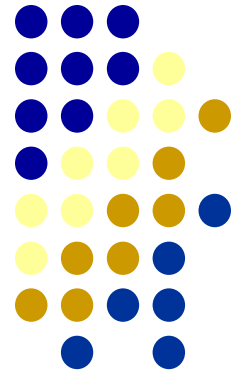




AASHTO
Technology Implementation Group



BUILDING A STRONG LEAD STATES TEAM



November 2004

What is a Lead States Team?

Whenever new technologies or engineering procedures are introduced, there are always several state transportation agencies that seem to be ahead of the pack in adopting these innovations. These leaders may have moved ahead because the technology addresses a problem they find particularly significant or these agencies and their industry partners are find themselves more comfortable with the change than their counterparts in other states. The leading states may have played a role in developing the new technology and hold a deeper understanding of its advantages. Often, a small group of agencies may use a technology for years before it is even tried in the majority of states. If the proficiency gained from experience could be readily transferred to the non-using states, the learning period for new users can be greatly shortened. Depending on the nature of the innovation, this principle applies equally to agencies and to their private sector partners for whom technology transfer is often an erratic process. Mutual exchanges of lead state experience across state borders will eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort and accelerate the general adoption of money- and life-saving innovations.

In concept, then, an AASHTO designated *Lead States Team* is an agency or, more usually, a consortium of like-minded transportation agencies committed to the implementation of demonstrated, practical innovations among their counterparts. Depending on the nature of the innovation and the intended user group, the team will also include private sector partners and be supported by experts from the Federal Highway Administration or other federal agencies and academic institutions. The Lead States Team will be expected to share its proficiency and knowledge of a technology or innovation with others in order to advise new users of potential benefits and shorten their learning period. The general responsibilities of those accepting the role of lead state follows.

The Technology Implementation Group and the Lead States Team

The Lead States Teams are designated by and operate under the aegis of the AASHTO Technology Implementation Group, a joint task force of the Standing Committee on Highways and the Standing Committee on Research. When a technology implementation proposal has been accepted and a Lead States Team is designated, the TIG authorizes financial support from AASHTO, request AASHTO staff support, mobilizes support of the AASHTO member agencies, and provides general guidance and advice. In return, the TIG holds certain expectations of the Lead States Teams.

- ◆ *Enthusiastic championship of the innovative technology*

To succeed, the Lead States Team members must be enthusiastic champions of their technology. Each of the members must be personally committed to the success of the venture.

- ◆ *Sound Planning*

The TIG expects each team to create and follow a work plan and stick to a budget. The plan and budget will be reviewed and accepted by the TIG before work begins so that the TIG can be confident it will fulfill the TIG's goal of "promoting new technology."

Do not stray from your work plan unless you agree as a team that changes are needed and the have approval from the TIG. You may not be reimbursed for expenses that were not on the approved work plan, unless TIG was notified and approved the change.

- ◆ *Regular and accurate reporting*

The TIG will ask for periodic reports of progress including current successes, failures, completed work plan items, and thoughts for future planning and changes.

- ◆ *Conscientious accounting*

The TIG has a fiduciary responsibility to the AASHTO member agencies and must keep track of the expenditures of the Lead States Teams. Thus each team is expected to know its own approved budget and stay within it. If budget adjustments are foreseen, timely notification to TIG is expected. If work plan items go over budget, notify TIG at once. Sample accounting spreadsheets, work plans, and other TIG documents are available through the AASHTO staff liaison.

- ◆ The roster of each Lead States Team will be unique and depends on the nature of the innovation, the locus of knowledgeable champions, the intended user groups and technology transfer techniques to be employed.

- ◆ A lead states team should include early users of the product or innovations whom also endorse it. These individuals should be technically aware of the technology's capabilities and limitations. These may include employees of one or more DOTs that eagerly support the technology or wish to become users. Private sector members might include vendors, construction contactors, materials suppliers, or consulting engineers if they are experts in the use, training or impacts of the innovation. These members often provide strong insight on marketing to the private sector. Members can also come from the Federal Highway Administration or universities. Such members will bring expertise about the technology or innovation and/or the techniques of technology transfer and technology marketing. Bear in mind, there may be constraints on the ability of AASHTO to reimburse the travel costs of members not affiliated with state DOTs.

- ◆ Most importantly, members should be carefully selected for their commitment. Commitment is the first step toward championship and, no matter how good the technology may appear, without the critical and positive recommendation of champions, it may very well languish. Champions most often identify themselves and can seldom be appointed by "higher ups." The support of those "higher ups," however, is essential if the potential member is to participate fully. The member's organization must recognize that participation on the team will be part of member's work duties.

- ◆ The TIG members can help in your recruiting efforts. TIG members are themselves senior managers of state DOTs and can often persuade their peers to support the participation of potential lead states team members. The TIG may also be helpful in identifying potential team members. When you encounter recruiting roadblocks, consult with the AASHTO staff liaison about getting help from the TIG.

- ◆ On average, participation on a lead state team will require per member about 70 hours per year and the attendance at five meetings per year. Prospective members and their agencies understand this time commitment. AASHTO will support the travel expenses of participants from member departments in accord with AASHTO travel guidelines. Unfortunately, AASHTO cannot reimburse the travel expenses of non-state DOT Lead States Team members.

Develop a Work Plan and Budget

- ◆ When a technology proposal is accepted, TIG will allocate \$10,000 for the first Lead States Team meeting. This funding is to provide for travel expenses and meeting logistics (room rental, A/V equipment, food service, etc.). The goal of this meeting is for the team to develop a work plan and budget to best fit implementation of your technology.

- ◆ Every member of the team should agree on the work plan submitted. Resolve discrepancies as a team. Once the team is content with the plan, it must be accepted by the TIG before you go to work. Submit the proposed work plan and budget to the AASHTO staff. It will be discussed at the next TIG meeting.

- ◆ Each work plan will be unique and reflect the nature of the innovation, the potential user groups and the talents available on the lead state team. For guidance on preparation of a work plan, examples of exceptional work plans from previously selected TIG technologies are available through the AASHTO staff liaison.

- ◆ Although not mandatory, one common element of many work plans has been a presentation to the relevant AASHTO committee, subcommittee, or task force. This alerts the AASHTO member agencies that an innovation is being introduced and piques interest among potential users. If the development of an AASHTO standard is part of the work plan, this also prepares the relevant committee for future action. The TIG members can assist in securing a place on the agendas of these meetings.

Managing the project

- ◆ AASHTO has printing services, TIG website control, and meeting/workshop planners and other resources needed to complete your work plan items. The cost associated with the expenses done through AASHTO may also be less expensive than contracted services.

- ◆ There may also be technical and informational resources available through FHWA and TRB that can be useful. Such resources include FHWA technical experts, literature searches, liaison with relevant TRB committees and task forces, contacts with international users, etc. Contact the FHWA or TRB members of TIG for information.

- ◆ Report to TIG your accomplished activities and necessary changes to the work plan. Status reports of your technology are generally requested by TIG members twice per year. Remember, a revised work plan must be accepted before actions are taken on the new items.

- ◆ Also, regular progress assessments should be made by the Team itself to evaluate accomplishments. Are goals being met? Will the work plan need to be changed to fulfill the Team's mission? Is the plan under budget? Overbudget? Does the entire team know what work plan items are in progress, completed, and expected future costs are? Are accounting records up to date?

- ◆ Regular, sustained communication is imperative. Lead States need a quick, efficient way of communicating their results and their expertise. A program of this magnitude demands a communications plan upfront to ensure that communications are effective, efficient and “on message”.

- ◆ Develop a marketing plan early. Communicating experiences with other states can be accomplished verbally, electronically, and through written correspondence or personal visits. Know your audience and what information they need to implement your technology.

- ◆ Coordinate and communicate early and often with AASHTO Standing Committees and Subcommittees. One major goal of technology implementation is to assure that there is a “home” for the technology after the initial promotion. Secondly, the subcommittees give the implementation function access to both markets and technical feedback on a wide basis. Lead State Team presentations are a typical agenda item at the AASHTO subcommittee meetings.

- ◆ An instructional video or interactive CD ROM may be helpful. These items are expensive, though effective. Plan accordingly.

- ◆ FHWA’s *Focus* newsletter can play a key role in communicating with highway agencies and industry. This regular, timely, accurate, and well-planned communication with an “encouraging” message may convince agencies to evaluate and experiment with additional technologies. TRB’s *TR News* magazine is another mechanism to deliver “success stories” to a wide transportation audience, as is the weekly *AASHTO Journal*, and FHWA’s *Public Roads*.

- ◆ Use the AASHTO’s TIG website, www.aashtotig.org. Coordinate with the AASHTO TIG liaison on updating information about your Focus Technology. Include a list of contacts, upcoming events, meetings, publications, and links.

- ◆ Consult with your local Technology Transfer representatives. Almost every DOT has one. Discuss with them your approach and ask for comments. Their suggestions may provide solid ideas on how to market your technology and save your TIG team a lot of expense.

When you encounter problems

When you encounter difficulties your first stop should be the TIG. Financial issues must be reported to the TIG immediately. TIG members may also be able to reverse the erosion of support within senior management of the Lead State DOTs; help secure agenda or exhibit space at meetings; make State DOT resources available; and aid in recruiting replacement team members.



The Washington DC support group consists of TIG liaisons and affiliates at the FHWA, TRB, and other governmental agencies. DC support group members can provide advice and assistance on technical issues, publicity and technology transfer. The TRB staff can put Lead States teams in touch with relevant technical committees and assist with arrangements for meeting in conjunction with TRB meetings and conferences. The AASHTO TIG representative will convey your requests to these groups.



AASHTO, and Administrative Issues

Typical work plan items consists of travel for presentations at AASHTO Subcommittee meetings, workshops and demonstrations, and Lead State Team meetings. This should be approved prior by the Team Chair.



During workshops and panel meetings, please be sure to obtain a participants sheet.



Remember, AASHTO travel Guidelines will only reimburse for the approved TIG/State DOT employee participants. Other Team members will have to seek other funding for their expenses. Also, AASHTO does not follow per diem based travel. Only actual, verifiable expenses can be reimbursed. Once travel is completed, submit a TIG travel voucher to the AASHTO Staff Liaison. Expect two to four weeks on travel reimbursement. The AASHTO-TIG Travel Policy and black voucher submittal forms are located on the TIG website and are also available by contacting AASHTO staff.



Questions concerning AASHTO Guidelines, reimbursement coverage, or other should also be directed to the AASHTO TIG Liaison.



Closing Out

Once you've met you TIG objectives, provide a report indicating recommendations for the next steps. This may include development of an AASHTO standard specification or testing procedure, training courses at the National Highway Institute, as well recommendations for TIG. A sample final report available through AASHTO staff



Include summary accounting records, project strong points and shortcomings, for this information proves to be valuable to the overall TIG program.



Consulting with the TIG oversight Committee is essential for this AASHTO program to run efficiently. A complete current listing of contacts are located on TIG's website www.aashtotig.org . Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Congratulations, and welcome to the Technology Implementation Group.

AASHTO / TIG - Washington DC Support Group

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