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 COSTI of swissuniversities, administered by the Academy. The funding of a total sum of CHF 700'000 for 2021–2024 would allow to flip open access in 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 publications.
- 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 costs of funding. The SAHS estimates that between CHF 15'000 and CHF 20'000 must be spent per journal to ensure that Open Access journals are backed by a learned society that can use membership fees to finance it.

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.

Costs and financing

- There is no general overview of the total costs for the production of journals in the SSH in Switzerland.
- 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.
- Since the SAHS cannot receive project-related contributions from swissuniversities, the fund would remain with swissuniversities, for example COSTI. This fund can be used to finance journals based in Switzerland that meet the evaluation criteria and that 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 costs). 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.

References

3. For the SSH/Journal funding see: https://www.sas.up.pt/contents/389
4. More information on the SAHS-Open Access programme and benefits can be found at: https://de.slideshare.net/OpenAIRE_eu/diamond
5. 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.
6. For the SAHS-Open Access programme and benefits, see: https://de.slideshare.net/OpenAIRE_eu/diamond
7. Swiss Medical Weekly model: https://doi.org/10.3390/publications7020034
8. For more information on the SAHS-Open Access programme and benefits, see: https://de.slideshare.net/OpenAIRE_eu/diamond
9. 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.

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See the Swiss Medical Weekly model, which receives contributions from the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (https://doi.org/10.3390/publications7020034)

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