



# Observing the Environment: Challenges and Opportunities in Citizen Science

The rise of citizen science has led to the development of Citizen Observatories (COs) for environmental monitoring. COs have proven to be effective in engaging citizens and increasing environmental awareness. They also complement the EU's Earth Observation monitoring efforts by increasing the availability of ground-based observations. COs have been gaining momentum starting with the European Commission's Seventh Framework Program, to Horizon 2020 and beyond with Horizon Europe, the next research and innovation framework program. Vast opportunities exist to carry forward the work of pioneering COs.

This event brings together four sister projects on "Citizen Observatories for Environmental Monitoring", funded by H2020 and launched in 2016, to showcase their achievements, share best practices, and discuss their impact and sustainability beyond the project lifecycle. Besides exchanging ideas and lessons learned, the outputs of this meeting will feed into a report summarising obstacles and recommendations for future programs.

**When:** Wed, 9 Oct 2019, 9:00 – 16:00

**Where:** COV2 Building, ERCEA ROOM COV2 00/SDR2 AUDITORIUM (70P)  
Place Rogier 16 1210 Brussels, BE

**Register:** <https://www.weobserve.eu/4973-2/>

## AGENDA

### ● 9:00 – 10:45 Project Presentations

- WeObserve: Welcome and presentation (25min)
- Outputs and Challenges: Ground Truth 2.0, GROW, Landsense, and SCENT COs (20 min each)

### ● 10:45 – 11:00 Coffee Break

### ● 11:00 – 12:00 Interactive Session: *Overcoming challenges to the integration of citizen science in environmental monitoring*

The WeObserve project tackles three key challenges preventing COs from moving into the mainstream: Awareness, Acceptability and Sustainability. The three stations in this session represent these challenges. This discussion focuses on key recommendations and potential solutions to address obstacles within each theme for current and future COs.



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- **Awareness:** Citizens are often unaware of opportunities to address environmental issues affecting them and lack understanding on how to contribute to environmental stewardship. Likewise, public authorities, SMEs and NGOs are unaware of the potential of COs to support decision making and create business opportunities
  - **Acceptability:** Citizen observations are often thought to lack the required quality standards for informed decision making and environmental governance. Public authorities generally do not trust or accept data from citizen science experiments to complement authoritative data.
  - **Sustainability:** EU infrastructure, measures, and legislation are currently insufficient to sustain and scale-up current citizen science projects across various sectors, especially the private sector. Deficiencies in systems and standards of data preservation and data interoperability across initiatives are limiting the long-term potential of citizen science and COs.
- **12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Break**
  - **13:00 – 14:00 Interactive Session: *Reporting back & discussion***
  - **14:00 – 15:00 Panel Discussion: *Opportunities & questions for the future***
- This panel is moderated to advance key discussions emerging from the previous sessions. Potential themes include:
- Sustainability of initiatives beyond the project cycle
  - Connections with policy (e.g. Common Dissemination Booster policy brief)
  - Sharing evidence – data, open innovation, public engagement
  - Interoperability among citizen science projects and connection to GEO
  - General infrastructure for citizen science in Europe (based on EOSC or other)
  - Co-design in setting up projects
  - Measuring citizen involvement
  - Challenges, gaps and opportunities – implications for Horizon Europe
- **15:00 – 16:00 Wrap Up**