



National Junior Faculty statement on Plan S

Today's academic publishing landscape struggles to be economically and ethically sustainable. The National Junior Faculty (NJF) of Sweden believes that the current monopolistic paywall strategy that encompasses much of publicly funded research, does not reflect the core humanitarian and scientific principles of open access, and freedom for dissemination of scientific output. Therefore, we strongly support transitioning to a well-functioning, economically sustainable, open-access publishing environment. As such, we agree with the basic ideals set forth in Plan S, and are in broad support of cOAlition S efforts to making open access a reality.

However, the NJF of Sweden is concerned with some aspects of Plan S and its potential impact on the career landscape for academics. We believe that the current proposal and rapid implementation period may have substantial negative consequences for those researchers that will suddenly find themselves thrust into navigating the results of a Plan S policy. In particular, we are most concerned with the outsized effects that Plan S could have on early-career academics (ECAs) - academics pursuing or holding a Ph.D., but that do not yet hold a permanent position.

A major concern is that for the cOAlition S "high pressure" strategy on publishers to be successful, Plan S needs to account for a global perspective. We anticipate that with its current level of support, and without further pledges of commitment from around the globe, Plan S will not exert enough pressure on the major publishers to affect the desired change. Instead, the effect will be to bifurcate the publishing and career landscape.

A foreseeable conclusion from the current predominantly Eurocentric policy is that research entities, and those with collaborators with funding from outside of cOAlition S sources, such as the Americas, China, Japan, etc., will have significantly greater flexibility in their publishing choice than researchers reliant on cOAlition S funding alone. The resulting stratification of the "haves" and "have nots" will disproportionately limit ECAs publishing and job opportunities in the global academic market at the outset of their careers. To date, cOAlition S's implementation plan has not articulated how such a scenario will be avoided.

Another key concern of the NJF of Sweden regards the communication of Plan S among the various stakeholders. We find that much of the discussion of Plan S revolves primarily around the top-level stakeholders, namely, funding agencies, academic institutions, and publishers. However, these discussions have not adequately informed, nor accounted for the hearts and minds of ECAs - the vast majority of scientific researchers.

It is demonstrable that the efforts of cOAlition S to inform and gather opinion from ECAs has been insufficient for a plan as ambitious as Plan S. For example, a recent survey conducted at Uppsala University, Jan 18 – 23, with responses from 464 ECAs showed that 51% "do not know what Plan S is" and an additional 14% "know what it is, but have not formed an opinion". Given the potential impact of Plan S, coupled with its rapid adoption timelines, we feel that such numbers point to a glaring oversight by cOAlition S. As such, the NJF of Sweden suggests that a significant increase in the information flow between various stakeholders of cOAlition S - that includes ECAs - is needed.

Further, the universities need to do a better job of involving ECAs with their preparations for Plan S. The implications of Plan S on research careers are too big to apply a "wait and see" approach. We feel strongly that not only should discussion and responses to Plan S within the universities include

the input of ECAs in a meaningful way, ECAs should be active participants in the ongoing negotiation processes throughout the transition periods of Plan S.

Finally, we argue that for the rapid and orderly transition to open access to have the highest chances for success, not only will it require a top down approach by funding agencies, such as initiated by cOAlition S, but simultaneously a bottom up embrace by ECAs. The NJF feels that strong support of open access among ECAs already exists – one need only to look at the multitude of popular open information repositories such as Wikipedia, Internet Archive and arXiv – but care must be taken to prevent the implementation of a plan that does not adequately address the serious risks it poses to the researchers themselves.

On behalf of NJF,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sara Hägg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sara Hägg, NJF chair
Stockholm, 2019-05-10