

POSITION STATEMENT
**CONNECTING OPEN
SCIENCE AND RESEARCH
ASSESSMENT REFORM**
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**SCIENCE
EUROPE**
Shaping the future of research

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Position Statement 'Connecting Open Science and Research Assessment Reform: a shared mission and common actions'

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CONNECTING OPEN SCIENCE AND RESEARCH ASSESSMENT REFORM

A Shared Mission and Common Actions

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Preface



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Research systems across Europe, and globally, are at an inflection point. Two major movements markedly contributing to this transformation, open science and research assessment reform, have each made remarkable progress over recent decades. This Position statement by Science Europe, ‘Connecting open science and research assessment reform: a shared mission and common actions’, reflects a growing recognition that the time is right to draw these movements into closer, more deliberate alignment, while enabling and respecting the distinct communities, expertise, and practices that underpin and animate them.

The ambition of each movement has grown considerably. Open science has evolved from its early emphasis on access to publications towards a far more ambitious vision of an open scholarly communication system, one that removes artificial barriers between researchers and fosters meaningful engagement with society. Research assessment reform has moved beyond critique of oversimplified proxies of excellence and flawed metrics, towards a broader understanding of research quality and impact, and the myriad skills and activities that contribute to it. Together, they shape research cultures, embed and perpetuate core values, and provide a framework for progressive policies and practices across the research and innovation sector: they point towards a research system that is more equitable, more trustworthy, and more responsive to public needs.

This position statement is the result of a unique and comprehensive process that reflects both the collective expertise of the Science Europe membership and a rigorous engagement with the academic evidence base. It concludes a

three-year collaborative effort combining multiple strands: a survey and analysis of current strategic approaches and practices; an interactive workshop series enabling exchange on good practices, challenges, and opportunities; and a scoping review of academic literature examining the contributions of open science to research culture. By integrating these perspectives, the report provides both a grounded understanding of current developments and a forward-looking framework for action.

The recommendations presented here are therefore not abstract principles, but are rooted in practice, experience, and evidence. They aim to support research funding and performing organisations in aligning their strategies and interventions in ways that reinforce both open science and research assessment reform, while contributing to broader systemic goals. In doing so, this report seeks to guide a coherent and strategic approach to culture change, recognising both the complexity of research systems, and the urgency of improving and refashioning them.

Introduction

Open science advances and research assessment reform are mutually reinforcing and inter-dependent drivers of research cultures based on [shared values](#) and progressive R&I policy and practice. Actions in these areas often overlap and can be more effective when combined. This document is intended to support this effort by providing a more intentional alignment of actions in both areas, with the recommendations made in this position statement serving as a guide for collective action.

Both open science and research assessment reform have made significant advances over the past decades: the Diamond Open Access movement and initiatives such as the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) and DORA, as examples. These initiatives highlight a shared commitment by a range of research stakeholders towards systemic change and research culture shifts. There is growing recognition that initiatives such as these are guiding research systems in a common direction, and it is now timely to strive to connect their actions and agendas more deliberately.

At the same time, there are distinct communities of practice and areas of expertise within each movement that should be recognised and supported, while the autonomy of both communities should also be respected as closer ties are promoted. At the heart of this balance is the notion that these movements are not ends in themselves, but essential means to achieve broader common

missions: advancing knowledge, and improving research quality, integrity, and impact.

Science Europe and its public research funding and performing member organisations are committed to advancing open science as a cornerstone of a robust, inclusive, and trusted European research system. By working together and aligning our approaches, we seek to enable research knowledge, methods, and outputs to be 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary', responsibly shared, and meaningfully reused in ways that serve researchers, policy makers, and society at large. This goes hand-in-hand with the commitment to reform research assessment processes in ways that better reflect the ways in which modern research is conducted and communicated, our broadening understanding of research quality and excellence, and the link between positive research cultures and effective knowledge advancement.

The Project and Process

This position statement strategically integrates actions from the open science and research assessment reform movements, and concludes a three-year project within Science Europe, bringing together experts from our Working Groups on Research Culture and Open Science, that has:

1. surveyed and analysed the state-of-the-art on the [strategic approaches](#) to, and research assessment of, open science,
2. provided a forum, through a three-part workshop series, for exchange on good practices, common challenges, and future opportunities, and

3. mapped the [academic literature](#) through a scoping review on the contributions of open science to research culture.

This document contextualises the outcomes of these activities, offering a strategic perspective on how Science Europe Member Organisations, and research funding and performing organisations more broadly, can combine and align actions to more effectively contribute to broader missions and goals. In doing so, it offers a framework to guide future actions, and provides practical recommendations based on existing good practices.

1. Mutually Reinforcing Drivers

A commitment to open science

We see open science as a driver of research cultures grounded in [shared values](#). Through open science policies and practices, our organisations seek to enable open and seamless collaboration among all actors in the research process, and to meaningfully engage societal actors whenever relevant. Because open science should be inclusive, we will ensure that all research communities can participate in this collaboration and that all segments of society can benefit from its outcomes.

We commit to advancing a community-driven approach to open science within the European Research Area, contributing to progressive research and innovation policies at European and national levels. By grounding policy development in the needs, expertise, and responsibilities of research communities, we seek to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems, and ensure that policy action enhances research quality, and openness.

A commitment to research assessment reform

We recognise the central role that research assessment practices play in embedding [shared values](#) within research cultures. Through values-based assessment processes and criteria, our member organisations aim to support talented individuals, teams, and institutions in delivering high-quality and impactful research through fair, transparent, efficient, and effective assessment systems. We will ensure that these systems enable the open science movement by recognising, rewarding, and incentivising open research practices, contributions, and outputs, while allowing for careful and considered shifts in research culture.

We commit to playing a central role in the ongoing reform of research assessment across the European Research Area and globally, informing and helping to shape progressive research and innovation policies. As research assessment practices strongly influence how research is conceived, conducted, and communicated, they are key enablers of effective policy development and implementation. Through this work, we aim to strengthen the role of the European research system within the broader policy landscape.

A shared vision

Together, our commitments to open science and research assessment reform articulate a shared vision for the future of research: one in which knowledge advances through openness, collaboration, and trust, and excellence is nurtured through responsible and values-based assessment systems. Open science broadens the creation and circulation of knowledge, fostering transparency, inclusivity, and meaningful engagement with society, while reformed research assessment provides the foundations that support and drive the evolution of research cultures that allow these practices to flourish.

By aligning assessment systems with open science principles, we enable research cultures that reward quality, integrity, collaboration. This integrated approach strengthens research and innovation ecosystems, supports a diverse and inclusive ecosystem of talented individuals, effective teams, and career pathways. Ensuring that excellence in research is defined by-, and grounded in our shared values, for the benefit of all.



2. Recommendations

These recommendations seek to guide a strategic alignment of key actions and interventions by RFOs and RPOs to advance open science, in line with the research assessment reform movement and principles of effective culture change, in order to drive research culture shifts and most effectively contribute to progressive research and innovation policies.

The rationale for these recommendations, as well as their sequencing, is inspired by the [Pyramid of Culture Change](#) (June 2019) developed by Brian Nosek, that guides effective and systemic culture change processes, highlighting vital interconnections between actions, and emphasising the importance of progressive implementation and alignment of infrastructure provision, engagement, community norms, incentives, and policies

to enable sustainable cultural transformation in research systems. This strategy provides clarity and directionality on the actions that RFOs and RPOs can undertake to advance open science, integrated with the ongoing reform of research assessment, and via careful and considered mechanisms that address the needs of and potential impact on the community and enable engagement by all actors.

2.1. Open and accessible community-governed infrastructures

Open, community-owned, non-commercial research infrastructures are critical enablers of open science and collaborative research, as well as effective assessment processes. Community-governed infrastructures, such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and Open Research Europe (ORE), support equitable access to tools, services, and knowledge, and reduce dependency on commercial platforms that may not align with public values. By investing in-, and optimising the use of open research infrastructures, Science Europe members strengthen European research sovereignty and provide a stable foundation for evidence-informed policymaking and innovation.

Science Europe members should invest in and promote the long-term financial sustainability of community-governed open research infrastructures, encouraging international alignment and coordination, seeking coherence and interoperability with other research infrastructures to ensure long-term sustainability and information preservation, seamless access, and optimal use by research communities. Ultimately, to enable and simplify engagement with open science practices.

Capacity building efforts can add value to these investments by providing guidance on the facilities, resources, services available to the community, and supporting the development and recognition of technical expertise and skills of research-enabling roles (data stewards, technicians, research managers) necessary to optimise the use and operation of these infrastructures.

These actions align with [The Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure](#) (2025) that aim to ensure long-term sustainability of critical systems on which researchers and research professionals rely.

2.2. Community capacity and support for open science

Research funding and performing organisations support the development and implementation of skills, knowledge, and community practices that enable researchers to integrate open science as a routine part of the research process. Normalising openness requires investment in

awareness-raising, training, and career development integration for researchers, research professionals, and institutions to adopt open research practices, it also requires a shift in research cultures towards more collaborative, team-oriented approaches.

Science Europe member organisations should expand, coordinate, and support training and capacity-building efforts. Actions may include integrating open science competencies into researcher development programmes at all career stages and in grant programmes, providing practical training on open research methods and tools. They may also include strengthening the roles of research professionals, including data stewards, research software engineers, and library professionals. Training initiatives should also address disciplinary differences and provide tailored support that reflects the diverse needs, infrastructures, and practices of different research communities.

In parallel, Science Europe member organisations should promote broad awareness of the value of open science for research quality, integrity, collab-

oration, and societal engagement. Partnerships with and support for enabling networks, communities of practice, and ambassadors within research communities can further accelerate positive cultural change and strengthen ownership of open science practices.

Capacity-building efforts should also ensure that approaches to openness are aligned across diverse research contexts. Within Science Europe, research funding and performing organisations work together to develop and promote shared guidance, frameworks, and practical resources that support researchers in making open science a normal part of their work. Developing common reference points and sharing good practices across countries and disciplines help provide clearer, more consistent support to research communities.

2.3. Recognising and incentivising open science

Research assessment processes play a pivotal role in enabling the effective uptake of open science by research communities and institutions, facilitating shifts in behaviours and attitudes through the reform of assessment criteria and practices towards the broader and better recognition and rewarding of open science activities. Embedding this shift into funding decisions and career progression exercises sends a clear signal that openness, integrity, and quality, across all stages of the research, are core values of our research systems. Science Europe Member Organisations strive to create the systemic and cultural conditions necessary for open science to become the norm.

Science Europe members should strive to value the full diversity of research contributions and outputs in alignment with the international reform of research assessment movement. Implementation of practices and criteria should be considered in a coordinated manner, promoting a coherent common approach towards research communities and normalising open sci-

ence through recognition of the widest possible array of open science activities in assessment processes. This should include safeguarding and embedding openness by design throughout the research lifecycle.

The uptake and embedment of these actions can be supported by capacity building actions aimed at both applicants and reviewers. Providing access to- and encouraging engagement with training and/or guidance on how open science activities and outputs should be treated in assessment processes helps to demonstrate strategic intent, empower the research community, and align implementation.

Such actions are fully in line with the objectives of CoARA (see [CoARA core commitment 1](#), as an example). It provides a framework and structure within which Science Europe member organisations can coordinate and align on specific common interventions to support the incentivisation and recognition of open science activities, offering a common coherent approach internationally.

2.4. Scholarly communication reform policies

Open access to research outputs is a cornerstone of a robust, and equitable scholarly communication system. By ensuring that publications, data, and other research outputs are openly available

and follow the FAIR and CARE principles, open access strengthens research quality and impact, maximising public value from public investment. For Science Europe member organisations, re-

forming scholarly communication is essential to create a more diverse, sustainable, and researcher-centred ecosystem for disseminating research results.

Science Europe member organisations should commit to strengthening bibliodiversity by supporting a broad range of open access publishing models that provide researchers with multiple pathways to disseminate their research outputs. This includes strengthening scholar-led and community-owned publishing models, with particular emphasis on diamond open access, alongside other sustainable and transparent open access approaches that align with the [values framework](#) for the organisation of research.

At the same time, member organisations recognise the importance of policy alignment and coordination in advancing scholarly communication reform. Efforts to strengthen bibliodiversity

should be implemented in a coherent and coordinated manner across national systems to avoid unintended consequences for researchers. In particular, members will seek to ensure that reforms do not create barriers to international collaboration or mobility, and that researchers can move seamlessly between institutions and countries without disadvantage related to publishing practices or compliance requirements.

In pursuing this objective, Science Europe member organisations will work collectively to support enabling infrastructures, coordinate policy approaches, and align their actions with key European initiatives, including the [Action Plan for Diamond Open Access](#) (March 2022), the [Council Conclusions on Scholarly Publishing](#) (May 2023), EOSC, ORE, and collaboration with the [European Diamond Capacity Hub](#), thereby contributing to a more diverse, resilient, and sustainable scholarly communication landscape.

3. Framework Conditions and Support

The shared goal of research funding and performing organisations to align on the recommendations included in this position statement are facilitated by the framework conditions and support from capacity building, monitoring, and evidence gathering.

3.1. Capacity building

Consistent and common approaches to capacity building are essential for embedding open science practices and enabling research assessment reform across national systems, institutions, and research communities, ensuring that researchers, evaluators, and research professionals have the knowledge, skills, and resources required to participate meaningfully as the research endeavor evolves and improves.

At all levels of intervention (as highlighted in sections 2.1 to 2.4), capacity building and support actions facilitate community engagement, add value to investments, and improve the efficacy of policy and practice adaptations. Science Europe member organisations will continue to develop

and support inclusive and community-sensitive capacity building approaches that foster cultures of continuous learning and professional development, while remaining attentive to unnecessary burden and the diverse needs and starting points of different research communities and national contexts.

Members will further promote the coherence and reach of capacity building efforts by aligning with relevant international initiatives, drawing on resources and good practices developed through initiatives such as [the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment Reform](#), [the European Open Science Cloud](#), and [the Declaration on Research Assessment](#)

3.2. Monitoring and evidence gathering

Robust monitoring and evidence-gathering are essential for understanding the contribution of open science and research assessment reform to research cultures, as well as research and innovation policies. Science Europe member organisations will continue to develop and implement transparent, proportionate, and community-informed monitoring approaches that support continuous learning, accountability, and policy improvement, while avoiding undue administrative burden or inadequate incentives. In doing so, members will work towards monitoring frameworks that capture both established and emerging elements of open science across the research lifecycle, extending beyond [open access to research outputs](#) to include areas such as open research methods, open research evaluation practices, and open research infrastructures.

Members will also strengthen the evidence base and coherence of monitoring efforts by aligning,

where appropriate, with relevant international initiatives and shared principles. This includes exploring alignment with frameworks developed through the [Open Science Monitoring Initiative](#) to enhance comparability across institutional, national, and international levels; advancing openly available and reusable research information in line with the principles of the [Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information](#); and contributing to the development of a stronger analytical and evidence base on the impacts of open science and research assessment reform, including potential unintended consequences, in connection with efforts such as the [Global Research Initiative on Open Science](#).

Through these ongoing efforts, Science Europe member organisations will continue to build a more co-ordinated and evidence-informed understanding of progress in open science.

Conclusion

Open science and research assessment reform share a common vision for the future of research systems across Europe, and beyond. These movements are mutually reinforcing drivers of positive research cultures and progressive research and innovation policies. Aligning their actions provides an opportunity to accelerate progress toward a research ecosystem in which openness, transparency, and responsible evaluation are embedded throughout the research lifecycle.

By connecting policies, infrastructures, incentives, and community support, the key actions presented in this document, Science Europe and its member organisations can create the conditions in which open science becomes standard practice and assessment systems meaningfully recognise the diversity of research contributions. Such alignment not only supports cultural change within research communities but also enhances the capacity of research systems to address broader societal challenges and policy priorities.

Research funding and performing organisations have an important role to play in fostering appropriate alignment, sharing good practices, and building a strong evidence base to guide continued progress. Through sustained collaboration and engagement with researchers, institutions, and policymakers, the integration of open science and research assessment reform can contribute to a more inclusive, trustworthy, and resilient European research landscape, one that advances knowledge as a public good and maximises the value of research for society.

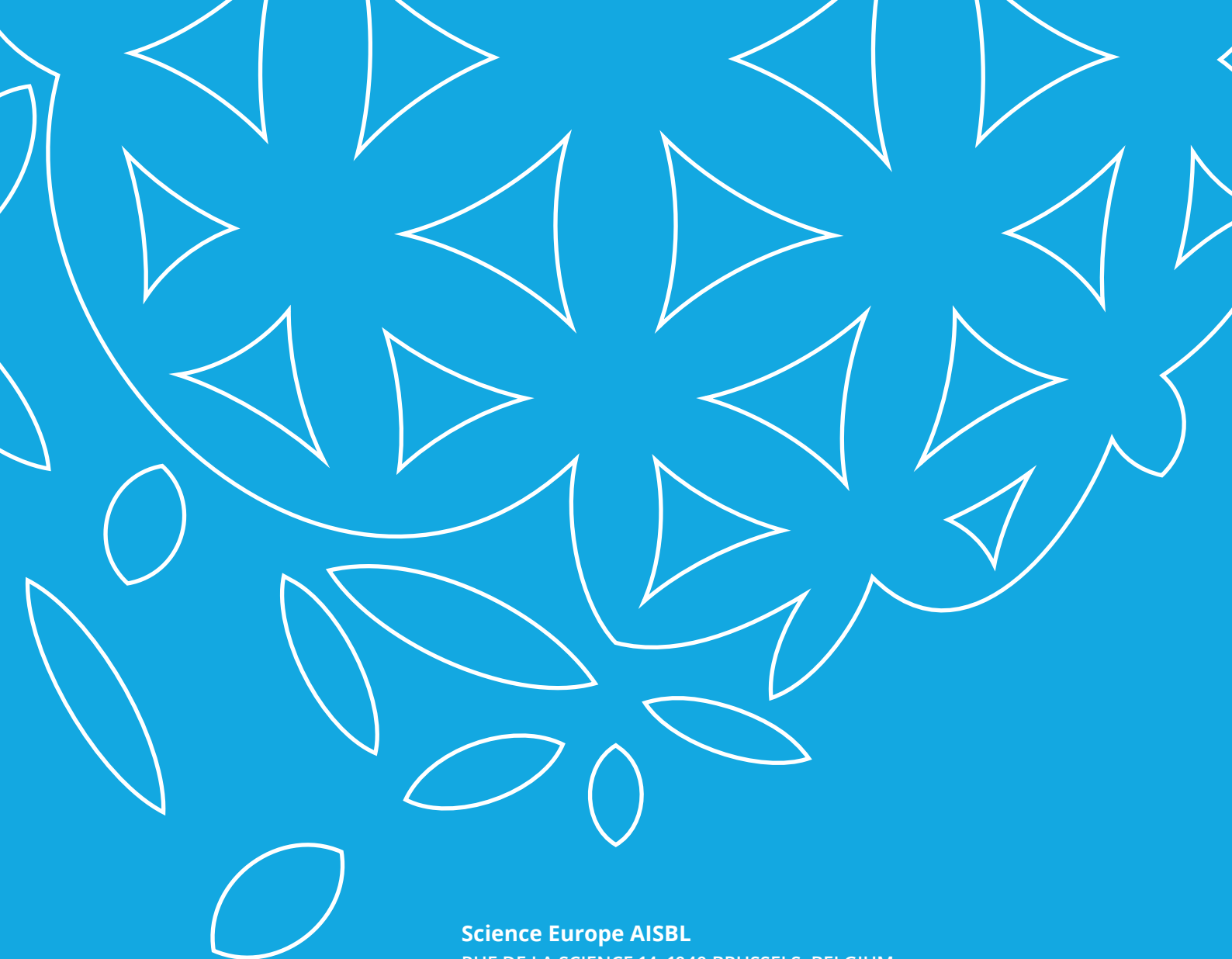
Next Steps

This position statement highlights the strategic importance and timeliness of deepening connections between the research assessment reform and open science movements. It offers recommendations on how and where research funding and performing organisations can align key actions and interventions to most effectively drive research culture shifts and enable the quality and impact of research.

As next steps, Science Europe commits to support its Member Organisations in the translation of

these recommendations into concrete policies and practices. Recognising the diversity of starting points and maturities amongst Member Organisations, a first point-of-call will be to collect and showcase best practice examples that address the recommendations made.

Turning principles and recommendations into practice, and aligning around best practice examples will be a focus of action under Science Europe's next Strategy Plan for the period 2027–2032.



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Science Europe is the association of major research funding and research performing organisations in Europe.

Our vision is for the European Research Area to have the optimal conditions to support robust education and research & innovation systems.

We define long-term perspectives for European research and champion best-practice approaches that enable high-quality research for knowledge advancement and the needs of society.

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