

Developing a Norwegian strategy for scholarly publishing beyond 2024

Publish and read (PAR) agreements have significantly increased the number of open articles but have not resulted in real transformation of the publication landscape.

We present price developments in the Norwegian PAR agreements and provide a peek into the ongoing Norwegian strategy work on scholarly publishing beyond 2024.

Finally, we introduce for discussion two ideas intended to help regulate the publication landscape.

Background for the strategy work

The HE institutions, research institutes and the regional health authorities are responsible for obtaining full open access to publicly funded research from 2024.

The Norwegian Government has assigned the task to The Research Council of Norway, Sikt and the Norwegian Directorate for

Higher Education and Skills to support the research organizations in formulating a strategy for scholarly publishing after 2024.

The strategy draft will be circulated for public consultation on the 15th of June and be completed by the end of 2023.

Vision

We envision a landscape of scholarly publishing where all researchers have equal access to publish their work Open Access and where everyone has access to read the publications stemming from publicly funded research.

A future scholarly publishing landscape

should contain a diversity of high-quality publication venues and services that ensure full and immediate Open Access to research.

The publishing costs must be equitable and reflect the actual editorial and publication workload.

Excerpts from draft recommendations

- Focus must be on quality and integrity. We want to stimulate processes and tools that contribute to quality in scholarly publications.

One example is to further develop the Norwegian registry for scientific publication venues as a promoter of high quality and as a whitelist of recommendable journals and a gatekeeper to avoid journals operating in the gray-zone of good publishing practice.

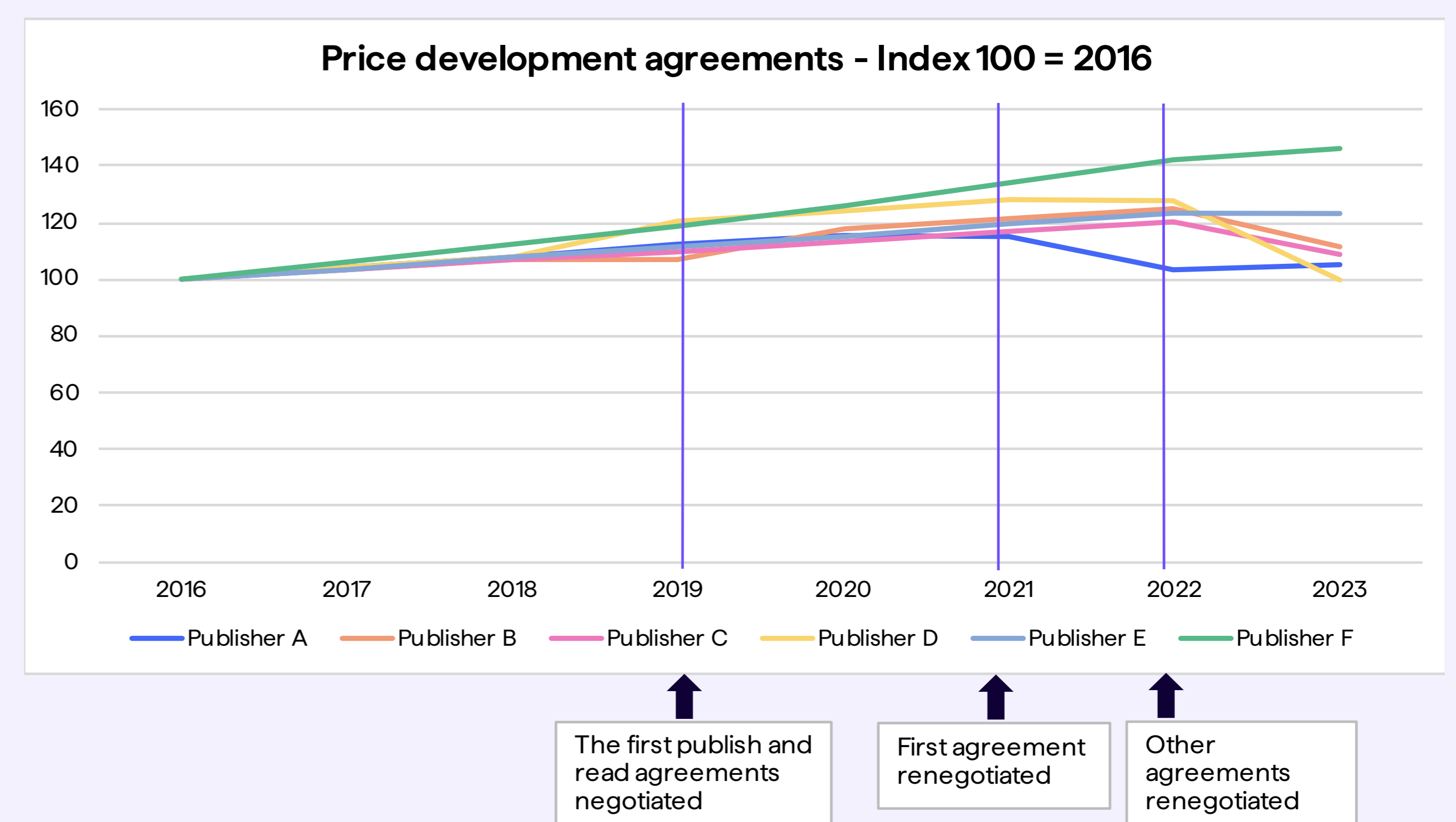
- The diamond model should be supported through the improvement of existing publication venues combined with the development of new ones.
- Work to support or develop high quality APC-based scientific journals with reasonable and equitable pricing models that ensure equal access to publishing Open Access.

- Support continued innovation among researchers to develop novel ways of publishing and assessing research (including early publishing, preprints, open peer review and support of the Agreement for Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA)).
- Promote institutional or centralized (national or European) Rights Retention Strategies during a transition period.
- Continue implementation of alternative career assessment systems both across research institutions and amongst funders.
- Maintain Transformative Agreements for a limited period, but with strict and aligned requirements for transparency and costs. Cooperate internationally on criteria alignment and design.
- Continue work on sustainable funding models for the costs of Open Access publishing and necessary infrastructure.

Price for Publish and read agreements

Norway was an early adapter of the PAR-agreements. The first round of negotiations saw an increase in the total costs for the agreements.

However, in the second round of PAR-agreements we managed to significantly reduce costs while securing full reading rights, archive rights and open access publishing.



Where are we heading?

The publication market is dominated by a limited number of mega-publishers with strong market power and high margins, but it also contains many low-quality and grey-zone publishers.

We introduce two ideas to regulate this market and invite further discussion on these. In order to succeed, the work should be organized by a broad international coalition with high scientific reputation.

International registry

We may establish an international registry to act as a whitelist of recommendable journals and a gatekeeper to avoid journals operating in the gray-zone of good publishing practice.

The register should contain information on openness, the refereeing process, the costs of publishing and reading and the overall service from the journal.

This could help new journals to be recognized. If registration were mandatory

in order to be acknowledged as a sound scientific journal (much in the same way as many use DOAJ today), this might clarify the landscape.

Publishing a high number of special issues, frequently changing editors or a too high acceptance rate, may be annotated with a warning. This would help researchers in their choice of publication venues and gradually change the publication landscape.

International competition

The international research community may arrange an international competition to honor and promote the publication venues with the highest quality and acceptable APC within a scientific discipline.

An invitation to enter may be repeated regularly within each discipline. This could make it easier for new high-quality journals to enter the market and make it more interesting for institutions to establish new journals to strengthen their profile in a preferred discipline.

