
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S GUIDE TO NITC SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

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OTREC
PO Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207
E-mail: askotrec@otrec.us
Follow us on the:
Web www.otrec.us
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Facebook www.facebook.com/otrec



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Project Checklist

Keep this in a convenient place. Past project performance is a critical factor in future funding decisions!

Project Name & Number: _____

End Date: _____

Project Requirement	Due Date	Actual Due Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Bi-annual progress report	Check award letter	
<input type="checkbox"/> No cost extension	Due 30 days before end of grant	
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft final report	Due 30 days before end of grant	
<input type="checkbox"/> Final progress report	Submit with draft final report 30 days before end of grant	
<input type="checkbox"/> Match documentation	Due 60 days after end of grant	

1. Introduction

Congratulations on receiving a NITC award! The National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC) is a grant funded by the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA). The NITC program is managed by the Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium (OTREC) at Portland State University (PSU). This guide is intended to help NITC sponsored Principal Investigators (PIs) understand expectations associated with the grant award.

Awards are made only after a rigorous peer-review proposal selection process, and this ensures that the best projects that fit well with the NITC theme and USDOT priorities are funded. PIs are obligated to comply with all grant requirements. PIs should take seriously the grant obligations since successful adherence to and past performance on budget, schedule, and project requirements will be used as review criteria for future proposals submitted. The expectations are also intended to ensure integrity of the project throughout the life of the grant.

Projects must show significant progress during the grant, demonstrate relevant outcomes, and further NITC's theme. Activities should result in an increase in collaboration and greater participation of faculty and students representing a multitude of disciplines. Funded research, education and technology transfer projects will culminate in the development of a final report or product that will synthesize the results of the effort. Results should also be disseminated via journal publications and presentations at recognized conferences.

2. Key Project Requirements

The project requirements ensure that progress is being made on projects with sufficient detail so that we can communicate efficiently and effectively progress to our federal sponsor. The key requirements are as follows:

2.1 Progress reports

OTREC takes into account the progress made on projects before awarding subsequent grants. Progress reports are due bi-annually, and again at the end of the project. These reports provide staff with a mechanism to ensure that the funded activity is progressing as planned, and will support OTREC's reporting to the federal sponsor. These reports will consist of the following:

- Updated progress of tasks to date.
- Specific accomplishments, noting especially milestones, outstanding students, noteworthy collaboration or exciting results and activities undertaken that support the national strategy for surface transportation research and/or respond to DOT priorities.
- Unexpected delays or issues.
- Performance metrics:
 - Research
 - Did research results confirm or change practice? If yes, list practitioners who use the results and provide brief explanation.
 - List peer peer-reviewed articles resulting from project
 - List articles in trade/professional publications
 - Students
 - List undergraduate students involved in this project
 - List graduate students involved in this project
 - Technology Transfer

- List event (seminars, workshops, symposia, etc.) held for transportation professionals and number of transportation professionals participating in event. Is this event to: attract workforce, technology transfer, or continuing education?

PIs are asked to submit reports using OTREC's on-line project management system accessible via the OTREC web site (see Appendix A for sample).

2.2 Final reports

Every sponsored project requires a summary of research findings and/or educational and technology transfer activities described in a final report or comparable product. The report should document the research project in total, including a complete description of the problem, objectives, approach, methodology, findings, conclusions, recommendations, etc. The final report should document all data gathered, analyses performed, and results achieved. The final report template, style guidelines and cover page specifications are available on the website.

The draft final report must be submitted 30 days prior to the official end date of the project. The draft final report will be peer-reviewed and copy-edited during a two-month review process. OTREC will send the draft final report to up to three peer-reviewers, including one practitioner. As applicable, at least one representative of the matching/partner entity will be asked to provide a review. PIs will also be asked to identify additional appropriate peer reviewers for their report. PIs should allow two months of review time in their schedule for this to occur. PIs are responsible for incorporating peer-review comments into the final report due 30 days after the end date of the project. If a project results in a journal-peer-reviewed article, this can be substituted for a final report peer review. In these case, the PI is required to submit a copy of the article and peer-review comments along with the final report.

The use of visuals such as photographs, graphs, charts, etc. is highly encouraged to further enrich reports and deliverables.

Before publishing, final reports will be reviewed by a copy editor to ensure standard formatting requirements are met. All final reports will be produced as part of a numbered report series, and will include the required disclaimer and NITC funding attribution (see section 7 and section 8). All final reports will be posted on the OTREC website, and the URL of the full version of the reports will be provided to the TRB TRID database to the USDOT's on-line National Transportation Library. OTREC will also produce printed a handful of copies for the OTREC library and other institutions, as required by our sponsor.

2.3 Technology transfer

We strongly encourage communicating the results of research projects at national conferences and in refereed journals. PIs should provide copies of all papers submitted to conferences or journals to OTREC, and should include appropriate attribution. OTREC also tracks metrics relating to seminars, symposia, distance learning classes and any education or technology transfer activities undertaken. OTREC welcomes video or streaming web archives.

2.4 Communications

OTREC seeks to disseminate the results of its projects to transportation professionals and the broader community. To meet this goal, we expect PIs to consider opportunities to communicate interesting, surprising, timely and newsworthy findings arising from projects.

Each lead PI is required to meet (in person or by phone) with the Communications Director at least twice during the course of the project: the first meeting should occur between when the project is selected and

when work begins. The purpose of this meeting is to forecast the project's audience, the communications objectives, and the anticipated project products (including talks, articles, workshops, etc.). The second meeting should be held as soon as possible after research is completed, rather than after the Final Report is submitted. The purpose of this meeting is to review the communications plan developed at the first meeting, review project communications that have already occurred, and discuss upcoming opportunities. In order to expedite dissemination of research findings, it is valuable to hold this meeting before the final report is developed.

OTREC's primary method of communication is its website and every PI and project has information on the site. As a complement to the final reports, OTREC prepares a 2-page "project brief" about each completed project. These and other communication strategies depend on input from the PI to remain valuable and relevant. Media include OTREC's website and social media accounts along with external print, broadcast and online media.

3. Project Oversight - Technical Advisory Committees

We recognize that many of the selected projects have technical advisory committees (TAC) established by external match partners. We encourage PIs to identify and create a TAC in the absence of one. TACs are typically good practice, providing feedback and direction to guide a research project. PIs should contact OTREC if assistance is needed in identifying appropriate committee members. The TAC may also be a source for peer review of final reports.

4. Performance Indicators

The data requested in the progress reports and in the final report are required so that OTREC can collect performance measures and gauge how well programs are working towards achieving OTREC and the USDOT goals. These performance measures are reported to our federal sponsor.

5. No-Cost Extension Requests

OTREC understands that unexpected project delays can occur, especially when awards are delayed. However, no-cost extension requests for projects are not to exceed 6 months beyond the original end date of an award (see original award letter date). Extension request forms (see sample in Appendix B) must be filled out completely, signed, and submitted to the PI's University Research Administration office no later than 1 month prior to the end date of an award. OTREC will only accept extension requests that have been approved by the PI's university research office.

Because OTREC is performance driven and must report annually on performance measures that relate to program activities, principal investigators must show reportable progress throughout the life of a project, and must justify the need for an extension. Extreme circumstances for extensions will be considered on a case by case basis. You will be notified by OTREC within two weeks of submittal whether your extension has been approved. PIs should recognize that schedule performance may factor into future funding decisions.

Note regarding extensions and communication plans: In conjunction with receiving a no-cost extension, a PI must have a brief check-in meeting with Communications Director to discuss how the extension affects the project's communications plan.

6. Attribution and Disclaimer

PIs should make proper attribution to NITC grant program in presentations, papers, submitted articles, websites, final reports, and other project dissemination with the following statement, or similar: This project was funded by the National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC). All dissemination should include the NITC logo and reference as a sponsoring agency. A copy of the logo is available below, or electronically from OTREC staff.



Final reports must include the following disclaimer on the inside front cover:

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the information presented herein. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Transportation's University Transportation Centers Program, in the interest of information exchange. The U.S. Government assumes no liability for the contents or use thereof.

Appendix A: Progress Reports



Progress reports are due bi-annually. Please submit via the OTREC website.

1. PROJECT INFORMATION

Report Date:	
Project Start Date:	Project End Date:
Project Title:	
Principal Investigator (PI):	
University:	
Phone:	
Email:	

2. PROGRESS Please provide detailed progress on your project to date.

% Project Completed to Date:	
% Grant Award Expended:	% Match Expended and Documented:
List Task <i>(Add new row for each task):</i>	Progress to Date
Task 1:	
Task 2:	
Task 3:	
Task 4:	

3. NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS Notable accomplishments, outstanding students, notable collaboration or exciting results and activities undertaken that support the national strategy for surface transportation research and/or respond to DOT priorities. This information may be used in newsletters and included in the Annual Report.

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4. ISSUES Please note any issues of concern.

5. PERFORMANCE METRICS Please provide the following performance metrics related to your project.

Research

- Did research results confirm or change practice? If yes, list practitioners who use the results and provide brief explanation.
- List peer peer-reviewed articles resulting from project
- List articles in trade/professional publications

Students

- List undergraduate students involved in this project
- List graduate students involved in this project

Technology Transfer

- List event (seminars, workshops, symposia, etc.) held for transportation professionals and number of transportation professionals participating in event. Is this event to: attract workforce, technology transfer, or continuing education?

Appendix B: No-Cost Project Extension



No-cost extensions are due no later than 1 month prior to the end date of a project. Please fill out the form completely, sign and give to your institution’s research office for processing **no later than 1 month prior to the end date of a project**. OTREC will only accept extension requests that have been approved by the PI’s university research office. PI’s at Portland State University can send the no-cost extension directly to Carol Wallace (cwallace@pdx.edu) at the OTREC office. All other no-cost extensions must be sent from the research office staff. No-cost extensions for projects are not to exceed 6 months from the end date of the project award (see the award letter date). OTREC is performance driven and must report annually on performance measures related to program activities. Investigators must show reportable progress throughout the life of a project, and must justify the need for no-cost extensions.

1. PROJECT INFORMATION

Report Date:	
Project Start Date:	Project End Date:
Project Title:	
Principal Investigator (PI):	
University:	
Phone:	
Email:	

2. PROGRESS Please provide detailed progress on your project to date.

% Project Completed to Date:	
% Grant Award Expended:	% Match Expended and Documented:
List Task <i>(Add new row for each task):</i>	Progress to Date
Task 1:	
Task 2:	

3. NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Notable accomplishments, outstanding students, notable collaboration or exciting results and activities undertaken that support the national strategy for surface transportation research and/or respond to DOT priorities. This information may be used in OTREC newsletters and included in the OTREC Annual Report:

4. ISSUES Please note any issues of concern.

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5. PERFORMANCE METRICS

Research

- Did research results confirm or change practice? If yes, list practitioners who use the results and provide brief explanation.
- List peer peer-reviewed articles resulting from project
- List articles in trade/professional publications

Students

- List undergraduate students involved in this project
- List graduate students involved in this project

Technology Transfer

- List event (seminars, workshops, symposia, etc.) held for transportation professionals and number of transportation professionals participating in event. Is this event to: attract workforce, technology transfer, or continuing education?

6. REASON FOR REQUEST

Reason for Extension:	
Anticipated Project End Date:	
Principal Investigator Signature:	Date:

7. APPROVALS

	Signature	Date
Dean or Department Chair (If applicable)		
University Research Office		
OTREC		
Approved new project end date (OTREC use only)		

Appendix C: Cost Share Documentation



Cost Share (Matching Funds) from Outside Source

Please fill out all applicable fields for in-kind cost share including matching external awards, volunteer services, and goods as outlined in the OMB Circular A-110. If the match source is an external project, please provide sponsoring agency name and award number to ensure that the funds are not federal. Please submit the form to Carol Wallace: cwallace@otrec.us fax 503-725-2880 phone 503-725-2834.

1. PROJECT INFORMATION

OTREC Project No:	Principal Investigator (PI):
Project Title:	
University:	
Sponsoring Agency:	Award Number:
Name of Contributor/Organization:	

2. VOLUNTEER SERVICES (add rows as necessary)

Name	# Hours	Hourly Rate	Fringe Benefits	Total

3. OTHER GOODS/SERVICES CONTRIBUTED (add rows as necessary)

Goods/Services	Amount	Market Value	Total

I certify that goods or services indicated above were donated to the referenced project in fulfillment of the agreed cost sharing contribution.

SIGNATURE OF CONTRIBUTOR DATE

Appendix D: International Travel Request



If you are planning to use NITC or OTREC funds to present your research at an International Conference, you will need to submit the following request via email to Susan Peithman (peithman@pdx.edu) in advance of travel. Requests will only be endorsed for travel to present results of funded research. The request will be routed to the OTREC Director for endorsement before submitting it to our sponsoring agency. Note that requests submitted after travel WILL NOT be approved.

1. Describe specific reason for travel including dates, and what is the value to be gained by the NITC grant program?
2. Name and relationship of traveler to the NITC grant.
3. Describe how the travel will further the goals of the NITC program.
4. Provide detailed itinerary & breakdown of planned expenses

Appendix E: Change of PI Request



Approval of a NITC project includes consideration of the participation and qualifications of the Principal Investigator (PI). OTREC requires notification whenever there is significant change in the level of participation by the PI in the awarded project. An email requesting a change in the level of PI participation should be addressed to the Research Program Manager, the Executive Committee representative or Associate Director for the institution, and the PI's Office of Sponsored Programs. The email should detail:

- the reasons for the change in key personnel,
- a plan for conduct of the project and supervision after the change has been approved, and
- the proposed replacement personnel's vitae.

This request must be made prior to the implementation of any changes.

Short Term Absence of PI

If the change in PI effort is anticipated to be less than 90 days, the PI will notify the Research Program Manager described above. The Research Program Manager will approve if conditions are satisfactory. If plan is not satisfactory, project may be suspended until an approved plan is in place.

Long Term Absence of PI

If the change in PI effort is anticipated to be more than 90 days, but the PI plans to return to the project, the PI must notify the Program Manager as described above. If approved by the Research Program Manager, no amendment to the task order is required.

If the PI will be leaving the project and not returning, then a change of PI request must be made as described above. If the PI is replaced with a co-PI who is at a different institution or if scope of work will change with this action the Executive Committee will need to approve the change. The Research Program Manager will approve the change if conditions are satisfactory and notify PI, new PI, and the Office of Sponsored Programs. If a new PI is requested, then the task order for the project will be amended.

If the Research Program Manager does not approve the changes, the project may be suspended until an approved plan is in place.

Appendix F: Equipment Request Form



If you are planning to use NITC funds to purchase equipment, you will need to submit the following request via email to Susan Peithman (peithman@pdx.edu). All equipment purchases that exceed \$5000 need to be approved the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA).

1. Which NITC project(s) are involved?

2. Please describe and include the general specifications for the piece of equipment?

3. What is the cost (including relevant explanation of why one vendor was selected over another)?

4. How it will be used on your specific NITC-funded project (include how it may be essential to your project and how your research would be impacted if you did not have this piece of equipment)?

5. How it will add value to the NITC program?