MEMORANDUM | 7.22.2014

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| TO | Carl Koch and Matt Keene, EPA |
| from | Nick Pittman and Neal Etre, IEc |
| subject | Draft Summary of Potential Funding Models for ArchEE |
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Introduction

The Environmental Evaluators Network (EEN) aims to advance the practice, policy, and theory of evaluating environmental programs, policies, and other interventions through systematic and collective learning. With support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) Office of Policy’s Office of Strategic Environmental Management (OSEM) and Evaluation Support Division (ESD), EEN is proposing to develop an Architecture of Environmental Evaluation (ArchEE) to meet the demand for evidence related to environmental management. ArchEE aims to provide EPA and the environmental sector with open access to environmental evaluations, evaluators, and evaluation-related literature, including formal evaluations and other approaches to systematic improvement, evidence-based management, and policy.

Building off of an initial review conducted in 2013, EPA contracted Industrial Economics, Inc. (IEc) to prepare for, organize, and implement an EEN workshop that brings together key stakeholders to formulate a design plan for ArchEE. As part of this effort, EPA tasked IEc with conducting research on potential funding approaches for ArchEE. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a brief update on funding research carried out to date under Task 2-2 of Call Order 1-27.

Funding approaches

To date, IEc has conducted research on 16 separate information repositories, including the four systems evaluated for EPA in 2013.[[1]](#footnote-1) Exhibit 1 below summarizes the funding methods employed by these systems.

exhibit 1. Funding Methods Summary by Repository

| Information Repository | Funding MethodS | Key Funding Sources | free to users? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| IssueLab | Sponsorship / Fee-for-service | Funded by Foundation Center, which receives 90% of its income from foundation / corporate contributions and publication revenues. Clients pay for Knowledge Center development and maintenance. | Yes |
| Campbell Collaboration (C2) | Sponsorship | Norwegian government; other parties | Yes |
| Crime Solutions | Sponsorship | U.S. Department of Justice | Yes |
| Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) | Sponsorship | U.S. Department of Education | Yes |
| International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) | Sponsorship | Mix of philanthropic grants and money from government agencies of various countries. | Yes |
| The National Science Digital Library | Sponsorship | National Science Foundation, various grants | Yes |
| PubMed Central | Sponsorship | U.S. National Institutes of Health | Yes |
| What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) | Sponsorship | U.S. Department of Education | Yes |
| BioMed Central | Fee-for-submission | $2,000 - $2,500 per article submitted | Yes |
| Copernicus Publications | Fee-for-submission | €500 - €1,000 per article submitted | Yes |
| EBSCO Host | Fee-for-service / membership | User fees - different account types for various entities. | No |
| JSTOR | Fee-for-service / membership | User fees - $199/year for unlimited reading access and 120 PDF articles per year. User may purchase per article. | No |

Thus far, we have identified four basic approaches to funding information repositories, including:

* **Sponsorship –** For social science and evaluation repositories, the most common funding sources are grants from government agencies, philanthropic organizations, or corporations. In many cases, these systems are wholly owned or funded by government agencies. For example, the U.S. Department of Education funds and maintains the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), an online library of education research and information.[[2]](#footnote-2) Others, such as the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), which funds evaluations and systematic reviews of development programs, receive a mix of grants from international government agencies (e.g., UK Department for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the U.S. Agency for International Development) and philanthropic organizations (e.g., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Flora Hewlett Foundation).[[3]](#footnote-3) In 2013, the Foundation Center, which owns IssueLab, received 44 percent of its operating revenues from foundation and corporate contributions.[[4]](#footnote-4)

In addition, several repositories pay for contractor support with government funding. For example, Crime Solutions, an initiative of the Office of Justice Programs within the U.S Department of Justice, contracts with Development Services Group, Inc. to coordinate evidence review and provide content, while Lockheed Martin coordinates website and technical support.[[5]](#footnote-5) 3ie relies on Aptivate for web design and technical support.[[6]](#footnote-6)

* **Fee-for-submission –** Some repositories charge authors a fee to cover the cost of the publication process. Discounts and waivers are generally available, and authors’ institutions are allowed to pay the submission fees. For example, BioMed Central provides access to over 100 free peer-reviewed journals in all areas of biology and medicine. Biomed charges approximately $2,000 to $2,500 per article based on the journal of origin; however, authors from more than 90 low-income countries receive automatic wavers on submission fees.[[7]](#footnote-7)
* **Fee-for-service –** Several large information repositories charge users to access content, typically from academic journals and trade publications. For example, JSTOR, which provides access to its vast library of more than 2,000 academic journals, allows users to purchase articles on an individual basis.[[8]](#footnote-8) In addition, IssueLab charges services fees for the development, hosting, and maintenance of its Knowledge Center repositories.[[9]](#footnote-9)
* **Membership –** Both of the large repositories evaluated to date, EBSCO Host and JSTOR offer membership plans, which, depending on the plan, allow for the download of a certain number of documents. For example, for $199 a year, a JSTOR user enjoys unlimited reading access and can download 120 articles per year.[[10]](#footnote-10), [[11]](#footnote-11)

Implications for Archee

EEN has set a primary goal for ArchEE to provide open and free access to environmental evaluations and other evidence-based management literature. Our preliminary research indicates that sponsorships are the principal funding mechanism for similar social science information repositories, including those that house evaluations. It appears that the government is the most important sponsor of open access repositories, with some assistance from philanthropic organizations and corporations. Fee-for-service and membership arrangements violate the spirit of open access principles by charging users to read content. Funding through fee-for-submission likely discourages authors from providing source material to the repository. With respect to ArchEE, these fee-based funding approaches may have a dampening effect on user adoption and could inhibit buy-in from key users and institutions. Consequently, our preliminary research suggests that a sponsorship approach to funding ArchEE will likely provide the best opportunity for success by encouraging site adoption for both readers and authors.

EPA has expressed concerns about the perception of bias, if it were to provide direct funding for ArchEE. As a result, the Agency may wish to explore the potential for EEN to fund the initial construction of ArchEE, as its members’ experience and expertise put them in the best position to guide its development. A successful implementation using EEN startup funds could provide positive momentum and attract other potential funders to ArchEE over time.

NEXT STEPS

Under Task 3, IEc will complete its funding research by examining the costs associated with information repositories, including initial/startup, maintenance, hosting, and data storage costs. Gathering this information may require interviews with individuals who run similar repositories. In particular, as part of our continuing conversations with IssueLab, we will discuss the costs associated with developing a Knowledge Center for environmental evaluations, as this may provide a lower cost option than building a new repository from the ground up.

1. See “Repositories of Evidence Review.” Memorandum to Matt Keene and Scott Bowles, EPA from Daniel Kaufman, Nick Pittman, and Tracy-Dyke-Redmond, IEc. September 19, 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “50 Years of Eric,” accessed July 17, 2014 at http://eric.ed.gov/pdf/ERIC\_Retrospective.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “3ie Annual Report 2013,” accessed July 17, 2014 at http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer\_public/2014/04/01/3ie\_annual\_report\_final\_web\_270314.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Foundation Center 2013 Annual Report,” accessed July 18, 2014 at http://foundationcenter.org/about/FCAR13\_condensed.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “FAQs”, accessed July 17, 2014 at https://www.crimesolutions.gov/faqs.aspx#General Questions. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “3ie Impact – Website,” accessed July 17, 2014 at http://www.aptivate.org/en/work/projects/3ieimpact/. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “Do authors from low-income countries have to pay APCs?,” accessed July 17, 2014 at http://www.biomedcentral.com/about/apcfaq/developingcountries. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. As a nonprofit organization, JSTOR also receives Archive Capital Fees from libraries around the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Personal communication with Gabi Fitz and Lisa Brooks, IssueLab. July 15, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “Register & Read,” accessed July 17, 2014 at http://about.jstor.org/rr. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. “Purchase JPASS,” accessed July 17, 2014 at http://jpass.jstor.org/. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)