ERC 2022 Synergy Grant Information Event

Session 2: Submission and Evaluation

23 July 2021

erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk

Outline

- Introduction to UKRO
- UK Participation
- Brief recap about the ERC
- Submission Process
- Evaluation process
- Other considerations

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 Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) - mariecurie-uk@ukro.ac.uk

Moderator

- *Dr Phil Holliday*
  - European Advisor and ERC NCP

Presenter

- *Sean Rowlands*
  - European Advisor and ERC NCP

UK’s Relationship with the EU

Horizon Europe Participation

UK's Relationship with the EU

- On 24 December 2020, the UK Government announced an agreement with the European Commission.
- This agreement included confirmation that the UK agreed to associate to Horizon Europe, which includes the European Research Council (ERC)
- For further info on UK participation:
  - UKRO website provides latest information, factsheets and updates
  - The European Commission published a Q&A document dedicated to UK participation which includes the following
  - Withdrawal Agreement is still in place and covers all Horizon 2020 funded projects through their entire life cycle.

More on UK Participation and Access

User Experience

- UK entities will be able to **compete for funding on equivalent terms to those of Member States.**
- This means that the vast majority of UK applicants will have a **very similar user experience to previous Framework Programmes** such as Horizon 2020.

Applying to Horizon Europe

- There will be **no role for the UK Government/UKRI** in the application or grant management process.
- **UK entities will be able to participate in all areas of the Horizon Europe Programme,** including ERC, MSCA and the grant funding elements of the EIC.

Programme Committees & Experts

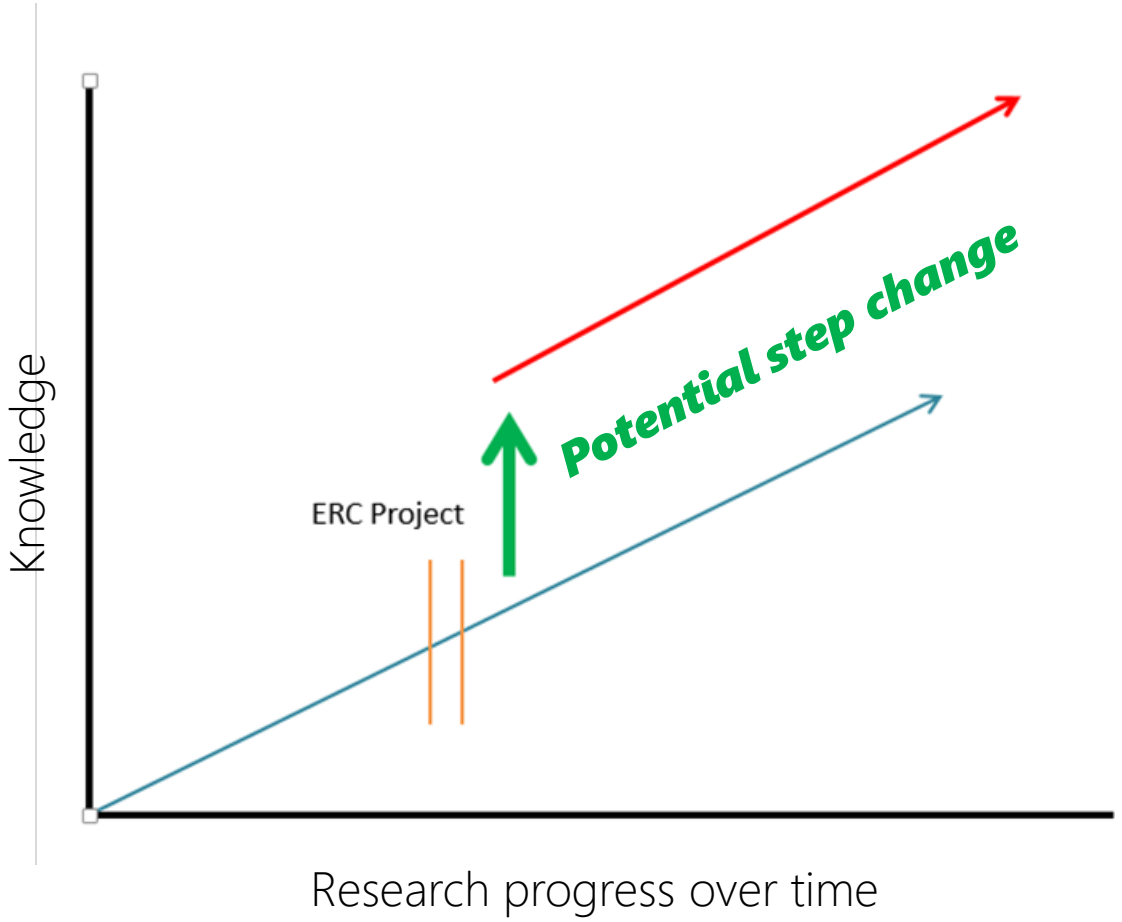
- The UK **can participate in Programme Committees** with speaking rights, access to information and documentation.
- UK experts can continue to take part in **evaluations** and join **expert groups**

ERC 2022 Synergy Grant Call

Brief recap about the scheme

What Do We Mean by Frontier Research?

- **Ground-breaking** research
- Going **beyond current limits** of your research area
- Development of **new horizons**
- New solutions to old problems
- Exciting



ERC Frontier Research Grant Schemes

The ERC funds

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

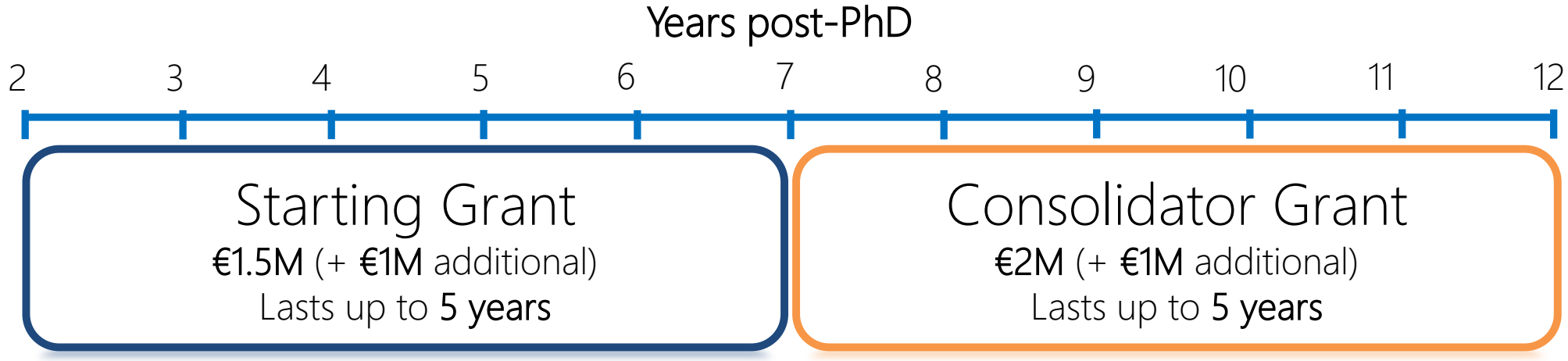
Projects led by Principal Investigators

- PIs are central to the grant, not the Host Institution
- PIs build teams around them (if required)
- A Synergy Grant Group is still distinct from a traditional consortium on a research project

Open to all disciplines

- Expert evaluators from all over the world
- Scientific Council leadership of the ERC
- Encouragement of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity

ERC Grant Schemes



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

What is distinct about Synergy Grants from other ERC grants?

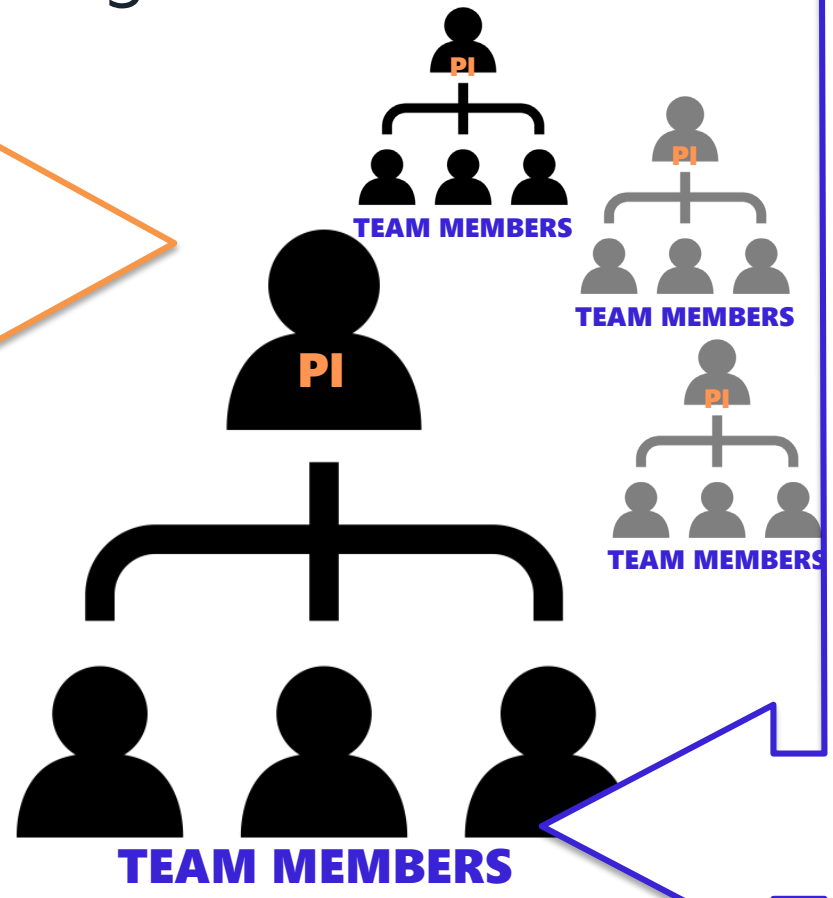
2 – 4 Principal Investigators, not just one

- Jointly address ambitious research problems that could not be addressed by the individual Principal Investigators and their teams working alone.

- Principal Investigators must also demonstrate that their group can successfully bring together the scientific elements necessary to address the scope and complexity of the proposed research question.

Principal Investigators leading Team Members

- **PIs lead 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
- Evaluators reject proposals where the PI is overshadowed by any of their team members.



- Team members are not co-investigators
- Assigned to specific project outputs/tasks
- Should not be purely supervisory or mentorship roles
- Can be **research staff at any level** (including technicians and project managers)
- Of any age, nationality or country of residence
- Can be based **at the Host Institution or any other organisation** in the world
- **EU funded**, even outside member states or associated countries

2022 Call Resubmission Restrictions

Call to which the Principal Investigator applied under previous ERC Work Programmes and proposal evaluation outcome		2022 ERC calls to which a Principal Investigator is *not* eligible
* **2020 and 2021 Starting, Consolidator, Advanced Grant or 2020 Synergy Grant**	Rejected on the grounds of a breach of research integrity	Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy Grant
2020 Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant	C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant
* **2020 Synergy Grant**	A, or B at Step 3	No restrictions
	B at Step 1 or 2	No restrictions
	C at Step 1	Advanced and Synergy Grant
2021 Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant	A, or B at Step 2	No restrictions
	B, or C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant

More lenient restrictions

Score-based Restrictions only apply to Synergy calls from previous Synergy calls

- Potential restriction **from** Synergy proposals can only apply to future Synergy and Advanced Calls.
- No restrictions **for** Synergy proposals from prior Starting or Consolidator calls
- If you are eligible for Starting or Consolidator calls, currently there is no jeopardy submitting a Synergy call (other than in cases of research integrity issues).

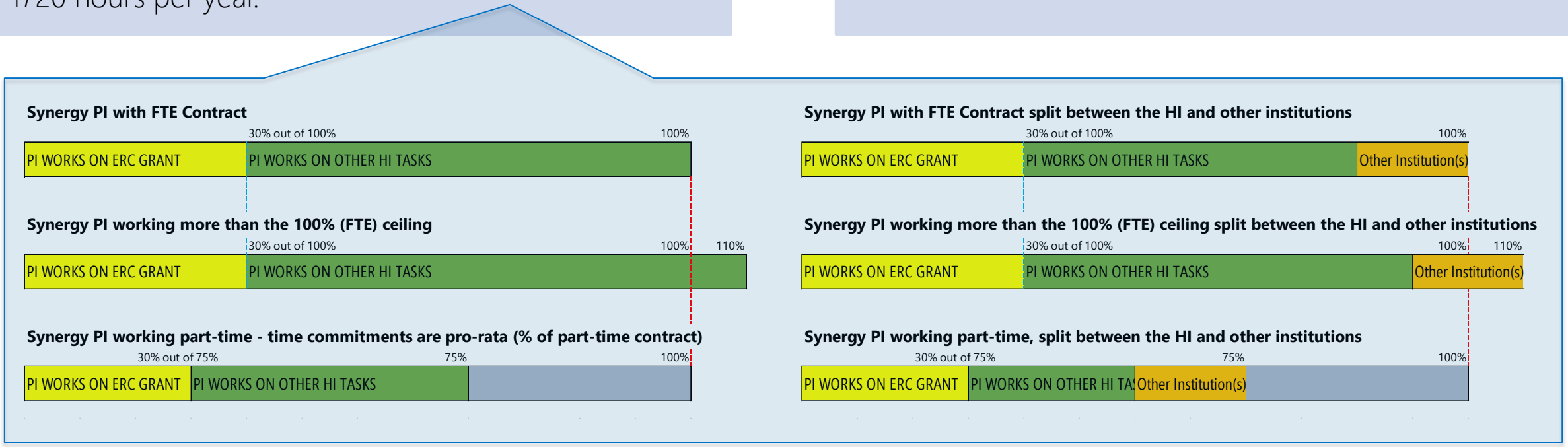
Principal Investigators' minimum grant time commitments

Minimum 30% working time working on the ERC grant

- All percentages are established by reference to the full time equivalent at the host institution (see below) or 1720 hours per year.

Minimum 50% time spent in Europe (Member State or Associated Country)

- Fieldwork/work abroad related to the ERC project does not count against time commitment



Successes for different disciplinary domains

- It is not easy to separate proposals into one domain or another in Synergy because they are not linked to specific evaluation panels under each domain. Also it is a very small sample of 123 Synergy Grants in total. **So there are no statistics on this!**
- The important principle is that the **evaluators on the panel are from every disciplinary domain**. The ERC can only provide a evaluation process open to any discipline, the number of grants might also be affected by how many applications are submitted.
- You can use the ERC Information Service to do more qualitative searches filtering for the Synergy Schema and for domain specific keywords.
- Some random examples:
  - Synergy grants with 'history' as a keyword: 5 out of 123
  - Synergy grants with 'evolutionary' as a keyword: 1 out of 123
  - Synergy grants with 'engineering' as a keyword: 8 out of 123

This was a brief search, NOT REPRESENTATIVE

Why not try to search yourself for past projects?

But remember, evaluations are on a case by case basis – so any excellent proposal from any field stands a chance to win ERC funding!

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

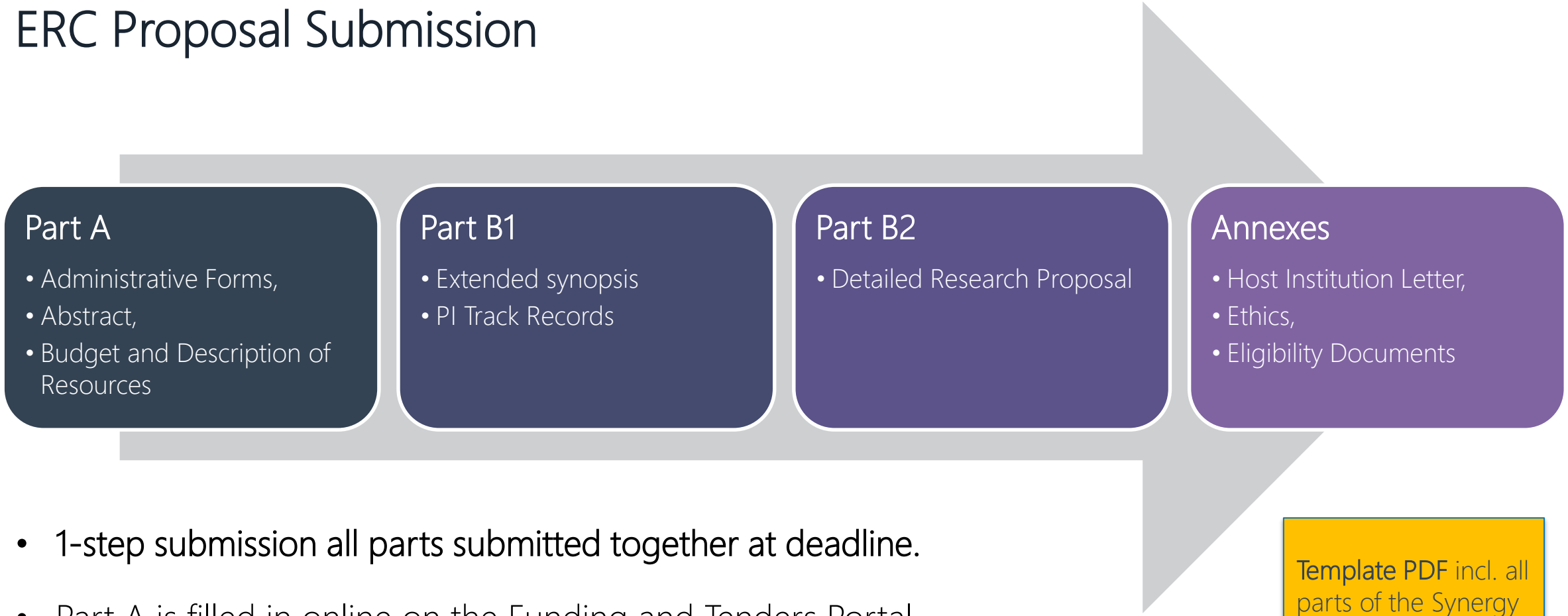
Get in touch with your research support office

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!!!

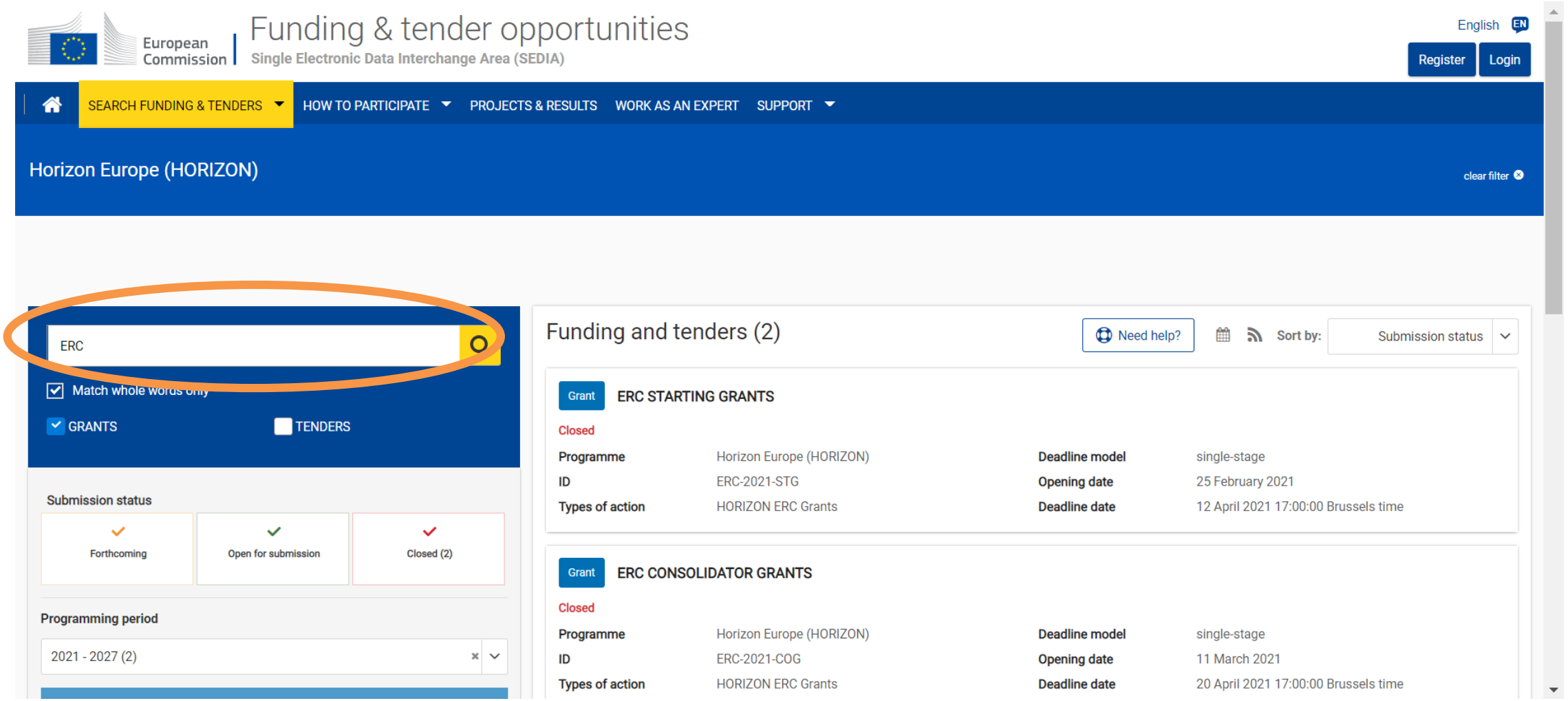
ERC Proposal Submission



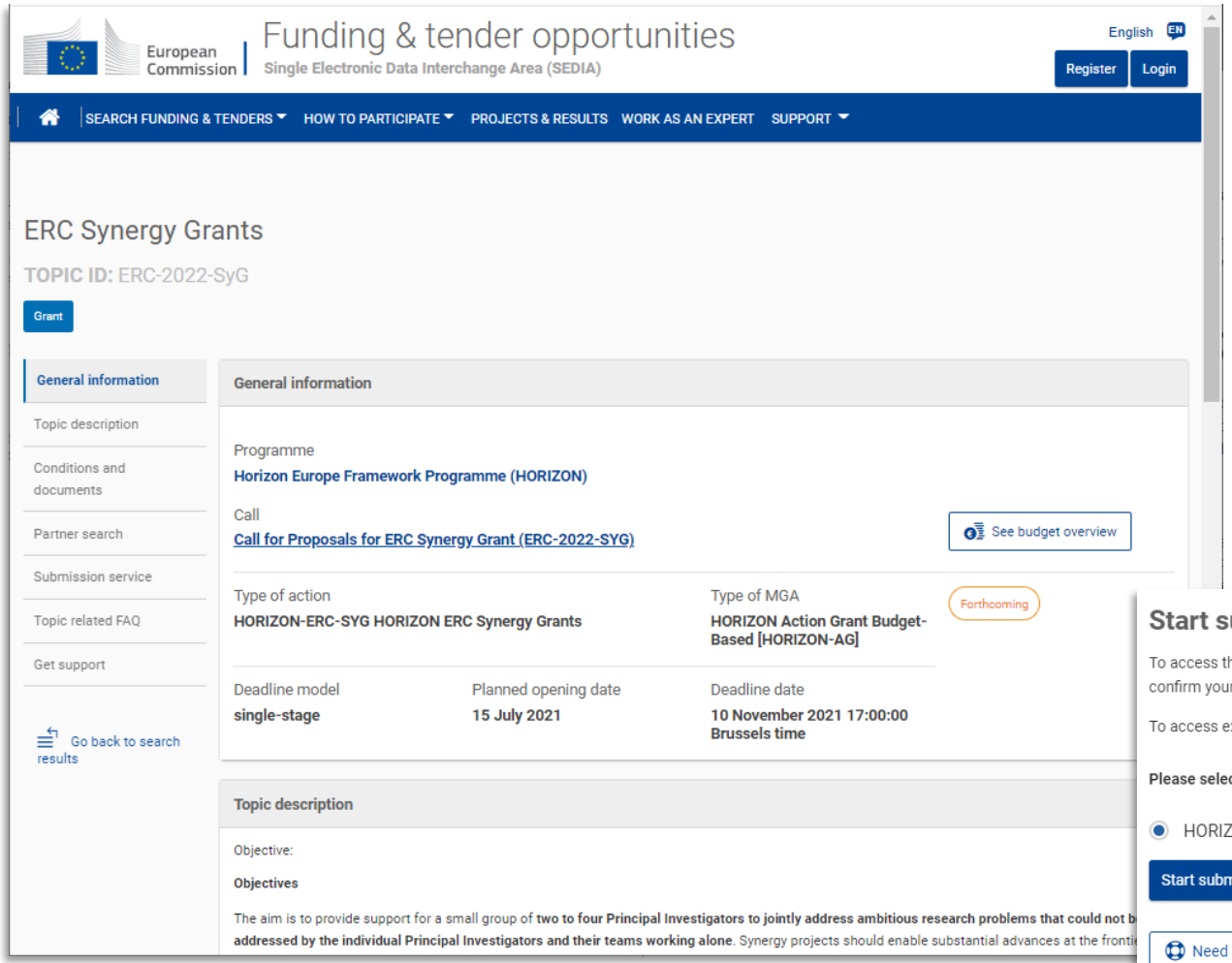
- 1-step submission all parts submitted together at deadline.
- Part A is filled in online on the Funding and Tenders Portal
- Part B1, Part B2 and the Annexes are uploaded as PDFs to the Funding and Tenders Portal.

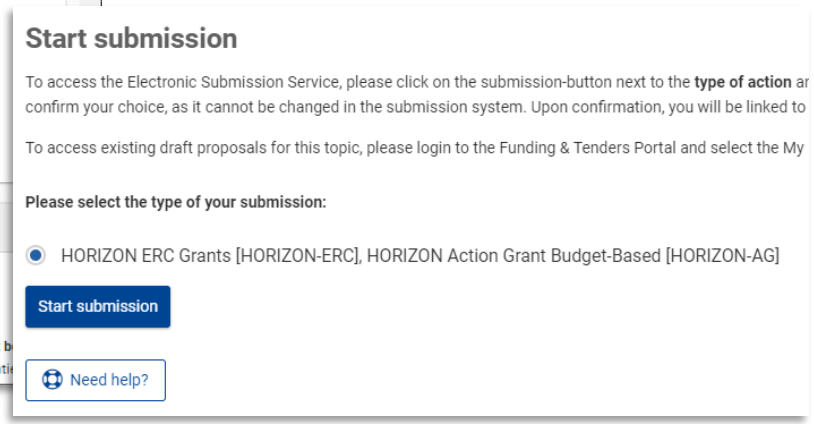
Template PDF incl. all parts of the Synergy application form available here..

Using the EC Portal https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home



Call Page on Funding & Tender Opportunities

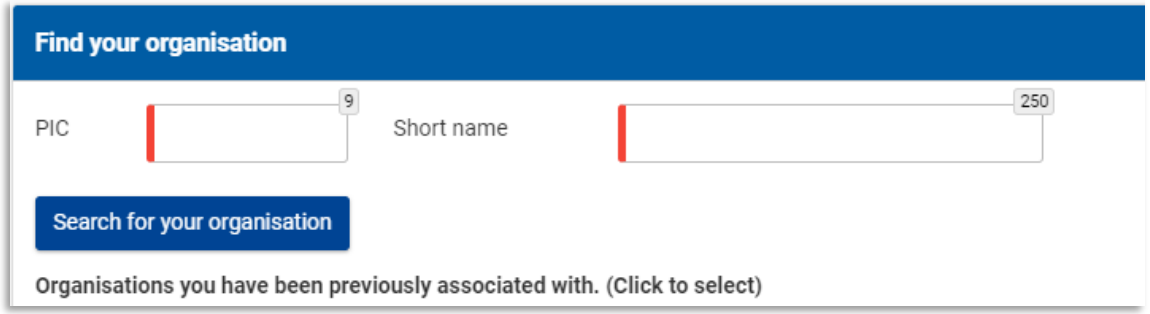




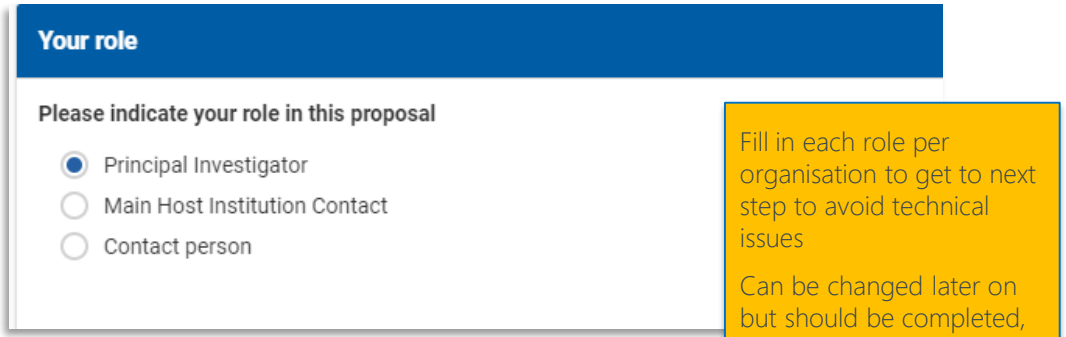
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding- tenders /opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/erc-2022-syg

First page of proposal submission

IDENTIFY THE HOST INSTITUTION (PIC number)



WHAT IS YOUR ROLE ON THE PROPOSAL?

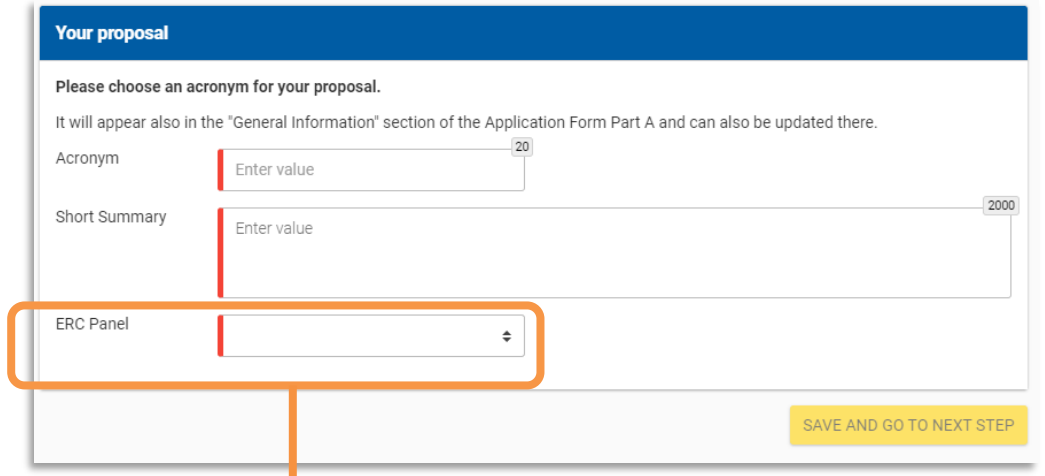


Fill in each role per organisation to get to next step to avoid technical issues

Can be changed later on but should be completed, if even if tentatively.

BASIC DETAILS ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Anything you enter in this part of the form **can be edited later** up until submission



Choose keywords only, there are no pre-existing panels for Synergy

Full list of ERC's keywords in Annex 4 of the Information for Applicants (page 31)

Defining discipline(s) of an ERC Synergy proposal

Corresponding PI indicates four to six 'fixed keywords' along with other 'free keywords'

Fixed keyword lists are nested under the headings seen below, full list: Information for Applicants

All chosen keywords plus abstract analysed together to find best evaluation for each proposal

The pre-structured panels below will not be there for Synergy Bespoke panels set up each call

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

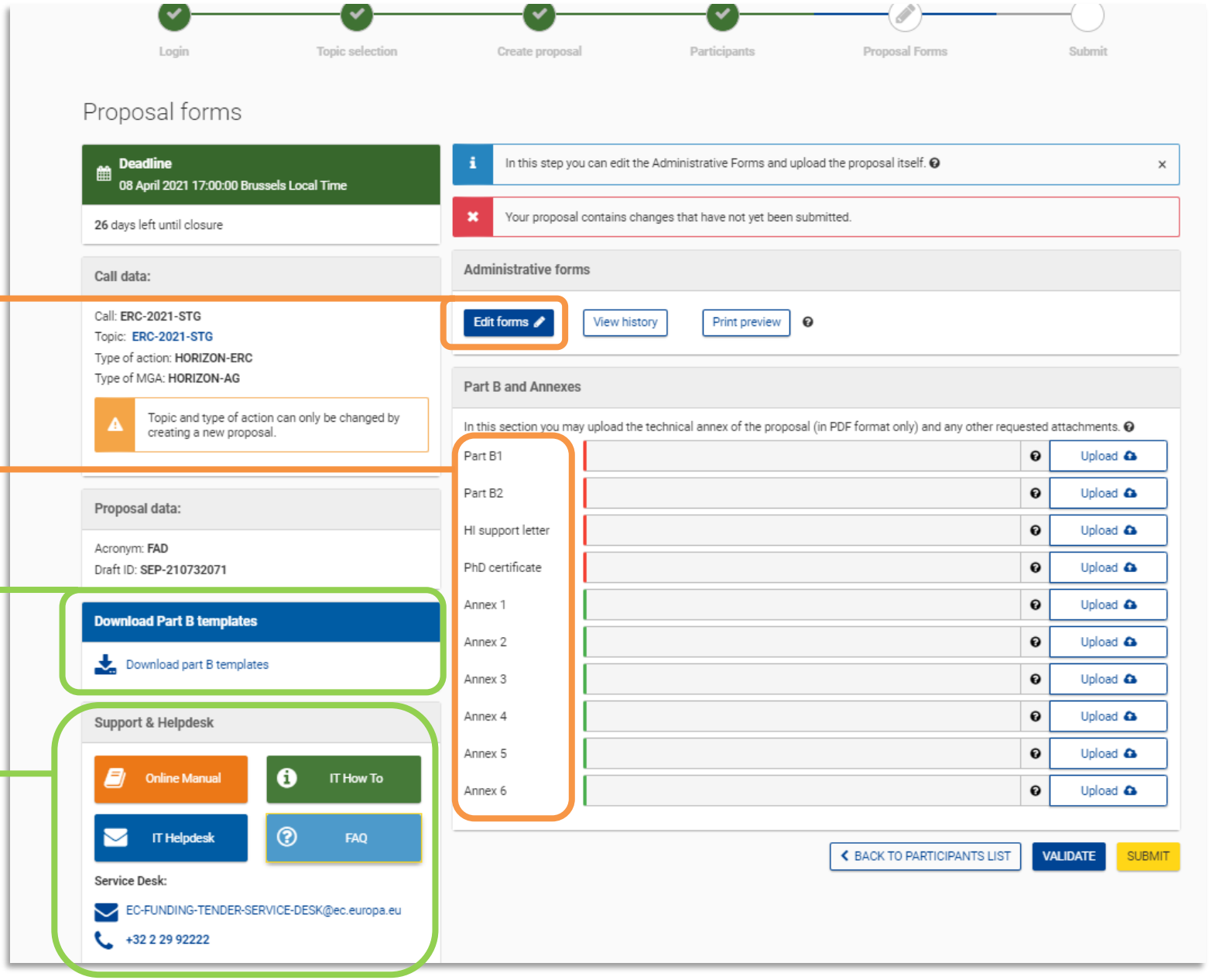
Main proposal page

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

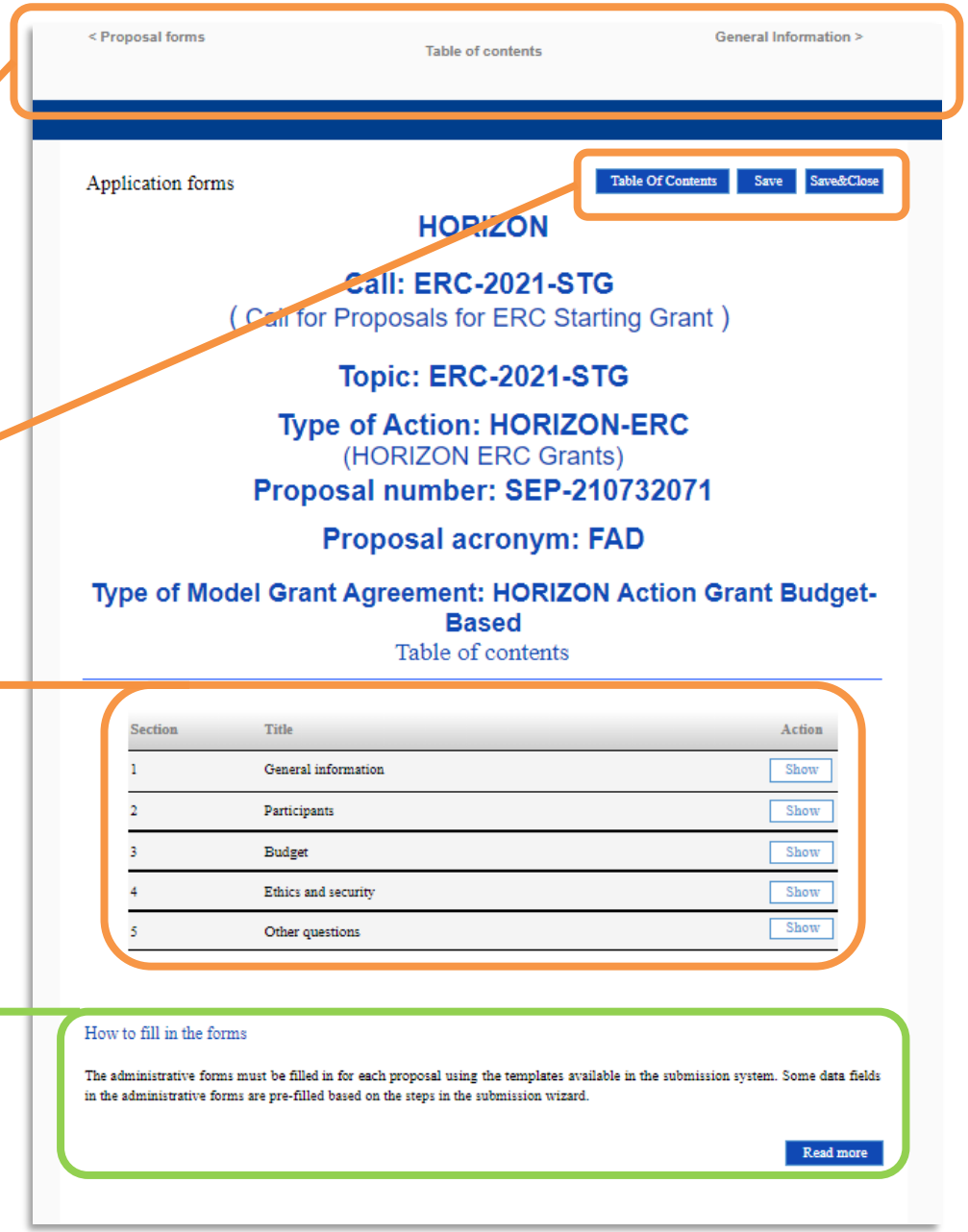
Support for using the EC portal
- *Not support on content of proposals*
- *Any issues during submission should be logged with the helpdesk*



Part A – Administrative forms

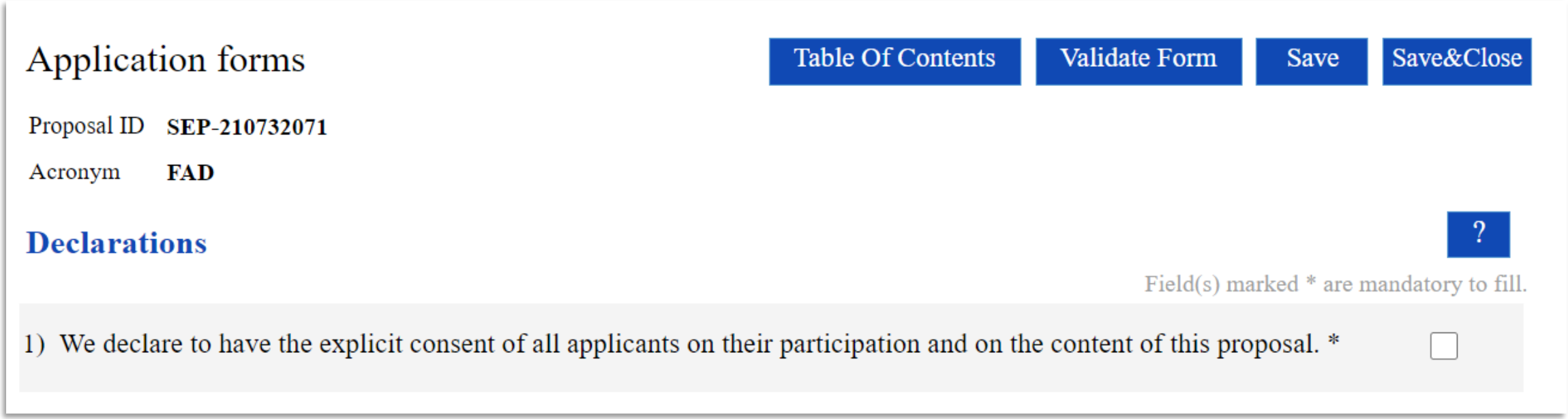
Navigate by chapter or pages

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 - 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	Consumables 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	Requested EU contribution €
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 2021

Make sure the figures are in whole Euros, not 1000s

Make sure the figures match between the table and the description.

Additional funding:

- In budget table dispersed across fitting cost categories
- In resources section described altogether, separate from rest of the budget

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:

Part A - Budget

Budget and Resources description are seen by evaluators but no longer count towards B2 Page limit (moved to Part A, the online form)

- 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.

One column per Principal Investigator and their team

Cost category			Corresponding PI	2nd PI	3rd PI	4th PI	Total in euro (no decimals)
PI name							
Host Institution							
A. Direct personnel costs/€	PI[2]						
	Senior Staff						
	Post docs						
	Students						
	Other personnel costs						
	Total personnel costs/€						
B. Subcontracting Costs/€ (No indirect costs)							
C. Purchase Costs/€	C.1 Travel and subsistence						
	C.2 Equipment - including major equipment						
	C.3 Other goods, works and services	Consumables 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/€ (C.1 + C.2 + C.3)						
D. Internally invoiced goods and services/€ (No indirect costs)[3]							
E. Indirect Cost/€ e= 25% * (A + C1 + C2 + C3)							
Total eligible costs/€							
Requested EU contribution/€							

Example, not to complete

Part A – Description of Resources

Budget and Resources description are seen by evaluators but no longer count towards B2 Page limit

Specify the resources required and justify them against the needs of the project.

Unjustified budget lines may be reduced or missing budget lines that are deemed necessary by evaluators could count against the proposal.

Some elements that should be briefly described and justified:

- Each PI's working time commitment.
- Each cost category with items considered necessary
- Size and nature of the team, indicating key team member(s) as named individuals or vacant roles
- Justify if team members are based elsewhere other than the Host Institution.
- Requested equipment: why you need it and how much it will be used.
- Costs for Open Access to project outputs including data management
- Describe any additional funding requested for the project.
- Existing resources needed for the project but do not require ERC funding

Template for Resources Description (from Information for Applicants page 53)

- *"I plan to allocate ...."* +Justification
- Max. 8000 characters (equivalent to about 2 pages)
- Request for additional funding if applicable.
  - Provide a total figure (cost in EUR)
  - Address specific grounds for additional funding in justification.
  - Additional funding described separately in Resources section

Funding Levels

Grant Type	Maximum Base Grant Amount	Maximum "Additional Funding"
Starting	€1.5 M	€1.0 M
Consolidator	€2.0 M	€1.0 M
Advanced	€2.5 M	€1.0 M
Synergy	€10 M	€4.0 M

Additional funding covers:

- eligible "start-up" costs for PIs moving from outside Europe
- the purchase of major equipment
- access to large facilities
- major experimental/fieldwork costs (excluding personnel)

Additional Funding is available for the project if properly justified; it is not strictly split as €1 million per PI.

There is no definition of "equipment" or "facilities". Make the case for what is needed for your discipline.

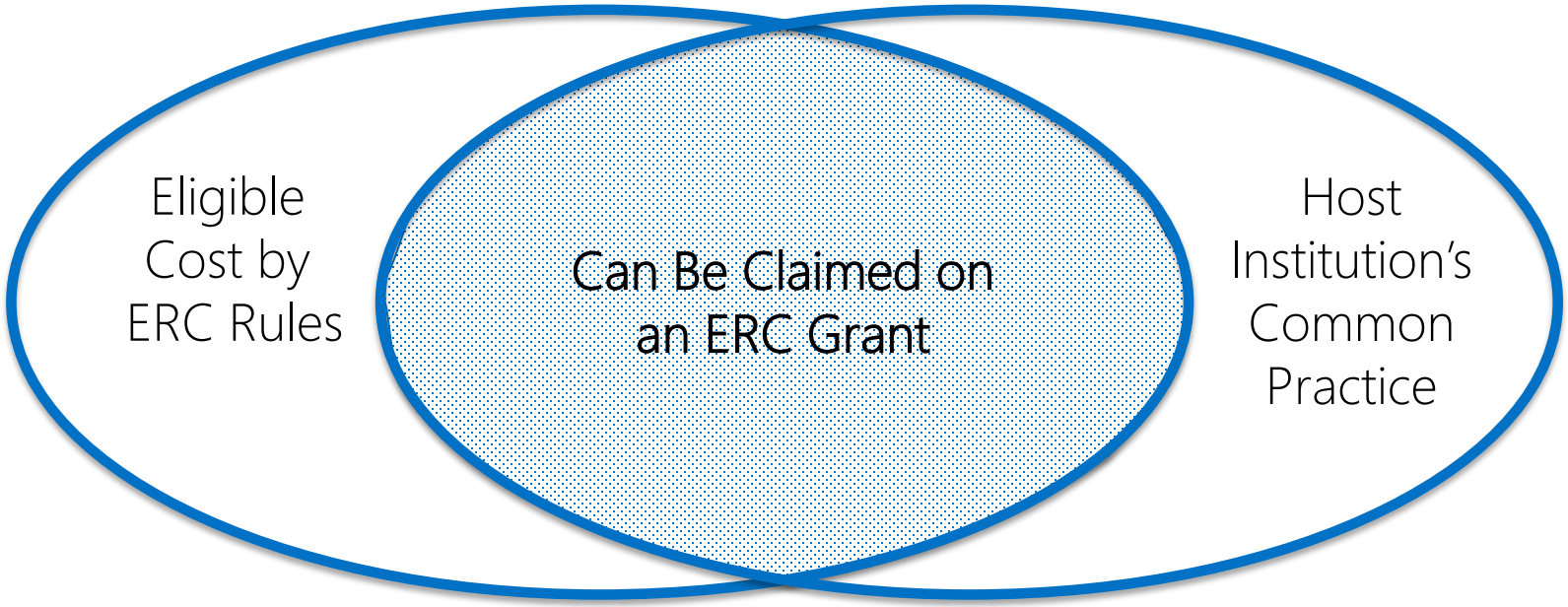
Eligible costs

The ERC funds up to 100% of the total eligible costs with a 25% flat rate for indirect costs
The budget is subdivided into

personnel costs	**travel, equipment**	**consumables**	**publications (including any costs related to Open Access)**
other additional direct costs	**internally invoiced goods and services**	**in kind contributions not used on the premises**	**subcontracting costs**

Work with your Host Institution to cost the budget properly

General tip on resources

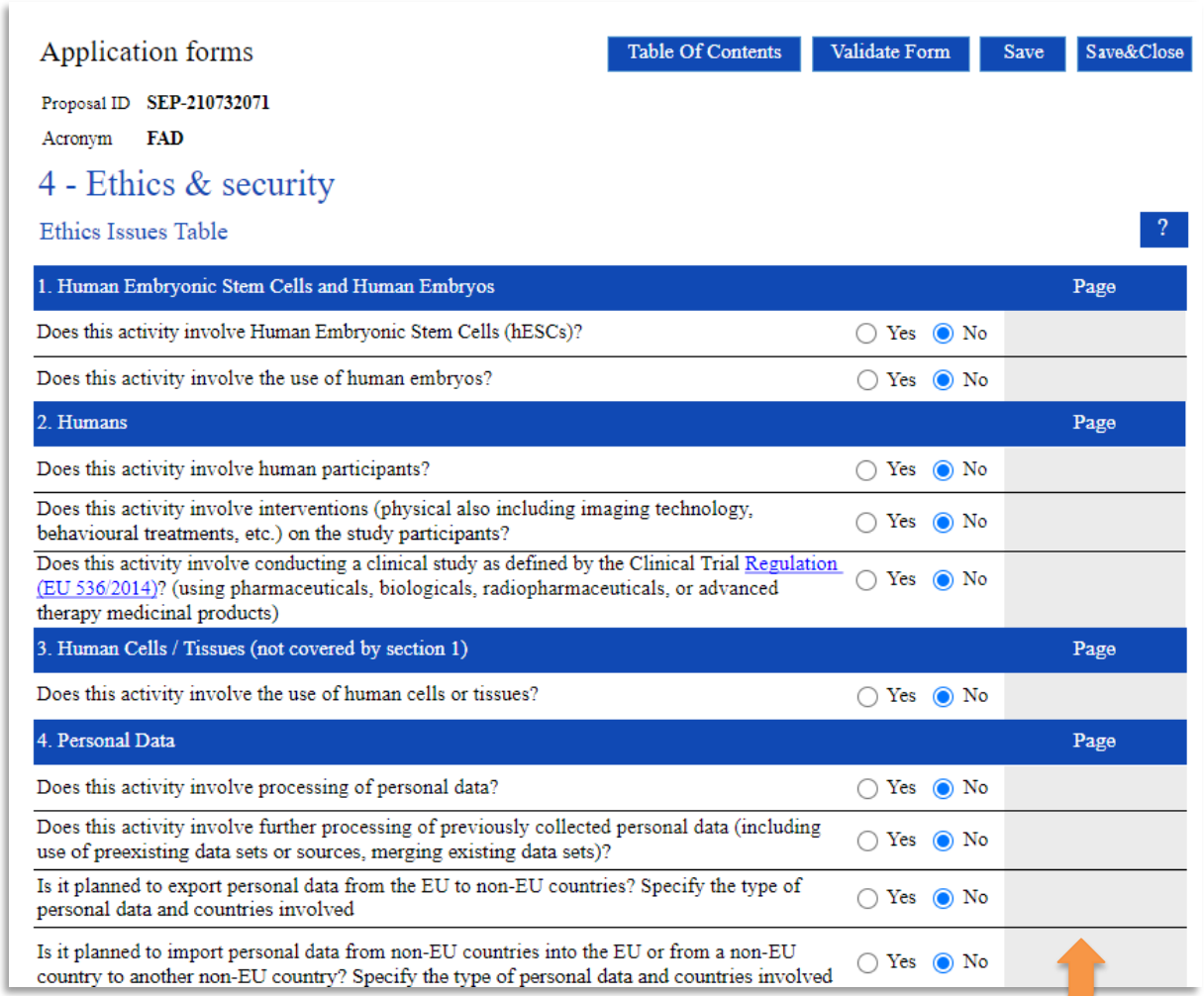


Auditors will check that costs are both eligible by ERC rules and in keeping with the institution's standard accounting practices

- e.g. ERC allows hotel bookings in Paris for research trips from a UK institution, but a PI at a Paris institution would not be allowed to charge it to their grant due to institutional rules

Part A – Ethics & Security questions

- Follow Horizon Europe guidance document: 'How to complete your ethics self-assessment'
- UK-hosted applicants should answer 'yes' on questions about non-European 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: If an applicant is requested to enter free text responses, you might see there is a 2000 character limit. This is meant to be up to 5000 per text box and will be changed soon.
- If the existing character limit is too short the recommendation is to provide the detailed explanation in optional annex, uploaded as a PDF. Include references to theses annexes in the Ethics text box in the application form.



Application forms

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

Proposal ID **SEP-210732071**

Acronym **FAD**

4 - Ethics & security

Ethics Issues Table ?

1. Human Embryonic Stem Cells and Human Embryos		Page
Does this activity involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve the use of human embryos?	○ Yes ◉ No	
2. Humans		**Page**
Does this activity involve human participants?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve interventions (physical also including imaging technology, behavioural treatments, etc.) on the study participants?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve conducting a clinical study as defined by the Clinical Trial Regulation (EU 536/2014)? (using pharmaceuticals, biologicals, radiopharmaceuticals, or advanced therapy medicinal products)	○ Yes ◉ No	
3. Human Cells / Tissues (not covered by section 1)		**Page**
Does this activity involve the use of human cells or tissues?	○ Yes ◉ No	
4. Personal Data		**Page**
Does this activity involve processing of personal data?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of preexisting data sets or sources, merging existing data sets)?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries? Specify the type of personal data and countries involved	○ Yes ◉ No	
Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? Specify the type of personal data and countries involved	○ Yes ◉ No	

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

Annexes

UPLOAD AS PDF DOCUMENTS

About the Applicant

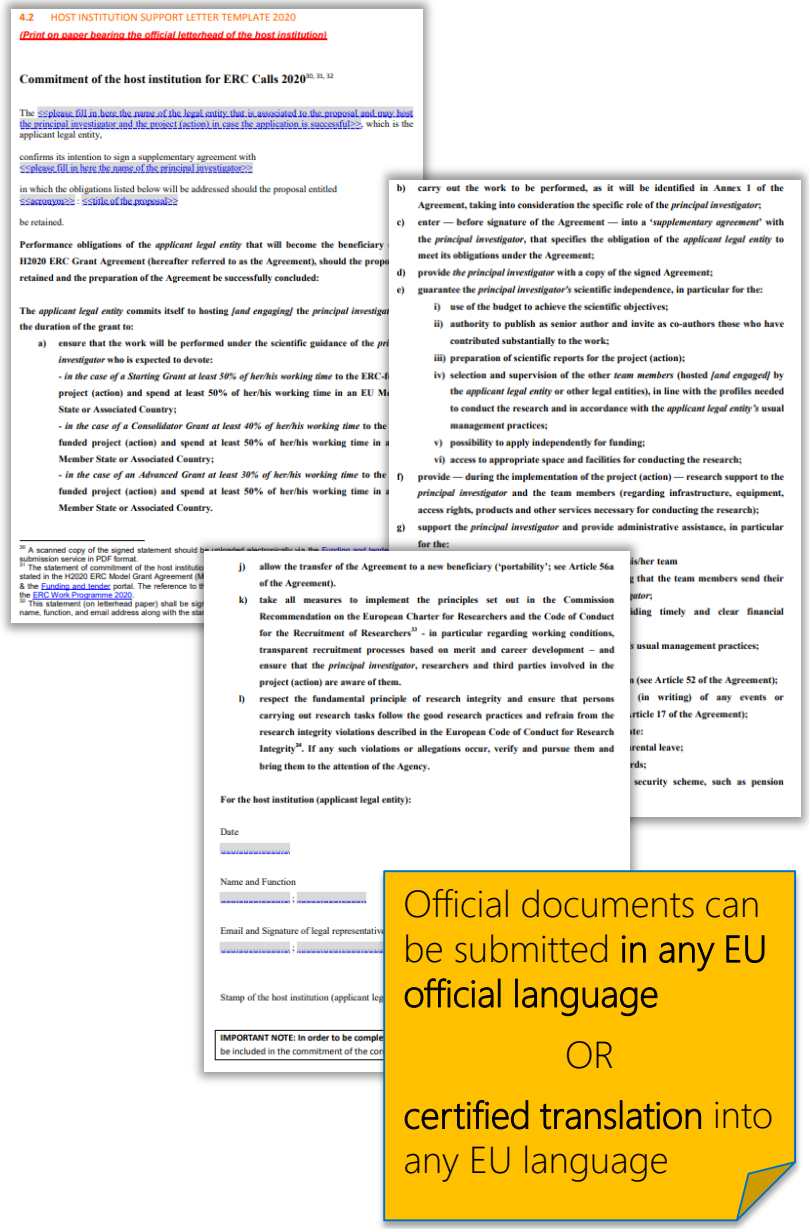
- Documentation to support **eligibility extension** (if relevant)
  - Child's birth certificates
  - Doctor's letters related to long term illness
  - Proof of leave from an employer at the time
  - Documentation related to clinical training.
  - Etc.

About the Institution

- Host Institution **support letter**
  - Using the NEW template
  - On official headed letter
  - Can be digitally signed

About the Project

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


4.2 HOST INSTITUTION SUPPORT LETTER TEMPLATE 2020

(Print on paper bearing the official letterhead of the host institution)

Commitment of the host institution for ERC Calls 2020[30, 31, 32]

The <<please fill in here the name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the principal investigator and the project (action) in case the application is successful>>, which is the applicant legal entity,

confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with <<please fill in here the name of the principal investigator>>

in which the obligations listed below will be addressed should the proposal entitled <<acronym>> : <<title of the proposal>>

be retained.

Performance obligations of the *applicant legal entity* that will become the beneficiary … H2020 ERC Grant Agreement (hereafter referred to as the Agreement), should the propo… retained and the preparation of the Agreement be successfully concluded:

The *applicant legal entity* commits itself to hosting *[and engaging]* the *principal investigat…* the duration of the grant to:

a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the *pri… investigator* who is expected to devote:
- *in the case of a Starting Grant at least 50% of her/his working time* to the ERC-f… project (action) and spend at least 50% of her/his working time in an EU M… State or Associated Country;
- *in the case of a Consolidator Grant at least 40% of her/his working time* to the … funded project (action) and spend at least 50% of her/his working time in … Member State or Associated Country;
- *in the case of an Advanced Grant at least 30% of her/his working time* to the … funded project (action) and spend at least 50% of her/his working time in … Member State or Associated Country.

[30] A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically via the Funding and tender… submission service in PDF format.
[31] The statement of commitment of the host institution… stated in the H2020 ERC Model Grant Agreement (M… & the Funding and tender portal. The reference to t… the ERC Work Programme 2020.
[32] This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be sig… name, function, and email address along with the sta…

b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex 1 of the Agreement, taking into consideration the specific role of the *principal investigator*;
c) enter — before signature of the Agreement — into a '*supplementary agreement*' with the *principal investigator*, that specifies the obligation of the *applicant legal entity* to meet its obligations under the Agreement;
d) provide *the principal investigator* with a copy of the signed Agreement;
e) guarantee the *principal investigator's* scientific independence, in particular for the:
i) use of the budget to achieve the scientific objectives;
ii) authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors those who have contributed substantially to the work;
iii) preparation of scientific reports for the project (action);
iv) selection and supervision of the other *team members* (hosted *[and engaged]* by the *applicant legal entity* or other legal entities), in line with the profiles needed to conduct the research and in accordance with the *applicant legal entity's* usual management practices;
v) possibility to apply independently for funding;
vi) access to appropriate space and facilities for conducting the research;
f) provide — during the implementation of the project (action) — research support to the *principal investigator* and the team members (regarding infrastructure, equipment, access rights, products and other services necessary for conducting the research);
g) support the *principal investigator* and provide administrative assistance, in particular for the:

j) allow the transfer of the Agreement to a new beneficiary ('portability'; see Article 56a of the Agreement).
k) take all measures to implement the principles set out in the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers[33] - in particular regarding working conditions, transparent recruitment processes based on merit and career development – and ensure that the *principal investigator*, researchers and third parties involved in the project (action) are aware of them.
l) respect the fundamental principle of research integrity and ensure that persons carrying out research tasks follow the good research practices and refrain from the research integrity violations described in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity[34]. If any such violations or allegations occur, verify and pursue them and bring them to the attention of the Agency.

For the host institution (applicant legal entity):

Date

Name and Function

Email and Signature of legal representative

Stamp of the host institution (applicant leg…

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to be comple… be included in the commitment of the cor…

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

OR

certified translation into any EU language

The Proposal – Formatting & Templates

Page limits will be strictly applied.

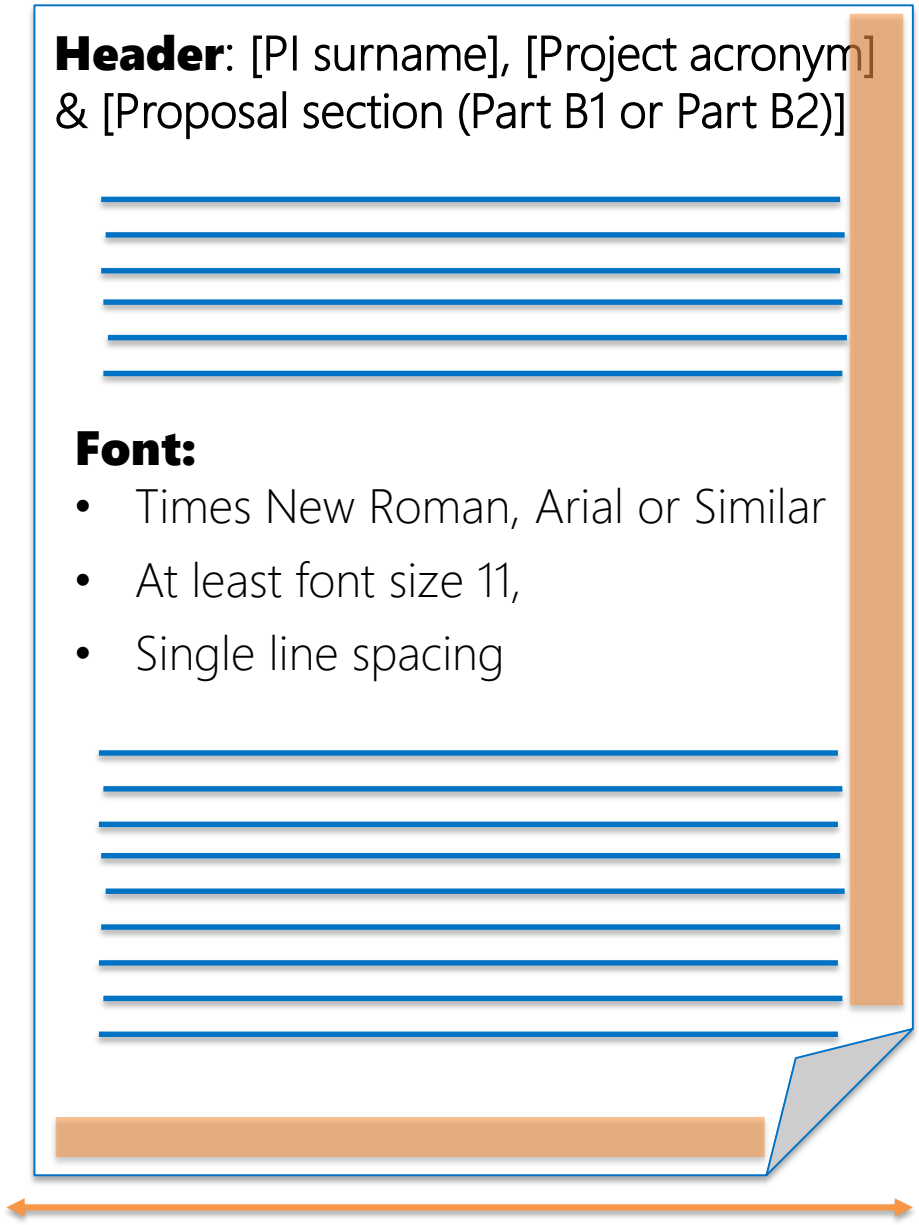
Page formatting will be systematically checked by the ERCEA.

References do not count towards page limit.

Templates:

- 2022 Synergy Grant B1 & B2 template (PDF version)
- Editable templates not yet available, download them from the Funding and Tenders Portal

Page Format:
A4



Side margin:
2 cm

Bottom margin:
1.5 cm

Part B1: Evaluated at Step 1, Step 2 and Step 3

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
  - 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

Track Record (2 pages)

- List and describe each PI's important achievements
- ERC profile
  - Address the evaluation criteria when describing your track record
- Most important publications
  - Ten publications as main author
  - Or 3 major research monographs

Funding ID

- List your research funding
  - Ongoing grants
  - Forthcoming/ submitted applications
  - Not your past grants
- This table will not count towards the page limit

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

Scientific Proposal

Maximum 15 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)

***Different from StG, CoG & AdG 2021**

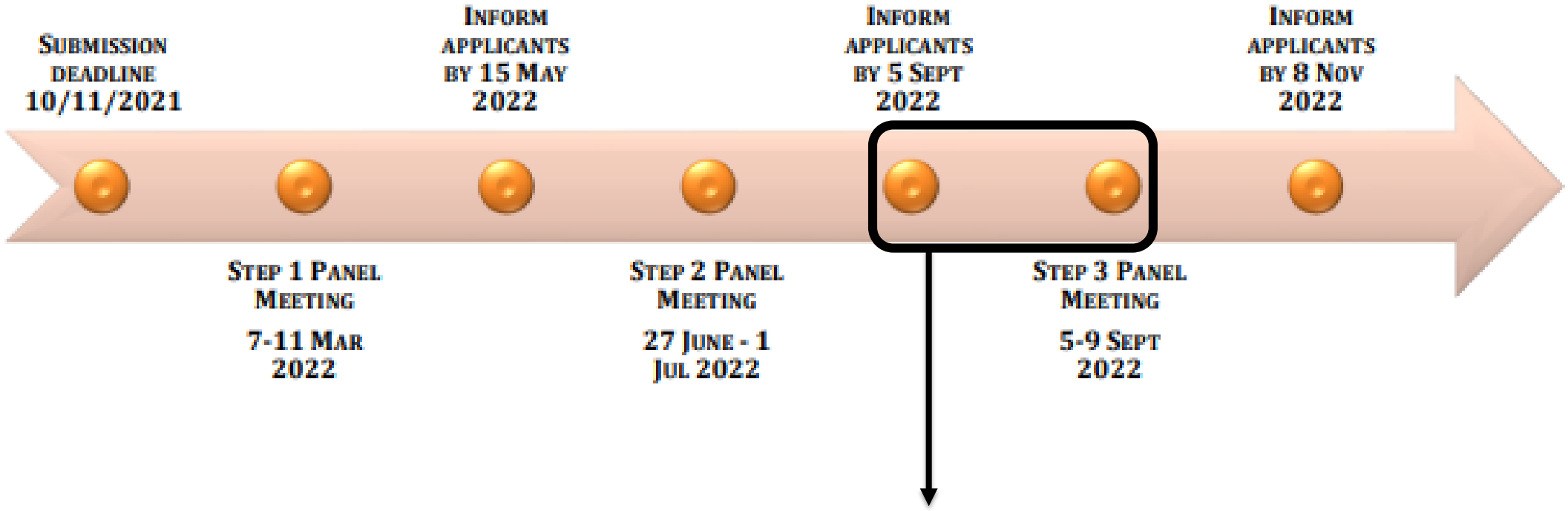
ERC Work Programme (page 34):
"For Synergy Grant proposals page limits above apply except that the page limit for the Scientific Proposal is 15 pages."

Information for Applicants (page 25)
Section c 'Resources and time commitment' are not limited to 2 pages and do not count towards the page limit.

Evaluation

The Process

Evaluation Process Timeframe



All PIs attend a 30 minute group interview with the panel, includes a presentation followed by a Q&A

Evaluation Outcomes

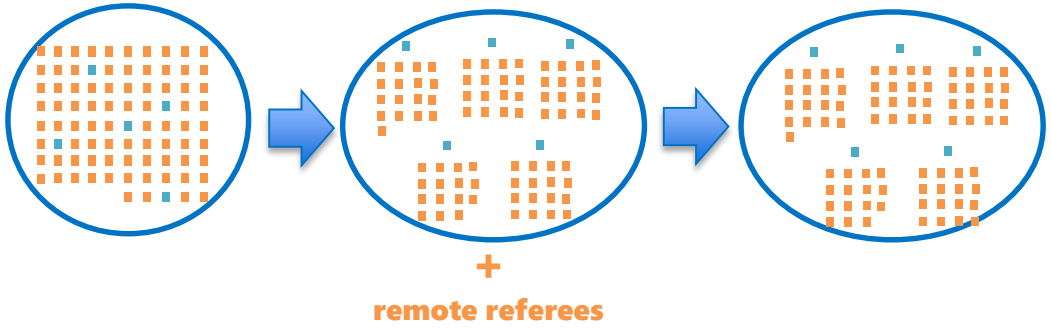
Proposal Grading	Stage	Funded?	Reapplication Restrictions?
A	2	If sufficient budget	None
B	2	No	None
B	1	No	1 Year
C	1	No	2 Years

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 Consolidator calls apply to subsequent Advanced Grant calls.
- Restrictions from Horizon 2020 apply in Horizon Europe.

Evaluation process for Synergy Grant Calls

Dynamic panel reforms at each step to adapt to multi-disciplinary submissions.



Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Single panel all proposals	**5 panels formed after step 1** proposals passed to step 2	**max 5 interview panels formed after step 2** proposals passed to step 3
Remote evaluation of Part B1 • SyG PMs + PEVs (PMs of other calls)	**Remote evaluation of full proposals** • SyG PMs + remote referees	**PMs re-assess the retained proposals** • based on step 2 reports + interviews • Interviews: all PIs of all proposals in step 3 will be invited
SyG panel chairs and vice chairs meet: preselect proposals for full review • No. of proposals: up to 7x panel budget	**Panels meet: preselect proposals for interview** • No. of proposals: up to 3x panel budget	**Panels rank the fundable proposals** • proposals selected up to available call budget (in 2020 approx . 39 proposals)
Feedback to applicants: for rejected proposals scored 'B' and 'C	Feedback to applicants: for rejected proposals scored 'B'	Feedabck to applicants: for all applicants. Possible scores: 'A' and 'B'

More detail on dynamic panel reconfigurations in:

- Information for Applicants (page 11)
- Guidance to Peer Reviewers (page 4)

Panel not involved

Eligibility Check

ERC Executive Agency and Eligibility Committee ensure proposals are eligible for funding

Part A

Administrative Forms and Abstract

- General Info
- Participating Institutions
- Budget & Description of Resources
- Ethics Check

Part B1

Proposal Overview and PI Track Record

- Cover page and summary
- Extended Synopsis (5 pages)
- CV (2 pages)
- Funding ID
- Track Record (2 pages)

Part B2

Detailed Research Proposal

- State of the art
- Objectives
- Methodology

(Total of 14 pages)
+ Budget report from Part A

Annexes

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents

Step 1 Evaluation

85 Panel Members and Chairs without any predefined structure remotely
They evaluate Part B1 from all the proposals submitted which passed the eligibility check

Part A

Administrative Forms and Abstract

- General Info
- Participating Institutions
- Budget & Description of Resources
- Ethics Check

Part B1

Proposal Overview and PI Track Record

- Cover page and summary
- Extended Synopsis (5 pages)
- CV (2 pages)
- Funding ID
- Track Record (2 pages)

Part B2

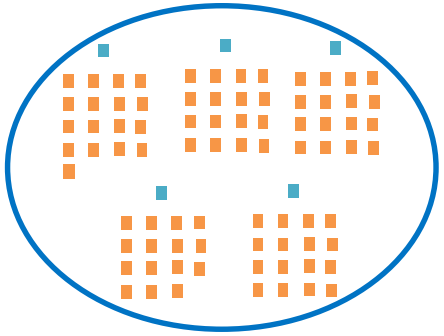
Detailed Research Proposal

- State of the art
- Objectives
- Methodology

(Total of 14 pages)

Annexes

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents



Step 2 Evaluation

Proposals passed to step 1 are split among 5 Panels of roughly 17 members.
Panels are structured to fit the kinds of interdisciplinary proposals submitted.
Remote evaluators' evaluation also contributed at this stage.

Part A

Administrative Forms and Abstract

- General Info
- Participating Institutions
- Budget & Description of Resources
- Ethics Check

Part B1

Proposal Overview and PI Track Record

- Cover page and summary
- Extended Synopsis (5 pages)
- CV (2 pages)
- Funding ID
- Track Record (2 pages)

Part B2

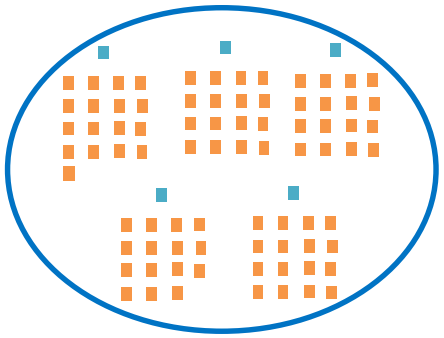
Detailed Research Proposal

- State of the art
- Objectives
- Methodology

(Total of 14 pages)
+ Budget report from Part A

Annexes

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents



Step 3 Interview

The same 5 Panels interview each applicant group for retained proposals.
Every Principal Investigator expected to attend
Panel then meets to re-assess full proposals in light of interview and make final ranking.

Part A

Administrative Forms and Abstract

- General Info
- Participating Institutions
- Budget & Description of Resources
- Ethics Check

Part B1

Proposal Overview and PI Track Record

- Cover page and summary
- Extended Synopsis (5 pages)
- CV (2 pages)
- Funding ID
- Track Record (2 pages)

Part B2

Detailed Research Proposal

- State of the art
- Objectives
- Methodology

(Total of 14 pages)
+ Budget report from Part A

Annexes

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents

Evaluation

The Criteria

ERC evaluation criteria

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

Each PI and overall Group's

intellectual capacity,
creativity
commitment

Research project's

ground-breaking nature
ambition
feasibility

- Proposals marked by panel from: 1 – 4
  (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 its socioeconomic impact or relevance to European policy

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

The project

To what extent:

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

The Scientific Approach

To what extent:

- is the outlined scientific approach **feasible** bearing in mind the high risk/high gain.
- are the research methodology and working arrangements **appropriate to achieve project goals**
- the proposal involves the **development of novel methodology**
- are the **timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate** and properly justified.
- does the Group's proposal **go beyond what individual PIs could achieve**

2. Principal Investigator - Intellectual capacity and creativity

Each Principal Investigator (PI)

To what extent:

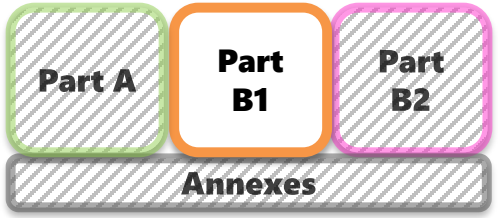
- has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- does the PI has/have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?
- Remember each Synergy PI must address the criteria of one ERC Grantee profile: Starting, Consolidator or Advanced.

Synergy Grant Group

To what extent:

- Has the group demonstrated they bring together the necessary know-how (skills, experience, disciplines and teams)
- What is necessary is defined by the project objectives – the project idea has to be a clear justification for group work.

Changes in the Evaluation Criteria – novelty for 2022



The below evaluation criteria will be used at all steps, thus the answers to these questions should be found in part B1 already, as only the extended synopsis is evaluated at step 1.

- **Evaluation of the Principal Investigators (previously evaluated only as from step 2):**
  - To what extent does the Synergy Grant Group successfully demonstrate in the proposal that it brings together the know-how ~~elements –~~ such as skills, ~~knowledge~~, experience, expertise, disciplines, ~~methods~~, ~~approaches~~, teams – necessary to address the proposed research question? (see SyG Information for Applicants: page 16

- **Evaluation of the Research Project – Scientific Approach:**
  - 'To what extent do the Principal Investigators succeed in proposing a combination of scientific approaches ~~elements put forward in the proposal~~ that are crucial to address the scope and complexity of the research questions to be tackled?'

Evaluation criteria about your Group

1. Research Project

Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

- *To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?*
- *To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?*
- *To what extent is the proposed research high risk-high gain (i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a high risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims)?*

Scientific Approach

- *To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high risk/high gain? (based on the Extended Synopsis)*
- *To what extent does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone? (based on the Extended Synopsis)*
- *To what extent 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? (based on the Extended Synopsis)*
- *To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the research proposal, evaluated only in step 2 and 3)?*
- *To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology (based on the research proposal, evaluated only in step 2 and 3)?*
- *To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified (based on the research proposal, evaluated only in step 2 and 3)?*

2. Principal Investigators

Intellectual capacity and creativity

- *To what extent have the PIs demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?*
- *To what extent do the Ps have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?*

Synergy Grant Group

- *To what extent does the Synergy Grant Group successfully demonstrate in the proposal that it brings together the know-how – such as skills, experience, expertise, disciplines, teams – necessary to address the proposed research question? (based on the Extended Synopsis)*

Taken from:
the ERC 2022 Synergy Grant Information for Applicants

Typical Reasons for Rejection

Proposed Project and Scientific Approach

- Scope: Too narrow or too broad or not focused enough
- Incremental research, not ground breaking
- Work plan not detailed enough or unclear.
- Collaboration approach is not suitable/creative
- Insufficient risk management

Principal investigator Groups

- Insufficient track-record
- Group is missing an element deemed necessary to carry out project objectives
- Insufficient synergies or complementarities between the PIs
- Insufficient experience in leading projects

Other Points for Consideration

Including Open Access and Gender

Open Science

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

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

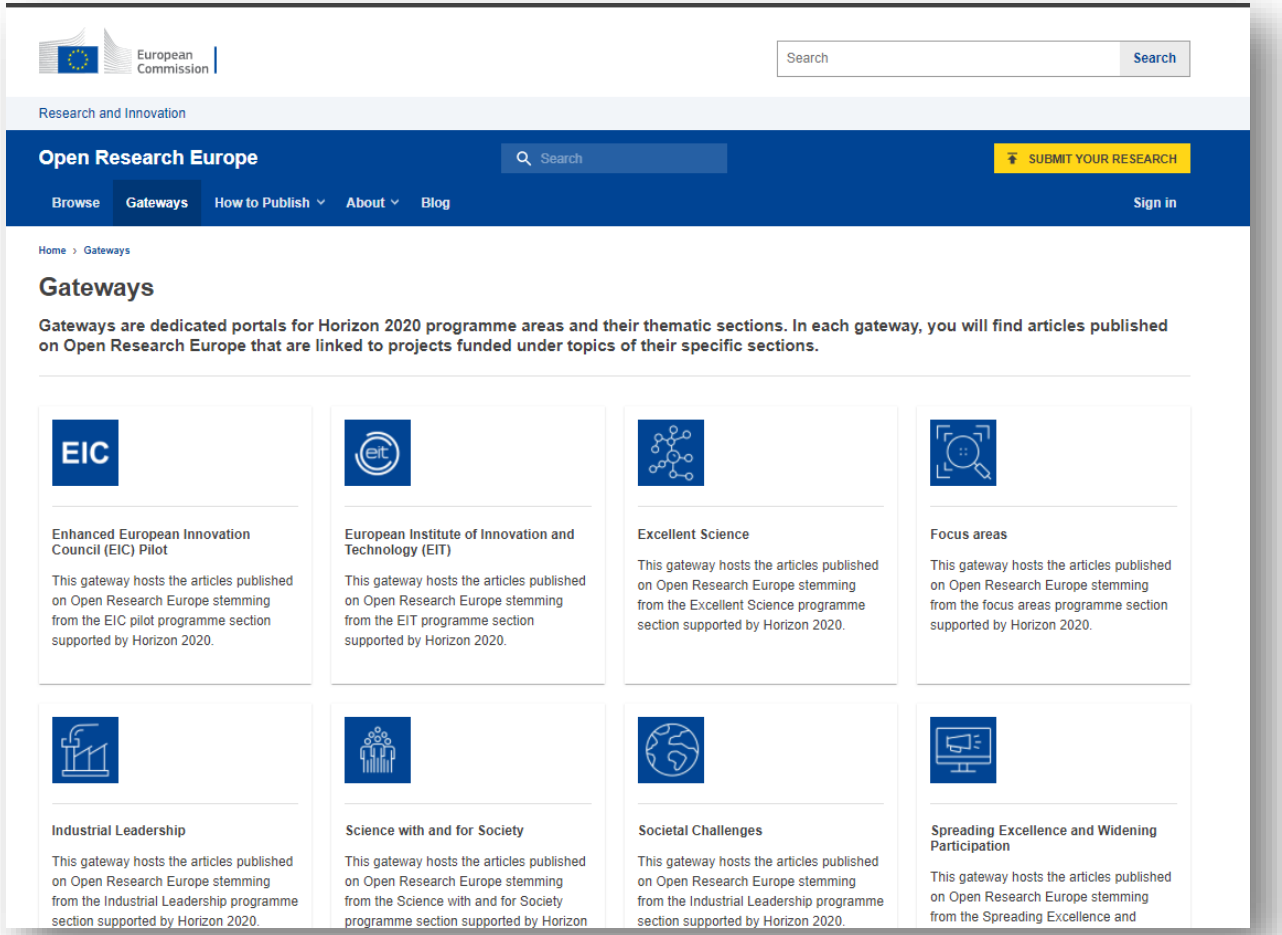
- For long-text publications like monographs
  - a CC BY-NC / ND / NC-ND licence (or equivalent) is acceptable.
  - The ERC Scientific Council recommends the use of the OAPEN Open Books library (https://oapen.org) as repository for monographs and other books as well as book chapters.

You can find the provisions related to Open Science on pages 107 – 109 of the Model Grant Agreement

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

Publishing Fees will not be eligible for funding if the venue is not fully open access (i.e. a full open access journal or book, or an open access publishing platform like, e.g., Open Research Europe)

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/

Why Gender?

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.

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?

Gender rules for eligibility and in the Part A form

- 2022 Synergy Call has a 2021 deadline so the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) does not need to be in place at point of submission
- Details requested in Part A on gender and career stage of the Grant participants are not seen by evaluators.
  - They are used by the Commission anonymously to monitor progress towards gender equality and better careers in the European research sector

Why Gender?

Gender rules for eligibility and in Part A

- Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for the institution
  - Responsibility of the Host Institution not the Principal Investigator.
  - 2022 Synergy Call does not need to have a GEP in place at submission because of 2021 deadline
  - Will be required at a later grant agreement stage if successful.
  - Basic details of what a GEP should be are in Footnote 26 of Information for Applicants. More comprehensive guidance in the HEU Programme Guide

- Part A data on participants:
  - questions on gender and career stage are not evaluated – they do not affect application
  - Data gathered by the Commission is used to monitor progress towards equality in European research sector.

Sex & Gender dimension of your project

- Not a strict requirement in of itself, ERC is still bottom up with researchers setting the topic.

- But, integrating a gender dimension in research and innovation in content and team for your project can make your proposal more competitive if well-suited to the frontier science.

- Evaluators often consider sex and gender dimension adds excellence to the research question and/or methodology and/or group's make-up.

Find tips and guidance: in a recent ERC workshop about how Sex & Gender can be relevant to ERC excellence in each domain.

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
- Will be public facing if the proposal is successful

Proposal Advice

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 our my proposal important?

Why are we the best/only people to carry it out?

Why am I the best person for my role in the group?

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 evaluation criteria

Be specific and don't provide unsupported opinions or comments

Clearly address ALL of the evaluation criteria

Make it easy for 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 and actually helpful

Research previous and current projects

Find colleagues to proof read drafts with the evaluation criteria

Resources

- ERC 2022 SyG call on the Funding and Tenders portal
- ERC 2022 SyG Information for Applicants
- PDF Application Form template
  incl. B1, B2, CV and Host Institution Letter (editable versions will be Funding and Tenders Portal when it opens)
- Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement
- Novelties in the Horizon Europe MGA – Commission Stakeholder Workshop video
- ERC YouTube Channel with explainer videos
- ERC FAQ https://erc.europa.eu/funding/frequently-asked-questions
- ERC Information System and Project database to search for examples of past Synergy Grant Projects
- Guide for Peer Reviewers on Synergy Calls (latest available version, for 2020 call. Look out for the 2021 version which we expect to be published soon)

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

Thank you!