FISCAL YEAR 2023
EVALUATION PLAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the U.S. Department of Transportation is to deliver the world's leading transportation system, serving the American people and economy through the safe, efficient, sustainable, and equitable movement of people and goods.

In accordance with the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act, Public Law No. 115-435), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT OR the Department) is pleased to present the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Evaluation Plan. This plan describes the significant evaluation activities that are planned to occur in FY 2023. It includes the key questions for each significant evaluation study and the associated information collections. It also outlines the Department's criteria for designating evaluations as "significant."

In addition to the evaluations described in this document, DOT intends to undertake additional evidence and evaluation projects going forward that will support the FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan. The recent passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) also presents new opportunities to explore the effectiveness of programs and activities. For example, the Department has committed to incorporating evidence and evaluation work into the delivery of grant programs with a budget exceeding $1 billion. DOT will update its Evaluation Plan as it progresses in the implementation of BIL programs and ensure that it aligns with the Strategic Plan.

As required by OMB Memorandum M-19-23, in developing a definition of significance, the Department considered factors such as:

- The importance of a program or funding stream to the Department's mission;

- The size of the program in terms of funding or population(s) served; and

- The extent to which the study would fill an important knowledge gap about the program, population(s) served, or the issue(s) the program was designed to address.

DOT designates an evaluation as significant based on two criteria: the evaluation met the definition of a program evaluation as stated in the Evidence Act, and the evaluation has proposed funding in the FY 2023 budget request.[1]

This plan was created by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs (OST-B). OST-B sought input from the Department-wide Performance Improvement Community and Evidence and Evaluation Working Group, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer from each Operating Administration. The Performance Improvement Community represents performance contacts from all Operating Administrations, designed to advance the Department's holistic use of evidence in decision-making. The Evidence and Evaluation Working Group is a working group of the Performance Improvement Community, comprised of subject matter expert representation from all Operating Administrations and the Office of the Secretary, in the areas of program evaluation, performance measurement, policy analysis, and research. This working group supports the Department in meeting all requirements under Title I of the Evidence Act, contributes to the maturation of the Department's capabilities in these areas, and fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement through stakeholder engagement and education.

OST-B is in the process of establishing more formal governance structures around conducting evaluations Department-wide, including the development and publication of the DOT Evaluation Policy as required by the Evidence Act. As the Department's capacity for evidence building matures, OST-B plans to provide additional guidance and resources for Operating Administrations around how to conduct evaluations and use the findings to inform programmatic and policy decisions.

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[1] The Evidence Act defines program evaluation as "an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency."

Organizational Structure

Congress established DOT in 1967, consolidating 31 transportation agencies and functions under the first U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Alan S. Boyd. Approximately 54,000 DOT employees continue to bring innovations and integrity to the work of improving the safety and performance of our multi-modal transportation system. Leadership of the Department is provided by the Secretary of Transportation, who is the principal advisor to the President in all matters relating to Federal transportation programs. The Office of the Secretary (OST) oversees nine Operating Administrations, each with its own management and organizational structure.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS)

Maritime Administration (MARAD)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)

Overview of Strategic Goals and Objectives

The FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan identifies six strategic goals, which are outcome-oriented, long-term goals for the major functions and operations of DOT. Each strategic goal has associated strategic objectives, which express more specifically the impact DOT is trying to achieve. The Department also establishes numerous performance goals that define what success looks like for each strategic objective, many of which support the transformational initiatives made possible by the IIJA. The graphic on the following page presents DOT's strategic goals and strategic objectives for FY 2022 – 2026.

STRATEGIC GOALS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1

SAFETY

1.1	SAFE PUBLIC
1.2	SAFE WORKERS
1.3	SAFE DESIGN
1.4	SAFE SYSTEMS
1.5	CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE CYBERSECURITY

GOAL 2

ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

2.1	JOB CREATION AND FISCAL HEALTH
2.2	HIGH-PERFORMING CORE ASSETS
2.3	GLOBAL ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP
2.4	RESILIENT SUPPLY CHAINS
2.5	SYSTEM RELIABILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

GOAL 3

EQUITY

3.1	EXPANDING ACCESS
3.2	WEALTH CREATION
3.3	POWER OF COMMUNITY
3.4	PROACTIVE INTERVENTION, PLANNING, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

GOAL 4

CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1	PATH TO ECONOMY-WIDE NET-ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050
4.2	INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE
4.3	CLIMATE JUSTICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

GOAL 5

TRANSFORMATION

5.1	MATCHING RESEARCH AND POLICY TO ADVANCE BREAKTHROUGHS
5.2	EXPERIMENTATION
5.3	COLLABORATION AND COMPETITIVENESS
5.4	FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

GOAL 6

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

6.1	CUSTOMER SERVICE
6.2	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
6.3	DATA-DRIVEN PROGRAMS AND POLICIES
6.4	OVERSIGHT, PERFORMANCE, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
6.5	SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES
6.6	ENTERPRISE CYBER RISKS

PLANNED EVALUATIONS FOR FY 2023

The FY 2023 Evaluation Plan includes three significant evaluations from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). While DOT recognizes the breadth of assessment and analysis activities occurring across the Department, they do not currently meet the definition of significance as defined above. In future years, the Department hopes to broaden the scope of its Annual Evaluation Plan to include more Operating Administrations and OST offices.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)

Electronic Logging Device Rule – Regulatory Effectiveness Review

Overview	The electronic logging device (ELD) rule is intended to help create a safer work environment for drivers, and make it easier and faster to accurately track, manage, and share records of duty status data. An ELD synchronizes with a vehicle engine to automatically record driving time for easier, more accurate hours of service recording. FMCSA plans to begin this evaluation in FY 2023 and conclude in FY 2024. The evaluation will be performed by FMCSA's Office of Policy with contractor support and two or three subject matter experts (SMEs) from the Office of Compliance.
Evaluation Question	Were the intended safety outcomes of the ELD rule achieved? *The final evaluation objectives and related questions will be identified during the planning/implementation phase of the evaluation.*
Information Needed	Safety risk data from Motor Carrier Management Information System, Safety Measurement System, and Fatality Analysis Reporting System to gather data on carrier investigations, roadside inspections, carrier, and driver performance. Additional information will be collected from SMEs and industry.
Methods	FMCSA will perform qualitative and quantitative analysis by collecting historical and trend data from existing data systems. FMCSA will conduct pre- and post-ELD implementation analysis and conduct surveys and interviews to collect SME and industry information.
Anticipated Challenges	FMCSA does not anticipate any challenges associated with this evaluation.
Dissemination	The final report will be issued internally containing Findings and Recommendations to guide FMCSA decision-making. FMCSA will develop and implement corrective actions to the recommendations. Corrective actions could include but are not limited to changing rules, policies, and/or implementing training.

Effectiveness of the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse Rule Data Reporting and Use

Overview	FMCSA established the [Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse](#) (Clearinghouse) through a recent rulemaking. This new database contains information pertaining to violations of the DOT controlled substances (drug) and alcohol testing program for holders of commercial driver's licenses (CDLs). The Clearinghouse provides FMCSA and employers the necessary tools to identify drivers who are prohibited from operating a CMV based on DOT drug and alcohol program violations and ensure that such drivers receive the required evaluation and treatment before operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) on public roads. An outcome evaluation will be performed four years after the Clearinghouse has been operational to understand its effectiveness, best practices, and opportunities for improvement. FMCSA plans to begin this evaluation in FY 2023 and conclude in FY 2024. The evaluation will be performed by FMCSA's Office of Policy with contractor support and two or three SMEs from the Office of Compliance.
Evaluation Questions	Is the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse being used as intended by the regulation? Is industry complying with data reporting and use requirements?
Information Needed	Data and information will be collected from the Clearinghouse, other systems (to be identified), interviews, and surveys.
Methods	FMCSA will perform qualitative and quantitative analyses that will be identified during the initial phase of the evaluation to identify specific data and information requirements.
Anticipated Challenges	Accessing the timely receipt of driver data located in systems outside FMCSA's control.
Dissemination	The final report will be issued internally containing Findings and Recommendations to guide FMCSA decision-making. FMCSA will develop and implement corrective actions to the recommendations. Corrective actions could include but are not limited to changing rules, policies, and/or implementing training.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Transit Asset Management Program Evaluation

Overview	Transit asset management (TAM) is a business model that prioritizes funding based on the condition of transit assets to achieve and maintain a state of good repair (SGR) for the nation's public transportation assets. In accordance with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), the 2016 TAM final rule developed a framework for transit agencies to monitor and manage public transportation assets, improve safety, increase reliability and performance, and establish performance measures in order to help agencies keep their systems operating smoothly and efficiently. The regulations apply to all transit providers that are recipients or sub-recipients of federal financial assistance under 49 U.S. Code Chapter 53 and who own, operate, or manage transit capital assets used in the provision of public transportation. Transit agencies are required to develop TAM plans and submit their performance measures and targets to the National Transit Database on a regular basis. In 2019, FTA began a multi-year evaluation of the TAM program and associated TAM rule, which will be completed in FY 2023. To date, FTA and its partners at the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center are evaluating the program in three dimensions: • *Policy Change:* Changes to Federal Policy and FTA grantmaking introduced or required by the TAM Rule, MAP-21, and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, as well as related guidance development, communications, and outreach. Related findings often discuss changes within FTA, the way it interacts with grantees, and the ability of the rule to be implemented by transit agencies. • *Organizational Change:* Updates to the organizational structure or organizational functioning of transit agencies, following either the TAM plan requirement or a move toward a TAM approach. Related findings include changes in agency processes, staffing structures, and outcomes of the asset management process. • *Industry Change:* The intermediate- to long-term change in practice in the transit industry and at transit agencies to reflect a broad focus on improved asset management. Related findings include how agencies utilize data for decision making and the effects of uncertain funding on maintenance, operations, and capital spending.
Evaluation Questions	**Policy Change** • Has the FTA final rule been an effective regulatory action in terms of the regulatory goals to advance performance management and TAM? • Are there updates to the regulation would more effectively meet the goals of advancing performance management and TAM practices? • Have FTA's communications, guidance, and support effectively addressed the challenges faced by transit agencies and grantees in the implementation of the TAM final rule? • Do Tier 2 agencies benefited from developing the additional TAM plan elements, such that the potential economic benefit or cost savings outweigh the time and cost burden of developing those elements? • Have transit agencies faced a higher-than-expected increase in the number of compliance findings or reviews as a result of the TAM plan requirement?

Evaluation Questions	**Organizational Change** • Has the TAM final rule led to an overall move toward a comprehensive TAM culture within agency organizations throughout the transit industry? • Have agency efforts to implement the TAM requirements led to changes in organizational structure or key functions? If yes, to what extent? • Have the changes in organizational structure resulted in intended improvements to agency business processes, in terms of internal coordination, interagency collaboration, hiring, or other practices? **Industry Change** • Has the implementation of the TAM requirements improved SGR of the nation's transit systems? • Has the SGR backlog nationwide been reduced as a result of the requirements? • Has the TAM plan and performance management requirements improved overall outcomes for the transportation system, including safety, service reliability, operations and maintenance costs, and system performance? • Have agency efforts to implement the TAM requirements led to overall cost savings, economic improvement, or reduced taxpayer costs for transit operations?
Information Needed	Since FY 2019, FTA has collected information from agency interview responses, FTA TAM Points of Contact survey responses, FTA TAM Points of Contact focus group responses, agency asset inventories, agency narrative reports, agency credit reports, media tweets, program engagement data, and national peer exchange event registration data. Quantitative and qualitative data collection will conclude in FY 2022.
Methods	FTA and the evaluation team are conducting the following evaluation activities: • *Agency interviews and focus groups:* Interviewing agencies representing a range of FTA regions and agency types and holding focus groups with regional Points of Contact to collect qualitative data relevant to the evaluation questions. • *Analysis of agency-reported asset inventory data from the National Transit Database (NTD):* Analyzing data that agencies are required to submit on their assets and the SGR of their systems to the NTD each year. The data cover four asset categories: revenue vehicles, service vehicles, facilities, and infrastructure. Also included are quantitative targets agencies set for performance measures, and information on agency finances. • *Review of NTD Narrative Reports:* The TAM Rule requires transit agencies to submit data on their assets and asset management process to the NTD, including qualitative descriptions of the asset management process. The evaluation team is conducting a content analysis of a representative sample of narrative reports to analyze trends across asset category and agency types. • *Review of agency credit reports:* Analyzing agency credit ratings from Moody's Investors Service to identify connections between an agency's SGR and its financial health. • *Review of social media mentions of TAM-related topics:* Using a Python script to scrape the Twitter feeds of transit-related media groups and general news organizations for tweets pertaining to transit. Feeding the data into a statistical computing software to analyze for TAM-related terms.

Methods	• *Quarterly data collection:* Analyzing data that the TAM program collects quarterly on outreach activities and engagement with agencies. The data contribute to the overall program evaluation by documenting changes in agency engagement with FTA's TAM Program over time, as well as topics of interest for agencies. • *Analysis of roundtable registration data on agency competency in TAM:* The TAM program hosts annual roundtable events to connect recipient agencies, present information on TAM topics, and facilitate learning about the state of the practice. Registration for the event includes providing information related to agency staff and experience with TAM practices. The evaluation team is collecting and coding data from registrations to find emerging themes.
Anticipated Challenges	The TAM program applies to a wide variety of organizations, from large multimodal transit systems with significant assets to small rural transit systems and Tribal transit operators. FTA has sought data from a cross-section of stakeholders to ensure that different types of stakeholders are represented in the responses. The evaluation team expects that most of its future findings will reflect not only the impacts of the TAM program, but also potentially the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on agencies and on industry-wide SGR. These impacts may be difficult to isolate, and future evaluation efforts may need to be tailored to attempt to distinguish between changes pre- and post-pandemic.
Dissemination	The findings of the evaluation will be submitted in a report to the program managers, who will then develop strategies for program improvement based on the results. A high-level summary of the findings will also be published on the TAM website.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDL   Commercial driver's license

CMV   Commercial motor vehicle

DOT   Department of Transportation

ELD   Electronic logging device

FMCSA   Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

FTA   Federal Transit Administration

FY   Fiscal year

MAP-21   Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act

NTD   National Transit Database

SGR   State of good repair

SME   Subject matter expert

TAM   Transit Asset Management

TIFIA   Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

VAM   Vessel Acquisition Manager

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