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erc European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

ERC 2023 Starting Grant Call Webinar

Session 2:

Submitting your proposal and how it is evaluated by the ERC

6 July 2023

erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk

About the Presenter

Jon Brookes

- **European Advisor since January 2017**

- **Interim ERC National Contact Point**

- **They/Them**

What will be covered in this webinar?

- UKRO & UK Participation in Horizon Europe
- Recap about the ERC & other considerations
- Submission Process
- How the proposal is evaluated
- Q&A

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Housekeeping

🔇 All participants will be muted for the duration of the webinar.

☁️ We will be recording this session.

📄 Slides will be shared after the webinar on the event page.

❓ Please use the Q&A function to submit questions.

👍 You can 'up vote' your favourite questions in the Q&A

💬 A chat function is available and will be monitored.

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About UKRO

We support UK research intensive organisations

UK National Contact Point for the
European Research Council and
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programmes

Unique partnership between UKRI and subscribing organisations

Provide a service to more than 140 subscribing organisations

A Brussels-based team of advisors

Part of UKRI's wider International team

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UK participation in Horizon Europe

On 24 December 2020, the negotiations on the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement concluded

The announcement sets out the UK's intention to **associate to Horizon Europe**

This includes **full participation in the programme** (with the exception of the EIC Fund)

UK entities can participate in/coordinate projects and receive funding from Horizon Europe, incl. ERC grants

European Commission's Q&A confirms **UK eligibility to apply.**

UKRO website provides latest information on UK participation

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UK-EU TRADE AND COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Summary

December 2020

Commission Q&A Guidance

[European Commission's Q&A](#) confirms UK eligibility to apply:

"UK entities including universities, research centres, scientists, innovative businesses, industry, etc. can participate in the first calls for proposals of Horizon Europe as soon as they are published on the European Commission's website."

"…UK applicants are treated as if the UK is an associated country throughout the process, from admissibility and eligibility to evaluation, up until the preparation of grant agreements."

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UK's Horizon Europe Guarantee fund

Short-term measure intended to address the delays in the formalisation of the UK's association to Horizon Europe.

Guaranteed funding for the first two waves of eligible, successful applicants unable to sign their grant agreements with the EU. List of covered calls available in [UKRI guidance annex](#).

The UK government has stated that it continues to monitor the situation closely and may consider whether it is appropriate to change the scope of the guarantee, in which case it will provide updated guidance.

If UK does not associate to Horizon Europe this guarantee will be part of the initial measures to be delivered, and will be an important part of the plan to provide stability for the UK sector, as we transition to a bold domestic alternative.

If you have any queries about the scope of the guarantee, please contact us at EUGrantsFunding@ukri.org.

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[Guarantee Fund](#) for successful UK applicants to first & second waves of calls of Horizon Europe, including ERC calls

Recap about the ERC

Brief recap of the overview presented previously in Session 1

ERC Frontier Research Grant Schemes

The ERC funds

- the best 'frontier research' proposals
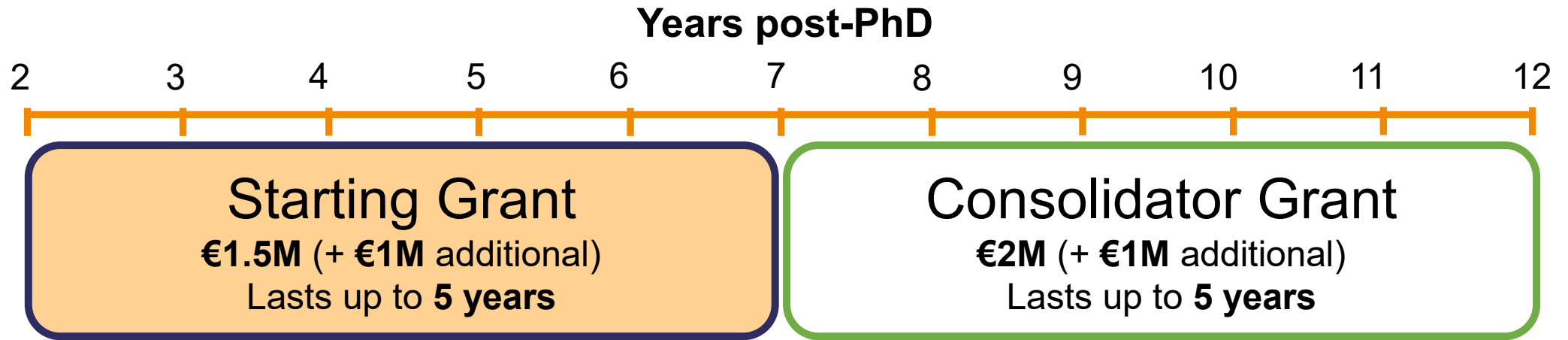- submitted by excellent researchers
- in the research field of their choice

Projects are led by a Principal Investigator

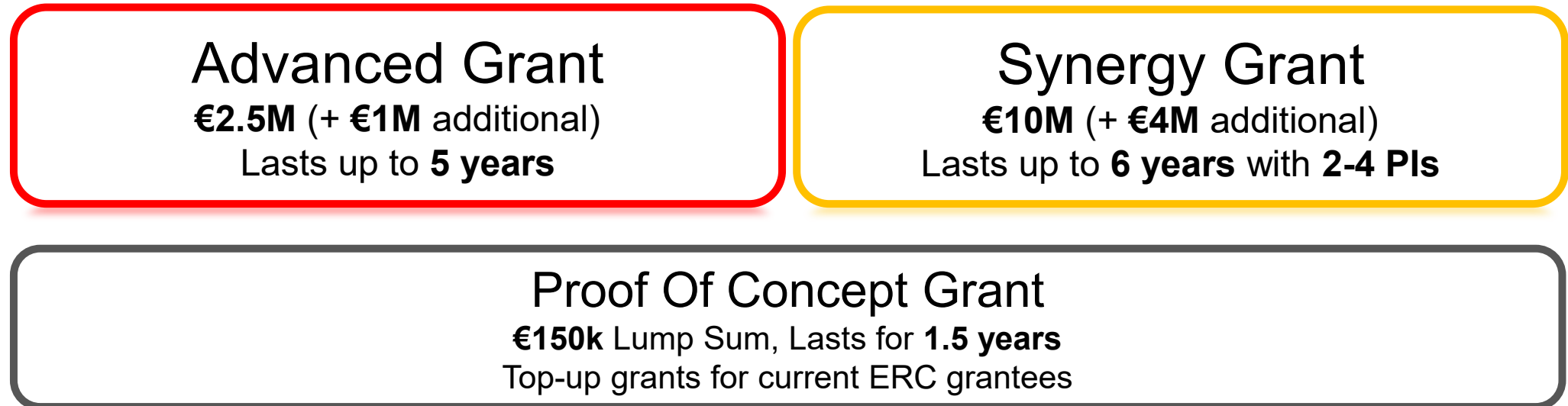- plus team members (if required)
- NOT the same as a collaborative grant

Funds any field of research

- Evaluation by 27 expert panels under 3 domains:
  - Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE)
  - Life Sciences (LS)
  - Social Sciences and Humanities (SH)

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Tentative 2024 Starting Grant call details*

Call Identifier	ERC-2024-StG
Budget	€601 Million
Estimated no. grants funded	387

Call open
11/07/2023

Deadline
24/10/2023

Step 1
Decision
10/05/2024

Step 2
Decision
23/08/2024

Grant
Signature
21/12/2024

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* Double check with the 2024 ERC Work Programme is published later this month

Changes to 2024 ERC Calls

- Excellence remains the only evaluation criterion, with a **primary evaluation of the research project** and at the same time an evaluation of the Principal Investigator

- Changes to the evaluation procedure – **introducing a maximum number of proposals** (44) per panel for 2024 Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant calls *(More on this in webinar 2)*

- **New panel** in the SH domain – **SH8** – and changes to the panel title, sub-title and descriptors for others

- The applicant's CV and Track Record are now merged into a **single four-page document.** The Funding ID is moved to Part B2

- The **2024 Advanced Grant call** will be implemented as a pilot call using lump sum funding and has a deadline in August now, three months later than in 2023

- The **2024 Proof-of-Concept call** will have two cut-off dates instead of three

- The **2024 Consolidator Grant call** is in December, two months earlier than in 2023

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Other points to consider

Important aspects of proposal development that might not be immediately apparent.

Open Science

Under Horizon Europe, beneficiaries of ERC grants must ensure open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to their ERC project results.

- **Open access means accessible on:**
  - a trusted repository
  - under a CC BY (or equivalent) licence (either to the 'author accepted manuscript' or the published 'version of record').

- **For long-text publications like monographs**
  - a CC BY-NC / ND / NC-ND licence (or equivalent) is acceptable.
  - The ERC Scientific Council recommends the use of the OAPEN Open Books library (https://oapen.org) as repository for monographs and other books as well as book chapters.

❖ Guidelines on FAIR Data Management in Horizon 2020
❖ www.openaire.eu
❖ https://www.fosteropenscience.eu/

Publishing Fees

Will not be eligible for funding from the grant if the publication venue is not fully open access

(i.e. a fully open access journal or book, or an open access publishing platform like, e.g., Open Research Europe)

Provisions related to Open Science can be found on pages 107 – 109 of the Model Grant Agreement

Open Research Europe
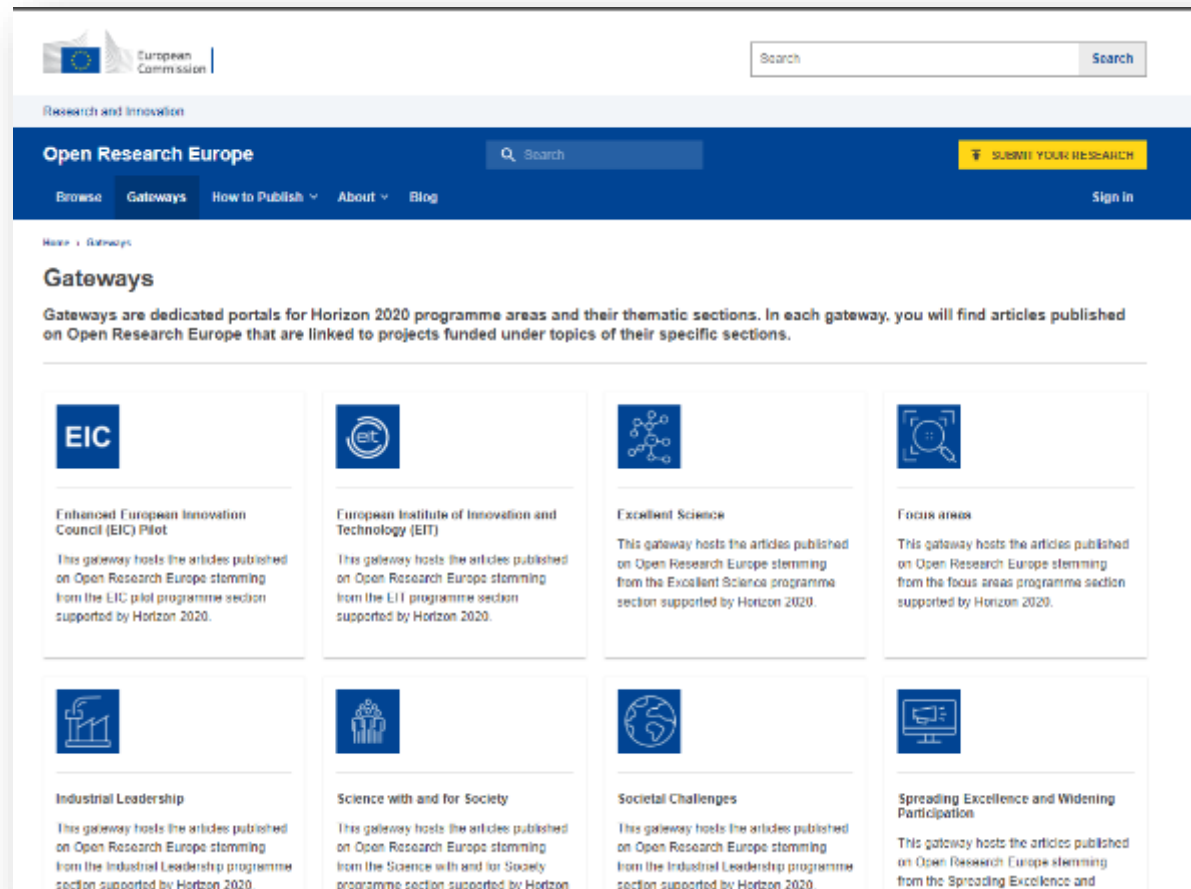
Scholarly publishing platform that will provide Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe beneficiaries with a no-cost full open access peer-reviewed publishing service, across all fields of research

https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/

Data Management Plan (DMP)

Every ERC grantee must submit a DMP within 6 months of the start of their ERC project.

Further information:

- [Information for ERC Grantees on DMP](#)
- [Data Management Plan](#)

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Gender Equality Plans (GEPs)

The host institution will need a GEP in place for this call

- **Necessary before the signing of the Grant Agreement**
- **Not the responsibility of individual PI applicants,** it is meant for the organisation, approved by management.

- **Applies to public bodies, research organisations and HEIs,** not required for SMEs, industry, NGOs or civil society organisations.

GEP must have the following building blocks:

Publication	Dedicated resources	Data collection and monitoring	Training
• formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management	• commitment of resources and gender expertise to implement it	• sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel and students and annual reporting based on indicators	• Awareness raising/trainings on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and

Why Gender?

- Sex & Gender is not an evaluation criteria, but it could have a lot to do with your proposal's scientific excellence.

- Make sure you think about it in your research design relative your field/discipline, evaluators might see this as a gap in your proposal.

- Integrating the gender dimension in R&I can be added value in terms of **excellence** and **creativity**

- S&G helps researchers question gender norms and stereotypes, to rethink standards and reference models – **improve methodology**

- It can **enhance** the **validity of results** and the **societal relevance** of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced.

- It also contributes to the **production of goods and services** better suited to potential markets

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[Click here to watch an ERC workshop](#)

*ERC grantees talking about how the **Sex and Gender Dimension is involved in each ERC domain***
(Physical Sciences & Engineering, Life Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities)

Bibliometrics and Impact Factors

ERC has formally endorsed the **San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**:

Do not use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions

What does this mean for applicants?

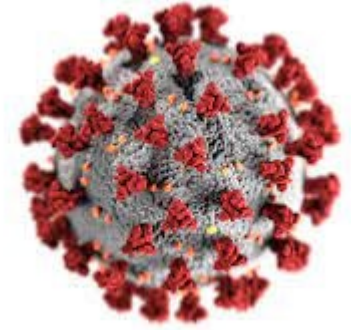Publications listed in the "track record" **can have contextual details** incl. field-relevant bibliometric indicators

Journal Impact Factor will be disregarded anywhere in the proposal

Covid-19 and the ERC

- Possible to postpone project start date by 6 months
- Possible to extend duration of project by 6 months or further on case by case basis
- Flexibility on teleworking and time commitments (notify ERCEA)
- **New since 2022** – Covid-19 Impact to scientific productivity

Remember – EU financial contribution to the project cannot be raised

[Click here for the ERC's up to date coronavirus measures](#)
(covering submission, evaluation, interviews and implementation)

Useful links

- ERC 2024 StG call on the Funding and Tenders portal - Not yet available.

- [ERC 2023 StG and CoG Information for Applicants](#)

- [Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement](#)

- [Part B1/B2, Host Institution Support Template](#) (pdf)

- [ERC Website](#),
  including the easy to use [Project Database](#) and the more in depth [ERC Information System](#)

- [Novelties in the Horizon Europe MGA](#) –
  Commission Stakeholder Workshop video

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ERC Submission Process

Approaching Proposal Submission

Register in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal and create an ECAS account

Get in touch with your research support office

Add relevant contact people to the online application

Submit early and often – latest version will be accepted

Keep the Information for Applicants in front of you throughout!!!

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ERC Proposal Submission

Part A
- Administrative Forms and Abstract

Part B1
- Proposal Overview and PI Track Record

Part B2
- Detailed Research Proposal
- Funding I.D.

Annexes
- Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents
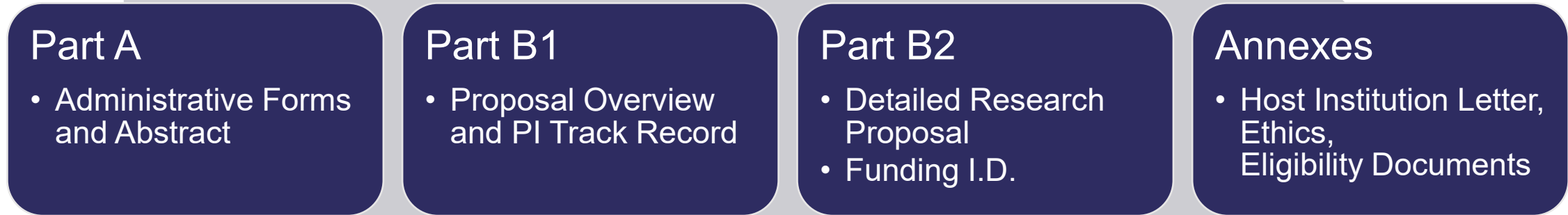
1-step submission: all parts of the proposal are submitted together at deadline

- Part A is filled in online on the Funding and Tenders Portal

- Part B1, Part B2 and the Annexes are uploaded as PDFs to the Funding and Tenders Portal.

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A combined template of these forms is available on the EC website.

Find the call on the Funding & Tenders Portal

Use the [topic search](#)

Programme	Work programme part
Horizon Europe Framework Programme (HORIZON)	**HORIZON-ERC-2022**

Call	Work programme year	
Call for Proposals for ERC Starting Grant (ERC-2022-STG)	**HORIZON-ERC-2022**	💶 See budget overview

Type of action	Type of MGA	
HORIZON-ERC HORIZON ERC Grants	**HORIZON Action Grant Budget-Based [HORIZON-AG]**	Closed

Deadline model	Opening date	Deadline date
single-stage	**23 September 2021**	**13 January 2022 17:00:00 Brussels time**

Call not listed yet

Until the submission link is available, key documents are available on the ERC website.

PDF of the 2023 Starting Grant application template is available
Incl. Part A, B1 & B2 – use it before the call opens on the portal.

First page of proposal submission

IDENTIFY THE HOST INSTITUTION (PIC number)

Find your organisation

PIC [9]   Short name [250]

Search for your organisation

Organisations you have been previously associated with. (Click to select)

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE ON THE PROPOSAL?

Your role

Please indicate your role in this proposal

- ● Principal Investigator
- ○ Main Host Institution Contact
- ○ Contact person

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BASIC DETAILS ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Your proposal

Please choose an acronym for your proposal.

It will appear also in the "General Information" section of the Application Form Part A and can also be updated there.

Acronym   Enter value [20]

Short Summary   Enter value [2000]

ERC Panel   [⬍]

SAVE AND GO TO NEXT STEP

Select your primary evaluation panel (e.g. LS3/SH1/PE4 etc)

See a full list of ERC panels and keywords in Annex 4 of the Information for Applicants document (from page 31)

Anything you enter in this part of the form **can be edited later**!

ERC Panel Structure

Must choose a primary evaluation panel	Optional secondary evaluation panel	Optional free key words	Read the descriptors	Applicants can flag their proposal as interdisciplinary

| Physical Sciences & Engineering	Life Sciences	Social Sciences & Humanities
PE1 Mathematics	**LS1** Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures & Functions	**SH1** Individuals, Markets and Organisations
PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter Particle	**LS2** Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems	**SH2** Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
PE3 Condensed Matter Physics	**LS3** Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration*	**SH3** The Social World and its Interactions*
PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences	**LS4** Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing	**SH4** The Human Mind and Its Complexity
PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials	**LS5** Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System*	**SH5** Texts and Concepts*
PE6 Computer Science and Informatics	**LS6** Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy	**SH6** The Study of the Human Past
PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering	**LS7** Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases	**SH7** Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
PE8 Products and Processes Engineering	**LS8** Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution	**SH8** Studies of Cultures and Arts*
PE9 Universe Sciences	**LS9** Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering	
PE10 Earth System Science		
PE11 Materials Engineering		

Panel Structure for 2024 calls

The Abstract

First thing that everyone looks at

Used by the panel chair to choose which panel members will undertake the Step 1 review
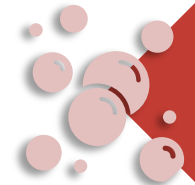
Mention interdisciplinary elements

Public facing – a version will be available on CORDIS if your project is selected

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Main proposal page

Part A: Administrative Forms
online only

Part B1 & Part B2
Upload PDFs based on editable templates
Other documents listed below uploaded separately as PDFs

Part B1 & Part B2
Editable templates available to download

Support for using the EC portal
- Not support on content of proposals
- Any issues during submission should be logged with the helpdesk

Proposal forms

📅 **Deadline**
08 April 2021 17:00:00 Brussels Local Time

26 days left until closure

Call data:

Call: **ERC-2021-STG**
Topic: **ERC-2021-STG**
Type of action: **HORIZON-ERC**
Type of MGA: **HORIZON-AG**

⚠️ Topic and type of action can only be changed by creating a new proposal.

Proposal data:

Acronym: **FAD**
Draft ID: **SEP-210732071**

Download Part B templates
⬇ Download part B templates

Support & Helpdesk

[Online Manual] [IT How To]
[IT Helpdesk] [FAQ]

Service Desk:
✉ EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu
📞 +32 2 29 92222

ℹ In this step you can edit the Administrative Forms and upload the proposal itself. ❓ ✕

✖ Your proposal contains changes that have not yet been submitted.

Administrative forms

[Edit forms ✏] [View history] [Print preview] ❓

Part B and Annexes

In this section you may upload the technical annex of the proposal (in PDF format only) and any other requested attachments. ❓

Part B1		❓	Upload ☁
Part B2		❓	Upload ☁
HI support letter		❓	Upload ☁
PhD certificate		❓	Upload ☁
Annex 1		❓	Upload ☁
Annex 2		❓	Upload ☁
Annex 3		❓	Upload ☁
Annex 4		❓	Upload ☁
Annex 5		❓	Upload ☁
Annex 6		❓	Upload ☁

[‹ BACK TO PARTICIPANTS LIST] [VALIDATE] [SUBMIT]

IT issues

Avoid issues by:

- Validating your proposal regularly

- Submitting early and often. Each submission overwrites the last, so only your final version will go to evaluators

- You can always submit an improved draft later but if there are IT issues and you do not manage to make any submission before the deadline, a proposal is unlikely to be accepted after the deadline

- Avoid using special characters for file upload. Only alphanumerical characters (A-Z, a-z, 0-9, _ (underscore), - (dash), . (dot) or space are allowed.

Problems? Contact the EC's IT Helpdesk ASAP
Send screenshots and clear description of the problem.

Log the problem!

Call them if it is urgent:+32 2299 2222

Once you have contact the helpdesk and your issue has been logged, you can try to resolve the issue with minor fixes, e.g.:

- Try using a different browser or computer.
- Try again at another time of day when traffic might be lower on the portal.

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Part A – PI Declaration of Consent

- These **should not be submitted with the application**, but the applicant must ensure they have written consent from all participants prior to the call submission deadline.

- The written consent doesn't need to be an official letter, our understanding is that an email with the essential info and clear consent would work.

- ERC Executive Agency may request the applicants to provide this written consent as evidence at any time during the evaluation process

Application forms

| Table Of Contents | Validate Form | Save | Save&Close |

Proposal ID **SEP-210732071**

Acronym **FAD**

Declarations

[?]

Field(s) marked * are mandatory to fill.

1) We declare to have the explicit consent of all applicants on their participation and on the content of this proposal. * ☐

Part A - Budget & Resources

3 - Budget

Please indicate the costs for each cost category as accurate as possible using only Euro integers. The 'Total eligible costs' of the project will be automatically calculated based on the figures inserted in the individual columns. The 'Requested EU contribution' has to be filled in manually. Please make sure to update the 'Requested EU contribution' if updates are made in any of the cost categories.

PI: When calculating the salary, please take into account the percentage of your working time dedicated to the ERC project.

Other personnel costs and Other additional direct costs:
If applicable, please specify this cost category in the Resources section (textbox below).

Internally invoiced goods and services:
Costs for host institution invoices and invoices for other entities should be included here; e.g. access to large facilities, access to other services that are charged as unit costs.
For more details on the budget table, please consult the ERC Information for Applicants document applicable to the call and year. Please note that the budget table and the description of resources below will be made available to the experts evaluating the proposal at Step 2.

	PI	Senior Staff	Postdocs	Students	Other Personnel costs	A Total personnel costs €	B. Subcontracting Costs € (No indirect costs)	C.1 Travel and subsistence	C.2 Equipment - including major	Consumables incl. fieldwork and animal	Publications (incl. Open Access fees) and	Other additional direct costs	C.3 Total other goods, works and services	Total Purchase costs €	D. Internally invoiced goods and services€ (No indirect	E. Indirect Cost €	Eligi

Make sure the figures match

Section C. Resources (Maximum 8000 characters allowed)

This section and the budget table will be made available to the experts evaluating the proposal at Step 2. Important: your description of resources will be truncated once it exceeds the maximum allowed characters. Please make sure that your description is complete before submitting.

State and fully justify the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully; unjustified budget will be consequently reduced. Please specify if you will use third parties giving in-kind contributions to the action.

If applicable, please specify the cost items covered by your 'Other personnel costs' category and the cost items covered by your 'Other additional direct costs' category.

Request for additional funding if applicable (All items MUST be included in the overall budget table above): (Cost in EUR)

Justification:

Budget

Budget and Resources description are seen by evaluators

Four main sections:
- Personnel
- Subcontracting
- Purchase
- Internally invoiced good and services

All 'Additional Funding' requested must be
- Included in the overall budget table
- Added to sums under each appropriate cost category
- *For example fieldwork travel would go under Travel & Subsistence along with non-fieldwork travel like conferences*

If funding is requested for 'Other personnel costs' & 'Other additional direct costs'
- Should be entered as a total figure on your budget table
- Should be unpacked in the Resource section with each item briefly described

Budget summary

Beneficiary organisation(s)	Total cost (€)	Requested AMT (€)
1. Name of Institution, country	x,xxx,xxx.00	xxx,xxx.00

Budget details

Cost Category / Beneficiary			Name of Institution	Total
A. Personnel costs	PI		xx	xx
	Senior Staff		xx	xx
	Postdocs		xx	xx
	Students		xx	xx
	Other Personnel costs		xx	xx
Total Personnel costs			Xxx	Xxx
B. Subcontracting costs (no indirect costs)			xx	xx
C. Purchase costs	C.1 Travel and subsistence		xx	xx
	C.2. Equipment incl. major equipment		xx	xx
	C.3 Other goods, works and services	Consumables incl. fieldwork and animal costs	xx	xx
		Publications (incl. Open Access fees) and dissemination	xx	xx
		Other additional direct costs	xx	xx
		C.3 Total other goods, works and services	Xx	Xx
Total Purchase costs (C1 + C2 + C3)			Xxx	Xxx
D. Internally invoiced goods and services (no indirect costs)			Xx	Xx
E. Indirect costs (= 25% * (A + C1 + C2 + C3))			Xxx	Xxx
Total eligible costs (A + B + C + D + E)			X.xxx.xxx	X.xxx.xxx
Requested EU contribution			X.XXX.XXX	X.XXX.XXX

[53] This is an example of how the Proposal Budget Report looks like for the experts. Please note that the layout may be further adapted when needed.

Part A – Description of Resources

Specify all the resources required and justify them against the needs of the project.
Unjustified budget lines may be reduced or count against your proposal.

Suggested elements to briefly describe and justify:

- Describe **your commitment** to the project
- Describe **all the cost categories** considered necessary for the project
- Describe the **size and nature of the team**, indicating the key team member(s) and their roles, or key vacant roles, specify and justify if they based at organisations other than the Host
- Describe any requested **equipment**, justify why you need it and how much it will be used
- Include the costs for **Open Access** to project outputs including data management
- Describe any **additional funding** requested for the project
- Describe any **existing resources that will be used but don't require funding**

Template for Resources Description (from [Information for Applicants](#) page 53)

- *"I plan to allocate …."* +Justification

- Max. 8000 characters (equivalent to about 2 pages)

- Request for **additional funding** if applicable.
  - Provide a total figure (cost in EUR)
  - Address specific grounds for additional funding in justification..
  - Additional funding described separately in Resources section

ERC Additional funding

Additional funding up to €1 million (incl. 25% indirect costs) can be requested to cover the following eligible costs when these are necessary to carry out the proposed work:

Additional funding:
- **Mixed in the budget table** with the main budget, included in totals for the fitting cost categories

- Separate in the **Description of Resources** text

"Start-up" costs for PIs moving to the EU or an AC from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant	The purchase of **major equipment**	Access to **large facilities**	Other **major experimental and field work costs**, excl. personnel cost

AND/OR   **AND/OR**   **AND/OR**
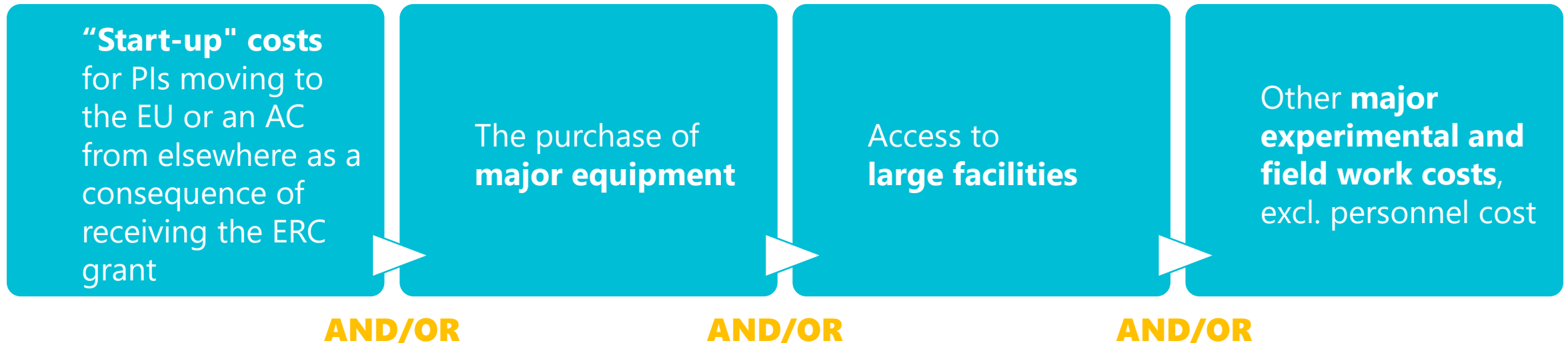
Special features of Additional Funding:
- What fits into the 4 categories in your field will vary from other fields
- If this additional part of the budget is not spent it cannot be transferred
- Same amount available to all ERC schemes

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Any Questions?

@_UKRO_ **UK Research Office (UKRO)**

![UKRI UK Research Office Brussels logo]

Short break
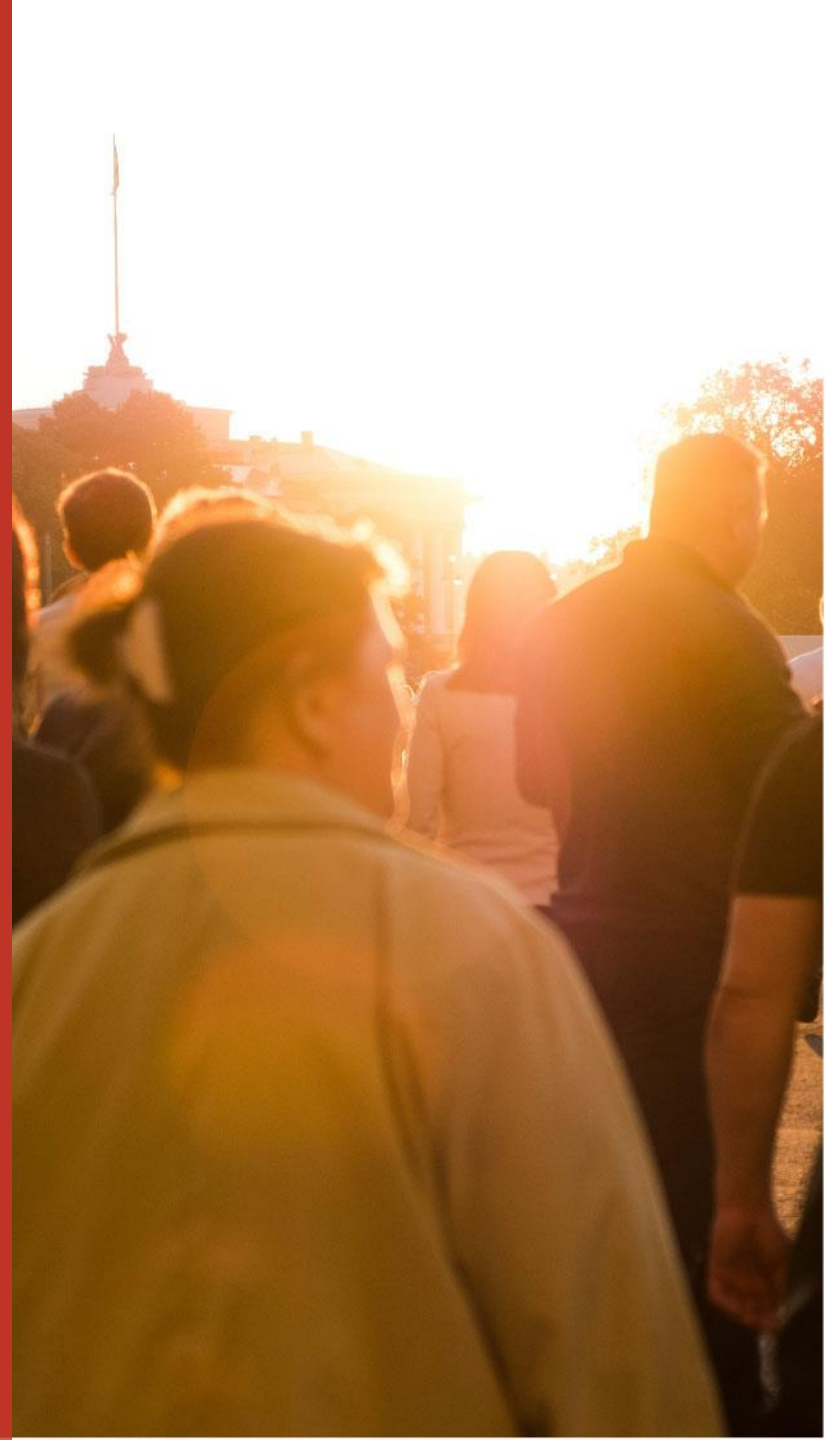
Part A – Ethics & Security questions

- Follow Horizon Europe guidance document: **'How to complete your ethics self-assessment'**

- UK applicants should **answer 'yes' on questions about non-EU activity.** This will not affect eligibility.

- Answering 'yes' on certain questions may require a **brief text response** from the applicant.

- Applicants may be requested to **upload documents** related to particular questions.

- **Free text character limits:** 5000 per text box

- If the character limit is too short, we recommend using a separate document **uploaded as one of the optional PDF annexes.** Make a reference to the annex in the Ethics text box in the application form.

4 - Ethics & security

Ethics Issues Table

1. Human Embryonic Stem Cells and Human Embryos		Page
Does this activity involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	○ Yes ● No	
Does this activity involve the use of human embryos?	○ Yes ● No	
2. Humans		Page
Does this activity involve human participants?	○ Yes ● No	
Does this activity involve interventions (physical also including imaging technology, behavioural treatments, etc.) on the study participants?	○ Yes ● No	
Does this activity involve conducting a clinical study as defined by the Clinical Trial Regulation (EU 536/2014)? (using pharmaceuticals, biologicals, radiopharmaceuticals, or advanced therapy medicinal products)	○ Yes ● No	
3. Human Cells / Tissues (not covered by section 1)		Page
Does this activity involve the use of human cells or tissues?	○ Yes ● No	
4. Personal Data		Page
Does this activity involve processing of personal data?	○ Yes ● No	
Does this activity involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of preexisting data sets or sources, merging existing data sets)?	○ Yes ● No	
Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries? Specify the type of personal data and countries involved	○ Yes ● No	
Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? Specify the type of personal data and countries involved	○ Yes ● No	
Does this activity involve the processing of personal data related to criminal convictions or offences?	○ Yes ● No	
5. Animals		Page
Does this activity involve animals?	○ Yes ● No	
6. Non-EU Countries		Page
Will some of the activities be carried out in non-EU countries?	○ Yes ● No	
In case non-UE countries are involved, do the activities undertaken in these countries raise potential ethics issues?	○ Yes ● No	
It is planned to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)?	○ Yes ● No	
Is it planned to import any material (other than data) from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? For data imports, see section 4.	○ Yes ● No	
Is it planned to export any material (other than data) from the EU to non-EU countries? For data exports, see section 4.	○ Yes ● No	

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Include page references to relevant sections in Part B1 & B2 for each issue if you answer 'Yes'

Part A – Responses on non-EU activity

Ethics Section 6, Non-EU countries – *"Will some of the activities be carried out in non-EU countries?"*

- Answer **yes for UK activity** and cite relevant points in the proposal.
- Similarly if there are any other activities outside EU member states.

Ethics Section 4, Personal data *– "Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries?"*

- Explain how these exports are **in accordance with GDPR** (Chapter V of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679).
- Mention the **EU Adequacy Decisions for the UK** on the protection of individuals regarding the processing of personal data and free movement of such data from the EU to the UK.

Security Section 1 EU classified information – *"Does this activity involve non-EU countries?"*

- You need to answer **yes for UK activity if the project involves EU classified information** (EUCI; see Article 3 definition)

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Read the Commission's step-by-step guidance on how to complete the ethics self-assessment

Supporting Documents

About the Applicant

- Evidence of **degree & date of award**
- Documentation to support **extension of the eligibility window** (if relevant)
  - ➤ Birth certificates
  - ➤ Doctor's letters
  - ➤ Proof of leave from an employer/previous employer
  - ➤ Etc.

About the Institution

- Host Institution **support letter** (using the template, on official headed letter)
- Documentation to support **extension of the eligibility window for applicant** (if relevant)

About the Project

- **Ethics documents** if requested by the Part A Ethics questionnaire (e.g. ethics committee decisions, licenses etc.)
- If the **character limit in the Ethics questionnaire is too short,** upload appropriate responses as PDF annexes.

Official documents can be submitted **in any EU official language**

OR

certified translation into any EU language

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Part B1 –
Step 1 of the Evaluation
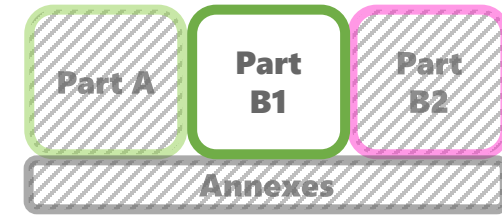
Strict formatting requirements:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman, Arial or similar	At least 11	Single	2cm Side 1.5cm Bottom

Part B1 includes:

- Cover Page   (info repeated from Part A)
- Extended Synopsis   (5 pages)
- CV and Track Record (4 pages)

Writing the Extended Synopsis
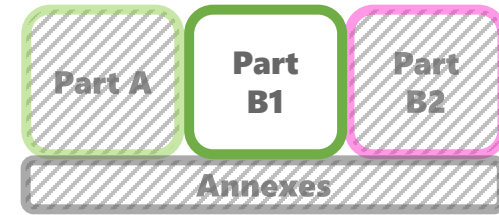
Self-contained

- All the essential info about your idea in 5 pages.

- Describe where the novelty lies – what is the state-of-the-art and how does this proposal go further?

- Your synopsis should be referenced, these won't count towards page limits – using end-notes is recommended.

Persuasive to generalists

- A variety of experts decide collectively whether to pass the proposal to Step 2.

- Be clear and don't use specialist jargon because the panel are generalists as a whole, some will be less familiar with your field.

- Applicants need to persuade the whole panel – include just enough info and don't give any reasons to reject!

Entertaining!

- Sell your idea and yourself - the synopsis should grab the panellists' attention

- Your idea should be ambitious – be explicit about high risk and potentially high gain.

- The description of novelty and ambition should leave them curious to find out more detail in Part B2 and the interview at Step 2.

Things to think about: Extended Synopsis
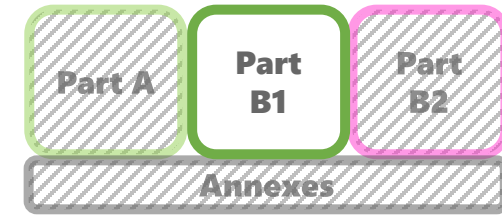
- **Dual role:** key text in stand-alone B1, then goes hand-in hand with the B2 full proposal. Make it work in both ways, not as a summary of the full proposal

- **What excites you about your research?** Convey that in your application

- **Scientific Impact –** how can you change your field of research and make progress beyond the current state-of-the-art.

    – Does the research open new lines of research and/or enquiry

    – Will it lead to new scientific activity and further questions beyond the current frontier?

    – Be positive about achievements made by others thus far then demonstrate you have something new and different to offer.

- **Timeliness and relevance of the work during the project,** not just at the deadline but throughout the project's five years. Scientific impact can also be made at anytime of the project, not just at the end

- **Research Aims, should clearly link to the research objectives,** which should clearly link to research methodology(ies)
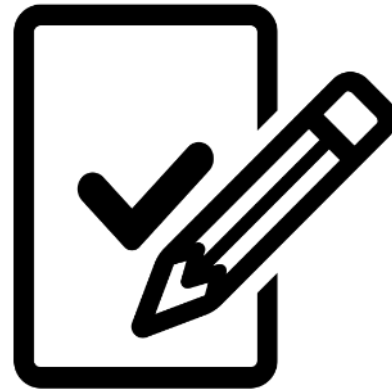
Writing your CV and Track Record
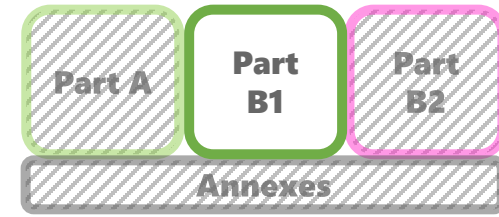
No prescriptive PI profiles

- **Personal details: education, employment**

- **Research achievements (up to a max. 10)**
  - **Demonstrating advancement in the field**
  - **Emphasis on more recent achievements**
  - **Short narrative on significance of achievements**

- **Peer recognition, prizes, fellowships, academy memberships, etc**

- **Additional information (setting the context)**
  - **Career breaks, diverse career paths, life events**
  - **Other contribution to research community**
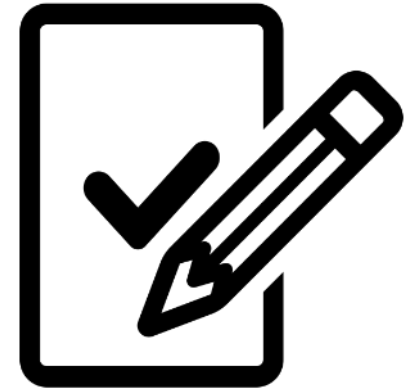
Template won't specify the layout. It will have some instructions, up to applicant to decide on the format. Let them best showcase their talent.

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Part B2

- **State of the art and objectives**
  - Objectives here become grant agreement objectives

- **Methodology**
  - Proposed methodology
  - Milestones and alternatives
  - Risk and mitigation
  - Project Management
  - Publication & Exploitation of results

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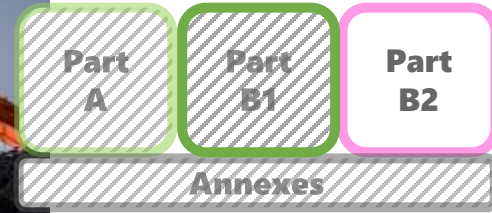
Writing your State of the Art and Objectives
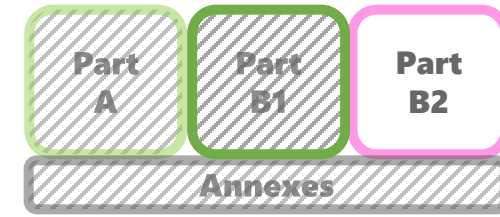
Coherence with Part B1

- **Elaborate Part B1 coherently:** Explain precisely how you plan to achieve what you promised.

- **A remote expert review will be provided to the generalist panel**, add technical detail that someone much closer to your field would need to know.

- **Don't copy & paste from Part B1.** Both looked at together at Step 2, so make them complementary.

State of the art

- It should be clear **how and why the proposed work is important for the field**.

- What **scientific impact** will your project have if successful? What new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship?

Objectives

- Objectives should **fit the context of the state-of-the-art** – they should match the ambition to go past the current frontier.

- These objectives will become **part of the Grant Agreement** if successful – so the need to be feasible.

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Writing your Methodology
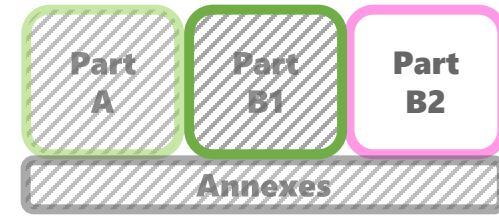
Methodology

- Should be **extensive**, include the essential detail that an expert in your field would need to know.

- Don't leave any reasons for experts to raise doubts for the panel

- Work plan should also be clear and **persuade evaluators that you can carry out the logistics** of a long term project.

Risk Mitigation Strategy

- Where possible **cover every risk with a mitigation strategy**.

- ERC accepts high risk to hopefully reach high gain – so don't shy away

- But evaluators and external experts can be risk averse.

- Explicit but controlled risk

Your team

- Be sure to show **how you will be the leader** of the team and central figure for the project.

- **Explain what each team member will do** – these can be named people or roles specified for recruitment.

Justify resources

- Be **ambitious**, if you don't ask for something needed that can be a problem.

- Justify: budget lines must have place in the project and **be linked to objectives**.

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Things to think about for Part B2
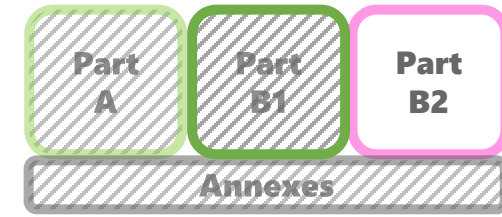
- **Recap and expand** on Part B1 introductory Extended Synopsis.

- Detail the **current state of the art** in your field: highlight the achievements, challenges and gaps. How will your project go beyond these?

- Explain how, and why, your project is important to the field and what **impact** and **implications** it will have if successful. Timeliness should be shown throughout.

- Discuss the c**hallenges** and **unconventional aspects** of your project.

- **Coherence** and **clear linkages** throughout proposal text: linking aims to budget via research methodologies. The better your proposal is organised the more feasible the project work plan will appear.

- Any preliminary **data management plans** could add to the excellence of your scientific approach. The full data management plan is required by Month 6 if funded.
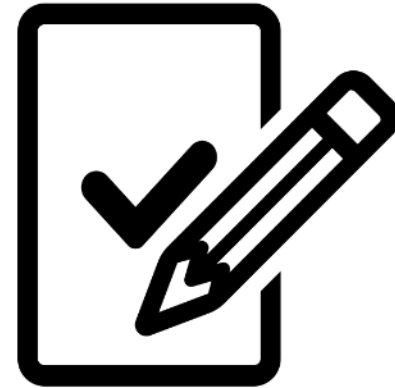
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ERC Evaluation Process & Criteria

Evaluation Process

Tentative timeframe for StG call feedback

- **May 2024**
  Feedback to unsuccessful applicants about Step 1 evaluation.
  Interview invitations sent to successful candidates passed to Step 2

- **August 2024**
  All applicants informed about Step 2 evaluation

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PI has approx. 30 minute interview that includes a presentation to the panel followed by a Q&A
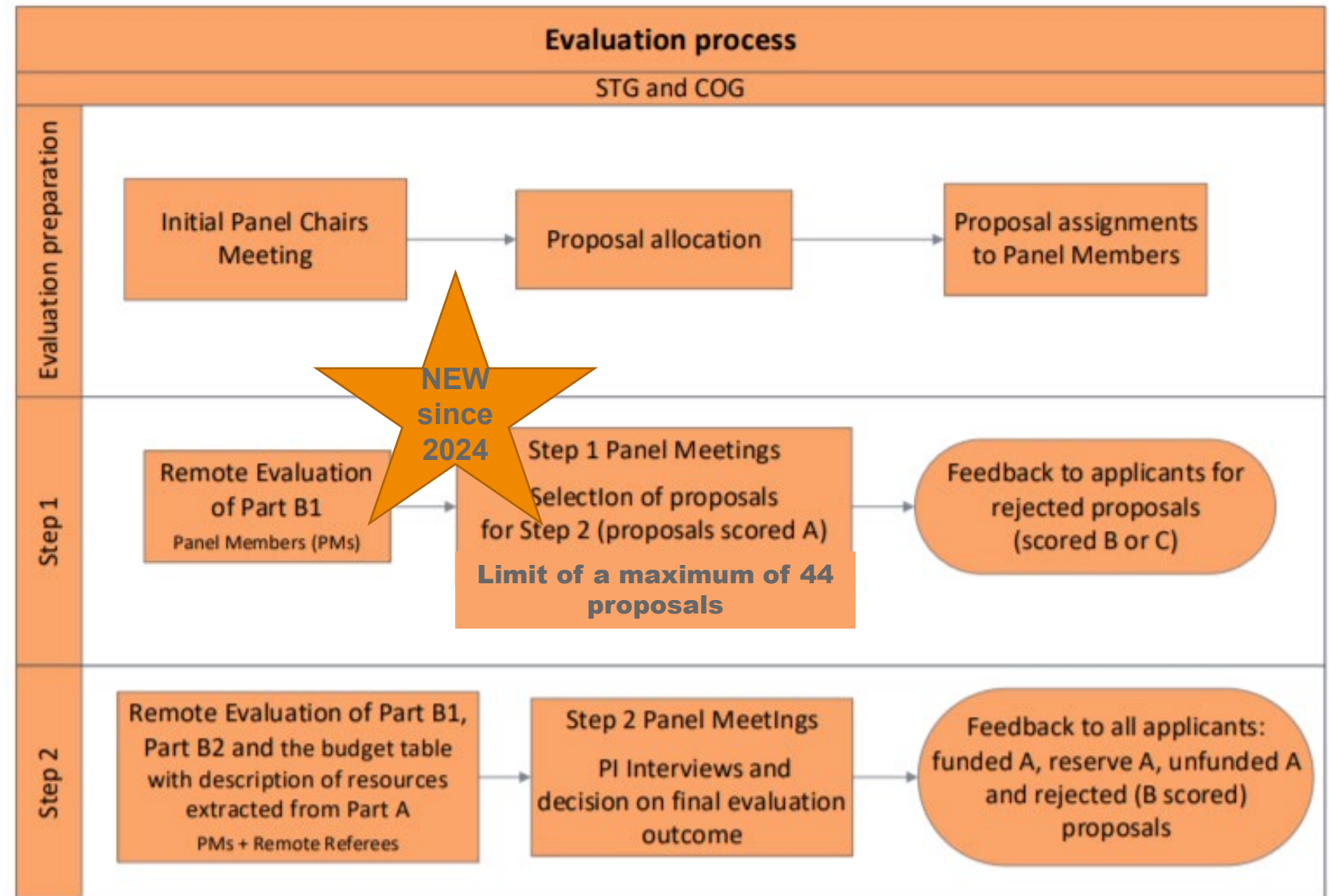
Evaluation Outcomes

Proposal Grading	Stage	Funded?	Reapplication Restrictions?
A	2	If sufficient budget	None
B	2	No	None
A invited	1	Invited to Step 2	None
A not invited	1	No	None
B	1	No	1 Year
C	1	No	2 Years

NEW since 2024

Proposals which score a B or C at Step 1 have "demand management" restrictions

- Restrictions are produced from Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant calls

- Synergy Grant calls only produce restrictions for Advanced Call applicants

- Restrictions from Starting Grant calls apply to subsequent Consolidator Grant calls

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ERC evaluation criterion - Excellence

Primary evaluation

Research project's
ground-breaking nature
ambition
feasibility

At the same time,
panels will evaluate:

PI
intellectual capacity,
creativity
commitment

Excellence
is the sole evaluation criterion

- Proposals marked by panel from: 1 – 5 (non-competitive to outstanding)

- Numerical marks not communicated to applicant

- Outcome of panel meetings expressed as A, B or C

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Proposals are not judged on socioeconomic impact or relevance to European policy

1. Research Project - Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

The Project

To what extent:

- does the proposed **research address important scientific challenges?**
- are the objectives **ambitious and beyond the state of the art?**
- is the proposed research **high risk/high gain?**

The Scientific Approach

To what extent:

- is the outlined scientific approach **feasible** bearing in mind the high risk/high gain?
- are the research methodology and working arrangements **appropriate to achieve project goals?**
- the proposal involves the **development of novel methodology?**
- are the **timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate** and properly justified?

2. Principal Investigator - Intellectual capacity and creativity

The Principal Investigator (PI)

To what extent:

- has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?
- does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

Reviewer comments about the PI

Unsuccessful

- PI has very good track record, yet, it is not entirely clear, what are their own original contributions their potential as an independent project leader (creativity, management) is to be demonstrated

- Based on the available information about their track record, publication activity and scientific experience, the Principal Investigator does not seem to have the capacity and is not prepared to execute the outlined project

- The PIs creativity and independent thinking are not appropriately demonstrated

- The PI has been working in a specialized field and contributed to a respectable number of publications, although the impact of these publications is not particularly high

Successful

- The PI has a strong track record, including various aspects of scientific service, and seems ready to establish their independent career

- The PI has shown an excellent knowledge of their field and an amazing productive, including some real highlights

- The PI made several significant contributions [to their field]

- The PI has a strong track record

Reviewer comments about Projects

Unsuccessful

- The concepts are novel, but very ill described
- Only 5 lines of text to describe a complex set of experiments. Much more information is needed
- Is really high risk but whether it is high gain is not certain due to lack of elements
- Is an important challenge, but the proposed project is not going to make a significant contribution to it.
- There is no description of the expected outcome
- Could not find information whether the PI will have sufficient access [necessary infrastructures]
- The proposal is high risk and low return
- Less sure that the research design proposed will provide particularly convincing answers
- No novel methodology is involved

Successful

- The proposed research is based on a bold vision
- This project certainly has substantial risks with equally substantial payoffs if successful
- Addresses a very relevant research topic
- Proposed project is challenging and the objectives are certainly ambitious
- Approach seems feasible to address the questions
- Project is well grounded in supporting evidence
- Timescale of the project looks adequate
- Funding request is fully justified
- There is also no doubt that the PI would have the optimal working conditions to achieve these results
- The breakthrough of the timescales and resources described in the project by the PI is fully justified

Tips to Remember

Speak ASAP with your HI's Research Support colleagues

- Find colleagues to proofread drafts against evaluation criteria
- You need a strong CV (in relation to your career stage)

Read all call documentation and evaluation criteria

- Evaluators are experts, but not necessarily in your exact area
- Study previous ERC projects within your research area

The best proposals take time to write

- Use clear and concise language, make it easy to find information in your proposal
- Explain jargon used in your country/research area
- Include diagrams, images, tables if appropriate

Useful links

- [2023 ERC Starting & Consolidator Grant Information for Applicants](#)

- [2023 ERC Work Programme](#)

- [ERC Youtube Channel- explainer videos](#)

- [Find out more about ERC Experts who review proposals](#)

- [ERC FAQ page](#)

- [ERC Information Service](#) – the best way to find out about previously funded projects

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Remember
Read the
Information for Applicants
&
Submit your proposal
early and often!

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Any Questions?

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