



Views,
Opinions
and Ideas
of Citizens

in **Europe** on **Science**

www.voicesforinnovation.eu

VOICES IS AN EU FUNDED PROJECT ANSWERING TO THE SiS.2013.1.2.1-1 (GRANTS TO NAME BENEFICIARY) CALL:

- The present action is a pilot focused on "Waste as a Resource" within the Societal Challenge "Climate action, resource efficiency, raw materials" of Horizon 2020 that aims to introduce a citizen dimension in the preparation of the Horizon 2020 Work Programmes for 2014.

SiS.2013.1.2.1-1

- Citizens' participation in science and technology policy is the subject of a vast field of research and practice in the domains of science communication and science and technology studies. With the present call the European Commission wants to include citizens' preferences, values, needs and expectations in the actual research priorities that will be part of the next framework program "Horizon 2020".
- Compared to many other consultation initiatives, the SiS.2013.1.2.1-1 call represents a breakthrough because of its scale (covering all of Europe) and because of the methodological approach used on such a wide scale (QUALITATIVE STUDIES which allow a deeper understanding and harvesting of citizens views, fostering real governance processes and social innovation).
- It is also innovative in the stated commitment to formally include the results of the citizens' consultations in the main policy document that will shape the priorities of European research.

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- One of the challenges for the "European Year of Citizens" will be to raise citizen's awareness of how they can benefit from EU rights and policies, and to stimulate citizen's active participation in EU policy-making. The aim of this pilot is to make possible active participation of citizens in Research and Innovation policies.

SiS.2013.1.2.1-1

- The proposed project, VOICES (Views, Opinions and Ideas of Citizens in Europe on Science) is not only a Europe-wide public consultation initiative, but a mechanism to provide valuable know-how on methodological and procedural aspects for the structural employment of citizens participation in defining the European research agenda in the framework of Responsible Research and Innovation.
- VOICES is building capacity both at the European and national levels to organize public consultations of this kind. Thanks to a deep collaboration between the academic field and the practitioners world, VOICES will initiate and document the process of content development and training necessary to implement a distributed and coordinated effort of public consultations.

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- The engagement of citizens in Horizon 2020 and namely in the preparation of the selected 2014 Work Programme will consist in collecting ideas and inputs through face-to-face gatherings between citizens (citizen focus groups) organised by the ECSITE network in each of the 27 EU Member States. The groups will be composed of 20-30 citizens chosen at random so as to be sufficiently representative of the population of each of the Member States.

SiS.2013.1.2.1-1

- **33 institutions from the Ecsite network have been actively involved in VOICES as Third Parties linked to the beneficiary (special clause 10) and will be responsible for organizing the focus groups.** Experienced moderators from all 33 Ecsite members will participate in training modules on the contents of the focus group which is being developed by the VOICES team.
- In order to recruit the participants for the focus groups, **recruitment agencies will be subcontracted to provide the necessary services.** Preference will be given to the recruitment agency previously involved in the “European Citizens’ Consultations” project (<http://ecc.european-citizens-consultations.eu/76.0.html>), or identified through Esomar (<http://directory.esomar.org/>), the world association for market social and opinion research, with preference given to agencies that are certified ISO 9001 (Quality management system requirements) and ISO 20252 (Market, opinion and social research service requirements).
- **Why the Ecsite network?** Science centers and museums are accessible institutions, trusted and respected by the public. They are permanent venues for public discussions on science, technology and society, and they have staff skilled in interacting with the public. Therefore they are perfectly capable to implement the consultations required by this project.

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- The methodology chosen for such encounters may also include different types of stakeholders (CSOs, NGOs, businesses, SMEs, universities, policy makers etc.). The aim of these gatherings (citizen focus groups) at national level, is to allow the citizens to express their preferences, values, needs and expectations from research and innovation activities undertaken at European level through Horizon 2020 on “Waste as a resource” within the Societal Challenge “Climate action, resource efficiency, raw materials”.

SiS.2013.1.2.1-1

- The methodology for the focus groups is discussed and validated by the Advisory Group, a group of 10 invited experts in public participation, RRI, urban waste/environment issues and the science museum field who will convene to fine tune the methodology and agree on its definitive format.
- After the Advisory Meeting, up to 4 tests of the focus groups will be organized to test the validity of the questions that the moderators will use, the content of the briefings and the script of the focus group.
- 99 focus groups, with 10 participants each, will be conducted at science centers (and in 4 subcontracted locations) in neutral settings. The actual conversation time for each focus groups is 2 hours. The regular set up of a focus group is: introduction (20 min), exercises (60 min), break (15 min), exercises (60 min), closing (10 min) and evaluation questionnaire feedback (10 min).
- The VOICES team is responsible for the analysis of the consultations. All the transcripts will be translated in English and analysed; a shorter report for each focus group will be produced and shared with citizens that participated to collect further comments and make sure it represents the views they expressed during the focus group. Finally, the results of the analysis will be integrated with stakeholders' views and presented to the European Commission for input to the Consolidation group set up with call SiS.2013.1.2.1-2.

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- An on-line tool (using open source and which can be institutionally sustainable/hostable by the European Commission) will also be used to capture and analyse the public engagement process and findings. Regular feedback to citizens will be given.

SiS.2013.1.2.1-1

- The VOICES communication and documentation aspects are as important as the formal results of the consultations. All the major components of the process – methodology, content development, training, focus groups, analysis of results, public events – will be documented on two levels.
- At one level is the production of various communication materials (written materials, fact sheets, digital brochures, animations and short videos/tutorials) to provide easy access, media ready content that can be used to communicate about the project with different audiences. This content can also be used to illustrate the process to other stakeholders, networks, organizations and private and public bodies.
- The second level is based on an open source platform (Visual Lab), which represents the open data approach to this project. The platform is at its core a database to host all the elements that constitute the participation exercise. The open data approach also means that the data are accessible in the original format as they become available.
- The communication and on-line platform will be developed by Formicablu srl, a member of Ecsite, in order to maximize the integration of the communication products and processes with the other members of the network.

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- The project includes an evaluation work package: an in-depth independent evaluation of the methodology and implementation progress of project throughout the duration of the project, in relation to its objectives and expected impacts, shall also be prepared.

SiS.2013.1.2.1-1

- **The evaluation shall look at the efficiency and fairness of the process**, from the initial steps of the specifications for the methodology and content provision, to the final utilization of the results into the policy making process. Previous experiences, supported by scholarly literature, point out how participation exercises are more successful when all the steps of the process are free from structural flaws that may deteriorate the information which is transferred to the next step.
- The evaluation will therefore **look at all the critical steps of the process to assess what the (possible or effective) weaknesses are, and how they impact the process as a whole**. The findings of the evaluation will on the one hand integrate the final results of VOICES, corroborating the analysis of the focus groups with the procedural analysis of the process that led to these results; on the other hand, they propose some recommendations in view of future pilots and related activities, pointing out strengths and weaknesses of each step of the participation exercise.

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Expected impact:

This topic will result in stimulating citizen's active participation in EU policy-making; having a part of the first Horizon 2020 calls for proposals co-defined by citizens in Europe; and in shaping a methodology that could be taken up by other parts of Horizon 2020 in subsequent years.

SiS.2013.1.2.1-1

- **One breakthrough aspect of this project is that the knowledge that will be gained with this pilot, in terms of methodology, infrastructure and results, can be used to organize similar participatory actions across Horizon 2020.**
- **All the contents and structure of the focus groups, as well as rationales on the approach to urban waste management utilized and any other specificity of the methodology, instruction for providing the training to moderators, and the transcripts and results of the analysis of the consultations, will be documented and made freely available on-line on the newly created VOICES open source platform (Visual Lab).**
- **The project presents some clear challenges, namely working in 27 countries with content in all 23 official European languages, and a very strict timing in order to allow the results of the consultations to be ready by June 2013.**

VOICES

The core elements of VOICES are:

1. a consultation process to involve one thousand European citizens in discussing the European research priorities for the theme “Urban Waste and Innovation”; the consultations will take place in 33 locations across all 27 European countries.
2. a structured methodology covering training, implementation and analysis, based on academic research;
3. an online tool that supports the process and the methodology, and provides full transparency on the activity thanks to an open data approach;
4. communication and dissemination materials and a series of local and international events to embed the consultation activity in local and national contexts, paving the way for a widespread adoption of similar approaches.

The project has two main goals:

1. to provide input for the Consolidation Group that will define the actual priorities for the next work programme on “Urban Waste” (call SiS.2013.1.2.1-2)
2. to provide the methodology, the tools, the know-how and recommendations that can be adapted and used in the next years for similar initiatives.

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