



NEXT GENERATION DATA INCUBATOR

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

REACH 1st open call for proposals

Closing date for proposals:

15th February 2021 at 12:00 (noon) CET



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History of changes

16/11/2020	1 st REACH Open call publication
18/01/2021	Guidelines minor updates in Section 6.4.1
09/02/2021	Pag 9 correction of applications submission deadline, 2121 corrected by 2021. “noon” reference included in the deadline Pag 35, “noon” reference included in the project deadline.

Introduction

This document provides a full set of information regarding the first open call for proposals for the EuRoPEAn incubator for trusted and secure data value Chain – REACH (<https://www.reach-incubator.eu/>). In addition to these guidelines, the applicants are invited to get acquainted with

- o the Sub-Grant Agreement template. The Sub-Grant Agreement draft template is available [here](#).
- o the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed between Data Providers involved in Track 3 and the REACH project coordinator, Commissariat à l’Énergie Atomique et aux énergies alternatives (CEA). The MoU model is available [here](#).

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Table of Content

1	ABOUT BIG DATA VALUE PPP.....	8
2	OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE OPEN CALL.....	9
3	REACH GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND TRACKS.....	10
3.1	REACH APPROACH.....	12
3.2	DATA OFFERING.....	14
3.3	DATA CHALLENGES & THEMES.....	14
3.4	WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROPOSALS ARE SUBMITTED?.....	14
4	ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA.....	15
4.1	BENEFICIARIES.....	15
4.2	ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES.....	15
4.3	LANGUAGE.....	15
4.4	NUMBER OF PROPOSALS PER APPLICANT. MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS.....	16
4.5	REACH AND I4TRUST PROJECTS.....	16
4.6	SUBMISSION SYSTEM.....	16
4.7	DEADLINE.....	16
4.8	DOCUMENTATION FORMATS.....	17
4.9	ABSENCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	17
4.10	OTHER.....	17
5	PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS.....	18
6	EVALUATION PROCESS.....	19
6.1	PROPOSAL STAGE - EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS AND ACCESS TO REACH PROGRAMME.....	19
	Evaluators.....	20
	Scoring.....	20
6.1.1	Draw resolution.....	21
6.1.2	Communication.....	21
6.1.3	Preparation and Signature of the Agreement.....	21
6.2	PHASE 1 – EXPLORE.....	23
6.2.1	Submission.....	23
6.2.2	Evaluation.....	23
6.2.3	Evaluators.....	23
6.2.4	Draw resolution.....	23
6.2.5	Communication.....	23
6.2.6	Payments.....	24
6.2.7	Next Phase.....	24
6.3	PHASE 2 - EXPERIMENT.....	25
6.3.1	Evaluation.....	25
6.3.2	Communication.....	25
6.3.3	Payments.....	25

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6.3.4	Next phase.....	26
6.4	PHASE 3 - EVOLVE.....	26
6.4.1	Evaluation.....	26
6.4.2	Payments.....	26
6.5	PHASE 4 - EXPOSE.....	26
6.5.1	Payments.....	26
7	FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED.....	27
7.1	FUNDING PRINCIPLE.....	27
7.2	ORIGIN OF THE FUNDS.....	27
7.3	USE OF THE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION AND RECOVERY.....	28
8	TECHNICAL SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EVENTS BY REACH.....	29
8.1	INFRASTRUCTURE.....	29
8.2	SERVICE CATALOGUE.....	30
8.3	REACH EVENTS.....	31
9	APPLICANTS COMMUNICATION FLOW.....	32
9.1	GENERAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE.....	32
9.2	APPEAL PROCEDURE.....	32
10	INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR).....	33
10.1	BACKGROUND.....	33
10.2	FOREGROUND.....	33
10.3	COMMUNICATION OBLIGATIONS.....	33
11	SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS.....	34
12	SCHEDULE.....	35

List of figures

Figure 1 The REACH incubation process.....	12
Figure 2 Overall funnel approach of reach during the incubation process of the first call	13
Figure 3 Service catalogue of REACH (E: event, W: webinar).....	30
Figure 4 REACH tentative events calendar	31

List of tables

Table 1 : REACH's ratios for selected proposals.....	11
Table 2 : REACH's programme tentative dates	35



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Abbreviations

BDVA PPP	Big Data Value Public Private Partnership
REACH	EuRoPEn incubator for trusted and secure data value Chain
DVC	Data Value Chain
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
SME	Small and medium enterprise

1 ABOUT BIG DATA VALUE PPP

The [Big Data Value Association](#) AISBL (BDVA) is a fully self-financed non-for-profit organization under Belgian law. The BDVA is the private counterpart to the EU Commission to implement the BDV PPP programme (Big Data Value PPP). BDVA has more than 200 members all over Europe with a well-balanced composition of large and small and medium-sized industries as well as research organizations.

REACH is part of the Big Data Value PPP [1] within a group of projects known as the Big Data Value PPP projects [2].

The Big Data Value PPP signature on 13th October 2014 was the first step towards building a thriving data community in the EU. This signature marks the commitment by the European Commission, industry and academia partners to build a data-driven economy across Europe, mastering the generation of value from Big Data and creating a significant competitive advantage for European industry, boosting economic growth and jobs.

The Big Data Value PPP commenced in 2015, starting with first projects in 2016 and it will run until 2020. Covering the multidimensional character of Big Data, the PPP activities will address technology and applications development, business model discovery, ecosystem validation, skills profiling, regulatory and IPR environment and social aspects.

The Big Data Value PPP will lead to a comprehensive innovation ecosystem for achieving and sustaining European leadership on Big Data, and for delivering maximum economic and societal benefit to Europe – its business and its citizens.

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2 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE OPEN CALL

REACH, the “EuRoPEAn incubator for trusted and secure data value Chains”, is an Innovation Action project funded by the European Commission under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, under the Grant Agreement No. 951981.

It has been launched in September 2020 and will create a second-generation Big Data incubator, building on the successful efforts of [EDI](#) – European Data Incubator to accelerate data-driven innovation in Europe, towards the vision of the [Common European Data Space](#) and developing the [European Data Market](#). REACH goes one step further from previous Data Incubators by focusing on secured and trusted Data Value Chains and demonstrating that Data Silos can be broken across sectors and stakeholders.

The main objective of REACH is to launch a sustainable European-wide second-generation incubator for data-driven start-ups and SMEs. The incubator aims to stimulate the generation of 100 business ideas from SMEs and select among them 30 solid business cases based on data-driven innovation, born from experimentations on secure and trusted data value chains across several sectors. This, with the aim of launching new data-fuelled products and services to the market and leveraged by the capacities of the best data-driven DIHs in Europe.

A Data Value Chain represents a multi-stakeholder data workflow whereby applying data analytics, both data and solution providers reciprocally benefit through joint exploitation models.

Any project selected by REACH must be implemented by an SME/startup and it is obliged to make use of a set of data assets for experimentation as defined in any of the tracks of this Open Call for proposals.

Along its lifetime, REACH will support +100 business ideas from SMEs and select among them 30 solid business cases through a total of three open calls in the coming three years, distributing a total amount of €3.5M. Each participant could receive as maximum €100,000 for a project. In the case that the company wins the REACH Best Experiment Grant, will receive a maximum of €120.000.

This 1st Open Call will accept 30 submissions led and executed by SMEs/startups, actively involved in research, development, and application activities. The selected projects should have potential to entail a substantial advance in the state of the art, delivering new services with potential to improve the European Data Market (i.e. data-oriented solutions that improve the exploitation of data assets) and/or reach the market in the short run.

The call is open for **submission from 16th November 2020 until 15th February 2021, at noon (12 p.m. noon; CET)**

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3 REACH GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND TRACKS

REACH will support the selected applicant through a 11-month programme where experts in diverse fields will provide a successful working methodology, access to top infrastructure and services, training in business and data related topics, coaching, mentoring, visibility and community building support.

The call will fund the execution of projects led by SMEs including a Data Value Chain (DVC) scenario where value is created from the sharing of data, proposing innovative products and services making use of Big Data tools but also adhering to one of the participation tracks defined below.

The open call will be divided in **three participation tracks**. Applicants must apply for one of them:

- o **THEME-DRIVEN (Track 1):** cross-sectorial Data Value Chain (DVC) themes to be tackled by participants have been defined by the REACH consortium. These DVC themes are Data Challenges on Secure and Trusted Data value Chain (e.g. tourism, energy, healthcare & insurance, manufacturing/industry...).

Applicants will select the theme from the REACH DVCs Theme page [3] and then, choose a challenge from REACH Challenge Catalogue [4] (tagged as being Theme-Driven), at application stage.

There will be two different DVC theme categories:

- ❖ **Individual DVC themes:** composed by a single experiment.
- ❖ **Collaborative DVC themes:** composed by complementary and individual experiments.

The datasets to be used in this track could be a combination of the following

- ❖ Dataset provided by REACH data providers and available at REACH Data Catalogue [5].
- ❖ Dataset or datasets, external to REACH Data Catalogue (i.e. open data), as long as the applicant has access and processing rights to the data in compliance with data protection regulations, and has legal permission to include them in a commercial solution.
- ❖ Dataset or datasets provided by Data Provider/s applicants bring to the project.

It is not it is not always necessary to have a combination of datasets to demonstrate the DVC in the experimentation. Applicants are encouraged to use datasets provided by REACH data providers. 50% of the applicants selected for the Theme-Driven will be using datasets from the REACH Data Catalogue.

- o **READY-MADE (Track 2):** Applications will deal with challenges defined by the REACH data providers according to the needs detected in their market. Applicants will select the challenge to be solved from the REACH Challenge Catalogue [4] (tagged as being Ready-Made), at application stage. The use of datasets from different sectors or fields to create cross-sector DVCs is encouraged.

Applicants are encouraged to combine these datasets available in the REACH Catalogue with other from other sectors (i.e. Open data). At least 20% of the selected experiments under this participation track will be cross sector.

- o **FREE CHOICE (Track 3):** Applicants will devise novel DVCs by bringing their own data provider/s and/or their own datasets with those already facilitated within the REACH Data Catalogue [5]. The applicant, a single SME, will apply together with their own Data Provider/s (at least one) proposing a joint challenge to be solved.

Applicants are encouraged to combine datasets from different sectors. At least 10% of the selected experiments under this participation track will be cross-sector.

Bringing Data Provider/s (and their data) is a requirement to participate in this track and it cannot be replaced using open data or own data. Datasets to be used are a combination of the following:

- ❖ Dataset or datasets provided by the Data Provider/s applicants bring to the project.
- ❖ Dataset provided by REACH data providers and available at REACH Data Catalogue [5]
- ❖ Dataset or datasets, external to REACH Data catalogue (i.e. open data), as long as the applicant has access and processing rights to the data in compliance with data protection regulations, and has legal permission to include them in a commercial solution.

IMPORTANT: For Track 1 (THEME DRIVEN) and Track 3 (FREE CHOICE), if the applicant brings its own data provider, the data provider will have to comply with the country eligibility rules (section 4.2) and follow the same rules of current REACH data providers. To sum up:

- o to complete the Data Providers application form, as indicated in the Application Form to be filled in by the Applicant.
- o to sign a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with REACH project coordinator, Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux énergies alternatives (CEA), at the time of the application and before 1st April 2021. The MoU model is available [here](#).
- o to sign the Sub-Grant Agreement in case of selection of the Applicant before the beginning of the incubation in April 2021. A Sub-Grant Agreement template is available [here](#).
- o Provide access to the data and assistance to the Sub-grantee if selected.
- o Participate in the meetings with the Sub-grantee organised by the project and in the evaluations in the corresponding pitches and events, if selected.

REACH incubation process will be continuously monitored by the core consortium of the project to facilitate experiments matchmaking and thus, give place to meaningful experiments, possibly cross-sector and collaborative ones, as long as they are always led by a SME. Therefore, the REACH experiments will be carried out by individual SMEs or in a collaborative approach.

- o **Individual SME experiment:** A single data-driven SME participates solving challenges and experiments.
- o **Collaborative SME experiment:** Several data-driven SMEs will conduct experiments under a common DVC theme or Data Provider's challenge. This way of collaboration will be fostered by REACH partners, for example, identifying synergies among applicants along the incubation. The consortium will aim 20% of the experiments progressing on this collaborative scheme to contribute towards the DVC concept.

The following table summarizes important issues regarding the type of proposals that are expected to be funded:

PARTICIPATION TRACK	MAX. RATE OF PROPOSALS	DATASETS TO BE USED
THEME-DRIVEN (track1)	40%.	At least 50% of the applicants selected will be using datasets from the REACH Data Catalogue.
READY MADE (track2)	40%	At least 20% of the selected experiments under this participation track will be cross sector.
FREE CHOICE (track3)	20%	At least 10% of the selected experiments under this participation track will be cross-sector.

Table 1 : REACH's ratios for selected proposals

3.1 REACH approach

REACH has been conceived as a 4-phase incubation/acceleration programme: **EXPLORE > EXPERIMENT > EVOLVE > EXPOSE**, in which the selected SMEs will be offered a set of technical and business services to develop an MVP (Minimum Viable Product) and reach a high technology maturity level for their solution but also a high market and investment readiness level (MRL & IRL).

The figure below shows the overall scheme of the incubation process:

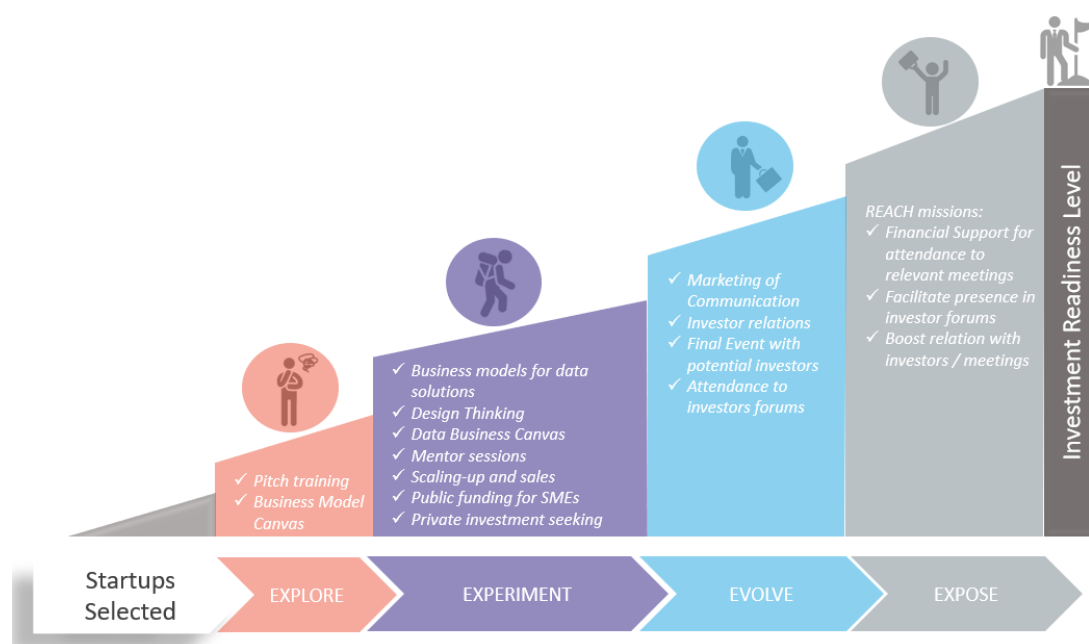


Figure 1 The REACH incubation process

REACH uses a funnel approach for project selection across four stages. Notice that funding is results-driven, depending on specific metrics of success (KPIs and commercial deliverables) described for each incubation phase/stage:

- EXPLORE (PHASE 1 – Idea Validation):** Up to 30-40 teams will enter this phase per call. This phase will help SMEs to clearly define the activities to carry out the experiment as well as the needs to be covered during the incubation with the supporting services provided by REACH. Initial trainings on Big Data and Business models related aspects will be organised. At the end of the phase, an event will be organised where the teams will present the first mock-ups of their experiments. During the event, REACH teams will compete in a “demolition pitch”, which will select the top projects progressing to the next phase (**up to 10 teams take part**).
- EXPERIMENT (PHASE 2 – Product realization):** During this phase, REACH teams will work in the solution development but also in their plan for the mission to reach the market and find investment. **This phase will end with the implementation of an MVP (Minimum Viable Product)** with the potential to be introduced into the market in the short-medium term.

The end of the EXPERIMENT phase will take place in the context of an event where startups will have the opportunity to defend their MVPs in front of external business and technical experts and business angels’ representatives.

- **EVOLVE (PHASE 3 – Market launch and investment search):** Up to 5 teams with a solid MVP and market potential will access this phase. This phase is dedicated to gaining the needed market readiness, promotion, community building, partnerships and to discover real investment opportunities. REACH partners will engage with investors forums in different event locations with the support of major events such as South Summit, Slush or Web Summit. This will be held as part of the final event for the programme and the best experiment will be recognized.
- **EXPOSE (PHASE 4 – Private funds raising):** This phase will run in parallel to EVOLVE phase and even the end of EXPERIMENT. The idea is that REACH startups/SMEs, those having reached EXPERIMENT, have the opportunity to reach as far as possible with the products incubated thanks to the project, and have the **opportunity to meet Business Angels, Corporate Investors and VCs attending to events such as South Summit or Web Summit**. In this case, **about 10 companies per round will have the chance to have a relevant presence in key events across Europe**.

Each company funded will receive **up to €100k** depending on the stage reached in the incubation process under a lump sum scheme, based on the approval of different milestones or KPIs and along the funnel approach. In the case that the company wins the REACH Best Experiment Grant, will receive a **maximum of €120.000**.

A graph summarizing the process is shown below:

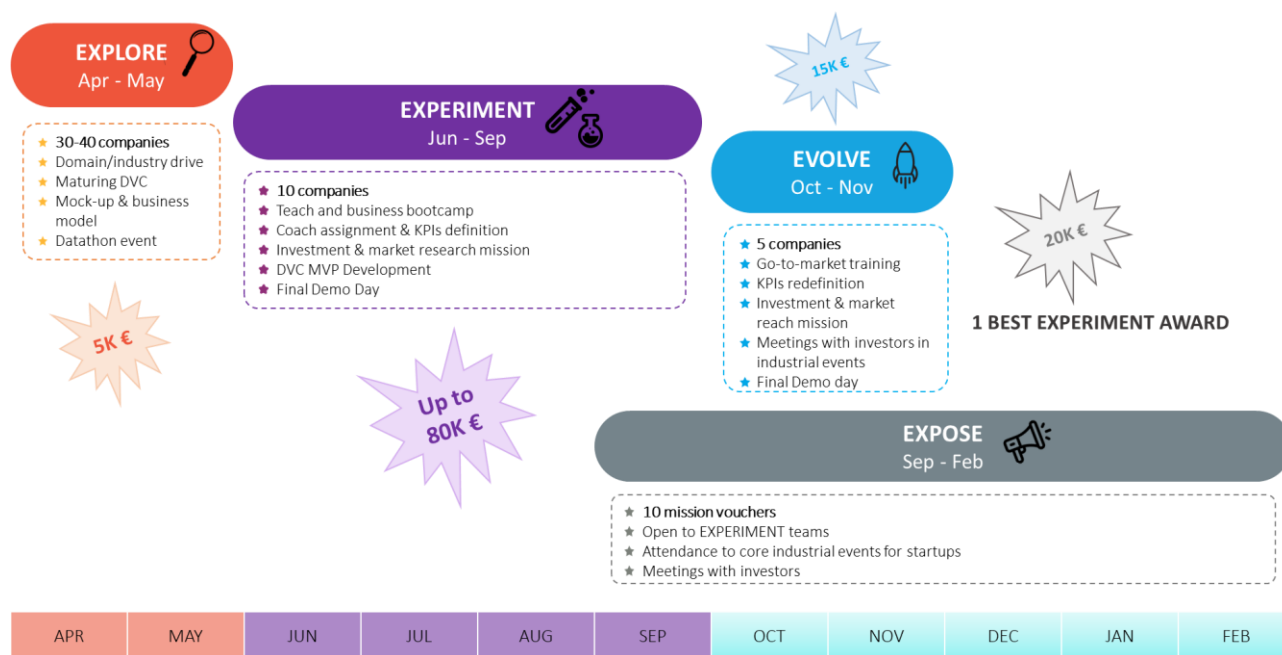


Figure 2 Overall funnel approach of reach during the incubation process of the first call

Each phase comprises a set of activities that qualify for financial support. All the funds disbursed will be based on concrete results and KPIs assessment. Further detail in Section 7.

3.2 Data offering

The sample data offered by project Data Providers is available at REACH Data Catalogue [5] for those participants applying to “Track 1 – Theme Driven” or “Track 2 – Ready Made”. Only applicants progressing to EXPERIMENT will have access to full datasets.

In the case of applicants –“bringing their own data provider”, either in Track1 or Track3, they will be requested to complete a specific form at application stage to evaluate the appropriateness of the data provider /s, the challenge and the dataset/s proposed according to the evaluation process defined in Section 6.

3.3 Data Challenges & Themes

REACH data challenges and DVC themes are defined in the REACH Challenge Catalogue [4] for those participants applying to “Theme Driven” “Ready Made”.

Applicants of “Free Choice” will be requested to complete specific information to evaluate the appropriateness of the challenge proposed.

3.4 What happens after the proposals are submitted?

Immediately after the submission deadline (15th February 2021 at 12.00 CET (noon)) is over, the evaluation process begins (as described in detail in Section 6 of this Guide).

External experts will evaluate proposals submitted through the online system and score them adequately to the quality of the content presented. The goal of the process is to select 30 proposals with the highest scores that will be invited to join the programme.

4 ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants will have to abide to all general requirements described in this section to be considered eligible for REACH. Therefore, please read this section carefully.

4.1 Beneficiaries

The accepted applicants for REACH open calls are start-ups in the form of **SMEs** ^[6]. A SME will be considered as such if accomplishing with the [Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC](#) [7] and the [SME user guide](#). As a summary, the criteria which define a SME are:

- o Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250.
- o Annual turnover less or equal to €50 million or annual balance sheet total, less or equal to €43 million.

The participation of other entities in a single application will be allowed only as **Data Providers**, but they will not receive funding.

4.2 Eligible countries

Only applicants (SMEs and DPs) legally established/resident in any of the following countries (hereafter collectively identified as the "Eligible Countries") are eligible:

- o The Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions
- o The [Overseas Countries and Territories \(OCT\) linked to the Member States](#) ¹;
- o [H2020 associated countries](#) (those which signed an agreement with the Union as identified in Article 7 of the Horizon 2020 Regulation): according to the updated list published by the EC;
- o The UK applicants are eligible under the conditions set by the EC for H2020 participation at the time of the dead line of the call.

4.3 Language

English is the official language for REACH open calls. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the REACH programme. This means any requested submission of deliverables will be done in English to be eligible.

¹ Entities from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) are eligible for funding under the same conditions as entities from the Member States to which the OCT in question is linked.

4.4 Number of proposals per applicant. Multiple submissions

Given the fact this call is a competitive one, and the applicants will focus on a specific challenge, only **one proposal per applicant will be evaluated, and accepted for funding**. In the case of multiple submissions, only the last one received (timestamp of the system) will enter our evaluation process, the rest being declared as non-eligible.

If the last submitted proposal is declared then non-eligible or fails to reach the thresholds of the evaluation, the other proposals submitted earlier will not be considered for evaluation in any case.

4.5 REACH and i4TRUST projects

Double funding is not acceptable. Start-ups or SMEs that have previously been beneficiaries in other incubators approved under the same topic (H2020- DT-ICT-05-2019 subtopic 2), namely, i4Trust, will not be funded by REACH and they are not allowed to apply to REACH 1st open call.

The basic information about a proposal (summary and participants) will be shared with the H2020- DT-ICT-05-2019 subtopic 2 ICT i4Trust incubator projects to check compatibility. It is possible to submit a proposal to REACH if you have taken part in i4Trust previously.

4.6 Submission system

Only proposals submitted through the **Open Call submission tool (F6S platform)** at <https://www.f6s.com/reach-oci-startups/apply> [8] which is directly linked from REACH website [9], and within the open call duration will be accepted. Proposals submitted by any other means, will be automatically discarded, and not be evaluated.

Only the documentation included in the application will be considered by evaluators. It will be composed by a form with administrative questions to be completed directly in the platform and the proposal description attached in PDF format.

The information provided should be actual, true and complete and should enable the assessment of the proposal.

The regular operation of the F6S platform limits to one application submission per F6S user in each call. If an F6S user wishes to submit more than one application, for example on behalf of different legal entities, the F6S user should request support from the **F6S support team** (support@f6s.com) at least 10 days prior the open call deadline.

Documents required in subsequent phases will be submitted via dedicated channel, which will be indicated by REACH consortium during the sub-granted projects execution.

4.7 Deadline

Only proposals submitted before the deadline will be accepted. After the call closure, no additions, or changes to received proposals will be considered. The deadline for this call is **15th February 2021, at 12.00 noon (midday)**.

4.8 Documentation formats

Any document requested in any of the phases must be submitted electronically in the format indicated, Excel-compatible or PDF, without restrictions for printing.

4.9 Absence of conflict of interest

Applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the REACH selection process and during the whole programme. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. In particular, **applicants cannot be REACH Consortium partners or affiliated entities nor their employees or co-operators under a contractual agreement.**

4.10 Other

Each applicant must confirm:

- It is not under liquidation or is not an enterprise under difficulty accordingly to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18,
- Its project is based on the original works and going forward any foreseen developments are free from third party rights, or they are clearly stated,
- It is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority,
- Applicants that have previously been beneficiaries in EDI Incubator are allowed to apply to REACH open call. However, double funding for the same proposal is not acceptable. The experiments must be significantly different in REACH.

5 PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS

The submission will be done through the F6S platform which is directly linked from REACH website [10]. The applicants are required to register a profile at F6S to be able to submit a proposal.

The documents that will be submitted are:

- o **Application form:** The application form will be different depending on the type of application track we are approaching. The online form will be divided in different sections: (1) Company information, (2) Technical approach and proposed use-case, (3) Team behind the project, (4) Company business, market and growth strategy and (5) the feasibility of a business case under the use case scenario. The applicant will need to provide some financial information (past and future estimations) at the time of the proposal submission. Properly providing this information is mandatory for evaluation.
- o **Declaration on Honour:** A tick box clicked by the SME or the individuals confirming they have read the conditions and agree with the conditions defined in this document. The model of this declaration is available [here](#).

If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and provided the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may submit a new version (for this purpose, the applicant must request it to F6S team through opencall@reach-incubator.eu). Only the last version received before the call deadline will be considered in the evaluation.

The project proposals must strictly adhere to the template provided by REACH consortium via F6S platform, which defines sections and the overall length. Participants are requested to carefully read and follow the instructions in the form. Evaluators will be instructed not to consider extra material in the evaluation.

Additional material, which has not been specifically requested in the online application form, will not be considered for the evaluation of the proposals. Data not included in the proposal will not be considered.

It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including communications delays, automatically leads to rejection of the submission. The time of receipt of the message as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

REACH offers a dedicated support channel available for proposers at opencall@reach-incubator.eu. Requests or inquiries about the submission system or the call itself, received AFTER the closure time of the call will neither be considered nor answered.

Also, 2 open call webinars will be organised to support applicants during the application period:

- o 1st Open Call Webinar –16 December 2020 13:00 pm CET- [Sign up Now](#)
- o 2nd Open Call Webinar –26 January 2021 13:00 pm CET- [Sign up Now](#)

6 EVALUATION PROCESS

6.1 PROPOSAL STAGE - Evaluation of proposals and access to REACH programme

- o **1. Proposals reception:** Submissions will be done ONLY through F6S platform in the space enabled for REACH project. A full list of applicants will be drafted containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity (which will be also shared with EC for transparency).
- o **2. Eligibility filter:** An automatic filtering to discard non-eligible proposals will follow the short list. Eligibility check will verify:
 - ❖ a) the existence of a legal SME in an eligible country,
 - ❖ b) the uniqueness of the proposal,
 - ❖ c) the correct fulfilment of the submission form on F6S,
 - ❖ d) the usage of Big Data tools to tackle a challenge,
 - ❖ e) not been funded by REACH in previous call(s) or other incubators under the same topic objective (i4TRUST project),
 - ❖ f) the fit with the participation tracks defined,
 - ❖ g) the issues of multiple participation described in section 4.4.

For those proposals "bringing their own data provider", either in Track1 or Track3, a prior evaluation to evaluate the eligibility of the data provider will be carried out. For this, your data provider will need to fill in a specific questionnaire as explained in the F6S Application Form. Eligibility criteria will verify:

- ❖ a) Challenge description
- ❖ b) Sample datasets description
- ❖ c) Datasets compliance with GDPR
- ❖ d) Anonymisation of the personal data
- ❖ e) Inferring personal data
- ❖ f) Informed consent
- ❖ g) Ownership of data
- ❖ h) Right of use
- ❖ i) GDPR awareness
- ❖ Infrastructure used to store the datasets at Data Provider premises.

Proposals marked as non-eligible will get a rejection letter including the reasons (a to s) for being declared as non-eligible. No further feedback on the process will be given.

- o **3. Traction indicators' control:** there will be a set of traction indicators, used as warnings, to automatically discard proposals, which do not have the structure or enough resources to commit with the proposal. The proposals will be categorised in two groups for this purpose:
 - ❖ **Early stage:** SMEs with 3 or less financial years closed.
 - ❖ **Established teams:** SMEs with more than 3 financial years closed.

In both cases, the concrete criteria for this automatic sorting will be made public AFTER the three calls for proposals are closed. These criteria will not be public before the calls to avoid proposers sending fit-for-the-call submissions.

Proposals not passing the automatic sorting will be sent a **rejection letter** indicating that the proposal does not reach the internal traction indicators needed for accessing the incubator. No further feedback on the process will be given.

- **4. Remote evaluation:** After the tractions indicator's control, one shortlist will be populated where the maximum rate of proposals per track will be the following to incentivise those experiments involving the consortium Data Providers: Theme-driven: 40%, Ready-made: 40% and Free choice: 20%.

The evaluation criteria are the following: **(1) technical approach, (2) business and (3) team. An external Big Data expert and a business expert will review each proposal**, scoring each of the mentioned criterium. In addition, DIHs and Data providers, respectively, under Theme-Driven and Ready-Made tracks will assess the challenge fit of the proposals with the DVCs defined for the call.

Evaluators

Every proposal will be assessed by at least 3 people with different profiles (technical, business). External evaluators will be part of the evaluations and, in any case, will have to sign a declaration that they have no conflict of interest. In the case of the domain specific challenges, feedback will be also gathered from the corresponding data providers.

Scoring

Reviewers will evaluate the proposals considering the above-mentioned 3 or 4 criteria. Each criterion (except for the challenge fit criterion of Track 1 and Track 2 challenges which is a yes/no flag) will have a score from 0 to 5. Decimal scores may be given. For each criterion under examination, score values will indicate the following assessments:

- **0 Fail.** The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information
- **1 Very poor.** The criterion is addressed in an unsatisfactory manner.
- **2 Poor.** There are serious inherent weaknesses.
- **3 Fair.** While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting.
- **4 Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible.
- **5 Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

A minimum score of 3 for each criterion and an overall score of 12 for the 3 criteria with a 0 to 5 score (remember that domain-specific challenges will have a yes/no flag regarding the challenge fit criterion) will be needed as a minimum threshold. Only proposals reaching all the criteria will be eligible for accessing the Explore phase.

The information on the evaluation will be compiled into an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) which will be sent to applicants after being approved by REACH consortium and the evaluators.

CORE PARTNERS



DATA PROVIDERS



A maximum of 40 proposals will be shortlisted in this phase and around 30 invited to sign a contract (sub-grantee agreement) and access the “explore” phase of the incubator, keeping the rest in a reserve list.

6.1.1 Draw resolution

In the case of a draw in the final scoring, the following criteria will be used in the following order of priority:

- o Higher score for business potential criterion
- o Higher score for team composition criterion
- o Date of submission: earlier submitted proposals go first.

6.1.2 Communication

Every applicant will receive via e-mail:

- o An Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)
- o A letter informing of rejection decision, invitation to negotiation and following steps or being part of the reserve list.

6.1.3 Preparation and Signature of the Agreement

The following actions must be carried out in order to enter into the Sub-Grant Agreement:

- o Status information of the beneficiaries:
 - ❖ **SMEs/start-ups.** If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the H2020 Participant Portal, the PIC number has to be provided. The following documents will be required to prove the status as an SME if the applicant has not been fully validated as an SME on the Participant Portal:
 - ❖ **SMEs check list:** signed and stamped. Available at [11].
 - In the event they declare being non-autonomous: the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organizations
 - ❖ **Status Information Form.** It includes the headcount (AWU), balance, profit & loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company.
 - ❖ **Legal existence.** Company Register, Official Journal and so forth, showing the name of the organization, the legal address and registration number and, if applicable, a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent)
 - ❖ **Supporting documents.** In cases where either the number of employees or the ownership is not clearly identified: any other supporting documents which demonstrate headcount and ownership such as payroll details, annual reports, national regional, association records, etc.
- o **Bank account information:** The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via form signed by the SME and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the SME.
- o **Sub-Grant Agreement** [12]: Signed between the REACH Consortium (represented by its coordinator Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique et aux Énergies Alternatives), the beneficiary/ies and, if applicable, the corresponding Data Provider.

The request, by REACH consortium, of the documentation will be made including deadlines. Failing to meet the deadlines requested will directly end up the negotiation process and projects under the reserve list will substitute the failing applicants.

Access to the first phase of the incubation is officially granted once the Sub -Grant Agreement is signed.



CORE PARTNERS



DATA PROVIDERS



6.2 PHASE 1 – EXPLORE

6.2.1 Submission

At this stage, a Datathon event will be held in Paris², where the participants will have a couple of days to fine-tune their ideas and present the mock-ups of their experiments.

As part of the incubation, teams will be offered different webinars during this phase to help them prepare for the Datathon (e.g. webinars such as "Big Data Ecosystem", or "Pitch Training" could be offered).

6.2.2 Evaluation

A "demolition pitch" contest will be used to evaluate the projects that will be scored based on the following evaluation criteria:

- o Technical quality of the mock-up
- o Pitching skills shown in the demolition pitch contest
- o Capacity of the team

The **evaluation panel** will be comprised by Big Data experts, data providers' and consortium members, who will select the top 12-16 teams accessing the next phase - "Experimentation".

6.2.3 Evaluators

Each Sub-granted project will be evaluated individually by an evaluation panel comprised by Big Data experts, data providers and consortium members, who will select the top 10 companies accessing the next phase - "Experimentation".

Evaluators will score the proposal individually and **complete and add comments to their scores** related to the evaluation criteria. This information will be compiled in a short **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)**.

6.2.4 Draw resolution

In the case of a draw in the final scoring, the following criteria will be used in the following order of priority:

- o Higher score for team's operational capacity criterion.
- o Higher score for pitching skills criterion.
- o Date of submission: earlier submitted proposals go first.

6.2.5 Communication

The best SMEs to move on to the Experiment phase will be first notified at the Datathon event. Afterwards, every Sub-granted project will receive the ESR via email and will be informed about the obtained results. This will lead to one of the following decisions:

² Unless COVID-19 or other major reasons do not allow this, it is the intention of REACH project to have Face 2 Face (F2F) events. Partners will look for alternative options to organise these events if major restrictions prevent F2F events.

- o Invitation to access the next phase if the general thresholds are reached and the position in the ranking list is within the top 10.
- o Informing about ending the process if the thresholds are not reached and the position in the ranking list is not within the top 10.

Also, data providers will be informed about the proposals accessing the next phase. Individual teams will be then requested to start their legal registration as a SME in an eligible country. The legal registration documents will have to be provided for any payment at the Experiment phase to be issued.

6.2.6 Payments

All teams in the Datathon event will be awarded €5,000, for investing their resources on developing their concept and actively taking part in the Explore phase and the event

Teams not attending the Datathon will be automatically disqualified from the programme and will not receive the funding.

Non-French teams will need to provide a Tax Residence Certificate within the meaning of a tax treaty between the country of residence of the team and France (further details will be provided before the incubation starts). This certificate will be only provided upon request of the project coordinator and will be sent to Emmanuelle Dauvergne (Emmanuelle.dauvergne@cea.fr) and Sylvie Fromenteau (Sylvie.FROMENTEAU@cea.fr).

6.2.7 Next Phase

The best 10 companies over the thresholds will access phase 2 – EXPERIMENT.

6.3 PHASE 2 - EXPERIMENT

The following **four months** will be fully dedicated to the creation of a working version of the product/service designed.

The 10 selected teams will be able to officially meet the data providers face-to-face, who will accompany the respective challenge they are participating in. Coaches for all teams will be nominated. Each SME will be assigned one coach who will have regular coaching sessions with the teams regarding their development. Furthermore, they will define the features of the **Minimum Viable Product (MVP)** and coordinate the necessary resources for the MVP development. The teams will define the baseline, against which the MVP will be tested against.

On-site technical and business training will be offered also at the beginning of the phase in Bilbao² (attendance is compulsory) and different webinars will be offered through this phase on different topics (i.e. sales, public funding).

6.3.1 Evaluation

To conclude the 2-EXPERIMENT phase of the incubation process, a final evaluation of the technical and business part of each project will be done in a 3-day event in Bilbao² with a similar scheme as the earlier Explore phase. The evaluation is intended to shortlist the projects and to select those accessing the Evolve phase as well as to validate the final payment of the Experiment phase. The evaluation will follow two criteria:

- o **Technical:** based on the MVP developed by the team and presented to a technical jury in the event.
- o **Business:** based on the pitch done in the event.

A jury comprised by external evaluators, mentors, coaches and data providers will shortlist the projects. From this evaluation, the top 5 companies will access Evolve phase. The idea is to select good technical projects with a credible growth strategy.

6.3.2 Communication

The best SMEs to move on to the Evolve phase will be first notified at the Final experiment phase event in Bilbao². Afterwards, every sub-granted project will receive the ESR via email and will be informed about the obtained results. This will bring one of the following decisions:

- o Invitation to access the next phase if the general thresholds are reached and the position in the ranking list is within the top 5.
- o Informing about ending the process if the thresholds are not reached and the position in the ranking list is not within the top 5.

6.3.3 Payments

The payment calendar will be structured as follows during each 4-month Experiment phase:

- o June 2021: Payment of €20k after agreeing the KPIs in the first month of Experiment phase;
- o July 2021: Payment of € 30k
- o September 2021: Final payment of €30k after the evaluation.

Therefore, a project succeeding in the evaluation of the KPI monitoring progress will receive €80k.

6.3.4 Next phase

The best 5 companies over the thresholds will access phase 3 – EVOLVE.

6.4 PHASE 3 - EVOLVE

This 2-month phase is dedicated to build solid partnerships and to detect real investment opportunities for the top companies in the call. Participation in major events for start-ups for promotion will be a must.

The teams qualifying to this phase will have around 5 minutes pitch on stage where they will present their solutions implemented in front of a jury. The jury will select the best solution that will be awarded with a prize of €20,000 of equity-free funding.

6.4.1 Evaluation

At the end of EVOLVE, a final event will be organised. The teams qualifying to this phase will have around 5 minutes to pitch on stage their developed solution and business model in front of data providers, selected investors and the press.

The jury will select the best solution (commercial offer and track records of private investment raising) to choose the recipient of the REACH Best Experiment Grant.

6.4.2 Payments

The payment of the last €15k will be done at the end of the phase (November 2021) should the KPIs be completed as required and the participation of the teams in the Final Demo Day is verified. In addition, a team per round will be granted €20,000 extra equity free financing to recognize their excellence during the incubator (Best Experiment Grant).

6.5 PHASE 4 - EXPOSE

The phase is dedicated to give REACH startups the opportunity to reach as far as possible with the products incubated thanks to the project, and have the opportunity to meet Business Angels, Corporate Investors and VCs attending events like South Summit or Web Summit. Europe. This phase will run in parallel to EVOLVE phase and even the end of EXPERIMENT.

6.5.1 Payments

In this phase there is no direct funding to SMEs. All the teams participating in EVOLVE will have access to mission vouchers to have relevant presence in events with access to investors.

Up to three vouchers of €5,000 each will be available for each of the 30 eligible subgrantees (no competition). A total of maximum €15,000 in vouchers will be granted per participant.

7 FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED

7.1 Funding principle

The incubator will be based on a 4-phase process EXPLORE > EXPERIMENT > EVOLVE > EXPOSE. Each phase comprises a set of activities that qualify for financial support. All the funds disbursed will be based on concrete results and KPIs assessment. No costs reporting will be requested by REACH consortium.

- o **Open call:** This is the submission of proposals. No funding attached.
- o **Explore:** €5,000 attached to the participation in a Datathon, elaboration of a mock-up of the future solution making use of big data tools and a pitch of the overall solution. This will be the REACH sprint 1.
- o **Experiment:** €80,000 attached to the accomplishment of the KPIs defined among each start-up/SME and its coach at the beginning of this phase for each of the two sprints.

According to the nature of each sprint, different goals will be defined:

- ❖ **Sprint 2** (2 months duration): In this sprint, KPIs will be linked to the solution development but also to the plan definition for the mission to reach the market and find investment,
- ❖ **Sprint 3** (3 months duration): In this sprint, the KPIs will be linked to the finalisation of an MVP (Minimum Viable Product) and first actions to seek market and investment approached according to the plan designed in Sprint 2.

KPIs will be revised monthly. Two major reviews of the KPIs will be done at the end of the sprints 2 and 3. If the indicators are in line with the defined objectives, the teams will receive the corresponding payments.

- o **Evolve:** €15,000 attached to the accomplishment of the KPIs defined among each start-up/SME and its coach at the beginning of this phase. It will be required to participate in the internal events organised by the consortium.
- o **Expose:** This phase does not consider the direct funding distribution. The budget allocated of 315,000€ will be distributed as mission vouchers. Each third-party reaching Evolve will be automatically passing to Expose. Each third-party will opt to up to three mission vouchers to have presence in three relevant events

Therefore, a participant could receive as maximum €100,000 for a project. In the case that the company wins the REACH Best Experiment Grant, will receive a maximum of €120,000.

Detailed payment schedule and payment conditions will be settled in the Sub-grant Agreement.

7.2 Origin of the funds

Any selected proposer will sign a dedicated Sub-Grantee Funding Agreement with the REACH project coordinator (on behalf of REACH Consortium). The funds attached to the Sub-Grantee Funding Agreement come directly from the funds of the European Project REACH, and the REACH consortium is managing the funds according to the Grant Agreement Number 951981 signed with the European Commission.

As will be indicated in the Sub-Grantee Funding Agreement, this relation between the sub-grantees and the European Commission through REACH project carries a set of obligations to the sub-grantees with the European Commission. It is the task of the sub-grantees to accomplish them, and of the REACH consortium partners to inform about them.

7.3 Use of the financial contribution and recovery

Each team (beneficiary) commits to a proper use of the funding received, for the purposes of carrying out the project in compliance with the KPIs.

While no reporting will be requested within the incubation, teams must ensure that funds are properly spent. See section 4.4 of the Sub-Grant Agreement for further details.

8 TECHNICAL SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EVENTS BY REACH

8.1 Infrastructure

The Big Data infrastructure provided by REACH leverages on three main components:

- Computing and Storage Infrastructure:** This is an HPC infrastructure that will be provided to support the development of computationally intensive solutions that demand consistently high performance and dedicated resources. Three computing & storage infrastructures will be provided, bringing around 600 CPUs with 7TB RAM in total, plus 16 GPUs, and 2PB storage.
- Big Data Stack:** This is a multi-tenant Big Data analytics toolset that will be provided to ease data science tasks of the incubated companies, on top of the previous layer. Three Big Data Stacks will be provided, covering a range of tools to support Data Analysis. Some of the common characteristics provided by these Big Data Stacks are: pre-installed clients to authenticate and run jobs at the computing infrastructure (e.g. HDFS YARN) via a web-based command-line terminal tool; a set of Jupyter Kernels to interactively work at the cluster (e.g. Spark, pySpark and so on); a set of Jupyter notebooks for running tutorials of the different tools provided; Pip and Conda Python package managers for installing custom packages and testing them before submitting to the computing infrastructure.
- Application Infrastructure:** This will enable the deployment of the data-based applications of subgrantees on top of the REACH infrastructure, and use the different resources provided (computing & storage, big data stack tools, or access to datasets). This will be done through virtualization technology, that is, virtual machines or application containers on which the developers would execute their own final applications or deploy additional software not provided by the Big Data Stack.

8.2 Service Catalogue

The services will be provided by REACH consortium complemented by the huge catalogue of services provided by the network of DIHs in Europe. Figure 3 shows the services provided by the core consortium with the aim of supporting all kinds of teams, independently of the domain or track.



Figure 3 Service catalogue of REACH (E: event, W: webinar)

8.3 REACH EVENTS

In the following Figure, it is presented a schema of those tentative events to which REACH participants will be invited to participate.

NOTE: These events may suffer changes due to the current worldwide COVID-19 crisis.

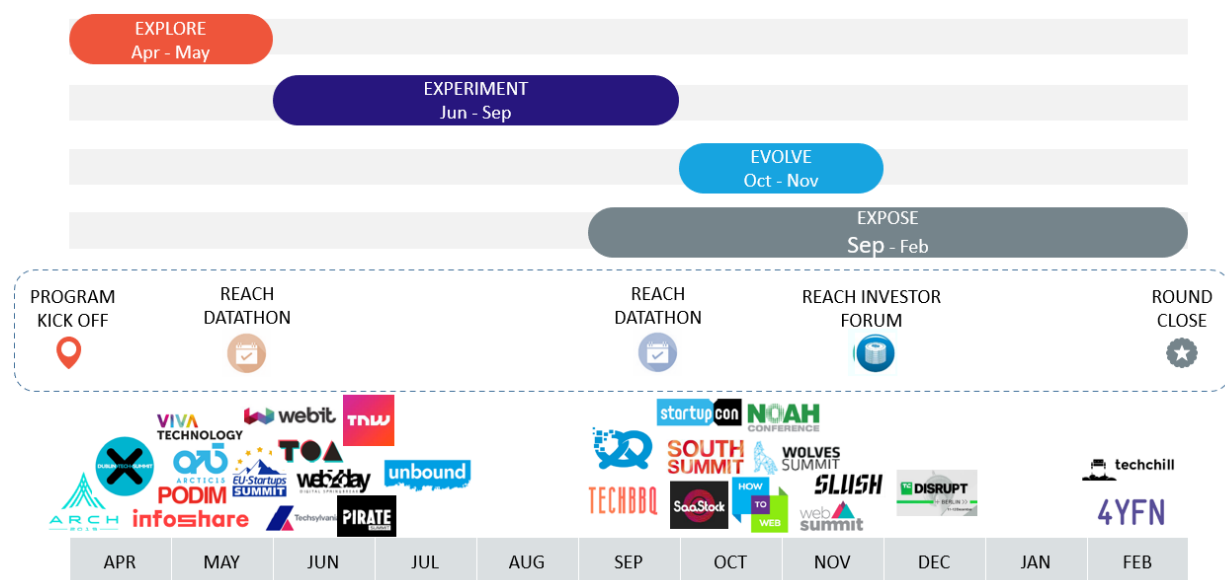


Figure 4 REACH tentative events calendar

9 APPLICANTS COMMUNICATION FLOW

9.1 General communication procedure

Applicants will receive the communications after each step of the evaluation process indicating if they passed or not. A communication will be sent to applicants rejected, including the reasons for the exclusion.

9.2 Appeal procedure

If, at any stage of the evaluation process, the applicant considers that a mistake has been made or that the evaluators have acted unfairly or have failed to comply with the rules of this REACH Open Call, and that her/his interests have been prejudiced as a result, the following appeal procedures are available.

A complaint should be drawn up in English and submitted by email to: opencall@reach-incubator.eu. Any complaint made should include:

- o contact details,
- o the subject of the complaint,
- o information and evidence regarding the alleged breach.

Anonymous complaints or those not providing the mentioned information will not be considered.

Complaints should also be made within five (calendar) days since the evaluation results are presented to the applicants.

As a general rule, the REACH Team will investigate the complaints with a view to arriving at a decision to issue a formal notice or to close the case within no more than twenty days from the date of reception of the complaint, provided that all required information has been submitted by the complainant. Where this time limit is exceeded, the REACH Team will inform the complainant by email.

CORE PARTNERS



DATA PROVIDERS



10 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

10.1 Background

- o All the participants will confirm and declare that they are the sole creators of the software they will develop and that it is free from third party rights. Combinations of their own software plus open source existing ones will be permitted and fostered (i.e. making available a full-stack of Big Data tools ready to use).
- o The start-up/SMEs will be using data with certain restrictive licenses (data owned by the data providers) combined with Open Data, other sources of data or whatever combination that might be needed. It will be the obligation of the start-up/SMEs to clearly state the kind of agreement that applies to these data. Data included from the providers in the consortium will be identified in the sub-grantee agreement and use access will be granted for SMEs and start-ups.
- o The ownership of the data provided by the data providers will be always from the partner providing the data. Unless otherwise agreed, the transfer of property or extension of the use of the data, needs to be agreed between the data provider and the party(ies) interested in such exploitation through a bilateral agreement.
- o By default, the right to make use of the data provided by Data Providers finalises for the start-up/SME once their participation in the incubation process is finished.

10.2 Foreground

The property of the software or products developed by sub-granted SMEs, within the framework of the REACH open calls, will be entirely owned by them. It will be their decision to determine if any part of the software will have an open-source license or not.

Moreover, given the fact that the developments by the start-ups and SMEs will make use of third party data (data providers), the core consortium will create the communication framework to facilitate agreements between the start-ups and the data providers to find a common workaround for the continuity of the sub-granted actions beyond the programme. However, it will be a decision of the Data Provider and the startup to come to a collaboration agreement out of the REACH scope.

10.3 Communication obligations

There are no IPR obligations toward the European Commission (EC). However, any communication or publication of the beneficiaries shall clearly indicate that the project has received funding from the European Union and the REACH programme, therefore displaying the EU and logo on all printed and digital material, including websites and press releases. Moreover, beneficiaries will agree that certain information regarding the projects selected for funding can be used by REACH consortium for communication purposes.

Further detail about communication obligations are available in the Sub-grantee model at Article 10.

11 SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

For more information about the REACH Open Call, please check the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section included at <https://www.reach-incubator.eu/about-reach/fag/>.

For further information on the Open Call, in case of any doubts regarding the eligibility rules, the information that is to be provided in the Application Form, or if you encountered technical issues or problems with the Application Form, please contact REACH Technical Helpdesk email: opencall@reach-incubator.eu

12 SCHEDULE

The table below presents the indicative dates during which each phase of the evaluation and REACH's programme phases will take place:

DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE DATES
Call Launch	16th November 2020
Submission Deadline	15th February 2021 12:00 noon PM CET
Evaluation Period	16th February 2021 – mid March 2021
Signature of Sub-grant Agreement	During March 2021

Table 2 : REACH's programme tentative dates

The schedule is based on estimations according to the expected number of proposals received and the actual timing of the consecutive phases may vary.

References

- [1] Big Data Value Association – About us, <http://www.bdva.eu/?q=about>, 2020
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- [3] REACH DVC Themes <https://www.reach-incubator.eu/resource-hub/dvc-themes/>
- [4] REACH Challenge Catalogue, <https://www.reach-incubator.eu/resource-hub/challenge-catalogue/>, 2020
- [5] REACH Data Catalogue, <https://data.reach-incubator.eu/>, 2020
- [6] SME definition, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/revised-user-guide-sme-definition0_es, 2020
- [7] Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC, <https://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:124:0036:0041:en:PDF>, 2020
- [8] <https://www.f6s.com/reach-oc1-startups/apply>
- [9] REACH Portal – 1st Open call, www.reach-incubator.eu, 2020
- [10] F6S Platform for REACH Next generation Incubator, <https://www.f6s.com/reach-incubator>, 2020
- [11] SMEs checklist. Available at bit.ly/3eP9cU3, 2020
- [12] Sub-Grant Agreement template, iteration 1, 2020: http://reach-incubator.eu/docs/Sub-Grant_Agreement_OC1.pdf