



Inclusive excellence at the European Research Council (ERC): latest actions and results of sustained measures



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

JESUS-RYDIN Claudia⁽¹⁾, FARIÑA-BUSTO Luis⁽¹⁾, HARVEY-KELLY Rachel⁽¹⁾, JANSEN Eystein⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

(1) European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA); (2) European Research Council (ERC); (3) University of Bergen, Norway

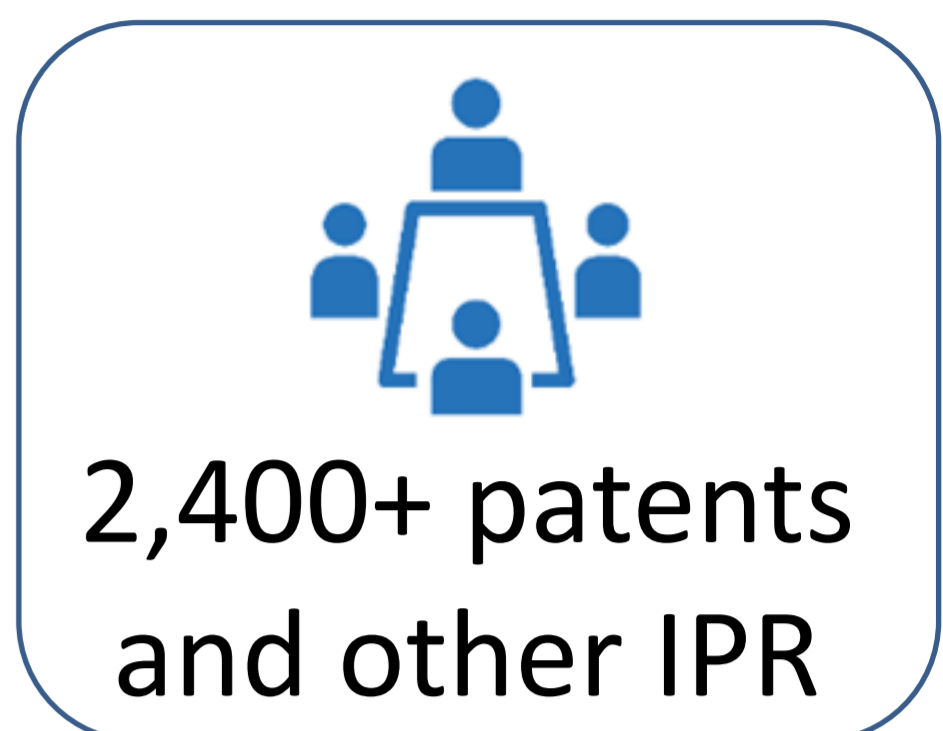
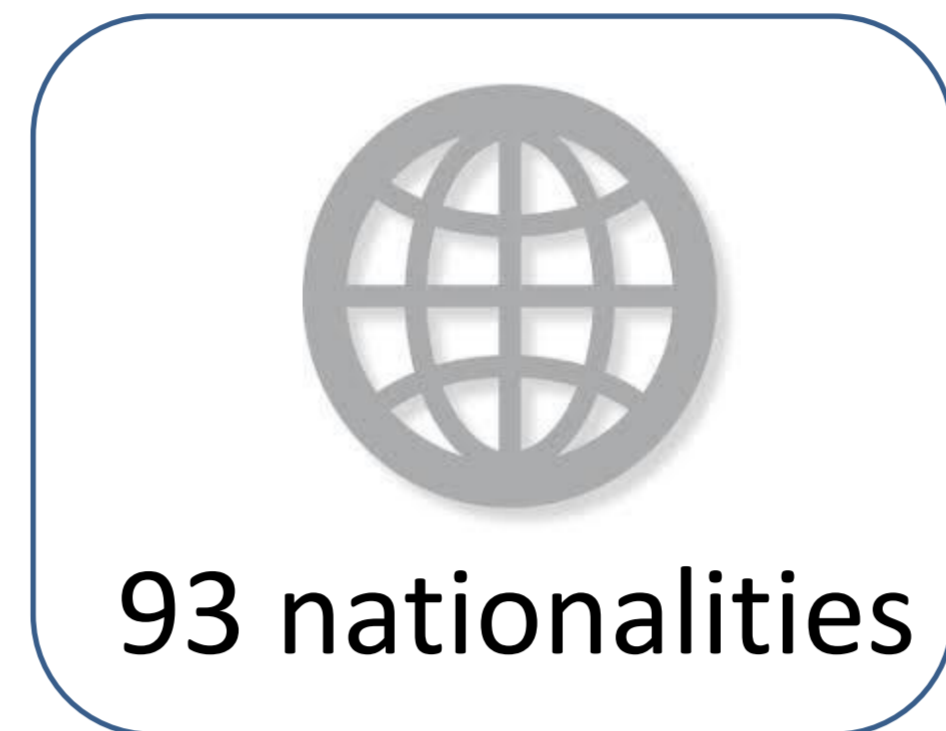
THE ERC AT A GLANCE

The ERC was set up by the European Union (EU) in 2007 as the premier European funding organisation for excellent frontier research.

The ERC funds creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run ground-breaking projects based across Europe.

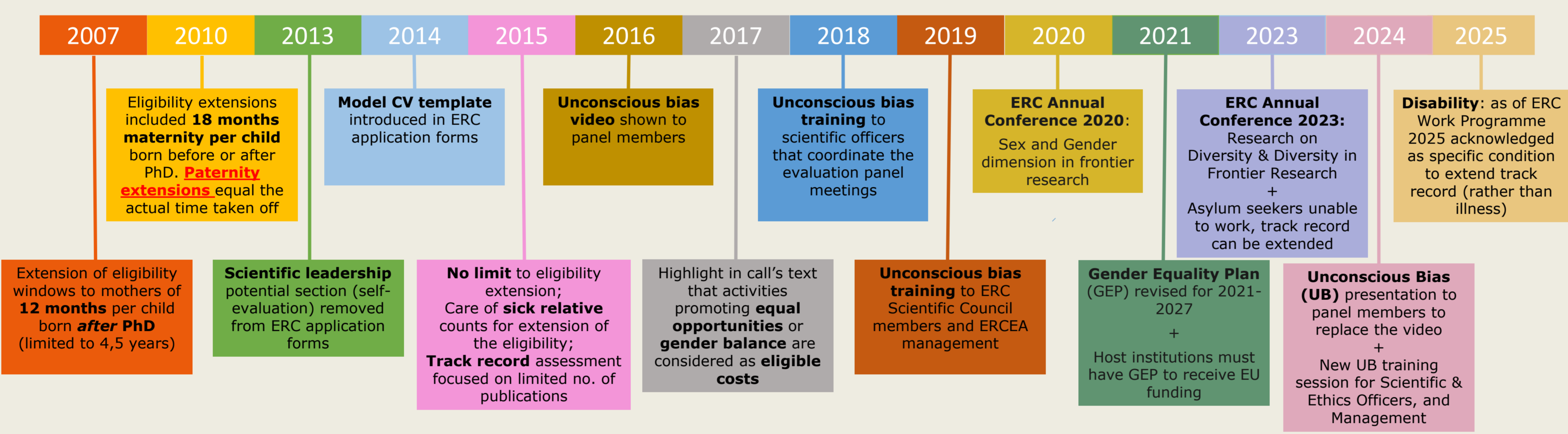
The ERC offers 4 core grant schemes: **Starting Grants** (1.5 M€ for 5 years, eligibility window 2 years < PhD < 7 years), **Consolidator Grants** (2.5 M€ for 5 years, eligibility window 7 years < PhD < 12 years), **Advanced Grants** (2.5 M€ for 5 years), and **Synergy Grants**.

To ensure **equality of opportunities** and **prevent any form of discrimination**, eligibility windows for Starting and Consolidator applicants can be extended under specific circumstances (e.g., maternity, paternity, military service, serious illness, natural disasters), beyond years 7 or 12, respectively.



MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY: ACTIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES

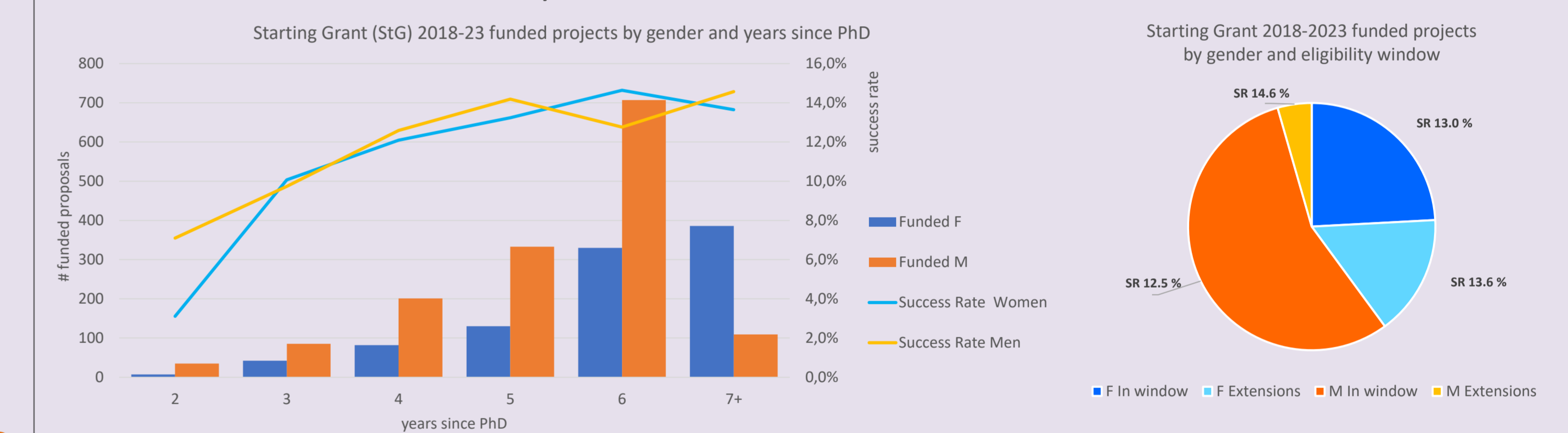
Since 2007, numerous actions have been taken to tackle imbalances and ensure fair and equal opportunities to all candidates, while keeping excellence as the sole evaluation criterion. The ERC remains open to suggestions and flexible in adapting to new realities and challenges.



IMPACT OF EXTENSIONS ON SUCCESS RATE AND GRANT'S SHARE

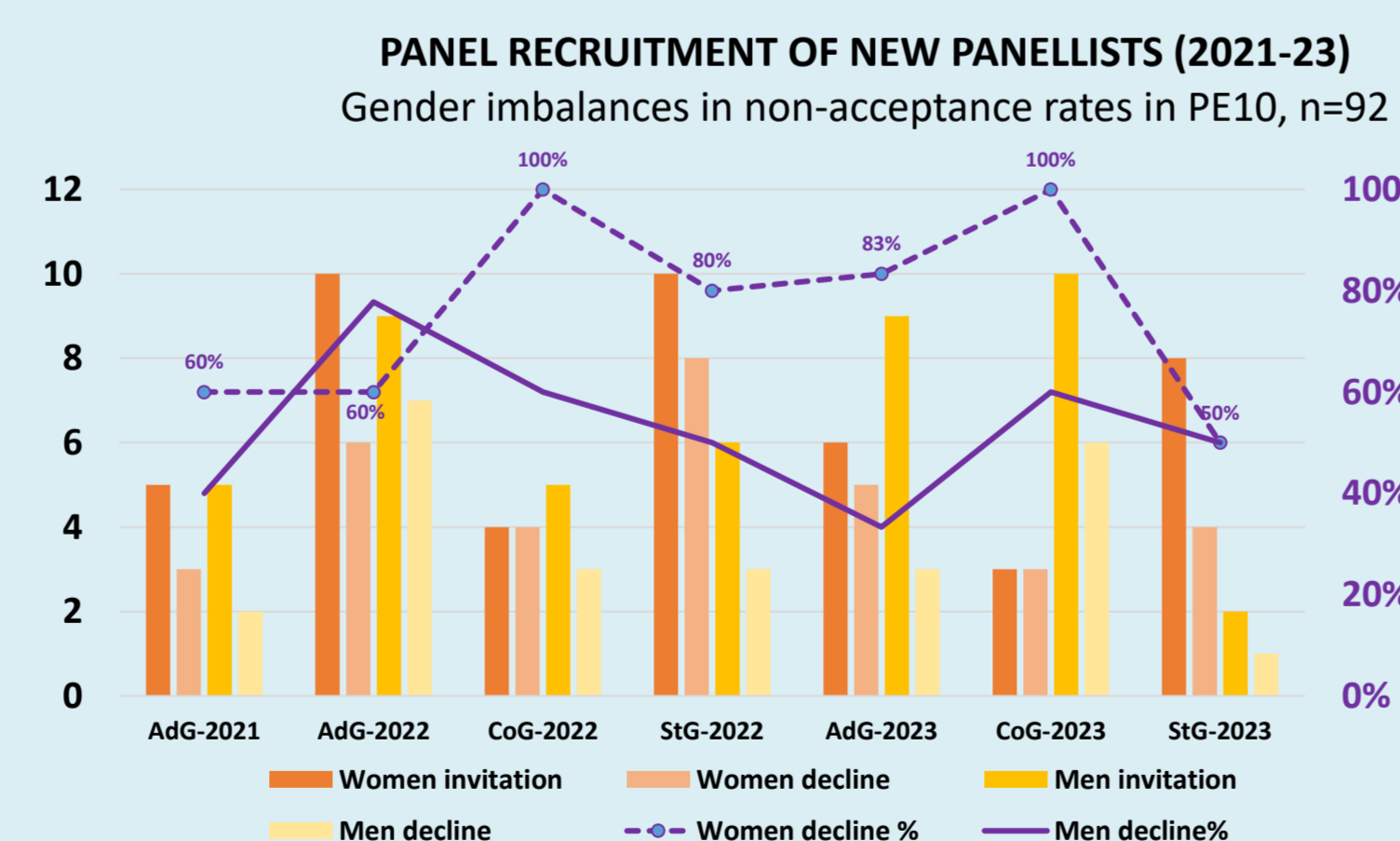
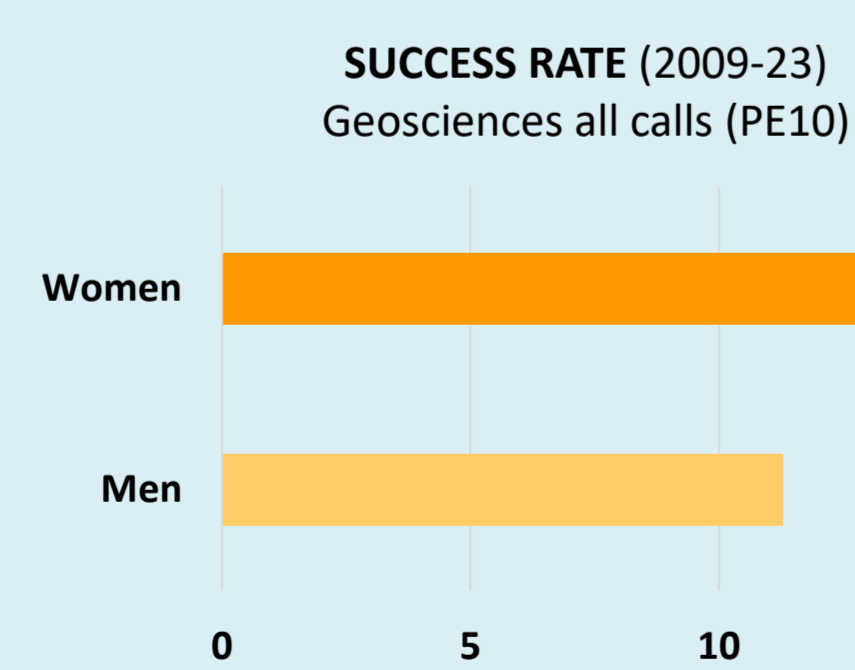
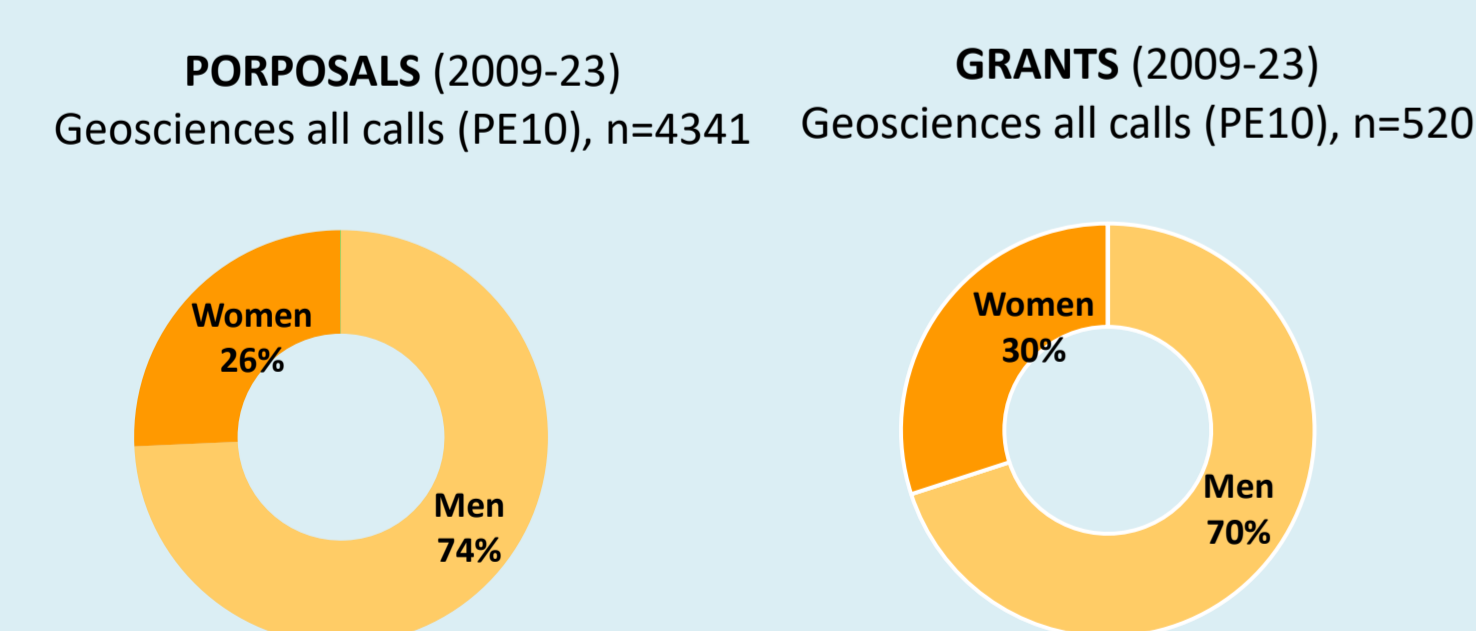
2451 Grants Starting Grant (2018-23) # 19011 Applications

Graph shows the distribution of grants per number of years after PhD. The yellow line shows the success rate for men and the blue line shows the success rate for women. The pie chart shows share of applicants with and without eligibility extensions disaggregated by gender. The success rate of women and men with and without the extension is comparable, with only minor differences (0.5% and 1% lower for women than men)



GEOSCIENCES (PE10) DATA

In 15 years, women's participation increased in all grant schemes, in both Starting and Advanced grants the increase was about 10%, and about 5% in Consolidator. Overall, women's success rates (14%) in the geosciences is slightly higher than men (11.3%). Data from seven calls, shows that the same number (i.e., 46) of men and women were invited to serve as new panellists in PE10, of which 76% women and 53% men decline these invitations.



Extensions: take home messages

- Men and women have a **peak of applications** and funding in the last year of the standard **eligibility window** (6 & 11 years past PhD, StG and CoG, respectively)
- **Success rates are comparable** in the standard **eligibility window** (however, ~1.5% lower for women in CoG)
- Women grantees in the extension window are many: **2/5 for StG** and **>1/2 for CoG**. This confirms what we know: it is indeed the time when most have children
- **Success rates for men and women are comparable** in the extension window (~1% lower for women), and overall **higher than in the standard window** for both men and women.

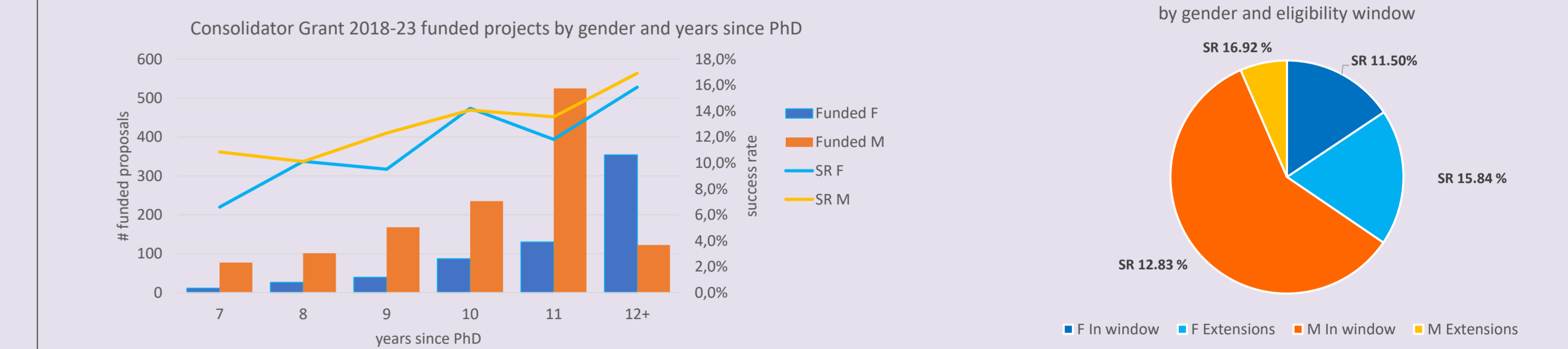
Women grantees in the extension window play a major role in the ERC H2020 achievements (i.e., comparable success rates between men and women):

- Starting Grant they make up for **40%**
- Consolidator Grant they make for more than half, i.e., **55%**

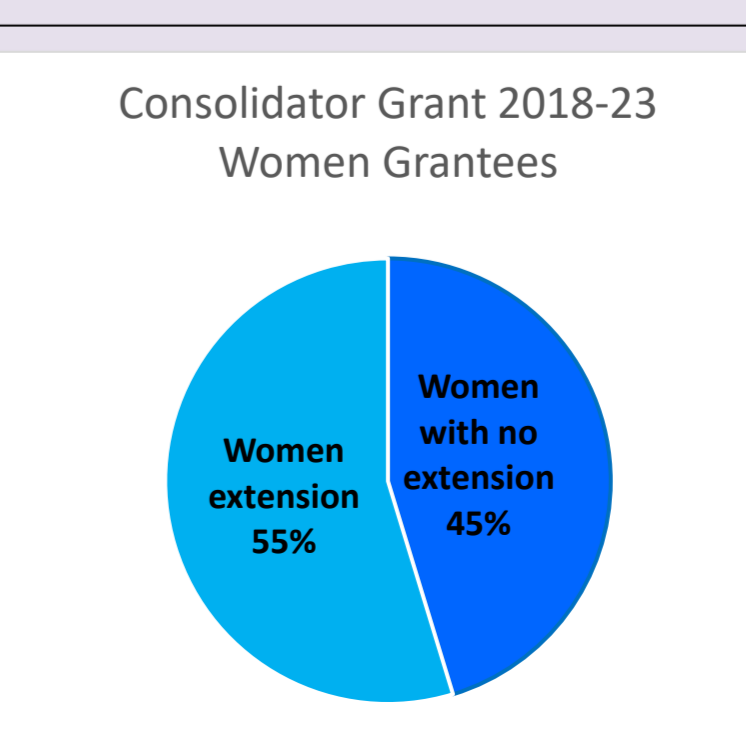
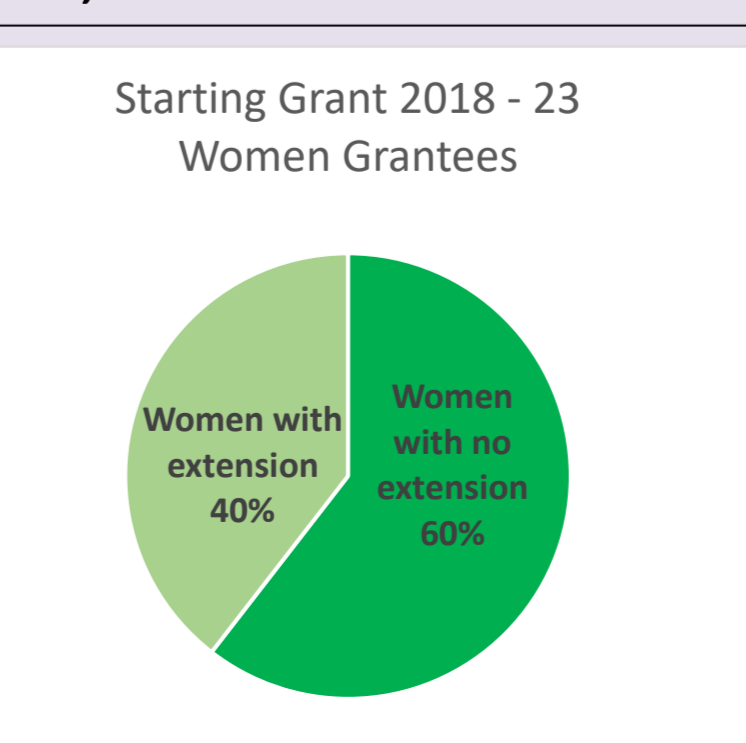
Data from the ERC statistical database

1876 Grants Consolidator Grant (2018-23) # 14145 Applications

Graph shows the distribution of grants per number of years after PhD. The yellow line shows the success rate for men and the blue line shows the success rate for women. The pie chart shows share of applicants with and without extensions disaggregated by gender. The success rate of women without the extension is about 1.5% lower than men's. With the extension, the success rate is around 17% for men and 16% for women.



In the same period, four non-binary grantees were funded out of 28 applicants in StG, and 5 out of 23 in CoG. The numbers are too small to allow statistical analysis.



Grant's share (2018-23)

The extensions of eligibility windows have a significant impact on the participation of women in ERC grants.