

ERC Synergy Grant Call 2020: Notes and Tips for Applicants (Version Oct 3, 2019)

Quick overview: Synergy Grant Call 2020

Deadline: November 5, 2019 17:00 CET

- Minimum 2, maximum 4 Principal Investigators (PI) jointly submit a proposal as a **group**
- One PI is designated as administrative contact (Corresponding PI)
- **One of the PIs** (except the Corresponding PI) can be hosted by an **institution outside of the EU/Associated Countries (AC)**
- New: At submission stage, a **Host Commitment letter by all (up to four) PI Host Institutions** (applicant legal entities), is required at proposal stage (annex)
- **Waiting time** for **resubmission** of proposals that failed in **step 1** of the evaluation is likely 1 or 2 years depending on the evaluation category; definite provisions will be presented in ERC Work Programme 2021 to be published under the next EU Framework Programme, Horizon Europe (see ERC Work Programme 2020, p 21)
- Proposals that proceed to **step 2 or 3** but are not funded can likely be resubmitted “immediately” to the next call (depending on provisions of ERC Work Programme 2021)
- **Track Record:** Presentation of up to five publications (Starter level) or up to ten publications (Consolidator or Advanced level) according to career stage of PI. **Preprints** may be included
- **Resources section in part B2** does **not count** towards **page limits**
- **Literature references** do **not count** towards **page limits** (B1+B2)
- **Avoid unnecessary repetition** of part B1 in part B2
- **Mandatory Funding ID annex** to indicate ongoing and submitted grants
- Request for **exclusion of up to four reviewers** possible without justification
- **Open Access** is mandatory, related costs can be charged to the project
- ERC beneficiaries will automatically be covered by the H2020 provisions on **research data sharing** unless they opt out; related costs (e.g. for data management plan) can be charged to the project
- **Ethical issues table** needs to be completed online; **ethics self-assessment annex to be provided if any issue** in the ethical issues table applies (no template)
- **Minimum 30% of the PIs total working time** needs to be committed to the ERC project, and each PI needs to spend minimum 50% of his/her total working time in the EU or a Horizon 2020-Associated Country, even if the salary of the PI is not charged to the project (exception: if one PI is hosted by an institution outside of EU/AC)
- Link to recording of recent FFG Academy Webinar on the ERC Synergy Grant:
https://www.ffg.at/europa/veranstaltungen/ffg-akademie_2019-09-12_webinar (Please note a corrigendum: For the Synergy Grant, the budget section has not been transferred to the online forms, but continues to be included in the B2 template)

The information provided in this compilation is based on several sources, in particular on key documents published by the ERC, such as the “Information for Applicants to the ERC Synergy Grant” as well as suggestions by ERC Panel Members and evaluation comments.

Important documents and useful links

Please read the following two documents:

- **ERC Work Programme 2020 (legally binding)**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/erc/h2020-wp20-erc_en.pdf
- **Information for Applicants to the Synergy Grant Call 2020**, including the detailed **panel expertise keywords**:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides_for_applicants/h2020-guide20-erc-syg_en.pdf

- ERC Homepage: erc.europa.eu
- Participant Portal: Link to proposal submission for **SyG 2020**:
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/erc-2020-syg.html>
- **ERC Standard Proposal template** (pdf) for the Synergy Grant, including administrative forms and Letter of Commitment of the Host Institute: available via the online submission tool after registration, at step 5
- ERC Synergy Grant 2020 Applicant Mailbox for queries related to the call:
ERC-SYG-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu
- Link to previous **ERC panel members (frequently generalists)**:
 - <https://erc.europa.eu/document-category/evaluation-panels>

The names of the 5 Panel Chairs for the ERC Synergy Grant Call 2020 should be listed before the deadline of the Call at <https://erc.europa.eu/funding/synergy-grants> (Please **do not contact the Panel Chairs under any circumstances**, as this could give rise to a conflict of interest considering the SyG 2020 evaluation, possibly leading to the exclusion of the proposal)

- Link to previous **ERC remote referees (specialists)**:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#h2020-expertslists-excellent-erc
- Link to ERC **database of funded projects**:

<https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>

In this database you can search for abstracts and principle investigators of ERC grants, including 50 funded Synergy projects from the pilot calls. Search results can be filtered to free keywords and according to ERC evaluation panel (the latter is not relevant for Synergy grants).

The CORDIS database also provides access to abstracts of funded ERC Synergy projects, and also displays the names of all PIs involved: http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/home_en.html

- ERC webpage on **open access**: <https://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/managing-project/open-access>
- Guidelines on Implementation of Open Access to Scientific Publications and Research Data (ERC): https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/oa-pilot/h2020-hi-erc-oa-guide_en.pdf

Online submission of ERC proposals: Submit early, submit often

We strongly recommend to **submit a first version of your proposal around 1 week before the deadline**, in order to check for any browser problem or other technical issues that may block proposal submission, or lead to layout changes in the submitted versions. Up to the call deadline, **you can continuously modify your proposal by submitting (not just uploading) a new version, which will overwrite the previous one.**

In case of problems with the online submission system, please contact your **host institution** (grant management/researchers' service), **FFG** (ylva.huber@ffg.at) or directly the submission system's Service Desk at DIGIT-EFP7-SEP-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu or +32 (2) 29 92222

Information on how to use the online submission system is also available via the submission service user manual: https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/sep_usermanual.pdf

Please ensure that all the **required supporting documents are obtained and submitted** via the submission tool in time (Commitment letter of the Host Institution, ethical issues annex [ethical self-assessment and any additional documents related to ethics], other supporting documents as applicable)

Also, please note the remark on "Declarations" in the online forms - **Written consent**:

The Principal Investigator declares to have the written consent of all participants on their involvement and on the content of this proposal, as well as of any researcher mentioned in the proposal as participating in the project (either as other PI, team member or collaborator). The ERCEA may request the applicants to provide the written consent of all participants at any time during the evaluation process.*

The written consents should however not be submitted with the application. Consent can e.g. be documented by an **email** by the participant, which is **dated before the call deadline**.

*For Synergy grant applications: 'Principal Investigator' = 'corresponding Principal Investigator on behalf of all Principal Investigators'; 'Host Institution' = 'corresponding Host Institution'

Ethical issues: Online table and ethical self-assessment annex

- The **ethical issues table** needs to be completed online in the online submission portal. The page numbers to be indicated in the ethics table refer to part B2. It is possible to list several page numbers divided by '/' (e.g. 12/14).
- For each ethical issue that applies to your proposal, please 1) tick the appropriate box in the list and 2) provide information on your approach to these issues in the **ethics self-assessment** document. As there is **no template** for the ethics self-assessment, we suggest to use a plain word-document indicating the relevant topic(s) from the online-ethics section and to describe your strategy to deal diligently with these issues (e.g. which ethic approvals you will obtain, compliance with relevant national and European law/directives, anonymization of data, insurance, etc). Convert the document into **pdf** format and upload it as **ethical self-assessment annex** in the submission system. Furthermore, you can upload additional annexes with ethics-related documents (e.g. examples of informed consent forms)
- A **guideline** on how to complete the ethical self-assessment is available at https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf
- **Please note:** The ethical self-assessment guide also refers to documents that may not be available at the stage of proposal submission but need to be provided at the stage of preparing the grant agreement, e.g. ethics approvals.
- The **ethical issues section will not be evaluated** during proposal evaluation, as communicated to FFG by the ERCEA: *“Any document related to ethics (including the ethics issues table) will not be made available to the ERC reviewers during the evaluation. Hence, they will not be instructed to look at them. The evaluators are not supposed to take ethic issues into account during evaluations. The ethics clearance is done by the ethics review after evaluation is final.”*
For proposals with immediate ethics issues, it is nonetheless *“advisable to include a short paragraph summarising how they will be dealt with and refer to ethics self-assessment/annexes.”*

Evaluating scientific excellence: Questions that SyG reviewers need to answer

(ERC Work Programme 2020, p35)

1. Research Project

Ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy

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)?

To what extent does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone (**for Synergy Grants**, based on the Extended Synopsis)?

To what extent is the combination of scientific elements put forward in the proposal crucial to address the scope and complexity of the research question (**for Synergy Grants**, based on the Extended Synopsis)?

To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified (based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

2. Principal Investigator (Advanced and Synergy)

Intellectual capacity and creativity

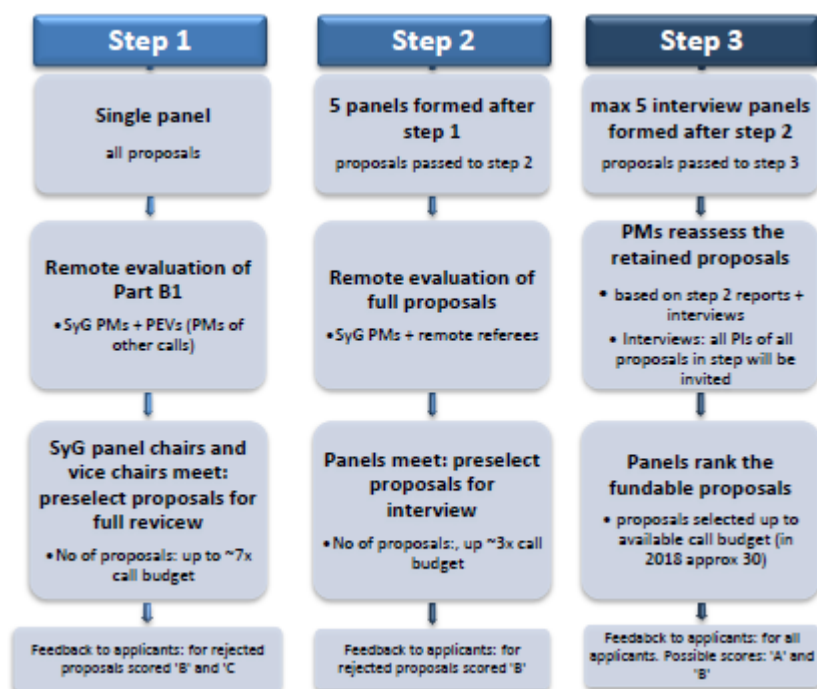
To what extent has/have the PI(s) demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?

To what extent does/do the PI(s) has/have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

Synergy Grant Group

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 (**for Synergy Grants**, based on the full Scientific Proposal)?

Evaluation process for the Synergy Grant



In **step one**, Part B1 only is assessed by the whole pool of panel members (approximately 80) 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, based on the written reviews by the panel members.

In **step two**, the complete version (B1 + B2) of the retained proposals is evaluated. To this aim, **five panels** are formed to provide the best expertise, using the whole pool of the step 1 panel members. Remote specialized reviews complement the generalist reviews by the panel members. The five panels are composed of around 15-

18 experts each, and most likely there will be roughly 2 Physical Sciences, 2 Life sciences, and 1 Social sciences and humanities oriented panels. At the end of the remote individual assessment the five panels meet in Brussels.

Step three: Following the step 2 evaluation the PIs of the retained proposals receive an invitation letter outlining the format and the length of the interview. All Principal Investigators of the proposals selected for interviews are invited to present their proposal to the interview panel in Brussels. A minimum of three and a maximum of five panels will interview the applicants in parallel. 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 50 minutes in total. All Principal Investigators are required to be present at the interview. The presentation is an opportunity to elaborate on the synergies that the project aims to create.

At the time of the interview, the panel members will usually have prepared a preliminary ranking list of proposals, based on their own assessments and the comments they have received by the remote referees. PIs will not be informed on any reviewer comments at this stage. Only the panel members will be present at the interview. They may also ask questions by quoting from evaluation comments by remote referees.

PM: panel member; PEV: panel evaluator. PEV is an ERC term used for panel members of the other ERC calls reviewing ERC SyG proposals, they may provide additional expertise, but do not participate in panel meetings.

Experience so far shows that the number of reviews per Synergy proposal is quite high, with 8-13 reviews per proposal in the Synergy Grant Call 2018.

Considerations and Tips for a competitive Synergy Grant proposal

Structure

- Provide a **clear structure**. Your proposal should read as a compelling, authentic **narrative**.
- To demonstrate the synergetic nature of your project, the proposal should be well integrated, **one of piece**, and not come across as separate projects by several PIs
- Present the big picture to put your research into a broader **context** (appealing also to panel members who are not specialists in your field) and to **motivate your research goals**
- The introduction/motivation should, however, not dominate the proposal: The **major part** of the grant application (also in the extended synopsis/B1) should explain concretely your **novel approach** and **planned work** (as a rule of thumb: minimum 50 % of the extended synopsis in B1)
- Present the **aims/objectives** of your project rather early and in a highly visible manner (e.g. bullet points, bold fonts, text box). Panel Members like to see them at the first glance.
- The **perfect match between aims/objectives**, the **methodology** and the **workplan** of the project should be easy to grasp. For instance, you can refer to aim(s) 1,2 when describing method x or research line/workpackage y). This will support the impression of a well integrated, coherent proposal.
- Describe the **significant synergies, complementarity and added value of the group beyond the current work of the PIs** to enable it to jointly achieve the project's scientific objectives.

Part B1 is a crucial element of the proposal, as only this part is read at step 1 of the evaluation. The extended synopsis in B1 should therefore contain **all important information** to evaluate the breakthrough character, feasibility and the synergetic effect of the project. This includes:

- key information on the **research gap, core novelty, synergetic aspects, long-term vision, aims, methodology, working arrangements**
- significant **risks/challenges** of the project and your **contingency plans/alternative strategies**
- key **preliminary data**/results/proof of principle already obtained
- information on how you will **validate** the results of the project
- any aspects that may be important to show the **explanatory power** of your approach, e.g. whether the results you obtain will likely be generalizable; demonstrating causality rather than “only” correlation; statistical powering etc – as applicable in the respective research field(s)
- showing that the project objectives can **only be achieved through the specific combination of knowledge and skills** brought together by the PIs

Based on ERC evaluation comments, we strongly recommend to also include in B1:

- **a sentence/paragraph** on the **team member composition**: number of postdocs, PhD students to be hired; their expected expertise
- **rough timing information**, e.g. a brief time plan in 1-2 sentences, or timing information in brackets, for instance “aim 1... /phase 1[Year 1-3]“ / “key intermediate goal x [Year 3]“). The idea is to provide an overview on main phases or **important intermediate goals** of your project, if applicable, and as appropriate and credible in your field. The timing information should thus fit with an ambitious project and not give an incremental impression

→More details on team and time plan should be provided in B2 (please see below)
- One or a few high quality **figure(s)** can also be very helpful for B1
- **References** to literature should be included. They do not count towards the five pages limit. The references in B1 may also support Panel Members in selecting the remote referees to evaluate the proposal in step 2 of the evaluation.

Part B2 should present the **required details for the evaluation by specialist reviewers** in step 2. This concerns in particular the **methodology, preliminary work/data, risks and contingency plans, interpretation methods** and how you aim to **validate results**, but also details on resources, including the **team composition, working arrangements within the group**, and the **infrastructure/scientific environment at the host institution(s)**.

Part B2 also contains the joint budget table for all PIs (see template).

- Highlight any **novel/unconventional methodology**
- Consider which aspects should be addressed (in more detail) to **demonstrate feasibility** and **explanatory power**, e.g. statistical powering; theoretical framework,...
- Deal **appropriately with significant risks** (contingency plans, alternative strategies; promising preliminary data)
- At least in most cases, reviewers will likely expect a reasonable **time plan** for an ERC project. It has meanwhile become standard in part B2 of ERC proposals to present e.g. a Gantt chart or overview table on key intermediate goals/milestones. Again, the time plan should however not be too detailed to be credible for a groundbreaking research agenda.
- Present the **composition and expertise requirements** for your team (PhDs, Post Docs), as well as **working arrangements**, e.g. joint supervision of PhDs/PostDocs by different PIs; supervision of PhD students supported by Post-Docs; overall supervision and guidance by the group of PIs; meetings/modes of interaction within the group, etc. → tailor-made for the needs of the project.

- Emphasize your **commitment** to the project as group of PIs, including the percentage of total working time devoted to the project for each PI, in the running text (in addition to the “time commitment” table next to the budget table)

If you think there could be reasonable doubts by reviewers on whether you will be able to fulfil the time commitment due to other duties, describe your strategy up front (e.g. agreement on reduced teaching duties with host institution for the duration of the project,...)

- **References** to literature should be included (they do not count towards the 15 page-limit)

Avoid unnecessary repetition between B1 and B2

As part B1 should capture the essence of the entire proposal, B1 and B2 need to be mutually consistent. **However, panel members seem to increasingly disapprove of longer sections with identical wording in B1 and B2.** As both B1 and B2 are evaluated at step 2, you can also **save space in B2** by e.g. referring to a figure or section in B1, instead of repeating it in B2.

Proposal Abstract

The abstract is an important part of the proposal, also during panel discussions. The majority of panel members may only read the abstract and possibly leaf through the proposals. The abstract should therefore present the essence of your project, capturing the scientific challenge, novel approach, objectives, potential impact and unique features of the project.

Further suggestions with relevance both for B1 and B2

Novelty and Vision

- Address explicitly the **groundbreaking nature** of the project: What is the important **research gap** you aim to address? What is the core novelty of your approach?
- Besides the short-term anticipated **impact** of the project on your field/other fields, it may also be useful to sketch your more **long-term vision** (6-10 years or beyond), to further underline the transformative nature of the project.
- It should be evident for reviewers that your approach is **genuinely novel, original, and timely**. Thus it should not come across as an incremental “extension” of previous research by the PIs.
- Explain the **unique features** and the advantages of your approach compared to **competing approaches**.

Hypothesis-driven project/clearly defined research questions

- While there can be differences between research fields/disciplines, ERC reviewers frequently comment positively on the fact that a project is hypothesis-driven. In any case, however, the overarching research questions should be clearly presented. Proposals that apparently lack such question(s) and are perceived as largely technology- or methodology-driven will likely be at a disadvantage.

Scope of the project well justified

- As for any research proposal, also the scope of an ambitious ERC Synergy project can be questioned by reviewers – either as being too broad/unfocused or too narrowly designed. It is therefore advisable to clearly explain the approach you have chosen together - why are you convinced that this is the best approach, and that it is feasible within 6 years?

Clarity

- Your proposal needs to be **well understandable** also for **reviewers that are not specialists** in your own research field/topic.
- This will be supported by **precise wording**/descriptions, **clear** (working) **definitions** where possible, concrete **examples**, high quality **figures**
- Ensure a **reader-friendly layout**, with sufficient spaces, highlighting key messages, e.g. by short summary of a section in a text box, bullet points; selective use of bold fonts

A group of PIs, not a consortium

- As the ERC explicitly does not fund consortia (see ERC Work Programme, p9), please always refer to the “group” of PIs (even if the online forms in the submission tool may refer to a “consortium”, because the submission is used for all types of Horizon 2020 projects)

Demonstrating a competitive Advanced, Consolidator or Starter profile (see also below)

- **CV, Track Record, State of the art:**
Important contributions by the PIs should not only be presented in the CV and Track Record, but also in the running text of the extended synopsis or B2, e.g. when presenting preliminary work (“As we could show in [ref.x]...“)
- **Depending on the career stage, up to 5 (Starter) or 10 (Consolidator, Advanced) representative publications** should be listed in the track record for each PI (early achievement track record or 10 year track record; see Work Programme 2020).

- The PIs' **experience in team leadership** should be reflected in the CV/Track record (e.g. [co]supervision of PhD students; major contributions to launching the careers of outstanding researchers)
- Based on the experience from previous Synergy Calls, it seems advisable that the Corresponding PI presents an "advanced" career level (10 year track record)
- For Synergy Grant applications, **no formal check** regarding the applicability of a Starter or Consolidator Track Record is carried out by the ERCEA: *"We are not requiring proof of any PhD documents, neither proof of career break at submission stage. It is a trust based approach, in which an applicant has to position himself/herself according to where they believe being in their career (See please the StG, CoG and AdG profiles in the ERC Work Programme). We hope that the applicants will provide the exact date in their CVs and they will clearly explain any career break in part B1. This is done to help the evaluators to better judge an applicant, to ensure that a very young applicant will not be evaluated according to the same criteria and a very senior one"*.

Feedback by colleagues

- Questions and critical comments of colleagues (both within and beyond your research field(s), ideally with a background similar to that of potential panel members) on the proposal will be highly valuable
- We suggest to picture and prepare for the situation of the interview in step three already when drafting the proposal, e.g. by **collecting critical questions from specialists and non-specialists**. (At the interview, the group will likely have around 20 minutes to "pitch" the project and around 30 minutes to answer questions by panel members, which will typically include questions that were submitted by specialist reviewers in writing).
- Where applicable, also a final polishing of the proposal by an English native speaker is highly recommended.

Specific remarks on B1-CV, Track Record and B2-resources

B1, Section b: Curriculum vitae (max. 2 pages per PI)

- The structure of the model **CV template** may be modified, but the ERC recommends the use of the provided template (panel members seem to appreciate it)
- In addition to the suggestions provided by the CV template, please present also key activities as reviewer for **journals**
- Provide the **name of your PhD supervisor and the title of your thesis**

- Ensure an impeccable and reader-friendly **layout** also of the CV and Track Record section
- **Appendix to CV: All ongoing and submitted grants and funding of the PI (Funding ID)** Mandatory information not counting towards page limits
 - According to information by the ERCEA, the information in this table is also used to support the selection of reviewers for the proposal (avoiding potential conflicts of interest with reviewers that might be involved in running/submitted projects with the applicant).

However, if several ongoing grants are listed which will temporally overlap with the ERC project, it is advisable to also demonstrate that **the PI(s) will be able to fulfil their time commitment to the ERC project**, e.g. by indicating the percentage of time commitment of the individual PIs for the other grants in the table.

- Either in the CV or the Track Record, we recommend that PIs also present **concluded grants** (full list, or selection), and possibly also the amount of funding they raised so far

B1, Section c: Early achievements track-record or 10 years track record (max. 2 pages per PI)

- We recommend to provide **summary/overview information** for the reviewers (e.g. total number of publications, conference talks; **weblink to full list of publications**), as well as specific **highlights**. You can also add field relevant bibliometric indicators .
- For the list of five/ten top publications in the track record, it is highly advisable to **describe their significance and your contribution in 1-2 sentences**, e.g. in a textbox (“Here, we could show for the first time...”).
- **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
- There is hardly any information available to date on how much attention ERC reviewers pay to the provision of listing only **"up to" five/ten publications** in the Track Record. According to the ERC Executive Agency, this is *“not an eligibility issue but how strictly each panel will look at this in the evaluation is their own decision and cannot be predicted.”*
- In any case, we recommend to mention any further important papers of particular relevance for your ERC project (i.e. in addition to the top 5/10) in the proposal as well, e.g. in the extended synopsis and B2.

B2, Section c : Resources – not counting towards 15 pages limit in B2

- Apart from explaining the project costs in the adequate detail, this section is also suitable to present **detailed information on the team composition and expertise**, including the expertise requirements

for Post Docs and PhD students that will be hired for the project, and **working arrangements**, e.g. joint supervision of Post Docs and PhDs by the PI's. Please consider: What is the ideal combination of PhD students and PostDocs for your joint project, how should PhD students "overlap" timewise to ensure optimal continuity of the project, etc? Reviewers may e.g. question whether certain tasks could be "too demanding for a PhD student" and should rather be allocated to a Post Doc; or conversely whether particular tasks constitute a convincing PhD project.

- We also recommend to present relevant information on the **host institution(s)/research environment** here, to support the message of "the right project and team in the right place"

Budget table – Remarks on specific cost categories

→ Please contact the grant management office at your ERC host institution for support with the budget calculation

- **Other direct costs** (with overhead flat rate): This category includes contracts to purchase goods, works or services, e.g. contract for a computer; contract for an audit certificate on the financial statements; contract for the publication of brochures; contract for the creation of a project website, contract for organization of the rooms and catering for a meeting, contract for hiring IPR consultants/agents. These costs do not arise from directly implementing the action tasks of the ERC project, but they are necessary to implement these tasks. As a change to previous regulations, overheads apply to these costs in Horizon 2020, as opposed to the case for subcontracts (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-amga_en.pdf, 126-130)
- **Audit costs** should thus be included in the "other direct costs" category. In Horizon 2020, only **one audit** (certificate of the financial statement) is required at the end of the project, if the funding (direct costs) amounts to more than 325.000 EUR (i.e. one audit per ERC-project will suffice)
- **Subcontracting costs** (without overheads): Costs for subcontracts arise from the implementation of specific tasks which are part of the action (ERC project) by a third party. No overheads can be charged for these costs.
- **Equipment**: Please note that only **depreciation rates** (according to national rules) can be charged to the ERC for equipment. If the depreciation period of the equipment in question exceeds the duration of the ERC project, the remaining costs have to be carried by other means. Please contact your host institution in case of questions in this context.
- Costs for **consumables** also include fieldwork and animal costs
- The category for **internally invoiced goods and services** refers e.g. to access to internal services that are charged as unit costs
- Do not forget the possibility to include costs for publications, including **open access fees** (Article 29.2 of the ERC Model Grant Agreement). In Horizon 2020, each beneficiary must ensure open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results. Also costs related to **open access to**

research data (Article 29.3. of the ERC Model Grant Agreement) can be charged.

- **Other direct costs with no overheads** : This category includes costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary (= host institution), e.g. access to large research facilities owned by a third party and not used on the premises of the beneficiaries.
- **PI salaries** : As PIs, you may request funding for your salary corresponding to the percentage of total working time dedicated to the ERC project (or a smaller fraction of that amount), even if you already receive a salary by your host institution(s). Funding of (part of) the PI's salary can e.g. support the host institution in hiring a teaching replacement in case there is an agreement to reduce teaching obligations of a PI during the ERC project. Please consider, however, whether funding of the PI salary/salaries could result in a less-than-optimal number/experience level of team members due to budget constraints, as this needs of course to be avoided.
- There is an additional short budget table in the template only to be used for requesting additional funding above EUR 10,000.000 EUR. If the table is not applicable, it should be deleted.
- For each PI, the time commitment to the project has to be indicated (table in B2 template). Based on experiences from previous calls, it may be advantageous to foresee a time commitment above the minimum 30% at least for some/one of the PIs, if possible.

Indicative evaluation schedule for the Synergy Grant Call 2020 (may be changed)

Updates at: <https://erc.europa.eu/timeframe-synergy-grant-2020-evaluation-erc-2020-syg>

