

Citizen Science at Universities

THE LAUNCH OF A CS CONTACT POINT AT VUB

Floor Keersmaekers, Science Outreach Office, VUB

Co-author: Carina Veeckman, SMIT Research Group, VUB

Scivil Networking Day, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022



VUB RESEARCH COUNCIL POLICY PLAN (2021-2024)

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: PARTICIPATORY & COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

- Science Outreach Office: involve citizens as much as possible in the scientific process.
- **Operational goal:**
 - provide information and guidance
 - a **central point of contact** will be set-up within the research department
 - < LERU recommendations: *Citizen Science at Universities: Trends, Guidelines and Recommendations* (2016)
- **KPI 4:** To support participatory research, a **central support center** will be established and 2 initiatives will be launched to support the citizen science research community.

THE PROCESS

INTERNAL VISION & POLICY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

1) Quality criteria for Citizen Science

- Criteria applied by CS Center Zürich
- 10 principles of CS (ECSA)

2) Collaboration with other departments

- Community Engaged Research & Learning (CERL)
- Research & Data Management (e.g. OS), TechTransfer

3) Definition of main services of the CSCP

- BESPOC model (LIBER + ECSA Working Group)

WS 1: QUALITY CRITERIA FOR CITIZEN SCIENCE

1) Difference in semantics

- Some criteria/values apply to science / scientific research in general
- Some are quite specific for citizen science

2) VUB values

- Urban Engaged University
- Collaboration, multidisciplinary, democratic attitude, societal relevance

3) Focus on Brussels

- Without excluding the international context

WS 2: COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

1) NO DUPLICATION of existing information, services and expertise at VUB

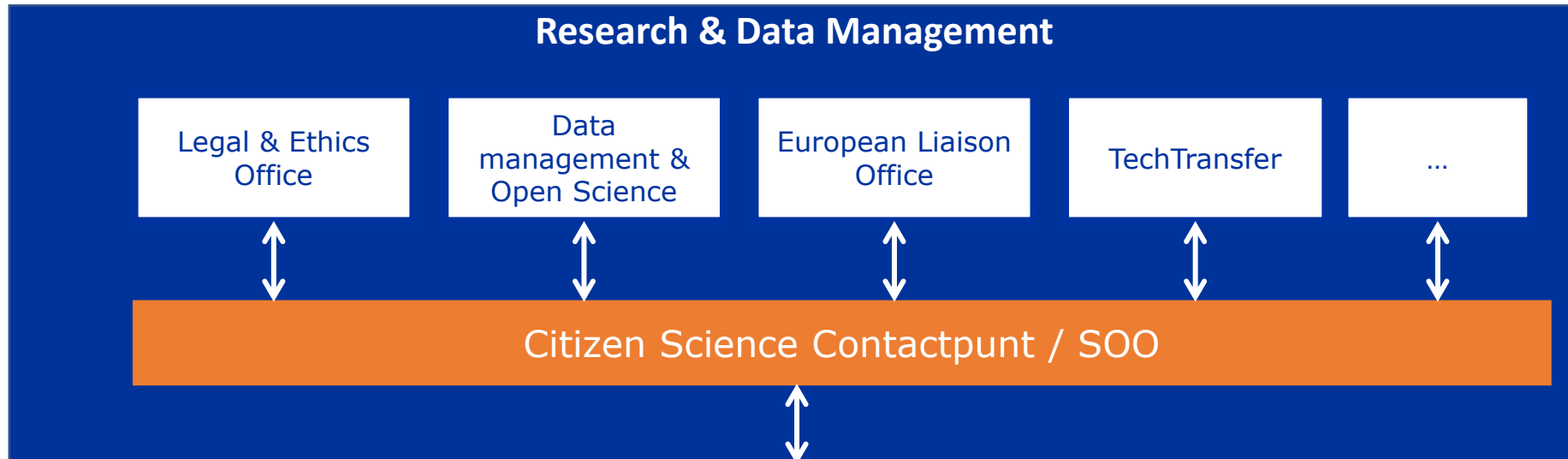
- Community Engaged Research, Grant Offices, Data Mgm/Open Science, Legal, TechTransfer ...

2) Become an expert in building networks and sharing knowledge

- Feed into CSCP's main goals and KPI's

3) Writing protocol for collaboration; advisory board

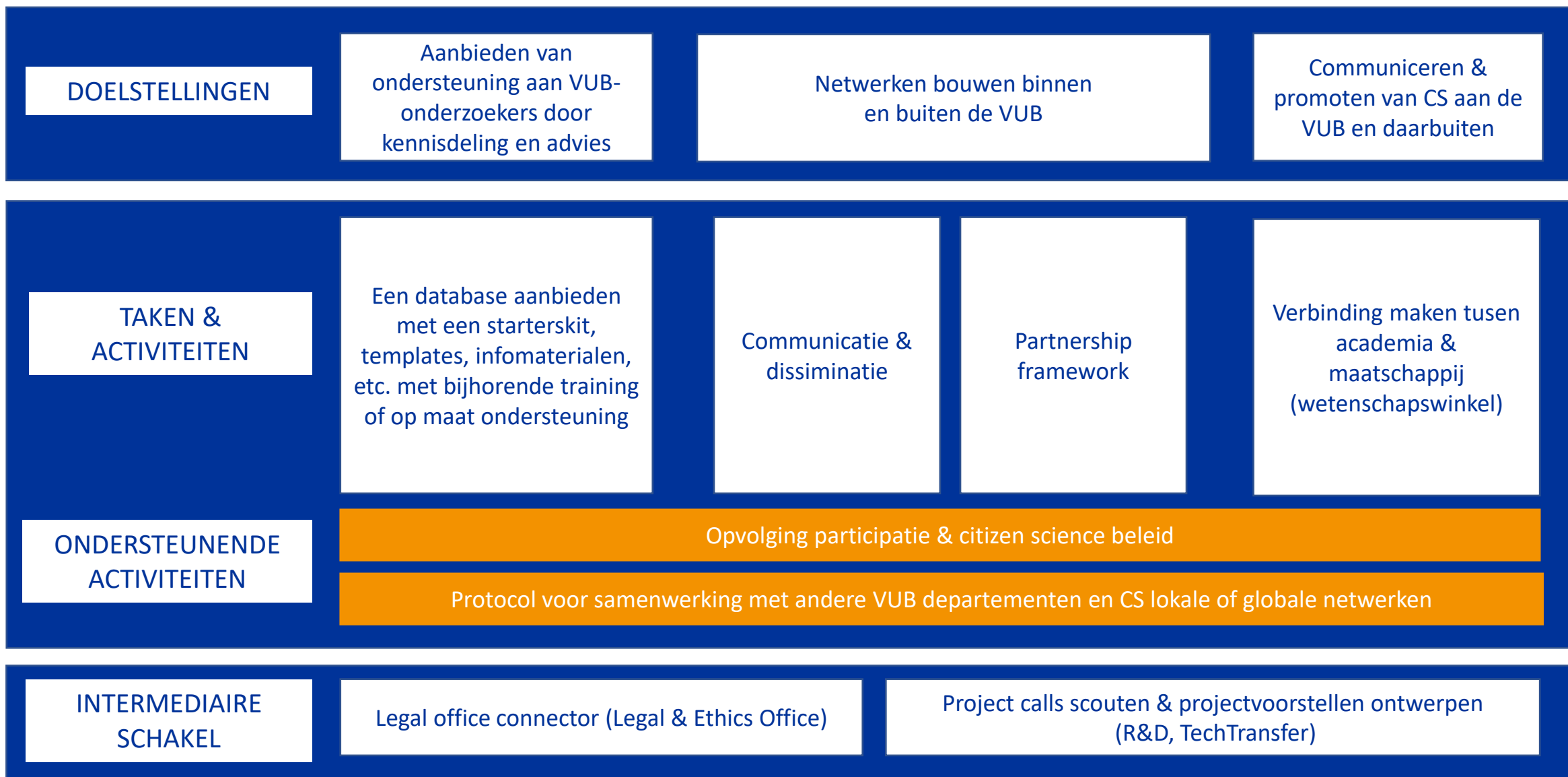
- Within different frameworks and departments



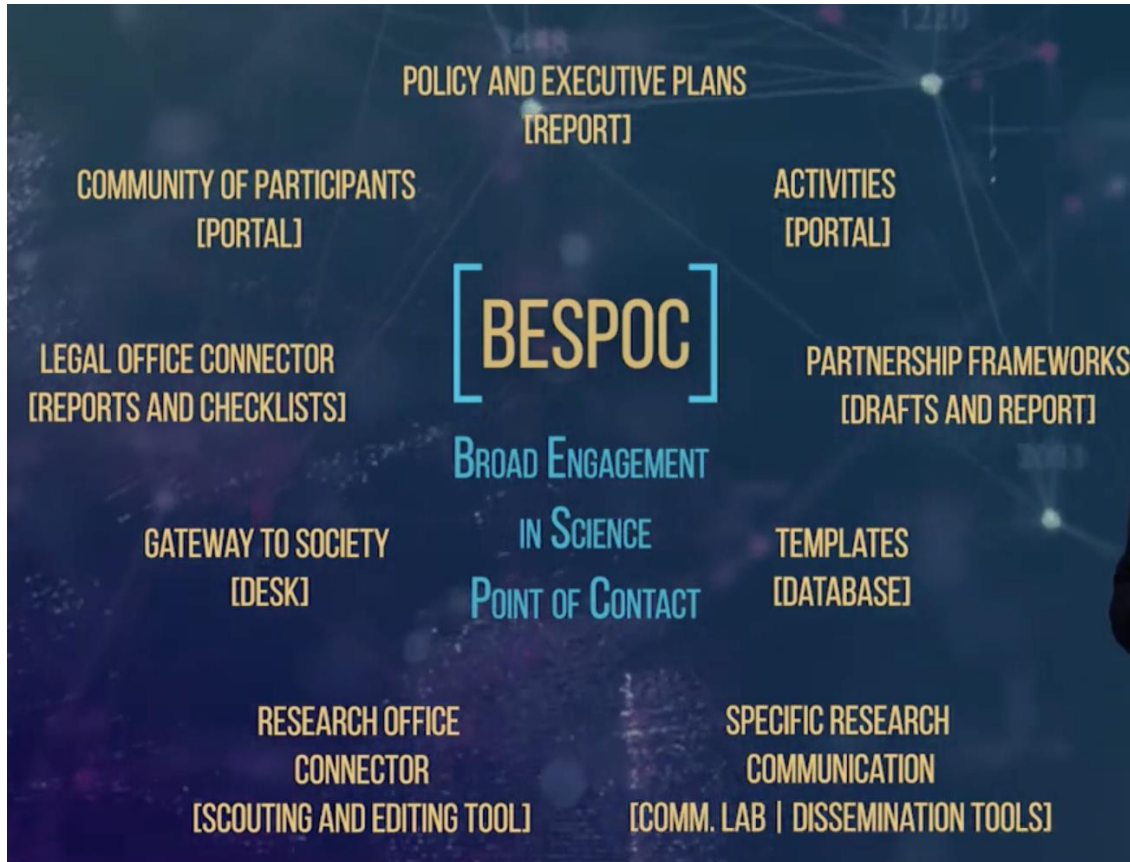
Open Lab VUB/ULB

CERL VUB





WS 3: DEFINITION OF MAIN SERVICES OF THE CSCP < BESPOC



1. Institutional policy for citizen science and executive plans / policy platform" updated report on how to collaborate on citizen science between different departments at the university
2. "Activity platform": information about citizen science activities and projects at the university
3. "Partnership framework": partnerships between departments at the university, or with external stakeholders from the projects
4. "Templates": checklist for data management, privacy, training materials, guidelines, evaluation forms, etc.
5. "Communication and dissemination tools": increase the dissemination of research, and stimulate recruitment for citizen science projects
6. "Scouting and proposal writing": scouting for grants, editing proposals, etc.
7. "Gateway to society / desk": identification of needs and questions from society
8. "Legal office connector": connecting the citizen science projects with the right departments at the university who are in charge for the legal matters
9. "Community platform": building a community of participants (could be the same as the activities portal)

WS 3: DEFINITION OF MAIN SERVICES OF THE CSCP < BESPOC

CITIZEN SCIENCE CONTACT POINT	BESPOC
<p>GOAL 1: Offering CS support to VUB researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Info materials, trainings, peer learning b. Provide support concerning all stages of a CS project via checklists and specific workshops c. First-line point of contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Templates (6. Scouting and proposal writing)
<p>GOAL 2: Building networks inside and outside VUB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Within VUB: mapping, community of practice b. Outside VUB: starting a partner list (w Scivil), existing international networks, community of practice c. Networking events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Institutional policy for citizen science and executive plans 3. Partnership frameworks 7. Gateway to society / desk 8. Legal office connector
<p>GOAL 3: Communicating and promoting citizen science at VUB and beyond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Through VUB's communication channels b. Participating in conferences, events, workshops c. Partner in projects (communication) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Activity platform 5. Communication and dissemination tools 6. Scouting and proposal writing

THE 1ST OUTCOMES

VUB RESEARCH COUNCIL CALL FOR PROJECTS



- 2 to 3 projects (18 months up to 4 years)
- addressing transition issues in a metropolitan context (preferably Brussels), contributing to the SDGs
- both interdisciplinary and intersectoral

DEVELOPMENT OF A CS STARTER KIT

- EUTOPIA TRAIN deliverable
- **Module I:** Start to learn about citizen science
- **Module II:** Determine if citizen science is right for your research
- **Module III:** Crucial design factors for a citizen science project
- (**Module IV:** Reflective questions/quizzes)
- Zenodo: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.701486>
- <https://eu-citizen.science/resource/342>



WHAT'S NEXT?

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- **October 2022:** Soft launch of the Citizen Science Contact Point // CS Call
- **November-December 2022:**
 - Development of GANTT chart, working plan, setting priorities
 - Establishing collaboration protocols with internal and external partners
- **January-June 2023:**
 - Develop a guide / 'detailed description of operation' for the EUTOPIA TRAIN Project
 - Support EUTOPIA consortium partners in setting up their own Education & Support Service + **building the network**



INTERESTING PROJECTS > RESOURCES



TIME4CS aims at supporting and facilitating **the implementation of sustainable Institutional Changes** in Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) to **promote Citizen Science and public engagement** (citizens and citizens associations) in science and technology.

<https://www.time4cs.eu>



INCENTIVE aims to **demonstrate the potential of citizen science through the co-creation, establishment and assessment of citizen science Hubs (CSH)** in four European Universities. The project aims to accelerate the transition of these institutions to more inclusive, open and democratic innovation and scientific governance.

<https://incentive-project.eu/>



Integrating Open and Citizen Science Into Active Learning Approaches in Higher Education – *The INOS project* aims to **modernise** Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) curricula **through civic engagement in OS and CS**.

<https://inos-project.eu/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Thanks to Eline Livémont and Karel Verbrugge
Special thanks to Carina Veeckman

Floor.Keersmaekers[at]vub.be / citizenscience[at]vub.be



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL