

National Licence Agreements with Open Access Publishing Status Report 2025



National Licence Agreements with Open Access Publishing

The Royal Danish Library negotiates national licence agreements on behalf of Danish universities and higher education institutions as well as other research institutions. The strategic direction and mandate for the negotiations are set jointly by the Royal Danish Library and the Danish Universities.

A number of these licence agreements (hereafter referred to as licence agreements with Open Access publishing) give the institutions' researchers both reading access to scientific content and the opportunity to publish their research results with free and open access for everyone to read.

This report covers the status of Royal Danish Library's work with licence agreements with Open Access publishing for 2025.



Equal Access to Knowledge

Denmark is not alone in focusing on Open Access. Free access to research articles attracts great international attention, and Royal Danish Library collaborates with the Nordic consortium group NordLic, the international consortium association ICOLC, and LERU (League of European Research Universities), among others.

Royal Danish Library supports the implementation of Denmark's National Strategy for Open Access¹ by, among other things, negotiating and entering into licence agreements with Open Access publishing. Since 2021, these agreements have enabled researchers at Danish research institutions to either make a version of their article available in an institutional archive or repository, or to publish it immediately Open Access on the publisher's platform, with the so-called Article Processing Charge (APC) covered by the agreement.

Through successful negotiations, this has been achieved without any significant additional costs to Danish society, which is in line with the national Open Access strategy.

The strategy was evaluated in 2023/2024. The general recommendations from the group behind the evaluation were that the focus should remain on green Open Access, and that efforts should be made to include gold journals in the negotiations, provided this does not significantly increase the Open Access expenditure.

One recommendation stated:

*"The working group expects that a focus on creating more equitable access to knowledge worldwide could potentially increase the motivation among researchers and others to publish Open Access"*²

¹ <https://ufsn.dk/english/research-and-innovation/framework-for-research-and-innovation/open-access/publications/denmarks-national-strategy-for-open-access/>

² <https://ufsn.dk/media/gdalp0kt/evaluating-a-danmarks-nationale-open-access-strategi.pdf>, s. 55

Inspired by these collaborations and the Royal Danish Library's own strategy to contribute to the work of educational and research institutions in ensuring free access to publicly funded research,³ Royal Danish Library is working on the following focus areas to support the priorities within Open Access:

Royal Danish Library's Open Access Focus Areas

Increased accessibility/visibility

Royal Danish Library enters into publishing agreements to increase the accessibility and visibility of Danish research. Royal Danish Library therefore expects that an agreement will cover all content published by researchers affiliated with Danish research institutions, and that this content will be found using persistent identifiers.

Transparency

Royal Danish Library enters into publishing agreements based on transparent pricing and business models including the right to disclose the full agreement.

Affordable pricing

Royal Danish Library enters into publishing agreements that ensure financial sustainability and a fair price for Denmark. The agreements must not lead to an increase in overall expenditure.

Retention of copyright

Royal Danish Library enters into publishing agreements that ensure all authors covered by the agreement retain all copyrights into their own publications and grant the publisher only a non-exclusive right to publish.



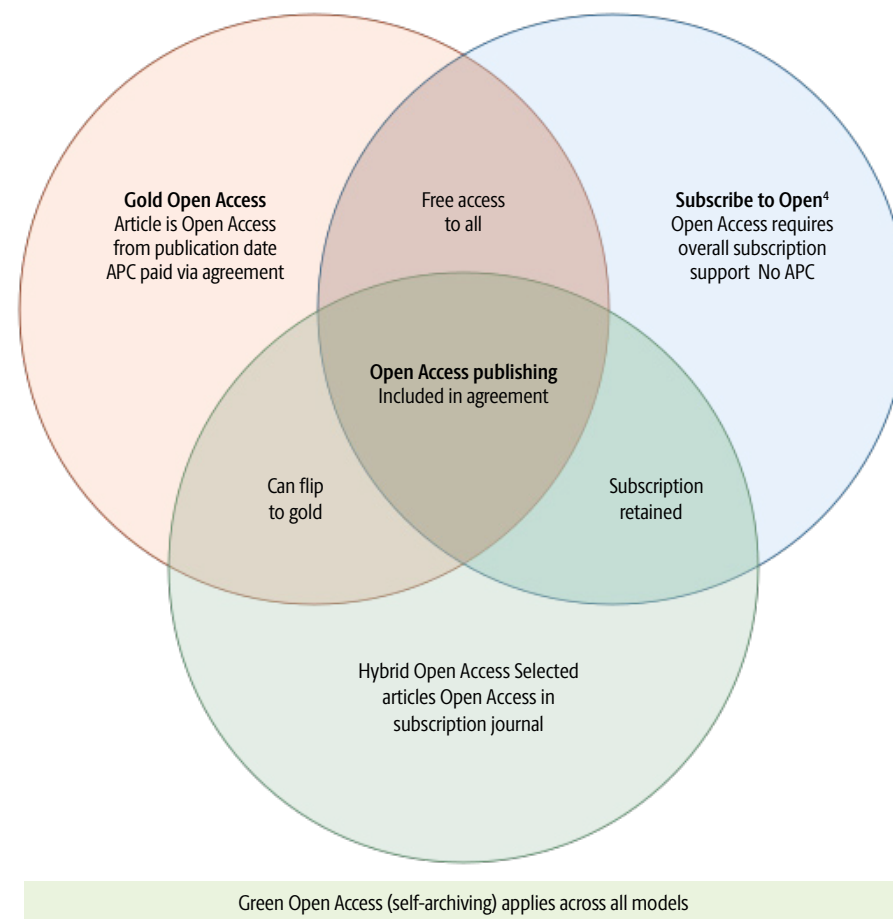
³ <https://www.kb.dk/om-os/opgaver-og-maal/strategi>

New Approaches to Open Access

In 2025, Royal Danish Library experienced continued developments in the models and their combination proposed by the publishers. Given the tighter framework, the Royal Danish Library continued to negotiate agreements based on new combinations of models for Danish researchers. These are agreements that also include golden titles or hybrid titles that flip to gold, such as with Cambridge University Press and Portland Press.

In 2024, Royal Danish Library also began negotiating agreements based on the Subscribe to Open (S2O) model. Some publishers use S2O for their entire portfolio of journals, while others (e.g. De Gruyter) introduce the model with selected journals. There may also be differences as to whether publishing is included.

Royal Danish Library has entered a single agreement under S2O terms, which includes publishing with BioOne. BioOne is an aggregator, and therefore publishing rights vary depending on the journal, but all titles permit self-archiving (green Open Access).



⁴ S2O is an Open Access model that makes journals freely available, provided the publisher maintains its total subscription revenue.

Increase in the use of Licence Agreements with Open Access Publishing

Figure 1 shows a rise in the use of licence agreements with Open Access publishing in the period 2021 to 2025. The increase over these four years is due to the fact that, each year, a new licence agreement with Open Access publishing was negotiated with the four major publishers: Elsevier (2021), Wiley (2022), Springer (2023), and Taylor & Francis (2024). In addition to the agreements with the major publishers, Royal Danish Library also enters into licence agreements with Open Access publishing with other, typically smaller publishers, which consequently have a lower volume of publications by Danish researchers.

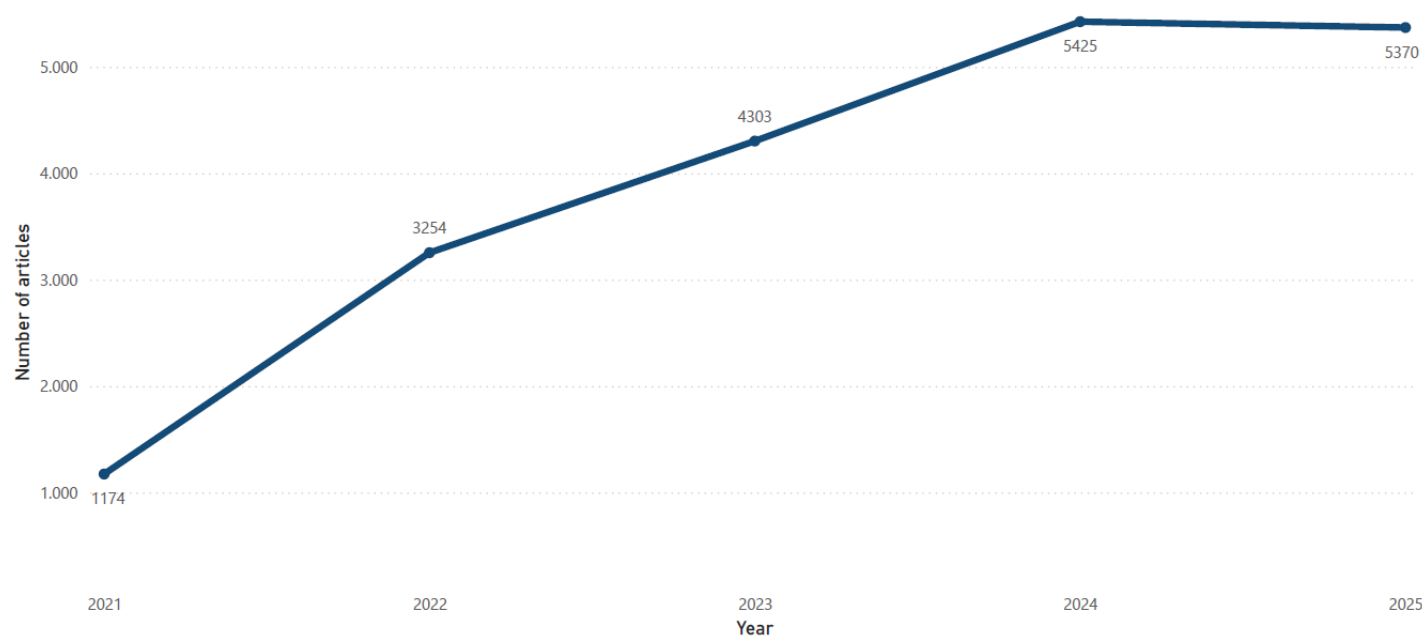


Figure 1: Total number of articles per year covered by licence agreements with Open Access publishing.

In 2025, the eight Danish universities accounted for 94% of all articles published Open Access through licence agreements with Open Access publishing⁵, with minor shifts in the distribution between the institutions compared to 2024. The University of Copenhagen and Aarhus University still account for over 50% of the total number of publications.

In 2025, 5,370 articles were published where researchers made use of the terms in a licence agreement with Open Access publishing to publish Open Access. Almost half of the articles have been published by Elsevier, followed by Wiley, Springer, and Taylor & Francis.

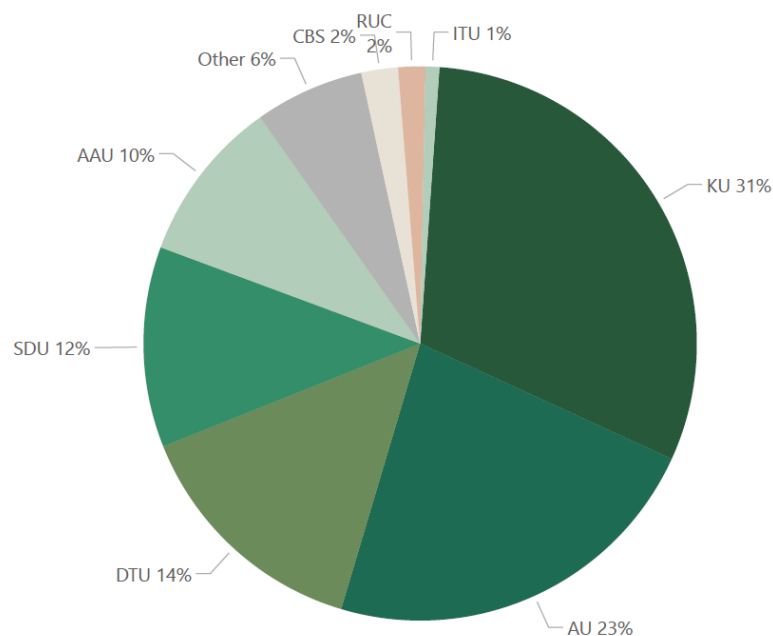


Figure 2: Distribution of Open Access articles per institution, 2025

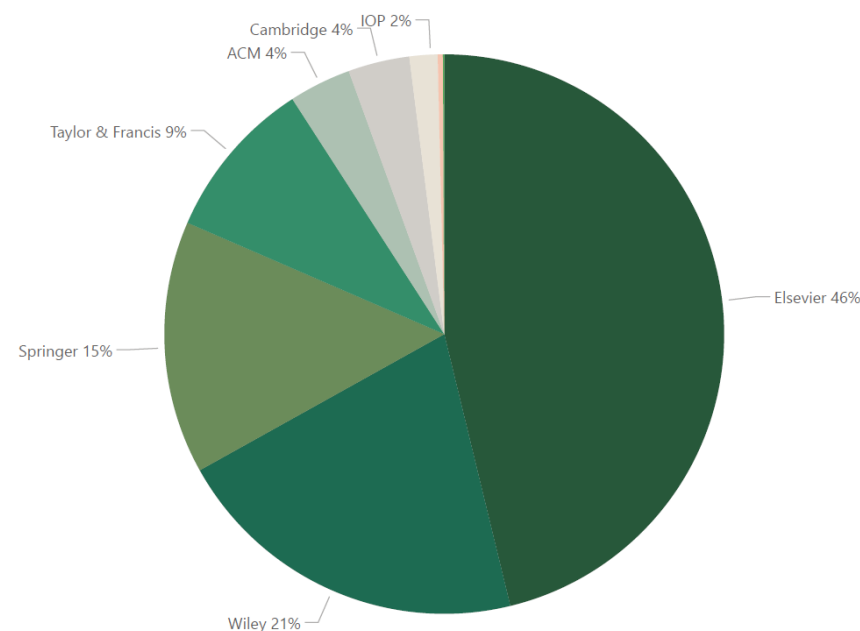


Figure 3: Distribution of Open Access articles per publisher, 2025

⁵ This report only includes data for articles covered by licence agreements for open access articles, and not the total number of publications by Danish researchers with the nine publishers.

Copyright and Creative Commons Licences

The authors' copyright is one of the areas that has received increased attention. This is also an area that Royal Danish Library is addressing in the negotiations. The topic continues to receive increasing attention internationally, not least through Rights Retention⁶ and a greater focus on Creative Commons licences (CC licences⁷). Consequently, this is also a focus for the Royal Danish Library when negotiating licence agreements with Open Access publishing.

The CC BY licence – the most open of all Creative Commons licences – is the recommended option and presented as the first choice for authors when they wish to publish under a license agreement with Open Access publishing negotiated by the Royal Danish Library.

The Royal Danish Library monitors and reports on authors' choice of CC licences. Data from the last five years, as shown in Figure 4, indicate that awareness of authors' rights is a significant factor, as the proportion of CC BY licences applied showed an upward trend from 2022 to 2024. It has since declined from 2024 to 2025.

In 2021, only articles published by Elsevier are shown in the figure as the sole agreement, and here we see that almost 100% chose the CC BY licence.

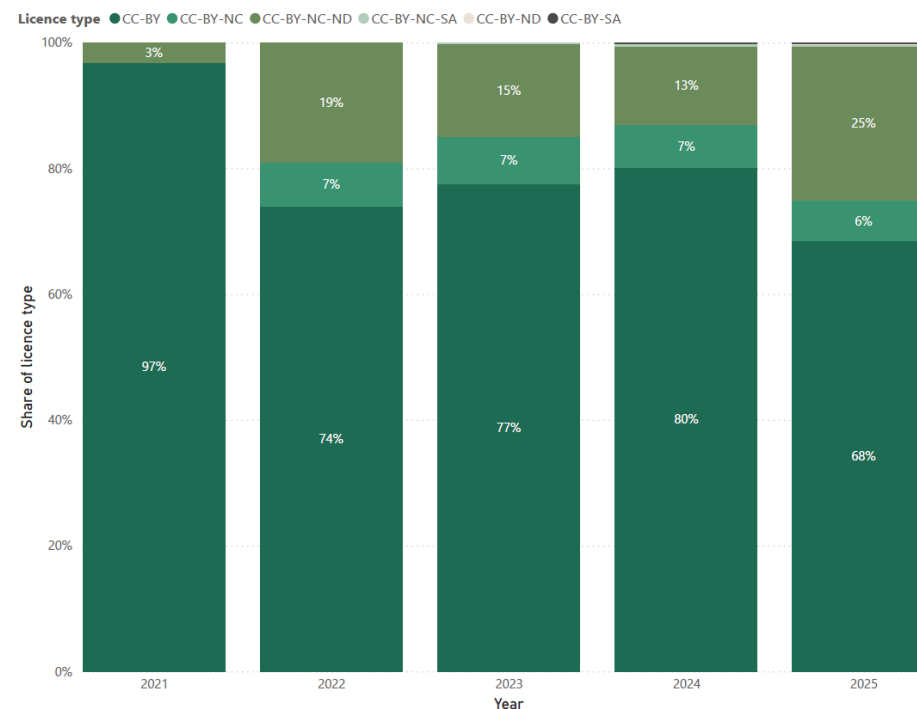


Figure 4: Share of CC licence type per year.

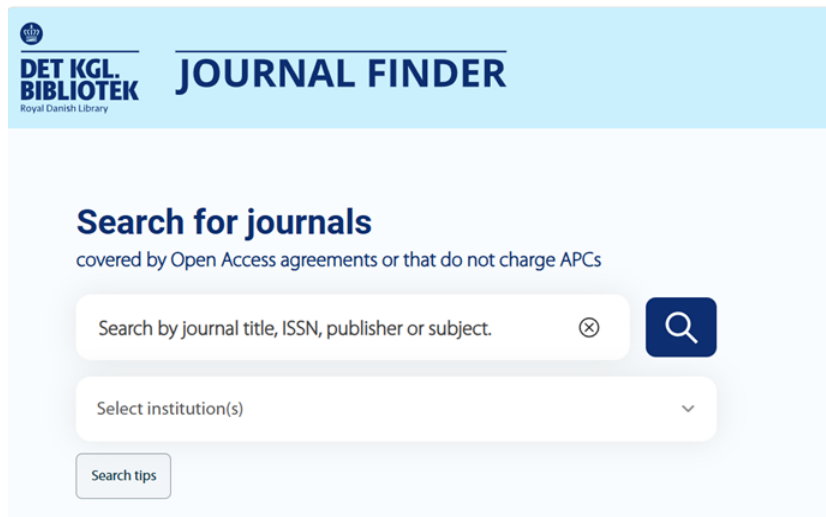
⁶ <https://www.coalition-s.org/resources/rights-retention-strategy/>

⁷ <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/cclicenses/>

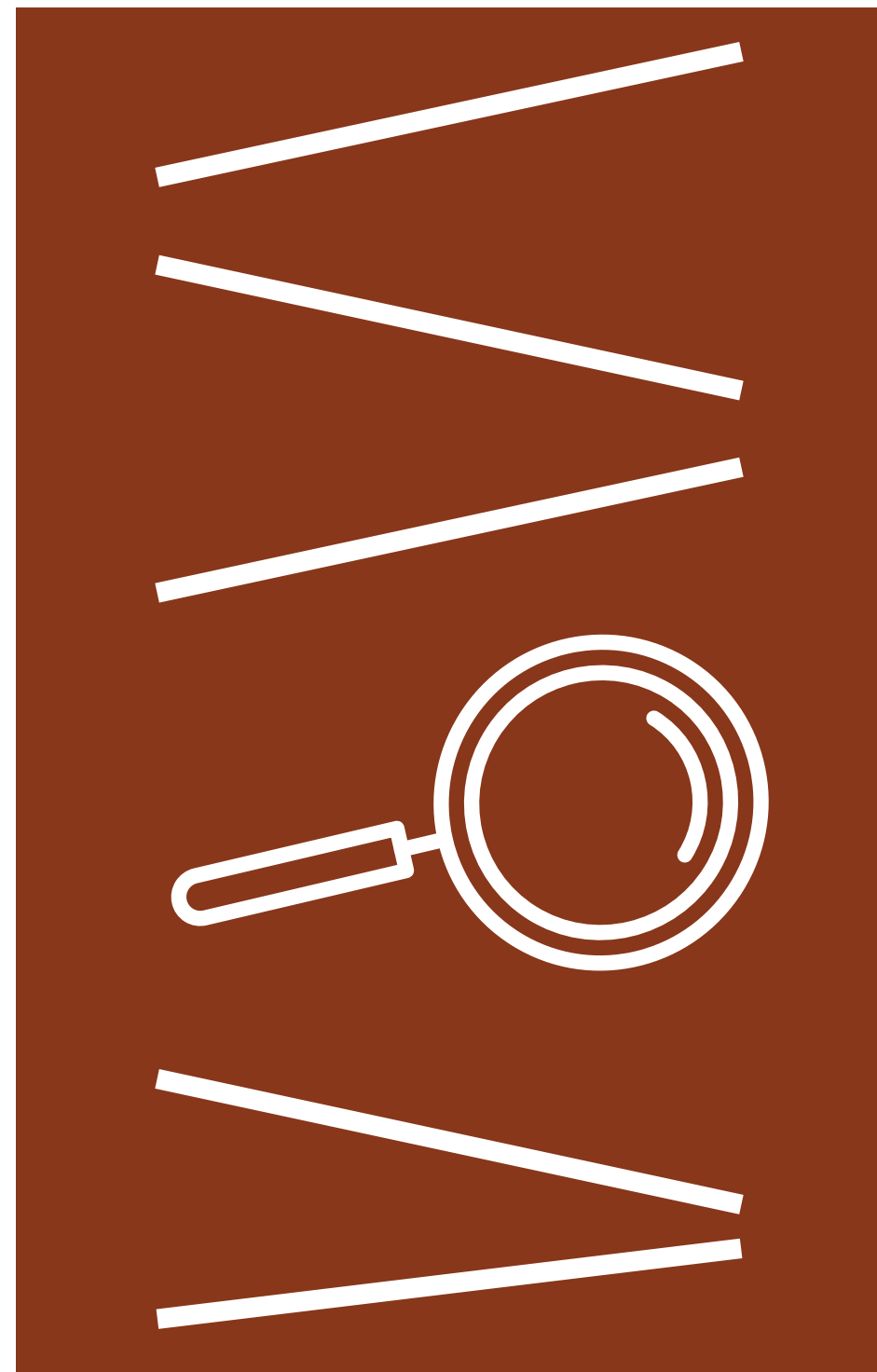
National Platform for Searching Journals

In 2024, Royal Danish Library launched a national Journal Finder⁸ where researchers can find journals covered by the national licence agreements with Open Access publishing, as well as the applicable terms and conditions for each individual agreement or journal per institution.

Journal Finder is an important tool in working to improve communication about the agreements, so that researchers better understand the terms of the national agreements with Open Access publishing and thereby ensure that they make optimal use of them.

A screenshot of the "JOURNAL FINDER" web interface. The header is light blue with the "DET KGL. BIBLIOTEK" logo and the title "JOURNAL FINDER". Below the header, the text "Search for journals" is followed by "covered by Open Access agreements or that do not charge APCs". There is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search by journal title, ISSN, publisher or subject." and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar is a dropdown menu labeled "Select institution(s)". At the bottom left of the search area is a button labeled "Search tips".

⁸ <https://pro.kb.dk/en/open-science/journal-finder>



Support for Open Science Infrastructure and Services



Since 2020, Royal Danish Library has provided financial support to promote the transition to Open Science. Earmarked funds have been allocated to support open infrastructure and services, which are made available to both the global as well as the Danish research community⁹.

To ensure the long-term viability of Open Science services and infrastructures, there is a growing need for support to invest in initiatives that promote Open Access, FAIR data, and digital sovereignty.

Royal Danish Library has defined five fundamental principles that are applied when assessing existing and new funding:

- **Community-driven:**
This means that the organisation is owned and/or controlled by the research community and cannot be taken over by commercial interests.
- **Relevance and disciplinary balance:**
Initiatives will only be supported if the research and disciplinary areas are relevant to research conducted at Danish research institutions.
- **Economically sustainable and responsible:**
There must be transparent business models that allow for a precise breakdown of the finances, so that it is clear where the funds are being invested. The initiative must not be for-profit, and any surplus must be reinvested in scientific publishing. Where possible, funding for critical infrastructure should be provided for a minimum of two to three years at a time to ensure continuity and predictability, particularly for newly emerging initiatives.
- **Copyright and licensing:**
Initiatives or models in which authors retain their copyright and/or all publications and metadata are published under a CC BY licence.
- **Administration:**
The administrative costs by the Royal Danish Library in connection with the grant must be proportionate to the grant.

⁹ <https://pro.kb.dk/en/open-science/support-open-science-services>

Royal Danish Library uses, among other things, the open-source software developed by Public Knowledge Project (PKP) to operate the platforms tidsskrift.dk¹⁰ and Open Books¹¹ for publishing journals and books respectively.

Open Books was launched in 2025 as a

national platform, and both platforms operate according to the Open Access model known as diamond. This means that neither authors nor editors are required to pay a fee to publish, that publications are published under a licence, and that publications can be read freely without any payment requirement.

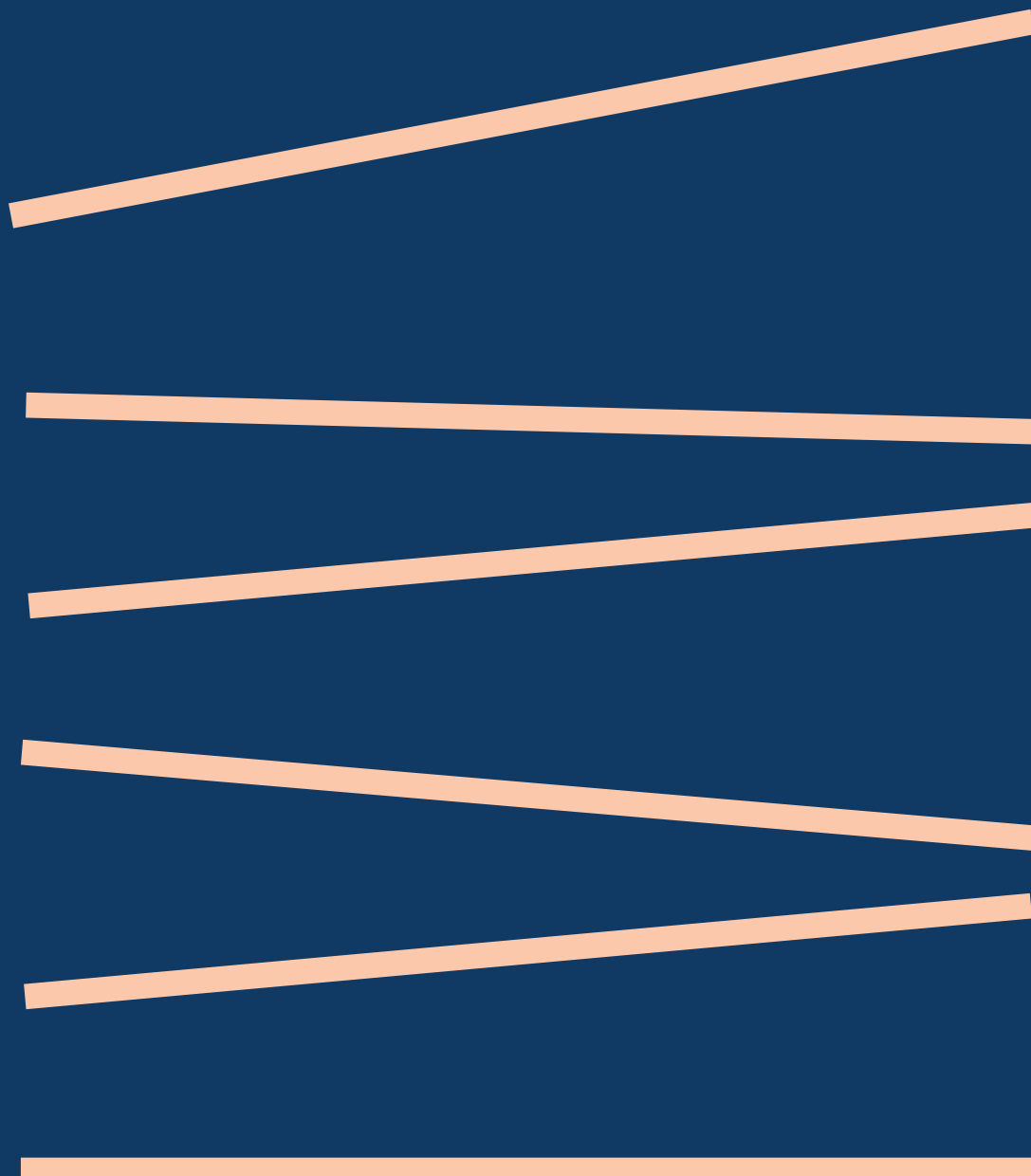
In 2025, the following initiatives received funding:

- SCOAP3
- ArXiv
- DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)
- OpenEdition
- OpenCitation
- PKP (Public Knowledge Project)
- Open Policy Finder
- SPARC Europe
- DOAB/OAPEN (Directory of Open Access Books / Open Access Books Toolkit)
- COAR (Confederation of Open Access Repositories)
- OA Switchboard
- ROR (Research Organization Registry)

¹⁰ <https://tidsskrift.dk/>

¹¹ <https://openbooks.kb.dk/>





**DET KGL.
BIBLIOTEK**
Royal Danish Library