

# Open Access Publication Funds

Hand-out



# Executive Summary

The number of scientific articles published in Open Access is increasing worldwide. Approximately 12% of all journal articles worldwide were published in Open Access in 2011. This proportion is continuing to rise, whereby Germany is following the global trend. Many Open Access journals are not financed by publication fees, but it is clearly evident that increasingly more scientists are also publishing in Open Access when the payment of publication fees is involved – and the number of both journals based on publication fees and the articles published in them is increasing. At the same time, the authors often face problems in raising the means to pay for publication fees in Open Access journals. A lack of means and/or a lack of knowledge about the mechanisms for the assumption of costs are therefore key factors which hinder the development of Open Access from the perspective of publishing scholars.

## Publication fund challenge

In view of the increasing relevance of Open Access publishing, there is a need for the scientific organisations to act to adapt to this form of publication and to structure its development in the interests of science. Publication funds may be appropriate instruments for this purpose. There are three important reasons for

science organisations or institutions to set up and administer publication funds:

1. They provide the organisation or institution with an administrative, organisational and financial instrument for the management of funds that is suitable for efficiently and sustainably structuring the transformation process from subscription-based publishing to publication-fee-based Open Access publishing in the interests of science and the individual scientists.
2. They provide the individual institutions with information about the publication volume and publication behaviour of their members and the costs incurred in this respect, and thus improve their own management expertise in terms of information provision.
3. They offer the opportunity to restructure economic relationships with publishers and to work towards the development of science-friendly business models – in particular when the criteria on the awarding of funds are agreed nationally and internationally.

Publication funds can therefore become a powerful and comprehensive strategic tool within the information infrastructure.



## Organisation and financing

It is the task of the scientific institutions and organisations to establish an adequate workflow between the organisational unit responsible for the management of the publication fund, the authors, their institutes and, where applicable, a research information system and a repository, on one hand, and the publishers, on the other. This cooperation entails the major challenge of further developing the Open Access infrastructure in such a way that the processes, from the submission of an article to billing, internal reporting and finally the exchange of information between the players, are by and large automated.

The personnel required for the management of a publication fund should, as far as possible, be integrated into the organisational unit responsible for information provision, thus generally into the scientific library of an institution or organisation. This approach enables the expenses for Open Access publications to be recorded centrally and managed in relation to the budget for subscription-based journals. To this purpose, the scope and the recipients of paid publication fees and the services relating to them should be recorded accurately as part of ongoing reporting. Reporting structures within

and between the scientific organisations can help to decide whether and in which way costs are to be distributed for an article based on which organisation authors belong to.

The set-up of a publication fund must be systematically geared towards its permanent operation from the outset. The level of resources available for running the publication fund and the exact procedures for the provision of these funds are heavily dependent upon the specific circumstances at the respective institution. An exact publication analysis is the key prerequisite for estimating the financial resources required. This analysis provides, at the same time, important information on publisher relations and may indicate the cases in which framework agreements with publishers could contribute to structuring the management of the publication fund more efficiently, minimising transaction costs and improving the service for the authors. Parts of the subscription budget should be transferred to the publication funds wherever possible. Finally, internal procedures must be established to govern the management of limited resources. This also includes ensuring that publication funding provided as part of third-party-funding projects can be accessed to finance Open Access articles.

In the interests of financial viability, stimulating competition between the publishers also appears a matter of urgency. The publishing scholars play a key role in this respect, as they decide upon the place of publication. As competition between the publishers can only be stimulated if the authors are informed about the implications of the decision to choose a particular place of publication and, depending on the circumstances, are rewarded for choosing a place of publication with an attractive price-performance ratio. A reporting system that functions effectively is equally important. An overview which is as detailed as possible of the payment flows from a science organisation or institution to a publisher is of major significance in the negotiation and evaluation of contracts. The prices that other organisations pay for comparable publishing services are also of interest. This comparison requires the disclosure of the estimated prices for the individual services. Confidentiality clauses, which are often still commonplace in the subscription model, should therefore be categorically avoided.

## **Awarding of funds and sustainability**

A science organisation or institution should precisely define which criteria must be met in order for the costs for an Open Access publication to be borne by the publication fund. These criteria are established with a view to permanently safeguarding all processes which are relevant to scientific publication. Sustainability in this sense refers to the legal safeguarding of the reusability of publications, to technical aspects, to ensuring the continuous availability of publications and the permanent financial security of the publication fund. Specific examples of such criteria would include the use of standardised free licences (such as the Creative Commons Licence CC-BY) or the agreement of specific workflows on the automated archiving of articles in the repository of the institution bearing the publication fees. Finally, each organisation or institution should establish from the outset whether and in which way the so-called hybrid Open Access model is to be supported. The following applies in general, (a) the criteria set out should be openly communicated, (b) a contact partner should be made available for the publication fund which is able to competently explain the criteria and their application and (c) the awarding of funds via the publication funds should be evaluated annually if possible.

If the criteria on the financing of Open Access publications are agreed nationally and internationally, science's common interests can be optimally represented vis-à-vis publishers and the risks concerning the financing of Open Access publications minimised. However, if the awarding of funds is not determined by clear and comprehensive nationally and internationally agreed criteria, the set-up of publication funds by science institutions could create the organisational preconditions for a new price spiral.

## **About the hand-out**

This hand-out was produced by the »Open Access« Working Group as part of the »Priority Initiative Digital Information« of the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany. It provides detailed information and recommendations on the organisation and financing of publication funds, workflow issues and the minimum requirements for the assumption of publication costs by an Open Access fund. However, this hand-out does not provide a blueprint for the set-up of a particular publication fund, as fundamental considerations which must be undertaken before the set-up of any Open Access publication fund can often only be addressed on an institution-specific or organisation-specific basis. A checklist enclosed as an annex provides the opportunity to reflect on these considerations, which are fundamental for any institution or organisation.



# Checklist for the establishment of a publication fund

The establishment of a publication fund requires the cooperation of a large number of players within an organisation. The early involvement of all parties concerned and the addressing and clarification of as many issues as possible that arise in relation to the launch of a publication fund increase the likelihood of a successful start and operation.

This checklist divided into the four main points of »Organisation«, »Allocation and securing of the budget«, »Criteria development« and »Communication with authors, research funders and publishing houses,« is intended to provide stimulus and support for the individual decision-making processes. They should serve as the starting point for the drawing-up of an organisation-specific to-do list.

## (A) *Organisation*

- (1) Start of the decision-making process
  - a. Which person/body generally decides whether an Open Access publication fund should be set up?
  - b. Which information is required for the start of the decision-making process?
  - c. Which players must/should approve or support the proposal to set up a publication fund?
- (2) Who needs to be »got on board« after the fundamental decision to set up a publication process?
  - a. Which players at the institution have been responsible for the approval and settlement of publication fees to date?
  - b. Is there someone at management level responsible for publishing and related issues?
  - c. Which individuals and groups are affected by the setting up of a publication fund or may have an interest in involvement in the planning?
- (3) Expectations
  - a. With the help of a survey or an event, an overview should be obtained of the expectations or concerns over a publication fund.
  - b. The results of this survey should be documented in writing and communicated within the organisation.



(B) *Assignment and securing of the budget*

- (4) Securing the funding of the publication fund
- a. To what extent have publication fees of different kinds been paid at the institution to date?
  - b. To what extent have Open Access publication fees been paid at the institution to date?
  - c. From which budgets have publication fees been financed to date at the institution?
  - d. From which budgets can the publication fund be financed over the medium and long-term, and which budgets can be used to cover the publication costs of individual articles?
  - e. From which budgets can the publication fund be financed on a one-time or short-term basis?

(5) Reporting

- a. Number of publications and costs borne?
- b. What information should be transferred to whom, and at what intervals?
- c. How is the transfer of the information organised? Which party is obliged to provide or collect the information? In what format should the information be transferred?
- d. Should the information be archived? Who is responsible for this?
- e. Should the information be prepared for a report? Who is responsible for that?
- f. What trend emerges of publication costs actually paid from year to year?

(C) *Criteria development*

- (6) Internal agreement on the conditions to be met for the awarding of funds
  - a. The results of the survey on expectations should be taken into account in the drawing-up of the criteria for the awarding of funds.
  - b. Which stakeholders (e.g. publishing authors, management, library and accounting department) should be involved in this decision-making process within the institution?
  - c. How should the decision-making process be organised so that the result can be determined in a binding form?
  - d. Which criteria should be met by the authors making the application?
  - e. What criteria must be met by the publisher to which the publication fees are to be paid?
  - f. Which criteria should categorically apply?
  - g. Which criteria are negotiable?
  - h. How will it be ensured that recipients actually use the publication cost funding provided, where applicable, from third parties?
- (7) External orientation and coordination in terms of the agreement on the criteria for the awarding of funding
  - a. Which external players will the institution use for guidance in the structuring of its criteria for the awarding of funding?
  - b. With which external players will the institution coordinate the development of its awarding of funding?
- (8) Design of the workflows
  - a. Which persons should/must cooperate on the planned workflows?
  - b. How will these persons be involved in the definition of the workflows?
  - c. The workflows should be trialled during a pilot phase before being determined definitively.

(D) *Communication with authors, re-search funders and publishing houses*

(9) Information for authors

- a. Via which channels can the authors be informed about the set-up of the publication fund and the application procedures?
- b. Which channels are available for one-off information?
- c. Which channels can be used for ongoing information?
- d. Which information material is required for which channels?

(10) Information flows outside of the organisation

- a. Are the specifications of the re-search funders requesting Open Access publications met (»funder compliance«)? How many Open Access publications are based on the support of this research funder?<sup>1</sup>
- b. Which publication fund functions require communication with publishing houses?
- c. How is this ensured?

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1 The European Commission has set itself the target of achieving an Open Access quota of 60 % by 2016 for scientific publications from publicly funded research. Owing to this and similar requirements of other research funders, the need has arisen to not just indicate the number but to also produce specific lists with Open Access publications and the corresponding information concerning the funded projects (»grants«).

This is the abridged version of the booklet »Open-Access-Publikationsfonds – Eine Handreichung« and gives an English translation of the Executive Summary and the Checklist only. Please refer to the German booklet at <http://doi.org/10.2312/allianzoa.006> for closer reading.

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