



Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology
and Space



Funding opportunities of the European Research Council in the 2027 Work Programme

Martin Winger (National Contact Point ERC / KoWi)

Reminder: ERC basics

- ERC: part of Horizon Europe (EU Framework Programme for R&I)
- Funding of “frontier research” → **ambitious**
- Open to all fields of research: bottom-up, investigator-driven
- Funding of **individuals**: Principal Investigator (& team) + project
- **Scientific excellence** is the sole criterion for evaluation
- ERC grants are portable



Outlook: The ERC in the next EU Framework Programme

- Next EU Framework Programme for R&I (FP10) starts in 2028
- Goal of the R&I community (and the EP): $\approx$ € 200 bn. for FP10 and doubling the ERC budget
- Reality (aka EU member states): “not so fast...”
- Draghi-Report: “ERC for institutions”
- DFG, HRK & WR: Nexus-initiative



A never ending story: rise of ERC applications



StG : + 78.3%



CoG : + 43.6%



AdG : + 82% (2023 vs 2025)

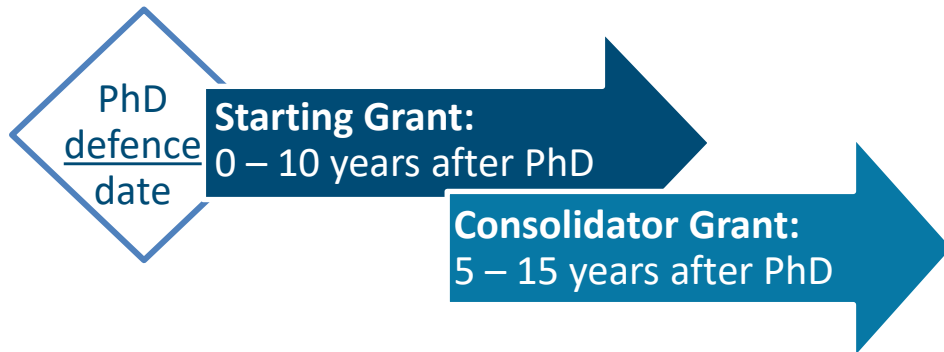
Source: ERC

ERC Work Programme 2027: Call calendar

	Starting Grant	Consolidator Grant	Advanced Grant	Synergy Grant	ERC Plus Grant
Opening	22 July 2026	24 September 2026	27 May 2027	17 February 2027	1 June 2027
Deadline	14 October 2026	12 January 2027	26 August 2027	11 May 2027	1 September 2027
Budget (€ mm)	594	618	798	500	210
Estimated grants	373	296	311	48	30



WP 2027: new eligibility windows for ERC Starting & Consolidator Grant



- StG: 1st January 2017 – 31st December 2026
- CoG: 1st January 2012 – 31st December 2021

- Cap: only **one StG** and **one CoG** per person (lifetime-limit)
- Eligibility: existing **extension rules** (e.g. parental leave) still apply



WP 2027: Some further changes

Additional rules on submission of proposals and eligibility:

- Former and current Starting and Consolidator Grant holders may not apply for the same type of grant in 2027
- Advanced and ERC Plus Grant applicants (2026) may not apply for a Synergy Grant 2027
- Advanced Grant 2027 panel members may not apply for an ERC Plus Grant 2027
- Should one Principal Investigator of a Synergy Grant group be declared ineligible, the whole group will be declared ineligible for a Synergy Grant 2027



ERC funding schemes



ERC Starting Grant & Consolidator Grant

Eligibility	0-10 years after PhD (defence date)	5-15 years after PhD (defence date)
↳ extension	extension of eligibility period possible, special rules for applicants with “Dr. med.”	
Funding	max. EUR 1.5 million for max. 5 years	max. 2 EUR million for max. 5 years
Additional funding	up to EUR 1 million or up to 2 million for third country applicants (who will relocate with the prospective ERC Grant to the EU or an Associated Country)	
Host institution	in EU Member State or Associated Country	
Time commitment	≥ 50% (≥ 50% in Europe)	≥ 40% (≥ 50% in Europe)



ERC Advanced Grant & Plus Grant

Target group	established researchers with a track record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years	researchers of all career stages, project scope beyond a regular ERC grant
Funding	max. EUR 2.5 million (lump sum) for up to 5 years (max. additional funding of up to EUR 1 million or 2 million for third country applicants)	max. EUR 7 million for 4-7 years (no additional funding)
Host institution	in EU Member State or Associated Country	
Time commitment	$\geq 30\%$ ($\geq 50\%$ in Europe)	



What distinguishes ERC Plus from other ERC Grants?

- Only 30 grants per year – compared to approx. 1 000 „normal“ ERC grants (StG, CoG and AdG) per year
- Granted once in a lifetime per PI
- Project: cannot be realised within the framework of a regular ERC grant (either due to financial or time-constraints) & „*because it aims to transform a field and/or open new avenues of research*“
- CV: past achievements might be given more importance than for regular ERC grants („*leaders in their field*“)



ERC Synergy Grant

Target group	2 - 4 researchers with a highly ambitious research goal that can only be achieved together – in order to provide transformative research results
Funding	max. EUR 10 million for up to 6 year (exception: maximum additional funding of up to EUR 4 million)
Host institution	in EU Member State or Associated Country (exception: 1 PI from Third Country)
Time commitment	≥ 30% (≥ 50% in Europe)
Procedure	single submission of full proposal, three-step evaluation (incl. interview)



Eligibility



Extension of the eligibility period (StG and CoG only)

- **Maternity before/after PhD:** 18 months per child
- **Extension by the documented time:**
 - **Parental leave** before/after PhD defence
 - **Military/civil service** after PhD defence
 - **Clinical training** after the award of the first eligible degree (up to 4 years)
 - Long-term **illness** of the PI or a close family member (>90 days) after PhD defence
 - **Disability**
 - Major **disasters** (natural or human-caused)
 - Seeking **asylum** after PhD defence
 - Gender-based or any other form of **violence**

PhD equivalence for Medical Doctors (StG and CoG only)

- A “Dr. med.”-degree is not considered equivalent to a PhD
- If holding a “Dr. med.”-degree, you need in addition:
 - Proof of an appointment that requires PhD equivalency/research position (postdoc fellowship, professorship, etc.)
 - Proof of research experience (to be provided in the CV)
- **Eligibility window** is shifted by two years after the **3rd state exam**
- Clinical training is recognized: can extend the eligibility window by a maximum of 4 years



Application procedure

Proposal Basics

- **Online submission** - process is started via the call page in the Funding & Tenders Portal
- A submitted proposal can be revised until the call deadline by submitting a new version that overwrites the previous one
- Stick to the structure of the **proposal templates**, adhere to the formatting rules, page limits, and provided guidance
- While preparing the proposal, take the **evaluation elements** into account

Main documents to be used

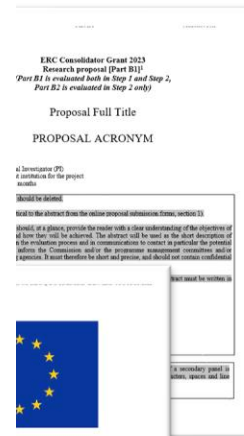
- Read the Annual ERC Work Programme: [2027](#)
- Follow the Information for Applicants – [call specific](#)
- Use the proposal templates – call specific
- Get used to the [electronic submission system](#)

ERC Work Programme 2027



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission





Proposal parts (StG, CoG, AdG)

A

Administrative Forms/ Proposal Submission Forms

- 1 - General Information
- 2 - Participants & Contacts
- 3 - Budget
- 4 - Ethics
- 5 - Call-specific questions

B

Part 1

Scientific Proposal Part I
(5 pages)

CV & Track record
(4 pages)

Part 2

Scientific Proposal Part II
(7 pages)
Appendix:
current grants &
grant applications

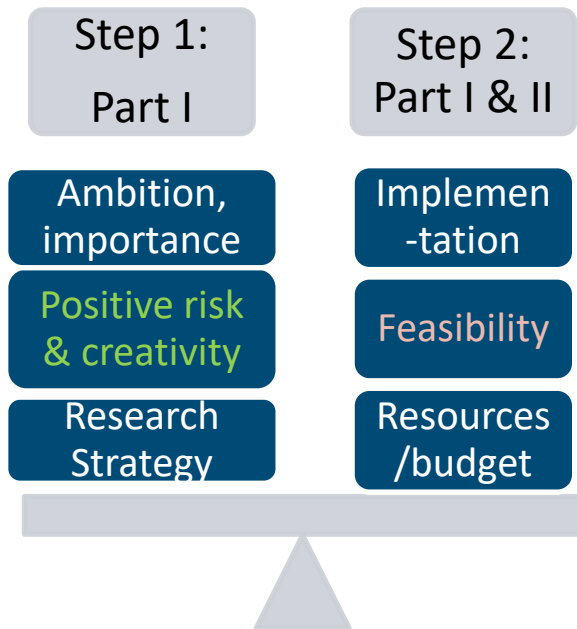
Resources and Time Commitment
(≈ 2 pages)

Annexes

- Host Institution Support Letter
- StG & CoG only: PhD-Certificate
- AdG only: Equipment Depreciation Table
- Further documents (if applicable)



Getting the right balance (I)



Part I

- “Is this a great research idea that would be worth pursuing?”

Part II

- „Can this idea be realistically implemented?”
- “Will the proposed research approach work?”



Getting the right balance (II)

Step 1: Part I + CV and Track record	Step 2: Part I + CV and Track record + Part II
<i>Is this a great idea that would be worth pursuing?</i>	<i>Can that idea be implemented realistically: if so, in/with the proposed manner & approach?</i>
• Current state of knowledge: Is the research idea advancing it? • Is the research idea original, creative, ambitious? • Explain scientific question & objectives • What is the overall approach/research strategy?	• Complementary, not redundant with Part I • Detail the implementation (incl. feasibility) • Provide extensive methodology • Detail the work plan • Provide risk assessment & mitigation measures • Justification requested budget & resources



Evaluation procedure

Evaluation basics

- Excellence is the sole evaluation criterion
 - Research project: **ground-breaking nature & ambition**
 - Principal Investigator: **intellectual capacity & creativity**
- One single submission but **two-/three-step** evaluation process (final step includes an interview by the panel)
- Evaluation by review panels (supported by remote reviewers)
- Outcomes (StG, CoG, AdG): A (step 2), A invited/not invited (Step 1), B, C
- Applicants are responsible for selecting the most appropriate panel(s)

ERC panels

28 panels in 3 domains: Life Sciences, Social sciences & humanities, Physical Sciences & Engineering

- Panel chairs: published before the deadline
- List of members (**without** panel assignment) published (normally) before the interview phase
- Complete list (**with** panel assignment) published after the evaluation
- Check the [ERC Panel Member Dashboard](#) for panel composition
- But do NOT contact panel member

Physical Sciences & Engineering

PE1 Mathematics

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

PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter

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

PE3 Condensed Matter Physics

Structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences, biological physics.

PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences

Analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics.

PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials

New materials and new synthetic approaches, structure-properties relations, solid state chemistry, molecular architecture, organic chemistry.

PE6 Computer Science and Informatics

Theoretical and experimental computer science, information processing, intelligent systems.

PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering

Electrical, electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering.

PE8 Products and Processes Engineering

Product and process design, chemical, civil, environmental, mechanical, vehicle engineering, energy processes and relevant computational methods.

PE9 Universe Sciences

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

PE10 Earth System Science

Physical geography, geology, geophysics, atmospheric sciences, oceanography, climatology, cryology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management.

PE11 Materials Engineering

Advanced materials development: performance enhancement, modelling, large-scale preparation, modification, tailoring, optimisation, novel and combined use of materials, etc.

Life Sciences

LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions

For all organisms: Molecular biology, biochemistry, structural biology, molecular biophysics, synthetic and chemical biology, drug design, innovative methods and modelling.

LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems

For all organisms: Genetics, epigenetics, genomics and other 'omics studies, bioinformatics, systems biology, genetic diseases, gene editing, innovative methods and modelling, 'omics for personalised medicine.

LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration

For all organisms: Structure and function of the cell, cell-cell communication, embryogenesis, tissue differentiation, organogenesis, growth, development, evolution of development, organoids, stem cells, regeneration, therapeutic approaches.

LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing

Organ and tissue physiology, comparative physiology, physiology of ageing, pathophysiology, inter-organ and tissue communication, endocrinology, nutrition, metabolism, interaction with the microbiome, non-communicable diseases including cancer (and except disorders of the nervous system and immunity-related diseases).

LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System

Nervous system development, homeostasis and ageing, nervous system function and dysfunction, systems neuroscience and modelling, biological basis of cognitive processes and of behaviour, neurological and mental disorders.
– *In humans and all other organisms*

LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy

The immune system, related disorders and their mechanisms, biology of infectious agents and infection, biological basis of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, innovative immunological tools and approaches, including therapies.

LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases

Medical technologies and tools for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases, therapeutic approaches and interventions, pharmacology, preventative medicine, epidemiology and public health, digital medicine.

LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution

For all organisms: Ecology, biodiversity, environmental change, evolutionary biology, behavioural ecology, microbial ecology, marine biology, ecophysiology, theoretical developments and modelling.

LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

Biotechnology using all organisms, biotechnology for environment and food applications, applied plant and animal sciences, bioengineering and synthetic biology, biomass and biofuels, biohazards.

Social Sciences & Humanities

SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations

Economics, finance, management.

SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems

Political science, international relations, law.

SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions

Sociology, social psychology, education sciences, communication studies.

SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity

Cognitive science, psychology, linguistics.

SH5 Texts and Concepts

Literary studies, literature, philosophy.

SH6 The Study of the Human Past

Archaeology and history.

SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space

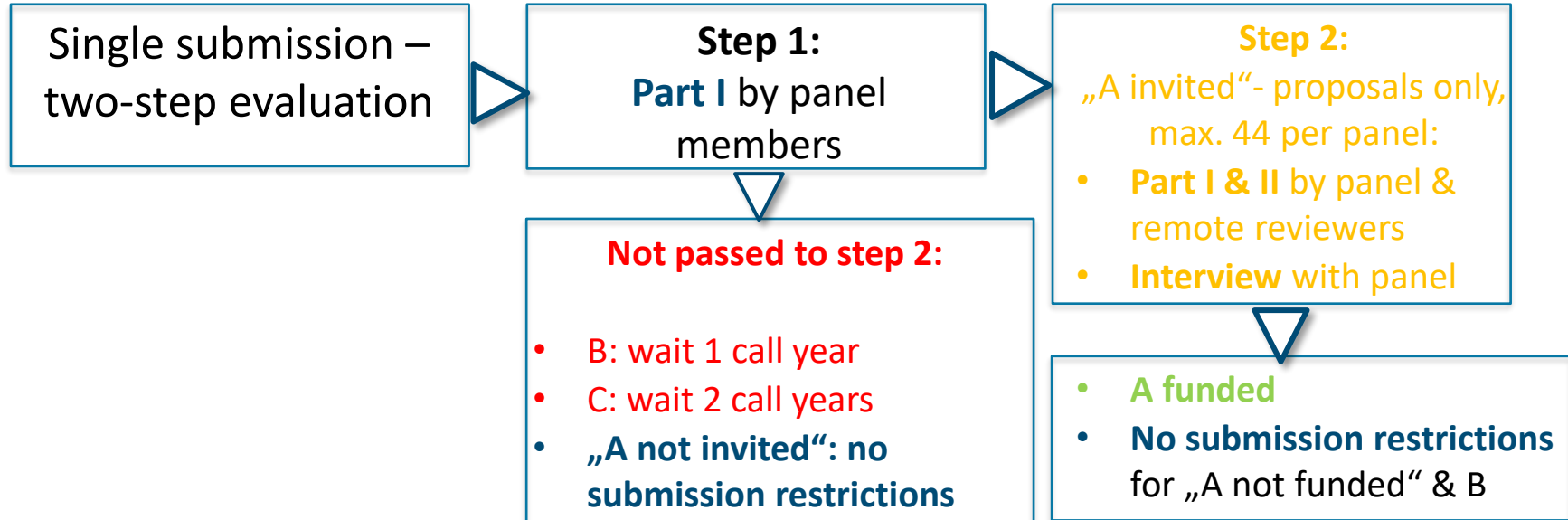
Human geography, demography, health, sustainability science, territorial planning and analysis.

SH8 Arts, Cultures and Societies

Anthropology, studies of cultures and the arts.



Evaluation procedure (StG, CoG, AdG)



Evaluation of the research idea (Step 1)

- To what extent does the research address important scientific questions?
- To what extent are the project's objectives ambitious, will the project advance the frontier of knowledge **and is the proposed approach scientifically convincing?**
- Plus Grant only: To what extent does the project address aims that could not be reached with a regular ERC grant?
- SyG only: To what extent does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone?

Evaluation of the research idea (Step 2)

In addition to the evaluation elements of Step 1:

- 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?
- SyG only: To what extent do the Principal Investigators succeed in proposing a combination of scientific approaches that are crucial to address the scope and complexity of the research questions to be tackled?

Evaluation of CV & Track Record (Step 1 and 2)

- To what extent has/have the PI(s)...
 - demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
 - provide evidence of creative and original thinking?
 - have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?
- Plus Grant only: To what extent is the applicant an undisputed leader in the field (compared to peers at the same career stage)?
- SyG only: To what extent does the SyG Group demonstrate that it brings together the know-how necessary to address the proposed research question(s)?

The Interview

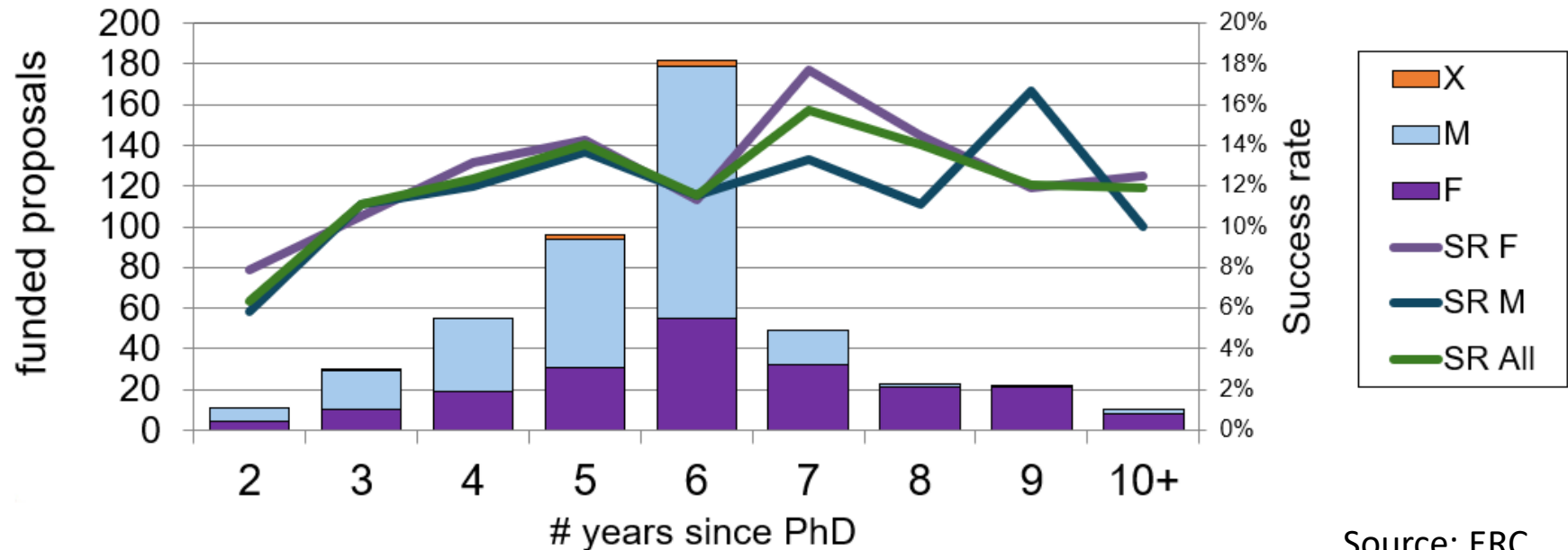
- Online (except SyG) with all panel members
- Project presentation plus Q&A
- Will influence the position on the ranking list
- Generally constructive atmosphere, focus on scientific content
- NCP ERC provides interview trainings



Success rates

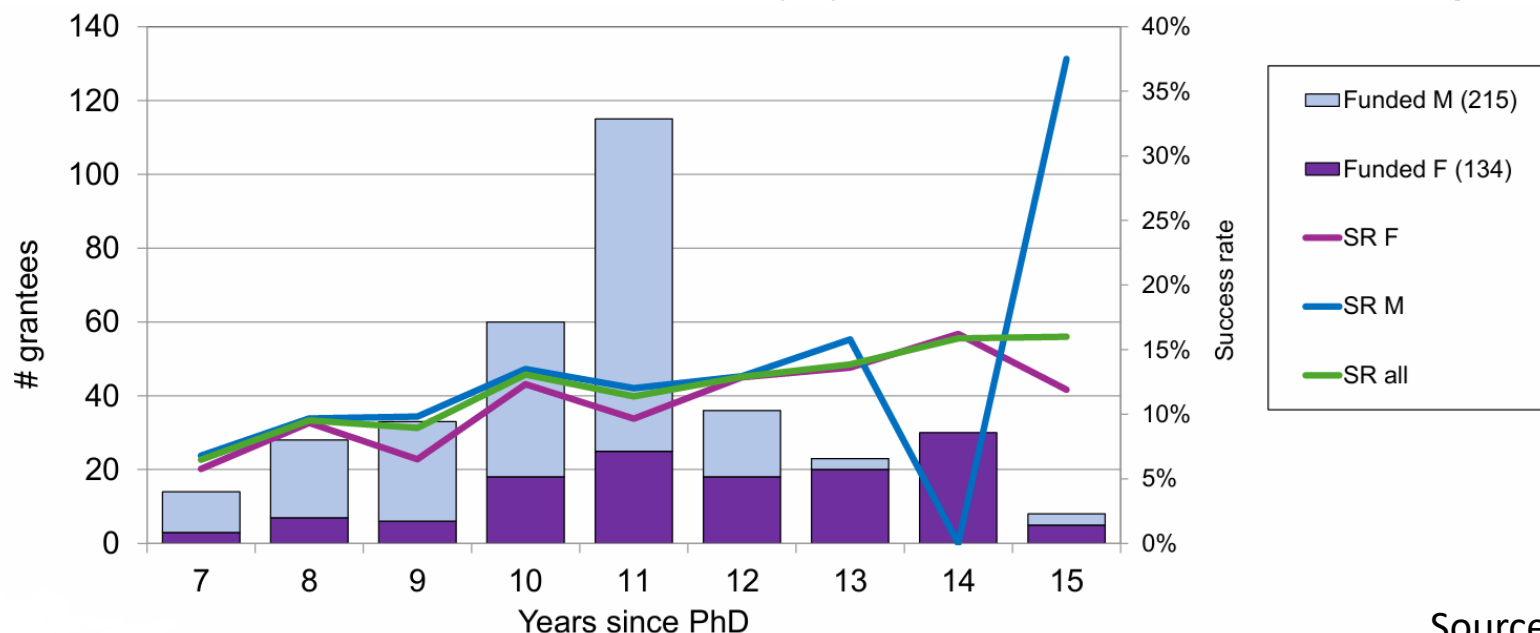


StG 2025: Success rate by years since PhD and gender



Source: ERC

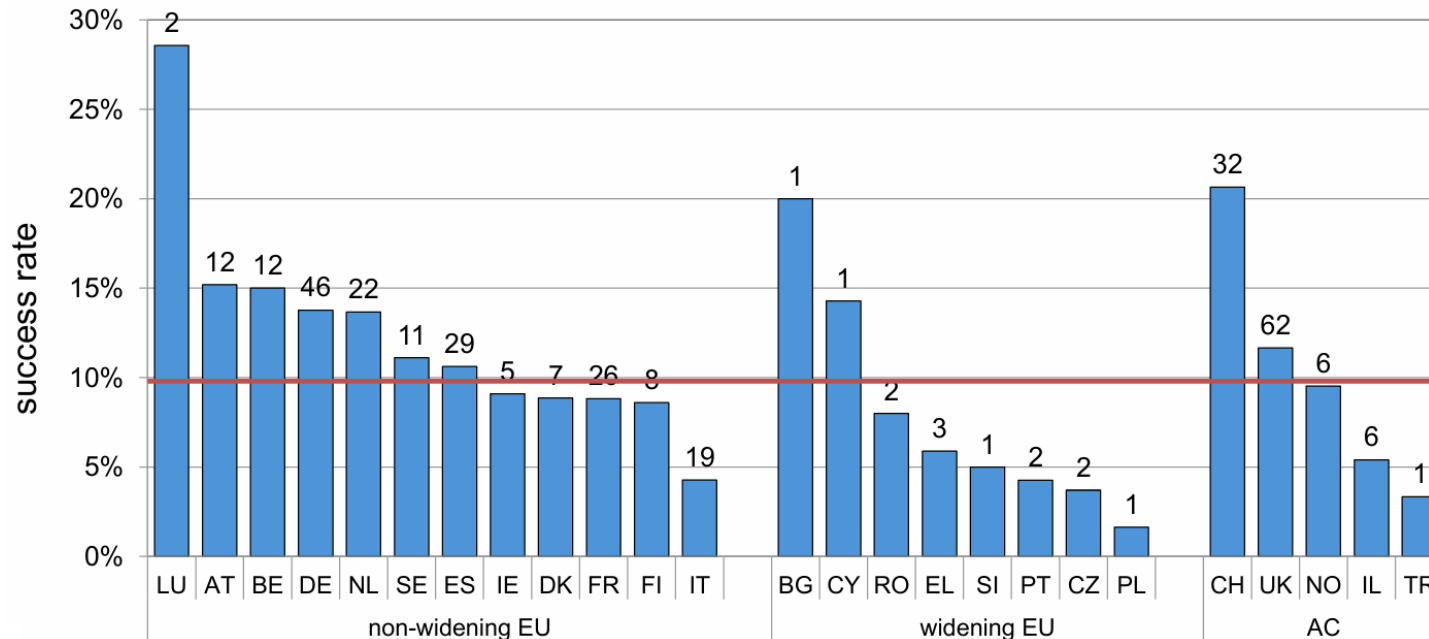
CoG 2025: Success rate by years since PhD and gender



Source: ERC

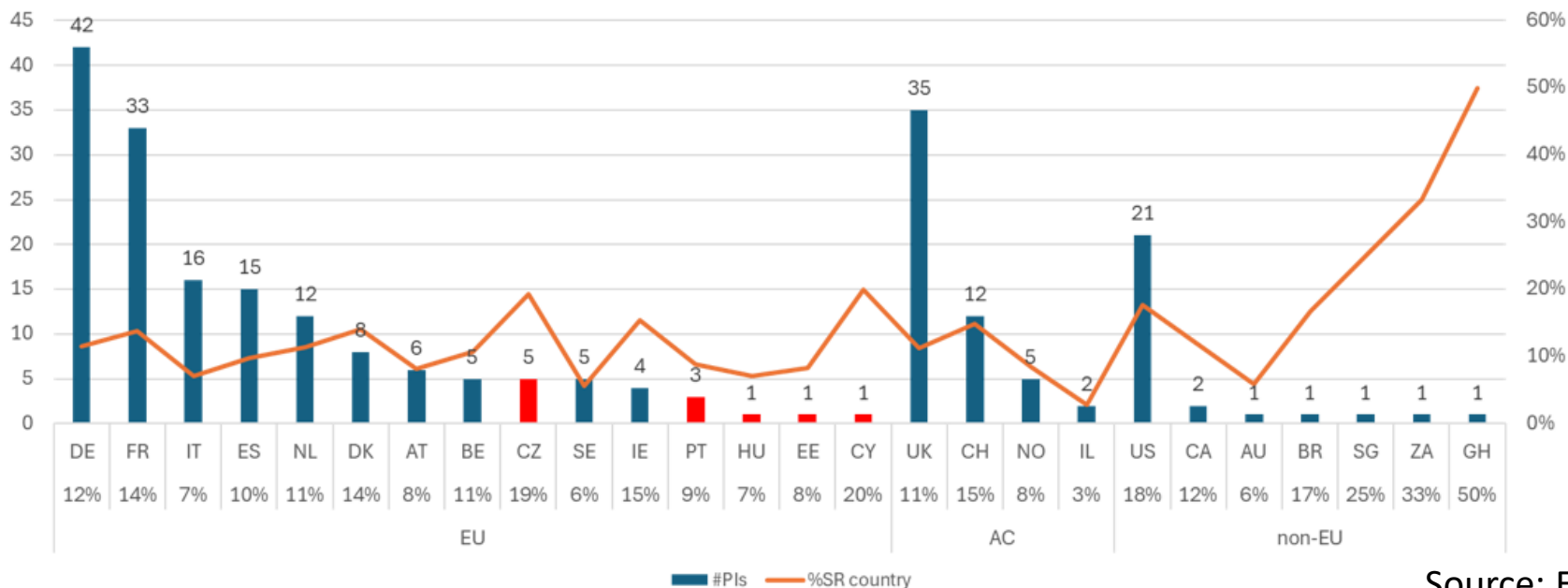


AdG 2025: Success rate of PIs by host country



Source: ERC

SyG 2025: Success rate of PIs by host country



Source: ERC



WP 2027: Resubmission restrictions and mitigation measures



Resubmission restrictions: StG, CoG & AdG (WP 2027)

- Applicants who received a C score at step 1 in the 2025 or 2026 StG/CoG/AdG call are not eligible
- Applicants who received a B score at step 1 in the 2026 StG/CoG/AdG call are not eligible

Resubmission restrictions: **SyG** (WP 2027)

- Applicants who received a C score at step 1 in the 2025 SyG/StG/CoG/AdG call are not eligible
- Applicants who received a C score at step 1 in the 2026 SyG/StG/CoG call are not eligible
- Applicants who received a B score at step 1 in the 2026 SyG/StG/CoG call are not eligible

Resubmission restrictions: **Plus** (WP 2027)

- Applicants who received a C score at step 1 in the 2025 or 2026 StG/CoG/AdG call are not eligible
- Applicants who received a B score at step 1 in the 2026 StG/CoG/AdG call are not eligible
- Applicants who were not retained at step 1 in the 2026 ERC Plus call are not eligible

Mitigation measures for evaluation (WP 2027)

- StG 2027 step 1: B scores → standardised panel comment
- StG, CoG, AdG 2027 step 1: C scores → standardised panel comment
- Number of reviewers: 3 instead of 4
- Up to 2/3 of reviewers may be “remote step 1 experts” or PEVs
- Proposals with a numerical mark of 3.5 or lower from all reviewers (remote step 1): No need to be discussed (unless decided otherwise)

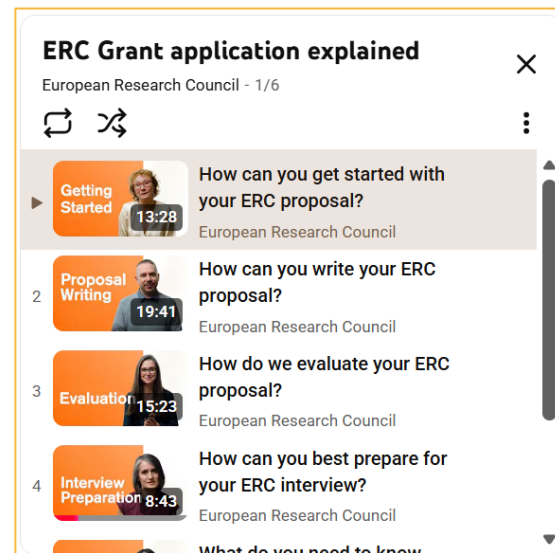


Further resources

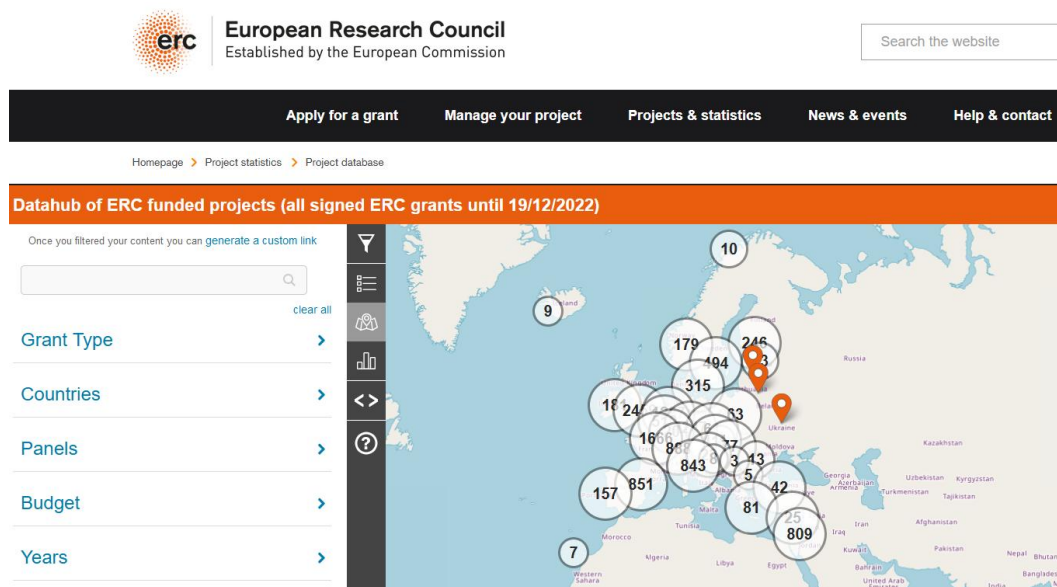


Further Information

- [Apply for ERC Grants | European Research Council](#)
- [ERC CLASSES - YouTube](#)
- Your host institution: EU Grant advisors



Check out funded ERC Projects



→ [ERC Website](https://erc.europa.eu/)

ERC National Contact Point : our services

- General information on the ERC
- Advice on grant application and grant management
- Proposal feedback
- [Events](#) & professional trainings
- Newsletter & website ([DE](#))/([EN](#))
- Website www.erc-germany.de



National Contact Point ERC



Michaela Thorn
Tel: 0228 3821-1538
E-Mail: michaela.thorn@dlr.de

Dr. Andrea Hesse
Tel: 0228 3821-1371
E-Mail: andrea.hesse@dlr.de

Mareike Thillmann (Tue. & Wed.)
Tel: 0228 3821-1667
E-Mail: mareike.thillmann@dlr.de

Randi Wallmichrath
Tel: 0228 3821-1647
E-Mail: randi.wallmichrath@dlr.de

Isabel Herzhoff
Tel.: 0228-95997-14
E-Mail: isabel.herzhoff@kowi.de

Cristina Condovici
Tel: 0228-95997-13
E-Mail: cristina.condovici@kowi.de

Dunja Hofmann
Tel: 0228 95997-26
E-Mail: dunja.hofmann@kowi.de

Byron Schirbock
Tel: 0228 95 997-27
E-Mail: Byron.schirbock@kowi.de

Katharina Spannhake
Tel.: 0228 95997-17
E-Mail: katharina.spannhake@kowi.de

Martin Winger
Tel: +32 2 54 802-21
E-Mail: martin.winger@kowi.de

Inga Benner
Tel: +32 2 54 802 14
E-Mail: inga.benner@kowi.de

First information:

Monika Schuler
Tel: 0228 3821-1633
E-Mail: monika.schuler@dlr.de
www.erc-germany.de