

Research Software Policy (RSP) Forum

The *Research Software Policy (RSP) Forum* is a collaboration of policymakers committed to supporting research software, and those who develop it, as fundamental and vital to research. Policy makers include representatives of organisations focused on research, open science, and open source software, that influence policy at the national, regional, and/or international level.

Software has become an [essential constituent](#) of research and research software is starting to be seen as an equal partner of research data in key international policy documents such as [UNESCO](#) and the [OECD](#). However, support and recognition of the importance of research software and the people who develop and maintain it, has failed to keep pace with the scale of use of research software in research.

The RSP Forum provides a formal mechanism for members to share practices and consider how to individually and collectively address common challenges to achieve the significant cultural change needed across the research sector globally. It aims to address topics such as:

- Best practices in policy development and implementation to support research software (within broader policies and/or through targeted policies)
- Policy alignment across national boundaries
- Case studies of how national policy makers are affecting (state) legislation for universities in their own country (where relevant) to change employment conditions for research software engineers
- Integration with broader policies for research, open science, open source software, etc.
- Opportunities provided by open source program offices (OSPOs)
- Consistent approaches to monitoring, benchmarking and measuring progress

Membership

Membership is open to any policymakers that focus on research, open science, and open source software, and influence policy at the national, regional, and/or international level.

Examples of/types:

- International and national government policy units (e.g., OECD, Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST))
- Regional initiatives focused on research software with a policy element (e.g., EVERSE)
- Funding and/or research organisation consortia (e.g., Science Europe, LA Referencia)

Members can suggest other organisations that support research software policy to join, or potential participants can contact ReSA for information on joining.

Research software is defined here to include source code files, algorithms, scripts, computational workflows and executables that were created during the research process or for a research purpose. Software components (e.g. operating systems, libraries, dependencies,

packages, scripts, etc.) that are used for research but were not created during or specifically for research should be considered software in research and not research software ([Gruenpeter et al.](#), 2021).

Membership is free to all participants. RSP members who find this initiative of value are encouraged to consider supporting ReSA through [Organisational Membership](#) or other resourcing options, including [task force support](#), [donations](#), or in-kind support (please contact ReSA). This support enables ReSA to continue to provide such services.

Roles and responsibilities

The forum is an initiative of the Research Software Alliance (ReSA), and was initially supported by an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation [grant](#). ReSA will chair the meetings, coordinate with members to develop agenda materials, and provide secretariat services for the forum.

Meetings

Meetings will occur annually or biannually, and each meeting will occur twice, 12 hours apart, to maximise attendance by participants in different time zones. The timing of the meetings will also vary to enable different combinations of members to meet.

The forum aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment, and to engage representatives from a range of organisations, including those in the Global South. Meetings utilise the ReSA [Code of Conduct](#). Meetings will be recorded and captioned upon request, for sharing only with members. Presenters are encouraged to maximise the accessibility of meeting materials, as described in best practice guidelines such as [Conference Accessibility Guidelines](#) by Ruhm (pp. 13-15), and [W3 Web Accessibility Initiative's guidelines for making accessible presentations](#).

Public information on the forum will be hosted and maintained by ReSA on their [website](#). Meeting agendas, notes, and materials will be made available to members in a private google folder.