



Sustaining Academic Publishing During Wartime: Integrity, Collaboration, and Responsibility*

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Abstract

This research explores financial strategies for sustaining Ukrainian scientific publishing amidst wartime constraints and EU integration. Addressing damaged infrastructure and shifted budget priorities, the study proposes a comprehensive methodology to identify academic publishing costs and optimize public spending. By analyzing direct and indirect expenditures alongside international benchmarks, the authors advocate for diversified funding models and performance-based incentives. Principal aims focus on aligning university journals with current international publishing standards and safeguarding Ukraine's intellectual sovereignty. This work provides evidence-based policy recommendations to fortify research infrastructure and accelerate Ukraine's transition into the global open science ecosystem.

Keyphrases

Open science integration, sustainable scientific publishing, wartime financial strategies.

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Introduction

The resilience and future integration of Ukrainian science into the global research ecosystem, particularly within the EU knowledge econ-

omy, are critically dependent on the development of sustainable scientific publishing practices. In the context of the ongoing war and the pressing demands of post-war recovery, Ukrainian state universities face unprecedented financial and institutional challenges in maintaining and enhancing the visibility of their academic journals.

This report aims to substantiate a comprehensive methodology for identifying potential financial expenditures required by Ukrainian state universities to establish and ensure the effective functioning of editorial boards of scientific publications. A key focus is placed on supporting university journals in meeting the rigorous criteria for inclusion in internationally recognized scientometric databases such as DOAJ, Scopus, and Web of Science.

The proposed methodology encompasses an analysis of both direct and indirect costs associated with editorial operations, including personnel, technological infrastructure, peer-review management, and quality assurance processes. Furthermore, this report explores innovative mechanisms for reimbursing these costs, alongside strategic incentives designed to stimulate Ukrainian researchers to publish in high-impact international journals. This approach seeks to optimize public spending within the budgets of national universities, aligning financial strategies with best global practices in academic publishing.

1 The Russian invasion of Ukraine has drastically altered the landscape of scientific research and publishing. Limited access to funding, damaged infrastructure, disrupted supply chains, and the forced migration of academics have compounded the challenges faced by Ukrainian universities. In this constrained environment, open science initiatives, which rely on robust funding for open access publication fees, data management, and digital infrastructure – have become particularly vulnerable. The financial burden of maintaining open access standards, covering Article Processing Charges (APCs), and sustaining editorial activities without stable external support has led to increased dependency on state resources and international donors.

3 Moreover, the war has shifted national budget priorities towards defense and humanitarian needs, reducing the financial allocations available for scientific development. This situation necessitates a strategic reassessment of funding models, emphasizing cost-efficiency and sustainability in academic publishing. Addressing these challenges, this report provides policy recommendations to optimize resource allocation, promote international collaborations, and safeguard Ukraine's scientific sovereignty through resilient open science practices.

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Wartime Publishing

The ongoing war has profoundly impacted Ukrainian scholarly publishing, yet it has also spurred resilience and reform efforts. An analysis of the Ukrainian journal landscape using Ulrichsweb directory revealed many 'hidden' or less visible journals, highlighting the need for greater transparency and international integration to overcome isolation and resource constraints during the conflict (M. Nazarovets 2024).

Acknowledgments in publications by Ukrainian researchers from 2022 to early 2024 often included expressions of gratitude to defenders for enabling research amid danger, marking a revival of this tradition across disciplines despite editorial hurdles (S. Nazarovets 2025). Even during active warfare, Ukraine approved a National Plan for Open Science in 2022, aiming to develop open online services for researchers and align legislation with EU standards, demonstrating commitment to open access principles under crisis conditions (S. Nazarovets 2022).

Russia has exploited academic platforms by publishing papers that falsely affiliate annexed Ukrainian territories and institutions with the Russian Federation, underscoring the weaponization of science as propaganda and the urgent need for international oversight in databases and journals (Plastun et al. (2025)).

In a recent interview, discussions emphasized the drive toward ethical standards, professional editor training, open science adoption, and international partnerships to modernize Ukrainian publishing, addressing post-Soviet legacies, funding shortages, and infrastructure damage while countering misinformation (Pinter 2024).

Analysis Framework

Drawing on the unique insights from a project funded by the National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU) on harmonizing scientific publishing practices with international standards, the chapter offers policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficiency and competitiveness of Ukrainian scientific output. By addressing the financial sustainability of academic publishing, this work contributes to broader efforts to fortify Ukraine's research infrastructure during wartime and accelerate its integration into the EU scientific community.

This report considers the following methodology framework:

1. Cost Identification and Categorization: (a) Use a cost-accounting approach to identify direct costs (e.g., editorial staff salaries, peer-review management, software, APCs) and indirect costs (e.g., IT infrastructure, administrative support, training programs). (b) Conduct comparative analysis with international benchmarks from EU universities to understand cost structures in global best practices.
2. Data Collection: (a) Collect primary data through surveys and interviews with university administrators, editorial boards, and researchers involved in academic publishing. (b) Utilize secondary data from NRFU reports, university budgets, and international open-access databases.
3. Financial Modeling: (a) Apply financial modeling techniques to estimate the projected costs of running editorial offices aimed at inclusion in DOAJ, Scopus, and WoS. (b) Model different funding scenarios considering current wartime constraints and post-war recovery trajectories.
4. Policy Analysis: (a) Perform a policy gap analysis to identify existing mechanisms for research funding and open-access support

(SWOT, PESTLE). (b) Propose evidence-based policy recommendations grounded in both the financial analysis and international best practices.

5. Scenario-Based Forecasting: (a) Develop potential funding and sustainability scenarios under varying conditions of resource availability (wartime, post-war recovery, EU integration phase). (b) Assess the long-term financial implications of different strategic approaches to scientific publishing in Ukraine.

The financial sustainability of scientific publishing in Ukrainian state universities is not just an academic concern but a strategic priority, especially in the context of Ukraine's EU integration and post-war recovery. Ensuring stable funding mechanisms for open-access publishing will strengthen Ukraine's position in the global research ecosystem, enhance scientific diplomacy, and contribute to the country's intellectual sovereignty. The development of clear, consistent national policies on open science and academic publishing is crucial. These policies should define funding priorities, set quality benchmarks, and establish mechanisms for cost reimbursement and accountability, aligned with European Research Area (ERA) objectives.

Conclusion

While the war in Ukraine has significantly strained university budgets and disrupted traditional funding streams, it has also accelerated the recognition of the need for resilient, flexible, and transparent funding models. This crisis presents an opportunity to reform outdated practices and adopt innovative, globally-aligned approaches to financing scientific publishing. Relying solely on state funding is unsustainable in the long term, particularly under current economic constraints. A diversified approach that combines national budget allocations, international grants, institutional support, and potential private-public partnerships can create a more resilient ecosystem for academic publishing in Ukraine.

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