

Summary

The Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST) is a voluntary self-evaluation tool to help integrate sustainability into transportation programmes and projects. It consists of a collection of criteria deemed to be "best practice". There are no credits for complying with environmental and other laws. The tool is challenging agencies to go beyond compliance

Leading organisation: US Department of Transport (DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

| Applicable sectors | | | | | Award types | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------|
| General civil | Transport only | Buildings | Public realm | Community / precinct | Design* | As built* | Operation | Planning | Other |

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|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Country | USA | Sustainability criteria | INVEST is composed of three modules: Systems Planning (SP), Project Development (PD), and Operations and Maintenance (OM) | |
| Deployment & developments | Following a pilot version, INVEST 1.0 was released in October 2012. There are 24 implementation projects by 18 agencies (state DOTs, metropolitan planning organisations, and US Federal Lands offices) in 17 states and Washington, D.C. | | There are 60 criteria, organised by module. SP includes 16 plus 1 bonus, PD includes 29, OM includes 14. Version 1 only includes weighting for PD criteria. SP and OM are equally weighted with 15 points, with bonus criteria in SP totalling 10 points. | |
| Applicants | Designed for state, city and local transport agencies. Specific users may include a team of owner, consultant and contractor. | | There is one scorecard each for SP and OM. PD has 6 options: basic rural, basic urban, extended rural, extended urban and custom - where some of the criteria are removed for all options except "urban extended". | |
| Government endorsement | Voluntary tool promoting best practice. FHWA has no intention of making a requirement to use this tool. | | Assessment: scoring, performance levels, evidence collection | For each module there are four achievement levels (minimum % total points required in brackets): bronze (30%), silver (40%), gold (50%), platinum (60%). Note that the points required to achieve the levels vary between modules (and between the different scorecards for the PD module). Evidence collection is not applicable given this is a self-assessment tool. |
| Support to applicants | Details for each criterion are provided online. This includes scoring requirements and suggestions for supporting information. A free web-based tool is provided to self-conduct assessment. A user toolkit is available for learning how to use INVEST tools. | | Tailoring | Note that FHWA is not a certifying body for this tool. Use of INVEST is completely voluntary, and evaluations are initiated and completed solely by the users of the tool. FHWA does not certify any project, plan, or program to which INVEST may be applied, nor does it solicit any third party entity to do so on its behalf. *The Project Development module includes early project planning, alternatives analysis, environmental documentation, preliminary and final design and construction. |
| | | Fee | Not applicable as this is a self-evaluation tool. | |

Case study

Project name: Western Federal Lands - Going-to-the-Sun-Road Rehabilitation Project

Location: Glacier National Park, Montana

Proponent: Western Federal Lands Highway

Award: (approximate) 60 points, Gold (using INVEST extended scorecard)

Brief project description: Approximately 80 per cent of the two million annual visitors to Glacier Park travel the road. The Sun Road project received \$27.6 million in federal stimulus money to reconstruct the road between Big Bend to Logan Pass in 2010 and 2011. Work was also completed between Logan Pass and Siyeh Bend as well as a section of road along McDonald Creek below the West Tunnel. Work continued between Haystack Creek and Big Bend as well as between Avalanche and Logan Creek for a total of 5.5 miles of construction activity.

Project Highlights:

- 70 years of traffic, weather, avalanches & rockslides
- Aggressive 20-year seasonal rehab program keeps road open but work moving ahead
- Reusing all existing stonework, reseeding disturbed roadsides
- INVEST helped validate context sensitivity but also improve their documentation & communications

Sustainability Facts:

- Safety improvements will be made at high-priority rockfall locations and at pull-outs, overlooks, and parking areas.
- A comprehensive mitigation program strives to limit impacts on tourism.
- Work can be done only five to six months of the year, typically mid-May to mid-October, because of harsh weather and the annual winter road closure.
- During construction, visitors can still drive their own vehicles over the road as usual, but they have the option of leaving their cars at two transit centres—one at each end of the park—and taking regularly scheduled shuttle buses to the most popular destinations on Sun Road, such as trailheads, overlooks, and interpretive sites.
- The entire Sun Road mitigation program will be supported by an extensive intelligent transportation system (ITS) computerized communications network that will provide real-time information to visitors such as road conditions, parking availability, traffic, weather and transit schedules.



Paving underway on the Going-to-the-sun road rehabilitation project