Copernicus Masters: An Important Innovation Driver for Earth Observation

Copernicus is Europe's most ambitious Earth observation (EO) programme and provides full free and open access to data for the development of applications in a wide variety of domains. The Copernicus Masters awards recognise applications and ideas that are using Copernicus data to tackle important challenges faced by business and society. From 1 April to 30 June, Copernicus Masters participants can submit their innovative EO ideas for solving any of the 16 challenges offered by the largest number of world-class partners since the competition started.

It is estimated that investments in the programme will increase to EUR 7.5 billion by 2020, while the economic benefit is expected to double in value. Every euro invested in Copernicus activities by public authorities results in a EUR 1.4 benefit to the whole economy.

The great potential of big data from space

10 Petabytes of free Earth Observation (EO) data is generated by the Copernicus Programme every year. This data enables the Copernicus services to deliver near-real-time data on a global level, contributing toward the sustainable management of the environment. The data is sourced both from the family of Sentinel satellite missions, contributing missions (existing commercial and public satellites) and from a multitude of in situ sensors. Big data from space holds great potential for the development of ideas and solutions in many (non-space) sectors. As these ideas continue to develop into commercially viable solutions, the economic benefits continue to grow.

The Copernicus Masters 2018 – Europe's leading innovation competition for Earth observation (EO) – is searching for such outstanding ideas, applications, and business concepts from future-oriented SMEs, startups, universities and individuals in the fields of business, research, and higher education.

Socio-economic advantages

The Copernicus Masters has developed into an important innovation driver for Earth observation. Solutions submitted to the competition not only benefit citizens but also bring multiple socio-economic advantages into various economic areas, stated Josef Aschbacher, director of ESA's Earth Observation Programmes. ESA is an initiating partner of the Copernicus Masters and has set a challenge for participants every year since 2011.

Participants can demonstrate their innovative use of Earth observation data across a wide variety of challenge topics, including the fields of the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, energy, health, sustainable living, smart farming, disaster management, maritime, defence & security, forestry, and smart farming, digital transportation, as well as smart cities.

Additional European challenges

For the second year running, the European Commission (EC) offers six additional European challenges, covering the topics of sustainable development, government, data access, B2B applications, land monitoring and emergency management. Participants also have the unique opportunity to build their solutions with additional satellite data sources offered by the new partners of the competition.

Together with cash prizes, challenge winners will receive access to an international network of leading Earth observation organisations, substantial satellite data quotas, crowd investing platform, and business development support worth more than EUR 600,000 in total. Additionally, the Overall Winner receives a VIP trip to a Satellite launch in Kourou valued at EUR 10,000.

Commercialisation of Earth observation services

One can be very proud of the active role the Copernicus Masters is playing in the commercialisation of Earth observation services, commented Thorsten Rudolph, managing director of AZO, the competition organiser. Since 2011, the competition has selected 87 winners in total. They were chosen out of more than 2700 entrants from 73 different countries, who submitted over 1100 cutting-edge business ideas. This is an excellent demonstration of how the innovation competition functions as a European deal flow pipeline for Earth

observation, he added.

In addition, the Copernicus Masters is complemented by the Copernicus Accelerator to empower the transformation of great ideas into commercially viable solutions through a tailored 12-month business coaching service. All winners of the Copernicus Masters 2018 will gain access to the Copernicus Accelerator if eligible.

For more details on this year's challenges, prizes, and partners, please visit www.copernicus-masters.com. For more information, please see space-of-innovation.com.

Additional information on the Copernicus programme is available at: www.esa.int/copernicus and www.copernicus.eu.

Partners of the 2018 edition are the European Space Agency (ESA), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), CGI, Planet Inc., BayWa AG, Stevenson Astrosat Ltd., Airbus, Satellite Applications Catapult Ltd., and the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI).

---

https://www.gim-international.com/content/news/copernicus-masters-an-important-innovation-driver-for-earth-observation