



Horizon Europe
European Research Council (ERC)
Frontier Research Grants

Information for Applicants to the
Advanced Grant Call



European Research Council
Executive Agency

Established by the European Commission

Version 1.0
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Warning: The budget table and description of resources are part of the online submission form (Section 3 - Budget). Do NOT include them in Part B2.

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 2021](#)¹,
- the European Research Council Rules of Submission, and the related methods and procedures for peer review and proposal evaluation relevant to the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe (hereinafter [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#)), and
- the [Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions](#).

This document does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding. Should there be any discrepancies between the aforementioned legal documents and this document, the former will prevail. 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 Advanced Grant call, provides practical information on the evaluation process.

National Contact Points ([ERC NCPs](#)) have been set up across Europe² 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 [Funding & Tenders Portal](#).

Abbreviations

AC – Associated Country³

ADG – [Advanced Grant](#)

COG – [Consolidator Grant](#)

ERC NCPs – [ERC National Contact Points](#)

ERC panel – ERC peer review evaluation panel

ERC WP – [ERC Work Programme 2021](#)

ERCEA – [European Research Council Executive Agency](#)

EU MS – EU Member States

F&T Portal – [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)

HE FP – [Horizon Europe Framework Programme](#)

HI – Host Institution

PI – Principal Investigator

PM – Panel Member

PIC – [Participant Identification Code](#)

STG – [Starting Grant](#)

¹ C(2021) 930 of 22/02/2021

² This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some other countries also provide this service.

³ At the date of the publication of the ERC Work Programme 2021, there are no countries associated to Horizon Europe. Considering the Union's interest to retain, in principle, relations with the countries associated to Horizon 2020, most third countries associated to Horizon 2020 are expected to be associated to Horizon Europe by the time the first grant agreements under Horizon Europe are signed. In addition, other third countries may also become associated to Horizon Europe during the programme. For the purposes of the eligibility conditions, applicants established in Horizon 2020 Associated Countries or in other third countries negotiating association to Horizon Europe will be treated as entities established in an Associated Country, if the Horizon Europe association agreement with the third country concerned applies at the time of signature of the grant agreement.

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1. ERC ADVANCED GRANTS 2021

1.1 ERC FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The ERC Advanced Grants are part of the main ERC frontier research grants 2021 funded by the European Union's [Horizon Europe Framework Programme](#) (HE FP) 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. Please see below an overview of all ERC 2021 calls.



Single Principal Investigator (PI) heading research teams

The ERC ADG grants support individual researchers who are already established research leaders with a recognised track record of research achievements and who can demonstrate the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal. In certain fields (e.g. in the humanities and mathematics), where research is often performed individually, the 'team' may consist solely of the Principal Investigator.

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 engineering⁴. In particular, the ERC encourages proposals of a multi- or interdisciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research or proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions. The focus is on the PI and on the individual team. Support for consortia is provided by other calls under Horizon Europe. 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.

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 chair and members are selected by the ERC Scientific Council on the basis of their scientific merits.

⁴ 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](#).

Open Access

Open science is 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. The ERC considers that providing free online access to all these research products can be the most effective way to ensure that the products 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 open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications⁵ of their results as set out in the [Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions](#). Beneficiaries must ensure that they or the authors retain sufficient intellectual property rights to comply with their open access requirements. In addition, beneficiaries of ERC frontier research grants funded under the 2021 ERC Work Programme will automatically be covered by the provisions on research data management as set out in the [Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions](#). In particular, beneficiaries are required to submit a data management plan within the first six months of the project implementation. These provisions are designed to facilitate access, re-use and preservation of the research data generated during the ERC funded project.

Funding

Advanced Grants can be up to a maximum of EUR 2 500 000 for a period of 5 years. **For projects of shorter duration the maximum size of the grant is reduced pro rata.**

However, up to an additional EUR 1 000 000 can be requested to cover:

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

Project costs will be reimbursed at a funding rate of 100% for direct costs plus a flat-rate of 25% for indirect costs⁶.

Research integrity

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data⁷ may result in the rejection of proposals in accordance with section 3.11 of the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#). Please also note that plagiarism detection software is used to analyse all submitted proposals to detect similar proposals submitted by different PIs. A procedure is in place to assess alleged or suspected cases of scientific misconduct. Scientific misconduct may result in the rejection of the proposal from the current call and a possible restriction on submission of proposals to future calls, as provided in the relevant ERC Work Programme.

⁵ This includes peer-reviewed long-text publications such as monographs, book chapters, edited collections, critical editions, scholarly exhibition catalogues, or PhD theses.

⁶ Excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting, and any unit costs, which include indirect costs.

⁷ 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.

Advanced Grant profile

Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their track-record and research independence against the below-mentioned benchmarks, in order to judge their likelihood for success and to avoid investing effort in proposals that are very unlikely to succeed.

Advanced Grant

ERC Advanced Grant Principal Investigators are expected to be active researchers and to have a track record of significant research achievements in their field during the last 10 years. A competitive Advanced Grant Principal Investigator must have already shown a record which identifies them as an exceptional leader in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions.

In most fields, PIs will be expected to have a proven track record of achievements in the past 10 years appropriate to their research field and at least matching one or more of the following benchmarks, for instance: up to 10 significant publications as main author in leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field, or major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals; 3 major research monographs (for research fields where monographs is the norm). They may also demonstrate a record of invited presentations in well-established international conferences, organization of international conferences, granted patents, leading research expeditions, awards, prizes, academy memberships etc.⁸.

Any documented career break during the last ten years should be clearly explained in the dedicated section of the CV.

1.2 ADMISSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY

Admissible and eligible proposals

All proposals must be complete, readable, and accessible. They must be submitted by eligible Principal Investigators before the relevant call deadline. Please see [section 2.1](#) for an overview of a complete ERC proposal. Proposals that do not meet these criteria may be declared inadmissible. All scientific fields are eligible for ERC funding.

All applications and the related supporting information are reviewed to ensure that all admissibility and eligibility criteria are met. The proposal's content should be related to the objectives of the call and must meet all its admissibility and eligibility requirements. If there are doubts about the admissibility or eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a final decision by the admissibility and eligibility review committee. The fact that a proposal is evaluated in such circumstances does not constitute 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 or eligibility criteria has not been met (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will be declared inadmissible or ineligible and not considered any further.

⁸ See the [ERC WP 2021](#) for the full description of the AdG profile, possible extensions of the period under consideration for the assessment of research achievements and career breaks.

Host institution

The HI must engage the PI for at least the duration of the project, as defined in the grant agreement⁹. It must either be established in an EU MS or an AC as a legal entity created under national law, or it may be an international European research Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) or any other entity created under EU law. International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or associated country will be deemed to be established in this 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. The ERC welcomes applications from PIs 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.

During the granting process, the financial capacity of applicant legal entities will be assessed, if required¹⁰.

Principal Investigator

ERC grants are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research activity in any EU MS or AC. The research team may be of national or trans-national character. The PI does not need to be employed by the HI at the time when the proposal is submitted. However, the PI must be engaged by the latter at least for the duration of the grant. Grant proposals are submitted by the PI taking scientific responsibility for the project, on behalf of the host institution.

Expected time commitment

With the support of the HI, the successful PIs are expected to lead their individual teams and devote a significant amount of time to the project. They will be expected to dedicate a minimum of 30% of their working time to the ERC project and spend a minimum of 50% of their working time in an EU MS or an AC. The time commitment must be clearly indicated in the submission form (Part A).

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. In order to maintain the quality and integrity of ERC's evaluation process, restrictions on applications were introduced in 2009.

The following general restrictions apply for the ERC 2021 frontier research Calls (StG, CoG and AdG):

⁹ [Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions](#)

¹⁰ 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. The check will normally be done for the coordinator (Host Institution) if the requested grant amount is equal to or greater than EUR 500 000, except for: - public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations, and - cases where the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000 (low-value grant). If needed, it may also be done for the other applicants including affiliated entities. If the financial capacity is structurally guaranteed by another legal entity, the financial capacity of the latter will be verified. The financial capacity check will be done on the basis of the documents provided during grant preparation (e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc.). For more information, see [Rules on Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

- A researcher may participate as PI in only one ERC frontier research project at a time¹¹. A new frontier research project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous frontier research ERC grant agreement has ended.
- A researcher participating as PI in an ERC frontier research project may not submit a proposal for another ERC frontier research grant, unless the existing project ends no more than two years after the call deadline¹².
- A PI who is a serving Panel Member for a 2021 ERC call or who served as a Panel Member for a 2019 ERC call may not apply to a 2021 ERC call for the same type of grant¹³.
- A PI may submit proposals to different ERC frontier research grant calls published under the same Work Programme, but only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated. The other proposal(s) will be declared ineligible, unless withdrawn by the applicants.

Additional restrictions have been designed to allow some unsuccessful Principal Investigators (as listed below) the time necessary to develop a stronger proposal. Therefore the outcome of the evaluation of previous submissions may prevent applications to the AdG2021 call. Inadmissible, ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against any of the restrictions listed below.

Call to which the PI applied under previous ERC WP	Evaluation outcome	Calls to which a PI is <i>not</i> eligible under ERC WP 2021
2019 and 2020 Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, or Synergy Grant	Rejected for breach of research integrity	STG, COG, ADG
2019 Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant	C at Step 1	STG, COG, ADG
2020 Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grant	A, or B at Step 2	No restriction
	B, or C at Step 1	STG, COG, ADG
2020 Synergy Grant	A, or B at Step 3	No restriction
	B at Step 1 or Step 2	No restriction
	C at Step 1	ADG

The year of an ERC call refers to the WP under which the call was published and can be established by its call identifier. A 2021 ERC call is therefore one that was published under the WP 2021 and will have 2021 in the call identifier (for example ERC-2021-AdG).

¹¹ Including all PIs supported under the Synergy Grant.

¹² According to the duration of the project defined in the previous frontier research grant agreement.

¹³ The members of the ERC panels alternate to allow panel members to apply to the ERC calls in alternate years.

1.3 EVALUATION PROCESS

The ERC's peer review evaluation process has been carefully designed to identify scientific excellence irrespective of gender, age, nationality or institution of the PI and other potential biases, and to take career breaks as well as unconventional research career paths into account. The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

A single submission of the full proposal is followed by a two-Step evaluation.

ERC evaluation panels¹⁴

The peer review is handled by 27 evaluation panels (ERC panels), covering all fields of science, engineering and scholarship (see panel details and ERC keywords in [Annex 4.1](#)). For operational reasons they are divided into three main research domains:

- Physical Sciences and Engineering (11 Panels),
- Life Sciences (9 Panels) and,
- Social Sciences and Humanities (7 Panels).

Before the deadline of a call, the names of the 27 panel chairs are published on the ERC website. The names of panel members are published after the evaluation process is concluded.

No Contact allowed with Peer Reviewers at any time

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 peer review evaluation of an ERC call between an applicant legal entity or a PI submitting a proposal on behalf of an applicant legal entity, and any independent external 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 of the ERCEA to reject the proposal concerned from the call in question (Article 141 of the Financial Regulation).

ERC Peer Reviewers are bound to confidentiality during as well as after the evaluation.

Panel allocation and panel budgets

It is the applicant's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant ERC panel ('primary evaluation panel') for the evaluation of the proposed research and to indicate one or more ERC keywords representing the research fields involved. The applicant may indicate a secondary evaluation panel.

The initial allocation of the proposal to a panel will be based on the preference expressed by the applicant. However, when necessary due to the expertise required for the evaluation, a proposal may be reallocated to a different panel with the agreement of both panel chairs concerned. In such cases, applicants are informed of the reallocation of the proposal through the notification for the invitation to the interview (if applicable) or the information letter with the final outcome of the evaluation of their respective proposal.

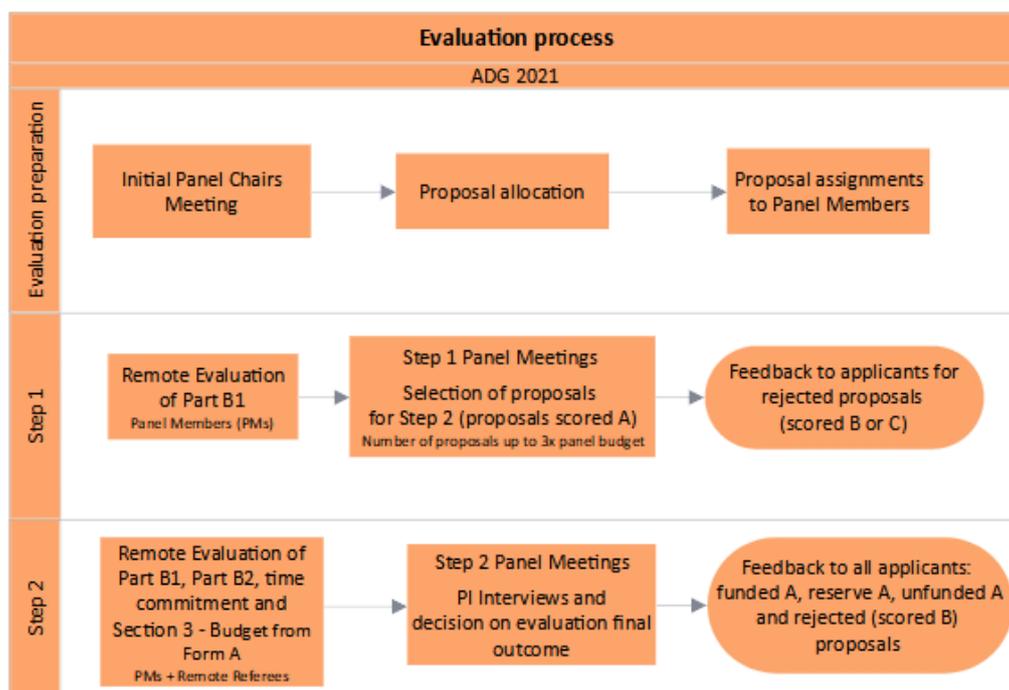
The composition of the ERC evaluation panels are by nature multi-disciplinary. The evaluation panel will determine if additional reviews by appropriate members of other panel(s) or additional remote experts are needed.

¹⁴ Please refer to the [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#) for details.

An indicative budget is allocated to each panel in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals. **This important principle ensures comparable success rates between the individual panels regardless of how many proposals each panel evaluates.** Depending on the budget available for the call, a budgetary cut-off applies to the call ranking list at both Step 1 and Step 2. Only proposals ranked A at Step 1 will be further evaluated and only the highest ranked A-scoring proposals at Step 2 will be invited for grant preparation until the call budget is spent. The remaining proposals recommended for funding may be funded by the ERC if additional funds become available.

Evaluation process and important dates

An indicative evaluation timeline is available for the [Advanced Grant](#) Call on the ERC web-site and outlined below.



At both evaluation Steps, every proposal will be evaluated for each of the two main elements of the proposal: Research Project and Principal Investigator. The ERC independent external experts deliver individual proposal reviews in a remote evaluation phase at both Step 1 and Step 2. The ERC panels assess and score the proposals on the basis of the individual reviews received and on the basis of the panels' overall appreciation of strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

STEP 1

At Step 1 the extended synopsis together with the PI's track record and CV will be evaluated (Part B1 – see [section 2.3](#)). After the remote evaluation phase, each panel meets to discuss all the proposals assigned to the panel. Proposals will proceed to Step 2 based on the outcome of the Step 1 evaluation. The maximum number of proposals evaluated by the panel at Step 2 may not exceed three times the panel's indicative budget. At the end of Step 1 of the evaluation the proposal will receive one of the following scores:

A score - is of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation,

B score - is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation¹⁵,

C score - is not of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation¹⁵.

The Step 1 evaluation outcome is provided to the applicants receiving a B or a C score through an information letter together with an evaluation report. It includes the score and the panel ranking range of their proposal, the panel comment explaining the panel decision as well as the individual comments given by each reviewer. This communication is uploaded to the Funding & Tenders Portal accounts of the PI and HI main contact person (see [section 3.2](#)). Applicants who receive an A score are invited for an interview to present their project at the Step 2 panel meeting. Each panel decides on the exact format of its interviews (duration, number of slides allowed, time allocated to the presentation and the questions and answers session), which will be communicated to the applicants shortly after Step 1. Applicants who receive an A score pass to Step 2 of the evaluation and will not receive a Step 1 evaluation report.

STEP 2

At Step 2, the full proposal (Part B1, Part B2 plus Section 3 – Budget and time commitment, present in the submission form) will be evaluated. After a remote evaluation phase the panels meet again. Step 2 includes an interview of approximately 30 minutes of each applicant¹⁶. The first part of the interview will consist of a presentation of the research project by the PI (5-10 minutes). The remaining time will comprise a questions and answers session. The PI may expect questions also related to the detailed budget table and resources section, which are at full title part of the application. The evaluation panels will review the requested budget for proposals recommended for funding and, if appropriate, recommend adjustments. In exceptional and justified cases such as illness, maternity or force majeure, if unable to attend in person, a panel member may participate remotely by electronic means (video-conferencing or telephone-conferencing), subject to the ERCEA's agreement.

The details of the interview arrangements will be communicated to the selected applicants shortly after the Step 1 evaluation is completed.

*In view of the confidentiality of the evaluation process, applicants invited to a Step 2 interview **should not share the identity of panel members** within their scientific communities until their names have been published on the ERC website.*

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

The assessment by the panels will take into account the interview and all individual reviews and the panels' overall appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. At the end of Step 2, following the timeline described above, applicants will be informed of the outcome of the evaluation. The score of their proposal can be either A or B.

A score proposals fully meet the ERC's excellence criterion and are recommended for funding. Such projects will be funded on a priority order based on their rank, if sufficient funds are available. This means that it is very likely that not all proposals scored 'A' will be funded by the ERC.

B score proposals meet some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded.

Evaluation outcome

The Step 2 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 given by each reviewer. This communication is uploaded to the Funding & Tenders Portal accounts of the PI and HI main contact person (see [section 3.2](#)).

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. 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 data¹⁷.

Panel comments

Comments by the individual reviewers may reflect divergent views. Differences of opinions about the proposal are part of the scientific debate and are legitimate. Furthermore, the ERC panel may take a position that is different from what could be inferred from the individual reviews. A panel discussion could reveal an important weakness that was not identified by the individual reviewers. The panel comment reflects the final decision taken by the panel either by consensus or by majority vote based on the individual assessments and the discussion within the panel.

Evaluation criteria

The "scientific excellence" evaluation criterion will be applied in conjunction of both: (i) the groundbreaking nature, ambition and feasibility of the research project, and, (ii) the intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment of the PI:

¹⁷ 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

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

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

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

Scientific Approach

- To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed research is high-risk/high-gain [*based on the Extended Synopsis at Step 1*]?
- To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project [*to be assessed at Step 2 based on the full Scientific Proposal*]?
- To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology [*to be assessed at Step 2 based on the full Scientific Proposal*]?
- To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified [*to be assessed at Step 2 based on the full Scientific Proposal*]?

2. Principal Investigator - Intellectual capacity and creativity

- To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?
- To what extent has the PI demonstrated sound leadership in the training and advancement of young scientists?

1.4 ETHICS AND SECURITY

Ethics

Every project funded by the ERC under Horizon Europe is subject to an ethics review process. The ethics review process is independent from the evaluation procedure and the evaluation panels do not have access to the ethics documents.

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

When submitting their proposal, applicants must complete the Ethics Issues Table as part of the submission form and provide an ethics self-assessment and supporting documentation where needed as separate annex(es). Please see the [How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment](#) document for guidance. 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. Applicants should be aware that no grant agreement can be signed by ERCEA prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethics review procedure.

Security

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) and provide, if applicable, available supporting documentation (as separate annexes). For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage.

1.5 MEANS OF REDRESS, ENQUIRES 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 PI and/or the 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 PI and/or the HI 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 provides a link for the PI and/or the HI to introduce the request. The letter will specify a deadline for the receipt of any such requests, which will be 30 days from the date of

receiving the information letter. A formal notification is considered to have been accessed by the applicant 10 calendar days after sending, if not accessed before in the system¹⁸.

Requests 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;
- sent by the PI and/or the HI.

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:

- 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. This means, for example, that a problem related to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on the other criteria;
- 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.

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 58/2003¹⁹ ('Article 22 request'), within 1 month of receiving the ERCEA's letter; or

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ O J L 11, 16.01.2003, p.1.

- bringing an action for annulment under Article 263 of the TFEU²⁰ ('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. Applicants are asked not to take more than one formal action at a time. Once the Agency/Commission communicates the final decision on an action, applicants can take a further action against that decision. Deadlines for a further action will start to run from when applicants receive the final decision²¹.

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 decision²².

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

A series of instructional videos giving information about the whole ERC application process (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-2021-ADG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu. For questions related to the ethics issues of the proposal, please contact the Ethics Support team: 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.

²⁰ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47–390).

²¹ 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.

²² 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

2.1 OVERVIEW OF AN ERC APPLICATION

An ERC application is composed of:

- the submission form (Part A) **including the detailed budget table, description of resources (Section 3 – Budget) and time commitment (Section 5 – Other questions);**
- completed Part B1 template (Extended Synopsis, Curriculum Vitae, Track Record);
- completed Part B2 template (Scientific Proposal: a. State-of-the-art and objectives; b. Methodologies);
- completed HI support letter;
- if applicable, any additional supporting documentation related to ethics and security issues.

2.2 THE SUBMISSION FORM

The submission form is accessed via the call submission link in the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#). The electronic form has 5 sections (approximately 25 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 (see [Annex 4.5](#)).**

1 – General Information contains information about the research proposal, including the project duration, title, acronym and abstract. Furthermore, in this section you will select the ERC evaluation panel which you believe is best suited to evaluate the research proposal. If the proposal covers several scientific disciplines you may indicate a 'secondary review panel'. You may indicate up to four ERC keywords as listed in [Annex 4.1](#) that cover your proposal subject. 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 the 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 Europe²³. 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 PI and the HI. One section will appear for each beneficiary. The name and e-mail of contact persons including the PI and HI contact are **read-only**. Further details such as ORCID number, researcher ID, other ID, last name at birth, gender, nationality etc., should be provided for the PI as well as the address and telephone number of each contact person. The PI’s mobile number is an essential information for the Step 2 interview logistics.

This section contains new fields compared to previous calls under the below headings:

- Gender Equality Plan (GEP): ‘yes/no’ tick box question to be filled in by the HI contact person. Only Public bodies, Higher education establishments and Research organisations must answer this question. This answer will not affect the evaluation of the project.

²³ 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.

The requirement of having a Gender Equality Plan (with minimum prerequisites²⁴) will not apply for the ERC 2021 calls. Please note, that the absence of the Gender Equality Plan will not prevent the signature of the grant agreement for the ERC 2021 Calls.

- Person in charge of the proposal (Principal Investigator): on this page there is a new field on the 'career stage' of the PI. 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 the proposal budget including the total estimated eligible project costs and the requested EU contribution for the project. The costs are given in whole Euros (not kilo Euros). A description and justification of the resources should be provided in the text box (Section C. Resources) under the budget table.

The budget table and description of resources will be made available to the independent external experts evaluating the proposal. The Section C. Resources has a maximum length of 8000 characters (including spaces). Please refer to [section 2.3](#) for further instruction on how to draw up the budget.

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 apply 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

²⁴ Public GEP: formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management, addressing the following issues:

- Dedicated resources: commitment of human resources and gender expertise to implement it.
- Data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel and students and annual reporting based on indicators.
- Training: Awareness raising/trainings on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.
- Minimum areas to be covered and addressed via concrete measures and targets:
 - work-life balance and organisational culture;
 - gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
 - gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
 - integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
 - measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

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. AdG applicants are expected to commit as a minimum 30% of their working time to the ERC project. The personnel cost for the PI provided in section “3 - Budget” cannot be higher than the percentage indicated in this section. This information will be provided to the independent external experts at Step 2 together with section “3 - Budget” (see [Annex 4.3](#)).

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

Finally, this section also contains a specific declaration confirming that, at the time of submission, the applicant PI has the written consent of all participants and researchers mentioned in the proposal²⁵.

As established in section 3.3 of the [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#), applicant PIs may identify up to three reviewers to be excluded from the evaluation of their proposal.

2.3 THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal consists of Part B1, Part B2 and Section 3 – Budget and time commitment from section 5 – “Other questions” (present in the submission form – Part A). The templates of Part B1 and Part B2 are provided in the submission system and their use is **strongly recommended**. Each proposal page **shall** carry a **header** presenting the **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 cm top and 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 them²⁶.

²⁵ The applicant 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 PI or member of the advisory board). Please note that the ERCEA may request the applicant PI at any time during the evaluation, to provide proof of the written consent obtained prior to the call submission deadline.

²⁶ The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. Therefore, the evaluation reports will be available in English only. If the proposal is not in English, the ERCEA will provide a version of the proposal translated using computer-aided technology. An English translation of the abstract must be included in the proposal.

Be aware that at **Step 1 only Part B1** is evaluated by the panel members (they have no access to – other parts and sections). At **Step 2 Parts B1, B2 and Section 3 – Budget and time commitment** are evaluated by panel members and Remote Reviewers. When drafting Part B1, pay particular attention to the Extended Synopsis (section a) and do not think of it as simply complementing Part B2. It is important that Part B1 contains all essential information.

During the Step 1 evaluation the panel members' expertise covers a wide range of proposals within a research field. The panel members are asked to act as generalists when evaluating the proposals. Further expertise on each proposal retained to Step 2 is brought to the evaluation by Remote Reviewers. Remote Reviewers are scientists and scholars who do not participate in the panel meetings and who deliver their individual reviews before the Step 2 panel meeting.

Part B1 (References should be included – they do not count towards the page limit)

The Part B1 cover page should list the name of the PI and HI, the title, acronym and abstract of the proposal as well as the project duration (in months). The abstract should be a maximum of 2000 characters and must be a copy/paste of the abstract from the submission form, section 1. For interdisciplinary/cross-panel proposals please indicate the additional ERC review panel(s) and explain why the proposal needs to be considered by more than one panel.

Section a: Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal (max. 5 pages) should contain all essential information including the feasibility of the scientific proposal since the panel will only evaluate Part B1 at Step 1. References should be included (they do not count towards the page limits).

Section b: Curriculum vitae (max. 2 pages) should follow the suggested template. Hyperlinks should be avoided, as experts are under no obligation to review external documents. Include (and explain) any career breaks or unconventional career paths, so that professional achievements are fairly assessed by the evaluation panels. List also any on-going grants and on-going and submitted grant applications in the funding ID table (this table will not count towards the page limits). Please note that also grants where your participation was *pro bono*, i.e. no funds were received, should be listed.

Section c: 10 years track-record (max. 2 pages) should list important achievements, including up to 10 of the most important publications²⁷. The track-record can be extended beyond ten years, in case of certain career breaks, as foreseen in the ERC WP, provided they are duly reported in Section b: Curriculum vitae. The publications should be properly referenced, including all authors in the published order (see section 1.1 on Research integrity). Field relevant bibliometric indicators as well as research monographs, any translations may also be included. If applicable include: granted patent(s); invited presentations to internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools; Prizes/Awards/Academy memberships etc.

Part B2 (References should be included – they do not count towards the page limit)

The limit of 14 pages applicable to the 'Scientific Proposal' as per the ERC WP 2021 will apply to Part B2.

Section a: State-of-the-art and objectives. Specify the proposal objectives in the context of the state of the art in the research field. It should be clear how and why the proposed work is important for

²⁷ Preprints should be freely available from a preprint server; they should be properly referenced and either a link to the preprint or a DOI should be provided.

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. Highlight any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi- or inter-disciplinary aspects.

Section b: Methodology. Describe the proposed methodology in detail including any key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state of the art, and particularly novel or unconventional aspects addressing the 'high-risk/high-gain' balance. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.

Section 3 – Budget (included in the online submission form)

PLEASE NOTE: The budget table and description of resources are part of the online submission form (Section 3 – Budget). The description of resources (Section C. Resources, text box under the budget table) should provide a clear description of the costs and justification of the proposal budget.

With the exception of clear mistakes (detected cases of obvious clerical error²⁸), in case of inconsistencies between the budget table and the description of resources, the figures entered in the budget table will prevail.

Budget table

The ERC funds up to 100% of the total eligible costs. The costs cover the full project duration²⁹. This includes the direct costs of the project plus a flat-rate financing of indirect costs calculated as 25% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding the direct eligible costs for subcontracting, and any unit costs, which already include indirect costs). The flat rate is automatically calculated by the system. Only Euro integers should be used when preparing the budget table.

The budget table is subdivided in different cost categories:

- A. Direct personnel costs** (PI, senior staff, post docs, students, other personnel costs).
- B. Subcontracting costs** (no indirect costs).
- C. Purchase costs** [travel and subsistence, equipment (including major equipment), consumables (including fieldwork and animal costs), publications (including any costs related to Open Access fees) and dissemination, and other additional direct costs].
- D. Internally invoiced goods and services** (no indirect costs).

If **additional funding**³⁰ above the ceiling of 2.500.000 € is requested for (a) covering eligible 'start-up' costs for a PI moving from another country to the EU or an AC 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)

²⁸ See Articles 151 and 200.3 of the Financial Regulation and section 2.3 of ERC Rules of Submission and Evaluation.

²⁹ The maximum award is reduced pro rata temporis for projects of a shorter duration (e.g. for a project of 48 months the maximum requested EU contribution allowed is 2.000.000 €). 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 3.000.000 € for a project of 48 months).

³⁰ 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").

other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs, the request has to be **fully justified it in the description of the resources and the figures included in the budget table**. Please note that any additional funding request under (a), (b) and (d) may be subject to 25% overhead.

In case the total estimated eligible costs differ from the requested EU contribution, specify in Section C. Resources what exactly is funded from other sources. Please carefully check all values of the budget table. **The requested EU contribution has to be filled in manually. Please make sure to update the 'Requested EU contribution' if updates are made in any of the cost categories.**

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 used for ERC actions](#).

Section C. Resources (Text box below the budget table: maximum 8000 characters allowed including spaces)

1. State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the research objectives. The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. The requested budget should be fully justified and in proportion to the actual needs. Describe all the cost categories considered necessary for the project. The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully: **unjustified budgets will be reduced**. **2.** Specify your commitment in terms of percentage of working time you are willing to devote to the proposed project³¹ and, if applicable, the percentage of salary claimed on the grant. **3.** Describe the size and nature of the team, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles. In case one or more team members are engaged by another host institution, their participation has to be fully justified with respect to the scientific added value they bring to the project. Describe the staff included under the 'Other personnel costs' category. Specify all cost items included under the 'Other additional direct costs' category. **4.** Include a short technical description of any requested equipment, why it is needed and the planned usage for the project. **5.** 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. **6.** 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. **7.** Describe any existing resources not requiring EU funding that will be used for the project, such as infrastructure and equipment.

The information entered in section 3 - Budget (including "Section C. Resources") of the administrative submission form (Part A) together with the time commitment enter in section 5 of the administrative submission form (Part A) will be provided to the independent external experts in the form of Proposal Budget Report for their assessment. An example of Proposal Budget Report is shown in [Annex 4.3](#).

2.4 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading them electronically in PDF format:

- **Host Institution support letter** please make sure to use the new 2021 template. As applicant's legal entity, the HI must confirm its support to the project and to the PI. As part of

³¹ You are expected to dedicate as a minimum 30% of your working time to the ERC project.

the application, the institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful. The template letter is part of the zip-file available in the submission system (see [Annex 4.2](#)). The complete text should be copied and printed on paper with the official letterhead of the HI, originally signed, stamped and dated by the institution's legal representative. **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.

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 into any other official EU language.**

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.**

All annexes, i.e. the host institution support letter 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 [Funding & Tenders 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 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.
- 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 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

The 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 2021 are published on the [ERC website](#), the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#), and in the [Official Journal](#) of the European Union.

USER GUIDANCE

- proposals must be submitted electronically using the electronic submission system of the web-based [Funding & Tenders Portal](#) (F&T Portal)³²;
- the [user guide](#) of the Submission Service is available online;
- the [IT HOW TO](#) wiki site provides an online IT manual with screenshots;
- the F&T Portal [Online Manual](#) describes the standard process of proposal submission.

The submission of an ERC proposal includes 6 practical Steps:

Step 1 and 2 – Logging in and Selection of the call

To be able to create and submit a proposal and, in general to login to the Funding & Tenders Portal, first [register an EU Login account](#) (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 evaluation³³. Under the “Search” function, you may search for ERC-2021-ADG (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

Here, you fill in the pre-registration data for the proposal. These data will be used by the ERCEA in order to plan the evaluation. Once this page is completed and you will progress to the next Step, you will not be able to return to this page, but certain data, such as Acronym (maximum 20 characters) and Short Summary (abstract) can be modified at a later stage (i.e. when editing the submission forms). **Be careful to choose the correct Participant Identification Code (PIC) number for your 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.

Step 4 – Participants (manage your partners and/or edit contact details)

At this Step, you MUST enter the name and e-mail of the PI and the Main Host Institution Contact person³⁴. You may also add the LEAR as a contact person (e.g. as a team member with read-only rights). These data are saved into the submission form where they cannot be edited. You may, at any time before submission, return to the “Participants List” and add or delete any contact person and/or change the access rights. In case you foresee partner organizations in your proposal, their contact details must also be entered. Remember always to save your data before leaving the “Participants

³² In duly justified exceptional circumstances the ERCEA may authorise submission on paper.

³³ Further details are available here: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/eim/external/help.cgi>

³⁴ Be careful to type the correct e-mail address of the PI and all contact persons at this Step. Please note that if the Principal Investigator and the administrative contact person is the same person (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.

List” page. Once the changes are saved, an automatic invitation is sent to all contacts' e-mail addresses. The persons invited as participants can access the proposal after logging in to the Funding & Tenders Portal – with the EU Login account linked to the given e-mail address – under the 'My Proposals' tab.

If they have not yet registered an EU Login account, the PI or the applicant legal entity's contact person will receive an activation e-mail inviting them to activate their EU Login account. Following this first activation, the EU Login account will be maintained for subsequent communications or feedback. In order to be able to submit your proposal after saving the changes made in the Participants List (e.g. editing participants' details, adding a partner to the proposal), you have to re-open the submission form ('Edit forms' button), revise the changes, validate and save the form. Failure to do so will prevent you from submitting your proposal. Further details are available in the [Online Manual](#) and [Submission Service User Manual](#).

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 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-marks . 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 blocking error or warning will be listed at the end of the validated form.

Further information on the preparation of the application (the online administrative submission form and Proposal Parts B1 and B2) is given in [section 2](#) 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.
- **Embedded material and any other documents** (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video, multimedia, etc.) sent either electronically or by post to the ERCEA or uploaded directly in the Funding & Tenders Portal **will be disregarded**.

There are 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: Ethical Self-assessment and 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. Any problems such as missing data, wrong file format or excessive file size will appear as a list of warnings and/or errors on the screen. You may submit your proposal with warnings (marked in yellow), but it is not possible to submit a proposal until all errors (marked in red) are corrected. Please note that the electronic checks by the submission system do not replace the formal

admissibility and eligibility review and do not confirm that the contents of these files respond to the requirements of the call.

Step 6 – Manage the submitted Proposal

By hitting the “Submit” button the proposal is submitted. It does not mean that the proposal is valid, admissible and eligible in all respects. After 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. Please, note that this e-mail may end up in the spam folder or be blocked by the anti-spam system of your organisation.

At this Step, you can re-edit the proposal (by clicking on “Edit forms” or uploading revised Part B1 and B2) and update the information in the “Participants List” (Step 4 and 5). **You may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one until the call deadline.** The sequence above must be repeated each time. The last version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one that will be reviewed for admissibility and eligibility and evaluated. No earlier version can be recovered from the submission system.

Check if the proposal is complete. Once submitted, it is recommended to verify the proposal and its content by downloading all submitted files. The ERCEA strongly advises to submit a first version of your proposal at least 48 hours prior to 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 evaluated³⁵. The final version of the proposal must be submitted **before the deadline of the call.**

Warning: Please note that in the last hours prior to call deadline, the download option for 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 [Funding & Tenders 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 selecting “View Submitted” and clicking 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 on the Funding & Tenders Portal. After the call deadline, proposals may be withdrawn at any moment **until the day preceding the panel meetings** when 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 2021](#).

To withdraw a proposal **after the call deadline**, please send an e-mail to the call-specific mailbox ERC-2021-ADG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu and include a signed scanned letter requesting the formal withdrawal. The letter should mention the name and the acronym of the proposal as well as the call identifier (for example ERC-2021-AdG). In the case of two or more proposals submitted by the same PI, the ERCEA services may ask the PI to withdraw one or more of those proposals. In the case of no reaction by the PI to this request, only the first eligible submitted proposal will be evaluated.

³⁵ 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 2021](#).

4. ANNEXES

4.1 ERC EVALUATION PANELS AND KEYWORDS

ERC panels cover all fields of research in three domains: Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE), Life Sciences (LS), and Social Sciences and Humanities (SH).

The list of keywords and descriptors associated to each panel is indicative and not exhaustive; applications are welcomed from all fields and disciplines even if not specifically mentioned under a given panel.

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, forward genetics, genome editing
- 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, Developmental and Regenerative Biology

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
- 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
- LS5_9 Neural basis of cognition
- 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
- 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
- SH1_2 International trade; international management; international business; spatial economics
- SH1_3 Development economics; structural change; political economy of development
- SH1_4 Finance; asset pricing; international finance; market microstructure
- SH1_5 Corporate finance; banking and financial intermediation; accounting; auditing; insurance
- SH1_6 Econometrics; operations research
- SH1_7 Behavioural economics; experimental economics; neuro-economics
- SH1_8 Microeconomic theory; game theory; decision theory
- SH1_9 Industrial organisation; entrepreneurship; R&D and innovation
- SH1_10 Management; strategy; organisational behaviour
- SH1_11 Human resource management; operations management, marketing
- SH1_12 Environmental economics; resource and energy economics; agricultural economics
- SH1_13 Labour and demographic economics
- SH1_14 Health economics; economics of education
- SH1_15 Public economics; political economics; law and economics
- SH1_16 Historical economics; quantitative economic history; institutional economics; economic systems

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, international law
- SH2_4 Legal studies, constitutions, human rights, comparative law

- SH2_5 International relations, global and transnational governance
- SH2_6 Humanitarian assistance and development
- SH2_7 Political and legal philosophy
- SH2_8 Big data in political and legal studies

SH3 The Social World and its Diversity

Sociology, social psychology, social anthropology, 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 Attitudes and beliefs
- SH3_6 Social influence; power and group behaviour
- SH3_7 Kinship; diversity and identities, gender, interethnic relations
- SH3_8 Social policies, welfare, work and employment
- SH3_9 Poverty and poverty alleviation
- SH3_10 Religious studies, ritual; symbolic representation
- SH3_11 Social aspects of teaching and learning, curriculum studies, education and educational policies
- SH3_12 Communication and information, networks, media
- SH3_13 Digital social research
- SH3_14 Social studies of science and technology

SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity

Cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, theoretical philosophy

- SH4_1 Cognitive basis of human development and education, developmental disorders; comparative cognition
- SH4_2 Personality and social cognition; emotion
- SH4_3 Clinical and health psychology
- SH4_4 Neuropsychology
- 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
- SH4_12 Philosophy of mind, philosophy of language
- SH4_13 Philosophy of science, epistemology, logic

SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production

Literary studies, cultural studies, study of the arts, philosophy

- SH5_1 Classics, ancient literature and art
- SH5_2 Theory and history of literature, comparative literature
- SH5_3 Philology; text and image studies
- SH5_4 Visual and performing arts, film, design and architecture
- SH5_5 Music and musicology; history of music
- SH5_6 History of art and architecture, arts-based research
- SH5_7 Museums, exhibitions, conservation and restoration
- SH5_8 Cultural studies, cultural identities and memories, cultural heritage
- SH5_9 Metaphysics, philosophical anthropology; aesthetics
- SH5_10 Ethics and its applications; social philosophy
- SH5_11 History of philosophy
- SH5_12 Computational modelling and digitisation in the cultural sphere

SH6 The Study of the Human Past

Archaeology and history

- SH6_1 Historiography, theory and methods in history, including the analysis of digital data
- SH6_2 Classical archaeology, history of archaeology, social archeology
- SH6_3 General archaeology, archaeometry, landscape archaeology
- SH6_4 Prehistory, palaeoanthropology, palaeodemography, protohistory, bioarchaeology
- SH6_5 Palaeography and codicology
- SH6_6 Ancient history
- SH6_7 Medieval history
- SH6_8 Early modern history
- SH6_9 Modern and contemporary history
- SH6_10 Colonial and post-colonial history
- SH6_11 Global history, transnational history, comparative history, entangled histories
- SH6_12 Social and economic history
- SH6_13 Gender history, cultural history, history of collective identities and memories, history of religions
- SH6_14 History of ideas, intellectual history, history of economic thought
- SH6_15 History of science, medicine and technologies

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
- 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; big data in geographical studies

4.2 HOST INSTITUTION SUPPORT LETTER TEMPLATE 2021

Note that the template has changed: please use this new template

Print on paper bearing the official letterhead of the host institution

Commitment of the host institution for ERC Calls 2021^{36, 37, 38}

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

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

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

be retained.

Performance obligations of the *applicant legal entity* (Host Institution) that will become the coordinator of the HE ERC Grant Agreement (hereafter referred to as the Agreement), should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the Agreement be successfully concluded:

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 principal investigator who is expected to devote:

- in the case of a Starting Grant at least 50% of her/his working time to the ERC-funded project (action) and spend at least 50% of her/his working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country;
- in the case of a Consolidator Grant at least 40% of her/his working time to the ERC-funded project (action) and spend at least 50% of her/his working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country;
- in the case of an Advanced Grant at least 30% of her/his working time to the ERC-funded project (action) and spend at least 50% of her/his working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country.

³⁶ A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal in PDF format.

³⁷ The statement of commitment of the host institution refers to most obligations of the host institution, which are stated in the [Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions](#) (MGA). The MGA is available on the [F&T Portal](#). The reference to the time commitment of the Principal Investigator is stated in the [ERC Work Programme 2021](#).

³⁸ This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be signed by the institution's legal representative indicating their name, function, email address along with the stamp of the institution.

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

- a) host and engage the principal investigator 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 Researchers³⁹ — in particular regarding working conditions, transparent recruitment processes based on merit and career development — and ensure that the principal investigator, researchers and third parties involved in the action are aware of them;
- c) enter — before grant signature— into a Supplementary Agreement with the principal investigator, that specifies the obligation of the applicant legal entity to meet its obligations under the Agreement;
- d) provide the principal investigator with a copy of the signed Agreement;
- e) guarantee the principal investigator 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 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 action — research support to the principal investigator and the team members (regarding infrastructure, equipment, access rights, products and other services necessary for conducting the research);
- g) support the principal investigator and provide administrative assistance, in particular for the:
 - i) general management of the work and their team;
 - ii) scientific reporting, especially ensuring that the team members send their scientific results to the principal investigator;
 - iii) financial reporting, especially providing timely and clear financial information;
 - iv) application of the beneficiary's usual management practices;

³⁹[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).

- v) general logistics of the action;
- vi) access to the electronic exchange system;
- h) inform the principal investigator immediately (in writing) of any events or circumstances likely to affect the Agreement;
- i) ensure that the principal investigator 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 principal investigator 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**⁴⁰. **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 of legal representative

_____ ; _____

Stamp of the applicant legal entity (Host Institution)

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to be complete all the above mentioned items are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the host institution.

⁴⁰[The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) of ALLEA (All European Academies) and ESF (European Science Foundation) of March 2011.

4.3 PROPOSAL BUDGET REPORT⁴¹

Proposal number	999999
Acronym	ERC proposal
Title	Title describing the ERC proposal
Evaluation panel	XXx
Principal Investigator	First Name, Last Name
Host Institution	Name of Institution, country
Project duration	xx months (this information will be extracted from the administrative submission form, 1 - General information)
Time commitment of the PI to the project	xx% (this information will be extracted from the administrative submission form, section 5 - Other questions)

Budget summary

Beneficiary organisation(s)	Total cost (€)	Requested AMT (€)
1. Name of Institution, country	x,xxx,xxx.00	xxx,xxx.00

Budget details

Cost Category / Beneficiary		Name of Institution	Total	
A. Personnel costs	PI	xx	xx	
	Senior Staff	xx	xx	
	Postdocs	xx	xx	
	Students	xx	xx	
	Other Personnel costs	xx	xx	
Total Personnel costs		Xxx	Xxx	
B. Subcontracting costs (no indirect costs)		xx	xx	
C. Purchase costs	C.1 Travel and subsistence		xx	xx
	C.2. Equipment incl. major equipment		xx	xx
	C.3 Other goods, works and services	Consumables incl. fieldwork and animal costs	xx	xx
		Publications (incl. Open Access fees) and dissemination	xx	xx
		Other additional direct costs	xx	xx
C.3 Total other goods, works and services		Xx	Xx	
Total Purchase costs (C1 + C2 + C3)		Xxx	Xxx	
D. Internally invoiced goods and services (no indirect costs)		Xx	Xx	
E. Indirect costs (= 25% * (A + C1 + C2 + C3))		Xxx	Xxx	
Total eligible costs (A + B + C + D + E)		X.xxx.xxx	X.xxx.xxx	
Requested EU contribution		X.XXX.XXX	X.XXX.XXX	

⁴¹ This is an example of how the Proposal Budget Report looks like for the independent external experts. Please note that the layout may be further adapted when needed and in case of partner organization.

Section C. Resources

I plan to allocate (one to max. two descriptive text pages) – max. 8000 characters

If applicable, please specify the cost items covered by your '*Other personnel costs*' category and the cost items covered by your '*Other additional direct costs*' category if applicable.

Request for additional funding if applicable (All items MUST be included in the overall budget table above): xxx (Cost in EUR)

Justification:

4.4 DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

All [legal notices](#) are accessible on the F&T Portal.

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

4.5 LIST OF BLOCKING FIELDS and WARNINGS IN THE ONLINE SUBMISSION FORM

BLOCKING FIELDS: The submission of the proposal will be blocked unless the error/missing entry is corrected

Section 1 – General Information

Acronym, Title, Duration, Primary ERC Review Panel, ERC Keyword 1, Abstract

Declaration on explicit consent on participation and content of the proposal

Section 2 – Participants

PI: First name, Last name and E-mail (can only be entered in the Participants section in the submission system)

PI: Nationality, Date of birth, Gender, Country of birth, Place of birth, Town, Country

Main contact person (for ERC HI contact person): contact First name, Last name and email (can only be entered in the Participants section in the submission system)

Section 3 - Budget

The total Requested EU contribution must not be zero (0.00)

Section 4 – Ethics and security

No blocking fields

Section 5 – Other questions

Percentage of working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country over the period of the grant

Percentage of working time the PI dedicates to the project over the period of the grant

Declaration of acknowledgement of eligibility requirements

Conformation of written consent obtained from participants and researchers

WARNINGS: The submission of the proposal will not be blocked

Section 1 – General Information

Previous submission of similar proposal

Non mandatory declarations

Section 2 – Participants

PI: ORCID number, Last name at Birth, Country of residence, Contact address

Contact address of HI and contact person:

Gender, Position in org. Department, address

Section 3 – Budget

Budget table: Field of Total Eligible Costs and Requested EU contribution per participant is zero (0.00)

Section C. Resources has less than 1500 characters

Section 4 – Ethics and security

Declaration of assessment of ethics issues

Section 5 – Other questions

Date of earliest award (PhD or equivalent)

Sharing of evaluation data: consent to disclose the results, name and proposal details if not funded due to budget limitations; consent to publish name and proposal details if funded.