

# Charter of Commitments and Values

## Portal for citizen science research projects by Sorbonne University Alliance (SUA<sup>1</sup>) members

### Preamble

#### Strengthening interactions between “science and society”

Efforts to encourage collaboration between scientific research stakeholders and civil society are currently experiencing considerable growth. Scientific curiosity and the search for solutions to complex issues (economic, social, health, environmental, cultural, educational, ethical, identity-related) are all driving forces. Digital technology has helped foster the development of this type of collaboration. **This promising movement is supported by the inclusion in the French Act of 22 July 2013 on higher education and research to strengthen interactions between science and society.**

#### At the national level, the “Citizen Science in France” report

This report, produced under the supervision of François Houllier, former President and Director General of INRA and President of AllEnvi, **was finalized in February 2016**. It led to a “**Charter of Citizen Science and Participatory Research in France,**” (*Charte des sciences et recherches participatives en France*) **signed on March 20, 2017** by around 30 higher education and research institutions, NGOs and associations at the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, including the Muséum national d’histoire naturelle (MNHN). In light of this, the MNHN has set up an office to coordinate citizen science projects it carries out (through “Vigie-Muséum”). The charter for the portal for citizen science research projects by SUA members is based on this national charter.

#### At the SUA level, the portal for citizen science research projects

This portal<sup>2</sup> came about from a desire by SUA researchers/scientists/project leaders<sup>3</sup> to showcase the many different types of participatory projects underway in their institutions. This portal can be described as an interdisciplinary platform to support citizen science research projects.

Participating in the portal reflects a desire to inform the public about your citizen science project and engage in the discussions on this interactive platform, which features many projects and initiatives conducted within the SUA based on citizen science approaches **linked to research**.

Ties between researchers and contributors/participants/citizens<sup>4</sup> are essential to implementing a citizen science program. The aim is to make it easier for participants to be involved in the scientific process and encourage them to take part in citizen science projects. The portal is one tool to support cooperation between civil society and the scientific community. It can drive **new synergies, the sharing of knowledge and collaborations** between researchers, partners and participants. This is what “citizen science” is truly all about.

## About the portal

### Multiple initiatives from SUA member institutions

The research laboratories currently listed on the portal **offer a diverse range of citizen science programs in terms of their fields, research topics and types of collaboration with stakeholders who are not professional scientists.**

### A variety of stakeholders involved in each project

Most of the citizen science projects are conducted by one or more laboratories and organizations that are not involved in academic research (associations, local government authorities, professional organizations, partners, etc.). The projects listed on the portal must involve at least one researcher from an SUA laboratory, and they must have an agreement in principle from all other project stakeholders.

### Two types of access to the portal

The portal is open to anyone wanting to simply view the descriptions of existing programs. There is also restricted access for program managers to allow them to share information and their experiences.

### This portal does not answer a particular research problem

Citizen science projects are initiatives implemented by project leaders to meet the many needs specific to their research. The aim of the portal is not to synthesize all of these topics. It simply brings together a variety of research projects each with their own area of focus.

### Openness to any type of participatory research approach

The portal seeks to maintain a spirit of openness and diversity.

The projects presented on the portal, which each have their own research focus, adopt many different types of participatory approaches, including (but not limited to) the following:

annotation; co-development of protocols/ measurement tools; data collection and entry; content contribution; descriptions; documentation; sound recordings; archaeological digs; identifications; indexing; games; museology; amateur practices; reporting; reproducing experiments; reporting of results; monitoring; transcription; and validation.

Another specific practice offers yet an additional possibility. Certain programs provide the research results and data only to the communities with which they work. In terms of terminology, rather than being “participatory”, they are focused on “collaboration” and “co-construction”. They deal with local practical knowledge that is not meant to be more widely shared. Additionally, in some countries, due to very poor economic conditions, participants may be compensated for their time (e.g., a fisherman who contributes to developing the project by observing water levels instead of going to work). Such compensation should not be viewed as remuneration but rather as offsetting expenses.

## Compliance with the French Data Protection Authority (CNIL) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of 25 May 2018

Compliance with the principles laid out in the French data protection law (purpose, relevance, retention, rights, security) shall be guaranteed by each project leader. Furthermore, the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of 25 May 2018 relating to protecting European users, reinforces individual data rights.

## The portal's values

Future signatories of the charter shall adopt the definition of citizen science as set out in the “Charter of Citizen Science and Participatory Research in France” signed on 20 March 2017:

“Citizen science and participatory research are types of scientific knowledge production in which stakeholders from civil society, as individuals or groups, participate with researchers in an active and deliberate manner.”

They shall also share the values, ethics and principles of scientific integrity as set out in the charter.

**The full charter is available in the attached document:** Charter of citizen science and participatory research in France.

## Form of commitment

### Invitation to participate in the portal by adhering to the Charter of

### Commitments and Values

Any project within the SUA network that is considered to be a citizen science initiative can participate in the portal as long as the project leader shares the values and agrees to the principles in this charter. The charter must be accepted by each project leader that would like to join the portal. This is the form of commitment desired by the community of project leaders who helped found the portal. Changes to the charter may be suggested at any time and will be considered by all of the project leaders and portal governance members, who will decide whether the change is relevant or not.



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1. In this document, the Sorbonne University Alliance (SUA) refers to the 10 institutions that have signed the SUA convention: SU, MNHN, UTC, INSEAD, PSPBB, CIEP, CNRS, Inserm, Inria, IRD.
  2. The word “portal” in this document refers to the portal for citizen science research projects by SUA members.
  3. In this document, the word “researchers” refers to researchers/scientists/project leaders.
  4. The word “participants” refers to “contributors/participants/citizens”.