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Information for Applicants to the Proof of Concept Grant 2022 Calls

European Research Council
Executive Agency

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Horizon Europe

European Research Council (ERC)

ERC Proof of Concept Grants

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This document is published by the ERC Scientific Council on the ERC website. It can also be downloaded from the Funding & Tenders Portal (F&T Portal).

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 2022 Work Programme,
- the European Research Council rules of submission, and the related methods and procedures for peer review and proposal evaluation relevant to the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe (hereinafter ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe), and
- the HE ERC MGA PoC Lump Sum - Multi & Mono (Multi-Beneficiary Model Grant Agreement for ERC Proof of Concept Lump Sum).

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.

Applicants can also consult the ERC-2022-PoC FAQs, available on the Funding & Tenders Portal (F&T Portal).

The Guide for ERC Reviewers – applicable to Proof of Concept Grants, provides practical information on the evaluation process.

National Contact Points (ERC NCPs) have been set up across Europe[1] 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 & Tenders Portal (F&T Portal).

[1] This applies to EU Member States and Associated Countries. Some other countries also provide this service.

Highlights of important new features related to proposal submission and evaluation for the ERC Proof of Concept grant call in 2022

The Proof of Concept grant is a complementary funding to Starting, Consolidator, Advanced and Synergy grantees.

The Proof of Concept grant is evaluated based on the sole criterion of excellence, which comprises three evaluation elements.

Two separate Proof of Concept calls for proposals open under ERC Work Programme 2022. ERC-2022-PoC1 opens in calendar year 2021 with a single deadline. ERC-2022-PoC2, opens for calendar year 2022 and has three cut-off dates. The two calls have separate conditions regarding eligibility of Principal Investigators.

A cap has been put on the number of Proof of Concept grants per main frontier research grant.

The Part B template has been modified.

The PoC grant remains a lump sum grant.

Abbreviations

AC – Associated Country[2]

ADG – Advanced Grant

COG – Consolidator Grant

EU MS – EU Member States

ERC WP – ERC Work Programme 2022

ERC panel – ERC Evaluation panel

ERC NCP – ERC National Contact Points

ERCEA – European Research Council Executive Agency

FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions

F & T Portal – Funding & Tenders Portal (Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)

HE – European Union's Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation[3]

HI – Host Institution

PI – Principal Investigator

PM – Panel Member

PIC – Participant Identification Code

PoC– Proof of Concept Grant

SEP – Submission and Evaluation of Proposals

STG – Starting Grant

SYG – Synergy Grant

[2] Please check the Horizon Europe Programme Guide on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal for up-to-date information on the current position for Associated Countries. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon

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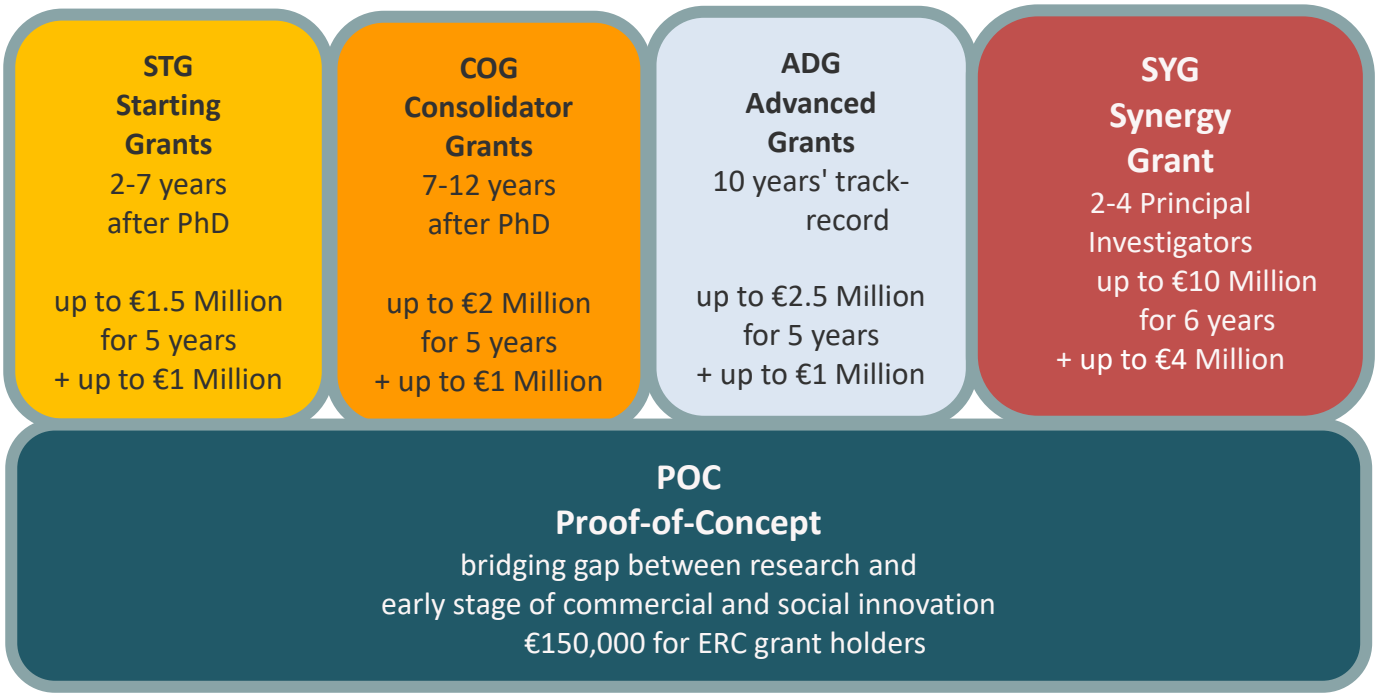
HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	**Publication date**	**Changes**
1.1	15.07.2021	Initial version
1.2	22.07.2021	Updated version (call identifier on page 12 has been corrected, clarifications added to 2.2."Submission form", sections 1, 3 and 5)
1.3	16.11.2021	Updated version (2.3 "The PoC Proposal", under section 1a.i. Brief description of the idea to be taken to proof of concept, "The solution" has been corrected)

1. ERC PROOF OF CONCEPT GRANTS 2022

1.1 ERC POC FUNDING PRINCIPLES 2022

The ERC Work Programme 2022 sets out the Objectives and Principles of ERC funding. The ERC's Proof of Concept Grant is a complementary funding only on offer to Principal Investigators that already benefit from an ERC main research grant (Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant, Advanced Grant or Synergy Grant). Frontier research often generates radically new ideas that drive innovation and business inventiveness and tackle societal challenges. The ERC PoC Grants aim at facilitating exploration of the commercial and social innovation potential of ERC funded research and are therefore available only to PIs whose proposals draw substantially on their ERC funded research.



The ERC PoC Grants aim at maximising the value of the excellent research that the ERC funds, by funding further work (i.e. activities which were not scheduled to be funded by the original ERC frontier research grant) to verify the innovation potential of ideas arising from ERC funded projects.
The objective is to enable ERC-funded ideas to progress on the path from ground-breaking research towards innovation. The path from research to innovation may take different forms: e.g. patenting, creation of spin-outs, through research contracts, research collaborations, consultancy agreements, informal advice, public engagement, policy reports/contributions to policy etc. Innovations can also be commercialised through licenses to a new or existing company or through a venture funded start-up, depending on the nature of the invention/idea, its potential markets, and the inventor's plans for future involvement in the commercialisation. Innovations can also feed into ventures aimed at addressing social and environmental goals, including social entrepreneurs and voluntary and not-for-profit sectors.

This action is open to PIs already benefitting from an ERC main frontier research grant (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced or Synergy) of any nationality who intend to conduct their Proof of Concept activity in any EU Member State[4] or Associated Country[5].

The ERC PoC Grant would help among others:

- testing, experimenting, demonstrating, and validating the idea and enable further research covering exploitation aspects as well as research to carry these activities out and to address the weaknesses uncovered by them
- establishing viability, technical issues and overall direction
- clarifying IPR position and knowledge-transfer strategy
- providing feedback for budgeting and other forms of commercial discussion
- providing connections to later stage funding
- providing connections to potential stakeholders and end users
- covering initial expenses for establishing a company, or cost of other type of agreements

The financial contribution will be awarded as a lump sum[6] of EUR 150 000 for a period of 18 months. The ERC expects that normally proof of concept activities should be completed within 12 months. However, to allow for those projects that require more preparation time, the grant agreements will be signed for 18 months. Extensions of the duration of proof of concept projects may be granted only exceptionally.

The lump sum offered will cover the beneficiaries' eligible (direct and indirect) costs[7] for the project. If the project is implemented properly, the amounts will be paid regardless of the costs actually incurred.

1.2 ADMISSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY

Admissible and eligible proposals

All proposals must be complete, readable and accessible. They must be submitted by eligible PIs before the relevant call deadlines. Please see section 2.1 for an overview of a complete ERC PoC proposal. Proposals which do not meet these criteria may be declared inadmissible.

Eligible proposals must demonstrate the relation between the idea to be taken to proof of concept and the ERC frontier research project (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced or Synergy) in question.
All applications and the related supporting information are reviewed to ensure that all admissibility and eligibility criteria are met. The proposal's content should be related to the objectives of the relevant ERC call and must meet all its admissibility and eligibility requirements. Where there is a doubt about the admissibility or eligibility of a proposal, the peer review evaluation may proceed pending a final decision by the admissibility and eligibility review committee. The fact that a proposal is evaluated in such circumstances does not constitute proof of its admissibility or eligibility. If it becomes clear before, during or after the peer review evaluation phase, that one or more of the

[4] Please consult the list of EU Member States.
[5] Please consult the List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe Please also check section international cooperation and association of the Programme guide for Horizon Europe for up-to-date information on the current position for Associated Countries.
[6] In accordance with the Decision authorising the use of lump sums for the European Research Council Proof of Concept actions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.
[7] The lump sum has been designed to cover the beneficiaries' personnel costs, subcontracting, purchase costs, other cost categories and indirect costs.

admissibility or eligibility criteria has not been met (for example, due to incorrect or misleading information), the proposal will be declared inadmissible or ineligible and it will be rejected.

Eligible Principal Investigator

This action is open to PIs already benefitting from an ERC main frontier research grant of any nationality who intend to conduct their Proof of Concept activity in any EU Member State or Associated Country. All PIs[8] in an ERC main frontier research project are eligible to apply for an ERC PoC grant. Synergy Grant Principal Investigators are eligible to apply only with the written consent of all Principal Investigators in the same Synergy Grant project.

Principal Investigators in an ongoing ERC main frontier research project or whose grant has ended[9] less than 12 months before 1 January 2022 are eligible to apply to both **ERC-2022-PoC1 and ERC-2022-PoC2 calls.** PIs whose main frontier research grant has ended less than 12 months before 1 January 2021 can only apply to **ERC-2022-PoC1.**

A summary of these conditions per call:

ERC-2022-PoC1

- Main grant is ongoing, or
- Main grant has ended less than 12 months before 1 January 2021, and/or main grant has ended less than 12 months before 1 January 2022.

ERC-2022-PoC2:

- Main grant is ongoing, or
- Main grant has ended less than 12 months before 1 January 2022.

Eligible Host Institutions

The Host Institution (HI) must engage the PI for at least the duration of the project, as defined in the PoC grant agreement. It must either be established in an EU Member State or Associated Country as a legal entity created under national law, or it 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. International organisations with headquarters in an EU Member State or AC will be deemed to be established in this Member State or AC. Any type of legal entity, public or private, including universities, research organisations and undertakings can host PIs and their teams. The ERC welcomes applications from PIs 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.

[8] Applicants that are subject to the administrative sanction of exclusion or are in one of the exclusion situations set out by the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 are banned from receiving EU grants and can NOT participate. See articles 136 and 141 of the Financial Regulation, as well as important information on possible exclusion and registration of economic operators in the Commission's Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) on the final page of the ERC Work Programme 2022.

[9] Where the duration of the project fixed in the ERC grant agreement has ended.

As part of the application, the HI must provide a binding statement according to the template annexed to this document (see Section 4. Annex), proving its engagement to the PI for at least the duration of the PoC project. Proposals that do not include this institutional statement may be declared inadmissible.

The PI can submit the PoC proposal with a different HI than the one where the ERC main frontier research grant is currently (or was) implemented, provided that this other HI complies with the eligibility criteria described in this section.

Submission and eligibility restrictions

The restrictions for submission under the ERC Work Programme 2022 are set out below. The Scientific Council may decide in the light of experience that different or comparable restrictions will apply in subsequent years.

The year of an ERC call for proposals refers to the Work Programme under which the call was published and can be established by its call identifier. A 2022 ERC call for proposals is therefore one that was published under the Work Programme 2022 and will have 2022 in the call identifier (for example ERC-2022-PoC). Ineligible or withdrawn proposals do not count against any of the following restrictions (please consult the ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe, section 2.2).

- A PI may submit only one application per call. Inadmissible, ineligible or withdrawn applications do not count against this limit.
- PIs may submit only one proposal under each call of Work Programme 2022. If multiple submissions are made at different cut-off dates under **ERC-2022-PoC2**, only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated.
- A Principal Investigator whose proposal was rejected on the grounds of a breach of research integrity in the calls for proposals under Work Programmes 2019 or 2020 may not submit a proposal to the ERC-2022-PoC1 call.
- A Principal Investigator whose proposal was rejected on the grounds of a breach of research integrity in the calls for proposals under Work Programmes 2020 or 2021 may not submit a proposal to the ERC-2022-PoC2 call.
- A maximum of three Proof of Concept Grants may be awarded per StG, CoG, AdG call and a maximum of six Proof of Concept Grants per Synergy Grant[10].

Research Integrity

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data[11] may result in the rejection of the proposals in accordance with section 3.11 of the ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe. Please also note that plagiarism detection software is used to analyse all submitted proposals to detect similar proposals submitted by different

[10] Proof of Concept projects for the same ERC main frontier research project can run in parallel.
[11] For example, if in the list of publications, the order of authors does not appear as indicated in the original publications.

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[12].

1.3 EVALUATION PROCESS

The ERC's evaluation process has been carefully designed to identify excellence irrespective of gender, age, nationality or institution of the PI and other potential biases. The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

ERC-2022-PoC1 call has a single deadline and an applicant may submit only one application for this call**.**

ERC-2022-PoC2 call is a continuous call with three cut-off dates; an applicant may submit only one application for this call. Ineligible and withdrawn proposals do not count against this limit.

Both PoC calls have a single-stage submission and single-step evaluation procedure.

ERC grant applications can be submitted only in response to a '**call for proposals**'. Calls announced in the ERC Work Programme 2022 are published on the ERC website and the Funding & Tenders Portal (F&T Portal). The provisional timing of evaluation will be updated on a regular basis on the ERC website.

Please note that the foreseen submission deadlines could be modified after the publication of the calls. You are therefore invited to periodically consult the F & T Portal update, where any modifications of the submission cut-off dates are indicated.

[12] For the restrictions due to breach of research integrity under the ERC Work Programme 2022 please see section Submission restrictions above.

The submission and cut-off dates foreseen are:

ERC-2022-PoC1 :

- **Single deadline: 14th October 2021, 17.00 (Brussels local time)**

ERC-2022-PoC2:

- **1st cut-off: 15th February 2022, 17.00 (Brussels local time)**
- **2nd cut-off: 19th May 2022, 17.00 (Brussels local time)**
- **3rd cut-off: 29th September 2022, 17.00 (Brussels local time)**

The evaluation will be conducted by independent external experts. These experts may work remotely and may if necessary meet as an evaluation panel on the application of excellence as the sole criterion of evaluation for selection of proposals for PoC Grant (as described in the ERC Work Programme 2022).

The sole evaluation criterion of excellence consists of the following evaluation elements:

Project
1.a Breakthrough innovation potential
1.b Approach and methodology
Principal Investigator
2. Principal Investigator - Capacity and commitment

Experts will evaluate independently each admissible and eligible proposal and mark it as "very good", "good" or "fail" for each of the three evaluation elements[13].
In order to be considered for funding, proposals will have to be awarded a pass mark ("very good" or "good") by a majority of independent experts on each of the three evaluation elements.

A proposal which fails one or more of the elements will not be ranked and will not be funded.
If there is not enough budget to fund all the proposals which pass all three evaluation elements, those proposals which pass all three evaluation elements will be ranked according to the marks (very good, good and fail) which they received from experts sorted by the following order:

- evaluation element 1.a (Breakthrough innovation potential),
- evaluation element 1.b (Approach and methodology), and finally by
- evaluation element 2 (Principal Investigator - Capacity and commitment).

Proposals will be funded in order of this ranking. If necessary, experts will meet as an evaluation panel in order to determine a priority order for proposals which have the same ranking. PIs and applicant legal entities are provided with feedback on the outcome of the evaluation through an information letter and an evaluation report. The evaluation report indicates whether the proposal is retained for funding or not, and provides the "very good, "good" or "fail" status for each of the three evaluation elements, the ranking range and the assessment of the evaluation elements by each

[13] Applicants whose proposal is recommended for funding are deemed to fulfil the operational capacity requirements provided for in Article 198(3) of the Financial Regulation.

external independent expert. **Comments by the individual external experts may reflect divergent views. Controversy and differences of opinions about the merits of a proposal are legitimate.**

No contact with Reviewers

In accordance with section 3.2 of the ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe, any direct or indirect contact about the peer review evaluation of an ERC call 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, may result in the decision of the ERCEA to reject the proposal concerned from the call in question, (Article 141 of the Financial Regulation).

ERC Peer Reviewers are bound to confidentiality during as well as after the evaluation.

1.4 ETHICS AND SECURITY

Ethics

Please see Annex A to the ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe for a detailed description of the ERC Ethics Review procedure.

Every project funded by the ERC under Horizon Europe is subject to an ethics review process. The ethics review process is independent from the evaluation procedure and the evaluation panels do not have access to the ethics documents.

Please see Annex A to the ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe for a detailed description of the ERC Ethics Review procedure.The process is aimed at ensuring that all relevant research and innovation activities under Horizon Europe 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 embryonic stem cells and human embryos
2. Human participants
3. Human cells/tissues
4. Personal data
5. Animals
6. Non-EU countries
7. Environment, health and safety
8. Artificial Intelligence

When submitting their proposal, applicants must complete the Ethics Issues Table as part of the submission form and provide an ethics self-assessment and supporting documentation where needed as separate annex(es). Please see the How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment document for guidance. It is important to provide a complete overview of all ethics issues during the submission phase in order to speed up the ethics review process. Applicants should be aware that no

grant agreement can be signed by ERCEA prior to a satisfactory conclusion of the ethics review procedure.

Security

In Horizon Europe applicants are requested to identify if the proposed activity will use and/or generate information which might raise security concerns. When submitting their proposal, applicants must complete the security issues table (section 4 of the online proposal submission form) and provide, if applicable, available supporting documentation (to be uploaded as separate pdf annexes). For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage.

1.5 MEANS OF REDRESS, ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINT

Please see the section 3.9 of the ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe for a detailed description of the admissibility, eligibility and evaluation review procedures and enquiries and complaints.

Means of redress:

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

A request can be made if the PIs and/or the HI consider that the applicable evaluation procedure has not been correctly applied to its proposal. The evaluation review procedure is not meant to call into question the judgement made by the 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 PIs and/or the HI 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. A formal notification is considered to have been accessed by the applicant 10 calendar days after sending, if not accessed before in the system.[14]

Request must be:

- related to the evaluation process, or admissibility/eligibility checks, for the call and grants in question;
- set out using the online form, including a clear description of the grounds for request;
- received within the time limit specified in the information letter;
- sent by the PI and/or the HI.

Requests that do not meet the above-mentioned conditions, or do not deal with the admissibility, eligibility or evaluation of a specific proposal, will not be admitted.

[14] Evaluation result letters are formal notifications. This means that deadlines triggered by these letters (evaluation review request, etc.) must be counted accordingly (i.e. access date + 1 day (event) + 30 days (deadline) OR sending date + 1 day (event) + 10 days (embargo period) + 30 days (deadline), if the letter was not accessed in the system.

Complainants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of the submitted request indicating the estimated date of the final reply.
A redress committee may be convened to examine the admissibility, eligibility or evaluation process for the request. 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. It provides specialist opinion on the admissibility, eligibility and evaluation processes, based on all available information related to the proposal and its evaluation.

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 profile and expertise of the independent external experts. The committee may also contact the panel chair/panel member(s) concerned. 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 recommend a course of action to the RAO for the call. 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 partial or a total re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal;
- the committee may uphold the initial outcome if it concludes that the errors identified would not substantially affect the outcome of the evaluation nor the ranking of the project;
- 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.

Other means of redress:

The above procedures do not prevent the applicants from using other means of redress, such as:

- requesting a legal review of the Agency decision under Article 22 of Council Regulation 58/2003[15] ('Article 22 request'), within 1 month of receiving the ERCEA's letter ; or
- bringing an action for annulment under Article 263 of the TFEU[16] ('Article 263 action') against the Agency, within 2 months of receiving the ERCEA's letter.

Applicants may choose which means of redress they wish to pursue. Applicants are asked not to take more than one formal action at a time. They are asked to wait for the reply to their complaint or request (final decision) of the Agency/Commission and then they can take further action against that decision. Deadlines for further action will start to run from when applicants receive the final decision[17].

Other types of complaints on decisions affecting the involvement of applicants in the programme:

[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, O J 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 afterwards to submit an evaluation review request within the 30 days deadline.

Any other complaint against a decision affecting the involvement of applicants in Horizon Europe shall be addressed to the Agency Director within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the communication of the Agency decision[18].

1.6 QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CALL

An extended set of Frequently Asked Questions for the ERC calls is available at the ERC website and on the European Commission Funding & tender opportunities Portal Support Frequently Asked Questions. Questions can be filtered by category and programme, and they consist of answers to the most common questions on how to prepare and submit an ERC application.

For additional questions related to the call, please contact the Proof of Concept Call coordination team: ERC-PoC-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 to scientific publications and research data management, please see the section on Open Science in the Horizon Europe of the Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions: HE ERC MGA PoC Lump Sum - Multi & Mono or contact ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu.

[18] A formal notification that has not been accessed within 10 calendar days after sending is considered to have been accessed by the applicant.

2. COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

2.1 OVERVIEW OF AN ERC PoC APPLICATION

An ERC PoC application is composed of:

- the administrative submission form (Part A);
- the proposal (Part B);
- supporting documentation (HI support letter, letters of support or intent and any documentation related to ethics or security issues).

2.2 THE SUBMISSION FORM

The 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.**

Section 1 – General Information contains information about the PoC proposal, including the title, acronym, project duration, end date and ID reference number of the related ERC project, as well as the panel under which the original ERC grant was funded. Furthermore, in this section you will provide an abstract that should give clear understanding of the objectives of the PoC proposal and how they will be achieved. The abstract will be used as a short description of your PoC 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 Horizon Europe[19]. NB: You do not need to tick the last declaration (10), as it refers only to the type of Lump Sum Grants with a detailed budget table, which is not applicable to the ERC Proof of Concept Lump Sum grant calls. When validating the form, validation check may show a warning, but you can just ignore it. This will not prevent you to submit your application.

The Principal Investigator fills out this section on behalf of the Host Institution and "We" is understood as both "the Principal Investigator" and "the Host Institution".

Section 2 – Participants & contacts contains information about the PI and the HI, one section appearing for each. The name and e-mail of contact persons including the PI and HI contact are **read-only**. Further details such as ORCID number, researcher ID, other ID, last name at birth, gender, nationality etc., should be filled for the PI as well as the address and telephone number of each contact person.

- Gender equality plan (GEP): 'yes/no' tick box question to be filled in by the HI contact person. Only Public bodies, Higher education institutions and Research organisations must answer this question. This answer will not affect the evaluation of the project. The requirement of having a gender equality plan (with minimum prerequisites[20]) applies for the ERC 2022 calls

[19] Please note that the ERCEA may at any time during the evaluation process request the applicants to provide the written consent mentioned in the declarations. These consents should not be submitted with the application, but the applicant must obtain the written consent from all participants prior to the call submission deadline.

[20] Public GEP: formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management, addressing the following issues:

- Dedicated resources: commitment of human resources and gender expertise to implement it.

(see Annex 5 of the ERC Work Programme 2022). Please note, that the absence of the gender equality plan will prevent the signature of the grant agreement for the ERC 2022 Calls, but the PoC-2022-PoC1 will be exempt from this rule.

Section 3 – Budget contains information about the requested EU contribution standard lump sum pre-fixed by a European Commission decision[21] at EUR 150 000. Do not include other financial information here. In case of several beneficiaries, the applicants must provide a breakdown of the lump sum showing the share per beneficiary (and any linked third party). This estimated lump sum breakdown by beneficiary will become part of the grant agreement[22]. Before submitting your proposal, please double check that the Total requested grant amount is EXACTLY EQUAL to EUR 150 000.

Section 4 – Ethics and security consists of the ethics issues table, and the security issues table. **The ethics issues table** 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 you answer 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 of this document for further details.

The security issues table serves to identify if the proposed activity will use and/or generate information which might raise security concerns. The table provided has to be completed by answering YES or NO to all questions. Where necessary and applicable, you are requested to provide available documentation as annexes. For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage.

Section 5 – Other questions contains the explanation of the relation between the existing ERC frontier research grant and the proposed PoC. Answers to these 3 questions (end date, number and panel of the related ERC main frontier research grant) are compulsory and will be used for eligibility review. NB: End date of the related ERC project: please double check the eligibility window for this call in the ERC 2022 Work Programme.

This section also contains declarations related to eligibility and permission statements on sharing evaluation data. The data-related consents are entirely voluntary. In addition, this section contains a specific declaration as regards the consent obtained from participants and researchers[23].

- Data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel and students and annual reporting based on indicators.
- Training: Awareness raising/trainings on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.
- Minimum areas to be covered and addressed via concrete measures and targets:
    - work-life balance and organisational culture;
    - gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
    - gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
    - integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
    - measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

[21] C(2018)5960 of 18.9.2018

[22] HE Model Grant Agreement: HE ERC MGA PoC Lump Sum - Multi & Mono

[23] The applicant PI will have to declare that they have the written consent of all participants on their involvement and the content of their proposal, as well as of any researcher mentioned in the proposal on their participation in the project (either as team member, collaborator, other PI or member of the advisory board). **Synergy Grant Principal Investigators are eligible to apply only with the written consent of all Principal Investigators in the same Synergy Grant project.** Please note that the ERCEA may request the applicant PI at any time during the evaluation, to provide proof of the written consent obtained prior to the call submission deadline.

2.3 THE POC PROPOSAL

The PoC proposal has to be presented in the form of the so-called "Part B" following the template provided in the submission system and its use **is strongly recommended**. Each proposal page shall carry a header presenting the **PI's last name** and the **acronym** of the proposal.

Important Notice: Please be aware that there is only one evaluation step. The "Part B" must contain all the information required to evaluate your proposal.

In fairness to all applicants, the page limits of 10 pages will be strictly applied. Only the material that is presented within these limits will be evaluated. External experts will be asked to read only the material presented within the page limits, and will be under no obligation to read beyond them.

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 cm top and bottom

The activities to be funded should draw substantially on the ERC-funded research project (whose ID number has to be indicated in the submission form 'Part 1. General Information'), but they should not aim at extending the original research or predominantly concerned with overcoming technical obstacles.

The funding will cover activities aimed at exploring the pathway from ground-breaking research towards innovation or socially valuable proposition. This includes work required to prepare the translation of the idea into application, as well as research required to test, validate and develop the idea further towards exploitation.

The evaluation of admissible and eligible proposals will look into ideas stemming from ERC-funded projects and will select among them the most competitive for further development towards an innovation.

Part B - Sections 1.a, 1.b, and 2:

Please, use the online Word template provided in the F&T Portal submission page for the call. The overall page limit is 10 pages, excluding references.

Section 1.a: The idea – Breakthrough Innovation potential (max. 3 pages)

This section shall describe the idea to be taken to proof of conception a few words (abstract) and the breakthrough innovation potential and high risk/high gain aspect of the proposed idea. The structure helps the PI to outline the problem addressed in the proposal and to present a solution to solve it. It will be used to assess the evaluation elements 1.a: Breakthrough innovation potential.

1a.i. Brief description of the idea to be taken to proof of concept:

> **The problem:** Describe the problem or the need that the idea is aiming to solve or alleviate
> **The solution:** Explain how the idea will solve or alleviate the problem or the need and the meaning that this will make. A clear value proposition should be included, explaining how the idea solves users' problems or improves their situation.

The origin: Briefly describe the ERC-funded project from which the idea is substantially drawn and briefly demonstrate the relation between the idea and the ERC-funded project in question.

Give an "abstract-like "description of your PoC project, explaining the idea and the expected outcomes of the project. This description should be understandable for a non-specialist in your field.

1a.ii. Demonstration of Breakthrough Innovation Potential:

Describe how the idea has the potential to drive innovation and business inventiveness and/or tackle societal challenges.
Describe in detail how the project outcomes will be innovative or distinctive. This section should include a clear explanation of why the solution proposed is new compared to what already exists. A clear value proposition should be included, explaining why potential users or sponsors should choose this solution and no other existing. Describe any competing products or solutions.

1a.iii. Demonstration of the high-risk/high-gain idea:

Explain how the idea, if successful, will result in breakthrough innovation.

Describe what can go wrong: which are the aspects that might not work or what are the features of the problem that require development of new approaches.

Present a plan for the identification and acceptance or off-setting of possible risks linked to the project idea (e.g. scientific events such as if a test or an experiment fails)

Present a plan for unforeseen events of non-scientific/technical nature, including back-up procedures, emergency response and ex-post recovery (e.g. if a key person of the team leaves or you cannot access a facility).

Use this risk mitigation table to summarise the information in section 1a.iii

Description of the risk	Proposed risk-mitigation measures

<u>Section 1b: Approach and Methodology (max. 6 pages)</u>

This section shall describe the approach and proposed methodology of the Proof of Concept project. Describe how the project will make progress on the path from ground-breaking research towards innovation. Demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of the project. Describe the planning of the proposed activities, timescale and resources, especially the team that will conduct the activities. You should demonstrate the relevance of the approach chosen for establishing the technical and commercial/societal feasibility of the project. Describe the proposed methodology including any key intermediate goals. Overall, explain and justify the approach and methodology in relation to the innovation. It will be used to assess the evaluation element 1.b: Approach and Methodology.

1b.i. Outline the approach and methodology to explore the innovation potential of your ERC-funded research

1b.ii Describe the activities exploring the pathway from ground-breaking research towards innovation: *(plans for validation activities and related research, knowledge transfer, involving partners and potential end users)***.**

This may include (where applicable[24]) proposed plans to:

- **Test, experiment, demonstrate and validate the effectiveness of the project's outcomes (or of the idea)** *(e.g. testing, experimenting, technical reports or any other form of validation to confirm that the solution is effective, efficient, sustainable, or appropriate).*

- **Undertake research** required to carry out the above activities and to address the weaknesses uncovered by them.

- **Clarify the IPR position and strategy[25] or knowledge transfer strategy** *(e.g. patenting, creation of spin-outs, licensing agreements, research contracts, research collaborations, consultancy agreements, informal advice, public engagement, policy reports/contributions to policy, and more).*

- **Involving industrial partners, societal or cultural organisations, policy makers or any other potential stakeholders supporting the translation of research results into innovation. Describe the level of relationship with entities mentioned in your proposal. If you have an established working relationship with any of them, describe its nature.** *If such contacts already exist, include supporting documentation like letters of support or intent from the relevant stakeholders.*

- **Assess the potential "end users" of the expected innovation**. Who would be using the output? What would be the expected size of the group or market?

1b.iii. Plan of the proof of concept - Description of the Action:

Grants to be awarded under this action (Proof of Concept), shall exclusively take the form of a standard lump sum pre-fixed **at EUR 150 000** by a European Commission decision [26].

The Action description shall present a detailed project plan including clearly identified objectives, and a description of work. The description of work must demonstrate that the timescale and resources are appropriate for the implementation and feasibility of the project. It should include a description of the resources and a description of the team**.**

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[24] "where applicable" does not mean you should skip these points if not applicable. In this case, explain why it does not apply to the project (is it out of scope or has it already been achieved?) in order for the evaluators to understand why this issue is not addressed in the frame of the Proof of Concept project.

[25] Any application for funding of IPR activities under the ERC Proof of Concept will not discharge beneficiaries from their prior obligations under their pre-existing ERC Grant Agreement in respect of protecting IPR capable of industrial or commercial application. If any foreground was potentially protectable in the pre-existing ERC project, beneficiaries had the legal obligation to seek for adequate and effective protection according to the Horizon Europe Regulation and to the Multi & Mono Model Grant Agreement for Lump Sum Grants.

[26] Decision authorising the use of lump sums for the European Research Council Proof of Concept actions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

- Provide a narrative description of the resources planned for each activity. Examples of resources: the type of project staff working on a task and the estimated effort (person-months), type of equipment and consumables required for the project implementation, staff travel requirements, etc.

- Do NOT present any breakdown of the lump sum with cost figures per category. This means that no cost figures should appear. Applicants should be able to justify the good use of the lump sum for the resources described. The overall value of the PoC action may be higher than the lump sum if covered by additional contributions. If so, please specify these so that the reviewers understand that part of the project activities will be financed through additional funding.

- The description of work must demonstrate that the resources are appropriate and necessary for the implementation and feasibility of the project and are properly justified. The evaluation panels assess the described resources carefully.

Description of the Action and timescale:

- Demonstrate the feasibility of the planned activities within the timescale planned for the implementation of the proposed project:

- Justify the project plan (where applicable, broken down into activities e.g. validating results, testing in real world contexts, clarifying IPR or knowledge transfer position and strategy, competitive/market analysis, plans for contacts with commercial and/or societal partners etc.) with clear objectives, task description and milestones representing the completion of each task

- Present a GANTT chart and/or milestones table, allowing effective monitoring over the project period.

Description of the resources:

- Give a narrative description of the resources allocated for each activity. *Examples of resources: e.g. the type of project staff working on a task and the estimated effort (person-months), type of equipment and consumables required for the project implementation, staff travel requirements, etc.*

- Justify that the resources are appropriate for the planned work.

- The resources should NOT be described financially. Do NOT present any breakdown of the lump sum with cost figures per category. No cost figures should appear. Applicants should be able to justify the good use of the lump sum for the resources described.

Description of the team:

Describe the size and nature of the team, indicating, where appropriate, the key team members and their roles. The participation of team members engaged by another host institution should be justified in relation to the additional resources this may impose to the project.

- Describe your team and their achievements and experience in relation to the approach you will be taking.

- Describe the roles of the team within your project. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the team?

For all types of third party involvement (purchases, in kind contributions, subcontracts and linked third parties), the **costs** are **ALL covered** by the lump sum. NO other costs will be reimbursed.

The rules on subcontracting for ERC POC Lump Sum actions are in principle the same as for the General HE MGA (see Article 9.3 [Option 2]).

The estimated costs for subcontracting should NOT be included in Annex 1. Annex 2 is the lump sum for mono-beneficiary action or the lump sum breakdown (in percentage for each beneficiary) for multi-beneficiary actions).

The principles of best value for money and no conflict of interest are not explicitly mentioned in Article 9.3. Nonetheless, they must still be complied with and confirmed by the beneficiaries at granting stage.

The ERC supports the principle of open access to the published output of research, including research data and data related products. The terms and conditions laid down in the Model Grant Agreement used for ERC actions 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 relating to results from ERC projects funded through this call. This includes peer-reviewed book chapters and long-text publications such as monographs, edited collections, critical editions, scholarly exhibition catalogues, or PhD theses. Please see Article 16.3 of the ERC MGA PoC Lump Sum - Multi & Mono for more details, or contact ERC-OPEN-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu.

The ERC PoC lump sum should include the provision of immediate Open Access to publications (article processing /book processing) that occur during the lifetime of the project. When drafting the Plan of activities, it is highly advisable to consider describing this. 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.

Section 2: Capacity and commitment of the Principal Investigator (max 1 page)

This sections describes the PI's capacity and commitment to the project: how the PI will take the strategic lead of the project, their past experience (if any) and how much time they are willing to devote to it. Please note that for PoC Grants, there is no minimum commitment percentage of the working time required to the PI. However, in the grant agreement, PIs must enter a minimum of their working time, as the ERC PoC project shall be performed under their guidance. It is essential that the cumulative percentage commitment that the PI spends on the ERC PoC action (at the time of granting) and on the main ERC StG/CoG/AdG/SyG Grant (if still ongoing) does not exceed 100%.

This section describes also the organisational structure and decision-making process and their justification in relation to the complexity and scale of the project.

This section will be used to assess the evaluation element 2: Capacity and Commitment of the Principal Investigator.

The Principal Investigator (PI):

- Describe your role in the project, including how you will take the strategic lead of it.
- Explain any experience or achievements you may have in leading similar innovative projects (if applicable) and how this enables you to lead this project to completion. If you do not have experience with similar projects, explain how you are fit to lead this project (e.g. evidence of creativity, independent thinking, and taking strategic decisions).

The Strategic Management:

- Describe the organisational structure and the decision-making process.
- Explain why these are appropriate to the complexity and scale of the project.

2.4 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

A scanned copy of the following supporting documentation needs to be submitted with the proposal by uploading them electronically in PDF format:

- The HI (applicant legal entity) must confirm its association with and its support to the project and the PI. As part of the application the HI must provide a binding statement that the conditions of independence are already fulfilled or will be provided to the PI if the application is successful. The HI support letter is part of the zip-file available in the submission system, or can be found in the Annex to this document. The provided letter template needs to be used and should be printed on the paper with the official letterhead of the HI, signed (blue ink or digital), stamped (in case of blue ink signature only) and dated by the HI's legal representative (name, function and email address). **Proposals that do not include this institutional statement may be declared inadmissible**.

- Where applicable, letters of support or intent from the relevant stakeholders.

- Where necessary and applicable, the applicant(s) shall provide available documentation such as: approvals from relevant ethics committee(s), regulatory approval(s) or authorisation(s) from the competent national or local authority(ies) in the country(ies) in which the project is to be carried out, templates of information sheets and informed consent forms, etc. If such documentation is available and provided with the application at submission stage, it may help speed up the ethics review process following evaluation. Please note that the ethics self-assessment is now included in section 4 of the online proposal submission form (and not any more as an annex).

- Where necessary and applicable, the applicant shall provide documents related to the security issues at submission stage. For proposals selected for funding, additional information regarding security issues may be requested at a later stage.

All annexes, including the HI support letter, and where relevant any letter of intent or support or documents in case of ethical or security issues, should be provided and uploaded as separate pdf documents. They do not count towards the maximum page limit for Part B.

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 into any other official EU language.**

Please, provide only the documents requested above. Unless specified in the call, any hyperlinks to other documents, embedded material, and any other documents (company brochures, CVs of team members, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) will be disregarded.

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 **EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu** or get in touch with the **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 creating the draft 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 person. We therefore recommend that you give 'read-only' access to your 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. **ONLY the last version of your proposal submitted before the deadline 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 sequence described in point 3.2 below 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 2022 and in the Official Journal of the European Union are published on the ERC website and the F & T Portal.

USER GUIDANCE

- proposals must be submitted electronically using the electronic submission system of the web-based Funding & tender portal[27]

- the user guide of the Submission Service is available online;

- the 'IT HOW TO' wiki site provides an online IT manual with screenshots;

- the HE Online Manual describes the standard process of proposal submission.

The submission of an ERC proposal includes 6 steps. For each submission step please find consult these above-mentioned guides[28].

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. 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 PP 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 will 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 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 starting the application process.

Step 4 – Manage your related parties and/or Edit contact details
At this step you MUST enter the name and e-mail of the PI and the Main Host Institution Contact person[29]. You may also add the LEAR as a contact person (e.g. as a team member with read-only rights). These data are saved into the administrative form where they cannot be edited. You may at any point return to Step 4 of the submission to add or delete any contact person or to change the

[27] In duly justified exceptional circumstances the ERCEA may authorise submission by other means than the electronic submission system.
[28] 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 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.
[29] Be careful to type the correct e-mail address of the PI and all contact persons at this step. Please note that if the Principal Investigator and the administrative contact person is the same person (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.

access rights. Remember to save your data before leaving Step 4. Once the coordinator 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.

If they have not yet registered an EU login account, the PI or the applicant legal entity's contact person will receive an activation e-mail inviting them to activate their EU login account. Following to this first activation, the EU login account will be maintained for following communications or feedback.
In order to be able to submit your proposal after saving changes made in Step 4 (Parties), you have to re-open the administrative form ('Edit forms' button), revise the changes, validate and save the form. Failure to do so will prevent you from submitting your proposal. Further details are available in the Submission Service user manual.

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 B) is given in section 2 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 B and supporting documentation)**. However, it is advised to limit the size of Part B of 2 Mbytes each.
- Unless specified in the call, embedded material and any other documents (company brochures, scientific papers, reports, audio, video, multimedia, etc.) sent either electronically or by post to the ERCEA or uploaded directly in F & T Portal 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. You are advised to clean your document before converting it to PDF (e.g. accept all tracked changes, delete notes). Check that your conversion software has successfully converted all the pages of your original document (e.g. there is no problem with page limits or page view), and that captions and labels have not been lost from your diagrams.

Completing the Proposal submission forms in the submission system and uploading all the necessary files does not yet mean that your proposal is submitted (**mandatory files: Part B , Host Institution support letter and – if applicable:** supporting documentation for ethics and security 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. Any problems such as missing data, wrong file format or excessive file size will appear as a list of warnings and/or errors on the screen. You may submit your proposal with warnings (marked in yellow), but it is not possible to submit a proposal until all errors (marked in red) are corrected. Please note that the electronic

checks by the submission system do not replace the formal admissibility and eligibility review and do not confirm 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, admissible 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 call deadline**. The sequence above must be repeated each time. The most recent version of your proposal submitted before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated. No earlier version can be recovered from the submission system.

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 48 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 inadmissible and will not be evaluated[30]. 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. **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 2022.

To withdraw a proposal **after the call deadline**, please send an e-mail to the call-specific mailbox ERC-PoC-APPLICANTS@ec.europa.eu and include a signed scanned letter requesting the formal withdrawal. The letter should mention the name and the acronym of the proposal as well as the call identifier (for example ERC-2022-PoC). In the case of two or more proposals submitted by the same PI, the ERCEA services may ask the PI to withdraw one or more of those proposals. In the case of absence of reaction by the PI to this request, only the first eligible proposal will be evaluated.

[30] See also section 2.4 'Admissibility and eligibility check' in the ERC Rules of Submission and in the section "Proposal submission and description" of the ERC Work Programme 2022.

4. ANNEX

HOST INSTITUTION SUPPORT LETTER TEMPLATE 2022

(Print on paper bearing the official letterhead of the host institution)

COMMITMENT OF THE HOST INSTITUTION FOR ERC 2022 POC Call [31, 32]

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 host and engage the following 'principal investigator'
<<please fill in here the name of the principal investigator>>

should their proposal be retained.

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

The applicant legal entity commits itself to host and engage the Principal Investigator for the duration of the grant and to:

a) implement the action, as it will be described in Annex 1 and in compliance with the provisions of the Agreement, and all legal obligations under applicable EU, international and national law;
b) ensure that the work described in Annex 1 will be performed under the guidance of the principal investigator.

For the host institution (applicant legal entity):

Date
……
Name and Function
…… ; ……

Email and Signature of legal representative
…… ; ……

Stamp of the host institution (applicant legal entity)[33]

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to be complete all the above mentioned items are mandatory and shall be included in the commitment of the host institution.

[31] A scanned copy of the signed statement should be uploaded electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal submission service in PDF format.
[32] This statement (on letterhead paper) shall be signed by the institution's legal representative and stating his/her name, function, email address and stamp of the institution.
[33] No stamp is needed if this document is digitally signed.