

ACTION FAQ

Last update on July 6th 2020

General

What is ACTION?

ACTION (pArticipatory sCience Toolkit for CombatIng PollutiON) is a joint initiative by King's College London, Cefriel, DRIFT, Dutch Butterfly Conservation, IGB, NILU, SINTEF, T6 ECO, Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. We support several citizen science efforts in Europe and worldwide to combat all types of pollution, from air and light pollution to agricultural and noise pollution. ACTION has received funding from the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme (824603). We are seeking ideas and initiatives to support citizen science projects to grow our ecosystem and join the ACTION initiative through our open call.

ACTION aims to partner with new, emerging and established European citizen science initiatives to tackle pollution in various forms and develop tools for supporting citizen science in becoming more open, participatory and sustainable. 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.

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, sustainability and impact assessment;
- 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 web site 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.

Which organisations are partners of ACTION

ACTION is delivered by [King's College London](#), [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.

While inclusive, various types of relevant activities are not citizen science. For example: For us it is important that there is a scientific question and methodology, and that the activities are *carried out by* participating citizens. Citizen engagement should be inherent to the project and its goals.

Competition

What is it about

ACTION is seeking to partner with:

- ongoing citizen science projects looking for support, financial and otherwise, to grow and become sustainable;
- 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.

We are looking to fund and support established initiatives tackling one or more pollution challenges, which are primarily carried out online.

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.

How many calls will you have

ACTION runs two open calls: One ran in 2019, and are currently running the second and last call.

When does the second call open

1 September 2020 12:00 PM Brussels time.

When does the second call close

1 November 2020 12:00 PM Brussels time.

How much funding is available

€200k, over two calls. €120k have been awarded in the first call; we can award up to €80k in the second call.

How many pilots will be funded

A total of 10 pilots, over two calls; six pilots have already been funded in the first call.

How do I apply

Follow the instructions from <https://actionproject.eu/apply-2020>

Eligibility

How do I know if I am eligible to apply

Refer to the information outlined in our '[Guide for Applicants](#)'

Can individuals apply to ACTION

Yes, provided that you are affiliated within a legal entity eligible to receive Horizon 2020 funding. ACTION will ask you to confirm your affiliation through a letter signed by the legal representative of your organisation.

Can consortia apply to ACTION

The funding is available to **legal entities** and **consortia** established in a country or territory eligible to receive Horizon 2020 grants. 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.

Submission

Can I submit more than one application for the same call

You can participate in one application only, either on your own or as part of a consortium.

I am new to this kind of funding; is there any extra help available?

Yes, we offer special support for new applicants. If you would like to be considered for this support programme, please contact us by the end of September, telling us who you are and why you need this support. We will select five applicants to participate in a dedicated webinar. Note that this special support programme will not affect your chances of acceptance into the accelerator.

Does ACTION offer a pre-proposal check

ACTION does not assess any applications prior to their submission. We are happy to answer general questions about the scope and format of the ACTION call via email or our social media channels, but we cannot make any statement about the feasibility or value of a proposal. The acceptance of a project will be at the discretion of the review panel.

Can I submit an application if I am already receiving funds from another public programme

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.

Can I submit documents that are not in English

No. All documents submitted to ACTION must be in English. ACTION will not be able to accept any documents in other languages.

Can I submit an application if I already applied in the first call

Yes, resubmissions are welcome. However, please note that the second call has a different focus than the first, and you may have to make changes to your plans to accommodate these. You will have to download and fill in the new - and changed - application form.

Responsible research and innovation

Who keeps the IP

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. 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.

ACTION will prioritise applications that plan to follow an open approach in their work, including releasing data openly for sharing and reuse, using, where relevant, ACTION data management infrastructure.

Do I need to share everything openly

We will give preference to proposals that are committed to making their data and outputs 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.

What about ethics

ACTION expects all successful applicants to the citizen science accelerator to abide by guidelines for ethical research. Most significantly, projects will be expected to ensure the informed consent of any human participants, who should be provided clear and concise instructions on what is expected of them, what personal or sensitive data will be gathered about them and how they can request the deletion of this data. Moreover, we require all pilots to ensure adequate data protection practises are in place to securely store any data gathered by or about volunteers including, but not limited to: pseudonymisation, anonymisation and aggregation of data; encryption and use of secure servers.

We expect applicants to outline their plans to ensure this in their proposal. In addition, ACTION will provide advice and support on dealing with these aspects throughout the accelerator.

Evaluation

How do you select applications

We follow a four step process:

1. Eligibility checks: ACTION checks if eligibility criteria are met. Proposals considered not eligible will not proceed to step 2 of the evaluation process.
2. Reviews and shortlist: Eligible proposals will be evaluated by at least two reviewers.
3. Interview: Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a remote interview with an expert panel.
4. Decisions: After the interview, the panel will decide whether to accept the applicant into the programme.

When will I know if I'm shortlisted

By 25th November 2020.

What will the interview consist of

During the interview we will ask you to give a presentation of your application of no more than 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of questions from a panel.

How many people can participate in the interview

There is no limit to the size of the team as long as the participants add to the discussions.

Will I receive feedback

Applicants will receive comments from the reviewers for each section of their application

When will the interviews be

Between 30th November and 4th December 2020. We plan to send out invitations by 25th November 2020, including a time slot for the interview.

Can I reschedule 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.

When will I know if my application was approved/rejected

All applicants will be notified in November whether they've been invited to interviews or not. Applicants who made it through the interviews will find the outcomes mid-December.

Can I change my application once submitted

You can update your application and resubmit as many times as you wish. We will consider the last submission made before the call deadline.

Can I apply for both calls

If your application was not successful in the first call, you will be able to submit an application for the 2020 call. Successful applicants from the 2019 call will not be able to apply for a second time.

Costs, payments and legal

What funding is available per pilot

Successful applicants will receive €20,000 in total, to complete their 6 month pilot.

What can I spend the funding on

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](#).

More information on funding can be found in the [Guide for applicant](#).

How are the payments scheduled

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, upon achievement of the milestones and deliverables agreed during negotiations.

Is subcontracting allowed

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.

What do I have to do to receive the final payment

You will receive your final payment on the completion of the below activities:

- 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;
- Attend the graduation at the ACTION conference.

The accelerator

Where will the training take place

- An initial workshop will take place over several days between 11th and 15th January 2020, as part of the negotiation phase.
- Further training will be offered virtually, through dedicated software or through conference calls and VOIP services such as Skype.

When/where will the graduation conference take place

We are actively planning the final ACTION conference and graduation event.

The conference will take place in autumn 2021, with an audience of approximately 150 persons representing practitioners, researchers, decision makers and representatives of the European Commission. All successful applicants should set aside a portion of their budget to attend it.

Should I account for training in my budget

- No. Due to ongoing travel restrictions, we plan to hold all trainings in the second accelerator online.
- We will hold a final conference at the end of the second round of the ACTION call, in 2021. During this event, pilots will be invited to share their findings and experiences of the ACTION accelerator. The exact details of this are to follow, but you should reserve some additional funding to attend this event.
- Please note – we regret that ACTION cannot offer further funding towards these travel costs.

Other questions

I want to put up sensors in my area. Would that make a good project?

No. We have found in our first call that there are many projects based around sensors (for air quality or other types of pollution). Successful projects should be more novel and innovative. We recommend that you look at the [successful pilots](#) from our first call to get an idea of the type of project we are looking for.