2020 Call for Vanguard Initiative New Pilot Projects"

Background and context

VI Pilot Projects are large scale interregional cooperation and demonstration projects between companies and knowledge institutes in a specific technology field or application domain. They aim to facilitate the emergence of / build and strengthen European industrial value chains in high potential (future) markets through the development of a pipeline of (investment) projects.

Pilot Projects, when successful, bring added value to the economic stakeholders within the territory of the VI members. They contribute to the 'industrial renaissance" of VI's regions, they elevate the attractive profile and the „weight" of the association, and they are an active and visible illustration of VI's baseline: smart growth through smart specialisation.

Therefore VI actively wants to give room to the emergence and development of Pilot Projects under its umbrella and within its range of activities, additional to the Pilot Projects already active right now. This was one of the main motivations to introduce the new VI Shared funding Model, to operationalize it in few steps and to organize a fresh call for new VI Pilots.

VI has a twofold strategy to realize this:

1. Develop brand new Pilot Projects initiated by one or more VI members through a special call for new VI Pilots.

2. Actively reach out to existing S3Ps within the TSSPs, that fall within the VI scope of "industrial innovation" and that want to continue their operation under the VI umbrella

Advantages and responsibilities of VI Pilots

A VI Pilot Project can, however it is not obliged to, ask for VI funding which is available to reimburse (part of) its coordination cost.

Every VI Pilot Project, funded as well as non-[1]funded, must accept and actively work to respect a number of basic (network related) conditions:

- Participating regions must be VI members, VI observers, or pay a non-member fee to VI asbl;

- The Pilot needs to report about its activities and progress, via participation in the Task Group 'Vanguard Pilot Monitoring' (VPM) and otherwise;

- The Pilot needs to contribute to VI's lobby and communication activities.

If such conditions are not met from the start, participating regions should be brought on the route to reach such status during the first 12 months of operations under the VI umbrella"

Some of these conditions, notably the need for participating regions to meet membership conditions and requirements, may be perceived as serious threshold by candidate Pilot Projects in particular for non funded Pilot Projects. While launching the process of mobilizing new candidates, we are stressing again that it is important and even prestigous:

- to be part of a highly visible European network and of its lobby efforts towards the European institutions;

- to be part of the only network taking active care about the governance of S3 Partnerships, offering moreover «economies of scale» by uniting under one single umbrella several S3Ps;

- to be part of a network which is actively working to set up a system offering access to regional innovation funding.

Application Process and Criteria

Applicants must submit their proposal no later than 17:00 CET on Tuesday 1st December 2020 to drasko.veselinovic@sbra.be and farha.brahmi@s3vanguardinitiative.eu. A decision will be taken by the General Assembly of the Vanguard Initiative on the successful new pilot applications, and communicated to the successful applicants no later than 12th January 2021.

In the application, the candidate Pilot Project needs to indicate whether it wishes to be funded by VI or not. Maximum up to 2 new pilots will be accepted, each financed up to EUR30.000 EUR, but there is no limit in the number of Pilot Projects that want to develop activities within VI without funding. From 2022 onwards the pilots will receive normal financing set by the Vanguard rules (see Vanguard Share funding model).

The start of the funding period is set on 1/1/2021.

Funded VI Pilot Projects as well as non-funded VI Pilot Projects can apply for funding from the VI Cross Cutting Budget (i.e. an internal budget for project calls contributing to achieving VI's goals), according to the rules set out for the management of that budget line.

A Pilot Project proposal must be submitted while outlining and illustrating how it corresponds to the following minimum elements and criteria:

1. The topic doesn't only allow for interregional cooperation between companies and knowledge institutes in a well defined technology field or application domain, it also integrates a clear European dimension in terms of an added value to collaborate and (a need for) joint demonstration;

2. The aim is to build/strengthen a (new) industrial value chain through a pipeline of (investment) projects, and part of this is a particular focus on the establishment of a European Network of test/demonstration facilities.

3. The main focus is on demonstration projects, no research (> TRL5 or « post-prototyping »);

4. The topic is relevant, in terms of documented economic potential and projected market development;

5. Industrial commitment (to participate/lead/co-invest) is clear, without asking at this point for a formal commitment. Commitment can also be demonstrated by roadmaps validated by industry.

6. The proposal outlines its expected significant impact in terms of economic, social and environmental returns; and as such indicates its links with the main EU's strategic orientations.

7. The proposal is submitted by at least two VI members acting as co-leaders and with the capacity to lead (coordinators), and has the confirmed interest of at least 5 additional regions (participating partners - altogether 7) , demonstrating as such the needed critical mass and the link with regions' policy priorities (RIS3).

8. The candidate pilot clearly demonstrates to be aware of the existing landscape of EU initiatives in the field (if any), and describes how to work on its own strategic position in that landscape and collaborate with others, in order to have real added value (as opposed to overlapping/competing).

The above mentioned minimum criteria are expected to be taken into account when writing the Pilot Project application. The whole application (for which no fixed template is provided) should be structured according to the following chapters/categories :

FOREWORD
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

chapter 1

-PILOT'S NAME
-COORDINATORS OF THE PILOT
-REGIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT
-ANY OTHER STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING (IF YOU KNOW THEM ALREADY)

chapter 2

-GOVERNANCE, STRUCTURE AND ASSESMENT FRAMEWORK FOR PROJECTS GENERATION, SUPPORT AND MONITORING
-MANAGEMENT incl. OPERATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATION OF THE PILOT
-REFERENCES OF LEADING PERSONAL OF THE PILOT

chapter 3

-GENERAL PILOT OBJECTIVES
-SPECIFIC PILOT OBJECTIVES
-POTENTIAL POSITIVE SPILL OVER EFFECTS OF THE PILOT
-POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL INTEREST IN THE PILOT
-WHICH DEMO PROJECTS DO YOU PLAN TO INTRODUCE WITHIN THE PILOT?

chapter 4

-ACTION PLAN as much as possible to be presented

-SHORT- AND LONG-TERM PILOT GOALS
-PILOT'S VISION/AMBITIONS
-KEY PLANNED FUTURE PILOT'S ACHIEVEMENTS ON ONE
AND CHALLENGES ON THE OTHER HAND (briefly)
-DESCRIBE 4 PHASES (learn, connect, demonstrate, commercialize) OF YOUR PILOT AND HOW DO YOU PLAN TO
HANDLE AND ACHIEVE THEM

chapter 5

-PLANNED/WISHED FUNDING (besides VANGUARD for pilots and (potentially) cross-pilots activities, any other local,
regional, cross-regional and/or international)
-BUSINESS PLAN incl. FINANCIAL PLAN and expected outcome in 1 and 3 years (Board being aware it may be difficult
to write these elements and chapter, however, an initial outline would be expected and any concrete estimations
would be much appreciated).

chapter 6

-HOW DO YOU PLAN TO INFLUENCE EU AGENDA?
-ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CONCLUSIONS

Each application for a pilot is supposed to include categories specified above. Some categories might be difficult to
write, in particular for candidate Pilot Projects in their early stages of development. Nevertheless, try to include them
at least in brief description/explanation and/or at least with some estimations.

Applications will be evaluated by the VI Board and an outside expert. Each category can bring between 1 and 5 points.
Evaluated categories are those from chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (only first item), altogether 16 categories with the
maximum of 80 points. The pilot with the most achieved points is a winner. The pilot with the second highest number
of collected points is second, etc. The VI Board will involve an outside, neutral expert to assist with the evaluation.

Once approved, each new pilot project starts its activities following the 4-step methodology. When a pilot project has
reached the start of the "connect" phase, funding of the new Pilot Project starts.

VI funding for Pilot Projects is mainly aimed at the 'connect' and 'demonstrate' phases within the 4-step methodology.
„Learn" activities related costs (drafting of a pilot concept note, mapping of VCs) at the start of a Pilot Project are not
eligible for funding, but a sign of original commitment by the initiating co-lead regions. Continuous updating of strategic
documents – like concept notes, position papers and mapping – are an integral part of daily operations during a Pilot's
lifetime, and therefore eligible. "Commercialise" activities are not eligible when the focus is the "uptake of technology,"
but are eligible when the main focus is the "deployment of technology" (spreading to the industry at large).

Planned Timeframe for the Call for New Pilot Projects

Date	Activity

Tuesday 10thNovember	Official opening of Call / Q&A at VI Network Representatives Meeting
Tuesday 1st December	Deadline for bids to be submitted
Thursday 10th December	VI Board recommendation to General Assembly
Thursday 10th December	Network Representatives Meeting – Board updates on recommended bids, and applicants invited to make a presentation of their proposal.
Friday 11th December	Start written procedure to GA for approval of new pilot
Monday 11th January	Close written procedure and announce result (pilots can commence in January 2021 with full year financial allocation as required)

For all questions related to the Call for new VI Pilot Projects, please contact the VI Network Manager, Farha Brahmi at Farha.brahmi@s3vanguardinitiative.eu