

Refugee Rights Pro Bono Pitching Roundtable Workshop

Empowering NGOs and RLOs through Pro Bono Collaboration

Thursday, September 10, 2025

1:00 - 2:30 PM ET



A&O SHEARMAN



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

**REFUGEE
CONGRESS**

Introduction to the Workshop

- **Jasmine Simperingham**, Program Director (Forced Displacement), **PILnet**
- **Basma Alawee**, Senior Advisor for Policy & Advocacy, **Refugee Congress**
- **Anna Greene**, Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Officer, **UNHCR**

Workshop Objectives

- Raise awareness about the types of free legal help available to nonprofits in the US and how to access such help.
- Showcase examples of successful pro bono projects from the US, to inspire and inform the development of new pro bono projects and partnerships.
- Empower nonprofits to scope and implement successful pro bono projects, including to navigate potential challenges in building partnerships with private sector law firms.
- Equip nonprofits with tools and tips to craft and clearly present compelling pro bono proposals at the Roundtable and other pro bono matching opportunities.

Introduction to Refugee Rights

Pro Bono

What is Pro Bono?

The provision of free legal services to organizations and individuals who would otherwise have no, or limited, resources or access to legal assistance.

Pro bono is:

- Voluntary, uncompensated legal work by lawyers and law firms.
- For the public good, not commercial interest.
- Free for clients, delivered to the same professional standard as paid work.

Introduction to **Refugee Rights** **Pro Bono**

What is **Refugee Rights Pro Bono**?

- Pro Bono directed at refugees, stateless **individuals**, and forcibly displaced groups.
- Support for **organizations** working with or led by those with lived experience of displacement, including Refugee-Led Organizations and Stateless-Led Organizations.

Is **pro bono** the same as legal aid?



LEGAL AID

- State-funded legal advice and representation for individuals.
- Not available for organizations.



PRO BONO

- Steps in when legal aid is unavailable or insufficient.
- Provides support beyond what legal aid covers, including legal research and training, assistance for organizations not just individuals.

Legal Aid **vs.** Pro Bono

Pro Bono fills the gaps left by Legal Aid

Who can receive **Pro Bono** support?

Individuals



NGOs/charities/ foundations/
community groups



Social Enterprises



Corporations or profit-making
organizations



PILnet's Refugee – Led Clearing House

Led by Displaced Legal Professionals



Connects NGOs/RLOs to Pro bono Legal Support



Fosters Equitable Partnerships



Outcome-Focused Assistance



Refugee Rights Pro Bono in Practice

**OPERATIONAL
LEGAL SUPPORT**

**RESEARCH AND
TRAINING**

**DIRECT
ASSISTANCE**

Operational Legal Support

- 01 **Non-profit Law**, including NGO registration, governance and compliance guidance. (e.g. support drafting by-laws and legal documents).

- 02 **Employment Law**, including drafting employee handbooks and reviewing volunteer or staff contracts.

- 03 **Access to Banking Services**, navigating banking procedures, including opening accounts and meeting financial institution requirements.

- 04 Development and enhancement of **data protection, cybersecurity**, and other organizational policies.

- 05 Full range of services include, but are not limited to, **Intellectual Property, Corporate, Finance, Tax, Real Estate**.

Research and Training Legal Support

- 01 Conducting legal research on complex issues, including **multi-jurisdictional analysis**.
- 02 Legal assessment of **draft legislation** and policy frameworks.
- 03 Comparative or other research to support **strategic litigation**.
- 04 **Training and workshops** on specific areas of law, including safeguarding, work rights and human rights.

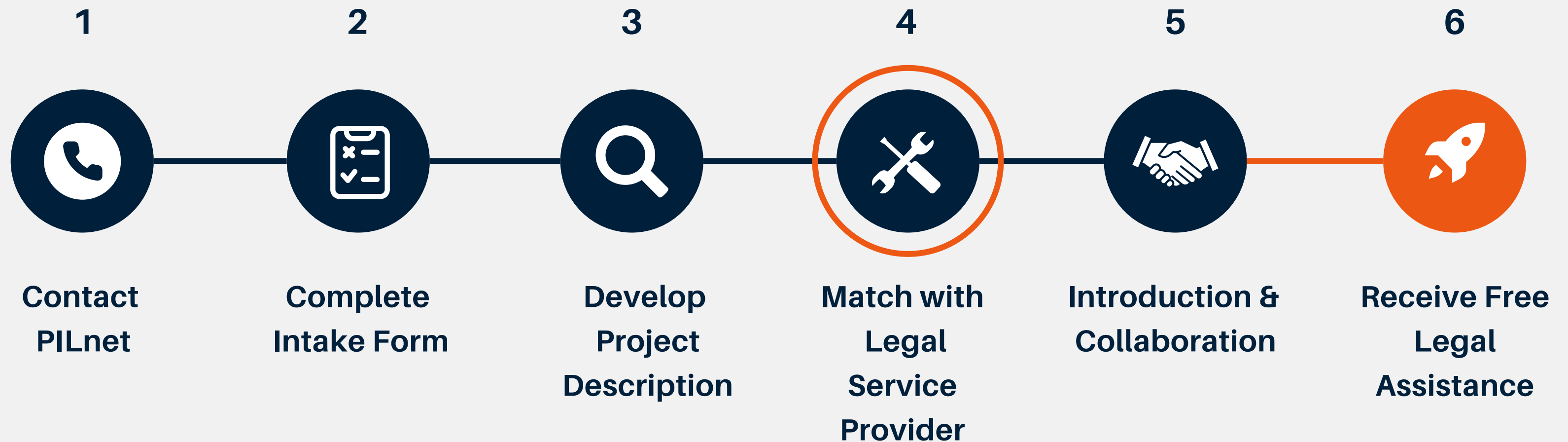
Direct Assistance Legal Support

- 01 Collaborative pro bono projects, where **law firms take on a certain task, or tasks**, to support the provision of direct assistance to asylum-seekers or other individuals.

- 02 Projects can cover many areas where individuals need direct assistance, including **asylum and immigration, detention, stateless and family reunification related procedures**.

Refugee-Led Clearing House **Process**

Easy 6-Step Process



Refugee Rights Pro Bono in Practice in the US

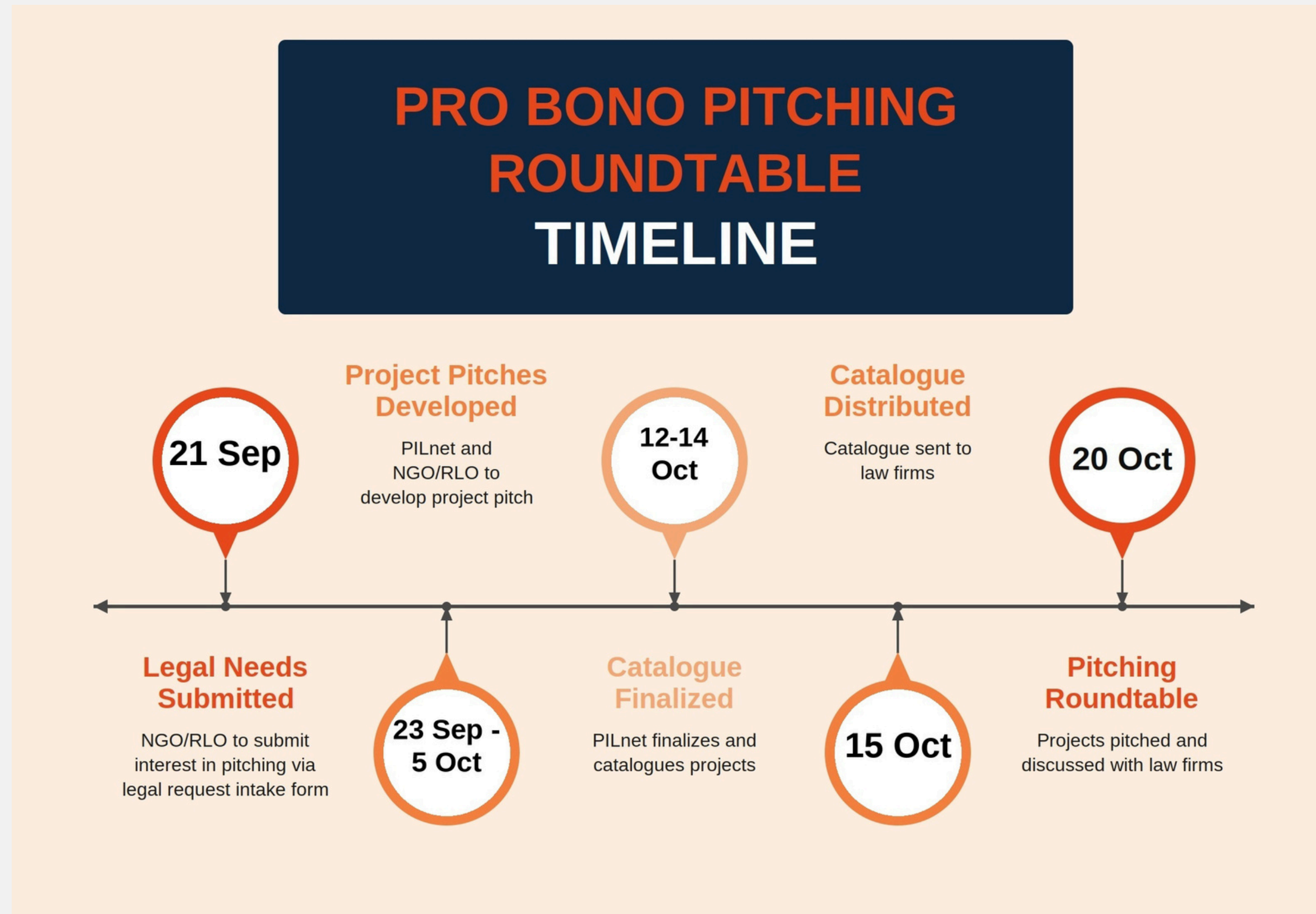
PROGRAMMATIC LEGAL SUPPORT

Samantha Sitterley,
Legal Services Director, United
Stateless

RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Alicia M. de la O,
Director of Legal Access and
Information, American Bar Association
(ABA) Commission on Immigration

Timeline: Scope and Pitch a Project



Legal Assistance Intake Form



General Information

Date of Pro Bono Request *

2024-08-30

Name of the organization *

Legal status of the organization

Please check any of the statements below if they apply to your organization (you may select multiple options).

☐ We have not registered as a legal entity.

☐ We are in the process of registering as a legal entity.

☐ We are a refugee-led organization or an organization led by persons with lived experience of displacement.

☐ FOR ORGANIZATIONS IN HONG KONG: Our organization has s.88 status with the Inland Revenue Department.

Contact Person for this Pro Bono Project

First/Given Name *

Last Name *

Position

Phone

+1

Email *

Stay Updated! Click here to subscribe to the PILnet newsletters to learn about our upcoming events, learning and sharing opportunities, and PILnet projects. Global, regional and thematic newsletters are available.

About Your Organization

Website

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

State/Province

ZIP / Postal Code

Country *

Please provide in no more than 5 lines the mission, goals, and activities of your organization.

Next

Legal Request Description

Which country(ies) / jurisdiction(s) does the request relate to? *

Please provide a brief background of the request *

If you wish to request a Legal Health Check in Hong Kong, please simply write "Legal Health Check."

What type of pro bono legal assistance do you require? For example: advice, research, drafting a document, etc. *

Be as specific as possible about the tasks you need a pro bono lawyer to carry out. If you wish to request a Legal Health Check in Hong Kong, please simply write "Legal Health Check."

Please provide a list of essential and desirable expertise, experience and skills that the lawyer(s) should have. *

For example, expertise in EU law, women's rights or data protection. We can assist with this if you are not you wish to request a Legal Health Check in Hong Kong, please simply write "Legal Health Check."

In which language(s) does the assistance need to be provided? *

By what date should the pro bono work be completed? *

Ideally, the deadline should be no closer than three months from the time of submission. We understand that deadlines can be challenging, but strongly recommend that you give us and the lawyers as much time as possible, so that the chances of providing quality assistance are increased.

Is the request urgent or time sensitive?

☐ Yes

PILnet recognizes that in some rare instances, an NGO may not want to publish its name and website, such as with projects containing sensitive information. We can circulate your project anonymously, but please know this may also reduce the number of law firms expressing interest. Should you prefer us to list your project anonymously, please select the box below:

☐ Please keep the name and website of the organization anonymous.

Next

PILnet's network includes a number of national pro bono service providers. If possible, may we share your request with a relevant pro bono provider to assist in the placement of your request? *

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you seeking legal assistance for this request by any other means?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide more details.

Do you agree to let PILnet know at the earliest possible opportunity if your matter is placed by another clearinghouse?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

How did you find out about PILnet's pro bono legal assistance? *

PILnet maintains a list of its clients and NGO partners on our website. Do you give permission to PILnet to use your organization's name in this list and/or other promotional purposes? *

☐ Yes, PILnet may use my organization's name in promotional materials.

☐ Yes, but PILnet may only add my organization's name to the website list.

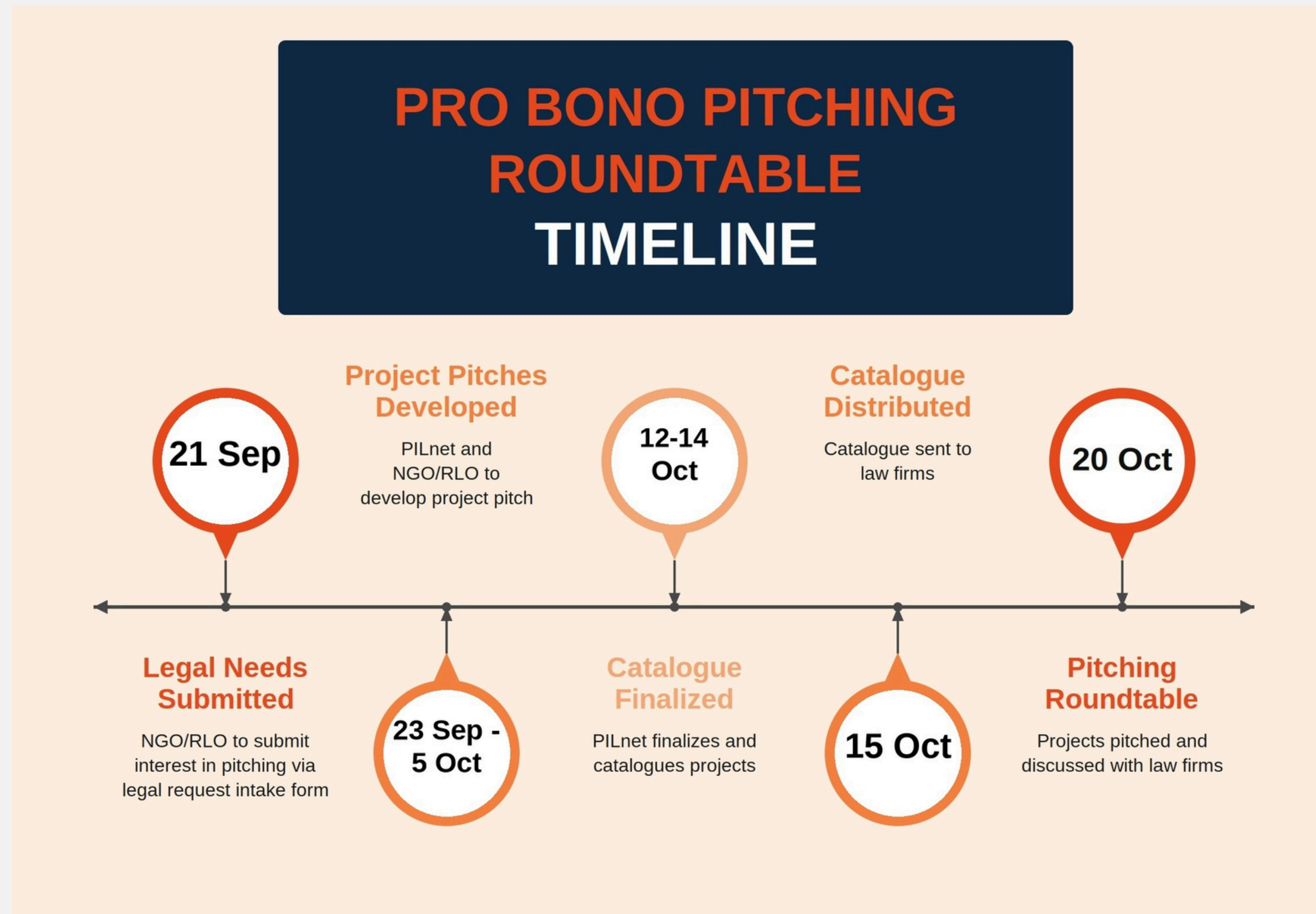
☐ No, please don't use my organization's name in any public materials.

Please read the terms and conditions here.

☐ Checking this box confirms that I agree to the Terms.

Submit Form

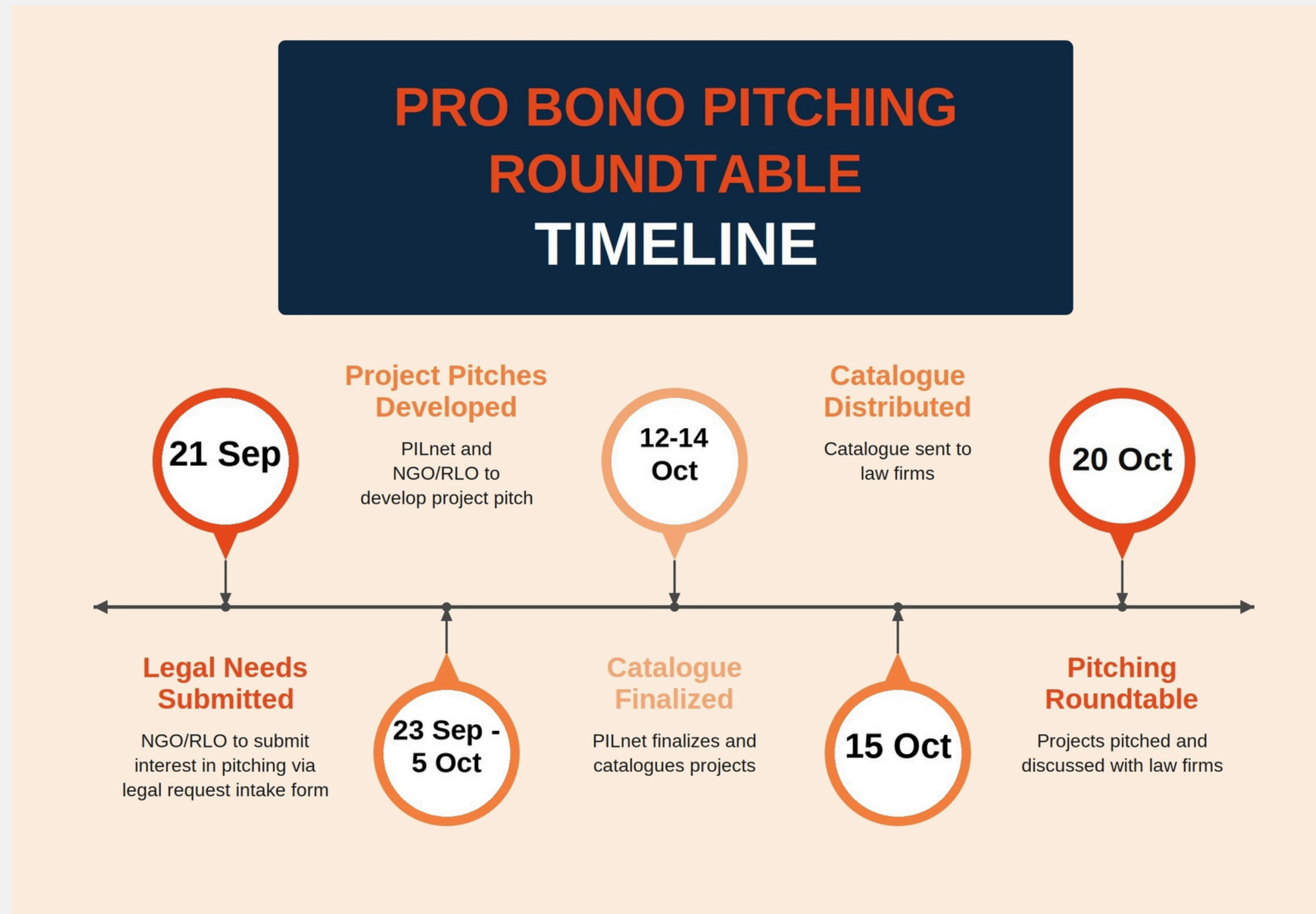
Timeline: Scope and Pitch a Project



Project Description

Types of Services	Organizational
Expertise	Knowledge of GDPR, cybersecurity law, and risk management
Project Description	AVID recently launched a digital development program, including a new website, a Baserow database, and an online handbook via Gitbook. Due to the sensitive nature of their work, they seek legal expertise in GDPR, cybersecurity law, and risk management. The goal is to ensure compliance with data protection laws, enhance cybersecurity, and maximize engagement with their digital tools. AVID specifically seeks legal support to: ● Review and update AVID's existing data protection policies, including the Data Handling Policy, Data Management Policy, and Process for Handling Data Access Requests. ● Advice and offer training to AVID's team on best practices for handling sensitive information related to detained individuals, visitor groups and other stakeholders.
Jurisdiction(s)	United Kingdom
Language(s)	English
Deadline	31 January 2025

Timeline: Scope and Pitch a Project



Catalogue

2024

PRO BONO PROJECTS CATALOGUE

REFUGEE RIGHTS PRO BONO PITCHING
ROUNDTABLES:

For Law Firms and Legal Service Providers
in the UK and Europe

UK & Ireland: Oct 10 2024, 15:00-16:30 CET
Rest of Europe: Oct 14 2024, 15:00-16:30 CET

 PILnet

 European Coalition
A Key For Inclusion

 UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

 HERBERT
SMITH
FREEHILLS

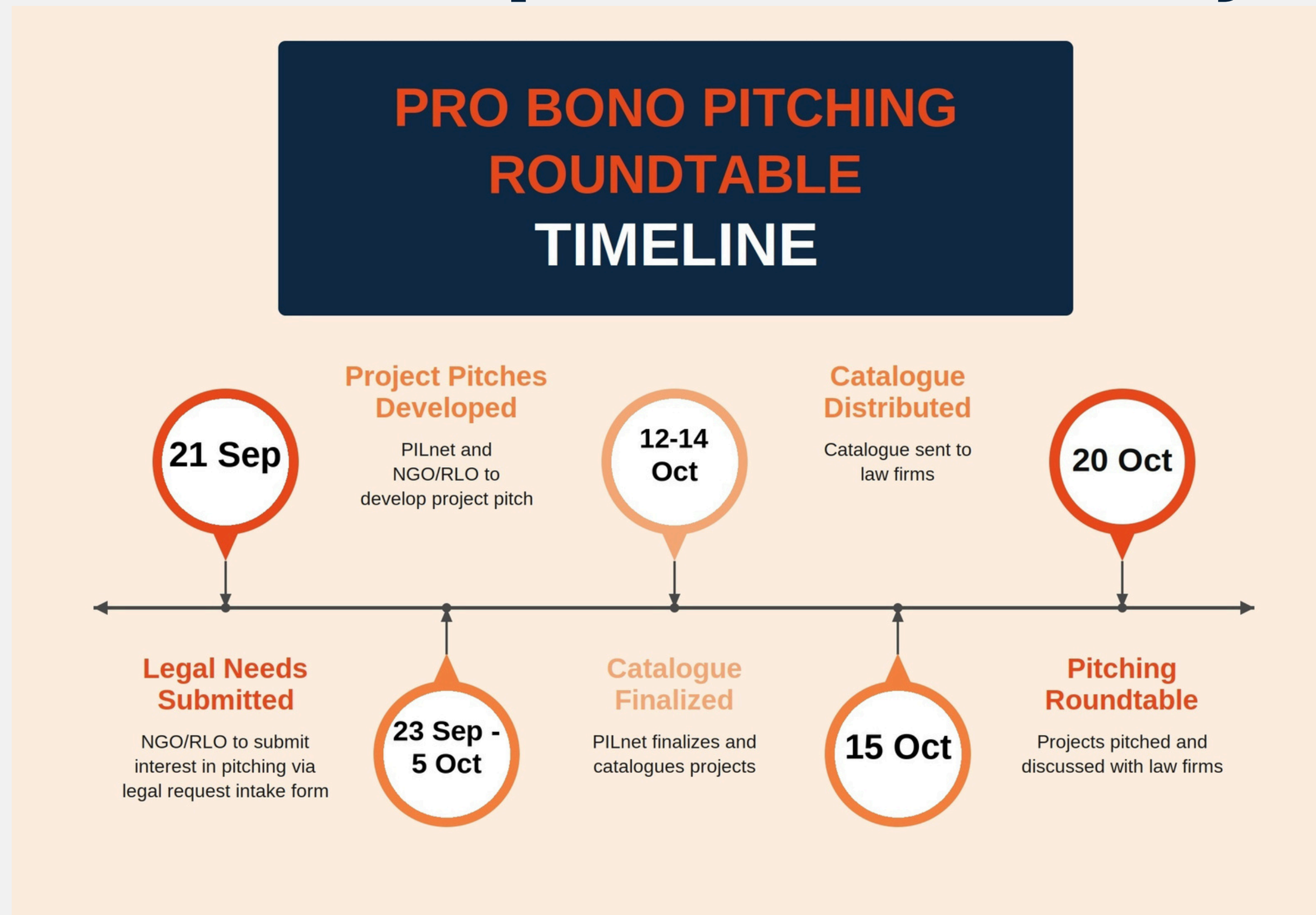
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Timeline: Scope and Pitch a Project



** Indicative timeline

Roundtable Powerpoint

IRC Germany

IRC supports people affected by war and crises globally to ensure their survival and the rebuilding of their lives. It reaches those affected where it is needed: at home, on the move and in places of refuge. Since 2016, IRC has been working in Germany in the areas of education, economic well-being, safety, empowerment and legal protection. The programs are carried out nationwide and implemented together with numerous partner organizations and institutions. This currently includes partnering with 8 international law firms on a collaborative 'Pro Bono Initiative for Afghans' (Deutsches Bündnis für Afghanische Flüchtlinge (DBAF)).

IRC Germany



Melina Garcin
Supervising Lawyer
Legal Protection

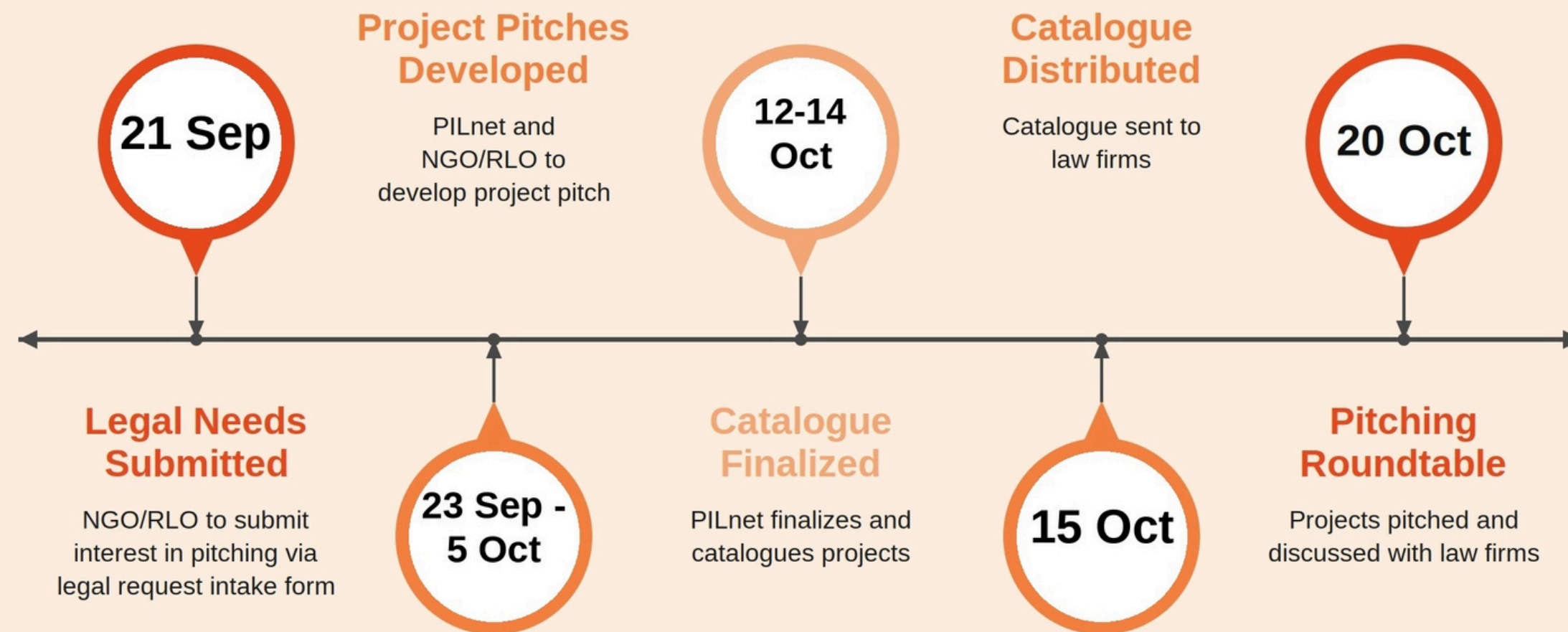
4. Assist with legal pathways and legal advice for Afghans

IRC is looking for additional pro bono partners to provide legal support in one or both of the following areas:

- Legal Pathways for Protection
- Legal Assistance for Arrival

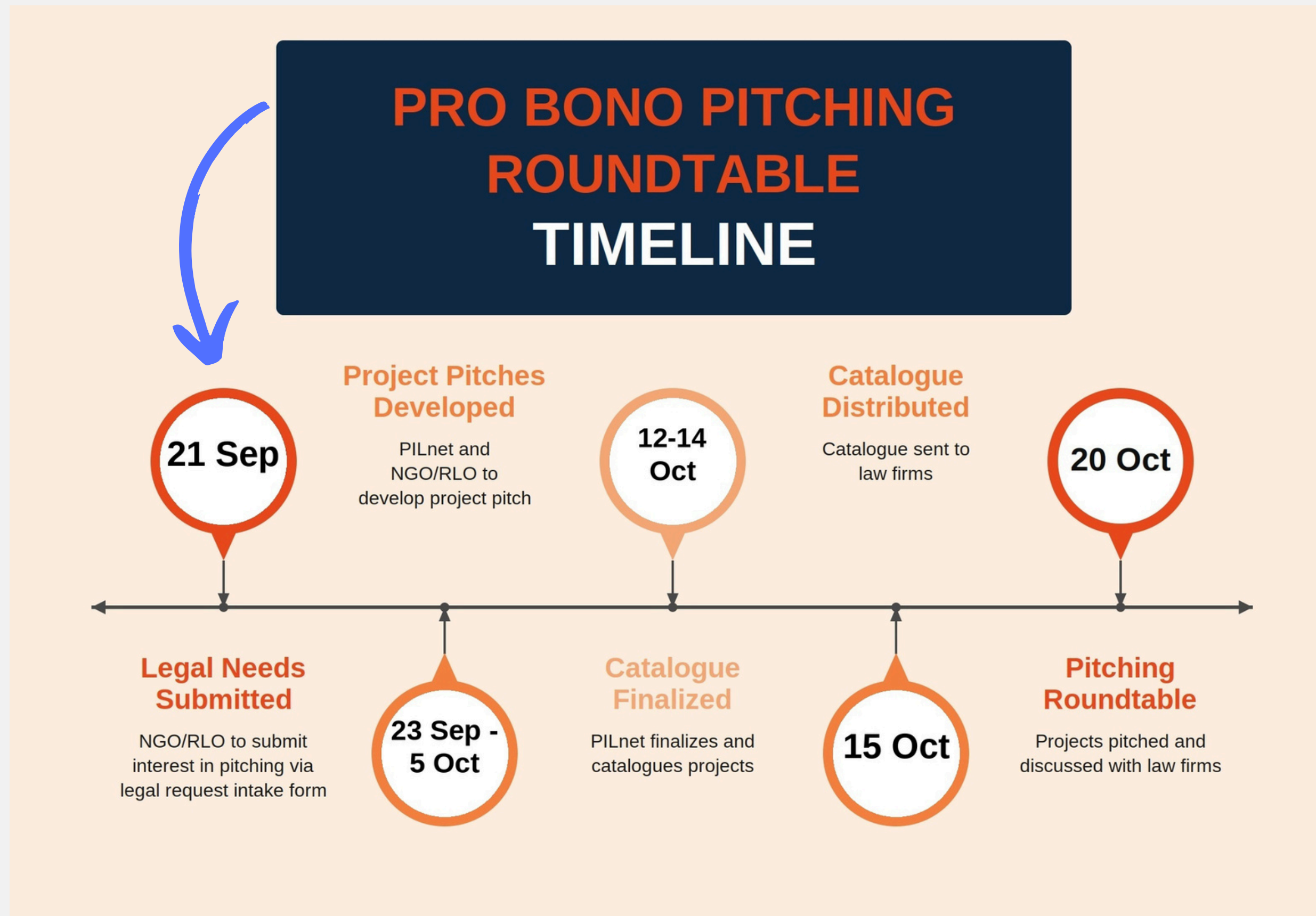
IRC's supervising lawyer will provide guidance and training in addition to direct supervision. Law firms can specify what type of legal advice and how many cases they would like to be referred to. Law firms are expected to contribute financially to cover the costs of the supervision. The third phase of the project will start on 15 November 2024, however, IRC is flexible regarding the timing of new pro bono partners joining.

PRO BONO PITCHING ROUNDTABLE TIMELINE



** Indicative timeline

Q & A



** Indicative timeline

THANK YOU



Workshop Feedback Form



Legal Assistance Intake Form

