



Developing metrics and instruments to evaluate citizen science impacts on the environment and society

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	Partner	Earthwatch			
Abstract (for dissemination)	A website has been developed as a web-based platform for external communication and dissemination. This includes providing public access to project research and activities, reports and presentations, as well as published electronic newsletters.				
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1 Executive Summary

A project website [mics.tools] has been developed for MICS to allow wide communication and outreach of the project.

The development process was led by Earthwatch in collaboration with all consortium partners, whose input and feedback were invaluable in determining the domain name, visual identity and content.

The website hosts a summary of information and resources about the project and can be easily adapted by the MICS consortium to accommodate any changes required as the project progresses, for example to incorporate the MICS toolbox platform.



2 Introduction

At this early stage (M3) in the MICS project a brochure website is needed for engagement and communication with stakeholders. However, the website will ultimately host the platform for the MICS toolbox. The integration of the toolbox will take place as Work Packages 2 & 3 develop.

As leaders of D5.7 Project Website, Earthwatch agreed to build the website in house, utilising the expertise within the Earthwatch IT team. The aims were to create a website that:

- represented the project and satisfied all consortium partners;
- had the required communications functionality; and
- could easily be adapted by the project team to accommodate progression of the MICS project.

A development process was followed (see section 3) to deliver the final results (see section 4).

3 Development process

An initial meeting was held between the MICS project and IT teams at Earthwatch to determine the process and requirements for website development. It was agreed that the site map, visual identity and content would be prepared by the project team by the end of January 2019, before the IT team started the build in February 2019. An initial draft of the website would then be shared in early March and allow for several iterations, considering internal and wider consortium feedback, before launch.

3.1 Domain name

This was determined in consultation with the consortium. The partners were asked for their suggestions, which were then collated, and checked for availability (via <https://instantdomainsearch.com/>). The suggestions were as follows:

- mics.tools
- mi-citsci.eu
- mics-h2020.eu
- mics-h2020project.eu

These were then shared with the partners, who were asked to rank them in order of preference. Unfortunately, no clear preference was demonstrated from the rankings and so, Luigi Ceccaroni, as Scientific Coordinator took the final decision to use “mics.tools”. This domain was purchased from website hosting service 1&1.

3.2 Site map

The site map for the website was designed to be simple and easy to follow. Other EU project websites (such as <http://www.monocle-h2020.eu>) were used as examples to inform the final arrangement, which is as follows:

- Home page
 - About
 - Team
 - Advisory Board
 - Partners
 - Workplan
 - Deliverables



- Project Impact
- Privacy Policy
- News
- Resources
- Citizen Science
- Nature Based Solutions
- Contact

3.3 Visual Identity

The MICS logo and visual identity were key components of the development of the website. They were designed by first agreeing a creative brief with the consortium, which summarised the project objectives, audiences and the type of logo we were looking for (combined word and image, suitable for vertical and horizontal use, a good fit with partner logos, which are mainly blue and black) (see Appendix I).

We uploaded the creative brief and a cover note to a website called Upwork [<https://www.upwork.com/>], from which you can hire freelance graphic designers at a reasonable rate. Numerous designers responded to our brief and the Earthwatch team selected one based on his reviews and portfolio, which matched what we were looking for.

Several ideas were proposed by the designer and the consortium ranked these in order of preference. The preferences were unanimously in favour of one logo in particular, although some tweaks were suggested. Once the feedback was taken on board and the logo updated, the designer prepared several versions for our use (vertical, horizontal, icon only, light/dark/transparent backgrounds), alongside a very simple brand guide (see Appendix II) detailing fonts and pantones, and a PowerPoint template.

This visual identity was then used in the development of the website design.

3.4 Content

The content was largely taken from the *description of action* (DoA), Annex 1 to the EC Grant Agreement, which was then adapted to make it more engaging and accessible for a public audience.

All public MICS Deliverables, the project factsheet and several versions of the MICS logo are available to download on the website – see Resources page – [<https://mics.tools/resources>]

A twitter feed and links to all MICS project social media accounts ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#)) are displayed on every page in the footer. In addition, the Mailchimp account for newsletter management has also been embedded.

Images were provided by River Restoration Centre, except for the Team photos, which were provided by individuals.

The privacy policy was developed in line with D6.1 and D6.2.

The cookie policy was developed by the Earthwatch IT team in line with standard practice.

Acknowledgement of the EU funding is incorporated as per the guidelines in the EC Grant Agreement and displayed on every page in the footer.



Training has been provided for the Earthwatch project team in the relevant Content Management System (CMS) so that content changes, as the project progresses, can be managed efficiently. More significant adaptations will be managed by the Earthwatch IT team as appropriate.

3.5 Technical specification

The website was built using “Yootheme”, as the templating system, and “Joomla”, as the CMS.

A security certificate has been purchased to secure the connection and ensure that when people browse the site, any information shared is protected.

The website has been optimised for mobiles and tablets.

The website has built-in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) with the appropriate key words in the heading tags and background code.

3.6 Iteration

An initial draft of the website was produced by the IT team with several rounds of feedback and amendment provided by the Earthwatch MICS project team. A subsequent draft was then shared with the consortium for input. Feedback from the consortium was positive, although there was a feeling that the visual identity had not quite been captured at this stage. This feedback was acknowledged and some changes were made to the design to improve the visual identity; there was a shift in the predominant colours used (from navy and white with blue accents, to navy with white and turquoise accents); and the design of the icons on the homepage was simplified.

The final version of the website was accepted and the site made live.

4 Project website images

The website can be viewed at <https://mics.tools/> but screen grabs of the website as at 25/03/2019 can be seen below in the same order as the site map list (see Section 3.2).



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Measuring Impact of Citizen Science

Developing metrics and instruments to evaluate citizen-science impacts on the environment and society


Methodologies & Metrics


Toolbox & Visualisation


Test & Validation

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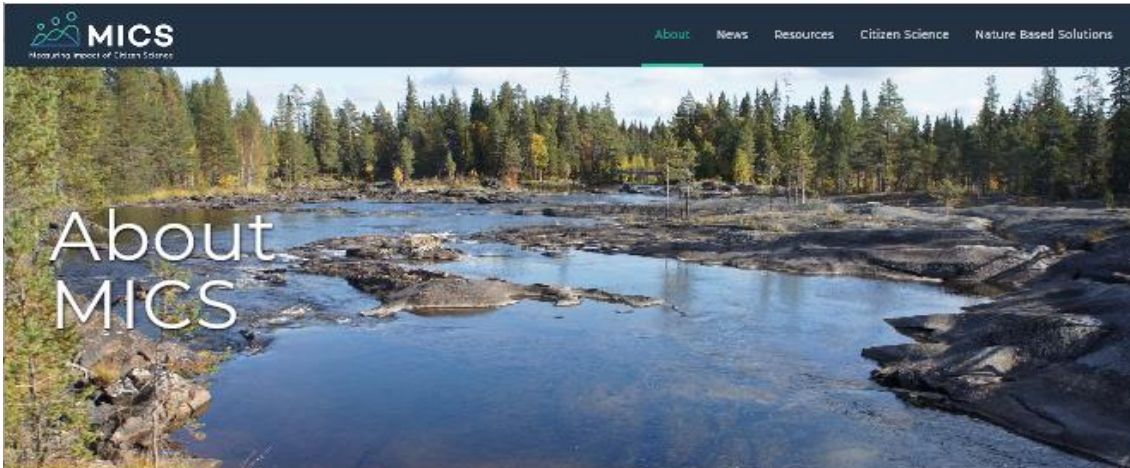
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About MICS

Overview

MICS brings together six partners from across Europe to develop an integrated platform of metrics and instruments to measure costs and benefits of citizen science in relation to Nature Based Solutions (NBS). These metrics will consider the impacts on society, democracy, the economy, the science related to NBS, citizen-science projects themselves and the individual citizen scientists involved in the activities. They will be validated by piloting them in four test sites across Europe, resulting in a comprehensive conceptual framework and clear recommendations for those involved in citizen science projects.

Objectives

- Provide comprehensive, participatory and inclusive metrics and instruments to evaluate citizen science impacts
- Implement an impact-assessment knowledge-base through toolboxes for methods application, information visualisation, and delivery to decision makers, citizens and researchers
- Improve the effectiveness of nature-based solutions through test-site development and citizen-science tool validation
- Generate new approaches that strengthen the role of citizen science in supporting research and development
- Foster a citizen-science approach to increase the extent to which scientific evidence is taken up by policy makers through recommendations and guidelines

Useful Links

- [TEAM](#) [WORKPLAN](#) [DELIVERABLES](#) [PROJECT IMPACT](#)

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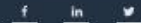
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Workplan

Methods for measuring citizen science impact

led by IRE DaRI

- To adapt or develop impact measurement indicators related to citizen science to be implemented in the toolbox and used in the pilot activities.
- To create a set of indicators for determining citizen science impacts and their relevance for NRBs.
- To create a set of hypotheses in different languages related to the NRB activities.
- To develop a conceptual framework based on the above mentioned set of indicators.
- To update the conceptual framework based on citizens' needs, actions and pilot case findings for the use of the indicators in case studies.
- To research the collected or possible best or novel related concepts of knowledge.
- To set up the project knowledge base.

Toolboxes for methods application, information visualisation and delivery to decision makers, citizens, and researchers

led by GeoToolster

- To define a proof of concept for a toolbox of methods based on the indicators and methods developed in the toolbox for the activities of NRBs, based on the methods developed in WCC.
- To adapt or develop tools and technologies for measuring the impact of citizen science in a NRB context based on WCC.
- To adapt or develop tools and technologies for peer reviewing.
- To demonstrate a non-proprietary learning model for integrating NRB activities and citizen science across Europe.
- To develop the MICS platform on which the toolboxes will run.
- To adapt or develop toolboxes for web and mobile devices related to the toolboxes.
- To develop and integrate the MICS platform, including data visualisation and information navigation, as well as user applications.
- To deliver the complete integrated solution, including components developed by WCC (e.g. ICA, MICS corpus of knowledge), to various single operators that can be accessed by end-users.

Test-site development and tool validation

led by RRC

- To design, develop and organise the pilot testing of project tools at four test and validation sites covering the pilot.
- To evaluate the pilot with respect to citizen science, and to the content of evidence-based actions.
- To create a citizen science model for NRB research.
- To demonstrate viable the usability of the consolidated corpus of knowledge for the expert community by sharing with researchers and innovation, policy, implementation and education in NRBs.
- To support the organisation of international pilot testing activities to discuss the results of the research.

Dissemination and outreach

led by Earthwatch

- To create opportunities to present NRB activities.
- To improve the citizen science engagement practices.
- To inform the future users of the results and findings of the project, and of how they can be effectively used and by whom.
- To inform a broad range of relevant stakeholders on the progress and results of the project and to extend MICS research results and the consortium into European research and policy-making activities.
- To update concepts of citizen science for a broad community of stakeholders and to share knowledge on relevant case studies and development tools.
- To engage the community of stakeholders in the evaluation of citizen science.
- To build and share knowledge regarding citizen science activities in the consortium.
- To produce a set of policy recommendations for citizen scientists.
- To produce a set of policy recommendations for NRBs.
- To publish the outputs.

DELIVERABLES

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Data Ethics and Data Governance



Our Deliverables over 3 Years

Deliverable	Lead Partner	Delivery Date	Download
Project Scoreboard and progress indicators	Berthwisch	Jan 2019	↓
Project Management Handbook	Berthwisch	Jan 2019	↓
Project factsheet	Berthwisch	Jan 2019	↓
Quarterly newsletters, social media posts and updates	AAWA	Jan 2019	↓
Report about identified research results ready for review	Geonardo	Mar 2019	
Project website	Berthwisch	Mar 2019	
Strategic plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results (PDR)	Berthwisch	Apr 2019	
Report on the technical requirements	Berthwisch	May 2019	
Open peer reviewed report on NBS science	Geonardo	May 2019	
The MICS repository	Berthwisch	Dec 2019	
Report detailing impact-assessment methods adapted to citizen science	IHE Delft	Jan 2020	
MICS corpus of knowledge	IHE Delft	Feb 2020	
A multilingual ontology	Berthwisch	Feb 2020	
Impact-assessment methods adapted to citizen science	IHE Delft	Jun 2020	
Participatory, adaptive, personal led, information-delivery web platform, period-1 prototype (P1P)	GeoBotMar	Jun 2020	
Relevant themes assigned to citizens	GeoBotMar	Dec 2020	
NBS science briefs	RRC	Dec 2020	
Report on pilot testing in the Central and Eastern Europe region (CE)	GeoBotMar	Dec 2020	
Report on pilot testing in the Southern Europe region (SE)	AAWA	Dec 2020	
Report on pilot testing in the Central and Eastern Europe region (NE)	Geonardo	Dec 2020	
Report on pilot testing in the Western Europe region (WE)	RRC	Dec 2020	
Tool box for citizen science research accompanying documentation report	Berthwisch	Dec 2020	
Recommendations about the assessment of the impact of citizen science	IHE Delft	Jan 2021	
A final led version of the conceptual framework	IHE Delft	Jan 2021	
Citizen-science model for impact-evaluation research	AAWA	Aug 2021	
Participatory, adaptive, personal led, information-delivery web platform, period-2 prototype (P2P)	GeoBotMar	Sep 2021	
Comprehensive evaluation report	RRC	Sep 2021	
Recommendations about the impact of citizen science on the science related to nature-based solutions	Berthwisch	Sep 2021	
Videos and podcasts presenting the general and region-specific recommendations	Berthwisch	Oct 2021	

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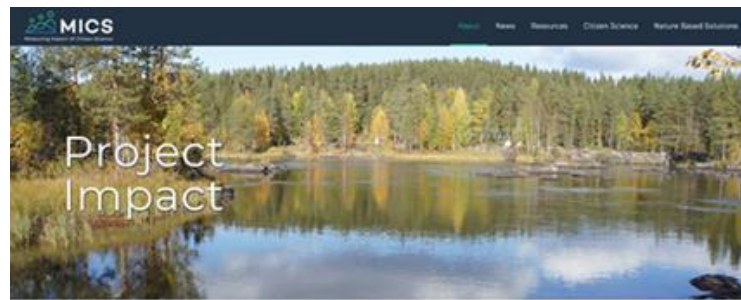
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Project Impact

Development of new knowledge and innovations by citizen scientists.

In the short term, the project will engage citizens in the development of new knowledge and innovations in the context of Nature Based Solutions. Open participation processes provide enormous potential to facilitate engagement of local communities in Nature Based Solutions (NBS) projects while also increasing capacity for standardized monitoring and scientific research to increase the evidence base for developing effective NBS.

Availability of evaluation data concerning the societal, democratic and economic costs and benefits of citizen science

In the long term, the project will make efforts to evaluate the impacts of citizen science on society, democracy, the economy, the science related to NBS, the science of citizen-science, and the attitudes and behaviours of the participating citizen scientists in the following specific areas:

- Creating policies that support NBS.
- Provide funding for NBS.
- Creating effective plans for NBS.
- Clarifying policies and suitable projects.
- Communicating the benefits.
- Improving the connection among citizens to environmental issues and scientific research.



Measurement of impact

MICS will consider an extensive set of indicators to generate a framework that can be used as a reference in all kinds of citizen science NBS interventions in impact assessment will become the reference for other scientific institutions in citizen-science research which want to include a wide array of societal actors.

Many policies taking into account citizen science can suffer from potential failure because of a lack of scientific evidence of its impact. This will change when the scientific community develops of a well-founded evidence model and toolset.

MICS will enable researchers and policy makers to carry out and report upon and evaluate projects involving agents of change within the society, and therefore will facilitate a paradigmatic change in citizen-science research towards a more robust monitoring of its impact.

Objectives according to the Lisbon Treaty

The Lisbon Treaty states in its Article 17: "The institutions shall do everything necessary to ensure that citizens and representative associations have the opportunity to make their views and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union activity".

Opening NBS research and providing citizens tools to participate will contribute to the compliance with Article 17, where "Institutions" means the European institutions (Parliament, Council and Commission). MICS demonstrates the potential for nature-based solutions.

More efficient and effective citizen-science research

The set of methods, concepts and tools for citizen science produced by MICS will enable to carry out impact assessments with a robustness which is currently not available.



Benefit for citizen science

Citizen science will benefit from a demonstrated extension to challenges in impact assessment, and will be developed in countries where it had not to be taken into account (i.e., Hungary, Romania).

Better use of European taxpayers' money

Clearly assessing citizen science impact in relation to the expectations and desires of the target populations could prove to be a crucial source of more legitimate and informed policies, which means a better targeted use of taxpayers' money. The lack of scientific evidence is reduced, policies grounded in independent, legitimate impact assessment are possible.

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Who we are

Details of the project partners and lead can be found at <https://mics.tools/about-mics/partners> and <https://mics.tools/contact> respectively.

MICS is lead by Earthwatch Institute (Europe). Earthwatch Institute (Europe) is the operating name of the Conservation Education and Research Trust, a charity registered in England and Wales with number 1094467, and Company number 4373313. We are a data controller and are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office Z8787682.

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When we collect your personal data we will make it clear to you which data is necessary in connection with a particular service. The law on data protection sets out a number of different reasons for which a company may collect and process your personal data, including:

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In specific situations, we can collect and process your data with your consent, e.g. when you subscribe to our project newsletter or make an enquiry.

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In certain circumstances we need your personal data to comply with our contractual obligations, e.g. if you are a project stakeholder we may need to get in touch with you.

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- Contact us by any means with queries, feedback, requests for information, complaints, etc.
- Fill in forms or applications, e.g. through our website
- Complete any surveys we send you
- Download data and information from our website
- Give any third party permission to share personal data they hold about you with us

We may also collect data from publicly available sources, where the information is made public as a matter of law, or when you have given your consent to share information. For example, before we enter into a contract or partnership with you we may need to carry out appropriate due diligence checks.


Examples of Personal Data we collect


We may collect both identifiable and anonymous information, depending on our relationship with you.

Identifiable Information

- If you subscribe to our newsletter we will collect your name and e-mail address.
- If you fill out and submit an enquiry/feedback form on our website, we will collect your name, e-mail address and message to respond to your query.
- If you interact with us via social media we will use your contact details to help us respond to your comments, questions or feedback.
- We may collect notes from our conversations and any correspondence between us on this project.
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News


MICS update coming soon.

Twitter Updates

-  MICSProject Luigi Ceccaroni, @Earthwatch_Eur, presents MICS @MICSproject at #citsci2019; announces the possibility to register... twitter.com/lweb/status/1171111111
2 weeks ago, via Twitter Web Client · 3 retweets · 0 likes
-  MICSProject facebook.com/permalink.php?..
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Project Logo

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Deliverables

All of the project deliverables are public and available below.

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Factsheet

The project factsheet is provided below.

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Citizen science at the forefront

Citizen science (CS) is "work undertaken by civic educators together with citizen communities to advance science, foster a broad scientific mentality, and/or encourage democratic engagement, which allows society to deal rationally with complex modern problems". A range of in-situ observatories, based on citizens' own devices (e.g. phones, tablets, computers) and social media, generate new and original applications that have the potential to improve the efficacy and sustainability of novel territorial solutions and regulatory actions by increasing information as well as the participation of novel partnerships between the private sector, public bodies, NGOs and citizens.

MICS innovation

Citizen science is emerging as an important mechanism for informing policy. However, neither policy makers nor scientists currently have enough empirical evidence on how MICS citizen science contributes to scientific discoveries and benefits society overall. Innovative approaches and a more diverse array of citizen-science evaluation-tools are needed to plan and implement projects in ways that lead to more powerful scientific outcomes and subsequent impacts. To explore these approaches and develop these tools (frameworks, guidelines, recommendations and applications), the MICS project will focus on an interdisciplinary priority area of scientific enquiry where citizen science can be at the forefront, known as nature-based solutions (NBSs).

The project will research new solutions for evaluating social and environmental impacts of citizen science, using models from NBSs as frameworks to do so.

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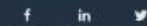
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What are the benefits?

Nature-based solutions (NBSs) are defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as "actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits". NBSs are growing in importance and range, and have become a priority for urban and rural planners. NBSs cover a whole range of ecosystem-related approaches, viz:

- Ecosystem restoration approaches;
- Issue-specific ecosystem-related approaches;
- Infrastructure-related approaches;
- Ecosystem-based management approaches; and
- Ecosystem protection approaches.

The NBS Concept

Building on and supporting other closely related concepts, such as the ecosystem approach, ecosystem services, ecosystem-based adaptation/mitigation, and green and blue infrastructure. They all recognise the importance of nature and require a systemic approach to environmental change based on an understanding of the structure and functioning of ecosystems, including human actions and their consequences. NBSs, however, have a distinctive set of premises:

- Some societal challenges stem from human activities that have failed to recognise ecological limitations
- Sustainable alternatives to those activities can be found by looking to nature for design and process knowledge.

They therefore involve the innovative application of knowledge about nature, inspired and supported by nature, and they maintain and enhance natural capital. They are positive responses to societal challenges, and can have the potential to simultaneously meet environmental, social and economic objectives.

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6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix I: MICS visual identity creative brief

Project Name	MICS
Slogan/Tagline	Developing metrics and instruments to evaluate citizen science impacts on the environment and society
Key words	Technology focussed. Environment. People. Public engagement. Participatory/Participation. Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)
Project Description	<p>The MICS project brings together a transdisciplinary team to address a scientific and policy priority area where citizen science has the potential to promote a paradigm shift. Nature-based solutions (NBSs) are actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges and provide human well-being. NBSs have increasingly become policy and planning objectives, but major knowledge gaps in NBSs science have hindered their implementation and acceptance. This is largely due to a lack of locally specific information about the influence of: climate, location, condition and management on NBS function and impact. Furthermore, the sustainability of NBSs often depends on the perceptions and needs of stakeholders, including user groups, local communities, conservation bodies, farmers, land managers, policy makers and practitioners. Due to their systemic complexity and embedding in local context, NBSs offer a unique potential for citizen science to make a major contribution. The MICS project will support NBS research by developing strategies and tools to evaluate impacts on science and society resulting from the integration of citizen science. These tools will foster citizen science approaches that increase both scientific knowledge, and how scientific evidence is taken up by communities and policy makers.</p> <p>MICS will use novel impact-assessment metrics and instruments that measure costs and benefits of citizen science in relation to the NBSs, with particular attention in the domains of society; democracy; the economy; NBS science, and citizen scientists. These instruments will be grounded in a comprehensive conceptual framework and integrated into an open platform following rigorous validation in key pilot sites along a West-East EU axis. This will test the applicability of the MICS impact-assessment tools in regions with differing opportunities and constraints for NBSs, and with different levels of citizen science uptake.</p>
Objectives	<p>O1. Provide comprehensive, participatory and inclusive metrics and instruments to evaluate citizen science impacts</p> <p>O2. Implement an impact-assessment knowledge-base through toolboxes for methods application, information visualisation, and delivery to decision makers, citizens and researchers</p> <p>O3. Improve the effectiveness of NBSs through test-site development and citizen science tool validation</p> <p>O4. Generate new approaches that strengthen the role of citizen science in supporting research and development</p> <p>O5. Foster a citizen-science approach to increase the extent to which scientific evidence is taken up by policy makers through recommendations and guidelines</p>
Values	Excellence, Rigor, Innovative, Accessible, Openness, Legitimacy



Target Audience(s)	Primary – European organisations employing citizen science techniques – usually NGOs, academic institutions, public authorities Secondary – Citizen scientists, Funders, General public, Worldwide organisations employing citizen science techniques
Preferred Logo Type (see here)	Combination Mark – the letters MICS and a graphic
Preferred Style (e.g. vintage, minimal)	Minimal, simple, clean. Future facing but not futuristic. Some soft/curved lines – not too geometric/harsh looking. The following wording could be used to expand the letters: Measuring Impact in Citizen Science
Logo use	Throughout the project in multiple media formats. Largely on the project website, in presentations, documents, banners, social media
Preferred Logo Orientation (eg vertical or horizontal, or both)	The logo will largely be used in a horizontal format but it would be useful to have both a vertical and a horizontal option.
Social Media profile image	There will be a project twitter feed so it will be important to have a suitable logo for the profile image.
Colour Palette	Blues, Grey, Black to fit with partner logos (see below) Greens or Oranges as complimentary ‘lifting’ colour to stand out from partner logos
Fit with partner logos	

6.2 Appendix II: MICS Simple brand guide

<p>#25c7a1 RGB: 37,199,161 CMYK: 69,0,49,0</p>	<p>vertical:</p>  <p>MICS Measuring Impact of Citizen Science</p>	<p>horizontal:</p>  <p>MICS Measuring Impact of Citizen Science</p>
<p>#2d75be RGB: 45,117,190 CMYK: 82,49,0,0</p>	<p>fonts:</p> <p>MICS ———— Compton Semi-Bold Measuring Impact of Citizen Science ———— Halcom Medium</p>	
<p>#203544 RGB: 43,53,68 CMYK: 84,69,48,51</p>		