

LIBSENSE in AfricaConnect3

Africa needs affordable access to scholarly content to curate and generate new knowledge and provide solutions to local challenges. Local knowledge should also be available at a global level to provide insights into global issues.

The LIBSENSE initiative emerged to exploit the growing trend towards freely available scholarly content, as well as free and open channels for the dissemination of academic information. In this next step, it will integrate the needs of libraries and NRENs with the strategic development of shared Open Access infrastructure.

With current and future partners, the African regional RENs will support the LIBSENSE initiative in the [AfricaConnect3](#) project to open doors for the full participation of new African voices in the scholarly communication landscape.

At the heart of this action is the concept that these free and open dissemination channels should become mainstream for academic and research institutions in Africa in order for the content to be equitably shared. Specific support will therefore be provided to:



1. **Establish a framework for sustainable Open Access repository and journal development in Africa** - Lessons learned from the [Africa-wide surveys and workshops](#) demonstrated critical concerns regarding the development and support for librarians' digital skill sets, especially to support Open Access. In all three regions, (human, technical, and resource) capabilities were seen to be a major issue leading to deficiencies in skill sets.

This first task will, therefore, continue the work of the LIBSENSE workshops by establishing a framework to guide the development of two open access initiatives; Open Access Repositories (OARs) and Open Access Journals (OAJs). Since the community of beneficiaries effectively owns these activities, it is expected that skills and practice will be embedded within the community and thus enable sustainability after the completion of the project.

2. **Operate a shared Open Access repository and a Research Data Management platform** - The goal here is the provision of a community cloud service in the form of a hosted general-purpose open-access repository for NRENs. Based on software developed under the European OpenAIRE program, it will allow researchers in African NRENs to deposit data sets, research software, reports, and any other research-related digital artifacts.

RENs in Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire are in early stages pilots of National Open Access Repositories in their countries. There are also ongoing discussions to exploit the outcomes in the development of the [RUFORUM Knowledge Hub](#)

3. **Engage with content providers and implement federated identity management for libraries** - This activity involves building on the groundwork laid for a full-fledged identity management service in [eduID.africa](#). The aim is to improve the access of LIBSENSE communities to research portals that provide free or very low-cost access to major journals such as Research4Life.

Another benefit will be the increased ability of LIBSENSE communities to securely authenticate and identify their users, organise them in groups, assign them roles, and centrally manage access rights for using community resources.