

Ávarp JAB rektors á ráðstefnu um rannsóknainnviði í félagsvísindum

Oddi 101, miðvikudaginn 3. maí 2023

Dear friends and colleagues

I am pleased to have the opportunity to open this conference on international research infrastructure in Social Sciences.

This topic is absolutely on the top of our agenda at the University of Iceland. One of the key components of the strategy for University of Iceland 2021 to 2026 involves strengthening of research infrastructure including seamless access to European and international large-scale infrastructure facilities.

University of Iceland will continue to enhance support for researchers through increased access to research infrastructure, as well as open and improved access to research data and findings.

We aim to co-ordinate all our efforts regarding research infrastructure across the University with an inter-institutional working group of experts and managers. We are currently in the process of appointing a leading co-ordinator for research infrastructure at the central level of the University.

I want to thank the School of Social Sciences for their initiative and for taking a leading role within our university on data curation services and backing up the FAIR principles regarding data. GAGNÍS or **DATICE** is an excellent example of successful services for the academic staff members across the university and beyond. I know that DATICE has been struggling a little, but we must find ways to ensure its sustainability.

The Icelandic Roadmap (Rannís Vegvísir) for research infrastructure is an extremely important source of funding for the University of Iceland.

IREI, the Icelandic research e-infrastructure project, is a part of the Icelandic roadmap for 2021-2026. The project is about creating a unified e-infrastructure that is to be robust and scalable, designed for universities and research institutions in Iceland. **IREI** will create a platform that provides services needed for effective management of research data, such as consultancy, storage, secure data discovery, search and collection including scientific feasibility of studies, data organization, processing power and sharing services for all research fields. Research projects in every science discipline need cost-effective and accessible data storage for research data, processing power for modelling, sharing services for cooperation and publication, and high-quality consulting for making all this come together in order to fit a given research project.

University of Iceland is a member of **Aurora** which is a European University Alliance consisting of 10 partners and 4 associate partners. These research-intensive universities are joined in a commitment to use academic excellence to drive societal change.

The University of Iceland is leading a Horizon 2020 funded project with the Aurora partners, focused on collaboration on research support, innovation and infrastructure sharing. At the end of the three-year project duration, we will produce a shared support plan for research and innovation.

In AURORA research and innovation, we are focused on how we can learn from and share with our partner universities. For an institution such as the University of Iceland, which is keen on international collaboration but geographically remote, it is particularly important to have strong partnerships with universities and research centres from around the globe or within Europe.

One of our key Work Packages in the Aurora project is on **Sharing Infrastructure and Resources**. We envision a future where our scientists and researchers can work together, and we seek to eliminate barriers to their collaboration in any way we can. Our objective is to facilitate the sharing of resources, which we define as data, networks, expertise, and equipment.

To that end, we have designed an interactive map wherein the resources of each partner can be explored. The map describes the resources available at each university and how it can be shared with partners.

Furthermore, we have produced a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding, MoU, set to be signed by Rectors of the 8 partner universities at a biannual event in Olomouc in the Czech Republic later this year. The MoU, which has been approved by all partners and associated partners, defines their intention and commitment to share resources, promote research activity among the partners, and collaborate in research cooperation.

Dear meeting participants, I want to thank you all for taking the time to discuss these important topics, such research infrastructure and access to international databases. I am sure you will have a good and beneficial conference and I wish you all the best.