

## The transformative potential of Citizen Science for nature based solutions

### Contribute to, and take part in the European research project of NATURESCAPES

Department: Sustainable Development

Research group: Environmental Governance

Supervisor: Heleen Mees

Email address: h.l.p.mees@uu.nl

#### Project description

[NATURESCAPES](#) is a big European research project on the transformative potential of nature based solutions for sustainable and just cities. A large group of researchers, consultants and NGOs is working on this transdisciplinary project in which field work is conducted in 12 urban case study sites in Europe, USA and Latin America. Within Naturescapes one important task is to explore the transformative potential of citizen science for nature based solutions. Citizen science (CS) is a form of citizen engagement in which citizens and academics collaborate, and members of the public engage in the process of research to generate new science-based knowledge (Shirk et al, 2012). In more established forms of CS citizens count species of birds or bees in their gardens. Citizens can also locate, assess the impact of, and report on polluting pipes in urban rivers (see [Outfall Safari](#)).

CS can not only have transformative potential for the learning of individuals who took part (Bela *et al.*, 2016), but ideally also for identifying the priorities and needs of communities, for developing solutions to societal issues, for changing the power dynamics between different stakeholders, and for including a wider array of voices in decision-making (Mačiulienė *et al.*, 2021), in particular those whose voices are often marginalized (e.g. women, ethnic groups, people with a lower socio-economic status, non-humans). When done well e.g. by including the voices, knowledge and values of marginalized communities, CS can develop and enhance knowledge-producing capacity of society and empower those communities who can benefit most from nature based solutions.

The bright mind who will assist us in this project, will become part of the citizen science team of Naturescapes for the duration of the BMA. In this role you will actively contribute to the exploration and understanding of the role of CS for Naturescapes. The BMA work will involve a modest literature review (to set the scene), and assistance with the analysis of how and with what outcome CS is conducted in the Naturescapes case study sites. The results of this analysis will be used for developing a mini-handbook on CS for practitioners, as well as a report for urban professionals and policy makers.

#### Job requirements

The bright-mind fellow should demonstrate a keen research interest in nature based solutions and/or citizen engagement. The fellow should have good writing and communication skills and a background in human geography, sustainable development, or environmental governance. Although the supervisor is heavily involved, the assistant should be able to work relatively independently.