SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Project n°: **SAS-CT-2006-044597**

Project acronym: **STACS**

Project title:
Science, technology and civil society - Civil Society Organisations, actors in the European system of research and innovation

Instrument: **Specific Support Action**

Thematic priority: **Structuring the ERA, science and society**

Deliverable 10: Publishable final report

Due date of deliverable: 30 April 2009
Submission date first draft: 5 August 2010
Date of submission final draft: 10 December 2010

Start date of project: **01 March 2007** Duration: **26 months**

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: **FSC**

Revision : 1

Dissemination level : **PU**

WHY STACS?

STACS: Science, technology and civil society - Civil Society Organisations, actors in the European system of research and innovation

The STACS project was selected under the Science and Society call: **Bringing research closer to society**: Promoting science and scientific culture, FP6-2005-Science-and-society-19, with special emphasis on section 4.3.1.4. « Increasing the societal relevance of research ».

Giving support to the active participation of civil society organisations[1] in research projects was the core issue addressed in the call.

STACS linked concrete experiences of workshops and seminars bringing together scientists and civil society representatives with a theoretical reflection on and an analysis of existing experiences and policies, and policy recommendations for the further development of academia - civil society research partnerships.

Our project attempted, in an exploratory way, to give input and impulses to the following questions:.

- How do we prepare CSOs to participate in research projects?
- How do we make scientists interested in research projects with CSOs?
- How do we raise awareness of policy makers and scientists that the implication of CSOs in research will create a win-win situation for research, development and innovation?
- How do we ensure that scientists and CSOs can build common projects, for instance under Framework programme 7?
- How do we strengthen the role of CSOs as mediators between citizens and researchers (e.g. bridging the gap between populations and the scientific community)?

Our project aimed at **exploring the feasibility of academia - civil society partnerships** in different research areas and how to optimize the interaction between science dynamics and the needs and concerns of society. The project intended to impact on the strengthening of CSOs participation in the elaboration of research protocols and to bring new arguments and issues into the public and political debate around scientific-technical problems with wide societal consequences.

1 according to the definition of the FP6 call: a CSO is a legal entity which is non governmental, non profit, not representing commercial interest and pursuing a common purpose in he public interest.

STATE OF THE ART

The first decades after the Second World War saw a strong drive for scientific and technological research in developed countries. States have strongly supported ambitious national (and European) research and development programmes and shared the governance of research with academic communities. Science penetrated quickly into daily life and collective identities (electricity, telephones, radios and television, antibiotics, cars, medicalised birth, household appliances, scientific teaching in schools, etc.). Under an unprecedented economic growth, the citizens benefiting from this technical and material progress seemed happy not to question that research, and development should be ruled by a largely self-regulated scientific community (representing truth, and instrumental power), by state regulators (representing the public interest), and by industrial actors (representing consumers' needs).

This **regime of knowledge production** has in the late 20th century entered into crisis. The rise of nuclear protests and environmental awareness (climate change, biodiversity...) and the advent of several catastrophes (Chernobyl, “contaminated blood scandal” in France, ESB crisis in Great Britain, asbestos, etc .) have turned our societies into a “risk society ”, where human-made risks associated with scientific-technological developments are pervasive in the public sphere and in the construction of identities. The former consensus for simple “progress” has therefore been replaced by a strong societal demand for precaution and for participation in the decision making on the socio-technical issues. Science is seen as both a source of problems and of solutions. Civil society organisations are rising as major players in domains such as environment, health, energy, agriculture, climate, ecology, international solidarity, gender, social exclusion and immigration, disability and poverty, both at local levels and at European and global levels.

These non-profit and public-interest oriented organisations have become important knowledge producers (World Wildlife Fund and endocrine disruption; Öko-Institutes in Germany, Austria and Italy; CRIIRAD – Commission de Recherche et d'Information Independante sur la Radioactivité in France and radioactive pollution; the organisations of the AIDS movement and co-production of clinical protocols; Médecins Sans Frontieres and Drugs for Neglected Disease Initiative). Indigenous people, amateur naturalists or farmers’ organisations are now seen as key actors in the conservation of biological diversity, and numerous peer-to-peer cooperative innovation processes (Free Software, Wikipedia, Tela Botanica, etc .) are known. A **third sector of knowledge production** and innovation (beyond the state and market sectors) has thus strongly emerged within Civil Society.

There is a growing awareness that scientific knowledge is crucial but has to be democratically oriented in public interest perspectives to meet the challenges our societies and our planet are facing. The long prevailing concept of « Public understanding of

science » based on the « deficit model » (the public needs more information from scientists to overcome contestations and rejections), has been criticized both by the Social Studies of Science and by CSOs for not taking into account knowledge and aspirations coming from the public, starts to be replaced by a more interactive vision of science and society dialogue. Today, all leading institutions of science policy recognise that only a two ways dialogue between science and civil society will help to make emerge common positions on scientific issues of high societal relevance.

Public science and technology policies have developed many instruments and have given strong support to stimulate academia-industry R&D partnerships. In contrast, the issue of civil society implication in research has received little attention up to now - from the scientific community, from policy and from CSOs. Civil society organisations traditionally underestimate the role science and research play for their engagements also because they are not part of their direct aims. On the other side there is a growing number of CSOs - the third sector of knowledge production - that would like to engage more with research agendas and policy and is looking for cooperation with public (and private) research institutions at local, regional, national and transnational levels.

PARTNERS

Our consortium contained members coming from various civil society organisations (alliances representing large networks of CSOs, CSO - think tanks, an independent institute).

Association pour une Fondation Sciences Citoyennes, France

www.sciencescitoyennes.org

Fondation Sciences Citoyennes was the leader of the STACS project.

The Citizen's Science Foundation aims at supporting and prolonging the current movement of democratic and civil appropriation of science in order to put it at the service of the common good. Its objectives are notably:

– To increase the capacity for research and expertise of civil society, NGOs, consumerists, citizen-movements and trade unions ("scientific third sector")

– To stimulate the freedom of expression and debate in the scientific world, to support whistle blowers and the development of public controversies and "hybrid forums" on key scientific issues.

– To promote the democratic elaboration of scientific and technical choices. We support the organisation of public debates on public policies regarding research, technology and expertise.

Institut Mensch, Ethik, Wissenschaft, Germany

http://www.imew.de/

The Institut Mensch, Ethik und Wissenschaft, an interdisciplinary and independent research centre, is a non-profit public company with limited liability. The circle of nine partners consists of nine German disability and self-help organisations. The institute seeks to build bridges between science and civil society especially in the field of biomedicine. Its mission is to improve the decision making processes of politics, science and civil society by including the perspective of disabled and chronically ill people. The institute concerns itself in particular with the problems of the disabled and chronically ill people as seen from their own standpoint as well as the impact of bioscience on society as a whole.

European Public Health Alliance, Belgium

http://www.epha.org/

The European Public Health Alliance is a network of more than 100 non-governmental and non-for profit organisations working on public health in Europe. 35 EPHA members are pan-European or international networks. EPHA aims to promote and protect the health interests of all people living in Europe and to strengthen the dialogue between the EU institutions, citizens and civil society organisations in support of healthy public policies.

Réseau Semences Paysannes, France

http://www.semencespaysannes.org/

The Reseau Semences Paysannes is a non governmental network which aims at promoting on farm-management of biodiversity. The main goals of RSP is to coordinate the activities, to promote farmers' exchange (knowledges, experiences), to disseminate information (communication, publications, European meetings), to support collaboration with Research, common reflexions and proposals about regulation and legislative affairs. RSP is today involving more than fifty national organic farming and farmers organisations, specialised organisations, crafts industries, farmers, seeds and plants breeding associations, CSO's on « development » and on biodiversity preservation, and searchers, all tied to seeds issues.

DEMOS, United Kingdom

http://www.demos.co.uk/

Demos is the think tank for everyday democracy. It believes everyone should be able to make personal choices in their daily lives that contribute to the common good. Its aim is to put this democratic idea into practice by working with organisations in ways that make them more effective and legitimate. Its work is driven by the goal of a society populated by free, powerful citizens.

Free Software Foundation Europe, Sweden

http://fsfe.org/index.en.html

Free Software Foundation Europe (FSFE) is a non-profit and in some countries charitable organisation dedicated to Free Software. FSFE maintains that the freedoms to use, study, share and improve software are critical to ensure equal participation in the information age. It works to create general understanding and support for software freedom in politics, law and society-at-large. Free Software Foundation Europe works to create general understanding and support for Free Software and Open Standards in politics, business, law and society at large. It also promotes the development of technologies, such as the GNU/Linux operating system, that deliver these freedoms to all participants in digital society.

PROCESS of the project

The first year of the project was mainly dedicated to the organisation of several theme specific ***capacity building sessions*** and ***research project nursery workshops*** and to the creation of the website. The training sessions touched themes of divers domains:

- Common Agricultural Policy and its impact on Health and Nutrition
- Free Software
- Understanding Biomedicine & Listening to disabled people
- Which Plant Breeding Methods for Organic and Peasant Agricultures
- Science, Technology and democracy

The workshops aimed at serving as research project «nurseries» focusing on the identification of research topics and of possible co-operations between researchers and CSOs. The idea was to involve CSOs in future research projects and to bring together representatives from CSOs and researchers willing to reflect on and to build common projects.

The themes of the workshops were:

- Making nanotechnology work for the poor
- Exploring joint research projects on the right to health and access to health care
- Free Software Research and Civil Society
- Methodologies for on farm genetic resources conservation and participatory plant breeding
- Doing research together - Different ways to identify human potentials and needs

The first year was also dedicated to the creation of the **website** http://www.citizens-science.org/ as a platform to inform about the STACS project and for an exchange between researchers and civil society organisations.

An important part of the work, mainly done during the second year, was dedicated to

- the improvement of the understanding of CSOs of the European research system
- the **analysis of current participatory research policies** and barriers to its wider establishment and recognition
- the reflection on existing and possible future **forms of cooperation between public research institutions and actors from organised civil society**
- the development of **ideas for a structural long term integration of CSOs in European research.**

We analysed numerous descriptions of projects and instruments of participatory research in Canada and France, conducted more than 30 interviews, and used a series of official documents of the European Commission concerning FP7.

Near the end of the project we organised a **policy meeting** on ***Mainstreaming Societal Engagement in Research Issues*** in Brussels in order to present our results to representatives of the European Commission and of ministries and to scientists.

OUTCOMES

Capacity buildings sessions and Research project nursery workshops

The *Capacity buildings sessions* of the STACS project had one common goal to achieve: ”Give CSOs the possibility to follow training sessions on selected scientific issues of high societal relevance”. The *Research project nursery workshops* aimed at identifying research topics for cooperation between CSOs and public research institutions and at involving CSOs in future research projects for FP7.

For some of the partners of our project it was a new challenge to organise meetings with scientists and civil society partners in order to discuss together research needs and possible research cooperation between them.

The Capacity building sessions and the Research project nursery workshops have been perceived as a real success by participants and organisers. They are concrete examples on how CSO's and scientists can exchange views about the same topic and establish a working relationship through a collaborative approach. They gave a strong input to tackle topics with joint agendas.

The conclusions from the training sessions and research project nursery workshops are unanimous:

➔ These meetings are concrete examples on how **CSO's and scientists** can exchange views about a defined research topic they are both interested in and **establish a working relationship through a collaborative approach**. The workshops can be seen as pilot experiences as so far the cooperation between researchers and NGO has neither a long history in Europe nor is it systematically done or developed.

➔ There is a strong consensus on the fact that **the cooperation between researchers and CSOs is important and fruitful**, and worthwhile to be explored further.

➔ The workshop participants clearly underlined that participatory research is a key issue for them. They would **wish to see participatory research more clearly supported in National and European research programmes.**

➔ **Participatory research approaches should attract more attention and reflection** also in regard to the **functioning of our current research system**.

Reports

Report on *Participation of Civil Society Organisations in Research*

The report **analyses the benefits and difficulties of two innovative mechanisms that allow and fund research partnerships between scientists and CSOs**. The **Community-University Research Alliance (CURA)** programme, set up in 1999 by the federal government of Canada (that has initiated almost 100 participatory research projects so far) and, inspired by this model, the **Partnerships of Institutions and Citizens for Research and Innovation (PICRI)** programme of the government of the Ile-de-France region (the large territory surrounding Paris). The reports contain the presentations of these funding mechanisms, examples of projects, barriers and keys to CSO involvement in research. It furthermore includes recommendations towards the European Commission, EU Member States, universities and CSOs concerning the structural long term integration of CSOs in European research at different levels. So drawing on the experience of actors involved in research partnerships funded through these two mechanisms, we have attempted to outline what the European Union and other research actors could do to strengthen its active support to the co-production of knowledge and to the inclusion of non-profit civil society in research, in line with the objectives of the European Research Area.

Handbook for CSOs on *Understanding the European research system*

CSOs have developed their capacities to deliver a robust scientific expertise on a whole range of issues and work with scientists. However, in general, they still pay little attention to research and research agenda setting, even though they may spend a lot of their time addressing issues that are the result of research policy decisions made ten or twenty years ago. This lack of CSOs involvement in research production and in research policy has several causes: lack of financial support and available time, focus on different levels of actions, but also lack of information on the opportunities and ways for them to get involved.

This Handbook modestly aims at fulfilling part of this information gap, and at giving tools to CSOs to get involved in research and research policy at the European level. It contains a short historical introduction into the issue, a brief overview of the research policy of the European Union, a description of framework programme 7 (elaboration, implementation, and possibilities for civil society organisations) and of different actors involved in its preparation and shaping, an argumentation on the benefits and importance of participatory research, and recommendations.

Scientometric and budget analysis on selected research domains

One of the goals of the STACS project was the construction of indicators allowing the evaluation of the research efforts in a few domains in the European Union, in Member States, and in other countries. We chose to measure research efforts in Organic Farming, Ecotoxicology, and Participatory Research, through the measurement of the number of publications in these domains, a widely used bibliometric indicator. The results show that these domains are not prioritised and that it is relevant to try and build indicators that can inform civil society of the national research efforts in domains they consider as a priority. Furthermore, there are wide disparities between countries, and discourses on research do not always reflect the reality of research efforts in a given domain. But the use of quantitative indicators also highlights the limits of evaluation exercises of scientific activity solely based on publications and patents.

As our studies show, sustainable development is fully integrated in the language used in Research Framework Programmes, but essential domains of sustainable development such as renewable energies and organic agriculture have not been prioritised enough and the visions of sustainable development conveyed by civil society do not appear very well reflected in FP. As a consequence it would be useful to develop indicators and other tools to ensure that the views of civil society are better reflected in EU research agendas. Interestingly, participatory research is particularly present in research domains linked to sustainable development such as environmental sciences, ecology, multidisciplinary agriculture.

Pamphlet on “Citizen scientists - reconnecting science with society”

This pamphlet “argues that we need to find, learn from and support our Citizen Scientists, presenting five examples from around Europe – Veronique Chable from France, Angelika Hillbeck from Switzerland, Carolyn Stephens and John Sulston from the UK and Gianni Tamino from Italy. They join a long line of scientists who have, throughout history, helped science build its social conscience. By doing science differently, these scientists and others like them are challenging assumptions about the why, the how and the what of twenty-first century science.”

We printed 1000 copies of the pamphlet, and spread a large part of them to the different project partners, their contacts and to the participants of our policy meeting in Brussels. The pamphlet can be freely downloaded from the project website, the website of Demos and also from other project partners websites.

Our experiences and analyses underline:

1) Knowledge production in conventional research is both discipline-based, evaluated by publications, and increasingly shaped by an industrial logic, to the extent that science has come to be seen mainly as a purveyor of technological innovation and increased competitiveness on a globalized market, as illustrated by the Lisbon agenda. As a consequence technological innovation is often framed as "one way" progress, and there is not much consideration about the direction of such progress. **Different technological choices have different impacts on society, but the implicit assumptions that frame these choices, and their social implications, are rarely evaluated and discussed. The narrow framing of the role of research and the focus on new technologies often leads to a piecemeal approach in the design of research agendas, inadequate for tackling the multi-dimensional challenge of moving our societies towards Sustainable Development.** This perceived lack of relevance of a linear model of research focused on competitiveness in addressing the ecological, economic and social crisis in an integrated way has fostered the emergence of problem-based approaches, that emphasize trans-disciplinarity and that see knowledge not only as a product, but also as a process.

2) Canada, similar to many European countries in the way the research system is structured and funded, is also the OECD country where participatory-type research enjoys the widest recognition and the strongest support from both the government and universities. The creation of a dedicated funding structure at the federal level in 1999, the "Community University Research Alliance" (CURA), was a landmark, which has attracted worldwide interest and continues to inspire similar initiatives. In policy terms, the overarching concept that supports the development of partnerships in research is "**Knowledge Mobilization**", which is based on two core principles: a) the idea that **valid knowledge is produced by many actors** outside universities and research centres, and that it is necessary to **tap into this knowledge produced by different sectors of society to face the current challenges**; b) the idea that research should aim at producing **results that are relevant beyond intrinsic academic interest**, that contribute to better policy-making and bring benefits beyond the economy field, benefits that are not easily assessed in monetary terms, or through simple indicators.

3) **Participatory Research has become a popular new research paradigm.** It is increasingly being recognized as important in yielding concrete knowledge and understanding that can guide changes - in research, in CSOs, in policies. A general aspect is the high productivity of such projects, both in terms of concrete outputs (deliverables), and in terms of less tangible outcomes (e.g. empowerment of communities). By the variety of the outcomes, and their relevance for different partners, **Participatory Research is deemed "highly productive", "cost-efficient" and "good value for money".** The problem-based approach which lies at the heart of Participatory Research projects is a drive towards trans-disciplinarity, and towards more relevance of research to problems and needs of people. It is particularly adequate to understanding the links between the different dimensions of Sustainable Development, and to helping communities move towards sustainability.

4) Policy-making is the outcome of a highly complex process, for which it is notoriously difficult to assess the impact of a given factor on it. **The extent to which research actually contributes to policy-making is a controversial issue in itself**, let alone a given research project. **A number of Community-Based Research endeavours strive to have a direct impact on policy as an outcome.** Some Participatory Research models are partly dedicated to answering research needs of policy-makers, or develop innovative models in which research needs and questions are jointly determined by policy-makers and CSOs. Others do involve policy-makers from the start in the definition of research topics, which lead to results more likely to have an impact on policies.

5) As more and more emphasis is put on concepts like "evidence-based policy-making", research is supposed to become a source for policy-makers even more than before. **The improvement of the relevance and of the validity of the research created is a pre-condition for better informed policy-making. Research agendas – and the narratives that underpin them - should reflect the diversity of interests and needs in society. In this respect, the value of such partnerships is that they can make policy alternatives visible and challenge existing norms, broadening perspectives beyond technological approaches. Research partnerships can also help make visible and explore alternative future scenarios (for instance on the use of natural resources).** Research partnerships can also contribute to research agenda setting by opening up new research and innovation paths. They encourage diversity in science, which is a key asset.

6) It is not only scientists who need to experience a shift in their culture, but CSOs as well. Getting engaged in research can be strategic for some CSOs but few do so for the moment. **Numerous NGOs do not consider research policy as a target, even though they may spend a lot of their time and energy addressing issues directly linked to research and research policy decisions made years ago. For CSOs, getting engaged in research also means to take the time and to make the effort to identify the needs of their sector and to build their own research agenda.** In practice, even though many CSOs have a solid expertise on a given issue, few feel legitimate to intervene on research agendas, or able to do so given their limited resources, and their goals. **Participatory research projects have actually proven useful in helping CSOs clearly defining the needs of a sector, and translating these needs into research questions. Integrating research in their activity can also help CSOs to develop a reflexive process and to improve their practices.**

Our work on participatory research intends to support its further development:

- **recognition** of the value and importance of participatory research **in the scientific community** and **creation of incentives** for scientists to engage in participatory research projects (publication policy, carrier evolution, etc.),

- **more policy support** and **consistent funding** for participatory research (projects,

programmes, financial support in general),

- recognition of the **capacity of participatory research results to inform policy** (on local and global levels),

- **strengthening of CSOs interest** in research projects and research policy

- evolution towards a **more inclusive approach to the governance of research**

- recognition of the necessity to **reflect on the missions of public research** and **making space for alternative narratives of research.**

Beyond STACS

The partners of the STACS project gave numerous oral, poster and/or powerpoint presentations in internal, national and international meetings and conferences in order to present STACS to divers publics - scientists, CSOs, policy makers, farmers, disabled people.

STACS clearly inspired the European project ***Cooperative Research on Environmental Problems in Europe*** (CREPE) which is funded under FP7 (2008-2010). CREPE is coordinated by the English sociologist Les Levidow from the Open University of London, and FSC is partner in the project (www.crepeweb.net). The project intended to empower and resource CSOs to participate in co-operative research on various agri-environmental issues. These themes included innovation priorities, agro-fuel production, participation in agbiotech issues, water scarcity and local agri-food networks. At almost each presentation of CREPE, the STACS project and results are mentioned and used.

FSC also started a new project in response to a call from the French Ministry of Ecology on the participation of civil society organisations in the governance of science (Repere : Recherche et Expertise pour Piloter Ensemble la Recherche et l'Expertise). FSC, in cooperation with one of the former STACS partners, the Réseau Semences Paysannes, will work on the ***Co-construction des savoirs et décision dans la recherche : l'exemple de la sélection participative en agri-environnement*** (Co-construction of knowledge and decisions in research: the example of participatory breeding in agri-environment). The project will last ten months. It will bring together peasants and scientists experienced in participatory breeding in order to perform a critical analysis of these experiences, and allow a wider discussion on “research and agriculture” including local and regional deputies.

IMEW started to translate parts of the report on Participatory research into German, and FSC undertakes the translation of the Citizen scientists booklet into French. The translations will be profitable for the dissemination of STACS results towards national publics which do not easily read English.