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WHAT IS ICPT?

National Laboratories can make use of a DOE sponsored purchasing mechanism called Integrated Contractor Purchasing Team (ICPT). ICPTs can be used for the purchase of many goods and services including information resources. ICPT agreements are overseen by a steering committee with procurement representatives from across the DOE laboratory complex.¹

ICPT can be used for information resources related subscriptions and purchases that are managed by laboratory libraries. The National Laboratory Libraries Coalition (NLLC) serves as the mechanism for determining interest and potential value of agreements. Members of NLLC volunteer to lead negotiations on behalf of the group. If an agreement is reached with a vendor, the lead laboratory will generally issue the paperwork required by member laboratories to execute a purchase order at the laboratory level. Required paperwork includes pricing documentation, terms and conditions (licenses), Representations and Certifications, and the Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA). ICPT agreements have a limit of five years (one plus four option years).

Current ICPT agreements:

- o American Chemical Society (ACS)
- o American Institute of Physics Publishing (AIPP)
- o Clarivate
- o Elsevier
- o IEEE
- o John Wiley & Sons
- o Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
- o SciFinder-n - Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS)
- o Springer Nature.

All the agreements listed above (except Clarivate) are NREL-led or will transition to NREL at the next agreement renewal.

Agreements cover such resources as:

- o Conference proceedings
- o Databases
- o Ebooks
- o Journal archive purchases
- o Journal subscriptions
- o Open access through Transformative Agreements or Read & Publish.
- o Text and Data Mining.

GOALS AND BENEFITS OF ICPT

Overall goals:

- o Control costs over time with escalation caps and built in discounts.
- o Centrally negotiate terms and conditions.
- o Provide member laboratories with a variety of resources for subscription and/or purchase with pre-negotiated terms and conditions.

Benefits include:

- o Member laboratories know what to expect and can plan their budgets accordingly.
- o Negotiating as a group likely leads to lower costs.
- o Reduces time to complete annual renewals at the laboratory-level.

ABOUT US

The National Laboratory Libraries Coalition (NLLC) is a loose consortium of libraries from the seventeen Department of Energy (DOE) National Laboratories across the United States. DOE laboratories are Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC) and are government owned, contractor operated research centers.² Membership in NLLC is voluntary but participation rates are generally high. NLLC provides a platform for member libraries to share information and lessons learned in the operation of research libraries that support the information needs of their home laboratories. Shared areas of interest include budget, staffing, collection development, and open access. Each laboratory is distinct both as legal entities and broader mission spaces. As such, all purchasing is completed at the laboratory level rather than at the consortium level.



Image Source: <https://www.energy.gov/articles/building-computer-literate-workforce>

Sources:

1. "Integrated Contractor Purchasing Team." n.d. Accessed October 3, 2024. <https://icpt.doe.gov/>.
2. Gallo, Marcy E. 2021. "Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs): Background and Issues for Congress." R44629. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44629>.

Acknowledgment:

Thank you to our sister laboratories for having faith in us to lead these agreements on their behalf. Thank you also to the amazing NREL ICPT Team. Our colleagues in legal and procurement are true partners, and we could not execute these agreements without their support.

OPEN ACCESS AND ICPT

It is our goal to include Transformative Agreements (TAs) wherever possible with new and existing ICPTs:

- o Participation is optional.
- o A member laboratory may sign-on for traditional journal subscriptions and skip the open access piece.
- o We aim for cost neutrality for member laboratories, or a shift of costs from reading to publishing (open access) with as little a cost increase as possible to a laboratory's overall spend.
- o Uncapped agreements are preferred but are rare.

Overall interest in open access and therefore some kind of TA is on the rise amongst NLLC laboratories but only a minority have made use of existing options.

Obstacles to participation:

- o Cost – Few publishers are truly cost neutral and oftentimes year one of a TA includes pricing jumps that are higher than normal escalation.
- o Limited library budgets – while interest is out there, not all libraries have been able to secure additional funding.
- o Concerns of time commitment – some NLLC members have expressed concerns over the amount of time it will take to administer these agreements. Since all laboratories are separate and distinct entities, any administrative responsibilities take place at the laboratory level.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- o Implementing new agreements and renewing existing agreements takes time.
- o Talks for agreements with start dates of January 1 should start as early as possible the previous calendar year.
- o Not all subscriptions are worthy of an ICPT – overall cost and the number of interested laboratories must be high enough to justify the time expenditure.
- o Most publishers we have approached are eager to work with us on ICPTs as they see this purchasing mechanism as a time-saving effort for them as well.
- o Member laboratories participate in ICPT on an opt-in basis. Even the lead laboratory may not know with absolute certainty whether all interested members ultimately participate (by issuing Purchase Orders) until the ICPT comes up for renewal.
- o Each publisher has distinct terms and conditions and standardization across agreements is difficult to achieve.
- o Laboratory-level procurement departments are not always fully knowledgeable of ICPT mechanics and will at times duplicate some of the due diligence already performed by the lead laboratory while executing their site's Purchase Order.