

Comments on PlanS

by Scandinavian Plant Physiology Society (SPPS)

2019-02-08

Scandinavian Plant Physiology Society (SPPS) is a learned society formed in 1947, SPPS owns the journal *Physiologia Plantarum* (PPL). We believe that our collaboration with publishers during the years (at present *Physiologia* is published by Wiley) has been highly beneficial for both parties: we provide academic strength and credibility, the publisher offers professional handling and distribution of the journal, and the society gets in return a large share of the income, that we spend to the benefit of plant science, mainly in the Nordic countries. This is by far our largest source of income. We are concerned that the implementation of Plan S, in the way that we have understood it, puts this relationship and hence our society, at danger. We cannot oversee the consequences, and are therefore sceptical, although we as a learned society are very positive to the general idea of open access. We are also very uncomfortable with the limited amount of concern for learned societies that have been expressed by advocates for Plan S. Learned societies are one important part of the academic world, that complements the efforts of research institutions, research funders etc, and putting us in danger for the sake of pushing a very hard timeplan for open access is in our opinion a bad idea.

PPL is a hybrid journal with only a minor fraction of the papers being published OA. SPPS is worried that a switch to "OA only" will put the number of submissions to PPL at risk and negatively affect the income to the society. It should be possible to publish OA papers in hybrid journals as a transition phase until PPL can become OA only. Another question is if/how does open access affects the high scientific quality of publications. Currently, only a small fraction of the journals are OA only, which limits the choice of the authors to decide where to submit their papers. It also limits the international collaborations to those that have signed the Coalition S. The expected publication costs will increase to levels that only large and well-funded research groups can afford to cover, whereas early-career researcher and smaller groups will be unfavored. Therefore, the responsibility for covering the publication costs should not be placed on the researchers. Instead, larger (national) agreements between publishers and institutions should be encouraged as well as more funding for covering the publication costs from grant agencies.

As it seems unlikely that Plan S will be adopted completely and globally, we are worried that if Plan S is implemented in the Nordic countries, our plant researchers will face problems in ongoing and future collaborations with researchers in environments that have not signed up to Plan S. It would also be detrimental if the quality of peer review should be compromised, a worry that has been increasing with the rise of so-called predatory journals that compete mainly by open access costs rather than quality,

Finally, we are also concerned about the short deadline to decide for Plan S. Furthermore, as pointed out in your letter, Norway and Sweden are about to reach a general agreement for publications with Wiley and we feel that it would be best to postpone our decision until the general agreement is reached. This will allow us to take a more informed decision that is best for our society.