

# Pulsate

## Guide for Applicants Adopters' Use Cases 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Call

(2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2023)

**Open date for proposals: 3 April 2023 at 00:00 CEST (Brussels Time).**

**Deadline: 30 June 2023 at 17:00 CEST (Brussels Time).**

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PHOTONICS<sup>21</sup>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document summarises the rules and conditions to be applied for the Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) funding scheme to support experiments through the open calls within the PULSATE project. The document is addressed to potential applicants for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Call for Adopter Use Cases and aims at being a practical guideline for a successful application.

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Author(s)	Changes	Date
0	PULSATE OC Team	Draft	13/02/2023
0.1	PULSATE OC Team	Partners' comments included; explanation added in Section 3.1	16/03/2023
1	PULSATE OC Team	Final version to be published on the OC microsite	27/03/2023

## Abbreviations

**AUC:** Adopter Use Case

**EC:** European Commission

**KPIs:** Key Performance Indicators

**OC:** Open Call

**SME:** Small and Medium Enterprise

**LBAAM:** Laser-Based Advanced & Additive Manufacturing

**FAQ:** Frequently asked questions

**SGA:** Sub Grant Agreement

**FSTP:** Funding Support to third parties

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>BASIC INFO ABOUT PULSATE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>WHAT DO WE OFFER?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>IDEAL PROJECT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>HOW TO APPLY?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>HOW WILL WE EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSAL? (SELECTION PROCESS)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY CHECK</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>EXPERTS' EVALUATION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>CONSENSUS MEETING</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>FORMAL CHECK</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>ADOPTERS USE CASES PROCESS - TENTATIVE SCHEDULE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>SUPPORT PROGRAMME AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>COMPLAINTS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>LAST BUT NOT LEAST - FINAL PROVISIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>EXTRA HINTS BEFORE YOU SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL</b>	<b>12</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	PULSATE Consortium partners	4
Figure 2	Adopters Open Call selection process	8
Figure 3	PULSATE 1st AUC tentative schedule	10

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	SME and Slightly bigger definition	5
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## 1 BASIC INFO ABOUT PULSATE

PULSATE is a part of the Horizon2020 programme called [I4MS](#) funded by the European Commission with the goal to accelerate the design, development and uptake of advanced digital technologies by the European Manufacturing industry to empower personalised products and to facilitate cost-effective small-scale production.

One of these digitalisation technologies that PULSATE project is focused on is **Laser-Based Advanced & Additive Manufacturing (LBAAM)**. To boost and support the uptake, PULSATE will select and support end-users (**Adopters**) - SMEs and Slightly bigger companies that are willing to implement Laser-Based Advanced & Additive Manufacturing (LBAAM) technologies into their environment.

PULSATE project brings together a strong consortium comprising six competence centres (AIMEN, FTMC, MTC, SINTEF, Fraunhofer and CEA) with high-level expertise in LBAAM and digitisation, the European Photonics Industry Consortium (EPIC) to support the acceleration of EU innovative scale-up initiatives, and two highly innovative SMEs (CLESGO & Fundingbox) to establish and support the Digital Agora platform, maintain a Marketplace of digital services and to manage the mechanisms of financial support to selected companies and the connection with DIHs across all Europe.



Figure 1 PULSATE Consortium partners

We invite you to join us at our [Helpdesk space](#) to ask your questions and solve your doubts. For further information about the PULSATE project, please visit our [website](#) or send us an email to [pulsate.help@fundingbox.com](mailto:pulsate.help@fundingbox.com).

## 2 WHAT DO WE OFFER?

PULSATE will select up to 18 Technology Adopter/End User companies with SME/Slightly Bigger status that represent **high-potential business use cases for implementation of LBAAM technology** in their processes, products and business models.

Selected Adopters will take part in a 3-month support programme between mid-January and mid-April 2024 through which they will receive:

- Up to 25 000 EUR as a lump sum.
- Mentorship from PULSATE Consortium partners in **LBAAM feasibility assessment** that will allow Adopters to confirm Technical and Business Feasibility for the implementation of LBBAM technology in their environment.

### 3 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All information provided in the application form that will be submitted before the deadline (June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 17:00 CEST, Brussels Time) via the online application form <https://pulsate-adopters.fundingbox.com/> will be checked during the whole evaluation process against the eligibility criteria listed in this section. Proposals that do not comply with those criteria will be excluded and marked as ineligible.

#### 3.1 WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

**PROFILE & NEED:** End-user/Technology Adopter that represents the high-potential business Use Case for implementation of LBAAM into their processes<sup>1</sup>.

*Note: Entities that are Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs)<sup>2</sup> are not eligible for this Open Call.*

**LEGAL STATUS:** application can be submitted by only ONE company that has the status of an **SME** or a **Slightly Bigger** company, registered as a legal entity before the formal check phase ([section 4.4](#) of this Guide).

Criteria	SME <sup>3</sup>	Slightly Bigger
<b>Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU)</b>	less than 250	less than 500
<b>Annual turnover or balance sheet total</b>	annual turnover less or equal to 50 million EUR OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to 43 million €.	annual turnover less or equal to 100 million EUR OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to 86 million €.

*Table 1 SME and Slightly bigger definition*

**ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES:** Companies legally established in the following countries and territories will be eligible to receive funding:

- [The Member States of the European Union](#) and their Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT)<sup>4</sup>
- [Associated Countries to Horizon 2020](#)

<sup>1</sup> Adopter Use Case proposal can be submitted ONLY by the Use Case owner. That means the LBAAM technology is foreseen to be implemented directly into the environment/process of the company that submits the application to this Open Call.

<sup>2</sup> Research and Technology Organisation is an entity, such as a university or research institute, irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development and to disseminate their results by way of teaching, publication or technology transfer; all profits are reinvested in these activities, the dissemination of their results or teaching.

<sup>3</sup> An SME will be considered as such if it complies with the [Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC](#). Note that the figures of partners and linked enterprises should also be considered as stated in the SME user guide. For detailed information check EU recommendation: [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en)

<sup>4</sup> OCTs are listed on the first page of this document:

[https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2018-2020/annexes/h2020-wp1820-annex-a-countries-rules\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2018-2020/annexes/h2020-wp1820-annex-a-countries-rules_en.pdf)

- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Make sure to pre-assess your SME/Slightly Bigger company status before applying. If you are a part of a larger group, the headcount/turnover or balance sheet total from the whole group need to be considered.

Here are the resources that may help you:

- EU recommendation: [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en)
- European Commission's [User guide to the SME Definition](#)

The criteria available under the links above apply to SMEs, but the rules for assessing Slightly Bigger company status are the same – with the higher thresholds for the criteria.

A thorough formal check will be carried out as outlined in [Section 4.4](#) in this Guide. Applicants who do not meet the SME/Slightly Bigger criteria will not be invited to join the programme.

### 3.2 IDEAL PROJECT

The ideal proposal should be submitted by Technology Adopter / End User with SME or Slightly Bigger status that represents the **high-potential business Use Case for implementation of LBAAM** that will enhance the activities of the manufacturing industry.

The applicant **should have a clear idea of how laser application can be applied** in their processes, products and/or business models and is looking for support on assessment if it is feasible.

The Adopter Use Cases must represent one of the areas of possible implementation:

- laser equipment integration, interoperability and robust automation,
- technology for cost-effective laser-based manufacturing,
- first part right and zero-defect laser-based production,
- flexible technology for small to large batches,
- from CAD to PLM: data integration and flow.

Examples of potential LBAAM adoption Use Cases:

- adoption of AM in the process that enables production facilitated maintenance, improve cycle times decreased inventories
- adoption of AM to produce obsolete spare parts (i.e., spare parts that have gone out of serial production)
- using LBAAM for repair/restoration/refurbishment, instead of to replacement of a product
- applying AM to produce some specific product is more cost-effective than conventional manufacturing: machining, welding, etc.

Examples of AUC projects supported in PULSATE 1<sup>st</sup> AUC support programme can be found [here](#).

### 3.3 HOW TO APPLY?

When applying to PULSATE open call, please consider the following conditions:

- **Have a European dimension:** your proposal should have a clear *European* dimension meaning that it should prove the possibility to accelerate the design, development and uptake of Laser-Based Advanced & Additive Manufacturing (LBAAM) by European industry – especially SMEs – notably in sectors where digital technologies are underexploited.
- **Be on time:** We will evaluate only proposals submitted through the online form <https://pulsate-adopters.fundingbox.com/> before the deadline - **June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 17:00 CEST** (Brussels Time). Upon receipt of your proposal, the system will send you a confirmation of the submission.
- **Be exhaustive:** Have you answered all the sections of the application form? It won't be possible to add any information after the deadline. However, you will be able to modify your application after the proposal is submitted as long as it is done before the deadline.
- **You can submit only one proposal** to this open call. If more than one proposal is identified, only the proposal submitted last will be evaluated.<sup>5</sup>
- Your proposal must be written in **English** in all mandatory parts to be eligible. Only parts written in English will be evaluated.
- We will take into consideration the existence of the potential **conflict of interest** among you and [PULSATE Consortium partners](#). PULSATE consortium partners, their affiliated entities, employees and permanent collaborators cannot take part in the PULSATE Programme. All cases of potential conflict of interest will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- **Healthy finances and a clean sheet are a must:** we don't accept entities that are under liquidation or are an enterprise under difficulty according to the [Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18](#), or that are excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national and EU authority.
- **It is your proposal:** your project should be based on your original work or your right to use the resources included in the proposal must be clear. Going forward, any foreseen developments must be free from third party rights, or those third-party rights must be clearly stated.
- **Pay attention to funding limits:** Entities participating cannot receive more than 100 000 EUR via open calls (FSTP) from H2020 [I4MS](#)<sup>6</sup> and [SAE](#) projects.

## 4 HOW WILL WE EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSAL? (SELECTION PROCESS)

Our evaluation process is transparent, fair and equal to all participants. Your project will be evaluated in 4 steps before the signature of the Sub Grant agreement, as presented below:

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that only the application's last edit will be considered.

<sup>6</sup> Note: the limit applies also to beneficiaries funded under previous PULSATE Open Calls

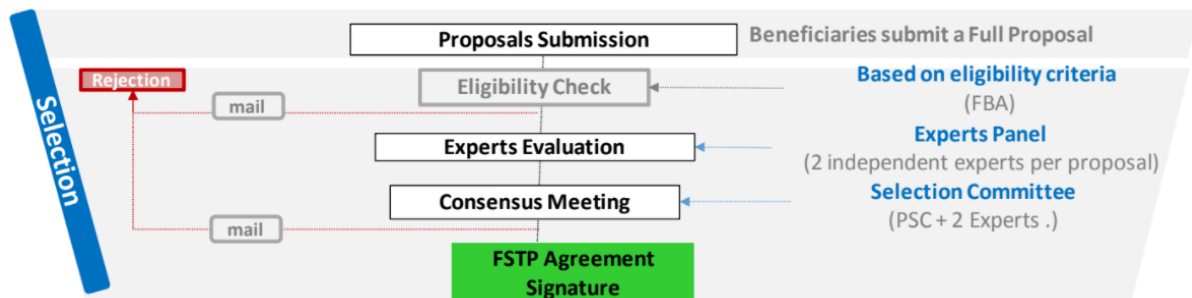


Figure 2 Adopters Open Call selection process

## 4.1 ELIGIBILITY CHECK

The first evaluation step is about verifying some basic requirements based on the statements from your proposal. Your proposal will be admissible for the next phase if:

- it is **complete, readable and in English** in all mandatory sections,
- it has been submitted via the online form <https://pulsate-adopters.fundingbox.com/> before June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 17:00 CEST (Brussels Time),
- it **fulfils the eligibility criteria** specified in [section 3](#),
- it includes the properly filled declaration of honour included in the application form,
- you did not exceed the maximum limit of one submitted proposal.

The proposals that do not comply with the above criteria will be excluded. We will inform you about the results of this first eligibility check soon after the deadline.

## 4.2 EXPERTS' EVALUATION

Each proposal will be evaluated by 2 external, independent experts (selected by PULSATE consortium) with wide expertise in the Photonics industry.

External Evaluators will evaluate and score the **Excellence, Impact and Implementation sections of the proposal** within the following evaluation criteria:

### 1) EXCELLENCE

- **Innovation:** applicants should describe their main business activities and the current status of LBAAM adoption in their environment.
- **Ambition:** applicants should describe what their main drivers are for LBAAM adoption, what they want to improve with LBAAM technology and the expected timeline for implementation.
- **Challenges:** applicants should describe the main challenges that they perceive for LBAAM adoption and what will be needed for LBAAM implementation.

### 2) IMPACT

- **Value Proposition and Competition:** applicants should describe what KPIs are important for their business operations, who the main customer is and how the business model and differentiation from the competition will improve thanks to LBAAM adoption.



- **Scalability:** applicants should demonstrate if their Use Case for LBAAM adoption can be applied in other industries/potential end-users processes and how they plan to exploit the assessment/adoption results and promote the LBAAM adoption to other European SMEs and manufacturing industry.
- **Social and Economic Impacts:** applicants should describe potential impact on aspects like environment and low carbon economy contribution, equal opportunities, social impacts.

### 3) IMPLEMENTATION

- **Team:** people involved in the assessment and future LBAAM implementation need to demonstrate their capacity with the implementation of new technologies into the processes and digitalisation; additionally, skills like management and leadership qualities, ability to take a concept from ideas to market, capacity to carry through ideas and understand the dynamics of the market they are trying to tap into. The team should be balanced, cross-functional, fully dedicated to the project and with a strong background and skills base.
- **Resources needed:** applicants should define and indicate which aspects related to Use Case that they might need support with and how PULSATE Consortium can support them. We recommend that you check the list of services available under PULSATE Partners' profiles [here](#).
- **Budget:** Applicants should include information about costs that will occur during the Adopter's participation in a three-month assessment support programme and request appropriate funding (respecting limits of up to 25 000 EUR per Adopter Use Case and max 70% of declared costs funding rate).<sup>7</sup>

Each evaluator will rank the application by awarding points from 0 to 5 for each criterion, resulting in an Individual Evaluation Report. The final score will be calculated as an average of the Individual Evaluation Reports provided by the Evaluators.

#### Thresholds needed to pass to the next stage are:

- For each criterion (Excellence, Impact and Implementation), the minimum threshold is 3 out of 5 points.
- For a total sum of scores, the minimum threshold is 10 out of 15 points.

If scores on a proposal show significant divergence between the two evaluators, a third evaluator will be involved to provide an additional independent assessment of the proposal.

Ties will be solved using the following criteria, in order: Impact Score, Implementation Score, Excellence Score, Date of submission: earlier submitted proposals go first.

### 4.3 CONSENSUS MEETING

The Selection Committee will decide by consensus (or majority vote of  $\frac{2}{3}$ ) on the list of companies to be invited to the programme (*Provisional List of FSTP Sub-grantees*). The discussion will be based on the ranking obtained as a result of the External Evaluation.

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<sup>7</sup> Example of Adopters Use Case budget is included in the [FAQ document](#).

Whilst normally the highest-ranked proposals will be selected for funding, the Selection Committee might have fair reasons for objecting to a specific third party, like the alignment with PULSATE goals and scope, the ability to achieve the highest impact possible, commercial competition, the balance needed for assessment support as well as the existence of significant ethical concerns or a potential conflict of interest. In this case, the choice may pass to the next-ranked proposal.

The exact number of proposals approved will be decided based on the overall quality of the proposals.

After the consensus meeting phase, the results will be communicated to the applicants.

## 4.4 FORMAL CHECK

Before the PULSATE support programme starts, each pre-selected Adopter will be requested to sign the Sub-Grant Agreement with the Coordinator of Consortium (AIMEN). To do so, each pre-selected Adopter will need to provide documents regarding their formal status (you can find a list in the [Frequently Asked Questions document](#)). The PULSATE Consortium will proceed to a verification of these documents to make sure each pre-selected Adopter is eligible.

Each pre-selected Adopter is requested to provide documents within the deadline, otherwise, it might be excluded from the further formal assessment and the next company from the reserve list will be invited to the support programme.

## 4.5 ADOPTERS USE CASES PROCESS - TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

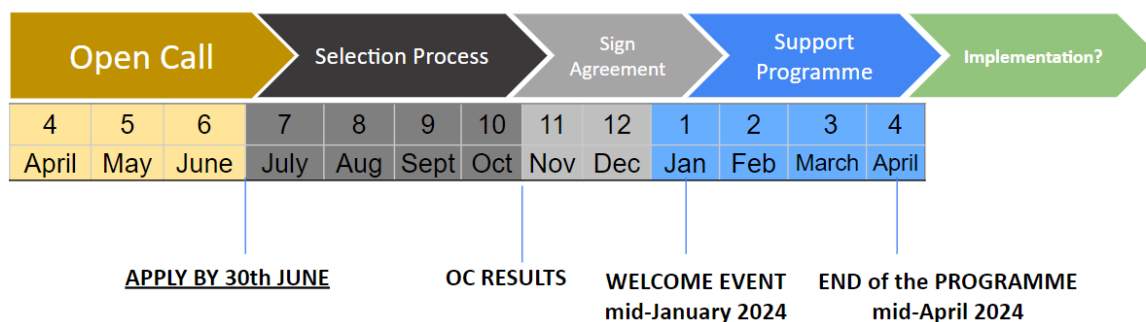


Figure 3 PULSATE 2<sup>nd</sup> AUC tentative schedule

## 5 SUPPORT PROGRAMME AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Once your eligibility has been confirmed following the formal check and the Sub-Grant Agreement signature, Adopters become official beneficiaries of the PULSATE programme. It is now that the adventure begins, and each Adopter should understand how the performance will be validated and funding distributed.

Each selected Adopter will receive the mentorship from PULSATE Consortium partners in the **LBAAM feasibility assessment** that will allow confirming Technical and Business Feasibility for the implementation of LBBAM technology in the Adopter's environment.

The support programme will last 3 months; the beneficiaries of the Adopters open call will receive a lump sum of up to EUR 25 000. The funding will be paid in 2 instalments, as explained below:

- 1st payment: 40% of the total grant (maximum EUR 10 000) will be paid upon validation of the Individual Mentoring Plan.
- Final payment: 60% of the total grant (maximum EUR 15 000) will be paid after successful conclusion and validation of the Feasibility Analysis Deliverable established for the Adopter.

All the payments will be made based on the **lump sum** methodology that is a simplified method of settling expenses in projects financed from Horizon2020 funds. It means that you are not required to present strictly defined accounting documents to prove the cost incurred (e.g., invoices), but you are obliged to demonstrate **the implementation of the project in line with the milestones set for the Project**. Simply speaking it means that we will assess your progress and quality of your work, not your accountancy. The milestones (deliverables and KPIs) will be fixed in the 'Individual Mentoring Plan' elaborated at the beginning of the programme.

**FUNDING LIMITS and 70% FUNDING RATE:** requested grant will not exceed:

- EUR 25 000 per beneficiary of Adopters Use Cases Open Call
- 70% of the costs estimated for the execution of the project
- EUR 100 000 per beneficiary in all PULSATE, I4MS and SAE Open Calls

## 6 COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### 6.1 HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

If you have questions regarding our Open Call, you can:

- post your question in the [Open Call Helpdesk](#)
- send us a message at [pulsate.help@fundingbox.com](mailto:pulsate.help@fundingbox.com)

PULSATE Team will organise a certain number of Info Days and online webinars about this Open Call that will be announced through the [PULSATE GET HELP](#) website and project communication channels.

### 6.2 COMPLAINTS

Please take into account that the evaluation is run by experts in the industry, and we do not interfere with their assessment, therefore we will not evaluate complaints related to the results of the evaluation other than those concerning the mistakes in the evaluation of the eligibility criteria. If after receiving the results, you consider that a mistake has been made in the evaluation of the eligibility criteria, you can send us your complaint. To do so please send us your complaint in English by email to [pulsate.help@fundingbox.com](mailto:pulsate.help@fundingbox.com) including the following information:

- your contact details (including e-mail address),
- the subject of the complaint,
- information and evidence regarding the alleged breach.

You have **3 calendar days** to submit your complaint starting from the day after the communication was sent. We will review your complaint within no more than seven calendar days from its reception. If we need more time to assess your complaint, we will inform you by email about the extension.

Please note that we will not review anonymous complaints as well as complaints with incomplete information.

## 7 LAST BUT NOT LEAST - FINAL PROVISIONS

Any matters not covered by this Guide will be governed by Belgian law and rules related to the H2020 and EU grants.

Please take into account that we make our best effort to keep all provided data confidential; however, for the avoidance of doubt, you are solely responsible to indicate your confidential information as such.

Your IPR will remain your property.

The PULSATE Consortium might cancel the call at any time, change its provisions or extend it, in which case we will inform all applicants of such change. The signature of the Sub-grant Agreement is an initial condition to establish any obligations between applicants and any Consortium partners (concerning the obligation of confidentiality of the application).

## 8 EXTRA HINTS BEFORE YOU SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

A proposal takes time and effort, and we know it. Here are a few crucial points you should read before submitting your proposal.

- Is your project in line with what PULSATE is looking for? You are not sure? You can consult [this section](#).
- Did you present your project in a way that will convince evaluators? Not sure if you did? Go back to this [section](#).
- Is your project fulfilling all eligibility requirements described in the Guide? Check again this [section](#).
- Do you need extra help? [Contact us](#).

**And as a bonus:** You can read our [R.E.C.I.P.E. for an outstanding European Funding Opportunity application](#) for additional advice. Good luck!

## Did not find what you were looking for?

You may want to check our [Frequently Asked Questions Document](#).