# A Global Sustainability Committee for Open Science Services

## The Case

### Background

Organisations (universities, research funders and governments – hereinafter: policymakers) are increasingly issuing policies to promote open access to publications and open data. Research organisations, researchers and authors wish to disseminate research outputs on an open access basis. The successful implementation and monitoring of open science policies and the successful operation of open research dissemination, depend on a number of key open science services.
Knowledge Exchange has done much preparatory work in this field and has passed this on to SPARC Europe, who, together with stakeholders across the globe, will help implement its plans.

This case attempts to describe in more detail why *A Global Sustainability Committee for Open Science Services* is necessary.

### The vision

An infrastructure of freely available open science services funded by policymakers and stakeholders, committing to provide sustainable funding for the operation and development of key services.

### The mission

To provide a new co-ordinated cost-sharing framework to help ensure that non-commercial OA services that underpin the development of wider global open science are sustained in the future.

### The committee's plan

1.  The Committee will form a consolidated voice from research funding and/or performing organisations, incl. libraries and researchers from across the globe to create a sustainable, equitable and efficient service infrastructure

2.  Establish a system to regularly identify and evaluate open science services considered key for implementing open access and open science policy

3.  To create a framework to present a transparent, efficient and equitable division of service funding that increases efficiency for investors and addresses community needs

4.  To achieve a common understanding amongst stakeholders and users as to the funding needs of such services. Obtaining more transparency on their costs (1) and funding needs (2) to enable the Committee to propose fair remuneration to help sustain them

5.  To provide a way for the international community that benefits from open science services to have a voice in the creation of a sustainable, equitable and efficient service environment

## The challenge

A number of critical Open Science (OS) and Open Access (OA) support services have been created over the last 15 years. The scholarly communication community has come to depend on many of them when implementing their own open access goals, e.g. the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) or SHERPA/RoMEO that records publisher copyright and self archiving policies

OS services have often been created at the point of need, drawing on project or locally-sourced funding. They have grown and developed along with community requirements, responding to needs as they arise.

However, usage of the services has now grown such that this is no longer sustainable and large user numbers and groups bring about a new situation. For example, the RoMEO API gets nearly 4 million hits per month from over 200 countries. Despite a significant and growing need for OA service support, many services are uncertain about their future since they are based on unsustainable funding models. Responding to stakeholder needs and planning further development has now become an issue due to financial constraints and pressures to economise. Furthermore, with no sustainable model in place, stakeholders are less likely to be able to build services into long-term strategic solutions for local OA and OS implementation.

## The key risk

The key risk is that without a new sustainable solution for the world's OS services, some services will fail. Furthermore, and more importantly, since policy implementation is very much dependent on certain services, policy also has the risk of not being realised. Currently several of the open science services are funded on an unsustainable, localised and temporary basis. There is a real risk that without a sustainable funding model being brought into operation, that the services would have to fundamentally change their operation, in scope, coverage, accuracy or responsiveness; be forced into charging at the point of use or raising some other pay-wall; or, in extremis, close down entirely.

## The opportunities and benefits

- The creation of a secure and sustainable open science service infrastructure that is able to be used with the same long-term confidence as commercially supported research services. A transparent, efficient and equitable cost-sharing framework will be used where the costs of maintaining certain OS services would be more fairly and collaboratively shared by organisations that decide to fund these services.

- The Committee will reduce the burden of assessing the priority and quality of an individual funding request through centralised, community-led, judgement.

- The annual review of key services on unstable financial footing will inform the state of health of the open science environment, reviewing the funding and governance of key services and allowing research funders, institutions, and government bodies a far higher degree of trust and certainty of support when planning future activities.

- While it is considered essential that the individual services maintain their operational independence, the Committee will create an influential consolidation of user representation, able to feed back directly to the services in association with the funding stream.

- The operation of the Committee will also encourage a close working relationship between those services identified as key, facilitating closer integration of development plans between services and helping to ensure that gaps between existing services are filled and overlaps reduced.

- Research funding and/or performing organisations can collectively take responsibility for maintaining an open research society by helping to fund and sustain some of the world's valued OS services based on transparency, equity and efficiency.