

Workshop as part of the Open Science Conference 2022 (08-10 March 2022)
10 March, 16:00 – 18:00 (CET)

Fostering Open Science in Africa

Practices, Opportunities, Solutions.

Objective:

To share practical experiences on key success factors for Open Science in Africa.

Description:

According to the UNESCO Open Science Recommendation, Open Science comprises "*various movements and practices aiming to make multilingual scientific knowledge openly available, accessible and reusable for everyone, to increase scientific collaborations and sharing of information for the benefits of science and society, and to open the processes of scientific knowledge creation, evaluation and communication to societal actors beyond the traditional scientific community*". According to the UNESCO Recommendation, Open Science targets all disciplines, basic as well as applied research. The Recommendation identifies the following five pillars: open scientific knowledge, open science infrastructures, science communication, open engagement of societal actors and open dialogue with other knowledge systems.

During the consultations to prepare and negotiate the UNESCO Open Science Recommendation, experts stated some special challenges for the African region, such as deficits in:

- Infrastructure: Internet access, hardware, software;
- Capacities and an enabling policy environment, in particular individual and institutional capacities in science, technology and innovation;
- Efficient scientific collaborations and networking, i.a. lack of sharing and scaling up of good practices in regional collaboration, thus generating new research funds, new knowledge and fostering sustainable collaborations at the regional level. African nations' science systems are still not well integrated; policies and practices differ from country to country.

The 2020 survey "Open Science in Research and Innovation for Development in Africa" has provided additional insight into challenges that African nations face.

The African Open Science Platform has been recently established; it is not yet fully operational. It is potentially the most powerful mechanism to bring together actors in Open Science from across the African continent in order to address the above-mentioned benefits for Open Science operationalization, including a collaborative approach to data-intensive research, and policy measures. However, individual African research and development institutions, as well as African Science Granting Councils and governments should also develop and implement Open Science strategies (as stipulated by the UNESCO Open Science Recommendation).

In this workshop, scientists (Open Science practitioners) and Open Science proponents from Africa and from non-African countries that cooperate with them or are interested in cooperation will come together to discuss next steps and development potentials as well as best practices and solutions for "Open Science in and with Africa". We welcome experience reports from cooperation projects as well as work-in-progress reports from a strategic-institutional point of view. The lead questions are: How can the progress of regional approaches such as the African OS Platform be fostered? How can African stakeholders learn from each other? What is needed to operationalize the UNESCO OS Recommendation?

The workshop aims at an open exchange of experiences. Ideally, participants will identify prerequisites that can provide guidance for decision makers in science, science policy and

funding as well as for actors in international research cooperation to promote Open Science. In addition, the workshops should also allow for a personal exchange of all those interested in the topic of "Open Science in Africa".

Format: Short reports on practical examples (maximum 5 minutes) are invited. Participants will be asked in advance if they want to contribute an example. The number of participants is limited to 60.

Facilitation: German Commission for UNESCO (Lutz Möller / Fatma Rebegiani)