

Transform2Open

Workshop „Exploring the Internationalization of Transformative Journal Agreements”

Report

Transform2Open

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Imprint

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Creators

Marcel Meistring, Lea Maria Ferguson, Hildegard Schäffler, Bernhard Mittermaier, Nicola Bieg, Gültekin Gürdal, Jens Lazarus, Gu Liping, and Wilhelm Widmark

Editors

Heinz Pampel, Tobias Höhnow, Peter Kostädt, Margit Schön, Joshua Shelly, and Mathijs Vleugel

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[Transform2Open](#) is a DFG-funded project that addresses the development of budgets, criteria, competency profiles, and other processes at research institutions related to the financial aspects of the open access transformation.

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Abstract

EN Transform2Open is a project funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) that addresses the development of budgets, criteria, competency profiles, and other processes at research institutions related to the financial aspects of the open access transformation. The project's internationalization workshop in March 2025 explored "the Internationalization of Transformative Journal Agreements": though they differ in the details, transformative agreements share the underlying principle of combining costs for open access publishing and reading, with the ultimate goal of open access transformation. Drawing on examples and negotiation experience, the workshop stressed the importance and opportunities of standardisation, with a particular focus on the international level, while also recognizing standardization's limitations and the need for a degree of variation and flexibility.

DE Das von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) geförderte Projekt Transform2Open widmet sich der Weiterentwicklung von Budgets, Kriterien, Kompetenzen und damit verbundenen Prozessen an wissenschaftlichen Einrichtungen rund um die finanziellen Dimensionen der Open-Access-Transformation. Der Internationalisierungs-Workshop des Projekts im März 2025 konzentrierte sich darauf, die Internationalisierung von Transformationsverträgen zu untersuchen („Exploring the Internationalization of Transformative Journal Agreements“): Transformationsverträge basieren grundsätzlich auf dem gleichen Prinzip: die Kosten für Open-Access-Publizieren und Lesen zu kombinieren, mit dem übergeordneten Ziel, den Übergang zu Open Access zu fördern. Sie unterscheiden sich jedoch in ihrer konkreten Ausgestaltung. Anhand von Beispielen und Verhandlungserfahrungen hob der Workshop die Bedeutung und die Möglichkeiten der Standardisierung hervor, mit besonderem Schwerpunkt auf der internationalen Ebene. Dabei wurden aber auch die Grenzen von Vereinheitlichung und der Bedarf an etwas Variation und Flexibilität deutlich.

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Introduction

Transform2Open¹, a project funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), is dedicated to the further development of budgets, criteria, competencies, and associated processes at academic institutions related to the financial dimensions of the open access transformation. Transform2Open organizes dialogue forums in which strategies, concepts and measures for shaping the open access transformation at universities and non-university research institutions are developed.

The workshop “Exploring the Internationalization of Transformative Journal Agreements”² took place on March 27, 2025 with participants from 20 countries³ and 30 different academic institutions. The event brought together key stakeholders to discuss standardization, flexibility, and best practices in open access publishing. The event opened with welcoming words by Lea Maria Ferguson, followed by a presentation on “Recommendations for Transformative Agreements with publication service providers – Overview and reality check?”⁴ by Marcel Meistrig.

Dr. Hildegard Schäffler delivered the keynote address “Standardisation and Flexibility in Transformative Agreements”,⁵ in which she focused on the balance between normalization and adaptability in transformative agreements, drawing on international examples and her own negotiation experience.

The workshop concluded with a best practice presentation from representatives of several different countries and institutions and a joint discussion, where participants shared experiences and strategies for advancing the open access transformation. The event, conducted in English, offered a valuable forum for the exchange of knowledge and the fostering of collaboration. This report provides a detailed account of the event and summarizes the key outcomes of the workshop discussions.

Starting Points

When asked in advance of the workshop what the biggest challenges were when negotiating transformative agreements with international publishing companies at the national or institutional level, respondents highlighted issues such as misaligned business models, publisher monopolies, outdated pricing structures, high costs, and administrative burdens. They also pointed to challenges in transitioning to open access (OA), including limited OA quotas, regional policy inconsistencies, and the difficulty of convincing publishers of the long-term benefits of OA. Additionally, the complexity of negotiations, lack of national policies in some countries, and the need for greater international standardization and transparency were key concerns.

Additionally, ahead of the workshop, the participants most frequently mentioned that the chief priorities in negotiating transformative agreements internationally concerned pricing models & cost distribution; rights retention and copyright issues; and compliance with open access policies. Technical interoperability (metadata, workflows, etc.) as well as relationships with commercial and society publishers were seldom mentioned. This overwhelming focus on pricing models suggests that cost-related concerns remain scholarly institutions’ primary concern when negotiating transformative

¹ Project information is available at: <https://www.transform2open.de/>

² <https://www.transform2open.de/en/news-and-events/details/workshop-internationalization>

³ Canada, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, United States, and Uruguay.

⁴ see Appendix, p. 14

⁵ see Appendix, p. 30

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agreements. This point is further supported by a survey conducted during the workshop asking for a ranking of the Alliance's recommendations, in which "pricing" was singled out as the most important dimension, followed by the transformative potential of transformative agreements, workflows, and transparency.

In general: How important do you see the criteria from the Alliance's recommendations. You can freely distribute 100 points.

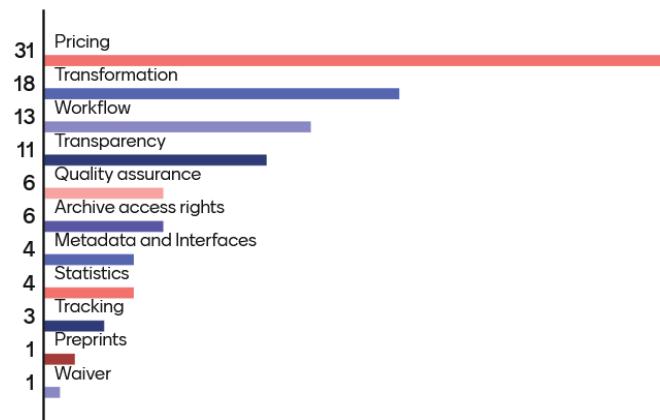


Fig. 1. Feedback from Survey during the workshop on ranking the importance of the Alliance's recommendations, n = 7

Participants' responses further indicate limited cross-border collaboration in negotiating and implementing transformative agreements. While some participants have experience with international exchanges, such as liaising with publishers, libraries, and end users, many have not yet engaged in joint negotiations. Some respondents reported monitoring agreements from other countries or exchanging experiences while not partaking in active negotiations. One respondent noted an advisory role in such collaborations, highlighting that direct involvement remains relatively uncommon.

Presentation: Recommendations for Transformative Agreements with publication service providers – Overview and reality check

To start the workshop, Marcel Meistrig presented the "Recommendations for transformative journal contracts with publication service providers" from the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany that were published against the backdrop of the implementation of the Alliance's Open Access Strategy 2021–2025. Within the project Transform2Open, these have been translated to English and French and made available⁶ for a broad international community. The presentation included feedback from a previous workshop with stakeholders from the German-speaking world. The feedback addressed limitations, such as its non-binding nature and missing definitions, for example, of the term "flipping." It also included suggestions for improvements, such as adopting a modular structure to serve different target groups and purposes, or refining the overall structure. In addition, stakeholders highlighted the need to prioritize certain aspects and pointed out elements that were previously missing, like the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning in scholarly publishing. In addition, initial good and best practices identified during this first workshop were presented.

⁶ <https://www.transform2open.de/ressourcen/empfehlungen-fuer-transformative-zeitschriftenvertrage>

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In advance of the event, the invited participants were asked to give feedback on the recommendations put forward by the Alliance. This assessment focused on the specified criteria⁷ and their associated characteristics. A rating scale from 1 ("nice to have") to 5 ("must have") was used. The results showed that all criteria, both the specific and broader ones, and their respective characteristics consistently received scores above 3, with most ratings significantly exceeding 3.5.

Criterion Pricing

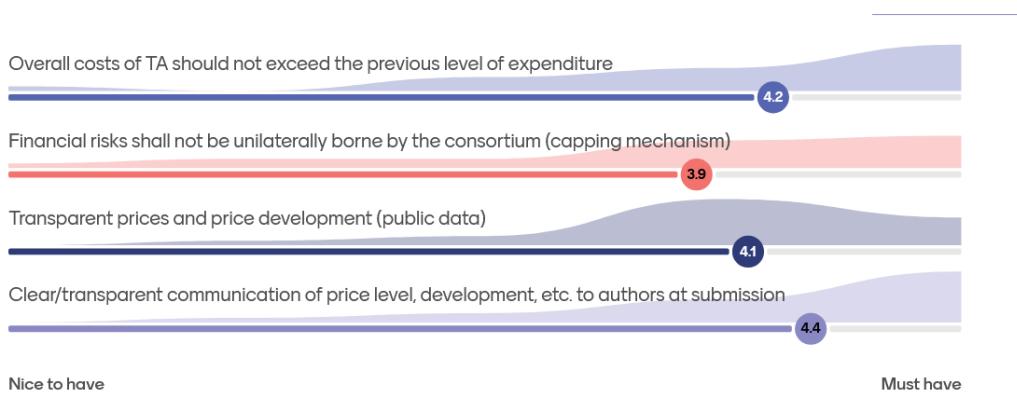


Fig. 2. Example from the advance survey of the workshop on the criterion "Pricing" of the the Alliance's recommendations, n = 19

This suggests that the Alliance's recommendations are, in principle, well-conceived and address the right priorities. As in the earlier stakeholder workshop with representatives from the DACH region⁸ two key elements were identified as missing: Artificial Intelligence and Text and Data Mining.

Furthermore, participants questioned how to ensure publishers adhere to the standards set forth in the recommendations. Participants in the previous workshop with DACH-region stakeholders raised similar concerns.

In the ensuing discussion about enhancing the binding nature of recommendations, some suggested that making them more actionable could increase their effectiveness. Currently, these recommendations primarily target librarians; however, expanding their focus to include publishers and contract negotiators might enhance their applicability; thus, redefining the target audience might prove beneficial.

In response to the central question of how publishers could be encouraged to comply with the recommendations, various propositions emerged. One possibility could be to reach publishers more effectively by rephrasing the recommendations in a way that makes them more appealing and relevant. Other potential approaches also included a willingness of negotiators to escalate negotiations and, if necessary, to walk away from the negotiation table. A poll conducted during the workshop indicated that around half of the respondents believed that their respective institutions would likely,

⁷ An international preparation of the Recommendations can be found on the Transform2Open Project-Website: <https://www.transform2open.de/ressourcen/empfehlungen-fuer-transformative-zeitschriftenverträge/kriterien-criteres>

⁸ DACH refers to the German speaking countries Deutschland (Germany = D), Österreich (Austria = A), and Switzerland (Suisse = CH).

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or even certainly, be willing to take such steps. Additionally, investment in alternatives such as Diamond Open Access was seen as a promising way to increase competitive pressure on publishers.

Additionally, participants highlight the need to consider the capacities of smaller publishers, as overly demanding requirements may be challenging for them to meet. Introducing greater flexibility could help accommodate the diverse needs and resources of various stakeholders.

Keynote: Standardisation and Flexibility in Transformative Agreements

Dr. Hildegard Schäffler is Head of the Department of Acquisition, Collection Development and Cataloging 2 at the Bavarian State Library in Munich. She is involved in various licensing and transformation contexts, as seen in her responsibility for the Bavarian Consortium and membership in the DEAL negotiating group. She is also chair of the German, Austrian, Swiss Consortia Organisation (GASCO) and co-chair of Forum 13+, the working group on transformational agreements beyond DEAL.

In her keynote, she looked closer into transformative agreements: though they differ in their details, they usually share the same underlying principle of combining costs for open access publishing and reading, with the ultimate goal of open access transformation. Drawing on examples and negotiation experience, her presentation stressed the importance and opportunities of standardisation, with a particular focus on the international level, but also identified some of standardization's limitations and the need for a degree of variation and flexibility.

The presentation shed light on a range of key aspects. It began with an overview of existing standards and assessment tools, followed by a detailed look at central parameters of Publish & Read agreements. These included pricing models, examples of negotiation parameters and their various configurations, as well as the complexity of internal distribution mechanisms within consortia, particularly regarding models and definitions. The presentation also addressed the status of "flipping" and the associated challenges in establishing a shared understanding. Additionally, it highlighted negotiation aspects that should and will receive even greater attention in the future such as datatracking and AI clauses. It became evident that "transformative agreements" are not restricted to Publish & Read agreements, but encompass various types of implementations such Subscribe to Open, for example. The presentation concluded with an international perspective, during which Hildegard Schäffler raised essential questions such as: which standardised criteria for transformative agreements can be agreed upon at the international level; what joint perspectives exist on the transformative nature of such agreements and on alternative transformational models; and what possible areas of collaboration could be explored to broaden the scope of negotiations.

Looking at the transformative idea of such agreements in the subsequent discussion, an example from France was brought up on how to reach a bigger OA-share without putting too much emphasis on gold OA-flipping: France has negotiated a zero-embargo green open access (OA) agreement with a well-known scholarly society that also acts as publisher, allowing immediate repository deposit of accepted manuscripts without additional publishing charges. This is in line with France's emphasis on green open access.

In the discussion on potential areas of collaboration, the question was raised whether a binding flipping rate for transformative agreements could be a promising approach for a first international coordinated action. To contextualize this, it was noted that such a binding quota had not been strongly pursued in the negotiations of the DEAL agreements. The question followed: Could this be feasible if

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all countries jointly insisted on such a binding target in a coordinated manner? The response was cautiously optimistic: while no promises could be made, it was suggested that if stakeholders acted together, it might be difficult – but perhaps not impossible – to achieve. One key challenge mentioned was the differing national perspectives and the heterogeneous mandates of the stakeholders involved. In many countries – especially smaller ones – a full-scale transformation is not necessarily a priority at the broader political level. Leadership at universities and research institutions often focus more on open access at the article level and tend to reallocate funds accordingly, for example towards hybrid models. However, the potential impact of a coordinated approach became clear during the discussion, when it was shared that one of the largest scholarly publishers had stated in negotiations that they would fully commit to transformation if every subscriber had a transformative agreement. This was particularly in reference to major customers such as the USA and China – essentially saying that if the customers demanded it, the publisher would follow.

This could serve as an encouragement to pursue collaborative efforts. However, these efforts should not be limited to flipping alone, which highlights the need for continued exchange and dialogue on this broader topic.

Best Practice Presentations

In this session, various aspects were highlighted in response to the three guiding questions. Six participants shared their insights in short presentations,⁹ which were followed by a joint discussion and an open Q&A session. Attendees were invited to contribute questions via the chat during the talks, and the discussion was opened to all participants after the presentations.

1. Open Science Culture and Bureau - Gu Liping, National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Gu Liping presented that open access and transformative agreements are integral parts of a broader culture of open science. The discussion also addressed examples that run counter to the idea of open access as outlined in various declarations like the Budapest Declaration, such as the current “offsetting APC fees” model, which ultimately tends toward simple cost recovery rather than true transformation.

Key to this shift is also transformational funding to support the transition of journals from subscription-based models to open access. This includes institutional funding mechanisms and support for authors through APC discounts. In addition, cost transparency and effective cost control were identified as essential components of a sustainable open access environment.

In the spirit of coordinated collaboration, it was emphasized that there is a need to encourage constructive dialogue among stakeholders and to move away from globally localized marketing strategies.

2. Action Plan - Bibsam Consortium - Wilhelm Widmark, Library Director of Stockholm

Wilhelm Widmark presented the plans of the Swedish Bibsam Consortium, which aims to facilitate the open publication of scholarly work, redirect payment flows from subscription-based to open access publishing, and promote transparency, oversight, and cost reduction in scholarly communication. As

⁹ See Appendix, p. 40ff.

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part of this strategy, the consortium intends to stop signing agreements for reading and publishing in so-called hybrid journals starting in 2026. Additionally, it supports the development of new pathways to open publishing, including alternative business models and efforts to help journals migrate away from traditional publishers. A further cornerstone of the approach is that publications should be released under open licenses, in alignment with the FAIR principles.

The presentation raised several important questions that would be worth addressing through internationally coordinated efforts and collaboration involving all relevant stakeholders. Examples include the need for diversification—emphasizing that investments should not focus solely on transformative agreements; the importance of putting pressure on publishers to ensure transparency in their cost models; the call to return ownership of the publishing system to the academic community; and the necessity of being prepared to walk away from the negotiation table if needed.

In the discussion, particular interest was sparked by the fact that the Swedish consortium will no longer engage in consortial negotiations with hybrid journals or publishers starting as of 2026. Although there is not yet a clear strategy for accessing content behind paywalls of hybrid journals, options like interlibrary loan are being considered. While Sweden already has a 90% open access rate, this step still signals a strong willingness to move beyond the current models of transformative agreements – even if this means going without contracts in the future. While researchers may still choose to publish in hybrid journals and pay article processing charges (APCs) independently, institutions will no longer cover these costs. Drawing on experiences from Norway – where negotiations with Wiley ceased and no institutional access was retained – some universities may adopt decentralized approaches, including purchasing individual articles, which could significantly reduce overall costs.

3. Negotiating non-commercial terms in TIB-Consortia - Nicola Bieg, TIB – Leibniz Information Centre for Science and Technology (Germany)

Nicola Bieg's contribution focused on the negotiation of non-commercial terms (such as clear definitions of relevant criteria, a smooth author journey during submission and the exchange of standardized publication data) within the TIB-Consortia. These operational provisions for open access publishing services are largely informed by the ESAC Workflow Recommendations for Transformative and OA Agreements¹⁰, which offer a solid framework for their implementation.

This approach offers several key benefits: it enhances the appeal of open access for authors by eliminating both financial and administrative hurdles in the publishing process; it eases the workload and reduces operational costs for library staff through more efficient workflows; and it strengthens the overall implementation and impact of the agreements.

A clear communication of objectives and conditions at the outset of negotiations is essential. The initial focus usually is on the cost model, financial terms, and included services, only then followed by the negotiation of non-commercial terms, that represent only a small portion of the overall negotiation effort.

However, this process presents several challenges. Time and resources for negotiation are limited for all stakeholders involved. Publishers are often hesitant to commit to specific provisions within the contract, partly due to the high costs associated with legal reviews. In addition, small and mid-

¹⁰ <https://esac-initiative.org/about/oa-workflows/>

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sized publishers, including society publishers, frequently lack established processes and must first develop the necessary operational capacities. These factors are further compounded by the significant communication efforts required throughout the negotiation process.

Publishers' reluctance to commit to specific provisions within contracts led to a key question in the discussion: what does this mean for any promises made – are they simply unlikely to be upheld? In response, a good practice was highlighted: securing a form of "soft commitment." Even if certain assurances cannot be formally included in the contract, it was suggested that these could at least be documented through written confirmation, such as via email or term sheets. This approach helps establish a clearer basis for mutual expectations and accountability.

4. Gold Rush - Bernhard Mittermaier, Forschungszentrum Jülich, Transform2Open

The slide deck presented by Bernhard Mittermaier included compelling data on the development of publications across subscription-based, gold open access, and diamond open access models. Between 2010 and 2022, gold open access saw steady and significant growth on global scale, while the share of publications in the subscription model declined at a roughly equivalent rate. Diamond open access also experienced growth during this period, though at a much lower overall level.

However, since 2023, this trend has reversed: the growth of gold open access has come to a halt and is even declining, while diamond open access has stagnated. At the same time, the share of publications appearing in subscription-based journals is once again increasing. As Mittermaier noted, the "gold rush" appears to be over.

This shift raises questions about the influence of transformative agreements like the DEAL agreements, particularly the one concluded with Elsevier, and whether they could be the cause for this development.

The discussion made clear that while Germany accounts for only a small share of global publication output, coordinated international pressure – such as collectively requiring publishers to meet specific open access (OA) flipping rates – could potentially be effective. However, publishers often see larger markets like the U.S. and China as decisive. Stakeholders agree that the OA transformation is complex, gradual, and influenced by multiple perspectives. While some publishers, like Elsevier, claim to follow market demand, their transformation progress remains limited. Transformative agreements (TAs) offer benefits beyond flipping, including increased transparency and content access. Some consortia, like FinELib¹¹, assess publisher agreements using multiple metrics, including OA progress, to guide negotiations. That might also be an idea to follow in an internationally coordinated approach.

5. Transformative Agreements: Landscape in Türkiye - Gültekin Gürdal, Izmir Institute of Technology

Gültekin Gürdal was not able to attend to workshop, but shared a slide deck that gives an overview of Turkey's strategic approach to transformative open access agreements, focusing on the key roles played by two national organisations: TÜBİTAK–ULAKBİM and ANKOS. TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye)¹² is the country's leading science and research policy

¹¹ <https://finelib.fi/negotiations/>

¹² <https://tubitak.gov.tr/en>

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agency. ULAKBİM (Turkish Academic Network and Information Center)¹³ operates under TÜBİTAK to manage national research infrastructure and scholarly communication. ANKOS (Anatolian University Libraries Consortium)¹⁴ is a collaborative network of academic and research libraries that plays a central role in negotiating and implementing library and publishing agreements across institutions.

Through national-level transformative agreements with publishers such as Springer Nature (2024–2026) and Wiley (2023–2025), TÜBİTAK–ULAKBİM provides researchers in Turkey with the opportunity to publish open access articles – including original research, reviews, and data articles – in high-impact hybrid and gold journals indexed in the Web of Science. These agreements are centrally managed with a national annual quota, allocated on a first-come, first-served basis without institutional limits.

In parallel, ANKOS negotiates additional transformative agreements with various publishers, offering different levels of APC support. Some agreements allow unlimited or discounted APC usage, while others provide limited access. Turkey has no national mandate requiring open-access publishing, allowing institutions and researchers autonomy in their publication decisions. These collective efforts reflect the country's growing alignment with global open science initiatives and aim to enhance the visibility, accessibility, and impact of Turkish scholarly output.

6. "Happy in Transition?" by Jens Lazarus, ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics, Germany

Jens Lazarus contributed a thought-provoking impulse that offered valuable perspectives from the ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics, Germany and stimulated further discussion among participants. Although the presentation sparked interest, the slides were not made available afterward.

¹³ <https://ulakbim.tubitak.gov.tr/>

¹⁴ <https://ankos.org.tr/en/open-access/>

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Outlook

Within the workshop “Exploring the Internationalization of Transformative Journal Agreements”, several key takeaways and recommendations emerged that can inform and shape the future of the open access transformation. One important next step is to collect examples of successful transformative agreements, as seen in countries like France and Sweden to inform and inspire future negotiations. This can help to identify best practices and potential pitfalls, and provide a foundation for more effective and efficient progress in open access transformation.

The potential of a coordinated international approach to transformative agreements also became clear during the workshop discussions. This could involve exploring a (binding) flipping rate as a promising approach for a first international coordinated action, although participants emphasized that such an approach should not be limited to flipping alone. Coordinated international pressure could potentially be effective in driving progress in open access transformation, and making full-scale transformation a priority at the broader political level will be crucial in ensuring a cohesive and effective shift towards open access.

To achieve this, it will be essential to foster constructive dialogue among stakeholders, including researchers, publishers, and policymakers. This dialogue must address the complexities of the open access transformation and work towards finding solutions that balance the needs and interests of all parties involved. It was also emphasized that investments should not focus solely on transformative agreements, but rather should be diversified to support a comprehensive transition to open access.

The workshop also highlighted the importance of, for example, securing “soft commitments” from publishers as they are often reluctant to include commitments directly into agreements for several reasons. Also, as demonstrated by FinELib, negotiations could be guided and the progress be assessed by using multiple metrics, including the rate of open access publications. This can help to ensure that publishers are held accountable for their commitments and that progress towards open access is accurately tracked and measured.

Finally, the establishment of an informal exchange platform, such as a mailing list, was suggested as a way to facilitate operational discussions and potential future collaborations. This can help to maintain momentum and enthusiasm for the open access transformation, and provide a space for stakeholders to share ideas, best practices, and lessons learned.

Overall, the workshop provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration, and the ideas and takeaways that emerged from the discussions have the potential to drive meaningful progress towards a more open and accessible research landscape.

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Appendix

1. Open Science Culture and Bureau - Gu Liping, National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences
2. Action Plan - Bibsam Consortium - Wilhelm Widmark, Library Director of Stockholm
3. Negotiating non-commercial terms in TIB-Consortia - Nicola Bieg, TIB – Leibniz Information Centre for Science and Technology (Germany)
4. Gold Rush - Bernhard Mittermaier, Forschungszentrum Jülich, Transform2Open
5. Transformative Agreements: Landscape in Türkiye - Gültekin Gürdal, Izmir Institute of Technology



Recommendations for Transformative Agreements with publication service providers – Overview and reality check?

Marcel Meistring, Lea Maria Ferguson

Tobias Höhnow, Peter Kostädt, Bernhard Mittermaier, Heinz Pampel, Margit Schön, Joshua Shelly, Mathijs Vleugel

27.03.2025, Transform2Open Workshop "Exploring the Internationalization of Transformative Journal Agreements"

Project partners of Transform2Open are the Central Library of Forschungszentrum Jülich, the University Library of the University of Potsdam and the Helmholtz Open Science Office.

Recommendations for transformative journal contracts with publication service providers



1. The Transform2Open project
2. AP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers
 - a) General
 - b) Notes on the structure
 - c) Identified gaps
 - d) Best Practices
3. Outlook

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Project: Team and framework

- Forschungszentrum Jülich: Bernhard Mittermaier, Margit Schön, (Irene Barbers †),
- University of Potsdam: Tobias Höhnow, Peter Kostädt, Joshua Shelly
- Helmholtz Open Science Office: Lea Maria Ferguson, Marcel Meistrig, Heinz Pampel, Mathijs Vleugel
- Transform2Open is DFG-funded and has a duration of 3 years; project start: 2023 [project number: 505575192]



HELMHOLTZ
Open Science

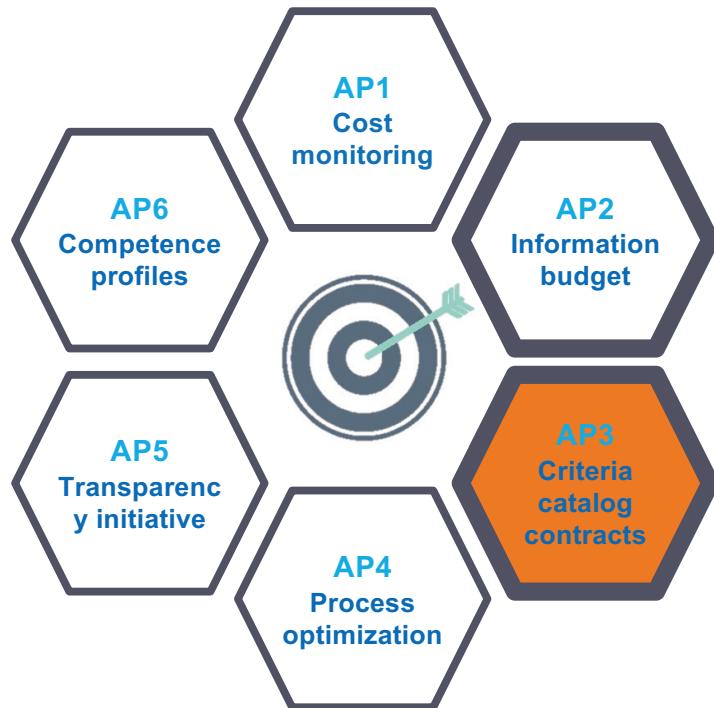
JÜLICH
Forschungszentrum

Universität
Potsdam



- Further development of budgets, criteria and competencies
- Promotion of cost transparency (national & international)
- Promotion of structure formation in the OA transformation (focus on Germany)
- Model development and standardization
- Transfer of the knowledge gained to an international level
- Contribution to sustainable science infrastructures

Project and current focus



1. Monitoring the total costs of publishing at scientific institutions
2. Interaction of various financial resources (library budget, third-party funds and other financial resources)
3. **Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of Alliance recommendations)**
4. Workflows for dealing with publications in cooperation with publishers and scientific institutions (metadata and invoice processing)
5. Promotion of transparency (disclosure of costs for subscription, transformation and OA contracts)
6. Organizational aspects of OA transformation in libraries (competencies and structures)

WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (The Alliance recommendations)

Recommendations for Transformative
Journal Agreements with Providers of
Publishing Services

Guidelines of the priority initiative “Digital Information” of the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany, against the background of the implementation of the Open Access Strategy 2021–2025 of the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany

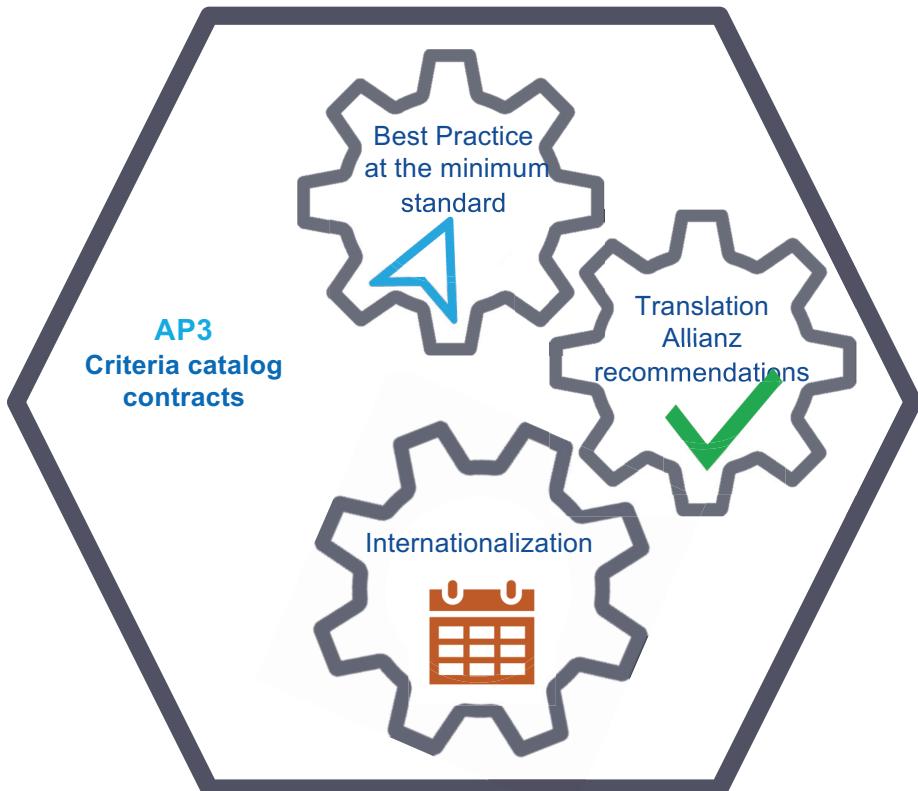
Version 1.0, November 2022

Heinz Pampel (Helmholtz Association), Roland Bertelmann (Helmholtz Association), Kristine Hillenkötter (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen), Bernhard Mittermaier (Forschungszentrum Jülich), Dirk Pieper (Bielefeld University), Hildegard Schäffler (Bayernische Staatsbibliothek), Stefanie Seeh (Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft), Marco Tullney (Leibniz Association)

- Originally published in [German](#) by the priority initiative “Digital Information” of the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany, against the background of the implementation of the Open Access Strategy 2021–2025 of the Alliance
- Translated to [Englisch](#) / [French](#) by Transform2Open - available as PDF or via trilingual [Website](#)

- Divided into
- 1) Specific Criteria
→ Transformation; Pricing; Transparency; Workflow; Preprints
- 2) Further Criteria
→ Quality Assurance; Access Rights for Achieval Contents; Metadata and Interfaces; Statistics; Tracking; Waivers

WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)

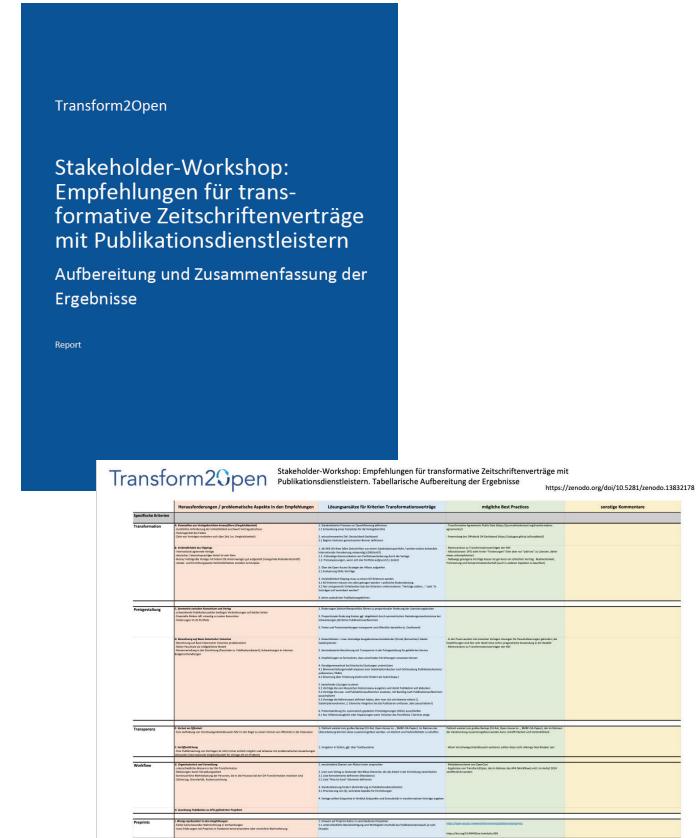


- Online workshop on 16 October 2023, organized by Transform2Open.
- Invited participants: GASCO members from German institutions, members of the Forum 13+ working group, research funders (German Research Foundation) and the authors of the Alliance paper.
- Identification of implementation challenges, existing best practices and aspects that may be missing.
- In addition, valuable content, procedures and processes for the further development of the recommendations were discussed.

WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)



- Stakeholder workshop:
Recommendations for
transformative journal contracts
with publication service providers.
Preparation and summary of the
results (German)
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1383223>
- Stakeholder workshop:
Recommendations for
transformative journal contracts
with publication service providers.
Tabular presentation of the results
(German)
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13832178>



WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)



Preparation and
summary of the results
(German)

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zendo.13832223>

General comments

- **Binding nature:** The lack of binding criteria makes it difficult to implement and compare contracts. More precise wording could help here.
- **Definition of "flipping":** Clarification of which publication models are permissible and when a changeover is considered successful.
- **Target group-specific criteria:** Libraries need adapted criteria for better budget planning and flexibility.
- **Standardization of service providers:** A uniform catalog of criteria makes negotiations and operational processes easier for libraries.
- **International cooperation:** Global cooperation (e.g. in the G6 network) is important in order to set international standards.

WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)



Preparation and
summary of the results
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zendo.13832223>

Notes on the structure / Proposal: Modular criteria catalog

- **Flexible structure and prioritization:** divide recommendations into text blocks that can be adapted locally or consortially. Allows specific weighting for different institutions.
- **Binding nature:** Adaptation of the wording: "Specific" → "Central criteria" and "Other criteria" → "Criteria that are relevant for any contract".
- **Categories:** Differentiated criteria for prioritization: must, should, ... (+ "KO criteria for contracts")
- **Differentiation of the main aspects:** OA transformation contracts / general contractual aspects (e.g. archive rights)
- **Tracking & quality assurance:** GDPR as standard + integrate contractual penalties for non-compliance prominently and recommend recognized procedures (e.g. COPE).

WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)



Preparation and
summary of the results
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zendo.13832223>

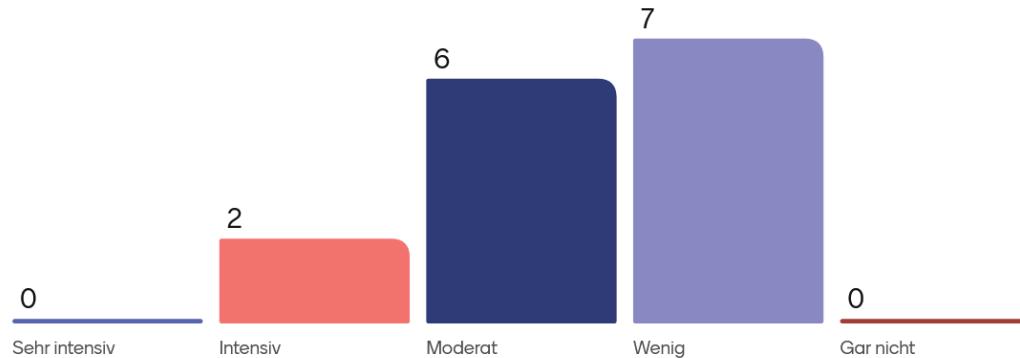
Identified gaps

- The allocation of publications to DFG-funded projects should be included in the catalog of criteria, or an inclusion should be examined.
- With a view to new forms of scientific communication and the potential impact of current efforts to create science-led publication infrastructures, aspects such as the publication of preprints or the Rights Retention Strategy of Plan S should also be examined for more prominent role/inclusion in the list of criteria.
- The use of publishing content for artificial intelligence / text and data mining / machine learning methods in scientific work and the rights to the resulting findings should be included in a list of criteria for transformative contracts with publication service providers. There are also links to good scientific practice here.

WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)

Summary of the proposed best practices I

- Transparency and data availability: The [D4Hybrid OA Dashboard](#) offers, for example, publicly accessible data on transformation contracts for transparent traceability.
- Frameworks and political support: The [Transformation Memorandum](#) of the Helmholtz Association (HGF) and the Alliance licenses with the support of the DFG provide orientation. Political documents (e.g. EU Council and BMBF OA paper) support commitment and clarity.
- Pragmatic solutions in negotiations: Halfway good contracts are better than none; compromises and feasibility must also be considered. Blanket agreements with individual publishers often offer practicable solutions.



WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)



Preparation and
summary of the results
[https://doi.org/10.5281/z
enodo.13832223](https://doi.org/10.5281/z
enodo.13832223)

Tabular presentation of
the results
[https://doi.org/10.5281/z
enodo.13832178](https://doi.org/10.5281/z
enodo.13832178)

Summary of the proposed Best Practices II

- Open metadata and workflows: Use of the OpenCost metadata schema and publication of Transform2Open results (AP4 workflows, April 2025) promote standardized processes.
- International role models and consortia: German approaches (e.g. DEAL) serve as a model for foreign consortia, such as CNRS in France.
- Avoiding deal-breakers: Non-disclosure clauses should not be the sole reason for a termination.

WP 3 Criteria for contracts with commercial publication service providers (further development of the Alliance recommendations)



- International Workshop planned for QII 2025 → TODAY 😊
- Expand further contacts + in particular perspectives from regions where this process is still less advanced, as there is/could be a particular need here and this exchange could be very interesting for each other

Objective

- Promotion of the recommendations beyond DACH
- Networking to promote international exchange via a core of common recommendations / criteria

Thank you! Questions?



Transform2Open

Thank you for your attention!



Contact us

- E-mail: info.transform2open@listserv.dfn.de
- Mastodon: @Transform2Open@openbiblio.social
- Bluesky: @transform2open.bsky.social
- Website: <https://transform2open.de/>
- DFG project number: 505575192

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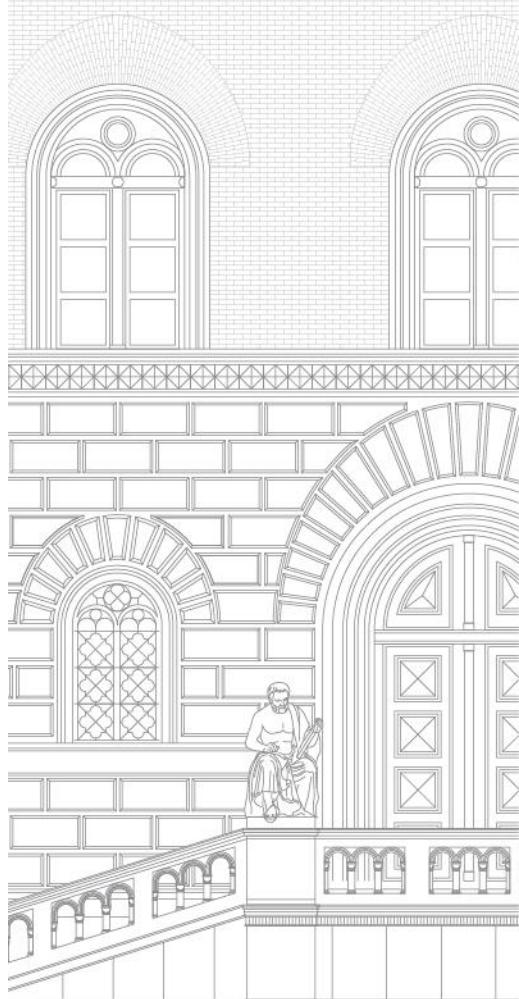
Project partners of Transform2Open are the Central Library of Forschungszentrum Jülich, the University Library of the University of Potsdam and the Helmholtz Open Science Office.

Our team consists of the following colleagues:

- From Forschungszentrum Jülich: Bernhard Mittermaier, Margit Schön
- From the University of Potsdam: Tobias Höhnow, Peter Kostädt, Joshua Shelly
- From the Helmholtz Open Science Office: Mathijs Vleugel, Lea Maria Ferguson, Marcel Meistrig, Heinz Pampel

Standardisation and Flexibility in Transformative Agreements

Dr. Hildegard Schäffler, Bavarian State Library, Munich



Standards and Evaluation Tools

Pampel, H. et al. (2022): **Recommendations for transformative journal contracts**

<https://www.transform2open.de/ressourcen/empfehlungen-fuer-transformative-zeitschriftenvertrage/kriterien-criteria-criteres>

Meistring, M., Ferguson, L. M., Pampel, H. (2024): **Stakeholder-Workshop: Empfehlungen für transformative Zeitschriftenverträge mit Publikationsdienstleistern: Aufbereitung und Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse**

<https://zenodo.org/doi/10.5281/zenodo.13832223>

ESAC Reference Guide to Transformative Agreements

https://esac-initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ESAC_Reference_Guide_to_TAs.pdf

Spectrum of transformation drivers in ESAC Reference Guide (**“How transformative is it”**)

“For each transformation driver, the spectrum starts (at the left) with the overarching negotiation objective, contrasted by a description of conditions under the subscription paradigm. The spectrum then progresses through different agreement iterations toward the envisioned characteristics of an open scholarly publishing paradigm.” (ESAC Reference Guide, p. 16; Version March 16, 2023)

<p>The agreement empowers authors with the means and right to publish articles under an open license without a cap, but OA publishing rights for a certain subset of journals remains excluded from the agreement, for example the publishers' fully open access journals or specific journal imprints.</p> <p>All journal articles in a large portion of the complete publisher portfolio are published open access.</p>	<p>The agreement empowers authors with the means and right to publish an unlimited amount of articles under an open license in the complete journal portfolio of the publisher.</p> <p>All journal articles are published open access.</p>	<p>Authors retain copyright and openly license their articles.</p>
<p>Under one central agreement, institutions pay for open access publishing based on fees that are calculated and post-paid or partially post-paid in direct proportion to the services rendered under a transparent pricing framework, for example based on per-articles fees.</p>	<p>Under one central agreement, institutions pay for open access publishing services in direct proportion to the services rendered and based on transparent and differential pricing that responds to market pressure and community expectations for fairness, sustainability and equity.</p>	<p>Researchers everywhere are able to read and publish without financial and administrative burden; fees for open scholarly publishing services are covered by their organizations (institutions, grant funding agencies).</p>

Publish&Read Agreements: Some key parameters

- Pricing model parameters
- Internal cost allocation in a consortium
- Flipping as a transformative dimension
- Widening the scope of negotiations to include a broader set of parameters



Some Pricing Model Parameters

Negotiation Parameters	Variation	Comments & Examples
Flat fee or publication-based payment	<p>Capped total price, not directly related to the actual number of publications</p> <p>Pay-as-you publish, based on a PAR Fee</p>	<p>Cost predictability; ideally combined with uncapped publishing; risk sharing</p> <p>e.g. German DEAL agreements; gold OA journals;</p> <p>Cost development uncapped, but most consistent with the transformative idea and pricing transparency</p>
OA types included	<p>Hybrid and gold treated separately</p> <p>Hybrid and gold covered in one and the same model</p> <p>Green OA</p>	<p>e.g. DEAL agreements</p> <p>e.g. BSB consortia with CUP and Karger: one single flat fee, which also provides for a smooth flipping scenario</p> <p>e.g. Couperin agreement with ACS: green OA with no embargo</p>

Internal Cost Allocation in a Consortium

Model	Definition	Comments & Examples
Previous spend remains	Previous spend covers both reading & publishing with no re-allocation of costs according to publication output	Maximum cost predictability, but no relation to publication output
Migration path to a publication-based cost allocation	Gradual transition towards a more publication-based approach; can go along with a flat fee approach	Cost increases for some members, but also decreases for others; will allow time for internal budget reallocation and structural changes; e.g. DEAL 1; BSB consortium with CUP
Pay-as-you publish	Purely publication-based cost allocation	Usually a challenge for members with high publication output; closest to a publication-based logic; e.g. DEAL 2 requires options for read-only members

What about Flipping?

*We are all committed to accelerating the progress of open access through **transformative agreements that are temporary and transitional**, with a shift to full open access within a very few years. These agreements should, at least initially, be cost-neutral, with the expectation that economic adjustments will follow as the markets transform. Publishers are expected to work with all members of the global research community to effect complete and immediate open access according to this statement. (<https://oa2020.org/b14-conference/final-statement/>)*

Publish&Read agreements and nonbinding OA commitments of publishers proliferate...

... but flipping doesn't.

Publish&Read agreements lead to transformative effects like a significant increase of OA content at the article level and shifts from a reading to publishing logic...

... but an equally significant share of pay-wall content remains.

A few publishers actively flip a significant number of journals...

... but not so much triggered by transformative agreements as by their own policy decisions.

Publish&Read agreements for journals have taken the lead...

... but a broader range of models is required to support flipping, also for smaller publishers and non-journal publications.

Widening the Scope of Negotiations

Negotiation Parameters	Comments & Examples
Datatracking	e.g. focus point in DEAL negotiations
AI clauses	e.g. standardised AI clauses for Springer Nature books (CDL, GASCO)
CC BY as standard licence	e.g. default option in the publication workflow
Workflow development	constant workflow optimisation to facilitate the publication process and bring down opt-out rates

Transformative Agreements: A Theme with Variations

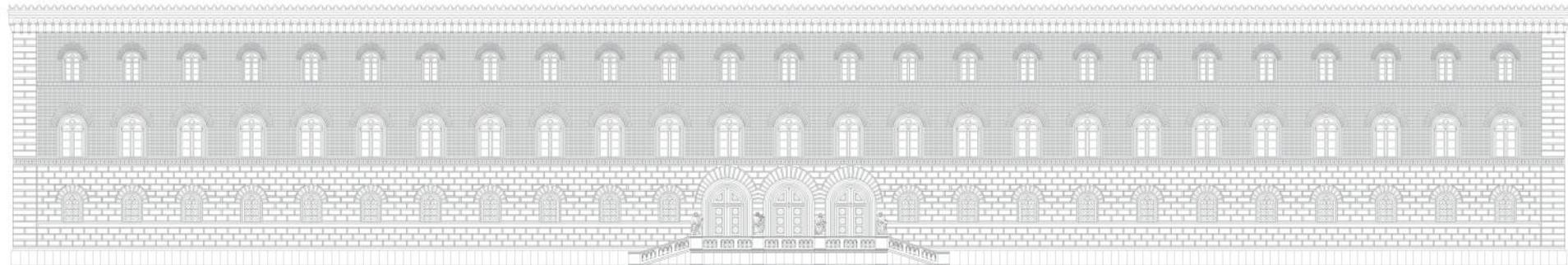
Type	Definition	Comments & Examples
Transformative publish&read agreements	Combining publishing in OA with the reading of pay-wall content	cf. ESAC Registry
Gold OA agreements	Negotiating publishing conditions for pure gold OA journals	cf. ESAC Registry
Subscribe to Open (S2O)	Continued payment of subscription fees by a sufficient number of subscribers leads to (reversible) full open access	e.g. De Gruyter Brill to focus on S2O Preferred model for the humanities and/or smaller publishers?
Crowdfunding / Diamond OA	Libraries actively contribute to the OA transformation of books	e.g. pledging projects and library initiatives
Purchase to Open (P2O)	OA conversion once book sales reach a certain threshold	e.g. concept of the ENABLE! initiative

The International Perspective

- Which **standardised criteria** for transformative deals can we agree on **internationally**
 - against the background of national mandates and policies and
 - with enough room for negotiation flexibility?
- What are our joint perspectives on the **transformative nature** of agreements and alternative transformation models?
- What are possible fields of collaboration with regard to a **broader negotiation scope**?



Thank you very much for your attention!



Workshop "Exploring the Internationalization of Transformative
Journal Agreements" short presentation

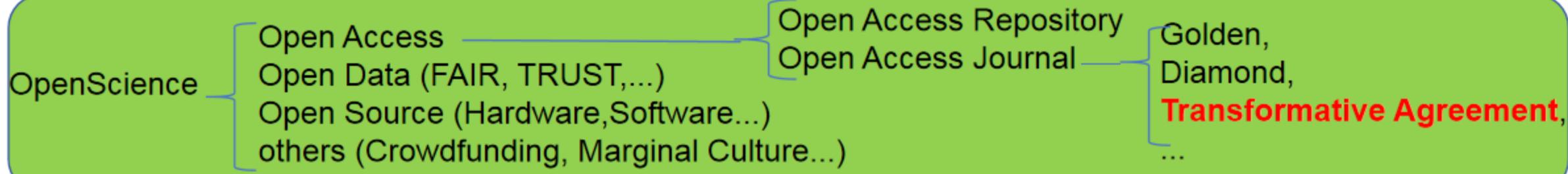
Open Science Culture and Bureau

顾立平 Gu Liping (Alan Ku)

National Science Library , Chinese Academy of Sciences

March 27, 2025

1. Open Science **Culture** and Bureau



- We must avoid failing to comply with the principles of **the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI)**, prevent scenarios where we merely enrich international publishers and benefit certain acquisition librarians (sometimes including system librarians obsessed with building big data platforms), and refrain from practices that ultimately harm researchers and the public (such as the current "offsetting APC fees" model that inevitably leads to cost recovery). We should learn from the historical experience of the past 22 years.
- Crucially, we need to mobilize support from **more researchers and early-career scientists**, encourage constructive dialogue among stakeholders, and abandon globally localized marketing strategies. The most direct and effective path lies in **leveraging parliamentary and central government budget approval processes**, as history has repeatedly demonstrated.

2. Open Science Culture and Bureau

- Based on the Budapest Open Access Initiative, if this is the consensus of scientists in the past and in the foreseeable future, then **the collaborators and the content of cooperation are inseparable entities, and open access repositories and open access journals are inseparable entities.**
 - (1) The commitment to supporting open access means: **the data localization of institutional repository and CC - BY contributions**, as well as the transformational funding for journals **to shift from subscription models to open access**, including institutional funding support and support for authors' APC discounts; it does not mean the transfer articles metadata to repositories by charged model and simply having open access journals only.
 - (2) **The transparency of the cost structure** does not mean the publicity of openly marked prices.
 - (3) **The Cost control** does not mean an increase in the total volume of sub-journals' expansion and the number of articles, a decline in quality, a low unit price per article, the continued rise in core journals, and non - open access.

Thank You

Alan Ku

gulp@mail.las.ac.cn

Action plan – Bibsam Consortium

- The aim is to facilitate the open publication of scholarly results, to bring about a redirection of payment streams from a subscription-based to an open access publishing system and to achieve transparency, an overview of and reduced expenses for scholarly publishing.
- that the Consortium **should not sign agreements for reading and publishing in so-called hybrid journals**, and instead only negotiate for publication in open access journals; this approach should be implemented from 2026 and apply to all open journals, regardless of publisher
- that **new pathways to open publishing are promoted** and supported and alternative business models are developed, and that researcher-driven journals that want to migrate from traditional publishers to other platforms are supported
- that publication occurs under an **open license**, in accordance with the **FAIR principles**, and that copyright conditions to promote open access, for example via so-called **secondary publication rights**, are explored



Bibsam Consortium - The National Library of Sweden negotiates licence agreements on behalf of Swedish universities, university colleges, as well as public agencies and research institutes. 95 institutions are a part of the Bibsam Consortium.



How can we get a transformation

- International discussions and cooperation
- Cooperation with all stakeholders in the countries
- Don't just invest in transformative agreements
- Try to change the system to bring in competition and innovation
- Investigate and build alternative publishing routes
- RRS strategies
- Put pressure on the publishers to be transparent about their cost models
- Be ready to walk away from the negotiation table
- Take the ownership of the publishing system back to the academia
- It is the researchers behavior that can change the system
- If we don't act there will be no transformation
- Policy and implementation

Negotiating non-commercial terms in TIB-Consortia

What?

- In TAs: non-commercial terms related to publishing services and read access
- Here: non-commercial terms = operational provisions relating to OA publishing services
- Informed by [ESAC Workflow Recommendations for TAs & OA Agreements](#)
 - o Clear and “bullet-proof” definition of relevant criteria: eligible authors, article types, and dates for eligibility; included journals / journal type
 - o Article verification and potential infrastructure (→ dashboard); retroactive OA
 - o Data exchange (negotiation, verification, reporting) → standardized metadata incl. necessary data points and ideally PIDs
 - o New: Author journey including choice of license type and “license to publish”

Why?

- Making OA more attractive to authors by removing not only financial but administrative barriers within the publication process
- Saving operational costs for library staff by simplifying the administration of OA publishing
- Helping performance of the agreement

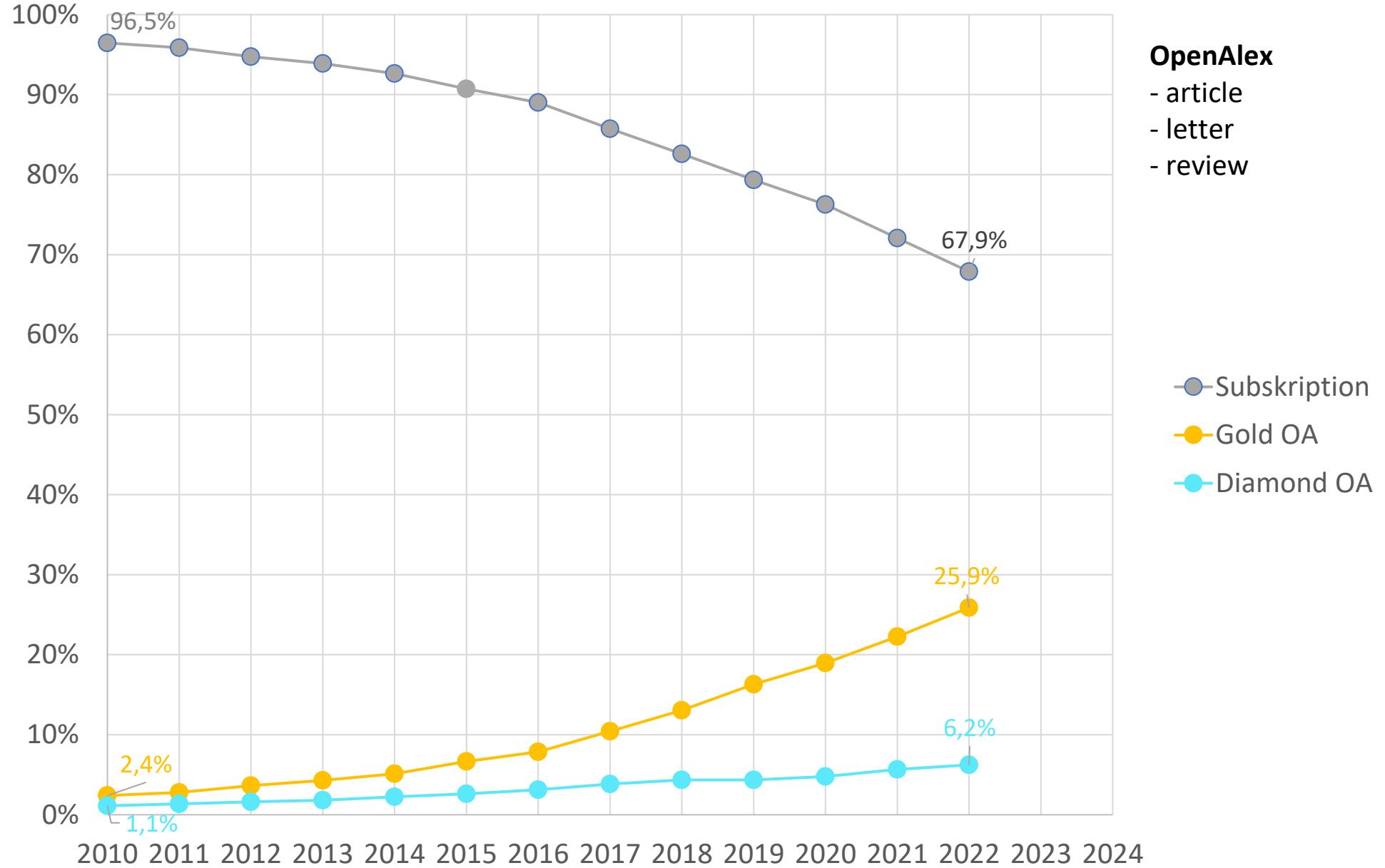
Negotiating non-commercial terms in TIB-Consortia

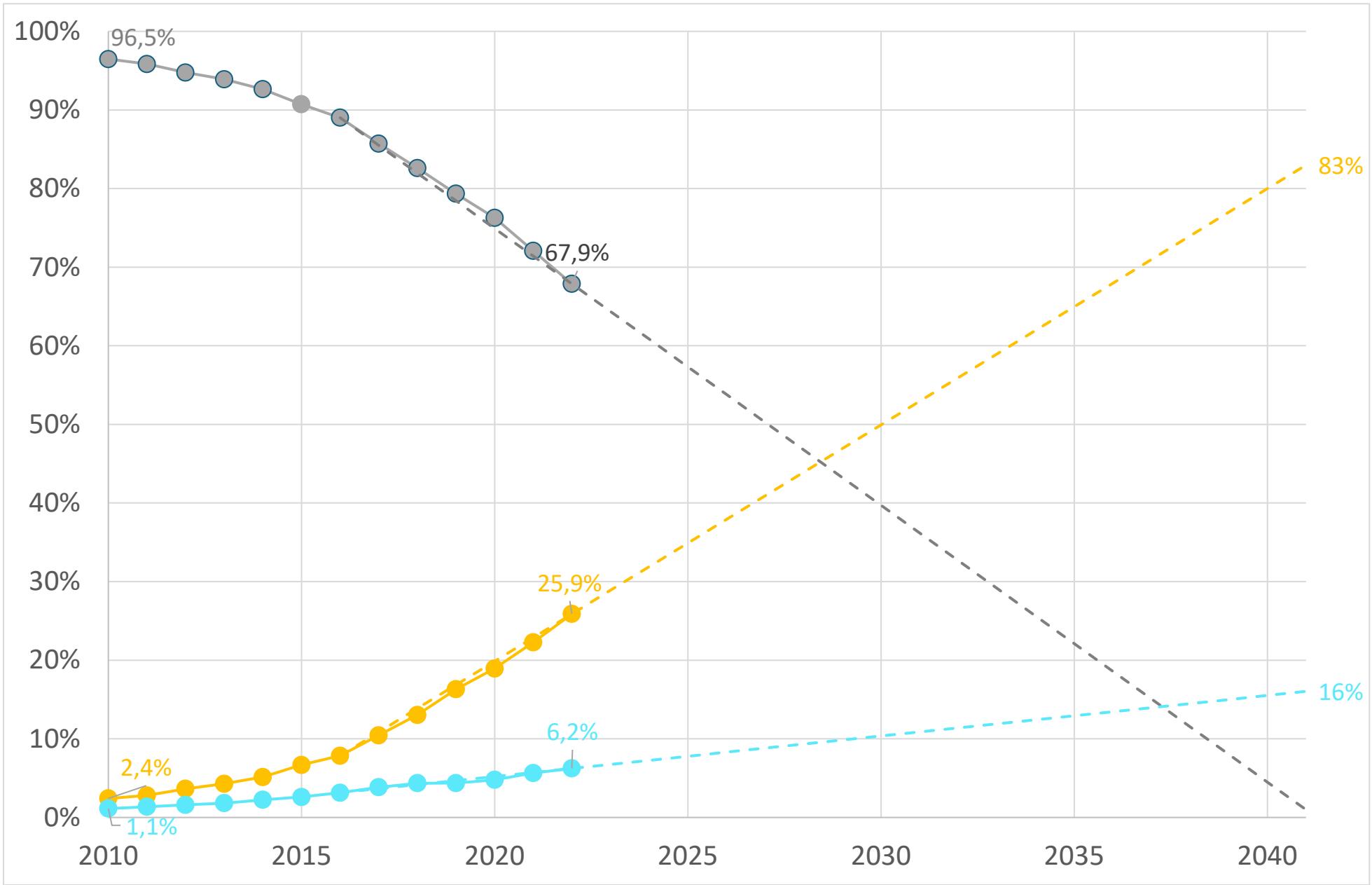
When?

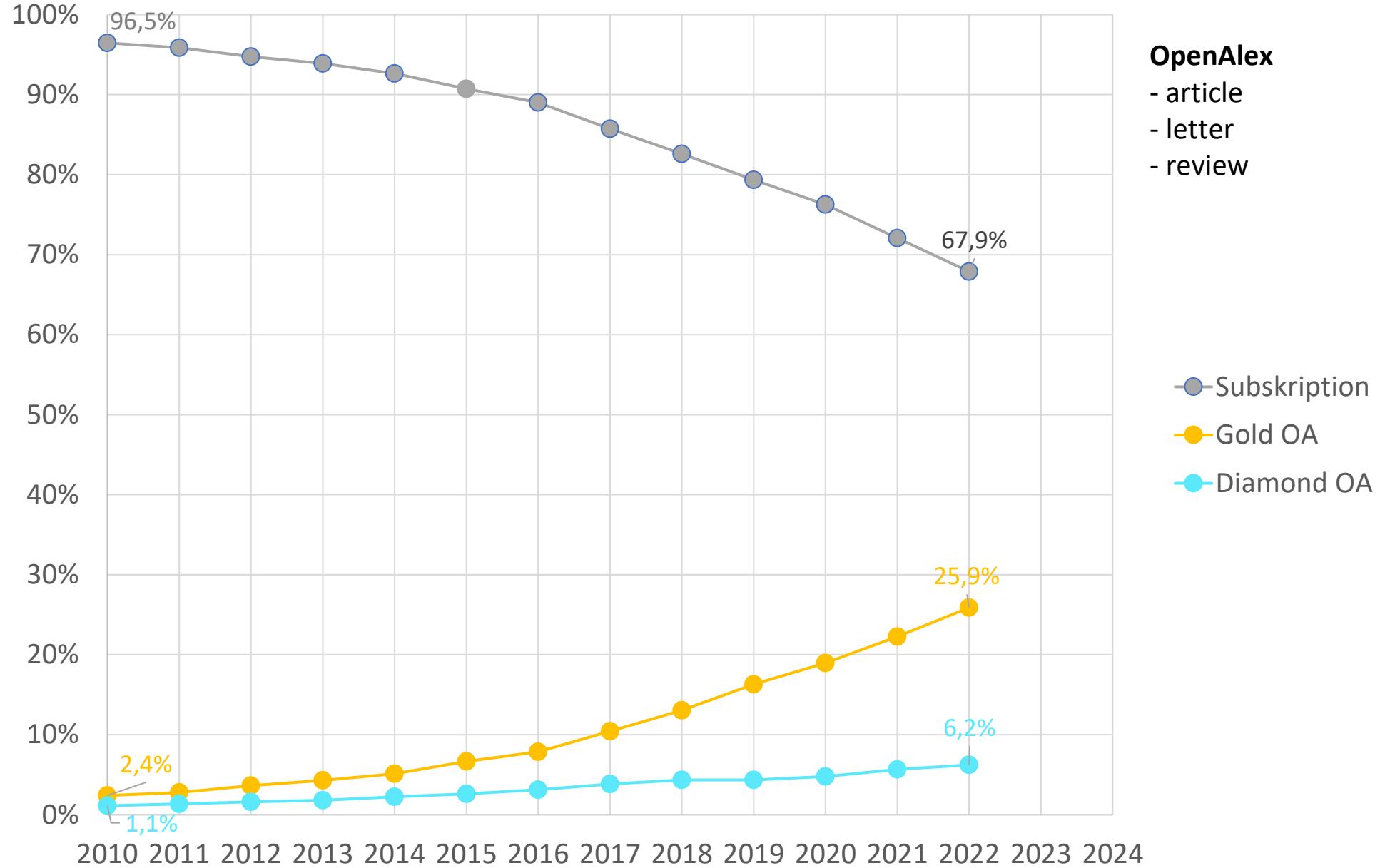
- Requirements/goals detailed in termsheet (distributed at beginning of negotiations)
- Focus firstly on cost model / financial terms and included services (read & publish), then on non-commercial terms (< 20% of negotiation time)

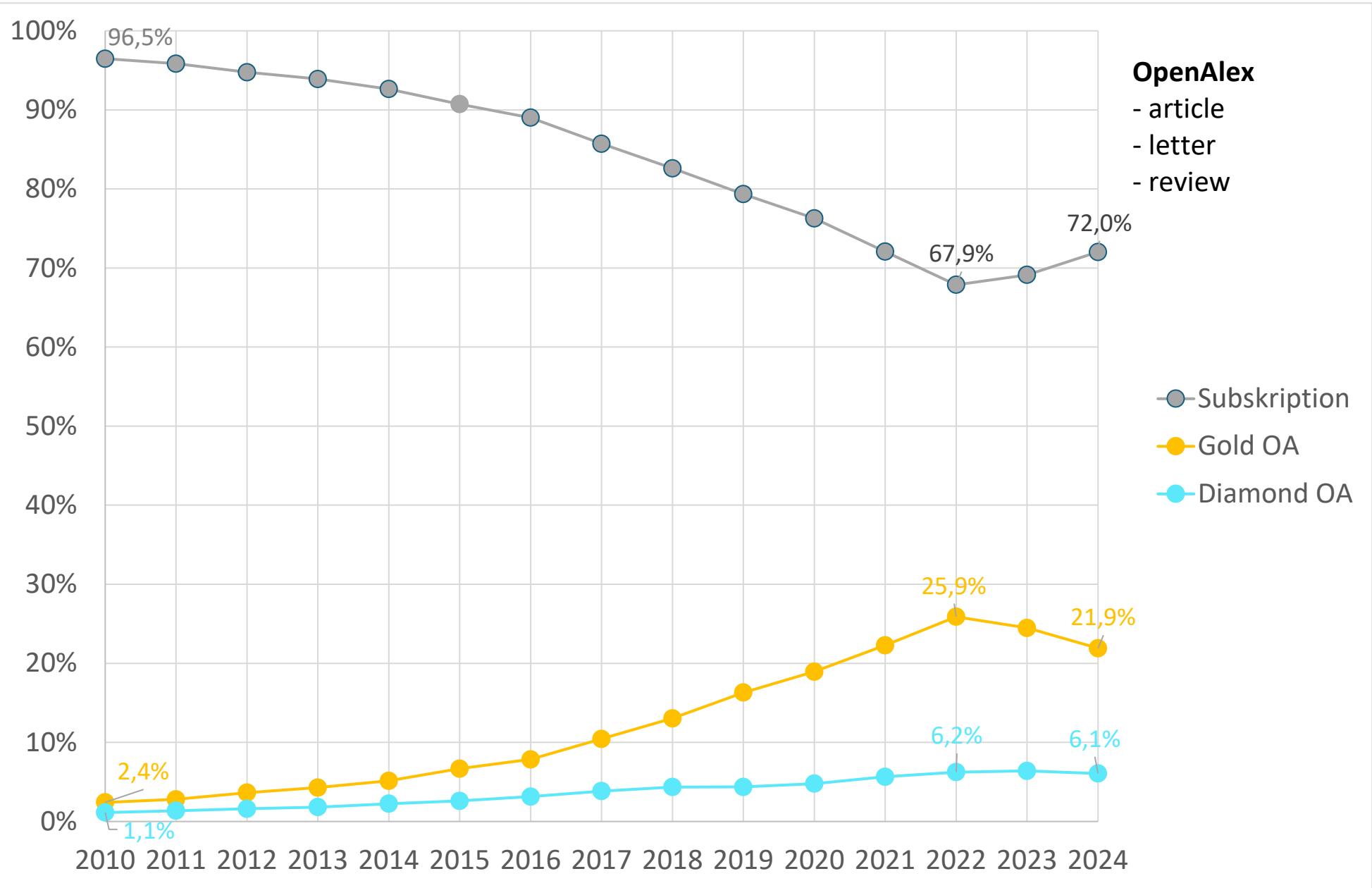
Why challenging?

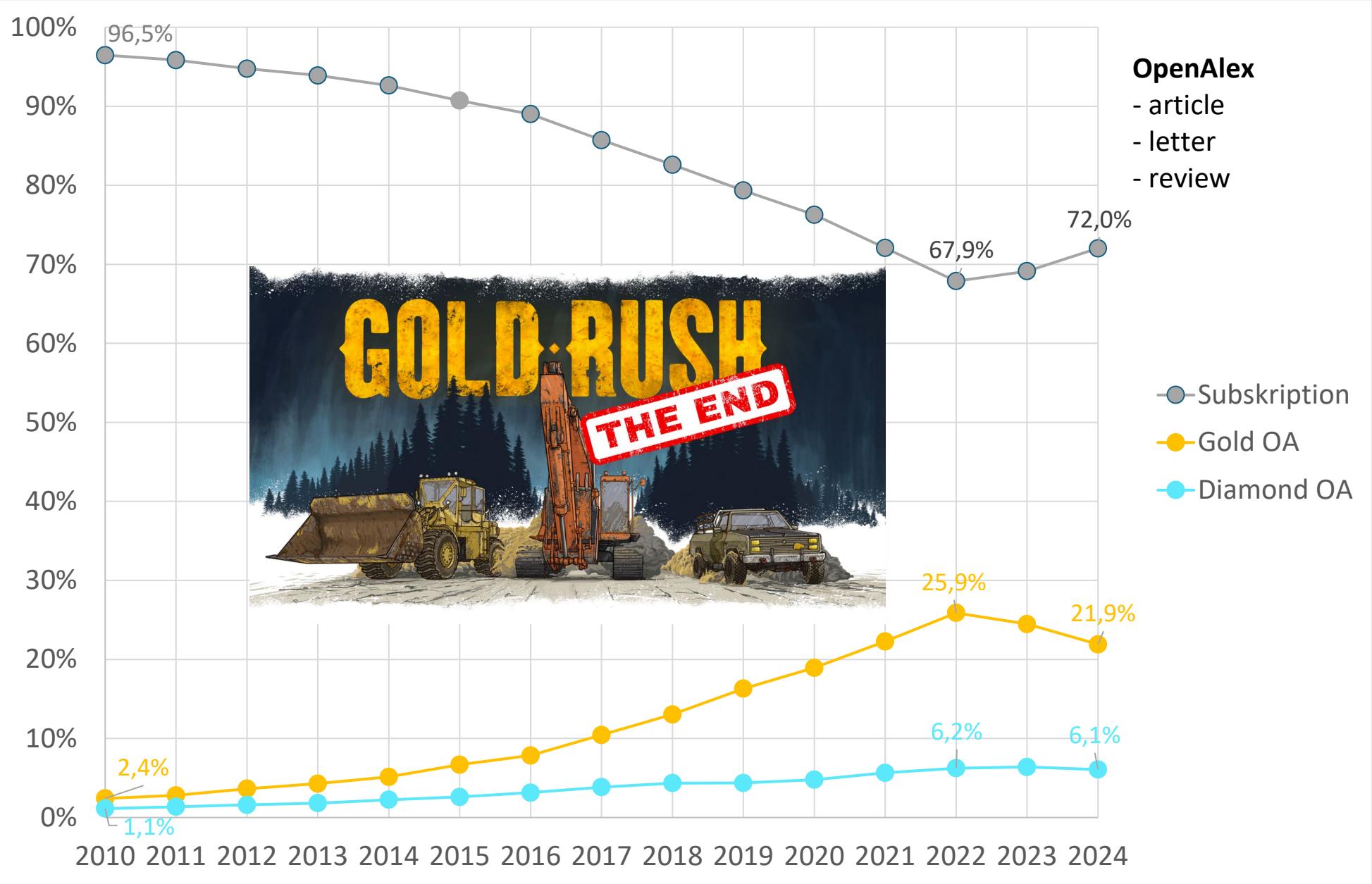
- Limited time and resources to negotiate (all stakeholders) → need to focus / prioritize on aspects that are actionable and realizable (continued discussion during agreement term)
- Reluctance to make commitments within a contract document (legal review often expensive)
- Small and mid-sized publisher / society publishers do not have processes in place / need to built up operational capacity (“guiding role” of consortium lead) → financial investment needed (who pays for this?)
- Often requires involvement of employees / departments that are not sales contact (increased communication effort)











Transformative Agreements Landscape in Türkiye



Gültekin Gürdal
izmir Institute of Technology

Transform2Open

*Online Workshop "Exploring the Internationalization
of Transformative Journal Agreements"*

March 27, 2025



Transformative Agreements in Türkiye

TUBITAK –ULAKBİM (EKUAL)

SPRINGER NATURE



Springer Nature Open Access Agreement

- The period: 2024-2026
- "Original Article," "Review Article," and "Continuing Education" types in the Q1 and Q2 Group Springer Nature Hybrid Journals in the Web of Science (SCI, SSCI, AHCI)
- National annual OA article publishing quota
- The requests are handled centrally on a first come first served basis
- No allocation per institution/member

Wiley Open Access Agreement

- The period 2023-2025
- "Research Article," "Review Article," "Data Article," and "Rapid Publication" published in Wiley's Hybrid Journals and Gold Journals (exclude Hindawi) included in Q1, and Q2 of Web of Science (WoS),
- National annual OA article publishing quota
- The requests are handled centrally on a first come first served basis
- No allocation per institution/member

Transformative Agreements in Türkiye

ANKOS

Publisher	TA Start Year	TA	Quota Info	Document Type	Journals
American Chemical Society (ACS)	2022	R&P	Limited	All Article Types. Except additions, corrections, editorials, and ebook chapters	Hybrid / Gold
Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)	2022	R&P	Unlimited	Research Articles Review Articles Conference Proceedings	Hybrid / Gold
British Medical Journal (BMJ)	2024	R&P	Unlimited	Research Articles	Hybrid / Gold
Cambridge Journals Online (CJO)	2021	R&P	Unlimited	Articles Review Articles Rapid Communications Brief Reports Case Reports	Hybrid / Gold
Institute of Physics (IOP)	2023	R&P	Unlimited	Research Paper Special Issue Letter Review Articles	Hybrid / Gold
Karger Journals	2022	R&P	Limited	Research Articles Letters Case Reports	Hybrid / Gold
Oxford Journals Online (OUP)	2023	R&P	Unlimited	Research Articles Review Articles Brief Reports Case Reports	Hybrid
Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)	2023	R&P	Limited	Research Articles Review Type Article	Hybrid / Gold
Sage	2022	APC Discount	Unlimited	All Document Type	Hybrid

Opt-out policies to increase/decrease the usage of APC

- Unlimited APC for journals and article types covered by the agreement.
 - ACM
 - BMJ
 - CJO
 - IOP
 - OUP
- Discount APC for journals and article types covered by the agreement.
 - SAGE
- Limited APC for journals and article types covered by the agreement.
 - ACS
 - Karger
 - RSC

- No national policy on open access in journals covered by the agreement
- Authors decide whether to publish open access or not
- Institutions may have decisions regarding the use of APC

Publication Licenses

Publisher	Licences
American Chemical Society (ACS)	CC-BY
Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)	CC-BY
British Medical Journal (BMJ)	CC-BY CC-BY-NC
Cambridge Journals Online (CJO)	CC BY CC BY-NC-ND CC BY-NC-SA
Institute of Physics (IOP)	CC-BY
Karger Journals	
Oxford Journals Online (OUP)	CC-BY CC-BY-NC
Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)	CC-BY CC-BY-NC
Sage	

Transformative Agreements Landscape in Türkiye



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Transform2Open

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