# Wikimedia & Open Science conference

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## What is the event or activity you want to organize?

Tell us in less than 250 words what your event or activity is about.

We are planning to organise a "Wikimedia and Open Science Conference" (exact name to be confirmed) in Poland in autumn of 2026, with smaller, local events earlier in the year to build the community. The main conference will be hybrid, with about 100 attendees in person and attendance online. It will be run in Polish and English, with simultaneous translation.

The programme is planned for 2 days, with space for presentations from researchers and from the Wikimedia community, interactive workshops, and space to get creative in tackling issues and looking for solutions.

We anticipate that the programme will cover:

1. Examples of projects researching Wikimedia (i.e. technological advancements, community health and participation, content bias, content creation and quality), with interesting outcomes for the community;
2. Examples of research projects using Wikidata, with practical solutions, challenges, blocks and wishlists (to explore if they could be solved by collaboration between researchers and the community);
3. Interactive workshops that will provide mutual insights about the groups - for example, about Wikidata for researchers who are new to Wikimedia projects;
4. Moderated discussions and breakout sessions to encourage finding collaboration opportunities, and including crucial topics for the community, such as the idea of open science, combating disinformation and building bridges between academia and society;
5. Networking opportunities and entertainment - sightseeing and socialising.

Before the conference, we want to organise 2-3 smaller "pre-conference" events with the purpose of community building - either with local academics at their institutions, or as part of Wikimedia Polska annual spring conference.

## What do you want to achieve by doing this community building activity?

What is the impact you aim to achieve? Why is this impact important for the Wikimedia research community?

The idea for research community building events is aligned with the Wikimedia Polska strategy 2023-2025[1], which identified supporting research projects and research collaborations as a key area to develop.

[1] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wikimedia_Polska_(WMPL)_Strategy_2023-2025_ENG.pdf

We have identified several issues that we would like to address:

- Overall, academics' understanding of Wikipedia and sister projects is fairly shallow, and they are unaware or even dismissive of the community behind it.
- While there are several Polish researchers studying Wikipedia, their activities are scattered and disconnected from the community: they often approach their research questions out of pure academic interest but with limited use for the community.
- Few researchers are aware of Wikidata or explore it.
- Polish Wikimedians are not aware of many research projects, and they find research results difficult to find, navigate or implement.
- There is a clear gap in meaningful engagement between researchers and the community behind Wikimedia projects: both groups have slightly different needs and challenges, but there is little dialogue or initiatives to bridge them.
- At the same time, the Polish Wikidata community remains active, but relatively small and fragmented, with limited opportunities for peer learning, support, and visibility within academia.

These trends were apparent in our conversations with Polish researchers and observations of the Polish academic community, and a review of existing research literature. The observations are also informed by conversations with the Wikimedia Polska editor community (during an online meeting in October 2024 focused on Open Science Strategy 2025, as well as in person roundtable discussions at Wikimedia Polska spring meeting in March 2025). These conversations and the community needs also shaped the event idea.

With this in mind, we plan to increase the research capacity of the local academic community, and encourage them to take up research projects answering questions important for the Wikimedia movement. We aim to achieve this with these three interrelated goals:

1. Build bridges between the Polish Wikimedia community and the academic community.
2. Increase awareness of Wikimedia projects among researchers and educators.
3. Strengthen and connect the Polish Wikidata community.

The first objective of the event is to create a space for exchange between researchers and Wikimedians, including Wikidata contributors and scholars who use (or could benefit from using) Wikidata in their work. These interactions, among people who might not otherwise be in the same space, will help build mutual understanding and inspire new forms of meaningful collaboration, where research is done not just *about* Wikimedia projects, but *with* the community.

The second, related goal is to raise awareness within academia about the value and potential of Wikimedia projects. For the researchers, this event will be a chance to learn more about Wikimedia projects. We know that many researchers in Poland have a superficial understanding of Wikimedia projects, with limited knowledge of how to use them in their work. They are either unaware of Wikidata or use it without realizing that it is curated and maintained by a dedicated community. We see an opportunity to change this, encouraging researchers to engage more deeply and responsibly with Wikimedia - both as a resource and as a collaborative system.

Third aim is to strengthen the Polish Wikidata community which, while active, remains fairly scattered. We know they are aware of potential Wikidata uses in research more broadly, but not in detail. They don't have many opportunities to come together to discuss Wikidata specifically. By bringing them together, we want to achieve a "critical mass", a supportive and active community. This could open the door to exploring new uses of Wikidata, beyond editing: for example, as a powerful tool for research and education, such as a Wikidata set built collaboratively with researchers, something that researchers from the Institute of Literary Research (involved in shaping the conference, as mentioned in one of the points below) already expressed interest in. Presenting the Wikidata editors with specific research applications of Wikidata is likely to enhance their motivation and feeling of meaningful contribution.

Finally, the academic collaborations for Wikimedia Polska are overseen by one staff member, the Open Science Manager, who has limited capacity. That's why we believe in enabling the community to support itself by encouraging peer learning, collaboration, and sustainable relationships between Wikimedians and researchers. Change will not happen during one event but by engaging various audiences such as researchers who already work with Wikimedia, Wikimedians who happen to be academics, etc, we hope to achieve a "snowball effect", starting relatively small and building it further over time, with the support from Wikimedia Polska staff.

This work is important for the Wikimedia research community, because when researchers are in dialogue with the communities they study, the work becomes more relevant, grounded in reality and accurate. It can also support the development of Wikimedia projects in ways informed by research. Stronger collaborations mean better research outcomes which can be further used by the community

This initiative is closely aligned with the Wikimedia Movement's strategic direction of Service and Equity. By actively bridging the gap between researchers and Wikimedians, we are fostering a more inclusive and equitable knowledge ecosystem - one in which academic perspectives are informed by the lived experience of Wikimedia contributors, and vice versa.

Our proposal also advances key Movement Strategy Recommendations:

- Coordinate Across Stakeholders: We bring together two communities, Wikimedians and academics. Through co-creation of the programme and continued engagement after the event, we aim to build structures that support ongoing collaboration.

- Innovate in Free Knowledge: The initiative fosters new ways of working with Wikidata as a research and educational tool, and supports the development of Wikimedia-aware research practices. It also positions Wikidata as infrastructure for open science in Poland.

Through this work, we are building infrastructure not just for knowledge sharing, but for knowledge co-production, supporting the long-term sustainability of Wikimedia communities and expanding the impact of research that is ethical, participatory, and grounded in real-world practice.

In the long term, we would be interested in seeing if other communities face similar challenges. Even though we are to some extent focusing on the Polish landscape to start with,

we believe that by engaging internationally, we will be able to share and translate our findings and good practices more broadly.

## When do you plan to host the event/activity? What is influencing the timing of the event?

Please share here when you expect the event/activity to begin and end. Please describe the preparations you expect for organizing the event/activity and their timing. Also, let us know if there are external factors influencing your decision about the timing of the event/activity.

We are planning the conference for October/November 2026. So far, we have started the conceptual work to apply for funds, as well as community dialogue. University of Silesia in Katowice, with whom we had signed a collaboration agreement on 7 November 2024, have confirmed their interest in becoming our academic partner for the event. Until the end of 2025 we will secure a venue and confirm the conference date, we will secure funding and continue the community planning.

Plan for 2026:
Quarter 1 (Jan-March):

- Establish the organising committee (with representatives from the academic community and Wikimedia, expressions of interest mentioned under the next question below)
- Invite keynote speaker & invited speakers
- Invite workshop organisers

Quarter 2 (April-June):

- Abstract submission open (for posters and oral presentations)
- Registration open
- Initial programme announcement

Quarter 3 (July - Sept):

- Abstract selection and confirmation
- Logistics: catering, accommodation
- Programme confirmation

Quarter 4 (Oct - Dec):

- Conference taking place
- Evaluation & summary, planning follow up actions

The timing is planned to give us enough time for community building, community planning and fundraising. We have also considered the average availability during the academic year, and the fact that Wikidata's birthday is on 29 October.

## Who will participate in your event/activity?

Who is the audience for your event/activity? Please identify specific people or the types of attendees you expect will participate.

How does their participation advance the purpose of the convening or activity? What is your existing relationship with them? Will your work focus on involving participants from any underrepresented communities?

If you are organizing an event, add the number of participants here, including the number of people who will shape your program. For the people who will shape your program, tell us who they are if you have indications of commitment from any of them already.

The event is intended for:

- Wikimedians interested in collaborating with the academic world
- Wikimedians active in and interested in Wikidata
- Academics working with Wikidata

- Academics working with other Wikimedia projects
- Academics interested in working with Wikimedia projects (including early career researchers)
- Students and PhD students working and interested in working with Wikimedia projects

We anticipate that the majority of attendees will be from Poland, but we will invite Wikidata representatives and Wikimedia researchers from other countries to present and attend, and encourage attendees from other countries, especially from the CEE region, as well.

Participation of the above-mentioned groups, and their input in shaping the programme, is crucial for the event, because the purpose of the conference is to bring them together.

At Wikimedia Polska, we have close relationships with active Wikidata editors, and thanks to years of working together, there is mutual familiarity and trust. We also have good relations with representatives of the academic community who are Wikimedians. Representatives of these groups will steer planning the programme and shape the event.

We have been developing relationships with the academic community. Because Wikimedia research is relatively unexplored and unknown in Poland, we have already secured an academic institution(University of Silesia) as a partner, to increase the event's visibility and recognition among academic peers.

We want to engage early-career researchers and students, and include women and gender minorities in meaningful ways in the event as well. We will ensure the event is accessible for people with disabilities and outcomes are disseminated in accessible formats.

We are planning the event for about 100 attendees in person and possible participation online.

We have a declaration of commitment from the following people who will shape the programme:

1. Dr Maciej Bisaga, Open Science Coordinator at University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland - University of Silesia being our academic partner for the event.
2. Dr Włodzimierz Lewoniewski, Poznań University of Economics and Business - experienced Wikimedian and established Wikimedia researcher (creator of WikiRank tool, among others).
3. Prof. Dariusz Jemielniak, Polish Academy of Sciences - established Wikimedia researcher and advocate, formerly on the Wikimedia Foundation board of trustees, author of *Common Knowledge? An Ethnography of Wikipedia*
4. Jarosław Błaszczak, user:Powerek38 - an experienced Polish Wikidata editor.
5. Dr Sabine von Mering, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, Germany.
6. Dr Agnieszka Turska-Kawa - Vice-Rector for Science, University of Silesia, Leader of the European Open Science School project.
7. Alan Ang, Senior Partner Manager, Wikimedia Deutschland - advisory role as content advisor (Wikidata).
8. Dr Marta Świelik, Digital Humanities Centre, Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences - co-author of the Open Humanities manifesto 2024[2] (in Polish) and group leader working with academic Wikidata users.

[2] https://operas.pl/manifest-otwartej-humanistyki/

9. Joanna Potęga, Polish Librarians Association, experienced Wikimedian and academic librarian.

Depending on their availability, some people on this list will play a more advisory role, with others being more hands on. We will also be engaging with several more members of the Polish Wikimedia and Wikidata community in the planning process - depending on their interest, we are hoping to engage at least 5 more Wikimedia and Wikidata editors.

## Where will the event/activity take place?

Please share details on where you expect the event/activity to take place. Will it be remote, in-person, or hybrid? Will it be synchronous or asynchronous? Will it be local, regional, or global? Please share the country names which are the focus of your event/activity and any other information that is useful for understanding your proposal.

We are planning to hold the event in Katowice, at the University of Silesia. We have a declaration from the university that they will make the venue available to us, at a significantly discounted rate. The event will be hybrid, with around 100 participants in person and more online, with interactive options such as the chance to ask questions online and some of the interactive workshops or breakout rooms conducted online as well.

The event will be synchronous, the programme will be run during 2 consecutive days, with time for socialising and networking. Recordings of the presentations will be made available on Wikimedia Polska youtube channel after the event, with subtitles in English and Polish, respectively.

The event will be to some extent focused on the Polish community, we anticipate that most participants will be from Poland, and the event will be run in Polish and English. We will invite and encourage participants and presenters from other countries (Germany, Italy, France, CEE Region) to share experience, show good practice examples, share solutions to challenges and learn from each other. A limited number of travel and accommodation scholarships will be available to encourage participants from the Wikimedia community.

## Experience organizing similar events or activities

Tell us about the organizing team's experience organizing research or research community-building events or activities. If you have organized many events in the past, please share a sample of them to help us understand your experience in this space.

The planned team would be:
Katarzyna (Kasia) Makowska, PhD, Wikimedia Polska Open Science Manager. She has been organising various research conferences and research community events, both in person and online, for more than 7 years. She has about 5 years of experience working with a team of volunteers to organise research conferences, meetings and workshops, from before she joined Wikimedia Polska. She has organised multiple events that were community-shaped and community-driven, often in a bottom-up or grassroot way.

Marek Lewandowski, an events expert who has been employed by Wikimedia Polska since 2022. He is the person responsible for organising conferences, training and meetings for the Polish Wikimedia community. The most important events organised by Marek were: breaking the Guinness record in the longest

editing (100h), annual Wikimedian conference for about 100 participants with a two-day programme (including catering and accommodation) and additional attractions, regular general meetings of the association's members online and onsite, and this year: the organisation of an informal record - editing Wikipedia in the deepest commercially accessible point in Poland - the Guido coal mine in Zabrze.

The communications and promotion of the event will be covered by an experienced communication, fundraising and PR officer from Wikimedia Polska.

Wikimedia Polska and its employees have years of experience in organising various conferences. As an organisation, we've been regularly organising conferences for almost 20 years. In the past, we organised the CEE Meeting, Wikimania and co-organised the last Wikimania in Katowice. Our yearly conference Wzlot attracts around 100 participants from different communities and backgrounds, not only Wikimedians, but academics and culture sector professionals. We organised an open science discussion panel during the last Wikimania. We ran an open science path during the Wzlot conference this March. Our employees attend dozens of conferences each year, bringing not only knowledge, but logistic experience as well.

## Specific outputs

Describe the specific outputs you expect from the event/activity (e.g., reports, action plans, etc.). How will these outputs advance the purpose of the event/activity and Wikimedia research community's goals? Who will be responsible for advancing action post-activity to realize your desired impact? With what resources?

We are planning the following outputs:

1. A bilingual conference proceedings report, summarising presentations and discussions, key discussions, and challenges identified by both researchers and Wikimedians. This report will include actionable insights and will be published on Meta and other Wikimedia-friendly platforms, increasing its visibility and utility. Report creation will be coordinated by the Open Science Manager.
2. Collaboratively developed, actionable "research wishlist" - open, evolving list of research topics and needs, co-created by the Wikimedia and academic communities. The wishlist will help guide future research aligned with community needs, and remain active post-event to encourage ongoing contributions.
3. An action plan with ways to engage the interested parties going forward, which will help inform the long term Open Science strategy at Wikimedia Polska when working with the Wikimedia and academic community.
4. A pilot community of practice. The ideal outcome for us will be to create an open group of academics and Wikimedians interested in research collaboration, peer learning, and shared problem-solving. This will be a space, focusing on Wikimedia research, as well as using Wikimedia projects such as Wikidata as research tools, where academics and less experienced users can come with questions and be supported by their peers and experienced Wikimedians, and everyone can benefit from the "hive mind" when facing challenges. We envision this space as an incubator for future research collaborations, grant applications, and joint initiatives. The

Open Science Manager and Community Support staff will facilitate initial coordination and sustainability planning of the group, and help maintain it. The online community could exist on Meta or collaborative platforms such as Slack or Discord.

Some aspects of the specific outputs are exploratory and will depend on the interests and needs of the participants' voices during the event. We are planning to gather insights and feedback from participants during the interactive sessions and discussions.

We plan that the event will be a strong boost of the ongoing dialogue and regular interactions, facilitated by the Open Science Manager at Wikimedia Polska. At the moment, academics who want to collaborate with Wikimedia, often come to Wikimedia Polska for guidance and advice. This is appreciated, but can consume a lot of time and capacity, considering we only have one staff member coordinating the collaborations. With these outputs, researchers will also find it easier to find research ideas and potential collaborators and support from the Wikimedians.

We are also taking steps to closer collaborations within the academic world, and the conference will strengthen them and establish our role in this area. University of Silesia has extended a preliminary invitation to join their new Open Science Community as well as lead workshops during their European Open Science School, summer school edition (work in progress).

## Evaluation

One year after the event/activity, how will you assess if your event/activity has been successful?

Our evaluation will focus on whether the event has successfully built relationships and shared understanding between researchers and Wikimedia contributors, laying the groundwork for future collaboration and research that is community-informed. These tasks will be taken up by the Open Science Manager, with Community Support staff's help.

In the short term (immediately after the event):

- We will send out evaluation forms to all attendees, in person and online, to gather insights about satisfaction, accessibility, and relevance of the programme.
- We will continue to work on the outputs, capturing ideas and needs of both communities.
- We will assess engagement with event outputs, based on contributions and responses during and shortly after the event.

In the long term:

- We will monitor interactions and emerging collaborations between the Wikimedia community and researchers. Our target is to enable:
    - At least one research grant proposal (to WMF) after the conference, as a result of new collaborations;
    - At least 3 collaborative projects or publications initiated as a result of the conference;
    - Continued engagement and development of the research wishlist.

- We will monitor whether the actionable insights from the conference have been put into practice. This can also be facilitated by Wikimedia Polska (for example, follow up workshops, meetings, creation of resources where the need will have been identified).

- We also want feedback on the idea of creating an ongoing community of practice in a way that is aligned with the community needs. A clear indication of success would be if one year after the conference, a platform has been established to serve as a community of practice.

## Budget

Use the Wikimedia Foundation's [budget template](#) for conferences and events planning. Please update the rows of the sheet to the needs of your project. In your submission, provide a link to your budget spreadsheet as part of this section. Please make sure we can view the file (e.g., ensure that it is viewable by anyone who has the link.)

The amount we are asking for is USD 45,774.16 (173,290.00 PLN). Detailed budget can be found in the template:
Wikimedia & Open Science Conference F...
(https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1BknKDFwIfbuP7kCbhN0RhHMDnXr7Rp99hK83C77QPF4/edit?usp=sharing)

Part of the costs, such as staff costs, will be covered in-kind by Wikimedia Polska. We are also planning to seek additional funding from other sources. (We are considering external sponsors or a symbolic conference fee for academic participants, reimbursed by their employers, to partially cover catering costs, among others.)

The contributions from Wikimedia Polska will amount to USD 13,999.00 (53,000.00 PLN).

We (Wikimedia Polska) are supported by the General Support Grant as well, but most of the funds from our General Support Grant are directed into strengthening fundraising and capacity building. We are in the middle of this process, and redirecting these funds into organising the conference could disrupt this plan. The General Support Grant and plan behind these funds will help Wikimedia Polska diversify the sources of income, be more financially independent. These purposes are different to the purpose behind this community building initiative, which focuses specifically on the research community.