

Response of the Universiteit van Amsterdam to the Guidance on the implementation of Plan S

The University of Amsterdam embraces the goal of Plan S to make research funded by public grants openly accessible. Sharing knowledge leads to scientific progress. By putting knowledge behind a paywall, this progress is hindered. The University of Amsterdam therefore is fully committed to a transition to Open Access, as evidenced by the university's initiative to establish University Journals as an alternative publication platform.¹

However, the intended implementation of Plan S as proposed in the Guidance on the implementation of Plan S document, raises some major concerns. Consistent with the LERU statement 'Plan S - To be a winner, plan to win,' the University of Amsterdam recommends the following:

1. Regarding ownership of and access to publications and underlying data, academic authors need to be empowered (and feel it is safe career-wise) to go for open access publishing. This is particularly important for researchers in early stages of their career. The implementation plan should come with necessary measures and not impose obligations where OA is not a viable option for researchers. The current timeline therefore seems unattainable and should not be kept at the expense of academic researchers and institutions. In the implementation the funding organisations should take account of the complexities surrounding copyright and database rights in outputs.
2. An assessment should be made of (1) potential outcomes of implementation of Plan-S, which will allow university and research institutes leadership to make an informed decision on whether to endorse the implementation plan and of (2) the risks associated with the fact that countries across the globe will not join the open science movement (at the same pace as Europe), which might put Plan S adopters at a competitive disadvantage. Adequate measures should be taken to mitigate identified risks, both in the implementation of Plan-S and where relevant in EU regulation.
3. Alternative structures for publishing publications and for sharing research data deserve more attention, connecting intimately to the methodologies and characteristics of the various research disciplines. Two examples of such alternatives are (1) University Journals and (2) FAIR Data Infrastructure. Flipping existing journals should be supported to move towards a desirable fully free-to-read & free-to-publish Diamond OA model.
4. Research organizations should address what they will do to align promotion and reward schemes with Plan S. This is an omission and the gap needs to be filled.

¹ Fourteen universities from five countries recently started the University Journals-project with the aim of making better use of their university repositories, by joining them into a common publication platform that at the same time functions as a digital open access journal, indexed in the same way as regular scientific journals. The journal-format makes the repositories more attractive for researchers, and better accessible for the academic community. The publication platform will be Plan S-compliant and will bring about many other advantages as well.