



Plan S

Making full & immediate
Open Access a reality

Annual Review 2024

**Accelerating
Open Access**

cOAlition S

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INTRODUCTION

Plan S is a funder-led initiative to promote Open Access (OA) publishing. The funders endorsing Plan S – united in cOAlition S – require that from 2021 scientific publications that result from research funded by their 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, in collaboration with the European Commission, we have been rolling out policies and tools since 2018 adhering to the principles laid out in Plan S.

In this annual review, we provide an overview of our activities in 2024, along with the latest advancements regarding our policies. Furthermore, we outline ongoing initiatives that will significantly influence our future steps. The review also sheds light on specific actions taken by cOAlition S organisations in the realm of scholarly communication.

About

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Author: cOAlition S office

Editors: Maria Karatzia, Robert Kiley, Nora Papp-Le Roy, Johan Rooryck

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FOREWORD

I am delighted to share with you the 2024 annual review of cOAlition S, a year marked by significant strides towards our shared vision of open access.

To see what has worked and what hasn't since we started implementing Plan S, we conducted a study to assess the impact Plan S has had on Open Access publishing, and to help us better understand where our strengths and weaknesses lie. The title of the impact study states the main achievement of Plan S: it has "galvanized" the research community and boosted open access publishing after years of stagnation. Open Access publishing is now high on the research policy agenda, and the cOAlition S's support for policies such as author rights retention and Diamond open access are enjoying growing support.

We acknowledge that our path forward includes both achievements and challenges. Although our funders' open access output grew in the past years, much of this growth happened through hybrid Open Access journals and Transformative Agreements. This path to Open Access is increasingly questioned for locking in expensive and inequitable publishing models rather than facilitating the transition to fully open access journals.

This reality prompts a key question: How can we collectively move away from - or at least mitigate the negative effects of - expensive open access models that are based on the journal article as a cost unit and that charge high fees regardless of the author's background, country, or institution?

In response, cOAlition S has reaffirmed that, as a principle, it will end its financial support for Open Access publishing under transformative arrangements after 2024. While, exceptionally, individual funders may participate in Transformative Agreements as part of their respective national strategies, this transition reflects the coalition's broader commitment to advancing sustainable models for fully Open Access scientific publishing. In addition, we have collaborated with publishers and librarians to devise two tools to bring more equity to OA publishing: a framework allowing publishers to determine globally differentiated APCs based on countries' purchasing power, and an assessment tool helping the community evaluate if a publishing model is equitable using collectively agreed principles and criteria.

Going forward, cOAlition S might consider identifying what new publishing models could be supported to bring more efficiency, transparency, and equity into Open Access publishing. We asked the research community these questions in a global consultation entitled "Towards Responsible Publishing". Responses from over 11 000 researchers from all over the world expressed clearly that the community is ready for more open publishing practices, such as preprints and open peer review, and for a more fit for purpose scholarly

“*Plan S has “galvanized” the research community and boosted open access publishing after years of stagnation. Open Access publishing is now high on the research policy agenda, and the cOAlition S’s support for policies such as author rights retention and Diamond open access are enjoying growing support.*”

communication system in general – if their efforts for openness are recognized and rewarded.

This feedback provides a clear direction of travel for cOAlition S, as we design our future strategy: On the one hand, funders need to convert their declared commitments into concrete actions and shift their spending towards more responsible practices and open infrastructures. On the other hand, we will only achieve progress if we collaborate globally to transform recognition and reward mechanisms to include a wider set of research outputs.

Many of our funders are already strategically shifting their support towards more open practices, as you can read in the funder highlights section: the Gates Foundation has stopped paying APCs altogether and is using the freed up funds to support equitable publishing; Wellcome now accepts preprints as a valid OA compliance route and supports Diamond open access in Africa; and other funders support OA books and strengthen their self-archiving policies.

This thriving and innovative policymaking within cOAlition S shows the determination of

research funders to build on what Plan S has started: the achievement of full Open Access. At the same time, it demonstrates that cOAlition S carefully listens to novel perspectives in the scholarly community and adapts to foster more equity and fairness in an evolving landscape.

In a time when academia and the ideals of equity and inclusion face unprecedented challenges, it is more vital than ever for like-minded stakeholders to work together to uphold our values and commitment to a fairer, more equitable, inclusive and open scholarly landscape.

We look forward to continuing this important journey together in the coming months.

Johan Rooryck
Executive Director, cOAlition S



FROM PRINCIPLES TO IMPLEMENTATION

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



OPEN ACCESS ARTICLES
IN 2024

177 237

82%

OF ALL PUBLISHED
ARTICLES

As a benchmark for the level of Open Access (OA) among cOAlition S organisations, we are using the [Dimensions database](#). This database offers a dedicated cOAlition S filter and, having served as our data source for four consecutive years, enables consistent year-on-year comparisons.

However, 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 when assessing compliance with Plan S.

Note: The data presented in the following figures and tables are derived from Dimensions database searches conducted on 16 December 2021, 17 December 2022, 2 January 2024, and 8 January 2025, covering years 2021 through 2024.

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 four years, OA levels have continued to rise, with more than four-fifths of the articles attributed to cOAlition S funders being available as OA in 2024. This highlights the strong commitment to OA among cOAlition S organisations towards achieving widespread OA in research.

cOAlition S funded research	2024	2023	2022	2021
1. Total number of OA articles	177 237 [82%]	163 775 [81%]	132 064 [79%]	113 507 [73%]
2. Total number of closed articles	37 856 [18%]	37 839 [19%]	36 136 [21%]	41 528 [27%]
3. Total number of articles	215 093 [100%]	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 below shows the global level of OA in 2022-2024, including cOAlition S. The key observation is that over the last three years, cOAlition S funders have consistently maintained OA rates near or over 80%, whereas the global OA average is around 56%.

Global Open Access articles	2024	2023	2022
1. Total number of Open Access articles	2 993 824 [53%]	2 992 203 [60%]	2 569 615 [56%]
2. Total number of closed articles	2 648 769 [47%]	1 957 130 [40%]	2 035 522 [44%]
3. Total number of published articles	5 642 593 [100%]	4 949 333 [100%]	4 605 137 [100%]

Table 2: Global Open Access articles in 2024 versus 2023 and 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)

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 41% of all articles published OA in 2024 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.

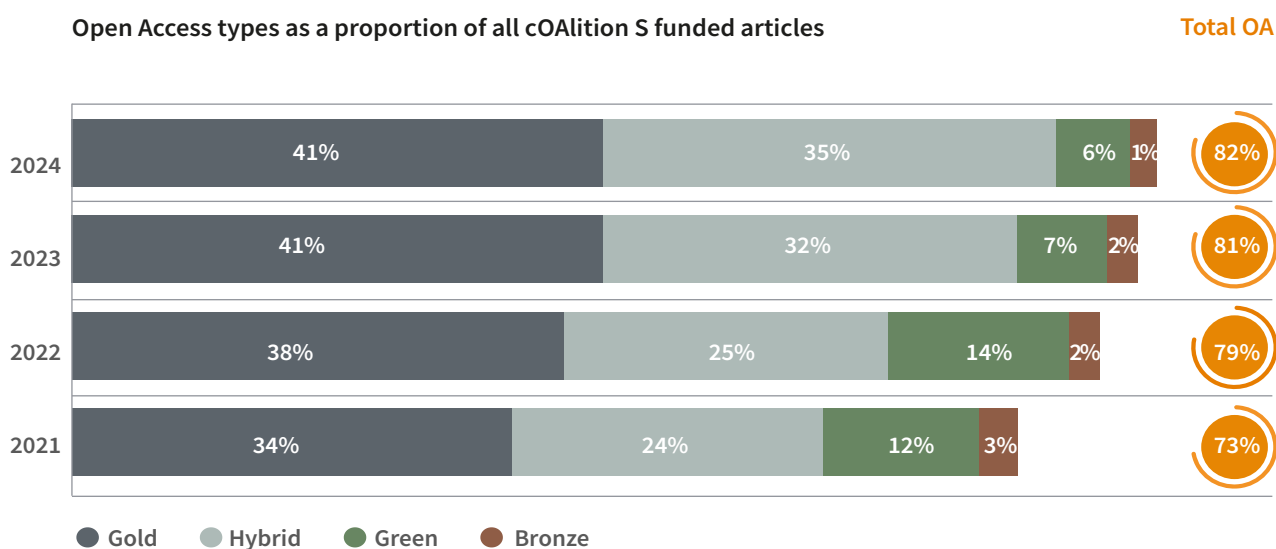


Figure 1: Open Access type as a proportion of all cOAlition S funded articles and total Open Access rate for 2021-2024



Gold

87 275

Open Access articles

Representing 41%
of all cOAlition S funded
articles in 2024



Hybrid

75 842

Open Access articles

Representing 35%
of all cOAlition S funded
articles in 2024



Green

12 514

Open Access articles

Representing 6%
of all cOAlition S funded
articles in 2024

Funder-specific data

Complementing our analysis of cOAlition S data and trends from the Dimensions database, this section offers an overview of funder-specific Open Access (OA) performance. We present data for articles published in 2024 as provided by four cOAlition S organisations to gain a deeper insight into their contributions to the evolving OA landscape.

Gates Foundation (GF)

Articles associated with GF funding in 2024 **3479**

Articles made available Open Access (“free to read”) **3130 (90%)**



Articles fully compliant with Plan S **2856 (82%)**



... made available as:

- Gold OA: published in fully OA journals (Route 1) **2101 (74%)**
- Green OA: available through a repository (Route 2) **69 (2%)**
- Transformative arrangement: published in subscription journals, made OA via transformative agreements / transformative journals (Route 3) **686 (24%)**

Data source: OA works¹

Dutch Research Council (NWO)

Articles associated with NWO funding in 2024 **5616**

Articles made available Open Access (“free to read”) **5060 (90%)**



Articles fully compliant with Plan S **3910 (69%)**



... made available as:

- Gold OA: published in fully OA journals (Route 1) **1276 (33%)**
- Green OA: available through a repository (Route 2) **104 (2%)**
- Transformative arrangement: published in subscription journals, made OA via transformative agreements / transformative journals (Route 3) **2530² (65%)**

Data sources: Crossref and NWO's grant management system ISAAC

¹ Gold OA figures are inclusive of Diamond. Green OA numbers are derived from grantee follow-up for non-compliance. Additional repository uploads may exist, either published as Gold OA or not captured here.

² As no article-level data is publicly available on which articles were covered by transformative arrangements, and since the majority of these relate to hybrid journals, figures here reflect hybrid articles (with CC-BY licence).

Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI)

Articles associated with HHMI's OA to Publications Policy³ in 2024 477

Articles made available Open Access ("free to read") 462 (97%)



Articles fully compliant with Plan S 429 (90%)



... made available as:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| • Gold OA: published in fully OA journals (Route 1) | 187 (44%) |
| • Green OA: available through a repository (Route 2) | 24 (5%) |
| • Transformative arrangement: published in subscription journals, made OA via transformative agreements / transformative journals (Route 3) | 218 (51%) |

Data source: OA works

UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)

Articles associated with UKRI funding in 2024⁴ 28398

Articles made available Open Access ("free to read") 24722 (87%)



Articles fully compliant with Plan S 20575 (72%)



... made available as:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Gold OA: published in fully OA journals (Route 1) | 8427 (41%) |
| • Green OA: available through a repository (Route 2) | 239 (1%) |
| • Transformative arrangement: published in subscription journals, made OA via transformative agreements / transformative journals (Route 3) | 11909 ⁵ (58%) |

Data sources: Crossref, Gateway to Research, and Unpaywall, in collaboration with Sesame Open Science⁶

⁴Commenting on 2024 trends is not appropriate as the data is expected to be incomplete due to limitations in ResearchFish reporting timelines.

⁵These figures may include non-TA/TJ hybrid OA, which is compliant with the UKRI OA policy although UKRI will not financially support OA publication fees.

⁶UKRI has [published baseline OA values](#) in collaboration with Research Consulting and Sesame Open Science.



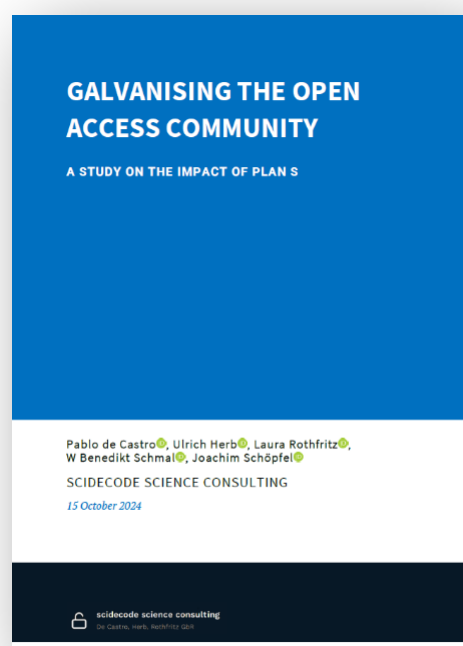
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In 2024, cOAlition S made steady progress in advancing our open access objectives. Following the milestone five-year assessment of Plan S, we focused on practical initiatives that address key challenges in the scholarly publishing ecosystem. This section highlights our recent work, including the insights gained from our global consultation on responsible publishing, our development of frameworks for more equitable access, and our collaborative efforts to strengthen Diamond Open Access. These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to creating a more accessible scholarly communication system that serves researchers worldwide and guide our future direction.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT: FIVE YEARS OF PLAN S

A comprehensive study

The past year marked a significant milestone in our open access journey with the completion of the independent impact assessment of Plan S five years after its launch. This comprehensive evaluation, conducted by scidecode science consulting following a competitive tender process, provides crucial insights into how Plan S has impacted the scholarly communication landscape and accelerated the transition to full and immediate open access.



Key findings

Drawing on extensive quantitative analysis and in-depth stakeholder interviews across the academic publishing ecosystem, the impact study revealed several key achievements. Most notably, the authors of the study highlighted that Plan S has successfully elevated open access as a priority among policymakers, brought publishers to the negotiating table with institutions and created new pathways for achieving full and immediate open access to research. The study underscored the potentially game-changing effect of the rights retention strategy, which has gained particular traction, with numerous institutions adopting and expanding upon this approach through their own Rights Retention Policies. Additionally, the study noted our contribution to the current momentum around Diamond Open Access and our role in raising awareness of the inequities of article-based charges publishing models.



The study was funded by the European Union via the OA-Advance project.

de Castro, P., Herb, U., Rothfritz, L., Schmal, W. B., & Schöpfel, J. (2024). Galvanising the Open Access Community: A Study on the Impact of Plan S. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13738479>

While full quantitative impact analysis requires longer evaluation, since many policies only took effect from 2021, the authors observed substantial progress in advancing full and immediate Open Access. Their recommendation to continue cOAlition S beyond 2025 affirms our vision and the importance of coordinated funder action. The study emphasizes that a transition towards more sustainable, affordable and equitable publishing requires collaboration among all actors in this ecosystem. We thank all contributors and will use these insights to strengthen our collaborative approach moving forward.

"TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE PUBLISHING"

Listening to the research community

In 2024, cOAlition S completed a global consultation with the research community on the “Towards Responsible Publishing” (TRP) proposal. This proposal articulated our vision for a fit-for-purpose scholarly communication system and outlined a mission enabling research funders to deliver on this vision through collaboration with key stakeholders.

The consultation was conducted by Research Consulting and Leiden University's Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS). Over 11,600 respondents from the worldwide research community participated, providing invaluable insights and perspectives. The six-month consultation period, from November 2023 to May 2024, gathered diverse opinions from researchers and other key stakeholders, including research performing organizations, scholarly societies, publishers, and infrastructure providers, through online surveys, focus groups, and feedback letters.

Key findings

The consultation revealed broad support for TRP principles related to preprint posting, open peer review, and open licensing - practices which cOAlition S organisations may wish to advance through supportive policies. Additionally, findings underscored the need for global collaboration to transform recognition and reward mechanisms, particularly between research funders, research performing organizations, and universities, to include a wider set of research outputs. Stakeholders also expressed the desire to shift spending within the scholarly communication system toward more responsible practices.

We deeply appreciate the thoughtful feedback provided by all participants, which has enriched our understanding and will play a crucial role in shaping our future strategy.



Complete report and accompanying datasets:

Chiarelli, A., Cox, E., Johnson, R., Waltman, L., Kaltenbrunner, W., Brasil, A., Reyes Elizondo, A., & Pinfield, S. (2024). "Towards Responsible Publishing": Findings from a global stakeholder consultation. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11243942>

EQUITABLE OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

cOAlition S strongly believes that no researcher should be excluded from publishing their findings in open access because they are unable to pay for an article processing charge (APC). While strategies to move away from this business model will take time, we are actively supporting two key initiatives to make OA publishing more equitable.

Pricing framework to foster global equity in scholarly publishing

With some exceptions, publishers set the same APC for journals regardless of geography. For example, a researcher in India who wanted to make their Nature-accepted article OA would pay the same price (\$12,690) as their counterpart in the United Kingdom. Although this approach could be considered fair – as both researchers are receiving the same level of service – it fails to account for significant differences in researchers' ability to pay across different economies.

To start to address this inequity, cOAlition S commissioned [Information Power](#) to develop a new pricing framework designed to foster global equity in scholarly publishing. Published in July 2024, this [framework](#) provides publishers with the ability to charge different prices for the same goods/services based on country-specific factors and researchers' ability to pay.

Using the Purchasing Pricing Parity (PPP) index developed by the World Bank [International Comparison Program](#) (2021), the model is fully adaptable, allowing publishers to implement changes gradually and in line with their specific circumstances. It can be applied to various pricing models, including article processing charges, subscriptions, and transformative agreements.

Over the coming months, we will continue promoting this framework and encouraging publishers who support equitable OA to consider adopting this approach. At the time of writing Wiley is implementing a [pilot initiative](#) allowing authors in Latin America to publish in any of their fully open access journals at prices that are tied to the region's purchasing power, utilizing the World Bank global purchasing power parity index.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PRICING FRAMEWORK



- **Open, Transparent Data:** Utilizing World Bank International Comparison Program data, reflecting each country's income and ability to pay.
- **Banding:** Grouping countries into bands eases administration.
- **Excel-Based Tool:** Allowing publishers to explore and set their own bands and differential prices using the same transparent data.
- **Local Currencies:** Issuing invoices in local currencies where possible.
- **Comprehensive Appendices:** Detailed guidance on data sources, downloading World Bank datasets, and changes in country indices from 2017 to 2021.

Beyond article-based charges

Although fairer APCs based on factors specific to each country represent a welcome development, the pursuit of a more equitable open access publishing extends beyond that.

Since September 2023, cOAlition S, in partnership with Jisc and PLOS, have been working with a [multi-stakeholder working group](#) to identify business models and arrangements that enable equitable participation in knowledge-sharing for the benefit of science and society while [moving beyond article-based charges](#).

A significant milestone in this initiative was the beta release of the "[How Equitable Is It?](#)" tool in September 2024. This tool provides a framework that enables stakeholders to evaluate scholarly communication models and arrangements on the axis of equity.

The tool prompts users to consider to what extent the publishing model they are assessing, facilitates (or restricts) equitable participation in knowledge sharing. Users score a publishing model against [seven criteria](#) – including access to read, publishing OA and pricing transparency – on a scale from “least equitable” to “most equitable” receiving an overall equity score upon completion, along with a summary of their responses.

We anticipate that this framework will become a useful resource for librarians and library consortia committed to equitable OA as they assess publisher models when making their investment decisions. Similarly, we invite publishers to use it to assess their current offerings and identify steps they can take to offer more equitable OA publishing options that serve all researchers.

SEVEN CRITERIA TO ASSESS EQUITY



- 01 Access to Read
- 02 Publishing Open Access
- 03 Maximizing participation
- 04 Re-use rights
- 05 Pricing and fee transparency
- 06 Promoting and encouraging open research practices: data and code
- 07 Promoting and encouraging open research practices: preprints and open peer review



Information Power. (2024). Pricing Framework to Foster Global Equity in Scholarly Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12784905>



How Equitable Is It?
<https://coalitions.typeform.com/Equity-Tool>

COALITION S & DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS

In 2024, cOAlition S played a major role in the advancement of Diamond OA in Europe and beyond. Within Europe, the results of the EC-funded DIAMAS and CRAFT-OA projects, in which cOAlition S participates, were folded into the developing structure of the European Diamond Capacity Hub (EDCH).

The EDCH was established with initial funding from the French National Research Agency (ANR) and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Its mission is to strengthen the Diamond OA community in Europe by supporting European institutional, national and disciplinary capacity centres, Diamond publishers and service providers engaged in Diamond OA scholarly publishing. It will provide Diamond OA publishing communities with technical services, quality alignment, training and skills, best practices and advice on sustainability. The EDCH will promote both pre- and post-publication peer review publishing models, Open Science practices, and Open Access books.

On 26 September 2024, the EDCH held its soft launch, bringing together 60 key stakeholders from the European Open Access community to discuss the Hub's first outline. The services offered by the EDCH are outlined below:



 DIAMOND OA Standard	Quality alignment and self-assessment of Diamond OA publishers and service providers. A benchmark for Diamond OA publishing.	 DIAMOND Discovery Hub	The authoritative list of Diamond OA journals that satisfy the 6 operational criteria of Diamond OA.
 Training Platform	Training modules and curricula for editorial and technical support staff. Learning Management System with self-paced courses and evaluation.	 Resources & Guidelines	A living toolsuite bringing together articles and descriptions of best practices on how to run a Diamond OA journal.
 Registry & Forum	Community management: a Forum for Diamond OA communities of practice and collaboration. A Registry of organisations involved in Diamond OA.	 Publishing Tools	Digital resources, interoperability tools, publishing software enhancements and add-ons.

Figure 3: services offered by the European Diamond Capacity Hub

Among the services being developed by the EDCH, two are particularly noteworthy:

- » The **Diamond Open Access Standard (DOAS)**, led by the Spanish funder FECYT, is a community-based aspirational quality standard for Diamond publishing of scholarly journals. Building directly on one of the results of the DIAMAS project, this Standard represents a bottom-up effort by European Diamond OA publishers to support quality alignment as an essential tool for building a robust distributed scholarly publishing system.
- » The **Diamond Discovery Hub (DDH)**, an output of the CRAFT-OA project, will function as a comprehensive and authoritative registry of Diamond OA journals that meet [six basic operational criteria for Diamond OA](#). The registry aims at making these journals more visible, while enabling Diamond OA publishers and service providers to help their journals align, improve and harmonize their data. Aggregators will be able to use the registry to retrieve Diamond OA journals' data compliant with their requirements. DDH will also serve as a trusted observatory of Diamond publishing channels for policy making and further improvement of the publishing sector.



More info on the EDCH

<https://diamas.org>

Beyond Europe, cOAlition S, in collaboration with ANR, Science Europe, and other organisations, worked with UNESCO towards a [global network for Diamond OA](#). UNESCO is currently leading a [worldwide consultation](#) regarding its implementation. The [Second Global Summit for Diamond OA](#), held in Cape Town from 8-14 December 2024, reinforced the idea that social justice, equity, and inclusivity are fundamental principles of Diamond Open Access.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Since the inception of Plan S in 2018, 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 – coupled with initiatives such as those spearheaded by OA2020 – has led to a significant growth in OA publications.

Despite this progress, data from Dimensions indicates that there were **more** paywalled articles published in 2023 than there were in 2017 (Figure 4).

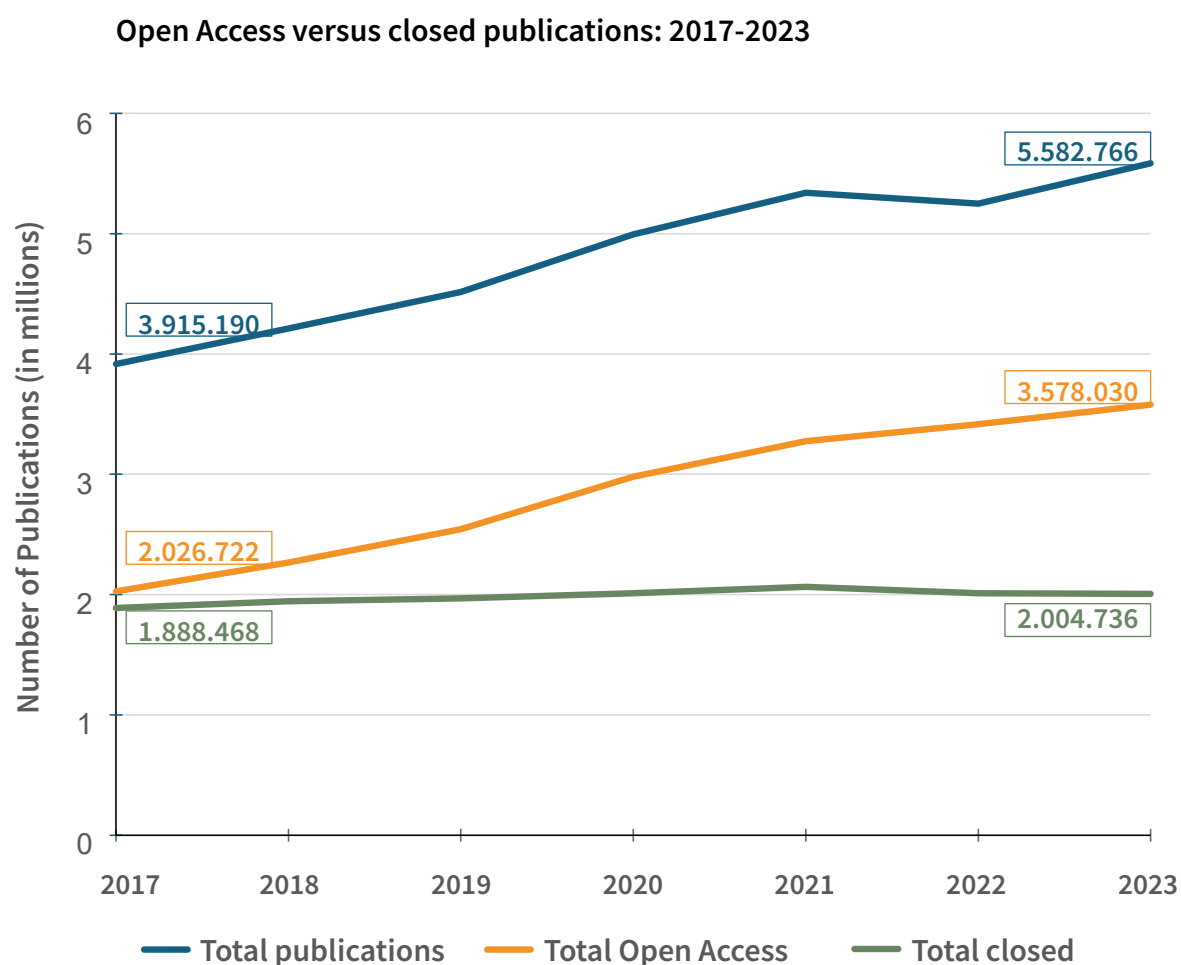


Figure 4: Open Access articles versus closed access articles: 2017-2023

Source: Dimensions. Search ran 26th February 2025

In addition to this growth of paywalled articles, there is widespread concern that OA publishing models based on Article Processing Charges (APCs) or transformative arrangements are inequitable and inhibit participation in knowledge sharing.

These developments occur against a backdrop of an incentive system which rewards researchers for focusing on journal placement and quantity of published papers, which can influence research priorities. This focus creates additional challenges for the peer review system, as it works to evaluate increasingly complex and data-intensive research findings.

Amidst these trends, there is a growing recognition of the importance of open science practices beyond just Open Access to publications. Stakeholders are increasingly advocating for openness throughout the entire research process, including access to preprints, protocols, research data, research software, code, and peer review reports.

An emerging strategy for cOAlition S

To respond to these issues – and help advance sustainable and equitable open science practices more broadly – cOAlition S has been actively working on developing the next-phase strategy.

The key areas that will likely guide our strategic direction focus around:

- » Continuing the implementation of current Plan S policies to achieve full and immediate open access to peer-reviewed articles.
- » Increasing or supporting more equitable and innovative publishing models, such as Diamond Open Access, Publish-Review-Curate and similar, to ensure that all researchers can participate in the scholarly discussion without barriers.
- » Expanding Plan S policies to include open access to all research outputs related to research articles, namely preprints, data, code, and peer review reports.

The way forward we propose will seek to accelerate discoveries and maximise the impact of our research by creating a scholarly communication system in which open science is the norm, for the benefit of science and society.





TOOLS & SERVICES

JOURNAL CHECKER TOOL

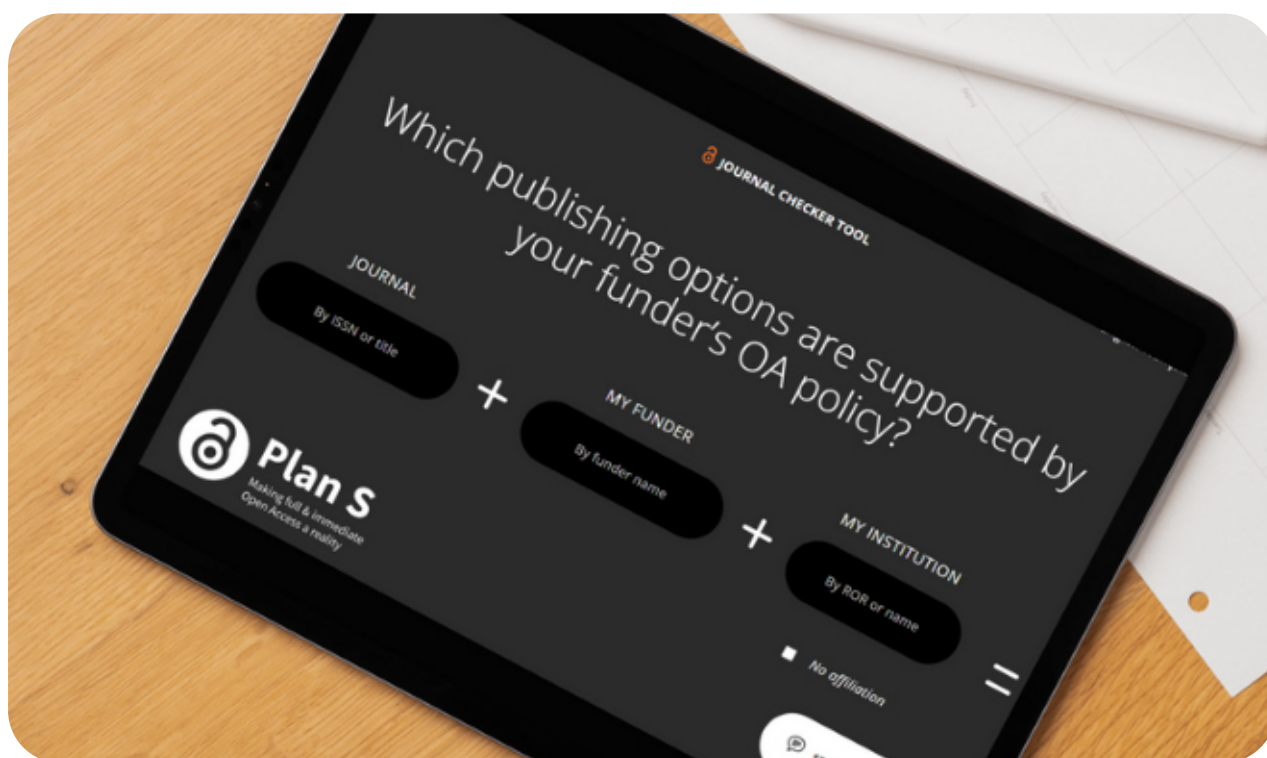
The Journal Checker Tool (JCT) helps authors funded by a cOAlition S organisation identify how they can comply with their funder OA mandate when seeking to publish in any academic journal.

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.

» The JCT has over 3 000 new users monthly, who have performed over 1,5 million searches in total since January 2021.

» Primary access has constantly been from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Poland.

» The major change that was being prepared during 2024 is that from 1st January 2025, JCT will stop detecting whether a journal is in the Transformative Journals list, in line with the new cOAlition S policy to discontinue the Transformative Journals programme.



Indexed in DOAJ and
bespoke registries

50 000

Journal titles



Utilised by researchers
and librarians

3 000

Unique users monthly



Performed since 2021

1,5 million

Database searches



<https://journalcheckertool.org>

JOURNAL COMPARISON SERVICE

In February 2025, cOAlition S decided to sunset the Journal Comparison Service, effective 30th April 2025, based on the low rates of usage by all key stakeholders.

While the JCS comes to an end, the valuable insights gained through it will continue to inform our strategy, as cOAlition S remains firmly committed to advancing more equitable and transparent open access fees and publishing models through collaborative initiatives. This report presents key usage metrics and analysis of the data held in the system.

USER ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

The Journal Comparison Service (JCS) was developed by cOAlition S, following detailed consultations with librarians, publishers, legal experts, and software developers, to shed light on open access publishing fees and services. The aspiration was to create a useful and secure price transparency tool for assisting libraries and library consortia in their open access negotiations with all publishers.

Achieving this ambition required enlisting a significant number of publishers who levy open access publishing fees to deposit their price and service data with the JCS. However, analysis of participation data indicates that adoption was low across key stakeholder groups. The following table shows how the service performed from 2021 to 2023:

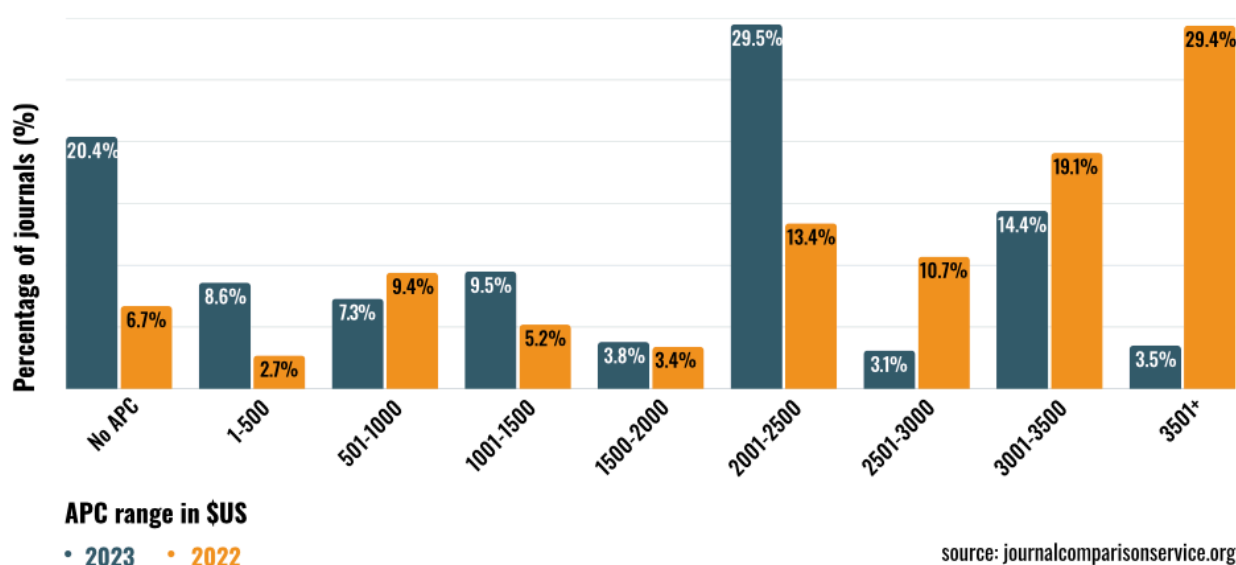
Reporting period	2021	2022	2023
Participating publishers	28	33	37
Participating journals	2172	1871	549
Publishers using the IP framework	17	19	22
Publishers using the FOAA framework	11	14	15
Journals using the IP framework	2000	1668	432
Journals using the FOAA framework	172	203	207

Table 3: Publisher participation in the Journal Comparison Service (JCS): reporting years 2021-2023

The limited journal coverage had a direct impact on end-user engagement, with relatively few librarians, library consortia and funders being motivated to register to use the service. At the end of 2024, the JCS had just 105 registered end users, who accessed the service on 163 occasions in that year. Despite this low adoption, the JCS provides access to a rich dataset as demonstrated below.

The 2023 data reveals useful insights, such as the distribution of Article Processing Charges (APCs) charged by journals participating in the JCS, as illustrated in the graphs below. A key finding is that 112 journals – some 20% of titles in the JCS do not charge APCs. Moreover, comparing 2023 to 2022 data shows a significant decrease in the percentage of journals charging APCs greater than \$3501, from 29% in 2022 to 3% in 2023; a change that can be primarily attributed to Wiley's decision to stop participating in the JCS.

APCs charged by journals participating in the JCS



JCS INSIGHTS

The number of journals in Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) disciplines, who levy no APCs

72 (66%)

The number of journals in Medical and Health Sciences (MHS) disciplines, who levy no APCs

10 (6%)

Average APC

\$2030

APC Range

\$33.17 (Advances in Science and Research) through to \$6540 (EMBO Reports)

Peer review processing time (Median) for SSH titles

87 days

Peer review processing time (Median) for MHS titles

72 days

Peer review price allocation in SSH titles

12%

Peer review price allocation in MHS titles

13%



FUNDERS' HIGHLIGHTS



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Key developments in Open Access by cOAlition S organisations

2024 has been a significant year for many cOAlition S organisations, with their Open Access policy updates, infrastructure investments, and strategic shifts aimed at enhancing open science practices and ultimately transforming how researchers publish their work.

The European Commission reported substantial growth in its Open Research Europe platform, with a 25% increase in publications, while planning its transformation into a collectively supported publishing service based on open-source infrastructure. Around the same time, the Gates Foundation announced it will stop funding article processing charges (APCs) in 2025 and instead require funded researchers to post preprints.

Other funders implemented more targeted interventions. Austria's FWF shifted from individual publication grants to institutional block funding. The Swiss National Science Foundation stopped covering APCs for special issues, citing concerns about "publish or perish" incentives. In France, the National Research Agency introduced automatic CC-BY licensing for scientific publications resulting from ANR-funded projects and deposited in the national archive HAL, and in Portugal, the science foundation finalized a comprehensive update to its Open Access policy, including rights retention and zero embargo. In the UK, Wellcome started accepting CC-BY licensed preprints as a valid compliance route, while UKRI extended open-access requirements to books and monographs.

These developments highlight how research funders are increasingly aligning their policies toward greater openness and equity in scholarly communication by simultaneously refining requirements and building alternatives to commercial publishing models. The collective efforts of cOAlition S organisations demonstrate their ongoing commitment to maximizing the value and impact of publicly funded research through enhanced accessibility and reuse.

The following pages present detailed descriptions of these important initiatives.



Austrian Science Fund (FWF)

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) introduced in January 2024 a new instrument to provide financial support for open access publishing in the form of [Open Access Block Grant funding \(OAP\)](#), replacing the decades-old "Peer-Reviewed Publications" program. The Open Access Block Grant is awarded once a year to Austrian research institutions to support the funding of peer-reviewed OA publications (journal articles, book chapters, etc.) that have resulted in whole or in part from FWF-funded projects. For FWF-funded authors, this means that funding for OA publications is handled directly by their own research institution and no additional application needs to be submitted. Together with the funding program for [open access book publications](#), for [digital open access publications](#) and for [open science infrastructure](#) (Diamond OA etc.), the Open Access Block Grant provides financial support for OA outputs by FWF-funded authors.

In April 2024, the FWF signed the [Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information](#), making another clear statement in favour of openness and transparency of information in research. The FWF has been committed to [open science and open standards](#) for many years. Information on FWF-funded research projects can be found on its [Research Radar page](#) and at [Crossref](#), openly accessible and usable for anyone. By employing persistent identifiers, such as [grant DOI](#), [ORCID](#) and [ROR](#), the FWF supports the interconnectedness and interoperability of metadata of research projects it funds.

European Commission (EC)

The European Commission [reported significant achievements for Open Research Europe](#) (ORE) in 2024, alongside presenting its vision for transforming the platform into a collective publishing service.

ORE published 275 articles in 2024 - a 25% increase from 2023. Since launching in 2021, the platform has received over 1,000 submissions and published nearly 800 articles, with over 500 completing peer review. ORE expanded its eligibility criteria beyond Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe researchers to include authors from over 40 EC programs. This was followed by a shift from an author-led to an editorial-led peer review process, where ORE's in-house editorial team handles reviewer recruitment, leading to reduced publication times. Addressing language barriers, ORE introduced multilingual abstracts in Spanish, French, German, and Italian alongside English.

In parallel, the European Commission, supported by numerous funding organisations, released a [scoping report](#) envisioning ORE as a collectively supported non-profit publishing service, which will enable the uptake of innovations in scholarly communication and research practice. The proposed collective model would operate under ten core principles, including high-quality research and integrity, accessibility, diversity of contributions, equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accountability to the research community. It would remain fee-free for authors and use open-source infrastructure.

The EC is funding the Public Knowledge Project to develop the infrastructure underpinning ORE based on their Open Journal Systems open source software.

Foundation for Science and Technology of Portugal (FCT)

In 2024, the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) finalised a comprehensive [update](#) to its Open Access policy, reflecting significant advancements in the mechanisms established since 2014. This new policy, released in early 2025, aims to enhance the visibility and accessibility of scientific research funded by FCT. Key highlights of the policy include rights retention and zero embargo. The policy applies to articles, theses, dissertations, and monographs.

To facilitate compliance with FCT's policy, a dedicated website (acessoaberto.fct.pt) was developed. Additionally, FCT is developing tools to aid in monitoring compliance.

In December 2024, FCT [committed to collaboratively fund Open Research Europe](#) (ORE), a non-profit open access publishing platform launched in 2021 by the European Commission. The collaboration and funding agreement, to be signed in 2025, will ensure that, from 2026 and for an initial period of five years, all national authors will be able to publish their articles in immediate open access and free of charge on this platform. This expands eligibility for publication on ORE beyond the initial beneficiaries of EU funding programs.

French National Research Agency (ANR)

The French National Research Agency (ANR) has implemented an automatic system that applies a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) licence by default to scientific publications resulting from ANR-funded projects and deposited in the national archive HAL. This applies in cases where no licence has been specified by the researchers themselves at the time of deposit. This initiative comes as an effort to facilitate and promote the adoption of CC-BY licensing across ANR-funded research.

Effective since 2024, the automatic licensing is activated under specific conditions: publications must be journal articles or conference papers with the full-text submitted, be linked to an ANR project, and have no pre-existing licence information (either filled or extracted from the PDF). Authors can modify the automatically assigned licence in the metadata at any time.

This functionality reflects [ANR's commitment to full and immediate open access](#) to scientific publications while respecting bibliodiversity and diverse publication routes. It supports ANR's 2021 policy requiring immediate open access for all funded research under a CC-BY licence or equivalent through one of three routes: publishing in native open access journals, in subscription journals with transformative agreements, or using the Rights Retention Strategy. The policy also requires submission of the full text of publications (either the Author Accepted Manuscript or Version of Record) to HAL by the publication date. All ANR-funded publications are accessible through the [HAL-ANR portal](#).

Gates Foundation (GF)

The Gates Foundation has [announced](#) an update to its [Open Access Policy](#), effective January 1, 2025. Researchers must [share funded manuscripts as preprints](#) on recognised servers, accelerating access to findings and addressing inequities in scholarly publishing. The Foundation also discontinued funding article processing charges (APCs) for open-access journal articles, reinforcing its commitment to more equitable publishing models like Diamond Open Access and Subscribe to Open.

To support this transition, the Foundation has partnered with F1000 to launch [VeriXiv](#), a verified preprint server for Gates-funded research. Additionally, a [new collaboration](#) with PLOS will allow grantees to continue publishing in PLOS journals while exploring alternatives to APC-based open access. The policy update also strengthens data transparency by requiring Data Availability Statements for all publications and upholding the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence, ensuring authors retain their rights and research remains freely accessible.

Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

The SNSF implemented a change of practice in its Open Access funding policy in February 2024. Following an announcement in late 2023, [the Foundation ceased funding Article Processing Charges \(APCs\) for publications in special issues](#). The SNSF's scientific

bodies were convinced that the sharp increase in articles in special issues funded through the SNSF's instrument was promoting the "publish or perish" culture. The SNSF is required to use its funds sustainably and in alignment with its processes in the evaluation of research proposals that focus on the actual quality of work researchers have done, rather than the number of published articles.

Additionally, [the SNSF reported that 81% of the 15,709 scientific publications emanating from SNSF-funded research in 2022 were openly accessible](#). This share has doubled over the last ten years. More than half of these publications are available under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence, with this share increasing year over year. The SNSF funded nearly 3.7 million CHF for the publication of journal articles.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

From January 2024, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) requires [open access](#) for monographs, book chapters and edited collections. To support the transition to open access for academic books, UKRI has published [case studies](#) on the experiences of 16 researchers who published their books open access and a [guide to support smaller and specialist book publishers](#) explore open access business models.

The case studies discuss the motivations of researchers to publish open access, challenges encountered and overcome, lessons learnt, and benefits. These are available in multiple formats and are openly licensed. The researchers who participated

represent a range of disciplines, career stages, institutions, and experience with open access publishing. The project was delivered by Insights Media.

The guide explains what steps can be taken to help small and specialist book publishers to transition to open access successfully and sustainably. It is accompanied by a [report](#) which sets out shared vision for open access books, identifies the challenges, and makes recommendations for stakeholders. The project was delivered by Information Power and undertaken in partnership with the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, the British Academy and the Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association.

Wellcome

Wellcome expanded its [Open Access policy](#) in 2024 with an amendment that recognises CC-BY licensed preprints as a valid route to OA compliance. This change offers researchers additional flexibility in meeting Wellcome's open access requirements, and aligns with the growing importance of preprints in the scientific communication ecosystem. The updated policy states: "If you are unable to make the Version of Record or the Author Accepted Manuscript open access, then you may post a preprint under a CC BY licence. We will accept this as compliant with the policy in these situations."

2024 also saw the first round of a Wellcome-backed funding call calling for proposals aiming to strengthen the quality and sustainability of Diamond OA publishing

across the African continent. This funding call was run by EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries), AJOL (African Journals Online) and WACREN (the West and Central African Research and Education Network), and awarded 17 grants across 9 countries in Africa, with a second call due to follow in 2025. The goal of this activity is to support diverse and equitable systems of open access publishing.



PLAN S AMBASSADOR VIEWPOINT

THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH FUNDERS

By Cameron Neylon

The Barcelona Declaration is a statement of principles and aspirations. Its goal is to achieve a shared and open research information environment. It is also a growing community of research institutions and funders, working together to make change.

Our research evaluation and monitoring systems have evolved over time, influenced by what was technically possible to capture, monitor and evaluate, and in turn influenced research communities to define what was important. A lot has been written to describe the problems and challenges of the system that has evolved. But these systems have particularly limited the capacity of funders to evaluate and monitor what matters to them.

If we step back to look at the role of funders, we can think of them as investors. Investors in development and innovation obviously, but also in people, systems and capacities. And ultimately investors in impact, positive change in the world. Effective investors monitor their portfolios across the full set of their goals. The monitoring information we have is valuable for funders. But it is not flexible or comprehensive enough to deliver on evaluation across all of these goals. In addition, funders have obligations and commitments to transparency and reporting. The closed nature of traditional research information has made this difficult or impossible.

Addressing the complex evaluation needs of funders requires access to diverse data sources that can be brought together, and used creatively to answer questions. The revolution in Open Research Information (ORI) is already helping here - opening up the possibility to use multiple data sources where once cost would have limited us to one. But it is much more than that. Truly open resources support interoperation, connecting and integrating multiple data sources to ask complex questions. They support creatively reshaping and enriching data because they can be used without restrictions. And they allow us to show, and share, our work, building transparency and shared capacity, increasing inclusion and reducing bias.

Funders have a role to play here - both as leaders and direction setters, as advocates for openness and transparency, and as exemplar users of open data. But also as providers of data. The information available on funding decisions and investments is patchy and inconsistent. Connecting real-world impacts with the investments that drive them requires high quality information on those investments. The beauty of open data is that data shared well, encourages others to share consistently, enriching the information we have available.

Open systems work best when we work together. The funders that have already become signatories of the Barcelona Declaration are working together, as well as with institutions and infrastructure providers to address both what funders can provide, and what they can gain when others provide or enrich more information. Building collective resources requires collective action.

Cameron Neylon is an advocate for Open Access, a key contributor to the Barcelona Declaration and a Plan S Ambassador. He was co-founder of the Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative and Professor of Research Communications at Curtin University from 2015 to 2024. ORCID ID: [0000-0002-0068-716X](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0068-716X)

cOAlition S welcomes the Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information and encourages funders and research performing organisations to consider signing this important initiative.



<https://www.coalition-s.org/coalition-s-welcomes-the-barcelona-declaration-on-open-research-information>



Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information
<https://barcelona-declaration.org>

BARCELONA DECLARATION ON OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION

Because open science
requires open research
information



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 2024 - and continues to contribute to them.



DIAMAS

The [DIAMAS](#) project, involving 23 organisations across 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. In 2024, the project released key outputs including the [European landscape of institutional publishing – a synopsis of results from the DIAMAS survey](#), the Diamond Open Access Standard (DOAS) for quality assurance, and the [DOAS Self Assessment Tool](#), a web application for evaluating compliance and financial sustainability. DIAMAS also developed a [set of resources](#) for the European Diamond Capacity Hub.

CRAFT-OA

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 OA. 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. In 2024, CRAFT-OA presented the [operational criteria for Diamond OA journals](#) in the context of the [Diamond Discovery Hub](#), a registry of institutionally published and scholar-led Open Access journals in Europe.

PALOMERA

The [PALOMERA](#) project, which concluded in December 2024, delved 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 delivered three key outputs: a [knowledge base](#) and [analysis](#) of its contents, a set of evidence-based and actionable [recommendations for different stakeholders](#) to boost the inclusion of books in OA policies across Europe, and a [Funder Forum](#) that provides a collaborative space for research funders to discuss OA book policies. PALOMERA's resources reside within the [OA Books Toolkit](#).

OA-ADVANCE

The [OA-Advance](#) project strengthens cOAlition S in its mission to achieve full and immediate open access to research findings. Throughout 2024, the project supported cOAlition S in conducting an independent review to evaluate the [impact of Plan S](#) and developing strategic recommendations. These recommendations build upon Plan S's achievements, incorporate lessons learned, and establish a forward-looking framework that defines the role of research funders and their vision for the future direction of scholarly publishing.



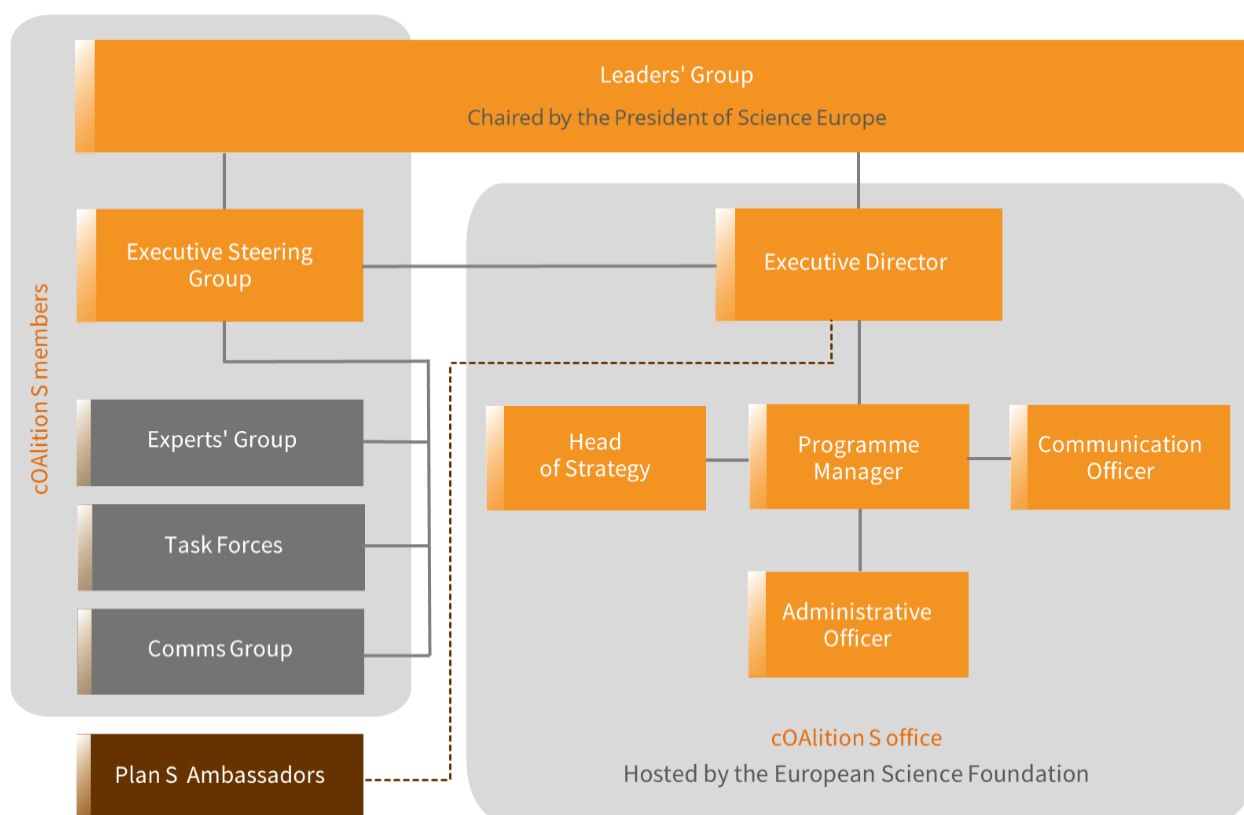
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW & GOVERNANCE

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.

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.

The cOAlition S Office staff and activities are funded by cOAlition S funders' contributions and grants. Human resources represented 3 FTE in 2024, including staff and consultancy. Software development covered the costs of the Journal Checker Tool and the Journal Comparison Service. The Commissioned studies in 2024 included the Impact Study of Plan S and the report about the "Towards Responsible Publishing", as well as work on "Fairer APCs". Travel and event expenses covered notably the participation and support for the 2nd Diamond Open Access Summit in Cape Town.



cOAlition S: Governance & Organisational Structure

ACTIVITY / SPENDING (EUR)	2024
Human resources & related	399 576
Software development	472 361
Communication	15 736
Commissioned studies	142 485
Legal & administrative	57 076
Travel	20 952
Total	1 108 186

Table 4: 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)

1, Quai Lezay-Marnésia
67080 Strasbourg, France

Contact us



coalition-s.org



info@coalition-s.org

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