

# PLACES

Platform of Local Authorities and Communicators  
Engaged in Science

## Project Summary

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## **INTRODUCTION**

PLACES is a four-year European project establishing and developing the concept of the European City of Scientific Culture.

The project focuses on developing and strengthening City Partnerships, bringing together 67 science centres, museums, festivals and events, each partnering with local authorities, and 10 European regional networks. The project facilitates cooperation among these alliances to structure their science communication activities, sharing tools, resources and results.

To do this, PLACES establishes a working community that will share activities, resources, ideas and innovations. The operational links stimulated by PLACES will generate much new knowledge, contributing to develop the whole field of science communication, and will impact citizens and policymakers with the social, cultural and scientific added value of scientific culture.

Many more actors and stakeholders are encouraged to participate in PLACES during and after the project lifetime. After the four years of the project, a new and wide European community will continue to share and exchange ideas, experiences and information on Science in Society issues.

The work developed in PLACES will provide a wealth of data, good practices and innovative strategies concerning Science in Society issues. Besides the valuable knowledge contributing to the advancement of the science communication field in general, PLACES will produce concrete recommendations for policymakers and the EU regarding the engagement of citizens, local authorities and the key role of science communicators in the development of the Cities of Scientific Culture.

### **A. OBJECTIVES**

The main PLACES objectives are:

- **To develop and promote the City of Scientific Culture** as an operational concept and as concrete practices, empowering citizens and policymakers to incorporate science and technology into the democratic life of citizens and local / regional governments
- **To establish a common platform to promote cooperation**, offering a wide and diverse community of actors a means of structuring their science communication activities.
- **To deliver appropriate recommendations on the “City of Scientific Culture”** and on science communication strategies, to city partnerships, local authorities and the European Commission.
- **To create solid ties** between hundreds of cultural and scientific actors and to structure a lasting community of professionals engaged in Science in Society issues.

## **B. PLACES TOP PRIORITIES**

In PLACES, whatever the scientific disciplines involved, participants will have to put emphasis on controversial issues. PLACES aims to engage actors on topics that are widely considered difficult to address, and will select the activities where the public is explicitly engaged and has a real possibility to express views.

The two main priorities PLACES are:

- **Engage the local authorities and other science communication actors in controversial issues**
- **Focus on two-way dialogue and public engagement**

## **C. STRUCTURE**

- **Partners:** PLACES brings together three networks: Ecsite ([www.ecsite.eu](http://www.ecsite.eu)), the European Network of Science Centres and Museums (coordinating partner); EUSCEA ([www.euscea.org](http://www.euscea.org)), the European Science Events Association; and ERRIN ([www.errin.eu](http://www.errin.eu)), the European Regions Research and Innovation Network.

A fourth partner, the Observatori de la Comunicació Científica of the University Pompeu Fabra, in Barcelona, will be responsible for the Impact Assessment of PLACES.

- **Third Parties (Network Members):** the members of each of the Ecsite, EUSCEA and ERRIN networks already signed for PLACES are called PLACES Third Parties; a list of each Network Third Parties is provided in Annex 1.
- **Stakeholders Assembly:** given the breadth of the project and to widen the scope and relevancy of the results of PLACES, a Stakeholders Assembly will be implemented, with members such as media, universities, research centres, NGOs and private companies. The Stakeholders Assembly will provide advice and comments, and validate the outputs of the project.
- **Management:** the project is managed by a coordinator team from Ecsite, the Coordinating Partner, with the support of an Executive Committee specific to PLACES and composed of 11 persons belonging exclusively to the Consortium.

#### **D. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

The overall work of PLACES is better described by considering two main approaches: approach at Third Parties level and approach at Network level.

- **At Third Parties level,** members of Ecsite and EUSCEA participating in City Partnerships receive support to produce a Local Action Plan, a Local Survey and, if selected, a seed grant to launch a new activity. Members of ERRIN promote training and support in science communication to local and regional authority administrators.

- **At Network level**, the three PLACES networks (Ecsite, EUSCEA and ERRIN) create a web platform and organise many meetings merging the various types of actors. The Networks will produce thematic reports and concrete recommendations.

### **1. The City Partnerships**

City Partnerships are at the core of the PLACES Project. They will provide the organisational and structural basis to facilitate exchange between science centres, science museums, science festivals and events, universities and other actors, with the cities.

Through the City Partnerships, PLACES will:

- Promote the exchange of knowledge and sharing of capabilities among different actors in the field of science communication
- Promote citizens' input at all levels
- Enrich PLACES with a solid body of information on the local partnerships that have been formalised and attract new cities and science communication actors
- Animate and enrich OPEN, the dynamic webplatform of PLACES (see below), providing it with a steady flow of information, discussion and documentation.

The work of the City Partnerships, will involve:

- Activating existing City Partnerships and forming new ones. Most of the Ecsite and EUSCEA members participating in PLACES have already signed a letter of commitment with a representative of the local authorities. It is necessary to activate and develop these partnerships, and to upload on the OPEN website information and documentation meaningful to the project

- Producing a Local Action Plan: all City Partnerships will prepare a Local Action Plan, covering the main themes and areas of interest in science communication and citizens' engagement on a local level with a strategic vision for the following 5 to 10 years.
- Some preparatory work will be necessary to develop the Local Action Plan, namely: a) a Local Survey made by the Ecsite and EUSCEA Third Parties to identify on their territory the groups, organisations, associations and other actors that carry out science communication activities; b) a citizens' consultation to ensure the close connection between the Local Action Plan and the end-users' expectations.
- Establishing Thematic Working Groups: each City Partnership will join a Thematic Working Group. Each Group will comprise between 5 to 10 City Partnerships and will work specifically on a selected theme from a list of possibilities established in accordance with the "Science in Society" work program priorities, such as Territorial Development, Green Cities, Dialogue and Democracy, ICT and access to knowledge, amongst others. Each Thematic Working Group will have a leader that will organise at least one workshop and compile the results of the Working Group in a thematic report comprising recommendations for EU policymakers concerning the best way to deal with the theme in question.

## **2. New Activities**

Local Action Plans will be encouraged to develop innovative and creative ideas for New Activities. These New Activities will be developed through networking workshops and under the provision of guidelines based on the preliminary impact assessment.

- A maximum of 50 New Activities will be selected amongst the Local Action Plans; a seed grant will be allocated to launch each New Activity.

- The definition, generic criteria and procedures for supporting creative ideas for “New Activities” will be prepared, taking into consideration the PLACES Top Priorities.
- A workshop with the participation of the three PLACES networks and Impact Assessors will establish formal criteria to evaluate the New Activities in accordance with the top priorities of PLACES, notably to provoke debate around non-consensual or controversial issues; to ensure a 2-way approach instead of the classical top-down model; to consider sensitive topics such as multiculturalism, racism, exclusion /inclusion, gender dimension in S&T, among others. The New Activities evaluation will also consider the coherence with the Local action Plan and aspects such as the feasibility, measurable impact, co-funding, support of local authorities and stakeholders, engagement of local population, involvement of Civil Society Organisations.

### **3. Models for the City of Scientific Culture**

Models for the “European City of Scientific Culture” will be developed through local and regional actors across Europe sharing their experiences, practical policies and strategies. ERRIN will engage 10 regional networks (ERRIN Members) that already have a strong track record in science communication and culture (science cities, notably). The work on these models will involve:

- A dynamic collaborative interaction between the 10 regional networks with the Ecsite and EUSCEA members;
- The creation of working groups on the OPEN webplatform for the discussion and work on local policy themes

- Workshops targeted at the 10 regional networks and open to the members of Ecsite and EUSCEA, to debate opportunities and challenges for the development of cities of scientific culture
- A state of the art survey of regional experience and expertise in science communication policies
- A survey and analysis of relevant research and case studies to identify commonalities and differences between existing science cities
- A survey and analysis on the obstacles to the city of scientific culture, notably drawing on the realities of the City Partnerships established in PLACES
- Seminars to compare project results of other similar projects supported by European Commission.
- An analysis of science communicators' expectations
- A synthesis and analysis of the Local Action Plans developed by the City Partnerships.

#### **4. The OPEN Platform**

The Open Platform of European Networks (OPEN) website will constitute the social workspace for the PLACES Community, to exchange information, to share and communicate activities, resources, action plans and other materials.

- Third Parties will have secured access to private workspaces and will be active participants in online thematic forums.

- The OPEN Platform will have a resource centre for professionals which will include services and databases such as a reference library, a directory of actors, e-learning modules, an interactive polling system to perform surveys.
- OPEN will have a general public interface, with specialised areas (Press Room, Agenda) where members and audiences can follow and participate in the production of knowledge.
- The dynamism of OPEN will be ensured by the assistance, advice, help, moderation, animation and information provided by the Third Parties, notably the City Partnerships, and by Ecsite.

## **5. Networking opportunities**

One of the main objectives of PLACES is to create solid ties, and to achieve this, the project provides a wealth of networking opportunities. This is done through the OPEN Platform and through a series of meetings, workshops and symposiums. The following is a list of the programmed meetings and expected participation of network members and City Partnership representatives:

### **Year 1:**

- First PLACES Annual Conference “City of Scientific Culture” and symposium on policies for the “European City of Scientific Culture” with 100-150 representatives of local authorities and science communicators; formalisation of Thematic Working Groups
- Science Cities Workshop, for 50 representatives of local authorities
- Criteria Workshop, with balanced participation of the three Networks, to establish the formal criteria for the New Activities
- Start of the Workshops on cities of scientific culture, for the ERRIN Networks, with participation of members from Ecsite, EUSCEA and ERRIN

**Year 2:**

- Continuation of the Workshops on cities of scientific culture
- Second PLACES Annual Conference “Share Experiences” (180 local authorities and science communicators).
- Creative Workshop for the New Activities (during the Annual Conference);
- Workshop on expectations of science communicators
- Start of the training sessions with Ecsite and EUSCEA experts for local authority officers (10 regional trainings, during years 2 and 3)
- Start of the Thematic Working Group Workshops: at least one workshop for each theme, total of 10 workshops; during years 2, 3 and 4

**Year 3:**

- Third PLACES Annual Conference “Models” (200 representatives from City Partnerships).
- Workshop for science communicators and policymakers regarding the the models for Cities of Scientific Culture
- Continuation of the training sessions with Ecsite and EUSCEA experts for local authority officers
- Continuation of the Thematic Working Group Workshops

**Year 4**

- Continuation of the Thematic Working Group Workshops
- Final PLACES Annual Conference – City of Scientific Culture: a large conference for all City Partnerships and for about 200 cities, with an expected total of about 800 participants. Includes the presentation of the model(s) for a “European City of Scientific Culture”, and debates to refine Recommendations to the participants, to other and new city partners, and foremost to the “Science in Society” program.

PLACES will be invaluable in multiplying the social impact of science communicators, developing and structuring their strategic cooperation with policymakers, establishing fruitful and lasting working relations with local authorities, and promoting their role at European level.

## **ANNEX 1 – PLACES THIRD PARTIES**

### **ERRIN Third Parties:**

1. INNOVA ESZAK – ALFOELDI REGIONALIS FEJLESZTESI ES INNOVACIOS UEGYNOEKSEG NON PROFIT KORLATOLT FELELOESSEGUE TARSASAG KFT
2. REGION ILE DE FRANCE
3. FUNDACION PARA O FOMENTO DA CALIDADE INDUSTRIAL E DESENVOLVEMENTO TECNOLOXICO DE GALICIA
4. UNIONCAMERE PIEMONTE
5. FORENINGEN EU OG INTERNATIONALT SAMARBEJDE SYDDANMARK F.M.B.A.
6. WEST MIDLANDS EUROPEAN CENTRE
7. WFB WIRTSCHAFTSFÖRDERUNG BREMEN GMBH
8. MUNICIPALITY OF LJUBLJANA
9. SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE
10. CONSEIL GENERAL DE L'ESSONNE

### **EUSCEA Third Parties:**

1. FORUM DEMOCRIT
2. UNIVERSITA DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA
3. WISSENSCHAFT IM DIALOG GGMBH
4. DANSK NATURVIDENSKABSFORMIDLING
5. SIHTASUTUS TEADUSKESKUS AHHA
6. ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ ΈΡΕΥΝΑΣ & ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΙΑΣ ΣΤΙΣ ΓΝΩΣΤΙΚΕΣ & ΦΥΣΙΚΕΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΕΣ, ΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΜΗ-ΚΕΡΔΟΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ

7. UNIVERSITE DE STRASBOURG
8. WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
9. LATVIJAS UNIVERSITATE
10. MALTA COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
11. UNIWERSYTET WROCLAWSKI
12. KHARKIV WOMAN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE FOR GIFTED STUDENTS
13. THINKTANK TRUST LTD
14. THE NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY
15. PSIQUADRO SCARL
16. IDEELLA FOERENINGEN VETENSKAP OCH ALLMAENHET VA
17. HASKOLI ISLANDS
18. EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL LTD
19. LOMONOSOV MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY SCIENCE PARK
20. GOETEBORG & CO TRAEFFPUNKT AB
21. ASSOCIAZIONE FESTIVAL DELLA SCIENZA

**Ecsite Third Parties:**

1. INSTITUT ROYAL DES SCIENCES NATURELLES DE BELGIQUE
2. SCIENCE CENTER NETZWERK
3. THE REGIONAL TECHNICAL MESEUM
4. FLANDERS TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL
5. DEUTSCHES SCHIFFFAHRTSMUSEUM
6. SCIENCE ADVENTURE ODYSSEUM KÖLN
7. DEUTSCHES MUSEUM VON MEISTERWERKEN DER NATURWISSENSCHAFT UND TECHNIK

8. CENTER FOR FORMIDLING AF NATURVIDENSKAB OG MODERNE TEKNOLOGI FOND
9. FUNDACION ESPANOLA PARA LA CIENCIA Y LA TECNOLOGIA
10. FUNDACION CONJUNTO PALEONTOLOGICO DE TERUEL-DINOPOLIS
11. TIEDEKESKUSSÄÄTIÖ
12. CENTRE DE CULTURE SCIENTIFIQUE, TECHNIQUE ET INDUSTRIELLE DE GRENOBLE
13. ECOLE NATIONALE SUPERIEURE DES MINES DE SAINT-ETIENNE
14. SOCIETE D ECONOMIE MIXTE D EXPLOITATION DE CENTRES CULTUREL EDUCATIF ET DE LOISIRS SEM\*SEMECCEL CITE DE L'ESPACE
15. ASSOCIATION SAVOIR APPRENDRE
16. CITE DES SCIENCES ET DE L'INDUSTRIE
17. THE PROVOST FELLOWS & SCHOLARS OF THE COLLEGE OF THE HOLY AND UNDIVIDED TRINITY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH NEAR DUBLIN
18. ISTITUTO E MUSEO DI STORIA DELLA SCIENZA
19. FONDAZIONE IDIS-CITTA DELLA SCIENZA
20. CENTROSCIENZA ONLUS
21. MUSEO TRIDENTINO DI SCIENZE NATURALI
22. RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN
23. NORDNORSK VITENSENTER
24. BIALYSTOK TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
25. CENTRUM NAUKI KOPERNIK (COPERNICUS SCIENCE CENTRE)
26. CIENCIA VIVA-AGENCIA NACIONAL PARA A CULTURA CIENTIFICA E TECNOLOGICA
27. ASSOCIAÇÃO CIENCIA VIVA - TAVIRA
28. STIFTELSEN TEKNIKENS HUS
29. STENUNGSUNDS KOMMUN\*
30. TEHNIŠKI MUZEJ SLOVENIJE

31. TURKIYE BILIMSEL VE TEKNOLOJIK ARASTIRMA KURUMU
32. GLASGOW SCIENCE CENTRE CHARITABLE TRUST
33. INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LIFE TRUST
34. LAPIN YLIOPISTO
35. AYUNTAMIENTO DE A CORUNA
36. STICHTING MUSEUM VOOR INDUSTRIE EN SAMENLEVING
37. UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT
38. TURKEY SCIENCE CENTERS FOUNDATION
39. UNIVERSITY OF LYON
40. MAGNA TRUST
41. CENTRO CIENCIA VIVA DE ESTREMOZ
42. STIFTUNG JUGEND UND WISSENSCHAFT HEIDELBERG GMBH
43. HEINZ NIXDORF MUSEUMSFORUM
44. BLOOMFIELD SCIENCE MUSEUM JERUSALEM (BSMJ)
45. CSODAK PALOTAJA NONPROFIT KFT.
46. STICHTING NATIONAAL CENTRUM VOOR WETENSCHAP EN TECHNOLOGIE