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UNIVERSITY OF TOMORROW
Kick-start Competitive Call for Proposals

Webinar, 29 April 2026

Roberta Mugellesi Dow, Volker Schumacher - ESA

Dr. Bror Giesenbauer - University of Bremen

Welcome to the webinar

Before we start…

- Please keep your **microphones muted** at all times and switch off the webcam function

- You can use the **conversation function** anytime to submit your questions. They will be addressed during the Q&A at the end of the webinar

Agenda

- ESA introduction
- BASS Programme
- Kickstart: University of Tomorrow
  - Objectives
  - Value of Space
- External Speaker
  - Bror Giesenbauer – University of Bremen
- How to apply to the Kickstart
- Questions & Answers

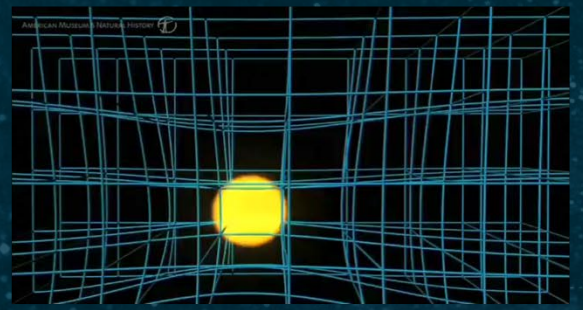
We are ESA

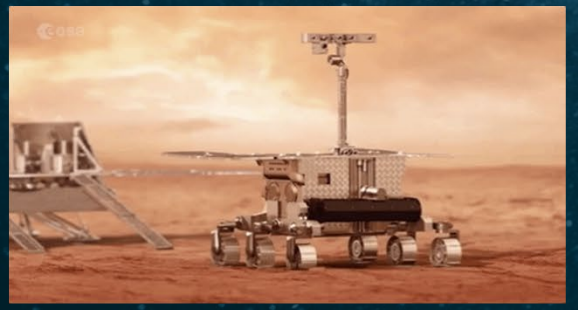
EUROPE'S GATEWAY TO SPACE

WHAT	23 Member States
WHY	Exploration and use of space for exclusively peaceful purposes
WHERE	HQ in Paris, 7 sites across Europe and a spaceport in French Guiana
HOW MUCH	€7.68 billion in 2025

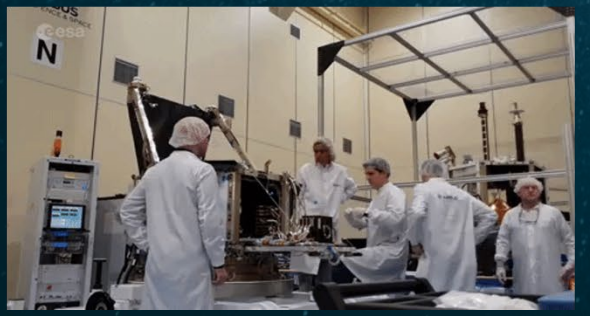
Four pillars. One ESA.

Science and Exploration

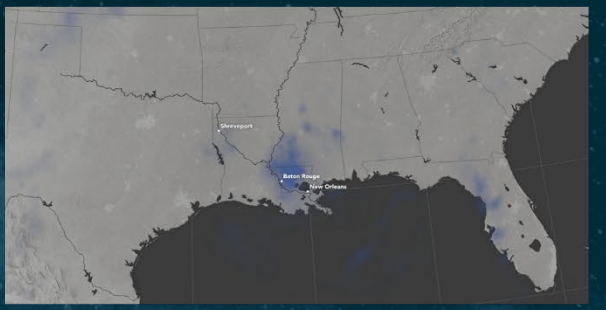


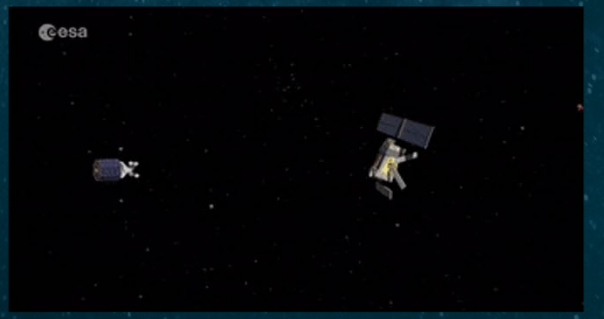


Enabling and Support

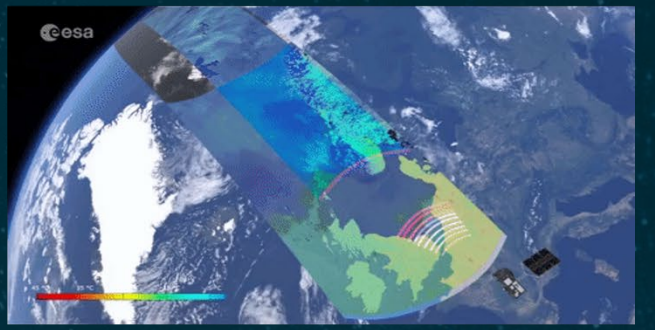


Safety and Security





Applications



ESA BASS (Business Applications & Space Solutions)

Program to support European companies to develop innovative & commercial applications/services in any market sector, using **space asset(s)**

BASS DNA:
Sustainability
User-Driven
Industry competitiveness

Earth Observation
Satellite Navigation
Satellite Communication
Human Spaceflight Technologies
Financial
Aviation
Education
Energy
Media
Agriculture
Environment
Transport
Healthcare
Maritime

https://business.esa.int/

What ESA BASS offers

Zero equity funding

Always open for businesses from start up to large companies* in any market sector

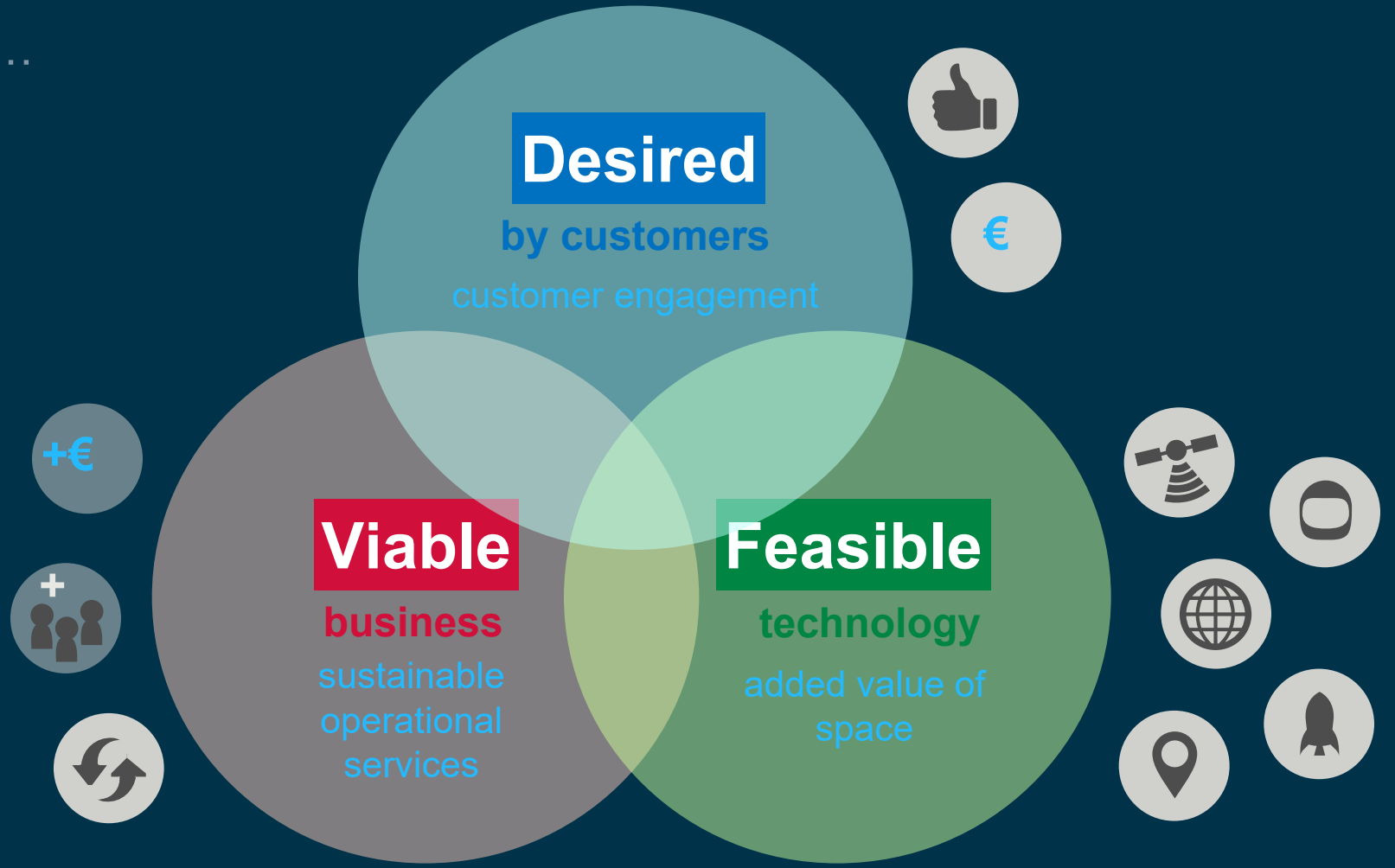
Focus on close to market services / applications exploiting space technologies (e.g. SatNav, SatCom, SatEO)

User driven, innovative and sustainable services that help companies to be on the market.

** Companies need to reside in one of the ESA BASS member states, targeted market instead can be anywhere in the world*

What are we looking for?

Services that are…



Kick-start Activity - Background

6 months duration - Overall cost €100K

€75K ESA funding (75% ESA co-funding)

Kick-start are ESA's funding scheme enabling companies to undertake short Feasibility Studies that explore new service and application concepts making use of space capabilities. The Kick-start will look at 3 main elements:

1. Engagement with potential users and customers to understand their needs and translate these into service requirements.

2. Assess the technical feasibility of the service, and definition of the service and system architecture.

3. Evaluation of the economic viability of the service and development of a business plan.


UNIVERSITY OF TOMORROW

Background & Objectives

- As gateways to knowledge and tools for scientific progress, innovation, and sustainable societal development, universities are navigating an intricate set of challenges..
- The aim of this Kick-Start is to enable companies to explore the technical feasibility and commercial potential of blending space technologies with their existing/new services and applications in the higher education sector.
- The call offers an unique opportunity for companies to develop new applications /services addressing topics such as:

- Democratisation of data and knowledge: Sharing knowledge among teachers, and students in an open environment as foundation of academic collaboration and innovation, breaking down barriers to access data.
- Virtual Labs: Technologies such as AR/VR are opening up a whole world of possibilities to enhance learning, for example enabling STEM students to perform experiments, which are difficult to perform in a traditional lab.
- Serious Gaming: Combining learning strategies, knowledge and game elements can be used to teach specific skills, knowledge and attitudes.
- Remote Learning: it will expand access to higher education for students who may not be able to attend traditional on-campus programmes.
- Connected Campuses: A sustainable connected university campus provides optimal conditions for research and teaching. A digital twin of the campus and smart energy management support the necessary intelligent digital solutions and connected infrastructures.

Call open from 4 May 2026 until 12 June 2026

THE POWER OF SPACE

Satellite Communication (SatCom)

- increasing network robustness and resilience
- enabling seamless connectivity when terrestrial communications are not available or unreliable
- enabling data transfer in scenarios involving remote regions or data transfer from in-situ sensors

Satellite Earth Observation (SatEO)

- enabling the representation, analysis, and integration of physical data in map form
- creating an accurate, and navigable virtual representation of the world
- integrating GIS data into the applications, so that students can interact with digital twins of real-world locations
- building a large-scale mapping of environments, infrastructure, and natural phenomena

Satellite Navigation (SatNav)

- enabling the mapping with extreme precision
- geofencing by using GNSS or RFID technology to create a virtual geographic boundary
- providing accurate positioning and to track and trace vehicles and persons with PNT

Dr. Bror Giesenbauer

University of Bremen

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German Society for Sustainability at Higher Education Institutions

University of Tomorrow: Networked and Open

Universität Bremen

Dr. Bror Giesenbauer
29 April 2026

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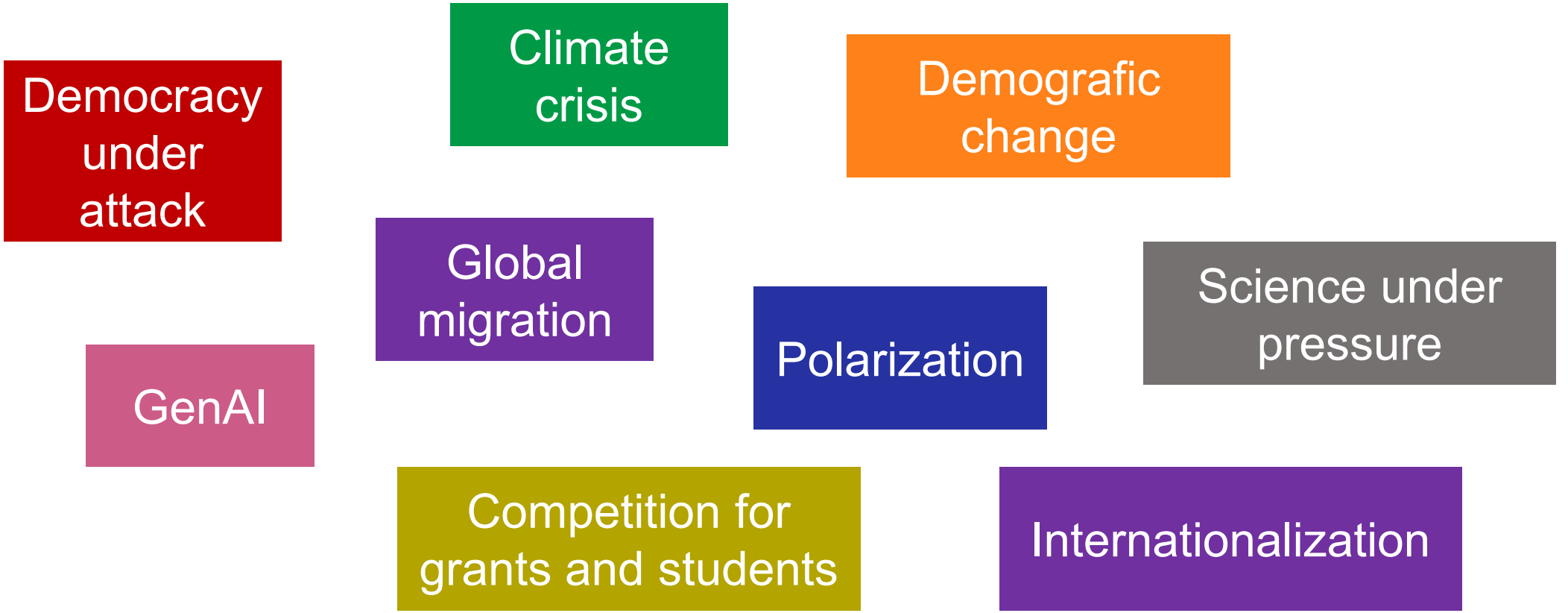
COMPLEX CHALLENGES FOR UNIVERSITIES



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In response to systemic requirements and complexity

Traditional/collegial	***Modern/metric-focused***	***Postmodern/ responsibility-focused***	***Integrative/ engaged***
Focused on the transfer of knowledge by authorities: lectures, textbooks, imposing buildings, etc.	Optimization of international, disciplinary research: peer review, journals, rankings, expansion, etc.	Involving (internal) stakeholders and highlighting social and ecological issues: Seminars, transfer, third-mission etc.	Co-creative, transdisciplinary approach to social challenges: Real-world laboratories, Service Learning, Challenge Based Learning, open science, etc.

Based on Giesenbauer & Müller-Christ, 2020

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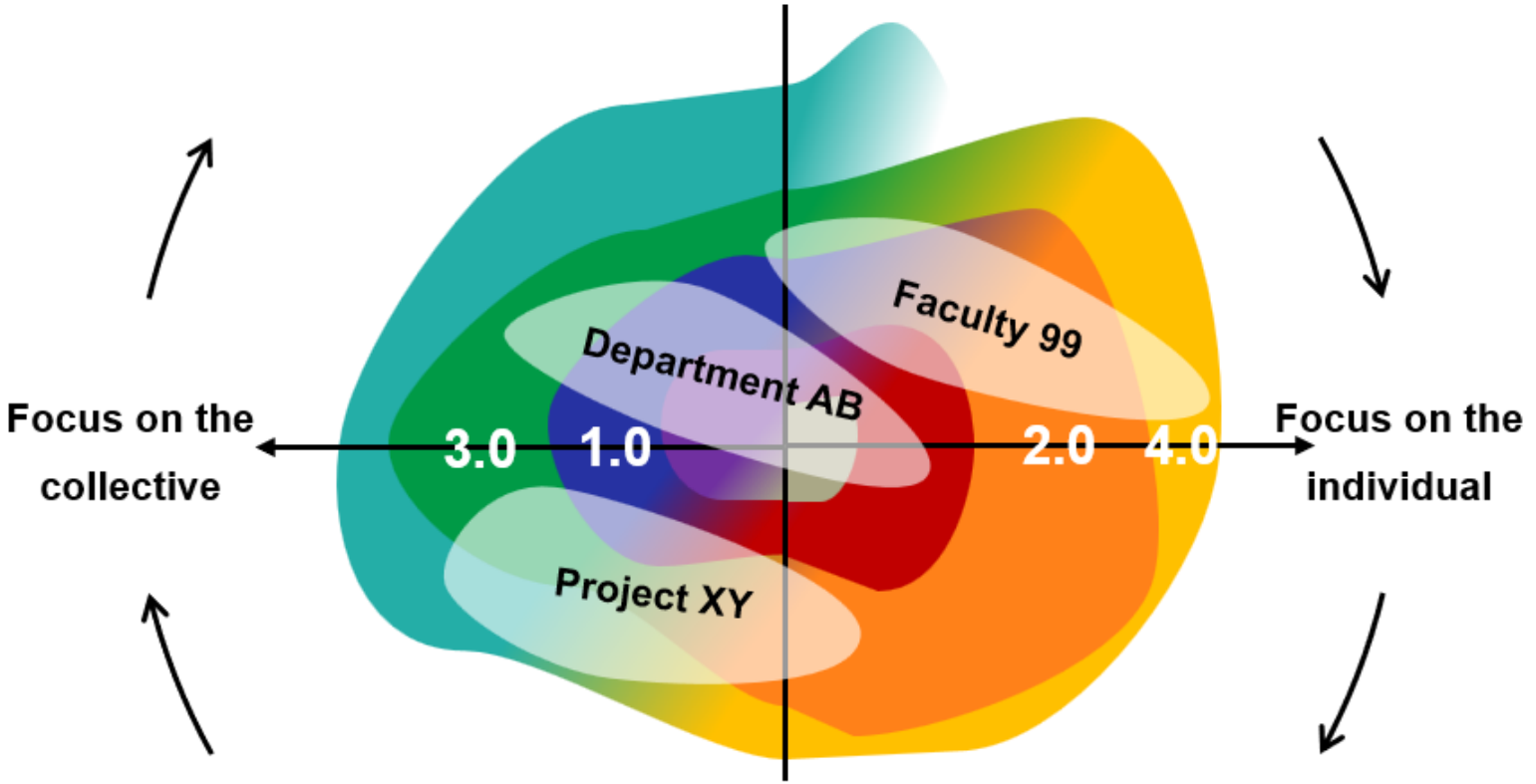
UNIVERSITY 4.0 (GIESENBAUER 2021)



Basic idea of the model:

Ability to handle greater complexity

+Simultaneity of modes

+Simultaneity of subsystems

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NEXT STEPS

- **Professionalization** of administrative processes (process management)
- Focus on **transparency** (incl. Open Data frameworks)
- Focus on robust **methods** (in research and processes)
- Create more **spaces for encounter and co-creation**: networking within the university, networking with society, new teaching and research formats
- Walk the talk and embody cooperation!

- More teaching formats that foster **transformational competencies**, enabling students to actively address future challenges
- More **citizen science** and **transdisciplinarity**
- More **challenge based learning** and **student teams**

SOLAR-POWERED AUTONOMOUS AIRCRAFT

TEAM DAEDALUS

Our vision is to create a solar-powered autonomous drone capable of prolonged aerial surveillance, to be used for wildfire detection.

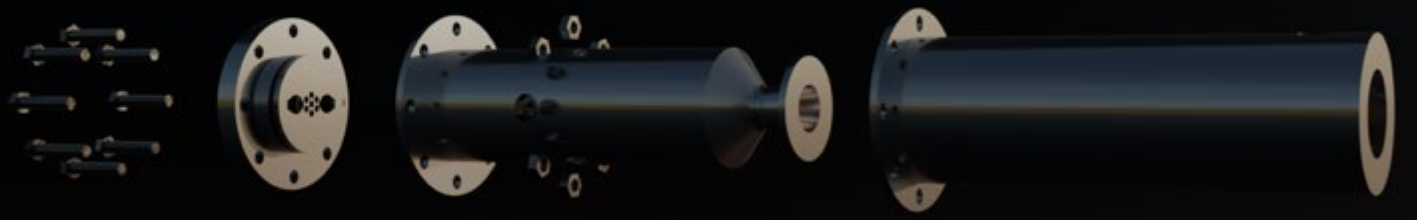
ABOUT US >

VOID

Launch the Future Together

VOID

Home About Projects Team Partners Contact



About

The Team

Team VOID is a student team at the TU/e with the aim of researching and developing reusable rockets. TU/e Student Teams are interdisciplinary organizations of students that challenge themselves to tackle significant societal challenges by developing innovative technology. Our team consists of 41 people from 10 programs and 21 nationalities, all working towards the common goal: democratising space access.

Our Mission

VOID develops reusable, student-built rockets and precision flight systems, to democratize access to space and advance European technological sovereignty and innovation in aerospace. Through iterative design processes and low-cost experimentation, we create reliable propulsion, avionics, and guidance technologies while training the next generation of aerospace talent.

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A FEW IDEAS

- Connecting students in remote areas
- Sharing data in open environment
- European sovereignity
- Democratization of data
- Virtual Reality learning environments
- Empowering student teams
- Providing challenges for Challenge Based Learning

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UNIVERSITIES AS INNOVATION ECOLOGIES

*„universities must evolve into **innovation ecologies for human and planetary flourishing** — hubs that, in the face of systemic breakdown and collapse, foster the praxis of regenerating soil, self, and society.”*
(Scharmer, 2025)

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THANK YOU!

HOW TO APPLY, 1/2

Register	Register by completing online questionnaire on ESA-STAR Registration (minimum 'light registration') (Doing Business with ESA)
Download	Download the official tender documentation (Invitation to Tender) via ESA Star Publication searching for University of Tomorrow opportunity
Create	Create 'Bidder Restricted Area' in ESA-STAR Tendering
Write	Write your proposal and obtain the Letter of Authorization from National Delegation https://business.esa.int/national-delegations
Submit	Submit your proposal via 'Bidder Restricted Area' in ESA-STAR Tendering (Doing Business with ESA) by the relevant closing date (don't wait until the last minute!)

ESA-STAR REGISTRATION

Registration (minimum ‘light registration’) on ESA-STAR Registration (https://esastar-emr.sso.esa.int)

Please note that esa-star allows two levels of entity registration: “Light” and “Full”. This allows new users wishing to do business with ESA to carry out their registration in two steps. A “Light” registration will grant access to all esa-star services up to and including proposal submission. The award of ESA contracts requires “Full” registration.

PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

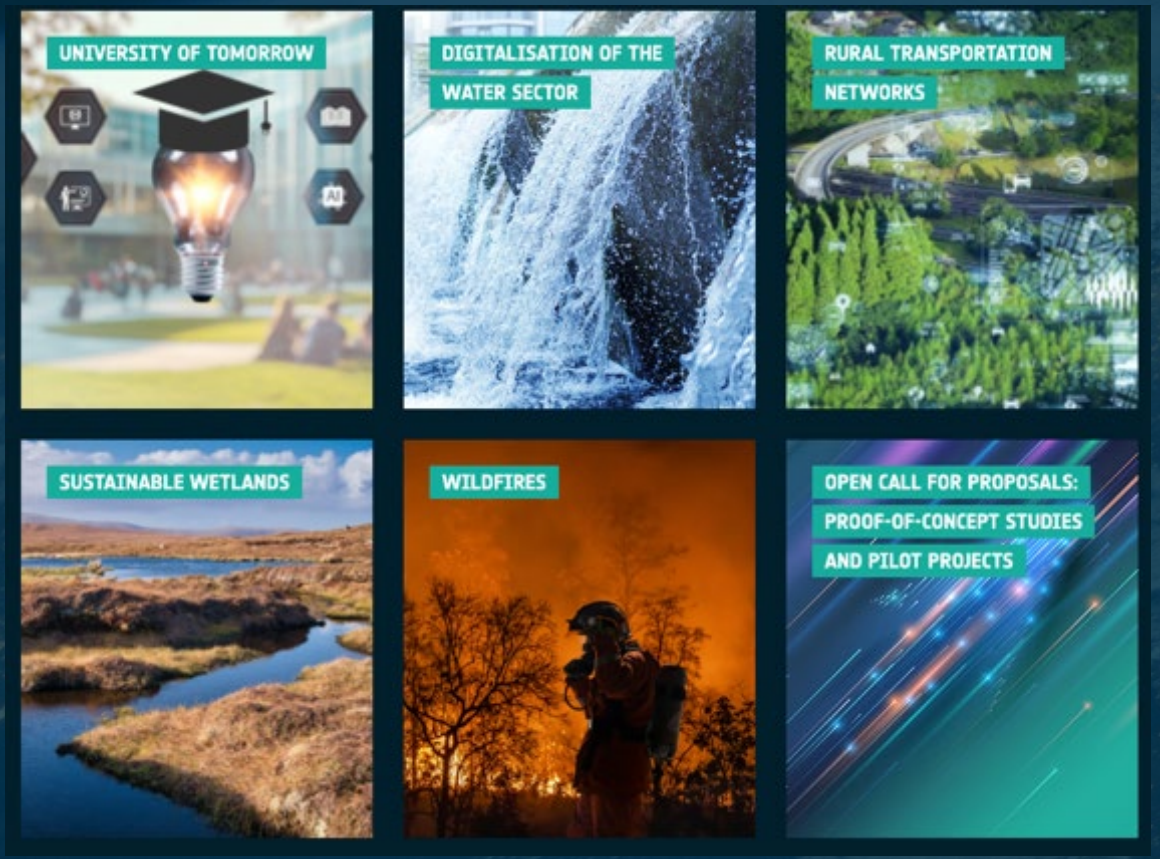
Your Proposal shall include the following information:

1. Executive Summary (max 1 page)
2. Business Potential (max 5 pages)
3. Technical Concept (max 5 pages)
4. Team and Resources (max 3 pages)
5. Management (max 4 pages)
6. Financials (max 2 pages)

AUTHORISATION FROM NATIONAL DELEGATIONS

- This opportunity is open to companies that intend to develop space-enabled services and products related, but not restricted, to the topics of relevance outlined previously.
- The authorisation from National Delegation for the call against which you submit your proposal is an admissibility criterion. Proposals not authorised at the closing date of the Thematic call will not be admitted for evaluation.
- To be eligible for funding, your team must be based in one of the following countries: Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.
  - Germany has issued a pre-authorisation for applications to this call
  - Norway and The Netherlands are not supporting this call
- In case your company/organisation resides in a country which has not provided a pre-authorization to the Call, you need to contact as soon as possible your National Delegation and ask for the authorization. The contact of the National Delegations can be found at https://business.esa.int/national-delegations.

Where to find the information



OPPORTUNITY	Call for Proposals (Competitive)
ACTIVITY	Kick-Start
OPENING DATE	04-05-2026
CLOSING DATE	12-06-2026
WEBINAR	29 April 2026 - 11:00 CEST

https://business.esa.int/funding/call-for-proposals-competitive/university-of-tomorrow

Thank you for your attention

ESA Business Applications and Space Solutions https://business.esa.int/

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Volker Schumacher@esa.int

After the call goes live on 4th of May
Please submit Questions through ESA-Star