3rd Call for NFDI4Earth Pilots 2024

In this call we provide 12 months funding for innovative research data management solutions in the Earth System Sciences. Up to 5 pilot projects will be funded.

The call is open for submissions from German institutions eligible for DFG funding. If your institution is not yet a participant of NFDI4Earth please reach out to the pilot coordination before submitting a proposal.

Deadline for submission: June 23th, 2024
Pilot coordinator: Kolja.nenoff@uni-leipzig.de

Background

NFDI4Earth is a consortium within the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) to establish a systematic and sustainable infrastructure for research data management (RDM) and analysis in Earth system sciences (ESS). Through a community-driven process, we promote address researchers necessities in research data management, push a cultural shift towards open FAIR RDM for ESS and, steer towards consolidating and harmonizing research data-related services. Our efforts encompass education, training, and support solutions tailored to the community's needs.

Pilot projects are a way to take up ideas from the ESS community and integrate them into NFDI4Earth. Members of the German ESS community can contribute solutions that stem directly from their research domain's actual needs. In yearly calls, we fund innovative ideas that support the pathway to Open Science and FAIR RDM in ESS. Pilots have a duration of one year. This will be the 3rd cohort, beginning approximately 01.10.2024.

(See current projects: https://www.nfdi4earth.de/2participate/pilots)

Who can apply?

In this call for pilots we welcome ideas from any ESS domain, from researchers at any stage of their career and from any ESS institution. If your institution is not yet a participant of NFDI4Earth please reach out to the pilot coordination before submitting a proposal.

What are we looking for?

Emphasizing broad applicability, this round specifically seeks solutions that are showcases for the entire ESS community. Our goal is to foster solutions that are versatile and widely adoptable across different domains within ESS.

We aim to produce solutions that can be easily reused and applied by broad research community, promoting broader uptake and impact. Solutions must also integrate with NFDI4Earth and adhere to FAIR Principles. This means they should be based on existing workflows or tools, with a focus on improving accessibility and usability. RDM solutions for one single domain or application will not be funded!

This funding call is structured around 4 thematic tracks: (1) Data management plans (DMP), (2) FAIR large data management, (3) data curation, and (4) Data publication . Submissions are expected to align with one of these tracks. Depending on the quality and relevance of the submissions, we are open to funding multiple projects within each track. Other proposals can be made as well, but we will only consider them if they likewise offer broad application potential.

Your NFDI4Earth pilot can be built on or integrated into existing ESS infrastructure to maximize the goals defined by the FAIR principles. Take advantage of this chance to contribute to the advancement of RDM in ESS! Submit your proposal aligned with our thematic tracks to make a meaningful impact on the field.

Thematic Tracks:

1. **DMP Pilot** – concrete support for developing research data management plans in DFG ESS projects. Focus on tailored guidance for proposal development and compliance with DFG regulations.

2. **FAIR Big Data Pilot** – Tools and support for managing large datasets in ESS: Focus on publication and efficient cloud-based analysis while ensuring adherence to FAIR principles.

3. **Data Curation Pilot** – Enhancing data quality, interoperability, and reusability within ESS through the development of automated curation workflows, tools, and assistance mechanisms.

4. **Data Publication Pilot** – Facilitating easy data publication and increasing reusability/interoperability through the development of pipelines, checklists, and showcases for effective data publication in research projects.

Expected results:

After the 1 year project duration, we expect our pilots to deliver an openly licensed implementation or prototype of a ready-to-use solution in a public repository, including documentation, a demo server, tutorials or vignettes, and integration into the existing NFDI4Earth infrastructure (living handbook, etc.)

Each pilot should produce a roadmap that describes its outcomes as well as challenges encountered during the project phase, and thus contribute to NFDI4Earth gap analyses. The roadmap should also sketch possible future developments, and a plan to ensure the tool's sustainability and reusability.

Follow-up applications from previous rounds of pilots or incubators

For ongoing funding of previous pilots or incubators, applicants must demonstrate a clear advancement and next-level development of their product in the new proposal, aligning with the expectations of this call. Follow-up proposals should show their breadth of scope and how they align with one of the thematic tracks. This may result from a merger with other prior-round pilots or by involving colleagues from other institutions.

Application

Please submit your proposal (4 pages) using the template available online on our application platform

This pilot call is open until June 23th, 2024. The funding decision will be announced on August 1st, 2024. Depending on the quality of the submitted proposal 4 to 5 projects will be funded. Projects will commence as soon as possible in 2024, pending hiring and employment processes etc.

You can apply for a planned budget of up to EUR 124,535.90.

According to DFG funding guidelines, you can apply for staff costs and material resources (Sachmittel). The purchase of instruments or software is only possible in exceptional cases and if strictly necessary to accomplish the project goals. Please contact the pilot coordinator before submitting a proposal including such investments. (DFG-Verwendungsrichtlinien für die NFDI-Konsortien: https://www.dfg.de/formulare/nfdi300/v/dfg_nfdi300_de_v0123.pdf)

Review Process

Pilot proposals will be evaluated by reviewers from different ESS disciplines with varying degrees of involvement with NFDI4Earth. The 4 main evaluation criteria are:

- Alignment with the selected track (see call announcements) and NFDI4Earth goals

- Quality and Innovation

- Feasibility

- Transferability and potential for engaging a broad user community

For each criterion, there are sub questions that will be ranked on a scale of 1 (not competitive) to 5 (excellent).

The reviews' results will be discussed and funding decision will be taken by the NFDI4Earth steering group. If the numerical scores of the reviews do not show a clear picture, additional factors will be considered in decision making - for example to support institutions without previous funding from NFDI4Earth or a balanced distribution among different thematic tracks.

All applicants will receive their anonymized scores and feedback. By submitting a proposal, you agree that your proposal will be published on the NFDI4Earth website in case of success.

If you have any questions regarding funding, the formalities of the proposal, whether you are eligible, or if your idea fits within the scope of the call, don't hesitate to reach out to the pilot coordinator.

Pilot Coordinator:

Kolja Nenoff

RSC4Earth, Universität Leipzig

Kolja.nenoff@uni-leipzig.de

Tel.: +49 (0) 341 97 32814