cOAlition S:

Q&A webinar for the development and maintenance of a Journal Checker Tool

Publishing Venues

What is the difference between a "journal" and a "platform" when discussing "publishing venues"?

For the purposes of the Journal Checker Tool, a publishing venue is a journal or single title platform (e.g. Wellcome Open Research) rather than a provider of infrastructure services that publishes multiple titles (e.g. Open Library of Humanities). In the latter case, the individual titles published by the service would be considered as the publishing venues. The term "Journal" is used in the Journal Checker Tool because in our experience that is the term that researchers most associate with.

Are SciElo, Open Edition and Redalyc 'platforms'?

No, these are publishing infrastructure services and collaborations that provide services to multiple journals.

Data Sources

There is no data source available that provides all necessary information to build the tool. What data sources can the provider use? Can the provider generate their own data?

Several possible data sources are listed in the ITT (DOAJ, Sherpa Romeo, ESAC Agreement Registry). The report ["Data needed to identify Plan S Compliance"](#) assesses the current status of some of these resources. The provider is free to use alternative data sources that they deem to be of sufficient quality or to generate their own information. Consortia may work together to gather necessary data.

Do you know of any initiatives that work on an international registry of Transformative Agreements (TA) that go beyond what is registered in the ESAC Agreement Registry?

No. TAs is an area where data will need to be generated. This could be through ESAC if they wish, otherwise, data may need to come from multiple sources (publishers, consortia, funders). The provider is expected to have a plan to build the data.

Are SciElo, OpenEdition and Redalyc accepted as data sources?

Yes, if they provide reliable data required by the tool provider.

May we rely on the [OpenDOAR website](#) as a point of reference for self-archiving authors?

OpenDOAR is a register of open access repositories but does not contain journal self-archiving policies. Those are registered in Sherpa Romeo. A provider is free to choose the data sources upon which it wishes to rely.

Advising researchers on which repository to use to self-archive their publication is not part of the initial requirements for the Journal Checker Tool.

Do I need to include a price offer for potential providers of data sources (eg DOAJ, OpenAPC, etc.) Is cOAlition S open to offers from others as well?

The costs of any data source that is integral to the functioning of the tool are eligible costs within the tender.

Will cOAlition S provide a whitelist of "Plan S-compliant" journals needed for the database creation? Who will be responsible for updates?

No. The JCT should ideally be able to perform a live analysis on journal titles rather than working from a static list, in order to reflect changes in agreements, journals, data and policies. If a live analysis is not possible, the provider should outline the frequency at which tool content will be updated to ensure changes are rapidly reflected in the results given by the tool.

The report [“Data needed to identify Plan S Compliance”](#) mentions that there are no comprehensive data sets that document all three routes. Will Plan S make available the data it has on, e.g., Transformative Agreements?

cOAlition S will support the provider in accessing data where it can, but the provider is expected to have a plan of how it will obtain data where it is not already available. This may be through cOAlition S funders, publishers, etc.

Tool Features

What percentage of the journals are supposed to be covered at the product launch on the 1st of November?

A minimum coverage of about 90% - 95% of the publishers, societies and journals most used by cOAlition S funded researchers. The provider will be given access to a list of the publishers most frequently used by grantees from cOAlition S member organisations.

What is acceptable in journal search queries returning no results because the journal is not covered (yet)?

The response should indicate that the journal is not yet covered and lead to follow up for future inclusion.

The ITT requires that users be able to comment on the results given by the tool through a Feedback mechanism. Who is responsible for responding to those queries?

As stated in the ITT, "Users should be able to provide feedback on the tool and its accuracy to the provider, who will be expected to respond appropriately". The overall feedback mechanism should be managed by the provider, who should be able to explain to a publisher the response given by the tool. Sources of error should be resolved between the publisher and the provider. The cOAlition S office will also be available to support queries regarding the Plan S principles. Whilst it is acknowledged that data and policies will change over time and adjustment are inevitable, a minimum level of service quality will be expected from the provider.

Why is funder information required?

Different cOAlition S members will be implementing Plan S in different steps and timelines, and the tool must be able to reflect that difference. The cOAlition S members will provide the supplier with the information about these different implementation processes.

Will the supplier be allowed to extend the tool for related purposes that are not directly tied to Plan S? For example, provide journal recommendations beyond Plan S compliance, but matching other funder mandates?

Yes. The tool is required to be built open source, and any data generated will be open licensed, which allows the supplier to extend the tool. However, any extension would require separate branding.

Do you have a proposed internet address for the tool, like e.g. https://journalcheckertool.cOAlition S.org/?

No. The expectation is a simple URL that is easily discoverable. The website should have cOAlition S branding.

Will cOAlition S decide exactly what the tool should do, or can the provider decide what the service will look like and provide add-ons beyond the tender spec?

No. cOAlition S will not prescribe exactly what the tool should look like. However, the provider should follow best practice in terms of tool design and conduct necessary user tests. Any additional add-ons beyond the tender spec that incur costs will need to be approved by cOAlition S.

Branding - Marketing

Should the tool be cOAlition S branded?

Yes.

Who will be responsible for marketing of the tool: cOAlition S or the supplier?

cOAlition S members will be responsible for the marketing of the tool. However, the supplier will need to provide basic documentation on tool use and support users once on the site.

Dealing with conflict

What happens if a journal publisher disagrees with the outcome of the journal checker tool? E.g. the tool states that the journal is not compliant, but the publisher thinks they are. Who will they turn to? Do you foresee a route for escalation in case of disagreement, such as a public appeal process?

cOAlition S members will not penalise researchers if they publish in a venue that the JCT deemed to provide a route to compliance in error. If a publisher or researcher believes there is an error concerning a journal in the JCT, the provider and the publisher are expected to work together to identify its source and correct data where appropriate. There will be no public appeal process. cOAlition S will provide support, but the provider must be the initial point of contact and resolution.

Compliance

Can subscription and hybrid journals not included within Transformative Agreements offer a route to complying with Plan S?

Yes, if they allow the author to retain copyright and self-archive the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) under a CC-BY licence with no embargo and do not charge for this. A cOAlition S researcher may choose to publish in a hybrid journal, but cOAlition S members will not provide funding for costs associated with this.

Plan S Principles state that "cOAlition S […] will only financially support agreements after 1 of January 2021 where they adhere to the ESAC Guidelines." As ESAC does not check this adherence, will public availability of the Transformative Agreements suffice?

Yes, the availability of the Transformative Agreement in the ESAC registry is sufficient. As we trust that those uploading agreements into the registry will be following the guidelines. However, if the provider is able to suggest what information is required by ESAC (or other database) to ensure uniform registration and reporting of Transformative Agreements this would be well received.

The ITT states that "The journal/platform must be registered in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) or in the process of being registered". There is no information about journals that are in the process of being registered. What happens if a journal is in the process of being registered by DOAJ and is subsequently rejected by DOAJ?

If a journal declares that they are in the process of being registered, it would be considered compliant. If the journal subsequently is still not registered after a certain period, it will be considered non-compliant. Researchers will not be penalized if they published in a venue that was considered compliant by the tool for being in the process of being registered in DOAJ, and then later rejected.

Licences

Will the license (CC-0, MIT) apply only to what is developed explicitly for the Journal Checker Tool or also to connected partner services and data sources?

Where material already exists and is licensed, that license will be respected. For material that is developed for the JCT, open license applies. In case of doubt, preference should be given to sources used under open license.

Will cOAlition S provide a point of contact database for each funder for when an author wants to see if the funder will allow an alternative to the CC-BY?

Requesting and documenting researchers requests for CC-BY-ND exceptions is not included with the current specification for JCT ITT. However, the JCT could be a potential point to manage this process should a provider wish to include this within their response to the tender. If a provider wanted to include this process then yes a contact database could be provided and a mechanism established whereby the funding agency concerned is contacted by the provider for a decision.

Can the list of most published-in journals be used as of now in order to test the coverage in existing sources?

A list of publishers can be made available if needed, please contact info@cOAlition S.org

In addition, the Open APC database also provides some of this information.

Evaluation

How will the price component be weighted? An example would be great to better understand the formula in the evaluation criteria.

An example of the scoring criteria is provided below where 3 providers are being analysed. The lowest (thus "most competitive") price for inclusion within the "budget proposed offers value for money" category is that of Provider A - €100k. Thus, the calculation for value for money is: €100, 000 / Price of Provider being evaluated X 20.

Provider A - total cost €100k

		Scores	Percentage
Technical ability	30%	4	24
Proposed approach	20%	3	12
Understanding of project	20%	4	16
Value for money	20%	20	20
		Total	72

Provider B - total cost €200k

		Scores	Percentage
Technical ability	30%	5	30
Proposed approach	20%	5	20
Understanding of project	20%	5	20
Value for money	20%	10	10
		Total	80

Provider C - total cost €300k

		Scores	Percentage
Technical ability	30%	5	30
Proposed approach	20%	5	20
Understanding of project	20%	5	20
Value for money	20%	7	7
		Total	77

A key success criterion for the tool will be its data completeness and quality. How will you evaluate that?

As an important part of the necessary data has to be produced by the supplier, the evaluation of this is not included as a stand-alone element within the ITT selection criteria. Data quality and service delivery will be included in the KPIs once the contract is awarded.