

# NIEM Open Sustainability

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## Exigency

To maintain, improve, enhance, and expand NIEMOpen (including the data model, tools, and training materials) at an annual cost of \$3 million. The combination of transforming NIEM to NIEMOpen under OASIS and the current restructuring of the federal government puts funding at risk.

Current management office functions are provided by DoD appropriations, which are not likely to be continued, as other priorities are calling for restructuring of DoD budgets. DoD also currently funds tool development, and such funding is also in doubt. Limited technical support for model enhancement and training is currently provided in inadequate quantities by the NIEMOpen sponsor funding. Funding for all of these functions is currently dependent on existing sponsors, which are not reliably forecast.

The release of Version 6.0 as an OASIS standard is not complete. Current funding may cover most of the remaining work and some of the anticipated enhancements in release 6.1, but not all, and not the onboarding new domains that apply to become part of NIEMOpen.

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## Options

The options for raising the required operating expenses, along with means to secure in-kind contributions, include the following:

- Charge new domains to become part of NIEMOpen
- Ask domain stewards to become sponsors
- Recruit volunteers to do all technical support, including model maintenance and tooling
- Seek funding from Congress
- Seek funding from philanthropic organizations
- Seek funding from industry as contributions
- License NIEMOpen compliance to commercial entities as a fee-based certification
- Ask states and/or counties to contribute to financing NIEMOpen
- Set up a new or existing non-profit as the authorized agent for selling training, services, certifications, etc., where the proceeds above costs are returned to NIEMOpen
- Merge with a financially secure and programmatically aligned organization that can incorporate NIEMOpen's activities into its existing design

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## Analysis

This issue must be resolved by around January 2026. There is no way to make any sustainable plans until the source of income is defined and there is confidence in the outcomes. The likelihood of getting sufficient funding from some combination of the options will vary among these alternatives. Extending current sponsorships and recruiting many more is the fastest potential solution to resolve this issue, if it works. Going to the NIEMOpen community, where there are supporters, is most likely to generate income rather than entirely new approaches, such as Congressional support. The probability of getting support from federal agencies in the short term is not very high. Some federal agencies that use NIEMOpen may be able to contribute, but their participation at this point is unknown.

We need to develop a clear messaging strategy to present to the possible donors, and an outreach campaign to reach them in the most compelling way. This will require careful thinking about how to reach out, including social media, news releases, presentations to individuals and groups, etc. A full-on marketing plan is immediately required.

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## Actions

1. Develop a unified message designed to gain contributions, with tailored versions for each audience
2. Push out the message through social media, emails to the NIEMOpen community, and other groups
3. Ask current domain stewards to become sponsors
4. Ask new domain stewards to become sponsors
5. Send individual appeals to major companies (e.g., Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Apple, IBM)
6. Ask major associations for their support in fund raising—NAJIS, NASCO, NACO, others
7. Lobby Congress for a line item in a relevant agency's budget
8. Prepare a business and financial plan for sustainable operations under a non-profit organization, such as IJIS, providing NIEMOpen-related services, including startup funding required
9. Call on NTAC and NBAC to design a technical support system with volunteers
10. Identify prospective philanthropic organizations and solicit support