

December 22, 2020

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Re: Comments on first draft of the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science

Dr. Nair-Bedouelle,

Thank you for the opportunity for provide comments on the first draft of the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science.

First and foremost, as a publishing stakeholder wholly invested in Open Science, we thank and commend UNESCO for such a strong, clear, and detailed document. We offer our full support of the recommendation. We have no concerns with any of the points or directions described therein, other than noting that some real-life tensions around data will emerge that will require sensitive community management (for example, the potential for tension between indigenous rights and governance to data, and open data principles). Such potential tensions, however, should not be allowed to be cited as blockers to the vision and direction of this recommendation – they are correctly noted as areas that will require effort and care.

We appreciate the strong statement that attention must be paid to (i) the inclusion of scholarly knowledge from marginalized groups, (ii) respecting the diversity of cultures and knowledge systems around the world, and (iii) ensuring that Open Science reduces, rather than continues, existing inequalities. PLOS has also committed to focus on these diversity, equity, and inclusion elements in scholarly communication as a matter of utmost priority.

We also appreciate the mention, in section 22e, of support for collaborative Open Access publishing models with no article processing charges. In addition to this support, we recommend offering encouragement and guidance to member state academic institutions and libraries to join funders in supporting the costs of these emerging, fairer collaborative models. In some regional contexts we need stronger narratives about leveraging the *existing* funds spent on scholarly publishing so that Open Science is not viewed as an additional cost above, or different to, the norms of scholarly publishing.

We thank you for taking the time to read these comments and affirm that PLOS would be happy to discuss or provide any extra context to our support that would be helpful to UNESCO.

Yours faithfully,

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