

## Press Release

### ***Orbiter* wins Copernicus Masters 2021 competition**

## **A Mobile Earth Visualisation App for Everyone**

The Copernicus Masters network is pleased to announce this year's overall competition winner, *Orbiter*, the solution that also won the 2021 ESA Challenge. *Orbiter* offers an Earth visualisation app for mobile devices and features a responsive globe that allows users to spin and zoom around the planet, revealing high-resolution Sentinel-2 satellite images as well as offering additional functions. Copernicus Masters is the global innovation competition for Earth observation (EO) initiated by ESA and has been driving entrepreneurial talent since 2011.

Oberpfaffenhofen, 15 December 2021 – [AZO](#) and the Copernicus Masters network are pleased to reveal the 2021 overall winner of the Copernicus Masters competition, who was announced at the Space Awards yesterday evening, on 14 December. With its unique mobile Earth visualisation app using different types of Copernicus data and imagery, *Orbiter* convinced the jury members for all of the prizes and challenges and was selected as the overall winner of this year's Copernicus Masters competition. The solution also won the ESA Digital Twin Earth (DTE) Challenge.

Every year, [Copernicus Masters](#) calls for submissions to find innovative solutions using EO data and it is supported by a network of high-class partners from institutions and industry such as the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Commission (COM), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), Planet Labs Inc., BayWa AG, Airbus, UP42, Portugal Space, and the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI). High-ranking representatives from these institutions as well as AZO, the organiser of Copernicus Masters, awarded the challenge winners with prizes at the 2021 Space Awards.

Dr Josef Aschbacher, Director General of ESA, comments: "The free and open data policy of Copernicus has been a game changer for Earth observation and has created enormous opportunities for government and businesses. For example, the downstream sector in Europe grew >10% – Growth Sustained in 2020 – CAGR over 5 years – (EARSC Industry Survey 2021), making this one of the fastest growing sectors in space. This is why we selected *Orbiter* as the winner of our ESA Challenge and are pleased to see the solution win the Copernicus Masters competition. With its streamlined and intuitive design, this application is breaking down EO data for anyone to understand. It is one of our missions to bring Copernicus data to the public and foster new user groups. Solutions like this show the potential that lies in the Copernicus Masters competition for driving new ideas and making them become reality."

### **The winning solution**

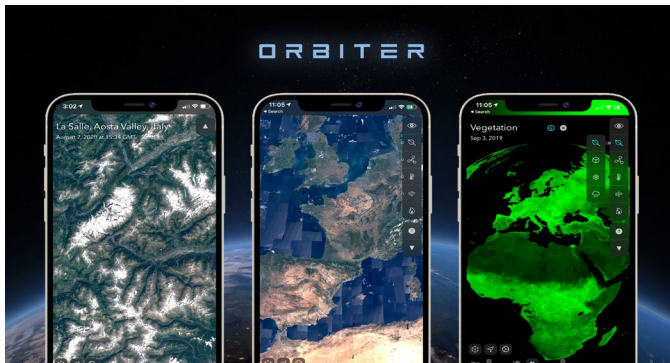


Figure 1: Impressions of Orbiter, © Orbiter 2021

representation of the Earth and its processes. Using current images and data from the Copernicus Sentinel-2, -3, and -5p satellites, *Orbiter* presents detailed, recent Earth imagery. Users can spin and zoom around the responsive globe, revealing high-resolution Sentinel-2 satellite images, which also allow for fast comparisons of different time periods. With an animated and coloured data overlay, *Orbiter* also shows invisible processes affecting the Earth, whether natural or caused by humans. With this streamlined and appealing user design, *Orbiter* edged out more than 180 other ideas to become the overall winner of Copernicus Masters 2021.

The Copernicus programme provides open access to up-to-date data and information, but their meaning and implications for our planet are often only clear to scientists and experts. *Orbiter* is bridging this gap between the scientific community and the public by offering a powerful tool to communicate the data gathered by Copernicus and the value that it represents to laypersons. The app shows a responsive globe that provides an up-to-date



Figure 1: Partners of the Copernicus Masters, © AZO 2021

This year, the Copernicus Masters featured ten Challenges presented by first-class industrial and institutional partners, along with 19 Copernicus Prizes powered by the European Commission (COM) and organised by regional Prize Partners as part of a growing network of 89 European affiliates.

Over 730 participants from 57 countries participated in the 2021 competition and submitted 187 new Earth observation business cases and application ideas.

“It is encouraging to see that so many talented and motivated people participated once again in the Copernicus Masters competition, despite the pandemic. This truly shows the great scientific and entrepreneurial potential in Europe,” explains Timo Pesonen, Director General for Defence Industry and Space at the European Commission.

“For the past ten years, Copernicus Masters has played a huge role in boosting Europe’s space and innovation sector in the Earth observation field,” comments Thorsten Rudolph, CEO of AZO. “The top 100 companies that came out of this global innovation competition have now created more than 3,300 jobs and generated EUR 182 million in total turnover in 2020. In recent years, these companies have also raised around EUR 548 million in venture capital. We are looking forward to seeing what great innovative solutions await us in the future!”

The Copernicus Masters' close cooperation with institutional, industrial, and regional partners promotes the development of high-tech EO products and services for Europe on a global scale. Next year's submission phase will start on 1 April 2022.

#### **About the Copernicus Masters**

AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen launched the Copernicus Masters in 2011 on behalf of the European Space Agency (ESA) and with the strong support of world-class partners. The Copernicus Masters is an international competition with the objective to drive Copernicus user uptake of Earth observation (EO) data and thus respective business cases. With partners such as European Space Agency (ESA), the European Commission (COM), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), Planet, BayWa AG, Airbus, UP42, Portugal Space and the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI), the competition awards prizes to innovative solutions for business and society. With the expansion of the Copernicus Space Component every year, new prize categories enable solutions that tackle global challenges. For more information, visit [www.copernicus-masters.com](http://www.copernicus-masters.com).

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

AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen is an international networking and branding company for the European space programme, supporting entrepreneurship with more than 1100 companies founded in Europe. Over the last 17 years, AZO has established the leading European space cluster innovation network for the satellite downstream market. The Masters Series, presented by AZO, consists of the [Galileo Masters](#), [Copernicus Masters](#), and [INNOspace Masters](#). AZO also manages its ESA Business Incubation Centres (ESA BIC) Bavaria and ESA BIC Northern Germany. This incubation programme has supported more than 200 company foundations to date. Since 2014, ESA BIC Bavaria companies were able to collect EUR 1,4 Billion in investments (Venture Capital and IPOs). AZO supported companies additionally profit from its very successful business angel network. For more information, please visit [www.azo-space.com](http://www.azo-space.com).

#### **Press contact:**

AZO Communication  
laura.kauffmann@azo-space.com

#### **AZO**

Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen  
Friedrichshafener Str. 1  
82205 Gilching