

After many years of successful collaboration with the Ministry, founded on a common vision of the needed transition to open science, we find ourselves frustrated and bewildered by JUFO's hasty decision to broadly classify Frontiers as a "grey publisher." We communicated in good faith with JUFO, and our concerns about the original decision remain unanswered. This harms Finnish researchers, as their [open letter](#) on this decision shows.

Gold Open Access has established itself as a standard business model, providing transparency, value and impact – every major publisher offers this as a publication option, often in fully open-access journals. Today 50% of all articles are published through these journals. In this context, targeting publishers who are entirely dedicated to Gold Open Access is both unfair and arbitrary – the assessment ranking of journals should simply be based on the quality and value of services provided. When this is not the case, researchers and universities find their academic freedom restricted, ultimately directing them, without regards to their own professional assessment, to more traditional publishing models; JUFO's current stance, which is based on a vague categorisation of "operating model" that overrides individual journal assessment – all downgraded Frontiers journals meet JUFO's level 1 criteria when evaluated – thus gives unjustified preference to those publishers.

The decision can only be interpreted as an attack on a publishing model, rather than as an assessment of journal quality.

We regret that the statement by JUFO, attempting to explain the decision, does not provide any evidence and instead builds on third party references, many of which lack evidence and community acceptance. With this decision, JUFO chose to ignore community input that does not support the biased approach. The response gives no indication of how many comments JUFO received about Frontiers' journals, nor what these comments said in relation to the JUFO survey that was supposed to inform its decision -- information which could have been provided completely anonymously. We have received no substantial feedback from JUFO about any Frontiers' journal that we can specifically address, which is the core criterion of any evaluation process. Instead, the response points to hearsay, anecdote and discredited lists. We will maintain our dialogue with JUFO concerning this decision and ask all concerned researchers to do so as well.