

# GAO 17-423 Update

Update: April 2024

## Rec. 1: Coordinate w/ FHWA and Tribal Stakeholders

- Beginning in 2018, BIA and FHWA begin meeting with tribes and the Tribal Transportation Program Coordinating Committee (TTPCC, 25CFR170.135) on the NTTFI and the recommendations of GAO Report 17-423.
  - Multiple national and regional meetings
  - Tribal recommendations made by the TTPCC and a tribal subgroup included the establishment of a data quality group of tribal planners to review the current data and NTTFI.
  - BIA developed an initial plan on data review
    - What is required by law?
    - What data is no longer applicable for program implementation?
    - What are data elements that are currently used and what data is critical?

## Rec. 1: Reexamine the need for road-description and condition data

- Through the coordination of the tribal transportation program coordinating committee (TTPCC), recommendations were made for a plan on data elements that could be considered for elimination or modification.
- The resulting changes recommended reducing the number of overall fields from 54 to ~30.
- Subsequent meetings held with tribes and the TTPCC resulting in a recommendation by TTPCC for BIA to move toward a GIS based NTTFI.

## Rec. 1: Eliminate fields that do not serve an identified purpose

- The TTPCC concurred that approximately 30 fields of the total 54 (current) are recommended for individual tribal use, while others will be moved outside of the core NTTFI.

# January 2022 Update

- Since March 2021, BIA has contracted with a consultant to begin the process of development of the pilot to establish a new GIS based inventory.
- Pilot approval and funding was approved by the IT Investment Governance Board (ITIGB) of Indian Affairs in Aug. 2021.
- The implementation plan includes three phases: (1) Pilot system development, (2) Incorporate integrated Submodules (bridge management and transportation improvement program), and (3) Sunset ITIMS (integrated transportation information management system) including data migration and system of record.
- At a follow up ITIGB meeting in Dec 2021, the board approved the development and investment of an “commercial off-the-shelf” GIS solution for a bridge management system (part of phase 2).
- Development of the pilot is on-target for July 2022.

# April 2023 Update

- Completion of Pilot in Oct. 2022
- Concurrent plans to upgrade Bridge Management System (BMS) under similar improvements to RIFDS
- Closed

## Rec. 2: Take steps to improve the quality of these data by clarifying guidance in the NTTFI coding guide that tribes use to collect data

- The BIA and FHWA organized inventory professionals from tribal users into a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) group to begin reviewing the NTTFI and the coding guide.
- The initial review of the NTTFI for review and recommendation of fields to eliminate came from the QA/QC team of tribal representatives. This review led to the establishment of the “Core NTTFI”.
  - Reduction of the number of overall fields to ~30
  - Completion of this recommendation will occur simultaneously with Recommendation 1.
- April 2020, regulation changed (170.443) based on consultation with tribes resulting in how data for “proposed” roads is collected and included in the NTTFI. Additional consultation on 170.447

## Rec. 2: Providing additional guidance on steps needed to ensure that data are consistently reported

- The BIA and FHWA have met with tribes and the TTPCC to specifically review and discuss 25 CFR 170.442- 447 (reporting and editing of existing and new data) as to specific guidance to be provided in the coding guide.
- RIFDS will eventually be sunsetted (12 – 18 months) and replaced by a GIS based environment.
- The new system subset will continue to contain all data associated with tribal transportation facilities. This will allow tribes to have access to their “own” data that is not officially part of the NTTFI as determined in the Recommendation 1



# January 2022 Update

- Unchanged
- New: Implementation of the modernization of the current inventory system to a GIS-enabled application will address this functionality of guidance through documentation, demonstration, training and coding guide.

# April 2023 Update

- Follows closely actions resulting from Recommendation #1
- Pilot completed
- Begin Phase I of implementation

Rec. 3: Establish a process to monitor data to facilitate timely and targeted corrections to missing or erroneous data.

- Since January 2018, the BIA and FHWA have met multiple times with tribal users, the TTPCC and the QA/QC team, on targeting data that is missing and/or erroneous. The most obvious data elements are those used in the prior funding formula that are no longer relevant or in use (changed by the enactment of Pub. L. 112-141). These fields will be modified or changed as part of change to the Core NTTFI.
- BIA has initiated over the past 2 years within the inventory training an extra day for tribes to correct entries. This process allows for corrections to take place in a timelier manner and in most cases with reduced paperwork and documentation. This also provides interaction and input of the tribes.

# January 2022 Update

- No Change
- Suspended due to COVID

# April 2023 Update

- Pandemic delays/suspension lifted.
- Resume training of tribes and corrective actions exercises related to errors and omissions in data.
- Update: April 2024. Recommended closure.

Rec. 4: Develop a means to document when the level of service for each road section was last evaluated.

- A time-stamp for the level of service assessment at the Field and/or Region level will be incorporated into the data reporting process for capturing the assessment date.
- All data associated with time/date for assessment is already included in the current Deferred Maintenance Reporting (DMR) database, the reports will be modified as a requirement.

# January 2022

- Scope of work in development of new GIS based system will also provide geospatial data management support and oversight of the Tribal Priority Allocations – Road Maintenance Program.
- Data entry and updates are recorded within the geometry information of routes for Level of Service assessment.
- Part of the Roads and Highway System of Record and RIFDS Workflows Pilot Configuration will generate the new or updated Deferred Maintenance Reports which will include the time/date stamp of evaluation activities.

# April 2023 Update

- As previously stated, this function currently exists in the present system. The report option will also reside in the update DMR system when updated from the currently Integrated Transportation Information Management System (ITIMS) update process.



## Rec. 5: Develop and maintain documentation supporting the unit costs of maintenance used to estimate maintenance needs

- The BIA worked with a tribal road maintenance subcommittee (Tribal Interior Budget Council) & developed a survey to gather some initial data on the obstacles and successes to data management for roads maintenance functions, equipment.
- Summary: A portion of the tribes have some capability to evaluate accuracy and completeness of road surface conditions. 1/3 do not have policy and guidelines in place to follow for reporting purposes. Majority of the tribes indicated that they are able to track cost per mile for different surface types.
- The TIBC Subcommittee pilot tribes have recommended data that they use.
- In late FY2019 TIBC approved the implementation of a pilot project to begin working with the BIA to develop automated systems that will allow the tribes to track costs electronically and report globally to the BIA.

# January 2022

- BIA currently establishes a regional unit cost table to support both BIA and Tribal DMR reports. Ideally, the ability for tribes to develop their own unit costs to represent their needs is preferred. The pilot described is a step in that direction.

## Rec. 6: Develop a process for more complete and accurate reporting occurring under existing authority of RMP funds expended for performed maintenance on BIA roads

- This is closely related to Recommendation No. 5.
- Input from tribes for complete and accurate reporting on maintenance activities.
- This reporting has to be coordinated with the tribes because it is information not reported as part of the contract requirements.

# January 2022

- BIA continues to work with tribes and internally has explored several options to report this information. In June 2021, the tribes expressed interest in reporting capabilities in the types of transportation data collected, the status on the update to the inventory project and how this data can improve transportation facility management.

# April 2023 Update

- Unchanged.
- New: PL 117-58, Section 14006 requires a Road Maintenance Study on the BIA road maintenance program. The report is due in November 2023.
  - The consultation with tribes includes Deferred Maintenance, streamlining efforts to improve program performance.
  - ~ 6 pre-meetings held with focus tribes on the BIA road maintenance program on generating a better understanding on what the intent of Sec. 14006 is.