2021	PROMOTING COPERNICUS EARTH OBSERVATION APPLICATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA						
Country	**Contract value (€)**	**% by Epsilon**	**Staff # provided**	**Client**	**Origin of funding**	**Date (start/end)**	**Consortium Members**
Central America	**165,000 (est.)**	TBC	3 of 4 key experts	EC / EU Delegation Costa Rica	EU – FWC SIEA 2018, Lot 2	11/01/2021 – 12/07/2022	COWI Belgium (lead), PPM (Bulgaria)

The Project

Request for Services SIEA-2018-1663 – Promoting Copernicus Earth Observation Application in Central America

The assignment aims to empower researchers, scientists, decision makers and entrepreneurs in Central America with the skills to use Copernicus data and information services to their full potential. Countries: Belize, Costa Rica (project headquarters, EU Delegation in San José), El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

Specific objectives: analyse the region's strengths and weaknesses for Copernicus uptake; support digital transformation; promote Copernicus among stakeholders, in research (Copernicus Academy) and in EU development cooperation; foster applications that meet regional needs; support a regional Copernicus Centre for disaster preparedness for Central America and the Caribbean; and improve data connectivity (RedCLARA, BELLA).

Planned activities: at least 4 training sessions with EU Delegations and beneficiary institutions (SICA, Copernicus Academy, CTCAP, ACAE); Spanish translation of Copernicus MOOC material; at least 3 intersectoral awareness-raising workshops; 2 Copernicus Hackathons; the First Assembly of the Copernicus Academy in Central America; and support for integrating RedCLARA into the Copernicus Academy.

Framework contract EuropeAid/138778/DH/SER/Multi. Offer submitted by the COWI consortium (COWI Belgium, lead; Project Planning & Management, Bulgaria) in December 2020, with a 24-month timetable: preparatory analysis, inception report and work plan, delivery of activities, and completion.

Outputs: inception report and work plan, a summary report per activity, communication and visibility materials, and a final report analysing the region's challenges and opportunities for Copernicus, with a map of key stakeholders.



Services to be provided by EPSILON

– Preparation of the technical methodology with COWI: rationale, Copernicus-specific issues for Central America, risks, staged strategy and work plan

– Key experts: KE1 Team Leader P. Geerders; KE2 Copernicus programmes specialist Prof. M. Bonazountas (EPSILON); KE3 GIS expert A. Mills

– Preparatory analysis and inception: matrix of Copernicus services vs. regional sectors, stakeholder mapping, SWOT and risk analysis

– Design and delivery of trainings, awareness workshops, 2 Hackathons and the Copernicus Academy Assembly

– Concepts for 4 regional applications; linking 3–4 Central American entities with EU partners and Horizon Europe projects

– Communication and visibility; draft and final reports in English and Spanish

Epsilon added value

– Direct experience from the similar COWI Copernicus assignment in the Philippines (National Conference on Copernicus, Manila, March 2019), delivered by M. Bonazountas and A. Mills

– 25+ years of remote sensing and GIS work in Latin America and the Caribbean (P. Geerders), with networks in government, regional organisations (e.g. CATIE), universities and local companies

– Disaster-management mapping across the Caribbean basin, including the 2020 hurricane responses in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras (A. Mills, MapAction)

– Copernicus and geomatics R&D capacity within the EPSILON Group

Approach principles

– Present Copernicus alongside US systems (e.g. Landsat), drones, in-situ data and models, and be clear about its limits, such as cloud cover

– Build lasting local capacity rather than promotion, working in Spanish through existing national and regional networks

– Focus on development priorities: water, agriculture and natural disasters

– COVID-19-ready plan: remote preparatory work first, then missions to Costa Rica