



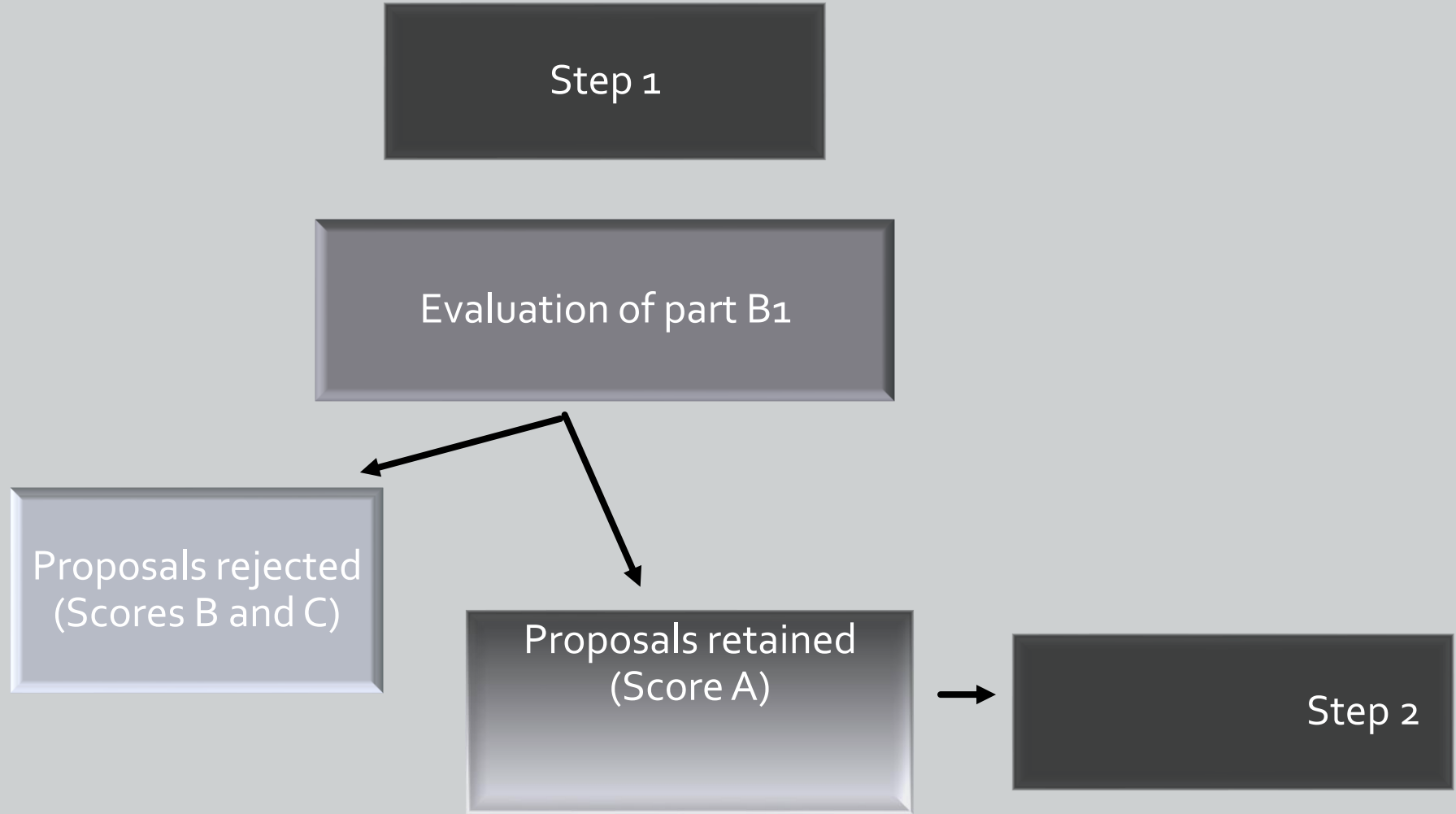
Coaching session:

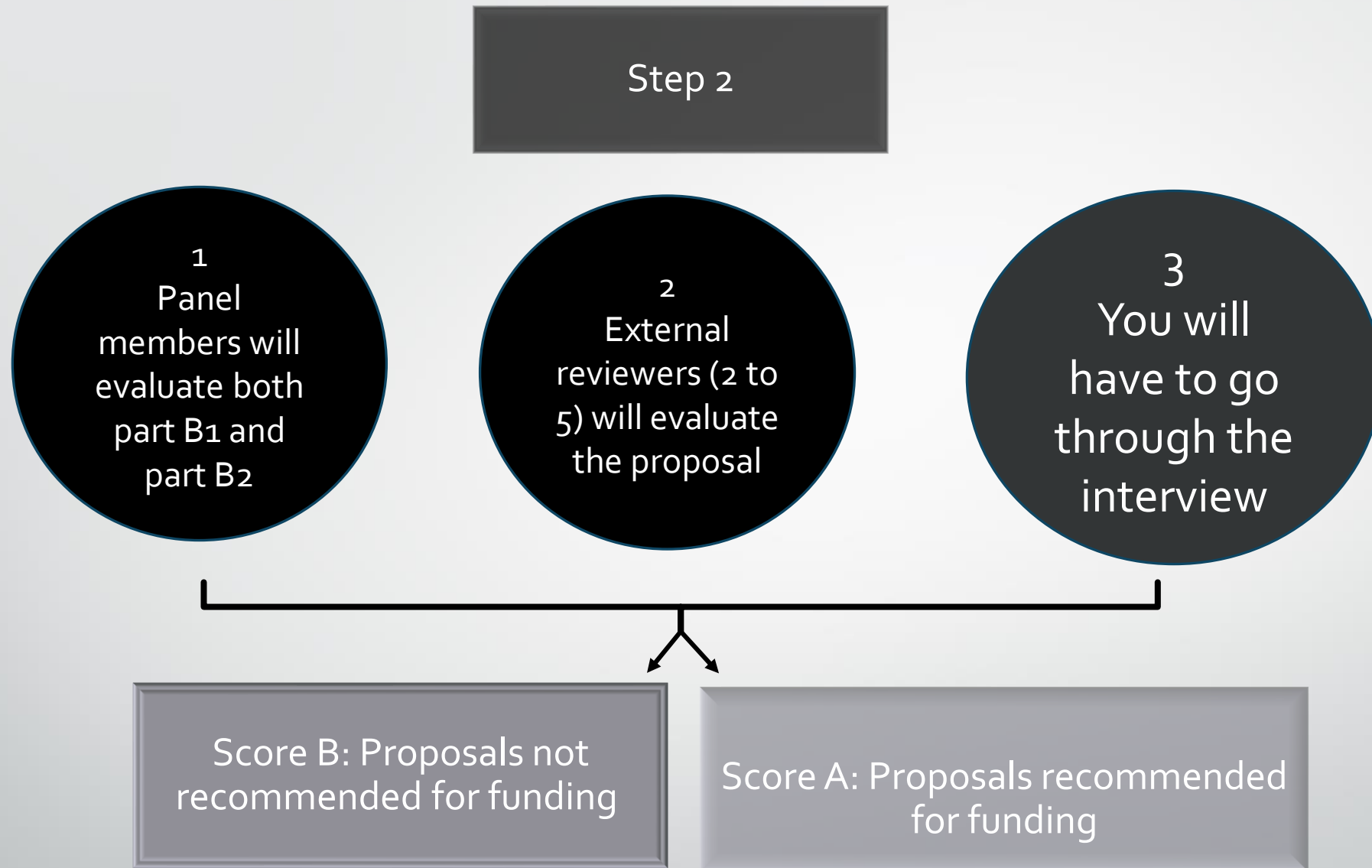
ERC Starting grant

2024

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Two-step evaluation





Step 1: The feasibility of the scientific approach is assessed.

Step 2: The detailed scientific approach (methodology, timescales, and resources included) is assessed.



Criteria to evaluate the proposals

Scientific excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation

When preparing the interview, remember that the panel members will evaluate the following aspects:

As a researcher:

- *Ability to conduct ground-breaking research*
- *Demonstrate sufficient expertise, maturity, and capacity to successfully execute the project*
- *Provide evidence of creative independent thinking*

Concerning your proposal:

- *Demonstrate the groundbreaking nature, impact, and feasibility of the research proposal (including important challenges that the proposal addresses, objective ambitions, going beyond the state of the art (novel concepts, approaches, or development between or across disciplines)*
- *To what extent is the proposed research high risk-high gain (i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a high risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims),*

Regarding the Scientific Approach

- *Demonstrate the feasibility of the scientific approach bearing in mind that the proposed research is high risk/high gain (mitigation measures are extremely important, without affecting the general aim of the proposal).*
- *Demonstrate the suitability of the research methodology proposed as well as the working arrangements to achieve the goals of the project.*
- *Demonstrate the adequateness of the proposed timescales, resources, and commitment.*

Read them carefully and try to cover all aspects. As the panel members may feel that some of these points were not sufficiently clear in the proposal.

Interview

1
A PPT presentation
by the PI

2
Panel members will
question the PI on the
proposal



Interview: presentation of your proposal

- Your presentation

- Be concise and clear
- Use only that material that you think it will help to defend your project, in a clear and concise manner.
- Explain in a few words:
 - Initial aims and hypothesis, including the need to carry out the project
 - Your suitability to carry out the research
 - Scientific/methodological novelty and relevance, including the high/risk high/gain aspects
 - Expected results
 - Contribution to science

Interview

After your presentation, there will be some time for questions

It is likely that the lead evaluator will ask the first questions and then give way to the other panel members who have evaluated your proposal (usually 3-4 panel members per proposal).

The questions will include those raised by the evaluators, but also by the external reviewers.

There will then be an open round of questions for the rest of the panel if they wish (remember that all panel members will have read your proposal, even if they have not evaluated it).

Interview: how to answer the questions

- Make sure you have a suitable environment for your interview (good sound and reception)
- Answer the questions asked by the panel members
- Some of the panel members' doubts may be related to
 - Lack of justification for the proposal's methods or scientific approach
 - Reasoning for selecting one geographic area, chronological period, etc.
 - Mitigation measures to cover the high-risk/high gain
 - Ultimate goals
 - Contribution to Science
 - Your expertise in the subject
 - The selection and commitment of your collaborators and other members of the proposal

Be concise and direct in your answers and make your position clear, but most importantly, answer the questions, do not try to avoid them or answer differently.

Final decision

The final decision, is taken by the panel members based on the individual reviews (both from the panel members and external reviewers), the panel discussion on the proposal, and the interview.

After the interview, the panel meets to establish the final panel ranking and each proposal receives one of the following panel scores:

- **Score A** – the proposal fully meets the ERC's excellence criterion and is **recommended for funding, if sufficient funds are available.**
- **Score B** – the proposal meets some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and is **not recommended for funding.**