“How To” Share Transportation Research Results

A white paper developed for AASHTO committees to provide guidance on research-related activities.

All things begin and end as stories. Transfer of knowledge generated through research activities is reliant on sharing such stories. It is equally important to share failures as well as successes. Lessons emerge from each. There are numerous ways to move research results into practice and to promote technology transfer. Some approaches are more logical with certain types of research. For example, introducing a new travel demand modeling computer program can best be accomplished through workshops and training programs, while the deployment of a new variable message sign technology may involve commercialization, licensing, and pilot tests. The bottom line, however, is that dissemination and sharing of research results and facilitation of implementation do not occur spontaneously or without cost.

1. Knowledge Transfer Requires Discipline

Technology transfer is defined broadly to encompass sharing ideas, knowledge, practices, processes, technologies, and techniques from research within the sponsoring agency and with other agencies and groups. It can be tangible (hardware and software) or intangible (knowledge and practices) and involves at least two parties—a source and a recipient. The ability to apply lessons learned from a research endeavor requires planning and vigilance. NCHRP 768: Guide to Accelerating New Technology Adoption Through Directed Technology Transfer provides key lessons on how a committee can contribute to better sharing of results.

2. What Approaches Exist to Share Research Knowledge?

There are dozens of ways to share the results of research and encourage wider use of research results. Among the many approaches your committee could consider are:

- Workshops and specialty conferences, including joint meetings with TRB committees of similar interests.
- Meeting presentations, papers, and newsletter articles. A regular agenda item to share research efforts as part of the committee’s business meeting will help expand the dissemination of priority activities.
- Web seminars. Several committees engage in regular webinars to discuss emerging practices.
- Guidebooks. Incorporating the findings of research sponsored through the committee in guidance documentation is a key opportunity for promotion of research results.
- New or updated practices, procedures, and policies.

AASHTO staff and subject matter experts in the RAC and NCHRP programs can help provide guidance for these knowledge transfer practices.

3. How Can This Sharing Be Most Successful?

Keys to successful technology transfer include following the guidance in this series of whitepapers, but also through planning ahead. By identifying appropriate technology transfer methods as part of a research project, success is more likely. Other key practices include partnerships with the researchers, appropriate public and private sector groups, marketing and communication groups, and using pilots and demonstrations to showcase new technologies and methods.

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4. What Resources Are Available to Our Committee?

**AASHTO RAC**—Your state’s research manager is a great place to start. They are knowledgeable on existing research activities and can facilitate connections with other states.

**NCHRP Report 768 – Guide to Accelerating New Technology Adoption through Directed Technology Transfer:** This document presents a framework and guidance on how to use technology transfer to accelerate innovation within a state department of transportation or other such agency.

**NCHRP Synthesis 355 – Transportation Technology Transfer: Success, Challenges, and Needs:** This document explores the use of technology transfer practices in the highway transportation community. The report documents successful practices, discusses challenges encountered, and identifies the needs of those responsible for sponsoring, facilitating, and conducting technology transfer activities and processes.

The complete set of “How To” documents include the following:
- Committee Approach to Research
- Writing a Strategic Plan
- Writing a Problem Statement
- Funding Resources
- Experimental Features
- Sharing Results
- Implementing Results
- Determining the Value of Research
- Monitoring Results