



Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative

# **2024 Program Work Plan**

**TPF-5(438)**

## Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
PROGRAM PROCESS .....	2
YEAR 2024 PROGRAM.....	4
APPENDIX A – Proposal for 2024 Program Administration .....	6

## INTRODUCTION

The Midwest Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative (MwSWZDI) was initiated in 1999 as a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Pooled Fund Study intended to coordinate and promote research among the participating states related to safety and mobility in highway work zones. Led by Pat McCoy at the University of Nebraska, the original four states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska were joined by Wisconsin in 2001. In 2003, the Nebraska Department of Roads stepped down from its role as lead state, and the Kansas Department of Transportation assumed those responsibilities for the pooled fund administration. To best facilitate the transition, a new pooled fund study was initiated with the same title and participants. Various circumstances led to another change of lead state in 2004, when that role moved from Kansas to Iowa and the pooled fund was designated the Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative (SWZDI). In 2019, Illinois, Michigan, and Texas joined the SWZDI pooled fund. In 2022, Minnesota also became a member.

The program is an ongoing cooperative effort between State Departments of Transportation, universities, and industry. Commercial products are provided by private vendors for evaluation, although this is not the only focus of contracted projects. State DOTs provide funds, prioritize products with respect to the anticipated benefits to their construction and maintenance activities, and cooperate with researchers to identify test sites and conduct the evaluations. To date, approximately 93 studies have been completed, consisting of evaluations of various work zone related products, numerous innovative topics researched, and several synthesis studies. Completed reports and descriptions of ongoing projects can be obtained at the Iowa State University's Institute for Transportation (InTrans) website ([www.swzdi.intrans.iastate.edu](http://www.swzdi.intrans.iastate.edu)) link to the Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative.

## PROGRAM PROCESS

1. The SWZDI Board of Directors, (BOD), with the assistance of the Program Manager annually drafts a list of proposed problem statements based on high priority issues related to work zone safety and/or mobility. Problem statements are developed through a solicitation of and suggestions by vendors, BOD members, and university faculty and staff within the pooled fund states. The statements are then distributed for consideration by university-based principal investigators (PIs) in the pooled fund states through a request for proposal (RFP).
2. The Program Manager distributes the RFP to university-based PIs. Unless there is a special circumstance requiring unique skills or a specific testing facility, the PIs receiving RFPs will be limited to researchers at universities within the states represented by members of the BOD. If specific commercial products are deemed to be of possible interest in addressing the selected issues, those vendors' products must be part of the university's proposal.
3. Upon receipt of proposals from PIs, the Program Manager will distribute those documents for ranking by members of the BOD. To rank each proposal, the scores of each BOD member will be weighted by their state transportation agency (STA) contributions to the pooled fund. Once the BOD, with the assistance of the Program Manager, has selected an annual work plan of projects, the Program Manager will notify the PIs who authored the selected and rejected proposals, debrief those authors on the outcomes, and request modification to the proposal scope and/or budget if necessary.
4. The BOD, with the assistance of the Program Manager, will select and assign a Project Monitor for each approved project. The Project Monitor will be either a member of the BOD or a representative from one of the member STAs. The Project Monitor and other representatives from the STA in which the PI is located will work with the PI to establish a project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC, including the Project Monitor, typically will consist of two to four people with an interest or background in the proposed project subject area; will provide guidance, as needed, to the PI; meet quarterly or as determined or approved by the Project Monitor (face-to-face or virtually); receive and review project quarterly reports; and, review the draft final report before the BOD. The Project Monitor will, as appropriate, serve as chair of the project TAC. PIs are also encouraged to have one TAC member from another pooled fund state. As needed, the Program Manager will discuss the progress of each project with the Project Monitor. Changes requested by the PI in project work plan and/or schedule will be decided by the Iowa DOT, and if considered significant, discussed with the BOD.
5. For each project proposal selected for funding, the Iowa DOT with the assistance of the Program Manager as needed, will develop and negotiate a contract with the selected Universities that contains the proposed work plan and schedule of the project to be performed by the selected PI. The standard contract language and structure will

be provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT). Contracts will need to meet both federal and Iowa DOT requirements. If reasonable negotiations fail the BOD will determine if the subject work should be conducted by an alternate contractor or if an alternate subject should be pursued.

For research contracted to universities located in Iowa, projects will be contracted through an addendum to the basic agreement between those universities and the Iowa DOT. For example, PIs within InTrans will furnish their proposals to the Program Coordinator at InTrans for approval by the ISU Office of Sponsored Programs Administration (OSPA). If the proposal is selected by the BOD the Iowa DOT and OSPA will then approve the addendum prepared by the InTrans Program Coordinator. Following final approval by the Iowa DOT, the Program Manager will furnish a copy of the addendum and project proposal to the PI.

6. Each PI will submit progress reports each quarter, using the Iowa DOT standard progress reporting format, to both the Program Manager and the TAC. A summary of these quarterly reports will be transmitted to the Iowa DOT by the Program Manager. Project progress payment requests (invoices) will be submitted by the Program Manager for payment by the Iowa DOT.
7. The Program Manager will evaluate project process and forward invoices to the Iowa DOT with recommendations for reimbursement. Representatives from the Iowa DOT, as listed on the official FHWA pooled fund website, will serve as points of contact.
8. The Iowa DOT will either deny the invoice and so notify the respective university or send payment directly to that university.
9. On an annual basis, the Iowa DOT will work with FHWA and member STAs to transfer committed funds for the upcoming year.

For the 2024 program, eleven problem statements were submitted for the four topic areas selected by the BOD. Ultimately, the BOD decided that three problem statements should be included in the RFP for Program Year 2024. This RFP was distributed to potential researchers at research institutions in contributing states on September 7, 2023. The deadline for proposal submittal was October 9, 2023. A total of 19 proposals were submitted that addressed all three of the problem statements. There were competing proposals for all three topics. All the proposals were distributed on October 20, 2023 to the contributing state DOT representatives for an initial ranking. The original deadline for these rankings was November 10, 2023. The last initial ranking submittal arrived on November 27, 2023. Upon completion of the first stage of ranking the contributing state DOT representatives from the BOD were provided the top ranked proposal for each of the three topics. Ultimately, it was decided that the top ranked proposals for all three topics would be funded.

The 2024 SWZDI administrative agreement with InTrans was also provided, reviewed, and approved by the BOD for funding from the pooled fund account number TPF-5(438). The administrative tasks approved for funding are documented within the proposal work plan in Appendix A. These tasks include activities related to the initiation and guidance of newly selected projects for program year 2024.

## YEAR 2024 PROGRAM

The cost of three proposals approved by the BOD for program year 2024 (TPF-5(438)) funding are expected to total \$242,490. Available funding for 2024 research projects was \$332,976 and was comprised of remaining funds from previous years and new contributions from the participating states as shown in Table 1. The administrative agreement for program year 2024 was also funded for a total of \$46,500 (from the total in Table 1). The 2024 program year projects, including the administrative agreement, are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 1. State SWZDI Contributions – 2024 (TPF-5(438))**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Funding level</b>
Illinois	\$25,000
Iowa	\$50,000
Kansas	\$25,000
Michigan	\$25,000
Minnesota	\$25,000
Missouri	\$50,000
Nebraska	\$25,000
Texas	\$25,000
Wisconsin	\$25,000
Carryover from Previous Years	\$104,476
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$379,476</b>

The projects listed in Table 2 have been approved for funding by the SWZDI pooled fund BOD. The universities indicated are in negotiation to contract directly with the Iowa DOT for individual projects and InTrans assists with the pooled fund and contract administration. There are \$90,486 in remaining funds after contracting is completed for the 2024 project year projects.

**Table 2. SWZDI BOD Approved Projects (2024)**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Principal Investigator</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Fund Account</b>	<b>Status</b>
Program Administration	Keith Knapp	Iowa State University	\$46,500	TPF-5(438)	Pending
Improving Work Zone Management and Safety Through AI-Powered Connected Vehicle Data Analysis	Meenakshi Sumeet Arya	Iowa State University	\$76,410	TPF-5(438)	Pending
Accommodation of Vulnerable Road Users	Steven Lavrenz	Wayne State University	\$91,080	TPF-5(438)	Pending
Work Zone Performance	Guillermo Basulto-Elias	Iowa State University	\$75,000	TPF-5(438)	Pending

Participating State DOTs assist InTrans in monitoring project performance through their participation as Project Monitor or participants in the TAC and their BOD membership. Significant changes in project budget or work plan require approval of the BOD. For minor changes the Project Monitor will represent the BOD in the decision-making.

**SWZDI Proposal for TPF-5(438) Funding  
2024 Program Administration**

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Dates: January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024



## **TITLE**

Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative (SWZDI) –2023 Program Administration  
[Federal Highway Administration project number TPF-5(438)]

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The Midwest Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative (MwSWZDI) was established in 1999 as a Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA), pooled fund study to promote and coordinate research related to safety and mobility in work zones among several cooperating states: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. The association name has been subsequently changed to Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative, (SWZDI). Originally administered through the University of Nebraska and later by the Kansas Department of Transportation, the FHWA and cooperating states recommended transfer of administration and coordination responsibilities to the Iowa Department of Transportation, (DOT) and the Institute for Transportation, (InTrans) at Iowa State University in calendar year 2005. In 2019, three additional states also started to provide funds to SWZDI. These states included Illinois, Michigan, and Texas. In 2022, Minnesota also joined the pooled fund. A total of 9 states are now involved.

## **POOLED FUND OBJECTIVES**

This initiative represents an on-going effort among cooperating states' DOTs, the FHWA, universities, and industry to evaluate new products and conduct related research focused on the enhancement of safety and mobility in highway work zones. State DOTs contribute funding necessary for these activities, prioritize products for evaluation considering potential benefits, and cooperate with university researchers to identify evaluation sites and conduct studies. More than 85 studies and evaluations have been completed since the inception of the SWZDI and final reports are posted in the Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative web site at <https://swzdi.intrans.iastate.edu>.

## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION OBJECTIVES**

Program administration for the SWZDI initiative includes a broad range of activities from meeting scheduling through contract monitoring. The Program Manager at InTrans will work with Project Monitors to track research project progress and discuss compliance with contract tasks and schedule, ensure that Board of Directors (BOD) meetings are productive and documented, as well as manage the financial and administrative needs so that pooled fund members can focus on the technical aspects of the project goals. The activities of InTrans will be transparent and monitored by the SWZDI BOD. InTrans will consult, as necessary, with the BOD on significant technical project matters brought to it by Project Monitors (Note: Project Monitors are members of the BOD) and with the DOT on requests for changes in contract scope or schedule changes.

The Program Manager will, if directed to do so by the BOD, review the final reports of SWZDI projects and the results of that review will be used to propose to the BOD potential implementation opportunities or outreach opportunities for the research findings and recommendations. Some potential outreach activities include technical briefs, webinars, workshops, and DVDs or videos. Existing projects and program will also be reconciled as needed.

## **EVALUATION PROCESS**

The BOD, comprised of representatives from cooperating states with non-voting members from the FHWA, is responsible for developing problem statements describing the highest priority issues related to work zone safety and mobility. Members of the BOD, vendors, and researchers are invited to submit ideas for proposed research study for each program year. In addition, selected vendors are invited to submit products or processes for evaluation studies. Following a review of the submitted topics and products by the BOD, request for proposals (RFPs,) are distributed to interested university researchers in pooled fund states. Researchers then submit proposals and work plans to the BOD for prioritization and selection of projects to be included in the next year's work plan based on anticipated benefits and available funding.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS**

The Iowa Department of Transportation is the lead agency for this pooled fund activity and has requested program management assistance from InTrans in administering and supporting the activities of this pooled fund consortium.

InTrans will complete the following administrative tasks:

- Serve as central location/clearinghouse/website for receipt and distribution of project information
- Maintain project files including an electronic distribution list, meeting notes, status report summaries, correspondence, financial data, action item lists, meeting notes, website, completed final reports and other deliverables.
- Receive completed draft research project reports, distribute to the BOD (including a representative of the DOT Office of Research and Analytics) for review and comment, convey received comments to researchers, and distribute final reports to the BOD
- Obtain quarterly reports from researchers and provide a summarized quarterly report of all project activities to DOT with individual project quarterly reports provided, as requested, for informational purposes in a separate document
- Monitor research accomplishment schedules and deliverables to discuss with Project Monitor and/or PI compliance with individual project objectives
- Verify partial and final billings and recommend reimbursement for work accomplished to the Iowa DOT
- Maintain and monitor the SWZDI web site and assure posting of all completed research reports

- Initiate and facilitate discussion with the BOD of implementation and potential outreach opportunities from completed research projects and document that information
- Provide general administrative assistance and the reconcile the program with DOT as needed

## **STAFFING**

The Iowa DOT is the lead state of SWZDI with a technical representative and financial administrator as posted on the FHWA Transportation Pooled Fund project website. InTrans staff will coordinate and manage the SWZDI pooled fund program and provide financial and budget input and support.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER BENEFITS**

The benefits from the SWZDI pooled fund include a wide variety of products including completed research reports, possible technical transfer documents, potential presentations and training, safety equipment evaluations, support toward other research, as well as development and/or implementation of research results in areas of mutual interest and benefit to pooled fund members and others in the industry.

## **ESTIMATED COST**

The estimated costs to complete the administrative tasks noted above are \$46,500. A detailed budget is attached.

## **RESEARCH PERIOD**

The services described above will be provided from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.