CS-SDG

Conference Declaration

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Abstract	A Declaration including policy recommendations resulted from the conference: "Our world – our goals: citizen science for the Sustainable Development Goals". The Declaration acts as a voluntary commitment by all partners to define the roles, competences and concrete potentials of Citizen Science to advance the SDGs. It was formulated in an open, bottom-up participatory process.
Keywords	Citizen Science, Conference, Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, Declaration, Policy recommendations, Bottom-up approach, Co-creation

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Version Log

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1.0	23/12/2020	Claudia Fabó Cartas (MfN)	Final Review CS-SDG project team
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Definitions and Acronyms

CC	Creative Commons
EC	European Commission
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable
GA	Grant Agreement
MfN	Museum für Naturkunde Berlin
Open Access	Access that is free to all and free of any restrictions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WP	Working Package

Executive summary

The CS-SDG Conference Declaration is Deliverable 2.1 (D2.1), part of work package 2 "Policy and strategy" from project CS-SDG, grant agreement (GA) No. 101000014.

The aim of this deliverable is to introduce the Conference Declaration titled "Our world – our goals: citizen science for the Sustainable Development Goals" which was formulated in an open, bottom-up participatory process in preparation for and parallel to the CS SDG Conference "Knowledge for Change: A Decade of Citizen Science (2020-2030) in Support of the SDGs".

The Declaration includes a list with authors and special contributors as well as two annexes containing the names of individual and institutional endorsers/signatories. This deliverable also provides some background on the formulation process of the Declaration and on its follow-up.

Background on the Declaration and follow-up

Background

One of the aims of the CS SDG Conference "Knowledge for Change: A Decade of Citizen Science (2020-2030) in Support of the SDGs" was to formulate a Declaration including policy recommendations as a voluntary commitment by citizen scientists, academics and policy makers to define the roles, competences and concrete potentials of Citizen Science to advance the SDGs. The Declaration titled "**Our world – our goals: citizen science for the Sustainable Development Goals**" was formulated in an open, bottom-up participatory process involving the Citizen Science and SDG communities.

The CS-SDG project team wished for the Declaration to acknowledge the diverse structure of Citizen Science. We are convinced of the unique characteristics of Citizen Science as a complex enterprise, because its social and scientific function cannot be achieved in any other way. Only Citizen Science serves several logics and exercises simultaneously, since it mediates between science and society and fills a gap. The main aim of the Declaration is the communication of the complexity and reliability of Citizen Science transparent for all.

Transparency and openness were the themes of the co-creation process of the Declaration. Aspiring to bring together the Citizen Science and SDG communities, the CS-SDG project team organised a series of five virtual meetings called "Become an author of the Declaration" during the summer organised and moderated by Jörn Knobloch from the CS-SDG project team at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin and hosted by ECSA (European Citizen Science Association).

Meetings were hold at midday (12:00-13:30 pm CET) in order to make participation from other time zones easier. Some virtual meetings included expert lectures that were held by Anne Kathrine Overgaard and Thomas Kaarsted, Alexander Gerber, and Dilek Fraisl. After the expert lectures and/or introduction by the moderator, participants were divided into groups to discuss and simultaneously work on already prepared documents online.

The titles and summarised contents of the five virtual meetings are:

1. **Virtual meeting 1 – 1ˢᵗ July 2020: "Scoping aims and potential impacts"**
   - Different options for a Conference Declaration were presented and discussed. Participants were able to actively contribute their ideas to the content of the Declaration.

2. **Virtual meeting 2 – 12ᵗʰ August 2020: "Declaring the Declaration"**
   - The scope of the Declaration was at the centre of the discussion and collective answers to the following questions were found: What is the purpose of the Declaration? Who develops the Declaration? Who are the recipients of the Declaration? What are the goals of the Declaration?

3. **Virtual meeting 3 – 26ᵗʰ August 2020: "In pursuit of a meaningful statement"**
   - We worked together on the precise formulation of our goals. Each working group focused on a different part of the Declaration. In a common creative

process, all participants contributed to the document with their specific perspective. A preliminary draft of the Declaration emerged from this meeting.

4. **Virtual meeting 4 – 2nd September 2020: "How can we implement our goals?"**

- The practical implementation of the goals, on which we agreed on in previous discussion was at the heart of the debate. Different ways to implement the goals were discussed and formulated in concrete terms.

5. **Virtual meeting 5 – 16th September 2020: "Discussion of the first draft"**

- The preliminary draft of the Declaration was discussed at the final virtual meeting. The title of the Declaration – voted by the CS and SDG communities via an anonymous online survey since the previous virtual meeting – was communicated.

Endorsements

Between the 8th of October 2020 and the 5th of January 2021 (date of revision of this Deliverable), a total of **286** individuals and institutions/organisations/projects (thereof 180 individuals and 106 institutions/organisations) have signed the Declaration.
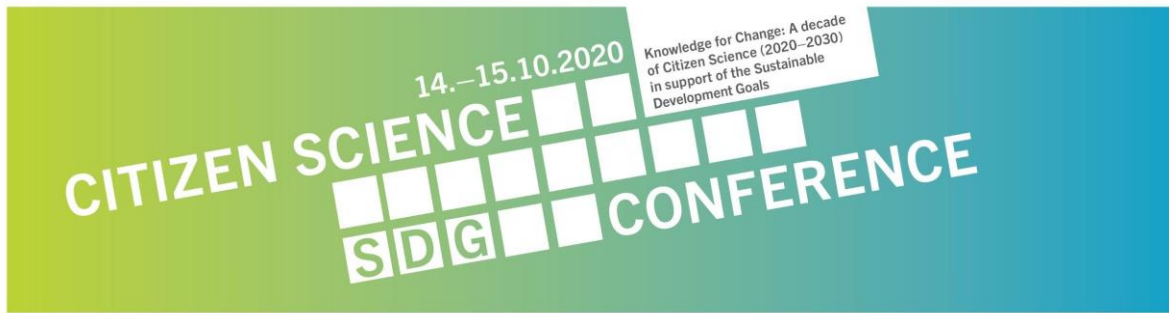
Follow-up

We plan **three** actions for the follow-up of the Declaration: **First**, the Declaration will be disseminated in the ECSA network. Through joint communication, as many Citizen Science projects as possible should become familiar with the Declaration and the idea of future Citizen Science projects orienting their work towards the Declaration will be promoted. **Secondly**, a brochure with the Declaration and its development process will be published and made openly accessible by the beneficiary of the action, the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin. The widespread distribution of this brochure should also contribute to the dissemination of the goals of the Declaration. **Thirdly**, intensive work is being done on the possibility of setting up the Declaration as a living document. This document should establish a **Need for Action**. Therefore, it is essential to connect the recommendations with practice via the formulation of areas of intervention. Based on the recommendations included in the Declaration, a range of potential action points targeting relevant stakeholders and relating to areas of intervention that call upon Need for Action should be collected and presented in the living document. The identified areas of intervention calling for action span across the main building blocks addressed by the SDGs, namely, societal, environmental, economic and governance, the latter including peace and justice, as follows:

- Bridge knowledge between policy needs, science requirements and Citizen Science activities;
- Raise awareness on benefits, allow for recognition of contribution, and instil trust in mutual relations;
- Promote quality and openness of data, agreed methodologies and assessment frameworks;
- Join forces through strategic alliances and complementary of resources to achieve impact.

We are looking for a technical solution where the Declaration can be presented online with little effort so that interested people can assign their experiences and projects to the areas of intervention. Others should then be able to discover these examples for themselves, comment on them and add their own project ideas to the document. However, we are only at the beginning here, hence why we cannot exactly present an overview of the implementation of the living document yet.

Our world – our goals: citizen science for the Sustainable Development Goals

We, the authors, call on European institutions, EU member states and their research and innovation funding and performing organisations, private companies and civil society to make citizen science a key factor across all policies and activities relevant to the SDGs, including in shaping and implementing the European research agenda.

To achieve these, we make the following recommendations.

Recommendations

1. Harness the benefits of citizen science for the SDGs

- Through citizen science, citizens must be supported and encouraged to generate new scientific knowledge to support the SDGs, in collaboration with policy-makers, academia, research institutions, research funding agencies, researchers, citizens and civil society organisations and according to recognised and tested standards.

- Academia, universities and research institutes must be supported to restructure and open up to give space and opportunity for citizen involvement. Citizen science needs organisational forms to provide the approach with a route and framework and at the same time guarantee for quality.

- Policy makers and research funders should provide strategic and financial support to citizen science networks, capacity-building activities and initiatives, as well as to changes in research organisations, whilst also supporting the active engagement of EU citizens in implementing the SDGs.

2. Strengthen citizen science and its connections with other communities

- Citizen science networks and communities must interact more closely with thematic research communities that produce scientific knowledge and technological innovation for the different SDGs, such as R&I for the environment, health R&I, food R&I, energy and transport R&I. Policies should be put in place to encourage and support citizen science networks and communities of practice focused on

sustainability to enhance networking with diverse stakeholders (e.g. research organisations, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, policy-makers and private companies), and help to align citizen science activities with policy and research needs.

- To promote and create synergies, systems should be established to increase the coordination and exchange of citizen science information and tools relevant to the SDGs, across countries and at the global level, and across thematic areas.

- To ensure and increase the usability and acceptance of citizen science data and evidence in efforts to achieve the SDGs, citizen science communities should communicate transparently on the methodologies they use, potential bias in the data they generate, and their data quality management strategies.

- Authorities across Europe should further promote, encourage and support the application of data-management and data-sharing principles (e.g. FAIR[1] and open data), and the release of technologies and tools that are open source and open access in citizen science initiatives, in order to ensure that citizen science data, technologies and tools are fit for science and policy purposes and, eventually, policy implementation.

3. Strengthen future citizen science systems

- Citizen science should be mainstreamed across the new Horizon Europe framework programme; this programme should also incorporate lessons from citizen science projects, and advice from citizen science experts, including on issues related to the European Green Deal.

- Curricula related to citizen science and the SDGs need to be developed for schools, higher education institutions and lifelong learning programmes, and adapted to different target groups. EU funding bodies should set up actions: support training and education institutes in incorporating citizen science; provide technical and legal support for citizen science practitioners; and reach out to local communities and schools.

- Funding for research into the science of citizen science is needed to advance the field, and how it can help achieve the SDGs and build expertise in a sustainable way.

- Funding for citizen science should allow for the special requirements of citizen science initiatives, including (among others) support for series of often small-scale experimentation, as well as for exploring different routes for the upscaling and long-term sustainability of initiatives aiming for social change.

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1   Findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable.

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