



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



## Background

Open communication of the scientific data, results, hypotheses and opinions, lies at the very heart of the scientific process. Open Science is the growing global movement to make scientific research and data accessible to all. It is not only an issue of science being open to the research community, as in “open access” and “open data”, Open Science refers to a science open to society.

Open Science could be a game changer for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in Africa, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States (SIDS), as it has the potential to significantly increase scientific discovery and facilitate adoption of well-adapted technologies for enhancing economic competitiveness, supporting sustainable development and alleviating poverty.

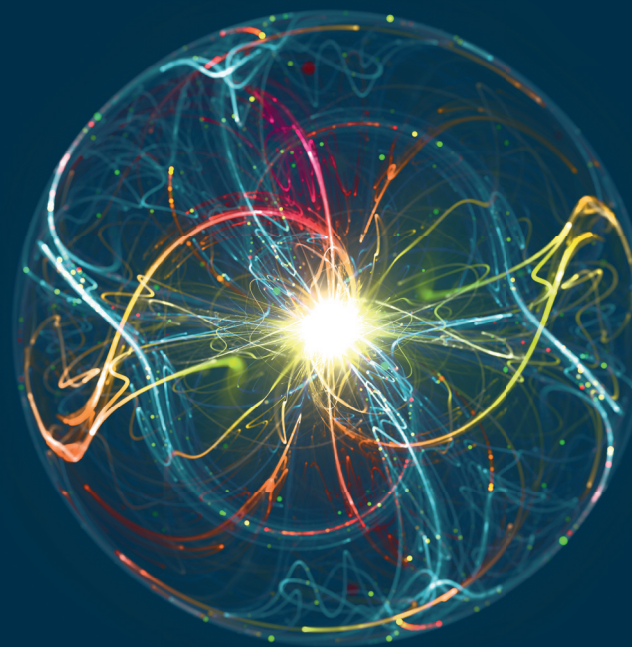
The African Open Science Platform has recently been launched demonstrating the importance of Open Science for Africa and for countries that need to strengthen their scientific systems and benefit from the results of science produced worldwide. The vision is for African scientists to be at the cutting edge of contemporary, data-intensive science as a fundamental resource for a modern society; to be innovative global exponents and advocates of Open Science; and as leaders in addressing African and Global Challenges. This vision is thus fully in line with the African Agenda 2063 and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024).

But some challenges, such as access to internet across the continent, political governance of Open Science and the standardization of services and platforms, to name a few, still remain for Open Science in Africa. As the movement grows globally, it is important to ensure that all countries in all regions have a voice on Open Science.

UNESCO is the only platform where a global consensus on Open Science, including on the definition of Open Science, can be built. The Organization is therefore embarking on a global consultation on Open Science to provide an opportunity to discuss and clarify challenges and opportunities, benefits and risks of Open Science to all regions, including those where the debate on Open Science is still in its infancy.

In this context, UNESCO is partnering with the African Union and its Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Education, Science and Technology to discuss the potential of Open Science for Africa. This partnership is set to explore how Open Science could contribute to closing the STI gaps and give a boost to the race towards the achievement of the SDGs in Africa and the Agenda 2063.

# Open Science for Africa



FORUM WITH THE AFRICAN UNION'S SPECIALIZED  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY

Thursday 12 December 2019  
African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa

# Programme

8h15-9h00	Welcome breakfast
9h00-9h10	Introduction by the African Union Commission <b>H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor</b> , Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology
9h10-9h30	Introduction by UNESCO <b>Dr. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle</b> , Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences
9h30-10h00	Keynote speech "Open Science in Africa – The Future of Science and Science for the Future" <b>Dr Molapo Qhobela</b> , Chief Executive Officer of the National Research Foundation, South Africa
10h00-11h30	<b>Comments from experts and questions from the audience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Open Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Dr Simon Hodson</b>, Executive Director of the International Science Council's Committee on Data (CODATA)</li> <li>✓ <b>Dr Mamadou Ciss</b>, Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Infrastructure needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Mr Andrew Rugege</b>, Regional Director for Africa, International telecommunication Union (ITU)</li> <li>✓ <b>Dr Abdul Kamara</b>, Ethiopia Country Manager, African Development Bank</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Role of researchers and universities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Prof Abiba Sanogo Tidou</b>, Présidente de l'Université Jean Lorougnon Guede (UJLoG), Daloa, Côte d'Ivoire, Présidente de la Conférence des Recteurs des Universités Francophones d'Afrique et de l'Océan Indien</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Citizen engagements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Prof Najat A. Saliba</b>, Director of the Nature Conservation Center, Professor of Chemistry, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, American University of Beirut</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>African Diaspora engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Dr Nkem Khumbah</b>, Faculty Associate, Science, Technology and Public Policy, STEM-Africa Initiative, University of Michigan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10h30-11h45	Coffee/tea break

11h00-12h30	Moderated discussion with STC members and invited experts on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scope of Open Science: All experts</b></li> <li>• <b>Major opportunities and threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Dr Annette Ouattara</b>, Head of Capacity Building and Partnership, Programme d'Appui Stratégique à la Recherche Scientifique (PASRES), Ivory Coast</li> <li>✓ <b>Dr Henri Tonnang</b>, Open Science Working Group, Global Young Academy, Africa Chapter</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Ensuring that no one is left behind</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Dr Munyaradzi Chenje</b>, Regional Director for Africa, UN development Coordination Office, Regional Office for Africa</li> <li>✓ <b>Dr Victor Konde</b>, Scientific Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Policy incentives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Dr Wilhelmina Quaye</b>, Director Science and Technology Policy Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and industrial Research (CSIR-STEPRI), Ghana</li> <li>✓ <b>Dr Molapo Qhobela</b>, Chief Executive Officer of the National Research Foundation, South Africa</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Moderated by <b>Dr Peggy Oti-Boateng</b>, Director, Division of Science Policy and Capacity Building</p>
12h30-13h00	Conclusions and closing
13h00	Lunch

## Objectives of the Forum

- Bring together the members of the STC and the main stakeholders of Open Science in Africa
- Discuss the meaning, scope and opportunities of Open Science between policy makers and experts from academia and the private sector
- Define the key opportunities and challenges of Open Science in Africa with suggestions on how to overcome them.
- Discuss the need for Open Science to ensure that that no one is left behind, including through policy incentives
- Discuss the engagement of African Diaspora in the field of Open science

The summary of the discussions will be reported to the Ministerial level meeting taking place on 13 December and will feed into the process led by UNESCO on building a global consensus on Open Science, including through a UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science expected to be adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 2021.