



Project Acronym: COPILOT

Project Title: Co-creating the next generation platform of PILOT and demo infrastructures, unlocking faster innovations and EU bioeconomy growth

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COPILOT Open Call 3 - Pitch Perfect

Annex 1: Guidelines for Applicants



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1. What is COPILOT?

The COPILOT project is a Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking Coordination and Support Action that will update, expand and make the Pilots4U database of Open Access Pilot and Demo Infrastructures for the European Bioeconomy future-proof and self-sustainable through co-creation.

Furthermore, the project will grow, train and nurture the stakeholder communities linked to this database by means of the “Scale-Up & Growth” and the “Exchange & Connect” Programmes.

For more information, visit project website at <https://copilot-project.eu/>

2. What is the COPILOT – Open Call 3 – Pitch Perfect offer?

This document provides the relevant information for applications for the special edition of COPILOT Open Call 3 (OC3) dedicated for the event Pitch Perfect and Boost the European Bioeconomy 2025 (OC3 - PP), part of “Exchange & Connect” Programmes.

The aim of the OC3 - PP is to issue 30 travel vouchers for bioeconomy innovators to foster collaboration, expand horizons and support scale up endeavours of the bioeconomy ecosystem in Europe. With the vouchers, the COPILOT project will encourage access to a vibrant bio-economy community, networking and matchmaking as well as better knowledge and understanding about the purpose and work of the pilot and demonstration facilities (PDIs). The *OC3 - PP* is the competitive process by which eligible applicants apply to have access to the COPILOT programme.

Applications to the Open Call will be accepted from 11th August 2025 until 10th October 2025. After the selection is completed, selected applicants will be invited to sign the sub-grant agreement.

The programme will select 30 applications, providing a maximum contribution of 500€, to be paid in form of lump sums after attending the above mentioned event.

Relevant links and contacts

- Project website: <https://copilot-project.eu/>
- Open call application form: <https://copilot-project.eu/open-calls/>
- Contact us: copilot@f6s.com

3. Who can apply and how?

3.1. Types of applicants

The COPILOT - OC3 PP is open to bioeconomy innovators pitching at the Pitch Perfect and Boost the European Bioeconomy event, the main COPILOT project event.

3.1.1. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants for the COPILOT - OC3 PP are:

- Legal entities, which can be either start-ups, spin offs, scale ups or SMEs.
- Relevant notes:
 - Please consult the [EU SME Definition](#) for details on what constitutes an SME.
 - A signed version of the Declaration of Honour and [If applicable] the SME Declaration will be requested during the contract preparation phase.

Additional requirements:

- Applicants that received funding under the COPILOT OC1, OC2 and OC3 Part 1 cannot apply to OC3 - PP.
- Applicants can only receive/win one voucher.
- Only entities located more than 300 km from Brussels are eligible to apply.
- Submitted and confirmed pitch slot at the [Pitch Perfect and Boost the European Bioeconomy 2025](#).³

3.1.2. Eligible countries

Eligible countries that may receive funding through this Open Call are legal entities from:

- European Union Member States, with a valid VAT and PIC number.
- Horizon Europe associated countries (those that have signed an agreement with the EU as identified in the HE Programme Guide) according to the updated list published by the European Commission.

The COPILOT - OC3 PP follows the rules applied by the EC for the R&D Programme Horizon Europe in terms of geographical coverage, eligibility, and exclusions, which take precedence.

3.1.3. Multiple submissions

The COPILOT - OC3 PP will accept a **maximum of 1 application** per applicant.

In case an applicant submits more than **1** application, only the application submitted first will be considered.

3.2. Funding conditions

Any entity will only be considered for funding once.

Each application may receive a maximum of up to €500.

Funding is foreseen to support the following categories of costs:

- Travel costs (accommodation and transport).

Funds will be disbursed in lump sums after the submission and approval of the travel report by the COPILOT consortium.

3.3. Application process

The COPILOT webpage will be the single entry point for all applications to the COPILOT - OC3 - PP. The relevant links and timings for the application process are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Application Process and Timeline

Phase	Description	Timeline
Application form	Fill in and submit application application form on COPILOT webpage [https://copilot-project.eu/open-calls/].	Launch date: 11/08/2025 Submission deadline: 10/10/2025 (17h00 CET)
Eligibility & Technical check	COPILOT Consortium performs internal check based on the eligibility criteria of the applications.	13/10/2025 to 15/10/2025
Application evaluation	An evaluation board reviews the received applications, scoring them based on the evaluation criteria.	16/10/2025 to 18/10/2025
Announcement of the results	All applicants receive an email with approval or rejection of their project. The successful applicants start the onboarding phase in the COPILOT Programme.	20/10/2025

The submission date for applications is final. All other dates, including those of the programme, may be subject to change.

3.4. Other application requirements and considerations

- **Submission:** Applications must be submitted via <https://copilot-project.eu/open-calls/>. Any other submission method will not be accepted.
- **Complete application:** All mandatory questions must be answered and all requested documents must be uploaded. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.
- **Accept terms:** Applicants must agree to the application's terms and conditions.
- **English language:** All applications and programme communication must be in English.
- **Document format:** Unless otherwise agreed, all documents in all phases must be submitted electronically in PDF format without printing restrictions.
- **Deadline:**
 - Failure to submit the application by the submission deadline, regardless of cause (e.g., network issues, multiple browsers or windows), is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. It is recommended to apply well before the deadline.

- **Review future documents:** Applicants are encouraged to get familiar with the documents that will be required in the contracting phase (see Section 5)
- **Applicants list:** A full list of applicants containing their basic information will be created for statistical and transparency purposes and shared with the European Commission.

4. How will applications be evaluated and selected?

COPILOT reserves the right to request at any moment of the process additional information and/or documentation to clarify any doubts regarding the eligibility of the applicant(s) and/or the application.

4.1. Eligibility check

An initial eligibility verification will be done to filter out and discard non-eligible applications. An application is only considered eligible if it meets **all the eligibility criteria and requirements** listed in Section 3, related with: type of applicant(s), consortium, countries, funding, language, documentation (...).

The eligibility check enables the establishment of a shortlist of applications to be evaluated in the next step of the evaluation process. Applications marked as non-eligible (for not meeting one or more of the eligibility criteria) will receive a rejection letter with a justification.

4.2. Evaluation Board

The expert evaluation board is a collective body composed of project partners with relevant experience in the COPILOT domains, having signed and duly agreed in advance a written commitment of confidentiality and absence of any conflicts of interest that might influence the impartial and objective analysis and evaluation of all submitted proposals.

4.2.1. Evaluation criteria & scoring

Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of two experts from the expert evaluation board. Applications will be scored against the following criteria:

Table 2: Evaluation criteria and description

Criteria Name	Description
Criteria 1	The applicants applying to the Voucher Network Program will have to answer a set of questions associated with the proposed activity. Their applications will be selected following the (i) what is the benefit of attending the event “Pitch Perfect and Boost the European Bioeconomy 2025” to your organisation / technology and (ii) what is the added value of Pilots4U powered by COPILOT platform and project activities for your organisation?
Criteria 2 – 1 bonus point	Applicants are based in Central and Eastern Europe. ¹
Criteria 3 – 1 bonus point	Applicants that represent start-ups founded at the latest in 2020.

¹ COPILOT consortium is committed to support the participation of under-represented regions from Central and Eastern Europe. List of Central and Eastern European countries: <https://www.unescwa.org/sd-glossary/central-and-eastern-european-countries-ceecs>

The table above defines how individual criteria will be scored. The minimum threshold for criterion 1 will be **2,5 out of 5**. Applications that do not meet the minimum threshold will be excluded from the programme.

4.2.2. Ranking & selection

All applications will be ranked in a single list based on their overall score, which is calculated from the average scores given by the evaluators. **Final ranking of applications:**

- Evaluators discuss and agree on the scores.
- Applicants are ranked by their overall score.

All applicants at all stages of the evaluation will be informed about the result of their evaluation. Applicants who meet the minimum quality threshold but are not initially selected may be placed on a reserve list, to be considered should selected applicants withdraw.

4.3 Appeals

Within three (3) working days of receiving (1) a rejection letter informing the application as non-eligible or (2) an ESR of non-acceptance, an applicant may submit a request for an appeal if they believe the results of the eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their application has been evaluated.

All requests for appeal must be sent to copilot@f6s.com and must:

- Focus on aspects concerning the evaluation of the application (e.g. admissibility or eligibility checks, evaluation procedure, etc), not their merits.
- Clearly describe the complaint.
- Be received within the time limit (3 working days) from the reception of a rejection letter considering the application as non-eligible or the ESR information letter delivered.
- Sent by the entities' legal representative that has also submitted the application.

Note that the evaluation is carried out by highly qualified experts. COPILOT will neither question nor interfere with their original evaluation. Mere repetitions of the content of the application or disagreements with the result or reasoning of the technical evaluation will not be considered.

5. What happens after selection?

Selected applicants will be invited to the contracting phase, where administrative and financial details and documents are verified and validated.

Furthermore, to carry out mandatory Know Your Customer (KYC) checks, proof of residency and proof of ID from one or more members of the organisation(s) is required.

The steps of this phase are:

1. Inclusion of comments (if any) provided in the Evaluation Summary Report as part of the sub-grant agreement (contract).
2. Validation of the entities based on the provision of the following documentation:
 - Formal proof of the entity’s legal existence and tax activity.
 - Proof of the SME status, including the SME Declaration Form (Annex 3).
 - Declaration of Honour (Annex 2), for all participating entities, signed by the legal representative of the entity.
 - Bank Account Information (Annex 4).
3. Signing of the sub-grant agreement between COPILOT Consortium represented by its Coordinator (BBEPP), the Treasurer (F6S) and the Lead Beneficiary.

Additional considerations:

- A valid VAT is mandatory.
- The sub-grant agreement (contract) is final and cannot be altered.
- Electronic digital signatures are required for signed documents (unless otherwise agreed).
- Deadlines for document submission will be provided and will normally be concluded within two weeks.

6. What is the COPILOT - OC3 PP and its requirements?

6.1. Programme Mandatory Actions

Mandatory action	Travel Report	Payment
Attend and pitch at the event Pitch Perfect and Boost the European Bioeconomy 2025 and participate in the feedback survey/evaluate the event	Provide travel report 10 working days after the event (Annex 5 to sub-grant agreement - Travel Report)	After successful review of the travel report and within 5 working days (Annex 6 to sub-grant agreement - Payment Request)
Follow the LinkedIn page Pilots4U powered by COPILOT and create one post about your pitch with the support of the COPILOT funding		

7. What else is important to know?

7.1. On conflicts of interest

Applicants must not have any actual and/or potential conflict of interest with the COPILOT selection process and during the project implementation. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case.

7.2. Data protection

In order to process and evaluate applications, and manage project implementation, the COPILOT consortium will need to collect Personal and Industrial Data.

- . BBEPP will act as Data Controller for data submitted through the COPILOT website for these purposes. Please see our privacy policy [here](#).
- A Data Protection Officer (DPO) has been appointed by BBEPP generally, to ensure compliance with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and that personal data is collected, processed, and stored in a secure manner.
- The COPILOT website system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the COPILOT terms to ensure compliance. Please refer to <https://copilot-project.eu/> to review the platform's privacy policy and data security policy.
- Apart from the COPILOT website, data will also be stored on the project repository on Microsoft 365 Sharepoint managed by the project coordinator BBEPP.
- Please note that the COPILOT consortium must retain generated data until five years after the balance of the COPILOT project is paid or longer if there are ongoing procedures (such as audits, investigations or litigation). In this case, the data must be kept until their conclusion.

7.3. Confidentiality

Confidentiality obligations:

- Selected applicants are required to maintain confidential any project data, documents, invoices and other materials (in any form) during the implementation of the activities and for 5 years after project completion.
- This confidentiality period can be extended by agreement with the EC and the COPILOT consortium.
- Information shared during the project, whether written or spoken, is only considered confidential if the COPILOT agrees and confirms it in writing within 15 days.
- Confidential information must only be used for project implementation, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Any information shared during the application stage will be treated as confidential.

7.4. Promotion of the action and ensuring visibility of the EU funding

The beneficiary must promote the project, the COPILOT project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC, including on the official third party website. The COPILOT Communication team will guide and support these communication activities to selected beneficiaries.

7.5. Checks and reviews

The EC may, at any time during the implementation of the sub-project and up to five years after the end of the sub-project, arrange for a check and review activity to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves, including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC.

There will be no financial checks, reviews, or audits to check costs, since beneficiaries have no obligation to document the costs incurred for the action. Checks, reviews, and audits will focus on the technical implementation of the action.

8. Relevant links and contacts

The COPILOT Consortium will provide information to the applicants via the F6S page, so that all information (questions and answers) are visible to all participants.

- Project website: <https://copilot-project.eu/>
- Open call application form: <https://copilot-project.eu/open-calls/>
- Contact us: copilot@f6s.com

4. Relevant Open Call definitions

Table 3. Acronyms & Definitions

Acronym	Explanation/ Definition
EC	European Commission
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprise
KYC	Know Your Customer
PP	Pitch Perfect

Table 4. Terms & Definitions

Term	Definition
Applicant(s)	The legal entity or group of legal entities that intend(s) to submit or that submitted an application to the Open Call 3 PP.
Application Eligibility Criteria	Criteria used to assess if an application can be considered for the open call. Possible values (Yes/No).
Application Eligible or Non-Eligible	Application that is or is not compliant with eligibility criteria.
Bank Account Information	Form where the beneficiary provides information of the bank account to which payments will be made during the project implementation.
Beneficiary or 3rd Party	An entity or a consortium that submitted an application to the open call that was accepted to be funded, and have signed, or are in the process of signing, a sub-grant agreement.
Consortium	Set of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible to implement the project as defined in the Grant Agreement signed with the European Commission.
Consortium Declaration of Honour	Declaration where the applicants/ beneficiaries, participating as a consortium, declare they accept all conditions of the open call, acceleration process & programme; and agree - if applicable - on budget share. One CDoH is required for each sub-granted project.
Contract Deadline	Date and time until when the selected entities need to provide contractual information.
Declaration of Honour (DoH)	Declaration where the applicant/ beneficiary declares they accept all conditions of the open call, acceleration process & programme. One DoH is required for each applicant/ beneficiary.
COPILOT Application Form	Application form available in COPILOT webpage.
FSTP	Financial support to third parties. Payments made to entities that are not members of the consortium.

Term	Definition
FSTP – Lump Sum	Payment made to the third party based on the achievement of a milestone.
Internal evaluation committee	Group of appropriately qualified persons of the consortium partners that are assigned the responsibility of performing evaluations or reviews at any stage of the open call implementation or programme.
Open Call	Competitive process to access a Programme.
Open Call and Programme deadlines	The project has planned the programme carefully, but unexpected things can happen. The application deadline is fixed, and will only change if something unforeseen occurs. Other dates, including of the programme, are flexible and may be adjusted as needed, and communicated to all applicants.
Open Call close date	Date and time when applications close.
Proof of Bank Account Information	The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a specific form signed by the entity, individuals, and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the entity/ individual. Provided using Annex 4.
Proof of Legal Existence	Company/ organisation register, official journal or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
Proof of SME Status	<p>Proof of the SME condition is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the EC Participant Portal, the PIC number must be provided. • Provision of the signed (with a valid e-signature) SME Declaration (Annex 3): in the event the beneficiary declares being non-autonomous, the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organisations is required. A Status Information Form may be requested, which includes the headcount (AWU), balance, profit & loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company. • Supporting documents: In cases where either the number of employees or the ownership is not clearly identified: any other supporting documents which demonstrate headcount and ownership such as payroll details, annual reports, national regional, association records, etc.
Reserve List	Eligible applications that were not selected for funding which can be invited in case selected applications do not provide contractual data.

Term	Definition
Schedule for payments to Beneficiaries	All payments to beneficiaries are dependent on the successful review of deliverables/ reports at the end of mandatory actions, and reception by the consortium of the corresponding payment request. All payments will be made with undue delay preferably no later than 30 calendar days after the reception of the financial statement.
Score, Expert	Unless otherwise stated, experts will rank each criterion with marks between 0 and 5. Half point scores are not given. Score values will indicate the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 0: Fail. The application fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information. ● 1: Very poor. The criterion is addressed in an unsatisfactory manner. ● 2: Poor. There are serious inherent weaknesses. ● 3: Good. While the application broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting. ● 4: Very Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible. ● 5: Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.
Selected application	Application that was selected to participate in the Open Call Implementation.
SME	An incorporated enterprise that complies with the rules defined by the European Commission to be qualified as an SME ²
SME – Autonomous Enterprise	An autonomous enterprise is not a partner with or linked to another enterprise
SME – Linked Enterprise	Linked enterprises are those that form a group through the direct or indirect control of the majority of voting rights of an enterprise by another or through the ability to exercise a dominant influence on an enterprise.
SME – Partner Enterprise	The enterprise holds a minimum of 25% (Capital or voting rights in another enterprise, or 25% (Capital or voting rights) are owned by another enterprise.
SME Declaration Form	Declaration where the SME status is assessed.
Sub-grant Agreement	Signed between the Project Consortium, represented by its Coordinator and the beneficiary. The sub-grant agreement will also include the comments (if any) of the application’s ESR to the work plan.

² https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-fundamentals/sme-definition_en