**ArchEE: Moving Forward
June 17 -18,** 20**15
Washington, DC**

The ArchEE Workshop, held on June 17 and 18, 2015, brought together professionals from the fields of evaluation and environment to create a foundation for collective action to design, develop, implement, and sustain ArchEE. A list of participants is included in Appendix A. This document captures the results of that meeting in terms of:

* Decisions
* Outstanding questions
* Plans for action

## Decisions

In the course of the workshop, the group came to consensus on several key issues, summarized below.

**ArchEE is** the collaborative space for the open sharing of evaluations and evaluative evidence to inform and improve environmental practice, learning and policy development.

**ArchEE is** a community of practice that includes an online system to collect, store, and access evaluations and evaluation knowledge as well as a network of users who contribute to and utilize that knowledge in a variety of learning dialogues.

Detailed lists of requirements under discussion appear in Appendix B. The following requirements were widely supported by the workshop participants.

**ArchEE is** comprehensive, including:

* Many disciplines
* Global and international applications
* Findings and methods
* Diverse evaluation and interventional designs
* All levels of projects—small, medium and large
* No submission bias
* Multiple definitions of “evaluation” and “environment”
* Knowledge dissemination and generation
* Useful for a wide range of individual and institutional users

**ArchEE is** sustainable:

* Populated over time
* Continually growing
* Decisions made in early design and development cycles will consider long-term implications and reduce constraints in the future whenever possible
* Clear inclusion criteria for each design and development cycle
* Clear leader for ArchEE, but open governance and transparent decision making

**ArchEE is** accessible and easy to use:

* Useful language taxonomy
* Good user experience
* Easy, simple user interface
* Incentives must be present to encourage and sustain users
* No password
* Usability testing

It will be difficult to determine one set of meaningful requirements that meets the needs of all of ArchEE‘s diverse users and uses. Participants in the workshop recognized a collection of dichotomies that speak to the wide range of potential design options. Each extreme has benefits for some applications and risks for others. To meet the needs of all, ArchEE will be:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Both . . .**  | **. . . And** |
| Open  | Closed |
| Expert curation | User curation |
| Integrate other systems | Contribute to them |
| Detailed plan | Adaptive evolution |
| Synthesis | Analysis |
| Keep it simple | State of the art |
| Integrated into operations | Narrow, one-time uses |
| Document successes | Capture learning |
| Static repository | Platform for engagement |
| Methods | Outcomes  |
| Democratic inclusion | Information overload |

To respond to this diverse and ever-changing user community, ArchEE will allow for adaptive design, so that it can be optimized for specific user groups and uses. When a specific use is identified, a team will come together to capture requirements and design and develop a module of ArchEE to meet that need. Various new modules, as well as existing systems, will then be connected into a network, where differences among uses and their associated modules will be transparent to potential users.

## Outstanding Questions

Several key questions remain to be answered. Some are unknown today and will require research and/or dialogue in the context of specific uses and users. Others are unknowable at this time and will require on-going attention as ArchEE evolves.

**How will ArchEE be used and by whom?**

* Who are the users, what are their applications, what do they need, and how can ArchEE effectively meet those needs?
* What are the incentives to encourage users to participate?
* How will ArchEE encourage dialogue among users?
* How do we avoid privilege traditionally associated with printed, published materials?
* How will we address the different levels of knowledge that users bring and the different types of inquiries?
* What tools will we have to identify patterns, analyze metadata, etc., so that users receive more than just a list of studies fitting a particular query?
* How can we use environmental evaluation work to tell a new story to promote conservation and the interdependence between people and planet?
* Will users be willing and able to share knowledge—particularly about failures?
* What services will be provided in support of ArchEE (e.g., custom searches, design support, integration, analysis, synthesis, document solicitation)?

**How will ArchEE be sustained?**

* Who will run and sustain ArchEE?
* How to keep ArchEE relevant?
* How will ArchEE inform policy?

**What will be included, and who decides?**

* What constitutes evidence?
* What are the inclusion criteria?
* Where will the studies and evaluations come from?
* What will be the process to ensure a useful level of review, i.e. not having just one review/rating for evaluations?
* How will documents be tagged and by whom?
* Whether and how evaluations will be weighted by quality?

**How will ArchEE relate to existing platforms?**

* What are the other platforms out there?
* How will ArchEE interact with them?
* Is it feasible to create an overarching information layer/integrator?

**How can the definition of ArchEE’s success account for the frequent disconnect between evaluative knowledge and decision making about policies, processes, programs and practices?**

## Plans for Action

Detailed reports from five Planning Clusters are available under separate cover. The table below summarizes next steps identified by the groups. Funding, ownership and governance were delayed with the agreement that particular uses and users would require different kinds and sources of support. Please note that the timelines emerged from small group discussions during the workshop. They may represent the excitement and eagerness of the Cluster members more than the realistic commitments of individuals or institutions. While Clusters are beginning their work, ArchEE’s development will require more thorough project planning.

| **What?** | **Deliverable?** | **Who?** | **When?** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Value Proposition and Theory of Change** |
| Check relevance of the other working groups against the Theory of Change  | Collect the iterations of the Theory of Change  | KeeneEstes | July 1 |
| Develop, share and revise the Theory of Change | Agreed Theory of Change | KeeneEstes | July 15  |
| Develop and elaborate the Value Proposition incorporating the Theory of Change | Agreed draft Value Proposition  | KeeneEstes | July 15 |
| Float the V.P. with potential users + donors  | Final Value Proposition incorporating the views of users  | KeeneEstes | Sept 15 |
| **Decision Making and Governance** |
| Decide if ArchEE should be registered in the U.S. (Delaware, California?) | Filing | Governance(Crohn agreed to host initial discussions) | Dec 15 |
| Develop timeline and structure for founding organization phase, the stabilization phase and then the governance phase | Organizational development plan | Governance  | Sept 15 |
| Define firewall between funders and governance, e.g., funders do not serve on board of trustees, rules for entertaining ideas from funders | BylawsConflict of interest statements | Governance  | Sept 15Dec 15 |
| Work with Funding group to decide how governance accommodates but remains independent from funding sources | Bylaws (see above) | TBD | TBD |
| Convene a working group to find preliminary funding | Development strategy | Finance and communications | Dec 15 |
| Work with funding group to hire development officer |  | TBD | TBD |
| Work with IT to decide which IT structures are in-house, outsourced, collaborated |  | TBD | TBD |
| Work with IT to ensure quality assurance |  | TBD | TBD |
| Convene check-ins for clusters  | Conference call | Governance  | Ongoing |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What?** | **Deliverable?** | **Who?** | **When?** |
| **Requirements (input) and Content (output)** |
| Finish task planning | Task plan, including various definitions, concrete requirements and anticipated linkages | Bours, Schilling, Dige  | Autumn 2015 |
| External outreach | Map external actors and inform them on the upcoming developments | Becker | Winter 2015 |
| Mainstream all task plans into overarching project plan |  | TBD | TBD |
| IT implementation | Selection of beta testers from potential user community, beta testing of user requirements, translation of user requirements into IT requirements, IT implementation, beta tested of implementation | Lopata on meta testing | Summer 2016 |
| Outreach, including to other networks for promoting ArchEE |  | EEN | Autumn 2016 |
| Harvesting from other databases | Inclusive harvesting with external stakeholders  | TBD | TBD |

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| **What?** | **Deliverable?** | **Who?** | **When?** |
| **Learning Community** |
| Form learning community, identify interested members, what motivates them to engage | Learning community engaged | TBD | TBD |
| Develop ideas for what learning community will do, how it will function – include users in governance.  | TOR for learning community | TBD | TBD |
| Undertake sample searches so people can access raw materials in database and show how to use it – use cases?  | Model searches, guidelines, use cases.  | TBD | TBD |
| Undertake sample summaries, analyses, syntheses.  | Model summaries, analyses, syntheses, guidelines, use cases.  | TBD | TBD |
| Undertake sample lessons learned, process by which users can feed lessons\*\* back into the system. \*\*Lessons for evaluators and lessons for practitioners/managers/planners/donors/funders/policy makers/other stakeholders (students, teachers, researchers, etc.). | Model lessons learned, tailored to different stakeholders.  | TBD | TBD |
| Space/Forum/Linked In/Research Gate set up that can facilitate learning from experiences, both success and failure. FAQs or keyword match for questions to help with lessons learned. | Space/forum for exchange | TBD | TBD |
| Method for gathering information on who users are, what they get from the resources (statistics could help with making case for importance of product for donors, but also need to help with learning aspect). What is demand? What do they want? Trends in statistics could help with understanding future directions. | Gap analysis/needs assessment of user base | TBD | TBD |
| Develop criteria, ideas for how lessons learned can be shared. | System by which you can upload lessons/interact with system.  | TBD | TBD |
| Develop methods for assessing evaluations – (criteria, standards for inclusion/exclusion, method for review of what is included - feedback on what? Anonymous? Curated? Rate reviews and reviewers?). (Problem with values base for evaluation).  | System for reviewing evaluations – which to include, but also what is good about what is included.  | TBD | TBD |
| Design ArchEE Evaluation - What are stakeholders learning from ArchEE, etc.  | ArchEE evaluation | TBD | TBD |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What?** | **Deliverable?** | **Who?** | **When?** |
| **IT Options / Designs** |
| Scoping IT options | Presentation of high-level scenarios | TBD | Sep 15 |
| Recommendations of IT options | Memorandum | TBD | Oct 15 |
| Roadmap  | Project plan | TBD | Jan 16 |
| Design and development | ArchEE prototype | TBD | April 16 |
| Scale up | ArchEE | TBD | TBD |

## Appendix A: Participants

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| --- | --- |
| Michelle Becker, US EPAMark Braza, GAO Dennis Bours, GEFKara Crohn, EMI ConsultingKathy Davey, US EPAKatherine Dawes, US EPAGorm DigeGlenda Eoyang, HSD Institute (Facilitator)Rubayi Estes, Santa Barbara Foundation Neal Etre, IEcGabi Fitz, IssueLab Kirsten Gallo, National Parks ServiceShari Grossarth, US EPAMarc Hockings, University of Queensland | Richard Kashmanian, US EPAMatt Keene, EPA, EENAndrew Knight, Imperial College of LondonAnnamarie Lopata, National Fish and Wildlife FoundationMichelle McGuire, International Energy Program and Policy Evaluation Conference; DatabuildNick Pittman, IEcAndrew Pullin, Collaboration for Environmental Evidence; Bangor UniversityKent Redford, Archipelago Consulting Johannes Schilling, EEAEleanor Sterling, American Museum of Natural HistoryAnna Viggh, Global Environment Facility (GEF)David Widawsky, US EPA |
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## Appendix B: Requirements

Participants were asked to comment on proposed requirements. The table below reflects the comments as developed on Day 1. On Day 2, the participants were asked to come back and indicate whether they agree with (+), disagree with (-), or wanted to discuss (?) each comment. The numbers in the table reflect the number of times participants placed a symbol next to the comment.

| **Requirements** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| **+** | **-** | **?** |
| *Attract and retain the right user base* |
| Participatory engagement |  | 1 |  |
| Broad community investment |  |  |  |
| Distribute small tasks |  |  |  |
| Define audience to engage with | 4 |  |  |
| Identify value for audiences | 3 |  |  |
| Consider fee-based system |  | 1 |  |
| Clarify funding source/seed grants | 1 |  |  |
| Consider system with different user types (such as power users – get more functions for “better” contributors) |  |  |  |
| Clarify benefits/incentives to participate | 3 |  |  |
| Reconsider bottom-up approach |  | 1 |  |
| Create communities of learning with moderator/interpreter | 1 |  |  |
| Clarify governance to contributors | 2 |  |  |
| Manage power/politics (watch for groups advancing particular agenda) | 1 |  |  |
| All users have equal access | 2 |  |  |
| Moderate users without log-in | 1 | 2 |  |
| *Include the right stuff* |
| Clear inclusion criteria |  |  |  |
| Minimum quality requirements |  |  |  |
| Use existing sources (like Better Evaluation) |  |  |  |
| Standards, boundaries and transparent decisions |  |  |  |
| Single decision-maker |  |  |  |
| Keep it fresh |  |  |  |
| Connect to clearinghouse sites, link to other sites rather than duplicating their work |  |  |  |
| Use other groups to get feedback |  |  |  |
| Follow the rules – copyright, ownership, privacy, clearance and review |  |  |  |
| Define what is “right” at start and revisit periodically | 2 |  |  |
| NOT a single decision-maker | 1 |  |  |
| Process to review relevance and archive | 2 | 2 |  |
| Accredit other efforts with overlapping criteria and inform user |  | 1 |  |
| Learn from other efforts |  |  |  |
| Foster learning groups | 2 |  |  |
| Establish what is “private” and “ownership” |  |  |  |
| Pick topics of interest to users to start |  |  |  |
| Create publishing outlets and encourage work |  |  |  |
| Document the predecessor to the program you are evaluating and previous evaluations  | 1 |  |  |
| Create incentives to contribute | 1 |  | 1 |
| *Use state-of-the-art methods* |
| Prototype – determine minimum viable product | 3 |  |  |
| Include list of additional possible features for future |  |  |  |
| Find out what users need most | 1 |  |  |
| Create adaptable platform | 1 |  |  |
| Determine methods for how to interpret content |  |  |  |
| Learn from IssueLab | 1 |  |  |
| Reuse or draw out usable elements from others | 1 |  |  |
| Get volunteers to test synthesis | 2 |  |  |
| Explain beta-testing | 2 |  |  |
| Expect course corrections | 2 |  |  |
| Start around key issue areas to build interest |  | 1 |  |
| Learn from what has not worked |  |  |  |
| Determine how to define boundaries of search and exploration |  |  |  |
| Have different levels/modules of access for different uses | 1 | 1 |  |
| Start with focused modules rather than trying to do a lot at once | 2 | 1 |  |
| *Keep it simple* |
| No password | 6 | 3 |  |
| Expert review involved (to make it easy to use) |  | 1 |  |
| Usability testing | 5 |  |  |
| Pilot testing | 4 |  |  |
| Use best of library science | 3 |  |  |
| Discuss “Wiki style” meaning (do we want?) |  | 3 |  |
| Discuss how library science achievers support effective information architecture | 1 |  |  |
| Discuss relationship between “keep it simple” and “state of the art” | 1 |  |  |
| Glossaries for key concepts/terms to retain important lexicons; promote consistency of tools/access/reports |  |  |  |
| Promote consistency of tools/access/reports/search | 1 |  |  |
| Concise overview |  |  |  |
| UI should have flexibility to allow creation of own queries |  |  |  |
| Data entry/upload needs to be really easy and fast | 2 |  |  |
| Provide flexible list for keywords to promote consistency (ex. Pollinator, pollinators, bees, bumble bee) | 1 |  |  |
| *Make it a learning system – adaptation* |
| Define learning system (options: user-driven, evaluator-driven) |  |  |  |
| Characterize user base | 1 |  |  |
| Actively involve users in governance | 1 |  |  |
| Lessons learned/summaries |  |  | 1 |
| Double-/triple-loop learning | 1 |  | 1 |
| User feedback |  |  |  |
| User registration |  |  |  |
| Use cases to understand users |  |  |  |
| Anonymous posting of lessons |  |  |  |
| Open resource site |  |  |  |
| Create competition in the evaluation market |  |  |  |
| *Sustain it – program design* |
| Cultivation and outreach | 3 |  |  |
| Develop a plan, model for maintenance and development |  | 2 | 1 |
| Clear role for data management and maintenance | 2 |  |  |
| Clear lead, open governance | 3 |  | 1 |
| Design to be adaptive, phased business model |  |  | 1 |
| Identify and cultivate partners | 1 |  |  |
| Clearly articulate value | 1 |  |  |
| Explore alternative funding models (“freemium”, subscription, custom searches) |  | 2 | 1 |
| Distinguish roles that require technical expertise | 1 |  |  |
| Lead organizations must not represent vested interest |  |  |  |
| Continual learning and assessment |  |  |  |
| Multiple donors | 2 |  |  |
| Clear network charter, enduring principles |  |  |  |
| Pick a growing technical partner |  |  |  |