



Setting up a participatory project

A research programme may call on civil society to help collect a large volume of data, following a strict protocol, which will then be processed and analysed by professional researchers.

Allowing citizens to partake in producing knowledge and innovation alongside researchers is the purpose of participatory research. According to the definition given in the [Charter for participatory science and research in France](#) : “Participatory science and research are forms of producing scientific knowledge in which civil society actors participate actively and deliberately, either individually or collectively, alongside researchers”

This form of research may be applied to any scientific domain and any subject, and may take very varied forms. It encourages science to be alert to societal issues.

Participatory science is not just precious for researchers, it also provides a way of renewing practices, methods, and issues on which they work.

One component contributing to the success of a participatory research project is identifying those with whom to work. A further issue is bringing distinct and permeable social worlds into close contact, creating a shared culture and partnership to be maintained throughout the project. It is important to find a facilitator (intermediary) familiar with both worlds and capable of mediating joint work and how it is conducted over time using different types of language.

Researchers and members of society may come together to construct a project and conduct each of the following phases :

- defining the questions to be answered and objectives to be reached
- deciding on the means to achieve this
- producing and/or collecting data
- analysing it
- interpreting results
- promoting findings, especially via dissemination (including scientific publications), application, and development.

In certain projects, third parties will only be involved in some of these research stages. In others, civil society will be involved in the entire process.

The [mission of the “Service universitaire à la collectivité” \(Univer.Cité\)](#) , the university’s outreach service, is to facilitate and act as this link between academia, members of civil society, and research third parties. Its purpose is to make university skills and resources accessible to social stakeholders (associations, local authorities, SMEs) and so work with them to build joint research and training projects responsive to fields and issues on the ground.

Contact

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Further information

- [TISSAGE project \(French\)](#)