Citizen science

?Citizen science', also termed ?crowd science' or ?crowd-sourced science', refers to the method and practice of involving members of the public in the conduct of professional or specialist research in order to perform activities such as data gathering, observation, calculation, testing, measurement and technology development. Citizen scientists often work in collaboration with professional researchers and research institutions in the frame of larger-scale projects where they perform defined tasks.

Despite the novelty of the term, citizen science is not a new practice. It reflects the way research was conducted by self-made and often self-funded scientists and inventors before the institutionalisation of research and its concentration in research centres, think tanks and universities. Yet, the contemporary practice of citizen science is also fundamentally different from the past in several respects. First, it is uniquely supported by digital technology, which affords new modalities for engaging citizen scientists, facilitating their research activities, and collecting and centralising inputs from diverse groups of contributors. Secondly, the collaboration between established researchers and voluntary citizens with an interest in science reflects an underlying openness towards the democratisation of research, bridging the gap between professional expertise and public engagement in the pursuit of science. As such, citizen science is an exclusively contemporary movement towards the co-creation of ?a new scientific culture?, which brings value to science while contributing to the enhancement of knowledge and skills of volunteer collaborators (EC, 2013).

Sources:

European Commission (2013) Green paper on citizen science. Citizen Science for Europe: Towards a better society of empowered citizens and enhanced research. Available at
http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/green-paper-citizen-science-europe-towards-society-empowered-citizens-and-enhanced-research-0