

**Proposal For
Transportation Pooled Fund
Federal Highway Administration and State Departments of Transportation (DOTs)**

**TPF-5(XXX)
Transportation Library Connectivity**

Summary

Accessible, reliable, and timely information is central to quality performance for all transportation agencies and stakeholders. Yet, a vast amount of transportation-related information is neither collected nor made available for use by others. Technology transfer activities—converting information into knowledge—are crucial for getting information in the hands of decision-makers. Library and information services currently are an underutilized piece of the technology transfer process. Library services are integral because they capture needed information and enable customers to access it when needed. Without these services, the information is simply irretrievable.

This document proposes a new pooled fund project on Transportation Library Connectivity, with the goal of making the transfer of information and knowledge an integral part of transportation library and information services. This technology transfer effort will support the systematic organization of state, federal, academic and private sector libraries to institutionalize the best practices of the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network (MTKN), a regional network of transportation libraries.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will be the lead agency, responsible for administration of the pooled fund and dissemination of results. Project partners who contribute funds to the study will appoint representatives to serve as members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC will identify library information and knowledge network needs and review technology transfer progress. The pooled fund study will be ongoing with the prospect of new transportation information/knowledge management initiatives.

This information and knowledge management/technology transfer initiative will result in the following benefits to participating organizations:

- Access to a vast and diverse pool of transportation-related information, much of which is not currently available on the Internet.
- Reduced costs through sharing of resources and reduced service fees.
- Better coordination with regional and national entities for effective distribution of information.
- Cost savings through avoiding the duplication of research efforts.
- A better informed workforce at each of the participating transportation institutions.
- Savings in time and lives.

To Join the Pooled Fund Project

A solicitation for this project will be posted on the Transportation Pooled Fund Web site at <http://www.pooledfund.org/>, where interested partners may commit funds. Project partners may include state departments of transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, other federal agencies, regional and local transportation agencies and libraries, academic institutions, foundations, private libraries, Canadian and European transportation agencies, and others. A request will be made to FHWA to approve the pooled fund project for use of 100% SPR funds.

Background and Objectives

To promote the effective use of available resources, state DOTs are encouraged to cooperate with each other, the FHWA and other appropriate agencies to achieve Research, Development and Technology (RD&T) Transfer objectives established at the national level. Effective program management, including optimal use of available funds, timely sharing of research results, and support of the Transportation Research Information Services (TRIS) Online is key toward meeting technology transfer objectives. However, states currently lack the support and tools needed to define and establish a cooperative, national information and knowledge management/technology transfer program.

The June 2003 “Scoping Study for a National Strategic Plan for Transportation Information Management” (NCHRP Project 20-7/Task 142) identified major information access issues for transportation practitioners. The study examined the transportation community’s current needs and practices, identified pressing problems and detailed a framework for a strategic plan for transportation information and knowledge management. To follow-up, TRB Division B Policy Study: Strategic Plan for Transportation Information Management (Project 20-66) is underway and will provide recommendations to improve the future of transportation information and knowledge management. As an interim measure, this proposed pooled fund project aims at helping states achieve Level 1 connectivity as defined in the Scoping Study (p. 44) through a highly organized technology transfer program.

Pooled fund activities will include:

- Encouraging all DOT and academic transportation libraries to become members of a service network such as OCLC, which would serve as a primary vehicle for interlibrary loans.
- Pooling unique and specialized transportation documents produced by the states to be accessible by every state DOT.
- Indexing and abstracting research and published materials as well as soliciting and adding members to the Transportation Libraries Catalog (TLCat), a shared catalog containing all members’ individual catalog listings.
- Exploring coordination of Transportation Research Information Services (TRIS) Online and TLCat for quick and easy access to all transportation items whether through full-text online, inter-library loan, or purchase.
- Pursuing more advanced information-sharing technology and practices for existing MTKNmembers.

To achieve Level 1 connectivity, this pooled fund project will consist of two major components:

- 1) **Technical Assistance**—Provide technical guidance to participating state agencies for cataloguing documents for use in OCLC and converting them to online format.
- 2) **Network Development**—Encourage and support the development and growth of DOT library information networks.

To make this two-part information and knowledge management/technology transfer initiative a success, a contracted full-time staff person will lead the process, and an organized marketing effort will be initiated to encourage participation and aid in network development.

Full-Time Staff Person

Under the guidance of a full-time technical staff person, the pooled fund participants will work to develop and support a national transportation information and knowledge network. The pooled fund will cover both salary and travel costs for the staff person, who will report to the Technical Advisory Committee.

Staff activities will be modeled after MTKN initiatives such as:

- Developing needs assessments based on site visits with participating states.
- Providing technical assistance to catalogue transportation documents on the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) system and converting them to online format.
- Prorated funding assistance for cataloguing and conversion.
- Assisting library Web site development to enhance document availability through technology transfer .
- Assisting with processes for sharing inter-library loan resources.

- Collaborating with the National Transportation Library (NTL) on broad-based activities.
- Negotiating reduced fees for OCLC services and information coordination at a national level.
- Promoting awareness among target audiences of the value of libraries and information services.

Marketing Plan

Print, online and other marketing products will be developed by a contracted marketing service to build awareness among transportation partners – such as the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Transportation Research Board (TRB) and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) of the great value in sharing transportation information. A successful marketing effort will also result in increased participation in the pooled fund project.

Partner Commitments

Once WisDOT, as the lead agency, has proposed this pooled fund project, others will be invited to become project partners and make financial commitments. Partners make funding commitments on the Transportation Pooled Fund Web site at <http://www.pooledfund.org/>, usually consisting of two-year contributions for the life of the project. Commitments are made through a password-protected screen, typically available to the Research Advisory Committee member for each state. Partners other than state DOTs may make commitments by sending e-mail directly to WisDOT (nina.mclawhorn@dot.state.wi.us). Submission of a commitment is an acknowledgment by the partner organization that it will formally obligate funding to the pooled fund project once it begins.

Each organization will be asked to commit \$20,000 per year in two-year installments. A minimum of two states is needed to begin work on this pooled fund project. Pooled funding will cover:

- Travel for TAC members to pooled fund meetings twice per year.
- Marketing of the research and technology transfer efforts.
- Membership in OCLC.
- Salary for a full-time technical staff person.
- Administration of the pooled fund project.
- Cataloguing of materials onto the OCLC system.
- For current MTKN members, pursuit of more advanced information sharing technology and practices.

When the study has sufficient partner support to move forward, the next phase is the Project Initiation step. WisDOT will request FHWA to formally establish the project and:

- Issue a TPF project number.
- Confirm that partners have the funding to honor initial commitments.
- Become the broker of the pooled funds and issue reimbursement through the lead agency's standard invoicing process.
- Communicate ongoing project financial information to the project partners.
- Assign a technical liaison to the project.

The FHWA Wisconsin Division Office will work with WisDOT to ensure funding and eligibility requirements.

Frequently Asked Questions
Proposed Transportation Libraries Pooled Fund Study
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1. Why is there a need to invest in libraries?

Libraries play a vital role in providing accurate, timely and relevant information in a user-friendly format. The knowledge generated from this information is key to maintaining a competitive national transportation system in today's global economy. Library and information systems are part of a technology transfer process that helps transportation officials make the difficult decisions required for building and operating a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system.

Transportation lags far behind other industries, such as agriculture and medicine, in funding library and information services programs. In 2001 the transportation sector in the U.S. accounted for \$306.7 billion of the Gross Domestic Product; yet only \$1.8 million, less than 0.001%, was invested in the National Transportation Library.

Transportation librarians and research managers recognize this disparity and are collaborating to develop a strategic approach to transportation information management, detailed in NCHRP Report 20-7/142, "Scoping Study for a National Strategic Plan for Transportation Information Management."

The July 2003 Scoping Study calls for increased funding and outlines a long-term strategic plan to facilitate access to the ever-increasing pool of transportation information. Developing a comprehensive transportation information management system requires a nationally coordinated effort with stable and sustained funding. Investing in libraries is essential in fulfilling this goal and will ensure the continued vitality of the U.S. transportation sector well into the 21st century.

2. If my state doesn't have a DOT library, why should it participate in the pooled fund? What are the benefits?

States with no libraries or few transportation-related resources stand to benefit the most. There is strength in numbers and you will become part of the library connectivity process. By networking, participating states will be able to share their resources, however limited, and have access to a much wider array of resources and services. Even a state without a formal library will have access to online reference systems and be able to borrow items from others through interlibrary loan.

3. What start-up activities will be supported through the pooled fund for states that currently don't have libraries?

A technical library staff person will help participating states survey and organize existing items into a library collection. The collection will then be formally cataloged into the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) for access through the Transportation Libraries Catalog (TL Cat).

4. If my state already has a library with cataloged holdings, what are the benefits of joining the library pooled fund study?

Your state will have access to more than 340,000 items through TL Cat and also be able to make its unique transportation holdings immediately accessible to others. This multiplies the value of each state's research investment and moves toward Phase I Library Connectivity that is recommended in the NCHRP Scoping Study.

5. How can we be assured that there won't be duplication of services between the existing system and what the pooled fund will do?

The principle behind an online interlibrary system inherently avoids duplication. Rather than independently investing in the same item or service, participating states can share resources, which reduces cost and maximizes value. The library pooled fund study offers participants an opportunity to refine core collections, enhance existing services, and begin to specialize in certain areas. In an economy where government officials and transportation practitioners are doing more with less, a linked library network means combined resources at a shared cost while increasing access to vital information.

6. Would my library have to start over in its cataloguing?

No, most cataloguing is convertible to the OCLC system that is compatible with TL Cat. Depending upon your state's system, some alteration of existing records might be necessary but in most circumstances a complete overhaul won't be necessary.

7. How does TL Cat differ from TRIS?

TRIS is an *index and abstract* of published and on-going transportation research. TRIS has more than 600,000 records generally containing a bibliographic citation, summary or abstract of the research, and controlled indexing. TRIS materials include journal articles, conference proceedings, technical and university research reports plus government and electronic publications. With the advent of TRIS Online through the National Transportation Library, a number TRIS records now contain links to full text documents. However, many publications in TRIS are difficult to obtain. A TRIS record can tell you that a document exists but not necessarily where it is located.

TL Cat is a *catalog or list* of publications and documents held by various libraries. TL Cat includes reports, books, videos, maps, CD-ROMs, and other electronic information with bibliographic citation to help users identify where a document is located and how to arrange for an interlibrary loan. TL Cat not only tells you where a document is located but also how to retrieve it.

LIBRARY INFORMATION ORGANIZATION
Abstracting – the process of describing the contents of an item (such as a book, research report or journal article) in a short narrative paragraph form.
Cataloging – the process of describing an item (book, journal article, research report, CD-ROM, videotape) in various fields applied from universal library science rules.
Indexing – the process of creating a comprehensive but concise list of “access” points with specialized terms that make the information (documents, publications, Web pages, etc.) more easily accessible.
Bibliographic information – any information about the physical and contextual characteristics of an item (a book, CD-ROM, video, report); meta data.

8. My state is already part of the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network. Why should my state participate and what are the benefits?

As an existing MTKN member, you can take pride in being a national leader. MTKN initiatives have set the stage for a national model of library connectivity and information management that will assist the transportation industry by supporting an informed workforce. Pooled fund participation will facilitate continued growth of the MTKN through marketing initiatives, ongoing technical assistance and travel opportunities for peer-to-peer exchanges, conferences and other forums.

In addition, MTKN pooled fund participants can utilize technical assistance through the pooled fund to further develop Phase I Library Connectivity, increasing TL Cat holdings and providing access to additional information contained on the ‘deeper’ or ‘invisible’ Web, such as academic reports not currently in TRIS, TL Cat or even WorldCat.

9. Can MTKN members participate in the pooled fund at a reduced rate since they have already completed much of the up-front work?

We are hoping to craft a plan that permits reduced rates for current MTKN members related to technical assistance and cataloguing services. OCLC annual membership would still be covered through the pooled fund. MTKN members would enjoy all the other benefits of participation in the pooled fund study, including:

- a. Increased collaboration with more states for the distribution of both regional and national transportation-related information.
- b. Higher visibility for the state’s research and library programs with marketing and communications services implemented throughout the study.
- c. Electronic delivery of interlibrary loan documents.
- d. Peer support to librarians.
- e. Continued leadership in a national movement to implement a strategic transportation information management system

10. How was the annual pooled fund contribution amount determined and what is the cost breakdown of the \$20,000 investment?

Cost is based on NCHRP Scoping Study recommendations and projections from the collective experience of MTKN members. Depending on participants' current OCLC costs, online compatibility, and collection size, pooled fund study costs could range from \$15,000 to \$20,000..

ANNUAL LIBRARY POOLED FUND STUDY COST STRUCTURE	
Technical library assistance, cataloguing services, OCLC annual membership	\$ 5,000 to 10,000
Travel expense for at least two library pooled fund study meetings per year	2,000
Administrative costs for overseeing the pooled fund study	3,000
Marketing services to develop communication and promotional materials	5,000
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$15,000 - \$20K

11. What are the lessons learned/best practices of the MTKN experience that can be modeled by other states?

MTKN has shown that a regional network of library and information services actually works. Since its inception in 2001, MTKN has implemented cost saving measures while expanding library and information services on a regional level. In an economy of downsizing and fiscal cuts, this regional model is a wise investment and demonstrates the need for continued support of a national library network.

MTKN's best practices also include improved access to new technology, pooling of indexed materials and more online research methods and tools. In uniting officials from state transportation libraries and universities, MTKN provides a forum to discuss common problems, exchange information and share resources. Through this cooperative effort, participating states avoid duplication of effort while reducing costs and optimizing library and information services. This regional model can help maintain an informed workforce among state DOTs.

12. What are MTKN's main accomplishments in the last four years?

- a. Implementation of TL Cat – an online catalog system – providing access to more than 340,000 documents not previously available through the Internet.
- b. Aiding in the technology transfer process by providing technical assistance and peer exchange information on how to build strong transportation collections.
- c. Marketing the need for enhanced transportation information access on both a regional and national level.
- d. Assisting in the development of technical training, such as "Working Smarter: Using the World Wide Web for Transportation Related Research." This two-hour

tutorial sharpens online research skills and teaches how to evaluate and interpret information found on the Web.

- e. Providing a forum to increase dialogue within the transportation community about the role librarians play in compiling and distributing vital information.

MTKN accomplishments include:
Developed network of librarians
Expert advice and peer review services
Technical support to less experienced members
Feedback to the NTL on its projects and services
More visibility for libraries and the value of information
Faster access to a broader range of materials through TL Cat