

# Economics and Equity in Open Research Europe

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# Pre-published material



## Economics and equity in the development of Open Research Europe

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### Abstract<sup>1</sup>

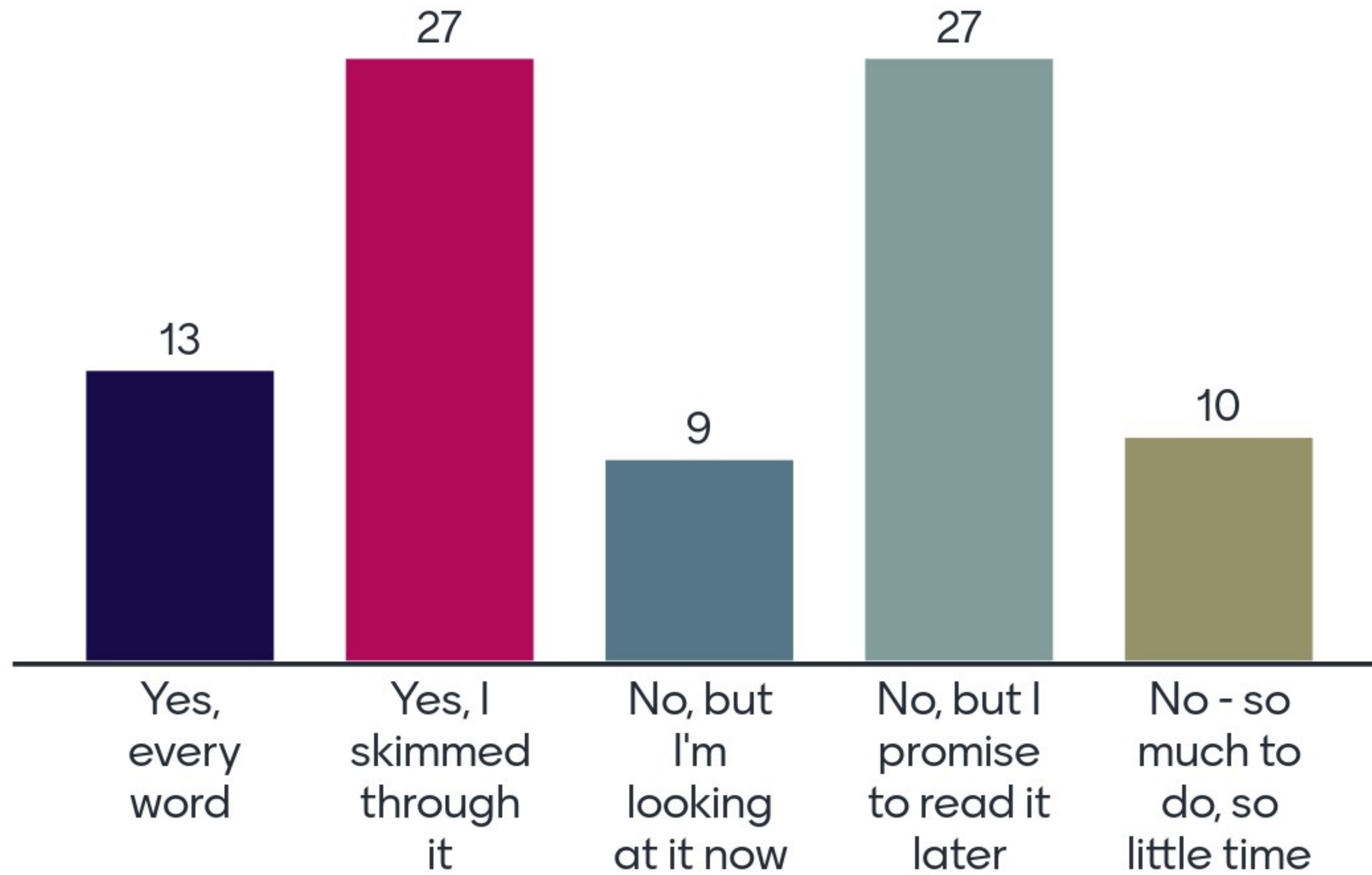
Open Research Europe (ORE) is the open access peer-reviewed publishing platform offered by the European Commission as an optional service to Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe beneficiaries at no cost to them. The platform enables researchers to publish open access without paying out of their research budgets and while complying with their open access obligations. This paper identifies potential financing and governance model(s) that would operationalize ORE as a collective publishing enterprise, supported by research funders and possibly research organizations, as of 2026. The aim of this study is to develop a sustainable, scalable funding model that is not based on article publication charges (APCs). To this end, the main business and financing models for not-for-profit publishing services were reviewed, based on a series of case studies and interviews with seven leading not-for-profit service providers. The paper outlines possible business model(s) for the financing of the operations of the Open Research Europe platform in the future and sets out actionable recommendations for implementing such a business model, appropriate to the scope and scale of the endeavour. It assesses how to incorporate equity into the design of Open Research Europe; and how to make Open Research Europe sustainable in the long run.



Johnson, R. "Economics and equity in the development of Open Research Europe", presented at the 17th Munin Conference on Scholarly Publishing 2022. Published in Septentrio Conference Series1 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.7557/5.6634>

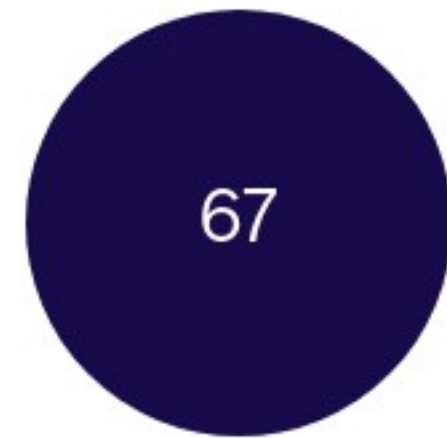
Johnson, R. (2020). Operationalising Open Research Europe as a collective publishing enterprise. European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, LU <https://doi.org/10.2777/061886>

# Did you read the pre-published paper before this session? Be honest!



# If an OA publishing platform has no author or reader fees it is diamond open access

Agree

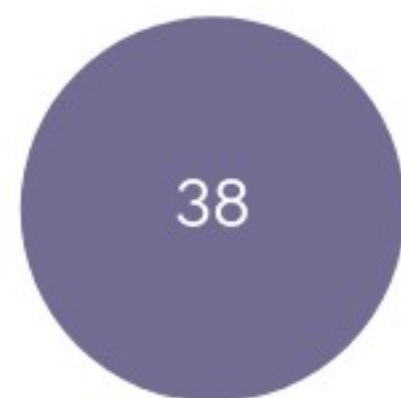


Disagree



# Open Research Europe is a diamond open access platform

Agree



Disagree



# The vision for Open Research Europe beyond 2026

A top-quality, trusted pan-European OA publishing service



Collectively driven, owned and supported by European research funders and research institutions, as a service for researchers, with no author-facing fees



Supported by an open source infrastructure



Ambition for a Diamond OA publishing service

Source: Michael Arentoft, Head of Unit, Open Science, DG R&I, European Commission  
Diamond Open Access Conference  
Zadar, 19-20 September 2022

# Three key challenges



## Developing an open source platform

The complexity of moving towards an open-source platform should not be underestimated. Development of a new platform should take place iteratively, to maximize its chances of success.



## Delivering a non-profit publishing service

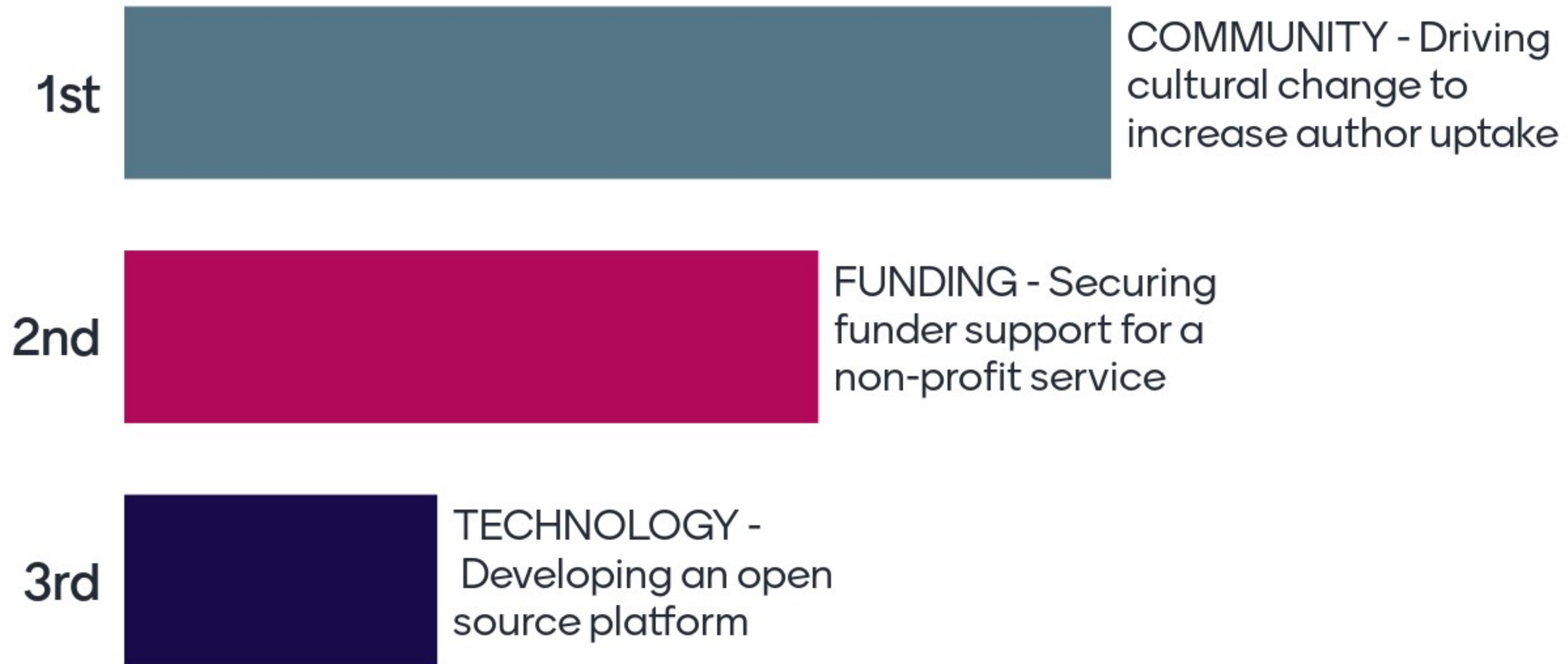
ORE must transition away from an outsourced commercial service provider, towards a model where service delivery is the responsibility of a non-profit organization and supported by multiple research funders.



## Driving cultural change

ORE's development is closely tied to wider processes of cultural change in researcher evaluation and behaviour. Securing the support of funders and other stakeholders is essential, and ORE's success will depend on the pace of wider reforms.

# What do you think is the biggest challenge for Open Research Europe?

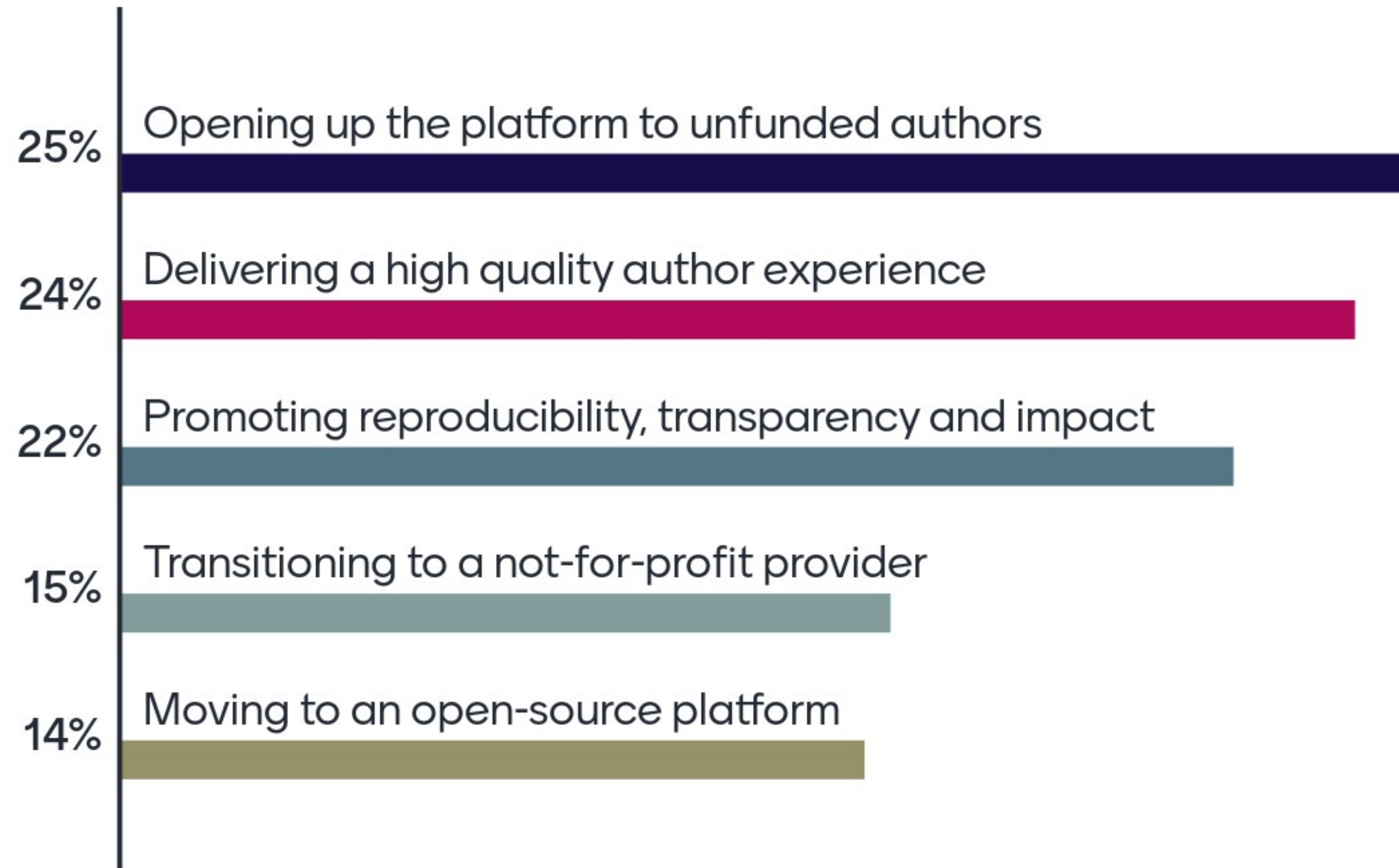




# Selected case studies

Legal form	Case studies
Independent not-for-profits	 
Hosted and subsidized by international organizations	 
Hosted and subsidized by academic organizations	  

# If you had €1 million to invest in ORE, where would you put it?



# What would a truly equitable model for ORE look like?

Access for all disciplines

Without apcs.

No idea, but it would have to be good enough :-)

Transparency throughout the publishing process  
(open peer review etc.)

A centralized model cannot ever be equitable

For all researchers funding or not.

Waivers policy

national model - like BIBSYS

To survive in the long term. Tough task,

# What would a truly equitable model for ORE look like?

Good question...

Easy to use for authors

No fees, open to all, authors retain copyright

A horse designed by committee...

A range of output types

Access for researchers from all income levels & less affluent countries

no fees for proofing service (not all are native English speakers)

Easy and understandable for researchers

Serving the great variety of research output (methods, data etc)

# What would a truly equitable model for ORE look like?

Attractive for subscription-based journals to flip to

Distributed responsibility

Serious in the sense that no low-quality research is allowed/considered.

Sustainable

Transparency

Account for all (full) costs to make a sensible comparison with other solutions

Support for authors from "smaller" countries; non-English writing

Community-owned, community-driven

Free

# What would a truly equitable model for ORE look like?

cover all aspects of a research project - from development to finish

Competitive service, reasonably cost-efficient, open to all

Let the users decide who gets published.

Abandoning traditional publications, preprints in focus.

Publishing (platforms) should not be owned / developed by governmental organizations.

Like for example arxiv is funded, voluntary funding from Institutions, and from funders all over the world...

Multiplicity

Possible to use by developing countries (who often turn to predatory or vanity publications - however, quality of papers should be supervised.

Somehow stimulate and reward cooperation and creativity in addition to transparency across the entire process

# What would a truly equitable model for ORE look like?

Long term preservation and access in place

Like arxiv is funded for example, voluntary funding from user institutions, based on level of usage..and from funders all over the world

Revolution!

regular audit?

Make it the place to go for non traditional outputs (eg data and software papers)

Reduced monopolistic powers re. publishers

One that enables researchers to carry on with their occupation - without the need to think abt e.g. who should pay and what and to whom.

tit-for-tat in the community

Make survival difficult for existing for-profit publishers?

# What would a truly equitable model for ORE look like?

It would or could increase innovation in commercial publishing.

tit-for-tat for community

tax payer money well spend

A good sustainable alternative, but without changing incentives for authors probably not huge impact on ecosystem

Make it a more attractive publishing alternative. A win-win situation, and in the long run, the prestige of the big publishing alternatives would be more nuanced?

Governmentally owned publishing could threaten academic freedom and freedom of speach if/when politicians are involved in funding and policies.



# What impact would a large-scale non-profit publishing service have on the current publishing ecosystem?

Allow those willing to change their ways to actually do so

Hopefully it would lure developing countries researchers from vanity journals to publish there.

Would it serve only the majority's needs, neglecting minor, but still relevant ones?

Realistic alternative

Increase competitive pressure on commercial actors on a publishing service level

More variety and options are always positive.

It would be seen as a good example

For those who believe in non-profit service value, it would be good. Some people would probably choose commercial publishers because of the impact on their career.

If successful, possibly drive us towards critical mass and a wanted cultural change

# What impact would a large-scale non-profit publishing service have on the current publishing ecosystem?

Positive impact but it will be a big ship taking a long time to turn.

Offering an alternative model that works is always a good food for thought

Less focus on impact factor

Not much

less production of articles.

Provide realistic option to steer away from expensive solutions

Positive :)

More diversity - re. forms of publications, actors in the system

Put pressure on large scale commercial publishers

# What impact would a large-scale non-profit publishing service have on the current publishing ecosystem?

Make the transition from for-profit services easier

This platform is a dream of politicians

A commercial platform for well funded authors versus a free for those less well off. And the lack of prestige...

Positive impact. It would show that we can do without big publishers and high APCs

Hopefully provide a good publishing alternative for (all) researchers.

If both authors and peer-reviewers are happy, then such platforms are likely to attract far more submissions

Business interests at the EC would prevent it from becoming a real competitor to the current publishing system

It would be good if journals wanted to go to a platform like this.

Depends how heavily large commercial publishers lobby funders and policymakers

# What impact would a large-scale non-profit publishing service have on the current publishing ecosystem?

Exclusive and excluding- if geographically restricted

Might help change the Research assessment system as well

Depends on the uptake by the authors - would they change their publishing behaviour (away from the large "high impact" journals)?

Practical experience of funders working together could lead to more innovation and support (if it's deemed a success)

More sustainable Diamond OA alternatives welcome

need to test that

Negative, we need small-scale publ services, they are closer to the authors

If widely used it would change it, shift the market and possibly have an impact on the shareholders of science.

Must be followed by change in research assessment

# What impact would a large-scale non-profit publishing service have on the current publishing ecosystem?

Greater place of research in society, improved dialogue between researchers and citizens outside of the academic world

Positive impact - an actual, working alternative is necessary if one is to achieve real change of current publishing culture

Alternative to fossils (traditional journals).

Revolution!

What about national languages, other than English?

Impact does not necessarily depend on one large scale initiative

Hopefully researchers will publish less with the large commercial publishers

Positive IF including more than Europe

disrupting (hopefully) positively the current publishing ecosystem

# What impact would a large-scale non-profit publishing service have on the current publishing ecosystem?

positive for replication studies and negative results

Publishers profit margins will decrease

Publishing and research communities must be closely connected - society involvements

Hopefully a wider diversity of academic voices.

Possibly large, depends on use, sharing, merits.

# Recommendations for further work



Developing an open source platform (preannouncement due mid-December 2022)

Promoting cultural change and research assessment reform

# Thank you

Johnson, R. (2022). Economics and equity in the development of Open Research Europe. *Septentrio Conference Series*, (1).  
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