



UK Research Office
Brussels



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

ERC 2025 Starting Grant Call Webinar

Session 1

Overview of the ERC, eligibility and
proposal development

29 July 2024

erc-uk@ukro.ac.uk



About the Presenters

UK ERC NCPs



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Brookes**



**Antonino
Puglisi**

**Also in the audience: Elspeth Martin,
DSIT**



What will be covered in this webinar?



Overview of the ERC calls



Eligibility criteria



Proposal development



Testimonial



Q&A



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



We will be recording this session.



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



Please use the Q&A function to submit questions.



You can 'up vote' your favourite questions in the Q&A



A chat function is available and will be monitored.

Housekeeping



About UKRO

We support UK research intensive organisations

UK National Contact Point for European Research Council, MSCA, COST and Widening.

Unique partnership between UKRI and subscribing organisations

Provide a service to more than 140 subscribing organisations

A Brussels-based team of advisors

Part of UKRI's wider International team



An aerial photograph of a densely packed residential area, likely a town or village, with many small buildings and a network of streets. The image is overlaid with a network of red lines and dots, suggesting a digital or data-driven theme. The lines radiate from a central point on the right side of the image, connecting to various points across the town. The background is a dark blue gradient on the left side, which contains the text.

UK's Relationship with the EU

Participation on Horizon Europe

UK Association to Horizon Europe

- On 7 Sept 2023 the European Commission and UK Government reached an agreement about the UK's association to Horizon Europe.
- From 1 Jan 2024 UK organisations can bid into Horizon*, certain that all successful UK applicants will be covered through the UK's association for the remainder of the programme.



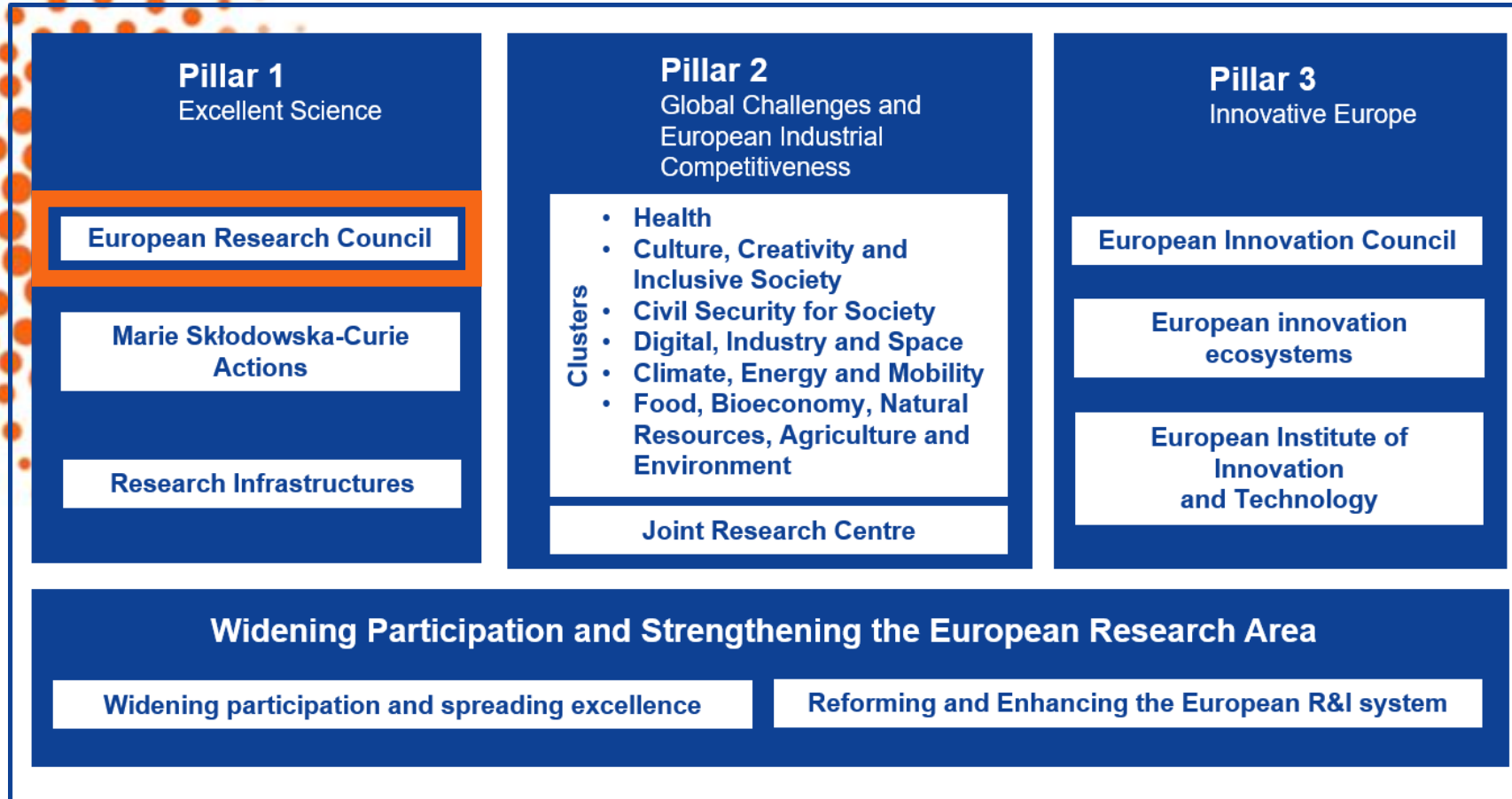
* Only exceptions: European Innovation Council Fund (equity part of EIC Accelerator) plus very exceptional cases if the eligibility for individual funding calls is limited in the Work Programme to EU Member States or certain other countries.

Overview of the ERC

How does it fit into the wider Horizon Europe and what is it about?



Horizon Europe structure



What is the European Research Council?



***BOTTOM-UP,
CURIOSITY-LED,
EXCELLENT RESEARCH***



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The ERC's mission:

- Support investigator-driven frontier research across all fields
- Fund projects purely on the basis of scientific excellence
- Encourage the highest quality research in Europe

What makes the ERC unique:

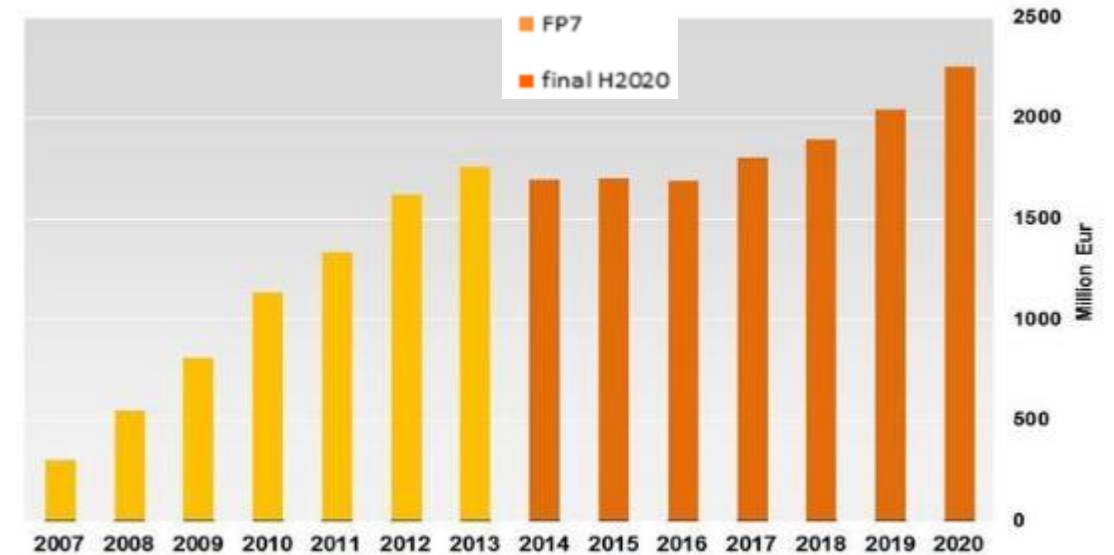
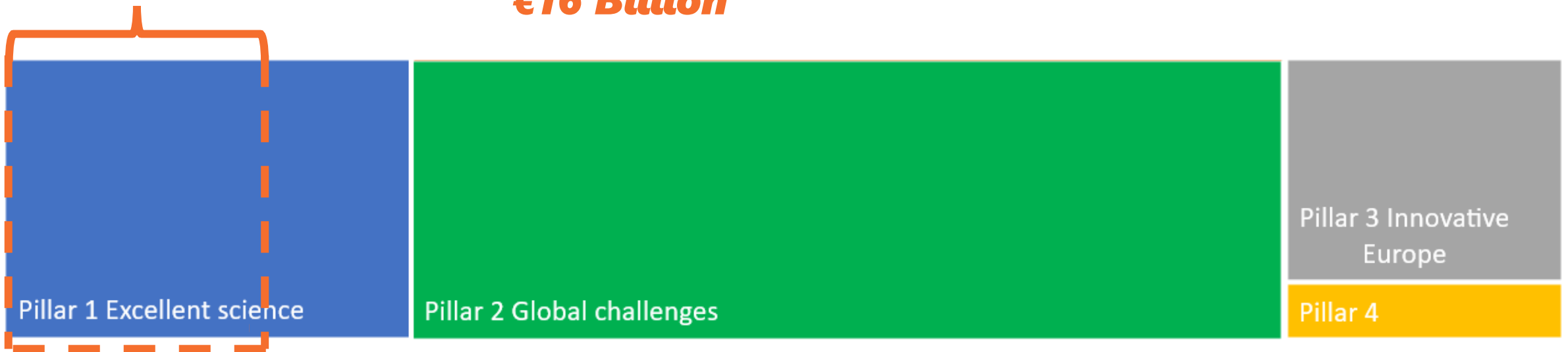
- Excellence is the only criteria
- Freedom of PIs to lead their project with anyone in the world in their team

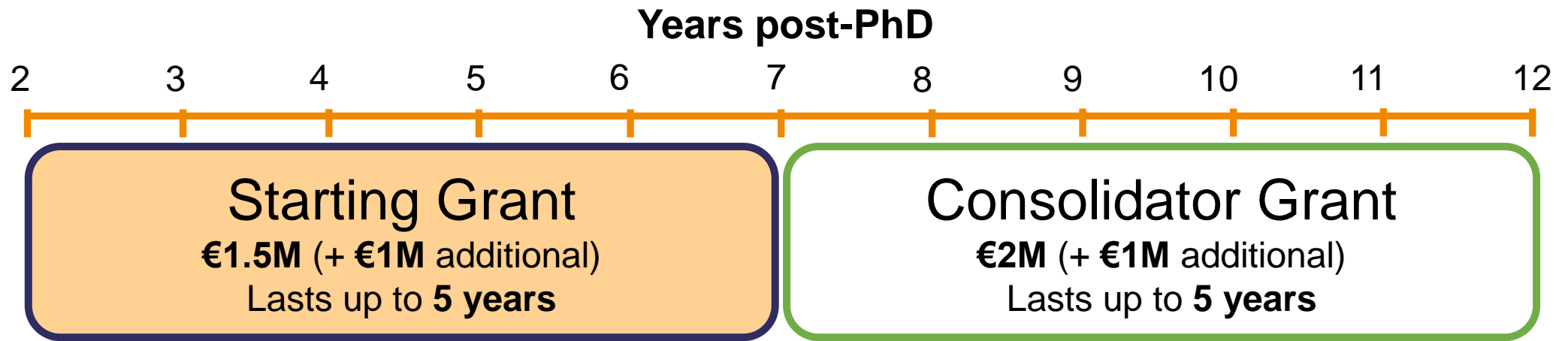
ERC Budget in Horizon Europe

26% increase in real terms compared to Horizon 2020.

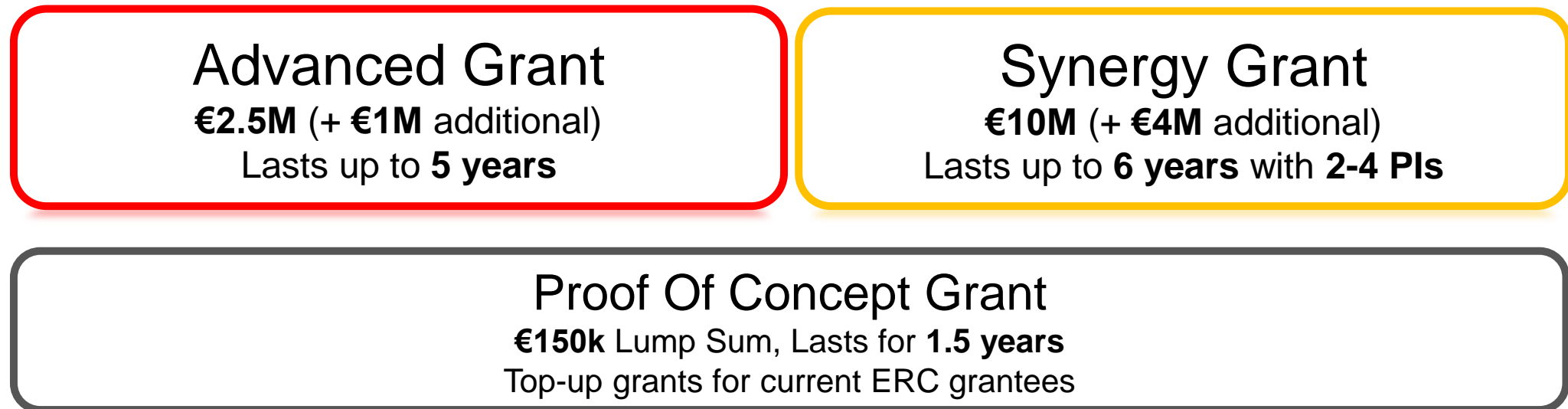
Horizon Europe structure is represented below proportionate to budget allocation.

**ERC BUDGET:
€16 Billion**





No PhD Requirements



ERC Work Programme 2025

- ERC Work Programme 2025 **approved by the Scientific Council** in February 2024
- **European Commission adopted** the ERC Work Programme 2025 on 9th July 2024
- The current budget appropriations – **EUR 2.3bn** – include the amount originally agreed in the Multiannual Financial Framework + fines + EFTA country contributions
- Additional funding from Associated Countries of some **EUR 439m** is expected and has already been included in the provisional total budget

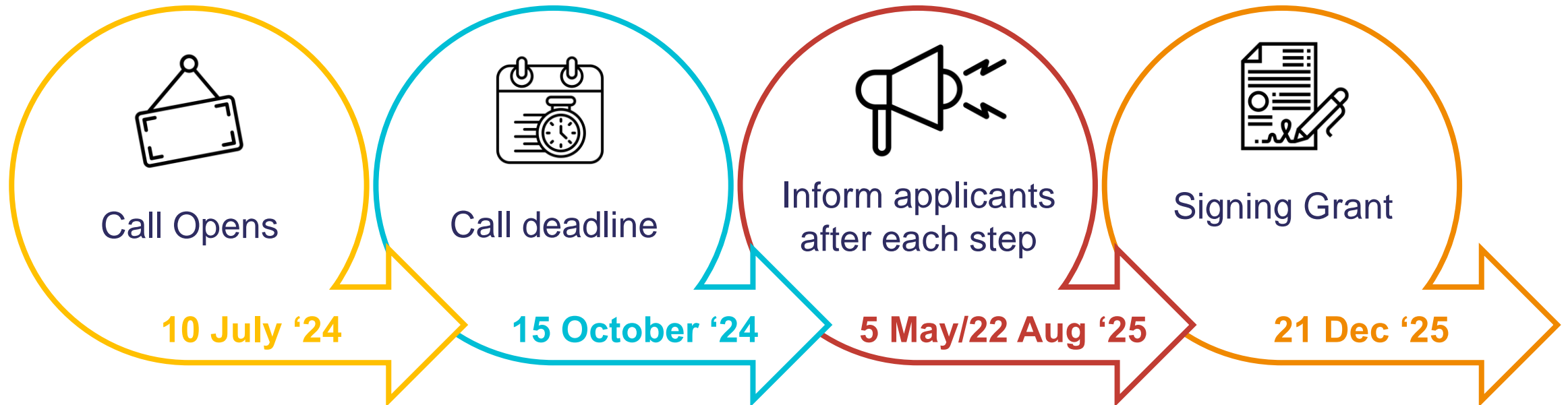
Provisional Total Budget = 2.7bn



ERC 2025 Calls

	<i>Starting Grant</i>	<i>Consolidator Grant</i>	<i>Advanced Grant</i>	<i>Synergy Grant</i>
<i>Call identifier</i>	ERC-2025-StG	ERC-2025-CoG	ERC-2025-AdG	ERC-2025-SyG
<i>Call opens</i>	10 July 2024	26 September 2024	22 May 2025	11 July 2024
<i>Call deadline</i>	15 October 2024	14 January 2025	28 August 2025	6 November 2024

2025 Starting Grant



Call Identifier	ERC-2025-StG
Budget	€751 Million
Estimated no. grants funded	483

Association Agreements

Signed and Ratified:

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada (Pillar II only), Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand (Pillar II only), North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom (except EIC Fund)

Transitional Arrangements:

Morocco, Switzerland (ERC WP 2024 AdG, and ERC WP 2025 StG, CoG, and SyG)

Under Negotiation and Exploratory Talks:

Republic of Korea (Pillar II only), Japan, Egypt, Singapore

Special Cases:

Lichtenstein: not associated to Horizon Europe
Russia, Belarus: Cooperation with public entities or related bodies halted

ERC Work Programme 2025: Novelties I – Eligibility and Submission Restrictions

Eligibility Extensions (changes):

- Extension on the grounds of disability
- Major disasters – definition elaborated to include disasters caused by humans

Evaluation of Synergy Grants:

- Flexibility in the number of panels in Step 2: between five and seven
- At Step 2, the budgetary cut-off to pass to Step 3, reverts to three times the panel budget (instead of four)



ERC Work Programme 2025: Novelties II – Additional Clarifications

Evaluation of Proposals by Panels:

ERC evaluation panels are instructed to approve or reject proposals in their entirety, and they may not select parts of a proposal for funding.

Change in Panel Descriptors:

PE6 - Computer Science and Informatics: Theoretical and experimental computer science, information processing, intelligent systems

ERC Panel Structure

Physical Sciences & Engineering	Life Sciences	Social Sciences & Humanities
<p>PE1 Mathematics</p> <p>PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter</p> <p>PE3 Condensed Matter Physics</p> <p>PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences</p> <p>PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials</p> <p>PE6 Computer Science and Informatics*</p> <p>PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering</p> <p>PE8 Products and Processes Engineering</p> <p>PE9 Universe Sciences</p> <p>PE10 Earth System Science</p> <p>PE11 Materials Engineering</p>	<p>LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures & Functions</p> <p>LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems</p> <p>LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration</p> <p>LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing</p> <p>LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System</p> <p>LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy</p> <p>LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases</p> <p>LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution</p> <p>LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering</p>	<p>SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations</p> <p>SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems</p> <p>SH3 The Social World and its Interactions</p> <p>SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity</p> <p>SH5 Texts and Concepts</p> <p>SH6 The Study of the Human Past</p> <p>SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space</p> <p>SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts</p>



ERC Eligibility Criteria



Types of research

- Can be in **ANY** field of research;
- Must be very **ambitious** in **risk** and in **scope**;
- **Principal Investigator** is central to the project, they can be supported by as many “team members” as they need;
- Must be “**frontier research**” and should not be incremental advances.



More on evaluation criteria in part 2 including how panels and external experts evaluate proposals

Judged on the scientific excellence of the project and PI

No need to aim for externally selected policies or research themes, it's up to the applicant!



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2025 Starting Grant Eligibility window

Cut-off dates:

**Successful defence of PhD between
1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022
(inclusive)**

The date of the first PhD considered for the calculation of the eligibility period is the date of the actual award according to the national rules of the country where the degree was awarded.

Applicants should check with the awarding institution if there is any doubt on the date of actual award.



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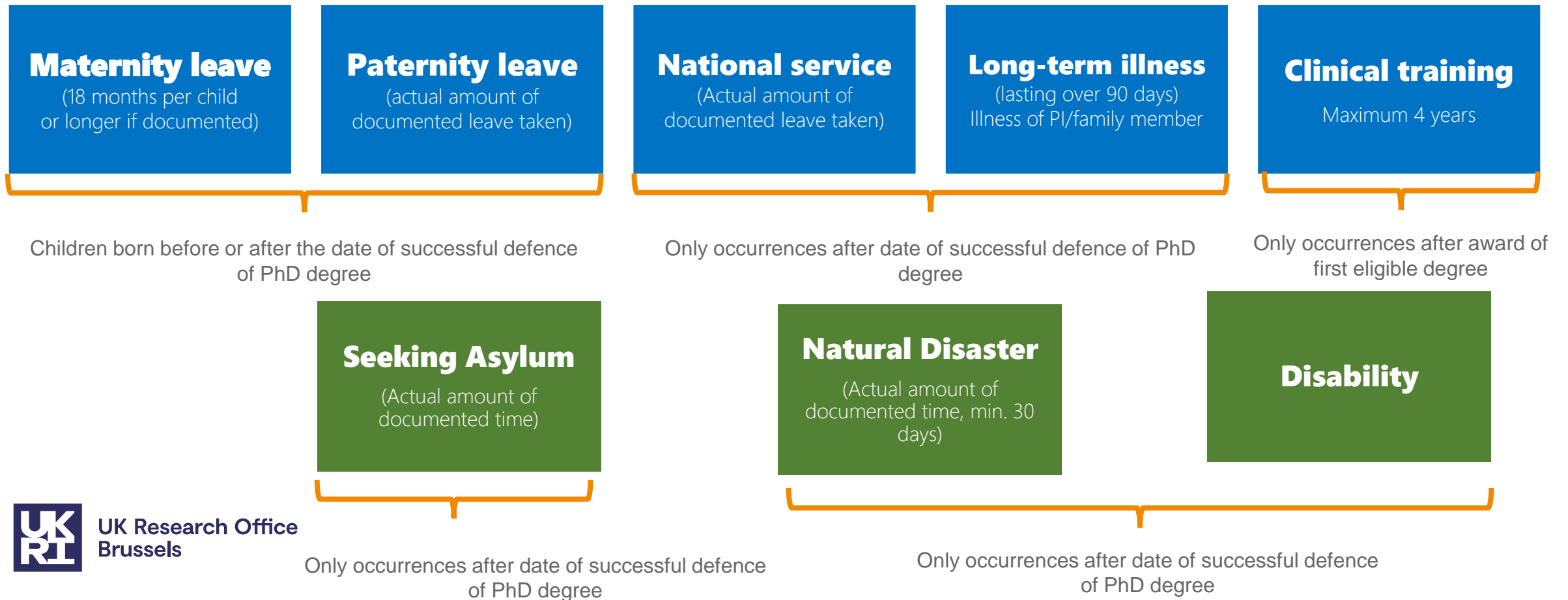


Extending Eligibility window

No extensions for part time working, non-research careers, travel, Covid restrictions (e.g. home schooling) etc., unless linked to illness/maternity.

But evaluators do take these circumstance into account if you describe them in your track record.

Starting and Consolidator Grant eligibility window can be extended for:



Disability: classification/documentation

You can find details related to extension requests in the [Information for Applicants](#)

Disability

- For disabilities, an extension may be granted corresponding to the documented period during which a Principal Investigator was unable to work or had reduced working capacity after their PhD defence (counting up to the call deadline).
- Supporting documents: an official document confirming the disability together with documentation certifying leave/part-time working/**reduced working capacity** resulting from the disability, with relevant start and end dates (if applicable).



2025 Call Resubmission Restrictions

Call to which the Principal Investigator applied under previous ERC Work Programmes and proposal evaluation outcome		2025 ERC calls to which a Principal Investigator is <u>not</u> eligible
2023 and 2024 Starting, Consolidator, Advanced Grant, or Synergy Grant	Rejected on the grounds of a breach of research integrity	Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, and Synergy Grant
2023 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant	C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator, and Advanced Grant
2024 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant	A or B at Step 2	No restrictions
	B or C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator, and Advanced Grant
2023 and 2024 Synergy Grant	A or B at Step 3	No restrictions
	B at Step 1 or 2	No restrictions
	C at Step 1	Synergy Grant

Am I a competitive candidate?

- Constantly measure yourself against the Starting Grantee profile and the PI Evaluation Criteria in the ERC Work Programme
- Evaluators will benchmark you to your specific career age; 2 years PhD \neq 7 years post PhD.
- Think about what this profile looks like in your field of research.
- Look at [previously funded Starting Grant PIs in your field](#), but remember you can present yourself on your own terms
- Prestigious achievements can matter but they aren't the only way to be successful. There are no blunt markers of an ERC grantee.
- Context matters, demonstrate what you did well and details that show your role so that evaluators can make a nuanced consideration



How are ERC proposals evaluated?

Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion, primarily to:

Research Project

- Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

At the same time:

Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity and creativity, with a focus on the extent to which the PI has the required scientific expertise and capacity.

Principal Investigator & Host
Institute



Principal Investigator Eligibility

Who?

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

Where?

Must have an institution based in an EU member state or associated country willing to host them.

Calculated as an average across entire project duration, can vary to a degree year on year

Grant Type	Minimum % of Working Time on Grant	Minimum % of time* in EU Member State or Associated Country	Years since PhD Award
Starting	50	50	2-7
Consolidator	40	50	7-12
Advanced	30	50	N/A
Synergy	30	50	N/A

Host Institution Eligibility



Can be any type of legal entity
(university, business, public body, NGO etc.)



Must be based in the territory of an
EU Member State or Associated Country



Has the infrastructure and capacity to allow the PI to independently direct the
research and manage ERC funding



Must not constrain the PI to the institution's research strategy. PI has the right to
transfer the grant to another institution.



Must 'engage' the PI for project duration, if grant is successful

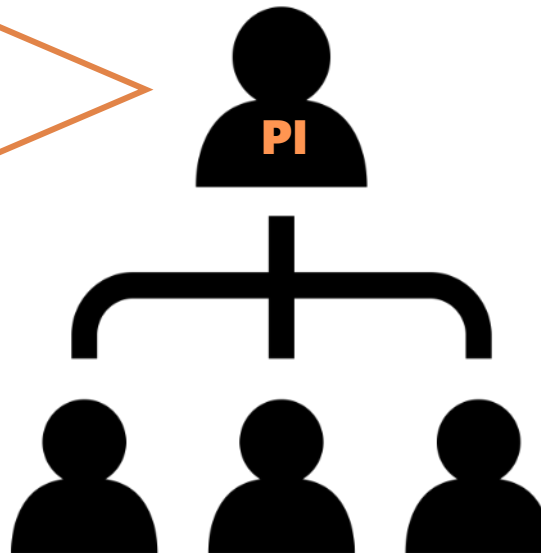


Not assessed as a separate criterion during peer review but must sign a letter of
commitment as part of application



Principal Investigators leading Team Members

- PI **leads** the research project, they are not collaborating as equals with their team
- PI has the **freedom to choose** how many team members are included in the project
- PI **names individuals or roles** that will be recruited in the proposal
- PI must **justify the team** and its composition and contribution
- Evaluators reject proposals where the PI is overshadowed by any team members



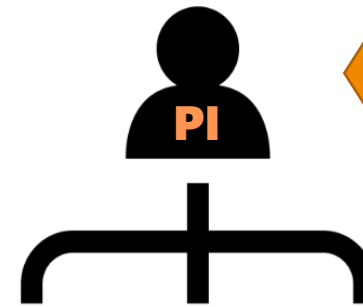
TEAM MEMBERS

- **Cannot be co-investigators**
- **Assigned to specific project outputs/tasks**
- Do activities the PI can't do by themselves
- Should not have purely supervisory/mentor roles
- Can be **research staff at any level** (including technicians and project managers)
- Think about career path of employees
- 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

What kind of team members can be in an ERC project?

The constitution of the research teams is flexible.

Depending on the nature of a project the research team may involve team members from other research organisations situated in the same or a different country.



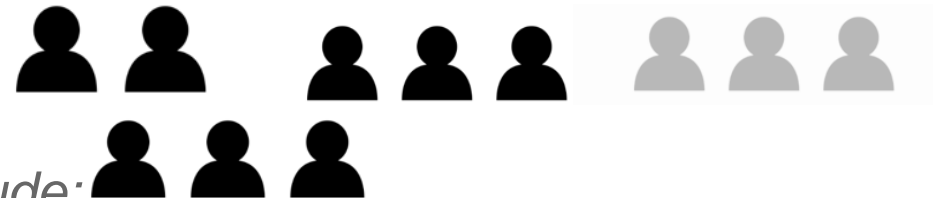
Only one PI

evaluated in proposal according to the broadly defined work programme (no prescribed job title)

Only one Host Institution

(although a PI can transfer or be based at multiple organisations)

PI designs and chooses their team according to the needs of the project



Can my team include:

Researchers at any career stage?

YES, from PhD to Professor etc, as long as the PI is clearly leading the project.

Non-academic/administrative team-members?

YES, if they are justified and help to carry out the objectives

Team members based in other organisations?

YES, if they are justified and help to carry out the objectives

More in Session 2

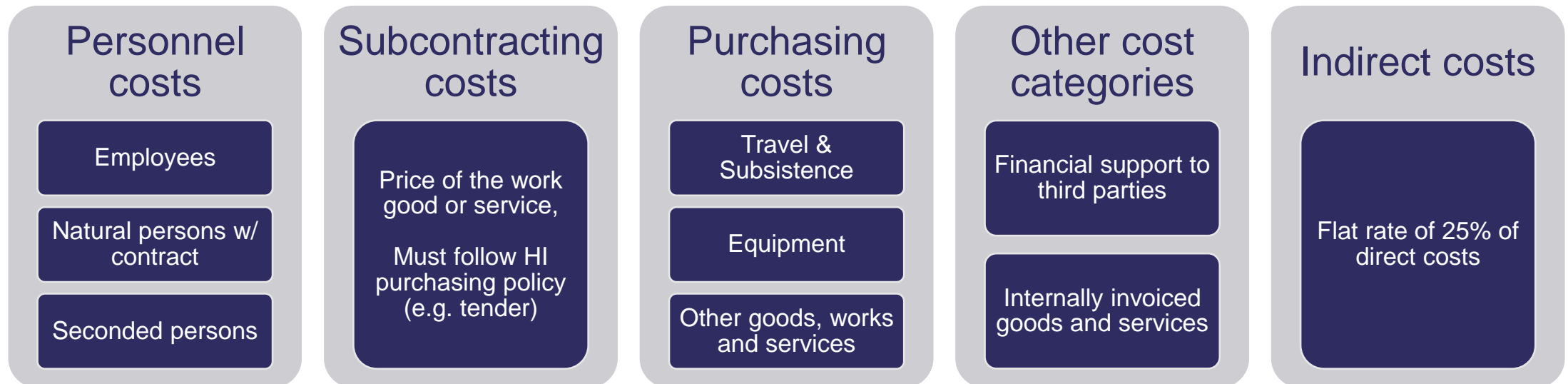
about adding organisations other than the Host Institution on the EC portal (other beneficiaries or third parties)

Eligible costs for ERC projects

The ERC funds up to **100% of the total eligible costs with a 25% flat rate of indirect costs on top.**

- Same as most EU grants – based on actual cost reporting
- The budget covers the full project duration,
- It can be adjusted with budget transfers from one category to another, but the overall grant amount cannot be increased after start date.

The budget is subdivided into:



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Ask for support from your Host Institution's research support or finance team as early as possible,

The ERC project costing must follow Host Institution rules as well!

Funding Levels

Grant Type	Main Grant Amount up to:	“Additional Funding” up to:
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

ERC's Additional Funding:

- 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 requests are **mixed into the main budget table** but **written separately** in the justification of resources text





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Short break





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ERC Proposal Development

Part B1 & B2

Part A is addressed in Thursday's session



1-Step Submission

All parts submitted together by the call deadline.

Part A is filled in online.

B1, B2 & Annexes are uploaded as PDFs.

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 and Track Record (4 pages)

Part B2

*Detailed Research
Proposal*

- State of the art
 - Objectives
 - Methodology
 - Funding ID
- (Total of 14 pages)

Annexes

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents

ERC Panel Structure

Physical Sciences & Engineering	Life Sciences	Social Sciences & Humanities
<p>PE1 Mathematics</p> <p>PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter Particle</p> <p>PE3 Condensed Matter Physics</p> <p>PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences</p> <p>PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials</p> <p>PE6 Computer Science and Informatics</p> <p>PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering</p> <p>PE8 Products and Processes Engineering</p> <p>PE9 Universe Sciences</p> <p>PE10 Earth System Science</p> <p>PE11 Materials Engineering</p>	<p>LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures & Functions</p> <p>LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems</p> <p>LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration</p> <p>LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing</p> <p>LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System</p> <p>LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy</p> <p>LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases</p> <p>LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution</p> <p>LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering</p>	<p>SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations</p> <p>SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems</p> <p>SH3 The Social World and its Interactions</p> <p>SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity</p> <p>SH5 Texts and Concepts</p> <p>SH6 The Study of the Human Past</p> <p>SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space</p> <p>SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts</p>



Choosing the correct panel

Make the right choice/configuration

You must choose a **best fit primary panel** – might not be perfect

You can choose a **secondary panel** – indicate where other panellists could help the primary panel to evaluate your proposal

Choose **Panel Descriptor**– this helps the Panel Chair to identify your proposal's main readers ahead of the panel meeting.

Choose **ERC-listed keywords from primary/secondary panel** in order of priority

Choose **Free keywords** that complement your selected ERC keywords.

Keywords in your abstract – try to use keywords that define your project because they are used by the ERC to find the right remote expert reviewers.

You can change your chosen panel right up to the deadline.



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Evaluation panel section in Part A form

The screenshot shows a form titled 'Evaluation panel section in Part A form'. It contains several input fields and instructions:

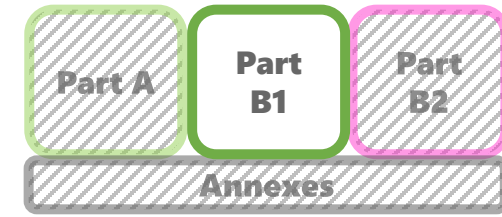
- Primary ERC Review Panel***: A text input field.
- Secondary ERC Review Panel**: A text input field with '(if applicable)' written to its right.
- ERC Keyword 1***: A text input field with instructions: 'As first keyword please choose one which is linked to the Primary Review Panel. Please select, if applicable, the ERC keyword(s) that best characterize the subject of your proposal in order of priority.'
- ERC Keyword 2**: A text input field.
- ERC Keyword 3**: A text input field.
- ERC Keyword 4**: A text input field.
- Free keywords**: A text input field with instructions: 'In addition, please enter free text keywords that you consider best characterize the scope of your proposal. The choice of keywords should take into account any multi-disciplinary aspects of the proposal.'

Do your homework to judge which panel best matches your proposal.

Read panel descriptors & keywords in the [ERC Work Programme](#) to get an idea of the best-fit panel for you – they align with the kinds of experts on the panel.

Search for previously funded projects from your potential panel choices to see examples of projects.
Use the [ERC Information System](#)

Part B1 – Step 1 of the Evaluation



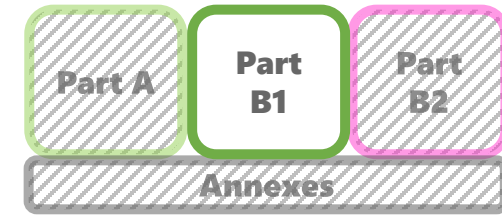
Strict formatting requirements:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman, Arial or similar	At least 11	Single	2cm Side 1.5cm Bottom

Part B1 includes:

- Cover Page (info repeated from Part A)
- Extended Synopsis (5 pages)
- CV and Track Record (4 pages)

Writing the Extended Synopsis



Self-contained

- All the essential info about your idea in **5 pages**.
- Describe where the novelty lies – what is the state-of-the-art and how does this proposal go further?
- Your synopsis should be **referenced**, these won't count towards page limits – using end-notes is recommended.

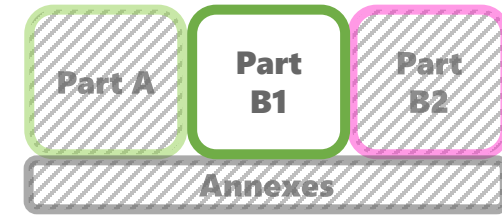
Persuasive to generalists

- A variety of experts decide collectively whether to pass the proposal to Step 2.
- Be clear and don't use **specialist jargon** because the panel are generalists as a whole, some will be less familiar with your field.
- Applicants need to **persuade the whole panel** – include just enough info and don't give any reasons to reject!

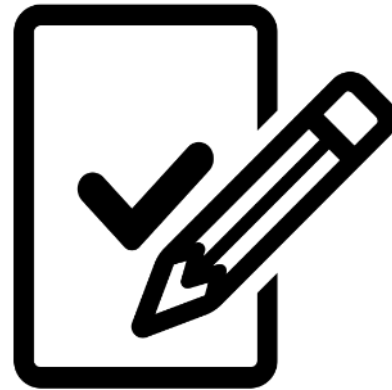
Entertaining!

- Sell your idea and yourself – the synopsis should grab the panellists' attention
- Your idea should be ambitious – be explicit about **high risk and potentially high gain**.
- The description of novelty and ambition should leave them curious to find out **more detail** in Part B2 and the interview at Step 2.

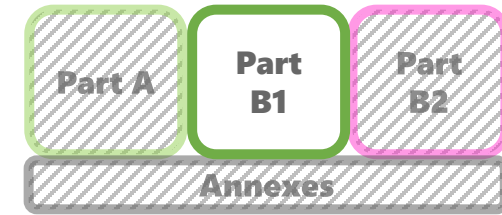
Things to think about: Extended Synopsis



- **Dual role:** key text in stand-alone B1, then goes hand-in hand with the B2 full proposal. Make it work in both ways, not as a summary of the full proposal
- **What excites you about your research?** Convey that in your application
- **Scientific Impact** – how can you change your field of research and make progress beyond the current state-of-the-art.
 - Does the research open new lines of research and/or enquiry
 - Will it lead to new scientific activity and further questions beyond the current frontier?
 - Be positive about achievements made by others thus far then demonstrate you have something new and different to offer.
- **Timeliness and relevance of the work during the project,** not just at the deadline but throughout the project's five years. Scientific impact can also be made at anytime of the project, not just at the end
- **Research Aims, should clearly link to the research objectives,** which should clearly link to research methodology(ies)

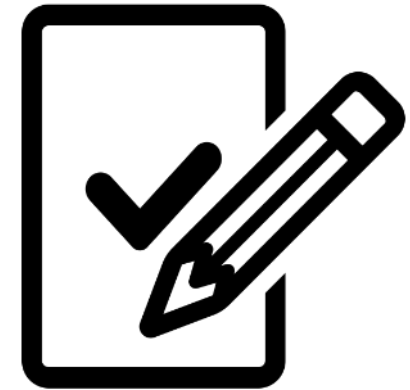


Writing your CV and Track Record



No prescriptive PI profiles

- Personal details: education, employment
- Research achievements (up to a max. 10)
 - Demonstrating advancement in the field
 - Emphasis on more recent achievements
 - Short narrative on significance of achievements
- Peer recognition, prizes, fellowships, academy memberships, etc
- Additional information (setting the context)
 - Career breaks, diverse career paths, life events
 - Other contribution to research community



Template won't specify the layout. It will have some instructions, up to applicant to decide on the format. Let them best showcase their talent.

Part A

*Administrative Forms
and Abstract*

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

Part B1

*Proposal Overview
and PI Track Record*

- Cover page and summary
- Extended Synopsis (5 pages)
- CV and Track Record (4 pages)

Part B2

*Detailed Research
Proposal*

- State of the art
- Objectives
- Methodology
- Funding ID

(Total of 14 pages)

Annexes

Host Institution Letter, Ethics, Eligibility Documents

***At Step 2 there is also a ~30 min interview with your panel
(presentation and Q&A)***

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Part B2

- **State of the art and objectives**

- Objectives here become grant agreement objectives

- **Methodology**

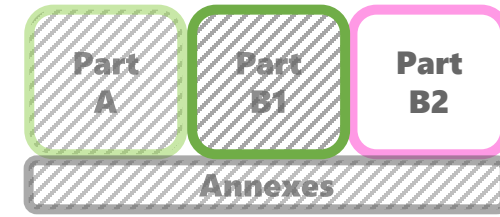
- Proposed methodology
- Milestones and alternatives
- Risk and mitigation
- Project Management
- Publication & Exploitation of results



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Writing your State of the Art and Objectives



Coherence with Part B1

- Elaborate Part B1 coherently: Explain precisely how you plan to achieve what you promised.
- A remote expert review will be provided to the generalist panel, add technical detail that someone much closer to your field would need to know.
- Don't copy & paste from Part B1. Both looked at together at Step 2, so make them complementary.

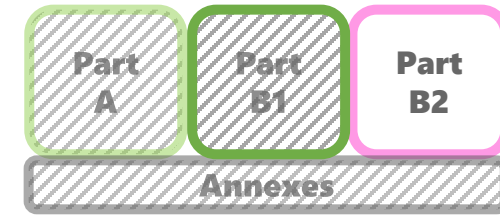
State of the art

- It should be clear how and why the proposed work is important for the field.
- What scientific impact will your project have if successful? What new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship?

Objectives

- Objectives should fit the context of the state-of-the-art – they should match the ambition to go past the current frontier.
- These objectives will become part of the Grant Agreement if successful – so the need to be feasible.

Writing your Methodology



Methodology

- Should be **extensive**, include the essential detail that an expert in your field would need to know.
- Don't leave any reasons for experts to raise doubts for the panel
- Work plan should also be clear and **persuade evaluators that you can carry out the logistics** of a long term project.

Risk Mitigation Strategy

- Where possible **cover every risk with a mitigation strategy**.
- ERC accepts high risk to hopefully reach high gain – so don't shy away
- But evaluators and external experts can be risk averse.
- Explicit but controlled risk

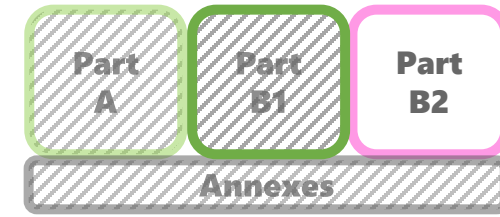
Your team

- Be sure to show **how you will be the leader** of the team and central figure for the project.
- **Explain what each team member will do** – these can be named people or roles specified for recruitment.

Justify resources

- Be **ambitious**, if you don't ask for something needed that can be a problem.
- Justify: budget lines must have place in the project and **be linked to objectives**.

Things to think about for Part B2



- **Recap and expand** on Part B1 introductory Extended Synopsis.
- Detail the **current state of the art** in your field: highlight the achievements, challenges and gaps. How will your project go beyond these?
- Explain how, and why, your project is important to the field and what **impact** and **implications** it will have if successful. Timeliness should be shown throughout.
- Discuss the **challenges** and **unconventional aspects** of your project.
- **Coherence** and **clear linkages** throughout proposal text: linking aims to budget via research methodologies. The better your proposal is organised the more feasible the project work plan will appear.
- Any preliminary **data management plans** could add to the excellence of your scientific approach. The full data management plan is required by Month 6 if funded.

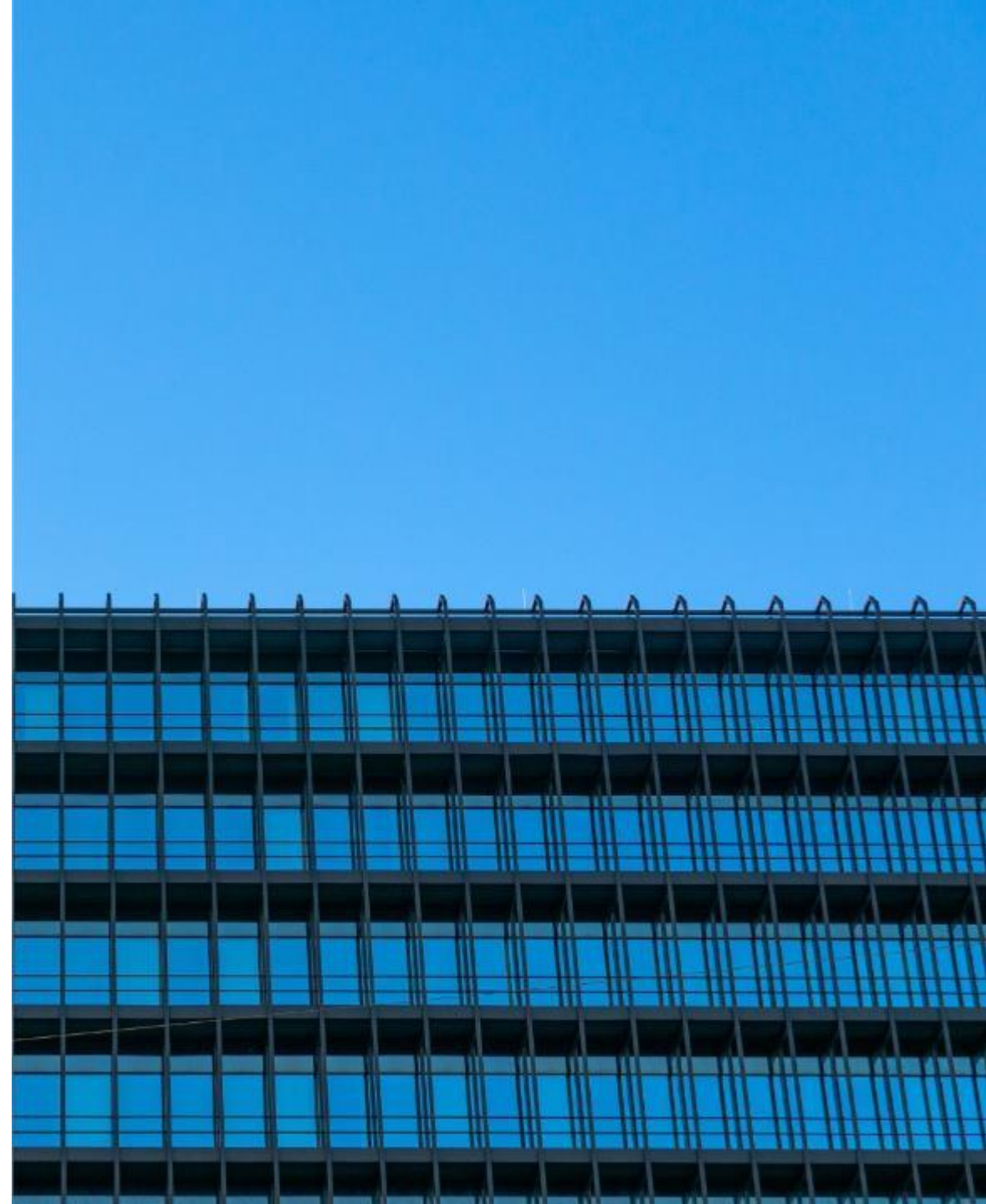


Useful links

- [ERC 2025 Work Programme](#)
- [ERC 2025 StG call on the Funding and Tenders portal](#)
- [ERC 2025 StG Information for Applicants](#)
- [Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement](#)
- [Part B1/B2, Host Institution Support Template](#) (pdf)
- [ERC Website](#), including the easy to use [Project Database](#) and the more in depth [ERC Information System](#)
- [Novelties in the Horizon Europe MGA](#) – Commission Stakeholder Workshop video



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Guest speaker

Prof Edmond Smith
The University of Manchester



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Thank you, any questions?



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