



SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL LIBRARY AND
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Negotiation principles for a transformational transition to Open Access

In June 2021 SANLIC members adopted principles with the intention of replacing existing journal reading subscription agreements, which no longer serve the interest of our researchers and the South African National System of Innovation, with agreements that incorporate reading and publishing services. In so doing, we expect to grow our members' research agenda and the dissemination thereof by negotiating agreement that incorporate the principles listed below.

These agreements must promote accessibility to local research which is crucial for accumulating and developing a corpus of local knowledge for the growth and development of society – African society.

Further, the agreements should address the challenges in the dissemination of research findings/output by South African researchers and focus on removal of bias and a development strategy. The development strategy is intended to grow the next generation of researchers.

There is significant evidence in the literature highlighting the drastically reduced chances of manuscripts from the global south being accepted for publication. There is evidence that show that this bias emanates from policies and practises of publishers. In the light of this, publishers should demonstrate that they have developed criteria for manuscript submission that clearly eradicates desk rejection based on geographic bias.

Publishers need to commit to a developmental programme that will contribute to an increase in the publication of research output from South Africa. This development programme should have a nurturing ethos for long term growth. The development programme should be centred around prospective authorship as well as developing young authors to be peer reviewers. Please see below what such a development programme should include:

Principles

Inclusivity and social justice

1. Inclusivity and social justice must be core. Publishers must have an equity and inclusion plan that addresses the challenges of researchers in the global south. Refer to definitions of social justice, inclusion and equity below.

Shifting from a subscription to an open access paradigm

SANLIC Directors

Chair: Ms L Vahed, **Deputy Chair:** Ms E Tise, **Treasurer:** Ms S Kibirige, Dr C Bitso, Dr E Chiware, Mr H Maritz, Dr D Selematsela, Ms L Soyizwapi, Mr G Turan.

2. The transformational agreement will not cost more than a subscription agreement but will incorporate the cost of reading and the cost of publishing open access for our participating members. There will be no author-facing charges.

Improving access and visibility

3. Read access will not be compromised for our researchers, including perpetual access and post termination access.
4. Researchers can publish full and immediate OA in outlet of their choice to ensure the widest possible reading audience.
5. All publications must be under an open license, preferably the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY).
6. OA content must be discoverable, and agreements must support improvements in service and workflow for authors and administrators.
7. Publishers will provide tools/mechanisms that facilitate immediate deposit into institutional repositories, with OA being the preferred publishing option.

Preservation

8. To ensure long term preservation and security of South African scholarship: Publishers will ensure the long-term digital preservation and accessibility of their content through participation in trusted digital archives.

Terms and conditions of engagement with publishers

9. The initial term (duration of agreement) will be three years.
10. Aid compliance with funder mandates.
11. Existing non-subscribers may join during the term of the agreement.
12. The agreement must reduce and constrain costs.
13. Publishers must allow SANLIC members the flexibility to join or leave the agreement as their financial situation dictates.
14. No cap on the number of full and immediate OA articles.
15. Renewal pricing must include all sites, campuses, and locations at no extra cost.
16. Interlibrary loan (ILL) and document delivery to be permitted.
17. Transparency for licensing deals – no non-disclosure clauses. Public money requires transparency of agreement terms and costs.

Definition of terms

Social justice

Social justice is the act of being fair and equitable and breaking down barriers to unfair practices and inequalities. It advances the protection of equal access to liberties, rights, and opportunities, as well as taking care of the least advantaged members of society.

It is viewed as a two-step process. The first step is the deconstruction of structures that perpetuate inequality, exclusion, and marginalization and the second step is the reconstruction of the structures that advances equity. In the scholarly communication environment, it addresses the different biases such as geography, language, peer review. The removal of bias will facilitate the bidirectional flow of scholarly information.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the process of improving the conditions for participation. It is both a process and a goal. The promotion of inclusion requires challenging exclusion by removing barriers to participation. This inclusion demands deliberate steps to facilitate participation.

The core elements of inclusion are empowerment and promotion. Inclusion processes require both addressing the drivers of exclusion, such as policies and procedures, as well as discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

Equity

Equity is the provision of various levels of support and assistance depending on specific needs: equality is provision of the same level of opportunity and assistance to all. In order to reach equality as an outcome, there is a need to confront the inequities within the research and scholarly communication landscape. Equality in an inequitable scholarly landscape consolidates marginalisation and exclusion.

Recommended Developmental programme:

- **Development of mentorship programme**
A proportion of aggregate subscriptions from South African institutions must be set aside for the development of the next generation of authors; and
MoUs must be signed with seasoned authors to mentor young authors.
- **Mentorship of reviewers**
Reviewer mentorship programme must be developed to groom reviewers who could also carry that skill into the development of their manuscripts;
Publishers need to develop a cohort of reviewers to review contents from the global south and further; and
Reviewers must be compensated for acting reviewers in ways such as APC exemption if they publish in a journal that they reviewed.
- **Use of global south reviewers**
Publishers must demonstrate a commitment to use global south reviewers more frequently;
Evidence must be shown that all South African higher education institutions are active participants in this activity
- **Support for local publications**
There is a need to improve the channels for the dissemination of South African scholarship, hence publishers must commit to:
Developing a programme for supporting the submission of manuscripts;
Providing language support for the development of manuscripts; and
Providing strong copyediting support for local manuscripts.