



cOAlition S:

Making full and immediate Open Access a reality

cOAlition S develops “Rights Retention Strategy” to safeguard researchers’ intellectual ownership rights and suppress unreasonable embargo periods

[Strasbourg, 15th July 2020] Publishers commonly require authors to sign exclusive publishing agreements which restrict what authors can do with their research findings, including making articles Open Access in line with their funders’ requirements. To address this problem, cOAlition S has developed a **Rights Retention Strategy**, which will empower their funded researchers to publish in their journal of choice, including subscription journals, and provide Open Access in compliance with Plan S.

One of the three Plan S routes to achieve full and immediate Open Access is via repositories, where, as a minimum, the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) is made openly available under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence or equivalent, without any embargo.

The **Rights Retention Strategy** is designed to ensure that all cOAlition S funded scholarly publications are available as Open Access. In practical terms, it enables researchers to retain sufficient intellectual ownership rights in their work to make the AAM Open Access at the time of publication with a CC BY license.

“The COVID-19 crisis has clearly shown that embargo periods are indefensible. No private or business interests can justify that new and original research results are held back for 6 or 12 months from other scientists, practitioners, governments and authorities, medical staff, patients and patient associations – especially those who are economically disadvantaged, who cannot afford expensive access tolls”, emphasizes Marc Schiltz, President of Science Europe and Chair of the cOAlition S Leaders Group.

Wheels in full motion for the implementation of the Rights Retention Strategy

Moving towards the implementation of the Plan S, **cOAlition S Organisations will change their grant conditions** to require that a Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC BY) is applied to all Author Accepted Manuscripts (AAMs) or Versions of Record (VoR) reporting original research, supported in whole or in part by their funding.

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To ensure publishers are aware of these requirements – and to avoid researchers being presented with publishing agreements whose signature would make them to be in breach of a prior obligation or would go against an already existing licence – we are **contacting those subscription publishers** who publish the majority of research articles attributed to cOAlition S Organisations. Specifically, we are encouraging them to modify their existing publishing agreements, such that all authors or by exception, those authors funded by a cOAlition S Organisation, can make their AAMs freely available at the time of publication with a CC BY licence.

“We hope that publishers will bring their policies into alignment with the Plan S requirements. In any event, we are committed to protect and safeguard the intellectual ownership rights of our grantees so that they can deposit their manuscript (including the corrections after peer-review) in a repository, without embargo and in compliance with Plan S. The manuscript belongs to the author, even after peer review!”, highlights Johan Rooryck, Executive Director, cOAlition S.

Using a dedicated **response form**, publishers are requested to indicate how they will manage future submissions from authors who are funded by a cOAlition S Organisation. This information will be added to the Plan S Journal Checker Tool (JCT), a public web service, currently under development, which will help researchers determine how they can adhere to Plan S for any given journal.

Over the coming weeks, the cOAlition S Office will be hosting a series of **webinars** to provide further information about the **Rights Retention Strategy** and to answer any questions publishers may have.

Related documents & webpages

- **Rights Retention Strategy [pdf version]**
- **Implementation Roadmap of cOAlition S Organisations**
- **Communication to publishers**
- **Rights Retention Strategy: Graphic**
- **Rights Retention Strategy: Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Rights Retention Strategy: Webinars**
- **Plan S Implementation Guidelines for Repositories: Results of COAR Repository Platforms Survey**

Notes to Editors

Plan S is an initiative for Open Access publishing that was launched in September 2018. The plan is supported by cOAlition S, a group of national research funding organisations and charitable foundations. Plan S requires that, with effect from 2021, all scholarly publications on the results from research funded by public or private grants provided by national, regional, and international research councils and funding bodies, must be published in Open Access Journals, on Open Access Platforms, or made immediately available through Open Access Repositories without embargo.

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