



PROPOSAL
ENSURING LIBER'S VIABILITY
& BUILDING ON SUCCESS

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INTRODUCTION

LIBER was born in 1971 out of a deeply held belief that research libraries across Europe would be stronger if they worked together.

Questions or Comments?

We invite your feedback on this proposal. You can connect with us in several ways.

OPEN MEETINGS

We will hold online meetings in April and May. Board members will be present to outline the proposal and answer questions. Instructions for joining will be sent to LIBER mailing lists and can be obtained by emailing the Office (liber@kb.nl).

EMAIL

Send your questions, suggestions and concerns to the LIBER office (liber@kb.nl).

PERSONAL DISCUSSIONS

The LIBER Office will be happy to connect you with the Executive Director or an Executive Board member to discuss your library's specific circumstance.

What began as a small group of library directors has evolved into a dynamic and thriving organisation. It is a broad network, active in 40 countries. From library directors and their staff to open science advocates, data experts, researchers and politicians, we are all LIBER and we all believe in the power of innovation through cooperation.

This shared purpose has never been more vital. New movements, technologies and players - Open Science, digital scholarship, artificial intelligence, the EOSC - are rapidly changing the way research libraries, and their users, operate. Libraries must frequently update their services and train staff to deliver them.

LIBER is moving quickly to address these challenges. More than ever, we are producing informative resources, offering professional development opportunities and representing European research libraries in Brussels.

Standing still is not an option. Our research libraries have growing aspirations and we want to support them with more tools, training and services. Crucially, we want to do this in a way which ensures that LIBER remains strong and stable. This last point is essential. LIBER has a healthy reserve (equivalent to approximately one year of expenses)

but our basic running costs are no longer covered by the contribution fees of our institutions.

Ensuring our viability and meeting our network's growing needs has been the topic of intense discussions. We have carefully considered LIBER's strategic goals, current activities and finances. We have also actively sought the opinions of our libraries, and we thank you for your insights. We know you want more training, and more opportunities to be involved in LIBER. We know that we need to make the benefits of participating in LIBER clearer, and that we must continue speaking up on the European and global stage for the interests of research libraries.

Libraries have told us what they would like LIBER to provide, and this is our plan for achieving those aims. It includes a suggested rise in annual fees from 2020 (the first increase in 5 years) and an explanation of how we will use those resources.

On behalf of the entire Executive Board, I hope that you will join us in supporting this vision of a LIBER capable of delivering growing value for its libraries.



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WHAT WE CURRENTLY OFFER

‘The most useful thing about LIBER is the knowledge exchange it enables across Europe through the working groups or the conference.’

Quote from LIBER Participant

LIBER is Europe’s largest network of research libraries.
Our mission is to enable world-class research.

We do this by representing the interests of our institutions, their universities and their researchers, and by working towards the goals in our 2018-2022 Strategy¹.

Your annual fee ensures that we can carry out a range of networking, professional development, advocacy and training activities. Benefits include:

- **PARTICIPATION IN OUR WORKING GROUPS**, a way to broaden your network and share knowledge on strategically important topics;
- **REASONABLY PRICED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES** such as our leadership programmes for emerging and current directors;
- **HALF-PRICE REGISTRATION** for our Annual Conference;
- **NETWORKING** with like-minded professionals;
- **VOTING RIGHTS** at our Meeting of Participants, including eligibility to be nominated for and serve on the Executive Board.

In addition, LIBER produces reports, case studies and webinars on topics of importance for research libraries, and plays a critical role in lobbying for research libraries in Europe and globally. Our work in this area resulted in the approval of a Europe-wide text and data mining exception for research in 2019.

Finally, by participating in European projects, LIBER has ensured that its libraries are up to date with the latest innovations and that the perspectives of research libraries are accounted for in the research agenda.

WHICH NEW SERVICES WE PROPOSE

‘Through LIBER, the library view is represented at relevant political developments. This is something we cannot do as a single university library.’

Quote from LIBER Participant

We will provide more insights, training, events and opportunities to participate in funded projects. We will also ensure that research libraries retain and expand their influence in Brussels.

The services we propose are directly tied to the suggestions and requests submitted by over 200 library directors and staff in two recent surveys.

Detailed Europe-wide Studies

We will produce in-depth reports which provide more data, insights and intelligence about how the research library landscape is evolving. These reports will take a pan-European view and will cover relevant topics in considerable detail.

Library Involvement in European Projects

We have participated in 21 funded projects with 60 LIBER libraries. This has kept library priorities high on Europe’s research agenda. Since we know that many more libraries want to work with us on projects, we will invite libraries to add their skills and project ambitions to a LIBER database. This information will be used to identify and invite LIBER libraries to become official project partners as part of our standard procedure when searching and applying for projects. The database will also help us to spot more opportunities, based on the profiles of our libraries.

Permanent Advocacy Officer

LIBER has earned a reputation for effective advocacy. We have won meaningful improvements to copyright law and developed relationships with key decision makers. The work to do this was led by volunteers in our Copyright Working Group, with essential support from a professional lobbyist. The costs for this expert advice came from our reserves. By hiring an expert to work regularly on our behalf, we can continue expanding our influence in Brussels and respond to European Commission proposals. Upcoming topics of interest include Horizon Europe, Plan S and the implementation of the Public Sector Information (PSI) Directive.

Strategic Planning & Mid-Year Events

We will create a new event to bring library strategists together for a day of discussion and networking. Our focus will be on defining, creating and implementing a strategic plan, with the support of staff and institutional leaders. The emphasis will be on managing current changes affecting your library. In addition, we will offer a mid-year meeting: giving another opportunity to learn and network beyond our Annual Conference.

Expanded Leadership Programme

Many LIBER libraries have already benefited from our leadership programmes for current and future directors. We will expand these programmes to include internship and mentoring projects, as well as an alumni network.

Thematic Mailings & Press Review

Research libraries produce a great deal of knowledge, but sharing is limited. By featuring case studies and interviews in regular mailings, we will showcase our community’s expertise. In addition, we will produce a regular press review summarising important news for European research libraries.

Frequent Webinars

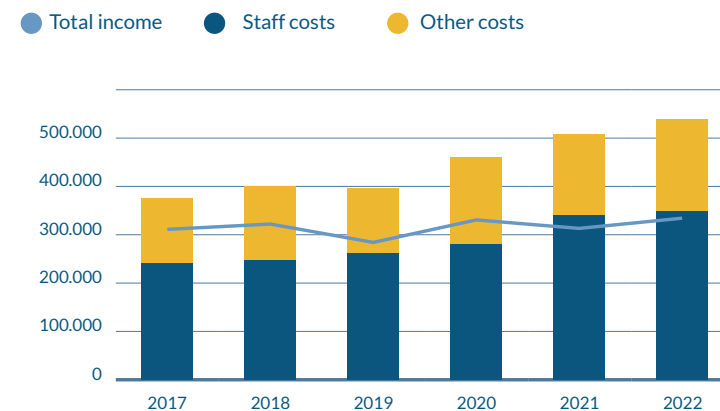
Our webinars have been exceptionally popular. We will run webinars more often so that you can hear from engaging speakers, deepen your understanding across a range of topics and learn about relevant best practices and resources. LIBER libraries will also be able to suggest a webinar as a way of sharing their own successes and insights with the entire community.

WHY NOW

LIBER has grown tremendously in the past decade. We have moved from a volunteer-led organisation to a professional foundation with four permanent employees; from an Annual Conference which comfortably hosted its core community to one which quickly sells out; from a low-profile network to a renowned champion for research libraries on the European and global stage.

Costs vs Income

(at current annual contribution rates)



The vertical bars on this graph represent the running costs of LIBER. The horizontal line shows income from annual fees (at current rates, before any fee increase), sponsorship, projects and events. From 2020 onwards, the projected costs include the provision of new services.

This steady extension of activities and services has created a situation where LIBER's income no longer covers current costs. Our participation in European projects has allowed us to balance the budget but this is not a reliable source of funding and we should not depend on it.

We want to keep growing and innovating for our libraries. From surveys and face-to-face conversations, we know you need more training, learning and networking. If LIBER is to continue thriving, however, we need more than energy and ideas. We must bring LIBER's historically low annual fees in line with our expenditures.

This proposal offers a way to do just that. It makes us independent of unpredictable project funding, ensuring that we can satisfy the needs of our community and meet the goals of our 2018-2022 Strategy. It also enables LIBER to keep a healthy reserve, in order to comply with legislation, and to manage risks and situations beyond standard daily operations. LIBER's reserve was €540,000 at the end of 2018. This is enough to cover risks and operating expenses for approximately one year.

Have other funding avenues been explored?

Sponsors give LIBER much appreciated support. We are finalising a new strategy which will allow selected corporate partners to make a greater contribution to our network activities. Already this approach yielded a new gold sponsor in March. We are targeting a 20% yearly increase in sponsor income from 2020-2022.

We are also actively seeking roles in more funded projects. LIBER's role in European projects has been a valuable source of influence. Through projects, we have benefited from opportunities to extend our activities and increased our expertise in key areas. However, project funding cannot cover core expenses. Meanwhile, LIBER needs a solid staff base to engage in projects.

THE PROPOSED NEW FEES

'LIBER is a well connected network for library issues on the European level. It's important for us to be part of this network.'

Quote from LIBER Participant



Inclusivity is one of LIBER's core values. The foundation has always aimed to keep annual fees affordable for a majority of Europe's research libraries.

Our new proposed fees are outlined in the table below. There are three bands, based on national GDP per capita. This reflects different financial realities among LIBER institutions.

Assuming the number of LIBER libraries stays stable, this increase would bring annual income from contribution fees to €415.000 (versus €226.000 currently). This is enough to cover approximately 87% of LIBER's predicted expenses in 2020, with the remaining expenses being met by income from sponsorship and events. In 2019, LIBER expects total expenses to be €386.000.

Who decides if these fees are approved?

Institutional and organisational Participants can vote on this proposal at LIBER's next Meeting of Participants, to be held on 27 June at the 2019 Annual Conference in Dublin, Ireland. Voting by proxy is possible if you cannot attend the meeting in person.

When will these proposed fees take effect?

If approved by LIBER's Participants, the new fees will take effect in 2020.

What if this proposal is rejected?

LIBER will have to choose between cutting services or using our reserve to fund operations in 2020. The Executive Board will prepare a new proposal for the 2020 Meeting of Participants.

Can I share feedback or ask a question?

We welcome your thoughts and are ready to discuss any aspect of this proposal. Ways to reach us are listed on the first page.

Membership Type	Fees from 2020*		
	Category A <i>Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom</i>	Category B <i>Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia</i>	Category C <i>Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Macedonia</i>
<i>Institutional Individual research libraries</i>	€995	€595	€275
<i>Organisational Library organisations and consortia; two fees are indicated for organisations with turnover above or below €25 million.</i>	€3.990 / €1.490	€2.375 / €1.195	€2.195 / €1.095
<i>Associate companies or consortia supplying services to research libraries, and non-European library associations</i>	€1220	€725	€625
<i>Individual Professional librarians who work or have worked in research libraries</i>	€225	€210	€195

*If approved at the Meeting of Participants.