



Fostering Open Access to Scientific Research and Scholarly Publications (OA) in Africa

“Open access to scientific information will benefit many developing countries”

Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	East, West and North Africa
Duration (in months):	36 Months in 2014-2016
Name and Unit of project Officer	Bhanu Neupane Programme Specialist (Open Access and ICT& Sciences) Knowledge Societies Division Communication and Information Sector
Partner(s) institutions:	UIS, EIFL, INASP, ICTP, CIS, CLACSO, ASSAF, IFLA, Research4Life, Universities
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	US\$ 2,100,000

Rationale and background

The project will aim to examine an inclusive and participatory modality to implement Open Access to Scientific Information and Research (OA) and develop approaches for upstream policy advice and building partnerships for OA and strengthen capacities at various levels to foster Open Access.

Recent reviews on Africa's quest to achieve MDGs have provided ample evidences that as the continent enters a new era of sustainable development, access to knowledge are still uncertain, which is in turn causing lapses in providing economic security, literacy, and creating opportunities for innovations. As a result, with all of the progress in Africa, poverty is still the only prospect, and hunger a condition of life, for a shockingly large portion of the continent's people. UN has collectively upgraded the context of Knowledge in its development dialogue and now regards it as a “Knowledge challenge”.

This provides enough justification that UNESCO must examine and provide solution on 1) how to "Open" contents, processes and technologies of information and knowledge to the

benefit of the people in Africa; and 2) how to make information and knowledge as "inclusive" as possible so that the benefit can be widely shared by everyone in the continent. The recently held WSIS review has identified a critical need to rethink these two issues within the broader context of the post 2015 agenda and to identify various normative, strategic and operational strategies.

Why UNESCO?

1. The Open Access Programme of UNESCO is guided by a concrete strategy on "building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication", which was endorsed by the member states during 36 C/4.
2. UNESCO's Open Access strategy has been focusing on policy development, capacity building, standard setting, partnerships building and collaborations, as well as on playing the role of a clearing-house. In this way, UNESCO has been providing both front as well as the back end to foster OA.
3. UNESCO is serving as a forum for international cooperation, exchange of dialogue and reflection and this is implemented by strengthening capacities to adopt Open Solutions at various levels.
4. The proposed initiative will directly contribute to the **Major Programme V, MLA2, Expected Result 4**. Identified as one of the top priorities in the program planning phase, the potentiality of this initiative is widely discussed and endorsed by various governing bodies of UNESCO.
5. The Initiative will directly contribute to strengthening Open Solutions via ICTs for building knowledge societies, which is part of the Organization's Sharpened Resource Mobilization Strategy

In order to achieve these goals the following activities will be implemented:

- Undertake a Pan-Africa wide survey on the possibility of development of standard setting instrument for Open Access and develop a policy generator tool.
- Organize an international Congresses on "Scholarly Communication and Open Access to Scientific Information and Research" in Africa.
- Undertake policy research for evidence-based policy making in 5 countries in Africa for Open Access
- Standardize education and training curricula on Open Access for 10 African Research Institutions and Universities
- Develop a Self-Directed Learning Course on Open Access for Africa
- Release of Open Access Toolkit for the promotion of OA Repositories and Journals in Africa
- Undertaking a feasibility of the setting up of a Network for Open Access to Scientific Information and Research (NOASIR) for Africa
- Development of a reliable set of indicators for measuring the impact of Open Access, including that in the post 2015 context
- Maintain the Global Open Access Portal, in cooperation with the OA community and the stakeholders, and serve as a clearing house

Key Opportunities:

- UNESCO will lead in the development of continent-wide and national policies for OA, and in line with its objective, promote dissemination of knowledge.
- The international congress will lead to development of normative instrument to make OA part of the national research systems.
- The NOASIR for Africa, once established will provide support to Member State institutions to have increased access to scientific information and enhance south-south collaboration.
- NOASIR will also bring in more private toll access publishers to support the OA movement
- The UNESCO curriculum on Open Access once adopted in Member State institutions will standardize and professionalize the education and training of OA practitioners
- The OA toolkit will be useful for short term training and skill development on the job
- The GOAP will become more popular and Member States use the portal for decision-making by accessing relevant information
- UNESCO plays the leading role in OA by leading the OA impact measurement study

Beneficiaries: Scientific Organization, Researchers, Students of Higher Institutions, Science Technology and Innovation systems and process in countries and the region.

Overall Goal/Objective

The overall goal of this concept note is to create an enabling environment for Open Access to scientific research and scholarly communications in Africa by focusing on policy development, capacity building, and strengthening partnerships and global cooperation to improve the access to information and knowledge.

Main expected results

1. Expected Result N°1: Beneficiary Member States from Africa adopt Open Access policies for increasing access to scientific information and scholarly knowledge (**Output:** At least 20 Member States in Africa participate in the regional policy forum on Open Access)
2. Expected Result N°2: Member States educational institutions use Open Access curricula and Courses for training of librarians and young researchers. This will also establish standardized curriculum on Open Access used for education and training of library and information professionals in African universities (**Outputs:** OA curricula for Librarians and young researchers of Africa developed; and two SDL course developed and populated)
3. Expected Result N°3: Expert Consultation meriting on quality indicators for Youth-focused Open Access organized in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. (**Output:** Quality indicators of OA Repositories and Journals; possibility of developing an index of OA)
4. Expected Result N°4: Expected Result N°5: Key stakeholders in OA participate actively in OA knowledge-based community and create a regional mechanism for South-South Collaboration. (**Output:** NOASIR for Africa is created)

The project will also contribute to the following other mandates of UNESCO:

- ICT in Education, Science and Culture
- Capacities of Member States enhanced to design, implement and assess rights-based education, communication and information for universal access, taking sociocultural factors into account
- Fostering ICT-enhanced learning
- Education/training "communities of practice" formed to build knowledge and access to open and diverse educational resources at all levels, including open access to scientific information
- Digital libraries of open educational resources (e.g. open courseware and digital learning objects) developed for quality lifelong learning
- Strengthening national research systems
- Scientific research enhanced through integration of ICTs

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

The following activities shall be carried out:

- Undertake a Pan-Africa wide survey on the possibility of development of standard setting instrument for Open Access and develop a policy generator tool.
- Organize an international Congresses on "Scholarly Communication and Open Access to Scientific Information and Research" in Africa.
- Undertake policy research for evidence-based policy making in 5 countries in Africa for Open Access
- Standardize education and training curricula on Open Access for 10 African Research Institutions and Universities
- Develop a Self-Directed Learning Course on Open Access for Africa
- Release of Open Access Toolkit for the promotion of OA Repositories and Journals in Africa
- Undertaking a feasibility of the setting up of a Network for Open Access to Scientific Information and Research (NOASIR) for Africa
- Development of a reliable set of indicators for measuring the impact of Open Access, including that in the post 2015 context
- Maintain the Global Open Access Portal, in cooperation with the OA community and the stakeholders, and serve as a clearing house

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

Beneficiaries: Scientific Organization, Researchers, Students of Higher Institutions, Science Technology and Innovation systems and process in countries and the region.

Partners: UIS, EIFL, INASP, ICTP, CIS, CLACSO, ASSAF, Research4Life, Universities

Ownership of the Project. While the beneficiary countries will own the project, some regional mechanisms will also be developed to support co-ownership of the regional outputs of the project.

Implementation strategy

As indicated before, the project shall be implemented in the Africa region with expert inputs from other parts of the world taking a modality of south-south and North-south collaboration. While the regional consultations will focus on Africa, the other components could serve UNESCO-wide commitment to create knowledge societies in terms of its delivery and impact. The following major activities shall be planned and implemented in cooperation with relevant partners:

1. Formation of an expert group: A 15-member steering committee will be created to guide and monitor the project. The steering committee will include DADG CI as the chair of the expert group, representative of Donor(s), and renowned experts selected from across Africa and the world. Responsible Officer will serve as the member secretary in the steering committee.
2. Organize Pan-Africa Wide survey on OA: A dedicate Survey will be implemented to establish the baseline of the project
3. Sub-region specific assessment: Organize 4 sub-Regional Policy Assessments on Open Access to Scientific Information with the potential to develop Youth-Focused policies on Open Access.
4. Develop Situation Specific Open Access Curriculum for various sub-regions of Africa.
5. Disseminate and Populate Self-Directed Learning courses in Africa and develop language versions.
6. Refine tools, select countries to undertake Country-level exercise: Organize one expert consultation meeting for development of quality indicators for Youth-Focused Open Access;
7. Develop an online toolkit for Open Access programme.
8. Creation of Network for Open Access to Scientific Information and Research (NOASIR) for Africa
9. Implement the develop strategy and ascertain a system for Monitoring and Evaluation: Conceptualize and develop a system for monitoring and evaluation.

Sustainability and exit strategy

The overall implementation and monitoring of the project covering management, external coordination, administration, finance and implementation will be the responsibility of the Director of the Knowledge Societies Division, and the Project Officer. In this task, they will be assisted by Internal Oversight Office and project implementation guideline. The technical experts (consultants) will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the progress of their respective assigned areas in consultation with Responsible Officer. Measures to modify and update the design and ensure a flexible implementation of interventions will be carried out on the basis of the findings.

KSD will also provide bi-annual progress reports and an end-of-project report. After 15 months, a mid-term evaluation will be prepared to adjust the expected outcomes, outputs and activities. Upon completion of the project, an end-of-project evaluation will be conducted and the final project report drafted based upon that evaluation.

a) Visibility of Project

UNESCO will ensure that due publicity is given to the project activities, with acknowledgement of support from various funding agencies. Information and briefs concerning the project and its activities will be prepared and disseminated among a large network of contacts, through the website of UNESCO and a dedicated project web portal.

All key electronic and printed materials will acknowledge the contribution of the donors. This material will all be advertised through appropriate channels and networks for widespread dissemination.

b) Sustainability

The implementation of project & its outcome will open new vista not only for OA and scientific fraternity but also for administrators, policy managers and community. At institutional level, working with the course of project period will make people aware about the challenges to be faced in the future. Given the fact that the project involves creation of policies and delivering policy development support, the sustainability of this project is at the heat of the project design.

The project exit strategy along with the relevant data shall be shared with administrators, scientific community along with community. To ensure that the results and benefits of the project will last beyond the end of the project and that these benefits are sustained and scaled up after the initial project cycle, a single agency, as recommended by the expert group will also be identified and handed over the charge of the project. UNESCO will review the data and follow up on the status of the project on yearly basis for their operation and utility.

Links:

Global Open Access Portal: <http://www.unesco.org/ci/goap>

WSIS Knowledge Community on Open Access:

<http://www.wsis-community.org/pg/groups/58145/open-access/>

UNESCO Open Access Page:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/access-to-knowledge/open-access-to-scientific-information/>

Open Access Brochure:

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/images/GOAP/3544.11_CI_E_Open%20Access%20brochure.indd.pdf