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# 2023 PCI's finances and article costs

Summary: PCI and its journal PCJ are part of the Diamond Open Access galaxy: Authors and readers pay nothing to read and publish articles. However, the activities of PCI and PCJ do cost money. The following text details the sources of their funding, their expenses, the average cost to society of publicly recommending a preprint after peer review, of publishing an article in PCJ, and the savings made possible by PCI and PCJ.

## 2023 PCI Resources

As explained in the “[Finances and Cost Structure of PCI](#)” webpage, Peer Community In's (PCI) financial resources are primarily derived from numerous small annual public subventions. In 2023, PCI received 59 such subventions, totaling 226 K€. Thanks to the continuous recruitment of new sponsors and the renewal of subsidies from previous donors, this amount has been steadily increasing over time: approximately 50 K€ in 2019, 65 K€ in 2020, 170 K€ in 2021, 200 K€ in 2022, and 226 K€ in 2023. In 2023, eleven new sponsors funded PCI, including prestigious organizations such as the Harvard Library, the University of Liverpool, the University of Leiden, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and the University of Exeter.

Additionally, PCI received funding for two projects. The first, COAR Notify, led by the Confederation of Open Access Repositories and funded by Arcadia, aims to develop automated and decentralized notifications among open archives, preprint servers, peer review services, endorsement services, journals, and information aggregation services. A second project, funded by the French National Fund for Open Science, focuses on developing the back office of PCI websites and promoting PCI communications.

PCI's third main resource is in-kind contributions from research institutes. The Executive Bureau of PCI comprises two researchers and an engineer from the French National Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research (INRAE), primarily dedicating their time to managing PCI and the Peer Community Journal (PCJ). Moreover, the CNRS has temporarily appointed a web developer to work part-time for PCI. Similar to other journals and publishing platforms, a considerable amount of work is contributed by reviewers, referees, and board members, yet these labor costs are not reflected in the annual balance sheet. In 2023, PCI engaged volunteer workers, including Juliette Tariel and Pavithran Narayanan, as editorial assistants and for formatting articles for the PCJ. We warmly thank them, as their voluntary contributions have been immensely valuable.

In total, PCI's resources for 2023—226 K€ from donations, 31 K€ from funding calls, 307 K€ in salaries as in-kind donations—amounted to 564 K€ or 257 K€ excluding in-kind donations of salaries.

## Article Costs at Peer Community In and Peer Community Journal

To calculate the cost of services rendered by Peer Community In (PCI) and Peer Community Journal (PCJ) — specifically, the cost of evaluating and recommending preprints and registered reports for PCI, and publishing articles for PCJ — we consider only operational costs. As shown in the details of 2023 finances below, these operational costs amounted to 213 K€ (188 K€ and 25 K€ for PCI and PCJ, respectively), or 24 K€ (21 K€ and 3 K€ for PCI and PCJ, respectively) if we exclude in-kind contributions of salaries. Investment costs, totaling 249 K€ in 2023, are not included in this calculation as the benefits of these investments are realized in subsequent accounting periods. The rationale for this exclusion is explained in the “[Finances and Cost Structure of PCI](#)” webpage. Note that if we exclude the salaries in the form of in-kind donations, the cost of PCI and PCJ in 2023 is very low, about 21 K€ and 3 K€, respectively.

PCI’s primary activity involves evaluating preprints and registered reports, and potentially recommending them if they receive positive evaluations. From this perspective, the total cost of PCI’s service in 2023 is 188 K€ (21 K€ without in-kind contributions). This breaks down to approximately 400 € (45 € without in-kind contributions) per preprint and registered report submission, based on 465 submissions in 2023, or 1,000 € (112 € without in-kind contributions) per recommended preprints, for 188 recommendations in 2023. The cost of hosting a preprint on an open archive or preprint server is very low, ranging from \$10 to a few tens of dollars (see for example <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature.2015.19102> or <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature.2014.16643> or the 2020 annual report of arXiv, [https://info.arxiv.org/about/reports/2020\\_arXiv\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://info.arxiv.org/about/reports/2020_arXiv_annual_report.pdf)). If we use 20€ as an estimate of the preprint server cost, then the total cost of a preprint recommended by PCI amounts to 1,020€ (132 € without in-kind contributions). It’s important to note that the number of submissions has been consistently increasing (with counts of 52, 78, 96, 121, 167, 289, and 465 from 2017 to 2023, respectively) and is likely to continue growing. The same is true for recommended preprints. Consequently, the cost per submission and recommended preprint is expected to decrease as the number of submissions rises (see the details in the “[Finances and Cost Structure of PCI](#)” webpage).

Regarding Peer Community Journal, the annual operating costs are 25 K€, or 3 K€ if we exclude in-kind contributions of salaries. The cost of publishing an article with PCJ comes to 205 € (25 € without in-kind contributions) per article for the 122 articles published in 2023. Additionally, there are costs incurred by our web publisher, the Centre Mersenne, estimated at around 200 € per article. The total cost per article published by PCJ (preprint hosting, recommendation of the preprint, PCJ costs, and Centre Mersenne’s costs) amounts to 1,425 € (357 € without in-kind contributions). Similar to the evaluation costs, the publishing costs are also expected to decrease over time with an increase in the number of publications (see the details in the “[Finances and Cost Structure of PCI](#)” webpage).

## Savings achieved with PCI and PCJ

As explained in the “[Finances and Cost Structure of PCI](#)” webpage, the current average cost of article publication in STM is about 3,000€ per article (note that this amount does not include in-kind contributions). This extremely high figure represents an appalling amount that we want to avoid ever approaching.<sup>[1]</sup> The costs incurred by PCI per recommended article and per published article are well below this limit. A recommended preprint is a finalised article, published by a preprint server or an

open archive, evaluated and validated by the scientific community. We hence need to compare the average cost to society of 3,000€ with the cost of a preprint recommended by PCI. The cost of a preprint recommended by PCI is 1,020€ or 132€ without considering in-kind donations. We can therefore guarantee savings of 1,980 € or 2,868 € per item. Given the volume of 188 preprints recommended in 2023, the total saving is 372 K€ or 539 K€ without considering in-kind donations. Some observers may retort that an article published as a preprint and then accepted for recommendation by PCI does not have the same value as an article published in a traditional journal. This is highly debatable, but let's accept the idea for a moment. If authors don't perceive a PCI-recommended preprint as valuable enough, they automatically have the option to transfer their preprint for publication in the companion journal Peer Community Journal (PCJ). We therefore need to compare the average cost of publication of 3,000€ per article with the cost of publishing an article in PCJ. The total cost of an article published by Peer Community Journal is 1,425 € or 357 € without considering in-kind donations. The saving compared with the 3,000€ per article is therefore 1,575 € or 2,643 € with no in-kind contributions. Multiplying this by 122, the number of articles published in 2023, gives a total saving of around 192 K€ or 322 K€ excluding in-kind contributions.

## 2023 Finances

### Income

Public subventions from individuals, universities, university libraries, and research organisms in 2023:

#### Between 1€ and 999€

- One individual donation
- Ghent University
- Université Sorbonne Paris Nord
- Université d'Angers
- University of Liverpool
- University of Glasgow
- Library of Iowa State University
- Bibliothèques de Montréal
- Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
- University of Sheffield
- University College London
- University of Bath
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of York

#### Between 1,000€ and 1,999€

- Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics (SIB)
- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)
- URFIST Lyon

- Université de Limoges
- AgroParisTech
- Université de Tours
- Institut des Sciences de l'Evolution de Montpellier
- Département MathNum INRAE
- Université Versailles Saint Quentin
- University of Oxford
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex

**Between 2,000€ and 2,999€**

- Université de Bordeaux
- Université de Perpignan
- Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (Ifremer)
- Ecole Patrique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE)
- Société Française d'Ecologie et d'Evolution (SFE2)
- Département Ecodiv INRAE
- Réseau URFIST
- Université Grenoble-Alpes
- University of Exeter
- Laboratoire de Linguistique Formelle Univ Paris Cité
- University of Leiden
- Harvard Library
- Labex TULIP
- Université de Strasbourg
- Université de Toulouse

**Between 3,000€ and 3,999€**

- Sorbonne Université
- Université Libre de Bruxelles
- Aix Marseille University
- Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD)
- Université de Nanterre
- Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

**Between 5,000 and 9,999€**

- Université de Rennes
- Université de Lorraine
- Université de Montpellier
- Royal Danish Library
- CNRS Institut National de l'Ecologie et de l'Environnement (INEE)
- Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM)
- Université Côte Azur
- Université Paris-Saclay

**Over 10,000€**

- INRAE DipSO

- Labex CEMEB
- Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)

**Total Public subventions: 226 K€**

#### Funding from calls

- Open Science National fund (FNSO) call to PCI (via Inrae): 20 K€
- COAR Notify: 11 K€

**Total funding from calls: 31 K€**

#### In-kind donations from research organisms and universities

- Reviewers, recommenders, managing board members: huge wage bill not accounted for, as usual, as in every scientific journal
- INRAE: salaries of two researchers (70% each) and one engineer (90%): 279 K€
- CNRS: salary of an engineer (66%): 28 K€

**Total in-kind donations: 307 K€**

#### Expenses

##### Operating costs for PCI

- Website hosting: 8 K€
- Annual subscription to services: 4 K€
- Accountant and auditor: 6 K€
- Travels (hotel, transport, catering), communication, small equipment: 3 K€
- Salaries (in-kind donation from INRAE) for PCI management: 167 K€

**Total Operating costs PCI: 188 K€**

##### Operating costs for PCJ

- Website hosting: 3 K€
- Salaries (in-kind donation from INRAE and benevolent salaries) for PCJ management: 22 K€

**Total Operating costs PCJ: 25 K€**

##### Investment costs for PCI

- Website development: 131 K€
- Salaries (in-kind donation from INRAE, CNRS) for tests and development management: 118 K€

**Total Investment: 249 K€**