**Call to Discuss ArchEE Initiative**

**Friday, January 9th, 2015; 9:30 AM U.S. Eastern Time, 3:30 PM Copenhagen Time**

Participants:

Matt Keene, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Environmental Evaluators Network (EEN)

Katherine Dawes, EPA

Carl Koch, EPA

Shari Grossarth, EPA

Rasmus Dilling, European Environment Agency (EEA)

Johannes Schilling, EEA

Neal Etre, Industrial Economics (IEc)

Nick Pittman, IEc

*Initiative Updates*

Since our last call, Matt and Katherine spoke about the ArchEE initiative with the Environment Canada Office of Evaluation. They are interested in learning more and perhaps being involved in the workshop. They had several questions about the initiative, which Matt sent to the group; he plans to respond to their questions early in the week of January 12th. These types of questions are exactly the reason we will convene the workshop.

*Introductions*

Matt introduced Katherine Dawes to the group, the director of EPA’s Evaluation Support Division. Katherine co-founded the EEN.

*ArchEE Structure*

People can conceive of ArchEE in a variety of ways. We can share examples of other knowledge repositories with work participants. The EEN concept has been to aggregate evaluation work into a place accessible to any potential future user for however they may wish to use it. Other repositories have approached analyzing and synthesizing information in a variety of ways, some with strict protocol and exclusivity, and others less so. Our conversation is currently more about including the total range of articles and not being exclusive, and we have not yet discussed how we would analyze and synthesize information out of ArchEE.

Rasmus and Johannes can comb the Finnish and Swedish repositories for material; if we need to translate works for the database, we can discuss that at a later time.

*ArchEE Principles*

We suggest employing a decentralized approach in the early stages of building ArchEE. We want the end result to be open-source (though there are potential legal complications with this) and built using a collaborative approach. We will emphasize to the stakeholders that this network approach and that all users are “one among equals”. Rasmus’ experience working with European partners is that you cannot present them a fully fleshed-out idea but rather need to invite them to participate from the beginning.

Additionally, once a year we could sit down to evaluate how successful the repository is and who is using it.

*ArchEE Workshop*

One of the workshop’s goals will be to get a clearer image of ArchEE’s structure, principle, and platform. In the time leading up to the workshop, we will start to answer Environment Canada’s questions, which could get the ball rolling and provide teasers to what we need to discuss in April.

We want to convene a diverse group of people in one place to begin the discussions.

We agreed that we do not need our workshop model to be perfect, but rather just good enough to inform our next wise action. That is, we do not need to make our planning overly complicated, we just need to start. The best that we can do at this point is to prepare a setup for answering questions.

We think it would be very interesting to have Environment Canada join the discussion.

*Workshop Logistics*

Part of the workshop development process will be to sort through our broad range of purposes and goals and organize them by priority. We agreed that it will be extremely helpful to have an agreed-upon agenda for the workshop that we can present to potential participants. Additionally, it is crucial to have a few “big names” commit to attend early on to motivate others to join. We envision a full group of 35 at most for the workshop.

Rasmus and Johannes will check with the EEA with the aim of providing a formal pledge of support for the ArchEE initiative. Matt would like to be able to tell an organization like the World Bank that EPA and EEA are hosting the workshop together. If it is not possible formally for the EEA to show its support, Rasmus and Johannes will find another way to show interest.

We brainstormed a preliminary list of whom to invite to the workshop:

* Matt has seen interest across numerous offices within EPA; they will discuss internally who they will involve in the design process.
* Johannes noted that there are many key players who could be interested, but is not sure how many could come from Europe to participate. They will test the waters with folks to see what is possible. If they cannot bring many people, there is the option to have a separate conference in Europe later in 2015 or early in 2016.
* Rasmus noted that European think tanks are doing a great job, and we need to reach out them as potential ArchEE users to get them involved from the start.
* The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
* Environment Canada’s Evaluation Office.
* The evaluation group of the Global Environment Facility in Washington, D.C.
* The World Bank’s independent evaluation group.
* The OECD.
* Issuelab.
* Foundations that may be interested.
* A few academics who have been focused on the evaluation realm in their environmental work; we would need to carefully target invites to researchers who we know to have a vested interest in ArchEE.

The group will share dates that will definitely not work in April and May, and suggest ideal dates. We are considering three days for the workshop; for example, beginning midday on the first day, then having two full days afterwards. We could also potentially have two days with the full group, followed by a half day at the end for the smaller group to reconvene.

We will start sketching out a rough agenda to pitch back and forth. We will circulate this on Dropbox or Google Drive (depending on which we decide to use to communicate and work together). *(NOTE: Based on the recent email from Johannes, it appears that email will be best for communication.)*

EPA has the funding in place for the workshop’s space, logistics, and communication. We will look for potential sponsors to help with honoraria for certain researchers who cannot attend otherwise. It will be easier to raise money once we have specific researchers who will attend.

Finally, the European EEN has decided to meet in Florence in mid-September, and it would be good if EPA personnel could join them.

**Action Items**

-Matt will respond to Environment Canada’s questions about ArchEE, if he has not yet already.

-Rasmus and Johannes will check with the EEA about providing a formal pledge of support for the ArchEE initiative.

-The group will share dates for the workshop that will definitely not work in April and May, and suggest ideal times.

-The group will develop a rough agenda, sending it back and forth via email.