



AN EU CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT

The European Commission through its Horizon 2020 programme, with support from the Swiss confederation, have committed almost 4m euro to a three-year programme to increase public participation in scientific research and innovation across Europe. The 11-partner project, co-ordinated by UCL Extreme Citizen Science group, aims to enable people to contribute to science at a level of participation suitable for them, whether that is using a crowdsourcing app to log air quality or working in a citizen biolab.

Doing It Together Science (DITOs) will implement (many) innovative participatory event formats across Europe focussing on the active involvement of citizens in two critical areas, the cutting edge topic of biodesign and the policy relevant area of environmental monitoring. The project will progress the EU Responsible Research and Innovation agenda by going beyond more common discussions and exhibitions into science café events, which include direct engagement with the processes of scientific research. A central element of the project is the 'escalator' model of engagement, in which people can enter at a level of participation that matches their needs, interests, and abilities, while also encouraging them to move beyond. In keeping with this, exhibitions, workshops, support for existing organisations, and guidelines to share the ingredients of successful projects are also part of the long-term project plan.

Consortium

The consortium includes a pan-European network (European Citizen Science Association ECSA - linking practitioners, scientists, and supporting policy makers), SMEs (Tekiu; Eutema), universities (UCL; Université University of Geneva), science galleries, museums and arts organisations (Kapelica Gallery / Kersnikova; Medialab-Prado; RBINS) and NGOs (Meritum Association; Waag Society). These organisations cross multiple countries and languages, enabling coverage of much of Europe in its native languages.

At UCL, central coordination for DITOs as well as events, analysis and research will be provided by the UCL Extreme Citizen Science (ExCiteS) group. UCL ExCiteS includes researchers from a variety of specialities and has a history of developing tools to help communities collect data and participate in decision making. From work with non-literate peoples in the Congo to document environmental damage, to collaborations with communities around Heathrow to monitor noise pollution, UCL ExCiteS enables people to change their world through data.

Professor Muki Haklay, co-director of UCL ExCiteS and project co-ordinator for DITOs, said: "Doing it together science is a step-change in European public participation in science and innovation. Prior projects show this is possible, but now we need to scale it up and engage many more people; we want to promote this 'deep' engagement. Our great aim is for the public to be engaged in all aspects and stages in the scientific and innovation progress, at a level suitable for them." Dr Katrin Vohland, vice-chair of the European Citizen Science Association added: "DITOs provides a great opportunity not only to experiment with different pathways for different persons and communities to engage at different intensities but to enhance mutual learning for lasting effects at the interface of science and society."

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