

ESA Earth Observation Entrepreneurship Initiative (EOEI)

Terms of Participation

1 BACKGROUND

The European Space Agency¹ (ESA), Europe's gateway to space, aims to shape the development of Europe's space capability and ensure that investment in space continues to deliver benefits to the citizens of Europe. In particular, ESA is leading the development of a series of Earth Observation (EO) satellites aiming to advance our understanding of our planet and support our society and economy. Over the last decades, ESA has been gathering a wealth of EO data on the state of our planet (e.g. Envisat, ERS, Third Party missions) providing entrepreneurs and data scientists with a unique asset to develop new EO applications, thereby maximizing the socio-economic value of the data. As new missions such as the Sentinels (developed within the framework of the European Copernicus initiative) are coming online, new opportunities are emerging to support the data economy.

In this context, ESA is launching the first Call of the **Earth Observation Entrepreneurship Initiative (EOEI)** aiming to attract *new players* to the world of EO and foster the development of a new generation of EO-driven digital companies. The Call is specifically targeting new players such as entrepreneurs, both aspiring (e.g. university students, data scientists) and early-stage (e.g. start-ups not older than 4 years).

In particular, the Call aims to support entrepreneurial ideas using EO data that can turn the grand challenges of our society, emerging business needs and advances in digital technologies into new growth opportunities for Europe. One specific focus of this initiative is to *test the feasibility of the idea with domain experts* so that the entrepreneur can consolidate its products and business plan and be in a better position to apply for the **ESA Business Incubation Centers² (BICs)³**. As such this initiative is fully complementary to existing idea competitions, such as the Copernicus Masters and App camps, as it addresses the feasibility gap thereby enabling a pre-incubation phase.

¹ The European Space Agency is an intergovernmental organisation constituted of the following **22 Member States**: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Canada takes part in some projects under a Cooperation agreement.

² ESA's Business Incubation Centres (BICs), initiated by ESA's Technology Transfer Programme Office (TTPO), work to inspire entrepreneurs to turn space-connected business ideas into commercial companies, and provide technical expertise and business-development support. See list of BICs on www.esa.int/bic.

³ ESA Technology Transfer Brokers' Network, whose principal task is the mediation between technology providers and technology receivers. See list of Brokers on www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Engineering_Technology/TTP2/Technology_Transfer_Network3.

In order to support the Call, ESA has appointed Verhaert New Products and Services - referred here as the **Coordinator** - to prepare, manage and coordinate the Call on behalf of ESA.

2 OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the Call are to:

- Attract new players and entrepreneurs to the world of EO,
- Stimulate the creation of the new generation of EO start-ups and their acceleration to market through the ESA BICs.

The Call will help support new players and entrepreneurs across Europe to create innovative EO products and consolidate their information services and business model in order to be in a position to apply for a full incubation package within the ESA Business Incubation Center (BIC) of their choice.

The expected outcome of the Call is that the selected teams prepare a consolidated **ESA BIC Application Package (eBAP) including a technical proposal and a business plan over a period of 3 months in order to apply for a full ESA incubation package to the ESA BIC of their choice**. A light mock-up of the EO prototype service will be included in the technical part of the eBAP for illustrative purpose.

3 INNOVATION VOUCHERS

ESA plans to **award up to 50 Innovation Vouchers worth 15,000 EURO** enabling the selected teams to procure data, tools and specific expertise or services to refine their idea and products both on a technical and business model point of view.

These vouchers can be used to purchase on a *flexible basis* the products and/or services meeting the specific innovation needs of the winners in order to help them develop a full technical and business proposal. They are designed to help teams of entrepreneurs and startups to tackle specific issues. The main types of costs allowable under the vouchers are:

- Providing technical expertise from EO specialists, universities/academia, ICT experts, and data scientists, (these experts can be local or from ESA member states),
- Developing and testing new products, services, and business models, with in domain experts,
- Advertising, branding, marketing, educational material and promotion,
- Buying specialist equipment, software, cloud computing time or facilities,
- Supporting (reasonable) travel cost for networking opportunities (e.g. conferences, events, B2B meetings),
- Support to business, financial and legal advice, and expertise from experts / users from the targeted market,
- Prototyping development and testing of ideas for new or improved products and services.

The Idea proposal (submitted under this Call) shall describe the type of services needed and the expected costs, which need to fit in the maximum financial envelope of 15,000 EURO available. The payment of the vouchers will be done by means of a contract to be signed between the Coordinator (Verhaert New Products and Services) acting on behalf of ESA and

the legal entity representing the selected team. The proposal shall describe the type of services needed and ESA together with the Coordinator will assess their eligibility.

4 SCOPE

This Call aims to support entrepreneurial ideas that can turn issues faced by our society and economy into a growth/business opportunity in Europe. The Applicant can propose a theme related to emerging *business information* or intelligence needed across industry sectors (e.g. example but not limited to eco-tourism, mining, renewable, Oil & Gas, insurance, retail, ICT) or a theme related more to *global change issues* (e.g. of particular interest is Climate change and Cities, food and water security, Sustainable Development and the measurement of Sustainable Development Goals SDGs).

The Call welcomes a wide range of ideas for new products and services, ranging from addressing a specific societal problem for a specific user to raising awareness (e.g. visualization of change, creative narrative). The ideas must be original. Applicants may propose new or improved ways to implement existing solutions, combine them, or adapt them to a different context or target group, but they cannot be exact copies of those. Applicants must demonstrate the novelty of their solution, in comparison with those already developed/implemented by themselves or by others in their context. Applicants are also expected to indicate how the innovation voucher will be used to benefit their idea. The ideas shall capitalize on EO data (with particular focus on ESA EO archive, Sentinels, European national missions, Copernicus), open data (e.g. reanalysis, met data, government data) and new digital technologies and tools (e.g. artificial intelligence, computer vision, cloud computing). Applicants must also address the sustainability of the idea by including a draft business model that outlines how the user uptake of the idea could be achieved in the longer-term. The idea shall be both technically feasible and have the prospects of being commercially viable.

5 ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

The call is specifically targeting new players to the world of EO and **entrepreneurs**, both aspiring (e.g. university students, data scientists) and early-stage (e.g. start-ups not older than 4 years). Applicants shall be above legal age and able to communicate in English. We encourage a wide response for new players across Europe.

Applicant's teams **must include at least one legal entity registered in ESA Member States or ESA Cooperating States** in order to be able to sign a contract with the Coordinator. The legal entity could be for example the start-up itself (not older than 4 years) or other organisations such as universities, and incubation / acceleration centers, ESA BICs or ESA Brokers. The legal entity will procure from different service providers a variety of services needed to consolidate the proposal and prototype service.

In case the Applicant is not already part of a start-up or any legal entity, we *encourage* Applicant teams to partner with an ESA BIC. This would also facilitate the potential for the pre-incubation phase inside the ESA BIC and ensure that Applicants acquire the necessary know-how to produce a successful technical and business consolidated proposal for the eBAP.

Our ideal candidates are small teams (e.g. around 3-4 people) bringing the relevant mix of

skills (e.g. technical, ICT, business) and putting passion into developing innovative products that address grand challenges of our planet and turn them into new business opportunities. We welcome applications from non-EO experts and students who want to connect different disciplines and various business sectors.

Applicant's teams may submit more than one idea and be named as a partner in more than one idea form. Applications involving several organisations and/or from various countries are possible. More than one proposal per team is also possible. All costs of entering the call must be borne by the Applicants. By entering the call and registering their idea on the web-form, Applicants shall certify that they meet these eligibility criteria and that all information they submitted is true, accurate and complete. They agree to abide by and be bound by the call rules and the decisions of the Tender Evaluation Board, which are final in all matters relating to this Competition.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Idea proposals shall be evaluated against the criteria and weighting factors stated below:

1. Background and suitability of the team and individuals (20%)
2. Degree of innovation (30%)
3. Relevance and need of the proposed services to be procured (20%)
4. Feasibility and level of impact of the proposed idea (20%)
5. Sustainability of the idea and quality of the draft business model (10%)

Proposals will be evaluated by the ESA Tender Evaluation Board. Applicants will be informed by the Coordinator.

7 CONFIDENTIALITY

Within the Call, the confidentiality of transmitted ideas is ensured. The transmitted ideas and the saved treatment statuses will be protected against any access by un-authorised third parties. After the call, the selected Applicants will be made public. By participating in this call, each Applicant agrees that ESA and the Coordinator may use the name, address, comments, photos, and a short description of the idea.

8 DISCLAIMER

It is important to note that, in no event, shall this Call be construed as imposing any obligation whatsoever upon ESA and/or the Coordinator Verhaert New Products & Services to enter into negotiations with any Applicant or to enter into any other specific arrangements.