



FFY27 Request for Proposals Questions & Responses

All WisDOT responses are provided in red and italics.

Administrative Questions

1. WHRP Technical Team, I am emailing you to ask if there are any policy or guidelines provided from WDOT related to budgeting indirect costs for funding announcement *"Performance and Durability Assessment of Portland Limestone Cement (PLC) Used in Wisconsin."* I am assisting MSU faculty prepare their budget. Please reply to confirm if we can use our approved IDC rate or something else.

You may use your approved indirect cost rate (IDC).

2. My team consists of two faculty members: myself (PI) from Washington State and a colleague (Co-PI) from Pennsylvania. Are we eligible to submit, and will my proposal be considered for evaluation? *RE: Performance and Durability Assessment of Portland Limestone Cement (PLC) Used in Wisconsin*

Yes, your team is eligible to submit a proposal, and it will be considered.

3. I am looking through the RFP materials and Proposal Preparation Instructions for the Wisconsin Highway Research Program and was hoping to clarify the scoring matrix by correlating the appropriate proposal sections to the how much they are worth/points in the matrix. Can you clarify if this is correct?

- Background – Awareness of Recent Work (up to 15 points) - Section 1 in RFP

Correct

- Work Plan – Understanding of the Problem (up to 15 points) - Section 2 in RFP

Correct.

- Work Plan – Activities & Techniques (up to 30 points) – Sections 3 – 7 in RFP

Correct.

- Deliverables & Implementation Plan (up to 15 points) - Section 8-12, 16 in RFP

Correct.

- Qualifications of the Research Team and Facilities (up to 25 points) – Section 13-15, 17 in RFP

Correct.

Total Points: (up to 100 points)

4. Are there specific limitations on the percentage of the \$300,000 budget that can be allocated to subcontractors?

No, there is none. However, the reviewers will assess the contribution and budget associated with all team members as part of the evaluation process.

5. For equipment over \$1,000 included in the budget, who retains ownership of the equipment at the end of the 24-month period—the research firm or WisDOT?

WisDOT.

6. Is there a limit on the percentage of work that can be performed by subcontractors?

No, there isn't. However, the reviewers will assess the contribution and budget associated with all team members as part of the evaluation process.

7. For the cover and summary pages, do we need to strictly use the template provided on the WHRP page, or is it acceptable to provide the required information without using the template? I am asking because the given template is in pdf format rather than docx, and it is hard to follow the exact format.

The provided template is required. If you would like a docx copy, please email the DOT Research team inbox (research@dot.wi.gov) and request a copy.

Flexible Pavements-Artificial Intelligence (AI) Analyses of Balanced Mix Design (BMD) Mixtures

1. Although the title of this RFP indicates that the project will evaluate the use of AI models for BMD design, the RFP descriptions highlight the use of LLM for BMD. AI models include LLMs, machine learning, deep learning, agent-based AI, and more. Should we stick to the LLM, or can we propose any AI models/approaches as long as their performance in prediction and optimization of BMD is exceptional?

Please refer to Section II. Research Objectives. It is anticipated that the LLM can/may incorporate the use of other AI models or as a part of the evaluation of the applicability of the LLM may be deemed as redundant or inefficient. However, there is also possibility that the LLM could be the gatekeeper for other AI models and provides an opportunity for incorporation of additional models in the future.

Geotechnics-Monitoring Long-Term Changes in MSE Walls

1. The RFP references Electrical Resistivity Imaging (ERI) for long-term monitoring. Does WisDOT envision ERI as:

- a. a multi-electrode imaging system (e.g., 24+ electrodes producing 2-D profiles), or
- b. simpler bulk resistivity measurements using four-pin methods intended to provide average resistivity values??

WisDOT envisions Electrical Resistivity Imaging (ERI) as a multi-electrode imaging system that can provide a 2-D electrical resistivity distribution of backfill materials (so that resistivity values at different depths/offsets can be obtained rather than a single average value for a particular test spot). The specific number of electrodes should be proposed by the research team based on the research objectives and geometric constraints.

2. Task 3 requires construction of large-scale experimental backfill structures but does not specify dimensions. Is there a minimum structure size (e.g., height, width, and depth) that WisDOT considers acceptable or representative?

The Request for Proposal (RFP) states that structures must be large enough to minimize the effects of the surrounding environment and boundary conditions on the Electrical Resistivity Imaging (ERI) profiles. This would give the research team the flexibility to select dimensions that enable reliable ERI measurements. The research team should propose a size that is scalable with respect to the expected physical measurements and the structures considered.

3. The RFP lists multiple possible ERI array configurations (dipole-dipole, Wenner, Schlumberger, inverse Schlumberger). Does WisDOT expect all selected arrays to be implemented, or should the research team propose and justify a subset?

Either way would be okay. It is expected that the research team will identify and propose array systems for taking Electrical Resistivity Imaging (ERI) measurements from both the top and the sides of the structures. However, if the research team has a justification for using a particular array configuration, it can be included in the proposal. The review panel will evaluate the proposed approach as part of the selection process.

Rigid Pavements-Performance and Durability Assessment of Portland Limestone Cement (PLC) Used in Wisconsin

1. The RFP mentions that WisDOT can provide equipment such as a Super Air Meter, if needed. Should the delivery fee be included in the proposal budget?

Yes, the delivery fees should be included in the proposal budget.

2. What is the exact content of limestone powder in the Type IL cement you use (e.g., 8% or 10% by weight)?

Typical limestone content in the Type IL cement used by WisDOT ranges from 8% to 14%. This varies by cement supplier.

Structures-Evaluation of exposed cast-in-place concrete piles in corrosive environments in the state of Wisconsin

1. The RFP references more than 500 structures in the HSI database. Will WisDOT provide a pre-selected shortlist of representative bridges for the Task 3 field investigation, or is the research team responsible for conducting the full screening process?

The budget provided for this project is not anticipated to support the complete screening of all 500 structures; only a representative sample. The project oversight committee (POC) is expected to work with the research team in selecting representative structures. After a proposal has been selected, the POC and research team will determine a list of potential sites based on location, data from past investigations, and the quantity of bridge testing.

2. Task 3 states that the team will “perform a targeted field investigation of selected bridges.” Can WisDOT provide an approximate number of bridges to be investigated to support budget development?

The number of bridges to be selected for the research plan is subject to budget development, researcher discretion, and Project Oversight Committee (POC) approval.

The proposal is expected to provide sample testing budgets in various corrosive environments. This will be evaluated as part of the review process.

3. Tasks 4.2 and 4.3 state the research team must provide equipment to access submerged environments. Does WisDOT require divers for underwater inspections, or will NDT performed at the waterline and splash zone be sufficient for the “critical sections” mentioned?

Divers are not required to address Task 4. Use of non-destructive testing may be sufficient to address Task 4.

4. Will WisDOT provide access to the structures? Does the visit require traffic control? If yes, does WisDOT manage the traffic control?

WisDOT can assist with access to structures, and traffic control may be required for specific site locations. WisDOT will NOT fund traffic control expenses beyond those included in the research project proposal budget. It should be assumed that WisDOT will not manage any traffic control.