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The General Incorporated Association, Division of Plasma Physics,
Association of Asia-Pacific Physical Societies (AAPPS-DPP Association Inc.)
Professor Mitsuru Kikuchi
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September 28, 2020

Dear Professor Mitsuru Kikuchi,

A lot has happened since my last letter to you in May on transformative journals (TJ). As you may recall, a TJ offers authors a choice of publication via the immediate gold OA route or via the subscription route, but unlike hybrid journals, which are usually agnostic towards these two routes, a TJ proactively promotes the benefits of OA to authors, and commits to increasing OA uptake and ultimately transitioning to full OA for primary research articles. As we continue to transition our own portfolio to OA, due in part to our pioneering transformative agreements (TA), which include your Journal, I would like to bring you up to date on all of our latest related developments, including the transition to TJs, as these have a positive impact on your journal.

As my last letter outlined, Springer Nature has been pioneering TAs since 2014, seeing them as a key part in driving forward the sustainable transition to OA. Alongside our commitment to forging new routes to OA through new journals, books or through the launch and introduction of TJs, we continue to be committed to driving forward a sustainable and effective OA environment for all of our partners and journals.

Springer Nature has established 11 TAs in total across Europe and Asia, including the largest OA agreement by article output with Projekt DEAL in Germany. We have also signed the largest TA in North America with the University of California which will deliver benefits for US funders, librarians and researchers. These agreements make the administration of OA simpler for both the institutions participating and their researchers. In addition, these agreements enable a wider group of researchers to benefit from the enhanced discoverability, increased citation and increased usage of OA content, and help to solve the problem that some academic disciplines lack OA funding (a centralized APC allows any researcher from the participating institution, regardless of academic discipline to publish OA). In addition it also provides researchers with an easy way to comply with funders' OA requirements.

Data released in August shows that our 8 national TAs that were live in 2019 are now enabling an increase in the number of authors publishing OA in those countries. Adding this to the fact that OA content is cited more than subscription content, institutions covered by TAs are not only opening up their research, but their authors are benefiting from greater usage and reach to their content. While TAs are certainly not a one size fits all approach and hold local complexities, the direction of travel

with their implementation is clear and, we believe, provides a sustainable path to a full OA environment.

Due to our ongoing success in signing an increasing number of TAs, all the hybrid journals that Springer Nature publishes are now automatically on the path to publish a growing fraction of OA articles over the years to come. The benefits for your journal are that these agreements enable a wider group of researchers to benefit from enhanced discoverability, increased citation and increased usage and help to solve the problem that some academic disciplines lack OA funding.

So what's next for us and you? As we communicated to you a few months back, our next step is to submit all journal titles publishing with Springer Nature under a hybrid model as TJs to the Plan S project team. There is no need for you to sign up your journal individually. As your publishing partner we will collate all the necessary information and we will add your journal to the list of TJs to ensure that Plan S funded authors can continue to publish in your Journal and comply with Plan S requirements for immediate OA by opting for the gold OA route.

While the OA-fraction growth targets and other Plan S criteria, such as the requirement for a journal to flip to OA for all research articles when this content surpasses 75%, can be challenging, we are confident that our TAs will allow us to meet this challenge. We expect individual journals to move and flip at different speeds--however, it may take years before your journal reaches this threshold. Your publishing editor will keep you apprised of the status of your journal and will work closely with you in managing the transition, whenever it occurs.

If after several years the OA fraction of your journal has not increased as expected, we will of course discuss other options with you. But we would expect that such an evaluation will take place no sooner than 3 years after we start measuring the OA fraction of primary research content systematically. At this point, we can be safe in the knowledge that by registering our hybrid journals, including your journal, as TJs, we are enabling Plan S authors to meet the requirements of their funders and clearly signalling the role that these journals are already playing in advancing progress in OA.

At the end of October, we plan to submit all Springer Nature published journals, including yours, to the Plan S Project team as TJs. We would be grateful if you could please share this information among your society. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me no later than October 16.

Sincerely,



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