



## Deliverable 3.4

# Establishment of local Citizen Science Education and Support Service

**DRAFT**

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## Executive Summary

This text presents the EUTOPIA TRAIN Citizen Science Education and Support Service [*hereafter* 'CS E&SS'], and the plans for its development alongside and within the EUTOPIA MORE project (12/2022 to 11/2026). It aims to illustrate the ways in which the CS E&SS builds upon the work done in Task 3.4 of the TRAIN project, and how it intends to merge with tasks and milestones in EUTOPIA MORE.

After a list of Task 3.4 activities and tools from the EUTOPIA TRAIN project in chapter 1, the second chapter elaborates on the alliance's approach to come to a common definition of the CS E&SS's main goals, activities and operation. In the third chapter, the objectives are specified in terms of services for researchers, for supporting staff and with an underlying mapping exercise to build and sustain a citizen science community. The practical organization is described in chapter 4, while the 5<sup>th</sup> and final chapter lists the current members (i.e. contact points) in each partner university.

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## 1. Introduction

This is the final deliverable for Task 3.4 (*Stimulation of the linkages between Open Science and Citizens Science*) within work package 3 of the EUTOPIA TRAIN project. Since January 2021, the alliance has been building and expanding a strong citizen science community, supported by training, peer learning opportunities and tools. Setting up a CS E&SS serves as a logical conclusion to this trajectory, consolidating the acquired experience and expertise into one individual division operating within each partner institution of the alliance. More specifically, in a chronological order, these are the milestones and deliverables preceding the establishment of the CS E&SS:

**MS2: Citizen Science Community of Practice (CoP)** created (June 2021):

- Mapping exercise and survey
- Teams environment and newsletter/regular mailings
- [Citizen Science Clinics](#) ( $\pm$  every 6 weeks, excluding July-August-September, 9 in total)

**MS9: Two Citizen Science training sessions** at two partner universities have taken place<sup>1</sup> (May 2022):

- 15/02/2022: UNICA – Eutopia Train webinar & workshop: [“How to engage citizens in your research?”](#)
- 17/05/2022: UNICA – Eutopia Train webinar: [“Successful strategies in applying for citizen science funding”](#)

**D3.3: Online Citizen Science training materials** (June 2022):

[Citizen Science Starters Kit](#) for researchers. By June 2023:

- Revision and update of module 1-3
- Addition of 4<sup>th</sup>, interactive module, including checklists and templates
- Graphic design turning the deliverable into an accessible, practical and user-friendly illustrated guide
- To be confirmed: online e-course by December 2023 at the latest

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<sup>1</sup> The EUTOPIA TRAIN Grant Agreement officially speaks of ‘Two Open Science *peer learning* sessions’ in its description of Milestone 9. However, from the text of the GA itself, it is clear that this milestone is linked to Task 3.4 and thus citizen science. Also, to avoid confusion with actual peer learning sessions (the Citizen Science Clinics for example), we decided to name these webinars for that they actually were, i.e. trainings.

**MS16: Citizen Science dissemination and networking event** (May 2023):

25/05/2023: UNICA – Eutopia Train webinar: [How European University Alliances can support citizen science](#)

The current deliverable is the final one, concluding this list. As the beginning of the CS E&SS marks the ending of the TRAIN project (at least for WP3), this scenario would usually provide a couple of possibilities for the service's continuation. However, as discussed below (cf. chapter 2, '[Approach](#)'), the next EUTOPIA project already started in the meantime, called EUTOPIA MORE. Because of the citizen science activities in MORE still having to be defined, it is not yet 100% clear in what way the CS E&SS will fit in with this project. But it goes without saying that to ensure the sustainability of the CS E&SS, it is key to follow up on evolutions or initiated actions within MORE and try to make the best possible connections.

**Important to note** with regard to the *title* of this deliverable, is the fact that the EUTOPIA TRAIN Grant Agreement describes it as the '**Establishment of local Citizen Science Education and Support Service under GLENN**'. GLENN is a concept valid under EUTOPIA TRAIN, referring to a 'Grants, Legal, and Innovation Office'. This concept might be adapted for the EUTOPIA European University alliance after the TRAIN project ends. At the moment this deliverable is submitted, it is therefore still unsure whether the CS E&SS will continue under the umbrella of GLENN, or not. Because of this reason, the authors choose not to include the reference to GLENN in the title and further description of this deliverable.

## 2. Approach

To get a clear view on **the needs and interests** of the partner universities beyond TRAIN project, and the ways the CS E&SS can align with **current activities and policies** at the individual institutions, the alliance set up a working group. This working group met online for a first time on February 15, 2023. During a *tour de table*, each partner got the chance to answer the following questions:

- What department do you work for and what is your position?
- What activities related to CS are already present at your institution, and how does your work relate to it (if so)?
- What do you expect to gain from these meetings and this deliverable?

The answers have shown that there are different support options available to researchers regarding citizen science at individual EUTOPIA universities. The common commentary was that awareness and adoption of citizen science practices by researchers is relatively low.

Next, the working group defined some **basic principles and points of interest** in order to define the goals and describe the operation of the CS E&SS. For instance, the working group members agreed not wanting to repeat or reproduce the work that has already been done and is accessible in the European citizen science field and community. They also acknowledged the different local contexts and want to find a way to allow each alliance partner to contribute to the CS E&SS according to the means available and the expertise present at the university. Furthermore, it was established that in order to support and encourage citizen science practices in a sustainable way, **the CS E&SS should not exclusively focus on the research community (including junior researchers and students), but also provide training for supporting staff.**

The working group had its second meeting on March 20, 2023. This meeting narrowed the scope and identified the next steps. To start, the working group listed **topics or activities excluded from the CS E&SS**, as they are already being addressed by other European organizations, institutions or projects. For example:

- Serving as a central information and communication channel: there are already numerous websites (e.g. [ECSA](#)), mailing lists and newsletters that centralize important information regarding citizen science
- Join forces to seek opportunities for funding: the CS E&SS can rely on the input of the research grant officers at EUTOPIA's respective member institutions
- Produce additional outputs or resources (tools, guides ...) to the Citizen Science Starter Kit: the focus should rather be on turning this kit into trainings and workshops

In addition, the working group looked at the plans for citizen science within EUTOPIA MORE. To provide continuity and a longer term perspective, we chose to align the CS E&SS with the relevant goals, milestones and deliverables in the next project. In EUTOPIA MORE, citizen science activities will be included within Task 5.3 ('Open Knowledge Advice, Support and Trainings'), linked to MS27: 'Anchoring Open Science in the EUTOPIA communities and expanding the training portfolio' (milestone set for November 2025). This milestone serves 1) to deepen the disciplinary/community-adoption of Open Science practices and 2) the upskilling of researchers and students, thereby adding to the mainstreaming of Open Science across EUTOPIA. More specifically, the intended result would

be an annual scheme of tailor-made advice, support and training for the '**connected communities**': groups of researchers, lecturers and/or students focusing on and working with a specific theme.

### 3. Operational Objectives

The operational objectives are based on careful consideration and reflection from the working group. Considering the common needs and interests from the partners, it appeared that in order for the CS E&SS to get a foothold in EUTOPIA's respective research communities, the **first** thing to do is to target researchers themselves. More specifically: to introduce them to citizen science practices and make them aware of the potential and value of this research methodology. At the start of the discussion was one main question: **How to motivate researchers to embrace citizen science and be more active in it, when appropriate?** It is the crucial question to ensure a durable and solid foundation for the CS E&SS' activities and services.

From this observation, the working group concluded it was necessary to tailor the CS E&SS' service offer both to researchers (and students as potential future researchers) and to supporting staff: after all, the staff members involved in work package 3 of EUTOPIA TRAIN also form a peer learning group in itself, which could, and should, be expanded by sharing good practices and expertise. Not only in 'internal' meetings, but also by turning these practices and experiences into trainings to be offered to fellow supporting staff. Not coincidentally, this intention aligns with the inclusion of 'train the trainer' sessions in the offer developed for Task 5.3/MS27 in EUTOPIA MORE.

#### 3.1.Services for researchers and students

##### 3.1.1.Education

The working group considered the education task to be twofold: it is *not only* to offer education on e.g. how to run successful citizen science projects, or on specific aspects such as communication, ethics, data management ... but in a **broader** sense it is also to educate the research community on the possibilities of citizen science as a research method, raising awareness and interest with the goal of **convincing them of the value of citizen science and motivating them to start a citizen science project.**<sup>2</sup> (Cf. the introduction to chapter 3, '[Operational objectives](#)', and chapter 3.2, '[Services for supporting staff](#)', below.)

Additionally, there should remain a strong focus on **peer learning** as part of citizen science education. Not only because it encourages the exchange of good practices, and is therefore complementary to trainings or info sessions. But also because peer learning provides **networking** possibilities for

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<sup>2</sup> In that sense, 'education' does not seem to be an entirely appropriate or sufficient term, being too 'strong' and suggesting a focus slightly different to what the CS E&SS wishes to work upon. (E.g. including a formal recognition of degrees to be obtained.) But for the sake of uniformity, continuity and clarity, the working group chose to still use the term in this concept note.



researchers and students to form clusters on specific interests or project ideas. (Cf. EUTOPIA MORE's *connected communities*.)

More specifically, the working group envisions the following actions and initiatives to reach these goals:

1) (EUTOPIA MORE) Training

As stated above, the focus will be both on good introductory courses and training with a more specific focus. We will merge the CS E&SS' training with the Open Knowledge/Open Science training in EUTOPIA MORE, wherever there are possibilities to focus on citizen science.<sup>3</sup> The CS E&SS will also draw from EUTOPIA TRAIN's *Citizen Science Starter Kit* (cf. D3.3 presented in chapter 1, '[Introduction](#)'), turning the modules into trainings and workshops.

2) 'Good Practices' Inspirational Events

We will invite project leaders, supporting staff and citizen science experts to share their stories and talk about their successes, blind spots and challenges. This will encourage peer learning and will allow for researchers and students who are rather new to citizen science to gain insights and find motivation. The 2022 edition of the annual ERC event, this time entitled '[Citizen Science and Frontier Research](#)', could hereby be considered as an example for the CS E&SS.

3) Continue the Citizen Science Clinics

The Citizen Science Clinics (cf. MS2 presented in chapter 1, '[Introduction](#)') have proven to be both a solid and flexible format: it can be applied to every topic imaginable without having to change its structure or procedure, it requires a very low effort from participants (no preparation) and is a lively trusted space for exchange and peer learning. The current series within EUTOPIA TRAIN have received mainly positive feedback and gained a loyal participant base over the past two years. However, there is always room for more people to join, and as is indicated below, the CS E&SS intends to include a 'How to run a Citizen Science Clinic' in the 'Train the Trainer' program for supporting staff.

4) Citizen Science Prize

The CS E&SS will explore ways to reward successful citizen science projects within the EUTOPIA alliance. Here, [the European Union Prize for Citizen Science](#) serves as an example, although the working group is of course aware of the limitations that come with operating in a different context (compared to the IMPETUS Project that frames this European Prize). Nonetheless, examples have shown that (financial) rewards and recognition are often very effective to raise awareness, initiate new ideas and explore 'unknown territory'.

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<sup>3</sup> The exact number of Open Science trainings in EUTOPIA MORE that will actually be focusing on (topics related to) citizen science remains still to be determined. This will become clear once the *connected communities* are up and running, probably by January 2024.

### 3.1.2.Support

In the next phase, the CS E&SS will have to find out **which type of support is needed**. It is important to tailor the offer to the most difficult issues the EUTOPIA research community is dealing with regarding citizen science. The members of the CS E&SS will discuss the best way to gather the necessary insights during the first meeting. This discussion will also take into account the possibility of **a combined strategy with the mapping exercise** (cf. chapter 3.3, '[Mapping](#)', below). The idea is to elaborate on the survey sent out in 2021<sup>4</sup>, when the EUTOPIA Community of Practice on citizen science was established by 6 partners, and expand it to the 10 partners. The CS E&SS can also use the topics discussed in, or suggested for, the Citizen Science Clinics (2022-2023) as resources. Given the alignment with EUTOPIA MORE (Task 5.3/MS27), the support will most likely be **tailored to a large extent, but not exclusively, to the thematic focus and research questions of EUTOPIA's connected communities**. (This is particularly relevant to point 1 below, on the SPOC's.)

The CS E&SS will provide:

1) One SPOC (Single Point of Contact) at each partner university to address questions

During the preparatory meetings in the spring of 2023, the working groups recognized that however relevant and useful, trainings or peer learning workshops might not suffice when it comes to the encouragement and support of actual citizen science activities and projects. In case researchers or students are relatively new to citizen science, and/or meet unforeseen challenges, they might have specific questions or needs that cannot be met by attending (recurrent) events. They should be able to ask for help from their university's CS E&SS, which should therefore function a single point of contact (SPOC) within the institution.

Taking up this role would also encourage peer learning amongst the CS E&SS members of all partner universities, helping each other out with useful suggestions and ideas. Indeed, given that the EUTOPIA-wide, overarching CS E&SS service is basically a network/working group, the members are not at all expected to provide support and answers to the researchers' question all alone, by themselves. A considerable part of the CS E&SS meetings will therefore be dedicated to the questions the members have received by researchers, students or administrative staff in their capacity as SPOC. (Cf. chapter 4, '[Practical organization](#)', below.) Urgent questions can be examined by the CS E&SS members via Slack or the chat function in MS Teams. Additional expertise related to citizen science (e.g. ethical or legal issues, data management, funding calls ...) is often already present within the partner universities, and CS E&SS members could count upon other support services colleagues' input and support as well.

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<sup>4</sup> People involved in EUTOPIA TRAIN should be able to access the survey's report via [this link](#) to the project's Sharepoint.

## 2) Specific resources on how to introduce citizen science in courses and work with students

A lot of researchers also engage in teaching, the one practice influencing the other and vice versa. As a consequence, supporting staff already working in public engagement, outreach and societal impact often apply **an integrated approach**, focusing on both research and education, amongst other academic activities. Similarly, it was decided in the preparatory meetings that the CS E&SS should equally focus on the work with students, in order for citizen science to become more attractive and accessible within EUTOPIA's partner institutions. For example, NOVA's [Master in Science Communication](#) or the [Master in Scientific Research and Communication](#) at the University of Warwick could perhaps include some citizen science approaches.

Indeed, if students can contribute to citizen science projects while having a meaningful learning experience, the 'research team' basically expands, widening the possibilities or at least entailing a reduced workload. However, it can be challenging to keep this 'construction' a balanced one, ensuring profit for all parties (staff, students and stakeholders). To support this integrated approach, **the CS E&SS will offer extra support**, by providing links to available (online) resources, and possibly by including this topic in the training offer, as the theme of a workshop. As most EUTOPIA MORE's *connected communities* include research and teaching activities, it makes sense to provide an integrated support to those connected communities related to citizen science, elaborating on the inclusion of citizen science practices in the courses as well.

## 3.2. Services for supporting staff

While citizen science practices are gaining in importance in the European research policies, and in some national/regional policies, the actual situation might be dissimilar in different countries, regions and institutions. Sometimes, citizen science still suffers the reputation of an 'inferior' range of research, delivering lower quality results and/or data.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, supporting staff or research managers are not all (yet) familiar with citizen science. The CS E&SS wants to address this challenge by **providing supporting staff with the means, tools and trainings to first raise awareness of and interest in citizen science, and then, as a second (or simultaneous) step, to support citizen science within their respective universities.**

More concretely, the ideas for the 'Train the Trainer' sessions to be developed, currently include the following topics:

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<sup>5</sup> Balázs, B., Mooney, P., Nováková, E., Bastin, L., Jokar Arsanjani, J. (2021). Data Quality in Citizen Science. In: , *et al.* The Science of Citizen Science. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-58278-4\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-58278-4_8) / Fritz S, See L and Grey F (2022) The grand challenges facing environmental citizen science. *Front. Environ. Sci.* 10:1019628. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fenvs.2022.1019628> / Ekström, B. (2023), "Thousands of examining eyes: credibility, authority and validity in biodiversity citizen science data production", *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 149-170. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-10-2021-0292>

- How to raise awareness on citizen science?
- How to run a Citizen Science Clinic? (cf. MS2 presented in chapter 1, '[Introduction](#)')
  - What elements to look for/pay attention to when supporting a citizen science project proposal?
- Workshops based on the Citizen Science Starters Kit (cf. D3.3 presented in chapter 1, '[Introduction](#)')
  -

The sessions for supporting staff will build upon the work done and experience gained during the EUTOPIA TRAIN project. **The CS E&SS plans for these 'Train the Trainer' sessions to also coincide, when suitable, with the EUTOPIA MORE planning for Task 5.3/MS27.**<sup>6</sup> Additionally, within the European citizen science community (and, by expansion, the global one), there are already interesting resources available on the topic,<sup>7</sup> ready to be used by the CS E&SS for developing these training sessions.

### 3.3.Mapping

Ideally, a European University Alliance such as EUTOPIA is instrumental in making sure that experience in citizen science is not only built and expanded within the individual partner universities, but also **shared and nourished within a larger academic network**. The CS E&SS considers the support of this process to be one of its main tasks. In order to encourage fruitful connections and both inter- and trans-university collaborations, it is crucial that the local CS E&SS members **identify** researchers, supporting staff and research managers interested and/or experienced in citizen science, as well as ongoing citizen science activities at their universities.

To reach this goal, the CS E&SS will set up **a continuous mapping exercise**. The members of the CS E&SS are expected to each **report** on their progress at every bi-monthly meeting, to inform the other members and **explore joint opportunities for peer learning, exchange and collaboration** (cf. chapter 4, '[Practical organization](#)'). How to conduct and organize this mapping exercise will be discussed in the first CS E&SS meeting. The exercise that took place in 2021 to launch EUTOPIA TRAIN's Community of Practice (cf. MS2 presented in chapter 1, '[Introduction](#)') could serve as a **starting point** to develop an efficient approach with a feasible workload. Additionally, the focus could be expanded to stakeholders outside the university, e.g. project partners, policy makers, or supporting organizations such as [Scivil](#) in Flanders. Of course, this mapping exercise will also have to take **EUTOPIA MORE's connected communities** into account. Being organized according to topic, they will provide a direct link to **networks within the alliance** possibly focusing on and working with themes related to citizen science (or, by expansion, open science).

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. the previous footnote: the exact number of these sessions linked to citizen science will be confirmed by next year.

<sup>7</sup> For example, to name a few: <https://eu-citizen.science/resource/143>; or <https://humility.cornell.edu/train-the-trainer/> (coming from <https://humility.cornell.edu/citizen-science-training/>).

## 4. Practical organization

The CS E&SS will consist of **at least one member** of each of the six original partner universities involved in EUTOPIA TRAIN. Of course, more people are welcome to join – each partner university can delegate as many staff members as they want. Also, since the launch of the EUTOPIA TRAIN project, the EUTOPIA European University Alliance has expanded with four more partner universities. All ten partners are engaged in EUTOPIA MORE. Given the alignment of the CS E&SS, where possible, with EUTOPIA MORE, colleagues from these new partner universities will be invited to join the CS E&SS as well. This will happen once WP3 for EUTOPIA TRAIN is finished and the CS E&SS is officially launched.

**Every two months**, there will be an **online meeting** of the members of the CS E&SS. Typical **agenda**:

- Go over last meetings minutes and action list;
- Citizen science projects or expertise within the partner universities: look for synergies and possible collaborations based on continuous mapping exercise;
- Pending questions the research community directed to the CS E&SS, to gather input from the other members (if not solved yet);
- Challenges the members experience in running the CS E&SS within their institution;
- Reflect on past training/events and discuss upcoming training/events;
- Allocating rotating responsibilities and tasks (see below).

To **start**, during the **first** meeting (which will most likely take place between October and November 2023, tbc), partners will discuss

- What they can specifically **contribute** from within their respective universities. If the expertise in citizen science appears to be rather modest or limited, the CS E&SS members will discuss other options together (e.g. additional financial support for the CS E&SS's activities, provide contributions from external experts).
- The best way to **gather information** on the research communities' needs and FAQ's (cf. supra), integrated in **the launch of the mapping exercise**.

To ensure a balanced and efficient organization, the members will alternately take on **different tasks and responsibilities**. These will be assigned at the end of each meeting, for the next gathering. Such as:

- Keeping the meeting notes and action list, and sending these out afterwards;
- Meeting chair: preparation of the agenda and discussion points, taking the lead during the meeting, setting the date for the next meeting;
- Communication: website, social media etc. (in collaboration with CYU) according to planning (so possibly not necessary every two months);
- Organization of events, trainings or peer learning sessions: this will not necessarily alternate every two months, but is rather regarded as a shared responsibility, with the expectations that for each event, another partner will take the lead (possibly with another partner as co-host).

Every 12 months, the meeting will be extended and dedicated to a thorough self-**evaluation** and **reflection** exercise. If necessary, adaptations of or additions to the current functioning and activities will be implemented.

## 5. Current members

### 5.1.Original EUTOPIA TRAIN consortium

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### 5.2.Other members of the EUTOPIA alliance

Not part of the EUTOPIA TRAIN project, but part of the EUTOPIA MORE project.

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UBB	T.B.C.	T.B.C.
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