



The Botanical Society of America  
Renewal Proposal  
May 2021

# Our Partnership

We are pleased to have the opportunity to present a renewal proposal for the Botanical Society of America titles. Over the last four and a half years together we have promoted the highest level of scholarship; built an engaged, international readership; and laid a strong groundwork for the BSA's activities and global outreach in the field of plant science.

We are now in a period of significant change within scholarly communications that is only likely to accelerate from 2022 and beyond. Open Research and Open Access have grown in importance, challenging traditional business models and metrics. In the Plant Sciences, Open Access research output has grown 14% since 2016, more than twice as fast as overall Plant Sciences output (6%). Publishing content rapidly and disseminating research to the widest possible audience will become even more essential. During this critical time of change, it is important for you to have a partner who can not only offer you stability but also a vision for the future.

The decisions that the BSA and Wiley make in the near future will shape our positions in our respective fields for years to come. From our side, Wiley intends not only to continue as the leading publisher of societies but also to become the leading Open Research publisher globally. We have signed transformative agreements with 12 European national consortia as well as 2 North American institutions, 5 of these in the last 6 months alone, so the pace is accelerating. We want the BSA to join us on this journey.

We have already made some changes to the way we organize our journal portfolio, clustering teams around subject matter rather than the society:proprietary divide, so that the BSA titles can benefit from affiliation with Wiley's entire plant science list, which is the leader in average citations in the subject category. We are also investing heavily in technological advances that will improve the author experience—as just one example, later this year the BSA titles will be enrolled in our Transfer Desk Assistant (TDA) program, in which they will be able to receive rejected articles (and reviews) transferred from other Wiley plant science journals.

In the following pages we detail our strategies for readying *AJB* for a transition into a fully Open Access publishing model, as well as our ideas for promoting the BSA titles, and our financial offer. Thank you for this opportunity to share our vision for the next term of our partnership. We hope to convey the potential that our continued partnership promises and look forward to further discussions with you about the future of the BSA's publishing portfolio.

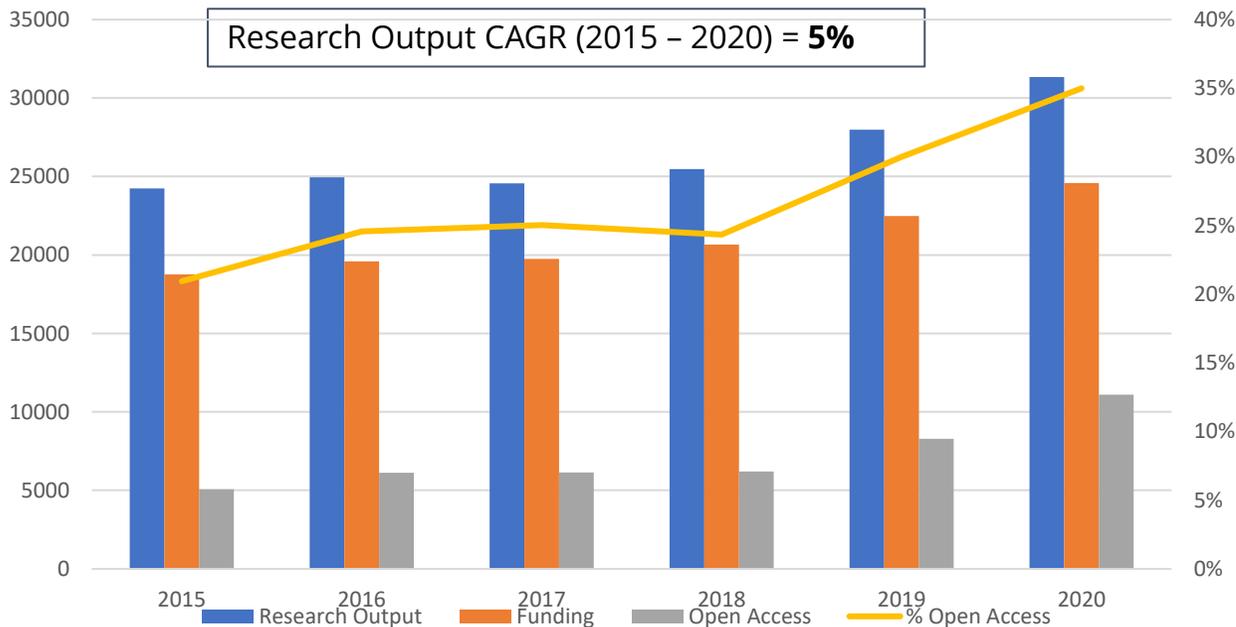
# Plant Science: Article Growth and Open Access Trends



# Trends in Plant Science Publishing

The number of total papers and Open Access papers publishing in the Plant Sciences ISI Category is increasing, and funding is available from a variety of global sources

Published Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Research Output	24,251	24,946	24,563	25,480	27,974	31,334
Funding	18,762	19,594	19,759	20,656	22,488	24,594
Open Access	5,077	6,129	6,150	6,203	8,290	11,091
% Open Access	21%	25%	25%	24%	30%	35%



Due to a primarily US-based author pool, *AJB* and *APPS* have not yet capitalized on the wealth of OA funding coming out of China, Europe, and Brazil. There is opportunity for significant growth in publishing output and revenue if the journals can capture authors in these regions.

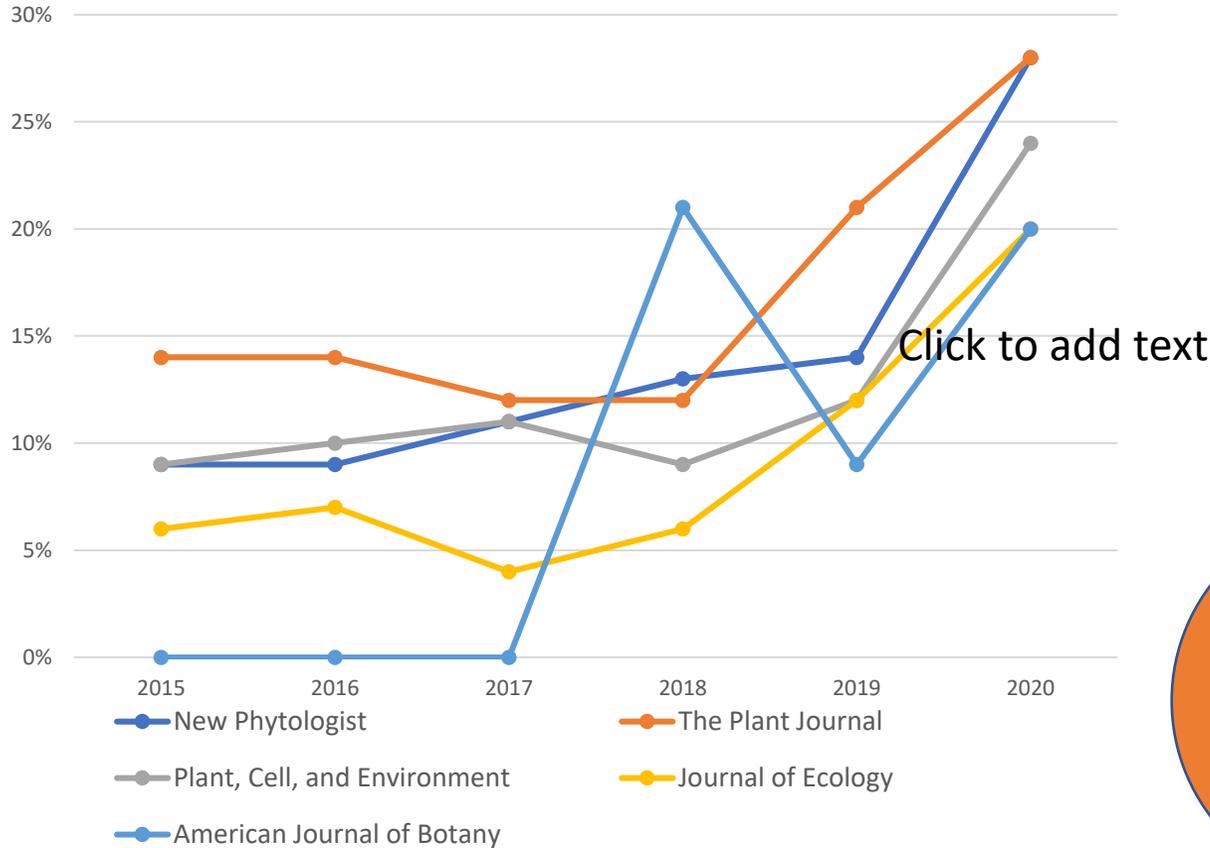
Top 10 OA Funders in Plant Sciences
NSFC (China)
MoST (China)
Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China
NSF (USA)
MCTIC (Brazil)
Coordenacao de Aperfeicoamento de Pessoal de Nivel Superior (Brazil)
USDA (US)
Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences
European Commission
Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

## BSA Top OA Funders, 2020

BSA Journal	Top OA Funders	Country	Number of Articles
<i>AJB</i>	National Science Foundation	United States	9
	International Cancer Research Partnership	United Kingdom	2
	US Department of Agriculture	United States	2
	National Institutes of Health	United States	2
<i>APPS</i>	National Science Foundation	United States	22
	Coalition S signatories	International	8
	International Cancer Research Partnership	United Kingdom	5
	US Department of Agriculture	United States	5
	European Union	International	4

# Open Access Performance in Wiley's Hybrid Titles

Open Access Articles as a Percentage of Total Published Articles



Open Access output is going up across Wiley's plant science hybrid titles. *AJB's* OA output as a percentage of the total is lower than average among these journals. There is funding and appetite for OA, and in the following slides we propose various ways to increase *AJB's* OA output. In the meantime, we suggest revisiting *AJB's* APC and bringing it in closer alignment with the APCs of other hybrid titles in Plant Sciences.

AJB's APC is 45% less than its nearest Wiley competitor!

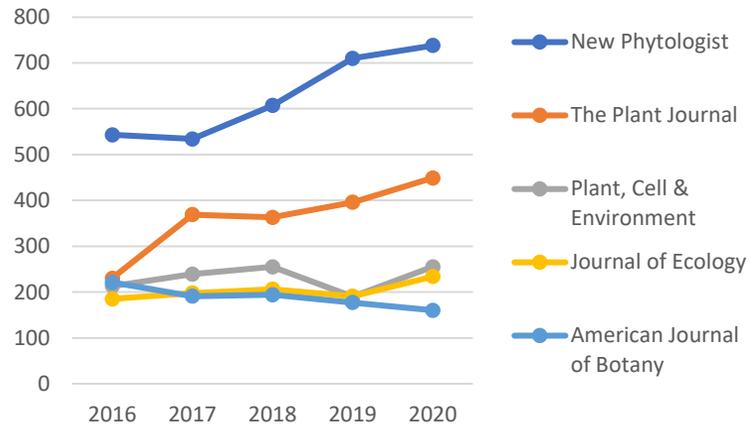
Title	APC
<i>The Plant Journal</i>	\$4,400
<i>Plant, Cell, and Environment</i>	\$4,300
<i>New Phytologist</i>	\$3,000
<i>Journal of Ecology</i>	\$3,000
<i>American Journal of Botany</i>	\$1,650

\*prior to publishing with Wiley, in 2016 10% of *AJB* articles were paid OA, and in 2017 14% of *AJB* articles were paid OA

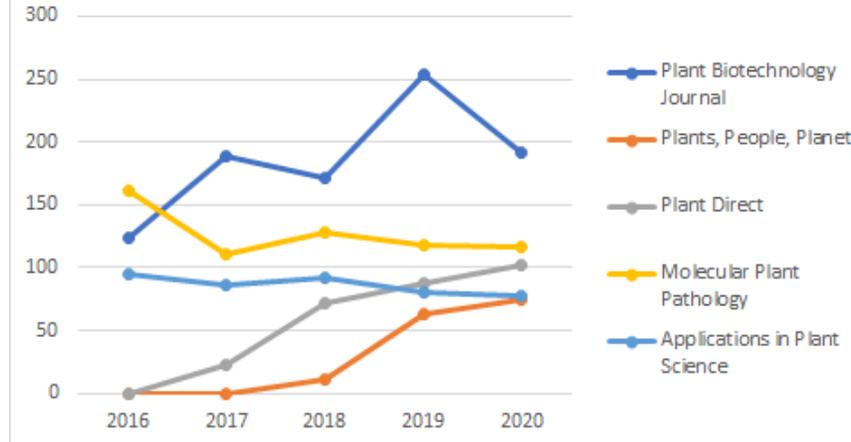
# Growing the BSA Journals

There is significant potential for article growth for the BSA titles. Output in Wiley's Plant Science portfolio is growing, in both hybrid and OA titles.

Article Growth, Hybrid Titles 2016-2020



Article Growth, Open Access Titles 2016-2020



The BSA journals will benefit from the overall growth of Wiley's plant science portfolio! In the second half of 2021, the **BSA titles will be included in Wiley's Transfer Desk Assistant (TDA) program**, in which authors rejected from other Wiley journals may choose to seamlessly transfer their articles, with reviews, to the BSA journals.

Consider capturing high impact content by publishing special issues on trending topics identified by the plant science team:

- Phenotyping
- New imaging techniques
- Plant biotechnology
- CRISPR gene editing
- Synthetic plant biology
- UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Stress

A photograph of a desert landscape at dusk or dawn. In the foreground, several saguaro cacti are visible, some with arms. The ground is covered with dry, brownish vegetation. In the background, there are blue mountains under a sky with soft, warm light. The overall scene is a typical desert environment.

# The BSA Journals and Open Access

*American Journal of Botany*: Ready for an OA Flip?  
*Applications in Plant Science*: Beyond Primer Notes



# What determines a successful flip to open access?

There are various factors to consider when assessing the suitability of a hybrid journal to flip to open access. Below we examine each factor and *AJB*'s position.



## SOCIETY, EIC AND EDITORIAL BOARD OPENNESS TO OA

Flipping can raise many questions and concerns from Boards. We advise open communication to ensure all parties are on board with and fully understand the implications of transitioning to an OA journal.



The BSA, EIC, and editorial board are supportive of a carefully planned transition to OA.



## AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING

APCs are often covered by a funder, institution, or company. When flipping a title, we carefully consider the subject area, including whether it has sufficient funding for OA.



There is ample and growing funding in Plant Science for OA publishing.



## SUBJECT COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE OF OA

Many journals have a loyal community of authors that publish regularly in a journal and may have strong opinions on OA, in particular on the level of APC.



20% of *AJB* authors already publish OA in the journal, many at discounted member rates.



## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Some journals have a lot of authors eligible for transformational deals but some authors elsewhere may be lost in a flip to OA. Authors from Research4Life countries may also need APC waivers.



*AJB*'s author base is primarily US-based. We will need to work on diversifying the author pool.



## ARTICLE TYPES

Differing article types may need to charge different APCs, e.g. we may need to build in waivers for commissioned content and have reduced APCs for shorter article types.



The majority of *AJB*'s article types are APC-eligible and minimal special pricing is necessary.



## COPY FLOW

Submissions need to be consistently growing in order to maintain revenue in as an OA title. Author experience is essential for this, as authors expect a first-class service in exchange for paying an APC.



*AJB*'s submissions need to grow robustly to support an OA flip.

# What would a flip to OA look like for *AJB*?

Article growth is critical for *AJB*!

## Current state

Total revenue in 2020: **\$840,824** Total articles published in 2020: **160** Revenue per article in 2020: **\$5,255**

## Future state: No Article Growth

Flat article output after a flip to OA at an APC of \$2,500\*, would lead to a loss of roughly half the revenue the journal earned in 2020.

Gold OA APC: **\$2,500** Total articles: **160** Total revenue: **\$400,000** Deficit of **-\$440,824**

## Future state: With Article Growth

With a flip to OA, *AJB* would need to **more than double** its output just to match its total revenue in 2020.

Gold OA APC: **\$2,500** Total articles: **336** Total revenue: **\$840,000**



<i>AJB</i> Copy Flow Stats	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Submissions	478	464	491	530	572	618	667	720	778	840
Output (Published Articles) **	194	177	160	212	229	247	267	288	311	336

Given the substantial gap between *AJB*'s current output and the output needed to sustain its income, we recommend a robust plan to increase quality output by 8% annually to prepare the journal for a flip in the next 6 years.

1<sup>st</sup> potentially viable flip year, if we meet output targets

\*Recommended APC based on discipline and Impact Factor \*\*Based on current average acceptance rate of 40%



# Strategies for Article Growth in Countries with OA Potential

- **Appoint a European Co-Editor-in-Chief** to really cement your presence in the area.
- **Mobilize Existing European Board Members** and invite more!
- **Acquire *AJB*'s first Chinese editorial board member**
- **Commission articles** from countries with OA funding/mandates
- **Publish regionally-based Special Issues** from Europe and China based on leading institutions and strong research areas
- **Participate in workshops or conferences** (Wiley can provide slides/content and information about possible events)

How can these Editorial Board members be of greater help to *AJB* in diversifying your author pool and attracting new authors?



Anna Bucharová  
University of Muenster,  
Germany



Daisy Dent  
University of Stirling, UK



Heidi Huber  
Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands



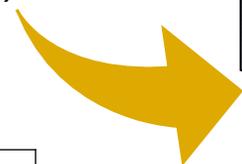
Jürg Schönenberger  
University of Vienna,  
Austria



Nina Sletvold  
Uppsala University,  
Sweden



China



## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

*AJB* benefits from moderate Spanish, Chinese, German, and UK authorship but needs to attract more submissions from these and other transitional deal countries.

AJB Authorship by Country, 2018-20			
Rank	Country	Papers	%
1	US	453	59%
2	Canada	36	4.6%
3	Spain	31	4.5%
4	China	27	3.5%
5	Japan	25	3.2%
6	Brazil	24	3.1%
7	Germany	22	2.8%
8	Mexico	18	2.3%
9	France	14	1.8%
10	UK	12	1.5%
11	Czech Republic	10	1.3%
11	Argentina	10	1.3%
	Rest	86	11.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Growing Applications in Plant Sciences



While *APPS* doesn't have to worry about a flip to Open Access, it is vital that the journal recovers and eventually exceeds the quantity of output that it lost when Primer Notes were discontinued.

<i>APPS</i> Copy Flow Stats	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Submissions	186	78	90	104	121	142	168	200	240
% growth	-4%	-58%	15%	15%	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%
Output (Published Articles) *	80	77	41	47	55	64	76	91	109

\*based on assumed acceptance rate of 45%



Expand the number of editorial board members in Latin America, Europe, and Asia (particularly China) to better capture the plant methods research is coming out of these regions. Consider adding a Chinese co-editor and a German co-editor to enhance the journal's presence in these areas.



Publish regionally-based special issues on topics of particular interest in Asia and Europe, where there is funding for Open Access.



Introduce new article types that will garner citations, thereby raising the Impact Factor and profile of the journal.



Use your existing network to encourage submissions (communications to past authors, outreach to *APPS* and *AJB* readers and BSA members) as well as looking for new audiences, i.e, campaigns to authors of competing journals.

We will work with the China team to implement another **Plant Sciences Roadshow in China** following on the very successful roadshow held in Wuhan in 2019 with 370 attendees, and the BSA titles will be promoted there

We will explore adapting this roadshow format to other target countries too, such as Germany and the UK.

## CHINESE FUNDED GRANT TOPICS

Order	Word	Occurrences
1	mechanism	747
2	molecular	281
3	plant	181
4	regulating	174
5	regulation	173
6	response	151
7	gene	132
8	stress	125
9	analysis	119
10	functional	111
11	nitrogen	108
12	resistance	105
13	rice	104
14	protein	90
15	root	90

# Marketing the BSA Journals



# Promotional Activities

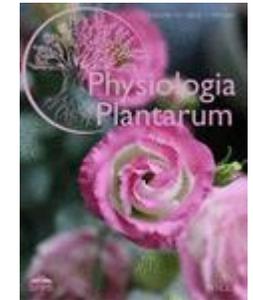
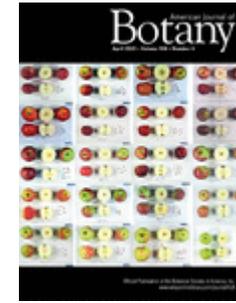
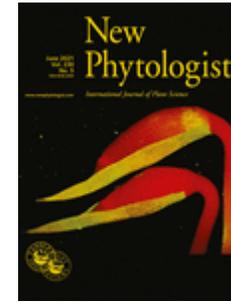
The BSA titles hold an important place in Wiley's portfolio of Plant Science journals and are marketed in conjunction with other society and proprietary journals, such as *New Phytologist*, *The Plant Journal*, *Plant Biotechnology Journal*, and *Physiologia Plantarum*.

We know that attracting submissions is of crucial importance to you, to increase the publishing output of both journals and to facilitate an eventual flip to Open Access for *AJB*, and have identified the following as **key objectives**:

- **AJB** – focus on increasing submissions from China and Germany as the data shows that open access submissions to this hybrid journal are not growing at market rate.
- **APPS** (OA) – focus on growing submissions from Europe, including transitional deal opportunities.

We've created the following schedule for the next year, and look forward to discussing more detailed plans to engage your community and increase quality submissions to the journals.

- From June to September, we will work with BSA team to **define each journal's unique selling points and messaging** to ensure that we are attracting the right authors and papers.
- From October, we will **run an organic social media campaign** focusing on the benefits to authors of publishing open access in BSA journals, using Wiley's plant science account. We will also plan for the BSA journals' inclusion in our **China webinar** series.
- From November to April, we will keep the BSA titles front and center by including them in **all relevant campaign plans**.
- Campaigns are planned on a quarterly basis, so we will provide **quarterly updates** on emails sent, open rates, click through rates, and social engagement.
- Your Wiley editorial team will continue identifying key BSA tweets for inclusion in Wiley's social media activities, as they have been doing for the last year.



**Wiley Plant Science** @wileyplantsci

Japanese knotweed is one of the world's most successful and widespread weeds.

Get an insight into the roles of clonality and hybridization in shaping the population genomics and success of this invasive species in #AJB.

Check it out > [ow.ly/d6Qh](https://ow.ly/d6Qh)

@Botanical\_ #CallForPapers

Got research for #AppsPlantSci new Special Issue, "Meeting the Challenge of Exceptional Plant #Conservation: Technologies and Approaches"?

Proposal deadline: 4th June.

Find out how to submit here [ow.ly/y17U50EK5kp](https://ow.ly/y17U50EK5kp)

@Botanical\_

**APPS**  
Applications in Plant Sciences

A close-up photograph of a sunflower head, showing the intricate details of the yellow and orange petals and the central disk. The text "Our Continued Partnership" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

Our Continued Partnership

# Financial Offer

Much has changed since the BSA and Wiley signed their first contract. The institutional subscription market, which in 2017 seemed stable and growing, has seen significant decline due to library budget cuts as well as a shift to arrangements that accommodate the increasing preference for Open Access publishing.

The attrition to *AJB*'s subscription income has primarily come from three sources: losses in the US from smaller institutions canceling a large percentage of their journal holdings; losses from non-renewals in Russia, India, and Mexico; and finally, losses resulting from the increasing prevalence of transitional deals. Transitional deals combine guaranteed license income with Open Access income that is based on the number of OA articles published by authors at participating institutions in the journal. With the proliferation of ever more journals, the competition for articles is fierce, and *AJB* has not yet been able to capture the number of Open Access articles needed to match the income of previous years.

We believe in the potential of *AJB* and *APPS* to meet the challenges that an increasingly competitive and Open Access world presents. The BSA is a well-known and -respected society with high quality, well-established journals that offer authors a superior publishing experience. In the next contract term, we would like to work even more closely with the BSA in order to ensure that this potential is fulfilled. While we work to maximize the BSA journals' capabilities, however, we must keep in mind that revenues are in decline and if we were to continue to offer the BSA the current financial arrangement, Wiley would be publishing at a loss. Thus we have had to make some adjustments to our financial offer.

We understand that your commitment to your journals staff is paramount, and in appreciation of that, we have sought to keep the value of our provision for editorial office support largely intact: we are committed to paying a flat fee of \$300,000 annually. We have also kept the development funds and the travel funds constant, at \$20,000 and \$2,000 annually respectively, in order to support the further growth and development of the journals.

In light of the decline in subscription revenues and slower than previously anticipated growth of OA for these titles, we are now able to offer a royalty rate of 33%, with a GMI of 50% of the previous year's royalties.

Over the next 5-year term, this arrangement is projected to deliver almost \$2.9 million to the BSA.

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Projected royalty	\$255,766	\$252,412	\$249,719	\$249,677	\$251,582	\$1,259,155
Editorial office support	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$1,500,000
Development Funds	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$100,000
Travel Funds	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000
Total Return	\$577,766	\$574,412	\$571,719	\$571,677	\$573,582	\$2,869,155

These are uncertain times. The publishing environment is changing quickly to reflect the demands of funders and institutions for greater accessibility. We believe it is wise to prepare for a tough road in the immediate future that may impact revenues while remaining focused on the long-term goal of sharing scientific knowledge that the world needs. The pandemic is accelerating trends that were already the focus of our strategy, including shifts to Open Access and digital-first publishing.

Throughout all this change, Wiley is proud to offer the BSA stability and continuity. We are committed to working with you closely and transparently to advance the strategic plans that we have crafted together, to increase the profile and impact of the BSA publications, and so improve the strength and prominence of Botany as a discipline.

We hope that our proposal addresses the society's key concerns and priorities for the BSA journals in the immediate years ahead and will look forward to hearing your feedback and addressing any questions you may have.

With very best wishes from your team at Wiley.



Gillian Greenough  
Executive Editor



Paul-André Genest  
Publisher



Vicky Johnson  
Senior Editorial Director