A Recommendation of Nine Research Funder Policies & Principles

Outlined below is a bundle of nine policies and principles that are recommended for research funders and grantees. A wide-enactment of this bundle could lead to a quiet improvement in scientific communication. While well-intentioned, funding mandates that focus on making published articles (or their preprints) available as open access objects assume and strengthen the status quo journal publication system. In contrast, the policies and principles included in this brief document seek to make positive changes to the scholarly communication system by decreasing incentives (which funders have had an unintentional role in sustaining) for researchers to publish more frequently than necessary, especially in outlets with financially or socially exclusionary practices. These policies do not preclude open access preprints or journal articles, but instead redirect the focus toward bolstering incentives which may result in a stronger culture of (open and anonymous) review, as well as the report of findings in developing scholarly communication spaces that emphasize accessibility, reusability, and replicability.
Within 12 months of the agreed upon research period end date, the primary investigator:

1. Must deposit related data adhering to FAIR Guiding Principles\(^1\) to an OA repository
2. Must deposit a report of the study’s outcome (that allows for interpretation of the data with respect to the original study proposal) to an OA repository
3. Should deposit an updated report responding to major feedback received and describing any notable updates (see Item 5.) within 24 months of initial report

Regarding publication:

4. Papers from the study (separate from the report in Item 2) may be published anywhere, but must acknowledge and link to items described in Items 1 & 2
5. If publication occurs within 24 months of the deposit of the initial report, authors must describe any notable updates (as described in Item 3)
6. The funder will not pay for individual publishing fees, but will commit to provide funding to likely-used infrastructure on three-year terms, with public documentation

Evaluation of Grant Applications:

7. Preference shall not be given based on any journal--specific metrics of a grant applicant’s prior publication history, and are strictly forbidden from inclusion in application materials\(^2\)
8. Preference shall be given to groups whose members (either individually or as an average) demonstrate year-on-year evidence of peer-review activity equal to or greater than the group’s journal publishing activity listed on their public vita
9. Preference shall be given to groups whose primary investigators demonstrate year-on-year evidence of Items 1-3 & 8 (as well as Item 5 where authors were funded under similar mandates)

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\(^1\) https://www.nature.com/articles/sdata201618
\(^2\) Such as outlined by the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (sfdora.org/read)