



# ACTION

## Guide for applicants

*(ACTION call 2019)*

Call opens: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019, 12:00 pm (noon) CEST

Call closes: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, 12:00 pm (noon) CET

**Deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Any submission past the deadline will not be considered.**

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## Introduction

This guide is designed to support citizen science initiatives considering a submission to the 1<sup>st</sup> ACTION call (2019). **It is intended to be the main source of information for the call.** Therefore, in case of factual conflicts with other sources of information (such as the ACTION website), **the contents of this guide should be deemed authoritative.**

Should you have any outstanding queries regarding the application process after reading this document, please refer to the FAQ on our website or contact us at [call@actionproject.eu](mailto:call@actionproject.eu) or on our social media channels.

## What is ACTION

Pollution is one of the greatest threats to human health and wellbeing of our times, killing more people than smoking, hunger, natural disasters, war and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. While some forms of pollution are regularly subject to public debate and media scrutiny, other pollution hazards are overlooked and the scale and urgency of the problem is beyond the means of an individual lab, government or initiative.

ACTION aims to partner with new, emerging and established European citizen science initiatives to tackle pollution in various forms. By partnering with citizen science projects and in turn, collaborating with citizens through citizen science, we seek to co-design, implement and evaluate novel methodologies and resources to open citizen science processes further. Furthermore, by engaging the public and citizen scientists in the research process, we will spread further awareness of pollution-related issues and achieve greater impact, in academic, policy and private sector contexts.

We are seeking to support new and ongoing citizen science projects related to any form of pollution in Europe and worldwide.

Successful applicants will receive €20,000 to help deliver a six-month pilot with the help of the ACTION team. In addition, ACTION will offer a set of services, tailored to the needs of each citizen science project, including:

- Intensive training at the start of the accelerator on: project design, citizen engagement, data management and preservation, funding and sustainability;
- Online mentoring during the pilot and beyond;
- Tools and infrastructure to host projects and their data according to state of the art IT practices in your discipline;
- Tools and methods to facilitate participatory data collection and analysis;
- Bespoke consultancy on a diverse set of citizen science challenges, including: data quality, data preservation, GDPR, research ethics, motivating participation, citizen empowerment, EDI (equality, diversity, inclusion), public engagement, and impact;
- Promotion via news on the ACTION website and on social media, as well as presentation opportunities at the ACTION conference and other related events;
- Peer learning and networking, facilitated through workshops and online tools.

ACTION is funded by the European Union's H2020 Research and Innovation Programme. It is delivered by [University of Southampton](#), [Cefriel S.Cons.R.L.](#), [Dutch Butterfly Conservation](#), [Dutch Research Institute for Transitions](#), [Erasmus University Rotterdam](#), [Forschungsverbund Berlin E.V.](#), [SINTEF AS](#), [T6 Ecosystems srl](#), [Universidad Complutense de Madrid](#) and [Universidad Politécnica de Madrid](#).

## What is citizen science

**ACTION takes an inclusive view on citizen science.** We broadly follow the [Green Paper on Citizen Science for Europe](#) from January 2014, which defines it as:

*“general public engagement in scientific research activities when citizens actively contribute to science either with their intellectual effort or surrounding knowledge or with their tools and resources”.*

For us, the term covers a range of activities with different levels of participation, from data collection in projects led by trained scientists to co-designing research questions and policy to education and public engagement.

## Why take part

ACTION is for:

- ongoing citizen science projects looking for support, financial and otherwise, to grow and become sustainable;
- scientists seeking to resource a new citizen science project;
- communities interested in co-designing research into pollution in any relevant discipline, from biodiversity and environmental sciences to astronomy and the humanities;
- organisations in the public, private and third sectors exploring the use of citizen science in their work.

As noted earlier, **applications have to be clearly related to a pollution challenge.**

ACTION will provide funding for a six-month pilot, alongside dedicated acceleration activities, resources and tools to set up and run the pilot. In a series of workshops you will have the chance to co-design and try out the tools and work together with the ACTION team to tailor the support you need to achieve your goals. You will have access to a community of like-minded initiatives, tackling similar challenges and contributing to common aims.

## Who is the funding for

The funding is available to **legal entities** and **consortia** established in a country or territory eligible to receive Horizon 2020 grants (see [Annex 1](#)). For consortia, all participants must be eligible. In this case, the participants also need to choose a pilot lead, which will submit the application and engage with ACTION on behalf of the consortium.

**Every entity is allowed to participate in one application, either on its own or as part of a consortium.**

ACTION has the following conflict of interest policy: **Immediate family, domestic and non-domestic partners and those with financial ties to members of the ACTION team are prohibited to apply. If you have a prior relationship with anyone contributing to ACTION that you feel may constitute a conflict of interest, please email [call@actionproject.eu](mailto:call@actionproject.eu) for clarification.**

## What is the funding for

**The funding will be set at €20,000 and can be spent on salaries, equipment, consumables, travel, subcontracting to other entities, and indirect expenditure (calculated as 25% of the total direct costs), in accordance with [Horizon 2020 guidelines](#).**

In your application, you will be asked to describe your effort and resources you plan to mobilise for this amount. You may propose any cost items deemed eligible and relevant for the delivery of your pilot. See Annex 2 of this document for further explanation.

**The activities you plan to carry out with ACTION cannot receive double funding.** Synergies with other sources of funding, including other Horizon 2020 projects, are encouraged as long as the grants are used for complementary, not overlapping purposes.

## Who keeps the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

**You will be the sole owner of the results and outcomes of your project, and all associated IP.**

However, we expect most proposals to follow an open approach, sharing results and experiences widely with the community. We will give priority to those applications that have a well articulated plan for this.

In addition, ACTION or the European Commission may ask you to present your work as part of our public relations and networking events, in order to showcase the benefits of the ACTION approach.

## What happens with the data

**Applicants will have to be clear in the applications about the data that will be collected or generated through the project.**

For citizen science projects in which citizens will produce data to help with scientific inquiries, the application needs to include details about the way data will be managed during and after the pilot, **including, if relevant, any GDPR concerns.** As noted earlier, we will give preference to proposals that are committed to making their data available for reuse, following an open science approach. ACTION will provide bespoke technical, legal and operational support to successful applicants to do so.

In addition, ACTION may require citizen science pilots funded through the programme to collect, manage and share data with the ACTION team. This may include the contributions of the citizens, as well as anonymised and/or aggregated data on citizen participation. Both are needed for the ACTION team to tailor their support, toolkit and resources to help the pilots in questions related to data quality, motivating participation, citizen empowerment, diversity, public engagement, and impact.

## How is the ACTION competition organised

### Two calls

ACTION will run **two open calls**, one in 2019 and a second one in 2020. **This document refers to the first action call only.** The second call is expected to launch in summer 2020.

### Topics

**ACTION supports citizen science efforts tackling pollution.** This includes, but is not limited to initiatives generating awareness of pollution effects, facilitating new knowledge about its causes and consequences, and implementing measures to combat it.

As noted earlier, our understanding of citizen science is inclusive. We are seeking to fund ideas that can make a difference, at local, national or international scale. We are particularly interested in initiatives that are bootstrapped and managed by citizens, with a limited involvement of scientists or public authorities. We would also welcome applications that propose novel, less explored participatory roles for citizens and other key stakeholders.

In our short proposal (see below) you will be asked to clearly articulate the aim and scope of your citizen science pilot, including planned activities, outcomes (including data), expected impact, team and budget.

### Application process

**Submission will be online via a platform provided by ACTION.** Applicants will be asked questions to determine their eligibility to apply for funding, as well as their ability to conduct the pilot.

**Only complete applications submitted before the deadline will be considered for review.**

**All information provided must be in English.**

Past submission, the applications will be reviewed by the ACTION team. The review panels will shortlist applications for a remote interview. We anticipate interviews to be held in November/December 2019. Successful candidates will be invited to join the ACTION accelerator for six months, following a short

negotiation. During the negotiation, you will revise your pilot plans following feedback from the interview and agree on a timeline, milestones and deliverables.

## How to apply

1. The starting point for your application is the ACTION website. Go to [actionproject.eu/apply-2019](https://actionproject.eu/apply-2019)
2. Read this guide, as well as the FAQ and related tutorials available on that page.
3. Create an account on the online submission platform and start your application.
4. Make sure to answer all questions and upload all relevant documents. These documents are:
  - a. A short proposal. A copy is available in [Annex 3](#) or at [actionproject.eu/apply-2019](https://actionproject.eu/apply-2019)
  - b. A declaration of honour, dated and signed. A copy is available in [Annex 4](#) or at [actionproject.eu/apply-2019](https://actionproject.eu/apply-2019)
5. Submit before the deadline.

We have prepared a [short proposal template](#) for the core part of your application. You need to download it and create your own copy to work on. Note the comments in the template, which will help you cover all aspects we will consider during the review. **It is very important that you do not change the template in any way** - any attempt to do so, no matter how minor, may result in your application being discarded without a review.

**You can upload multiple versions of the documents and make multiple submissions. We will consider only the last version received before the deadline.**

## How do we select proposals

### Step 1 – Eligibility checks

ACTION checks if eligibility criteria are met. Proposals considered not eligible will not proceed to Step 2. The criteria are listed under [Who is the funding for](#).

### Step 2 – Reviews and shortlist

Eligible proposals will be evaluated by at least two reviewers against the following criteria:

1. Idea
2. Impact
3. Implementation

Reviewers will be asked to provide an overall score, on a five-points scale, as well as a recommendation to shortlist the applications. The criteria we will follow are available in [Annex 5](#) of this document. Consider them when answering the questions from the short proposal.

### Step 3 - Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a remote interview with an expert panel. The interview will consist of a short pitch of the application, followed by questions. The interviews will be scheduled in November/December 2019. To grant call winners access to funding quickly, we operate on a very tight schedule - we plan to send out invitations to interviews by mid November 2019, including a time slot for the interview. Unfortunately, we will not be able to negotiate interview dates and related conditions with the applicants and may not answer any queries on the subject. If an applicant is not able to attend the interview, we will have to reject that application.

Applicants who were not shortlisted will be informed at this stage as well.

### Step 4 - Decisions

After the interview, the panel will decide whether to accept the applicant into the programme. We will provide feedback to applicants to improve their pilot. Unfortunately, due to the high number of applications anticipated, we will not be able to reply to any queries on unsuccessful applications.



Decisions will be final and cannot be contested. We plan to inform applicants about the outcome early December.

## Step 5 – Negotiation

If your application is successful, you will be invited to enter negotiations with ACTION. This is a busy two month period, which will hopefully end with a signed contract between you and ACTION. For this to happen, we will have to complete the following steps:

- Due diligence checks: these checks are performed to understand the status of the applicant. We will check your legal entity information, ethics requirements, financial information and any other checks as requested by the European Commission before commencing the project. Should you fail the due diligence checks, ACTION reserves the right to reject the application.
- Workplan and budget agreement: before starting the project, the applicant and ACTION agree on milestones and success criteria. We will also assess the costs associated with your project to ensure they are eligible. You will be assigned an advisor who will go through this process with you and answer any questions.

Negotiations will start mid December 2019 and must finish (with a signed contract, see [Annex 6](#)) by the end of January 2020. A detailed schedule will be sent out in due time.

## Step 6 – ACTION accelerator

Applicants who reach this stage of the process are formally accepted into the six month project accelerator between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

Funds will be transferred in two stages – 50% at the beginning of the project, and the remaining 50% at the end with the completion of activities outlined below:

- Attend training and co-design workshops;
- Provide a report outlining your activities at the end of the pilot;
- Provide a short video about your work to be shared on the ACTION website;
- Participate in ACTION impact assessment activities;
- Attend the graduation at the ACTION conference.



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# Annexes

## **Annex 1: Eligible countries**

Only organisations legally registered and operating in an EU member state or associated country are eligible for funding from ACTION. Guidance on the associated countries can be found [here](#).

## Annex 2: Eligible costs

### Overview

ACTION's citizen science fund is provided by Horizon 2020, a large research and innovation programmes funded by taxpayers. As such, ACTION and the citizen science pilots it supports need to ensure the funds are spent in accordance to Horizon 2020 guidelines. The following provides a summary of these guidelines - please get in touch at [call@actionproject.eu](mailto:call@actionproject.eu) if you have any questions.

The €20,000 grant may be spent only on eligible costs. These are costs that meet the following criteria:

- Incurred by the applicant in connection with or during the project;
- Identifiable and verifiable in the applicant's accounts;
- Compliant with national law;
- Reasonable, justified, in accordance with sound financial management (economy and efficiency);
- Indicated in the budget you submitted with the short proposal.

ACTION will provide training and guidance to all funded pilots on financial matters.

### Cost categories and reimbursement guidelines

The budget you submit will have to include different cost categories, which are explained below. There is a general distinction between **direct costs**, **subcontracting**, and **indirect costs** (also known as overheads). Indirect costs are calculated at 25% of the direct costs; no indirect costs can be charged on subcontracting.

All costs, except for purchased equipment (see below), are recovered 100%, and need to include the indirect costs, charged on top of the total direct costs. All costs should be stated inclusive of any irrecoverable VAT.

#### **Direct costs: Personnel (100% reimbursed + indirect costs)**

Applicants can spend ACTION funds on staff who are directly involved in the execution of the project.

#### **Direct costs: Equipment (15% reimbursed + indirect costs)**

Equipment with a useful life in excess of the project duration can only be reimbursed to the extent the asset would be depreciated for the six-month project period. Therefore, the standard rate allowed under the contracted project will be 15% of the total costs of the asset for a six-month period. Indirect costs can be applied to the 15% of costs charged to the project.

The costs of equipment rental for the project period can be charged at full cost, as long as the rental cost is not greater than the depreciation cost had the equipment been purchased.

#### **Direct costs: Consumables, other goods and services (100% reimbursed + indirect costs)**

Applicants can spend on consumables and other goods and services (including travel), if they are directly relevant for the achievement of the project.

#### **Subcontracting (100% reimbursed, no indirect costs)**

Applicants may subcontract some of their activities to other parties as long as they are also from a H2020 eligible country. No indirect costs (overhead) can be charged on subcontracting costs. Note that we expect the applicant to carry out most of the tasks of the project – subcontracting cannot be used to carry out key tasks in the project.

#### **Indirect costs**

Indirect costs are within the €20,000 limit and cover items such as rent, admin, printing, photocopying, amenities etc. These costs are eligible if they are declared on the basis of the flat rate of 25% of the eligible costs, from which are excluded:

- Costs of subcontracting and

- Costs of in-kind contributions provided by third parties which are not used on the applicant's premises

## Annex 3: Offline application form

# Proposal title

## 1. Idea

### 1.1 Strength and novelty of the idea

<i>Describe the core idea of your application in <b>one sentence</b>.</i>	
<i>What is new or different about it? Has it been tried before?</i>	

### 1.2 Relevance to the call

<i>What pollution-related issues does your idea address?</i>	
<i>Which EU territories will the pilot cover? Be specific – if international, note countries, if regional regions, cities etc.</i>	
<i>Which pilot activities will involve citizen scientists and/or the public?</i>	

### 1.3 Open approach

<i>Which (if any) data do you intend to gather or produce? How much of this will be openly available?</i>	
<i>Which other outputs will the pilot have? Which will be openly available?</i>	
<i>Do you rely on personal data? If so, how will you store this data? All pilots will be expected to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR).</i>	

## 2. Impact

### 2.1 Value proposition

<i>What problem does your pilot address and how?</i>	
<i>What are the end-benefits of your pilot? How will things be different at the end of the six months pilot? How about in a year, or five, or a decade?</i>	
<i>Who are the key stakeholders? Who will be (positively or negatively) impacted by the pilot and how?</i>	

### 2.2 Opportunity and timing

<i>Why is now a good time to address this issue?</i>	
<i>Is your pilot is an extension of an existing initiative? If yes, how many volunteers do you already have and what are the main outcomes?</i>	

### 2.3 Growth and sustainability

<i>How many participants do you need to achieve your goals and why?</i>	
<i>How will you manage the growth of the pilot during the six months of the accelerator? Please provide a rough timeline.</i>	
<i>How will you ensure the sustainability of the work beyond the end of the funding? Please indicate any additional sources of funding/support you may need and how you plan to secure it.</i>	

## 3. Implementation

### 3.1 Planned activities

<i>What will the volunteers be asked to do? What data will they collect or produce? What other opportunities will they be offered?</i>	
<i>Beyond the activities described above, what activities will your team participate in? E.g. public dissemination, research publications, meetings with stakeholders, etc.</i>	
<i>How do you intend to attract and maintain engagement from citizen scientists and other stakeholders? Why will people want to contribute to your pilot?</i>	

### 3.2 Team

<i>Who are the core members of your team? What are their relevant skills and experience?</i>	
<i>Is this your first citizen science project? Do you have expertise in project design, citizen engagement, data management etc.?</i>	
<i>What expertise do you think you're missing? How could ACTION help?</i>	

### 3.3 How will you use the €20k

	<b>Cost over 6 months</b>	<b>Overhead (25%)</b>	<b>Total in euro</b>
Personnel			
Travel			
Equipment			
Other goods and services			
Subcontracting		n/a	



<b>Grand total in euro</b>	
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<i>Explain the main cost items briefly.</i>	
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## Annex 4: Declaration of honour

# Declaration of honour

1. I declare:
  - a. the organisation that I represent is not bankrupt or being wound up, is not having its affairs administered by the courts, has not entered into an arrangement with creditors, has not suspended business activities, is not the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, nor is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
  - b. neither the organisation that I represent nor persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
  - c. neither the organisation that I represent nor persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
  - d. the organisation that I represent is in compliance with its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
  - e. neither the organisation that I represent nor persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
  - f. the organisation that I represent is not subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresenting the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in a grant award procedure or another procurement procedure or failing to supply this information, or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under contracts or grants covered by the Union's budget.
2. I declare that I:
  - a. am not subject to a conflict of interest;
  - b. have not made false declarations in supplying the information required by the as a condition of participation in the ACTION call or does not fail to supply this information;
  - c. am not in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in the above mentioned points 1a) to 1f).
3. I certify that I:
  - a. am committed to participate in the above mentioned project;

- b. have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain activity throughout participation in the above mentioned project and to provide any counterpart funding necessary;
  - c. have or will have the necessary resources as and when needed to carry out involvement in the above mentioned project.
4. I declare that I and other representatives of my organisation will:
- a. ensure the quality, integrity and accuracy of research activities and outputs within the scope of the project;
  - b. ensure informed consent of any and all volunteers taking part in the project, both data subjects (such as in the case of surveys) and project participants (such as citizen scientists)
  - c. take all steps to protect and ensure the confidentiality of all project participants;
  - d. take all necessary steps to protect vulnerable groups who may participate within the project (particularly minors and those with a reduced capacity for consent);
  - e. actively seek to encourage participation from underrepresented minority groups;
  - f. comply with any and all legal requirements, both within the country or countries in which the project shall operate and at the European level, in particular the European Union General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679;
  - g. take all reasonable steps to ensure project outputs are made openly available and accessible to the widest possible audience, where this does not infringe upon the rights and expectations of project participants, or contravene the legal requirements of the territories in which the project shall operate.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I am eligible to apply for the ACTION accelerator call and all the information I provided in the form is true.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

## Annex 5: Review criteria

Idea	Strength or novelty of the idea	<p>Is the idea realistic? Can it be achieved on the scale proposed, with the resources and team proposed?</p> <p>Is the idea innovative? Does it use new techniques, activities and technologies, or focus on a new problem?</p> <p>Is the idea one that can attract the interest of volunteer citizen scientists?</p>
	Relevance to the call	<p>Does the idea focus on a pollution-related issue (or issues)?</p> <p>Will the idea benefit from participation in the ACTION accelerator?</p> <p>Does the idea make use of citizen science and citizen action or otherwise offer EU citizens the opportunity to actively experience and engage in science?</p>
	Open approach	<p>Will any data or outputs from the idea be openly accessible?</p> <p>Does the idea follow open science principles?</p> <p>Does the approach account for data protection and any personal or sensitive data?</p>
Impact	Value proposition	<p>Will the idea resolve the pollution issue?</p> <p>Will the idea benefit the citizen scientists taking part, or the community in which the pilot will take place?</p>
	Opportunity and timing	<p>Is this a good time to focus on the idea and issue in question?</p> <p>Has there been significant interest in the media, the scientific community or within the general public?</p> <p>Have new technologies and tools become available or accessible to facilitate this research?</p>
	Growth and sustainability	<p>Can the idea be grown from the proposed concept to achieve the target aims within the accelerator period (6 months)?</p> <p>Are the idea and outputs maintainable beyond the life of the project? Are new sources of funding available or likely to become available?</p>
Implementation	Planned activities	<p>Are the planned activities achievable and accessible to citizen scientists and the general public?</p> <p>Have the team assigned resources to key activities such as dissemination?</p> <p>Is there an effective strategy to recruit and engage the general public and citizen scientists in the project activities?</p>
	Team	<p>Does the team fulfill the roles required to carry out citizen science activities?</p>

		<p>Does the team have experience of research activities, managing communities, citizen science etc.?</p> <p>Have they identified relevant expertise gaps and ways to fill those gaps?</p>
	Budget	<p>Are the requested resources relevant and suitable for the proposal?</p> <p>Can the pilot feasibly be carried out using the funding and resources required?</p> <p>Are there any important activities or requirements that are not accounted for within the budget?</p>

## Annex 6: Negotiation documents

If you have passed the interview stage, you will be asked to submit a series of documents, as explained in this section.

### 1. Confirmation of affiliation

ACTION will ask you to confirm your affiliation through a **letter signed by the legal representative of your organisation**. In a consortium, we will be carrying out this step for the leading organisation.

### 2. Pilot plan

During negotiations, the ACTION team will work with the pilot to finalise a project plan for the six months accelerator. Receiving any amount of funding from ACTION requires the applicant to **set and achieve** a set of milestones and/or KPIs. During this time, we will also provide more details on the workshops and other events, including the ACTION conference, which the pilots will have to attend.

The project plan will include a (revised) budget. ACTION reserves the right to adjust the budget outlined by the applicant in the original submission based on feedback received during the interview.

### 3. Contract

Once a pilot plan has been agreed, the applicant will be asked to sign a contract to formally join the ACTION accelerator. A preliminary template of the contract will be made available in due time.

The terms of the contract are the same for every pilot accepted into the accelerator and cannot be negotiated.

The contract must be signed by the legal representative of the applicant. When pilots are delivered by a consortium, the contract will be signed by the leading organisation.

### 4. Bank account information

If negotiations are successful, ACTION will require bank account information of where to transfer the funding. Applicants will be asked to fill out this [bank information template](#). For consortia, we will distribute the funding to the leading entity.

The bank information document will have to be signed (and, if applicable, stamped) by the legal representative of your organisation. Use CAPITAL LETTERS and LATIN CHARACTERS when completing the form.

The form will also need to be signed by your bank to validate the information you have provided. Alternatively, you can provide a recent bank statement which confirms the details you have included in the form.

**Please note that bank account information forms will not be accepted until they are signed by the organisation representative and approved by your bank (or bank statement provided).**

### 5. Other documents

ACTION reserves the right to solicit any other document that allows us to assess the capacity and capability of the applicants to deliver the pilot.