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ESAMI

# FOSTER PROJECT NEWSLETTER

**Fostering digital transformation of science in Kenya and Tanzania**

Co-funded by the European Union

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# FOSTER Project Sets the Pace for Open Science Transformation in Africa

**By ESAMI Editorial Team**

The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) is at the forefront of a bold new scientific movement in Africa, following the official launch of the FOSTER Project—FOSTERing Digital Transformation of Science in Africa. Co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ CBHE Programme, the three-year project aims to digitally revolutionize research and knowledge-sharing across Kenya and Tanzania, with ripple effects expected across the continent.



*Dr. Peter Kiuluku*
*ESAMI Director General (DG)*

Speaking during the ESAMI FOSTER project launch at stakeholder forum, ESAMI Director General Dr. Peter Kiuluku described the project as "*a transformative leap for scientific research and innovation in Africa.*" He emphasized that Open Science will play a central role in dismantling long-standing barriers to scientific advancement and global collaboration. "*ESAMI is proud to lead in policy advocacy and capacity building to ensure a lasting legacy well beyond the project's lifespan,*" he added.

The FOSTER Project is guided by key principles of Open Access, FAIR data (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable), and inclusive participation in science. The initiative brings together a vibrant consortium of nine institutions from five countries—Kenya, Tanzania, Slovenia, the Netherlands, and Spain—committed to collaborative research and impactful education.

### Strengthening Regional Impact Through Open Science

As the FOSTER Project progresses over the coming three years, ESAMI remains dedicated to advancing Open Science across Africa. Through strategic partnerships, digital transformation, and policy innovation, the Institute is shaping a future where inclusive, accessible, and high-quality research drives sustainable development and regional impact.



*Dr. David Kalaba*
*ESAMI Deputy Director General (DDG)*

According to Dr. David Kalaba, ESAMI's Deputy Director General, "*Open Science is not just a trend—it is the future of equitable knowledge sharing.*" FOSTER project supports our mission to strengthen institutions, promote digital infrastructure, and advance evidence-based policymaking.



*Prof. Dr. Lucky Yona*
*ESAMI-FOSTER Project Coordinator*

Project Coordinator Prof. Dr. Lucky Yona noted that the first six months have set a strong foundation. "*From the Nairobi Open Science Forum to our strategic retreat in Arusha, Capacity Building Workshop in Amsterdam and collaboration among partners has been impressive.*" As we enter the delivery phase, we aim to institutionalize these practices through training, reform, and infrastructure investment.

As the lead institution for dissemination, exploitation, and sustainability, ESAMI is steering engagement efforts across the region, ensuring the project's outcomes are visible, relevant, and lasting.

- *Pan-African & European Scientific Collaboration*
- *The FOSTER Project Focus on FAIR Data, Open Access & Citizen Science*
- *ESAMI at the Helm of Regional Policy Impact*

Co-funded by the European Union

# Driving Open Science in Africa: Inside the FOSTER Project's Ambitious Vision

In a groundbreaking move to elevate the African research landscape, the FOSTERing Digital Transformation of Science in Sub-Saharan Africa (FOSTER) project is shaping the future of Open Science across Eastern and Southern Africa. Launched in January 2025 with funding from the European Commission under Erasmus+ STRAND 2, this €1 million initiative is more than a project—it is a movement.

With nine collaborating institutions—four African and five European—the FOSTER project is a shining example of what global cooperation can achieve. The aim?

> *"The FOSTER project is transforming Africa's research landscape by promoting Open Science, strengthening infrastructure, and fostering global collaboration."*

## Breaking the Walls of Knowledge

At its core, FOSTER envisions a regional culture where research is not hidden behind paywalls but is accessible, collaborative, and impactful. From sharing data to co-developing digital platforms, the project's mission is deeply rooted in equity and sustainability.

## Five Work Packages. One Vision

To ensure real, measurable impact, the project is structured into five strategic Work Packages (WPs):

**WP1:** Project Management & Quality Control

**WP2:** Building Consensus on Open Science

**WP3:** Transition to Open Science Practices

**WP4:** Embedding Open Science in Institutional Policies

**WP5:** Dissemination & Impact Maximization

ESAMI, a regional hub for management training and research excellence, leads WP5, ensuring the visibility, awareness, and long-term sustainability of FOSTER activities across the continent.

## Collaboration with Purpose

Each FOSTER partner contributes specialized expertise:

**In Kenya,**

Daystar University plays a role as a project coordinator and leads **WP1** (Project Management & Quality Control), Garissa University leads **WP2** (Building Consensus on Open Science), and St. Paul's University leads **WP3** (Transition to Open Science Practices).

**In Tanzania,**

the University of Dar es Salaam leads **WP4** (Embedding Open Science in Institutional Policies), while ESAMI leads **WP5** (Dissemination & Impact Maximization). Together, these African institutions are driving grassroots engagement, virtual learning innovation, and policy reform.

**European partners** include the International School for Social Science and Business Studies (ISSBS) and the European Policy Development and Research Institute (EPDRI) both in Slovenia, with EPDRI serving as co-coordinator—along with the University of Zaragoza (Spain) and VU Amsterdam University (Netherlands). They bring global best practices in digital infrastructure, policy development, and academic mobility.

Together, this consortium forms a dynamic alliance that advances Open Science in the region through complementary expertise and shared goals.

*FOSTER Project Institutional Partners Logos*

## FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the ESAMI FOSTER Project Newsletter!

This publication marks a vital step in our shared journey to champion Open Science across Sub-Saharan Africa. Through this newsletter, we aim to keep you informed, engaged, and inspired by the milestones, stories, and voices shaping the FOSTER Project. We are proud to spotlight progress, partnerships, and the powerful potential of digital transformation in research and innovation.

Together, let's foster a future where science is open, accessible, and impactful for all.

*— Editorial Team, ESAMI FOSTER Project*

## FOSTER Project Objectives

The FOSTER Project is guided by five key objectives: promoting an Open Science culture and stakeholder consensus; enhancing universities' transition to sustainable Open Science practices; strengthening research infrastructure; embedding Open Science into university policies and national regulations; and fostering Citizen Science across partner countries. These objectives are designed to transform how knowledge is produced, shared, and applied, ensuring long-term impact on research and innovation ecosystems across Africa.

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FOSTERING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF SCIENCE

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# ESAMI Mobilizes Expert Team to Lead FOSTER Project

The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) has strategically assembled a high-caliber, multidisciplinary team to lead its contribution to the FOSTER (FOSTERing Digital Transformation of Science in Sub-Saharan Africa) project. The team's strength lies in its blend of academic rigor, technical expertise, and operational precision—positioning ESAMI as a key player in reshaping the region's research and innovation landscape.



**Prof. Dr. Lucky Yona,** ***Principal Consultant/ Project Coordinator***



**Dr. David Kalaba,** *ESAMI's Deputy Director General (DDG)*



**Mr. Sandy Banda,** *Director of Finance and HRA / Project Accountant*



**Prof. Joseph Mumba,** *Director of ESAMI's Business School*



**Dr. Henry Waruhiu,** *Director of Research & Management Consultancy/ Project Researcher*



**Dr. Innocent Nuwagaba** *Management consultant /Project Researcher*



**Mr. Clarence Kayange,** *Manager of ICT/ Project Researcher*



**Ms. Asia Lashku,** *Librarian/ Project Assistant*

At the helm is **Prof. Dr. Lucky Yona,** Principal Consultant and Project Coordinator, who provides visionary leadership rooted in a solid academic and research background. His guidance shapes the strategic implementation of the project.

**Dr. David Kalaba**, ESAMI's Deputy Director General, serves as the Project's Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR), ensuring financial governance and serving as the formal liaison with the European Union.

Overseeing financial operations is **Mr. Sandy Banda**, Director of Finance and Human Resources Administration. As Project Accountant, she ensures budget integrity and compliance with donor standards.

Contributions from the academic and research fronts come from **Prof. Joseph Mumba**, Director of the Business School, and **Dr. Henry Waruhiu**, Director of Research. Prof. Mumba brings a wealth of experience in curriculum design and research mentorship, while Dr. Waruhiu offers specialized knowledge in digital transformation and FAIR data principles.

**Dr. Innocent Nuwagaba** adds strength to training and capacity-building efforts, drawing from his extensive background in research and publishing.

The project's IT backbone is managed by **Mr. Clarence Kayange**, who leads initiatives in systems integration, cybersecurity, and digital platform certification—key pillars for a robust open science ecosystem.

On the operational front, **Ms. Asia Lashku,** Project Assistant, ensures seamless coordination. With a background in library science, she supports knowledge management and access systems vital to the project's goals.

Together, this team represents more than just functional expertise—they embody ESAMI's commitment to long-term, sustainable impact in African science and innovation.

# FOSTER Project: A Strong Start in Advancing Open Science

### Project Launch and Partnerships

The FOSTER Project (FOSTERing Digital Transformation of Science in Sub-Saharan Africa) has made significant progress in its first six months. ESAMI signed a formal partnership with the European Union on 12 January 2025, followed by subgrant agreements with all nine partner institutions across Africa and Europe by the end of the month.

### Funding and Implementation

The European Commission disbursed 70% of the €1 million budget soon after, enabling implementation across all institutions. ESAMI received €105,000 to support staffing, logistics, and awareness under Work Package 5 (WP5).

### Official Launch at ESAMI

On 5 March 2025, ESAMI officially launched the project at its Arusha headquarters. Dr. Lucky Yona, the Project Coordinator, presented FOSTER's goals and ESAMI's strategic role in driving Open Science culture, infrastructure, and policy change.

### Consortium Meeting in Nairobi

Held from 22–23 April 2025, the first Consortium Meeting (CM1) brought together all partner institutions at Daystar University, Nairobi.




*Prof. Dr. Lucky Yona (Project Coordinator) Gives brief introduction about ESAMI on the 1st Consortium Meeting – Nairobi*

Representing ESAMI, Dr. Lucky Yona introduced the project team and ESAMI's strategic vision.

A major agenda item was the budget planning session led by Dr. Olesea, outlining resource allocation, cost categories, and reporting standards. Common templates and procedures for financial governance were adopted—laying the groundwork for transparent and effective collaboration.



*FOSTER project Partners at the 1st Consortium Meeting – Nairobi*

# FOSTER Project Forum Sets the Stage for Africa-led Open Science Future



*Prof. Mike Kuria, CEO of the Commission for University Education (CUE), Kenya, delivers the keynote address at the 1st Open Science Forum*

The 1st Open Science Forum (OSF1), held from 24–25 April 2025 at Daystar University, Nairobi, marked a pivotal step in advancing Open Science ecosystems for higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Convened under the FOSTER Project and co-funded by the European Union, the forum brought together leading voices from universities, government, and research institutions to shape a fairer and more inclusive academic knowledge landscape.

**Day One: Laying the Foundation**

The forum opened with a compelling keynote by Prof. Mike Kuria, CEO of the Commission for University Education (CUE), Kenya, urging Africa to embrace Open Science as a path to independence, innovation, and global research leadership.

A highlight of the day was a session on regional progress and challenges in Open Science, led by **Dr. David Kalaba of ESAMI**. He presented a comparative analysis of Kenya and Tanzania's Open Science environments, highlighting infrastructure gaps, limited funding, and policy fragmentation. He advocated for stronger regional collaboration, adoption of FAIR data principles, and shared research infrastructure.

*"The 1st Open Science Forum marked a turning point—uniting Africa's academic and policy leaders in building a bold, inclusive future for Open Science."*




*Dr. David Kalaba leading the Open science Forum's engagement during a focused discussion on Open Science in Kenya and Tanzania on the 1st Open Science Forum – Nairobi*



*ESAMI Team on the 1st Open Science Forum – Nairobi*

**Prof. Dr. Dr. Lucky** Yona presented ESAMI's institutional efforts, highlighting integration of Open Science in its MBA curriculum, enhanced open-access platforms like the ESAMI Journal, and alignment with national and continental initiatives such as COSTECH and EASTECO. He underscored the importance of capacity building and cross-border research cooperation.

**Day Two: Strengthening the Ecosystem**

On the second day, a high-level panel discussion explored strategies to strengthen the Open Science ecosystem in the region. Moderated by **Dr. Kevin Ndereba** of St. Paul's University, the session featured four experts: **Prof. Abraham Waithima** emphasized the need for institutional frameworks and supportive policies; **Joy Owango** advocated for equitable research dissemination and researcher communication capacity; **Mr. Cyrus Kamau** highlighted the role of ICT infrastructure and digital transformation in education systems; and **Dr. Henry Waruhiu of** ESAMI focused on promoting ethical research practices, fostering institutional cultural change, and securing sustainable funding models.




*The panelist addressing the issues of Strengthening the Open Science Ecosystem on the as the panelist on the 1st Open Science Forum – Nairobi*

Collectively, the panel reinforced the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, regional integration, and strategic advocacy to anchor Open Science as a transformative pillar for higher education and innovation in Africa.



*Dr. Henry Waruhiu shares insights on institutional strategies for advancing Open Science during the panel session on the 1st Open Science Forum – Nairobi*

The OSF1 forum concluded with a unified call to action—strengthening national and institutional policies, building inclusive infrastructure, and investing in human capital to support Open Science. The FOSTER Project has laid a strong foundation for transformative impact, and with institutions like ESAMI leading the way, Sub-Saharan Africa is well-positioned to become a global trailblazer in Open Science leadership.



*Participants of the 1st Open Science Forum at Daystar University – Nairobi*

# FOSTER Staff Retreat Strengthens ESAMI's Leadership and Strategic Focus

The FOSTER Project Staff Retreat, held from 5–7 May 2025 at the Arusha Serena Hotel, Tanzania, brought together a multidisciplinary ESAMI team to strengthen project coherence and strategic planning. Organized by ESAMI's Directorate of Research and Management Consultancy, the retreat emphasized progress review, financial alignment, and forward planning for Work Package 5 (WP5), led by ESAMI.



*ESAMI Team on the FOSTER Staff Retreat – Arusha, Serena Hotel*

Moderated by Dr. Lucky Yona, Dr. David Kalaba, and Dr. Henry Waruhiu, sessions covered integration of project work packages, EU-compliant budgeting, and preparation of the first FOSTER Project Progress Report. A dedicated focus was also placed on synergies with the SWITCH Kenya GREEN Project and planning for the ESAMI Research Colloquium.

Key outputs included an updated WP5 work plan, refined procurement priorities, and a working draft of the project report. The retreat reinforced ESAMI's leadership in promoting Open Science infrastructure, capacity building, and digital research excellence in Sub-Saharan Africa.

# Amsterdam Workshop Ignites Momentum for Open Science in Africa



*FOSTER Project Partner's Team Consortium convened at VU University – Amsterdam*

In a milestone for research collaboration and capacity building, a delegation from the FOSTER Project Consortium convened at VU University Amsterdam from June 16–23, 2025, for a pivotal Capacity Building Workshop. The session brought together key representatives from partner institutions including ESAMI, St. Paul University, Daystar University, Garissa University, and the University of Dar es Salaam, hosted by the Dutch institution.

The week-long event deepened understanding of Open Science principles and introduced innovative tools such as Science Shop 2.0. Participants explored strategies for community engagement in research, fostering grassroots participation through operationalized science shops, and aligning research with societal needs. The workshop is a key milestone under Work Package 2 of the FOSTER Project.

Sessions covered ecosystem mapping, community-engaged research models, and collaboration planning—laying the groundwork for a comprehensive 50-page report co-authored by all partners. This document will feature engagement models, ecosystem analysis at macro, meso, and micro levels, and strategic recommendations to scale up impactful research practices.

Lessons learned underscored the importance of structured documentation, focused research mandates, and targeted collaboration strategies. Most importantly, the workshop reinforced the consortium's shared vision: to build a sustainable, inclusive research environment that bridges science and society across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The momentum generated in Amsterdam is expected to ripple across the continent as institutions refine their engagement strategies and operationalize community-driven research frameworks.

# FOSTER Project Moves to Implementation Phase

The FOSTER Project is entering an exciting new phase. With contractual, financial, and organizational structures solidly in place, the project now moves from mobilization to full-scale implementation. In the coming months, efforts will concentrate on delivering capacity-building workshops, launching innovative digital platforms, and initiating vital policy dialogues across partner countries. The foundation laid during the first six months has set the stage for impactful results. By fostering collaboration and innovation, FOSTER aims to embed a strong culture of Open Science, supported by infrastructure and policies, across Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. This transition marks a significant milestone in advancing digital transformation in science.

# FOSTER Project Embarks on Strategic Study Visits to Europe

The FOSTER Project is set to embark on a significant capacity-building mission to Europe, with two major events scheduled for October 2025. From 13 to 17 October, selected participants will attend a Capacity Building Workshop organized by the International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS) in Slovenia. This study visit aims to foster engagement with leading institutions and experts in Open Science, providing a platform to exchange best practices and strengthen strategies for advancing Open Science policies at both institutional and national levels. The program will include discussions on national frameworks, visits to Open Science repositories, and collaborative seminars with European counterparts.



*The International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS) – Slovenia*

Following this, the FOSTER Project meeting will take place from 20 to 24 October at the University of Zaragoza, Spain. This meeting, a key milestone in the project, will consolidate insights from the study visit and align the consortium on the next phase of implementation. Sessions will focus on integrating Open Science into the core policies and practices of higher education institutions, digital transformation, and innovation in research management.



*University of Zaragoza – Spain*

Together, the study visit and project meeting are designed to deepen partnerships, enhance institutional capacity, and accelerate the FOSTER Project's objectives of promoting digital transformation and Open Science across Africa. These engagements mark critical steps toward fostering a more inclusive, transparent, and collaborative research ecosystem.

# ESAMI Leads Regional Push for Open Science Under FOSTER Project

The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) is playing a leading role in advancing Open Science across Sub-Saharan Africa through its leadership in Work Package 5 of the FOSTER Project.

Tasked with communication, dissemination, and capacity-building, ESAMI's efforts were prominently featured during the Lake Duluti Staff Retreat, which aligned regional stakeholders and galvanized support for the initiative.

So far, key milestones include the establishment of governance frameworks, strategic consultative forums, and early development of digital infrastructure. As the project moves into the implementation phase, ESAMI will coordinate regional study tours and capacity-building workshops to enhance institutional preparedness for Open Science adoption.

By fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and policy integration, ESAMI is positioning the region to become a key player in the global Open Science movement.

## FOSTER PROJECT ONGOING RESEARCH SURVEY

Participate in the FOSTER Project Citizen Science Survey here

**"Public Survey: Citizen Science and Public Engagement Practices in Higher Education"**

https://forms.office.com/e/rtzJ6ZQ6Gw

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