

Funding decision for an AI support pilot

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE. All organizations, roles, measurements and evidence references are invented for learning. Decision dated 28 October 2026; six-month illustration in USD.

Choice and accountable owner

Proceed with conditions for a limited internal support drafting pilot at fictional Cedar Operations. The operations lead owns delivery; the department head owns the funding decision. This is the fictional decision maker's judgment, not an automated recommendation.

Authorize at most \$2,300 in external setup cash and \$470 per month for six months (\$5,120 total cash outflow). Reserve 40 setup staff hours plus contingency. The upside costs \$485/month and \$5,210 total, which exceeds this approval; limit usage or obtain revised cash authorization before expansion. No payroll reduction is assumed. Work stays with two trained reviewers; no draft is sent without review.

The case for a limited pilot

The base case releases 122.67 net staff hours per month after review, rework and eight support hours. This is capacity for backlog reduction. It creates no automatic cash saving. Finance must accept the cash outflow and name the work that will use the capacity.

Six-month outcome	Base / Downside / Upside
Net cash USD	(5,120) / (4,910) / (5,210)
Net economic value USD	22,480 / (2,630) / 35,030
Net released hours per month	122.67 / 17.17 / 175.33

Downside that could change the choice

Adoption falls from 70% to 35%, review rises from one to three minutes, rework rises from 10% at four minutes to 25% at six minutes, and support rises from eight to twelve hours per month. The downside economic loss is \$2,630. The team will not expand based only on the base case.

Evidence and conditions for the pilot

Inputs to gather before using this note

Gather the decision horizon, monthly eligible volume, adoption, manual time, human handling with AI, review time, rework frequency and time, loaded labor rate, cash allocation and avoidable rate, support hours, setup staff hours, setup external cost, fixed software, variable usage, other recurring cost and contingency. These are the 18 input rows in the illustration and full model.

Evidence gap and a bounded test

Fictional E03 is the main gap: 70% adoption has not been demonstrated beyond a small trial. Fictional E06 also leaves slow review cases uncertain. Before expansion, the operations lead measures 200 eligible items across two reviewers by 13 November 2026 and records eligible and adopted counts, all handling/review/rework minutes, corrections and source dates.

Alternatives and tradeoffs

Keep the manual process: no incremental cash cost, but the backlog remains. Narrow to one queue: lower exposure and a smaller evidence task, with fewer released hours. Defer: preserve cash while measuring review time, but delay capacity relief. Stop: return the queue to manual work if the conditions below fail.

Stop criteria and owner action

Stop new pilot items immediately for a sensitive-data disclosure or an unreviewed external response. Pause expansion if forecast recurring cash exceeds \$470/month or total cash exceeds \$5,120. Limit usage or obtain revised cash authorization before expansion. Also pause if the 200-item test shows review plus expected rework above 4.5 minutes per adopted item, adoption below 35%, or net released time at or below zero. The operations lead returns items to the manual queue, disables pilot access and preserves internal evidence references. The department head reviews any restart.

Review and record

Review on 16 November 2026 in Asia/Tokyo. Finance confirms the \$5,120 cash envelope, the department head records fund, narrow, defer or stop, and the operations lead records results in the conditions template. Decision signature in this fictional example: Department Head, conditional approval for the limited test only. No evidence has been independently verified.