

ERC Starting Grant Call 2026

Notes and Tips for Applicants

Version September 2025

Disclaimer

The information provided in this compilation is based on several sources, in particular on key documents published by the ERC, such as the ERC Work Programme and Information for Applicants, as well as suggestions by ERC Panel members and evaluation comments.

The Austrian Research Promotion Agency (Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft mbH, FFG) assumes no liability for the accuracy of this data and information. These non-binding comments and recommendations are provided by FFG in the function as National Contact Point to the best of our knowledge and belief. The Austrian Research Promotion Agency draws attention to the fact that these are statements of a general nature and not a binding expert opinion.

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Quick Overview for the Starting Grant Call 2026

Deadline: 14 October 2025 17:00 CET

The ERC Work Programme 2026 comes with several changes. In particular, the proposal template has been shortened and restructured to make the two parts of the proposal (5 + 7 pages) complementary to each other, avoiding redundancies. Along with this, the evaluation questions have been adapted: feasibility will be assessed in step 2 of the evaluation procedure.

Below, we list some further key features of the call. For a full picture, we highly recommend to read the ERC work programme 2026 and guidance documents by the ERC (please see weblinks on page 3).

- **Eligibility time window for the call under Work Programme 2026:** The reference date for the Starter and Consolidator eligibility window is January 1st, 2026. For the calculation of the eligibility time window, the certified date of the successful PhD defence is used. A template for requests concerning eligibility extensions is provided in the Information for Applicants (p.58), which should be uploaded as a single PDF, as Annex 1 of the application.
- **Extending the eligibility time window:** Gender-based violence or any other form of violence has been added to the list of defined circumstances to request an extension of the eligibility time window provided in the ERC Work Programme.
- **MD/PhD-equivalency:** Please note that an M.D. degree plus clinical training alone does not render a M.D. degree a PhD-equivalent; a proof of an appointment that requires doctoral equivalency is necessary in addition.
- **Minimum 50% of the PI's total working time** needs to be committed to the ERC project, and PIs need to spend minimum 50% of their total working time in Europe or a Horizon Europe-Associated Country, even if their salary is not charged to the project.
- **Additional funding of up to EUR 1,0 Mio** can be requested to cover further eligible costs such as start-up costs, major equipment, access to large facilities, major experimental and field work costs, including personnel costs (and, where applicable, 25% overhead costs). For PIs re-locating to an EU or Associated country from elsewhere to take up their ERC grant, the additional funding may amount to up to EUR 2,0 Mio.
- **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).
- A request for exclusion of up to three persons as reviewers for potential competitive reasons can be made (online submission form, section 5 – Other questions).
- In case you select a second evaluation panel, there is a textbox on the cover page to explain the cross-panel/cross-domain nature of proposal (please see also p7)
- **Open Access for peer-reviewed publications is mandatory** (without embargo period); related costs can be charged to the project.
- **Provisions on research data sharing apply** also for ERC grants. Therefore, a Data Management Plan (DMP) is a mandatory deliverable of the ERC grant (due 6 months after project start).
- The **Budget table** and (at least in large part) the budget justification, **ethical issues table** and **security issues table** need to be completed online.

Indicative Evaluation Schedule for the Starting Grant Call 2026



<https://erc.europa.eu/timeframe-starting-grant-2026-evaluation>

Important Documents and Useful Links

Please read the following two documents:

[ERC Work Programme 2026 \(legally binding\)](#)

[Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant Call 2026](#)

→ includes details on the ERC panels and keywords

- **[Database of panel chairs and previous ERC panel members \(frequently generalists\)](#)**

This database includes panel members who took part in finished ERC grant competitions as well as panel chairs in the ongoing calls. We recommend to have a look at previous panel members to understand the different backgrounds and perspectives from which panel members may view your proposal. ERC panel members alternate between even and odd years, while several of the panel members will usually be replaced by new ones. For the sake of transparency, a list of all panel members active in a particular call is published in advance of the deadline (not broken down according to panels)

- **[ERC Dashboard of ERC evaluated and funded projects](#)**

Here you can search for ERC project summaries, Principle Investigators of ERC grants, funding amounts etc., with a variety of filters including panel and keywords from abstracts. Although panel configurations may have changed over the years, this tool can still be helpful for deciding on the most suitable evaluation panel.

- ERC Starting Grant 2026 **applicant mailbox** for queries related to the call:

ERC-2026-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

- Recordings of ERC Webinars on the ERC Work Programme and Calls 2026 can be found at **<https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/events>**

- Explanation by the ERC President on the rationale for the changes in the ERC's evaluation procedures: **<https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/erc-president-explains-changes-erc-evaluation-procedures>**

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

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

Evaluating Scientific Excellence: The Questions that ERC Starting Grant Reviewers Need to Answer

Source: ERC Work Programme 2026, p. 36-37 and Information for Applicants 2026, p. 14

Primarily assessing the **Research Project – Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility**

At Step 1:

- To what extent does the research address important scientific questions?
- To what extent are the project's objectives ambitious and will it advance the frontier of knowledge?

At Step 2:

- To what extent does the research address important scientific questions?
- To what extent are the project's objectives ambitious and will it advance the frontier of knowledge?
- To what extent are the research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
- To what extent are the timescales and resources adequate and properly justified?

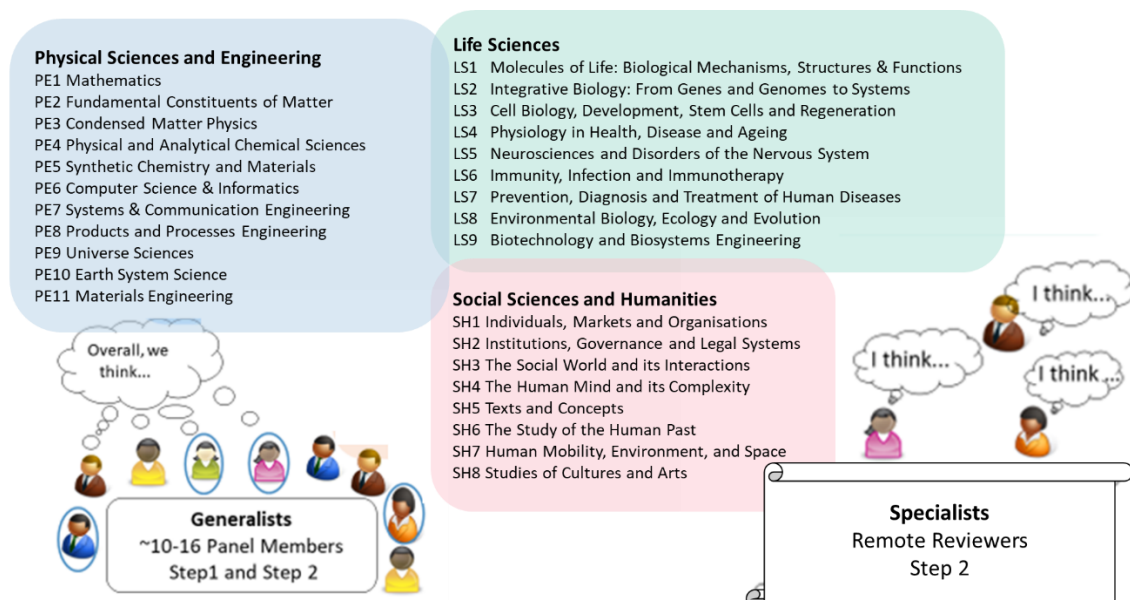
At the same time, assessing the **Principal Investigator – Intellectual capacity and creativity**

At Step 1 and Step 2:

- To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative and original thinking?
- To what extent does the PI have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

Evaluation procedure: Generalists and Specialists

- Consider which panel is likely in the best position to understand the ground-breaking contribution of your project.
- If you consider your proposal to be interdisciplinary (cross-panel/cross-domain), you can indicate a secondary panel in the online submission system. We suggest to give some extra thought before doing this. The ERC welcomes interdisciplinary projects, but they pose a challenge for the evaluation process: Reviewers will likely expect that proposals are excellent in every discipline they cover. According to the ERCEA, the success rate of explicitly cross-panel proposals has been lower in the first step of the evaluation, but higher in the second step. One reason for the lower success rate at step 1 could be that the (usually single) panel member from the secondary panel will not participate in panel meetings, but only submit their written comments to the primary panel. In case of critical comments, there is apparently no opportunity to discuss them in 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). Also in this case, however, it is possible that a member from another panel is asked to review the proposal.
- Exceptionally, panel chairs may also decide allocate a proposal to a different panel than the one indicated by the PI (reported for approximately 3% of cases in previous years).



Evaluation step 1

As of WP 2026, typically three Panel Members (out of approximately 14-16) read Part I and the CV/Track record section. The majority of panel members may be generalists and thus not experts in the specific area(s) of your project. At step 1 a distinction will be made between proposals obtaining a score of A and invited to step 2 of the evaluation (a maximum of 44 proposals per panel), and proposals with an A score but not ranked sufficiently high to be invited to step 2. The latter proposals can likely be “immediately” resubmitted to a call under the next ERC work programme. PIs of proposals that are evaluated as category B or C at step 1, however, will most probably be subject to resubmission restrictions. The waiting window depends on the evaluation category: one year for category B and two years for category C proposals, applicable to all ERC calls except for the Synergy Grant (most likely; the resubmission rules will be determined in the subsequent ERC work programme).

Evaluation step 2

The full proposal (Part I and Part II as well as the information submitted in the online form A, section 3 – resources) is made accessible to the panel members and to specialist remote reviewers. The latter are selected by the panel members based on Part I only. The final decision on the recommendation of a project for funding, following the interview, lies with the panel members.

Tips for a Convincing ERC Starting Grant Proposal

General Remarks

It is important that your proposal effectively communicates:

- The important research problem/question, intractable until now
- The fundamental nature of the current knowledge gap
- What has prevented the scientific community from solving the research problem until now
- The novelty of your approach to solving it
- Why your project promises a breakthrough that will change the field
- That you have the expertise and means to succeed with the project
- The criteria/reasons for key choices for your project, e.g. focus, case studies, methods
- How you will validate the results of the project
- What the key contribution of your project to the field will be

Questions and critical comments of colleagues (both within and beyond your research field, ideally with a background similar to that of potential panel members) on the proposal will be highly valuable.

Novelty and unique features

- Explain clearly what makes your project ground-breaking. What is the core novelty that will change the field?
(At the ERC interview, you may be asked: What line in the textbooks should change based on the success of your project?)
- It should be evident for reviewers that your project is genuinely new, original and creative, and takes your research to a higher level. It is not an incremental extension of (your) previous research.
- Explain the advantages of your approach compared to competing approaches.

Well-chosen scope and focus

- ERC projects should be ambitious, but their scope should not be too broad for achieving a breakthrough.

Research questions/Hypotheses

- We recommend to clearly present the key research question(s) driving the proposal.
- While there can be differences between research fields, ERC reviewers frequently comment positively on the observation that a project is hypothesis-driven.

Research vision

- We suggest to also briefly outline your more long-term scientific vision beyond the project (e.g. with a time-frame of 5-10 years from now). This can further underline the significance of your project, and help to motivate the focus that you chose for the Starting Grant project

Explanatory power

- Explain how you will validate the results of your project. E.g. how will you determine causality, as opposed to “only” correlation? Could the results obtained in the ERC project be generalizable to other fields?

Well-founded claims

- As far as possible in the limited space, underpin your statements, so that every claim comes across as well substantiated (“Show me, don’t tell me”).
- When explaining the limitations of current literature and/or competing approaches in order to position your new approach, we suggest to write this in a balanced manner that recognizes previous work or other approaches, while effectively demonstrating the need for your new approach. Setting the right tone can underline that the PI is truly in command of the current literature and gives a fair account, which may help to convince also potentially sceptic reviewers.

Plan on success

- How will you measure success of your project, what will constitute a successful outcome?

Collaborations well explained

- 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 overly 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, rather than an individual investigator-driven project (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.

Excellent reading experience: Structure, clarity, impeccable layout

- Provide a clear, coherent structure in your proposal narrative (panel Member quote: “Don’t let me think”).
- Your proposal should read compelling and authentic. Make it well accessible also for reviewers who are not experts in your research field/topic.
- Put the research you propose into a broader context. This will help to motivate your research goals and to capture also the interest of non-specialist reviewers.
- We suggest to frequently use active voice/first person (I/We) in the proposal. This can support a confident, authentic impression and a more direct connection to the reader.
- Scientific substance is key. Buzzwordish proposals will likely irritate reviewers.
- The introduction/ motivation is important, but it should not dominate the proposal. The major part of the grant application should explain your novel approach and the planned work.
- Present the aims of your project rather early and in a highly visible manner (e.g. bullet points, bold fonts, text box).

- The 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 notion of a coherent proposal.
- Ensure there are no loose ends in the proposal. (Panel Member quote: “The proposal should go full circle”).
- Important: Precise wording/descriptions, clear (working) definitions, concrete examples to illustrate your statements, high quality figures (for preliminary data)
- Charts can be very helpful to convey key information on your project in a succinct and well-understandable way.
- 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.
- To ensure that part I and part II are complementary and do not overlap, it may be helpful to write the proposal “in one piece” first and then splitting into part I (up to 5 pages) and part II (up to 7 pages), as suggested in a webinar by the ERC

Picture the interview/talk to non-specialists

- 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 well communicated in your proposal. In a similar vein, explaining the gist of your project to laypersons can be helpful to put the essential messages in simple, well understandable terms

B1 – Part I of the Scientific Proposal: Excitement

“This is a great idea that would be worth pursuing”

Only Part I (5 pages) and the CV/Track record section (4 pages) are read at step 1 of the evaluation. Part I should explain how your project will advance the frontier of knowledge, what contribution it will make to the research field(s): what may be changed, opened, challenged, how will the results of the work alter the current understanding of the field? (see ERC Work Programme)

To this aim, part I should:

- **lay out the current state of knowledge**
- **explain the scientific question and the objectives of the project, and**
- **present the overall approach or research strategy to reach the goals of the project**

Some suggestions in this context:

- Tell a story. The first sentences should already captivate the reviewers.
- The ingredients for part I as listed in the ERC Work Programme 2026 should all be covered, but not necessarily in this sequence. We suggest to present the essence of the project, including the aims, rather early in Part I.
- Write in a clear, cogent manner that makes your proposal attractive also to non-experts in the field (possibly a majority of the panel members).
- The ERC emphasizes that Part I should not provide details of the methodology, as feasibility will be assessed in step 2 of the evaluation, based on part II of the proposal. At the same time, also based on anecdotal remarks by reviewers, we anticipate that at least some of them will seek to understand whether your idea is realistic already based on part I. Thus, we suggest to use the explanation of your research strategy and overall approach in part I as a framework to provide essential information in this regard, without going into detail and without repeating it in part II. For some aspects, you may consider short statements, e.g. you could explain in one sentence in Part I that alternative strategies/mitigation plans are in place and will be presented in Part II.
- As part of explaining your overall research strategy and approach, we also suggest to include very brief overview information/ a sentence on the composition of your team (message: you will assemble the necessary expertise). Details should follow in Part II.
- When describing the current state of knowledge in the field, we suggest to include also key information on preliminary data/results/proof of principle that you already obtained, e.g. in a pilot study, or a first publication demonstrating the high promise of your approach, in part I (complemented by further information/details in part II). Also here, it is important to strike a balance - reviewers should not get the impression that a sizeable part of the work has already been done.
- Consider whether a high quality figure/chart could be helpful already in Part I to communicate the essence of your project.

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

B2 – Part II of the Scientific Proposal: Affirmation

“This idea can be pursued realistically, in the manner and with the approach that the applicant proposes”

Part II should present a detailed explanation of the project implementation, including research methodology, work plan, risk assessment, and mitigating measures, justification for the requested budget and resources, and any further necessary background not included in Part I. (see ERC Work Programme)

- We recommend to take particular care with the explanations on your approach and methodology in Part II. The key questions and critical comments of specialist reviewers are typically 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 Part II, it can be difficult for a PI to dispel them entirely in a brief interview.
- 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,..), in order to bolster the message of a favourable risk-gain-balance.
- Explain how you will validate the results of your project. E.g. how will you determine causality, as opposed to “only” correlation? How will you measure success of your project, what will constitute a successful outcome?
- Where applicable, we suggest to provide information on statistical power calculations. For clinical trials, it can be helpful to foresee an exploratory and an independent validation cohort.
- Reviewers will likely expect a reasonable time plan for an ERC project. We suggest to present e.g. a Gantt chart or an overview table on key intermediate goals. However, the time plan should not be too detailed to be credible for a ground-breaking research agenda.
- With respect to justifying resources, we refer to the instructions by the ERC in an updated version of the ERC template for B2/part II: *Please note that the justification for the requested budget and resources should be explained under the “Resources” Section in the online submission form (Part A, Section 3 - Budget). Part II of the Scientific Proposal cannot deviate from the Resources section but can include additional justification where necessary when describing the methodology, workplan etc.* Thus, some budget aspects can be included in the scientific part II but there is no obligation.
- References to literature should be included, they will not count towards the 7 pages- limit

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.

The CV &Track Record section

Communicating your capacity to succeed with the ERC project

The Curriculum Vitae & track record section consists of the following elements (cf. ERC Work Programme and Information for Applicants 2026):

- Personal details, education, key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions
- **Research Achievements: a list of up to ten research outputs** that demonstrate how you have advanced knowledge in your field – with an emphasis on recent achievements (e.g. publications, articles deposited in a publicly available preprint server, books, book chapters, conference proceedings, data sets, software, patents, licenses, standards, start-up businesses or any other research outputs you deem relevant in relation to your research field and your project). We suggest to highlight publications as main author and/or without the co-authorship of your PhD supervisor in this section.
- **Peer Recognition:** a list of selected examples of significant peer recognition., e.g. prizes, awards, fellowships, elected academy memberships, invited presentations to major conferences or any other examples of significant recognition you deem relevant in relation to your research field and project.

You can include short, factual explanations of the significance of the selected outputs, your role in producing each of them, and how they demonstrate your capacity to successfully carry out the proposed project. Also, a short explanation of the importance of the listed examples of significant peer recognition can be added. We recommend to make use of these opportunities.

- In the section for **additional information**, you can include relevant information on career breaks, diverse career paths (e.g. secondments, volunteering, part-time work, time spent in different sectors) or effects of major life events (e.g. long term illness or pandemic restrictions).
Furthermore, here you can also list particularly noteworthy contributions to the research community other than research achievements and peer recognition, along with a short explanation. The idea is to provide context to reviewers so that they can take a more rounded view when they evaluate your achievements and peer recognition in relation to your career stage – e.g. by taking into account additional responsibilities, commitments and leadership roles beyond individual research activities.
- The potential for research independence of the PI should be evident throughout the proposal, i.e. not only shown in the CV &Track Record section, but also in Part I and Part II for instance when presenting preliminary work/data (e.g. “As we could show in [ref.x]...”).
- We suggest to consider also the following aspects for the CV/Track record section if applicable, although they are not mentioned (anymore) in the template: (co-)supervision experience; activities as reviewer for journals, functions in advisory boards; granted funding
- Ensure an impeccable, reader-friendly layout also of the CV and Track Record section.

The Funding ID

This is mandatory information on all ongoing and submitted grants and funding of the PI and does not count towards page limits.

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 their 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.

For submitted grant proposals which overlap with the content of the ERC, we recommend to add an explanatory sentence, e.g.: “In case both the X grant application and the ERC Starting grant application are successful, I shall accept the ERC Grant and decline the X grant”.

You can also present the total amount of funding obtained by the PI so far in the CV/Track record section.

Resources

Online Submission Form Section 3: Budget Table and Text

- The budget table and description of resources will be made available to panel members and remote reviewers. The description of resources, without the budget table, is limited to 8.000 characters (corresponding to two pages). It does not count towards the 7 pages-limit of Part II.
- Apart from explaining the project costs in the adequate detail, section 3 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).
- We also 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.
- It is useful to double-check for plausibility of your planning. For instance, 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.

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; for an audit certificate on the financial statements; for the publication of brochures; for the creation of a project website, for the organization of the rooms and catering for a meeting, 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 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 $\geq$ EUR 725 000).
- **Equipment**: Please note that typically, only **depreciation rates** (according to national rules) can be charged to the ERC for equipment. 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. Please contact your host institution in case of questions in this context. However, the ERC Work Programme 2026 also refers to the exceptional option of declaring

full capitalised costs (p. 27), if the necessary conditions are met (e.g. fixed asset account)

- 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).
- **Additional funding of up to EUR 1,0 Mio** can be requested to cover further eligible costs such as start-up costs, major equipment, access to large facilities, major experimental and field work costs. As of Work Programme 2026, also personnel costs can be requested in the context of additional funding (and, where applicable, 25% overhead costs). For PIs re-locating to an EU or Associated country from elsewhere to take up their ERC grant, the additional funding may amount to up to EUR 2,0 Mio.
- 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 the 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 a 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 composition of the team due to budget constraints.
- In case you consider a **100% time commitment as PI** to the ERC project (meaning : 100% of a full time equivalent as defined at your host institution), we recommend to give this some extra thought since it implies that for the duration of the project no time is foreseen for any other activities such as teaching, writing grant proposals, etc. A slight reduction of your time commitment can provide you with more flexibility, also for a possible transfer of the ERC grant to another host institution.
- While the administrative requirements for ERC projects are comparatively slim, please note that you also may include personnel costs for **administrative support**. This could be discussed with your host institution.

Submit early, submit often: Online submission tool

*We strongly recommend submitting **a first version of the proposal around 1 week before the deadline**, in order to check for browser problems 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), the National Contact Points for ERC at FFG (ylvh.huber@ffg.at, copy lil.reif@ffg.at and erc@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
- Please 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 [ethical self-assessment and any additional 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 II. 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".

- Typically, the ethical issues section and the ethics self-assessment annex (if applicable) is not accessible to the reviewers and will not be assessed during the 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.
- In Horizon Europe, applicants are also requested to identify if 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.
- For further guidance on ethics issues, please consult <https://erc.europa.eu/manage-your-project/ethics-guidance>, which a.o. contains the guideline [How to complete your ethics self-assessment](#)
- Questions on ethics issues of your proposal can be addressed directly to the **ERC's Ethics Support team** at ERC-ETHICS-REVIEW@ec.europa.eu.