

Gamification

Can increase number of citizens, number of contributions, short-term and long-term engagement, and increases participation of specific groups.

Gamification can have positive results on participation and motivation, but can also lead to mixed or neutral results. When implementing gamification elements, be mindful of how they might bias the results: generally they do not increase the quality of the data.

Score-based systems that are personalised with individual goals are generally better rather than a leaderboard, which can make new and infrequent participants feel overwhelmed and discouraged. It is generally advised to use collective, intrinsic and progression-based gamification elements.

Below you can find more practical tips.

Launch competitions with a prize

Organise a "soft contest", just for fun/joy on the way!

Score points for schools

Use avatars and personal profiles

Provide instant feedback

Include personalised instant messages, tailored to quantify each participant's environmental or social impact

Appreciation and importance

Can increase quality, quantity, and long-term engagement.

Appreciating participants and acknowledging the importance of their work can lead to increased contributions from participants. You can acknowledge the importance of participants' individual work or stress the importance of the project.

Ways to do this are to give feedback, to acknowledge participants in the dissemination of results, or to give participants more responsibility. Below you can find more practical tips.

Communicate, co-own the attention resources of your project with your participants

Pay attention to visual communication graphic design

Gather testimonials and promote them on social media

Establish a contract, write a mission and vision

Social content messages from the project team

Use social media to promote the project

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Self-efficacy

Can increase quality, quantity, long-term engagement, short-term engagement, and increases participation of everyone.

Participants can have anxiety about performing their tasks correctly. Anxiety about being accurate, smart enough, capable leads to fewer contributions or even stopping. Citizen science projects can alleviate this anxiety by increasing self-efficacy. Ways to do this are to make people feel like they are doing a good job, by giving them clear instructions in tutorials etc., to let them know it is ok to make mistakes, and to allow them to flag uncertainty when doing their tasks. Below you can find practical tips

Develop training sessions

Have a support desk

Be clear about expected skills required and provide a free trial

Be aware of political context of the project

Frame the task carefully - give clear instructions and reassurance around level of knowledge/experience required.

Citizen Science participation roadmap ACTION

This tool is meant for anyone who wants to increase participation in a citizen science project. It supports developing strategies for increasing participation, as well as practical advice on how to implement these strategies.

The first step is to look closer at what type of participation you are hoping to increase.

Participation in citizen-science projects can be of several types:

Short-term	long-term
It can be short-term or long-term participation. A citizen can solve one folding puzzle on the online platform Zooniverse, or they can count butterflies once a month for nine years.	
More citizens	More contributions
Increased participation can mean more citizens, or more contributions per citizen. When a project manager wants to increase the number of observations of plastic waste, they can focus on attracting more volunteers, or on stimulating every volunteer to increase their observations (or both).	
Quality	Quantity
Next to increasing the quantity of participation, a citizen science project might also want to increase the quality of contributions, for example by increasing the accuracy of the measurements of air pollution that the citizen record.	
Specific groups	Anyone
Last, project managers might be interested to increase participation of specific groups, rather than of anyone. For example, a project might want to attract more young people, or increase participation of people living in a specific neighbourhood.	

These types of participation connect to different strategies - follow the arrows to find out more about the strategies and the practical advice that other citizen science organisations and researchers have given.

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Project framing and recruiting

Can increase quality, quantity, and long-term engagement.

Finding the right framing for your project can increase participation by helping you to find the right audience. Try to formulate what the problems, goals, moral evaluation, and messages of the project are.

Recruitment strategies are important, and also very dependent on the kind of framing of your project. Examples of ways to recruit citizens is through citizen science platforms, by word of mouth, or by involving other institutes and organisations.

Good project framing and recruiting can also lead to more appreciation and a sense of importance of the participants.

Below you can find more practical tips.

Involve other organisations who are doing a similar project

Actively recruit in a wide range of spaces

Increase local grassroots engagement sending personal contact and new ones

Diversity and accessibility

Can increase quality, quantity, long-term engagement, more citizens, and increases participation of everyone, as well as specific groups.

The "average" participant of a citizen science project is older, highly educated, male or female depending on the project, white, from Europe or Northern America, and able-bodied.

Increasing diversity and accessibility can lead to increased participation: accessibility in terms of location, language, finances, technology, and the level of knowledge required.

One way to do this is to connect scientific questions and practices to community priorities, values, and norms. Below you can find more practical tips

Engage local grassroots organisations

Project users to the future, shaping their life thanks to the project

Build an identity for your project by choosing a name, choosing a logo, making a uniform with these logos, creating a playlist

Make tools as user-friendly and tech-accessible as possible

Have regular meetings with food

Stimulate learning by doing

Design a help forum (e.g. for peer support)

Social interaction

Can increase quality, quantity, long-term engagement, more contributions, and increases participation of everyone, as well as specific groups.

Although social factors are not always the most significant motivation for participating, it can be a significant motivation for a portion of participants. Lack of social interaction can also be a reason to stop participating.

Social interaction in a citizen science project has two main forms: between participants and project coordinators or among participants. Newcomers observing longer term participants is an important aspect in them becoming full participants, because it allows them to determine if they want to participate, and how to participate in the community, and is critical for participants transitioning to longer term engagement.

Below you can find more practical tips.

Set up a peer support from more involved participants

Keep in touch with the expert via a forum

Include training sessions

Have a support desk