

**PNN Statement (representation of Dutch PhD candidates) about the implementation of Plan S**  
*Involve and support PhD candidates and early career researchers in the implementation of Plan S*

**Plan S**

On the 8th of september 2018, [Plan S](#) was presented by cOAlition S. The initiative strives to establish direct and complete Open Access of scientific publications from January 2020 onwards. It encompasses all publications that are the result of research funded by the members of cOAlition S, including the dutch NWO and ERC. At its core are [10 principles](#) currently being developed into a set of [implementation guidelines](#).

As representatives of all PhD candidates in the Netherlands, we like to respond and contribute to the debate surrounding the implementation of Plan S. In general, as young researchers, we support the ambitions of Plan S. We fully endorse the joint statement on the implementation by the [European representation](#) (Eurodoc, MCAA and YAE), to which PNN also contributed. In this statement, a number of specific proposals are made regarding the implementation of Plan S. We call upon NWO and the other members of cOAlition S to integrate these proposals in the implementation of Plan S, as well as in future debates and initiatives within cOAlition S.

In addition to this joint statement, we would like to address the members of cOAlition S, in particular also the Dutch members, with an important call: make sure that PhD candidates and early career researchers are better informed, supported and involved in the ongoing transition to open science in general, and the implementation of Plan S especially. Below we iterate 4 key concerns we would like the members of cOAlition S to consider while moving forward with Plan S.

**1. Modernizing the evaluation and rewarding of researchers**

One of the major concerns for early career researchers on Plan S is the potential disruption for their scientific career. For many research areas most of the 'high-impact' journals are currently not Plan S-compliant. However in the current academic system, publishing a 'high-impact' paper is key to advancing ones scientific career, especially for early career researchers. Since Plan S will make publishing in such 'high-impact' journals more difficult, the scientific community will have to shift towards an alternative way of evaluating and rewarding scientists.

PNN supports the statement of (the Dutch) NWO and ZonMW on actively debating and pursuing a new system to evaluate and reward scientists. A clear, specific and rapid completion of this transition will be crucial to address any potential career disruptions and concerns for PhD candidates and early career researchers. It should be made clear how open access benefits young researchers, for example when it comes to awarding grant applications. A 'lost generation' of young researchers should be prevented: a generation who under the current reward system would not be rewarded for complying with Plan S, but rather suffer negative career consequences. In our opinion, the emergence of such a lost generation would harm the transition to open access by eroding the support among young researchers.

We call upon cOAlition S, and in particular NOW and ZonMW, to provide clarity on this topic as soon as possible. We explicitly call for the involvement of PhD candidates and early career researchers in the design of a new evaluation system which rewards open access. Signing the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) would be an important step in this transition. The shift towards a new reward system should take into consideration two key points: 1) avoiding a 'lost generation' as stated previously and 2) providing a level playing field and equal opportunities for researchers who do not fall under Plan S to also publish in Open Access journals through ensuring adequate funding.

## **2. Involve PhD candidates and early career researchers more actively in the debate**

Plan S accelerates the transition to Open Access publishing. This provides both opportunities as well as challenges for early career researchers. We feel that this group is not always represented and involved in the debate surrounding Plan S. If Plan S and the transition to open science is to be a success, engaging and involving young researchers is crucial. PNN represents the interests of PhD candidates in the Netherlands and as such invites NWO and ZonMW as a member of cOAlition S to involve the voice of young researchers more explicitly in the implementation of Plan S.

## **3. Lack of Open Access Infrastructure: 'One size fits all'?**

As mentioned by other parties, Plan S does not distinguish between differences in publication cultures across the various scientific fields. PNN is especially worried about young researchers in fields that are still lagging behind when it comes to open access infrastructure, lacking peer-reviewed open access journals. In this regard, Plan S is sometimes ahead of scientific practice. For example, in the field of law, articles are often published in national journals who do not have clear guidelines on open access at all.

We ask NWO and members of cOAlition S to collaborate with junior and senior scientists to make a thorough analysis of the various scientific fields in order to detect and tackle potential practical problems upfront. Where (peer-reviewed) open access publishing opportunities are indeed lacking, this should not be made the responsibility of individual researchers. Where this is the case, alternative publication methods should be offered to make sure that all researchers can still publish under Plan S. Potential practical problems and solutions should be identified and communicated to researchers in advance.

## **4. Financial support**

The implementation guidelines contain important features that make open access publishing better achievable for young researchers. Of particular importance to PhD candidates is the financial support by the members of cOAlition S to cover the APCs ('article processing charges') so as not to financially burden researchers themselves. We would like to stress that all publishing fees should be covered fully under Plan S. If such fees would exhaust the already small research budgets of many departments, young PhD candidates will often be the first to be affected.

Finally, we would like to propose an addition to Plan S and ask the Dutch members of cOAlition S in particular to consider to provide also for funding for open access publishing for researchers who do not fall under Plan S. Independent financial support for open access is not always present at universities, making it difficult for PhD candidates to engage in open access publishing due to limited financial support. Although Plan S is an important first step towards open access publishing, extending means and support beyond Plan S for all researcher would help further accelerate the transition to open access, thereby also potentially contributing to more appreciation of the ambitions of Plan S within the research community at large.

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