

WORKSHOP REPORT: AFRICAN OPEN SCIENCE PLATFORM: DELIVERY PHASE PLANNING

2 – 3 September 2019, Alexandria, Egypt

GYA representative: Abel Polese

Context

In 2016, a three-year pilot phase for the Africa Open Science Platform (AOSP) was launched. The collaboration included the International Science Council (ISC) and its Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA) and was funded by the South African Government's Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), (previously the DST), through the National Research Foundation (NRF). An AOSP Office hosted by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) in collaboration with CODATA managed the pilot and delivered on the following goals:

- Map the current landscape of data/science initiatives and supporting infrastructure in Africa;
- Build a Pan-African open science community and encourage the formation of national open science fora. A notable and crucial success of the pilot in this regard has been the development of an African community of practice and support; and
- To develop frameworks for policy, incentives, training and technical requirements that will inform the operational Platform

The first draft of the Platform strategy was developed as a result of an expert group meeting held in Pretoria during March 2018. It then formed the discussion document for a stakeholder meeting held in Pretoria on 3-4 September 2018. Resulting amendments have been incorporated in this strategy for the Platform. The programme is anchored on robust support from local institutions, governments, regional/international funders and developing partners. The pilot phase will be concluded in October 2019.

Workshop Objectives

During 2-3 September 2019, a select cohort of representatives of government, development partners, the private sector and higher learning/research institutions participated in an implementation phase workshop in Alexandria, Egypt. The objective of this high-level meeting was to deliberate on and design the implementation phase of the AOSP initiative with key regional stakeholders and international partners. The intended outcome of the meeting was to increase up-take and ownership of the programme and leverage existing initiatives on Open Science. To achieve this, the meeting set out to:

- Outline the need for and the vision of the AOSP;
- Present the preparatory work that has laid the foundations for the implementation phase;
- Agree options for governance, membership and financing; and
- Establish concrete support for participation and commitment to the proposed strands.

The meeting featured several key organizations from the field of Open Science, including the International Science Council and CODATA. After a first day presenting the state of the art of open science in Africa, participants were grouped into two Parallel Session

- 1) Transitioning Towards Open Access and Open Science in Africa
- 2) Group Two: New Approaches towards Research Data Management

The meeting ended with the JOINT STATEMENT EMANATING FROM THE AFRICAN OPEN SCIENCE PLATFORM (AOSP).