



Marine Debris VCC

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Virtual Community Center

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The Marine Debris Virtual Community Center

by

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Past Efforts and Lessons Learnt:

- The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) has made many efforts to link to societal agents and decisions and policy making (*e.g., User Interface Committee, Communities of Practice, User Requirement Registry, Tasks and Community initiatives, web pages, knowledge bases, ...*).
- Cross-sectoral collaboration remains low in many areas.
- Transformative approaches to knowledge creation and sharing are needed.

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Recent Efforts:

- COVID posed a significant challenge to many governmental and nongovernmental organizations to achieve their goals of interacting with the public and other organizations.
- Existing social media, collaboration tools and platforms are not sufficiently community focused.





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Recent Efforts:

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- Existing social media, collaboration tools and platforms are not sufficiently community focused.

A transformative Alternative:

- Several pilot projects aim for Virtual Community Centers (VCC) as a transformative concept.
- One pilot project is the Marine Debris Virtual Community Center.

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Virtual Community Center

The **VCC concept is fundamentally different** from social media. The VCC:

- Is community focused
- Does not elevate individuals
- Is a tool for collaboration and community building, not aiming for manipulation
- Does not use notification, likes, recommendations to facilitate growth
- Does not collect/sell/exploit user data and does not sell user time to advertisers

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The **VCC explores transformative ways:**

- inclusion of all societal agents in knowledge creation and use;
- increase of literacy (information, risk, sustainability, ...) and
- tackle of societal challenges (including wicked problems) in a cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary approach.

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VCC Concept

[User Access](#)

WELCOME

The Marine Debris Virtual Community Center (MD-VCC) is a virtual space that explores new ways for the public to improve literacy on marine debris and to learn about activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations to tackle the challenge of marine debris and to interact with these organizations.

The VCC Parts

In this VCC, you can:

- [Exhibition](#): Take a walk through the exhibition with information on the participating organizations and their activities. You may also take virtual tours organized by them.
- [Classroom](#): participate in courses that give you detailed knowledge and skills related to the activities of the participating organizations or your community.
- [Meet the Experts](#): participate in scheduled virtual meetings with experts in different areas and get to communicate with these experts.
- [Environmental Gym](#): exercise your knowledge about your environment and the environmental science background and acquire new knowledge and skill in individual exercises.
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- [Meet the Experts](#): participate in scheduled virtual meetings with experts.
- [Environmental Gym](#): exercise your knowledge and skill in individual exercises.
- [Citizen Science](#): become a citizen scientist.
- [Chat Rooms](#): join chat rooms to talk about real-time issues.
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Exhibition

About

Earth Viability Center



The Earth Viability Center is telling the story of Earth's viability. To tell this story, the Center is creating a book of river stories with the people who live at the rivers. The story of the viable Earth is a book filled with river stories. Life may have started in the ocean, but it spread along rivers into the depth of the continents. The story of humanity is a book filled with river stories. Even when crossing the oceans to find new land, the landing point was at the mouth of a river. It was the river that provided a path into the new land.

[Enter the Booth](#)

Visit the [web resource](#) of ...

IEEE Plastic in the Ocean



The IEEE OES Initiative aims to develop a matrix for assessing the different approaches to the observation and detection of plastics required to for a set of indicators. To achieve this, a working group led by OES in collaboration with the UN Environment and the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) initiative "Blue Planet" will organize participatory workshops and utilize the MD-VCC for thematic deliberations.

[Enter the Booth](#)

Visit the [web resource](#) of IEEE-PIO ...



Exhibition Classroom for courses, participatory lectures, and educational videos to feature

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- [Environmental Gym](#): exercise your knowledge and skill in individual exercises.
- [Citizen Science](#): become a citizen scientists and contribute to science.
- [Chat Rooms](#): join chat rooms to talk about relevant topics.
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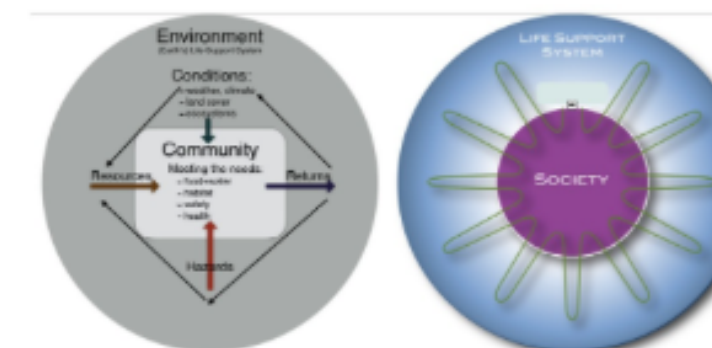


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Classroom

Overview
Modern Climate Change
Sustainability

Can the Economy in Modern Society Work without Polluting the Environment With Our Growing Waste?



The mainstream economic model depends on continuous growth and this growth is achieved by ever increasing consumption of products, material and energy, which increases waste. At the same time, globalization, rationalization, and the preference of "new" over "reuse" and "repair" have further increased the waste output of our society. Attempts to reduce waste by recycling of selected items are to a large extent failing and increasingly leading to the overload of the environment, in particular the rivers, lakes and the ocean, with litter (including, but not limited to plastics) from macro to micro and nano scales. Addressing the wicked problem of maintaining a thriving society where the needs of the people are met without overloading the planetary physiology with an increasing flow of waste requires a thorough rethinking of the mainstream economic model and the development of circular economic models that can reduce the amount of waste drastically.

[Read more about this course ...](#)

Modern Climate Change: A Symptom of a Human-Caused High Energy Pulse



Modern climate change is a symptom of the much larger syndrome of what could be called a single-species high-energy pulse. Unlike other animals, Homo sapiens were able to improve energy supply to their bodies allowing them to develop larger and more complex brains, out-compete all other mammals and establish a single-species dominance. With the recent access to new energy sources and technologies, humans modify the physiology of the Earth's life-support system to an unprecedented extent. By changing major flows, including carbon, water, nitrogen, phosphorous, and energy, by several orders of magnitude, and by creating new flows, humanity reduced most limitations to population growth such as predators, sicknesses, and limitations to food, dwellings, and other resources and this initiated an explosive growth of population and human wealth. As a side effect, the Earth's energy imbalance has increased at least seven orders of magnitude resulting in global warming and unprecedented rapid climate change. Humanity's impact on the Earth's life-support system is comparable to that of a virulent virus on the organism of a host animal, and there is a chance that its action will render large parts of the planet unfavorable for humanity to thrive. ...

[Read more about this course ...](#)



Exhibition
participate
to feature

Classroom
lectures

A space to meet
experts, talk to them, learn
from them, ...

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Exhibition
participate
to feature

Classroom
lectures

A space
experts,
from

A place to exercise
environmental and social
knowledge and to expand
it

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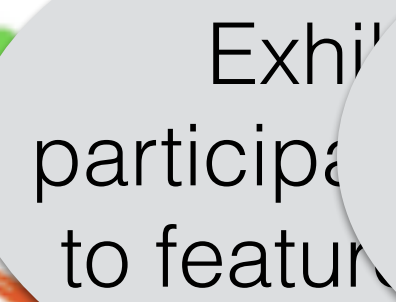


Exhibit Classroom

Classroom

A sp
erts,
from

A place
environment
knowledge

Becoming a citizen
scientist and participate or
organize citizen science
projects

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Citizen Science

Certification
Participate
Initiate
Solicit

Citizen Scientist Certification

We are developing a curriculum for a citizen scientist certificate. Read more about the curriculum ...

Participate

d As a certified citizen scientist, you can participate in open citizen science projects. Read more about the projects that are currently open ...

Initiate

As a certified citizen scientist, you can initiate and organize new projects. Read more about the process of initiating new projects ...

Solicit

If you are a researcher at a research or higher education institution and are managing a research activity, you may solicit citizen science support for your activity. Read more about the process of initiating new projects

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- Environmental Gym:** exercise your knowledge about your environment through individual exercises.
- Citizen Science:** become a citizen scientist and participate in environmental monitoring projects.
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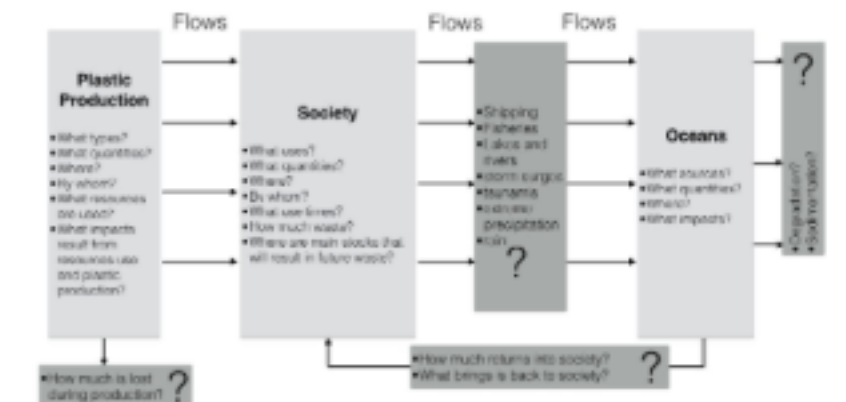
The Contribution of the Earth Viability Center (EVC) to the Mapping of Marine Debris



The EVC is telling the story of Earth's viability. To tell this story, the EVC is creating a book of river stories with the people who live at the rivers. Rivers are a main pathway for many different substances and items from the terrestrial environment into the ocean, and many rivers increase the marine debris in the ocean. This chat is about the contribution the EVC could make in mapping potential marine debris in river systems.

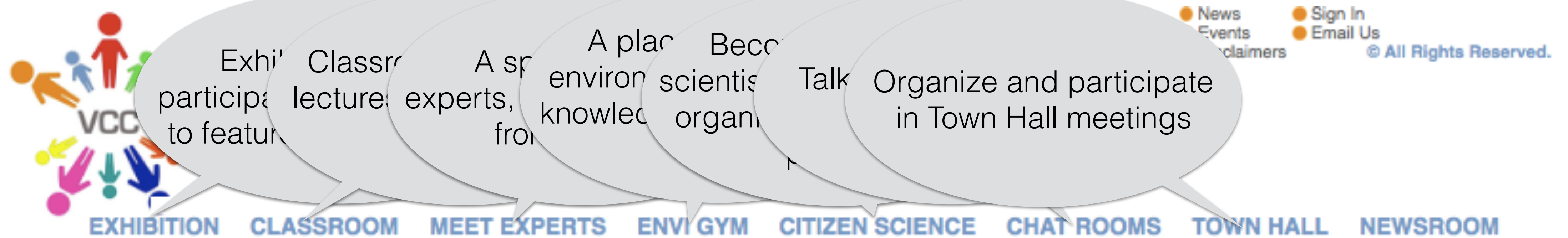
Participate in the chat

The Road Map for the Plastic in the Ocean Initiative



The road map for the initiative was developed during the 2018 and 2019 workshops in Brest. The road map is available at <https://www.gstss.org/plastics/roadmap>. Here we can chat about the road map, the further development, and steps to the implementation.

Participate in the chat



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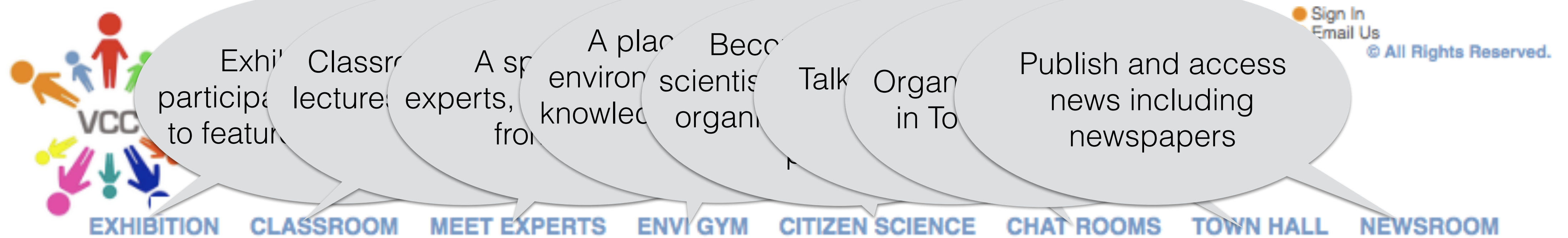
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Virtual Community Center

VCC Ownership, Governance, Participation:

- VCCs are community based and not 'owned' by one organization
- VCCs are open for participation of all (cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary)
- For each VCC, governance is detailed in Terms or Reference
- Each VCC has an Advisory Board
- Each VCC has (voluntary) staff with different roles
- Partners (organizations) and members can have different privileges (e.g., to set up booths, contribute lectures, register as experts, certify citizen scientists, initiate and monitor chats, publish news, organize Town Hall meetings and other events)



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Overarching goals:

- Efforts to develop a diverse, inclusive, and supportive community where everyone has the opportunity to participate and benefit.
- Community development, including, engagement with the commercial sector, resource mobilization, communications, and capacity development.



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Next Steps:

- The **VCC concept** is further developed based on the experience in the pilot projects
- The **VCC platform** is **open source** supported by voluntary programmers, more volunteers are very welcome
- The operational **VCC platform** will be provided by a **not-for-profit** organization
- Inviting **more partners** into the pilot projects
- Feedback** from the community on the concept and the Marine Debris pilot project would be appreciated and can be submitted at **<https://www.gstss.org/mdvcc>**

