



# **Horizon Europe**

## **European Research Council (ERC)**

### **Frontier Research Grants**

Information for Applicants to the  
Synergy Grant call



**European Research Council**  
Executive Agency

Established by the European Commission

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3.0	12.07.2023	Information for Applicants to the ERC Synergy Grant 2024 call

# Information for Applicants to the Synergy Grant 2024 Call



**European Research Council**  
Executive Agency

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## European Research Council (ERC) Frontier Research Grants

12 July 2023

This document is published by the ERC Scientific Council on the [ERC website](#). It can also be downloaded from the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities](#) Portal (F&T Portal).

## IMPORTANT TO NOTE

The present document is based on the legal documents setting the rules and conditions for the ERC frontier research grants, in particular:

- the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#)<sup>1</sup>,
- the [European Research Council Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#), and the related methods and procedures for peer review and proposal evaluation relevant to the specific programme implementing [Horizon Europe](#),
- the [Model Grant Agreement](#) used for ERC actions<sup>2</sup>.

This document complements and does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding and prevail in case of discrepancies. The European Commission, the ERC Executive Agency or any person or body acting on their behalf cannot be held responsible for the use made of this document.

The [Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers](#) – applicable to the Synergy Grant call, provides practical information on the evaluation process.

National Contact Points ([ERC NCPs](#)) have been set up across Europe<sup>3</sup> by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to ERC applicants in their native language. The mission of the ERC NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on ERC funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of ERC grant applications. For details on the ERC NCP in your country please consult the [ERC website](#) or the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#).

For any questions related to the call, please contact the relevant Call coordination team: [erc-syg-applicants@ec.europa.eu](mailto:erc-syg-applicants@ec.europa.eu)

<b>Abbreviations</b>	
<b>AC</b> <a href="#">Associated Country</a> <sup>4</sup>	<b>HE</b> <a href="#">Horizon Europe Framework Programme</a>
<b>ADG</b> <a href="#">Advanced Grant</a>	<b>HI</b> – Host Institution
<b>cHI</b> corresponding Host Institution	<b>NCP</b> – <a href="#">National Contact Points</a>
<b>COG</b> <a href="#">Consolidator Grant</a>	<b>PI</b> – Principal Investigator
<b>cPI</b> corresponding Principal Investigator	<b>PM</b> – Panel Member
<b>ERCEA</b> <a href="#">European Research Council Executive Agency</a>	<b>PEV</b> Panel Evaluator
<b>ERC</b> <a href="#">European Research Council</a>	<b>PIC</b> <a href="#">Participant Identification Code</a>
<b>ERC panel</b> ERC peer review evaluation panels	<b>POC</b> <a href="#">Proof of Concept Grant</a>
<b>ERC WP</b> - <a href="#">ERC Work Programme</a>	<b>SEP</b> <a href="#">Submission and Evaluation of Proposals</a> (online tool)
<b>EU MS</b> <a href="#">EU Member States</a>	<b>STG</b> <a href="#">Starting Grant</a>
<b>F&amp;T Portal</b> – <a href="#">EU Funding &amp; Tender Opportunities Portal</a> (Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA))	<b>SYG</b> <a href="#">Synergy Grant</a>

<sup>1</sup> European Commission C(2023)3999 of 10 July 2023

<sup>2</sup> Specific rules for ERC actions are detailed in Annex 5 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement

<sup>3</sup> This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some other countries also provide this service

<sup>4</sup> Please check the Horizon Europe Programme Guide on the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#) for up-to-date information on the current position for Associated Countries.

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# 1. ERC SYNERGY GRANT 2024

## 1.1 ERC FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The ERC Synergy Grant is part of the main ERC frontier research grants 2024 funded by the European Union's [Horizon Europe Framework Programme](#) for Research and Innovation.

The ERC's main frontier research grants aim to empower individual researchers and provide the best settings to foster their creativity. **Scientific excellence** is the sole criterion of evaluation in all ERC frontier research grants. Please see below an overview of all ERC 2024 main calls.



### Objectives

ERC Synergy Grants support a small group of two to maximum four Principal Investigators (PIs) – hereafter the Synergy Grant group, (and their teams)<sup>5</sup> to jointly address ambitious research problems that could not be addressed by the individual Principal Investigators and their teams working alone. Synergy projects should enable substantial advances at the frontiers of knowledge, stemming, for example, from the cross-fertilisation of scientific fields, from new productive lines of enquiry, or new methods and techniques, including unconventional approaches and investigations at the interface between established disciplines. The transformative research funded by Synergy Grants should have the potential of becoming a benchmark on a global scale.

### Principal Investigators and the Synergy group

Principal Investigators of any career stage are welcome and must demonstrate the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their research proposal. 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.

One of the Principal Investigators must be designated as the corresponding Principal Investigator (cPI). At any one time, one Principal Investigator per Synergy Grant group, except the corresponding PI, can be hosted and engaged by an institution outside the European Union or Associated Countries.

Researchers of any age and career stage can apply for up to six years funding. No specific eligibility criteria regarding the academic training are required for PIs applying for ERC Synergy Grants. Each PI has to present their profile, consisting of a CV and track record, using a single template available for all career stages. The PIs are requested to use the template in part B1 available for download from the submission system.

The applicant PIs do not need to be based in the same Host Institution; any Synergy Grant group that can demonstrate the need for a synergetic proposal to promote key research advances will be considered. Synergy Grant groups are expected to demonstrate that they can successfully bring together those elements – such as skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, disciplines, methods, approaches, teams, access to infrastructures – necessary to address the scope and complexity of the

<sup>5</sup>Where research is often performed individually in certain fields (e.g. in the humanities and mathematics), the 'team' may consist solely of the Principal Investigator.

proposed research question. Applicants are expected to describe the contribution of each PI, their team, and the resources to achieve the objectives proposed.

It is of utmost importance not to confuse the term 'synergy' and its requirements with the concepts and the terminology of other parts of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme. Proposals perceived as mere loose cooperation or networking are not in the scope of the call. Support for consortia is provided by other calls under Horizon Europe. Synergy projects should generally involve PIs and their teams that are capable of tackling bold new research themes that require novel approaches. Such research teams are typically characterised by exceptional combinations of knowledge and skills, in which the Principal Investigators hold a central role. Through its bottom-up approach the Scientific Council remains open to what applicants choose as the best ways of working together. Nevertheless, the applicants are expected to explain the feasibility and appropriateness of the working arrangements by coming up with ideas on how to spend time together in ways that best suit the aims and goals of their research in order to convince the reviewing panels (or reviewers) about the outstanding work together.

The ERC expects the composition of a Synergy Grant group to remain unchanged throughout the lifetime of the grant. If a Principal Investigator leaves a Synergy Grant group, the grant may be continued only exceptionally, subject to a scientific evaluation and provided that all eligibility criteria will continue to be met.

Examples of Synergy projects funded in the previous calls can be found on the ERC website: [Synergy grants](#).

### **Research fields – no predetermined priorities**

The ERC's frontier research grants operate on a 'bottom-up' basis and applications can be made in any field of research with an emphasis on the frontiers of science, scholarship and engineering<sup>6</sup>. In particular, the ERC welcomes proposals of a multi- or trans-disciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, or pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research, or proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions. The focus is on the group of PIs and on their teams. Projects wholly or largely consisting in the collation and compilation of existing material in new databases, editions or collections are unlikely to constitute ground-breaking or 'frontier' research, however useful such resources might be to subsequent original research. Such projects are therefore unlikely to be recommended for funding by the ERC panels.

Each Synergy proposal must demonstrate that its objectives can only be achieved through the specific combination of knowledge and skills brought together by the participating PIs. In other words, a major scientific question of pressing significance, that could become benchmarks on a global scale, an integrated project and the transformative scientific potential are crucial elements in conceiving a Synergy proposal.

As ERC funds frontier research, careful consideration should be given to propose truly novel ideas, not just continuations of ongoing work or existing collaboration.

### **Evaluation and Peer Review**

The ERC's evaluation process is conducted by peer review panels composed of renowned scientists and scholars. The panels may be assisted by independent external experts working remotely. The panel chairs and members are selected by the ERC Scientific Council on the basis of their scientific merits.

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<sup>6</sup> Research proposals within the scope of Annex I to the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications shall be submitted to relevant calls under the [Euratom Framework Programme](#)

The peer reviewers are asked to primarily evaluate the **quality of the science proposed, as well as the synergy aspects through the combination of the scientific elements and the know-how of the group, collaborative working arrangements** when assessing the excellence of the proposal.

## Open Science

Open science is a general principle of the Horizon Europe programme, and a core principle of the ERC. The ERC is committed to the principle of open access to any published output of research, including in particular peer-reviewed articles and monographs. It also supports the basic principle of open access to research data and data related products such as computer code, algorithms, software, workflows, protocols, electronic notebooks, or any other forms of research output. The ERC considers that providing free online access to all these research products can be the most effective way of ensuring that the results of the research it funds can be accessed, read and used as the basis for further advancement.

Under Horizon Europe, beneficiaries of ERC grants must ensure immediate open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications<sup>7</sup> related to their results as set out in the [Model Grant Agreement](#) used for ERC actions. Open access has to be provided with full re-use rights<sup>8</sup>. Beneficiaries must ensure that they or the authors retain sufficient intellectual property rights to comply with their open access requirements. Publishing costs can be considered as eligible costs provided that the publishing venue (e.g., journal, book) is fully open access.

In addition, beneficiaries of ERC grants funded under the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#) will be covered by the provisions on research data management as set out in the [Model Grant Agreement](#) used for ERC actions. In particular, whenever a project generates research data, beneficiaries are required to manage it in line with the principles of findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability as described by the FAIR principles initiative<sup>9</sup>, and establish a data management plan within the first six months of the project implementation. Open access to research data should be ensured under the principle ‘as open as possible, as closed as necessary’. These provisions are designed to facilitate access, re-use and preservation of the research data generated during the ERC funded research work.

## Funding

Synergy Grant can be up to a maximum of EUR 10 000 000 for a period of 6 years. For projects of shorter duration the maximum amount of the grant is reduced *pro rata*<sup>10</sup>.

However, additional funding up to EUR 4 000 000 can be requested to cover<sup>11</sup>:

- (a) ‘start-up’ costs for PIs moving to EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant and/or
- (b) the purchase of major equipment and/or
- (c) access to large facilities and/or
- (d) other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs.

Additional funding is not subject to *pro rata temporis* reduction for projects of shorter duration. All funding requested is assessed during evaluation.

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<sup>7</sup> This includes peer-reviewed book chapters and long-text publications such as monographs, edited collections, critical editions, scholarly exhibition catalogues, or PhD theses.

<sup>8</sup> For monographs and other long-text formats, commercial re-use and derivative works may be excluded.

<sup>9</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18>

<sup>10</sup> The maximum award is reduced *pro rata temporis* for projects of a shorter duration than 72 months (e.g. for a project of 60 months duration the maximum requested EU contribution allowed is EUR 8 333 333). Additional funding to cover major one-off costs is not subject to *pro-rata temporis* reduction for projects of shorter duration (e.g. with additional funding it is possible to request a maximum EU contribution of EUR 12 333 333 million for a project of 60 months duration).

<sup>11</sup> Additional funding costs of the main grants are a separate cost category in the [Model Grant Agreement](#) used for ERC actions.



The total requested grant should reflect a realistic estimation of the project needs and **should not be unnecessarily inflated to reach the maximum grant level**. The evaluation panels will review the requested grant and recommend the total amount to be awarded on the basis of the needs of the project. The panels may also suggest a modification to the indicative budgetary breakdown in the application but the PIs have the freedom to re-budget during the course of the project.

Eligible project costs will be reimbursed at a funding rate of 100% for direct costs plus a flat-rate of 25% for indirect costs<sup>12</sup>.

### **Research integrity**

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data<sup>13</sup> may result in the rejection of the proposal from the current call and in a possible restriction on submission of proposals to future calls, as provided in the relevant ERC Work Programme<sup>14</sup>. Please also note that a plagiarism detection software is used to analyse all submitted proposals in order to detect similar proposals submitted by different PIs. A procedure is in place to assess alleged or suspected cases of scientific misconduct.

## **1.2 ADMISSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY**

### **Admissible and eligible proposals**

All applications and the related supporting information are reviewed to ensure that all admissibility and eligibility criteria are met. All proposals must be complete, readable, and accessible. They must be submitted by eligible Principal Investigators before the relevant call deadlines. Please see [section 2.1](#) for an overview of a complete ERC proposal. Proposals which do not meet these criteria may be declared inadmissible. All scientific fields are eligible for ERC funding<sup>15</sup>.

The proposal's content should be related to the objectives of the ERC Synergy call and must meet all its admissibility and eligibility requirements, as defined in the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#). Where there is a doubt on the admissibility or eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a decision of the Responsible Authorising Officer following the opinion of the admissibility and eligibility review committee<sup>16</sup>. The fact that a proposal is evaluated in such circumstances does not constitute a proof of its admissibility or eligibility. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the admissibility and eligibility criteria has not been met (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will be declared inadmissible or ineligible and it will be rejected.

### **Host institution(s)/Principal Investigators**

ERC grants are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research activity in any EU Member State or AC. At any one time, one Principal Investigator per Synergy Grant Group, except the Corresponding PI, may be hosted and engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries<sup>17</sup> or an international organisation. Up to four Host institutions could engage Principal Investigator(s).

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<sup>12</sup> Excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting and internally invoiced goods and services.

<sup>13</sup> For example if (i) in the list of publications, the order of authors does not appear as indicated in the original publications; (ii) the written consent of the research collaborators mentioned in the proposal is not obtained by the call submission deadline

<sup>14</sup> See section 3.11 of the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#).

<sup>15</sup> Proposals on nuclear energy applications within the scope of Annex I to the Euratom Treaty shall be submitted to relevant calls under the [Euratom Framework Programme](#)

<sup>16</sup> For further information see applicable [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#) which can be found on the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#).

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, as established in Annex 3 - [ERC Work Programme 2024](#):

The corresponding Host Institution (cHI) and the other HIs must either be established in an EU Member State or an Associated Country - with the exception of the PI hosted and engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries - as a legal entity created under national law, or it may be an international European research organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), or any other entity created under EU law. International organisations with headquarters in an EU Member State or associated country will be deemed to be established in that Member State or Associated Country. Any type of legal entity, public or private, including universities, research organisations and undertakings can host Principal Investigators and their teams. To be eligible legal entities that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education institutions (including private research organisations and private higher education institutions) must have a gender equality plan (GEP) or an equivalent strategic document in place for the duration of the project. The gender equality plan or equivalent must fulfil the mandatory requirements listed in Annex 5 of the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#). The ERC welcomes applications from Principal Investigators hosted by private for-profit research centres, including industrial laboratories.

Normally the PI will be employed by the HI, but cases where, for duly justified reasons, the PI's employer cannot become the HI, or where the PI is self-employed, can be accommodated. The specific conditions of engagement will be subject to clarification and approval during the granting procedure or during the amendment procedure for a change of HI.

The cPI will be the administrative contact point for the cHI, other PIs as well as other HIs. The constitution of the research teams is flexible. Together, all the Principal Investigators have scientific responsibility for the group's project on behalf of the host institution or host institutions which are the applicant legal entities. 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. During the granting process, the financial capacity of applicant legal entities will be assessed, if required<sup>18</sup>.

In case of Synergy Grants, Principal Investigators may be hosted by more than one Host Institution, and each of the Host Institutions shall offer their support to the Principal Investigator(s) hosted by them for the duration of the grant. At submission stage, **each** Host Institution must provide the host support letter for their Principal Investigator(s). The Host Institutions must engage the Principal Investigators for at least the duration of the grant<sup>19</sup>. PIs do not need to be employed by the cHI or HI at the time when the proposal is submitted.

#### **Expected time commitment**

PIs will be expected to spend as a minimum 30% of their working time on the ERC project and a minimum of 50% of their working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country, with the exception of the PI hosted or engaged by an institution outside the European Union or Associated Countries, if any. For Principal Investigators hosted and engaged by international European research organisations, any time spent working for these organisations may count as working time spent in a

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- legal entities subject to EU restrictive measures are not eligible to participate in any capacity,
  - given the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the involvement of Belarus, there is currently no appropriate context allowing the implementation of the actions foreseen under ERC Work Programme 2024 with legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine.

<sup>18</sup> Applicants must have stable and sufficient resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects. The financial capacity of applicant legal entities will be verified in accordance with Article 198(5) of the Financial Regulation and Article 27 of the Horizon Europe Regulation. Applicants that are subject to the administrative sanction of exclusion or are in one of the exclusion situations set out in the [Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) ('the EU Financial Regulation') are banned from receiving EU grants and can NOT participate. Please see Articles 136 and 141 of the EU Financial Regulation, as well as important information on possible exclusion and registration of economic operators in the Commission's Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) on the final page of this Work Programme.

<sup>19</sup> [Model Grant Agreement](#) used for ERC actions.

Member State or an Associated Country for the purpose of the Principal Investigator's time commitment.

PIs shall ensure a sufficient time commitment and presence throughout the course of the project to guarantee its proper execution. The time commitment will be monitored, and in cases where the actual commitment is below the minimum levels set out above, or the levels indicated in the proposal, appropriate measures may be taken, up to and including reduction of the grant and suspension or termination of the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

It is also expected that PIs will be able to start their project within six months of receiving an invitation letter from the ERC.

### **Submission restrictions**

The ERC calls are highly competitive. Thousands of high quality proposals are received each year and only outstanding proposals are likely to be funded. To maintain the quality and integrity of the ERC's evaluation process, restrictions on applications have been put in place.

The following general restrictions apply:

- A researcher may participate as Principal Investigator<sup>20</sup> in only one main frontier research grant at any one time<sup>21</sup>;
- A researcher participating as Principal Investigator in one of the main frontier research grants may not submit another proposal for a main ERC grant, unless the existing project ends no more than two years after the call deadline<sup>22</sup> (i.e. before 8 November 2025 for Synergy applications);
- A Principal Investigator who is a serving Panel Member for a 2024 ERC call or who served as a Panel Member for a 2022 ERC call may not apply to a 2024 ERC call for the same type of grant (i.e. panel members who served in the SyG 2022 call cannot apply to the SyG 2024 call; while those who served in SyG 2023 can);
- If a Principal Investigator applies to more than one main ERC frontier research grant call published under the same [Work Programme 2024](#) (calls labelled with '2024'), only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated.

The year of an ERC call for proposals refers to the Work Programme under which the call was published and can be established by its call identifier (ERC-2024-SYG), it does not refer to a calendar year.

Additional restrictions are related to the outcome of the evaluation in previous calls (see table below). They are designed to allow unsuccessful PIs the time necessary to develop a stronger proposal. Inadmissible, ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against any of the restrictions listed below.

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<sup>20</sup> Including all Principal Investigators supported under the Synergy Grant.

<sup>21</sup> A new main frontier research grant project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous grant agreement for one of the main frontier research grants has ended.

<sup>22</sup> According to the duration of the project fixed in the previous grant agreement of the main frontier research grant.

Call to which the Principal Investigator applied under previous ERC Work Programmes and proposal evaluation outcome		2024 ERC calls to which a Principal Investigator is <u>not</u> eligible
2022 and 2023 Starting, Consolidator, Advanced Grant, Synergy Grant	Rejected on the grounds of a breach of research integrity	Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy Grant
2022 Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant	C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant
2022 and 2023 Synergy Grant	A, or B at Step 3	No restrictions
	B at Step 1 or 2	No restrictions
	C at Step 1	Synergy Grant
2023 Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant	A, or B at Step 2	No restrictions
	B, or C at Step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant

### 1.3 EVALUATION PROCESS

A single submission of the full proposal will be followed by a **three-step evaluation, including interviews**. The evaluation will be conducted by means of a structure of dedicated panels. The panels will be assisted by independent external experts working remotely. These ERC panels assess, score and flag the proposals on the basis of the individual evaluations and on the panel discussion which follows them.

The panels are not predefined at the beginning of the evaluation. The applicants apply to a single panel and all panel members belong in step 1 to this panel that covers all fields of science and scholarship. To facilitate the allocation of proposals to the right experts, the applicant corresponding PI has to **indicate between four and six fixed keywords**. These keywords are the same as the ones used in the ERC Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants and given in [Annex 4.1](#) of this guide. There is **no hierarchical order of the selected keywords**. The fixed keywords and free keywords and the abstract of the proposal are analysed together to ensure the best expertise for each proposal. It is the corresponding PI's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant keywords for the evaluation of the proposed research.

The composition of the panels at step 2 and step 3 is by nature multi-disciplinary to accommodate a proper evaluation of multidisciplinary and complex proposals. The allocation of the proposals to the various panels in step 2 and step 3 will be done by grouping proposals based on their research areas and the expertise of the panel members.

The names of the five panel chairs are published on the ERC website before the deadline of the call, while the names of panel members are published only after the evaluation process is concluded and the final results have been communicated to all applicants.

### **No Contact allowed with Peer Reviewers**

Please, note that in accordance with section 3.2 of the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#), any direct or indirect contact about the ERC peer review evaluation between an applicant legal entity or a PI submitting a proposal on behalf of an applicant legal entity, and any independent expert involved in the peer review evaluation under the same call, in view of attempting to influence the evaluation process, is strictly forbidden. Such contact can constitute an exclusion situation and, may result in the decision to reject the proposal concerned from the call in question (Article 141 of the Financial Regulation). In addition, any contact with Peer Reviewers to obtain confidential information on the evaluation process is not allowed. ERC Peer Reviewers are bound to confidentiality during the evaluation and afterwards. Hence, they are not allowed to communicate about the evaluation and/or specific proposal(s) with the principal investigators or potential team members or persons linked to them even after the completion of the evaluation process.

The corresponding PI on behalf of the group can request during the electronic proposal submission that up to four specific persons should not act as an evaluator in the evaluation of their proposal. The persons identified may be excluded from the evaluation of the proposal concerned, as long as it remains possible to have the proposal evaluated.

**Step 1:** The extended synopsis and the Principal Investigators' CV and Track Record will be assessed (Part B1 only, and not the full scientific proposal) by the whole pool of panel members in one panel from a generalist perspective. After a remote evaluation phase in which each proposal is reviewed by minimum three reviewers, the panel chairs and vice chairs meet to discuss all proposals submitted to the Synergy Grant call and to select those passing to step 2. Proposals will be retained for step 2 based on the outcome of the evaluation at step 1 and a budgetary cut-off level of up to seven times the panel's indicative budget. In this first step the panel's indicative budget corresponds to the entire call's budget of EUR 400 million for the Synergy 2024 call.

**Step 2:** The complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed (Parts B1 and B2). Five panels will be formed right after the step 1 filtering to ensure the best expertise using the whole pool of the step 1 panel members. External specialized reviews will complement the generalist reviews of the panel members. The five panels will have around 17 experts each (the orientation of the panels is roughly towards 2 Physical Sciences, 2 Life sciences, 1 Social sciences and humanities domains, these are all highly cross-disciplinary panels). At the end of the remote individual assessment the five panels meet to discuss jointly all proposals. Proposals will be retained for step 3 based on the outcome of the evaluation at step 2 and on a budgetary cut-off level of up to four times the panel's indicative budget. An indicative budget in step 2 is allocated to each panel in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals.

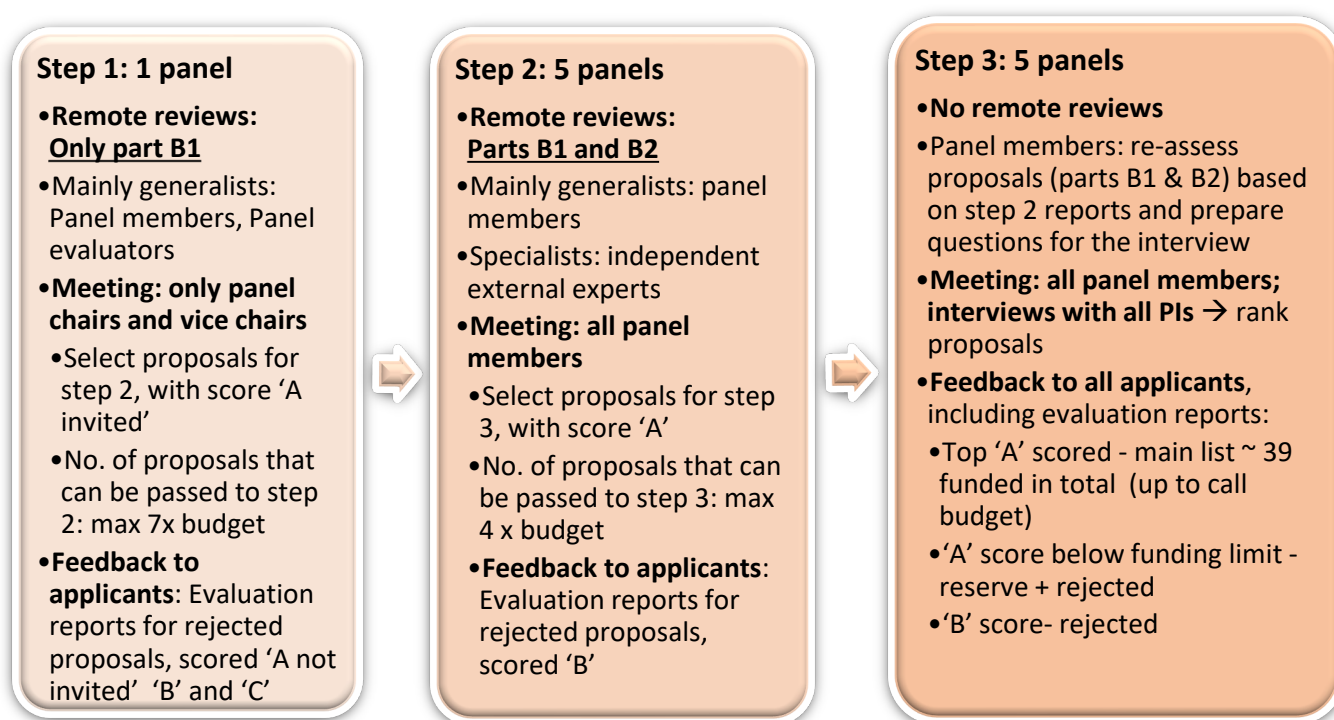
**Step 3:** Following the step 2 evaluation the applicants will receive an invitation letter detailing the format and the length of the interview. All Principal Investigators of the proposals selected for interviews will be invited to present their proposal to the interview panel. A minimum of three and a maximum of five panels would interview the applicants in parallel. The composition of the panels might be different from the panels at step 2. The interview panels may be reconfigured to ensure the best expertise for the proposals. The interview details will depend on the decision of the panels: interviews can last around 45 minutes in total. The panel may ask the applicants to give a 10-15 minute presentation on the proposed research project. The remaining time may be devoted to questions and answers on the scientific content and implementation of the project, modalities of collaboration among the Principal Investigators and the project's budget and resources. The presentation is an opportunity to elaborate on the synergies that the project aims to create. **The interviews are planned between 9 and 13 September 2024. Please check the ERC website for any changes.**

The resources requested by the applicants will be scrutinized and can be adjusted if not sufficiently justified. Projects recommended for funding will be funded by the ERC if sufficient funds are available. Proposals will be funded in priority order based on their rank.

**As a general rule, all Principal Investigators should take part in the interview.** Interviews are taking place in Brussels, in person<sup>23</sup>. In very exceptional cases, if a Principal Investigator from the group is unable to attend the interview (e.g. pregnancy, immobility due to illness, Covid-19 pandemic situation, out in research field work), two alternatives for a remote interview are offered: video-conference or telephone-conference.

Note that it is difficult to accommodate a preference for a particular day within the panel meeting week. The schedules of the interviews in all the panels are interconnected, which limits the possibility of any change.

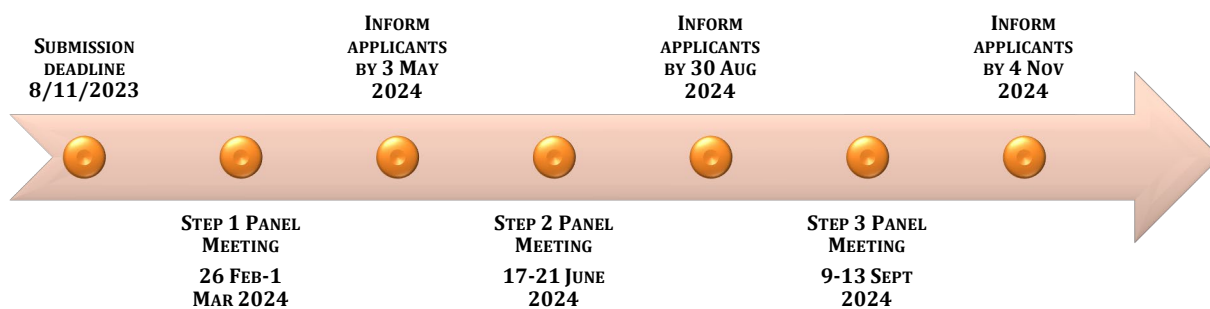
If experts are unable to attend the interview in person, subject to technical feasibility, they may participate in the panel meeting by electronic means (video-conferencing or telephone-conferencing).



**Figure 1** shows the schematic representation of the 2024 evaluation process. 'Panel Evaluator' is an ERC term used for panel members of the other ERC main frontier research calls reviewing ERC SyG proposals.

<sup>23</sup> The interview may be in physical presence in Brussels or virtual, through video- or teleconferencing systems. Please note that the ERC will reimburse the PI's travel expenditures for the interview in Brussels (see [Commission Decision C\(2007\) 5858](#)). Travel costs will be reimbursed upon presentation of the appropriate supporting documents. For travel >100 km, a flat rate will be paid to cover living expenses (including costs for overnight stay). Alternatives to interviews: For those candidates who are, in very exceptional cases, unable to attend the interviews in person in Brussels (pregnancy, immobility due to illness, out in research fieldwork), two alternatives may be offered: i) video-conferencing, ii) telephone-conferencing. Once invited for an interview, such candidates are requested to indicate in due time to ERCEA in case they need to have recourse to one of these options.

Should a planned interview not be possible for reasons beyond the control of the ERCEA, the panel will have to take its decision based on the information made available to it.



**Figure 2:** Timeline of the Synergy 2024 evaluation. The time to inform the applicants corresponds to indicative dates when the applicants receive the evaluation report. Successful applicants invited for step 3 interviews will receive their interview modalities at the end of July 2024.

In view of the confidentiality of the evaluation process, applicants invited to a step 3 interview should not share the identity of panel members within their scientific communities until their names have been published on the ERC website after the evaluation process is concluded and the final results have been communicated to all applicants.

### Outcome of evaluation and feedback to applicants

At each evaluation step, the reviewers will primarily evaluate the quality of the research project and in addition the Synergy group. The panels will mainly look into the ground-breaking nature, the synergetic aspects, ambition and feasibility of the research project; at the same time the intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment of the Principal Investigators also matters (see the evaluation criteria below). Following the timeline described above, the ERCEA provides feedback on the final decision of the evaluation through an 'Information letter' to the PIs and the Host Institutions (applicant legal entities) via the EU Login secured web-mail account accessible on the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#). Besides the information letter, an evaluation report will be provided to all PIs and all HIS' contact person(s). This indicates whether the proposal meets the quality threshold and is retained, and provides the score, ranking range and corresponding comment given by the panel as well as the comments given by the individual reviewers<sup>24</sup>.

Please note that the comments by the individual reviewers may not necessarily be convergent – controversy and differences of opinions about the merits of a scientific proposal are part of scientific debate and are legitimate.

If a proposal is resubmitted, note that the reviewers neither have access to the previous ERC proposal(s), nor to the earlier Evaluation Report(s). The proposal is assessed on its own merit in the context of the competition of the current call. Thus, the score received by the proposal submitted in a previous ERC call has no bearing on the current proposal and will neither be taken into account in the current evaluation nor will affect its outcome, as the two evaluations are independent from each other. Therefore, the result and the score of the current evaluation can be different from those in an earlier evaluation.

Furthermore, the ERC panel may take a position that is different from what could be inferred from the comments of the individual reviewers. This is the case for example, if the panel discussion reveals an important weakness in a proposal that had not been identified by the individual reviewers. The **panel comment** reflects the consensus decision taken by the panel as a whole based on prior remote

<sup>24</sup> The pre-defined responses related to the questions regarding the Principal Investigators can be the following: Outstanding/ Excellent/Very Good/Good/Non-competitive.

individual assessments from independent reviewers, which can be external remote referees as well as panel members, and on a thorough discussion as well as on the ranking against other proposals during the panel meeting.

At the end of each step the proposal will receive one of the following scores:

#### **Step 1**

**A Invited** - is of excellent quality and ranked sufficiently high to pass to step 2 of the evaluation

**A Not invited** – is of excellent quality but not ranked sufficiently high<sup>25</sup> to pass to step 2 of the evaluation

**B** - is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to step 2 of the evaluation<sup>26</sup>

**C** - is not of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation<sup>27</sup>

Only the applicants not retained for step 2 receive the evaluation results including an evaluation report.

#### **Step 2**

**A** - is of sufficient quality to pass to step 3 of the evaluation

**B** - is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to step 3 of the evaluation

Applicants who receive an A score are invited for an interview to present their project at the step 3 panel meeting. The rejected applicants will receive the evaluation results, including an evaluation report. The passed applicants will receive two notifications: the first one that they have passed to step 3 and a second one specifying the interview requirements.

#### **Step 3**

**A** - fully meets the ERC's excellence criterion and is recommended for funding if sufficient funds are available

**B** - meets some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded

The step 3 evaluation outcome is provided to all applicants through an information letter together with an evaluation report. It includes the final score, the panel ranking range of their proposal, the panel comment explaining the panel decision as well as the individual comments prepared by each reviewer in the remote phase of step 2.

After each peer review evaluation a report is prepared by the ERCEA services and made available to the Programme Committee. The report provides information on the proposals received, it includes names of Host Institutions and personal data i.e. names of applicant PIs, evaluation scores of proposals, ranked lists as well as panel comments and individual reviews. A subset of information is also made available to the National Contact Points (NCP). The NCP report provides the names of the Host Institution and personal data, i.e. the name of the applicant PIs, evaluation scores of the proposals and ranked lists. Applicants have different rights as regards the processing of their personal data<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> i.e. exceeds the maximum threshold of proposals, i.e. 7 times the call budget, that can be passed to step 2.

<sup>26</sup> The applicants may be subject to restrictions on submitting proposals to future ERC calls based on the outcome of the evaluation. Applicants will need to check the restrictions in place for each call in the following ERC Work Programme.

<sup>27</sup> The applicants may be subject to restrictions on submitting proposals to future ERC calls based on the outcome of the evaluation. Applicants will need to check the restrictions in place for each call in the following ERC Work Programme.

<sup>28</sup> Applicants have the right to access their personal data, the right to rectify them, if necessary, and/or to restrict its processing or erase them, if applicable. They are also entitled to object to the processing of their personal data, where applicable. If they would like to exercise their rights under the Regulation 2018/1725, if they have comments, questions or concerns, regarding the collection and use of their personal data, applicants are free to contact the ERCEA Controller at [ERCEA-B2-CALL-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERCEA-B2-CALL-COORDINATION@ec.europa.eu).



## Evaluation criterion and elements

Scientific excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation.

The panels will primarily evaluate the ground-breaking nature, ambition, and feasibility of the research project. At the same time, the panels will evaluate the intellectual capacity, creativity, and commitment of the Principal Investigator(s), with a focus on the extent to which the Principal Investigator(s) has the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project.

In the case of a Synergy Grant application, the peer reviewers will need to see that the collaborative working arrangements between the Principal Investigators, described as part of the research methodology, can ensure scientific excellence.

### 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)?*

##### *Scientific Approach*

- *To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the ground-breaking nature and ambition of the proposed research? (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 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 PIs provide evidence of creative and original thinking?*
- *To what extent do the PIs 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)*

## 1.4 ETHICS AND SECURITY

Every project funded or put on the reserve list by the ERC under Horizon Europe is subject to an ethics review process. The ethics review process is independent from the scientific evaluation.

**Please see Annex A to the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#) for a detailed description of the ERC Ethics Review procedure.**

The process is aimed at ensuring that all the research and innovation activities under Horizon Europe comply with ethics principles and relevant national, Union and international legislation, including the [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#) and the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) and its Supplementary Protocols.

The main areas that are addressed during the ethics review process include:

1. Human embryonic stem cells and human embryos
2. Human participants
3. Human cells/tissues
4. Personal data
5. Animals
6. Non-EU countries
7. Environment, health and safety
8. Artificial Intelligence

Other ethics issues may be identified as new ethical issues, or issues not fully covered by the above questions.

When submitting their proposal, applicants must complete the Ethics Issues Table as part of the submission form, provide an ethics self-assessment and if applicable, upload supporting documentation as separate annex(es). Please see the [How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment](#) document for guidance. In order to determine whether your proposal contains serious and complex ethics issues, please consult the [Guidelines on serious and complex ethics issues](#). For domain-specific guidance, please consult the documents available on the following link [Ethics guidance | ERC \(europa.eu\)](#).

It is important to provide a complete overview of all ethics issues during the submission phase in order to speed up the ethics review process (please also see section 2.2(4) of this guide for further details). Additional information or documents may be requested to the applicants to finalise the ethics review. Applicants should be aware that no grant agreement will be signed by ERCEA prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethics review procedure.

### **Security<sup>29</sup>**

The Security Review Procedure is managed by the Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME).

Its main scope is to ensure both that EU-funded research is conducted in line with applicable security rules and principles and that beneficiaries comply with applicable security rules, as established in national and EU law (in line with Article 20 of the [Horizon Europe Regulation](#)).

The procedure is designed to help applicants and their institutions to identify and manage possible security risks linked to three main aspects<sup>30</sup>:

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<sup>29</sup> Further guidance on tackling various security aspects and mitigating associated risks in research has been published by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation: Tackling R&I Foreign Interference: Staff Working Document, 2022 (<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/513746>).

- the generation and/or handling of classified information
  - the generation of knowledge, materials and technologies that could be channelled into activities that could pose a security threat for the EU and its Member States (misuse)
- the identification of research activities may involve information and/or materials subject to national security restrictions.

Under Horizon Europe applicants are requested to identify if the proposed activity will use and/or generate information which might raise security concerns. **When submitting their proposal, applicants must complete the security issues table** (section 4 of the online proposal submission form, please also see section 2.2(4) of this guide for further details) and provide, if applicable, supporting documentation (as separate annexes). For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage (For further information see Annex 4 to the [ERC WP 2024](#)).

## 1.5 MEANS OF REDRESS, ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

Please see the section 3.9 of the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#) for a detailed description of the admissibility, eligibility procedures, enquiries and complaints, and evaluation review procedures.

### Means of redress:

Upon receiving the information letter with the evaluation report or with the results of the admissibility and eligibility review, the corresponding PI and/or the corresponding HI (applicant legal entity) may request an admissibility, eligibility or evaluation review, if there is an indication that the results of the admissibility or eligibility checks were incorrect or that there has been a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment.

A request can be made if the PIs and/or the HIs consider that the applicable procedure has not been correctly applied to the proposal. The evaluation review procedure is not meant to call into question the scientific judgement made by the peer review panel. It will look into procedural shortcomings and – in rare cases – into factual errors.

The information letter will provide information for the cPI and/or the cHI on the means of redress and how to introduce the request. The letter will specify a deadline for the receipt of any such requests, which will be 30 calendar days from the date of receiving the information letter<sup>31</sup>. A formal notification is considered to have been accessed by the applicant 10 calendar days after sending, if not accessed before in the system<sup>32</sup>.

The request must be:

- related to the evaluation process, or admissibility/eligibility checks, for the call and grant in question;
- set out using the online form, including a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
- received within the time limit specified in the information letter;

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<sup>30</sup> For a detailed overview of how to handle security issues in Horizon Europe programmes please consult the guide [How to handle security-sensitive projects](#)

<sup>31</sup> Applicants of proposals selected for funding will normally not receive information on the means of redress in their information letter but if the applicant considers that there are grounds for such request, they can redress.

<sup>32</sup> Evaluation result letters are formal notifications. This means that deadlines triggered by these letters (evaluation review request, etc.) must be counted accordingly (i.e. access date + 1 day (event) + 30 days (deadline) OR sending date + 1 day (event) + 10 days (embargo period) + 30 days (deadline), if the letter was not accessed in the system.

- sent by the cPI and/or the cHI.

Requests that do not meet the above-mentioned conditions, or do not deal with the admissibility, eligibility or evaluation of a specific proposal, will not be admitted.

An acknowledgment of receipt will be sent no later than two weeks after the deadline for submitting the request indicating the estimated date of a final reply.

A redress committee may be convened to examine the request for the admissibility, eligibility or evaluation. The redress committee will bring together staff of the ERC Executive Agency with the requisite scientific, technical and legal expertise. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of the requests, based on all available information related to the proposal and its evaluation, and fair and equal treatment of all applicants.

In case of the evaluation review procedure, the committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report, the individual comments and examine the profile and expertise of the experts. The committee may also contact the panel chair/panel member(s) concerned. **The committee will not call into question the scientific judgement of appropriately qualified panels of experts.** In light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action to the Responsible Authorizing Officer (RAO) for the call. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

Please note that:

- a partial or total re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality of the assessment of a proposal
- the committee may uphold the initial outcome if it concludes that the errors identified would not substantially affect the outcome of the evaluation nor the ranking of the project
- the evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score
- only one request at the time for evaluation review per proposal will be considered by the committee
- all requests for evaluation review will be treated in confidence

#### **Other means of redress:**

The above procedure does not prevent the applicants from resorting to any other means of redress such as:

- requesting a legal review of the Agency decision under Article 22 of Council Regulation 58/2003<sup>33</sup> ('Article 22 request'), within 1 month of receiving the ERCEA's letter; or
- bringing an action for annulment under Article 263 of the TFEU<sup>34</sup> ('Article 263 action') against the Agency, within 2 months of receiving the ERCEA's letter

Applicants may choose which means of redress they wish to pursue<sup>35</sup>. Applicants are asked not to take more than one formal action at a time. Once the Agency/Commission communicates the final

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<sup>33</sup> [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 58/2003 of 19 December 2002 laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes](#), O J L 11, 16.01.2003, p.1.

<sup>34</sup> Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47–390).

<sup>35</sup> Even though applicants may freely choose which means of redress to pursue, first submitting a request for evaluation review will ensure that the applicants' case can be heard on all the above-mentioned possible instances.

decision on an action, applicants can take a further action against that decision. Deadlines for further action will start to run from when applicants receive the final decision<sup>36</sup>.

#### Other types of complaints on decisions affecting the involvement of applicants in the programme:

Any other complaint against a decision affecting the involvement of applicants in Horizon Europe shall be addressed to the Agency Director within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the communication of the Agency decision<sup>37</sup>.

## 1.6 QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CALL

Useful information can be found on the [ERC website](#) and more specifically on the pages dedicated to the [Synergy Grant Call](#).

An extended set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the ERC calls is available at the [ERC website](#). They can be filtered by calls or categories, and answers the most common questions for how to prepare and submit an ERC application.

A series of instructional videos giving information about the whole ERC application process, 'ERC classes' (drafting the proposal, its evaluation steps and PI's interview) is available on the [funding](#) page of the ERC website.

For additional questions related to the call, please contact the relevant Call coordination team:

[ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu)

For questions related to the compilation of the Ethics issues of the proposal, please contact the Ethics Support team: [ERC-ETHICS-REVIEW@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-ETHICS-REVIEW@ec.europa.eu)

For questions on open access to scientific publications and research data management, please see the section on Open Science in the [Model Grant Agreement](#) used for ERC actions or contact [ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu).

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<sup>36</sup> Please be aware that, as per Article 22 of Regulation 58/2003, reaching a final decision on an Article 22 request may generally take more than 30 days. Therefore, if you first file an Article 22 request you may not be able afterwards to submit an evaluation review request within the 30 days deadline. Please note as well that applicants of proposals included on the reserve list may not file an Article 22 request because their information letter does NOT constitute a final position concerning funding.

<sup>37</sup> A formal notification that has not been accessed within 10 calendar days after sending is considered to have been accessed by the applicant.

## 2. COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

**A single submission deadline for ERC-2024-SYG is planned for:**

**8 November 2023, 17:00.00 (Brussels local time)**

Please note that the planned submission deadline could be modified after the publication of the call. You are therefore invited to periodically consult the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities](#) where any modifications of the submission deadline is indicated.

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF AN ERC APPLICATION

An ERC application is composed of

- The administrative form (Part A)
- The research proposal (Parts B1 and B2)
- Supporting documentation (HI support letter(s) and ethics and security issues)

### 2.2 THE ADMINISTRATIVE FORM

The submission form is accessed via the call submission link in the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities](#). The electronic form has 5 sections (approximately 20 pages in total), which need to be completed before a submission can take place. Many fields are mandatory and specific to the ERC calls and we therefore advise to create a draft proposal well in advance of the submission deadline. **All mandatory fields are marked in red if left empty. Failure to fill in any mandatory field will block submission.**

**1 – ‘General Information’ section** contains information about the research proposal, including the project duration, title, acronym and abstract. Furthermore, in this section you will select four to six ERC keywords as listed in [Annex 4.1](#) that you believe best fit your scientific proposal. **There is no hierarchical order of the selected keywords and they are not linked to predefined panels, i.e. keyword 1 is equally weighted with keywords 2 to 6. The keywords are used to best allocate proposals to experts.** The abstract should provide a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as a short description of your research proposal in the evaluation process. Please note that in case your proposal is funded this abstract will be published. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information. This section also contains general declarations related to the proposal and participation in Horizon Europe<sup>38</sup>. The declarations have to be filled in by the Principal Investigator on behalf of the Host Institution and ‘We’ has to be understood as both ‘the Principal Investigator’ and ‘the Host Institution’.

**2 – ‘Participants’ section** contains information about the PIs and the HIs. Separate sections will appear for each Principal Investigator and beneficiary. The name and e-mail of contact persons including the PIs and HIs contacts are **read-only in the forms**. To give access rights to the proposal and change contact persons, the form needs to be closed and the guidance of the online submission system to be followed. Further details such as ORCID number, researcher ID, other ID, last name at birth, gender, nationality etc., should be provided for the PIs as well as the address and telephone number of each contact person. The PI’s mobile number is an essential information for the Step 3 interview logistics.

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<sup>38</sup> Please note that the ERCEA may at any time during the evaluation process request the applicants to provide the written consent mentioned in the declarations. These consents should not be submitted with the application, but the applicant must ensure the written consent from all participants prior to the call submission deadline.

- **Gender Equality Plan (GEP):** ‘yes/no’ tick box question to be filled in by the corresponding HI contact person. Only Public bodies, Higher education institutions and Research organisations in EU/AC countries must answer this question. This answer will not affect the evaluation of the proposal. In case the proposal is selected for funding, at the latest by the Grant Agreement signature, the HI must have a Gender Equality Plan or an equivalent strategic document in place for the duration of the project. The GEP or equivalent must fulfil the mandatory requirements<sup>39</sup> listed in Annex 5 of the [Work Programme 2024](#) and will be necessary before the signature of the grant agreement.

- Person in charge of the proposal (Principal Investigators): on this page there is a field on the ‘career stage’ of the PIs. This information will not be provided to the evaluators and it will not be evaluated. The field on the career stages refers to the ones defined in Frascati 2015 manual (see below). Please choose the appropriate option:

Category A – Top grade researcher: the single highest grade/post at which research is normally conducted. Example: ‘Full professor’ or ‘Director of research’.

Category B – Senior researcher: Researchers working in positions not as senior as top position but more senior than newly qualified doctoral graduates (IsCED level 8). Examples: ‘associate professor’ or ‘senior researcher’ or ‘principal investigator’.

Category C – Recognised researcher: the first grade/post into which a newly qualified doctoral graduate would normally be recruited. Examples: ‘assistant professor’, ‘investigator’ or ‘post-doctoral fellow’.

Category D – First stage researcher: Either doctoral students at the IsCED level 8 who are engaged as researchers, or researchers working in posts that do not normally require a doctorate degree. Examples: ‘PhD students’ or ‘junior researchers’ (without a PhD).

**3 – ‘Budget’** contains a summary of the total estimated project costs and the requested EU contribution for the project. The costs are given in whole Euros (not kilo Euros). **The figures in the Administrative section of the proposal should match the corresponding figures in the detailed Part B2 budget table. Make sure that the calculations in the budget table in Part B2 are correct.** Note that in the administrative form the budget lines appear by beneficiary organisation. Only in part B2 it is possible to detail the budget for each PI. As the project costs and the ERC contribution request is specified both in the Administrative form and in Part B2, please make sure that the figures in both places are aligned. Please refer to [section 2.3](#) below for further instruction on how to draw up the budget. **Please ensure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros.**

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<sup>39</sup> A Gender Equality Plan of an Applicant Legal Entity must cover the following minimum process-related requirements:

- Publication: formal document published on the institution’s website and signed by the top management
- Dedicated resources: commitment of resources and gender expertise to implement it
- Data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students for institutions concerned) and annual reporting based on indicators
- Training: Awareness raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers

Content-wise, recommended areas to be covered and addressed via concrete measures and targets are the following:

- 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

Other strategic documents such as a development plan, an inclusion strategy or a diversity strategy are considered as equivalent if they meet the requirements listed above.

**4 – ‘Ethics and security’ section** consists of the ethics issues table, and the security issues table. **The ethics issues table** serves to identify any ethical aspects of the proposed work. This table has to be completed even if there are no issues (simply confirm that none of the ethical issues applies to the proposal). Please note that, in case you answer YES to any of the questions, you are requested to provide an Ethics Self-Assessment and additional ethics documentation, if applicable, as detailed in the [Ethics Self-assessment step by step](#). Please refer to [section 1.4](#) for further details.

**The security issues table** serves to identify if the proposed activity will use and/or generate information which might raise security concerns. The table provided has to be completed by answering YES or NO to all questions. Where necessary and applicable, you are requested to provide available documentation as annexes. For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage.

**5 – ‘Other questions’ section** contains information on the academic training (collected for statistical purposes only) as well as declarations related to eligibility and expected working time in EU or an AC. Each SyG PI is expected to commit as a minimum 50% of their working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country, with the exception of the PI hosted by an HI outside of these countries. This information will be provided to the experts at Step 2 and 3.

The ‘Other questions’ section also contains permission statements on sharing evaluation data. These data-related consents are entirely voluntary.

**The applicant corresponding PI will have to declare that they have the written consent of all participants on their involvement and the content of their proposal, as well as of any researcher mentioned in the proposal on their participation in the project** (either as team member, collaborator, other PIs or member of the advisory board). Please note that the ERCEA may request the applicant corresponding PI at any time during the evaluation, to provide proof of the written consent obtained prior to the call submission deadline. As established in section 3.3 of the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#), and specified in the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#) applicant PIs may identify up to four specific persons to be excluded from the evaluation of their proposal.

## 2.3 THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal (Part B) consists of Part B1 and Part B2. The templates are provided in the submission system and their use is **strongly recommended**. Each proposal page **shall** carry a **header** presenting the **corresponding PI's last name**, the **acronym of the proposal**, and the reference to the respective proposal section (**Part B1** or **Part B2**).

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

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

In fairness to all applicants, the **page limits will be strictly applied**. Only the material that is presented within these limits will be evaluated. Peer reviewers will only be asked to read the material presented within the page limits, and will be under no obligation to read beyond them.

The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. Please note that accordingly, the evaluation reports will be available in English only. If the proposal is not in English, the ERCEA will provide the evaluation panel with a raw machine translation version of the proposal. Such a translated version will not be verified by the ERCEA. An English translation of the abstract must be included in the proposal.



Please be aware that at **step 1 of the evaluation only Part B1** is evaluated by the panel members, while **at step 2 and 3 both Parts B1 and B2 are evaluated**. The Resources and Time Commitment section, as an integral section of Part B2 is evaluated only if the proposal passes to step 2 and 3.

When drafting Part B1, PIs should pay particular attention to the extended synopsis and should not consider it as simply complementing Part B2. It is important that the extended synopsis contains all relevant information including the **feasibility of the scientific proposal and synergetic aspects**, since the panel will only evaluate Part B1 at step 1, without access to Part B2. Be familiar with the evaluation criteria and be aware that reviewers answer a set of questions in all steps, thus the relevant information should already be present in part B1. Additional criteria complement the step 1 questions and will be addressed only if the proposal passes to step 2, thus consider carefully in which part you include the relevant information.

**The panel members are asked to act as generalists when evaluating the proposals.** Thus, their expertise will have to cover a wide range of proposals within a research field. For this reason and the fact that panel members evaluate only Part B1 at step 1, PIs should ensure that Part B1 is as complete and detailed as possible. In addition to the panel members, the ERC evaluations rely on input from external reviewers (remote referees) if the proposal passes to the next step. They are scientists and scholars who bring in the necessary specialised expertise. Remote referees work remotely and deliver their individual assessments by electronic means. They do not participate in panel meetings and their involvement is limited to step 2 of the evaluation process.

## Part B1

### Cover page:

Proposal full title

Proposal short name (acronym)

Name of the corresponding PI (cPI)

Name of the corresponding Host institution (cHI)

List of the other participating PIs, indicating their respective Host Institutions

Proposal duration in months

Proposal abstract (half page, must be a copy/paste of the abstract from the administrative form section 1)

### The Research Proposal: Part B1 – section a, b and c:

**a. *Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal (max. 5 pages) - References to literature should be included; they do not count towards the page limits.***

The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to the ground-breaking nature of the research project and the feasibility of the outlined scientific approach. Describe the proposed work in the context of the state of the art of the field. **It is important that this extended synopsis contains all relevant information including some details about combination of the scientific approaches to be able to assess the feasibility of the scientific proposal and the know-how of the group since the panel will only evaluate Part B1 at step 1.**

### The Principal Investigators

The evaluation experts will be instructed to evaluate each PI considering their profiles, as relevant to their career stage. The group is evaluated as a whole.

Relevant profiles for various career stages

A Principal Investigator in the approximate career stage of a Starting Grant should have already shown evidence of the potential for research independence, for example by having produced at least one important publication as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor.

A Principal Investigator in the approximate career stage of a Consolidator Grant should have already shown evidence of research independence.

A Principal Investigator in the approximate career stage of an Advanced Grant is expected to be an active researcher and to have a track record of significant research achievements.

**b. Curriculum Vitae and Track Record (max. 4 pages for each PI):**

The CVs of each PI should include personal details, education, key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions (max. 1 page), and the remaining 3 pages should contain a list of up to ten research outputs that demonstrate how the applicant has advanced knowledge in their field with an emphasis on more recent achievements and a list of selected examples of significant peer recognition; a short explanation of the significance of the selected outputs, the role of the applicant in producing each of them, and how they demonstrate the applicant's capacity to successfully carry out their proposed project may be included, as well as a short explanation of the importance of the listed examples of significant peer recognition.

The applicant may also include relevant additional information on career breaks, diverse career paths, and life events<sup>40</sup>, as well as any particularly noteworthy contributions to the research community. These will provide context to the evaluation panels when assessing the Principal Investigator's research achievements and peer recognition in relation to their career stage.

Please follow the CV and Track record template found in the part B1 template that can be downloaded from the submission system on the EU Funding.

**Part B2 sections a, b and c (Scientific proposal: max. 15 pages. References should be included – they do not count towards the page limit). Section c. 'Resources and time commitment' are not limited to 2 pages and do not count towards the page limit.**

**This part of the proposal (part B2) is evaluated only in step 2 and step 3 of the peer review evaluation.**

Please use the Word-template provided online in the EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal Submission Page for the call.

Describe in more detail the scientific, technical, and/or scholarly aspects of the project demonstrating the ground-breaking nature of the research, its potential impact and research methodology. Describe the significant synergies, complementarity and added value of the group beyond the current work of the PIs to enable it to jointly achieve the project's objectives. At step 2 and 3 of the evaluation process Part B2 is evaluated together with Part B1. Consider carefully what you are repeating or expanding in Part B2.

**a. State of the art and objectives**

Specify clearly the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state of the art in the field. When describing the envisaged research it should be indicated how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi - or inter-disciplinary aspects.

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<sup>40</sup> In the context of the Covid-19 outbreak, any specific situation caused by the pandemic with a negative impact on the Curriculum Vitae and Track Record should be mentioned under this element.

## **b. Methodology**

Describe the proposed methodology and working arrangements in detail including, as appropriate, key intermediate goals. Include elements specifying why the combination of the skills, knowledge, expertise etc. brought together by the PIs is crucial to the execution of the work. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state of the art. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning. In case it is proposed that team members engaged by other organisations than the Host Institution(s) participate in the project, their participation has to be fully justified. This should be done emphasizing the scientific added value they bring to the project. The research methodology section should also describe and justify the collaborative arrangements enabling the Synergy Grant group to carry out the proposed joint work.

**c. Resources and time commitment** (incl. project costs) – this section does not count towards the page limit.

**It is strongly recommended to describe adequately the resources needed for each PI and to use the budget table template included in Part B2** to facilitate the assessment of resources by the panels. For detailed information on eligible- and non-eligible direct and indirect costs as well as the different cost categories applicants should consult the [Model Grant Agreement](#) used for ERC actions. Please **use whole euro integers** only when preparing the budget table.

State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. **The resources requested should be reasonable and fully justified in the proposal.** The requested grant should be in proportion to the actual needs to fulfil the objectives of the project.

Specify briefly the time commitment each PI is willing to devote to the proposed project. Please note that each PI is expected to devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project.

Describe the size and nature of the Synergy group, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles. The participation of team members engaged by another institution should be justified in relation to the additional financial cost this may impose to the project. Take into account the percentage of each PI's dedicated time to run the ERC funded activity when calculating the personnel costs.

Specify any existing resources that will be used in the project. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. It is advisable to include a short technical description of the equipment requested, a justification of its need as well as the intensity of its planned use. When estimating the costs for travel, please also consider participation of the PIs and team members in conferences and dissemination events.

Include a realistic estimation of the costs for Open Access for project outputs. Costs for providing immediate Open Access to publications (article processing charges/book processing charges) are eligible if they are incurred during the lifetime of the project.

Describe any additional funding requested for the project. It needs to be indicated in the budget table and well justified for the successful implementation of the project. Describe any existing resources not requiring EU funding that will be used for the project, such as infrastructure and equipment.

When drafting the budget, it is highly advisable to consider the need for each item/resource that should be charged to the project and to make a realistic estimation of the amount needed. In addition, costs related to data management are also eligible. Therefore, the ERC recommends that all funded researchers follow best practice by retaining files of research data produced and used, and are prepared to share these data with other researchers when not bound by copyright restrictions, confidentiality requirements, or contractual clauses. Costs related to data management can also be eligible.

**Budget table.** Please use the budget table template provided in part B2 form. The ERC funds up to 100% of the total eligible costs. **The costs are given for the full project duration<sup>41</sup>.** Each PI is required to fill in their budget breakdown. Include the direct costs of the project plus a flat-rate financing of indirect costs calculated as 25% of the total eligible direct cost. Furthermore, include a breakdown of the budget subdivided in personnel costs, travel, equipment, consumables, publication costs (including any costs related to Open Access), other direct costs, internally invoiced goods and services and any envisaged subcontracting costs.

If additional funding<sup>42</sup>, above the normal (EUR 10 000 000), is requested for (a) covering eligible 'start-up' costs for a PI moving from another country to an EU Member State or an Associated Country as a consequence of receiving an ERC grant and/or (b) the purchase of major equipment and/or (c) access to large facilities and/or (d) other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs, then this also needs to be fully justified. Please note that any additional funding request under (a), (b) or (d) may be subject to 25% overhead. Normally, if they are costs for subcontracting or internal invoices, they do not include overheads. Include the additional costs in the budget tables as well. Additional funding is meant to cover relatively large costs that would exceed the normal grant maximum. Any cost requested under additional funding must be necessary for the implementation of the proposed research activities.

Please note that for relocation costs under (a) 'start-up' costs category, the cost of the PI's one-way ticket to EU or AC country may be requested, only if in line with the normal practice and the accounting policy of the host institution, and within the duration of the project; other personal costs (e.g. tickets of family members and all relocation costs related to them) incurred because of moving to the EU or AC cannot be claimed on the grant.

Purchases of equipment, infrastructure, or other assets used for the action must be declared as depreciation costs. Moreover, an applicant can request to include in the Grant Agreement equipment, infrastructure or other assets purchased specifically for the action (or developed as part of the action tasks) that may exceptionally be declared as full capitalised costs<sup>43</sup>. These items should be clearly listed and justified in the proposal.

The costs are given for the full duration. A breakdown by reporting period is not requested for the evaluation process. The 'Total Eligible Costs' as well as the 'Requested EU contribution' figures in the table should be equal to those inserted in the online proposal submission forms (section 3 – Budget). In case the total costs differ from the requested grant, it should be specified in the proposal what exactly is funded from other sources.

**The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully; unjustified budgets will be consequently reduced. With the exception of clear mistakes (detected cases of obvious clerical error<sup>44</sup>), in case of inconsistencies between the amounts in the budget table in part B2 and the amounts in the administrative form A, the figures entered in form A will prevail.**

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<sup>41</sup> The maximum award is reduced pro rata *temporis* for projects of a shorter duration than 72 months (e.g. for a project of 60 months duration the maximum requested EU contribution allowed is EUR 8 333 333). Additional funding to cover major one-off costs is not subject to pro-rata *temporis* reduction for projects of shorter duration (e.g. with additional funding it is possible to request a maximum EU contribution of EUR 12 333 333 million for a project of 60 months duration).

<sup>42</sup> Additional funding costs of ERC frontier research grants are a separate cost category in the Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions. These costs will be eligible if they fulfil the eligibility conditions set out in the Model Grant Agreement for this cost category, if they are incurred for the activities and objectives for which the additional funding may be awarded, and if they are in line with the specific eligibility conditions for the other relevant cost categories as set out in the Model Grant Agreement (e.g. costs related to a purchase of major equipment must also fulfil the specific eligibility conditions for the cost category for "Equipment").

<sup>43</sup> Where needed for the viability of the action (including its financial viability), and recorded under a fixed asset account of the beneficiary in compliance with international accounting standards and the beneficiary's usual cost accounting practices

<sup>44</sup> See Articles 151 and 200.3 of the Financial Regulation and section 2.3 of [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#).

**Appendix.** Please also include a succinct "funding ID" which must specify any current research grants and their subject, and any on-going application for work related to the proposal<sup>45</sup>- this section does not count towards the page limit.

For more information on eligible and non-eligible direct and indirect costs as well as the different cost categories, applicants should consult the [Model Grant Agreement](#) and the [Horizon Europe Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

## 2.4 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically in PDF format (they do not count towards the page limits):

- **Host Institution support letter(s):** Each Host Institution (applicant legal entity) must confirm its association with and its support to the project and the Principal Investigator(s) it intends to host. As part of the application each Host Institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence are already fulfilled or will be provided to their PIs, if the application is successful. The Host Institution support letter (template available in the submission system or please see [Annex 4.2](#) to this document) needs to be completed with the official letterhead of the HI. If it is printed, it must be blue-ink signed, stamped and dated by the institution's legal representative. In case it is digitally signed there is no need to stamp it. A PDF version must be uploaded in the submission system. **Proposals that do not include this institutional statement may be declared inadmissible.**
- Documents related to the **ethics** issues (i.e. supporting documentation). Where necessary, applicant PIs shall provide any available documentation, such as: (a) favourable opinion(s) of the relevant ethics committee(s); (b) the regulatory approval(s) or authorization(s) of the competent national or local authority(ies) in the country in which the research is to be carried out; (c) templates of information sheets and informed consent forms, etc. The supporting documentation must be provided to the ERCEA at the latest during the ethics review. If such documentation is available and provided with the application at submission stage, it may help speed up the ethics review process following evaluation. **Please note that the ethics self-assessment is now included in section 4 of the online proposal submission form.**
- Documents related to the **security** issues (i.e. supporting documentation). Where necessary, the applicant PIs shall provide available documentation at submission stage. For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage. **Please note that the ethics self-assessment is now included in section 4 of the online proposal submission form.**

Copies of official documents can be submitted in any of the EU official languages. **Document(s) in any other language must be provided together with a certified translation into English or in any other official EU language.**

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<sup>45</sup> References and the funding ID section are not counted towards these page limits.

Please provide only the documents requested above. Unless specified in the call, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material, and any other documents (company brochures, support letters, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) will be disregarded. **Experts will not have access to any supporting documentation during the evaluation. They will have access only to parts B1 and B2.**

**All annexes, i.e. the host institution support letter(s) and, where relevant, documentation already available related to ethics and security issues should be provided and uploaded as separate pdf documents. They do not count towards the maximum page limits of the proposal.**

## 3. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

### 3.1 IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Regularly consult the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#) call page for updated information on the call.
- Make sure that the personal information added in the Submission Form is accurate as this information is used to personalise the communications to applicants and the Evaluation Reports.
- In case of technical problems with the submission system please contact [EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu) or get in touch with the **IT Helpdesk** directly on **+32 (2) 29 92222** to receive immediate assistance.
- Registration and submission via the F&T Portal submission system should be done as early as possible and well in advance of the call deadline. Applicants, who wait until shortly before the closing of the call to start uploading their proposal, take a serious risk that the uploading will not be concluded in time and that their submission will fail.
- Only the person creating the draft proposal will have the right to manage the access rights of other people to the proposal and will be able to modify any parts of the proposal and to submit it, whereas the other contacts will only be able to edit the parts related to their personal data.
- Be aware that only one person should work on the forms at any given time. If two persons work on the forms at the same time, in case of a save conflict, the last save wins, which means that you risk overwriting changes made by another person if you are working in parallel. We therefore recommend that you give 'read-only' access to your fellow PIs/partners/additional contact persons (other contacts) unless it is absolutely necessary to grant full access. Remember that the Main Host Institution contact person has full access – it is not possible to grant them 'read-only access'.
- Up to the call deadline it is possible to re-edit, download or withdraw a proposal. **ONLY the last updated version of your proposal submitted before the deadline will be evaluated;** no later version can be accepted and no earlier version can be recovered from the submission system. Once the deadline has passed, no further additions, corrections or resubmissions are accepted. However, a read-only access to the submitted proposal is available for 90 days after the call deadline.
- **Submit your proposal as early as possible** (at least 48 hours prior to the deadline of the call) to avoid being confronted with last minute issues shortly before the call deadline. There is no reason in delaying the submission for confidentiality concerns as the system does not allow any access to the proposals before call deadline (other than to selected data that is part of the Submission and Evaluation of Proposals Assent Disclaimer).
- In some rare occasions the proposal may be altered while being converted into a PDF file. Before uploading the file, please check that everything is correct. Additionally, please download and verify all uploaded files in due time before the submission deadline.

Submission is deemed to occur only if the submission sequence described in point 3.2 below has been followed and not when the applicant starts uploading the proposal.

## 3.2 HOW TO APPLY

ERC grant applications can only be submitted in response to a 'call for proposals' and only via the Electronic Submission Service. Calls announced in the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#) are published on the [ERC website](#), the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#).

### Data Protection notice

All [legal notices](#) are accessible on the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#).

The Privacy Statement on 'Grant management and registration/validation of participants' relevant to this document is available [here](#).

### USER GUIDANCE

- proposals must be submitted electronically using the electronic submission system of the web-based EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal (F&T Portal)<sup>46</sup>;
- the [user guide](#) of the Submission Service is available online;
- the [IT HOW TO](#) wiki site provides an online manual with screenshots;
- the EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal - [Online Manual](#) describes the standard process of proposal submission.



### Step 1 and 2 – Logging in and Selecting a Topic

To be able to create and submit a proposal and, in general to login to the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#), first [register an EU Login account](#)<sup>47</sup> (Step 1). Each time you access the proposal for editing, this user ID (EU Login) is requested. The same user ID is used for all later interactions with the ERCEA, including notification of the results of the evaluation<sup>48</sup>. Under the 'Search' function, you may search for ERC-2024-SYG (Step 2). Soon after the opening of the call, you will be able to access the Electronic Submission page. The 'Start Submission' button is available under the 'Start submission' section of the call. You will need to select HORIZON ERC Grants to open the submission page. When you click 'Start Submission' and confirm your choice, you will move to the next step: Step 3 – Create a Draft proposal.

### Step 3 – Create a draft proposal

At this step, you fill in pre-registration data for the proposal. These details will be used by the ERCEA in order to plan the evaluation. You will not have access to this page again once it is completed and you have progressed to Step 4, but certain data, such as Acronym and Short Summary (abstract) can

<sup>46</sup> In duly justified exceptional circumstances the ERCEA may authorise submission by other means than the electronic submission system.

<sup>47</sup> Further details are available here: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/eim/external/help.cgi>

<sup>48</sup>Tutorial page: 'How to sign in to the EU Login system?', <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cpnp/public/ecas-signup.cfm>



be modified at a later stage (at step 5, when editing the administrative form). **Be careful to choose the correct Participant Identification Code (PIC) number for your corresponding Host Institution.** An [online tool](#) is available to search for existing PICs and the related organisations. Organisations not yet having a PIC must self-register (via the same page) before starting the application process.

When registering, please select carefully the type of contact person you are:

Corresponding Principal Investigator, Main Administrative Contact person, Principal Investigator or Contact person (e.g. additional contact person or team-member) can be chosen.

**We advise that either the corresponding Principal Investigator or the Main Administrative contact person (the administrative person on behalf of the corresponding Host Institution) start creating a proposal.**

**Your Role**

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Please indicate your role in this proposal

Corresponding Principal Investigator

Main Administrative contact person

Principal Investigator

Contact person

**The person who starts drafting the proposal will have an influence on the subsequent steps. Only that person will have the right to manage the access rights of other people to the proposal at the following step. The person who creates the proposal will have the 'coordinating' role, and alongside other people at the corresponding Host Institution with a designated coordinating role, will be able to modify any parts of the proposal and to submit it. Further contacts or PIs at other Host Institution will only be able to edit the parts related to their personal data or their Host Institution (have 'full access' rights to their parts).**

#### **Step 4 – Participants - Manage your related partners and/or edit contact details**

Here you define the Host Institutions and, if applicable, you may add additional partner organisations. After defining a Host Institution by clicking on the 'Add contact +' button, you identify the Principal Investigators linked to it and the administrative contact person(s). You can see the name and details of the corresponding Host Institution (always participant number '1') and the name of the person who created the draft proposal. At this step, you can:

- **add the Main administrative contact person name** (for the corresponding Host Institution) **or the corresponding Principal Investigator** (if not done yet) **and e-mail**;
- **add further Principal Investigators hosted at the corresponding HI** (full access or read-only access);
- **add further Principal Investigators hosted at other Host Institutions**;
- **give access to one or more 'Contact person(s)'** (full access or read-only access);
- **add additional organisations** ('Add Partner Organisations (no PI)': to add team members hosted in other organisations than the Host Institutions.

**Note that only one PI can apply with a Host Institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries. No such restrictions apply to partner organisations hosting additional team members. A partner organisation hosts only additional team members not belonging to a HI, a PI should not be added as a contact.**

**Be careful to type the correct e-mail address of the PIs and all contact persons at this step.** Please note that if the Principal Investigator and the administrative contact person **is the same person** (e.g. because the PI is self-employed), you must use two different e-mail addresses as the system does not allow two identical e-mail addresses to be entered.

**Organisations** must be identified by their nine-digit PIC numbers. A search function is provided in the system to facilitate the search for partners (if any). If you realise that you have made a mistake in selecting the organisation, you can use the 'Change Organisation' button.

For each contact person the **role within the project** must be defined. When giving access rights to **contact persons**, the e-mail address of the person serves as the main identifier. You must define the level of access rights for each contact person:

- **Coordinator contact (full access):** corresponding Principal Investigator level of rights is named 'Coordinator contact' in submission system. The Coordinator contact/cPI, the Main administrative contact of the corresponding HI or another PI with full access at the corresponding HI has the right to edit all parts of the proposal, upload documents, submit, and withdraw the proposal.
- **Participant contact (full access):** PIs at other HIs and their administrative contacts have full access to their parts, but have only read-only rights to other institutions parts, and cannot submit the proposal.
- **Team member (read-only rights):** The persons identified with read-only rights cannot edit or submit the proposal.


For the Principal Investigators and the Host Institution contact persons' full details will be required later in the administrative forms (section 2). **Please be aware that you MUST enter the details of the PIs and the Host Institution contact persons at the 'Participants' step before going further, since these fields are not-editable in the following step in the forms.** You may at any point return to the 'Participants' step of the submission to add or delete any contact person or to change the access rights. If you have made an error in adding a person/contact to an organisation, first delete the person from the unwanted entry, save it and only afterwards enter the name in the contact details of the wanted organisation. **Remember to save your data before leaving this step otherwise you will be prevented from submitting the proposal.**

You may also add the LEAR as a contact person (e.g. as a team member with read-only rights) to the proposal at the 'Participant' step of the application.

Once the coordinator (cPI or cHI main administrative contact) saves the changes, an **automatic invitation** is sent to all contacts' e-mail addresses. The invited persons can **access the proposal** after logging in to the F & T Portal - with the EU Login account linked to the given e-mail address – under the 'My Proposals' tab. **In case you encounter difficulties, please contact the submission system's Service Desk at [EC-SEP-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EC-SEP-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu) or +32 (2) 29 92222.**

## **Step 5 – Proposal forms - Edit and complete the proposal**

This step is the core of the submission process, as from this step, you **can edit the online administrative proposal submission forms**, view the history, print the draft proposal, **download templates, upload files** and **submit** the proposal by clicking on the relevant buttons.

Guidance on how to fill in the administrative forms is provided directly in the form as ghost text for the single entries or as additional help text hidden behind question-mark: . Some parts of the form will be prefilled based on the data entered at pre-registration or in the Beneficiary Register.

Please use the functionality 'Validate form' button to check the validity and completeness of your data. Any warning or error will be listed at the end of the validated form. **If one or several mandatory fields are not filled, it will prevent you from submitting your proposal.**

Further information on the preparation of the application (the online administrative forms and Proposal Parts B1 and B2) is given in sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this document.

- **All files must be uploaded in the submission system as PDF (Portable document format). Other file formats will not be accepted by the system.** Irrespective of any page limits specified in this document, there is an **overall limit of 10 Mbytes to the size of each uploaded document (Part B1, B2, and supporting documentation)**. However, it is advised to limit the size of Parts B1 and B2 to 2 Mbytes each.
- Unless specified in the call, embedded material and any other documents (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video, multimedia, etc.) sent electronically outside of the submission system or within it or by post will be disregarded.
- There are also restrictions to the name given to the Part B files: use alphanumeric characters; special characters and spaces must be avoided. You are advised to clean your document before converting it to PDF (e.g. accept all tracked changes, delete notes). Check that your conversion software has successfully converted all the pages of your original document (e.g. there is no problem with page limits or page view), and that captions and labels have not been lost from your diagrams.

**Completing the Proposal submission forms in the submission system and uploading all the necessary files does not yet mean that your proposal is submitted (mandatory files: Part B1, Part B2, Host Institution support letter and – if applicable: supporting documentation for ethics and security issues).** Once there is a consolidated version of the proposal, **the 'SUBMIT' button must be pressed.** The system performs a limited automatic validation of the proposal. A list of any problems such as missing data, wrong file format or excessive file size will then appear on the screen. You will see a list of warnings and/or errors. You may submit your proposal with warnings (marked in yellow) but **submission is blocked until all errors marked in red are corrected.** However, the electronic checks by the submission system do not replace the formal admissibility and eligibility review described in section 1.2 of this document and cannot guarantee that the contents of these files respond to the requirements of the call.

#### **Step 6 – Submit proposal page**

Reaching this step means that the proposal is submitted (i.e. sent to the ERCEA for evaluation). It does not mean that the proposal is valid, admissible and eligible in all respects. Within a few minutes of submission your proposal will be available for download with an e-receipt in the system. You will receive a confirmation e-mail with the summary data of the submitted proposal. The mail can end up in the spam folder or be blocked by the anti-spam system of your organisation. This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt.

In Step 6 you can re-edit the proposal, going back to the previous step. **You may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up until the deadline.** The sequence above must be repeated each time. The most recent version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated; no later version can be substituted and no earlier version can be recovered.

**Check if the proposal is complete.** Once submitted, it is recommended to verify the proposal and its content by downloading all the submitted files. We strongly advise that you submit a first version of your proposal at least 24 hours in advance of the call deadline. Incomplete proposals (where parts or sections of the proposal and/or the host institution's commitment statement are missing) may be

declared inadmissible and will not be evaluated<sup>49</sup>. The proposal must be submitted **before the relevant deadline of the call**.

**Warning: Please note that in the last hours prior to call closure, the download option of checking your submitted proposal may be disabled due to a high pressure on the system.** In this case the ERCEA will inform the applicants via the call page on the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#) (under 'call summary') that the function has been disabled.

**If the e-receipt and download option have been disabled, you may review your submitted proposal by going back to Step 5 to check the data in the administrative forms and click on 'View History' to verify which attachments have been uploaded.**

### 3.3 HOW TO WITHDRAW A PROPOSAL

To withdraw a proposal **before the call deadline** use the 'withdraw proposal' button from the 'My proposals' tab when logged in at the F & T Portal. After the call deadline proposals may be withdrawn at any moment **until the day preceding the panel meetings** where a final decision on the outcome of the evaluation of the proposal is established. A withdrawn proposal will not be considered for evaluation nor count against possible re-application restrictions as set out in the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#).

To withdraw a proposal **after the call deadline**, please send a message/letter indicating a clear and unambiguous intention to withdraw the proposal, to the call-specific mailbox [ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu). The message/letter should mention the name of the cPI, proposal number and the acronym of the proposal as well as the call identifier (for example ERC-2024-SyG). The applicant PI should use an e-mail address indicated in the application. If the message/letter is sent by the Host Institution representative, the applicant PI should be in copy of an e-mail containing such a message/letter.

A PI can be part of only one proposal submitted for the same call and even for any call published under the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#). In the case of two or more proposals submitted by the same PI, even if they are part of a different group of PIs, the ERCEA services may ask the corresponding PI to withdraw one or more of those proposals. In the case of absence of reaction by the corresponding PI to this request, only the first eligible proposal will be considered.

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<sup>49</sup> See also section 2.4 'Admissibility and eligibility checks' in the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#) and in the section 'Proposal submission and description' of the [ERC Work Programme 2024](#)

## 4. ANNEXES

### 4.1 ERC EVALUATION PANELS AND KEYWORDS

For proposal submission and for evaluation of Synergy grant proposals, the following keywords will be used. Applicants should choose between 4 and 6 keywords from the list below. There is no hierarchical ordering of the keywords.

#### Physical Sciences and Engineering

##### **PE1 Mathematics**

All areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics

- PE1\_1 Logic and foundations
- PE1\_2 Algebra
- PE1\_3 Number theory
- PE1\_4 Algebraic and complex geometry
- PE1\_5 Lie groups, Lie algebras
- PE1\_6 Geometry and Global Analysis
- PE1\_7 Topology
- PE1\_8 Analysis
- PE1\_9 Operator algebras and functional analysis
- PE1\_10 ODE and dynamical systems
- PE1\_11 Theoretical aspects of partial differential equations
- PE1\_12 Mathematical physics
- PE1\_13 Probability
- PE1\_14 Mathematical statistics
- PE1\_15 Generic statistical methodology and modelling
- PE1\_16 Discrete mathematics and combinatorics
- PE1\_17 Mathematical aspects of computer science
- PE1\_18 Numerical analysis
- PE1\_19 Scientific computing and data processing
- PE1\_20 Control theory, optimisation and operational research
- PE1\_21 Application of mathematics in sciences
- PE1\_22 Application of mathematics in industry and society

##### **PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter**

Particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics

- PE2\_1 Theory of fundamental interactions
- PE2\_2 Phenomenology of fundamental interactions
- PE2\_3 Experimental particle physics with accelerators
- PE2\_4 Experimental particle physics without accelerators
- PE2\_5 Classical and quantum physics of gravitational interactions
- PE2\_6 Nuclear, hadron and heavy ion physics
- PE2\_7 Nuclear and particle astrophysics
- PE2\_8 Gas and plasma physics
- PE2\_9 Electromagnetism
- PE2\_10 Atomic, molecular physics
- PE2\_11 Ultra-cold atoms and molecules
- PE2\_12 Optics, non-linear optics and nano-optics
- PE2\_13 Quantum optics and quantum information
- PE2\_14 Lasers, ultra-short lasers and laser physics
- PE2\_15 Thermodynamics
- PE2\_16 Non-linear physics

PE2\_17 Metrology and measurement

PE2\_18 Equilibrium and non-equilibrium statistical mechanics: steady states and dynamics

### **PE3 Condensed Matter Physics**

Structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences, biological physics

PE3\_1 Structure of solids, material growth and characterisation

PE3\_2 Mechanical and acoustical properties of condensed matter, lattice dynamics

PE3\_3 Transport properties of condensed matter

PE3\_4 Electronic properties of materials, surfaces, interfaces, nanostructures

PE3\_5 Physical properties of semiconductors and insulators

PE3\_6 Macroscopic quantum phenomena: e.g. superconductivity, superfluidity, quantum Hall effect

PE3\_7 Spintronics

PE3\_8 Magnetism and strongly correlated systems

PE3\_9 Condensed matter – beam interactions (photons, electrons, etc.)

PE3\_10 Nanophysics, e.g. nanoelectronics, nanophotonics, nanomagnetism, nanoelectromechanics

PE3\_11 Mesoscopic quantum physics and solid-state quantum technologies

PE3\_12 Molecular electronics

PE3\_13 Structure and dynamics of disordered systems: soft matter (gels, colloids, liquid crystals), granular matter, liquids, glasses, defects

PE3\_14 Fluid dynamics (physics)

PE3\_15 Statistical physics: phase transitions, condensed matter systems, models of complex systems, interdisciplinary applications

PE3\_16 Physics of biological systems

### **PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences**

Analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics

PE4\_1 Physical chemistry

PE4\_2 Spectroscopic and spectrometric techniques

PE4\_3 Molecular architecture and Structure

PE4\_4 Surface science and nanostructures

PE4\_5 Analytical chemistry

PE4\_6 Chemical physics

PE4\_7 Chemical instrumentation

PE4\_8 Electrochemistry, electrodialysis, microfluidics, sensors

PE4\_9 Method development in chemistry

PE4\_10 Heterogeneous catalysis

PE4\_11 Physical chemistry of biological systems

PE4\_12 Chemical reactions: mechanisms, dynamics, kinetics and catalytic reactions

PE4\_13 Theoretical and computational chemistry

PE4\_14 Radiation and Nuclear chemistry

PE4\_15 Photochemistry

PE4\_16 Corrosion

PE4\_17 Characterisation methods of materials

PE4\_18 Environment chemistry

### **PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials**

New materials and new synthetic approaches, structure-properties relations, solid state chemistry, molecular architecture, organic chemistry

PE5\_1 Structural properties of materials

PE5\_2 Solid state materials chemistry

PE5\_3 Surface modification

PE5\_4 Thin films

- PE5\_5 Ionic liquids
- PE5\_6 New materials: oxides, alloys, composite, organic-inorganic hybrid, nanoparticles
- PE5\_7 Biomaterials synthesis
- PE5\_8 Intelligent materials synthesis – self assembled materials
- PE5\_9 Coordination chemistry
- PE5\_10 Colloid chemistry
- PE5\_11 Biological chemistry and chemical biology
- PE5\_12 Chemistry of condensed matter
- PE5\_13 Homogeneous catalysis
- PE5\_14 Macromolecular chemistry
- PE5\_15 Polymer chemistry
- PE5\_16 Supramolecular chemistry
- PE5\_17 Organic chemistry
- PE5\_18 Medicinal chemistry

## **PE6 Computer Science and Informatics**

Informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems

- PE6\_1 Computer architecture, embedded systems, operating systems
- PE6\_2 Distributed systems, parallel computing, sensor networks, cyber-physical systems
- PE6\_3 Software engineering, programming languages and systems
- PE6\_4 Theoretical computer science, formal methods, automata
- PE6\_5 Security privacy, cryptology, quantum cryptography
- PE6\_6 Algorithms and complexity, distributed, parallel and network algorithms, algorithmic game theory
- PE6\_7 Artificial intelligence, intelligent systems, natural language processing
- PE6\_8 Computer graphics, computer vision, multi media, computer games
- PE6\_9 Human computer interaction and interface, visualisation
- PE6\_10 Web and information systems, data management systems, information retrieval and digital libraries, data fusion
- PE6\_11 Machine learning, statistical data processing and applications using signal processing (e.g. speech, image, video)
- PE6\_12 Scientific computing, simulation and modelling tools
- PE6\_13 Bioinformatics, bio-inspired computing, and molecular computing
- PE6\_14 Quantum computing (formal methods, algorithms and other computer science aspects)

## **PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering**

Electrical, electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering

- PE7\_1 Control engineering
- PE7\_2 Electrical engineering: power components and/or systems
- PE7\_3 Simulation engineering and modelling
- PE7\_4 (Micro- and nano-) systems engineering
- PE7\_5 (Micro- and nano-) electronic, optoelectronic and photonic components
- PE7\_6 Communication systems, wireless technology, high-frequency technology
- PE7\_7 Signal processing
- PE7\_8 Networks, e.g. communication networks and nodes, internet of Things, sensor networks, networks of robots
- PE7\_9 Man-machine interfaces
- PE7\_10 Robotics
- PE7\_11 Components and systems for applications (in e.g. medicine, biology, environment)
- PE7\_12 Electrical energy production, distribution, application

## **PE8 Products and Processes Engineering**

Product and process design, chemical, civil, environmental, mechanical, vehicle engineering, energy processes and relevant computational methods

- PE8\_1 Aerospace engineering
- PE8\_2 Chemical engineering, technical chemistry
- PE8\_3 Civil engineering, architecture, offshore construction, lightweight construction, geotechnics
- PE8\_4 Computational engineering
- PE8\_5 Fluid mechanics
- PE8\_6 Energy processes engineering
- PE8\_7 Mechanical engineering
- PE8\_8 Propulsion engineering, e.g. hydraulic, turbo, piston, hybrid engines
- PE8\_9 Production technology, process engineering
- PE8\_10 Manufacturing engineering and industrial design
- PE8\_11 Environmental engineering, e.g. sustainable design, waste and water treatment, recycling, regeneration or recovery of compounds, carbon capture & storage
- PE8\_12 Naval/marine engineering
- PE8\_13 Industrial bioengineering
- PE8\_14 Automotive and rail engineering; multi-/inter-modal transport engineering

### **PE9 Universe Sciences**

Astro-physics/chemistry/biology; solar system; planetary systems; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy; cosmology; space sciences; astronomical instrumentation and data

- PE9\_1 Solar physics – the Sun and the heliosphere
- PE9\_2 Solar system sciences
- PE9\_3 Exoplanetary science, formation and characterization of extrasolar planets
- PE9\_4 Astrobiology
- PE9\_5 Interstellar medium and star formation
- PE9\_6 Stars – stellar physics, stellar systems
- PE9\_7 The Milky Way
- PE9\_8 Galaxies – formation, evolution, clusters
- PE9\_9 Cosmology and large-scale structure, dark matter, dark energy
- PE9\_10 Relativistic astrophysics and compact objects
- PE9\_11 Gravitational wave astronomy
- PE9\_12 High-energy and particle astronomy
- PE9\_13 Astronomical instrumentation and data, e.g. telescopes, detectors, techniques, archives, analyses

### **PE10 Earth System Science**

Physical geography, geology, geophysics, atmospheric sciences, oceanography, climatology, cryology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management

- PE10\_1 Atmospheric chemistry, atmospheric composition, air pollution
- PE10\_2 Meteorology, atmospheric physics and dynamics
- PE10\_3 Climatology and climate change
- PE10\_4 Terrestrial ecology, land cover change
- PE10\_5 Geology, tectonics, volcanology
- PE10\_6 Palaeoclimatology, palaeoecology
- PE10\_7 Physics of earth's interior, seismology, geodynamics
- PE10\_8 Oceanography (physical, chemical, biological, geological)
- PE10\_9 Biogeochemistry, biogeochemical cycles, environmental chemistry
- PE10\_10 Mineralogy, petrology, igneous petrology, metamorphic petrology
- PE10\_11 Geochemistry, cosmochemistry, crystal chemistry, isotope geochemistry, thermodynamics
- PE10\_12 Sedimentology, soil science, palaeontology, earth evolution
- PE10\_13 Physical geography, geomorphology
- PE10\_14 Earth observations from space/remote sensing
- PE10\_15 Geomagnetism, palaeomagnetism



PE10\_16 Ozone, upper atmosphere, ionosphere  
PE10\_17 Hydrology, hydrogeology, engineering and environmental geology, water and soil pollution  
PE10\_18 Cryosphere, dynamics of snow and ice cover, sea ice, permafrosts and ice sheets  
PE10\_19 Planetary geology and geophysics  
PE10\_20 Geohazards  
PE10\_21 Earth system modelling and interactions

### **PE11 Materials Engineering**

Advanced materials development: performance enhancement, modelling, large-scale preparation, modification, tailoring, optimisation, novel and combined use of materials, etc.

PE11\_1 Engineering of biomaterials, biomimetic, bioinspired and bio-enabled materials  
PE11\_2 Engineering of metals and alloys  
PE11\_3 Engineering of ceramics and glasses  
PE11\_4 Engineering of polymers and plastics  
PE11\_5 Engineering of composites and hybrid materials  
PE11\_6 Engineering of carbon materials  
PE11\_7 Engineering of metal oxides  
PE11\_8 Engineering of alternative established or emergent materials  
PE11\_9 Nanomaterials engineering, e.g. nanoparticles, nanoporous materials, 1D & 2D nanomaterials  
PE11\_10 Soft materials engineering, e.g. gels, foams, colloids  
PE11\_11 Porous materials engineering, e.g. covalent-organic, metal-organic, porous aromatic frameworks  
PE11\_12 Semi-conducting and magnetic materials engineering  
PE11\_13 Metamaterials engineering  
PE11\_14 Computational methods for materials engineering

## **Life Sciences**

### **LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions**

*For all organisms:*

Molecular biology, biochemistry, structural biology, molecular biophysics, synthetic and chemical biology, drug design, innovative methods and modelling

LS1\_1 Macromolecular complexes including interactions involving nucleic acids, proteins, lipids and carbohydrates  
LS1\_2 Biochemistry  
LS1\_3 DNA and RNA biology  
LS1\_4 Protein biology  
LS1\_5 Lipid biology  
LS1\_6 Glycobiology  
LS1\_7 Molecular biophysics, biomechanics, bioenergetics  
LS1\_8 Structural biology  
LS1\_9 Molecular mechanisms of signalling processes  
LS1\_10 Synthetic biology  
LS1\_11 Chemical biology  
LS1\_12 Protein design  
LS1\_13 Early translational research and drug design  
LS1\_14 Innovative methods and modelling in molecular, structural and synthetic biology

### **LS2 Integrative Biology: from Genes and Genomes to Systems**

*For all organisms:*

Genetics, epigenetics, genomics and other 'omics studies, bioinformatics, systems biology, genetic diseases, gene editing, innovative methods and modelling, 'omics for personalised medicine

- LS2\_1 Genetics
- LS2\_2 Gene editing
- LS2\_3 Epigenetics
- LS2\_4 Gene regulation
- LS2\_5 Genomics
- LS2\_6 Metagenomics
- LS2\_7 Transcriptomics
- LS2\_8 Proteomics
- LS2\_9 Metabolomics
- LS2\_10 Glycomics/Lipidomics
- LS2\_11 Bioinformatics and computational biology
- LS2\_12 Biostatistics
- LS2\_13 Systems biology
- LS2\_14 Genetic diseases
- LS2\_15 Integrative biology for personalised medicine
- LS2\_16 Innovative methods and modelling in integrative biology

### **LS3 Cellular, Cell biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration**

For all organisms: Structure and function of the cell, cell-cell communication, embryogenesis, tissue differentiation, organogenesis, growth, development, evolution of development, organoids, stem cells, regeneration, therapeutic approaches

- LS3\_1 Cell cycle, cell division and growth
- LS3\_2 Cell senescence, cell death, autophagy, cell ageing
- LS3\_3 Cell behaviour, including control of cell shape, cell migration
- LS3\_4 Cell junctions, cell adhesion, the extracellular matrix, cell communication
- LS3\_5 Cell signalling and signal transduction, exosome biology
- LS3\_6 Organelle biology and trafficking
- LS3\_7 Mechanobiology of cells, tissues and organs
- LS3\_8 Embryogenesis, pattern formation, morphogenesis
- LS3\_9 Cell differentiation, formation of tissues and organs
- LS3\_10 Developmental genetics
- LS3\_11 Evolution of developmental strategies
- LS3\_12 Organoids
- LS3\_13 Stem cells
- LS3\_14 Regeneration
- LS3\_15 Development of cell-based therapeutic approaches for tissue regeneration
- LS3\_16 Functional imaging of cells and tissues
- LS3\_17 Theoretical modelling in cellular, developmental and regenerative biology

### **LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing**

Organ and tissue physiology, comparative physiology, physiology of ageing, pathophysiology, interorgan and tissue communication, endocrinology, nutrition, metabolism, interaction with the microbiome, non-communicable diseases including cancer (and except disorders of the nervous system and immunity-related diseases)

- LS4\_1 Organ and tissue physiology and pathophysiology
- LS4\_2 Comparative physiology
- LS4\_3 Physiology of ageing
- LS4\_4 Endocrinology
- LS4\_5 Non-hormonal mechanisms of inter-organ and tissue communication
- LS4\_6 Microbiome and host physiology
- LS4\_7 Nutrition and exercise physiology

- LS4\_8 Impact of stress (including environmental stress) on physiology
- LS4\_9 Metabolism and metabolic disorders, including diabetes and obesity
- LS4\_10 The cardiovascular system and cardiovascular diseases
- LS4\_11 Haematopoiesis and blood diseases
- LS4\_12 Cancer
- LS4\_13 Other non-communicable diseases (except disorders of the nervous system and immunity-related diseases)

### **LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System**

Nervous system development, homeostasis and ageing, nervous system function and dysfunction, systems neuroscience and modelling, biological basis of cognitive processes and of behaviour, neurological and mental disorders

- LS5\_1 Neuronal cells
- LS5\_2 Glial cells and neuronal-glia communication
- LS5\_3 Neural development and related disorders
- LS5\_4 Neural stem cells
- LS5\_5 Neural networks and plasticity
- LS5\_6 Neurovascular biology and blood-brain barrier
- LS5\_7 Sensory systems, sensation and perception, including pain
- LS5\_8 Neural basis of behaviour (e.g. sleep, consciousness, addiction)
- LS5\_9 Neural basis of cognition (e.g. learning, memory, attention, emotions, speech)
- LS5\_10 Ageing of the nervous system
- LS5\_11 Neurological and neurodegenerative disorders
- LS5\_12 Mental disorders
- LS5\_13 Nervous system injuries and trauma, stroke
- LS5\_14 Repair and regeneration of the nervous system
- LS5\_15 Neuroimmunology, neuroinflammation
- LS5\_16 Systems and computational neuroscience (e.g. modelling, simulation, brain oscillations, connectomics)
- LS5\_17 Imaging in neuroscience
- LS5\_18 Innovative methods and tools for neuroscience

### **LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy**

The immune system, related disorders and their mechanisms, biology of infectious agents and infection, biological basis of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, innovative immunological tools and approaches, including therapies

- LS6\_1 Innate immunity
- LS6\_2 Adaptive immunity
- LS6\_3 Regulation of the immune response
- LS6\_4 Immune-related diseases
- LS6\_5 Biology of pathogens (e.g. bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi)
- LS6\_6 Infectious diseases
- LS6\_7 Mechanism of infection
- LS6\_8 Biological basis of prevention and treatment of infection
- LS6\_9 Antimicrobials, antimicrobial resistance
- LS6\_10 Vaccine development
- LS6\_11 Innovative immunological tools and approaches, including therapies

### **LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases**

Medical technologies and tools for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases, therapeutic approaches and interventions, pharmacology, preventative medicine, epidemiology and public health, digital medicine

- LS7\_1 Medical imaging for prevention, diagnosis and monitoring of diseases
- LS7\_2 Medical technologies and tools (including genetic tools and biomarkers) for prevention, diagnosis,

- monitoring and treatment of diseases
- LS7\_3 Nanomedicine
- LS7\_4 Regenerative medicine
- LS7\_5 Applied gene, cell and immune therapies
- LS7\_6 Other medical therapeutic interventions, including transplantation
- LS7\_7 Pharmacology and toxicology
- LS7\_8 Effectiveness of interventions, including resistance to therapies
- LS7\_9 Public health and epidemiology
- LS7\_10 Preventative and prognostic medicine
- LS7\_11 Environmental health, occupational medicine
- LS7\_12 Health care, including care for the ageing population
- LS7\_13 Palliative medicine
- LS7\_14 Digital medicine, e-medicine, medical applications of artificial intelligence
- LS7\_15 Medical ethics

## **LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution**

*For all organisms:*

Ecology, biodiversity, environmental change, evolutionary biology, behavioural ecology, microbial ecology, marine biology, ecophysiology, theoretical developments and modelling

- LS8\_1 Ecosystem and community ecology, macroecology
- LS8\_2 Biodiversity
- LS8\_3 Conservation biology
- LS8\_4 Population biology, population dynamics, population genetics
- LS8\_5 Biological aspects of environmental change, including climate change
- LS8\_6 Evolutionary ecology
- LS8\_7 Evolutionary genetics
- LS8\_8 Phylogenetics, systematics, comparative biology
- LS8\_9 Macroevolution and paleobiology
- LS8\_10 Ecology and evolution of species interactions
- LS8\_11 Behavioural ecology and evolution
- LS8\_12 Microbial ecology and evolution
- LS8\_13 Marine biology and ecology
- LS8\_14 Ecophysiology, from organisms to ecosystems
- LS8\_15 Theoretical developments and modelling in environmental biology, ecology, and evolution

## **LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering**

Biotechnology using all organisms, biotechnology for environment and food applications, applied plant and animal sciences, bioengineering and synthetic biology, biomass and biofuels, biohazards

- LS9\_1 Bioengineering for synthetic and chemical biology
- LS9\_2 Applied genetics, gene editing and transgenic organisms
- LS9\_3 Bioengineering of cells, tissues, organs and organisms
- LS9\_4 Microbial biotechnology and bioengineering
- LS9\_5 Food biotechnology and bioengineering
- LS9\_6 Marine biotechnology and bioengineering
- LS9\_7 Environmental biotechnology and bioengineering
- LS9\_8 Applied plant sciences, plant breeding, agroecology and soil biology
- LS9\_9 Plant pathology and pest resistance
- LS9\_10 Veterinary and applied animal sciences
- LS9\_11 Biomass production and utilisation, biofuels
- LS9\_12 Ecotoxicology, biohazards and biosafety

## Social Sciences and Humanities

### SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations

Economics, finance and management

- SH1\_1 Macroeconomics; monetary economics; economic growth, labour economics
- SH1\_2 International trade; international business; spatial economics
- SH1\_3 Development economics political economics
- SH1\_4 Finance; financial markets
- SH1\_5 Corporate finance; international finance
- SH1\_6 Banking, insurance
- SH1\_7 Accounting, asset prices, auditing
- SH1\_8 Econometrics, game theory, decision theory
- SH1\_9 Behavioural economics; experimental economics; neuro-economics
- SH1\_10 Microeconomics, industrial organisation, applied microeconomics
- SH1\_11 Innovation, research & development, entrepreneurship
- SH1\_12 Management; operations management, international management
- SH1\_13 Human resource management; organisational behaviour
- SH1\_14 Strategy, operation research
- SH1\_15 Marketing, consumer behaviour
- SH1\_16 Quantitative economic history, economic systems, institutional economics

### SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems

Political science, international relations, law

- SH2\_1 Political systems, governance
- SH2\_2 Democratisation and social movements
- SH2\_3 Conflict resolution, war, peace building
- SH2\_4 Legal studies, comparative law, law and economics
- SH2\_5 Constitutions, human rights, international law
- SH2\_6 International relations, global and transnational governance
- SH2\_7 Humanitarian assistance and development
- SH2\_8 Political and legal philosophy
- SH2\_9 Digital approaches to political science and law

### SH3 The Social World and its Interactions

Sociology, social psychology, education sciences, communication studies

- SH3\_1 Social structure, social mobility, social innovation
- SH3\_2 Inequalities, discrimination, prejudice
- SH3\_3 Aggression and violence, antisocial behaviour, crime
- SH3\_4 Social integration, exclusion, prosocial behaviour
- SH3\_5 Social attitudes and beliefs
- SH3\_6 Social influence; power and group behaviour
- SH3\_7 Social policies, welfare, work and employment
- SH3\_8 Poverty and poverty alleviation
- SH3\_9 Social aspects of teaching and learning, curriculum studies, education and educational policies
- SH3\_10 Communication and information, networks, media
- SH3\_11 Digital social research
- SH3\_12 Social studies of science and technology

### SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity

Cognitive science, psychology, linguistics

- SH4\_1 Cognitive basis of human development, developmental disorders; comparative cognition
- SH4\_2 Personality and social cognition; emotion

- SH4\_3 Clinical and health psychology
- SH4\_4 Neurocognitive psychology
- SH4\_5 Attention, perception, action, consciousness
- SH4\_6 Learning, memory; cognition in ageing
- SH4\_7 Reasoning, decision-making; intelligence
- SH4\_8 Language learning and processing (first and second languages)
- SH4\_9 Theoretical linguistics; computational linguistics
- SH4\_10 Language typology; historical linguistics
- SH4\_11 Pragmatics, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis

### **SH5 Texts and Concepts**

Literary studies, literature, philosophy

- SH5\_1 Classics, ancient literature
- SH5\_2 Theory and history of literature, comparative literature
- SH5\_3 Book studies
- SH5\_4 Philology; text and image studies
- SH5\_5 Palaeography and codicology
- SH5\_6 Philosophy of mind, philosophy of language
- SH5\_7 Philosophy of science, epistemology, logic
- SH5\_8 Metaphysics, philosophical anthropology; aesthetics
- SH5\_9 Ethics and its applications; social philosophy
- SH5\_10 History of philosophy
- SH5\_11 Digital humanities; digital approaches to literary studies and philosophy

### **SH6 The Study of the Human Past**

Archaeology and history

- SH6\_1 Archaeological methods and theory, history of archaeology
- SH6\_2 Prehistoric archaeology, archaeology of non-literate societies
- SH6\_3 Archaeology of early literate societies and early civilizations
- SH6\_4 Medieval and post-medieval archaeologies
- SH6\_5 Archaeological science, bioarchaeology, environmental archaeology, geoarchaeology
- SH6\_6 Digital, computational, virtual and geospatial archaeologies
- SH6\_7 Historiography, theory and methods of history, including the analysis of digital data
- SH6\_8 Ancient history, medieval history
- SH6\_9 Early modern, modern, and contemporary history
- SH6\_10 Colonial and post-colonial history
- SH6\_11 Global, transnational, and comparative history
- SH6\_12 Social and economic history
- SH6\_13 Cultural history, intellectual history
- SH6\_14 History of science and technologies, environmental history

### **SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space**

Human geography, demography, health, sustainability science, territorial planning, spatial analysis

- SH7\_1 Human, economic and social geography
- SH7\_2 Migration
- SH7\_3 Population dynamics: households, family and fertility
- SH7\_4 Social aspects of health, ageing and society
- SH7\_5 Sustainability sciences, environment and resources, ecosystem services
- SH7\_6 Environmental and climate change, societal impact and policy
- SH7\_7 Cities; urban, regional and rural studies
- SH7\_8 Land use and planning
- SH7\_9 Energy, transportation and mobility
- SH7\_10 GIS, spatial analysis; digital geography

## **SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts**

Social anthropology, studies of cultures, studies of arts

- SH8\_1 Kinship; diversity and identities, gender, interethnic relations
- SH8\_2 Religious studies, ritual; symbolic representation
- SH8\_3 Cultural studies and theory, cultural identities and memories, cultural heritage
- SH8\_4 Museums, exhibitions, conservation and restoration
- SH8\_5 History of art and of architecture
- SH8\_6 Architecture, design, craft, creative industries
- SH8\_7 Music and musicology; history of music
- SH8\_8 Visual and performing arts, screen, arts-based research
- SH8\_9 Digital approaches to anthropology, cultural studies and art

4.2 HOST INSTITUTION SUPPORT LETTER TEMPLATE 2024

**Print on paper bearing the official letterhead of the institution. Each host institution is required to provide a separate support letter listing the PI(s) who will be engaged by them.**

**Commitment of the Host Institution for the  
ERC Synergy Call 2024<sup>50, 51, 52</sup>**

The <<please fill in here the name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the Principal Investigator(s) and the project (action) in case the application is successful>>, which is the applicant legal entity (Host Institution), confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with

<< please fill in here the name of the Principal Investigator(s) who will be engaged by the Host Institution >><sup>53</sup>,

in which the obligations listed below will be addressed should the proposal submitted by the Principal Investigators listed below be retained.

The applicant legal entity (Host Institution) confirms that it is aware that the Synergy project will involve the following Principal Investigators (PIs):

<<Please enter below the names of all Principal Investigators participating in the project.>>

Corresponding PI: .....

PI 2: .....

PI 3 (if applicable): .....

PI 4 (if applicable): .....

The fact that the applicant legal entity confirms its awareness of the group's Synergy project does not imply an obligation to contractually engage all of the Principal Investigators.

**Performance obligations of the applicant legal entity (Host Institution) that will become the beneficiary of the HE ERC Grant Agreement (hereafter referred to as the Agreement),**

<sup>50</sup> A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically via the EU [Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#) Submission Service in PDF format.

<sup>51</sup> The statement of commitment of the Host Institution refers to most of the Host Institution obligations, stated in the Model Grant Agreement (MGA) used for ERC actions. The [MGA](#) is available on the [EU Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal](#). The reference to the time commitment of the Principal Investigator(s) is stated in the ERC Work Programme 2024.

<sup>52</sup> This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be signed (blue ink or digitally) by the institution's legal representative indicating their name, function, email address, address and, in case of blue ink signature, along with the stamp of the institution.

<sup>53</sup> Please insert the names only of those Principal Investigators that will be engaged by the Host Institution.



**should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the Agreement be successfully concluded:**

*The following obligations apply only to the Principal Investigators, hereinafter referred as the PI(s), who will be engaged by the applicant legal entity (Host Institution) signing this letter.*

The applicant legal entity (Host Institution) commits itself to ensure that the action tasks described in Annex 1 of the Agreement are performed under the guidance of the PI(s) who is/are expected to:

- devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC funded project (action);
- spend at least 50% of their working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country (except for a PI hosted or engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Country).

The applicant legal entity (Host Institution) commits itself to respect the following conditions for the PI(s) and their team:

- a) host and engage the PI(s) for the whole duration of the action;
- b) 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<sup>54</sup> - in particular regarding working conditions, transparent recruitment processes based on merit and career development – and ensure that the PI(s), researchers and third parties involved in the project (action) are aware of them.
- c) enter — before grant signature — into a *Supplementary Agreement* with the PI(s), that specifies the obligation of the *applicant legal entity* to meet its obligations under the Agreement;
- d) provide *the* PI(s) with a copy of the signed Agreement;
- e) guarantee the PI(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*, in line with the profiles needed to conduct the research and in accordance with the *beneficiary'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 PI(s) and the team members (regarding infrastructure, equipment, access rights, products and other services necessary for conducting the research);
- g) support the PI(s) and provide administrative assistance, in particular for the:
  - i) general management of the work and their team;

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<sup>54</sup> [Commission Recommendation 2005/251/EC](#) of 11 March 2005 on the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and on a [Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#) (OJ L 75, 22.3.2005, p. 67).

- ii) scientific reporting, especially ensuring that the team members send their scientific results to the PI(s);
- iii) financial reporting, especially providing timely and clear financial information;
- iv) application of the beneficiary's usual management practices;
- v) general logistics of the project (action);
- vi) access to the electronic exchange system;
- h) inform the PI(s) immediately (in writing) of any events or circumstances likely to affect the Agreement;
- i) ensure that the PI(s) enjoys adequate:
  - i) conditions for annual, sickness and parental leave;
  - ii) occupational health and safety standards;
  - iii) insurance under the general social security scheme, such as pension rights;
- j) allow the transfer of the Agreement to a new beneficiary, if requested by the P(s) and provided that the objectives of the action remain achievable (portability; see Article 41 of the Agreement);
- k) respect the fundamental principle of research integrity and ensure that persons carrying out research tasks under the action follow the good research practices and refrain from the research integrity violations described in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>55</sup>. If any such violations or allegations occur, verify and pursue them and bring them to the attention of the Agency.

For the applicant legal entity (Host institution)

Date

.....

Name and Function

.....; .....

Email and Signature (blue ink or digitally signed<sup>56</sup>) of legal representative

.....; .....

Stamp of the applicant legal entity (Host Institution)<sup>57</sup>

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** In order to be complete all the above mentioned points are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the applicant legal entity (Host Institution). The highlighted fields should be filled in.

<sup>55</sup> [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) of ALLEA (All European Academies, Berlin 2023)

<sup>56</sup> The digital signature must have the same legal value (i.e. must be the electronic equivalent) of a handwritten signature and a stamped seal.

<sup>57</sup> No need to stamp this letter of support when it is digitally signed.