



# TETHYS

## Funding Schemes/Sources for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and Gender Dimension

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# Presentation Structure



1. Definition of Early Career Researchers (ECRs)
2. ECRs within TETHYS
3. Selected Funding Opportunities for ECRs
  - A) National Funding Opportunities (RIF)
  - B) Horizon Europe – Pillar I
4. Gender Equality in R&I Funding
  - Gender Dimension in the Evaluation Criteria
  - Gender Dimension in Research Methodology
  - Gender Dimension in Research Work Plan



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# 1. Definition of the Early Career Researchers (ECRs)



Based on the **European Framework for Research Careers**, which is adopted and used by **EURAXESS**, Early Career Researchers (ECRs) generally comprise the first two stages of a researcher's career:

- **R1 – First Stage Researchers (up to the point of PhD):**

Researchers doing research under supervision. This includes PhD candidates (doctoral students) and, in some contexts, pre-doctoral researchers.

- **R2 – Recognised Researchers (PhD holders or equivalent):**

Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are not yet fully independent. They are typically postdoctoral researchers or junior staff who have not yet established a significant level of independence (e.g., cannot yet lead their own, long-term research group or attract major funding).



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## 2. ECRs within TETHYS project



**ECRs as a Core Pillar of the TETHYS Project:** TETHYS is strategically built ECR) to strengthen UCY's long-term research excellence and internationalisation capacity. By clearly identifying their key characteristics, we can align them with the most appropriate national and European funding schemes.

### ◆ **Embedded in Research Excellence (WP4)**

- PhD and Postdoctoral researchers
- Joint supervision with advanced EU partners
- Direct contribution to FOW-H2 research and Digital Twin development

### ◆ **Structured Career Development**

- Individual Professional Development Plans (PDPs)
- Dedicated Career Development Plan
- Scientific and transferable skills training

### ◆ **International & Intersectoral Exposure**

- Staff exchanges and mentoring
- Industry internships
- Webinars and summer schools

### ◆ **Active Networking & Visibility**

- Conference participation
- Stakeholder engagement
- Development of research reputation and EU networks



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### 3. Selected Funding Opportunities for ECRs

#### A) National funding in Cyprus:

**Research and Innovation Foundation** (RIF): the National funding agency for R&I - RESTART 2020-2026- framework programme for R&I- Excellence Hub call – Postdoctoral call - National funding schemes supporting HE participation.

*Note: past call documents are provided for information only. The official documents of the new calls need to be advised and used when available and officially announced as they might contain changes in rules and requirements*

#### B) European funding:

**Pillar I, Horizon Europe**, the EU Framework Programme for R&I **2021-2027**: ERC Starting & Consolidator Grants and Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowship



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### 3.A National funding in Cyprus - RIF – **Post-Doctoral Researchers Programme** (Post-doc)



- **Aims** to integrate young, post-doctoral scientists in the Cypriot RTDI System (with max. 7 years from the date receiving PhD until the Call announcement), to carry out excellent research projects.
- Projects can focus on **any topic (bottom-up)**.
- **Research Activities:** Fundamental research and/or applied (industrial) research
- **Duration:** 24 months
- **Eligible expenses:** Salaries + 40% on salaries for other expenses, such as expenses of research institutions from abroad, equipment, subcontracting, travel, consumables, special expenses, overheads.
- Previous [Call for Proposals \(EN\)](#)



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## 3.A National funding in Cyprus - RIF - Excellence Hubs Programme



- Projects can focus on **any topic (bottom-up)**.
- **Aims** to promote scientific excellence through funding pioneering research projects in cutting-edge fields. Fundamental research and/or applied (industrial) research.
- **Max funding** €200k for Life Science (LS) or Physical Sciences & Engineering (PE) or €120k for Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH). Can reach €250k or €150k, in case of collaboration with privately funded research center/university (in Cyprus).
- **Duration:** 18-24m.
- **Eligible expenses:** Salaries + 40% on salaries for other expenses such as expenses of research institutions from abroad, equipment, subcontracting, travel, consumables, special expenses, overheads.
- Previous [Call for Proposals \(EN\)](#)



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### 3.A National funding in Cyprus-RIF - **National funding schemes supporting Horizon Europe participation**



- **VISION ERC** ([Path 1](#), [Path 2](#)): €100.000 (9-24 months) to excellent researchers for research that will form the basis of an ERC proposal.
  - **Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity MSCA**: €150.000 or €170.000 (industry placement), for researchers whose MSCA European PF proposal was eligible, but not funded due to lack of budget and received a Seal of Excellence.
  - **Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity ERC**: €100.000 to researchers that passed to Step 2 of the ERC evaluation, to improve proposal and resubmit (12-18 months).
- Open**
- **ERC Visiting Research Fellowship**: €50.000 to visit an ERC grantee abroad (3-6 months) and then submit an ERC proposal.



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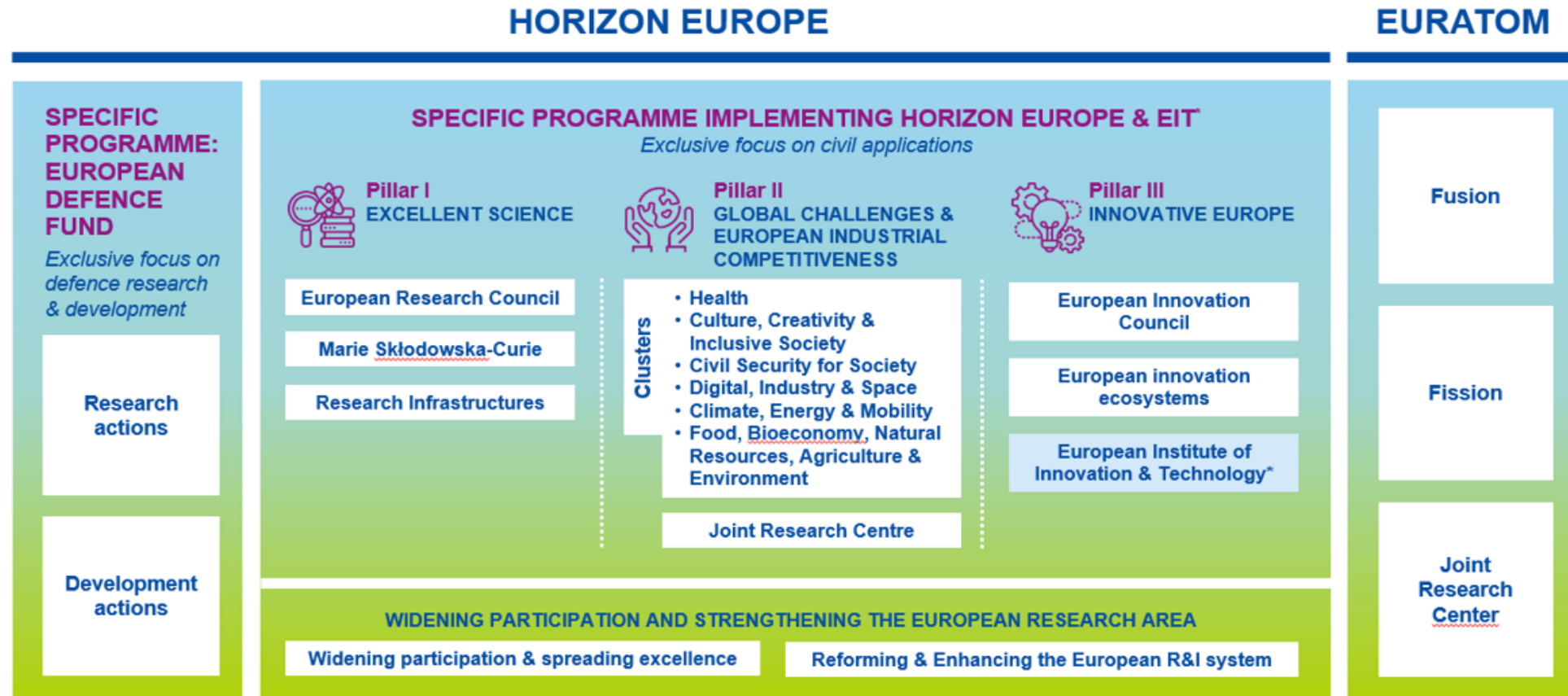


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# 3.B Horizon Europe: €95.5 billion for R&I (2021-2027)



\* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme



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## 3.B HE Pillar I – Excellent Science

Aim of Pillar I is to reinforce and extend the **excellence of the EU science base**. Projects can focus on **any topic (bottom-up)** :

1. **European Research Council**: ERC grants are designed to support **outstanding researchers** of any career stage to perform **excellent**, ground-breaking **research**.
2. **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** : MSCA grants are designed for **doctoral and post-doctoral training**, equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through **mobility** across borders, sectors, disciplines.



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### 3.B HE Pillar I – The **ERC grants 2027** (opening July 2026)



#### Starting Grant

0 – 10 years after PhD  
Up to €1.5m (+€1m)  
Up to 5 years



#### Consolidator Grant

5 - 15 years after PhD  
Up to €2m (+€1m)  
Up to 5 years

Table 1: Provisional Details on the Main Calls for Proposals under Work Pr

	Starting Grant Call	Consolidator Grant Call
Call Identifier	ERC-2026-StG	ERC-2026-CoG
Opening Date	9 July 2025	25 September 2025
Deadline	14 October 2025	13 January 2026
Budget (EUR, m)	705	673
Estimated Number of Grants	450	328
Date to Inform Applicants – Step 1	28 April 2026	17 July 2026
Date to Inform Applicants – Step 2	25 August 2026	11 December 2026
Date to Inform Applicants – Step 3	-	-
Grant Agreement Signature Date	22 December 2026	12 April 2027

The 2027 timeline is expected to be similar to the 2026 timeline.

Useful resources: [ERC info sessions for Widening European Participation](#) and [webinar on the 2026 Calls](#).



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### 3.B HE Pillar I – Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) PFs



**MSCA** is the EU's main programme for doctoral education and post-doctoral research and mobility.

- **Postdoctoral Fellowships** help researchers acquire new skills, develop their careers and gain international, interdisciplinary, and inter-sectoral experience by working abroad. Plus Widening Fellowships.
  - [2026 PF call](#) deadline **9 September 2026**.
  - Budget per proposal: max ~ €150.000 (mono-beneficiary).



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## 4. Gender Equality and R&I Funding

- There are **3 main levels** at which gender equality is addressed in Horizon Europe:
  1. Having a **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)** in place is **an eligibility criterion** for public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments from MS / AC, covering minimum process-related requirements. **Self-declaration at proposal stage.**
  2. The **integration of a gender dimension** into research and innovation content is a **mandatory requirement by default**, and evaluated under the excellence criterion (Methodology), unless the topic description explicitly specifies otherwise.
  3. The **gender balance** among researchers with a leading role in the **project's team** is used as a ranking criterion for proposals with the same score.

**Most national funders also follow Horizon Europe's example (e.g. RIF), especially in 2.**



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# 4.A Gender Dimension – **Definitions** to consider in National and Horizon Europe calls



- **Gender dimension in R&I content:** An umbrella term, covering the integration of sex and/or gender analysis in the design and delivery of R&I, in order to foster excellence and ensure R&I outputs benefit everyone in society and are adapted to people’s needs and behaviours.
- **SEX:** Refers to biological **characteristics** (including genetic, hormonal, physiological, anatomical) that distinguish between male, female, and intersex (in humans) or hermaphrodite (in non-human animals).
- **GENDER:** Refers to socio-cultural norms, **identities** and relations that, together, shape and sanction what are considered “feminine” and “masculine” behaviours, and structure societies and organisations.
- **INTER-SECTIONAL FACTORS:** factors of inequality that might be intersecting with sex/gender in the project, e.g. racial or ethnic origin, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or disability.

[Source](#) and [Source](#)



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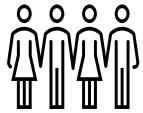
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# 4.B Gender Dimension is an Evaluation Criterion- EXCELLENCE



## Excellence

- Clarity and pertinence of the **project's objectives**, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the SoA.
- Soundness of the proposed **methodology**, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the **gender dimension** in R&I content, and the quality of **open science practices** including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.

## Impact

- Credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions due to the project.
- Suitability and quality of the **measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.

## Implementation

- Quality and effectiveness of the **work plan**, assessment of s, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.
- Capacity and role of each **participant**, and extent to which the **consortium** as a whole brings together the **necessary expertise**.



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# 4.C Gender Dimension in Research Methodology



## 1. Excellence

The following aspects will be taken into account, to the extent that the proposed work corresponds to the description in the work programme:

- Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state of the art.
- Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.

*“Describe how the **gender dimension** (i.e. sex and/or gender analysis) is taken into account in the project’s R&I content. If you do not consider such a gender dimension to be relevant in your project, please provide a justification”*

Addressing the gender dimension in R&I entails taking into account sex and gender in the whole R&I process. **Ask yourself:** does your research involve humans or living organisms? If yes, gender is relevant. If no, at what point down the line will humans be involved and how will gender influence your project at that stage?

**This relates to the content of the R&I activities NOT the gender balance of the team.** So in the methodology address: What are the gendered dimensions of the R&I?

✓ Useful doc with examples: [Gendered Innovations 2 report](#)



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# 4.C Gender Dimension in Research Methodology – Example from MSCA PF 2025



*1.2 Soundness of the proposed methodology (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices)*

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

- **Overall methodology:** Describe and explain the overall methodology, including the concepts, models and assumptions that underpin your work. Explain how this will enable you to deliver your project's objectives. Refer to any important challenges you may have identified in the chosen methodology and how you intend to overcome them.
- **Integration of methods and disciplines to pursue the objectives:** Explain how expertise and methods from different disciplines will be brought together and integrated in pursuit of your objectives. If you consider that an inter-disciplinary<sup>2</sup> approach is unnecessary in the context of the proposed work, please provide a justification.
- **Gender dimension and other diversity aspects:** Describe how the gender dimension and other diversity aspects are taken into account in the project's research and innovation content. If you do not consider such a gender dimension to be relevant in your project, please provide a justification.
  - ⚠ Remember that this question relates to the content of the planned research and innovation activities, and not to gender balance in the teams in charge of carrying out the project.
  - ⚠ Sex, gender and diversity analysis refers to biological characteristics and social/cultural factors respectively. For guidance on methods of sex / gender analysis and the issues to be taken into account, please refer to this [link](#)



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# 4.C Gender Dimension in R&I – Example from the national Post-Doc Programme



## B3. ADDED VALUE AND BENEFIT

### B3.1 Impact

Describe the added value and benefit expected to emerge from the implementation of the proposed project (e.g. economic or social benefit for each participating organisation individually and for the Consortium as a whole, perspectives for technological application, possible licensing of patents etc.).

Describe the potential significance and impact of the project for economic, social and technological development at national and international level.

Describe the long term employment prospects of the Post-Doc within the Cyprus RTDI System deriving from the project implementation.

Describe, where applicable, the potential contribution and significance of the proposed project for the achievement of gender equality in the selected scientific field at national or international level.

## B4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### B4.1. Analysis and Description of Methodology

Describe the structure of the proposed activities and provide an analysis of the methodology and the important phases of the project, justifying the selection of the key techniques to be used. Possible scenarios – assumptions for the implementation of the proposed project should also be described, as well as the critical risks and all mitigation measures/contingency plans.

Where applicable, indicate if potential sex/gender differences will be considered and describe how sex/gender analysis will be integrated into the research content of the proposed project.

Work Package 1 (WP1) should include the management and coordination activities of the project and WP2 should include the proposed dissemination & exploitation activities.

### B5.3.3 Research Team Gender Table

Please fill in the following Table specifying the Gender of each research team member described in sections B.5.3.1 and B.5.3.2

Num.	Name	Organisation (HO, PA1, PA2, PA...)	Gender (Male/Female)
1			
2			
...			



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# 4.D. Gender Dimension in Research Work plan and resource

## Example of WP Project Management



Work Package Number	1
Work Package Title	Project Management
Work Package Objectives	
<p><b>WP specific objectives are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Efficient and effective management of administrative and contractual issues</li> <li>•Sound and smooth operation of all undertaken activities on a day-to-day basis</li> <li>•Monitor and control progress between planned and actual activities</li> <li>• Effective coordination and exchange of information</li> <li>• Gender equality</li> <li>• Identification and monitoring of potential risks and mitigation actions when necessary</li> </ul>	
<b>Description of Work</b>	
Task 1.1: Management structure /contractual obligations (technical -financial reporting)	
Task 1.2: Preparation and Implementation of a <b>Quality Assurance Plan</b>	
Task 1.3: Progress reporting -improvements /amendments-changes	
<b>Task 1.4: Data management plan</b>	
Task 1.5: Gender issues	
Task 1.6: Risk Management Plan and mitigation actions	

Plus in the IMPLEMENTATION - Capacity of participants & consortium, expertise in horizontal aspects is necessary to be presented including in gender aspects.



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# The Gender Dimension of R&I and Excellence

- The Gender Dimension in R&I is here to stay and it is more than just a buzz word. **It improves science and engineering. It ensures excellence and impact:** [Sex and gender analysis improves science and engineering | Nature](#)
- **Sex and Gender analysis is important in all phases of the research cycle:** from inception phase / research idea phase, proposal phase (design), research phase, dissemination and exploitation phase leading to impact.
- With the declining success rates, a well-integrated approach towards the gender dimension in the proposal could make the difference in the score. But can ultimately lead you perform more excellent and impactful research!

## nature

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[nature](#) > [perspectives](#) > article

Perspective | Published: 06 November 2019

### Sex and gender analysis improves science and engineering

[Cara Tannenbaum](#), [Robert P. Ellis](#), [Friederike Eysse](#), [James Zou](#) & [Londa Schiebinger](#)

[Nature](#) 575, 137–146 (2019) | [Cite this article](#)

197k Accesses | 518 Citations | 436 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

#### Abstract

The goal of sex and gender analysis is to promote rigorous, reproducible and responsible science. Incorporating sex and gender analysis into experimental design has enabled advancements across many disciplines, such as improved treatment of heart disease and insights into the societal impact of algorithmic bias. Here we discuss the potential for sex and gender analysis to foster scientific discovery, improve experimental efficiency and



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# Useful resources

- [Gendered Innovations | Stanford University project](#)
  - Field specific methods e.g. Analysing sex in biomedicine, analysing gender and intersectionality in machine learning etc
  - Collecting information via surveys: asking about gender in surveys
- Videos from the [Gender Equality Academy EU](#)
- Videos from the [Gender Action project](#)
- [Gender equality in research and innovation](#)
- [ACT Videos | ACT \(act-on-gender.eu\)](#)



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**Gendered Innovations** in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering, and Environment

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What is Gendered Innovations?

SEX, GENDER, & INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

General Methods  
Specific Methods  
Terms  
Checklists

CASE STUDIES

Science  
Health & Medicine  
Engineering  
Environment

INTERSECTIONAL DESIGN

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

ENVIRONMENT  
**Sex and Gender Methods for Design** | Gendered Innovations >

FEATURED CASE STUDIES

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**Thank you!**

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