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## Monitoring a national open access funder mandate

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### Abstract

Acknowledging the benefits associated with open access (OA) to scientific literature, the Foundation for Science and Technology (Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia - FCT), the national funding agency for science in Portugal, defined an OA policy that aims at ensuring free, online access to publications arising from FCT-funded research. Key to the implementation of FCT OA policy is the existence of a solid and mature repository infrastructure, the Scientific Open Access Repository of Portugal – RCAAP. Furthermore, RCAAP is part of PTCRIS, an integrated research information ecosystem whose holistic vision of the research information landscape allow us to link implementation of FCT OA mandate to added value services, with great benefits for the research community. In these paper, we describe the strategy adopted to implement and monitor a funder's OA mandate in an unprecedented integrated manner, using ground-breaking technical solutions built upon an existing infrastructure to address new challenges.

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### 1. Introduction

Information and communication technologies, and in particular, the internet has fundamentally changed the way that science and scholarly research is communicated. The possibility of a world-wide delivery of knowledge allied to the willingness of scientists and scholars to share their research has resulted in a global movement towards open access

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publishing and archiving. Open Access (OA) refers to the practice of providing on-line access to scientific information that is free of charge to the end-user and that is re-usable, with the aim of promoting a widespread dissemination of research results thereby enhancing their use, application and impact.

Momentum for OA has been growing as numerous funding agencies and institutions worldwide implement OA policies. However, critical for the success of OA policies is the availability of the required infrastructure to implement such policies. The European Union (EU) for example has been striving to foster OA and to boost the benefits of public investment in the research funded under the Horizon2020 research programme. To this end, a scholarly communication infrastructure – OpenAIRE<sup>1</sup> - has been developed to manage and monitor the outcomes of EU-funded research supporting OA policies.

In Portugal, the development of a solid and mature repository infrastructure, the Scientific Open Access Repository of Portugal – RCAAP<sup>2</sup> – has been key to recent developments concerning OA policies. Launched in 2008, RCAAP has contributed not only to increase the visibility of Portuguese universities on the internet, but also to the rapid development and spread of OA repositories within several academic institutions. To this end, the RCAAP project has focused on a) the development of the RCAAP portal, aggregating, indexing and providing unified access to OA research results from Portuguese institutional repositories (IR); b) offering a free repository hosting service (SARI), to facilitate the creation and management of IRs in many Portuguese research and higher education institutions; and c) training and advocacy about repositories and OA<sup>3</sup>. These activities resulted in a solid basis to support the establishment of the mandatory OA policy of the Portuguese major public funder – Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)<sup>4</sup> – which was released in 2014. Taking advantage not only of the underlying infrastructure but also of the services and support provided by RCAAP, FCT launched a public consultation on proposals for policies on OA, resulting in a policy on OA for publications<sup>5</sup> which requires that all publications or research outputs subject to peer-review or another form of scientific review must be deposited into a repository hosted within RCAAP.

Having an OA policy in place, the major challenge becomes to reinforce and monitor compliance with such policy. This involves showing ways, and providing tools and incentives, to incorporate repository deposit in particular and Open Access in general, into academic workflows. It also requires the integration and interoperability of repositories with other components of the research information systems landscape. In this domain, a national program – PTCRIS<sup>6</sup> is underway to promote a wide and effective integration of several national and international information systems, thereby creating a coherent and efficient research information ecosystem. Noteworthy, under PTCRIS initiative, FCT is the first national funder using the OpenAIRE data model and services for funding information. Such collaboration has identified as outputs from FCT projects around 13000 publications deposited in an OpenAIRE<sup>7</sup> or RCAAP repository and opened up new possibilities to monitor compliance to the FCT OA policy.

This paper focus on the implementation of compliance monitoring measures of FCT OA policy. Here we describe a strategy whereby new technical solutions are built upon existing infrastructure to implement an efficient monitoring process with great benefits for all stakeholders.

## **2. FCT Open Access Policy**

The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), the Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology, widely recognizes the benefits of Open Access, not only to the research community, giving authors and their works greater visibility, readership and impact, but also at the socio-economic level, bringing science and society together.

Specific benefits of OA to Portugal acknowledged by FCT are the promotion of nationally-funded research, an expected increase in research collaborations with different countries and across different disciplines and, particularly, defense and affirmation of Portuguese language (along with other Portuguese-speaking countries) and research. In accordance, FCT has been actively involved in the implementation of strategies to promote immediate, online, free availability of research outputs to the research community and to the public at large. One of such strategies was the

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