

The European Research Council

ERC Grants: General overview and novelties in WP 2026

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ERC funding opportunities for researchers in Poland



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Overview

- What is the ERC?
- Overview of ERC Grants
- Evaluation and novelties in WP 2026

ERC is part of Horizon Europe



EUR 16 billion
ERC budget in Horizon Europe



17%
of the entire
Horizon Europe budget

ERC Scientific Council

Life Sciences



Geneviève
Almouzni
Molecular Cell
Biology



Liselotte
Højgaard
Medicine



Leszek
Kaczmarek
Neurobiology



Dirk
Inzé
Plant Biology



Luke
O'Neill
Biochemistry and
Immunology



Jesper
Svejstrup
Vice-President
Biochemistry



Maria Leptin
ERC President
Cell Biology



Gerd
Gigerenzer
Vice-President
Psychology



Eystein
Jansen
Vice-President
Earth Science

Social Sciences and Humanities



Harriet
Bulkeley
Geography



Mercedes
García-Arenal
History



Torsten
Persson
Economics



Giovanni
Sartor
Law



Milena
Žic Fuchs
Linguistics

Physical Sciences and Engineering



Conny
Aerts
Astrophysics



Tom
Henzinger
Computer
Science



Maarit
Karppinen
Chemistry



Sylvie
Lorente
Mechanical
Engineering



Björn
Ottersten
Electrical
Engineering



Tomaž Prosen
Physics



Nicola
Spaldin
Materials Theory



András
Stipsicz
Mathematics



ERC structure

The ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure - ERC Executive Agency

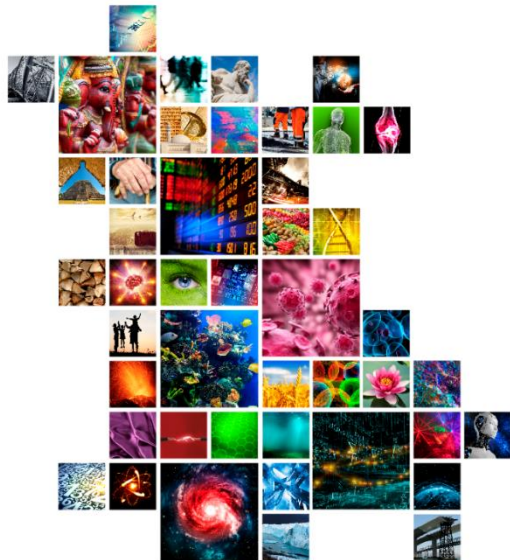
- Executes annual work programme as established by the Scientific Council
- Implements calls for proposals and provides information and support to applicants
- Organises peer review evaluation
- Establishes and manages grant agreements
- Administers scientific and financial aspects and follow-up of grant agreements
- Carries out communications activities and ensures information dissemination to ERC stakeholders



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ERC basics



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INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

**LONG TERM
GRANTS**

TO PIONEERING PROJECTS

IN ANY FIELD OF FRONTIER RESEARCH



Life Sciences



Physical Sciences and Engineering



Social Sciences and Humanities



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Why to apply for ERC grant?

ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility to:

- work on a research topic of own choice
- gain financial autonomy for five years (six years for Synergy)
- negotiate the best conditions of work with the host institution
- attract excellent team members and collaborators from anywhere in the world
- move with the grant to any place in Europe/AC if desired (“portability of grants”)
- win additional funding

ERC funding schemes 2026



Starting Grants

Starters (2-7 years after PhD)
up to **€ 1.5 Mio** for 5 years



Advanced Grants

Already established research leaders with a
recognized track record of research achievements

lump sum up to **€ 2.5 Mio** for 5 years

Final payment will be based on the work carried out and
reported; portability maintained

**New
instrument:**
(substantial
funding for up to
7 years)



Consolidator Grants

Consolidators (7-12 years after PhD)
up to **€ 2 Mio** for 5 years



Synergy Grants

2 – 4 Principal Investigators

up to **€ 10.0 Mio** for **6 years**

1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated Countries



Proof-of-Concept (ERC grant holders)

bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation

lump sum €150,000 for 18 months

Additional funding (+ new features as from WP2026)

- **Increased ERC funding for top global researchers moving to Europe:** Additional funding of up to **€2 million** for researchers currently based outside Europe or associated country applying for Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grants.
- On top of its standard grants, the ERC has always offered additional funding for major costs not covered by the main grant. Applicants already based in an EU Member State or associated country remain eligible for up to **€1 million** of additional funding (for Starting, Consolidator and Advanced grant)
- Additional funding for Synergy Grant applicants is up to **€4 million**

Evaluation panel structure (STG, COG, ADG)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering



Physical Sciences & Engineering

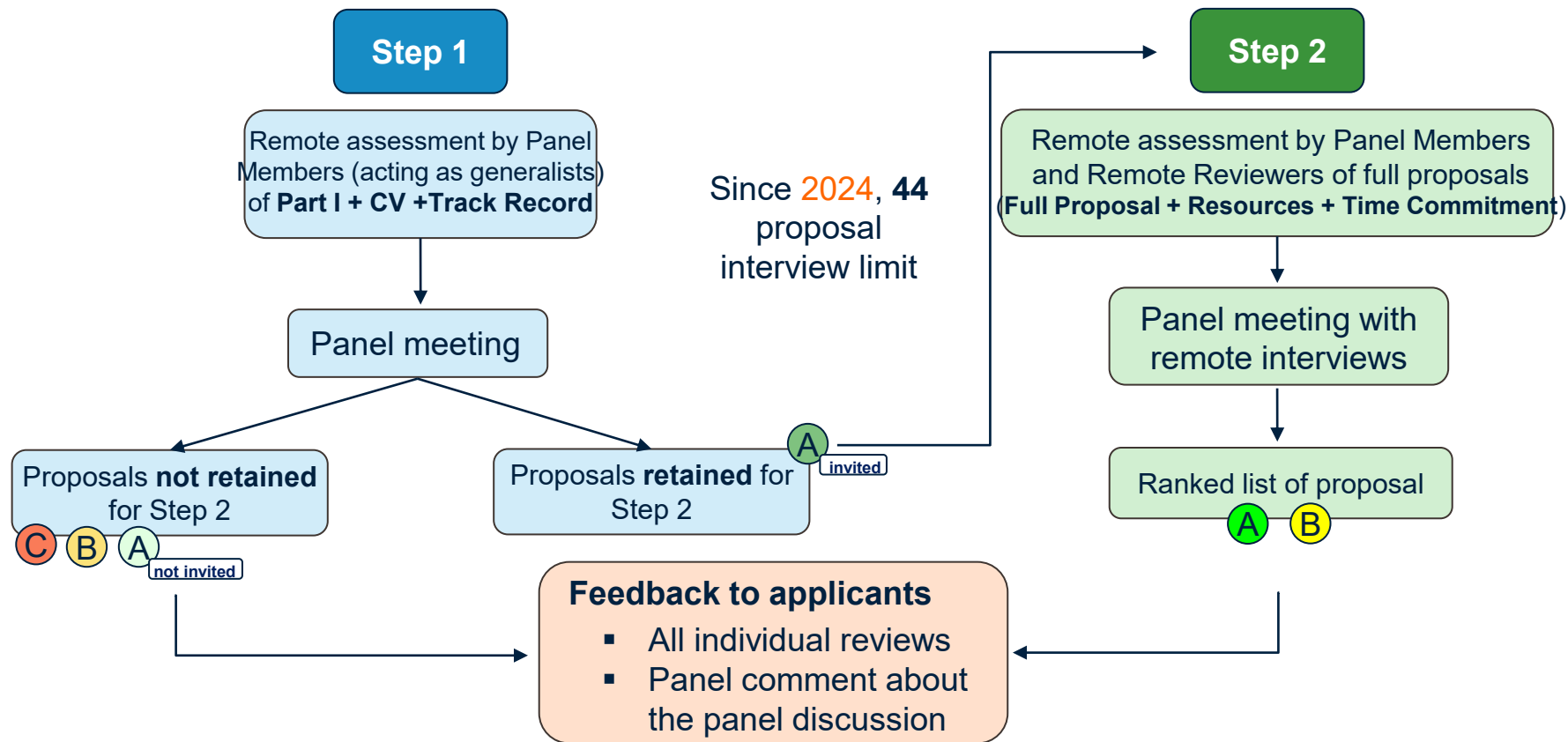
- PE1 Mathematics
- PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
- PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
- PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
- PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
- PE6 Computer Science and Informatics
- PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering
- PE8 Products and Processes Engineering
- PE9 Universe Sciences
- PE10 Earth System Science
- PE11 Materials Engineering

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts

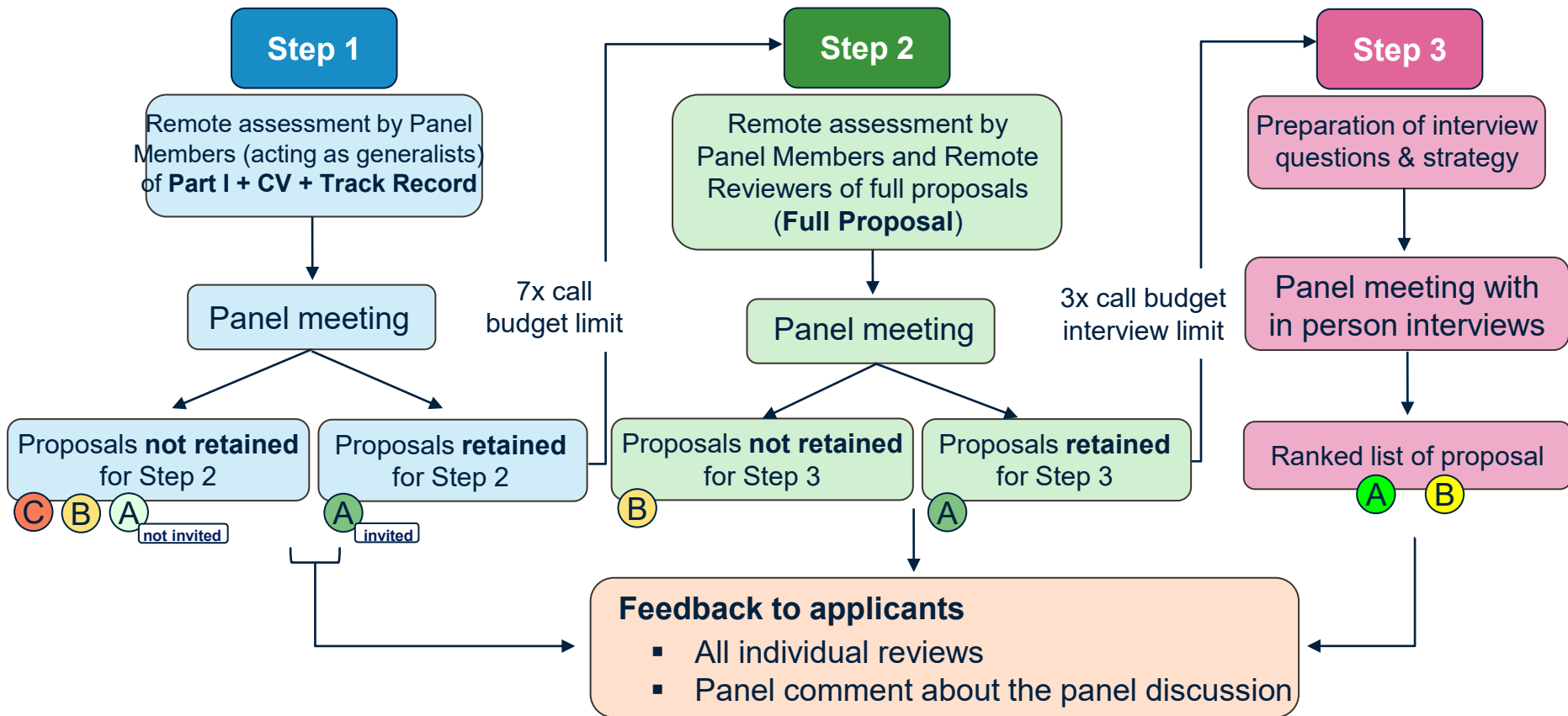
Evaluation process

For **StG**, **CoG** and **AdG**: a single submission but a two-step evaluation



Evaluation process

For **SyG**: a single submission but a three-step evaluation



What changes in 2026?

Grant application

- New structure of the scientific proposal:
 - Scientific Proposal Part I (under 5 pages) should describe the overall idea of the proposed research project;
 - Scientific Proposal Part II (under 7 pages or 10 pages for Synergy Grant) should describe the implementation in detail: the research methodology, work plan, risk assessment etc.

The panels will use Part I for evaluation at Step 1 and both parts together for their evaluation at Step 2.

- Step 1: Part I + CV and Track Record
- Step 2: Full Research Proposal (Part I + Part II) + Resources and Time Commitment

ERC grants – Evaluation criteria



Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion

- Excellence of the **Research Project**
 - ✓ Ground-breaking nature
 - ✓ Ambition
- Excellence of the **Principal Investigator**
 - ✓ Intellectual capacity
 - ✓ Creativity
 - ✓ Scientific expertise and capacity to execute the project



Since **2024** the evaluation is primarily focused on the **research project**

Approach for Evaluation in 2026

Evaluation

- Applicants will be assessed on the ambition of their idea in advancing present-day knowledge in the field
- Feasibility of the scientific approach will no longer be assessed at Step 1.
- Combination of scientific approaches to address scope and complexity of research questions in Synergy Grant will now be assessed at Step 2 (instead of Step 1);
- Applicants to SyG 2025, who have obtained a score 'B' at Step 1 will not be eligible for SyG 2026 call.

Preparing your proposal

...make sure you are eligible!

1. Reference date for the calculation of the Eligibility window: **1st of January of the year of the Call**
StG2026: 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2023
CoG2026: 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018
 - *Extensions of eligibility window possible for documented cases*
2. If you previously applied to an ERC call, check **resubmission restrictions**
 - *Indicative submission restrictions for the StG, CoG and AdG2026 calls same as in the past*
 - ***For SyG2026: Applicants to Synergy Grant 2025 call who have obtained a score 'B' at Step 1 will not be eligible for the Synergy Grant 2026 call***
3. Time **commitment on the project**: Min. 50% (StG), 40% (CoG), 30% (AdG + SyG)
4. Minimum 50% of PI **working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country**, for SyG: this only applies to PIs engaged and hosted by an institution in the EU or an AC

Contrary to what you may think

- The **budget** is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand → success rate is equal amongst panels → **choose the Panel that is right for your proposal!**
- **Publication record** is not decisive in selection decisions;
- You do not have to apply for the maximum **budget**;
- The **Host Institution** is not an evaluation criterion;
- The **success rate** is not linked to academic age;
- The **panel descriptors** do not represent ERC scientific priorities; **any topic/field** is equally welcome;
- If you **fail**, try again! Gain experience from evaluation. Panel feedback is useful and resubmissions have higher success rate (typically 1.5 times higher).



2025-2026 Calendar

ERC calls	Call Opening	Submission Deadline
Starting Grants ERC-2026-StG	9 July 2025	14 October 2025
Consolidator Grants ERC-2026-CoG	25 September 2025	13 January 2026
Advanced Grants ERC-2026-AdG	28 May 2026	27 August 2026
Synergy Grants ERC-2026-SyG	10 July 2025	5 November 2025
Proof of Concept ERC-2026-PoC	13 November 2025	17 March 2026 (deadline 1) 18 September 2026 (deadline 2)



Where can you find more information?



Videos - ERC Classes

- What to consider before applying (Eligibility)
- How to fill in the application
- The interview
- How the evaluation works

[Click here to watch!](#)

Take a chance and apply!

Thank You!

More information: erc.europa.eu



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