



# ERC 2026 Synergy Grant Webinar

29 July 2025 | 10am-12pm



Dr. Antonino Puglisi
UK Research Office
ERC UK National Contact Point



Prof. Euan Spence
University of Bath
ERC Synergy Grantee

# Agenda for today





Overview of the ERC



Eligibility criteria



Proposal development



**Submission Process** 



**Break** 



**ERC Testimonial** 



Q&A



Evaluation

erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk

# Housekeeping announcements



- 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



# **About UKRO**

We support UK organisations involved in EU R&I funding

- Part of UKRI's wider International team championing EU engagement
- Host UK National Contact Points for ERC, MSCA, WIDERA, NEB and COST
- Provide resources to help understand Horizon Europe on the UKRO Portal <u>www.ukro.ac.uk</u>
- Work in partnership with EU support teams within research organisations – helping European Liaison officers navigate pre- and post-award





# Striving for excellence with ERC funding







Over **13,000** top researchers funded since the ERC creation in 2007



Over **90,000** researchers and other professionals employed in ERC research teams



Over **2,400** patents and other IPR applications generated by ERC funding



Over 400
start-ups identified as founded
or co-founded by ERC grantees



Over **250,000** articles from ERC projects published in scientific journals



Over **900** research institutions hosting ERC grantees – universities, public or private research centres in the EU or Associated Countries



93 nationalities of grant holders



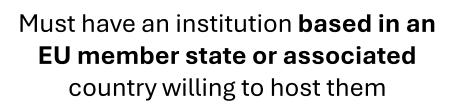
12 Nobel Prizes, 6 Fields Medals, 11 Wolf Prizes and other prizes awarded to ERC grantees







No restrictions based on age, nationality, current location or current employment/contract status





# Any field of science



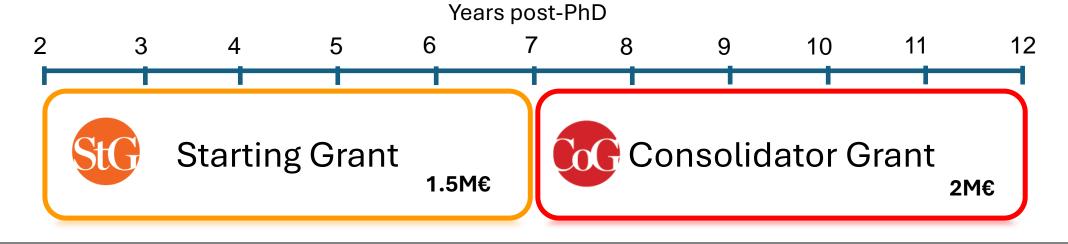
No thematic restrictions

No consortium required

No co-financing needed

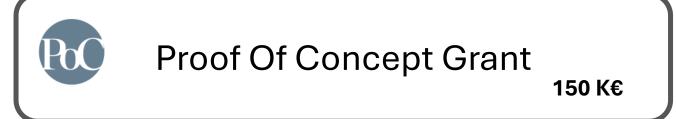
Scientific excellence of both yourself and your ambitious pioneering research proposal

# **ERC Grant Opportunities**



No PhD Requirements





# Webinar on ERC Work Programme 2026





# Our upcoming webinars



Consolidator
Grant
Webinar

Prof. Valentina Arena
Camden Professor of Ancient History
University of Oxford
ERC Consolidator Grantee

23 Sept 2025 | 10am-12pm For more information erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk

**ERC Starting Grant Webinar | 31 July 2025** 

**ERC Consolidator Grant Webinar | 23 September 2025** 



# Synergy Grant | In a nutshell

Support researcher who wants to address a research problem so ambitious, that cannot be dealt with one PI and their team alone



# 10 Million euros | Up to 6 years



Proposals are evaluated on the sole criterion of scientific excellence which takes on the additional meaning of outstanding intrinsic synergetic effect



No need to evidence a PhD



General info about ERC Synergy Grants

# Synergy Grant | Essential features



**Synergy** | Integration of complementary knowledge and approaches



**Unity** | Joint effort to achieve something the PIs could not on their own



**Equality** | PIs join as **equals** to carry out excellent frontier research



**Flexibility** | Small group of PIs decide who they need to work with



# Synergy Grant | About the group of Pls

### The "corresponding PI"

- Bears the overall admin responsibility for the project
- Is NOT the team leader
- Cannot be based outside EU's MS or AC





### **Group composition**

- Pls can be a mix of different career stages
- Each individual will be evaluated on their own but also as a group



# **Synergy Grant | Funding rates**

# **Base amount & Additional funding**



### Up to 4M euros

- "Start-up" costs
- Purchase of major equipment
- Access to large facilities
- Other major experimental and field work costs

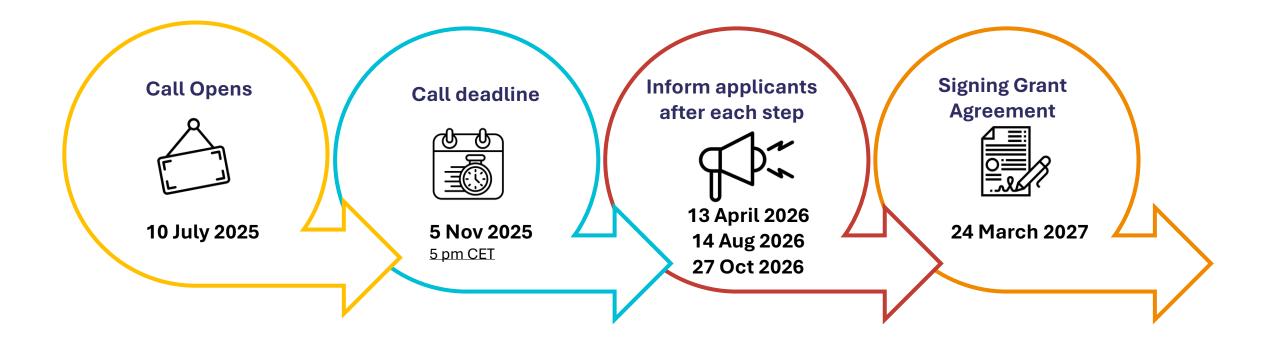


Now including personnel costs!

# 2026 Synergy Grant (ERC-2026-SyG)







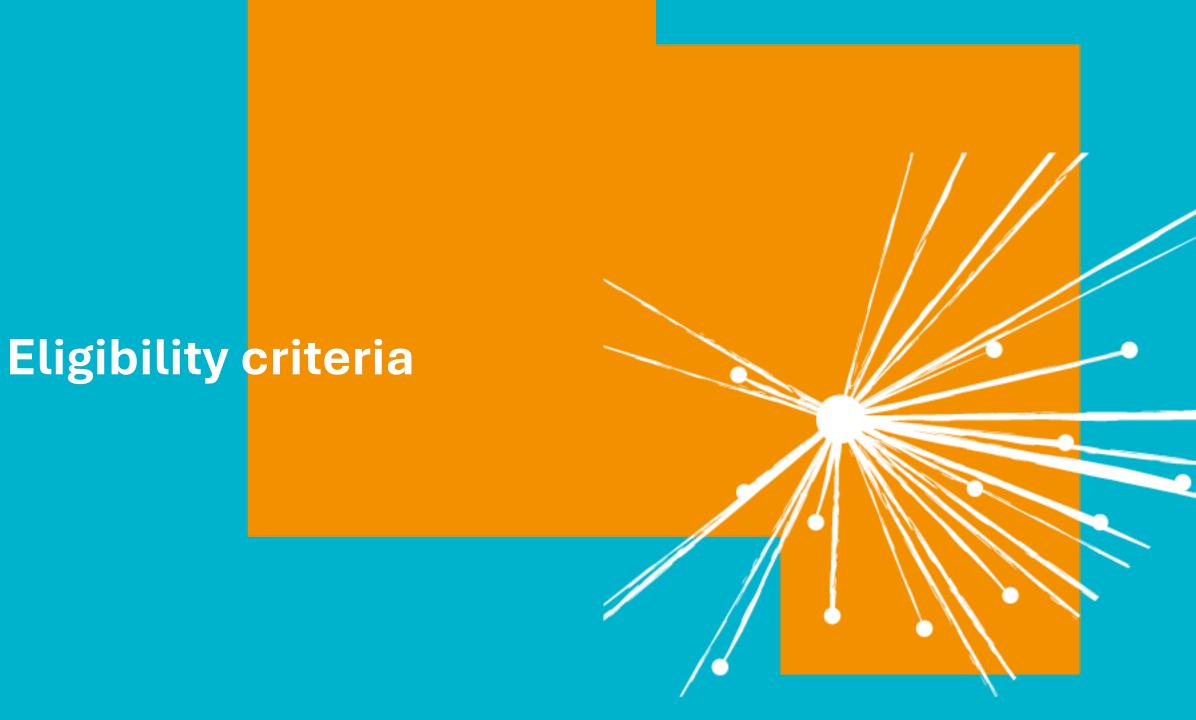




Single submission

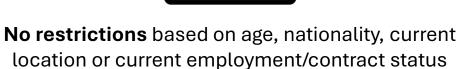
Three-step evaluation





# **Principal Investigator Eligibility**







Must have an institution based in an EU Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC) willing to host them (\*)

Time Commitment in the ERC Synergy

30% minimum of working time on grant

minimum time in EU's MS or AC (\*)

No PhD requirement for Synergy Grant



# Host Institution Eligibility



Any type of **legal entity** 



Based in an **EU** Member State or Associated Country



Have the **infrastructure** to enable PI's independence



Must **not constrain the PI** to the institution's research strategy



Must engage the PI for project duration



Not assessed at evaluation

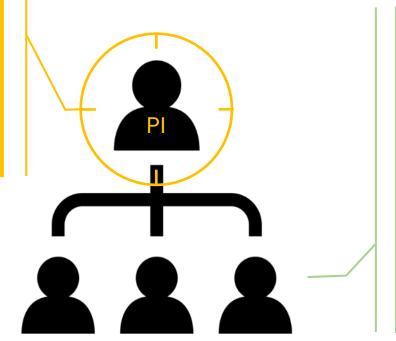




- ✓ Sign the **Grant Agreement** with the Commission
- ✓ Sign the Supplementary Agreement with the PI

# Principal Investigators & Team Members

- PI leads the research project They are not collaborating as equals with their team
- PI has the freedom to choose how many team members are included in the project
- PI names individuals or roles that will be recruited in the proposal
- PI must justify the team and its composition and contribution





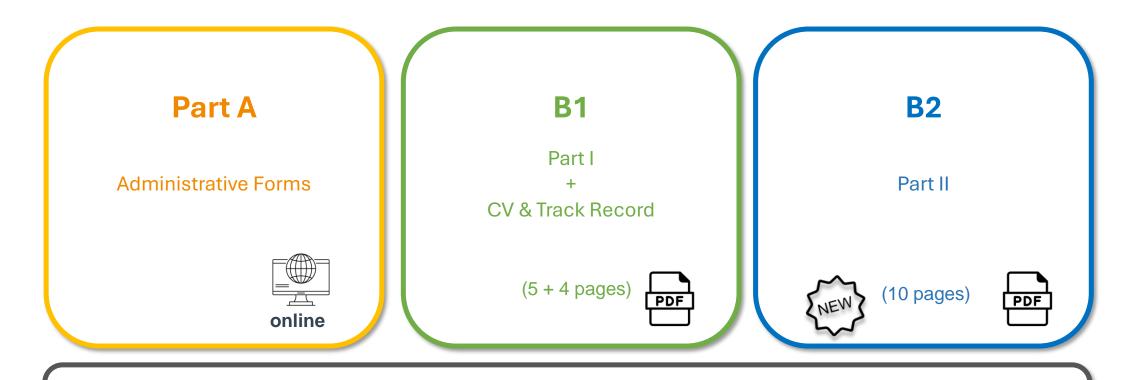
- Of any age, nationality or country of residence
- Can be based at the Host Institution or any other organisation in the world
- Cannot be co-investigators
- Assigned to specific project outputs/tasks
- Can be **research staff at any level** (including technicians and project managers)
- **EU funded** Even outside member states or associated countries





# **ERC Application** – Your building blocks





### **Annexes**

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents

### **HORIZON**

Call: ERC-2026-SYG

( Call for Proposals for ERC Synergy Grant)

Topic: ERC-2026-SyG

Type of Action: HORIZON-ERC-SYG

(HORIZON ERC Synergy Grants)

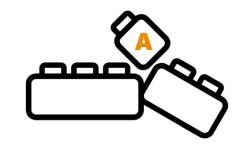
Proposal number: SEP-211195766

Proposal acronym: test

Type of Model Grant Agreement: HORIZON Action Grant Budget-Based

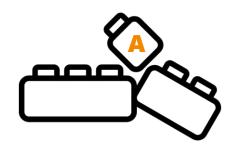
Table of contents

Section	Title	Action
1	General information	Show
2	Participants	Show
3	Budget	Show
4	Ethics and security	Show
5	Other questions	Show



- 1. General Information
- 2. Participants
- 3. Budget
- 4. Ethics and security
- 5. Other questions





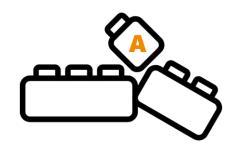
- Title of the project
- Duration
- Abstract
- 4 keywords to guide the evaluation process
- (...)

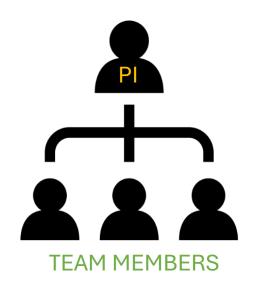
### 1. General Information

- 2. Participants
- 3. Budget
- 4. Ethics and security
- 5. Other questions







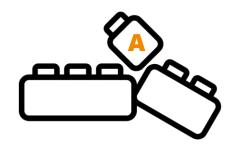


All encoded by their HI/beneficiary!

- 1. General Information
- 2. Participants
- 3. Budget
- 4. Ethics and security
- 5. Other questions







### Application forms

Proposal ID SEP-211195766

JK Research Office

Acronym test

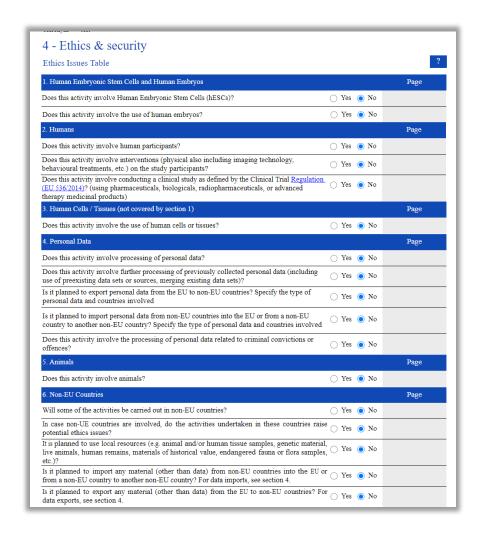
### 3 - Budget

Participant Number in this proposal	Organisation Short Name	Organisation Country	Total eligible costs⊮ (including 25% indirect costs)	Requested grant/€
1	Ukri	UK	0	0
2	Unict	IT	0	0
Total			0	0

- 1. General Information
- 2. Participants
- 3. Budget
- 4. Ethics and security
- 5. Other questions



# Part A – Ethics & Security questions



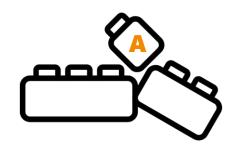


Follow the guidance document

'How to complete your ethics self-assessment'

- 1. General Information
- 2. Participants
- 3. Budget
- 4. Ethics and security
- 5. Other questions





- Indicate the corresponding PI
- Details of the pool of PIs
- Your Working Commitment in the EU (50%)\*
- Excluded Reviewers
- (...)

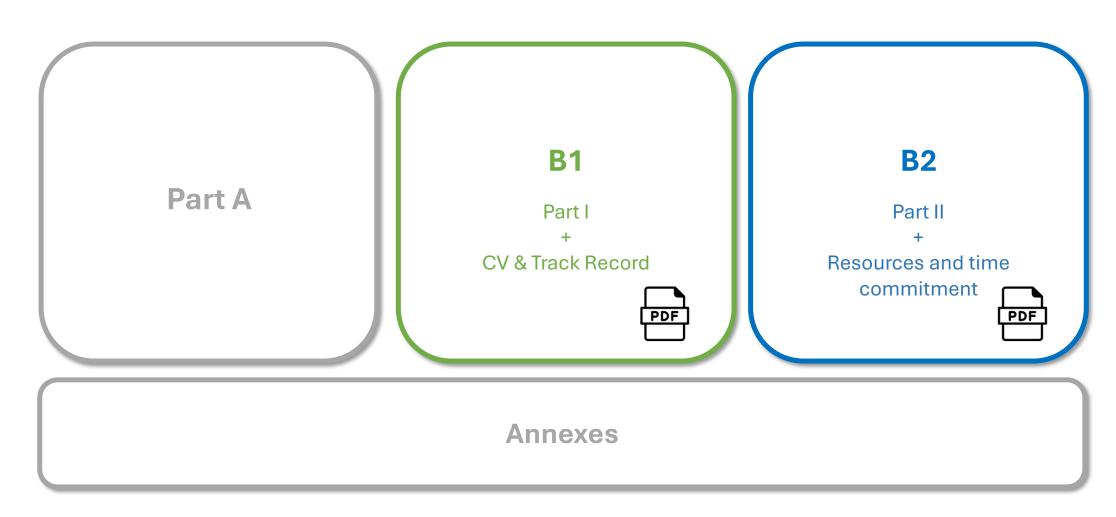
- 1. General Information
- 2. Participants
- 3. Budget
- 4. Ethics and security
- 5. Other questions





# **ERC Application** – Your building blocks





# ERC Application – Your scientific proposal



# Your scientific proposal | Part I

**5 pages** max





Describe your idea

Your **objectives** 





Overall **strategy** 

# Your scientific proposal | Part I





**Self-contained** 

Standalone document
Complementary to B2





**Entertaining** 

Grab the panellists' attention

Leave them curious to find out more in B2

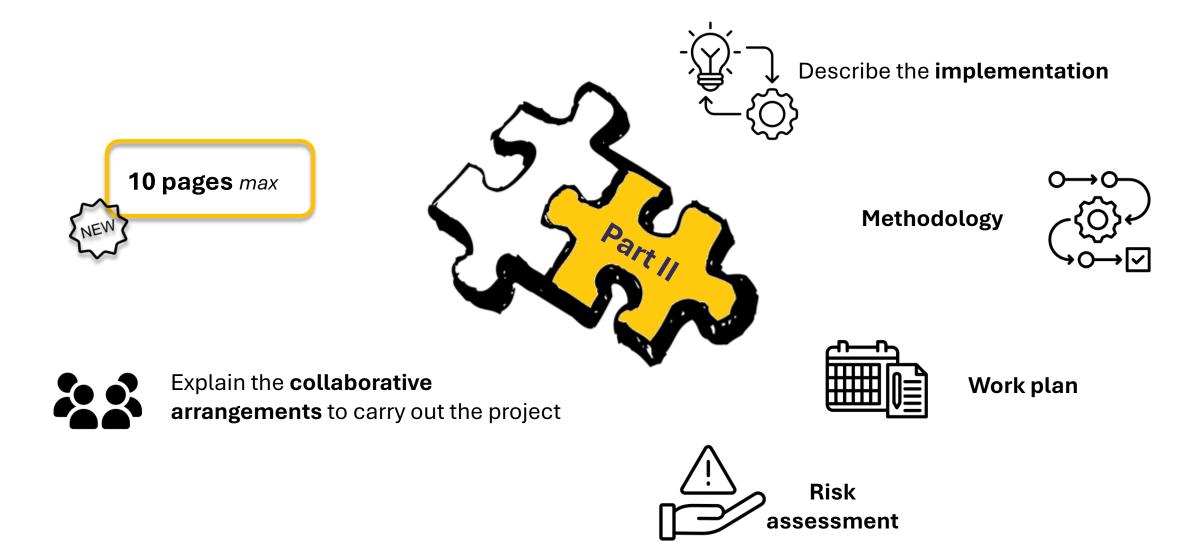
Convery your passion and motivation



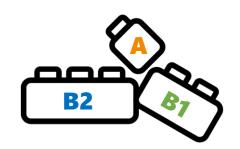
Persuasive to generalists

Do not use specialised jargon

# Your scientific proposal | Part II



# **ERC Application** – Overview





Follow the specific formatting requirements



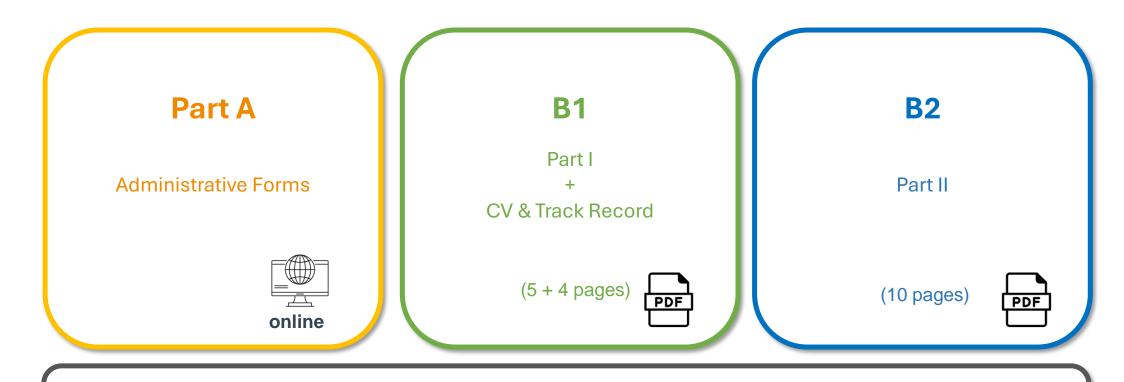
**References** do not count towards the page limit



Keep on hand
Information for
Applicants

# **ERC Application** – Your building blocks

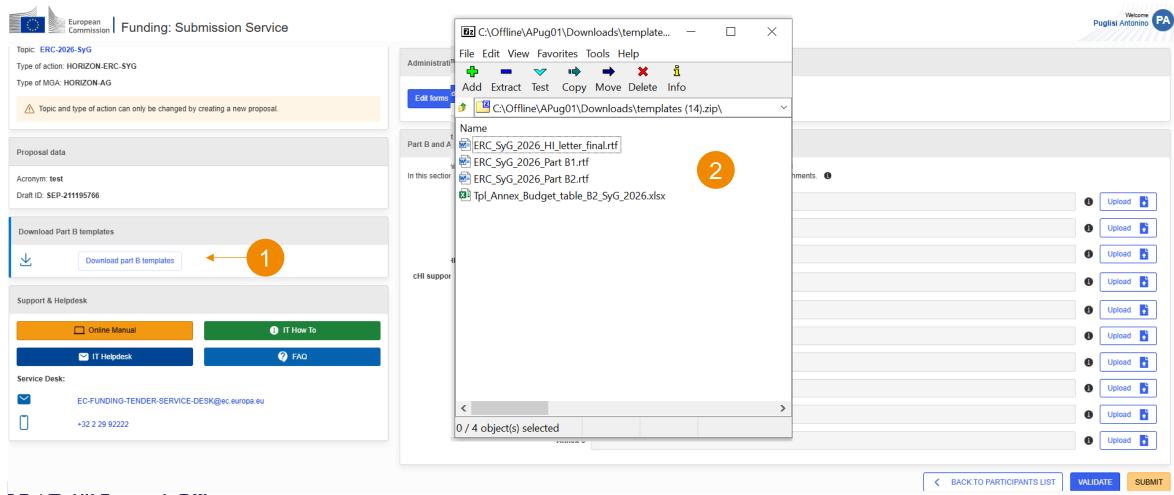




### **Annexes**

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents

# Part B2 – Your Templates





## **B1** – Overview





B1, your business card!



**Cover Page** 

Info from Part A



Part I

5 pages



**CV** and Track Record

4 pages per PI



## **B1** – CV and Track Record



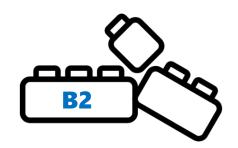
#### 4 pages x PI

in one single template

- Personal details, education, key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions
- **list of up to ten research outputs** that demonstrate how the applicant has advanced knowledge in their field and a list of selected examples of **significant peer recognition** (for example, prizes).
- Include relevant additional information on career breaks, diverse career paths, and life events



## **B2** – Overview





Part II

10 pages



Resources and time commitment

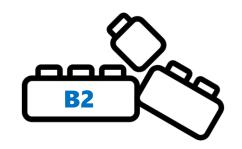


"Funding ID"

not counting towards page limits



## **B2** – Resources & time commitment





Resources and time commitment

Via a narrative part

In the B2 Template

Via the excel template

'Annex\_Budget\_table\_B2\_SyG2026.xlsx'

Min time commitment to the project (30%)

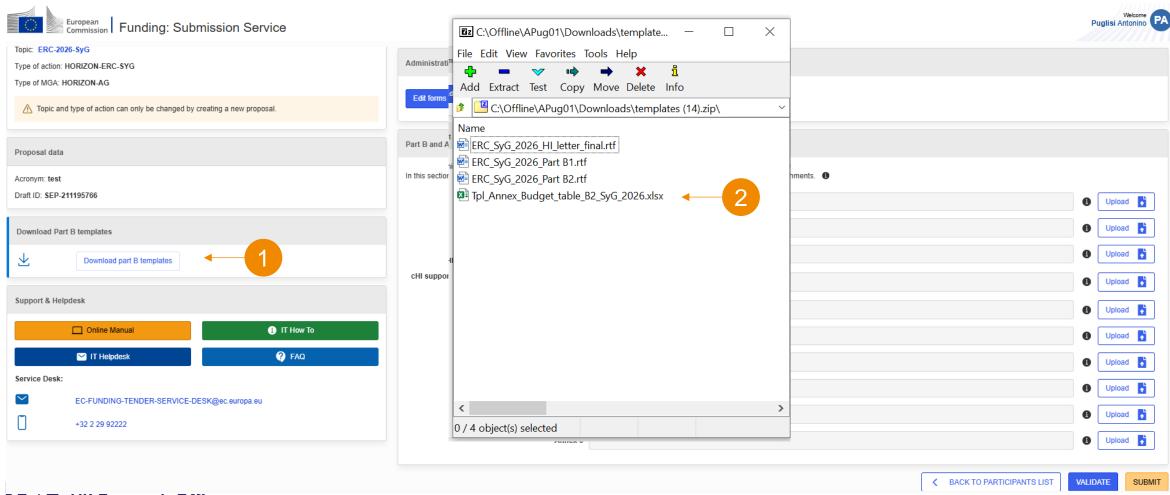
Request for additional funding



<u>Information for Applicants to</u> <u>the Synergy Grant 2026 Call</u>



# B2 – Budget/2 (by PI)





# **B2** – Budget/2 (by PI)



			cPI	PI2	PI3	PI4	
Prin	cipal lave	stigator names					
	Host Ins	titutions					
Cost category							Total
A. Direct premn al Carte	Perzunn	PI (Lake into annual the X of each PI odedinated working time on the ERC project)					
		Soniar Staff					-
		Partdocr					
		Students					
		Other Personnel costs					
	Total Personnel Carts		-	-	-	-	-
-Selec artr)	entractine	<b>  Carts</b> (naindirect					-
C. Perche se Cartr	C.1 Travel and subsistance						-
	C.2 Equipment (including major equipment under additional funding)						
	0.3 Other quadr, unrkr and service	Consumables (incl. fieldwork and animal					-
		Publications (including Open Access fees) and dissemination					-
		Other additional cortr					-
		C.3 Total other goods, works and services	-	-	-	-	-
	Total Perchare cortr (0.1+0.2 +0.3)		-	-	-	-	-
rervices Caulafariaa	(He indira	cod quadr and oct cartr) qlaboraterin and/or occaire ed as Unit code should be					
E. Indirect Curtr (nverheads) e-25%*(A+01+02+03)			-	-	-	-	-
Tutal Ertimated Eliqible Curtr (A + B + C + D + E)			-			-	-
Røgwøst	od EU cant	ribution"					-
Yease II	ndicate ti	e duration of the place of the place of working time			he project o	over the	ž
Corresp	onding P						
2" Pla							
3" Pla 4" Pla							

Request for additional funding above	Justification
Keep only the category(ies) that apply to the project.	



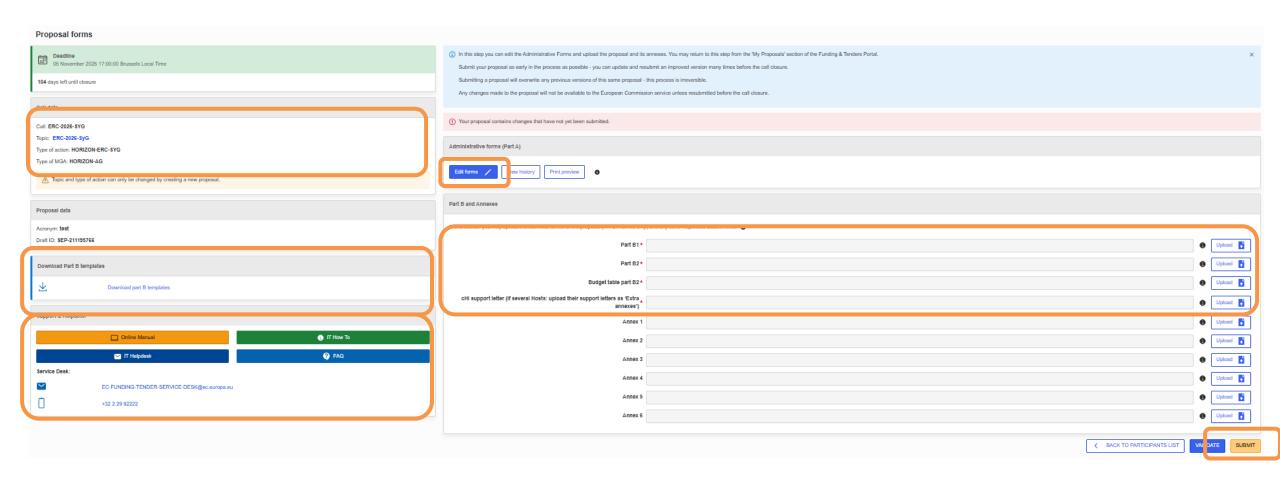


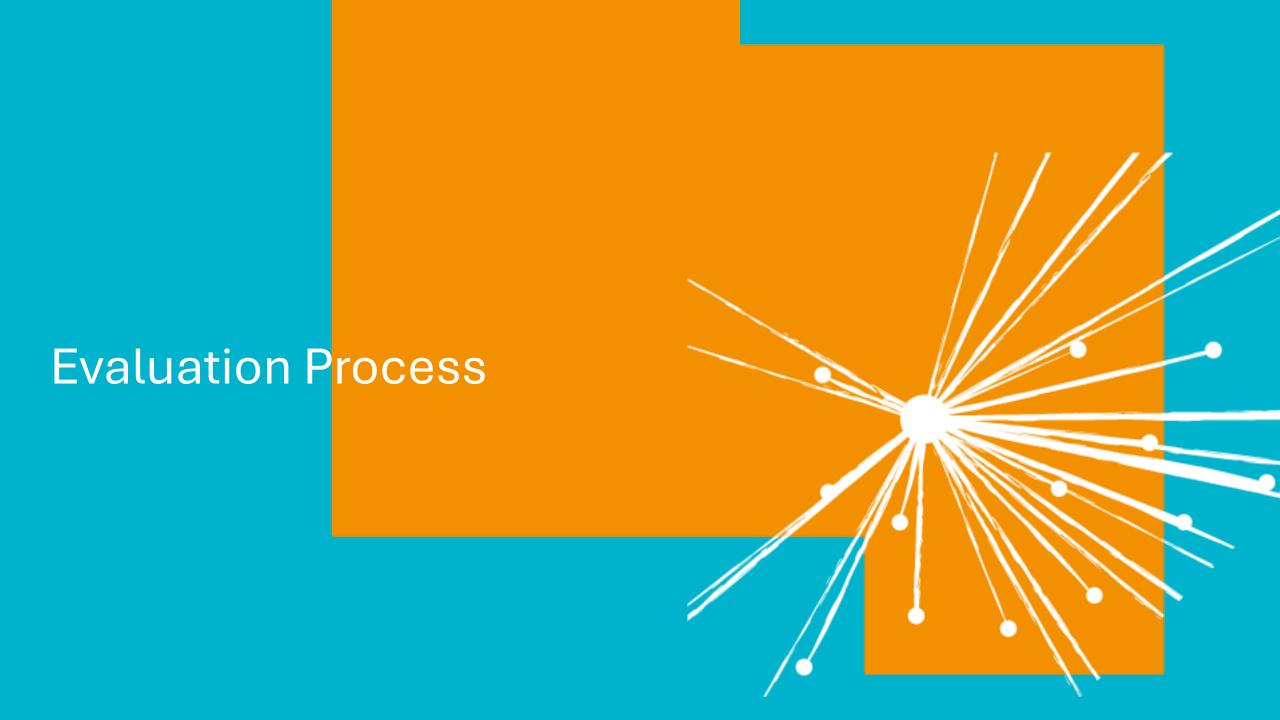
# Approaching Proposal Submission

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!!!

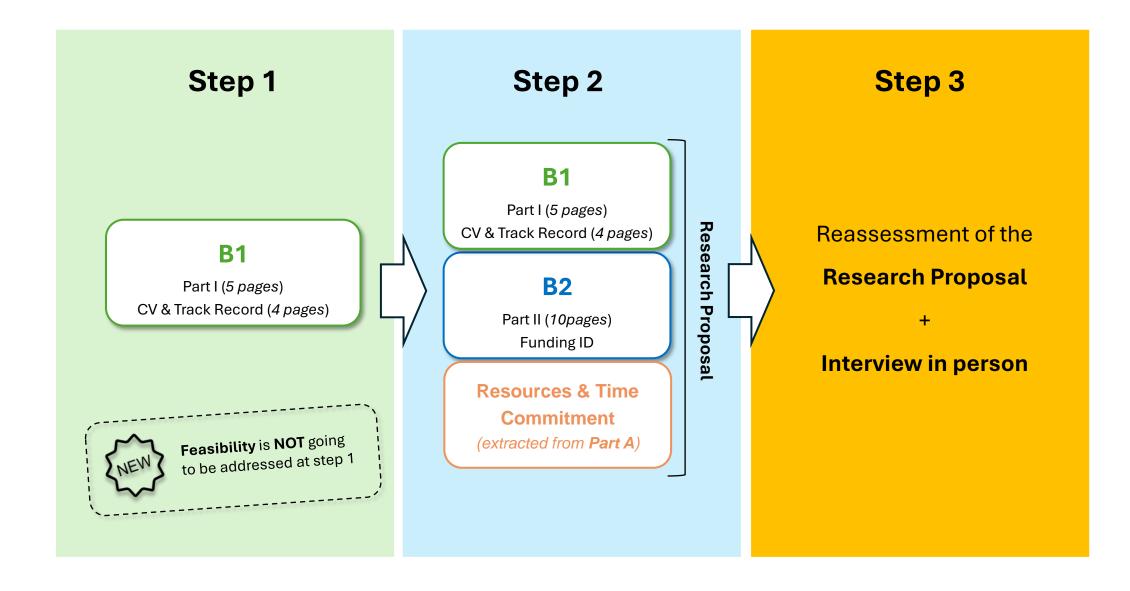


# Main proposal page on EC Portal





## **ERC Starting** – Evaluation



## **ERC Synergy** – Panel composition

Due to the collaborative nature of Synergy grants, the call's evaluation process **does not have a disciplinary panel scheme** 

Instead...



...bespoke panels with a variety of experts are set up during the evaluation to match the unique profile of submitted proposals

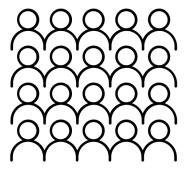
## **Evaluation** – Step 1

**B1** 

Part I (5 pages)
CV & Track Record (4 pages)



PI indicates 4-6 **fixed keywords** 





To step 2

Only one panel of "generalists"



**Feasibility** is not going to be addressed at this step of the evaluation

You should really focus on convincing the panel member that you are pushing the frontier of knowledge

## **Evaluation** – Step 2

**B1** 

Part I (5 pages)
CV & Track Record (4 pages)

**B2** 

Part II (10pages) Funding ID

Resources & Time
Commitment
(extracted from Part A)

Proposals are grouped

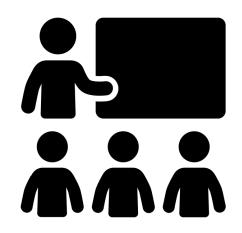
5 to 7 panels
+ external expert

To step 3

- The names of the 5 panel chairs are published on the ERC website **before** the deadline of the call
- The names of panel members will be published **after** the call deadline

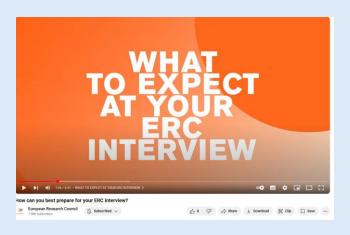
# **Evaluation** – Step 3

In person interview in Brussels



The interviews are planned between 7 and 11 September 2026

# How can you best prepare for your ERC interview?



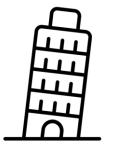


## What is the evaluation based on?

## **Principal Investigator**

intellectual capacity, creativity commitment





### Research project

ground-breaking nature ambition





## Evaluation of the Research Project

Ground-breaking nature & ambition





#### To what extent...

- ...does the research address important scientific questions?
- ...are the project's objectives ambitious and will it advance the frontier of knowledge?
- ...does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone?

#### To what extent...



- ...does the research address important scientific questions?
- ...are the project's objectives ambitious and will it advance the frontier of knowledge?
- ...does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone?
- ...are the research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
- ...are the timescales and resources adequate and properly justified?
- ...do the Principal Investigators succeed in proposing a combination of scientific approaches that are crucial to address the scope and complexity of the research questions to be tackled?

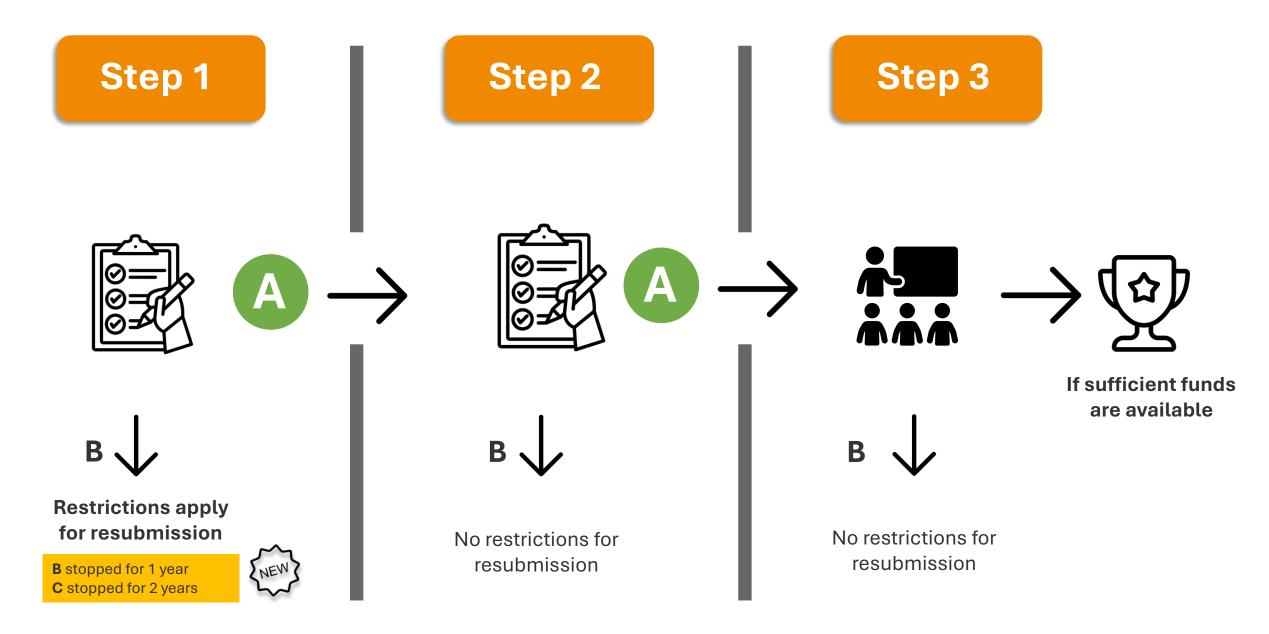
# Evaluation of the **Principal Investigators**

Intellectual capacity and creativity

#### To what extent...

- ...the PIs demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- ...the PIs provide evidence of creative and original thinking?
- ...the PIs have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?
- ...the Synergy Grant Group demonstrate that it brings together the knowhow necessary to address the proposed research question(s)?

## **Evaluation Outcomes & Resubmission restrictions**



Other Points for Consideration



# **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 (<a href="https://oapen.org">https://oapen.org</a>) as repository for monographs and other books as well as book chapters.

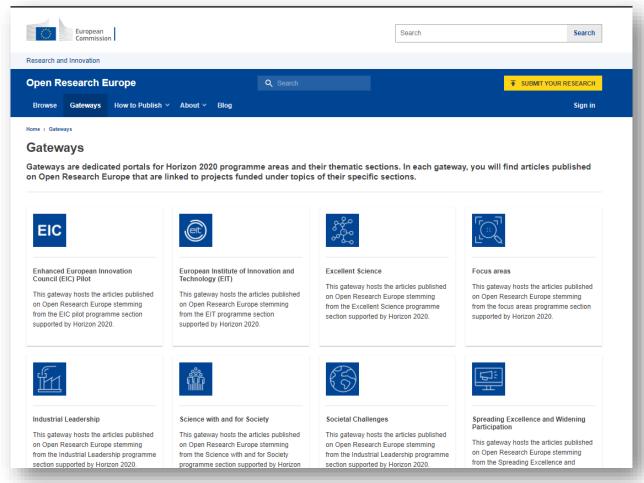
- - Guidelines on FAIR Data Management in Horizon 2020
  - www.openaire.eu
  - https://www.fosteropenscience.eu/

# Publishing Fees will be eligible for funding if the venue is fully open access (i.e. a full open access journal or book, or an open access publishing platform like, e.g., Open Research Europe)



You can find the provisions related to Open Science 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/

## Gender

# Sex and Gender dimension of your project

- Not a strict requirement in of itself, but...
- Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation can make your proposal more competitive
- Proper consideration of sex and gender in research design is often evaluated as added excellence to the research question and methodology.
- Some basic questions you can ask in project design:
  - Are some of your findings going to be gender specific?
  - Do you justify your gender choices in the research design to peer reviewers?
  - If the topic is not relevant to Sex & gender, do you explicitly acknowledge that consideration?

#### Find more tips and guidance:

In a recent **ERC workshop** about how ERC-style excellence in different domains can be interrelated with the Sex and Gender Dimension.

# Gender rules for eligibility and in the Part A form

- A Gender Equality Plan (GEP) has to be in place for the Host Institutions <u>before the signature of the</u> grant agreement.
- GEPs are the Host Institution's responsibility, it is not the Principal Investigator's responsibility
- Proposal PI and team members' gender and career stage details requested in Part A are not seen by evaluators.
- These Part A personal details are used in a quantitative way by the Commission to monitor progress towards gender equality and better careers in the European research sector



## Useful resources

- ERC Website
- ERC Classes available on YouTube



- Webinar on ERC Work Programme 2026
- ERC 2026 Work Programme
- Information for Applicants 2026
- Call for proposal
- Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement





# Stay tuned

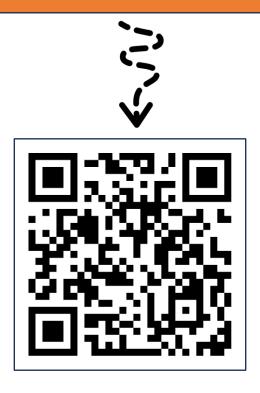




erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk



#### Sign up for our free **ERC newsletters**



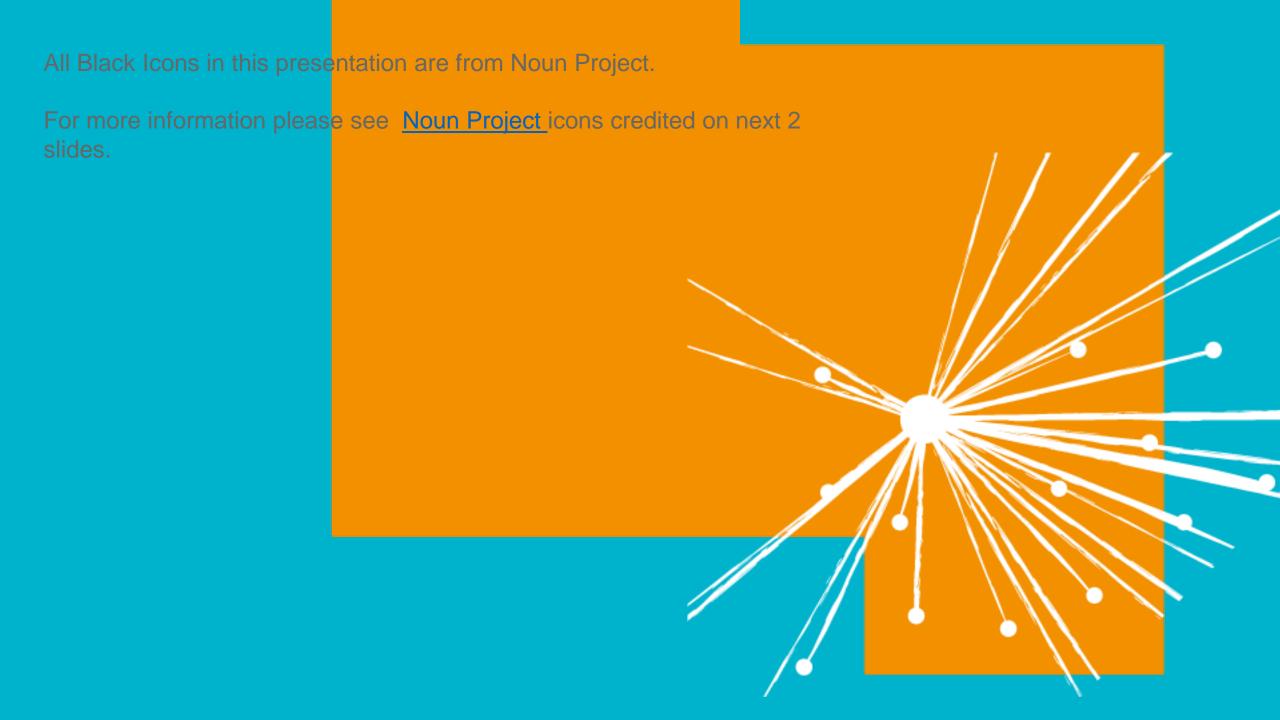
Please tick 'European Research Council (ERC)' within Pillar I when signing up

Best of luck with your frontier research!



Break

Q&A



## **Credits**

Most icons were sourced from https://thenounproject.com/























































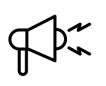
















































































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