



Confederation
of Open Access
Repositories

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

COAR Annual Report 2021-2022

**April 2022
Version for members**

<http://coar-repositories.org>

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COAR is an international association with 155 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.

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

1. Highlights from 2021-2022

- Launch of the [Notify Project](#) and proposal submitted to external funder
- Launch of the COAR Strategy for Modernizing the Global Repository Network
- Release of [version 3.0 of the Resource Types](#) vocabulary
- Virtual [Annual Meeting and General Assembly](#) in September 2021
- Promotion of the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#)
- Co-hosted the [Asia OA 2021 meeting](#) with over XX attendees
- Community review of [COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories](#)
- Launch of the ASAPbio/COAR Working Group on Preprints in Institutional or Generalist Repositories

2 Introduction

COAR (Confederation of Open Access Repositories) 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 major repository networks in order to build capacity, align practices, define future functionalities, and act as a global voice for the repository community. This report covers COAR's activities from May 2021 - April 2022

Five strategic directions will guide COAR's activities:

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

3 Programmatic Activities

COAR's programmatic activities for 2021-2022 were 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



Presentations and Keynotes: COAR representatives participated in numerous conferences, events and sessions related to open science, open access, and repositories. The COAR Executive Director, staff and Executive Board delivered presentations about the high level vision of COAR and the work we are doing to progress this vision internationally in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

Collaboration with OpenDOAR: COAR Executive Director and several COAR representatives are members of the OpenDOAR Working Board. The role of the Working Board is to develop the strategic directions for the OpenDOAR services and provide guidance on operational issues. COAR's participation helps to ensure OpenDOAR has a deep understanding of the needs of the international repository community. During Open Access Week, Jisc (the organization that maintains OpenDOAR) and COAR – along with regional networks LA Referencia (Latin America), LIBSENSE (Africa) and OpenAIRE (Europe) – sent out a call to the repository community to update their records in OpenDOAR, resulting in significant increase in the accuracy of records in the directory.

Speaking Up for 'Green OA': Building on several statements in 2020, COAR published a blog post in November 2021 responding to a Springer Nature white paper entitled, "[Going for Gold](#)". The paper presents an analysis of a subset of their articles comparing the usage across closed access, open access (OA) via the Springer Nature platform, and open access through repositories. The paper concludes that "there is an 'OA effect' which sees OA articles in hybrid journals achieving greater impact, usage and reach than comparative non-OA articles" and goes on to assert that "there is no significant corresponding 'Green OA effect'". Among other things, the post points out that the underlying data from the white paper does not provide an accurate picture of the use and impact of repository-based, green OA, because it does not include the usage statistics of corresponding open access articles in repositories

UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science: On November 23, 2021, the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#) was formally adopted, representing a significant achievement in our collective progress towards open science. The endorsement of the Recommendation by member states demonstrates strong support for the notion that widespread scientific collaboration and knowledge sharing are critical to addressing our most pressing issues and to advancing new discoveries. COAR has been an active partner in the development of the Recommendation and since its adoption, has been working with regional and national partners to raise awareness with local stakeholders and develop strategies for its implementation in countries around the world.

Protecting Repositories in the European Policy Arena: COAR has been working with several European partners (including European University Association, LIBER, Science Europe, and SPARC Europe and CAESAR) to ensure repositories (and other research infrastructures) are excluded from the EC's Digital Services Act. The Act, which is aimed at curbing the spread of disinformation via content sharing platforms, could create significant barriers for repositories, resulting in greater administrative burden and financial costs for institutions with repositories. Through public statements and lobbying, the group of organizations is advocating for a blanket exemption for not-for-profit research and education repositories, archives and digital libraries.

2. Provide support for strengthening and modernizing repositories and repository networks



COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories: In October 2020, COAR published the first version of the [COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories](#). The purpose of the framework is to assist repositories in evaluating and improving their current operations based on a set of applicable and achievable good practices. Although there are already a number of best practices frameworks and evaluation criteria (e.g. Core Trust Seal, FAIR Principles, NRG Recommendations) that were developed to assist repositories in assessing certain facets of their operations, these frameworks target only one type of repository (e.g. data repositories) or one aspect of their operations (e.g. Trust). The Framework, presents good practice criteria to achieve a number of objectives, has been translated into eight languages. In February/March 2022, COAR undertook a community review of the framework, and based on this input the COAR Repository Assessment Working Group will be revising and updating it. The second version will be available in June 2022.

Modernizing the Global Repository Network: In July 2021, COAR launched an international strategy to modernize repositories. Despite the widespread adoption of repositories around the world, many struggle with low visibility in their research community, are running old versions of software platforms, and/or are understaffed. This strategy, which was launched with a meeting of national and regional partners, will help position repositories to embrace their new and expansive role in the scholarly communications landscape. The meeting was attended by participants from Africa, Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Europe, Latin America and the United States. To advance the strategy, COAR has been working at the regional and national level to develop locally relevant action plans.

National Aggregator Working Group: There is a growing number of national repository networks around the world. These networks aggregate metadata from repositories and other

data sources and provide a number of services including tracking open access content, discovery of national research outputs, standardized usage statistics, and more. Aggregators can also act as an important mechanism to bring together the community of repositories to help them adopt good practice, define policies, and develop a shared vision for repositories. The National Aggregators Working Group, co-chaired by FECYT in Spain, is a mechanism for convening aggregators around the world to support information sharing. The working group undertook a survey of networks, and in 2021, produced an Aggregator Profiles dashboard which provides visualizations of aggregator services.

RDA Data Repository Attributes Working Group: Several COAR members and the COAR Executive Director are acting as co-chairs in the Research Data Alliance “Data Repository Attributes Working Group”, which seeks to produce a list of common attributes that describe a research data repository. There are a growing number of funders and stakeholders that are developing recommendations for “eligible” repositories including funders and publishers. COAR’s participation on this working group will ensure that any recommendations are feasible for the repository community to adopt, and do not arbitrarily bias certain repositories over others.

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



International Alignment of Repository Networks: COAR continues its work to foster greater cooperation between repository networks by identifying areas of collaboration that can lead to concrete actions that lead to global alignment. The aim is to ensure a general level of interoperability, while still supporting the unique functions and use cases of each network. These efforts are very much intertwined with the modernizing repository activities, and are most effective when tailored to the individual country and/or region. In general, the focus is on three approaches, depending on the level of repository development in the jurisdiction:

1. Capacity building and development of basic repository infrastructure
2. Coalescing and strengthening national and regional networks through developing shared visions, action plans, and common standards
3. Technology transfer across networks, data sharing, and development of innovative services for networks

Asia OA: This 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. This community is dedicated to people working in the academic environment based in the Asian region. It celebrates Asian cultural diversity and unique ways of doing things. Asia OA has an annual meeting in different Asian countries. The virtual 6th meeting of [COAR Asia OA was held 25-27 October 2021](#) and was hosted by Singapore Alliance of University Libraries (SAUL), the libraries of Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education, National University of Singapore, Singapore Institute of Technology, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Yale NUS College in collaboration with the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR). The meeting discussed the latest trends in open access and open scholarship, with community updates from Asia. Topics included open access infrastructure, open educational resources, open peer review, research data repositories, and tools built on open data.



LIBSENSE Initiative (Africa): COAR is a partner in the LIBSENSE initiative, a project that is led by WACREN (West and Central African Research and Education Network) and aims to build a community of practice for open science 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. LIBSENSE also engages internationally to ensure there is international alignment and awareness of other initiatives, best practices and standards. 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.

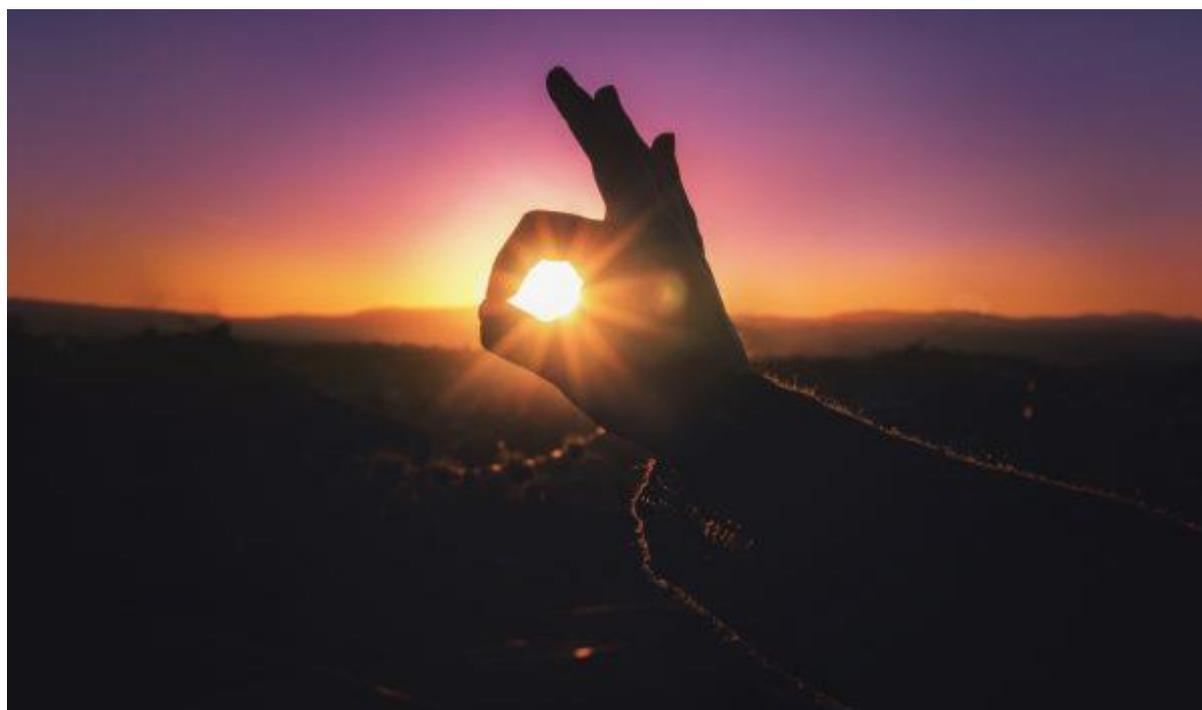
Collaboration with LA Referencia (Latin America): LA Referencia, the open access network representing ten Latin American countries, is an important stakeholder for COAR and provides a mechanism for engaging with the repository community in that region. COAR has close ties with LA Referencia, ensuring 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. LA Referencia and OpenAIRE already

collaborate closely. And, in April 2021, LA Referencia, RedCLARA and the three African regional research and education networks – ASREN, WACREN and UbuntuNet Alliance – signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance open science policies, services and infrastructure. This collaboration, which was facilitated by COAR, will support south-south knowledge exchange related to open science and potentially technology transfer of the LA Referencia software between the two regions. In addition, COAR, DSpace and LA Referencia have been working on a strategy and looking for funding opportunities to address some of the challenges and gaps in repository services and technologies in the region.

Catalyzing the Creation of a Repository Network in the US: In June 2021, COAR and SPARC began a collaboration to help launch and advance the network of repositories in the U.S. The work is being led by a visiting programme officer based at SPARC, who has started by convening a high-level expert group of both Library Deans/Directors and IR managers to develop a strategic vision for repositories in the United States. The next step will be to develop a more concrete plan to help advance that vision and bring the US repository community into a more cohesive networked environment.

COAR Controlled Vocabularies: The COAR Controlled Vocabulary Editorial Group continued to work on translations of the “Resource Type” and “Access Rights” vocabularies, which are now available in seven languages and have also been adopted into the OpenAIRE Metadata guidelines. Thanks to our partners at the University of Vienna Library, the three COAR controlled vocabularies have been migrated to a new platform, called iQvoc. And in July 2021, version 3.0 of the “Resource Type” vocabulary was released. These vocabularies are now integrated into DSpace version 7, which we anticipate will result in much greater usage of them by the community.

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

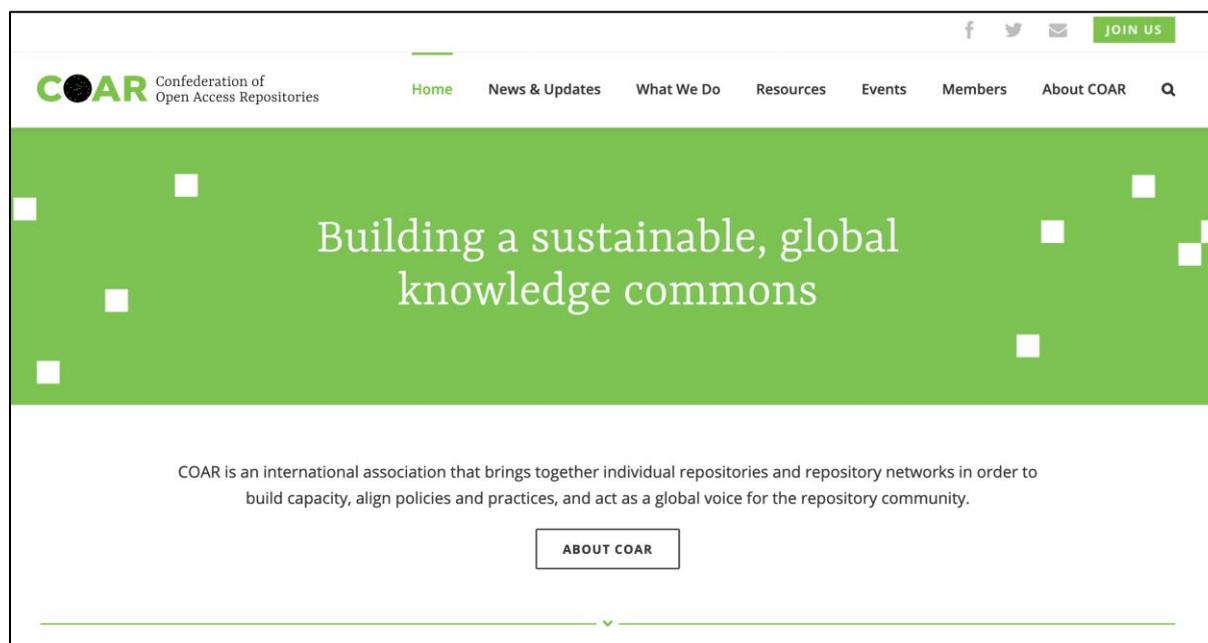


The Notify Project: The Notify project was launched in January 2021, building on previous efforts such as the [COAR Next Generation Repositories Initiative](#), the [Pubfair White Paper](#), and a [generic technical model](#) that outlines the technical framework for connecting repositories with external services. The aim is to develop a standard, interoperable, and decentralised approach to linking research outputs hosted in the distributed network of repositories with resources from external review services such as overlay-journals, open peer review, and assessment services, using linked data notifications, called the Notify Protocol. The Notify Project brings together a number of partners who are interested in using the protocol to enable and improve their interactions with other services to support external peer review on repository resources. To date, several of our project partners have been undertaking development to become Notify-enabled. There are three services in France (HAL - the national repository; Peer Community In - an open peer review services; and Episcience - an overlay journal platform) which have a basic implementation and working interactions using Linked Data Notifications as specified in the Notify protocol. There are also minimal viable product implementations in DSpace versions 5 and 6 and development is underway for DSpace version 7, led by Harvard Library and 4Science. Discussions are ongoing with Invenio as there is significant community interest in using the Notify protocol with Invenio users including Humanities Commons (which will migrate to the Invenio platform in early 2023), Zenodo, and the National Institute of Informatics in Japan. A proposal was submitted to an external funder in April 2022, and if funded, will enable COAR to greatly accelerate and expand its work on Notify to a larger number of partners and open source platforms.

ASAPbio-COAR Collaboration on Preprints in Repositories: In summer 2021, COAR and ASAPbio ran a survey of institutional and generalists repositories (IRs) to understand their practices and plans regarding the collection of preprints. Our [preliminary results](#) revealed that approximately two thirds of the responding repositories currently host preprints. The preprint community has been developing good practices that respond to the unique challenges associated with managing preprints, such as identifying preprint versions, linking to journal versions ([Beck et al 2020](#)), and transparently labeling these objects to clarify their peer review status to a [broad range of readers](#). It is not yet clear how the unique requirements for managing preprints can be best supported in repositories with a broader remit and with access to diverse resource types. Yet, as preprint sharing becomes more widespread, it is clear that these generalist repositories have a role to play. As a next step, COAR and ASAPbio have jointly convened a working group to identify specific challenges for these repositories, develop good practice recommendations, and define a strategy for advancing the collection of preprints in institutional and generalist repositories.

Hosting a Directory of Open Access Preprint Repositories: In February 2022, le Centre pour la Communication Scientifique Directe ([CCSD](#)) of France and COAR announced a formal collaboration to launch a directory of open access preprint repositories. Preprints are becoming an increasingly important part of the research communications landscape, however, the community has no single tool to view the current preprint landscape. Existing registries are either exhaustive and cover all types of repositories or focus on preprints in a single discipline. This directory, which will be publicly available in June 2022, will bring together all repositories that collect preprints into a single database, enabling users to choose the most suitable platform for their needs and to have an overview of the preprint ecosystem.

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



Proposal to Move the Legal Seat of COAR to the Netherlands: 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. This support has enabled COAR to thrive during these years. However, COAR has matured and evolved since 2009, and the Executive Board believes that it is the right time for the organization to become more autonomous, take greater responsibility for the legal and administrative aspects of the organization, and become less reliant on a single member host organization. Over the last year, the COAR Executive Board has undertaken an analysis of several options for the future of COAR and proposes to relocate the legal seat of the organization to the Netherlands, becoming a “Stichting”. This move will not change the relationship of the members to the organization and democratic governance of the organization will be maintained in the Articles of Association. The working office will continue to be hosted at the University of Minho.

4. Organisation & Governance

4.1. Membership

In the 2021-2022, COAR had 8 new institutional members from Australia, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. At the same time, one institution ended their membership during 2021 and beginning of 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
April 2019	119	2 (20)	2	1	142	6
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	143	8

TABLE I: Change of Membership April 2019 - April 2022

New members since April 2021:

Single members:

- Center for Research on North America, UNAM, Mexico
- Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Saudi Arabia
- Simon Fraser University, Canada
- UC Berkeley Law Library, USA
- Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt, Germany
- University of Newcastle, Australia
- University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, USA
- University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

4.2. Governance

Executive Board: The 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>

4.3. 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.

4.4. Personnel

COAR currently has approximately 1.5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) in total staffing, split over several persons and locations. Kathleen Shearer is Executive Director. Carla Marques, based at the University of Minho Library, is head of the COAR office. COAR also employs several consultants on a regular basis for programme support and technical consultancy.

4.5. 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

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.

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.

Quality Metadata Working Group: COAR is working with the repository community to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of metadata in repositories. The COAR Metadata Working Group develops user stories and provides recommendations for metadata in repositories.

National Aggregators Working Group: There is a growing number of national repository networks around the world. These networks aggregate metadata from repositories and other data sources and provide a number of services including tracking open access content, discovery of national research outputs, standardized usage statistics, and more. This group focuses on the exchange of information and experience across national networks.

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.

5. 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.

European Commission: The OpenAIRE Advance project ended on February 28, 2021, with final funding provided to COAR in September 2021.

Arcadia Project: Next Generation Library Publishing Project: COAR is a partner in this project, which began in September 2019 and will run until the end of December 2021. COAR received most of the (modest) funding from this project between September 2019 - August 2020, but received some small funding for a very minor role, which ended in February 2022.

Voluntary Contributions: On a non-regular basis, COAR also receives financial contributions from the partner institutions or other organizations, either as subsidies and/or for specific programme activities, usually to support travel for in person meetings. In 2021/2022, COAR did not receive any such contributions.

Annual Meeting Registration Fees: As there was no in-person Annual Meeting last year, there were no revenues from registration fees.

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.

6. Annual Meeting

The COAR Annual Meeting and General Assembly took place last week virtually from September 29 – October 1, 2021. It was attended by over 160 people and offered a great opportunity to consult and discuss current COAR initiatives and priorities with members and partners.

The meeting began with a presentation about the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. Other sessions included a round table of representatives from Latin America, Africa, United States, Canada, Asia, Europe who presented their activities related to the COAR Strategy for Modernizing Repositories and a progress report of the [Notify Project](#). The General Assembly elected a new Executive Board for the 2021-2024 term. Martha Whitehead, Vice President for the Harvard Library and University Librarian was elected as Chairperson taking the place of Eloy Rodrigues, who stepped down after 6 years in the position. Other members of the new Executive Board are Kazu Yamaji, (Vice-Chairperson), William Nixon, (Treasurer), Bianca Amaro, Virginia Barbour, Isabel Bernal, Iryna Kuchma, and Omo Oaiya. With members from Africa, Australia, Europe, Japan, Latin America, the United Kingdom and the United States, this will be the most geographically diverse Executive Board to date, reflecting the international nature of the COAR membership. At the closing of the meeting, there was a tribute to outgoing chairperson, Eloy Rodrigues, and he was presented with a COAR Recipe book, “[Flavours from around the World](#)”, which contains the favourite recipes of many of the COAR members.

7. COAR Resources

- [COAR Community Framework for Best Practices in Repositories](#)
- [COAR Controlled Vocabularies](#)
- [COAR Notify Project Technical Documentation](#)
- [COAR Repository Toolkit](#)
- [COAR-SPARC Good Practice Principles for Scholarly Communications Services](#)
- [COAR Website](#)
- [SCOMCat - Scholarly Communication Technology Catalogue](#)

Appendix I: Financial Statement 2021

Below you will find the financial statement for the financial year 2021 (January 1st to December 31st). The audit will be conducted by elected auditors Irena Kriviene (Vilnius U, Lithuania) and Tiiu Tarkpea (University of Tartu Library, Estonia) in advance of the Annual Meeting 2022.

OPENING BALANCE (01.01.2021)	121,357.26 €		121,357.26 €
REVENUES	Planning, as decided at GA 01-10-2021		Effective, as of 31-12-2021
Membership fees	96.775,00 €	*	101.864,50 €
Partner contributions	- €		- €
Next Gen Library Publishing	18.000,00 €		6.908,55 €
OpenAIRE-Advance	32.250,00 €		33.191,18 €
Annual Meeting	- €		- €
Asia OA Meeting	- €		- €
Fundraising for Annual Meeting	- €		- €
TOTAL	147.025,00 €		141.964,23 €
EXPENDITURES			
Personnel costs	131.224,00 €		123.860,00 €
Travel	2.000,00 €		-733,90 €
Legal assistance & accounting	2.850,25 €		3.940,55 €
Communications	1.480,82 €		824,55 €
Working Group support & Thematic Activities	- €		- €
Annual Meeting	500,00 €		71,61 €
Asia OA Meeting	- €		- €
TOTAL	138.055,07 €		127.962,80 €
BALANCE (calendar year)	8.969,93 €		14.001,43 €
OVERALL BALANCE	130.327,19 €		135.358,69 €
Remarks			
* includes overlaps between 2019 and 2020			