

Version 1.1 Second Draft

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Note May 2023: the recommendations are currently being updated.

Recommendation to form a single point of contact for Citizen Science at the University of Copenhagen

Political and funding landscapes in Europe are evolving rapidly with an emphasis on Citizen Science (CS) as an important research method in fulfilling the principles of Open Science. For example, the European Commission and the League of European Research Universities (LERU) recognize CS as one of the eight important pillars of Open Science. Horizon 2020 of the European Commission has supported over 2000 projects with societal engagement, including the allocation of €60 million to dedicated CS projects from the Science and Society part of the programme¹. LERU recommends that universities recognize CS as an evolving set of research methods, and further recommends creating a single point of contact for CS within each institution². The University of Copenhagen (UCPH) relies on the LERU recommendations to inform its strategic work with Open Science, and has adopted CS as one of the eight areas of Open Science.

Based on outcomes of two university-wide Open Science workshops held on CS at the UCPH, and the interest in and need for CS support expressed by researchers across faculties, a single point of contact for citizen science should be established at UCPH. A number of externally funded citizen science projects and networks led by UCPH researchers are already burgeoning in faculties such as SUND and SCIENCE, and tremendous interest in developing CS research methods exists university-wide. Universities across Europe are in the process of establishing or have recently created single points of contact for citizen science following recommendations by LERU. As such, several different models of university-based citizen science hubs exist from which to draw inspiration from. Creating a single point of contact or CS hub at UCPH would allow for the pooling of expertise and resources, would broaden access to CS information, would create opportunities for cross-faculty interdisciplinary research, and would immensely assist with the engagement of citizens and the dissemination of UCPH-led research, among other Open Science objectives.

¹ Citizen Science: Elevating research and innovation through societal engagement, European Commission 2020

² Open Science and its role in universities: A roadmap for cultural change. LERU 2018

A CS hub should be part of the broader Open Science initiatives at UCPH and take full advantage of synergies among Open Science areas. The CS hub should draw expertise and funding support from all faculties at UCPH. Statens Naturhistoriske Museum (SNM) is recommended as an optimal point of contact for a physical CS hub, based on the Museum's successful engagement profile with the public (upwards of one million visitors per year), its strong public outreach and communication activities, as well as having a well-established and supported citizen science research section. Virtual hubs, supported by the university's libraries, are also deemed a necessary component of the UCPH solution, to ensure researchers across all faculties and campuses can access data and information to guide and support their CS research. Similarly, a virtual portal for citizens to find projects, learn about research outcomes etc., would further extend the citizen base reached by the university.

Approval and a commitment to fund the establishment of a CS hub by the UCPH Executive Management is therefore being sought. A byproduct of the CS Workshop held on 14 June, 2021 has been the formation of a CS Working Group representing all faculties. This group should be endorsed by the UCPH Open Science Task Force and tasked with guiding the initial establishment of a CS hub at UCPH over a four-year period. The group may evolve into a Scientific Advisory Board to help steer and manage the evolution of the CS hub over time. A budget, which includes a four-year period and the basic elements required to establish a hub, has been drafted for approval.