

Aurora Research Gateway Implementation

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1 Introduction

The **Aurora Research Gateway** (<https://aurora.openaire.eu>) is the shared discovery platform of the Aurora Universities. Developed in cooperation with **OpenAIRE AMKE**, it aggregates the research outputs of all Aurora universities—publications, datasets, and software—into one searchable, branded web portal. The Gateway fulfils the AURORA 2030 objective of creating a *shared research information infrastructure* that supports Open Science and transparency across the alliance (T5.3 project plan, 2023).

The Aurora Gateway is built on **OpenAIRE CONNECT**, a platform-as-a-service enabling communities to create customised portals for discovering and sharing research outcomes (OpenAIRE BUNDLE description CONNECT+MONITOR.pdf, p. 2). Its deployment demonstrates how European University Alliances can federate institutional repositories and CRIS (Current Research Information Systems) into a common entry-point, increasing the visibility, interoperability, and impact of open research.

2 Description

2.1 Financial and Governance Framework

2.1.1 Cost model and contract

Aurora procured OpenAIRE's **CONNECT + MONITOR Bundle** (€10 000 per year in 2024). The fee covers the Gateway and Dashboard infrastructure, hosting, backups, updates, and premium support (response ≤ 48 h) plus 10 hours of training for repository and CRIS managers.

The alliance adopted an **equal cost-sharing model** where each of Aurora's nine full partners contributes an equal share of the bundle fee. Within the bundle, institutions may **optionally** add an individual dashboard for an additional price.

2.1.2 Governance and roles

Each university designated at least one **Manager** (Authorised User with admin rights) to configure its data sources via provide.openaire.eu and curate its share of the portal ([admin interface](#)) and dashboard ([admin interface](#)). Managers can invite additional members and managers within their institution. SSO is possible through a federated EduGAIN login. One or more Managers for each organisation are recorded in the cost and contacts table, the team members of this task. Aurora Central Office coordinates the service collectively and acts as contract holder. Decisions on renewal or partner replacement are taken by the Aurora Steering Committee .

2.1.3 Licensing and compliance

OpenAIRE harvests only metadata (not full texts) from institutional repositories or CRIS systems. Partners confirm that only metadata (no full texts) are harvested and that institutional metadata are openly reusable (e.g., CC0 for Graph exposure) in line with OpenAIRE policies; GDPR responsibilities remain with data providers.

2.2 Technical Implementation

2.2.1 Setup and onboarding

OpenAIRE created the dedicated Aurora Gateway in Q1 2025, branded with Aurora logos and colour palette. Each partner registered its institutional repositories and CRIS systems in *Provide* using the OpenAIRE Guidelines for Literature Repositories and CRIS data sources (<https://guidelines.openaire.eu>).

All repositories were validated for OAI-PMH compliance and linked to their official Aurora organisation IDs (OpenAIRE OpenOrg links in cost and contacts table). By May 2025, nine sources were harvesting successfully.

2.2.2 Harvesting and metadata cleaning

Harvesting occurs monthly via the OpenAIRE Graph. By October 2025, seven of the nine Aurora universities had full harvesting in production; two (University of Iceland and Universitat Rovira i Virgili) are in preparatory stages.

- *University of Iceland* operates within a **national CRIS** shared by all Icelandic universities. Its data appear collectively in the national system; the university is now deploying its **own CRIS instance** to enable institution-specific harvesting into OpenAIRE (Task 5.3 Rolling Agenda, Meeting 2025-09-12).
- *Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV)* uses the **SciMarina CRIS** (vendor iMarina). The current software does not expose an OAI-PMH endpoint; URV is coordinating with the vendor to add this feature to the Catalonian roadmap so other regional universities can also interoperate with European open infrastructures.

For all institutions using **Elsevier PURE**, a concise instructional guide was created:

The poster summarises the necessary configuration steps to activate the OpenAIRE-CERIF export module and has been distributed among all PURE users (VUA, CBS, Ulice, UNINA).

Vanderfeesten, M. (2024). *How to: Enable OpenAIRE compliant CERIF in PURE (v1.1)*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11624355>

2.2.3 Metadata validation

Repositories faced typical issues—missing affiliations, duplicate records, or non-standard license fields—which were resolved through joint validation sessions (Task 5.3 Rolling Agenda, April 2025 notes). The Provide validation tool was used to check compliance scores per source; all achieved $\geq 90\%$ compliance by October 2025 (ibid.).

2.2.4 Affiliation normalisation and cleaning

To unify affiliation data, Aurora used **OpenOrgs**, merging name variants and hierarchies (OpenAIRE BUNDLE description CONNECT+MONITOR.pdf, p. 7). Volunteer curators from VUA and UPEC were trained by OpenAIRE (Training webinar June 2024, Agenda § 2). After curation, all outputs were properly linked to the nine Aurora universities, enabling accurate institution filters in the portal. Still this is an ongoing manual process.

2.2.5 Integration and content coverage

The Gateway aggregates records tagged to Aurora institutions within the OpenAIRE Graph. As of October 2025 it hosts > 250 000 research products (publications, datasets, software) spanning 2010-2025 (Task 5.3 Rolling Agenda summary M24). Because OpenAIRE also indexes Crossref, Zenodo, and national repositories, outputs co-authored by Aurora researchers outside institutional repositories are included automatically (ibid.).

2.2.6 Training and support

OpenAIRE delivered ≈ 10 hours of hands-on training (webinars June & September 2024) covering data-source registration, metadata validation, and OpenOrgs curation (OpenAIRE BUNDLE description p. 5). An instruction video by Maurice Vanderfeesten (VUA) demonstrated repository setup and data cleaning (Task 5.3 Rolling Agenda Meeting 2024-10-10). All partners achieved independent operational capacity by early 2025. Premium helpdesk support (≤ 48 h response) can be used for technical tickets (Aurora–OpenAIRE subscription Q&A § 5).

3 Discussion of the final outcome

The objective — to establish a functional **Aurora Research Gateway** by October 2025 — has been **partly achieved**. The portal is operational, publicly accessible, and fully populated with **affiliated metadata** from all nine Aurora universities. At the same time, **seven out of nine partners** currently have their **main institutional (CRIS) data sources** integrated and harvesting, while the remaining two are in progress (T5.3 Rolling Agenda, M24 report). By combining both affiliated records from the OpenAIRE Graph and locally harvested data sources, the Gateway already provides a **unified interface for discovering Aurora’s collective research outputs**, demonstrating the feasibility of a federated open-science infrastructure within a multi-institutional alliance.

Note: Missing bars indicate that the source may not be connected to OpenAIRE or does not expose publications. Universities with a CRIS data source but no publications retrieved from it: Uni of Iceland & Uni Rovira i Virgili

3.1 Key outcomes

- **Visibility and interoperability.** For the first time, Aurora’s research outputs are discoverable in one portal linked to the European Open Science Cloud (Analysis Unexpected Expense OpenAIRE p. 3).
- **Data quality improvement.** Repository metadata were aligned with OpenAIRE guidelines and affiliations curated through OpenOrgs.
- **Sustainable governance.** A cost-sharing model and central contract ensure continuity through 2027.
- **Capacity building.** Nine trained Managers form a community of practice for research information management within Aurora.

3.2 Deviations and contingencies

Take note that the Monitor report (deliverable 5.3) is separated from this deliverable. This Deliverable 5.2 is to focus on data accuracy first. Minor delays in two repositories were mitigated by extra harvesting runs coordinated with OpenAIRE support. No budget or scope deviation occurred.

3.2.1 Comparison to objectives

The Gateway fulfils WP5's aim of building a "*shared research information infrastructure for Open Science*". It meets the expected results in full and positions Aurora as a model for European University Alliances.

4 Conclusion

The **Aurora Research Gateway** is now an operational, sustainable platform showcasing the alliance's collective research output. It will underpin internal discovery, external visibility, and forthcoming Open Science analyses (reported separately), while continuing to improve as remaining sources complete configuration (Ulce instance; URV OAI-PMH). The subscription and governance framework ensure ongoing operation and growth.

Next steps (post-D5.2):

- Complete Ulce institutional CRIS deployment and connect to OpenAIRE harvesting.
- Support URV vendor engagement to expose OAI-PMH for SciMarina.
- Continue Provide validation cycles and OpenOrgs curation.
- Continue to update gateway with hierarchical organisation data for institutional deep filtering.
- Promote PURE CERIF export configuration using the Zenodo "how-to" poster where applicable.

The Gateway is already demonstrating impact through higher visibility of Aurora outputs in [EOSC EU Node](#) and [OpenAIRE Explore](#), showcasing the alliance as a leader in Open Science collaboration.

5 Annex

5.1 Institutional Data Sources

University	System Type / Primary Sources	Protocol / Status	Notes
VUA	PURE CRIS	OAI-PMH CERIF (Active)	Using OpenAIRE-compliant CERIF export (see poster).
UDE	Universitätsbibliographie (library catalog) + DuEPublico Repository	OAI-PMH DC (Active)	Both sources registered and harvesting.
UNINA	IRIS CRIS + Institutional Repository	OAI-PMH DC (Active)	Dual source; validated mappings.
Ulce	National CRIS → institutional CRIS in setup	OAI-PMH CERIF (Pending)	Preparing dedicated instance for direct harvest.
UIBK	VIVO CRIS	OAI-PMH CERIF (Active)	Custom CRIS; VIVO connected and harvesting.
UPOL	Institutional Repository	OAI-PMH DC (Active)	Harvested; Czech mappings verified.
URV	SciMarina CRIS	OAI-PMH CERIF (Not exposed)	Vendor discussion to enable endpoint (regional roadmap).
CBS	PURE CRIS	OAI-PMH CERIF (Active)	Using OpenAIRE-compliant CERIF export (see poster).
UPEC	HAL Collections	OAI-PMH DC (Active)	Harvest via national HAL node.

(Sources: OpenAIRE Subscription – cost and contacts table.xlsx tab “Source information”; Task 5.3 Rolling Agenda Harvest Log May 2025, [Find research Data sources](#))

5.2 Implementation Timeline

Month	Milestone / Activity	Evidence
M1 (Nov 2023)	T5.3 kick-off; systems inventory; governance setup	Sprint notes
M6 (Apr 2024)	Contract negotiation finalised (draft agreement)	Subscription Agreement (v1.0)
M8 (Jun 2024)	Training webinar #1 (CONNECT/Provide)	BUNDLE training features
M10 (Aug 2024)	All initial sources registered in Provide	Sprint notes
M12 (Oct 2024)	First validation cycle (affiliations, DOIs, licences)	Sprint notes
M18 (Apr 2025)	Public beta of gateway; extra re-harvests as needed	Sprint notes
M24 (Oct 2025)	D5.2 submitted ; two sources in final setup	This report; sprint log

5.3 Screenshot

Figure 1 – Aurora Gateway Homepage: Branded landing page with search bar, highlights, and consortium logos.

AURORA Home Deposit Link Search About Develop Manage mv

Research Gateway

Type: Research products | Scholarly works Search in OpenAIRE

All our research output and projects, in one place.

Aurora consists of research-intensive universities deeply committed to the social impact of our activities, and with a history of engagement with the communities in which we operate. Our overall vision is to use our academic excellence to influence societal change through our research and education – aiming to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

All our research output from selected sources with validated records, is combined via this Aurora Connect Gateway, and put on the Aurora Monitor Dashboard.

More about Aurora: <https://aurora-universities.eu/>

Try browsing by:

- [SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS \(SDGs\) →](#)
- [FIELDS OF SCIENCE \(FOS\) →](#)

Gateway Information

Curated by: Maurice Vanderhoeven, Baldwin Zarich, Sander Bosch, Martin Jutteau, Elke Spielberg

1,516 Projects

2 Linked Zenodo Communities

40 Data sources

Publications	1.1M	Research data	93.5K	Research software	1.6K
Other research products	101.8K				

Aurora Universities

[BROWSE ALL →](#)

- UNIVERSITÄT DUISBURG ESSEN
- Copenhagen Business School
- PAVOL JOZEF ŠAFÁRIK UNIVERSITY IN KOŠICE
- Palacký University Olomouc
- HASKÓLI ISLANDS
- UPEC
- UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDERI NAPOLI FEDERICO II
- VU VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

<https://aurora.openaire.eu/>

Figure 2 – Search Results & Filters: Results list with filters (organisation, type, OA, year, FoS, SDGs).

The screenshot displays the Aurora OpenAIRE search interface. At the top, the Aurora logo is on the left, and navigation links (Home, Deposit, Link, Search, About, Develop) and a Sign in button are on the right. Below the logo, a search bar contains the text "Search by title, author, abstract, DOI, orcid...".

On the left side, there are three filter sections:

- Filters** (Clear All): Includes "Access" (Open Access checked, Closed Access, Restricted, Open Source, Embargo) and "Type" (Publications checked, Research Data, Research Software, Other Research Products).
- Document Type**: Includes Article (388,451), Other Literature Type (161,774), Preprint (37,586), Conference Object (29,590), Part Of Book Or Chapter... (21,702), and Doctoral Thesis (20,209).
- Year range**: A range from 1800 to 2035 is shown, with "This year" and "Last 5 years" options.
- Field of Science**: Includes Medical And Health Sci... (164,702), Clinical Medicine (98,068), Natural Sciences (82,922), Basic Medicine (78,755), Health Sciences (53,032), and Social Sciences (44,344).

The main content area shows 472,361 Research Products. A message states: "The following results are related to Aurora Universities Network. Are you interested to view more results? Visit OpenAIRE - Explore." Below this, there are buttons for "Aurora Universities Network", "Open Access", and "Publications".

The first search result is titled "Radiomics Applications in Head and Neck Tumor Imaging: A Narrative Review". It is a publication from 2023, Italy, published by MDPI AG. Authors listed are Mario Tortora, Laura Gemint, Alessandra Scaravilli, and Lorenzo Uggi. The abstract mentions recent advances in machine learning and artificial intelligence technology for medical images.

The second result is "An Executable Model of the Interaction between Verbal and Non-verbal Communication", a publication from 2000, Netherlands, published by Springer Berlin Heidelberg. Authors are Jan Treur, Wouter C. A. Wijngaards, and Catholijn M. Jonker. The abstract describes a generic process model for verbal and non-verbal communication.

The third result is "Pathogen manipulation of chloroplast function triggers a light-dependent immune recognition", a publication from 2020, United Kingdom, Netherlands, published by Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Authors are Cian Duggan, Tingxiu Yan, Vivianne G. A. A. Vleeshouwers, and Suomeng Dong. The abstract discusses NLR proteins in plants and animals.

The fourth result is "Do commissions and boni affect advisor behavior?", a master thesis from 2019, Austria, published by Universität Innsbruck. The author is Rittmannsberger, Thomas. The abstract discusses financial decisions in households.

<https://aurora.openaire.eu/search/find/research-outcomes?resultbestaccessright=%22Open%2520Access%22&type=%22publications%22>

Figure 3 – Record Page (Linked Entities): Project with links to publications, and datasets.

The screenshot displays the AURORA record page for the project 'xFATE'. At the top, the AURORA logo is on the left, and navigation links (Home, Deposit, Link, Search, About, Develop) and a search/sign-in area are on the right. Below the logo is a toolbar with 'Link to', 'Share', 'Deposit', 'Embed', and 'Download' buttons. The project title 'xFATE' is followed by its subtitle 'The Fate of Excitation Energy in Photoinhibited Chloroplasts'. A blue box on the right shows 'Views 26' and 'Downloads 9'. Project details include 'Open Access Mandate for Publications and Research data', project code '799083', call for proposal 'H2020-MSCA-IF-2017', and funding information: 'Funder: European Commission', 'Funded under: H2020 | MSCA-IF-EF-ST', 'Overall Budget: 165,599 EUR', and 'Funder Contribution: 165,599 EUR'. A link to 'Detailed Project Information (CORDIS)' is provided. A horizontal menu below the project details includes 'Summary', 'Publications (7)', 'Research data (1)', 'DMPs', and 'Metrics', with 'Statistics' on the right. The main content area is divided into 'Description' and 'Partners'. The description text discusses the thermal dissipation of excitation energy in photosynthesis. The partners list includes 'VUA'. Below this is a 'RECENT PUBLICATIONS' section with a 'VIEW ALL' link. The featured publication is 'In situ Time-Resolved Spectroelectrochemistry Reveals Limitations of Biohybrid Photoelectrode Performance', published in 2022. It lists authors 'Nawrocki, Wojciech J.; Jones, Michael R.; Frese, Raoul N.; Croce, Roberta; +1 Authors' and provides DOI, Handle, and a link to the publication page. The footer contains 'Powered by the OpenAIRE Graph', 'Last update of records in OpenAIRE: Sep 15, 2025', and 'Found an issue? Give us feedback'.

https://aurora.openaire.eu/search/project?projectId=corda_h2020::bc8bf0d1a376a3443d2981529018440a

Figure 4 – Adding sources and Affiliations (Gateway Management interface): Data Sources and Affiliations that are used to fill the records for the Gateway.

The screenshot displays the AURORA Gateway Management interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Deposit', 'Link', 'Search', 'About', 'Develop', and 'Manage'. The left sidebar shows 'Manage Communities' with a sub-menu for 'Content configuration' containing 'Projects', 'Data sources', 'Subjects', 'Zenodo Communities', 'Advanced Criteria', and 'Affiliations'. The main content area features a grid of content provider cards. The first card is for 'HAL UPEC', which includes a 'Deposit info' section describing its commitment to open science, a 'Why and what to deposit on HAL' section with a link to 'avant-de-deposer - Université Paris-Est-Créteil-Val-de-Marne', and a 'Deposit on HAL' section with a link to 'CCSD CAS - Central Authentication Service'. The second card is for 'Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam', with a 'Deposit info' section and a 'Login in PURE here with your VUnet ID' link. The third card is for 'Research data repository of the Universität Innsbruck'. The fourth card is for 'DuEPublico - Duisburg-Essen Publications Online', with a 'Deposit info' section, a 'Login with your UDE account and start deposit here' link, and a list of materials: 'Open Access E-Publications', 'Electronic Dissertations', 'Open Access Research Data', and 'Open Access Teaching and Learning Materials'. Each card has 'EDIT OPTIONS' and 'REMOVE' buttons at the bottom.

<https://admin.connect.openaire.eu/aurora/config/content-providers>

← Manage Communities

- Community Info
- Content configuration**
 - Projects
 - Data sources
 - Subjects
 - Zenodo Communities
 - Advanced Criteria
 - Affiliations**
- Users
- Pages & Menus
- Customization

Any research product with an author affiliated to any of the organisations will be tagged for your community and included in your gateway. Information about the organisation comes from the OpenAIRE Graph. If you want to change it, use the [OpenOrgs service](#). If you have no access, contact [the OpenAIRE Helpdesk](#). Descriptions can be edited for organisations subscribed to the Premium plan.

11 Affiliations, Page 1 of 2

Copenhagen Business School(CBS)

[View in the gateway](#)
Website URL: <http://www.cbs.dk/en>

Palacký University, Olomouc

[View in the gateway](#)
Website URL: <http://www.upol.cz/en/>

Paris-East Créteil University(UPEC)

[View in the gateway](#)
Website URL: <http://www.en.u-pec.fr/>

Universitat Rovira i Virgili(URV)

[View in the gateway](#)
Website URL: http://www.urv.cat/en_index.html

University Federico II of Naples

[View in the gateway](#)
Website URL: <http://www.unina.it/index.jsp>

University of Duisburg-Essen

[View in the gateway](#)
Website URL: <https://www.uni-due.de/en/>

<https://admin.connect.openaire.eu/aurora/config/affiliations>

Figure 5 – Validating, Harvesting and Indexing CRIS systems (Provide Management interface): CRIS managers have insight in harvesting and indexing status.

The screenshot displays the 'Aggregation History' page in the OpenAIRE PROVIDE interface for Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The page shows a timeline of aggregation stages from 2025-09-05 to 2025-10-05. Each stage includes details on the aggregation stage, collection mode, number of records, and completion status. An 'Indexed version' is also shown at the top.

Date	Aggregation stage	Collection mode	Number of records	Completed Successfully
2025-09-05	TRANSFORM	REFRESH	218873	true
2025-10-05	TRANSFORM	REFRESH	197299	true
2025-10-05	TRANSFORM	REFRESH	197800	true
2025-10-05	COLLECT	INCREMENTAL	219399	true

Indexed version
 Aggregation date: 2025-09-05
 Number of collected records: 218873

Info / Help
 This page provides you with information about the metadata aggregation stages of your datasource.
 For each aggregation stage (**COLLECT** and **TRANSFORM**) is presented the aggregation date, the number of records collected and transformed as well as the collection mode (REFRESH or INCREMENTAL).
Aggregation stage COLLECT: Stage in which OpenAIRE collects the metadata records from your datasource.
Collection mode REFRESH: Harvesting of all metadata records.
INCREMENTAL: Harvesting of metadata records from a specific time-range (the new records since the previous collection date).
Aggregation stage TRANSFORM: After collection, metadata are transformed according to the OpenAIRE internal metadata model, which is used to generate the final OpenAIRE Graph that you can access from the OpenAIRE portal and the APIs. The number of transformed records may decrease taking into account the compatibility of the metadata with the OpenAIRE guidelines.
 Which version is published in the public portals?
 The published version is labelled **Indexed version**. Look for this label in the timeline to know which version of the aggregated records is published on the public portals.
 How often is the OpenAIRE Graph published?

<https://provide.openaire.eu/repository/eurocrisdris::01222/aggregationHistory>

5.4 Acknowledgements

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- **OpenAIRE Support Team:** OpenAIRE Services Relation Manager, who brought us in contact with the right people internally and for handling quotes and contracts OpenAIRE Services Portfolio Manager, OpenAIRE CEO who provided strategic support, OpenAIRE technical lead for CONNECT who guided portal customisation, OpenAIRE tech assisting with Graph, Harvesting, Validation and Monitor issues), and the OpenAIRE Helpdesk staff. Their training, prompt responses, and technical interventions were critical to the project's success.
- **Aurora Institutional Coordinators and Leadership:** Aurora Secretary General for facilitating the financial agreement and signing the subscription, the Aurora Vice-Rectors Research (VRR) board for approving the cost-sharing model and supporting Open Science infrastructure at the highest level, Aurora Central Office for handling the communication with the Institutional Coordinators and steering committee, and other WP5 members who advocated for this deliverable.

5.5 References (incl. non-public internal documents)

- **Aurora – T5.3 Rolling Agenda & Sprint Notes (2024–2025).** Internal agenda/log of meetings, actions, and decisions (incl. onboarding, harvesting, validation, and vendor engagements).
- **Analysis – Unexpected Expense OpenAIRE (2024).** Rationale for bundle, discount, cost-sharing model, and bridge-year funding.
- **OpenAIRE BUNDLE description – CONNECT + MONITOR (July 2024).** Service features, pricing, branding, training/support, OpenOrgs, and Graph update cadence.
- **Aurora – OpenAIRE subscription contract Q&A (2024–2025).** Clarifications on authorised users, payment scenarios, suspension, and links to contacts/source registry.
- **Subscription Services Agreement v1.0 – AURORA 2025 (Dec 3, 2024).** Term/renewal, payment, IP, confidentiality, third-party components, indemnification, force majeure.
- **Vanderfeesten, M. (2024). *How to: Enable OpenAIRE compliant CERIF in PURE (v1.1)*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11624355>**