

Response Information Expertise Centre – Eindhoven Technical University

The Information Expertise Centre (IEC – university library) is responsible for providing high quality content to researchers of the Eindhoven Technical University and offer them support on publishing related topics. Historically, the university library played an indispensable part in safeguarding the quality of the scientific journals and the relevance of the content to the researchers of our university.

From the viewpoint of this role within the university, the IEC wishes to ask some questions and express some concerns about the implementation of Plan S.

Definitions:

It is essential to have clear and unambiguous definitions of for instance:

- Solid review system: what are the requirements, how can a journal guarantee this and how will this be monitored?
- Mirror journal
- What are “essential rights” in the requirement “No copyright transfer or license to publish that strips the author of essential rights”.
- Transparency of costs and pricing: what information will publishers exactly have to provide to be compliant?

Support:

To be able to advise our researchers we would need to have:

- An cOAlition S-led information desk where we can ask for advice and clarification of the implementation guide and obtain practical information about for instance journal compliance and procedures to share with our researchers.
- Whitelists (or blacklists) of:
 1. Compliant open access journals and platforms
 2. Non open access journals without transformative agreements that comply with the requirements in paragraph 10.1 and 9.2 of the implementation guidance
 3. Compliant repositories
 4. Mirror journals
- A review procedure the compliance of transformative agreements we negotiate with publishers and journals.

Full Open Access journals and DOAJ:

We wonder whether the DOAJ is the correct basis for establishing Plan S compliance of full open access journals. The DOAJ doesn't have an advanced audit-process in place and judges journals based on publisher-provided information and subjects this to cursory verification only. How will the coalition guarantee for instance the quality of the peer-review process of these DOAJ-listed journals?

Transformative agreements:

An important task of the IEC is to negotiate contracts with publishers and individual journals, for access to and in some cases open access publishing in scientific journals, either on a local level or on a national level in a consortium with other Dutch university libraries. To be able to continue doing this and provide our researchers with access to for them essential scientific content after 1 January 2020, clear information on the requirements Plan S imposes on new agreements is paramount.

Furthermore, we wonder why transformative agreements agreed between two parties are not valid for third parties. The journals included in those agreements would have committed to adjusting their business model. It seems unnecessarily complicated to have several parties negotiate the same changes to the publication model, as a journal can make those only once. Is the coalition planning to play a role in these negotiations?

Hybrid journals:

We are uncertain whether our researchers funded by a coalition S funder can publish in hybrid journals that do not have a transformative agreement but do comply with the requirements in paragraph 10.1 and 9.2 of the implementation guidance, provided they are also deposited in a compliant repository and not funded from the grant provided by the coalition S funder. Will coalition S-funded researchers be allowed to publish in these journals and report that as part of the projects scientific output?

Repositories:

We support the feedback provided by the Dutch Pure User Group (NL-PUG) and urge to allow a realistic transition period for repositories to meet the requirements.

Costs:

We wonder how Plan S is planning to contain the costs of open access publishing in a fully open access publishing system. We believe a vision on the consequences of a cap for different types of publishing companies on different geographic locations and of different size and the possibilities they have for costs reduction is lacking and are worried that a cap on the APC might affect the quality of the valued editorial process.