

Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning

An open-access AESOP Journal

Identity:

- A journal of AESOP: produced by an Editorial Team and owned by the Association of European Schools of Planning
- An open-access online journal, supporting the move towards scientific outputs to be accessible by all
- A Journal using the InPlanning publishing platform, an initiative of AESOP
- A refereed, double-blind peer-reviewed journal

Aim and Role:

- The journal aims at serving AESOP's goal of promoting excellence in planning education and research, by supporting and disseminating, as a public good for AESOP members, scholarly work produced by AESOP members or participants to AESOP events and activities.
- Its role is to publish articles that make a major theoretical, conceptual or empirical contribution to the development of planning as an academic discipline; to stimulate and shape research agendas in planning; to showcase the contribution of planning education and research to advancing knowledge in the social sciences and humanities.

Content:

- A combination of contributions are to be sought from:
 - Invited papers by members of AESOP to help stimulate discussions on education and research agenda as well as to contribute to the dissemination of our community's ongoing debates and efforts in promoting excellence in planning
 - AESOP Best Congress Paper Prize winners and nominees (about 15-20 papers are nominated each year by congress track chairs)
 - AESOP Excellence in Teaching Prize winners
 - AESOP Thematic Groups' (TGs) conferences and workshops, from which nominations can be made with a view to promoting our TGs and providing access for TG outputs
 - Possible special issues on AESOP Congress Tracks
 - Possible special issues developed with Editorial Board members

Format:

- All papers (regardless of being invited or not) are subject to a double-blind peer-review
- Two issues per year, starting with a number of pilot issues
- Open-access, with running costs paid by AESOP
- Language of publication is English but special issues may be considered in any of the official languages of the countries in which AESOP member schools are based in.

Editorial Team and Editorial Board:

- During the Pilot Phase, members of the Working Group carry out required tasks and have invited AESOP Colleagues to join the Editorial Board -.
- After the Pilot Phase:
 - Five Editors: an Editor-in-chief directly elected by the CoRep for a period of 5 years (may serve up to two terms in office); an ExCo representative (ex-officio, any of its members that the ExCo sees fit, non-renewable); the Chair of the Best Congress Paper Committee (ex-officio, has to be replaced every time a new BCP chair is elected); two additional members elected by the rest of the Editors for three years, who can serve up to two terms in office.
- Editorial Assistance: the infrastructure for this to be implemented in the 2nd year of pilot phase

PROGRESS REPORT

Background

The Journal concept has been developed by Nikos Karadimitriou and Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe upon the request of ExCo, and was presented to the AESOP CoRep twice, in the 2015 March CoRep in Madrid purely for information and feedback, and then in the 2015 July CoRep in Prague for approval. The Transactions of AESOP Journal project was approved, with 37 votes in favour, and 2 votes abstain, as a 2 year pilot project. During the meeting, CoRep members raised questions regarding the practicality of the concept, i.e. whether there would be interest in publishing in a new journal that is not yet indexed, and whether inviting authors nominated for Best Congress Paper Prize but subjecting their invited papers to a review process would be appealing to these authors. The pilot phase is to test these issues and initial answers to these questions are reported below.

Another issue raised was the copyediting component of the budget. This issue is also addressed in the renewed budget proposal attached and to be presented to CoRep in 2016 March in Thessaloniki.

Work carried out since July 2015 CoRep in Prague

The Working Group:

The Pilot Phase requires a dedicated team to work on the project. The ExCo proposed expanding the team, and from September 2015 onwards two more colleagues joined the taskforce to utilise their experience as members of Journal Editorial Boards as well as in AESOP activities.

Currently the working group for the Transactions of AESOP comprise: **Andrea Frank, Nikos Karadimitriou, Ela Babalik Sutcliffe** and **Olivier Sykes**.

Contacting BCP nominees to confirm interest in publishing in Transactions of AESOP:

The working group for the Transactions of AESOP contacted the Best Congress Paper (BCP) nominees from the 2014 Utrecht and 2015 Prague Congresses. With 17 papers nominated for this prize in 2014, and 26 nominations in 2015, a total of 43 paper authors were contacted.

All authors were informed that the Journal is a double-blind, peer-reviewed journal, and that their paper would be subject to peer-review and hence publication depended on the outcome of that review.

The authors of 17 papers (out of 43) accepted to submit their papers to be considered for publication in the Transactions of AESOP. This corresponds to 40% of the BCP-nominated papers. Another 14 authors (corresponding to 33%) stated that their paper has already been published or was in the publication process. Many of these authors stated, however, that they were pleased to hear about this initiative and would consider this journal for their future work. 12 authors did not respond to the invitation.

This initial experience shows that there is interest from the AESOP Community in publishing in an AESOP-owned open-access Journal, and that an important proportion of the authors are likely to consider submitting their work to the Journal knowing that their papers would be subject to a review process.

Of the 17 papers, whose authors confirmed their interest in submitting their papers for review, 11 of them already did so by the end of January. The authors of the remaining six papers asked for extra time to revise their papers. They were informed that the first issues would be filled on a first come first served basis.

Planning and design of pilot issues:

“Author Guidelines” was prepared by the Working Group, providing style and formatting guidelines for papers to be published in the Transactions of AESOP. This document was sent to the authors of the 17 papers, who accepted to submit their work for consideration for publication.

It is planned to publish about 6 papers per issue. The goal is to publish the first pilot issue as soon as possible in 2016.

The Pilot Project Team will write an editorial to introduce both the journal and the activities of AESOP covered in the Transactions of AESOP Journal. Following the Editorial, the journal will include an article authored by a prominent planning scholar as an opening piece, to be followed by five or six papers selected from the Best Congress Paper Prize nominees.

The InPlanning team was also contacted regarding the design of the Journal as well as the design of format and templates of articles to be published. Costs regarding these services are included in the proposed budget attached.

Review process:

An Editorial Board was set up by sending 34 scholars an invitation to become a member of the Editorial Board of the Transactions of AESOP during its pilot phase. Among other functions, members of the Editorial Board will act as reviewers for the papers submitted to the Journal. The review process started in February.

Copy-editing:

The Working Group believes that a Copy-Editor is crucial for the quality and reputation of the Journal. This was an issue raised by the CoRep members too. Cost ranges for copy-editing services were explored and incorporated into the budget attached.

Editorial assistance:

In the first year of the pilot project, the Working Group will carry out all the contacts, will handle submissions, appointment of reviewers for papers and the blind review process, and all associated correspondence. However, by the end of the pilot phase, the Journal infrastructure should be completely built, and this would include an editorial assistance. The completion of this infrastructure is envisaged by the second year of the pilot phase and incorporated into the budget attached.