



Developing Institutional Open Access
Publishing Models to Advance
Scholarly Communication

Optimise your expenses

Guide for Diamond Open Access publishers

This guide is designed to help Diamond Open Access publishers manage their expenses and save resources. It walks them through the typical costs involved in running a Diamond OA publishing project, with questions that encourage them to think about their current practices and explore ways to optimise costs.

Author(s): [Milica Ševkušić](#), EIFL

Contributors(s): [Claire Redhead](#), OASPA

Reviewer(s): [Jessica Dallaire-Clark](#), Érudit; [Sharla Lair](#), Lyris; [Johan Rooryck](#), cOAlition S; [Jeroen Sondervan](#), Open Science NL



**Funded by
the European Union**

If you are a Diamond Open Access (OA) publisher, the questions below can help you optimise your expenses and save resources!

This guide identifies the expenses typically involved in the operation of Diamond OA publishers.

Each question prompts reflection on your current practices, available options and potential savings, helping you manage expenses more effectively. Questions related to specific technical or governance issues are signposted with explanations, advice and relevant resources to help you make informed decisions.

The questions are divided into eleven sections:

- [Office space for your publishing operations](#)
- [Administrative, legal and financial services](#)
- [IT equipment for administrative and publishing tasks](#)
- [Software](#)
- [Publishing platform \(infrastructure\)](#)
- [Persistent identifiers](#)
- [Editorial and production services](#)
- [Digital preservation \(content archiving\)](#)
- [Visibility, indexing and marketing](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Memberships in publishing-related professional organisations and networks](#)



Office space for your publishing operations

Do you really need a dedicated office space, or could your team work remotely or from home?

Is there an available space within your parent organisation that you could use free of charge or at an affordable fee?

Is it possible to share office space with others, either within your parent organisation or externally?

Are there ways to reduce your running expenses (e.g. lighting, heating, internet, cleaning, repairs, stationery, etc.)?

Have you taken steps to reduce the environmental impact of publishing activities?

How to: Mertens S, Brown A (2021) Environmental sustainability and scientific publishing: EASE manifesto. European Science Editing 47: e75625.
<https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e75625>

Administrative, legal and financial services

Can you engage existing staff within your parent organisation (either as dedicated staff or on a part-time basis) to perform necessary administrative, legal and financial tasks?

Could you collaborate either within your parent organisation or with other Diamond OA publishers to share the cost of professional outsourced staff?

Would it be more efficient and cost-effective to hire professionals for specific tasks instead of relying on the parent organisation's staff?

Would you be able to offer incentives and rewards for volunteer (unpaid) work?

To what extent is your current situation aligned with your long-term vision for managing administrative, legal, and financial tasks?

IT equipment for administrative and publishing tasks

Note: It includes computers, printers, scanners, external drives and similar equipment. Servers are addressed under 'Publishing platform'.

Have you consulted with IT experts to ensure that you don't purchase items that are not really needed, will soon become outdated, or cannot meet your requirements? Are there items on your IT equipment list that you can do without or can delay purchasing?

Would it be more cost-effective to upgrade existing equipment (if technically possible) instead of buying new items?

If it is more cost-effective, are there options to lease equipment instead of purchasing it outright?

Could you use IT equipment provided by your parent organisation instead of purchasing it?

How will you manage the maintenance and repair of the equipment and do you have an assessment of the associated costs?

Is your IT equipment aligned with environmental sustainability goals?

How to: Mertens S, Brown A (2021) Environmental sustainability and scientific publishing: EASE manifesto. European Science Editing 47: e75625.
<https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e75625>



Software

Note: This section includes licences for office software, cloud services, typesetting, image processing, XML editing, similarity checking and other tools used in content production. Software for the publishing platform is addressed under 'Publishing platform'.

Have you explored free and open-source software alternatives before purchasing software licences?

More details:

Check the Publishers and Service Providers Registry for efficient technology solutions.

Barthonnat, C., Blotière, E., Gingold, A., Mas, F.-X., Stanić, N., Pierno, A., Szulińska, A., Armando, L., Pochet, B., de Santis, L., MacGregor, J., Pozzo, R., & Pogačnik, A. (2021). OPERAS SIG on Tools for Open Scholarly Communication: White Paper 2021. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5654319>

Maxwell, John W., Erik Hanson, Leena Desai, Carmen Tiampo, Kim O'Donnell, Avvai Ketheeswaran, Melody Sun, Emma Walter, and Ellen Michelle. 2019. Mind the Gap: A Landscape Analysis of Open Source Publishing Tools and Platforms. 1st ed. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.21428/6bc8b38c.2e2f6c3f>.

Can you use licences purchased by your parent organisation?

Could you collaborate either within your parent organisation or externally to share software licences?

Is the software you're considering essential, or are there functions that could be outsourced? Would it be more cost-effective to hire a service provider who already has the necessary software instead of purchasing it for yourself and hiring staff to manage the work?

Hint: Check [OPERAS Pathfinder](#) and any local service registries to find service providers.

Do you have access to any local, regional, national waivers, discounts or concessions (e.g. the discount for [Crossref Similarity Check available to Crossref members](#))?

Publishing platform (infrastructure)

Does your parent organisation or national research and education network (NREN) offer free or affordable hosting service that meets your technical requirements?

Explanation: National Research and Education Network (NREN) is a specialised internet service provider supporting the needs of the research and education communities within a country. NRENs are usually funded by governments or university consortia. They also provide secure connections, advanced digital tools and dedicated channels for individual research projects. Reference/derivation: <https://geant.org/>

Do you have the technical and financial capacity to buy a server and manage your own hosting, or would it be more efficient and cost-effective to rent a server (e.g. use cloud hosting)? If you choose the latter, would you also need to outsource the maintenance of the virtual server?

Have you explored options for a publishing platform based on free and open source software (FOSS) instead of using a proprietary platform?

More details: [DIAMAS Guidelines: Choosing a platform](#)

Hint: Check the Publishers and Service Providers Registry for efficient technology solutions.

Do you have the technical and financial capacity to manage your own publishing platform or would it be more efficient and cost-effective to use an affordable Software-as-a-Service option?

Explanation: Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) is a way to use publishing platform software online, through your web browser, without having to install it on a server. The service provider takes care of updates and maintenance for you. Typically, a service fee is paid.

Hints:

Search the Publishers and Service Providers Registry and [OPERAS Pathfinder](#) to find services.



In some countries and institutions scholarly journals can be hosted free of charge on institutional/national platforms if they meet certain criteria (e.g. being published in a particular country or by a particular institution, quality criteria, language, etc.). Examples: [OpenEdition](#), [ePublishing EKT](#), [Hrčak](#), [Septentrio Academic Publishing](#).

If you have one or several journals with a small output, a SaaS option is likely to be more cost-effective than establishing an independent platform from scratch.

Persistent identifiers

Which type of persistent identifiers (PIDs) for publications best suit your publishing needs – are DOIs necessary, or another type of PIDs (e.g. Handle, ARK, URN) would be acceptable?

Explanation: A persistent identifier (PID) is a long-lasting reference to a digital object, person, organisation, or other entity. It is unique to an entity and remains stable over time, i.e. it resolves even if the location of the entity changes. The most common PIDs for publications include DOI (Digital Object Identifier) Handle, ARK (Archival Resource Key) and URN (Uniform Resource Name).

How to:

'Persistent Identifiers - OA Journals Toolkit'. 2023. 20 April 2023.

<https://www.oajournals-toolkit.org/infrastructure/persistent-identifiers>.

[DIAMAS Toolsuite FAQ](#) (How can I assign persistent identifiers to published content?)

If you're using a SaaS option, are the costs of PIDs for publications (e.g. DOI) already included in the service package?

Explanation: Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) is a way to use publishing platform software online, through your web browser, without having to install it on a server. The service provider takes care of updates and maintenance for you. Typically, a service fee is paid.

Can you afford sufficient staff to ensure the registration of PIDs for publications (e.g. for metadata creation and deposition with PID registration agencies)?

Would collaborating with another organisation help reduce costs for PIDs?

Could you join Crossref through a sponsor to reduce costs?

How to: Join Crossref through a sponsor:

<https://www.crossref.org/membership/about-sponsors/>

Editorial and production services

Note: This section includes copyediting, translation, design, typesetting, publishing platform management and similar services. See also 'Software' and 'Staff'.

Do you need to hire part-time staff / freelancers, or can you manage production tasks in-house with existing resources?

Could you utilise your parent organisation's staff and resources rather than outsourcing them?

Would it be more cost-effective to outsource professional service providers instead of managing the whole process by yourself?

Can you rely on volunteer (unpaid) work for some of these services, and if so, how will you ensure motivation and commitment among volunteers? Is this sustainable (e.g. can you handle the loss of knowledge and skills if staff leaves)?

Hints:

Community copyediting, done by volunteers, can be a good idea if you can ensure quality control and provide suitable incentives. Here are some examples:

[LLT Copy Editor Volunteer & Badging Program](#)

Nordhoff, Sebastian. 2019. "Community Proofreading as a Tool for Community Engagement." In ELPUB 2019 23rd Edition of the International Conference on Electronic Publishing. Vol. Academic publishing and digital bibliodiversity. Marseille, France: EIPub. <https://doi.org/10.4000/proceedings.elpub.2019.3>.

Could you coordinate service provision within your parent organisation or externally to reduce cost?



Funded by
the European Union

Hints:

Search the Publishers and Service Providers Registry and [OPERAS Pathfinder](#) to find services.

Digital preservation (content archiving)

How would you like to preserve your content long-term and which service meets those needs best?

More details: [DIAMAS Toolsuite: Preservation and content formats](#)

Is your current content archiving solution sustainable, or should you consider joining a network like PKP?

Have you explored community initiatives that could support your preservation needs?

How to:

If you are using OJS, join the [PKP Preservation Network](#)

[JASPER \(JournAIs are Preserved forevER\)](#) offers support to Diamond Open Access journals indexed in the [Directory of Open Access Journals](#)

[Thoth Open Archiving Network](#) is a community initiative that seeks to help small and scholar-led book publishers

Visibility, indexing and marketing

Have you taken the necessary actions to make sure that the publishing platform is optimised for discoverability (e.g. Search Engine Optimisation strategies are applied, metadata exchange protocols are set up, etc.)?

More details: DIAMAS Toolsuite: [Visibility, indexation, communication, marketing and impact](#) and [Software and Interoperability](#)

Could you utilise your parent organisation's staff and resources rather than outsourcing them?

Can you collaborate with libraries to improve visibility (e.g., by using infrastructures provided by libraries, working together to improve metadata quality, getting your publications included in library catalogues and repositories, etc.)?

Can you rely on volunteer (unpaid) work to improve visibility and if so, how will you ensure motivation and commitment among volunteers?

Would it be more cost-effective to outsource professionals to improve visibility and outreach?

Hints:

Outsourcing IT support to deal with technical aspects of discoverability if you don't have institutional resources is a good strategy, all the more some of the recommended actions are one-time operations (e.g. setting up a metadata harvesting protocol).

Generalist marketing experts are not necessarily familiar with the scholarly publishing context and their strategies may not be effective. If you want to engage a marketing expert, make sure that support is tailored for your needs and that a mechanism for measuring the effects of marketing actions is in place.

Training

Do you provide training or training resources for the staff involved in the publication process?

Hints:

Collaborate with other institutional publishers and libraries to organise training and create training materials for your staff.

Reuse available training materials. If materials in your language are scarce, identify quality materials in other languages and collaborate with other institutional publishers and libraries to translate and adapt them.

Share your training materials under an open licence. This makes it possible for others to update and enrich your materials.



Do you provide training or training resources for authors, editors and reviewers?

Hints:

Collaborate with other institutional publishers and libraries to organise training and create training materials.

Reuse available training resources. Be careful when it comes to materials provided by commercial publishers, as these may not be licensed for reuse and may not be suitable for the Diamond OA publishing context.

Share your training materials under an open licence. This makes it possible for others to update and enrich your materials.

Can you rely on volunteer (unpaid) work to support training efforts and if so, how will you ensure motivation and commitment among volunteers?

Memberships in publishing-related professional organisations and networks

Are you a member of any professional organisations (e.g. OASPA, COPE, EASE, etc.) or do you consider becoming a member? If not, what are the obstacles?

Hints:

The lack of financial resources is often a reason for not becoming a member of a professional organisation. While membership fees can be comparatively high, some organisations offer discounted fees or even waivers (e.g. based on the publisher's size or location). This information can be found on their websites.

Many professional organisations offer a selection of free resources (e.g. guidelines, webinars, training) to non-members.

DISCLAIMER

The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon -WIDERA-2021-ERA-01 research and innovation programme.

Disclaimer- "Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them."

This deliverable is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License



**Funded by
the European Union**