



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

Guidance for UK Organisations-Copernicus Space Component

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Contents

Guidance for UK Organisations-Copernicus Space Component _____	4
What is the Copernicus Space Component? _____	4
What opportunities are now available to UK entities? _____	4
European Space Agency _____	5
EUMETSAT _____	5
Key Opportunities for 2024 _____	5

Guidance for UK Organisations-Copernicus Space Component

Following the UK rejoining Copernicus on 1st January 2024, this guidance supports UK businesses and research organisations that are interested in competing for contract opportunities to develop and operate the Copernicus Sentinel missions or contributing their complimentary data into the Copernicus Services.

What is the Copernicus Space Component?

The Copernicus Space Component comprises the Earth Observation satellites which provide the data exploited by the Copernicus Services. The Space Component is split into two groups of missions – the **Sentinels**, which are being developed to meet the specific needs of the Copernicus programme, and the **Contributing Missions**, which are operated by National, European or International organisations and provide supplementary data to the Copernicus services.

The European Space Agency (ESA) is responsible for the development of the space component, and operates the Sentinel-1, Sentinel-2 and Sentinel-5P satellites. ESA also delivers the land mission from Sentinel-3.

EUMETSAT is responsible for operating the Sentinel-3 satellites and delivering the marine mission and will also operate and deliver products from the Sentinel-4, and -5 instruments, and the Sentinel-6 satellites.

[ESA](#) and [EUMETSAT](#) also coordinate the delivery of data from over 30 satellites that form the Copernicus Contributing Missions (CCM).

The Copernicus Space Component is completed by a ground segment; its role is to provide access to Sentinel and Contributing Mission data. The ground segment, which is spread geographically, relies on existing infrastructure and is delivered by international agencies (ESA and EUMETSAT) as well as national public and private facilities.

What opportunities are now available to UK entities?

From 1st January 2024, the UK has now rejoined Copernicus as a full participating state. This means that UK entities are fully eligible to apply for contracts to build, launch and operate the Copernicus Sentinels, as well as supply data as a Copernicus Contributing Mission.

Previously, UK entities were only eligible to apply for specific Copernicus contracts that were funded through the UK's membership of ESA and EUMETSAT. UK entities now have equal footing with entities from EU Member States when competing for Copernicus Space Component contract opportunities that are funded by the European Union (via ESA and EUMETSAT).

European Space Agency

The [ESA-STAR](#) portal maintains a full list and documentation for all Open Invitations to Tender (ITTs). Potential bidders can use ESA-STAR to post an expression of interest for a particular ITT. We encourage you to do this well in advance of the close date, as this will allow you to be informed of any developments. Also, Primes can take these EOIs into account when establishing their strategy for replying to ITTs. Further information on ESA's procurement processes can be found at: https://www.esa.int/About_Us/Business_with_ESA

Companies that wish to be part of the pool of **Copernicus Contributing Missions (CCM)** can submit an application via ESA's Dynamic Purchasing System, also accessible via ESA-STAR.

CCM procurement is via a two-stage tendering procedure: Stage 1 consists of an eligibility assessment based on exclusion and selection criteria. Stage 2 includes restricted mini-competitions open to candidates accepted in Stage 1. Further information can be found at: <https://spacedata.copernicus.eu/w/how-european-earth-observation-companies-can-apply-to-join-copernicus>

EUMETSAT

As a key service provider in the Copernicus Programme, EUMETSAT is responsible for operating the ocean-monitoring Copernicus Sentinel-3A and -3B satellites and Copernicus Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich. In the next few years, EUMETSAT will also operate and deliver products from the Sentinel-4, and Sentinel-5 instruments which will operate onboard the Meteosat Third Generation and Metop Second Generations satellites, as well as from several new and next generation Copernicus missions.

Information on EUMETSAT's current and planned ITTs can be accessed via the EUMITS portal: <https://eumits.eumetsat.int/>

Key Opportunities for 2024

Please see below some of the main upcoming opportunities in 2024:

Phase B2/C/D/E1 of Sentinel 1-Next Generation (Q1, 2024)

Copernicus Contributing Missions – European EO Established Data Suppliers (Q1, 2024)

Copernicus Contributing Missions – VHR Pan-European Coverage (Q1, 2024)

Copernicus Contributing Missions – European EO New Space Data Suppliers (Q1/Q2, 2024)

Phase B2/C/D/E1 of Sentinel 3-Next Generation (Topographic) radiometer and altimeter (Q4, 2024)

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