



Ohio's Research Initiative for Locals

Research Idea Evaluation & Prioritization Criteria

Page 1 of 3

(Updated: August 2014)

The evaluation of research ideas submitted by local transportation agencies is conducted by the ORIL Board. The Board will strive to develop a balanced portfolio of projects. To achieve this goal, during the evaluation of research ideas, the Board will:

- Encourage collaboration among local entities on individual research projects.
- Encourage the inclusion of multiple funding sources (e.g.: cost sharing, in-kind contributions, etc.).
- Consider the inclusion of various study types (e.g.: synthesis, feasibility, pilot, student studies, standard research, large phased work plan, development, technology transfer, etc.).
- Consider the incorporation of a variety of subject matter among projects (e.g.: pavements, structures, geotechnical, environmental, maintenance, safety, etc.).
- Encourage fair representation of all local transportation organizations throughout the program.

The Board will use the following scoring matrix as an aid in evaluating individual research idea submissions and to prioritize the ideas for development and posting as Requests for Proposals.

Category:	Weight	Points (Value = 0-5)
Alignment / Relevance to ORIL	20%	
Potential Benefit of Research	30%	
Potential Application / Implementability of Research Results	25%	
Champion for Project / TAC Development	15%	
General Consideration Items	10%	
TOTAL	100%	

Examples of items considered during the evaluation of each category are provided below. This list is given for informational purposes to illustrate the general nature of each category and should not be construed as an all-inclusive or limited list of items.

Alignment/ Relevance to ORIL

- 1) Is this research idea responsive to ORIL's strategic research plan?
 - a) Which focus area(s) does this idea relate to?
 - b) Does this research idea address multiple focus areas?
- 2) What is the overall value of this proposed research to ORIL's business plan and strategic direction?
- 3) Is this research idea in the best interests of Ohio's locals?
- 4) What is the urgency of this research idea?

Potential Benefit of Research

- 1) How beneficial will this research be to Ohio's locals if it is funded?
- 2) What kind of benefit is this research likely to produce?
 - a. Are the benefits tangible (e.g.: cost savings, etc.) or intangible (e.g.: knowledge enhancement, etc.)?
 - b. Is this research considered state-of-the-art (leading edge/development) or state-of-the-practice (overview/assessment/synthesis)?
- 3) Based on the program goals, this research is expected to produce which of the following:
 - a. Insert ORIL performance measure #1 (from strategic research plan)
 - b. Insert ORIL performance measure #2 (from strategic research plan)
 - c. Insert ORIL performance measure #3 (from strategic research plan)
 - d. Etc.



Ohio's Research Initiative for Locals

Research Idea Evaluation & Prioritization Criteria

Page 2 of 3

(Updated: August 2014)

Potential Application / Implementability of Research Results

- 1) What are the opportunities for success of this research?
- 2) What are the risks of failure for this research?
- 3) What is the likelihood for this research to produce implementable results? (*This research could be the coolest idea ever, but the likelihood of getting something useful and useable out of it very low. Is it something you want to invest your funds in?*)
- 4) Realistically, how long will it take to see the benefits / reap the rewards from conducting this research?
- 5) Does this research have the potential for early payback?
- 6) Can the implementation activities of this research be tracked?
- 7) Can a return on investment (ROI) be calculated on this research?
 - a. What kind of data will be needed to determine ROI?
 - b. Can this data be made available?
- 8) Is there a champion for implementation? (*The individual needed to champion the incorporation of the research findings may not be the same individual as the person who submitted the original the idea.*)
 - a. Has this person been included on the TAC?
- 9) Who would find this research relevant and ultimately be impacted by or an end user of the findings (e.g.: counties, townships, cities, MPOs, rural locations, industry, contractors, ODOT, etc.)?
- 10) Any foreseeable challenges with acceptance/adoption/use of the research findings?
 - a. Could this research produce a significant paradigm shift that will be difficult to execute?
 - b. Is now the best time to address this issue or should it be delayed (e.g.: political concerns, financial constraints, general attitude amongst professionals on the topic)?
- 11) Could this research impact/influence ODOT policies, processes, specifications, etc.?
 - a. If yes, which ones?

Champion for Project / Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Development

- 1) Has a clear champion for this project been identified? (*People may submit great research ideas, but are either unwilling or unable to be the champion.*)
- 2) Can an adequate TAC be assembled to actively participate in this project for the entire duration?
- 3) Does the proposed TAC include the appropriate expertise to provide technical oversight to the research team and review technical findings?
 - a. If no, which areas are missing and can individuals be identified who can fill in the gaps?
- 4) Who on the Board is willing to serve on the TAC for this project?

General Consideration Items

- 1) Is the problem to be researched clearly identified in the submission?
- 2) Is the goal of the research clearly indicated in the submission?
- 3) Are specific deliverables clearly identified in the submission?
- 4) Is this research likely to require assistance in order to be completed (e.g.: test sites for field work, traffic control, coordination with a construction/maintenance project, data, etc.)?
 - a. If yes, will it be possible to provide this assistance?
 - b. How critical is this assistance to the success of this research (e.g.: will the project stop without it)?
- 5) Realistically, how much funding will this research likely require in order to be accomplished?
 - a. Is this level of funding available?
- 6) What are the findings of a preliminary literature search?

In the event special funding restrictions are associated with funds that will be used to support ORIL research projects, special notice will be included in the solicitation for research ideas to make submitters aware of any eligibility criteria. For example, the following criteria apply to SP&R2 funds:

According to 23USC505, SP&R2 funds may only be used to support two specific activities:

- (5) *Research, development, and technology transfer activities necessary in connection with the planning, design, construction, management, and maintenance of highway, public transportation, and intermodal transportation systems.*



Ohio's Research Initiative for Locals

Research Idea Evaluation & Prioritization Criteria

Page 3 of 3

(Updated: August 2014)

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- (6) *Study, research, and training on the engineering standards and construction materials for transportation systems described in paragraph (5), including the evaluation and accreditation of inspection and testing and the regulation and taxation of their use.*

SP&R2 funds are provided through ODOT's Office of Statewide Planning & Research and are managed (as contracts) in accordance with 49CFR18 and are comprised of 80% federal funds and 20% state funds.