ERC Advanced Grant Call 2023
Notes and Tips for Applicants
Version March 2023

Content

Quick Overview for Advanced Grant Call 2023

Deadline: May23, 2023 17:00 CET

- **Waiting time for resubmission** of ERC proposals that failed in step 1 of the evaluation: 1 year for proposals evaluated as category B and 2 years for category C proposals (most likely; with the probable exception of the Synergy Grant Call). Proposals that proceed to step 2 but are not funded can most likely be resubmitted "immediately" to ERC calls of Work programme 2024.

- **Section c) resources is part of the online submission form** (section 3, max 2 pages/8000 characters in total)

- Part B2 is limited to **14 pages**

- **Literature references do not count towards page limits** (B1+B2)

- **Additional funding of up to 1 Mio EUR** is possible in exceptional, defined circumstances

- **Model CV-Template** provided by ERC (should be followed; some adaptations are possible)

- A brief **explanation on any specific situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic** with a negative impact on the PI's scientific productivity can be included in a dedicated section of the CV

- **10 years Track Record:** Presentation of up to 10 publications from the last 10 years. Journal Impact factors should not be indicated anymore in the Track Record.

- **Mandatory Funding ID annex** to indicate ongoing grants and submitted grant applications

- There is a dedicated **textbox to explain cross-panel/cross-domain nature of proposal**, if a second panel is selected

- **Request for exclusion of up to three reviewers** possible without justification

- **Minimum 30% of the PIs total working time** needs to be committed to the ERC project, and the PI needs to spend minimum 50% of his/her total working time in an EU or Associated Country, even if the salary of the PI is not charged to the project

- **Open Access for peer-reviewed publications is mandatory** (new: immediate, without any embargo); related costs can be charged to the project

- **Provisions on research data sharing apply** also for ERC grants, as set out in Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions. Therefore, a Data Management Plan (DMP) is now a mandatory deliverable of the ERC grant (6 months after project start)

- **Ethical issues table** and **Security issues table** need to be completed online

- **Written consent by all participants named in the proposal needs to be documented,** e.g. by an email dated before the call deadline (not to be submitted with the application)

It is important that your proposal clearly communicates:

– The research problem, intractable until now
– The fundamental nature of the knowledge gap
– What has prevented solving the research problem so far
– The novelty of your approach to solving it
– Why your approach promises a breakthrough, not a small (incremental) progress
– That you have the expertise and the means to succeed with this project
– How you will validate the results
– Your criteria for key choices regarding the project, e.g. focus, methods, case studies
– Why the risks are worth taking, and what your back-up strategies are
– What the key contribution of your project to the field will be

Important Documents and Useful Links

Please read the following two documents:
ERC Work Programme 2023 (legally binding)
Information for Applicants to the Advanced Grant Call 2023
→ *includes details on the ERC panels (expertise keywords)*

– **ERC Standard Proposal template for the Advanced Grant**, including administrative forms and Letter of Commitment of the Host Institute: available via the online-submission tool after registration (Funding & Tenders Portal)

– **ERC Homepage:** erc.europa.eu

– **ERC Advanced Grant 2023 Applicant Mailbox** for queries related to the call: ERC-2023-ADG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

– **Previous ERC panel members (frequently generalists)**: https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/advanced-grant

The lists of previous panel members can be used to get an overview on the different backgrounds from which panel members may assess your proposal (considering that typically four panel members will read it). ERC panel members alternate between even and odd years, while several of the panel members will usually be replaced by new ones.

The list of Panel Chairs for the 2023 call will also be published under this link, usually some weeks before the deadline.

– **ERC database of ERC-funded projects**

https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/project-database

Here you can search for ERC project summaries (abstracts) and Principle Investigators of ERC grants. Search results can be filtered e.g. by panel and keywords. Project abstracts and the

CVs of Principal Investigators funded by the panel you consider applying for may prove helpful for deciding on the best evaluation panel, and for comparing track records of PIs.

- **ERC webpage on Open Access:**
  https://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/managing-project/open-access

- **List of funded ERC proposals published online** by ERC Principal Investigators:
  https://www.ffg.at/europa/heu/erc/published-proposals

- **ERC Classes:** String of videos on how to prepare an ERC proposal, generated by ERCEA Scientific Officers:
  https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtv6FnsXqnXAYRk6HCErwMxwML0ZKoMcy

"Submit early, submit often"
Online submission of ERC proposals

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*We strongly recommend to **submit a first version of the proposal around 1 week before the deadline**, in order to check for any browser problem or other technical issues that may block proposal submission, or lead to layout changes in the submitted proposal. Up to the call deadline, you can continuously modify your proposal by submitting (not just uploading) a new version, which will overwrite the previous one.*

- In case of technical problems with the online submission system, please **contact your host institution** (grant management/researchers´ service), or the National Contact Points for ERC at **FFG** (ylva.huber@ffg.at, lil.reif@ffg.at) or directly the **Helpdesk**: **EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu** or **+32 (2) 29 92222**

- **Information on how to use the online submission system** is also available via the proposal submission service user manual: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/sep_usermanual.pdf

- **Ensure that all the required supporting documents are obtained and submitted** via the submission tool in time: **Commitment letter of the Host Institution in the current template** (older versions are not accepted), ethical issues annex (any documents related to ethics), other supporting documents as applicable

- Also, please note the remark on "**Consent obtained**" in the online forms ("other questions"): *Please confirm that you (as PI) have the written consent of all participants on their involvement and the content of this proposal, as well as of any researcher mentioned in the proposal on their participation in the project (either as team member, collaborator, other PI or member of the advisory board). We may request you to provide proof of the written consent obtained at any time during the evaluation.*

  The written consents should, however, not be submitted with the application. Consent can e.g. be documented by an **email** by the participant, which is **dated before the call deadline**.

Ethics and Security

— An **ethics issues table** has to be completed in the online submission forms. The page numbers in the ethics table refer to part B2. It is possible to indicate several page numbers divided by '/' (e.g. 12/14).

— If any of the ethics issues listed in the table applies to your proposal, **an ethics self-assessment** should be provided as well, within the corresponding online template (one text box each for Ethical dimension of the objectives, methodology and likely impact; and Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations). The ERCEA has provided some further explanation:

"The Ethics self-assessment text boxes have a character limit. The automatic limit is currently set to 5000 characters/box = 10000 in total. We suggest that PIs make use of the both boxes. If the detailed explanation goes beyond the limit (10000 characters), our recommendation is to provide the detailed explanation in a separated document and uploaded the pdf file as one of the optional annexes. Please inform PIs to make a reference to the annex in the Ethics text box (application form)."

"Applicants should only respond to the questions as displayed in the online submission form – they prevail over the ones presented in the general guidelines".

— As stated in the ERC Information for Applicants, the **ethical issues section will not be evaluated** during proposal evaluation. For proposals with immediate ethics issues, it is nonetheless *"advisable to include a short paragraph summarising how they will be dealt with and refer to the ethics self-assessment"*, according to the ERCEA.

— Applicants are also requested to specify whether the proposed activity will use and/or generate information which might raise **security concerns.** This occurs by completing a **security issues table** in the online proposal submission form. If applicable, available supporting documentation should be provided as well (as separate annexes). For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage.

— Questions on ethics issues of your proposal can be addressed to the **ERC's Ethics Support team** at ERC-ETHICS-REVIEW@ec.europa.eu

Evaluating Scientific Excellence: Questions that Advanced Grant Reviewers Need to Answer

Source: ERC Work Programme 2023, p. 41-42

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 higher-than-normal 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)?

— To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the research proposal)

— To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology (based on the research proposal)?

— To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified (based on the research proposal)?

Principal Investigator – Intellectual capacity and creativity

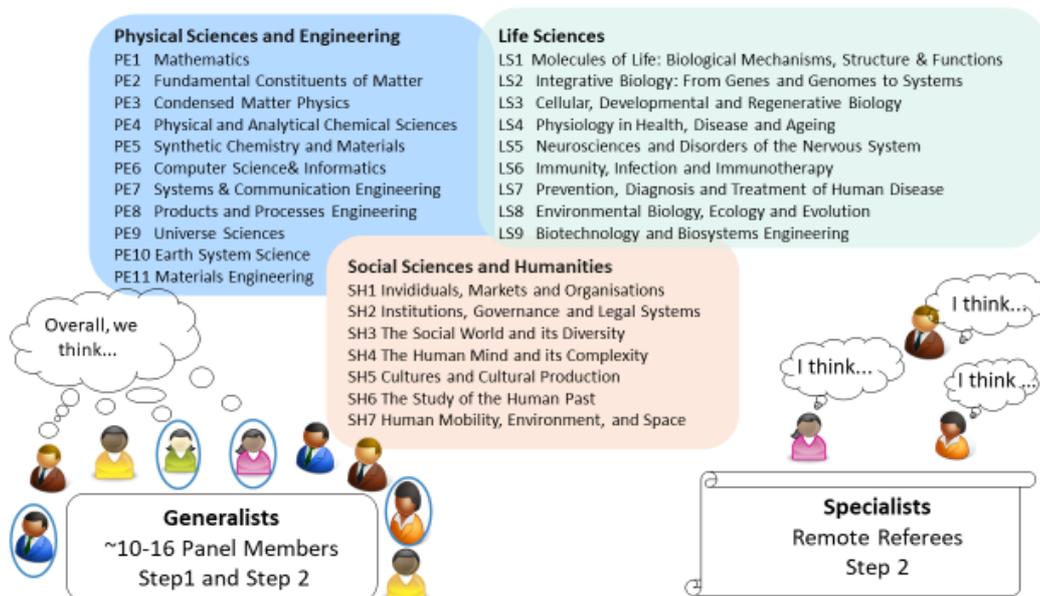**To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?**

— To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?

— To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

— To what extent has the PI demonstrated sound leadership in the training and advancement of young scientists?

The Evaluation Process – Generalists and Specialists

Which panel?

— Consider which panel is likely in the best position to understand the ground-breaking nature of your project, and to appreciate your previous achievements.

— While the ERC welcomes interdisciplinary projects, they constitute a challenge for the evaluation process, as these proposals need to be rated as excellent in every discipline they cover. If you consider your proposal to be interdisciplinary (cross-panel/cross-domain), you can indicate a secondary panel in the online-submission system. In this case, please describe the cross-panel/cross-domain nature in the dedicated text box on the B1 cover page. However, we recommend to give some extra thought to this question. So far, the success rates of explicitly cross-panel proposals apparently has been lower at least in the first step of the evaluation (while success rates for cross-panel proposals are higher in the second stage, according to information by the ERCEA). One reason for the lower success rate at step 1 might be that panel members from the secondary panel (usually one panel member) are not physically present during panel meetings, but only submit their written comments to the panel. As an alternative to selecting two panels, you can choose only one panel, and add keywords from other relevant panels (as well as free keywords).

— Exceptionally, the ERC may also allocate a proposal to a different panel than the one indicated by the PI.

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

Life Sciences
LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structure & Functions
LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
LS3 Cellular, Developmental and Regenerative Biology
LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
LS5 Neurosciences and Disorders of the Nervous System
LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Disease
LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

Social Sciences and Humanities
SH1 Invididuals, Markets and Organisations
SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
SH3 The Social World and its Diversity
SH4 The Human Mind and its Complexity
SH5 Cultures and Cultural Production
SH6 The Study of the Human Past
SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space

Overall, we think…

Generalists
~10-16 Panel Members
Step1 and Step 2

I think… I think… I think… I think…

Specialists
Remote Referees
Step 2

Evaluation step 1

Usually **four Panel Members** (out of approximately 14-16) **read part B1 only**. The majority may often be **generalists rather than specialists** in the area(s) of your project. The success rate of proposals in step 1 was around 38% lately.

Evaluation step 2

The **full proposal (B1 and B2) becomes accessible** to the **panel members and** to **specialist remote referees** (selected by the panel members based on part B1 only). The final decision on

the recommendation of a project for funding lies with the panel members. The success rate of proposals in step 2 was around 39% in a recent call.

The Evaluation Report

Below you find an **example structure** of an evaluation report for an ERC proposal, as sent to applicants following the conclusion of the evaluation:

For proposals not successful in step 1 (evaluation category B or C), approximately 4-5 individual reviews are included in addition to the panel comment (reviews only by Panel Members).
For proposals that proceed to step 2 (and are eventually funded or not funded), the number of individual reviews can range from approximately 8 to 12 or more (reviews by Panel Members and Remote Referees).

PANEL SCORE AND RANKING RANGE

Final panel score: B (is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation. Please note that you may also be subject to resubmission limitations in the next call)	**Ranking range*:** 27%-36% For your information, only the top 26% of the proposals evaluated in panel SH1 were retained for Step 2.

* Ranking range of your proposal out of the proposals evaluated by the panel in Step 1, in percent, from 1% for the highest ranked proposals to 100% for the lowest ranked.

PANEL COMMENT (approximately ¼ - ½ page)

Standard sentences/introduction – step 1: This evaluation report contains the final score awarded by the ERC review panel during the first step of the ERC Advanced Grant review and the ranking range. The discussion of the panel was conducted within the context of the individual reviews submitted by ERC panel members.
The panel closely examined all the individual review reports and, while not necessarily subscribing to each and every opinion expressed, found that they provide a fair overall assessment. The comments of the individual reviewers were the basis for the discussion and the final recommendation of the panel, and are included in this report.

Standard sentences/introduction – step 2: This evaluation report contains the final recommendations and score awarded by the ERC review panel during the second step of the ERC Advanced Grant review and the ranking range. The discussion of the panel was conducted within the context of prior reviews submitted by ERC panel members and external referees and the interview with the applicant. The panel closely examined all the individual review reports and, while not necessarily subscribing to each and every opinion expressed, found that they provide a fair overall assessment. The comments of the individual reviewers are included in this report. The presentation given by the applicant during the interview and the answers to the questions that were addressed greatly contributed to build the panel's view about the proposal's strengths and weaknesses.

Specific panel comments: The panel agreed that…[..]

Concluding standard sentences - **step 1 (evaluation category B, not funded):** […] Overall the panel considers this proposal to be of good quality. However, based on the combined set of criteria used in the assessment it was not ranked highly enough to be retained for Step 2. The panel therefore recommends that the proposal should not be retained for Step 2 and should not be considered for funding

Concluding standard sentences - **step 1 (evaluation category C, not funded**): […] On the basis of this evaluation, the panel concluded that the proposal does not meet the excellence standards of the ERC. The panel therefore recommends that the proposal should not be retained for Step 2 and should not be considered for funding.

Concluding standard sentence - **step 2 (funded):**
[…] The panel therefore recommends the proposal to be retained for funding with a grant not exceeding [x] Euro.

Concluding standard sentence - **step 2 (not funded):** […]The panel therefore does not recommend the proposal for funding.

REVIEWER COMMENTS
The following individual reviews have been carried out independently prior to the panel meeting and do not necessarily reflect the panel's final opinion

Reviewer 1

Research project
Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project […]
Scientific Approach […]

Principal Investigator	
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?	

Here, reviewers provide marks for each question, ranging from exceptional (1) to non-competitive (5)

In addition, an optional textbox is available for comments on the Principal Investigator:

Comments (Optional for reviewers)
(…)

Reviewer 2,3,… (as above)

Indicative Evaluation Schedule for the Advanced Grant Call 2023

SUBMISSION DEADLINE	STEP 1 PANEL MEETING	INFORM APPLICANTS	STEP 2 PANEL MEETING	INFORM APPLICANTS
23 May 2023	Oct 2023	Jan 2024	Jan/Feb 2024	Apr 2024

Updates at: https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/timeframe-advanced-grant-2023

Considerations for a Convincing ERC Advanced Grant Proposal

Structure

− Your proposal should read as a compelling, authentic narrative.

− Provide a clear, coherent structure.

− Put your research into a broader context. This will help to motivate your goals and to capture the interest also of reviewers who are non-specialists in the field (often the majority)

− The introduction/motivation should, however, not dominate the proposal: The **major part** of the grant application should explain concretely your **novel approach and planned work**.

− Present the concrete **aims/objectives** of your project rather early and in a highly visible manner (e.g. bullet points, bold fonts, text box). Panel Members like to see them at the first glance.

− The **perfect match between aims/objectives, the methodology and the workplan** of the project should be easy to perceive. For instance, you can refer to aim(s) 1,2 when describing method x or research line/workpackage y). This will support the impression of a coherent proposal.

B1 – Extended Synopsis

Part B1 is your "ticket to the interview". It is important to write it in a clear, succinct manner attractive also to non-experts in the field - possibly a majority of the panel members. Only part B1 is read at step 1 of the evaluation. It should contain all essential information, and communicate the ambition and the feasibility of your project.

We suggest to consider in particular the following aspects:

− Key **preliminary data**/results/**proof of principle** already obtained, e.g. in a pilot study. Ideally, a first publication demonstrating the high promise of your approach can be presented.

− **Risks and contingency strategies** (what are significant risks and your plan B, why does the project have a favourable risk-gain-balance).

− How you will **validate** the results of your project? In this context, e.g. information on statistical power can be very important also for part B1 (and in more detail for part B2). For clinical trials, it can be helpful to foresee an exploratory and an independent validation cohort.

− Show the **explanatory power** of your approach.

- If relevant for your field: How will you determine causality, as opposed to "only" correlation?

- Provide any other important information to underscore the breakthrough potential of your proposal. Depending on the field, reviewers may also frequently ask whether the results obtained in the ERC project will be **generalizable**.

- How will you measure success of your project?

- One or a few high quality **figure(s)/charts** can be very helpful for B1 (and B2), e.g. a flowchart to illustrate your approach.

- Based on evaluation comments, we strongly recommend to also include a short paragraph/sentence on the **team composition** in B1 (message: the necessary expertise will be assembled in your team), as well as a **brief timeplan** (1-2 sentences, or putting timing information in brackets, e.g. "aim 1… [Year 1-3]" / "key intermediate goal x [Year 3]"). More details on these aspects should be provided in B2, including the resources section.

- **References to literature** should be included. They do not count towards the five pages-limit. The references in B1 may also support Panel Members in selecting the external referees to evaluate the proposal in step 2 of the evaluation.

B2 – Scientific Proposal

Part B2 should present the required details for the evaluation by specialist reviewers in step 2. This concerns in particular the methodology, preliminary data, and risks and contingency plans.

- **We recommend to take particular care with the explanations on your approach in B2**, with a view to the specialist remote referees, who join in step 2 of the evaluation. Key questions and critical comments of specialist referees may be read out to the PI by panel members during the interview (PIs will not receive these questions beforehand). If major issues are raised in step 2 of the evaluation due to problems with B2, it can be difficult for a PI to dispel them entirely in a brief interview.

- Avoid unnecessary repetition between part B1 and B2**.** As part B1 should capture the essence of the entire proposal, B1 and B2 need to be mutually consistent. But some panel members may disapprove of longer sections with identical wording in B1 and B2. In part B2, you can also refer to figures/text presented in part B1. This can save space to provide more detailed information e.g. on methodological aspects for specialist reviewers.

- We recommend to maintain the overall structure of B2 provided for in the B2 template with two sections: a) State of the art and objectives; b) Methodology

- Where applicable, present **important intermediate goals** and any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to your planning

- Highlight any **novel/unconventional methodology**

- **Deal appropriately with significant risks** (contingency plans, alternative strategies; promising preliminary data) to further bolster the message of a favourable risk-gain-balance.

- **References to literature** should be included, but will not count towards the 14 pages-limit.

- Reviewers will likely expect a reasonable **time plan** for an ERC project. It has meanwhile become standard in part B2 of ERC proposals to present e.g. a Gantt chart or overview table

on key intermediate goals/milestones (see example in figure 1 below). The time plan should not be too detailed to be credible for a ground-breaking research agenda.

Figure 1 Fictitious example table of key intermediate goals

	Aim 1	**Aim 2**	**Aim 3**
Year 1-2	Analysis of … Publication 1…	Purify…	Visualize… Conference…
Year 3-4	Maps…	Integration of…	…
Year 5	Model…	Correlation of findings…	… Publications, …

Further Suggestions with Relevance both for B1 + B2

Novelty and unique features

– Address explicitly the ground-breaking nature of the project. What is the currently intractable research problem? What is the core novelty of your approach? What will be the main contribution of your project, how will it change the field/open up a new field?

– We recommend to explain the "immediate" impact of the project on your field/other fields and also to outline your more **long-term-vision beyond the project** (e.g. 5-10 years from now).

–– It should be evident for reviewers that your approach is genuinely new, timely, and not a small ("incremental") extension of (your) previous research.

– Explain the **unique features** and the advantages of your approach compared to **competing approaches.**

Hypothesis-driven project/clearly defined research questions

– While there can be differences between research fields/disciplines, ERC reviewers frequently comment positively on the fact that a project is hypothesis-driven. In any case, however, the overarching research questions should be crystal clear. Proposals that lack such question(s) and come across as largely technology- or methodology-driven will likely be at a disadvantage.

Scope of the project

– As with any research proposal, also the scope of an ERC application can be questioned by reviewers, e.g. as being too broad, or perhaps too narrowly focused. It is therefore important to explain why the approach you have chosen is the best strategy to achieve a breakthrough.

Clarity

– Your proposal needs to be **well understandable also for reviewers that are not specialists** in your own research field/topic; the motto should be "everything on a silver platter", in a **concise, easily accessible** writing-style

– Important: **Precise wording**/descriptions, **clear** (working) **definitions**, concrete **examples**, high quality **figures**

- Ensure a **reader-friendly layout**. It can be helpful to highlight key messages, e.g. by a short summary of a section in a text box, bullet points, selective use of bold fonts

Collaborations

- Strive for a good balance when describing collaborations for the project: explain their importance for the project, but without giving the impression of the PI being "too dependent" on them. Messages: Due to the excellent network of the PI, they will have access to all required complementary expertise and infrastructure. The collaborations are well-defined and targeted. This should avoid a potential impression of a project based on a consortium, as the ERC explicitly does not fund consortia (see ERC Work Programme). If you think your project would actually require several PIs, the ERC Synergy Grant call (for a group of 2-4 PIs) could be an interesting option.

Demonstrating a competitive Advanced profile

- **CV, Track Record; B1 & B2**
  Your scientific leadership should be evident throughout the proposal, i.e. not only in the CV and Track Record section, but also in the synopsis and the full scientific proposal, e.g. when presenting the state of the art or preliminary data ($\rightarrow$ "As we could show in [ref.x]…")

- **Up to 10 representative publications** from the last 10 years should be listed in the track record (see below and Work Programme 2023).

Picture the interview

- We recommend to also think about the interview situation from time to time when writing the proposal. This can help to ensure that the main messages you would pitch to generalist panel members in a 5-10 minutes presentation are highly visible in your proposal and well understandable also to non-specialists in the field.

The Proposal Abstract

The abstract is an important part of the proposal, also during panel discussions. Therefore, it should not be underestimated.

- The majority of panel members may only read the abstract and possibly leaf through the proposals when they are discussed in the panel meetings. The abstract should therefore present the essence of your project, including the scientific challenge/knowledge gap, novel approach, objectives, potential impact, unique features. It can also be helpful to mention the existence of relevant preliminary work/recent promising results of the PI already in the abstract.

Remarks on CV and Track Record

Curriculum Vitae (B1, Section b, max. 2 pages)

− Overall, it is recommended to **maintain the structure of the CV template,** as applicable; panel members seem to appreciate it (see also Information for Applicants, p23: "Curriculum vitae …should follow the suggested template")

− In addition to the examples provided by the CV template, please present also key activities as **reviewer for journals**

− Ensure an **impeccable and reader-friendly layout** also of the CV and Track Record section

− **Appendix to the CV: All ongoing and submitted grants and funding of the PI (Funding ID***)* Mandatory information not counting towards page limits

According to information by the ERCEA, the information in this table is also used to support the selection of reviewers for the proposal (avoiding potential conflicts of interest with reviewers that might be involved in running/submitted projects with the applicant). However, if several ongoing grants are listed which will temporally overlap with the ERC project, it is advisable to also demonstrate that **the PI will be able to fulfil his/her time commitment to the ERC project**, e.g. by indicating the percentage of time commitment of the PI for the other grants in the table.

− You can also present the total amount of funding obtained by the PI so far (CV or Track record)

− A brief explanation on **COVID-19 impact to scientific productivity** can be included in a dedicated section of the CV (max. 300 characters). Note that according to the ERCEA, this information will count towards the page limit of the CV.

Early Achievements Track-Record (B1, Section c, max. 2 pages)

− **The typical structure of the tean years track record is provided in the ERC Work Programme** 2023, p.21.

− A central element of this track record is the presentation of your most important publications (**up to ten**) in the last 10 years, as main author (note that until 2016, the wording was senior author). You can also add field relevant bibliometric indicators, e.g. citations without self-citations, **except for the Journal Impact Factor**. **Preprints** may be included, if freely available from a preprint server and should be properly referenced and either a link to the preprint or a DOI should be provided.

− We recommend to provide **summary/overview information** for the reviewers (e.g. total number of publications, contributions to conferences, citations etc. as applicable; plus a **weblink** to the full list of publications and talks), as well as specific **highlights**.

− For the list of ten top publications in the Ten year Track record, we suggest to **describe their significance and your contribution in a brief narrative** ("Here, we could show for the first time…"). This option is also mentioned in the ERC's Information for Applicants.

− Judging from evaluation comments, reviewers like to see evidence for **successful mentoring activities** by "advanced" PIs (Track Record section: Major contributions to the early careers of excellent researchers). We suggest to provide **examples** (Dr. X, PhD student in my group,…now Prof. at Institution X/ group leader at Y, awarded with a prize,…).

- Information on any **further important papers of particular relevance** for your ERC project can be integrated in the proposal as well, in particular in the extended synopsis and part B2.

Ressources

Online Submission Form Section 3: Budget Table + Text

⸻ The **budget table and description of resources** are part of the **online submission form (Section 3 – Budget table and text box "Section C" below). They should therefore not be included in Part B2.** However, we would expect that a note we received by ERCEA for the last calls in Horizon 2020 is still valid, which confirmed that some information regarding resources, i.e. "*regarding the role of team members and collaborators, may be added in the usual (B2) sections a and b".* This would seem reasonable, as the text box in the resources section currently does not allow the inclusion of explanatory charts s.a. Gantt charts, which also may include information on team members. That said, section C is clearly also intended for information on the team (please see further below).

⸻ The budget table and description of resources will be made available to panel members and remote referees. The **description of resources, without the budget table, is limited to** 8.000 characters (corresponding to two pages). It does not count towards the 14 pages-limit for B2.

⸻ Apart from explaining the project costs in the adequate detail, section C is also designed to present information on the "size and nature of the team, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles" (see ERC Information for Applicants). We recommend to include the expertise requirements for Post Docs and PhD students that will be hired for the project, as well as information on **working arrangements** (e.g. supervision of PhD students supported by Post Docs, overall supervision and guidance by PI).

⸻ Reviewers may question whether certain tasks could be "too demanding for a PhD student" and should rather be allocated to a Post Doc; or conversely whether the presented tasks constitute a convincing PhD project.

⸻ We recommend to present relevant information on the **host institution/research environment** here, to strengthen the message of "the right project and team in the right place".

⸻ Explain your **commitment** to the project as PI, including the percentage of total working time. If you think there could be reasonable doubts on whether you will be able to fulfil the time commitment due to other duties, describe your strategy up front.

Budget Table – Remarks on Specific Cost Categories

Please contact the grant management office at your ERC host institution for support.

⸻ **Other goods, works and services** (with overhead flat rate): As explained in the [Model Grant Agreement](#), this category includes contracts to purchase goods, works or services, e.g. contract for a computer; contract for an audit certificate on the financial statements; contract for the publication of brochures; contract for the creation of a project website, contract for organization of the rooms and catering for a meeting, contract for hiring IPR consultants/agents. These costs do not arise from directly implementing the action tasks of the ERC project, but they are necessary to implement these tasks. Overheads apply to these costs, as opposed to the case for subcontracts.

— **Subcontracting costs** (without overheads): Costs for subcontracts arise from contracts for goods, works or services that are part of the action tasks.

— **Audit costs** should be included in the **other goods, works and services category,** subcategory "other additional direct costs" (see above). In Horizon Europe, only one audit (certificate of the financial statement) is required at the end of the project, if the funding (direct costs) amounts to ≥ 430.000 EUR. A special threshold applies for beneficiaries with a systems and process audit (requested EU contribution ≥ EUR 725 000).

— **Equipment:** Please note that by default, only **depreciation rates** (according to national rules) can be charged to the ERC for equipment. Only if foreseen in the call/the grant agreement, there are some possible exceptions. If the depreciation period of the equipment in question exceeds the duration of the ERC project, the remaining costs have to be carried by other means. We suggest to contact your host institution in case of questions.

— The category for **internally invoiced goods and services** refers e.g. to access to internal services that are charged as unit costs (no overheads apply).

— Do not forget the possibility to include costs for publications, including **open access fees** In Horizon Europe, as each ERC beneficiary must ensure open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results. Also costs related to management of research data/ **open access to research data** can be charged.

— **Other direct costs with no overheads:** This category includes costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary (= host institution), e.g. access to large research facilities owned by a third party and not used on the premises of the beneficiaries.

— **PI salary:** As PI, you may request funding for your salary corresponding to the percentage of total working time dedicated to the ERC project (or a smaller fraction of that amount), even if you already receive a salary by your host institution. Funding of (part of) the PI's salary can e.g. support the host institution in hiring a teaching replacement in case there is an agreement to reduce teaching obligations of a PI during the ERC project. Please consider, however, whether funding of the PI salary could negatively affect the suitability of the team due to budget constraints, as this needs of course to be avoided.

— In case you consider a **100% time commitment as PI to the ERC project**, we recommend to give this some extra thought. It implies that there is no time foreseen for other activities such as teaching, writing grant proposals, etc, for the duration of the project. A slight reduction of your time commitment can provide you with more flexibility.

— While the administrative requirements for ERC projects are comparatively slim, please note that you also may include personnel costs for **administrative** tasks. You could discuss this with your host institution.