

# Contracting Strategies: A Different Approach to Address Long-term Performance

Project 2130  
July 2022

Maria Calahorra-Jimenez, PhD



## Introduction

In consideration of cost-efficiency, public safety, and sustainability, long term-performance remains a top concerns in infrastructure projects. This research addresses these issues from the pre-construction perspective by asking the following research question: how and to what extent do evaluation criteria used in the procurement of highway projects consider long-term performance?

## Study Methods

This study followed a three-step approach. First, through data collection, the researchers gathered 100 Request for Proposals (RFPs) from 19 Departments of Transportation (DOTs) to analyze. Second, the researchers used content analysis to identify, count, and compare units of content embedded in the RFP. Finally, the team categorized long-term evaluation criteria based on the focus of their assessment.

## Findings

Key findings from this research are the following: Answering the question: to what extent long-term evaluation criteria are considered highway RFP:

- Sixty three percent (36%) of the states analyzed included long-term performance evaluation criteria in their RFP.
- However, roughly 11% of all the evaluation criteria analyzed (a total of 365) related to long-term performance.

Answering the question: how long-term evaluation criteria are considered highway RFP:

- Sixty percent (60%) of long-term evaluation criteria focused on assessing the design.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of long-term evaluation criteria focused on assessing materials.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of long-term evaluation criteria focused on assessing methods/technology.
- The weight given to any of these criteria in the overall technical proposal was lower than 30%.

### Policy/Practice Recommendations

Evaluation criteria included in the procurement of highway projects should be aligned with the project's goals and expectations so that Departments of Transportation (DOTs) select the firm that best meets these expectations based on the established criteria. Achieving an improved long-term performance should be a goal in any highway project. However, this research's results show that there is a missing opportunity in the use of evaluation criteria that focus on long-term performance. In addition, areas such as materials and techniques/methods should be further explored as areas of assessment to consider when evaluating long-term performance.

In design-build best-value highway projects, roughly 11% of all the evaluation criteria analyzed related to long-term performance.

### About the Author

**Dr. Maria Calahorra-Jimenez** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Construction Management at California State University, Fresno. Maria holds a Ph.D. degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado Boulder and a Ph.D. degree in Engineering Science from the Catholic University of Chile. Before earning her doctorates, Maria worked in international engineering firms for 14 years.

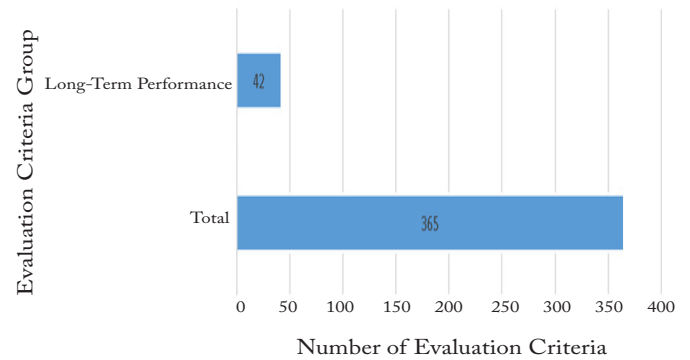


Figure: Number of Evaluation Criteria Identified

### To Learn More

For more details about the study, download the full report at [transweb.sjsu.edu/research/2130](https://transweb.sjsu.edu/research/2130)



MTI is a University Transportation Center sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology and by Caltrans. The Institute is located within San José State University's Lucas Graduate School of Business.