

Call for Proposals

Open Access Transition Agreements



A Call under the Funding Programme

“Licences for Digital Content”

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

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Background

Academic publishing is undergoing a process of transformation. The goal of this process is to establish free access to research results as the norm. In the course of this process, new business models are being applied to publishing. One of these business models consists of converting subscription-only journals to open access and funding them through article processing charges (APC). This conversion can be achieved through agreements between consortia and/or information providers and publishing companies. Such agreements, which are designed to achieve a shift in the method of publishing in journals and in the funding structure of these journals, are transition agreements.

Transition agreements are characterised by the following features: They increase the number of publications available in open access, rather than merely offsetting the charges for articles already published in this manner. They are also indicative of a publisher's strategy to convert to full open access publishing. Hence, their goal going forward is having the amounts that licensees have to pay be calculated on the basis of the open access publications covered by the agreement. As a consequence, payments for subscriptions will steadily decrease and finally cease altogether. The calculation basis for article processing charges will also be transparent.

The form to be taken by the transition agreements is under development. At present, different models are being defined, negotiated and implemented by consortia and publishing companies. The drafting, negotiation and handling of transition agreements depends on a number of preconditions. Consortia must develop long-term funding mechanisms that may possibly also include offset options between the participants. Consortium offices must be in contact with data suppliers and, at various times, also with service providers. Consortium offices and participating institutions may need to adapt existing workflows and develop new workflows so that accurate data can be aggregated and/or collected or reviewed, and compliance with agreements can be checked, e.g. in relation to the open access status of articles. Central institutions that provide literature, first and foremost university libraries, need to expand their strategies for informing, communicating with and integrating researchers as authors. The publishing companies must adapt their workflows, above all in the submission and reporting phase, and adjust to the requirements of article-based invoicing.

Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to support the modelling of transition agreements appropriate to the respective consortium context, and also their funding and handling. To this end, consortia together with their consortium members must agree on processes relevant to the drafting of the agreement and its implementation, and set them up efficiently. In the long term these processes are also intended to facilitate the streamlined administration of open access publishing at research institutions in a manner compatible with the needs of science and academia. Hence, institutions need not only to be able to take into account the overall costs expended by their members for article processing charges and the actual expenses for subscription and transition agreements when shifting, consolidating or centralising and providing funds for servicing open access fees, but also to obtain an information base for determining what transaction costs arise for implementing such agreements over the long term.

The call ultimately aims to increase the innovation potential of transition agreements and guarantee their cost transparency, and to integrate the analysis and effective implementation of such agreements in the practice of research institutions. The agreements will give publishing companies the opportunity to optimise their workflows in the course of the open access transition.

Funding is available for two types of projects:

- Transition agreement projects, with the option of adaptation of processes and evaluation of the agreement:** Proposals can be submitted that only include support for an agreement. In addition there is also the possibility of applying for funds for the implementation, and if necessary adjustment, of processes and for the evaluation of transition agreements. This can only be done through consortium offices or in a group of consortium leaders and participating institutions. In this case, the proposal should describe what tasks are necessary as a consequence of an agreement being signed. It is possible, for instance, to involve institutions in adjusting the corresponding processes in an exemplary or typological manner.

Adaptation and evaluation projects can also be carried out on agreements that are not co-financed with DFG funding, provided that these agreements conform to the principles on p. 4.

For this type of project, acquisition funding and/or funding for staff can be provided, depending on the structure of the project. For concluding an agreement, only acquisition funding is provided.
- Workflow projects, fund projects:** Funding is available for designing model workflows to collect hybrid article processing charges paid to research institutions (principally higher education institutions), and model solutions for processes to link with or analogous to open access publication funds. It is likewise possible to obtain financial support for creating strategies and processes for the integration of open access and acquisition budgets or for the development of co-funding models or internal funding reallocation (third-party funding, university budgets, research budgets, central and local budgets, etc.) and also for author participation models for open access funding. These projects can be implemented in relation to a DFG-funded transition agreement, or even independently of the conclusion a specific agreement or for participation in transition agreements not planned in this project. Transferring the project results to other institutions should be fundamentally possible. Documenting of project results is essential. Funding for staff can be provided for this type of project.

Prerequisites to funding the conclusion of agreements

Agreements can only be funded if, in addition to the characteristics named above, they conform to the following principles:

Funding mechanisms

The pricing mechanism must be logically derived and justified. The proposal must describe how “double dipping” will be reliably prevented. The global reduction of subscription charges

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(global offsetting) is not to be considered as the subject of the specific agreement. A minimum charge or minimum number of articles to be funded should not be specified. Publication costs in addition to the APC should not be proposed. In the case of advance payments for APC, reimbursement in the event of not reaching the specified number of articles should be agreed. Restriction of OA publication to certain journals in the licensed portfolio is only permissible in justified exceptional cases. The calculations must take into account the rules that were specified for the funding of golden article charges in the “Open Access Publishing” programme.

Author identification and information

The publishing company must clearly assign the authorised publications, identify authors and their affiliations, and be prepared to accept sanctions for errors. Where possible, standardised identifiers should be employed (e.g. ORCID). Authors are to be informed by the publishing company about assumption of the APC as part of the agreement when they submit an article. Research institutions will inform their authors in good time about the offer and where applicable about the consequence of opt-out decisions.

Trigger mechanism and transmission of the article

The publishing company will release the open access publications included in the agreement without delay. Opt-in mechanisms should not be provided for. The publishing company will transmit the corresponding articles via interfaces (e.g. SWORD) or deliver them as data to open access repositories and discovery systems or the operating service providers and institutions. The metadata for the article are to be delivered separated according to affiliations.

Article designation

The funded articles must be designated clearly on the publisher's platform as open access articles and be available for the long term. The articles funded through these agreements should be furnished with a CC-BY licence. The licensor is the author. The publishing company must supply the licence information to CrossRef. Full text, metadata and additional material must be machine-readable.

Invoicing

Invoices should make it possible to get a clear picture of every APC paid per article, as well as provide for a payment in the course of the year. The invoicing data must be machine-readable.

Reporting obligations

A regular reporting obligation should be provided for on the part of the publishing company. It must be possible for the gross costs for APCs to be reported to OpenAPC by the institutions participating in the agreement. Articles should also be allocated a DOI for this purpose. The provision of statistics on access at the article level should be ensured.

Funding cannot be made available for: agreement models that merely contain APC discounts or publication vouchers. Agreements with publishing companies with which negotiations are being carried out or will be carried out through the DEAL project of the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany also cannot be funded.

Work programme requirements

Please describe what type of project you are applying for.

Agreement projects:

For agreements, please describe in the proposal

- how you will be able to attract as many participants as possible for the transition agreement and retain them in the longer term. Please explain reasons, if possible, for potential consortium members not participating;
- what measures are proposed as part of an exit strategy in the event that the agreement cannot be extended after expiration due to the aims of the transition no longer being pursued by the publishing company or a lack of sufficient consortium members for a continuation;
- how the data necessary for the negotiations were compiled;
- what the negotiated terms and conditions for the agreement are and on what basis the calculation and modelling of funding mechanisms, and where applicable offset mechanisms, will occur in the consortium;
- if and in what manner consultations with foreign negotiators and consortia will occur.

If you are also applying for funding for staff for the adaptation of workflows and the evaluation of agreements, please also explain

- which consortium members are participating in the proposal, how many will potentially be participating in the agreement and what considerations led to selection to participate in the proposal;
- which tasks are indispensable and had to be completed, or will have to be completed, in preparing (own contribution) or implementing the agreement;
- which tasks are to be carried out by the consortium office, the consortium members and where applicable third parties;
- which processes can be organised most effectively centrally and which locally;
- at which point in the processes or in the infrastructure deficits are recognizable or could be anticipated, and ideas for dealing with these;
- how the establishment of workflows will occur at the research institutions themselves for communication between administrative units and researchers;
- which aspects will be your focus in the evaluation and what criteria you will use for the evaluation, e.g. with a focus 1) on the implementation of the agreement 2) on increasing the publishing output in open access and the degree of use or increase in citations or other determination of the qualitative benefit of the open access status in proportion to the costs and 3) on calculating the costs of implementation and transaction costs for drafting, concluding and implementing the agreement, if applicable in proportion to the agreement volumes;
- the long-term applicability of the established processes and their transferability to other providers or/and institutions.

Workflow projects, fund projects:

Please describe in the proposal

- what measures for the identification of payments of “hybrid” APCs, i.e. article processing charges for journals that are fundamentally subscription-only, already exist and are planned in the future;
- what long-term processes or strategies would be desirable and feasible for the establishment of central funds for servicing transition agreements or for the integration of (decentralised) media funds or acquisition funds and (DFG) open access funds;
- what scenarios your institution considers effective and feasible for the development of co-funding models (through central funds, third-party funding, research funds, etc.) for open access;
- which measures for implementation of these processes and scenarios are to be initiated within the period of the project;
- what obstacles exist to the establishment of effective and central monitoring, funding or co-funding of workflows;
- in what manner and for which type of institution you would like to set standards with the project;
- what technical or system prerequisites must be satisfied to ensure the transferability of your results;
- what interaction with third parties or service providers or projects such as LAsER or the national statistics server is relevant for the implementation of the project and promises efficiency gains;
- how you will document the results and make them accessible by other institutions;
- if you are relating your work to a specific agreement, please advise of its terms and conditions.

General requirements

All agreement drafting should be carried out in consultation with the National Open Access contact point. It must be possible for the institutions participating in the agreement to report the costs for APCs to OpenAPC as gross prices. The requirements on publishing companies formulated by ESAC are to be taken into account as far as possible. The [“Guidelines for the Purchase of Alliance Licences funded by the DFG”](#) also apply in the context of the call (DFG form 12.181).

Type and extent of funding

As part of the funding offer, the basic module and/or acquisition funding module can be applied for; see DFG guidelines [52.01](#) and [52.16](#). The funds have to be justified on the basis of the specific project.

Only acquisition funding can be provided for concluding agreements, and as part of adaptation and evaluation projects. In these cases, analogous to the Alliance licences, 25% of the subscription share can be funded by the DFG. The APC share is assumed by the institutions in order to facilitate the transition to APC funding models. In addition, the subscription share should be structured on a diminishing scale over the term of the agreement.

In the first proposal, up to three years of funds can be applied for. A renewal proposal for three further years at most can only be submitted if a relational reduction in the subscription volume

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in comparison with the first proposal as well as a reduction relative to the subject of the agreement is discernible in the proposals. In the case of agreement and evaluation projects, the evaluation of the agreement can be the focus of the renewal proposal. In the case of workflow and fund projects, a renewal is only possible if the intention is to transfer the results achieved to other institutions in order to enable agreements or to extend standards.

Overall, a commensurate self-contribution is expected for all project types. The drafting of agreements is recognised as a self-contribution.

Deadlines and submission of proposals

Funding proposals with agreements from the 2018 licence period can be submitted up to **28 June 2017**.

Funding proposals with agreements from the 2019 licence period can be submitted up to **1 May 2018**.

Funding proposals that do not include any agreement completion can be submitted at any time in **2017** and **2018**.

Proposals must be submitted via the elan portal (<https://elan.dfg.de>). Please select the proposal call Open Access Transition Agreements under Proposal – New Project – Scientific Library Services and Information Systems – Alliance Licences.

Please observe the "[Proposal Preparation Instructions – Project Proposals in the Area of Scientific Library Services and Information Systems](#)" (DFG form 12.01) and submit the "[Alliance Licence Data Sheet](#)" (DFG form 53.40). The "[Guidelines for the Purchase of Licences funded by the DFG](#)" also apply in the context of the call (DFG form 12.181).

The guidelines relevant to the proposal can be found at:

- www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/forms_guidelines

Proposals that include aspects of transition agreements **cannot** be submitted in the Licences for Digital Content programme for the duration of the call.

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