

Vigie-Terre : A citizen science program to report fresh outcrops

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Résumé : Vigie-Terre est un nouveau programme de sciences participatives en géologie porté par le Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle. Il offre à toutes et à tous la possibilité de signaler des affleurements rocheux récemment mis au jour et de les décrire afin d'être expertisés par un réseau de relais et évaluer ainsi leur intérêt scientifique et patrimonial.

Introduction: New outcrops of potential geological interest are regularly uncovered by natural or anthropogenic actions such as land-use planning and public works (Fig. 1). These outcrops are most often exposed temporarily as they are deemed to be scars on the landscape and are sooner or later revegetated, filled or concreted. In France, the number of outcrops uncovered each year that may be of geological interest remains unknown. This can be explained by the fact that there is no procedure for examining geological objects during construction projects. By contrast, the situation is very different for archaeological remains. The law on preventive archaeology that was enacted in 2001 (based on the European Convention signed in Malta in 1992) provides for advanced archaeological interventions on development sites for the purpose of evaluation and, if necessary, excavation.

Vigie-Terre is a citizen science project founded at the French National Museum of Natural History whose objectives is to allow volunteers to report and describe fresh outcrops (<https://www.vigie-terre.org/>). To participate to Vigie-Terre, an online reporting protocol has been set up to locate and describe fresh outcrops and allow geologists across the country to assess the geological interest of the site. The main objective of Vigie-Terre is to estimate the potential number of outcrops of geological heritage interest uncovered each year. The secondary objective is to encourage preservation actions and to promote knowledge of these sites and the geoheritage. This action is possible thanks

to a network of "Vigie-Terre" relays. These relays are professionals in geology or culture (from natural parks, nature reserves, geoparks and universities) who are ambassadors of the Vigie-Terre approach.

Finally, the data collected should enable debates on a possible "preventive geology" as it already exists in archaeology.



Fig. 1 An example of fresh outcrop. The road has been extended and give the access to non altered rock (French Alps, © G.Egoroff)