

Transportation Library Connectivity and Development
Pooled Fund Study
TPF-5(237)

Research/Technology Project Solicitation

Lead Investigator: HS Infocus LLC
Lead State: Missouri Department of Transportation

October 24, 2013

Research/Technology Project Solicitation

TITLE: Improvement of research report distribution and access and promotion of more effective use of Technical Report Documentation page, USDOT Form 1700.7.

PROJECT: Transportation Library Connectivity and Development Pooled Fund Study, TPF-5(237)

LEAD INVESTIGATOR: HS InFocus LLC

LEAD AGENCY: Missouri Department of Transportation

INTRODUCTION: This Request for Proposals (**RFP**) seeks proposals from qualified organizations (**Offeror**) to furnish the described services to HS InFocus LLC (**HS InFocus**) and the Transportation Library Connectivity and Development Pooled Fund Study, TPF-5(237) (**pooled fund**) as a subcontractor. HS InFocus is under contract to the Missouri Department of Transportation, who reserves the right to reject any and all proposals for any reason whatsoever. Time is of the essence for responding to the RFP within the submission deadlines.

SPECIAL NOTES: This RFP for is a project approved by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the pooled fund study above. This solicitation is for a qualified contractor to plan and execute the project under a subcontract to the Lead Investigator, HS InFocus LLC.

This solicitation encompasses two parts. Please carefully read all background information in both Parts "A" and "B." All responses must address both aspects of this overarching project.

PART A

I. PROBLEM TITLE:

Research Report Distribution and Access Process Improvement

II. BACKGROUND :

State Departments of Transportation, University Transportation Centers, and other institutions using federal USDOT funds to conduct research and produce reports are required to "distribute" copies of final reports to a specified list of recipients (see attached memo provided by FHWA). In addition to the federal requirements, many states have local requirements of depositing reports to the State Library or State Depository / Archive. Beyond the requirements, best practices have been established for providing reports to additional entities such as the NTL: National Transportation Library for permanent retention, etc.

Agencies involved with the distribution of research reports often experience high levels of confusion with the overall process and a lack of compliance with requirements and best practices is evident throughout the community. Factors believed to contribute to the ineffectiveness of the process include the following:

- It is unclear as to where to send reports, even with the attached list provided in the memo from FHWA, some on the list are required while others on the list are simply recommended, and overall the list is too long
- State DOTs may have different requirements than UTCs or others
- Each recipient on the list has a different submittal process, and differing acceptance of particular formats
- Access to submitted reports varies greatly depending upon the recipient and the backlog -- submitted reports may take weeks or months to become fully accessible by the user community; some recipients on the list do not provide free access, while others have hidden or difficult to navigate retrieval systems
- Some state DOTs and UTCs like to be “alerted” when others have published new reports, currently no systematic alert system is in place for users to be quickly informed when reports are produced, rather there are multiple, disparate alert options or more centralized alert options with longer delays
- New members of the transportation community often have no indication or instructions on this process when they begin their responsibilities

III. OBJECTIVES

The AASHTO Research Advisory Committee, Transportation Knowledge Network (TKN) Task Force Report Distribution Subcommittee Group is proposing research be conducted to provide answers/insight into resolving the issues outlined in Part A, Section II to create predictable, sustainable information resources and streamline the report distribution process. Improving this process should lead to increased compliance by providers resulting in overall increased access to essential transportation information by practitioners.

IV. METHOD

Activities will include employing a researcher or team to investigate the issues outlined in Section II and provide the deliverables outlined in Section V. Some expertise in information technology will be useful in providing some of the deliverables, other research will require a good familiarity of the stakeholders and an organized knowledge of where we are currently with the issues to avoid duplication of effort.

V. SPECIFIC RESULTS, FINDINGS, TOOLS ETC. (DELIVERABLES)

- Definitive list of required vs. recommended list of recipients for distribution of any research reports produced with USDOT funding such as is commonly received by state DOTs and UTCs, etc. and provide the authorizing language (statute, order, etc.) along with specific submittal process requirements
- If different requirements exist for different groups, define for each provider group
- Using list above, explain the various access and archival functions provided: documents being stored or just providing bibliographic access, if stored -- is the storage considered archival (refer to Dale Steele's report on depositories); describe the process for retrieval --- website accessible or library catalog (provide direct links); full text or abstract only; free access or associated cost
- Recommendation to streamline submittal so a provider could send an electronic document to one or two places and satisfy many requirements, explore technology options
- Recommendation on technology or process to provide systematic alert options when new reports are produced, i.e. many states currently provide RSS alerts for new reports, can these be combined, can the combined list be filtered by topic, or is there a better way
- Create document of instructions or best practices which can be shared with new members of the transportation community who are responsible or could be responsible for this provision of reports and recommend several outreach options for sharing this information
- Other objectives may result as the project progresses. The project team may identify additional tasks and objectives.

VI. HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

Results will be used to resolve the issues outlined in the Background section to create predictable, sustainable information resources and streamline the report distribution process. Improving this process should lead to increased compliance by providers resulting in overall increased access to essential transportation information by practitioners. There will be recommendations to provide to key stakeholders for process change and instructions to new members of the community responsible for the process.

PART B

I. PROBLEM TITLE:

Promoting more effective use of the Technical Report Documentation page, USDOT Form 1700.7.

II. BACKGROUND:

Agencies of the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) administer research funds to many different recipients. For example, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers State Planning & Research funds to the state departments of transportation (state DOTs). Another agency, the Research & Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), administers funds to selected university transportation centers (UTCs).

Any research reports that utilize US DOT funds must include a Technical Report Documentation Page based on Form DOT F 1700.7. This page is meant to provide a standardized, one-page format for readers, researchers, librarians, and other knowledge management professionals to quickly and easily identify the title, authors, dates and key data contained in the report.

However, there is concern among state DOTs and others that various factors are leading to ineffective use of the form. These factors include the following:

- Form DOT F 1700.7 has not been changed since 1972, leading to concern that the form and its fields may not reflect current and future knowledge management techniques and needs.
- There appears to be a lack of consistent instructions for state DOTs, UTCs, researchers or even federal agencies to accurately complete the form in a way that will benefit future readers.
- There appears to be a lack of consistency in who completes the form and at what stage of a research project.
- The information provided in the form may not be easily deciphered by knowledge management professionals, leading to ineffective cataloging or retrieval from repositories. Ultimately, inability to retrieve reports prevents practitioners from accessing information needed to most effectively perform essential transportation work.

III. OBJECTIVES:

The AASHTO Research Advisory Committee, Transportation Knowledge Networks (TKN) Task Force Report Distribution Subcommittee Group is

proposing that research be conducted to document the current state of practice in the use of Form DOT F1 700.7, and to identify best practices or methods that will encourage more effective use of the form.

IV. METHOD:

Activities will include hiring a researcher; the only anticipated resource needs would be for labor and possibly for a survey mechanism. The research does not require major technical expertise, although the ideal researcher should have a background in research and experience with information and knowledge management in federal and/or state DOTs and UTCs.

Objectives

- The research should start with accurately and fully documenting the federal requirements related to the form, especially as they relate to research conducted by state DOTs and UTCs. This documentation should consider the ultimate goal of instructing users on the purpose of fields and best practice for completing fields. Perhaps provide an example of a form completed to the best extent possible?
- The project should survey or canvass state DOTs, UTCs and USDOT federal agencies to establish the current state of practice and existing concerns about the form. Possible questions include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - Who typically completes the form, and at what stage of the research project or publishing process?
 - Does the agency have any other forms, databases, catalogs or other systems that draw directly from the information/metadata required on DOT Form F 1700.7?
 - Does the agency have any other forms, databases, catalogs or other systems that already capture or duplicate the information/metadata required on DOT Form F 1700.7?
 - Does the structure of the form pose any problems? Are fields clearly understandable? Is there sufficient space for the information requested?
 - Are there fields on the form that are routinely left blank? Are some fields required and others optional, should this be indicated on the form? Which fields on the form are used by which agencies?
 - Is there information needed by agencies or knowledge management professionals that is not currently captured by the form? Examples include: statement of copyright or intellectual property; alignment of fields with NTIS's new form

(<http://www.ntis.gov/pdf/rdpform.pdf>) and NTL metadata capture; suggestion of using TRT terms in addition to or in lieu of keywords.

- Has the individual agency already developed its own set of instructions or guidelines for the completion of the form? How and why did they agency develop these instructions? Make sure to speak with the publications offices at the respective agencies for this feature.

V. SPECIFIC RESULTS, FINDINGS, TOOLS ETC.:

- The research would compile information and develop recommendations that would lead to more effective use of DOT Form F 1700.7.
- Recommendations would be provided for those actions that are outside the ability of AASHTO to implement unilaterally, such as changing the US DOT form.
- Implementation of identified solutions that AASHTO may be willing to institute, such as standard guidance documents for state DOTs.

VI. HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

Identification of changes in the format of Form F 1700.7 will lead to greater consistency, efficiency, and improvement in information retrieval. Identifying best practices for documentation, such as quality control, will result in more effective sharing of research among practitioners and information agencies. The research results from this study would be most effective if they would be available to state DOTs to apply to activities starting in federal fiscal year 2014 (begins October 1, 2013).

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

I. Evaluation Factors: Any agreement for services resulting from this RFP shall be awarded to the Offeror providing the best proposal. After determining responsiveness, proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

- Experience, expertise and reliability;
- Proposed method of performance;
- Cost, fees and expenses;
- Recommendations from references;
- The affirmative action program of the Offeror;
- Overall clarity and quality of proposal; and

- Other preferred attributes.
- II. Historic Information:** HS InFocus reserves the right to consider historic information and facts, whether gained from the Offeror's proposal, question and answer conferences, references, or other sources, in the evaluation process.
- III. Responsibility to Submit Information:** The Offeror is cautioned that it is the Offeror's sole responsibility to submit information related to the evaluation categories and that HS InFocus is under no obligation to solicit such information if it is not included with the Offeror's proposal. Failure of the Offeror to submit such information may cause an adverse impact on the evaluation of the Offeror's proposal.

PRICING

- I. Cost Estimate:** The Offeror must submit a proposed cost estimate for all services defined in the Scope of Work. For example, the Offeror shall indicate all cost for providing services to complete the project and deliverables:

Cost Estimate	
Expenses	Estimated Amount
Billable Hours	
Hourly Rate for Services	
Miscellaneous	
Total	

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONSES:

REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF PROPOSAL

- I. Experience:** The proposal must clearly identify the Offeror's experience in offering the services requested in this RFP during the past three (3) years. The description should include a list of the agencies that you or your firm has served or currently serves.
- II. Personnel:** Please indicate the name, location, telephone number, fax number and email address of the primary contact person for the Offeror. Information

presented in this section should highlight the previous Offeror experience, as well as any work with other federal, state agencies or local governments. No Sub-Offerors may be included in the proposal.

- III. References:** Proposals should indicate the name, title, and telephone number of at least three employers and/or clients within the past three years.
- IV. Project Plan:** Proposals should include a detailed narrative project plan addressing each identified problem and deliverable and how it will be addressed and accomplished. Project plan should not exceed 10 pages (not including background and reference materials.)
- V. Cost Estimate:** Proposals should include a best estimate of hours required to complete the project (Parts A and B). Provide hourly pricing and total cost projection for the project.
- VI. Contact:** Please send all questions regarding this solicitation to msacco@hsinfocus.com.

AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The selected contractor will be a subcontractor to HS InFocus LLC and shall be subject to all employment requirements stated as follows:

Work Eligibility (Required by Missouri Department of Transportation)

The Contractor shall comply with all the provisions of Executive Order 07-13, issued by the Honorable Matt Blunt, Governor of Missouri, on the sixth (6th) day of March, 2007. This Executive Order, which promulgates the State of Missouri's position to not tolerate persons who contract with the state engaging in or supporting illegal activities of employing individuals who are not eligible to work in the United States, is incorporated herein by reference and made a part of this Agreement.

(A) By signing this Agreement, the Contractor hereby certifies that any employee of the Contractor assigned to perform Services under the contract is eligible and authorized to work in the United States in compliance with federal law.

(B) In the event that the Contractor fails to comply with the provisions of the Executive Order 07-13, or in the event the Client has reasonable cause to believe that the Contractor has knowingly employed individuals who are not eligible to work in the United States in violation of federal law, the Client reserves the right to impose such contract sanctions as it may determine to be appropriate, including but not limited to contract cancellation, termination or suspension in whole or in part or both.

Nondiscrimination Assurance (Required by Missouri Department of Transportation)

(A) Civil Rights Statutes: The Contractor shall comply with all state and federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination, including but not limited to Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d and 2000e, et seq.), as well as any applicable titles of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, the Contractor shall comply with all applicable provisions of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(B) Administrative Rules: The Contractor shall comply with the administrative rules of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) relative to nondiscrimination in federally-assisted programs of the FHWA (49 CFR Subtitle A, Part 21) which are herein incorporated by reference and made part of this Agreement.

(C) Nondiscrimination: The Contractor shall not discriminate on grounds of the race, color, religion, creed, sex, disability, national origin, age or ancestry of any individual in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment. The Contractor shall not participate either directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited by 49 CFR 21.5, including employment practices.

(D) Solicitations for Subcontracts, Including Procurements of Material and Equipment: These assurances concerning nondiscrimination also apply to suppliers of the Contractor. Each potential supplier shall be notified by the Contractor of the requirements of this Agreement relative to nondiscrimination on grounds of the race, color, religion, creed, sex, disability or national origin, age or ancestry of any individual.

(E) Information and Reports: The Contractor shall provide all information and reports required by this Agreement, or orders and instructions issued pursuant thereto, and will permit access to its books, records, accounts, other sources of information, and its facilities as may be determined by the Client or the FHWA to be necessary to ascertain compliance with other contracts, orders and instructions. Where any information required of the Contractor is in the exclusive possession of another who fails or refuses to furnish this information, the Contractor shall so certify to the Client or the FHWA as appropriate and shall set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.

(F) Sanctions for Noncompliance: In the event the Contractor fails to comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of this Agreement, the Client shall impose such contract sanctions as it or the FHWA may determine to be appropriate, including but not limited to:

1. Withholding of payments under this Agreement until the Contractor complies; and/or
2. Cancellation, termination or suspension of this Agreement, in whole or in part, or both.

HOW TO BID

Please send your proposal to Maggie Sacco at msacco@hsinfocus.com and direct all

questions, both general and technical to Maggie by email or call 202.657.6650. You may also view this solicitation at <http://libraryconnectivity.org/files/HS-InFocus-RFP-Final-20130726.pdf>

Questions must be received by November 15, 2013. We will respond directly and post all Q&As as they are received at <http://libraryconnectivity.org/2013/07/project-rfp/>

All proposals must be received by the close of business (5:00 PM EDT) on December 1, 2013.