

# Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2020 Calls



**European Research Council**  
Executive Agency

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**Horizon 2020**  
**European Union Funding**  
**for Research & Innovation**

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

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

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

## IMPORTANT TO NOTE

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

- the [ERC Work Programme 2020](#)<sup>1</sup>,
- the ERC Rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Specific Programme of H2020 – the Framework programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter [ERC Rules for Submission](#)), and
- the [ERC Model Grant Agreement](#).

This document does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding.

Should there be any discrepancies between these 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 Starting and Consolidator Grants, provides practical information on the evaluation process

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

### Abbreviations

**AC** – [Associated Country](#)

**ADG** – [Advanced Grant](#)

**COG** – [Consolidator Grant](#)

**EU MS** – EU Member States

**ERC WP** – [ERC Work Programme 2020](#)

**ERC panel** – ERC peer review evaluation panel

**ERC NCP** – [ERC National Contact Points](#)

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

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

**H2020 FP** – [Horizon 2020 Framework](#)

### [Programme](#)

**HI** – Host Institution

**PI** – Principal Investigator

**PM** – Panel Member

**PIC** – [Participant Identification Code](#)

**POC** – [Proof of Concept Grant](#)

**SEP** – Submission and Evaluation of Proposals

**STG** – [Starting Grant](#)

**SYG** – [Synergy Grant](#)

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<sup>1</sup> C(2019) 4904 of 2 July 2019.

<sup>2</sup> C(2017) 4750 of 12 July 2017.

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

# Content

## ERC STARTING AND CONSOLIDATOR GRANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

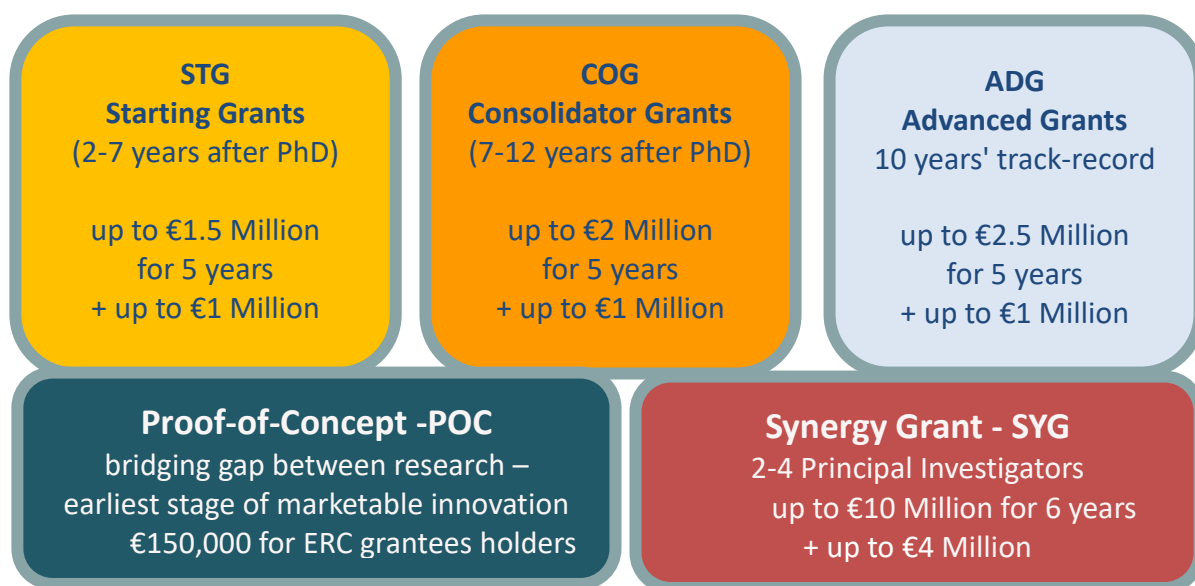
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## 1. ERC STARTING AND CONSOLIDATOR GRANTS 2020

### 1.1 ERC FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants are part of the main ERC frontier research grants 2020 funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The ERC's main frontier research grants aim to empower individual researchers and provide the best settings to foster their creativity. **Scientific excellence** is the sole criterion of evaluation. Please see below an overview of all ERC 2020 calls.



#### Single Principal Investigator (PI) heading research teams

The ERC STG and COG grants support individual researchers that are starting or consolidating their own independent research team or programme 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 engineering<sup>4</sup>. 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 2020. 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.

<sup>4</sup> Research proposals within the scope of Annex I to the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications shall be submitted to relevant calls under the [Euratom Framework Programme](#).

## 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 experts working remotely. The panel chair and members are selected by the ERC Scientific Council on the basis of their scientific merits.

## Open Access

The ERC supports the principle of open access to the published output of research, including research data and data related products. Applicants should be aware that it is mandatory to provide Open Access (free of charge, online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to results from ERC projects funded through this call. In addition, the ERC recommends that all funded researchers follow best practice by retaining files of research data produced and used, and are prepared to share these data with other researchers when not bound by copyright restrictions, confidentiality requirements, or contractual clauses.

## Funding

Starting Grants can be up to a maximum of EUR 1 500 000 for a period of 5 years. Consolidator Grants can be up to a maximum of EUR 2 000 000 for a period of 5 years. For projects of shorter duration the maximum award is reduced pro rata.

However, up to an additional EUR 1 000 000 for STG and COG 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) the purchase of major equipment and/or
- (c) access to large facilities and/or
- (d) other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs.

The ERC reimburses up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and a flat rate of indirect costs corresponding to 25% of the total eligible direct costs<sup>5</sup>.

## Research integrity

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data<sup>6</sup> may result in the rejection of proposals in accordance with section 3.11 of the [ERC Rules for Submission](#). Please also note that plagiarism detection software is used to analyse all submitted proposals to detect similar proposals submitted by different PIs. A procedure has been put 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 in a possible restriction on submission of proposals to future calls, as provided in the relevant ERC Work Programme.

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<sup>5</sup> Excluding the direct costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties, which are not used on the premises of the host institution.

<sup>6</sup> For example if (i) in the list of publications, the order of authors does not appear as indicated in the original publications; (ii) the written consent of the research collaborators mentioned in the proposal is not obtained by the call submission deadline.

## Starting and Consolidator grant profiles

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 efforts in proposals that are very unlikely to succeed.

Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant
A competitive STG PI must have already shown the <u>potential</u> for research independence and evidence of maturity, for example by having produced <u>at least one</u> important publication as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor.	A competitive COG PI must have already shown research independence and evidence of maturity, for example by having produced <u>several</u> important publications as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor.
All PIs should also be able to demonstrate a promising track record of early achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage, including significant publications (as main author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals, or in leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field. They may also demonstrate a record of invited presentations in well-established international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes etc.	

## 1.2 ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible proposals

All proposals must be complete and submitted by eligible Principal Investigators before the relevant call deadlines. Please see [section 2.1](#) for an overview of a complete ERC proposal. All scientific fields are eligible for ERC funding<sup>7</sup>.

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

### Host institution

The HI must engage the PI for at least the duration of the project, as defined in the grant agreement. 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 Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) or any other entity created under EU law. 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

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<sup>7</sup> Please see footnote 4.

clarification and approval during the granting procedure or during the amendment procedure for a change of HI.

### Principal Investigator

ERC grants are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research activity in any EU MS or an 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. If not already employed by the HI, 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.

The requirements in terms of PhD award date<sup>8</sup> are as follows:

Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant
<p>The first PhD shall have been awarded</p> <p>&gt; 2 and ≤ 7 years prior to 1 January 2020</p> <p>Cut-off dates: <b>PhD awarded</b></p> <p><b>from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017</b> (inclusive)</p>	<p>The first PhD shall have been awarded</p> <p>&gt; 7 and ≤ 12 years prior to 1 January 2020</p> <p>Cut-off dates: <b>PhD awarded</b></p> <p><b>from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2012</b> (inclusive)</p>

The eligibility periods set out in the table above can be extended beyond 7 and 12 years for the Starting and Consolidator Grants respectively for certain properly documented circumstances such as for maternity and paternity leave, clinical training, long-term illness or national service (see [Annex 4.4](#) for further details).

The ERC policy on PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees, including specific provisions for holders of medical degrees, is provided in [Annex 4.3](#).

### 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 spend as a minimum 50% for STG and 40% for COG of their working time on the ERC project and a minimum of 50% of their working time in an EU MS or an AC.

### 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 have been introduced as from 2009.

<sup>8</sup> The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period should be the date of the actual award according to the national rules in the country where the degree was awarded (generally, the date of successful defense/viva).

The following general restrictions apply:

- A researcher may participate as PI in only one ERC project at a time<sup>9</sup>. An ERC project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous grant agreement has ended.
- A researcher participating as PI in an ERC project may not submit a proposal for another ERC grant, unless the existing project ends no more than two years after the call deadline<sup>10</sup>.
- A PI who is a serving Panel Member for a 2020 ERC call or who served as a Panel Member for a 2018 ERC call may not apply to a 2020 ERC call for the same type of grant<sup>11</sup>;
- A PI may submit proposals to different ERC grant calls published under the same Work Programme, but only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated.

Additional restrictions are related to the outcome of the evaluation in previous calls (see table below). They are designed to allow unsuccessful PIs the time necessary to develop a stronger proposal. 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 2020
<b>2018 and 2019 Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, or Synergy Grant</b>	Rejected for breach of research integrity	STG, COG, ADG, SYG
<b>2018 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant</b>	C at Step 1	STG, COG, ADG
<b>2018 Synergy Grant</b>	A, or B at Step 3	No restriction
	B at Step 1 or 2	No restriction
	C at Step 1	ADG, SYG
<b>2019 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant</b>	A, or B at Step 2	No restriction
	B or C at Step 1	STG, COG, ADG
<b>2019 Synergy Grant</b>	A, or B at Step 3	No restriction
	B at Step 2	No restriction
	B at Step 1	SYG
	C at Step 1	ADG, SYG

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 2020 ERC call is therefore one that was published under the WP 2020 and will have 2020 in the call identifier (for example ERC-2020-StG).

<sup>9</sup> Including all PIs supported under the Synergy Grant.

<sup>10</sup> According to the duration of the project fixed in the previous frontier research grant agreement.

<sup>11</sup> 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 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 panels

The peer review evaluation is handled by 25 peer review 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 subdivided into three main research domains:

- Physical Sciences and Engineering (10 Panels),
- Life Sciences (9 Panels) and,
- Social Sciences and Humanities (6 Panels).

Before the deadline of a call, the names of the 25 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

Please note that, in accordance with section 3.2 of the [ERC Rules for Submission](#), any direct or indirect contact about the ERC peer review evaluation between an applicant legal entity or a PI submitting a proposal on behalf of an applicant legal entity, and any independent expert involved in the peer review evaluation under the same call, in view of attempting to influence the evaluation process, is strictly forbidden. Such contact can constitute an exclusion situation and, if this situation is established in accordance with Article 136 of the Financial Regulation, will result in the decision to reject the proposal concerned from the call in question.

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

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 proposals at

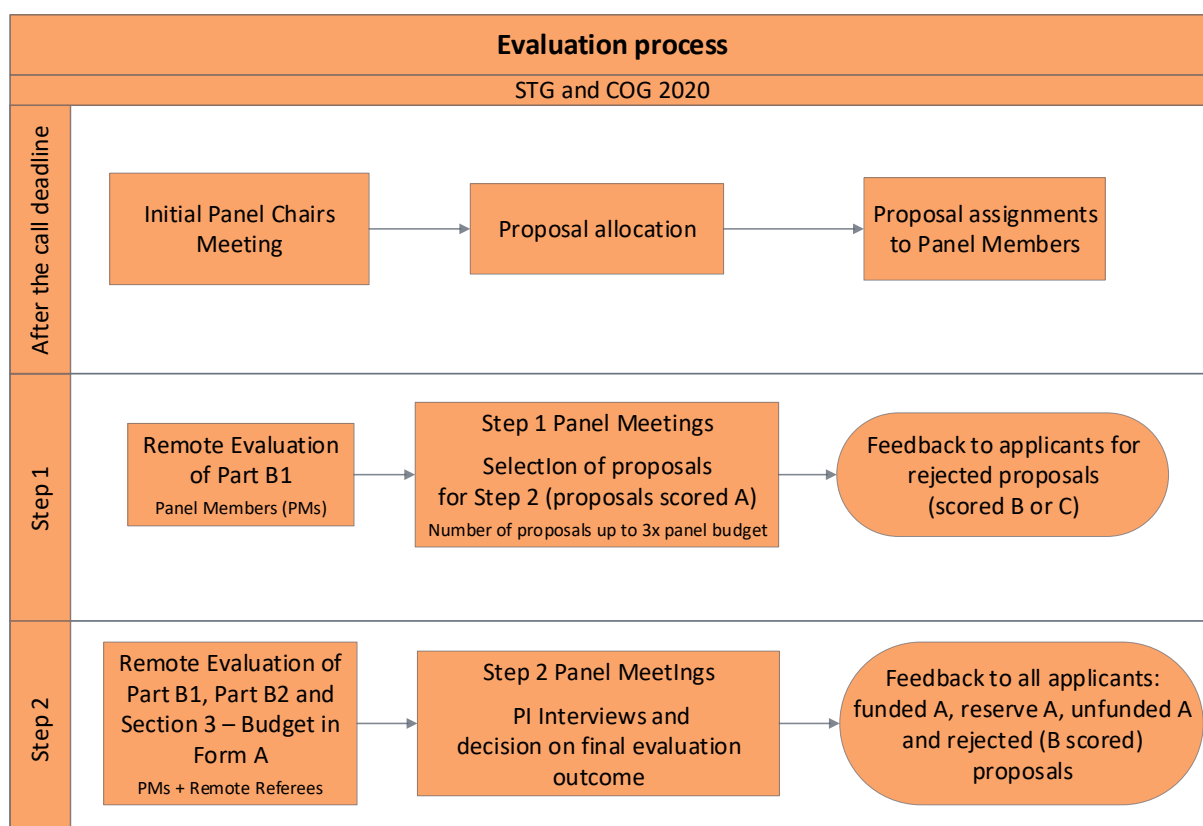
Step 2 will be invited for grant preparation until the call budget is spent. The remaining proposals recommended for funding may be funded by the ERC if additional funds become available.

### Evaluation process and important dates

An indicative evaluation timeline is available for the [Starting Grant](#) and [Consolidator Grant](#) Call at the ERC web-site.



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 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 they have received and on the basis of the panels' overall appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses.



## 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 a remote evaluation phase each panel meets in Brussels to discuss all 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 evaluation<sup>12</sup>,

**C score** - is not of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation<sup>12</sup>.

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 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 F & T Portal accounts of the PI and HI contacts (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 in Brussels. Each panel decides on the exact format of its interviews (duration, number of slides allowed, time allocated to the presentation and the question and answer session) which will be communicated to the applicants after Step 1. Applicants who pass to Step 2 do not receive a Step 1 evaluation report.

## STEP 2

At Step 2 the full proposal (Part B1 and Part B2 and Section 3 – Budget, present in the submission form) will be evaluated. After a remote evaluation phase the panels meet again in Brussels. Step 2 includes an interview of approximately 30 minutes of each applicant<sup>13</sup>. The first part will be devoted to a presentation on the outline of the research project by the PI. The remaining time will be devoted to a question and answer session. The PI may expect questions also related to the detailed budget table and resources, which is part of the application. The evaluation panels will review the requested budget for proposals recommended for funding and, if appropriate, recommend adjustments. If experts are unable to attend the interview in person, subject to technical feasibility, they may participate in the panel meeting by electronic means (video-conferencing or telephone-conferencing).

*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.*

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

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<sup>12</sup> The applicants may be subject to restrictions on submitting proposals to future ERC calls based on the outcome of the evaluation. Applicants will need to check the restrictions in place for each call.

<sup>13</sup> 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 (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.

**A score** proposals fully meet the ERC's excellence criterion and are recommended for funding. Such projects will be funded in 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 eventually 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.

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 F & T Portal accounts of the PI and HI contact (see [section 3.2](#)).

### Panel comments

Comments by the individual reviewers may reflect divergent views. Differences of opinions about the proposal are part of 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 decision or by majority vote based on the individual assessments and discussion in the panel.

### Evaluation criteria

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

## 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 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 provide evidence of creative independent thinking?
- To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

### 1.4 ETHICS REVIEW

Please see Annex A to [the ERC Rules for Submission](#) for a detailed description of the ERC Ethics Review procedure. Ethics assessment is independent of the evaluation procedure and the evaluation panels do not have access to the ethics documents.

The ethics review process concerns all projects funded by the ERC in Horizon 2020. The applicants should pay particular attention to the ethical aspects of the proposed work and should submit all ethics documentation available for their proposal.

The process is aimed at ensuring that the Article 19 of [Horizon 2020 Framework Programme](#), and Articles 13 and 14 of the [Rules for Participation](#) are implemented and, in particular, that all the research and innovation activities under Horizon 2020 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 protection (including study participants and researchers)
2. Animal protection and welfare
3. Data protection and privacy
4. Environment protection
5. Participation of non-EU countries
6. Malevolent use of research results

When submitting their proposal, applicants must complete the Ethics Issues Table which is section 4 of the online proposal submission forms and submit an ethics self-assessment (separate annex) if they answer yes to one or several questions in the Ethics Issues Table. Please see the [Ethics Self-assessment step by step](#) document for guidance.

If the proposal is retained for funding, further to the outcome of the ethics review process, the Host Institution and the Principal Investigator receive a copy of the ethics report (the document is unsigned so as to preserve the anonymity of the experts).

Please include any supporting documentation, such as any authorisation you may already have. This will allow a more effective ethics clearance and an accelerated granting process<sup>14</sup>. Please upload any related documents or annexes in F&T Portal submission system Step 5 'Edit Proposal'.

Applicants should be aware that no grant agreement can be signed by ERCEA prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethics review procedure.

If a proposal is rejected because of ethics considerations, the applicant is informed of the grounds for such a decision and the means to address enquiries and complaints.

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<sup>14</sup> A full description of the Ethics Review is provided in the [ERC Rules for the submission](#) of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the H2020 Specific Programme.

The European Commission has set up a [dedicated website](#) that aims to provide helpful information on ethics issues.

## 1.5 MEANS OF COMPLAINT

Please see the section 3.9 of the [ERC Rules for Submission](#) for a detailed description of the enquiries and complaints and evaluation review procedures.

Upon reception of the information letter with the evaluation report or with the results of the eligibility review, the PI and/or the HI (applicant legal entity) may introduce a **complaint against the rejection on the grounds of ineligibility** or a **request for an evaluation review**, if there is an indication that the results of the eligibility checks were incorrect or that there has been a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment.

A complaint can be made if the PIs and/or the HI consider that the assessment of the eligibility and/or evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in the Rules for Participation, the relevant ERC Work Programme, call for proposals or the ERC Rules for Submission. The evaluation review procedure is not meant to call into question the scientific judgement made by the peer review panel. It will look into procedural shortcomings and – in rare cases – into factual errors.

The information letter will provide a link to be used by the PIs and/or the HI to introduce a complaint. The letter will specify a deadline for the receipt of any such complaints, which will be 30 days from the date of receiving the information letter.

Complaints must be:

- related to the evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the call and grants 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.

An acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to complainants no later than two weeks after the deadline for submitting the complaint. This acknowledgement of receipt will indicate the estimated date of a definitive reply.

A redress committee may be convened to examine the eligibility or evaluation process for the complaint. 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 requests, and fair and equal treatment of applicants. During 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 CVs of the experts. The committee will not call into question the scientific judgement of appropriately qualified panels of experts. In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action. 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 re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating 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 a 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 seeking redress such as lodging an appeal to the Commission in accordance with Article 22<sup>15</sup> of Council Regulation 58/2003, or filing an action for annulment under Article 263<sup>16</sup> of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) before the Court of Justice of the European Union for a decision affecting a person or legal entity. PIs and applicant legal entities will have to choose either one or several of these means of redress, and they are not obliged to pursue one before another. These channels are also available to applicants who wish to register a complaint after the deadline mentioned above.

Applicants are asked not to take more than one formal action at a time. They are asked to wait for the final decision of the Agency/Commission before taking any further action. Deadlines for further action will start to run from when applicants receive the reply to their complaint (final decision)<sup>17</sup>.

## 1.6 QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CALL

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

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

[ERC-2020-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-2020-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu) OR [ERC-2020-COG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-2020-COG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu)

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

For questions on Open Access please see Article 29.2 of the [ERC Model Grant Agreement](#) or contact [ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu).

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<sup>15</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 58/2003 of 19 December 2002 laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes (OJ L 11, 16.01.2003, p. 1

<sup>16</sup> Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47–390).

<sup>17</sup> Please be aware that, as per Article 22 of Regulation 58/2003, reaching a final decision on an Article 22 request may generally take more than 30 days. Therefore, if you first file an Article 22 request you may not be able afterwards to submit an evaluation review request within the 30 days deadline.

## 2. COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF AN ERC APPLICATION

An ERC application is composed of

- the administrative submission form (Part A) **including the detailed budget table and description of resources (Section 3 – Budget);**
- Part B1;
- Part B2;
- supporting documentation (PhD certificate, HI support letter, and any documentation needed on eligibility and ethics issues).

### 2.2 THE SUBMISSION FORM

The submission form is accessed via the call submission link in the [Funding and tender](#) portal. The electronic form has 5 sections (approximately 15 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 you to create your draft proposal well in advance of the submission deadline. **All mandatory fields are marked in red if left empty. Failure to fill in any mandatory field will block submission.**

**1 – General Information** 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 fit 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 this abstract will be published. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information. This section also contains general declarations related to the proposal and participation in H2020<sup>18</sup>.

**2 – Participants & contacts** 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 filled for the PI as well as the address and telephone number of each contact person. The PI mobile number is an essential information for the Step 2 interview logistics.

**3 – Budget** contains the proposal budget including the total estimated 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 experts evaluating the proposal. The description of resources, without the budget table, will count towards the page limit of 15 pages for the Scientific Proposal. The section C. resources has a maximum length of 8000 characters (including spaces). As 4000 characters will be**

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<sup>18</sup> Please note that the ERCEA may at any time during the evaluation process request the applicants to provide the written consent mentioned in the declarations. These consents should not be submitted with the application, but the applicant must ensure the written consent from all participants **prior** to the call submission deadline.



considered as corresponding to one text page, this section will count as maximum 2 pages. In this section you should also indicate the % working time the PI dedicates to the project over the period of the grant. Please refer to [section 2.3](#) for further instruction on how to draw up the budget.

**4 – Ethics issues** 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.

**5 – Call-specific questions** contains information on the academic training of the PI, as well as declarations related to eligibility, expected working time in EU or an AC, as well as permission statements on data-related questions. The data-related consents are entirely voluntary. As established in section 3.3 of the [ERC Rules for Submission](#), you may identify up to three reviewers who you wish to exclude from the evaluation of your proposal.

## 2.3 THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal (Part B) consists of Part B1, Part B2 and Section 3 – Budget (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 bottom

In fairness to all applicants, the **page limits will be strictly applied**. Only the material that is presented within these limits will be evaluated. Peer reviewers will only be asked to read the material presented within the page limits, and will be under no obligation to read beyond them<sup>19</sup>.

Be aware that at **Step 1 only Part B1** is evaluated by the panel members (they have no access to Part B2 and Section 3 - Budget). At **Step 2, the Parts B1, B2 and Section 3 – Budget** 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

## **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 half a page and must be a copy/paste of abstract from the submission form section 1. For inter-disciplinary/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. Include any career breaks or unconventional career paths, so that your career stage is fairly assessed by the evaluation panels. You should as well list your current grants and on-going and submitted grant applications in the funding ID table (this table will not count towards the page limits).

**Section c: Early achievements track-record** (max. 2 pages) should list your important achievements, including your most important publications<sup>20</sup> (up to five for Starting Grant and up to ten for Consolidator Grant) highlighting those as main author and/or without the co-authorship of your PhD supervisor. The publications should be properly referenced, including all authors in the published order (Please see section 1.1 on Research integrity). Field relevant bibliometric indicators as well as research monographs and any translations thereof 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 15 pages applicable to the ‘Scientific Proposal’ as per the ERC WP 2020 will apply to Part B2 and the descriptive part of the resources (Section C. Resources). The budget table will not count against this page limit.**

**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 the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi- or inter-disciplinary aspects.

**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. In case you ask that team members are engaged by another host institution their participation has to be fully justified by the scientific added value they bring to the project.

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<sup>20</sup> 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.

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

**PLEASE NOTE: The budget table and description of resources are now part of the online submission form (Section 3 – Budget). While the description of resources (Section C. Resources) counts towards the page limit of 15 pages for the Scientific Proposal, the budget table itself will not count against this limit.**

#### Budget table

The ERC funds up to 100% of the total eligible costs. The costs cover the full project duration<sup>21</sup>. 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 subcontracting and costs of in kind contributions not used on the beneficiary's premises). The flat rate is automatically calculated by the system. The budget is subdivided in personnel costs, travel, equipment, consumables, publications (including any costs related to Open Access), other additional direct costs, internally invoiced goods and services, costs of in kind contributions not used on the beneficiary's premises, and any envisaged subcontracting costs. Use only Euro integers when preparing the budget table.

If additional funding above the ceiling of 1.500.000 € for STG and 2.000.000 € for COG 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) other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs, then you need to fully justify it in the description of resources. Please note that additional funding request under (a), (b) or (d) may be subject to 25% overhead. The request of additional funding under (c) to access large research facilities owned by a third party and not used on the premises of the beneficiaries should be listed in cost category 'C2. Other Direct Costs with no overheads'. Include the additional costs in the overall budget table as well.

In case the total estimated eligible costs differ from the requested EU contribution, specify in the proposal what exactly is funded from other sources. Please carefully check all values of the budget table. Please note that while the total estimated eligible costs in the budget table are calculated automatically, **the requested EU contribution has to be filled manually.**

For more information on eligible- and non-eligible direct and indirect costs as well as the different cost categories, applicants should consult the [H2020 ERC Model Grant Agreement](#) and the [H2020 ERC Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#)<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> The maximum award is reduced pro rata temporis for projects of a shorter duration (e.g. for a Consolidator Grant project of 48 months duration the maximum requested EU contribution allowed is 1.600.000 €). 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 2.600.000 € for a project of 48 months duration).

<sup>22</sup> Applicants should pay special attention to the cost category 'Direct costing for Large Research Infrastructures'. The cost category will only be applicable for PIs who are hosted by institutions with Large Research Infrastructures of a value of at least EUR 20 million and **only** after having received a positive ex-ante assessment from the Commission's services. This cost category should only be used for costs to access large research infrastructures inside the premises of and owned by the participating organisations. Please refer to the [ERC Model Grant Agreement](#), pp. 92 - 102.

**Section C. Resources (Maximum 8000 characters allowed including spaces. Please note that 4000 characters (including spaces) will be considered as corresponding to one text page).**

To facilitate the assessment of resources by the panels

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 project<sup>23</sup>.
3. Describe the size and nature of the team, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles. The participation of team members engaged by other host institutions should be justified and in relation to the additional financial cost this may impose. When estimating your personnel costs take into account the dedicated working time to run the project.
4. Include a short technical description of any requested equipment, why you need it and how much you plan to use it for the project.
5. Include a realistic estimation of the costs for Open Access to 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 requested funding requested for the project.
7. Describe any existing resources not requiring EU funding that will be used for the project, such as infrastructure and equipment.

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<sup>23</sup> You are expected to spend as a minimum 50% for STG and 40% for COG of your working time on the ERC project.

## 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:

- **PhD certificate.** You must submit scanned copies of documents proving your eligibility for the grant, i.e. the PhD certificate (or equivalent doctoral degree, see [Annex 4.3](#) to this document) **clearly indicating the date of award<sup>24</sup>**.  
If you request an **extension of the eligibility window** (beyond 7 years for STG applicants and 12 years for COG applicants), the relevant documentary evidence should be uploaded together with the PhD certificate or as separate annexes. Please see [Annex 4.4](#) for details.
- **Host Institution support letter.** As the applicant's legal entity, the HI must confirm its support to the project and of the PI. As part of 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 wording should be 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 ineligible.**
- Documents related to the ethics review (i.e. **ethical self-assessment** and supporting documentation). Where necessary, the beneficiary(ies) shall provide a written confirmation that it has received (a) favourable opinion(s) of the relevant ethics committee(s) and, if applicable, the regulatory approval(s) of the competent national or local authority(ies) in the country in which the research is to be carried out. Such 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.

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

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, including the PhD documentation, the host institution support letter (and where relevant documentation related to ethical issues or requests for eligibility extensions) should be provided and uploaded as separate pdf documents. They do not count towards the maximum page limits for the proposal.**

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<sup>24</sup> In case of doubt the ERCEA may ask the awarding institution to confirm the actual award date.

## 3. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

### 3.1 IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Regularly consult the [F & T](#) portal call page for updated information on the calls.
- 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 **DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu** or get in touch with the **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 close of the call to start uploading their proposal, take a serious risk that the uploading will not be concluded in time and thus the 'SUBMIT' button will not be active anymore in order to conclude the submission process.
- Only the person creating the draft proposal will have the right to manage the access rights of other people to the proposal. The person who creates the proposal will be able to modify any parts of the proposal and to submit it. Further 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 partners/additional contact persons (other contacts) unless it is absolutely necessary to grant full access. Please remember that the Main administrative 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 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.
- **Do submit your proposal as early as possible** (at least 48 hours prior to the deadline of the call) to avoid being confronted with last 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 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 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 2020 are published on the [ERC website](#), the [F & T](#) 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 [F & T](#) portal<sup>25</sup>;
- 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 H2020 [Online Manual](#) describes the standard process of proposal submission.

The submission of an ERC proposal includes 6 steps. For each submission step please find below links to a short guide including a quick demo<sup>26</sup>.

#### [Step 1 and 2](#) – Logging in and Selecting a Topic

To be able to submit a proposal and, in general to login to the F & T Portal, you must first register an EU Login account (Step 1). Each time you access the proposal for editing, this user ID is requested. The same user ID is used for all later interactions with the ERCEA, including notification of the results of the evaluation<sup>27</sup>. Under 'Search Topics' you may search for 'ERC' to select an open ERC call (Step 2). Soon after the opening of the call you may access the Electronic Submission Service via the F & T portal call page. The 'Start Submission' button is available in the 'Submission Service' section of the call. When you click 'Start Submission' and confirm the call selection, you will arrive to Step 3 – Create a Draft proposal.

#### [Step 3](#) – Create a draft proposal

At this step, you fill in pre-registration data for the proposal. These details will be used by the ERCEA in order to plan the evaluation. You will not have access to this page again once it is completed and you have progressed to Step 4, but certain data, such as Acronym (maximum 20 characters) and Short Summary (abstract) can be modified at a later stage (at Step 5, when editing the submission form). **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 submitting the proposal.

#### [Step 4](#) – Manage your related parties 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 person<sup>28</sup>. You may also add the LEAR as a contact person (e.g. as a team member with read-only

<sup>25</sup> In duly justified exceptional circumstances the ERCEA may authorise submission on paper.

<sup>26</sup> The Electronic Submission Service is used across all the funding schemes of the European Commission, thus the guidelines provided may contain a nomenclature which is not for the ERC funding schemes (e.g. there is no such a thing as 'Consortium' in any of the ERC grants funding schemes). Thus for the correct nomenclature, please refer to this document.


<sup>27</sup> Further details are available here: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/eim/external/help.cgi>.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

rights). These data are saved into the submission form where they cannot be edited. You may at any point return to Step 4 of the submission to add or delete any contact person or to change the access rights. Remember to save your data before leaving Step 4. Once the coordinator saves the changes, an automatic invitation is sent to all contacts' e-mail addresses. The invited persons can access the proposal after logging in to the F & T portal – with the EU login account linked to the given e-mail address – under the 'My Proposals' tab.

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 to this first activation the EU login account will be maintained for following communications or feedback. In order to be able to submit your proposal after saving changes made in Step 4 (Parties), you have to re-open the administrative 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 Submission Service user manual.

### **Step 5 – Edit and complete the proposal**

This step is the core of the submission process, as from this step, you **can edit the online administrative proposal submission forms**, view the history, print the draft proposal, **download templates, upload files** and **submit** the proposal by clicking on the relevant buttons. Guidance on how to fill in the administrative forms is provided directly in the form as ghost text for the single entries or as additional help text hidden behind question-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 warning or error will be listed at the end of the validated form. Please see [Annex 4.5](#) for a list of mandatory fields. **If one or several mandatory fields are not filled it will prevent you from submitting your proposal.**

Further information on the preparation of the application (the online administrative forms and Proposal Parts B1 and B2) is given in [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.
- Unless specified in the call, 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 F & T portal will be disregarded.

There are also restrictions to the name given to the Part B files: use alphanumeric characters; special characters and spaces must be avoided. You are advised to clean your document before converting it to PDF (e.g. accept all tracked changes, delete notes). Check that your conversion software has successfully converted all the pages of your original document (e.g. there is no problem with page limits or page view), and that captions and labels have not been lost from your diagrams.

**Completing the Proposal submission forms in the submission system and uploading all the necessary files does not yet mean that your proposal is submitted (mandatory files: Part B1, Part B2, PhD certificate, Host Institution support letter and – if applicable: Ethical Self-assessment and supporting documentation for eligibility extension and/or ethics 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 eligibility review and do not confirm that the contents of these files respond to the requirements of the call.

### **Step 6 – The Proposal Submitted page**

Reaching this step means that the proposal is submitted (i.e. sent to the ERCEA for evaluation). It does not mean that the proposal is valid, complete and eligible in all respects. Within a few minutes of submission your proposal will be available for download with an e-receipt in the system. You will receive a confirmation e-mail with the summary data of the submitted proposal. The mail can end up in the spam folder or be blocked by the anti-spam system of your organisation. This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt. In Step 6 you can re-edit the proposal, going back to Step 5. **You may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up 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 which will be 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 the submitted files. We strongly advise that you submit a first version of your proposal at least 48 hours in advance of the call deadline. Incomplete proposals (where parts or sections of the proposal and/or the host institution's commitment statement are missing) may be declared ineligible and will not be evaluated<sup>29</sup>. The proposal must be submitted **before the relevant deadline of the call** to the appropriate primary ERC panel (i.e. the panel which covers the main scientific areas of the research proposed).

**Warning: Please note that in the last hours prior to call closure, the download option of checking your submitted proposal may be disabled due to a high pressure on the system.** In this case the ERCEA will inform the applicants via the call page on the [F & T](#) portal (under 'call summary') that the function has been disabled. **If the e-receipt and download option have been disabled, you may review your submitted proposal by going back to Step 5 to check the data in the administrative forms and click on 'View History' to verify which attachments have been uploaded.**

### **3.3 HOW TO WITHDRAW A PROPOSAL**

To withdraw a proposal **before the call deadline** use the "withdraw proposal" button from the 'My proposals' tab when logged in at the F & T portal. After the call deadline proposals may be withdrawn at any moment **until the day preceding the panel meetings** where a final decision on the outcome of the evaluation of the proposal is established. A withdrawn proposal will not be considered for evaluation nor count against possible re-application restrictions as set out in the ERC Work Programme 2020.

To withdraw a proposal **after the call deadline**, please send an e-mail to the call-specific mailbox [ERC-2020-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-2020-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu) or [ERC-2020-COG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-2020-COG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu) and include a signed scanned letter requesting the formal withdrawal. 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 absence of reaction by the PI to this request, only the first eligible submitted proposal will be evaluated.

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<sup>29</sup> See also section 2.4 'eligibility check' in the [ERC Rules for Submission](#) and in the section "Proposal submission and description" of the [ERC Work Programme 2020](#).

## 4. ANNEXES

### 4.1 ERC EVALUATION PANELS AND KEYWORDS

#### Physical Sciences and Engineering

##### **PE1 Mathematics**

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

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

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

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

- PE2\_1 Fundamental interactions and fields
- PE2\_2 Particle physics
- PE2\_3 Nuclear physics
- PE2\_4 Nuclear astrophysics
- PE2\_5 Gas and plasma physics
- PE2\_6 Electromagnetism
- PE2\_7 Atomic, molecular physics
- PE2\_8 Ultra-cold atoms and molecules
- PE2\_9 Optics, non-linear optics and nano-optics
- PE2\_10 Quantum optics and quantum information
- PE2\_11 Lasers, ultra-short lasers and laser physics
- PE2\_12 Relativity
- PE2\_13 Thermodynamics
- PE2\_14 Non-linear physics
- PE2\_15 Metrology and measurement
- PE2\_16 Statistical physics (gases)

##### **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, etc.
- PE3\_5 Physical properties of semiconductors and insulators
- PE3\_6 Macroscopic quantum phenomena: superconductivity, superfluidity, etc.
- PE3\_7 Spintronics
- PE3\_8 Magnetism and strongly correlated systems
- PE3\_9 Condensed matter – beam interactions (photons, electrons, etc.)
- PE3\_10 Nanophysics: nanoelectronics, nanophotonics, nanomagnetism, nanoelectromechanics, etc.
- PE3\_11 Mesoscopic physics
- PE3\_12 Molecular electronics
- PE3\_13 Structure and dynamics of disordered systems: soft matter (gels, colloids, liquid crystals, etc.), liquids, glasses, defects, etc.
- PE3\_14 Fluid dynamics (physics)
- PE3\_15 Statistical physics: phase transitions, noise and fluctuations, models of complex systems, etc.
- 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**

Materials synthesis, structure-properties relations, functional and advanced materials, molecular architecture, organic chemistry

- PE5\_1 Structural properties of materials
- PE5\_2 Solid state materials
- 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, biomaterials synthesis
- PE5\_8 Intelligent materials – self assembled materials
- PE5\_9 Coordination chemistry
- PE5\_10 Colloid chemistry
- PE5\_11 Biological chemistry
- 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, pervasive computing, ubiquitous computing
- PE6\_2 Computer systems, parallel/distributed systems, sensor networks, embedded systems, cyber-physical systems
- PE6\_3 Software engineering, operating systems, computer languages
- PE6\_4 Theoretical computer science, formal methods, and quantum computing
- PE6\_5 Cryptology, security, privacy, quantum cryptography
- PE6\_6 Algorithms, distributed, parallel and network algorithms, algorithmic game theory
- PE6\_7 Artificial intelligence, intelligent systems, multi agent systems
- PE6\_8 Computer graphics, computer vision, multi media, computer games
- PE6\_9 Human computer interaction and interface, visualisation and natural language processing
- PE6\_10 Web and information systems, database 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, biocomputing, and DNA and molecular computation

## **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 technology, high-frequency technology
- PE7\_7 Signal processing
- PE7\_8 Networks (communication networks, sensor networks, networks of robots, etc.)
- 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 design, process design and control, construction methods, civil engineering, energy processes, material engineering

- PE8\_1 Aerospace engineering
- PE8\_2 Chemical engineering, technical chemistry
- PE8\_3 Civil engineering, architecture, maritime/hydraulic engineering, geotechnics, waste treatment
- PE8\_4 Computational engineering
- PE8\_5 Fluid mechanics, hydraulic-, turbo-, and piston- engines
- PE8\_6 Energy processes engineering
- PE8\_7 Mechanical and manufacturing engineering (shaping, mounting, joining, separation)
- PE8\_8 Materials engineering (biomaterials, metals, ceramics, polymers, composites, etc.)

- PE8\_9 Production technology, process engineering
- PE8\_10 Industrial design (product design, ergonomics, man-machine interfaces, etc.)
- PE8\_11 Sustainable design (for recycling, for environment, eco-design)
- PE8\_12 Lightweight construction, textile technology
- PE8\_13 Industrial bioengineering

### **PE9 Universe Sciences**

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

- PE9\_1 Solar and interplanetary physics
- PE9\_2 Planetary systems sciences
- PE9\_3 Interstellar medium
- PE9\_4 Formation of stars and planets
- PE9\_5 Astrobiology
- PE9\_6 Stars and stellar systems
- PE9\_7 The Galaxy
- PE9\_8 Formation and evolution of galaxies
- PE9\_9 Clusters of galaxies and large scale structures
- PE9\_10 High energy and particles astronomy – X-rays, cosmic rays, gamma rays, neutrinos
- PE9\_11 Relativistic astrophysics
- PE9\_12 Dark matter, dark energy
- PE9\_13 Gravitational astronomy
- PE9\_14 Cosmology
- PE9\_15 Space Sciences
- PE9\_16 Very large data bases: archiving, handling and analysis
- PE9\_17 Instrumentation - telescopes, detectors and techniques

### **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: earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and other ground instabilities

## Life Sciences

### **LS1 Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Structural Biology and Molecular Biophysics**

Molecular synthesis, modification, mechanisms and interactions, biochemistry, structural biology, molecular biophysics signalling pathways

- LS1\_1 Macromolecular complexes including interactions involving nucleic acids, proteins, lipids and carbohydrates
- LS1\_2 Biochemistry
- LS1\_3 DNA synthesis, modification, repair, recombination, degradation
- LS1\_4 RNA synthesis, processing, modification, degradation
- LS1\_5 Protein synthesis, modification, turnover
- LS1\_6 Lipid biology
- LS1\_7 Glycobiology
- LS1\_8 Molecular biophysics (e.g. single-molecule approaches, bioenergetics, fluorescence)
- LS1\_9 Structural biology and its methodologies (e.g. crystallography, cryo-EM, NMR and new technologies)
- LS1\_10 Molecular mechanisms of signalling pathways
- LS1\_11 Fundamental aspects of synthetic biology and chemical biology

### **LS2 Genetics, 'Omics', Bioinformatics and Systems Biology**

Molecular genetics, quantitative genetics, genetic epidemiology, epigenetics, genomics, metagenomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, glycomics, bioinformatics, computational biology, biostatistics, systems biology

- LS2\_1 Molecular genetics, reverse genetics, forward genetics, genome editing
- LS2\_2 Non-coding RNAs
- LS2\_3 Quantitative genetics
- LS2\_4 Genetic epidemiology
- LS2\_5 Epigenetics and gene regulation
- LS2\_6 Genomics (e.g. comparative genomics, functional genomics)
- LS2\_7 Metagenomics
- LS2\_8 Transcriptomics
- LS2\_9 Proteomics
- LS2\_10 Metabolomics
- LS2\_11 Glycomics/Lipidomics
- LS2\_12 Bioinformatics
- LS2\_13 Computational biology
- LS2\_14 Biostatistics
- LS2\_15 Systems biology

### **LS3 Cellular and Developmental Biology**

Cell biology, cell physiology, signal transduction, organogenesis, developmental genetics, pattern formation and stem cell biology, in plants and animals, or, where appropriate, in microorganisms

- LS3\_1 Morphology and functional imaging of cells and tissues
- LS3\_2 Cytoskeleton and cell behaviour (e.g. control of cell shape, cell migration and cellular mechanosensing)
- LS3\_3 Organelle biology and trafficking
- LS3\_4 Cell junctions, cell adhesion, cell communication and the extracellular matrix
- LS3\_5 Cell signalling and signal transduction
- LS3\_6 Cell cycle, division and growth
- LS3\_7 Cell death (including senescence) and autophagy

- LS3\_8 Cell differentiation, physiology and dynamics
- LS3\_9 Developmental genetics in animals and plants
- LS3\_10 Embryology and pattern formation in animals and plants
- LS3\_11 Tissue organisation and morphogenesis in animals and plants (including biophysical approaches)
- LS3\_12 Stem cell biology in development, tissue regeneration and ageing, and fundamental aspects of stem cell-based therapies

#### **LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology**

Organ physiology, pathophysiology, endocrinology, metabolism, ageing, tumorigenesis, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic syndromes

- LS4\_1 Organ physiology and pathophysiology
- LS4\_2 Comparative physiology and pathophysiology
- LS4\_3 Molecular aspects of endocrinology
- LS4\_4 Fundamental mechanisms underlying ageing
- LS4\_5 Metabolism, biological basis of metabolism-related disorders
- LS4\_6 Fundamental mechanisms underlying cancer
- LS4\_7 Fundamental mechanisms underlying cardiovascular diseases
- LS4\_8 Non-communicable diseases (except for neural/psychiatric and immunity-related diseases)

#### **LS5 Neuroscience and Neural Disorders**

Neural cell function and signalling, systems neuroscience, neural bases of cognitive and behavioural processes, neurological and psychiatric disorders

- LS5\_1 Neural cell function, communication and signalling, neurotransmission in neuronal and/or glial cells
- LS5\_2 Systems neuroscience and computational neuroscience (e.g. neural networks, neural modelling)
- LS5\_3 Neuronal development, plasticity and regeneration
- LS5\_4 Sensation and perception (e.g. sensory systems, sensory processing, pain)
- LS5\_5 Neural bases of cognitive processes (e.g. memory, learning, attention)
- LS5\_6 Neural bases of behaviour (e.g. sleep, consciousness, addiction)
- LS5\_7 Neurological disorders (e.g. neurodegenerative diseases, seizures)
- LS5\_8 Psychiatric disorders (e.g. affective and anxiety disorders, autism, psychotic disorders)
- LS5\_9 Neurotrauma and neurovascular conditions (including injury, blood-brain barrier, stroke, neurorehabilitation)

#### **LS6 Immunity and Infection**

The immune system and related disorders, biology of infectious agents and infection, biological basis of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases

- LS6\_1 Innate immunity in animals and plants
- LS6\_2 Adaptive immunity
- LS6\_3 Regulation and effector functions of the immune response (e.g. cytokines, interferons and chemokines, inflammation, immune signalling, helper T cells, immunological memory, immunological tolerance, cell-mediated cytotoxicity, complement)
- LS6\_4 Immunological mechanisms in disease (e.g. autoimmunity, allergy, transplantation immunology, tumour immunology)
- LS6\_5 Biology of pathogens (e.g. bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi)
- LS6\_6 Mechanisms of infection (e.g. transmission, virulence factors, host defences, immunity to pathogens, molecular pathogenesis)
- LS6\_7 Biological basis of prevention and treatment of infection (e.g. infection natural cycle, reservoirs, vectors, vaccines, antimicrobials)
- LS6\_8 Infectious diseases in animals and plants

### **LS7 Applied Medical Technologies, Diagnostics, Therapies and Public Health**

Development of tools for diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of diseases, pharmacology, clinical medicine, regenerative medicine, epidemiology and public health

- LS7\_1 Imaging for medical diagnosis
- LS7\_2 Genetic tools for medical diagnosis
- LS7\_3 Other medical technologies for diagnosis and monitoring of diseases
- LS7\_4 Pharmacology and pharmacogenomics (including drug discovery and design, drug delivery and therapy, toxicology)
- LS7\_5 Applied gene and cell therapies, regenerative medicine
- LS7\_6 Radiation therapy
- LS7\_7 Analgesia and surgery
- LS7\_8 Epidemiology and public health
- LS7\_9 Environmental health, occupational medicine
- LS7\_10 Health services, health care research, medical ethics

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

Population, community and ecosystem ecology, evolutionary biology, behavioural ecology, microbial ecology

- LS8\_1 Ecosystem and community ecology, macroecology
- LS8\_2 Biodiversity, conservation biology, conservation genetics
- LS8\_3 Population biology, population dynamics, population genetics
- LS8\_4 Evolutionary ecology
- LS8\_5 Evolutionary genetics
- LS8\_6 Phylogenetics, systematics, comparative biology
- LS8\_7 Macroevolution, paleobiology
- LS8\_8 Coevolution, biological mechanisms and ecology of species interactions (e.g. symbiosis, parasitism, mutualism, food-webs)
- LS8\_9 Behavioural ecology and evolution
- LS8\_10 Microbial ecology and evolution
- LS8\_11 Marine biology and ecology

### **LS9 Applied Life Sciences, Biotechnology, and Molecular and Biosystems Engineering**

Applied plant and animal sciences, forestry, food sciences, applied biotechnology, environmental, and marine biotechnology, applied bioengineering, biomass and biofuels, biohazards

- LS9\_1 Applied biotechnology (including transgenic organisms, applied genetics and genomics, biosensors, bioreactors, microbiology, bioactive compounds)
- LS9\_2 Applied bioengineering, synthetic biology, chemical biology, nanobiotechnology, metabolic engineering, protein and glyco-engineering, tissue engineering, biocatalysis, biomimetics
- LS9\_3 Applied animal sciences (including animal breeding, veterinary sciences, animal husbandry, animal welfare, aquaculture, fisheries, insect gene drive)
- LS9\_4 Applied plant sciences (including crop production, plant breeding, agroecology, forestry, soil biology)
- LS9\_5 Food sciences (including food technology, food safety, nutrition)
- LS9\_6 Biomass production and utilisation, biofuels
- LS9\_7 Environmental biotechnology (including bioindicators, bioremediation, biodegradation)
- LS9\_8 Biohazards (including biological containment, biosafety, biosecurity)
- LS9\_9 Marine biotechnology (including marine bioproducts, feed resources, genome mining)



## Social Sciences and Humanities

### SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations

Economics, finance and management

- SH1\_1 Macroeconomics; monetary economics; economic growth
- SH1\_2 International management; international trade; international business; spatial economics
- SH1\_3 Development economics, health economics, education economics
- SH1\_4 Financial economics; banking; corporate finance; international finance; accounting; auditing; insurance
- SH1\_5 Labour and demographic economics; human resource management
- SH1\_6 Econometrics; operations research
- SH1\_7 Behavioural economics; experimental economics; neuro-economics
- SH1\_8 Microeconomics; game theory
- SH1\_9 Industrial organisation; strategy; entrepreneurship
- SH1\_10 Management; marketing; organisational behaviour; operations management
- SH1\_11 Technological change, innovation, research & development
- SH1\_12 Agricultural economics; energy economics; environmental economics
- SH1\_13 Public economics; political economics; law and economics
- SH1\_14 Competition law, contract law, trade law, Intellectual Property Rights
- SH1\_15 Quantitative economic history and history of economics; institutional economics; economic systems

### SH2 Institutions, Values, Environment and Space

Political science, law, sustainability science, geography, regional studies and planning

- SH2\_1 Political systems, governance
- SH2\_2 Democratisation and social movements
- SH2\_3 Conflict resolution, war, peace building
- SH2\_4 Constitutions, human rights, comparative law, humanitarian law, anti-discrimination law
- SH2\_5 International relations, global and transnational governance
- SH2\_6 Sustainability sciences, environment and resources
- SH2\_7 Environmental and climate change, societal impact and policy
- SH2\_8 Energy, transportation and mobility
- SH2\_9 Urban, regional and rural studies
- SH2\_10 Land use and regional planning
- SH2\_11 Human, economic and social geography
- SH2\_12 GIS, spatial analysis; big data in political, geographical and legal studies

### SH3 The Social World, Diversity, Population

Sociology, social psychology, social anthropology, demography, education, communication

- SH3\_1 Social structure, social mobility
- SH3\_2 Inequalities, discrimination, prejudice, aggression and violence, antisocial behaviour
- SH3\_3 Social integration, exclusion, prosocial behaviour
- SH3\_4 Attitudes and beliefs
- SH3\_5 Social influence; power and group behaviour
- SH3\_6 Kinship; diversity and identities, gender, interethnic relations
- SH3\_7 Social policies, welfare
- SH3\_8 Population dynamics; households, family and fertility
- SH3\_9 Health, ageing and society
- SH3\_10 Religious studies, ritual; symbolic representation
- SH3\_11 Social aspects of learning, curriculum studies, educational policies
- SH3\_12 Communication and information, networks, media
- SH3\_13 Digital social research
- SH3\_14 Science and technology studies

#### **SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity**

Cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, philosophy of mind

- 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**

Literature, philology, 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 and palaeography
- SH5\_4 Visual and performing arts, film, design
- 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; social and political 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
- SH6\_3 General archaeology, archaeometry, landscape archaeology
- SH6\_4 Prehistory, palaeoanthropology, palaeodemography, protohistory
- SH6\_5 Ancient history
- SH6\_6 Medieval history
- SH6\_7 Early modern history
- SH6\_8 Modern and contemporary history
- SH6\_9 Colonial and post-colonial history
- SH6\_10 Global history, transnational history, comparative history, entangled histories
- SH6\_11 Social and economic history
- SH6\_12 Gender history; cultural history; history of collective identities and memories
- SH6\_13 History of ideas, intellectual history, history of economic thought
- SH6\_14 History of science, medicine and technologies

## 4.2 HOST INSTITUTION SUPPORT LETTER TEMPLATE 2020

**(Print on paper bearing the official letterhead of the host institution)**

### **Commitment of the host institution for ERC Calls 2020<sup>30, 31, 32</sup>**

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* that will become the beneficiary of the H2020 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* commits itself to hosting [and engaging] the *principal investigator* for the duration of the grant to:**

- a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific 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.*

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<sup>30</sup> A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically via the [Funding and tender](#) portal submission service in PDF format.

<sup>31</sup> The statement of commitment of the host institution refers to most obligations of the host institution, which are stated in the H2020 ERC Model Grant Agreement (MGA). The [H2020 ERC MGA](#) is available on the [ERC website](#) & the [Funding and tender](#) portal. The reference to the time commitment of the Principal Investigator is stated in the [ERC Work Programme 2020](#).

<sup>32</sup> This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating their name, function, and email address along with the stamp of the institution.

- b) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex 1 of the Agreement, taking into consideration the specific role of the *principal investigator*;
- c) enter — before signature of the Agreement — 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's* scientific independence, in particular for the:
  - i) use of the budget to achieve the scientific objectives;
  - ii) authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors those who have contributed substantially to the work;
  - iii) preparation of scientific reports for the project (action);
  - iv) selection and supervision of the other *team members* (hosted [*and engaged*] by the *applicant legal entity* or other legal entities), in line with the profiles needed to conduct the research and in accordance with the *applicant legal entity's* usual management practices;
  - v) possibility to apply independently for funding;
  - vi) access to appropriate space and facilities for conducting the research;
- f) provide — during the implementation of the project (action) — research support to the *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 his/her 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 *applicant legal entity's* usual management practices;
  - v) general logistics of the project (action);
  - vi) access to the electronic exchange system (see Article 52 of the Agreement);
- h) inform the *principal investigator* immediately (in writing) of any events or circumstances likely to affect the Agreement (see Article 17 of 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 ('portability'; see Article 56a of the Agreement).
- k) take all measures to implement the principles set out in the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers<sup>33</sup> - 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 project (action) are aware of them.
- l) respect the fundamental principle of research integrity and ensure that persons carrying out research tasks follow the good research practices and refrain from the research integrity violations described in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>34</sup>. If any such violations or allegations occur, verify and pursue them and bring them to the attention of the Agency.

**For the host institution (applicant legal entity):**

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Function

\_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

Email and Signature of legal representative

\_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

Stamp of the host institution (applicant legal entity)

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

<sup>33</sup> [Commission Recommendation 2005/251/EC of 11 March 2005](#) on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (OJ L 75, 22.3.2005, p. 67).

<sup>34</sup> [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) of ALLEA (All European Academies) and ESF (European Science Foundation) of March 2011.

### 4.3 PHD AND EQUIVALENT DOCTORAL DEGREES

The ERC Policy on PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees is detailed in Annex 2 of the [ERC Work Programme 2020](#) 'ERC Policy on PhD and equivalent doctoral degrees':

#### 1. *The necessity of ascertaining PhD equivalence*

In order to be eligible to apply to the ERC Starting or Consolidator Grant a Principal Investigator must have been awarded a PhD or equivalent doctoral degree. First-professional degrees will not be considered in themselves as PhD-equivalent, even if recipients carry the title "Doctor". See below for further guidelines on PhD degree equivalency.

#### 2. *PhD Degrees*

The research doctorate is the highest earned academic degree. It is always awarded for **independent research** at a professional level in either academic disciplines or professional fields. Regardless of the entry point, doctoral studies involve several stages of academic work. These may include the completion of preliminary course, seminar, and laboratory studies and/or the passing of a battery of written examinations. The PhD candidate selects an academic adviser and a subject for the dissertation, is assigned a dissertation committee, and designs his or her research (some educators call the doctoral thesis a dissertation to distinguish it from lesser theses). The dissertation committee consists usually of 3-5 faculty members in the candidate's research field, including the adviser.

#### 3. *Independent research*

Conducting the research and writing the dissertation usually requires one to several years depending upon the topic selected and the research work necessary to prepare the dissertation. In defending his or her thesis, **the PhD candidate must establish mastery of the subject matter, explain and justify his or her research findings, and answer all questions put by the committee**. A successful defence results in the award of the PhD degree.

#### 4. *Degrees equivalent to the PhD:*

It is recognised that there are some other doctoral titles that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD in certain fields. All of them have **similar content requirements**. Potential applicants are invited to consult the following for useful references on degrees that will be considered equivalent to the PhD:

- EURYDICE: "Examinations, qualifications and titles - Second edition, Volume 1, European glossary on education" published in 2004<sup>35</sup>. Please note that some titles that belong to the same category with doctoral degrees (ISCED 6 – 1997 classification or ISCED 8 – 2011 classification<sup>36</sup>) may correspond to the intermediate steps towards the completion of doctoral education and they should not be therefore considered as PhD-equivalent.
- List of research doctorate titles awarded in the United States that enjoy the same status and represent variants of the PhD within certain fields. These doctorate titles are also recognised as PhD-equivalent by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF)<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/european-glossary-on-education-pbEC3212292/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-structure-us.html>

### **5. First Professional Degrees (for applicants holding a degree in medicine please see below):**

It is important to recognise that the initial professional degrees in various fields are **first degrees, not graduate research degrees**. Several degree titles in such fields include the term "Doctor", **but they are neither research doctorates nor equivalent to the PhD**.

### **6. Applicants holding a degree in medicine:**

**A first degree in medicine will not be accepted by itself as equivalent to a PhD award.** To be considered an eligible Principal Investigator, applicants holding a degree in medicine need to provide **the certificates of both the medical degree and a PhD or proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency** (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship, professorship appointment). Additionally, candidates must also provide information on their research experience (including peer reviewed publications) in order to further substantiate the equivalence of their overall training to a PhD.

In these cases, the certified date of the medical degree completion plus two years is the reference date of the actual award used for the calculation of the eligibility period established for Starting and Consolidator Grants in the section "Eligible Principal investigator(s)" of the ERC Work programme 2020.

For applicants holding both a degree in medicine and a PhD, **the date used for the calculation of the eligibility period** (i.e. medical degree plus two years or PhD award date) **is the date of the earliest degree that makes the applicant eligible.**

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### **Further explanation on point 6 for applicants holding several degrees:**

A medical degree<sup>38</sup> takes precedence over a PhD degree **only** when an applicant has held an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship, professorship appointment) **before** a PhD award date.

#### **Example 1**

A PI who was awarded a degree in medicine in 2005, completed clinical specialty training in 2010 and then was awarded a PhD on 1 January 2015, is eligible to apply to the Starting Grant 2020 call based on the award date of the PhD. As the medical degree by itself is not accepted as equivalent to a PhD award, the earliest eligible degree is the PhD – awarded 5 years prior to 1 January 2020 and within the eligibility window (2 – 7 years after PhD).

#### **Example 2**

A PI who was awarded a degree in medicine on 1 January 2001, completed clinical training in 2004 and held one or several research positions (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship or professorship appointment) prior to being awarded a PhD in 2014, is ineligible for both the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2020 calls. The medical degree together with the research experience acquired during the research position(s) is considered equivalent to a PhD. Therefore, the earliest eligible degree is the medical degree – awarded 19 years prior to 1 January 2020 and not within the eligibility window (the date of the medical degree + 2 years = 1 January 2003, is used for the calculation of the eligibility window of 2-7 years for StG and 7-12 years for CoG). An extension for three years of clinical training is not enough to make the applicant eligible for the Consolidator grant call.

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<sup>38</sup> The basic medical degree (first graduate degree in medicine) applicable to all countries.

### **Example 3**

A PI who was awarded a medical degree on 1 January 2012, followed by a Dr. Med. degree awarded on 11 July 2013 and who then held one or several research positions requiring PhD equivalence (e.g. post-doctoral fellowship or professorship appointment) is eligible to apply to the Starting Grant 2020 call based on the award date of the medical degree. As the Dr. Med. degree by itself is not accepted as equivalent to a PhD degree, the earliest eligible degree is the MD degree – awarded 8 years prior to 1 January 2020 and within the eligibility window (the date of the medical degree + 2 years = 1 January 2012, is used for the calculation of the eligibility window of 2-7 years for StG and 7-12 years for CoG). The certified date of the MD degree completion plus two years is the time reference for calculation of the eligibility time-window and thus 1 January 2014 is the PhD equivalence date which should be entered in the application form for this applicant.

### **Example 4**

A PI who was awarded an MD Univ. degree on 8 August 2006, followed by a Dr. Med. degree awarded on 25 October 2007 and then a PhD on 1 January 2011 is eligible to apply to the Consolidator Grant 2020 call based on the award date of the PhD degree. As the Dr. Med. degree by itself is not accepted as equivalent to a PhD award, and as the applicant has not held any research positions requiring PhD equivalence between the MD Univ. degree and the PhD, the earliest eligible degree is the PhD degree – awarded 9 years prior to 1 January 2020 and within the eligibility window (7 – 12 years past PhD) for Consolidator grant applicants.



## 4.4 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR EXTENSION REQUESTS

The date of the first PhD considered for the calculation of the eligibility period shall be the date of the actual award according to the national rules of the country where the degree was awarded. The eligibility periods set out in the table on page 7 can be extended beyond 7 and 12 years for the Starting and Consolidator Grants respectively for the following properly documented circumstances<sup>39</sup>, provided they started before the call deadline:

- **Maternity:** 18 months extension for each child born before or after the PhD award. If the applicant can document a longer maternity leave, the eligibility period will be extended by the documented amount of actual leave taken until the call deadline.
- **Paternity:** extension by the documented time of paternity leave taken until the call deadline for each child born before or after the PhD award.
- **Long-term illness<sup>40</sup>, or national service:** extension by the documented amount of leave taken by the Principal Investigator until the call deadline for each incident which occurred after the PhD award date.
- **Clinical training:** extension by the documented amount of clinical training received by the Principal Investigator **after** the award of the first eligible degree and until the call deadline, **up to a maximum of 4 years.**

All applicants are entitled to an extension of their eligibility window if properly documented and related to the specific circumstances defined in the annual ERC work programme<sup>41</sup>. Please note that any such circumstance must have started before the call deadline. The reference date for calculating the eligibility window is the actual award date of the first eligible degree according to the national rules of the awarding country<sup>42</sup>. The extension time is calculated based on the supporting documentation submitted with the application. There is no limit to the total extension timeframe. Please note however, that a maximum of 4 years have been introduced for extensions due to clinical training. The individual extensions for different periods are additive and the total extension time can thus be based on several reasons.

### Maternity leave

For maternity, a flat rate of 18 months extension is granted for each child born **before or after** the PhD award. If a maternity leave or the combined maternity- and parental leave was longer than 18 months, an extension will be granted for the documented leave actually taken. The same principle also applies for child adoption.

Supporting documents: any official document that links the mother and the child(ren), i.e. birth certificate(s) or passport(s) of the child(ren) or family book. For extension requests above 18 months per child, an official signed document<sup>43</sup> from the employer certifying start and end date(s) of the

<sup>39</sup> For applicants whose first eligible degree is their medical degree such incidents can be considered from the date of the completion of their medical degree.

<sup>40</sup> Over ninety days for the Principal Investigator or a close family member (child, spouse, parent or sibling).

<sup>41</sup> E.g., no extension to the eligibility window can be accepted for periods of unemployment.

<sup>42</sup> Please see footnote 8.

<sup>43</sup> The certificate should be issued by a person within the employing organisation empowered to certify the actual leave taken (i.e. an authorised officer from the HR Department).

individual leave(s) must be submitted. Any document should mention the reason for the leave. If the leave was conducted as a part-time leave this should be stated. It is acceptable if the time off work happened over several periods.

### **Paternity leave**

For paternity leaves, an extension will be granted corresponding to the documented time of paternity and/or parental leave actually taken for each child born **before or after** the PhD award (counting up until the call deadline). Both full time and part time leaves can be accepted if properly documented<sup>44</sup>. The same principle also applies for child adoption.

Supporting documents: an official signed document<sup>37</sup> from the employer certifying start and end date(s) of the individual leave(s). Any document should mention the reason for the leave. If the leave was conducted as a part-time leave, this should be stated. It is acceptable if the time off work happened over several periods.

### **Long-term illness**

For long-term illness (more than ninety days for the Principal Investigator or a close family member such as a child, spouse, parent or sibling), an extension can be granted corresponding to the documented time of leave actually taken after the PhD award (counting up until the call deadline). Full time and part time leaves as well as reduced working capacity can be accepted if properly documented.

Supporting documents: an official signed document from the employer certifying start and end date(s) of the individual leave(s). Any document should mention the reason for the leave. If the leave was conducted as a part-time leave, this should be stated. It is acceptable if the time off work happened over several periods, as long as the leaves were related to the same illness or condition. Furthermore, the request should be supported by an official document explaining the long-term nature of the illness or condition of the applicant or the close family member (e.g. from a hospital, a doctor or an insurance company). The supporting documents should also prove the family relationship in case the extension request relates to caring for a seriously ill close family member.

### **National (military) service**

For national military service, an extension can be granted corresponding to the documented amount of leave actually taken after the PhD award (counting up until the call deadline).

Supporting documents: document signed by official authority with start and end date of the service.

### **Clinical training**

For clinical training, an extension can be granted corresponding to the documented time of clinical training received by the PI after the award of the first eligible degree up to a maximum of 4 years (counting up until the call deadline). For applicants whose first eligible degree is a medical degree, clinical training can be accepted from the date of the completion of their medical degree. No extension will be accepted for serving as a house doctor or hospital doctor unless it is part of a clinical training programme. In case of part-time clinical training, the exact total training time will be accepted on a pro-rata basis to extend the eligibility window of the applicant.

Supporting documents: an official document signed by the employer (usually a hospital) certifying start and end date(s) of the individual training period(s). Any document should mention the type of training. If the training was conducted part-time, this should be stated. It is acceptable if the training happened over several periods and for different clinical specialties.

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<sup>44</sup> An official document proving the PI's right to social paternity benefits can also be accepted.

## 4.5 LIST OF BLOCKING FIELDS IN THE ONLINE SUBMISSION FORM

### Section 1 – General Information

Acronym

Title

Duration

Primary ERC Review Panel

ERC Keyword 1

Abstract

Agreement on title use

Declaration on written consent of all participants

### Section 2 – Participants and contacts

PI: First name, Last name and e-Mail (can only be entered at Step 4 in the submission system)

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

Main HI: contact First name, Last name and e-Mail (can only be entered at Step 4 in the submission system)

### Section 3 - Budget

Total Estimated Eligible Costs and Requested EU contribution per beneficiary

### Section 4 - Ethics

No blocking fields

### Section 5 – Call-specific questions

Date of earliest award (PhD or equivalent)

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

Eligibility declaration