

## WHAT TO DO WHEN JOURNALS LACK SPONSORSHIP

There are scientific journals that succeed in being financially self-sufficient. Generally, two good reasons being that: they count on an adequate sponsorship or that they generate sufficient income. Non-governmental patronage of periodicals comes in practically all cases from professional associations with numerous members and abundant resources, from large enterprises –usually publishing houses or transnational pharmaceuticals- or from institutions that in most cases are of an academic nature. In all cases there are specific interests. Scientific publications, in particular, are rarely the object of patronage. On the other hand, journals that have enough income in order to self-support themselves must have a large circulation and the possibility to charge high subscription rates and/or be an adequate media for publicity, given their important circulation. In developing countries, self-sufficient scientific journals are very few, if any.

In several Latin American countries the organisms in charge of the promotion of science and technology have established programs where journal production is financed through grants. For *Interciencia*, which is already in its thirty seventh year of uninterrupted publication, such a mechanism allowed to cover a very substantial part of its production and distribution expenses. However, such auspices and programs can disappear or change their orientation. The selection and approval criteria are not static, nor are the programs permanent.

As a matter of fact, in Venezuela the last call for grant applications to the Program of Periodical Science and Technology Publications by Fonacyt took place in 2009. That year, *Interciencia* received for the last time funds from said institution, to be utilized in the edition and distribution of its printed version. In the case of the electronic versions of Venezuelan scientific journals, the official organism selected and has financed for several years, the *Scientific Electronic Library Online* (SciELO) as the electronic carrier for all those journals that qualify to be included in the SciELO collection. *Interciencia* received official support for its inclusion in this collection up to 2008.

Facing the lack of economic support by official organizations, the closing of a journal is bound to be considered as a realistic option. In the case of *Interciencia*, however, several arguments could be considered in favor of its continuation: 1) The number of papers submitted by researchers from numerous countries for publication in the journal has increased constantly, to the point of saturating its present handling capacity. 2) *Interciencia* is included in the Science Citation Index and continues to be the multidisciplinary journal with more visits in Redalyc. 3) The impact factor reported by the Science Citation Reports, which fell to half upon doubling the number of yearly issues in the year 2000, has recovered and surpassed its historic average, and keeps increasing continuously. 4) Some still consider that the cultural values, including science and technology, generated in our countries merit to be disseminated in our own languages, in publications of the highest possible quality.

*Interciencia* being the journal of the homonymous Association, and being the latter a confederation of many associations for the advancement of science that, in general, have very limited financial resources, the survival of the journal stands upon the search of an adequate and sufficient patronage, under the wing of an academic institution or of a regional system willing to provide it.

An option worthy of analysis is that of the social responsibility of large enterprises, under whose patronage there could be an important source of support for science and technology in the region. Such seemed to be the case of the new Venezuelan law, but its deficient execution and control has led to a reform that restricts the use of the collected funds to governmental instances or their chosen ones, limiting the development of independent initiatives.

While the desired stability is reached, the institutional contributions solicited through the authors of published papers have become a support that, although labile and insufficient, is currently the most important one for the continuity of *Interciencia*.

MIGUEL LAUFER  
Editor