SPACE4Cities calls on European space application providers to develop solutions for climate adaptation, sustainable mobility and city planning – 2.87M€ call for tenders coming up after an Open Market Consultation

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City planners have traditionally used many different ways to map urban space such as manual photography or scanners, drones and aeroplanes. However, satellite data is still very underused, although it has various benefits complementing current mapping methods. It can cover large areas, it is cost-efficient and it functions with high levels of automation.

The international project launched this February 2024, SPACE4Cities, now aims to build replicable solutions, utilising European satellite data, for better and more dynamic management of public areas to increase resilience and functionality in cities. SPACE4Cities is funded by the European Commission's Horizon Europe programme via the European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA).

Through a Pre-Commercial Procurement process, SPACE4Cities will buy Research & Development services from several suppliers in parallel. The project is looking for highly innovative solutions that are not currently present on the market to be designed and piloted in the project. To that end, the project is now announcing the launch of its Open Market Consultation starting 4 June 2024.

Space data and their services will contribute to more than 55 billion euros in the EU alone in 2033[1]. As a European project, SPACE4Cities stands out for explicitly linking public spaces to space applications using Copernicus and/or Galileo data. The project addresses public space challenges with a holistic approach, broader than the security perspective usually taken with technology.

Being one of the few European initiatives intending to fill the gap of public procurements dedicated to space downstream technologies, SPACE4Cities also innovatively responds to European cities' major challenges and improves citizens' daily lives. Moreover, the technological capacities and skills developed under the SPACE4Cities Pre-commercial procurement will contribute to the EU's strategic autonomy.

Solutions to meet the cities' needs

Early 2024, five top-innovative European cities – Helsinki, Amsterdam, Ghent, Guimarães and Athens (Attica Region) – defined use cases to enhance the management of their public spaces and grouped them into three challenges related to the cities' current needs. These three fields are: Climate adaptation and resilience, Sustainable mobility, and Urban planning.

During SPACE4Cities' five-month Open Market Consultation, the project seeks insights from solution providers, whether SMEs, large companies, NGOs or research organisations. All stakeholders interested in the challenges are encouraged to contribute to the state-of-the-art analysis of space applications and to comment on the challenges' content and requirements, as well as the budget and timeline of the Pre-commercial procurement.

– Participating in the Open Market Consultation is an undeniable asset in order to influence the upcoming call for tenders. In fact, providers are welcome to explain what is currently being done on the market and how they can innovate. They can also comment on the feasibility of our Pre-Commercial Procurement process, and start thinking about their tender submission at the beginning of 2025, SPACE4Cities Project Coordinator Renske Martijnse-Hartikka from Forum Virium Helsinki says.

– SPACE4Cities commits to keeping a strictly fair, free and transparent consultation and reminds all stakeholders that participating in our Open Market Consultation does not provide any preference for the forthcoming €2.87 million call for tenders, planned to be open in the first quarter of 2025. However, all insights received until November 2024 will help to refine our challenges and feed our specifications, Space Project Manager Alan Mandrillon from Aerospace Valley points out and adds:

– SPACE4Cities is proud to be the first Pre-commercial procurement stimulating both Earth Observation and Global Navigation Satellite System technologies, thus fostering their combination in meeting European cities' needs as well as the space sector."

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