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Open Science Strategy

at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

USB Open Science Team

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Open Science

Open science represents a modern approach to conducting research that emphasises transparency and accessibility, fostering collaboration, reproducibility, and dissemination, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness and societal impact of research outcomes.

The University of South Bohemia (hereinafter referred to also as USB) acknowledges open science as a key component of modern, responsible, and trustworthy research and, as a result, incorporates and promotes it in all its strategic documents. To support this vision, USB issues this Open Science Strategy outlining the goals, objectives, and an overall framework for developing the **infrastructure, policies, and culture** necessary to support open science practices institution-wide.

1.2 Current Institutional Context

Currently, open science at USB is centrally supported through a dedicated webpage, seminars organised by the USB Academic Library, and presentations by external open science experts. The Academic Library promotes open science by organising Open Access Week. The vice-rector for Science and Research provides strategic leadership and integrates open science into institutional research policies. Faculty and individual researchers are responsible for applying open science practices in their research, while IT departments provide the technical infrastructure and maintain the DSpace-based institutional repository for storing and disseminating publications. However, USB currently lacks a centralised perspective on its open science activities, including data production, data management, open access practices, and citizen science. To address this issue, this Open Science Strategy has been formulated to facilitate structured implementation and institutional alignment.

To achieve its goals, USB will use funding from the *Operational Programme Jan Amos Comenius Research Environment* project, which, over the next two years, will provide a solid foundation for implementing policies that promote open science, empowering infrastructure, enhancing public engagement, integrating open science into research careers, and offering comprehensive support for researchers.

1.3 Purpose of this Strategy

This Open Science Strategy aligns USB with key international and European principles and best practices that guide open, transparent, and collaborative research. By integrating these principles into its institutional framework, USB strengthens its commitment to transparency, integrity, and cooperation within the European Research Area and the global research community.

To ensure a successful transition to open science, institutional structures must evolve to fully integrate open science activities into professional practice and to provide appropriate recognition and rewards. This demands systemic changes in research assessment and institutional policies, ensuring that contributions such as open data, open-access publications, and citizen science initiatives are valued alongside traditional research outputs.



USB is committed to creating an open, transparent, and collaborative research ecosystem through this Open Science Strategy. By 2028, USB aims to develop a clear policy framework for open access and data management, establish a professional institutional repository for research data and publications, promote citizen science, and integrate open science achievements into researchers' evaluations. Researchers may receive recognition in performance evaluations for publishing in open-access journals, depositing FAIR-compliant datasets in a data repository, participating in citizen science projects, or contributing to open science training and outreach activities. This strategy will ensure that open science becomes an integral part of the university's identity, creating a culture of excellence, trust, and societal impact in research.

As an inevitable part of setting up and maintaining this Open Science Strategy, USB will continuously monitor, evaluate, and make necessary adjustments to its implementation and impact.



2 Introduction

2.1 USB Research Mission

USB presents itself as an educational and research institution focused on the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Despite its relatively short history, it has already become an important centre of science and research, nationally and internationally, across many fields. USB actively cooperates with hundreds of universities and other research organisations worldwide, in part due to its two unique research infrastructures, the South Bohemian Research Centre for Aquaculture and Biodiversity of Hydrocenoses CENAKVA in Vodňany¹ and the Josef Svoboda Czech Arctic Research Station in Svalbard².

The fundamental mission of USB as a research organisation, formulated in the USB Strategic Plan for 2021-2030³, is to “independently perform basic and applied research or experimental development and publicly disseminate the results of these activities by instruction, publishing, or knowledge transfer”. The USB Strategic Plan is USB’s key management tool. Its Objective 2.2 “Social relevance of research”, moreover, states: “The social relevance of research is one of the foundational pillars of higher education institution evaluation. [...] We will concurrently further support the openness of science by focusing on an intelligible presentation of important results of research to the public, as well as by making the results of our scientific staff accessible to the scientific public via open science instruments. [...]”

2.2 USB Research Strategy

In 2024, USB issued the USB Research Strategy⁴, a policy document that articulates the direction, goals, and values we aim to achieve in the research process and intend to continue promoting, supporting, and valuing from the institutional level down to individual research staff. While the USB Strategic Plan sets out concrete steps to further strengthen the USB’s position in, among other things, research, the aim of the USB Research Strategy is to define a more general framework for science and research at USB, including the creation and cultivation of an environment for the successful implementation of the USB Strategic Plan. This more general framework also integrates a number of other important USB regulations related to science and research, such as the USB Code of Conduct⁵, the USB Gender Equality Plan⁶, regulations related to open science or the recognition of our researchers, aiming to establish a USB science and research ecosystem in which it is a pleasure to conduct science and research and where the achieved results contribute to the development of society and meet generally accepted scientific standards such as accuracy, credibility, reproducibility and accessibility.

¹ <https://www.frov.jcu.cz/en/faculty/faculty-parts/south-bohemian-research-centre-for-aquaculture-and-biodiversity-of-hydrocenoses-cenakva>

² <https://www.prf.jcu.cz/en/faculty/departments/czech-arctic-research-station>

³ <https://www.jcu.cz/en/university/documents/long-term-strategic-plan-of-the-usb>

⁴ <https://www.jcu.cz/en/science-and-research/research-strategy>

⁵ <https://www.jcu.cz/en/university/university-bodies/ethics-committee>

⁶ <https://www.jcu.cz/en/science-and-research/research-and-gender>



In its Objective 3 “Social relevance of science and research”, Sub-objective 3.2 “Striving for open and engaged research”, topic “Sharing knowledge as openly as possible”, the USB Research Strategy says: “The popularisation of science and its communication to the broadest public, as well as open access to scientific publications, data, and all processes of the research life cycle, is the basis for trustworthy and publicly supported science today. We advocate for open access to our scientific results, as this provides the basis for the widest possible sharing of knowledge. We are building our own open platforms for sharing scientific publications and data. We will strive to inform the public as fully as possible about our scientific activities and offer our experts and their knowledge. We will always present our knowledge in a contextual way, clearly communicating the uncertainty and limitations of relevant results. We will support our scientists who will seek to understand society's problems and engage in participatory research. We value those who participate in such activities and in such a way.”

2.3 Dedication to Open Science at USB

Both the USB Strategic Plan and the USB Research Strategy thus clearly express our dedication to implementing open science policies and practices in our everyday research, with particular focus on open access to research results (i.e., publications and accompanying data), research data, and participatory research (i.e., citizen science). Building on this dedication, USB presents this Open Science Strategy to outline how we plan to achieve it, defining the vision, goals, and framework needed to develop the infrastructure that supports Open Science practices across the university. Consequently, this strategy aims to enhance collaboration, transparency, reproducibility, and broad accessibility of our research achievements.

2.4 Alignment with International Frameworks

In formulating and implementing this strategy, USB is deeply committed to advancing open science in alignment with key international frameworks that establish and promote best practices in the field. Specifically, the university's approach is guided by the principles outlined in the European Commission's *Recommendation on Access to and Preservation of Scientific Information*⁷, the *European Open Science Cloud Strategic Implementation Plan*⁸, and the *UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science*⁹. These foundational documents serve as a blueprint for open, transparent, equitable, and sustainable science across national and institutional contexts. By aligning our research policies with these international standards, USB ensures that its scientific practices contribute to a global research environment built on

⁷ European Commission. (2018). Commission Recommendation (EU) 2018/790 of 25 April 2018 on access to and preservation of scientific information. Official Journal of the European Union. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2018/790/oj>

⁸ European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Jones, S. and Abramatic, J.-F., *European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) strategic implementation plan*, Jones, S. (editor) and Abramatic, J.-F. (editor), Publications Office, 2019, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/202370>

⁹ UNESCO. *UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science*. 23 Nov. 2021, UNESDOC digital library, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949>

collaboration, trust, and shared knowledge. This alignment also affirms USB's position as a proactive participant in the European Research Area and the global open science movement.

In any case, we already follow open science practices through our collaboration on national and international projects and research infrastructures (USB is a member of ELIXIR CZ, the Czech National Infrastructure for Biological Data) and our participation in EU consortia and ERICs (CENAKVA is part of the Danubius ERICs and is a member of the ESFRI projects eLTER and GenoPHEnix).

3 Vision

The University of South Bohemia strives to promote a research ecosystem where openness, transparency, trust, and collaboration are integral to all research endeavours. Through its Open Science Strategy, USB aims to increase its reputation and expand the European Research Area by implementing responsible research practices. USB will enhance the quality, credibility, and societal impact of its research by promoting open access to research outputs, fostering inclusive public engagement, and facilitating data sharing in accordance with the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) principles.



4 Objectives

A full transition to open science necessitates systemic adjustments to both institutional activities and individual academic practices. This strategy reflects the institutional perspective and prioritises the following five foundational elements:

Policy Implementation. Establishing clear rules and guidelines for open science.

Establish clear methodologies for open access, data management, and public engagement, aligned with national frameworks, to set rules and guidelines for following open science practices at USB.

Infrastructure Development. Building infrastructure for open science practices.

Enable open science through robust infrastructure by developing FAIR-compliant repositories and collaborative platforms, making open science practices technically feasible and sustainable and ensuring integration with national and international research infrastructures and global open science networks, such as EOSC, to support cross-border collaboration and wider reuse of research outputs.

Public Engagement. Encouraging citizen participation in scientific research.

Invite the community to contribute to data collection, analysis, and research design, making science participatory and relevant to real-world issues.

Career Integration. Incorporating open science into academic career paths.

Integrate open science contributions (e.g., open-access publications and data sharing) into academic evaluation processes and reward positive examples.

Researcher Support. Providing resources, links, information and training for researchers.

Provide workshops, mentoring, and resources to equip researchers and students with the skills necessary for open science.

Foundations of Open Science



Infrastructure Development

Building infrastructure for open science practices



Policy Implementation

Establishing clear rules and guidelines for open science



Public Engagement

Encouraging citizen participation in scientific research



Career Integration

Incorporating open science into academic career paths



Researcher Support

Providing resources and training for researchers



5 Current state

As of now, USB has made initial steps in open science with a dedicated webpage managed and maintained by the Academic Library, open science faculty coordinators, and data stewards at its two research faculties, while other faculties rely on the central Open Science Manager. However, there is no central data repository, and data management practices vary widely, with limited adherence to FAIR principles and to metadata standards. USB operates a DSpace repository primarily for students' theses, with most researchers utilising public repositories. Open-access publishing is supported through CzechELib membership and publisher tokens; however, Article Processing Charges remain a significant barrier. Training on open access has been provided, yet it is irregular. USB lacks a formal, comprehensive Open Science strategy and coordinated policies across faculties. Public engagement efforts exist but are not systematically monitored. Open Science activities are not yet integrated into career assessment, though revisions are planned to follow CoARA commitments¹⁰. Overall, USB supports open science through information dissemination and scattered initiatives, but requires a unified strategy, central infrastructure, specific legislation and structured support for researchers to fully implement its principles.

5.1 Policy Implementation

There is no central Open Science strategy at USB, and neither do the faculties have formal documents of this nature. Most faculties also lack specific recommendations on data management, although the Faculty of Fisheries and Protection of Waters and the Faculty of Science have mandatory guidelines for PhD candidates. Open science as a necessary institutional policy is included in the USB Strategic Plan for 2021–2030 and in the USB Research Strategy (see above), but only at a general policy level, as a proclamation without any follow-up strategy or action plan to achieve the desired state.

5.2 Infrastructure Development

Research data management. Two faculties with the highest scientific production, the Faculty of Fisheries and Protection of Waters and the Faculty of Science, have data stewards and basic legislation which help their researchers navigate through open science concepts such as FAIR principles, open vs. closed data, metadata standards, proper and reliable data repositories, and development and maintenance of Data Management Plans. The remaining six faculties, recognising a need for coordinated data management, use the central Open Science Manager. No central data repository exists at USB.

A questionnaire has recently been sent to all faculties, inquiring about faculty data management (data production and storage, types of research data, sensitivity of research data, existing practices and methodologies, openness of data, need for a university repository), and about which central services faculties would like to exploit. The results, serving as a basis for establishing a sound Open Science Strategy at USB, can be summarised as follows. The annual volume of data generated varies significantly across faculties, from about 1 TB to 150 TB, and includes tabular, pictorial, audiovisual, textual, and genomic data, as well as survey questionnaires, computer code, and e-lab diaries. None of the faculties has a

¹⁰ <https://www.coara.org/>



centralised storage system. Most faculties do not utilise or address FAIR or metadata standards. Also, most faculties do not have specific recommendations regarding data management, although the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Fisheries and Protection of Waters have mandatory guidelines for PhD candidates. Data storage and publication practices vary, are individual-specific, and commonly utilise general repositories. Sensitive data generation is common across faculties. Storage methods for sensitive data also vary, with some faculties lacking standardised procedures and others using secure faculty servers. No rules are set for the allocation of funds in project applications, data stewards, and data storage. Very limited educational activities exist in the field of research data management, FAIR principles, and open data. Most faculties express interest in centralised storage and repository services.

Open Access. USB runs its own article repository on the DSpace platform. It is now mainly used to store students' qualification theses (bachelor, master, doctoral, rigorous, and habilitation); over 40,000 of these are stored in it. It also stores openly accessible research papers (currently close to 500), yet most USB researchers use public article repositories such as Zenodo, arXiv, or bioRxiv.

The USB Academic Library is a member of the CzechELib consortium. The CzechELib National Centre ensures the purchase of key electronic resources for the entire research and education community in the Czech Republic and manages their use, including the collection of usage statistics. As a CzechELib member, USB has arranged discounts or fee waivers for open-access publishing with several publishers through their fully open-access or hybrid journals. However, this applies only to the corresponding authors affiliated with USB. In 2024, the Oxford University Press provided us with unlimited tokens, Wiley with 23, Springer with 13, and Taylor & Francis with 4. In 2023, 43 tokens were used; in 2024, 56 were used.

5.3 Public Engagement

Citizen science has become a steadily expanding part of open science activities at modern research universities, and the public has been engaged in science long before formal open science principles were introduced. Although some activities exist in this direction at USB, no central support is provided, and no monitoring or guidance is conducted at the central level.

5.4 Career Integration

Only limited recognition exists so far regarding open science activities at the individual researcher or research team level. There is no doubt that open science activities should be valued and incorporated into research assessment processes; the key actions leading to this are described later in this document.

Following the ten commitments outlined in the CoARA document "Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment," to which USB subscribed in 2023, all research assessment procedures at USB will undergo an audit that considers these commitments, and appropriate steps will be taken as needed. The Agreement sets a shared direction for changes in assessment practices for research, researchers, and research-performing organisations, aiming to maximise the quality and impact of research. Among other things, it strongly recommends considering the full range of research outputs, such as scientific publications, data, software, models, methods, theories, algorithms, protocols, workflows, exhibitions, strategies, and policy contributions, and reward research behaviour underpinning open science practices,



such as early knowledge and data sharing as well as open collaboration within science and collaboration with societal actors where appropriate. In 2024, USB published the Action Plan to achieve this goal, which will be implemented through 2028.

ORCID¹¹ is an open, non-proprietary, transparent, and community-based registry of unique identifiers for researchers. Each registered researcher is provided with a unique, persistent identifier that supports automated linkages across all their research-related activities. Many journals and database portals nowadays allow access upon entering an ORCID number. ORCID enables the aggregation of all researchers' information (affiliations, research output, and other research-related activities) in one place and the reuse of that information in an increasing number of locations. The OBD system at USB can be linked to an ORCID account, and vice versa, making it easier to keep the publication record up to date. The use of an ORCID number will be encouraged, and guidelines will be issued to help USB researchers interlink ORCID and OBD.

5.5 Researcher Support

Open science is centrally supported by disseminating accurate information on its various aspects through the dedicated webpage maintained by the USB Academic Library, seminars organised by the USB Academic Library (in 2020-2024, 542 such training sessions with 6,313 attendees were conducted), and occasional seminars by external open science experts. However, apart from those seminars, no formal, regular training is provided on open science. Also, the types and organisation of support for researchers do not currently have a solid basis.

Arguably, the Article Processing Charges (APCs) are nowadays the main obstacle to publishing in open-access journals. Some faculties allocate a portion of their budget to help pay APCs. For example, at the Faculty of Science, the open-access budget matches the annual needs. Still, it supports only high-profile papers (D1 or Q1 Web of Science-listed journals), and co-authors must co-finance the APCs. The situation is likely to worsen in the future. Between 2020 and 2023, approximately 537,900 EUR was spent on APCs in open-access journals at USB.

Support is also provided at the faculty level through dedicated faculty coordinators and data stewards, who assist researchers with data management plans, FAIR compliance, and open science practices. Currently, the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Fisheries have active data stewards supporting these activities. In addition, USB links its research infrastructure and repositories to international initiatives such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC).

¹¹ <https://orcid.org/>



6 Target state

The target state for open science at USB is to introduce a comprehensive open-access policy that supports both gold and green pathways, make all research data FAIR-compliant, and require mandatory data management plans for all research projects. Additionally, USB will establish a professional and secure institutional repository for publications and data by 2027. This will be developed in collaboration with expert partners to ensure adherence to ethical standards and institutional resilience and will be integrated with national and international data infrastructures. USB also aims to participate in initiatives such as EOSC (EOSC-CZ). Public engagement will be strengthened by promoting and supporting citizen science. Open science activities will be recognised in career assessments, in line with commitments from the CoARA Action Plan. Researcher support will include mandatory open science training for PhD candidates and new research staff, as well as seminars, workshops, and assistance with publishing and data management. Overall, USB aims for a coordinated, sustainable open science framework that promotes transparency, quality, and international collaboration.

6.1 Policy Implementation

The following list emphasises the major topics and the accompanying fundamental principles this strategy aims to promote:

Research Data Management Policy

- Ensuring commitment to FAIR Principles.
- Requiring researchers to create mandatory Data Management Plans at the university, faculty, and project levels, planning for data storage and long-term preservation, and ensuring research data is stored in institutional or discipline-specific repositories that comply with national and European infrastructures.
- Legal and ethical compliance.

Open Access Policy

- Ensuring commitment to open access principles by making research output freely accessible.
- Encouraging the use of Green Open Access through self-archiving publications and ensuring they are available under Creative Commons licences where possible.
- Repository and infrastructure compliance.

Citizen Science Policy

- Engaging the public in meaningful scientific research, promoting science literacy, and enhancing the societal impact of research.
- Making projects accessible to diverse participants, protecting participant rights, privacy, and data security.
- Encouraging deposition of citizen science datasets in institutional or open repositories.
- Making research outputs from citizen science projects open and accessible wherever possible.



- Protecting sensitive or personal data according to GDPR or local regulations.
- Encouraging engagement through workshops, events, or online platforms.

6.2 Infrastructure Development

Although we already have a rudimentary institutional publication and data repository, we plan to elevate it to a much higher professional level. This will enable USB to have a more comprehensive overview of the data it produces and to protect sensitive information, thereby contributing to our institutional resilience. Institutional data management strategy is a sign of excellence and adherence to ethical standards in science and research. We aim to have a working institutional data repository by 2027. The institutional publication repository also needs a revision and clear rules. More generally, we aim for:

- Creation of a fully functional institutional repository for publications and data.
- Integration with national and international data infrastructures.
- Building technical and staff capacity for open science.
- Linking with the USB Academic Library, the central IT department, and research administration.
- Implementing data management tools.
- Utilisation of available funding under national and international initiatives.

6.3 Public Engagement

- Promoting and supporting citizen science and public engagement.

6.4 Career Integration

- Setting up awards and recognition for activities in the field of open science.
- Rewarding research behaviour that underpins open science practices, such as early knowledge and data sharing, as well as open collaboration within science and with societal actors, in research assessment schemes at USB.
- Definition of basic mandatory standards. Basic mandatory standards include open-access publishing, FAIR data compliance, mandatory Data Management Plans (DMPs), and repository deposition.
- Making ORCID a mandatory researcher identifier at USB.

6.5 Researcher Support

- Ensuring mandatory training in open science for PhD candidates and new academic personnel.
- Organising seminars, workshops, and e-learning courses for students and researchers.
- Providing support for publishing in open journals and repositories.
- Providing training and full support in research data management.



7 Policy Implementation

Embedding open science into institutional policies ensures that USB practices comply with recognised, widely adopted standards for openness, data management, and the public dissemination of research outputs. The open science policies and methodologies arising from this strategy will apply to all research outputs produced at USB, including publications, data, and software. They will ensure consistent practice across disciplines while respecting their specific differences (such as field-specific differences between STEM and SSH subjects). The policies and methodologies will comply with national legislation and regulations of funding providers (such as Horizon Europe or the Czech Science Foundation), as well as recommendations from internationally recognised open science frameworks (such as EOSC) and ESFRI research infrastructures. Indeed, the new Act on Research, Development, Innovation, and Knowledge Transfer (Act No. 328/2025 Coll.) directly addresses Open Science. Its principles are not only part of the general definitions but are also addressed in a dedicated section covering Sharing Research Information and Access to Research Data. The developed policies will be reviewed annually and updated to maintain alignment with evolving standards and regulations.

7.1 Institutional Policy Development

- Establish a USB Open Science Team with data stewards, faculty representatives, the USB Academic Library representatives, and the central IT department representatives.
- Integrate Open Science principles into USB's broader strategic plans and research policies.
- Oversee the implementation of the strategy and communicate regularly with university research staff and administration.
- Develop and approve comprehensive open science policies and methodologies, outlining researchers' and students' obligations and institutional support mechanisms.

7.2 Policy Provisions and Guidelines

Purpose and Scope

These policy provisions and guidelines outline the USB's expectations of its researchers regarding the publication of their research outputs and the management of data generated by their research. They also define the roles of the individuals and services that support these processes throughout the research data lifecycle.

If research is funded by a third party, any agreement regarding data storage and access with that party shall take precedence over this policy.

Institutional Repository

USB will establish and maintain an institutional repository to store publications and research data, with various access modes, including open access.

The repository will:



- Facilitate accessibility: Assist researchers in making their publications and data widely accessible.
- Ensure compliance: Adhere to current national and European infrastructure standards and align with the FAIR principles.
- Provide secure storage: Serve as a central platform for the long-term and secure storage of USB's research outputs.

Open Access Publications

USB is committed to promoting Open Access (OA) to maximise the visibility, accessibility, and impact of its research. Researchers are required, where possible, to make their research output openly available through one or more of the following routes:

Green Open Access:

Researchers are required to deposit accepted versions (preprints or postprints) of their published articles in a certified public repository, while adhering to publisher embargoes and licensing terms. They must also ensure that the publication's metadata is stored in the institutional repository, allowing it to be linked to the full text and made discoverable through the university's platform.

Gold or Diamond Open Access:

Researchers are encouraged to publish in open-access journals that make articles freely available immediately upon publication.

In all cases, researchers should ensure the application of appropriate open licenses (e.g., Creative Commons) in line with publisher and funder requirements.

Persistent Identifiers

USB recommends that all researchers establish and maintain the ORCID identifier (and possibly additional identifiers) and include it in their publications and data to ensure proper attribution and enhance the discoverability of their work.

Research Data Management

Researchers are responsible for implementing good data management practices throughout the research lifecycle. Each researcher shall:

- Implement the FAIR principles in managing research data.
- Ensure adequate security and regular backups of research data.
- Use the institutional repository as the primary platform for storing research data.
- Store data in formats suitable for long-term preservation.
- Create detailed metadata for stored datasets and include any additional relevant documentation.
- Link data records to related publications.
- Follow the principle of “as open as possible, as closed as necessary” when making research data publicly available, balancing openness with ethical, legal, or contractual obligations.

Handling Sensitive Data

- Develop a dedicated policy for management, storage, and sharing of sensitive data (e.g., personal information, ethically restricted content, commercially confidential results).
- Ensure all activities comply with GDPR and other relevant privacy laws.
- Mandate anonymisation, secure access controls, and explicit consent procedures for sensitive or personal data, with regular audits and risk assessments overseen by the Data Protection Officer and faculty ethics committees for research.

Ethical Standards and Licensing

- Define clear ethical standards for data collection, sharing, and publication.
- Standardise licensing procedures to ensure proper intellectual property management and reusability.

Repository and Archiving Guidelines

- Detail requirements for depositing USB-generated data and outputs in the institutional repository.
- Establish metadata standards for interoperability and reusability.

Citizen Science

USB recognises citizen science as an integral and valued mode of research and public engagement, which supports scientific discovery and societal relevance. The university will monitor and evaluate citizen science activities, publishing periodic reports on participation, outputs, impacts, and lessons learned to continuously improve the practice. Data and metadata produced through citizen science shall be managed in accordance with the institutional research data policy and, where feasible, stored in the institutional repository or approved external repositories, and made discoverable and reusable under appropriate licensing.

To support the effective implementation and the responsible practice of citizen science, USB will:

- Recognise and value citizen science contributions within institutional evaluation, dissemination, and public engagement activities.
- Monitor and assess citizen science initiatives through qualitative and quantitative metrics—such as participation rates, data quality, research outputs, community benefits, and data reuse—and publish periodic reports on their outcomes.
- Address ethical, legal, and logistical considerations in all citizen science projects, including data protection and privacy, intellectual property, informed consent, and the inclusion of diverse participant groups.
- Ensure data management compliance by aligning citizen science data with institutional research data policies, including the use of institutional repositories, adherence to appropriate metadata standards, application of FAIR principles, and the use of persistent identifiers.



- Clarify participant rights and responsibilities, including consent procedures, anonymity, data ownership, intellectual property, and liability, particularly when involving non-professional contributors in research.
- Ensure full compliance with relevant national and international regulations (e.g., GDPR) when citizen science activities involve sensitive or personal data.

7.3 Timelines and Milestones

Phase 1 (2026): Draft Institutional Policies

- Develop draft versions of the Research Data Management, Open Access, and Citizen Science Policies. Align all drafts with FAIR principles and EOSC standards, emphasising metadata quality, data access and licensing, and repository usage protocols.
- Share draft policies among key stakeholders for consultation and feedback to ensure practicality and institutional relevance.

Phase 2 (2026): Policy Feedback and Validation

- Organise validation workshops and stakeholder meetings to review and refine the draft policies.
- Incorporate stakeholder and expert feedback to ensure clarity, enforceability, and alignment with institutional priorities.
- Finalise policy texts and implementation guidelines.
- Ensure approval of final policy texts by adequate USB bodies.

Phase 3 (2026-2027): Policy Dissemination

- Communicate approved policies across USB via official channels (emails, internal documentation, webinars, and training workshops).
- Publish final policies and guidelines on the institutional website to ensure open access and transparency

Phase 4 (2027): Next Steps

- Gather ongoing feedback from users to refine policies and improve adherence.
- Align future updates with evolving EOSC standards and emerging best practices in open science.
- Establish mechanisms to monitor adherence to policies and identify areas for enhancement.

7.4 Monitoring Progress

Monitoring mechanisms:

- Regular progress reporting to the rector's steering group.
- Feedback channels: meetings, surveys, email responses.
- Training logs: attendance and completion records from workshops/webinars.



- Repository analytics: repository submissions, metadata compliance, licensing accuracy, and usage logs.

KPIs:

- Research projects complying with current legislation and institutional guidelines.
- Number of Data Management Plans submitted or created.
- Number of training sessions delivered.
- Policy adoption rate (number of faculties/departments compliant).
- Number of policy dissemination events (workshops, communication actions).
- Policy dissemination reach (% of institutional departments receiving and acknowledging policy dissemination).
- Policy update cycle (frequency of policy updates/refinements based on user feedback).
- Policy compliance rate (% of repository submissions compliant with the new policies).

7.5 Gantt Chart

Task Name	2026			2027			2028		
Draft Institutional Policies									
Share draft policies for consultation									
Validation workshops & stakeholder meetings									
Finalise policy texts & implementation guidelines									
Policy Dissemination									
Establish adherence monitoring mechanisms									



8 Infrastructure Development

USB shall ensure that all scholarly outputs of researchers, lecturers, and all university employees are made publicly available in the most open and FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) manner possible. This approach maximises the impact, transparency, and societal value of academic work.

Outputs to be shared openly and FAIRly include datasets (e.g., research data, analysed data, databases, collected datasets, clinical data), publications (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, preprints, conference papers), software (e.g., algorithms, source codes, computer models), research protocols, prototypes, etc.

To fully support open and FAIR research practices, the university's infrastructures must be designed and managed to maximise efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability while upholding core academic values. Supporting infrastructures must enable researchers and students to share and manage their outputs in the most efficient and user-friendly way possible. All infrastructures should be built to continuously protect academic freedom, integrity, and autonomy. This includes maintaining standards for data security, privacy, and ethical management of research outputs.

Sustainable funding for maintenance and personnel will be obtained from the USB budget, developmental project sources, and research projects that support the funding of open science experts, such as data curators and stewards.

8.1 Institutional Data Repository

Establish a sustainable institutional data repository that ensures secure, long-term storage and access to research data, thereby facilitating the preservation of research findings. Ensure the repository adheres to the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable). Integrate the repository with national and European Open Science infrastructures, as well as with selected field-specific and general open repositories. Ensure the repository supports:

- Generally accepted metadata structure.
- Persistent identifiers (e.g., DOIs).
- Metadata exports and harvesting via OAI-PMH and other protocols.
- Allowing researchers to link their ORCID during data deposit and including ORCID as a standard field in the metadata schema.

8.2 Research Data Management Procedures

Clearly define procedures for handling data generated at USB:

- Data management planning from project initiation, with a mandatory Data Management Plan (DMP) included in the PhD Individual Study Plan.
- Depositing datasets in the institutional repository post-project.
- Licensing and embargo procedures.
- Encouraging the use of persistent identifiers and proper metadata standards.



- Mandatory metadata registration for all research data.

8.3 Open Science Webpage

Redesign and transform the existing webpage into a comprehensive Open Science portal that includes:

- Guidance on FAIR data and Open Access publishing.
- Institutional policies, reusable templates, and practical how-to documentation.
- Links to repository submission guidelines, legal resources, and support contacts, ensuring researchers can navigate Open Science procedures and obligations with clarity.

8.4 Timelines and Milestones

Phase 1 (2026-2027): Development of information and communication policy

- Transform the current institutional open science webpage into a modern and comprehensive information hub.
- Establish USB Data Policy.
- Develop guidelines and procedures for handling data generated at USB.
- Define sensitive data, survey their production at USB and ensure its security.
- Develop clear and simple guidelines on management planning and train academic personnel in following them and handling the relevant supporting data management tools.

Phase 2 (2026-2027): Institutional data repository development

- Agree on the general architecture and specific services of the data repository.
- Discuss and set up metadata structure that aligns with accepted guidelines and protocols.
- Evaluate and secure hardware requirements needed for running the data repository.
- Test and pilot developed data repository to assess functionality, usability, and compliance with FAIR principles, as well as harvesting, testing data exchange and compatibility.
- Formulate and publish guidelines on using the developed data repository.
- Conduct training and awareness sessions for researchers and repository managers on metadata quality, FAIR principles, and compliance with EOSC standards.
- Launch the fully operational repository institution-wide, ensuring compliance with FAIR principles.
- Fully integrate institutional repository metadata harvesting into the EOSC infrastructure, ensuring continuous data flow and updates.
- Conduct ongoing optimisation, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure sustainability and adoption.
- Develop a strategy for sustainable management of open science activities at USB after 2028 (funding, maintenance, development, personnel, etc.)



8.5 Monitoring Progress

Monitoring mechanisms:

- Regular progress reporting to the rector's steering group.
- Regular meetings with the data repository developers.
- Metadata harvesting logs or endpoint test results.
- Online surveys and/or feedback forms.

KPIs:

- Functional Data Repository and Interface.
- Number of datasets/publications uploaded to the institutional repository.
- Number of Open Access records (downloads)
- % of metadata records compliant with FAIR principles and EOSC protocols.
- Rate of successful metadata harvesting exercises (interoperability).
- Researcher satisfaction with repository usability (via surveys).

8.6 Gantt Chart

Task Name	2026			2027			2028		
Transform Institutional Open Science Webpage									
Establish USB Data Policy									
Training Activities									
Design Repository Architecture									
Publish Repository Guidelines									
Launch and Integrate Repository									
Optimization and Monitoring									



9 Public Engagement

Citizen science is a vital aspect of open science, enhancing public trust and engagement in research. It is essential to establish clear ethical and methodological guidelines for initiating and maintaining citizen science projects. These guidelines must ensure informed consent and transparency, while also promoting public engagement activities that enhance societal impact and scientific literacy. Open science infrastructures, including repositories, collaborative platforms, and open data standards, enable citizen scientists to contribute, access, and reuse scientific data. The strategy ensures that data and findings from citizen science projects are made openly available whenever possible, enhancing transparency, reproducibility, and societal benefit.

9.1 Timelines and Milestones

Phase 1 (2026)

- Conduct a survey on recent citizen science practices at USB.
- Review literature to identify priority scientific areas nurtured at USB and suitable for citizen science involvement.
- Perform matchmaking analysis based on current and potential research areas adequate to participatory science and identify the promising ones.

Phase 2 (2026)

- Develop an engagement strategy and plan workshop/event formats on citizen science.
- Organise an initial workshop on citizen science.
- Organise public events to educate and engage citizens in research methodologies.

Phase 3 (2027)

- Publish impact stories about public engagement on university channels to raise awareness.
- Publish a report on achievements, challenges, and future directions.
- Roll out a wider series of workshops/events based on pilot feedback and continued public engagement.
- Optimise workshop content and delivery methods, integrate feedback for greater impact.

9.2 Monitoring Progress

Monitoring mechanisms:

- Event records, attendance sheets, and feedback forms.
- Survey platforms (Google Forms).
- Publication count (social media, newsletters).



KPIs:

- Number of citizen science workshops/events held.
- Participant counts in engagement activities.
- A variety of research areas covered by public involvement.
- Impact measures (e.g., engagement reports, published stories).

9.3 Gantt Chart

Task Name	2026			2027			2028		
Survey & Analysis on recent citizen science practices at USB									
Develop an engagement strategy									
Organise workshops and Public Events									
Publish Impact Stories and Report on Achievements									

10 Career Integration

It is essential to collaboratively develop quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate contributions to open science, ensuring that these values are embedded in institutional assessment and reward systems. For this, we need to:

- Establish and include in regular academic evaluations clear metrics to assess open science contributions, such as the number of open-access publications, datasets shared, and their FAIR compliance, software released, and participation in citizen science or public engagement activities.
- Include assessments that recognise the value and impact of activities like public engagement initiatives and open teaching materials. In practice, this can involve submitting short activity reports, links to outputs, or documentation of outreach efforts that can be tracked and monitored in academic portfolios.
- Encourage the sharing of intermediate and final research outputs, such as preprints, datasets, code, and protocols. These should be logged in institutional repositories or platforms to enable verification and monitoring, make contributions visible in institutional records, and support career recognition.
- Ensure that the preparation and maintenance of a DMP are mandatory components of doctoral studies, with documentation included in individual study plans or annual evaluations.

10.1 Timelines and Milestones

Phase 1 (2026)

Develop quantitative and qualitative measures for evaluating Open Science contributions, such as:

- Open access publications.
- FAIR-compliant datasets shared.
- Software/tools released under open licenses.
- Participation in citizen science or public engagement activities.
- Contributions to open educational materials and knowledge dissemination.
- Usage of metrics of shared datasets, such as the number of downloads or accesses.

Phase 2 (2026)

- Create a draft Open Science Evaluation Framework integrating the defined metrics into institutional assessment systems.
- Establish clear criteria for assessing the quality and impact of open science contributions.

Phase 3 (2027)

- Launch a pilot program to integrate Open Science metrics into annual performance evaluations for researchers and faculty.



- Provide training and resources to evaluators on how to effectively assess Open Science contributions.

Phase 4 (2027)

- Gather feedback from pilot participants and evaluators on the clarity, feasibility, and effectiveness of the Open Science Evaluation Framework.
- Identify areas for improvement and refine the framework accordingly.
- Implement the refined Open Science Evaluation Framework across the institution.
- Integrate Open Science activities into promotion and tenure criteria, ensuring they are systematically valued and rewarded.
- Conduct workshops and awareness campaigns to educate researchers and faculty on the new evaluation system and the importance of Open Science contributions.
- Provide resources (e.g., templates, guidelines) to help individuals document their Open Science activities for evaluations.
- Monitor the adoption and implementation of the framework.
- Publish a progress report highlighting achievements, challenges, and recommendations for further improvements.

10.2 Monitoring Progress

Monitoring mechanisms:

- Interviews, HR annual reporting forms, department reports, and Annual performance review forms.

KPIs:

- Number of annual evaluations that include Open Science activities.
- Number of academic and research staff recognised/rewarded for Open Science practices.
- Number of Open Science contributions (open access, data, software) included in career progression.

10.3 Gantt Chart

Task Name	2026			2027			2028		
Define Open Science Metrics									
Create draft Open Science Evaluation Framework									
Launch pilot in annual evaluations									
Monitor adoption & implementation									



11 Researcher Support

Encouraging the development of a vibrant and diverse open science community within USB is essential for advancing the adoption of open science principles and practices. This community offers a supportive environment where researchers can informally learn about open science, share their experiences, and exchange practical knowledge, thereby raising awareness and fostering a culture of openness. By facilitating regular discussions, workshops, and networking events, this community will help disseminate the best practices and innovative approaches across USB. The shift to open science is not merely a technical or procedural change; it represents a fundamental transformation in values, behaviours, and organisational structures at the system level. As USB is in the early stages of this transition, it is vital to focus on building broad-based support and actively encourage participation from diverse disciplines, career stages, and backgrounds to ensure that the open science community reflects the full spectrum of the academic environment.

A significant barrier to the widespread adoption of open science practices in daily research is the limited understanding of available options, challenges, and supporting tools or infrastructure. Therefore, we strive for the following actions:

- Make open science workshops and courses a regular and mandatory component of the PhD curriculum and other research training programs, ensuring that all early-career researchers acquire the essential knowledge and skills.
- Encourage ongoing professional development for all university employees by providing access to up-to-date resources, training modules, and peer learning opportunities through both institutional and national platforms.
- Embed open science training into the core educational and professional development structures of the university and leverage national platforms for coordination and resource sharing.
- Aim to establish a central APC fund.

This will foster a culture of openness, collaboration, and innovation that promotes sustainable research and education.

11.1 Timelines and Milestones

Phase 1 (2026):

- Launch a dedicated university-wide Open Science webpage as a central portal.
- Launch pilot open science workshops.
- Develop mandatory open science training modules for PhD students and early-career researchers.
- Begin developing training materials, templates, and guidelines for researchers and support teams.
- Disseminate information on open science activities across USB.

Topics of training units:



- Open access and responsible publishing.
- Research data management and FAIR principles.
- Metadata creation and standards.
- Principles, ethics, and conductance of participatory research.

Dissemination activities:

- Annual Open Science Day/ Week.
- Webinars, newsletters, social media, and the USB Open Science webpage hub.

Phase 2 (2027):

- E-Learning Platform Development: Develop and begin building an e-learning platform integrating institutional and national resources (e.g., EOSC).
- Launch institutional e-learning platform for Open Science training and resources.
- Dissemination Activities: continue regular workshops, webinars, newsletters, and awareness campaigns; continue multi-channel dissemination via social media, Open Science Day/Week, and networking events.
- Redesign and expand the existing Open Science Library webpage to include comprehensive policies, guidelines, training, support, and news.
- Regularly update the Open Science webpage with guidance, institutional policies, templates, and documentation.
- Monitor the effectiveness of training and support programs, gather feedback on improvements, and publish progress reports with recommendations for ongoing improvement.

11.2 Monitoring Progress

Monitoring mechanisms:

- Attendance sheets, event reports, event calendars.
- Curriculum documents, LMS content log, LMS analytics (logins, course completion rates).
- Feedback surveys, platform reviews.

KPIs:

- Number of outreach activities conducted (workshops, training, webinars).
- Participation rate in the e-learning platform and workshops.
- User satisfaction rate (user satisfaction and program effectiveness based on feedback).
- Number of training modules developed for PhD and early-career researchers.
- Number of consultations provided – e.g., support on preparing Data Management Plans (DMPs).



11.3 Gantt Chart

Task Name	2026			2027			2028		
Launch university-wide Open Science webpage (central portal)									
Develop mandatory Open Science training modules for PhD and early-career researchers									
Open Science Day / Week									
Launch institutional Open Science e-learning platform									
Monitor effectiveness of training/support programs, gather feedback, publish progress reports									



12 SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Institutional Commitment to open science policies and long-term planning.
- Comprehensive Planning with structured frameworks and timelines for repository development, policy formulation, training, and engagement.
- Consistent alignment with FAIR principles and EOSC protocols supporting interoperability and global integration.
- Close collaboration with MUNI experts on sharing expertise and best practices.
- Integration of open science into career development, recognising and rewarding contributions institutionally.
- Dedicated teams, e-learning platforms, and communities provide essential guidance, resources, and ongoing professional development.
- Dedicated support team (data stewards, librarians, advisors) to assist researchers and sustain efforts.
- Currently available funding.

Weaknesses:

- Success depends heavily on researcher, faculty, and department engagement, which may vary.
- Mandatory training may face resistance or low participation if not well-integrated or incentivised.
- Establishing compliant metadata frameworks and interoperability protocols requires significant technical expertise.
- Long-term success depends on securing sustainable funding, dedicated personnel, and continuous support from skilled staff (e.g., data stewards, librarians, and technical advisors).

Opportunities:

- Leading in the adoption of open science can increase USB's visibility and attractiveness to partners and funders.
- EOSC Collaboration and Metadata Integration, enhancing visibility and European alignment.
- Open science principles encourage interdisciplinary research, knowledge sharing, and the potential for research visibility through open repositories and data sharing.
- Digital training and e-learning modules can scale knowledge dissemination efficiently.



Threats:

- Data security and privacy concerns, especially in handling sensitive data openly, require careful legal and ethical management, which can complicate implementation.
- Resistance to cultural change among researchers used to traditional publishing or data practices.
- Long-term funding and institutional commitment are required to maintain platforms, training, and evaluation systems.
- Technical Integration Risks in integrating with EOSC and compliance with metadata standards, which may face unexpected technical delays or compatibility issues.



13 Resource Allocation

Human Resources

Open Science Manager: oversees coordination, reporting, timeline adherence, guides the initiative, ensures best practices, and co-designs Moodle course content.

Data stewards: experts in metadata, data management, repository workflows, handle dissemination (web, social, newsletters), and contribute to the design and structure of Moodle courses.

Librarians: support for repository, training, and policy guidance.

IT specialists: manage repository software, websites, e-learning platforms, and technical integrations.

Faculty Open Science coordinators: promote Open Science practices and awareness at the faculty level, serve as the primary point of contact for Open Science within faculties, and support training initiatives and the dissemination of resources.

Workshop trainers, including EOSC delegates and external experts.

Financial Resources

Personnel salaries

IT Infrastructure Development: Repository software, e-learning platform (Moodle or equivalent), and website redesign.

APC (Article Processing Charge) Funds: A central fund for supporting open access publishing.

Workshops & Training: Fees for running workshops – including travel, materials, and external trainers.

Communication: Design of the webpage, newsletters, and outreach materials.

Continuous Improvement: A budget for annual upgrades, system optimisation, and scaling resources.

Project-Based Funding: Temporary funds allocated to pilot programs, workshops, and the development of e-learning modules or repositories.

Long-Term Sustainability Planning: Strategies to ensure ongoing financing beyond initial grants, including institutional commitment and diversified funding sources.

Infrastructure Requirements

Physical Infrastructure: Seminar/workshop rooms for training and public engagement activities.

Institutional Repository: robust, scalable, compliant with FAIR/EOSC protocols.

E-learning Platform: Moodle or custom LMS, integrated with EOSC and internal training resources.



University & Library OS Webpages: central access points for policies, templates, news, and documentation.

IT Back-end: servers, storage, backup solutions, system administration.



14 Responsibilities for Advancing Open Science

To ensure the effective implementation and continuous development of open science, the following responsibilities are recognised across all levels of research and institutional activity:

- Establish and communicate clear policies and guidelines aligned with FAIR and EOSC standards.
- Maintain and further develop the repository system with ongoing support from the IT department to ensure technical stability, updates, security, and integration with FAIR principles and EOSC standards.
- Disseminate information about open science benefits, policies, and practical workflows institution-wide.
- Manage, document, and preserve research data responsibly throughout all stages of the research process.
- Share research data openly through recognised repositories, while respecting ethical, legal, and intellectual property requirements.
- Publish research outputs in open-access formats or ensure their deposit in institutional or disciplinary repositories.
- Ensure transparency and reproducibility of research by sharing methodologies, protocols, and materials where appropriate.
- Share intermediate and final research results openly as per guidelines to enhance knowledge transfer and reproducibility.
- Develop and maintain data management plans that align with institutional, national, and funding body requirements.
- Participate actively in open science workshops, e-learning courses (e.g., on data management, FAIR principles, open access publishing), and continuous professional development.
- Follow institutional open science policies for proper data documentation, storage, sharing, and licensing.
- Ensure compliance with GDPR, participant consent, and data privacy regulations in all open data sharing activities.
- Maintain records of open science activities for inclusion in annual evaluations or career development.



15 USB Open Science Team

USB aims to form a dedicated Open Science Team. The team will coordinate infrastructure development, policy drafting, training, and support activities, and serve as the primary point of contact for open science initiatives. Regular meetings and reporting will ensure alignment with university goals and responsiveness to emerging needs.

The team is led by the central USB Open Science Manager, responsible for conceptual development and coordination of open science activities at USB. The USB Open Science Manager falls under the Science and Research Office at the USB Rectorate and is methodically led by the Vice-Rector for Research.

To ensure the effective implementation and sustainability of open science practices across the university, dedicated open science coordinators have been nominated at each of the eight faculties. This decentralised approach allows open science to have a strong presence at the faculty level, while empowering faculties to address their unique departmental needs and priorities. These faculty coordinators will be methodically led by the USB Open Science Manager and supported in their open science skills.

A necessary support is also provided by the central IT department. Dedicated personnel will be responsible for maintenance and technical support for the institutional data repository once developed, for managing DSpace and for ORCID-related technical issues. Also, the USB Open Science Manager will collaborate with the USB Cybersecurity Manager on issues related to the security of sensitive research data generated at USB.

Regular Open Science Team Meetings

Regular meetings of the USB Open Science Team will be organised. These meetings will provide a structured forum for:

- Sharing updates and information on ongoing and upcoming open science initiatives.
- Making collective decisions and identifying new opportunities for collaboration.
- Exchanging ideas, experiences, and best practices among faculties.
- Coordinating participation in national and international strategic networks, ensuring the university maintains a visible and active presence in the broader open science community.

Open Science Strategy at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

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