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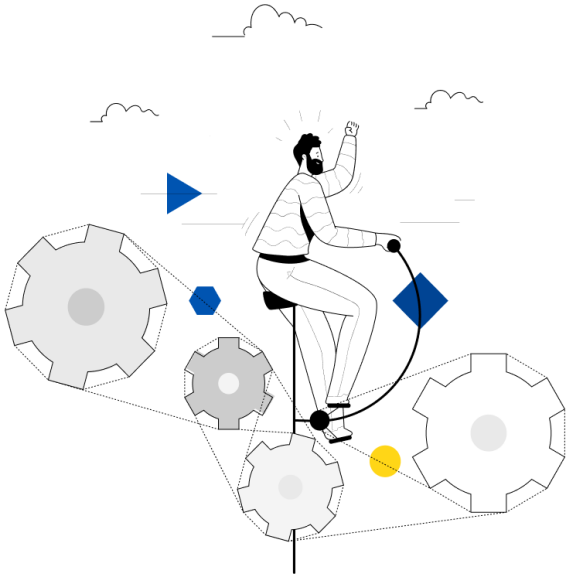
ERC CONSOLIDATOR GRANTS CALL 2023 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Update Ianuarie 2023



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
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Q1. For ERC 2023 frontier research calls, what is the best practice for communication between the Host Institution(s) (HI), the Principal Investigator(s) (PI) and the European Research Council Executive Agency during the grant preparation and implementation?

In Horizon Europe, all interactions with ERCEA will take place online via the Funding & Tenders Portal (F&T Portal), under "My Area" (after EU Login). The handling of documents will be fully electronic as there is no need any more to exchange any paper document. The grants for the successful proposals submitted to the ERC 2023 calls (ERC-2023-STG, ERC-2023-COG, ERC-2023-ADG, ERC-2023-SYG, ERC-2023-PoC) will be prepared and then signed electronically. Requests of amendments will be prepared, submitted and either accepted or rejected electronically. All reports will have to be submitted for review via the F&T Portal. According to the various phases of the project lifecycle, the correct actors (HIs and/or PIs) will be informed via email that certain tasks must be performed in the F&T Portal. In case of the Synergy grants, the corresponding HI and PI are the main contacts with the Agency. Notwithstanding the above and in an effort to keep on offering a high level service, we strongly encourage both the HIs and the PIs to contact the respective Agency staff for discussion in an informal way about any changes in their respective action. This is of utmost importance in order to avoid cancellation of documents or requests that are incomplete or incorrect. The name and surname of the ERC officer responsible for the PI's grant can be found in the F&T Portal. The officer can be easily contacted via the messaging tool embedded in the F&T Portal, allowing the PI (corresponding PI for the Synergy grants) to communicate directly with the officer without having to use emails. Furthermore, the ERCEA has set up a helpdesk to provide Principal Investigators with assistance and guidance throughout the lifetime of the project. The helpdesk can be contacted by email at ERC-C2-PI-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu.

Q2: Must the Principal Investigators applying for an ERC Starting Grant 2023 (ERC-2023-STG) call choose the appropriate ERC peer review evaluation panel for their proposal?

According to the conditions of the ERC Starting Grant 2023 or ERC Consolidator Grant 2023 (ERC-2023-STG or ERC-2023-COG) call, it is the applicant's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant ERC Panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research and to indicate one or more ERC keywords representing the research fields involved. The Principal Investigator (PI) may indicate a secondary relevant evaluation panel. The initial allocation of the proposal to a panel will be based on the preference expressed by the applicant. However, when necessary due to the expertise required for the evaluation, a proposal may be reallocated to a different panel with the agreement of both panel chairs concerned. The composition of the ERC evaluation panels are by nature multi-disciplinary. The primary allocated panel will determine if additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional remote experts are needed. The applicant should indicate when they believe that their proposal is of a cross-panel or cross-domain nature. Further explanations can be found in the Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant calls 2023.

Q3. For ERC 2023 calls under Horizon Europe, will the information requested in Part A concerning the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) be provided to the reviewers?

To be eligible for calls with deadlines in 2022 and 2023, legal entities from an EU Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC) must have a gender equality plan (GEP) or an equivalent strategic document in place for the duration of the project. This information will not be provided to the reviewers and it will not be evaluated. In the Part A online submission form, there is a 'yes/no' tick box question that the Host Institution (HI)'s contact person must fill in. Only public bodies, higher education institutions (including private research organisations and private higher education institutions) must answer this question. This answer will not affect the evaluation of the proposal. In case the proposal is selected for funding, the HI must have a GEP or an equivalent strategic document in place at granting stage. The GEP or equivalent must fulfil the mandatory requirements listed in Annex 5 of the ERC Work Programme 2023 and will be necessary before the signature of the grant agreement. See guidelines here.

Q4. For ERC calls under Horizon Europe, is the GEP (gender equality plan) required at submission stage or at the grant signature?

To be eligible for ERC calls, Host Institutions (HIs) – which can be public bodies, research organisations or higher education institutions (including private research organisations and private higher education institutions establishments) from an EU Member State or Associated Country – must have a gender equality plan (GEP) or an equivalent strategic document in place for the duration of the project.

Please be aware that it is not necessary for the Host Institution to have already the gender equality plan or equivalent strategic document in place at the time of the submission and the absence of a GEP will not affect the evaluation of the project. However, if the project is successful, it will be necessary before the signature of the grant agreement.

Q5. For ERC calls under Horizon Europe, will the information requested in Part A on the career stage of the PI be provided to the reviewers?

For ERC calls under Horizon Europe, the information requested in Part A on the career stage of the PI will not be provided to the reviewers of your proposal and will not be part of the evaluation. This data is gathered for statistical purposes and used to evaluate the Horizon Europe Programme as a whole.

Q6. Under call ERC-2023-STG or ERC-2023-COG, can a Principal Investigator, simultaneously engaged part-time by 2 different research organisations and leading a research group at both, apply for an ERC grant with both research groups executing the proposed project as 1 team?

Yes, this is possible as long as the Principal Investigator (PI), at the time of submission to the ERC-2023-STG or ERC-2023-COG call, is supported by one organisation acting as Host Institution (applicant legal entity) based in an EU Member State or an Associated Country. Through the Host Institution support letter, this organisation is committing itself: to host and engage the Principal Investigator for the whole duration of the action, to ensure that the project will be performed under the guidance of the Principal Investigator who is expected to devote minimum 50% of their working time to the ERC funded project. Specific circumstances, where the minimum time requirement of the call (50%) results from the sum of more than one employment

contract of the PI with different organisations, may be accommodated in case the proposal is selected for funding. Other organisation(s) hosting team members should be referred to as (an) additional partner(s) in the proposal and their details should be given in the administrative proposal submission form on the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Q7. May a Principal Investigator (PI) whose proposal was unsuccessful (not category A) in one of the ERC 2021 or 2022 StG/CoG/AdG calls submit a proposal to the ERC-2023-SyG call?

Yes, a Principal Investigator (PI) whose proposal was evaluated as category B or C at Step 1 or as category A or B at Step 2 in the 2021 or 2022 Starting Grant (StG), Consolidator Grant (CoG) or Advanced Grant (AdG) calls may submit a proposal to the ERC 2023 Synergy Grant (SyG) call. In other words, regardless of the score received in an individual main frontier research call prior to the ERC 2023 Synergy Grant call, you are eligible to apply. Further details in the ERC Work Programme 2023, section "Restrictions on submission of proposals".

Q8. Is it possible to apply to the ERC Synergy Grant (ERC-2023-SyG) call if the same PI also intends to apply to an ERC Starting (StG), Consolidator (CoG) or Advanced Grant (AdG) call?

If a Principal Investigator (PI) submits proposals to different ERC main frontier research calls published under the same Work Programme, only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated. Ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against this limit. If a PI thus applies to the ERC-2023-SyG call and the proposal is eligible and evaluated, their other application to a StG, CoG or AdG call under the ERC Work Programme 2023 will not be evaluated. It is important to note that the year of an ERC call refers to the ERC Work Programme under which the call was made and can be established by its call identifier, and it does not refer to a calendar year. A 2023 ERC call is therefore the one that was published under the ERC Work Programme 2023 and will have 2023 in the call identifier (for example ERC-2023-SyG). Example: A proposal submitted to the ERC-2023-AdG call will not be evaluated if the PI had already applied to the ERC-2023-SyG call and the SyG proposal was considered eligible, even if the call deadlines are in two different calendar years (in 2022 for the SyG 2023 call and in 2023 for the AdG 2023 call). Note that it is possible to apply both to the ERC-2022-AdG call and to the ERC-2023-SyG call, even though the deadlines

are in the same calendar year. In case the PI is selected for funding in the 2022 AdG call and the Grant Agreement is signed, the PI becomes ineligible to the 2023 SyG call, because a PI can hold only one ERC main frontier grant at any one time. For further questions please contact the ERC SyG mailbox (ERC-SyG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu).

Q9. For ERC calls under Horizon Europe, is the written consent of collaborators and/or participants in the project required?

Yes, Principal Investigators submitting a proposal to any ERC call must have, at the time of submission, the written consent of all participants on their involvement and on the content of the proposal, as well as of any researcher mentioned in the proposal as participating in the project (either as team member, collaborator, other PI or member of the advisory board), should the proposal be funded. The ERC Executive Agency may request PIs to provide proof of the written consent (email, letter) at any time.

Q10. The ERC announced to applicants to the ERC-2023-STG and ERC-2023-COG calls that there would be a change regarding the PhD reference date for the calculation of the eligibility period. Is there going to be a transition period for applicants?

This announcement was done in advance in order for the PIs to assess their eligibility early enough so that they could consider applying for calls under the Work Programme 2022. Hence, the 'transition phase' were the 2022 calls where the 'old' rule was applicable. As from 2023, as set in the ERC Work Programme 2023 for the ERC-2023-STG and ERC-2023-COG calls (Starting and Consolidator Grants), “the date of the first PhD considered for the calculation of the eligibility period is the date of the successful defence of the PhD degree”. More information can be found in the Section Admissibility and eligibility criteria of the ERC Work Programme 2023 as well as in the applicable Information for Applicants document.

Q11. Under ERC frontier research grants 2023, can a researcher participate as Principal Investigator in more than 1 ERC frontier research proposal at the same time? Is it possible to receive funding for more than one participation?

According to the conditions applied to the ERC main frontier research grants 2023, there are three main restrictions to be considered for Principal Investigators (PI) in this regard:

A researcher may participate as PI [Including all PIs supported under the Synergy Grant] in only one main frontier research grant at any one time [NB: A new main frontier research project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous frontier research grant agreement has ended.] In other words, at any one time, a PI can have only one ongoing ERC main grant.

A researcher participating as PI in one of the main frontier research grants may not submit another proposal for a main ERC grant, unless the existing project ends no more than two years after the call deadline. Therefore, an ongoing ERC main frontier research grant must end before 8 November 2024 for a PI to be eligible to apply to the 2023 Synergy grant.

A PI may submit proposals to different main frontier research grant calls published under the same Work Programme, but only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated. As an example, if you apply as a Principal Investigator to the 2023 Synergy Grant call (ERC-2023-SYG), and this proposal is eligible, you will not be eligible to apply to the 2023 Starting, Consolidator or Advanced grants calls.

Q12. What are the reporting requirements for ERC research frontier projects granted under the Horizon Europe Programme [Starting Grant (StG)/Consolidator Grant (CoG)/Advanced Grant (AdG)/Synergy Grant (SyG)]?

The reporting requirements for ERC main frontier research projects granted under the Horizon Europe Programme (Starting Grant / Consolidator Grant / Advanced Grant or Synergy Grant) foresee two different reporting streams to cover the scientific aspects, on the one hand, and the financial aspects of the grant, on the other hand, as described in Article 21 of the Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions. Scientific reports are the sole responsibility of the Principal Investigator and are submitted via the Host Institution usually twice during the lifetime of an individual PI project (at mid-term and at the end). In case of the Synergy grants running for 6 years, there are two intermediate and a final report. The financial reports are prepared by the Host Institution in consultation with the Principal Investigator and must usually be submitted 60 days after the end of each period; this report must include information on the use of resources and the general implementation of the project (see Article 21 of Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions). At the end of a project, the Host Institution will also have to submit a Certificate on Financial Statements for each beneficiary (and linked third party) depending on the amount of

requested EU contribution to the costs claimed (if the entity requests a total contribution of EUR 430 000 or more – standard threshold). Both types of reports (Scientific and Financial) are prepared and submitted online via the Funding & Tenders Portal. In the case of Synergy Grants the corresponding Principal Investigator assumes the primary responsibility for the scientific reporting and contribution to the financial reporting, while the other Principal Investigators must contribute to both the scientific and financial report (page 120 of Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions).