

**U.S. DOT Federal Railroad Administration  
Office of Passenger and Freight Programs**

**Monitoring Procedure 25 - Recurring Oversight and Related Reports**

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**1.0 PURPOSE**

This Monitoring Procedure (MP) describes FRA requirements for MTAC when performing recurring oversight of a Grantee's major capital rail project/s. It also provides direction on the reports developed by the MTAC in support of the oversight work.

Recurring oversight by the Monitoring and Technical Assistance Contractor (MTAC) provides a basis for FRA's stewardship role and a venue to foster best practices. Recurring oversight helps Grantees to identify and avoid problems, capture opportunities, mitigate risks, and meet the requirements of their agreements with FRA.

**2.0 KEY PRINCIPLES**

During oversight of the project the MTAC obtains important information related to project planning, design, and construction, as well as the Grantee's ability to implement the project. As part of recurring oversight, the MTAC is expected to proactively engage with the Grantee and offer alternative approaches and suggestions to help solve problems.

The MTAC will update the Federal team about findings, project status, issues of concern, and recommendations for action. The MTAC's discussion with the Federal team, combined with written reports, allows FRA to make appropriate and timely decisions about project advancement and funding. Through oversight and reporting, the MTAC will help to ensure that the project is delivered on time, within budget, and meets all Federal requirements.

**3.0 REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

The MTAC will review project materials and documents as part of recurring oversight, including but not limited to:

1. Grantee correspondence with FRA, other agencies, third parties, etc.
1. PMP and PMP Sub-Plans
2. Analyses and planning studies for operations, capacity, and service
3. Design drawings, construction documents, and specifications
4. Site investigation and analysis documents
5. Third-party agreements and service-outcome agreements
6. Project schedule
7. Cost estimate
8. Project delivery and procurement documents
9. Construction administration/management files

**4.0 SCOPE OF WORK**

## **4.1 Discussions with the Grantee**

The MTAC should be proactive in its oversight role. Through investigation and dialogue with the Grantee, the MTAC should assess the project, provide suggestions and recommendations and offer professional opinions based on its observations, knowledge, experience, etc. The information collected should be included in the MTAC's report so the report supports the oversight goals.

1. The MTAC will hold meetings with the Grantee monthly and/or quarterly, based on the project's activity level. The MTAC should recommend adjustments to the meeting frequency as the activity level changes. The duration of the MTAC's visit will depend on the stage of project development as well as the project's activity level. For projects in construction, the MTAC should plan sufficient time to be on site to participate in site tours, meetings with individuals representing all aspects of the project, and discussions with the agency's leadership and management.

## **4.2 Meetings and Meeting Notes**

### **4.2.1 Quarterly Meetings**

FRA or the MTAC usually leads the quarterly meeting attended by the Grantee's executive management and project team as well as FRA leadership. The meeting may be held at the Grantee's office or at FRA Headquarters. The quarterly meeting allows FRA and Grantee a venue to accelerate the resolution of project issues and move the project forward.

1. Prior to the meeting, the MTAC prepares the agenda and briefs the Federal team on agenda items and major issues of concern.
2. During the meeting the MTAC takes notes that capture the discussion and serves as the official record of the meeting. The notes should also include prior and current action items identifying the responsible party and a sign-in sheet of meeting attendees.

### **4.2.2 Monthly Meetings**

FRA or the MTAC usually leads the monthly meetings attended by the Grantee's project team. The responsibilities of the MTAC are the same as the quarterly meetings.

### **4.2.3 Special Meetings**

Special meetings and site visits may be held when required. The responsibilities of the MTAC are the same as the quarterly meetings.

### **4.2.4 Meeting Notes**

For all meetings, the MTAC will submit draft notes to the Federal team for review and concurrence no later than 10 business days after the meeting.

## **4.3 Meeting Reports**

In addition to meeting notes, the MTAC will produce reports (Comprehensive and Mini-Monthly Reports as described below) for the Federal team. Reports should be written simply and clearly—they should

“tell it like it is”—and include graphic aids such as photos and tables to help convey meaning. The MTAC should not repeat text within a report but should cross reference earlier text.

For special meetings or site visits (i.e., visits to vehicle manufacturing facilities) the MTAC will prepare a trip report. These reports summarize the items discussed and should be no more than seven pages long.

Reports will follow the formatting requirements listed in MP 01.

Report distribution / timeframe / reconciliation procedures:

1. 24 hours after meeting - MTAC will send the Federal team a brief email (using a bullet format) with a project assessment and update with issues highlighted.
2. 10 business days after meeting - MTAC develops a draft report and emails it to the Federal team for review and concurrence.
3. 15 business days after meeting – MTAC incorporates comments, if any, by Federal team into revised draft / final report and emails it to the Federal team. If authorized by the Federal team, the MTAC shares this document with the Grantee for concurrence on the facts.
4. If there are differences of opinion between the MTAC and the Grantee about the MTAC’s conclusions, the Federal team may direct the MTAC to reconcile with the Grantee. If this occurs the MTAC should submit an amended report to the Federal team that highlights report modifications within 15 days of the reconciliation.

#### **4.3.1 Comprehensive Report (Monthly or Quarterly) Report**

The MTAC must prepare a Comprehensive Report the third month of every quarter—March, June, September, and December. If coverage of all topics every month is deemed necessary, the comprehensive report format can be used monthly instead of the Mini-Monthly (described in Section 4.3.2 of this MP).

In the Comprehensive, the MTAC provides the Federal team with an update of the entire project including critical issues, MTAC concerns, recommendations, and professional opinions on the project’s status. It is based on the MTAC’s independent observations and opinions from meetings with the Grantee and through study of Grantee materials. At a minimum, the Comprehensive should contain the following information in the order outlined below, within a maximum of 20 pages, excluding appendices.

#### 4.3.1.1 Report Content

##### 1) Executive Summary

The executive summary will be succinct and contain information that is of interest to FRA executive staff/upper management. It should brief the reader in a clear, concise manner on the status of the project and include major issues impacting project scope, schedule, budget, safety, and quality.

No more than three pages long, the executive summary should include one paragraph each describing the project scope, a brief summary of the project status, changes since the last report, critical issues that should be brought to FRA’s attention, an indication of whether the Grantee is taking action to resolve the issues, the MTAC’s assessment and recommendations, and a table containing cost, schedule, and project completion information using the following format:

| Project Name                                     |  |  | At Grant Award | At Present |
|--|--|--|----------------|------------|
| Total Cost Estimate                              |  |  |                |            |
|  | Total Contingency (incl in Total Cost Estimate)        |  | \$             | \$         |
|  | Allocated Contingency                                  |  | \$             | \$         |
|  | Unallocated Contingency                                |  | \$             | \$         |
|  | Total Contingency                                      |  | \$             | \$         |
| Schedule (completion or date of revenue service) |  |  |                |            |
|  | Based on Expenditures/Total Project Cost               |  |                |            |
|  | Based on Time Expended/Total Project Time              |  |                |            |
|  | Based on percent complete of construction (where appl) |  |                |            |
| Date of next Quarterly Meeting                   |  |  |                |            |

##### 2) Body of Report

The MTAC will include any issues observed during quarterly reviews or that are outstanding from other in-depth reviews. Use tables, schedules, and photos to help explain. Topics include:

- a. Grantee’s capacity, capability, and approach to the project:
  - i. Based on observations and discussions with the Grantee and review of the PMP and sub-plans, the MTAC will assess the Grantee’s management capacity and capability to successfully complete the project and achieve compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, and standards
  - ii. The MTAC will assess the Grantee’s use of project controls for scope, quality, schedule, cost, risk, and safety
- b. Project scope, including:
  - i. Sufficiency of analyses and plans for operations and service

- ii. Condition and quality of design/construction documents, bidding, and construction status
- iii. List and status of third-party agreements including utilities, railroads, other agencies, etc.
- iv. Selection of delivery method, description of contract packages, construction sequencing, contract terms, and conditions
- v. Vehicle status of design, procurement, safety approvals, testing, etc.
- vi. Safety and security activities including hazard analyses, threat and vulnerability assessments, development of safety and security design criteria, certifiable elements, plan for oversight, etc.
- vii. Compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, guidance, and agreements
- c. Project Management Plan and Sub-Plans
- d. Project Schedule status:
  - i. Table of key milestones – planned and actual
  - ii. Explanation of changes between baseline schedule and current schedule
  - iii. Explanation of changes in critical path and recommended actions to recover
  - iv. 90-day look ahead for important activities by the Grantee, the Federal team, and the MTAC
- e. Project cost status, including:
  - i. Table showing original budget, current budget, expenditures to date, earned value, and estimate to complete by element for the current month
  - ii. Explanation of variances between planned and actual cost to date
  - iii. Information on funding sources, if required
- f. Project risk, including:
  - i. Discuss the Grantee's status of risk assessment, including treatment of risks and related mitigation actions, as well as contingencies. Provide date of initial risk assessment and updates.
- g. Table of action items including pending items

### 3) Appendices

- a. Project Map
- b. Acronyms
- c. Lessons Learned/Best Practices (MP 26)
- d. Before and After information (MP 27)
- e. Longer supporting information, e.g. during construction track construction changes and claims, source of change (owner, contractor, site conditions, etc.)

#### 4.3.2 Mini-Monthly Report

In an effort to streamline the process of reporting and to provide the Federal team with project information in a more timely way, a shorter, more focused report, the Mini-Monthly, may be requested of the MTAC. This report can be developed for the first two months of every calendar quarter. The third month however requires a Comprehensive Report.

It is important to not shorten the meetings with the Grantee. Only the report may be changed to be more targeted and focused in its coverage of critical issues. The Mini should follow the outline for the Comprehensive, however, with the exception of the executive summary and the project overview, the MTAC should include other sections that are needed to inform the Federal team of the most critical project occurrences, issues, and next steps, as well as professional opinions and recommendations. These reports should be no more than twelve pages long, excluding appendices.

#### **4.3.3 Final Monthly Report**

The MTAC will submit a Final monthly report to the Federal team after the project is complete, the phase is complete, or construction is complete and revenue operations has commenced, if applicable.

The MTAC should organize this report according to the outline for the Comprehensive. The report should highlight, in a broad way, the most important events, issues, hurdles, resolutions, and actions taken during project life so that the report is instructive for future projects. Excerpts of the report can become Lessons Learned.

In addition, as preparation for a Before and After report (MP 27), the MTAC should ensure the Grantee provides information on the project's benefits and impacts on passenger service, railroad operations, and overall system performance, and organizes such information to mirror the Grantee's Service Outcome Agreement, where applicable.