Challenge 1: Citizen Science for Circular Communities

Why this matters

Citizen Science engages volunteers in a range of scientific activities. This helps educate and inform citizens in the subject matter and leads to a greater public understanding of how science and scientists work. Participation in Citizen Science can increase trust in science and expert opinions, enhance critical thinking, and ultimately fight misinformation, disinformation and fake news. Scientists can learn from Citizen Science about what people genuinely care about, the impact their work has or should have in society, and become more participatory, by involving volunteers early on in co-designing the research, collecting, cleaning, and analysing the data, documenting the results, and sharing the recognition.

Citizen Science is playing an ever more important role in how researchers and innovators engage with society, and how they contribute to common concerns. However, Citizen Science sometimes struggles to achieve recognition and impact because citizen and 'professional' science practices differ, and citizen scientists have a harder time gaining access to local stakeholders and policy makers. Results of Citizen Science are chronically underutilised, although we know that they can add value to virtually everything from meeting Green Deal and UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets to boosting social and environmental innovations, all while being closely aligned with local communities.

While Green Deal and SDG targets may seem abstract for many citizen scientists, their projects may already be working toward monitoring them, through activities such as environmental measurements (for example air, water or soil quality), or monitoring (for example insect or bird observations).

What we are looking for

In our Open Call 2025, IMPETUS is looking for Citizen Science projects that contribute to sustainable development goals related to the theme of "Citizen Science for Circular Communities". Specifically, we are interested in projects that address one or more of the following topics, which are related to SDGs #7, #11, #12, and #3:

- **Resource management**: Encouraging responsible and (re-)use of resources (e.g. natural resources, energy); preventing waste and pollution of all kinds; education and awareness raising about sustainable lifestyles with special attention to circularity.
- **Infrastructure & housing**: Availability, efficiency, sustainability and resilience of suitable accommodation and infrastructure, including energy, HVAC, and public transport.
- **Disaster resilience**: Safeguarding people, their homes, jobs, and culture, in the face of natural disasters, including those caused by climate change; community participation in disaster preparedness, prevention, and recovery, and adaptation and mitigation practices.

Applicants should contribute to at least one of these topics, and enable the monitoring of at least one established indicator, by providing monitoring data, or directly contributing to their achievement at local, regional, or national level.

How we select projects

We particularly welcome applications from projects that are run by, or actively involve, underrepresented groups and their public representation. This includes those belonging to groups at risk of social exclusion and discrimination, such as refugees, ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, those with disabilities; or from lower-middle income countries; as well as projects that focus on inclusion dimensions of their research.

All projects **will also be assessed against criteria of equality, diversity, equity, openness, and potential impact on policy.**
IMPETUS has an inclusive view of Citizen Science initiatives, which can have a wide-ranging scope of scientific and social activities that engage citizens and aim to deliver scientific advancement and social benefits, support communities, and foster an open and inclusive civil society.
Eligible projects could include but are not limited to:

- Citizen engaged in digital humanities research
- Initiatives that incorporate characteristics of Citizen Science as defined by the European Citizen Science Association (ECSA)
- Science and research communication with citizens
- Participatory artistic-led research
- Science education that engages citizens

What we offer

Successful applicants will receive funding and support to deliver a seven-month project. Support will include training and expert guidance from a range of experts within and beyond the IMPETUS consortium, as well as peer-to-peer support and exchange.
Projects can apply for two kinds of grants, depending on their current development stage:

- Projects that are no more than six months into their Citizen Science journey and are yet to establish a community and/or data collection and processing procedures, can apply for a **Kickstarting grant**, worth 20,000 €.
- Projects that are more advanced, with established processes, an engaged community, and initial evidence of impact, can apply for a **Sustaining grant**, worth 10,000 €. We expect these grants to be awarded for the continuation, enhancing of impact, and/or further establishment of existing projects.

The funds provided can be spent on personnel costs, equipment, consumables, travel, subcontracting to other entities, and indirect expenditure (calculated as 25% of the total direct costs), in accordance with Horizon Europe guidelines.