

Press release: for immediate release

## Call for start-ups to receive support from experienced mentors

### European Commission Launched Open Call for the Copernicus Accelerator

**To ensure the highest level of diversity in terms of the user uptake of the European Union's Earth observation programme Copernicus, the European Commission launched a new Open Call for the Copernicus Accelerator. The programme fosters the development of commercial space solutions and products. Applications are welcome to apply directly via an Open Call until 15 September 2018, 23:59 CEST.**

Brussels, 8 June 2018 – The European Commission launched a new Open Call for the Copernicus Accelerator. The goal of the Copernicus Accelerator is to provide tailored business development support to start-ups, SMEs, research institutes and universities who have innovative ideas using Earth observation (EO) data, specifically Copernicus data. The new Open Call particularly targets start-ups younger than three years and entrepreneurs planning to be incorporated within one year, to gain direct access to the programme. The Open Call establishes a new entry point for the Copernicus Accelerator which enables access to about half of the fifty mentees. The remaining spots of the programme will be allocated to the winners of the Copernicus Masters and Copernicus Hackathons.

Until 15 September 2018, 23:59 CEST, start-ups, are able to submit their applications at [accelerator.copernicus.eu](http://accelerator.copernicus.eu). The easy Open Call submission process provides for the upload of a pitch deck, a video of maximum two minutes as well as a recommendation letter by a company or organisation or any entity with experience or an interest in EO.

Interested start-ups must be either citizens of one of the Copernicus Participating Countries (EU Member States, Norway and Iceland) or have established their company in the territory of one of the Participating Countries. The selection of the participants for the programme will be made by an international panel of experts in early October 2018.

“We are proud that, that the Copernicus Accelerator - as part of the Copernicus Start-up Programme - has enabled 90 participants to benefit from a one-year tailored business coaching service since its start in 2016. With the new Open Call, we are again looking forward to numerous applications from Europe enriching the programme’s diversity,” says Philippe Brunet, Director for Space Policy, Copernicus and Defence at the European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW).

The Commission has set up the wide-ranging Copernicus Start-up Programme based on important pillars. It consists of four elements that pursue the goal of increasing the number of users of Copernicus data and services: Copernicus Prizes as part of the established Copernicus Masters innovation competition, Copernicus Hackathons (open on 11 June 2018), Copernicus Incubation

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Programme and Copernicus Accelerator. The comprehensive programme accompanies young companies from the generation of a business idea to its full commercialisation.

Through the Copernicus Accelerator, start-ups will receive support from experienced mentors and work with them on advancing their innovations over a period of several months. They will be able to determine the focus of this coaching, such as creating a business plan, acquiring their first customers, raising capital, etc. Scheduled to last ten months, the Copernicus Accelerator will kick off with a boot camp that will invite all of its participants to Marseille, France, on 3 and 4 December 2018 as part of the EU Space Week 2018.

In Marseille, the winners of the Copernicus Masters will also be honoured and will receive access to the Copernicus Accelerator. The international competition awards prizes to innovative solutions for business and society based on EO data and is open for submissions until 30 June 2018.

The Copernicus Accelerator is a programme of the European Commission, implemented by SpaceTec Partners and AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen.

#### **About European Commission – DG GROWTH**

The Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROWTH) is the European Commission service responsible for: completing the Internal Market for goods and services; helping turn the EU into a smart, sustainable, and inclusive economy by implementing the industrial and sectorial policies of the flagship Europe 2020 initiative; fostering entrepreneurship and growth by reducing the administrative burden on small businesses; facilitating access to funding for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and supporting access to global markets for EU companies. All of these actions are encapsulated in the Small Business Act; generating policy on the protection and enforcement of industrial property rights, coordinating the EU's position and negotiations in the international intellectual property rights (IPR) system, and assisting innovators on using IP rights effectively; and implementing the EU's space policy via its two large-scale satellite programmes Copernicus (for Earth observation) and Galileo (for global navigation), as well as research actions designed to spur technological innovation and economic growth.

[http://ec.europa.eu/growth/about-us/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/about-us/index_en.htm)

#### **About SpaceTec Partners**

SpaceTec Partners is an independent strategy, management, and communications consulting group with offices in Munich and Brussels. Its broad array of services includes strategy and technology consulting, communication activities, and interdisciplinary project management, which it mainly provides to public institutions (the European Commission, the European Space Agency, the European GNSS Agency, the European Parliament, national ministries, etc.) in the space and space applications domain. SpaceTec Partners also offers business coaching to start-ups and SMEs, and is an accredited coach by leading early-stage funds. SpaceTec Partners is strongly involved in Copernicus User Uptake and User Requirements gathering activities on behalf of the European Commission. [www.spacetecpartners.eu](http://www.spacetecpartners.eu)

#### **About AZO – Partner in Competition & Innovation**

AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen is an international networking and branding company initiating the most important space-related innovation competitions with more than 15,000 participants, over 200 industrial & public - and 400 international stakeholders. The Masters Series, presented by AZO consists of

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the [European Satellite Navigation Competition](#) (ESNC), [Copernicus Masters](#), [Space Exploration Masters](#), and [INNOspace Masters](#). AZO has been supporting entrepreneurship with more than 130 company foundations to date and the creation of 1,800 high-tech jobs in Bavaria with an annual turnover of about EUR 150 million. Additionally, AZO runs a very successful business angel network which invested more than EUR 130 million Venture Capital in 2016/17 as well as the ESA Incubation Centre (ESA BIC) Bavaria. For more information, please visit [www.azo-space.com](http://www.azo-space.com).

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