Atmosphere Extras - Citizen science

[MUSIC PLAYING] I think it's fair to say the quality of air quality measurements will continue to improve. Equipment, particularly, is becoming cheaper. We see that in citizen science air quality sensors. We have a mix of sensors on the market at the moment, some of which are not so reliable, but some of which are very reliable and can definitely be used to help complement traditional sources of air quality monitoring. In order to design effective measures, it's clear that different types of information are needed, particularly by local authorities, to help guide their decision making about what measures to put in place.

We have the traditional air quality monitoring stations, often delivering very high quality data, but in a very local area. We're looking to new sources of information, such as that available from remote sensing from citizen science projects that can help inform local authorities on a greater scale, at a greater resolution, about the different levels of air pollution in their cities. So it's this combination of traditional in situ monitoring techniques, together with some of the new information sources that are coming along, which makes it a very interesting but still challenging time for addressing air quality at the local scale. One of the challenges that we see for citizen science is, firstly, the quality of the information, but also how it's being used.

A lot of the citizen science information is not being used to inform policy decisions. It's not feeding through into the local air quality modeling. There are some very good examples of projects across Europe, however, where it is doing this - The Curious Noses citizen science project in Flanders has recently completed, with more than 25,000 households in the area actively subscribing to use citizen science measurements. And that data has been taken on board by the local authorities to look and address the problems of air quality through their modeling activities.

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