Dialogue and co-creation are promising ways to involve civil society in scientific work; enabling citizens to influence and contribute to scientific research for mutual benefit.

Intermediaries of four European countries decided to start a process to enhance their respective competences and qualifications within the ERASMUS+ partnership program. In the FIRE! project the partners will their exchange experiences and good practices. FIRE! acts as a learning platform regarding interactive ways of science communication. Aspects such as science and art are regarded as part of this platform. Students self-organized project laboratories are regarded as example of explorative learning / research-oriented learning with relevant impact on skills for co-creational transdisciplinary research.

kubus is operating since 1983, the Boutique des Science Nord de France of Université Lille since 2013 and the Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) since 2008. Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) is just at the beginning of establishing a Science Shop. These various backgrounds appear as resource for mutual capacity building regarding processes, tools / methods and skills. FIRE! intends future cooperation and continuing exchange of experiences. Content and format of operating processes go in line with each other, they reflect the operating principles of the intermediaries.

IES is a network of young and well-established scientists, artists, engineers, entrepreneurs, and managers who care for the environment. They employ modern technologies, reflective practice and multi-stakeholder involvement. The IES has developed a paper about Citizen Science in Latvia within the Field of Environment. The aim of the document was to identify key elements and understand the state of citizen science in Latvia regarding to the environment studies.

AMU in Poznań has developed many initiatives and projects that are active in public engagement. September 2017 the first Sience Shop in Poland started, it organizes jointly projects with CSO’s and students; another part is the Laboratory for Social Innovation, an educational project that started in November 2016 where students are taught how to deal with local challenges by using design thinking methods; in June 2018 a digital platform will be launched which helps AMU scientists with local partners.

Lille Science Shop was founded in 2013 and creates collaborative and co-creation activities, translating demands and questions coming from civil society into research. The Boutique des Sciences Nord de France (Lille Science Shop) bridges associative actors confronted with concrete problems and academics. It allows the organized civil society to collaborate with a scientific team in order to answer a question of general interest. Together, they co-build the research to produce results in open access.

FIRE! fosters the development of social, civic and cultural translation competences.

FIRE! addresses the staff of intermediaries at the interface between science and society.

FIRE! deals with innovative science communication.

FIRE! contributes to a process of joined continuing education for intermediaries on European level.
FIRE! – Fertilize Innovation in Responsible Education
Article by Frank Becker, Science Shop kubus / August 2018

FIRE! delivers innovative and interactive formats of science communication and co-design. Results of the project and narratives of the process will feed into national-international (e.g. LIVING KNOWLEDGE Network) networks of partners for the benefit of Science Shops (SC) development in Europe.

FIRE! appears at a point in time when scientific answers to real-life questions are desperately needed but often not accepted. SC is a major strategy to promote the understanding and appreciation of relevant scientific results in the society and to initiate dialogue between science and society. The co-creational design of research questions and the assessment of research results in co-operation between citizens and scientist encourage a greater acceptance of scientific results within the society.

Today’s real world problems are manifold, diverse and multi-dimensional, often interrelated in wicked ways. Recent past has demonstrated that scientific solutions without acceptance and understanding of mutual societal stakeholders deflagrate and vanish to no purpose.

FIRE! will develop cooperative and self-organized processes and adjusted tools / methods in the course of continuing education for intermediaries’ staff.

Four training and learning activities (TLA) address relevant topics and practices of science communication and citizen science against the background of the experiences of the partners:

• explorative learning / research-oriented learning by kubus
• co-design + co-creation / science communication by Uni Lille
• e-tools by kubus
• arts + sciences by IES

In the course of different TLA the design, framework and expectable results of different formats and methods used by the partners will be presented. Exchange and discussion about these different formats and methods of communication between science and civil society as well as explorative learning / research-oriented learning in academic education is organized in the TLA. Each partner brings slightly different background, focus and methods, so that they can “fertilize” each other and collect a pool of tools to qualify staff and new possible partners.

In the course of four national implementation events citizens and civil society organizations (CSO) as well as other intermediaries on national level will benefit from the results of FIRE!

Formats of communication between science and society and explorative learning appears as a relevant topic of scientific education as well as in research over the last years. Staffs of transfer offices and intermediaries e.g. Science Shops have to deal with new demands from academic teaching regarding adjusted didactics. They are asked to offer adjusted services.