

3rd Open Call

FAQs

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

AI & EO

**OPEN
CALLS**



April 2022 - UPDATED

Table of Contents

1. What is AI4Copernicus 3
2. Why should I apply? 3
3. Who can apply? 3
4. Are we considered to be an SME? 3
5. Any requirements for 3rd Round of Open Calls? 4
6. Can AI4Copernicus consortium members apply to this call? 4
7. Can an SME that participated in another AI4EU and/or ICT-49 project, related to Open Call, apply to the AI4Copernicus calls? 4
8. What is the difference between a Use-Case and an Experiment? 5
9. What is considered to be a successful proposal? 5
10. What is the funding per project (3rd Round of Open Calls)? 5
11. What kind of activities will be supported? 5
12. Can a project cover more than one industrial domain? 6
13. How long does it take to fill in the application? 6
14. Do I have any conflict of interest? 7
15. Is it mandatory to use one of the DIAS platforms that participate in the AI4Copernicus project? 7
16. Is there a restriction on the type of satellite data I can use for my project proposal? 7
17. Is it mandatory to use the AI4EU services? 7
18. What should be published in the AI4EU platform? 7
19. Is it mandatory to use the AI4Copernicus services? 8
20. Will my algorithms, developed in my proposed solution, be exposed by the potential publicity in AI4EU or DIAS platform? 8
21. Do we have to use the monthly composite approach, or can we propose another approach (Agriculture domain)? 8
22. Can we use single images instead of time series (Agriculture domain)? 8
23. How are bootstrapping services going to be provided? 8
24. Are the bootstrapping services customizable? 9
25. Will I be able to modify my proposal before final submission? 9
26. Will I be able to modify my proposal after the submission? 9
27. Can my organization submit more than 1 proposals in the same Call? 9



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28. Can my organization be selected for funding in more than 1 Open Calls of AI4Copernicus project? 9
29. Is there a maximum amount of financial support per third party? 9
30. I am an individual entrepreneur. Am I eligible for the single-company open calls (3rd Round of Open Call for experiments)? 9
31. I am an individual. Am I eligible for the AI4Copernicus open calls? 10
32. Can an SME which is part of a larger group, apply to the Open Calls for SMEs (3rd, 4th)? 10
33. Can an SME have a subcontractor (i.e., University, NGO, etc)? 10
34. Can an SME include in-kind contributions from external partners (i.e., not asking for funding) in the proposal? 10
35. What type of support is available for preparing the proposal? 10
36. Do selected projects get any money in advance? 11
37. What is the payment schedule and payment condition? 11
38. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Issues: The IPR stays with whom? 11
39. What will happen to the proposal related data? 11
40. Is there any personal data processing? 12
41. Can I become part of the AI4Copernicus network and community? 12
42. When will the grant agreement be signed? 12
43. Should we include activities/effort during the Sustain Phase (M15-M16)? 12
44. What does the Person Month/PM (effort) mean and how should we calculate it? 12
45. Where can we find the CAMS Air Quality model data service? 13



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1. What is AI4Copernicus

AI4Copernicus is an EU-funded (H2020) project which aims to enable innovation by bringing together the AI (Artificial Intelligence) and EO (Earth Observation) communities. AI4Copernicus will make the AI4EU AI-on-demand platform the platform of choice for users of Copernicus data along the value chain (scientists, SMEs, non-tech sector), bringing together the knowledge, algorithms, tools and resources available in domains of high economic and societal impact, such as in Agriculture, Energy and Security.

2. Why should I apply?

Within AI4Copernicus 3rd Round of Open Calls, we will select up to 8 Experiments in the fields of Health, Energy, Security, Agriculture and other sectors like Maritime, Aviation that can be implemented by exploiting the existing AI4Copernicus resources and tools.

3. Who can apply?

Applicants can be SMEs¹ and startups legally established in:

The Member States of the European Union, and/or Associated Countries to H2020 (the list of Associated Countries available [here](#)), including the United Kingdom.

If you want to participate in the AI4Copernicus Open Call for proposals (Use-cases and/or Experiments), your organization needs to be registered, have a valid VAT number and have a **9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC)**. Please quote your PIC and your partner PIC in the proposal template.

Additional information about the PIC number can be found [here](#).

4. Are we considered to be an SME?

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](#). The main factors determining whether an enterprise is an SME are:

(1) staff headcount, (2) either turnover or balance sheet total

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	or	Balance sheet total

¹ SME Definition https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en



Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m	≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m	≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m	≤ € 2 m

These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only.

A firm that is part of a larger group may need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from that group too.

Additional details can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en

5. Any requirements for 3rd Round of Open Calls?

The **3rd Round of Open Calls** for Experiments (single SME project) focus in **any Industrial Domain like, Energy, Security, Health, Agriculture & other sectors such as Maritime, Aviation among others** will be open from **1st February 2022**.

This type of Open Calls involves:

- Single SMEs, Start-ups and spin-offs (EU & Associated Countries)

Max funding per experiment:

- €80.000

Please note that we expect to receive proposals with a budget up to €60.000 each. Proposals that exceed €60.000 and up to €80.000 will need to clearly justify their budgetary request in terms of human resources, sub-contracting and infrastructures needed. This will be taken into consideration under the proposal evaluation stage (i.e., implementation criterion, see Guide for Applicants).

6. Can AI4Copernicus consortium members apply to this call?

No, AI4Copernicus consortium partners cannot be funded by the Call.

7. Can an SME that participated in another AI4EU and/or ICT-49 project, related to Open Call, apply to the AI4Copernicus calls?

Yes.



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8. What is the difference between a Use-Case and an Experiment?

- **Use-Cases:** small SME consortia projects with **at least two members (max 3 partners)**, including a non-technology advanced partner by default. The end output of Use-Cases should be at **min TRL 5 at the end of the project**.
- **Experiments:** **single beneficiary** projects. The end output of the experiments should be at **min TRL 6 at the end of the project**.

9. What is considered to be a successful proposal?

An innovative proposal that addresses *sufficiently* and *successfully* all the AI4Copernicus requirements.

10. What is the funding per project (3rd Round of Open Calls)?

For the **3rd Round of Open Calls** each selected project will receive up to **€80.000**.

Please note that we expect to receive proposals with a budget up to €60.000 each. Proposals that exceed 60.000 EUR and up to €80.000 will need to clearly justify their budgetary request in terms of human resources, sub-contracting and infrastructures needed. This will be taken into consideration under the proposal evaluation stage (i.e., implementation criterion, see Guide for Applicants).

11. What kind of activities will be supported?

Developing and testing AI technical solutions that address **industrial challenges** by exploiting AI resources and Earth Observation Data focusing on **any industrial domain (Energy, Security, Health, Agriculture & other sectors like Maritime, Aviation, etc)**.

The AI4Copernicus support program (acceleration process) involves a 16-month acceleration program, which includes namely

- Phase 3: Support Phase (14 Months) and
- Phase 4: Sustain Phase (2 Months), as can be seen in Figure 1



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Figure 1: 3rd Round of Open Call Phases for SMEs

During this period the following services, will be provided:

- Funding (depending to the type of the call) to implement their project for a period of 16 months
- AI4Copernicus Tools & Resources
- AI4EU, DIASes (CREODIAS, WEKEO) Tools & Resources
- Technical Mentoring
- Business & Sustainability Mentoring
- Certification: AI4Copernicus Trustmark
- Visibility through AI4Copernicus digital channels and events as AI4Copernicus Ambassadors

12. Can a project cover more than one industrial domain?

Yes, more than one industrial domain can be covered.

13. How long does it take to fill in the application?

The estimated time is 2-3 working days, once a specific project idea is formulated. Please, take into consideration that specific character limits have been established in each field of the



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online application form, so we encourage you to keep your proposal focused on the requested information, keeping in mind the AI4Copernicus concept and the requirements gathered in the Guide for Applicants for this call. We also recommend you start the submission process quite in advance before the deadline in order to avoid last minute circumstances.

If you have any questions, feel free to let us know at info@ai4copernicus-project.eu

14. Do I have any conflict of interest?

Is your organization directly linked with an AI4Copernicus Partner or a member of the Advisory Board?

If you answered NO then there is NO conflict of interest² and you can submit a proposal in the 3rd Round of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls.

15. Is it mandatory to use one of the DIAS platforms that participate in the AI4Copernicus project?

One of the DIAS platform (CREODIAS, WEKEO) should be used.

Focus on the DIAS platform more suitable for your experiment.

16. Is there a restriction on the type of satellite data I can use for my project proposal?

There is no such restriction, you can use a combination of satellite data from different series. However, you are expected to use Copernicus data, as well as any other data necessary.

17. Is it mandatory to use the AI4EU services?

No, it is not required to use AI4EU services for developing your services.

18. What should be published in the AI4EU platform?

All successful applicants should publish a description of their solution and provide a link to their service in the AI4EU catalogue.

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.



19. Is it mandatory to use the AI4Copernicus services?

AI4Copernicus services should be exploited as part of the project (see [Part 2 of Technical Documentation](#)).

20. Will my algorithms, developed in my proposed solution, be exposed by the potential publicity in AI4EU or DIAS platform?

In general, we are in favor and promote as open as possible solutions.

However, this is not a strict requirement either for the AI4Copernicus Open Calls or the AI4EU platform. You can publish the description of your resource in the AI4EU platform independently of the accompanying license (which however must be included in the description of the resource). In any case, the version integrated into the DIAS platform will necessarily be a docker container exposing the resource, thus there is no need to expose the source code / algorithm itself. You can include any amount of detail that you find appropriate for the algorithmic approach in the documentation of the resource.

21. Do we have to use the monthly composite approach, or can we propose another approach (Agriculture domain)?

The monthly composite approach allows flexibility in terms of adaptation to different geographical areas with images having different frequency of acquisition. You are free of using whatever you prefer but the output is expected to have good generalization capability.

22. Can we use single images instead of time series (Agriculture domain)?

Yes. However, the temporal component is essential to perform an accurate analysis of the phenological trend of different crops, that may become distinguishable in a particular month or date and be easily misclassified in another.

23. How are bootstrapping services going to be provided?

Processing pipelines will be provided as docker images for this 3rd Round of Open Calls. Some of them will be also available in a beta version as models in AI4EU platform. Regarding datasets, depending on the source, they will be provided through web services or as local resources in CREODIAS environment.



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24. Are the bootstrapping services customizable?

Bootstrapping service providers are implementing the services having into account the different needs of the bidders. For that, a lot of parameters will be exposed to be able to customize the processing. It will be possible to provide feedback about the services and the providers could update the services considering new requirements if it is considered needed.

25. Will I be able to modify my proposal before final submission?

Multiple submissions are available until deadlines.

26. Will I be able to modify my proposal after the submission?

After the submission of your application, no modification is acceptable. Please, be aware that your application is completed before you proceed with its submission.

27. Can my organization submit more than 1 proposals in the same Call?

Yes, an organization is possible to submit more than 1 proposals as a partner, however, **ONLY one** will be funded.

28. Can my organization be selected for funding in more than 1 Open Calls of AI4Copernicus project?

Yes, an organization can be selected for funding in more than 1 Open Calls of AI4Copernicus project as a partner. However, the **total funded amount should be up to € 60.000**.

29. Is there a maximum amount of financial support per third party?

Please note that we expect to receive proposals with a budget **up to € 60.000 each**. Proposals that exceed € 60.000 and up to € 80.000 will need to clearly justify their budgetary request in terms of human resources, sub-contracting and infrastructures needed. This will be taken into consideration under the proposal evaluation stage (i.e., implementation criterion, see Guide for Applicants).

30. I am an individual entrepreneur. Am I eligible for the single-company open calls (3rd Round of Open Call for experiments)?

Registered SMEs can participate in the following AI4Copernicus Open Calls: 1st Round, 3rd Round and 4th Round.



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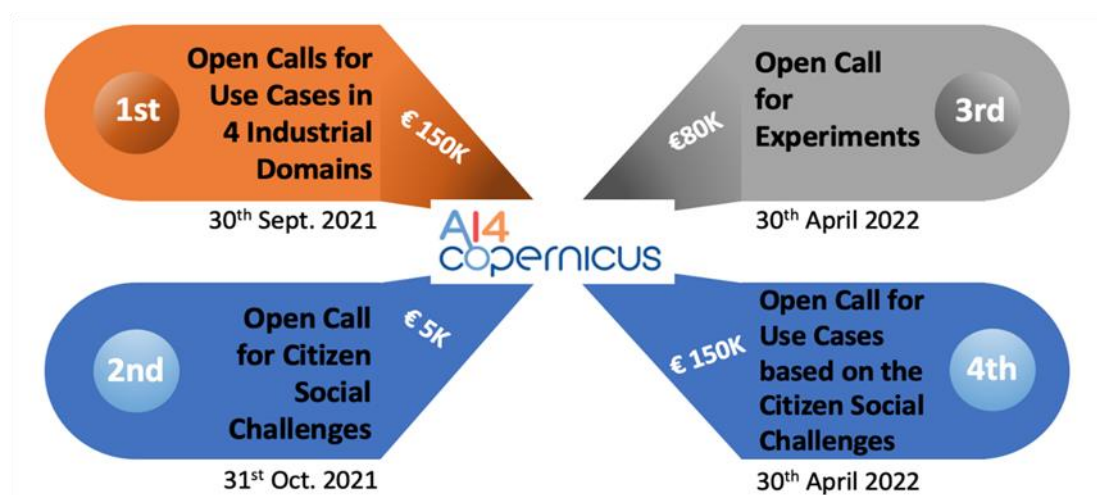


Figure 2: The 4 Rounds of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls (& submission deadlines)

31. I am an individual. Am I eligible for the AI4Copernicus open calls?

Individuals could participate in the AI4Copernicus Open Calls for citizens: 2nd Round (see figure 2).

32. Can an SME which is part of a larger group, apply to the Open Calls for SMEs (3rd, 4th)?

Yes, it can apply.

33. Can an SME have a subcontractor (i.e., University, NGO, etc)?

Yes, subcontracting is allowed.

34. Can an SME include in-kind contributions from external partners (i.e., not asking for funding) in the proposal?

This is not allowed.

35. What type of support is available for preparing the proposal?

The **'Guidelines for Applicants'** is the main reference document. It provides detailed information about the requirements of the evaluation and selection process, and the Support Program offered by AI4Copernicus.



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All the information needed will be provided to applicants via the following digital channels:

- Project's website (more info): <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/>
- Apply via: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>
- AI4Copernicus Support team: info@ai4copernicus-project.eu

36. Do selected projects get any money in advance?

Yes, there will be an initial pre-financing (30% of the total funding) established at the beginning of the Support Program (M0).

37. What is the payment schedule and payment condition?

The maximum amount of financial support to be granted per selected experiment is up to €80.000* and beneficiaries will receive funding in the following installments:

- Award Stage (pre-financing): 30% of the total
- Interim Assessment: 30% of the total against depending of on the assessment outcome
- Proof of Concept Stage/Final Assessment: rest 40% of the total

* Please note that we expect to receive proposals with a budget up to €60.000 each. Proposals that exceed 60.000 EUR and up to €80.000 will need to clearly justify their budgetary request in terms of human resources, sub-contracting and infrastructures needed. This will be taken into consideration under the proposal evaluation stage (i.e., implementation criterion, see Guide for Applicants).

38. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Issues: The IPR stays with whom?

The IPR will belong to the IPR holder(s) as it will be specified in the Project Proposal.

The AI4Copernicus will have NO claims over this IPR.

39. What will happen to the proposal related data?

If you have submitted a proposal, your project and company related 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.



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40. Is there any personal data processing?

AI4Copernicus requires certain types of your personal data, necessary in order to proceed with your application. These personal data types are: a) name, b) address (physical address and email), (c) telephone number. Your personal data will be kept strictly during the Open Call term, solely for the purposes of Open Call and will not be shared with any third party. For any inquiry regarding your personal data and your related rights you may contact info@ai4copernicus-project.eu.

41. Can I become part of the AI4Copernicus network and community?

Yes, you can join our community!

AI4Copernicus aims at developing a vibrant community of peers for knowledge exchange, networking and further collaboration processes in an open space format.

You can join us at: info@ai4copernicus-project.eu

In the event you opt to become part of this community you will be asked to fill in an online consent form.

42. When will the grant agreement be signed?

The "Funding and Support Services Agreement" will be signed once the results of the 3rd Round of AI4Copernicus Open Calls for Experiments will be announced. Before signing the agreement between the consortia of selected projects, a Legal Check has to take place.

43. Should we include activities/effort during the Sustain Phase (M15-M16)?

The last 2 months of the project, i.e. M15 and M16, are related to the project's sustainability activities (e.g., sustainability workshops, etc).

Therefore, during these two months it is expected on your behalf to have a small effort allocation, equal to 1 – 1,5 Person/Month (PM) at maximum.

As such we would kindly ask you to take this into consideration in the course of your planned activities and implementation plans.

44. What does the Person Month/PM (effort) mean and how should we calculate it?

Person Months (PM) are the estimated overall effort allocated by the agency/ies participating in a project for the implementation of the project.



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As such one should take into consideration the working time of all personnel involved for the whole duration of the project.

One PM means that the agency involved will need to have an employee, working full time for one month (or two employees working half time, etc.).

Please note that each agency involved must keep sufficient supporting documents (e.g timesheets to be approved at least monthly by the responsible person) to show that the PMs they declare are eligible.

Moreover, the declared number of PMs must:

- be linked to the implementation of the action,
- be incurred during the action's duration,
- be identifiable and verifiable and
- comply with the applicable national law on taxes, labour and social security.

Kindly note that you can find additional info in this regard on [What is 'human effort' \(person-months\) and how to calculate it?](#)

45. Where can we find the CAMS Air Quality model data service?

The code for the CAMS model output downscaling service is open source, and can be found at <https://github.com/mishooax/ai4cop-health-cams> (including a Dockerfile than can be used to build an image for testing purposes).

Do you have any additional questions that are not covered in this document?

If yes, please let us know: info@ai4copernicus-project.eu



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