



# **REINFORCING cascading grants supporting documentation GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ORRI	Open and Responsible Research and Innovation.
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation.
ERA	European Research Area.
HEU	Horizon Europe.
FSTP	Financial support to third parties.
FGB	Fondazione Bassetti (the Project Coordinator)
ITB	Consorzio Italbiotec (the Contracting Entity)
B1	ORRI Booster call 1
I1	ORRI Incubator call 1
CSO	Civil Society Organizations.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation



**HISTORY OF CHANGES**

<b>Version nr.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment</b>
V1	21/12/2023	First version of the guidelines for applicants published on the project website
V2	19/03/2024	Updated version of the guidelines for applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update of the nr of ORRI booster proposals supported for each call (paragraph 2.2)</li><li>• Clarification on the calls and grants timeline in paragraph 2.3</li><li>• Added clarifications in paragraph 2.6 and 5.3</li></ul>
V3	18/11/2024	Updated version of the guidelines for applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improving the description of ORRI Incubator grants in paragraph 2.2</li><li>• Clarification on the general criteria applicants must comply to (paragraph 2.5)</li><li>• Clarification on the criteria considered in the eligibility check (paragraph 4.1.1)</li></ul>
V4	28/05/2025	Updated version of the guidelines for applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update of the nr of ORRI booster and incubator calls, as well as the nr of proposals supported for each call (paragraph 2.2)</li><li>• Update of the calls and grants timeline in paragraph 2.3</li><li>• Added clarifications in paragraph 2.5</li><li>• Update and clarification on the criterion considered in the eligibility check (paragraph 4.1.1) and in the preliminary assessment (paragraph 4.1.2)</li><li>• Clarification on contractual arrangements (paragraph 5.1) and eligible costs (paragraph 5.3)</li></ul>
V5	25/08/2025	Updated version of the guidelines for applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Added more details on the non-eligible countries (paragraph 2.4)</li><li>• Update of the general criteria with information regarding the DoH signature (paragraph 2.5)</li><li>• The application form is now divided into four parts, with Part 2 dedicated to the administrative template (paragraph 3.1 and 4.1.1)</li><li>• Retention period for project information and documents updated to 10 years. (paragraph 5.1)</li></ul>





		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Added that funds will be paid as a lump sum (paragraph 5.2)</li></ul>
V6	17/12/2025	Updated version of the guidelines for applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Added a disclaimer clarifying, on an exceptional basis for the 7th REINFORCING Open Call, the eligibility of ORRI newcomers within the Booster Call framework and the prioritisation of applicants with prior ORRI experience in case of ex aequo ranking.</li></ul>





# 1. INTRODUCTION

<b>Project Acronym</b>	<b>REINFORCING</b>
<b>Project Title</b>	Responsible tEerritories and Institutions eNable and Foster Open Research and inClusive Innovation for traNsitions Governance
<b>Project Number</b>	101094435
<b>Project Topic</b>	HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-40
<b>Project Duration</b>	50 months (1/01/2023 – 28/02/2027)
<b>Overall Budget</b>	€ 5.000.082,50
<b>Reserved budget for cascading grants</b>	€ 2.400.000,00

**Table 1:** REINFORCING summary information

## 1.1 REINFORCING project

REINFORCING supports organizations and institutions in Europe to transition to a new paradigm where responsibility and openness drive research and innovation processes.

In the current situation, the green and digital transitions have become an urgency that can no longer wait. The twin transition, as they have come to be known, will bring enormous benefits but also undesired externalities. Making it fair and inclusive is therefore key. To succeed, institutions and territories need to shift to more open and transparent R&I practices in which all actors share responsibility to develop services and products that are acceptable, sustainable, and bring social satisfaction.

The Open and Responsible Research and Innovation (ORRI) approach promotes collaborative efforts. From sharing research outputs as early as possible to engaging citizens in co-creation processes, R&I should be open to the whole society.

Implementing Open and Responsible R&I can seem like a daunting task. However, over the past decade, many resources and tools have been created, but an effort to systematize, curate, and create a single entry point was still missing. REINFORCING is this much-needed European central hub for Open and Responsible R&I. The project's platform is the entry point to knowledge, training, ORRI skills match-making, and capacity building for organizations interested in starting or continuing their journey to creating an inclusive R&I ecosystem. Furthermore, the project brokers unique networking opportunities for organizations, institutions, and territories interested in becoming part of the European ecosystem that is transforming the R&I system by bringing it closer to society and societal needs.

To support this change, REINFORCING has ring-fenced funding to invite institutions from around Europe to develop projects aiming at implementing new modes of doing R&I that drive more just transitions. The project will launch 7 open calls for cascading grants to help territories and organizations experimenting with ORRI for the first time (ORRI Incubator Open Calls) or to boost those scaling up their ORRI activities (ORRI Booster Open Calls).





## 1.2 REINFORCING partners

	<p><b>FONDAZIONE GIANNINO BASSETTI</b> ITALY <a href="https://www.fondazionebassetti.org/">https://www.fondazionebassetti.org/</a></p>
	<p><b>AIT AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GMBH</b> AUSTRIA <a href="https://www.ait.ac.at/en/">https://www.ait.ac.at/en/</a></p>
	<p><b>TEKNOLOGIAN TUTKIMUSKESKUS VTT OY</b> FINLAND <a href="https://www.vttresearch.com/en">https://www.vttresearch.com/en</a></p>
	<p><b>FRAUNHOFER GESELLSCHAFT ZUR FORDERUNG DER ANGEWANDTEN FORSCHUNG EV</b> GERMANY <a href="https://www.fraunhofer.de/">https://www.fraunhofer.de/</a></p>
	<p><b>FUNDACION TECNALIA RESEARCH &amp; INNOVATION</b> SPAIN <a href="https://www.tecnalia.com/en/">https://www.tecnalia.com/en/</a></p>
	<p><b>CONSORZIO ITALBIOTEC</b> ITALY <a href="https://www.italbiotec.it/">https://www.italbiotec.it/</a></p>
	<p><b>STICKYDOT SRL</b> BELGIUM <a href="https://stickydot.eu/">https://stickydot.eu/</a></p>
	<p><b>INMARK EUROPA SA</b> SPAIN <a href="https://www.grupoinmark.com/">https://www.grupoinmark.com/</a></p>
	<p><b>EUROPEAN BUSINESS AND INNOVATION CENTRE NETWORK AISBL</b> BELGIUM</p>





	<a href="https://ebn.eu/">https://ebn.eu/</a>
	<b>RHEINISCH-WESTFAELISCHE TECHNISCHE HOCHSCHULE AACHEN</b> GERMANY <a href="https://www.rwth-aachen.de/">https://www.rwth-aachen.de/</a>
	<b>UNIVERZITET U NOVOM SADU FAKULTET TEHNICKIH NAUKA</b> SERBIA <a href="http://ftn.uns.ac.rs/n1386094394/faculty-of-technical-sciences">http://ftn.uns.ac.rs/n1386094394/faculty-of-technical-sciences</a>
	<b>UNIVERZITET U NOVOM SADU, POLJOPRIVREDNI FAKULTET NOVI SAD</b> SERBIA <a href="http://polj.uns.ac.rs/">http://polj.uns.ac.rs/</a>
	<b>TEHNOLOSKI FAKULTET NOVI SAD</b> SERBIA <a href="https://www.tf.uns.ac.rs/">https://www.tf.uns.ac.rs/</a>

**Table 2:** REINFORCING partners

### 1.3 REINFORCING Grants targeted audience

The REINFORCING cascading grants calls will address the following legal entities (but not limited to):

- Higher education institutions
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Research Centers
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).





## 2. REINFORCING'S OPEN CALLS

### 2.1 Aim of the calls

A big part of REINFORCING efforts (also budget-wise) will be dedicated to shaping and handling cascading grants open calls, in close dialogue with the EC, through 7 open calls, differentiated by the level of ORRI maturity of the applicants. REINFORCING grants will be awarded to projects planning to implement ORRI implementation activities.

All REINFORCING calls will adhere to EU principles of transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest, and confidentiality, ensuring an objective and clear selection procedure.

3 smaller-scale calls, called ORRI boosters, will select and support institutions already experienced in ORRI that would like to further enhance their uptake and its various dimensions. 4 larger grants, called ORRI incubators, will support more complex initiatives lasting one year and engage at least two different entities, which are both or just one of them, "newcomer" institutions implementing ORRI actions together.

Beneficiaries will benefit from REINFORCING support and services, including training modules on ORRI principles and practices. Beneficiaries will be requested to take part in peer-learning activities (at the midterm of their interventions) to showcase the results and impact of their actions and to join online REINFORCING webinars. REINFORCING Impact awards will be conferred to the most successful ORRI Incubators grantees, announced during public events involving policymakers. Incubator grantees will also receive mentoring support at the end of their journey to foster long-term ORRI sustainability and institutionalization.

### 2.2 Type of grants

Two kinds of grants will be delivered by REINFORCING: ORRI booster (Small) grants and ORRI incubators (Large) grants. The specific objectives and targets of the calls will be defined throughout the duration of the project.

#### 2.2.1 ORRI Booster grants (Small grants)

Small grants, also called ORRI boosters, will be awarded to applicants (at least one beneficiary) already experienced in ORRI that would like to strengthen and institutionalize their ORRI approach. Each ORRI booster call will support proposals<sup>1</sup> implementing an **8-month project (set duration that can't be changed)**. The maximum amount granted for each project is 20,000 €.

*Exceptionally, and only for the 7th REINFORCING Open Call, the Booster Call also allows applications from ORRI newcomers. The call follows all standard Booster features (maximum grant of €20,000, 8-month duration, no mandatory consortium, no ORRI training or mentoring, and only a final report; see paragraph 2.6). All applicants are fully eligible and evaluated on an equal footing. However, in the event of an ex aequo ranking, priority will be given to applicants with prior ORRI experience.*

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<sup>1</sup> The number of projects to be funded is different from call to call and publicly announced for each launch.





Grant	Duration of the projects (months)	Estimated number of calls
ORRI booster grants	8	3

**Table 3:** Small grants key features

### 2.2.2 ORRI Incubator grants (Large grants)

Large grants, also called ORRI incubators, will be awarded to consortia of beneficiaries (at least two beneficiaries per consortium) that encompass at least one newcomer in ORRI that would like to embark on an ORRI approach. The work carried out by newcomers to embark on an ORRI approach should be the focus of the project, and, thereby, newcomers are expected to lead the project and have the majority of the budget. Each ORRI incubator call will support consortia implementing a **12-month Project (set duration that can't be changed)**. The maximum amount granted for each project is 60,000 €<sup>2</sup>.

Grant	Duration (months)	Estimated number of calls
ORRI incubator grants	12	4

**Table 4:** Large grants key features

## 2.3 Grants timeline

Starting from November 2023, REINFORCING calls will be launched, switching between the two types of grants – ORRI booster and ORRI incubators.

ORRI Boosters will be launched in:

- B1: November 2023
- B2: November 2024
- B3: December 2025

ORRI Incubators will be launched in:

- I1: March 2024
- I2: July 2024
- I3: June 2025
- I4: September 2025

Each call, after the launch, will be open for at least two months, as visible in Table 5. Please note that **the launch schedule is indicative and can be subject to changes.**

<sup>2</sup> The number of projects to be funded is different from call to call and publicly announced for each launch.

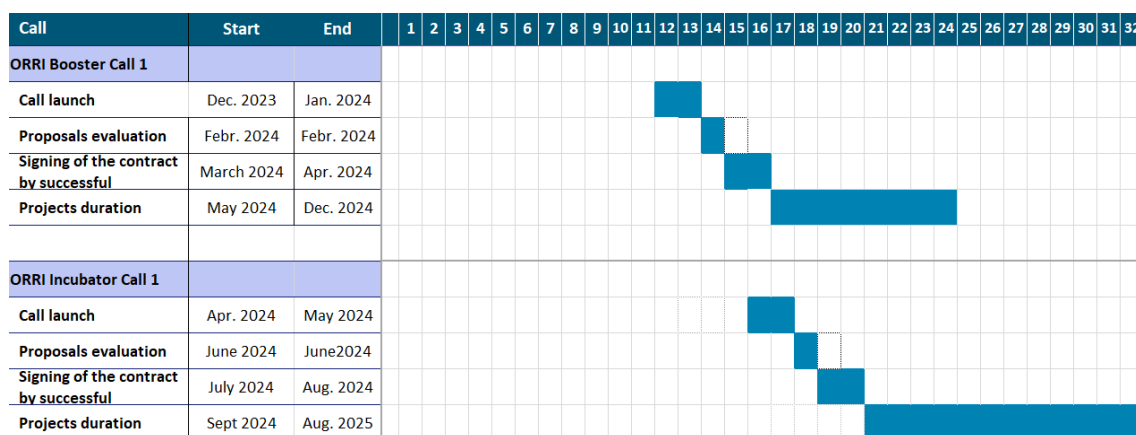




<b><u>Call closing</u></b>	At least 2 months after the launch. Specific Call closing date will be reported for each call.
<b><u>Evaluation process</u></b>	Starting after the call closing and going on for a maximum of two months, unless exceptional circumstances.
<b><u>Contracting phase</u></b>	The contracting phase will last for about one month and will be closed two months after the call closing
<b><u>Publication of the results</u></b>	At least two months after the call closing and contracting phase finalization.
<b><u>Project start</u></b>	The projects are expected to start at least in the 5 <sup>th</sup> month after the call launch date and will last for 8 months in case of ORRI Booster and 12 months in case of ORRI incubators. Late start can be foreseen for specific reasons (e.g. just after the summer period). In any case, <b>the start will be set by the REINFORCING consortium</b> and publicly announced during the call launch and can't be negotiated since all the funded projects must start (and end) all together.

**Table 5:** Cascading grants calls general timeline.

As an example, the timeline for the first ORRI Booster and Incubator calls is provided below:



**Figure 1:** Calls timeline – Gantt Diagram of B1 and I1 calls

Small variations in the timeline of the call and the evaluation process may be foreseen, especially in the case of planned festivities and holidays. Specific timelines will be communicated with the publication of each call.

The duration of the projects (both Boosters and Incubators) is fixed as defined in paragraph 2.2. The start and ending dates of each project will be established by the contracting entity and cannot be changed.





## **2.4 Eligibility conditions**

Proposals will be considered eligible and enter the evaluation phase if each and all the following conditions are met. Only complete applications will be taken into account by the reviewing committee.

- Applicants must be established in an EU country (Member State or associated country), including their outermost regions or associated countries eligible to receive HEU grants, provided that the applicants are not covered by the Council sanctions in force. Other third countries are not eligible.
- Applicants must be legal entities such as, but not limited to, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Higher Education Institutions, Research Centres, and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME).
- Applicants must declare their financial stability.
- Applicants shall not have any potential conflicts of interest with the REINFORCING consortium or any of its partners (notably, they should not have a legal relationship with any organization that is a member of the REINFORCING consortium, including affiliated entities).

Eligibility criteria will apply individually to each consortium participant.

Please note that in some calls, further specific eligibility conditions might be foreseen.

## **2.5 General criteria**

Besides the eligibility criteria, REINFORCING applicants must meet the following general criteria:

- Activities must focus on the actions described in the call conditions, and the level of experience in ORRI of the partners must be aligned with the type of grant partners are applying to (Booster or Incubator).
- Applications must be completed in all their parts (administrative and technical parts, including the DoH) and must be written in English (applications fully or partially written in another language are not eligible).
- The length of the technical template must not exceed the number of pages specified in the template itself (5 pages for the Boosters and 10 for the Incubators).
- Applicants must submit their application via the [project website](#) using the templates provided. Applications submitted by other means will not be evaluated and considered eligible (and then rejected).
- The Declaration of Honour document must be duly signed by the legal representative of each project partner.
- It is not possible to submit multiple applications under the same call. However, applicants can apply for more than one REINFORCING call as long as the funding amount received by the same organization doesn't exceed €60 000 in total.
- Applicants must declare that the same project hasn't received funding under another call.





Proposals will be considered eligible and enter the evaluation phase if each and all the above-mentioned conditions are met.

## **2.6 Requirements for the implementation**

In order to positively contribute to the REINFORCING objectives, grantees are requested to carry out the following activities during the implementation:

### **REINFORCING Booster beneficiaries:**

- Deliver at least one ORRI tool to be included in the REINFORCING One-Stop Source
- Provide evidence of the accomplished ORRI institutional change
- Attend the Call Kick-off meeting and monthly meetings with the Call Coordinator and REINFORCING consortium representatives;
- Take part in the mid-term review meeting;
- Join the internal call final event;
- Participate in the public webinar at the end of their projects;
- Contribute to the online communication and update of the REINFORCING project channels (e.g., website, social media, etc.) with grantees' achievements and information;
- Engage in peer learning activities

### **REINFORCING Incubator beneficiaries:**

- Deliver at least one ORRI tool to be included in the REINFORCING One-Stop Source
- Provide evidence of initiating ORRI institutional change
- Attend the Call Kick-off meeting and monthly meetings with the Call Coordinator and REINFORCING consortium representatives;
- Partake in the ORRI training workshop on-site in Brussels (costs related to training can be funded by the grant);
- Take part in the mid-term review meeting;
- Join the internal call final event;
- Participate in the public webinar at the end of their projects;
- Contribute to the online communication and update of the REINFORCING project channels (e.g., website, social media, etc.) with grantees' achievements and information;
- Engage in peer learning activities.





## **3. APPLICATION**

### **3.1 How to apply?**

ORRI booster and ORRI incubator calls will be published according to the timeline provided in paragraph 2.3 on the [Funding & Tenders portal](#) and on the project channels (project website, REINFORCING LinkedIn account).

The application form will consist of four parts:

- An online form requiring general information on the project to be completed on the REINFORCING website for each applicant (part 1);
- Administrative template (part 2) with administrative information of the organization(s) involved in the project. The completed template must be uploaded in pdf format on the online form;
- Technical proposal (part 3) with the description of the project, using the mandatory template, including a detailed description of how the grant will be used. The completed template must be uploaded in pdf format on the online form;
- A Declaration of Honour (part 4, to be downloaded from the project [website](#)) that must be signed by all project partners.

Only complete applications will be considered for selection/evaluation.

ORRI booster and ORRI incubator proposals will be based on two different application forms that can be downloaded from the [project website](#).

### **3.2 Where to apply?**

All proposals will be submitted electronically via the [REINFORCING project website](#). Proposals must be received by the Call closing date and time. Late proposals, or proposals submitted by any means other than those indicated in the Guide for applicants, will not be considered.

All proposals and related data, knowledge, and documents will be treated according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016).





## 4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

### 4.1 Evaluation process

The evaluation and ranking of applications will be based on a set of criteria in addition to the above-mentioned eligibility conditions. The evaluation process is structured as follows:

#### 4.1.1 Eligibility check and formal requirements

The REINFORCING consortium, and namely Consorzio Italtotec (ITB) as the contracting entity, will check each proposal for formal requirements, including:

- Compliance with eligibility criteria and general criteria as defined in paragraph 2.4, Eligibility criteria, and paragraph 2.5, General criteria, respectively.
- Completeness of the requested administrative, financial, and technical information, specifically:
  - All required sections of the application template are duly completed. The length of the proposal (Part 3) is also an eligibility criterion. Proposals that exceed the limit in the number of pages declared for each call type will be automatically excluded. This will also be applied to proposals that change the minimum requirements of formatting (e.g., font size, margin size, etc) specified within the proposal template.
  - All data required through the online form is accurately provided.
  - All mandatory documents (i.e., administrative template, proposal template, and Declaration of Honour, the latter one for each partner) are attached and correctly filled out.
  - The Declaration of Honour (DoH) is duly signed by the legal representative of each project partner. If the main contact person and the legal representative are different individuals, only the legal representative has to sign the DoH. Otherwise, the document will be considered invalid.
  - Verification of partner experience, as declared in the DoH and in accordance with the General criteria (paragraph 2.5). Applicants providing false or inconsistent declarations that do not comply with the call's requirements will be excluded.
  - Language of the application (English is mandatory).
  - Compliance with the submission process and deadline.

Applications that do not meet one or more mandatory requirements will be excluded from the following evaluation phases. All applicants eliminated from the process after the eligibility check will be notified by email.

#### 4.1.2 Preliminary assessment by the consortium

If eligible and complete, the REINFORCING consortium will proceed with a first assessment of the proposals. The preliminary assessment is aimed at verifying the overall quality and alignment of the submitted proposals with the objectives and structure of the call.

During this phase, the consortium will focus on the following preliminary quality criteria:

- Compliance with the objectives and thematic scope of the call, as detailed in the official call text.





- Correct classification of the proposal as Booster or Incubator and related activities on institutional change, in line with the specific call under which the proposal was submitted.
- Exclusion of activities explicitly identified as out of scope or not to be funded in the call text.
- Evaluation of the "Requirements for the implementation", as outlined in paragraph 2.6, with particular attention to the development of an ORRI tool as a core expected outcome. Proposals that do not clearly include the design and development of an ORRI tool, with specific task(s) clearly identified and explained, will be automatically rejected during this stage.

Only proposals meeting all the above criteria will proceed to the next stage, where they will be evaluated and ranked by external panelists.

Although some applications may be rejected during the preliminary assessment, the outcome will be formally communicated via email **only at the conclusion of the entire evaluation process.**

### **4.1.3 Final evaluation**

Each proposal that passes the preliminary assessment will be evaluated by three external evaluators according to the awarding criteria as defined in paragraph 5.3. Evaluators for each call are selected through an open call to ensure the best possible expertise in the evaluation process and the absence of conflicts of interest. Experts who are involved in a proposal or in which their institution is involved in a proposal are not eligible to review any of the proposals submitted under the same call. Evaluation panel members are furthermore requested to sign a CoI document and are bound to a confidentiality agreement with the contracting entity.

The evaluation process will consist of an initial individual evaluation, carried out individually by each expert of the evaluation panel remotely, and an online panel assessment, where experts reach an agreement on the proposal evaluation. As a general rule, the proposals submitted under the same call will be evaluated by the same panel of evaluators.

The proposals obtaining the highest ranking after the final evaluation will be selected until the available funding for that call is available. All applicants undergoing the final evaluation will be informed of the evaluation ranking and results by receiving an Evaluation Summary Report.

### **4.2 Evaluation criteria**

The proposals selected for funding must demonstrate high quality in the context and in specific criteria set out for each call. Evaluation criteria evaluated by the external panelists will take into consideration all three sections described in paragraph 3.1. The evaluation criteria are described in the table below.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Evaluation criteria</b>
<b>Objectives, needs and approach [Excellence]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity of the project’s objectives.</li> <li>• Pertinence of the project’s objectives with the call requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>Changes to be achieved [Impact]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected changes benefitting the organization(s) involved, the territory and society at large</li> </ul>
<b>Activities [Implementation]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality and consistency of the actions in relation to the project objectives.</li> </ul>

**Table 6:** Evaluation criteria for proposal assessment





### **4.3 Scoring system**

For the evaluation, each section will be scored from 0 to 5 as follows:

- 0: not acceptable;
- 1 Poor: The criteria in the section are addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses;
- 2 Fair: While the proposal broadly addresses the criteria in the section, there are significant weaknesses;
- 3 Good: The proposal addresses the criteria in the section well, although improvements would be necessary;
- 4 Very good: The proposal addresses the criteria in the section very well, although certain improvements are still possible;
- 5 Excellent: The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the section. Any shortcomings are minor.

The average for each section will be calculated from all reviewer evaluations. The average of all reviewer evaluations for a particular section has to be at least 3. If a criterion is rated on average below 3, the application will be excluded from funding immediately. The sum of these averaged scores results in the total evaluation score for each project. Thus, the highest achievable total evaluation score is 15. The minimum total evaluation score for a project to be funded is 9.

Proposals obtaining a score of 9 or more will be ranked, and the proposals with the highest ranking will be selected until funds for the call are exhausted.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be considered as ranking criteria for ex aequo proposals.

In some cases, diversity could be the leading principle driving the selection of the projects, aiming to obtain a balanced list of selected projects, in terms of geography, types of stakeholders involved, issues addressed, and gender.

### **4.4 Disclaimer on the selection process**

All submitted proposals will be treated equally: they will be evaluated impartially based on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants.

The evaluation procedure will be clear and transparent for applicants; the evaluation ranking and results will be made available to each applicant through an Evaluation Summary Report and released on the REINFORCING website. REINFORCING will publish the outcome of the calls without delay, including a description of grantees' projects, the date of the award, the duration, and the legal name and country of the beneficiary (or beneficiaries).





## 5. GRANTS CONTRACTING AND PAYMENT OF THE FUNDS

### 5.1 Contractual arrangements and general payment terms

Once the evaluation process is concluded, each selected proposal will be invited to sign the REINFORCING Sub-Grant Agreement with the Consortium (represented by Consorzio Italbiotec for the purposes of signature).

Prior to signature, the content of the Sub-Grant Agreement shall be subjected to a review period of fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of receipt of the document by the beneficiaries. Following the expiration of this period, no further modifications, comments, or requests for changes shall be considered or accepted. In any case, the Sub-Grant Agreement shall be signed no later than thirty (30) calendar days from the date of receipt of the document by the beneficiaries.

The funds awarded under the REINFORCING Sub-Grant Agreement are provided directly from the funds of the Horizon Europe-funded project, and are, therefore, funds owned by the European Commission. Management of the REINFORCING funds has been transferred to the project partners via Grant Agreement Number 101094435 signed with the European Commission.

All beneficiaries of REINFORCING financial support must comply with contractual obligations, including:

- **Avoiding conflicts of interest:** The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Sub-Grant Agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest, or any other direct or indirect interest ('conflict of interests').
- **Confidentiality obligations:** The parties must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as sensitive in writing ('sensitive information') - during the implementation of the action and for at least the time limit of 10 years after the final payment. If a beneficiary requests, the REINFORCING Consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for a longer period. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use sensitive information only to implement the Sub-Grant Agreement. The REINFORCING Consortium may disclose sensitive information to its staff and to other EU institutions and bodies. It may moreover disclose sensitive information, if:
  - a) This is necessary to implement the Sub-Grant Agreement or safeguard the EU financial interests.
  - b) The recipients of the information are bound by an obligation of confidentiality.

The confidentiality obligations no longer apply if:

- a) The disclosing party agrees to release the other party.
- b) The information becomes publicly available, without breaching any confidentiality obligation.
- c) The disclosure of the sensitive information is required by EU, international, or national law.





- **Handling of classified information:** The parties must handle classified information in accordance with the applicable EU, international, or national law on classified information (in particular, Decision 2015/44417 and its implementing rules). Deliverables that contain classified information must be submitted according to special procedures agreed with the contracting entity. Action tasks involving classified information may be subcontracted only after explicit approval (in writing) from the contracting entity. Classified information may not be disclosed to any third party (including participants involved in the action implementation) without prior explicit written approval from the contracting entity.
- **Ethics:** The granted action must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international, and national law on ethical principles.
- **Ensuring gender equality:** Applicants are invited to take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including supervisory and managerial levels, to the extent possible.
- **Give visibility to the EU funding:** Unless otherwise agreed with the contracting entity, communication activities of the beneficiaries related to the action (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate):



Funded by  
the European Union

The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands, or text. When displayed in association with other logos (e.g., of beneficiaries or sponsors), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos. Furthermore, for the dissemination and use of results generated through the financial support from the Consortium, the recipients must credit the REINFORCING project through proper citation and appearance of the REINFORCING logo and EU Logo, including the proper citation "This project has received funding from the European Research Executive Agency (REA), under grant agreement number 101094435".

- **Ensuring Intellectual Property Rights:** The ownership of IPR created by the beneficiaries using the REINFORCING funding will remain with the beneficiaries, who will be the sole owners of the solutions in any form of IP created within the framework of their funded projects. The beneficiaries are advised to arrange for internal contracts regarding Intellectual Property Rights, and the use and dissemination of the results generated by the project teams through the funding obtained via REINFORCING financial support.





- **Providing additional information without any delays:** the beneficiaries must provide, during the action or afterwards, any information requested in order to verify the eligibility of the costs or contributions declared, proper implementation of the action, and compliance with the other obligations under the Sub-Grant Agreement. The information provided must be accurate, precise, and complete, and in the format requested, including electronic format.
- **Keeping the data updated:** The beneficiaries must keep — at all times, during the project — their information stored by the REINFORCING Consortium up to date, in particular, their name, address, legal representatives, legal form, and organization type.
- **Communicating information about events and circumstances that impact the action:** The beneficiaries must immediately inform the contracting entity (and the other beneficiaries) of any of the following:
  - a) events which are likely to affect or delay the implementation of the action or affect the EU's financial interests, and in particular changes in their legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation (including changes linked to one of the exclusion grounds listed in the declaration of honour signed before grant signature)
  - b) circumstances affecting the decision to award the grant or compliance with requirements under the Agreement.
- **Record-keeping and supporting documents:** The beneficiaries must — at least for 10 years after final payment — keep records and other supporting documents to prove the proper implementation of the action in line with the accepted standards in the respective field (if any). In addition, the beneficiaries must keep adequate records and supporting documents to prove that their cost accounting practices have been applied in a consistent manner, based on objective criteria, regardless of the source of funding, and that they comply with the eligibility conditions.

### **5.1.1 Consequences of non-compliance**

If a beneficiary breaches any of its obligations linked to carrying out the action, the grant may be reduced.

## **5.2 Reporting and payment of the funds**

Each grantee will be asked to complete a Progress Report, including justifications of expenses, precise descriptions of the actions implemented, the problems encountered, and the solutions adopted. These reports will allow monitoring of the grants, checking that funds are being used according to the plan, and, at the same time, collecting information on the impact of REINFORCING grants. A template will be provided and made available to all beneficiaries.

For ORRI Booster grants, a single final progress report will be required, while for ORRI Incubator grants, two progress reports will be required (mid-term and final report) because of the longer duration of the pilot projects.

Funds will be paid as a lump sum, meaning that payment will be made only if the objectives set in the Grant Agreement are achieved. The report is meant to ensure that the funds are used correctly.

Payment of the funds will be made at the beginning of the project and concurrently with the validation of Progress Reports. This distribution will avoid misuse of funds.





Type	Payment scheme
<b><u>ORRI Booster grants</u></b>	50% at the beginning of the project; 50% at the end
<b><u>ORRI Incubator grants</u></b>	40% at the beginning of the project; 30% after mid-term progress report validation; 30% at the end of the project

**Table 7:** Financing terms per grant category

For ORRI Incubator projects that involve more than one institution, the payment will be made to the institution appointed as coordinator. The coordinator will be responsible for distributing the payments between the beneficiaries without unjustified delay.

### 5.3 Eligible costs

For general eligibility costs, please see article 6 of the Horizon Europe AGA (V1.0 DRAFT – 01.04-2023).

Eligible costs include:

- Personnel costs as described in Article 6.2.A part of the Horizon Europe AGA.
- Purchase costs include:
  - Travel, accommodation, and subsistence (see Article 6.2.C.1 of the Horizon Europe AGA) (*these costs are eligible for ORRI Incubators – large grants only*)
  - Other goods, works, or services, if necessary to implement the action (see Article 6.2.C.3 of the Horizon Europe AGA). The purchase of equipment – including workstations, computers, and similar hardware – is not eligible under this call. These items will not be considered reimbursable costs, regardless of their justification.
- Indirect costs are costs that cannot be identified as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action. They are calculated as a 25% flat rate of the eligible direct costs (personnel costs and purchase costs).

Subcontracting costs are not eligible in the REINFORCING calls.





## 6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

GDPR compliance: The General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU) guarantees that the processing of data is carried out in compliance with the fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the dignity of the data subject, with particular reference to confidentiality, personal identity, and the right to data protection.

By applying, the applicant agrees to the storage and use of their personal data for the execution of the REINFORCING objectives and work plan. The REINFORCING Consortium commits to handling personal data confidentiality except for the call results, which will contain the following information:

- Information about successful REINFORCING funding support applications that will be made publicly available before the end of the project, containing the project title, names of project partners, and a short project description (as provided by the applicant in the application template).
- Information about successful REINFORCING funding support that will be made publicly available after the end of the project: project title, names of project partners, awarded funding, and updated short project description (as provided by the project partners in the Final Report).

The processing of data that REINFORCING Consortium intends to carry out will be based on lawfulness and correctness in the full protection of its rights and its confidentiality pursuant to the general principles of the GDPR and its art.24. Therefore, the competitors are informed of the procedure that the data provided by the applicants will be treated exclusively with reference to the procedure for which they submitted the documentation.

The applicants can exercise their rights towards the data controller, pursuant to Article 12 of the GDPR. For any inquiries regarding the processing of your personal data, please read more about the privacy policy of REINFORCING grantees' contracts management, Consorzio Italbiotec, at the [following link](#). Application selection and evaluation will be performed under the appropriate ethical conduct and will respect the confidentiality of the information received.





## 7. DISCLAIMER

- **Purpose:** This text is explaining the REINFORCING financial support scheme for information purposes only. No rights can be claimed on the basis of this document. This document does not reflect the views of the European Commission and REA.
- **Mistakes or inconsistencies:** The REINFORCING Consortium is not responsible for any mistakes or misinterpretations that this text may cause. In the case of inconsistencies, the Consortium will determine the steps to be taken, in cooperation with the applicant concerned.
- **Modification of the Terms and Conditions:** The REINFORCING partners, represented by the coordinator, are entitled to modify these Terms and Conditions (including re-opening/closing dates of the calls, in case of non-granting of funds and/or early depletion of the available funds, or as they see fit) at any time without notice. The current Guide for Applicants will be provided on the project website ([www.reinforcing.eu](http://www.reinforcing.eu)), always mentioning the version number. The most recent version of the Terms and Conditions of the REINFORCING financial support scheme applies and prevails.
- **Consequential damages:** In no event shall either party be liable to the other or any of its affiliates for any consequential, incidental, indirect, special, punitive or exemplary damages (including, without limitation, lost profits, business or goodwill) suffered or incurred by such other party or its affiliates in connection with this financial support scheme, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.





**REINFORCING**

## 8. SUPPORT TO APPLICANTS

Additional information is provided in the FAQ published on the [project website](#).

For further information on the call or if you have any doubts relating to the eligibility rules or the information that is to be provided in the Application form, please contact the Support Team: [grants@reinforcing.eu](mailto:grants@reinforcing.eu)

