

Press release | 25 March 2019

## DFG sponsors open access transformation project

Library consortium and Thieme embark on collaboration

**The Thieme Group has signed a transformation agreement with ZB MED – Information Centre for Life Sciences, the Forschungszentrum Jülich, and thirteen additional specialist libraries. In doing so, the project partners have demonstrated that it is possible to conclude forward-looking agreements that benefit all parties involved, even beyond major projects such as DEAL. As part of an initial pilot project, authors at participating institutions will first be given the opportunity to publish original papers in “Hormone and Metabolic Research”, an international journal published by Thieme, on an open access basis at no extra cost. The license fee paid by libraries to the publisher for access to the journal is increasingly being converted into a publication fee on the basis of the five-year contract. The German Research Foundation (DFG) is funding the project as part of the Licences for Digital Content programme, which will potentially also include other titles.**

Appropriate business models for open access are currently being discussed in detail and a number of wide-ranging agreements have already been reached. The Thieme Group’s current contract with the fifteen members of the potentially expandable library consortium sets forth the gradual transformation of an existing subscription model to open-access financing. “We have worked with representatives from the specialist libraries to develop a very fair and, in our view, pioneering business model, which we would now like to test together,” explains Thieme publisher Dr. h.c. Albrecht Hauff. “We definitely see an opportunity to expand this project on both a national and international level.”

Under the new business model, ZB MED, the Forschungszentrum Jülich, and the thirteen other specialist libraries pay a fee to access Hormone and Metabolic Research based on a license for reading access and a publication fee to allow open access publishing by authors attached to these institutions. There is no limit on the number of open access publications this could be extended to. Those involved specifically selected Hormone and Metabolic Research as a suitable pilot. The journal covers a very research-intensive field in which German scientists and researchers are known to publish extensively. Around half-way through the term of the contract, the partners will together review their experiences with open access submissions. Step-by-step, the licensing fee will be transformed into a publication fee. “We can very well envisage

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incorporating additional titles into this collaboration and converting these into open access titles in an according way,” says Thieme publisher Hauff.

“ZB MED has been a supporter and driver of open access for many years,” notes Dr. Ursula Arning, who heads up open access activities at ZB MED. “The DFG’s decision to financially support the transformation of subscription journals into open access journals is a commendable step for Germany, as a center of science – a step towards more openness in science,” Arning continues. “In the Thieme Group, the libraries have found a reliable partner with whom they can break new ground in scientific publishing,” adds business lawyer Beate Brüggemann-Hasler, Head of Licensing and Law at ZB MED. “This willingness to develop innovative publication models is truly trendsetting. We’re really looking forward to our long-term collaboration.”

Dr. Bernhard Mittermaier, Head of the Central Library at Forschungszentrum Jülich and participant in the DEAL negotiations, emphasizes the significance of the agreement to science policy worldwide: “In addition to the DEAL negotiations with the three largest publishers in the world, it is important that we also promote the transition to open access among small and medium-sized publishers. We are happy to be able to pursue this path with Thieme, with support from the DFG.”

Quality assurance for the publications was a critical concern for all parties involved. The Thieme Group’s services are just as comprehensive for open access publications as they are for traditional journal articles: “All work is examined and reviewed with equal care – a discerning peer review by leading international experts as well as professional editing are a matter of course, and open access articles are no exception,” explains Dr. Regina Wenzel, program planner at Thieme.

### **Background information: Forschungszentrum Jülich**

Forschungszentrum Jülich makes a vital contribution to solving major challenges facing society in the fields of information, energy, and bioeconomy. It focuses on the future of information technologies and information processing, complex processes in the human brain, the transformation of the energy system, and a sustainable bioeconomy. Forschungszentrum Jülich develops simulation and data sciences as a key research method and makes use of large, often unique, scientific infrastructures. With some 6000 employees and about 800 visiting scientists per year from 75 countries, it is one of Europe's large research centres..

Find out more at [www.fz-juelich.de](http://www.fz-juelich.de)

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### **Background information: Thieme**

Thieme is a leading supplier of information and services contributing to the improvement of healthcare and health. Employing more than 1,000 staff, the family-owned company develops products and services in digital and other media for the medical and chemistry sectors. Operating internationally with offices in 11 cities worldwide, the Thieme Group works closely with a strong network of experts and partners. The products and services are based on the high-quality content of Thieme's and 4,400 books 200 medical and scientific journals. These include 50 dedicated open access journals as well as numerous hybrid publications. This is all based on comprehensive services and many years of experience in communicating scientific information. With solutions for professionals, Thieme supports information processes in research, education, and patient care. Medical students, physicians, nurses, allied health specialists, hospitals, health insurance companies and others interested in health and healthcare are at focus of Thieme's activities. The mission of the Thieme Group is to provide these markets with precisely the information, services, and products they need in their specific work situation and career. Providing top-quality services that are highly relevant to specific audiences, Thieme contributes to better healthcare and healthier lives.

Find out more at [www.thieme.com](http://www.thieme.com)

### **Background information about ZB MED – Information Centre for Life Sciences**

As a key component of German and European information infrastructure, ZB MED is the central partner for the life sciences, including medicine, biodiversity, environmental protection and beyond. The institute as it exists today has evolved from a former library. With its expanding collections of literature, databases, and research data, ZB MED supports researchers in acquiring new information and insights – both locally in Cologne and Bonn, and nationwide. ZB MED offers digital value-added services via LIVIVO – the semantic-based search engine, and PUBLISSO – the open access publication platform. Another key area of focus is the teaching of information and data competence. ZB MED conducts its own application-based data science research with the aim of developing products and services to support life science research. Researchers at ZB MED aggregate, apply, and combine heterogeneous data, information, and literature, which enables new approaches to research. The focus here is on semantic-based methods, automated processes, as well as text and data-mining. The promotion of open science is one of ZB MED's core priorities. ZB MED is a foundation under German public law.

Find out more at [www.zbmed.de](http://www.zbmed.de)

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