

## Challenges and Opportunities as identified in the 2019 SE European OE Survey (preview) May 2020

### Policy

- There are challenges on two levels: **institutional** and **national**. Both institutionally and nationally, respondents report the challenge being **the lack of an organisational or national OER policy**. Notably, those that consider policy to be an opportunity already have institutional policies in place and are part of libraries which are engaged with the national development of policies.

### People

- There were **more challenges for teaching staff and library staff** and more opportunities for students and external partners. The key challenges here being the **difficulty in influencing teaching staff** in OE and OER and the **lack of capacity for library staff**. Opportunities were identified to engage students further with OER and improve their awareness, and to collaborate and share best practices amongst scientific communities.

### Resources

- The availability of resources is a challenge and places limitations on what OE and OER services a library can offer. **The financial and library skills topics report the most prevalent challenges in this area**. Whilst the **low-cost of OE for the end-user is a clear benefit**, due to the emerging nature of OE and OER and the various resources required to create them, there is a highly reported **lack of funding** from respondents. In addition, the vast majority of respondents reported suffering from a **lack of skills and knowledge of OE**. Opportunities were identified in improving skills development, with a particular emphasis around knowledge on repositories and metadata and public engagement and knowledge exchange activities.

### Culture and environment

- Notably, this theme received the highest number of instances for both challenges and opportunities which speaks to its significance in OE and OER activity. Strikingly here, is the **disparity between the challenges reported in terms of institutional leadership and library leadership**, with a high number reporting that a **lack of institutional leadership** was a challenge and **no challenges being identified for library leadership**. The positive response to library leadership is encouraging for the enterprise of OE.

### Quality, access and reuse

- Challenges are identified around **improving visibility** and in the **delivery and distribution of OER**. However, interestingly, **the opportunities for this area outweigh these challenges**, with some respondents reporting discoverability as an opportunity to raise their institution's profile in research-based teaching. **Quality was communicated predominantly as an opportunity to increase the quality of education overall** by making it subject to the same public review and validation as research publications.

## Draft Conclusions:

### OE Policies

- **Libraries are making formal commitments to OE through adapting policies but this is currently limited**, only 27 of 146 respondents reported having policies, with 14 of these being part of a larger or overarching policy. Eleven libraries report being involved in the conception of the OER policy. More specifically, libraries were involved in 3 of the 4 standalone OE/OER policies, which suggests that when the library is engaged in institutional policymaking, it may encourage the development of standalone OE/OER policies.

### Resources

- **The availability of resources is a challenge and places limitations on what OE and OER services a library can offer.** The financial and library skills topics report the most prevalent challenges in this area. Whilst the low-cost of OE for the end-user is a clear benefit, due to the emerging nature of OE and OER and the various resources required to create them, there is a highly reported lack of funding. In addition, the vast majority of respondents reported suffering from a lack of skills and knowledge of OE. Therefore, it is apparent that more could be done to train librarians in such skills, as is reflected by respondents' suggestions that training opportunities could lie in areas such as knowledge on repositories and metadata and knowledge exchange and public engagement activities.

### Quality, access and reuse

- **The discoverability and accessibility of OER services appear to be notable challenges in this area, with improving visibility of OER and the delivery and distribution of OER being key.** However, interestingly, the opportunities for this area outweigh these challenges, with some respondents reporting discoverability as an opportunity to raise their institution's profile in research-based teaching. Quality was communicated predominantly as an opportunity to increase the quality of education overall and making it subject to the same public review and validation as research publications.

### Culture and environment

- **The culture and environment of a given institution evidently is a significant factor in a library's OE and OER activity**, as is reflected by the theme having received the highest number of instances for both challenges and opportunities. Strikingly here, is the disparity between the challenges reported in terms of institutional leadership and library leadership, with a high number reporting that a lack of institutional leadership was a challenge and no challenges being identified for library leadership. It should be noted that this emerging space is more difficult for some institutions to navigate than others, with library leaders of OER efforts facing a multiplicity of focal points. The positive response to library leadership is encouraging for the enterprise of OE, but seemingly, the institutional leadership and support to allow this is still a barrier to OE activity.

### Overall

- Libraries also have the potential to take a leadership role in exploring how their institution might commit more to OE through institutional policymaking, particularly in the absence of a national OE policy. Lessons can be learnt from a range of libraries who have led the way here. **The next vital step is for libraries to collaborate to build a more open, creative, legally and technically sound, and informed education environment to facilitate access to education material for all.**