ERC 2022 Starting Grant Information Event

Session 2: Submission and Evaluation

30 September 2021

erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk

Who is who

Presenter

- Sean Rowlands - European Advisor and ERC National Contact Point

Moderator

- Dr Phil Holliday - European Advisor and ERC National Contact Point

Guest Speaker

- Prof. Erminia Calabrese, Cardiff University – 2019 ERC StG Grantee

Outline

- Introduction to UKRO

- UK Participation

- Brief overview of ERC

- Submission Process

- Evaluation

- ERC Grantee Case Study

Housekeeping

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

- A chat function is available and will be monitored.

- Please use the formal Q&A function to submit questions.

- You can 'up vote' your favourite questions.

- We will be recording this session.

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

About UKRO

Mission

- Maximise UK engagement in EU-funded research, innovation and higher education activities

Our office

- Based in Brussels
- EU office of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- Delivers subscription-based advisory services for around 140 research organisations in the UK and beyond

Horizon Europe National Contact Point for

- European Research Council (ERC)- erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk
- Marie Skłowdowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) - mariecurie-uk@ukro.ac.uk

Sources of Further Information

- UKRO [website](#) provides latest information on UK participation

- The official statements on the EU-UK relationship
  - [European Commission website](#)
  - [UK Government website](#).

- UK Government provides information on [EU Funded Programmes under the Withdrawal Agreement](#).

- [Turing scheme](#) for students to study and work abroad - new UK programme replacing Erasmus+
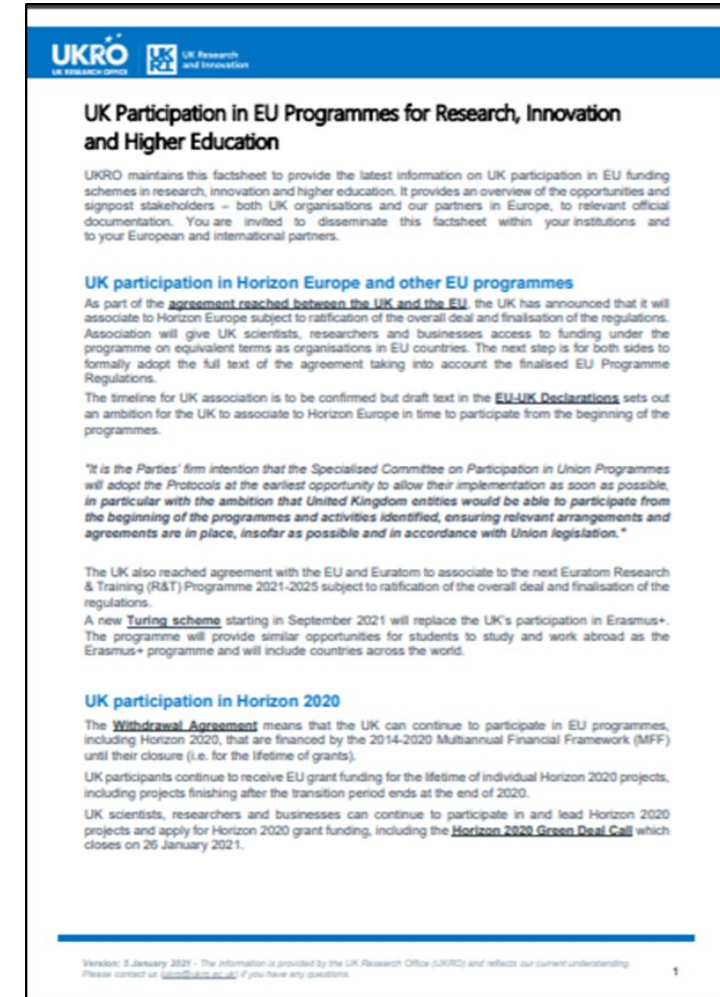
ERC Starting Grant 2022 Call

What is the ERC?

The ERC's mission:

- encourage the highest quality research in Europe
- support investigator-driven frontier research *across all fields*
- fund projects *purely* on the basis of *scientific excellence*

What makes the ERC unique:

- Excellence is the only criteria
- Funding split based on number of applications, *not* field/discipline/topic
- Freedom to collaborate with and fund team members anywhere in the world

BOTTOM-UP, CURIOSITY-LED EXCELLENT RESEARCH

ERC Frontier Research Grant Schemes

The ERC funds

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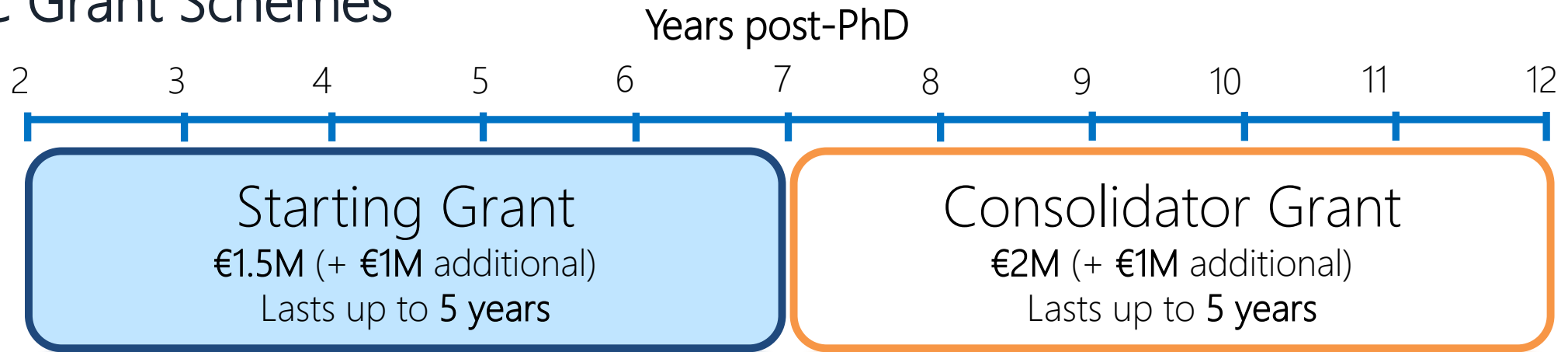- in the research field of their choice.

Projects are led by a Principal Investigator

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

Evaluation by 27 expert panels in 3 domains:

- Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE)
- Life Sciences (LS)
- Social Sciences and Humanities (SH)

ERC Grant Schemes

Years post-PhD

2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

Starting Grant
€1.5M (+ €1M additional)
Lasts up to 5 years

Consolidator Grant
€2M (+ €1M additional)
Lasts up to 5 years

No PhD Requirements

Advanced Grant
€2.5M (+ €1M additional)
Lasts up to 5 years

Synergy Grant
€10M (+ €4M additional)
Lasts up to 6 years with 2-4 PIs

Proof Of Concept Grant
€150k Lump Sum
Lasts for 1.5 years
Top-up grants for current ERC grantees

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ERC-2020-StG results

- **436** proposals selected for funding from a total of **3272** submitted

- Overall success rate of 13.3%, compared to 12.5% in 2019

- Breakdown by research domain:

	Physical Sciences and Engineering	Life Sciences	Social Sciences and Humanities
Proposals submitted	1409	923	940
Proposals selected	186	124	126

Images of 2020 Starting Grantees sourced from the ERC website

Update on ERC 2021 Starting Grant call:

- 4066 proposals submitted (24% increase from 2020)
- ~400 proposals will be funded
- Overall success rate of ~10%

- 1070 passed to Step 2 of the evaluation process

Submission Process

Practical tips for the online submission system and which documents to upload

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!!!

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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

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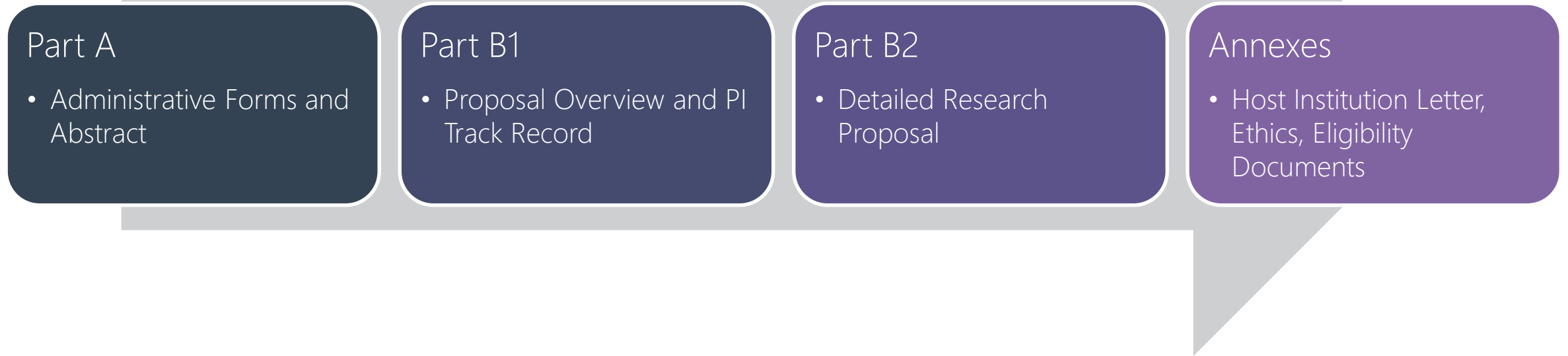
- 1-step submission, all parts of the proposal are submitted together at deadline.

- 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.

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

Funding & Tender Opportunities

Call Page on Funding & Tender Opportunities

European Commission

Funding & tender opportunities
Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)

English **EN**

Register | Login

SEARCH FUNDING & TENDERS ▾ | HOW TO PARTICIPATE ▾ | PROJECTS & RESULTS | WORK AS AN EXPERT | SUPPORT ▾

ERC STARTING GRANTS

TOPIC ID: ERC-2022-STG

Grant

- **General information**
- Topic description
- Conditions and documents
- Submission service
- Topic related FAQ
- Get support

General information

Programme	Work programme part
Horizon Europe Framework Programme (HORIZON)	**HORIZON-ERC-2022**
Call	
Call for Proposals for ERC Starting Grant (ERC-2022-STG)	Work programme year **HORIZON-ERC-2022**
Type of action	Type of MGA
HORIZON-ERC HORIZON ERC Grants	**HORIZON Action Grant Budget-**

See budge...

Forthcoming

Call currently listed as 'forthcoming'

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

Start submission

To access the Electronic Submission Service, please click on the submission-button next to the **type of action** ar confirm your choice, as it cannot be changed in the submission system. Upon confirmation, you will be linked to

To access existing draft proposals for this topic, please login to the Funding & Tenders Portal and select the My

Please select the type of your submission:

◉ HORIZON ERC Grants [HORIZON-ERC], HORIZON Action Grant Budget-Based [HORIZON-AG]

Start submission

🛟 Need help?

PDF of the Starting Grant application template is available
It shows Part A, B1 & B2 – use it before the call to open 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

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**!

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ERC Panel Structure

Must choose a primary evaluation panel	Optional secondary evaluation panel	Optional free key words	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: Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems	**SH2** Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
PE3 Condensed Matter Physics	**LS3** Cellular, Developmental and Regenerative Biology	**SH3** The Social World and its Diversity
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** Cultures and Cultural Production
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	
PE9 Universe Sciences	**LS9** Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering	
PE10 Earth System Science		
PE11 Materials Engineering*		

https://erc.europa.eu/document-category/evaluation-panels

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*

IT issues on the EC Portal

Avoid issues by:

- Validate your proposal regularly.

- Submit early and often. Only the most last submission will be evaluated

- 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, the proposal is unlikely to be accepted.

Resolve issues by:

- **Contact the [EC's IT Helpdesk](#) ASAP**
  - Send screenshots and clear description of the problem.

- Sometimes calling them can be helpful 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.

Part A – Administrative forms

Navigate by chapter or pages

How to fill in the forms

Part A – PI Declaration of Consent

- These consents **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.
- ERC Executive Agency **may request the applicants to provide the written consent** mentioned in the declarations at any time during the evaluation process

Part A – Gender Equality Plans (GEP)

The host institution will need a GEP to submit to the 2022 call

- **It is not the responsibility of individual PI applicants,** it is meant for the organisation, approved by senior leadership

- **Does not apply to private-for-profit organisations** including SMEs, non-governmental 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

Recommended areas to be covered and addressed via concrete measures and targets:

- work-life balance and organisational culture

- gender balance in leadership and decision-making

- gender equality in recruitment and career progression

- integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

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.

Beneficiary Short Name	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 equipment	Consum-ables incl fieldwork and animal costs	Publications (incl. Open Access fees) and dissemination	Other additional direct costs	C.3 Total other goods, works and services	Total Purchase costs €	D. Internally invoiced goods and services€ (No indirect costs)	E. Indirect Cost€	Total Eligible Costs	Requ... E... contrib...
Ukri	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00

ERC ver 1.00 20210305

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 budgets 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:

Make sure the figures match.

Additional funding:
- **In budget table** dispersed across fitting cost categories
- **In resources section** described separately

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Part A - Budget

Budget and Resources description [are seen by evaluators](#) but no longer count towards B2 Page limit

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

- All 'Additional Funding' requested must be
  - included in the overall budget table,
  - tallied with normal costs in appropriate cost category
  - *For example fieldwork travel would go under Travel & Subsistence in a sum including 'normal' costs not related to fieldwork).*

- If funding is requested for Other personnel costs & Other additional direct costs (see highlights)
  - Should be entered as a total figure on the budget table
  - 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.

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Part A – Description of Resources

Specify the resources required and justify them against the needs of the project. Unjustified budget lines will be reduced, budget lines that are deemed necessary by evaluators but not included could count against the proposal.
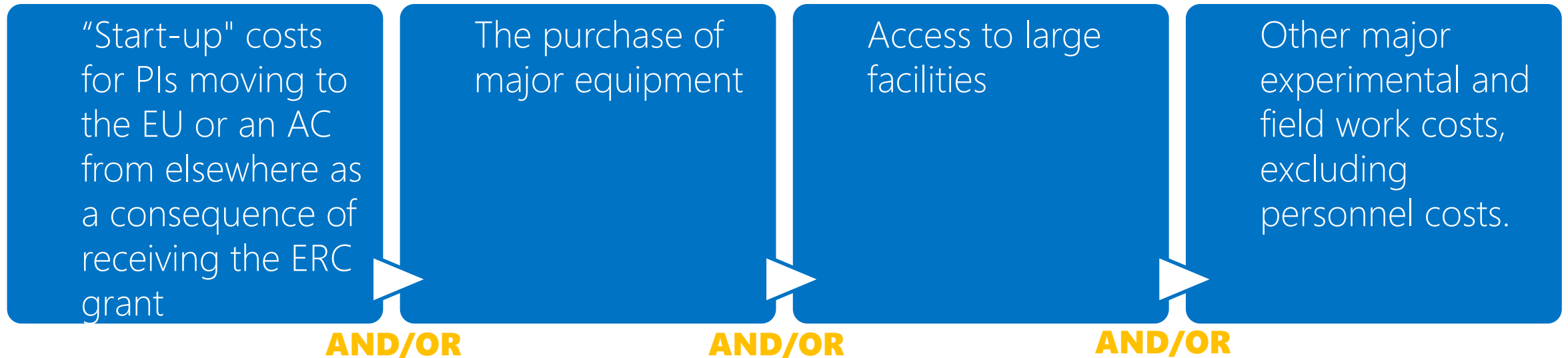
What to briefly describe and justify:

- 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 not requiring funding that will be used**

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:

"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, excluding personnel costs.

AND/OR   **AND/OR**   **AND/OR**

What constitutes an additional cost in your field will vary from other fields, if there is a good reason to make an additional funding request we recommend that applicants go for it.

If this additional part of the budget is not spent it cannot be transferred.

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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:** you might see a 2000 character limit. This is meant to be up to 5000 per text box

- If the existing character limit is too short the recommendation is to **provide the detailed explanation in a separated document and uploaded the pdf file as one of the optional annexes.** Please also make a reference to the annex in the Ethics text box in the application form.

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

Part A – Ethics and security self-assessment for non-EU activity

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

> You need to 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?"*

- You need to mention that these 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)

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 [NEW 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

Data Management Plan (DMP)

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

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

The Proposal – Formatting & Templates

Page limits will be strictly applied.

Page formatting will be systematically checked by the ERCEA.

References do not count towards page limit.

Templates:

- [2022 Starting Grant application form template](#) (PDF version)

- Editable templates available on [ERC website](#)

Page Format:
A4

Header: [PI surname], [Project acronym] & [Proposal section (Part B1 or Part B2)]

Font:
- Times New Roman, Arial or Similar
- At least font size 11,
- Single line spacing

Side margin:
2 cm

Bottom margin:
1.5 cm

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Part B1: Evaluated at Step 1 and Step 2

Cover page & summary

Abstract
Half a page

Copy/paste of abstract from Part A

If interdisciplinary or cross-panel
Justification

Indicate the additional ERC review panel(s)

Extended Synopsis (5 pages)

Contains all essential info about scientific proposal
Including feasibility

ERC-style project
Address the evaluation criteria, show why the project is exciting!

References should be included
Do not count towards the page limits

CV (2 pages)

Use the template

Career path
Indicate any career breaks or unconventional career paths or Covid impact to scientific productivity

Track Record (2 pages)

List and describe your important achievements to date

ERC profile
Address the evaluation criteria when describing your track record

Most important publications
Up to five, can be fewer

Highlight publications as main author and/or without PhD supervisor

Funding ID

List your research funding
Ongoing grants

Forthcoming/ submitted applications

Not your past grants

This table will not count towards the page limit

Bibliometrics and Impact Factors in ERC proposals

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?

The publications listed in the "Early achievements track record" of Part B1 can have contextual details including field relevant bibliometric indicators but **not Journal Impact Factors.**

If an Impact Factor is included anywhere in the proposal the Panel will disregard it.

Part B2: only evaluated is proposal is selected for Step 2

Scientific Proposal

Maximum 14 pages

- State of the art
- Objectives & Methodology
- Address the 'high-risk/high-gain' balance
- Milestones & Deliverables
- Risk & mitigation
- References should be included
(they do not count towards the page limits)
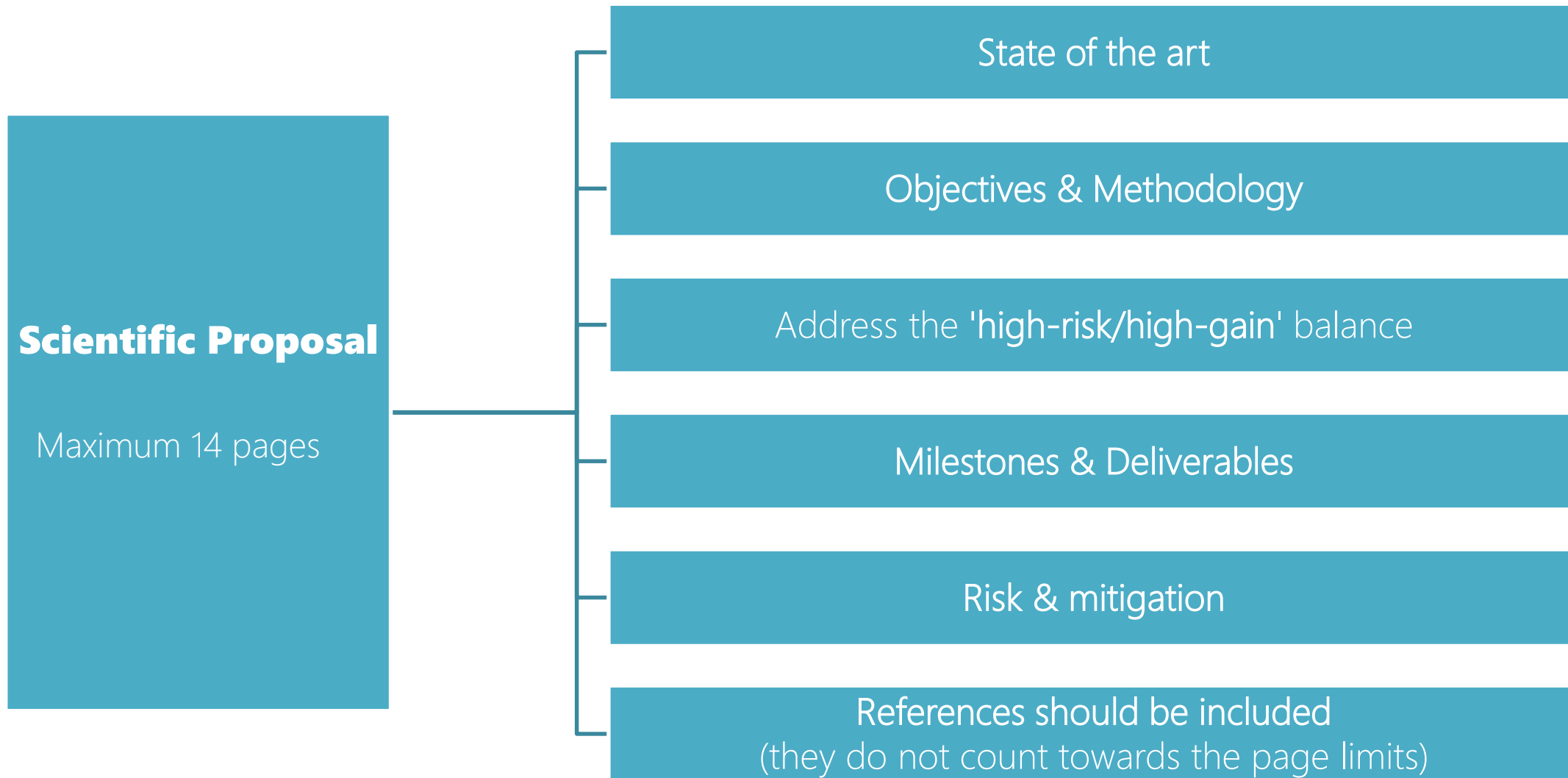
Should I describe my team in B1 or B2?

- PI's should describe their team in B2, aligned with the work plan and methodology.

- Space is more limited in B1, so there is not likely to be space for describing the team. The priority is the eye-catching presentation of
  - the **Project** and
  - the **Principal Investigator.**

Evaluation

The Process

Evaluation Process
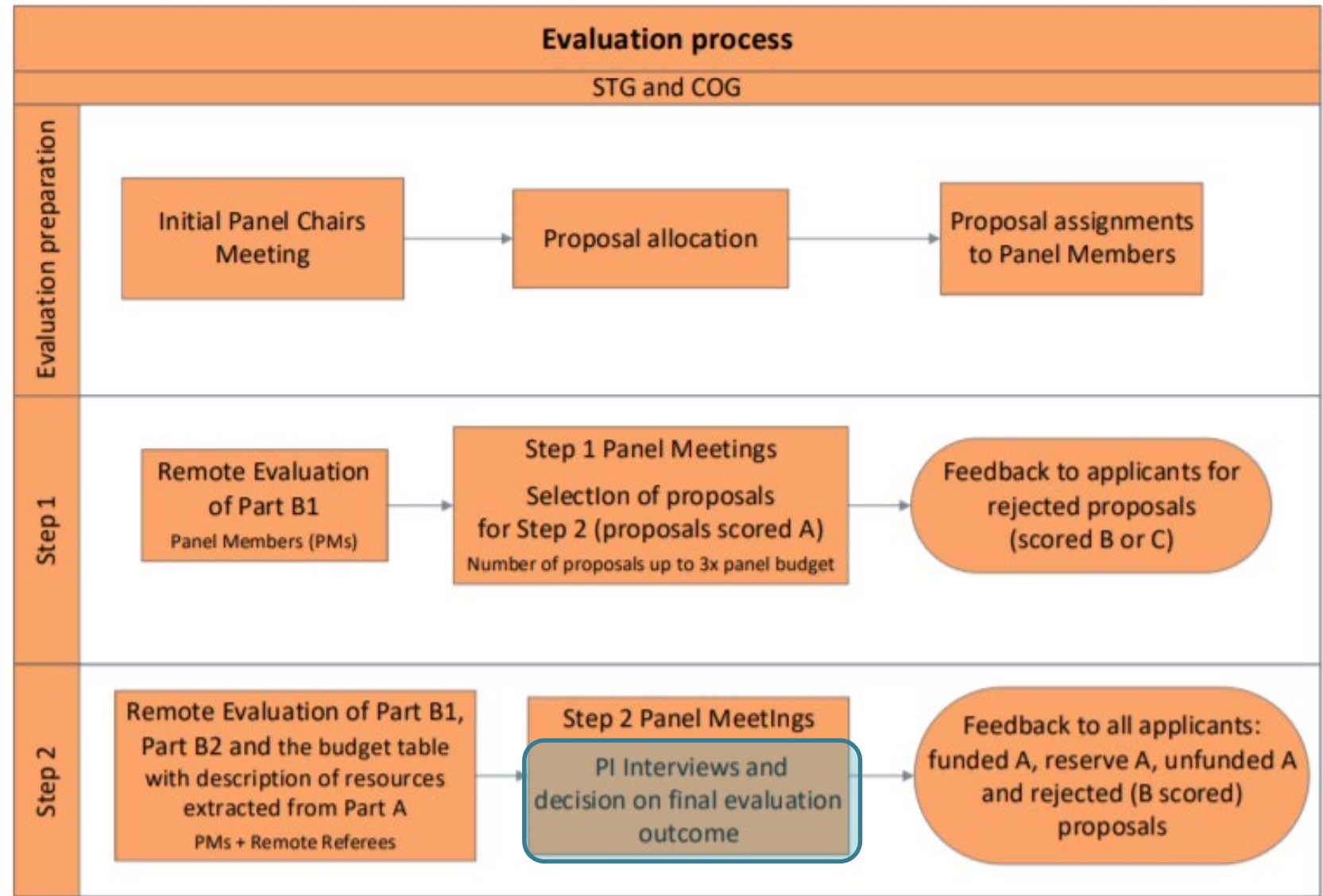
Tentative timeframe for StG call feedback

- **August 2022**
  Feedback to applicant about Step 1 evaluation

- **December 2022**
  Inform applicants about Step 2 evaluation

Evaluation process

STG and COG

Evaluation preparation
- Initial Panel Chairs Meeting → Proposal allocation → Proposal assignments to Panel Members

Step 1
- Remote Evaluation of Part B1 — Panel Members (PMs) → Step 1 Panel Meetings — Selection of proposals for Step 2 (proposals scored A) — Number of proposals up to 3x panel budget → Feedback to applicants for rejected proposals (scored B or C)

Step 2
- Remote Evaluation of Part B1, Part B2 and the budget table with description of resources extracted from Part A — PMs + Remote Referees → Step 2 Panel Meetings — PI Interviews and decision on final evaluation outcome → Feedback to all applicants: funded A, reserve A, unfunded A and rejected (B scored) proposals

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
B	1	No	1 Year
C	1	No	2 Years

Proposals which do not progress to Step 2 have "demand management" restrictions.

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

- Synergy Grant calls only produce restrictions for PIs at Advanced career level.

- Restrictions from Starting Grant calls apply to subsequent Consolidator Grant calls. Similarly from Consolidator to Advanced.

- Restrictions from Horizon 2020 apply in Horizon Europe.

Final Ranked List Calculation

$$\frac{\text{Requested EU Contribution (Panel)}}{\text{Requested EU Contribution (Total)}} \quad \text{x} \quad \text{Available Budget} \quad = \quad \text{Panel Budget}$$

Normalised Accumulated Budget (NAB)

$$\frac{\text{Funding Requested + (Funding for Higher Ranked Proposals)}}{\text{Panel Budget}} \quad \text{x 100} \quad = \text{NAB}$$

Proposals with a NAB between 0 and 100 are funded.
Final ranked list is based on NAB scores from all panels. Reserve list is based on NAB scores over 100.

Example: If a Panel had a €3 million budget, 3 projects would be selected and 1 put on reserve list

Rank	Funding	Score	NAB	Funded?
1	€1M	A	1/3 x 100 = 33%	Yes
2	€1M	A	(1+1)/3 x 100 = 67%	Yes
3	€1M	A	(1+1+1)/3 x 100 = 100%	Yes
4	€1M	A	(1+1+1+1)/3 x 100 = 133%	Reserve?
5	€1M	B	(1+1+1+1+1)/3 x 100 = 168%	No
6	€1M	B	(1+1+1+1+1+1)/3 x 100 = 200%	No

Evaluation

The Criteria

ERC evaluation criterion

Excellence of one is not more important than that of the other

Research project's
ground-breaking nature
ambition
feasibility

Principal Investigator's
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.

Proposal is not judged on socioeconomic impact or relevance to European policy

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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.

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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?

Refer back to Webinar 1

Your understanding of the evaluation process and criteria should inform your proposal writing.

We covered proposal writing in the previous Webinar

A recording of Webinar 1 is available to
[stream here](#)

ERC Evaluation Interviews

This webinar is focused on preparing the written ERC application.

Those invited to Step 2 will also be invited to be interviewed
by the evaluation panel.

For more info on that step we presented an ERC interviews webinar that applies to Starting,
Consolidator and Advanced calls.

You can watch a [recording on the UKRO website](#).
(although we do not recommend focusing on that part of the process until you happen to be
invited)

Typical Reasons for Rejection

Proposed Project and Scientific Approach

- Scope: Too narrow or too broad or not focussed enough

- Incremental research, not ground breaking

- Work plan not detailed enough or unclear

- Insufficient risk management

Principal investigator

- Insufficient track-record

- Insufficient (potential for) independence

- Insufficient experience in leading projects

Reviewer comments about the Principal Investigator

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 the Project

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.

Things to remember

The Abstract

First thing that everyone looks at

Used by the panel chair with the key words to choose the 4 panel members who will undertake the Stage 1 review

Mention interdisciplinary elements

Public facing

Proposal Advice

Questions to ask yourself

Does the proposal go beyond the state of the art ?

Is it timely? (Why wasn't it done in the past? Is it feasible now?)

What is the risk? Is it justified by the potential gain? Do I have a plan for managing the risk?

Why is my proposal important?

Why am I the best/only person to carry it out?

Am I internationally competitive as a researcher at my career stage and in my discipline?

Am I able to manage a 5-year project with a substantial budget?

Key points

Read all call documentation and the evaluation criteria

Be specific and don't provide unsupported opinions or comments

Clearly address ALL of the evaluation criteria

Make it easy for the evaluators to find the information

Pitch to generalists: evaluators will be experts, but not necessarily in your exact area

Use clear and concise language and explain country/research area specific jargon

Include diagrams, images, tables if appropriate

Research previous and current projects

Find colleagues to proof read drafts with the evaluation criteria

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Proposal Development Tips to Check Coherence

- Does my methodology support my scientific objectives/questions?
- Do I have the right resources?

Scientific Questions	Methodology 1	Methodology 2	Methodology 3	Methodology 4
Questions 1	X			
Question 2		X		
Question 3	X		X	
Questions 4				

Activity (Methodology)	Team Member 1	Team Member 2	Team Member 3	Team Member 4
Activity 1	X			
Activity 2		X		
Activity 3	X		X	
Activity 4				

Tips & Tricks to Remember

- You should have a strong CV (in relation to your career stage)

- Read all call documentation and the evaluation criteria

- Evaluators will be experts, but not necessarily in your exact area

- Make it easy for the evaluators to find the information in your proposal

- Use clear and concise language

- Explain specific jargon used in your country/research area

- Include diagrams, images, tables if appropriate

- Research previous and current ERC projects within your research area

- Find colleagues to proof read drafts with the evaluation criteria

- The best proposals will take time to write

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Resources

- 2022 ERC Starting Grant Information for Applicants https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/information-for-applicants_he-erc-stg-cog_en.pdf

- 2022 ERC Work Programme https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2022/wp_horizon-erc-2022_en.pdf

- ERC Youtube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7_ZP8emRUxHXv-JU4PZp8g

- ERC Experts https://erc.europa.eu/erc-experts-H2020

- ERC FAQ https://erc.europa.eu/funding/frequently-asked-questions

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

ERC Grantee Case Study

Prof. Erminia Calabrese (Cardiff University)

2019 ERC Starting Grantee - CMBforward

Thank you!