

Annex 2:

Guidelines for Applicants

Reinforcing the AI4EU Platform by Advancing Earth
Observation Intelligence, Innovation and Adoption

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AI & EO

OPEN
CALLS

August 2021

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1. Introduction

This document provides relevant information regarding the second (#2) Round of the AI4Copernicus Open Call for Citizen-driven Social Challenges.

WHAT's a Citizen-driven Social Challenge?

A **challenge** can be seen as a particular problem with a **societal, industrial, business or environmental impact** that can be solved utilising AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies and Earth Observation (EO) data in addition to other types of data.

WHAT kind of citizen-driven social challenges are we looking for?

AI4Copernicus is looking for **citizen-driven social challenges based on AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies and Earth Observation (EO) Data**. These should aim to **help for example individuals, vulnerable communities, the environment, as well as business and the public sector**, to deliver innovative services to their customers and citizens of Europe and the World.

WHY are the Citizen Challenges so Important?

AI4Copernicus partners enable and empower citizens to become a key part of the future solutions for significant global social challenges.

By proposing a social challenge with a societal, industrial, business or environmental impact that can be solved utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies and Earth Observation (EO) data in addition to other types of data; **citizens are able to co-create emerging AI & EO solutions for the benefit of the society at large**.

WHO can Apply?

The call for challenges is addressed to the following type of applicants:

- **Individuals (age 18 years or older)**
- **EU Countries citizens**
- **Associated EU Countries citizens**

Only beneficiaries external to the consortium will be funded.



This project has received funding from the *European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme* under grant agreement No 101016798.

WHICH are the Eligible Countries?

Only individuals from the EU member states, Associated Countries¹ (hereafter collectively identified as the 'Eligible Countries') and UK will be eligible to participate in the AI4Copernicus 2nd Round of Open Calls.

Please find the list of Associated Countries [here](#).

WHAT's the Benefit For You?

The 2 best challenges that will be selected will:

- (a) receive **an Award in cash** and will be
- (b) be **addressed by SME Consortia** under the 4th Round of Open Calls for Use-Cases based on the Citizen-driven Social Themes (based on the selected citizen-themes of the 2nd Open Call).

Award in cash:

- **€ 5.000 for the each of the best 2 Social Challenges**

Non-Financial Support benefits the Citizen-driven Social Challenge Owners (Winners):

- Visibility through **AI4Copernicus digital channels and website**
- A dedicated presentation of the **winning ideas and Social Challenge Owners in the AI4Copernicus Website**

BEFORE Applying

We strongly recommend you to read carefully through the "Proposal Preparatory" Documents: the **AI4Copernicus Call for Citizen-driven Social Challenges** as well as the **Guide for Applicants (Annex 2)** before starting to fill in the **proposal template (Annex 3)**. In case you may have any questions, you can have a look at our **Call for Challenges**

¹ Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Israel, Moldova, Switzerland, Faroe Islands, Ukraine, Tunisia, Georgia, Armenia



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) or send them to info@ai4copernicus-project.eu or submit them through the AI4Copernicus website in the [Contact Us](#) section.

Only proposals in English will be admitted.

REMEMBER that after submission you **CANNOT EDIT** your application.

Finally, be aware that all information provided will be verified during the evaluation process. If any false information is detected, the proposal will be immediately excluded.

1.1. The AI4Copernicus Project

Delivering 12 TB of space data per day, Copernicus is the world's largest space data provider. At the same time, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an indispensable and ubiquitous tool for growth and innovation. In this context, the EU-funded AI4Copernicus project will bridge the EU AI on-demand platform [AI4EU](#) with [Copernicus Data and Information Access Services \(DIAS\) platforms](#) to allow innovative players break new ground.

Key information regarding AI4Copernicus project, open calls and all documents needed, you could find in our AI4Copernicus website: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/> & Open Calls related information: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>

1.2. AI4Copernicus Open Calls Approach

The AI4Copernicus Open Calls aims to bring together diverse communities, such as the Artificial Intelligence and Earth Observation Communities, AI4EU ecosystems, tools and services, Earth Observation data and DIAS ([Data and Information Access Services](#)) tools and services as well as AI4Copernicus tools and services with diverse market-driven challenges in diverse industrial domains and citizen-driven social challenges (Figure 1).



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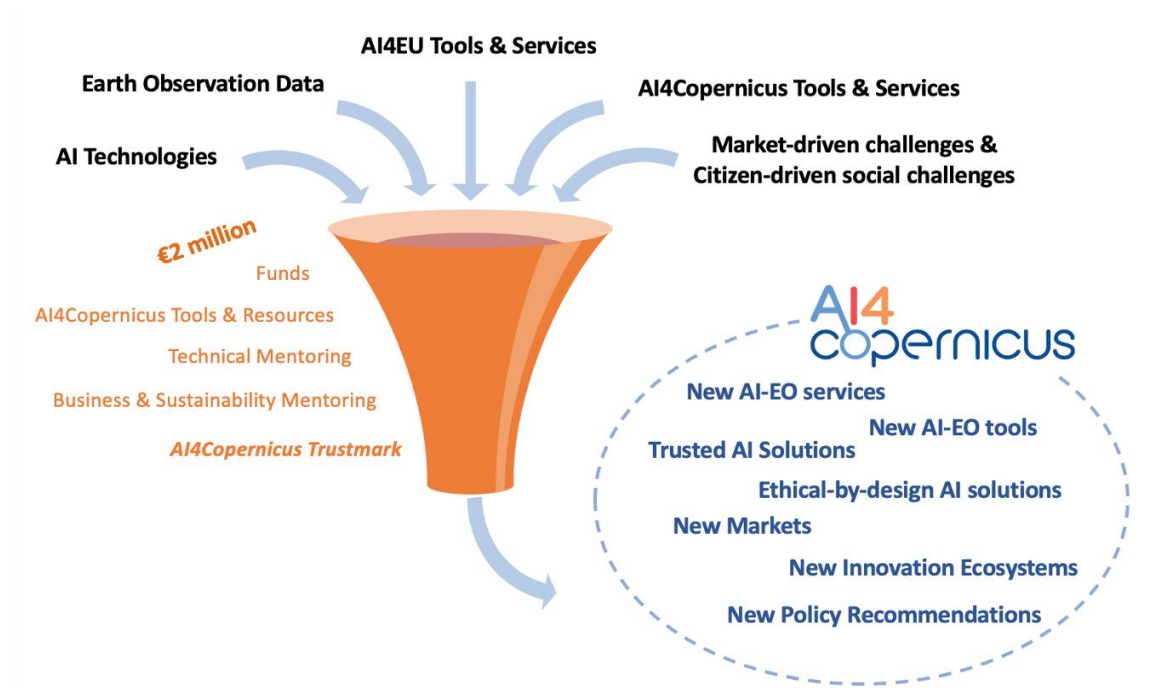


Figure 1: AI4Copernicus Open Calls

1.2.1 Open Calls Overview

The AI4Copernicus Open Calls have four distinct Rounds, targeting:

- **SMEs:** 1st Round, 3rd & 4th Round
- **Individuals:** 2nd Round for Citizen-driven Social Challenges

The four AI4Copernicus Open Call Rounds are:

- **1st Round of Open Calls** for Use-Cases (SME consortia projects with a low-technology SME by default) in 4 Industrial Domains: Energy, Security, Health, Agriculture
- **2nd Round of Open Calls** for Citizen Social Challenges
- **3rd Round of Open Calls** for Experiments (single company)
- **4th Round of Open Calls** for Use-Cases (SME consortia projects with a low-technology SME by default) based on the Citizen Social Challenges (Winning Social Challenges of the 2nd Round)



Figure 2: Interlinkage between the 2nd & 4th Round of AI4Copernicus Open Calls



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Please note that the 2nd Round of Open Calls for Citizen Social Challenges are inter-linked with the 4th Round of Open Calls for Use-Cases as it will be based on the 2 winning Citizen Social Challenges of the 2nd Round (see figure 2). This means that SME Consortia that will apply will aim to solve the citizen social themes that will be funded (in the 2nd Round).

1.2.1.1 Open Call for Citizens Phases

The AI4Copernicus Open Calls have two to four phases depending on their type.

The **Open Calls for Individuals (Citizens)** is the **2nd Round of Open Calls**, which has only two phases as can be seen in figure 2. In detail these phases are:

- **Phase 1** (3 months): Open Call Phase
- **Phase 2** (2 months): Selection Phase
- **AWARD**



Figure 2: Open Call Phases for Individuals

PHASE 1: OPEN CALLS PHASE

Time: August-October 2021

Phase 1: “Open Calls” involves the announcement of the 2nd Round of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls for social causes/thematic areas and it will cover a period of **3 Months (3M)**.

During this phase all relevant AI4Copernicus Open Call Annexes will be provided for interested participants to prepare their proposals.

PHASE 2: SELECTION PHASE

Time: November - December 2021

Phase2: “Selection” involves the evaluation of all the eligible AI4Copernicus Open Call Proposals and will cover a period of **2 Months (2M)**.



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AWARD PHASE

The monetary rewards will be offered to the successful social challenges. This will cover a period of **1 Month (1M)**.

2. General Information about the 2nd Round of Open Calls

2.1. Eligibility Criteria

All proposals received via the 2nd Round of Open Calls, will be checked according to the following items:

- 1. Type of Activity:** Use-Case, Small-Scale experiments, Social challenges, etc
- 2. Type of Beneficiary:** depending on the type of activity, the beneficiaries can be: **individuals (age 18 or older)**
- 3. English-language.** English is the official language for the open calls. The proposal must be in English in all its mandatory parts in order to be eligible. If the mandatory parts of the proposal are in any other language, the proposal will not be eligible.
- 4. Submission system.** All the proposals should be submitted through the AI4Copernicus Open Call Platform. Proposals submitted by any other means, will not be evaluated.
- 5. Submission before the Deadline.** Applications must be submitted by the closing time and date published in the open call. The time recorded by the Open Call Management Tool, as submission time of the proposal, will be the official one. Late proposals will not be admitted.
- 6. Absence of conflict of interest.** Applicants shall not have any potential conflict of interest (if applicants are directly linked with an AI4Copernicus Partner or a member of the Advisory Board) with the AI4Copernicus selection process².
- 7. All Required documentation.** All the requested documents must be submitted.

² Please note that, AI4Copernicus may withdraw an application in the event the participant is directly linked with an AI4Copernicus Partner or a member of the Advisory Board.



2.2. Any Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

As part of the AI4Copernicus 2nd Round of Open Calls we are looking for citizen-driven social challenges that can be solved with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Earth Observation (EO) data among others. As such we ask citizens to become a key part of the future solutions for significant global social challenges.

A **challenge** can be seen as a particular problem with a societal, industrial, business or environmental impact that can be solved utilising AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies and Earth Observation (EO) data in addition to other types of data. AI4Copernicus will share the successful citizen social challenges to the industrial community in order to propose innovative products/services that will contribute to the solution of these challenges.

The citizens will provide their ideas for social challenges and will be rewarded based on the evaluation results. Ideas are free and not protected with any form of intellectual property protection. Acknowledgement of the citizen-driven social themes will be acknowledged in the AI4Copernicus website and funded open calls for use-cases trying to solve these challenges (4th Round of Open Calls).

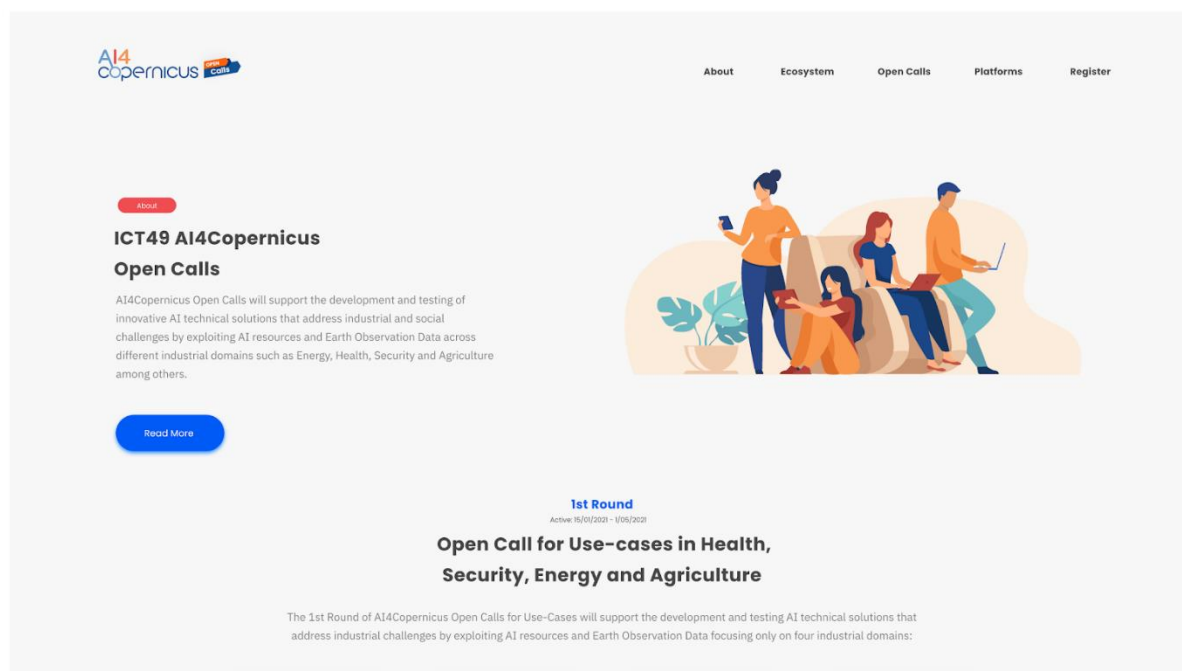
2.3. Means of Submission

The **AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform** will be the entry point for the submission of all proposals. The platform can be accessed via the following link: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>

The submission in the ***Open Calls Platform will open mid of August 2021***. A special Open Calls Platform Guide for Applicants will also become available at the same time.

Please note that documents required in subsequent phases (i.e., once the projects acquire funding) will be submitted via a dedicated channel, which will be indicated by AI4Copernicus consortium and will be communicated to all funded AI4Copernicus projects.





2.4. Language

English is the official language for ALL AI4Copernicus Open Call Submissions. Submission done in any other language WILL NOT be evaluated (see "Eligibility Criteria").

2.5. Documents Format

All requested documents (in any part of the Open Calls process) will be submitted electronically in PDF format.

2.6. Number of Proposals per Applicant

Each individual may participate in more than one application.



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3. Open Call Submission and Evaluation Process for Citizen-driven Social Challenges

3.1. Proposal Submission

The AI4Copernicus submission process will involve the following phases:

3.1.1 2nd Round of Open Calls Publication

Each AI4Copernicus Open Call will be published on pre-specified dates as denoted on the project website. The 2nd Round of Open Calls will be supported by the following documents:

- **FAQs- 2nd Round of Open Calls:** Frequently asked questions & answers published via the AI4Copernicus website
- **Annex 1: Open Call Announcement:** which provides information regarding the 2nd AI4Copernicus Open Call for proposals
- **Annex 2: Guidelines for Applicants:** which sets out the guidelines for participation in the AI4Copernicus open calls
- **Annex 3: Proposal Form:** the application form will be made available via the AI4Copernicus website
- **Annex 4: Bank Account Information:** collects information on the applicant's bank account where the AI4Copernicus payments will be transferred to.

Relevant Documents for the:		
Proposal Preparation (Documents that you need in order to prepare the proposal)	Proposal Submission (Document that you need in order to write the proposal)	Award Phase (Document that you need if your proposal is selected for funding)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex 1: 1st Open Call Related Information• Annex 2: Guide for Applicants• FAQs - 2nd Round of Open Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex 3: Proposal Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annex 4: Bank Account Information

Please download the relevant files and read them carefully before you submit your proposal.

For the AI4Copernicus 1st Open Call the submission deadline is **31st of October 2021**.

3.1.2 Applicants Registration



This project has received funding from the *European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme* under grant agreement No 101016798.

Interested parties should register via the **AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform**:
<https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>

3.1.3 Proposal Preparation

All applicants are requested to follow the steps below:

1. Register online via the AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform: (<https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>)
2. Download all relevant material and templates (see 2nd AI4Copernicus Open Call page in the AI4Copernicus website)
3. Apply online and answer all mandatory questions (with no exception).
4. Applicants can send any questions at info@ai4copernicus-project.eu.
5. Applicants need to ensure that ALL the necessary documents have been uploaded in the Open Calls Platform as well as that ALL the Eligibility Criteria (see Section “Eligibility Criteria”) are met.

3.2. Proposals Reception

All the Open Call proposal submissions must be done via the AI4Copernicus Open Call Platform (<https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>)

For the **2nd Round of Open Calls for Citizen-driven Social Challenges** the application reception will close at **17:00 CET (Brussels Time) on the 31st of October 2021**

There will be **NO deadline extensions** unless the open calls platform becomes unavailable due to technical problems.

3.3. Evaluation Process

The Open Calls Evaluation process involves:

- **STAGE 1: ELIGIBILITY Evaluation**
Initial filtering to discard non-eligible proposals based on the eligibility evaluation that follows.
- **STAGE 2: PROPOSAL Evaluation**
All eligible proposals will be evaluated based on a specific set of criteria that are presented in the following section.



3.4. Stage 1: Eligibility Evaluation

Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Check: Yes/No
1. Full alignment between the requested type of Open Call Activity (i.e., Social challenges, etc.) ?	Y/N
2. Full alignment with the requested type of Beneficiaries for the 2nd AI4Copernicus Open Call (i.e., individuals that are 18 years old or older) ?	Y/N
3. Are the submitted documents by the applicants in English ?	Y/N
4. Are all the necessary Open Call documents submitted through the AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform ?	Y/N
5. Has the submission deadline been respected?	Y/N
6. Is there any conflict of interest with the AI4Copernicus selection process?	Y/N
7. All required documentation has been submitted?	Y/N

Proposals being marked as non-eligible will get a rejection letter including the reasons (1 to 7) for being catalogued as non-eligible. No further feedback on the process will be given.

3.5. Stage 2: Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All eligible proposals will be evaluated by 2 (two) AI4Copernicus evaluators with wide expertise in AI within the fields prioritized in the AI4Copernicus's Target Use Areas. The experts will be selected accordingly with the specific characteristics of the project.

The proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

(1). EXCELLENCE will evaluate:

1.1 Soundness of the proposed social theme. Applicants should provide concrete and verifiable arguments, and/or evidence, with regard to the premises of the proposed idea.

(2). IMPACT will analyse:



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2.1 Social Impact: The applicants have to provide/indicate how the proposed theme/social cause might contribute to pave the way to create for example for the creation of new jobs (economic impact), solve social challenges, solve environmental challenges (environmental impact), etc.

2.2 Other impact areas: The applicants have to provide/indicate how the proposed theme/social cause might contribute to other impact areas for example: contribute to the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) as presented in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, etc.

3.6. Proposal Scoring

Applications will be evaluated following two main criteria as described below. Each evaluator will rank the application assigning a **score from 0 to 5 for each award criterion** (half point scores may be given) and produce an **Individual Evaluation Report**.

The scale from 0 to 5 includes:

- **0 – Fail.** Application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- **1 – Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- **2 – Fair.** The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- **3 – Good.** The application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- **4 – Very good.** The application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
- **5 – Excellent.** The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The **final score** will be calculated as the average of the individual assessments provided by the two Evaluators.

The default **threshold** for individual criteria is 3 (out of 5). The default overall threshold, applying to the sum of the two criteria scores, is **7 out of 10**. In order to be considered for support, the application must score above both individual and overall thresholds.

The AI4Copernicus external **Expert Advisory Board** will monitor the process and will finalize the list of citizen challenges that will be funded.

Ties will be solved using the following criteria, in order:

- Impact score,



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- Date of submission: earlier submitted proposals go first.

3.7. Proposal related data

If you have submitted a proposal, your project information need to be stored on our servers until the payment of balance of the AI4Copernicus project, for potential reporting purposes towards the European Commission.

After this date all information will be deleted from our servers but will still be part of the statistics of the European Commission.

4. Award Criteria

4.1. Overview of Award criteria

The total amount per **Social Challenge**, that will be selected via the AI4Copernicus 2nd Round of Open Calls, is calculated to a lump sum of: **€ 5,000 per social challenge**.

Individuals will receive the total funding in one-time payment.

4.2. Origin of Funds

The funds come directly from the funds of the European Project AI4Copernicus and are, therefore, funds owned by the European Commission, whose management has been led to the project partners in AI4Copernicus via the European Commission Grant Agreement Number No. 101016798.

4.3. Maximum amount to be granted to each individual of the 2nd Round of Open Calls

The maximum amount to be granted to each project selected through the 2nd Round of Open calls will be:

€5,000 total amount per social challenge

4.4. Maintaining Confidentiality

During the implementation of the AI4Copernicus funded projects and for 2 -5 years after the end of the project, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at Grant Agreement signing time ('Confidential Information').



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If specific information has been identified as confidential during the project execution and/or only orally, it will be considered to be confidential only if this is accepted by the AI4Copernicus coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the oral disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the Agreement.

The funded project beneficiaries may disclose confidential information to the AI4Copernicus consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.



APPENDIX

Appendix 1. 2nd Open Calls Documentation (Annexes)

Each AI4Copernicus Open Call will be published on pre-specified dates as denoted on the project website. The 2nd Round of Open Calls will be supported by the following documents:

- **Annex 1: Open Call Announcement:** which provides information regarding the open call for proposals, and the AI4Copernicus project
- **Annex 2: Guidelines for Applicants:** which sets out the guidelines for participation in the AI4Copernicus open calls
- **Annex 3: Proposal Form:** the application form will be made available via the AI4Copernicus website
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- **FAQs- 2nd Round of Open Calls:** Frequently asked questions & answers published via the AI4Copernicus website

Please download the relevant files and read them carefully before you submit your proposal. For the AI4Copernicus 1st Open Call the submission deadline is: **31st of October 2021**.



The logo for AI4 Copernicus, featuring the text "AI4" in a stylized blue font above the word "copernicus" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

AI4
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find more information at ai4copernicus-project.eu