HAWASSA UNIVERSITY
OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (2026-2030)

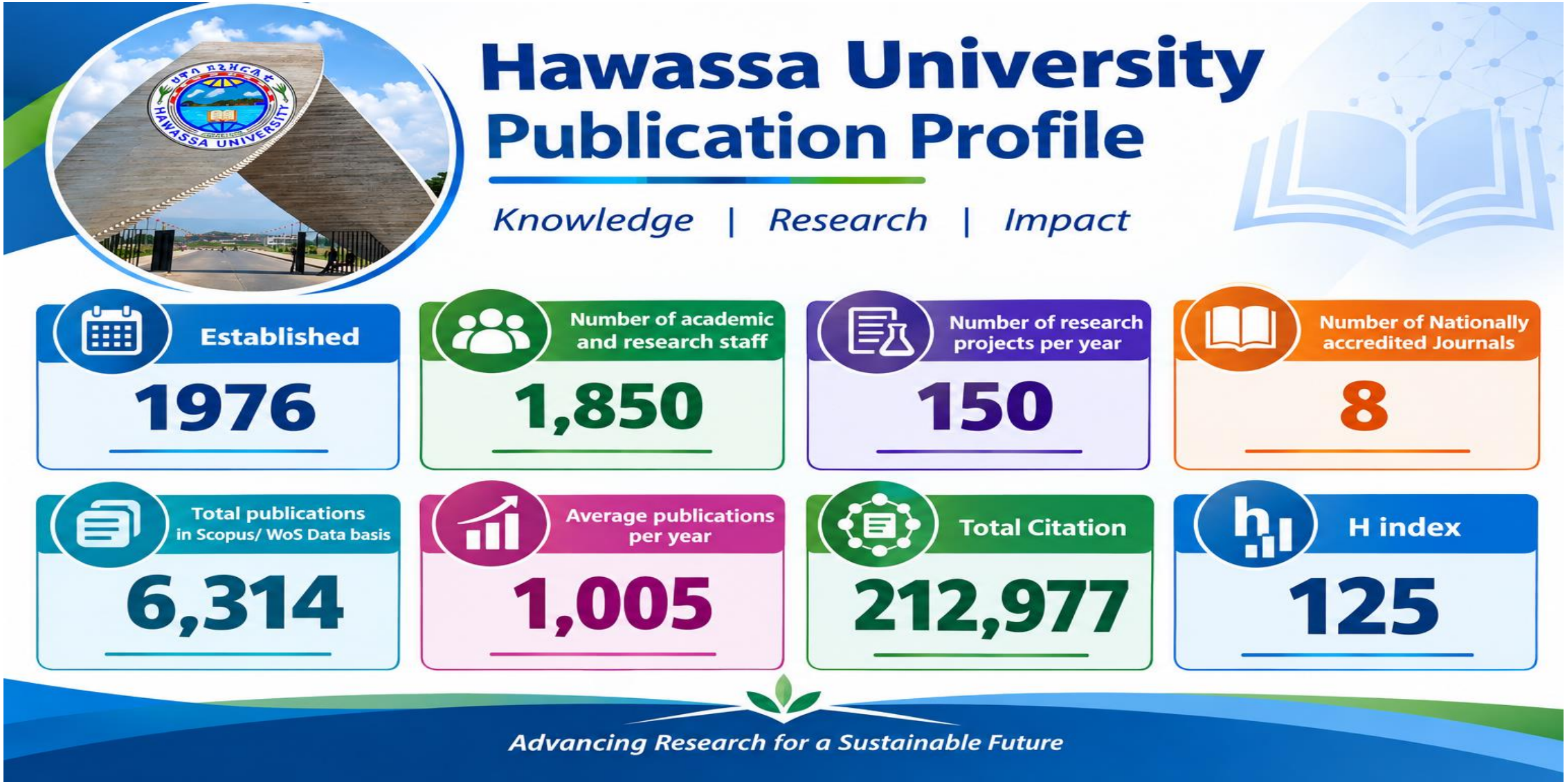
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Advancing Sustainability, Excellence, and Capacity of HU- OA Journals Project

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Outline

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Introduction



Why to Strengthen our Journals?

- **Critical Role**:
  - "Scholarly journals are the lifeblood of academic research”
  - Disseminate research findings, advance knowledge, and build institutional reputation.

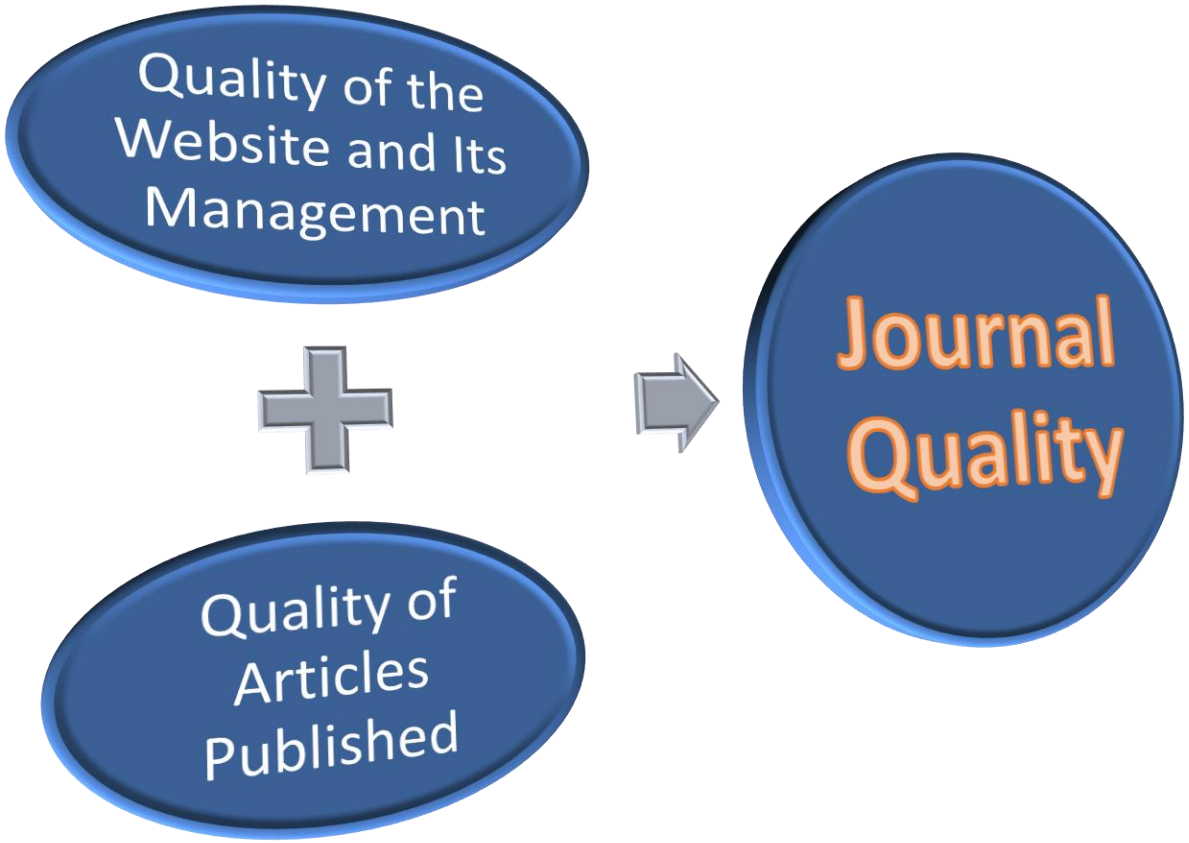
- **Global Visibility**:
  - Indexing in major databases (Scopus, WoS, DoAJ, AJOL) is a key benchmark of quality and increases citation impact.

- **Equitable Access**:
  - All journals currently operate under a Diamond Open Access model (free for authors and readers)
  - This model aligns with the principles of equitable knowledge dissemination.
  - **However, this requires a sustainable funding model**

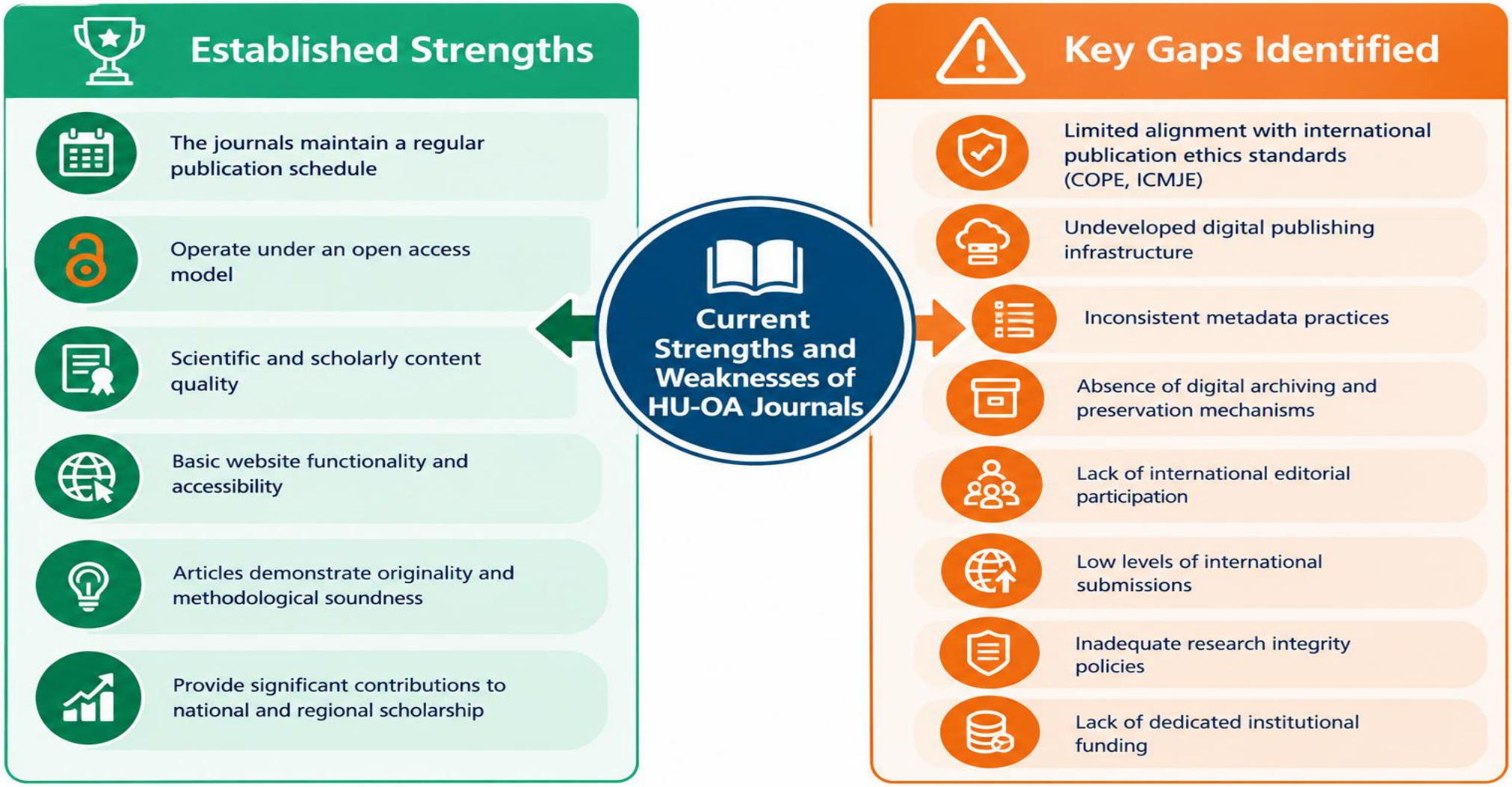
Why HU-Journals Quality Audit?



Overall HU-OA Journals Quality Audit



Current Strengths and Key Gaps



Vision

- To establish HU-Journals as financially sustainable, credible, and internationally visible scholarly publishing platforms that uphold high content quality, meet global standards for editorial governance, research integrity, and digital publishing.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & CORE PILLARS



Pillar 1: Institutional Governance Framework

1. **Establishment of a Journal Management Office**
   - A Central office responsible to coordinate the management of all journals
2. **Establishment of a University Journal Advisory Board,**

   Should include the VPRC, Research Affairs Director, senior researchers, experienced journal editors, librarians, ICT specialists, and international advisors.
3. **Journal Editorial Teams**

   Journal-level staff managing manuscript submissions, peer review, publication processes, and adherence to editorial policies
4. **ICT Support Personnel**
   - Technical staff maintaining publishing platforms, ensuring system functionality, and supporting digital infrastructure for journals

Pillar 2: Financial Sustainability Strategy

1. Institutional Funding Commitment

- A dedicated annual budget line from the university cover centralized costs: JMO staff, OJS platform maintenance, DOI registration, Copyediting, and others

2. Diversification of Funding Sources

- Explore supplementary funding from grants and partnerships. Competitive research grants for special issues or journal-related projects. (African Crop Science Society, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) , African Health Journals Network, African Association of Law Journals and African Economic Research Consortium (AERC))

3. Engaging African Diaspora Networks:

- Editorial and scholarly contributions, Fundraising and sponsorship, Partnerships with diaspora organizations

Pillar 2: Financial Sustainability……

4. Non-Monetary Incentives

- Recognize editorial work through:
  - Formal acknowledgment
  - Professional development opportunities
  - Training workshops
  - Conference support
  - Networking events
  - Dedicated time allocation (staff workload)
  - Consider for promotion
- This is key to motivating and retaining our editorial staff.

Pillar 3: Digital Publishing Infrastructure

1. **Unified Publishing Platform**
   - Static website –Articles uploaded manually as PDF files -not support modern scholarly publishing standards
   - Adoption of a centralized journal publishing platform like **OJS** for the technical sustainability of HU journals,
2. **Metadata standards**
   - Inconsistency-metadata practices
   - HU journals must adopt internationally recognized metadata standards: Assign DOIs to all published articles, Integrate ORCID identifiers for all authors, Implement XML/JATS metadata and Adopt OAI-PMH (Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting)
3. **Digital Preservation**
   - **N**one of the HU journals have established formal digital preservation mechanisms.
   - Establish reliable archiving solutions such as PKP Preservation Network or LOCKSS to guarantee long-term accessibility & security of published content

Pillar 4: Editorial Governance and Research Integrity

1. Strengthening Editorial Governance

- Clearly defined editorial roles and responsibilities, work process and flow and performance monitoring,

2. Adoption and Implementation of International Ethical Standards

- All journals should adopt internationally recognized ethical standards, including COPE and ICMJE

3. Standardized Ethical Declarations and Workflow Integration

- Conflict of Interest statements
- Funding information (including “no funding” statements where applicable)
- Data Availability statements
- Ethical approval declarations from relevant institutional review boards
- Informed consent statements where research involves human participants

4. Plagiarism Detection and Research Integrity Screening

- HU has already procured and is using Turnitin to support academic integrity
- **Plagiarism detection should be fully integrated into editorial workflows**

Pillar 5: Internationalization Strategy

1. Expanding Editorial Boards

- Increase international representation to 20-30% by recruiting qualified global scholars to bring diverse expertise & enhance journal credibility

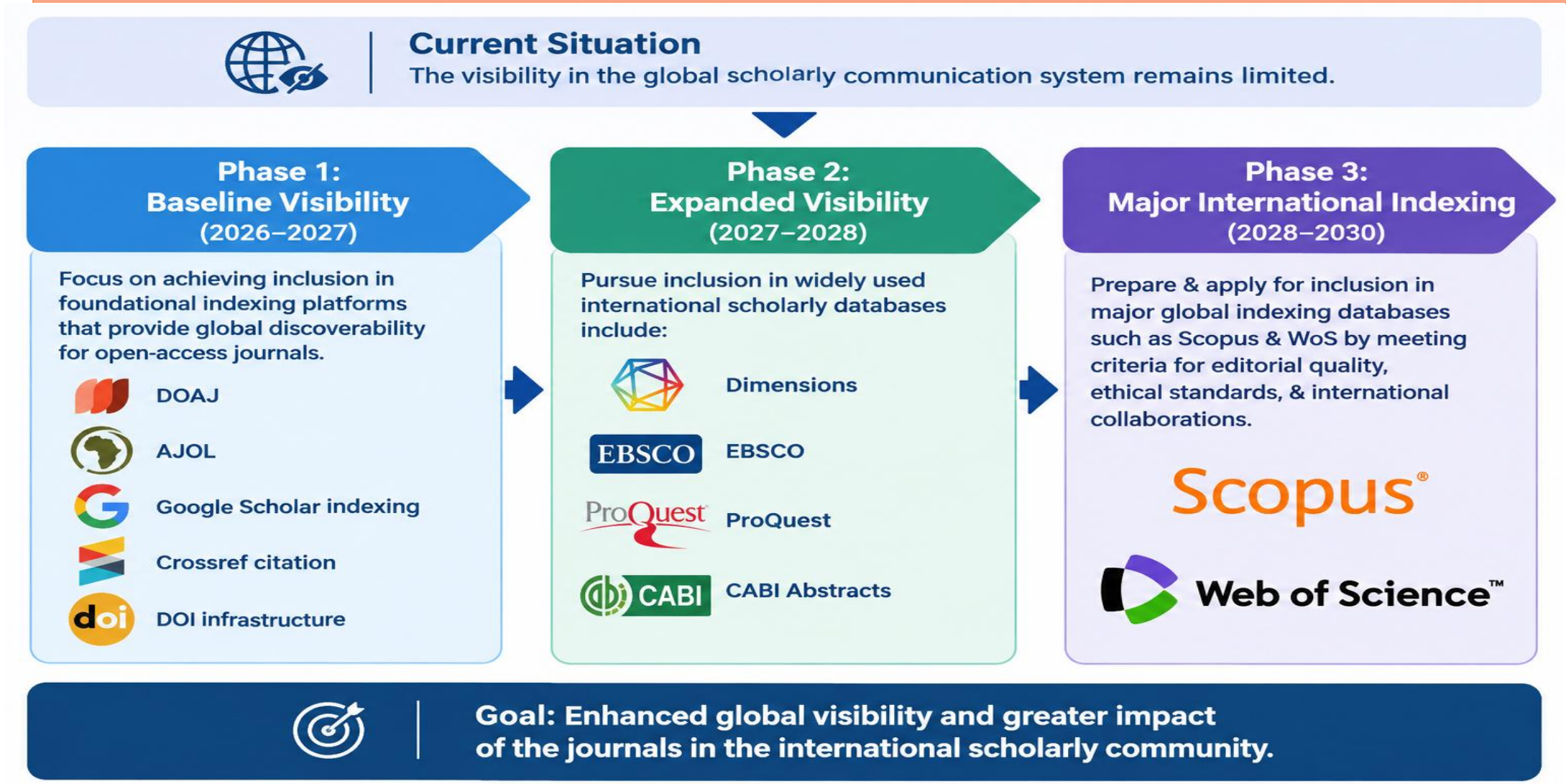
2. Developing Reviewer Networks

- Establishing and maintaining updated ***reviewer databases*** that include international scholars
- Encouraging editorial board members to nominate ***qualified reviewers from their professional networks***
- ***Recognizing reviewer contributions*** through annual reviewer acknowledgement lists
- Tracking reviewer diversity indicators, including institutional and geographic representation

3. Attracting International Authorship

- Publishing thematic special issues addressing research topics of global or regional relevance
- Inviting international guest editors to coordinate special issues or thematic collections

Pillar 6: Visibility and Indexing Strategy



Pillars and KPIs

Strategic Area	Key Performance Indicators
Editorial & Publication Performance	Adherence to regular publication schedules and timeliness of issue release; average peer review turnaround time; number of processed manuscripts per year/issue (submitted, reviewed, and decided upon)
Infrastructure & Operational Capacity	Platform updates; Number of staff trained; Provided IT support
Journal Management Office Efficiency	Author query response time; manuscript tracking efficiency; staff workload distribution
Research Quality	Type of articles published and their structure; reporting guidelines; data availability; reference quality/structure; relevance of topics covered; expert content analysis
Biometric Performance	Citation rates; usage statistics; article downloads; readership metrics; evidence of increasing scholarly impact

Pillars and…

Strategic Area	Key Performance Indicators
Internationalization	Percentage of international authorship; international editorial board membership; geographic diversity of reviewers
Research Integrity and Ethics	Alignment of journal policies with internationally recognized publication ethics standards; inclusion of standardized ethical declarations in published articles; plagiarism screening implementation
Digital Publishing Standards	DOI assignment to all articles (via Crossref, required for Scopus/WoS/DOAJ); Compliance with metadata standards (Crossref schema, ORCID integration, funder IDs, abstracts in English); Implementation of digital archiving systems (PKP PN, LOCKSS, CLOCKSS, Portico — required for DOAJ and recommended for Scopus/WoS)
Indexing Progress	Inclusion in recognized indexing platforms; progress toward major international indexing databases
Institutional Support for Diamond OA	Number of active Diamond OA journals; the existence of a dedicated budget line; number of staff with editorial/reviewing roles

Implementation Timeline

Phase I: Institutional Capacity Strengthening: 2026–2027

Key Activities	Expected outcomes
Establish a centralized Journal Management Office	Improved editorial governance & centralized coordination
Implement a unified digital publishing platform (OJS) for all journals	Operational OJS platform with standardized workflows across all journals; uptime and system performance metrics tracked
Standardize editorial and publication ethics policies	Strengthened ethical compliance and transparency
Introduce DOI assignment and improved metadata standards	100% of articles in all journals assigned DOIs via Crossref; metadata validated against Scopus/DOAJ requirements
Provide training programs for editors and journal staff	Improved technical capacity; ≥80% of editorial staff certified in OJS and metadata management. Greater efficiency in handling editorial and production workflows.
Introduce non-monetary incentive (recognition) mechanisms for editors & reviewers	Recognition mechanism in place for editors & reviewers
Establish digital preservation systems (PKP PN, LOCKSS)	Operational archiving system ensuring long-term accessibility
Strengthen ethical compliance and research integrity policies	Strengthened compliance with international ethical standards; Improved content
Enhance metadata and indexing compatibility	Improved visibility and indexing

Implementation Timeline

Phase II: Quality Enhancement and Internationalization: 2027-2028

Key Activities	Expected outcomes
Expand international editorial board membership	A greater share of international board members (at least 20%) & international collaboration
Recruit international reviewers	Greater pool of potential reviewers; Improved peer review quality
Improve journal visibility through global promotion (conferences, partnerships, social media)	Expanded global visibility measured by: • +25% increase in international submissions by 2030 • Growth in readership/downloads from outside Ethiopia (tracked via OJS analytics)" • Inclusion in DOAJ and at least one regional indexing service (e.g., AJOL) • Annual reporting of social media and website engagement metrics (increased followers, shares, article views) reported annually • Better ranking in search engines;
Introduce infrastructure performance monitoring (platform uptime, submission system efficiency)	Improved infrastructure performance metrics (uptime ≥95%, reduced submission system errors)

Implementation Timeline

Phase III: Indexing Readiness and Global Integration: 2028-2030

Key Activities	Expected outcomes
Conduct internal readiness assessments for each journal	Assessment report and recommendations for improvement - better understanding of specific improvements that should be made;
Apply for inclusion in international indexing databases (SCOPUS, WOS, DOAJ)	Improved international recognition of HU journals; 50% of the journals are indexed in international databases
Improving article visibility	Enhanced institutional research visibility measured by citation growth and bibliometric indicators (increased visits and downloads, Altmetric Attention Score, sharing on social media, etc.)
Expand partnerships with international scholarly networks	Expanded partnerships with international scholarly networks and consortia
Institutionalize periodic performance reviews & reporting	Institutional accountability through annual reporting and advisory board oversight

Institutional Responsibility Matrix

Institutional Unit	Key Responsibilities
University Leadership	Provide strategic direction, institutional support, and sustainable funding for journal development
Research Affairs Directorate	Coordinate journal policy development, oversee implementation of sustainability strategies
Journal Management Office	Monitor journal performance, provide technical support, coordinate training programs, support journal indexing applications, recruit international editorial board members, reviewers, and authors
Editorial Boards	Maintain high editorial standards, ensure peer review quality, and implement ethical policies
ICT Directorate	Support digital publishing infrastructure, journal websites, archiving, editorial teams, and boards
Library Services	Support indexing initiatives, digital repositories, metadata systems, and knowledge dissemination

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation of HU-OA Journals Sustainability Plan Implementation

Evidence-based decisions for stronger journals and greater impact



Annual Plans & Performance Reports

- Set annual work plans and targets for each journal.
- Collect and analyze performance data.
- Prepare annual performance reports (progress, achievements, gaps).
- Share with stakeholders for informed decision-making.

Periodic Comprehensive Reviews

- Conduct periodic (e.g., mid-term and end-of-plan) comprehensive reviews.
- Assess overall implementation and impact.
- Identify lessons learned and best practices.
- Recommend adjustments for continuous improvement.

Tracking the Progress of Journals

- Monitor publication output and quality.
- Track indexing and visibility progress.
- Follow up on editorial, financial and operational milestones.
- Identify challenges and implement corrective actions.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy

Risk Category	Description	Mitigation Strategy
Financial Constraints	Insufficient or inconsistent funding	Establish a dedicated budget line; diversify funding sources; phased implementation
Technical Capacity Gaps	Limited expertise in digital publishing systems	Provide targeted training; recruit technical specialists; partner with external providers
Low International Engagement	Limited international authorship and editorial participation	Strengthen partnerships; recruit international editors; promote calls globally
Editorial Workload	Overburdened editors and limited support	Establish JMO support; automate workflows; expand editorial teams
Staff Turnover	Loss of key personnel (editors, technical staff)	Develop succession plans; document workflows; train backup personnel
Delays in Indexing	Failure to meet indexing requirements on time	Conduct periodic readiness assessments; adjust timelines; provide targeted support
Resistance to Change	Limited adoption of new systems or policies	Conduct awareness programs; provide training; ensure leadership support

Conclusions

- The plan provides a clear and coordinated institutional strategy.
- By investing in governance, digital infrastructure, research integrity, and staff capacity, we can transform our **journals into globally visible, credible, and sustainable platforms.**
- **Expected outcomes**: Enhanced institutional reputation, a greater global research profile and policy impact, and a stronger contribution to global knowledge
- The **success of this plan**, however, requires strong institutional commitment, leadership support, and collaboration from all units

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Thank you for your attention!