



cOAlition S

Making full and immediate Open Access a reality

Guidance on the Implementation of Plan S

1. Aim and Scope

Plan S aims for full and immediate Open Access to publications from publicly funded research. The coalition of research funders that have committed to implement Plan S, known as cOAlition S, therefore calls for a definitive shift towards new models of academic publishing. cOAlition S aims to accelerate the transition to a scholarly publishing system that is characterised by immediate, free online access to, and largely unrestricted use and re-use of scholarly publications. cOAlition S recognises that research funders, institutions, researchers, learned societies, librarians, and publishers must work together towards a system of scholarly publishing that is more accessible, efficient, fair, and transparent. cOAlition S will also promote a culture that ensures that young scholars have opportunities to excel and advance their careers.

cOAlition S is committed to fulfil the specific target set out in Plan S – immediate Open Access to all scholarly publications from research funded by coalition members from 2020 onwards. cOAlition S does not favour any specific business model for Open Access publishing or advocate any particular route to Open Access given that there should be room for new innovative publishing models. Plan S applies to all scholarly output that is reviewed according to accepted standards within relevant disciplines and is based on results from research funded fully or partially by cOAlition S members. In addition, cOAlition S strongly encourages that research data, preprints, and other research outputs are made openly accessible, subject to the usual legal and ethical considerations. cOAlition S supports the intentions of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)¹ that research needs to be assessed on its own merits rather than on the basis of the venue in which the research is published. cOAlition S members intend to sign DORA and implement those requirements in their policies.

¹ <https://sfdora.org/>

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The following guidance further specifies the principles of Plan S and provides paths for their implementation regarding scholarly articles. The guidance is directed at cOAlition S members and the wider international research community. cOAlition S will, at a later stage, issue guidance on Open Access monographs and book chapters.

2. Plan S Compliance

All scholarly articles that result from research funded by members of cOAlition S must be openly available immediately upon publication without any embargo period. They must be permanently accessible under an open license allowing for re-use for any purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship. cOAlition S recommends using Creative Commons licenses (CC)² for all scholarly publications and will by default require the CC BY Attribution 4.0 license for scholarly articles.

Scholarly articles are compliant with Plan S if they are published in compliant Open Access journals or on compliant Open Access platforms. In addition, cOAlition S will, under specified conditions, accept deposit of scholarly articles in Open Access repositories and, in a transition period, publishing Open Access in subscription journals ('hybrid Open Access') under transformative agreements as means to achieve compliance with Plan S.

| Open Access journals or Open Access platforms | Deposition of scholarly articles in Open Access repositories | Transformative agreements |
|---|--|---|
| Authors publish in a Plan S compliant Open Access journal or on a Plan S compliant Open Access platform with a CC BY license. | Immediately upon publication, authors deposit the final published version of a scholarly publication (Version of Record (VoR)) or an Author's Accepted Manuscript (AAM), in a Plan S compliant repository. The document is made available immediately open access (with no embargo) under a CC BY license. | Authors publish Open Access with a CC BY license in a subscription journal that is covered by a transformative agreement that has a clear and time-specified commitment to a full Open Access transition. |

More details on the requirements for individual publications and for journals, platforms, repositories and transformative agreements can be found below in the section '*Technical Guidance and Requirements*'.

cOAlition S intends to work with the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)³ and the Directory of Open Access Repositories (OpenDOAR)⁴ to establish mechanisms for identifying and signalling whether journals/platforms and repositories, respectively, are in compliance with the cOAlition S requirements. Irrespective of the form of publication, cOAlition S recommends that all publications and also other research outputs are deposited in open repositories and request that publishers facilitate deposit. Deposit of research outputs in open repositories is recommended to ensure long-term archiving, research management, and to support maximum re-use.

² <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/licensing-types-examples/>

³ <https://doaj.org/>

⁴ <http://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/opendoar/>

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3. Publication Costs

There exist different models of financing and paying for Open Access publication. cOAlition S calls for full transparency and monitoring of Open Access publication costs and fees. Transparency on Open Access publication costs and fees is included as one of the criteria that define Plan S compliance of journals and platforms.

Where article processing charges (APCs) apply, cOAlition S will contribute to establishing a fair and reasonable APC level, including equitable waiver policies, that reflects the costs involved in the quality assurance, editing, and publishing process and how that adds value to the publication. To help inform the potential standardisation of fees and/or APC caps, cOAlition S will commission an independent study on Open Access publication costs and fees (including APCs).

cOAlition S members will ensure financial support for OA publishing via the prescribed routes to compliance. Grants can be used for financing APCs for Open Access publication in subscription journals ('hybrid Open Access') only under transformative agreements. cOAlition S emphasises that the individual cOAlition S members are not obliged to enter into transformative agreements nor to fund APCs that are covered by such agreements.

4. Supporting Quality Open Access Journals and Platforms

cOAlition S intends to jointly support mechanisms for establishing Open Access journals, platforms, and infrastructures where necessary in order to provide routes to open access publication in all disciplines. cOAlition S explicitly acknowledges the importance of a diversity of models and non-APC based outlets. cOAlition S will commission a gap analysis of Open Access journals/platforms to identify fields and disciplines where there is a need to increase the share of Open Access journals/platforms. cOAlition S members will collectively establish incentives for establishing Open Access journals/platforms or flipping existing journals to Open Access, in particular where there are gaps and needs.

5. Timeline

cOAlition S appreciates that the timeline for implementation of Plan S will vary among member organisations. Implementation of Plan S will take place from 1 January 2020, having impact on either 1) existing grants, 2) new projects/grants or, at the latest, 3) new calls. cOAlition S members should, at the very least, implement the new requirements in all calls issued after 1 January 2020.

6. Review

In 2023, cOAlition S will initiate a formal review process that examines the effects of Plan S. The main focus of the review will be to examine the effect of transformative agreements as well as the option of providing immediate Open Access to subscription content via open repositories, on achieving a transition to full and immediate Open Access.

7. Compliance and Sanctioning

The individual members of cOAlition S will align their grant agreements and/or contracts with Plan S and monitor compliance and sanction non-compliance through enforcing contractual requirements.

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Technical Guidance and Requirements

8. Licensing and Rights

cOAlition S requires that authors must be in the position to post their publications in a compliant platform or journal of their choice, and be able to re-use content in whichever way they see fit. For scholarly articles the public should be granted a worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive, irrevocable license to share (i.e. copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (i.e. remix, transform, and build upon the material) the work for any purpose, including commercially, provided proper attribution is given to the author. The copyright of the work is left with the legal copyright holder (usually the author or their institution).

cOAlition S generally recommends using Creative Commons licenses (CC) for all scholarly publications. For scholarly articles, cOAlition S requires the use of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 license. In addition, cOAlition S will accept the use of the CC BY-SA 4.0 license, and publishing in the public domain (CC0), in line with the cOAlition S aim of maximum re-use of the research funded. Recognising that the Open Access definition of the Berlin declaration⁵ does not accommodate non-commercial restrictions, cOAlition S will, therefore, not accept the non-commercial (CC BY-NC) variant. CC BY 4.0 demands that licensees indicate if changes are made when re-using licensed material, and this means that the CC BY-ND license should not be necessary for due protection of the rights of the author. For the protection of authors' legal and moral rights to published material cOAlition S refers either to the respective Rules of Good Research Practices or to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.⁶

Third party content included in a publication (for example images or graphics) is not affected by these requirements. While all efforts should be made to also make this content as open and reusable as possible, more restrictive licenses on these aspects of content are acceptable if so required by the third party rights holder.

9. Open Access Journals and Platforms

Open Access platforms referred to in this section are publishing platforms for the original publication of research output (for example scholarly articles and conference proceedings). Platforms that merely serve to aggregate or re-publish content that has already been published elsewhere are not included.

9.1 Basic mandatory criteria for Plan S compliant Open Access journals and platforms:

The journal/platform must be registered in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) or in the process of being registered.

- All scholarly content must be openly accessible (journal website or dedicated platform) and free to read and download immediately upon publication, without any kind of technical or other form of obstacles.
- The journal/platform must enable authors to publish under a CC BY 4.0 license (alternatively CC BY-SA 4.0 or CC0).

⁵ <https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration>

⁶ <http://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/berne/>

- The journal/platform must offer authors/institutions the option of full copyright retention without any restrictions, i.e. no copyright transfer or license to publish that strips the author of essential rights.
- The journal/platform must have a solid system in place for review according to the standards within the relevant discipline, and according to the standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Details on this must be openly available through the website.
- The journal/platform must provide automatic APC waivers for authors from low-income countries and discounts for authors from middle-income countries.
- The journal must not have a mirror/sister subscription journal with substantial overlap in editorial board to avoid business models charging for both access and publication. Such journals will de facto be considered hybrid journals (see 'Transformative Agreements' below).

9.2 Mandatory quality criteria for Plan S compliant journals, platforms, and other venues:

- Transparent costing and pricing: information on the publishing costs and on any other factors impacting the publication fees (for example cross subsidising) must be openly available on the journal website/publishing platform. This must include details on direct costs, indirect costs and potential surplus.
- Use of DOIs as permanent identifiers (PIDs with versioning, for example in case of revisions).
- Deposition of content with a long-term digital preservation or archiving programme (such as CLOCKSS).
- Availability of the full text (including supplementary text and data when applicable and feasible) in machine readable format (for example XML), allowing for seamless Text and Data Mining (TDM).
- Linking to underlying data, code, and so on available in external repositories.
- High quality article level metadata – including cited references – in standard interoperable format, under a CC0 public domain dedication. Metadata must include complete and reliable information on funding provided by cOAlition S funders.
- Machine readable information on the Open Access status and the license embedded in the article.

9.3 Recommended additional criteria for journals and platforms:

- Support for PIDs for authors (such as ORCID), funders, funding programmes and grants, institutions, and so on.
- Direct deposition of publications by the publisher into Plan S compliant author designated or centralised Open Access repositories.
- Openly accessible data on citations according to the standards by the Initiative for Open Citations I4OC.

10. Deposition of Scholarly Content in Open Access Repositories

10.1 Requirements for authors and publishers:

A copy of the published work must be openly available in a compliant repository under the following conditions without cost for the depositor/author if it is not available in a compliant journal or platform:

- Version: the final published version of the publication (Version of Record) or at least the Author's Accepted Manuscript (AAM).
- Embargo: no embargo period can be applied; the publication must be fully available Open Access at the time of publication (including early view version).
- License and Copyright: Authors/institutions must retain their copyright and articles must be made available under the CC BY 4.0 license (alternatively CC BY-SA 4.0 or CC0).

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- Self-archiving policy: The self-archiving ('Green Open Access') policy of the venue where the article is published must be registered in Sherpa/Romeo.
- Quality assurance/peer review: The venue where the article is published must have a solid system in place for review according to the standards within the relevant discipline, and according to the standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Details on this must be openly available through the website.
- Quality criteria: The venue where the article is published must comply with the same quality criteria as compliant Open Access journals and platforms (see above) to the extent applicable. The 'Recommended additional criteria for journals and platforms' (see point 9.3) also apply here.

10.2 Requirements for Plan S compliant Open Access repositories:

The repository must be registered in the Directory of Open Access Repositories (OpenDOAR) or in the process of being registered.

In addition, the following criteria for repositories are required:

- Automated manuscript ingest facility
- Full text stored in XML in JATS standard (or equivalent)
- Quality assured metadata in standard interoperable format, including information on the DOI of the original publication, on the version deposited (AAM/VoR), on the open access status and the license of the deposited version. The metadata must fulfil the same quality criteria as Open Access journals and platforms (see above). In particular, metadata must include complete and reliable information on funding provided by cOAlition S funders. OpenAIRE compliance is strongly recommended.
- Open API to allow others (including machines) to access the content
- QA process to integrate full text with core abstract and indexing services (for example PubMed)
- Continuous availability
- Helpdesk

The posting of preprints of the completed manuscript in a repository or on a preprint server under a CC BY license is strongly encouraged. However, the posting of preprints is not sufficient to be compliant with Plan S.

11. Transformative Agreements

cOAlition S recognises models that avoid non-transparent and non-fair pricing, such as 'offsetting' and 'read & publish' models as a way of achieving compliance with Plan S during a transition period. cOAlition S will require that the details of such agreements are listed on a website to ensure transparency, and encourages consortia to develop shared requirements for this. cOAlition S intends to collaborate with the Efficiency and Standards for Article Charges (ESAC) initiative⁷ to ensure registration and dissemination of agreements.

COAlition S acknowledges existing transformative agreements. However, from 2020 onward, new agreements need to fulfil the following conditions to achieve compliance with Plan S:

- The contracts (including costs) of such agreements need to be made publicly available.
- Contract negotiations need to be concluded before the end of 2021, and contracts may not last for longer than three years.

⁷ <http://esac-initiative.org>

- The negotiated agreements need to include a scenario that describes how the publication venues will be converted to full Open Access after the contract expires.

The effects of the transformative agreements will be reviewed in 2023.

cOAlition S acknowledges that some publishers have established mirror journals with one part being subscription based and the other part being Open Access. Such journals are not compliant with Plan S unless they are a part of a transformative agreement since they *de facto* lead to charging for both access and publishing in the same way as a hybrid journal does. Funding for publishing in such journals will only be supported under a transformative agreement.

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