

Questions/Answers #1: January 21, 2011

All questions below are presented as submitted to MDOT Research

- Q1: On page 21 of the revised selection guidelines, Price (Item 6) is now a criteria for rating proposals. This criteria is given equal weighting as Understanding of Service (Item 1). Please clarify how MDOT will verify that comparable services will be provided in the case where differing prices are submitted. That is, two proposers can understand the required services, thereby receiving an equal score in this category, but provide different technical solutions at different prices. The less costly solution could be technically inferior but be given a higher score due to the lower price.
- A: **Best value selection procedures are based on the concept of using a methodology for selection that represents the greatest value when considering cost and benefit. The proposed benefit to MDOT in each proposal is coalesced in the set qualification scoring standards that include, but are not limited to, understanding of service, qualifications and team experience, past performance and location. We rely on the expertise of our university partners to develop a fair cost for the specialized service they are proposing. Cost is only 25% of the total points allotted so the selection decision is based on value with a stronger emphasis on benefit than cost. Distinguishing between the level of benefit provided by the proposed solution from each of our experienced university partners is a critical component of the selection.**
- Q2: Will Co-PI past performance also be reviewed?
- A: **The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) may review relevant performance evaluations and/or references for members of the entire team. The principal investigators (PI) past performance is important to the research advisory panel because MDOT depends on the PI to control the cost, schedule, and quality of the project. However, the past performance of subconsultants and other members of the prime vendor's team, such as the Co-PI, may affect the past performance score. The Consultant/Vendor Section Guidelines indicate "MDOT will review relevant performance evaluations for the past five years for prime and subconsultant/vendors that are being proposed."**
- Q3: If someone is interested in knowing what their SVEC/CES (or other evaluation system) file contains, is it available for an individual's personal review, and if so how does one submit a request to receive this information?
- A: **The evaluation systems are set up so that PIs receive their evaluations at the end of the project after the evaluation is conducted by the PM. If you have not retained copies of your past evaluations, a request can be submitted to mdot-research@michigan.gov for an individual's evaluation. Please allow approximately three days for the request to be processed and include all project information in your request. Evaluations will be sent for the requester's projects only.**

Questions & Answers pertaining to all posted RFPs

Q4: What measures does MDOT take to ensure that PMs and others involved in the evaluation process are actually submitting scores to the vendor/consultant SVEC/CES file for consideration in review of subsequent proposals by a PI? This question is prompted based on the past biennial release and scoring feedback received where a proposing PI had experience on projects for MDOT, but no score/information was ever submitted by the PM. Had the PI known that his/her performance had not been captured, they could have provided additional references.

A: Once the final research report is accepted by the project manager, The Office of Research and Best Practices (ORBP) requires that each project manager complete an evaluation of the PI. This practice was put in place in the last three years, and as a result, ORBP does not have evaluations for older projects. In these cases, ORBP has provided a list of projects completed in the past five years and the corresponding project manager to be contacted for reference. Additionally, the request for proposal Consultant/Vendor Selection Guidelines indicate, "If the consultant/vendor has not previously worked for MDOT or has only had a few services opportunities that have been evaluated, this area should be used to provide other references for the selection team to contact." In this light it is recommended that references be provided if there is a concern that evaluation records may be limited.