



**STRIKING SYNERGIES: PREPARING A  
COMPETITIVE ERC SYNERGY GRANT PROPOSAL**

18 June 2024, FFG Academy

# OUTLINE

- Synergy Grant – Key features
- Sharing Experiences, Q&A



Gašper Tkačik  
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Synergy Grant:

Transcription in 4D: the dynamic interplay between chromatin architecture and gene expression in developing pseudo-embryos

Dennis Duboule, Gasper Tkacik, Thomas Gregor;  
College De France; Institut Pasteur; IST Austria

# SYNERGY GRANT IN SHORT

- For groups of 2 - 4 Principal Investigators (PIs) and their teams
- Bring together skills, knowledge, and resources in order to jointly address ambitious research problems
- Open for all areas of research



## Transformative research

- Should enable substantial advances at the frontiers of knowledge, stemming, for example, from the cross-fertilisation of scientific fields, from new productive lines of enquiry, or new methods and techniques, including unconventional approaches and investigations at the interface between established disciplines.
- Should have the potential of becoming a benchmark on a global scale



## Synergy Grant Group

+

## Host Institution/s (HI)



**2-4 PIs**  
**including 1 Corresponding PI**  
**(admin. contact for ERC)**



Corresponding HI in  
EU-27 or  
Associated  
Countries; 1 HI can  
be located outside  
of EU/AC

- Innovative and active PIs in all career stages (no formal eligibility criteria)
- Max. **EUR 10 million for up to 6 years** (up to EUR 14 million in defined exceptional cases)

- Minimum 30% time commitment to project by each PI
- Minimum 50% of total working time spent in EU-27/AC by each PI except if 1 PI (not Corresponding PI) located at HI outside EU-27/AC

# SYNERGY PROPOSAL STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION STEPS

## STEP 1



Panel Members – **Generalists**  
5 Panel Chairs, 6 Vice Chairs  
~ 75 Panel Members



**Extended Synopsis (B1)** - 5  
pages  
+ CV/Track record, 4 pages per PI

## STEP 2



5-7 dynamic panels á ~15-18 members  
Panel Evaluators - **Specialists**  
+ Remote Referees – **Specialists**



**B1 +**  
**Research proposal (B2)** - 15 pages  
+ Resources section: no page limit

cut-off: 7 times the panel budget

## STEP 3

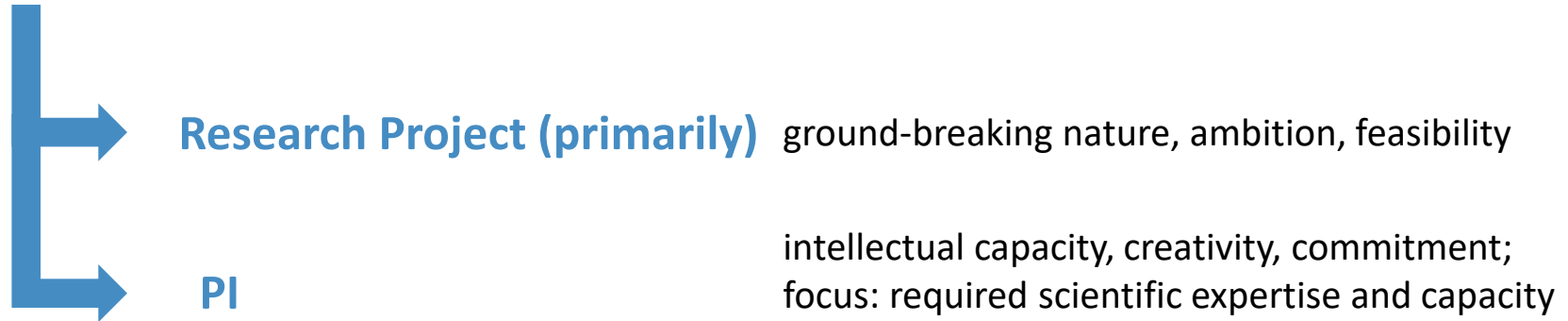


Panel Members – **Generalists**

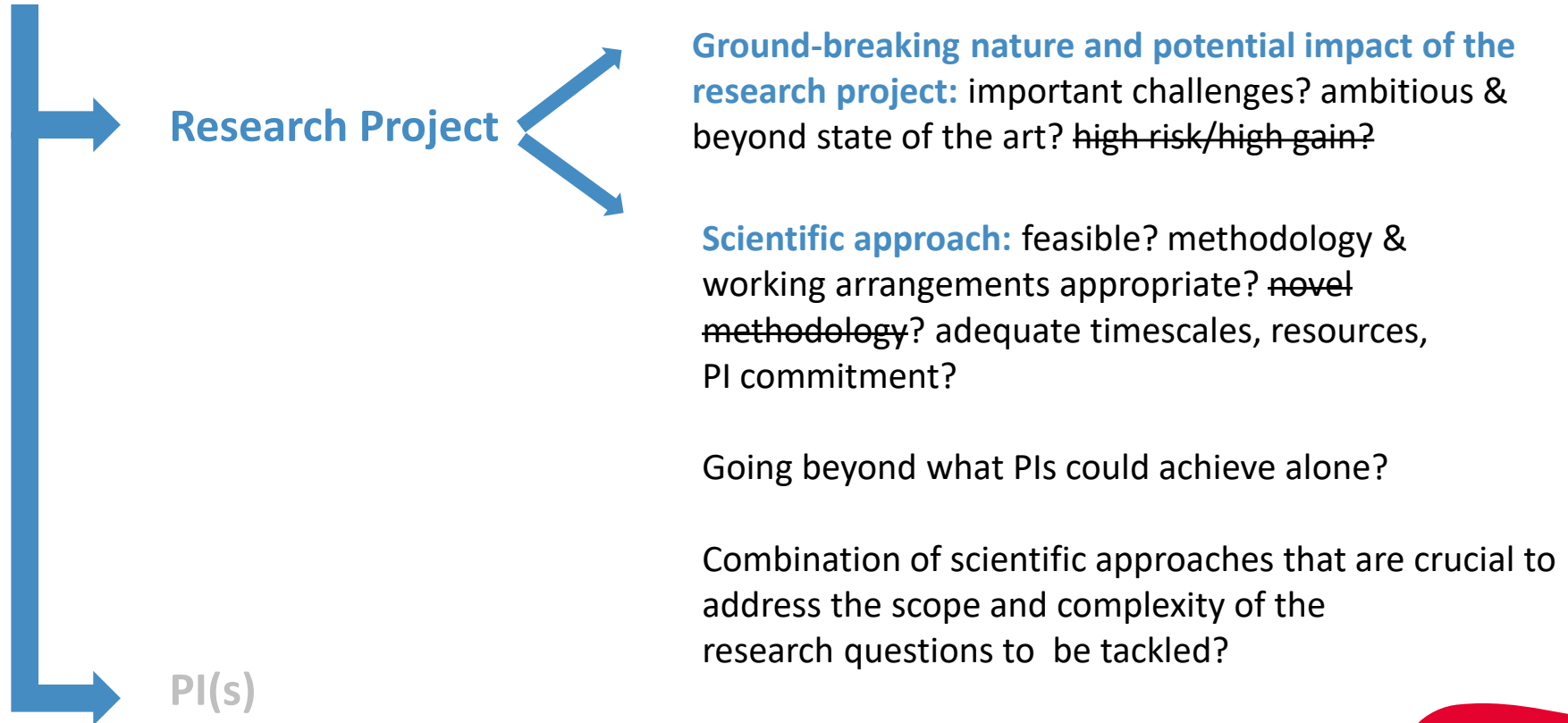
**Interview**  
with all PIs in Brussels

cut-off: 3 times the panel  
budget

# SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE: EVALUATION QUESTIONS INCLUDING PLANNED CHANGES (1)



# SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE: EVALUATION QUESTIONS INCLUDING PLANNED CHANGES (2)





# SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE: EVALUATION QUESTIONS INCLUDING PLANNED CHANGES (2)



**PI(s)**

- demonstrated ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- evidence of creative and original thinking?
- required scientific expertise and capacity?
  
- Synergy Grant Group: To what extent does the Synergy Grant Group successfully demonstrate in the proposal that it brings together the know-how – such as skills, experience, expertise, disciplines, teams – necessary to address the proposed research question (based on the Extended Synopsis)?

# “COMPETITIVE TRACK RECORDS ACCORDING TO CAREER STAGE“



## STARTER

Should have already shown **evidence of the potential for research independence**, E.g. by having produced at least **one important publication as main author** or without the participation of their PhD supervisor



## CONSOLIDATOR

Should have already shown **evidence of research independence**.



## ADVANCED

established research leaders, recognised track record of research achievements

# PRESENTING THE PIS IN THE PROPOSAL

- **CV & Track Record, up to 4 pages:**
  - personal details, education, key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions,
  - list of up to ten research outputs; emphasis on more recent achievements,
  - list of selected examples of significant peer recognition
  - short explanation of significance of selected outputs and role of applicant
  - optional: information on career breaks, diverse career paths – to provide context to the evaluation panels
- **Extended Synopsis (B1) and Scientific Proposal (B2):**
  - e.g. references: - As we could show in [ref],...
  - preliminary results

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## Feedback-loops with specialists and generalists



# USEFUL LINKS & FURTHER INFORMATION



- ERC homepage: <https://erc.europa.eu/>
- ERC evaluation panels: <https://erc.europa.eu/document-category/evaluation-panels>
- ERC funded projects database: <https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects>
- Funded ERC Proposals published online: FFG collection at <https://www.ffg.at/europa/heu/erc/published-proposals>
- For a **proposal check** by FFG (focusing on structural features): Please send your proposal to [erc@ffg.at](mailto:erc@ffg.at) by **mid-October, 2024**

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**ERC National Contact Points**

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