Information for Applicants to the Synergy Grant 2020 Call

European Research Council (ERC)
Frontier Research Grants

Version 1

18 July 2019

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

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

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

This document does not supersede the afore-mentioned documents, which are legally binding.
Should there be any discrepancies between the aforementioned legal documents and this document, the former will prevail.

The European Commission, the ERC Executive Agency or any person or body acting on their behalf cannot be held responsible for the use made of this document.

The Guide for ERC Peer Reviewers – applicable to Synergy Grants, provides practical information on the evaluation process

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

Abbreviations

AC – Associated Country
ADG - Advanced Grant
cHI – corresponding Host Institution
COG - Consolidator Grant
cPI – corresponding Principal Investigator
EU MS - EU Member States
ERC WP - ERC Work Programme 2020
ERC panel – ERC peer review evaluation panels
ERC NCP – ERC National Contact Points
ERCEA – European Research Council Executive Agency
F&T portal – Funding & tender opportunities (Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA))

H2020 – Horizon 2020 Framework Programme
HI – Host Institution
PI – Principal Investigator
PM – Panel Member
PEV – Panel Evaluator
PIC – Participant Identification Code
POC – Proof of Concept Grant
SEP – Submission and Evaluation of Proposals
STG – Starting Grant
SYG – Synergy Grant

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[1] European Commission C(2019) 4904 of 2 July 2019.
[2] C(2017)4750 of 17 July 2017.
[3] This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some other countries also provide this service.

Content

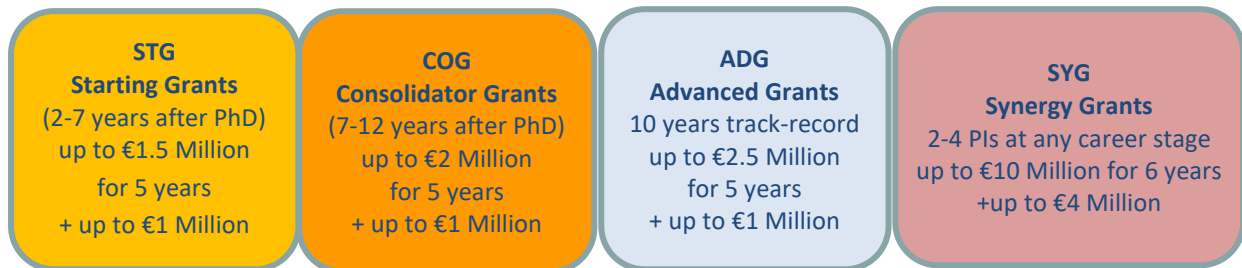**ERC SYNERGY GRANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS**

1. ERC SYNERGY GRANT 2020

1.1   ERC FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The ERC Synergy Grant is part of the main ERC frontier research grants 2019 funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The ERC's frontier research grants aim to empower individual researchers and provide the best settings to foster their creativity. **Scientific excellence** is the sole criterion of evaluation in all ERC frontier research grants; however, in the ERC Synergy Grant, scientific excellence takes on an additional meaning: its intrinsic **synergetic effect**.

STG **Starting Grants** (2-7 years after PhD) up to €1.5 Million for 5 years + up to €1 Million	COG **Consolidator Grants** (7-12 years after PhD) up to €2 Million for 5 years + up to €1 Million	ADG **Advanced Grants** 10 years track-record up to €2.5 Million for 5 years + up to €1 Million	SYG **Synergy Grants** 2-4 PIs at any career stage up to €10 Million for 6 years +up to €4 Million

Objectives

ERC Synergy Grants are intended to enable minimum two to maximum four Principal Investigators (PIs) and their teams[4] to bring together complementary skills, knowledge, and resources, to jointly address ambitious research questions. Principal Investigators must demonstrate the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal. Principal Investigators must also demonstrate that their group can successfully bring together the scientific elements necessary to address the scope and complexity of the proposed research question. Applicant PIs therefore must demonstrate that only with the added value of the synergetic team could the proposed research lead to breakthroughs that would not be possible by the individual PIs working alone.

Synergy Grant Groups are expected to demonstrate that they can successfully bring together those elements – such as skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, disciplines, methods, approaches, teams, access to infrastructures – necessary to address the scope and complexity of the proposed research question. Applicants are expected to describe the contribution of each PI, their team and resources to achieving the objectives proposed.

Principal Investigators and the Synergy group

One of the Principal Investigators must be designated as the corresponding Principal Investigator (cPI). At any one time, one Principal Investigator per Synergy Grant Group, except the corresponding PI, can be hosted or engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries.

Researchers of any age and career stage can apply for up to six years funding. No specific eligibility criteria regarding the academic training are foreseen for PIs applying for ERC Synergy Grants. The Principal Investigators must present an early achievement track-record or a ten-year track-record, whichever is most appropriate for their career stage (see Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant profiles sections in the ERC Work Programme 2020). There is little prospect of an application succeeding in the absence of such a track-record. Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their track-records against the benchmarks described in the various profiles to decide for themselves their likelihood for success, thus avoiding investing effort in proposals that are very unlikely to succeed.

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[4]Where research is often performed individually in certain fields (e.g. in the humanities and mathematics), the 'team' may consist solely of the Principal Investigator.

The applicant PIs do not need to be based in the same Host Institution; any group that can demonstrate the need for synergy to promote key research advances will be considered.

The ERC expects the composition of a Synergy Grant Group to remain unchanged throughout the lifetime of the grant. If a Principal Investigator leaves a Synergy Grant Group, the grant may be continued only exceptionally, contingent on scientific evaluation and provided that all eligibility criteria will continue to be met.

Examples of Synergy projects funded in the previous calls can be found on the ERC website: [Synergy grants](#)

Research fields – no predetermined priorities

The ERC's frontier research grants operate on a 'bottom-up' basis and applications can be made in any field of research with an emphasis on the frontiers of science, scholarship and engineering[5]. In particular, proposals of an interdisciplinary nature, proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research and proposals introducing unconventional or innovative approaches and scientific inventions are encouraged. This has the potential to enable transformative research that could become benchmarks on a global scale. Careful consideration should be given so to propose truly novel ideas not just continuations of ongoing work or existing collaboration.

Synergetic aspects

It is of utmost importance not to confuse the term 'synergy' and its requirements with the concepts and the terminology of other parts of the H2020 Framework Programme. Proposals perceived as mere loose cooperation or networking are unlikely to be recommended for funding by the ERC Synergy panels. Synergy projects should generally involve composite teams that are capable of tackling bold new research themes that require novel approaches. Such teams are typically characterised by exceptional combinations of knowledge and skills, in which the Principal Investigators hold a central role. A project that involves the simple passing of data or information from one team to another would not satisfy the integrative features of a Synergy project. A Synergy project could incorporate novel multi- or trans-disciplinary approaches or innovative combinations of knowledge and skills in a single discipline or research field. Each Synergy proposal must demonstrate that its objectives can only be achieved through the specific combination of knowledge and skills brought together by the participating PIs. In other words, a major scientific question of pressing significance, an integrated team and the transformative scientific potential are crucial elements in conceiving a Synergy proposal.

True to its bottom-up approach the Scientific Council remains open to what applicants choose as the best ways of working together. Nevertheless, the applicants are expected to explain the feasibility and appropriateness of the working arrangements by coming up with ideas on how to spend time together in ways that best suit the aims and goals of their research in order to convince the reviewing panels (or reviewers) about the outstanding and exceptional work together.

As with any other frontier research funded by the ERC, research proposals are expected to be risky. It remains important, however, that the risk and how it will be managed is well thought through and explained in the proposal.

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[5] Research proposals within the scope of Annex I to the Euratom Treaty, namely those directed towards nuclear energy applications, shall not be submitted to ERC calls but to relevant calls under the Euratom Framework Programme.

Evaluation and Peer Review

The ERC's evaluation process is conducted by peer review panels composed of renowned scientists and scholars. The panels may be assisted by independent experts working remotely. The panel chairs and members have been selected by the ERC Scientific Council on the basis of their scientific merits.

The peer reviewers are asked to look at the **quality of the science proposed, the synergy, working arrangements and risk** when assessing the excellence of the proposal.

Open Access

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

Funding

Synergy Grant can be up to a maximum of EUR 10 000 000 for a period of 6 years. For projects of shorter duration the maximum award is reduced *pro rata*.

However, up to an additional EUR 4 000 000 can be requested to cover[6]:

(a) "start-up" costs for PIs moving to the EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving the ERC grant and/or
(b) the purchase of major equipment and/or
(c) access to large facilities and/or
(d) other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs.

The total requested grant should reflect a realistic estimation of the project needs and should not be unnecessarily inflated to reach the maximum grant level. The evaluation panels will review the requested grant and recommend the total amount to be awarded on the basis of the needs of the project, using rounded figures. The panels may also suggest a modification to the indicative budgetary breakdown in the application but the PIs have the freedom to re-budget during the course of the project.

The ERC reimburses up to 100% of the total eligible and approved direct costs and a flat-rate of indirect costs corresponding to 25% of the total eligible direct costs[7].

Research integrity

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data[8] may result in the rejection of proposals in accordance with section 3.11 of the ERC Rules for Submission. Please also note that plagiarism detection software is used to analyse all submitted proposals to detect similar proposals submitted by different PIs. A procedure has been put in place to assess alleged or suspected cases of scientific misconduct. Scientific misconduct may result in the rejection of the proposal from the current call and in a possible restriction on submission of proposals to future calls, as provided in the relevant ERC Work Programme.

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[6] As any additional funding is to cover major one-off costs it is not subject to pro-rata reduction for projects of shorter duration. All funding requested is assessed during evaluation.
[7] Excluding the direct costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the host institution.
[8] For example if in the list of publications, the order of authors does not appear as indicated in the original publications.

1.2   ELIGIBILITY

Eligible proposals

All proposals must be complete and submitted by eligible Principal Investigators before the foreseen call deadline, 5 November 2019. Please see section 2.1 for an overview of a complete ERC proposal. All scientific fields are eligible for ERC funding[5].

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

Host institution

ERC grants are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research activity in any EU MS or an AC. Up to four Host institutions could engage a Principal Investigator, and one of these Host Institutions, with the exception of the corresponding Host institution, at any one time, may be a legal entity established outside the European Union or Associated Countries or an international organisation.

The corresponding Principal Investigator will be the administrative contact point on behalf of the cHI, other PIs as well as other HIs. The constitution of the research teams is flexible. Depending on the nature of a project, the research team may involve team members from other research organisations situated in the same or a different country.

In case of Synergy Grants, Principal Investigators may be hosted by more than one Host Institution, each of the Host Institutions shall offer their support to the Principal Investigator(s) hosted by them for the duration of the grant. At submission stage, **all** Host Institutions must provide the host support letter for their Principal Investigator(s). The Host Institutions must engage the Principal Investigators for at least the duration of the grant. PIs do not need to be employed by the cHI or HI at the time when the proposal is submitted.

The corresponding HI and the other HIs must either be established as a legal entity created under national law, or may be an International European Interest Organisation (such as CERN, EMBL, etc.), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) or any other entity created under EU law. Any type of legal entity, public or private, including universities, research organisations and undertakings can host Principal Investigators and their teams. The ERC welcomes applications from Principal Investigators hosted by private for-profit research centres, including industrial laboratories.

Normally the PI will be employed by the HI, but cases where, for duly justified reasons, the PI's employer cannot become the HI, or where the PI is self-employed, can be accommodated. The specific conditions of engagement will be subject to clarification and approval during the granting procedure or during the amendment procedure for a change of HI.

Expected time commitment

PIs will be expected to spend as a minimum 30% of their working time on the ERC project and a minimum of 50% of their working time in an EU MS or AC, with the exception of the PI hosted or engaged by an institution outside of the EU or AC, if any.

PIs shall ensure a sufficient time commitment and presence throughout the course of the project to guarantee its proper execution. The time commitment will be monitored, and in cases where the actual commitment is below the minimum levels set out above, or the levels indicated in the proposal, appropriate measures may be taken, up to and including reduction of the grant and suspension or termination of the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

It is also expected that PIs will be able to start their project within six months of receiving an invitation letter from the ERC.

Submission restrictions

The ERC calls are highly competitive. Thousands of high quality proposals are received each year and only outstanding proposals are likely to be funded. In order to maintain the quality and integrity of ERC's evaluation process, restrictions on applications have been put in place.

The following general restrictions apply:

➢ A researcher may participate as PI in only one ERC project at a time[9]. An ERC project can only start after the duration of the project fixed in a previous grant agreement has ended.
➢ A researcher participating as PI in an ERC project may not submit a proposal for another ERC grant, unless the existing project ends no more than two years after the call deadline[10] (i.e. before 5 November 2021 for Synergy applications).
➢ A PI who is a serving Panel Member for a 2020 ERC call or who served as a Panel Member for a 2018 ERC call may not apply to a 2020 ERC call for the same type of grant[11].
➢ A PI may submit proposals to different ERC grant calls published under the same Work Programme, but only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated.

Additional restrictions are related to the outcome of the evaluation in previous calls (see table below). They are designed to allow unsuccessful PIs the time necessary to develop a stronger proposal. Ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against any of the restrictions listed below.

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[9] Including all PIs supported under the Synergy Grant.
[10] According to the duration of the project fixed in the previous frontier research grant agreement.
[11] The members of the ERC panels alternate to allow panel members to apply to the ERC calls in alternate years.

Call to which the Principal Investigator applied under previous ERC Work Programmes and proposal evaluation outcome		2020 ERC Calls to which a Principal Investigator is _not_ eligible
2018 and 2019 Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, or Synergy Grant	Rejected on the grounds of a breach of research integrity	Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy
2018 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant	C at step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced
2018 Synergy Grant	A, or B at step 3	No restriction
	B at step 1 or 2	No restriction
	C at step 1	Advanced and Synergy Grant
2019 Starting, Consolidator, or Advanced Grant	A, or B at step 2	No restriction
	B or C at step 1	Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grant
2019 Synergy Grant	A, or B at step 3	No restriction
	B at step 2	No restriction
	B at step 1	Synergy
	C at step 1	Advanced and Synergy Grant

The year of an ERC call refers to the WP under which the call was published and can be established by its call identifier. A 2020 ERC call is therefore one that was published under the WP 2020 and will have 2020 in the call identifier (for example ERC-2020-SyG).

1.3   EVALUATION PROCESS

A single submission of the full proposal will be followed by a **three-step evaluation, including interviews**. The evaluation will be conducted by means of panels. The panels will be assisted by independent experts working remotely. These ERC panels assess and score the proposals on the basis of the individual evaluations and on the panel discussion which follows them. The panels are not predefined at the beginning of the evaluation. The panel members and the proposals belong to a single panel. The composition of the panels at step 2 and step 3 is by nature multi-disciplinary to accommodate a proper evaluation of multidisciplinary and complex proposals.

As there are no predefined panels, and to facilitate the allocation of proposals to the right experts, the applicant corresponding PI (cPI) has to indicate between four and six fixed keywords. These keywords are the same as the ones used in the ERC Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants and given in Annex 4.1 of this guide. There is no hierarchical order of the selected keywords. The fixed keywords and free keywords and the abstract of the proposal are analysed together to ensure the best expertise for each proposal. It is the corresponding PI's responsibility to choose and indicate the most relevant keywords for the evaluation of the proposed research. The allocation of the proposals to the various panels in step 2 and step 3 will be done by grouping proposals based on their research areas and the expertise of the panel members.

The names of the five panel chairs are published on the ERC website before the deadline of the call, while the names of panel members are published only after the evaluation process is concluded.

No Contact allowed with Peer Reviewers

Please, note that in accordance with section 3.2 of the ERC Rules for Submission, any direct or indirect contact about the ERC peer review evaluation between an applicant legal entity or a PI submitting a proposal on behalf of an applicant legal entity, and any independent expert involved in the peer review evaluation under the same call, in view of attempting to influence the evaluation process, is strictly forbidden. Such contact can constitute an exclusion situation and, if this situation is established in accordance with Article 136(2) of the Financial Regulation, will result in the decision to reject the proposal concerned from the call in question.

The corresponding Principal Investigator on behalf of the group can request during the electronic proposal submission that up to four specific persons should not act as an evaluator in the evaluation of their proposal.

Step 1: The extended synopsis and the Principal Investigators' track records and CVs will be assessed (Part B1 only, and not the full scientific proposal) by the whole pool of panel members in one panel from a generalist perspective. After a remote evaluation phase in which each proposal is reviewed by minimum three reviewers, the panel chairs and vice chairs meet in Brussels to discuss all proposals submitted to the Synergy Grant call and to select those passing to step 2. Proposals will be retained for step 2 based on the outcome of the evaluation at step 1 and a budgetary cut-off level of up to seven times the panel's indicative budget. In this first step the panel's indicative budget corresponds to the call's budget of EUR 350 Million for the Synergy 2020 call.

Step 2: The complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed (Parts B1 and B2). Five panels will be formed right after the step 1 filtering to ensure the best expertise using the whole pool of the step 1 panel members. External specialized reviews will complement the generalist reviews of the panelists. The five panels will have around 15-18 experts in each panel (roughly 2 physical Sciences, 2 Life sciences, 1 Social sciences and humanities oriented panels). At the end of the remote individual assessment the five panels meet in Brussels. Proposals will be retained for step 3 based on the outcome of the evaluation at step 2 and on a budgetary cut-off level of up to three times the panel's indicative budget. An indicative budget in step 2 is allocated to each panel in proportion to the budgetary demand of its assigned proposals.

Step 3: Following the step 2 evaluation the applicants will receive an invitation letter detailing the format and the length of the interview. All Principal Investigators of the proposals selected for interviews will be invited to present their proposal to the interview panel in Brussels. A minimum of three and a maximum of five panels would interview the applicants in parallel. The composition of the panels might be different from the panels at step 2. These panels may not be the same panels as in step 2. The interview details will depend on the decision of the panels: interviews can last around 45 minutes in total. The panel may ask the applicants to give, a 10-15 minute presentation on the proposed research project. The remaining time may be devoted to questions and answers on the scientific content and implementation of the project, modalities of collaboration among the principal investigators and the project's budget and resources, and so on. The presentation is an opportunity to elaborate on the synergies that the project aims to create. The interviews are planned for the second week of September 2020 (7 to 10). Please check the ERC website for any changes.

The resources requested by the applicants will be scrutinized and can be adjusted if not sufficiently justified. Projects recommended for funding will be funded by the ERC if sufficient funds are available. Proposals will be funded in priority order based on their rank.

All Principal Investigators should be present at the interview. If, in very exceptional cases, a Principal Investigator from the group is unable to attend the interview (e.g. pregnancy, immobility due to illness, expedition), two alternatives for a remote interview are offered:

- ➢ Video-conference: A video-conference room has been booked for the duration of the interviews and can be used by panels provided the interviewee also has access to a matching facility. A specific schedule will be established depending on the needs.
- ➢ Telephone-conference: A telephone (with loudspeaker) will be available in each meeting room to ensure the possibility of a telephone interview.

Note that it is difficult to accommodate a preference for a particular day within the panel meeting week. The schedules of the interviews in all the panels are interconnected, which limits the possibility of any change.

If experts are unable to attend the interview in person, subject to technical feasibility, they may participate in the panel meeting by electronic means (video-conferencing or telephone-conferencing).

In view of the confidentiality of the evaluation process, applicants invited to a step 3 interview should not share the identity of panel members within their scientific communities until their names have been published on the ERC website.
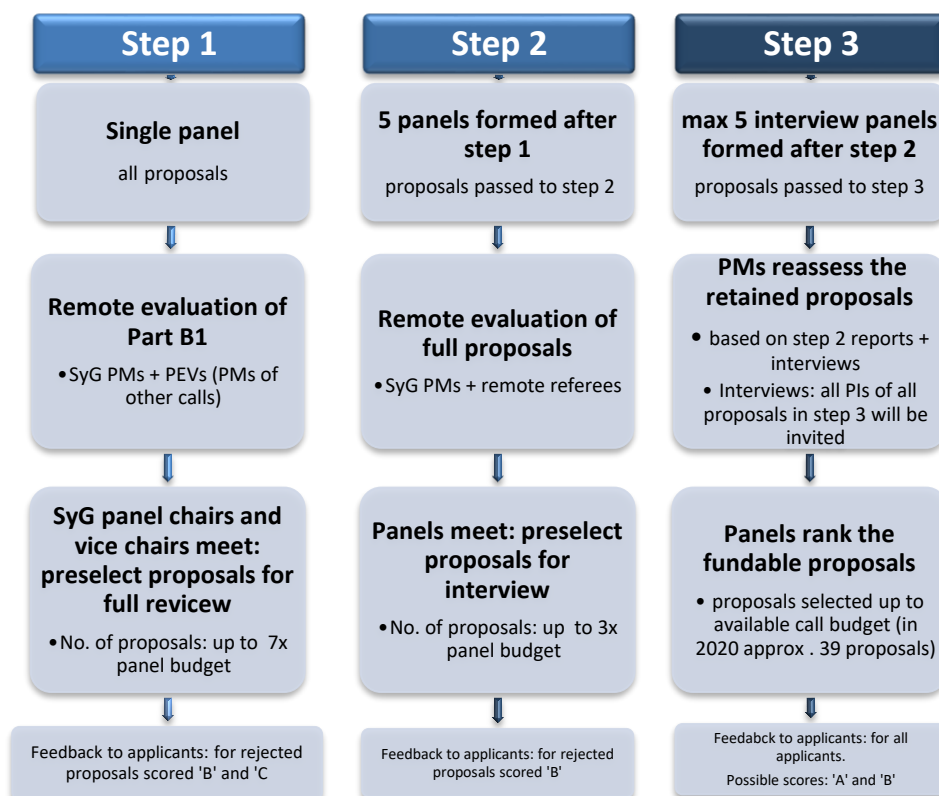
Step 1	**Step 2**	**Step 3**
Single panel all proposals	**5 panels formed after step 1** proposals passed to step 2	**max 5 interview panels formed after step 2** proposals passed to step 3
Remote evaluation of Part B1 • SyG PMs + PEVs (PMs of other calls)	**Remote evaluation of full proposals** • SyG PMs + remote referees	**PMs reassess the retained proposals** • based on step 2 reports + interviews • Interviews: all PIs of all proposals in step 3 will be invited
SyG panel chairs and vice chairs meet: preselect proposals for full revicew • No. of proposals: up to 7x panel budget	**Panels meet: preselect proposals for interview** • No. of proposals: up to 3x panel budget	**Panels rank the fundable proposals** • proposals selected up to available call budget (in 2020 approx . 39 proposals)
Feedback to applicants: for rejected proposals scored 'B' and 'C'	Feedback to applicants: for rejected proposals scored 'B'	Feedabck to applicants: for all applicants. Possible scores: 'A' and 'B'

Figure 1 shows the schematic representation of the 2020 evaluation process. PM: panel member; PEV: panel evaluator. PEV is an ERC term used for panel members of the other ERC frontier calls reviewing ERC SyG proposals.
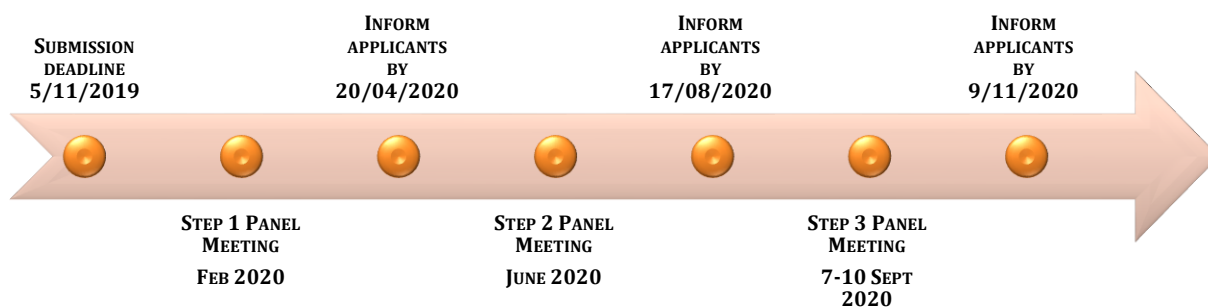
Timeline showing: SUBMISSION DEADLINE 5/11/2019 · STEP 1 PANEL MEETING FEB 2020 · INFORM APPLICANTS BY 20/04/2020 · STEP 2 PANEL MEETING JUNE 2020 · INFORM APPLICANTS BY 17/08/2020 · STEP 3 PANEL MEETING 7-10 SEPT 2020 · INFORM APPLICANTS BY 9/11/2020

Figure 2: Timeline of the Synergy 2020 evaluation. The time to inform the applicants corresponds to indicative dates when the applicants receive the evaluation report.

Outcome of evaluation and feedback to applicants

At each evaluation step, the reviewers will evaluate the quality of the research project and the Synergy group. The panels will look into the ground-breaking nature, the synergetic aspects, ambition and feasibility of the research project; and the intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment of the Principal Investigators (see the evaluation criteria below). Following the timeline described above, the ERCEA provides feedback on the final decision of the evaluation through an 'Information letter' to the PIs and the Host Institutions (applicant legal entities) via the EU Login secured web-mail account accessible on the F & T portal. Besides the information letter, an evaluation report will be provided to all PIs and all HIs' contact person(s).This indicates whether the proposal meets the quality threshold and is retained, and provides the score, ranking range and corresponding comment given by the panel as well as the comments given by the individual reviewers.

Please note that the comments by the individual reviewers may not necessarily be convergent – controversy and differences of opinions about the merits of a scientific proposal are part of scientific debate and are legitimate.

Furthermore, the ERC panel may take a position that is different from what could be inferred from the comments of the individual reviewers. This is the case for example, if the panel discussion reveals an important weakness in a proposal that had not been identified by the individual reviewers. The panel comment reflects the consensus decision taken by the panel as a whole based on prior remote individual assessments from independent reviewers, which can be remote referees as well as panel members, and on a thorough discussion as well as on the ranking against other proposals during the panel meeting.

At the end of each step the proposal will receive one of the following scores:

Step 1
A score - is of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation,
B score - is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to step 2 of the evaluation[12],
C score - is not of sufficient quality to pass to step 2 of the evaluation (*see footnote 12*).

Only the applicants not retained for step 2 receive the evaluation results including an evaluation report.

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

Step 2
A score - is of sufficient quality to pass to step 3 of the evaluation,
B score - is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to step 3 of the evaluation (*see footnote 12*)

Applicants who receive an A score are invited for an interview to present their project at the step 3 panel meeting in Brussels[13]. The rejected applicants will receive the evaluation results, including an evaluation report. The passed applicants will receive two notifications: the first one that they have passed to step 3 and a second one specifying the interview requirements.

Step 3
A score - fully meets the ERC's excellence criterion and is recommended for funding if sufficient funds are available;
B score - meets some but not all elements of the ERC's excellence criterion and will not be funded.

The step 3 evaluation outcome is provided to all applicants through an information letter together with an evaluation report. It includes the final score, the panel ranking range of their proposal, the panel comment explaining the panel decision as well as the individual comments prepared by each reviewer in the remote phase of step 2.

Evaluation criteria

Excellence is the sole criterion of evaluation. It will be applied to the evaluation of both the Principal Investigators and the group's research project.

1. Research Project - Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project

- *To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?*
- *To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?*
- *To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain (i.e. if successful the payoffs will be very significant, but there is a 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 at step 1]?*
- *To what extent does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone [based on the Extended Synopsis at step 1]?*
- *To what extent is the combination of scientific elements put forward in the proposal crucial to address the scope and complexity of the research questions [based on the Extended Synopsis at step 1]?*
- *To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project [to be assessed at step 2 and step 3 based on Parts B1 and B2]?*
- *To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology [to be assessed at step 2 and step 3 based on Parts B1 and B2]?*

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[13] Please note that the ERC will reimburse the PIs' travel expenditures for the interview in Brussels (see Commission Decision C(2007) 5858). Should a planned interview not be possible for reasons beyond the control of the ERCEA, the panel will have to take its decision based on the information made available to it.

- *To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitments adequate and properly justified [to be assessed at step 2 and step 3 based on Parts B1 and B2]?*

2. Principal Investigator - Intellectual capacity and creativity

Intellectual capacity and creativity

- *To what extent have the PIs demonstrated the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research?*
- *To what extent do the PIs have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?*
- *To what extent does the Synergy Grant Group successfully demonstrate in the proposal that it brings together the elements – such as skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, disciplines, methods, approaches, teams – necessary to address the proposed research question [to be assessed at step 2 and step 3 based on Parts B1 and B2]?*

1.4   ETHICS REVIEW

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

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

The process is aimed at ensuring that the Article 19 of [Horizon 2020 Framework Programme](#), and Articles 13 and 14 of the [Rules for Participation](#) are implemented and, in particular, that all the research and innovation activities under Horizon 2020 comply with ethics principles and relevant national, Union and international legislation, including the [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#) and the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) and its Supplementary Protocols.

The main areas that are addressed during the ethics review process include:

1. Human protection (including study participants and researchers)
2. Animal protection and welfare
3. Data protection and privacy
4. Environment protection
5. Participation of non-EU countries
6. Malevolent use of research results

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

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

Please include any supporting documentation, such as any authorisation you may already have. This will allow a more effective ethics clearance and an accelerated granting process[14]. Please upload any related documents or annexes in the submission system as specified in section 2.4 of this document.

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

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

The European Commission has set up a dedicated website that aims to provide helpful information on ethics issues.

1.5   MEANS OF COMPLAINT

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

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

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

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

Complaints must be:

➢ Related to the evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the call and grants in question;
➢ Set out using the online form, including a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
➢ Received within the time limit specified in the information letter;
➢ Sent by the corresponding PI and/or the corresponding HI.

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

A redress committee may be convened to examine the eligibility or evaluation process for the complaint. The redress committee will bring together staff of the ERC Executive Agency with the requisite scientific, technical and legal expertise. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and fair and equal treatment of applicants. During the evaluation review procedure, the committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report, the individual comments and examine the CVs of the experts. The committee will not call into question the scientific judgement of appropriately qualified panels of experts. In the light of its review, the committee will

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

recommend a course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

Please note:

➢ A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on the other criteria.
➢ The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.
➢ Only one request at a time for evaluation review per proposal will be considered by the committee.
➢ All requests for evaluation review will be treated in confidence.

The above procedure does not prevent the applicants from resorting to any other means of seeking redress such as lodging an appeal to the Commission in accordance with Article 22[15] of Council Regulation 58/2003, or filing an action for annulment under Article 263[16] of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) before the Court of Justice of the European Union for a decision affecting a person or legal entity. PIs and applicant legal entities will have to choose either one or several of these means of redress, and they are not obliged to pursue one before another. These channels are also available to applicants who wish to register a complaint after the deadline mentioned above.

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

1.6   QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CALL

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

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

ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu

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

For questions on Open Access please see Article 29.2 of the ERC Model Grant Agreement or contact ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu.

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

[16] Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47–390).

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

2. COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

A single submission deadline is foreseen:

ERC-2020-SYG: 05 November 2019, 17:00.00 (Brussels local time)

Please note that the foreseen submission deadline could be modified after the publication of the call. You are therefore invited to periodically consult the F & T portal where any modifications of the submission deadline is indicated.

2.1   OVERVIEW OF AN ERC APPLICATION

An ERC application is composed of

➢ The administrative form (Part A),
➢ The research proposal (Parts B1 and B2),
➢ Supporting documentation (HI support letter(s) and ethics issues)

2.2   THE SUBMISSION FORM

The online submission form is accessed via the call submission link in the F & T portal. The electronic form has 5 sections (approximately 15 pages in total), which need to be completed before a submission can take place. Many fields are mandatory and specific to the ERC calls and we therefore advise you to create your draft proposal well in advance of the submission deadline. **All mandatory fields are marked in red if left empty. Failure to fill in any mandatory field will block submission.**

1 – General Information contains information about the research proposal, including the project duration, title, acronym and abstract. Furthermore, in this section you will select the four to six ERC keywords which you believe best fit to the scientific proposal. **There is no hierarchical order of the selected keywords and they are not linked to predefined panels, i.e. keyword 1 is equally weighted with keywords 2 to 6. The keywords are used to best allocate proposals to experts**. The abstract should provide a clear understanding of the objectives of the research proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as a short description of your research proposal in the evaluation process. Please note that in case your proposal is funded this abstract will be published. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain confidential information. This section also contains general declarations related to the proposal and participation in H2020[18].

2 – Participants & contacts contains information about the PIs and the HIs. Separate sections will appear for each Principal Investigator and beneficiary. The name and e-mail of contact persons including the PIs and HIs contacts are **read-only in the forms.** To give access rights to the proposal and change contact persons, the form needs to be closed and the guidance of the online submission system to be followed. Further details such as ORCID number, researcher ID, other ID, last name at birth, gender, nationality etc., should be filled for the PIs as well as the address and telephone number of each contact person. The PIs mobile number is an essential information for the step 3 interview logistics.

3 – Budget contains a summary of the total estimated project costs and the requested EU contribution for the project. The costs are given in whole Euros (not kilo Euros). The figures should match the corresponding figures in the detailed Part B2 budget table. Note that in the administrative form the budget lines appear by beneficiary organisation. Only in part B2 it is possible to detail the budget for each PI. As the project costs and the ERC contribution request is specified both in the

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[18] Please note that we may request the corresponding Principal Investigator to provide the written consent of all participants in the proposal at any time during the evaluation process. These consents should however not be submitted with the application, but should be have been obtained before the call closure.

Administrative form and in Part B2, please make sure that the figures in both places are aligned. Please refer to section 2.3 below for further instruction on how to draw up the budget. **Please ensure that all costs are given in whole Euros (integer), not thousands of Euros**.

4 – Ethics issues serves to identify any ethical aspects of the proposed work. This table has to be completed even if there are no issues (simply confirm that none of the ethical issues apply to the proposal). Please note that, in case the answer is YES to any of the questions, you are requested to provide an Ethics Self-Assessment and additional ethics documentation, if applicable, as detailed in the Ethics Self-assessment step by step Please refer to section 1.4 for further details.

5 – Call-specific questions contains declarations related to eligibility, and permission statements on data-related questions (the data-related consents are entirely voluntary). As established in section 3.3 of the ERC Rules for Submission, an applicant cPI can request on behalf of the group up to four reviewers to be excluded from the evaluation of their proposal.

2.3   THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal (Part B) consists of Part B1 and Part B2. The templates are provided in the submission system and their use is **strongly recommended**. Each proposal page **shall** carry a **header** presenting the **corresponding PI's last name**, the **acronym of the proposal**, and the reference to the respective proposal section (**Part B1** or **Part B2**).

The following parameters **must** be respected for the layout:

Page Format	Font Type	Font Size	Line Spacing	Margins
A4	Times New Roman Arial or similar	At least 11	Single	2 cm side 1.5 bottom

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

> Please be aware that at step 1 of the evaluation only Part B1 is evaluated by the panel members, while at step 2 and 3 both Parts B1 and B2 are evaluated.
>
> When drafting Part B1, PIs should pay particular attention to the extended synopsis (section a) and should not consider it as simply complementing Part B2. It is important that the extended synopsis contains all relevant information including the **feasibility of the scientific proposal and synergetic aspects**, since the panel will only evaluate Part B1 at step 1, without access to Part B2.
>
> The panel members are asked to act as generalists when evaluating the proposals at step 1. Thus, their expertise will have to cover a wide range of proposals within a research field. For this reason and the fact that panel members evaluate only Part B1 at step 1, PIs should ensure that Part B1 is as complete and detailed as possible. In addition to the panel members, the ERC evaluations rely on input from remote referees. They are scientists and scholars who bring in the necessary specialised expertise. Remote referees work remotely and deliver their individual assessments by electronic means. They do not participate in panel meetings and normally their involvement is limited to step 2 of the evaluation process.

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[19] The working language of the ERC evaluation panels is English. Please note that accordingly, the evaluation reports will be available in English only. If the proposal is not in English, the ERCEA will provide a version of the proposal translated using computer-aided technology. An English translation of the abstract must be included in the proposal.

Part B1

> **Cover page:**
> Proposal full title
> Proposal short name (acronym)
> Name of the corresponding PI (cPI)
> Name of the corresponding Host institution (cHI)
> List of the other participating PIs, indicating their respective Host Institutions
> Proposal duration in months
> Proposal abstract (half page, must be a copy/paste of the abstract from the administrative form section 1)

> **The Research Proposal: Part B1 – section a, b and c:**
>
> **a.** *Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal* **(max. 5 pages) - References should be included; they do not count towards the page limits.**
>
> The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to the ground-breaking nature of the research project and the feasibility of the outlined scientific approach. Describe the proposed work in the context of the state of the art of the field. References to literature should also be included. **It is important that this extended synopsis contains all relevant information including synergetic aspects, some details about working arrangements to be able to assess the feasibility of the scientific proposal since the panel will only evaluate Part B1 at step 1.**
>
> **The Principal Investigators**
>
> **Each of the Principal Investigators must provide a list reflecting their track record.** This can be either an **'early achievement track-record'** (for PIs within 2-7 and 7- 12 years after their PhD) or a **'10-year track-record'** (for advanced researchers) chosen by the applicants based on which is most appropriate for their career stage.
>
> The evaluation experts will be instructed to judge each PI against the benchmarks relevant to their career stage.
>
> **b. Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages for each PI):**
>
> The CV **should include the standard academic and research record**. A suggested outline is available in the Part B1 downloadable template. **The structure of the CV may be modified**, but the ERC recommends the use of the provided template. If applicable, please make sure that any research career gaps and/or unconventional paths which might have influenced your track record are clearly explained in the career break section of your CV so that this can be fairly assessed by the evaluation panels.
>
> The succinct **'funding ID', to be completed by each PI,** which must specify any current research grants and their subject, and any on-going and submitted applications for work related to the proposal **must follow the table format indicated in the Part B1 template.** The funding ID **will not count towards the page limits** and needs to be completed with the following information for on-going grants and applications:
>
> **Project Title, Funding source, Amount, Period, Role of the PI, Relation to ERC project** (describe any potential overlap)

c. Track record (max. 2 pages for each PI)[20]:

Each Principal Investigator is required to include, depending on their career stage, either an '**Early achievements track-record**' or a ' **10-year track record'.**

'**Early achievements track-record**'. Each applicant PI should list (if applicable):
1. **Publications (up to five for Starting Grant and up to ten for Consolidator Grant profile)** in **major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals** and/or in the **leading international peer-reviewed journals, peer-reviewed conferences proceedings and/or monographs** of their respective research fields, highlighting those as main author or without the presence as co-author of their PhD supervisor (properly referenced and including all authors; field relevant bibliometric indicators may also be included); preprints may be included, if freely available from a preprint server (preprints should be properly referenced and either a link to the preprint or a DOI should be provided)
2. Research monographs and any translations thereof;
3. Granted patent(s);
4. **Invited presentations to internationally established conferences** and/or **international advanced schools**;
5. **Prizes, awards, academy memberships**.

'**10-year track record'.** Each PI must provide a list of achievements in the last 10 years (as applicable below):
*1. **Up to ten representative publications, from the last ten years, as main author** (or in those fields where alphabetic order of authorship is the norm, joint author) in **major international peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary scientific journals** and/or in the **leading international peer-reviewed journals and peer-reviewed conferences proceedings** of their respective research fields, (properly referenced; field relevant bibliometric indicators may also be included); preprints may be included, if freely available from a preprint server (preprints should be properly referenced and either a link to the preprint or a DOI should be provided);*
*2. **Research monographs and any translations thereof**;*
*3. Granted **patents**;*
*4. **Invited presentations to internationally established conferences** and/or **international advanced schools**;*
*5. **Research expeditions** that the applicant Principal Investigator has led;*
*6. Organisation of **international conferences** in the field of the applicant (membership in the steering and/or organising committee);*
7. **Prizes, awards, academy memberships**;
8. **Major contributions to the early careers of excellent researchers**;
9. **Examples of leadership in industrial innovation or design**.

Part B2 sections a, b and c (max. 15 pages. References should be included –they do not count towards the page limit):

This part of the proposal is evaluated only in step 2 and step 3 of the peer review evaluation.

Please use the Word-template provided online in the F & T portal Submission Page for the call. References do not count towards the page limit.

Describe in more detail the scientific, technical, and/or scholarly aspects of the project demonstrating the ground-breaking nature of the research, its potential impact and research methodology. Describe the significant synergies, complementarity and added value of the group

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beyond the current work of the PIs to enable it to jointly achieve the project's objectives. At step 2 and 3 of the evaluation process Part B2 is evaluated together with Part B1.

a. State of the art and objectives: Specify clearly the objectives of the proposal, in the context of the state of the art in the field. When describing the envisaged research it should be indicated how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the proposal, including multi - or inter-disciplinary aspects.

b. Methodology

Describe the proposed methodology in detail including, as appropriate, key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state of the art, including any particularly novel or unconventional aspects addressing 'high-risk/high-gain' balance. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning. In case it is proposed that team members engaged by other organisations than the Host Institution(s) participate in the project, their participation has to be fully justified. This should be done emphasizing the scientific added value they bring to the project.

c. Resources (incl. project costs) – this section does not count towards the page limit.

It is strongly recommended to describe adequately the resources needed for each PI and to use the budget table template included in Part B2 to facilitate the assessment of resources by the panels. For detailed information on eligible- and non-eligible direct and indirect costs as well as the different cost categories applicants should consult the H2020 ERC Model Grant Agreement and the H2020 ERC Annotated Model Grant Agreement Please use whole euro integers only when preparing the budget table.

State the amount of funding considered necessary to fulfil the objectives for the duration of the project. **The resources requested should be reasonable and fully justified in the proposa**l. The requested grant should be in proportion to the actual needs to fulfil the objectives of the project.

Specify briefly the commitment of each PI to the project and how much time each PI is willing to devote to the proposed project. Please note that each PI is expected to devote at least 30% of their working time to the ERC-funded project.

Describe the size and nature of the Synergy group, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles. The participation of team members engaged by another institution should be justified in relation to the additional financial cost this may impose to the project. Take into account the percentage of each PI's dedicated time to run the ERC funded activity when calculating the personnel costs.

Specify any existing resources that will contribute to the project. Describe other necessary resources, such as infrastructure and equipment. It is advisable to include a short technical description of the equipment requested, a justification of its need as well as the intensity of its planned use. When estimating the costs for travel, please also consider participation of the PIs and team members in conferences and dissemination events.

The terms and conditions laid down in the article 29.2 of the ERC Annotated Model Grant Agreement address how scientific publications must be made available through Open Access. Applicants should be aware that it will be mandatory to provide **Open Access** (free of charge, online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications resulting from ERC projects funded through this call. Open Access can be ensured through green or gold Open Access-routes, and Open Access must in any case be ensured through a repository at the latest 6 months after publication (12 months for publications from the Social Sciences and Humanities). Please see Article 29.2 of the H2020 ERC Model Grant Agreement for more details, or contact ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu.

Costs for providing immediate Open Access to publications (article processing charges) are eligible and can be charged against the ERC grant if they are incurred during the lifetime of the project. When drafting the budget, it is highly advisable to consider the need to include such expenditure, and if that is the case, to make a realistic estimation of the amount needed. In addition, the ERC recommends that all funded researchers follow best practice by retaining files of research data produced and used, and are prepared to share these data with other researchers when not bound by copyright restrictions, confidentiality requirements, or contractual clauses.

Costs related to data management can also be eligible.

Budget tables. Please use the budget table template provided in part B2 form. The ERC funds up to 100% of the total eligible costs. **The costs are given for the full project duration[21].** Each PI is required to fill in their budget breakdown. Include the direct costs of the project plus a flat-rate financing of indirect costs calculated as 25% of the total eligible direct costs (excluding subcontracting) towards overheads. Furthermore, include a breakdown of the budget subdivided in personnel costs, travel, equipment, consumables, publication costs (including any costs related to Open Access), other direct costs, and any envisaged subcontracting costs.

If additional funding, above the normal (EUR 10 000 000), is requested for (a) covering eligible 'start-up' costs for a PI moving from another country to the EU or an Associated Country (*see footnote 3*) as a consequence of receiving an ERC grant and/or (b) the purchase of major equipment and/or (c) access to large facilities and/or (d) other major experimental and field work costs, excluding personnel costs, then this also needs to be fully justified. Please note that any additional funding request under (a), (b) or (d) may be subject to 25% overhead. The request of additional funding under (c) to access facilities owned by a third party[22] and not used on the premises of the beneficiaries should be listed in cost category 'C2. Other Direct Costs with no overheads'. Include the additional costs in the budget tables as well.

The costs are given for the full duration. A breakdown by reporting period is not requested for the evaluation process. The 'Total estimated eligible costs' as well as the 'Total requested grant' figures should be equal to those inserted in the online proposal submission forms (section 3 – Budget). In case the total costs differ from the requested grant, it should be specified on the proposal what exactly is funded from other sources.

The project cost estimation should be as accurate as possible. The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully; unjustified budgets will be consequently reduced.

For more information on eligible- and non-eligible direct and indirect costs as well as the different cost categories, applicants should consult the H2020 ERC Model Grant Agreement and the H2020 ERC Annotated Model Grant Agreement[23]

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[21] The maximum award is reduced pro rata *temporis* for projects of a shorter duration than 72 months (e.g. for a project of 60 months duration the maximum requested EU contribution allowed is EUR 8 333 333). Additional funding to cover major one-off costs is not subject to pro-rata *temporis* reduction for projects of shorter duration (e.g. with additional funding it is possible to request a maximum EU contribution of EUR 12 333 333 million for a project of 60 months duration).

[22] Please consult the H2020 ERC Model Grant Agreement – Article 11 and 12

[23] Applicants should pay special attention to the cost category 'Direct costing for Large Research Infrastructures'. The cost category will only be applicable for PIs who are hosted by institutions with Large Research Infrastructures of a value of at least EUR 20 million and **only** after having received a positive ex-ante assessment from the Commission's services. This cost category should only be used for costs to access large research infrastructures inside the premises of and owned by the participating organisations. Please refer to the ERC Model Grant Agreement, pp. 92 to102.

2. 4 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading electronically in PPSS in PDF format (they do not count towards the page limits):

➢ **Host Institution support letter(s)**: Each Host Institution (applicant legal entity) must confirm its association with and its support to the project and the Principal Investigator(s) it intends to host. As part of the application each Host Institution must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence are already fulfilled or will be provided to their PIs, if the application is successful. The Host Institution support letter (template available in the submission system or please see Annex 4.2 to this document) needs to be printed on the official letterhead of the HI, originally signed, stamped and dated by the institution's legal representative. Proposals that do not include this institutional statement may be declared ineligible.

➢ Documents related to the ethics review (i.e. **ethical self-assessment** and supporting documentation). Where necessary, the beneficiary(ies) shall provide a written confirmation that it has received (a) favourable opinion(s) of the relevant ethics committee(s) and, if applicable, the regulatory approval(s) of the competent national or local authority(ies) in the country in which the research is to be carried out. Such documentation must be provided to the ERCEA at the latest during the ethics review. If such documentation is available and provided with the application at submission stage, it may help speed up the ethics review process following evaluation

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

Please provide only the Host Institution support letter(s) and documents relating to ethics review as requested above. They should be uploaded in the submission system as separate pdf documents. These annexes do not count towards the maximum page limits for the proposal. Unless specified in the call, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material, and any other documents (company brochures, supporting documentation, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) will be disregarded. Experts will not have access to any supporting documentation during the evaluation.

3. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

3.1   IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE YOU BEGIN

➢ Regularly consult the F & T portal call page for updated information on the calls.

➢ Make sure that the personal information added in the Submission form is accurate as this information is used to personalise the communications to applicants and the Evaluation Reports.

➢ In case of technical problems with the submission system please contact **DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu** or get in touch with the **SEP helpdesk** directly on **+32 (2) 29 92222** to receive immediate assistance.

➢ Registration and submission via the F&T portal submission system should be done as early as possible and well in advance of the call deadline. Applicants, who wait until shortly before the close of the call to start uploading their proposal, take a serious risk that the uploading will not be concluded in time and thus the 'SUBMIT' button will not be active anymore in order to conclude the submission process.

➢ **Only the person starting the proposal will have the right to manage the access rights of other people to the proposal**. The person who creates the proposal will be able to modify any parts of the proposal and to submit it. Further contacts will only be able to edit the parts related to their personal data.

➢ Be aware that **only one person should work on the forms at any given time**. If two persons work on the forms at the same time, in case of a save conflict, the last save wins, which means that you risk overwriting changes made by another contact person if you are working in parallel. We therefore recommend that you give 'read-only' access to your fellow PIs/partners/additional contact persons (other contacts) unless it is absolutely necessary to grant full access. Please remember that the Main administrative contact person has full access – it is not possible to grant them 'read-only access'.

➢ **Up to the call deadline it is possible to re-edit, download or withdraw a proposal**. **The last version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated**; no later version can be accepted and no earlier version can be recovered from the submission system. Once the deadline has passed, no further additions, corrections or resubmissions are accepted. However, a read-only access to the submitted proposal is available for 90 days after the call deadline.

➢ **Do submit your proposal as early as possible** (at least 48 hours prior to the deadline of the call) to avoid being confronted with last issues shortly before the call deadline. There is no reason in delaying the submission for confidentiality concerns as the system does not allow any access to the proposals before call deadline (other than to selected data that is part of the Submission and Evaluation of Proposals Assent Disclaimer).

➢ In some rare occasions the proposal may be altered while converted into a PDF file. Before uploading the file, please check that everything is correct. Additionally, please download and verify all uploaded files in due time before the submission deadline.

➢ Submission is deemed to occur only if the submission sequence described in Section 3 .2. of this document has been followed and not when the applicant starts uploading the proposal.

3.2   HOW TO APPLY

ERC grant applications can only be submitted in response to a 'call for proposals' and only via the Electronic Submission Service. Calls announced in the ERC Work Programme 2020 are published on the ERC website, the F & T portal, and in the Official Journal of the European Union.

The submission of a proposal includes 6 steps. For each submission step please find below links to a short guide including a quick demo[25].

Step 1 and 2 – Logging in and Selecting a Topic

To be able to submit a proposal and, in general to login to the F & T portal, you must first register an EU Login account (Step 1). Each time you access the proposal for editing, this user ID is requested. The same user ID is used for all later interactions with the ERCEA, including notification of the results of the evaluation[26]. Under 'Search Topics' you may search for 'ERC' to select an open ERC call (step 2). Soon after the opening of the call you may access the Electronic Submission Service via the F & T portal call page. The 'Start Submission' button is available in the 'Submission Service' section of the call. When you click 'Start Submission' and confirm the call selection, you arrive to step 3 – Create a Draft proposal.

Step 3 – Create a draft proposal

At this step, you fill in pre-registration data for the proposal. These details will be used by the ERCEA in order to plan the evaluation. You will not have access to this page again once it is completed and you have progressed to Step 4, but certain data, such as Acronym and Short Summary (abstract) can be modified at a later stage (at step 5, when editing the administrative form). **Be careful to choose the correct Participant Identification Code (PIC) number for your corresponding Host Institution.** An online tool is available to search for existing PICs and the related organisations. Organisations not yet having a PIC must self-register (via the same page) before submitting the proposal.

When registering, please select carefully the type of contact person you are:
Corresponding Principal Investigator, Main Administrative Contact person, Principal Investigator or Contact person (e.g. additional contact person or team-member) can be chosen.

We advise that either the corresponding Principal Investigator or the Main Administrative contact person (the administrative person on behalf of the corresponding Host Institution) start creating a proposal.

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[24] In duly justified exceptional circumstances the ERCEA may authorise submission on paper.

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

[26] Further details are available here: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/eim/external/help.cgi

Your Role

Please indicate your role in this proposal
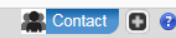
- ● Corresponding Principal Investigator
- ○ Main Administrative contact person
- ○ Principal Investigator
- ○ Contact person

> **The person who starts drafting the proposal will have an influence on the subsequent steps. Only the person starting the proposal will have the right to manage the access rights of other people to the proposal at Step 4. The person who creates the proposal will have the 'coordinating' role, and alongside other people at the corresponding Host Institution with a designated coordinating role, will be able to modify any parts of the proposal and to submit it. Further contacts or PIs at other Host Institution will only be able to edit the parts related to their personal data or their Host Institution (have 'full access' rights to their parts).**

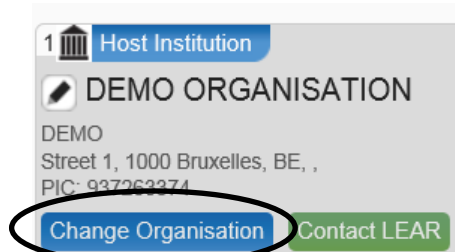**Step 4 – Manage your related parties and/or Edit contact details**

Here you define the Host Institutions and, if applicable, you may add additional partner organisations. After defining a Host Institution by clicking on the [Contact] button you identify the Principal Investigators linked to it and the administrative contact person(s). You can see the name and details of the corresponding Host Institution (always participant number '1') and the name of the person who created the draft proposal. At this step, you can:

> ➢ **add the Main administrative contact person name (**for the corresponding Host Institution) **or the corresponding Principal Investigator** (if not done yet) **and e-mail;**
> ➢ **add further Principal Investigators hosted at the corresponding HI** (full access or read-only access);
> ➢ **add further Principal Investigators hosted at other Host Institutions;**
> ➢ **give access to one or more 'Contact person(s)'** (full access or read-only access);
> ➢ **add additional organisations** ('Add Partner Organisations (no PI) '): to add team members hosted in other organisations than the Host Institutions.

> **Note that only one PI can apply with a Host Institution outside of the EU or Associated Countries. No such restrictions apply to partner organisations hosting additional team members.** A partner organisation hosts only additional team members not belonging to a HI, a PI should not be added as a contact.

Be careful to type the correct e-mail address of the PIs and all contact persons at this step. Please note that if the Principal Investigator and the administrative contact person **is the same person** (e.g. because the PI is self-employed), you must use two different e-mail addresses as the system does not allow two identical e-mail addresses to be entered.

Organisations must be identified by their nine-digit PIC numbers. A search function is provided in the system to facilitate the search for partners (if any). If you realise that you have made a mistake in selecting the organisation, you can use the 'Change Organisation' button.

1 🏛 Host Institution
✏ DEMO ORGANISATION
DEMO
Street 1, 1000 Bruxelles, BE, ,
PIC: 937263374
[Change Organisation] [Contact LEAR]

For each contact person the **role within the project** must be defined. When giving access rights to **contact persons**, the e-mail address of the person serves as the main identifier. You must define the level of access rights for each contact person:

➢ **Coordinator contact (full access):** corresponding Principal Investigator level of rights is named 'Coordinator contact' in submission system. The Coordinator contact/cPI, the Main administrative contact of the corresponding HI or another PI with full access at the corresponding HI has the right to edit all parts of the proposal, upload documents, submit, and withdraw the proposal.

➢ **Participant contact (full access):** PIs at other HIs and their administrative contacts have full access to their parts, but have only read-only rights to other institutions parts, and cannot submit the proposal.

➢ **Team member (read-only rights):** The persons identified with read-only rights cannot edit or submit the proposal.

Please also be aware that only one person should work on the forms at any given time. If two persons work on the forms at the same time, in case of a save conflict, the last save wins, which means that you risk overwriting changes made by another contact person if you are working in parallel. We therefore recommend that you give 'read-only' access to your partner organisations/additional contact persons (other contacts) unless it is absolutely necessary to grant full access. Please remember that the Main administrative contact person has full access – it is not possible to grant them 'read-only access'.

For the Principal Investigators and the Host Institution contact persons full details will be required later in the administrative forms (section 2). **Please be aware that you MUST enter the details of the PIs and the Host Institution contact persons at Step 4 before going further, since these fields are not-editable in Step 5 in the forms.** You may at any point return to Step 4 of the submission to add or delete any contact person or to change the access rights. If you have made an error in adding a person/contact to an organisation, first delete the person from the unwanted entry, save it and only afterwards enter the name in the contact details of the wanted organisation. **Remember to save your data before leaving Step 4 otherwise you will be prevented from submitting the proposal**.

You may also add the LEAR as a contact person (e.g. as a team member with read-only rights) to the proposal at Step 4 of the application.

Once the coordinator (corresponding PI or corresponding HI main administrative contact) saves the changes, an **automatic invitation** is sent to all contacts' e-mail addresses. The invited persons can **access the proposal** after logging in to the F & T portal - with the EU Login account linked to the given e-mail address – under the '**My Proposals**' tab. **In case you encounter difficulties, please contact the submission system's Service Desk at** DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu **or +32 (2) 29 92222.**

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

This step is the core of the submission process, as from this step, you **can edit the online administrative** proposal submission **forms**, view the history, print the draft proposal, **download templates**, **upload files** and **submit** the proposal by clicking on the relevant buttons.

Guidance on how to fill in the administrative forms is provided directly in the form as ghost text for the single entries or as additional help text hidden behind question-marks ❓ . Some parts of the form will be prefilled based on the data entered at pre-registration or in the Beneficiary Register.

Please use the functionality **'Validate form**' button to check the validity and completeness of your data. Any warning or error will be listed at the end of the validated form.

Further information on the preparation of the application (the online administrative forms and Proposal Parts B1 and B2) is given in sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this document.

- ➢ **All files must be uploaded in the submission system as PDF (Portable document format). Other file formats will not be accepted by the system.** Irrespective of any page limits specified in this document, there is an **overall limit of 10 Mbytes to the size of each uploaded document (Part B1, B2, and supporting documentation)**. However, it is advised to limit the size of Parts B1 and B2 to 2 Mbytes each.
- ➢ Unless specified in the call, embedded material and any other documents (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video, multimedia, etc.) sent electronically outside of the submission system or within it or by post will be disregarded.
- ➢ There are also restrictions to the name given to the Part B files: use alphanumeric characters; special characters and spaces must be avoided.

Completing the Proposal submission forms in the submission system and uploading all the necessary files does <u>not</u> yet mean that your proposal is submitted (mandatory files: Part B1, Part B2, Host Institution support letter and – if applicable: Ethical Self-assessment and supporting documentation for ethics issues). Once there is a consolidated version of the proposal, **the 'SUBMIT' button must be pressed**. The system performs a limited automatic validation of the proposal. A list of any problems such as missing data, wrong file format or excessive file size will then appear on the screen. You will see a list of warnings and/or errors. You may submit your proposal with warnings (marked in yellow) but **submission is blocked until all errors marked in red are corrected.** However, the electronic checks by the submission system do not replace the formal eligibility review described in section 1.2 of this document and cannot guarantee that the contents of these files respond to the requirements of the call.

Step 6 – The Proposal Submitted page

Reaching this step means that the proposal is submitted (i.e. sent to the ERCEA for evaluation). It does not mean that the proposal is valid, complete and eligible in all respects. Within a few minutes of submission your proposal will be available for download with an e-receipt in the system. You will receive a confirmation e-mail with the summary data of the submitted proposal. The mail can end up in the spam folder or be blocked by the anti-spam system of your organisation. This automatic message is not the official acknowledgement of receipt.

In Step 6 you can re-edit the proposal, going back to Step 5. **You may continue to modify the proposal and submit revised versions overwriting the previous one right up until the deadline**. The sequence above must be repeated each time. The last version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated; no later version can be substituted and no earlier version can be recovered.

Check if the proposal is complete. Once submitted, it is recommended to verify the proposal and its content by downloading all the submitted files. We strongly advise that you submit a first version of your proposal at least 24 hours in advance of the call deadline. Incomplete proposals (where parts or sections of the proposal and/or the host institution's commitment statement are missing) may be declared ineligible and will not be evaluated[27]. The proposal must be submitted **before the relevant deadline of the call**.

Warning: Please note that in the last hours prior to call closure, the download option of checking your submitted proposal may be disabled due to a high pressure on the system. In this case the ERCEA will inform the applicants via the call page on the F & T portal (under 'call summary') that the function has been disabled.

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[27] See also section 2.4 'eligibility check' in the ERC Rules for Submission and in the section "Proposal submission and description" of the ERC Work Programme 2020.

If the e-receipt and download option have been disabled, you may review your submitted proposal by going back to Step 5 to check the data in the administrative forms and click on 'View History' to verify which attachments have been uploaded.

3.3   HOW TO WITHDRAW A PROPOSAL

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

To withdraw a proposal **after the call deadline,** please send an e-mail to the call-specific mailbox ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu and include a signed scanned letter requesting the formal withdrawal.

A PI can be part of only one proposal submitted for the same call and even for any call published under the ERC Work Programme 2020. In the case of two or more proposals submitted by the same PI, even if they are part of a different group of PIs, the ERCEA services may ask the corresponding PI to withdraw one or more of those proposals. In the case of absence of reaction by the corresponding PI to this request, only the first eligible proposal will be considered.

4. ANNEXES

4.1 ERC KEYWORDS

For proposal submission and for evaluation of Synergy grant proposals, the following keywords will be used. Applicants should choose between 4 and 6 keywords from the list below. There is no hierarchical ordering of the keywords.

Physical Sciences and Engineering

PE1 Mathematics
All areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics

PE1_1 Logic and foundations
PE1_2 Algebra
PE1_3 Number theory
PE1_4 Algebraic and complex geometry
PE1_5 Lie groups, Lie algebras
PE1_6 Geometry and Global Analysis
PE1_7 Topology
PE1_8 Analysis
PE1_9 Operator algebras and functional analysis
PE1_10 ODE and dynamical systems
PE1_11 Theoretical aspects of partial differential equations
PE1_12 Mathematical physics
PE1_13 Probability
PE1_14 Statistics
PE1_15 Discrete mathematics and combinatorics
PE1_16 Mathematical aspects of computer science
PE1_17 Numerical analysis
PE1_18 Scientific computing and data processing
PE1_19 Control theory and optimisation
PE1_20 Application of mathematics in sciences
PE1_21 Application of mathematics in industry and society

PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter
Particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics

PE2_1 Fundamental interactions and fields
PE2_2 Particle physics
PE2_3 Nuclear physics
PE2_4 Nuclear astrophysics
PE2_5 Gas and plasma physics
PE2_6 Electromagnetism
PE2_7 Atomic, molecular physics
PE2_8 Ultra-cold atoms and molecules
PE2_9 Optics, non-linear optics and nano-optics
PE2_10 Quantum optics and quantum information
PE2_11 Lasers, ultra-short lasers and laser physics
PE2_12 Relativity
PE2_13 Thermodynamics
PE2_14 Non-linear physics
PE2_15 Metrology and measurement
PE2_16 Statistical physics (gases)

PE3 Condensed Matter Physics
Structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences, biological physics

PE3_1   Structure of solids, material growth and characterisation
PE3_2   Mechanical and acoustical properties of condensed matter, Lattice dynamics
PE3_3   Transport properties of condensed matter
PE3_4   Electronic properties of materials, surfaces, interfaces, nanostructures, etc.
PE3_5   Physical properties of semiconductors and insulators
PE3_6   Macroscopic quantum phenomena: superconductivity, superfluidity, etc.
PE3_7   Spintronics
PE3_8   Magnetism and strongly correlated systems
PE3_9   Condensed matter – beam interactions (photons, electrons, etc.)
PE3_10   Nanophysics: nanoelectronics, nanophotonics, nanomagnetism, nanoelectromechanics, etc.
PE3_11   Mesoscopic physics
PE3_12   Molecular electronics
PE3_13   Structure and dynamics of disordered systems: soft matter (gels, colloids, liquid crystals, etc.), liquids, glasses, defects, etc.
PE3_14   Fluid dynamics (physics)
PE3_15   Statistical physics: phase transitions, noise and fluctuations, models of complex systems, etc.
PE3_16   Physics of biological systems

PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences
Analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics

PE4_1   Physical chemistry
PE4_2   Spectroscopic and spectrometric techniques
PE4_3   Molecular architecture and Structure
PE4_4   Surface science and nanostructures
PE4_5   Analytical chemistry
PE4_6   Chemical physics
PE4_7   Chemical instrumentation
PE4_8   Electrochemistry, electrodialysis, microfluidics, sensors
PE4_9   Method development in chemistry
PE4_10   Heterogeneous catalysis
PE4_11   Physical chemistry of biological systems
PE4_12   Chemical reactions: mechanisms, dynamics, kinetics and catalytic reactions
PE4_13   Theoretical and computational chemistry
PE4_14   Radiation and Nuclear chemistry
PE4_15   Photochemistry
PE4_16   Corrosion
PE4_17   Characterisation methods of materials
PE4_18   Environment chemistry

PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials
Materials synthesis, structure-properties relations, functional and advanced materials, molecular architecture, organic chemistry

PE5_1   Structural properties of materials
PE5_2   Solid state materials
PE5_3   Surface modification
PE5_4   Thin films
PE5_5   Ionic liquids
PE5_6   New materials: oxides, alloys, composite, organic-inorganic hybrid, nanoparticles
PE5_7   Biomaterials, biomaterials synthesis
PE5_8   Intelligent materials – self assembled materials

PE5_9   Coordination chemistry
PE5_10   Colloid chemistry
PE5_11   Biological chemistry
PE5_12   Chemistry of condensed matter
PE5_13   Homogeneous catalysis
PE5_14   Macromolecular chemistry
PE5_15   Polymer chemistry
PE5_16   Supramolecular chemistry
PE5_17   Organic chemistry
PE5_18   Medicinal chemistry

PE6   Computer Science and Informatics

Informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems

PE6_1   Computer architecture, pervasive computing, ubiquitous computing
PE6_2   Computer systems, parallel/distributed systems, sensor networks, embedded systems, cyber-physical systems
PE6_3   Software engineering, operating systems, computer languages
PE6_4   Theoretical computer science, formal methods, and quantum computing
PE6_5   Cryptology, security, privacy, quantum cryptography
PE6_6   Algorithms, distributed, parallel and network algorithms, algorithmic game theory
PE6_7   Artificial intelligence, intelligent systems, multi agent systems
PE6_8   Computer graphics, computer vision, multi media, computer games
PE6_9   Human computer interaction and interface, visualisation and natural language processing
PE6_10   Web and information systems, database systems, information retrieval and digital libraries, data fusion
PE6_11   Machine learning, statistical data processing and applications using signal processing (e.g. speech, image, video)
PE6_12   Scientific computing, simulation and modelling tools
PE6_13   Bioinformatics, biocomputing, and DNA and molecular computation

PE7   Systems and Communication Engineering

Electrical, electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering

PE7_1   Control engineering
PE7_2   Electrical engineering: power components and/or systems
PE7_3   Simulation engineering and modelling
PE7_4   (Micro- and nano-) systems engineering
PE7_5   (Micro- and nano-) electronic, optoelectronic and photonic components
PE7_6   Communication technology, high-frequency technology
PE7_7   Signal processing
PE7_8   Networks (communication networks, sensor networks, networks of robots, etc.)
PE7_9   Man-machine interfaces
PE7_10   Robotics
PE7_11   Components and systems for applications (in e.g. medicine, biology, environment)
PE7_12   Electrical energy production, distribution, application

PE8   Products and Processes Engineering

Product design, process design and control, construction methods, civil engineering, energy processes, material engineering

PE8_1   Aerospace engineering
PE8_2   Chemical engineering, technical chemistry
PE8_3   Civil engineering, architecture, maritime/hydraulic engineering, geotechnics, waste treatment

PE8_4   Computational engineering
PE8_5   Fluid mechanics, hydraulic-, turbo-, and piston- engines
PE8_6   Energy processes engineering
PE8_7   Mechanical and manufacturing engineering (shaping, mounting, joining, separation)
PE8_8   Materials engineering (biomaterials, metals, ceramics, polymers, composites, etc.)
PE8_9   Production technology, process engineering
PE8_10   Industrial design (product design, ergonomics, man-machine interfaces, etc.)
PE8_11   Sustainable design (for recycling, for environment, eco-design)
PE8_12   Lightweight construction, textile technology
PE8_13   Industrial bioengineering

PE9   Universe Sciences

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

PE9_1   Solar and interplanetary physics
PE9_2   Planetary systems sciences
PE9_3   Interstellar medium
PE9_4   Formation of stars and planets
PE9_5   Astrobiology
PE9_6   Stars and stellar systems
PE9_7   The Galaxy
PE9_8   Formation and evolution of galaxies
PE9_9   Clusters of galaxies and large scale structures
PE9_10   High energy and particles astronomy – X-rays, cosmic rays, gamma rays, neutrinos
PE9_11   Relativistic astrophysics
PE9_12   Dark matter, dark energy
PE9_13   Gravitational astronomy
PE9_14   Cosmology
PE9_15   Space Sciences
PE9_16   Very large data bases: archiving, handling and analysis
PE9_17   Instrumentation - telescopes, detectors and techniques

PE10   Earth System Science

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

PE10_1   Atmospheric chemistry, atmospheric composition, air pollution
PE10_2   Meteorology, atmospheric physics and dynamics
PE10_3   Climatology and climate change
PE10_4   Terrestrial ecology, land cover change
PE10_5   Geology, tectonics, volcanology
PE10_6   Palaeoclimatology, palaeoecology
PE10_7   Physics of earth's interior, seismology, geodynamics
PE10_8   Oceanography (physical, chemical, biological, geological)
PE10_9   Biogeochemistry, biogeochemical cycles, environmental chemistry
PE10_10 Mineralogy, petrology, igneous petrology, metamorphic petrology
PE10_11 Geochemistry, cosmochemistry, crystal chemistry, isotope geochemistry, thermodynamics
PE10_12 Sedimentology, soil science, palaeontology, earth evolution
PE10_13 Physical geography, geomorphology
PE10_14 Earth observations from space/remote sensing
PE10_15 Geomagnetism, palaeomagnetism
PE10_16 Ozone, upper atmosphere, ionosphere
PE10_17 Hydrology, hydrogeology, engineering and environmental geology, water and soil pollution

PE10_18 Cryosphere, dynamics of snow and ice cover, sea ice, permafrosts and ice sheets
PE10_19 Planetary geology and geophysics
PE10_20 Geohazards: earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and other ground instabilities

Life Sciences

LS1   Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Structural Biology and Molecular Biophysics
Molecular synthesis, modification, mechanisms and interactions, biochemistry, structural biology, molecular biophysics signalling pathways

LS1_1   Macromolecular complexes including interactions involving nucleic acids, proteins, lipids and carbohydrates
LS1_2   Biochemistry
LS1_3   DNA synthesis, modification, repair, recombination, degradation
LS1_4   RNA synthesis, processing, modification, degradation
LS1_5   Protein synthesis, modification, turnover
LS1_6   Lipid biology
LS1_7   Glycobiology
LS1_8   Molecular biophysics (e.g. single-molecule approaches, bioenergetics, fluorescence)
LS1_9   Structural biology and its methodologies (e.g. crystallography, cryo-EM, NMR and new technologies)
LS1_10   Molecular mechanisms of signalling pathways
LS1_11   Fundamental aspects of synthetic biology and chemical biology

LS2   Genetics, 'Omics', Bioinformatics and Systems Biology
Molecular genetics, quantitative genetics, genetic epidemiology, epigenetics, genomics, metagenomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, glycomics, bioinformatics, computational biology, biostatistics, systems biology

LS2_1   Molecular genetics, reverse genetics, forward genetics, genome editing
LS2_2   Non-coding RNAs
LS2_3   Quantitative genetics
LS2_4   Genetic epidemiology
LS2_5   Epigenetics and gene regulation
LS2_6   Genomics (e.g. comparative genomics, functional genomics)
LS2_7   Metagenomics
LS2_8   Transcriptomics
LS2_9   Proteomics
LS2_10   Metabolomics
LS2_11   Glycomics/Lipidomics
LS2_12   Bioinformatics
LS2_13   Computational biology
LS2_14   Biostatistics
LS2_15   Systems biology

LS3   Cellular and Developmental Biology
Cell biology, cell physiology, signal transduction, organogenesis, developmental genetics, pattern formation and stem cell biology, in plants and animals, or, where appropriate, in microorganisms

LS3_1   Morphology and functional imaging of cells and tissues
LS3_2   Cytoskeleton and cell behaviour (e.g. control of cell shape, cell migration and cellular mechanosensing)
LS3_3   Organelle biology and trafficking
LS3_4   Cell junctions, cell adhesion, cell communication and the extracellular matrix
LS3_5   Cell signalling and signal transduction

LS3_6 Cell cycle, division and growth
LS3_7 Cell death (including senescence) and autophagy
LS3_8 Cell differentiation, physiology and dynamics
LS3_9 Developmental genetics in animals and plants
LS3_10 Embryology and pattern formation in animals and plants
LS3_11 Tissue organisation and morphogenesis in animals and plants (including biophysical approaches)
LS3_12 Stem cell biology in development, tissue regeneration and ageing, and fundamental aspects of stem cell-based therapies

LS4 Physiology, Pathophysiology and Endocrinology

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

LS4_1 Organ physiology and pathophysiology
LS4_2 Comparative physiology and pathophysiology
LS4_3 Molecular aspects of endocrinology
LS4_4 Fundamental mechanisms underlying ageing
LS4_5 Metabolism, biological basis of metabolism-related disorders
LS4_6 Fundamental mechanisms underlying cancer
LS4_7 Fundamental mechanisms underlying cardiovascular diseases
LS4_8 Non-communicable diseases (except for neural/psychiatric and immunity-related diseases)

LS5 Neuroscience and Neural Disorders

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

LS5_1 Neural cell function, communication and signalling, neurotransmission in neuronal and/or glial cells
LS5_2 Systems neuroscience and computational neuroscience (e.g. neural networks, neural modelling)
LS5_3 Neuronal development, plasticity and regeneration
LS5_4 Sensation and perception (e.g. sensory systems, sensory processing, pain)
LS5_5 Neural bases of cognitive processes (e.g. memory, learning, attention)
LS5_6 Neural bases of behaviour (e.g. sleep, consciousness, addiction)
LS5_7 Neurological disorders (e.g. neurodegenerative diseases, seizures)
LS5_8 Psychiatric disorders (e.g. affective and anxiety disorders, autism, psychotic disorders)
LS5_9 Neurotrauma and neurovascular conditions (including injury, blood-brain barrier, stroke, neurorehabilitation)

LS6 Immunity and Infection

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

LS6_1 Innate immunity in animals and plants
LS6_2 Adaptive immunity
LS6_3 Regulation and effector functions of the immune response (e.g. cytokines, interferons and chemokines, inflammation, immune signalling, helper T cells, immunological memory, immunological tolerance, cell-mediated cytotoxicity, complement)
LS6_4 Immunological mechanisms in disease (e.g. autoimmunity, allergy, transplantation immunology, tumour immunology)
LS6_5 Biology of pathogens (e.g. bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi)
LS6_6 Mechanisms of infection (e.g. transmission, virulence factors, host defences, immunity to pathogens, molecular pathogenesis)
LS6_7 Biological basis of prevention and treatment of infection (e.g. infection natural cycle, reservoirs, vectors, vaccines, antimicrobials)

LS6_8   Infectious diseases in animals and plants

LS7   Applied Medical Technologies, Diagnostics, Therapies and Public Health

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

LS7_1   Imaging for medical diagnosis
LS7_2   Genetic tools for medical diagnosis
LS7_3   Other medical technologies for diagnosis and monitoring of diseases
LS7_4   Pharmacology and pharmacogenomics (including drug discovery and design, drug delivery and therapy, toxicology)
LS7_5   Applied gene and cell therapies, regenerative medicine
LS7_6   Radiation therapy
LS7_7   Analgesia and surgery
LS7_8   Epidemiology and public health
LS7_9   Environmental health, occupational medicine
LS7_10   Health services, health care research, medical ethics

LS8   Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology

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

LS8_1   Ecosystem and community ecology, macroecology
LS8_2   Biodiversity, conservation biology, conservation genetics
LS8_3   Population biology, population dynamics, population genetics
LS8_4   Evolutionary ecology
LS8_5   Evolutionary genetics
LS8_6   Phylogenetics, systematics, comparative biology
LS8_7   Macroevolution, paleobiology
LS8_8   Coevolution, biological mechanisms and ecology of species interactions (e.g. symbiosis, parasitism, mutualism, food-webs)
LS8_9   Behavioural ecology and evolution
LS8_10   Microbial ecology and evolution
LS8_11   Marine biology and ecology

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

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

LS9_1   Applied biotechnology (including transgenic organisms, applied genetics and genomics, biosensors, bioreactors, microbiology, bioactive compounds)
LS9_2   Applied bioengineering, synthetic biology, chemical biology, nanobiotechnology, metabolic engineering, protein and glyco-engineering, tissue engineering, biocatalysis, biomimetics
LS9_3   Applied animal sciences (including animal breeding, veterinary sciences, animal husbandry, animal welfare, aquaculture, fisheries, insect gene drive)
LS9_4   Applied plant sciences (including crop production, plant breeding, agroecology, forestry, soil biology)
LS9_5   Food sciences (including food technology, food safety, nutrition)
LS9_6   Biomass production and utilisation, biofuels
LS9_7   Environmental biotechnology (including bioindicators, bioremediation, biodegradation)
LS9_8   Biohazards (including biological containment, biosafety, biosecurity)
LS9_9   Marine biotechnology (including marine bioproducts, feed resources, genome mining)

Social Sciences and Humanities

SH1   Individuals, Markets and Organisations
Economics, finance and management

SH1_1   Macroeconomics; monetary economics; economic growth
SH1_2   International management; international trade; international business; spatial economics
SH1_3   Development economics, health economics, education economics
SH1_4   Financial economics; banking; corporate finance; international finance; accounting; auditing; insurance
SH1_5   Labour and demographic economics; human resource management
SH1_6   Econometrics; operations research
SH1_7   Behavioural economics; experimental economics; neuro-economics
SH1_8   Microeconomics; game theory
SH1_9   Industrial organisation; strategy; entrepreneurship
SH1_10   Management; marketing; organisational behaviour; operations management
SH1_11   Technological change, innovation, research & development
SH1_12   Agricultural economics; energy economics; environmental economics
SH1_13   Public economics; political economics; law and economics
SH1_14   Competition law, contract law, trade law, Intellectual Property Rights
SH1_15   Quantitative economic history and history of economics; institutional economics; economic systems

SH2   Institutions, Values, Environment and Space
Political science, law, sustainability science, geography, regional studies and planning

SH2_1   Political systems, governance
SH2_2   Democratisation and social movements
SH2_3   Conflict resolution, war, peace building
SH2_4   Constitutions, human rights, comparative law, humanitarian law, anti-discrimination law
SH2_5   International relations, global and transnational governance
SH2_6   Sustainability sciences, environment and resources
SH2_7   Environmental and climate change, societal impact and policy
SH2_8   Energy, transportation and mobility
SH2_9   Urban, regional and rural studies
SH2_10   Land use and regional planning
SH2_11   Human, economic and social geography
SH2_12   GIS, spatial analysis; big data in political, geographical and legal studies

SH3   The Social World, Diversity, Population
Sociology, social psychology, social anthropology, demography, education, communication

SH3_1   Social structure, social mobility
SH3_2   Inequalities, discrimination, prejudice, aggression and violence, antisocial behaviour
SH3_3   Social integration, exclusion, prosocial behaviour
SH3_4   Attitudes and beliefs
SH3_5   Social influence; power and group behaviour
SH3_6   Kinship; diversity and identities, gender, interethnic relations
SH3_7   Social policies, welfare
SH3_8   Population dynamics; households, family and fertility
SH3_9   Health, ageing and society
SH3_10   Religious studies, ritual; symbolic representation
SH3_11   Social aspects of learning, curriculum studies, educational policies
SH3_12   Communication and information, networks, media
SH3_13   Digital social research
SH3_14   Science and technology studies

SH4   The Human Mind and Its Complexity
Cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, philosophy of mind

SH4_1   Cognitive basis of human development and education, developmental disorders; comparative cognition
SH4_2   Personality and social cognition; emotion
SH4_3   Clinical and health psychology
SH4_4   Neuropsychology
SH4_5   Attention, perception, action, consciousness
SH4_6   Learning, memory; cognition in ageing
SH4_7   Reasoning, decision-making; intelligence
SH4_8   Language learning and processing (first and second languages)
SH4_9   Theoretical linguistics; computational linguistics
SH4_10 Language typology; historical linguistics
SH4_11 Pragmatics, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis
SH4_12 Philosophy of mind, philosophy of language
SH4_13 Philosophy of science, epistemology, logic

SH5   Cultures and Cultural Production
Literature, philology, cultural studies, study of the arts, philosophy

SH5_1   Classics, ancient literature and art
SH5_2   Theory and history of literature, comparative literature
SH5_3   Philology and palaeography
SH5_4   Visual and performing arts, film, design
SH5_5   Music and musicology; history of music
SH5_6   History of art and architecture, arts-based research
SH5_7   Museums, exhibitions, conservation and restoration
SH5_8   Cultural studies, cultural identities and memories, cultural heritage
SH5_9   Metaphysics, philosophical anthropology; aesthetics
SH5_10 Ethics; social and political philosophy
SH5_11 History of philosophy
SH5_12 Computational modelling and digitisation in the cultural sphere

SH6   The Study of the Human Past
Archaeology and history

SH6_1   Historiography, theory and methods in history, including the analysis of digital data
SH6_2   Classical archaeology, history of archaeology
SH6_3   General archaeology, archaeometry, landscape archaeology
SH6_4   Prehistory, palaeoanthropology, palaeodemography, protohistory
SH6_5   Ancient history
SH6_6   Medieval history
SH6_7   Early modern history
SH6_8   Modern and contemporary history
SH6_9   Colonial and post-colonial history
SH6_10 Global history, transnational history, comparative history, entangled histories
SH6_11 Social and economic history
SH6_12 Gender history; cultural history; history of collective identities and memories
SH6_13 History of ideas, intellectual history, history of economic thought
SH6_14 History of science, medicine and technologies

Print on paper bearing the official letterhead of the institution. Each Institution is required to provide a separate support letter listing the PI(s) who will be engaged by them.

Commitment of the Host Institution for the ERC Synergy Call 2020[28, 29, 30]

The <<please fill in here the name of the legal entity that is associated to the proposal and may host the Principal Investigator and the project in case the application is successful>>, which is the applicant legal entity, confirms its intention to sign a supplementary agreement with

<< please fill in here the name of the Principal Investigator(s) who will be engaged by the Host Institution >>[31] ,

in which the obligations listed below will be addressed should the proposal entitled

<<acronym>> : <<title of the proposal>>

be retained.

The applicant legal entity confirms that it is aware that the Synergy project will involve the following Principal Investigators (PIs):

<<Please enter below the names of all Principal Investigators participating in the project.>>

Corresponding PI: ....

PI 2: ....

PI 3 (if applicable): ....

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[28] A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Submission Service in PDF format.

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

[30] This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be dated, stamped and signed by the institution's legal representative, stating their name, function, email address.

[31] Please insert the names only of those Principal Investigators that will be engaged by the host institution.

PI 4 (if applicable): ....

The fact that the applicant legal entity confirms its awareness of the group's Synergy project does not imply an obligation to contractually engage all of the Principal Investigators.

Performance obligations of the applicant legal entity that will become the beneficiary of the H2020 ERC Grant Agreement (hereafter referred to as the Agreement), should the proposal be retained and the preparation of the Agreement be successfully concluded:

The following obligations apply <u>only</u> to the Principal Investigators, hereinafter referred as the PI(s), who will be engaged by the applicant legal entity signing this letter.

The applicant legal entity commits itself to hosting and engaging the *PI(s)* for the duration of the grant to:

a) ensure that the work will be performed under the scientific guidance of the *PI(s)* who are expected to devote *at least 30% of their working time* to the ERC-funded project (action);

b) spend at least 50% of their working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country (except for a PI hosted or engaged by an institution outside of the EU or Associated Country)*;*

c) carry out the work to be performed, as it will be identified in Annex 1 of the Agreement, taking into consideration the specific role of the *PI(s);*

d) enter — before signature of the Agreement — into a '*supplementary agreement*' with the *PI(s)*, that specifies the obligation of the *applicant legal entity* to meet its obligations under the Agreement;

e) provide *the PI(s)* with a copy of the signed Agreement;

f) guarantee the *PI(s)* scientific independence, in particular for the:
   i) use of the budget to achieve the scientific objectives;
   ii) authority to publish as senior author and invite as co-authors those who have contributed substantially to the work;
   iii) preparation of scientific reports for the project (action);
   iv) selection and supervision of the other *team members* (hosted *and engaged* by the corresponding *applicant legal entity* or other legal entities), in line with the profiles needed to conduct the research and in accordance with the corresponding *applicant legal entity's* usual management practices;
   v) possibility to apply independently for funding;
   vi) access to appropriate space and facilities for conducting the research;

g) provide — during the implementation of the project (action) — research support to the *PI(s)* and the team members (regarding infrastructure, equipment, access rights, products and other services necessary for conducting the research);

h) support the *PI(s)* and provide administrative assistance, in particular for the:

    i) general management of the work and their team;

    ii) scientific reporting, especially ensuring that the team members send their scientific results to the *PI(s)*;

    iii) financial reporting, especially providing timely and clear financial information;

    iv) application of the corresponding applicant legal entity's usual management practices;

    v) general logistics of the project (action);

    vi) access to the electronic exchange system (see Article 52 of the Agreement);

i) inform the *PI(s)* immediately in writing of any events or circumstances likely to affect the Agreement (see Article 17 of the Agreement);

j) ensure that the *PI(s)* enjoys adequate:

    i) conditions for annual, sickness and parental leave;

    ii) occupational health and safety standards;

    iii) insurance under the general social security scheme, such as pension rights;

k) allow the transfer of the Agreement to a new beneficiary ('portability'; see Article 56a of the Agreement);

l) take all measures to implement the principles set out in the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers[32] - in particular regarding working conditions, transparent recruitment processes based on merit and career development – and ensure that the *PI(s),* researchers and third parties involved in the project (action) are aware of them.

m) respect the fundamental principle of research integrity and ensure that persons carrying out research tasks follow the good research practices and refrain from the research integrity violations described in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity[33]. If any such violations or allegations occur, verify and pursue them and bring them to the attention of the Agency.

For the host institution (applicant legal entity):

Date

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[32] Commission Recommendation 2005/251/EC of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (OJ L 75, 22.3.2005, p. 67).
[33] The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity of ALLEA (All European Academies) and ESF (European Science Foundation) of March 2011.

Name and Function

.... ; ....

E-mail and Signature of legal representative

.... ; ....

Stamp of the host institution (applicant legal entity)

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to be complete all the above mentioned points are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the host institution. The highlighted fields should be filled in.