



Scivil

Annual Report 2025

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Introduction



2025 was a year when
I felt the power
of citizen science
more than ever.

2025 was a year when I felt **the power of citizen science** more than ever. This power lies in doing it together: with citizens, with partners in Flanders and beyond, and with our own Scivilteam, which has continued to grow.

Citizens brought **valuable insights** and **keen observations** to our projects. For example, Flemish people thought about the impact of AI on our daily lives, taking the Flemish Policy Plan on AI as a starting point, and examined sustainable biotechnology as part of the European DeCYPher project. Through Maaraltee, hundreds of people contributed their voices to an open dataset of Flemish speech. The first thousand submissions mark the start for more inclusive speech applications.

There was also a lot of activity in our **European collaborations**. Our Citizen Science Fair, in collaboration with European Citizen Science, grew from an enthusiastic idea in an online meeting into a sun-drenched day of citizen science in Brussels. During the closing event of the European Mutual Learning Exercise on Public Engagement,

we brought examples from Belgian citizen-science to more than a hundred European participants. And in Berlin, our innovative approach with amai! received valuable recognition at the final stage of Falling Walls Engage.

Students brought fresh eyes and critical questions to enrich our operation. They helped inventory and analyse the Belgian citizen science landscape and started a global inventory of water initiatives for Citizens4Water. Engaging discussions at the UHasselt Journal Club centred on the value of participation in research were a great finale to an inspiring year.

The power of collaboration was also felt **within our organisation**. In 2025, our umbrella body the RVO-Society celebrated its 25th anniversary. In May, together with Flemish science communication actors and our sister organisation Brightlab, we kicked off this jubilee year with an inspiring session on future thinking.

When I look back at 2025, I see mainly this: a year when collaboration was not an afterthought, but the **driving force** behind everything we did. That collaboration took on added significance with the recognition of Scivil as a research centre – a confirmation of the research-based path we were

taking together. I look forward to building on that in the future.

Annelies Duerinckx
Scivil coordinator



From left to right: Jef Van Laer, Sanne Strouven, Isaak Vandermaesen, Karen Verstraelen, Steve Bers, Annelies Duerinckx, Sven Speybroeck en Alyssa Lambrecht.



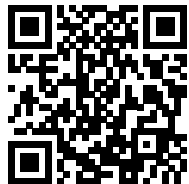
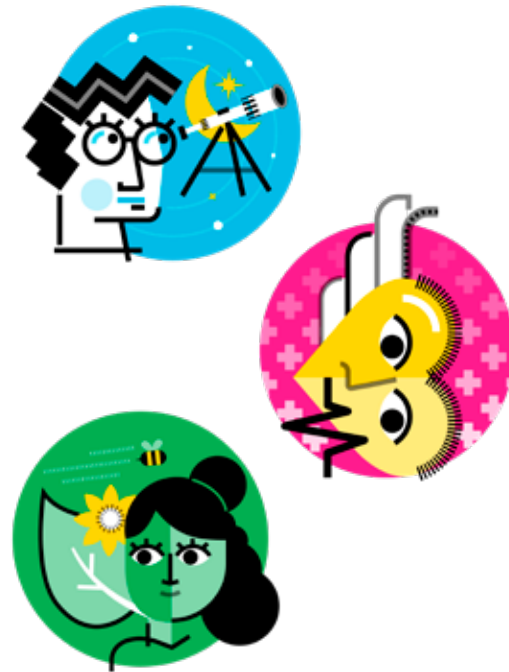
**Scivil promotes
citizen science**

Scivil promotes citizen science
so that actively contributing
to the solutions to scientific
and social issues becomes
something accessible to all.

Citizen Science Test

Citizen science begins with **curiosity**. That's why in 2025 Scivil developed an approachable little test to find out "What type of citizen scientist are you? By answering short, playful questions, participants discover which of eight citizen-science profiles fits them: traffic virtuoso, protective angel, environmentalist or something else.

The test makes citizen science **tangible** and shows that it has a place for every interest and talent. The results give citizens an instant indicator of concrete projects they can take part in.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/cs-test>

Maarallee

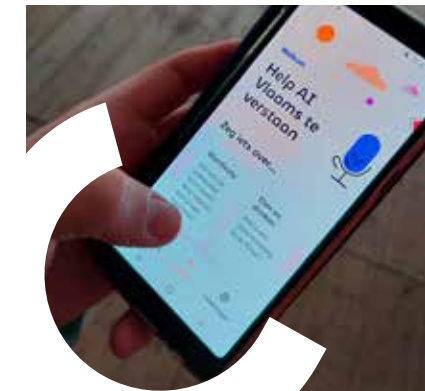
Contributing to citizen science innovation is not just exciting, but also often necessary. That certainly applies to the crowdsourcing **"Corpus of Spoken Flemish"** project, which Scivil launched in 2025 in collaboration with KU Leuven's Department of Image and Speech Processing. Scivil developed a citizen-science campaign to encourage citizens to donate **Flemish voice recordings** to a publicly available, crowdsourced dataset. The long-term goal: to improve the training of speech-to-text AI models on the Flemish accent.

The public campaign was named "Maarallee" - a **nod** to spoken Flemish as well as the frustration when AI models such as ChatGPT misinterpret Flemish.

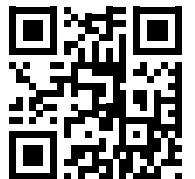
During 2025, we toured various events with an initial test recording protocol, which was later reformulated into the flow in the app. We appeared at 600 years of KU Leuven, the Flemish AI Forum and Manifiesta, among other events. Launched on 17 October 2025, the app received wide

coverage in media including national and regional newspapers and the podcasts "Nieuwe Feiten" (Radio 1) and "Bits and Atoms" (De Standaard). By the turn of the year, we had collected the first 1000 recordings.

Maarallee shows that civic participation is a **fully-fledged and successful method** even outside traditional research contexts.



www.maarallee.be



VAIOP and DeCYPhar citizen panels

In 2025 Scivil organized **two citizen panels**.

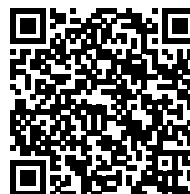
On 15 March, 58 Flemish citizens took part in a panel as part of the **VAIOP project**. They discussed the social opportunities and risks of eight practical AI applications from the Flemish AI Research Program.

This was followed on 25 October by a second citizens' panel with 29 participants on sustainable innovation in biotechnology for the **European DeCYPhar project**.

The panel took place simultaneously in Barcelona, Vilnius and Vienna and focused on more sustainable production methods for flavonoids and terpenoids.



https://amai.vlaanderen/news_items/5093



<https://www.scivil.be/en/news/citizen-panel-sustainable-innovation-biotechnology>



Science Day

Sunday 23 November marked the 15th edition of Science Day. Scivil was present at **various locations**.

At the **University of Antwerp**, visitors were able to interact with an analogue AI chatbot as part of amai!, and took part in a lecture and quiz on artificial intelligence.

At **Hasselt University** and at **Muntpunt Brussels**, visitors spoke to the Maarallee app in dialect, "tussentaal" or youth slang to help AI understand Flemish better. The Citizen Science Test could also be tried out on site.





**Scivil makes
connections for
citizen science**

Scivil connects initiators and
potential initiators with
partners to conduct
impactful citizen science
projects together.

Citizen Science Fair

On 18 June, together with European Citizen Science, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and the European Commission, Scivil organised the **first** Citizen Science Fair.

The fair had a **dual purpose**: to inform and encourage citizens and to introduce policy makers to the impact of citizen science.

Thirty projects from home and abroad – on topics ranging from biodiversity and security to heritage and technology – were presented to hundreds of visitors, including a delegation from the European Commission.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/news/citizen-science-fair-2025-look-back>



Citizens4Water

In 2025, we **launched** the development of the Citizens4Water platform: a global inventory of citizen-science projects on water management and hydrology. The input we gathered in 2024 was consolidated and, in collaboration with UNESCO and the developers of Ibercivis, was given shape step by step as a user-friendly platform.

We also organised several **test rounds** with the community of citizen-science researchers on water-related topics. Their feedback helped us identify bugs and further optimise the platform. To ensure the **sustainability** of the project, Citizens4Water was fully embedded into the UNESCO environment.

To publicise the platform, we presented Citizens4Water at several international **events**, such as the CS4Water conference in Delft, the celebration of 50 years of IHP (UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme) in Paris and the Australian citizen-science conference in Melbourne (with digital presence).

Over the summer, we also worked with job students who created a first **global inventory** of citizen-science projects concerning water. Through systematic online searching, they traced 368 projects, including contact information, allowing us to invite them to contribute to Citizens4Water.



<https://ihp-wins.unesco.org/citizens4water/>



Contributions to working groups

In 2025, Scivil was involved in **16 working groups, steering committees and advisory panels** for various projects and organisations. For example, Scivil, together with [Waterland vzw](#), was the leader of the 'citizen science' platform of the [Coordinating Committee on Integrated Water Policy \(CIW\)](#). This platform working group met

five times to exchange information and explore collaboration and funding opportunities.

On 22 September, Scivil was also a **guest** at a [VLIR](#) and [CREF](#) consultation on the ERA research agenda and citizen science.

Scivil was one of the driving forces behind the CIW 'citizen science' platform.



Amai!

For the fifth year in a row, Amai! built on its **mission**: to raise awareness about AI and actively involve citizens in AI innovation.

To include vulnerable groups in the rapidly evolving AI context, Scivil and the Knowledge Centre Data & Society developed a range of **training** for teachers and digital assistants at Ligo centres for basic education. This offering provides tools to deal with AI in the classroom, an introduction to deepfakes and a complete teaching package that teachers can use to get started right away. This way, through Ligo, amai! reaches a broad group of low-literacy adults.

In addition, amai! developed an **interactive quiz** that was used at science events and festivals. Using questions about concrete AI applications, participants were able to hone their knowledge in an accessible and encouraging way. The quiz was presented at Docville in Leuven, Razor Reel Film Fest in Bruges and the Day of Science in Antwerp, among others.



www.amai.vlaanderen



International operation

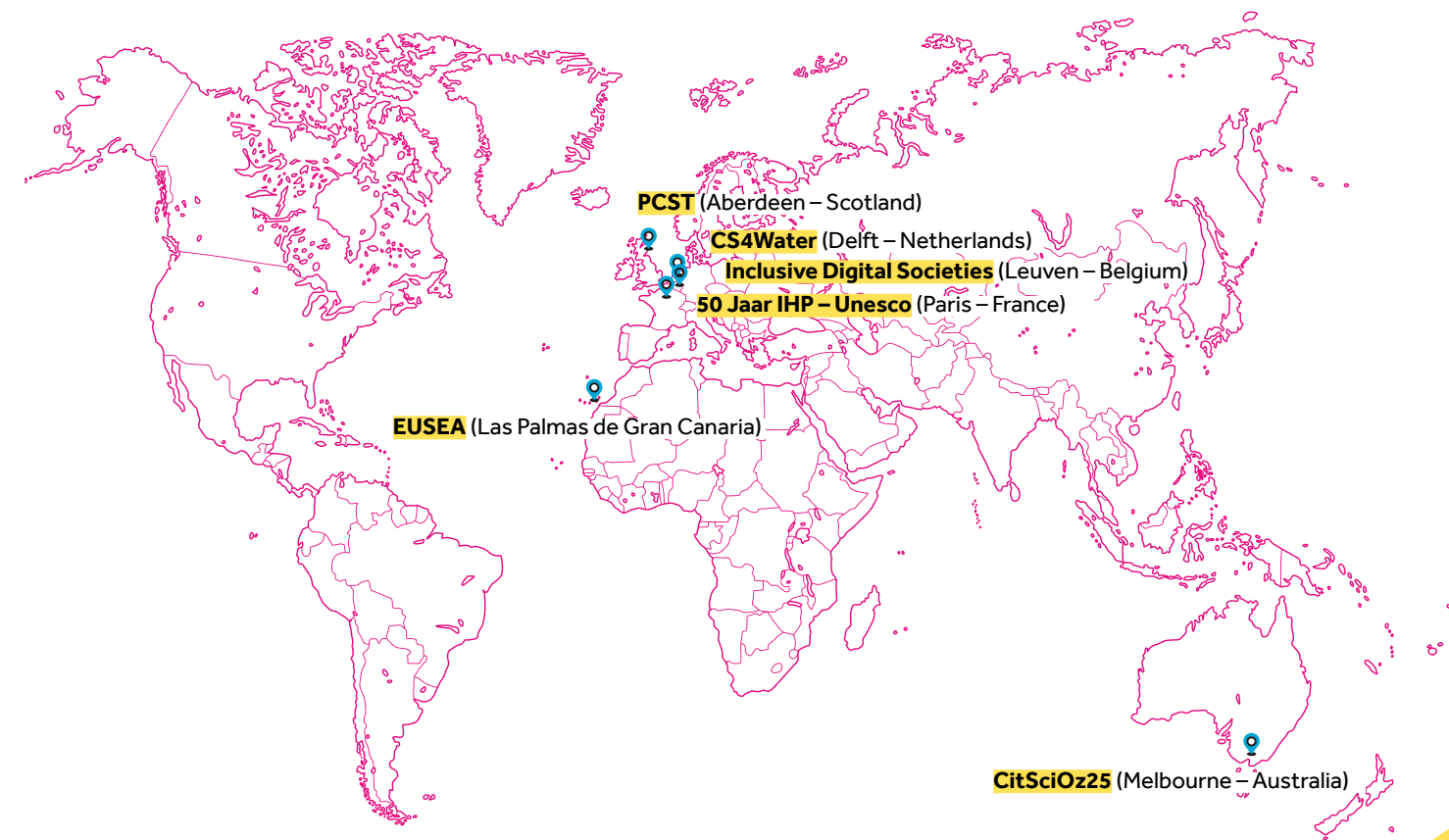
2025 was a year of inspiring **international collaborations**. In April, Scivil co-organised the closing event of the European Mutual Learning Exercise on Public Engagement in Research and Innovation. On June 18, the Citizen Science Fair brought together citizen scientists, researchers, families and passers-by for a congenial and inspiring day of meetings and interactive demos.

Scivil also contributed to the **OECD publication** Embedding Citizen Science into Research Policy and, on a working visit to Citizen Science Netherlands, exchanged **insights** about our operation as a knowledge centre - and counted bees together, illustrating that international cooperation also begins with doing things together.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/news/scivil-international-events-brussels-gran-canaria>

The Scivil team also attended a number of international **events** to raise awareness of citizen science in Flanders, share experiences and gain inspiration. From Gran Canaria to Melbourne, from Paris to Aberdeen: Scivil was widely represented.





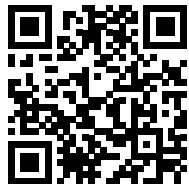
**Scivil supports
citizen science**

Scivil supports
citizen science initiators
with advice, events and
hands-on workshops

New workshops

In 2025, Scivil developed **three new workshops**, ranging from an ultra-short one-hour exploratory session to a day-long “Citizen Science in Heritage” workshop, in collaboration with **FARO**.

The short session was offered at the UHasselt Research Day (24 April) and the VLAIO cluster event (2 October), among others. For the **PreCISE Summer School** on citizen science, we developed a workshop **focusing on communication** within citizen science. This was held on 8 July for 56 international researchers.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/workshops>



Featured events

Scivil regularly provided **part** of the program at larger events. For example, we presented two posters at the network day of the Flanders Open Science network **FRDN**. On the same day, we also took part in the UNESCO Day of the **Flemish UNESCO Commission**, with the theme of AI and peace. In the session “Citizen science, biodiversity and AI,” we explained citizen science and presented the **amai!** and Citizens4Water projects.

The **amai!** project also continued to inspire **internationally**. We presented our approach at a webinar of the Data and Open Science Working Group of the European Citizen Science Association in front of more than 100 participants. The **amai!** team also gave workshops at the Flemish AI Forum and the Creative AI Exploration and Imagination conference in Leipzig, among others. In November, we presented **amai!** on the international stage of Falling Walls Engage in Berlin (see 5.1).

Maaraltee was also represented at the Flemish AI Forum and at various other events, such as 600 years of KU Leuven, Manifiesta, Trefdag Digitaal Vlaanderen and the Day of Science.

Lastly, we continued to expand our network to **colleges**. At the invitation of **VLHORA (Flemish Colleges Council)**, we gave an introductory session on citizen science for staff from a number of Flemish colleges.



Student Activities

Collaborative work with students remains an **important and instructive pillar** of our operation. In 2025 this was no different.

During the summer, we welcomed **seven job students**. Three students drew up an inventory of Belgian citizen-science projects for the Citizen Science Scan 2025. Three other students worked on a global inventory of water-related citizen-science projects as part of Citizens4Water. The seventh student developed a communication plan and materials for Citizens4Water, focusing on inspiring project examples.

For the Citizen Science Scan, we also collaborated with **Amandine Raucq**, master's student at UCLouvain, who wrote her thesis on citizen-science projects on biodiversity in French-speaking Belgium. This collaboration improved the visibility of French-language projects and our inventory could be further expanded.

We also again collaborated with students from the **Science Communication course** at KU Leuven. One group developed a strategy to engage global projects with Citizens4Water. Another group worked for amai! on image style prompts and an educational brochure on how AI can be used to learn Dutch, in collaboration with Ligo.

In amai! we also collaborated with a student group from the **PIP project** at KU Leuven, who developed **Maia**: a physical installation to collect citizens' ideas about AI at events.

Lastly, we played our part as a research centre by supervising a **Journal Club** on citizen science at UHasselt, where students read scientific articles in advance and discussed them.



Collaborative work with students remains an important and instructive pillar of our operation.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/success-story/mapping-citizen-science-french-speaking-belgium>



**Scivil innovates
citizen science**

Scivil explores best practices
and lessons learned,
and develops and disseminates
innovative methods to further
strengthen citizen science.

Falling Walls Engage

In 2025 it was once again clear that amai! has captured the international imagination. The project was nominated as one of 15 finalists in the global Falling Walls Engage competition. This **nomination** was great recognition for the innovative work of the amai! team.

The **finale** took place in Berlin at the Falling Walls Science Summit, an event that bridges research, innovation and society. We pitched amai! on a special stage in the conference venue. Although we did not win, we returned home with valuable insights, inspiration from various scientific fields and new international contacts involved in science engagement.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/news/amai-falling-walls-engage>

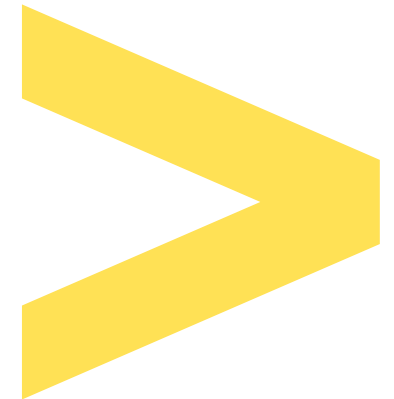


Measuring environmental noise in Flanders

How do citizens experience **noise in their environment**? In the Innovative Public Procurement Programme, Scivil collaborated with UGent and Department of Environment on an innovative citizen-science approach.

Using **facade sensors** and **short questionnaires**, citizens mapped both noise levels and noise pollution. The project tested a distributed approach where sensors were not lent out centrally, but passed between citizens through local partners such as schools, associations and municipalities.

This approach provided valuable **insights** on cost-effectiveness, usability and scalability, and represents an important step toward scaling up citizen science as a tool for environment and health policy.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/project/ambient-noise-flanders>



**Scivil contributes to
RVO-Society**

At RVO-Society, we believe that
science and innovation
are the key to a better future.

25 years of RVO-Society

In 2025 our umbrella organisation RVO-Society, with its two pillars Scivil and Brightlab, celebrated its 25th anniversary. This **year of celebration** was kicked off at the General Assembly on 14 May, with a workshop on the future of science communication in which possible future scenarios were explored and translated into actions for today.

<https://www.scivil.be/en/news/rvo-society-celebrates-25-years>



Salad & Learn

RVO-Society is committed to clear science communication and building bridges between education, science and society. Scivil and Brightlab each play **complementary roles** for this mission.

Monthly “Salad & Learn” sessions were started as a way to strengthen knowledge sharing and internal expertise. At these **lunch sessions**, colleagues share insights and skills. Scivil provided the first session on science communication, followed by sessions on working with Canva and effective prompting with AI.



At these lunch sessions, colleagues share insights and skills.

Team two-day with Innovation Day

Collaboration and innovation are at the heart of RVO-Society. In September 2025, the annual team two-day event took place in Kortrijk. A **varied program** of site visits, workshops and presentations was developed in collaboration with HoWest.

Among other activities, we took a deep dive into design thinking at innovation hub The Enterprise, got an overview of projects at the Human Interface Technology (HIT) Lab and visited the Flax House of AI. This **exchange** with other Flemish actors strengthens our network and stimulates further development for our operation.





Scivil looks ahead
to 2026

Citizen Science Networking Day and Getting Started with Citizen Science

In February, we will again host the “[Getting Started with Citizen Science](#)” workshop, where participants will be **immersed** for a full day in project planning, communication, participant engagement and stakeholder management.

The **biennial Citizen Science Network Day** will follow in September. We look forward to bringing the Flemish citizen-science community together for the fourth time at inspiring presentations and workshops.

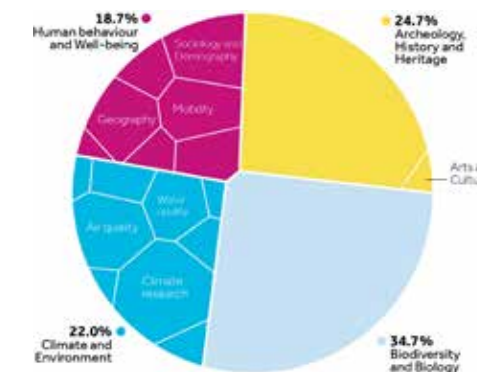


<https://www.scivil.be/en/evenementen>

Citizen Science Scan 2025

In 2026, we will launch the second Citizen Science Scan, a new edition of our **periodic inventory** of citizen-science initiatives in Belgium. The scan provides an up-to-date overview of the landscape, charts developments since the last edition and analyses research areas, initiators and funding sources.

With this publication, Scivil aims to **support** policymakers, researchers and practitioners with informed insights to further strengthen citizen science and embed it sustainably.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/citizen-science-scan>

CitizenELF

In 2026 we will build on the lessons learned from the PIO project on measuring environmental noise in Flanders. Using the same distributed citizen-science approach via local hubs, we, working with UGent and Departement Omgeving, are setting up a measurement network to map **magnetic fields** around high-voltage lines in Flanders.

CitizenELF combines citizen measurements with a real-time dashboard and map visualisations and will culminate in a **roadmap** for scaling up and policy-relevant insights.



<https://www.scivil.be/en/project/citizenelf-extremely-low-frequency-radiation-around-high-voltage-power-lines>

Amai!

2025 was a **pivotal year** for amai! After four years during which 17 projects were funded, the focus was on reflection and preparing for the future. Together with the Data and Society Knowledge Centre, a new project proposal was developed for 2026.

Amai! will further **strengthen** its role as a citizen participation AI research project, in closer collaboration with other funding channels and Flanders Technology & Innovation (FTI). Amai! also aims to act as a **megaphone** for citizen participation in AI innovation, not least through a large-scale event with 2,000 citizens at the FTI experience festival.

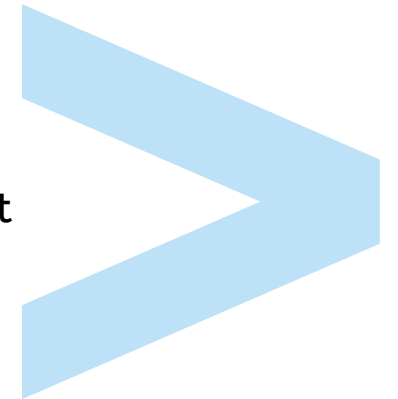


Maarallee

Maarallee is fully committed to **continued collection of Flemish speech data** in 2026. We do this via a stronger presence on social media, a curriculum for schools and additional gamification elements on the website and in the application.

We are also starting the **data processing phase**, once again following a citizen-science approach. Using the Zooniverse classification platform, a group of engaged citizens will be able to correct raw transcripts of speech recordings, based on KU Leuven's pre-trained model. This way citizen participation remains central to the entire process, from data collection to processing.

Public participation continues to play a central roll throughout the entire process.



Scivil

Citizen Science
Vlaanderen

by
rvo-
society

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