



Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning Call for Innovative Demonstration Projects, FY 2018

Questions and Answers

Note: This includes responses to questions received until the week of Feb. 20, 2017. Towards the end of that week, TxDOT began experiencing technical difficulties with the PTN_ProgramMgmt email address and we have not received any questions that may have been submitted since then. This issue is being addressed and we will provide an updated Questions and Answers sheet as soon as the system is working again.

If you submitted a question to the PTN_ProgramMgmt email address, but do not see it listed below, then *re-send* your question and we will respond.

Question Number	Applicable Section of Instructions Document	Question	Answer
1.	Applicant Information Form	<p>We understand that any projected sub-contractors need to be identified in the application. However, we have a question regarding the procurement of certain professional services or competitively bid services. Under procurement requirements for political subdivisions, we are required to go through a competitive Request for Qualifications for professional services and a competitive bid process for construction related projects. In these instances, it is not possible to know exactly what firm would be the contractor on a project without violating procurement requirements. Please provide guidance on how we are to identify potential contractors at the time of application without going through procurement processes that are associated with funded projects. We are glad to include needed information, but want to make sure we do everything correctly.</p>	<p>The sub-contractor does not need to be identified in the proposal. However, the proposal is to indicate whether a sub-contractor will be used. For instance, if you want to hire a consultant to do some kind of research, then you are correct that you need to follow acceptable procurement practices. In this case, your proposal should state your intention for doing this.</p> <p>Even though a consultant does not need to be named in the proposal, other partner(s) do need to be named. This should include the partner(s) name, a description of their role and what they are committing (funding, staff, time, expertise, facilities, materials, or other resources), and letters of commitment from each partner.</p> <p>These partners, their roles and what they agree to commit to should be determined prior to submission of your proposal. Potential partners might include transit providers, health and/or human services agencies, social services agencies, veterans organizations, universities or any number of other organizations or individuals, depending on the nature of your proposed demonstration project.</p>

Question Number	Applicable Section of Instructions Document	Question	Answer
2.	Applicant Information Form	<p>We plan to propose a collaborative project with another entity to provide service across our Service Area Boundaries for the Demonstration Project . . . The question is how do we structure the application? Do we apply jointly (if so how?) Do we each apply referencing the partnership and the other application or does one of the agencies apply, taking the lead and include all information? The issue as I see it is that both agencies would need some of the funding for operations to provide this service. If you could please direct us we would greatly appreciate it.</p>	<p><i>One</i> entity should take the lead on this proposed project. Whichever entity this is, should then submit the proposal for funding to TxDOT.</p> <p>The proposal should be developed collaboratively.</p> <p>If this is a successful proposal, then TxDOT will contract with whichever entity submitted the proposal. The entity that submits the proposal should enter into a separate agreement with the other partner-entity to formally establish roles, responsibilities and other terms of the agreement and to provide a mechanism for sharing resources between the two entities.</p> <p>Funding applicants are to attach under the Project Evaluation section letters of <i>commitment</i> from partnering organizations, entities and/or individuals. A letter of <i>commitment</i> (as opposed to simply a letter of support is a letter documenting an organization’s, entity’s or individual’s pledge of resources for a proposed project or activity. This may be a <i>commitment</i> of financial support, staff support, services, or other resources. A letter of <i>commitment</i> must describe the nature of the <i>commitment</i> and state exactly what the organization, entity or individual commits to. This letter must be signed by a person fully authorized to bind the organization, entity or individual.</p> <p>Successful applicants are to provide, prior to execution of a project grant agreement, evidence of formal partnerships with other entities who commit funding, staff, time, expertise, facilities or other resources to accomplish this demonstration project.</p>
3.	Applicant Information Form	<p>When we click on the “Strategic Plan” link on Question 3 under “Project Summary,” we are not redirected to the correct page. Can you help?</p>	<p>Thank you for pointing this out. We are working with TxDOT’s web team to resolve this. The link within the instructions document will be corrected as soon as possible. In the meantime, you may find TxDOT’s strategic plan at http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/state-affairs/strategic-plan.html.</p>

Question Number	Applicable Section of Instructions Document	Question	Answer
4.	Applicant Information Form	What are we to send to demonstrate the need for our project? Are we to include data? Studies?	<p>It is up to you. Basically, you should present whatever information you have to most convincingly justify the need for your project. Data and results of studies could be very appropriate.</p> <p>In addition, you should cite the strategy, objective or priority identified in the current five-year public transit-human services transportation plan that your proposed project will help to achieve.</p> <p>You might check to see if data is available from the recent comprehensive needs assessment that was conducted in your region as part of the process to develop the new five-year plan. It is possible that data collected during the needs assessment could help to bolster your proposal. The lead agency for developing the plan in your region should have this data.</p> <p>Also, depending on the nature of your project, it is possible that you may want to gather additional data through research prior to the actual pilot testing of whatever is you propose to test. Make clear in your application if you propose an initial research phase to be following by another phase to actually conduct the pilot test. By the way, it is anticipated that projects will terminate on Aug. 31, 2018, however it is possible for a project to extend beyond Aug. 2018 depending on the possible phased nature of individual projects.</p>
5.	Applicant Information Form	Does “partner” mean the regional transportation stakeholder steering committee members?	<p>Not necessarily.</p> <p>Certainly, steering committee members are partners in a general sense. But, for the purposes of this call for projects, a partner is an individual or entity that formally commits or pledges to provide funding, staff resources, expertise, facilities or some other specific support to actually make this project happen. With this said, it is possible that a member of your steering committee might also happen to represent an entity that will serve as a formal partner for your project, but committee members would not be considered formal project partners simply by virtue of their serving on the steering committee alone.</p> <p>Potential partners might include transit providers, health and/or human services agencies, social services agencies, veterans organizations, universities or any number of other organizations or individuals, depending on the nature of your proposed demonstration project.</p>

Question Number	Applicable Section of Instructions Document	Question	Answer
6.		<p>If the applicant partners with a research institution to conduct the project evaluation and provides funds from this grant to that partner to conduct those activities, are they considered a partnering entity or a consultant? What if those funds are part of the matching funds?</p>	<p>A research institution such as you describe could be considered both a partner and consultant. The instructions for this call for projects do not specifically define “partner,” “consultant,” or the distinction between the two. However, you should refer to sections of the instructions that refer to partnering entities or partnerships.</p> <p>For instance, Question 2 under the Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders form asks applicants to list the names of organizations, entities and/or individuals who have committed to active participation in the proposed demonstration project. Applicants are to describe specific roles and activities in which these partnering entities will engage. Further, applicants are to include letters of commitment from these partnering organizations, entities, and/or individuals. A letter of commitment (as opposed to simply a letter of support) is a letter documenting an organizations’, entity’s or individual’s pledge of resources for a proposed project or activity. This may be a commitment of financial support, staff support, services, or other resources. A letter of commitment must describe the nature of the commitment and state exactly what the organization, entity or individual commits to.</p> <p>Additionally, the Introduction section of the Instructions document lists funding criteria. Note that successful applicants shall provide, prior to execution of a project grant agreement, evidence of formal partnerships with other entities who commit funding, staff, time, expertise, facilities or other resources to accomplish the demonstration project. This could be an inter-agency agreement, a contract, a memorandum of understanding or perhaps some other documentation of a partnership arrangement.</p> <p>As far as consultants are concerned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) You do not have to list the name of this entity if you plan to secure their services through a competitive procurement process because you probably have not yet gone through this procurement process. If this is the case, then your proposal simply should state your plans for securing such services. (2) However, you <i>should</i> include the name of this entity <i>if you already know who they are and have secured their services through some sort of appropriate procurement process such as entering into an inter-agency agreement.</i> <p>Finally, to the last part of your question, the Division views the match funds as part of the project funds and this would not change the status or designation of the research entity.</p>

Question Number	Applicable Section of Instructions Document	Question	Answer
7.	Evaluation Form	Can we sub-contract with another entity?	Yes.
8.	Evaluation Form	Our project is pretty ambitious, and as such it may actually be a two-year effort to get it implemented correctly. In the application guidance, I know that everything is looking at a one-year project. However, would it be possible to pursue research and development in Year 1 with project implementation and evaluation projected out for a Year 2 proposal? ... would it hurt us to approach a larger project this way in your opinion?	<p>The Public Transportation Division anticipates that most projects will terminate after one year on Aug. 31, 2018, however it is possible for projects to extend beyond one year (that is, beyond Aug. 31, 2018), depending on the possible phased nature of individual projects.</p> <p>It is possible for your agency to conduct research and development activities and report on research findings as a 1st phase in Year 1 and then actually test, evaluate and report on whatever it is you want to test as a 2nd phase in Year 2.</p> <p>It is imperative that your proposal presents a clear description of the proposed demonstration project, including a clear rationale for the proposed scope of work and timeline, since all projects will not warrant a two-year contract period.</p>
9.	Evaluation Form	Are matching funds included in the budget worksheet considered certified match?	The Division is not familiar with the term, "certified match"
10.	Evaluation Form	Can we attach resumes or job descriptions for key positions to demonstrate experience and capacity?	No. Do not attach additional documents such as resumes or job descriptions. Applicants may provide information describing resumes or job descriptions in narrative format in the space provided.
11..	Miscellaneous	May this funding be used to reimburse for regional transportation stakeholder committee meetings?	<p>Possibly, if these meetings concern the funded demonstration project.</p> <p>It is certainly conceivable that stakeholders would want to be kept informed of the project's progress and continue to shape its development by participating in interim evaluation and adaptive management.</p>
12.	Miscellaneous	My organization is interested in applying for the Innovative Demonstration Project. Cn you please assist me with accessing the egrants sytem?	Contact the eGrants Help Desk at (512) 486-5957 or ptn-egrantshelp@txdot.gov for access to the eGrants system.
13.	Miscellaneous	How many awards do you anticipate making?	The Division has not set a pre-determined number of awards. The number of awards will depend on the availability of funds and the merits of proposals as assessed through the reviewing and scoring process.
14.	Miscellaneous	Is there an award floor or ceiling, or average award amount?	No. However, the Division emphasizes that the anticipated <i>statewide</i> total award will be between \$500,000 and \$700,000, depending on availability of funds. This is not an anticipated award amount per project.

Question Number	Applicable Section of Instructions Document	Question	Answer
15.		What intellectual property rights do grantees have?	TxDOT and the USDOT reserve a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use for government purposes all intellectual property created under the grant or acquired with grant funds

March 17, 2017