



## PR6A2: CeOS in the Netherlands

### ABSTRACT

As part of the CeOS project, LIBER organised an online meeting lasting two hours as a mutual learning exercise for the CeOS in the Netherlands. The goal was to facilitate mutual learning experiences by sharing project results and examples of practices from the Netherlands. During the meeting, project results and practical examples were shared, helping to foster mutual learning. Furthermore, attendees were encouraged to provide feedback and reflect on their experiences to improve the status of citizen science. The meeting served as a stepping stone for an onsite multiplier event at the end of the project in the Hague.

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## Introduction

Building on PR6A1, an online meeting about Citizen Science in the Netherlands was organised by LIBER with support from a project consortium. Given the challenge of gathering recognised experts for a full-day meeting in The Hague, we agreed with the Erasmus+ Agency to hold the meeting online instead of in person. This virtual format allowed for greater participation, with 66 attendees joining us, including interested individuals. Importantly, this adjustment did not have any financial implications.

The event brought together representatives from Dutch higher education libraries, researchers, students, academic staff, policymakers, and public libraries. Participants evaluated the impact of initiatives like this project on strategic partnerships extending beyond the Netherlands. The meeting emphasised potential collaboration, transferability of ideas, strengthening national alliances, and empowering Dutch higher education institutions to take the lead in Citizen Science. Moreover, it encouraged these institutions to share their expertise with domestic and international organisations.

### AGENDA OF THE EVENT:

Chair: Martine Pronk; Introduction:

PART I - Presentation of the CeOS project findings.

Speakers:

(Insert time) A number of presentations by the CeOS project partners will discuss the results produced by the project since its initiation. These will include:

- CeOS survey findings (Thomas Kaarstred, SDU)
- Roadmap for Balkans-findings (Aleksandra Trtovac, UNILIB)

Part II - State of Citizen-enhanced Open Science in the Netherlands.

Speakers:

A number of presentations by the CeOS in the Netherlands selected speakers will discuss the state of play of CS in the Netherlands

- Citizen Science on the policy level (Frederike Schmitz, Open Science NL)
- The Citizen Science network in the Netherlands (Margaret Gold, LU) 15 minutes
- Concrete examples of Citizen Science in the Netherlands:
  - Casper Kleiman & Astrid van Wesenbeeck, KB Nationale Bibliotheek: Science for the Public
  - Grounding citizen science at research organisations: learnings from the TIME4CS and INCENTIVE projects. (Dr Janine Swaak, Citizen Science Hub Twente)

### Part III Discussion: CS Activities/Examples of Good Practice

- Main point – how to stimulate cultural and policy change. The examples of CS activities from the CeOS project and Dutch good practices.

Conclusion

## The CeOS project survey findings

Thomas Kaarsted, Deputy Library Director at SDU Library in Denmark and Co-chair of the LIBER Citizen Science Working Group, presented findings from the CeOS project. He highlighted the project's goal of enhancing citizen science in European research libraries. Key insights from their study include:

- There is high awareness of citizen science in libraries, with 80% recognising its importance.
- Limited practical implementation, with only 23% experimenting with it and 8% considering it a core service.
- Barriers include a lack of resources, funding, and strategic direction rather than a lack of relevant skills.
- Libraries possess essential skills such as project management, research data handling, and advocacy, making them well-equipped for citizen science initiatives.
- There is a need for proactive leadership and institutional support to integrate citizen science into library services.

Alisa Martek from “Nacionalna Sveučilišna Knjižnjica u Zagrebu” presented findings from the second work package, which focused on collaboration between universities and public libraries. The study found that:

- Most academic libraries do not cooperate with public libraries on citizen science projects.
- Key barriers include a lack of ideas, time, staff, and funding.
- Advocacy and strategic planning are crucial for integrating citizen science into regular library activities.

### Discussion:

In response to a question about convincing university management to allow libraries to be involved in citizen science, it was emphasised that arguments should be tailored to the audience—focusing on strategy, alignment, and funding for senior leadership while highlighting new services and skill utilisation for new library directors.

## Roadmap for Balkans-findings

The presentation continued on developing a roadmap for open and citizen science in the Balkans, led by the University Library Belgrade (Unilib) as part of the CeOS project. This roadmap was published in October 2023 and is freely available on the CEOS website and Zenodo. Its objective is to build capacity and raise awareness of the region's open and citizen science practices.

A survey conducted among project partners gathered 99 responses from various Balkan countries, primarily from Serbia. The survey assessed institutional engagement with open and citizen science and revealed that while open science is widely recognised, citizen science remains underdeveloped. Key findings indicate a need for improved collaboration, training, and policy development.

Several challenges were identified, including a lack of resources, policies, and awareness. Despite these hurdles, there is optimism due to the emergence of initiatives, government support, and a growing interest in libraries. The roadmap presents strategies for integrating citizen science into education, research, and public engagement. Aleksandra Trtovac from the "Univerzitetna Biblioteka Svetozar Marković" expressed confidence that progress will continue through collaboration and advocacy efforts.

## Part II - State of Citizen-enhanced Open Science in the Netherlands

### Citizen Science on the Policy Level

Frederike Schmitz from Open Science NL introduced their work in Open Science and Citizen Science in the Netherlands. They lead the Citizen Science and Societal Engagement program at Open Science NL, an independent organisation under the Dutch Research Council. They emphasise UNESCO's definition of Open Science, which promotes accessibility and collaboration in scientific research, benefiting both scientists and society. Citizen Science plays a key role by involving the public in knowledge production.

The Netherlands has a national Open Science strategy, with the government supporting its implementation. Open Science NL aims to accelerate Open Science adoption by funding projects, monitoring progress, and fostering collaboration. They focus on four key areas:

1. Citizen Science & Societal Engagement
2. FAIR Data (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable)
3. Open Research Software
4. Open Scholarly Communication

Key initiatives include:

- The Citizen Science Network (CSNL): Strengthening national collaboration.
- Open Science Infrastructure Funding Call: A new funding opportunity for digital infrastructures supporting Open Science and Citizen Science.
- Future Funding Strategy: Exploring ways to involve citizen scientists, researchers, and communities in grant decisions.
- Citizen Science Hubs Initiative: Supporting universities and applied sciences institutions.

Funding grassroots and civic organisations is a challenge, as grant rules favour knowledge institutions. However, Open Science NL is working to expand funding access, including for libraries and public institutions. Collaboration with universities and research networks is encouraged to navigate funding limitations.

The speaker encouraged participants to connect with the European Citizen Science Association (ECSA) and check Open Science NL's website for more details.

### The Citizen Science Network in the Netherlands

Margaret Gold from Leiden University emphasised the importance of various levels of support for citizen science, from global to national and institutional. They highlight the influence of



UNESCO's Open Science recommendations and the European Commission's initiatives in fostering citizen science as a key component of open science. The European Citizen Science platform and the European Citizen Science Academy are crucial in capacity building, particularly in research libraries.

The Citizen Science National Network has been formally launched at the national level in the Netherlands, benefiting from open science funding. This network was initiated as a grassroots movement advocating for the recognition of citizen science within the broader research landscape. The Netherlands has embedded citizen science into its national open science agenda, ensuring institutional backing from research organisations, universities, and libraries.

The speaker stressed the importance of research libraries in supporting citizen science through training, capacity building, and knowledge exchange. Additionally, they highlight the need for institutional recognition of open science practices within academic career structures so citizen science is valued and integrated into formal research pathways.

At Leiden University, the Citizen Science Lab is a hub for research and project development, aligning with broader open science and rewards and recognition initiatives. The overarching goal is to create a sustainable and inclusive ecosystem for citizen science that bridges academia, grassroots initiatives, and societal organisations.

#### **Discussion:**

The discussion evolved around the evolving role of citizen science, advocacy, leadership, and strategy in research networks. There was a question about implementing the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) framework in assessing research excellence and whether societal impact and participatory aspects could be integrated.

In ongoing discussions in the Netherlands, it moves away from traditional research metrics (e.g., publication counts) toward more qualitative evaluations of open science practices. This shift aligns with citizen science, which emphasises broader impacts such as participant learning, scientific advancements, and societal engagement.

Efforts are being made to formalise monitoring and evaluation methods that capture the value of citizen science within open science frameworks. There is debate on whether citizen science should have a dedicated working group in CoARA or be part of a more extensive discussion on societal impact. A key focus is on shifting from a checkbox approach to assessing open science based on core principles, such as making knowledge a common good. The crucial importance of public libraries in providing access to knowledge was highlighted, along with an upcoming contribution from the Dutch Royal Library on this subject.

## Concrete Examples of Citizen Science in the Netherlands

### Science for the Public

The representative of the Royal National Library, Casper Kleiman presented an upcoming project by the National Library of the Netherlands aimed at making scientific knowledge more accessible to the public. Casper explained that the project seeks to create an Open Access portal where non-academic users can find and engage with scientific articles. The initiative aligns with the broader open science movement and aims to contribute to a more informed and creative society.

His role focuses on understanding the needs of the general public rather than the technical aspects of the platform. Research suggests that one in eight people in the Netherlands, primarily non-academics over 25, are interested in accessing scientific knowledge but face obstacles such as paywalls and difficulty in finding relevant resources.

The project is still in its early stages, exploring different engagement models such as a science gallery, workshop, or café-like setting to facilitate public interaction with scientific content. Six key user groups have been identified: individuals seeking medical knowledge, social scientists, teachers, entrepreneurs, history enthusiasts, and professionals in various fields. The project draws insights from an existing education-focused portal, where user behaviour has revealed barriers such as language difficulties, complex content, and challenges in applying knowledge.

The plan involves a research phase to refine user needs, small-scale experiments with different engagement formats, and gradual expansion toward full implementation by 2030. In response to a question about engaging those uninterested in science, Casper suggested fostering discussions between sceptical and enthusiastic individuals to understand better and address the root causes of disinterest.

#### Discussion:

A participant raised a question about how to engage people who are not interested in science. The response highlighted that engagement occurs at various levels and is generally more effective among those who actively seek information. To better understand disinterest, the speaker suggested having direct conversations and discussions between sceptical and enthusiastic individuals, as the reasons for disinterest may be more complex than they seem.

## **Grounding citizen science at research organisations: learnings from the TIME4CS and INCENTIVE projects.**

Janine Swaak from Citizen Science Hub Twente introduced the final presentation on citizen science at the University of Twente. She highlighted the importance of informal leaders in fostering collaboration between universities, governments, companies, and citizens to address societal challenges. The presentation discusses the Citizen Lab Topfit program, which focuses on health and prevention research through cooperation with care organisations and citizens.

Swaak explained that institutional and ecosystem transformations are necessary for citizen science to thrive. Universities must support researchers through awareness, training, and funding while engaging non-academic stakeholders. She presented transformation roadmaps, showing how research institutions can evolve from traditional models to ones that prioritize co-creation with society.

The key takeaway was that citizen science requires structural support, informal leadership, and ecosystem building to ensure lasting impact and relevance in addressing societal challenges.

### **Discussion: CS Activities/Examples of Good Practice**

The discussion highlighted the common enablers and barriers in citizen science across different regions and institutions. A key takeaway was the gap between recognising the importance of citizen science and taking institutional action to integrate it as a core practice.

Speakers explored potential next steps to bridge this gap, emphasising two approaches: a structured institutional strategy with funding and a more experimental, grassroots approach. The role of advocacy, awareness, and individual initiative was also noted as crucial for progress.

Specific regional challenges were discussed, such as low motivation for citizen participation in Serbia due to limited volunteer culture. However, there was optimism that learning from international colleagues would help drive engagement.

Speakers from the Netherlands shared that citizen involvement increases when projects are directly relevant to people's lives, such as healthcare and urban sustainability. They also noted the importance of recognising and supporting grassroots activism as a form of citizen science rather than focusing on formal definitions.

## Executive Summary: CeOS in the Netherlands – Mutual Learning Exercise

As part of the Citizen-enhanced Open Science (CeOS) project, LIBER organised an online mutual learning exercise to discuss the state and transferability potential of CeOS in the Netherlands. Originally planned as an in-person event, the meeting was moved online to facilitate broader participation, attracting 66 attendees, including researchers, policymakers, academic staff, and public library representatives.

The event featured presentations on key findings from the CeOS project, highlighting the importance of citizen science in libraries, existing barriers (e.g., lack of funding and strategic direction), and the need for institutional support. Discussions also explored how Dutch higher education institutions (HEIs) can lead in citizen science and share best practices beyond national borders.

Key presentations included:

- **CeOS Project Findings:** Surveys showed strong awareness of citizen science but limited practical implementation.
- **Citizen Science Policy in the Netherlands:** National strategies and funding opportunities were discussed.
- **Citizen Science Network in the Netherlands:** Efforts to formalise collaboration and advocacy for citizen science.
- **Practical Examples:** Projects from Dutch libraries and universities showcased engagement strategies, challenges, and lessons learned.

The discussion emphasised the need for structural support, leadership, and advocacy to integrate citizen science into institutional frameworks. The event also served as a foundation for future collaborations and an upcoming in-person multiplier event in The Hague.

The meeting reinforced the Netherlands' potential as a leader in CeOS, promoting knowledge-sharing and best practices across Europe.