



# Plan S

Making full & immediate  
Open Access a reality

## Annual Review 2023

Accelerating  
Open Access

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**cOAlition S**

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# INTRODUCTION

**Plan S is an initiative for Open Access (OA) publishing, which requires that from 2021 scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants must be published in compliant Open Access journals or platforms.**

**At cOAlition S, we are committed to accelerating the transition to Open Access. As an international consortium of research funding and performing organisations, along with the European Commission, we have been rolling out policies and tools since 2018 to achieve the goal of Plan S.**

**In this annual review, we provide an overview of our activities in 2023, along with the latest advancements in our policies. Furthermore, we delineate ongoing initiatives that will significantly influence our future steps. The review sheds light also on specific actions taken by cOAlition S funders in the realm of scholarly communication.**

## About

### **Plan S: 2023 Annual Review**

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## FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to present the annual review of cOAlition S activities carried out in 2023. In the past year, we focused on a number of initiatives, both looking back on the five years since Plan S was launched and looking forward to a bold vision for the future of scholarly communication.

2023 marked the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of Plan S. To commemorate this milestone, we invited various experts in scholarly communication to reflect on the achievements of Plan S and the challenges still ahead. During a [webinar](#), the panelists acknowledged the pivotal role Plan S played in increasing the share of Open Access (OA) outputs and aligning OA policies worldwide. According to them, the key drivers of that success were the concerted actions of funders, their openness to community input, and their flexibility in adjusting Plan S policies as needed to ensure greater equity and fairness. However, the consensus prevailed that there is still a lot of work to do to make all research Open Access and foster a fairer, more reliable, and efficient scholarly communication that is also inclusive and sustainable.

What does this mean for the future of Plan S and funders' role in shaping scholarly communication? To find answers, we launched two important processes.

The first one is a public consultation on a forward-looking plan ("Towards Responsible Publishing") to establish a community-based scholarly communication system. In this ecosystem, authors are responsible for the publication of their findings; all scholarly outputs are available immediately and openly; and quality control processes are community-

based with open peer review. Extending the original ambitions of Plan S, we want the scholarly record to include the full range of narrative outputs - including peer review reports - created during the research cycle, not just the final journal-accepted version. The consultation, running until April 2024, and the feedback from the community will inform a revised proposal to be considered by cOAlition S funders in June 2024.

The second process is the launch of an independent study to assess the impact of Plan S on the global scholarly communication ecosystem.

As the Open Access landscape evolves, cOAlition S evolves with it. In 2023 we witnessed an unprecedented wave of support for open, non-profit, equitable and fit-for-purpose scholarly publishing from high-level political bodies, as reflected in the [EU Council Conclusions](#) of May 2023 and the [G7 declaration](#) by ministers of science and technology.

It was also the year of growing frustration in the community regarding the [slow transition to OA of journals included in so-called transformative agreements](#) and concern about the [inequalities of the APC business model](#). Regarding the latter, cOAlition S has partnered with Science Europe, OA2020, Jisc, PLOS and others in different configurations to

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*The Plan S mission to foster full and immediate Open Access has broadened to include the aspects of equity, open peer review, research assessment, and increased researcher involvement in scholarly publishing.*

”

devise a fairer, geographically differentiated global pricing system for publishing and to explore publishing business models that move away from article-based charges.

At the same time, author rights retention policies spread across European and UK institutions. Recognising the importance of reforming researcher assessment the [Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#) was established, currently counting more than 600 members. These events demonstrate that there is a momentum for changing the way we perform and evaluate research.

cOAlition S is committed to contributing positively to this trend. We actively support Diamond Open Access, where neither the authors nor the readers of research have to pay to participate in the scholarly conversation. We are active partners in European projects (DIAMAS and CRAFT-OA) that intend to provide the research community with an aligned, high-quality, and sustainable Diamond Open Access scholarly communication ecosystem. At the first-ever Global Summit on Diamond Open Access (Toluca, Mexico, 25-26 October 2023), we introduced the concept of a Global Diamond Open Access Federation to align worldwide initiatives for Diamond OA publishing. This will be a major part of our work in the coming months.

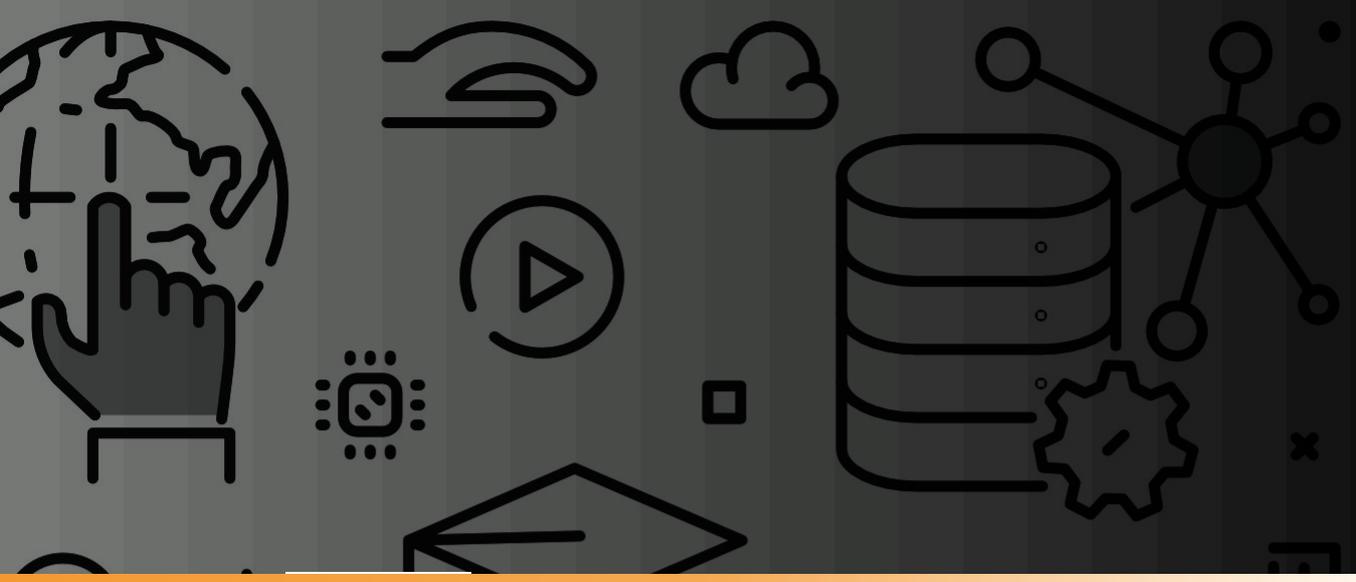
Recognising the very low transformation rate of our Transformative Journals and of Transformative Agreements to Open Access, cOAlition S decided to end its financial support for these Transformative Arrangements. Instead, we encourage funders to direct efforts to more innovative and community-driven Open Access publishing initiatives.

The Plan S mission to foster full and immediate open access has broadened to include the aspects of equity, open peer review, research assessment, and increased researcher involvement in scholarly publishing. Looking to the future, we firmly believe that accelerating Open Access can only be achieved if these aspects are given due consideration.

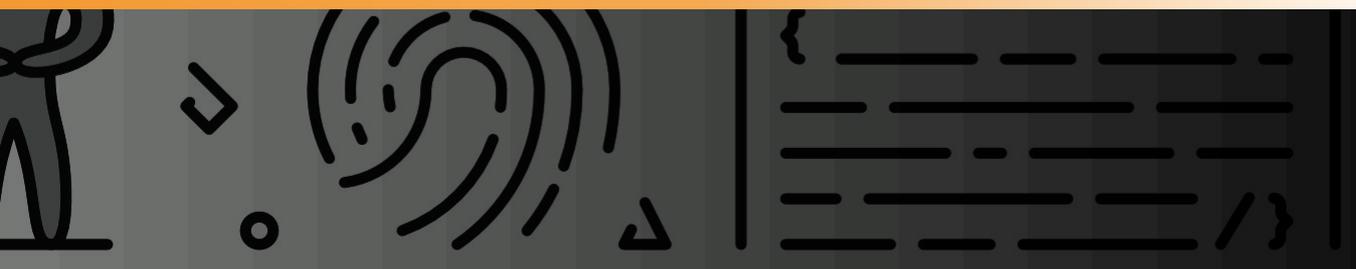
We believe our work in advancing Open Access is making an important contribution. However, our work is not possible without the commitment of the cOAlition S funders, which we are grateful for. We also thank our partners and stakeholders for their support and collaboration and are glad to be able to continue working together on our mission in the coming year.

**Johan Rooryck**  
Executive Director, cOAlition S





**FROM PRINCIPLES  
TO IMPLEMENTATION**



## THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



As a benchmark for the level of Open Access (OA) among cOAlition S funders, we are using the [Dimensions database](#).

**OPEN ACCESS  
ARTICLES  
IN 2023  
163 775**

This choice is based on the availability of a cOAlition S filter within the database. Further, as we have used this database for the last three years, it provides us with the opportunity to do year-on-year comparisons. It is important to note, however, that Dimensions does not allow us to determine whether an article is openly licensed, in addition to being free to read, and available at the time of publication – both key attributes of Plan S. To address this limitation, we are also providing some funder-specific data which takes these aspects into account in evaluating compliance with Plan S.

**81%**  
**OF ALL PUBLISHED  
ARTICLES**

*Note: The data presented in the following figures and tables are derived from searches conducted on the Dimensions database on 2 January 2024, 17 December 2022 and 16 December 2021. These searches were performed for the years 2023, 2022, and 2021, respectively.*

## Open Access versus closed access

### Strong commitment to Open Access

Table 1 below presents the total number of articles assigned to cOAlition S funders and how many of these are available as Open Access (OA). The data consistently shows that over the past three years, OA levels have continued to rise, with approximately four out of five articles attributed to cOAlition S funders being available as OA in 2023. This highlights the strong commitment to OA among cOAlition S members towards achieving widespread OA in research.

cOAlition S funded research	2023	2022	2021
1. Total number of Open Access articles	163 775 [81%]	132 064 [79%]	113 507 [73%]
2. Total number of closed articles	37 839 [19%]	36 136 [21%]	41 528 [27%]
3. Total number of articles	201 614 [100%]	168 200 [100%]	155 035 [100%]

Table 1: cOAlition S funded research: Open Access versus closed access

## Global levels of Open Access

To put the cOAlition S Open Access numbers into a broader perspective, it is useful to consider the global level of OA as well. In this context, Table 2 shows the global level of OA in 2022-2023, including cOAlition S. The key observation is that cOAlition S funders have consistently maintained OA rates of approximately 80%, whereas the global OA average stands at around 60%.

Global Open Access articles	2023	2022
1. Total number of Open Access articles	2 992 203 [60%]	2 569 615 [56%]
2. Total number of closed articles	1 957 130 [40%]	2 035 522 [44%]
3. Total number of published articles	4 949 333 [100%]	4 605 137 [100%]

Table 2: Global Open Access articles in 2023 versus 2022

## |Routes to Open Access

To further understand how OA is achieved among cOAlition S members, the Dimensions database allocates one of the four statuses to each OA article, as shown below.

### 01 Gold

Publication is published in a fully open access journal  
(includes all publications with a Gold OA status in Unpaywall and those on Dimensions own fully OA list of journals)

### 02 Hybrid

Publication is freely available under an open licence in a paid-access journal  
(Unpaywall OA status = Hybrid)

### 03 Green

Publication is freely available in an OA repository  
(Unpaywall OA status = Green or publication type in Dimensions = Preprint)

### 04 Bronze

Publication is freely available on the publisher's website but without an open licence  
(Unpaywall OA status = Bronze)

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*Definitions of OA labels used by Dimensions*

The "Gold" route remains the most widely used method for delivering OA, amongst cOAlition S-funded researchers, with more than 40% of all articles published OA in 2023 made available this way, as shown in Figure 1.

The number of articles made available via the "Hybrid" route has increased, likely due to the transformative arrangements, such as Read and Publish agreements and transformative journals.

In the future it will be interesting to see if this number declines following the [statement](#) from cOAlition S that, post 2024 it will no longer financially contribute to such arrangements.

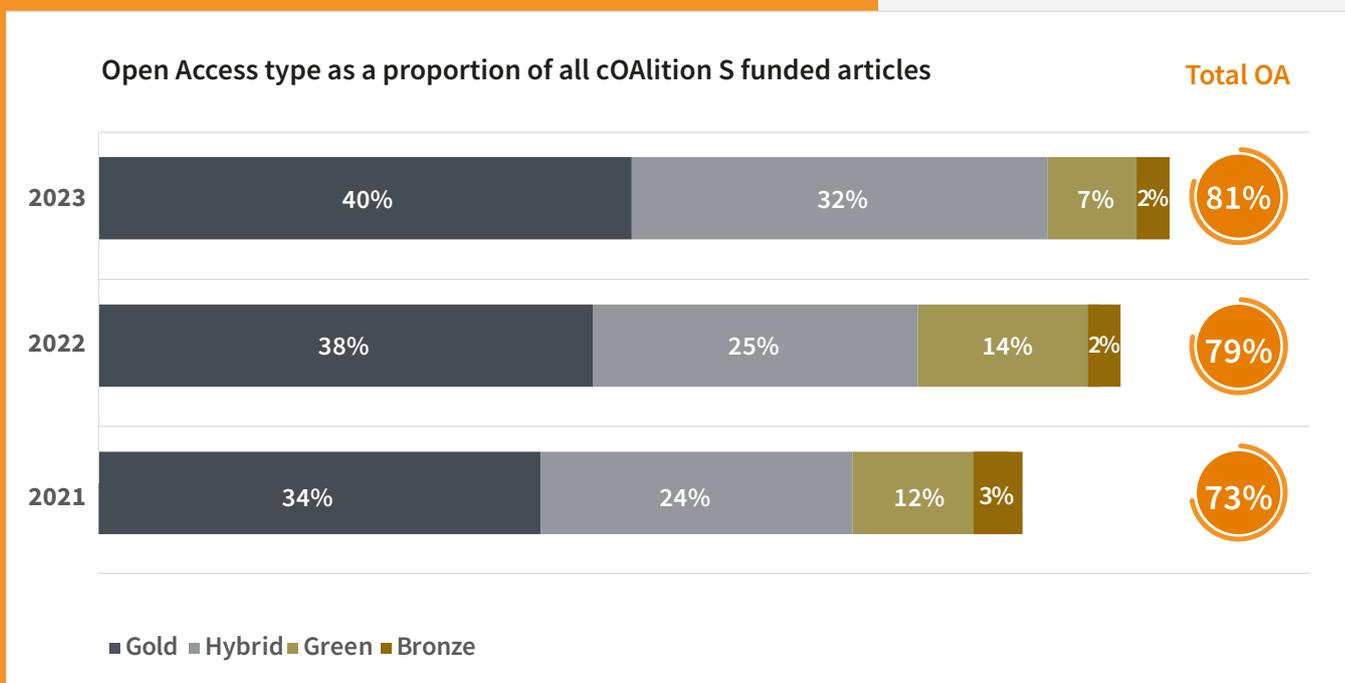


Figure 1: Open Access type as a proportion of all cOAlition S funded articles and total Open Access rate for 2021-2023



Gold

**82 078**

Open Access articles

Representing 41% of all cOAlition S funded articles in 2023



Hybrid

**64 828**

Open Access articles

Representing 32% of all cOAlition S funded articles in 2023



Green

**13 294**

Open Access articles

Representing 7% of all cOAlition S funded articles in 2023

## Funder-specific data

Following the overview of the general cOAlition S data and trends, as sourced from the Dimension database, we provide a more detailed exploration of funder-specific Open Access (OA) data. In this section, we present data for articles published in 2023 provided by four cOAlition S funders to gain a comprehensive understanding of their contributions to the Open Access landscape.



### Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)

Number of articles associated with BMGF funding	3545
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Number of articles made available OA (“free to read”)	3323 [94%]
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Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S	2945 [83%]
--	------------

Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S made available via:

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| a. “gold” (published in fully OA journals) [Route 1]   | 2171 [74%] |
| b. “green” (available through a repository) [Route 2]  | 154 [5%]   |
| c. “transformative arrangement” (published in subscription journals, but made OA via transformative agreements or transformative journals) [Route 3] | 784 [27%]  |

Note: all categories total 106% due to some double counting in the green category

Data source: OA.works

The compliance rate for published outputs at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) stands at a consistent 83%. With the support of OA.Works, BMGF is continually following up on non-compliance. Authors are becoming more aware of the Rights Retention Strategy (RRS) and are uploading their Author Accepted Manuscripts (AAMs) to meet the OA requirements. The strategy involves centrally covering Article Processing Charges (APCs), ensuring that publishers recognise "Gates" funding and subsequently invoice BMGF, thereby boosting compliance without requiring direct action from the authors. BMGF continues to closely monitor data to help inform their future policy direction.



### Dutch Research Council (NWO)

Number of articles associated with NWO funding	4201
Number of articles made available OA (“free to read”)	3923 [93%]
Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S	3093 [74%]
Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S made available via:	
a. “gold” (published in fully OA journals) [Route 1]	957 [31%]
b. “green” (available through a repository) [Route 2]	49 [1,5%]
c. “transformative arrangement” (published in subscription journals, but made OA via transformative agreements or transformative journals) [Route 3]	2087 [67,5%]

**Data sources:** Crossref for data collection and Unpaywall for checking OA status

The Dutch Research Council (NWO) observes an increase of Plan S compliance compared to 2022 (approx. 65%), though it should be noted that this amount of publications is only a part of the total output. On the one hand, this is attributed to the incompleteness of the 2023 data, given that due to the timing of the measurement possibly a set of publications are not included. On the other hand, the utilised method, namely the detection of funder acknowledgement, is deemed too restrictive. Recognising this as a known issue, NWO aims to take further steps, along with other funders, to generate attention to this among authors, publishers, and other relevant stakeholders. The use of the Rights Retention Strategy is very low, potentially due to the large number of TAs available for researchers in the Netherlands. The Secondary Publishing Right (Taverne Amendment) in the country, which has been adopted by all universities, allows authors to make their work publicly available after six months through their institutional repositories. Despite this non Plan S-compliant policy, NWO acknowledges that authors occasionally use it when facing delays in the publication process.



Howard Hughes  
Medical Institute

**Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI)**

Number of funded articles associated with HHMI’s Open Access to Publications Policy **714 (major contributions from lab heads)**

Number of articles made available OA (“free to read”) **675 [95%]**

Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S **641 [90%]**

Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S made available via:

- a. “gold” (published in fully OA journals) [Route 1] **258 [40%]**
- b. “green” (available through a repository) [Route 2] **24 [4%]**
- c. “transformative arrangement” (published in subscription journals, but made OA via transformative agreements or transformative journals) [Route 3] **247 [39%]**
- d. Other **112 [17%]**  
(including 105 non-TJ hybrids and 7 Diamond)

**Data source: OA.Works**

At Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), compliance in 2023 was generally good and comparable to that in 2022, the first year in which HHMI’s new OA policy was in effect. Some confusion remains regarding licenses, with some individuals mistakenly assuming that any license with a CC prefix is compliant. Additionally, very few authors are opting for "rights retention" unless explicitly supported by the journal.

Key initiatives for the future include promoting rights retention, encouraging preprint review, and covering preprint review service fees from central funds. HHMI plans to implement a peer review training course for its students and postdocs.



## UK Research and Innovation

### UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)

Number of articles associated with UKRI funding **25193**  
(data still largely incomplete for 2023)

Number of articles made available OA (“free to read”) **22972 [91%]**  
Includes bronze OA (publisher-based OA without open license) and submitted versions of published articles in repositories.

Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S **19120 [76%]**  
Criteria: accepted/published version, CC BY, CC BY-ND or CC0/PD license.

Number of articles fully compliant with Plan S made available via:

- a. “gold” (published in fully OA journals) [Route 1] **7148 [37%]**
- b. “green” (available through a repository) [Route 2] **743 [4%]**
- c. “transformative arrangement” (published in subscription journals, but made OA via transformative agreements or transformative journals) [Route 3] **4421 [23%]**
- d. Other (non-TJ “hybrid” articles) **6,808 [36%]**

**Data sources:** Crossref, OpenAlex, Gateway to Research, in collaboration with Sesame Open Science, Research Consulting and OA.Works

The UKRI Open Access policy for research articles came into effect on 1 April 2022, applicable to articles submitted for publication on or after this date. Commenting on the UKRI 2023 data is not appropriate as - due to the limitations associated with Researchfish reporting timelines - the available data only represents about 60% of UKRI articles. The data presented above are based on articles published in 2023 as identified via Crossref (not including publications for which publishers do not provide funder IDs metadata), OpenAlex and Gateway to Research, obtained in collaboration with Sesame Open Science, Research Consulting and OA.Works. UKRI is developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for its Open Access policy. This will help UKRI and the sector assess Open Access progress, levels of compliance with the policy and its effectiveness. Further information can be found on [UKRI’s website](#).



# **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

# Charting the course

In the five years since the inception of Plan S, our efforts towards making full and immediate Open Access a reality have evolved in tandem with the dynamic shifts in the scholarly communication landscape. The increase of Plan S-aligned Open Access (OA) policies among research funders has undeniably led to a surge in OA publications. Yet, as highlighted in Section 1, a significant challenge persists: nearly 40% of all research articles remain inaccessible behind paywalls. Amid growing concern about the equity of OA models based on Article Processing Charges (APCs) or transformative arrangements, there is a pressing need for strategic intervention.

To address the ongoing developments in the Open Access landscape, we introduced several initiatives last year that extend into 2024.

Our aim is to adjust our strategy, not only to navigate the evolving Open Access publishing scene but also to actively contribute to shaping its future direction.

The outcome of these strategic initiatives will shape the trajectory of Plan S (and cOAlition S) but, more significantly, will help to redefine research dissemination.

We anticipate that these endeavors will pave the way for a future in which the scholarly communication ecosystem serves the advancement of science and society, and where research findings are disseminated in a more responsible, equitable, and sustainable manner.

*Robert Kiley  
Head of Strategy  
cOAlition S*



» **Activity 1: Assessing the impact of Plan S on the global scholarly communication**

It has been estimated that Plan S only covers about 5% of the scholarly literature. Despite this, it appears to have punched significantly above its weight. The [Brief](#) stated that “*Plan S has been, without a doubt, a paradigm-shifting success...catalyzing a community-wide movement to OA*”, and an [MIT Press study](#) concluded that Plan S “*has had an outsized effect on the market as a major tipping point in the shift to OA*”.

Although such plaudits are welcome, within cOAlition S we are seeking a more evidence-based evaluation. To this end we have contracted with [Scidecode Science Consulting](#) to assess the impact of Plan S on the global scholarly communication ecosystem. A key aspect of this study involves a counterfactual evaluation to estimate the likely progress towards full and immediate Open Access if Plan S (and cOAlition S) had not existed.

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» **Activity 2: Towards Responsible Publishing: a manifesto for change**

Whilst assessing the Plan S impact is focused on how best to build on the achievements of cOAlition S and determine what a future cOAlition might look like, in parallel we have initiated the process for defining a new strategy for Plan S. The [Towards Responsible Publishing](#) (TRP) proposal explores a new vision for scholarly communication; a vision that holds the promise of being more effective, affordable, and equitable, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.

In contrast to the top-down approach used to develop Plan S, the TRP has been published as a draft manifesto. With support from [Research Consulting](#) and the [Centre for Science and Technology Studies](#) (CWTS) we are undertaking a broad consultation to determine to what extent the proposal resonates with the research community and explore ways for further development and adoption.

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» **Activity 3: Equitable Open Access publishing**

The OA movement aimed to provide equitable access to research outputs by incorporating the publication costs into research budgets. However, the dominance of APCs as the primary OA business model has created barriers to participation for those with limited funds. The TRP manifesto seeks to address this challenge, but recognising that the vision outlined in our proposal may take some time to realise, we are pursuing additional activities to make OA publishing more equitable.

Specifically, we have commissioned [Information Power](#) to explore how a globally fair pricing framework for academic publishing could be devised and implemented and, in partnership with Jisc and Plos, convened a multi-stakeholder [working group](#) to identify business models and arrangements that enable more equitable participation in knowledge-sharing and move beyond article-based charges.

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» **Activity 4: Diamond Open Access**

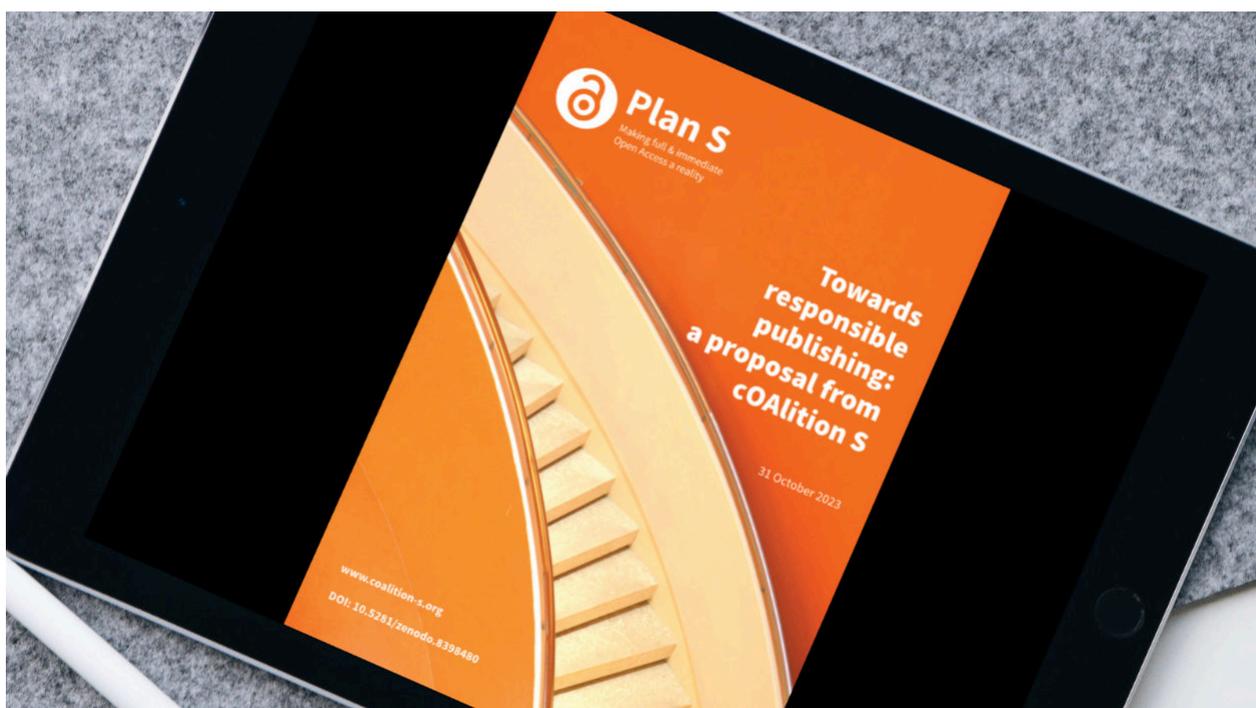
Finally, we are playing a key role in supporting Diamond OA, which we see as the most equitable OA publishing model on the planet. Over the last 12 months we have supported several projects focused on strengthening institutional publishing with a special emphasis on Diamond OA in the European Research Area. These efforts culminated at the Diamond Open Access Summit in Toluca, Mexico where a framework for a Global Diamond Federation was presented.

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## TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE PUBLISHING

*A community-based vision for scholarly communication*

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cOAlition S has been exploring a new vision for scholarly communication that holds the promise of being more effective, affordable, and equitable, ultimately benefiting society as a whole. This proposal, called “[Towards Responsible Publishing](#)”, recognises that the traditional journal-accepted article is problematic for several reasons. To address these and other shortcomings, the new proposal is anchored in two key concepts: authors, not third-party suppliers, decide when and what to publish, and the scholarly record includes the full range of outputs created during the research cycle, and not just the final journal-accepted version.

This proposal stems from the unwavering commitment of cOAlition S to the ideals of Plan S, which champion full and immediate Open Access to research findings. However, 'Towards Responsible Publishing' goes beyond the traditional focus on the journal-accepted article, recognising its limitations in ensuring timely dissemination and robust quality control. The proposal aims to transition to alternative systems where authors control the dissemination of their research.

To gain insights into the research community's response to this proposal, which was unveiled in late October 2023, cOAlition S, in collaboration with Research Consulting Limited and the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS), have embarked on a consultative process. This process provides researchers and other stakeholders – including research performing organisations, scholarly societies, and infrastructure providers – with an opportunity to share their perspectives and contribute to the development of a proposal that truly serves their needs.

During the first three months of the consultation, cOAlition S has received valuable feedback via an online stakeholder survey and several focus groups interviews from about 500 individuals worldwide, representing publishers, learned societies, institutions, libraries, membership organisations, individual researchers, infrastructures, and service providers. In the coming months we will be reflecting on this input to refine our proposal and better address the needs of the scholarly communication community.

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### Our vision for the future of scholarly communication

We have a vision for a **community-based scholarly communication system** fit for open science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where scholars can:

- Rapidly and transparently share the full range of their research outputs; and
- Participate in new quality control mechanisms and evaluation standards



[coalition-s.org/towards-responsible-publishing](https://coalition-s.org/towards-responsible-publishing)

# ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PLAN S

*A comprehensive study*

A study to assess

## the impact of Plan S

on the global scholarly  
communication ecosystem



In a significant step towards evaluating the effectiveness of Plan S, cOAlition S has awarded a tender to scidecode science consulting to undertake a comprehensive [study on the impact of Plan S](#) on the global scholarly communication ecosystem.

This multifaceted study, launched in October 2023, employs both quantitative econometrics and qualitative methodologies to provide a thorough assessment of Plan S's contributions to Open Access publishing and its broader influence on the research landscape.

The study aims to unravel the extent to which Plan S has accelerated the transition to OA publishing, analysing trends in OA publication rates and the adoption of various OA models. Additionally, the study explores the perspectives of key stakeholders, including research funders, institutional Open Access advocates, publishers, and researchers, gaining insights into their experiences with Plan S.

The findings from this study are anticipated to be published in mid-2024, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of cOAlition S and offering actionable recommendations for improvement. These recommendations will address both challenges and opportunities encountered in the transition to OA, contributing to the advancement of Plan S and its alignment with the broader goals of scholarly communication.

The launch of this study marks a crucial juncture in the ongoing evolution of scholarly communication and reflects the ongoing commitment of cOAlition S to review its impact on the scholarly landscape. By objectively evaluating our impact, we can gain valuable insights into Plan S effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This knowledge will be invaluable as we strive to create a more equitable and accessible scholarly landscape for researchers worldwide.



[coalition-s.org/a-study-to-assess-the-impact-of-plan-s](https://coalition-s.org/a-study-to-assess-the-impact-of-plan-s)

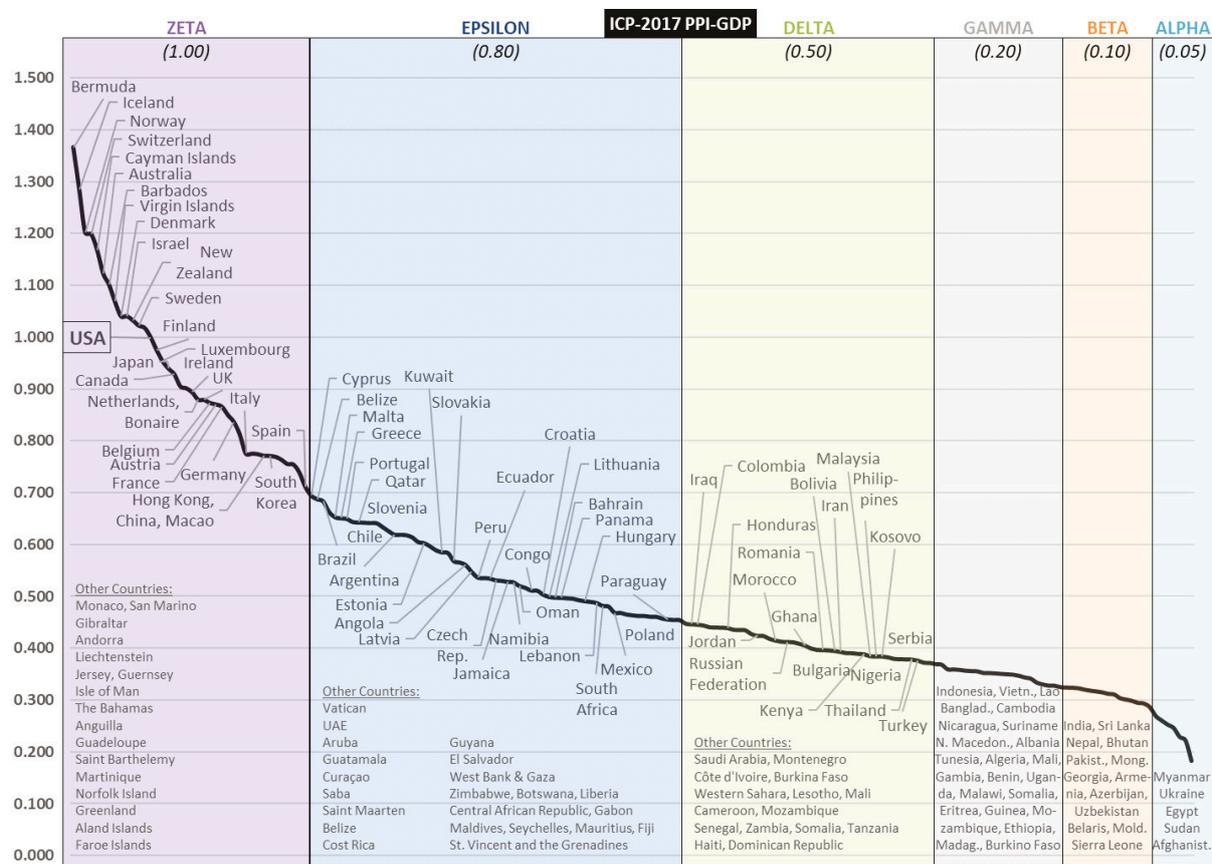
# EQUITABLE OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

The majority of Open Access journals cover their costs through article processing charges (APCs). As a result, researchers who do not have access to funds to cover these fees can find themselves unable to publish in these OA journals. Recognising that no researcher should be excluded from publishing their findings in Open Access, cOAlition S is actively supporting two initiatives, detailed below, to make OA publishing more equitable.

## Fair(er) Global Pricing

Following a workshop organised in partnership with UNESCO, the International Science Council (ISC), the Open Access 2020 Initiative (OA2020), Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), the Association of African Universities, and Science Europe, cOAlition S commissioned [Information Power](#) to explore how a globally fair pricing framework for academic publishing could be devised and implemented.

The primary objective is to identify ways in which the costs of academic publishing services can be shared in a globally equitable and sustainable manner. To this end, the Information Power team crafted a fairer global pricing [framework](#) and [tool](#) based on open and transparent data that can be used across the spectrum of publishing business models.



An example of banding countries into groups based on 2017 World Bank GDP Purchasing Price Indices

Having evaluated a range of datasets that best suits differential pricing around the globe, the team selected the [World Bank International Comparison Program](#), 2017 Series. The data will be updated in March 2024, and incorporated into the final report and tool, which we plan to publish in April 2024.

The team considered, and rejected, data based solely on national income. Consider two individuals earning the same income:

one is married, has one child, owns a fully paid-off home, and has no mortgage, while the other is single, has three children, rents an apartment, and carries debt. These individuals have very different spending power. So too with countries.

The key concept is that it is more equitable to charge different prices for the same goods / services based on factors varying by country and their ability to pay.



[coalition-s.org/fair-global-pricing-consultation](https://coalition-s.org/fair-global-pricing-consultation)

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### ***Beyond article-based charges***

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Although fairer APCs based on factors specific to each country and their ability to pay would be a welcome development, cOAlition S, in partnership with PLOS and Jisc, have convened a multi-stakeholder [working group](#) to identify business models and arrangements that enable more equitable participation in knowledge-sharing and [move beyond article-based charges](#).

Comprising funders, publishers, librarians and library consortia representatives, the group are working to develop a set of "more equitable" business-model attributes that are not based on per unit payment systems, such as APCs.

The envisioned framework will allow those funding research and/or procuring publishing services to assess publishers or services against others, and to direct their funds to support purchasing decisions fostering more equitable participation in knowledge sharing. Equally, a publisher will be able to use the framework to evaluate their commitment to inclusivity and equity and benchmark their business models against competitors on these axes.

The Working Group aims to release a preliminary framework for consultation in the second quarter of 2024, followed by the publication of the final version in the third quarter of the same year.



[coalition-s.org/moving-away-from-apcs](https://coalition-s.org/moving-away-from-apcs)

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## ADVANCING DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS



In recent years, Diamond Open Access (OA) publishing has gained increasing recognition and support as a sustainable and equitable scholarly publishing model that is directed by scholarly communities, and that provides no-fee access to both authors and readers.

cOAlition S is committed to supporting equitable and sustainable pathways to Open Access. Our engagement in advancing Diamond OA dates back to early 2020 when we commissioned a study financed by Science Europe to explore collaborative non-commercial Open Access publishing models for Open Access (a.k.a Diamond OA). The resulting [Open Access Diamond Journals Study](#) (OAJDS, Bosman et al 2021), revealed a fragmented archipelago of between 17.000 and 29.000 Diamond journals, which despite their relatively small and diverse nature, are responsible for publishing 44% of all articles in fully Open Access journals.

In the wake of this study, cOAlition S was also among the initiators of the [Action Plan for Diamond Open Access](#) (2022), an endeavor that has brought together over 150 organisations aimed at aligning and developing common resources for the entire

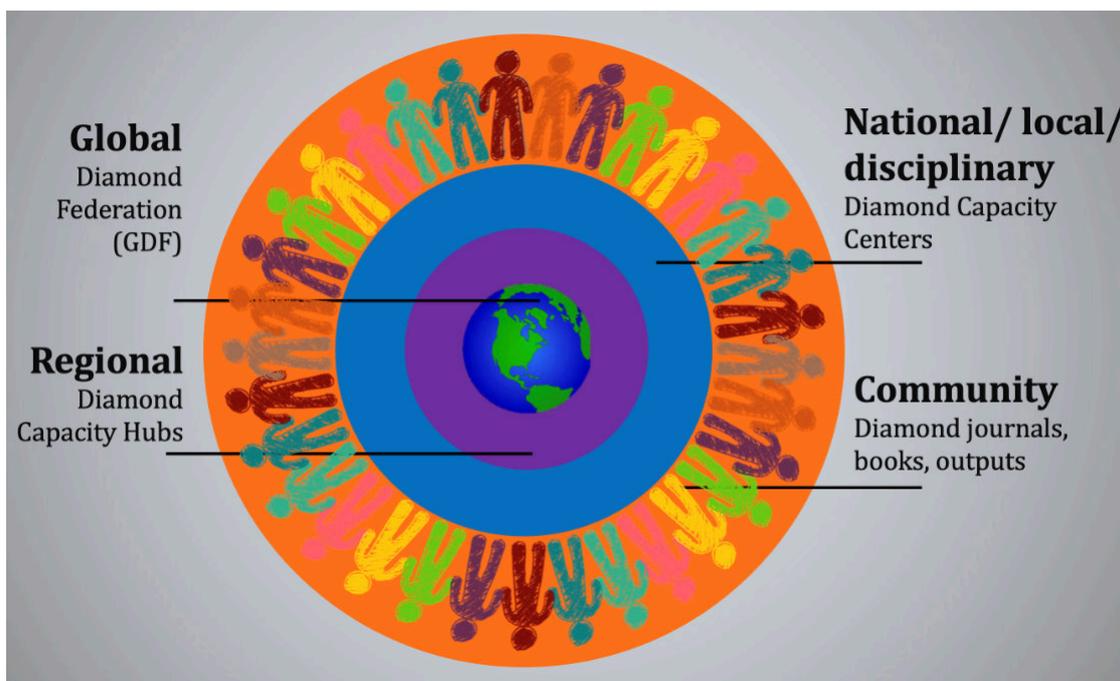
Diamond OA ecosystem. Adding impetus to these developments, the EU Council Conclusions in May 2023 recommended that “*Authors should not have to pay fees (...) Non-profit scholarly publishing models should be supported...*”. This political support for Diamond OA has accelerated the momentum to build a common infrastructure.

Throughout 2023, cOAlition S continued its active engagement in the EC-funded projects [DIAMAS](#) and [CRAFT-OA](#), strategically focused on strengthening institutional publishing with a special emphasis on Diamond OA in the European Research Area.

These efforts culminated at the Diamond Open Access Summit in Toluca, Mexico (23-27 October 2023), where Pierre Mounier (OPERAS, OpenEdition) and Johan Rooryck (cOAlition S) jointly outlined the visionary framework for a Global Diamond Federation.

This globally distributed infrastructure comprises four levels: Diamond journals and their communities, Capacity Centers directly servicing these journals, regional Diamond Hubs coordinating the Capacity Centers, and

the Federation itself that would seek alignment and cooperation between the regional Diamond Hubs. A comprehensive governance structure will be proposed in the coming months.



*A proposal for a global four-level federation*

*Image credits: Pierre Mounier & Johan Rooryck, Towards a federated global community of Diamond Open Access. A discussion paper. Hypothèses: The Diamond Papers, <https://thd.hypotheses.org/296>*

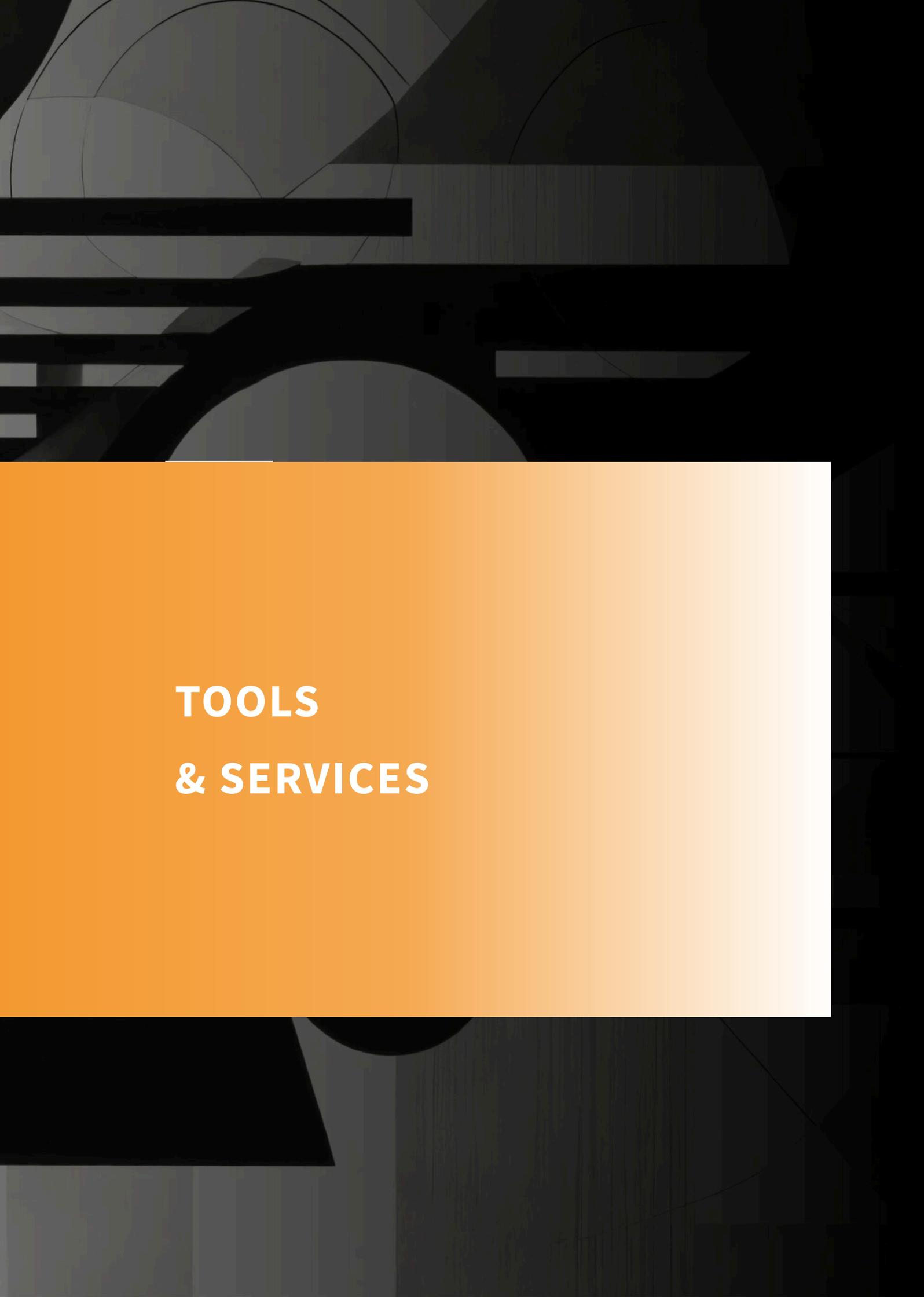
### **Momentum grows for Diamond Open Access: major funding boost and international support**

At the Diamond Open Access Summit in Toluca, Mexico, the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, alongside UNESCO, pledged support for the Global Federation for Diamond Open Access, offering financial backing and hosting its secretariat. Thierry Damerval, ANR's President and CEO, emphasised the importance of the Summit for science and collaboration and announced €250k funding for the Global Federation through the launch of the European Capacity Hub in 2024. This is in addition to the €850k already

allocated to the French National Fund for Open Science in support of Diamond projects. The French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), represented by Sylvie Rousset, Director of the Open Research Data Directorate also announced its support for the European Capacity Hub with an in-kind staff commitment. These commitments mark a significant leap towards a collaborative and unified Diamond OA ecosystem.

More information: [ANR Open Science policy](#)



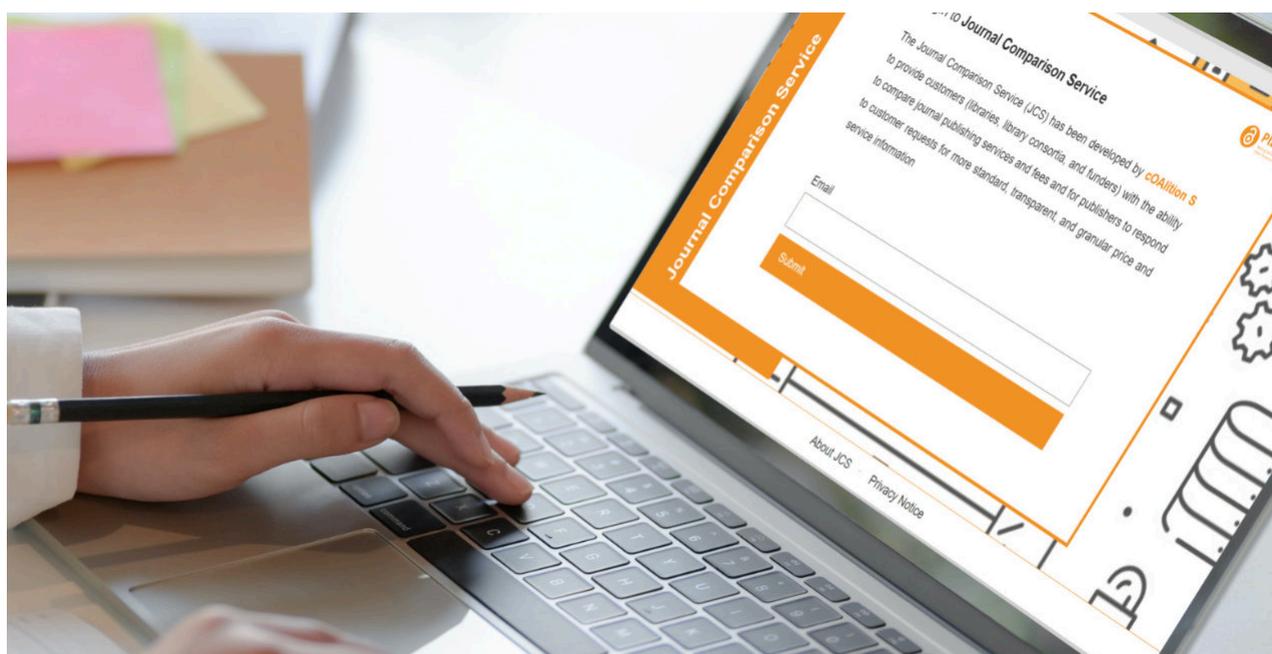


**TOOLS  
& SERVICES**

## JOURNAL COMPARISON SERVICE

*A unique initiative to help create visibility of publishing services and prices and support libraries' investment decisions*

The Journal Comparison Service (JCS) has been developed by cOAlition S to shed light on publishing fees and services. It enables those who procure publishing services to better understand how journals and publishers compare on a range of key indicators.



2023 marks the second year of providing the JCS and we are pleased to report that 96% of publishers that shared price and service data in 2022, did so again this year.

In a move to promote greater awareness of the service – and show how the data it holds can be used to support publishing purchasing decisions – we published a blog which gave an aggregate overview of the data in the JCS.

### Key findings included:

- The median APC of journals participating in the JCS is \$2940, whilst the average is \$2648;
- in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines 14% of titles charged zero APCs, compared with 2% in the Medical and Health Sciences (MHS) disciplines;
- the median time for titles in the SSH disciplines to make a first decision (desk reject or send a manuscript to peer review) is 32 days, compared with 22 days for titles in the MHS disciplines;
- the median to manage the peer review process for SSH titles (64 days) is almost twice as long as it takes journals in the MHS disciplines to complete this activity (33 days);
- the percentage of total price allocated to managing the peer review service – arguably the most critical service publishers provide – is identical in both SSH and MHS disciplines at 14%;
- the largest single price element in both SSH (34%) and MHS (27%) disciplines is allocated to the “Journal Community Development” price bucket.

### JCS: Advisory Panel

To further develop the JCS, cOAlition S has established an Advisory Panel comprising publishers, librarians, library consortia and funders.

This Panel will review the JCS Frameworks (Information Power and FOAA) and make recommendations on how these might be further developed to ensure that the price and service data is as useful as possible for those who procure publishing services whilst remaining deliverable by the publishers who are asked to provide these data.

In addition, this Panel will advise cOAlition S on potential modifications to the JCS service, which would make it more useful to all stakeholders and actively promote its use amongst relevant stakeholder groups.



## JOURNAL CHECKER TOOL

The Journal Checker Tool (JCT) helps authors identify how they can comply with their funder OA mandate when seeking to publish in any academic journal. To do this, the JCT uses a database of more than 50 000 journal titles and an algorithm that makes use of data held in DOAJ, Crossref, Research Organisation Registry (ROR), the ESAC Registry and OA.Works, as well as bespoke registries, such as the list of Transformative Journals.

**Three years since its launch, JCT is an established tool, trusted by over 3 000 new users monthly, who have performed close to 1 million searches in total since January 2021.**

**Primary access is from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Poland.**

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» In the past year we introduced an important new feature that allows users to search across over 500 ESAC-registered transformative agreements (TAs) by journal and by institution, to determine if there is a TA in place allowing authors to comply with their funder's OA mandate.

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» The JCT TA search feature can be accessed at <https://journalcheckertool.org/ta-search>

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» Since late 2022 the JCT also shows if the selected journal has provided price data to the Journal Comparison Service, and thus helps the author decide whether they wish to publish in that journal.

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 JOURNAL CHECKER TOOL

Which publishing options are supported by your funder's OA policy?

JOURNAL

MY FUNDER

MY INSTITUTION

By ISSN or title



By funder name



By ROR or name



**3 000**

unique users monthly



**One million**

searches performed  
since autumn 2020

**50 000**

journals



<https://journalcheckertool.org>



# **FUNDERS' HIGHLIGHTS**

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## **IN THE SPOTLIGHT: COALITION S FUNDERS' ACTIVITIES**

cOAlition S funders are committed to accelerating progress in making full and immediate Open Access a reality. Their activities in 2023, aligned with this objective, span from advocating for Open Access to implementing OA policies and developing new initiatives, while enabling their researchers to share their work and ensuring that the benefits of their research are accessible to all. In this section, we take a closer look at a number of initiatives undertaken by that cOAlition S funders in line with the Plan S principles.

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## Open Science Monitor: measuring the effects of ANR's open science policy

As part of its open science policy, the Agence nationale de la recherche (ANR) has developed the [ANR Open Science Monitor](#) - based on the [French Open Science Monitor](#) - with three primary objectives:

- Supporting the implementation of its Open Access publication policy and measuring its effect.
- Measuring the Open Access rate of scientific publications resulting from ANR-funded projects.
- Providing visibility on the publication routes adopted by ANR grantees.

Presented through six graphs, the ANR Open Science Monitor illustrates the impact of the ANR's open science policy. Noteworthy highlights include an increase in the Open Access rate across various disciplines and a rise in publications available on Open Access repositories. In particular, 87% of publications published in 2021 were open access in 2022, (compared to 67% at national level). The data also reveals a consistent upward trend in the Open Access rate, starting at 60% in 2018.

The tool measures the opening rate of publications with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) Crossref resulting from the Generic Call for Proposals and France 2030 programme. The latest version of the national Open Access monitor was unveiled in March 2023 and will be updated shortly.



## European Commission seeks to transform Open Research Europe into a collectively supported non-profit publishing service

[Open Research Europe](#) is the open access peer-reviewed publishing platform of the European Commission, an optional service to grantees of its funding programmes at no cost to them.

Developed in 2021 to serve Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, at the end of 2023 eligibility was extended to all EU funding programmes. By the end of 2023 the platform grew with more than 500 publications and 900 peer-reviews all in open access. Looking ahead, the Commission with several national funders, including cOAlition S funders, seek to transform ORE into a collectively supported non-profit publishing service open to all researchers who meet the scientific and publishing standards of the platform. This will be a way of supporting equitable publishing models that empower responsible scholarly communication, the research institutions and the research community.

In 2023 the Commission funded two studies to support the organisation of this transition, one on [scenario modelling](#) for the costs and a second on the [open source infrastructure](#) to underpin ORE. It also [published a tender](#) for the open infrastructure to underpin ORE based on existing open source software, the contract for which is expected in late spring 2024. Preparations are expected to accelerate in 2024 and 2025 ahead of the transition.



## HHMI focuses on Open Access policy compliance and complementary initiatives

HHMI has always viewed its Open Access to Publications policy as an important first step towards healthier publishing and researcher assessment. The policy's implementation continues to be successful – with 90% compliance during its second year - on par with compliance rates from 2022. In light of this success, we have used 2023 to lay the groundwork for complementary initiatives in sustainable publishing business models, preprint peer review, and assessment of researchers:

- HHMI established a central payment mechanism to cover service fees associated with preprint review, such as that provided by the journal eLife. Since other publishing costs, including APCs, are covered from research budgets, we hope that this central funding will incentivise scientists to engage in preprinting and in preprint review. Support for the preprint review service Review Commons continues.
- HHMI developed the Transparent and Accountable Peer Review Pilot, a new training program for graduate students and postdocs on constructive and transparent peer review. Trainees gain hands-on experience by drafting and publicly sharing peer review reports on preprints.
- HHMI began replacing journal names in citations with the article PMID or DOI in 2023 to de-emphasise journal names in researcher assessment, signaling that HHMI values the scientific contribution itself and not the publication venue of the article.



## A new Norwegian strategy for scientific publishing post-2024

The Norwegian Government has set a goal for all publicly funded scientific articles within Norway to be openly accessible by 2024, with about 80% achieving this status so far. To advance this, a government-established working group, including the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and representatives from various organisations, was tasked to formulate a strategy for Norwegian scientific publishing post-2024.

The group's [report](#) envisions a future publishing landscape where all researchers have equal access to read and publish publicly funded research, openly and without delay, in quality-assured and researcher-controlled publication channels. The report offers specific recommendations for researchers, research institutions, funding bodies, and governmental authorities.

Key strategic propositions include prioritising quality in scientific publishing, challenging the dominance of major commercial publishers, supporting diamond Open Access publishing, advocating for transparent and fair pricing models, encouraging innovation in publishing and research evaluation, involving and training researchers, and exploring strategies to retain researchers' rights at various levels. The report recommends evolving the Norwegian Register of Scientific Publishing Channels for better channel recommendation and as a gatekeeper against predatory journals. Furthermore, the report suggests continuing Publish and Read agreements for a limited time with stringent transparency and monitoring requirements, while emphasizing the importance of international collaboration for consistency. The group proposes the development of new research assessment practices aligned with initiatives like [CoARA](#) and [NOR-CAM](#), adherence to the DORA principles, and work towards sustainable Open Access funding models and infrastructures.



## | SFI's contributes to Open Research dialogue at NORFest

The Royal Irish Academy hosted Ireland's inaugural National Open Research Festival, NORFest, on November 2-3, 2023. Organised by Ireland's National Open Research Forum, the event focused around the three key themes outlined in Ireland's National Action Plan for Open Research: establishing a culture of open research, achieving 100% Open Access to research publications, and enabling FAIR research data and other outputs.

Representing Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Marion Boland, Head of Research Policy, contributed to a panel discussion titled 'Beyond Transformative Agreements: Looking at alternatives of supporting sustainable and inclusive Open Access'. This session looked into the future of open access, specifically examining alternatives to the growing in Ireland Transformative Agreement model. She also introduced the 'Towards Responsible Publishing' proposal, outlining its vision for a scholar-led publishing ecosystem. The proposal was well-received and aligned with various perspectives expressed by panelists and attendees regarding the future role of Diamond Open Access in scholarly publishing.

In other developments, SFI will be amalgamated with the Irish Research Council in 2024, forming a new funding agency, named "Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland". The resulting agency will continue to engage with stakeholders across the Irish research landscape, supporting the transition towards equitable and sustainable Open Access publishing.



## UKRI publishes guide for managing third party content to publish Open Access

Authors can encounter challenges when clearing rights to include third party content in digital versions of their research publications. These challenges exist regardless of Open Access and can limit the reach of research outputs that require third party content.

To address this challenge and to achieve Open Access, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) commissioned an expert team led by Professor Emily Hudson (Faculty of Law and The Queen's College, University of Oxford, UK) to develop guidance on good practice on [managing third party copyright for research publications](#).

The guide sets out the different avenues available to researchers to be able to include third-party content, which does not always require clearing permissions from copyright owners. Illustrative case studies, example copyright notices on how to attribute third party content, and a fact sheet to support researchers when they contact rightsholders are provided.

UKRI's new [Open Access requirements](#) for monographs, book chapters, and edited collections apply from January 2024. The guide on managing third party copyright was developed to support the policy implementation, as was the accompanying [guidance](#) from Jisc on copyright and creative commons licences. Although both sets of guidance documents are provided in the context of UKRI's Open Access policy, these are resources are more widely applicable and can be used by all.



## PLAN S AMBASSADOR VIEWPOINT

# RIGHTS RETENTION POLICIES IN THE UK

By Sally Rumsey

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**The trajectory of Institutional Rights Retention Policies (IRRP) adoption in the UK gained significant momentum in 2023, marked by numerous announcements from institutions such as Aberdeen, Oxford, and Queen's University Belfast. These institutions joined the growing wave of Higher Education Institutes (HEI) adopting IRRLs, signifying a broader trend that suggests more universities are likely to follow suit in the coming years.**

Author rights retention has been evolving in the UK since discussions around a [UK Scholarly Communications Model Licence](#) took place across many universities from around 2016. A significant milestone in this evolution was reached in 2021 with the launch of the [Rights Retention Strategy](#) (RRS) by cOAlition S. The intent of both was to empower researchers to retain sufficient rights to be able to use their work as they choose and to be able to meet their funder's Open Access requirements.

Inspired by these initiatives, many UK universities were keen to adopt a local Institutional Rights Retention Policy (IRRP). Funders' Rights Retention policies only support funded researchers, but IRRLs are much stronger. In the UK they can form part of a researcher's employment contract. Universities are adopting them both in support of and with the support of their academic staff.

The [University of Edinburgh](#) was the first in the UK to launch its IRRP in January 2022. Cambridge soon followed, testing the water with a year-long pilot opt-in policy launched in April 2022 (superseded by a [full opt-out policy](#)). These marked the beginning of a trend, with three IRRLs adopted in 2022, followed by an impressive surge of 20 in 2023. As of January 2024, three more institutions have unveiled their IRRLs.

Institutional Rights Retention policies often represent initiatives by individual universities. There are also examples of UK universities collaborating to adopt such policies. Groups are typically situated in a geographic region and have a common vision encapsulated in a joint statement, with which they align their individual policies. Groups that have published common statements so far are:

- The [Northern Research Partnership](#) of 8 institutions, known as N8
- The [Midlands Innovation Group](#) of 8 universities
- The [Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries](#) (SCURL) which includes all 19 Scottish universities
- The [GW4 Alliance](#) of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter Universities

That is a total of 39 institutions committing to adopt an IRRP.

It took only two years for an impressive 26 UK institutions to actually develop and adopt IRRPs. Prof Stephen Eglen provided an interesting [visualisation](#) of the institutions that have adopted them. There are more in the pipeline. Globally the number of similar policies is increasing too, as shown in the [Open Access Directory](#) list of policies.

*The direction of travel is clear: increasing number of institutions are supporting their researchers to retain sufficient rights to be able to use their own research outputs as they choose. Others feel emboldened by such rapid progress, to take a stand against the anomaly of service industries owning the keys to academia's valuable assets.*



**Plan S**  
Making full & immediate  
Open Access a reality

The peer-reviewed Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) is your intellectual creation, your valuable asset. Don't give it away.

**Publish with Power.**  
**Protect your Rights.**



**#RetainYourRights**

## ADVANCING OPEN ACCESS VIA EU PROJECTS

In the pursuit of fostering Open Access to scientific knowledge, cOAlition S has actively engaged in various EU-funded projects throughout the year 2023 - and continues to contribute to them.



## DIAMAS

The ongoing [DIAMAS](#) project, involving 23 organisations from 12 European countries, well-versed in OA academic publishing and scholarly communication, has persistently worked on mapping the Diamond Open Access publishing landscape in the European Research Area. The project aims to establish Quality Standards for Institutional Publishing, paving the way for an aligned, high-quality, and sustainable institutional OA scholarly publication ecosystem for the ERA.

## CRAFT-OA

Launched in 2023, the [CRAFT-OA](#) project seeks to make state-of-the-art Open Access publishing available to everyone by helping publishers to improve the technical and organisational infrastructure of Diamond Open Access. The project focuses its efforts on activities geared towards providing technical improvements for journal platforms and software, building communities of practice to foster infrastructure improvement, increasing the visibility, discoverability and recognition for Diamond OA publishing, and integrating it with EOSC and other large-scale data aggregators.

## PALOMERA

Initiated in the same year, the [PALOMERA](#) project delves into the landscape of Open Access academic books. Investigating barriers to Open Access across diverse geographies, languages, economies, and disciplines within the European Research Area, the project employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to explain challenges and bottlenecks. The ultimate goal is to provide actionable recommendations and tangible resources to support and coordinate institutional policies for Open Access books.

## SOAR

The [SOAR](#) project, which concluded in May 2023, played a significant role in supporting cOAlition S activities. It facilitated authors in meeting their grant conditions by identifying and monitoring publishing venues that aligned with both Plan S and Horizon Europe requirements, utilising the Journal Checker Tool. Additionally, the project assisted cOAlition S in executing its outreach strategy, specifically targeting funders with non-Plan S-aligned policies, and implementing its communication plan to engage the research community.





# **FINANCIAL OVERVIEW & GOVERNANCE**

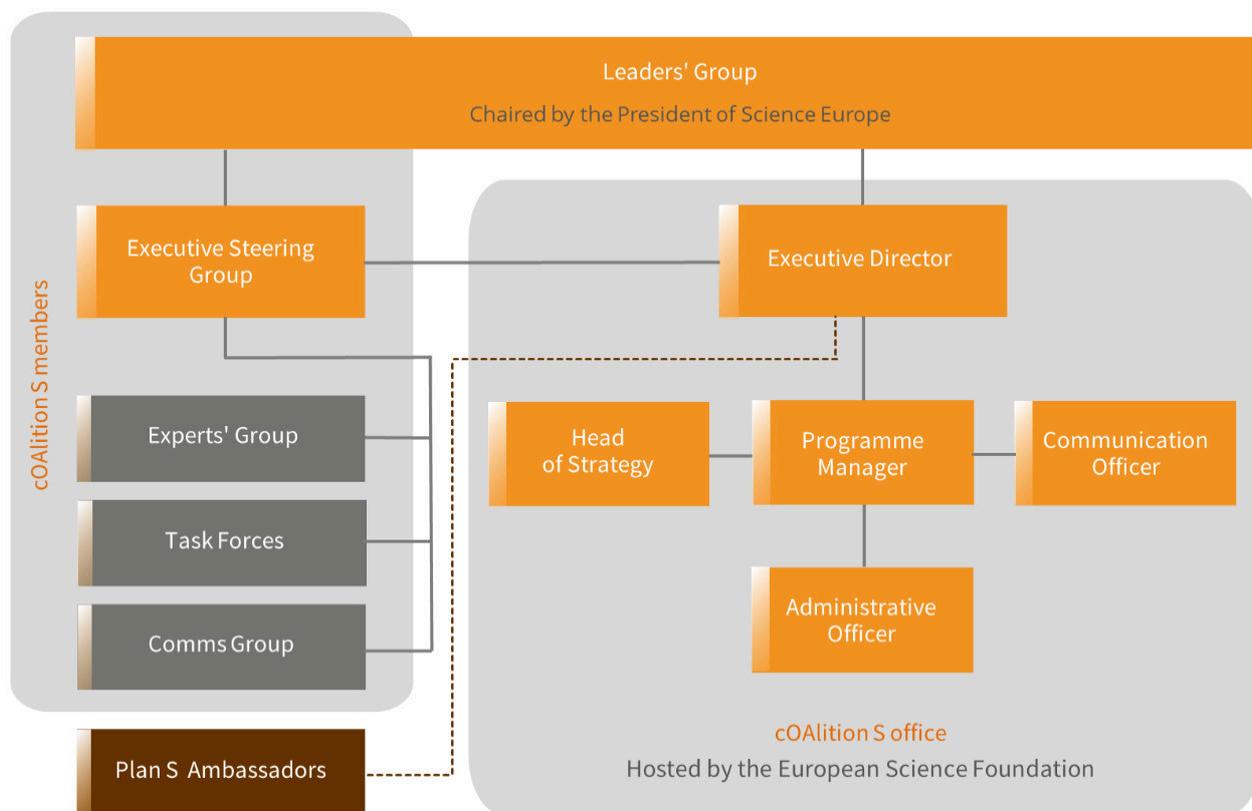
## GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

cOAlition S is an informal alliance of organisations and institutions that fund and/or perform research activities, and that have publicly expressed their intention to work together towards the implementation of the principles of Plan S. cOAlition S does not have any autonomous legal capacity. The individual organisations remain fully responsible for implementing their Plan S-aligned Open Access policies, as stated in the cOAlition S Terms of Reference.

The cOAlition S Office was set up in January 2020 and is hosted by the European Science Foundation (ESF) in Strasbourg, to support the work of cOAlition S.

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**The cOAlition S Office staff and activities are funded by cOAlition S funders' contributions and grants. Human resources represented 3.5 FTE in 2023, including staff and consultancy. Software development mainly covered the costs of improving the Journal Checker Tool and the Journal Comparison Service. The commissioned studies in 2023 included the launch of the impact study of Plan S and the consultation about the "Towards responsible Publishing" proposal, as well as work on "Fairer APCs". Travel expenses covered notably the participation of unfunded experts from the Global South in the Diamond Open Access Summit in Mexico.**



**cOAlition S: Governance & Organisational Structure**

ACTIVITY / SPENDING (EUR)	2023
Human resources & related	542 100
Software development	388 800
Communication	5 000
Commissioned studies	91 300
Legal & administrative	0
Travel	62 500
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 089 700</b>

**Budget for supporting the cOAlition S Office**

# ORGANISATIONS ENDORSING PLAN S AND WORKING JOINTLY ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Supported by



National funders



Charitable and international funders & research organisations



European funders



The cOAlition S Office is hosted by the European Science Foundation







# Plan S

Making full & immediate  
Open Access a reality

## cOAlition S

Hosted by the European Science Foundation (ESF)

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