# Citizen science for the future of Europe

Advocating for deeper integration and dedicated support for citizen science in the 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

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*Authored by:*

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# Citizen science for the future of Europe:
# 5 key recommendations

Citizen science encompasses a wide range of participatory research practices that actively engage societal actors and the general public in knowledge co-production. Participants contribute data, contextual insights, and experiential knowledge, provide access to resources, raise research questions, and propose solutions to scientific challenges.

Citizen science has proven its value in addressing global challenges and democratising research. To build upon this success, the 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation **(FP10) must ensure continued support for citizen science through dedicated funding and its full integration across research domains.**

This will enable citizen science to tackle research and innovation challenges beyond traditional approaches, generating unique, verified, datasets while fostering inclusive science-society collaborations that drive societal impact.

It will strengthen trust and inclusivity in science by ensuring equitable representation of all communities and integrating citizen-generated data and insights into policy frameworks for more effective decision-making. Additionally, it will address emerging challenges by leveraging digital technologies, safeguarding privacy, and promoting human-centered innovation.

Horizon Europe (HE) continues to play a crucial role in mainstreaming citizen science by embedding it within the EU's Research and Innovation Strategy and emphasising citizen engagement in mission-oriented innovation. The European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda 2022-2024 reinforced this

commitment by prioritising public involvement to increase societal impact and trust in science. FP10 must continue this momentum by maintaining dedicated citizen science funding, supporting co-creation initiatives that directly address citizen concerns, scaling successful projects, and expanding participation to maximise impact.

**We set out 5 key recommendations, and 10 further support recommendations for citizen science in FP10.**

**KR1 DEDICATED CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAMME LINE:**

Establish a specific funding line for citizen science in FP10, building on the success of H2020's "Science with and for Society" programme, to develop innovative ways of connecting science and society.

**KR2 MAINSTREAM CITIZEN SCIENCE PRINCIPLES ACROSS FP10:**

Embed participatory research methodologies in all funding calls to ensure cross-cutting integration.

**KR3 SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MECHANISMS:**

Provide long-term funding, including multi-year sustaining, and upscaling grants. Funding calls dedicated to the continuation and upscaling of successful ongoing citizen science initiatives will enable longer-term campaigns with broad participation and (data) stewardship models.

**KR4 GRASSROOTS FUNDING:**

Empower local communities, small-scale initiatives and civil society organisations with accessible and adaptable support, including micro-grants with simplified procedures (potentially through cascading grants mechanism from HE) and participatory budgeting mechanisms.

**KR5 OPEN TOPIC CALLS:**

Introduce more non-prescriptive calls to responsively address societal challenges through bottom-up, citizen-driven research and interdisciplinary collaboration.[1]

1 This need was also emphasised in the recent Heitor report (EC DG RTD 2024b).

# Ten supporting recommendations in strategic areas

SR = supporting recommendation

## SR1
**Catalysing Europe's innovation, economic growth and competitiveness:**
—
Establish dedicated funding streams to integrate citizen science into key economic and industrial sectors, fostering academia-SME collaboration, knowledge transfer, scaling up successful initiatives, and aligning citizen-generated data with industry standards to enhance socio-economic impact and sustainable competitiveness.

## SR2
**Strengthening policy integration:**
—
Invest in integrating citizen-generated data into EU monitoring systems by funding data harmonization efforts, advocacy initiatives, and pilot projects aligned with EU and national policy frameworks to enhance credibility and uptake.

## SR3
**Increasing public trust in science:**
—
Support large-scale public engagement initiatives that promote research literacy, co-creation, and citizen participation throughout the research cycle to combat misinformation and increase trust in science.

## SR4
**Enhancing access to resources and infrastructures:**
—
Establish and maintain European research infrastructures dedicated to citizen science, ensuring long-term investment in shared resources, data repositories, services and tools, and collaboration platforms to enhance excellence and sustainability.

## SR5
**Advancing cultural change in the scientific community:**
—
Fund targeted programmes and initiatives that embed citizen science within institutional structures, funding mechanisms, and academic reward systems, ensuring sustained investment in Universities Alliances, ERC, and MSCA actions to make it a mainstream research practice.

## SR6
**Rethinking research assessment:**
—
Align research assessment reforms with the CoARA initiative and Open Science agenda, funding projects that develop and test new evaluation indicators recognizing citizen science contributions and achievements.

## SR7
**Capacity building:**
—
Fund large-scale training programs and capacity-building initiatives for researchers, policymakers, and citizen scientists to ensure equitable access to citizen science opportunities across Europe.

## SR8
**Harnessing synergies and scaling successes:**
—
Provide funding for networks, interoperable data aggregation platforms, and coordination mechanisms that facilitate the scaling and integration of local citizen science initiatives into European-level policy frameworks.

## SR9
**Upgrading impact assessment:**
—
Invest in the development of robust impact assessment tools to evaluate the diverse contributions of citizen science initiatives, developing standardized impact assessment tools, training personnel in evaluation methodologies, and supporting small-scale funds for assessing ongoing and completed projects.

## SR10
**Ensuring inclusivity and broad representation across regions and communities:**
—
To achieve more equitable participation, FP10 must provide targeted funding to dismantle barriers and ensure the inclusion of underrepresented groups in citizen science, and to expand citizen science to all regions and Member States, ensuring that the benefits are shared throughout Europe and across all citizens.

Incorporating these funding measures into FP10 is crucial in enabling the EU to tackle contemporary challenges in collaboration with citizens, accelerating innovations and discoveries that deliver both social and economic benefits.

Furthermore, these measures will advance the EU's Open Science Agenda and align with the new ERA Policy Agenda 2025–2027 by empowering local communities alongside researchers to freely share knowledge and increase public trust in science.

**Citizen science empowers communities to shape research, driving innovation and addressing global challenges.**

This paper outlines key recommendations for the EU's FP10, advocating for dedicated funding and integration to unlock citizen science's full potential. By fostering collaboration and inclusivity, we can build a future where science and society work together for a more sustainable and equitable Europe.

**The full version of this position paper is available here:** *http://citizenscienceFP10.eu*

You can endorse it on this website and express your support for citizen science in FP10.

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