Webinar Report

Building Capacity in the Ukrainian R&I Ecosystem

Open Science Policies and Practices of Research Funding Organisations

20 February 2026

NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF UKRAINE

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Report of 3rd Webinar on 'Building Capacity in the Ukrainian R&I Ecosystem: Open Science Policies and Practices of Research Funding Organisations'

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Context

Open Science has become a central element of research policy across Europe and globally. Ensuring open access to research results, promoting transparency and reproducibility, and strengthening public trust in science are increasingly recognised as essential components of responsible research and innovation. Research funding and performing organisations play a key role in advancing Open Science by embedding its principles into funding conditions, assessment criteria, and project implementation requirements. Many of these organisations co-ordinate their efforts and align their policies through Science Europe, the representative body of public research funding and performing organisations in Europe, fostering coherence and sharing best practices across (inter)national funding bodies.

Science Europe has positioned Open Science as a strategic priority, supporting its Member Organisations in the development and alignment of policies that enable a more transparent, accessible, and efficient research system. It also plays an active role in shaping and supporting key European open science infrastructures. Notably, Science Europe and its Member Organisations contribute to initiatives such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and Open Research Europe (ORE), which exemplify scholar-led and community-governed approaches to scholarly communication, aligned with Diamond Open Access principles. These efforts reflect a broader commitment to fostering sustainable publishing models and interoperable research infrastructures that serve society and the research community.

As research funding and performing organisations (RFOs and RPOs) continue to refine their policies, questions arise regarding how Open Science principles are operationalised in practice – particularly in peer review procedures, grant agreements, monitoring processes, and compliance mechanisms. Within the broader framework of strengthening research governance and accountability, the integration of Open Science represents a strategic priority for many organisations.

Introduction

The 3rd Science Europe–NRFU webinar, titled 'Open Science policies and practices of research funding organisations,' took place on 20 February 2026 and focused on practices and policies that integrate Open Science principles into both assessment procedures and project implementation.

In 2024, the National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU) joined the Science Europe Working Group on Open Science, which focuses on developing policies for open access to research results and data. The work of this group includes discussions on best practices for research data management and the creation of mechanisms that facilitate the global exchange of information among researchers. During this period, the NRFU actively supported the implementation of Open Science principles.

By collaborating with European partners, the NRFU facilitates the exchange of best practices in research assessment and Open Science, adapting them to the specific needs of the Ukrainian research community. As the national institution responsible for supporting and funding research, the NRFU plays a key role in fostering a culture of transparency, accessibility, and responsible research in Ukraine.

Objectives of the Webinar

The webinar aimed to provide an overview of how research funding and performing organisations integrate Open Science principles into their policies and practices, with a particular focus on assessment procedures, project implementation, and practical tools.

Specific objectives included:

- **exploring** how Open Science principles are embedded in grant assessment criteria and funding conditions, and institutional assessment practices, including reforms to move beyond traditional metrics;
- **discussing** practices for open access to research results and data, including data management, Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR) principles, and open sharing of software and research outputs;

- **examining** challenges and opportunities in monitoring compliance with Open Science requirements;
- **facilitating** the exchange of best practices between European and Ukrainian research funding organisations and institutions to strengthen capacity, collaboration and researcher engagement.

By bringing together experts from many European organisations, the webinar provided a platform to discuss both strategic and operational aspects of Open Science, helping participants identify practical solutions to advance open, transparent, and sustainable research practices in Ukraine and beyond.

The full recording is available on YouTube:

View the recording

Panel Discussion

Zoé Ancion, Head of the Open Science Unit at the French National Research Agency (ANR), opened the webinar with an overview of ANR's policies and practical actions in Open Science. She highlighted that ANR's strategy is fully aligned with international initiatives, including UNESCO recommendations and European Union guidance, as well as the national Open Science plan in France. Open Science at ANR is seen as a means to increase scientific quality, transparency, collaboration, and inclusiveness across the research lifecycle.

Key elements of ANR's approach include:

- **Strategy and pillars:** ANR's strategy is based on promoting full and immediate open access to publications, supporting diversity and multilingualism, and facilitating the sharing and opening of research data, source code, and software. Open Science is embedded across the entire research life cycle.
- **Policy integration:** Open Science principles are embedded in all calls for proposals, requiring grantees to provide immediate open access to publications and to develop, update, and submit data management plans.
- **Dedicated funding and projects:** ANR launches calls and provides funding for projects specifically promoting Open Science, including sustainable infrastructures and collaborative initiatives with other institutions.
- **Monitoring and assessment:** ANR monitors the impact of Open Science policy through the Open Science Monitor, tracking open access rates (currently about 88%), data management practices, and associated costs such as article processing charges (APCs). This monitoring supports evidence-based adjustments to policy.
- **Equitable publishing models:** ANR actively supports Diamond Open Access, providing free access to research results for both authors and readers. The initiative is co-ordinated internationally through networks and global summits, involving over 160 institutions.
- **Collaboration and capacity building:** ANR engages with the national and international research community, co-ordinating with other French funding agencies, research institutions, European networks, and UNESCO to promote coherent Open Science practices and exchange best practices.

Ancion emphasised that the further advancement of Open Science requires collective action grounded in evidence-based policies; equitable and transparent practices; investment in infrastructure; integration of AI considerations; and continuous monitoring of outcomes. She concluded that close collaboration between research funding and performing organisations, together with alignment with national policies, is essential to make Open Science a sustainable norm and to strengthen trust in research.

Stefano Bianco, Senior Researcher at the National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN), Coordinator of Open Science in INFN and CoPER,[1] presented a detailed overview of Open Science from the perspective of research performing organisations. He framed the discussion around both ethical and practical dimensions, stressing that Open Science is fundamentally

1. CoPER (Council of the Presidents of Public Research Institutions) is an Italian coordinating body composed of the presidents of national public research institutions. It supports the government in promoting and coordinating research activities, contributes to the development and implementation of the National Research Plan, and facilitates collaboration among research institutions and universities.

"science done well," rooted in the historical openness of research dating back to Galileo.

Bianco identified major challenges in accessing scientific knowledge, including the high concentration of the scientific publishing market among a few major publishers, which control roughly 80% of the global market (~€10–12 billion annually). Researchers produce content and conduct peer review without remuneration, while assessing systems, and particularly in Italy, rely heavily on proprietary metrics and databases.

He outlined the key pillars and actions implemented by INFN and other Italian RPOs to advance Open Science:

- **Research assessment reform:** Adoption of CoARA principles for fair and transparent assessment.
- **Open Science policies:** Institutional policies aligned with national and European frameworks.
- **Institutional repositories:** FAIR-compliant, free-software repositories for all research outputs (data, software, publications); mandatory depositing in institutional repositories.
- **Legal and licensing aspects:** Attention to intellectual property rights and licensing in the context of Open Science. Clear policies on data ownership, copyright, and licenses are essential to support reproducibility, sharing of research outputs, and a smooth transition toward equitable open access models.
- **Data management plans:** Structured guidance for all projects, including procedures for article processing charges and a transition toward Diamond Open Access.

Bianco **drew particular attention to reforming research assessment** as a critical step in promoting Open Science. He noted that all Italian RPOs, universities, and the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR) have signed principles for reforming research assessment, emphasising fair, transparent, and responsible assessment practices. This reform includes reducing reliance on proprietary metrics such as journal impact factors, promoting evidence-based assessment, and integrating Open Science practices – such as data sharing and open access publications – into assessment criteria. This approach encourages ethical, high-quality research and aligns assessment with the broader goal of science done well, while allowing flexibility across disciplines and research contexts.

He also highlighted INFN's collaboration with other Italian RPOs and universities to negotiate collective agreements with publishers and support collaborative publishing initiatives. This networked approach allows institutions to align Open Science policies, share best practices, and promote equitable access to research outputs, which Bianco described as essential for fostering a sustainable Open Science culture.

Finally, Bianco stressed that the success of Open Science depends on active engagement by researchers themselves, rather than only on top-down regulations, advocating a "soft law" approach to foster ethical awareness and cultural change. Collaboration across RPOs, universities, and funding bodies is central to building coherent networks and ensuring consistent policy implementation.

He concluded by underlining the core message: **Open Science is not a new concept but an ethical imperative, ensuring transparency, accessibility, and quality in research.** While challenges like research security and publication equity remain, collective action and evidence-based policies are essential to embedding Open Science throughout the research lifecycle.

Matthias Kiesselbach, Programme Director, German Research Foundation (DFG) shared the perspective of the DFG on Open Science, highlighting both conceptual and practical aspects. He echoed previous speakers in saying that Open Science is fundamentally "science done well," and that it is essential for systematic, transparent, and collaborative research.

During the discussion, Kiesselbach emphasised the following key points regarding Open Science policy and funding practices.

- **Flexibility is a core value of Open Science implementation:** There is no 'one-size-fits-all' model; different disciplines and contexts require different degrees of openness.
- **Open Science should be enabling, not coercive:** A 'soft law' approach based on researcher engagement is more effective than strict top-down mandates.
- **Openness is part of research quality:** Even without formal requirements, it is increasingly considered in project evaluation.

- **Infrastructure is crucial:** Sustainable Open Science depends on funding and supporting research data systems, digitisation, and e-research technologies.
- **Openness must be balanced:** Ethical concerns, data protection, economic realities, and geopolitical risks may justify differentiated levels of access.

Kiesselbach underlined that the growth of digital technologies now allows research to be more open than before, while policy frameworks, including UNESCO's Open Science definition, guide principles and practices to ensure accessibility, inclusiveness, equity, and sustainability of scientific knowledge. He highlighted that Open Science encompasses publications, raw research data, educational resources, software, hardware, open infrastructures, and, in some cases, peer review, reflecting a broad and flexible understanding of openness.

He highlighted that Open Science should be adaptable: different disciplines, research cultures, and contexts require different degrees of openness, considering ethical concerns, data protection, economic realities, and geopolitical risks. While some processes, such as peer review, may appropriately remain confidential, infrastructures should be funded and supported to enable researchers to share results, data, protocols, and experiences. Kiesselbach emphasised that fostering a culture of Open Science relies on researcher engagement rather than top-down enforcement, advocating a 'soft law' approach that encourages ethical awareness and practical implementation.

In terms of practical implementation, Kiesselbach explained that DFG does not mandate Open Science in formal criteria or bylaws for project funding. Instead, openness is recognised as part of a high-quality research project, and projects naturally integrate Open Science practices. Approximately 80% of DFG-funded publications are now open access, demonstrating the effectiveness of enabling researchers rather than forcing compliance. DFG also funds infrastructure for research data management, digitisation, and e-research technologies, supporting broader adoption of Open Science principles.

His core message was that **Open Science is not a one-size-fits-all model, but a flexible, principle-driven approach** that strengthens transparency, replicability, co-operation, and innovation in research.

Aneta Pazik-Aybar, Head of the Open Science Team, National Science Centre (NCN), outlined the development and practical implementation of Open Science policies at NCN during her presentation. Rather than focusing solely on formal policy design, she highlighted operational measures, institutional milestones, and the practical challenges of embedding Open Science principles into everyday research funding processes.

The key insights emerging from her presentation:

- **Gradual and internationally aligned policy development:** NCN began shaping its Open Science approach following the adoption of Poland's 2015 national Open Access recommendations and ensured continuous alignment with European and global standards to avoid isolated or siloed solutions.
- **Engagement in major international initiatives:** NCN joined cOAlition S, became a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), and collaborated with Science Europe on Data Management Plans (DMPs) and data sharing principles, strengthening its integration within the European Open Science ecosystem.
- **Mandatory Data Management Plans:** Since 2019, DMPs are required for all research proposals and final project reports and are subject to merit-based evaluation. FAIR principles are fully integrated into these requirements.
- **Data sharing as a core obligation:** Research data must be shared according to the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary," allowing flexibility in cases involving ethical, legal, security, or disciplinary constraints.
- **Financial support for Open Science practices:** Projects may allocate up to 2% of direct costs to Open Science-related activities (such as APCs, data stewardship, infrastructure). The capped funding model aims to avoid inflationary pressure on APC pricing.
- **Co-ordination of national participation in EOSC:** NCN co-ordinates Poland's involvement in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), manages EOSC Poland, and develops a national gateway connecting datasets, repositories, and services.
- **Capacity building and training:** NCN launched courses on research data management (RDM) via the Navoica[2] MOOC platform *(also*

2. Navoica – a Polish national Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platform offering free online courses. Within this platform, the National Science Centre (NCN) provides a structured course on Research Data Management (RDM), covering Data Management Plans, FAIR principles, and good practices in data sharing and stewardship, available in both Polish and English. It includes multimedia materials, expert interviews, webinars, tests, and discussion forums.

available in English), providing structured training to increase researchers' awareness and competence in FAIR-compliant data practices.

The NCN case demonstrates a comprehensive and strategically aligned approach to Open Science implementation. By combining mandatory data-sharing requirements, structured financial support, international alignment, infrastructure development through EOSC, and systematic training efforts, NCN has embedded Open Science principles into its funding framework in a balanced and pragmatic way.

At the same time, the experience highlights structural tensions within research systems, particularly between Open Science objectives and traditional evaluation models. NCN's evolving approach reflects an effort to maintain high standards of openness while remaining flexible and responsive to disciplinary diversity, financial constraints, and broader policy environments.

Key challenges include rising APC costs, administrative burden related to data management plans (DMPs), and misalignment between Open Access requirements and national research evaluation systems based on bibliometric indicators.

Victoria Tsoukala, Policy Officer for Open Science, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, outlined the Commission's approach to promoting Open Science and reforming research assessment across Europe. She emphasised that Open Science is not a separate task but a fundamental way of doing research, enhancing transparency, reproducibility, and efficiency, while fostering inclusiveness and trust. She added that the European Commission acts simultaneously as a policy maker, funder, and co-ordinator of research and innovation policies, embedding Open Science both in funding instruments, primarily Horizon Europe, and in the broader legislative and policy framework of the European Research Area.

Historical development of Open Science in the EU:

- Principles of free circulation of knowledge, researchers, and innovation considered since 2000.
- Embedded in the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.
- 2012 European Commission Recommendation on Open Access, revised in 2018.
- Series of European Council recommendations and conclusions (2020–2021) supporting the ERA and Open Science.

Open Access is central to this framework, ensuring that research outputs contribute to a robust European R&I ecosystem. Tsoukala highlighted the upcoming **ERA Act (2026)**, a legal instrument designed to strengthen the ERA by addressing barriers such as copyright or technological limitations and making Open Science and Open Access integral obligations for EU Member States, institutions, and funders.

In the context of EU funding programmes, she stressed that Open Science practices are progressively integrated into the current Horizon Europe framework programme and will be further embedded in its successor.

These practices include:

- open access publishing;
- FAIR-aligned data management;
- transparency measures.

Importantly, the Commission encourages **qualitative assessment** of research outputs, moving away from an exclusive reliance on journal impact factors or numerical metrics.

Research assessment reform is another key focus. Through the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), which now involves nearly 1,000 members and hundreds of institutional action plans, the European Commission promotes **fit-for-purpose, qualitative assessment** that recognises diverse outputs and incorporates Open Science practices. Tsoukala emphasised that these reforms are now structural policy priorities rather than isolated initiatives.

Finally, she presented **Open Research Europe (ORE)**, the EC's innovative publishing platform for EU-funded research. ORE combines free Open Access publishing with open post-publication peer review, supporting reproducibility, early sharing, and transparency. It uses a **publish–review–curate model**, allowing immediate dissemination of research while enabling transparent peer feedback afterward. The platform is expanding to include more funders, institutions, and countries, including Ukrainian researchers, offering practical tools to implement Open Science principles and helping researchers actively practice open, transparent, and collaborative research workflows.

In sum, Tsoukala framed Open Science as both a policy goal and practical reality. By combining historical foundations, legal frameworks, funding incentives, research assessment reform, and publishing innovations, the European Commission aims to embed Open Science and ensure that it is structurally integrated in European research practices.

Conclusions from the Discussion

Open Science as a Core Principle

- Open Science is increasingly recognised as a fundamental principle of conducting research rather than an optional practice, reinforcing transparency, reproducibility, collaboration, and ethical responsibility in the scientific process.
- Framing Open Science as an integral component of research culture strengthens its role in improving the quality, reliability, and societal relevance of scientific knowledge.
- By connecting Open Science to the historical ethos of 'science done well,' openness is positioned as both an ethical obligation and a practical necessity for modern research.

Policy Alignment and International Co-operation

- The alignment of Open Science strategies of national and European funding agencies with international frameworks (UNESCO, cOAlition S, DORA, and Science Europe) contributes to the establishment of common standards and approaches for the development of Open Science.
- Close co-ordination between research funding and performing organisations, and national policies ensures more effective and consistent implementation of Open Science principles.
- Co-ordinated co-operation among all stakeholders helps prevent policy fragmentation and supports the systematic implementation of Open Science practices at both national and international levels.

Integration Across the Research Lifecycle

- The integration of Open Science principles throughout the entire research lifecycle ensures that openness is systematically implemented from project planning to the dissemination of results.
- Requirements such as mandatory Data Management Plans and immediate Open Access publication promote responsible data management and wider accessibility of research outputs.
- Monitoring and evaluation tools, such as Open Science monitors, enable evidence-based policy adjustments by tracking indicators including open access rates, FAIR data compliance, and related costs.

Research Assessment Reform

- Reforming research assessment is a key condition for the effective integration of Open Science principles within the research system.
- Moving beyond journal impact factors and proprietary metrics toward qualitative and context-sensitive evaluation enables the recognition of diverse research outputs and contributions.
- International and national initiatives promote fair, transparent, and responsible assessment practices, while increasingly incorporating Open Science activities such as open access publishing and data sharing into evaluation criteria.

Equitable and Sustainable Publishing Models

- The promotion of equitable and sustainable publishing models, such as Diamond Open Access and institutional repositories, helps ensure free access to research for both authors and readers.
- Collective negotiations with publishers and collaborative institutional agreements contribute to reducing dependence on large commercial publishing companies and support the development of more balanced scholarly communication systems.
- Innovative platforms like Open Research Europe demonstrate alternative publishing approaches by providing free Open Access, post-publication peer review, and faster dissemination of EU-funded research, thereby supporting transparency and reproducibility.

Infrastructure, Training, and Capacity Building

- The effective implementation of Open Science requires sustained investment in digital infrastructures, including FAIR-compliant repositories and data management platforms.
- Training and awareness initiatives play a crucial role in equipping researchers with the skills necessary for responsible data stewardship, FAIR data management, and ethical Open Science practices.
- Capacity-building efforts that support multilingualism, open-source software, and collaborative digital tools strengthen cross-institutional and international research co-operation.

Flexible, Principle-Based Implementation

- The implementation of Open Science should remain flexible and adaptable to disciplinary differences, ethical considerations, and broader contextual factors such as privacy, data protection, economic conditions, and geopolitical risks.
- A principle-based approach allows institutions and researchers to apply Open Science practices in ways that are appropriate to their specific research environments.
- An enabling 'soft law' approach that promotes ethical awareness and voluntary engagement is considered more effective than rigid regulatory enforcement for fostering sustainable Open Science practices.

Sustainable Open Science

- The long-term sustainability of Open Science depends on co-ordinated collective action, evidence-based policy making, and continuous investment in research infrastructures and technologies.
- The active engagement of researchers is essential for fostering a culture of openness, trust, and responsibility in the research community.
- Effective co-ordination among research funding and performing organisations, universities, and international networks supports coherent implementation, equitable access, and the sustainable development of Open Science practices.

Next Steps and Way Forward for Science Europe

Building on these conclusions, a clear priority for Science Europe and its Member Organisations is to translate shared principles into aligned implementation across national and disciplinary research systems. It will continue to promote policies and practices that advance open access to research publications and FAIR research data. Additionally, it will continue to develop and expand its work on Open Science, in close co-operation with its Member Organisations. It will encourage and support its members to implement the principles and directions highlighted above by developing and aligning policies in Europe, raising awareness, advocating, and providing input to European legislation and European and global policies.

Funding conditions and research assessment practices should be further aligned to embed open science requirements across the full research lifecycle, including robust data management practices, immediate open access, and the use of shared indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Strengthening the link between open science and research assessment reform remains essential, ensuring that diverse research outputs and open practices are systematically recognised in evaluation processes. Science Europe will continue to foster discussions between its working groups that advance the reform of research assessment and Open Science.

At the same time, sustained collective investment in scholar-led and community-governed infrastructures, particularly the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), Coalition S, and Open Research Europe (ORE), will be critical to ensure long-term sustainability and reduce fragmentation in the European research landscape. Complementing these structural efforts, co-ordinated capacity-building initiatives are needed to equip researchers with the skills and incentives required to engage in open science, fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration, and responsibility.

Through these combined actions, Science Europe and its Member Organisations can play a central role in advancing a coherent, inclusive, and sustainable research ecosystem that strengthens research quality, integrity, and societal impact across Europe. Science Europe also plays a crucial role in advancing Diamond Open Science, in co-operation with partners from across the world.

Since the outbreak of the war in February 2022, Science Europe and its Member Organisations have undertaken a range of initiatives to support the National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU) and the broader Ukrainian research ecosystem. As part of these efforts, NRFU and Science Europe jointly organised a series of three online workshops between September 2025 and February 2026, focusing on key priority areas relevant to the development and resilience of the Ukrainian research system.

The primary objective of the webinar series was to contribute to the capacity-building of the Ukrainian research ecosystem by facilitating knowledge exchange, sharing European experience, and discussing practical approaches to policy development and implementation.

The workshops addressed priority areas identified by the National Research Foundation of Ukraine, bringing together representatives of research funding organisations, research institutions, and policy experts to exchange insights and best practices.

Reports From Previous Webinars

- 19 September 2025 – Balancing bottom-up and top-down research funding
- 25 November 2025 – Developing and implementing monitoring tools for R&D projects

20 February 2026 — **Open Science Policies and Practices of Research Funding Organisations**

Programme

10.00–11.30 CET *(11.00–12.30 EET)*

10.00–10.10 Welcome and Introductory Remarks

- **Lidia Borrell-Damián**, Secretary General, Science Europe
- **Olga Polotska**, Executive Director of the National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU)

10.10–11.20 Panel discussion

- **Zoé Ancion,** *Head of the Open Science Unit, French National Research Agency (ANR)*
- **Stefano Bianco**, Senior Researcher, National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN)
- **Matthias Kiesselbach**, Programme Director, German Research Foundation (DFG)
- **Aneta Pazik-Aybar**, Head of Open Science Team, National Science Centre (NCN)
- **Victoria Tsoukala**, Policy Officer for Open Science, European Commission (EC)

Moderator: **Lidia Borrell-Damián**, Secretary General, Science Europe

11.20–11.30 Conclusions and next steps

- **Lidia Borrell-Damián**, Secretary General, Science Europe
- **Olga Polotska**, Executive Director of the National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU)

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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.

We are uniquely placed to lead advancements to the European Research Area and inform global developments through participation in research initiatives where science is a strong and trusted component of sustainable economic, environmental, and societal development.

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The National Research Foundation of Ukraine is the central organisation supporting competitive research and development projects across all fields of science in Ukraine.

Our mission is to strengthen the country's scientific potential, foster innovation, and enable researchers – especially early-career scientists – to contribute to knowledge advancement and societal development.

The NRFU promotes national and international research collaboration, invests in research infrastructure, and champions best practices to ensure high-quality scientific outcomes.