

**Region 10 – Request for Initial Proposals
for EPA Dedicated Water Quality Program Funding
Announcement # EPA-R10-10-OWW-WU**

OVERVIEW:

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10, Office of Water and Watersheds, Watersheds Unit

Funding Opportunity Title: Region 10 – Request for Initial Proposals (RFIP) for EPA Dedicated Water Quality Program Funding

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R10-10-OWW-WU

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): CFDA Number **66.436** Surveys, Studies, Investigations, Demonstrations, and Training Grants and Cooperative Agreements – Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act.

Action Dates: The deadline for receipt of initial proposals is November 9, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST). Applicants who are invited to submit final applications will be notified of final application deadlines and requirements after November 9, 2009.

Executive Summary

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region 10, Office of Water and Watersheds, Watersheds Unit, is soliciting proposals from eligible agencies/organizations for the coordination and acceleration of research, studies, experiments, training, investigations and demonstration projects to improve the capacity of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington States and Tribes to effectively and efficiently develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for impaired waters located in these States. EPA will not provide funding to State or Tribal environmental agencies for "routine" TMDL work that the Agency supports with grants under Section 106 and 319 of the Clean Water Act; production of TMDLs must be an incidental by-product of the activities EPA funds under this competitive announcement. This notice sets forth the process that will be used for selecting awards. The total estimated funding available for awards under this announcement is approximately \$400,000. The number of expected awards is approximately 8, with an expected range of award of \$25,000 - \$80,000; however, proposals requesting funding below or above the expected range of award will be considered.

FULL TEXT ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is authorized pursuant to §104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), which provides that assistance agreements awarded under this authority may be used to support the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the cause, effects (including health and welfare), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. To be considered for funding, a project must consist of activities within the statutory terms of §104(b)(3) of the CWA. **These activities relate generally to gathering or transferring information, or advancing the state of knowledge, and accelerating program development for improving water quality in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Tribal lands within EPA Region 10. Grant proposals must emphasize the "learning" concept as opposed to "fixing" an environmental problem via a well-established method.** Examples of eligible research, investigations, studies, training, and demonstration activities may include but are not limited to developing "best practices" for generating data, models, techniques and methods, and training personnel that lead to improved State and Tribal TMDL programs, and disseminating the results of the project so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained. **EPA will not provide funding for "routine" TMDL work that the Agency supports with grants under Section 106 and 319 of the Clean Water Act; production of TMDLs must be an incidental by-product of the activities EPA funds under this competitive announcement. Demonstration projects must**

involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches where the results of the projects will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration projects.

Under this RFIP, TMDL program development projects will be funded. See the expected “outputs” and “outcomes” below for a more detailed description of TMDL program development. As a general matter, the expected outputs of all awards under this announcement will result in the acceleration of the states’ and tribes’ development of tools for meeting water restoration goals (i.e., TMDLs).

Measuring Environmental Results

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7, “*Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements*,” EPA requires that all grant applicants and recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature, and in how they are measured.

A. Outputs

The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Proposals must include a description of project outputs and the way in which recipients will track progress towards the environmental goal throughout the grant period.

Expected outputs from projects funded under this solicitation may include, but are not limited to the following:

TMDL project outputs:

New and improved methods for developing TMDLs that promote best management practices and TMDL implementation.

Staff trained on improved and accelerated TMDL development/implementation methods.

New tools or innovative techniques for TMDL development that accelerate the production of TMDLs.

New or innovative approaches to fostering interstate or tribal/state coordination of TMDL development when more than one state/tribe has an interest in a waterbody.

B. Outcomes

The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Proposals must include a description of project outcomes resulting from the project outputs.

Expected outcomes from projects funded under this solicitation may include, but are not limited to the following:

TMDL project outcomes:

A more advanced state of knowledge among state or tribal personnel involved in developing and implementing TMDLs.

Improved capacity of state and/or tribal TMDL programs.

Improved coordination among state/tribal TMDL programs in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington.

Widespread adoption of a demonstrated new or improved methodology or technology in TMDL programs.

- Short-term outcomes include increased understanding or environmental effectiveness of an approach, fine-tuned and improved use of a demonstrated methodology or technology.
- Medium-term outcomes include widespread adoption of the demonstrated methodology in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and/or Washington, improved program development capacity and/or documented reductions in pollutant loadings to impaired waters.
- Long-term outcomes resulting in improved water quality include reduced number of impaired waterbodies, and increased number of waters attaining water quality standards.

Additional information regarding EPA’s definition of environmental results in terms of “outputs” and “outcomes” can be found at www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/assistance.htm.

C. Alignment with EPA’s Strategic Plan

Ultimately, the outputs and outcomes listed above for awards made under this announcement are expected to support *environmental results* associated with the following goal and objectives in EPA’s Strategic Plan: Goal 2 (Clean & Safe Water), Objective 2.2 (Protect Water Quality), Sub-objective 2.2.1 (Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis). EPA will track the degree to which TMDLs are developed, which should indicate whether these projects are working towards accelerating the tribes’ and states’ development of TMDLs. EPA will track the progress towards attainment of WQS in impaired waters, which should indicate whether these projects are working toward environmental results.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated funding available for awards under this announcement is approximately \$400,000.

Partial Funding.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates award of up to approximately 8 cooperative agreement(s) or grant(s) under this announcement ranging in value from approximately \$25,000 to \$80,000, subject to the availability of funds and quality of evaluated proposals. Proposals requesting funding below or above the expected range of award will be considered.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of the original selections. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated.

What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will begin in late spring/summer 2010. Proposed project periods may be up to 2 years.

Funding Type

The funding for selected projects will be in the form of either a grant or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this project will be:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant’s performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;

- in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient);
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with CFDA 66.436, assistance under this program is generally available to States, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private non-profit institutions and individuals.

Non-profit organization, as defined by OMB Circular A-122, located at 2 CFR Part 230, means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization which: (1) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (2) is not organized primarily for profit; and (3) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. For this purpose, the term "non-profit organization" excludes (i) colleges and universities; (ii) hospitals; (iii) state, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; and (iv) those non-profit organizations which are excluded from coverage of this part in accordance with § 230.20(c)

Nonprofit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

B. Cost sharing or Matching

There is no match or cost-sharing requirement for this funding opportunity.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants and proposed projects will need to meet all of the following threshold criteria at the time of their initial proposal submission. Threshold criteria will be applied on a pass/fail basis. Only proposals from eligible entities (see above) that meet all threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. Failure to meet any of them will render the initial proposal ineligible; ineligible proposals will not be evaluated or considered. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

Threshold Criterion 1: Geographic location of proposed project work

Proposed projects must take place in one or more of the four Region 10 States (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and/or Washington), or on tribal lands within EPA Region 10.

Threshold Criterion 2: Project Eligibility

Proposed projects must be designed to conduct research, perform studies, conduct experiments or demonstration projects, or offer training to improve state/tribal capacity, or make arrangements for regional (interstate or state/tribal) coordination of TMDLs in Region 10 states (in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and/or Washington or on tribal lands within Region 10). EPA will not provide funding for "routine" TMDL work that the Agency supports with grants under Section 106 and 319 of the Clean Water Act; production of TMDLs must be an incidental by-product of the activities EPA funds under this competitive announcement. Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.

Threshold Criterion 3: Substantial Compliance

Initial proposals must substantially comply with the submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. As indicated in Section IV, initial proposals must be no longer than four pages and no more than five projects may be

submitted by any entity. Pages in excess of this page limitation will not be reviewed. Only the first five projects will be evaluated. **Initial proposals received by EPA after the initial proposal submission deadline stated in Section IV of this announcement will not be considered. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their initial proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.**

Initial proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the proposal was late due to EPA mishandling. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires initial proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their initial proposal with Jayne Carlin at (206) 553-8512 or carlin.jayne@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in the initial proposal not being reviewed.

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain Proposal Package

Applicants can download individual grant proposal/application forms from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm.

To obtain a hard copy of materials, please send an email or written request to the Agency contact listed in Section VII of this announcement.

B. Mode of Proposal Submission

Applicants have the following options to submit their proposals: 1) Hard copy by express delivery service to the specified EPA contact below, or 2) electronically through email to the specified EPA contact below. Proposals will not be accepted via fax or standard 1st class mail delivery by U.S. Postal Service. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described below in Section IV.C "Content and Form of Submittals" regardless of mode of transmission.

1. Hard Copy Submission

Please provide one original of the proposal package (including signed and completed SF 424 and SF 424A forms) to:

Hard Copy via Express Delivery (FedEx, UPS, DHL, USPS, etc.)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Jayne Carlin, Watershed Unit (OWW-134)
U.S. EPA Region 10
1200 Sixth Ave, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140
(206) 553-8512

Hard Copy Proposal Submission Deadline

All hard copies of proposal packages must be received by Jayne Carlin by **November 9, 2009, 4:30 PM PST.**

2. E-mail Submission

E-mail submissions must be submitted to carlin.jayne@epa.gov and be received by the submission deadline stated in Section IV.D of this announcement. All required documents listed in Section IV.C of the announcement must be attached to the e-mail as separate Adobe PDF files. Please note that if you choose to submit your materials via e-mail, you are accepting all risks attendant to e-mail submission including server delays and transmission difficulties. E-mail submissions exceeding 15MB will experience transmission delays which will affect when they are received by the Agency. For these size submissions, applicants should submit their application materials via hardcopy or else they may be received late and not considered for funding. Applicants submitting their application materials through e-mail should confirm receipt of the materials with Jayne Carlin as soon as possible after submission.

C. Content and Form of Submittals

The proposal package *must* include all of the following materials:

- **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**

Complete the form (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm> .There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

- **Standard Form (SF) 424A , Budget Information**

Complete the form (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm>. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

- **Narrative Proposal**

Initial Proposal Submittals: Content and Format

Each organization may submit no more than five initial proposals. Applicants must use the following format for initial proposal submission(s), and must include the information outlined below in their initial proposals. Initial proposals must be no longer than four pages (8 ½ x 11 inches, single-spaced, minimum font size of 11 point) - pages in excess of this page limitation will not be reviewed. Each proposal can include several individually costed projects or project phases, listed in order of funding priority, with the highest priority project listed first. *Applicants must also make sure that, to the extent not otherwise addressed below, their initial proposal submittal provides information addressing all of the initial proposal evaluation factors identified in Section V.A.1.*

Project Title	
Funding Amount	(Total amount of federal funding requested.)
Project Description(s)	<p>A. General summary statement of project goal & justification Provide a brief description of 1) the need for (and environmental significance of) the project, 2) the proposed project, and 3) the anticipated outputs and environmental outcomes and how they will be measured.</p> <p>B. Project descriptions <i>Characterization of the Issue:</i> Describe the environmental significance of the project (what problem will be addressed by this project) and why it is a priority at this time. Describe the geographic area impacted by the project (waterbodies to be used for the demonstration project etc.) and whether the project will have widespread applicability to other areas of EPA Region 10 or the United States. <i>Project Plan:</i> Describe the proposed work to be accomplished, including specific tasks, activities, and anticipated outputs/outcomes (quantifiable results) associated with major project components. Include in this section how this project will improve state and tribal TMDL programs in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and/or Washington. For demonstration projects that involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, explain how the results of the projects will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration projects. <i>Partners:</i> Description of the roles of the applicant and partners, if any. <i>Staff Expertise:</i> Description of the staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.</p> <p>C. Description of environmental outcomes and outputs <i>Expected Deliverables as Outputs and Outcomes:</i> Provide a description of expected deliverables (such as 1. Quality Assurance Project Plan if the project involves sampling or data collection or 2. Summary report of research, study, or</p>

	<p>demonstration and means for disseminating the results) expressed as outputs and environmental outcomes.</p> <p>Tracking/Measuring Progress: Provide a description of the plan for tracking and measuring progress towards achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes (<i>see definition and examples identified in Section I Measuring Environmental Results in this announcement</i>)</p> <p>Timeline: Identify timeframes for achieving expected outputs and outcomes</p> <p>D. Budget: Provide costs for each project or phase broken down into major budget categories.</p>
Applicant Contact	Name, agency, e-mail address, telephone, mailing address.
Attachments (Optional)	<p>These items are optional and not included in the page limit.</p> <p>A. Resumes. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.</p> <p>B. Support Letters. Provide support letters from relevant organizations that support this proposal. Where appropriate, specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.</p>

Final Application Submittals

If your initial proposal is selected for further consideration, you will be invited to submit a final application. Further instructions for the submittal of the final application package will be provided to these applicants at the appropriate time. Final application submittals will be evaluated against the final application review criteria in Section V. In the final application submittal, applicants will be asked to provide certain information, including:

Program Capability and Past Performance

Submit a list of federally (and/or non-federally if applicable) funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreements include grants or cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five agreements and preferably EPA agreements), and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you have no relevant or available past performance or reporting history, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/ qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

General Submission Information

1. Confidential Business Information

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c) (2) prior to disclosure. However, the agency considers competitive proposals/applications confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

2. Management Fees

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants' cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

3. Partnerships, Contractors and Subawards

(1) Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

(2) How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application (assuming that the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award, then the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31). For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain

commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.

- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal/application [assuming that the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate]. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

D. Submittal Dates and Times

The closing date and time for receipt of proposal submissions, regardless of mode of submission, is **November 9, 2009, 4:30 p.m. PST (Pacific Standard Time)**. All hard copies of proposal packages must be received by Jayne Carlin by **November 9, 2009, 4:30 pm PST**. Electronic submissions must be addressed to carlin.jayne@epa.gov and include, "Announcement # **EPA-R10-10-OWW-WU**– [name of applicant] in the subject line and must be received by **November 9, 2009, 4:30 p.m. PST**. Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications and forms will be requested, as necessary, from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

E. Proposal and Application Assistance and Communications

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy of January 11, 2005 (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications and proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

V. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals and final applications will be evaluated and scored by reviewers using the criteria listed below. Each initial proposal and final application may receive up to 100 points.

1. Initial Proposal Evaluation Criteria (100 points):

- a. Whether the proposal contains the information described under Section IV. A. 1. of the announcement.

Under this criterion, reviewers will focus on the degree to which the proposal: 1) describes the environmental significance of the project (what problem will be addressed by this project and why it is a priority at this time), 2) outlines a technically/scientifically sound and appropriate approach (including appropriate staff expertise/qualifications and resources), 3) provides clear project goals and measurable objectives, 4) demonstrates an understanding of the environmental issues or problems, and 5) shows level of project

development (i.e., readiness of project, technical merit, and expected environmental improvements). **(50 points-each item is worth 10 points)**

- b. Whether the proposal consists of activities within the statutory terms of §104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act.

Under this criterion, reviewers will focus on the degree to which the proposal either 1) conducts research, performs studies, or offers training that advances the state of knowledge of or accelerates TMDL program development OR 2) conducts demonstration projects that involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches (unique, creative or novel approaches to TMDL development and/or environmental restoration) with widespread applicability to other areas of the State, EPA Region 10 or United States and where the results of the projects will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration projects. **(25 points)**

- c. The quality of the applicant's plan for tracking and measuring progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes described in Section I on the announcement. In addition, reviewers will evaluate the degree to which the proposal contains clear and quantifiable output and outcome measures, a timeline, and a description of the format in which these measurements will be reported. **(25 points)**

2. Final Application Review Criteria (100 points): Final applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this factor, the Agency will evaluate the applicant's technical ability to successfully carry out the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:
- (i) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years **(25 points)**.
 - (ii) History of meeting reporting requirements (including documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving the expected results --e.g., outcomes and outputs) on federally-funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last three years, and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements **(25 points)**.
 - (iii) Organizational experience and plan for timely and successful achievement of the project objectives **(25 points)**.
 - (iv) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project **(25 points)**.

In evaluating applicants under this factor the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance or reporting history (items i and ii above), will receive a neutral score for those elements of this factor. (For example, the criterion is worth 20 points, so a neutral rating for an applicant with no history on federally-funded assistance agreements would be 10 points.) Applicants providing no response for this item would receive a score of 0.

B. Review and Selection Process:

1. Initial Proposals

A panel comprised of EPA Region 10 staff will review initial proposals against the threshold eligibility factors in Section III. Those proposals that are deemed eligible will then be evaluated and ranked by the panel against the initial proposal criteria stated above, Section V.A.1. The panel will then invite the applicants with the highest ranking initial proposals to submit final applications.

2. Final Applications and Awards

After the evaluation of the initial proposals, EPA will invite those applicants with the highest ranked initial proposals to submit final applications for review. Those applicants will be asked to submit a formal assistance agreement application for funding under CWA §104(b)(3). The applicant will receive further instructions for submitting final applications in accordance with 40 CFR Part 31 (state and local governments) or 40 CFR Part 30 (non-profits and universities) and will also be advised what further information is necessary to be included in the final application package (including the information identified in Section IV.A.2 of the announcement).

EPA Region 10 staff will evaluate each final application based on the final application review criteria described above in Section V.A.2 and provide funding recommendations to the regional EPA approval official. Final funding recommendations will be made by the regional EPA approval official based on EPA staff recommendations and may also take into account the following other factors: geographic distribution of funds and a balanced package of projects. The goal of the process is to select a package of projects that strengthen tribal and/or state TMDL programs throughout Alaska, Oregon, Idaho and Washington.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices and Other Award Requirements

Applicants who have been selected for award and whose final application has been approved can expect to receive an award document which constitutes an agreement between EPA and the recipient organization, and sets forth the terms and conditions of the financial assistance. As the assistance agreement is a legal document, an authorized representative of your organization must indicate acceptance by signing and returning the appropriate copies to the EPA Region 10 Grants Administration Unit. Specific instructions will be provided with the award document.

In accordance with EPA policy, and OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund raising, or political activities (e.g., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts).

Unsuccessful applicants will receive by e-mail or telephone within fifteen calendar days of the final selections for award. (See information in VI.B. regarding disputes.)

Quality Assurance Requirements: Final awards involving the collection of environmental data will require an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) prior to data collection and/or modeling. The award recipient must coordinate review of the QAPP with the EPA Region 10's Office of Environmental Assessment.

Administrative and National Policy Requirement

A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Application and not all states require such a review. A listing of State Point of Contacts (SPOC) may be viewed at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html

DUNS

All applicants **are required** to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

Disputes: Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=3629&dbname=2005_register Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the EPA representative listed in section VI.C. of this announcement.

Data Access and Information Release: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations at 40 C.F.R. 30.36.

Nonprofit Administrative Capability: Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). Depending on the size of the award, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

Exchange Network: EPA, states, territories, and tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure, Internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA, should make the Exchange Network and the Agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information on the Exchange Network is available at www.exchangenetwork.net.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

Please note that EPA employees can only provide pre-application assistance in a manner that complies with EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements (1/11/05), which is available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/5700_5A1.pdf.

For further information, please contact:

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All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, fax or email to the contact person listed above. To view this announcement and related information, go to EPA Region 10's website at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/TMDLs/2010TMDL>.