

1.6.5 Evaluation Elements

Research Project. The ground-breaking nature and ambition of the Research Project (applicable to Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, ERC Plus, and Synergy Grants, unless otherwise specified) is assessed as follows:

At Step 1:

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

At Step 2:

- To what extent does the research address important scientific questions?
- To what extent are the project's objectives ambitious, will the project advance the frontier of knowledge and is the proposed approach scientifically convincing?
- ERC Plus Grants only: To what extent does the project address aims that could not be reached with a regular ERC grant?
- Synergy Grants only: To what extent does the proposal go beyond what the individual Principal Investigators could achieve alone?
- To what extent are the research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
- To what extent are the timescales and resources adequate and properly justified?
- Synergy Grants only: To what extent do the Principal Investigators succeed in proposing a combination of scientific approaches that are crucial to address the scope and complexity of the research questions to be tackled?

Principal Investigator(s). The intellectual capacity and creativity of the Principal Investigator(s) (applicable to Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, ERC Plus, and Synergy Grants, unless otherwise specified) is assessed as follows:

At Step 1 and Step 2:

- To what extent has/have the PI(s) demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- To what extent does/do the PI(s) provide evidence of creative and original thinking?
- To what extent does/do the PI(s) have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

- ERC Plus Grants only: To what extent is the applicant an undisputed leader in the field (compared to peers at the same career stage)?
- Synergy Grants only: To what extent does the Synergy Grant Group demonstrate that it brings together the know-how necessary to address the proposed research question(s)?

1.6.6 Evaluation Outcome

For Starting, Consolidator, and Advanced Grants

At the end of each evaluation step, the panels rank proposals according to their strengths and weaknesses.

At the end of **Step 1** of the evaluation, each proposal receives one of the following scores:

- **A invited:** the proposal is of excellent quality and ranked sufficiently high to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation;
- **A not invited:** the proposal is of excellent quality but not ranked sufficiently high⁶⁶ to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation;
- **B:** the proposal is of high quality but not sufficient to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation;
- **C:** the proposal is not of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation.

At the end of **Step 2** of the evaluation, the proposal receives one of the following scores:

- **A:** the proposal fully meets the excellence criterion and is recommended for funding should sufficient funds be available;
- **B:** the proposal meets some but not all elements of the excellence criterion and will not be funded.

For ERC Plus Grants

At the end of **Step 1** of the evaluation, the panels conclude their assessment as follows:

- **Retained:** the proposal is of sufficient quality to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation;
- **Not retained:** the quality may be high but not sufficient to pass to Step 2 of the evaluation.

At the end of **Step 2** of the evaluation, the proposal receives one of the following scores:

- **A:** the proposal fully meets the excellence criterion and is recommended for funding should sufficient funds be available;

⁶⁶ i.e., exceeds the maximum threshold of proposals that can be passed to Step 2.