ecsa

European Citizen Science Association

Working group guidelines

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Introduction

These guidelines provide practical support for setting up and maintaining a working group at the European Citizen Science Association (E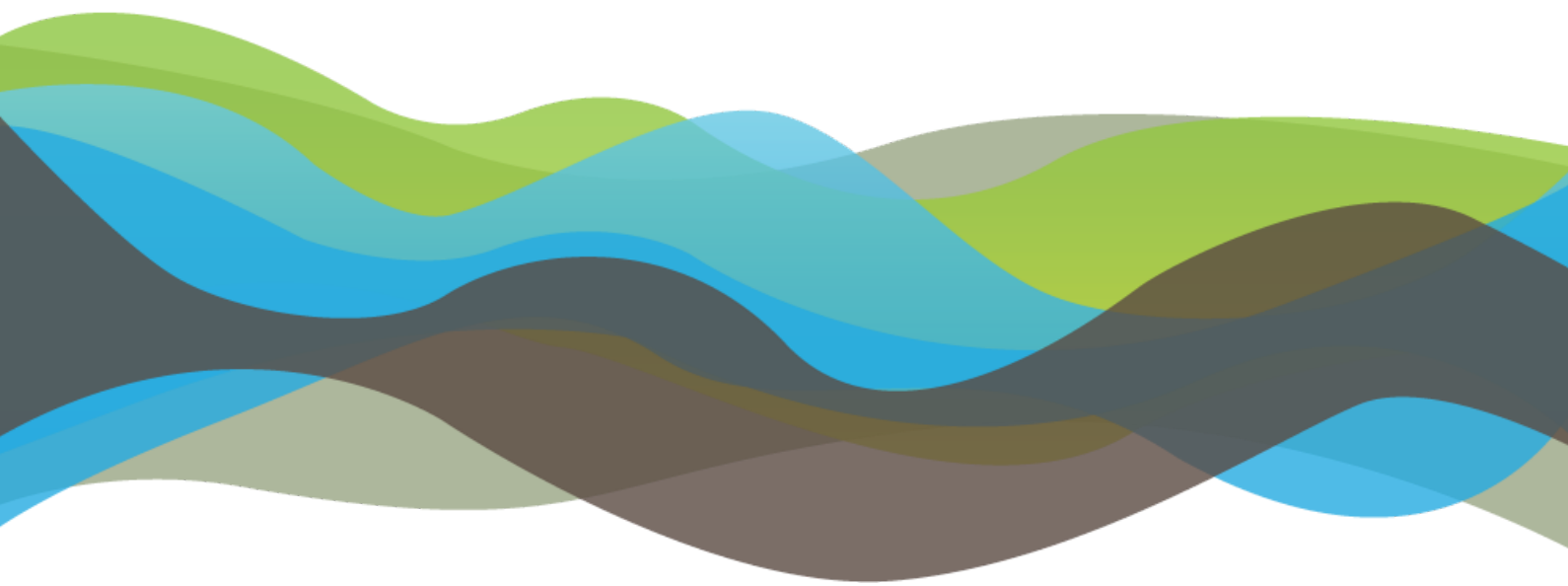CSA). They were initiated by the ECSA working group on empowerment, inclusiveness & equity (EIE). The guidelines are a living document, which will be modified on a rolling basis with input from the working groups and ECSA headquarters.

How to start a new working group

1. **Check if you are an ECSA member.** All working group chairs must hold an ECSA membership. Individuals who are not ECSA members may be invited to participate in working group activities.
2. **Propose a working group.** Fill out this form to let ECSA headquarters know you'd like to found a new working group. Be sure to check out existing working groups to see if one covering your area of interest has already been formed.
3. **Get people involved.** Sending out a message via the ECSA-all internal mailing list to raise awareness is a great way to start.
4. **Present your proposal at the annual ECSA general assembly.** During the general assembly, members will vote on whether to approve the formation of new working groups.
5. **Send ECSA information on your working group** for a profile page on the ECSA website. The necessary information is:

   - the working group name

   - the names and institutional affiliations of the chairs

   - a short description, with the group's aims and background

   - the names of working group members (minimum of five)

   - an activity plan

   - details of how interested people can get involved.

ECSA headquarters can support you with these steps. For all questions, please contact info@ecsa.ngo.

Basic principles

Below you can find the minimum expectations for all ECSA working groups.

- Hold regular meetings with the members of your working group. These meetings can be virtual, in-person or hybrid events. The minutes for the regular meetings should be made public.
- Attend a steering committee meeting organised by ECSA headquarters once every two months.
- Present a brief overview at the annual ECSA general assembly of the activities, accomplishments, outputs, milestones, etc. of your working group from the previous

year, in addition to plans for the coming year. At the general assembly the gathered ECSA members will vote on whether to approve the continued operation of the working groups. A template will be provided for the presentations. Participation in the ECSA general assembly is mandatory for all ECSA working groups.

- Provide ECSA with a one-page summary of your activities at the beginning of the year for the ECSA annual report. A template will be provided for this purpose. Submitting the annual summary of activities is mandatory.
- Provide ECSA with an up-to-date list of working group members.

Structure

- Create a mailing list for all members of the working group. ECSA headquarters can set up a centralised mailing list for the working group via the DFN-Listserv service.
- Create an access point for documentation (e.g. a folder on Google Drive).
- Maintain a living document on your project's description, and an activity plan (e.g. Introduction to EIE working group).
- Hold regular online meetings and keep minutes which are understandable to people outside of your working group (e.g. EIE minutes).
- Write a code of conduct (e.g. Open Leadership Training Series : Write or Choose a Code of Conduct).
- Licence the documents you are creating (e.g. CC BY 4.0 by ECSA Working Group [...]). More information on licensing can be found here.

Engagement

- Hold working group meetings in cooperation with ECSA projects and other working groups, making sure they are accessible for remote attendance. ECSA headquarters has a conference call system available for this.
- Share news on your work, outputs and issue calls for contributions, through the ECSA-all mailing list, and/or contact Paul Sorrell to contribute to the monthly ECSA newsletter.
- Encourage working group members to form sub-groups and create sub-projects that they lead themselves (the EIE working group refers to these as cooperation projects).
- Think about how contributors can evolve to fulfil different roles, for example learning more about the topic, contributing to a collection of guidelines, becoming a co-host of monthly online meetings, etc. Mozilla refers to these as contributor pathways.
- Acknowledge contributions by working group members and partners in suitable ways (e.g. a list of current working group members to be featured on the working group profile page; a list of contributors to specific outputs).
- Share your experiences with other working group chairs by contributing to this document, communicating via the working groups chairs mailing list or taking part in a steering committee meeting.
- Think about and consult your members on how to make your online calls even more worthwhile. For example, the EIE working group introduced short input talks by practitioners and researchers in their area of interest. Begin each meeting with a round of introductions, and switch on cameras during online meetings.

- Specify multiple channels for feedback and input from working group members. For example, the EIE working group has a feedback section at the end of the meeting minutes; encourages members to email the chairs, contribute to documents and to the website page; and after online meetings, people are invited to stay on to share their feedback verbally.

How to contribute to this document

This is a living document to support ECSA working groups. If you have any additional ideas or resources you feel can improve this document, please email us your contributions.

Resources

- Introduction to Working Open by Mozilla
  https://openmatt.org/2011/04/06/how-to-work-open/
- Mozilla Open Leadership framework – starter on explaining concept, has templates, references https://mozilla.github.io/open-leadership-framework/framework/
- Open Leadership Training Series – access to some basic instruction material that can get you a long way https://mozilla.github.io/open-leadership-training-series/
- Open Leadership 101 – free online introductory course
  https://mozilla.teachable.com/p/open-leadership-101
- Mozilla Open Leaders programme – mentoring
  https://foundation.mozilla.org/de/opportunity/mozilla-open-leaders/
- Case study by Claudia Göbel to initiate this line of work at ECSA: Inclusiveness & Equity in Citizen Science - Building a community of practice at the European Citizen Science Association
  https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OV1SyaPhUwue7NAEBIrPxhFHRxQVsxpZHjosG8iLHUc/edit?usp=sharing
- The material in this guideline is adapted from the Mozilla Open Leadership Series.

Any questions, contributions or feedback?

Contact ECSA at: info@ecsa.ngo