

ORTASA-DSS 2025 Celebrated in Benin, with the Founding Event of the Operations Research Society of West Africa

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The 3rd Regional School in Operations Research (ORTASA) was held from 10 to 13 November 2025 at the *Institute of Mathematics and Physics (IMSP)*, *University of Abomey-Calavi*, Benin, jointly organised with the 5th Data Science School (DSS). The event aimed to strengthen capacity building, advanced training, and research exchange in *Operations Research (OR)*, Data Science, and Artificial Intelligence, with a particular focus on African challenges (visit <https://www.imsp-benin.com/home/> for more about the institution).

The scientific programme comprised 17 sessions, including 2 plenary sessions, 9 tutorials, and 6 thematic parallel sessions. ORTASA-DSS 2025 brought together over 50 speakers and contributing authors from more than 10 countries. Participation was strongly anchored in West Africa, notably Nigeria, Benin, and Burkina Faso, and complemented by international contributions from Canada, France, Germany, South Africa, Iraq, Senegal, Togo, and Mauritania, some of which were made remotely. Topics covered included artificial intelligence, optimisation and decision-making, health and epidemiological modelling, energy systems, transport and telecommunications, and data-driven education, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of modern OR and its relevance to sustainable development.

A major highlight of the event was the initial physical meeting and inaugural launch of the *Operations Research Society of West Africa (ORSWA)*, held on 12 November 2025 during the school. This marked the first in-person assembly of OR professionals in the region following a series of virtual preparatory meetings conducted between 2022 and 2025. Delegates from nine West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo) unanimously adopted the ORSWA Constitution and elected the pioneer executive council, thereby providing the society with a formal legal and operational framework. The launch of ORSWA represents a significant step toward strengthening regional cooperation, professional networking, and OR's visibility in West Africa.

The organisers gratefully acknowledge the support of the *International Federation of Operational Research Societies (IFORS)*, the *Modelling and Simulation Hub, Africa (MASHA)* at the University of Cape Town, the *African Centre of Excellence in Mathematical Sciences and Applications (CEA-SMIA)*, and the *Institute of Operational Research and Management Science of Nigeria (IORMS)*.

Particular appreciation is extended to IORMS for its strong participation, led by its national president and several executive members, which significantly contributed to the scientific discussions and regional engagement. These collective efforts underscore a shared commitment to advancing *Operations Research and Data Science* for societal impact in Africa.

For pictures and other social events during the event see:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1pTUFhAKECSEFb3Q2CPqQgouK26yJNBPr?usp=sharing>.



Cross-section of participants at the 3rd ORTASA 2025 School.



Picture of participants at the Administrative Building of IMSP.

Cordial thanks to dear **Prof. Adewoye Olabode**, for his communication help that made this report possible.