

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES AND OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

The FEBS perspective

The Federation of European Biochemical Societies <http://www.febs.org/about-us/> founded in 1964 has become **one of Europe's largest organizations in the molecular life sciences**, with over 36,000 members across 35 biochemistry and molecular biology societies (its 'Constituent Societies') in different countries of Europe. As a grass-roots organization FEBS, similarly to other international learned societies, thereby provides a voice to a large part of the academic research and teaching community in Europe and beyond.

FEBS owns four journals: FEBS Journal, FEBS Letters, Molecular Oncology as subscription journals and the open access journal FEBS Open Bio. Through their editorial boards, peer review procedures and productive relationships with publishing partners, the journals have not only provided scientists with **effective routes for research dissemination**, but also an **income stream** to fund the other programs of FEBS.

As a charitable academic organization registered in the UK, FEBS **promotes and supports** biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, molecular biophysics and related **research areas through its journals, congress, advanced courses, fellowships and other initiatives**. In other words **all incomes generated by the journals for FEBS serves the scientific community and the public**. In a revenue sharing system more than 75% of the income generated by publishing the journals are secured by FEBS. Since it has no other substantial income, **all science promoting activities of FEBS are financed from the revenues obtained through journal publishing**.

The extensive and innovative **support of biomedical research by FEBS amounts to 5 million euro annually** and in addition to offering four high quality international scientific journals **it includes**

- funding an annual Young Scientists' Forum, for scientific exchange and support for career development;
- offering advanced courses on focused bioscience research topics throughout the FEBS area, for research updates, networking, education and training;
- aiding participation of early-career scientists at these events through, for example, FEBS Congress Bursaries and Advanced Courses Youth Travel Fund grants;
- providing long term and short term fellowships for pre-and post-doctoral researchers to facilitate research, training and mobility;
- organizing workshops on biochemistry and molecular biology education;
- following and making recommendations on European science policy;
- awarding prizes and medals in recognition of scientific distinction;
- supporting science in disadvantaged economies of the FEBS area;
- supporting women in science;
- enhancing national scientific meetings by supporting Constituent Society events through FEBS3+ and National Lecture programs;
- sponsoring worldwide lectures at bioscience society meetings across the globe.

In open access publishing FEBS supports the following principles and objectives shared by many scientific societies:

Open Science: Key Principles

Research stakeholders should advance sustainable open access and open science policies that:

- Ensure flexibility aligned with needs of discipline communities.
- Avoid imposing unnecessary burdens on researchers and institutions.
- Enable continued public-private collaboration to ensure interoperability and reach.

Open Access

- Decisions of all stakeholders on open access publishing must be based primarily on protecting the core principles of scientific publishing, namely the critical, high quality and independent evaluation of scientific claims and secure archiving of validated research.
- For many societies, journal publishing represent a significant source of operating revenue and underpins critical society services to its discipline community, including career development, young researcher support and scholarships and conference activities. A rapid move to open access and fast disappearance of the traditional, high quality subscription journal would mean that professional societies will not have enough time to find alternative funding sources for many of the scientific activities that they finance.
- Any transition to open access publishing where costs are paid up front - often called gold open access - will cost research intensive countries more than the current system. Therefore, a transition to this form of Open Access requires joint ownership. All stakeholders - universities, funders, researchers, policy makers and publishers - need to take responsibility and share the economic burden.
- In order to be sustainable, any transition to open access reliant on the current subscription business model - often called green open access - requires embargo periods that respect distinct needs of each discipline community. The use of academic and professional journals varies widely within and across subject areas. According to recent surveys only 3% of journals experience even half of their article usage in the first 12 months after publication. For 60% of journals, half of their usage occurs 3 years or more after publication.
- Hybrid journals play an important role in any transition to Open Access as they enable researchers to embrace Open Science while publishing in the quality journals of their choice.
- Private sector investment has enabled a robust, global-scale, and open infrastructure for the wide dissemination of research outputs. Rather than duplicating this effort, opportunities for collaboration and partnership can and should be embraced as they are in other markets worldwide.