

# Forging a Federation: The FedOSC Approach to Open Science and RDM

Five figures gather around a softly lit table.

Before them lies a map of Belgium. The universities glow in familiar patterns, their light structured and widely visible. But across Brussels, within the FSIs, especially the Art & Doc cluster, there is a different kind of light.

Not absent, not dim, but diffuse, embedded, and less easily captured by existing maps.

**These are not gaps. They are places where knowledge is created, interpreted, and preserved in ways that do not always align with the dominant systems of research visibility.**

The figures understand this. They are not asking, “How do we bring light there?”, they are asking: **“How do we better see, support, and connect the light that is already there?”**



## RANGERS

Data stewards:  
explorers, missionaries



Explore.  
Observe.  
Protect.  
Connect.

Bring knowledge  
back to the community.

They set out as Rangers, as listeners and cartographers of existing practices.

Through conversations, surveys, and interviews, they learn:

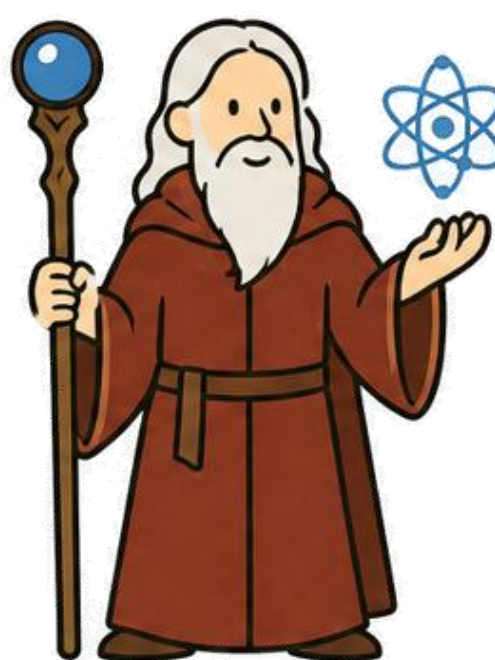
- how research is embedded in archival and artistic work
- how data is handled when it is also heritage
- how preservation, interpretation, and creation are intertwined

They begin to **see that FSIs are knowledge systems operating with different logics and practices.** This encourages them to consider how existing data frameworks can engage with these realities in meaningful ways without flattening them.



## WIZARDS

Scientists in  
the FSIs



Question.  
Discover.  
Understand.  
Share.

Advance knowledge  
for the benefit of all.

On their way, they encounter many more allies at the different institutes – Wizards of organisation, of linking things, of change, of connection. Some gather people, some translate between worlds, some keep knowledge moving from one place to another. They share events, training, and practices across institutes, build common resources, record what is learned, and help less fluent communities find their way into the evolving landscape of Open Science. **Together, they form a living network of peer support and shared stewardship,** ensuring the change does not fade after the Rangers settle down.



## COUNCIL OF THE WISE

Policy Officers  
at Belspo



Advise.  
Decide.  
Steward.

Ensure integrity,  
fairness and alignment  
with the public good.

They speak with the Council to shape rules that favour openness, knowledge circulation, and long-term stewardship.

Together, **they rethink mandates so they can recognise publications, data, software, workflows, and heritage collections alike** as part of the research landscape.

They help connect policies with the tools, infrastructures, and communities needed to sustain them.



## ARTIFICERS

IT consultants,  
maker of stuff



Design.  
Build.  
Improve.  
Solve problems.

Create tools that  
empower the mission.

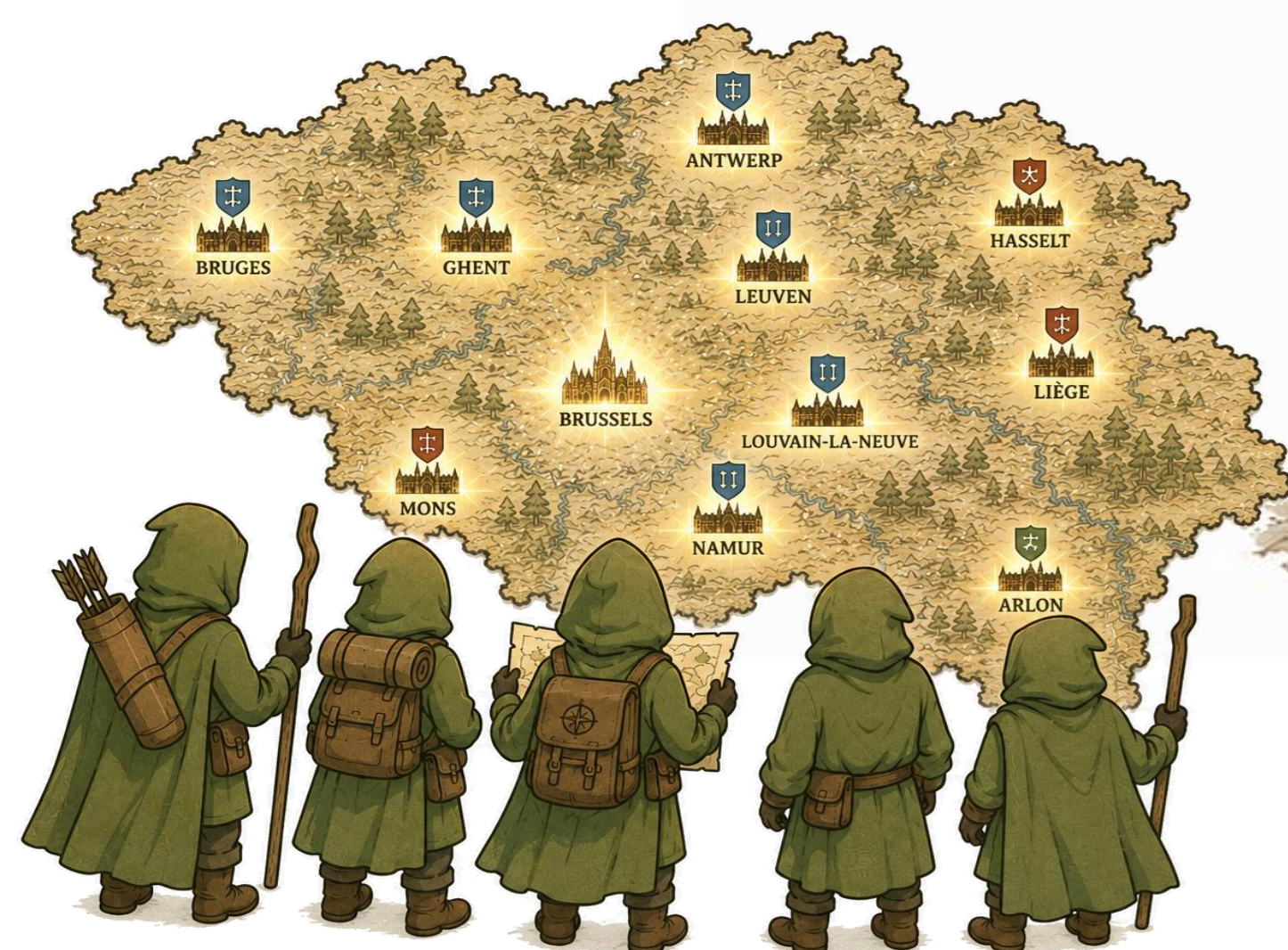
They invite Artificers to **reshape and sharpen existing tools** like DMPonline and Orfeo:

- Can they be made **more user-friendly**, so they truly support everyday practices?
- Can they include versioning, so that changes over time can be traced and understood?
- Can they be designed in a modular way, allowing new components, including AI-related ones, to be integrated in the future?
- Can their framework be updated to be more flexible and exchangeable, so that they can adapt when technologies and needs change?

And the Rangers, together with the Wizards, gather around them, bringing feedback from the many corners of the institutes.

**Through shared practice, testing, and exchange, the tools are slowly reshaped, made resilient enough to endure through time, and adaptable enough to face the coming of the Machines.**

The map changes, but not by adding light. **By changing how light is recognized.** What was once diffuse becomes connected, not because it was weak, but because it is now acknowledged on its own terms. The figures now know: **their role is not to illuminate. It is to make space for different forms of knowledge to be visible, legible, and supported without being reduced.**



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AI-generated images

FedOSC



Tartler-Ostrizek, A., Bercegeay, M.-S., Biernaux, J., Miglio, A., Strobbe, F. (2026) *Engaging the GLAM Sector in a Federal Open Science Ecosystem: The Belgian FedOSC Approach* - poster for Digital Humanities Benelux Conference, June 02-05, Maastricht



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