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1. Publication criteria

Open Research Europe is an open access publishing platform for the publication of research stemming from Horizon 2020 funding across all subject areas. The platform makes it easy for Horizon 2020 beneficiaries to comply with the open access terms of their funding and offers researchers a publishing venue to share their results and insights rapidly and facilitate open, constructive research discussion.

The eligibility criteria for publishing with Open Research Europe are the following:

- At least one author must be involved in a running or finished Horizon 2020 project from the European Commission and the article must be a result of that project.
- The article must be original work (see section on Originality).

There are no fees for publication for Horizon 2020 beneficiaries and all publication costs are covered by the European Commission.

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Open Research Europe publishes articles in all subject areas funded by Horizon 2020 across the Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medical Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities.

Publication in Open Research Europe denotes that all its authors have agreed to its content and have ensured that Open Research Europe policies have been fully adhered to. Non-compliance with these policies may mean that an article fails the pre-publication checks and cannot be published.

2. Originality

All articles submitted to Open Research Europe must be original; the work, or large parts of it, must not have been published previously or be currently under consideration or review elsewhere. If there is any significant overlap with another article, this must be cited in the article and mentioned on submission. All articles are checked for plagiarism on submission; if clear plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) is identified, the article will be rejected.

Articles previously posted on a preprint server, such as arXiv, SSRN, BioRxiv, MedRxiv can be submitted for publication in Open Research Europe.

Submitted articles with content that infringes copyright may be rejected if the problematic sections cannot be removed.

Authors who wish to reproduce a figure or table from a previous copyrighted publication are responsible for obtaining the permission of copyright holders and for clearly referencing the original source. Figures that were previously published under a creative commons license may be reused under the condition of the [specific license](#) that applies to those figures.

3. Authorship

All authors should have made a clear contribution to the published article. As a guide, authors should refer to the criteria for authorship that have been developed by [The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\)](#). Each author's contribution must be detailed by selecting [CRediT roles](#) on the article submission form.

Anyone who has contributed but does not meet the criteria for authorship (for example, purely technical or writing assistance) should be listed in the 'Acknowledgments' section. The involvement of any professional scientific or medical writer assistance must be declared. Authors should obtain permission to include the name and affiliation, from all those mentioned in the Acknowledgments section. For more resources on defining authorship policies see the relevant [COPE guidelines](#).

Changes in authorship: If the author list of an article changes following its publication, a new version of the article can be published with an explanation included in the 'Amendments' section at the top of the new version. Any changes in authorship must be confirmed by all authors. If the editorial team

is unable to contact an author, the corresponding author is responsible for facilitating communication. In agreement with [COPE guidelines](#), the editorial team cannot take responsibility for resolving any disputes over authorship; any disagreements amongst the authors must be settled by the authors' institution(s).

Changes to author names: Open Research Europe understands that authors, reviewers or commenters may wish to change their names for many reasons, including marriage, divorce, gender identity recognition and other personal reasons. Following a name change request, the editorial office will require confirmation of the identification of the individual, and in the event of a name change on an author list will notify the corresponding author. Any change of name will not require a new version to be created, all existing versions will be edited to reflect the change; the DOI will remain the same. A Notice of Change will be posted to make readers aware that a name change took place with the following standard text: 'A name change in the author list of this article was requested. The change was implemented on'. Please note that Open Research Europe considers it a violation of publishing and personal ethics to request to change the name of another individual without their explicit consent. If an author, reviewer or commenter requires a name change, please contact the editorial office.

Submitting author(s) of articles involved in Horizon 2020 projects must provide an ORCID iD upon submission. Co-authors will be invited to connect their ORCID iD once an article has been published.

4. Competing interests

Authors must include a 'Competing interests' statement. A competing interest will not preclude publication, but it provides full transparency for the reviewers and readers. If there are no competing interests to declare, the following standard statement is added: 'No competing interests were disclosed'.

A competing interest may be of non-financial or financial nature. Examples of competing interests include (but are not limited to):

- individuals receiving funding, salary or other forms of payment from an organization, or holding stocks or shares from a company, that might benefit (or lose) financially from the publication of the findings;
- individuals or their funding organization or employer holding (or applying for) related patents;
- official affiliations and memberships with interest groups relating to the content of the publication;
- political, religious, or ideological competing interests.

Reviewers are also required to declare any [competing interests](#) in their reports, as are readers who contribute comments on the site.

5. Ethical Policies

All research published in Open Research Europe must have been conducted according to the requirements of ethics and integrity in Article 34 of the [H2020 Programme Multi-Beneficiary Model Grant Agreement](#). Guidelines on fulfilling these requirements are provided in the extensive guidance on [Horizon 2020 proposal ethics self-assessment](#) and in the [Horizon 2020 Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

Not following these requirements will result in rejection of article submissions.

6. Inappropriate image manipulation

Images published in Open Research Europe should accurately reflect the original image. As such, we require that all images, whether submitted as figures or uploaded as data, are not manipulated so that readers are not misled about what the images indicate. We understand that it is standard practice to use software to modify images to make them clearer and easier to interpret. However, any modifications that are made to images should be minor and must be made uniformly to the whole image.

Modifications that alter the meaning of the image, whether conducted on specific regions or the whole image, are not permitted, unless such modifications are a necessary and fundamental part of an interpretation presented in the publication in which case they should be duly explained and justified. Authors are required to include details of all modifications made to images published as figures or uploaded as data in the Methods section of an article, including the name of the software (with version number) used to make these modifications.

We also require the original, uncropped, unannotated and unprocessed versions of scientific images, which we consider underlying data, to be deposited to an approved online repository (see our [Data Guidelines](#) for further details on depositing your data).

The Editorial Team will conduct checks of random selected figures and data using Adobe Photoshop and forensic image analysis software. In line with [COPE guidelines](#), where images suspected of improper manipulation are detected, clarification with the authors will be sought. Where the reasons for these suspected manipulations are not explained satisfactorily, the article is likely to be rejected and the authors' institution may be contacted.

7. Registration of trials and systematic reviews

7.1 Trial registration

Open Research Europe uses the [WHO definition of a clinical trial](#) to decide what constitutes a clinical trial:

“A clinical trial is any research study that prospectively assigns human participants or groups of humans to one or more health-related interventions to evaluate the effects on health outcomes.

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Interventions include (but are not restricted to) drugs, cells and other biological products, surgical procedures, radiologic procedures, devices, behavioural treatments, process-of-care changes, preventive care, etc.”

Trials should be registered prospectively, and the trial registration number and registration date must be included in the article. Further information can be found at the [ICMJE FAQ on trial registration](#) and the WHO provides a [list of approved registries](#).

Although we expect trials to be registered before patient recruitment starts, several initiatives (such as the [AllTrials campaign](#)) have recognized that retrospective trial registration will encourage publication of both positive and negative results, and trials that were conducted before registration was possible. In line with these initiatives, Open Research Europe will consider retrospectively registered trials, provided an explanation for the late registration is provided in the article. Again, the trial registration number and date of registration must be included in the Methods section of the article.

7.2 Systematic reviews registration

We encourage authors to register their systematic reviews in [PROSPERO](#) or another registry for systematic reviews. The registration number should be included in the article.

8. Standards of reporting

Standards of reporting guidelines help authors to ensure that they have provided a comprehensive description of their research, making it easier for others to assess and reproduce the work; for more detail and a comprehensive overview, see the [FAIRSharing](#) initiative.

9. Data availability

Open Research Europe requires open access to research data supporting articles under the principle ‘as open as possible, as closed as necessary’, according to the policy of Horizon 2020.

Open Research Europe authors that submit original publications should deposit the research data underlying the publication in a repository and provide open access to them under a Creative Commons Attribution Public License (CC BY) or a Creative Commons Public Domain Dedication ([CC0](#)) or a license with equivalent rights, unless an exception applies. Failure to provide the research data underlying the publication without appropriate justification will result in the article being rejected. Authors should also provide via the repository any information needed to replicate, validate, and/or reuse the results/your study and analysis of the data. This includes details of any software, instruments and other tools used to process the results. Where possible, the tools and instruments themselves should also be provided. A Data Availability Statement is required with every submission.

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For detailed information about the type of research data authors need to include when publishing an article in Open Research Europe, where the data can be stored, and how they should be presented, see our [Data Guidelines](#).

Exceptions: Openly sharing data may not always be feasible. Exceptions to open access to research data underlying publications in the Open Research Europe are permitted in alignment to the European Commission's relevant policy in Horizon 2020. These exceptions concern:

- the obligation to protect results (e.g. through patents)
- confidentiality obligations (e.g. for data identified as confidential during projects)
- security obligations (e.g. if research data is classified or if there are security concerns)
- the obligation to protect personal data (submission to Open Research Europe must respect the EU [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR)) and national law on data protection (including authorizations or notification requirements)
- if providing open access to these data would jeopardise the achievement of the main objective of the H2020 project from which the research data derives
- other legitimate constraints.

For details on how to provide information on any data sharing exceptions please see our [Data Guidelines](#).

10. Licenses

Open Research Europe articles are published under a Creative Commons Attribution International Public License (CC BY) license, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and leaves the copyright of the article with the current copyright holder (usually the author or his/her institution).

Data associated with Open Research Europe articles are made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution International Public License (CC BY) or a Creative Commons Public Domain Dedication ([CC0](#) license). This facilitates and encourages re-use and helps prevent the problems of attribution stacking when combining multiple datasets each authored by multiple authors that use multiple different licenses.

Peer review reports that are published with a given article are also available under the CC BY license.

11. Permanency of content

All articles published in Open Research Europe receive a DOI and are published. They remain published regardless of the outcome of the peer review that follows publication.

All content, including articles that have not (yet) passed peer review, is permanently archived in Portico. All articles that pass peer review will also be permanently archived in Zenodo, or, if appropriate, in a number of thematic repositories that collaborate with Open Research Europe, such as Europe PMC, thus fulfilling the Commission's requirement for open access through repositories.

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Once the platform has been formally approved by major bibliographic databases, articles that have passed peer review will be archived there.

Authors can revise, change and update their articles by publishing new versions, which are added to the article's history; however, the individual versions, once published, cannot be altered or withdrawn and are permanently available on the Open Research Europe website. Open Research Europe participates in the [CrossMark](#) scheme, a multi-publisher initiative that has developed a standard way for readers to locate the current version of an article. By applying the CrossMark policies, Open Research Europe is committed to maintaining the content it publishes and to alerting readers to changes if and when they occur.

Clicking on the CrossMark logo (at the top of each Open Research Europe article) will give you the current status of an article and direct you to the latest published version; it may also give you additional information such as new peer review reports.

In order to maintain the integrity and completeness of the scholarly record, the following policies will be applied when published content needs to be corrected; these policies take into account current [best practice](#) in the scholarly publishing and library communities.

11.1 Correction to an Article

In traditional journals, where articles are peer reviewed before publication, Corrections (or Errata) are published to alert readers to errors in the article that became apparent following the publication of the final article.

By contrast, articles in Open Research Europe undergo peer review post publication and publication is not 'final' as new versions can be added at any stage. Possible mistakes that come to light during the peer review process may be highlighted in the published peer review reports, which are part of the article. Authors can publish revised versions, and any errors that become apparent during peer review or later can be corrected through the publication of new versions. Corrections and changes relative to the previous version are always summarized in the 'Amendments' section at the start of a new version.

11.2 Retraction

Articles may be retracted for several reasons, including:

- honest errors reported by the authors (for example, errors due to the mixing up of samples or use of a scientific tool or equipment that is found subsequently to be faulty)
- research misconduct (data fabrication)
- duplicate or overlapping publication
- fraudulent use of data
- clear plagiarism
- unethical research

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For any retracted article, the reason for retraction and who is instigating the retraction will be clearly stated in the Retraction notice. The retraction notice will be linked to the retracted article (which usually remains on the site) and the article will be clearly marked as retracted (including the PDF).

An article is usually only retracted at the authors' request or by the publisher in response to an institutional investigation. It is important to note in the context of the Open Research Europe publication model, that - as in traditional journals - a retracted article is not 'unpublished' or 'withdrawn' in order for it to be published elsewhere. The reasons for retraction are usually so serious that the whole study, or large parts of it, are not appropriate for inclusion in the scientific literature anywhere.

The content of a retracted article would only be removed where legal limitations have been placed upon the publisher, copyright holder or author(s), for example, if the article is clearly defamatory or infringes others' legal rights, or if the article is the subject of a court order. In such cases, the bibliographic information for the article will be retained on the site along with information regarding the circumstances that led to the removal of the content.

Under rare circumstances, for example, if false or inaccurate data have been published that, if acted upon, pose a serious health risk, the original incorrect version(s) may be removed, and a corrected version published. The reason for this partial removal would be clearly stated on the latest version.

11.3 Editorial Note

If there is a potential, not yet resolved, problem with an article, it may be appropriate to alert readers with an Editorial Note. Such an Editorial Note may be added, for example, if Open Research Europe receives information that research or publication misconduct might have taken place, or that there is a serious dispute between authors or between the authors and third parties. The Editorial Note will usually be posted while further investigations take place and until a more permanent solution has been found (e.g. the publication of a revised 'corrected' version, or a Retraction).

11.4 Expression of Concern

In rare cases, Open Research Europe may decide to publish an Expression of Concern, which is linked to the problematic article, if there are serious concerns about an article but no conclusive evidence can be obtained that would unequivocally justify a Retraction. This may include:

- if there is inconclusive evidence of research or publication misconduct
- there is evidence that there are problems with the article, but the authors' institution will not investigate the case
- an investigation into alleged misconduct has not been impartial or conclusive

12. Allegations of misconduct

If a case of suspected research or publication misconduct is brought to our attention, we will follow [COPE guidelines](#). This may involve contacting the authors' research institution, an ethics committee or other third parties.

Research misconduct includes data fabrication or falsification, or cases where research involving animals or humans has not been carried out within an [appropriate ethical framework](#). Publication misconduct includes duplicate publication of articles or clear plagiarism. Honest errors or differences of opinion are not considered 'misconduct'.

In the process of investigating an ethical query, the submitted article, author, reviewer and any other person (including whistleblowers) involved will be treated in confidence. During an investigation, it may be necessary for the Editor to share information with third parties, such as the ethics committee and/or the authors' institution.

13. Appeals and complaints

Open Research Europe follows the [COPE guidelines](#) in relation to complaints and appeals. If you wish to make an appeal about an editorial decision or make a complaint, you should contact the [editorial office](#). In the instance that your issue cannot be resolved by the editorial office, the [Publishing Director](#) should be contacted.

14. The peer review model

All articles undergo formal peer review by invited experts who meet our criteria for reviewers; these criteria are aimed at ensuring that reviewers have sufficient expertise and qualifications to judge the content of the article and that they have no conflicts of interest.

Peer review takes place after publication and is driven by the authors who must suggest the reviewers and who decide when and how to address any criticisms raised by the reviewers. Communication with the reviewers is done by the editorial team, on behalf of the authors.

The peer-review process is completely transparent: the reviewer names and their reports are published alongside the article, and the authors' responses to the reviewers (or to reader comments) are also posted for readers to see.

Revisions and updates are published as new versions, with clear explanations (in an "Amendments" section) of the changes the authors made.

Usually, an article receives two or three peer review reports. The reviewers choose an approval status, which contributes to determining whether the article has 'passed peer review' and is indexed in bibliographic databases (once the platform has been formally approved by those indexers).

15. Policy for Comments on Articles

While peer reviewers are formally invited, we encourage unsolicited open scientific discussion on all articles. Such contributions are published through our Comment system. Comments should contribute to, and focus on, the scholarly debate. We welcome comments from readers with a formal affiliation with a research institution, or other organisation clearly related to the Open

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Research Europe scope. We also welcome comments from readers who have demonstrable expertise in a relevant area of research, including independent scholars and citizen scientists. Consistent with our commitment to full transparency, the reader's full name and affiliation appear on their public comment.

Comments should focus on the scholarly content presented in the articles with which they are associated.

Comments that appear to be advertising, are potentially libellous or legally problematic (including comments revealing patient information) are not permitted. We will not accept Comments that are offensive, indecent or contain negative comments of a personal, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, or religious character.

All Comments must be written in good English; a Comment may be rejected if it is deemed unintelligible.

Readers who wish to comment on an article are asked to declare any competing interests. Competing interests can be of a financial nature (e.g. holding a patent or receiving fees from a company that may lose or gain financially from the publication of the Comment), or they can be personal, religious, political or other non-financial interests. When completing your declaration, please consider the issues summarized in the [Declaration of Competing Interests](#).

While we welcome open scientific debate and discussion, we will not tolerate abusive behaviour towards our authors and reviewers via our Comment system or via social media. In extreme cases, we will consider contacting the affiliated institution to report the abusive behaviour of individuals.

16. Advertising

Open Research Europe does not publish advertorial articles. Advertisers have no influence on the editorial publication process. Any advertisements, such as online banner adverts, must be clearly distinguished from published content. The publisher reserves the right to place the word "Advertisement" in any material that may - in the publisher's opinion - be potentially confused with peer-reviewed research content.

17. Harassment

Open Research Europe will not tolerate any kind of harassment of authors, reviewers or editorial staff. To assist researchers in dealing with harassment, we follow [guidance](#) from the Science Media Centre.