



RIECS
concept | Towards a pan-European Research
Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science

Halfway Forward: Building Europe’s Future Citizen Science Infrastructure

Towards a pan-European Research Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science.

Halfway through the project journey, RIECS-Concept continues to turn dialogue into direction and collaboration into concrete progress. What began as a shared ambition to conceptualise a pan-European research infrastructure for citizen science has evolved into an active process of co-creation involving researchers, citizens, policymakers and research infrastructure actors across Europe.

Through workshops, conferences, consultations and community engagement activities, the project has continued to explore how citizen science can be better supported, connected and sustained in the long term.

First 18 Months in Numbers

 9000 Website Visits	 6700 Dissemination Events Participants	 45 Dissemination Events
 4 Scientific Publications	 7 International Conference	 1 Policy Paper

[OUR WEBSITE](#)

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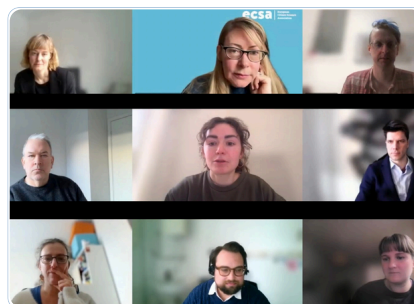
Gaining Visibility & Building Momentum

EVENTS

✳ **High-Level Policy Event:**
“Institutionalisation and Long-Term Sustainability of Citizen Science”, 19 February 2026, Online.

During the high-level policy event organised by the European Citizen Science (ECS) project, RIECS-Concept joined experts from research infrastructures, policy institutions and citizen science organisations to discuss the institutionalisation and long-term sustainability of citizen science.

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✳ **RIECS-Concept Consortium Meeting:**
From Coordination to Vision, 2 March 2026, Oulu, Finland.

RIECS-Concept partners met in Oulu to review progress, align ongoing work and connect the project’s conceptual development more closely with its technical components.

The meeting brought particular attention to traceability, clearer labelling and stronger links across project activities, helping move RIECS-Concept from coordination towards a more integrated and operational vision.

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EVENTS

* **A Roundtable Session: “Building a Federated Future: Conceptualising Governance and Sustainability for the Pan-European Citizen Science Infrastructure”, at the ECSA 2026 Conference, 5 March 2026, Oulu, Finland.**

The roundtable session brought together perspectives on how to build governance and sustainability into the foundations of a future pan-European research infrastructure for citizen science.

The insights gathered will feed directly into the RIECS-Concept roadmap and sustainability plan, supporting the development of an infrastructure that is collaborative, sustainable and responsive to policy needs.

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* **The Scientific-Practical Conference: “From Idea to Impact: Living Lab as a Space for Co-Creation and Change”, 27 May 2026, Vilnius, Lithuania.**

The conference brought together researchers, practitioners and partner organisations at the VILNIUS TECH Sustainability Hub to explore the role of Living Labs and Citizens’ Assemblies in climate adaptation.

Discussions focused on co-creation, citizen participation and collaborative governance, highlighting trust-building, locally grounded engagement and sustainable collaboration networks as important elements for achieving long-term societal impact.

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* 2026 Conference for Advancing Participatory Sciences (CAPS 2026), 26-29 May 2026, Online.

At CAPS 2026, RIECS-Concept presented its draft Evaluation and Impact Assessment Framework, developed to support the assessment of a future European Research Infrastructure for Citizen Science.

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Conference for Advancing
Participatory Sciences

* World Biodiversity Forum 2026: “Towards a Connected Europe: RIECS-Concept and the Future of Citizen Science for Biodiversity”, 14-19 June 2026, Davos, Switzerland.

At the World Biodiversity Forum 2026, RIECS-Concept presented the first synthesis of findings emerging from its European co-design process. The presentation explored initial solutions for connecting citizen science tools, data flows, and stakeholder communities, contributing to the development of a more connected and participatory European research infrastructure.

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✓ Open Session at the Regional Studies Association Annual Conference 2026: “Building Trustworthy, Sustainable and Collaborative Citizen Science Infrastructures: Regional Governance, Policy Integration and European Cooperation”, 15 June 2026, Gothenburg, Sweden.

During the Regional Studies Association Annual Conference 2026, RIECS-Concept contributed to discussions on the governance and policy dimensions of sustainable citizen science infrastructures.

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EVENTS

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WORKSHOPS

✳ Workshop: “Exploring the Role of Open Science Hardware in Europe’s Citizen Science Infrastructure” at The HEROES (Hardware Ecosystem Requirements for Open and Emerging Science), 19-21 January 2026, Geneva, Switzerland.

The workshop brought together around 40 researchers, practitioners, institutional leaders and funders to explore the role of Open Science Hardware (OSch) in the development of citizen science infrastructure.

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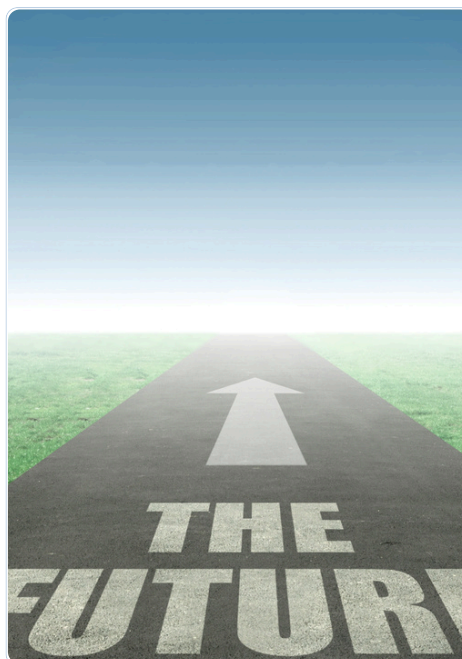


✳ Workshop: “Shaping the Future of Citizen Science”, 18 February 2026, Online.

The workshop creates a dedicated space for researchers and scientists from different disciplines and countries to:

- Share research needs, challenges, and opportunities related to citizen science.
- Reflect on current gaps in tools, support structures, and interoperability.
- Contribute user stories that will directly inform the design of [RIECS-Concept](#).

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WORKSHOPS

* **Workshop: “Co-Creating RIECS-Concept with Open-Source Builders” at FOSS Backstage 2026**, 16 March 2026, Berlin, Germany.

The workshop recognised that open-source developers and maintainers are not just contributors but central architects of the citizen science ecosystem.

The workshop was organised by the European Citizen Science Association (ECSA).

[**READ MORE**](#)

* **Expert Workshop on Citizen Science in Education Systems**, 25 March 2026, Online.

The workshop brought together 20 experts from 10 European countries to explore how citizen science can be more effectively integrated into education systems.

The workshop was organised by OeAD within the RIECS-Concept project.

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Governance & Community

Co-Creating RIECS with Open Source Builders



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WORKSHOPS

* **Workshop: “Co-Designing the Future of Citizen Science”**, 13 April 2026, Online.

The workshop brought together citizen science networks to explore their needs and priorities for a future European research infrastructure and to align diverse perspectives around a shared vision.

Discussions reinforced the importance of co-design in developing a more connected, resilient and impactful citizen science ecosystem, with stakeholder perspectives directly contributing to the development of RIECS-Concept.

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* **Workshop with Students: “Shaping the Future of Citizen Science”**, 27 April 2026, Vienna, Austria.

Students from BG/BRG Erlgasse in Vienna joined a RIECS-Concept co-creative workshop to discuss their experiences in citizen science and help shape ideas for future research infrastructures.

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* “Enhancing municipal climate adaptation: Evaluating communication strategies in Lithuanian cities”, by researchers from [VILNIUS TECH](#), has been published in the scientific, peer-reviewed journal Urban Transitions.

* The study explores how Lithuanian municipalities communicate climate adaptation issues and how citizens perceive these efforts.



What’s Next at RIECS-Concept

- ✓ [Berlin Science Week 2026](#), 4 November 2026, Berlin, Germany.
- ✓ [EOSC Symposium 2026](#), 11 November 2026, Florence, Italy.
- ✓ [PartWiss26](#), 18-20 November, Berlin, Germany.
- ✓ [International Conference on Research Infrastructures](#), 2-4 December 2026, Rome, Italy.
- ✓ [Chaos Communications Congress](#), 27-29 December 2026, Hamburg, Germany.
- ✓ [Open Science Festival](#), 18-19 March 2027, Bamberg, Germany.
- ✓ [Re:publica](#), 10-12 May 2026, Berlin, Germany.

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Latest Project Updates and Deliverables

Behind every RIECS-Concept deliverable lies a wealth of evidence, collaboration and stakeholder engagement. Here are some of the key figures and highlights from our latest reports.

Deliverable D2.2 Technical Requirements Report

- * Deliverable D2.2 translates evidence collected during the first phase of RIECS-Concept into a structured set of technical requirements for a future pan-European Research Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science, bringing together insights from key stakeholder groups.
- * Starting from 793 analysable user stories, the RIECS-Concept team consolidated stakeholder input into 37 needs and 31 technical requirements, including 18 functional, 7 non-functional, 4 compliance and 2 integration requirements. 11 were classified as MUST requirements using the MoSCoW prioritisation approach.
- * The report maps these requirements against a catalogue of 4,487 existing technologies and platforms, with 823 shortlisted as particularly relevant, and identifies 10 structural gaps not adequately addressed by existing solutions.
- * The findings provide a technical foundation for the next stage of RIECS-Concept development, linking stakeholder needs with feasible technologies and directly informing the preliminary catalogue of services, resources and functionalities in D2.3.



24

Co-Design
Workshops



31

Technical
Requirements



793

Analysable
User Stories



823

Shortlisted
Entries



37

User
Stakeholders
Identified



10

Structural
Gaps

[VIEW ALL DELIVERABLES](#)



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Latest Project Updates and Deliverables

Deliverable D2.3 Preliminary Catalogue of Services, Resources and Functionalities

* Deliverable D2.3 takes the next step from stakeholder needs and technical requirements to define what a future pan-European Research Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science should actually provide. Building on the evidence gathered through stakeholder engagement and the technical requirements established in D2.2, the deliverable develops a preliminary catalogue of services, resources and functionalities for RIECS-Concept.

* The catalogue organises proposed components across seven functional layers: foundation, interoperability, participation, knowledge and impact, community and capacity, governance, and cross-cutting domain neutrality. This structure reflects the different roles that components would play within a future research infrastructure, from enabling interoperability and participation to supporting knowledge exchange, capacity building and governance.

* A key result is the complete traceability between stakeholder evidence, identified gaps, technical requirements and proposed components. The catalogue addresses all 37 consortium-validated needs, all 10 structural gaps and all 31 technical requirements identified during the first project phase. In total, 151 components address at least one stakeholder need, 68 address at least one technical requirement, and 33 address at least one structural gap.

* The catalogue provides a structured basis for connecting and strengthening the existing citizen science ecosystem.



7

Funcional
Layers



151

Components
Linked to Needs



68

Components Linked
to Requirements



33

Components Linked
to Structural Gaps

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Latest Project Updates and Deliverables

Deliverable D2.4 Evaluation and Impact Assessment Framework

* Deliverable D2.4 presents the first RIECS-Concept Evaluation and Impact Assessment Framework, addressing a fundamental question for the future infrastructure: how can the value and impact of a Research Infrastructure centred on citizen participation be meaningfully assessed?

* The framework builds on established Research Infrastructure evaluation approaches, including the ESFRI lifecycle model, OECD Reference Framework and RI-PATHS, while incorporating evidence from citizen science evaluation research, stakeholder engagement and an internal RIECS-Concept co-creation process. The analysis shows that conventional indicators focused primarily on publications, citations, user numbers and outputs cannot fully capture the community, societal and systemic value generated through participatory research.

* The main conceptual result is the introduction of a dedicated Participation Case, complementing the established ESFRI Scientific Case and Implementation Case. It expands evaluation towards dimensions that are particularly important for citizen science, including inclusive and accessible participation, the quality and transparency of co-created data, community stewardship and trust, policy use of citizen-generated evidence, multilingual and cross-cultural accessibility, participatory governance and capacity development.



9

Impact
dimensions



1

Participation
Case



21

Core
KPIs

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Latest Project Updates and Deliverables

Deliverable D4.1 Engagement Methodology Protocol

- * Deliverable D4.1 establishes the common engagement methodology used by RIECS-Concept to involve stakeholders directly in the co-design of a future pan-European Research Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science. It provides the methodological blueprint for collecting stakeholder needs in a structured, inclusive and comparable way across different countries, sectors and levels of citizen science experience.
- * The protocol covers 10 stakeholder groups and coordinates engagement activities across 13 consortium partners in 8 European countries. It combines co-design workshops, surveys and semi-structured interviews with a shared user story approach that enables stakeholder experiences and expectations to be translated into concrete needs and, subsequently, into services, resources, functionalities and technical requirements.
- * The methodology is organised into two engagement phases. Phase 1 focuses on identifying what services, resources and functionalities stakeholders need from the future infrastructure. Phase 2 builds on these results to refine the emerging concept and address additional technical and non-technical dimensions, including data and metadata, governance, financial sustainability and collaboration.



10

Stakeholder Groups



13

Consortium Partners



2

Engagement
Phases



3

Main Engagement
Formats

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Latest Project Updates and Deliverables

Deliverable D4.2 Citizens Requirements Report

* Deliverable D4.2 presents the needs and expectations of citizen scientists, citizen science practitioners, students and early-career researchers for a future pan-European Research Infrastructure for Excellent Citizen Science.

* A total of 24 citizen and student-facing co-design workshops were conducted across 10 countries and regions, involving 8 consortium partners and engaging 264 reported participants. Together, these activities generated 378 validated user stories, capturing participants' experiences, challenges and expectations related to participating in and supporting citizen science.

* The analysis identified 37 user needs and revealed several clear priorities. Participants emphasised easier discovery of citizen science projects and opportunities, low-barrier and user-friendly participation, accessible training and support, recognition and feedback, and transparent data governance. Training materials and documentation emerged as the most frequently mentioned individual need. Access, usability and discoverability together represented 35% of citizen need mentions, while recognition, feedback and trust accounted for 30% of expressed needs.



24

Workshops



10

Countries and
Regions



264

Reported
Participant



30%

Recognition, Feedback
and Trust

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Latest Project Updates and Deliverables

Deliverable D4.3 Stakeholders Requirements Report

* Deliverable D4.3 brings together the needs and expectations of professional and institutional stakeholder groups whose expertise is essential to the development of RIECS-Concept. The report complements the citizen-focused findings of D4.2 by examining the organisational, scientific, technical, educational and policy requirements of researchers and scientists, citizen science networks, NGOs, technology providers, companies, education systems, policymakers and Research Infrastructures.

* During the first project phase, 27 engagement activities under Task 4.3 involved 352 reported participants and generated 415 user stories included in the analysis. Engagement combined 13 online, 13 in-person and 1 hybrid activity, using the common co-design methodology and user story approach established in D4.1. Across the broader first-phase engagement process, RIECS-Concept conducted 42 activities and reached 514 reported participants.

* The analysis identifies both shared priorities and important differences across stakeholder groups. Needs are examined around themes such as access and discoverability, data quality and trust, tools and infrastructure, training and capacity building, governance and sustainability, and policy and impact.



8

Stakeholder
Groups



13

Online
Activities



42

Total First-Phase
Engagements

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Latest Project Updates and Deliverables

Deliverable D4.4 Global Policy Organisations Report

* Deliverable D4.4 examines how RIECS-Concept can connect with global policy organisations and international research institutions. The work recognises that many areas addressed through citizen science, including climate change, biodiversity, environmental monitoring and sustainable development, extend beyond national and European boundaries and require interoperability with international research, data and policy frameworks.

* RIECS-Concept developed five complementary engagement streams. These included engagement at the 4th UN Expert Group Meeting on Citizen Data, coordinated participation in UNEA-7, interviews with representatives of UN organisations, involvement in the APPEC Strategy 2027-2036 Open Science & Citizen Science Working Group, and the HEROES workshop on Open Science Hardware.

* A consistent message emerged: the future infrastructure should function as a connective layer rather than another standalone platform. Stakeholders highlighted the need to make existing citizen science data, tools, communities and infrastructures more visible, discoverable, interoperable and usable for policy. They also emphasised trust and validation, governance, long-term sustainability, and alignment with existing frameworks for Citizen Data, Open Science, FAIR and CARE principles and the Sustainable Development Goals.



5

International
Engagement
Streams



3

Primary Policy
Engagement Streams



32

Participants in the
APPEC Survey



5

Fundational
Requirement
Clusters

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**Impact in Numbers: Dissemination, Exploitation
and Communication**

Deliverable D6.3 Interim Report on Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication

* Deliverable D6.3 presents the communication, dissemination and exploitation activities of RIECS-Concept during its first 18 months and assesses progress against the project's communication and dissemination objectives and KPIs. The consortium established the project's visual identity, website, communication materials, social media presence and channels for reaching scientific, policy, citizen science and wider public audiences.

* During M1-M18, RIECS-Concept published 65 website news and blog posts, generated approximately 9,000 website visits, established communication across seven social media platforms, and released two project newsletters. The project also established its Open Access approach, making scientific publications, public deliverables and other outputs available through project and research repositories.

* Dissemination extended beyond digital communication. RIECS-Concept organised and participated in 45 dissemination events, reaching more than 6,700 participants across research, policy, public authorities, citizen science organisations and wider communities. During the same period, the consortium produced four scientific publications, presented project work at seven international conferences, published its first policy paper, and developed collaborations with related European initiatives.



65

**Website Blog
and News Post**



7

**Social Media
Platforms**



2

**Project
Newsletters**

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Impact in Numbers: 1st Policy Briefing

Deliverable D6.4: 1st Policy Briefing

* Deliverable D6.4 translates the evidence generated during the first 18 months of RIECS-Concept into policy recommendations for European and national decision-makers. The briefing responds to a central challenge identified throughout the project: citizen science in Europe is growing, but its projects, platforms, tools, datasets, resources and communities remain fragmented across countries and sectors.

* The policy briefing brings together evidence from the project's technical challenges assessment, stakeholder engagement, preliminary infrastructure design and national policy mapping. The analysis identifies fragmentation across five interconnected dimensions: technology, data, standards, resources and community. It also builds on a two-phase engagement strategy involving 10 stakeholder groups across the 8 consortium countries, alongside additional international engagement.

* From this evidence, the briefing develops three core policy actions: Recognise, Sustain and Federate. It calls for Citizen Science to be recognised as a horizontal research capacity, supported through sustained investment, and connected through a federated approach based on open standards. Rather than replacing existing platforms and initiatives, this approach focuses on enabling them to work together as part of a more coherent European ecosystem.



**First Policy
Publication**



**Strategic Direction
& RoadMap**



**Evidence Base &
Key Message**



**Tree-Layer
Infrastructure Model**



**Maximising
Policy Uptake**

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1 goal: To build a strong
foundation for the future of
Citizen Science in Europe!



**8 countries
and
13 partners**



3 scientific areas:
Environmental observation,
Health, and Climate change



ABOUT RIECS-CONCEPT

The RIECS-Concept project aims to conceptualise the European Research Infrastructure for Excellence in Citizen Science that will leverage both citizens’ resources (such as mobile phones, desktop computers, etc.) and existing scientific resources (citizen science platforms, data collections, existing research infrastructures, etc.) and will provide transversal services to the research community.

1

Assessing Feasibility and
Addressing Challenges

2

Developing a Strategic
Roadmap

3

Fostering Open and
Participatory Governance



OBJECTIVES

The RIECS-Concept focuses on three scientific areas – environmental observations, health, and climate change.

The projects will bridge typical citizens’ used resources, such as mobile apps, amateur scientific kits or personal accessibility, with professional scientific resources, such as databases, federated computing and storage facilities, citizen science platforms, and dedicated personnel.



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