

**FFSCat, a constellation of federated satellite systems, offers the highest investment return, improved revisit time, scalable approach, and graceful performance degradation at the end of the satellites' life.**

Tallinn, Estonia, 7 November 2017 - FFSCat – providing complementary data to the Sentinel fleet – wins the 2017 Copernicus Masters, the international competition on innovative solutions for business and society based on Earth observation (EO) data.



Small satellites are a cost-effective way to test new EO concepts. FFSCat is a future-oriented satellite mission, consisting of two federated 6U Cubesats. It supports the Copernicus Land and Marine Environment services by measuring soil moisture, ice extent and thickness, and detecting melting ponds over ice, using a state-of-the-art dual microwave payload as well as a multi-spectral optical payload. FFSCat will be the precursor of a constellation of federated small EO satellites connected by radio and optical inter-satellite links.

"Since the beginning of the competition in 2011 we have had exciting challenges. I am especially delighted that the winner of the overall competition is taking the challenge to new heights benefiting from the Copernicus Masters," explains Dr Josef Aschbacher, ESA's Director of Earth Observation Programmes, at the awards ceremony in Tallinn, Estonia. "The Copernicus Masters competition has once again clearly demonstrated its potential to drive the innovative use of Earth observation data and promote the use of Copernicus data to new user groups".

13 more Challenge winners were also recognised during the Awards Ceremony by high-ranking industry and institutional representatives, such as the European Commission (EC), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), T-Systems International GmbH, Stevenson Astrosat Ltd., CGI Ltd., the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI), Satellite Applications Catapult Ltd. and AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen, the organiser of the Copernicus Masters.

"We're especially proud to have witnessed a constant rise in young entrepreneurs involved in commercialising EO applications and services. I am very confident that this growth will continue to provide novelties, especially in regards to the launch of further satellites, such as the Sentinel-2B in March and the Sentinel-5P just recently.", declares Managing Director Thorsten Rudolph from AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen, the organiser.

EO and big data from Copernicus hold huge potential for the creation of cutting-edge products and services. Many industries and areas of public interest benefit from the progress of the Copernicus programme. In this year's Copernicus Masters edition, prizes worth more than EUR 1.5 million were awarded in topic-specific challenges, powered by a number of world-class partners. The close cooperation with institutional, industrial and regional partners promotes the development of high-

tech products and services for Europe on a global scale. Additionally, the Copernicus Accelerator programme – funded by the EC – ensures customised business development support for 50 Copernicus Masters finalists during the next two years.

The Copernicus Masters 2017 Awards Ceremony took place in front of an international audience during the European Space Week 2017 in Tallinn, Estonia – as part of the Satellite Masters Conference & Horizon 2020 Space Info Day.

#### **About Copernicus Masters**

The Copernicus Masters, launched by AZO on behalf of ESA in 2011, is an international competition which awards prizes to innovative solutions for business and society based on Earth observation data, also improving the User Uptake of Copernicus services. Annually, different prize categories tackle global challenges with competition entries in the fields of deep learning including IoT, big data analytics, smart mobility and industry 4.0. The Copernicus Masters has developed into a driving force when it comes to promoting cutting-edge solutions.

#### **About AZO**

AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen is an international networking and branding company initiating the most important space-related innovation competitions with more than 15,000 participants, over 200 industrial & public - and 400 international stakeholders. The Masters Series, presented by AZO consists of the European Satellite Masters (ESNC), the Copernicus Masters, the Space Exploration Masters, and the INNOspace Masters. AZO has been supporting entrepreneurship with more than 130 company foundations to date and the creation of 1,800 high-tech jobs in Bavaria with an annual turnover of about EUR 150 Mio. Additionally, AZO runs a very successful business angel network which invested more than EUR 130 Mio Venture Capital in 2016/17 as well as the ESA Incubation Centre (ESA BIC) Bavaria. For more information, please visit [www.space-of-innovation.com](http://www.space-of-innovation.com).

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