

ICAERUS is launching its 1st PULL Open Call

The ICAERUS project is launching the first round of PULL OPEN calls for Farming, Forestry and Rural Challenges on October 16 2023, with funding available for 6 innovative ideas!

ICAERUS is a project launched July 2022 and funded by Horizon Europe aiming to showcase and support the effective, efficient and safe deployment of drones, as well as identify the risks and added values associated with their use.

The project will issue **two types of Open Calls**, each with two release dates, providing financial support to third parties as a mechanism for harvesting ideas and datasets from the ecosystem and accelerating the formation of a European network for optimising the adoption of drone technologies in rural areas.

1st PULL OPEN CALL for Farming, Forestry and Rural Challenges

To do what?

The PULL Open Calls for Forestry, Farming and Rural Challenges will award **6** successful applicants with up to **50,000 €** to implement projects aiming to utilise drones and the services built around them for individual commercial needs and/or community-related issues. The following types of applications/solutions (but not limited to) are expected to be funded:

- **Applying innovative solutions** that leverage drone technology to address specific challenges faced by farmers, foresters, and rural communities.
- **Sustainable agriculture**, such as using drones to support regenerative farming methods, reduce the use of pesticides and fertilisers, and improve soil health.
- **Logistics and supply chain management**, such as for transporting goods and deliveries to remote areas, managing inventory and distribution, and monitoring supply chain operations using drones.
- **Infrastructure monitoring and maintenance**, such as using drones to inspect and maintain roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure in rural areas.
- **Energy management**, such as using drones to monitor and optimise renewable energy systems such as wind turbines and solar panels (agrivoltaics).
- **Water management**, such as the use of drones to monitor and manage water resources, including dams, reservoirs and irrigation systems.
- **Public safety**, such as the use of drones for crime prevention and law enforcement, disaster relief and response, and emergency medical services.

Who can apply?

ICAERUS is looking for **agri-food producers**, **environmental monitoring entities** and **rural communities** who are either SMEs or rural community/cooperative with a valid VAT or relevant registry number within eligible Horizon Europe countries. This include: Member States of the European Union, their outermost regions, and Overseas Countries and Territories linked to an EU Member as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries. More information is provided in the Applicant's Guide which is available on the ICAERUS website.

Examples of applications eligible for funding:

- **Crop monitoring and analysis using drones:** Applying software and hardware solutions for the use of drones to collect and analyse data on crops, such as growth rates, yield estimates and pest infestations.
- **Precision agriculture with drones:** Applying drone-based systems for precision agriculture, e.g., for mapping soil moisture, applying fertilisers and pesticides and managing irrigation systems.
- **Monitoring forests and wildlife with drones:** Applying drone systems for forest and wildlife monitoring, including habitat mapping, animal tracking and forest fire detection.
- **Disaster management and risk reduction using drones:** Apply drone-based systems for disaster management, e.g., for search and rescue missions, delivery of medical supplies and providing situational awareness in disaster scenarios.
- **Environmental monitoring with drones:** Applying drone-based systems for environmental monitoring, e.g., for mapping water quality, measuring air pollution and tracking changes in land use.
- **Rural connectivity through drones:** Applying drone-based solutions for rural community connectivity, e.g., for providing internet access or communication during natural disasters.

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals based on their own ideas related to the topic of ICAERUS PULL Open Calls, however in order to be eligible, proposals need to address challenges in Rural Areas.

Timeline

The applications open on **October 16, 2023**, and close on **January 15, 2024**. Sub-projects implementation will be divided into three phases: **Design, Development** and **Market**, lasting a total of **12 months**, beginning **April 2024**.

How to apply?

Register on the Open Call Hub to apply! You can find all of the details for the 1st PULL Open Call and other available calls on the ICAERUS website, at icaerus.eu/open-calls/.

Evaluation will be conducted by independent evaluators who will assess the quality of each application including the concept and feasibility, technology readiness and innovation development, Impact and exploitation, as well as organisational capacity and allocation of resources. Full evaluation criteria will be available in the Open Call Kit documents found in the Open Call Hub.

English is the official language for ICAERUS Open Calls. Applications submitted in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language throughout the whole execution of the ICAERUS project. This means all requested contributions must be submitted in English to be eligible.

Points of contact

For all the information related to ICAERUS Open Calls please state your question on the FAQ section on the ICAERUS Open Call Hub page opencallhub.eu or contact us at icaerus@opencallhub.eu.

Note to editors:

At a glance - Key facts and figures

- Instrument: Horizon Europe- Financial support to third parties
- 1st PULL Open Call budget: **300,000 €**
- Funding for each third party: up to **50,000 €**
- Duration of each sub project: 12 months

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**Funded by
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Grant agreement N° 101060643