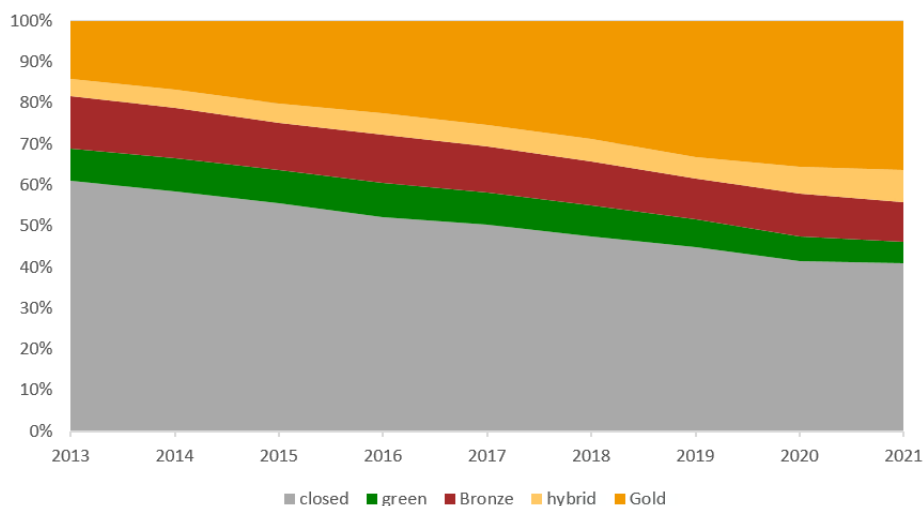


# GLOBAL EQUITY IN OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

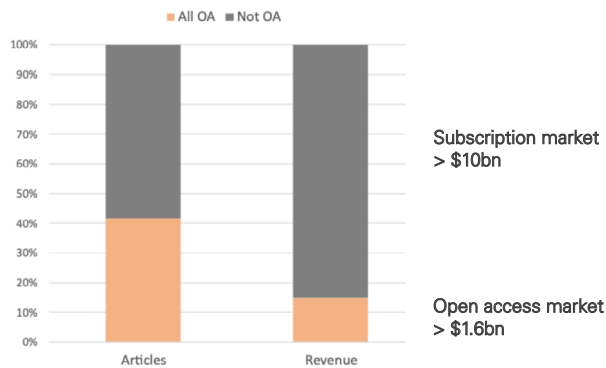
WORKSHOP SERIES ON PRACTICAL MECHANISMS AND ACTION PLANS TO REMOVE BARRIERS FOR READERS AND AUTHORS

The outputs of science are so crucial to the future of human society, that open access for all, both authors and readers, is not only an issue for the scientific community, but also for society at large. This essential priority has stimulated the urgent development of a multitude of strategies: preprint sharing platforms, repositories and rights retention policies, academic-led and owned publishing initiatives, fully open access journals, and library-consortium-led negotiations with publishers to transition subscription-based journals to open access. Thanks to these efforts, today nearly half of new research articles are openly accessible in some form.



Open access in the scholarly publishing landscape. Source: Dimensions.

Yet, while these strategies all remove barriers for readers, the accelerating growth of fee-based open access publishing raises concerns around affordability, global equity and the distribution of cost in scholarly publishing. In 2021, about 45% of all scholarly articles were published as paid-for open access, accounting for just under 15% of the value of the journal publishing market value, or more than \$1.6bn. Analysis suggests that mid-term growth is likely to reach 14%-15% in both volume and value.



**Financial streams in scholarly publishing** Source: Delta Think News & Views: Open Access Market Sizing  
<https://deltathink.com/news-views-open-access-market-sizing-update-2022>

In order to support open access to scientific information in a way that removes barriers for both readers and authors, especially those in resource-limited contexts, the many actors that contribute financially to scholarly communication must coordinate their efforts and collaborate on approaches at both the political and operational level. In this context, UNESCO, the International Science Council (ISC), the Open Access 2020 Initiative (OA2020), cOAlition S, Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), the Association of African Universities, and Science Europe are organizing a series of workshops on global equity in open access publishing (see <https://oa2020.org/events/workshops-global-equity-in-oa-publishing/>).

The workshops are organized around the following principles for equitable OA:

- > Scholarly communication is part of the research process and, as such, costs for open access publishing services should ultimately be borne by research funders and institutions;
- > Fees associated with open access publishing services should be fair, reasonable, transparent, and globally equitable;
- > Spending on scientific publishing should enable global open access by both readers and authors.

The first of these workshops focused on viewpoints from Europe and Africa, and participants formulated a variety of proposals, including but not limited to the following.

**To advance non-fee-based open access publishing:**

- > Currently, access to publishing in commercial journals is priced as a function of journal prestige. A truly equitable academic publishing system requires a level playing field among publications. This can only be achieved by **reforming research assessment**: making sure that authors are evaluated for the intrinsic merit of

their publications rather than for the journal name, impact factor, or most other quantitative metrics.

- > Institutional spending on journal subscriptions and alternatives should be re-organized and re-oriented towards open dissemination of research. Open Access and Open Science infrastructure should be supported by national, regional, and international actors, also in the context of development and cooperation strategies.
- > There should be greater financial support for local journals so they can align their editorial practices, guidelines, governance, and revenue streams, and adopt a common approach to indexing these journals in various international indexing systems.

### **To address inequities in fee-based open access publishing:**

Irrespective of the nature of necessary reforms for research communication, it is important that elements of scientific publishing that depend upon international payments are based on principles of purchasing power parity.

- > Libraries and library consortia worldwide should develop shared principles to adopt in their transformative and open access negotiations with scholarly publishers, that will hold publishers accountable for reducing financial and other inequities in scholarly journal publishing. Efforts toward this goal are underway, promoted by the OA2020 Initiative together with the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC).
- > Various international organizations—library consortia, funders, universities, science organizations—should work together in the call for publishers to adopt more equitable practices, including but not limited to transparent pricing of open access publishing services based on purchasing power parity.

These and additional proposals will be discussed in two further regional workshops, in the Asia-Pacific region and the Americas, in the first half of 2023, with the aim of defining and promoting global practices and action lines.

The workshops are open to a wide range of stakeholders **who fund and produce research**: scientists and scholars, research administrators, libraries and library consortia, university leadership, science councils and grant funders, and ministries of research and education, all have a role to play in shaping an open ecosystem in scientific information that is globally equitable.

Details about the workshops will be posted on the OA2020 website in early 2023. For more information, [contact@oa2020.org](mailto:contact@oa2020.org).

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