Innovative Deployments to Enhance Arterials (IDEA) Grant Program

Questions and Answers from Workshops #4 through #5

**Q1: Do IDEA projects need to be multimodal?**

A1: No. The IDEA program is open both to projects that are multimodal and those focusing on a single mode of travel.

**Q2: Since these are federal funds, will there be any "Buy America" requirements?**

A2: Yes. The Federal Highway Authority (FHWA) Buy America policies, as laid out in [23 U.S.C.313](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2014-title23/html/USCODE-2014-title23-chap3-sec313.htm) and in [23 CFR 635.410](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title23-vol1/xml/CFR-2013-title23-vol1-sec635-410.xml) will apply to the federally-funded elements of IDEA projects. Buy America requirements apply only to steel and iron products. For more information, please see the FHWA Q&A on Buy America [here](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/contracts/buyam_qa.cfm).

**Q3: I have a very good reason for why I need a particular product in our Category 2 project. Is it possible to fund this product through the IDEA grant, given the prohibition on sole-sourcing?**

A3: FHWA generally prohibits the use of federal funds for sole-sourcing. However, there may be some exceptions. We suggest all applicants review FHWA’s [Q&A](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/contracts/011106qa.cfm#_Hlk307506076) document for details about such exceptions.

Please be advised that any sole-sourcing of federally-funded elements of an IDEA project will be scrutinized by MTC and subject to review by Caltrans and FHWA. Potential applicants should consider whether or not a sole source makes sense for their project and closely review the information linked to in this document regarding federal law and regulation to see if it might be permissible.

**Q4: If IDEA Category 2 funds are used to develop a mobile application, would the technology and the data belong to MTC or can the intellectual property stay with the company that developed the app?**

A4: Under the standard MTC contract language, MTC retains ownership of work product created using its funding, as well as the resulting data and documentation. That ownership does not extend to the baseline (pre-existing) product or intellectual property whose ownership is already established. If there is a valid business case for a firm to use MTC intellectual property in future products, MTC staff are willing to discuss possible ownership/license arrangements.

Please be advised that because of the federal funding source, this arrangement would have to be compliant with the appropriate federal laws and regulations regarding ownership of grant-funded property, including [CFR 200.315](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-sec200-315.pdf), and FHWA approval.

**Q5: Does the maximum grant amount include the local match?**

A5: No. As stated in the [IDEA guidelines](https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/IDEA_guidelines_final_2.0_8-21.pdf), the maximum ($3,000,000) and minimum ($250,000) grant requirements refer to the MTC award only. All percentages are based on the total project cost (MTC award + cash match + in-kind match).

**Q6: When will the grant funds be available?**

A6: MTC aims to obligate the federal funding for Category 1 only projects in the first quarter of calendar year 2018 and projects with Category 2 elements in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2018. This is subject to approval by FHWA.

**Q7: How will MTC transfer the grant funds to local agencies?**

A7: It will depend on what goods and services are being procured. In some cases, a Fund Agreement between MTC and the local agency will be executed to reimburse local agencies for their procurement of project goods/services. In the case where MTC procures the goods/services directly, the transfer of funds is not applicable. At project initiation and during the course of the project, MTC and the project sponsor(s) will discuss what makes the most sense in terms of which agency will be responsible for procuring which goods/services. At all steps MTC intends for there to be a cooperative relationship between project partners.

**Q8: What are the federal systems engineering requirements for IDEA?**

A8: In general, all federally-funded “high risk” Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects require that a systems engineering analysis be conducted. You can find out more about systems engineering for federal projects [here](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/int_its_deployment/sys_eng.htm).

A system engineering process is often a useful and necessary part of the project development cycle. The scale of the systems engineering analysis shall be commensurate with the scope of the project. MTC staff will work with local agencies and FHWA to determine the appropriate level of analysis that will conform to federal requirements and good practice.