



GRIOS CALL FOR EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS ON OPEN SCIENCE

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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This document compiles questions submitted by potential applicants and the corresponding GRIOS responses. Where necessary, questions were summarised or grouped for clarity and conciseness. Full guidelines and application materials are available at www.grios.org.

Eligibility and conflict of interest

Q1. In the conflict-of-interest clause, the eligibility criteria state that "researchers with a close affiliation with members of GRIOS committees" may be ineligible. Given that the Open Science, research assessment, and reproducibility communities are tightly interconnected, and the call is likely to attract applicants who are themselves active in these communities, could you clarify which bodies are included under the term "GRIOS committees"?

In the call guidance under Eligibility criteria it is mentioned that "Applicants must not present a conflict of interest with the aims or the process of the call. Ineligible applicants include, for example, commercial actors with a financial stake in influencing public research policies, or researchers with a close affiliation with members of GRIOS committees, etc.

In this context, "GRIOS committees" refers to the GRIOS Steering Committee, the GRIOS Advisory Board and the GRIOS Secretariat.

Q2. What does "close affiliation" mean under the conflict-of-interest clause? Would the following relationships be considered disqualifying, or instead managed via declaration and/or recusal?

- a) **Co-membership in an active, externally-funded research consortium (e.g., Horizon Europe) on a topic unrelated to this call, where neither party is the coordinator**

- b) **Co-applicant status on a research proposal currently under evaluation elsewhere, on an unrelated topic**
- c) **Co-membership in a non-funded professional network or community of practice**
- d) **A planned future co-submission to an unrelated call**
- e) **Past co-authorship of academic publications, without a current funded collaboration**

In the call guidance under Eligibility criteria, it is mentioned that “Ineligible applicants include, for example, (...) researchers with a close affiliation with members of GRIOS committees, etc.

In this context “close affiliation” means relatives (family members) or other close personal relationships. Naturally, the members of these GRIOS boards are themselves ineligible.

For all the above-mentioned cases (a-e), these situations would not in themselves disqualify a researcher from applying for the call and the applicant would not be considered ineligible. At the evaluation phase, any potential conflict of interest will be assessed and addressed so that members of the GRIOS committees do not evaluate proposals where they have a conflict of interest.

Q3. Where a relationship falls in a grey-zone, how would GRIOS handle a potential conflict of interest? For example, through (i) ineligibility, (ii) eligibility with declaration in the application, (iii) eligibility with declaration plus recusal of the affected committee member from evaluation, or (iv) something else?

In grey-zone cases, GRIOS will consider the applicant eligible and manage the conflict of interest at the evaluation stage through recusal of the affected committee member.

Scope

Q4. Could you please confirm whether this project can be focused on a discipline such as Engineering or Built Environment to achieve Topic 1 or 2? Or does the project have to be covering all potential research under any discipline, yet focused on either Topic 1 or 2?

The evidence synthesis carried out in the framework of the GRIOS call for proposals must address either Topic 1 or Topic 2 in the guidelines and the research should be as exhaustive as possible, including literature from multiple disciplines, in more than one languages, etc. Any decision about restricting the scope should be justified in the call.

Q5. Should applicants aim to cover the full ecosystem of research data sharing policies (e.g., funder mandates, journal policies, institutional policies, repository requirements, national policies), or would a more focused synthesis centered on one policy domain be considered equally responsive if methodologically justified?

The evidence synthesis carried out in the framework of the GRIOS call for proposals should be as exhaustive as possible, including literature from multiple disciplines, in more than one language, etc. If methodologically justified, a more focused scope could be considered.

Q6. Does GRIOS expect proposals to address multiple effectiveness domains simultaneously (e.g., intention to share data, actual data availability, reuse, impact of reuse), or would a focused review on one or several clearly defined outcome domains be acceptable?

By default, we expect all effectiveness domains to be addressed, but if it is methodologically justified, a more focused scope could be considered.

Q7. When defining "uptake" of Open Science practices, does GRIOS expect proposals to address multiple outcome domains simultaneously (e.g., self-reported intention, observed adoption rates, sustained practice over time, quality and depth of practice, downstream effects on research culture), or would a focused review on one or two clearly defined outcome domains be acceptable?

By default, the review should be as exhaustive as possible within the given time-, budgetary- and methodological constraints. The applicant may choose to focus on the uptake domain(s) that are best suited for the review and that provide the most useful information to inform open science policies. These choices should be justified in the proposal.

Q8. Open Science practices span a heterogeneous set of behaviours (preprints, open data, open code, open peer review, registered reports, citizen science, etc.), each with its own incentive landscape. Does GRIOS expect proposals to address incentives for the full breadth of these practices, or would a focused synthesis on incentives targeting a specific practice or family of practices be acceptable if justified?

By default, the review should be as exhaustive as possible within the given time-, budgetary- and methodological constraints. The applicant may choose to focus on the practice(s) that are best suited for the review and that provide the most useful information to inform open science policies. These choices should be justified in the proposal.

Q9. Could you advise how to join a team responding to the call?

GRIOS cannot assist potential applicants in setting up or joining a research team to respond to this call.

Design and Methodology

Q10. Are mixed-methods or qualitative evidence synthesis approaches considered equally suitable alongside more quantitative systematic review or meta-analytic approaches, particularly for questions relating to research culture and behavioural factors influencing data sharing?

The applicant may choose the evidence synthesis approach and methodology that they judge best fit to achieve the objectives of the call, and should justify their choice in the proposal. It is recommended to combine all relevant methodologies, so that they yield evidence to inform open science policies.

Q11. Much of the existing evidence on assessment reform consists of qualitative case studies, implementation reports, and policy analyses rather than quantitative outcome studies. Are mixed-methods or qualitative evidence synthesis approaches (e.g., realist synthesis, framework synthesis) considered equally suitable alongside more quantitative systematic review or meta-analytic approaches, particularly for questions about institutional implementation and behavioural change?

The applicant may choose the evidence synthesis approach and methodology that they judge best fit to achieve the objectives of the call, and should justify their choice in the proposal.

Q12. Could GRIOS clarify its expectations regarding inclusion of literature from low- and middle-income countries and non-English sources?

As mentioned in the guidelines, we expect the inclusion of literature in as many languages as possible whilst keeping the review manageable (but at least one non-English language in addition to English). We encourage the inclusion of literature from low- and middle-income countries when this is feasible.

Q13. Does GRIOS expect applicants to systematically include grey literature (e.g., institutional reports, repository policies, funder guidance documents), or should applicants determine the extent of grey literature inclusion based on methodological fit and feasibility?

By default, we expect the inclusion of grey literature – and if this is not possible or not recommended by the applicant, they should justify their choice in the proposal.

Applicants should determine the extent of grey literature inclusion based on methodological fit and feasibility and justify their choice in the proposal.

Q14. Could GRIOS clarify its expectations regarding the inclusion of literature, policy documentation, and implementation evidence from low- and middle-income countries and Global South contexts, given the call's explicit interest in how incentive schemes can be adapted to low-resource settings?

We would welcome the inclusion of literature, policy documentation, and implementation evidence from low- and middle-income countries and Global South contexts, in more than one language, where these are available and usable for the review.

Q15. If AI-assisted tools are used for screening, extraction, or synthesis, what level of methodological documentation and reproducibility would GRIOS expect in the final deliverables?

We expect a high-quality review and high reproducibility. Guarantees should be given about the performance of any tool that could be used. The use of AI tools should be justified and validated for the specific purpose of the review.

Q16. Would GRIOS consider a staged or adaptive review design acceptable, where the review question or scope may be refined after initial evidence mapping if the literature base proves too broad or uneven?

Yes, this is acceptable if the applicant thinks it is necessary – this should be justified in the proposal. The methods used for this should be state of the art and the criteria to adapt the review process should be prespecified.

Q17. Does GRIOS have any expectations regarding engagement with stakeholders (e.g., funders, repository managers, institutional policy teams, researchers) during the review process to support interpretation and policy relevance?

There is no expectation to engage with stakeholders – we are expecting a desk review.

Q18. Are applicants expected to assess the comparative effectiveness of different policy mechanisms (i.e., evaluate which kinds of policies work better than others), or is the focus primarily on identifying factors associated with successful or unsuccessful implementation (i.e., what conditions make data-sharing policies succeed or fail)?

As the aim of the call is to inform Open Science policies, both approaches should be addressed.

Q19. Clarification concerning Topic 2: Would GRIOS consider a scoping review with structured evidence mapping and realist/implementation-oriented synthesis appropriate, rather than a conventional effect-size meta-analysis, given the expected heterogeneity of data-sharing policy interventions, outcomes, disciplines and grey literature?

Yes. The applicant may choose the evidence synthesis approach and methodology that they judge best fit to achieve the objectives of the call, and should justify their choice in the proposal.

Q20. The guidelines list systematic reviews, scoping reviews, rapid reviews, and umbrella reviews as examples of acceptable evidence synthesis approaches. Would GRIOS consider a structured narrative review acceptable where the heterogeneity, conceptual breadth, or maturity of the evidence base makes a more formal systematic approach impractical, provided the methodology is transparent, justified, and follows recognised reporting standards?

Yes. The applicant may choose the evidence synthesis approach and methodology that they judge best fit to achieve the objectives of the call, and should justify their choice in the proposal.

Q21. Several of the initiatives named in the call (e.g., CoARA, large-scale narrative CV adoption) are recent and may not yet have generated mature outcome evidence. How should applicants handle the gap between policy salience and empirical evidence maturity — for example, would GRIOS expect reviews to incorporate emerging implementation evidence, stakeholder evaluations, and grey literature, or to restrict synthesis to studies with documented outcomes?

We would expect the review to include literature that is as recent as possible, including “grey” literature (policy reports, studies, etc) where this is available and useful. The design of the proposal should take into account that there is a risk that relevant literature may be lacking for certain questions, and should focus on areas where useful evidence can be provided that can inform open science policies.

Q22. The call explicitly highlights unintended consequences (gaming behaviours, superficial compliance, narrowing of measurable practices at the expense of theory or innovation) as a focus. Does GRIOS expect this to be integrated throughout the synthesis, or treated as a distinct analytical workstream — for example, a complementary realist or scoping component examining how and why such effects arise?

The applicant may choose the approach that they find most relevant, doable and useful to provide evidence to inform open science policies.

Q23. Are applicants expected to assess the comparative effectiveness of different incentive mechanisms (i.e., evaluate which kinds of incentives or reforms produce greater uptake than others), or is the primary focus on identifying the conditions, mechanisms, and contextual factors that shape successful or unsuccessful implementation?

As the aim of the call is to inform Open Science policies, both approaches should be addressed.

Q24. The call defines the relevant research community broadly to include researchers, technicians, software engineers, data stewards, and others. Does GRIOS expect proposals to address incentives across all these professional roles, or would a focused synthesis on a defined subset (e.g., academic researchers, or a comparison across roles) be acceptable if justified?

By default, the review should be as exhaustive as possible and reasonable within the given time-, budgetary- and methodological constraints. The applicant may choose to focus on the areas that are best suited for the review and that provide the most useful information to inform open science policies. These choices should be justified in the proposal.

Q25. Regarding topic 2 (effectiveness of data sharing policies): Most of the questions listed can be answered via systematic/scoping reviews; however, when it comes to assessing the content of policies, this suggests document analysis of these policies, which is not technically a systematic review. I suspect that any systematic review around this general topic will need to say something about the content of data sharing policies, but this seems somewhat out of scope of an evidence synthesis. Maybe this could be (somewhat) clarified.

It is acceptable (and even recommended) to combine different study methods, if this contributes to the objective of the study to provide evidence about the factors that influence the effectiveness of research data sharing policies, and how aspects of research culture (such as career stage, discipline, etc) shape that effectiveness. The aim is always to inform open science policies with evidence.

Q26. The call (understandably) requires any outputs to be available under a cc-by license at a minimum. Does the funding include APCs should that be needed?

The report resulting from this call will be a GRIOS-branded report published open access on the internet and in a repository. The authors of the report are free to use the results of their work to publish them as an open access journal article. However, the APCs for that subsequent output are not eligible costs of this call.

Budget and contractual issues

Q27. Are institutional overheads (indirect costs) eligible expenses in this call? If they are eligible, could you please specify the applicable rules or limits?

Overheads are eligible expenses in this call. The call does not specify any rules or limits. It is up to the applicant to propose a reasonable budget breakdown with justifiable costs, noting that value for money is one of the evaluation criteria.

Q28. It is specified that a main applicant will receive the funds. Just to clarify: would it be permissible for the project team to be distributed across multiple institutions, with the funding used to support salaries at different institutions? If so, would the main applicant then be responsible for setting up the necessary inter-institutional agreements/contracts?

Yes, the project team may include individuals from multiple eligible institutions, and the budget may support their fees. The main applicant is responsible for coordinating the distribution of funds between the team members within a framework of their choosing and under their responsibility (agreement, contract, etc.).

Q29. The call specifies that “The total budget available for each evidence synthesis topic is 80 000 EUR, excluding taxes”. What does “excluding taxes” mean in this regard? Beneficiaries would receive a maximum of EUR 80k, which they would use to pay for the person(s) working on the evidence synthesis. Does that mean that beneficiaries would pay any amount exceeding the 80k in-kind? Does that mean that ESF will “top up” the EUR 80k based on the tax code of the beneficiaries country?

Beneficiaries (outside France) may invoice a maximum of 80 KEUR excluding VAT (and 20% VAT on services will be paid by ESF, the host of the GRIOS secretariat in France using the reverse charge procedure). Beneficiaries located in France will have to invoice according to their own fiscal status with or without VAT.

ESF is not responsible for other tax obligations that the beneficiaries have in their own countries.

ESF will not financially compensate for contributions (in-kind or otherwise) beyond the financial support agreed contractually.

Q30. Does GRIOS have a template for the contract awarded to the successful applicant to do the review, and if so, can we see a copy of it? Or is the contract drawn up by the applicants’ institution?

We are developing a contract template that could be shared on the website as soon as it is ready.