

The European Research Council

ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants Calls

Inês Proença

ERC Consolidator Grant Call Coordination

5th June 2026

Belgian ERC Webinars



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Overview

- General outline ERC Grant Schemes: focus on ERC Starting Grant and Consolidator Grant
- Submission and Evaluation Process (including novelties in 2027)
- How to apply (tips and hints for preparing your proposal)

ERC is part of Horizon Europe



2027 Calls*
EUR 2.72 billion



EUR 16 billion
ERC budget in Horizon Europe



17%
of the entire
Horizon Europe budget



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



About the ERC

Scientific governance

- Independent Scientific Council with 22 members including the ERC President, with full authority over strategy.
- Supported by a Dedicated Implementation Structure, the ERC Executive Agency.

Scientific freedom

- Scientific excellence as the sole criterion.
- Support to the individual scientist – *no consortia!*
- No predetermined subjects – “*bottom-up*”.
- Support for frontier research in all fields of science and humanities.
- International peer-review.



ERC basics



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
**LONG TERM
GRANTS**
TO PIONEERING PROJECTS
IN ANY FIELD OF FRONTIER RESEARCH



Life Sciences



Physical Sciences and Engineering



Social Sciences and Humanities



Anyone from anywhere in the world can apply

- Host Institution for the ERC project must be in an EU Member State or Associated Country.
- The Host Institution is not an evaluation criterion.
- No requirement to already have an employment contract in an EU Member State or Associated Country – the institution provides a letter of support with the application.
- Significant part of work time in Europe: at least 50%.
- Team members can be based outside Europe.
- Grantees can move within Europe with the grant.



ERC grant schemes



Starting Grants

Researchers (**0-10 years after PhD**)
up to €1.5 million for 5 years



Consolidator Grants

Researchers (**5-15 years after PhD**)
up to €2 million for 5 years



Advanced Grants

Researchers with track-record of significant
research achievements up to €2.5 million for
5 years



Proof of Concept

bridging gap between research
- earliest stage of marketable innovation
lump sum €150 000 for ERC grantees



Synergy Grants

2-4 Principal investigators
up to €10 million for 6 years
1 PI can be based outside
EU/Associated Countries



Plus Grants

Principal investigators at all career stages
with a vision for transformative research
up to €7 million over 4-7 years

Starting/Consolidator Grant: Extension of the Eligibility Windows

For documented situations occurring before the call deadline

- Maternity leave: 18 months for each child born before/after the date of the successful defence of PhD degree;
- Paternity/parental leave: documented time taken for each child born before or after the date of the successful defence of PhD degree;
- Long-term illness (>90 days for the PI or a close family member) or national service: documented amount of leave taken for each occurrence that happened after the date of the successful defence of PhD degree;
- Clinical training: documented amount of clinical training received after the reference date of the 1st eligible degree, up to a maximum of 4 years;
- Major disaster (natural or human-caused such as armed conflicts)
- Seeking asylum
- Gender-based violence or any other form of violence

2025-2026 Calendar

ERC calls	Call Opening	Submission Deadline
Starting Grants ERC-2026-StG	9 July 2025	14 October 2025
Consolidator Grants ERC-2026-CoG	25 September 2025	13 January 2026
Advanced Grants ERC-2026-AdG	28 May 2026	27 August 2026
ERC Plus	5 May 2026	2 September 2026
Synergy Grants ERC-2026-SyG	10 July 2025	5 November 2025
Proof of Concept ERC-2026-PoC	13 November 2025	17 March 2026 (deadline 1) 17 September 2026 (deadline 2)

Overview

- General outline ERC Grant Schemes: focus on ERC Starting Grant and Consolidator Grant
- Submission and Evaluation Process (including announced novelties in 2027)
- How to apply (tips and hints for preparing your proposal)

Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground-breaking nature
- Ambition
- Scientific approach

Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity

The panels will **primarily evaluate the ground-breaking nature and ambition of the project.**

At the same time, the panels will evaluate the intellectual capacity and creativity of the PI, with a focus on **the extent to which the PI has the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project**

Evaluation Process – Individual Grants

For main grant schemes (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced grants):
one single submission but a **two-step** evaluation

STEP 1

Remote assessment by **panel members**
Part I, CV and Track Record



Panel meeting

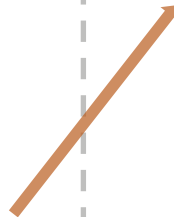


Proposal rejected
Scores B&C,
A non-invited
(above 44)



Feedback to
applicants

Proposal retained
for step 2 (Score A)
- max. 44 per panel



STEP 2

Remote assessment by **panel members**
and **remote reviewers** of **complete research proposal**



Panel meeting
+ interview



Proposal not
funded
(Score B)



Feedback to
applicants

Fundable proposal (score A)

- **A funded** (within available budget)
- **A non-funded** (outside available budget)

Evaluation panel structure (2025-2026)

Life Sciences

- LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems
- LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

Physical Sciences & Engineering

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

Social Sciences and Humanities

- SH1 Individuals, Markets and Organisations
- SH2 Institutions, Governance and Legal Systems
- SH3 The Social World and Its Interactions
- SH4 The Human Mind and Its Complexity
- SH5 Texts and Concepts
- SH6 The Study of the Human Past
- SH7 Human Mobility, Environment, and Space
- SH8 Studies of Cultures and Arts

What changed in 2026?

- On top of its standard grant amount, the ERC has always offered additional funding for major costs not covered by the main grant. Applicants already based in an EU/ AC remain eligible for up to €1 million of additional funding. **No more pre-defined cost categories for additional funding.**
- **Increased ERC funding for researchers moving to Europe:** Additional funding of up to €2 million above the standard amount for researchers based outside EU/AC at the time of application for Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grants.
- The ERC has launched the '**ERC Plus**' funding scheme to support outstanding PIs to address a major scientific challenge that can't be solved with a regular ERC grant.

What changes in 2026?

ERC Plus

- Applicants should explain how the proposed project aims go **beyond those of a regular ERC Project** (**vision** to transform their field or open a new field of research)
- Scholars at **all career stages** can apply for an ERC Plus Grant **if they have an outstanding record of scientific achievement at the forefront of their field**. The past achievements of the PI will be given more importance in the evaluation of the ERC Plus (than in the regular grants).
- **Only some 30 ERC Plus Grants can be awarded** across all fields and all career stages (compared to ~1000 STG/COG/ADG)
- Maximum duration: 84 months
- **Maximum Grant Amount: 7.000.000€**
- Lump Sum (based on a realistic estimate of the actual cost of the project)



What changes in 2026?

Grant application

- New structure of the scientific proposal:
 - Scientific Proposal Part I (up to 5 pages) should describe the overall idea of the proposed research project: current state of knowledge; objectives of the project; overall approach/research strategy to reach the goals of the project;
*Focus on the **idea***
 - Scientific Proposal Part II (up to 7 pages) should describe the implementation in detail: the research methodology, work plan, risk assessment, etc.
*Focus on the **implementation** of the idea*

The panels will use Part I for evaluation at Step 1 and both parts together for their evaluation at Step 2.

Research Project

**is this an original and creative idea
addressing an important question
that would be worth pursuing?**



**can that idea be pursued
realistically, and if so, with the
approach that the PI proposes?**

PART I (MAX 5 PAGES)

should describe the overall idea of the proposed research project:

- .. What is the current state of knowledge;*
- .. How is the idea original, creative, ambitious?*
- .. What is the scientific question and the objectives;*
- .. What is overall approach/research strategy to reach the goals of the project?*

PART II (MAX 7 PAGES)

should describe the implementation in detail:

- .. Provide extensive research methodology;*
- .. Describe the work plan;*
- .. Include risk assessment;*
- .. Expand on mitigating measures etc.*

Part II is complementary to, and not redundant with, Part I.

What changes in 2027*?

The eligibility period for both Starting and Consolidator Grant schemes have been widened:

- From 2027 on, researchers will be eligible to apply for a Starting Grant immediately after successfully defending their PhD, and at any time within the following ten-year period.
- Consolidator Grant applicants will be eligible to apply between five and fifteen years after defending their PhD.
- Researchers will be awarded no more than one Starting Grant and one Consolidator Grant during their career.
- The rules for the extension of the eligibility periods will remain in place.

Announced re-submission restrictions WP 2027*

Eligibility for the 2027 StG, CoG and AdG calls will follow the same rules as in the past:

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

Overview

- General outline ERC Grant Schemes: focus on ERC Starting Grant
- Submission and Evaluation Process (including Novelty in 2027)
- How to apply (tips and hints for preparing your proposal)

Step 1: Get the information (early on)!

- Register early, get familiar with the European Commission's **Funding and Tender portal** and download the templates
 - <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>
- ERC pages for Starting Grants: <https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/starting-grant> and Consolidator Grants: <https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/consolidator-grant>
- Read the call documents (**Information for Applicants, Work Programme, Frequently Asked Questions**) that explain how to prepare your proposal
- Talk to your Institution's grant office; NCPs
- Talk to ERC grantees
- Contact the ERCEA to ask all your questions well ahead of the submission deadline – ERC-2027-STG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu or ERC-2026-COG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu
- Get the written consent of your collaborators before the submission deadline (a simple email exchange is OK)

Step 2: choose your grant type & make sure you are eligible!

- From 2027 on, researchers will be eligible to apply for a
 - **Starting Grant** immediately after successfully defending their PhD, and at any time within the following ten-year period i.e. **0 and 10 years after defending their PhD**.
 - **Consolidator Grant** applicants will be eligible to apply between **5 and 15 years after defending their PhD**.
 - Researchers will be awarded **no more than 1** Starting Grant and 1 Consolidator Grant during their career.
-
- The reference date shall be the certified date of the **successful defence** of the first PhD degree.
 - The rules for the extension of the eligibility periods will remain in place.
 - Window is calculated as according to the 1st of January of the year of the Call.
 - If you previously applied to an ERC call, check resubmission restrictions
 - Minimum 50% of PI working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country
 - Time commitment on the project: Min. 50% (StG), 40% (CoG), 30% (AdG/SyG/Plus)



Step 3: Preparing your application

PART A – admin forms online

Section 1 Proposal and PI info

Section 2 Host Institution info

Section 3 Budget

Section 4 Ethics

Section 5 Call-specific Questions

Annexes – submitted as .pdf

- Statement of support of HI
- copy of PhD or equiv. (StG & CoG)

If applicable:

- document for extension of eligibility window (StG & CoG)
- explanatory info on ethical issues

Seen by the panel

PART B1 – submitted as .pdf

Abstract and Cross-Panel explanation	1 p.
Scientific Proposal Part I	5 p.
CV & Track Record	up to 4 p.

PART B2 – submitted as .pdf

Scientific Proposal Part II	7 p.
Funding ID	

Explain properly your resources and budget

- Budget analysis carried out in Step 2 evaluation.
- Panels have responsibility to ensure that resources requested are reasonable and well justified.
- Budget cuts need to be justified on a proposal-by-proposal basis (no across-the-board cuts).
- Costs might be cut when they have not been explained.

- Additional funding (should be justified)
- No more pre-defined cost categories for additional funding
- May include personnel costs

CV and Track Record

No prescriptive Principal Investigator profiles

Instead, 3 sections

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

PI's education and key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions they have held.

2. RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS (<=10) AND PEER RECOGNITION

- demonstrating advancement in the field, with emphasis on more recent achievements
- prizes, fellowships, academy membership, etc.

*The applicant can provide a **short, factual narrative** on the significance of the listed achievements and recognitions in relation to the research field and the proposed project.*

3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Relevant additional information on their research career to provide context when assessing their research achievements and peer recognition.

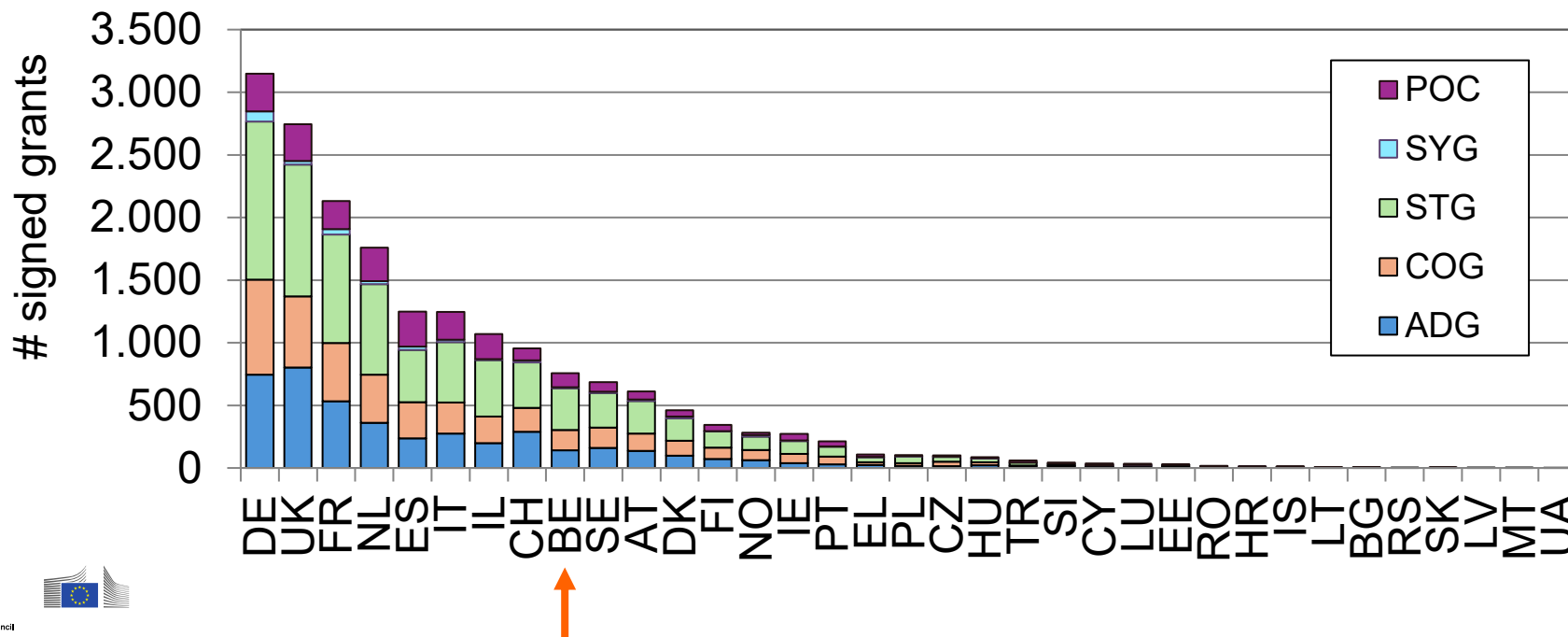
- career breaks, diverse career paths, life events
- other noteworthy contributions to research community

When writing your CV and Track Record

- Use the recommended template with the 3 sections as much as possible.
- The CV/Track Record part of B1 is still very important, so do put time and effort in it.
- **Tell your story!**
- Name your PhD/PostDoc supervisors
- Explain what has been your own contribution to your publications/how they have impacted the field.
- Convince the panel that you are the forefront of your research field – this may be (very) different for different people so make sure you highlight your key strengths and accomplishments.
- Explain publishing habits in your field and country if needed.
- Describe accurately any other activity that can indicate scientific maturity.
- If you know that you have gaps or other issues in your CV, explain them in the Additional Information section.

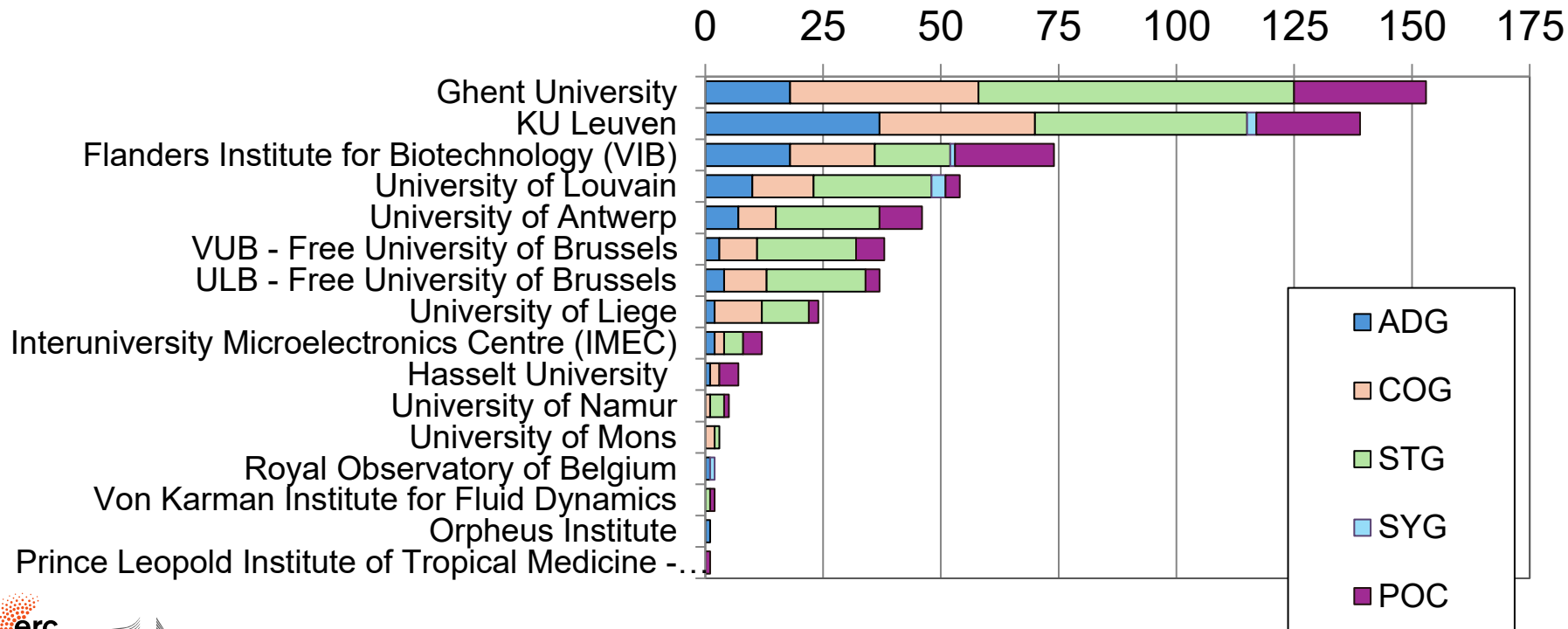
ERC-funded projects by country of Host Institution

ERC 2007-2026 signed grants May 2026



ERC Funded Projects in Belgium by host institution

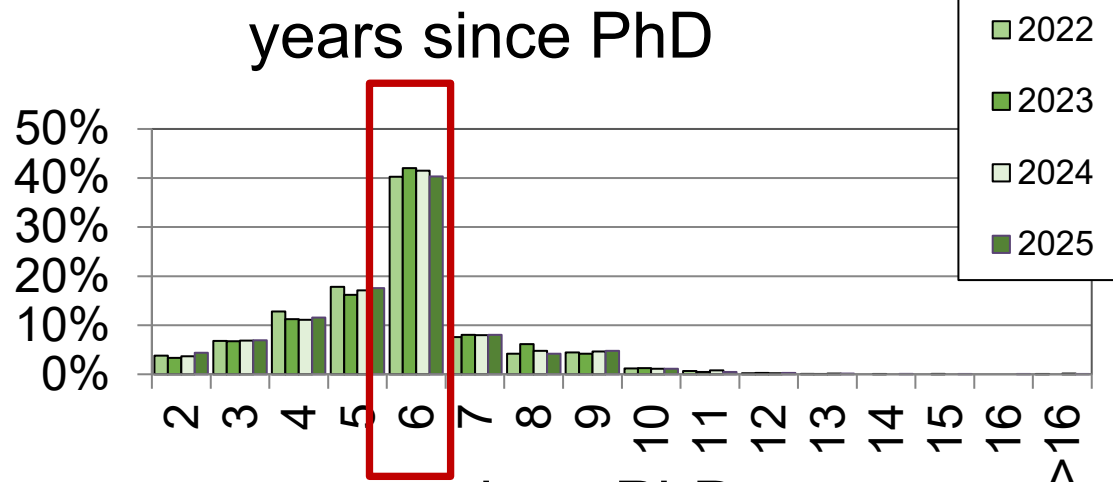
H2020 and Horizon Europe (signed May 26.....)



Submissions by years since PhD

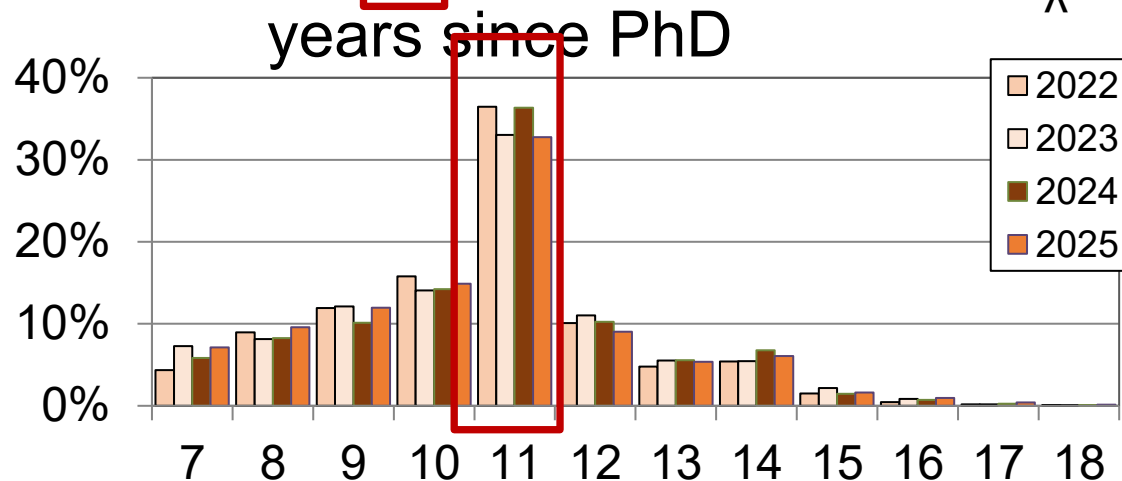
STG 2022-2025

% submissions



COG 2022-2025

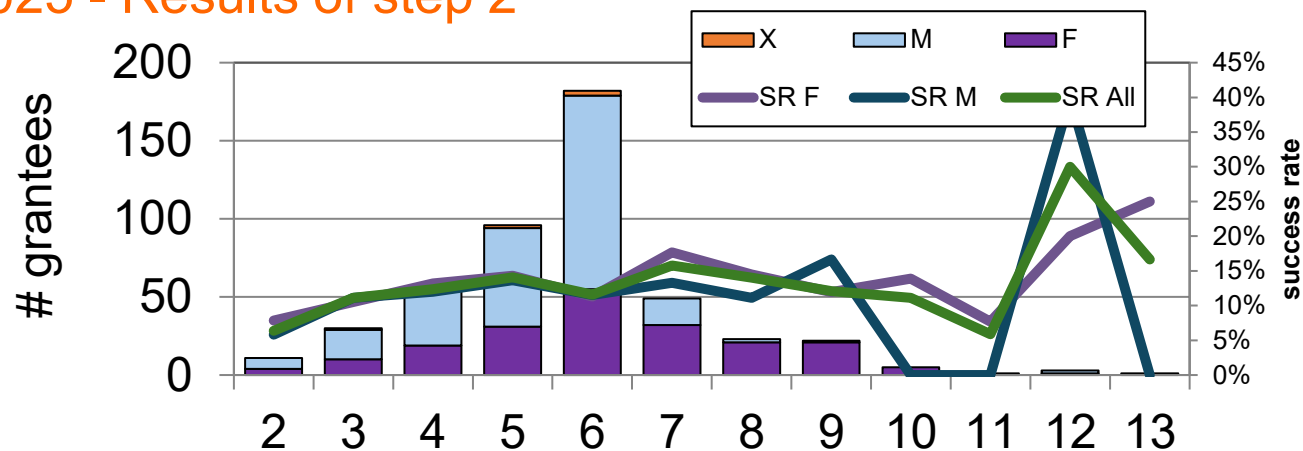
% submissions



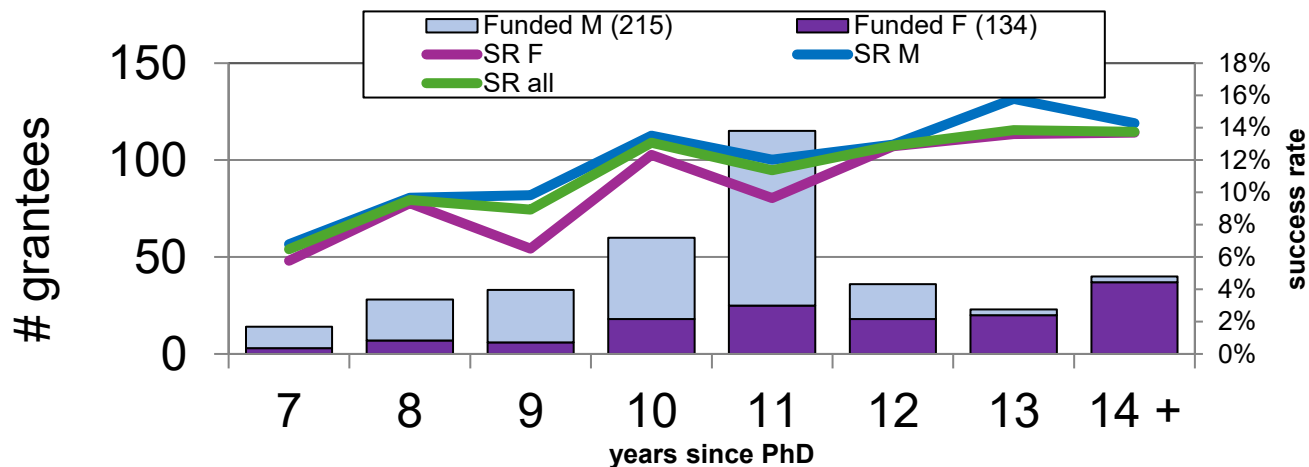
Shall I apply now or wait another year?

STG and COG 2025 - Results of step 2

STG 2025



COG 2025



Where can you find more information?

The ERC website

[Apply for a grant | ERC](#)



6 New Videos - ERC Classes

- How can you get started with your ERC proposals?
- How can you write your ERC proposal?
- How do we evaluate your ERC proposal?
- What do you need to know about the ERC Synergy Grants?
- How can you best prepare for your ERC interview?
- Why care about ethics in your ERC proposal?

Thank You!

More information: erc.europa.eu



Follow us on social media

