



CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

NETWORK OF COPERNICUS RELAYS

Open call

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1. DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

1.1. Background

In the framework of Copernicus user uptake activities, the Commission has undertaken a study with the purpose of identifying strengths and gaps from existing user and market uptake initiatives across the Copernicus Participating Countries¹. The final report of the study can be found on the copernicus.eu website².

Whilst the study identified many positive uptake activities, it also highlighted a need for coordination between these various initiatives. An important recommendation was to build an extended Copernicus User Uptake Network to enlarge the outreach into the various Copernicus Participating Countries, and to leverage the user uptake initiatives across borders.

The Commission therefore decided to develop different channels of promotion, targeting intermediate and end-user communities. An awareness structure is to be set-up to ensure a mid- and long-term perspective and to provide sustainable and homogeneous coverage of Copernicus Participating countries.

In this context, the Commission's objective is to engage with national, regional and local stakeholders for Copernicus user uptake through the creation of a Network of Copernicus helpdesks/information points called the "Copernicus Relays".

1.2. Definition of the initiative

The Network of Copernicus Relays is a concept and process whereby the Commission will work closely with different stakeholders / multipliers in view of fostering the use of Copernicus data and information in each and every Copernicus Participating Country. One or several Relays will be established per country.

The Relays are to be recognised by users as dedicated representatives and permanent interlocutors on Copernicus, acting as principal helpdesks/information points on the Programme. They will provide stakeholders, the general public and experienced users with technical assistance and foster awareness activities. A bottom-up approach is also foreseen since the structure should be perceived as a user-feedback mechanism to the Commission services.

The Relays will act as multipliers, developing initiatives to reach two different sets of objectives:

1. To promote Copernicus as a sustainable source of free, open and reliable information to meet the needs of local public services.
2. To promote Copernicus as sustainable source of full, free, open, and reliable data for the development of environmental services with high commercial potential by local entrepreneurs.

Activities developed by the Relays should ensure complementarity with ongoing and future initiatives undertaken by existing national points of contact.

The Relays will be considered as operational actors providing support to the coordination of Copernicus-related activities in their area of influence. They should act as focal points for a series of initiatives developed at local, regional and/or national levels. To this end,

¹ Copernicus Participating Countries include EU Member States plus Norway and Iceland

² The report is available at:

http://www.copernicus.eu/sites/default/files/library/Copernicus_User_Uptake_Engaging_with_Users_0.pdf

they shall work closely with the representatives of the Copernicus Participating Countries in the Copernicus political fora, i.e. the Members of the Copernicus Committee and of the Copernicus User Forum. The Commission invites Participating Countries to ensure adequate coordination of the Relays to be set up in their respective countries.

In order avoid any duplication of activities already developed at national scale, the Relays should primarily focus on activities developed at local and regional levels. Cross-border initiatives will also be supported. The Commission will encourage and supports interactions and regular exchange of best practices between Members of the Network.

Beyond this core function of building awareness and stimulating local actors, Members of the Copernicus Relays, in cooperation with Participating Countries Representatives, may support the promotion of uptake opportunities that may arise at national level and could help further stimulate the Network.

1.3. Opportunities

In the framework of its strategy to promote Copernicus user and market uptake, the Commission is in the process of developing a toolbox of user uptake measures which will be put at the disposal of the Members of the Copernicus Relays.

This includes a wide range of relevant initiatives such as: supporting business creation through the Copernicus Start-ups Programme, supporting the internationalisation of Earth observation companies, making the most of EU financial instruments for Copernicus, setting up new financial tools (Framework Partnership Agreement) to co-finance local initiatives in the Copernicus Participating Countries, or addressing the Earth observation skill gap through the development of dedicated educational programmes and trainings.

A new series of informative and didactic materials, for instance on data access and funding instruments, is also under development in order to support activities developed by the Relays.

The Relays will therefore rely on a solid basis of existing tools to develop or support activities at local level.

Furthermore, the Relays will receive support from the "Support Office for Copernicus User Uptake" to be set-up by the Commission at European level. This office will implement a comprehensive and integrated user uptake strategy throughout the Copernicus Participating Countries.

With the creation of the Network of Copernicus relays, the Commission also intends to foster awareness of the Programme by reinforcing the Copernicus branding.

Thus, Members of the Network will formally be labelled "Copernicus Relays". In this capacity, they will benefit from direct contact with the Commission services and with the Support Office for Copernicus User Uptake to be set up by the Commission to animate the Network and to foster these activities. They will also receive first-hand information about the toolbox mentioned above (Start-ups Programme, internationalisation of EO companies, financial tools...).

Members of the Copernicus Relays will have direct access to existing tools and background documents (e.g. products portfolio, Copernicus market report, information on funding instruments and data access, success stories) and will be part of the consultation, on a voluntary basis, on future tools to be developed by the Commission.

The Copernicus Relays will thus be fully integrated in the overall Copernicus ecosystem.

1.4. Profile of the Members

The neutrality of the Copernicus Relays needs to be guaranteed. Ideally, the Relays should be well connected with the different user communities in their thematic area, in particular private companies, research centres, universities and end users from the public sector (e.g. local administrations) or from the private sector (e.g. agriculture, energy...).

The Relays' concrete involvement in broadening the spectrum of stakeholders to communities that have no direct connection with space will contribute to increase user uptake.

The Relays should in particular target potential users that have the technical competences to use and process Copernicus data and information, such as the Geo-information community or IT start-ups.

1.5. Examples of possible actions

The Relays may contribute on a voluntary basis to one or several of the following tasks (this list should by no means be considered exhaustive):

Task 1 – Coordinating activities at local level. The Relays are encouraged to ensure the coordination of Copernicus-related activities developed in their respective areas of influence. A mapping exercise of existing and future activities in this area will allow the Relays to have an in-depth overview of activities which could represent an opportunity for the promotion of Copernicus. This is to be considered as a core task for the Relays.

Task 2 – Distribution of dissemination material. The Relays are encouraged to ensure appropriate and effective dissemination of Copernicus promotional material as provided by the Commission. Material should be distributed at relevant events and fora with the aim of having a maximum impact for raising awareness of Copernicus. Whenever possible, this should also include non-space-related events (e.g. events of specific sectors that could benefit from the use of Copernicus data). Materials produced by the Commission produced material will be provided in the three working languages of the institution, namely English, French and German. Translation in other languages by the Relays is encouraged, if deemed necessary.

Task 3 – Creating and running of a hotline. The Relays are encouraged to develop helpdesks for anyone interested in obtaining information about Copernicus. This could include for example answers to general enquiries or specific questions, such as modalities of access to Copernicus data and information. The Commission encourages the Relays to offer this service in the official language(s) of the Copernicus Participating Country where it is set up.

Task 4 – Promoting Copernicus at relevant events. The Relays are encouraged to ensure adequate representation of Copernicus at relevant events organised at national and regional levels. The aim is to target as wide an audience as possible that could benefit from the provision of Copernicus data and information. Special emphasis should be given to industry events where, for example, SMEs are represented. Any sector, private or public, that could potentially benefit from Copernicus, should be targeted.

Task 5 – Organising Copernicus promotional events. The Relays are encouraged to develop dissemination strategies adapted to their local needs and to implement them by way of organising events, either fully funded by the Relays themselves or co-funded by national, regional, local authorities or the Commission and its Copernicus Entrusted

Entities (e.g. basic awareness events; general audience events; sector-specific events; matchmaking events). The Commission should be informed in advance of these dissemination plans.

Task 6 – Organising targeted training sessions. The Relays are encouraged to provide training opportunities to relevant stakeholders which could benefit from the Programme. This could cover the whole spectrum of potential Copernicus users (such as public authorities, academia, specific private sector SMEs etc) and decision-makers at all levels of government.

Task 7 – Development of physical one-stop-shops. The Commission encourages co-funding for the set-up of physical one-stop-shops such as Copernicus Information Points.

Task 8 – Other actions. The Commission also encourages the development of other innovative, sustainable and reliable tools to ensure a closer link to the intermediate- and end-user communities.

On a yearly basis, Members of the Network of Copernicus Relays will be invited to inform the European Commission about their action plan in order to identify potential support. Aforementioned examples will be eligible for support by the Commission.

1.6. Duration of the labelling

The "Copernicus Relay" labelling shall enter into force on the date, on which the letter is signed by the last contracting party.

The label shall be granted for 12 months.

In order to be eligible for the renewal of the labelling, Members will have to provide the yearly action plan mentioned in point 1.5 to the Commission no later than 90 days before the termination of the 12-month period.

Unless either of the parties gives a 30-day written notice in advance, the labelling is automatically renewed (with the same terms and conditions).

2. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

2.1. Process

The user uptake of the Copernicus programme would be very difficult without the engagement of stakeholders at local level. The Commission is therefore inviting stakeholders on the ground to engage with it to become part of the Network of Copernicus Relays.

Relevant stakeholders developing Earth Observation-related awareness tools and/or activities are invited to submit an expression of interest.

Applicants should send their expression of interest to GROW-I3@ec.europa.eu with "**Copernicus Relays- Expression of Interest**" in the subject, together with the completed form (see in annex).

The deadline for submission is **23 September 2016**.

The Commission, in cooperation with Copernicus Participating Countries, will review all expressions of interest after this date. Within 25 working days, the Commission will inform applicants of decisions reached concerning the selection of the Relays.

The procedure is then to be concluded by an exchange of letter by the parties.

The Commission may decide to revert its decision and to remove any Members at any time.

2.2. Selection criteria

The following award criteria will be applied:

No	Qualitative award criteria	Weighting (maximum points)
1.	Quality of the expression of interest: clarity, relevance and completeness of the proposed methodology or approach to achieve the objectives required by call, to complete some of the tasks	50
2.	Experience of the applicant in the development and/or coordination of geo-information-related events and/or activities.	50
Total number of points		100

Each expression of interest is assessed according to the above qualitative award criteria and the weighting applicable to each criterion.

Expressions of interest scoring:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less than 65% in the overall points total, or - less than 50% in the points awarded for a single criterion, <p>will be excluded from the rest of the assessment procedure.</p>

If certain essential points of these specifications are not expressively covered by the expression of interest, the Commission may decide to give a zero mark for the relevant qualitative award criteria.

2.3. Launch of the Network

Once notified, Members of the Copernicus Relays will be invited to attend the official kick-off meeting of the Network which will be held in Brussels in January 2017.

ANNEX: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COPERNICUS PROGRAMME

The legal basis of this open call for expression of interest is Regulation No 377/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council of 3 April 2014 establishing the Copernicus Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 911/2010.

According to article 5, support activities shall be undertaken consisting in measures to promote the use and uptake of Copernicus data and Copernicus information including capacity building, development of standard procedures and tools to integrate Copernicus data and information into users' workflow, outreach, training and dissemination activities.

The Copernicus Programme³

Environmental information is of crucial importance. It helps to understand how our planet and its climate are changing, the role played by human activities in these changes and how these will influence our daily lives. The well-being and security of future generations are more than ever dependent on everyone's actions and on the decisions being made today on environmental policies. To take the right actions, decision makers, businesses and citizens must be provided with reliable and up-to-date information on how our planet and its climate are changing. The European Union Earth observation and monitoring programme, Copernicus, provides this information. The Copernicus programme is coordinated and managed by the European Commission.

Copernicus consists of a space component, a service component and an in situ component. The space component provides sustainable space-borne observations (satellite data) for the service component. The in situ component refers to all non-space borne data with a geographic dimension, including observation data from ground-, sea- or airborne sensors as well as reference and ancillary data for use in Copernicus.

Copernicus integrates satellite and in-situ data with modelling to provide reliable and up-to-date data and information through the Copernicus service component⁴ which comprises of the following already operational services:

- Land monitoring
- Emergency management
- Atmosphere monitoring
- Climate change
- Marine environment monitoring
- Security

The programme has recently moved from a research to an operational phase. The space infrastructure is being put in place, and the volume of data from Copernicus is expected to grow dramatically in the coming years (over 8 TB/day). The key challenge is now to maximise the socio-economic benefits of the programme, by ensuring that all user groups are able to easily access Copernicus data; creating favourable conditions in the

³ More information on <http://copernicus.eu>

⁴ Currently organised in thematic websites e.g. <http://land.copernicus.eu/>, <http://emergency.copernicus.eu/>, <http://marine.copernicus.eu/>, <http://www.copernicus.eu/pages-principales/services/security/>, <http://www.copernicus.eu/pages-principales/services/climate-change/>, <http://atmosphere.copernicus.eu/>.

downstream sector and maximising the use and value of space data for public and private end users.

Copernicus data means:

- dedicated mission data: spaceborne Earth observation data from dedicated missions, in particular the Sentinel missions; these data are available on a full, open and free-of-charge basis;
- contributing mission data. There are around 30 existing or planned Contributing missions contributing to Copernicus by providing data for the services; These include missions from ESA, their Member States, Eumetsat and other European and international third party mission operators. Even when all Sentinels are operational, the Contribution Missions will continue delivering complementary data.
- in situ data: these are observation data from ground-, sea- or air-borne sensors as well as reference and ancillary data e.g. geological data, INSPIRE data; some in situ data are available on a full, open and free-of charge basis and some are licensed for Copernicus;

Copernicus information is the result of processing or modelling Copernicus data. Example: fire alert maps which can be visualised are produced every 15 minutes (near real-time) based on a specific methodology to analyse and compare (Copernicus) satellite images (data) and in situ data.

Copernicus is a user-driven programme. Copernicus user uptake refers to both the intermediate users (downstream users) as the end-users. Intermediate users build upon the Copernicus data and information to deliver value-added information (services) to the end-users. Such value-added products can be created for e.g. by combining Copernicus data with other Earth Observation (EO) or non-EO data. Industry players (and in particular SMEs) are particularly encouraged to create and base their business plans on such services.

Copernicus users include Union institutions and bodies, European, national, regional or local authorities, research users like universities or any other research and education organisations, commercial and private users, charities, NGOs and international organisations.

Support to the uptake of Copernicus services by users can be understood as the use and integration of Copernicus data, information, products that are available across the different Copernicus services including the in situ data, by the end-user into their own applications and workflows. These can either be provided directly by the Copernicus services or provided by intermediate users (added-value services). For example a local/regional authority (end-user) wants to improve its preventive actions of clearing the streets in case of heavy snowfall (the challenge/need). An intermediate user e.g. a local/regional SME, on request of the local/regional authority, develops together with a local/regional applied research institute an operational information service which integrates existing data resources with Copernicus data that can deliver (near)real-time info. The intermediate user shows hands-on how the end-user can incorporate the information service into its daily workflow processes/practices.

A further distinction can be made between the non-technical experts (manager, decision maker) and the technical expert. The non-technical expert can look for a better comprehension of a challenge or issue by using information which has been enhanced by

the technical expert who has processed and integrated/combined the Copernicus data and information in synergy with existing data/info into a more comprehensible output.

For example, the administration of a local/regional authority (non-technical expert) wants to improve the monitoring of illegal waste dumping on their territory: there is a need for a faster and more accurate identification. What is the potential for Copernicus information (products) provided by the different Copernicus services and in situ data component, to enhance/complement the existing monitoring activities? The technical experts of the regional authority (end-user) or maybe the technical experts of a local/regional SME or research institute (intermediate user) hired by the regional authority, will deal with the technical implementation on how practically to integrate the products in the current monitoring systems e.g. enhancement of orthophotos with Earth Observation products e.g. from the land monitoring service, from the emergency monitoring service in combination with field surveys (in-situ) resulting in a more accurate and up-to-date status monitoring. The non-technical expert will then be able to use the enhanced information to identify infringements which will be reported to the decision-makers who can act upon e.g. by initiating possible law enforcement activities.

A Copernicus user may be either using direct satellite data (from the Copernicus Sentinels and contributing missions) or obtaining data/information/products from the existing Copernicus services. Nevertheless, Copernicus services users do not need to necessarily identify themselves only as users of a specific thematic service e.g. emergency management user, but may also be users/integrators of all possible Copernicus data and information available across the different services (cross-cutting services).