



Director-General's announcement

Date: 30 January 2023

ILO Open Access Policy

Introduction

1. This Announcement is issued further to article 8 of the ILO Constitution, which delegates overall responsibility to the Director-General for the efficient conduct of the Office, and to article 10 of the ILO Constitution, under which the Office is tasked with the collection and distribution of information on all subjects relating to the ILO's mandate. It provides for the provisional implementation of the policy detailed below, pending formal endorsement by the Governing Body at its 347th Session (March 2023).
2. The ILO Open Access Policy furthers the objectives outlined in IGDS Number 458 (the ILO Publishing Policy) for the ILO to be a recognized international centre of excellence for knowledge, research and policy analysis on the World of Work.
3. This announcement is effective as of 3 May 2023.

Definition of Open Access

4. Open Access means free access to information and unrestricted use of electronic resources for everyone. A publication is considered Open Access if:
 - its content is universally and freely accessible, at no cost to the reader, via the internet or otherwise;
 - the author or copyright owner irrevocably grants to all users, for an unlimited period, the right to use, copy, or distribute the article, on condition that proper attribution is given;
 - it is deposited, immediately, in full and in a suitable electronic form, in at least one widely and internationally recognized Open Access repository committed to Open Access.¹
5. Open Access is granted through the use of public licences under which any user is given permission to use, reproduce, distribute or otherwise communicate a given work to the public.
6. Open Access supports the fundamental concept that results of publicly funded research should be made freely available to the public for use and reuse, with the goal of increasing accessibility, visibility and impact. It fosters public ownership, partnership and participation in development from a wide range of stakeholders.

¹ UNESCO, "What is Open Access?".

Rationale for Open Access at ILO

7. ILO strives to be at the forefront of knowledge generation and sharing with both its constituents and wider stakeholders relating to the World of Work.
8. The ILO's Knowledge Strategy 2018–21 (GB.331/PFA/4) and Research Strategy 2020–21 (GB.337/INS/7) call for an increase in the accessibility of ILO publications.
9. Many UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations have already implemented Open Access policies including FAO, UNESCO, The World Bank Group, WHO, WIPO, Asian Development Bank, the Nordic Council of Ministers and CERN.
10. The ILO Open Access Policy aligns ILO's work with that of cOAlition S [sic], a global Open Access initiative supported by the European Commission, governments, national research funding organizations, and research and university associations.
11. The adoption of Open Access by the ILO is in line with its move towards a digital-first publications strategy as outlined in the ILO Publishing Policy.
12. The ILO Open Access Policy complements the [Open Data principles](#) practised by the ILO for the dissemination of statistical resources in ILOSTAT.

Scope of the Open Access policy

13. The policy applies to all works published (that is, made publicly available) by the ILO including co-publications of textual publications and documents as well as other materials including:
 - (a) International Labour Conference (ILC), Governing Body (GB) and other official meeting documents and reports;
 - (b) Flagship reports and major publications;
 - (c) Research and policy publications such as books, reports, journal articles, background papers, working papers and briefs;
 - (d) Guides, manuals and training materials;
 - (e) Digital-only content published in mobile apps, data visualizations;
 - (f) Multimedia and news content such as videos, photos, public website content, factsheets, press releases, news articles, infographics, podcasts and blogs;
 - (g) Databases ² and datasets.
14. As of 3 May 2023, works authored by the ILO but not published by the ILO will be within the scope of the Open Access policy. ILO authors should consult with DCOMM/PUBL regarding meeting the three criteria outlined in paragraph 4 for their work to be published as Open Access.
15. The following works are not within the scope of the Open Access policy:
 - (a) International labour Conventions and Recommendations, resolutions and other legal texts adopted by the ILO are considered to be in the public domain and therefore are not assigned licences.
 - (b) Publications where ILO has entered into special agreements with donors, external agencies or publishers before 3 May 2023.

² In this context, databases should be understood in the legal sense as "a collection of independent works, data or other materials arranged in a systematic or methodical way and individually accessible by electronic or other means" (see art. 1(2) of EU Directive 96/9/EC on the legal protection of databases, which is referenced in CC licences, for example, Section 1(j) of CC BY 4.0).

- (c) The *International Labour Review* will be in transition to Open Access on the effective date and application of this policy and will complete its move to Open Access at a later date.

Licensing

16. ILO publications prior to the effective date of this policy will retain their existing copyright and licensing status. As the Open Access policy is not retroactive, permissions for use of such ILO works should be obtained through procedures existing prior to its entry into force.
17. In order to give effect to this Open Access policy, the ILO must assign public licences to its published works. Therefore, all works published from 3 May 2023 onwards will use public licences in the form of Creative Commons licences, except for the publications mentioned in paragraph 15.
18. **Creative Commons** (CC) licences, developed by the eponymous American non-profit corporation, are a set of widely used standard licences that holders of copyrights can choose to apply to their works protected by copyright. By publishing work under a CC licence, licensors irrevocably authorize all interested parties to make use of their work subject to the terms of the selected licence. There are three CC licences that will primarily be used by ILO: **CC BY 4.0** (Attribution ("by")), **CC BY-ND 4.0** (Attribution – No Derivatives), and **CC BY-SA 4.0** (Attribution – Share Alike). The number (4.0) stands for the latest version of the licences, which work independently from any national legal system and protect privileges and immunities of international organizations.
19. The majority of works will receive the ILO's default licence of **CC BY 4.0**. It is the most open CC licence, which permits the reproduction, distribution and adaptation (including translation) of the work for any purposes. It requires that when a copy of an original work, or an adapted version of the work is distributed, credit must be given to the respective author/creator, in this case, the ILO. In addition, all notices and disclaimers included with the original work must be reproduced, and derivative work must be marked as such. This condition is contained in all CC licences.
20. **CC BY-ND 4.0** prevents users from sharing any derivative work created on the basis of ILO work. This licence will be used where maintaining the integrity of the work is essential.
21. **CC BY-SA 4.0** requires users to license derivative work they create under the substantially same terms as the ILO work on which it is based. This licence will be used for material that has high potential for commercial use.
22. Other CC licences may be considered, if necessary. Notification of intent to use a CC licence other than CC BY 4.0 must be communicated to DCOMM/PUBL at ilopubs@ilo.org.
23. The CC licences to be assigned to publications are fully compatible with Open Data principles and therefore also apply to ILOSTAT data and metadata.
24. Digital licensing to commercial aggregators on a royalty basis will cease as of 3 May 2023.

ILO Open Access repository

25. Further to the ILO Publishing Policy (IGDS 458) the Office will launch an Open Access repository of publications.
26. All newly published works included in this policy will receive Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs), allowing the Office to track and measure uptake of ILO publications.
27. In addition to disseminating and storing all works published by the ILO, the repository will, where possible, include articles by ILO authors published as Open Access in external journals and other sources.

28. The ILO repository will be available for navigation in English, French and Spanish, with content available in all languages in which the ILO publishes.
29. As of implementation date of this policy, Labordoc³ is designated the official ILO Open Access repository. All newly published ILO works, whether issued in Geneva or in the Regions, will receive CC licences and will be deposited in Labordoc.

Printed publications

30. Despite the ILO's move towards a digital-first publications strategy, the ILO is expected to face continuing demand for printed publications, even as an Open Access publisher.
31. To manage this demand, the ILO will continue to produce select publications in print. Given the associated cost implications of producing hardcopy publications, the ILO will continue to price these publications and will retain the services of an external distribution partner.

External publishing

32. Negotiations with commercial publishers will continue to be conducted by DCOMM/PUBL on behalf of authoring departments and field offices. These negotiations will include determining the Open Access fees levied by publishers.
33. ILO departments and field offices will continue to be responsible for the costs related to co-publishing books, chapters and articles with commercial partners. These costs may include fees charged by partners who agree to Open Access publication against payment of a fee.
34. Where possible, all co-published materials will be freely available to the public through the Labordoc repository.
35. Articles and chapters published by ILO staff with outside publishers should be deposited in Labordoc with any Open Access fees to be covered by departments and offices.

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Director-General

³ <https://labordoc.ilo.org/>