



II DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS CONFERENCE

The 2nd Diamond Open Access Conference aims to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders—researchers, editors, universities, research funding and performing organisations, academic libraries, learned societies, and policy makers—who are engaged in strengthening the Diamond Open Access scholarly publishing ecosystem worldwide. The conference will focus on equity, quality, usability, and sustainability of the Diamond Open Access model, aiming to encourage mutual learning and understanding between different regions of the world.

The event will highlight good practices and policies from different parts of the world to develop a deeper understanding of Diamond Open Access. The event aims to promote the development of global principles that unite the initiatives developed in diverse, local contexts.

The conference will help to foster collaboration and networking opportunities among participants from different regions of the world. It will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share their experiences and learn from each other's successes and challenges. Additionally, the conference will produce a set of global principles that will guide and federate the Diamond Open Access initiatives worldwide.

The Diamond Open Access Conference is open to all stakeholders involved in the Diamond Open Access ecosystem, including researchers, editors, universities, research funding and performing organisations, academic libraries, learned societies, and policy makers.

The event will consist of keynote speeches, plenary sessions, panel discussions, and workshops. The conference will be held both in-person and virtually, allowing for broader participation from different parts of the world.

Overall, the Diamond Open Access Conference aims to promote equity, quality, usability, and sustainability of the Diamond Open Access model and foster collaboration among stakeholders involved in the ecosystem.

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TOWARDS A FEDERATED GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS

A discussion paper



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Abstract:

This discussion paper presents a comprehensive proposal for establishing a global research infrastructure dedicated to Diamond Open Access (OA). Diamond OA is characterized by scholarly communities leading and owning the content-related aspects of scholarly communication without charging fees to authors or readers. The proposed infrastructure, organized as a four-level federation, aims to strengthen the role of Diamond OA worldwide. The paper explores the background of current Diamond OA initiatives, highlighting the Latin American model and the significant findings of the OA Diamond Journals Study. The Action Plan for Diamond OA, a community-driven initiative, responds to the study's recommendations and further supports the ecosystem.

The paper introduces a Diamond infrastructure that is distributed, collaborative, and sustainable, emphasizing global collaboration and alignment. The four-level structure proposed consists of Diamond Open Access communities, Diamond Capacity Centers (DCCs), Regional Diamond Capacity Hubs (DCHs), and the Global Diamond Federation (GDF). Each level has specific responsibilities and functions aimed at fostering collaboration, interoperability, and mutual support.

Keywords: Diamond OA, Open Science, Equity, Bibliodiversity, Governance

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1. Introduction¹

This paper proposes to establish a global research infrastructure for Diamond Open Access (OA). This infrastructure will aim at providing resources and services to diamond open access communities worldwide to strengthen their role in scholarly communication. It will be a global infrastructure serving communities worldwide, while operating as a distributed system that aligns diverse communities to achieve shared goals.

'Diamond' Open Access is a scholarly communication model whereby research outputs are openly available without charging fees to either authors or readers. Importantly, it is a model that is driven by scholarly communities, meaning that they are in the lead and have ownership of the content-related elements of scholarly communication.

The proposed globally distributed infrastructure aims to engage with, provide support for, and align the existing diamond open access ecosystem, as uncovered by the OA Diamond Journals Study and increasingly organized around the endorsing community of the Action Plan for Diamond Open Access (cf. *infra*). It is a timely proposal, given the growing importance of diamond OA within the public sector coupled with unprecedented political consensus and support in Europe (cf. *infra*).

The infrastructure will take the shape of a four-level federation, with each level having its own responsibilities to achieve the shared goal of strengthening diamond open access as a leading scholarly communication model. These levels and their responsibilities are presented in this paper, initiating a discussion with diamond OA communities and other stakeholders in the research landscape. We invite you to come forward and join this discussion.

2. Background

This section presents current Diamond Open Access initiatives, which form the basis for knowledge sharing, infrastructure development, and advocacy. It succinctly reports the experience of several communities and important policy developments. Notable community examples include the 20 years of Diamond

Open Access in Latin America; the breakthrough study on Diamond OA Journals and Platforms in 2021; the Action Plan for Diamond Open Access—a stakeholder-driven initiative. The sections also point to crucial policy developments, including the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (2021) and the EU Council Conclusions fostering the engagement of EU Member States in working towards accessible and equitable scholarly publication models (May 2023).

It is important to note that the examples presented here are just a small subset of the myriad Diamond Open Access initiatives worldwide. The authors are in discussion with initiatives from other world regions that add their own accents and new elements to the global discussion. The Global Summit on Diamond Open Access in October 2023 in Toluca, Mexico was instrumental in this process which is now being complemented with numerous bilateral and multilateral meetings.

2.1. Latin America

Latin America has historically maintained a model of scientific publication without reading or publishing fees that is supported by universities and where the academic sector acts as the main owner and publisher of scientific journals. Several platforms in the region are key components that consolidate the Diamond Open Access ecosystem. The Latindex journal directory, the Diamond Open Access journal platform Redalyc, Scielo, CLACSO, AmeliCA, La Referencia as well as hundreds of institutional journal portals, thematic, disciplinary and institutional repositories, national journal and repository networks are part of the infrastructure. These platforms are characterized by an organically regulated distribution of tasks. Its services support non-commercial scholarly communication. The Latin American model provides a universal benefit: Open Access is collectively sustained for the common good.

Since 2003, Redalyc has aimed to contribute to sustainable Diamond Open Access publishing, by providing diamond OA publishers with training and technology. Although Redalyc emerged as a Latin American platform, since 2018 it is focusing efforts on strengthening Diamond Open Access by indexing journals from anywhere in the world, as long as they meet

quality and editorial criteria. Currently, Redalyc holds a collection of 1,575 journals from 749 institutions from 31 countries and it hosts about 800 thousand full-text scientific articles on its platform.

AmeliCA is an initiative supported by UNESCO and led by Redalyc and CLACSO to articulate the dialogue with different actors in order to strengthen the recognition and sustainability of Diamond OA publishing and non-commercial Open Science. AmeliCA's goal is to promote the value of non-commercial approaches to achieve Open Access.

Many declarations in Latin America have focused on different aspects of Open Access: to safeguard access to information ("Declaración de Salvador sobre acceso abierto," 2006), to safeguard the protection of academic and scientific output in Open Access ("Declaración de México En Favor Del Ecosistema Latinoamericano de Acceso Abierto No Comercial," 2017), to promote the development of public policies for the implementation of Open Science ("Declaración de Panamá sobre Ciencia Abierta," 2018), the declaration for a new academic and scientific evaluation for a science with social relevance in Latin America and the Caribbean (FOLEC-CLACSO, 2022), and more recently the Declaration on Open Science of CSUCA (Central American Higher University Council) and the Manifesto on Science as Global Public Good: Non-commercial Open Access (2023), one of the results of the reflections at the Global Summit of Diamond Open Access held in Toluca, Mexico from 23 to 27 October 2023.

2.2. The OA Diamond Journals Study

March 2021 marked a milestone: the publication of the [OA Diamond Journals Study](#) (OADJS, Bosman et al. 2021) undertaken by an OPERAS-led consortium. Commissioned by cOAlition S and funded by Science Europe, this study explored "collaborative non-commercial Open Access publishing models for Open Access (a.k.a Diamond OA)" and provided an analysis of the global landscape of OA diamond journals and platforms. The most important finding of the study was that Diamond OA worldwide can be characterized as a largely fragmented archipelago of 17.000 to 29.000 journals. Most of these journals are

relatively small, multilingual, and diverse, but despite this, they represent 44 % of all articles in fully Open Access journals. In addition, 11.500 of these journals are in DOAJ, testifying that Diamond OA journals meet the DOAJ threshold of quality. One of the recommendations of OADJS was to build a Diamond Capacity Hub that would align, coordinate, and improve the sustainability of Diamond OA.

2.3. The Action Plan for Diamond Open Access

In response to the findings of the OA Diamond Journals Study, the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR), cOAlition S, OPERAS, and Science Europe launched the [Action Plan for Diamond Open Access](#) in March 2022. This is a plan to align and develop common resources for the entire Diamond OA ecosystem, including journals and platforms, while respecting their cultural, multilingual, and disciplinary diversity. Over 150 organizations have endorsed the Diamond Action Plan to work together in a community.

In line with the ambitions of the Action Plan, the 3y–€3m DIAMAS project and the 5y–€5m CRAFT-OA project, funded by Horizon Europe for Diamond journals in the ERA, are taking forward the goal to provide the research community with an aligned, high-quality, and sustainable Diamond OA scholarly communication ecosystem, capable of implementing OA as a standard publication practice across the ERA. These projects intend to create a community, supporting services, and infrastructure for Diamond Publishers who adopt common standards, guidelines, and best practices, which will be co-created and adopted as an Extensible Quality Standard for Institutional Publishing (EQSIP).

2.4. Growing political support

Political support for Open Science has been growing in alignment with initiatives taken by the public research sector. Increasingly, governments are including Diamond Open Access as the way forward for scholarly communication worldwide. At the global level, the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#) was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 41st session in November 2021 and has been instrumen-

tal in providing a framework for Open Science policies and practices worldwide. It outlines a common definition, shared values, principles and standards for Open Science at the international level and proposes a set of actions conducive to a fair and equitable operationalisation of Open Science. In October 2023, UNESCO announced that it would host the Secretariat of the globally distributed cooperative for Diamond Open Access.

In Europe, political support for Diamond Open Access took a step forward and solidified with the Council of the European Union adopting [conclusions on high-quality, transparent, open, trustworthy, and equitable scholarly publishing](#) on 23 May 2023. EU Member States in these conclusions supported unanimously “the development of aligned institutional and funding policies and strategies regarding not-for-profit open access multi-format scholarly publishing models in Europe with no costs for authors or readers, and to set and implement roadmaps or action plans for a significant expansion of such publishing models.”

Representative organizations of the public research sector in Europe [welcomed these conclusions in a joint statement](#) (May 2023). The statement was co-signed by the European University Association (EUA), the Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER), the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA), the Association of ERC Grantees (AERG), the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA), the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc), Science Europe, cOAlition S, OPERAS, and ANR.

3. A common Diamond infrastructure

These rapid developments have accelerated the need and the momentum to build a common infrastructure for scholar-led and owned OA publishing. This infrastructure must be international and long-term sustainable. It must integrate existing services and be capable of supporting bottom-up Diamond initiatives.

The initiative to federate Diamond Open Access initiatives must be a global endeavor because science and scholarship

are global. Therefore, collaboration must be sought with pre-existing initiatives in Diamond OA elsewhere in the world. Redalyc-AmeliCA stands out as a prime example of how to organize Diamond OA at the regional level. All local, national and international Diamond Open Access infrastructures should collaborate globally to align their practices and training, share services and tools, and work on the interoperability of their platforms. This collaboration should take the form of a globally aligned and coordinated set of open infrastructures, that promotes cooperation and interoperability at all levels, sustainably supports scholar-led publishing communities with a solidarity-based model, and that is adequately recognized and valued by research assessment systems.

Such an infrastructure should also be *fully distributed*: similar to those of Latin America and the Caribbean—other world regions (Africa, Europe, Asia, North America) should develop regional Diamond Capacity Hubs that federate and align a set of smaller national, community and institutional Capacity Centers that deliver services and guarantee quality standards of Diamond OA journals in various languages and for a variety of disciplines.

In the rest of this paper, we outline the organization of this global collaboration.

4. A global four-level federation

The essence of our proposal is captured in the following figure:



4.1. Diamond Open Access communities

The basis and foundation of the federation consists of Diamond Open Access communities that curate scholarly journals, books, and other outputs. Journals represent communities of authors, readers, reviewers and editors with a shared interest in a specific scholarly topic, as defined in the aims and scope of the journal. The work at this level is editorial and scientific: editors solicit reviews and formulate recommendations and decisions. They adhere to and apply international quality standards and guidelines in running the journal. Guidelines for authors and reviewers are clearly provided, as is the governance of the journal (team and board). The journal community also ensures that the journal title's ownership cannot be transferred, and the continuity of governance is ensured via procedures for selecting the editorial team and board. Journals are interconnected at the disciplinary level. Books will be considered as well, in view of various scholar-led initiatives that are adopting Diamond models. Similarly, Diamond elements that cannot be categorized as journals or books, such as Diamond Publish-Review-Curate models (which include preprints and Open Peer Reviews), as well as contents in repositories; are grouped here under the general term 'outputs'.

4.2. The Diamond Capacity Centers (DCCs)

Moving up one level in the proposed organizational structure, **Diamond Capacity Centers** (DCCs) provide first-line assistance to Diamond journals. They provide close support to journals, including technical tools, financial administration, a submission system and platform, dissemination platforms, mediation for copy-editing/ typesetting services, assistance with legal matters related to governance and ownership, guidelines, best practices, and training of editors. Additionally, DCCs help journals align with quality standards and guidelines. They also handle multilingualism and provide support in national language(s).

The DIAMAS study has found that national DCCs, as in Croatia (HRAC), Finland (TSV), France (OpenEdition), and Spain (FECYT) already align and coordinate services for Diamond journals in their respective countries. The national level is a valuable one

because it is most attuned with national legislation, institutional networks, and academic traditions that need to be taken into account for Diamond journals.

There are many types of DCCs. Geographical DCCs can be distinguished from disciplinary ones. Geographical DCCs encompass centers that can be local and institutional (based in a University library), or national organizations, funders, and platforms (FECYT, OpenEdition, HRAC, TSV). Disciplinary DCCs serve a specific scholarly subdiscipline and facilitate the exchange of best practices and alignment of guidelines and journal policies among journals in the same field (Open Library of Humanities, LingOA). A third type of DCCs can be distinguished based on the specific subset of services they provide to journals: some may only offer copy-editing and typesetting, others may provide exclusively administrative or legal advice. Not all DCCs necessarily provide the same set of services, but all journals must be able to have access to all services required for their operations. This patchwork is an inevitable consequence of the federated, community-based structure we have to embrace. DCCs will collaborate and interconnect at this level.

4.3. The Regional Diamond Capacity Hubs (DCHs)

At a third level, **Regional Diamond Capacity Hubs** (DCHs) ensure alignment of DCCs in their region. These Hubs have three distinct functions within the federation: first, serving the DCCs, secondly, fostering horizontal alignment across world regions, and third, representing their own region in the federation. They also pool resources at the regional level; coordinate services, standards, and practices across DCCs; and ensure complementarity and subsidiarity between DCCs. They aim at streamlining services at the regional level, create efficiencies, and organize exchanges of electronic publishing specialists across the region. Specific world regions share a number of common characteristics, traditions, legislative contexts, and governmental structures that make aggregation at this level both useful and practical. At the same time, regional DCHs should work together and interact as much as possible at this level, exchanging technologies, best practices, learning modules etc.

Regional DCHs come in various forms. In Africa, the non-profit organization African Journals Online (AJOL), is the preeminent platform of African-published scholarly journals. Since 1998, AJOL has worked to increase online access, awareness, quality and use of African-published, peer-reviewed research. In Latin America and the Caribbean, LA Referencia is a network of Open Access repositories. Through its services, it supports national Open Access strategies in Latin America by means of a platform with interoperability standards, sharing and giving visibility to the scientific production generated in higher education and scientific research institutions. It currently integrates 12 national nodes, consolidating scientific articles, doctoral and master's theses from more than one hundred universities and research institutions.

In Europe, 2024 will see the creation of the **European Research Area Diamond Capacity Hub** (ERA-DCH) that will facilitate equitable Open Access scholarly publishing without fees for readers and authors. The aim of the ERA-DCH is to regionally facilitate a globally distributed, aligned, high-quality, and sustainable scholarly communication infrastructure that is both managed and owned by the scholarly community.

The main role of the ERA-DCH is to ensure alignment of Diamond Capacity Centers (DCCs) in Europe. The ERA-DCH has at least the following tasks:

- Coordinate and streamline tools, services and practices across DCCs.
- Implement and monitor community standards (e.g. EQSIP 2.0).
- Manage a European Common Access Point (ECAP) for shared resources such as the outputs of DIAMAS and Craft-OA projects.
- Create efficiencies, complementarity, and subsidiarity between existing European DCCs, and stimulate the creation of new national DCCs across Europe.
- Pool and redistribute financial and service resources for Diamond Open Access in Europe.
- Organize exchanges of electronic publishing specialists across Europe with a view to increasing the professionalization of Diamond OA publishing.

- Set goals for the expansion of Diamond Open Access journals in Europe via a “Diamondisation Task Force”.

4.4. The Global Diamond Federation (GDF, provisional term)

The fourth level represents the **Global Diamond Federation** (GDF), a group that brings together regional Diamond Capacity Hubs (DCHs)—and possibly other large regional organizations with a similar vocation—to facilitate Diamond Open Access publishing, in line with the 2021 [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#). The main aim of the GDF is to facilitate a globally distributed, aligned, high-quality, and sustainable scholarly communication infrastructure that is managed and owned by the scholarly community, and where the quality of outputs is derived from the trust in the communities running the journals.

4.4.1. Vision, mission, and objectives

The *vision* of the GDF is a robust worldwide system of scholarly communication services and infrastructures that provides scholarly communities with tools allowing them to focus on their central function of organizing and facilitating the scholarly discussion. These scholarly communication services will have no financial barriers for editors, authors, and readers, and strictly operate in the interest of advancing knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

The *mission* of the GDF is to build a global federated community of Diamond Open Access, advocate for this scholarly communication model, and monitor its progress worldwide in the interest of equitable and inclusive Open Science.

The initial objectives of the GDF are the following:

- **Advocacy.** The GDF will promote the vision, mission, and values of Diamond Open Access at the level of international organizations and governmental bodies.
- **Interoperability.** The GDF will explore technological interoperability of tools and platforms and adopt common technical standards and best practices.

2 More specifically, the GDF would invite bids from consortia of Diamond OA communities and organizations, and select one of these bids as a function of specific, open, and inclusive criteria.

- **Mutualisation.** The GDF will organize exchanges of services, promote mutual learning between regional hubs, and ensure equity and solidarity across regions as much as possible. The GDF will also facilitate the organization of regular Diamond OA Summits, with the aim to inclusively bring together the worldwide Diamond OA community around specific themes and interests.²
- **Monitoring.** The GDF will measure progress of Diamond OA and set priorities for its global expansion across all scholarly disciplines and geographical regions.

Progress on these fronts will be measured annually and reported with SMART criteria.

4.4.2. Governance

The Global Diamond Summit Group (GDSG) who took the initiative to organize the first global summit on Diamond OA in Toluca where the idea of the GDF was launched, will initially discuss and set up an initial governance model for the GDF. This group includes representatives of ANR, CLACSO, cOAlition S, OPERAS, Redalyc-AmeliCA, Science Europe, UNESCO, and UÓR.

Given the goals of the GDF formulated above, at least two types of organizations will be represented in the eventual Board of the GDF (BGDF) as worked out by the GDSG.

On the one hand, the BGDF should ideally include representatives from the major existing DCHs: e.g. Redalyc-AmeliCA, AJOL, ERA Diamond Capacity Hub (under construction), Re-lawan Jurnal (Indonesia), Coalition Publica. In regions where DCHs are currently lacking as such, other organizations that are willing and able to eventually take on that role can be asked to join (e.g. LYRASIS in the USA). Delegates on the BGDF represent their organizations and commit to support synergies within and between regions.

On the other hand, the BGDF should have a role for organizations that serve Diamond OA as global infrastructures, e.g. SCOSS, DOAJ and PKP, and COAR (for the relation between Diamond and repositories). The GDSG should define the re-

spective roles of both types of organizations in the BGDF, as they are not on the same level.

This double articulation will be accommodated by setting up a Governing Board representing the major existing DCHs or equivalent organizations, and various Special Interest Committees, including a Technical Committee. Each DCH will delegate representatives to both the Board and the Technical Committee. Representatives from the organizations that serve Diamond OA as global infrastructures should be able to participate in the special interest committees...

The BGDF has a double role. Its *main initial* role is to represent the regional hubs and the communities of DCCs and journals that they serve. Its *additional* role is to politically represent and advocate for Diamond Open Access with regional and global bodies, ministries, and governmental agencies. All BGDF members will have a demonstrable background as active members of the Diamond OA community.

It is important that the BGDF be appropriately limited in the type of organizations included in it. The BGDF and its Office should be a very light organization with a mission limited to coordination. A GDF Office will organize the activities and meetings of the BGDF. The GDF Office will coordinate the following activities in 2024:

- Set up the framework of the federation.
- Support collaboration between DCHs.
- Prepare future editions of the global summit.
- The GDF Office will be hosted by a secretariat at UNESCO, and operate under its auspices, in line with Bhanu Neupane's announcement at the Toluca Global Summit.

4.4.3. Principles and values ³

In addition to the principles of Diamond Open Access,⁴ the Federation will work under the five conditions of the "[Collective Impact Model](#)":

- *Common Agenda:*
Participants agree on a shared vision, common goals,

³ With thanks to Sharla Lair, who drew our attention to the Collective Impact Model, and Tanja Niemann, who referred to the principles of the cooperative model, both at the Global Diamond Summit in Toluca, Mexico on 26 October 2023. The cooperative model for academic publishing is also proposed as a model for academic publishing by Crow (2006) [Raym Crow, Publishing cooperatives. An alternative for society publishers, SPARC Discussion paper], as brought to our attention by Kamran Nain.

⁴ See, e.g. <https://thd.hypotheses.org/35>

and a collective approach to addressing the issue.

- *Shared Measurement:*
Stakeholders develop a common set of metrics and data collection methods to track progress and evaluate the impact of their efforts.
- *Mutually Reinforcing Activities:*
Organizations and individuals coordinate their activities to ensure they are working in alignment with one another and reinforcing each other's efforts.
- *Continuous Communication:*
Regular and open communication among all partners is essential to maintain trust and facilitate collaboration.
- *Backbone Support:*
A dedicated organization or entity provides leadership, coordination, and support for the collective impact initiative, ensuring that it moves forward effectively.

Furthermore it should work under the principles of a *federated cooperative*. It should be:

- Democratic, inclusive, and multilingual.
- Driven by the values of fairness, equality, social justice, and sustainability.
- Enabling its members to take control of their future.
- Allowing economic and social benefits to stay in the communities where they are generated.

5. Final remarks and way forward

The proposal outlined here is the result of an initial proposal first presented at the Global Diamond Summit in Toluca on 26 October 2023, and subsequently amended based on consultations to the GDSG, the organizers of the Diamond Action Plan, and the DIAMAS and Craft-OA communities. Further consultations, e.g. the Diamond Open Access Plan community, are on the way.

UNESCO is supporting this development and will provide a neutral platform that can follow up the principles and some of the framework actions in the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. Discussions are on the way and more information will be provided in due time.