

DCitizens Fostering Digital Civics Research and Innovation in Lisbon

DELIVERABLE 1.2: Mid-term Staff Exchange Report

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D1.2: Mid-term Staff Exchange Report

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Executive Summary

The mid-term staff exchange report describes the interchange of people within the consortium. It mostly involves staff exchanges between the widening institution (IST-ID) and twinning partners (Italian Institute of Technology, Northumbria University, and University of Siegen). The main goal is to foster the interchange of scientific knowledge within the consortium in line with the DCitizens strategic areas. Overall, DCitizens supported about 40 weeks of exchanges in the first 16 months of the project. Most exchanges (55%) were to support exchanges between IST-ID and the partners. The remaining exchanges occurred in joint events, such as lab retreats or summer schools.

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1 Short-term Staff Exchanges

Short-term staff exchanges are planned to promote the interchange of scientific knowledge and expertise between the DCitizens consortium. Particularly, exchanges aim to enhance IST-ID research and innovation competence in four Strategic Areas related to Digital Civics: 1) Community-based Research Methods, 2) Emerging Technologies, 3) Design Justice, and 4) Civics, Policy, and Economic Models.

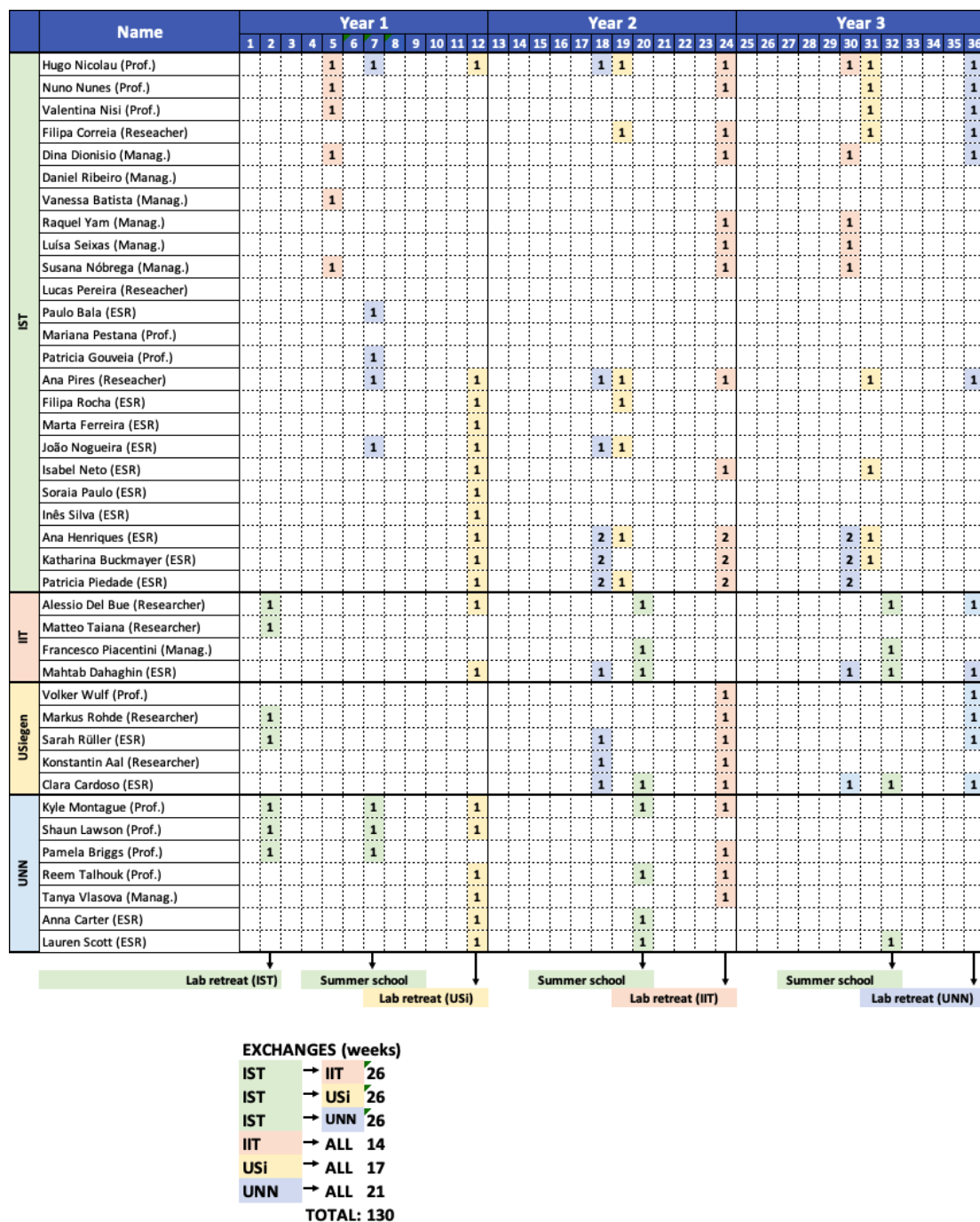


Figure 1. Representation of staff exchanges within the consortium. Cell's content represents number of weeks and colours represent the hosting partner.



Moreover, each exchange aims to build rapport, training, support current joint efforts (e.g., papers, proposals, deliverables), and identify opportunities for future collaborations, namely in joint MSc/PhD supervision and writing European research proposals.

Exchanges include junior/senior researchers, Early-Stage Researchers (ESRs), and management staff. Most exchanges are planned for one week, and ESRs can stay up to three weeks (i.e., internships).

Figure 1 illustrates the exchanges that took place during the first year of DCitizens and the plan for the second and third years. The cell's content represents the number of weeks, and its background colour shows the hosting institution. For instance, Katharina Buckmayer, Ana Henriques, and Patricia Piedade will stay for a two-week internship at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle (UNN) in month 18 of the project.

To optimise budget spending, exchanges are aligned with lab retreats hosted yearly by each institution. Lab retreats correspond to the yearly project meetings that involve all partners. IST-ID hosts visits from all partner institutions during the summer school in Lisbon.

1.1 IST-ID – IIT: First-Year Exchange

The main goal of the first visit of IST-ID to IIT was to leverage IIT's expertise in project management, particularly on four facets: (1) hands-on training for the research management unit on pre-award and post-award practices, (2) finish D7.2 – Data Management Plan, (3) discuss a draft of the research management unit action plan (D5.1), and (4) discuss a training plan for the research management unit (D5.2).

IST-ID team visited IIT for 4 days (see agenda below), between the 15th and 18th of May 2023. The IST-ID team included Hugo Nicolau (DCitizens coordinator, Professor, Vice-President of ITI/LARSyS), Nuno Nunes (Professor, President of ITI/LARSyS), Valentina Nisi (Professor, Head of the Scientific Committee of ITI/LARSyS), Susana Nobrega (Project Manager), Dina Dionisio (Project Manager), and Vanessa Batista (former executive director of ITI/LARSyS).

The IIT hosting team included Alessio Del Bue (Principal Investigator), Stuart James (Postdoctoral Researcher), Matteo Taiana (Postdoctoral Researcher), and Sara Curreli (Admin.).

Table 1. IST-ID - IIT agenda.

Day 1: 15th of May - Center for Convergent Technologies (CCT) – Morego , Genova	
14:00 – 14:30	IIT Introduction (F. Cagnoni)
14:30 – 15:00	Technology Transfer (L. De Michieli)
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:00	Hands-on Training: Projects Office (pre-award) and Future EU Calls Discussion (F. Piacentini)
Day 2: 16th of May - Center for Convergent Technologies (CCT) – Morego, Genova	
10:00 – 10:30	Research Data Management (V. Pasquale)
10:30 – 12:30	Hands-on Training: Data Management Plan (D7.2)
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:30	Draft of Management Training Plan (D5.2) and Management Unit Action Plan (D5.1)
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:00	Visit to Center for Robotics and Intelligent Systema (CRIS)
Day 3: 17th of May - Center for Human Technologies (CHT) – Erzelli, Genova	
10:00 – 10:30	Presentation of PAVIS Research Line (A. Del Bue)
10:30 – 11:00	Lab visits and demos (PAVIS staff)
11:00 – 12:30	Hands-on Training: RIA Mock-up Proposal Writing Organisation (A. Del Bue, S. James, F. Piacentini)
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:30	Post-award Project Management (I. Santori)
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:00	Nanoscopy and CHT Labs Visit
Day 4: 18th of May - In Genova City Center	
10:00 – 12:00	MEMEX app testing, storytelling, and redeployment in DCitizens

The first day was spent at the Center for Convergent Technologies (Figure 2), where discussions were held about IIT’s scientific structure (F. Cagnoni) and technology transfer practices (L. De Michieli). The afternoon was dedicated to a hands-on session with Francesco Piacentini on pre-award processes, tools, and practices. We finished selecting and discussing European calls for the DCitizens consortium aligned with the Emerging Technologies strategic area.

On the second day, the IST-ID team had a personalised training session on Research Data Management by Valentina Pasquale, followed by a working session on D7.2. The afternoon was dedicated to working on the research management unit training plan for the remainder of the project (D5.2). Finally, IST-ID presented the draft of D5.1 with a clear strategic and action plan for the new research management unit. The day ended with a visit to the Center for Robotics and Intelligent Systems.

The third day was spent at the Center for Human Technologies and started with a presentation of the PAVIS research line (Alessio Del Bue and Stuart James). IIT staff shared common practices when selecting EU calls and engaging in the creation of a

new consortium. We then worked towards an RIA mock-up proposal writing with Alessio Del Bue, Stuart James, and Francesco Piacentini (pre-award project manager). In the afternoon, Isabel Santori shared IIT's practices, tools, and processes for post-award project management. The day ended with visits and demos from multiple research lines.

On the final day, the IIT team showcased one of their digital infrastructures that resulted from the EU project MEMEX.

Overall, the exchange was highly productive in finalising (or drafting) three deliverables (D5.1, D5.2, and D7.2). IIT contributions and guidance were key. Insights from working sessions had a clear influence on the proposed management and scientific structure of ITI/LARSyS.

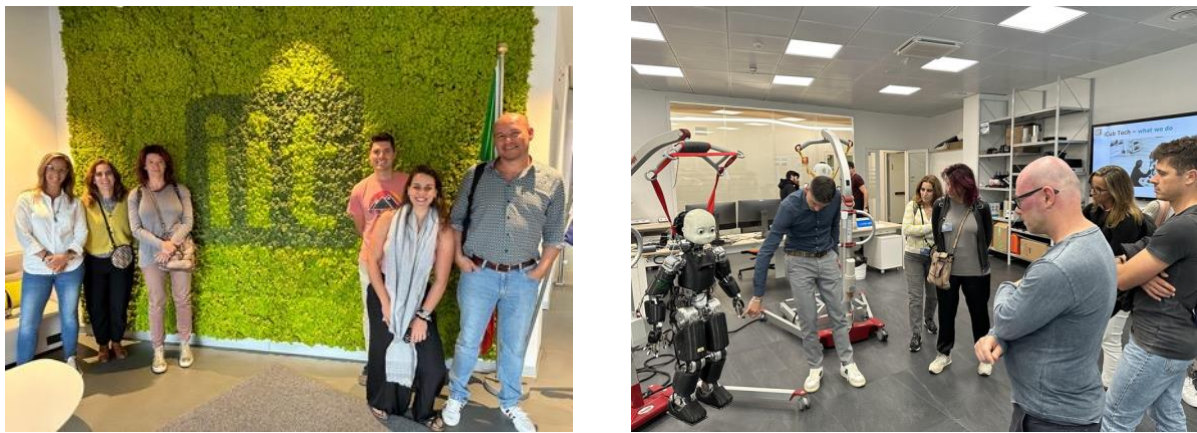


Figure 2. IST-ID visit to IIT in May 2023.

1.2 IST-ID – USiegen: First Year Exchange

The 2023 USi exchange coincided with the project's yearly lab retreat with three main goals: 1) conduct the consortium meeting to discuss progress, current challenges, and planning the next year's activities; 2) engage with DCitizens' scientific advisory board (SAB) to receive feedback about prior activities and guidance for future endeavours; and 3) offer ESR hands-on training on participatory research (Community-based Research Methods strategic area) and career training.

Between the 21st and 23rd of November 2023, all DCitizens' partners visited USi (Germany). The IST-ID team included Hugo Nicolau (DCitizens coordinator, Professor), Ana Pires (postdoctoral researcher), and nine Early-Stage Researchers (Inês Silva, Isabel Neto, Filipa Rocha, Soraia Paulo, Patricia Piedade, Marta Ferreira, João Nogueira, Ana Henriques, and Katharina Buckmayer). The UNN team was composed of Kyle Montague (Professor), Reem Talhouk (Professor), Shaun Lawson (Professor), Anna Carter (postdoctoral researcher), Lauren Scott (ESR), and Tanya Vlasova (project manager). The IIT team included Alessio Del Bue (Professor) and Mahtab Dahaghin (ESR). The hosting team included Markus Rohde (Professor), Volker Wulf (Professor), Clara Cardoso (ESR), and Konstantin Aal (ESR). The exchange's agenda (see below)

had two parallel tracks: (1) the consortium/advisory board meetings and (2) ESR training.

Table 2. IST-ID - USi agenda.

Day 1: November 21 – University of Siegen		
	Track 1: Consortium Meeting	Track 2: ESR Training
10:00	Welcome and progress report (IST-ID, IIT, UNN, USi)	
11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11:30	Ongoing challenges (Hugo Nicolau)	Trust in Participatory Research (Rita Grinko)
12:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
14:00	Next year and mid-term review (Hugo Nicolau)	Participatory Research and Resilience (Philip Engelbutzeder)
15:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
15:30	Round table discussion: Citizens – collaborators, clients or victims?	
Day 2: November 22 – University of Siegen, Fablab, PraxLabs		
	Track 1: SAB Meeting	Track 2: ESR Training
10:00	Prepare SAB meeting	Careful Intervention: Participatory Research with Vulnerable Groups
11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11:30	Prepare SAB meeting	Alumni Career Planning
12:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
14:00	DCitizens overview (IST-ID) and progress report (IST-ID, IIT, UNN, USi)	Fablab Siegen and House of Innovation: Communal Co-Design and Making (Marios Mouratidis)
15:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
15:30	Plan for next year (IST-ID) and general discussion with AB	Participatory Research in Neighbourhood PraxLabs (Dennis Kirschsieper)
Day 3: November 23 – University of Siegen		
10:00	Closing session: Consortium meeting report, ESR training report, discussion, and commissioning ESR training (IST-ID, IIT, UNN, USi)	
12:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>	

The consortium meeting is described in section 2 in full detail. Regarding the ESR training, students were exposed to and discussed multiple topics related to Participatory Research, Citizen-centric Technologies and Community Infrastructures, such as trust, resilience, bias, ethics, and power relationships. We also discussed career planning avenues in academia and industry.

The first day occurred at the University of Siegen (Figure 3), and Rita Grinko presented and moderated a discussion on “Trust in Participatory Research”. Following, Philip Engelbutzeder covered the topic of “Resilience in Participatory Research”. The afternoon was dedicated to a round-table discussion with the whole consortium on “Citizens: Collaborators, Clients or Victims?” moderated by Markus Rohde.

The second day started with a presentation from Max Krüger on the ethical implications of conducting participatory research with vulnerable groups. Following, there were two presentations, one from an academic speaker and another from a start-up founder, that discussed career opportunities after a PhD. In the afternoon, ESR participants visited the Siegen Fablab, a communal co-design and making space. Marios Mouratidis organised the tour. Finally, Dennis Kirschsieper presented multiple projects of the Neighbourhood PraxLabs.

The last day of the exchange was dedicated to getting everyone together and sharing experiences from the ESR training and consortium meeting. Markus Rohde moderated a discussion of major learning outcomes and insights. Moreover, we commissioned future ESR training sessions for 2024, and Hugo Nicolau presented the major activities of DCitizens for 2024.



Figure 3. IST-ID visit to USiegen in 2023

1.3 IST-ID – UNN: First-Year Exchange

The main goal of the exchange was twofold: (1) to foster knowledge exchange in interdisciplinary research between IST-ID and UNN, and (2) to explore future joint research efforts on civics-related research. The DCitizens team engaged in a series of talks and round table discussions.

The IST-ID team included Hugo Nicolau (DCitizens coordinator, Professor of Computer Science), Patricia Gouveia (Professor of Fine Arts & Design), Ana Pires (postdoctoral researcher in Psychology), Paulo Bala (postdoctoral research in Computer Science), and João Nogueira (ESR in Computer Science). The hosting team consisted of Kyle Montague (Professor of Computer Science), Shaun Lawson (Professor of Computer Science), Reem Talhouk (Professor of Design and Art), Pam Briggs (Professor of Psychology), and Tanya Vlasova (Project Manager).

Table 3. IST-ID - UNN agenda.

Day 1: July 25 – Department of Computer and Information Sciences	
09:45	Get together
10:00	Welcoming and administrative issues
11:00	Projects' overview and IST-ID presentations (Hugo Nicolau, Patricia Gouveia, Paulo Bala, and Ana Pires)
12:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
12:15	Newcastle team presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centre for Digital Citizens (Martin King) - Visit to NorthLab Group
13:15	<i>Lunch Break</i>
14:00	Newcastle team presentations (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urban Futures (Martyn Amos) - Digital Health (Kay Rogage)
15:15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
15:30	Newcastle team presentations (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not-Equal (Clara Crivellaro)
16:30	Summary of discussion points
Day 2: July 26 – Design & Art Department; Psychology Department	
09:45	Get together and have coffee
10:00	Design & Art roundtable discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marco, Stacey, Daniel, Phil, Jayne, Reem
12:30	<i>Lunch Break and transfer to the Psychology Department</i>
14:00	Introduction to PaCTLab (Pam Briggs)
14:10	Chatbots for embarrassing and stigmatising conditions (Richard Brown)

14:30	The RHED-C project: Remote healthcare for eating disorders (Claire Murphy-Morgan)
15:50	Discussion
16:15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16:30	Meeting review, next steps, and closing

The first day was held in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences (Figure 4) and started with presentations from the IST-ID team to about 20 faculty from UNN. The presentations showcased ongoing projects aligned with two strategic areas: Emerging Technologies (locative games and tangible computing) and Design Justice (the role of gender and disabilities in emerging technologies). Then, UNN’s NorthLab group presented some of their research projects related to community-based research methods and civic strategies. Martin King spoke about democratic innovations and the role of civic technologies in supporting deliberative and participatory citizen engagement. Knowledge exchange continued in the afternoon with Martyn Amos presenting the new Urban Futures interdisciplinary initiative from UNN and Kay Rogage presenting his research on Digital Health. The team then discussed the Not-Equal network with its coordinator - Clara Crivellaro, originating new insights for the commissioning model that is being applied in Lisbon. The day ended with a reflection on all the discussions.

The second day started at the Design and Art department, with a roundtable discussion between the DCitizens team and five faculty members from the Design and Art department. The discussion focused on how interdisciplinary research, mainly design and art, can originate new forms of knowledge that are highly complementary to traditional scientific methods. In the afternoon, we visited the Psychology department, namely the PACT lab led by Pam Briggs. Richard Brown presented his work on chatbots to encourage people with stigmatising conditions to seek medical advice. Then Claire Murphy-Morgan presented the RHED-C project, which aims to provide remote healthcare for citizens with eating disorders. The remainder of the day was dedicated to planning the 2024 staff exchange, opportunities to co-supervise PhD students, ongoing collaborations on the Citizen-centric Doctoral Centre, and the 2024 Digital Civics exchange (in partnership with Purdue and Indiana University).

The UNN team also visited IST-ID for the 2023 Summer School in Lisbon. The Summer School was a three-day event from the 11th to the 13th of July that brought together 18 students interested in Digital Civics, along with experts in the field, to engage with community-led projects. These projects involved the Portuguese Council for Refugees, the Intercultural European Club, and Aga Khan Foundation). The summer school focused on the Community-based Research Methods strategic area under the theme of “From User-Centred to Community-Led Design”. The UNN team that

visited IST-ID included Kyle Montague (Professor), Pam Briggs (Professor), and Shaun Lawson (Professor). D2.2 – Mid-term Report on Joint Events - describes this exchange in more detail.

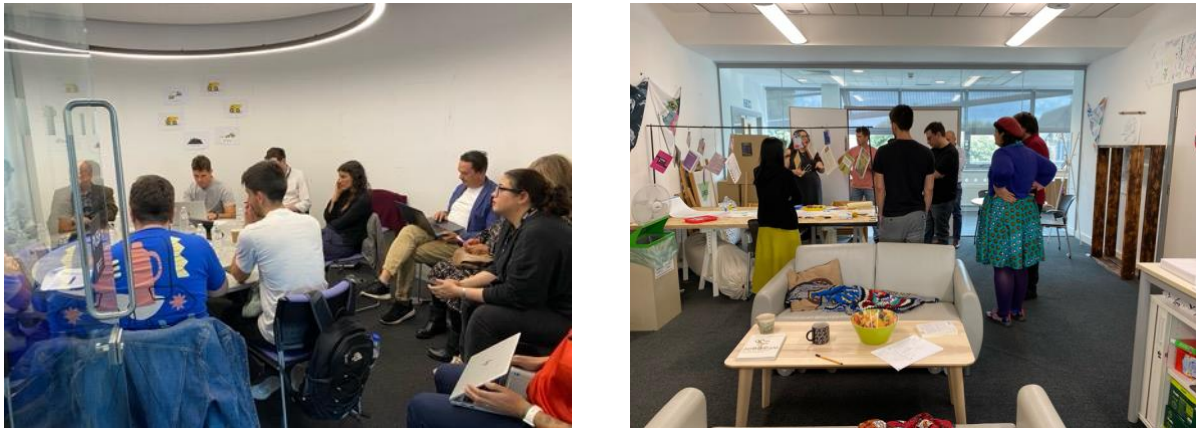


Figure 4. IST-ID visit to University of Northumbria in 2023.

2 Joint Lab Retreats

Lab retreats correspond to three to five-day project meetings with all partners. They occur (approx.) every 12 months and occur in the four participating countries / institutions. Moreover, they are co-located with other DCitizens events, such as ESR training, civic events or management training.

DCitizens have already organised two lab retreats, which are described in the following two subsections. The first lab retreat took place at IST-ID (Lisbon, Portugal), while the second took place in Siegen (Germany) at the University of Siegen. The two last lab retreats will take place at IIT (2024) and UNN (2025).

2.1 Joint Lab Retreat at IST-ID

The first lab retreat was a three-day event in Lisbon between the 23rd and 25th of January 2023, corresponding to the DCitizens kick-off (Figure 5). All partners visited IST-ID (Portugal). The hosting team at IST-ID team included Hugo Nicolau (DCitizens coordinator, Professor), Nuno Nunes (President of ITI/LARSyS, Professor), Valentina Nisi (Vice-President for Scientific Affairs, Professor), Augusto Esteves (Professor), Patricia Gouveia (Professor), Mariana Pestana (Professor), Claudia Silva (Professor), Daniel Ribeiro (Communication Manager), Dina Dionísio (Project Manager), Ana Pires (Postdoctoral Researcher), Filipa Correia (Postdoctoral Researcher) and six Early-Stage Researchers (Isabel Neto, Filipa Rocha, Soraia Paulo, Patricia Piedade, Marta Ferreira, João Nogueira). The UNN team was composed of Kyle Montague (Professor), Shaun Lawson (Professor), and Pam Briggs (Professor). The IIT team included Alessio Del Bue (Professor) and Matteo Taitana (Postdoctoral Researcher). The USi team included Markus Rohde (Professor) and Sarah Rüller (ESR).

Table 4. Lab retreat's agenda in Lisbon.

Day 1: January 23 – Beato Creative Hub, Lisbon – “LET’S MEET”	
10:00	Welcome and partner presentations (IST-ID, IIT, UNN, USi) <i>10m presentation from each partner showcasing previous work</i>
11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:30	Overview of DCitizens (Hugo Nicolau)
13:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
14:00	Launch of work packages and discuss first-year deliverables (Hugo Nicolau)
Day 2: January 24 - Beato Creative Hub, Lisbon – “ALL ABOUT RESEARCH”	
10:00	DCitizens joint research project (Hugo Nicolau)
11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:30	Presentations from other projects in IST-ID <i>15m talk from LogaCulture, BoSS, BIG; promote discussion about touchpoints and potential collaborations</i>
13:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
14:00	Discussion of action points for the research project
Day 3: January 25 - Beato Creative Hub, Lisbon – 2023 CIVIC EVENT	
09:00	Reception
09:10	Invited talk – António Brito Guterres
10:00	Flash presentation from community partners
10:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00	Roundtables with community partners
13:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
14:00	Project presentations from community partners
15:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
15:30	Kick-off meeting wrap-up

The first day focused on getting to know all the partners and the DCitizens project. The day started with a welcoming session where each institution showcased some of their most relevant work in the field of Digital Civics. Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID), Alessio Del Bue (IIT), Markus Rohde (USi), and Shaun Lawson (UNN) delivered 10-minute presentations.

Next, Hugo Nicolau provided an overview of the project's goals, WPs, deliverables, milestones, and key performance indicators. After lunch, Hugo Nicolau highlighted WPs leaders, main tasks, and deliverables. The consortium kicked off all WPs by establishing concrete goals and responsibilities based on the first-year tasks and deliverables. Then, the meeting was dedicated to discussing foreseen challenges and establishing working and communication practices. These were documented and shared through D7.1 (Project Handbook).

The second day was dedicated to discussing the research project in WP4 and exploring collaborative avenues between IST-ID and the Twining partners. The day started with a detailed description of tasks in WP4. Then, a series of presentations showcasing other European projects at IST-ID: LogaCulture (Valentina Nisi), Bauhaus of the Seas Sails (Mariana Pestana and Frederico Duarte), and the BIG Era Chair (Nuno Nunes). The day ended with a discussion about the research project, namely its ethics framework, commissioning model, and civic events.

The last day of the kick-off meeting was dedicated to the first civic event of DCitizens, which included four round-table discussions. We invited participants from academia, industry, local government, and NGOs (14 institutions and 36 participants). We planned round-table discussions around citizen-driven needs and goals. Therefore, we selected four NGOs representing four main challenge areas (social cohesion, accessibility, immigration, and healthcare) and invited them to present their vision and mission. All participants were organised in four round tables to work on a tentative project proposal to tackle a specific challenge aligned with the institution's vision. We provided all materials and scaffolded the activities around brainstorming methods, consolidation techniques, prioritisation methods, and theory of change planning. The main goal is that these proposals could serve as the foundation for a case study submission in the first commissioning call of DCitizens and inform Lisbon's research and innovation agenda.



Figure 5. Lab retreat at IST-ID. Left - project meeting; Right - civic event.

2.2 Joint Lab Retreat at USi

The second lab retreat was held in November 2023 in Siegen (see agenda in Table 2), and it was co-located with the ESR training initiative. USi hosted the yearly project/consortium meeting (Figure 6).

The meeting started with an opening presentation from Hugo Nicolau, which included introducing the DCitizens project to all participants (including ESRs) and a progress report. Then, Ana Pires provided further details about the joint research project in DCitizens and its ongoing activities. Following this, Ana Henriques presented the Ethics Framework (D4.1) to the consortium, which needed to be submitted by the end of the month.

The second session of the consortium meeting was dedicated to the senior members of the consortium: Hugo Nicolau, Ana Pires, Alessio Del Bue, Markus Rohde, Volker Wulf, Kyle Montague, Reem Talhouk, Shaun Lawson, and Anna Carter. Each Work Package (WP) leader presented a detailed progress report, including the status of deliverables and Key Performance Indicators. We then discussed the joint research project and avenues for future collaborations (e.g., workshop proposals and joint EU proposals). The first day's afternoon was dedicated to planning the following year (e.g., mid-term review) and discussing foreseen challenges and mitigation strategies.

On the second day, the partners reviewed the materials for the SAB meeting that was held that afternoon. Three members of the SAB join remotely: John Vines (University of Edinburgh), John Richards (IBM T.J. Watson Research Center), and Lizzie Coles-Kemp (Royal Holloway University of London). We sent the SAB a report of DCitizens activities prior to the meeting. In the meeting, Hugo Nicolau presented the DCitizens project, a progress report, and a plan for 2024. The afternoon was dedicated to Q&A and discussion with the SAB, which provided new insights and recommendations on the project's activities. Major discussion points were the joint research project (i.e., the commissioning research model applied in Lisbon) and efforts to ensure the knowledge and training provided within DCitizens would impact IST-ID and live beyond current ESRs and Professors.



Figure 6. Lab retreat at USiegen.

3 Summary of Outcomes from Staff Exchanges

The short-term staff exchange programme fosters the interchange of knowledge and the creation of scientific networks, which can be invaluable to individual researchers at all stages of their careers from ungraduated students to senior researchers. Although it is a challenging task to measure its impact, particularly long-term impact, we describe some of the direct short-term tangible outcomes from these exchanges. These outcomes shed light on the potential impact of DCitizens in making IST-ID a leading pole of excellence in Digital Civics.

The staff exchanges programme enabled the widening institution to strengthen and expand its collaborative network, which directly resulted in two EU research proposals and three bilateral national proposals in the first 16 months of the project:

1. Centre for Doctoral Training in Citizen-Centred AI. The proposal was led by UNN in collaboration with IST-ID, USi, and IIT, and submitted to the UKRI (accepted).
2. Sociotechnical Design and Evaluation of Digital Platforms for Democratic Participation. EU proposal led by the University of West London in collaboration with IST-ID to the COST Action Network call (under review).
3. D4Dem: Digitalisation for Democracy. EU proposal led by the University of Copenhagen in collaboration with IST-ID and USi, and submitted to the HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01 call (under review)
4. DEMOCRaiCY: Fostering AI Literacy and Democratic Values in Children through Interactive Objects and Robots. The proposal was led by IST-ID in collaboration with UNN and submitted to the Portuguese Science Foundation (under review).
5. INCLUDE: Multisensory Robots for Inclusive Social Play. The proposal was led by IST-ID in collaboration with USi and submitted to the Portuguese Science Foundation (under review).

In addition, staff exchanges allowed IST-ID to engage in joint research with Twinning partners and their extended network, which is shown by the organisation of four workshops at premier scientific venues, one special interest group, one conference paper, and two co-supervisions of PhD students. Furthermore, the DCitizens publication plan (see D6.2 for more details), which is based on the first year of joint research, includes:

- Crafting a Community-led Ethics Toolkit for Digital Civics Projects
- Infrastructuring a Community Sponsorship Program for Refugees in Portugal
- A Critical Review of Urban Technologies for Inclusive Smart Cities
- Understanding the Lifecycle and Sustainability of Digital Civics Projects

- Strategies, Tactics and Challenges of Civic Universities in Empowering Local Communities

Finally, the exchange programme has had a direct impact on the research management structure of ITI/LARSyS (part of IST-ID) with the hiring of a new team of project managers and admin staff. This led to the creation of a new Research Management Unit. Furthermore, ITI/LARSyS restructured its scientific structure based on reflections with IIT to foster individual excellence and facilitate collaborations across its researchers.

4 Conclusion

The DCitizens short-term exchange program supported about 40 weeks of exchanges (55% between IST-ID and partners). This interchange of researchers between institutions fostered knowledge exchange in the four strategic areas of digital civics: 1) Community-based Research Methods, 2) Emerging Technologies, 3) Design Justice, and 4) Civics, Policy, and Economic Models.

There was a slight deviation from the planned number of staff exchanges between IST-ID and IIT, and UNN in the first year of the project. The deviation was mostly due to increased travel costs worldwide, which resulted in seven fewer weeks at IIT and two fewer weeks at UNN. The consortium had to adjust the staff exchange plan (see Figure 1) and reduce the number of exchanges to be within the estimated travel budget. As a mitigation strategy, we have been promoting informal online meetings to build and establish rapport, namely between ESRs within the consortium. We will plan trips far in advance for the following years to reduce costs.