

## Frequently Asked Questions

# EuroGEOSS Request for Expressions of Intent in 2018

This document includes a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that may help you to prepare your submission of an Expression of Intent. For any further information on EuroGEOSS requests, please send your question to:

[RTD-EUROGEOSS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:RTD-EUROGEOSS@ec.europa.eu).

### ***In a nutshell:***

*From 2018 onwards, the EuroGEOSS initiative plans to launch periodic requests for Expressions of Intent.*

*All organizations located in European GEO member countries which are involved in developing, promoting or deploying innovative EO derived solutions are invited to come forward with voluntary Expressions of Intents for networking with other stakeholders along the value chain and upscaling activities within a timeframe of up to three years.*

*The Expressions of Intent shall build upon the combination of existing funded developments. They must address the EuroGEOSS scoping priorities and selection criteria annexed to the text of the EuroGEOSS Request 2018 available from the [EuroGEOSS website](#).*

*All Expressions of Intent submitted online to the EuroGEOSS Request 2018 will be analyzed by the EuroGEOSS Coordination Group (formed of Members of the European GEO Caucus).*

*Action Groups will be established for each of those application areas where critical mass and market potential is identified from the submitted Expressions of Intents. Being selected for an Action Group is the prime mechanism to get your activity labelled as a EuroGEOSS activity. Each Action Groups shall facilitate scaling-up of a specific EO applications characterized by a Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) equal or above 5.*

*The Action Groups are not subject to a contractual basis. They represent ad hoc voluntary partnerships aiming at advancing the EuroGEOSS innovation agenda on a best effort basis and for a period of maximum three years.*

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## What is the policy context of EuroGEOSS?

Of The *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025*, agreed in 2015 by the GEO Ministers, outlines the strategy and framework to fulfill the GEO vision, define its objectives and produce key deliverables.

- EuroGEOSS will advocate GEO and GEOSS in Europe, engage with European users, developers and other stakeholders to accelerate the delivery of new close-to-market applications and address innovation barriers in Europe for the upscaling and uptake of those applications.

GEO advocates the role of Earth observations in supporting the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is underlined in the GEO Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2025<sup>1</sup> and enshrined in the GEO engagement strategy.

- EuroGEOSS shall add value through combining and scaling up of existing EO developments in Europe addressing the Sustainable Development Goals, the GEO Societal Benefit Areas and other GEO priorities within a European context.

*Innovation Union*<sup>2</sup> aims at fostering Europe's capacity to innovate. It is a central element of Europe 2020 (the European agenda for growth and jobs of the current decade 2010-2020). The aim is to create an innovation-friendly environment in Europe that makes it easier for great ideas to be turned into products and services.

- EuroGEOSS contributes to Innovation Union by building momentum around innovation in the field of Earth observation, mobilizing stakeholders along the value chain, mainstreaming EO-based innovation in Europe and showcasing European know-how internationally via GEO.

Making the most of space for our society and economy is one of the actions proposed by the Commission in the *Space Strategy for Europe*<sup>3</sup>. Strong focus is put in ensuring a strong market uptake of space data by the public and private sector.

- EuroGEOSS will accelerate delivery of additional EO-based services and applications exploiting European programmes like Copernicus and Galileo and international partnerships like GEO in order to contribute to common European priorities and the implementation of EU policies.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.earthobservations.org/documents/GEO\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_2016\\_2025\\_Implementing\\_GEOSS.pdf](https://www.earthobservations.org/documents/GEO_Strategic_Plan_2016_2025_Implementing_GEOSS.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index.cfm?pg=intro>

<sup>3</sup> COM(2016) 705

## What is a EuroGEOSS "Request for Expressions of Intent"?

From 2018 onwards, the EuroGEOSS initiative plans to launch annual Requests for Expressions of Intent. These Requests borrow on the "Calls for Commitments" implemented by the European Innovation Partnerships<sup>4</sup> (EIPs) launched in the context of Innovation Union and the EU agenda (2010-2020) for growths and jobs.

A EuroGEOSS Request for Expressions of Interest is a mechanism aiming to attract on-going or upcoming EO developments with high market potential and to accelerate their market uptake in Europe. This is achieved by enabling voluntary, focused partnerships of European EO stakeholders along the value chain.

Each Request shall provide the means to identify innovation areas where synergies could be triggered and critical mass might be achieved from already funded developments. This approach shall ensure that any EO breakthroughs can be brought quickly and more efficiently to the market.

The EuroGEOSS Requests for Expressions of Intent invite organizations from all European GEO member countries<sup>5</sup>, involved in developing, promoting or deploying / implementing innovative EO derived solutions, to come forward with proposals for upscaling activities that shall be implemented within a timeframe of three years. The scope of these activities shall be in line with the vision, objectives and priorities set in the EuroGEOSS concept paper available from the [EuroGEOSS website](#) on Europa.

## What kind of organizations may participate?

Any organization/entity from a European GEO Member country<sup>6</sup> is invited to submit an Expression of Intent. Submitting an Expression of Intent implies a sustained participation in the activities of EuroGEOSS, and the acceptance to report back to the EuroGEOSS Coordination Group<sup>7</sup> on the progress and outcomes of your activities. It is the beginning of a process of collaboration.

A Request for Expressions of Intent is an opportunity to partner beyond the classical R&D community; industry involvement is very much encouraged.

Interested parties are encouraged to submit their EuroGEOSS Expression of Intent as a joint proposal by several organizations bringing together multiple existing developments. A joint contribution can also include partners outside Europe but needs to be led by an organization located in Europe. A party making an individual

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<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index.cfm?pg=eip>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.earthobservations.org/members.php>

<sup>6</sup> GEO Members: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom. Additional contributing country: Lithuania.

<sup>7</sup> EuroGEOSS shall coordinate its activities through a Coordination Group chaired by the Commission (DG RTD and DG GROW) and comprises experts nominated by the GEO members and participating organisations from the European GEO Caucus. The list of nominated experts is accessible from [the EuroGEOSS web site](#).

submission is still required to indicate, where relevant, with which other stakeholders they are already partnering within the scope of the submission.

### **What is an Expression of Intent?**

An Expression of Intent is a declaration of intention to carry out or to contribute to the scaling-up of an existing, user-driven, EO-based pilot application as part of a dedicated EuroGEOSS Action Group (see below in the FAQ for more information on the Action Groups). Expressions of Intents must build on the combination of existing funded developments. They must be in line with the EuroGEOSS scoping priorities annexed to the text of the EuroGEOSS Request 2018. Expressions of Intent should be based on existing activities, but could also include firmly planned activities starting in the near future, up to 12 months from the submission of the Expression of Intent.

### **Should Expressions of Intents relate to EO application developments that have already accomplished a demonstration phase?**

It is expected that the Expressions of Intent have a focus on EO applications which match a TRL of 5 or above. This means that proof of concept (TRL3) and validation in the lab (TRL4) should have already been successfully performed in order to be included in an Expression of Intent. EuroGEOSS would start with the validation (TRL5) and demonstration (TRL6) in user environment, with the target to demonstrate in operational environment (TRL7) and qualification if possible (TRL8).

### **Should pilot applications focus on one particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) or GEO Societal Benefit Area (SBA) or can they tackle several SDGs?**

A single pilot application could tackle one or several of the nine SDGs selected for scoping the EuroGEOSS Request in 2018. The same situation could apply to the GEO SBA. The online form of the EuroGEOSS Request 2018 allows participants to flag the most relevant priorities tackled by the proposed pilot application.

### **What is the benefit of submitting an Expression of Intent?**

Numerous benefits are expected from taking part in the EuroGEOSS implementation such as:

- To share good practice; to benchmark experiences and scale them up across different local contexts and across the EU as a whole;
- To gather local, regional, national and international stakeholders, including new organizations not (yet) involved in European R&I EO activities;
- To get high visibility (including in GEO and Copernicus events) and take part in a more strategic dissemination at European and international level under the EuroGEOSS flag;
- To contribute to a more coherent and structured European contribution to the implementation of GEOSS (EuroGEOSS as a regional framework to GEO);

- To bring new mutual benefits from linking with important projects, platforms and initiatives in Europe;
- To link better with EU programmes such as Copernicus, Horizon 2020 and its follow-up programme after 2020;
- To contribute to reinforce a European marketplace for Earth observation;
- To be kept informed by the EuroGEOSS Coordination Group on new funding opportunities;
- To participate in a European-wide, lasting partnership where shared competences, resources and skills are aligned.

### **What about funding associated to Expressions of Intent?**

Expressions of Intent shall bring together relevant initiatives already supported or firmly planned in the short-term through various funding schemes at local to European levels (e.g. Horizon 2020, national and regional programmes, Copernicus Framework Partnership Agreement, Copernicus Core Services, GEOSS activities of the GEO Work Programme 2017-2019, activities carried out by European GEO Participating Organizations).

### **Are there fees required to take part in the EuroGEOSS upscaling activities?**

Joining the EuroGEOSS community of innovators is not subject to any fees or financial contribution, nor to any financial EU compensation. Following the collaborative spirit underpinning the Group on Earth Observations<sup>8</sup> (GEO), all work in the frame of EuroGEOSS is purely voluntary, carried out on an in-kind and best effort basis. A positive and active contribution to the EuroGEOSS initiative is expected, including a light annual reporting to the EuroGEOSS Coordination Group.

### **When and where can I submit an Expression of Intent?**

The EuroGEOSS Request 2018 will be open from April until end of June 2018. During this period, you will be able to submit your voluntary commitments through an online tool accessible from the [EuroGEOSS website](#). The exact dates for launching and closing the survey will be communicated from the same website.

### **Can I modify or revise my Expression of Intent?**

You can modify at any time the draft version of your Expression of Intent until you submit it as a final version through the online tool accessible from the [EuroGEOSS website](#).

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.earthobservations.org>

## Who is going to review my Expression of Intent?

The European Commission, assisted by members of the EuroGEOSS Coordination Group, shall verify the overall coherence of your commitment with the EuroGEOSS vision, objectives and criteria for the selection of EuroGEOSS pilot applications. Final approval of the retained Intents will be given by the High Level Working Group of European GEO members and Participating organizations<sup>9</sup> in charge of providing a coherent and sustained European leadership throughout the GEO initiative. Applicants will be informed by the European Commission about the evaluation results.

## What are the criteria for the selection of an Expression of Intent?

Voluntary commitments need to fulfil the criteria annexed to the EuroGEOSS Request text accessible from the [EuroGEOSS website](#).

## What happens after the submission of an Expressions of Intent?

Following the submission of an Expression of Intent, identified stakeholders who meet the selection criteria of the Request will be invited by the European Commission to collaborate in so-called "EuroGEOSS Action Groups". Each Action Group retained from the Request shall address a specific EO pilot application. Each Action Group will define on its own a light governance structure and agree on its implementation milestones towards clearly defined deliverables over a duration of up to three years.

## What are the responsibilities of an Action Group?

Each Action Group shall:

- be responsible for proceeding towards the upscaling goals of the Action Group;
- commit to the need for concrete results in the timeframe set for the Action Group (dormant/inactive Action Groups will be terminated by the EuroGEOSS Coordination Group);
- report once a year to the Coordination Group on the progress towards the defined objectives and milestones (including on encountered barriers to innovation and recommendations on how to overcome such barriers).

## What are the types of concrete deliverables expected from an Action Group?

The deliverables of an Action Group may range from patents and trademarks to full scale demonstrations, business models, training and implementation guidelines or new strategic cooperation to innovation. It is up to the author or group of authors of an Expression of Intent to define their goals, milestones and deliverables while considering the scope and selection criteria annexed to the text of the EuroGEOSS Request.

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<sup>9</sup> GEO High Level Working Group ([link](#))

Given the bottom-up characteristic of a EuroGEOSS Request, the aim is not to be too prescriptive. The following types of deliverables are given in view of inspiration only:

- Real life, user-driven demonstrated EO applications
- EU wide evidence based on demonstrated applications
- Green paper on state-of-the-art technologies
- Reviews of user-related experience and questions
- Catalogues of good practices available in different languages
- Strategies for scaling-up new services including critical success factors
- Guidelines for business models, evidences on return on investment
- Innovative procurements of interoperable innovative solutions
- Innovation deals in the field of service solutions
- Reference site with high potential for replication in Europe
- Inter-regional cooperation (e.g. formalized via Memoranda of Understanding)
- Synergies with H2020 projects (e.g. strategic dissemination of deliverables)
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Education and training modules, including for trainers
- Emerging themes of novel interest for research & innovation.

### **What about funding resources for the Action Groups?**

The Action Groups are NOT new funding instruments. They shall carry out their activities on the basis of existing resources by their members. This might include but is not limited to ongoing EU-funded projects (e.g. via Horizon 2020, Copernicus or ESA). Additional resources might be looked for depending on the type of activities carried out by each Action Group. For this reason, maximum implementation flexibility and minimum administrative burden are given to the Action Groups.

## **How many Action Groups can be formed?**

The EuroGEOSS approach to Action Groups aims to be inclusive rather than exclusive. A high number of dynamic Action Groups would plead in favor of a successful EuroGEOSS initiative provided that these groups fulfill the critical mass objective and the EuroGEOSS selection criteria in terms of policies, upscaling and leveraging of GEOSS and Copernicus.

Action Groups are always based on the initiative of interested stakeholders to work with other stakeholders within the EuroGEOSS framework. If two (or more) Expressions of Intent are received that cover the same themes/topics, it will be suggested to join forces and form one Action Group.

## **What about the relationship between EuroGEOSS Action Groups and Horizon 2020 projects?**

EuroGEOSS provides a long-term framework which does not rely exclusively on a project approach. While H2020 projects dedicated to advance EuroGEOSS objectives will also be crucial to develop close-to-market applications, the Action Groups as conceived as the main mechanism to extend flexible collaboration over time.

The fact that an Action Group might combine existing resources from different programmes with different funding mechanisms and timelines should enable this Action Group to sustain some activities, showcase critical mass, generate interest and maybe attract additional resources of public or private origin.

The question is not so much how the Expression of Intent turned into Action Groups will be connected to a Horizon 2020 Project, but how funded projects (being from Horizon 2020 or other funding sources) might contribute to EuroGEOSS Action Groups. Depending on their focus, Horizon 2020 projects (or other projects funded via alternative sources) could be associated with relevant Action Groups to input into their activities.

In particular, future EU-funded projects arising from Horizon 2020 topic calls directly related to EuroGEOSS will be expected to align with the EuroGEOSS concept and criteria. Therefore, those actions should easily plug into EuroGEOSS clustering activities via existing or new Action Groups.