

NIH eRA eXchange Partnership Program

Service Provider Questionnaire

Solution Name: Coeus

Company Name: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

1. What is the name of the solution you developed to help grantees submit electronic applications to the NIH?

Coeus

2a. Is your solution a product or is it a service that can be purchased by an institution?

Product.

2b. If a product, do you offer site licenses, concurrent user licenses, desktop licenses or other pricing mechanisms?

Licensees get all source code and future upgrades. Cost is \$500 per institution. One-time fee; all upgrades free.

2c. If a service, describe your service contracts?

N/A

3a. If your solution is a product, is it an enhancement to an existing product?

Yes. The current version is Coeus, Version 3.8. The new Java-based version, which we've started populating the NIH XML file, will be Version 4.0. Licensed institutions will get this version for free if they choose to download it.

3b. If yes, is it necessary to purchase the entire package?

For \$500, the institutions pick and choose which pieces of the application they want to implement. Version 4.0, for example, includes an Institutional Review Board (IRB) module. Some schools will choose to implement this, some will not.

4. If your e-application solution is a service, do you offer other related services? If so, describe the services and their associated costs.

N/A

5. Is your solution appropriate for small, medium, and/or large institutions? (Small=<50 applications submitted per year; medium=50–200 applications submitted per year; large=>200 applications submitted each year.)

Yes. We have schools with less than \$3,000,000 in funding that have licensed Coeus. Our latest addition to the Coeus family is Johns Hopkins University. Some schools purchased the \$500 license but never actually implemented the software. Others

implemented some modules and not others, while some schools are at prior versions. A list of schools LICENSED to use Coeus is available at http://web.mit.edu/osp/www/coeus/licensee_list.htm.

6. Does your solution require the purchase of hardware?

The MIT solution requires a database server and the Java application requires a Web/application server. However, Coeus is not a hardware “hog.” A relatively entry-level server will be sufficient for most schools. Of course, those that do a lot of customizations and local enhancements tend to have a development, test and production environment.

7a. Do you provide customer support?

Yes. By email and telephone. We will send technical staff on-site for a fee. Since the software is only \$500, support is “pay as you go” for on-site support. Telephone and email assistance is free. Additionally, we hold an annual Coeus user group meeting and host “focus” sessions a couple of times a year. During the focus sessions, we gather functionality requirements for future release enhancements. We hosted three, 2-day focus sessions for our IRB effort.

7b. If so, when is this service available?

Immediately upon signing a license.

7c. How many concurrent calls can you handle?

A bit different for an academic institution. We have several points-of-contact and mailing lists. Most of the time, email is sufficient. If not, the appropriate technical person will contact the user. If, for example, someone has a question about setting up routing and approvals, then the programmer responsible for developing that module will handle the customer.

7d. Describe the skills of your customer support team.

Across the spectrum. We offer xmlSpy support, Java support, Tomcat support, Oracle support, Powerbuilder support.

7e. How do you charge for customer support?

Telephone and email assistance are free. Long-term technical support on site is \$80/hour. Short-term support (e.g., for two days) is \$150/hour.

8. What operating systems/platforms are compatible with your solution? Is there a requirement for a specific database system?

Coeus requires an Oracle database. Oracle isolates the database from the underlying operating system, so the operating system should not be an issue. Web/application servers require a little more configuration. We’ve been successful with Websphere and Web Logic as well as Apache/Tomcat.

9a. Explain how the institution supplies you with grant application data and attachments. (Through downloadable forms? Through a Web interface? Through PDF files? Through system-to-system data streams?)

All of the above. The latest version of Coeus is a Java Swing application. We use WebStart technology to deploy the application. For the majority of functions, the users will interact with the Java Swing application. We also use JSP pages for “light” users, e.g., administrators requiring limited use of the system. For them, simply opening a Web browser to approve a proposal is sufficient. For some forms, the user can download the form, complete it, then upload the form back into Coeus. We store Word and PDF files in the database at this time. However, the Java application technically has the ability to store any type of binary data supported by the browser. We are currently working with Grants.gov to create a system-to-system interface.

9b. How many users can submit proposals concurrently?

Virtually unlimited—as long as the server is sufficient for the number of concurrent users.

9c. Will the institution be able to capture the data transmitted to the NIH? If so, how?

Yes. All data is stored locally in the Oracle database. We anticipate that the data will arrive at NIH via the Grants.gov mechanism.

10a. Did you take part in any of the NIH eRA CGAP pilots?

No.

10b. If so, provide contact information for at least one participating client.

No response.

11. Do you offer free trials?

Since we must support a variety of schools, we do not have the resources to support free trials. We have a test system that potential users can see, but will not offer any support or questions until the \$500 license is paid.

12. Provide contact information for a specific company representative who can respond to institution inquiries.

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13. Do you have plans for enhancing and/or expanding your product or service? What are they?

Many. We have a Web site available for “wish lists.” The institutions help prioritize (and occasionally help fund) future enhancements. The product has about 75 man-years of effort. We continue to add bells and whistles. Releases come out about every 9 months.

14. Briefly describe the background of your organization.

MIT has been developing the Coeus system for nine years. We have produced nine versions of the software with version 4.0 being our latest. MIT will continue to develop the application both in terms of new functionality for existing modules and new modules that ultimately will encompass the entire life-cycle of eRA. We have several full-time staff devoted to development as well as contractor support as needed. Our Powerbuilder-to-Java conversion, for example, required 13 additional contractors to meet our target delivery dates. MIT is in the process of formalizing a consortium agreement. Schools joining the consortium will have the opportunity to assist in the development, prioritization and future direction of Coeus releases.