

Funding of Platinum Open Access journals in the Social Sciences and Humanities

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Summary

The Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences SAHS proposes the **establishment of a Platinum Open Access Fund** within COSI of swissuniversities, administered by the Academy. The funding of a total sum of **CHF 700'000** for 2021–2024 would allow to **flip** and operate approx. **15 to 20 scientific journals in the humanities and social sciences** that are not depending on article processing charges and that are immediately open for everyone.

Reason for action

- Humanities and social sciences journals are usually **financed by subscriptions**. **Open Access is not yet standard** for these publications¹.
- Financing of scientific journals by **Article Processing Charges (APCs)** has not yet established itself in these disciplines and is not anchored in scientific culture.

➔ In order to promote direct, free access to research publications in the SSH, new ways of financing must be sought.

The **Platinum (aka Diamond) Open Access** model is a possible solution. The authors do not finance their articles, but one or more institutions bear the costs². But dedicated funding at national level to finance Platinum Open Access journals currently **does not exist in Switzerland**.



The aim of the SAHS proposal is to **make as many SSH journals based in Switzerland as possible accessible** to the scientific community and the general public through Platinum Open Access.

Situation in Switzerland

Status quo

- **75 journals and series of national learned societies in the humanities and social sciences** with annual contributions³ are **supported by the SAHS**; for them: **problem solved**.
- **But:** More SSH journals in Switzerland not being part of the SAHS funding are **looking for solutions for sustainable financing of an Open Access model outside the APC-system**.

➔ Since monographic series and anthologies can be financed by the SNSF's publication funding, **this proposal is focusing on subsidizing journals in the SSH**.

Costs and financing

- There is no general overview of the total costs for the production of journals in the SSH in Switzerland⁴.
- Journals supported by the SAHS cost **CHF 4.1 million** (2018), of which around 50 percent are **financed by subscriptions** and by the societies' own funds.
- The SAHS **finances 25 percent with subsidies**, the remaining 25 percent come from **additional third-party funds**.
- **No journal is financed by APCs**.

However, the financing model described is **hardly scalable**, since not every new Open Access journal is backed by a **learned society** that can use **membership fees** to finance it.

Proposal of the SAHS



The SAHS proposes the creation of a **Platinum Open Access Fund** with the aim of **publishing 15 to 20 humanities and social sciences journals in Open Access** in Switzerland.

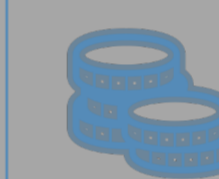
This fund can be used to subsidize journals that cannot be financed by membership fees from learned societies and SAHS subsidies.



The SAHS proposes to administer this fund:

- elaboration of funding criteria
- implementation of the call for proposals
- organization of the evaluation procedure
- control of the accounts and the monitoring.

Since the SAHS cannot receive project-related contributions from swissuniversities, **the fund would remain with swissuniversities**, for example COSI. This fund can be used to finance **journals based in Switzerland** that meet the evaluation criteria and that a) already exist and wish to switch to a Platinum Open Access model or b) are newly created. The SAHS can draw on its own **expertise and of its learned societies** for the scientific evaluation of the quality of a journal.



With an annual amount of **CHF 200,000**, about **10 Platinum Open Access journals** can be financed.

The SAHS estimates that between **CHF 15'000 and CHF 20'000 must be spent per journal** (excluding printing costs⁵). These contributions can cover the cash requirements of a journal; the work of the editorial boards will continue to be done on a **voluntary basis**. It can be assumed that the number of journals funded will increase in the period 2021–2024, so that a gradual growth of funding is to be planned, for example in the following distribution: **2021: CHF 100'000, 2022 CHF 150'000, 2023 CHF 200'000, 2024: CHF 250'000, a total of CHF 700'000 for the period 2021–2024**.

Financing

The amount of CHF 700'000 for the period 2021–2024 can be financed from the **project funds of the Open Science Programme for the Open Access Action Plan on the basis of action line 5.8 "Alternative forms of publication"**. The **costs for the management** of this fund can be covered by the Academy⁶. However, it is imperative that **stable financing is found for the subsequent periods**. There are various ways of doing this:

- The SAHS **receives a mandate from the SERI to finance Platinum Open Access journals** in the humanities and social sciences (application via ERI Dispatch 2025–2028), analogous to Norway's model for SSH journals⁷.
- Financing models as proposed by **Prof. Dr. Marc Thommen** (spill-over model): **Priority financing of Platinum Open Access journals** via Open Access funding from various sources.
- **Financing via a consortium solution**, similar to Open Library of Humanities or Scoap3: Different partners pay smaller contributions into a fund⁸.

Transfer

It is possible to **transfer this funding model for Platinum Open Access journals to other disciplinary groups**, such as medicine⁹. However, other, **discipline-specific partners** would have to assume the function of the SAHS. It would also be necessary to clarify how high the demand for Platinum Open Access journals outside the SSH is and what role other publication cultures such as preprint repositories play there, which already enable an Open Access diffusion of articles.

References

- 1 Source: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/goals-research-and-innovation-policy/open-science/open-science-monitor/trends-open-access-publications_en (last visited 28. August 2019). See also Severin A., Egger M., Eve M.P. and Hürlimann D. Discipline-specific open access publishing practices and barriers to change: an evidence-based review [version 1; peer review: 3 approved with reservations]. F1000Research 2018, 7:1925 (<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.17328.1>).
- 2 For Platinum Open Access see: Tennant, Jonathan P.: Ten Hot Topics around Scholarly Publishing. Publications 2019, 7(2), 34, p. 13; <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications7020034>.
- 3 For the SAHS journal funding see: <https://sagw.ch/sagw/angebot/zeitschriften-und-reihen/>.
- 4 The financial flow analysis of the SNSF examined the total cost (licenses, APC, repositories etc.) of scientific publications, regardless of whether they were published in Switzerland or abroad. (Cambridge Economic Policy Associates Ltd. (2017, January 12). Financial Flows in Swiss Publishing. Zenodo. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.240896>).
- 5 The costs for printing would have to be covered by a journal itself.
- 6 We estimate that the SAHS will have an expenditure of approximately CHF 40'000 for the management of the Platinum Open Access Fund, which can be contributed as in-kind funds for 2021–2024.
- 7 Solveig Wikstrøm (2019): Norwegian open journals in SSH (https://de.slideshare.net/OpenAIRE_eu/norwegian-open-journals-in-ssh-solveig-wikstrm).
- 8 Tom Mosterd, Max Mosterd (2019): Diamond Open Access Models for Journals – Knowledge Unlatched (https://de.slideshare.net/OpenAIRE_eu/diamond-open-access-models-for-journals-knowledge-unlatched).
- 9 See the Swiss Medical Weekly model, which receives contributions from the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (<https://smw.ch/about-us/>).

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