

SUMMARY REPORT ON 'NO-FEE OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING IN AFRICA' WEBINAR



Introduction

This report summarises the highlights of the LIBSENSE 'No-Fee Open Access Publishing in Africa' Webinar held on Monday, May 27, 2024. The webinar was a collaboration between WACREN, EIFL, and AJOL regarding the grant call for proposals launched by the three parties with funding from Wellcome¹. Key content areas in the webinar were the importance of open access publishing in African scholarly communication and the development of open data and publishing infrastructure for NREN communities in Africa in the AfricaConnect3² project funded by the European Commission.

Background on Diamond (No-Fee) Open Access Publishing

Diamond Open Access (OA) Publishing is a model where academic journals and articles are freely published and accessible by authors and readers, respectively, at no fee or subscription. This model is supported through a mixed funding model: institutional funding, grants, or other non-commercial means. This ensures that scholarly work's dissemination and production remain barrier-free and equitable for all researchers, irrespective of economic status. Diamond OA enhances the visibility, impact, and collaboration potential of scholarly research, driving innovation and progress across various fields.

Webinar Format

Webinar format comprised presentations, Q&As and a call to action

¹ <https://wellcome.org/>

² <https://africaconnect3.net/>

Key Objectives

- Understanding the impact of no-fee open access journals.
- Exploring the support provided by WACREN, EIFL, and AJOL.
- Presentation and discussion of the grant call: "Strengthening No-Fee Open Access Publishing in Africa," a collaboration funded by Wellcome Trust.

Key Speakers and Summary of Presentations

Iryna Kuchma's³ presentation on 'No-Fee Open Access Publishing' underscored the critical need for sustainable open access publishing in Africa, with Diamond OA at the forefront. She emphasised the role of Diamond OA in promoting equity, openness, and the visibility of research, particularly in non-English speaking regions. The presentation referenced the UNESCO Open Science Outlook and various projects supporting Diamond OA, highlighting the pressing need for financial sustainability and institutional support. Citing the project survey findings on Diamond OA, Iryna called for more funding options, collaboration opportunities, and capacity building for African Diamond OA journals, stressing the urgency and importance of financial support.

Omo Oaiya's 'Open Publishing in WACREN' presentation highlighted WACREN and the AfricaConnect3 project's support for National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) with high-capacity connectivity and value-added services. It covered the development of R&E services like secure access, cloud services, and cybersecurity platforms. These services are integrated within the LIBSENSE framework, creating a relevant infrastructure and ecosystem for open science in the WACREN region.

These efforts have led to a national shared repository and open platforms for publishing preprints, journals, and managing archival resource keys (ARKs). Omo emphasised that these inclusive platforms aim to foster open publishing in scientific and scholarly communities. He detailed WACREN's strategy for deploying open publishing infrastructures with a focus on national and international interoperability, along with capacity-building initiatives like policy development workshops and peer review training. The overarching goal is to promote equity, diversity, and social justice in African scholarly publishing, ensuring all voices are represented.

³ https://www.eifl.net/experts/Iryna_K

Milica Sevkuvic ⁴ walked participants through the Grant Call application process⁵, emphasising eligibility criteria and requirements needed to be completed by applicants.

Webinar Resources

- Presentations - <https://drive.wacren.net/index.php/s/QTd7PCJ5DHznXG>
- Video - https://video.wacren.net/media/Diamond+OA+Webiner+%28English%29/0_sd0en9qr

Contact Information - libsense@ren.africa

Participation

- Total number of registrations - 560
- Highest number of concurrent viewers - 170

Links shared in the meeting

1. <https://www.eifl.net/eifl-in-action/collaboration-sustainable-open-access-publishing-africa>
2. <https://eifl.net/programme/open-access-programme/grant-call-supporting-no-fee-open-access-publishing-africa>
3. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387324>
4. <https://diamasproject.eu>
5. <https://openscholarlyinfrastructure.org/>
6. <https://www.coar-repositories.org/news-updates/coar-community-framework-for-best-practices-in-repositories/>
7. <https://zenodo.org/record/4017999>
8. <https://www.eifl.net/news/grant-call-strengthening-no-fee-open-access-publishing-africa>
9. <https://www.eifl.net/eifl-in-action/collaboration-sustainable-open-access-publishing-africa>
10. <https://www.eifl.net/programme/open-access-programme/grant-call-supporting-no-fee-open-access-publishing-africa>
11. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajol>

⁴ https://www.eifl.net/coordinators/Milica_S

⁵ <https://youtu.be/JtesH4obKiQ>