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Are you ready to embark in a 3-year journey into Citizen Science?

Project STEP CHANGE receives funding from the European Commission to implement 5 Citizen

Science Initiatives in the fields of Energy, Health and Environment

Project STEP CHANGE, funded under H2020 and coordinated by the University of Primorska, has kicked off in March. The project, which has secured more than €2 million funding over the 3 coming years, will develop 5 Citizen Science Initiatives (CSIs) in the areas of Energy, Environment, Health and Infectious Diseases.

Citizen science is one of the more interesting participatory approaches that has been developed in recent years in the broader field of public engagement. According to the European Commission, citizen science "spans a range of levels of engagement: from being better informed about science, to participating in the scientific process itself by observing, gathering or processing data". Furthermore, as stated in the document released by the European Citizen Science Association in April 2020, research involving citizen science "can take many forms, and the roles of the participants can include, for example: identifying a research question [...]". STEP CHANGE aims to ensure that research institutes make the most of the potential that citizen science has to offer, whilst also identifying, analysing, and limiting the associated risks. The objective of the project, whose Consortium is composed of 11 partners from 7 European countries and Uganda, is to make science more socially robust, inclusive and democratic. The project will also benefit from the experience of 23 supporting entities.

Along its implementation, STEP CHANGE will boost the capacity of scientific investigation over phenomena that cannot be completely seized within conventional disciplinary boundaries. The CSIs will tackle the issues of wildlife conservation in Slovenia, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease in the UK, energy communities in Germany, infectious disease outbreak preparedness in Italy, and off-grid renewable energy in agriculture in Uganda. STEP CHANGE

builds on the assumption that citizen science can play an even broader societal and scientific role than it is generally acknowledged, particularly in those critical fields of research where human and non-human factors are deeply intertwined.

The overall objective of the project is to explore the potential of citizen science and to formulate recommendations and tools for better cementing this approach within R&I institutions. Within this framework, STEP CHANGE will also design and develop a Citizen Science Navigator, a web-based tool that will collect theoretical and practical insights about different citizen science applications.

The consortium is composed of: University of Primorska (Slovenia); Knowledge & Innovation (Italy); Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (UK); Women Engage for a Common Future (Germany); European Science Engagement Association (Austria); Science for Change (Spain); University of Aarhus (Denmark); University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy); Centre for Social Innovation (Austria); Action for Rural Women's Empowerment (Uganda); European Citizen Science Association (Germany).



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Coordinated by: University of Primorska (Slovenia)

More information on STEP CHANGE can be found on <u>Cordis</u>, the European Commission's primary public repository to disseminate information on all EU-funded research projects.

For additional information please contact the Communication Officer, Amalia Verzola.

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STEP CHANGE will launch its website in June 2021. Meanwhile, you can follow its first steps on Twitter (@StepChangeEU) and Facebook (@StepChangeEU).





