



CoNOSC Member Needs

April 2022

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Summary of interviews
conducted with CoNOSC members
in January & February 2022

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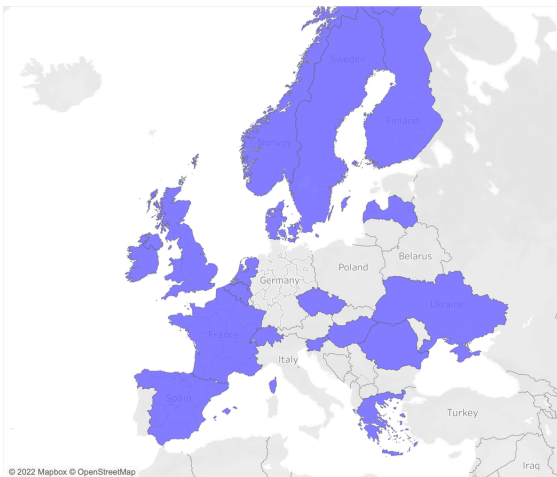
1. Introduction

In 2021, SPARC Europe took on the facilitation of the Council for National Open Science Coordination (CoNOSC), the high-level European Open Science (OS) policymaker group.

CoNOSC was founded in 2019 to help to promote coordination at national level. Its mission is to help countries create, update and coordinate their national OS policies by sharing valuable insights from the network.



SPARC Europe committed to investigate the needs of national policymakers and organize meetings to determine priorities for the coming year. As a part of that process, a series of interviews were held with CoNOSC members' representatives - national OS Co-ordinators, ministry officials and other policymaking decision-makers.



A total of 30 representatives from 18 different European nations were interviewed during January and February 2022, as well as the Deputy Head of the Open Science Unit from the European Commission, which attends CoNOSC as an observer. The full list of interviewees are included in Appendix A.

Interviews were semi-structured around a short list of questions. These were designed to identify what activities and areas would provide the greatest value through collaboration at CoNOSC. Discussions were structured around these questions and they were provided in advance where requested. Interviews were allowed to proceed based on interviewee responses. The questions used are included in Appendix B.

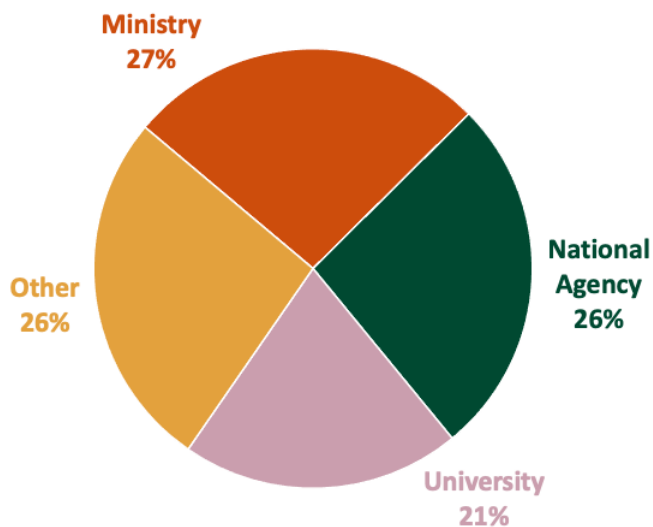
This report provides a summary of the key findings from those interviews, and the implications for CoNOSC's priorities and activities.

2. National approaches to Open Science policy-making

The profiles of CoNOSC members & their representatives

Differences in national level OS policy-making are illustrated by the profile of those interviewed for this report. Six member nations have formal National Coordinators of Open Science. Their roles are hosted as follows:

- Federation of Learned Societies - Finland
- Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation - France
- National Open Research Forum - Ireland
- National Platform Open Science - Netherlands
- Swissuniversities and Swiss National Science Foundation - Switzerland
- Universities Norway - Norway



Beyond this, CoNOSC membership representation shows the differences between how countries formally organize OS policymaking. There is then a roughly equal balance between those employed in a ministry, a national agency (generally those with delegated responsibility for coordinating all research activity and funding), and those employed in other organizations. Some interviewees hold more than one post, in which case they are counted twice.

Just under 20% of CoNOSC policymakers work within a university or research institution.

Where CoNOSC representatives are not ministry employees, relationships with ministries are always important to the development of OS policy. In several cases, the nature of the ministry relationship is still evolving. Interviewees experienced disruption to progress due to changes in government, changes in those with responsibility in a ministry, and the need to coordinate across multiple ministries. Several would like stronger connections to their ministry, and greater levels of engagement or public endorsement.

Responsibility for Open Science policy can be split across several ministries or agencies, or owned by a single entity which has multiple areas of responsibility. They differ across Europe. The ministries involved include those responsible for:

- Research & Development
- Innovation
- Health
- Education
- or combinations of the above

Similarly, some nations have a dedicated National Open Science strategy or policy, such as in France, Finland and Slovenia, while others incorporate OS into multiple strategies or policies, or develop OS in conjunction with other areas of policy, such as Romania or the Czech Republic. These other areas of policy often reflect the 8 pillars of EU's open science policy and include:

- Open Education
- Research Communication
- Research Assessment
- Public Engagement
- Citizen Science

Some notable differences in approach were as follows:

- as in Finland, the need for 100% consensus between stakeholders before policy can be approved or implemented, compared to policy progress via a coalition of those willing to engage, as in Ireland or Hungary
- the role of constitutionally autonomous federal entities, notably in Switzerland and Belgium; in Belgium these entities have additional protected responsibilities according to languages
- large dedicated OS funding, such as in France, against many smaller allocations, such as Ireland, or against no funding at all, such as in Ukraine
- progress being wholly dependent on legislative approval, as in Ukraine, as against those where it plays only a minor role, such as Slovenia or where a law exists, but it is not always enforced, as in France concerning its open data mandate.

Policy development

CoNOSC members report a number of phases in the development of OS policy, and various documents express these phases and influence policymaking. However, interviewees expressed their belief that there is no one roadmap or formula that European nations must follow in order to successfully develop OS policy.

What countries are interested in, however, is learning about what enabled and hindered other countries as they developed their policy – particularly countries who are just beginning the national OS policymaking process, such as:

- Achieving cultural change
- Setting priorities at different stages
- Moving beyond declarations of support and statements of intent
- Adapting when progress is limited or slow
- Developing action plans to support strategies
- Passing legislation
- Ensuring action plans are implemented and progress is monitored

Countries further along in the development of Open Science policy expressed a desire to support development of policies in countries at the beginning of their journey. However, they also shared a belief that they would benefit from a greater understanding of different approaches and innovations in certain thematic areas or around the process as they further strengthen their own more mature policies or seek to implement or monitor them. Several interviewees also indicated that their ability to raise awareness of the international dimension of policy making was a key factor in unlocking progress and overcoming resistance to change.

3. Role of CoNOSC

CoNOSC's founding mission is to help countries create, update and coordinate their national open science policies by sharing valuable insights from the network.

When asked what role CoNOSC members would like to see CoNOSC play, interviewee responses can be grouped under three areas:

I Connecting those responsible for national open science coordination

The primary value of CoNOSC is as a Community of Practice - a well defined group of peers which shares a concern or responsibility for something which they learn how to do better as they interact regularly.[1]

Interviewees see value in networking with others who are responsible for open science policymaking. Many interviewees expressed how complex their task is. Several recalled being handed a newly agreed Declaration of Support for Open Science and nothing else, and being asked to 'get on with it'.

Some of those who are formally National Coordinators of Open Science expressed that the post can be lonely – acting as the conduit of information in multiple directions, facilitating decisions rather than making them. CoNOSC members wanted to make sure those newly tasked with OS coordination did not find themselves in the same position.

II Knowledge exchange

CoNOSC members are not, primarily, seeking a library or repository of Open Science policies and legislation. Rather, they seek a forum in which they can explore the differences and similarities in the policymaking structure and process, priorities, funding, infrastructure, and legislation at a national level. OS relies on national level projects, but those delivering OS wish to develop greater insight about how progress is made internationally to inform their own work.

[1] <https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

National OS policies differ a great deal across Europe but there are also important similarities. National structures have different strengths and weaknesses, different challenges and routes through which progress has been achieved. These differences run across specific factors - funding, legislation, structures, infrastructure - as well as being more generally expressed as part of research, innovation and OS culture. Interviewees know this, but consistently express the belief that they do not yet understand these differences & similarities well enough to apply lessons effectively in their own contexts.

To achieve this, members want CoNOSC to provide a 'safe space' in which representatives do not try to compete or show off progress, but rather take the opportunity for dialogue and to understand 'what is tough'. This relies on the ability of members to speak openly and frankly without fear that what they say will be used against them.

Several interviewees felt that there was space and need for more bilateral or multilateral initiatives, i.e. to fund joint projects or efforts. Such initiatives are small and require limited critical mass to succeed. These would bring together a few countries with similar interests or structures but not necessarily geographic proximity. Bibliodiversity and shared platform development were given as potential examples.

There is also a desire to ensure that future international collaborative initiatives consider national level OS policy differences from the very start. The Directories of Open Access Journals & Books (DOAJ & DOAB), FAIR data, and cOAlition S were all highlighted as international initiatives of great value but which were built in line with the activities and structures of a limited range of countries. Members felt that time and resources could have been saved had there been greater international engagement and co-ordination at the outset.

III Navigating the Open Science landscape

Very few interviewees expressed an appetite or perceived need for greater alignment of national policies - the commonly expressed desire is for greater understanding on a range of thematic levels, and that this understanding can be used to improve national OS policy development, and create more opportunities for coordination and collaboration. It is also likely that this approach will bring about alignment in an organic rather than top down way.

Interviewees do, however, see value in CoNOSC helping navigate the fragmented and complicated international OS policy landscape because of its broad membership and focus on the whole policy cycle.

By this, we mean the many organizations and networks involved in Open Science policy setting and coordination both nationally and internationally. Interviewees named nearly 20 different entities (see Appendix) which currently coordinate elements of OS policy, have a specific relevant policy remit, or which CoNOSC members currently use to stay up to date with OS policy developments outside their own member state.



We did not hear any particular belief that the Open Science landscape should or needs to be simplified - in the main, interviewees were positive about the role of different entities operating across Europe.

However, it is a challenge for those responsible for OS coordination at a national level to stay engaged everywhere across such a broad landscape. These are particular challenges for countries at the beginning or early in the process of establishing OS policies. They lack information about which bodies to engage and when, and about all relevant membership bodies and service providers which might be of benefit to them.

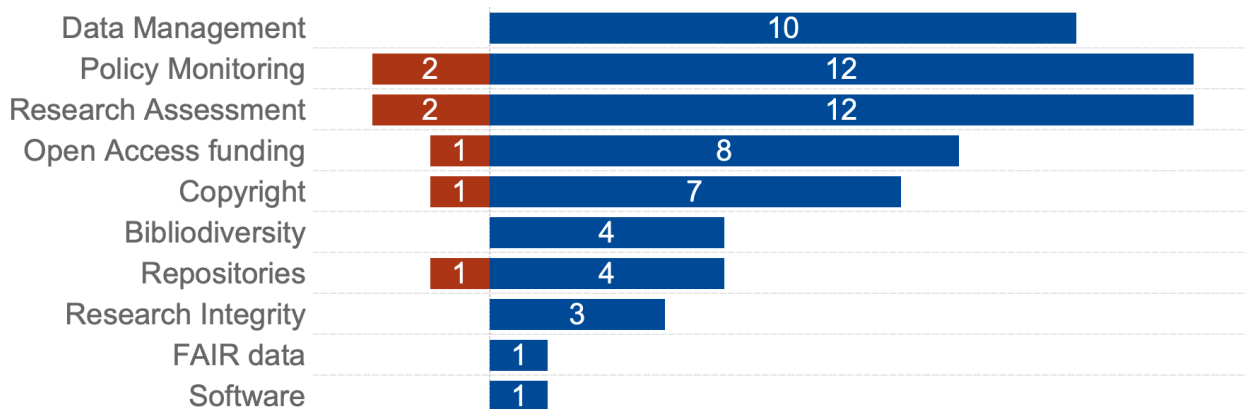
Many interviewees noted that EOSC does not cover all of the aspects of OS policymaking. Further changes to the resources offered by ERAC, National Points of Reference and OpenAIRE mean that mechanisms previously relied on to exchange information and keep up to date on progress are reduced. Interviewees felt that there is a clear, well-defined niche for CoNOSC to help its members, ie. OS decision-making policymakers, explore and understand the roles of different entities involved in OS policymaking, and to provide signposting and contacts.

4. Priority areas for CoNOSC

CoNOSC members want CoNOSC to facilitate in-depth discussion of policy areas. While they value 2-5min updates on national level developments, they also wish to move beyond this to a much deeper exploration of priority topics. They wish to use those topics to illustrate elements of OS policy development that cut across individual policy areas - notably the impact of national and international organizational dynamics, consideration of the whole policy cycle, and prioritization.

There is a willingness to bring in expertise from outside the membership group to achieve this where necessary. A session at which representatives from TU Delft contributed a discussion on data stewards was highlighted as an example of particular good practice.

There was consistency between responses in interviews and discussions at the CoNOSC meeting on 1 December 2021, where members presented their national priorities and voted on issues they felt would benefit most from collaboration internationally.



The following areas were identified as a priority most often:

Data Management

This includes the development of data steward programmes and data management plans.

Particular issues raised were the design of data management programmes after funding has been agreed, the shortage of data management skills and the difficulty of establishing policies that work across the full range of subject areas with the differing research cultures.

There is clear overlap with Research Assessment, below, with the need to develop appropriate incentives and frameworks for researchers.

Policy Monitoring

This was the area referenced during most interviews, although two countries felt it was not a priority because it is in hand at a national level. 'Policy monitoring' referred to a number of different, but related issues:

- Lack of structures for tracking progress over time nationally and Europe-wide
- Addressing the lack of data (open data, international data and comparative data) necessary to ensure policy monitoring could occur
- Monitoring as a defined stage in the policy cycle, but which needs to be considered all stages in the policy cycle and particularly at the outset
- Difficulty finding information on developments outside the English-speaking world & outside Europe

Since needs and perceptions differ in this area, this topic needs some further discussion to provide meaningful support going forward.

Research Assessment

Interviewees highlighted research assessment as a challenge and major priority, especially since it has been an area where reform has been targeted for many years without adequate change. Interviewees also acknowledged that it is the main focus of many different groups at present, and is a strategic priority for the European Commission. For this reason, it was not considered a priority for CoNOSC by two countries.

There is a need for reform of policy, training and infrastructure, and interviewees believed all three would be required to achieve meaningful progress. Reform of research assessment is also broader than simply an OS issue, and there is a need to consider how open aspects intersect with other reforms.

There is a particular need for international collaboration because the incentive & reward system for research is international, and researchers do not recognise boundaries in their work. Reform will need to be adopted by institutions globally to be successful. Interviewees also highlighted the need to focus on how the issue affects doctoral candidates & researchers at an early stage in their careers, and the challenges of equality, diversity and inclusion when considering alternative structures.

Copyright & licensing

This area was identified as a priority in two distinct ways - first, open licensing of research outputs and implementation of rights retention strategies; second, reform of copyright and legislation where European-level consistency and action is desired to ensure adequate provision for text & data mining and use of materials for research purposes. Some interviewees feel they have missed the opportunity for reform nationally, but are interested to share their experience and learn about others' progress.

Open Access funding

This area includes a broad range of opportunities for and research into future open access publishing. These include Diamond Open Access, Transformative Agreements and what will come after they expire, relationships with smaller publishers and those in subject areas with little culture or funding for Open Access. There was interest in exploring opportunities to collaborate and combine forces for negotiation of future agreements, as well as the importance of considering rights retention and copyright reform alongside Open Access funding.

The need to exempt publication charges from relevant tax regulations was highlighted by one interviewee as a challenge for several countries that would benefit from coordinated action, although it was not flagged by any other members. Open Access funding was flagged as a low priority for one country due to its large existing domestic Open Access publication output.

Bibliodiversity

The need to ensure cultural diversity in publishing was raised several times, in reference to accessibility, different subject areas, representation across Europe and internationally. Multilingualism was the area identified by several countries as an area where a multilateral partnership between interested nations might be tenable.

5. European Commission connection and priorities

The Commission's Open Science Unit has several priority areas in the short- to mid-term, including:

- *Reforming Research assessment* - focus on reforming assessment of research, individual researchers and institutions, and specifically on facilitating and accelerating progress towards reform. The Commission is clear on the need for a stakeholder coalition and implementation plan with concrete results within the next few years.
- *Proposing a EU Copyright & Data legislative framework fit for research* - the framework for access to and reuse of research results and of publications and data for research purposes is a complex environment, and while many pieces of legislation at the European level are in place or proposed, research considerations have not driven these.
- *Developing the EOSC* - European Open Science Cloud is shifting to a stakeholder community driven approach, with common objectives between the European Commission, the Member States and the association of stakeholders. It also involves more procurement actions, and grants requiring beneficiaries to transfer whatever IP is developed from the project to the association for further development, at least for core services.
- *Open Research Europe (ORE) publishing platform* - a vision for ORE is that the platform could also include publications from other framework programmes handled by the Commission, and that it could also expand to serve researchers supported by national funders.

Additional areas of action include:

- science-society interactions
- Open Science skills and training
- the relationship between Open Science and research culture
- the relationship between Open Science and research integrity and ethics
- more and better research into the tangible costs and benefits of Open Science

The Open Science Unit highlights three particular areas in which CoNOSC brings value:

1. exchanging in-depth information and mutual learning between countries, e.g. on development and implementation of OS policies, on monitoring and evaluation of OS policies and of progress in practicing OS, and on coordination of OS policies at national level
2. reinforcing interaction with national stakeholders and promoting the national uptake of Open Science
3. identifying multilateral opportunities for collaboration between countries

These are well-aligned with the role and priorities of CoNOSC expressed by its members.

The Open Science Unit believes CoNOSC may identify areas where priorities set at European level and national level complement each other, including e.g. where structural or recovery funds might be available to help with development. This will be challenging, however, as the scope of application of these funds will need to match.

The Open Science Unit expressed that any outreach role outside of Europe of CoNOSC should be complementary to the European Commission's role in international cooperation on OS policies, e.g. for EOSC, RDA and CODATA are useful forums for driving global convergence on standards.

The Open Science Unit also said that the person in CoNOSC representing a country should be in touch with the NPR (National Point of Reference) and EOSC Steering Board members of that country.

6. Proposals for CoNOSC activities and priorities

The interviews we have conducted provide confirmation that there is a well-defined niche in which the organization can provide value to its members.

Discussion topics should be focused around specific priority policy areas, as highlighted by members, affording in-depth discussion highlighting national differences and similarities and the OS policy landscape. While external expertise will be necessary and welcome on specific topics, members will also benefit both from sessions which allow open, frank policy discussions, and which may be unrecorded and closed as a result. CoNOSC will actively ensure it is not duplicating the efforts of the Commission, and bodies such as EOOSC, but will seek to complement and amplify their work, and help members explore the relationship between them and national OS policy.

CoNOSC should aim to organize three meetings per annum, where possible organized to coincide with other events that members are attending. At least one of these being in person, to facilitate policy updates, networking and open discussion. Meetings should be sufficiently informal to ensure Members can speak freely and raise potential areas of collaboration. In addition, a web based resource offering contacts and a simple outline of members OS progress and legislation would be beneficial.

We are extremely grateful to the CoNOSC members' representatives for contributing their time and expertise to this exercise.

Appendix A - List of interviewees

Belgium	Marc <u>Vanholsbeeck</u>	Deputy Director Ministry of Wallonia-Brussels Federation
Czechia	Eva <u>Hnátková</u>	Open Science Coordinator National Library of Technology
Denmark	Thomas <u>Midtgaard</u>	Senior Advisor Ministry of Higher Education and Science
	Hanne-Louise <u>Kirkegaard</u>	Senior Adviser Agency for Higher Education and Science
European Commission	Michael <u>Arentoft</u>	Deputy Head of Open Science Unit Directorate-General for Research & Innovation European Commission
Finland	<u>Henriikka Mustajoki</u>	Secretary-General, Open Science Federation of Finnish Learned Societies
France	Marin <u>Daços</u>	National Open Science Coordinator Ministry of Higher Education, <u>Research and Innovation</u>
Greece	Michalis <u>Zervakis</u>	Vice-Rector of Research and Lifelong Learning Technical University of Crete
	Giannis <u>Tsakonas</u>	Director Library and Information Center University of Patras
Ireland	Daniel <u>Bangert</u>	National Open Research Coordinator Digital Repository of Ireland Royal Irish Academy
	Patricia Clarke	<u>Programme</u> Manager Policy and EU Funding Health Research Board
Latvia	<u>Aleksandrs Mārtiņš Blūms</u>	RIS3 Expert Ministry of Science and Education
	Anna <u>Leiškāle</u>	Senior Expert Ministry of Science and Education
Netherlands	Karel <u>Luyben</u>	President EOSC Association Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
Norway	Vidar <u>Haanes</u>	Rector Universities Norway
	Ragnar Lie	Senior Advisor Universities Norway

Romania	Alina Irimia	Open Science projects coordinator Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, <u>Development</u> and Innovation Funding - UEFISCDI
	Mihaela Cucu	Project officer Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, <u>Development</u> and Innovation Funding - UEFISCDI
	Andreea Popa	Project officer Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, <u>Development</u> and Innovation Funding - UEFISCDI
Slovenia	Ivan Skubic	Secretary Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
	Peter Steerle	Secretary, Science Directorate Science Division Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
Spain	Cecilia Cabello Valdés	Director of Operations Spanish Foundation for S&T (FECYT)
	Inmaculada Figueroa	Vice Deputy Director General for the Internationalization of Science & Innovation Ministry of Science and Innovation
Sweden	Sofie Björling	Head of Department Department of Research Infrastructures The Swedish Research Council
	Sanja Halling	Senior Research officer Department of Research Infrastructures Swedish Research Council
Switzerland	Aude Baxe de Keating	Open Science Program Portfolio Manager Swiss Universities
	Isabel Bollinger	Scientific Officer at Strategy Unit Swiss National Science Foundation
	Ariane Studer	Deputy Head of Division Higher Education Policy Swiss Universities
United Kingdom	Rachel Bruce	Head of Open Research UK Research and Innovation Strategy (UKRI)
Ukraine	Oleksandr Berezko	State Expert Ministry of Education and Science
	Daria Boykun	State expert Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Appendix B - Structured questions

The following questions were used to structure interviews, although discussions were led by the interviewees with follow up questions often responding to their responses.

- Introductions, to include:
 - Role(s) & areas of responsibilities
 - Major areas of policy development and priorities
 - Any existing policy collaborations or partnerships outside your own country
- What of your current activities do you hope international coordination and CoNOSC will be able to develop or enhance? What new activities do you hope CoNOSC will be able to help you do?
- How do you currently deal with new policy challenges? Would you see value in discussing these at CoNOSC and developing collaborative responses / solutions to them? Where do you get updated on OS policy outside your country? How do you currently update the OS community on policy developments within your country and outside of it?
- What do you think are the key challenges for European OS policymaking as a whole?
- At the 1 Dec meeting the following areas were identified as particular priorities for collaboration:
 - Policy monitoring
 - Research assessment and incentives
 - Data stewards
 - EOSC
 - Repositories
 - CopyrightWhat focus would you like CoNOSC to have in these areas?
- How would you like CoNOSC to prioritize over the next 6-18 months? i.e. What themes and types of activities?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix C - Open Science policy making bodies mentioned by interviewees

1. European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) - eosc-portal.eu
2. National Points of Reference (NPR) on Scientific Information (European Commission Expert group) - ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3477
3. European Universities Association (EUA) - eua.eu
4. ERA-LEARN - era-learn.eu
5. OpenAIRE - openaire.eu
6. UNESCO - unesco.org
7. European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) - consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/european-research-area-and-innovation-committee-erac/
8. Science Europe - scienceeurope.org
9. The Science Council - sciencecouncil.org
10. League of European Research Universities (LERU) - leru.org
11. European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) - eurodoc-net.com
12. European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) - earma.org
13. Horizon Europe - ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en
14. GoFAIR - go-fair.org
15. G20 - g20.org
16. G7 - g7germany.de
17. NordForsk - nordforsk.org
18. cOAlition S - coalition-s.org

The Council for National Open Science Coordination (CoNOSC)

is a network of national
Open Science coordinators
in the UN-European region

"CoNOSC Member Needs"

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CoNOSC

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