REINFORCING CASCADING GRANTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HISTORY OF CHANGES

Version	Date	Comments
1	04/12/2023	First version
2	19/03/2024	FAQs added: • 1.8 Which documents are assessed in the selection process of REINFORCING calls? • 1.9 Do I receive the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) if my project is out of scope of topic of the call? • 2.10 Can I propose a project that is shorter than expected (less than 8 months for ORRI Booster projects and less than 12 months for ORRI Incubator projects)? • 2.11 Can I set up a project with a higher budget? • 2.12 Are solo traders organizations eligible? • 2.13 In case of projects with more than one partner, is the Declaration of Honour needed for each project partner, even if an organization is not requesting any financing? • 3.5 What training opportunities are foreseen for participants in the ORRI Incubators calls, and what are their features? • 3.6 What tools are the Sub-Projects expected to deliver? • 3.7 Should the ORRI tool be a by-product of the institutionalization of RRI, or can the creation of a tool be the main activity? • 3.8 Will projects funded by REINFORCING grants be required to produce deliverables? • 3.9 If funded, may I start (and end) the project whenever I prefer? • 3.10 If funded, will the REINFORCING Consortium support me along the duration of my project? • 4.3 Can I change the start and end dates of the project?
3	20/06/2024	FAQs added: • 1.10 Will I receive an ESR if my application did not pass the preliminary assessment? • 2.14 What is the difference between newcomers and experienced in ORRI? • 2.15 In ORRI Boosters and Incubators, do the partners should be from different regions/ countries? • 2.16 In ORRI Incubators, do all the partners need to be ORRI newcomers? • 2.17 Is self-employed person considered a SME? • 2.18 Why do I need to provide the PIC number? • 2.19 What happens if an organization submits two or more proposals in the same call?
4	03/09/2024	Section2 title changed from "eligibility criteria" to "eligibility criteria and evaluation process" to add more clarity to the content. FAQs added: • Update of 2.15 enlarging the scope to ORRI Incubators • 2.20 the Guidelines says that "It is not possible to submit multiple applications under the same call". How does this apply to universities or organizations with mulitple departments/faculties? • 2.21 How ex-aequo proposal are ranked? • 2.22 In projects with more than one partner, who should be the coordinator? • 2.23 How will I be informed on the assessment results? • 2.24 Can non-eligible countries participate in the project

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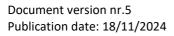|		
		with EU or associated countries organizations if the non-eligible country contribution is funded at national level (and not with EU funds)? • Update of 3.5 with a clarification on the budget to attend the grantees training in Brussels • 3.11 Are amendments foreseen after the signature of the sub-Grant Agreement for the projects that receive funding? • 3.12 Are REINFORCING grantees lump sum projects? • 3.13 Which expenses will I be asked to justify in the intermediate and in the final reports? • 3.14 What is the Peer Learning Workshop and who needs to attend?
5	18.11.2024	• Update of 1.5 with clarification on how to declare the financial stability of an applicant • Update of 1.8. Added "general criteria" • 1.11 If I notice a mistake in my proposal after the submission, can I ask to modify it? • Update of 2.6 with a clarification on the templates to be used in case of resubmission • Update of 2.16 clarifying how budget and responsibilities should be distributed among partners in a Incubator project. • Update of 2.22 clarifying budget distribution among partners • 2.25 Are Financial Support to Third Parties costs eligible?

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1 SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION PROCESS

1.1 Where can I find the official call texts launched by REINFORCING?

The REINFORCING calls are published on the [Funding & Tenders portal](#).
The direct link to each call text and supporting documentation can be found on the REINFORCING project website: https://reinforcing.eu/

1.2 Which supporting documents are available for applicants?

Besides the call text, the following documents are available for applicants:
- [Guide for applicants](#).
- Frequently asked questions on REINFORCING cascading grants (this document you are reading).
- [Template for the submission](#) (two different templates based on the type of call you are applying to).
- [Template for the Declaration of Honour](#).

Furthermore, webinars for applicants – with a Q&A slot - will be organized for each launch of the seven REINFORCING calls. The recording will be available on the project website.

1.3 How can I submit my proposal? Is it possible to send it to the REINFORCING consortium by email?

Unless otherwise indicated in the specific text of the call, all applications must be sent via the dedicated [REINFORCING webpage](#). Applications received by any other means (e.g. email) and after the call deadline will not be accepted.

1.4 How many calls are foreseen?

The REINFORCING project will publish seven calls starting from November 2023 until December 2025, of which four ORRI Booster grants (small) and three ORRI Incubator grants (large).
Small grants, also called **ORRI boosters**, will be awarded to applicants already experienced in ORRI that would like to strengthen and institutionalize their ORRI approach. Each ORRI boosters project will last 8 months and can be awarded a maximum of 20,000 €.
Large grants, also called **ORRI incubators**, will be awarded to consortia of beneficiaries (at least two beneficiaries per consortium) that are newcomers in ORRI and that would like to embark for the first time on an ORRI approach. Each ORRI incubators project will last 12 months and can be awarded a maximum of 60.000 €.
For more information, read the [Guide for Applicants](#).

1.5 How can I prove that my organization is financially stable?

Each applicant will be asked to declare their financial stability by signing the Declaration of Honour. No supporting documents are needed. However, please be aware that false declarations may lead to rejection, suspension, termination or reduction of the grant. To validate your financial stability, you can use [the profit and loss simulation tool](#) provided by the EU. Please, notice that the use of this tool is not mandatory but you can use it to validate the truthfulness of your claims.

1.6 How long should the proposal's text be?

The page limit is indicated in the template for the application. Proposals shorter than the page limit will be accepted, whilst proposals exceeding the page limit will be rejected. It is in your interest to keep your text as concise as possible since the evaluators will not view unnecessarily long proposals in a positive light.

1.7 Would it be advisable to attach letters of support?

No, you are only requested to upload the proposal template and the signed Declaration of Honour. Any other documents will not be taken into account.

1.8 What documents are assessed in the selection process of REINFORCING calls?

In the REINFORCING selection process, various documents are evaluated to determine eligibility and assess the quality of proposed projects.

Eligibility Assessment: The eligibility evaluation scrutinizes the alignment of submitted information with the eligibility and general criteria outlined in:

- The online form,
- Section 2 (Administrative information) of the template, and
- Declaration of Honour.

Preliminary and Panel Evaluation: During the preliminary assessment and the subsequent panel evaluation, the following sections of the template are subject to thorough evaluation:

- Section 3 (Excellence),
- Section 4 (Impact), and
- Section 5 (Implementation).

1.9 Do I receive the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) if my project is out of scope of topic of the call?

No, you will not receive the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) if your project is out of scope in relation to the topic of the call. Such proposals are typically discarded during the preliminary assessment phase. The ESR is only sent to proposals subject to final evaluation, which have successfully passed both the eligibility check and the preliminary assessment.

1.10 Will I receive an ESR if my application did not pass the preliminary assessment?

No, you will receive an ESR only if your application is assessed by the external evaluators in the last step of the evaluation process.

1.11 If I notice a mistake in my proposal after the submission, can I ask to modify it?

In case you notice a mistake in your proposal, do not send multiple applications through the REINFORCING website, but you can reach out to us via grants@reinforcing.eu to ask for a modification only **before** the deadline of the call. Requests made after the deadline will not be considered.

2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND EVALUATION PROCESS

2.1 Which type of organisations can apply for REINFORCING cascading grants?

All types of organizations can apply for REINFORCING cascading grants if they comply with the eligibility criteria reported in the Guide for Applicants.

2.2 Can consortia also apply for ORRI Booster grants (small grants)?

Yes, it is possible for consortia of two or more beneficiaries to apply for ORRI Booster grants (small grants), provided that they do not request more than 20,000 € in total.

2.3 Is it possible to send multiple applications for the same call?

No, it is not possible. If an organisation sends more than one application for the same call, only the first application received will be considered and other proposals will be automatically excluded from the evaluation.

2.4 Is applying for other calls under the REINFORCING cascading grants scheme possible?

Yes, it is possible as long as the funding amount received by the same organisation doesn't exceed €60.000

2.5 I represent an entity not based in Europe. Can I apply?

To be eligible for funding, applicants must be established in one of the following countries:
- the Member States of the European Union, including their outermost regions
- the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the Member States countries associated with Horizon Europe
- low- and middle-income countries as listed in the General Annexes of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2024.

Legal entities established in countries not listed above will not be eligible for funding under the REINFORCING grants.
For more details, see the section "Entities eligible for funding" of the General Annexes of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2024.

2.6 I submitted a proposal in a REINFORCING call, but I was unsuccessful. May I submit a new proposal in the next call?

Yes, you can apply again to another REINFORCING call provided that the topic fits your proposal and the activities align with the general criteria as detailed in the general criteria. Make sure to download again all the templates as they may be updated from time to time.

2.7 What does the REINFORCING consortium mean for "Conflict of interest"?

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A conflict of Interest (CoI) can occur when your organization is directly linked to a REINFORCING partner (i.e. working in a different department/unit of the same institution, which is a REINFORCING partner). Still, other cases can be considered as CoI. EU Commission conflict of interests rules apply, and you can find more info on the Horizon Europe Model of Grant Agreement.

2.8 Which costs are eligible under REINFORCING cascading grants?

For general eligibility conditions related to costs and budget categories, please see Article 6 of the Horizon Europe AGA (V1.0 DRAFT – 01.04-2023).
Eligible costs include:
- Personnel costs as described in Article in 6.2.A of the Horizon Europe AGA.
- Purchase costs include:
  - Travel, accommodation and subsistence (see Article 6.2.C.1 of the Horizon Europe AGA) – **only for ORRI Incubators (large grants)**
  - Other goods, works, or services, if necessary, to implement the action (see Article 6.2.C.3 of the Horizon Europe AGA).
- Indirect costs (or overheads) cannot be identified as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action. They are calculate as a 25% flat rate of the eligible direct costs (personnel costs and purchase costs).

Subcontracting costs and Financial Support to Third Parties are not eligible in the context of the REINFORCING calls.

2.9 Can the REINFORCING budget be integrated with other funds?

REINFORCING grants are expected to fund 100% of the budget of the action. The maximum budget that can be requested for each type of call is expected to cover the REINFORCING objectives and call requests fully. However, applicants may include REINFORCING grants in a more extensive plan towards institutional changes. In this context, it is essential to bear in mind that no double funding is allowed, which means that no costs for the same activity can be funded twice.

2.10 Can I propose a project that is shorter than expected (less than 8 months for ORRI Booster projects and less than 12 months for ORRI Incubator projects)?

No, ORRI Booster projects must last a a set duration of 8 months, while ORRI Incubator projects must last a set duration of 12 months.

2.11 Can I set up a project with a higher budget?

Yes, it is possible to set up a project with a higher budget although the maximum grant that will be provided per project is 20.000 € for ORRI Booster projects and 60.000€ for ORRI Incubator projects regardless of a higher budget. The excess budget must be co-financed by the organization(s) and clearly explained in the proposal.

2.12 Are solo traders organizations eligible?

Whether solo trader organizations are eligible depends on the legal nature of the "solo trader organization." Specifically, if it operates as a sole proprietorship or a similar legal entity, it is still considered a business entity. However, if it operates as an individual with a VAT number, it could potentially be eligible as a "natural person."

2.13 In case of projects with more than one partner, is the Declaration of Honour needed for each project partner, even if an organization is not requesting any financing?

Yes, any organizations participating in the project must sign and upload the Declaration of Honour during the submission.

2.14 What is the difference between newcomers and experienced in ORRI?

Newcomers are organizations that does not have any experience in ORRI or only a small experience with these topics but basically never implemented an ORRI initiative in their organization, thus they would like to approach this topic within a new project. On the contrary, organizations experienced in ORRI already implemented these practices in their organization and would like to strengthen what they already started.

2.15 In ORRI Boosters or Incubators, do the partners should be from different regions/ countries?

The partners can be based in the same country/region.

2.16 In ORRI Incubator, do all the partners need to be newcomers?

One of the partners may have significant experience in ORRI but the newcomer should be in focus with activities and the budget. This means that the coordinator is expected to be a newcomer and that the majority of the budget should be allocated to newcomer organisations.

2.17 Is self-employed person considered a SME?

For the question on self-employed person see page 12 at *https://www.eusmecentre.org.cn/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/SME-Definition.pdf*
Self-employed, family firms, partnerships and associations regularly engaged in an economic activity may be considered as enterprises.

2.18 Why do I need to provide the PIC number?

It is not mandatory to provide your PIC number, however it is highly recommended as it may be used by the contracting entity to clarify your eligibility in case the information provided in the administrative form are not clear.

2.19 What happens if an organization submits two or more proposals in the same call?

If an organization submits two or more proposals in the same call, only the first submitted proposal will be considered. Any subsequent proposals submitted by the same partners will be discarded, even if only one partner has made multiple submissions.

2.20 The Guidelines says that "It is not possible to submit multiple applications under the same call". How does this apply to universities or organizations with mulitple departments/faculties?

For the purpose of this programme, one "organization" means one "legal entity". Thus, if all departments are under the same legal entity, this would be considered as one organization. If you have a PIC number, you can also refer to the general rule that one PIC equal one organization, thus if departments have different PICs that may be considered as different organizations, while if they all fall under the same PIC they are considered as one organization.

2.21 How ex-aequo proposal are ranked?

If two or more proposals receive the same final score (ex-aequo), such proposals will be ranked taking into account Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and specifically if and how gender activities are implemented within the project. Please notice that gender activities is not equal to gender composition in the consortium.

2.22 In projects with more than one partner, who should be the coordinator?

The coordinator should be the project partners that carry out the majority of the activities and has the majority of the budget.

2.23 How will I be informed on the assessment results?

Eligibility Check: If your proposal is not eligible, you will be informed via the project official email just after the completion of the eligibility check (usually after around two weeks from the call deadline). You will receive just a short comment on your proposal (e.g. if there were some formal issues with the proposal or if one organization was not considered eligible), but no detailed Evaluation Summary Report will be provided.

Preliminary Evaluation: If your proposal does not pass the eligibility check, you will be informed via the project official email after the final evaluation (usually around 1 month after the call deadline). You will receive just a short comment on your proposal, but no detailed Evaluation Summary Report will be provided.

Final Evaluation: if your proposal is assessed in the final evaluation (whether is funded or not), you will be informed via the project official email after the final evaluation (usually around 1 month after the call deadline). All the projects that undergo this step will receive a detailed Evaluation Summary Report commenting the score for each of the section.

2.24 Can non-eligible countries participate in the project with EU or associated countries organizations if the non-eligible country contribution is funded at national level (and not with EU funds)?

No, all project partners must be from an eligible country (EU Member States or third countries associated to Horizon Europe is governed by the Horizon Europe Regulation 2021/695).
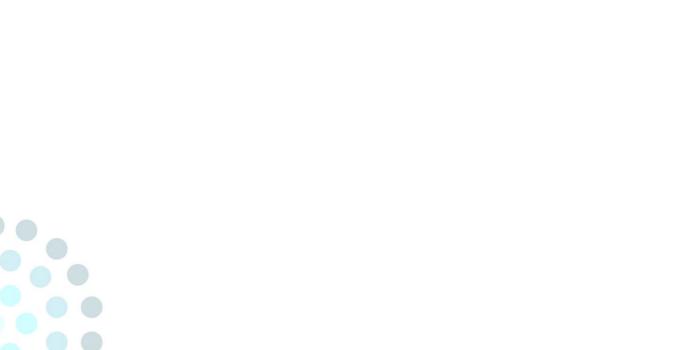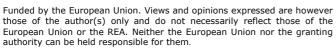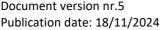
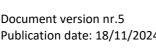## *2.25 Are Financial Support to Third Parties costs eligibile within REINFORCING grants?*

No, all eligible costs are listed in paragraph 5.3 of the Guidelines for Applicants available on our website.

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3 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 My proposal was successful. When will the funding arrive?

All grantees will receive pre-financing at the beginning of the project, namely, ten days before the project starts. The pre-financing amount depends on the grant type (50% for ORRI Booster and 40% for ORRI Incubators). The remaining amount will be distributed concurrently to the validation of Progress Reports (one for ORRI Booster and two for ORRI Incubators) to avoid misuse of funds. For more details, check the Guide for Applicants.

3.2 What information will be required in the Progress Reports?

The Progress Reports will include a detailed description of the implemented activities, the justifications for expenses, the problems encountered, and the solutions adopted according to the template provided by the contracting entity.

3.3 Do beneficiaries need to provide additional information/documents than the Progress Reports?

No, you are only required to submit Progress Reports in a timely manner according to the template provided by the contracting entity. However, you must - at least for three years after the final payment — keep records and other supporting documents to prove the proper implementation of the action and the incurred costs. Furthermore, at the end of the project, you will be required to provide a concrete output to be included in the REINFORCING One-Stop Source.

3.4 Do beneficiaries have other obligations than reporting their activities? Are there other activities in which they will be engaged within the frame of REINFORCING?

REINFORCING beneficiaries will be asked to:
- Deliver at least one ORRI tool to be included in the REINFORCING One-Stop Source, the EU central virtual platform on ORRI that REINFORCING is developing;
- Contribute to update the REINFORCING project website with grantees' achievements and information;
- Attend and contribute to a final webinar in which grantess will be asked to present their results;
- Participate in a mid-term review meeting aimed to assess the impact of the grants on beneficiaries;
- (*Only for ORRI Incubators*) Attend preliminary training activities at the beginning of project activities to familiarize with ORRI principles. Training will last one day and a half on-site in Brussels. Costs related to training (personnel and travel) can be funded by the grant (thus to be included in the budget overview).
- (*Suggested but not mandatory*) Promote project activities and EU funding through REINFORCING on online channels (webpage on partners' website; social media communication).

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3.5 What training opportunities are foreseen for participants in the ORRI Incubators calls, and what are their features?

For ORRI Incubators calls, that are specifically tailored for ORRI newcomers, preliminary training activities will be provided at the outset of their involvement to acquaint them with ORRI principles. This training spans 1.5 days and will be conducted on-site in Brussels. Therefore, while beneficiaries are primarily responsible for developing ORRI tools, newcomers to ORRI will receive initial training to facilitate their engagement with the principles and requirements of the project. Budget to attend the training in Brussels is eligible and should be considered during the budget preparation in the proposal.

3.6 What tools are the Sub-Projects expected to deliver?

REINFORCING grantees are expected to deliver the so-called "Open Responsible Innovation tools" similar to the ones collected by https://rri-tools.eu/ This includes best practices, guidelines, reports, project outcomes related to ORRI, training materials, and videos that can be shared with other organizations to disseminate the project's experience. It is not a technological or innovative tool but rather a means to share your project's insights and knowledge.

For the development of ORRI tools, beneficiaries are expected to undertake this task as part of their project implementation.

3.7 Should the ORRI tool be a by-product of the institutionalization of RRI, or can the creation of a tool be the main activity?

The tool could be a by-product, showcasing the outcomes of a process developed and applied during the project. Alternatively, it could also be the primary result itself, especially if it benefits your organization. For example, if you create a tool useful for implementing ORRI within your organization as part of the project, this tool can also be shared with other organizations as an ORRI tool.
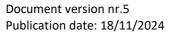
3.8 Will projects funded by REINFORCING grants be required to produce deliverables?

No, projects funded by REINFORCING grants are not required to produce deliverables as intended in EU projects. However, grantees are expected to produce progress reports. Each grantee will be asked to complete a Progress Report, which includes justifications of expenses, precise descriptions of actions implemented, challenges encountered, and solutions adopted. These reports enable monitoring of grant progress, verification that funds are used according to the plan, and collection of information on the impact of REINFORCING grants. For ORRI booster grants, a single final report will be required, while for ORRI incubator grants, two progress reports (one mid-term and one final) will be necessary due to the longer duration of the pilot projects. A template for Progress Reports will be provided and made available to all beneficiaries to facilitate consistent reporting and assessment.

3.9 If funded, may I start (and end) the project whenever I prefer?

No, for each call, all the grantees will initiate together with the same starting date, which will be set by the REINFORCING Consortium. This date will be notified in the text of the call so that applicants can be ready in advance in case they are granted.

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3.10 If funded, will the REINFORCING Consortium support me along the duration of my project?

Specific activities have been foreseen both for Booster and for Incubators, which are described in the information package for the applicants and will be presented by the Consortium in a collective online Kick-off meeting at the start of the granted projects. In any case, REINFORCING Consortium will act as a sort of "Project Officer" rather than a mentoring/supporting entity since you are expected to conduct your activities autonomously.

3.11 Are amendments foreseen after the signature of the sub-Grant Agreement for the projects that receive funding?

No formal amendments for the budget are foreseen. Nevertheless, changes in budget categories can be foreseen up to 10% with justifications in reporting documents (no prior approval needed). However, bigger changes are discouraged but if necessary - and needed for the proper implementation of the project and planned activities - they need to be approved by us in advance before the spending and the end of the project. In any case, changes greater than 10% of the total grant amount (2k for Booster and 6k for Incubators) from what is presented in the proposal will not be accepted, and the cost will be refused.

3.12 Are REINFORCING grantees lump sum projects?

Yes, this means that the payment of the funding depends on the achievement of the project objectives as described in the sub-GA. However, we can ask to justify in the final report major expenses in the other costs category to ensure that the project money was spent for eligible expenses.

3.13 Which expenses will I be asked to justify in the intermediate and in the final reports?

As a default you will not be asked to justify personnel or indirect costs. However, you will be asked to describe how you used the budget you allocated under the "other costs" item. Additional checks on the personnel costs may be asked by the contracting entity.

4 OTHERS

4.1 What can I do if I have further questions not included in the Guide for Applicants or FAQs?

For further information on the call or if you have any doubts about eligibility rules or the information to be provided in the Application form, please contact the Support Team at grants@reinforcing.eu.

4.2 Does REINFORCING fund research and innovation projects?

No, REINFORCING grants are aimed at supporting activities to implement ORRI processes. Thus, they do not fund:

- Research project to only produce academic results
- Innovation projects in terms of development of a product or a process
- Research projects on ORRI (e.g. investigate ORRI from a theoretical point of view)

4.3 Can I change the start and end dates of the project?

No, the start and ending date of each project will be established by the contracting entity and cannot be changed.