

FOREU4ALL Community of Practice Workshop n°4

“Open and Shared European Research Infrastructures: The Accelerator Role of Alliances of European Universities”

28 and 29 October, University of Poitiers (EC2U Alliance), France

**** Concept note ****

1. Context of the Workshop

The FOREU4ALL Topical Group on Research and Innovation (R&I) has created a sub-group on the “Sharing of Research Infrastructures (ResInfra)”, with the objectives to strengthen cooperation between Alliances by exchanging and co-developing policies and models of sustainable, auditable, legally sound, people-driven, digitally enabled, and professionally managed open and shared ResInfra.

Among its activities, the sub-group performed, during the first semester 2026, a mapping of Alliances practices in that field and collected information from 65+ Alliances on: definition of ResInfra, governance/management structures, funding, pricing, audit, legal, investment, data management, training, technical platforms used for resource discovery and access management (e.g., service catalogues and booking systems), etc. The results will be used to identify current (different) models (incl. centralized/Alliance-wide vs. decentralized/institutional) and, later, identify the needs and remaining challenges. The sub-group will then develop recommendations from identified models/needs/challenges and explore strategies for opening ResInfra beyond alliances (including industry).

The Workshop 4 will be the occasion to disseminate the first results of the mapping and organise their live analysis, with all the needed experts. The event will thus be a very practical workshop where participants not only learn the current practices at Alliances regarding the sharing of ResInfra but also actively participate in the design of potential future recommendations. The workshop will aim to bring together a diverse group of participants, including Alliance research/innovation Coordinators and ResInfra Managers, early-career and senior researchers, industry representatives, and representatives of the European Commission, to ensure that the perspectives and needs of all stakeholder groups are taken into account.

2. Objectives of the Workshop

In terms of European policies:

The topic of shared ResInfra was already included in the Transformation Modules of the pilot SwafS H2020 calls for Alliances in 2021. It remains a priority within the current ERA Agenda. Recent policy documents

not only highlight the need for effective collaboration between ResInfra, but also stress the importance of opening access to industry and other third-party beneficiaries.

The report “Unlocking innovation: addressing the funding needs of EU Technology Infrastructures” provides significant guidance for defining future investment strategies. It emphasizes the role of shared ResInfra in supporting innovation and enabling broader access.

Shared ResInfra can also accelerate best practices on data management in line with EU regulations (including FAIR principles and EOSC framework)

In the “competitiveness Compass for the EU” report, the sharing of ResInfra is identified as a key dimension for strengthening Europe’s attractiveness and competitiveness. To achieve this, it is essential to harmonize different regulatory models, simplify access procedures so that bureaucracy does not become a barrier, and ensure that data is managed in accordance with the FAIR principles.

The workshop is thus expected to contribute to European policy discussions, particularly within the ERA framework. By identifying common challenges, emerging trends, and shared priorities across Alliances and institutions, the outcomes can serve as evidence-based inputs to future policy initiatives, recommendations, and proposals aimed at enhancing the accessibility, sustainability, and interoperability of ResInfra in Europe.

In terms of Alliances and individual university policies:

The sharing of ResInfra can boost the joint research activities of Alliances (and shared R&I agenda, when relevant). It is also a very important topic for individual member universities of Alliances, since it may offer opportunities to better manage the proprietary ResInfra, accelerate access, ensure a better funding (maintenance, renewal), boost the training of the support technicians/staff and/or users. The identification of common challenges recurring across Alliances and institutions can serve as a basis for informing or shaping proposals and strategic inputs at the European level.

The workshop will also include the following dimensions:

- comprehensive definition of ResInfra (incl. also collections and databases, in particular in SSH)
- digital tools and specialized management platforms to support the sharing of ResInfra through federated digital catalogues, automated matchmaking, and unified access request workflows
- OpenAIRE collections within Alliances, digital resources sharing and Open Access infrastructures
- Access to (local) non-academic actors

The workshop is thus expected to generate tangible impact at both participating Alliances and the broader R&I ecosystem. It will foster direct peer-learning among Alliances but also with other Higher Education Institutions, enabling the exchange of practical experiences, operational models, and effective approaches to sharing ResInfra.

3. Target audience

From Alliances:

R&I Officers at Alliances and individual university levels
Leaders and Managers of Alliances/universities (incl. Coordinators and Vice-Rectors in charge of research)
IT experts at Alliances and individual university levels
Library and collection experts at Alliances and individual university levels
Open Science experts and Data Stewards at Alliance and individual university levels
Researchers (incl. doctoral candidates and early-career)

Outside Alliances:

Researchers (incl. doctoral candidates and early-career)
Experts from the European Commission
Managers and Operators of European research infrastructures (ESFRI, ERIC)
Non-academic R&I sectors (Industry, RTOs, chambers of commerce, start-ups, etc)
Open Science and research data communities

4. Workshop structure

All sessions (plenary and breakout) will be fully available for online audience.

28 October, morning:

Plenary session with:

- Introductory speeches
- Keynote speakers from relevant stakeholder organisations (incl. European Commission)
- Presentation of the main mapping results
- Panel of experts to comment the main mapping results

28 October, afternoon, and 29 October, morning:

3 parallel breakout sessions will be organised, on the topics below, each breakout session being structured as follows:

- 1 or 2 expert speech(es)
- short presentations from Alliances (selected case studies via upcoming dedicated call)
- open scene to audience' complementary interventions
- open discussion and summary

Breakout 1: "Alliance & institutional political and financial orchestration" (includes management, legal and financial frameworks, intra- and extra-Alliance cooperation schemes)

Breakout 2: "digital orchestration" (includes processes and tools, automated workflows, metadata harvesting, data management)

Breakout 3: "opening orchestration" (includes content and usage, Open Access, digital resources, OpenAIRE collections, access to industry and external partners)

28 October afternoon sessions will focus on the identification of the **different models and best practices**.

29 October morning will focus on identification of **needs and remaining challenges**.

2nd afternoon:

Plenary session with:

- reports from breakout sessions
- panel of experts to reflect on the identified needs and remaining challenges, with possible future recommendations
- closing speech(es)