



DIAMAS

Developing Institutional Open Access
Publishing Models to Advance
Scholarly Communication

Towards an enhanced and aligned institutional publishing landscape in the ERA

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Document overview

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Version history

Version	Created/Modified	Comments
0.0	09/06/2023	Initial doc created
0.1	23/06/2023	Preliminary draft for contribution
0.2	07/07/2023	Final draft for review
0.3	29/07/2023	Final version
1.0	31/07/2023	Final version in template

Acronyms

IPSP	Institutional Publishers and Service Providers
ERA	European Research Area

Executive Summary

This preliminary policy document calls for increased alignment in institutional publishing along several dimensions: (1) geographical (i.e. national, regional, and global), (2) disciplines and epistemic traditions, and (3) types of stakeholders (institutions, publishers, service providers, scholarly societies, journal editors), to benefit the work of researchers and thus enable science to progress faster



Towards an enhanced and aligned institutional publishing landscape in the ERA

Introduction

In September 2022, 23 organisations from 12 European countries started a joint effort in the DIAMAS project to better understand the institutional publishing landscape in the European Research Area (ERA); and provide the institutional publishers and service providers (IPSPs) with support to better align their practice, improve quality, and develop sustainability. This action will facilitate the work of researchers by providing them with an aligned, high-quality, and sustainable scholarly communication ecosystem, capable of implementing Open Access as a standard publication practice.

The DIAMAS project funded by the EC under the Grant agreement ID 101058007, has a duration of 36 months organised in three distinct phases:

1. Understanding the landscape of IPSPs in the ERA.
2. Improving coordination, quality and sustainability of IPSP.
3. Formulating policy and strategy recommendations.

This policy brief, released at month 11 of the project, reflects on the lessons learnt during the first phase of the project, and formulates recommendations based on the project participants' experience so far. It draws upon three different sources: (1) the scoping exercise and the landscape study of IPSPs in progress (2) the Best Practices Report and the Extensible Quality Standard for Institutional publishing (EQSIP) which have already been published; and (3) the interactions with the International Advisory Board of the project.

An uneven institutional publishing landscape across Europe

The project participants sought to gain a better understanding of the landscape of institutional publishing in the ERA via a scoping exercise and an extensive survey that was sent to around 5000 IPSPs, most of them non-commercial, yielding 685 answers.

The analysis of the collected data is not complete at the time of writing, but lessons can already be drawn from it.

First, the survey of the institutional publishing landscape showed sharp contrasts across ERA countries in terms of capacity and efficiency. In Croatia, Finland, France and Spain, for example, institutional publishing seems to be better organised at the national level thanks to well-operating national infrastructures (e.g. Croatia, France, Finland) or national certification and funding agencies (Spain) than in other countries. This was immediately reflected in the uneven effort required to collect potential respondents in the different countries in scope, and subsequent differences in response rate to the survey.

The diversity of national infrastructures for institutional publishing in Croatia, Finland, France and Spain suggests that the national levels in other ERA countries could also hold considerable federative potential and that the national levels can be leveraged to create further alignment in public policies for institutional publishing in the ERA.

→ **Key issue:** There is a need to federate and harmonise institutional publishing at national level and at the level of the European Research Area .

Recommendation 1: Develop Capacity Centres and Hub

Develop Capacity Centres for institutional publishing at the national level in countries that lack national coordination to provide tools, guidelines, governance, and funding. Coordinate their action and seek for synergies at the ERA level through a Capacity Hub that would share resources and set common quality standards at European level.

Institutions as “publishers”: a blurred situation

During the design and implementation of the survey methodology, our interactions with respondents showed that a substantial proportion of institutional publishers and publishing service providers found it difficult to identify themselves as such and position themselves adequately in the landscape. This seems to have been due to the embedding of publishing services in larger institutional units such as libraries and technical service departments, the high degree of independence of the individual journals from their publishing service, or the lack of recognition of publication services as a distinct activity of the institution.

In addition, the boundaries between legal, ethical, or scientific responsibility for public institutional publishing on the one hand, and the commercial or noncommercial publication services that are contracted to perform specific publishing services on the other, are not always clearly drawn. This situation makes it difficult to engage entities that do not recognize themselves as fully fledged members of the institutional publishing landscape. This was found to be particularly true of scholarly societies, who



do not necessarily see themselves as “publishers” of their own journals. In general, institutions do not seem to have a clear understanding of their responsibilities towards the publishing activities that take place under their remit.

We believe that a clear distinction between final responsibility for publishing on the one hand, and the publishing services that can be outsourced to commercial service providers on the other, is particularly important for ensuring that institutional publishing is controlled and led by the academic community.

→ **Key issue:** There is a lack of understanding and awareness among institutions and societies regarding their publishing responsibilities.

Recommendation 2 : Clarify the landscape

Help institutions better identify and organise their publishing activities in terms of a distinction between public, scholar-owned Institutional Publishers (IPs) who hold legal, ethical, or scientific responsibility and ownership of journal titles on the one hand; and (public or private) Service Providers (SPs) who carry out specific activities with more limited responsibility in the publishing process on the other. Engage a dialogue with scholarly societies about their activities, roles and responsibilities as institutional publishers.

Balance quality standardisation with flexibility that allows for minor variations

Another part of the work done so far produced a Best Practices Report and an Extensible Quality Standard for Institutional publishing (EQSIP) v.1.0. The Best Practices Report provides a synthesis of 74 documents that specify quality evaluation criteria, best practices, and assessment systems for academic journals, spelling out a long tradition of quality control and editorial practice. The report found that these documents are largely overlapping, with minor variations depending on specific disciplines and epistemic traditions, but they address journals rather than IPSPs.

Although there seems to be a broad consensus around what are the characteristics of good quality scholarly publishing, standards are not uniformly adopted and applied across journals and IPSPs. It is important to involve IPSPs in adopting common quality standards in the same way as journals are, and to recognize the common core quality standards while allowing for minor variations, without trying to impose a rigid, top-down, one-size-fits-all quality standard. The concept of an Extensible Quality Standard for Institutional publishing captures this effort. Various publishing communities and national organisations can use it to create well justified variations that respect the common core.

→ **Key issue:** Current best practice guidelines in institutional publishing are overlapping with minor variations but they address only academic journals and not

IPSPs. The fragmentation into many overlapping documents makes it difficult to identify common aspects and the variations that are necessary to accommodate specific needs.

Recommendation 3: Adapt quality standards to IPSPs and alignment with minor variations

Ensure alignment of quality standards in institutional publishing by encouraging institutional publishers to adopt and co-create specific variations of the Extensible Quality Standard for Institutional publishing in different disciplines and communities (EQSIP), with the help of the Capacity Hub and Centers, who will develop a stepwise roadmap for this purpose.

A global alliance for institutional publishing beyond the European Research Area

The international community active in institutional publishing has reacted enthusiastically to the DIAMAS project. For this reason, the principal investigators of both projects have decided to have a joint International Advisory Board (IAB).

The IAB has expressed a strong interest in ensuring global alignment of quality standards and guidelines for institutional publishing, since research is a global endeavour and therefore requires globally applicable standards.

This leads to a recommendation to better support international cooperation between the ERA and other regions of the world, in particular the Latin American, Caribbean Region (LAC) region where institutional publishing has strengths evidenced in several previous studies ([Open Access Diamond Journal Study](#) and [Open access policies in Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union](#)).

→ **Key issue:** institutional publishing requires globally shared standards.

Recommendation 4: Global alignment

Invest in international cooperation for alignment of quality standards and guidelines in institutional publishing worldwide.



Consortium overview

AMU	UNIVERSITÉ D'AIX MARSEILLE	FR
PVM	PROTISVALOR MEDITERRANEE SAS	FR
OPERAS	OPEN ACCESS IN THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA THROUGH SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION	BE
CNRS	CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE CNRS	FR
EIFL	STICHTING EIFL.NET	NL
FECYT	FUNDACIÓN ESPAÑOLA PARA LA CIENCIA Y LA TECNOLOGIA, F.S.P., FECYT	ES
TSV	TIETEELLISTEN SEURAIN VALTUUSKUNNASTA	FI
LIBER	STICHTING LIBER	NL
UB	UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA	ES
UniZD	SVEUČILIŠTE U ZADRU	HR
FFZG	SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET	HR
Science Europe	SCIENCE EUROPE	BE
EUA	ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ	BE
OASPA	STICHTING OPEN ACCESS SCHOLARLY PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION	NL
UiT	UNIVERSITETET I TROMSØ - NORGES ARKTISKE UNIVERSITET	NO
CNR	CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE	IT

UGOE	GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT GÖTTINGEN STIFTUNG ÖFFENTLICHEN RECHTS	DE
SPE	STICHTING SPARC EUROPE	NL
UU	UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT	NL
EKT	ETHNIKO KENTRO TEKMIROSIS KAI ILEKTRONIKOU PERIECHOMENOU	EL
IBL PAN	INSTYTUT BADAŃ LITERACKICH POLSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK	PL
ESF	FONDATION EUROPÉENNE DE LA SCIENCE	FR
JISC	JISC LBG	UK
DOAJ	INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES FOR OPEN ACCESS C I C	UK

