

**Clarification of the RFP for
C-16-02: Develop Manufactured Topsoil Mixes to Support the Growth of Pollinator-Friendly Vegetation in Roadside Settings**

As of 3/19/18

The following questions have been raised concerning the RFP for SPR project C-16-02. Clarification of the RFP, through responses to the questions raised, is being provided to all potential Principal Investigators to ensure each proposal in response to the RFP is based on the same information.

Questions and Answers:

Scope of Work

Q1. How many sites does DOT want to start with through this RFP?

Ans.: NYSDOT is looking for the Researcher to propose the location and number of test sites. The RFP requires the Researcher to develop test sites within each of the defined ecoregions. The number of state ecoregions varies depending on if one is looking at the Level III or Level IV Ecoregions. NYSDOT expects the Researcher to propose the number of test sites based on the need for different topsoil mixes (due to different site soil conditions). The proposed location and number of test sites will be negotiated/discussed further during refinement of the winning proposal into a scope of work suitable for contracting.

Q2. How many linear feet? Or how much area revegetated?

Ans.: NYSDOT is looking for the Researcher to propose the scope of work, such as area to revegetate. NYSDOT has no preset or required measure. The area should be whatever would be the most effective for the purposes of the research. This will be negotiated/discussed further during refinement of the winning proposal into a scope of work suitable for contracting.

Q3. Which highways? Thruway, 81, 90, 87, 17(86), the roads associated with these highways like 481, 690, smaller roads like Rtes. 12, 20, 5, 32?

Ans.: NYSDOT is looking for the Researcher to propose the highways to be selected for the research. NYSDOT anticipates that the highways selected will correspond to the number of different ecoregions being considered. ROW width may be another method used to determine which highways are selected. This will be negotiated/discussed further during refinement of the winning proposal into a scope of work suitable for contracting.

Q4. Should we work in the ecoregions within each of the DOT regions?

Ans.: Yes, that is the intent of this project.

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Scope of Work

General Statement

The intent of the project is to come up with soil mixes that are more conducive to native plant (wildflower) germination and subsequent growth. NYSDOT uses the terminology “native plant” and “wildflower” because the research is tied to establishing habitat suitable for pollinators. While the term “wildflower” is more frequently associated with dicots, monocots, including native grasses, shall also be given consideration.

NYSDOT realizes that different ecological regions within the state will have, among other abiotic conditions, different soil types, and, possibly, different native plant material. NYSDOT used the EPA Ecoregions because they present a standard, broadly accepted method of dividing the state into ecologically distinct zones that *may also* correspond to differences in soil types and, as a result, native plant material.

NYSDOT was intentionally flexible regarding the number of test site and methods used to determine how many were needed and where they were needed (specifying neither the number of ecoregions nor the number of test sites). This was done to give the Researcher the opportunity to develop his/her own method of arriving at an acceptable way to distinguish the different ecological areas in the state requiring unique topsoil mixes. NYSDOT wants to be sure to test as many sites, and to develop as many topsoil mixes, as needed to cover the state.

While NYSDOT agrees that amending the existing soil is a preferred method to establish native plants (wildflowers), there are instances when using imported topsoil is necessary. In these cases, NYSDOT has used standard topsoil mixes and efforts to re-establish native vegetation have failed. NYSDOT has been repeatedly informed that the failures were due to imported topsoil, which is considered not conducive to establishing and maintaining native plants.

Finally, NYSDOT has a standard method for specifying topsoil material - using AASHTO parameters of material size gradation. The soil information provided in USDA Soil Surveys is not presented in this way.