



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Highway Administration**



# Federal Highway Administration

## Assessment of Performance Measurement System

In 2004, Weidner Inc. worked with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop an assessment plan of its performance management system. FHWA was interested in continuous improvement of their system and asked Weidner to perform a preliminary assessment with specific attention to employee issues and report the strengths and weaknesses and facilitate a decision on next steps.

### Results:

Based on this Assessment Report, the FHWA decided to initiate changes to their training program and communications effort in order to improve employee understanding of the performance measurement system.

### Project Description

Specifically, the consulting team:

1. Reviewed available material on current measurement techniques and practices,
2. Interviewed a small sample (six) FHWA officials from Headquarters (HQ) involved in performance management,
3. Facilitated a design meeting to define evaluation criteria and determine the techniques to be employed in a subsequent assessment, and
4. Wrote an assessment plan.

## Materials Review

Prior to conducting any on-site work, the consultant team reviewed approximately forty (40) documents provided by the agency and/or researched by the team. The list of materials included strategic plans and reports, performance plans and reports, unit performance plans and reports, internal guidance and reference documents, survey results and recommendations, and various background documents.

## Interviews

The multipurpose interviews were designed to:

- Enable the consultants to verify observations gleaned from the review of material that was provided,
- Gather a personal perspective from staff members that, though small in number, was well positioned to offer insight into the development and use of performance measurement, and
- Provide some insight into the observed and reported reaction of employees to performance measurement to inform the design of the assessment plan.

## Design Meeting

**The consultants utilized the information gleaned in these interviews to inform the next day's design and decision meeting. Topics of discussion for the design and decision meeting included:**

- A review of best practice criteria for performance management and accountability systems (handout provided to participants),
- A review of a draft of FHWA strengths and opportunities for improvement in performance measurement and performance evaluation, and
- A discussion of possible assessment techniques (along with the pros and cons of each) to conduct an agency-wide assessment of performance management.

## Assessment Report

The draft assessment report described several options for conducting an employee assessment of performance management in the FHWA. The report included the consulting team's observations on the potential advantages and disadvantages of an assessment study to inform the approaches taken to address employee issues with performance management. In addition, the report contained the discussions of the Design Team and the recommendations of the Consulting Team.

