PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT
JOURNAL SUBMISSION AND WEB HOSTING – *JOURNAL OF REPLICATION AND REPRODUCIBILITY*
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

1. BACKGROUND: The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is preparing to launch a new scholarly journal and publishing platform focused on the reproducibility space. The *Journal of Replication and Reproducibility* (*JRR*) will address a major gap in scientific publishing: the lack of incentives, visibility, and infrastructure for replication research. By sponsoring replication studies as well as publishing studies from outside groups and authors, and combining full-service publication with an integrated open and interactive repository for data, methods, software, and materials for both internal and external studies, *JRR* will become a trusted global platform for transparent and verifiable science.

JRR will be an online only, diamond open-access scientific journal and platform dedicated to publishing direct replication studies, conceptual replication studies, reproducibility analyses, null results and negative findings, and registered replication reports. Each paper will be accompanied by a mandatory, permanent repository hosted by *JRR* that includes all supporting materials necessary to replicate and validate the claims made in the paper.

As a diamond open-access journal, *JRR* will have no author publication charges, no pay-per-view purchases, and no subscriptions. All content will be freely available to anyone visiting the website, as all costs will be covered by the NIH.

1.1. Current Processes and Specifications: As a new endeavor, there are no existing articles, archives, platforms, data, or requirements that must be incorporated into this project. All content to be published in the journal will be created specifically for this platform.

2. OBJECTIVES: The basic service objective is to provide a fully integrated journal submission, manuscript review, and web publishing/hosting platform for the website on a third-party, separately hosted journals-publishing platform; this platform will not live on a government server and will not have a ".gov" URL. The platform must be able to accept submissions from authors; post papers as preprints ahead of final publication; route papers to reviewers; allow reviewers to upload comments; allow papers to be published in both a preprint and a "final" format that both include full-text XML; allow for the hosting and archiving of all supporting material in an integrated, interactive manner; and offer uninterrupted access to users worldwide. The service must also be robust enough to serve users throughout the world, including those with poor or limited internet access in low- and middle-income countries. Being a diamond open-access journal, the site must offer unfettered access to all readers in all countries.

Rough estimates of publication numbers for the journal are 20-40 articles in the first year of work.

3. TASKS & DELIVERABLES: The Government will not exercise any supervision or control over the contract service providers performing the services herein. Such contract service providers shall be accountable solely to the contractor who, in turn is responsible to the Government. The contractor, in turn, shall be accountable to the Government for contractor personnel, subcontractors, or contract service providers.

3.1. TASKS: The contractor shall provide the following services:

Task 1 – General Support Services: The contractor shall:

- Provide web hosting for the *JRR* journal program, meeting all requirements listed in the Web Hosting section.

- Provide a platform capable of receiving submissions from authors, meeting all requirements listed in the Submission System section.
- Provide a platform capable of posting papers as preprints ahead of final publication, meeting all requirements listed in the Preprints section.
- Provide a platform capable of routing papers for open peer review and receiving reviewer comments, meeting all requirements listed in the Open Peer Review section.
- Provide a platform capable of single-source XML publishing, meeting all requirements listed in the Single-Source XML Publishing section.
- Provide a platform capable of hosting code in Git-style repositories, with each paper having its own Git-style instance, meeting all requirements listed in the Code Repositories section.
- Provide a platform capable of hosting containerized software environments running software provided by the author, meeting all requirements listed in the Containerized Compute section.
- Provide a platform capable of continuous publication, meeting all requirements listed in the Article-by-Article Publishing (Continuous Publication) section.
- Provide a platform that allows for interface customization, as detailed in the Customizable User Interface section.
- Provide a platform that supports full-text search with facets and a taxonomy, as detailed in the Search and Taxonomy section.
- Provide a platform that supports social media integration, as detailed in the Social Media Integration section.
- Provide a platform that is mobile responsive, and not dependent on apps for mobile views, as described in the Mobile-Responsive Site section.
- Provide a platform that allows related articles to be linked together for the benefit of users and readers, as described in the Related Article Linking section.
- Provide a portal for *JRR* staff to access back-end systems and reports from the platform, and to manually manipulate content, as detailed in the Customer Administration Portal section.
- Provide a platform that allows access to all content for people with disabilities such as but not limited to blindness, deafness, and colorblind, as detailed in the Compliance section.
- Provide the ability to send out email alerts for content on the platform to alert users to new content and more, as detailed in the Email Alerts section.
- Provide usage statistics for the platform and its content, as detailed in the Usage Statistics section.
- Meet all customer service requirements detailed in the Customer Service section.

Task 2 - Web Hosting: The platform provider shall deliver robust hosting services for their proprietary platform. The contractor shall meet the following requirements:

- The platform provided by the contractor shall be hosted from datacenter(s) offering redundant access options to ensure maximum uptime. Please detail all redundancy options currently in place at the various hosting centers.
- A guarantee of 99.95% uptime shall be provided by the platform.
- The platform provided by the contractor shall be accessible from datacenters located throughout the continental United States.
- The platform provided by the contractor shall have sufficient processing power and bandwidth to serve content and pages supporting the expected 100,000+ monthly page views.
- Best-practice data archiving schemes shall be in place to ensure long-term data integrity.
- The contractor shall register and manage all necessary URLs on behalf of the *JRR* program, and will manage DNS to connect those URLs to the platform.
    - The exact URLs purchased and used will depend on availability at the time this section of the contract is executed; the contractor will procure the URLs within 5 business days of being

directed to by the government. The contractor should expect to purchase up to twelve (12) URLs for this project, and shall keep them active for the duration of the contract.
    - Domains and DNS records shall be transferable to the Government or its designated successor contractor during phase-out/transition.
- The platform provided by the contractor shall allow for the hosting of both HTML/XML content, as well as hosting and downloads of various content types [PDF articles, graphic files, various supplemental material files associated with individual articles, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint slides, zip bundles, code and data files, raw data, processed datasets, statistical scripts, computational notebooks (e.g., R, Python, MATLAB), software source code and dependencies, experimental materials (stimuli, surveys, protocols), pre-registration documentation, version history, and the like – the contractors shall specify any restrictions on file type downloads].
- Any scheduled hosting maintenance that would degrade the user experience or take the site offline must be posted in advance and shall occur outside normal U.S. business hours (Monday–Friday, 8:00 am–5:00 pm Eastern) whenever possible.
- Support for streaming audio or video, and optional support for hosting video. A line item for the cost of hosting video should be included in the price list as an optional element.
- Ability to deliver all content over a secure connection [HTTPS enforced, HTTP Strict Transport Security (HSTS) with long duration, RSA 2048 bit Key length, SHA256withRSA certificate signature algorithm, TLS 1.3, perfect forward secrecy].
- Ability to design/customize the public-facing portions of the site as needed to ensure its look and performance are consistent with the goals of the *JRR* program. One (1) design should be budgeted for by the contractor in their initial quote; any additional design requirements beyond the initial design and launch items will be added as a future modification.
- Within sixty (60) days of award, the platform provider shall publish/host a promo site announcing the *JRR* program, and hosting basic information such as Aims & Scope, names of editorial board members, short news updates on the launch of the program, and a way for interested parties to sign up for a newsletter. This site shall be live until the main site launches.
- In the process of development and deployment of the platform, the provider will incorporate Government feedback, as appropriate, in the process of Systems Integration Testing (SIT), User Acceptance Testing (UAT), or equivalent processes.
- The live (production) platform incorporating all features and tasks will be fully developed, deployed, and available to the public no later than September 1, 2027, unless otherwise directed by the Government. Prior to this launch date, the provider will give a full demo of the working production system to the Government as confirmation that it is complete, stable, and ready to accept and publish live content.

Task 3 – Submission System: The platform provider shall deliver a robust submission system that is integrated into their proprietary platform. The contractor shall meet the following requirements:

- Authors shall be able to self-register at the time of submission if they do not already have an account on the platform. This account shall grant the user the right to submit content only; there will be no other access granted during self-registration.
- The system shall accept manuscripts in both Microsoft Word and TeX (LaTeX and RevTeX, for example, and their associated BibTex and style files) formats.
- The system shall accept a wide variety of figure file formats, including PDF, TIFF, EPS, BMP, PNG, and JPG. Figures shall not be automatically resaved or converted to any other formats; they must be made available in the format originally uploaded by the author.
- The system shall accept supplemental material uploads from authors: these will include text documents, figures, tables, video, audio, software, computational notebooks, code, and data sets, among others. There shall be no restrictions on the file types that authors can provide, and no limit on the size of each upload. These materials shall be included with the posted preprint and accessible to all Editors and Reviewers

during the peer review process.

- The system shall allow authors the ability to clone an existing GitHub archive into the Git-style repository hosted by the platform.
- The system shall allow authors to install open-source software into the containerized compute environment hosted by the platform.
- The system shall have the ability for journals to build basic custom submission questions and fields for authors to type responses, and for *JRR* staff to make changes to these questions directly without intervention from the provider's technical support staff.
- The system shall allow the journals to define required metadata fields, both during initial setup of the product and during the normal use of the product. Any data entered into these fields shall be reportable.
- The system shall offer a role-based permissions system for users, so new users can be assigned permissions to perform their job function quickly and easily.
- The system shall log email correspondence sent to the editors, reviewers, and authors, including allowing externally logged attachments (of any file type).
- The system shall track all dates associated with the submission, peer review, and acceptance of the paper.
- The system shall provide a mechanism for creating and using email templates for each peer review and production task to be assigned to a user. These emails shall allow for the use of hyperlinks and merge data to automatically pull relevant manuscript metadata [titles, authors, manuscript number, digital object identifier (DOI)] into the email templates.
- The system shall allow user self-service options for updating contact information and resetting passwords.
- The system shall be capable of sending automated reminder messages to authors, editors, associate/deputy editors, and reviewers on a schedule that is defined by the journal. Configuration options must allow these reminders to be sent both before and after the assignment is due.
- The system shall allow easy assignment of peer review tasks to reviewers and Associate/Deputy Editors.
- Upon Government request or contract completion, the system shall export Government content, metadata, workflow records, and supporting files in documented, commonly used formats that do not require or restrict access to the Contractor's proprietary platform. JATS XML is preferred, and any content originally provided to the platform in JATS XML format will be preserved in that format for the purposes of this export.
- The system shall be capable of exporting manuscript files (Word or TeX documents, figures, tables) in a Zip bundle, along with XML metadata (JATS XML preferred) and transmitting it as a bundle to an external server.
- The system shall include a People database of individual user profiles, allowing users to register and keep basic contact and login information on file.
- The system shall be capable of assigning DOIs to all articles, using the preferred format of the publisher.
- Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) integration is required. Authors shall be able to enter and validate their ORCID IDs (and the IDs of their co-authors) from within the submission interface, and users shall also be allowed to log into the system using their ORCID IDs.
- The system shall provide a robust reporting system. The reporting system shall offer both preconfigured reports and the ability to create ad-hoc reports. Such reports shall be able to be run and delivered to users on a schedule.
- The system shall notify the publisher, via email, of each submitted paper.
- Each submitted paper should be received by the platform's staging area. The author shall be allowed to view the paper in staging prior to final submission to ensure it appears as they expect. This staging view must also be available to *JRR* staff.

Task 4 – Preprints: The platform provider shall deliver a robust preprint system that is integrated into their proprietary platform. The contractor shall meet the following requirements:

- All submitted papers that pass a basic scope and technical check from the publisher shall be posted as a preprint.
- All preprint papers must be clearly labeled as a "preprint" on the platform to distinguish them from papers that are accepted and published in their final form.
- The platform shall register the assigned DOI at the time the preprint is posted to the site by the publisher.
- Preprints shall be fully indexed for search.
- All supporting features of the platform shall be made available to preprints; features like full-text XML/HTML, Git-style repositories and compute containers will not be reserved just for final, published papers.

Task 5 – Open Peer Review: The platform provider shall deliver a robust open peer review system that is integrated into their proprietary platform. The contractor shall meet the following requirements:

- All registered users to the site shall have the ability to be a reviewer. This role shall be added to the user record by the publisher's staff.
- At the direction of the publisher, reviewers shall receive email invitations to review a paper on the platform. The platform shall generate these invitations automatically. The invitation shall include a link to accept or reject the invitation, which will log the response to the platform, and will also generate an email notice to the publisher indicating the response.
- The platform shall notify the publisher, via email, about review invitations that have not been acknowledged after 3 business days.
- Since all papers eligible for review will be posted to the platform as a preprint, reviewers will not require special access to the paper itself.
- If the reviewer accepts the review invitation, the reviewer shall be able to log into the platform to provide their review to the publisher. The platform shall allow reviewers to type (or copy/paste) a text review into the platform for the paper they have been assigned; this includes public comments that will be part of the open review, as well as confidential comments to the editor. Once submitted, the platform shall notify the publisher, via email, that a review has been received.
- If the reviewer rejects the review invitation, the platform shall notify the publisher, via email.
- The review status of each paper not yet published in final form shall be displayed to the publisher via a dashboard in the platform. This platform shall only be accessible to users who are logged in with the appropriate role.
- The publisher can invite an unlimited number of reviewers to review the paper, but it is expected that only one round of peer review shall be supported; the platform provider should detail the full capabilities and limitations of their review system in their response.
- The platform shall allow the publisher to easily cancel all outstanding reviews if sufficient reviews have already been received for publication.
- The platform shall be capable of saving and publicly displaying, once approved by the editors, the completed peer review reports obtained from manuscript reviewers.

Task 6 – Single Source XML Publishing: The *JRR* production and composition processes will follow the best practices of single-source XML publishing. As a result, the web publishing system must be capable of ingesting content in an XML format. The site provided by the contractor must meet the following requirements:

- Must accept JATS XML content as full-text source files and automatically convert this to HTML for online viewing. Standard JATS shall be supported – platforms that support only customized versions of JATS (as prescribed by the platform) will not be considered. JATS 1.4 Archiving and Interchange (Green) with XHTML Tables will be the launch specification for *JRR*.
- Must accept MathML content, which must be displayed in a typeset, interactive format. Platforms that require math/MathML to be displayed as images will not be considered. The Government requires use of

display tools such as MathJax. (MathJax is considered superior to KaTeX, due to wider compatibility and better visual presentation of math.) MathML 3.0 (Presentation Format) will be the launch specification for *JRR*.
- The platform must accept and display high-resolution images (including vector-based EPS files) with the XML input.
- The platform must support the display of XHTML tables (within the JATS 1.4 framework). Platforms that require tables to be displayed as images, or that require tables to be provided only in OASIS format, will not be considered.
- The platform must be capable of automatically converting and depositing the provided JATS XML into the appropriate format for deposit at outside databases, including Crossref, PubMed, and PubMed Central. The platform must also manage the deposits of these data, DOI registration, and distribution of metadata to any other major Abstracting & Indexing services (indicate all that are supported).
- The platform must support the automatic distribution of both metadata and full-text content to Abstracting & Indexing services, as well as archiving services such as CLOCKSS and LOCKSS.
- The platform must provide downloadable article citation information in multiple formats (such as EndNote and BibTeX), for users to import into their reference manager software. These formats shall be automatically created from the publication XML – the publisher or composition services provider will not deliver these formats separately.

Task 7 – Code Repositories: The platform provider shall deliver a robust code repository system that is integrated into their proprietary platform. The contractor shall meet the following requirements:

- A code repository shall be available for each submitted paper. It shall appear with the preprint or published paper.
- At submission, authors will have the opportunity to either (1) type or copy-and-paste code into a repository, or (2) clone/fork a GitHub repository into the *JRR* archive. Additional options should be detailed by the platform provider.
- The code repository of each paper shall be version controlled, so that any changes made during the review and publication process are captured.
- The repository shall allow readers to download the code directly from the platform, or clone it to a private GitHub archive.
- Upon Government request or contract completion, the Contractor shall provide complete Git-compatible exports of Government repositories, including version history.

Task 8 – Containerized Compute: The platform provider shall deliver a robust containerized compute system that is integrated into their proprietary platform. The contractor shall meet the following requirements:

- A containerized compute environment (such as Docker) shall be available for each submitted paper. It shall appear with the preprint or published paper.
- At submission, authors will have the opportunity to upload and install open-source software into the environment.
- The compute environment shall be interactive, allowing readers to upload data directly into it in order to check the reproducibility of the study.
- Uploads to the compute environment by readers shall not be preserved, and should be discarded after 24 hours to conserve resources.
- The platform provider is expected to provide reasonable site monitoring and usage controls to prevent abuse of these compute environments.

Task 9 – Article-by-Article Publishing (Continuous Publication): *JRR* will publish each article as it becomes ready, both as a preprint and in final form. The site provided by the contractor shall meet the following requirements:

- The platform shall allow for articles to be posted or published live one at a time.
- Metadata deposits shall take place as soon as the article is made live.
- The platform shall be capable of registering DOIs on behalf of *JRR* at the time of preprint posting or final publication (DOIs should be updated at final publication with any relevant changes).
- The platform shall contain automated tools to make readers aware of new article-by-article publications (email alerts, new content lists on various pages – list all that are available for use).

Task 10 – Customizable User Interface: *JRR* will serve a variety of users. As a result, the design of the web interface is very important. Robust professional support and design personnel at the platform provider will be essential to this task, especially during initial setup or major redesigns. The government expects the platform provider to make such talent available for the design and launch of this platform, and *JRR* staff shall be able to communicate directly with the design team throughout the design and launch process.

Task 11 – Search and Taxonomy: Users are conditioned to reach directly for the search box instead of browsing for the content that they want, making a robust search engine (with advanced search options, faceting, and filtering) essential to the success of any website. However, few companies are able to perform search well, and an ill-performing search engine is just as bad as no search engine at all. The platform shall offer a robust search engine, using available metadata such as article type, title, authors, abstract, publication date, and full-text search, and shall also provide users with relevant "See Also" links (aka, the Amazon experience) on both the search page and on individual article pages. This improves reader engagement and keeps them on the site longer.

Customization of the search pages (tools and results) is required. The platform shall also allow for full-text indexing by major third-party search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, Baidu, etc.), and shall provide for some form of search-engine optimization.

The platform shall also support taxonomies (MeSH is the preferred taxonomy for *JRR*) to complement site search functionality and to aid users in finding the content they are looking for.

Task 12 – Social Media Integration: The platform must at least offer buttons for users to share content and links via Facebook, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, Reddit, and email, but will ideally be setup to allow users to share content via many more outlets. Provisions for supporting and generating Facebook Open Graph (OG) meta tags, to allow for more consistent postings, are also needed. The platform provider shall detail all available social media integrations.

Task 13 – Mobile-Responsive Site: While some publishers have embraced apps as the path to mobile success, *JRR* requires that the Contractor operate a mobile-optimized/mobile-responsive website. The platform must be device aware and must present a mobile-optimized interface to all users accessing it via a mobile device. And since many mobile users do not have access to cutting-edge devices, the mobile site must be performant on mid-grade mobile hardware.

Task 14 – Related Article Linking: *JRR* may publish articles that are related to one another, whether it be a multipart series of papers or a letter/response combination. The platform must make use of the <related-article> elements in the JATS DTD to automatically build these links into the UI of the appropriate article page. The site shall be forward looking (e.g., if an erratum is published with a <related-article> link back to the original paper, a related article link shall appear on both the erratum page and the original article page without the need to upload revised XML for the original paper).

Task 15 – Customer Administration Portal: The website hosting platform must provide an administrative interface for *JRR* staff and its designates to upload content, publish content, preview content in staging, run reports and retrieve usage statistics, administer accounts, resupply metadata deposits, configure advertisements, and more. Self-service will be a key aspect of the *JRR* platform.

Task 16 – Email Alerts: Email is still an excellent option for reaching out to users and letting them know when new content has been posted to the website. Users of the web platform shall be given the opportunity to sign up for email alerts about new publications, new announcements from the journal, and other important content alerts. The site must maintain these lists and must offer the ability to automatically generate alerts within certain parameters, pulling article data directly from the site as needed. No lists may be purchased or sold, and subscriber lists and related records are Government data and shall be transferred in a commonly used format upon Government request or contract completion.

The content of the email publication alerts (titles, authors, publication date, DOI, and links) must be generated by the site; *JRR* staff will not provide separate documentation detailing the content of every publication email alert that needs to be sent.

Task 17 – Usage Statistics: *JRR* will not be permitted to collect personally-identifiable information about its site visitors (outside of registered users who submit or review for the journal), so the journal will rely heavily on aggregate data provided by the platform. The platform shall be capable of capturing and reporting on the following data points, at least monthly (in most cases, real-time or near real-time statistics are preferred):

- Total page views, total users, and total unique users.
- Total PDF downloads.
- Most popular/most read content, with the ability to distinguish between the various types of content published by *JRR*.
- Number of subscribers to the various email alerts.
- Referral sources.
- Aggregated user activity within the platform (i.e., page- or asset-specific clicks, interactions with specific page elements, etc.)

Integration or compatibility with Google Analytics/Universal Analytics is required.

The platform shall also support the use and display of alternative metric plugins, such as Altmetric and Dimensions (*JRR* plans to use both).

Task 18 – Customer Support Services: *JRR* requires the assignment of an individual, primary customer support representative (with a backup) at the contractor, to act as a single point of contact for all inquiries from the publisher. Direct email and phone contact information must be provided for both individuals. The contractor shall stipulate a central customer support representative for *JRR*'s account. Any response that requires support to be initiated through a ticketing system or phone queue will be deemed unacceptable.

The journal expects the ability to host regular conference calls with the account manager, and with any other members of the contractor's team that are required based on current projects or problems. The frequency for these calls shall be once a week at the start of the contract, moving to once every two (2) weeks or once a month under normal operations, as mutually agreed. A regular meeting schedule will be established to ensure consistency in these conference calls. Zoom or Teams, provided by the contractor, is the preferred method for hosting the calls.

3.2. DELIVERABLES: The contractor shall provide the following reports/plans as specified below (Also, reference Attachment 1 – Deliverables_JRR Platform.

3.2.1. Email Alerts: Monthly TOC alerts. Alerts are distributed to all alert subscribers by e-mail.

3.2.2. Journal Web Hosting Data Report: Provide an annual report for journal web hosting on storage size and bandwidth used per month. The report is due 10 days after completion of the period of performance. Report shall be submitted to the COR(s) by e-mail.

3.2.3. Journal Web Administration Data Report: Provide an annual report for journal web administration on number of articles published and overall size of the journal, per month. The report is due 10 days after completion of the period of performance. Report shall be submitted to the COR(s) by e-mail.

3.2.4. A Privacy Threshold Analysis (PTA) is due within 30 days after contract award, and annually thereafter. Reference the Contract for details.

3.2.5. Contract Employee Data is due within 7-days (before an employee begins working on the contract). Reference the Contract for details.

3.2.6. A Security Assessment and Authorization (SA&A) is due within 30 days after contract award, and annually thereafter. The SA&A shall include all plans/reports listed in Contract, not required to be submitted with the technical quote.

3.2.7. Data Export and Transition Package: No later than thirty (30) calendar days before expiration of the contract, the Contractor shall provide the Government an export of the Government data and documentation identified in Section 8 and Section 6.1. The Contractor shall provide an updated final package at contract completion. The package shall include sufficient instructions and documentation for the Government or an authorized successor contractor to access and use the delivered information.

4. QUALITY CONTROL: The Government is committed to a highly interactive relationship between quality control by the contractor and quality assurance by the government recipient of services. This relationship shall be achieved through an effective prevention-based quality control program dedicated to ensuring the best possible products and services to end users. The contractor shall provide their written Quality Control Plan (QCP) for evaluation as part of the contractor's quote. The QCP shall be updated and delivered to the Government no later than sixty (60) calendar days after award of the contract. The QCP shall document how the contractor intends on meeting and complying with the quality standards established in this PWS. At a minimum, the QCP shall include a self-inspection plan, an internal staffing plan, and an outline of the procedures that the contractor will use to maintain quality, timeliness, responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and any other requirements set forth in this PWS.

The contractor's QCP shall be maintained throughout the life of the contract and shall include the contractor's procedures to routinely evaluate the effectiveness of the plan to ensure the contractor is meeting the performance standards and requirements of the contract.

5. COMPLIANCE: All content published in *JRR* must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 level AA accessibility guidelines as defined by the federal government. Please see the following URLs for details:

- About WCAG: https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG2AA-Conformance
- How to Meet WCAG: https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/quickref/

The platform must allow for government contractors to scan both the website and its published content to confirm compliance with 508/WCAG mandates.

NOTE: If the deliverable includes features and functions in addition to those identified as requirements, these features and functions also need to conform to relevant WCAG 2.2 AA technical provisions, functional performance criteria, and information, documentation, and support.

6. PHASE-OUT PERIOD: To minimize any decreases in productivity and to prevent possible negative impacts on additional services, the contractor shall have personnel on board for up to six (6) months during phase-out.

6.1. Phase-Out: Prior to the completion of this contract, an observation period shall occur, at which time team management personnel of the incoming Contractor may observe operations. This will allow for orderly turnover of equipment and records and will help to ensure continuity of services. During phase-out, the Contractor shall transfer the Government data, documentation, configurations, repositories, domains, and administrative access needed for continued operation/services. The outgoing Contractor is ultimately responsible for performing full services in accordance with the contract during the phase-out period and shall not defer any requirements for the purpose of avoiding responsibility or of transferring such responsibility to the succeeding Contractor. The outgoing Contractor shall fully cooperate with the succeeding Contractor and the Government, so as not to interfere with their work or duties. The outgoing Contractor shall ensure all outstanding work orders, equipment, and all Government-owned items are turned in to the COR. All outgoing Contractor personnel shall out-process through the designated Government personnel to ensure compliance with the Government's requirements for closing e-mail accounts, terminating access, and turning in ID cards, etc. The outgoing Contractor shall be prepared to transition the workload to the newly selected Contractor during the 6-month phase-out period, which will occur prior to the end of the period of performance of the contract.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Restriction on contractor's use of or dissemination of databases:** Mailing lists either furnished to the contractor by the COR or prepared by the contractor as part of its continuing efforts to support the journal are protected by the Privacy Act, and shall not be used by the contractor or any other third party for any purposes other than for the expressed purpose of this contract. Mailing lists provided as part of this contract shall not be disseminated to other persons or entities, except the COR and CO, and shall not be used by the contractor, its subcontractors, or any other organization of persons for any purpose other than the services specifically described by the PWS and contract document. The contractor shall ensure that all subcontracts and consultant agreements in support of this contract include this restriction.
- **Privacy Act Notice:** This PWS requires the Parties to do one or more of the following: design, develop, or operate a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579, December 31, 1974 (5 USC 552a) and applicable agency regulations. Violation of the Act may involve the imposition of criminal penalties. The Privacy Act System of Records applicable to this project is Number 09-90-0024.
- **Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites:** This PWS requires the Parties to abide by the rules established in OMB M-05-04 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-04.pdf).
- **Policy to Require Secure Connections across Federal Websites and Web Services:** This PWS requires the Parties to abide by the rules established in OMB M-15-13 (https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2015/m-15-13.pdf).

8. DATA RIGHTS: Consistent with RFO FAR 27.403 - Data rights-General and RFO FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data—General, this contract identifies the Government data and other data deliverables to be provided and the parties' respective rights in those deliverables.

Consistent with RFO FAR 12.107 and RFO FAR 27.405-3, the Contractor retains ownership of its pre-existing commercial hosting infrastructure, platform, software, tools, methods, and related commercial documentation. Rights in those items shall be governed by the incorporated commercial license terms and any additional rights mutually agreed to by the parties. The contract terms shall take precedence over conflicting vendor or third-party commercial terms.

The Government shall receive the rights in Government-specific reports, administrative records, workflow records, exports, transition materials, usage data, analytics data, and platform-generated metadata and other data first produced under the contract. The Contractor shall provide complete, current, documented, and portable exports of Government content and data upon Government request and at contract completion.

Author-submitted manuscripts, peer-review materials, datasets, code, author-provided metadata, and supporting materials shall remain the property of the author unless expressly transferred under Government-approved submission or publication terms. The Contractor does not have ownership rights to such materials and may use them only as necessary to perform the contract.

The Contractor shall administer Government-approved submission, publication, and license terms sufficient for NIH to host, reproduce, publish, distribute, preserve, export, migrate, and transfer such materials to the Government or a successor contractor in order to maintain continuity of services.

The Contractor shall not impose any click-wrap, Terms of Service, license, or other condition that transfers ownership to the Contractor or grants the Contractor rights beyond those necessary to perform this contract. Any EULA, Terms of Service, click-wrap agreement, or similar agreement applicable to the commercial platform shall be subject to RFO FAR 52.212-4(s), Unauthorized Obligations.

9. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: The period of performance shall be a one (1) year period of performance.

10. HOURS OF OPERATION: The contractor shall be responsible for providing routine services between the core hours of 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Eastern time Monday through Friday, except federal holidays or when the government facility is closed due to local or national emergencies, administrative closings or similar government directed facility closings. All responses to queries from *JRR* staff and its contractors or associates must be issued in a timely manner, usually the same business day. The contractor shall at all times maintain an adequate workforce for the uninterrupted performance of all tasks defined within this PWS when the government facility is not closed for the above reasons. When hiring personnel, the contractor shall keep in mind that the stability and continuity of the workforce are essential. No overtime (OT) or compensatory time (CT) is authorized under this contract.

10.1. Federal Holidays: The National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences observes the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

11. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: The place of performance for all parties directly affiliated with fulfilling the services of this contract shall be within the continental United States.

12. CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL: Contract staff shall illustrate expertise in the following areas:

- A robust system for submitting, reviewing, and publishing scientific journal content.
- Following established best practices for hosting and delivering scholarly journal content on the web.
- Following established best practices for maintaining security on public-facing websites.
- Strong web design skills and an understanding of how users access and consume content, as it relates to the scholarly journals publishing market.
- Demonstrated understanding of 508/WCAG 2.2 compliance requirements, and existing tools to address these requirements on the platform.
- Strong understanding of XML publishing principles, and participation in the scholarly XML publishing community.
- Existing implementations of mobile-responsive websites for scientific journal customers.
- Existing implementations of search systems for scientific journal customers.
- Existing mechanisms to support continuous publication for scientific journal customers.

13. GOVERNMENT FURNISHED PROPERTY, EQUIPMENT, AND SERVICES: This section identifies those items such as property, information and/or services that will be provided for the contractor's use (without cost to the contractor) to allow the contractor to provide the required services, such as materials, facilities, training, etc. as follows:

- Facilities: The Government shall not furnish workspace, workstations, computers.

- Materials: The Government will not provide Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs), applicable regulations, manuals, texts, briefs or any other materials associated with these projects.

- Training: The Government will not provide any training, management, or accountability for contractor's staff beyond the initial guidance given during initial setup, and the ongoing feedback that is provided throughout the course of the contract.

14. CONTRACTOR FURNISHED ITEMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: The contractor shall furnish all supplies, equipment, and services required to perform work under this contract that are not listed under section 13 of this PWS.

14.1. Items: The contractor shall provide all required hardware, software, licenses, internet access, etc., along with all necessary support, to perform this work. The Government will not provide any equipment, materials, or technical support. The contractor will not have access to the NIEHS network or email accounts. When not specified, the contractor is free to select the software/hardware that best fits their needs.

14.2. Security/Security Log: The contractor shall maintain the security and integrity of their systems at all times. This includes promptly installing updates to mitigate security threats, actively testing all software releases for potential security holes, and promptly informing customers of known or suspected data breaches.

15. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

15.1. AI Applicability and Disclosure
The Government does not require the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) under this PWS. The Offeror shall identify in its quote any AI capability embedded in the proposed platform or otherwise proposed for contract performance. If no AI use is proposed, the Offeror shall state: "No AI use is proposed."

For purposes of this section, AI includes machine learning, generative AI, large language models, predictive models, natural language processing, AI-enabled third-party services, and AI features embedded within the proposed platform.

15.2. Restriction on AI Use
The Contractor shall not use AI to perform contract requirements or process Government information, journal submissions, peer-review information, registered-user information, repository content, code, datasets, or other contract information unless the AI use was disclosed in the Contractor's quote and approved in writing by the Contracting Officer.

15.3. New or Changed AI Use
The Contractor shall notify the Contracting Officer before introducing any new or materially changed AI model, feature, service, component, subcontractor, or third-party capability. The Contractor shall not implement the proposed AI use until written approval is provided by the Contracting Officer.

15.4. Requirements When AI Is Identified
If AI is identified or proposed, the Contractor shall submit an AI Compliance and Risk Management Plan before implementing or using the AI. The plan shall identify the AI technology, provider, model, version, intended use, data handling, human oversight, testing, safeguards, monitoring, change-control, incident-reporting, rollback, and portability procedures.

The Contractor shall not begin or continue the proposed AI use until the Contracting Officer provides written approval. The Contractor shall update the plan before any material change in AI use and when otherwise directed by the Contracting Officer.

16. ATTACHMENT/TECHNICAL EXHIBIT LISTING: This section lists all attachments applicable to the contract Performance Work Statement (PWS).

- Attachment 1A - Deliverables