

## APCs in the Wild – White Paper

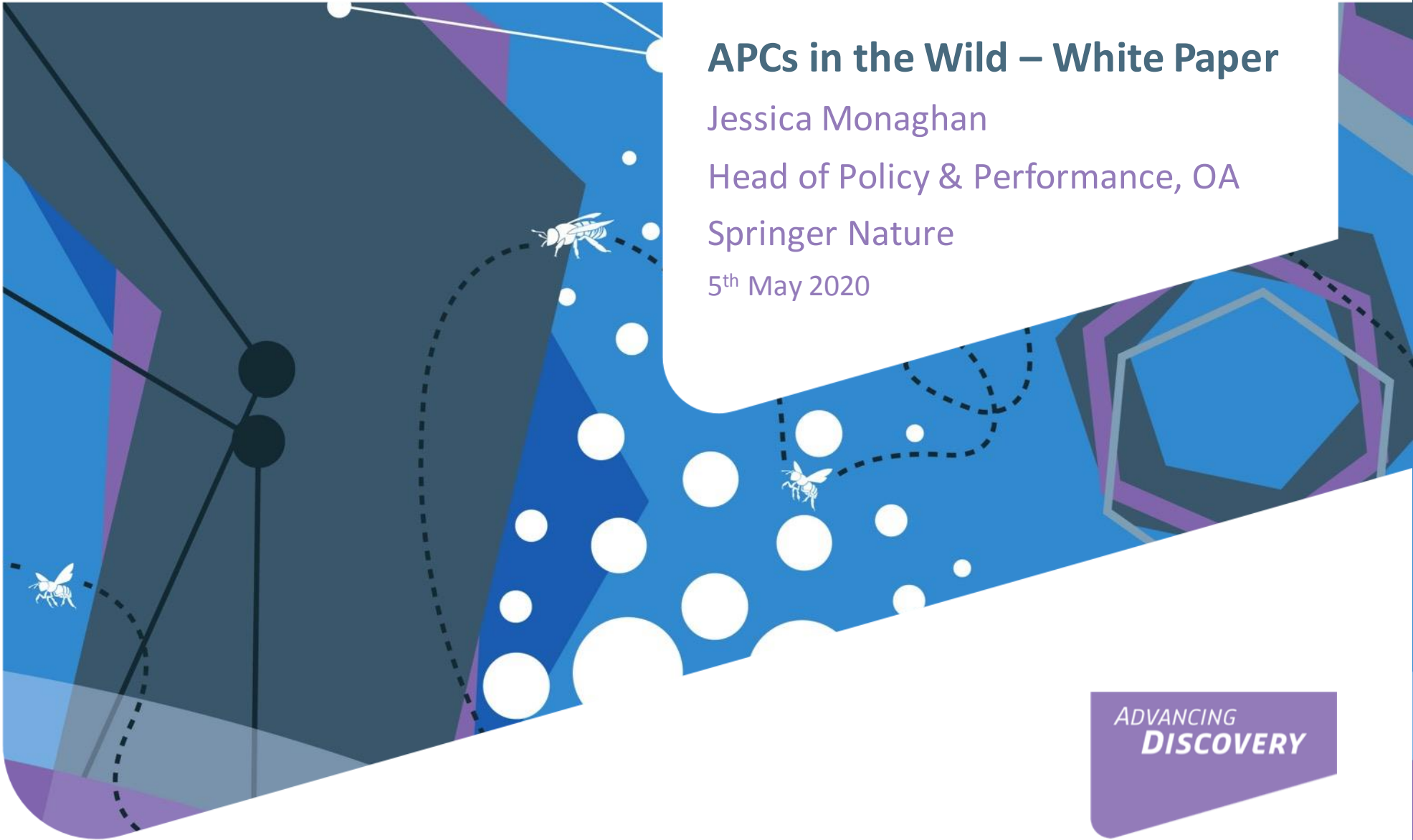
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Springer Nature

5<sup>th</sup> May 2020

ADVANCING  
**DISCOVERY**



# AGENDA

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## APCs in the Wild: A Springer Nature whitepaper

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Author survey findings
- 3 Institutional interviews
- 4 Next steps
- 5 Q&A

# APCS IN THE WILD: INTRODUCTION

# 1

# Open research at Springer Nature

We see the rise of open research in all its manifestations as one of the major forces reshaping the way that researchers communicate and collaborate to advance the pace and quality of discovery.

We offer researchers, institutions and their funders open access options for journals, books and sharing research data.

**nature**research

 Springer Open

 **BMC**

palgrave  
macmillan

 Springer

# A transition to open access

As the world's largest OA publisher, we are committed to accelerating the adoption of Open Science techniques and OA publishing world-wide.

## Open approaches benefit the whole scientific and research community



Facilitates collaboration



Increases the public's appreciation of research



Fosters economic growth



Aids the application of research to solve real-world problems

We believe gold open access publication offers the simplest, the most open, and the most sustainable route to open access.

# SPRINGER NATURE SUPPORTS THE OA TRANSITION

We are working with the research community to examine challenges that could block progress to OA, including complexity of APC funding streams

**'APCs in the Wild'** explores the role that increased monitoring of OA funds - and harnessing of complex funding sources - might play in speeding up the transition to OA.

The whitepaper includes findings from:

- A **survey** with over 1,000 Springer Nature authors who paid an APC from June to August 2019
- **16 interviews** with institutional contacts responsible for OA management

The image shows the cover of a whitepaper from Springer Nature. At the top left is the Springer Nature logo, and at the top right is the website address 'springernature.com'. The central graphic is a blue and purple abstract design with white dots and lines, resembling a network or data visualization. On the left side of the graphic, there is vertical text: 'Illustration inspired by the work of Sarah-Danielle Bradley'. Below the graphic, the text reads: 'Open Research', ''APCS IN THE WILD': EXPLORING FUNDING STREAMS FOR AN ACCELERATED TRANSITION TO OPEN ACCESS', and 'Whitepaper'. To the right of this text is a blue box with the text 'ADVANCING DISCOVERY' and a small version of the graphic. Below that is a white box with the text 'Open Research Journals Data Books Tools'. At the bottom left of the whitepaper cover is a Creative Commons license icon.

# A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF APC FUNDING SOURCES IS KEY

We wanted to better understand the current APC funding landscape and identify opportunities to support the OA transition

- Which types of APC funding sources are used by Springer Nature **authors**?
- Does this vary by journal type and author location?
- How much visibility do **institutions** have on this?
- What methods are institutions using to monitor APCs?
- Could improved monitoring help support the transition to OA?



# THE APC FUNDING LANDSCAPE IS COMPLEX

Where APC funding sources are still ‘in the wild’ it may be harder for institutions and funders to track, and therefore to consolidate funds





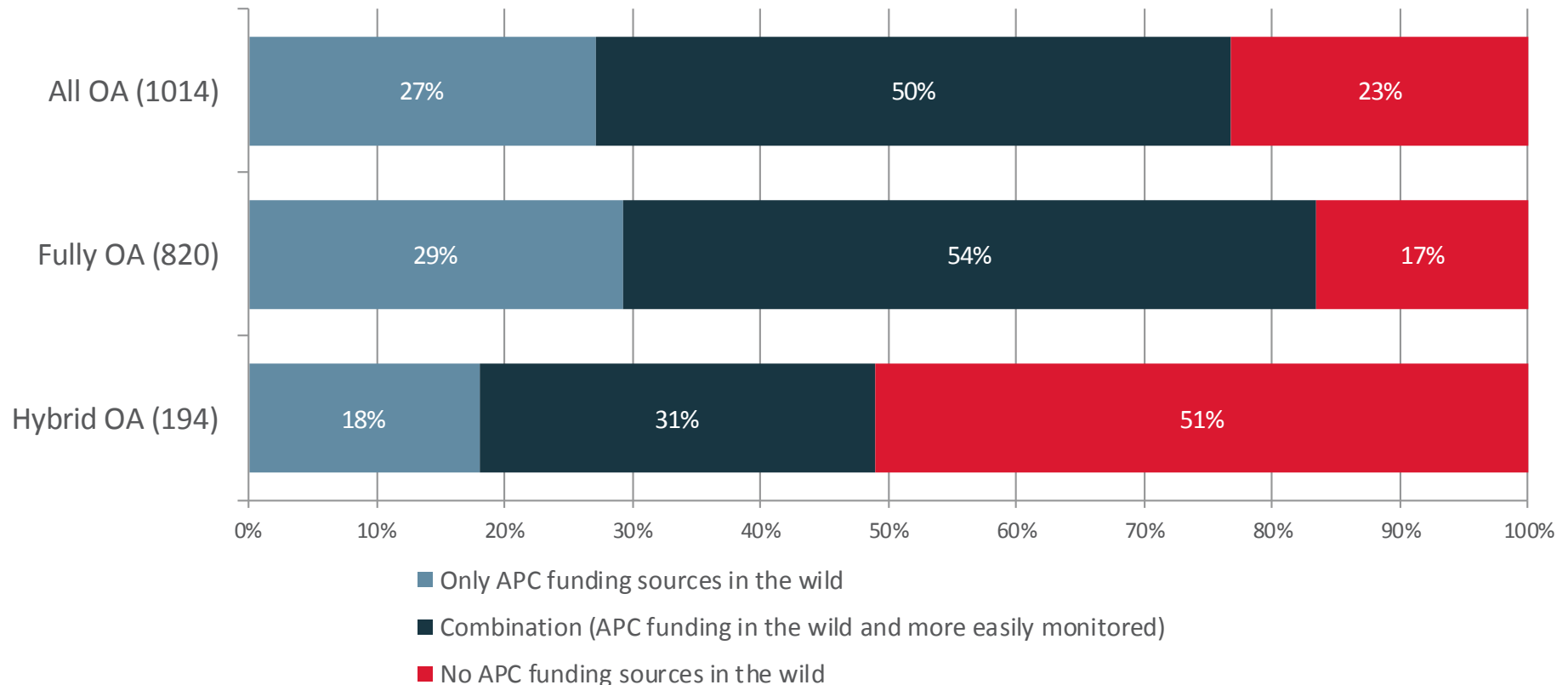
# SPRINGER NATURE AUTHOR SURVEY

# 2

# MANY APCs ARE STILL 'IN THE WILD'

Over a quarter of Springer Nature authors surveyed only used 'wild' funding sources for their APC, and a further 50% used wild sources in combination with more easily monitored sources

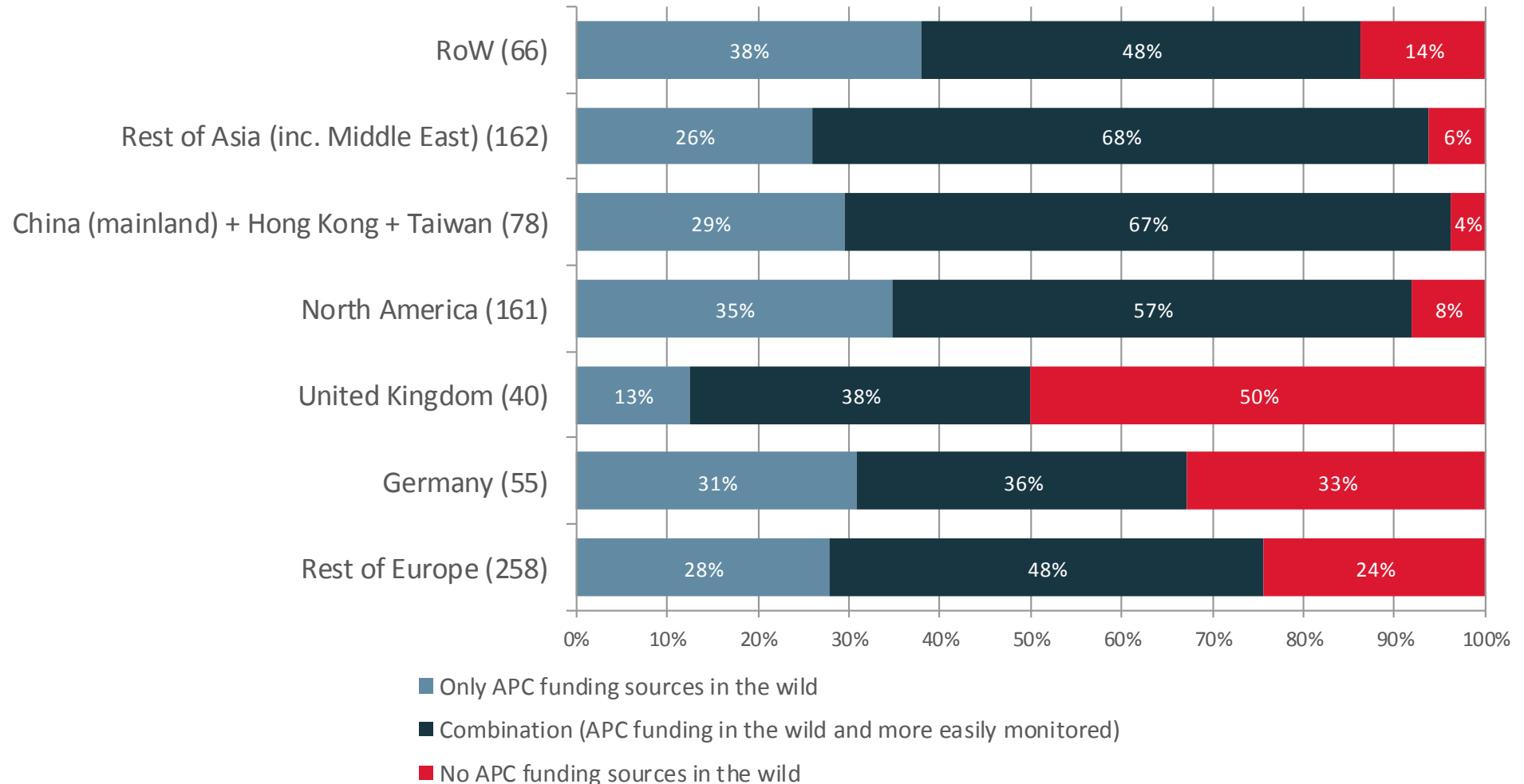
Levels of APC funding 'wildness'



# LEVELS OF APC 'WILDNESS' VARY REGIONALLY

OA policies and funding mechanisms have created different landscapes

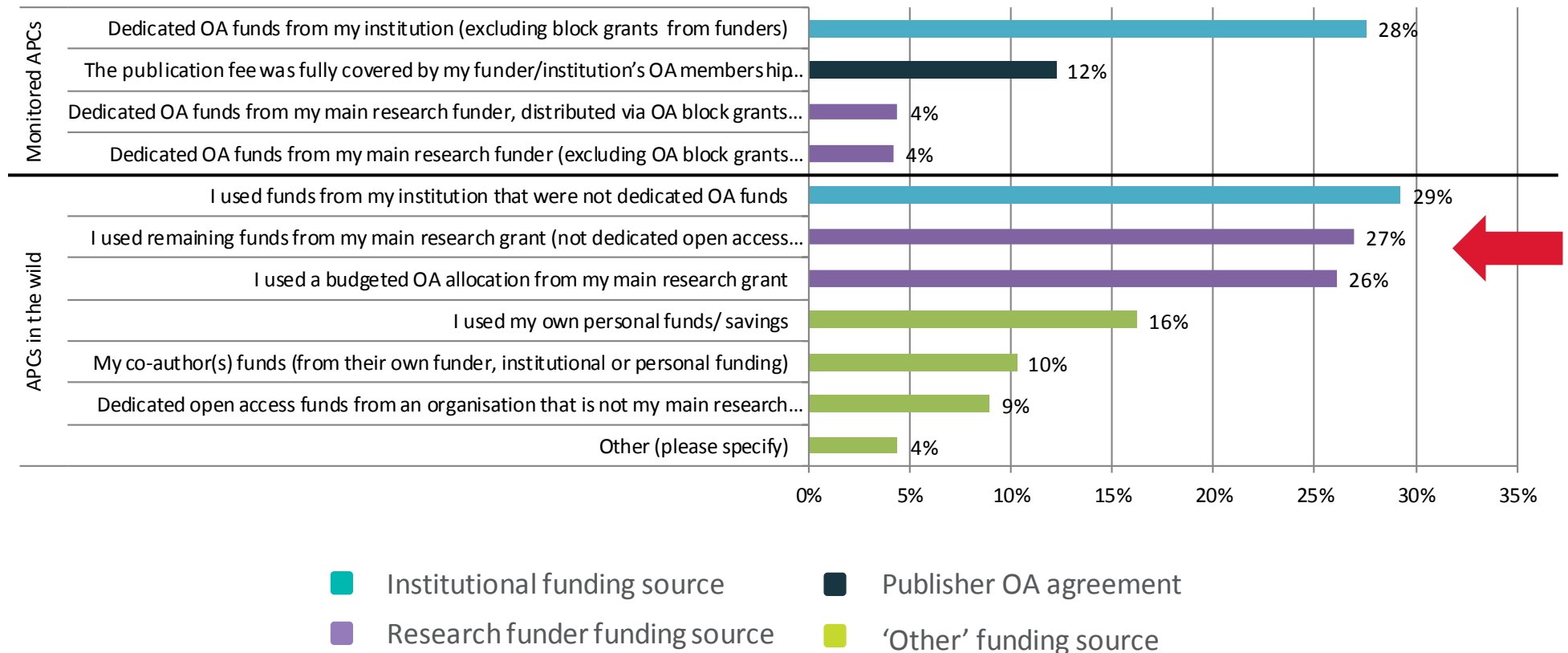
Levels of APC funding 'wildness' - fully OA by region



# 'WILD' APC FUNDING HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE HARNESSSED

Nearly one in three fully OA authors is using institutional funding from non-dedicated sources, and it is also common to draw on research funds

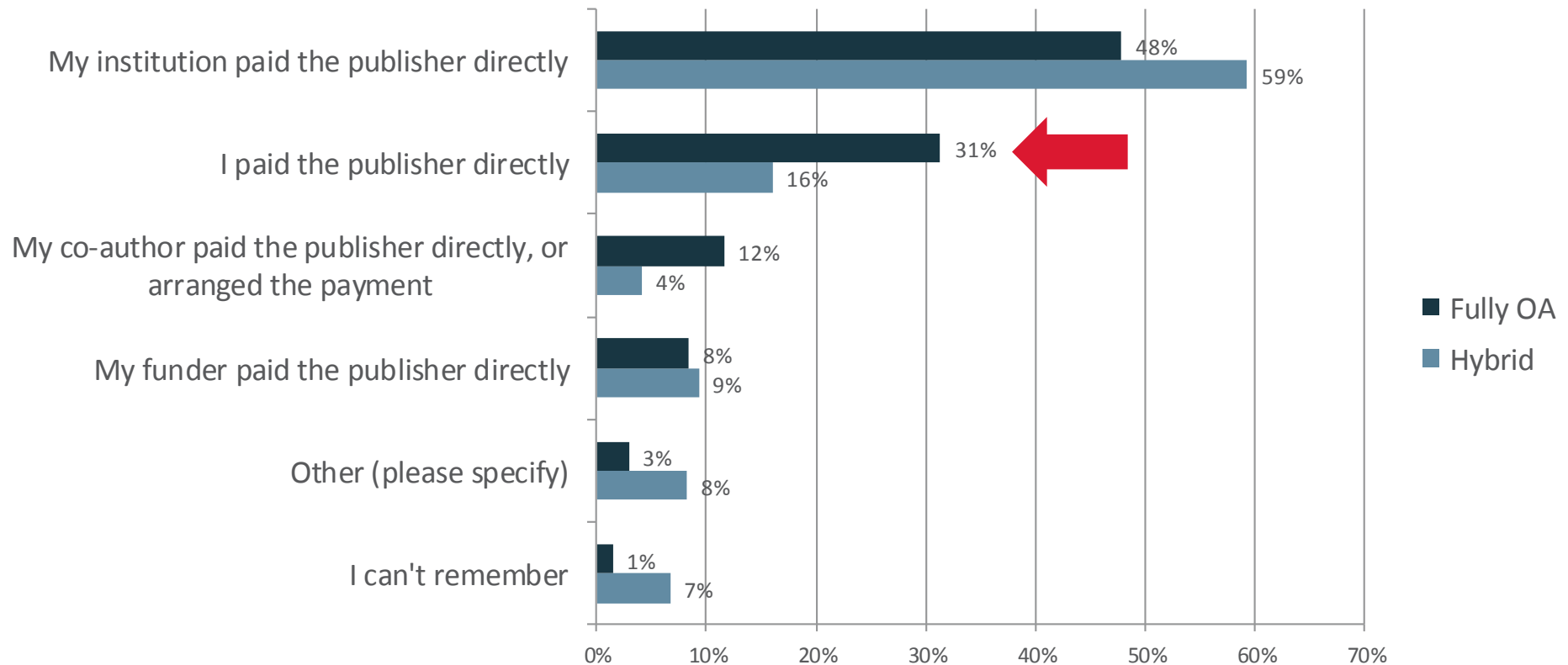
## APC funding sources: Fully OA authors (n=820, multiple selection possible)



## BUT MANY APC PAYMENTS ARE NOT SEEN BY INSTITUTIONS

Almost one in three fully OA authors paid the publisher directly – institutions may find it challenging to monitor funding for these articles, and this is also an additional administrative burden for authors

### Who was involved in the process of paying the APC?



# INSTITUTIONAL INTERVIEWS

# 3

# WE GATHERED INSIGHTS FROM 16 INSTITUTIONS

Institutional interviewees provided us with insights into their motivations, challenges, and approaches to APC monitoring

Country	Institution
Australia	University of Queensland
Australia	University of Wollongong
Austria	University of Vienna
China	Fudan University
Netherlands	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Netherlands	Delft University of Technology
Norway	University of Bergen
Sweden	Stockholm University
UK	University of Glasgow
UK	Imperial College London
UK	University of York
USA	Iowa State University
USA	IUPUI - Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis
USA	University of California
USA	University of Florida
Qatar	Qatar National Library

# INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT IN APC MONITORING VARIES

Where institutions or funders are seeking OA transition we unsurprisingly see greater focus on APC management and monitoring to facilitate this

- **Model A:** separate financial streams for subscriptions and APCs
- **Model B:** separate financial streams, with an institutional OA fund
- **Model C:** research funder in the lead, compliance is key
- **Model D:** library in the lead, aiming to transform the library budget



Through interviews we identified four broad models under which institutions approach APC management and monitoring – more details in the report



## SOME INSTITUTIONS TRACK MOST APCs, OTHERS STRUGGLE

It is challenging for some institutions to estimate the proportion of APCs they are monitoring since those ‘in the wild’ are so difficult to track

One interviewee - with institution-wide APC tracking over several years - has been able to track more than **95%** of all APCs

Another interviewee - from the library with an OA fund and no publisher deals - thinks the **vast majority** of APC payments fall outside their view

institutions often find APC monitoring a **“bureaucratic headache”**

Another interviewee - with a central OA fund - thinks they cover about **15 to 20%** of the APCs, based on a search in a bibliographic database

## THERE IS OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM SUCCESS STORIES

Some have identified mechanisms for successful APC tracking, offering greater opportunities to bring together complex APC funding sources

- ✓ **Policy requirements:** authors required to inform institution about OA publications
- ✓ **Accounting codes:** two universities reported positive results but another struggled
- ✓ **APC hub:** one org is planning a centralised APC payments hub for more visibility
- ✓ **Publisher agreements:** centralisation of APCs reduces the number of micro payments requiring tracking, and provides clarity on APC funding

Many interviewees pointed to the **success of OA agreements** - including transformative agreements - in reducing complexities around APC payment and monitoring

However, to facilitate agreements, or to consolidate a central OA fund for researchers, it is clear that **institutions and research funders** need to **understand the complex sources of funding** being utilised to pay for OA

# RECAP AND NEXT STEPS

# 4

## RECAP: KEY FINDINGS

APC funding is complex but with improved monitoring there is potential for institutions and funders to harness funds to support OA transition

- **APC funding is complex.** Authors use a wide range of funding sources, often in combination.
- **Monitoring is a challenge** as many APCs are still 'in the wild', particularly for fully OA journals.
- **Authors use 'wild' funds from outside of the library budget** (other institutional funds or from research funders), which presents an opportunity to harness funding streams to support OA.
- **Publisher OA agreements offer opportunities** to facilitate monitoring, reduce admin burden and consolidate multiple funding sources, but require an understanding of funding streams.
- **Institutions need a more comprehensive view** of APC funding sources to support the OA transition.
- **Success stories show potential** for effective monitoring, but more research is needed.

# SPRINGER NATURE IS CONDUCTING FURTHER RESEARCH

Our institutional survey is live!

**Further research is needed to identify APC monitoring blockers and enablers, with the aim of gaining a global picture of institutional activity**

**Springer Nature has launched an institutional survey to verify and build on findings from institutional interviews**

**Share your views with us now!**

**SPRINGER NATURE**

English - United Kingdom ▾

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Springer Nature is interested to understand more about institutions' experiences, motivations, and challenges in monitoring open access article processing charges (APCs).

- This global survey will build on the findings of our recent white paper "[APCs in the wild](#)".
- It is aimed at any individual working in an institution which has some engagement with open access.

The questions should take around 5-7 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain anonymous and will be analysed only in aggregate.

<https://bit.ly/2xOvbZZ>

# THANK YOU!

## Questions?

Jessica Monaghan, PhD  
Head of Policy & Performance, OA  
Springer Nature

Share your insights in our survey!  
<https://bit.ly/2xOvbZZ>

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