



Confederation
of Open Access
Repositories

*Working towards a sustainable, global knowledge commons based on a network of
open access repositories*

COAR Annual Report 2022-2023

**April 2023
Version for members**

<http://coar-repositories.org>

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COAR is an international association with over 150 members and partners from around the world representing libraries, universities, research institutions, government funders and others. COAR brings together individual repositories and repository networks in order to build capacity, align policies and practices, and act as a global voice for the repository community.

Underpinning all COAR activities is the notion that a distributed repository network plays a fundamental role in advancing the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in open science. This report covers the major activities of COAR for the previous year from April 2022 to March 2023.

Vision


“A sustainable, inclusive and trusted global knowledge commons based on a network of open access digital repositories”

Mission

To enhance the visibility and application of research outputs through collaboration across the global repository network.

Highlights from 2022-2023

1. Awarded \$4 million for the [COAR Notify Initiative](#) from Arcadia
2. Steady progress on national and regional strategies for [modernizing repository networks](#) in Europe and United States
3. Engaged with [other regions and countries](#) through Asia OA, LIBSENSE, and LA Referencia
4. Published [COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories, Version 2](#)
5. Published [Ten Recommended Practices for Managing Preprints in Generalist and Institutional Repositories](#) with ASAPbio
6. Published initial recommendations on [Supporting Multilingualism and non-English Content in Repositories](#)
7. Launched the [Directory of Open Access Preprint Repositories](#) with CCSD
8. Organized the [COAR Annual Meeting](#) in Madrid in May 2022



**Over 150 members
and partners from around
the world**

About COAR

COAR is an international association that brings together individual repositories and repository networks in order to build capacity, align policies and practices, and act as a global voice for the repository community.

Main areas of work:

- Innovation
- Interoperability
- Visibility
- Capacity building

Strategic Directions

Five strategic directions will guide COAR's activities:

	1. Advocate for the important role of a distributed, international network of open repositories in advancing open science and bibliodiversity
	2. Provide support for strengthening and modernizing repositories and repository networks
	3. Promote alignment and interoperability across repositories, repository networks, and between repositories and other systems and services
	4. Define and advance the adoption of new behaviours, technologies and roles for repositories and their interaction with other value added services
	5. Increase the sustainability and effectiveness of the organization and strengthen the COAR brand

Activities

COAR's activities are organized according to the five strategic directions:

	1. Advocate for the important role of a distributed, international network of open repositories in advancing open science and bibliodiversity
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Presentations and Keynotes: The COAR Executive Director and Executive Board delivered numerous presentations about the high level vision of COAR, the COAR Notify Project, Modernizing the Global Repository Network, and bibliodiversity, and other aspects of the COAR work. In addition, COAR staff, members and partners participated in numerous conferences, events and sessions related to open science, open access, and repositories.

United Nations 3rd Open Science Conference Kathleen Shearer, COAR Executive Director delivered a talk at the [3rd Open Science Conference](#), which took place at UN Headquarters in New York on February 8-10, 2023. The topic of the talk was reforming scholarly publishing and Kathleen emphasized that research knowledge and outputs should be considered a public good, emphasized that repositories support this vision and ensure greater equity in the system, and introduced the COAR Notify Project. The Conference was very well attended with over 2000 participants from around the world, reflecting the growing momentum and awareness of open science in the academy and beyond.

attributes of a data repository, and (2) a selection of examples that illustrate the approaches currently being taken by repositories to express and expose these attributes to users and user agents.

Asia OA: Asia OA is a special forum hosted by COAR in which members of the Asian open access community can share information, meet each other and build relationships. It has a mailing list and organizes meetings to facilitate greater exchange beyond national boundaries. The Asia OA community has been adapting the COAR Community Framework into a checklist to enable repository managers to assess their operations. This framework will be available in spring 2023.

LIBSENSE Africa: COAR is a partner in [LIBSENSE](#), an initiative that is led by WACREN (West and Central African Research and Education Network), and the other regional RENS in Africa. LIBSENSE brings together the major players in Africa to advance the adoption of open science on the continent, bridging across countries and stakeholder communities. COAR contributes to LIBSENSE by bringing in an international perspective to those discussions, assists with the development of the LIBSENSE strategy, participates in committee meetings, and provides expertise about repositories and related topics when needed. In the last year, COAR participated in several meetings organized by LIBSENSE to raise awareness of open science, support the development of local infrastructure, and develop open science policies in various countries.

Collaboration with LA Referencia, Latin America: LA Referencia, the open access network representing ten Latin American countries, is an important partner for COAR and provides a mechanism for engaging with the repository community in that region. All LA Referencia members are members of COAR. COAR works closely with LA Referencia, ensuring that the Latin American perspective is reflected in international alignment activities, and that LA Referencia has strong connections with other regional networks, such as OpenAIRE and LIBSENSE. This year, COAR, LA Referencia, and CONARE (Consejo Nacional de Rectores, Costa Rica) have been working together to produce the COAR Annual Meeting 2023, which takes place in San José, Costa Rica in May 2023.



3. Promote alignment and interoperability across repositories, repository networks, and between repositories and other systems and services



Supporting multilingual and non-English content in repositories: In August 2022, COAR launched the [COAR Task Force on Supporting Multilingualism and non-English Content in Repositories](#) to develop and promote good practices for repositories in managing multilingual and non-English content. Multilingualism is a critical characteristic of a healthy, inclusive, and diverse research communications landscape. The Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication asserts that the disqualification of local or national languages in academic publishing is the most important – and often forgotten – factor that prevents societies from using and taking advantage of the research done where they live. While the dominant position of a lingua franca – English – is useful for the widespread dissemination of ideas across the world, it also impedes the use of research results at the local level. In November 2022, the Task Force published its first output, recommending that ***all records in the repository include a tag in the language metadata field that identifies the language of the resource, and a tag that identifies the language of the metadata (even if the resources are in English)***. A community consultation will be launched in April or May 2023 to get feedback on a number of other draft recommendations.

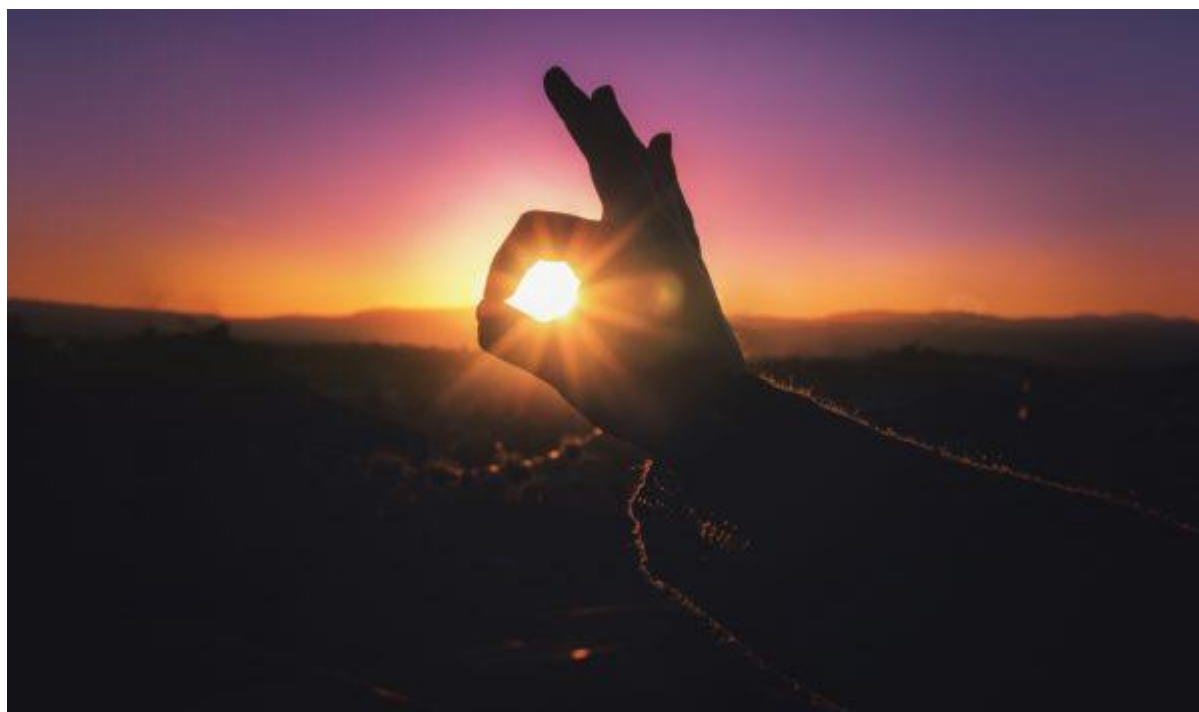
COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories, Version 2: In July 2022, COAR published version 2 of the [COAR Community Framework for Good Practices in Repositories](#), which provides a global, multidimensional framework for good practices in repositories that can be applied to different types of repositories (publication, institutional, data, etc.) and across geographical and thematic contexts. The second version was developed based on a review of version 1 by the COAR Repository Assessment Working Group, and with widespread community input through a public consultation process. This version contains “Essential” and “Desired” Criteria in eight areas: (1) Discovery, (2) Access,

(3) Reuse, (4) Integrity and Authenticity, (5) Quality Assurance, (6) Preservation, (7) Sustainability and Governance, and (8) Other Areas. The 2nd version includes a number of new criteria and clarifies the wording of others. As with the previous version, COAR invites interested parties to translate the framework into their own language and which can be linked to from the webpage.

Directory of Open Access Preprint Repositories: In October 2022, the Centre pour la Communication Scientifique Directe (CCSD) of France and COAR launched the [Directory of Open Access Preprint Repositories](#). The directory is built on the outcomes of a project undertaken by the French Committee for Open Science (Preprints Platforms Project) and supported by the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), which developed an extensive and detailed catalogue of preprint repositories. The current directory of preprints contains over 90 preprint repositories along with details about their management, functionalities, and related services and their relation to open science criteria. As part of the collaboration, COAR is hosting the preprint directory and CCSD is curating the metadata records ensuring the registry remains up-to-date.



4. Define and advance the adoption of new behaviours, technologies and roles for repositories and their interaction with other value added services



The COAR Notify Initiative: The [COAR Notify Initiative](#), which is developing and implementing a standard protocol for connecting the content in the distributed repository network with peer reviews and assessments in external services, using linked data notifications. In May 2023, COAR was awarded a US\$4 million grant from Arcadia (a charitable foundation that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge) towards the initiative. The funding from Arcadia has allowed COAR to accelerate and expand current activities, in particular providing assistance to

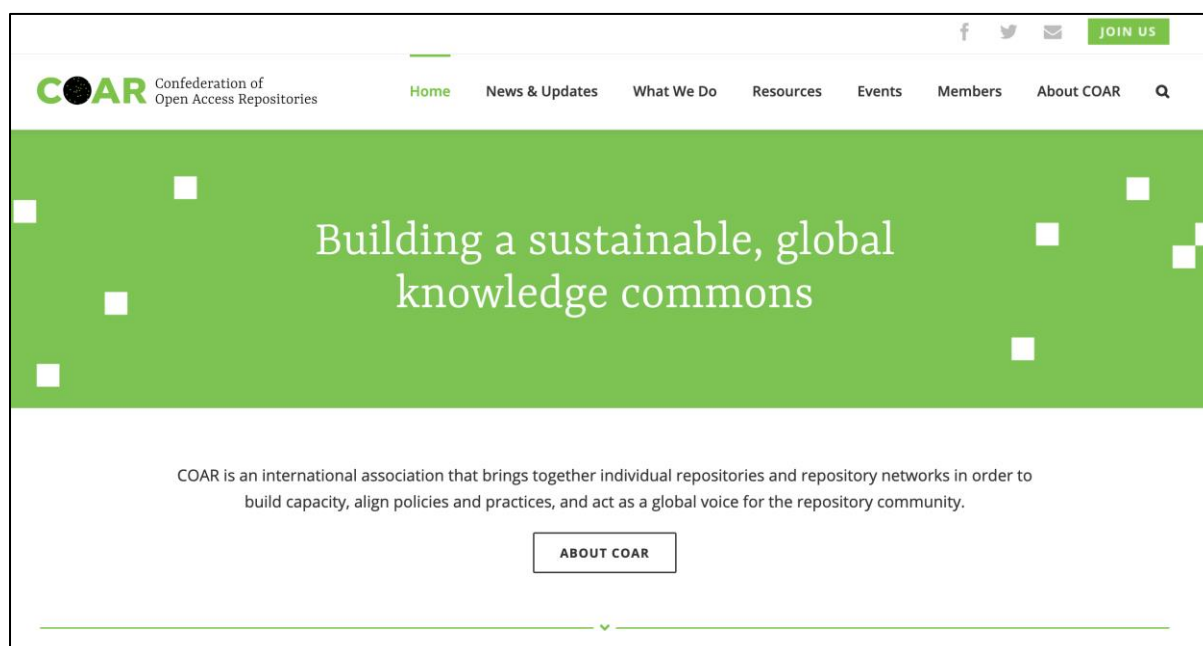
implementing partners with financial and technical support for implementing COAR Notify Protocol. First phase partners are at various stages of implementation, however it is anticipated that there will be at least one working demonstration of COAR Notify by early summer 2023. We also aim to ensure that the functionality is widely available in open source platforms, so that many different organizations and services can participate in the Notify-enabled ecosystem.

Recommended Practices for Managing Preprints in Generalist and Institutional Repositories: Currently there are numerous gaps in geographic and domain coverage and some authors will choose to deposit their research outputs into another type of repository, such as an institutional or generalist repository. For example, many existing preprint servers only allow submissions in English, which limits the options for researchers who work in other languages, or researchers may want to have their preprint hosted in their own country or region to comply with national policies or other preferences. It is clear, therefore, that institutional and generalist repositories have an important role to play in supporting preprint sharing worldwide. To address these gaps, COAR and ASAPbio launched a working group to identify good practices for collecting preprints which, in December 2022, published [Ten Recommended Practices for Managing Preprints in Generalist and Institutional Repositories](#) that can be implemented by repositories. The practices fall into three areas: linking, discovery, and editorial processes. While many of these practices are not currently in use by institutional and generalist repositories, we hope that the recommendations will encourage repositories around the world that collect preprints to begin to apply them locally.

Directory of Preprint Repositories: In February 2022, le Centre pour la Communication Scientifique Directe (CCSD) of France and COAR launched a [Directory of Open Access Preprint Repositories](#). This directory provides a list of preprint repositories that are available to the research community. It helps researchers find the most appropriate platform for them, enabling them to browse through existing repositories by discipline, location, language, functionalities, and other facets. The directory is jointly managed by CCSD and COAR. The data in this directory was originally compiled through the GPPdP (Groupe Projet Plateformes de Prepublications) project, with financial support from the French Ministry of Research's Open Science Committee.



5. Increase the sustainability and effectiveness of the organization and strengthen the COAR brand



Presentations, Statements and Community Engagement: COAR is an active participant in community dialogue related to open science. COAR representatives attend numerous conferences, events and sessions related to open science, open access, and repositories. These activities ensure that the visibility and recognition of COAR continues to increase over time. Many of these presentations are publicly available, several of which are linked to at the end of the report.

New Jurisdiction for the Legal Seat of COAR: Since its inception in 2009, COAR has been hosted by Göttingen State and University Library, which has provided significant support for the organization, especially in terms of navigating the requirements of a not-for-profit organization in Germany. After in-depth analysis and member consultations, the COAR Executive Board has decided to move the legal seat of COAR from Germany to the Netherlands. This will involve the dissolution of the current COAR e.V. (eingetragener Verein) and creation of the COAR Foundation (Stichting) in the Netherlands. The COAR Executive Director and Executive Board have been working closely with a German lawyer and Dutch notary to ensure the process will be smooth and according to requirements of both jurisdictions, and the process is planned for June 2023, once it has been approved by the COAR Members.

Organisation & Governance

Membership

In the 2022-2023, COAR had 3 new institutional members and 2 new special members from Nepal, South Africa, Sudan and the United States. At the same time, one institution ended their membership during 2022.

Current membership changes over the last 4 years are outlined in the table below:

	Full Single Members	Consortia (# of institutions)	Special members	Supporting organizations	Total members	Partners
March 2020	123	2 (19)	5	1	148	8
April 2021	113	2 (23)	5	1	142	8
April 2022	120	2 (23)	5	1	149	8
April 2023	122	2 (23)	7	1	153	8

TABLE 1: Change of Membership April 2020 - April 2023

New members since April 2022:

Single members:

- Dag Hammarskjöld Library
- Iberoamerican Science and Education Consortium
- University of Pretoria









Special members:

- Nepal Research and Education Network
- Almayzab Digital Library

Governance

Executive Board: The COAR Executive Board takes the lead on major strategic decisions regarding the activity areas of COAR as well the overall responsibility for the organization and its finances. A focus of discussions during the past year has been to move the Next Generation Repository vision to implementation, as well as ensuring greater financial sustainability of the organizations. The Executive Board meets every two or three months via teleconference with typically one face-to-face meeting during the COAR Annual Meeting (which has been virtual since 2020 due to COVID).

COAR Executive Board 2021-2024

				
<p>Martha Whitehead (Chairperson) Vice President for the Harvard Library and University Librarian USA</p>	<p>Kazu Yamaji (Vice-Chairperson) Professor and Director of Research Center for Open Science and Data Platform, National Institute of Informatics JAPAN</p>	<p>William Nixon (Treasurer) Assistant Director, University of Glasgow SCOTLAND, UK</p>		
				
<p>Bianca Amaro General coordinator, Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology BRAZIL</p>	<p>Virginia Barbour Director, Open Access Australasia AUSTRALIA</p>	<p>Isabel Bernal DIGITAL.CSIC Repository Manager, Spanish National Research Council SPAIN</p>	<p>Iryna Kuchma Open Access Programme Manager, EIFL LITHUANIA/UKRAINE</p>	<p>Omo Oaiya Chief Strategy Officer, WACREN (West and Central African Research and Education Network) GHANA</p>

COAR Office

The main administrative tasks for COAR are managed by the University of Minho in Portugal. While the legal seat and permanent contact point of COAR is at the Göttingen State and University Library, Göttingen, Germany, which continues to manage the legal affairs of COAR through in-kind contributions.

COAR currently has approximately 2 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) in total staffing, split over several persons and locations. Kathleen Shearer is Executive Director and co-PI for the COAR Notify Initiative. Carla Marques, based at the University of Minho Library, is head of the COAR office. COAR also contracts with other subject experts / consultants for programme support and technical consultancy.

COAR Community Groups



ASAPbio/COAR Working Group on Preprints in Institutional or Generalist Repositories: This Working Group is developing good practice recommendations for the management of preprints in repositories in generalist and institutional repositories

COAR Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Board: This group aims to develop and maintain controlled vocabularies for repositories to enhance the interoperability across repositories and with other related systems such as harvesters, CRIS systems, data repositories and publishers.

COAR Task Force on Supporting Multilingualism and non-English Content in Repositories: Is developing and promoting good practices for repositories in managing multilingual and non-English content. The task force is focusing on identifying good practices for metadata, multilingual keywords, user interfaces, translations, formats, licenses, and indexing that will improve the visibility of multilingual and non-English content across the world. Some of the use cases that are driving the recommended practices are as follows.

Next Generation Repositories (NGR) Expert Group: This group monitors and promotes the adoption of Next Generation Repositories technical recommendations and monitors the environment for new technologies appropriate for repositories.

Repository Assessment Working Group: This working group maintains the COAR Community Framework for Good Practices in Repositories.

Asia OA: Asia OA is a special forum hosted by COAR in which members of the Asian open access community can share information, meet each other and build relationships. It has a mailing list and organizes meetings to facilitate greater exchange beyond national boundaries. It celebrates Asian cultural diversity and unique way of doing things. The aim is to support information sharing through a mailing list and organize regular in-person meetings in Asian countries.

Funding

From May 2021- April 2022, COAR received funding from the following sources:

Membership Fees: All regular members contribute through the annual fee of 750 EURs. Invoices are sent to members in the 1st quarter of the year. A small number of supporting members pay an additional fee of 2000 EURs. Funding through membership fees supports the permanent functioning of the association and represents about two-thirds of the annual budget.

Arcadia Funding for the Notify Project: COAR received the first of four installments of the grant from Arcadia in July 2022.

French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation: Funding from the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation was provided to COAR to develop the platform supporting the Directory of Open Access Preprint Repositories.

Annual Meeting Registration Fees: A small amount of funding was received by in-person participants, which covered the costs of catering for the meeting.

Benefits In-Kind: Several institutions provide significant staff time in contributing to the different activities of COAR. Especially generous contributions have been made by Göttingen State and University Library, which is the legal seat of the organization, the University of Minho Library, Portugal for providing rent-free office space and infrastructure, and the University of Vienna Library, which is hosting the COAR Controlled Vocabularies.

Annual Meeting



COAR Annual Meeting 2022: The COAR Annual Meeting 2022 took place in Madrid on May 17-20 in a hybrid format, with about 30 in-person attendees and over 100 online participants. The meeting was hosted by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the theme of the meeting was “Radical Transformation of Scholarly Communications”. Keynote speaker Bjoern Brembs, argued for the need to change the current system of scholarly communications to one of “interoperable research objects that are dynamic and

version controlled, can be searched and text mined, are available immediately, support different types of post publication review, recognize diverse contributions, and are open to everyone”. This set the stage for a large number of discussions about strategic directions for repositories and their collective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which was the basis for COAR’s communications strategy. Recordings and presentations are on the [Annual Meeting webpage](#).

COAR Resources

- [COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories, Version 2](#)
- [COAR Controlled Vocabularies](#)
- [COAR Notify Protocol Technical Documentation](#)
- [COAR Repository Toolkit](#)
- [COAR Website](#)
- [Directory of Open Access Preprint Repositories](#)

Selective List of Presentations and Recordings

[Presentations and recordings](#) from the COAR Annual Meeting in Madrid, May 18-20

Kathleen Shearer’s [interview on Repositories and Open Research Podcast](#), Jisc, May 2022

Various [presentations](#) about the COAR Notify Project to the Open Repositories Conference, June 2022

[Recording](#) of Kathleen Shearer and others in webinar, Challenges for Institutional and Academic Repositories, June 14, 2022

Kathleen Shearer’s [presentation](#) at FSCI 2022: Open Access, Biodiversity and Research Assessment Reform Across Borders, July 206, 2022

Kathleen Shearer’s [presentation](#) from the Ghana Open Science Symposium, October 19, 2022

Kathleen Shearer’s [presentation](#) about COAR Notify at the Open Peer Review Workshop (beginning on slide 233), December 1-2, 2023

Martha Whitehead’s [presentation](#) to the National Institutes of Health, Generalist Repository Community, January 24, 2023

Kathleen Shearer’s [presentation](#) to the UN Open Science Conference, February 8-10, 2023

Kathleen Shearer and Eloy Rodrigues’ [presentation](#) about COAR Notify to OpenAIRE, February 24, 2023