Tapping the power of Citizen Science

Citizen science, in which scientists and non-scientists work together on scientific projects, is recognized to be an important tool for public participation and engagement. To be able to tailor citizen science projects to water quality issues, we first investigated the water awareness of people by an online survey (1). Following this survey we launched a Citizen Science campaign across Europe to assess water quality (2).

NETLAKE (Networking Lake Observatories in Europe) is an EU COST Action (ES1201) that aims to build a network of sites and individuals to support the development and deployment of sensor-based systems in lakes and reservoirs, and promote their use to address both current and future water quality issues in Europe.

1: Online Survey Water awareness and Citizen Scientists

Figure 1: How many liters of water do you think you use directly daily?

- 50 liter
- 100 liter
- 150 liter
- 200 liter
- >200 liter

150 liter

Figure 2: How much water do you think it takes to produce the goods, food and beverages you use on a daily basis?

- 50 liter
- 100 liter
- 150 liter
- 500 liter
- 1500 liter
- >3000 liter

3400 liter

Preliminary results from 498 completed questionnaires from across Europe. 90.3% of the participants think we should save water and 84.6% see a role for citizens in monitoring and preserving water quality. However direct and indirect water use per person is heavily underestimated (Figure 1 – 2).

2: Citizen Science campaign summer 2016

In 28 lakes across Europe citizens and scientists are working together to determine in-lake decomposition (using the tea bag index) and microplastic pollution using homemade sampling equipment.

For more info: www.nioo.knaw.nl/Netlake–Citizen–Science

Microplastics