

Library and Open Science

Terms of Reference

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I. Objectives

The Library and Open Science topical group aims to foster collaboration, innovation and capacity building among university library networks within European university alliances by addressing common challenges and leveraging collective expertise in the above-mentioned areas.

1. Strengthening OS, Diamond and OER practices

Promote a culture of openness at Alliance level. Align practices with European Open Science mandates, including immediate open access to publications and open access to research data, following the principle of "as open as possible, as closed as necessary". Foster the adoption of Citizen Science in Open Science policies across European Universities, and share initiatives and practices in this field. Disseminate information about Diamond Open Access practices in order to support bibliodiversity. Support the creation of open educational resources (OER).

2. Improving academic mobility including resource sharing

Ensure equitable access to library resources and services for students and staff participating in mobility programmes within their alliances. Explore opportunities for sharing scientific resources, thereby contributing to the integration of European higher education.

3. Promoting digital transformation and sustainability

Recognise the challenges of digitisation, AI (Artificial Intelligence) integration, and compliance with the SDGs and provide guidance to help libraries navigate these changes.

4. Professional capacity development and community building

In order to foster a vibrant community of practice, the group will focus on knowledge sharing, professional development and exchange of best practice among librarians. This will include organising tailored workshops and webinars to address skills gaps and emerging challenges.

5. Influencing policy and infrastructure development

The group will advocate for European policy recommendations on OS and CS, Diamond publication model, OER, scientific resource sharing and digital infrastructure. It will work with initiatives such as the EOSC (European Open Science Cloud) EU Node, OpenAIRE and the Research Data Alliance (RDA) to ensure that libraries' contribution to the European knowledge ecosystem is recognised and supported.

6. Produce practical outputs and evidence-based recommendations

Outputs such as guides, toolkits for the members, and position papers, surveys and reports to provide evidence for decision makers and policy makers.

II. Background

From FOREU-LIB group to FOREU4ALL Library and Open Science topical group

This topical group is originally from the former FOREU-LIB group, established in March 2023, brings together 95 members from 39 alliances to share experiences, network, and promote libraries' roles within alliances. Coordinated by a chair and co-chair, it has met six times, communicates via a mailing list, and shares reports via a cloud space.

Key achievements include two surveys on libraries' roles in alliances, with the 2024 survey results and 10 recommendations shared with coordinators. An inventory of Open Science (OS) initiatives at the alliance level has also been conducted.

Two sub-groups focus on Open Science and library visibility in alliances. FOREU-LIB has raised awareness of international collaboration through articles and conference presentations, including at LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques européennes de recherche)'s annual conference.

As such, the FOREU-LIB group is switched smoothly to this current FOREU4ALL Library and Open Science topic group.

Strategic relevance

The current topical group highlights the role of libraries in advancing the missions of the European universities. Focus areas include Open Science, including Citizen Science, Diamond Open Access model and Open Educational Resources, digital transformation, sustainability, academic mobility and scientific resource sharing, professional capacity building through a solid and concrete community of practice, and policy collaboration with European infrastructures like the EOSC EU Node, OpenAIRE, and major European library networks like LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques européennes de recherche).

This topical group aligns with the European Universities Alliances and the priorities of the European Higher Education (EHEA) and Research Areas (ERA) by fostering collaboration, innovation, inclusiveness, and sustainability while promoting excellence in education and research.

This group will work on:

- Open Science (OS), Diamond OA (Open Access) model, Open Educational Resources (OER), and academic mobility, it highlights libraries' role in enabling cross-border collaboration.
- Shared tools, resources, and knowledge-sharing networks will support a cohesive European academic ecosystem.

This group will strengthen professional collaboration, fostering knowledge exchange and common methodologies. This will also enhance libraries' capacity to provide equitable access to resources and expertise for alliance participants and joint projects.

By emphasising information and data literacy, OER, and digital transformation, the proposal advances EHEA goals of improving teaching quality, fostering innovation, and ensuring accessibility. Libraries play a key role in equipping students and educators with the tools to navigate digital and information ecosystems. Sustainability is central to the proposal, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Libraries will promote green practices in resource sharing digital preservation, and operations, contributing to institutional and societal sustainability.

The focus on Open Science, Diamond model, Citizen Science, and policy advocacy supports ERA objectives of enabling knowledge to flow freely across borders.

Libraries drive open access, research output management, public engagement, and data reuse, adhering to the FAIR principles (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, Reusability). They also facilitate interdisciplinary and transnational research partnerships.

Finally, AI integration and digital transformation align with ERA priorities, leveraging digital technologies for research and innovation.

III. Work plan and working modalities

Work Plan and Provisional Timeline

The group's work plan is structured to foster collaboration, address shared challenges, and deliver concrete results. It outlines key activities over the first two years.

Establishment and Coordination (Months 1-3)

- Formalise leadership by confirming the chair, co-chair, and steering committee in collaboration with WP2.
- Develop a detailed roadmap for the first year.
- Expand membership to ensure diversity and inclusivity.
- Set up communication channels: mailing list, shared workspace, and regular virtual meetings.

Thematic Sub-Groups & Initial Outputs (Months 4-12)

- Launch sub-groups on priority topics: Open Science (OS) & Citizen Science (CS), Diamond OA (Open Access) model, Open Educational Resources (OER), Academic mobility & shared resources, Digital transformation & sustainability or any other suggested topics.
- Conduct a new survey on library practices, challenges, and innovations.
- Develop preliminary toolkits & guidance to support alliance-level initiatives.

Workshops & Professional Development (Months 6-18)

- Organise workshops/webinars on topics such as FAIR data principles & citizen science, Sustainable library practices & resource sharing
- Host online training sessions on digital transformation and AI for librarians.

Advocacy & Policy Development (Months 12-24)

- Publish position papers and policy recommendations on OS, CS, Diamond OA, OER, and/or library services.
- Engage policymakers & European stakeholders to advocate for libraries' roles in alliances and academia, in collaboration with WP2 leaders.

Community Building & Dissemination (Months 3-24)

- Strengthen the community of practice through regular meetings and discussions.
- Present findings at major conferences (e.g., LIBER) to enhance visibility.
- Disseminate reports & recommendations via publications & alliance events.

Evaluation & Strategic Planning (Months 18-24)

- Assess progress and gather feedback.
- Update the roadmap for the next two years.
- Plan future outputs, including new toolkits & follow-up survey

Meeting Plan and Working Modalities

The group will adopt a flexible, inclusive, and collaborative approach to ensure active participation and meaningful contributions.

The following working modalities will guide its activities:

1. Chairing and coordination

Led by a chair and co-chair from different alliances, serving a two-year term.

A steering committee (~10 members) will provide strategic guidance, ensure diverse representation, and oversee the work plan. Members may also lead subgroups.

2. Communication and meetings

Regular virtual meetings (bimonthly) to track progress and make decisions.

The project mailing list will be the main communication channel.

A shared online workspace will store resources, documents, and tools to ensure transparency and accessibility.

3. Participation and inclusivity

Open to library network representatives, librarians, researchers, and research support staff involved in shaping library services and policies.

Members are encouraged to share expertise, best practices, and participate in thematic sub-groups aligned with their interests.

4. Thematic subgroups

Focus areas include OS/Citizen science, Diamond Open Access model and OER, digital transformation, and academic mobility.

Sub-groups work autonomously while reporting to the steering committee, ensuring balance between specialised work and overall coherence.

5. Outputs and deliverables

Development of guidance documents, toolkits, policy recommendations, and survey-based reports.

Organisation of workshops, webinars, and professional development sessions to support capacity building.

6. Collaboration and advocacy

Engagement with European infrastructures and policymakers to enhance the role of libraries within alliances.

Networking with related groups (e.g., IT, Research & Innovation, European diploma initiatives) to foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Regular assessments in alignment with WP2 leaders' requirements and possibly an external evaluation group.

Findings will be used to adjust the work plan, ensuring continuous improvement and relevance.

A steering committee (~10 members) will provide strategic guidance, ensure diverse representation, and oversee the work plan. Members may also lead subgroups.

Regular virtual meetings (bimonthly) to track progress and make decisions. Hybrid or in person meeting could be set if there are any opportunities to fund the mobility, by Erasmus + funding program or during the workshop meeting.

This topical group is open to library network representatives, librarians, researchers, and research support staff involved in shaping library services and policies.

Members are encouraged to share expertise, best practices, and participate in thematic sub-groups aligned with their interests.

The group ensures inclusive participation by welcoming representatives from diverse backgrounds. Particular attention is paid to gender balance in the steering committee. The group also prioritises the inclusion of voices from under-represented regions and smaller alliances, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for collaboration. Workshops and initiatives will address diverse needs, including accessibility for participants with disabilities and equitable digital access.

The project mailing list will be the main communication channel.

A shared online workspace will store resources, documents, and tools to ensure transparency and accessibility, with a Teams folder named [library and open science](#).

The group will contribute to workshops on:

- Open Science & Citizen Science: Best practices across alliances, a toolkit for standardising Citizen Science engagement
- Diamond Open Access model: Publication practices diversity / Bibliodiversity.
- Digital Transformation: AI integration, SDG compliance, sustainability
- Academic Mobility: Library support for student and researcher mobility, shared resources
- Professional Development: Change management, collaborative and networking skills
- Public Policy: Advocating for European policies on OS, OER, Diamond OA model and libraries, incorporating Citizen Science into Open Science frameworks
- Libraries will also disseminate workshop outcomes via institutional repositories, open access platforms, and traditional channels (emails, guides, etc.).

IV. Members

The group will adopt a flexible, inclusive, and collaborative approach to ensure active participation and meaningful contributions.

The membership of this topical group is open to library network representatives, librarians, researchers, and research support staff involved in shaping library services and policies.

Members are encouraged to share expertise, best practices, and participate in thematic sub-groups aligned with their interests.

Ideally, we hope to have 2 or 3 members or participants per alliance in this topical group to assure a diverse presentation of each alliance.