

# Access to SPIRE as ESA's Third Party mission

## Terms of Applicability

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## 1 General

Within the Third Party Mission scheme, ESA provides to Earth Observation users data from non-ESA missions, so-called Third Party Missions, to complement the data from ESA EO missions and to support and build up the scientific user community for those data in Europe.

A Third Party Mission (TPM) is a mission

- that is operated by any legal body, governmental or non-governmental entity other than ESA or
- for which ESA assumes some formal responsibility towards the mission operator or to which ESA contributes financially, usually through sharing of Ground Segment facilities or operations cost or
- for which ESA assumes a data distribution responsibility, usually towards European Users, but sometimes towards a worldwide user community for a subset of the geographic coverage of this mission.

The implementation of a new Third Party Mission follows a Selection Procedure approved by the Program Board on Earth Observation in 2004. This procedure evaluates a yearly list of Third Party Candidate Missions according to a set of criteria (e.g. European User benefits and excellence, accessibility etc.). In order to gain access to the TPM data, ESA establishes co-operation schemes with the owners/operators of the Third Party Missions. In these co-operation schemes, one option foresees to provide ground segment support to the TPM owner/operator in exchange for access to the TPM data (e.g. share acquisition or archiving facilities or support respective operations).

Spire Constellation, developed and operated by Spire Global, is a Third Party Mission part of the Earthnet Programme since 2020.

Within the ESA CAT-1 TPM Scheme, Spire offers the ESA CAT-1 community:

- Delivery to worldwide Category-1 Users of on-demand Spire products (historical and live data) for category-1 use

ESA tries to support as many high-quality and innovative projects as possible within the quota limit available, therefore only a limited amount of products can be made available to each project.



## 2 Data Accessibility Conditions

The data available as part of the ESA TPM are the following:

- **Automatic Identification System (AIS):**  
Satellite AIS (S-AIS) messages as collected by Spire satellites and terrestrial AIS (T-AIS) from third party sensor stations; Historical data from June 2016 or Live; distribution by monthly subscription via CSV file or API for Historical, via TCP or API for Live;
- **Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B):**  
Global ADS-B satellite data stream observed by Spire satellites; Historical data from December 2008 or Live; distribution by monthly subscription through AWS or Google Cloud storage solutions for Historical, via API for Live
- **Global Navigation Satellite System Radio Occultation (GNSS-RO):**  
Different profiles of Earth's atmosphere for each different type of observation are collected globally (Level 0 raw intermediate frequency (IF) data as well as derived Level 1 and Level 2 products that include both atmospheric and ionospheric products); historical data from December 2018 to the present; distribution via S3 API.
- **GNSS Reflectometry (GNSS-R):**  
conventional and grazing angle measurements of Earth's surface properties using reflections of GNSS signals in the form of a bistatic radar (Level 0 raw intermediate frequency (IF) data as well as derived Level 1 and Level 2 products); Historical grazing angle GNSS-R data are available from May 2019 to the present, while conventional GNSS-R data are available from December 2020 to the present.

To be noted that:

- ADS-B and AIS products are considered "historical data" if they are past data, already in the archive. "Live products" are products still to be acquired, which will be distributed to the user as soon as available.
- Distribution of ADS-B and AIS is based on monthly subscription: the month is considered as "live product" if part of it is after the order submission date
- Order for ADS-B and AIS live data have to be finalized and sent to Spire in advance, at least 3 days before the sensing
- Distribution of GNSS-RO data is based on profile provision: each profile is a 'snapshot' of the conditions of the atmosphere in a specific location at a specific point in time and it contains several different information and observation files. Historical GNSS-RO profiles are distinguished in '< 30 days' if no older than 30 days since order submission date and '>30 days' if 30 days old (or more) since the date of order submission.
- Standard product delivery is completed within a maximum of three working days from the date of order submission for archive data, within one working day from the date of data acquisition for tasking orders
- Data are delivered to customers mainly via API

## 3 Data users

- Access to data can be provided by ESA to worldwide users
- Access to Spire data is subject to further Spire control which might introduce limitations or even the rejection of the order (e.g. if the user is located in country with some sort of embargo): in this case, Spire will interact with the user to find the best possible solution



## 4 Assignment and usage of quota

### **Project Proposal submission and evaluation**

A user requesting access to Spire products in the frame of the TPM shall submit a project proposal to ESA. During the project submission, the user shall specify his need as

- Type of data and amount of data
  - ADS-B Data Stream
    - Number of monthly subscriptions of Historical data
    - Number of monthly subscriptions of Live data
  - AIS messages
    - Number of monthly subscriptions of Historical data
    - Number of monthly subscriptions of Live data
  - GNSS-Radio Occultation profile
    - Number of profiles older than 30 days
    - Number of profiles no older than 30 days
  - Raw IF samples from GNSS-RO satellites
    - Number of collections (older than 30 days)
  - Raw IF samples from GNSS-R satellites
    - Number of collections (older than 30 days)
  - Grazing angle GNSS-R observations
    - Number of tracks collections (older than 30 days)
  - Georeferenced grazing angle GNSS-R observations
    - Number of tracks collections (older than 30 days)
  - GNSS-R calibrated bistatic radar reflectivities
    - Number of tracks collections (older than 30 days)
  - GNSS-R calibrated bistatic radar cross-sections
    - Number of tracks collections (older than 30 days)
  - Ionosphere total electron content
    - Number of observations (older than 30 days)
  - Ionosphere scintillation
    - Number of observations (older than 30 days)
  - Electron density profile
    - Number of profiles (older than 30 days)
  - Combined Surface Soil Moisture
    - Number of grid cells (older than 30 days)
- Time of interest
- Area of interest

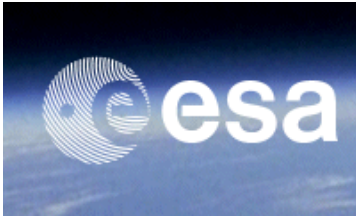
During the evaluation process, the scientific content of a submitted project proposal is evaluated by ESA and Spire against the data requirements of the PI and a respective quota is granted to the PI allowing getting the requested data.

### **Order submission and data delivery**

Upon acceptance of the project proposal by ESA, the PI is entitled to submit via email to [hadrien.chautard@spire.com](mailto:hadrien.chautard@spire.com) the order request. Spire only requires a brief description of the type of data required, the region of interest, data time frame (start and end date) and a description of what the data will be used for.

The PI is not strictly constrained to order exactly the products requested into the proposal. The ordered products can change in type, AOI or TOI with respect to the original proposal provided that the new request is within the original assigned credits (e.g. if a Project has a quota per specific data type, the Project can exchange such quota for other data types if the total quota is not exceeded).

In case of request for live data, the order is evaluated by Spire's Maritime, Aviation and/or Weather teams and within 5 working days a feedback is provided to the user (if it is accepted or possible alternatives). The acceptance procedure is based on a quick cross-check of the end-user, data availability and verification that the data will not be used for commercial use or to develop commercial applications, Once approved by both parties, the acquisition event is scheduled.



In case of request for historical data, the order is submitted and confirmed to the PI via email within 5 working days from the order submission.

The quota shall be consumed within a year from assignment. After the validity period of 1 year, ESA reserves the right to remove the credits or to extend the end date.

Products are delivered via API. As soon as the requested data are available, the PI is notified by email about the data availability and instructed on the data retrieval procedure including instructions and keys to access the API. The retention time for data download is 30 days. Spire can also support the delivery of data via TCD and csv files if the API mechanism cannot be supported by the user.