Open Access to books – challenges and opportunities from the perspective of researchers and funders

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Aim of this presentation

- Highlight challenges and opportunities related to open access for books from the researcher/funder perspective as input for debate
- Drawing on the example of the ERC grant programme, taking into account feedback from grantees and applicants
- Issues raised should be seen in a broader context
ERC and Open Access

• ERC’s general approach to Open Access in a nutshell:
  - Mandate applies to all peer reviewed publications related to results from the project; recommendation also for other types of publications
  - Immediate deposit in repository mandatory; all requirements relate to the deposited copy
  - Mandate has evolved – from recommendation to ‘best effort’ requirement to strict mandate

• Books and chapters have always been included in the ERC Open Access mandate!
Key aspects of current ERC Open Access rules

- Under the current ‘Horizon Europe’ research framework programme:
  - Deposition of AAM (author’s accepted manuscript) or VoR (version of record) in trusted repository
  - Immediate open access to deposited version
  - Deposit under CC BY licence or equivalent; for full books (not chapters) commercial and/or derivative use can be excluded
  - Detailed metadata required via repository (FAIR principles)
  - Linking with related research outputs mandatory (e.g. data)
  - Publishing fees eligible only if fully open access (no hybrid)
Challenges for grantees (1): Book publishing process and academic culture

- Definition of ‘peer review’ for books?
- Concept of ‘author’s accepted version’ (AAM) may not be clear-cut in case of books?
- Persistent scepticism towards self-archiving of AAM (‘AAM = inferior version’; layout can be important part of output)
- Impact of choice of publishing house/series for authors’ careers
Challenges for grantees (2):
Practical implementation of funder rules

- Self-archiving of AAM in immediate OA generally not an option offered by publishers
- Licence requirements:
  - concerns about reuse of parts out of context, poor translations
  - how to deal with third party content
- Availability of high quality infrastructure adapted to books?
  - e.g. trusted repositories with metadata features supporting FAIR principles
Challenges for grantees (3): Costs

- Publishing costs for books published after end of grant
- Publishing costs for invited chapters in non-OA books
  - authors need to have open discussion with editor up-front before accepting to contribute
- Edited collections – who is / should cover costs for open access (editor or individual authors)?
Challenges for funders

- Policy development in view of great diversity of backgrounds, including language and publishing tradition and markets
- Discovery of outputs (books, chapters), especially after end of grant
  - team members’ outputs hard to track
  - incomplete funding information in publisher metadata; automatic extraction from acknowledgements challenging
  - citation data for books not easily accessible
- Support of suitable infrastructure may not be within funder’s remit
Opportunities

• Many experiments for alternative business models ongoing!
• Researchers can produce change through their behaviour
  - through their choice of publisher / publishing programme
  - through the way they assess others (hiring committees, grant selection panels)
  - by demanding adequate publisher services such as FAIR metadata and direct repository deposit (especially where a fee is paid)
What funders can do

• Incentivize good practices through strong mandates
• Provide adequate guidance and training to grantees
• Adopt good research assessment practices focused on content rather than prestige
• Contribute to broader debate through relevant networks (e.g. Open Access Books Network) and events
• Engage in discussions with grantees, publishers, infrastructure providers etc.
• Support relevant initiatives where compatible with the funder’s remit
More information on Open Science at the ERC

- ERC page ‘Manage your project - Open Science’
  https://erc.europa.eu/manage-your-project/open-science
- References provided on that page