

Title

EU-Citizen.Science: a platform for mainstreaming citizen science and open science in Europe

Keywords

citizen science, open science, European platform, networking, data standardisation

Abstract

Main idea

Citizen science is a prominent field of application for open science, and the two approaches have many strong synergies. These include: shared infrastructure and applications; advocating for the data and metadata generated through citizen science projects to be made publicly available (ECSA, 2015); supporting equitable collaboration between scientists and citizens (DITOs, 2017); and introducing new perspectives to science through public engagement (Ibid.).

As a central platform for citizen science in Europe, EU-Citizen.Science will be a place for stakeholders and users to:

- share, learn and initiate citizen science activities
- find and disseminate useful resources about citizen science (e.g. guidelines, best practices, training modules)
- make citizen science knowledge more accessible
- discover how to initiate their own citizen science activities
- support anyone involved with or interested in citizen science to learn more and get involved.

By supporting citizen science activities across Europe, the EU-Citizen.Science platform will strengthen open science by providing the infrastructure necessary for more people to engage with and learn about both approaches.

Practical relevance

While several European countries have their own national platforms for citizen science, to date there is no European initiative to support these and strengthen the connections between them. EU-Citizen.Science will fulfil this role. It will strengthen citizen science and open science across Europe by enabling peer learning and the sharing of resources and expertise. Further, it will create a space for networking and interaction between the different stakeholder groups involved in citizen science and open science - including citizens, policy-makers, educators and scientists - helping to ensure that people can learn from each other, share findings and provide inputs to other projects. Our aim is for people from all walks of life to become more engaged with scientific processes.

Innovative, scientific and/or societal impact

By advocating for, and supporting efforts to realise, greater citizen involvement in science, the platform supports wider efforts to strengthen science education and science communication. Studies show that involvement in citizen science projects can enhance public interest in science (Bonney et al. 2015); the platform will achieve societal impact by helping to secure the place of science more centrally within public life. Open science is an equally essential element of inclusiveness of science. In this way, citizen science can strengthen policy through better data, and support society's interest in, and ability to tackle, the major global issues we face by using open data (e.g. biodiversity loss, climate change).

In light of this, the platform is being continuously developed and refined through feedback from target stakeholders and other users. Alongside our poster presentation, we will invite other conference delegates to provide feedback on the platform's progress to date, particularly:

- its relevance to citizen science and open science activities and networks in their own country
- which features and/or resources they find most useful
- elements and/or information they would expect to find that is currently lacking
- reflections on the platform's user interface and how this could be improved.

References

Bonney, R., Phillips, T.B., Ballard, H.L and Enck, J.W. (2015) 'Can citizen science enhance public understanding of science?' *Public Understanding of Science*, 1-15, DOI: 10.1177/0963662515607406

DITOs consortium (2018) 'Citizen science and open science: synergies and future areas of work', DITOs Citizen Science Policy Brief #3 (https://ecsa.citizen-science.net/sites/default/files/ditos-policybrief3-20180208-citizen_science_and_open_science_synergies_and_future_areas_of_work.pdf)

ECSA (2015) 'Ten principles of citizen science'. Berlin, European Citizen Science Association (https://ecsa.citizen-science.net/sites/default/files/ecsa_ten_principles_of_citizen_science.pdf)