12 September 2018

COAR Response to Plan S

The Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) welcomes the strong stance taken towards open access by a coalition of 11 European Funders, coordinated by Science Europe as outlined in "Plan S" and we strongly support the goal of accelerating the transition to open access.

Europe has been one of the leading regions in regards to Open Access and Open Science; nevertheless, it is important to appreciate that the policies and practices adopted in Europe will have an impact on other regions and countries outside of Europe. As an international association with members from over 140 organizations on all 6 continents, there are a number of comments COAR would like to provide in order to ensure that the transition to Open Access is both is effective, inclusive, and sustainable internationally.

1. Plan S commits funders to "the establishment of robust criteria and requirements for the services that compliant high quality Open Access journals and Open Access platforms must provide". The terms 'journal', 'platform', 'archive' and 'repository' are becoming increasingly blurred as functionalities and services evolve and innovate. In a digital, networked environment, the different functionalities of publishing can be unbundled and undertaken in a distributed manner. Therefore, we recommend that any criteria for services be defined according to function (e.g. peer review), rather than type of infrastructure (e.g. journal or platform). This will support greater innovation and the adoption of variety of models, while still ensuring quality within the system.

2. While repositories are referenced in Plan S, it is mainly for their preservation role. This overlooks the main role of the global network of over 3000 repositories around the world, which is to provide Open Access to research articles and other valuable outputs. These repositories, based at universities, governments and research centres, are already self-organized through regional and national networks and connected globally through COAR. As we move forward towards a fully open system, we should build on our widespread investment in repository infrastructures and leverage this network to collectively develop the inclusive and trusted services we require. These services, which are outlined in the COAR next generation of repositories report are envisioned within the framework of a distributed, community-based system and include peer review, social networking, and standard usage measures.

3. Research is international and the scholarly communication system should reflect this global nature. As an international association, COAR seeks to ensure that the transition towards open access is responsive to the needs and priorities of all regions and countries. Many in the international community are concerned about the negative impact of APCs, especially on less economically developed countries, which have limited budgets (or no funds at all) to support publication fees. A large-scale shift to the APC model would create new barriers for participation in the system for many regions and researchers. In 2017, the major research funders in Latin America asserted that they are not in favour of an

APC-based model and that open access "through the payment of APC fees, is impossible to undertake from a financial point of view for the participant countries". In a <u>joint statement</u> published in 2016, COAR and UNESCO noted that, "there is significant diversity in the way countries have approached its implementation. These differences reflect a range of perspectives, values, and priorities of the different regions. There is no one-size-fits-all solution". We therefore urge Science Europe to promote a variety of models that will ensure the development of an inclusive system for scholarly communication.

COAR strongly encourages Science Europe and European research funders to take these issues into account as the implementation of Plan S moves forward. COAR would be pleased to engage and contribute to discussions around these issues and help to foster a sustainable transition to open access and open science.

About COAR

The Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) is an international association with over 140 members and partners from around the world representing libraries, universities, research institutions, government funders and others. COAR brings together the repository community and major repository networks in order build capacity, align policies and practices, develop new functionalities and services, and act as a global voice for the repository community.

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