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## Norway

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8–10 minutes

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### Key findings

- **Research libraries in Norway are part of independent units -universities and research centres - with their own institutional policies**
- **The UNIT consortium represents research libraries in licence negotiations with publishers**
- **National OA guidelines exclude monographs**
- **Sources of funding for OA books are available on an institutional level**
- **No library/scholar-led OA book publishing initiatives (small output of monographs) were identified**
- **Libraries rely on common catalogue offered by UNIT (Alma) for OA book coverage**

### General library system for e-content and OA publications

The landscape of research libraries in Norway is heterogeneous, with individual, institution-based libraries which differ greatly in size, available funding and resources. Collectively, they are represented by the library committee of the **Universities of Norway (UHR)**. **UHR** is a cooperative body in the higher education landscape in Norway, which plays a vital role in giving advice on open access-related questions to the entire sector. It stands for 33 universities and university colleges and is divided into strategic units. One of them is dedicated to research libraries.

Their interests are also represented by the newly-formed organisation called UNIT.

**UNIT** (The Norwegian Directorate of Information and Communications Technology and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research) is an agency of the Ministry of Education and Research, established in 2018. As part of its mission, UNIT coordinates work on open access on a national level and is in charge of negotiations of licence agreement for e-content with publishers. It represented Norway in talks with Taylor and Francis, Springer, Elsevier and Wiley. Library participation in the UNIT consortium is voluntary. Currently the organisation gathers public,

county and research libraries, as well as hospitals and institutions, under the aegis of the government. Members of the consortium operate on the basis of the “open consortia” idea, meaning that they can choose in which licence agreements they will participate.

Norwegian national strategy for libraries for the upcoming three years (2020-2023) focuses on three main areas: dissemination, cooperation and development, and infrastructure. It calls for a greater interoperability and cooperation between the public and research libraries, with UNIT and the higher education institutions working together on common standards, metadata and ensuring access to digital sources. The strategy hints at the fact that special funding will be allocated towards these goals (*National Strategy on Access to and Sharing of Research Data*, n.d.).

## Library community and open access

Norway is one of the European front runners when it comes to the open access movement and the library community has played its part in the adoption of OA principles. In 2005, as a product of cooperation between four Norwegian universities, an organisation called **NORA** was founded. Its goal was to be the forum of exchange for the common repositories standard and it was intended to serve as a source of information about the OA for the academic community in Norway (Frantsvåg, 2008). It ceased to exist in 2011 when **Cristin**, a national organisation, formed under the aegis of the Ministry of Education with a mission of dealing with all OA issues on a national level. Currently Cristin is part of UNIT.

Despite high OA awareness among Norwegian librarians, there are no OA specific working groups within the library community in Norway. The issue of open access has been so engrained in the academic system, though, that it is hard to imagine any discussion about the future of scholarly communications in Norway that would exclude the notion of open access to science. [openaccess.no](https://openaccess.no) is a website gathering news on open access-related questions on a national level. It is steered by UNIT.

## OA book policies

Norway has been a strong supporter of open access in the European landscape. In 2017 the country introduced its national goals and guidelines, with an ultimate goal of having all publicly funded research articles OA by 2024 (*National Goals and guidelines for Open Access to Research Articles*, 2017). OA monographs, however, are not mentioned in the document. Despite several rumours concerning their soon-to-be introduction to the national OA goals, books still remain uncovered.

Alongside OA guidelines on a national level, each HEI has its own policy that their libraries follow. Eight institutional OA policies have been recorded in ROAR for Norway, with three institutions

specifically listing books as a type of content covered by the OA policy (University of Stavanger, University of Bergen and University College of Southeast Norway).

## OA book funding

Norway benefits from the strong support of the Research Council of Norway, which allocates substantial funds to cover the costs of OA publications. The RCN runs a program called STIM-OA, rolled out on a yearly basis, to which Norwegian research institutions can apply. Available funding support accounts for 50% of the OA publication costs, but so far can be used for APCs only. The need for BPCs to be included in the funding scheme has been communicated by the academic community, but no changes have been introduced as of the end of 2020. **STIM-OA**, introduced in 2015, has entered its second phase now, planned till 2022 (*Open Access to Publications*, n.d.).

In addition to this central funding, there are options for OA book funding available on an institutional level. Nineteen Norwegian institutions currently have their own institutional OA funds (*Publiseringsfond ved norske UH-institusjoner - frontpage*, n.d.). While the majority of them is geared towards journal publication fees, nine institutions mention that their funds can also be used to cover book processing charges.

## Library/scholar-led OA book publishing

No library/scholar-led OA book publishing initiatives were identified.

## Integration of OA books in library systems

All HEIs in Norway use a common catalogue system offered through UNIT: Alma from ExLibris and Oria as a search system. Libraries depend on Alma for the inclusion of OA books that should be included in it automatically. Single titles coming from smaller publishers and not included in Alma might be added to the catalogue manually by librarians.

NORA - Norwegian open research archives - is the central portal to all national OA output, including more than 6,000 OA books.

## Important contributors

**UNIT** <https://www.unit.no/en/about-unit-0>

**The Research Council of Norway**

<https://www.forskningradet.no/en/>

**Universities Norway (UHR)** <https://www.uhr.no/en/about-uhr/>

**open.access.no** <https://www.openaccess.no>

**NORA** <https://nora.openaccess.no/>

## References

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