

SLSP

Swiss Library
Service Platform



Tackling publishing monopolies through consortial negotiations

The role of the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries (CSAL) in making Open Access a reality

Anina Köppli, CSAL, Lunch & Learn Open Science, April 3, 2025

Agenda

The session will address the following questions:

- 1) What is the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries and why was it established?
- 2) Why do we need negotiations with publishers?
- 3) What is CSAL's role in these negotiations?
- 4) Who defines the negotiation aims?
- 5) What have we learned in the past years and how does this shape our current work?



1) Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries

What is a consortium?

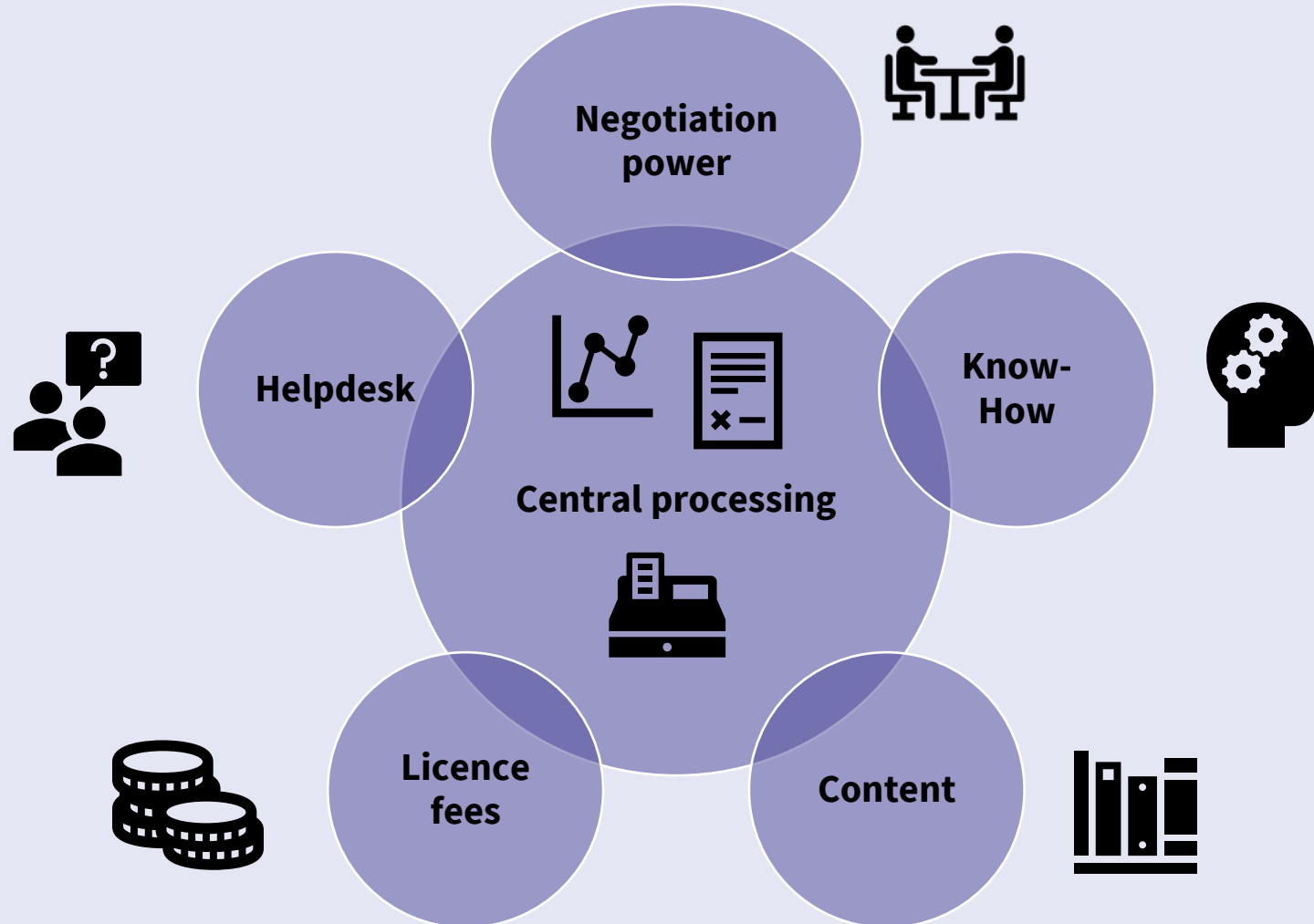
- Wikipedia: A consortium is an association of two or more individuals, companies, organizations, or governments (or any combination of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or **pooling their resources for achieving a common goal**.
- Merriam-Webster: an agreement, combination, or group (as of companies) formed to undertake an enterprise **beyond the resources of any one member**.

The Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries (CSAL) was established in 2000 to negotiate and obtain licenses for digital scientific resources (journals, books and databases) for academic libraries.

CSAL now also plays an important role in implementing the Swiss National Open Access Strategy which aims at making all publicly funded scholarly publications freely available for all.



1) Benefits of licensing through CSAL



2) Why do we need to negotiate with publishers?

- Academic publishing is essential for **sharing knowledge** and publishers play a key role in managing peer review, ensuring quality and distributing research
- But publishers have become **quasi-monopolies** in the scholarly publishing ecosystem (situation where a single entity or a small group of entities have significant control over a particular market, but not complete control or dominance).
- Majority of resources goes into the biggest three publishers **Elsevier, Springer Nature and Wiley**
- Increasing scrutiny also because of
 - Ever increasing costs
 - Limited access
 - Profit-driven motives
 - Control over academic knowledge
- Negotiations need to address all these issues
- Tax money needs to be allocated in a responsible manner and decreasing budgets add pressure to get better agreements



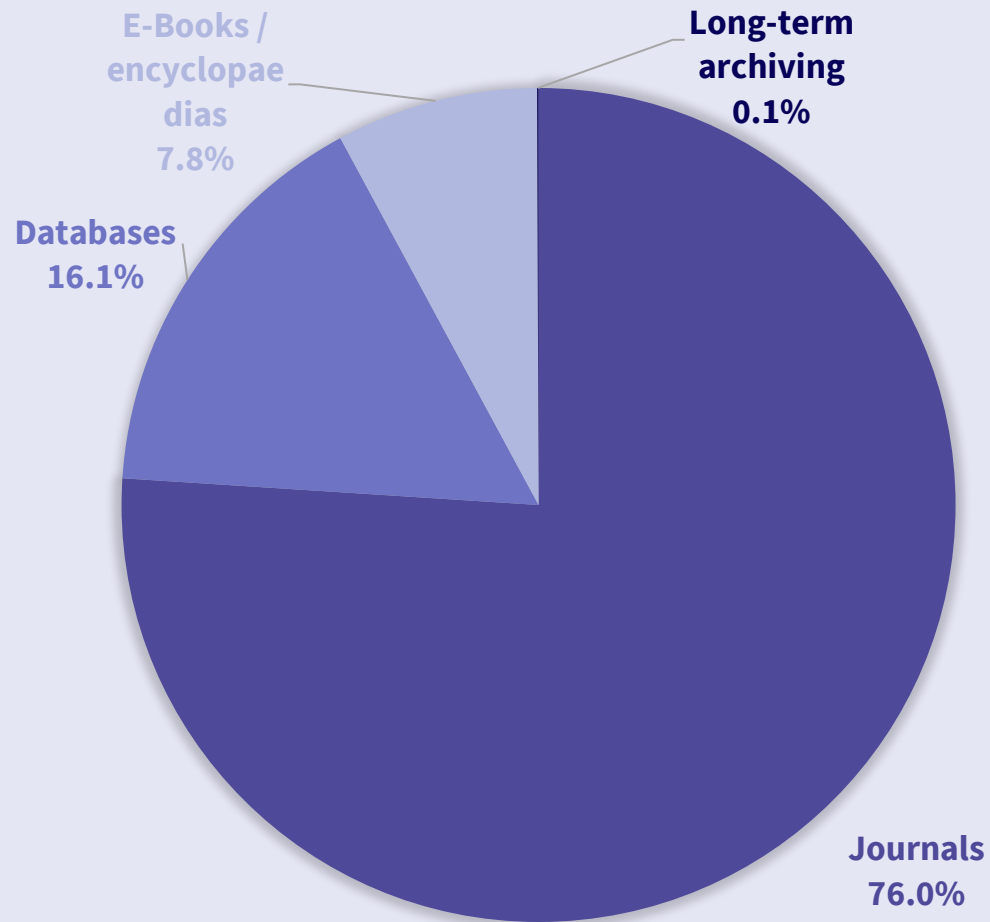
2) Licence spend with largest publishers

Top 4 publishers by licence volume 2024, in EUR 1,000



Source: CSAL (see consortium.ch for publicly available contracts)

2) Licence share per product type 2024



Konsortium der Schweizer Hochschulbibliotheken
Consortium des bibliothèques universitaires suisses
Consortio delle biblioteche universitarie svizzere
Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries

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Lizenzen

Suchen:

Subjects: Provider: Type: Contract Type:

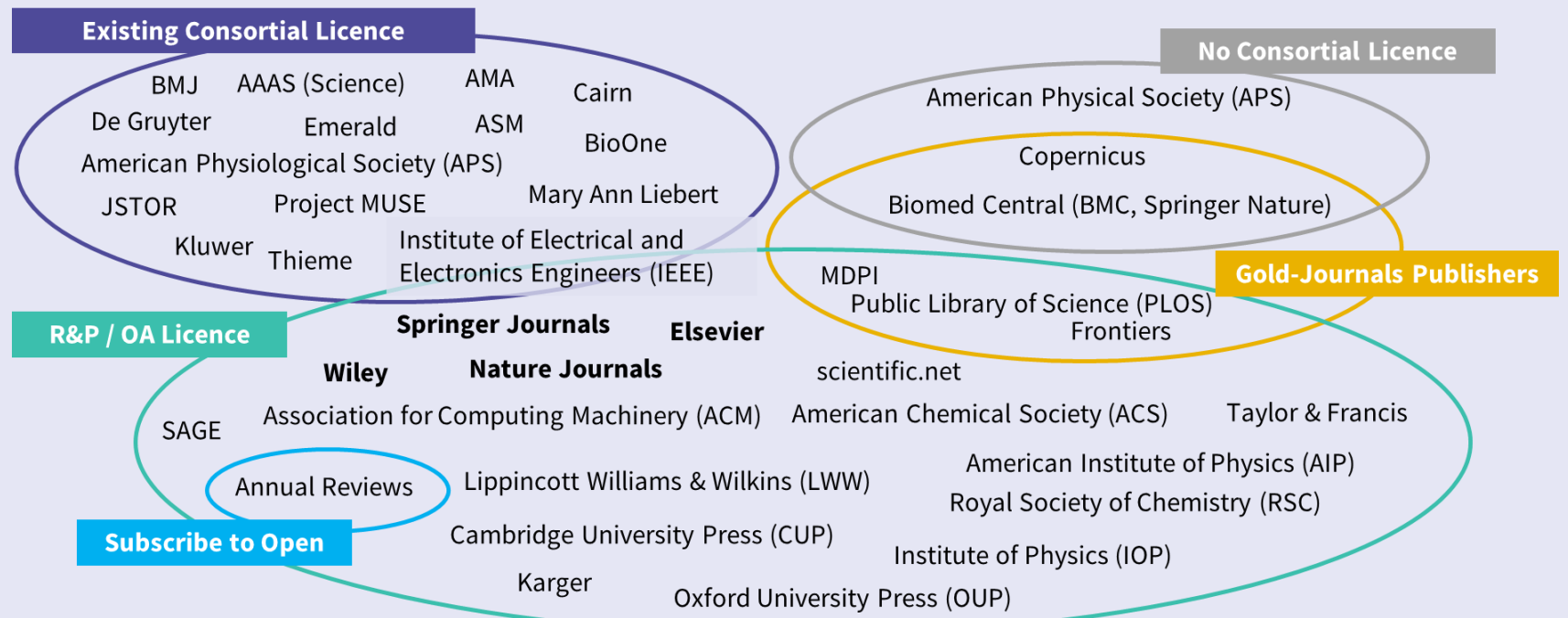
[Reset the Filter](#)

Product	Provider	Type
ABI Inform	ProQuest	Database
ACM OPEN	Association for Computing Machiner...	Database
Agricola	EBSCO, Ovid	Database
America: History & Life	EBSCO	Database
American Chemical Society (ACS)	American Chemical Society (ACS)	Archive, E-Journals
American Institute of Physics (AIP) Journals	American Institute of Physics (AIP)	E-Journals
American Mathematical Society (AMS) Journals	American Mathematical Society (AMS)	E-Journals
American Medical Association (AMA) Journals	American Medical Association (AMA)	E-Journals
American Physiological Society (APS) Journals	American Physiological Society (APS)	E-Journals

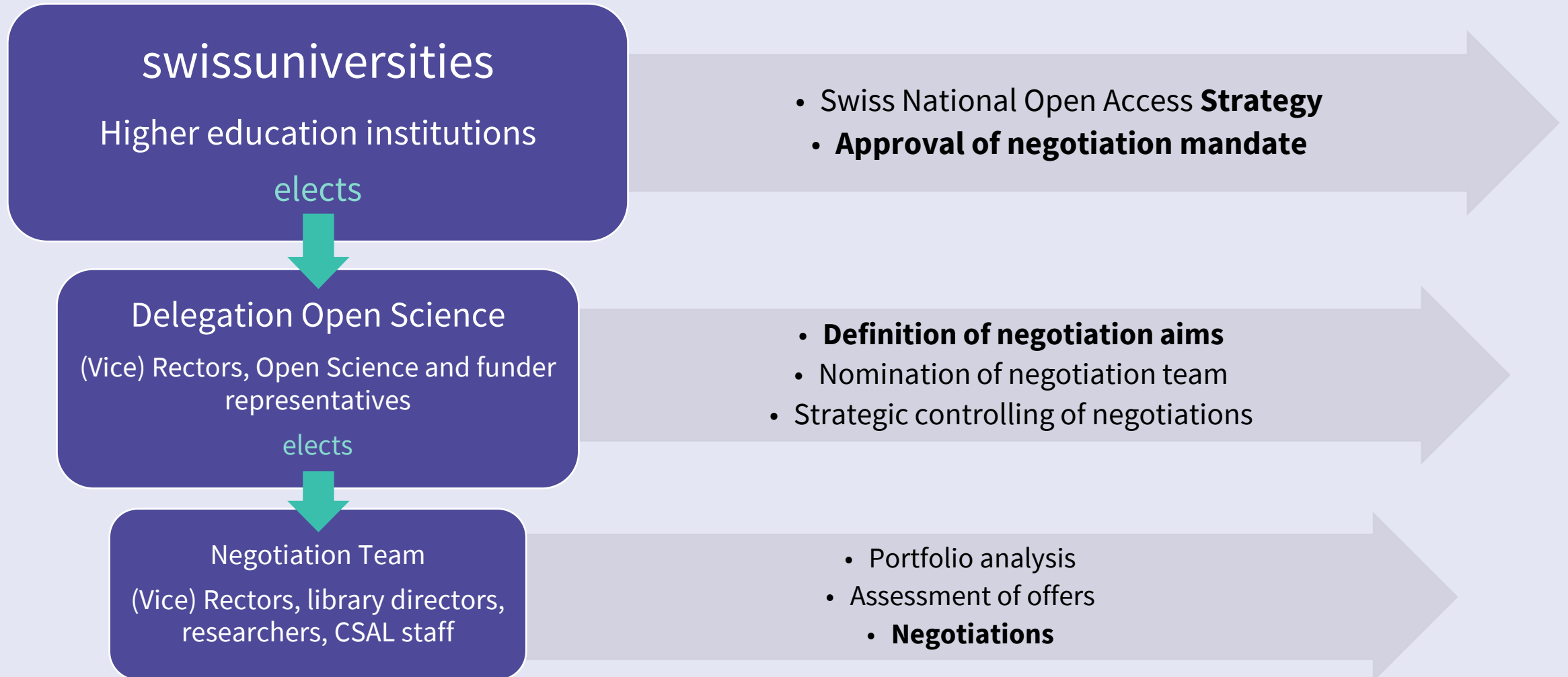


3) What is CSAL's role in these negotiations?

- CSAL's role depends on type of negotiation
- Big Deal negotiations: CSAL prepares, organizes, and professionally supports the negotiations as well as the decision-making processes
- Remaining negotiations: CSAL leads negotiations and involves library contacts through Working Group Licences



4) Who defines the negotiation aims?



4) 3rd Mandate for the Negotiations with Major International Publishers

swissuniversities

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Mandate for the Negotiations with Major International Publishers

In 2017, the Swiss higher education institutions, assembled in swissuniversities, formulated the goal to achieve publicly funded scholarly publications. This goal was reaffirmed in 2024 [National Open Access Strategy](#). Given the essential role of publishers as scholarly publishing, one element to achieve this goal are the negotiations with major international publishers for a sustainable transformation.

Negotiation Aims

On the basis of the experiences made, particularly with regard to the steadily rising cost of scholarly publishing, the inflation of the number of scholarly publications, and the systemic dependencies, the Delegation Open Science has decided that the mandate must focus on quality, fair prices, and the avoidance of (new) systemic dependencies, particularly with regard to research data. In order to achieve agreements with major international publishers that are in alignment with the aforementioned aims, swissuniversities intends to pursue agreements which focus on the publishing services provided, e.g. through a previously agreed and centrally paid flat-rate charge for unlimited publishing, to limit systemic incentives to inflate the number of publication opportunities. swissuniversities also examines the extent to which the negotiation aims and practices can be coordinated with other like-minded consortia and international initiatives.⁵ The main aims for agreements with major international publishers are as follows:

Quality before Quantity	Systemic incentives are to promote quality of content and service over quantity. This includes cost containment and cost control, e.g. through a previously agreed and centrally paid flat-rate charge for unlimited publishing.
Publishing as a Service	Immediate Open Access publishing services for all publications in the entire journal portfolio of this publisher, including Gold Open Access journals / portfolios as well as any pres-

- Mandate and information available on swissuniversities website (including previous mandates)
- Institutions sign mandate for the three large publishers
- But aims of mandate apply to all collective negotiations with publishers



5) What have we learned in the past years and how does this shape our current work?

- Having the framework of a mandate is important and developing it is essential
- Know your data: Data analysis has become much more important in the past years
- International knowledge exchange through networks (e.g. OA2020, ICOLC etc.) and platforms (e.g. ESAC) is crucial to better understand and develop our negotiation position
- Achieving the goals of the open access strategy is a long-term process and needs persistence and patience from all involved stakeholders



Questions?



Thank you!

