

Project Description – Project Proposals in the Area of Scientific Library Services and Information Systems (LIS)

LIS Funding Programme or Call: Infrastructures for Scholarly Publishing – Fresh Momentum for Diamond Open Access

SeDOA – Servicestelle Diamond Open Access

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1. Project Description

Starting Point: The Role of Diamond Open Access in Germany

Analyses from the “Open Access Monitor” for Germany show that over the last 10 years “article processing charges” (APC) and transformative agreements have been the key factors for the significant increase of journal articles published directly via open access each year.¹ Findings of the DIAMAS-project state “a high penetration rate by commercial publishers” (Taşkın et al. 2024:88) in Germany. Although the number of journal articles published under the Diamond Open Access model has grown consistently, according to the figures of the Open Access Monitor it only accounts for a small proportion of the total number of journal articles.

In the discussion about future open access strategies, however, fee-based open access publishing in the APC model and via transformative agreements is being increasingly scrutinised, and former arguments regarding the de-commercialization of the publication process gain momentum: “Would

¹ Data source Web of Science and filter 2013, 2023, corresponding authors from Germany. <https://open-access-monitor.de/publications>.

we begin to understand publishing ventures not as revenue centers [...], but rather as part of the infrastructure of the institution [...]" (Fitzpatrick 2011:165). In addition, the price and cost development of APCs raises legitimate fears that research funders, research organisations and scientific institutions are falling into a cost trap. The direct funding of individual open access journal articles also offers false economic incentives to open access publishers and bears the risk for reduced quality control in favour of the highest possible publication output and revenue. Although the transformation agreements often contribute to improved information supply and significantly grow the ratio of open access articles in hybrid journals, they have not yet led to any considerable conversion of former subscription journals to open access (Jahn 2024). Against this background, the Diamond Open Access model is increasingly being discussed as a viable alternative and received support by a significant number of research funding agencies at the European and national level. The [cOAlition S](#)² defines Diamond Open Access as follows:

"Diamond Open Access refers to a scholarly publication model in which journals and platforms do not charge fees to either authors or readers. Diamond Open Access journals are community-driven, academic-led, and academic-owned publishing initiatives. Serving a fine-grained variety of generally small-scale, multilingual, and multicultural scholarly communities, these journals and platforms embody the concept of bibliodiversity. For all these reasons, Diamond Open Access journals and platforms are equitable by nature and design."

The research funders united in cOAlition S announced a few years ago that they would stop funding open access publication fees via transformative agreements in hybrid journals and in "transformative journals" after 2024. The European Commission has already implemented this in its funding conditions (European Commission 2024:99). The European Council's "Council Conclusions On High-Quality, Transparent, Open, Trustworthy And Equitable Scholarly Publishing" published by the European Council (Council of the European Union 2023), whose recommendations received wide appraisal and were also welcomed by the DFG³, have set out the path of Diamond Open Access. And after the first Global Summit on Diamond Open Access, the UNESCO only recently has announced a "Global Alliance for Diamond Open Access", launching a world-wide movement to coordinate all the different initiatives.⁴ The European Union is funding important projects in the context of Diamond Open Access publishing that are highly relevant to the project applied for here. Under the umbrella of the European research infrastructure OPERAS, where the Max Weber Foundation is a core member, the project "Developing Institutional Open Access Publishing Models to Advance Scholarly Communication" ([DIAMAS](#))⁵ aims to provide a coordinated, high-quality and sustainable institutional ecosystem for Diamond Open Access publishing in the European Research Area (ERA) by the end of August 2025. DIAMAS published a comprehensive report on the respective national requirements for publishing in the Diamond Open Access model in 2024 (Taşkın 2024). Its general results and those relating to Germany will be incorporated into the work packages of the project applied for here. With "Creating a Robust Accessible Federated Technology for Open Access" ([CRAFT-OA](#))⁶, the European Union is funding a project that aims to provide

² <https://www.coalition-s.org/diamond-open-access/>

³ DFG welcomes EU Council Conclusions on Scholarly Publishing, 23 May 2023. <https://www.dfg.de/en/ser-vice/press/press-releases/2023/press-release-no-16>.

⁴ First Global Summit on Diamond Open Access, Toluca, Mexico, 23-28 October 2023. <https://globaldiamantoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/202310-Global-Summit-Conclusions-Way-Forward.pdf>; UNESCO. Announcing the Global Alliance for Diamond Open Access, 10 July 2024. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/announcing-global-diamond-open-access-alliance>.

⁵ <https://diamasproject.eu/>

⁶ <https://www.craft-oa.eu/>

technical tools, training, information and services for the institutional Diamond Open Access publishing environment. DIAMAS and CRAFT-OA are complementary projects that cooperate. Being a recent joint effort the “Operational Diamond OA Criteria for Journals” can be considered as one step on the way towards a universal definition of Diamond Open Access (Armengou et al. 2024). The project consortium applying here is involved in CRAFT-OA via the Max Weber Foundation and the Hamburg State and University Library and aims to work closely with CRAFT-OA. Based on the observation that the promotion of open access books is not yet as pronounced as in the field of journals, the strategic goal of the project “Policy Alignment of Open Access Monographs in the European Research Area” ([PALOMERA](#))⁷ is to accelerate the open access transformation of books. Bielefeld University Library is one of the members of this consortium involved in PALOMERA and this project proposal explicitly includes the publication of Diamond Open Access books.

The “German Science and Humanities Council” (Wissenschaftsrat), too, has referenced the Diamond Open Access model several times in its highly regarded recommendations on the transformation of academic publishing (German Science and Humanities Council 2022). In line with the “Action Plan for Diamond Open Access” (Ancion et al. 2022), the DFG call for proposals rightly states that the potential of non-commercial, science-led publishing within the existing Diamond Open Access infrastructure is currently not being fully utilised. In comparison, the technical development level of publishing platforms and workflows, the editorial work, which is often based on voluntary labour, and thus the lower visibility and sustainability lag behind the offerings of commercial publishers.

The current situation of publishing in the Diamond Open Access model in Germany is described most comprehensively by Taubert et al. 2024 in the publication “Mapping the German Diamond Open Access Journal Landscape”, which, in addition to the journal list “Diamond Open Access Journals Germany” (DOAG, Bruns et al. 2022), is a result of the project “Community-Driven Open Access Journals between Scientific and Resource-Related Requirements” (CODRIA) funded by the “Federal Ministry of Science and Research” (BMBF) and carried out at Bielefeld University until the end of 2023. The article presents the results of the bibliometric analyses conducted in the project as well as surveys and in-depth interviews with editors of Diamond Open Access journals in Germany. Some important results include the fact that the majority of journal titles are located in the social sciences and humanities, with some exceptions (Taubert et al. 2024:222, fig. 2), and that more than half of the journal titles are institutionally anchored at research institutions. Many journal editors appreciate the support of libraries for the technical operation of journal platforms such as “Open Journal System” (OJS), but at the same time there is a tension between the need of the libraries to standardise the service and the wish of the journal editors to provide a more individualised service (Taubert et al. 2024:222). A majority of the journals surveyed can be characterised as “unstable” because they are underfunded or will be so in the foreseeable future (Taubert et al. 2024:219/220).⁸ In absence of studies, we assume that the publishing infrastructures for Diamond OA books are even more precarious.

Connected to the organisational and administrative aspects is a discussion about the value-based and political dimensions of scholarly publishing, which are particularly realised in the path of Diamond Open Access. Various networks and initiatives have emphasised that collaboration and co-

⁷ <https://operas-eu.org/projects/palomera/>

⁸ BMBF is also currently funding the project “Diamond Thinking” by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and UB Stuttgart, which aims at assisting scientists of the KIT in establishing DOA journals or flipping existing journals to DOA. More information: <https://www.bibliothek.kit.edu/english/diamond-thinking.php>.

operation in scholarly publishing lead to productive results (e.g. scholar-led.network 2022). Publication experiments and innovations have thus become possible and enriched the publishing landscape (Wrzesinski 2023; Pampel et al. 2023). Selected studies on the organisational principles of academic publishing also refer to inclusive governance and the questioning of an “economy of scale,” especially in small and interdisciplinary publication projects (Adema, Moore 2021; Adema, Moore 2018). Overall, the preservation and sustainability of the Diamond Open Access ecosystem is an important concern in terms of the necessary bibliodiversity of the scientific publication system.

Preliminary work in consortium

Our consortium combines a wide array of experts and institutions that are distinguished in the field of scholar-led academic publishing in general, and Diamond Open Access publishing in particular. This expertise is rooted in practical experience and deep connections throughout the community. Detailed information on relevant work from all members can be found in the attachment “member profiles”. In addition to the 15 organisations requesting funding in this proposal, our consortium includes the community represented by the [AG Universitätsverlage](https://ag-universitaetsverlage.de)⁹ with its 33 members and others such as the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. While our consortium comprises several large scale universities, we also represent organisations with a different institutional set-up and strong focus on specific academic disciplines, tying in to a wide set of communities. Besides the common library networks like IFLA, LIBER or DBV, we are connected with national and international research institutions through networks such as [U15](https://www.german-u15.de/)¹⁰ (FU Berlin, HU Berlin, UB Hamburg, UB Heidelberg), [TU9](https://www.tu9.de/)¹¹ (ULB Darmstadt, UB Braunschweig, TU Berlin), [CircleU](https://www.circle-u.eu/)¹² (HU Berlin), [UnaEuropa](https://www.una-europa.eu/)¹³ (FU Berlin) or [IATUL](https://www.iatul.org/)¹⁴ (ULB Darmstadt).

Publishing Expertise within the Consortium

The consortium partners offer a wide range of experience and expertise. Heidelberg University Library has an established, quality controlled OJS-based service, currently hosting about 150 OJS-Journals. Through co-operations, e.g. with *Fachinformationsdienste* (FID), Heidelberg has built a strong discipline-specific profile with excellent research, as well as a solid portfolio of basic services. Notably, a service for digital editions is offered via *heiEditions*. Berlin Universities Publishing (BerlinUP) with its branch BerlinUP journals (provided by Freie Universität Berlin) has recently been established with an up-to-date process to ensure technical and scientific quality. The new service is built on a decade of experience hosting about 40 OJS-based journals. Through Heidelberg and Berlin, the consortium represents high expertise in the field of open access journal publishing with a specific focus on the community surrounding Open Journal Systems (OJS), the world leading software for open access academic journals. Most notably Heidelberg and Freie Universität Berlin have been instrumental in shaping and connecting the German language OJS community in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland¹⁵, and have been actively contributing to sustaining the code base of the open source software OJS.¹⁶ Within our consortium, several other members are actively

⁹ <https://ag-univerlage.de>

¹⁰ <https://www.german-u15.de/>

¹¹ <https://www.tu9.de/>

¹² <https://www.circle-u.eu/>

¹³ <https://www.una-europa.eu/>

¹⁴ <https://www.iatul.org/>

¹⁵ This includes lead roles in the DFG-funded projects building up [OJS-de.net](https://ojs-de.net).

¹⁶ This includes developing new features, plugins and long-term maintenance of OJS-features across versions, including the main feature to integrate the German National Library (DNB) and OJS.

publishing OA-journals with OJS, e.g. UB Bielefeld, SUB Hamburg, as well as additional organisations associated through *AG Universitätsverlage*.

While OJS is the leading software for OA-journals, we believe that bibliodiversity should also be reflected in a wider portfolio of software solutions. ULB Darmstadt offers OA-journal services powered and hosted by the open source software Janeway¹⁷. HAB Wolfenbüttel uses content management system Drupal for its journal publishing and Max-Weber-Stiftung hosts international OA-platform perspectivia.net¹⁸ and an OA-blog platform via Hypotheses¹⁹, among others.

Not only focusing on journals, our consortium brings together key actors in the field of scholar-led open access publishing for books as well. Heidelberg University Publishing is a leader in the field of OA-books, publishing about 170 monographs per year, using the open-source-software Open Monograph Press (OMP, maintained by the same international community as OJS).²⁰ With 50 years of experience, the university press of Technische Universität Berlin laid the foundation for the book segment of BerlinUP, providing a well established workflow for Diamond open access book publishing and additional print publications. Further institutions associated through *AG Universitätsverlage* contribute an impressive share of roughly 3,700 Diamond OA books as well as many years of experience in support and development of services. ZB MED has established the open access platform PUBLISSO (based on DRUPAL), which allows for the publication of Living Handbooks in addition to version-of-record OA-books.

Third-party Funded Open Access Projects of Consortium Members

Our consortium members are well-versed in project management on different scales and combine expertise and experience within their organisations, teams and networks.²¹ We host several DFG-funded “Specialised Information Services (FID)”, most of which are in the process of establishing or expanding publishing infrastructures.²² Members of our consortium are working in different capacities in EU-funded open-access projects, most notably OPERAS Research Infrastructure, PALOMERA project, DIAMAS project, and CRAFT-OA project, as well as contributions towards EOSC. We are represented in 6 BMBF-funded projects²³ promoting open access, including open-access.network²⁴, and members of the consortium are part of [Landesinitiative openaccess.nrw](http://Landesinitiative.openaccess.nrw)²⁵ and NiedersachsenOpen.²⁶ Moreover, we are directly involved in several projects establishing the national research data infrastructure in Germany, NFDI.²⁷

AG Universitätsverlage

Over the course of 20 years, the AG (working group) *Universitätsverlage* has become a central point of contact for institutional open access publishing in the German-speaking countries in the

¹⁷ ULB Darmstadt is an institutional Journal Hosting client of Janeway. The publishing platform was developed at Birkbeck, University of London, to support the goals of the Open Library of Humanities (OLH), a pioneer of open access academic publishing. <https://janeway.systems>

¹⁸ <http://perspectivia.net>

¹⁹ de.hypotheses: Diamond OA platform for academic blogs, dedicated to the German speaking community, providing conceptual support, technical troubleshooting and training for blogging scholars.

²⁰ As a complement to OJS the open source software Open Monograph Press (OMP) offers support for the whole publishing workflow and the presentation of books. <https://pkp.sfu.ca/software/omp/>.

²¹ More information will be provided in the attachments to this proposal.

²² Among others, FID (Fachinformationsdienste): FID Pharmazie, arthistoricum.net, Propylaeum, FID4SA, FID SKA, FID Erziehungswissenschaft und Bildungsforschung, FID BBI, FID Romanistik.

²³ CODRIA, OLEKonsort, OPERAS-GER, DARIAH, Scholar-led Plus, ELADOAH.

²⁴ <https://open-access.network/en/home>

²⁵ <https://www.dh.nrw/kooperationen/Landesinitiative%20openaccess.nrw-80>

²⁶ <https://www.nds-bibliotheksbearat.de/sektion-w-wissenschaftliche-bibliotheken/konsortium/ndsopen/>

²⁷ NFDI (National Research Data Infrastructure in Germany): MaRDI, NFDI4Chem, NFDI4Culture, NFDI4DataScience, NFDI4Ing, NFDI4Memory, NFDI4Objects, NFDI4Phys, NFDI-Matwerk, NFDI4CS, FairCore4Eosc, Text+.

EU. It serves as an organisational framework for the cooperative collaboration of its members. Pooling 33 publishers (including 8 associated publishers) based in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy with broad service portfolios, the *AG Universitätsverlage* stands for bibliodiversity. All members support open access in accordance with the Berlin Declaration²⁸ (Arning et al. 2020). The close cooperation within the working group enables publishing providers to participate in knowledge transfer on workflows and technical aspects of publication infrastructures. The collaboration is organised in various focus groups, ensuring a constant exchange on needs and necessary innovation.²⁹ These focus groups provide a wide range of community experience, networking and the associated communication structures.

The *AG Universitätsverlage* is well established in the open access publishing ecosystem. Its members are engaged in a variety of (inter-)national publishing-related projects. Its quality standards (*AG Universitätsverlage* 2022) are widely adopted by the community and referenced by the DFG (2024b). The members of *AG Universitätsverlage* currently publish 105 Open Access journals, 90 of which fulfil the criteria for Diamond Open Access. To date, they have published more than 3,700 Diamond Open Access books. The AG members FU Berlin, HU Berlin, TU Berlin, SUB Hamburg, UB Heidelberg and ZB MED Köln as well as 14 SeDOA supporting members as listed under 5.3 and 5.4 provide a close connection to this community, placing the *AG Universitätsverlage* in the core of SeDOA.

2. Objectives and work programme

2.1 Anticipated total duration of the project

36 months (+36 months for the second phase)

2.2 Objectives

Following Pierre Mounier and Johan Rooryck's proposal to establish a global research infrastructure for Diamond Open Access, the "German Service Centre for Diamond Open Access" (Services-telle Diamond Open Access, SeDOA) will be a "National Diamond Open Access Capacity Center", which is part of the European and global Diamond Open Access network (Mounier, Rooryck 2023). As a national capacity centre, SeDOA will connect to the European hub in order to align activities in the German landscape with the overall Diamond Open Access strategy. Closely affiliated to the European bodies, SeDOA is also deeply rooted in German scholarly communities, thus making sure to channel all these requirements into the German Diamond Open Access community and vice versa. The German Diamond Open Access community, here understood as Communities of Practice (CoP), brings together those involved in Diamond Open Access publishing:

1. At the heart of the CoP is the target group of DiamondOA publication services, namely researchers at academic institutions in their role as authors, editors of anthologies and publication series as well as journal editors.
2. The backbone of the CoP are the existing academic publication infrastructures and Institutional Publishing Service Providers (IPSPs). In addition to university publishers and other publication service providers, these also include hosting services for publication platforms and repositories.

²⁸ https://openaccess.mpg.de/67605/berlin_declaration_engl.pdf

²⁹ Focus groups of the *AG Universitätsverlage* deal with the following topics: accessibility, indexing, ojs journals, outreach/range measurement, research assessment and quality standards, rights/licensing, service providers, single source publishing/xml, tenders, training, workflow management.

3. Specialised information services and scholarly societies play an intermediary role between service providers and researchers. They either offer publication services themselves, refer enquiries directly to known DiamondOA service providers or forward enquiries to the SeDOA Point of Contact for onward referral.
4. University and research libraries being responsible for providing information on open access publishing and offering general publication services. This target group plays a decisive role in providing first level support at their universities and research institutions. Adding these institutions to the SeDOA network will enhance the already strong SeDOA alliance and will establish an all encompassing and closely interconnected Diamond OA publication infrastructure reaching out directly to researchers and scholars seeking advice locally at their institutions.
5. Furthering change in current publication regimes requires rethinking reputation that rests on inappropriate metrics such as Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and Hirsch factor. Therefore, it is crucial to also address central policy makers such as the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, university leadership, and consortia such as TU9 and U15 to raise awareness for Diamond OA solutions.

SeDOA contributes to growing the efficiency of Diamond Open Access publishing in Germany by supporting the currently decentralised institutions in improving their technical and procedural services and providing centralised innovations for Diamond Open Access publishing. Although the DFG's call for proposals focuses on journals, SeDOA will also address services for open access books. The following operational objectives to be realised in the course of the project start at establishing a working governance, both for the project and tentatively for its long-term successor (WP1). We will provide new journals and those who intend to flip away from a commercial publisher with either publishing options at existing DOA venues or via SeDOA-specific services (WP2). We will provide guidelines and training for the community (WP3) and focus on discipline-specific as well as international networks (WP4). To increase visibility and metadata quality, we will build up a registry (WP5), and finally invest in exploring innovative publishing models (WP6).

2.3 Work programme and proposed methods

An overview of the work programme can be found in the appendices “work packages overview” and “work packages timetable”.

Work Package 1: Governance, Management and Communication

(Lead: ULB Darmstadt; participants: ULB Darmstadt, HU Berlin, MWS Bonn, SUB Hamburg)

The aim of WP1 is both to coordinate the project and to develop and establish governance and communication structures of SeDOA. The core elements are the SeDOA Office, the Spokesperson, the Steering Committee and the Communication Layer (see figure 1). This structure is intended to ensure the communication to all relevant stakeholders and users, i.e. the Communities of Practice (CoP). The SeDOA Office is represented by three consortium members, the ULB Darmstadt, the HU Berlin and the MWS Bonn, and is responsible for the coordination of the project and communication by and for SeDOA. The SeDOA Coordination section (ULB Darmstadt, HU Berlin) manages the SeDOA consortium. It organises and keeps records of the internal project meetings, including those of the Steering Committee, and convenes meetings of the Advisory Boards. The SeDOA Communication section (ULB Darmstadt, HU Berlin, MWS Bonn) manages all communication tasks and operates the SeDOA Point of Contact that serves as a single point of access to all services, distributes work to the respective WPs and monitors all relevant activities. The Communication

Layer permeates all levels of SeDOA and also comprises persons from each WP responsible for maintaining communication with pertinent stakeholders. By dividing up communication and supporting tasks amongst the WPs and a federated network of stakeholders, SeDOA ensures that issues are solved promptly and expertly and users are served as much as possible in their particular environments. By the same token all communication processes and outreach is connected to the central Communication Office. The Communication Layer manages all issues by using a ticket system. Communication activities are assisted by a Knowledge Base (KB) that is to be developed by taking advantage of the CRAFT-OA KB. Both the KB and ticket system are provided by the SUB Hamburg.

The members of the Steering Committee are made up of those organisations responsible for the five service segments mirrored in the WPs 2 to 6, the representatives of the SeDOA Office and a representative of the *AG Universitätsverlage*. It is responsible for strategic decisions about development and operation of SeDOA. In the area of strategy and project development, the Steering Committee is advised by the Stakeholder and International Advisory Board. In its function as a strategic part of SeDOA, the Steering Committee discusses results of the responsible WPs, agrees on network activities and commissions WPs to prepare position papers or statements or decides on their publication to serve the Communities of Practice (CoP, see figure 1)

Envisioning a future governance of the European Hub (DCH), SeDOA (DCC) as a consortium is prepared to collaborate with and to provide expertise for the DCH in the envisioned task forces and prepares services which are selected to be offered for the European or international community. Also, SeDOA sends a representative to the “Assembly of Capacity Centres”. Furthermore, the DCC will gather, prepare and transmit SeDOA results into the European Hub.

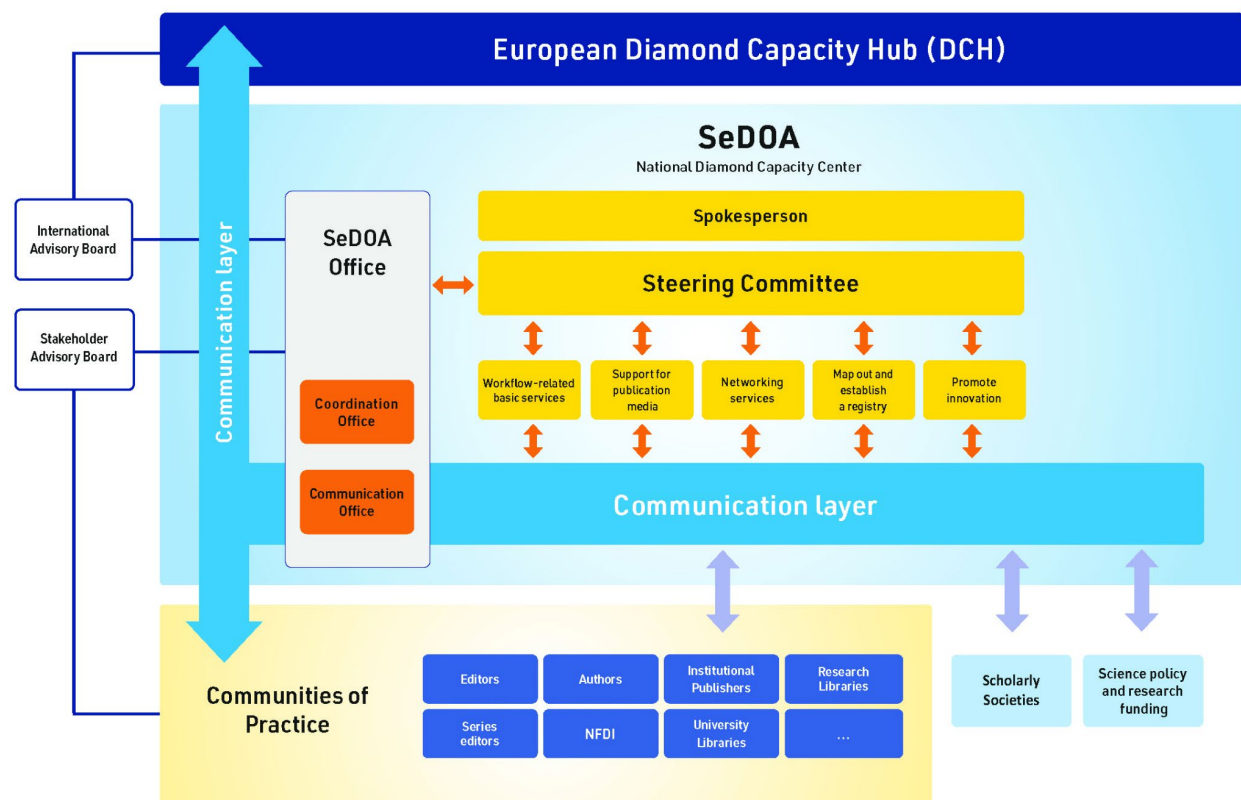


Figure 1: Overall structure of SeDOA

List of Tasks

- Task 1.1: Setting up the SeDOA Office and connecting project staff, managing staff and all WPs (ULB Darmstadt)
- Task 1.2 Developing the Corporate Design of SeDOA and setting up the project's website (ULB Darmstadt)
- Task 1.3: Setting up communication infrastructures within SeDOA (email-lists, chat, wiki, collaborative platforms) and organising workflows for the Single Point of Contact for the Community of Practice (HU Berlin)
- Task 1.4: Establishing SeDOA as the Diamond Capacity Centre by connecting it to DCH, European partners and institutions (MWS Bonn)
- Task 1.5: Establishing the Stakeholder Advisory Board (HU Berlin)
- Task 1.6: Establishing the International Advisory Board (MWS Bonn)
- Task 1.7: Developing and implementing the Knowledge Base (SUB Hamburg)
- Task 1.8: Implementing a ticket system (SUB Hamburg)
- Task 1.9: Ongoing monitoring, reporting and annual evaluation of SeDOA Office activities (ULB Darmstadt, HU Berlin, MWS Bonn)

Work Package 2: Publication Services

(Lead: ZB MED Köln; participants: FU Berlin, HU Berlin, TU Berlin, ULB Darmstadt, UB Heidelberg, ZB MED Köln)

a) Distribution Hub

Rather than building a new centralised infrastructure, SeDOA will act as a central connector for Diamond Open Access services: Referrals will match journals, book series or individual publication projects with appropriate DOA publishing services based on scope, format, academic discipline etc. This service will consider all DOA publication venues internationally and issue their recommendations neutrally. Through a set of required quality standards, SeDOA will thus strengthen existing DOA publishing venues and help raise the quality of small and medium DOA publishers, independently of consortium membership.

b) Publishing Services

For publications that cannot be dispatched to existing services, SeDOA will provide publication services for diamond open access journals and books that meet advanced quality standards. This includes layout, design, typesetting, writing environments, editorial software, metadata preparation, PID allocation, hosting and administration of various peer review workflows (e.g. for Open Peer Review) provided by the participants of the WP. Consultancy and implementation for indexing in relevant databases (DOAJ, DOAB, WoS, Scopus, Dimensions, OpenAlex etc.) and assistance with corresponding processes are also included here. Finally, the offer or arrangement of long-term archiving options is relevant in this WP. In order to achieve this, experienced project partners will expand their current services to a wider audience and publish additional journals and books.

SeDOA Publication Services has the capacity to run up to 50 additional publications p.a. (e.g. 150 additional publications over the course of 3 years). This includes 30 periodicals, living handbooks or serials (at least 10 journals or conference proceedings based on Open Journal Systems at FU Berlin, at least 10 journals based on Janeway at ULB Darmstadt and 10-12 living handbooks or serials based on PUBLISSO at ZB MED Köln). In addition, SeDOA has the capacity to publish an

additional number of 10-20 stand-alone books per year (TU Berlin). Since these publications require a long term commitment that exceeds the duration of the DFG-funded project, editorial teams will be made aware that the end of the project might mark a change in funding requirements, e.g. a paid membership model for institutions. All future models will be Diamond OA models with no charge to authors or readers. There is a strong conviction that it will be possible in the second phase of the project to develop a long-term DOA-compatible financing model on the basis of the networks that are being established as part of the project.

c) Expanding Services

While providing basic publishing services, SeDOA will also improve these services and make these improvements accessible for subsequent use by other DOA publishers, thus improving the entire DOA landscape in Germany. In close cooperation with the Community Services provided in WP3 three areas will receive special attention in the first funding phase. First, the need for streamlined XML workflows unites all Diamond OA publishing endeavours, since it can significantly reduce time and cost for the production of journals and books. Furthermore, using standard XML Formats (e.g. JATS, BITS, TEI) improves the ability to analyse digital articles and books by text and data mining (“AI ready”) and facilitates their integration into the semantic web. This builds on developments of WP6. In cooperation with existing initiatives, XML solutions will be part of individual consultations for journal editors and IPSPs. This includes the creation of XML-templates for re-use and the implementation of XML-solutions in widely used publishing software like OJS. Second, digital accessibility is a challenge for individual journals and IPSPs. Therefore we will provide guidelines and training for those interested in publishing or flipping a journal or book by taking advantage of material and resources provided by WP3 in order to meet current legal requirements as well as community needs. This will be centred around a train-the-trainer approach and online-formats to consult with IPSPs and members of the CoP. Third, in order to facilitate long-term archiving, we will work on options that provide DOA ISPs in Germany with easy, preferably automated solutions for long-term archiving. Building on the work done through integrating reports to the German National Library (DNB) in OJS³⁰, customizable connections to other available long-term archive solutions will be established. Besides, all members of the WP offer long-term archival systems such as Rosetta or Archivematica to ensure a professional storage of the data according to current standards.

List of Tasks

- Task 2.1: Establish and run a Distribution Hub (HU Berlin, ULB Darmstadt, UB Heidelberg, ZB MED Köln)
- Task 2.2: Offer Journal/Serial/Living Handbook Publishing Services to Germany-based publication projects (FU Berlin, ULB Darmstadt, ZB MED Köln)
- Task 2.3: Offer Book Publishing Services to Germany-based publication projects (TU Berlin)
- Task 2.4: Support and expand the service range (FU Berlin, ZB MED Köln)

Work Package 3: Community Support Services

(Lead: ZBW Kiel, participants ZBW Kiel, SUB Hamburg)

WP3 addresses the topic of supporting publication media. The main target groups are the Communities of Practice as described in WP1. Besides institutional publishers, scholarly societies, FID and

³⁰ OJS DNB Export Plugin, committed by FU Berlin. https://github.com/ojsde/dnb/tree/ojs-stable-3_4_0.

other institutional parties or consortia, WP3 offers support to journal and book editors. The support services are organised in four topics:

a) Assessment of current needs and demands in the Diamond Open Access community

At the beginning of the project WP3 conducts a survey to assess the most pressing needs of the German DOA community. The survey can build upon the results of previous surveys targeted towards OA publishing initiatives (e.g., survey of the editorial network [SoGez!](#)³¹, survey of Taubert et al. 2024). The questions include organisational as well as technical and legal issues. The survey is broadly distributed and includes the following target groups: AG *Universitätsverlage*, Fokusgruppe scholar-led.network, SoGez!, and further institutional publishers in Germany. Secondly, individual DOA journal editors are contacted to answer the survey and to contribute their individual needs and requests concerning SeDOA. Thirdly, interested scholarly societies are invited to express their specific challenges.

The results inform the activities within this work package and beyond. In addition, results are entered into the SeDOA Knowledge Base, which is implemented in WP1 and thereby published for the CoP.

b) Development and adaptation of available information materials

To support the Communities of Practice WP3 provides a set of information materials (including guidelines, checklists and best practices in close cooperation with WP2 and WP6). They address different publication formats (e.g. journals, books, conference proceedings, living handbooks) and take into account different publication cultures as well as state of the art standards and principles (e.g. Extensible Quality Standard in Institutional Publishing 2024, Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure). With this differentiation according to disciplines, the materials are also relevant for NFDI consortia and Specialized Information Services (FID). The provided materials within a national DOA Service Center are also based on relevant documents, which have been written in other contexts (e.g. EU projects like DIAMAS, CRAFT-OA and PALOMERA or national projects like Scholar-led Plus). Updated, curated and newly created materials are provided in Open Access via the SeDOA knowledge base to enable easy and accurate access. Materials will address at least the following topics:

- General journal or book publishing management (incl. roles and functional profiles)
- Different (DOA) business models
- Guidelines for Quality Control and Peer Review workflows
- Financial and governance issues of DOA
- Workflow routines (from submission to publication)³²
- Guidelines for journal flipping / dealing with commercial publishing houses
- Publication costs
- Publication ethics (in accordance with the Committee On Publication Ethics (COPE) Core Practices)
- Legal aspects
- Communication with authors (incl. acquisition of manuscripts)
- Recommendations for university and research libraries for informing researchers about DOA publications

³¹ <https://zeitschriftennetzwerk.wordpress.com/uber/>

³² We will expect synergies with the ongoing BMBF project Workflow Management Systeme für OA-Hochschulverlage: <https://oa-wfms.htwk-leipzig.de/en/mainnavigation/start>.

Authorship and quality assurance (also considering free licences and PID) for all publications within SeDOA are made transparent. Moreover there will be regular updates on each paper, as the publication system is constantly evolving.

c) Provision of guidance, training sessions and workshops

To build up DOA capacities in Germany, the SeDOA Service Centre also organises training sessions and workshops on specific issues relating to OA (see also the topical list above). Focus groups of the *AG Universitätsverlage* will be involved due to their experience and overlap of topics³³. WP3 is centrally responsible for all SeDOA training activities and workshops and organises events in collaboration with the pertinent WPs. The events are conducted either standalone by one of the SeDOA WPs or together with various partners in the field (e.g. *open-access.network*). The content of the workshops offered is geared towards the needs of the main target groups (see WP 1) such as institutional publishers and journal or book editors, but will also address researchers, authors or librarians for example, who act as important intermediaries on their campuses. Journal management-related workshops will be complemented by more technically oriented training (e.g. on OJS, Janeway, PUBLISSO). As the publication culture differs according to discipline, we will also provide discipline-specific workshops and training by taking advantage of networks that are established by WP 4.

In addition, there is a frequently expressed need in the broad OJS community for OJS-specific guidance. SeDOA fills the gap by providing an OJS network with a focus on Diamond OA. The numerous institutional publishers and journals that use OJS will receive software-related support for the transformation or further development to Diamond OA in accordance with the EU project CRAFT-OA. These existing services will be organised in and supported by networking activities involving the focus group OJS journals of the *AG Universitätsverlage* and building upon the prework of the now idle ojs-de.net.

Depending on the subject and the specific target group, the workshops will be provided either online or on-site. We are planning to host about 10-12 training sessions or workshops per year. These are made available for the wider community via the SeDOA knowledge base and other relevant platforms.

Moreover, SeDOA takes into account training events from other providers and, if suitable, shares activities available via them (e.g. [DALIA](#))³⁴. It will organise a cumulated inclusive calendar of events with external and self-organised events. Some of the workshops will result in a best practice documentation, which is then published alongside the other information material (see under b). In this respect SeDOA will also consider the community of scholarly-led journals and university publishers in order to establish consensus on the information offerings in a transparent process.

d) Legal services and legal opinions

Within WP3 SeDOA provides legal (advisory) services, mainly for the target group institutional publishers, but in some cases also for individual journal editors. The focus of the work is to develop more clarity in the legal framework of the DOA publishing model. A variety of topics can be ad-

³³ Cf. footnote 28 on focus groups.

³⁴ <https://dalia.education/>

dressed: legal governance of scholar-led journals, trademark and domain protection issues, licensing of content, and the transformation and change of provider from a for-profit publisher to a public-law or non-commercial and non-profit publication provider.

As not all legal questions can be answered directly from the SeDOA staff, it is planned to commission legal opinions if relevant issues arise. Moreover an exchange is implemented with other legal issues services, e.g. with *openaccess.nrw*.

In order to get a better understanding of current legal questions of institutional publishers and journal or book editors, the survey described under a) will also include questions on legal issues.

All solved issues are published in the SeDOA knowledge base (see WP1), structured by topic. On that token, SeDOA will not interfere in legal conflicts between different parties in the publication system.

List of Tasks

- Task 3.1: Assessment of current needs and demands in the Diamond OA community (ZBW Kiel)
- Task 3.2: Development and adaptation of available information materials and their publication (ZBW Kiel)
- Task 3.3: Guidance, training sessions and workshops (ZBW Kiel)
- Task 3.4: Setting up and providing OJS network: activities, events and workshops with focus on OJS-related support and mutual knowledge transfer (SUB Hamburg)
- Task 3.5: Set up legal services and provide legal opinion (ZBW Kiel)

Work Package 4: Networking Services

(Lead: MWS Bonn; participants: MWS Bonn, UB Braunschweig, FIZ Karlsruhe, HAB Wolfenbüttel, FH Potsdam, HIIG Berlin, ZB MED Köln)

WP4 organises networking activities which aim to integrate all SeDOA processes into the currently developing global workflow. In this way, WP4 gathers, prepares and transmits the results from the different fields of SeDOA (e.g. innovation lab, registry, services) into the European Hub (DCH). In addition, it also makes sure that SeDOA can profit from ideas and services offered and provided on a European level. Thus WP4 enacts and organises a bidirectional flow of information between location-specific solutions and provides a horizontal integration with discipline-specific solution offers. On the geographical axis, WP4 is the joint between Germany (DCC) and Europe (DCH)³⁵, ensuring that data, processes, and standards are seamlessly interoperable in both directions and thus contribute to the [Global Diamond Open Access Alliance](https://thd.hypotheses.org/296).³⁶ In addition to this, the WP collaborates in developing and adopting international standards to secure its European and international connectivity.

For that purpose, the WP4 leader is also part of the Communication Centre (WP1), thus co-devising the strategy of SeDOA's communication. In addition, WP4 is taking care of day-to-day communication, in particular gathering information and conveying them to the respective WPs, also gathering the results from those WPs and forwarding them to specific task forces of the DCH. Concerning the portfolio of services for Diamond OA, these activities are based on the results of WP2. New developments within the area of organising an apt environment for Diamond OA are closely aligned

³⁵ <https://thd.hypotheses.org/296>

³⁶ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/announcing-global-diamond-open-access-alliance>

with WP3, whereas new requirements from the German scientific landscape are harvested via WP6. Latest ideas from the European level are to be forwarded to the same WP.

Addressing the national landscape, WP4 adopts a two-fold approach which ensures that all initiatives, projects and organisations working in the field of Diamond Open Access are included:

First, it will actively seek to cooperate with Open Access initiatives at the federal state and national level that are explicitly dedicated to the topic of Diamond Open Access or that act as multipliers or communicators. In doing so, WP4 makes best use of building synergies and avoiding parallel structures. For instance, WP4 will address the *open-access.network* which is a competent communication partner and dissemination platform, focusing also on the topic of Diamond Open Access. SeDOA will moreover support the oa.atlas by providing data on identified Diamond Open Access activities or by encouraging joint events on Diamond Open Access. Another nationwide initiative WP4 will join forces with is the FID office to be installed within the recently granted DFG project “FID Netzwerk – Koordinierung und Weiterentwicklung zum FIDplus-System”.

Second, the consortium will focus on the discipline-specific integration to ensure that the manifold disciplinary cultures and needs are addressed and included properly. Here WP4 interacts with infrastructure providers, FIDs (specialised information services), and NFDI consortia in Germany. It systematically contacts scholarly societies (see appendix “scholarly societies list”) to advocate for DOA. By these measures it strives to ensure that inclusive Diamond Open Access communities of practice are established. One key aspect of discipline-specific integration is the advocacy of Diamond Open Access standards and adequately representing discipline-specific needs in future versions of those standards. It is also important to establish a routine of applying and adapting international standards, recommendations, and best practices in their disciplinary field and network.

Advocating Diamond Open Access includes reaching out to scholars and researchers as the main stakeholder group of academic publishing. As acceptance of the Diamond Open Access in general is closely linked to the topic of academic reputation, WP4 acknowledges that reputation is gained differently in different disciplines. This ensures that Diamond Open Access will become a mainstay of academic careers.

WP4, once fully operational, will be the communication and network centre of the SeDOA consortium which is working as an integrated body in the global, regional, and national landscape.

List of Tasks

Task 4.1: National Diamond Capacity Centre (DCC): Building an information centre for Diamond Open Access, serving as liaison between the DHC within Europe and the national landscape, thus also adding to the policy-making on the national, European and international level. (all participants)

Task 4.2: Nationwide integration: Aligning initiatives and institutions in the national landscape of Diamond Open Access activities on a national and international level. (UB Braunschweig)

Task 4.3: Discipline-specific level integration: Gathering the variety of disciplinary needs and adapting them to national and global standards (ZB MED Köln, FH Potsdam, FIZ Karlsruhe, HAB Wolfenbüttel, HIIG Berlin)

Work Package 5: Map out and establish a registry

(Lead/Participant: UB Bielefeld)

WP5 maps the Diamond Open Access journals in Germany and sets up a database-supported registry. The basic procedure is based on the workflow developed at Bielefeld University in the

CODRIA project for creating the journal title list “Diamond Open Access Journals, Germany” (DOAG). In addition to the standard data sources such as OJS journal directories, the “Directory of Open Access Journals” (DOAJ), “PubMed Central” (PMC) and the “Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources” (ROAD), the [Diamond Open Access Journal list](#)³⁷ in the Electronic Journals Library (EZB) must now also be included as an additional data source. The working basis for determining Diamond Open Access journal titles is initially the characteristics specified in the DFG call for proposals (no publication fees for authors, not commercially but non-profit orientated towards the interests of research and science, academic institutions or scholarly societies as leading institutions) (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft 2024a:2). This essentially corresponds to the current definition of Diamond Open Access in the “Diamond OA Standard” of the DIAMAS project (DIAMAS Project Consortium: 2024). The example of the EZB Diamond Open Access Journal list shows that the characteristic of scholarly led or scholarly owned open access journals in particular is difficult to ascertain. The University Libraries in Bielefeld and Regensburg are already working closely together in the [openCost](#)³⁸ project, which also includes further developments of the EZB.

The registry to be created in this project goes beyond a simple list of titles. Information on quality standards, review procedures and technical standards of the journal titles will be included. The registry will also include the allocation of journals to their “Institutional Publishing Service Providers” (IPSP) and “Institutional Publishing Technology Providers” (IPTP). Data collection and database are created according to the FAIR principles and published under suitable open licences. In addition, Bielefeld University will make this information available to the “Open Access Office Berlin”, which operates the “oa.atlas” service as part of the open-access.network project. The “oa.atlas” maps various open-access- and open-science-related activities of academic institutions in Germany, including their hosting services for open access journals. Bielefeld University is already co-operating with the “Open Access Office Berlin” in the reuse of data from the “oa.atlas” for its own services. Additional features to be included have to be in line with further requirements of the “Diamond Discovery Hub” (Bardi et al. 2023:62-166). Other useful features of the registry can be derived from the publication by Taubert et. al. (2024). Database design and the definition of corresponding interfaces are therefore important components of this work package.

In order to address the underrepresentation of Diamond Open Access journal articles in common bibliographic databases like “Web of Science” or “Scopus”, the registry can also be used as a starting point for a publication monitoring at article level. As the operator of the BASE search engine, Bielefeld University already harvests a whole series of OJS journals via OAI-PMH. With the help of the registry, articles can be assigned as automatically as possible to the Diamond Open Access journals identified as secured in the registry. As the SeDOA consortium covers more than 450 Diamond Open Access journals in Germany, IPTPs can be supported in the implementation of OAI-PMH interfaces if they had not been supported already in the past. The data set obtained in this way can be used for comparative analyses with other data collections, e.g. with DOAJ, WoS and OpenAlex.

List of Tasks

- Task 5.1: Database design: definition of the bibliographic and other characteristics of Diamond Open Access journals to be recorded
- Task 5.2: Development of technical workflows for aggregating, normalising and indexing bibliographic data on Diamond Open Access journal titles in Germany while leveraging external data sources; definition and implementation of APIs and output formats of the registry

³⁷ https://ezb.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit/searchres.phtml?bibid=SUBHH&cols=7&lang=en&jq_type1=FKW&jq_term1=Diamond_Open_Access_Journal

³⁸ <https://www.opencost.de/en/>

- Task 5.3: Integrating registry into Diamond Discovery Hub
- Task 5.4: Collection of information on journals that cannot be automatically reused from external data sources (including e.g. information to ensure internal journal quality standards and other characteristics that can generally only be answered by the journal editorial offices)
- Task 5.5: Implementing a publication monitoring for articles in Diamond Open Access journals
- Task 5.6: Data curation and further adjustments of the registry, documentation

Work Package 6: SeDOA Innovation LAB

(Lead: FH Potsdam; participants: FH Potsdam, HIIG Berlin, FIZ Karlsruhe)

The SeDOA Innovation Lab (SIL) based in WP6 is the project's dedicated innovation think tank and sounding-board and offers participation opportunities to all relevant DOA stakeholders. Its main function is to serve as an observatory to create an overview of relevant practices, initiatives, and projects on an international level in order to shape workflows with solutions and steps to be executed by researchers for case studies. It facilitates the creation and uptake of future-oriented DOA-relevant socio-technological developments, deploying monitoring mechanisms and participatory open innovation processes, conducting its own original research, all in order to improve the SeDOA research infrastructure landscape.

The SeDOA Innovation Lab is acting independently to ensure it remains open and dynamic, but is strongly interlocked with the SeDOA consortium and community and ensures a multidirectional flow of information. The various requirements and the current situation of SeDOA stakeholders and communities will be prioritised and brought to discussion, creating opportunities to involve internal and external cooperation partners. Through these agile, bottom up co-creation and co-design processes, it will be a lightweight sandbox for innovations, but also a place to gather and plan concrete next steps (conceptualisation). Actual technical service developments aimed at production readiness take place in close exchange between SIL and other SeDOA WPs.

The results of the SIL monitoring and creation processes also enrich corresponding activities on the European level (in collaboration with WP4), especially by collaboration with the [OPERAS Innovation Lab](https://lab.operas-eu.org).³⁹ In doing so, SIL aims at ensuring an adequate representation of needs in Germany and concerns for services and prototyped solutions on an European level. It will also contribute to other initiatives or projects to ensure that needs in Germany are recognised internationally and adhere to European (FAIR) standards.

In order to establish the SeDOA Innovation LAB, the project team works on three interdependent, simultaneous tasks which ensure continuous evaluation and feedback loops in this work package. The first task aims at establishing the SIL infrastructure and workflows to monitor innovations (such as Jupyter Notebooks to embed software in publications) and facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration within SeDOA. It includes setting up the SIL observatory and SeDOA Innovation Task Forces for permanent innovation monitoring and collaboration with international labs and stakeholders. It identifies research gaps and trends through systematic reviews, resulting in the "State of the Art and Gap Report" and the "Trend Report." Additionally, it organises participatory activities such as Ideathons (months 6, 18, 30), online Community Forums (months 12, 24), and annual conference workshops/sessions in close cooperation with WP 3.

³⁹ <https://lab.operas-eu.org>

The second task uses an agile workflow with two tracks of up to three implementation projects each, integrating SeDOA Innovation Task Forces. Track 1 focuses on Data-Driven Case Studies (AI, etc.) led by FIZ Karlsruhe, and Track 2 on Socio-technological/Open/Service Case Studies led by FH Potsdam. Promising ideas from WP 6.1 are selected for development sprints, involving SeDOA members and external experts through iterative bidding. Feedback loops will refine prototypes and scaling strategies. Measures include coordinating grant proposals, developing shared tasks (Kaggle, CLEF, TREC), rapid prototyping (e.g., Google Summer of Code), and planning productization of research outputs.

The final task is to promote SIL as a central German hub for DOA innovation needs and ideas, contributing to standard developments, and publishing research results. This involves (1) strategic publicity through branding and social media, in close cooperation with WP1; (2) contributing project results to the evaluation and development of DOA-relevant standards (JATS, BITS, TEI, etc.) and options for semantic web implementations as well the uses of RDF; and (3) publishing research outcomes and transferring learnings through target-specific channels, such as scientific peer-reviewed journals, case studies, and reports. Measures include three presentations/publications.

List of Tasks

- Task 6.1: Conception and Ideation Hub Establishing the SIL infrastructure and workflows to monitor innovations and facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration within SeDOA (HIIG Berlin)
- Task 6.2: Implementation Projects (socio-technological case studies): Using an agile workflow with two tracks of up to three implementation projects each, integrating SeDOA Innovation Task Forces (FIZ Karlsruhe)
- Task 6.3: Knowledge Dissemination and Outreach: Promoting SIL as a central German hub for DOA innovation needs and ideas, contributing to standard developments, and publishing research results (FH Potsdam)

3. Project- and subject-related list of publications

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4. Supplementary information on the project context

4.1 General ethical aspects

All partners of SeDOA are committed to the Code of Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice. Against this background and in view of the content of the project, risks and/or burdens for persons or groups

of persons and/or possible further negative effects are not to be expected. during the implementation of the planned project. Accordingly, the opinion of an ethics committee is not required.

4.2 Considerations on aspects of ecological sustainability in the planning and implementation of the project

Sustainability considerations are taken into account in terms of making intensive use of video conferencing as a meeting option and avoiding travel activities as much as possible. If travel is necessary all participants declare that they will preferably use trains instead of cars or planes. Besides these concrete measures all activities such as the initiative launched by the DHd AG “Greening DH”⁴⁰ that improve the environment are welcome and will be supported.

4.3 Measures to meet funding requirements and handle project results

All documents and publications resulting from the project, including the relevant metadata, will be made openly available to third parties for comprehensive reuse, with open licences and appropriate long-term archiving. If applicable, this pertains to code, too (open source). Diamond Open Access will in any case be the preferred publishing model.

All elements of the proposed project will be in compliance with the DFG’s *Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice*.⁴¹

4.4 Formal assurances

The partners of the project undertake to jointly maintain SeDOA and keep publications created in the course of the project available beyond the duration of the project and to continue to operate the web services created. Furthermore they declare that all funding conditions will be met.

[...]

⁴⁰ Cf. <https://github.com/sustainable-computing-io/kepler>

⁴¹ A detailed overview on each consortium member’s individual actions towards good research practice is not part of this proposal but can be supplied to the reviewers on demand.