

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM)

Scientific Report

**Strengthening of strategic collaboration on
activities and outputs for policy engagement
related to citizen science across Europe.**

by Aleksandra Berditchevskaia

Action Number:	CA15212
Grantee Name:	Aleksandra Berditchevskaia
Institution	Tekiu Ltd, London UK
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Host	Katrin Volland, ECSA
Host Institution:	Natural History Museum, Berlin

STSM Report

Purpose of the STSM

The overarching aim of the STSM was to strengthen the collaboration between Tekiu and ECSA in order to improve mutual capacity to raise awareness and provide evidence of the policy relevance of Citizen Science on the European, national and regional levels particularly within the topics of Responsible Research and Innovation, Open Science and addressing societal challenges. This aim is allied to the objectives of third Working Group of the COST Action, which works to improve the science-society-policy interface.

The STSM was an opportunity to conduct background research and network with experts on the current European policy climate around citizen science and the development of the international support infrastructure for citizen science more broadly. The research opportunity enabled me to synthesise a short overview of these topics a report on citizen science, commissioned by the Swiss Science and Innovation Council (SSIC): Citizen Science: Expertise, Democracy, and Public Participation. This report's main authors, Bruno Strasser & Muki Haklay, invited Aleks Berditchevskaia to provide policy context within the report section: "What is citizen science today?". Exchanges with colleagues working on the DITOs project, and other researchers based at the Naturkundemuseum throughout the STSM also allowed for development of ideas towards a future publication on policy engagement methodologies for the citizen science community.

Specific aims of the STSM included:

1. To learn from each other's methodologies and expertise, with a particular focus on consolidating findings through co-authorship.
2. To elaborate the strategy and coordination for policy engagement between Tekiu and ECSA.
3. To organise and coordinate the delivery of forthcoming events and outputs, and the dissemination of results.

These aims resonate with Task 2 of Work Group 3 within the COST Action "to identify and raise awareness of success factors and mechanisms that increase the policy impact of approaches drawing upon CS, taking the integration of citizen-generated data with official data into account."

The leadership of ECSA on policy engagement activities for both DITOs and COST made the organisation a compelling choice for an STSM exchange for Tekiu to . Ongoing collaborations with the ECSA team are enabling us to deliver on our policy engagement activities for the DITOs project, namely Discovery Trips for policy and decision makers.

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

1. To learn from each other's expertise, with the aim to consolidate findings through co-authorship

Taking the mapping of completed and upcoming activities within the DITOs project as a starting point (see 2. below), we outlined our common research interests. We are exploring opportunities to evaluate some of the practice-based policy engagement undertaken within the DITOs project to address some of the following research questions:

How much does cultural context determine "policy engagement" formats and the impact of activities targeted to decision makers? What does policy engagement look like for a European project and how effective is such short-term engagement at the European level? How inclusive is citizen science? What are the effects of terminology on inclusion and capacity building for citizen science?

The analysis we would like to undertake relates to both the geographical scope of the DITOs policy engagement activities (local vs European) as well as a more comprehensive cross-country mapping and comparison of the implementation of the stakeholder roundtable format over the past 18 months in Slovenia, Germany, France, Poland. We are keen to highlight common challenges for policy engagement around citizen science/open science, including political instability (changes of administration) and cultural attitudes to science and participative democracy. Other DITOs activities and outputs that can be used as case studies for this work include Discovery Trips and policy briefs.

2. To elaborate the strategy and coordination for policy engagement between Tekiu and ECSA

With ECSA colleagues we undertook a comprehensive mapping of completed activities and outputs from the DITOs project from the last 18 months. We also projected the upcoming activities for the next 6 months. This exercise helped us to identify overlapping thematic streams and narratives and to capture stakeholder involvement thus far (both those involved in organisation and those involved in attending/follow-up).

3. To organise and coordinate the delivery of forthcoming events and outputs, and the dissemination of results

Tekiu and ECSA colleagues worked on the alignment of specific activities, particularly the forthcoming ECSA European Stakeholder Roundtable (SHRT) and associated Discovery Trip (DT) in Italy (5-6th April 2018). Over the course of the STSM we finalised the focus of these two activities to address the development of a national citizen science strategy for Italy. This change from the original intention to focus the SHRT on Citizen Science for Environmental Sustainability was in direct response to developments in Italy, where a recent conference (Italian Citizen Science Conference, Nov 2017) demonstrated the local appetite for building capacity towards a national citizen science strategy. With our local partners, we believe that a roundtable for national stakeholders will help to capture the momentum generated by the conference to guide the process towards the development of a national strategy for the implementation of citizen science in Italy. Tekiu and ECSA staff also worked together on a conference session for EU Green Week (see Results section below) and made progress on the organisation of a COST workshop on Open Science & Citizen Science (1 March 2018).

Description of the main results obtained

Policy Engagement Strategy – DITOs Project

The strategic mapping of past and upcoming policy engagement for DITOs helped us to determine that much of our work thus far has focussed on policy engagement at the European level, in response to the Research and Innovation agenda promoted by the European Commission. Given these insights, we have started to outline key strategic objectives for the remainder of the DITOs project, namely to:

- a) Evaluate the activities that we complete within the policy engagement work package – to explore their respective effectiveness and to disseminate this insight to a wider audience through publication and future capacity building workshops for partners.
- b) Increase involvement of new stakeholder groups in our engagement and dissemination activities. We are particularly interested in developing our work with civil society organisations/NGOs and shifting our focus to supporting DITOs partners at the local and national level of policy engagement.

We will continue to develop this strategy at Work Package 4 meetings with other DITOs partners over the coming months.



Contribution to Citizen Science Report for the Swiss Science and Innovation Council (SSIC)

DITOs collaborators Bruno Strasser and Muki Haklay were commissioned to provide a historical overview of the development of citizen science for SSIC, an advisory body to the Swiss Federal Council. They invited me to contribute the policy and organisational context of citizen science within two subsections: 1. Citizen science organizations 2. International, national, and local policy initiatives. The report, Citizen Science: Expertise, Democracy, and Public Participation was submitted on 9 February 2018 and will be publicly available in the coming months.

Progress on planning policy engagement activities for Q1/Q2 2018

- a) ***Local Stakeholder Round-table and Discovery Trip: 5-6th April, 2018 (Tuscany & Rome, Italy)***
ECSA and Tekiu colleagues developed a detailed work plan for implementation, designed the agenda and established a working relationship with local partners. Key logistical details were decided and the first batch of international invitations were issued during the STSM.
- b) ***EU Green Week Conference Session “Making our cities green with citizen science” 23rd May, 2018 (Brussels, Belgium)***

During the STSM, ECSA and Tekiu colleagues developed the agenda, agreed on the format, issued speaker invitations and finalised a summary description for the ECSA Green Week session. This session will be split under the two themes of Environmental Policy Impacts and Biodiversity Conservation and will feature an interactive Q&A format with the audience.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)

Over the course of the STSM, DITOs colleagues, Claudia Göbel and Gaia Agnello, and myself planned future collaborations on both events and published outputs. Concretely, based on the research interests identified above (Description of Work: Part 1), we are intending to co-author a publication on citizen science and policy engagement. We have identified two relevant opportunities for this output: the Special Issue in Citizen Science: Theory and Practice on the theme of Policy Perspectives in Citizen and the Special Issue on Communication at the Intersection of Science and Politics for the Journal of Science Communication.