



## RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE AND RESEARCH PROJECT TECHNICAL PANEL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### GENERAL

#### Research Review Committee

The Research Review Committee (RRC) oversees the Research Projects Program. This committee:

- ★ Along with the District Administrators, determines which research topics submitted during the annual research solicitation move forward to the technical panel stage based on champion presentation, ranking (criteria listed below), and funding availability.
  - ❖ Priority research focus areas (e.g., TranPlanMT focus areas that lend themselves to research);
  - ❖ Scope, budget, and timeline are appropriate for available resources (limited funds need to be allocated to highest priorities) and timeliness/urgency of topic;
  - ❖ Importance (e.g., federal or state initiative or compliance);
  - ❖ Benefits and pay-off (including as they relate to MDT’s mission and “strategic plan”; e.g., return on investment, cost/lives savings, etc.);
  - ❖ Implementability; and
  - ❖ Feasibility/probability of success/risk (What is success?)
- ★ Identifies need for and approves administration high priority research topics, partnership projects, and small projects;
- ★ Identifies additional technical panel members;
- ★ Reviews technical panel recommendations (e.g., cancel, fund, implement) for each research project;
- ★ Reviews and approves scopes of work for those research projects where an RFP is to be issued, the cost of the project has increased by the percentage shown in the below table or more, or if there was any contention within the RRC when the project was approved to move forward to the technical panel stage;

Project Cost	Percent Increase in Project Cost
\$50,000 or less	N/A
\$50,001 to \$100,000	30%
\$100,001 to \$500,000	25%
Greater than \$500,000	15%

- ★ Approves funding for all MDT research projects based on the project proposal and technical panel recommendation;
- ★ Approves funding for pooled-fund studies, based on the scope of work and staff recommendation;
- ★ Reviews project progress, as desired; and
- ★ Reviews and makes implementation recommendations.

The RRC consists of a FHWA and WTI representative, and the following MDT positions:

- ★ Director,
- ★ Deputy Director,
- ★ Administrators (except HR), and
- ★ Research Manager.

The RRC meets at most monthly (typically last Wednesday of the month from 9 am to 12 pm). Agenda items must be prepared and final approximately 2 weeks prior to each RRC meeting.

### Technical Panels

Technical Panels (TP) oversee all MDT research projects. They are formed at the beginning of each project and members are chosen with careful consideration since the success of a project hinges on the Technical Panel and its oversight. **This is your project, not Research's; the project can only deliver the products the technical panel wants if there is appropriate technical panel oversight.** There is a different technical panel for each project, usually consisting of three to ten individuals from both inside and outside of MDT, with knowledge and a vested interest in the research topic, results, and implementation. FHWA and MDT Research Staff are on all technical panels. Individuals on panels should adequately represent the breadth of the issue at hand and be balanced with respect to viewpoint and representation. Each panel member is chosen to represent the needs of their respective division, department, organization, and/or constituencies.

### Benefits

The benefits of serving on a technical panel are many and varied. Some are listed below.

1. Obtain answers to questions and solve problems.
2. Help MDT to meet its mission by improving quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment.
3. Help to guide the future direction of MDT.

4. Help to improve operations within your area.
5. Communicate, coordinate, and collaborate within a team environment.
6. Contribute to your professional development.

## Roles

1. Technical Panel Member
2. MDT Research Project Manager
3. Technical Panel Chair

## Responsibilities

Note: All tasks must be performed in a timely manner.

1. Technical Panel Members, including Research staff (MDT Research Project Manager) and panel chair, who is usually the project champion
  - a. Determine if others need to participate on the technical panel.
  - b. Oversee project from inception through implementation. Implementation (i.e., products necessary, identification of barriers, mitigation of barriers) should be considered from the very first panel meeting.
  - c. Determine if research need exists by a literature search and completing the research project statement form and, then, the best method to proceed (cancel project; implement available results; or secure funding from local/MDT, regional, or national research programs).
  - d. If it is determined a project is necessary and should be funded at the local/MDT level, develop a scope of work (SOW), based on the research project statement. Otherwise, work within the appropriate venue to submit research topic. It is critical that a clear, complete, and concise SOW is developed, as the proposal, which is a part of the project contract, is developed from this SOW.
    - i. *Items e. through i. pertain to projects funded at by MDT.*
  - e. Determine if RFP should be issued or a governmental agency would be the best entity to conduct research. Review proposal(s) and recommend to the RRC a proposal for funding. Proposals are based on the SOW.
  - f. Meet with consultant in project kick-off meeting and other meetings, as determined by the project proposal and/or technical panel.
  - g. Carefully review all project products for completeness and accuracy. It is especially critical for technical panel members to review the Task Reports (TR). The TR will provide detailed information on each task, including what was done, how it was done, and the results. The TRs can be combined to form much of the final report.
  - h. Ensure the project stays on scope and delivers desired products by reviewing project deliverables (i.e., progress reports, task reports, other interim products, final report and other final products) and communicating issues with contractor through the MDT Research Project Manager. This is critical for project success.
  - i. Keep supervisor(s), organizations, and/or constituencies informed of all progress and products of the project.
  - j. Make implementation recommendations for MDT.
2. MDT Research Project Manager

- a. Identifies technical panel members and forms technical panels.
  - b. The Research staff on each technical panel serves as the project manager.
  - c. The project manager is the direct liaison between the technical panel and contractor, communicating panel decisions to the contractor.
  - d. Serves as a conduit for all information flowing between the technical panel as a whole or individual technical panel members, and the contractor.
  - e. Ensures project stays within scope and budget, and issues are addressed in a timely fashion.
  - f. Takes meeting notes prior to contracting and for those meetings not attended by the contractor. Contractor takes meeting notes after contract is in place for those meetings contractor attends.
  - g. Manages contractual compliance.
3. Technical Panel Chair
- a. Identifies technical panel members and makes sure they have the time and are willing and able to serve on the technical panel.
  - b. Presents scope of work and business case information to RRC for approval-in-concept as described in the Research Review Committee Section on page 1.
  - c. Presents business case for project and proposal technical panel recommends for funding to RRC for funding approval.
  - d. Chairs, schedules, and moderates all technical panel meetings.
  - e. Encourages active participation by all panel members.
  - f. Helps the panel reach consensus.

### **Time Commitment**

- 1. Scope and business case development – 2-8 hours.
- 2. Proposal review – 1-5 days if an RFP is issued; 2-4 hours if not.
- 3. Meetings and review of progress and interim products. – varies depending on length of project, about 1-2 hours per month.
- 4. Final Product Review – 1-2 days

Time commitment varies with each project.