



# Open Research Europe: Towards a Collective Open Access Publishing Service

*Scoping Report*

Research and  
Innovation



## Open Research Europe: Towards a Collective Open Access Publishing Service

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# **Open Research Europe:**

## **Towards a Collective Open Access Publishing Service**

*Scoping Report*

# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Vision for ORE as a collective open access publishing service .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. Rationale	4
2.2. EU policy and political context	5
2.3. Value proposition	7
2.4. Principles for the operation	8
<b>3. References.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. ANNEX .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Annex I: Organisations participating in developing this scoping report	15
Annex II: Summary of R&I Stakeholder consultation meeting	16

## 1. Introduction

Launched in March 2021, [Open Research Europe](#)<sup>1</sup> (ORE) is the open access publishing service offered by the European Commission (EC) as an optional service to grantees of its Framework Programmes and at no cost to them. It enables scholarly publishing of high scientific quality under a cost-efficient and transparent model.

ORE supports innovative scholarly communication and open science practices, such as early and open sharing of research, the recognition of and rewarding for diverse research outputs, and creating visibility for peer review as a research contribution. It follows an innovative open access publishing model for articles, which is based on open peer review after publication (the so-called ‘post-publication open peer review’ model). In ORE emphasis is placed on the merit and impact (scientific, societal, economic) of individual publications and not on venue-based indicators as proxies of quality (e.g. the Journal Impact Factor). ORE is implemented until 2026 through an EC public procurement contract with the publisher and publishing service provider F1000 Research Ltd., part of the Taylor & Francis publishing companies.

This report puts forward a vision for ORE as a collective publishing service including its rationale, EU policy and political context, value proposition, and principles for its operation. Reflections on the future development of ORE, proposing to transform it into a collectively supported non-profit publishing service, come in the midst of important developments in scholarly communication and research practices enabled by technology. At the same time, the research publishing system is characterised by shortcomings which are not in line with these forward-looking developments, such as inequitable and costly subscription system for scholarly publishing, while assessment and funding of research are based primarily on bibliometric indicators and academic prestige is linked to the commercial journal ranking. ORE, as a collectively supported non-profit publishing service, will enable the uptake of innovations in scholarly communication and research practice and will help alleviate some of the shortcomings observed in the system. Council Conclusions on the implementation of open science and on scholarly publishing in 2022 and 2023 lend support to such a vision and initiative<sup>2, 3</sup>, inviting Member States and research funding organisations to consider joining ORE, and to explore the operation of ORE as a collective, non-profit, open access publishing service for the public good.

The report is the result of a co-creation process involving EC services and a number of national research funding and performing organisations (cf. Annex I: Organisations participating in developing this scoping report). These organisations showed interest subsequent to interactions with Member States, including the national points of reference with regard to the ‘[Recommendation on access to and preservation of scientific information](#)’<sup>4</sup>, as well as with research funding and performing organisations, including through Science Europe. It also takes into account input from consultation with R&I stakeholders including through a meeting held in June 2023 (cf. Annex II – Summary of R&I Stakeholder consultation meeting).\*

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## 2. Vision for ORE as a collective open access publishing service

### 2.1. Rationale

Scholarly publishing is an activity of critical significance for researchers: not only is it the principle means for communicating their research to their peers and the world but, it also holds a key role in their career advancement. Numerous forward-looking developments can be discerned in the field in the past decade which are relevant to the present proposition of a collectively supported ORE. Research funders increasingly require immediate open access to funded research and support open access as the standard mode in publishing, while they support open science practices in the research they fund. Technical requirements that seek to ensure the findability, accessibility, interoperability and reuse (FAIR) of digital content, including the technical and legal ability for it to be reused openly, are also becoming common. New innovative publishing practices open the path for a more distributed publishing system in the future, which progressively affords roles to more actors beyond the publishers. Early sharing of research, for example through preprints, is becoming more common, while open and transparent peer review is gradually gaining ground,<sup>5</sup> and in some publishing models, as with ORE, takes place post-publication. Further, funders and institutions increasingly require specific measures to enable reproducibility of research results, such as for example open access to data and other materials underlying publications. New types of publications and new publishing policies foster openness and transparency in the entire research process and reproducibility of results. Significantly, in recent years research institutions and funders have been investing in non-profit publishing services and infrastructures, largely based on open source software and open standards, which do not charge publishing fees to authors and support their own roles as publishers.

In spite of these developments in policy and in scholarly communication, and in times when the publication output in articles increases every year,<sup>6</sup> only about 50% of published articles are currently available in open access, and most are available through open access publishing.<sup>7</sup> The subscription system for content continues to flourish and innovative open access publishing is not yet the norm. Scholarly publishing, in particular in STEM fields, is dominated by commercial publishers who charge subscription fees for access to content or author fees for open access publishing on their own proprietary platforms. Access to content and to open access publishing, usually bundled together in 'big deals', comes at a very high cost to institutions and their funders and is generally not transparent in terms of charges, according to a recent study on scientific publishing in Europe published by the European Commission.<sup>8</sup> It is also not an equitable system since not all institutions (in Europe and beyond) are well endowed to be able to pay for expensive fees or subscriptions, and neither can researchers meet individual article fees by themselves. Very importantly, over the years a system of academic prestige has developed mostly around this type of journal publishing, with journals ranked on the basis of metrics and specifically the Journal Impact Factor (JIF). Research assessment is still focused on publications and assessment systems are largely based on this and a few other metrics, such as the h-factor, with researchers competing for publications in highly ranked journals. Funding is thus predominantly earmarked for access to content and open access publishing in these journals, operated mostly by large commercial publishers, while funding for and investments in non-profit publishing services is at the moment not systematic.

In this context, research institutions, funders and numerous other actors in the research system increasingly perceive that the current evaluation procedures are not adequate when they are based on a narrow range of quantitative indicators and a very narrow range of research activities, practices and outputs, mostly publications. A more qualitative and nuanced system is necessary, allowing for more types of research outputs to be considered

in evaluation, and based on peer review as well as responsible use of quantitative indicators. A global Coalition for the Advancement of Research Assessment ([COARA](#))<sup>9</sup> that systematically pushes forward such an agenda through an [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#)<sup>10</sup> formed in 2022 at the initiative and with the support of the EC<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, there is a strong movement towards a more scholar-led, transparent and equitable scholarly communication system, directed by the researcher community. Such a system is envisioned in the 2019 expert group report on the [Future of scholarly communication and scholarly publishing](#)<sup>12</sup>, the 2021 Principles on the Future of Scientific Publishing of the International Science Council, followed by a discussion paper on the [Case for Reform of Scientific Publishing](#)<sup>13</sup> in 2023, the 2022 [Action Plan for Diamond Open Access](#)<sup>14</sup> by Science Europe, cOAlition S, OPERAS, and the French National Research Agency, and the 2023 proposal by cOAlition S on [Towards Responsible Publishing](#)<sup>15</sup>, articulating a vision and a series of principles. In view of opening a path towards more equity in the scholarly communications and publishing system, and to potentiate research institutions, the EC supports the vision for an ecosystem directed by the researcher community, including with funding in Horizon Europe of projects such as [CraftOA](#)<sup>16</sup> and [DIAMAS](#)<sup>17</sup>, that support the coordination and capacity-building at a European level of relevant publishing activities.

With these considerations, under the governance of institutions that support innovative open access publishing for the public good, ORE will enrich scholarly publishing and scholarly communication through a publishing model that fosters transparency, reproducibility, integrity, cost-efficiency and equity in scholarly communication. This will be in line with current innovative developments and in support of the reform of research assessment and of open science policies and practices. It will create economies of scale and be a cost-efficient non-profit publishing service, based on open infrastructure. It will capitalise on existing knowledge regarding non-profit publishing and will strengthen the position and role of public funders and research institutions in non-profit scholarly publishing. If ORE achieves the intended large scale, it will contribute towards systemic improvements to the research publishing system.

With research funding organisations, the EC is exploring ways to implement the vision put forward in this report. To this end, the EC has also funded studies<sup>18,19,20</sup> that have served to advance a concrete understanding and planning of what would be required to implement ORE as a collective publishing service in terms of organisation, financing and infrastructure.

## 2.2. EU policy and political context

In 2016, the Council Conclusions on [The Transition Towards an Open Science System](#)<sup>21</sup> proposed open access as the default publishing mode for publicly funded research. Transition to open access should be based on common principles such as transparency, research integrity, sustainability, fair pricing and economic viability. The same Conclusions envisioned immediate open access as the default by 2020, using various models and in a cost-effective way. The Commission, Member States and relevant stakeholders, including research funding organisations, were invited to catalyse this transition.

In the 2018 revision of the 2012 Recommendation on [Access to and preservation of scientific information](#)<sup>14</sup> the Commission recommended that Member States, research funders and research institutions develop and implement policies that secure open access to scientific publications stemming from public funds, and that open access should preferably be immediate. It recommended that all publications are available in open access as of 2020.

Open Science is a significant element of the Commission Communication COM(2020) 628 on a [‘New European Research Area for Research and Innovation’](#)<sup>22</sup>, published in 2020. This Communication promised the launch of the open access publishing platform (Open Research Europe) to support the integration of publicly funded research into a single seamless European data space.

The November 2021 Council Recommendation on a [‘Pact for R&I in Europe’](#)<sup>23</sup> identified common values and principles for research and innovation in Europe and priority areas for joint action. Open science figured prominently in these values and priorities, including open access to scholarly publications and research data, the uptake of open science practices and the further development and integration of the underpinning digital infrastructures and services.

The ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024, annexed to the Council Conclusions on the [‘Future governance of the European Research Area’](#)<sup>24</sup> in November 2021, included priority actions on enabling the open sharing of knowledge and re-use of research outputs, including through the development of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC); on proposing an EU copyright and data legislative and regulatory framework fit for research; and on advancing towards the reform of the Assessment System for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality, performance and impact.

The June 2022 Council Conclusions on [‘Research Assessment and Implementation of Open Science’](#)<sup>2</sup> noted the increasing costs of scholarly publishing and access to publications and the need to develop a common approach in terms of shared principles for scholarly publishing and scholarly communication. They urged Member States to strengthen their capacities for scholarly publishing in coordination with private and public stakeholders. The Council Conclusions welcomed Open Research Europe and similar funder-initiated publishing platforms and invited Member States and research funding organisations to consider joining Open Research Europe, or if this not possible, to consider setting up their own open access publishing platforms. The Conclusions encouraged the diversity of business models for open access publishing and a fair balance between them; the retention of sufficient intellectual property rights by authors and their institutions to ensure open access and reuse of results; and transparency in publishing and subscription fees, commensurate with the publication services.

In May 2023 the Council of the European Union adopted conclusions on [‘High-quality, transparent, open, trustworthy and equitable scholarly publishing’](#)<sup>3</sup>. These conclusions continued to encourage Member States to support the piloting of Open Research Europe into a collective, non-profit large-scale open access research publishing service for the public good, and to promote and support other high-quality, subject-specific and national non-profit, open access publishing platforms and models. They also encouraged Member States and the Commission to invest in infrastructures for publishing based on open source software and open standards, and it emphasised the importance of non-profit, scholarly open access publishing models without funding/institutional eligibility criteria, and that do not charge fees to authors and readers. The Council also stresses the relevance of a rigorous peer review system to scholarly publishing.

At the global level, the 2021 [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#)<sup>25</sup> provides a definition of open science, as well as core values and guiding principles accompanied by areas of action, which are well aligned with the EU Open Science policy.

In 2021, Members of the International Science Council (ISC) adopted a resolution in favour of eight fundamental principles for scientific publishing and launched activities to identify the



actions needed to realize these principles. The discussion paper on '[Case for Reform of Scientific Publishing](#)'<sup>13</sup> represents the culmination of that work. It supports that as an integral part of the scientific process, publishing should be accountable to the scientific community and to those that fund its work. The scientific output should be treated as a global public good, scientific papers should be freely accessible to all through a variety of open access models, the peer review process should be reformed, bibliometric indicators should be abandoned as sole indicators of excellence and a comprehensive index of the record of science, among others.

### 2.3. Value proposition

Following a growing interest by research funders in the publishing service and based on the invitation by the Competitiveness Council in its June 2022 Conclusions on '[Research Assessment and implementation of Open Science](#)'<sup>2</sup> and its May 2023 Conclusions on '[High quality, transparent, open, trustworthy and equitable scholarly publishing](#)'<sup>3</sup>, an ambitious vision for the future of ORE is put forward. It is proposed that ORE is transitioned into a publishing service collectively supported by research funders, and gradually also research institutions, who will fund its operations on a non-profit basis for the public good.

Transitioning from a platform that only serves the participants in the EC programmes to one which is collectively funded and managed with the involvement of other research funders and research institutions, ORE offers a unique opportunity to develop a high-quality non-profit publishing service at a large scale. The benefits of such an arrangement **for the research community** will be substantial and can be summarised in the following:

- Open publication of research results throughout the research process, enabling the sharing of new findings without delay and supporting a collaborative investigation process;
- Transparent scholarly dialogue through open peer review, improving the quality of the research outputs;
- Publication of a wide range of research outputs (e.g. software, data, workflows), from new insights to confirmatory or negative results, credited to authors/creators;
- Visibility of peer reviews as contributions that can be cited, providing authorship credit for recognition and rewarding;
- Increased equity in accessing publishing services without fees;
- Proliferation of research publications with open licenses for lawful reuse.

Numerous benefits are equally expected **for scholarly publishing and for the research system**. They may become truly profound and impactful if the proposed initiative achieves the intended scale with the involvement of many organisations and countries:

- Greater transparency, improved reproducibility, and reinforced integrity in scholarly communication practices with increased uptake of open science practices;
- Increased equity in publishing open access and in accessing research results;
- Economies of scale and efficiencies (including financial) in scholarly publishing with a non-profit mission;

- Empowerment of research funders, higher education/research institutions and researcher communities in the governance and decision-making of scholarly publishing;
- Support of open infrastructure for public-interest services.

Overall, under the proposed arrangement and scale, ORE is expected to influence significantly publishing practices in the direction of greater transparency and towards open science. It will thus also contribute towards improving the research process itself.

## 2.4. Principles for the operation

The 2019 report on the '[Future of Scholarly Publishing and Scholarly Communication](#)'<sup>12</sup> presented a vision for the future of scholarly communication based on ten principles:

1. Maximizing accessibility; 2. Maximizing usability; 3. Supporting an Expanding Range of contributions; 4. A Distributed Open Infrastructure; 5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity; 6. Community Building; 7. Promoting High-Quality Research and its Integrity; 8. Facilitating Evaluation; 9. Promoting Flexibility and Innovation; 10. Cost-effectiveness.

The report identified an ideal state in scholarly communication and publishing where all principles are fulfilled optimally, while discussing current problems in the system and proposing recommendations for various actors to take up in view of getting there.

The present report adopts these principles in their essence, with minor changes, as the foundational principles on which ORE will be based in the future. It aspires that they will also serve as possible foundational elements for other institutional and non-profit initiatives across Europe and beyond. It additionally considers other relevant works such as the [2021 UNESCO Open Science Recommendation](#)<sup>25</sup> with its core values and principles, the International Science Council '[Case for Reform of Scientific Publishing](#)'<sup>13</sup> and the recently released cOAlition S proposal on '[Towards Responsible Publishing](#)'<sup>15</sup>.

Importantly, the proposed ORE principles and their detailed descriptions have been enriched and sharpened, not only by the group of interested research funding organisations, but also by comments by the broader R&I stakeholder community (e.g. in the context of the June 2023 consultation meeting, see Annex I: Organisations participating in developing this scoping report).

The following proposes how each principle should be operationalised in the context of a collective ORE. The order in which the principles are presented is not hierarchical as each address different and critical aspects in scholarly communication.

- Ensuring High-Quality Research and its Integrity
- Maximising Accessibility and Usability
- Supporting an Expanding Range of Contributions
- Community Building
- A Distributed, Open Infrastructure
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity

- Facilitating the Evaluation of Research
- Promoting Flexibility & Innovation
- Cost-Effectiveness
- Accountability to the Research Community & the Public.

#### **2.4.1. Ensuring High-Quality Research and its Integrity**

ORE will enable the communication of research of high quality and integrity by implementing rigorous standards in its policies and guidelines to authors and reviewers, adherence to which will be required, as well as in its publishing operations. Policies and guidelines will be developed in collaboration with the scientific communities through relevant advisory bodies. They will adhere to high scientific standards, safeguarding the integrity of research and good scientific practice.

Policies and guidelines will foster reproducibility in various ways including by requiring explicit information regarding the methods used in the research, quality assurance mechanisms and process accreditation implemented during the research process. It will additionally encourage practices that enable reproducibility such as preregistration and adherence to standards of reporting, use of open lab books, among others, and the publication of diverse article and document types. Open access will be the default to underlying data and other materials underpinning conclusions in the articles, with exceptions where necessary. Ethical policies on the platform will ensure that ORE publishes research which adheres to strict ethical standards.

Rigorous pre-publication checks coupled with open peer review after the publication will further enhance the transparency and fairness of the process. They will also support the reproducibility and rigor of research published in the platform through transparent scholarly dialogue.

#### **2.4.2. Maximising Accessibility and Usability**

ORE will provide open access to all its scientific content, publications and peer reviews, and any additional scholarly conversations arising around its publications inside the platform, under a CC BY license. Its policies will ensure that publication of articles is rapid to enable research contributions and results to reach the scientific community and the citizens quickly. The scholarly content of the platform will conform to the FAIR principles and be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

ORE will operate under such technology and such metadata standards that ensure easy transfer of metadata and content information to major search engines, indexers and relevant discovery services, e.g. in libraries, in view of maximising discoverability of content.

Scientific content in ORE will be presented in different formats that allow reuse, such as at least xml, html, pdf, under CC BY machine-readable licenses. The latter should ensure the maximum legal reuse of content by both humans and machines (including for text and data mining and AI technologies). Gradually the platform should enable, by providing the relevant tools, based on open standards, the reuse (analysis, repurposing etc.) of both individual digital objects, as well as of collections of them.

The long-term preservation policy of ORE will ensure the longevity of publications, peer reviews and any other scholarly materials published on it and deemed appropriate for

preservation. The long-term preservation will take place in collaboration with public-interest trusted repositories and relevant infrastructures.

### **2.4.3. Supporting an Expanding Range of Contributions**

ORE will support a diverse range of publication types beyond research articles, such as data notes, method articles, software tool articles, study protocols, registered reports, among others. This practice will enable the proliferation of and open access to a wide range of materials that underpin articles and are produced in the course of the research process. It will support their gradual appreciation as valuable contributions to the scholarly record. These materials will be curated and accessible in appropriate trusted repositories and data centres. They will be open access by default, with exceptions where necessary, FAIR, and linked to the ORE articles.

Reviewing work of peers is at the core of the research enterprise, helping improve quality in research and publications, and peer reviews are legitimate research outputs. Peer review reports in ORE will be open access, including the names of the reviewers. They will also be citeable to enable their proliferation in the scholarly record through reuse and allow researchers to list them in their CVs. In this sense peer review reports will be a type of publication within ORE.

The platform will be responsive to the needs of researcher communities for new types of publications, as they become necessary, and open to innovative approaches.

### **2.4.4. Community Building**

ORE will offer research communities in all fields, appropriate spaces and tools within the platform to publish, discover and curate publications that are relevant to their specific research interests and needs. It will foster the growth of the research communities that publish in the platform and enable cooperation within and between them, as well as with communities outside of the platform. It will encourage building and sustaining of new research communities and benefit from partnerships with established communities, while it will support the transition of some of them in ORE.

Building research communities in diverse disciplines and enabling them to collaborate will be pivotal in view of maintaining the high scientific and publishing standards of the platform through policies, guidelines and the peer review process.

ORE will enable the development of research communities that publish routinely in open access and in line with open science principles.

### **2.4.5. A Distributed, Open Infrastructure**

ORE will be underpinned by an open source software infrastructure, the core elements of which will be developed with the support of the Commission and will follow open standards. Its infrastructure will be in line with the [Principles for Open Scholarly Infrastructure](#)<sup>26</sup> and with the [Open Source Software Strategy of the European Commission](#).<sup>27</sup>

The ORE infrastructure will be community governed with publicly available rules and the code will be available under appropriate open source licenses for anyone to reuse and for the open source community to develop further. Its core components will be modular and flexible, providing the possibility for reorganisation in new ways, responding to the needs of the

research communities, who should be involved in the development of relevant components as necessary.

The ORE infrastructure will be globally interconnected to the ecosystem of scholarly communication infrastructures and services. Once operational, it will also be accessible through the European Open Science Cloud.

The funders and institutions responsible for ORE will be the custodians of the infrastructure of the publishing service, ensuring that it is fit for purpose and complies to current open standards and open source practices.

#### **2.4.6. Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity**

Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity will be a central principle for the operation of ORE, which will provide access to knowledge and access to publishing services as a public good. All scholarly content will be open access under CC BY licenses to everyone.

There will be no author fees for publishing in ORE. Its publishing policies will ensure that gradually all researchers whose research meets the scientific and publishing requirements of ORE can publish there, without any other barriers.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity will be respected in providing the publishing service, including in the peer review, for example in the selection of reviewers, and in staff selection, where applicable.

ORE will promote multilingualism. While English will be the main language of publishing in the platform, metadata, including abstracts, will additionally be provided in other languages. Publishing articles in languages other than English will be considered at a later stage of the operation of the platform.

Articles in the platform will include so-called plain language summaries for the benefit of non-specialised readers.

#### **2.4.7. Facilitating the Evaluation of Research**

ORE will enable the open proliferation of a wide range of research outputs and contributions which underpin the variety of article types published therein and reflect actual research practices in various fields. In so doing it will enable these outputs as well as the diverse article types to become part of the scholarly record and part of a research assessment process, which is not restricted only to publications and not only to research articles.

The scientific merit of publications in ORE will be assessed through transparent, open and qualitative peer review, while further indicators attached at the level of the article will provide quantitative appreciation of impact, scientific, societal, and economic. These practices will lend support towards a fairer evaluation system which places an emphasis on the quality and impact of the contribution itself and not of the venue of publication.

#### **2.4.8. Promoting Flexibility & Innovation**

ORE will be a publishing platform responsive to the needs of researchers in various scientific fields and disciplines, fostering experimentation and enabling the introduction of innovative elements in scholarly communication which are discipline-appropriate. This will be reflected

in the scientific and publishing policies and guidelines, in the publishing workflow and in the infrastructure underpinning the platform.

ORE will maintain close contact with researcher communities to consider the needs of its users. New services will be designed as appropriate, also in collaboration with research communities and relevant service providers in the public and private domain.

#### **2.4.9. Cost-Effectiveness**

ORE will operate on a non-profit basis for the public good. Its operational and funding model will be designed on the basis of transparency and cost-effectiveness in the spending of available funds, primarily derived from the public domain, while maintaining efficiency and high quality in the operation of the service.

ORE will be a sustainable publishing service for all parties involved in supporting it.

#### **2.4.10. Accountability to the Research Community & the Public**

Accountability will be an integral part of ORE and permeate all the principles underpinning this publishing service. ORE will be accountable to public-sector actors (cf. universities and other research performing organisations, research funders, academic libraries, and scholarly communities), the research community, and, ultimately, the public itself. Its governance and business model, as well as daily operations will focus on meeting the needs of researchers and ensuring the social contract between the research community and the public.

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## 4. ANNEX

### **Annex I: Organisations participating in developing this scoping report**

AUSTRIAN SCIENCE FUND

DUTCH RESEARCH COUNCIL

ESTONIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FUNDING OF ROMANIA

FRENCH NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENCY

GERMAN RESEARCH FOUNDATION

IRISH HEALTH RESEARCH BOARD

LUXEMBOURG NATIONAL RESEARCH FUND

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF TECHNOLOGY, THE CZECH REPUBLIC

RESEARCH COUNCIL OF NORWAY

SCIENCE EUROPE

SLOVAK CENTRE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

SLOVENIAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENCY

SPANISH STATE RESEARCH AGENCY

SPANISH NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

SWEDISH RESEARCH COUNCIL

SWEDISH RESEARCH COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SWEDISH RESEARCH COUNCIL FOR HEALTH, WORKING LIFE AND WELFARE

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS, ITALY

## Annex II: Summary of R&I Stakeholder consultation meeting

### Open Research Europe, ORE: towards a collective open access publishing service R&I stakeholder consultation 14 June 2023

31 R&I stakeholder organisations participated in the meeting.

The primary objective of the meeting was to give participants insights into ORE and its publishing model, to provide information regarding current plans for the future of ORE as a collective non-profit open access publishing service, and to solicit stakeholder views on these plans and discuss how stakeholder organisations and their members could become involved in shaping the future of ORE.

The European Commission presented the proposed vision for the future of ORE, the value proposition and principles of ORE and the proposed model to implement the vision and to operate the future of ORE.

The discussion with stakeholders addressed the ORE principles, the proposed funding model, the governance model, the strengths/weaknesses of the models proposed and room for improvements. Participants also explored the potential role(s) for the different types of stakeholders in such a model.

The following main points were raised in the discussion:

- **Several representatives expressed their support for ORE.** They particularly praised the support to immediate and full open access, the bold vision, the soundness of the principles, and the possibility to embed the research community. It was suggested to promote the cutting-edge elements of ORE (such as open peer review) to gain traction with researcher communities. Also, ORE should benefit from the distributed editorial model and identify and seek support from partnerships with established communities.
- **Participants also identified the main challenges that the future of ORE should meet.** They include gaining or reinforcing the support of the researcher community, enlarging the role the research community in ORE, and listening to the concerns and needs of the research community and users to make ORE successful. Some participants noted that the absence of scientific editors and an editorial board to moderate the review process and help avoid conflicts of interest might be deterrent to some researchers and/or their community to publish in ORE.
- **Participants agreed in principle with the overall proposed governance scheme for the future of ORE,** stressing that it should not be over-complicated. Lessons learnt from the governance procedures of other initiatives could be useful in that regard. Participants identified different roles for themselves in the future of ORE, including being users of ORE as authors, providing services within ORE, and informing and further engaging research communities into publishing in ORE, among others.
- Lastly, **stakeholders stressed that ORE should stay within the publicly funded research system** to secure its sustainability and longevity. Funders and research

institutions can play an important role, e.g. in encouraging/rewarding/enforcing the use of ORE. It was also remarked that ORE should be accessible to all authors.

After the meeting, an online R&I stakeholder survey regarding the future of ORE comprising five questions was sent to stakeholders. It sought to collect information about what stakeholders expect to be the added value of ORE in the future, the challenges in achieving uptake of ORE and role(s) they potentially see for themselves in such a collectively supported future for ORE. 28 organisations completed the survey.

64% of the respondents indicated having research performing organisations including universities as members, and 28 % research libraries, 25 % research centres and 21% research infrastructures and researchers.

The survey results were aligned with input received from stakeholders during the discussions at the meeting. Namely, the innovative transparent publishing model of ORE with immediate open access and the fact that it comes at no cost to researchers were perceived as the most important strengths of the platform. Reversely, its limited yet acknowledgement by reference scientific community and its lack of track record of scientific prestige were perceived as major challenges for the uptake of the platform. Numerous organisations offered themselves to operate as the seat of ORE in the future, while some offered to fund it.

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This report puts forward a vision for Open Research Europe as a collective non-profit open access publishing service for the public good. This vision comes in the midst of important policy developments towards more equitable, transparent and sustainable costs for publishing and access to content, as well as accelerated activities for reforming research assessment. The report includes a rationale for the vision, the EU policy and political context, a value proposition and principles for the operation of a collective ORE.

*Research and Innovation policy*

