

Big Deal negotiations – (Completion of Phase 1 2018-2021) – Summary and outlook

1) Outset

Based on the [Swiss National Strategy on Open Access](#) and the Action Plan ([German](#) / [French](#)), negotiations with the three major publishers Elsevier, Springer Nature, and Wiley have been ongoing since 2018. Over 40 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Switzerland and Liechtenstein have mandated swissuniversities for these negotiations. The negotiating team, led by the president of swissuniversities, includes two representatives of SLiNER, the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries (CSAL), and, since 2020, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The organisation and technical support are provided by the CSAL.

Phase 1 of the negotiations (2018-2021) has now been concluded with the signing of the contract with the publisher Wiley, valid from 1 May 2021. In the following, we try to summarise the main results.

2) Negotiation aims

The negotiations aim to conclude Read & Publish agreements for the HEI. On the one hand, these deals enable eligible authors affiliated to swissuniversities member institutions and further institutional clients of the CSAL to publish their articles in the journals of the above-mentioned publishers without additional costs (Publish component). On the other hand, the unrestricted reading rights for the publishers' journal portfolio are to be continued as before (Read component). In addition, the corresponding business models must be transparent and largely cost-neutral. These so-called transformative agreements are an important step towards the increase of Open Access (OA) and, in the longer term, aim at a complete switch to purely OA-based business models.

3) Agreements

Elsevier

A first Big Deal Read & Publish agreement was signed with Elsevier in March 2020 for the years 2020-2023 with a total volume of EUR 56'878'190 over the four years. The agreement allows eligible authors to publish OA in over 2'200 Gold OA and hybrid journals at no additional cost. Furthermore, the agreement provides full reading and continuing access to more than 2'500 titles in Elsevier's journal portfolio on ScienceDirect. However, Cell Press and a few other (society) titles could not be integrated into the agreement. The number of included articles to publish at no additional cost is limited for the first three years of the agreement and will be unlimited as of 2023. The first year has shown that also the limited number of included articles seems to be sufficient to cover all publications by eligible authors. For 2020, an estimated 2'681 articles were published OA within this agreement. With the Graduate Institute (IHEID) joining in 2021, there are now 45 institutions participating in this agreement.

Springer

A second Big Deal Read & Publish agreement ("Springer Compact") was signed with Springer Nature in June 2020 for the years 2020-2022 with a total volume of EUR 13'046'910 over the three years. Since 2021, there are 47 institutions in total that participate in this agreement. From 1 July 2020, the agreement includes publishing in over 2'000 hybrid journals available

on SpringerLink. Furthermore, Springer Compact provides full reading and continuing access to over 2'300 titles in Springer Nature's journal portfolio (incl. Springer, Palgrave, Adis, and Nature Academic journals). However, Gold OA and Nature Branded journals on nature.com are excluded from this deal. The number of included articles to publish at no additional cost is capped at a level that aims to cover 100% of the article output of eligible authors. For the six months July to December 2020, the allowance of 690 articles was used up one week before the end of the year. As an interim solution 31 institutions chose to pay extra for each additional article published during this time. At the end of 2020, a total of eight additional articles were published on top of the capped number. The other 15 institutions stopped the workflow for OA publishing. For 2021, it is very likely that the 1'423 included articles will not be sufficient either since eligible authors are publishing more articles than estimated.

Under the agreement, approx. EUR 150'000 less were spent for Article Processing Charges (APC) in 2020 compared to if list APC had been applied.

Wiley

In April 2021, the third Big Deal Read & Publish agreement was signed with Wiley, covering the years 2021-2024 with a total volume of EUR 21'432'361 over the four years. 46 institutions participate in the agreement that provides full reading access to the Wiley Online Library with over 1'470 journals. From 1 May 2021, eligible authors can publish their accepted research papers OA in Wiley's nearly 1'400 hybrid journals. The agreement defines the amount allocated to cover APC, and not the number of covered articles. The share of the OA amount increases over the agreement and is expected to cover 100% of the articles in the final year of the agreement. In 2021, the APC for around 1'000 articles are covered within this agreement.

4) First assessment

The three agreements represent a significant step towards the goal of 100% articles published OA in Switzerland by 2024, as defined in the Swiss National Strategy on Open Access. The negotiations have shown that the united approach of the HEI together with the committed support of the CSAL are key to achieve the negotiation goals. The foundation for a strong promotion of OA in Switzerland has been laid with these three largely cost-neutral Big Deal agreements, although cost neutrality will not be achieved to the same extent at all HEI, due to the different publication volumes per institution. As a result, the decades-long price increase has been flattened overall and the additional burden on researchers with hybrid publication costs has been significantly reduced. At the same time, the implementation of new workflows in publishing represents a major challenge for the specialist departments at the HEI.

The conclusion of the first round of Big Deal negotiations sets the stage for further negotiations between the CSAL and smaller publishers. Several Read & Publish agreements have already been concluded, in other cases renewals without price increase build the basis for further negotiations.

Nevertheless, not all goals have been achieved yet. Not least because of the decentralised financing structures at the HEI, Gold OA offerings from Springer Nature and Wiley could not be included in the deals. In addition, the publishers are not yet willing or able to make all their journals available for OA publishing - notable exceptions are Nature branded journals and Cell Press, but also society journals. Also, it remains to be seen whether the agreed on upper limits for article publication will be sufficient and how to handle the cases where OA

allowances will be used up before the end of the year. This will most likely be the case again for Springer Nature in 2021, and probably also for Wiley in 2022. Regarding cost, price levels remain high overall, despite the positive developments. In the area of financial monitoring, HEI struggle to gain an overview of their institution's total OA costs, as these are still incurred and paid for in many different places.

Negotiations with major publishers are only one action area of the Swiss National Strategy on Open Access. Further parallel measures, e.g., agreements with pure Gold OA publishers, Platinum approaches and optimisations in Green OA are indispensable. The negotiation delegation will review and adapt the negotiation strategy and goals in 2021 and the next round of negotiations, initially with Springer Nature, will start in 2022.

Overview Big Deal Read & Publish agreements

	Elsevier	Springer Nature	Wiley
Licence term	2020-2023	2020-2022	2021-2024
Number of participating institutions	45	47	46
Read & Publish fee per year	2020: EUR 13'800'000 2021: EUR 14'076'000 2022: EUR 14'357'520 2023: EUR 14'644'670	2020: EUR 4'249'319 2021: EUR 4'352'391 2022: EUR 4'445'200	2021: EUR 5'200'000 2022: EUR 5'304'000 2023: EUR 5'410'080 2024: EUR 5'518'281
Open Access articles included per year within agreement	2020: 2'850 2021: 3'000 2022: 3'150 2023: unlimited	2020 (6 months): 690 2021: 1'423 2022: 1'437	2021 (8 months): 1'000 (estimate) 2022: 1'100 (estimate) 2023: 1'200 (estimate) 2024: 1'350 (estimate)
Open Access articles published in 2020 within agreement	2'681 (to be confirmed)	698 (to be confirmed)	n/a
Journals included for publishing (status 2021)	2'245	2'074	1'397
Journals included for reading (status 2021)	2'569	2'386	1'474
Journal types included	Hybrid journals Gold OA journals	Hybrid journals	Hybrid journals
New journals joining during licence term included?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Open Access licence	CC-BY CC-BY-NC-ND	CC-BY CC-BY-NC	CC-BY CC-BY-NC CC-BY-NC-ND

Participating institutions

#	Institution	Elsevier	Springer Nature	Wiley
1	Agroscope	x	x	x
2	Berner Fachhochschule BFH	x	x	x
3	CERN		x	x
4	Eidgenössisches Hochschulinstitut für Berufsbildung EHB	x	x	x
5	EPF Lausanne	x	x	x
6	ETH Zürich	x	x	x
7	Fachhochschule Graubünden FHGR	x	x	x
8	Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz FHNW	x	x	x
9	Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau FiBL	x	x	x
10	Graduate Institute (IHEID) – <i>since 2021</i>	x	x	x
11	Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale HESSO	x	x	x
12	HEP Berne, Jura, Neuchâtel (HEP-BEJUNE)	x	x	x
13	HEP Fribourg (PHFR)	x	x	x
14	HEP Vaud	x	x	x
15	Hochschule für Wirtschaft Zürich HWZ	x	x	x
16	Hochschule Luzern HSLU	x	x	x
17	Interkantonale Hochschule für Heilpädagogik (HfH)	x	x	x
18	Kalaidos	x	x	x
19	Lib4RI	x	x	x
20	Medi		x	
21	MMV - Medicine for Malaria Ventures	x	x	x
22	Ostschweizer Fachhochschulen OST	x	x	x
23	Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich PHZH	x	x	x
24	PH Bern	x	x	x
25	PH Graubünden (PHGR)	x	x	x
26	PH Luzern	x	x	x
27	PH Schaffhausen (PHSH)	x	x	x
28	PH Schwyz	x	x	x
29	PH St. Gallen (PHSG)	x	x	x
30	PH Thurgau (PHTG)	x	x	x
31	PH Wallis / HEP Valais	x	x	x
32	PH Zug	x	x	x
33	Schweizerische Vogelwarte	x	x	x
34	Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana SUPSI	x	x	x
35	Università della Svizzera italiana USI	x	x	x
36	Universität Basel	x	x	x
37	Universität Bern	x	x	x
38	Universität Liechtenstein	x	x	x
39	Universität Luzern	x	x	x
40	Universität St. Gallen	x	x	x
41	Universität Zürich	x	x	x
42	Université de Fribourg	x	x	x
43	Université de Genève	x	x	x
44	Université de Lausanne	x	x	x
45	Université de Neuchâtel	x	x	x
46	Zürcher Hochschule der Künste ZHdK	x	x	x
47	Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften ZHAW	x	x	x