



**ACTION PLAN FOR**  
**DIAMOND**  
**OPEN ACCESS**

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## Colophon

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'Action Plan for Diamond Open Access'

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# Introduction



This Action Plan provides a set of priority actions to further develop and expand a sustainable, community-driven Diamond scholarly communication ecosystem. It aims to bring together Diamond Open Access journals and platforms around shared principles, guidelines, and quality standards respecting the cultural, multilingual and disciplinary diversity that constitute the strength of the sector. Researchers, editors, and research institutions will benefit from this Action Plan.

'Diamond' Open Access refers to a scholarly publication model in which journals and platforms do not charge fees to either authors or readers. Diamond Open Access journals represent community-driven, academic-led and -owned publishing initiatives. Serving a fine-grained variety of generally small-scale, multilingual, and multicultural scholarly communities, these journals and platforms embody the concept of bibliodiversity. For all these reasons, Diamond Open Access journals and platforms are equitable by nature and design.

The landmark '[Open Access Diamond Journals Study](#)' (OADJS) uncovered the vast size and scope of this publication ecosystem. The estimated (2021) 17.000 to 29.000 Diamond Open Access journals worldwide are an essential component of scholarly communication, publishing 8 to 9% of the total article publication volume and 45% of Open Access publishing.

Despite these obvious strengths, Diamond Open Access is held back by challenges related to the technical capacity, management, visibility, and sustainability of journals and platforms. More dialogue and commitment is required between researchers, RFOs, RPOs, university libraries, university presses, faculties, departments, research institutes, scholarly societies, ministries, and service providers to properly support this part of the scholarly communication sector.

This Action Plan aims at substantially increasing the capacity of Diamond journals to provide innovative, valid, reliable, and accessible publishing services. Following up on the recommendations of the OADJS, the action plan aims to support Diamond Open Access by focusing on four central elements for its further development: efficiency, quality standards, capacity building, and sustainability.

# 1. Efficiency

Diamond Open Access currently represents an archipelago of relatively isolated journals and platforms. They would benefit from sharing common resources. This action plan proposes to undertake the following actions to increase efficiency and economies of scale:

- ▶ Flexibly align quality standards, create sustainability, and enhance trust for all stakeholders by promoting the sharing of infrastructures, standards, policies, practices, and funding streams while respecting cultural differences and disciplinary requirements.
- ▶ Make technical services and operations more accessible, interoperable, and streamlined for Diamond journals and platforms. Particular attention will be paid to the alignment and interoperability of submission systems, journal platforms, and metadata.
- ▶ Build synergies between Diamond journals and platforms in the same discipline, geographical location, or language via a network of existing organisations, groups, and societies to provide better service to researchers and readers in general.

# 2. Quality standards

Diamond Open Access journals and platforms have different practices to ensure quality standards rooted in historical, cultural, and disciplinary diversity. To raise and flexibly align the quality profile of the ecosystem, this action plan proposes to undertake the following actions:

- ▶ Flexibly align existing standards and best practises for OA publishing already developed by various organisations (including OASPA, DOAJ, COAR, COPE, SPE, and EASE). This will be done in co-creation with the communities representing Diamond journals into an international framework for Diamond publishing.
- ▶ Specify these quality standards for seven core components of scholarly publishing and explore their alignment across the Diamond Open Access ecosystem:
  1. Funding and business models
  2. Service efficiency and quality assurance
  3. Editorial management and research integrity
  4. Legal ownership, mission, and governance
  5. Communication and marketing
  6. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) including multilingualism and gender equity
  7. Level of openness and compliance with OS principles and practises.
- ▶ Develop a self-assessment tool to assess the quality standards for Diamond journals to assist progress towards meeting the international framework for Diamond publishing.

## 3. Capacity building

Diamond Open Access journals and platforms differ in terms of editorial and management skills. To build capacity, this action plan proposes to consecutively undertake the following actions:

- ▶ Build capacity through the creation of a toolsuite for Diamond academic publishing. This includes training materials for Diamond Open Access editors and service providers, quality standards for journals, author and reviewer policies and guidelines that will be made available in a Common Access Point.
- ▶ Engage all stakeholders in Diamond Open Access – researchers, RFOs, RPOs, university libraries, university presses, faculties, departments, research institutes, scholarly societies, ministries – to make them aware of their roles in Diamond Open Access.
- ▶ Reach out to scholars with a targeted communication strategy about Diamond Open Access publishing.
- ▶ Create a dedicated nonprofit Capacity Centre for Diamond Publishing (CCDP) within 30 months that provides technical, financial, and training services and resources at different levels to eligible journals and editors. Governance of the CCDP will be transparent and representative of its stakeholder communities, with proper consideration for the decentralised and diverse nature of the Diamond ecosystem.

## 4. Sustainability

Although Diamond Open Access journals and platforms are scholar-owned and -led, their legal status and governance is often unspecified. Moreover, their revenue streams often depend on a patchwork of in-kind contributions, funding by various types of institutions, and temporary grant money. To improve the sustainability of the Diamond Open Access publishing ecosystem, this action plan proposes to undertake the following actions:

- ▶ Develop a framework to ensure that the ownership and governance of Diamond Open Access journal titles and platforms is legally recognised and protected to better guarantee the sustainability of community-driven scholarship.
- ▶ Seek to gain an understanding of the costs of Diamond Open Access and promote responsible and transparent financial administrative practices to inform journal managers, institutions, funders of revenues, expenses, and financial sustainability. All service providers will need to adhere to these principles.
- ▶ Promote a more balanced distribution of financial support between different forms of Open Access scholarly publishing, as well as better and more transparent monitoring and allocation of available finances.
- ▶ Strive to ensure that the full range of operational costs of Diamond publishing is carried by a network of institutions: RFOs, RPOs, university libraries,

university presses, faculties, departments, research institutes, scholarly societies, and governments.

- ▶ Develop a coordinated financial mechanism that will deliver these various sources of funding to Diamond Open Access journals, infrastructures, and the Capacity Centre for Diamond Publishing proposed under point 3.

## About the Action Plan

This action plan was prepared by ANR, cOAlition S, OPERAS, and Science Europe. It was discussed and reviewed by the members of Science Europe's Working Group on Open Science, as well as by international experts at the Diamond Open Access workshop held online on 2 February 2022. Their comments led to a number of improvements. The workshop was organised by Science Europe in collaboration with cOAlition S, OPERAS, and ANR. It was sponsored by the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in preparation for the Paris Open Science European Conference (OSEC) organised in the context of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Parts of the action plan will initially be taken forward under the umbrella of the Horizon Europe project 'Developing Institutional Open Access Publishing Models to Advance Scholarly Communication' (DIAMAS; 2022–2025) with the ultimate aim of the Diamond Open Access community taking over its long-term implementation. A scholarly publishing infrastructure that is equitable, community-driven, and academic-led and -owned will enable the global research community to take charge of a scholarly communication system by and for research communities.