

# Call: Join our project group Responsible Sharing of Data and Knowledge

The **Flemish Open Science Policy Plan**<sup>1</sup> aims to embed Open Science-by-design as a natural part of the research process, following the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary". By 2030, researchers in Flanders should be able to handle Open Science principles smoothly, without additional administrative burdens. The policy plan translates this mission and vision into seven strategic objectives, further elaborated in operational objectives and concrete policy actions. To achieve these objectives, the Flemish knowledge institutions join forces via the **Flemish Research Data Network (FRDN)**, a network organisation stimulating knowledge sharing, collaboration and professionalisation.

This call is part of Strategic Objective **SD 4**:

Researchers apply the Open Science and FAIR principles in a thoughtful way, as a foundation for high-quality and reproducible research.

and Action **4.1.2.**:

We develop guidelines to apply the principle of "as open as possible, as closed as necessary", including in seemingly conflicting situations, and communicate these to raise awareness among researchers.

Within this strategic objective and action, this project group will focus on developing guidelines for applying the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary." This principle emphasizes that researchers, when sharing research results, must always make a well-considered balance between openness and necessary restrictions, both within and beyond the formal requirements of research funders. This assessment takes into account, among other things, personal data, intellectual property rights, commercial or contractual interests, research security, and strategic autonomy.

When data cannot be fully shared openly, transparency and discoverability remain possible through shared metadata and clear access conditions, in line with the FAIR principles. To support researchers in making this assessment correctly, always in consultation with their institution—which holds the final decision-making authority regarding whether (part of) the research results should remain closed, for example in view of valorisation potential—there is a need for a structured overview of all factors that must be considered in this evaluation.

## What will you do?

As a member of the project group Responsible Sharing of Data and Knowledge, you will play an active role in shaping and delivering the project group's mission:

- connect with the OS4Researchers project group, which develops a narrative that demonstrates the added value of Open Science and FAIR principles while also addressing considerations related to data protection;
- compile an overview of reasons for keeping a dataset closed, with attention to the risks researchers need to manage and the opportunities created by protecting data. Each factor will be clearly explained, for example through case studies or relevant literature. The impact of the current context of geopolitical tension will be taken into account in this analysis;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ewi-vlaanderen.be/nieuws/vlaams-beleidsplan-open-science-2026-2030-goedgekeurd>

- compile an overview of good practices that enable both open and/or closed data to be made FAIR;
- consult the various institutions within the network to develop the overview documents, including input from Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs);
- as a synthesis, provide guidelines that make the principle “as open as possible, as closed as necessary” more operational and understandable, ensuring broad support within the network. The synthesis will refer to TTOs and relevant institutional bodies responsible for decisions on opening and/or protecting data.

## Who are we looking for?

Project groups are composed based on complementary expertise and ideally consist of 6 to 8 members. As a group, they bring together different areas of expertise. This expertise is either directly present within the project group or accessible through expertise that members of the group can easily call upon.

We are looking for professionals who:

- are affiliated with one of the partner institutions;
- have in-depth expertise in making data FAIR;
- are knowledgeable about ethical and legal requirements that impact whether data can be made openly available;
- have knowledge of personal data protection;
- have knowledge of institutional policies;
- have expertise in valorisation and collaboration with industry and companies;
- have insight into international collaboration, including knowledge security and strategic autonomy;
- are familiar with the day-to-day reality of researchers.

Do you recognise yourself in this profile? Don't hesitate to join the project group.

## What do we offer?

- the opportunity to make an impact;
- collaboration with engaged colleagues/participants from different areas of expertise and institutions;
- the opportunity to further develop your knowledge and skills;
- new insights and experience that you can bring back to your own workplace;
- room to contribute your own ideas and help shape the project;
- a valuable network within and beyond the organisation.

## Practical information

The project group ‘Responsible Sharing of Data and Knowledge’ will operate from July ‘26 to September ‘27. Participation requires on average about 2 hours per week (indicative), with alternating more intensive and quieter periods. Within the existing framework of agreements, the project group can further define its activities and organise its own way of working. This project group reports to the thematic group Open Science Policy and the Coordination Hub, and will provide interim feedback to the theme group.

## Interested?

Please apply **before 22/05/2026** via [frdn@fwo.be](mailto:frdn@fwo.be). Please include the CPOC of your own institution in cc, so they are informed as well.

**Provide a short introduction of yourself and briefly explain why this project group is a good fit for you.** Also indicate whether you are interested in taking on the **role of chair or co-chair** of this project group.

If you would like more information about our policy, feel free to visit our [website](https://www.frdn.be) (<https://www.frdn.be>) or send an email to [frdn@fwo.be](mailto:frdn@fwo.be).

We look forward to working together!

