



IAF AUTOMOTIVE AWARDS | FIRST EDITION

APPLICANT GUIDE

How to select a category, build a credible evidence pack and navigate the annual award process.

PREPARED FOR IAF ADOPTION

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Nine award categories
Evidence-based evaluation and independent decisions
English master text

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Purpose and use

How to select a category, build a credible evidence pack and navigate the annual award process.

This document forms part of one consistent five-document programme set. It does not itself announce a live season, appoint a jury or confer an award. The Standard states the programme requirements; the annual notice supplies approved dates and channels.

Contents

Document control	2
01 Understand the recognition you are seeking	4
02 Choose the right category and entry boundary	4
03 Use the application efficiently	5
04 Build a claim-to-evidence trail	5
05 Understand the scoring and evidence caps	6
06 Demonstrate present value and future readiness	6
07 Protect confidential and personal information	7
08 Prepare for clarification and verification	7
09 Interpret the decision and use recognition accurately	8
10 Final submission check	8
Category preparation cards	9
IT Innovation & Technology Award	10
DE Design Excellence Award	11
SG Sustainability & Green Mobility Award	12
QS Quality & Safety Leadership Award	13
FM Future Mobility Award	14
SE Supplier Excellence Award	15
CR Corporate Social Responsibility Award	16
SU Start-up & Entrepreneurship Award	17
LA Lifetime Achievement Award	18
Worked evidence examples	19
Evidence-pack structure and submission record	20

01 Understand the recognition you are seeking

IAF Automotive Awards recognizes a specific achievement in one of nine categories. Start with the work and its benefit, then select the category whose five criteria best fit the evidence. A vehicle, factory, service, software product, supplier programme, community initiative or individual career can be the assessed object; the award scope must remain precise.

Membership is not required. The quality of the evidence and achievement determines the result. Company size, publicity, sponsorship and event attendance do not add points. The award is annual recognition of the stated achievement, not an unrestricted approval of every product or activity.

Read the current Season Notice before using any dates. It supplies the authorized submission channel, UTC deadlines, evidence cutoff and contact route. The templates intentionally leave the season and dates blank so that a later annual cycle can use the same controlled edition.

02 Choose the right category and entry boundary

Write one sentence identifying who achieved what, where, when and for whose benefit. Examples include a defined battery-repair programme, one accessible charging interface, one verified supplier recovery system or a specific career contribution. Avoid an entry described only as our company is innovative.

Use Innovation & Technology for a demonstrated technical advance; Design Excellence for the quality of human interaction and design execution; Sustainability & Green Mobility for lifecycle improvement; Quality & Safety Leadership for sustained prevention and outcomes; Future Mobility for a working mobility system; Supplier Excellence for customer delivery performance; Corporate Social Responsibility for human outcomes; Start-up & Entrepreneurship for a young venture; and Lifetime Achievement for an individual career.

One achievement enters one category. If several categories appear relevant, choose the one with the strongest evidence against all five criteria. Separate entries from one organization need genuinely distinct achievements, not different descriptions of the same results. A joint entry needs agreed attribution and an authorized lead.

03 Use the application efficiently

Complete the common sections, then only the module matching the chosen category. Mark other category modules as not submitted in the module-selection record; they are not missing evidence. Complete the evidence index and sign the declaration. The form does not calculate scores and does not submit itself.

Use the form for the core narrative, claim summaries and evidence references. Keep long technical reports, videos, raw records and confidential material in a separately indexed evidence pack through the authorized channel. Field space is not an invitation to omit material limits: use numbered continuation sheets when necessary.

Use clear English for the core summary. Original-language evidence may be accompanied by an accurate English summary identifying translator and document sections; the Secretariat may seek clarification. Save a copy with the entry title and season, reopen it to confirm the values and submit only through the announced channel.

04 Build a claim-to-evidence trail

Assign claims C01, C02 and so on. Each claim should state the result, result type (measured, modeled or forecast), unit, baseline and result period, population, source and limitation. Link it to evidence E01, E02 and the relevant category criterion. An assessor should be able to follow a headline back to the underlying record.

For numerical outcomes, preserve the numerator, denominator and calculation method. A lower failure count with a much smaller fleet is not automatically improvement. For qualitative outcomes, describe participant selection, questions, coding and contradictory responses; use independent corroboration rather than unsupported adjectives.

Include unfavorable observations, missing data, uncertainty and differences between the comparison periods. Label independent checks and describe the verifier's relationship to the applicant. The strongest record allows a competent reviewer to challenge the claim without needing to trust a presentation.

05 Understand the scoring and evidence caps

Each category has five weighted criteria adding to 100. Jurors rate each criterion from 0 to 5. The median rating for each criterion is divided by five and multiplied by its weight; the five contributions are added. Preliminary and final scoring are separate rounds. The final panel normally has five jurors.

Evidence limits the maximum rating: E0 permits 0; E1 permits 1; E2 permits up to 3; E3 permits up to 4; E4 permits up to 5. Excellent language cannot compensate for weak evidence. No criterion may be omitted or have its weight transferred to another.

Shortlisting needs at least 70/100 and every median at least 2. Recognized-finalist status needs final 75/100, every median at least 3, at least E2 for every criterion and all applicable controls closed. Winner eligibility needs final 85/100, the same minimums, and at least E3 for the category's first tie-priority criterion plus one other criterion. The highest eligible result wins after the tie rules; a category may have no winner.

06 Demonstrate present value and future readiness

A working prototype can be eligible in categories that allow it, but it remains a prototype. Separate test success from market readiness, and market readiness from sustained field performance. State the precise hardware, software, data and service configuration that produced the result.

For learning systems or connected products, show data provenance, controlled evaluation, human responsibility, misuse testing and recovery. For new energy systems, show safe operating boundaries, aging behavior and credible service arrangements. For mobility platforms, assess a complete user journey and what happens when a partner or network fails.

Future readiness is shown through tested dependencies, support commitments, realistic scenarios and explicit uncertainty. Forecasts may explain the development path; they cannot be counted as achieved safety, environmental, commercial or social benefit.

07 Protect confidential and personal information

Provide a public summary suitable for announcement and a separate confidential evidence index. Mark trade secrets and sensitive records individually, explaining why restriction is needed. A whole-file confidential label without an evidence access plan may prevent verification.

Remove unnecessary names, identity numbers, addresses, health details and beneficiary images. Use coded participants and aggregate results when they retain evidential value. Obtain authority to share customer, worker and partner information; do not upload material merely because you can access it.

The programme may arrange controlled viewing, redacted samples or competent independent checking. Restricted access protects the information; it does not remove the need to verify decisive claims. Publicity permission is optional and separate from the processing needed to evaluate the entry.

08 Prepare for clarification and verification

Expect questions about the baseline, sample, exclusions, version, evidence owner and adverse results. Reply once with a numbered response matching each question, cite existing evidence and identify any added file. Do not silently replace the frozen submission or introduce an achievement that occurred after the cutoff.

For demonstrations, agree safe conditions, participants, configuration and success criteria in advance. For interviews, ensure that participants can answer freely. For customer or beneficiary confirmation, agree confidentiality without coaching the response or concealing contrary experience.

You normally have five business days to respond to factual findings. Identify factual errors and previously overlooked evidence; do not negotiate scores or contact jurors privately. Keep the authorized contact available during the published review window.

09 Interpret the decision and use recognition accurately

Your private outcome includes criterion medians, total, principal reasons, evidence limitations and the appeal route. Shortlisted is a review state; recognized finalist is an earned outcome with its own threshold. Neither automatically means winner. The award can be withheld if no entry meets the requirements.

An appeal normally must arrive within 10 business days and identify a procedural error, conflict, material factual mistake or incorrect rule application. It is not a second promotional pitch. Complaints about conduct and data handling can be raised separately at any time.

Use an award only after written confirmation and within the approved category, season, recipient and achievement. Keep prototype or pilot limits visible. Report facts that may invalidate the original award basis and correct misleading public uses promptly.

10 Final submission check

Confirm the recipient, authority, category, dates and scope are consistent on every page. Include the common application, exactly one category module, completed claim and evidence registers and signed declarations. Confirm each material claim is supported and each confidential item has an access route.

Check the category-specific minimum history and maturity. Include negative evidence, relevant incidents, contributor rights and any declared relationships. A signed form without a complete evidence pack is not a complete application.

Save and reopen the PDF, verify its fields and provide a readable copy through the authorized route. Retain the original submission and receipt. A typed name in this form is a record entry; use the signature or authenticated authorization method specified in the Season Notice.

Category preparation cards

Use the next nine cards to select your category and prepare the corresponding application module. Read the exact category schedule in the Standard before submission. Only your selected module is required; all five of its criteria must be addressed.

Code	Category	Criterion weights
IT	Innovation & Technology Award	30 / 25 / 20 / 15 / 10
DE	Design Excellence Award	25 / 30 / 20 / 15 / 10
SG	Sustainability & Green Mobility Award	30 / 20 / 20 / 15 / 15
QS	Quality & Safety Leadership Award	30 / 25 / 20 / 15 / 10
FM	Future Mobility Award	25 / 20 / 25 / 15 / 15
SE	Supplier Excellence Award	30 / 20 / 20 / 20 / 10
CR	Corporate Social Responsibility Award	30 / 20 / 25 / 15 / 10
SU	Start-up & Entrepreneurship Award	25 / 25 / 20 / 15 / 15
LA	Lifetime Achievement Award	30 / 25 / 20 / 15 / 10

IT | Innovation & Technology Award

Original engineering that solves a material automotive problem and survives rigorous validation.

Who and what qualifies

A functioning prototype, completed controlled pilot or deployed solution shall exist by the evidence cutoff. Pure concepts, patents without demonstrated function and promotional simulations alone are not eligible.

A material new achievement or improvement within the 24 months preceding the entry deadline; disclose earlier development and deployment history.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Originality and technical advance (30%)	What is technically different, and which controlled comparison proves that the difference matters?
2. Demonstrated benefit (25%)	What measured benefit remains after normalizing operating conditions and disclosing trade-offs?
3. Engineering readiness and scale (20%)	Which technical and operational constraints still prevent wider deployment, and how are they controlled?
4. Responsible technology and resilience (15%)	How does the system fail safely, resist misuse and recover after a faulty release or lost dependency?
5. Lifecycle value and knowledge transfer (10%)	Does the advance retain value across its lifecycle and enable practical adoption beyond the initial demonstration?

Useful measures

Task success and failure rate; energy per defined task; latency distribution; cost per validated output; operating exposure; repair time; material use per functional unit.

Avoid this common weakness

A patent, a funding round or a polished demonstration is not proof of performance. Compare equivalent functions and freeze the tested hardware and software.

Future-facing entries

Adaptive software, autonomous industrial systems, advanced cells, bidirectional energy, secure computing and future communication architectures remain eligible through the same evidence and risk rules.

DE | Design Excellence Award

Distinctive design that improves real use, accessibility and the complete ownership experience.

Who and what qualifies

A full-scale usable prototype, representative interactive demonstrator or released design shall be available for evaluation. Renderings alone cannot establish ergonomic, accessibility or usability performance.

A new design or substantial redesign demonstrated within 24 months before the entry deadline.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Design originality and coherence (25%)	How do form, function, materials and interaction express a coherent and distinctive design intent?
2. Usability, ergonomics and inclusion (30%)	Who can use the design independently, and which observed results support that conclusion?
3. Functional safety and interaction quality (20%)	Can users understand system state and complete critical actions safely when conditions deteriorate?
4. Material and lifecycle responsibility (15%)	How does the design retain usability and quality while reducing avoidable lifecycle burdens?
5. Execution and enduring value (10%)	What proves that the design can be delivered consistently and remain valuable in everyday use?

Useful measures

Independent task completion; critical errors; time and attention per task; comfort findings; accessible-user coverage; repair steps and time; durability after specified exposure.

Avoid this common weakness

Do not select only favorable participants or infer accessibility from appearance. Aesthetic preference is assessed alongside documented functional outcomes.

Future-facing entries

Adaptive cabins, multimodal interfaces, inclusive automated travel, augmented information and materials with changing properties require controllable behavior and explicit user consent.

SG | Sustainability & Green Mobility Award

Verified lifecycle improvement with transparent boundaries, resource stewardship and a fair transition.

Who and what qualifies

An operational pilot or deployed programme shall have completed at least one defined reporting cycle. Forecast-only reductions and purchased environmental claims without operational improvement are not sufficient.

Report a comparable baseline and a completed result period of at least three months within the preceding 24 months; explain seasonality and provide a full seasonal cycle where it materially affects the result.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Measured lifecycle improvement (30%)	What lifecycle burden actually fell, compared with which counterfactual and at what uncertainty?
2. Circularity and material integrity (20%)	Which material loops are operating in practice, and what usable output has been verified?
3. Resource and ecosystem stewardship (20%)	Were other environmental burdens increased or displaced while the headline indicator improved?
4. Durable and transferable implementation (15%)	What sustains the result and which assumptions must hold when the programme expands?
5. Fair transition and claim integrity (15%)	Who bears the costs of transition, and how are environmental and social claims kept proportionate?

Useful measures

Absolute and per-unit energy, water and emissions; useful life; repair completion; collected mass; recovered usable mass; verified recycled input; affordability and workforce outcomes.

Avoid this common weakness

Do not mix operational reductions, modeled avoided impacts and offsets in one headline. State denominator, geography, time and uncertainty.

Future-facing entries

Battery second life, digital material records, low-impact chemistry, climate adaptation and energy-integrated mobility are judged by actual boundary-specific results.

QS | Quality & Safety Leadership Award

Sustained leadership that prevents harm, exposes defects and improves dependable automotive outcomes.

Who and what qualifies

At least 12 consecutive months of relevant operating results shall be available by the evidence cutoff, including field failures and corrective actions. A new unproven product alone is not sufficient for this leadership category.

Use the latest complete 12-month result period ending no more than six months before the entry deadline, with a comparable baseline and disclosed exceptional events.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Safety and quality outcomes (30%)	Which outcomes improved after accounting for exposure, severity and changes in reporting?
2. Prevention and validation discipline (25%)	How were foreseeable failure modes challenged and prevented before they reached users?
3. Learning and corrective effectiveness (20%)	Did corrective action remove the cause and reduce recurrence across the affected population?
4. Leadership and speak-up culture (15%)	Can a credible safety concern stop a release, and is that authority exercised without retaliation?
5. Continuity and sector contribution (10%)	What makes the improved performance durable and useful beyond one successful project?

Useful measures

Severe events per defined exposure; defect and warranty rates; escape rate; detection coverage; closure effectiveness; recurrence; time to contain; training competence.

Avoid this common weakness

Do not reward a low complaint count without assessing reporting access. Include unfavorable data and distinguish a management process from its measured outcomes.

Future-facing entries

Software-related defects, mixed human/automated work, new energy hazards, aging fleets and complex supply dependencies require continuing validation and rapid escalation.

FM | Future Mobility Award

Practical mobility systems that connect people, goods, infrastructure and data safely and inclusively.

Who and what qualifies

A representative operational pilot or deployed service shall have completed an evaluation with actual users or a justified safe surrogate. A concept film or city-scale forecast without service evidence is not eligible.

A completed operating or pilot cycle of at least three months within the 24 months before the entry deadline, including relevant peak, off-peak and degraded conditions.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Mobility and access outcomes (25%)	Who can reach which opportunities more reliably or affordably because of the service?
2. Interoperability and service integration (20%)	Does the complete journey or delivery remain usable across organizational and technical boundaries?
3. Safety, security and trustworthy operation (25%)	What happens when the service leaves its supported conditions or a critical dependency fails?
4. Deployment viability and resilience (15%)	Can the service sustain reliable operation when demand, resources or environmental conditions change?
5. System-wide sustainability and inclusion (15%)	Do local and system-level benefits remain positive after indirect effects and exclusion risks are considered?

Useful measures

Completed and failed journeys; waiting-time distribution; accessible-trip success; cost per useful trip; occupancy; empty distance; outage recovery; energy per passenger- or tonne-distance.

Avoid this common weakness

A fast connection or attractive app does not prove useful mobility. Demonstrate the whole service and include users who could not complete it.

Future-facing entries

Cooperative automation, connected freight, rural access, multimodal orchestration and public-space adaptation are assessed through bounded operational evidence.

SE | Supplier Excellence Award

Dependable and responsible supply performance across every tier of the automotive value chain.

Who and what qualifies

At least one verifiable automotive customer delivery or operating programme and 12 consecutive months of performance shall be evidenced. The category includes all supply tiers; applicant size and direct access to a vehicle manufacturer are not eligibility conditions.

Latest complete 12-month customer performance period ending no more than six months before the entry deadline; separate new and mature programmes.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Quality and delivery reliability (30%)	Does verified customer experience confirm the claimed quality and delivery performance?
2. Value creation and co-development (20%)	What durable value did the supplier create beyond meeting basic contract requirements?
3. Resilience and change capability (20%)	How is supply maintained or restored when a critical process, source or information system fails?
4. Responsible sourcing and workforce (20%)	How are material upstream and workforce risks identified, prevented and remedied?
5. Transparency and shared improvement (10%)	Can customers and sub-tier partners rely on timely disclosure and sustained improvement?

Useful measures

On-time-in-full delivery with stated exclusions; defects per shipped unit; warranty burden; response and recovery time; approved change failures; supplier risk closure; resource intensity.

Avoid this common weakness

Do not confuse inspected quality with delivered quality or remove late orders from the denominator. Customer confidentiality can be protected through controlled verification.

Future-facing entries

Semiconductor concentration, software dependencies, critical minerals, circular parts and distributed production require traceable ownership and exercised recovery routes.

CR | Corporate Social Responsibility Award

Measurable improvements in people's lives supported by ethical conduct, participation and lasting capability.

Who and what qualifies

An operational programme with a completed reporting cycle and direct evidence from affected people shall exist. Donations, publicity or participation counts without demonstrated outcomes are insufficient.

At least one six-month programme cycle completed within the prior 24 months, with longer follow-up where the claimed social outcome takes longer to emerge.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Demonstrated social outcomes (30%)	What changed for people, and how convincingly is that change linked to the programme?
2. Equity, access and participation (20%)	Were the intended beneficiaries able to influence and access the programme equitably?
3. Ethics, safeguarding and remedy (25%)	Could a participant refuse, complain or withdraw safely, and were harms remedied?
4. Sustained capability and partnerships (15%)	Will benefits and local capability persist after the initial campaign or funding period?
5. Transparency and learning (10%)	Is the programme honest about what worked, what did not and what remains unknown?

Useful measures

Outcome attainment and retention; access barriers removed; fair-work changes; skills applied after training; grievance resolution; distribution of benefits; sustained participation.

Avoid this common weakness

Do not score donations or media reach as social impact. Protect children and vulnerable people; use redacted and aggregated evidence wherever possible.

Future-facing entries

Automation-related transitions, digital exclusion, just reskilling, accessible mobility and workforce wellbeing require long-term outcomes rather than one-off campaigns.

SU | Start-up & Entrepreneurship Award

Young automotive ventures that combine original value with verified traction and responsible execution.

Who and what qualifies

The venture shall be less than 10 years old at the entry deadline, measured from the earliest incorporated entity carrying on substantially the same business. Spin-outs shall disclose parent support and control. A working minimum viable offer and independently corroborated user or customer traction are required.

Show inception-to-date context and material progress in the preceding 24 months. Report the full available operating history if shorter, without implying missing years of results.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Problem relevance and differentiated value (25%)	Why is this problem worth solving and what makes the venture's solution meaningfully different?
2. Verified traction and customer value (25%)	Who is using or buying the offer, what value is delivered and how much traction is independently verified?
3. Viable and disciplined growth (20%)	Can growth be financed and delivered under credible assumptions without hiding material dependencies?
4. Team and execution capability (15%)	Has the team demonstrated that it can learn, deliver and manage its most important capability gaps?
5. Responsible venture and durable value (15%)	Are growth ambitions matched by credible protections for users, workers, partners and the environment?

Useful measures

Active and retained users; repeat customers; pilot-to-paid conversion; realized margin or cost per service; milestone delivery; deployment defects; support response; funding runway range.

Avoid this common weakness

Do not present bookings as revenue, reservations as users or a large valuation as product impact. Disclose related-party transactions and parent-company support.

Future-facing entries

New ventures in artificial intelligence, energy flexibility, circular components and mobility access receive equal consideration when a working offer and responsible traction are demonstrated.

LA | Lifetime Achievement Award

A sustained personal contribution that leaves the automotive sector more capable, responsible and beneficial.

Who and what qualifies

An individual shall have at least 20 years of documented relevant service. Submission shall be made by the individual or an expressly authorized representative with the individual's written consent. Unsolicited third-party and posthumous nominations are outside this edition.

A career portfolio with dated milestones spanning at least 20 years; distinguish enduring results from current reputation and verify the continuing legacy at the evidence cutoff.

Build your category response

Criterion / weight	Question your evidence should answer
1. Enduring contribution and impact (30%)	Which enduring changes can be credibly linked to this individual's own contribution?
2. Technical or institutional leadership (25%)	How did the individual build lasting capability and exercise responsible judgment when it mattered?
3. Mentorship and knowledge legacy (20%)	Who became more capable because of this individual, and how has that contribution continued?
4. Integrity and professional responsibility (15%)	Does the career record demonstrate ethical responsibility, including how difficult or adverse events were handled?
5. Lasting relevance and collaboration (10%)	Why does the contribution remain relevant and valuable to the sector's future?

Useful measures

Verified years and milestones; sustained adoption or capability; people developed; outcomes continuing after departure; independent corroboration; evidence of responsible decisions.

Avoid this common weakness

At least three independent career references are required, including one person able to verify mentorship. Previous awards, publicity and senior titles are context, not proof.

Future-facing entries

Recognition should reward a legacy that equips future practitioners to address changing technology and societal needs without rewriting historical context.

Worked evidence examples

Illustrative scenarios only. These numbers are not programme performance targets and do not represent actual applicants.

Example 1 - A repair process with a fair denominator

A component-repair project reports that failures fell from 40 to 20. The baseline covered 2,000 repaired units and the new period covered 500. The baseline failure rate is 2%; the new rate is 4%. The lower count does not establish improvement. The applicant should reconcile product mix, exposure time and failure definitions before claiming a benefit.

Example 2 - A pilot energy result

A controlled route used 20 energy units per 100 distance units before a change and 16 afterward: $(20 - 16) / 20 \times 100 = 20\%$ reduction. The evidence must identify the actual unit, vehicle and software version, payload, route, weather, sample and uncertainty. A citywide saving extrapolated from this route is a forecast, not the measured result.

Example 3 - Social outcomes rather than activity

Training 300 people is an output. Demonstrating that 180 applied the skill after six months, with a stated follow-up response rate and independent employer or participant corroboration, is stronger outcome evidence. Report the people lost to follow-up and alternative reasons for employment changes. Never publish identifiable beneficiary details unnecessarily.

Example 4 - A career contribution

A lifetime entry links a dated engineering decision, an implemented programme and a durable outcome to the nominee's specific role. Independent records, colleagues and a mentee corroborate the contribution. A senior title and a list of prior awards may supply context but do not prove the achievement or ethical legacy.

Evidence-pack structure and submission record

Item	Recommended content
00 Entry summary	Recipient; title; category; season; scope; maturity; contact; one-page result summary.
01 Application	Completed common form pages, one category module, authority and declarations.
02 Claim register	Claim IDs, criterion mapping, result type, units, baseline/current value, periods and limitations.
03 Evidence index	Evidence IDs, exact files, dates, versions, page/section references, owners and confidentiality.
04 Supporting records	Methods, source samples, tests, deployment or outcome data, negative results and independent checks.
05 Risk and integrity	Material concerns, rights, contributors, safeguards, incidents and corrective actions.
06 Public content	Approved public summary, attribution and optional media permissions, clearly separated from confidential evidence.

Naming example

Use EntryReference_E03_TestResults_v02.pdf and cite the relevant page or dataset range. The actual submission route and file limits are supplied in the Season Notice. Do not attach live credentials, unnecessary personal records or files you lack authority to share.

After submission

Retain the receipt and frozen pack. Keep the authorized contact available for questions. Material updates should identify the original claim and file, explain the change and request a logged decision on its use. After recognition, use only the approved award identity, year and scope.