

Summary of the evaluation of offsetting agreements in Sweden – report 2: Springer Compact and Institute of Physics

This document is a summary of the second report¹ of five on the evaluation of offsetting agreements in Sweden (2016-2019). The Bibsam consortium has signed offsetting agreements with publishers in order to support a transition to Open Access publishing in participating institutions, at controlled costs. The evaluation is based on publishers' agreements, publication data and survey data to examine the effects of offsetting agreements regarding economy, administration, researcher attitudes and research dissemination. The evaluation is conducted on behalf of the Bibsam consortium.

There are basically three types of offset agreements:

- 1. A pure Offset agreement means that an institution reduces its license/subscription costs with a publisher based on the article processing charges the researchers from the institution paid for publishing Open Access during the previous year.*
- 2. A second kind of offset model is the Read & Publish. In these agreements one publishing charge and one reading charge is paid.*
- 3. The third kind is the Pay-as-you-publish model which means that the costs for article processing charges is centralized and the institutions in the agreement does not have to pay a fixed amount in advance for a specific number of publications. This model does not include reading costs.*

Springer Compact is an offsetting agreement of type 2 above, between Springer Nature and 40 Swedish institutions, negotiated through the Bibsam consortium, supported by the Swedish Research Council and the Swedish National Library. The purpose of the agreement is to increase accessibility of scientific articles from the institutions in the agreement published with Springer Nature and to control expenditure by combining subscription and publishing fees². The agreement runs from July 2016 to December 2017. In 2016 the Bibsam consortium signed another offsetting agreement, with the publisher Institute of Physics³. This is an agreement of type 1 and runs from January 2017 to December 2019 and was added to the evaluation in the spring of 2017. The Springer Compact publication data in this document includes publications from July 2016 to June 2017. Publication data from Institute of Physics will be available for analysis in 2018, in report 3.

Springer Compact

The agreement covers

- Open Access publishing in any of Springer's 1705 hybrid journals
- Reading of the approximately 2110 e-journals available on the SpringerLink platform (1997-).

The first year of the agreement (July 2016 – June 2017) resulted in 1 232 Open Access publications in hybrid journals. Without Springer Compact, the participating institutions were expected to publish between 220 and 230 Open Access publications in hybrid journals during that same time span.

The participating institutions in Springer Compact have published about 20 percent less per month than the agreement allows for, which suggests more article types than Original papers, Review papers, Brief communications and Continuing education⁴ could be included for the remainder of the agreement. The projected

¹ Link to the report: <http://openaccess.blogg.kb.se/files/2017/09/Utvärdering-av-offset-avtal-SC-och-IOP-delrapport-2.pdf> (in Swedish).

² Publisher information on the Springer Compact agreement: <https://www.springer.com/gp/open-access/springer-open-choice/springer-compact/agreements-swedish-authors> (2017-01-10).

³ Publisher information on the Institute of Physics agreement: http://www.iop.org/news/14/may/page_63308.html (2017-09-25).

⁴ The article types not included today are: Abstract, Acknowledgment, Announcement, BookReview, EditorialNote, Erratum, Interview, Letter, News, and Report. The limited number of publications allowed within Springer Compact will unlikely be exceeded even if all article types are included.

15% raise in number of published articles per year in 2016-2019, was likely an overestimation of the publishing rate.

The Open Access publishing in Springer Compact has been achieved through an added cost of 1 842 839 € per year, compared to what the participating institutions in 2016 would have paid Springer Nature for reading alone. If the added cost is divided by number of published articles during the first year of the agreement it results in a cost of 1496 € per Open Access publication.

According to survey data, researchers show positive attitudes towards Springer Compact and call for more agreements of its like. While they do not see all costs involved, they welcome the ease of economic and administrative burden.

Regarding research dissemination it is yet too soon to perform citation analyses, but comparisons of scores from Altmetric.com revealed that Open Access publications (Open Access publications in hybrid journals within Springer Compact and Open Access Gold separately) scored higher than the control group (non-Open Access publications in hybrid journals, before Springer Compact). The altmetric score is an indication of attracted online attention and this result suggests higher visibility and interaction for Open Access publications than for publications in subscription journals.

Institute of Physics

With Institute of Physics (IOP) the offsetting effect is more obvious than in Springer Compact. The agreement entails that institutions will receive deductions in their subscription fee based on the Article Processing Charges (APC's) their researchers paid the previous year. More specifically a part of the APC's paid will reduce the subscription fee locally and the other part will reduce subscription fees globally. How large the portion that reduces fees locally/globally is depends on the total share of Open Access publications in hybrid journals with IOP. Currently 1-4% of publications in hybrid journals are Open Access and paid with an APC. Therefore, according to the agreement, 90 % of the APC's paid will be used to reduce subscription fees locally and 10% will be used to reduce subscription fees globally in 2018.

As of August 2017, publication data from Institute of Physics had not been made available to the evaluation group. The economic and administrative effects of Institute of Physics, as well as researchers' attitudes towards the agreement and the research dissemination of the published articles, will be presented in future reports.

Preliminary conclusions

The evaluation group finds the advantages of the Springer Compact agreement to be an increase in numbers of Open Access publications and a great economic and administrative ease for researchers. By centralizing the publishing costs and involving the university libraries, Bibsam also helps create a foundation for the transition to a system of paying for publishing rather than for reading, at controlled costs.

As for disadvantages, the evaluation group points out increased costs compared to the previous agreement and the promotion of Open Access publishing in hybrid journals, rather than in Open Access journals.