



Europe-Africa Research Cooperation and Open Science

Tuesday 9 December 2025
8h30 - 14h30

Maison Irène et Frédéric
Joliot Curie
Rue du Trône 100, 1050
Brussels, Belgium





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Context and rationale

The recent global health crisis, much like the climate disruption that humanity as a whole now faces, has served to further illustrate the urgent need to promote equitable access to scientific information, to facilitate the sharing of research data, to reinforce international scientific collaborations and to develop science-based policies. The current ecosystem of scientific publication produces glaring inequalities between Europe and Africa in terms of access to information, research dissemination and impact. African scientific publications are significantly underrepresented in major global indexing databases such as Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, and more than two thirds originate from South Africa only. Another fact is the lack of journals platforms in Africa. While most regions (South America, Asia, etc.) have developed dedicated policies and, above all, national or regional platforms to disseminate their scientific journals, it is much more difficult in Africa especially in West and Central Africa where institutional support is lacking. A few journals exist but do not meet the standards for sufficient recognition, impact and citation.

In this context, Open Science is an essential lever for increasing the scientific excellence, impact and accessibility of African scientific journals and books. It is also a key element for achieving SDGs, enabling sustainability science and strengthening the links between science and society at large. About scholarly publishing, UNESCO and various European actors are supporting the Diamond publishing model which is free for readers and authors, and ensures that public funding leads to public benefits for scholars, (citizen) scientists, practitioners, and society.



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Since the 2003 Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge, two other major declarations on Open Science have been adopted in 2023 : 1) the conclusions of the European Council on high-quality, transparent, open, trustworthy and equitable scholarly publishing and 2) the UNESCO recommendation on Open Science which is the first international standard setting instrument on Open Science. Last but not the least, Open Science is one of the thematic priorities of the EU-Africa cooperation in research and innovation as a way not only to accelerate research and amplify its impact but also to improve the quality, efficiency and creativity of research, while increasing society's trust in science.

Europe is one of the most advanced regions in terms of Open Science with the recent creation of a European non-profit publishing competence center and the launch of the EU funded ALMASI project aiming to provide the research community with an aligned, non-profit, high-quality, and sustainable scholarly communication ecosystem across Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

Objectives

Organised by IRD (French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development) in collaboration with UNESCO, the European Commission, CAMES, CRUFAOCI, African Academy of Sciences, CNRS and other key EU and African partners, this event offers a unique opportunity to deepen the partnership between Europe and Africa on Open Science following the recent AU-EU Dialogue on Science Diplomacy held in Brussels on 22 October 2025.

More specifically, the event will present the state of play on Open Science in Africa, highlight ongoing initiatives and projects, and explore how Europe and Africa can strengthen their collaboration to advance open scientific publishing across the continent.



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Programme

08:30 - 09:00 Welcome coffee

09:00 - 09:10 Welcome remarks

- Vincent Fautrel, Representative to the EU, IRD
- Jean-Christophe Desconnets, Head of Open Science Unit, IRD

09:10 - 10:40 Open Science in Africa: key challenges and opportunities

Chair: Ana Persic, Programme Specialist at the Section of Science Technology Innovation Policy, UNESCO

- Keynote speaker: Hanae Lrhoul, Professor at Ecole des Sciences de l'Information, Morocco

Panelists:

- Valérie Verdier, Chairwoman and CEO, IRD
- Nienke Buisman, Deputy Director International Cooperation, DG RTD, European Commission
- Mahaman Bachir Saley, Senior Scientific Officer, African Union Commission
- Lise Korsten, CEO, African Academy of Science
- Saturnin Enzonga Yoca, Director of Programs Open Science, CAMES
- Roger Tsafack-Nanfosso, Chairman, CRUFAOCI

10:40 - 11:00 Coffee break



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11:00 - 12:10 Towards a new publishing ecosystem in Africa: presentation of key initiatives/projects and key challenges

Chair: Moussa Samba, Director of Presses Universitaires, UCAD, Senegal

Panelists:

- Mame Penda Ba, Co-founder of LASPAD, Executive Secretary of the ASAA, and Editor-in-Chief of the Global Africa Journal
- Susan Murray, Executive Director, African Journals Online
- Sylvie Rousset, Director of the Open Research Data Directorate, CNRS
- Omo Oaiya, Chief Strategy Officer, LIBSENSE Project (WACREN)
- Tshiamo Motshegwa, Director, African Open Science Platform (AOSP)
- Johan Rooryck, Principal Investigator, ALMASI Project (OPERAS)

12:10 - 13:20 Way forward: how to contribute to the strengthening of the scientific publication

Chair: Vincent Fautrel, Representative to the EU, IRD

Panelists:

- Mahaman Bachir Saley, Senior Scientific Officer, African Union Commission
- Philippe Mayaux, Senior Adviser, DG INTPA, European Commission
- Camille Laporte, Deputy Director of the Economic Diagnostics and Public Policy Department, AFD
- Veerle Van den Eynden, Research Data Expert, University of Hasselt & VLIRUOS
- Hannah Hope, Open Research Lead, Wellcome Trust
- Iryna Kuchma, Open Access Programme Manager, EIFL

13:20 - 13:30 Closing remarks

- Isabella Aboderin, Chair, Perivoli Africa Research Centre

13:30 - 14:30 Networking lunch