THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

ERC OVERVIEW

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ERC NCP

ERC is part of Horizon Europe

Pillar I: Excellent Science

Reinforcing and extending the excellence of the Union's science base

European Research Council

Frontier research by the best researchers and their teams

€16 billion

17% of entire budget

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

Equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through mobility and training

€6.6 billion

Research Infrastructures

Integrated and inter-connected world-class research infrastructures

€2.4 billion

The ERC`s mission

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

erc
European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

LONG TERM
GRANTS
PIONEERING PROJECTS

TO HIGH-RISK
IN ANY FIELD OF FRONTIER RESEARCH

- Life Sciences
- Physical Sciences and Engineering
- Social Sciences and Humanities

Why to apply for ERC grant?

To make your scientific dream a…..REALITY!!!

ERC offers **Independence, Recognition & Visibility** to:

- Work on a research topic of own choice in **ANY FIELD** of frontier research
- Gain financial autonomy for long term: **5** years in individual grants, **6** years in Synergy grants
- Negotiate the **best conditions** of work with the Host Institution
- Attract **excellent team members** and **collaborators** from anywhere in the world
- Move with the grant to **any place in Europe** if desired ("Portability of grants")

Success???

Excellent idea

Before you start...

Frontier research
Innovative concept
Ground breaking research

Are you ready?

Excellent researcher

The best version
OF YOU

Who can apply?

Principal Investigator

PI

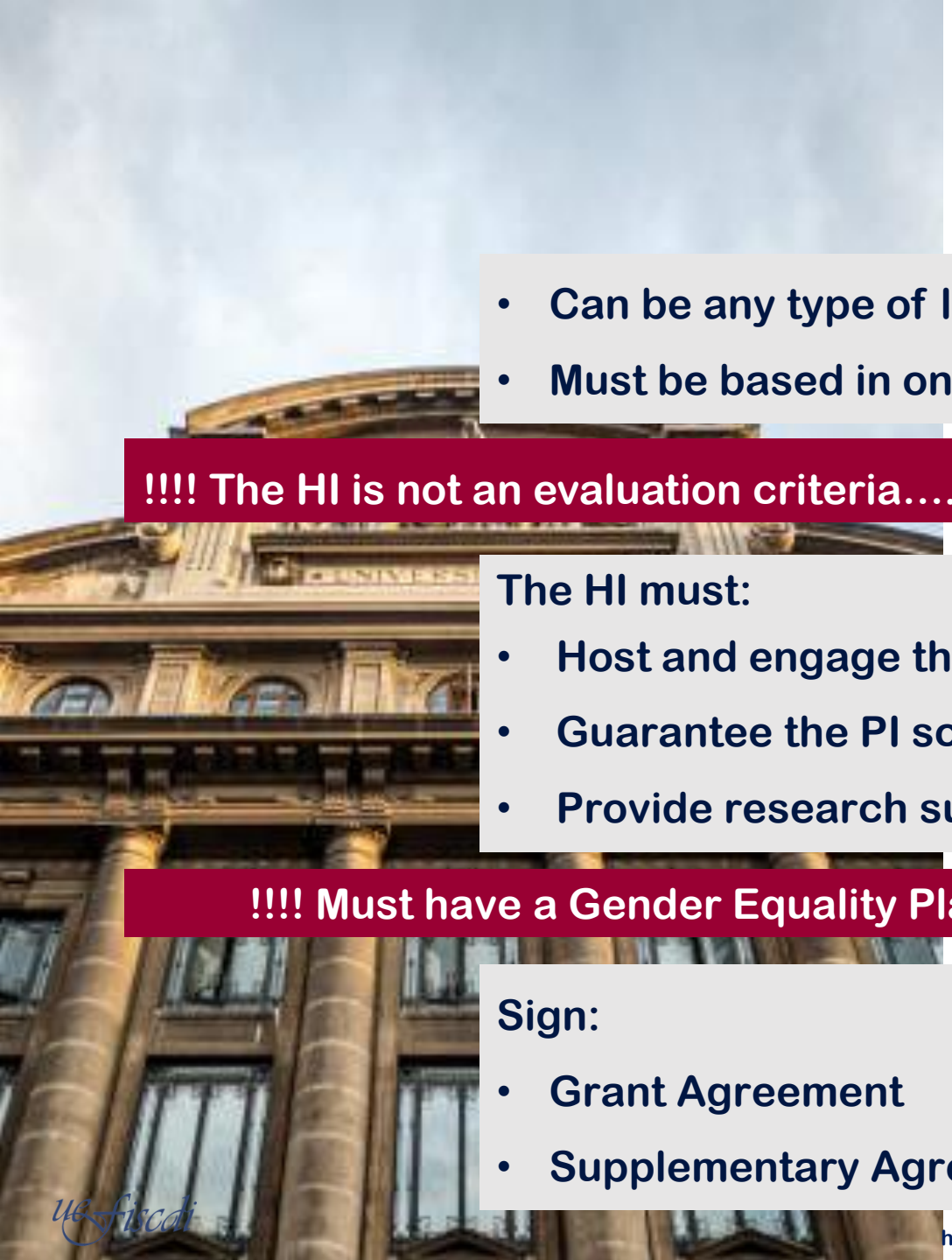
Any nationality,
any age,
any current place of work

An EU / Associated Country
Host Institution

Host Institution

HI

At least 50% of the time in EU or Associated Countries



Host Institution Eligibility

- Can be any type of legal entity, private or public
- Must be based in one of the EU Member States /Associated Countries

!!!! The HI is not an evaluation criteria…..but a has to sign HI commitment letter

The HI must:

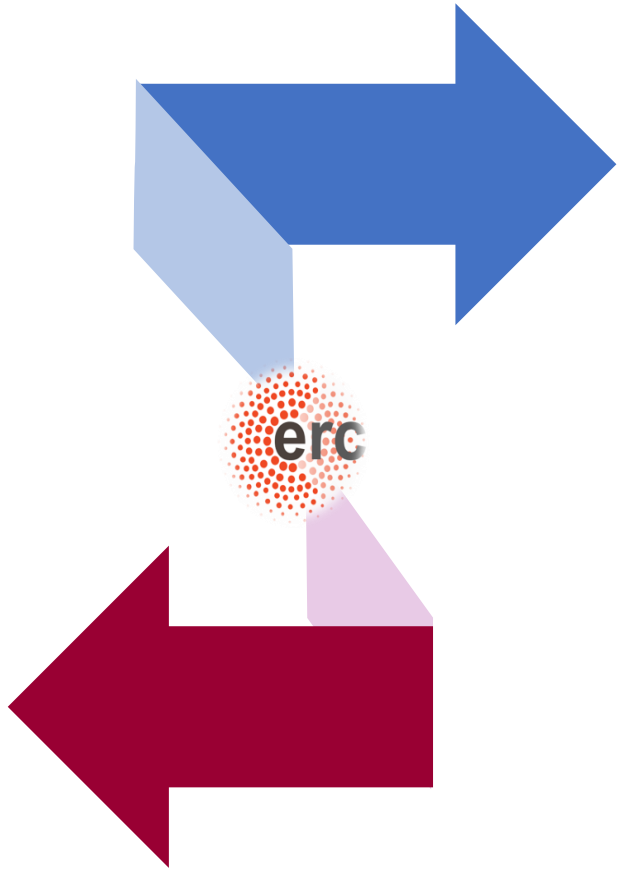
- Host and engage the PI for the whole duration of the action
- Guarantee the PI scientific independence
- Provide research support and administrative assistance

!!!! Must have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) at the time of signing GA

Sign:

- Grant Agreement
- Supplementary Agreement with the PI

Principal Investigator Eligibility



Must have a Host Institution (HI) based in an EU Member State or Associated Country willing to host them

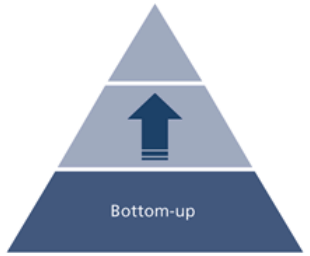
No restrictions based on age, nationality, current location or current employment/contract status

Types of research funded

Ambitious in risk and in scope

Any field of research – bottom-up

Must be frontier research



Types of ERC projects

Individual grants 1 PI

Starting Grants
2-7 years after PhD, up to 1.5 ME
for 5 years

Consolidator Grants
7-12 years after PhD), up to 2 ME
for 5 years

Advanced Grants
No PhD Requirements, up to 2.5 ME
for 5 years

Group of 2 - 4 PI

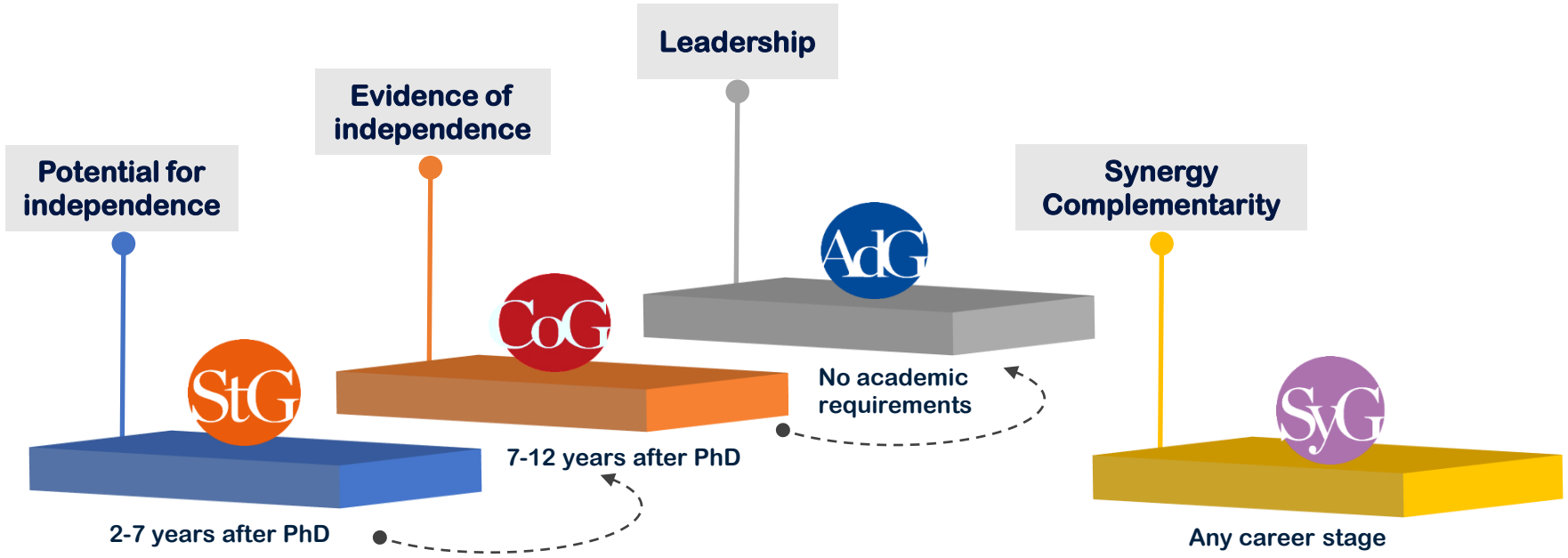
Synergy Grants
2 – 4 Principal Investigators, up to 10 ME for 6 years
1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated Countries

Main Frontier Research Grants

Proof-of-Concept
bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation
lump sum, 150,000 E, **ONLY** for ERC grant holders

Complementary Funding

Principal Investigator Profile



Grant type	Minimum% of Working Time on Grant	Minimum% of time in EU MS/AC	Years since PhD defence
STG	50	50	2 – 7
COG	40	50	7 – 12
ADG	30	50	N/A
SYG	30	50	N/A

Funding

Grant type	Grant Amount (up to)	Additional Funding (up to)
STG	€ 1.5 M	€ 1.0 M
COG	€ 2.0 M	€ 1.0 M
ADG	€ 2.5 M	€ 1.0 M
SYG	€ 10 M	€ 4.0 M
POC	€ 150.000	N/A

ERC's Additional Funding:

- "start-up" costs for PIs moving to the EU or an AC from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant AND/OR
- the purchase of major equipment AND/OR
- access to large facilities
- other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs

Eligible costs for ERC projects

A. Personnel costs	B. Subcontracting costs	C. Purchasing costs	D. Other cost categories	E. Indirect costs
• Principal Investigator • Senior staff • Post docs • Students, • Other personnel costs	NO Indirect costs	• C.1. Travel and Subsistence • C.2. Equipment • C.3. Other goods, works and services	NO Indirect costs	25% * (A + C1 + C2 + C3)

Eligible project costs will be reimbursed at a funding rate of 100% for direct costs plus a flat-rate of 25% for indirect costs, excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and internally invoiced goods and services

ERC - Main Frontier Research Grants (1)

Individual grants

ERC Starting Grants

Objective: Support for excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they are starting their own independent research team or programme

Grant size: Up to €1.5M (possibility of additional up to €1M) over 5 years

PI Profile:

- 2-7 years past after first PhD
- Potential for research independence
- At least one publication as main author or without PhD supervisor
- 50 of PI's time in the project 50 in the EU or AC

ERC - Main Frontier Research Grants (2)

Individual grants

ERC Consolidator Grants

Objective: Support for excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they may still be consolidating their own independent research team or programme

Grant size: Up to € 2.0M (possibility of additional up to €1M) over 5 years

PI Profile:

- 7-12 years past after first PhD
- Evidence of research independence
- Several publications as main author or without PhD supervisor
- 40 of PI's time in the project 50 in the EU or AC

ERC - Main Frontier Research Grants (3)

Individual grants

ERC Advanced Grants

Objective: Support for excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they are already established research leaders with a recognised track record of research achievements

Grant size: Up to € 2.5 M (possibility of additional up to €1 M) over 5 years

PI Profile:

- Significant track record in the last 10 years
- Supervision of early career stage researchers
- 30% of PI's time in the project + 50% in the EU or AC

ERC - Main Frontier Research Grants (4)

ERC Synergy Grants

Objective: Support for a small group of 2 - 4 PIs to jointly address ambitious research problems that could not be addressed by the individual PIs and their teams working alone

Grant size: Up to € 10.0 M (possibility of additional up to €4 M) over 6 years

PIs Profile:

- Any career stage (STG, COG, ADG) with competitive track records as appropriate to their career stage

ERC - Complementary Funding

ERC Proof of Concept Grants

Objective: Facilitating exploration of the commercial and social innovation potential of ERC funded research → ONLY for ERC grant holders

Grant size: Lump sum, up to € 150.000 over 18 months

PI Profile: All PIs in one of the main grants are eligible to participate and apply for an ERC Proof of Concept Grant

Change in PhD eligibility reference date

……for Starting and Consolidator ERC calls, make sure you are eligible!

Starting from WP2023 → **New "PhD eligibility reference date" rule:**

*The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period shall be the **certified date of the successful defence***

The first PhD shall have been successfully defended

!!!!! Eligibility window is measured from the 1st of January of the year of the Call

Extensions of eligibility window possible for documented cases

> 2 and ≤ 7 years prior to 1 January…….. STG

> 7 and ≤ 12 years prior to 1 January…….COG

STG and COG : Extension of the Eligibility windows

For documented situations occurring <u>before the call deadline</u> the eligibility window can be extended for:

Maternity leave
18 months per child or longer if documented

Paternity leave
Actual amount of documented leave taken

Children born before or after the date of successful defence of PhD degree

Long – term illness
Lasting over 90 days) Illness of PI/family member

National services
Actual amount of documented leave taken

Only occurrences after date of successful defence of PhD degree

Clinical training
Maximum 4 years

Only occurrences after award of first eligible degree

Since ERC WP 2023

Natural disaster
Actual amount of documented time

Seeking asylum
Actual amount of documented time, min. 30 days

Only occurrences after date of successful defence of PhD degree

ERC Panel Structure

for individual grants (STG, COG, ADG)

3 Domains / 28 Panels

15–20 descriptors per panel

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

Read the descriptors

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts

Physical Sciences & Engineering

- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

Evaluation

Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

Primarily to:

Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground breaking nature
- Scientific impact
- Scientific approach

At the same time:

Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Time Commitment

Useful documents

- Guide for Applicants
- Proposal templates
- ERC Work Programme
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Model Grant Agreement
- Annotated Grant Agreement

Changes in Work Programme 2024 (1)

Research assessment

Evaluating primarily the research project → Focus on the project

- ground-breaking nature, ambition, and potential impact
- feasibility of the scientific approach

- intellectual capacity, creativity, and commitment of the PI also evaluated
- focus on the extent to which the PI has the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project

Revised evaluation questions

- 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

Changes in Work Programme 2024 (2)

New CV and Track Record

No prescriptive Principal Investigator profiles:

- CV & Track Record templates are combined (4 pages in total) + simplified

Research achievements (<=10):

- demonstrating advancement in the field
- emphasis on more recent achievements
- short narrative on significance of achievements:

Peer recognition: prizes, fellowships, academy membership, etc.

Additional information:

- career breaks, diverse career paths, life events
- exceptional contributions to research community
- other contributions to research community

Changes in Work Programme 2024 (3)

Evaluation procedure

No budget multiplier in STG, COG, ADG calls

- up to **44 proposals** per panel in Step 2

New A-score at Step 1 (STG, COG, ADG, SYG):

- **'A invited'** – high quality proposals to pass to Step 2
- **'A not invited'** – high quality proposals is of excellent quality but not ranked sufficiently high to pass to step 2 of the evaluation

!!! The researcher will be free to submit a proposal in the following year's calls

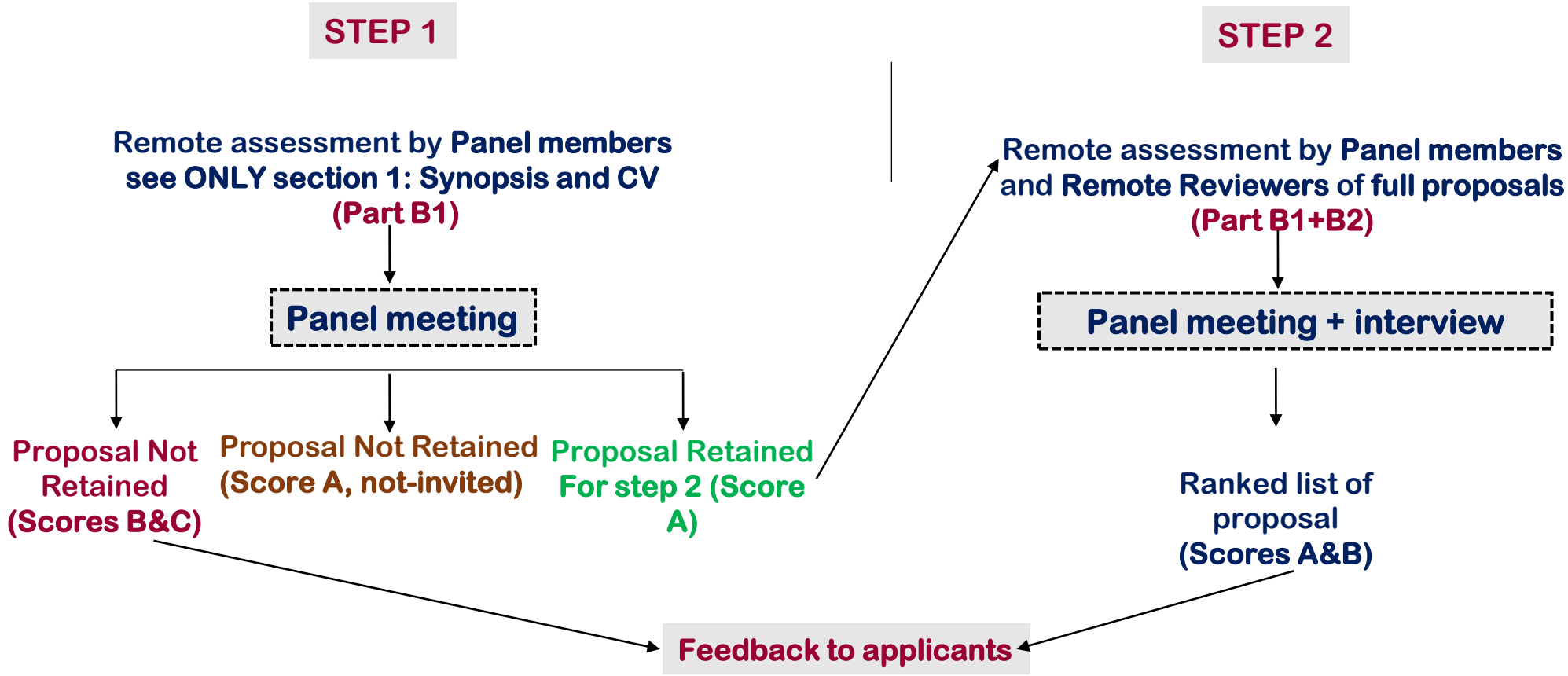
New resubmission restriction

- applicants selected for funding and preparing a grant agreement in a 2023 ERC call, may not apply to STG, COG, ADG in 2024 ERC calls

Evaluation process

How are the ERC proposals evaluated?

For individuals calls: a single submission…… but a two step evaluation

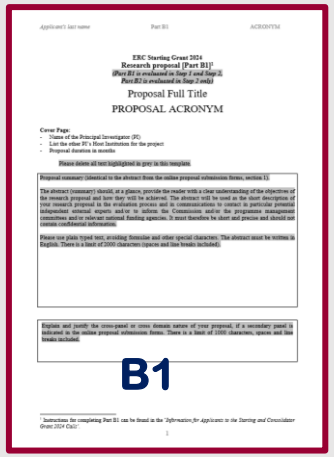


Proposal structure

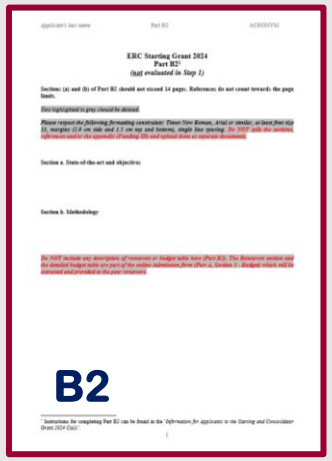
For individuals calls: STG, COG, ADG

!!! In Step 1 only part B1 is reviewed

The ERC full proposal = B1 + B2 + Part A


ERC Starting Grant 2024
Research proposal [Part B1]
Proposal Full Title
PROPOSAL ACRONYM

B1


ERC Starting Grant 2024
Part B2

B2

Part B1 (pdf)

Evaluated in Step 1 & Step 2

- Cover page and Summary
- Extended Synopsis (5 p.)
- CV & Track record (4 p.)

Part B2 (14 p.)

NOT evaluated in Step 1
(only in Step 2)
Scientific Proposal (pdf)

- SoA and Objectives
- Methodology

Part A (Administrative forms)

- A1 - General Information
- A2 - Participants (GEP)
- A3 – Budget* + Resources description
- (8000 words)
- A4 - Ethics and security
- A5 - Other questions (Time commitment)

Annexes

- Host Institution Binding Statement of Support
- Explanatory information on ethical issues
- PhD record and supporting documentation for eligibility checking

Preparing an application (1)

Hints and Tips

In Step 1: Panel members (act as generalists) they see only Part B1 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!
- 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 play and why is your idea and scientific approach outstanding?
- **Only the extended Synopsis is read at Step 1: concise and clear presentation** is crucial **(Outline** only of the **methodological approach** – feasibility is assessed at Step 1)

Preparing an application (2)

Hints and Tips

In **Step 2**: Both**Part B1 and B2** are sent to specialists around the world (**specialised external referees**)

- Do not just repeat the synopsis in part B2
- Provide sufficient detail on methodology, work plan, selection of case studies etc. (references do not count towards page)
- Check coherency of figures, justify requested resources pay attention to the calculations and provide budget for each category
- Explain involvement of additional team members (it is possible to have further beneficiaries/partners in the project)
- Funding ID to be filled in carefully for each PI

Questions???