

## ITD Responses to RFP Questions December 3, 2024

**Note:** The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) Research Program received two or more similarly worded questions regarding some of the topics addressed in the Q&A below. To avoid duplicating responses and to provide clarity, some of the original language used in the questions may have been modified or merged with language in similar questions. For additional responses to general RFP questions, please see the [FAQ document](#) on the [ITD Research Program webpage](#).

### **General RFP Questions and Responses**

**Question:** Are there eligibility requirements for universities outside of Idaho?

**Answer:** There are no eligibility requirements for universities outside of Idaho. ITD welcomes proposals from universities outside of the State of Idaho.

**Question:** Please provide clarification regarding ITD's evaluation process and whether proposals are assessed with equal consideration, regardless of the proposer's location. Do proposers from outside Idaho have an equal opportunity in the selection process?

**Answer:** As indicated in Section 4 of the RFP, proposals will be evaluated based on four criteria – Experience and Qualification, Proposed research Approach, Project Management and Communications Strategy, and Budget and Cost. We encourage all universities to submit their proposals, as they will be evaluated comprehensively based on these criteria as shown in the table below, ensuring a fair assessment for all applicants:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Experience and Qualifications	35%
Proposed Research Approach	35%
Project Management and Communications Strategy	10%
Budget and Cost Estimate	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Question:** Does ITD have any cap on the Indirect Rate for the released list of projects?

**Answer:** Idaho Universities are limited to charging 20% overhead per [Idaho State Board of Education policy \(see item 3\)](#). Other public universities are limited to the federally approved overhead rate for their institutions. Consultants are required to submit an overhead rate which has been reviewed or audited by an independent CPA on a yearly basis.

**Question:** Regarding Section 3.4 item 8(d)i: "Identify ... [a]n independent peer reviewer with sufficient expertise to assess the adequacy of the work performed and the conclusions reached by the project team..." Must this individual be external to the proposer's organization? Or is a qualified internal associate not otherwise involved in this project considered independent for deliverable review purposes?

**Answer:** The peer reviewer is not required to be from outside the research organization. They should be an individual who is familiar and experienced with the research topic but should be not involved in any aspect of the research project. The peer reviewer is responsible for providing an independent assessment of the appropriateness of the methods used and soundness of the analysis performed. The peer review should also assess whether the report findings and conclusions are adequately supported.

**Question:** Are there any specific pre-approval prequalification requirements for consulting firms or universities?

**Answer:** There are no specific prequalification requirements for consulting firms that wish to submit proposals for research projects. However, ITD will conduct a suspension and debarment check for the consulting firm/university prior to the final selection of researchers for ITD research projects.

**Question:** In the case of a state institution that cannot accept Idaho governing law in the awarded contract, would it be acceptable for the parties to remain silent on governing law? (Reference: Section 6)

**Answer:** The terms of the agreement will be negotiated and finalized after award. Any desired modifications to the [State of Idaho Standard Contract Terms and Conditions](#) should be identified in the proposal.

**Question:** Are entities that have completed research projects for ITD within the RFP's specified period of study still eligible to submit proposals?

**Answer:** Yes, entities that are expected to complete ITD research projects within the study period of the advertised project are eligible to submit proposals. Per Section 3.4 item 8(c), please include information about your current commitments and anticipated availability in your proposal. This information will help us gain a comprehensive understanding of your capacity to undertake the new project.

**Question:** Does the maximum budget listed in RFP exclude overhead and fixed fees? (Reference: Sections 1.3 and 3.4, Item 10)

**Answer:** No. The maximum budget includes all project costs. Fixed fees and overhead costs should be included in the proposed budget. Fixed Fees included in proposals should be consistent with ITD's [Fixed Fee Rate Calculation Worksheet](#) for Consultant Contracts. Overhead rates are discussed in the FAQ document referenced above.

## **GIS-based Source Management System: Developing a Geospatial Database of Material Sources in Idaho for Use on ITD Projects**

**Question:** While the RFP outlines the need for a database management system to host and maintain aggregate material source data, it is unclear whether ITD expects a commercial software solution (like ArcGIS) or a custom-developed system (PIs will do coding work to develop a customized database management system). Please clarify the level of customization required for the database management system. Specifically, would ITD prefer a solution built using existing commercial software with configuration and integration capabilities, or a fully custom-coded system tailored to ITD's specific needs?

**Answer:** ITD does not expect contractors to develop the platform for the geodatabase. However, the geodatabase that is produced should be fully compatible with ArcGIS Online to ensure seamless integration with ITD's ArcGIS Online-based open data portal, [IPLAN](#).

The requested solution should be developed and designed to operate within the ESRI platform, ensuring it can be maintained using tools such as ArcGIS Pro, ArcGIS Online, or SDE environments. This approach prioritizes alignment with ITD's existing systems and long-term maintainability within the ESRI GIS environment.

**Question:** The RFP mentions the need for a "standardized geospatial database" and IPLAN as a "web-based geospatial data portal." Could you please clarify the relationship between these two components? Is IPLAN intended to serve as the front-end interface for the database, or will it function independently? If they are separate systems, how will they interact and share data?

**Answer:** [IPLAN](#) is ITD's ArcGIS Online portal, which serves as a web-based platform for hosting and sharing geospatial data. The standardized geospatial database should be designed to integrate seamlessly with IPLAN. Specifically, the database should be maintained within ArcGIS Pro and hosted on IPLAN to ensure compatibility and accessibility through ITD's existing systems.

In this setup, IPLAN will act as the front-end interface for users to access and interact with the geospatial data stored in the standardized database. This integration ensures that data can be efficiently managed and displayed via ITD's web-based geospatial data portal.

**Question:** Is the database basically a dataset collection and organize it into a standard database (centralized repository for all relevant data on aggregate material sources in Idaho) that can be retrievable for future ITD engineers?

**Answer:** The database is a standardized spatial database designed to be developed and maintained within the ESRI suite of products. Specifically, it will be built and managed using ArcGIS Pro and hosted on ITD's ArcGIS Online portal, [IPLAN](#), ensuring seamless integration with ITD's existing geospatial data infrastructure. This spatial database will serve as a centralized repository for all relevant data on aggregate material sources in Idaho. It will include detailed records of individual aggregate quality test results. Each test will be cataloged with information such as the date, test procedure, and result. Users will have the capability to query the database by test type, test values, date range, location, or other relevant parameters. Additionally, the database will house legacy documents related to the management and use of aggregate material sources. This includes plats, deeds, permits, and other essential documentation. The comprehensive design will ensure that all necessary data is organized, easily retrievable, and maintainable for future use by ITD engineers.

**Question:** Will the project deliver both a data repository (GIS database) and a database management system (tools and functionalities for maintaining and interacting with the database)?

**Answer:** The project deliverables will include a robust file geodatabase containing multiple feature classes. This geodatabase will serve a dual purpose: it will act as the data repository for storing and organizing geospatial information, and it will also fulfill the role of a database management system by providing the necessary structure and functionalities for maintaining and interacting with the data. The geodatabase will be designed with an architecture that supports ITD's current and future needs. It will include the capability to host data solutions on [IPLAN](#), ITD's ArcGIS Online portal. Additionally, it will allow for easy expansion and data entry, ensuring adaptability for future use cases. The file geodatabase will be sufficiently robust to meet ITD's requirements for data storage, management, and integration within the ESRI ecosystem.

**Question:** Under Task 5, does the Department have an estimate of how many documents might need to be converted into the aggregate material source database for each of the identified data types (lab and field test data, legacy land documents, digital imagery, etc.)? Is the Department able to provide any estimated level of effort for this task? E.g. thousands of historic field test results in paper format could be very time consuming to convert.

**Answer:** ITD estimates that there are approximately 1,000 to 2,000 legacy land documents that may need to be evaluated for inclusion in the aggregate material source database. Not every document will require scanning, but all documents will need to be sorted to determine which are relevant for inclusion. For those that require scanning, additional effort may be necessary to extract key features or data points from the documents.

For lab and field test data, the level of effort will vary based on the format and complexity of the data. Some datasets will be straightforward to input, involving only a simple numeric entry (e.g., a four-number test result). Other data may involve populating the database by creating and uploading spreadsheets.

ITD recognizes that the effort required for document conversion will depend on the specific data type and volume. Legacy land documents are expected to demand more time and resources due to the need for sorting, scanning, and data extraction, while some lab and field test data may be more easily digitized and uploaded.

**Question:** Are the meetings described under Task 3 expected to be in person?

**Answer:** While the meetings under Task 3 can be conducted virtually, ITD strongly recommends that these meetings be held in person. In-person meetings will allow the contractor to directly view and handle the documents slated for conversion, providing a better understanding of their physical condition and characteristics. This hands-on experience can be invaluable in planning the document conversion process effectively.

## **Benefits of Transportation Research in Idaho**

**Question:** When is the anticipated start of the project?

**Answer:** The exact start date of the project is not currently determined. We expect to review proposals and make a selection by mid-February 2025. Based on this timeline, the anticipated project start date will likely be in early spring 2025.

**Question:** ITD research covers a wide variety of topics. A review of current topics includes projects ranging from customer service surveys to concrete chemistry. Will this project focus on certain areas of research (structures, materials, etc.), or is it intended to cover all research topics?

**Answer:** The review is intended to be comprehensive, encompassing all existing ITD research. The contract research team, ITD project manager, and project Technical Advisory Committee will collaborate to compile a targeted list of research projects for evaluation that will ensure a thorough and representative assessment of research areas.