

## **Press Release:**

### **Copernicus Masters 2021 Submissions Open 19 April**

#### **Monitoring Climate Change with Copernicus**

**Copernicus is the world-leading European Earth observation programme, offering open and free data, information and services that substantially contribute to socio-economic benefits, as well as smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It fosters the development of innovative solutions in many domains and helps to achieve the priorities of the European Union, such as the Green Deal and making Europe fit for the digital age. In 2020, the Copernicus programme grew further with the launch of the Copernicus Sentinel-6 satellite – an expansion of the Sentinel family by a new member to survey the global rise in sea level. In the last 10 years, the Copernicus Masters has supported the use of Copernicus data in highly innovative solutions to tackle environmental and societal challenges. The submissions for the Copernicus Masters this year open on 19 April.**



Oberpfaffenhofen, 19 April 2021 – Climate change is one of the biggest environmental threats of our time, with potential severe social and economical consequences if left unaddressed. The rise in sea level, the melting of glaciers and ice sheets as well as the increase in sea surface temperature in the oceans are currently subject to important scientific investigations that provide the insights about the nature and

evolution of this threat. The use of long-term archives of Earth Observation data in this context is truly fundamental not only for climate science and risk screening but also for different mitigation and adaptation, and environmental protection strategies taken up by governments, international organizations and private sector. At the same time many aspiring innovators reach for EO data to develop practical applications to help visualise and expose climate and other environmental issues addressing problems that concern global and local communities. The application called ReefSupport is an example of such online monitoring and predictive maintenance tool uses AI and satellite imaging to track coastal reef health and prevent beach and aquaculture pollution. It was developed through the Copernicus Masters – the global innovation competition for Earth Observation (EO) that is dedicated to future-oriented SMEs, startups, universities and individuals that want to tackle important challenges faced by the society through the use of satellite data.

The 2021 Competition is again in search of outstanding applications, solutions, and services.

From 19 April to 19 July, participants in the Copernicus Masters 2021 can submit their innovative EO application or service to 10 Challenges offered by the following world-class partners: European Space Agency (ESA), the European Commission (COM), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), Planet, BayWa, UP42 with Airbus, the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI) and Portugal Space (Portuguese Space Agency). Through these Challenges the participating teams can reap valuable rewards ranging from cash or direct access to commercial EO data to expert support and

incubation of their business. At the same time, they have the possibility of entering a variety of prizes co-funded by the European Commission up to EUR 10,000 each.

“The Copernicus Sentinel satellite family is expanding at a rapid pace generating fantastic data. Every year ESA opens the Copernicus Masters Challenge to solicit fresh and groundbreaking proposals of how they can be applied in research and stimulate new business ideas. According to Toni Tolker-Nielsen, Acting Director of ESA’s Earth Observation Programmes the time is ripe for the latest generation of start-ups and young scientist to take this opportunity to the next level and show us where EO innovation can lead in terms of the impact it can make, and its market potential”. ESA is an initiating partner of the Copernicus Masters and has set a challenge every year since 2011.

Participants can demonstrate their innovative use of EO data across a wide variety of challenge topics, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, cloud computing, data analytics, health, smart farming, maritime and digital transportation – to name just a few.

“Europe needs more young companies dedicated to building and commercialising new digital services, valorising space data from Europe’s satellites. The Commission has in recent years supported the Copernicus Masters, an innovation competition which has seen many innovative applications among its contestants and winners. We are looking forward to seeing many more ambitious entrepreneurs take part in the 2021 competition when submissions for Copernicus Masters open on 19 April 2021; Europe’s Bauhaus in Space needs them. “ Catherine Kavvada, Director DG DEFIS, European Commission.

“Many successful companies have grown out of the Copernicus Masters in recent years, raising EUR 274 million in venture capital with the support of our international space ecosystem,” adds Thorsten Rudolph, Managing Director of AZO, the competition organiser.

Together with cash prizes, challenge and prize winners will receive access to an international ecosystem of leading Earth observation organisations, substantial satellite data quotas, and individual business development support worth more than EUR 835,000. The Overall Winner will receive an additional cash prize of EUR 10,000.

For more details on this year's challenges, prizes, rewards, and partners, please visit [www.copernicus-masters.com](http://www.copernicus-masters.com).

#### **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 the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Commission (COM), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), Planet, BayWa AG, Airbus & UP42, the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI), and Portugal Space, the competition rewards innovative solutions for business and society. With the expansion of the Copernicus Space Component every year, new prize categories, like the Copernicus Prizes, enable solutions that tackle global challenges. For more information [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 700 companies founded in Europe. Over the last 15 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 Incubation Centre (ESA BIC) Bavaria and Northern Germany. This incubation programme has supported more than 190 company foundations in Bavaria alone to date. AZO runs a very successful business angel network, which invested EUR 380 million of venture capital in 2020 alone. For more information, please visit [www.azo-space.com](http://www.azo-space.com).

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