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D 3.3 - Summary of Round One

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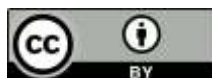
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Abstract	This deliverable outlines the procedures, processes and timelines for the first round of the ACTION open call. This call solicited applications from citizen science projects in the domain of pollution, which were evaluated by a panel of experts made up of external reviewers and the ACTION consortium. In this document, we further outline key aggregate statistics concerning pollution focus, country of origin and the evaluation outcomes of these applications, as well as the relationship with applicants through email correspondence and webinars. We conclude with lessons learned and recommendations for the second round of the call, to be launched in September of 2020.
Keywords	Open Call, Citizen Science, Pollution, Summary statistics

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Participatory Science Toolkit Against Pollution (ACTION) is a Horizon2020 project which aims to establish tools, technologies and methodologies to enable citizen science in the area of pollution. As part of that process, ACTION aims to support and fund a set of citizen science pilots, giving them the opportunity to make use of and bootstrap these tools, through an open call. In this document, we set out a summary of the first round of the open call, which opened on the 1st of August 2019, with the projects joining the ACTION accelerator process in February 2020.

This document may be of use to individuals and organisations looking to carry out their own open call, particularly in the areas of citizen science and pollution, as well as policy makers, researchers and citizen science projects and administrators, who may obtain insight about the types and focus of projects in this area.

The main findings of this document are as follows:

- We received 116 applications (including one duplicate) from a total of 30 countries, including 19 EU member states, 8 associated countries and 3 third countries.
- The most common country from which applications were received was Italy, with 25 applications. Significant numbers were also received from Serbia and Spain (11 applications each)
- 22 applications were deemed ineligible with 94 were selected for review. Of these 94, 66 were rejected prior to interview, while 28 were shortlisted for interview. Ultimately 22 of these projects were rejected upon interview, with a final 6 projects selected for the accelerator programme.
- The most common pollution focus was air pollution, representing 53 of the 115 unique applications.
- During the application process we received 63 emails from applicants.
- We carried out a series of 3 webinars, with a total of 30 attendees and a total of 90 subsequent views of webinar recordings through the ACTION website.

1 INTRODUCTION

ACTION (Participatory science toolkit against pollution) is a Horizon2020 project aiming to devise novel methodologies, create and provide infrastructure and develop a socio-technical toolkit to provide recommendations and guidelines for citizen science, with a particular focus on the area of pollution. As a core element of these aims, ACTION aims to set-up and carry out a citizen science accelerator, involving 10 pilot citizen science projects in the domain of pollution, to bootstrap these tools and facilities.

These pilots will be recruited through an open call process, consisting of two rounds, open to applicants from across the EU and the associated countries defined in the Horizon2020 projects. Applicants will be offered €20,000 euros and support from the ACTION consortium to devise and carry out research activities using citizen science to address pollution challenges, over the course of a six month period. The first round of this call took place in 2019 and identified six pilot projects who joined the accelerator in February of 2020. The second round will launch in September of 2020, with a second and final round of the accelerator to launch in February 2021.

In this summary report on the first round of the ACTION open call, we provide details of the call process from the perspective of applicants, consortium partners and external evaluators who assisted with the review process. We provide key statistics on the eligibility, review and evaluation outcomes of the applications, country of origin and the pollution focus of each application. We also describe the relationship with applicants through email correspondence and a series of webinars held to inform applicants and answer any queries. Finally, we identify lessons learned and recommended changes for the second round of the call. Appendix A contains the Guide for Applicants, which covers all relevant documentation required for applicants to apply, including the short proposal template (page 32) and declaration of honour (page 36) that participants were required to submit. Appendix B contains the FAQ document, which provides the answers to frequently asked questions and expected issues which participants may encounter. Finally, Appendix C contains an example negotiation contract which provided the basis for the final contracts agreed with successful pilots.

2 Summary of Call Process

The ACTION open call is a competitive funding call intended to promote open innovation within European citizen science initiatives, with a particular focus on those initiatives researching and addressing pollution-related issues. Successful applicants gain access not only to funding, but also to an incubator process designed to take projects through the process of designing and implementing citizen science actions, gathering data and producing early outputs, over the course of a six month process. The call is divided into two rounds, each comprising five key phases: call definition, application solicitation, evaluation, selection and negotiation. Successful projects then join the 6 month ACTION accelerator and receive funding and ongoing support from the ACTION consortium. A timeline of these phases for round one of the call can be seen in Table 1 below:

Date	Milestone	Description
1st August 2019	Call opens	EasyChair open for applications. Call published on website and social media channels.
20th August 2019	First Webinar	Hosted at: https://actionproject.eu/apply-2019/ (see more support for applicants)
18th September 2019	Second Support Webinar	As above
8th October 2019	Third Support Webinar	As above
31st October 2019	Applications close	EasyChair applications close.
1st November 2019	Eligibility check complete	Applications checked for eligibility.
4th November 2019	Reviewing begins	Panel included 25 reviewers + metareviewer
22nd November 2019	Reviewing ends	Applications shortlisted for interview
2nd - 6th December 2019	Interviews take place	Eligible applications interviewed by ACTION panel
8th December 2019	Final notifications, negotiations begin	
16th January 2020	Negotiations end	

Table 1 - Key Dates and Milestones for the First Round of the ACTION Open Call

2.1 Call Process for Applicants

The first source of information potential applicants have access to is the ACTION website, with a dedicated page on the first round of the call (<https://actionproject.eu/apply-2019/>). The website serves as the entry point for the call and offers all the documentation and information that an applicant needs to be aware of in order to apply, along with links to any upcoming webinars, previous recordings and the application platform (*Easychair*). Applicants were strongly advised to read the 'Guide for Applicants' prior to beginning their application (see Appendix A). This document contained all the necessary information to submit to the open call, including the call aims, eligibility requirements, key dates, and template documents that must be submitted, as well as the review and notification processes.

In terms of eligibility, applicants to the first round of the call were required to be a legal entity established in an EU member state or an associate country of the Horizon 2020 programme. While we allowed applications from consortia, any individual applying to the call could make one application only. We required the register to reserve time for the interview and negotiation phases if they were selected.

In order to apply, applicants were asked to complete a short proposal document of a maximum of 4 pages, by filling in a template provided within the guide for applicants and available for download from the ACTION website. The proposal template consisted of 22 questions, along with a brief budget breakdown and an explanation of key costs. Questions are divided into three sections, according to the main criteria expected in a successful application: the **idea**, **impact** and **implementation**. This template is provided on page 32 of this report. Alongside this proposal template, participants were asked to sign and submit a declaration of honour, covering ethical and legal issues, as well as expectations for participation in the call process. This document can be seen on page 36.

In addition to the questions within the template, we produced a public set of criteria, broken down according to the main principles we would expect in a successful application, each with a set of yes/no questions. These criteria were included within the guide for applicants and formed the basis of the criteria provided to reviewers for the evaluation process. When receiving their reviews, applicants were given overall comments for each of the core areas - idea, impact and implementation - structured around these principles and questions, along with an overall score out of 5. These criteria can be seen on page 38 of this report.

Following the closure of the call, applications were assessed for eligibility. Ineligible applicants were identified at this stage, along with the reason for their ineligibility -- e.g., overlength applications. These applicants were informed of the status of their application and the reason for this ineligibility shortly following the completion of the eligibility check.

Eligible applications were then reviewed by the ACTION team and external reviewers. Each eligible applicant received a copy of these reviews following the completion of the review process. Reviewers were asked to make overall comments, as well as comments on the idea, impact and implementation respectively. Upon completion of the review process, applicants received all four

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comment fields from both assigned reviewers, as well as a summary meta-review from a third reviewer. In addition to these review comments, applicants received an overall score out of 5 from each reviewer, as well a third score from the meta-reviewer and a final overall shortlisting decision, explaining whether the application had been selected for interview or not.

Shortlisted applicants were then asked to prepare a five minute presentation, briefly summarising their project idea. In the instructions to applicants, it was recommended that applicants use this time to expand on any details which were not communicated in the short proposal template, with a particular focus on any areas of concern or questions raised by the reviewer feedback. The remaining 15 minutes of the interview consisted of questions from the ACTION interview panel - three reviewers and a fourth chair with the role of coordinating the interview process. Each interview concluded with the chance for applicants to ask any questions they may have about the open call process or the next steps.

Upon completion of the interview process and after allocating a few days to discuss and select applications, applicants were then informed of whether their application had been selected for the ACTION accelerator or not. All applicants were given a summary of comments from the panel, identifying strengths and weaknesses, summarising the panel's thoughts and highlighting any key issues for future consideration.

Successful applicants then entered the negotiation phase. At this stage, applicants selected a more concrete project plan and timeline, with deliverables and Key Performance Indicators. A formal contract was produced with agreement from both parties and this was then signed by applicants. An initial payment of 50% was made to selected applicants upon completion of the negotiation phase and the commencement of the accelerator process, with the final 50% to be paid upon completion of the accelerator, subject to a final review and adherence to the requirements set out during the negotiation process. A summary of the main call stages can be seen in Figure 1 below.

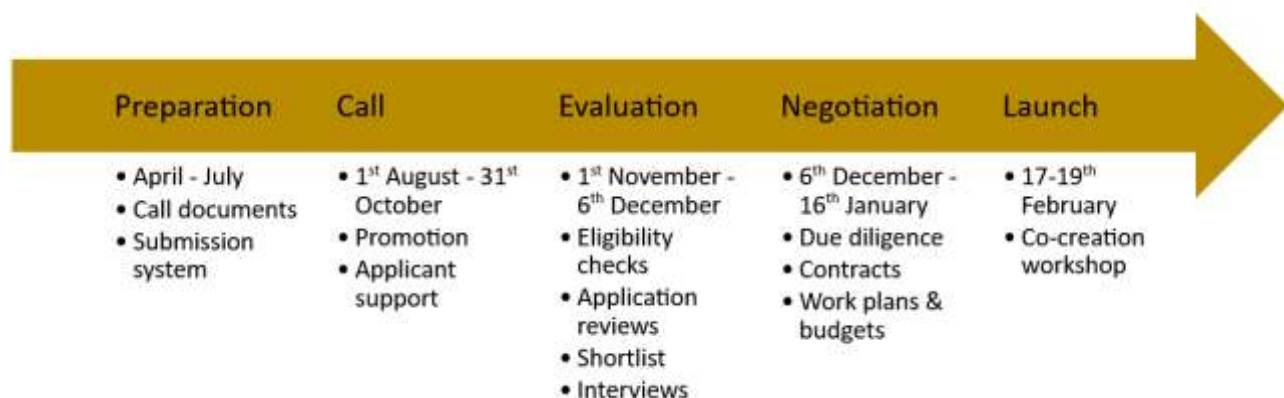


Figure 1- Summary of Call Stages

2.2 Call Process for the ACTION Consortium

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For the ACTION team, the structure of the open call was broadly similar to the structure for applicants. However, the consortium had a more expanded role, being instrumental in designing and setting out the requirements of the call, prior to the call launch, as well as shaping the accelerator programme.

To summarise, the role of the ACTION consortium was as follows:

1. **Prior to the commencement of the open call process:** set out call objectives, requirements and programme, agreeing eligibility and evaluation criteria. At this stage, draft public-facing and internal call documentation and guidance were produced and distributed to consortium members for comment and editing.
2. **During the application period:** Disseminate and publicise call, including attending events, hosting webinars, responding to email queries and producing and sharing social media materials.
3. **Near end of the application period:** Provide names and details of parties for review, including external experts. These external reviewers were approached by members of the ACTION team and made aware of the call, prior to the closure of the call process.
4. **Upon closure of the application period:** review applications for eligibility, identifying ineligible applications and specifying the reason for applications. Attend internal (virtual) reviewing workshop.
5. **During review process:** Review applications according to review criteria. Each reviewer completed approximately 8 reviews on average.
6. **Upon completion of review process:** Identify shortlisted applications. This stage was particularly essential for those applications where there was significant disagreement between the two reviewers, where comments did not align with scores or where the applications scores and comments described a borderline accept/reject decision.
7. **Upon commencement of interview process:** attend interviews, listen to application presentations and ask questions. Make notes on applications and write recommendations and feedback.
8. **Upon completion of interview process:** Identify successful applicants to join the ACTION accelerator. This stage involved all members of the consortium and all applicants were discussed, with an opportunity for the interview panel members to give their recommendations and justify their decisions.
9. **Negotiation process:** oversee negotiations and administrative processes, including management of internal and institutional processes such as signing of documents and formulation of contracts.

2.3 Call Process for External Reviewers

Due to the large number of applications received and to ensure a more balanced view of applications, we recruited a number of external reviewers to participate in the review stage of the open call. A total of 5 reviewers provided their time and each reviewed between 4 and 10 applications for the call. The review process was largely the same for both internal and external reviewers. However, since external reviewers had not taken part in the formation of the review criteria, these reviewers were given additional assistance and instructions before commencing the review process. Due to a lack of availability, external reviewers did not participate in the interview process.

2.4 Review Process

Each application was reviewed by two randomly assigned reviewers¹. All applications were also overseen by a single meta-reviewer, who ensured the consistency and quality of reviews and decisions. To complete reviews, reviewers were asked to fill in a score page within the EasyChair system, divided into four sections, with scores and comments for the idea, impact, implementation and an overall score, comment field and shortlisting recommendation. Each section was to be evaluated on a scale of very poor (1), poor (2), fair (3), good (4) and excellent (5).

To support this process, each reviewer was given a document outlining the criteria, which broke down the expectations for each field and area for each point on the scale. This document is available on page. There was no requirement that any given score be influenced by another - i.e., an application could in theory receive a 1 for implementation, but still receive a high overall score. Nevertheless, the criteria and importance of each area for the overall evaluation meant that such disparity in scores was not observed. Reviewers were asked to clearly outline their reasoning and comments for each field and reviewers were checked for consistency between scores and comments. It should be noted that while all comments and an overall score were provided as feedback to applicants, individual scores for fields were not. Similarly, while reviewers were asked to recommend whether each application be shortlisted or not, these recommendations were not provided to applicants. Ultimately while these recommendations were taken into account, overall scores and the comments by reviewers played a much greater role in deciding which applications to shortlist for interview.

2.5 Interview Process

As part of the interview process, each application was reviewed by a panel consisting of three members of the ACTION team and a fourth chair, who had been responsible for the meta-reviews and who was familiar with each application. Due to a lack of availability and a desire for consistency among the interview team, the three interview panel members assigned to each application may not have been responsible for originally reviewing each specific proposal. For this reason, interviewers were provided with a copy of each application, full reviews, a meta-review and a summary of the most pressing issues identified by the reviewers, prior to beginning the interview process. Additionally, reviewers were given a set of example questions that could be used during the interview process if necessary.

While we tried to use the same members of the panel wherever possible, the large number of applications and limited time available for interviews meant that some variation in members of the panel was inevitable. For this reason, panel members were asked to record notes, comments and recommendations immediately following each interview and these comments and recommendations were discussed by the entire ACTION consortium when deciding on the final set of successful applications.

¹ For purposes of fairness and given the number of applications dealing with scientific activities which did not align with the consortium and reviewer's knowledge, it was decided that reviewers should be assigned at random, rather than based on expertise. Nevertheless, relevant consortium partners were available for any questions around specific topics such as air pollution.

3 Call Statistics

3.1 Evaluation Outcomes

For the first round of the ACTION open call, we received 116 applications², exceeding the target of 100 applications set out in the grant agreement in a single round. 22 of these applications were deemed to be ineligible and so a total of 94 applications were reviewed and evaluated for inclusion within the ACTION accelerator. A breakdown of evaluation outcomes can be seen in Table 2 below.

Outcome	Number of Applications
Submitted	116
Ineligible	22
Eligible and reviewed	94
Rejected prior to interview	66
Shortlisted for interview	28
Rejected after interview	22
Successful applicants	6

Table 2 - Evaluation Outcomes for Round One Applications

3.1.1 Reasons for ineligibility

During the eligibility check, applications were checked for adherence to the criteria of the call, including the length of applications, the budget available and the list of eligible countries. Additionally, a minor due diligence check was carried out at this stage to ensure that applications involved legal entities or organisations that the ACTION consortium would be able to enter into an agreement and fund. The reasons for applications being deemed ineligible can be seen in table 3 below. Note that while 22 applications were deemed ineligible, many applications had multiple issues.

Reason for ineligibility	Number of applications
Over length	11

² One application was received twice. To avoid confusion, the remaining statistics in this deliverable will ignore the second instance of this application

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Incomplete	1
Duplicate	1
Ineligible (third) country	4
Irrelevance for call	2
Over budget	1
Fraudulent application	1
Attempted submission after call closure	3

Table 3 - Summary of Eligibility Issues for Round One Applications

The most common reason for ineligibility was the length of applications. While the short proposal template and guide for applicants both stressed that applications should not exceed 4 pages, most ineligible applications were 5 pages and in one case as many as 9. Additionally, one application exceeded the available budget of €20,000 euros by over 20%. Four applications were received from ineligible countries as set out in the call criteria - specifically Morocco, Tanzania and Uganda. Two applications sought funding to design and launch products and had no citizen science or research based aims.

Three applications were received after the call closed, through applicants taking advantage of weaknesses in the EasyChair system - for example, submitting an otherwise blank application and editing the application after the call had closed to upload documents. As soon as this was noticed, steps were taken to prevent further applications in these manners and the affected applicants were informed that their applications were received after the deadline and could not be considered.

Finally, one application was deemed to be fraudulent after the eligibility check raised significant questions around the funding requested and a due diligence check identified further issues. This application did not appear to align with the goals of the ACTION accelerator and the proposed budget was not appropriate for the activities and materials proposed. Upon checking the details of the submitting organisation, a number of inconsistencies were noted, including the website and associated social media pages having been launched on the date the application was submitted, most pages being blank and inconsistent names, locations and descriptions when comparing the website and application. On this basis, this application was deemed highly likely to be fraudulent and therefore ineligible.

3.1 Geographical Coverage

For the first round of the call, we received applications from a total of 30 countries, of which 19 countries were EU member states, 8 countries were associated countries under the Horizon2020 programme and three countries were third countries deemed ineligible. These are shown in Figure 2 below. In terms of the number of applications received, 85 were received from EU member states, 26 were received from associated countries and 4 were received from ineligible (third)

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countries. Note that there was a degree of ambiguity present in applications, which in many cases involved international collaboration between workers in one country, working in a second country and carrying out research activities in a third. We therefore consider only the country as recorded by the individual within their Easychair application. Generally speaking, this refers to the country in which the organisation was founded, rather than the country where the research was to take place.

We note that submission rates appear to be generally higher in countries where the ACTION consortium partners are based -- i.e., Italy, Spain, Germany and the UK -- than in other countries. There are, however, a number of significant exceptions to this. Rates of submission were also high in Belgium, Greece and Portugal, EU member states outside of the ACTION consortium. Furthermore, applications were also high in associated countries outside of the consortium, particularly Serbia and Turkey. We believe this was due to governmental organisations disseminating news of the call within these countries, as well as providing support to organisations looking to apply. Finally, the ACTION consortium comprising two Norwegian organisations, only one application was received from Norway.

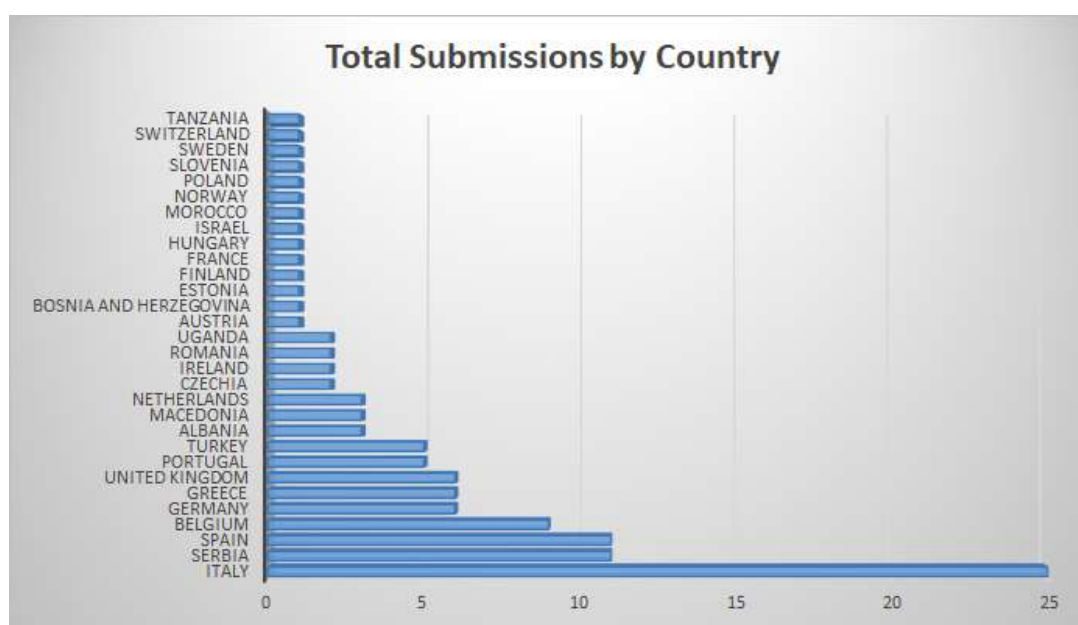


Figure 2 - Submissions by Country Prior to Eligibility Check

3.2 Pollution Focus

For the first round of the open call, we implemented few restrictions in terms of the pollution focus that applicants should have and applications included a diverse range of pollution issues and activities. In spite of this diversity, it should be noted that proposed activities and research topics tended to be similar for particular topics -- e.g., plastic pollution generally involved asking citizens to gather and record examples of plastic waste, while noise pollution generally included the monitoring of sensors or use of a smartphone app.

Air pollution was by far the most popular topic of submissions, with 53 submissions in this area, representing almost half of the total submissions. While the exact reason for the popularity of this

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topic is not known, we note two factors that likely influenced submissions in this area: the first is recent focus and interest within the media as well as general understanding of the issues associated with air pollution by the general public. We asked for submissions to describe why the research was timely and relevant -- that is, what interest there has been in the topic recently in terms of the media or scientific research. This was inherently simpler for some topics than for others.

The second is that air pollution research was one of the simpler topics to apply to citizen science and one which could be applied to many locations, contexts and demographic groups or communities. Ultimately, the vast majority of the 53 submissions in this area involved asking volunteers to install and monitor air quality sensors, with limited input and activity required from these volunteers and limited need for specific resources, except for a power source, internet connection or data storage device.

Table 4 below shows the list of pollution topics on which each application focused. Note that due to significant ambiguity in applications and a general lack of a common framework for pollution topics, we assign applications to categories based solely on how that application described its pollution focus. There is, therefore, some overlap in categories between topics such as litter/waste, plastic and water pollution. For those where a more general issue such as 'environmental' pollution or multiple pollution issues were mentioned, we assigned applications to the 'various' category.

Pollution Topic	Number of Applications
Agricultural/Soil	3
Air	53
Chemical	2
Energy Wastage	3
Light	1
Litter	7
Noise	4
Plastic	16
Space	1
Water	14
Various	7
Unclear or unspecified	4

Table 4 - Pollution Focus of Round One Applications

4 Relationship with Applicants

4.1 Email Correspondence

On launching the call on the 1st of August 2019, the ACTION team also launched an email helpline (call@actionproject.eu) to field questions from potential applicants. This helpline was managed by two members of the team at the University of Southampton and aimed to respond to applicants within 2 working days wherever possible, with some longer turnaround times for questions with some degree of uncertainty or which required input from other consortium partners. Additionally, a frequently asked questions document was provided for applicants on the ACTION website.

During the application period (between August and October), we received a total of 63 emails from participants. These emails largely comprised of two broad categories - questions about eligibility and clarification about the application process (i.e., the proposal template).

4.2 Webinars

To assist applicants with the application process, answer questions and clarify the aims and objectives of the ACTION accelerator, we ran a series of three webinars for potential applicants, one for each month that the call was open to applications. These took place on the GoToWebinar platform and were first publicised on the ACTION website, Facebook and Twitter account. The first webinar took place on the 20th of August, with the second on the 17th of September and the final webinar on the 8th of October, each at 11am CEST.

Each webinar lasted for approximately one hour, and consisted of a presentation explaining the application and evaluation process for the call, along with opportunities throughout and at the end for questions from applicants. Each webinar was made available for registration several weeks before starting and all webinars and questions were recorded and published on the ACTION website shortly after completion.

Total registration counts, attendance figures and view counts for each webinar and video can be seen in table 5 below. Note that webinars used the same presentation and were all very similar, with the only difference in the questions from applicants asked throughout.

Date	Registration	Attendance	Views
20th August	8	4 (50%)	65
17th September	24	9 (38%)	24
8th October	26	17 (65%)	1
Total	58	30	90

Table 5 - Registration, Attendance and Viewing Figures for Round One Webinars

5 Lessons Learned and Second Round

For the first round of the ACTION call, the objectives, procedures and tools used were generally successful. We received 116 applications, exceeding the 100 total proposed in the grant agreement for the two rounds, with a variety of pollution focuses, citizen activities and countries of origin. We noted some areas for improvement, however, in the application and evaluation process:

- Participants struggled to understand the differences between questions within the short proposal template, leading to some applicants repeating answers or offering little additional information. One such example is that many applicants did not adequately describe the overall goals of the project, instead describing the project in terms of the activities expected from participants.
- The short proposal template format left little room for longer answers to questions. This was somewhat intentional, to keep responses brief, encourage applicants to highlight key topics and reduce the workload during the review and evaluation process. However, this meant some useful information was not mentioned by applicants, in favour of highlighting details that were less useful to reviewers. This was similarly compounded by repetition of responses between questions.
- Some applicants struggled to understand administrative restrictions, particularly surrounding the budget. In some cases, costs were not adequately broken down, while some applicants struggled to understand the distinction between consumables and equipment. Many applicants failed to consider costs to attend ACTION events.
- Many queries around eligibility and the application process were asked multiple times. While some of these were clearly communicated in the guide for applicants, others were a result of ambiguity or a lack of information in particular sources.
- Applicants did not always understand the types of support offered by ACTION. Some requested very specific technical support that was beyond the capabilities and resources available within the consortium, while others required next to no practical support and saw the call solely as an opportunity for funding.

To address these issues, we propose three major changes for the second round:

1. A more streamlined short proposal template, which includes fewer questions per section and removes questions to which applicants tended to give similar answers. The overall length of submissions would remain the same (i.e., 4 pages) giving applicants the opportunity to make longer responses and increasing the overall clarity and detail within applications.
2. Update the guide for applicants, clarifying missing details around the budget, any expected costs. We intend to hold the kick-off event in an **online** format, due to current uncertainty and travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 virus, but other potential costs and the differences between budgetary concerns will be more clearly laid out.
3. Update the FAQ document more frequently, publishing new documents to the ACTION website and updating other documents as necessary should any ambiguity arise.

In addition to these changes necessitated by administrative issues, we noted a number of common weaknesses and issues with applications that were more difficult to address. To summarise:

- The requirement to design, launch and carry out a citizen science project within six months, was associated with a number of unfeasible and unrealistic proposals in terms of timescale.

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Most commonly, projects starting entirely from scratch would propose activities such as app development in the space of weeks, or recruiting a large body of volunteers almost instantaneously, without an adequate plan or consideration of how long such steps might realistically take.

- The broad definition of citizen science and pollution outlined in the guide for applicants and during webinars was intended to avoid unnecessary restrictions which might bias the types of application received. However, we noted a significant overlap between many applications and a large volume of applications for which citizen science was unnecessary or even not used. In particular, many of the air pollution applications required minimal input from citizens and asked citizens to play a largely passive role.
- Many applicants struggled to address the issue of **impact**, suggesting very simplistic or vague impacts such as raising awareness within a small target groups or proposing unfeasibly large impact such as addressing a pollution challenge (e.g., air pollution) in a particular region within six months and with no clear plan to do so.

To begin to address this issue and in response to the challenges posed by the novel coronavirus during the first round of the call, we have decided to introduce two clear criteria to which projects must adhere during the second round of applications. The first is that we will particularly welcome applications from existing, established projects looking to expand their activities, for example by introducing new tasks or reaching new target groups. The second is that we will expect all activities carried out by volunteers to be entirely achievable **online**, without a need for physical events that must be attended in person.

Finally, we will adjust the timeline of the call, launching on the 1st of September 2020 and closing on the 31st of October 2020 and thereby allowing just two months for applications instead of three. This was in response to the significant lack of applications and queries during August, as well as a general lack of events to attend and difficulties in dissemination. Feedback from applicants and partners identified August as a holiday period, where many were unavailable or preoccupied with existing concerns

Beyond this, the structure of the call and major milestones will remain the same, following the existing process of application opening and closure, eligibility check completion, review, interview and negotiation. We expect to launch the second and final accelerator in February of 2021, for completion in summer 2021.

APPENDIX A – GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS



Guide for applicants

(ACTION call 2019)

Call opens: 1st August 2019, 12:00 pm (noon) CEST

Call closes: 31st 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 1st 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 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 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
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
 - b. A declaration of honour, dated and signed. A copy is available in [Annex 4](#) or at 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-point 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 1st February 2020 and 31st 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.



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 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.

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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

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

1.2 Relevance to the call

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

1.3 Open approach

Which (if any) data do you intend to gather or produce? How much of this will be openly available?	
Which other outputs will the pilot have? Which will be openly available?	

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<p><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></p>	
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2. Impact

2.1 Value proposition

<p><i>What problem does your pilot address and how?</i></p>	
<p><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></p>	
<p><i>Who are the key stakeholders? Who will be (positively or negatively) impacted by the pilot and how?</i></p>	

2.2 Opportunity and timing

<p><i>Why is now a good time to address this issue?</i></p>	
<p><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></p>	

2.3 Growth and sustainability

<p><i>How many participants do you need to achieve your goals and why?</i></p>	
<p><i>How will you manage the growth of the pilot during the six months of the accelerator? Please provide a rough timeline.</i></p>	

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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.

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

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

Explain the main cost items briefly.	
--------------------------------------	--

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;

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

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	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.

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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.

APPENDIX B – Example Negotiation Contract



ACTION Contract

Between

The University of Southampton

And

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Contracting parties

- (1) University of Southampton, a non-profit organization established in University Road, Southampton, UK, SO17 1BJ, with VAT No. GB 568 6304 14000, , hereinafter referred to as the “**ACTION Co-ordinator**”
- (2) [ORGANISATION NAME] a legal entity under the laws of [COUNTRY OF REGISTRATION] with a registered address of [INSERT ADDRESS] hereinafter referred to as the “**Awardee**”, duly represented by [INSERT LEAD NAME]

Together the “**Contracting Parties**” or individually the “**Contracting Party**”, have agreed to the following terms and conditions, including those in **Annexes 1-6**, which form an integral part of the agreement (hereinafter referred to as the “**Contract**”).

1. General provisions

- 1.1. “**ACTION**” will transform citizen science from a mostly scientist-led process to a more participatory, inclusive, citizen led one, which acknowledges the diversity of the citizen science landscape and all of the challenges citizen science teams have to meet as their project evolves. The University of Southampton acts on behalf of the consortium, comprising the University of Southampton, Cefriel Società Consortile a Responsabilità Limitata, Dutch Butterfly Conservation, Dutch Research Institute for Transitions, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Forschungsverbund Berlin E.V., Norwegian Institute for Air Research, SINTEF AS, T6 Ecosystems srl, Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Universidad Politecnica de Madrid. (the “**ACTION Consortium**”).
- 1.2. The European Commission (hereinafter referred as the “**EC**”) and the ACTION Co-ordinator and the ACTION Consortium have signed Grant Agreement no 824603 for the implementation of ACTION as part of the H2020 Framework Programme for Research and Development.
- 1.3. ACTION has, as one of its major objectives the distribution of EC Horizon 2020 funding to Awardees for the purposes of solving a challenge deemed significant for the advancement of tangible economic, societal, and environmental problems in the domain of pollution in Europe by means of two competitive calls for innovation as described in **Annex 2**. The Project has been positively evaluated and is therefore entitled to receive funding and distribute funding according to the terms and conditions set out under this Contract. The funds which will be received by the Awardee under this Contract are provided by the EC. The ACTION Co-ordinator has been tasked by the EC to manage these funds as described in the Grant Agreement no 824603.
- 1.4. This Contract defines the framework of rights and obligations of the Contracting Parties under the specific project submitted by the Awardee and that has been awarded funding under the ACTION project (**insert project name here**), hereinafter referred to as the “**Project**”, as further described in **Annex 1**.
- 1.5. **Annex 4** of this Contract is the Declaration of Honour, which the Awardee certified by authorised signature at the application stage. **Annex 4** sets out the declarations to which the Awardee must adhere, breach of the provisions of **Annex 4** shall be considered a material breach of the Agreement.

2. Entry into force of the contract and termination

- 2.1. This Contract shall enter into force on the day of its signature by the last Contracting Party, which can be sent as a scanned copy of the Contract by electronic means to the other Contracting Party. The Contract shall continue in full force until complete fulfilment of all obligations undertaken by the Awardee for the Project, estimated to be approximately six (6) months duration and as agreed in **Annex 1**. Termination of the Contract will be subject to the terms and conditions set out in Article 13, below.

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- 2.2. The provisions relating to Intellectual Property Rights, Information and Dissemination, Financial Audits and Control, Liability, Applicable Law, Settlement of Disputes and Confidentiality (specifically for the time period set out in Article 8 below) shall survive the expiration or termination of the Contract.

3. Performance obligations and responsibilities of the Awardee

- 3.1. The Awardee undertakes to take part in the efficient implementation of the Project and to cooperate and perform and fulfil promptly and on time, all of its obligations set out in this Contract and in particular **Annex 1**, **Annex 2** and **Annex 4** for use of the Data as may reasonably be required and with a duty of good faith and compliance with the Ethics Statement accompanying the call documents.
- 3.2. The Awardee will comply with the obligations as set out in this Contract and **Annexes 1, 2 and 4**, in particular:
- 3.2.1. The Awardee will use the allocated funding for the sole purpose of carrying out the Project and in accordance with the requirements of Article 6.
- 3.2.2. The Awardee shall immediately inform the ACTION Co-ordinator of any changes in status or circumstances that may lead to a delay in or inability to perform its obligations under the Contract.
- 3.2.3. The Awardee shall not assign its rights, duties or obligations under this Contract to any person or entity, in whole or in part and any attempt to do so shall be deemed a breach of this Contract.
- 3.2.4. The Awardee shall comply with the terms of the Declaration of Honour incorporated by reference as **Annex 4**.
- 3.2.5. The Awardee shall keep all records relating to the Project including financial records for Eligible Costs as set out in Article 6 for a period of seven (7) years from the termination or expiry of this Contract.
- 3.2.6. The Awardee shall comply with all relevant laws including but not limited to anti-corruption and anti-bribery, data protection, equality and ethics including compliance with the Ethics Statement at Section 4 of **Annex 4** (Declaration of Honour) and accompanying the call documents.
- 3.3. The Awardee shall also comply with the following specific obligations in relation to ACTION:
- 3.3.1. Populate and maintain a contact sheet with key contact details of staff;
- 3.3.2. Provide bio and photo for each key member of your team to the ACTION communication team, this will be placed on the ACTION website;
- 3.3.3. Update any team changes and communications data to the ACTION Co-ordinator as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event, no later than seven days following the relevant change;
- 3.3.4. Work to promote the ACTION Project and its mission;
- 3.3.5. Use the ACTION brand appropriately in its communications as agreed with the ACTION project mentor, including but not limited to ACTION logo and mention of participation in the ACTION Project on Awardee website; and
- 3.3.6. Do nothing that may have an adverse effect on the reputation of the ACTION Project or ACTION Consortium members.
- 3.4. **DELIVERABLES**
- 3.4.1. Attend citizen science training, which will take place at the start of the 6 month project period, in Europe.
- 3.4.2. Attend the ACTION conference, during the time of the ACTION project in Europe (date not confirmed)
- 3.4.3. Produce a short report at the end of the 6 month project period outlining the work that has been done and the outputs from the project.
- 3.3.4. Participate in impact assessment activities carried out during ACTION
- 3.3.5. Produce a short video about your work to be shared on the ACTION website
- 3.3.6. Any other deliverables according to the workplan agreed with ACTION during negotiations

4. Conflict of Interests

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- 4.1. The Contracting Parties agree to take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest (“**Conflict of Interest**”).
- 4.2. Each Contracting Party must formally notify the other Contracting Party without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a Conflict of Interest and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.
- 4.3. The ACTION Co-ordinator will notify the EC without delay of a Conflict of Interest of either the Awardee or of the ACTION Co-ordinator.
- 4.4. The Contracting Parties agree to take any reasonable measures notified to the ACTION Co-ordinator by the EC to rectify a Conflict of Interest.

5. Breach of contractual obligations

- 5.1. In the event of a breach the ACTION Co-ordinator will give written notice requiring that, where possible, such a breach is to be remedied within thirty (30) days. In case the Awardee has not remedied the breach within the notice period, or a remedy is not possible, the ACTION Co-ordinator may decide to terminate the contract unilaterally and to take measures to secure from the Awardee the repayment of the payments already received.
- 5.2. For the avoidance of doubt the following sets out a non-exhaustive list of events that will constitute a breach:
 - 5.2.1. The ACTION Co-ordinator identifies that the Awardee has breached its obligations under the Contract;
 - 5.2.2. The Awardee has changed the nature of its business and therefore is not able or willing to continue the Project; or
 - 5.2.3. The Awardee breaches the provisions of the Declaration of Honour set out at **Annex 4**, including but not limited to the Ethics and General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 in Section 4.

6. Funding and financial provisions

Maximum financial contribution

- 6.1. The financial contribution shall be specified in the Project description included in **Annex 1**.
- 6.2. The maximum financial contribution to be granted to the Awardee will be a lump sum financial contribution and must not exceed twenty thousand euros (€20,000).

Distribution of the financial contribution

- 6.3. The financial contribution to be granted to the Awardee shall be calculated and distributed for the following “**Eligible Costs**” only:
 - 6.3.1. Personnel: hiring of personnel who are directly involved in the execution of the plan for the incubation period.
 - 6.3.2. Equipment: Equipment needed for the execution of the plan for the incubation period.
 - 6.3.3. Direct costs: other goods and services: Consumables and other goods and services, as long as they are for the achievement of the goals of the incubation period.
 - 6.3.4. Subcontracting: Tasks to be subcontracted have to be agreed during the negotiation phase and cannot include tasks deemed critical for the Project.
 - 6.3.5. Indirect costs: (within the €20,000 limit and covering items such as rent, admin, printing, photocopying, amenities etc.) are eligible if they are declared on the basis of the flat-rate of 25% of the eligible direct costs (see clause 6.3), from which are excluded:
 - (a) Costs of subcontracting and
 - (b) Costs of in-kind contributions provided by third parties which are not used on the beneficiary’s premises

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- 6.3.6. All costs should be stated inclusive of any irrecoverable VAT. Research grants are outside the scope of VAT and all input VAT on expenses directly related to the Project will therefore be irrecoverable.
- 6.4. Financial support will be implemented as a set sum not to exceed €20,000 which will cover or offset the costs incurred by the Awardees when implementing the supported activities, all in accordance with the provisions specified in **Annexes 1 and 2**.
- 6.5. Payments to the Awardee will be made by the ACTION Co-ordinator. The ACTION Co-ordinator will give prior written notice to the Awardee of the estimated date and the amount to be transferred into the Awardee's bank account (according to the information in **Annex 3**), giving the relevant references.
- 6.6. In any case, the financial grant to be paid will always be subject to the following conditions:
- 6.6.1. The achievement of the milestones and deliverables specified in **Annex 1** and reported in accordance with the terms of this Contract.
 - 6.6.2. The payment will be made for the Eligible Costs only as stated in Article 6.3.
 - 6.6.3. The ACTION Co-ordinator reserves the right to withhold the payments if the Awardee does not comply with the obligations and responsibilities specified in this Contract and in **Annexes 2 and 4**.
- 6.7. Payments will be transferred in stages with an initial payment and a final payment all as set out in **Annex 1**.
- 6.7.1. The initial payment of 50% of the total financial grant will be released no later than fifteen (15) calendar days after the Contract has been agreed and signed by the Awardee and by the ACTION Co-ordinator.
 - 6.7.2. The final payment of 50% of the total financial grant will be transferred within fifteen (15) calendar days of the completion of the Project and the receipt and approval of the final project report by the ACTION Project Management Board.
- 6.8. Banking and transaction costs relating to the bank transfers will be paid by the Awardee.

7. Liability of the Awardee

- 7.1. The EC, the ACTION Co-ordinator and the other members of the ACTION Consortium cannot be held liable for any acts or omissions of the Awardee in relation to this Contract nor for any damage caused by the Awardee as a consequence of implementing this Contract including any acts of gross negligence.
- 7.2. The Awardee shall bear sole responsibility for ensuring that their acts within the framework of this Contract do not infringe third parties rights.
- 7.3. The EC, the ACTION Co-ordinator, and the other members of the ACTION Consortium cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the Awardee as a consequence of implementing the Project including consequential losses including, for the avoidance of doubt, any losses in respect of processing activities in relation to the Data.

8. Confidentiality

Principles

- 8.1. With respect to all information of whatever nature or form as is disclosed between the Contracting Parties in connection with the Project and identified in writing as confidential, the terms of this Article shall apply.

Confidentiality obligations

- 8.2. The Contracting Parties agree that the information defined in Article 8.1 is communicated on a confidential basis and its disclosure may be prejudicial to the owner of the information, and the Contracting Parties undertake that they will not, during the Project and for a period of five (5) years

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- from the expiration date of the Project, use any such information for any purpose other than in accordance with the Contract and the terms specified in **Annexes 2 and 4**.
- 8.3. The Contracting Parties undertake that they will, during the Project and for a period of five (5) years from the expiration date of the Project, treat the information as confidential, provided always that such agreement and undertaking shall not extend to any information which the receiving Party can show:
- 8.3.1. was, at the time of disclosure to the Awardee, published or otherwise generally available to the public; or
 - 8.3.2. has, after disclosure to either of the Contracting Parties, been published and become generally available to the public otherwise than through any act omission on the part of the receiving Party; or
 - 8.3.3. was already in the possession of a Contracting Party, without any restrictions on disclosure, at the time of disclosure to the receiving Party; or
 - 8.3.4. was rightfully acquired from others without any undertaking of confidentiality; or
 - 8.3.5. is or was independently developed by a Contracting Party without use of the information provided by the disclosing Party; or
 - 8.3.6. was required to be disclosed in order to comply with applicable laws or regulations or with a Court or administrative order.
- 8.4. In case of breach of the confidential rules in this Contract, the Contracting Party breaching the confidentiality obligations will remain solely liable for possible claims.
- 8.5. The Contracting Parties agree that confidential information that is disclosed to the EC by the ACTION Co-ordinator may be disclosed to:
- 8.5.1. the EC's staff, other EU Institutions and bodies; or
 - 8.5.2. third parties as necessary to implement the ACTION Project or safeguard the EC's financial interests,
- all subject to those parties being bound by obligations of confidentiality.
- 8.6. Breach of the provisions of this Article 8 may result in termination of this Contract by either Contracting Party.

9. Intellectual property rights

- 9.1. **"Background IP"** means all IP Rights owned by or licensed to the Awardee and all IP Rights owned by or licensed to the ACTION Co-ordinator at the time of the Contract.
- 9.2. **"IP Rights"** means patents, rights to inventions, copyright and related rights, trade marks and service marks, business names and domain names, rights in get-up, goodwill and the right to sue for passing off, rights in designs, rights in computer software, database rights, rights to use, and protect the confidentiality of, confidential information (including know-how and trade secrets) and all other intellectual property rights, in each case whether registered or unregistered and including all applications and rights to apply for and be granted, renewals or extensions of, and rights to claim priority from, such rights and all similar or equivalent rights or forms of protection which subsist or will subsist now or in the future in any part of the world.
- 9.3. **"Results"** means any tangible or intangible outputs of the Project such as data, knowledge or information, in whatever form or nature, whether it can be protected or not, that are generated by the Awardee in the Project, as well as any IP Rights attached to it.
- 9.4. The Contracting Parties agree that no rights or transfer ownership shall be granted to any Background IP of either Contracting Party as a result of this Project save for as expressly provided for in this Contract.
- 9.5. Each Contracting Party hereby grants a worldwide, non-exclusive licence to any Background IP required for the Project to the other Contracting Party solely for the purposes of the Project and the ACTION Project and sub-licensable solely to the ACTION Consortium members for those purposes only.
- 9.6. Subject to the license at Clause 9.7, the Contracting Parties agree that IP Rights in the Results developed during the Project shall be owned by the Awardee.

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- 9.7. The Awardee hereby grants a worldwide, non-exclusive, licence of the IP Rights in the Results to the ACTION Co-ordinator, such licence shall be sublicensable to the ACTION Consortium members solely for the purposes of the ACTION Project and for no commercial use whatsoever.

10. Force majeure

- 10.1. **“Force Majeure”** shall mean any unforeseeable exceptional situation or event beyond the Contracting Parties’ control, which prevents either of them from fulfilling any of their obligations under the Contract, which was not attributable to error or negligence on their part and which proves to be inevitable in spite of the exercising all due diligence. Any default of a service, defect in equipment or material, or delays in making them available, unless they stem directly from a relevant case of Force Majeure, as well as labour disputes, strikes or financial difficulties cannot be invoked as Force Majeure.
- 10.2. The Contracting Parties shall take the necessary measures to limit any damage due to Force Majeure. They shall do their best to resume the implementation of the action as soon as possible.
- 10.3. A Contracting Party shall not be considered to be in breach of its obligations and tasks if such breach is caused by Force Majeure. A Contracting Party will notify the other Contracting Party of any Force Majeure as soon as possible. In case the Awardee is not able to overcome the consequences of Force Majeure within thirty (30) calendar days after such notification, the ACTION Co-ordinator is entitled to terminate the Contract unilaterally.

11. Information, and Dissemination

Information and communication with the EC and the ACTION Consortium

- 11.1. For the avoidance of doubt this Article has no impact on the Confidentiality provisions set out under Article 8 above.
- 11.2. The Awardee shall, throughout the duration of the Project, take appropriate measures to engage with the public and the media about the Project and to highlight the financial support of the EC and the ACTION Consortium.
- 11.3. Any communication activities of the Awardee related to the Project must:
- 11.3.1. Display the EU emblem;
 - 11.3.2. Include the text: *“This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 824603.”*
- 11.4. Any publicity made by the Awardee in relation with the Project in addition to or alongside ACTION logo and branding as required, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author’s views and that the EC and the ACTION Consortium are not liable for any use that may be made of the information which it contains.
- 11.5. The Awardee acknowledges and agrees that EC and the ACTION Project shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:
- 11.5.1. the name of the Awardee;
 - 11.5.2. contact address of the Awardee;
 - 11.5.3. the general purpose of the Project;
 - 11.5.4. the amount of the financial contribution of ACTION foreseen for the Project;
 - 11.5.5. the geographic location of the activities carried out;
 - 11.5.6. the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to the Project;
 - 11.5.7. the publishable reports submitted to it, in accordance with **Annex 1** and the obligations under this Contract; and
 - 11.5.8. any picture or any audiovisual or web material provided to ACTION during the Project.
- 11.6. The Awardee shall ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and ACTION does not infringe any rights of third parties.

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- 11.7. The Awardee must participate in dissemination and networking events organized by the EC or ACTION, as specified in **Annex 1** and the obligations under this Contract.

Information and communication among the Contracting Parties

- 11.8. Any notice to be given under this Contract shall be in writing to the legal authorities of Contracting Parties.
- 11.9. Any change of persons or contact details shall be notified immediately to the ACTION Co-ordinator as specified in this Contract.

12. Financial audits and controls

Awardee Obligations

- 12.1. The Awardee shall make available directly to the EC or their representatives all information that is required to verify that the Project is/was properly managed and performed in accordance with the present Contract and its Annexes. The EC may carry out an audit during the Contract and up to four (4) years after the termination or expiry of the Contract. The EC may audit the financial implementation or technical implementation under the Contract.
- 12.2. The Awardee shall keep originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies -of all documents relating to the Contract for up to five (5) years after the termination or expiry of the Contract. These shall be made available to the EC where requested during any audit.
- 12.3. The Awardee shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorised by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the Awardee's offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data, and to all the information needed to carry out an audit, including information on individual salaries of staff involved in the Project.
- 12.4. The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules. In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the EC in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

Audit Findings

- 12.5. If the audit shows ineligible costs, or improper implementation of the action under the Contract, it may lead to suspension or termination of the Contract by the ACTION Co-ordinator and potential rejection of costs.
- 12.6. In the event that the EC audit rejects any costs and seeks to recover contributions from the ACTION Co-ordinator of financial contributions made to the Awardee, the Awardee agrees to repay such amounts to the ACTION Co-ordinator.
- 12.7. If the EC suspects that the Awardee committed fraud or other illegal acts, it will inform the European Anti-Fraud Office (“**OLAF**”).

13. Termination and Suspension

Termination

- 13.1. This Contract shall terminate on the completion of the Project and receipt of the final payment by the Awardee.
- 13.2. The ACTION Co-ordinator may terminate the Project:
- 13.2.1. if the EC terminates the ACTION Grant Funding Agreement; or
 - 13.2.2. If the Awardee commits a material breach of the Contract as set out in Article 5.
- 13.3. The Awardee may terminate the Project if the ACTION Co-ordinator commits a material breach of the Contract.

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13.4.A Contracting Party may terminate this Contract in the event that the other Contracting Party is declared bankrupt, being wound up, having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, or is subject to any other similar proceedings or procedures.

13.5.In the event of termination of this Agreement in accordance with Article 13.2, 13.3 or 13.4, all rights acquired by the Contracting Parties and the licences granted by the Contracting Parties to each other, pursuant to this Contract shall continue upon such termination.

Suspension

13.6.In the event that the ACTION Project is suspended by either the EC or the ACTION Consortium, the ACTION Co-ordinator shall inform the Awardee without delay and the Awardee agrees to suspend work on the Project until the ACTION Co-ordinator informs the Awardee that the suspension is lifted

13.7.The Awardee agrees that costs incurred during the suspension of the Project are not Eligible Costs as defined in Article 6.

14. Language

14.1.This Contract is drawn up in English language, which shall govern all documents, notices, meetings and related processes.

15. Amendments

15.1.Amendments or changes to this Contract shall be in writing and signed by the duly authorised representatives of the Contracting Parties.

15.2.Nevertheless, in the event the EC modifies the conditions of its grant to the ACTION Co-ordinator, the ACTION Co-ordinator has the right to amend the Contract accordingly.

16. Applicable law

16.1.This Contract shall be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of England and Wales.

17. Settlement of disputes

17.1.The Contracting Parties shall endeavour to settle their disputes amicably.

17.2.Any dispute, controversy or claim arising under, out of or relating to this Contract and any subsequent amendments of this Contract, including, without limitation, its formation, validity, binding effect, interpretation, performance, breach or termination, as well as non-contractual claims, may be submitted to mediation in accordance with the WIPO Mediation Rules. The place of mediation shall be London unless otherwise agreed upon. The language to be used in the mediation shall be English unless otherwise agreed upon.

17.3.If, and to the extent that, any such dispute, controversy or claim has not been settled pursuant to the mediation within sixty (60) calendar days of the commencement of the mediation, it shall, upon the filing of a Request for Arbitration by either Contracting Party, be referred to and finally determined by arbitration in accordance with the WIPO Expedited Arbitration Rules. Alternatively, if, before the expiration of the said period of sixty (60) calendar days, either Contracting Party fails to participate or to continue to participate in the mediation, the dispute, controversy or claim shall, upon the filing of a Request for Arbitration by the other Contracting Party, be referred to and finally determined by arbitration in accordance with the WIPO Expedited Arbitration Rules. The place of arbitration shall be London unless otherwise agreed upon. The language to be used in the arbitral proceedings shall be English unless otherwise agreed upon.

AS WITNESS:



ACTION

<p>For [AWARDEE NAME]</p> <p>[NAME]</p> <p>Director</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>Signed at _____ on</p>	<p>For the University of Southampton (the ACTION Co-ordinator)</p> <p>Ms Emma Mills</p> <p>EU Accountant</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Signed at _____ on</p>
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Annex 1 Project description

Overview of planned activities (written report) and indication of what the funds will be used for (budget form).

Annex 2 Guide for applicants

See <https://datapitch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Guide-for-applicants-call-2018vfq.pdf>

Annex 3: Bank account information form

This is the bank information document which must be provided and signed and stamped by the representative of the Awardee. The template can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/fich_sign_ba_gb_en.pdf

Please use CAPITAL LETTERS and LATIN CHARACTERS when filling in the form.

Annex 4: Declaration of honour

This is the document uploaded by the Awardee with the original submission.

Annex 5: Application form

Details submitted at application

Annex 6: ELIGIBILITY information

The following should be provided to the co-ordinator to validate the eligibility status of the applicant.

You can submit original documents in all the official EU languages. However, you must also submit a certified/official/legal translation into English made by an accredited body or translator. ACTION will not be able to validate your legal status unless you provide these translations.

- Completed Legal Entity Identification form. The form can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legEnt_privComp_en.pdf
- Affiliation to legal entity / letter of support to complete the project under the name of the legal entity
- Details of other funding if applicable

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