

# The European Research Council

## European Research Council (ERC): Funding opportunities

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Future Funding Landscape



**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

# ERC is part of Horizon Europe

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**EUR 16 billion**  
ERC budget in Horizon Europe



**17%**  
of the entire  
Horizon Europe budget



European Research Council  
Established by the European Commission



# About the ERC

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## Scientific governance

- Independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President, with full authority over strategy
- Supported by a Dedicated Implementation Structure, the ERC Executive Agency

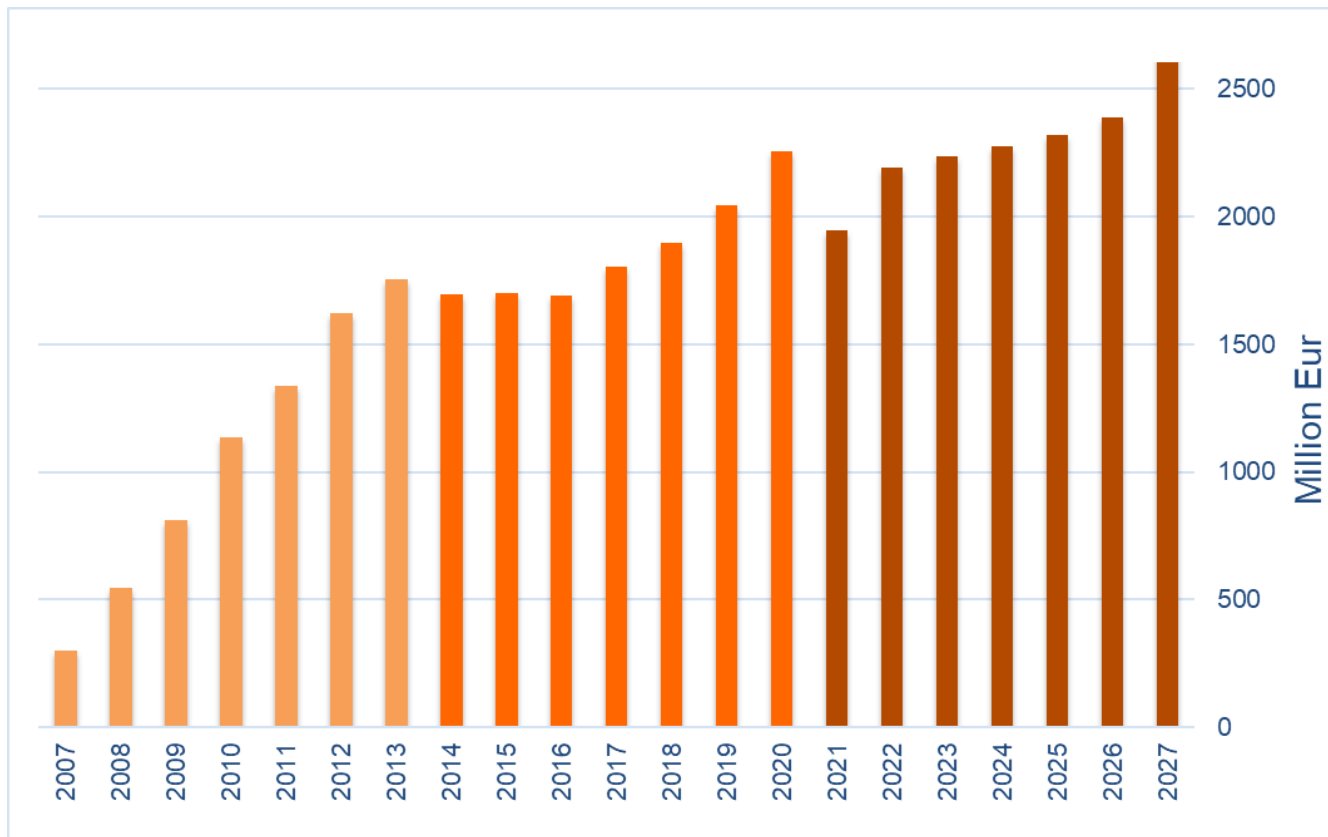
## Scientific freedom

- Scientific excellence as the sole criterion
- Support to the individual scientist – *no consortia!*
- No predetermined subjects – “*bottom-up*”
- Support for frontier research in all fields of science and humanities
- International peer-review



# ERC budget 2007 – 2027: EUR 36.5 billion

- FP7: €7.5 billion
- H2020: €13 billion
- HE: €16 billion



# Why apply for an ERC grant?

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ERC offers independence, recognition & visibility to:

- work on a research topic of own choice
- gain financial autonomy for five years
- 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 if desired (“portability of grants”)
- win additional funding

# ERC grant schemes

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## Starting Grants

starters (2-7 years after PhD) up to €1.5 Million  
for 5 years



## Consolidator Grants

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



## Advanced Grants

track-record of significant research achievements  
up to €2.5 Million  
for 5 years



## Synergy Grants

2 – 4 Principal Investigators up to €10 Million for 6  
years  
1 PI can be based outside EU/Associated  
Countries



## Proof-of-Concept

bridging gap between research - earliest stage of marketable innovation  
lump sum €150,000 for ERC grant holders



## Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

### Excellence of the Research Project

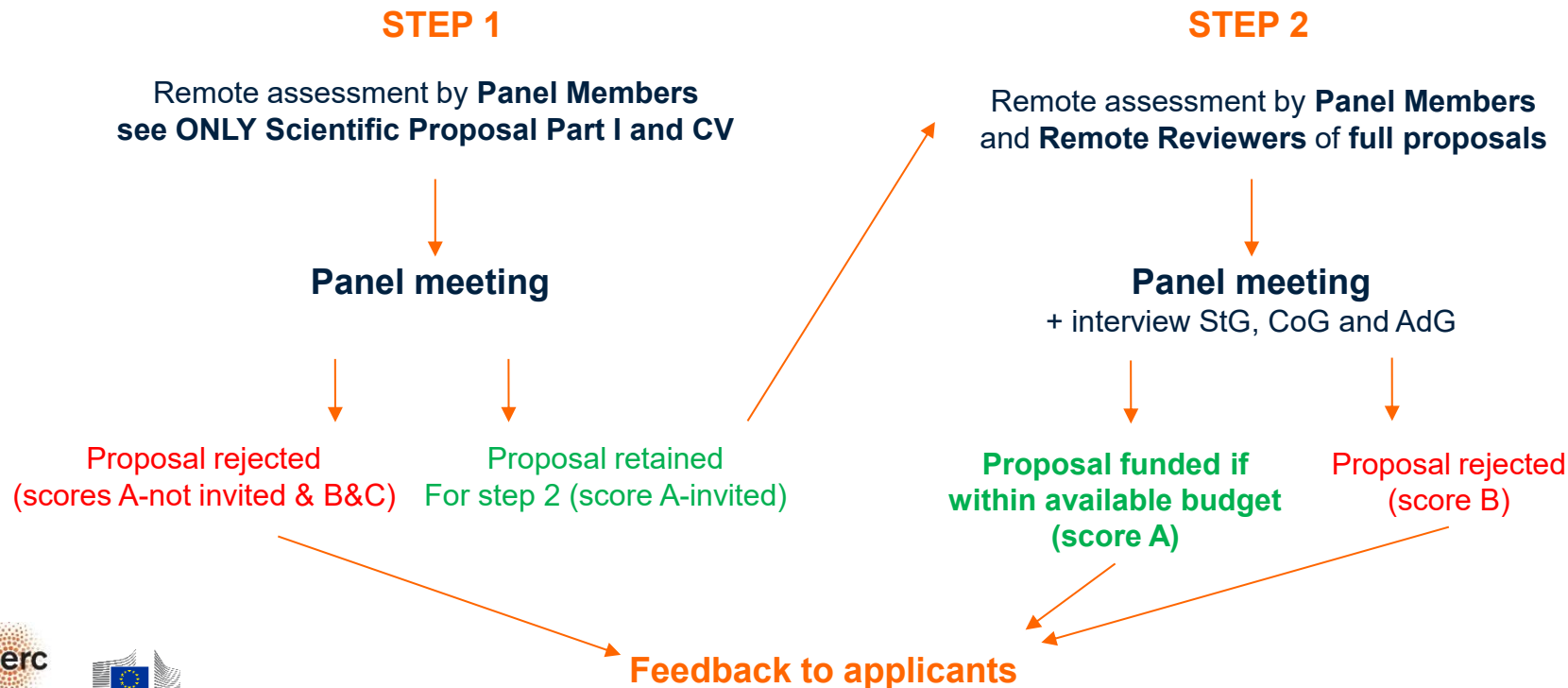
- Ground-breaking nature
- Ambition
- Feasibility of the research project

### Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity
- Commitment

# Evaluation: process

For individuals calls: a single submission but a two-step evaluation





# Evaluation panel structure (2025-2026)

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## 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

# Contrary to what you may think

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- The budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand
- The panel descriptors do not represent ERC scientific priorities
- The success rate is not linked to academic age
- Publication record is not decisive in selection decisions
- The Host Institution is not an evaluation criterion



# What changes in 2026?

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- **Increased ERC funding for researchers moving to Europe:** Additional funding of up to €2 million for researchers currently based outside Europe 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.
- The ERC is working on a new funding instrument to offer ambitious researchers substantial funding for up to seven years, as part of the Choose Europe for Science initiative.



# What changes in 2026?

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## Grant application

- New structure of the scientific proposal:
  - Scientific Proposal Part I (up to 5 pages) should describe the overall idea of the proposed research project;
  - Scientific Proposal Part II (up to 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.



# Approach for Evaluation in 2026

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## Evaluation

- Applicants will be assessed on the ambition of their idea in advancing present-day knowledge in the field based on Part I of the Scientific Proposal.
- Feasibility of the scientific approach will no longer be assessed at Step 1. The proposed timescales and resources will be assessed at Step 2 of the evaluation. The PI time commitment will be verified during the eligibility checks;
- 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);
- One general category for additional funding without pre-defined sub-categories (for both actual and lump sum cost models);
- Applicants to SyG 2025, who have obtained a score 'B' at Step 1 will not be eligible for SyG 2026 call.



# ERC plus – to be added to the 2026 ERC Work Programme

## New funding instrument

The ERC Scientific Council is currently working on a new instrument to offer ambitious researchers substantial funding for up to seven years, as part of the **Choose Europe for Science** initiative announced by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. More details about the modalities will follow in due course. The new funding instrument will be included in an amended version of the ERC Work Programme 2026 that is expected to be adopted by the end of 2025.

**Up to 7 years  
Up to €7 million**

**Details to be  
published  
later in 2025  
as an amendment to  
ERC Work  
Programme 2026**

# What changes in 2027?

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The eligibility period for both Starting and Consolidator Grant schemes will be widened:

- From 2027 on, researchers will be eligible to apply for a Starting Grant immediately after successfully defending their PhD, and at any time within the following ten-year period.
- Consolidator Grant applicants will be eligible to apply between five and fifteen years after defending their PhD.
- Researchers will be awarded no more than one Starting Grant and one Consolidator Grant during their career.
- The rules for the extension of the eligibility periods will remain in place.



# Preparing your proposal

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**In Step 1: Panel members** see only **Part B1** of the proposal (prepare it accordingly!)

## **Part B1: Find the right balance**

- ✓ Innovative? Beyond state-of-art?  
Realistic/feasible?
- ✓ Outline state of play (incl. competition)
- ✓ Goals realistic? Think about risk mitigation
- ✓ Be concise & clear  
(also for generalists)
- ✓ Scientific approach

**In Step 2: Part B1 and B2** and **Budget section** are evaluated by Panel Members & Remote Referees

## **Part B2: Fill in the details**

- ✓ No verbatim repetition of synopsis (B1)
- ✓ Detailed state-of-art
- ✓ Extensive methodology and work plan
- ✓ Provide risk mitigation strategies
- ✓ Explain involvement of team members
- ✓ Justify requested resources - Panels have to ensure that the requested resources are reasonable and well justified.

Consider the balance between addressing generalists and specialists, and the difference between part B1 and part B2 of the written proposal



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# You have been invited for an interview

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- Have **clear** presentation and focus on **SCIENCE**.

*Get panel interested in **YOUR ideas** & proposal; Present & defend YOUR ideas (panels want to see that these are your ideas); Don't over-explain your CV.*

- **Anticipate questions**
- Know the **details of your proposal** and methods, as well as your **research area** – who are your main competitors/collaborators?
- **Practice** thoroughly.
- **Keep the time.**



# Typical reasons for rejection – it's all about the right balance!

## Research Project

- Scope: Too narrow  $\leftrightarrow$  too broad/unfocussed
- Incremental  $\leftrightarrow$  unfeasible.
- Collaborative project, several PIs
- Work plan not detailed enough/unclear
- Insufficient risk management
- Part B2 did not give sufficient information on the methodology

## Interview

- Vaguely/not addressed questions
- Panel not convinced it's their own idea/project
- Lack of supporting evidence
- Similar work published in the meantime
- Unaddressed issues

## Principle Investigator

- Insufficient track-record



# Statistics about submission of the ERC grants

Lapland University-  
30 proposals were submitted  
from 2007 to 2025

Evaluation outcome	% proposals
Step 1 C	35%
Step 1 B	55%
Step 2 B	10%
Total	100%

Number of the ERC grants for the top HIs in  
Finland.

Host Institutions	Number grants
Helsingin Yliopisto	123
Aalto Korkeakoulusaatio Sr	59
Jyvaskylan Yliopisto	24
Turun Yliopisto	19
Ita-Suomen Yliopisto	11
Tampereen Korkeakoulusaatio Sr	10
Oulun Yliopisto	10

# Where can you find more information?

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## Videos - ERC Classes

- What to consider before applying
- How to fill in the application
- The interview
- How the evaluation works.

[Click here to watch!](#)

# 2025-2026 Calendar

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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)



# Thank You!

More information: [erc.europa.eu](https://erc.europa.eu)



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