

## National Policy on Promoting Open Access to Publicly Funded Scholarly Publications and Scientific Data

February 16, 2024

Decided by the Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion Council

Science and technology are driving forces for transforming social issues into engines of growth and realizing sustainable economic growth. At the same time, they ensure the safety and security of the people against threats such as infectious diseases and natural disasters, and they are the lifeline of the nation. The promotion of open access through publishing scholarly publications leads to research progress and social implementation, which in turn leads to the broad return of the research outputs of science and technology to the public. However, the market of scholarly publishing is under dominance of the global academic publishers (hereinafter referred to as "academic platformers"), and the subscription fees for academic journals and article processing charges (APC) are increasing. These soaring prices could have adverse effects such as increasing the financial burden on universities and researchers involved in the core activities of academic research, such as the subscription of academic journals and the publication of academic papers, and undermining the autonomy of the research community. In addition, it is necessary to reconsider the excessive dependence on quantitative indicators in research evaluation and assessment, and to establish and transition to new systems for evaluation and assessment providing incentives while understanding and analyzing the current situation and problems for the promotion of open science. In Japan, based on trends in the United States and EU, executive members of the Council for Science, Technology, and Innovation and other government organizations have been discussing this issue in consideration of the importance of the distribution of outputs related to science, technology and innovation.

Based on the G7 Hiroshima Summit and the G7 Sendai Science and Technology Ministerial Meeting in May 2023, Integrated Innovation Strategy 2023 (decided by the Cabinet on June 9, 2023) stipulates that "we will formulate a national policy to promote immediate open access to publicly funded scholarly publications and scientific data." In response, executive members of the Council for Science, Technology and Innovation compiled "Basic Concepts for Promoting Open Access to Publicly Funded scholarly publications and scientific data" (hereinafter referred to as the "Basic Concepts") on October 30, 2023, and organized the items that should be incorporated in the national policy to promote immediate open access to publicly funded scholarly publications and scientific data.

The Basic Concepts state that the philosophies for promoting open access to scholarly publications and scientific data should include:

- The first, that publicly funded research outputs should be widely accessible to the public, freely utilized through their sharing and publication, and contributing to the creation of science, technology and innovation and the resolution of global issues.

- The second, that the financial burden of the total amount of subscription fees and APCs throughout Japan should be optimized without reducing the number of academic journals available at universities and inter-university research institutes (hereinafter referred to as "universities, etc.") and publications, and without adversely affecting research activities.
- The third, that the ability to disseminate research outputs to the world based on Japan's research capabilities should be enhanced.

National Policy on Promoting Open Access to Publicly Funded Scholarly Publications and Scientific Data (hereinafter referred to as the "Policy") respects these philosophies and stipulates the following.

( 1 ) Immediate Open Access to Publicly Funded Scholarly Publications and Scientific Data

- Recipients (including corporations) of competitive research funds which are subject to immediate open access for new applications starting FY2025 among public funds<sup>1</sup> shall be required to publish scholarly publications and scientific data funded by the applicable competitive research funds in information infrastructures such as institutional repositories immediately after publication in academic journals<sup>2</sup>.
- The competitive research funding systems whose main outputs are scholarly publications are subject to immediate open access, and the subject systems are specified by the relevant ministries and agencies.
- The aforementioned immediate open access is applied to peer-reviewed scholarly publications and scientific data. The peer-reviewed scholarly publications are those which published in electronic journals, including author accepted manuscript. And the scientific data are research data that are required to be published from the viewpoint of ensuring transparency and reproducibility in the writing guidelines and publication regulations of electronic journals in which the scholarly publication is published.

( 2 ) Negotiations with Global Academic Publishers (Academic Platformers)

- From the perspective of securing the right for everyone to freely use scholarly publications and scientific data, the government will support the establishment of mainly universities-based system for group negotiation with academic platformers to optimize the financial burden on the research community through negotiations.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "public funds" refers to all expenses granted, subsidized, or entrusted to universities, research and development agencies, etc. by the government or funding agencies. Public funds consist of publicly solicited research funds and other expenses (management expenses grants, etc., which are basic expenses for institutions). (National Policy on Management and Utilization of Publicly Funded Research Data (decided by the Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion Council on April 27, 2021))

<sup>2</sup> The relevant ministries and agencies will consider measures, including cases where immediate open access is difficult.

( 3 ) Publishing Scholarly Publications and Scientific Data in Information Infrastructures such as Institutional Repositories

- By publishing scholarly publications and scientific data in information infrastructures such as institutional repositories<sup>3</sup>, the government aims to make them freely available to everyone.
- Information infrastructures such as institutional repositories mean those of which scholarly publications and scientific data can be searched on the research data infrastructure system (NII Research Data Cloud), which is designated as "a core platform for the management and utilization of research data in Japan" in the 6th Science, Technology and Innovation Basic Plan (decided by the Cabinet on March 26, 2021).

( 4 ) Improvement and Enhancement of Platforms for Disseminating Research Outputs

- As a means of disseminating research outputs to make everyone freely available them, the government will support the improvement and enhancement of the NII Research Data Cloud and platforms for managing and utilizing research outputs such as preprints, and scholarly publications and scientific data.

( 5 ) International Collaboration

- In order to promote open science in line with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable), the government will promote international cooperation for immediate open access to scholarly publications and scientific data, in particular with like-minded countries, regions, and international organizations such as the G7.

( 6 ) Implementation System and Others

- In addition to this Policy, the management and utilization of research data funded by public funds shall be governed by National Policy on Management and Utilization of Publicly Funded Research Data (decided by the Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion Council on April 27, 2021).
- Relevant ministries and agencies will examine the intersystem federation for monitoring the status of implementation of immediate open access by funding agencies, universities, etc., and other institutions to which recipients of competitive research funds subject to immediate open access belong.
- Recognizing that open access is implemented for improving the ability to disseminate research outputs, the government will take care not to put pressure on existing research funds and the number of applications accepted.
- The government will collaborate to promote immediate open access to scholarly publications

---

<sup>3</sup> Identifiers of scholarly publications and scientific data are also accepted when publishing in information infrastructures such as institutional repositories.

and scientific data based on this Policy and discuss to determine measures for the implementation of this Policy among relevant ministries and agencies.

- This Policy will be revised as necessary based on policy and market trends regarding open access in Japan and abroad.