



Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics

Feedback on Plan S

As with previous Open Access mandates, SIAM (Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics) is carefully reviewing its Open Access policies to ensure that authors are able to continue publishing in SIAM's highly respected publications and comply with funding mandates. SIAM supports a sustainable transition to full Open Access but notes that without global agreement among funders and universities, particularly those in the US and China as the leading research output countries, a global 'flip' to Open Access will be challenging.

Plan S as currently written means authors funded by Plan S signatories would effectively be banned from publishing in all SIAM journals, all of which already offer hybrid Open Access as well as liberal Green Open Access and preprint policies. This does not seem a desirable outcome for authors or readers. Authors will no longer be able to reach their community via the respected publication venues that further their academic careers. Readers will be deprived of high-quality vetted research published in a venue they can trust.

It should be noted however that Plan S does permit hybrid Open Access for journals covered by "transformative agreements". These so-called "offsetting" and "read & publish" agreements have been agreed primarily with large commercial publishers such as Elsevier, Wiley and Springer. It is striking that Plan S has elected to make an exception on hybrid Open Access that benefits the large commercial publishers, while simultaneously banning hybrid Open Access for nonprofit scholarly societies such as SIAM – societies that do not have the commercial sales force and content scale to already have such "transformative agreements" in place.

Plan S also appears designed to preference Gold Open Access, given the zero embargo period proposed for Green Open Access. However, unlike other fields, APC funding in mathematics is highly limited. It would be extremely challenging for SIAM to launch a sustainable Gold Open Access title by January 1, 2020 that would have the requisite prestige and editorial board to attract Plan S authors. In addition, Plan S has announced it intends to cap APCs but has not specified any figure – a critical piece of information when assessing the sustainability of a new Gold Open Access title.

SIAM remains committed to serving its authors and readers and will review how best to continue publishing Plan S authors. However, SIAM is deeply concerned that Plan S does not take account of the specific culture of mathematics as a discipline, both in terms of its funding and the longevity of its content. While its aims are laudable, the rapid consultation and implementation periods for Plan S will likely end up pushing authors towards large commercial publishers and away from nonprofit scholarly societies. This will further consolidate commercial power and accelerate the trend of independent society publishers migrating publishing operations to commercial publishers – thereby consolidating commercial power even further. That cycle is unlikely to be healthy for the diversity of scholarly publishing and science itself.

Plan S as currently written seeks to undermine the subscription revenue of SIAM – but without setting out plausible plans for increasing Gold APC funding globally in mathematics. It must be



emphasized that SIAM, like many scholarly societies, uses its subscription revenues to support all manner of services and activities for the scientific community, including student grants, student chapters, section activities, conferences, educational outreach and a renowned book program. The very students and faculty that librarians serve would be the ones to suffer if SIAM were no longer able to offer this support to the scientific community.

Given all of the above, SIAM therefore urges the Plan S drafters to

- Permit Green Open Access (“Deposition of scholarly articles in Open Access repositories”) with a 12-month embargo
- Permit Hybrid Open Access specifically for nonprofit scholarly society publications