

Science Europe welcomes efforts towards European Open Science Cloud

Open Letter by the Governing Board of Science Europe

Brussels, 28 November 2017

Research data should be permanently, publicly, and freely available for re-use.¹ That is the opinion of Science Europe, the association of the main Research Funding and Research Performing Organisations in Europe. Science Europe follows with interest the European Commission's initiative to launch a cloud service for research data that aims to create a trusted environment for hosting and processing research data to support the globally leading role of European science.

Support for the principle of the European Open Science Cloud

Science Europe believes in the development of Open Science in a way that recognises the driving role of scientific communities in shaping and adopting Open Science practices. These diverse communities are currently faced with numerous challenges when undertaking data-driven research. Science Europe therefore commends the European Commission on its ambitions for the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC):² to foster the FAIR principles for research data; to ensure the recognition of researchers' data skills; to address issues of access, copyright, and data subject privacy; to allow easier replicability of results; to limit data wastage; and, to contribute to clarification of the funding model for data generation and preservation.

However, several aspects remain unclear so far. How will the EOSC be funded and governed? How will the EOSC integrate and be interoperable with existing research infrastructures? In addition, there are several data management issues to be solved. Answers to these questions are essential if the EOSC is to become a real support mechanism for Open Science and research.

Realising the European Open Science Cloud: Science Europe contributions

It is beneficial to the advancement of research to address common issues in relevant policies and funding structures collectively, both at European and at global level. Through Science Europe, the major public research funding and performing organisations of Europe have already developed a number of common general principles, policies, and detailed recommendations related to requirements for research data and data infrastructures.

Funding for research data and related infrastructures

Science increasingly depends on infrastructures that support sustainable research data management.³ Science Europe calls for the establishment of an ecosystem of such infrastructures and for the design of appropriate

1. Science Europe Roadmap: <http://scieur.org/roadmap>

2. <https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/index.cfm?pg=open-science-cloud>

3. Science Europe–Knowledge Exchange Briefing Paper on Funding Research Data Management and Related Infrastructures: <http://scieur.org/briefing-rdm>

funding mechanisms. Current funding is mainly geared towards providing funding on a project basis. For research data management and infrastructures to be sustainable, it is essential to move towards long-term planning and funding schemes. This requires engagement from various stakeholders in the research sector. Science Europe is committed to be part of this discussion.

Text and Data Mining

The European copyright law needs to be modernised and harmonised to better match the needs of researchers. Science Europe is actively advocating for a broad copyright exception for text and data mining that will allow anyone involved in research with lawful access to data to analyse them using automated processes (so-called 'mining').⁴ Science Europe welcomes the fact that the European Commission aims to prime the market for innovative research services and new business models with the EOSC initiative.

International alignment of research data management policies

Universities, research performing and research funding organisations have adopted research data management policies to stimulate good data governance and stewardship. Science Europe actively supports international alignment of these policies across relevant organisations. It supports its Member Organisations in defining a common set of core requirements and a basic list of trusted repositories, which will enable researchers to store and share their data. Preliminary findings and proposals for core requirements will be debated in a joint event by Science Europe and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) on 30 January 2018 in Brussels.

Research Data Management Protocols

Science Europe has developed a framework for disciplinary research data management protocols, also known as domain data protocols, and is supporting its uptake among scientific communities. These protocols intend to form a pragmatic solution to facilitate research data management for scientists who have to provide data management plans for their projects, as well as for funders who have to evaluate them. Scientific communities are encouraged and enabled to set up protocols that meet their specific needs, based on the Science Europe framework. Individual researchers can then use these protocols as a template for their data management plans. This makes planning and evaluation easier for all parties involved. Science Europe is organising a workshop at the previously mentioned event to foster the implementation and use of the framework by scientific communities.

In addition to the collective activities of Science Europe as a pan-European association, its members are also individually active and working on different issues that the EOSC is aiming to address.

The Governing Board of Science Europe looks forward to working constructively with the European Commission and other stakeholders on addressing the issues that the EOSC aims to provide a solution to.

The Governing Board of Science Europe

4. See also <http://scieur.org/copyright>