**Membership Charter**

**Collaborative Development of New Strategic Planning Models
Pooled Fund TPF-5(369)
October 17, 2017**

# Introduction

The “Collaborative Development of New Strategic Planning Models” pooled fund, TPF-5(369) was launched at PooledFund.org on June 19, 2017. Work performed through the pooled fund will be completed by June 18, 2020. This document formalizes the activities of the pooled fund and defines roles and responsibilities for member organizations.

# Pooled Fund Background

Using strategic tools for long range performance-based planning is becoming increasingly valuable as a means to help state and metropolitan area governments select policies and actions to address pressing issues that are fraught with uncertainty. Strategic tools are designed to explore efficiently the joint effects of a wide range of trends and policies in order to equip decision makers and the public with a clearer understanding of possible outcomes.

In order to support these benefits, strategic models must not only rapidly generate results for a diverse range of scenarios, but they must also be amenable to revision as new technologies such as autonomous vehicles emerge. Strategic models also need to be augmented frequently with new assumptions about future outcomes, as well as new policy responses that decision makers may wish to make.

A number of agencies have found value in the RSPM and RPAT strategic models that evolved from the GreenSTEP system developed by Oregon DOT using the R programming system. These models, along with others that have been separately developed at other agencies from the GreenSTEP system, enhance the abilities of planners, advocates, the public, and decision makers to better understand complex systems, and to support sound decisions in response to new challenges whose full impact is still unclear. However, the GreenSTEP “family” of models has proved inflexible and difficult to enhance in order to address new planning issues and new responses. An effort has been underway with the sponsorship of the SHRP 2 program, FHWA and AASHTO, and with the participation of Oregon DOT, to move these models to a new open-source framework (VisionEval). VisionEval will address some of the technical challenges with these models, and will enable rapid and efficient development of new strategic models and enhancements that can be shared across models.

This pooled fund will further those previous efforts and extend their benefits to the agencies who choose to participate. While it is feasible in principle for agencies to perform such work on their own, many agencies are facing similar challenges, and work done on behalf of one agency is likely to be useful to others. The pooled fund will allow participating agencies to realize an economy of scale by engaging in joint development and support activities for new strategic modeling tools, thus ensuring that each agency has timely access to tools that will support their emerging planning needs.

# Pooled Fund Objectives

The “Collaborative Development of New Strategic Planning Models” pooled fund will make strategic tools affordably available to members. The pooled fund will support efficient investment in new and upgraded tools, ensuring that public funds are not spent on projects with overlapping goals and products and ensuring that innovations can be efficiently built on the basis of existing working tools.

The pooled fund will allow participating agencies to have access to:

* Working models that can assess new challenges such as shared mobility or automated vehicles;
* Tools to set up and run these models very rapidly for a large number of policy and scenario combinations;
* Web-based interactive visualization tools to display results;
* Cost-effective technical support for the implementation, customization and application of these tools to each agency’s needs; and
* Credible, maintained, documented tools adhering to clear standards and development guidelines, with thorough quality control.
* A community of active users and developers, which will reduce the likelihood that models will become obsolete, fall under the control of a single developer, or be abandoned by their developer while there is still interest in using them.

# Membership and Technical Advisory Committee

# Definitions

A pooled fund **Member** is an agency that has contributed funds to the VisionEval pooled fund led by FHWA[[1]](#footnote-2). The pooled fund shall be managed by a **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** defined below. The **Lead Agency** is the Federal Highway Administration.

# TAC Representation

The TAC shall consist of a single representative from each member agency. Each TAC member will have one vote when the TAC conducts business. Agencies may appoint a primary TAC member, as well as one or more alternates who may attend TAC meetings. The TAC shall be chaired by the Lead Agency representative.

# New Members

New members of the pooled fund may be added by the Lead Agency during the first year of pooled fund activity, upon approval by the TAC. New members shall become members upon making a financial commitment at a level approved by the TAC. New members will appoint a TAC representative who will participate in subsequent pooled fund decision making.

# TAC Responsibilities

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The TAC shall be responsible for establishing operating rules, which are documented in this charter (see *TAC Operating Rules* below). The TAC shall be responsible for identifying priorities and goals for the pooled fund, adopting procurement and fiscal procedures to be implemented by the Lead Agency (consistent with policies in place at the Lead Agency), selecting contractors, and reviewing and approving the work program, status reports, deliverables and other products. Details on expectations for pooled fund administration are described below in Section 3, *Administration*.

*Lead Agency Responsibilities*

The Lead Agency will have the same responsibilities as other TAC members. In addition, the Lead Agency and its delegated support staff (together referred to as the Administrator) shall be responsible for convening the TAC, and for developing documents, reports and other materials related to fiscal and program management of the pooled fund. Procurement of services sought by the TAC shall be performed by the Lead Agency after approval by the TAC.

# TAC Meetings

The TAC shall meet in person at least once per year at a location to be agreed upon, with options for virtual participation. The membership may also convene virtually to receive progress reports, review products of the pooled fund, and to conduct other business as necessary.

# TAC Operating Rules

TAC business shall be conducted by a quorum of the TAC, consisting of representatives from at least three quarters of the pooled fund participants. TAC business shall be decided by majority vote, except that revisions to this Charter shall require votes totaling at least three quarters of the entire membership (such that if business is being conducted by a simple quorum of the TAC, any vote to change the Charter must be unanimous). Business of the TAC shall be conducted whenever possible at meetings announced to all members at least two weeks ahead of time. In rare cases requiring more rapid decision, a request for a vote by email may be placed before the membership by the Lead Agency; such email votes will not be required to be completed in less than one week.

# Administration

# Organization

The **Administrator** of the pooled fund conducts the administrative work of the pooled fund, and shall consist of staff from the Lead Agency and also, at the Lead Agency’s discretion, staff delegated through formal agreement with another organization, institution or agency. The Administrator shall coordinate activities of the membership and the pooled fund budget, including tasks such as meeting organization, preparing minutes, developing reports on pooled fund activities, maintaining a repository of pooled fund products, and other activities as agreed upon with the Lead Agency and approved by the TAC.

# Pooled Fund Contracting

The Lead Agency is responsible for distributing requests for proposals (RFPs), preparing contract documents, and performing other functions related to contract administration and management. Such activities shall be reviewed and approved by the TAC, consistent with Lead Agency procurement rules. The Lead Agency shall assure that contracts, work plans, and schedules are adhered to.

# Pooled Fund Scope of Work

Procurement of services on behalf of the Pooled Fund shall include specifying tasks and deliverables. The procurement is expected to occur in two phases: a first year of activity guided by the initial pooled fund membership, and an additional period of activity encompassing the remaining term of the pooled fund and guided by members joining within the first year of the fund’s activity. The TAC shall approve scopes of work and task descriptions consistent with the objectives of the pooled fund and with Lead Agency procurement rules. As feasible under the rules of the procurement made by the Lead Agency, modifications to the tasks and deliverables may be made during the pooled fund period of activity. All such decisions regarding work program tasks and deliverables shall be made by the TAC, using procedures described above.

# Pooled Fund Products

Any Pooled Fund contract shall allow unlimited rights to the products of the pooled fund for all members[[2]](#footnote-3). The Administrator shall maintain a repository of code and documentation that contains all VisionEval materials managed by the Pooled Fund, based on the VisionEval products developed under prior contracts (see the *Background* section above), along with approved changes and additions produced under pooled fund contracts and approved by the TAC. At its discretion, the TAC may specify technical review procedures for such products that the Administrator shall coordinate. Through exercise of the rights in data, all such code and documentation shall be made available to the public by the Administrator through a liberal open source license to be specified by the TAC.

# Outside Products

Outside products contributed by independent developers (i.e. code or documentation not generated through contracts issued by the Lead Agency) may be added to the pooled fund repository by the Administrator at the direction of the TAC. The owner of any such contributed products must formally grant to the pooled fund members full rights in data consistent with those specified in the pooled fund development contracts issued by the Lead Agency. Any such code included in the pooled fund repository shall be made available to the public under the same terms as products of the pooled fund itself (see the previous item, *Pooled Fund Products*).

1. <http://www.pooledfund.org/Details/Study/621> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. These rights will include unlimited “rights in data” as defined in Federal Acquisition Regulation 27.401, specifically the rights to “use, disclose, reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly, in any manner and for any purpose, and to have or permit others to do so”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)