Association of College & Research Libraries
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SCOAP^3 – Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

The SCOAP^3 proposal is a valuable opportunity to create a viable alternative to the status quo in scholarly publishing for one entire discipline. It aims to reach consensus among all stakeholders on a new model for publishing in high-energy physics, and establish market equilibrium. The proposal is currently supported by ~100 U.S. libraries, either directly or through consortia, and by the Canadian Research Knowledge Network, on behalf of all Canadian libraries, as well as libraries, consortia and funding agencies in 18 other countries in Europe, the Middle East and Australasia

The success of the SCOAP^3 proposal now depends on the full support of U.S. libraries. The following FAQs aim to support the decision-making process for additional U.S. libraries to sign an Expression of Interest in support of SCOAP^3. The FAQ was prepared by SPARC and ACRL in consultation with SCOAP^3 and is available online at http://www.arl.org/sparc/publications/papers/scoap3_09april.shtml.

1. What is SCOAP^3?

SCOAP^3, the Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access in Particle Physics Publishing, proposes an innovative economic model to achieve Open Access to peer-reviewed literature in high-energy physics (HEP). The model seeks to, (using current funding levels as a starting point), redirect subscription expenditures to ensure open access and work to contain costs - and in doing so, achieve more value than is possible within a subscription-based system.

The SCOAP^3 model is the product of extensive consultation with all stakeholders in scholarly communication -- authors, funding agencies, libraries and publishers -- spearheaded by the scientists and librarians at CERN, the center of the high-energy physics community in Geneva, which has been a leading example of the unifying power of international collaboration in science. CERN aims to transfer HEP's successful model for consensus-building and cooperation to the scholarly communication arena. Open Access is a priority for the HEP community.

2. What is SCOAP^3's business model?

SCOAP^3 proposes to create an international consortium of libraries and funding agencies that will centrally contract with publishers for the services of administering peer-review, editing, and Open-Access article dissemination. An open tender or "bidding" process will invite publishers of HEP journals, not-for-profit and commercial alike, to compete to provide these services. This will replace the current disaggregated process, in which libraries negotiate the cost of access separately – putting libraries back at the center of scholarly communication.

The tendering process is an established practice in the HEP community, as it is in other large-scale publicly funded industrial procurements. It is guided by the principles of competition and will work to link *price* with *quality* and *volume*. These variables are not explicitly (or transparently) linked in today's scholarly communication market.

The SCOAP^3 initiative relies on Expressions of Interest from the worldwide library community to advance to the next step. Once a critical mass of interest from the international community is established, a governing board will be formed to represent the interests of all participants. CERN will provide the legal and purchasing infrastructure required to administer the tendering process.[1] The

[1] CERN will operate SCOAP^3 using its existing legal and financial infrastructure, which has successfully managed the $9B collected worldwide for the construction of the Large Hadron Collider.

governing board will invite and assess bids from the publishers and adjudicate contracts, ensuring that the requirements and interests of member libraries are met. Partner libraries and consortia will only formalize their commitment to the consortium through a Memorandum of Understanding once bids have been reviewed and accepted by the governing board.

3. Why is it important for the library community to support the model?

The SCOAP^3 model relies on the group negotiating power of an international consortium of libraries, as SCOAP^3 aims to convert to Open Access the vast majority of the literature of the field. This model creates for libraries the opportunity to:

- Achieve Open Access in a specific discipline without incurring additional expenses,
- Experiment with a new model that may have relevance for Science at large,
- Contain costs and achieve more value than is possible with the prevailing subscription model.

The HEP discipline is uniquely positioned for a large-scale experiment of this type, due its strong tradition of international collaboration and leadership of Open Access through arXiv. SCOAP^3 offers a valuable opportunity for the library community to test and explore the viability of a new model for open-access publishing.

Effective April 2009, SCOAP^3 has collected pledges towards 60% of its budget envelope from partners in 20 countries, including Canada and most European and Middle Eastern countries with an active HEP community. Before SCOAP^3 may advance to the next stage -- establishing an international governing board -- the membership must expand to mirror the international structure of the HEP community, and include countries in the Far East and more institutions in the U.S. Only 63% of the expected SCOAP^3 contribution has been collected in the United States.

4. What are some of the benefits it is hoped the model will achieve?

The institution-specific return on investment in SCOAP^3 is expected to be the containment of costs required to access HEP literature, along with:

- A transparent view of the costs of peer-review, editing, and article dissemination.
- An opportunity to contain the costs of HEP publishing.
- A more complete electronic information environment to support the needs of HEP research and beyond.
- A closer relationship with the worldwide research community to effect positive change in scholarly publishing.
- A demonstration of how international cooperation can support the advancement of sustainable Open Access to research.
- Concrete data on the viability of a unique Open Access publishing model that can inform the evolution of future potential models.
- The opportunity to automatically populate digital repositories with Open Access peer-reviewed material, or create local archives of all SCOAP^3 material.

5. What can my library do to support SCOAP^3?

U.S. libraries are invited to submit Expressions of Interest to SCOAP^3 [http://tinyurl.com/scoap3us] to determine whether there is sufficient support to advance to the next stage of the process: establishing a structure for governance. Submitting an Expression of Interest in no way obligates a library to transfer funds to SCOAP^3 at this time, but is required for the successful progress of the call for tender.

Libraries are also being asked to assess their current local investment in HEP journals, which would be re-directed to SCOAP^3 if successful. This will allow the consortium to evaluate how close SCOAP^3 will likely come to the projected budget before moving forward.

Once a sufficient level of interest is established, the governing board will be formed and criteria for the tender will be put before the publishing community for consideration. If and when publishers have accepted the terms of the tender and bids have been evaluated, contracts will be issued. Libraries and consortia will then be asked to formally commit to SCOAP^3 through a Memorandum of Understanding.

6. What are the costs for an individual library to participate?

The cost of supporting SCOAP^3 will not exceed the cost of subscription access to the identified suite of HEP journals. To determine the cost of participation in SCOAP^3, begin by calculating your library's current investment in the journals noted below. For package subscriptions, prorate the amount paid by title. (Question 7 offers more detail on how to address bundled deals).

Five journals are considered 100% convertible to SCOAP^3: Springer's *European Physical Journal C*, SISSA/IOP's *Journal of High Energy Physics*, Elsevier's *Nuclear Physics B* and *Physics Letters B* and APS' *Physical Review D*.

SCOAP^3 will target a smaller proportion of content from two other titles which carry a wider spectrum of articles beyond HEP: SISSA/IOP's *Journal of Instrumentation* (50%), Elsevier's *Nuclear Instruments and Methods* (20%), and APS' *Physical Review Letters* (10%).

These journals represent the vast majority of HEP literature but the list is in no way exhaustive: the competitive call for tender will be open to all journals publishing high-quality, peer-reviewed HEP content.

7. How do I calculate my current investment for SCOAP^3 journals when the journals are part of a larger package?

- If you have original subscription records and cost data, take the cost of the relevant journals at the start of the license and roll the amount forward based on the increase caps for the package (and any associated access fees).

  Example: Journal X originally cost $1,000 as part of a $100,000 package licensed in 2000; the package also included a 10% surcharge for online access. Annual increases were 7% for the 1st two years and have been 5% per year since then. Formula: Take $1,100 (=$1,000 + 10%) and multiply by 1.07 * 1.07 * 1.05 * 1.05... and so on. If you're calculating this on behalf of a consortium and there were 5 copies that went into the cost of the consortial license, make sure to add up all of the consortium copies.

- If you don't have historical data but your annual reconciliation process with the publisher lists individual prices, you already have the title detail that you need.

- If you don't have subscription records at the title level, use current publisher list prices to calculate the percentage of the package that the SCOAP^3 journals comprise.

  Example: at current list prices, Journals X and Y comprise 3.25% of the entire portfolio of journals covered by our license. If you're calculating this on behalf of a consortium, be sure to factor in multiple copies and a corresponding percentage of any added consortial fees.

8. How are we assured that publishers will terminate contracts for package deals we have subscribed to?

The governing board will ensure that tender requirements make explicit the un-bundling of these journals, and require publishers to reduce prices according to the fraction of articles/journals that will become Open Access. They will be required to issue either reimbursements or credits to ensure that no double payments occur. This aspect of the transition from subscription to SCOAP^3 is a cornerstone of the model,[2] and money will not be exchanged until terms are agreed upon.

Some of the libraries that have committed to SCOAP^3 have already successfully negotiated agreements with publishers to allow cancellation of the affected journals and withdrawal of the associated fees without penalty to the existing contract. In some cases these agreements also explicitly include the right to re-instate subscriptions at the capped pricing levels they would have reached had they remained in the package, should the library's participation in SCOAP^3 be discontinued.

9. Is the SCOAP^3 model expected to cost libraries less than they pay now for subscriptions? If yes, how?

While libraries are asked to commit to SCOAP^3 with the level of funding they currently direct to HEP publishing, and cost reductions will not be evident

[2] See pp. 24-26, Transition Aspects of the Tendering Requirements in the 2007 report, *Towards Open Access Publishing in High Energy Physics*. http://scoap3.org/files/Scoap3WPReport.pdf

in the first year, the model is expected to lower costs over time for the following reasons:

- The consortium creates the most possible leverage for libraries, negotiating with publishers as a single party.
- The competitive tender process will link price to quality and volume, challenging publishers to deliver more value for less cost. The process will also make fees transparent, open to analysis, and more thoroughly understood.
- The power of some publishers to inflate fees will be mitigated by the transparency of the bidding process; the cost of individual services will be specified and proposals will be openly visible.

10. Is it possible that the cost of supporting SCOAP^3 for an individual library will increase over time, as other libraries are forced to withdraw due to budget limitations?

The risk of the cost of supporting the consortium increasing is analogous to the risk of subscription cost increases. It's true that the commitment from libraries must be met, upon the Memorandum of Understanding, even though some libraries withdraw. If too many libraries withdraw, SCOAP^3 will be discontinued and an orderly return to the subscription model organized.

However, it is as likely that the cost of supporting the consortium will decrease in this case. If the projected national contribution is assembled and then additional libraries join, the cost for individual libraries will go down. If implemented, SCOAP^3 will also provide data by institution that would offer significant weight in local budget negotiations.

11. Who will be responsible for selecting journals to be included in SCOAP^3?

The SCOAP^3 governing board will be responsible. The board, which will be representative of the nations and funder types that form the consortium, will first achieve consensus on the criteria of the tender and then evaluate publisher responses. The guiding principle of the tender will be to convert all HEP literature to Open Access with a fixed price tag. Other criteria will include linking quality and price as well as price and volume, reducing the cost of subscription bundles based on the percent of articles to be converted to Open Access, and irreversible Open Access rights. Additional criteria will be identified by the governing board.

12. How have publishers reacted to the SCOAP^3 proposal?

All publishers of high-quality HEP journals have been involved in consultative conversations with SCOAP^3 since the beginning of the project. All have demonstrated a pro-active and open attitude toward the HEP community's desire for Open Access to research, including allowing or promoting self-archiving (the APS even hosts a mirror of the popular arXiv repository) and offering Open Access to subsets of the literature at no cost to authors. This is the case with the *European Physical Journal C*, which offers Open Access for all letters and articles in experimental High-Energy Physics, or Elsevier's *Nuclear Physics B* and *Physics Letters B*, which have pledged to publish Open Access with no fees all articles describing results of the Large Hadron Collider. SISSA/IOP's *Journal of High Energy Physics* and *Journal of Instrumentation* offer low-cost Open Access institutional memberships that have resulted to over a third of their content to be Open Access, with no damage to their subscriptions. The organizers are encouraged and expect the publisher response to the call for tender to be positive.

13. Which libraries & library consortia have committed to SCOAP^3?

As of April 2009, U.S. libraries have collectively pledged 2.2M$ of the 3.6M$ that the consortium aims to raise in the U.S. Canadian libraries, represented by CRKN and CISTI, have collectively pledged the entire contribution expected from Canada. The targeted contribution is calculated based on the share of the HEP literature produced in each country i.e. those countries that use the peer-review services the most are expected to make the greatest financial contributions. The worldwide membership of SCOAP^3 is listed at http://www.scoap3.org/whoisscoap3.html. The list of U.S. libraries that have signed an Expression of Interest is at http://scoap3.org/scoap3us_alpha.html.

14. By law U.S. public universities and agencies cannot make payments for services that otherwise are freely available. How will participation in SCOAP^3 qualify as a legitimate purchase?

Membership in the SCOAP^3 consortium will give U.S. universities access, upon request, to additional services operated from the SCOAP^3 repository that would not be otherwise freely available. These services will be designed by the SCOAP^3 governing board. Some examples include:

- The opportunity for participating institutions to automatically populate their own digital repository with metadata and articles authored by their scientists, as soon as they appear in the SCOAP^3 repository. This metadata could subsequently be enriched with usage and citation data.
- The possibility for participants to host their own archive of the entire corpus published under SCOAP^3, automatically populated from the SCOAP^3 repository. This is an opportunity that is not accessible under some current licensing schemes.
- The opportunity to brand the pages from which the SCOAP^3 repository serves articles, so that users visiting from the institution's I.P. addresses would clearly identify the support of the library.

In addition, members of SCOAP^3 will have the exclusive right to participate to the determination of the SCOAP^3 international governing board and therefore have voice in the evolution and operation of the initiative.

15. What will happen after the first year of SCOAP^3 implementation?

The goal is to have contractual conditions and prices in place for three years, before proceeding with regular calls for tenders. Within the limits of the partners' ability to enter multi-year agreements, SCOAP^3 will aim to offer publishers contracts for three-year periods.

In the case where the consortium is not in a position to continue its operations, the governing board will have the power to centrally negotiate explicit protections into the contracts with publishers, whereby – for example – libraries might be guaranteed that subscriptions may be reinstated at previous levels.

16. How will we ensure that SCOAP^3 journals are archived in the same way as before?

Journals that are SCOAP^3 partners will be expected to continue their current archiving practices. In addition, Open Access to the materials will make it possible for electronic versions to be stored anywhere, including in each library's digital repository.

17. Is the SCOAP^3 model intended to be extensible? Is there any indication whether the approach will be replicable by other disciplines?

The relevance of the SCOAP^3 model, which is being developed with the specific needs of the HEP community in mind, will only be understood after the consortium has begun its operation. However, the data resulting from the SCOAP^3 implementation is expected to be of use in the planning and implementation of other Open Access ventures.

18. Libraries are concerned about the sustainability of arXiv and other open-access models in the field once SCOAP^3 is launched. What will be the relationship between arXiv and SCOAP^3?

It is expected that SCOAP^3 will help to stabilize Open Access in the HEP field, which includes arXiv and other projects. arXiv and SCOAP^3 complement one another: arXiv pioneered Open Access in HEP and provides the cornerstone for unhindered and immediate circulation of initial research in the field (most frequently before peer-review); SCOAP^3 will tackle the issue of sustainable Open Access to the prestigious peer-reviewed publications on which HEP scientists depend to advance their careers.

19. What is the authority behind SCOAP^3? Who is promoting this model?

SCOAP^3 is being led by CERN, which provides infrastructure and services and which is uniquely equipped to promote SCOAP^3 on behalf of the HEP community. Driven by the support of its international research partners, CERN is financing and leading the fund-raising effort for SCOAP^3. CERN will also donate time from its legal and

purchasing divisions to operate SCOAP^3 once implemented.

The proposal to establish SCOAP^3 mirrors the process used to establish successful governance models for many large international HEP research collaborations, which in some cases count more than 2500 scientists, 500 institutes, and 80 countries. These collaborations have self-organized through a process that has involved data analysis, consensus-building via Expressions of Interest, establishing a governing board, signing Memoranda of Understanding, issuing competitive tenders for the purchase of equipment and services, and negotiating contractual agreements with suppliers. Ultimately, a SCOAP^3 governing board will be established once a sufficient number of Expressions of Interest have been received.

For more information about SCOAP3, visit http://scoap3.org.

To submit an Expression of Interest, visit http://tinyurl.com/scoap3us