

Technology Centre Prague and the Expert Group for supporting ERC applicants are pleased to invite you to the

ON-LINE workshops for ERC applicants on the PREPARATION OF A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL

This interactive workshop series is focused on the preparation of ERC Starting or Consolidator proposals. It is composed of three interconnected parts to be held in April, May and June/October 2026. A precondition for being eligible to participate in the training is having selected a host institution based in the Czech Republic.

The workshop series is intended only for the ERC Starting and Consolidator grant applicants who are ready to submit their project proposal within the respective ERC 2027 call. They must not be restricted by resubmission limitations from the previous calls. Applicants who have submitted their proposal to one of the 2026 calls that are currently under evaluation are not eligible for participation in this workshop series.

The workshops will be held in English and fully on-line.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS:

Registration will start on March 16, 2026, at 12:00 (noon) and will be closed on March 22, 2026.

The submitted materials will be evaluated on a rolling basis with a strong emphasis on quality, which should be conforming with the submission of a competitive ERC grant application within one of the 2027 calls. Registrations not complying with this requirement will not be accepted.

Registration will consist of filling out an online form and sending the requested materials (specified below) to the Expert Group mailbox (erc.es@tc.cz) as soon as possible (24 hours at the latest) after filling in the online registration form.

Applicants will be informed about their admission/rejection to the workshops one week before the first workshop at the latest.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE REQUIREMENTS:

In order to attend the workshop series, the applicants are required to

- 1. fill in a registration form (to be opened on March 16, 2026, 12:00)**
- 2. send an abstract of the proposal** (max. 2 000 characters) and the **CV** and **track record** (please use the full four pages allowed and make it as complete as possible).

The requested materials should be sent to the Expert Group mailbox (erc.es@tc.cz) as soon as possible (24 hours at the latest) after filling in the online registration form. The final deadline for registration will be **March 22, 2026, 23:59**. In order to allow further processing of the materials, this deadline will be strictly enforced.

The documents should be in **one PDF file** and in the form **fully respecting the instructions** in the [Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2026 Calls](#) (using the latest, i.e. 2026, ERC proposal templates).

All materials will be considered confidential.

DATES:

- **The 1st part of the workshop series will take place on 20 - 24 April 2026.**

22 April 2026: Social Sciences and Humanities

23 April 2026: Life Sciences

24 April 2026: Physical Sciences and Engineering

It will consist of individual presentations of the applicants' project ideas and a discussion with members of the Expert Group for supporting ERC applicants (EG) and other ERC evaluators as well as ERC grantees.

More specifically, participants will give a **five-minute presentation** of their intended project, which will address two questions:

- 1. What is the project's main original idea that makes it competitive in the ERC terms?**
- 2. Why does your professional path make you credible to achieve substantial results in the given direction?** The answer should follow implicitly from the presented facts.

The participants are not requested to send their presentations beforehand. The length limitation of 5 minutes is intentional and fully in line with the purpose of the workshop. Presentations should focus on the essentials and on presenting the main idea (a lengthy overview of the state-of-the-art would not serve this goal well). While preparing the presentation, the applicant should repeatedly ask

her/himself: "How could I describe the main idea in one sentence? What is the main selling point of my proposal?" In the annex, you will find ERC evaluation elements/questions, which evaluators of ERC proposals are obliged to consider when assessing your proposal, and also tips for the presentation as well as for the proposal itself. Please pay attention to these recommendations.

- **The 2nd workshop will be held between 11 and 15 May 2026 (TBC).**

You will have the opportunity to get acquainted with a successful ERC proposal from the scientific domain of your preference (PE/LS/SH), and to meet its principal investigator. This part should help you to better understand the evaluation process and its implications for writing your own proposal.

- **The 3rd workshop will be held in mid-June 2026 (for Starting applicants)/October 2026 (for Consolidator applicants).**

The workshop will take the form of individual feedback on the draft B1 part of the ERC proposal and a discussion with members of the EG as well as other ERC evaluators and grantees.

Annex I: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Research Project. The ground-breaking nature and ambition of the Research Project (applicable to Starting, Consolidator, Advanced, 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 and will it advance the frontier of knowledge?
- 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 and will it advance the frontier of knowledge?
- 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, 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?
- 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)?

Source: ERC Work Programme 2026, p. 29–30

Annex II: HOW TO PRESENT YOUR PROPOSAL

- ✓ Do not provide a lengthy overview of the state-of-the-art, focus on the basic questions:

WHAT is the challenge?

WHY is it important (expected broader impact on the field, adjacent fields, society ...) and why right now?

HOW are you going to achieve your goals?

WHO? Why do YOU have the qualification to successfully address the project objectives globally?

- ✓ In the first 60 seconds (presentation/interview)/ 5 minutes (project proposal) it must be clear, what your main idea is, what you are going to do and why.
- ✓ Set your project goals based on a **scientific question of fundamental importance/a working hypothesis/a** substantially new idea on a worldwide scale (your project should not be a simple synthesis or improvement of current methods, techniques, approaches, knowledge. It should not aim at building of infrastructures, research centres, equipment, a microscope, a bioreactor etc.
- ✓ Your project must be challenging, yet feasible.
- ✓ You will only have 5 minutes – your slides should **not be too busy**. Do not try to say everything, **less is sometimes more** – think about what **your selling point** is.
- ✓ Be **ambitious, self-confident** (but not overselling) **and convincing**. It must be **pleasant** (make the evaluators' life easier – provide them with clear answers to the questions/evaluation elements we have sent you, use simple clear text, charts, diagrams, figures, pictures, highlighting where appropriate, avoid jargon, explain abbreviations...). It must also be **exciting** to read your proposal/listen to you (eye contact, clear simple sentences, loud voice, understandable English, do not speak too fast ...)
- ✓ Be consistent throughout the proposal!
- ✓ Show that you are the right person, who has **the qualification to successfully address the project objectives** – highlight **your best achievements**, showing the ability to think out of the box and to conduct ground-breaking research as well as your leadership qualities.
- ✓ Prepare for a **heterogeneous audience**. The panels are usually very broad, consisting of experts in-depth understanding your proposal as well as generalists – you **must be able to convince both groups**.
- ✓ **Allow time for a mock presentation** before you come to the workshop/**several mock presentations** before your interview with ERC panel members.
- ✓ Show passion for science and the topic! 😊