

Dear cOAlition S members,

We write in response to your request for feedback on your proposed Plan S implementation guidance.

The **Palaeontological Association** is one of the world's leading learned societies, a registered not-for-profit charity that promotes the understanding of palaeontology and its allied sciences through publication of original research and field guides, awarding of research and travel grants, sponsorship of meetings, provision of web resources and information. It also funds outreach programmes and awards grants to engage the public with the science of fossils and inspire the next generation of professional palaeontologists. Our membership and outreach are worldwide.

The Association raises funds (£393k annual budget, 2018) to pursue these charitable aims primarily through the sale of its two academic journals, *Palaeontology* [**ranked 1<sup>st</sup>** out of 56 in field: ISI Journal Citation Reports® Ranking 2017] and *Papers in Palaeontology* [ranked 10<sup>th</sup>], supplemented by membership subscriptions and investment income. These are hybrid journals, publishing both grant-funded open access (OA) papers (*ca.* 20% in *Palaeontology*) and papers by authors who do not have access to APC funding. Journal income represents >80% of our annual budget, of which *ca.* 10% currently comes from OA fees.

Plan S as it currently stands has far reaching implications for our association as it threatens to seriously damage our financial stability and lead to a severe curtailment of our charitable activities.

- If we opted out of Plan S compliance then potentially 50% of our authors (assuming most European-funded research institute members are subject to Plan S) would be ineligible to publish their results with us, and our journals' reputations for publishing the best science in the field would decline rapidly along with the income they generate and upon which we depend.
- If we became Plan S compliant we would be able to publish leading research results from European-funded research institute members, but our finances would again be hit. Not only is APC income likely to be significantly less than under the present arrangement, but also a substantial part of that income would be diverted to supporting the publication of top-quality research from bodies who are not Plan S adopters (particularly from South America and China), as well as students and emeritus/retired researchers. Indeed, it seems unlikely that we would be able to generate the necessary income to cover the cost of publishing current levels of this high quality research undertaken by individuals without access to APC funding.

Under either model it is clear that the publications income the Association generates for its many charitable offerings to professional and amateur palaeontologists and to public awareness of science will undoubtedly be catastrophically diminished. Without this source of income, the very existence of the Palaeontological Association and similar learned charitable societies will be challenged.

Professor Charles Wellman, President, Palaeontological Association  
Andrew Smith FRS FRSE, editor in chief, Palaeontological Association