

The European Research Council

ERC Funding Opportunities

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Choose Belgium webinar:
Research Career Opportunities in Belgium



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC is part of Horizon Europe



EUR 16 billion
ERC budget in Horizon Europe



17%
of the entire
Horizon Europe budget

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 grants

The **ERC** supports **ground-breaking, frontier research**

Who can apply?

- Researchers of **any nationality and age**, from **anywhere in the world**
- To carry out a research projects **in an EU or associated country**

What's in it for you? **Independence & Flexibility & Visibility**

- A research topic of own choice: **bottom-up approach**, no predetermined topics
- True **financial autonomy** for 5 years
- Negotiate with the host institution the **best conditions of work**
- Attract **top team members and collaborators**
- **Portability**: move with the grant to any place in Europe, if desired



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



Additional funding (+ new features as from WP2026)

- **up to 1M €:** Applicants already based in an EU Member State or country associated to HE

Additional funding can be requested to cover the following costs (examples):

- (a) purchase of **major equipment** and/or
- (b) access to **large facilities** and/or
- (c) other **major experimental and field work**

In WP2026: no more cost categories, you just need to justify the need for extra funding

- **up to 2M €:** Applicants currently based outside EU or Associated Countries

(WP2026 + AdG2025) 

- ✓ to facilitate the **relocation** of their laboratory/team to the EU/country associated to the ERC part of the HE programme, for Starting, Consolidator or Advanced Grants

Expected Calls Calendar 2027*

Pending the approval and publication of the Work Programme 2027 due in July 2026

ERC Call	Call Opens	Submission Deadline
Advanced Grants ERC-2026-AdG	28 May 2026 747 M€	27 August 2026
ERC Plus Grants ERC-2026-PLUS	2 June 2026 210 M€	2 September 2026
Starting Grants ERC-2027-StG	22 July 2026	14 October 2026
Consolidator Grants ERC-2027-CoG	24 September 2026	12 January 2027
Synergy Grants ERC-2027-SyG	17 February 2027	11 May 2027

Preparing your proposal

... for StG & CoG, **make sure you are eligible!**

1. Eligibility window is measured from the **1st of January of the year of the Call**
Extensions of eligibility window possible for documented cases

*The reference date towards the calculation of the eligibility period shall be the **certified date of the successful PhD defence.***

2. If you previously applied to an ERC call, check resubmission restrictions
3. Time commitment: Minimum 50% (StG), 40% (CoG), 30% (AdG)
4. Minimum 50% of PI working time in an EU Member State or Associated Country

What changes in 2027?

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

- From **WP 2027** onwards, 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**, with 1 January of the year of the Call serving as the cut-off date for determining the eligibility 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.

Extensions to eligibility windows

The **eligibility periods can be extended** beyond 10 or 15 years, respectively, for the Starting and Consolidator Grant for the following properly documented circumstances:

- **Maternity**
- **Paternity/Parental leave**
- **Long-term illness or Disability**
- **National service**
- **Clinical training**
- **Major Disaster / Seeking Asylum**
- **Victims of violence, including gender-based (as from WP2026)**



Excellence

is the sole evaluation criterion

Excellence of the Research Project

- Ground-breaking nature
- Ambition



Since WP 2024, emphasis on **the research project**

Excellence of the Principal Investigator

- Intellectual capacity
- Creativity

Applying for an ERC grant

- **Competitive calls**

Only outstanding proposals stand a chance to be funded

- **Submit when your proposal is ready**

Critically assess your proposal's quality, ambition, and readiness before submitting

- **Equal success rates across panels**

Submission numbers vary greatly across panels.

Fewer granted in a panel simply reflect a lower submission rate.

***Strong,
competitive
proposals,
not more
proposals***



Proposal structure

- **Part A:** Administrative form and Proposal Budget
- **Scientific Proposal Part I** (max. **5** pages) should describe the overall idea of the proposed research project; Abstract & Cross-panel explanation (1 p) and CV & Track Record (4 p)
- **Scientific Proposal Part II** (max. **7** pages or 10 pages for Synergy Grant) should describe the implementation in detail: the research methodology, work plan, risk assessment etc.
- **Annexes:** Support letter of Host Institution; PhD certificate; extension eligibility window request documents, ethics documents, etc.

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

Feasibility of the scientific approach will no longer be assessed at Step 1. The proposed **timescales and resources** will be **assessed at Step 2** of the evaluation. The PI time commitment will be verified during the eligibility checks.



Choose your panel in Part A (Administrative form)

- **Choose the panel that best fits the proposal** – the success rate in each panel is the same, the budget is distributed as a function of number of submissions
- Descriptors are **not exhaustive** (not a classification)
- **Any topic/field is equally welcome**, whether mentioned in panel structure or not
- **Descriptors and free keywords** used by panel chair to assign reviewers
→ choose carefully
- If a proposal is across panels: reviewers from both panels used. **Explain why proposal is “cross-panel” in Part I**

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



Evaluation Process – Individual Grants

A **single** submission, but a **two-step** evaluation (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced grants)

STEP 1

Remote individual assessment by
Panel Members
of **Part I, CV & Track Record**

Panel meeting 1

Rejected
B & C

Retained: A
> 44: A non-
invited

max. 44

STEP 2

Remote individual assessment by
Panel Members & External Reviewers
of **Part I + Part II (full proposal)**

Panel meeting 2 + Interview

Funded
A

Unfunded
A

Unfunded
B

Feedback to
applicants



Contrary to what you may think

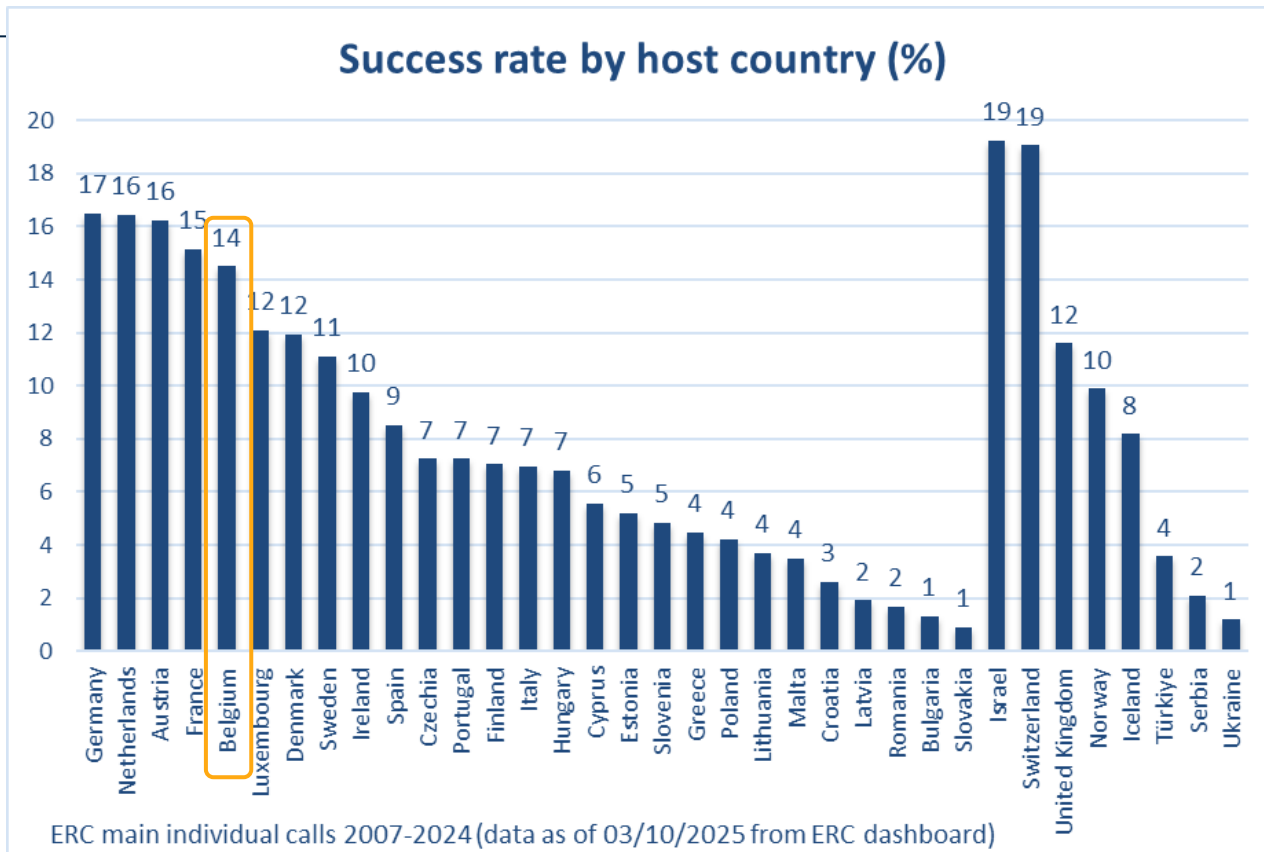
- **The budget is distributed among the scientific panels as a function of demand.**
- The panel descriptors do not represent ERC scientific priorities.
- The success rate is not linked to academic age.
- Publication record is not decisive in selection decisions.
- The Host Institution is not an evaluation criterion.



Anyone from anywhere in the world can apply

- Grantees can keep affiliation with home institute outside Europe (“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.

Success rate by country of Host Institution



Where can you find more information?

Apply for a grant | ERC



6 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?

<https://erc.europa.eu/>

Thank You!

More information: erc.europa.eu



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