

<https://osi-ngo.org/Jobs/partnerships-with-other-organisations/article/do-you-have-an-activity-a-field-site-expertise-or-a-scientific-question-let-s>



Do you have an activity, a field site, expertise or a scientific question? Let's transform them together into a Participatory Science programme.



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- Jobs / Partnerships - Partnerships with other Organisations -

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Objectif Sciences International can build partnerships with NGOs, associations, universities, laboratories, companies, local authorities, travel agencies, foundations, educational institutions, field operators, public institutions, international organizations, professional networks, or independent project leaders who wish to directly involve citizens in a genuine research process.

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It is not necessary to arrive with a fully designed program.

You can contact us with:

- a scientific question;
- a subject you would like to document;
- an existing field activity;
- a destination or territory in which you work;
- a network of researchers, citizens or local stakeholders;
- a trip, expedition or educational program you would like to develop further;
- a method or technology to test;
- an issue faced by a population or territory;
- data that need to be produced;
- a scientific project seeking a participatory model;
- or simply an idea whose feasibility you would like to test.

Our guiding principle: enable people who are not necessarily researchers to progressively become capable of making a genuine contribution to the production of knowledge, the experimentation of a solution or the implementation of an action documented scientifically.

What do we mean by "[participatory research](#)"?

A participatory scientific activity does not simply consist of presenting science, explaining a phenomenon, visiting a laboratory or accompanying a scientist in the field.

At Objectif Sciences International, we organize our work to create an **experiential journey** in which participants progressively become active contributors to a project that produces results.

Depending on the program, they may, for example:

- learn to observe and recognize a phenomenon;
- formulate or understand a research question;
- learn a protocol;
- carry out observations or measurements;
- collect data;
- contribute to improving a method;
- build or use instruments;
- interview residents or professionals;
- analyze results;
- compare several hypotheses;
- participate in an experiment;
- document the effects of a solution;
- contribute to a database;
- participate in restoration, remediation or conservation operations;
- present their results;

- contribute, depending on the project, to a scientific publication or to recommendations intended for decision-makers.

Participation can therefore involve physical, natural, engineering and experimental sciences as well as the humanities and social sciences.

It can take place within fundamental research, applied research, an innovation process, environmental monitoring, a social experiment or the documented implementation of a solution.

We can start from an activity you already carry out

You do not necessarily need to invent a new program.

A large part of our work may consist of examining what you already do and identifying how to add a genuine [participatory research](#) dimension to it.

Example - A biodiversity conservation association

An association already organizes outings that allow participants to observe an endangered species in a mountainous region.

Instead of creating an entirely new activity, we can work together so that some outings progressively contribute to a scientific protocol: identifying signs of presence, geolocating observations, characterizing habitat, photographic monitoring, standardized surveys and data transmission.

The association retains its local and naturalist expertise.

Scientific partners guarantee the relevance of the question and the protocol.

OSI contributes, in particular, its experience in participatory research, educational progression and the organization of programs that enable non-specialists to become genuine contributors.

We can also start from a research question

Are you a researcher, laboratory or university with a question requiring a large number of observations, field sites, measurements or human interactions?

We can study with you which parts of the protocol can be opened to participants.

Example - A university laboratory

A team is studying the evolution of a coastal ecosystem and does not have enough staff to repeat certain observations on a large scale.

A participatory program can enable different groups to return several times a year, acquire the necessary skills and produce part of the observations under the supervision of a scientific protocol.

The trip is then no longer simply a visit to the territory: it becomes one of the means of producing the data required for the research.

Are you an NGO or an association?

Your organization may already possess what is most difficult to create:

- a local presence;
- expertise;
- a community;
- scientific partners;
- a relationship of trust with residents;
- a field of action;
- several years of data or experience.

We can examine how these resources can become the basis of a viable and replicable participatory program.

The partnership may focus in particular on:

- choosing the scientific question;
- designing the participatory format;
- educational progression;
- choosing target audiences;
- designing trips or expeditions;
- tools for preparing operations;
- allocating responsibilities;
- the cost structure;
- recruiting and training teams;
- program visibility;
- seeking additional funding;
- progressively developing the program over several years.

Are you a university, laboratory or researcher?

You can use a partnership with OSI to develop the participatory component of existing research or to bring about a new program.

Depending on the situation, OSI can help build the bridge between:

researchers + field operators + participants + educational organizations + local partners + funders.

Example - A team working in the social sciences

Researchers want to understand how rural communities adapt their practices to rapid environmental changes.

Participants can be trained in a survey method, contribute to a campaign of interviews and observations, document certain practices and participate in the initial stages of structuring the data.

Participatory research is therefore not limited to naturalist inventories or physical measurements.

Are you a company?

A company may have a technology, know-how, a territorial network or an issue whose study may be of scientific and collective interest.

A partnership is not intended to turn a commercial operation into pseudo-research.

However, we can work with you to identify a **genuine question of scientific or societal interest** around which a participatory approach is relevant.

This may concern, for example:

- water quality;
- biodiversity;
- soils;
- agriculture;
- energy;
- materials;
- uses;
- mobility;
- ergonomics;
- collective intelligence;
- behaviors;
- climate adaptation;
- reducing environmental impacts;
- the design or evaluation of solutions.

Example - A technology company

A company is developing a low-cost environmental sensor.

A program designed with researchers and OSI can enable several groups of participants to compare measurements from the sensor with reference methods in different contexts.

Participants are not used merely as testers: they understand the question, learn the protocol, produce data and contribute to analyzing the limitations of the tool.

Are you a local authority, a territory or a public service?

Citizens can become producers of knowledge that is useful to their own territory.

A municipality, region, river basin agency, natural park or other public stakeholder may, for example, wish to better

document:

- a watercourse;
- heat islands;
- biodiversity;
- soils;
- erosion;
- air quality;
- landscapes;
- uses of an area;
- mobility;
- certain effects of climate change;
- or the effectiveness of a public action.

Example - A watershed

Several municipalities want to monitor more closely the evolution of small tributaries for which professional measurements are infrequent.

Residents, school pupils, students and visitors can learn different levels of protocols.

Participatory data do not necessarily replace regulatory measurements: they can provide complementary observation frequency, territorial coverage and alert capacity.

Are you a travel agency, tour operator, accommodation provider or tourism operator?

You already have a capacity that many scientific projects do not have: **bringing people to a field site and giving them an experience.**

We can examine how some of your trips can become participatory research journeys.

This requires more than adding a scientific lecture to a tour.

The objective is to build a program in which participants progressively become capable of taking action.

Example - A nature travel operator

An operator has been offering wildlife observation trips for several years.

The trip can retain much of its itinerary while incorporating a scientific thread throughout: defining observation stations, applying a reproducible protocol, collecting data, comparing observations, conducting daily analyses and transmitting results to a partner scientific team.

The enjoyment of the journey remains.

But the journey now also produces something that did not exist before it.

Are you a school, university or educational network?

A school trip can become a genuine research project.

A class can contribute before, during and after the trip.

Preparation beforehand makes it possible to acquire the necessary knowledge and methods.

The fieldwork becomes the production phase.

The return phase allows for analysis, presentation of results and, where appropriate, continuation of the program.

Example - A network of educational institutions

Several schools located in different countries study the same ecological indicator near their institution.

Students apply a common protocol, compare results between territories and monitor their evolution over the years.

Each institution carries out a local project while contributing to much broader collective research.

Are you a foundation, philanthropist or patron?

You can also contact us not because you already have a project, but because you would like to make it possible for a particular audience to participate in research.

For example:

- fund the participation of young people who could not otherwise afford it;
- enable girls and young women to access scientific programs;
- fund shared scientific equipment;
- fund a reconnaissance phase;
- fund the creation of a new protocol;
- enable a program to begin in a new territory;
- fund several years of observations;
- support the training of local stakeholders;
- enable a proven project to scale up.

Funding can therefore directly contribute to increasing the quantity and quality of participatory research produced.

Are you an international organization or a public agency?

A resolution, international strategy or public objective rarely produces effects simply because it has been adopted.

It then requires stakeholders, territories, data and implementation capacity.

A participatory research program can become a means of connecting an international direction with thousands of documented local actions.

Example - An international recommendation

An international organization wants to accelerate the adoption of an environmental practice in several countries.

A participatory program can enable communities, schools, NGOs and researchers to test different implementation methods, document their results and progressively feed back comparable data.

Participatory research then also becomes a tool for moving from recommendation to action.

Are you an individual project leader?

You do not need to have already created a large organization.

A researcher, naturalist, engineer, science communicator, explorer, teacher, professional or group of people can initiate a program.

Depending on the project, it will then be necessary to determine which partners are needed:

- scientific organization;
- local operator;
- legal entity;
- educational team;
- funder;
- accommodation;
- transport;
- public institution;
- company;
- university;
- or another member of a consortium.

We can work specifically on this architecture.

Do you only have an exceptional field site? That may be enough to get started.

A nature reserve, farm, forest, observatory, island, fab lab, scientific station, museum, archaeological site, village or territory can host research questions that no one had yet considered.

We can start from the resources available:

What is here? What is changing? What deserves to be measured? Which researchers might be interested? What could participants actually do?

The program can then emerge from this analysis.

Do you already have participants but no research yet?

This is also a possible starting point.

An organization may already welcome each year:

- travelers;
- students;
- families;
- school groups;
- volunteers;
- employees;
- residents;
- members of a network.

The question then becomes:

what new scientific production could be made possible thanks to this existing human capacity?

Do you have the research but not yet the audience?

We can work in the other direction.

A scientific question may be excellent while remaining difficult to turn into an accessible experience.

It is then necessary to identify:

- what participants can actually do;
- what they must learn before they can do it;
- how much time this progression requires;

- which tasks must remain reserved for specialists;
- how to organize the experience so that it remains motivating;
- what group size is appropriate;
- which audiences are suitable;
- which operations can be repeated.

The partnership can begin well before the first "real" research

Some projects require several years before reaching their definitive protocol.

This is not necessarily a problem.

The preparatory stages can themselves become useful when they are properly designed and documented.

For example:

- survey different sites;
- compare several field sites;
- establish a baseline;
- carry out initial inventories;
- build a photographic database;
- identify local partners;
- test methods;
- test equipment;
- document access conditions;
- establish an initial map;
- identify relevant questions with local populations;
- create the first datasets.

A participatory program can therefore tell and document a scientific journey over several years rather than claiming to have all the answers and all the protocols from the very first day.

A project can combine several scientific disciplines

There is no need to choose between natural sciences and human sciences.

The same program can, for example, combine:

- ecology;
- agronomy;
- geography;

- hydrology;
- climatology;
- economics;
- anthropology;
- sociology;
- psychology;
- education sciences;
- engineering;
- computer science;
- data science.

Example - Agriculture and biodiversity

A program focused on the transformation of an agricultural landscape can combine biodiversity inventories, soil measurements, mapping, the study of agricultural practices and surveys of residents.

Participants then contribute to several layers of a shared understanding of the territory.

Several audiences can participate in the same program

The same research question can give rise to several formats:

- expedition for adults;
- family trip;
- school program;
- student internship;
- program for professionals;
- local operation involving residents;
- science camp;
- trip for teenagers;
- mission dedicated to a group funded by a foundation;
- scientific volunteering program;
- one-off data collection event;
- recurring program over several years.

Protocols, responsibilities, supervision and levels of progression are adapted to the audience concerned.

Welcoming minors, particularly when they are not accompanied by their legal guardians, naturally requires specific organization and responsibilities.

Who does what? There is no single partnership model.

OSI does not necessarily ask its partners to transfer all of their activities to it.

We build an allocation of roles tailored to each project.

Depending on the situation:

- the scientific partner defines or co-defines the protocol;
- a local partner organizes the field operations;
- OSI leads the participatory research format;
- a tour operator manages part of the travel;
- several partners promote the program;
- OSI or a partner manages registrations;
- an organization hosts participants on site;
- a university carries out the scientific analysis;
- a foundation funds certain participants;
- a company funds equipment;
- a local authority facilitates access to the territory;
- several organizations jointly handle communication.

The preliminary work consists precisely of determining:

who does what, who bears which responsibility, who incurs which expenses, who receives which revenues and who has which resources.

Registrations can be distributed among several partners

A program can be promoted by several stakeholders.

Depending on the chosen structure, OSI, an association partner, a tourism operator or another organization may participate in finding participants and managing registrations.

The allocation is defined on a case-by-case basis within the operational and economic architecture of the project.

The objective is to avoid an abstract partnership.

Each function must have an identified person or organization responsible for it.

Together, we build the economic structure of the operation

A sustainable program must know precisely the cost of each session.

Possible cost items include:

- accommodation;
- food;
- transport;
- supervision;
- scientists;
- coordination;
- insurance;
- premises;
- equipment;
- consumables;
- logistics;
- communication;
- registration fees;
- administrative costs;
- investments required to develop the program.

The objective is to achieve a model in which **running a new session does not financially weaken the program**.

Registrations do not necessarily have to fund everything

A participatory research program generally involves several interconnected economic models.

1. The economics of the operation

Registrations or funding directly linked to participants make it possible to cover the cost of running the trip or session.

2. The economics of development

Launching a new territory, purchasing major equipment, creating a protocol or making certain investments may require additional resources.

3. The economics of impact

A foundation, company, local authority or public funder may wish to fund certain audiences, an increase in the number of actions, infrastructure or the scaling up of the program.

These three dimensions can be built together without artificially placing all development costs on the price paid by each participant.

We can seek several forms of funding

Depending on the nature of the project, additional resources may come in particular from:

- public grants;
- calls for projects;
- philanthropy;
- foundations;
- patronage;
- sponsorship;
- CSR policies;
- crowdfunding;
- individual donations;
- industrial partnerships;
- territorial funding;
- research funding;
- educational funding;
- funding for specific audiences;
- impact finance when the project and its model are suited to it.

Funding is not, however, a separate stage from project design.

A project becomes easier to fund when it can explain precisely what each additional euro will make it possible to produce.

An initial reconnaissance mission can itself become an operation

Have you never worked in the proposed field location before?

That does not necessarily prevent you from beginning to build the program.

A reconnaissance mission can, in some cases, be organized with a very small group of experienced participants or partners.

Example - First exploration of a new territory

A team wants to create a program in a territory it does not yet know well enough.

A first small mission can be used to test travel arrangements, accommodation, several study areas, equipment, local contacts and certain preliminary observations.

The operation is explicitly presented as an exploratory phase.

It produces the information needed to design the next program instead of waiting for all this information to exist before getting started.

It is not always necessary to wait until everything is known before presenting the project

Developing a program takes time.

It may therefore be appropriate to publish sufficiently early a description presenting:

- the subject;
- the territory;
- the general question;
- the type of research;
- the proposed experience;
- the audiences concerned;
- the main stages envisaged.

Elements that are still under development simply need to be presented as such.

The description can then be enriched as reconnaissance work progresses, new scientific partnerships are formed and the protocol advances.

Each new stage then also becomes an opportunity to tell the story of the project's progress.

We can help you choose the right participatory research question

This is often one of the most important stages.

An organization sometimes arrives with a very broad field:

"biodiversity", "water", "forest", "climate", "education", "agriculture", "health", "astronomy"...

But a participatory program needs a sufficiently precise question in order to produce something real.

We can examine with you:

- what is already being studied;
- the scientific partners available;
- the needs of the territory;
- questions that are still poorly documented;
- protocols accessible to different audiences;
- the potential value of the data;
- possibilities for repetition over time;
- possibilities for replication in other territories;
- public policies or international programs to which the project can contribute.

The challenge is not to create an additional scientific activity when a highly effective system already exists.

It may be far more useful to identify **the angle that is still missing and that will make your project genuinely useful.**

Your project can start locally and become international

Some programs begin in a single territory.

Once the protocol has been stabilized, it may become possible to reproduce it in:

- several regions;
- several watersheds;
- several schools;
- several reserves;
- several countries;
- several communities;
- or an entire international network.

Fictional example - A first site becomes a distributed observatory

A monitoring protocol tested for two years in one valley works correctly.

The program is then offered to five comparable territories.

Participants produce the same categories of data.

The project progressively ceases to be a simple local activity and becomes a distributed knowledge infrastructure.

Your project can also join a broader ecosystem

Depending on the nature and maturity of the program, partners can also connect with different spaces and tools developed around Objectif Sciences International.

These make it possible, in particular, to work on:

- program design and improvement;
- team training;
- educational methods;

- economic models;
- partnerships;
- funding;
- public visibility;
- international cooperation;
- scaling up projects.

Depending on needs and schedules, this may include collective preparation sessions, training courses, meetings between operators, Terra Scientifica, the Geneva Forum or other initiatives associated with the OSI ecosystem.

What we look for above all in a partner

We do not necessarily look for an organization that already has substantial resources.

Above all, we look for partners who bring at least one of the building blocks needed to create something solid:

- a relevant question;
- scientific expertise;
- a field site;
- a real issue;
- a local network;
- operational capacity;
- an audience;
- a technology;
- data;
- a method;
- funding capacity;
- dissemination capacity;
- a long-term vision.

OSI can provide some building blocks. Other partners will provide others. The final project is often a collective architecture.

You can contact us at any stage of your project

You only have an idea so far

We can examine whether it can become a participatory research question.

You already have a scientific question

We can study what participants can actually produce.

You already have a field site

We can explore what research could be carried out there.

You already have a trip or activity

We can study how to transform it into a participatory research experience.

You already have the project but not its economic model

We can work on roles, costs, revenues and additional funding.

You already have a program that works

We can think with you about replicating it or scaling it up.

You are a funder

We can work with you on the type of participatory infrastructure or program that your funding could make possible.

How does a collaboration begin?

There is no need to prepare a fifty-page proposal. Contact us (email, telephone, LinkedIn, by coming to meet us at the Geneva Forum...).

For an initial discussion, a few pieces of information are enough:

- **Who are you?**
- **What is your subject?**
- **What resources do you already have?**
- **In which territory or with which audience would you like to act?**
- **What new output would you like to produce?**
- **What are you currently missing in order to achieve this?**

Based on these elements, we can determine whether cooperation with Objectif Sciences International makes sense and identify the first building blocks of the partnership.

What we will examine with you

During the initial discussions, we will seek in particular to understand:

- the scientific value of the project;
- its value for participants;
- its value for the territory or society;

- the genuine contribution that non-specialists can make;
- the progression required for them to be able to make that contribution;
- the essential partners;
- logistical feasibility;
- everyone's responsibilities;
- the timeline;
- the economic structure;
- funding opportunities;
- possibilities for replication;
- and what makes the project complementary rather than redundant with what already exists.

Some situations in which you should contact us

"We are an NGO and have been present in a territory for twenty years, but we have never opened our work to participants."

This is precisely a situation in which a partnership may be possible.

"We are researchers and would need thousands of observations spread over several years."

Let us examine which parts of the protocol can become participatory.

"We are a travel agency and would like some of our trips to produce something scientifically useful."

We can work on transforming the experience.

"We are a company and would like to fund a participatory program around an issue related to our field of activity."

We can work with you to identify a scientifically relevant issue and an appropriate partnership structure.

"We are a municipality and want to enable residents to better understand and monitor their environment."

A participatory observatory may be one possible response.

"We have an extraordinary research idea, but no economic model."

Building the economic model can be part of the work.

"We do not yet have the money for the first mission."

It may be appropriate to examine at the same time the reconnaissance phase, the future program, funding and the first communities likely to contribute to getting it started.

"Our project will not be able to produce genuine scientific results for another three years."

That does not necessarily prevent the first documented stages from becoming a coherent part of the research journey.

What if your situation does not match any of these examples?

That is probably normal.

The most interesting partnerships often begin with a combination we have never encountered before.

Objectif Sciences International works at the interface between:

Science Participation Education Fieldwork Experience Organizations Territories Funding Impact.

You therefore do not need to know in advance which "box" you fit into.

Tell us what you know how to do, what you already have, what you are seeking to accomplish and what is currently holding you back.

Together, we will examine whether these elements can become the building blocks of a participatory research program.

Propose a partnership to Objectif Sciences International

To facilitate the initial discussion, you can send us:

- the name of your organization;
- your activity;
- the territory concerned;
- the scientific field or fields;
- the partners you already have;
- the audiences potentially concerned;
- the idea or research question being considered;
- the resources already available;
- the current stage of the project;
- and the main difficulties you would like to resolve.

[Contact us to propose a Research project](#)

[Contact us to propose becoming a field organizer, for any type of partnership](#)

You can contact us even if several of these pieces of information are still unknown. The design phase is precisely intended to identify them.