

5th Open Call

FAQs - 5th round

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

AI & EO

OPEN
CALLS



January 2023**Table of Contents**

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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 [AI-on-demand](#) (former AI4EU) 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 5th Round of Open Calls, we will select up to 10 Micro-Projects with open themes that can be implemented by testing the existing AI4Copernicus Project services. The 5th Round of Open Calls targets technology-advanced users that are interested in incorporating and assessing the AI4Copernicus services in AI solutions for EO.

3. Who can apply?

Applicants can be technology-advanced 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 Micro-Projects, your organisation 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 5th Round of Open Calls?

The **5th Round of Open Calls** for Micro-Projects (single SME project / technology advanced users) with an **open theme** will be launched in **February 2023**.

This type of Open Calls involves: Single SMEs, Start-ups and spin-offs (EU & Associated Countries).

Max funding per micro-project: €30.000

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.

8. What is considered to be a successful proposal?

An innovative proposal that addresses *sufficiently* and *successfully* the 5th open call objectives.



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

9. What is the funding per project (5th Round of Open Calls)?

For the **5th Round of Open Calls** each selected project will receive up to **€30.000**.

10. What kind of activities will be supported?

Short projects with open themes, involving single high technology SMEs that will be Testing of AI4Copernicus Project services, utilising Copernicus data and the AI4EU platform and services.

The 5th Round of Open Calls involves a single “testing” phase of the AI4Copernicus Project services, as well as three sub-phases, as shown in the following figure:



Figure 1: 5th 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 micro-project for a period of 5 months
- AI4Copernicus Tools & Resources
- AI4EU, DIASes (CREODIAS, WEKEO) Tools & Resources
- Technical Mentoring
- Visibility through AI4Copernicus digital channels and events as AI4Copernicus



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Ambassadors

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

Yes, more than one industrial domain can be covered.

12. 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 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

13. Do I have any conflict of interest?

Is your organisation 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 5th Round of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls.

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

One of the DIAS platforms (CREODIAS, WEKEO) should be used. Focus on the DIAS platform more suitable for your testing activities.

15. 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.

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.



16. Is it mandatory to use the AI4EU services?

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

17. What should be published in the AI-on-demand platform?

All successful applicants should publish a description of their solution and provide a link to their service in the AI-on-demand catalogue.

18. Is it mandatory to use the AI4Copernicus services?

For the 5th Open call, it is mandatory for the projects to test at least one (1) of the AI4Copernicus services. The list of the AI4Copernicus services can be found in the [Technical Documentation](#).

19. Is it mandatory to use the supplementary I-ENERGY services?

No, it is not required to use the supplementary I-ENERGY [services](#) for your testing activities.

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

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

However, this is not a strict requirement either for the AI4Copernicus Open Calls or the AI-on-demand platform. You can publish the description of your resource in the AI-on-demand platform independently of the accompanying licence (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 generalisation capability.



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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 5th Round of Open Calls. Regarding datasets, depending on the source, they will be provided through web services or as local resources in the CREODIAS environment.

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 customise 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 organisation submit more than 1 proposals in the same call?

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

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

Yes, an organisation 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**.



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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 € 30.000 each**.



Figure 2: The 5 Rounds of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls (& submission deadlines)

30. I am an individual entrepreneur. Am I eligible for the 5th Round of Open Calls for micro-projects?

Registered SMEs can participate in the following AI4Copernicus Open Calls: 1st Round, 3rd Round, 4th Round, and 5th Round (see Figure 2).

31. I am an individual. Am I eligible for the 5th Round of Open Calls for micro-projects?

No, individuals could have participated in the AI4Copernicus Open Calls for citizens: 2nd Round (see figure 2).



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32. Can an SME which is part of a larger group, apply to the 5th Round of Open Calls for micro-projects?

Yes, it can apply.

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

This is not 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.

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://calls.ai4copernicus-project.eu/>
- AI4Copernicus Support team: info@ai4copernicus-project.eu

Especially in the context of the 5th Open Call, the AI4Copernicus consortium organised a **Technical Webinar** for all interested parties, where the AI4Copernicus services were presented. Information about this webinar can be found [here](#).

36. Do selected projects get any money in advance?

Yes, there will be an initial pre-financing (60% of the total funding) established at the beginning of the Testing Phase (M1).

37. What is the payment schedule and payment condition?

The maximum amount of financial support to be granted per selected experiment is up to €30.000* and beneficiaries will receive funding in the following installments:

- Award Stage (pre-financing): 60% of the total.



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- Final Assessment: up to 40% of the total, depending on the assessment outcome and the Financial Statements submitted for the corresponding reporting period. The final installment will be paid 60 days after the payment of balance of the AI4Copernicus project.

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.

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.



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42. When will the grant agreement be signed?

The "Funding and Support Services Agreement" will be signed once the results of the 5th Round of AI4Copernicus Open Calls for Micro-Projects will be announced. Before signing the agreement between the consortia of selected projects, a Legal Check has to take place.

43. 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.

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?](#)

44. 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 that can be used to build an image for testing purposes).



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45. Is there a mandatory obligation to utilise the AI4Copernicus services during the 5th Round of Open Calls for Micro-Projects?

The main objective of the 5th call is for the successful applicants to evaluate and make good use of the services that were developed to facilitate earth observation resources. Proposals that won't make use of any of the AI4Copernicus services will not be evaluated.

46. Are there any key dates for the assessment of the progress of the successful proposals of the AI4Copernicus 5th Round of Open Calls for Micro-Projects?

The progress of the successful proposals will be assessed with a report at the end of the first two months and a demonstration at the end of the project. The main objective of the interim report is that the SMEs will have to present which services they utilised and the derived outcome, whether it is positive or negative. The demonstration will be presented in the form of a video where the applicants will have to depict the results of the 5 month assessment of the AI4Copernicus services.

47. Where can I find more information about the Technical Workshop for the applicants of the AI4Copernicus 5th Round of Open Calls?

Especially in the context of the 5th Open Call, the AI4Copernicus consortium organised a **Technical Webinar** for all interested parties, where the AI4Copernicus services were presented. Information about this webinar can be found [here](#).

48. We are a company that operates in the area of energy and we are interested in applying for the 5th Open Call. However, Energy bootstrapping services and resources do not contain the data sources that we feel relevant towards this application. Are we allowed to use Metop-B data which is also part of the Copernicus program?

It is OK to use Metop-B data, EUMETSAT data, Sentinel data, or any other Copernicus data in your proposal (you are required to use Copernicus data). You don't have to use the datasets under the category "energy bootstrapping services" if it is irrelevant to your application.

It is a mandatory requirement though to utilise at least one service from the AI4Copernicus services listed in the [AI4Copernicus Technical Documentation](#), even if it is not an energy one.



49. Do you offer Cloud resources for the applicants for the 5th Open Call? If not, how should the applicants test their solutions in CREODIAS or WEKEO?

AI4Copernicus will provide Cloud resources only to the winners (therefore not to all applicants) of the 5th Open Call. The winners resulting from the 5th Open Call will be able to test the AI4Copernicus services and their solutions in CREODIAS or WEKEO during the testing phase (June 2023 - October 2023). Notice that there is no requirement for any of the applicants to use any cloud resources before the selection phase, but to have a plan to utilise CREODIAS or WEKEO in case they will be selected .

50. Regarding the bootstrapping services of the agriculture domain,. can you better explain the possible outputs of the Long Short-Term Memory Neural Network for NDVI prediction?

At the moment, the LSTM for the prediction trains on a fixed-length time series and performs the prediction of the last step of the series. The service can be easily adapted to perform multiple predictions of different indices at a time.

51. Are the Linked Data tools also publicly available?

Yes, the tools are publicly available and can be accessed through <https://www.ai4europe.eu/> (please follow the links in the corresponding footnotes as shown in the [AI4Copernicus Technical Documentation](#)).

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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