

National Coordination Council for Open Access Publishing and Digital Scholarship in Nigeria

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Final

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

National Coordination Council for Open Access Publishing and Digital Scholarship in Nigeria.

In these Terms of Reference and all associated annexes, the National Coordination Council for Open Access Publishing and Digital Scholarship in Nigeria is referred to as the “Open Access Coordination Council” or, where the context is clear, “the Council”.

1. Background and Rationale

Nigeria’s tertiary education and research system is undergoing a strategic transition toward Open Science and community-led Open Access Publishing, aligned with national priorities for research quality, accessibility, and digital sovereignty. This transition is evidenced by:

1. the [Academic Publishing Centre \(APC\) Framework](#) for Open Access Book Development in Nigeria;
2. national consensus reached at the [National Summit on Open Access Book Publishing \(2025\)](#);
3. adoption of the [Model Open Science Policy of Nigeria \(2024\)](#), aligned with the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science; and
4. the emergence of shared digital infrastructures supporting repositories, Open Access publishing platforms, and national discovery services.

These developments reflect a shift from fragmented, commercially dependent publishing practices toward institutionally governed, sustainable Open Access Publishing systems that encompass books, journals, research data, and other scholarly outputs.

To translate this consensus into operational reality, Nigeria requires a recognised national coordination mechanism to align policies, regulations, funding, infrastructure, and institutional practices across the tertiary education system.

2. Establishment and Status

The National Coordination Council for Open Access Publishing and Digital Scholarship (“the Open Access Coordination Council”) is constituted as a national coordination mechanism:

1. following the approval and formal engagement of the National Universities Commission (NUC), as the statutory regulator for university education in Nigeria;
2. with the formal support and agreement of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVCNU), representing the collective leadership of Nigerian universities and

enabling system-wide institutional adoption;

3. with the implicit support of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), whose investments in Academic Publishing Centres, repositories, and shared digital infrastructure underpin the national Open Access ecosystem; and
4. with the inclusion of other national regulatory and coordinating bodies across tertiary education, including the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), to ensure coherence, compatibility, and future alignment across the full tertiary education system.

The Council operates from inception with an initial operational focus on the university system, where publishing infrastructure and funding mechanisms are most mature, while maintaining structured engagement pathways for polytechnics and colleges of education.

The Council is a non-statutory, coordination and alignment body. It does not exercise regulatory, funding, or institutional authority, and does not replace or override the mandates of participating organisations

3. Purpose

The purpose of the Council is to:

Provide national coordination, implementation guidance, and system alignment for Open Access Publishing and digital scholarship in Nigeria, covering the full range of scholarly outputs, including books, journals, research data, software, preprints, and grey literature, with particular emphasis on Diamond Open Access models, institutional publishing capacity, and compliance with national Open Science policy.

Open Access Publishing is treated as a single, integrated scholarly function, not as separate book, journal, or data silos.

For the purposes of this Council and all associated guidance, Open Access Publishing shall be understood as defined in **Annex C**.

4. Scope and Mandate

4.1 Policy and Regulatory Alignment

1. Align Open Access Publishing practices with national Open Science policy, accreditation and quality assurance frameworks, and responsible research assessment principles.
2. Support institutions in adopting compliant Open Access and Open Science policies.

4.2 Open Access Publishing Systems and Platforms

- Provide national guidance for institution-led Open Access Publishing.
- Support sustainable Diamond Open Access models that avoid author-facing charges.
- Promote shared, community-governed publishing and repository platforms as public-good infrastructure.
- Support alignment with recognised editorial, ethical, and quality standards.

4.3 Persistent Identifiers (PIDs) and Scholarly Infrastructure

- Coordinate and oversee the development of a National Persistent Identifier (PID) Framework enabling long-term persistence, interoperability, institutional stewardship, and cost-effective scale.
- Ensure coherent use of ARKs, DOIs, ORCID iDs, and institutional identifiers (e.g. ROR).
- Anchor PID practices within institutional and national governance.

4.4 Funding and Sustainability

- Advise on the integration of Open Access Publishing into TETFund-supported funding schemes.
- Promote shared infrastructure, cost pooling, and institutional ownership models.

4.5 Research Assessment and Incentives

1. Support recognition of Open Access outputs in promotion, tenure, accreditation, and evaluation.
2. Advance responsible research assessment aligned with DORA and CoARA principles.

4.6 Capacity Building and Inclusion

1. Guide training strategies for editors, reviewers, librarians, APC staff, and early-career researchers.
2. Support multilingual publishing and inclusion of indigenous and locally relevant knowledge.

4.7 Institutional Adoption and Sector Alignment

- Work with CVCNU to support adoption by university Senates and Governing Councils.
- Engage NBTE and NCCE in parallel to adapt guidance for polytechnics and colleges of education through phased, context-appropriate approaches.

5. Functions

5.1 Core Functions

The Council shall convene coordination meetings, establish time-bound working groups, issue guidance notes, monitor national progress, and support alignment between policy, regulation, funding, infrastructure, and institutional practice relating to Open Access Publishing and digital scholarship.

5.2 International Participation

International organisations, regional bodies, and individual experts may participate in the Council's work in advisory, observer, or technical partner capacities, where their expertise supports national objectives, capacity building, standards alignment, or interoperability.

6. Governance, Duration, and Review

The Council operates on a consensus-driven advisory basis, with an initial 12–18-month mandate, after which its structure and continuation will be reviewed.