# TRANSPORTATION POOLED FUND PROGRAM
# QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

Lead Agency (FHWA or State DOT): Kansas DOT

**INSTRUCTIONS:**
*Lead Agency contacts should complete a quarterly progress report for each calendar quarter during which the projects are active. Please provide a project schedule status of the research activities tied to each task that is defined in the proposal; a percentage completion of each task; a concise discussion (2 or 3 sentences) of the current status, including accomplishments and problems encountered, if any. List all tasks, even if no work was done during this period.*

| **Transportation Pooled Fund Program Project #** | **Transportation Pooled Fund Program - Report Period:** |
|---|---|
| *TPF-5(503)* | ☐ Quarter 1 (January 1 – March 31)<br>☒ Quarter 2 (April 1 – June 30)<br>☐ Quarter 3 (July 1 – September 30)<br>☐ Quarter 4 (October 1 – December 31) |

**TPF Study Number and Title:**
**TPF-5(503) and Standardizing Rigid Inclusions For Transportation Projects: Phase I**

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|---|---|---|
| **Lead Agency Contact:**<br>**Dan Wadley** | **Lead Agency Phone Number:**<br>**785-291-2718** | **Lead Agency E-Mail**<br>Dan.Wadley@ks.gov |
| **Lead Agency Project ID:**<br>Click or tap here to enter text. | **Other Project ID (i.e., contract #):**<br>Click or tap here to enter text. | **Project Start Date:**<br>**7/1/2023** |
| **Original Project Start Date:**<br>Click or tap to enter a date. | **Original Project End Date:**<br>**6/30/2025** | **If Extension has been requested, updated project End Date:**<br>11/30/2025 |

**Project schedule status:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ On schedule | ☒ On revised schedule | ☐ Ahead of schedule | ☒ Behind schedule |

**Overall Project Statistics:**

| Total Project Budget | Total Funds Expended This Quarter | Percentage of Work Completed to Date |
|---|---|---|
| $240,000 | $4,890 | 93% |

## Project Description:

Rigid inclusions are grouted or cemented columns used to improve loose or soft soils. They have been increasingly used in practice in the United States, mostly for embankment, retaining walls, and box culvert support in transportation applications. Several types of equipment and methods are available in the practice to install rigid inclusions with different trade names. Installation of rigid inclusions may cause full or partial displacement of their surrounding soils that disturb soils, neighboring rigid inclusions, and/or existing structures, depending on the type of equipment and method used, installation procedure, and type of soil. Rigid inclusions are often installed under a load transfer platform to support embankment or structure loads. The methodology and equipment-driven installation has been closely guarded and much is proprietary (commercial competitive advantage), which has left the DOTs dependent on and obligated to the contractor. No well-accepted design methods and construction specifications are available to assess and consider installation effects on their surrounding soils, neighboring rigid inclusions, and nearby existing structures, down drag forces in rigid inclusions under embankment or structure loads, and stability of embankments with side slopes supported by rigid inclusions. Research, including the state of the practice (Phase I) and full-scale field tests (Phase II), is needed to quantify rigid inclusion installation effects, develop design methods considering their effects on load transfer analysis, axial load capacity, and displacement calculations for vertical loads and evaluating the stability of rigid inclusion-supported embankments, and develop construction specifications for minimizing installation effects and improving long-term performance.

The main objectives of the Phase I study are to assess the state of the practice of rigid inclusions used for embankment and structure support, analyze existing data and design methods available in the literature or agencies, identify knowledge gaps and missing data and procedures, and develop a plan for full-scale field tests to be carried out in the Phase II study.

Tasks for this study include:

1) Literature Review and Assessment of Current Practices
2) Evaluating design methodologies
3) Developing a Full-scale Field Test Program

## Progress this Quarter
## (includes meetings, work plan status, contract status, significant progress, etc.):

The research team compiled the specifications for rigid inclusions installation from four state DOTs, developed a plan for Phase II, prepared the draft research report, and is working to improve the report to be distributed for reviews. The research team met with KDOT to develop a schedule for pursuing the Phase II study and has also reached out to several state DOTs gauging their interest in continuing or joining to support the Phase II project.

Task 1: Literature Review and Assessment of Current Practices
The literature review work has been completed.

100% COMPLETE

Task 2: Evaluating Design Methodologies
The research team has completed evaluating design methodologies.

100% COMPLETE

Task 3: Developing a Full-scale Field Test Program
The research team has developed a draft plan for the Phase II study including a required budget and sought for comments and suggestions from the steering committee. The research team will working with the University of Kansas Research Center about the proposed budget.

95% COMPLETE

Research Report
The draft report has been completed and needs improvements before being distributed for reviews.
75% COMPLETE

## Anticipated work next quarter:

The research team will continue improving the plan for the Phase II study, distribute the draft report of the Phase I study to the consultants and the steering committee for reviews, finalize and submit the report by addressing review comments and suggestions, continue reaching out to more state DOTs to seek additional support for the Phase II study, and submit documents to solicitate funding for the Phase II study.

## Significant Results:

The literature review shows that different types of rigid inclusions have been used in the practice. Rigid inclusions (RIs) are typically designed as a system, which includes rigid inclusion elements and a load transfer platform. Much research has been done on load transfer mechanisms (soil arching and tensioned membrane) and critical heights above rigid inclusions to prevent differential settlement. A large number of methods including analytical and numerical methods are available to design load transfer platforms above rigid inclusions but these methods often yield significantly different results. Several studies examined the accuracy and differences of these design methods. However, limited research has been done on installation effects and slope stability of embankments supported by rigid inclusions. Recent projects have used a small area replacement ratio (less than 5%) for rigid inclusion elements. Rigid inclusion elements subjected to lateral loads and need for steel reinforcement have become a concern for some projects. How to consider lateral loads in design still requires further research.

According to the survey, the majority of the respondents indicate that (1) embankments are the most common application of RIs, (2) drilled displacement columns are the most common type of RIs, (3) reducing settlement is the main objective of RIs, (4) clay is the soil type where RIs are commonly used, (5) design-build is the most common contracting methods for RIs in projects, and (6) the conditions for using steel reinforcement in RIs are: slope stability, seismic load, and horizontal loads.

The numerical analysis shows that both unit cell and global models could reasonably model embankments over soft soils, rigid inclusions, and rigid inclusions with geosynthetic reinforcement. The commonly-used design methods in the literature gave a wide range of predictions of the performance of rigid inclusions under embankments. All these four commonly-used design methods evaluated in this study are overall conservative. The FHWA strain compatibility method gave better prediction of load efficacies while the Netherlands method (CUR226) gave better prediction of differential settlement and reinforcement tension in the load transfer platform. Both the British method and the stress reduction method overestimated the factor of safety as compared with the numerical method.

Installation sequence of rigid inclusions affects the displacements of pre-installed rigid inclusions, which may affect their integrity and quality. State DOTs have limited and inconsistent specifications for installation of rigid inclusions for projects, especially lack of guidelines for instrumentation and monitoring.

The proposed plan for the Phase II study is to gather full-scale test data for RI serviceability and failure limits, to improve analytical methods for load and deformation calculations, to evaluate installation-induced soil displacements and potential damages to adjacent RIs, and soil property changes, to evaluate load-displacement behavior of single RI vs. group RIs under wall/embankment, to compare behavior of RIs under walls vs. slopes, to evaluate lateral load capacities of RIs with and w/o steel rebars, and to improve/develop an analytical method for slope stability with RIs.

## Circumstance affecting project or budget. (Please describe any challenges encountered or anticipated that might affect the completion of the project within the time, scope and fiscal constraints set forth in the agreement, along with recommended solutions to those problems).

The research team has completed most proposed tasks and prepared a draft report for the Phase I study. However, the research team feels additional time required to improve this report, get it reviewed by the consultants and the steering committee, and then finalize the report for submission. There is no issue with the budget.

## Potential Implementation:

The potential implementation from the Phase I study will be recommended in the final report.