

A CHARTER FOR

CITIZEN SCIENCE AND MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

The Global Citizen Science movement, coordinated by the Citizen Science Global Partnership, a network of networks uniting regional and national citizen science associations and hubs to advance citizen science for sustainable development worldwide, calls on all Member States of the United Nations Environment Assembly to:

- adopt this Charter on Citizen Science and multilateral environmental agreements;
- recognise the value of citizen science programmes in supporting the delivery of UNEA Resolutions; and
- integrate citizen science components of the Aarhus Convention on people's right to access and collect environmental information, the UNESCO Open Science Recommendations, and the emerging Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data into multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), while supporting their implementation through a truly inclusive, whole-of-society approach.

The Charter

1. Recognition of citizen science:

- MEAs should formally acknowledge citizen science as a valuable participatory and scientific approach for environmental monitoring, research, and decision-making.
- Clear guidelines and frameworks should be developed for the integration of citizen science into the monitoring and implementation of MEAs.
- All Member States should recognise that citizens have a right to collect and gather data on issues covered by the MEAs without the risk of violence and intimidation, with their confidentiality and intellectual property rights respected and protected by International laws.

2. Capacity strengthening:

- Improve coordination and support for citizen science within and between Member States through the establishment of an interdisciplinary High Level UN¹ Committee of Experts on Citizen Science and MEAs (UN-CECS).
- Invest in training and resources to strengthen the capacity of the citizen science researcher and practitioner community, supporting their active participation in MEA-related activities.
- Support the development of standardized protocols and harmonized data collection and sharing for citizen science projects, ensuring alignment with global methodologies and MEA objectives.

¹ See attachment for further details – based on the example of The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

3. Data sharing and integration:

- Support the establishment of open data platforms and mechanisms for sharing citizen science data with relevant parties and actors in the context of MEAs.
- Support the development of data quality assurance and quality control processes tailored to the specific context of MEAs, ensuring that citizen science data meet the needs of MEAs, country-specific requirements and relevant initiatives.

4. Knowledge generation and collaboration:

- Support collaborative research projects involving citizen scientists, citizen science practitioner and researchers, and policy makers to address key environmental challenges relevant to MEAs.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and communication between citizen science practitioners, the researcher community and other interested parties and actors in the context of MEAs.
- Support the development of cross cutting citizen science programmes focusing on environmental degradation and impacts on the health and well-being of people and the planet;

5. Policy and decision-making:

- Incorporate citizen science data, insights and approaches into policy development and decision-making processes related to MEAs.
- Establish mechanisms for citizen science researchers and practitioners to provide input and participate in MEA governance.

6. Funding and sustainability:

- Allocate funding to support the development of sustainable citizen science input to the MEAs.
- Develop innovative financing mechanisms to support the implementation of global citizen science programmes for MEAs and beyond.

7. Global collaboration and networking:

- Support the creation of a global network of citizen science practitioners coordinated by the CSGP to share “protocols, standards, and best practices”, develop joint projects, and focus the citizen science community on the MEAs and sustainable development.
- Promote capacity strengthening and knowledge exchange across regions and countries.

The Committee of Experts on Citizen Science and MEAs (UN-CESC)

The establishment of a UN Citizen Science Network is recommended to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), as the means for UNEA and the Open Ended Committee of the Permanent Representatives (OECPR) to collaborate and inform on Citizen Science within the United Nations system. UNEA is recommended to use the Committee of Experts as the apex intergovernmental mechanism for making joint decisions and setting directions with regard to the production, availability and use of Citizen Science within national, regional and global policy frameworks. Led by the United Nations Member States, UN-CESC aim will be to address global challenges regarding the use of Citizen Science, including in the development agendas, and to serve as a body for global policymaking in the field of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.



Citizen Science Association Members and Founding Institutions

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