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Call to Action: Comment on European open science initiative, Plan S

AUTHOR

Colleagues,

As many of our European members are aware, cOAlition S is a group of European science foundations that have banded together to tackle the problem of facilitating open science. Much of the motivation for the cOAlition's "Plan S" stems from resistance to the for-profit academic publishers who keep scientific articles behind paywalls. There is much to admire and celebrate in the cOAlition's plan to ensure that federal funds are being spent on science that is accessible to the tax payers who support the work. However, there are also potentially significant unintended consequences for scientists, educational institutions, and scientific societies. For example:

- Mandating that research appear in Open Access journals prohibits researchers from publishing in many of the highest-impact journals in the field. This, in turn, creates challenges for institutions attempting to assess the impact of an individual's published research when evaluating researchers for hiring and promotion.
- Many scientific societies that rely heavily on profit-sharing from their flagship journals will see an abrupt loss of income, even if they convert the journals to full Open Access, because the plan requires

caps on article processing costs. Some societies will be unlikely to survive this sudden decline in income.

SRCD is eager to embrace forward-looking alternative models that provide broader access to scholarly output, but is encouraging more comprehensive deliberation regarding the downstream consequences of Plan S before it is enacted.

COAlition S invites you to review and provide feedback on their implementation plan by Friday, February 8, 2019 at 5 p.m. Central European Time. I encourage you to contribute to the conversation.

Please reach out with any questions.

Best,

Laura L. Namy, Ph.D.
Executive Director