

Dear Professor xxxx,

As you may be aware, Elsevier and the VSNU have been in dialogue over the past few months to renew an agreement for Dutch universities' continued access to Elsevier journals on our ScienceDirect platform.

While you are mostly concerned with scholarly work and less with our commercial operations, we know that a number of journal editors and board members have been contacted by their universities about their view on Open Access in the context of our negotiations with the VSNU. We therefore would like to share information about our position on Open Access and our commitment to reaching a renewal agreement that will benefit Dutch science:

- We support the Dutch government's goal to move to Gold Open Access and we have been very active in developing new Open Access journals and options in recent years.
- Ahead of the negotiations with the VSNU, the Dutch government made clear that it wishes to have 100% of Dutch research published Gold Open Access by 2024, i.e., funded by authors paying publication fees rather than their institutions paying subscription fees. In addition to making Dutch research freely available globally in this way, the VSNU wants to maintain subscription access for Dutch researchers to all journals we publish across the world.
- The challenge is that, apart from the Netherlands and the UK, no other country aims for Gold Open Access. The rest of the world prefers a move toward Green Open Access, which is based on the traditional subscription model. This would mean that if the Netherlands were to choose to move toward a Gold Open access model, it would pay both to make Dutch research Open Access for the rest of the world to read at no cost, while also paying to subscribe to the rest of the world's content.
- Therefore, while a transition to Open Access is desirable, it needs to be managed carefully and funded properly as it is not cost-free for the Netherlands.
- Moreover, Elsevier journals currently represent 28% of the world's most cited articles – growing in quality every year, and increasing in volume by 20% in the last four years. This means that continued access to Elsevier's high-quality journals is critical for Dutch research.
- To manage both these needs – cost effective transition to Open Access and maintenance of access to high-quality research – we have submitted three proposals to the VSNU that support a well-planned transition to Open Access at significant discounts. Our proposals also ensure continued subscription access to more than 2,200 Elsevier journals.

Let me stress again that we are committed to working with the VSNU to reach an agreement that truly benefits Dutch researchers, now and in the future. Our proposals reflect this.

This letter may not answer all questions you may have and if you would like to discuss these issues further, please contact your publisher.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your ongoing contributions in support of the global research community.

Kind regards,

Philippe Terheggen
Managing Director
Global STM Journals, Elsevier