

Open access progress in the Netherlands

Launch of national open science plan

On Thursday 9 February the [national open science plan](#) was presented in an open meeting. Marjan Hammersma, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science presented the plan in the absence of State Secretary Sander Dekker. According to Hammersma the plan emphasises what has already been achieved and confirms what still needs to be done. *'The open science team is a strong and committed team, yet also has a long road ahead of it and new members are always welcome. Researchers play the leading role. Without them on the team there is no chance of winning.'* Daniël Lakens, assistant professor at the Eindhoven University of Technology, spoke about the importance of open science for transparent and efficient science in general. According to him the greatest bottleneck of open science is that it is still not attractive to all individual scientists. Open science poses a social dilemma according to Lakens: *'It is to everyone's benefit if everyone participates, while it is best for me if I don't. Don't expect me to pass up on publishing in Nature or Science and choose an open access publication instead. You can prohibit me from doing so with financing requirements though.'*

The national open science plan has three main focuses:

1. Encouraging open access to academic publications.
2. Encouraging the optimum use and re-use of research data.
3. Creating reward systems by tailoring evaluation and appraisal systems to the aims of open science.

The main goal regarding open access in this plan is to achieve 100% open access by 2020. To this end, a number of constituent aims have been formulated. One example of these is a consistent system for ensuring FAIR access to research data. Each aim is further elaborated with regard to conditions and what the various parts of the aim are. Additionally, for each aim the organisations involved in the national open science plan that are responsible for it in an ad-hoc coalition are identified.

At the meeting, the [parties involved](#) signed the Dutch Open Science Declaration (*Nederlandse Verklaring Open Science*). The starting signal for a platform coincided with the plan's announcement and the [website](#) was launched. The website outlines the plan, participants and progress being made. The website also indicates the importance of the impact of open science on research and on society in its entirety.

Open access agreement with Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

Wageningen University & Research and the universities with university medical centres reached an agreement with publisher Lippincott Williams & Wilkins on open access publishing. Authors connected to one of these universities may publish open access free of charge in one of their hybrid journals in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Gerard Meijer in German negotiating delegation

Outgoing chair and open access negotiator Gerard Meijer from Radboud University Nijmegen will be leaving for the Max Planck Institute in Berlin. Meijer will be conducting research in Berlin as director of the Fritz Haber Institute. He has been asked to join the German delegation negotiating with Elsevier. In an interview in Dutch daily [de Volkskrant](#) Meijer was queried about Dutch open access negotiations. Meijer indicated that the agreement reached with Elsevier had been the maximum achievable but that the results actually were still insufficient. According to him open access is inevitable. In [this video](#) Meijer explains the importance of open access.

A call for open access medical research data

Lude Franke is a researcher in the field of medical genetics and heredity and member of The Young Academy (DJA) of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). In [this video](#) Franke urges making data open access to enable genetic diseases to be traced. According to him data is often created for specific purposes but can well be reused if a slightly different question is asked. His aim is to reuse data efficiently in order to gain as much insight as possible in medical challenges. This provides opportunities for new discoveries without major expenditure.

International developments

Switzerland

Together with the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Swiss universities have made a proposal concerning a [national open access strategy](#). The proposal refers to agreements made during the Amsterdam Call for Action on Open Science which took place under the Dutch EU Presidency. A Swiss national open access strategy is still in its early stages. Universities indicated that they require strong support from politicians, heads of research institutions and financing organisations.

United States

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has expanded its [open access policy](#). The new policy has meant the release of over 375,000 images of works of art which may be freely used for research and commercial purposes. This is in keeping with museum policy to bolster its global cultural impact. Museum CEO Thomas Campbell had the following to say on the subject: *'increasing access to the Museum's collection and scholarship serves the interests and needs of our 21st-century audiences by offering new resources for creativity, knowledge, and ideas.'*

England / Egypt

Hindawi, one of the major publishers of peer-reviewed and open access journals, is [no longer a member](#) of the STM Association. According to Hindawi, the STM Association is a trade association for publishing which is still too concerned with business models from the past, instead of investigating future options such as open access. The advantages of open access are obvious according to Hindawi, as are the challenges yet to be surmounted. Meeting these challenges requires the coordination of researchers, financing parties, universities and policymakers. Hindawi expects trade organisations such as STM to rise to the challenge, yet finds they do not. Should STM adapt its open access policy, Hindawi will reconsider its membership.

Open access in the media

Free access to academic articles, yes or no?

In [Dutch daily Trouw](#) various academics advocate open science although criticism is also voiced. The aim is for all academic articles and research data to be freely accessible, findable, usable and reusable within three years. Nobel Prize winner Ben Feringa wonders who will be supervising the quality of these data. Publishers maintain a network of peer reviewers, but who will be ensuring quality control in a freely accessible database? Sijbrand de Jong, a professor of Physics, makes the point that Nature at times also errs. According to him Nature is a commercial venture with an eye for sexy subjects which also sometimes makes mistakes. René Medema, director of Research at the Netherlands Cancer Institute Antoni van Leeuwenhoek (NKI), agrees that Nature sometimes is wrong, but says that these cases are the exception. He feels it would be best if the academic world were to take over the work from publishers. 'Open access needs to be more highly appreciated. It would make a major difference if established scientists were to declare that they will only publish open access. That could lead to a turning point.'

