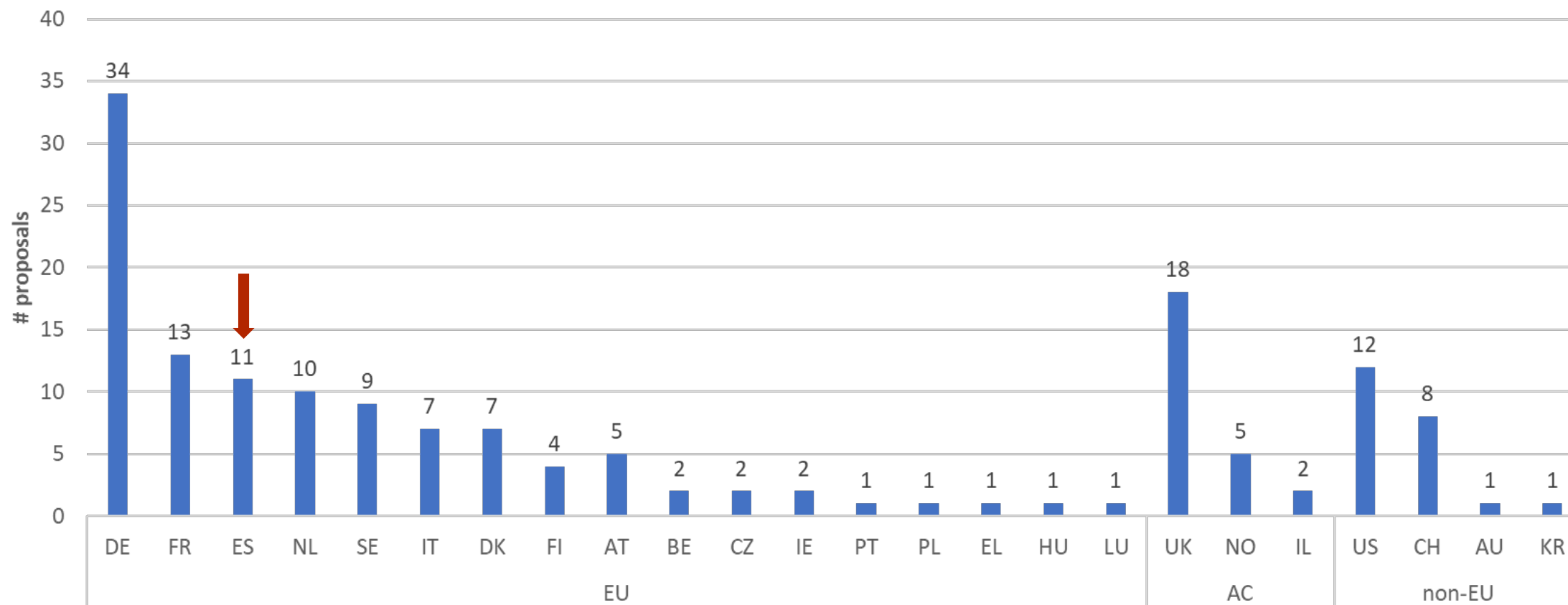
Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable or social innovation
lump sum €150,000 for ERC grant holders



ERC SyG2024

Number of proposals funded per country

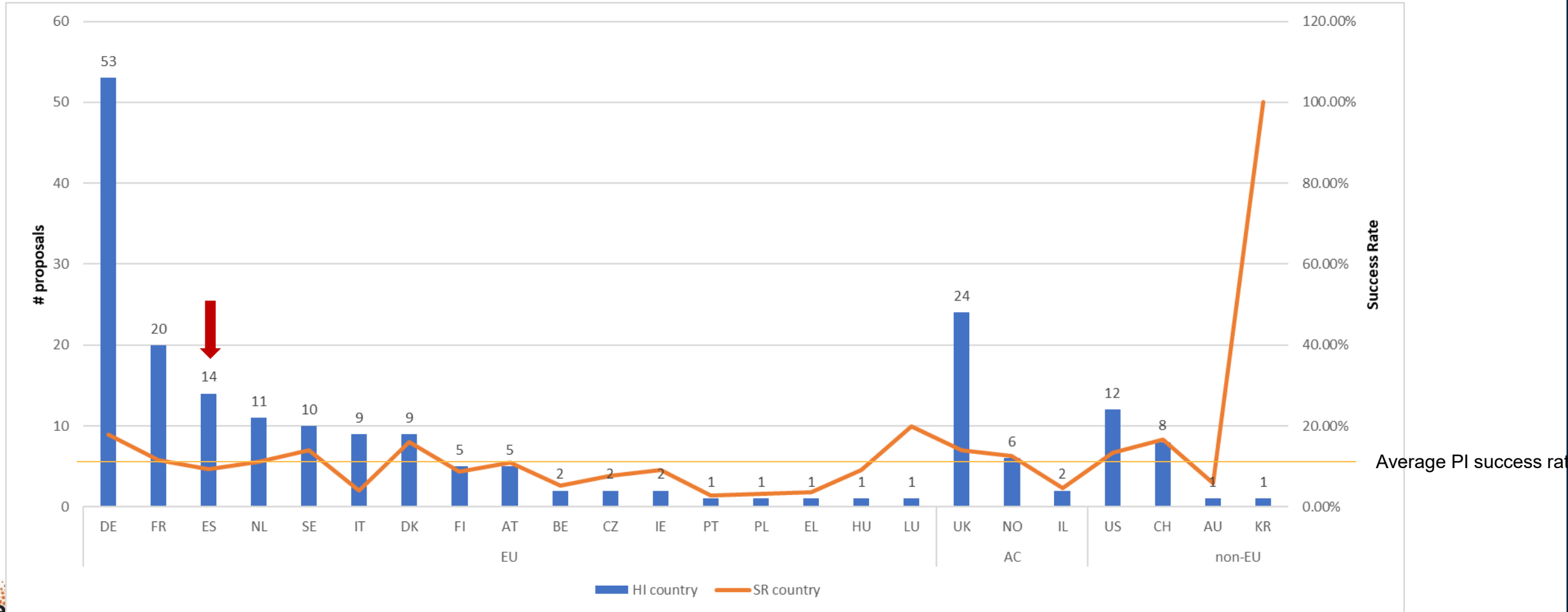


- 22/57 funded proposals have Host institutions outside EU or Associated Countries
- 6 proposals funded in widening countries: 2 CZ, 1PT, 1PL, 1EL, 1HU

ERC SyG2024

Success rate of PIs per host country

201 Principal Investigators funded in the 57 proposals



32 other countries that submitted proposals had no successful Principal Investigators

ERC Work Programme 2026 – Call Calendar

	Starting Grant Call	Consolidator Grant Call	Advanced Grant Call	Synergy Grant Call
Identifier	ERC-2026-StG	ERC-2026-CoG	ERC-2026-AdG	ERC-2026-SyG
Opening Date	09/07/2025	25/09/2025	28/05/2026	10/07/2025
Deadline	14/10/2025	13/01/2026	27/08/2026	05/11/2025
Budget (EUR, m)	705	673	747	500
Grants (est.)	450	328	294	49



Novelties applicable since the SyG2024 call (1)

CVs and Track records

- **CV & Track Record templates** are combined + simplified

⇒ broad assessment of the Principal Investigator

4 pages in total / PI

- List of up to ten research outputs that demonstrate how the applicants have advanced knowledge in their field, with an emphasis on more recent achievements, and a list of selected examples of significant peer recognition (for example, prizes).
- Applicants will be able to **add short narrative descriptions** to explain information provided: the significance of the selected outputs, the applicant's role in producing each of them, and how the applicant has demonstrated their capacity to successfully carry out the proposed project
- Applicants are invited to explain **career breaks or unconventional career paths &**
- Applicants can describe **exceptional contributions** to research community



Novelties applicable since the SyG2024 call (2)

Evaluation procedure

- Proposals **continue to be evaluated by peer review panels** composed of leading scientists and scholars using sole criterion of scientific excellence
- New scoring introduced at step 1: A not invited- *‘A not invited is of excellent quality but not ranked sufficiently high to pass to step 2 of the evaluation’*
 - A candidate whose proposal is scored A at step 1 of the evaluation, but not taken to the following step, will be free to submit a proposal in the following year’s calls.
- Cap on the number of proposals passing to step 2 in Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants calls: **at most 44 proposals can be passed to step 2 of the evaluation. For SyG (x7 call budget).**



Novelties applicable since the SyG2024 call (3)

Revised evaluation questions;

Explicitly evaluating primarily the research project

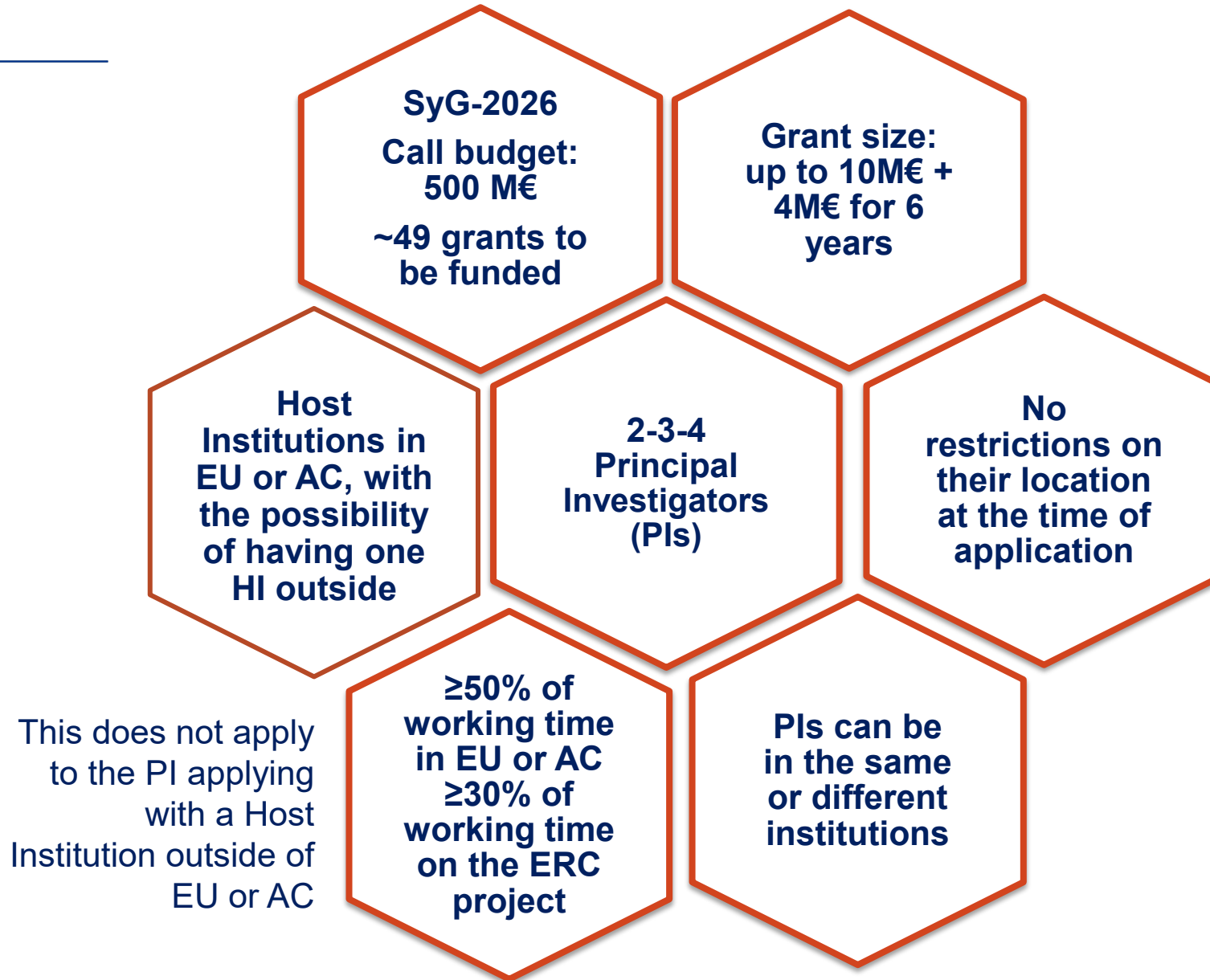
- Explicitly **weighing the project proposal more** than past achievements of the applicants during evaluation
- **Evaluation questions have been revised** (no question any longer on high risk/ high gain aspect, neither on development of novel methodology:

focus rather on the extent of the ground-breaking nature and ambition of the proposed research).

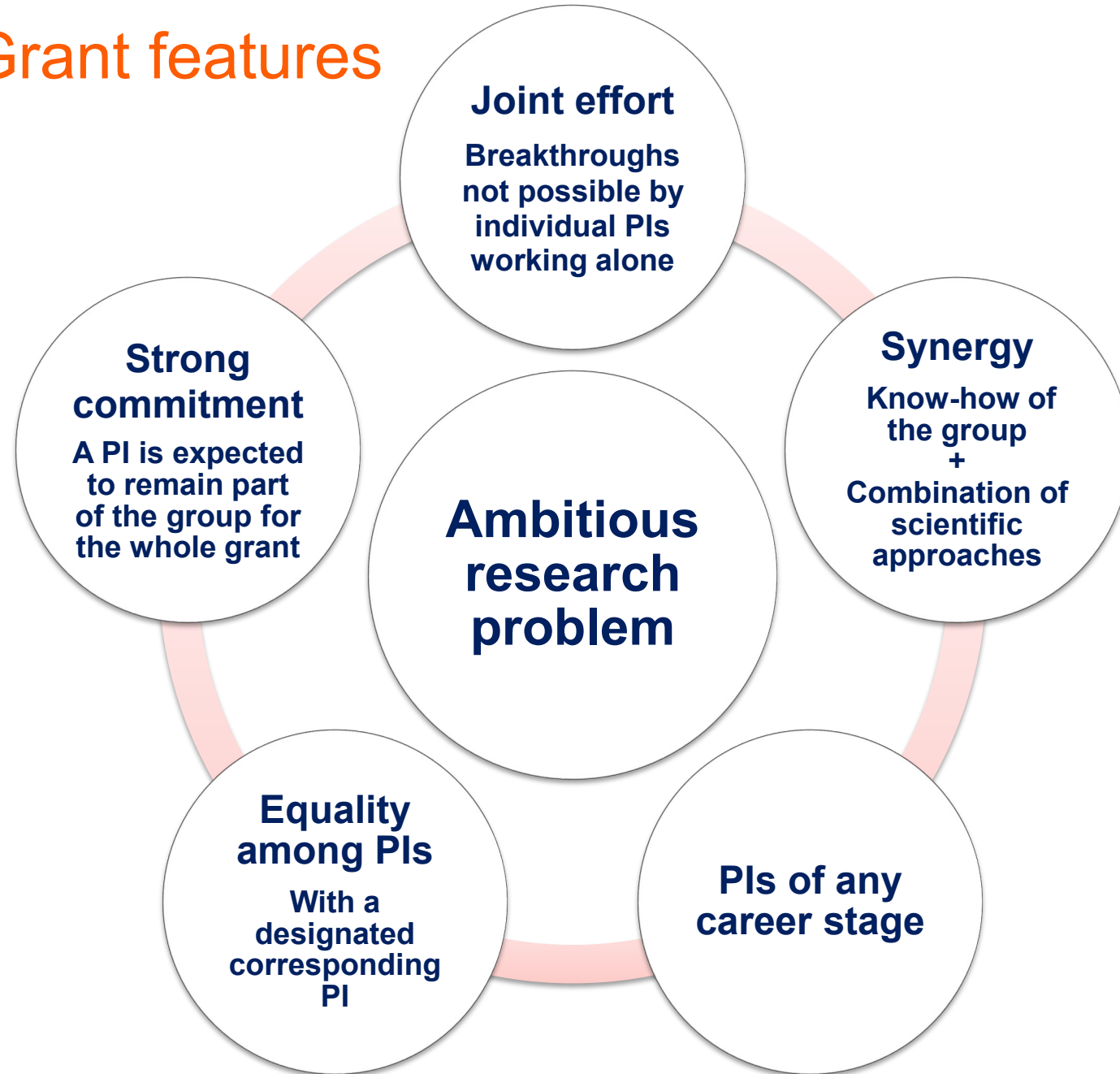
Novelties applicable in SyG2026 call

- Grant application
- Evaluation
- Resubmission restrictions
- Additional funding
- New funding instrument
- [Changes to the 2026 and 2027 Work Programmes|ERC](#)

Design of the Synergy call 2026



ERC Synergy Grant features



ERC Synergy Grant features

Synergy aspects

**NOT
SYNERGY**

Loose cooperation or
networking between PIs

Simple passing of data or
information from one team
to another

Note: The proposed work does not need to cover more than one
discipline or field to be considered for the Synergy grants



ERC Synergy - Proposal Structure

In Step 1 only part I is reviewed.

Administrative data and eligibility are checked by ERC staff.

Administrative forms (Part A)

- 1 – General information
 - 2 – Administrative data of organisations
 - 3 – Budget
 - 4 – Ethics
 - 5 – Call specific questions
- 4-6 ERC keywords are selected, panels are not defined at submission*

Annexes

Commitment of ALL the Host Institutions, ethics docs, etc.

Check out the templates in the submission system on the Funding & Tenders portal

Part B1 (submitted as pdf)

Evaluated in Step 1 & Step 2 & Step 3

a – Part I of the Scientific proposal (formerly Extended synopsis) : 5 pages

b – Curriculum vitae & Track-record

4 pages per PI
Templates available on the F&T portal

Part B2 (submitted as pdf)

NOT evaluated in Step 1 (only in Step 2 & 3)

Part II of the Scientific proposal: 10 pages

- Methodology, work plan, risk assessment and mitigating measures

– Resources:

- justification of resources in part II
- **NEW: separate Budget table annex with the budget breakdown per PI**



Submission restrictions for the SyG2026 call

When checking for a rule look for the **call year** (in the title of the call), not calendar year.

Evaluation		Can a PI apply to		
Result of SyG 2025	Step	StG/CoG call in 2026?	AdG call in 2026?	SyG call in 2026?
C (also in 2024)	1	yes	yes	no
B	1	yes	yes	no
B	2	yes	yes	yes
A or B	3	yes	yes	yes

Applicants to previous StG/CoG/AdG ERC calls can apply to the SyG2026 call regardless of the score received previously.

To be eligible for SyG 2026: a **running ERC grant has to end before November 2027**

A PI can be part of only one application published under the same Work Programme regardless of the call. The first application will be considered, the subsequent ones will be declared ineligible.



Evaluation

Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion; focus on the project

Be familiar with the evaluation questions in the Work Programme or in the Information for applicants to the Synergy grants call.

1. EXCELLENCE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

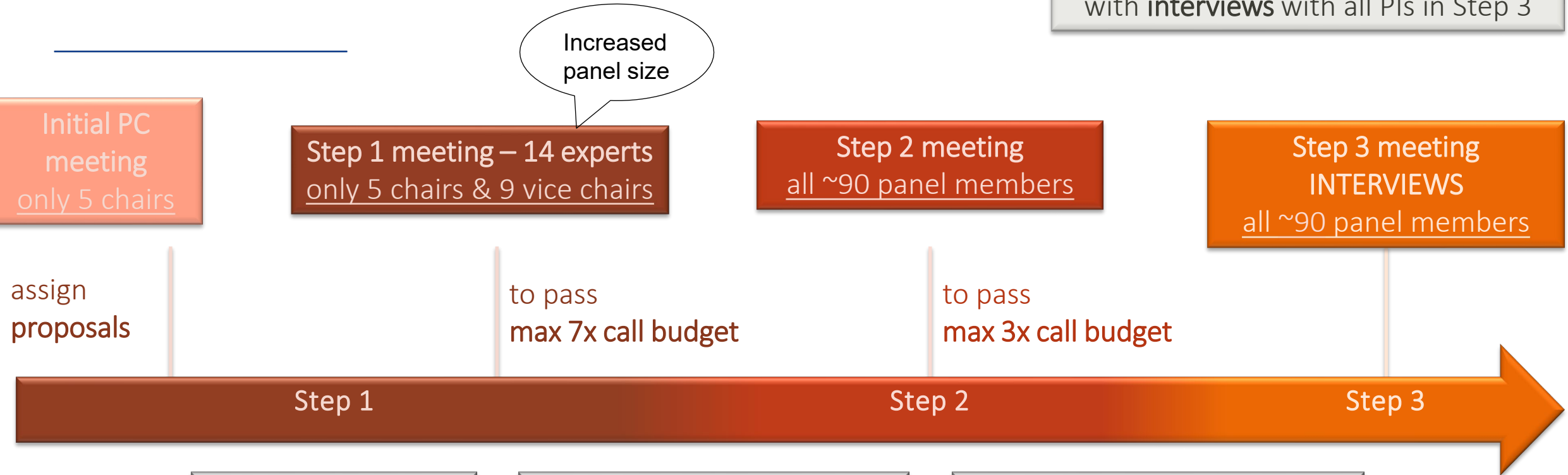
- Ground breaking nature
- Potential impact
- Scientific approach
- Synergetic aspects
- In **step 1 no details on feasibility are requested**, instead a convincing overall research strategy is needed=> methodology and feasibility in step 2 and 3 (in part II)
- Resources are **not** assessed in step 1

2. EXCELLENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

- Each PI assessed according to their career benchmarks
- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment => evaluated in step 2 and 3 only (information in part II)

Evaluation Process Overview – SyG 2025

3-STEP EVALUATION
with interviews with all PIs in Step 3



Remote Phase 1

Review Part B1
by ~90 PMs & ~150 PEVs*
as generalists: ~ 5
reviews/proposal

Remote Phase 2

Review Part B1 + B2
by ~90 PMs as generalists
& ~4-6 External Reviewers
per proposal as specialists:
~8-12 reviews/proposal

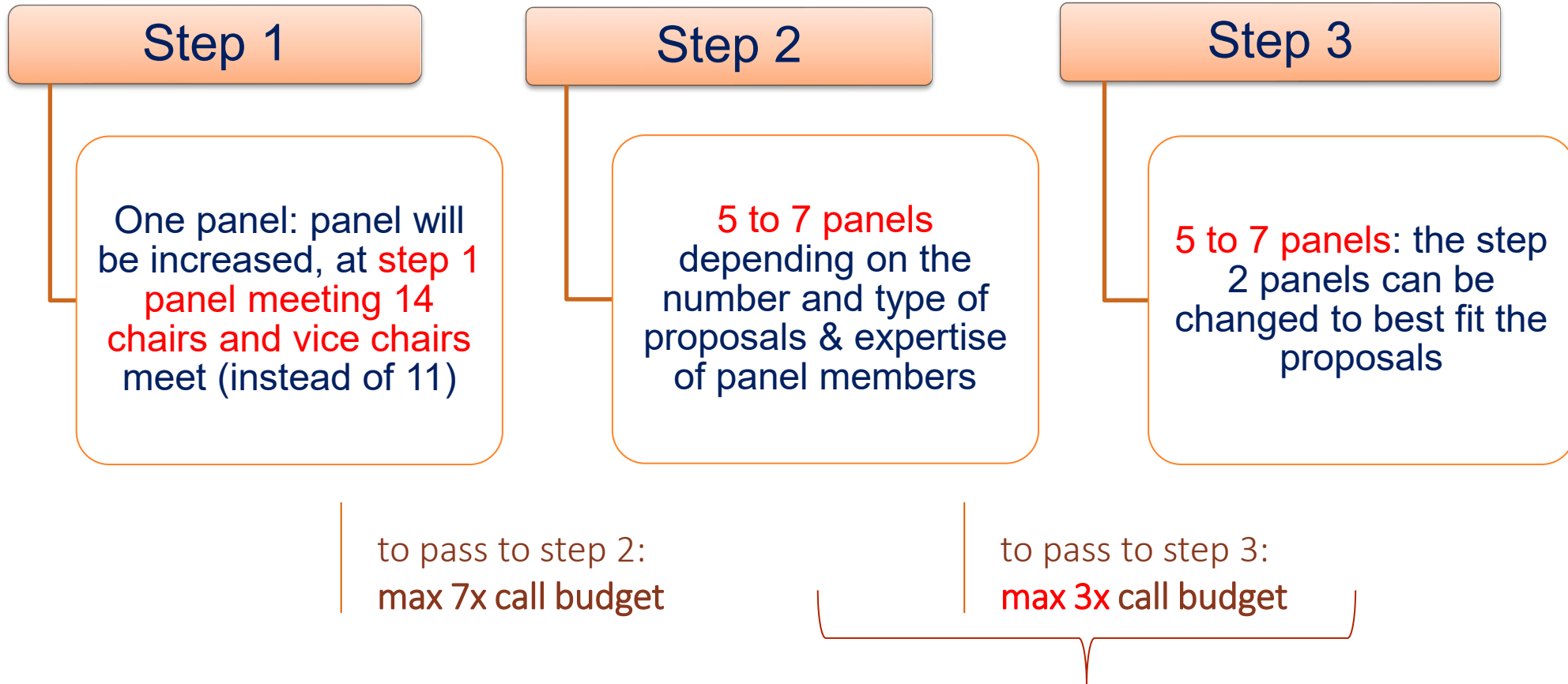
Remote Phase 3

Preparation of interview questions
& strategy (NO new reviews)

PM = panel member

*PEV = panel evaluator
(panel member serving in another ERC call)

Changes in the Synergy 2025 Evaluation Process



The number and the composition of the interdisciplinary Step 2 panels are defined only when we know what type of proposals remain in evaluation after each step

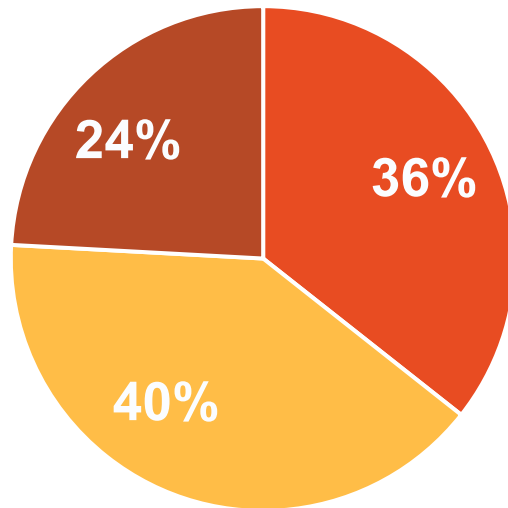
Who is evaluating Synergy proposals?

SyG 2024 - Evaluators' profiles (provisional data)

Step 1: Remote Evaluation – all experts in one panel

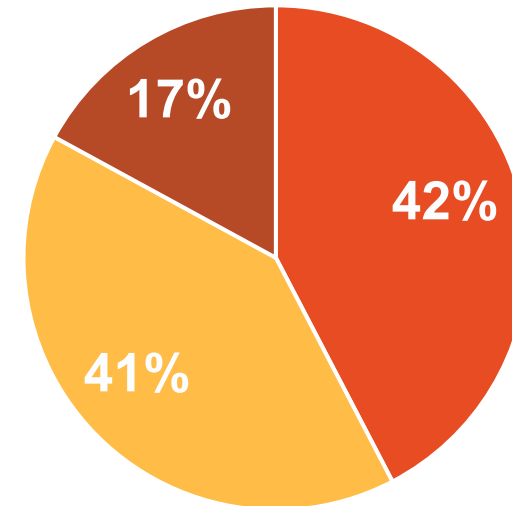
257 Reviewers; 36 Nationalities; 174 Men and 83 Women (32%)

87 Panel Members Including 5
Chairs and Vice Chairs



■ LS ■ PE ■ SH

170 Panel Evaluators (PMs of
other ERC calls)



■ LS ■ PE ■ SH



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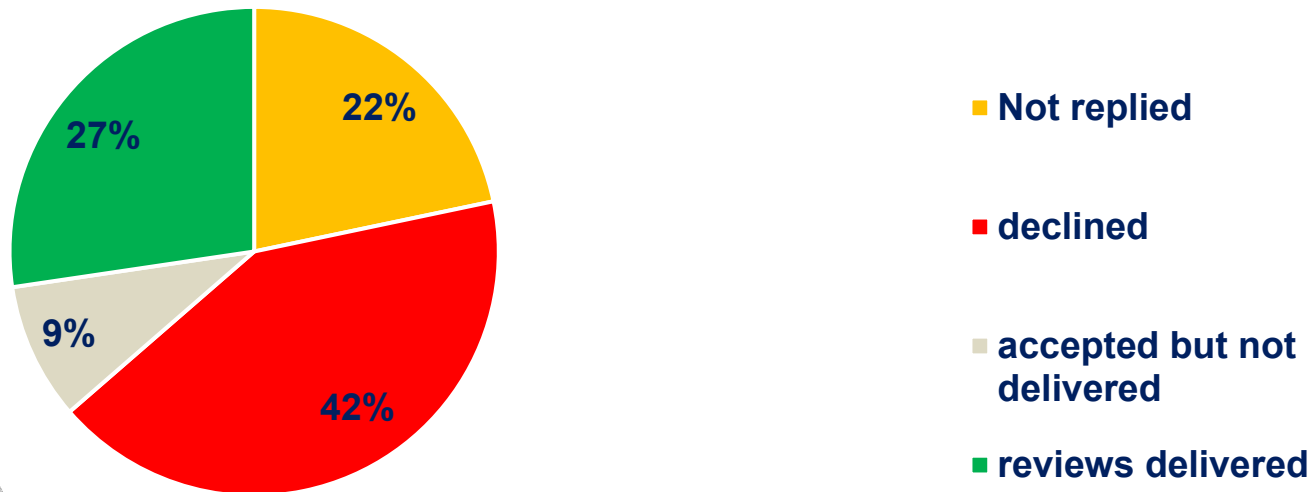
ERC SyG2024 Data on step 2 panels

Overview reviewers

Number and type of reviewers in step 2 – all panels

- Panel members in step 2: 87 in 5 panels
- Remote referees: 6113 invited – 1671 reviews submitted
- Each proposal has between 8 and 18 reviews:
 - Panel members between 4 to 7 reviews per proposal
 - Remote referees and panel evaluators: between 3 to 11 reviews

External reviewer recruitment statistics



3074 Reviews
submitted for 278
proposals

Hints and tips

Preparing an application

Differences in Part I and Part II

In **Step 1: Panel members (act as generalists)** they see **only Part I** of your proposal: Prepare it accordingly, make sure it is accessible to non-specialists!

- Pay particular attention to the **ground-breaking nature** of the research project – no incremental research. State-of-the-art is not enough. Think big!
- For SyG: Synergetic aspects important – **know-how of the group** is assessed together with the **combination** of the scientific elements
- Know your competitors – what is the **state of knowledge** and why is your idea and scientific approach outstanding?
- **Only the Part I is read at Step 1: concise and clear presentation** is crucial (feasibility is not assessed at step 1)

Hints and tips

Preparing an application

Differences in Part I and Part I

In **Step 2** : Both Part I and II are sent to specialists around the world (**specialised external referees**)

- Do not just repeat the part I in part II
- Provide **sufficient detail** on methodology, work plan, selection of case studies etc. (10 pages) (references do not count towards page limit)
- Check coherency of figures in part II and in the administrative part, **justify requested resources** (outside of 10 pages) – pay attention to the calculations and provide budget for each of the PIs – use the Budget table annex provided
- Explain **involvement of additional team members** (it is possible to have further beneficiaries/partners in the project) – their budget has to be included under a PI's budget in the Budget table annex
- Funding ID to be filled in carefully for each PI



In Step 3: no new reviews are written, but part B1 and B2 are re-assessed

Hints and tips

Summing-up

- Have an **original and exciting idea** that requires the **joint effort** of 2 or 3 or 4 PIs
- **Design a research project** to implement the idea
 - It is not about a consortium, but about a tight-knit small group of PIs and their teams. The PIs are equal and indispensable for the project!
- Get a **letter of support for each PI** from their **Host Institution**
- If you have submitted previously to ERC Synergy grant check the resubmission restrictions before applying
- **Write** the research proposal (carefully plan the resources). Choose carefully the 4-6 keywords and abstract: applications are not submitted to panels used in the individual grants
- Read carefully the **evaluation criteria** and try to ensure that the reviewers can find the answers to them in your proposal (part II is not a mere repetition of part B1)
- **Get feedback** from your peers; have mock interviews if you passed to step 3
- Don't underestimate the **obstacle of different scientific languages** when you are merging fields
- **Submit** your research proposal **before the deadline** -> fully electronic/web-based submission system – try to avoid submitting on the last day

Take home messages – ERC Synergy grants

The end result should be more than the mere sum of the parts.

Competitive call (expected success rate of 7% in SyG2025)

- Only exceptional proposals are likely to be funded that will demonstrate that the **truly ambitious** research questions could lead to breakthroughs **only through the joint effort** of the group of PIs.

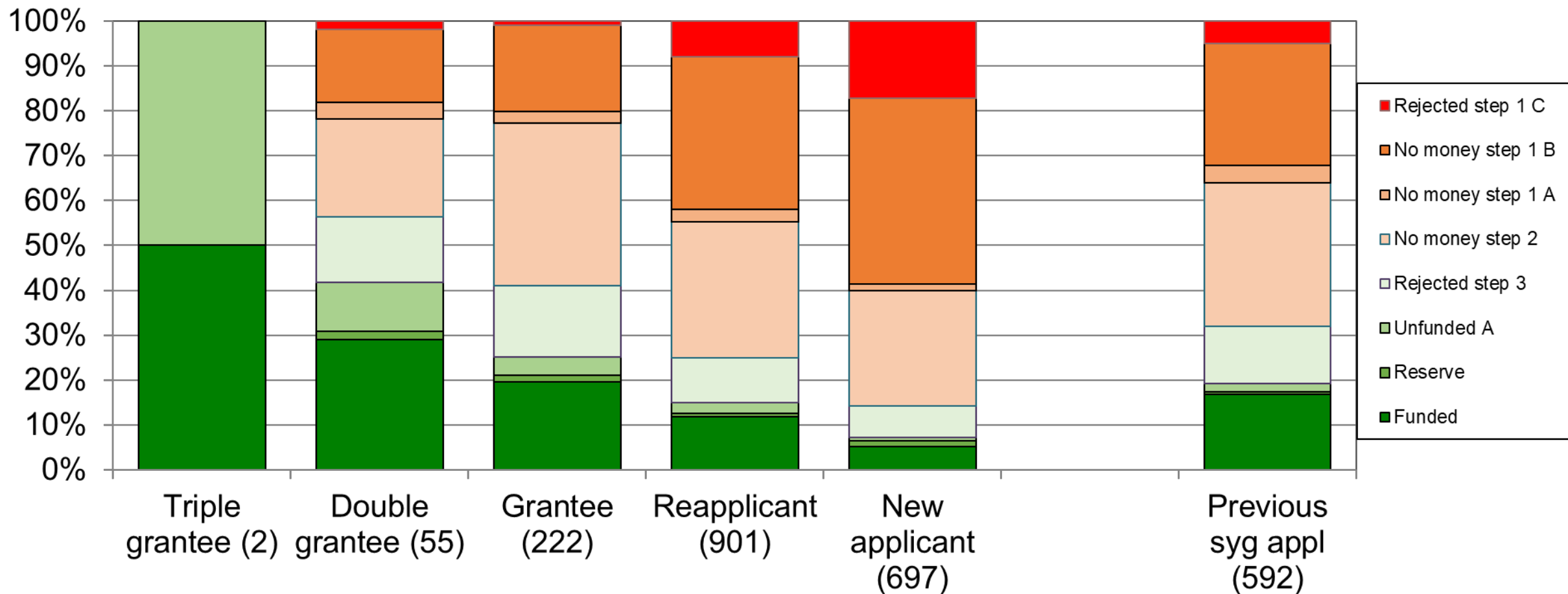
‘Synergy’ does not mean a loose consortium and is not the end goal

- The interaction would yield something more than just the sum of the individual parts.
- To yield possibly either unforeseen, completely new science, to cross fertilize disciplines or to solve important research problems that until now could not be dreamt of solving.

Early career applicants are encouraged to apply

ERC SyG2024

Proposal results by applicant type



- 48% of PIs funded applied previously to a Synergy grant.
- Previous Synergy applicants are >3x more successful than first time applicants

Further advice

1. Consult call documents (Work Programme, Information for Applicants, [ERC classes](#))
2. Information and videos on Synergy grants on the ERC website: <https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/synergy-grant>
3. Look at funded projects in your field (search tool on ERC website), testimonials, tutorials ([ERC homepage](#))
4. Register early on the F&T Portal in the submission system
5. Have your documentation ready
6. Contact the ERCEA and ask all your questions well ahead of the submission deadline:
SyG mailbox: ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu
7. Get the written consent of your collaborators before the submission deadline (a simple email exchange is OK)



Thank You!

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