

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OPEN FUNDING METADATA: A CALL TO ACTION

BARCELONA
DECLARATION ON
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WHY DOES OPEN FUNDING METADATA MATTER?

Funding metadata - structured information linking grants to research outputs - is a cornerstone of research transparency and integrity. If it works, it enables systematic analysis of how (public) money shapes science, reduces administrative burden and strengthens accountability. If it fails, how research is funded remains hidden, conflicts of interest go undetected, and the picture of who funds what - and why - remains opaque.

For now, the promise outpaces the practice. Coverage is patchy, identifiers are inconsistent, and the systems that should connect funders, publishers, and researchers don't always talk to each other.

THE KEY BOTTLENECKS

Three core challenges underlie most of the difficulties:

Lack of Standardization

There is no common way to acknowledge funding across journals and funders, making it harder for publishers to translate acknowledgment text into structured funding metadata for deposit to e.g. [Crossref](#). Grant DOIs could help make it easier for publishers to capture and link funding to outputs but adoption by funders remains limited.

Disconnected Systems

Publishers operate many systems across their production workflow, and these often don't interoperate well. Funding metadata that is captured at submission can get lost or degraded as manuscripts move through editorial and production stages — never making it to final deposit.

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Cost, Culture and Capacity

Funding metadata is not yet a community expectation, which means it can get deprioritized. Researchers carry most of the burden of providing funding information, which lead to errors and omissions. Publishers with limited resources may lack the incentive and capacity to invest in improved funding metadata practices.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

Progress requires coordinated action across four stakeholder groups:

Funders

Should register Grant DOIs for all grants, share grant metadata openly via APIs, and consider making standardized funding acknowledgment a formal grant condition.

Publishers

Should make funding information — including Grant DOIs — mandatory at submission, invest in automation and better author experience, and work to prevent funding metadata loss across their editorial and production pipelines. Where extraction and submission of funding metadata is outsourced, publishers should monitor third party performance.

Institutions and Libraries

Can play an important role by including requirements for funding metadata in publisher negotiations, and by collaborating with funders to develop benchmark figures that support those negotiations.

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Infrastructure Providers

[Crossref](#), [DataCite](#), and other DOI agencies should continue to stimulate their members to deposit as rich as possible funding metadata, develop tools to support them with that, support [ROR](#) ID adoption, and lower technical barriers for Grant DOI adoption by funders.

THE ASK

We warmly invite funders, publishers, infrastructure providers, and institutions to engage with the recommendations in this action plan and commit to concrete steps within their own organizations. A working group under the Barcelona Declaration will help coordinate collective progress — but action doesn't need to wait for perfect coordination. Each stakeholder group is well-placed to begin now.

A detailed background paper with full recommendations is available at:
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20189998>

This document was developed by the Barcelona Declaration [Working Group on Funding Metadata](#), based on discussions held during a community roundtable on funding metadata co-organized with Crossref in October 2025.

For further information about this document or the Barcelona Declaration: contact@barcelona-declaration.org