

### ***3<sup>rd</sup> Call for NFDI Incubator Projects 2024***

In this call, we offer 3 to 6 months of funding for one researcher (at the DFG personnel rate) to explore an innovative idea or to provide a research data management solution within the Earth System Sciences community.

The call is open to submissions from German institutions eligible for DFG funding and from researchers who are not part of a working group led by an NFDI4Earth Steering Group Member. We are seeking your innovative ideas to enhance research data management.

**Deadline for submissions: October 31, 2024**

Incubator coordinator: Udo Feuerhake [nfdi4earth-incubators@tu-dresden.de](mailto:nfdi4earth-incubators@tu-dresden.de)

#### ***Background***

NFDI4Earth is a consortium of the [NFDI](#), a nationwide effort to establish a systematic and sustainable infrastructure for research data management and analysis in the Earth System Science (ESS). In a community-driven process, we foster cultural change towards open ESS and the consolidation and harmonization of research data-related services. We offer education and training and support solutions from the community. Incubator projects are one of our measures to take up ideas from the ESS community and integrate them into NFDI4Earth.

Members of the German ESS community are invited to contribute solutions that address the specific needs of their research domains. Through annual calls, we fund the development of cutting-edge tools, innovative ideas, and high-risk blue-sky projects that promote Open Science and FAIR research data management in the Earth System Sciences. **Incubator projects last between 3 and 6 months.** The topics of the first two cohorts can be found here: <https://www.nfdi4earth.de/2participate/incubator-lab>.

This call will be **open until October 31, 2024**. Funding decisions will be announced in the beginning of December 2024, with projects expected to commence as soon as possible thereafter.

#### ***Who can apply?***

In this call for incubators, we welcome ideas from **any ESS domain, from researchers at any stage of their career and from any institution**. Please be aware that members of a working group led by an NFDI4Earth Steering Group member<sup>1</sup> are not eligible in this call. If your institution is not yet a participant of NFDI4Earth<sup>2</sup> please reach out to the incubator coordination before submitting a proposal.

<sup>1</sup> List of working groups: <https://www.nfdi4earth.de/2participate/pilots?view=article&id=321>

<sup>2</sup> List of NFDI4Earth participants: <https://www.nfdi4earth.de/about-us/consortium>

## ***What are we looking for?***

NFDI4Earth collaborates with and supports the Earth System Science community. Therefore, solutions developed in Incubator Projects should enhance tools that improve the use and usability of NFDI4Earth data, advance the state-of-the-art, and better address current and future user needs.

The objective of the Incubator Lab is to foster the exploration of **new, potentially relevant building blocks** to be integrated into related NFDIs. The Incubator Lab invites proposals on **novel cutting-edge tools, latest innovations, and high-risk blue-sky ideas**. Incubator Projects are supposed to be **small, concise, and to have a clear focus**.

We are looking for ideas that support ESS researchers in their research data management and analysis workflows and **facilitate an easier uptake of the Open Science and FAIR principles** in their everyday work. The proposed solution can tackle challenges at all stages of the research data life cycle and any aspect of the FAIR principles. We appreciate ideas that show potential for transfer to other domains or data types.

Your NFDI4Earth-incubator idea ideally links your research case with general NFDI4Earth use cases and can make use of the available repositories, incubators, and pilots, e.g.:

- **Discover and explore existing or newly acquired/generated Earth Data Sources** (improve accessibility, findability, data quality, fitness for use assessments, automatic metadata assignment, annotation and enrichment, preparation for long-term reusability)
- **Collaborative analysis integrating different sources** (automation of federated data integration and fusion; designing interactive information products addressing current research questions also across NFDI consortia, Virtual research environments (VRE), AI, DL/LLMs, data interpretation, visual analysis and inspection)

However, you can also surprise us with a blue-sky idea!

## ***Expected results***

We expect the Incubator Projects to deliver a reproducible software product, which is easy to install and use, well documented with sample data and a small tutorial, combining a Jupyter-Notebook with videos. The final report includes a project description demonstrating the contribution of the project. Furthermore, the report sketches future development potential and suitability for the NFDI4Earth community. To be FAIR, both software and report are publicly accessible via Git under an established OSI-approved Free and Open Source Software license.

## ***Application***

Please submit your concisely described proposal (no longer than 3 pages) using the [template](#) available online on our [application platform](#) until October 31, 2024. You can apply for 3 to 6 months full-time equivalent (FTE), corresponding to 17.500 up to 35.800€. No other costs can be covered.

If you have any questions regarding funding, 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 incubator coordination.

### **Incubator Coordination:**

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## ***Review Process***

The proposal will be evaluated in three categories – each category will be scored from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) and a total grade will be derived using the weighting indicated below:

- Quality and Innovation (weight 40%)
  - *Is the idea convincing?*
  - *Does it solve an interesting / relevant problem?*
  - *Is it new (in the field)?*
  - *Is the ambition adequate?*
- Feasibility (weight 40%)
  - *Does the researcher have the required expertise?*
  - *Is the research plan feasible?*
- Potential for transferability (weight 20%)
  - *Ability to process similar data from different time periods / locations / institutions*

We want to enlarge the group of participants and thus invite new partners to join the NFDI4Earth consortium. Therefore, given equal quality of proposals, in selection process

- Proposals from partners who have not yet received funding will be given priority,
- Proposals by individuals from underrepresented groups in the German ESS community are preferred,
- Financially smaller proposals are preferred.