

Towards a Plan(HS)S: DARIAH's position on PlanS

On 4 September 2018, national science funders from 11 EU countries [announced the launch of cOAlition S](#) to express the collective will of making full and immediate Open Access to research publications a reality. The key principles to achieve this are articulated in their 10-point *Plan S*. According to the plan, from 2020, all scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants provided by participating national and European research councils and funding bodies must be published in compliant Open Access journals or on compliant Open Access platforms. To achieve this, research funders will cover the costs of publications as part of research grants.

The plan has sparked intense debates from the moment of its release. In addition to the signatories, there is a large group of key stakeholders, both on European and national levels, who have expressed their support and endorsement for the principles even if they still have not formally added their signatures to it.

DARIAH fully endorses the principles of Open Access and is in favour of powerful Open Access policies aiming to accelerate the transition towards full and immediate Open Access to scientific publications within a reasonably short time. As such, we support the main ambitions set out by the plan, namely the elimination of paywalls, copyright retention, and the rejection of [hybrid](#) models of Open Access publishing. Committed to rapid realization of these aims, we consider PlanS a powerful step in returning ownership of research to a position where it is working for the good of society.

However, it is precisely this strong commitment to making Open Access publishing a viable, feasible and, most importantly, default option for research communities at large without disciplinary boundaries that prevent us from expressing our full support to the plan by adding our collective signature to it. Like so much that has come before it, [Plan S reveals a strong bias toward the STEM perspective on not just publishing, but on research itself, which makes it diverge with the values of DARIAH and its key constituency, arts and humanities researchers, who most commonly do not fund their work through projects, and for whom the term 'science' may seem alienating.](#)

Our primary substantive concern¹ is that by making a strong case for APC-based [gold](#) Open Access publishing models, the implementation of the plan has a disproportionately negative

¹ Although we also share general concerns regarding the implementation of the plan (such as: how transparency in APCs will be achieved and how upper limits will be calculated, or whether the plan will be able to contribute to the deconstruction of publisher brand hierarchy), as a research infrastructure for Arts and Humanities, in this post we focus on the discipline-specific problems with general relevance. Besides, [although we recognize the green route an equally sustainable way to achieve openness, and is probably the only solution to ensure long-term availability of research outputs](#), our primary focus will be on Gold Open Access.

impact on access to Gold Open Access publishing in Arts and Humanities. The plan of accelerating large-scale gold Open Access publishing via linking it with research grants will not be straightforwardly achievable in a disciplinary environment where grants are not the primary means of covering costs of research compared to e.g. salaries. In addition, due to these restricted funding opportunities in these disciplines, [green](#) Open Access and Open Access models in which a reasonable fee is paid, but not by the author, have always been more appropriate options for the open and transparent dissemination of research results.

We would encourage Coalition S to recognise the value of of Article Processing Charge free (henceforth APC-free) Gold Open Access publishing models such as consortial funding mechanisms (e.g. Open Library of Humanities), freemium services (e.g. OpenEdition), academic community owned Open Access publishing platforms (e.g. Language Science Press) or other collaborative approaches.² Their success and growth can only partially be explained by the fact that they address the particular needs of the humanities communities concerning publishing formats, academic evaluation, and funding availability. In addition to that, all these emerging models bring innovations and share values that are very much in line with the core principles of Open Access. They enable 1. cost-efficiency 2. making infrastructural investments over simple payment for publications fees 3. academic control over the publishing industry and 4. inclusiveness and flexibility for different national and disciplinary publishing landscapes.

Keeping in mind that diverse research environments give rise to multiple, fit-for-the-conditions and proven routes to achieve to Open Access, we propose the following changes toward the better integration of disciplinary traditions and non-APC Gold Open Access publishing models into PlanS in particular and the European-level policy planning in general. These recommendations, (broken down to the 10 key principles of Plan S below) are formed along 4 action lines.

- 1. Foster diversification in the Open Access business models**
- 2. Secure and maintain multiple funding channels to cover Open Access publishing costs**
- 3. Integrate support for consortial Open Access publishing models**
- 4. Break down the technical barriers of Open Access by focussing on long-term infrastructural investments**

A discussion of how each of these points might be implemented appears below.

1. Foster diversification in the Open Access business models

- We call for the inclusion of more diverse and multidisciplinary feasible models of achieving Gold Open Access in the plan. Acknowledging the need to complement Open

² The [OPERAS Open Access Business Models White Paper](#) gives an insightful analysis on the emerging landscape of such alternative Gold open Access publishing models.

Access by support for the diversity in scientific publishing, **we fully endorse the [Jussieu Call for Open science and bibliodiversity](#).**

- Diversity also applies to forms of scholarly communication. A large-scale transition to Open Access cannot be achieved if certain publishing formats significant in certain disciplinary traditions are left out of consideration. **We suggest complementing Plan S by a 5-year open monograph strategy that is flexible enough to stay compliant with the different national policies.** To facilitate a sustainable environment for Open Access monographs, opening both the green and the gold routes and incentivising online publishing platforms and digital services (like open annotation or entity recognition) enabling the monograph to maximise its value in the digital age could be key strategic goals.
- In addition to enabling full and immediate Open Access to research publications via Gold Open Access publication models, **we recommend for funders to keep providing infrastructural support for self-archiving practices.** Depositing publications in an open archive ensures **sustainable and long-term access to research outputs for everyone** and also free access to the texts in terms of **text and data mining.**

2. Secure and maintain multiple funding channels to cover Open Access publishing costs

- We suggest **keeping a good balance between project-based and institutional or national funding channels.** That is, in addition to covering Open Access publishing costs through research grants, we also recommend securing institutional or national publication funds to make Gold Open Access publishing available also for disciplinary environments where external grant funding opportunities are limited.
- In humanities, turning PhD dissertations into proper research monographs is a milestone in the career path. To better align publishing resources with this scholarly practice, as a specific form of institutional publication funding, **we recommend considering introducing competitive and targeted monograph publishing funds as a possible extension of PhD scholarships.** To ensure cost-efficiency, publishing via library consortia or via other collective Open Access models should be incentivised in such funds.
- **We recognize the importance of Gold APC-free models** such as library consortia, freemium, crowdsourced models or academic community owned publication platforms and recommend greater consideration and systematic policy support to them. As an instance of European-level support to APC-free publishing platforms, **the continuation of funding schemas** like [Alternative Funding Mechanism](#) (AFM, part of the [FP7 post-grant Open Access pilot](#)) would be highly beneficial.
- In line with the [Open APC initiative](#), **we recommend the open administration of the APCs of universities and research organizations and their publication under an open license.**

3. Integrate support for consortial Open Access publishing models

- We recommend strong incentivization for consortium-based Open Access publishing models and services. **The key role of university libraries in pushing this shift in scholarly**

communication forward should be acknowledged and rewarded. Therefore, we recommend harmonizing the European Open Access strategy proposed in Plan S with the ongoing tendency of reallocating library budgets from traditional subscription deals to innovative and open publishing infrastructure and advocate supporting library consortium models from the resources becoming available this way.

- To overcome the fragmentation of funding flows and enable coordinated actions, we recommend to create a **joint online portfolio or registry of consortial Open Access publishing services** (similarly or complementary to DOAJ and DOAB) where institutions and funders could openly administrate their support to these providers. Such a transparent review and evaluation platform would help institutions and research communities to use their funds to invest in sustainable or more diverse services. If such funding decisions are presented to and discussed with the faculty on a regular basis, library and funder evaluation published as a part of the proposed service catalogue could also serve as a powerful alternative of prestige-based publisher brand hierarchy.³

4. Break down the technical barriers of Open Access by focussing on long-term infrastructural investments

- Investing more into the **development and professionalisation of small-scale Open Access publishing services** (e.g. via keeping training resources, advocacy on metadata standards but also infrastructural components like PKP OJS or Episciences.org openly available for them) should be a top priority for funders, research institutions and publishers alike.
- We recommend keeping the development of **research aggregation/discovery platforms** as a focus area in infrastructural investments. Such platforms help all stakeholders to keep up with the emerging trends in Open Access publishing.
- **Harnessing new possibilities of the digital, networked publishing environments** such as open annotation, interlinking with data sources or entity recognition should be incentivized and rewarded.
- Finally, creating new Open Access publishing venues to satisfy topical diversity is a key step in the transition towards Open Access. In this changing landscape, we stress the responsibility (and chances) of both funders and researcher communities to gain control over and contribute to a healthier Open Access journal landscape that is operating at reasonable costs and where the smooth transition of the valuable publishing outlets to Open Access business models is guaranteed. As a form of control from the researcher communities' side, we highly endorse the **collective evaluation-based journal flipping model outlined by the [Free Our Knowledge](#) initiative**. Besides, as a form of funders' involvement, from a humanities perspective, **securing the transition of small niche journals either via bridging grants** (i.e. specific funds available to aid the conversion during a limited time) **or via their inclusion into a networked library consortium program would be highly beneficial**.

³ Here we consider the [Quality Open Access Market](#) as one of the possible prototypes.

It remains to be seen how Plan S will transform the publishing market/landscape, what novel business models and forms of cooperation it might bring or how it will enable the increasing mass of no-APC Gold Open Access to scale up and achieve self-sustainability. Considering the expected defining impact Plan S will have in shaping (or even defining) the future of Open Access in Europe, the crucial step for the moment is to lay down the main directions, specific priority areas and implementation routes that are forming the basis of an open, transparent and (cost-)effective publishing ecosystem, equally accessible for all research communities regardless on nationality or field of interest.

Opening up access to scholarly works can be best achieved if publishing models are in line with established disciplinary practices. Keeping a good balance between institutional and project-based funding mechanisms, between APC-based and non-APC based routes to Gold Open Access, or between centralization and diversity in publishing services can guarantee the avoidance of major failures in delivering the ambitious goal of setting OA the default in Europe. If we proceed along these lines, nobody is going to be left behind from this brave new world.

Strong and forward-looking European-level open policy plans like PlanS augur a major chance for Europe to transform the landscape of science and scholarly communication for the better. This chance, however, can be easily spoiled without extensive and multi-stakeholder discussions on implementation routes early from the design phase. DARIAH is working towards contributing to the achievement of this goal and is committed to its role of making the voices of the arts and humanities researcher communities heard on the European policy level.