

RFP Questions received by deadline.

Section III, #2. Comparative engineering fee analysis to ensure that such project costs and fees are not excessive:

1. Are you expecting the engineering fee analysis to have basically the same result as a benefit/cost analysis? **Yes, however, this is only part of the scope of the project.**
2. Would it be sufficient to use publically available documentation in the analysis? **No. The expectation for this project is an analysis not just of the fees, but of the MDOT processes, policies, and procedures that organizationally control the types of contracts let and fees paid.**

Section III, #4. Analysis and comparison of MDOT contract oversight to ensure they properly manage their projects to minimize cost overruns, change orders, and delays. This could include analysis of whether there are a. claw back provisions and whether such provisions are being utilized when delays or other vendor related problems arise, b. defined "stage-gates" (decision points) where MDOT decides to continue on a project or not, and c. savings identified in previous projects and how those savings were found.

3. When reviewing previous projects, how far back is the review period? **OSA would expect no less than a three-year review based on the general life cycle of these types of projects, but no more than a five-year review, generally.**

According to MDOT The "typical/average" MDOT projects over the last several years that have been constructed primarily consist of pavement rehabilitations, overlays, and bridge replacements. The average lifecycle, which is considered the time from conceptualization until the project is constructed and final payment is made, may vary based on many factors. However, in general, most of these projects could fit within your suggested timeframe indicated above (three to five years). The only exception is that some bridge replacements may take up to eight years to complete the lifecycle.

4. What is the estimated number of projects in the review period? **OSA is looking for the execution of this project to include the evaluation of enough projects and processes to support the findings and recommendations that result from the analysis. The approach and selection can be flexible and should include an analysis of the "average" type of MDOT project or the type of project ost commonly undertaken.**

From MDOT: Over the last three years, we (MDOT only, does not include State Aid Roads) have constructed and closed out approximately **360** of these type projects (See above MDOT comment)

Section VI indicates company name, logo and other identifying information must be redacted from the five copies of the technical proposal.

5. Is this correct? **Yes. Because the reviewers who are evaluating the proposals need to not form any preconceived notions or biases toward a company based on names, OSA requests that to the extent possible and practical, that those logos, and other company identifying information be redacted from the copies (not the original) of the technical proposal. Redaction is not necessary for the cost proposal because they will be evaluated after the technical proposals are scored.**
6. If so, what falls under "identifying information?" **Logos and corporate addresses generally that would easily identify the company.**
7. Would names of engagement professionals need to be removed, for example? **Not generally.**

Section III, #5. Analysis of MDOT and State Aid Roads' history of successful contract execution, which could include an analysis of the percentage of projects completed on time and on- or under-budget

8. Approximately how many contracts/projects were completed by MDOT & State Aid Roads during the review period? [Please see responses to Questions 3 & 4 above.](#)

Specific to item #2 within the "anticipated scope of work"- comparative fee analysis:

9. How many agreements would you like reviewed? [OSA is looking for the execution of this project to include the evaluation of enough projects and processes to support the findings and recommendations that result from the analysis.](#)
10. Are these master service agreements or individual agreements? [They may be either.](#)
11. Are the engineering services provided as hourly rates, lump sum, or other? [Per MDOT: Most engineering services contracts administered by MDOT utilize a "cost plus fixed fee" method of payment in accordance with federal regulations.](#)
12. Will the engineering services include field support during construction or just design? [Per MDOT: Most engineering service contracts administered by MDOT primarily include the design phase.](#)
13. What are the magnitude of the agreements in \$s? [The magnitude of the agreement in dollars should be based on an "average" project by MDOT. The most useful results will come from the evaluation and analysis of the systems and processes of the most often undertaken project \(an average project\). However, the magnitude of the agreements in dollars should be sufficient to support the findings and recommendations of the work conducted and the report provided.](#)

Item I of the RFP states that "If the Department of Audit enters into a contract with a private entity for the audit required under this section, the department shall ensure that such entity is adequately experienced with auditing other state departments of transportation or similar departments or agencies"

14. If the consultant or offeror does not fulfill this specifically, ie, experience with other departments of transportation or similar departments or agencies, will this be a disqualifying factor? [Not necessarily. OSA was tasked by the Legislature to carry out this project. The language quoted in this question comes from HB1, of the 2018 Special Session. OSA will choose the best firm to conduct the project based on overall technical qualifications and value. OSA will interpret the Legislative language in a manner that fulfills this mandate.](#)
15. What about if the offeror has experience working for other federal or state agencies outside the state of Mississippi, as we do, but not in the transportation arena or similar? (say, DOE, for example, and others). [OSA interprets "similar" to mean that a firm has experience in federal and/or state agencies related to evaluating performance, efficiency, best practices, industry standards, contracting processes, general operations, finances, etc. generally. However, understanding engineering and/or transportation regulations, policies, requirements, etc. could be helpful to the successful applicant.](#)

Item II : related to the above, there is a statement in the RFP that says: The performance of MDOT and State Aid Roads should be compared to industry best practices; both from public and private sector, and their performance should be compared to other states' DOT".

[Important note about the Performance Audit project:](#) While OSA has included State Aid Roads in the RFP, each offeror should understand that in Mississippi, State Aid Roads operates separately from MDOT. In addition, State Aid Roads operates under a separate set of statutes and guidelines than MDOT. Therefore, because the State Legislature did not specifically include State Aid Roads in its legislative mandate for a Performance Audit, it is possible that, if the MDOT portion of the proposal is sufficient, no work at State

Aid Roads will be required as part of this project. OSA has discussed the possibility of working with State Aid Roads if necessary and they have indicated they are willing to work with the successful firm if the need arises.

16. (If the offeror or consultant does not have enough public sector data on Transportation projects like yours and/or other states' DOT information, would this be a disqualifying factor? IPA has private sector data and/or data on other federal or state projects but not Mississippi's and not regarding roads, but other sectors. **Not necessarily. As part of the project, this information would be made available for Mississippi through MDOT's cooperation and participation in this endeavor.**

Item III 1: Mentions "identifying weaknesses in effective operations"; also Item III 8: "any other type of analysis that would identify waste or savings for taxpayers in MDOT's and State Aid Roads' operations and management".

17. Most of the scope of work in the RFP refers to the capital investment process/cycle of the transportation projects, not standard operations. However, the line above mentions also "operations". Does this refer to effectiveness of how the roads or other transportation scopes are operated and maintained once in use (ie, after being built)? In other words, after the capital investment cycle has ended? **The "operations" referred to mean the internal operations of the agency. This project is about determining the efficiency, effectiveness, and performance of the agency in its overall mission of managing taxpayer funds to the best advantage while ensuring the highest quality infrastructure possible. This project does not contemplate evaluating the operation and maintenance of the roads after being built outside of any projects for that purpose.**

Item V 1 h requires to provide photocopies of relevant licenses, certifications, etc.

18. Does this refer to company certifications or of the individuals assigned to the job? **This refers to the individuals that the firm expects to assign to the project. A firm may also provide any relevant certifications, licenses, etc. that are for its whole firm, but OSA wants to ensure the individuals assigned to the projects are qualified to conduct the work.**

Under XV - OSA Access to Records and Other OSA Issues

19. What kind of records does this refer to? **This refers to OSA having access to any records directly related to the project. It does not mean general company records. This is language required by the State of Mississippi to be present in contracts.**
20. Is there an incumbent firm who has performed this scope of work? **OSA is not aware of such a firm.**
21. Will MDOT entertain a lump sum fee for the scope of work? **Yes, however, details would still need to include enough information about what the lump-sum covers/doesn't cover that it could be properly evaluated.**
22. Are there any policy goals that are driving this solicitation? **The project is based on the efficiency, effectiveness, and best practices surrounding MDOT's internal operations including, but not limited to the engineering contracts and how they are let and managed. The project should seek to find efficiencies and waste in Mississippi's infrastructure spending and determine if there are more effective ways of spending and managing MDOT's transportation infrastructure funds. The final report should be written with a lay audience in mind to best inform taxpayers, legislators, the Governor's office, and MDOT about ways to save taxpayer money in road and bridge spending, while**

maintaining a high quality infrastructure program. OSA will be looking for a product that is useful to MDOT for its operations.

With respect to Section III Anticipated Scope of Work:

23. Would MDOT accept a response that offers an option of either a GAO Yellow Book Performance Audit Standard or an alternative to perform the work under AICPA Consulting Standards? This project is being undertaken by the MS Office of the State Auditor, and as such would accept an option of either a GAO Yellow Book Performance Audit Standard or an alternative to perform the work under AICPA Consulting Standards. GAO Yellow Book Performance Audit Standards allow for the specialized use of industry evaluation standards in such cases. From the 2018 Edition of the GAO Yellow Book:

2.15 For performance audits, GAGAS does not incorporate other standards by reference, but recognizes that auditors may use or may be required to use other professional standards in conjunction with GAGAS, such as the following:

- a. International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, Institute of Internal Auditors, Inc.;*
- b. International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions, International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions;*
- c. Guiding Principles for Evaluators, American Evaluation Association;*
- d. The Program Evaluation Standards, Joint Committee on Standards for Education Evaluation;*
- e. Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, American Psychological Association; and*
- f. IT Standards, Guidelines, and Tools and Techniques for Audit and Assurance and Control Professionals, Information Systems Audit and Control Association.*

These are merely examples and not the only standards that could be incorporated into such a project.

24. With respect to item 5 “Analysis of MDOT and State Aid Road history of successful contract execution,” can you provide a time period for reviewing prior projects and the minimum number of prior projects the bidder should review? [Please see responses 3 & 4 above.](#)
25. What period will the anticipated scope of services be applied? [Not less than three years and generally, not more than five years.](#)