

A Plan S for Academic Books
EASSH-OPERAS Roundtable
March 8th, 2019, 11am-4pm, Brussels

Report

Premises

The roundtable was organised by [OPERAS](#) and [EASSH](#) with the rationale reported in Annex 1 of this document.

The meeting started with two sets of short introductions:

- Short presentation of Plan S
- Short overview of some responses to the Plan S proposal

This background material is attached as Annex 1 at the end of this short report, which will only highlight the main points emerged from the discussion. This report will represent the backdrop of a workshop event to be held in 2019-2020.

Roundtable Discussion

The Group discussion recognised that establishing OA Infrastructures is key for a successful implementation to move forward. However, pending issues are

- o **what are the needed infrastructures to be supported or created?**
- o The importance of open archives and repositories for hosting research outputs is acknowledged —> **what is the importance, relevance of repositories in the context of OA books, compared with journals?**

Many SSH researchers are sceptical towards Plan S and OA initiatives seems to be underfunded compared to STM disciplines and therefore adopt a defensive attitude. Some participants proposed a New Deal to those who are undersigning Plan S: to increase funding for SSH research so that some of this financial support can be invested in building and strengthening dissemination in OA.

1. Copyright and licences: principle 1

The starting point of the conversation under this heading was that authors retain copyright of their publication with no restrictions. All publications must be published under an open licence, preferably the Creative Commons Attribution Licence CC BY. In relation to book publishing there are some important questions to be addressed, as the publication of books is felt as strongly connected with the editorial work provided by publishers.

The participants referred to the importance of text and highlighted the importance of authors retaining control over the further uses of the text. In this context, the participants once again brought up the important role of OA platforms, which create and protect mechanisms of quality control.

The issue of making research discoverable (a key point in OA narratives) is currently in contrast with one main concern, especially in SSH:

- **If ND licences must be allowed to protect against improper reuse, the problem is that these curtail TDM as well. Licensing allowing for TDM on one side and preventing improper reuse on the other should be sought if possible.**

2. Business models: principles 4-5-(9)

Business models have been at the core of the OA discussion particularly in relation to the publishers' contribution. One of the participants also suggested that there is enough money in the system to support OA implementation more widely. He proposed that Plan S could encourage a transformative model: "subscribe to open" (coming from the example of Annual Reviews).

A question however was left pending, namely: if such a scheme could work in any country. Again this seems to be a good system for rich research systems but not necessarily transferable to all countries in Europe.

3. Policy alignment and monitoring: principles 6-10

The next point of the discussion was about policy alignment and monitoring to ensure high quality in OA. A monitoring mechanism envisaged for books could be the Open Book Watch: a monitoring platform that could collect all sorts of data on OA books (usage, business models, technical) and help the different stakeholders take wise decisions based on facts (rather than on impressions).

So far, in the OA narrative there has been very little engagement on who should monitor compliance for OA policies. Of course, funders who have undersigned Plan S will also encourage that the policy is implemented but there are issues of aligning the strategies and policies of those funders fostering Plan S, so that standards could be more transparent and also easier to monitor.

However, books present also a remarkable time lag between funding and actual publication (very different from an article). Therefore a question is what role would be played by this time lag in compliance with OA policies. Research published in books also may have several funding sources.

A further element of monitoring concerns the repositories and how reliable they are in providing their services. Some of them are institutional repositories and therefore tied to universities' reputation, but some are not and it is not clear how these can be validated for depositing books. It remains also particularly difficult to monitor licences and how these are respected.

4. Implementation schedule: principle 7

The DARIAH paper (see Annex 1) is proposing a five-year strategy plan. All participants felt that this is a feasible proposition and they are all committed to bring the conversation forward.

Annex 1 – Rationale

Research monographs are core in science writing and dissemination. They are the basis for in-depth knowledge and the space to develop long and complex arguments in an extended and detailed way. They are powerful tools of science dissemination to engage society in research.

Plan S and Open Access are key issues in the science policy discussions. Even the most adverse to engage with such topics feel that the debate on Open Access will profoundly change the European and then the global research communication landscape. Started as a movement by libraries to limit the costs of subscriptions to journals, it became a political goal for public access to research results.

Scholars, universities, publishers and policy makers are debating the best path forward for making available books in Open Access.

EASSH and OPERAS invite you to a private roundtable between researchers and publishers to address how the implementation of Open Access for books may be taken forward. The aim is to engage different stakeholders to provide a first step on the pathway to a wider adoption of open access books and to future Plan S implementation guidelines for books.

Gabi Lombardo – EASSH Director Pierre Mounier - OPERAS Coordinator
Claire Clivaz - EASSH governing board

Annex 2 - Background of the workshop discussion

Plan S (history, principles, guidance)

Plan S foresees the alignment of OA policies of national, supranational and charitable research funders towards a number of principles. These principles include a mandate to authors who receive funding from the implementing funders to make any resulting peer-reviewed publications available in Open Access without embargo periods, under a Creative Commons licence and without copyright transfer to the publisher. Three routes are foreseen to implement the Plan: immediate publication in Open Access journals or platforms that meet certain quality conditions; deposit of the peer-reviewed material in an open repository that meets certain quality conditions; or publication in a 'hybrid' journal under condition that said journal is part of a transformative agreement and on a clear trajectory towards an OA based model.

The rationale and motivation for the funders who will implement Plan S (the group is called cOAlition S) lies in the fact that there is no justification for publicly funded research to be locked behind pay-walls and that the coexistence of two systems (OA and subscription) is too expensive and that any hybrid model must be phased out.

However, plan S cannot be implemented by the funders alone: funders undersigning Plan S may not be able to provide full funding for all the publications emerging from their supported research, and even less provide the infrastructures that could support the full implementation of the plan (the whole OA ecosystem). Moving to a full OA model will require reallocation of resources already in the science system (e.g. budgets currently tied up in large subscription deals). It has to be noted that the current draft of Plan S has left reference to monographs and books out of the first process for implementation, leaving time for that discussion in collaboration with researchers and publishers.

Organisational responses to Plan S

The event has been organised by two large platforms for Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) research. The aim is that SSH researchers are fully engaged with the aims of open access and are not trying to preserve systems that are increasingly becoming obsolete. Furthermore, SSH scholars have already noted the benefits to their scholarship from the option to be read by large audiences, even more than for the STEM research. Therefore, there is a strong commitment to move the discussion further and to keep pace with other disciplinary areas, bearing in mind some other constraints that may be more typical of SSH research.

➤ **European Alliance for SSH response**

EASSH made three clear points in response to the draft proposal of Plan S:

1. Quality and licences: a. Current strategies of implementation do not take into consideration the unintended effects of creating asymmetries between

research systems that can bear the costs of OA and poor research systems that lag behind; b. Not all newly operating fully OA publications have proved to have quality evaluation systems in place that are of comparable standards to existing high ranked journals; c. Include 'No derivatives' (ND) in the licence for any OA publications.

2. Impact on European scholars' career in a fair and competitive international research system: The impact is still unclear given that Plan S is mainly a European initiative.
3. Infrastructures and OA platforms (including impact on learned societies): there is a clear lack of funding for OA infrastructures and incentives in order to fully implement Plan S.

➤ **OPERAS response**

OPERAS focuses on the importance to work as soon as possible on an implementation plan for monographs, beyond the political narrative, as there are some technical and practical issues to be addressed in detail. In particular:

1. Not to rule out 'No Derivative' licences as SSH researchers need to keep control over the further usage of their discourse, particularly when it can be used in the public debate;
2. To support the so-called 'Diamond Open Access' business model, where neither the authors nor the readers have to pay for the publication;
3. To consider explicitly XML TEI as an accepted technical standard, because it is well used and defined by the researchers in humanities;
4. To invest in open scholarly communication infrastructures, which are essential for a sound development of open access.

➤ **DARIAH response**

DARIAH argues for the better integration of disciplinary traditions and non-APC Gold Open Access publishing models along 4 action lines.

1. Foster diversification in the Open Access business models
 - Increased support for no-author-fee (diamond OA) businessmodels.
 - Proposal for a 5-year open monograph strategy that is flexible enough to stay compliant with the different national policies.
2. Secure and maintain multiple funding channels to cover Open Access publishing costs
 - Suggestion to keep a good balance between project-based and institutional or national funding channels. That is, in addition to covering Open Access publishing costs through research grants, we also recommend securing institutional or national publication funds to make Gold Open Access publishing available also for disciplinary environments where external grant funding opportunities are limited.
 - Recommendation for introducing competitive and targeted monograph publishing funds as a possible extension of PhD scholarships.
3. Integrate support for the administration of consortial Open Access publishing models
 - Strong incentivisation for consortium-based Open Access publishing models and services.

- Recommendation for a joint online portfolio or registry of consortial Open Access publishing services, where institutions and funders could openly administer their support to these providers.
 - Recommendation for the open administration of the APCs/BPCs of universities and research organizations and their publication under an open licence.
4. Breaking down the technical barriers to Open Access by focussing on long-term infrastructural investments
- Stressing the strong need for long-term/strategic investments into publishing infrastructure instead of merely paying for the costs of publishing to third-parties who are out of control of the scholarly communities.
 - Recommendation for keeping the development of research discovery platforms as a focus area in infrastructural investments.
 - Recommendation for investing more into the development and professionalisation of small-scale Open Access publishing services.

Existing OA policies for books in Europe

Responses to OA policies are still uneven although the policy is included widely in the Open Science debate. More importantly, publishers noted that the emergence of OA publications will not necessarily mean the end of printing and hard copies. All participants also highlighted that one size doesn't fit all.

Whereas the ERC is going on full steam asking for the provision of OA to both journal articles and books resulting from their funding, not all the research councils agree on such an holistic approach. Big steps have been made towards OA implementation by those research systems that can finance publications in all disciplines quite easily (e.g. SNSF has about [50% of their publications in OA](#)), and by those publishers whose scale allows such adaptation. For some smaller or less wealthy research systems, OA implementation is still work in progress. Other research councils are looking at alternative implementation of OA, including deposit of publications in repositories (e.g. FCT).

One participant noted that there is a big difference in compliance with OA between different research systems. Even support for designing a proposal, which could include the real costs of OA publications in its budget, is really different among the EU countries and this has an impact on compliance with OA policies.

Regarding books, the practices are still very diverse. However, as an international platform, OAPEN (www.oapen.org), which is dedicated to open access peer-reviewed books, plays a structuring role in the global landscape. OAPEN operates two platforms, the OAPEN Library (www.oapen.org), a central repository for hosting and disseminating OA books, and the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB, www.doabooks.org), a discovery service for OA books. It is recognised that OA for books is still an open challenge, and this mainly affects the Humanities and some areas of the Social Sciences, where books remain a predominant means of communicating research.

Other national case studies about OA. The SNSF supports largely the OA publication for researchers employed in Switzerland, in collaboration with national and international publishers. Some Swiss publishers already offer Gold OA solutions, but the OA model still needs to be propagated further. Are research councils 'controlling/moderating' the rate of publishing following the claims that researchers are now publishing too much? This seems to be not much of an issue in open countries (e.g. UK, NL) but could that be an issue in other contexts?

Also small publishers do not seem to be included in the discussion, particularly when they are very specialised, selling a small number of copies, working in a multilingual environment and with a very traditional approach (e.g. Austria). Similar conditions can be found in those countries where English is not so widely spoken or used for publications.

Books are again a more complex issue, because the role of the editor is very important.

Annex 3 – Background papers

- Plan S principles and implementation: <https://www.coalitions.org/principles-and-implementation/>
- Responses to Plan S consultation:
 - EASSH: <http://www.eassh.eu/sites/default/files/pdf/positionpapers/plansdraftfnl.pdf>
 - OPERAS: <https://operas.hypotheses.org/2575>
 - DARIAH: : <https://www.dariah.eu/2018/10/25/towards-a-planhss-dariahs-position-on-plans/>
 - IHA <http://research.ie/2019/02/08/irish-research-council-statement-on-open-access-and-plan-s/>
 - ALPSP (transmitted by OUP) : [https://wellcome.figshare.com/articles/Towards transition strategies and business models for Society Publishers who wish to accelerate Open Access and Plan S/8398406](https://wellcome.figshare.com/articles/Towards_transition_strategies_and_business_models_for_Society_Publishers_who_wish_to_accelerate_Open_Access_and_Plan_S/8398406)
- Knowledge Exchange work on OA books: <http://www.knowledge-exchange.info/event/open-access-monographs>
- Funding opportunities for OA books (Radical OA wiki page): <https://radicaloa.disruptivemedia.org.uk/wikis/funding-opportunities-for-open-access-books/>