Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
Environmental Procedures Guidebooks

General
Scope Preparation and Deliverables

OVERVIEW

Scope preparation during the procurement process allows GDOT to provide a clear understanding of required efforts and expectations to their partner consultants. The procurement process can be cumbersome, and it requires attention to detail. The intent of this guidebook is to provide insight into the process that can help avoid the need to backtrack and thus delay the Notice to Proceed (NTP) due to a missed requirement – such as a seasonal protected species survey or public involvement activity. The guidebook also details the investment required in the scoping process to get task orders efficiently completed and correct the first time.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

For most task orders, the GDOT Project Manager (PM) and the Consultant PM will lead the procurement activities. This is especially true for larger projects that almost always require procurement activities and typically involve multiple GDOT offices. However, GDOT's Office of Environmental Services (OES) does have several master contracts in which they lead procurement activities and serve as the contract manager. In either instance, it is very important to coordinate any procurement needs as early as possible with the GDOT PM to ensure services can be procured in advance of the schedule need and to ensure the availability of funding. Late requests will often result in baseline schedule delays or funding complications if Preliminary Engineering (PE) funds are already obligated to other studies.

Contract Manager

Any procurement needs should be coordinated with the GDOT PM to determine the appropriate contract type and Contract Manager (CM). The GDOT PM typically serves as the CM, especially on larger projects. For smaller projects or more specific tasks, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) may serve as the CM. For example, OES may need to procure a particular study – like a Phase III Archaeology Survey. In this case, an OES Archaeologist or Team Leader would likely be the CM.

The CM is responsible for initiating all procurement activities, leading the development of scope and assumptions, facilitating negotiations, monitoring the contract schedule, invoicing, and development of the future procurement needs strategies, when applicable. It is best for procurement needs to be identified during GDOT's Project Team Initiation Process (PTIP). This allows the PM the most flexibility to procure the needed services prior to the baseline need date (approximately 6-9 months prior to PE authorization). However, if procurement services are needed during any other of the project delivery phases, consultation with the PM should take place as soon as possible.

Subject Matter Experts

SMEs serve a vital role in the development of the scope, assumptions, and fee estimate for all procurement services. The GDOT PM and Consultant PM, especially on larger projects, cannot be considered a SME for all services typically needed to deliver a project. Thus, they rely on their SMEs to fully identify all tasks and deliverables needed, to identify assumptions needed for each deliverable, and to develop a work-hour estimate (amount of effort required to complete the tasks identified in the scope) for negotiation purposes. The earlier in the process each of these can be developed, the timelier and more efficient the procurement process tends to go. This is true for both the GDOT SMEs and the consultant SMEs.

Procurement Facilitation

GDOT's procurement staff is responsible for facilitating the task order through scope development, the negotiation process, and issuance of NTP. For more information, please refer to the GDOT Procurement Manual for the procurement, management, and administration of engineering and design related Consultant Services.

Procurement Manual, Georgia Department of Transportation

CONTRACTING MECHANISMS

GDOT has several contracting mechanisms, so it's important that the appropriate mechanism is identified early. Once the need for consultant services is identified, communication with the GDOT PM and OES Environmental Program Manager should occur early to determine the appropriate contract mechanism.

Procurement Advertisement

If consultant services are identified during the PTIP process, those services will most likely be procured through GDOT's procurement advertisement process. The Request for Qualification (RFQ) or procurement advertisement should include an accurate representation of the anticipated scope, include any existing available information, include the anticipated schedule, and ensure all needed prequalification area classes are represented. The GDOT PM typically leads procurement activities but environmental should be included in the production and review of the ad. The scoping process will begin for an advertised procurement once the consultant is selected.

Master Contracts

GDOT has several existing master contracts that can complete a wide range of services. The Office of Program Delivery (OPD) has Regional Contracts (commonly referred to as General Engineering Contracts [GEC]) which include the ability to complete all needed services required for the plan development process. In addition, other GDOT offices have master contracts to complete services including OES. Thus, once the need for consultant services is identified, it is important to identify the proper contracting mechanism so a CM can be identified to start the procurement services. Currently, OES has a variety of master contracts for state-funded projects, federal-aid projects, and contracts specific to ecological, cultural resources, and other tasks.

Pre-Negotiated Task Orders

In addition to identifying the proper master contract, some GDOT offices have pre-negotiated task orders that allow for quick start tasks. These pre-negotiated task orders already have rates and activities defined, which reduces the negotiation duration. For these task orders, the main focus is on developing the proper scope. These task orders are typically used for immediate needs and have to be approved for use by OES's executive management.

SCOPE DEVELOPMENT

GDOT's OPD has developed a Pre-Negotiations and Scoping Process Flowchart that outlines the process to be followed with respect to initial scoping and task order development with GDOT's consultant community. The GDOT Office of Transportation Services Procurement (TSP) provides further guidance and procedures for negotiations and contractual agreements. While the flow chart developed by OPD is specific for their projects and contracts, it outlines the general process for all sub-genres of programs and can be used for environmental specific task orders.

Pre-negotiations and Scoping Process Flowchart,
GDOT Office of Program Delivery

The key to successful task order scope development is to be as thoughtful and thorough as you can be from the first identification of the need for consultant services. While efficiencies have been made in the procurement process, it is simply a very time-consuming process, especially for larger, more complicated projects. Each SME needs to identify all needed activities for the task order being developed but also think about future task order needs – the next step. For larger projects, procurement services are often divided between concept, preliminary, and final design activities. Thus, the first task order could include resource identification activities while a future task order will include deliverables that take place at a later date such as the assessment of effects and permitting. Procurement activities typically need to start approximately 6 to 9 months in advance of the need for those services to allow adequate time to achieve a NTP. Thus, it is most appropriate to develop a complete procurement strategy for each SME and then subdivide accordingly based on each task order's ending point. The Georgia OPD Contract Scope Initiation Reference Guide for PMs and Design Phase Leaders is a great tool to help with the development of a total procurement delivery strategy:

Contract Scope Initiation Reference Guide,
GDOT Office of Program Delivery

Remedy Request System

During the procurement and scoping activities, OES will receive three requests through the remedy request system. The system is a tracking platform that allows the transfer of information, review, and comments, while tracking through each stage. The first request OES will receive is to review the scope for accuracy. Once all comments or questions are clarified by the GDOT PM, the second request OES receives is the request for scope concurrence. Once the scope is concurred, the third and final remedy request is for the production of work-hour estimates (during the final stage, no changes to tasks or assumptions should occur).

Drafts Scope and Fee Spreadsheet

Typically, the first step in the procurement process is the development of the draft scope and GDOT fee spreadsheet by the GDOT PM or Consultant PM. The draft scope will list all anticipated activities and deliverables including any available information from GDOT to the consultants – like existing plan sets or previously completed environmental studies. The work-hour spreadsheet is similar to the scope and is typically where the tasks' assumptions are listed to assist with the identification of anticipated effort levels.

During this first phase of procurement, it is important to add or delete tasks as needed in the draft scope, cross out any unneeded tasks in the fee spreadsheet, add assumptions into the scope and fee spreadsheet, and list out any questions. Once these are provided to the GDOT CM, a scoping meeting will typically be held to address any questions and finalize the scope and spreadsheet. This scoping meeting should conclude with a

concurrence of the scope and assumptions. After this concurrence, no changes to the scope or fee spreadsheet should occur. Any changes identified after concurrence will require backing up in the process to address. This most commonly occurs during the work-hour preparation when one of the SMEs adds assumptions to the fee spreadsheet. To avoid delays in the procurement process, it is critical that no changes be requested to the scope or fee spreadsheet after this concurrence.

Cost Estimate Template/Fee Spreadsheet

GDOT has developed a cost estimating template (sometimes referred to as the fee spreadsheet) to assist in the assimilation of estimated work hours, rates, and other data critical to the procurement of consultant services. The Environmental Team's role in the creation of the spreadsheet is typically limited to the following, with the Prime consultant typically responsible for the initial draft version:

- *Cover Tab* – If OES is acting as the Contract Manager, this tab should be filled out to include the Prime's information such as address and contact information. In addition, this tab includes the identification of the Master Contract. The cost totals on this tab are self-calculated from other tabs.
- *Team Tab* – This tab identifies all the firms participating in this task order and which roles they will fill (Roadway, Environmental, etc). This is also where any Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) are identified. The identification on this tab assist with the calculation of DBE utilization that is shown on the Cover Tab.
- *Firm Summary and Cost Summary Tabs* – These two tabs are summary tabs which pull their information from the role-specific tabs – like PM1, Rd1, ect. Data entry on these two tabs is not required but both tabs should be reviewed for correctness.
- The spreadsheet includes several role-specific tabs – like PM1, Rd 1, and others. Larger projects under the management of OPD will more traditionally use all of these tabs and possibly add additional tabs, for instance where multiple Environmental firms will be procured. This may apply to some environmental specific contracts, but more commonly OES would focus on the PM1, Env 1, and Env Data tabs.
    - The PM1 (or Project Management tab) is traditionally where the PM hours are calculated for a task order. These tasks include schedule creation/review, invoicing, project administration, and other PM activities. For Environmental specific contracts, these activities may be included on the Env1 tab. This approach is acceptable as long as it is agreed upon at the scoping meeting.
    - OES has developed the Env1 tab to capture the most common activities/project deliverables for projects. The Env1 tab is a very good source to use in scope development. As much as possible, robust assumptions should be included within the Env1 tab. The assumptions should be as specific as possible to try and accurately produce work hour estimations. The tasks that are not needed are typically struck through and/or grayed out. Multiple Env tabs may be required if multiple environmental firms will be working on the contract as only one firm should be included on each tab.
    - Env Data Tab includes the environmental survey limits and assumptions such as the number of anticipated resources to be encountered. An evaluation of the project area should be completed by the consultant prior to filling out this tab and this tab may represent the best anticipated data known at that time. Thus, the data may be broader during a concept task order than a final design task order (when more data and the actual environmental resources within the Environmental Survey Boundary (ESB) would be known).

Consultant Information

For all phases of the procurement process, the Consultant PM is responsible for delivering all consultant information, including information from any sub-consultants. This includes ensuring that all scope is accounted for and all assumptions are complete, as well as ensuring that any other required information – like certified payroll for example – is delivered. Existing environmental guidebooks and procedural manuals should be referenced when developing the environmental scope and assumptions. Since work-hour estimates are not produced during this phase, this would be the appropriate time for coordination between GDOT and consultant SMEs if questions exist about the scope. Include the CM in this coordination, and only discuss the scope and assumptions, not the effort.

WORK-HOURS

Submittal

After all SMEs concur with the scope and fee spreadsheet, the next step is the development of work-hour estimates by both the consultant and GDOT SMEs. These estimates are developed independently and are used for negotiation purposes. For GDOT SMEs, requests for work-hours will be received through the GDOT internal remedy request system as noted previously. Consultants receive a request for work-hours through GDOT's Request Tracking System (RTS). The Consultant PM will receive an email request from RTS with the requested activity and a due date. Once the activity is completed, the consultant will load the activity – like the consultant completed work-hour estimate – into RTS and submit it for review. RTS provides an efficient tracking system and is also used for task order extensions and other procurement activities. All work-hours should be completed in a timely manner once the request is received.

Details

Work-hour estimates are multi-faceted and should include all hours required to complete the scope, including the number of staff required to complete a task (especially field work), time required to travel to the project site, coordination with any agencies, deliverable preparation, deliverable review by the consultant team, and revisions following GDOT and agency reviews. In addition, the work-hour estimate will include Other Direct Costs (ODC) – like mileage reimbursement or use of rental vehicles, lodging and other expenses incurred with the production of the work – which are only prepared by the consultant SMEs. TSP reviews the ODCs and approves them once determined to be in compliance with GDOT's requirements.

Negotiations and Revisions

After the initial work-hours are developed by both GDOT and the consultants, the GDOT procurement office will review them and lead any necessary negotiations. Most often, significant differences in work-hours are due to misunderstanding of scope/assumptions. Thus, it is critical to have those conversations early – in the first step of the process

described previously. If a negotiation meeting is needed, it is important that all needed SMEs are identified and attend. Most negotiations can be settled at the meeting but if not, revised work-hours should be submitted back as quickly as possible. Common areas of scope misunderstanding include the size of the ESB / survey area, number of field personnel, number of days required to complete field work, and number of environmental resources anticipated to be encountered. Documenting these types of assumptions in detail on the Env Data Tab of the fee spreadsheet lessens the risk of work-hour negotiations.

Extensions

Finally, once the consultant receives NTP, the GDOT and Consultant PMs should regularly monitor the contract expiration date, need for future services, and contract balances. Task orders need to have a valid duration so that no work takes place after the task order expiration date. When needed, the Contract PM should request a task order extension and provide the reason for the extension at least 3 months prior to the contract expiration date. As part of the project's delivery game plan, the Contract PM should evaluate if additional services are needed. If so, those procurement activities should start at least 7 to 9 months prior to their need. In addition, the Contract PM should monitor the task order's budget to ensure the consultant can complete the task within the negotiated price. The Contract PM should also coordinate with the GDOT PM (if not the same person) if additional services are needed to ensure the project's budget has the appropriate amount of funding. Additional funding can be added to a project if needed but it would take time to identify and receive approval.

GDOT OES does use support staff (support service consultants) to manage their workload. Within the procurement process, the support staff will help develop the scope and assumptions. However, the support service staff cannot provide work-hours.

BEST PRACTICES

- Scoping on any needed consultant services should start 7 to 9 months prior to the need of those services. Starting scoping too late can result in missed baseline dates. Scope and level of effort should be the focus of discussion during the scoping phase. Each side can begin development of work-hours at their convenience, but no discussions of rates or work-hours/costs should be discussed during the scoping phase.
- At the start of the procurement process, please retrieve the most current scope/task order template and GDOT fee spreadsheet, as these templates are updated routinely and using outdated templates will slow down the procurement process.
- Invest time early into the development of the scope, work-hour spreadsheet/activity template, and assumptions. Providing good assumptions and ensuring all scope is captured will minimize the risk for future delay.

- The GDOT and Consultant PMs should review master contract caps as well as determine the availability of PE for any consultant services. When requesting consultant services, any supplemental agreements or 1625 requests should be determined during the scoping phase (noting that specific work-hour or dollar amounts should not be discussed during the scoping phase).
- Don't skip steps. While this shouldn't be a problem, steps are sometimes skipped to try and save time, or may simply be missed inadvertently. Skipping steps is likely to lead to the need to back up in the process because assumptions will be missed, proper input will not be communicated, or roles and responsibilities will not be adequately defined.

Guidebook Revision History

Revision Description	Relevant Sections	Revision Date
Initial Publication	All	05/20/2021