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The Copernicus Young Ambassador Day: a replicable example for new technologies uptake by SMEs and Local Regional Authorities

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Innovation process is a very slow process especially when local regional authorities (LRA) are involved. Such an issue is further amplified when new advanced technologies/data should take the place of traditional and well-established approaches. A full exploitation of data acquired by satellite sensors, as well as of the relative services developed, has been limited in the latest years by the lack of expertise on this topic, at different level, from the general public to the human resources working at LRA and SME's premises. This circumstance indicate the clear need of academic institutions to develop different targeted curricula for different potential users (students/researchers, SME professionals, LRA managers, etc.) of Earth Observation (EO) data and GeoInformatic (GI) tools. In the framework of the EO4GEO and CopHub.AC EU projects, the University of Basilicata (UNIBAS) is experimenting new, ad-hoc, EO/GI curricula and training tools. Among the different initiatives carried out so far, the Copernicus Young Ambassador Day is a quite simple and easily replicable action that has received evident consents in the latest years. A short course on EO/GI is offered to interested representatives of SMEs and Local Regional Authorities who are invited to identify possible applications related to their specific field of interest. These "user needs" are offered to the students of the Remote Sensing course at UNIBAS in order to propose their own possible technological solutions based on EO/GI technologies. Such solutions are presented in a public session to the representatives of LRA, SMEs and, for a feasibility evaluation, to the UNIBAS researchers. During this exercise SME and LRA personnel receive a basic education enabling them to better understand the potential of available and incoming EO technologies; students have the occasion to proof their acquired skill facing real problems. In this paper, after a general description of the EO4GEO and CopHub.AC projects, a summary of the main achievements of several Copernicus Young Ambassador days will be presented and discussed.