

Response by NWO to questions addressed at the KNAW webinar on June 23 on Implementation of Plan S

Many questions were asked. Since the focus of the webinar was on the Implementation plan proposed by NWO, this document only addresses questions related to the implementation plan.

1. Why this focus on publishing CC BY? Kan alleen CC-BY gekozen worden of mag bij CC-BY-NC ook?

NWO and the other cOAlition S funder will require either CC BY or CC BY ND. The reason cOAlition S why requires the use of CC BY is because it wants to make sure the research that is funded gets the broadest possible (re)use. NWO acknowledges that within the Open Access debate in the Netherlands there has been relatively less attention to the use of open licenses. NWO will look how it can improve the awareness about CC BY amongst its grantees. Fundamentally though NWO and cOAlition S believe Open Access is not only about the freedom to read anywhere in the world the fruits of publicly funded research. Ever since the [Berlin Declaration of 2003](#) Open Access has also been about the reuse of research outcomes: the author of a paper “grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose”. Of course, authorship will always have to be properly attributed. In response to concerns from the HSS community cOAlition S has decided to allow for the more restrictive CC BY ND license in those cases where authors feel the need to restrict the possibility of derivative works. COAlition S will not allow restrictive licenses like CC BY NC or CC BY NC ND because it would seriously limit the reuse of scholarly publications that have been produced by public funds. It would for instance limit the reuse of papers for educational purposes. More restrictive licenses also limit large-scale content mining of scholarly outputs by modern technology (such as machine-reading), including for commercial uses (e.g., pharmaceutical companies mining scholar papers in their endeavor to develop new drugs or vaccines or support for digital humanities methods). We strongly believe in the utility and potential for innovation based on results of publicly funded research.

2. What is the legal basis of the ‘zero embargo’ policy? how does this relate to the Taverne project (which works with a 6 month period right)?

NWO will inform the Dutch community about the solution cOAlition S foresees in the coming months. Basically, the aim is to provide a legal basis whereby NWO/cOAlition S grantees will be able to share the author accepted version of their scholarly outputs via the repository route upon publication (without embargo). It is correct that the Taverne amendment currently works with a 6 month embargo. It has to be said though that the law itself does not mention 6 months. It speaks of the right to make a short work publicly available after a “reasonable period” after first publication. In the pilot “[You share, we take care](#)” the VSNU has decided to take this “reasonable period” to be 6 months for the final accepted version. Already in the “[Memorie van Toelichting](#)” to the amendement it was mentioned that a “reasonable period” could in principle even be zero months.

3. could you say a bit more about the VSNU agreements for covering APCs?

Since 2015 the VSNU and UKB have had the strategy to negotiate so-called transformative read and publish deals with publishers. Currently there are more than 15 of those deals in place. They allow Dutch affiliated researchers to read the contents of the journals covered by the deal and also publish in them for free or against a discount. These deals are called transformative agreements because the money formerly used to pay for subscriptions is repurposed (to some extent) to pay for Open Access publishing services. The Netherlands is a frontrunner when it comes to negotiating these kind of deals and NWO will endorse them as a compliant route to Open Access. More information about these deals and which journals are covered can be found on www.openaccess.nl

4. Is Plan S also for social sciences?

NWO and cOAlition S strongly believe that the principle of full and immediate Open Access is of universal value and applies to all scholarly disciplines. We are sensitive to disciplinary differences and their different publication cultures. But we think that together the three routes presented provide all the necessary room to provide a route to full and immediate open access for journals in all disciplines. NWO acknowledged that it has a responsibility when it comes to independent Dutch (journals) that are not part of the big international commercial publishers. That’s why we recently announced that NWO will support the www.openjournals.nl project lead by the Humanities Cluster of the KNAW. This project will assist these journals to make the transition to Open Access. In short:

NWO's Open Access policy applies to all the research and scholarly publications it funds, from all disciplines, including the social sciences.

5. Does Plan S have anything to say about papers in conference proceedings (which in Computer Science have the same status as papers in journals)?

Yes. This was brought up several times during the consultation about NWO's implementation guidance. It has led the board of NWO to decide to include peer reviewed conference papers in the policy. At the moment already 55% of all conference papers that arise from NWO funding are available in Open Access.

6. "I looked at the journals in DOAJ in my field most of them are completely laughable quality (as judged by the editorial board in place) is a concern."

Then do not publish in one of those journals. NWO does not force you to publish in full gold Open Access journals nor does Plan S. You are completely free to choose any Open Access journal or subscription-based journal or one of the 10.000 journals covered by the VSNU deals. Plan S does not limit your choice of a publication venue as long as you make sure that at least the author accepted manuscript is available in Open Access at the moment of publication.

NWO and cOAlition S has stated repeatedly that we will not compromise on quality. We emphasize our commitment to strong peer review systems alongside other forms of quality assurance. Researchers should go for those journals, that meet these requirements. We cannot image good scientists to go for journals, which don't meet these criteria.

7. What will be done to prevent predatory journals from gaining traction in the program of Plan S?

One of the ways cOAlition S will try to fight predatory publishing is through the launch of its [Journal Checker Tool](#). This tool will tell grantees of cOAlition S members whether the journal of a researcher's choice complies with its policies. The website [Think Check Submit](#) provides useful advice to researchers when choosing a venue. It is widely acknowledged that especially for early career researchers it is often hard to find their way in the rapidly changing publishing landscape. An advice like: "only submit at a journal you know or where you know any of the members of the editorial board" is likely to be hard for someone at the beginning of his/her research career. That's why in NWO's view it is imperative PhD-supervisors together with graduate schools provide guidance and help in these matters.

Furthermore, referring to our reply to item 6: researchers should only publish in journals with a high-quality review system which ensures quality of the papers published in that journal.

8. What happens when the VSNU deals or transformative agreements expire? What happens after 2024?

First Plan S will be reviewed by cOAlition S in 2024. That is also the moment when the effectiveness of the transformative deals like those of the VSNU will be assessed. Do they actually lead to the transformation of business models that cOAlition S seeks to promote or not? What happens after 2024 will be decided then and not before. NWO will of course inform its grantees on time. Of course the hope is that after 2024 we will only see "[publishing deals](#)" where large consortia buy Open Access publication services for the researchers in their constituency. Whether we will already be that far in 2024 depends on the global uptake of Open Access which cannot be predicted at this moment in time.

9. Basically, all my publications are open access but not for those that are first authored by colleagues working outside the Netherlands. The VNSU deal does not cover these cases. Will this be relaxed?

VSNU deals will continue to cover only costs for corresponding authors of Dutch affiliated authors. Library consortia in other countries have generally the same strategy as it is a means to distribute costs of Open Access publishing in a fair way between countries. This means indeed that if you are an NWO grantee and not a corresponding author on a paper, you will have to consult the first author. The guidelines apply to all publications which are partly or in whole the result of funding by NWO. If the corresponding is from another country and cannot make use of a transformative agreement in his/her own country, the (green) self-archiving route will provide an opportunity to fulfill NWO's requirements.