FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

The Civic Epistemologies focus group protocol is designed for two purposes:

1) to prepare the moderators to conduct focus groups on-site;
2) to provide a general understanding on the characteristics and parameters of the study and the identified links to the web questionnaire targeting professionals from cultural heritage institutions.

The suggested structure of the focus groups follows.

1. Introduction to the study
2. Pre-questionnaire and consent form
3. A teaser on citizen science
4. Discussion 1 (first thoughts)
5. Assignment
6. Discussion 2 (further thoughts)
7. Conclusion

The document elaborates further on the separate sections and clarifies what are the specific aims. This approach was chosen in order to align the team efforts as much as possible and guarantee a sound methodological approach and the necessary conditions to analyse the outcomes also on contrastive basis.

Requirements:

• A projector from PC or laptop with internet access.
• OPTIONAL. There is at least one video camera (if we want to produce a video/take photographs)

Participants are not expected to use any devices and best should be prompted to put their mobile phones on silent.

The whole exercise will take up to 2 hours.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Objective	This part provides a broad introduction to the research. It should orientate the participants but not be so specific as to influence the results. It should also establish a friendly and collaborative atmosphere.
Actors	1) Moderator(s) 2) Assistant taking note (and distributing and collecting forms) 3) Video operator 4) Up to 12 participants in the focus group
Duration	5-10 min
Example	Hello, my name is X and we are here to discuss your view on citizen science and its place in cultural heritage institutions. I will be moderating the focus group today. This is an activity within the EC-funded Civic Epistemologies project which aims to develop a roadmap on the application of citizen science in the cultural heritage institutions across Europe.

	Why are we organising this group? We hope to learn about the potential you see in citizen science and your views on its potential use – and even if this is something new for you we will provide sufficient background information to help our discussion.
	In our discussion here are no right or wrong answers – we are exploring an area which is quite new and we want to learn from you.
	You are part of a set of focus groups which are held in three countries, Sweden, UK and Malta – in this sense we also try to capture a diversity of views.
	Therefore, we are going to start with each of you doing some form filling. This is so that we can make you all into statistics and make the methodology work.
	Then we will continue providing some information on citizen science and we will have a discussion around the topic.
	After this we will break you into groups to discuss a scenario.
	OPTIONAL. As you see we are making a video of our session; this will be used only by our colleagues who are not able to be in Valletta/Stockholm/Coventry today but also would like to learn from your experience.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET AND FILLING IN OF CONSENT FORM AND PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

Objective	To gather quantitative data which can be mapped to the online survey; and to gather initial data on the confidence of the participants in the domain of citizen science and their attitudes towards cultural values.
Actors	1. Moderator (to explain again that this needs to be filled in)
	2. Assistant (who will give and collect forms)
Duration	10 mins
Notes	The questionnaire below contains explanatory notes (the evaluated areas and links to other user study methods) which will not be included in the printed version used during the focus groups.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Demographic Data	*Notes*
Country of Residence:_____	
Country of origin: _____	*These data will be used to compare responses to the data from the web questionnaire*
Age:	
☐ 20-30	
☐ 31-40	
☐ 41-50	
☐ 51-60	
☐ 61+	
What is your role?	
☐ Policy maker	
☐ Academic	

☐ Member of a citizen rights-related activist organization
☐ Unprofessional researcher
☐ Other – please specify_____
 	
Interest in archive, library, or museum collections
 	
How often do you use archive, library, or museum collections?
 	
  ☐ Frequently (Multiple times a month)
  ☐ Often (Once a month)
  ☐ Rarely (A couple of times a year)
  ☐ Irregularly
 	
What is your main reason for using archives, libraries, or museum collections?
 	
  ☐ Personal reasons
  ☐ Professional reasons
 	
Which of these statements apply to your experience using archive, library, or museum collections?
 	
  ☐ Easy to navigate
  ☐ Comprehensive
  ☐ Efficient
  ☐ Lacking in data
  ☐ Slow to find data
  ☐ Finding materials is difficult
  ☐ Helpful staff
	General attitudes and role in the subject domain

Familiarity with Citizen Science
 	
Were you familiar with the term "Citizen Science" before coming here today?
 	
  ☐ Yes
  ☐ No
 	
Have you ever been personally involved with projects using citizen scientists?
 	
  ☐ Yes
  ☐ No
 	
If your answer was no, would you be interested in participating in such a project? If your answer was yes, would you participate in such a project again?
 	
  ☐ Yes
  ☐ No
  ☐ Not sure
	Establishing levels of preliminary knowledge and interest

A TEASERS ON CITIZEN SCIENCE

Objective	The idea is to show a 2-3 minutes long video which captures main ideas about citizen science. We have two suggestions but others are welcome: • http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OxO0eOnntE – this one gives an overview of citizen science but does not really show cultural heritage related examples

	• http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ku8kz75e6Zw – citizen archivists – relevant to the CH domain (but from the USA)
Actors	1. Moderator 2. Assistant (collects questionnaires).
Duration	5 min
Example	Thank you for filling in the questionnaires. Now I will be showing you a short video about citizen science.

DISCUSSION 1 (FIRST IMPRESSIONS)

Objective	This discussion is common for all groups and it aims to capture the perception on citizen science before the discussion task.
Actors	1. Moderator 2. Assistant (distributes and collects 2 forms, Appendix 4 and 5).
Duration	Up to 20 min
Notes	The table below suggests how to organise the discussion. This discussion is common for the three groups. We have three columns in the table – with a question, a possible rewording of this question in the cases when the group remains silent, and an explanation what do we hope to achieve including this question.

No	Question	Possible rewordings	Comments
1	We just have seen the short video about citizen science. What do you think about it?		"ice-breaker" question
2	Is this an area in which you already have some experience? If yes, what exactly was your experience?		Poll of hands. Capturing the degree of personal involvement.
3	What do you think is most useful from a cultural heritage institution perspective in organising such projects?		This gets us into one the key issues – the role/place of citizen science; to help this we have 2 helping aids with questions 4 and 5.
4	Let us fill in some bubbles Citizen science mostly could help cultural heritage institutions to… See Appendix 4		The bigger size unconsciously would show the preference.
5	On piece of paper – checking semantic differentials with a scale from 1 to 10 Citizen science applications in CH institutions could… See Appendix 5		Trying to identify where citizen science is seen to be most helpful in the CH context.

ASSIGNMENT

Objective	The aim is to split the group into two smaller groups which will discuss the same scenario. Scenarios differ within the 3 targeted communities.
Actors	1. Moderator observes one subgroup 2. Assistant observes second subgroup
Duration	Up to 30 min
Notes	Each group should be provided with a flip chart where several areas are marked as below (1-5 for each scenario).

Scenario 1. Policy makers/CH managers (Malta)

One of the cultural heritage institutions in Malta is planning to introduce a citizen science project which involves unprofessional researchers to transcribe 19 and early 20 century texts. The volume of the work would require some 20 person years for a staff member of the institution. What do you think would be the best way forward to organise such an initiative?

1. How do you imagine such initiative will be implemented – for example where the unprofessional researchers are going to work; are they going to handle original documents or digital copies; who would own the data they produce? What would be the most efficient way to recruit, train and monitor the unprofessional researchers?
2. How the CH institution will monitor the quality of the citizen researchers' work?
3. What policies need to be in place in the institution and in the cultural heritage sector in general?
4. What technological infrastructure would be necessary? (for example devices and special software tools)
5. What are the main obstacles you can imagine to organise such an initiative? List up to three obstacles.

Scenario 2. Citizen scientists (Spain)

One of the cultural heritage institutions in Spain is planning to introduce a citizen science project which involves unprofessional researchers to transcribe 19 and early 20 century texts. The volume of the work would require some 20 person years for a staff member of the institution. What do you think would be the best way forward to organise such an initiative?

1. What is the best way to involve the unprofessional researchers - where are they going to work; are they going to handle original documents or digital copies; who would own the data they produce?
2. Who will monitor the quality of the work performed?
3. What is the biggest benefit for these unprofessional researchers?
4. What incentives would help a long-term involvement of such volunteers?
5. What are the main obstacles you can imagine to organise such an initiative? List up to three obstacles.

Scenario 3. Activists (Sweden)

One of the cultural heritage institutions in Sweden is planning to introduce a citizen science project which involves unprofessional researchers to transcribe 19 and early 20 century texts. The volume of the work would require some 20 person years for a staff member of the institution. What do you think would be the best way forward to organise such an initative?

1. How do you imagine such initiative will be implemented? Will the cultural heritage institution manage all aspect or collaborate with other entities? If collaboration would be beneficial, what entities would be helpful and how exactly?

2. What could be the specific input of citizen organisations to this initiative?
3. How would be monitored the quality of their work of the citizen scientists?
4. What policies need to be in place in the institution and in the cultural heritage sector in general?
5. What are the main obstacles you can imagine to organise such an initiative? List up to three obstacles.

DISCUSSION 2 (FURTHER THOUGHTS)

Objective	The previous task made people think deeper about citizen science and this probably will change some of the initial opinions.
Actors	1. Moderator 2. Assistant (distributes final questionnaire)
Duration	Up to 30 min
Notes	This phase starts with asking both sub-groups to summarise their findings very briefly. The discussion starts as free-flowing, picking on points which got different interpretations by both groups. Distribute final questionnaire (See Appendix 6).

Conclusive questions:

1. Are you aware of any technical tools which can help citizen science projects? Have you personally used any? (If not, what tools you would consider useful?)
2. What actions could attract more interest to citizen science projects related to cultural heritage?

CONCLUSION

Objective	Closing the study.
Actors	Moderator
Duration	Up to 5 min
Notes	Thank you for your participation, if you wish to keep in touch with the project please provide your contact details. You could monitor the progress of the project on www.civic-epistemologies.eu OPTIONAL. It is possible to take a group photo for the Civic Epistemologies newsletter/website

APPENDIX 1. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

APPENDIX 2. SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

<Name of the institution organising the focus group>

Consent form for Project Participants

Project title: Civic Epistemologies

I agree to take part in the above EC-funded research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be photographed / video taped / audio taped
- Make myself available for a further interview should that be required

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

I understand that I have given my approval for my name and/or the name of my country of nationality, as well as the name of my workplace to be used in the final report of the project, and in further publications.

I consent to the audiotapes being shared with other researchers and interested professional parties.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3. PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Data

Country of Residence:_____

Country of origin: _____

Age:

- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 61+

What is your role?

- ☐ Policy maker
- ☐ Academic
- ☐ Member of a citizen rights-related activist organization
- ☐ Unprofessional researcher
- ☐ Other – please specify_____

Interest in archive, library, or museum collections

How often do you use archive, library, or museum collections?

- ☐ Frequently (Multiple times a month)
- ☐ Often (Once a month)
- ☐ Rarely (A couple of times a year)
- ☐ Irregularly

What is the main reason for you to use archive, library, or museum collections?

- ☐ Personal reasons
- ☐ Professional reasons

Which of these statements apply to your experience using archive, library, or museum collections?

- ☐ Easy to navigate
- ☐ Comprehensive
- ☐ Efficient
- ☐ Lacking in data
- ☐ Slow to find data
- ☐ Finding materials is difficult

☐ Helpful staff

Familiarity with Citizen Science

Were you familiar with the term "Citizen Science" before coming here today?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Have you ever been personally involved with projects using citizen scientists?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If your answer was no, would you be interested in participating in such a project? If your answer was yes, would you participate in such a project again?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure

APPENDIX 4. ADDITION A TO THE DISCUSSION ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS
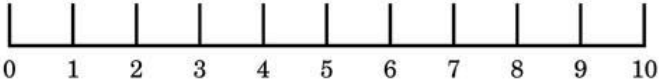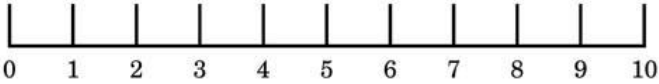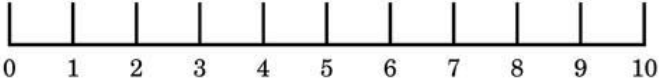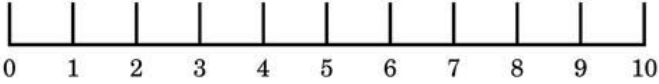
Please fill in these bubbles:

Citizen science mostly could help cultural heritage institutions to…

Add more bubbles if you have further ideas!

APPENDIX 5. ADDITION B TO THE DISCUSSION ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In which areas citizen science has the potential to be most helpful for CH institutions (0 = no potential to be helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Attracting more visitors to the CH institution

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Saving CH institutions' staff time on tasks given to member of the public

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Facilitating new discoveries on the CH institution collections/artefacts

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Attracting interest of children and young adults

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Providing better service to professional researchers

| 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Bringing new technological solutions to the CH institution

| 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Keeping the CH institution up to date with newest trends in user engagement

| 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

APPENDIX 6. FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Potential of Citizen Science

Do you think that citizen science should be used more actively within the cultural heritage context?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Would you seek personal involvement in such initiatives?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Do you think that taking part in such initiatives contributes to better quality of life of the citizens?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

What would help to attract more interest to citizen science in this domain?

Would you like to be informed on future events organised by the project Civic Epistemologies?

- ☐ Yes – please provide your email _____
- ☐ No

Thank you for your participation!