



The case for jointly funding Open Science Services

1. The issue

Worldwide, universities, research funders and governments are consistently issuing policies to promote better open access to research publications and data. The scholarly communication community has come to depend on many of them when implementing their own Open Access and Open Science goals, e.g. the Directory of Open Access Journals ([DOAJ](#)) or [SHERPA/RoMEO](#) that records publisher copyright and self-archiving policies

However, currently several of the Open Science services are funded on an unsustainable, localised and temporary basis. Despite their success, they are frequently under financial constraints and pressures to economise. With no alternative sustainable model in place, stakeholders are less likely to be able to build services into long-term strategic solutions for local OA and OS implementation. Numerous research support services have already been bought up by publishers such as Springer and Elsevier as a result with obvious consequences. Without an alternative sustainable funding model being brought into operation, and one led by the users themselves, the risk is that the services would have to fundamentally change their operation, in scope, coverage, accuracy or responsiveness; be forced into charging at the point of use or raising some other pay-wall; be bought up by a commercial publisher to be added to their suite of growing services, or, in extremis, close down entirely.

Without a new sustainable solution for the world's OS services, some services will fail. Furthermore, and more importantly, since policy implementation is very much dependent on certain services, policy also has the risk of not being realised.

2. An international coalition helping to strategically and systematically focus on sustaining OA and Open Science services

The SCOSS coalition was developed by a global group of research organisations and their libraries including The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions ([IFLA](#)), [LIBER](#), the Australasian Open Access Strategy Group ([AOASG](#)), the Council of the Australian University Librarians ([CAUL](#)), the Confederation of Open Access Repositories ([COAR](#)), The European University Association ([EUA](#)), and organisations with Open Access and Open Science as key areas of focus such as [EIFL](#) and [SPARC \(US\)](#) and [SPARC Europe](#), and organisations representing research funding organisations such as The European Research Council ([ERC](#)), and [Science Europe](#).

At present, the coalition is comprised of the following members: the Council of the Australian University Librarians ([CAUL](#)) [LIBER](#), [EIFL](#) and [SPARC Europe](#) to take the mandate forward.

3. The vision

An infrastructure of freely available open science services funded by policymakers and stakeholders, committing to provide sustainable funding for the operation and development of key services

4. The mission

To provide a new co-ordinated cost-sharing framework to ensure that non-commercial OS services that underpin the development of wider global open science are sustained in the future.



5. The approach, in brief

- The SCOSS coalition forms a consolidated voice from Open Access and Open Science stakeholders to help create a sustainable, equitable and efficient service infrastructure.
- It establishes a system to regularly identify and evaluate Open Science services considered key for implementing Open Access and Open Science policy and recommend these for funding to the Open Access and Open Science communities.
- It creates a framework to present a transparent, efficient and equitable division of service funding year-on-year that increases efficiency for investors and addresses community needs.
- It achieves a common understanding amongst stakeholders and users as to the funding needs of such services. Obtaining more transparency on their costs (1) and funding needs (2) to enable the Coalition to propose fair remuneration to sustain them.
- It provides a way for the international community that benefits from Open Science services to have a voice in the creation of a sustainable, equitable and efficient service environment.

6. The opportunities and benefits

- A transparent, efficient and equitable cost-sharing framework will be used where the costs of maintaining certain OS services would be more fairly and collaboratively shared by organisations that decide to fund these services.
- SCOSS will reduce the burden of assessing the priority and quality of an individual funding request through centralised, community-led, judgement.
- While it is considered essential that the individual services maintain their operational independence, SCOSS will create an influential consolidation of user representation, able to feed back directly to the services in association with the funding stream.
- SCOSS will encourage a close working relationship between those services identified as key, facilitating closer integration of development plans between services and helping to ensure that gaps between existing services are filled and overlaps reduced.
- Research and funding organisations can collectively take responsibility for maintaining an open research society by helping to fund and sustain some of the world's valued OS services based on transparency, equity and efficiency.

7. The SCOSS pilot

SCOSS is in the middle of a pilot, asking the community to fund 2 essential services to Open Access and Open Science: e.g. the Directory of Open Access Journals ([DOAJ](#)) or [SHERPA/RoMEO](#). Please see their offers for more details. For a short description of these services, see www.scoss.org.

8. The funding model

As compared to the huge sums spent on subscriptions, SCOSS feels that the suggested amount is a small amount to pay to help us meet the targets efficiently. Considering this is a new initiative, we have set these targets to include early adopters and to factor them into a sum we believe will be needed to obtain the targets. For DOAJ, we need *at least* 243 funders paying the higher fee per year to meet the target. For Sherpa/RoMEO, we need *at least* 382 to pay the higher fee per year to meet the target.

Not all institutions are in the position to fund such services, which means that other organisations will pay to facilitate access to these services for all; as a community committed to implementing Open Access and Open Science, we can help sustain our infrastructure for years to come.