



## **OPERATING PROCEDURES**

### **Pooled Fund Project #TPF-5(092), Test and Evaluation of Materials, Equipment and Methods for Winter Highway Maintenance**

The Clear Roads pooled fund research group was established in 2004 to carry out rigorous testing of winter maintenance materials, equipment and methods for use by highway maintenance crews. This document outlines the administrative makeup and practices of the pooled fund, which consists of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) representatives from each of the member agencies. Close collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration and other related research organizations is also a crucial component of a successful pooled fund effort. See the Clear Roads Web site at [www.clearroads.org](http://www.clearroads.org) for the most current project and TAC activity information.

#### **Membership**

Each organization that has made at least the minimum annual commitment to Clear Roads of \$25,000 may appoint a technical expert to serve as a voting member of the Technical Advisory Committee. In-kind commitments are not accepted to achieve membership in Clear Roads. At the discretion of the TAC, reduced funding contributions may be considered in exchange for limited non-voting membership benefits. Additional non-voting members with needed expertise may also be invited to serve, at the discretion of the committee. If a member becomes unable to serve on the TAC, the project partner will appoint a new TAC member within 30 days of the vacancy.

This pooled fund launched with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as the lead agency. In this role, WisDOT is responsible for contracting with research investigators and handling payment of invoices. Another agency may fulfill this role upon agreement by the TAC.

Tom Martinelli, WisDOT's TAC representative, was designated the Chair of the Technical Oversight Committee at the first meeting of the pooled fund. There is no limit to the length of time a Chair may serve. The TAC may elect a new Chair at any time.

TAC members participate in all project-related meetings and briefings. The TAC will have the following responsibilities and others that the TAC decides are appropriate:

- Develop an annual work plan
- Approve research project work statements
- Select the best-qualified investigators to conduct projects
- Approve investigator contracts
- Review project progress reports and annual reports
- Approve invoices and reimbursement requests
- Accept project deliverables and final reports
- Complete implementation activities

## **Administration**

The Clear Roads pooled fund will contract with an Administrator to support the efforts of the Technical Advisory Committee and the research conducted through the pooled fund. Below is a summary of the Administrator's functions:

### Communications and Marketing

- Serve as primary contact for the project with the Transportation Pooled Fund Program and its sponsors (FHWA, TRB and AASHTO), partner organizations, TAC members, prospective and selected investigators, and others.
- Establish and maintain regular communication with TAC members via e-mail, phone and meetings.
- Schedule and coordinate meetings and teleconferences of the TAC and assist with associated travel arrangements.
- Prepare and distribute meeting agendas, minutes and other materials needed to conduct Committee business.
- Provide outreach and marketing activities to recruit potential member agencies and other purposes as required by the TAC.
- Maintain the Clear Roads Web site at [www.clearroads.org](http://www.clearroads.org).
- Prepare and distribute quarterly progress reports of Clear Roads activities and Administrator activities.

### Financial and Administrative

- Monitor partner commitments and assure obligation forms are received by FHWA from partners.
- Receive and coordinate review, approval and payment of reimbursement requests from investigators and TAC members.
- Maintain all past, present and future Clear Roads project files and Clear Roads related documents.

### Research Project Support

- Perform preliminary online literature searches for potential research projects.
- Develop work statements for each research project under the direction of the TAC.
- In cooperation with the lead state's purchasing unit, disseminate RFPs for individual research projects and distribute proposals to TAC members.
- Facilitate evaluation of proposals and issuance of investigator contracts through the lead state's standard purchasing processes, including communication with purchasing personnel and prospective investigators.
- Maintain FHWA-approved Clear Roads work plan.
- Track and report on (via posting to TPF Web site) all aspects of ongoing research projects based on investigator quarterly reports and other milestones.
- Receive and distribute (via Web posting and other means as needed) interim and final research reports and other deliverables.
- Track and report on implementation activities related to completed research.

As of February 2005, CTC & Associates LLC is the contract Administrator for this pooled fund. For more information, contact Kim Linsenmayer at [kim.linsenmayer@ctcandassociates.com](mailto:kim.linsenmayer@ctcandassociates.com) or 608-628-3806.

## Voting Procedures

Each TAC representative from the member agencies will have voting privileges on all Clear Roads matters. Each member agency may have no more than one voting representative. Formal votes are not necessary on all issues. The TAC may establish agreement on an issue through meeting discussions, phone calls, and e-mail exchanges.

For matters that do require a formal vote to establish a majority opinion, such as selecting which research projects to fund, members may cast votes by voice, a show of hands, or a written proxy. Any voting member may request a roll call vote if desired. A quorum of at least two-thirds of the members is needed to establish a consensus. Without two-thirds-majority support on an issue, members who are absent from the meeting will be polled. Decisions will be delayed until all members have had sufficient opportunity to respond.

## Annual TAC Meeting Calendar (2005/2006)

The calendar below represents the tentative timing of the Clear Roads Technical Advisory Committee meetings and research project milestones. The TAC may meet more frequently, either in person or by conference call, to review and approve research project interim deliverables or to hold joint meetings with other winter maintenance research organizations. The location of face-to-face meetings will vary to best accommodate members from around the country and to keep costs down.

<b>January/February</b>	<b>Face-to-face TAC meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss new project proposals</li> <li>• Share state experiences and new ideas</li> <li>• Plan for year's activities</li> <li>• Review progress of current research projects</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>	<b>Conference call TAC meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and finalize draft RFPs for new projects</li> <li>• Review Clear Roads annual work plan, action items</li> </ul>
<b>April</b>	<b>Post RFPs for new research projects</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>Responses to RFPs due</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>Face-to-face TAC meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview researcher candidates for new projects, if desired</li> <li>• Discuss and score all RFP responses</li> <li>• Select researchers and discuss next steps for new projects</li> <li>• Review progress of current research projects</li> </ul>
<b>August/September</b>	<b>Award contracts, finalize work plans</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>Conference call TAC meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New projects get underway</li> <li>• Review progress of current projects</li> <li>• Plan for kickoff meeting in January/February</li> </ul>

## **Research Project Lifecycle**

The primary goal of the Clear Roads pooled fund group is to fund and oversee research projects and technology transfer activities that advance the field of winter highway operations. To achieve this objective, TAC members will work closely together to identify and prioritize needs, develop and review project problem statements, disseminate Requests for Proposal, select research investigators, oversee the research projects, and promote implementation of research results.

Below are the steps taken to propose, rank, and select projects to be funded on the annual Clear Roads cycle:

### Proposing and Selecting Research Projects

Prior to the annual TAC meeting in January/February:

1. TAC members submit written problem statements (no more than three per member) describing the proposed research project to the Administrator.
2. The Administrator conducts a brief literature search for all proposed projects to identify existing identical or complimentary research.

At the annual TAC meeting:

3. TAC members present and discuss their research proposals. Additional project ideas may emerge during these discussions and are recorded for consideration.
4. TAC members complete a preliminary project ranking based on a scale of 1 (no need) to 5 (absolute need). These rankings serve to eliminate from consideration projects that are not universally supported by members. The remaining projects are again discussed.
5. TAC members make a final selection of projects to fund. Selected projects should address the objectives of Clear Roads, focus on implementation opportunities, represent the variety of interests of the member organizations, and be financially possible within the constraints of the pooled fund budgets.
6. A Project Champion will be assigned to each project that is selected. The Champion will work with the Administrator to develop a Request for Proposal and will serve as the primary contact throughout the project lifecycle.
7. Projects may emerge that would lend themselves to joint funding with other research organizations. TAC members will discuss appropriate steps for pursuing such projects.

### Developing and Posting Requests for Proposal

The Administrator will work with the Project Champions to draft RFPs for the selected research projects. RFPs will conform to the standards established by the pooled fund's lead state agency.

The TAC will meet by conference call to discuss and edit the draft RFPs. TAC members are responsible for submitting lists of potential investigators for the research projects. The Administrator will work closely with the lead agency's purchasing unit to finalize the RFPs, distribute them to the TAC's list of researchers, and to post the RFPs on all appropriate Web sites.

RFPs will allow a minimum of 30 days for contractor response. A longer period of 45-60 days is preferable.

### Awarding Contracts

A minimum of two acceptable RFP responses is required for TAC consideration. If this minimum is not met, the TAC has the option of canceling the project or resoliciting. If the TAC receives only one responsive proposal, it may decide by two-thirds vote to waive the minimum requirement.

The TAC will meet in-person (or by conference call) to review, discuss and score the RFP responses for all projects. If the TAC decides it is necessary, this meeting will include interviews and/or presentations with proposers. RFP scoring will be documented per the lead state's guidelines.

Upon selection of the research investigators by the TAC, the Administrator will work with the lead state's purchasing unit to notify the contractor of the award and develop the contract. The Project Champion for the project will recruit a small Project Subcommittee from the TAC to assist in final review and approval of the work plan and budget prior to signing the contract and to monitor the progress of the project.

#### Overseeing the Research

Each research investigator must submit quarterly reports for review by the TAC and posting on the Clear Roads Web site. Investigators will also be expected to provide interim and final deliverables and to participate in face-to-face meetings with the TAC regarding the project progress and results. Specific deliverables and meetings will be defined in each project work plan.

The Project Champion and Project Subcommittee will provide primary project oversight and technical support. However, the entire Technical Oversight Committee will be involved in project update meetings and review of progress reports.

The Administrator will coordinate approval of investigator invoices through the Project Champion and will submit the invoice to the lead state for payment.

### **Travel Expenses**

#### TAC Members

Travel expenses for Technical Advisory Committee members related to participation in Clear Roads activities will be paid out of the pooled fund project's funds unless stated otherwise for the individual project. Such expenses include airfare, car rental, mileage, meals, lodging, etc. The majority of travel expenses will relate to Clear Roads TAC meeting participation. However, at the TAC's discretion, travel expenses associated with attending related meetings or activities will also be reimbursed. The Administrator is responsible for coordinating events that minimize travel costs.

When appropriate and possible, the Administrator will pay for TAC member expenses at the time they are incurred on behalf of the TAC member and then submit an invoice for reimbursement to the Clear Roads pooled fund. When this is not possible, TAC members must submit a request for reimbursement to the Administrator using the Clear Roads Reimbursement Form. All receipts must accompany this request for reimbursement. The Administrator will reimburse the TAC members and invoice the pooled fund for the expenses.

#### Clear Roads Administrator

Travel expenses for the pooled fund Administrator will be covered in the same manner as for TAC members.

#### Investigators

Investigators should include costs for travel related to Clear Roads research in their project budgets. Expenses incurred for travel related to presenting a proposal response are the responsibility of the investigators or submitting organizations.

### TAC Meeting Guests

It is to the benefit of Clear Roads to encourage participation at TAC meetings by individuals who are interested in official membership, can lend technical expertise to meeting discussions, or can provide federal oversight and guidance. To support this participation, some travel expenses for non-members may be reimbursed as follows:

#### *FHWA Representatives*

Meal expenses incurred while participating in a group Clear Roads event such as a group lunch, dinner, or break item. Other travel and lodging expenses are not covered.

#### *Potential TAC Members*

All reasonable travel expenses incurred, following the same reimbursement policies as for TAC members.

#### *Additional Member State Representatives*

Full expenses will be reimbursed for only one representative for each member agency. However meal expenses incurred while participating in a group Clear Roads event will be reimbursed for additional representatives. Such attendance and reimbursement must be approved by the TAC prior to the event.

#### *Other Invited Guests*

Meal expenses incurred while participating in a group Clear Roads event such as a group lunch, dinner, or break item. Other travel and lodging expenses are not covered.