

## OVERVIEW INFORMATION

**Federal Agency Name:** U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Gulf of Mexico Program Office

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Gulf of Mexico Alliance Regional Partnership Projects

**Announcement Type:** Request for Proposals (RFP)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.475

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-GM-2009-1

**Dates:** The deadline for submissions is **5:00 P.M. CST June 15, 2009**. Proposals must be received by the Agency Contact (see **Section IV Application and Submission Information** of this RFP) by hard copy through the mail or commercial delivery service or through email to [GMP.proposals@epa.gov](mailto:GMP.proposals@epa.gov). All required documents listed in Section IV of this announcement must be attached to the email as separate Adobe PDF files. Please note that if you choose to submit your materials via email, you are accepting all risks attendant to email submission including server delays. All proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. For further information, see Section IV.

**Summary:** An estimated amount of up to \$3,000,000 depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations for approximately 10 to 50 cooperative agreements may be awarded under this announcement to eligible applicants for projects that improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico by addressing improved water quality and public health, priority coastal habitat conservation and restoration, more effective coastal environmental education, improved ecosystems integration and assessment, strategic nutrient reductions, and coastal community resilience. Projects must actively involve stakeholders and focus on support and implementation of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Governors' Action Plan II for Healthy and Resilient Coasts. For more information go to [http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/action\\_plan2/welcome.html](http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/action_plan2/welcome.html).

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Program Objectives**

The EPA Gulf of Mexico Program's (GMP) mission is to protect, restore, and enhance the coastal and marine waters of the Gulf and its natural habitats; to sustain living resources; to protect human health and the food supply; and to ensure the long-term use of the Gulf shores, beaches, and waters. To carry out the GMP mission, EPA must continue to develop and maintain a partnership of State and Federal agencies, local governments, academia, regional business and industry, agricultural and environmental organizations, and individual citizens and communities that effectively addresses the complex ecological problems that cross State, Federal, and international jurisdictions and boundaries.

EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are co-leads of a

Federal Workgroup of thirteen federal agencies committed to supporting the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, a partnership formed by the five Gulf State Governors. The Gulf of Mexico Program is the lead for EPA and is issuing this Request for Proposals seeking proposals to strengthen and support the Alliance Regional Partnership.

EPA is working with the states and other partners to support attainment of environmental and health goals that align with the Governors' Action Plan II for Healthy and Resilient Coasts which follows the successes of the first Action Plan released in March 2006. For more information on the Governors' Action Plan go to <http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/>. Action Plan II is intended to be a farther-reaching, five-year regional plan that addresses specific issues and projects which will result in a healthier Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and economy with a vision toward healthy and resilient coasts and communities in the Gulf of Mexico. Plan II sets out a strategy with actions addressing specific projects/activities that will deliver significant results to achieve the environmental outcomes of improved water quality for healthy beaches and shellfish beds; habitat conservation and restoration; increased awareness/stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico; ecosystems integration and assessment; reduced nutrient inputs to sustain productive Gulf aquatic ecosystems; and coastal community resilience.

## **B. Environmental Results and Linkage to Strategic Plan**

Successful proposals must have clear and measurable environmental results directly related to EPA's Strategic Plan. Awards resulting from this announcement must relate to **Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems** ---Protect, sustain or restore the health of people, communities, and ecosystems using integrated and comprehensive approaches and partnerships; **Objective 4.3: Ecosystems** ---Protect, sustain, and restore the health of critical natural habitats and ecosystems; and **Subobjective 4.3.5: Improve the Health of the Gulf of Mexico**. For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to:

<http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>

All proposed projects must demonstrate the linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting ecosystems. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. Applicants must discuss environmental outputs and outcomes in their proposed narrative/workplan.

- 1. Outputs:** The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work products 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. Expected *outputs* from the projects funded under this announcement are listed with each of the Actions identified above.
- 2. 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. Expected outcomes from the projects funded under this announcement are listed with each of the Actions identified above.

### **C. Statutory Authority**

All proposals submitted will be reviewed for eligibility under Section 104 (b)(3) of the Clean Water Act. Assistance Agreements are authorized under this statutory authority to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. The term “pollution” means the man-made or man-induced alteration of the chemical, physical, biological, and radiological integrity of water.

### **D. Priority Issue Areas**

This announcement is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to address the following issue areas: Water Quality, Habitat Conservation and Restoration, Ecosystems Integration and Assessment, Nutrient Reduction, Environmental Education, and Coastal Community Resilience.

Each of the Actions listed under the **issue areas** below describes some of the expected outputs and outcomes of projects addressing that Action. While Applicants may submit multiple proposals under this announcement, each proposal must be for a separate issue area. Proposals addressing more than one issue area will be rejected. Applicant’s proposals must address one or more Actions under an issue area.

## **Priority Issue Area #1 -Water Quality**

**Action: Ensure healthy beaches and shellfish beds. Improve the ability to determine which kinds of organisms in coastal waters constitute risks to human health in order to support coastal managers and decision makers.**

### **Activities:**

- Assess the effectiveness of current indicator organisms in the environment and the survivability of human pathogens associated with fecal pollution in Gulf waters. Conduct a minimum of one re-growth and persistence pilot study to assess utility of current indicators.
- Conduct a Gulf-wide “round-robin study” for a core set (BOD, CBOD, TP, Ortho P, NH<sub>3</sub>, TKN, Total NO<sub>x</sub>, Dissolved NO<sub>x</sub>, TOC, DOC, Chl a) of water quality parameters across Gulf coastal ecosystems. After individual sampling events in the round robin series, prepare and submit a summary of the sampling event’s findings (including, but not limited to, laboratory data, data analysis, statistics on data variability, data quality review, etc.) to be used in refining future sampling events of

the round robin series.

- Assess existing information to better understand *Vibrio* bacteria ecology, health risks, and research needs. Obtain data and provide an analysis of temperature, salinity, and related environmental factors that aide in the prediction of recreational and seafood health risks from *Vibrio* species.

Outputs:

- Prepare, submit and broadcast the findings of an assessment report on the survivability of human pathogens versus traditional indicators of fecal contamination in Gulf waters.
- At the conclusion of the round robin study, a detailed report including narrative, data and maps depicting comprehensive findings from the Gulf-wide “round-robin” data comparability study. Special emphasis is on the determination of variability in data collection, data analysis, and /or data quality.
- The development and publication of a comprehensive report on the status of *Vibrio* bacteria ecology, risk and research needs; including a predictive analytical approach based on the relationship between ambient water quality parameters and related factors.
- A study report of environmental parameters which can be used in statistical analyses or models to predict *Vibrio* presence, density, and virulence in Gulf waters.

Outcomes:

- Increased protection of public health through new information to evaluate current indicators of fecal contamination to Gulf waters.
- Decrease in the incidence of illness related to fecal contamination in Gulf waters.
- Increased knowledge of the efficacy of current indicator organisms in the environment and the survivability of human pathogens associated with fecal pollution in Gulf waters.
- Increased ability to compare Gulf-wide water quality data to facilitate the coordination and standardization of state and federal water quality data collection activities and support to the Gulf States for the development of numerical nutrient criteria.
- Increased knowledge of *Vibrio* bacteria ecology, health risks and research needs.
- Improved public health protection by gathering and assessing the information necessary to use a human health risk-assessment approach.
- Decrease in the incidence of *Vibrio* infections in humans.
- Increased use of proactive as compared to reactive health management decisions through the use of supportive scientific documentation.

**Action: Reduce effects of harmful algal blooms on human health and coastal economies by improving the ability to predict, detect, track, and forecast the movement and effects of harmful algal blooms in waters along the Gulf coast.**

**Activities:**

- Conduct a minimum of two inter-state workshops to determine optimal protocols for sampling, detection, and analysis of harmful algal blooms (HAB) cells and their toxins that will allow all states to identify and monitor the same suite of relevant parameters.
- The workshops should include inter-state comparisons of existing methodologies and protocols for sampling, detecting, and analyzing HAB cells and toxins, and plans for standardizing and optimizing protocols.
- Plan and conduct a minimum of two workshops for algal bloom cell identification training with curricula including standardized monitoring protocols, methodology for *in situ* sensors, field collection, laboratory analyses, and taxonomy training (including microscopic identification of harmful algal bloom species).
- Conduct a study to evaluate and compare the multiple methods of non-*Karenia* HAB cell detection technologies versus current microscopic identification methods; and/or conduct a study to evaluate and compare the multiple methods of HAB toxin detection technologies.
- Conduct an investigation of advanced technologies for the rapid field screening and enhanced real-time remote sensing, platform sensing and autonomous sensing of cells of non-*Karenia* HAB species and/or toxins from *Karenia* or other HAB species. Conduct training workshops in established protocols.
- Initiate, coordinate and conduct workshops to support the expansion of the Harmful Algal Blooms Observing System (HABSOS) to the following states of Mexico: Campeche, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Yucatan and Quintana Roo. Coordinate workshops with the input of local, state and federal expert scientists. Develop and implement a curriculum and training program for HAB field sampling, microscopic identification methods and the demonstration of toxin-detection methodology. Provide training to Mexican personnel for sample collection, HAB identification and enumeration. Guide and assist the Mexican personnel to establish a sampling program for the detection of *K. brevis* and other HAB species.

**Outputs:**

- Incorporate the findings from the inter-state workshops into the Harmful Algal Bloom Integrated Observing System (HABIOS) implementation plan to ensure cost-effective, sustainable, standardized, relevant, and reliable monitoring capabilities by state facilities Gulf-wide.
- Components for a coordinated monitoring HABs action plan that develops a strategy for coordination among existing entities that monitor HABs in the Gulf.

- A robust harmful algal bloom training program which can be applied gulf-wide with curricula including standardized monitoring protocols, methodology for in situ sensors, field collection, laboratory analyses, and taxonomy training (including microscopic identification of harmful algal bloom species).
- Facilitate completion of the HABIOS monitoring network design and its implementation, ensuring that it supports tracking and forecasts that are useful to coastal managers at appropriate spatial and temporal scales and is integrated with the coastal monitoring networks, Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), HABSOS and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS).
- Harmful algal bloom detection technologies capable of detecting multiple species are developed and applied for predictive forecasting.
- Gulf-wide training workshops to increase professional skills and knowledge are conducted. Number of workshops conducted and number attending those workshops is reported.
- Laboratory methodologies suitable for developing operational in situ harmful algal bloom and harmful-algal-bloom toxin sensors are identified and in situ sensors developed.
- Complete HABSOS binational workshop(s) program with interactive training components that physically teaches field sample techniques, microscopic identification methodology and other pertinent program aspects for early detection and decision making support.

Outcomes:

- Increase the ability to predict, detect, track and forecast the movement and effects of harmful algal blooms in waters along the Gulf coast.
- Reduction in the effects of harmful algal blooms on human health and coastal economies.
- Improved detection resolution for HAB cell and/or toxin technologies is available to decision makers and researchers.
- Decreased negative impacts to human health and Gulf economies.
- Increased knowledge in established protocols among workshop attendees.
- Binational interactive training for HABSOS microscopic identification methods and sampling programs in the Mexican states which border the Gulf of Mexico.
- Decreased incidence of human and economic impacts related to HABs in Mexican Gulf states' waters.

**Action: Quantify the factors and inputs controlling the accumulation of mercury in the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. Quantify methyl mercury inputs to Gulf waters from estuarine sources. Identify food items in the Gulf of Mexico that are primary sources of mercury consumed by humans in the Gulf of Mexico region.**

**Activities:**

- Develop a set of models to be used by resource managers and decision makers to reliably predict the relationship between changing mercury loads and concentrations of methyl mercury in Gulf of Mexico seafood.
- Develop a high-resolution model of hydrodynamic circulation in the Gulf of Mexico, coupled to a biogeochemical mercury cycling model (similar to dynamic mercury cycling models used in lakes and other freshwater ecosystems), that includes modeling of mercury cycling in estuaries and in the coastal and open waters of the Gulf. The model has to be capable of being used to predict methyl mercury levels in Gulf of Mexico seafood.
- Conduct a baseline study to measure gradients in methyl mercury concentrations and associated production rates across one or more Gulf of Mexico estuaries. Choose estuaries that maximize existing sampling and data collection in conjunction with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Coastal Nutrient Criteria Framework Studies. Conduct the study for at least one year with emphasis on quantifying the estuarine flushing effects from major storm events where possible.
- Develop a strategy to establish the primary sources of human dietary intake of mercury in the Gulf of Mexico region. Determine if a single species or suite of species can be used to consistently establish guidance concentrations for consumption advisories Gulf-wide. Determine if a consistent process can be defined and applied among Federal and State Agencies when defining and communicating consumption advisories.
- Characterize consumption patterns of mercury-containing biota by humans in the Gulf of Mexico region.
- Characterize species that might be used to establish guidance concentrations for consumption advisories Gulf-wide.
- Characterize a process that might be used to consistently establish guidance concentrations for consumption advisories Gulf-wide.

**Outputs:**

- A reduced-form model that can run on a personal computer and be used by

decision makers and resource managers to test the impacts of various mercury load reduction scenarios on methyl mercury levels in Gulf of Mexico seafood.

- Compilations of various data sets including but not limited to: atmospheric mercury deposition; mercury fluxes in rivers; rates and mechanisms of methyl mercury production in estuaries and other coastal environments; mercury levels in fish and other Gulf of Mexico seafood; and, food webs in the Gulf of Mexico leading to various top predators.
- A coupled hydrodynamic/mercury water quality modeling framework to quantify how present and future mercury loadings will affect fish mercury concentrations in the Gulf of Mexico region, including both temporal and spatial variability and uncertainty.
- A report on the quantification of methyl mercury input to waters of Gulf of Mexico from an initial estuary. A framework will be used as a guide for conducting similar but more efficient subsequent studies (based on work in the initial estuary) for additional estuaries in the Gulf.
- A study of a consistent, science-based approach resulting in comparable data among the Gulf states for assessing mercury and methyl mercury pathways and levels that can be applied in future years. Provide critically needed data on mercury and methyl mercury fluxes, conditions for methyl mercury production, and methyl mercury bioaccumulation into estuarine food webs from a few characteristic estuarine systems for the calibration of estuarine and Gulf-wide biogeochemical mercury cycling models.
- A quantitative report which establishes the primary sources of human intake of mercury in the Gulf region. The report will provide recommendations regarding specie(s) that may be used consistently across the Gulf region in determining consumption advisories and a uniform Federal-State procedure for developing and communicating fish consumption advisories.

#### Outcomes:

- Reduction of risks to human health from consuming potentially contaminated Gulf seafood.
- Increased knowledge of decision makers concerning gradients in methyl mercury concentrations and associated production rates across one or more Gulf of Mexico estuaries.
- Reduced human health impacts related to mercury intake. More efficient and consistent establishment and implementation of mercury consumption advisories Gulf-wide.



**Action: Obtain and provide vital information about the conditions of Gulf of Mexico waters. Support good management decisions about coastal fisheries, recreation, tourism, public health and infrastructure planning by providing information on the condition of Gulf of Mexico waters and the plants and animals living in them.**

**Activities:**

- Produce a blueprint for a coordinated, Gulf-wide monitoring network to provide coastal managers with current and appropriate resource information pertaining to the waters of the Gulf region. The blueprint should: 1) allow for the development of a “Gulf-wide” Report Card that would include products from other Gulf of Mexico Alliance Water Quality Team workgroups and Priority Issue Teams; and, 2) consider the use of remote sensing for integration of parameters as appropriate in the network design. It should also include information gathered at the Annual Monitoring Forum and additional workshops that are hosted or co-hosted by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Water Quality Team.
- Develop and apply a watershed restoration plan in one or more of the (13) priority coastal areas (as identified on the Gulf of Mexico Program Office official website: <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/surfgulf/>) that partners with local, state, academia and/or nonprofit organizations; that determines the cause and source of water quality impairments; and, applies either low technology and/or innovative technology to correct the identified problems.

**Outputs:**

- Blueprint for a State of the Gulf Report that will be designed for periodic (every five years or less) updates through time
- Complete a recognition of and agreement paper on the critical needs and uses of a comprehensive Gulf monitoring network that serves across state boundaries and that can be used by multiple Priority Issue Teams for their needs.
- Two or more “similarly impaired segments” within a key watershed are restored to levels that meet state water quality standards. For example, two or more impaired segments are improved for fecal coliform within the watershed.

**Outcomes:**

- Increased knowledge of managers concerning vital information on the condition of Gulf of Mexico waters and the plants and animals living in them. The increased knowledge will help support decisions concerning coastal fisheries, recreation, tourism, public health and infrastructure planning.
- Increased cooperation, communication and collaboration by all levels of government involved in Gulf of Mexico water-quality monitoring.

- Committed partnerships are developed which build upon this experience and take forward the knowledge and skills that are learned and applied. Ecosystem health is sustained and/or improved for the betterment of the local area and the region in general.

## **Priority Issue Area #2-Habitat Conservation and Restoration**

**Action: Address issues impeding habitat conservation and restoration**

### **Activities:**

- Initiate projects to restore, enhance, or protect at least 2,400 acres of coastal and/or marine habitat. Partner with local, state and federal agencies; business and industry; local schools and educational partners; the National Estuary Programs; and/or non-government organizations to identify critical areas in the Gulf of Mexico region where on-the-ground efforts will produce visible results. The use of community volunteers, and educational institutions and their students and the application of new, innovative approaches in this activity are encouraged.

### **Output:**

- Essential and vital acreage is conserved, restored and/or enhanced in habitats in the Gulf of Mexico region.

### **Outcome:**

- Build partnerships within the Gulf Region, as well as share information and technology throughout the Gulf via these partnerships. Develop new technologies or adapt established technologies and promote successful projects and their associated technologies Gulfwide for future projects. Conserved, restored and protected habitat has the following potential benefits: improved recreational and commercial fisheries, improved water quality, enhanced protected during storm events and enhanced aesthetic appeal, which can promote tourism and the economic benefits associated with tourism.
- At least 2,400 acres of coastal and marine habitat is restored, enhanced or protected.

**Action : Identify and address relevant water management questions and scientific approaches to protect estuaries.**

### **Activities:**

- Adopt or develop a methodology to identify, assess and prioritize areas in the Gulf of Mexico coastal zones that are impacted by alterations in Freshwater Inflow. Identify the factor(s) in each area that are causing alterations in freshwater flows.

- Apply this methodology to identify priority areas in coastal Gulf of Mexico that are stressed by alterations due to Freshwater Inflow.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of the methodology and identify the site stressors by using remedial steps in at least one of the five priority areas.
- Conduct a workshop to present the findings of the methodology development/selection and application. Post the workshop proceedings on the Alliance Working Website and other appropriate locations.
- Conduct a study to identify estuarine and other coastal areas in the Gulf of Mexico Coastal zone that are most likely to be impacted by sea level rise and other climate change impacts, such as the increase in frequency and intensity of hurricane activity. Use established assessment models and tools. This information will be used so that state federal and local agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations, can better focus their conservation and restoration activities on areas that will not be lost to sea level rise and climatic impacts.

#### Outputs:

- A report outlining the methodology to be used for the identification, assessment and prioritization of impacted Gulf coastal areas.
- A report identifying five priority areas impacted by alterations in freshwater inflow. This report will also identify the factors causing those alterations in freshwater and suggest the remedial actions needed to restore freshwater inflow to a more natural state.
- Restore freshwater inflow to a more natural state in one or two areas. Prepare a report on the results to demonstrate the efficacy of this approach for these pilot area(s). Make the report available to agencies and organizations Gulf-wide; and, post on the Alliance website.
- A comparative analysis and report will be completed on models and tools used for evaluating the impacts of sea level rise and other climatic changes on Gulf coastal habitats.
- An analysis and report will be completed delineating the specific locations along the Gulf of Mexico coastal zone that are at highest risk of loss and or degradation due to sea level rise and climate change.
- Build partnerships within the Gulf Region, as well as share information and technology throughout the Gulf via these partnerships. Develop new technologies or adapt established technologies and promote successful projects and their associated technologies Gulfwide for future projects.

#### Outcomes:

- Restoration of the identified five priority areas stressed by alternations due to freshwater inflow.
- Increased knowledge and targeting by decision makers of viable areas for

conservation and restoration activities in areas that will not be lost to sea level rise and climatic impacts.

**Action : Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan. Issues of sediment management, both natural movement and dredged sediments, have significant impact on the ability to conserve, restore and sustain coastal habitats. Present management of sediment resources is typically compartmentalized within individual agencies, sometimes with conflicting missions and standard practices. Standard practices must change to ensure that sediment resources are managed for maximum benefit on a regional scale unencumbered by agency, state, or national boundaries. Policy, authority, and funding issues germane to sediment management will be examined in efforts to provide recommendations on how they provide flexibility to facilitate the Regional Sediment Management (RSM) approach.**

**Activities:**

- Conduct topical working sessions to address the funding, policy, permitting and regulatory issues identified in the initial planning phases of the Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan (GRSMMP).
- Conduct a study of recommendations for changes in funding, policy, permitting and regulations to the appropriate State and/or Federal agencies for promotion of Regional Sediment Management. Work with the Gulf Alliance Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (HCRT) as well as other partners such as non-governmental organizations to accomplish this activity.
- Organize and conduct topical working sessions to address the focus area issues identified in the initial planning phases of the Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan (GRSMMP).
- Work with the Gulf Alliance Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team (HCRT) as well as other partners to draft recommendations resulting from consideration of the focus areas.

**Outputs:**

- The Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan (GRSMMP) is updated to incorporate results from the working meetings. Development and promotion of funding, policy, permitting and regulatory change recommendations.
- Recommendations and guidelines will be established for implementation of the RSM approach and be made available to appropriate levels of management. These recommendations and guidelines will be incorporated into the GRSMMP. Other media will also be identified as a suitable means to transfer this information to the appropriate levels of planners and managers.

Outcomes:

- More coastal habitats are conserved, restored and sustained by improved ability to manage sediment resources on a regional basis.
- More coastal habitats are conserved, restored and sustained through use of these recommendations and guidelines in the RSM approach.

**Action: International Partnerships. The six Mexican States that border the Gulf of Mexico contain nearly half the contiguous coastline between the Florida and Yucatán Peninsulas. Responsible and thorough management of the overall Gulf of Mexico ecosystem can not continue to be a sole effort of the five U.S. Gulf States. The Mexican Federal and State governments bordering the Gulf must be engaged if habitat-dependent issues are to be addressed.**

Activities:

- Sponsor and conduct working sessions to develop a list of Mexican State-specific and overall management and technical issues for integration into the Gulf Alliance's Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team planning.
- Establish discussions with Mexican federal and state governments to identify appropriate level and capacity of Mexican participation in the expansion of the Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan to a Gulf-wide scale.

Outputs:

- A report listing Mexico State-specific and overall management and technical issues for integration into the Gulf Alliance's Habitat Conservation and Restoration Team planning. The report will also identify the appropriate level and capacity of Mexican participation in the expansion of the Gulf Regional Sediment Management Master Plan to a Gulf-wide scale
- Essential information on key habitat conservation and restoration issues will be formally exchanged.

Outcome:

- Increase understanding of the formal role of the Mexican federal and state governments and their relationship with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Strengthen the partnership between the Alliance and the Mexican federal and state government.

### **Priority Issue Area #3 -Ecosystems Integration and Assessment**

**Action:** The living marine resources of the Gulf of Mexico are the ultimate expression of ecosystem health for this “Large Marine Ecosystem,” one of ten such ecosystems adjoining the continental margins of the United States. The productivity of commercial and recreational fisheries and growth of ecosystem based tourism are key to the economic health of the region. Managers need ready access to data and information on a Gulf wide basis. Public support for actions to conserve and enhance these resources is fundamental to assuring these benefits.

#### **Activities:**

- Form a Gulf wide working group to identify Living Marine issues needing more public support, and the development of a Living Marine Resource information clearinghouse.

#### **Output:**

- A clearing house is completed so current information is available to make better decisions on the welfare and management of Living Marine resource issues.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Increased knowledge of Gulf of Mexico scientists, resource managers and the public of the status of the living marine resources of the Gulf.
- Increased constituent support for those management actions critical to the future health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico.

**Action:** Develop a Comprehensive Emergent Wetlands Status and Trends Report. This report will include gathering of the latest geospatial data, coordination with federal, state and local agencies, organizations and universities to compile all available emergent wetlands maps and data to be included into the report.

#### **Activities:**

- Update the 1992 Gulf of Mexico Program Report on the Status of Emergent Coastal Wetland Habitats; define the extent of emergent coastal wetland habitats and how they have changed through time, support future efforts to monitor and research emergent coastal wetland habitats, and to update the ecological, economic, and cultural importance of these emergent wetland habitats

Output:

- A status and trends report is completed for Emergent Wetlands of the Gulf of Mexico and an Emergent wetlands geospatial data set is developed.

Outcome:

- Increased knowledge of resource managers concerning emergent wetlands. That increased knowledge should lead to development of improved recommendations for conservation and restoration of wetlands.

## **Priority Issue Area #4 -Nutrient Reduction**

**Action: Characterize Nutrients and Nutrient Impacts to Coastal Ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico. In order to establish appropriate and protective nutrient criteria for estuaries and coastal waters in the Gulf of Mexico, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of nutrient cycling from streams and rivers into the coastal waters and estuaries.**

Activities:

- Conduct ‘Nutrient Sources, Fate, Transport and Effects’ studies within coastal ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico to establish relationships between nutrients and ecosystem response (in coordination with the Alliance Nutrient Priority Issue Team).
- Develop a predictive model for the socioeconomic impacts related to nutrient pollution in coastal waters and estuaries: Identify shared State needs and priorities for the development of coastal nutrient criteria. Support research; monitoring; models; development and implementation of scientific assessment tools; and, provide overall technical assistance to facilitate a regional approach to nutrient management in coastal ecosystems.

Outputs:

- Compile and analyze data from nutrient source, fate, transport, and effects (SFTE) studies to advance the understanding of quantitative relationships between nutrients and ecosystem responses.
- Compile and analyze nutrient SFTE study data and other relevant data to advance the understanding of the formation, magnitude, persistence, and duration of nutrient impacts to coastal ecosystems where studies are conducted.
- Recommend refinements to the Gulf of Mexico Nutrient Criteria Research Framework based on results of the nutrient SFTE studies.
- Establish key ecological relationships, thresholds, and socio-economic values for

state-selected indicators.

- A predictive model that can be applied across the Gulf of Mexico region.

Outcome:

- Increased knowledge of adequately characterized nutrients and nutrient impacts, using regionally comparable methods, in state priority Gulf coastal ecosystems.
- Increased knowledge of managers concerning the socioeconomic impacts related to nutrient pollution in coastal waters and estuaries.

**Action: Develop and implement a gulf-wide classification system for coastal waters and estuaries for use in nutrient criteria development and management: Identify shared State needs and priorities for the development of coastal nutrient criteria. Support research, monitoring, models, develop and implement scientific assessment tools and provide overall technical assistance to facilitate a regional approach to nutrient management in coastal ecosystems. Establish a regional approach for classification of coastal waters and estuaries.**

**Activities:**

- Compile existing information about classification systems and their applicability for nutrient criteria development. Conduct a technical workshop to analyze classification systems and recommend minimum data needs in order to support a classification system.
- Develop and implement one or more pilot projects to calibrate and validate the recommended classification system. Present the results of the pilot project(s) and finalize the classification system in cooperation with the Alliance Nutrient Priority Issue Team. Provide workshop support funding and/or travel support funding for the State Leads, Alliance Nutrient Priority Issue Team; subject matter experts and other participants as needed.

Output:

- A gulf-wide classification system for coastal waters and estuaries that is coordinated among the five Gulf States and applied gulf-wide.

Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of all five Gulf States shared needs and priorities in support of research, monitoring, modeling, tools and other technical assistance to facilitate a regional approach to nutrient management in coastal ecosystems.
- Increased access of all five Gulf States to data, expertise and other resources necessary for the development of a regional approach for the classification of coastal



waters and estuaries in support of the development of nutrient criteria.

**Action:** Increased regional coordination to reduce Hypoxia in Gulf of Mexico coastal waters and estuaries. Coordinate research and assist with technical guidance to provide continual information on point and nonpoint source pollution to the Gulf of Mexico and the ecological and economic impacts on estuaries and coastal waters. Ongoing efforts for research into the connection between nutrient concentrations, nutrient loading, seasonal and other factors allow the Gulf States to work together effectively at the regional level.

**Activities:**

- Provide a consistent and sequential series of long-term data that document the temporal and spatial extent of hypoxia: continue the collection of hydrographic, chemical and biological data related to the development and maintenance of hypoxia over seasonal cycles; and, integrate temporal and spatial data with an improved understanding of the physics of the system and input of materials from the Mississippi River system.
- Conduct pilot projects to examine dissolved oxygen concentrations and impacts of low dissolved oxygen to critical resources such as spawning habitat, essential fish habitat and other important aquatic resources. Use results of the pilot to recommend a methodology to characterize dissolved oxygen and related ecosystem responses. Present the results of the pilot project(s) in cooperation with the Alliance Nutrient Priority Issue Team. Include provisions for workshop support funding and/or travel support funding for the State Leads, Alliance Nutrient Priority Issue Team; subject matter experts and other participants as/where needed.
- Support the development of a communications and outreach effort to supplement Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force activities. Recipient must act in the capacity of a trusted source and leader in the agricultural community and deliver messages that link nutrient reduction strategies with audiences whose actions can directly improve the water quality in the Mississippi River Basin and the health of the Gulf of Mexico. Through various media vehicles that include emerging and interactive technologies, projects should raise awareness and contribute to the promotion of behavior change. The project could also collect and incorporate “success stories” regarding agricultural conservation practices that reduce nutrients or the benefits of ecosystem protection throughout the Mississippi River Basin and communicate these techniques through a variety of targeted media services.

**Outputs:**

- Systematic and routine data (raw) is collected and shared with the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force, regional experts, Gulf states and interested parties. Reports based on the data are used to understand the rate and extent of hypoxia. Research is applied to test automated methodologies for continuous unmanned observation stations.
- A defined regional methodology to be used as a tool by Gulf States to develop low

dissolved oxygen stress and hypoxia reduction goals and thresholds.

- Reports that include the number of the target audience reached and the associated demographics by communications and outreach efforts and results of a scientifically acceptable method(s) of determining the percentage of the target audience who reported an increased awareness of nutrient reduction strategies as well as a change in behavior as a result of the communication and outreach effort.

Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of the temporal and spatial extent of hypoxia.
- An increased understanding of ‘natural’ cycles in dissolved oxygen for a range of Gulf ecosystems.
- Reduce the size of the hypoxic zone to less than 5000 square kilometers by 2015.

**Action: Reduce Excess Nitrogen and Phosphorus Inputs to Gulf of Mexico Coastal Waters and Estuaries. Implement nutrient reduction activities in cooperation with local communities in key watersheds. Provide resources and technical support for the expansion of wastewater infrastructure. Apply innovative practices and technologies to restore coastal waters impaired by excessive nutrient inputs.**

Activities:

- Identify local communities in key watersheds that have the highest likelihood for the most effective use of resources and technical support for the expansion of wastewater infrastructure. Apply innovative practices and technologies where possible to remove or correct deficient septic tanks. Identify point and nonpoint sources and eliminate them by partnering with health organizations and land owners. Include target goals for impaired segment restoration related to water quality and/or nutrient pollution.
- Track and report nitrogen and phosphorus reduction activities and progress in the Gulf of Mexico region; communicate successes in meeting nutrient reduction goals at appropriate local, state, regional and national workshops/conferences. Present the results in cooperation with the Alliance Nutrient Priority Issue Team. Include provisions for workshop support funding and/or travel support funding for the State Leads, Alliance Nutrient Priority Issue Team; subject matter experts and other participants as/where needed.

Outputs:

- Local communities implement innovative practices and technologies which identify sources; eliminate sources where possible using leveraged partnerships; and, restore coastal waters impaired by excessive nutrient pollution.
- Restored infrastructure and improved water quality.

Outcomes:

- Reduction of nutrient inputs from local communities in priority areas via the effective use of resources, partnerships, management tools and nutrient reduction activities. In this manner, current low-technology and/or innovative practices are applied which directly improve currently impacted coastal waters and directly result in a healthier Gulf of Mexico.
- Committed partnerships which build upon experience and knowledge learned. Ecosystem health is sustained and/or improved for the betterment of the local area and the region in general.

## **Priority Issue Area #5-Environmental Education**

**Action :** **Environmental Awareness and Stewardship. Build upon existing success of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) partners to increase awareness on Gulf of Mexico stewardship issues and promote action among Gulf citizens by engaging in both Alliance in-reach (existing partners) and outreach activities.**

**Activities:**

- Create and promote adult environmental education opportunities Gulf-wide through non-traditional partnerships (i.e., birding groups, rotary clubs, and landscapers).
- Expand experiential learning opportunities by developing and implementing informal education programs in one of the five Gulf Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (Florida Aquarium, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Texas State Aquarium, J.L. Scott's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, and Audubon Aquarium of the Americas) and possibly the Veracruz Aquarium in Mexico. Programs should enhance knowledge of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Priority Issue Teams: Environmental Education, Nutrients, Water Quality, Habitat Conservation and Restoration, Ecosystem Integration and Assessment, and Community Resiliency.
- Develop a pilot program that will increase coordination among Gulf Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCS). Note: The CELCS are notated above.

Outputs:

- An expansion of environmental education programs Gulf-wide that seek to improve literacy through workshops, leadership training, field trips, and web technology. Citizens will be privy to viable information concerning the Gulf State in which they reside.
- An interactive experiential educational program(s) that educates and entertains audiences on Gulf-wide environmental issues and solutions.

Outcomes:

- Through increased knowledge and ability, citizens will be gatekeepers of their communities; advocating for best environmental practices that will help to restore and preserve Gulf habitats.
- Increased coordination of hands-on educational activities and resources between the (5) Gulf CELCs; and possibly the Veracruz Aquarium CELC in Mexico.

**Action : Public Awareness. Expand public awareness campaign efforts for the Gulf of Mexico and its relevance in the lives of citizens.**

**Activities:**

- Implement and evaluate the pilot Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) campaign strategy in each of the five Gulf-states using the preferred branding scheme. By means of the CBSM campaign strategy, identify one behavior modification technique per target audience and encourage the adoption of actions that will lessen the adverse impact of nutrients.

Outputs:

- The Community Based Social Marketing campaign will be implemented in each of the five Gulf States using one standardized branding scheme so that citizens around the Gulf recognize and support the Alliance.
- Evaluation of the varying approaches to implementing the campaign strategy; assessment of successes, failures, and lessons learned.

Outcome:

- A comprehensive Gulf-wide assessment of the Community Based Social Marketing campaign strategy. The assessment will assure that the campaign is strategic and effective in promoting awareness and recognition of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

**Action: K-12 Environmental Literacy: Increase environmental literacy within the K-20 audience by developing, implementing, expanding, and enhancing specific environmental education programs. Define underserved and underrepresented populations within communities and include cultural needs in environmental education initiatives.**

**Activities:**

- Expand and evaluate environmental education services for underserved and underrepresented populations through the development of a pilot project in each Gulf state. Proposals must have a strong focus on the concept of adopt the school

program and/or professional training geared towards workforce development in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Proposal should be centered on the issue areas.

- Continue to enhance experiential learning opportunities by developing formal and informal environmental education projects and programs. Build on opportunities provided in outreach events (i.e., festivals) and/or civic activities; such projects and programs must be posted on the Environmental Education Network website.

#### Outputs:

- To gauge the effectiveness of the underserved and underrepresented program/project an evaluation will be conducted. Evaluation results will be shared with the Alliance Environmental Education Network.
- An array of opportunities for experiential learning among Gulf States and a database listing of such projects will be posted on the Alliance Education Network website to spark interest and increase awareness.

#### Outcome:

- Increased environmental education opportunities among K-12 across Gulf States; increased awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Gulf of Mexico and its ecosystems.

## **Priority Issue Area #6-Coastal Community Resilience**

**Action:** Measure the natural, built, and social environments and understand the regional and localized risks and consequences associated with living, working, and doing business along the Gulf of Mexico, including a consideration of climate change.

#### Activities:

- Develop a Resilience Index that can be used as a method to introduce and promote the concept of resiliency to local governments and communities.
- Produce a Master Plan and implement the region-wide geospatial infrastructure that enables the measurement of millimeter-scale changes in land elevations and water levels over the long term.
- Accelerate development of NOAA's V-Datum (Vertical Datum) transformation tool for the entire Gulf coast.
- Catalog unstructured storm surge model grid files.

- Conduct a resiliency social climate survey that will identify a community's understanding of coastal hazards.
- Develop a data platform that includes existing coastal hazards information as well as global climate change-related variables as they relate to coastal habitats, communities, and weather variables.
- Assess risks to natural environments and identify models that assess environmental consequences associated with coastal hazards and climate change.
- Assess risks to built environments and identify models to demonstrate the economic risks associated with coastal hazards and climate change.
- Assess risks to social environments and develop cultural and heritage projects to demonstrate the connections between healthy ecosystems and healthy social communities.

Outputs:

- A Resilience Index has been developed and is available for coastal communities to self-assess their resilience.
- Region-wide geospatial infrastructure is in place and baseline data for monitoring local sea level rise trends in natural and built environments has been established.
- A Resilience Social Climate Survey is complete that measure trends in public knowledge and acceptance of resilience, coastal hazard, and other related issues.
- Wetlands dynamics models have been run for estuarine systems around the Gulf to show the ecological impacts of sea level rise.
- Assessment of Gulf-wide risks and resilience of natural, built, and social environments is complete.

Outcome:

- In order to empower coastal communities to become more resilient to coastal hazards, it is important to establish baseline conditions associated with risks and consequences to the natural ,built and social, environments. Once baseline conditions are established, coastal communities can identify current resilience factors and begin to address gaps in their resilience that pose significant risks or for which unacceptable consequences are inevitable.

**Action: Inventory existing capabilities and tools to address coastal hazards in the Gulf Region, identify important gaps, and, where needed, develop new methods to enhance regional and local resilience.**

Activities:

- Compile an inventory of existing resiliency-related data, projects, tools, and policies

from across the Gulf of Mexico region.

- Based on the resilience-related inventory, create or package tools for use in management.
- Support the establishment of hazardous materials inventories and facilitate the sharing of this information across local and State boundaries.
- Research existing policies guiding coastal development and make recommendations to enhance resilience.
- Promote the expansion of resilient and environmentally responsible operations and best management practices at ports, harbors, and marinas.

Outputs:

- Risk and resilience-related tools are available that can lead to better informed decision-making by individuals, businesses, and communities.
- Hazardous materials inventories are accessible to local and State decision-makers across the Gulf States.
- Recommendations for enhancements to existing resilience policies are implemented in local coastal communities.

Outcome:

- Often communities are unaware of the resources available to better manage risks and consequences and improve resiliency. State-of-the-art methods can be shared with communities via workshops, guidebooks, and the clearinghouse (see Priority #3) and will include tools such as models, policy recommendations, and inventory programs for first responders. These methods can support decision-makers at the community level in their efforts to improve resiliency, thus helping to strengthen economies by improving the quality of life for residents and providing stable business environments.

**Action: Inform communities about the risks associated with coastal hazards and provide access to the tools for mitigating the risks and increasing their resilience.**

**Activities:**

- Develop state-specific guidebooks/handbooks pertaining to risks and resiliency issues to help local decision-makers and/or citizens prepare for coastal hazards.
- Develop a Gulf of Mexico Resilience Clearinghouse web site ensuring that resilience-related information and tools are available to the public.

- Share the results of sea level rise modeling work done in the Gulf via the Clearinghouse and other mechanisms, and exchange information with efforts around the country related to sea level rise and other climate change impacts.
- Conduct or support workshops to promote pro-active resilience and mitigation measures and to improve coordination and communication between emergency managers and the general public.

Outputs:

- State-specific resiliency guidebooks/handbooks have been developed and distributed.
- A web-based Gulf of Mexico Resilience Clearinghouse is established and available for community leaders, businesses, and residents of the Gulf of Mexico region.
- Sea level rise modeling results from the Gulf region are available via the Clearinghouse, and the Alliance is exchanging information related to sea level rise and climate change with efforts around the country.
- Resiliency training workshops have been held across the Gulf of Mexico States.
- Resilience information and tools collected and/or developed by the Alliance are available to all Gulf Coast residents using a variety of communication methods.

Outcome:

- Once the risks and potential consequences of coastal hazards are identified and the steps toward becoming more resilient are determined; it is imperative to communicate these findings to the coastal communities and decision makers. Ensuring that the risk assessment and mitigation tools are communicated and made available to the decision-makers at the local level will empower coastal communities to become more resilient.

## **II. Award Information**

### **Funding Amounts and Number of Awards**

Under this funding opportunity, EPA expects to award an estimated amount up to \$3,000,000 depending on availability of funds and the evaluation and quality of proposals. An estimated 10 to 50 projects are expected to be awarded. The estimated award range is from \$50,000 to \$333,000/fiscal year.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or make fewer than anticipated. In appropriate circumstances, EPA also reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, 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.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards



will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

The period of performance for awards under this announcement is from one year to three years.

### **Type of Award.**

Successful applicants will be issued a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements require substantial EPA involvement with the recipient in the form of programmatic oversight and review and comment on all agreement activities and products. When a cooperative agreement is awarded, EPA's involvement in carrying out the work with the applicant will be described in a selection letter and identified in the terms and conditions of the award document.

In general, cooperative agreements awarded will be one-time awards and recipients should use the funds within the period of performance (from one year to three years).

### **Contracts 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.

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. **Application Review Information** 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, if appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award that 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 if 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.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **Eligible Applicants**

State and local governments, interstate agencies, tribes, colleges and universities, and other public or nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. EPA will require nonprofit organizations selected for funding to provide verification of their nonprofit status prior to the grant award.

## **Threshold Eligibility Criteria**

Proposals from eligible applicants must meet all of the following threshold eligibility criteria by the time of proposal submission. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in **Section V. Application Review Information** of the announcement. 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.

**1. Proposed projects must be consistent with the Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3) authority.** All proposals submitted will be reviewed for eligibility under Section 104 (b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Water Quality Cooperative Agreements are authorized under this statutory authority to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. The term “pollution” means the man-made or man-induced alteration of the chemical, physical, biological, and radiological integrity of water.

Projects that implement ‘Best Management Practices’ or any type of construction activities must qualify as a demonstration project under CWA § 104(b)(3). A demonstration project 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. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge is not a demonstration.

**2. Ineligible Activities:** Applicants must adhere closely to the types of projects authorized for funding under CWA § 104 (b)(3) in developing proposals. Unauthorized project types will be disqualified. Types of projects that are ineligible for funding are routine construction projects, except to a limited degree to demonstrate innovation, prevention, or removal of pollution; land acquisition; or projects that are largely general education/outreach or conferences unless they meet a clear need to accomplish a public purpose and are not for the direct benefit of EPA.

3. While Applicants may submit multiple proposals under this announcement, each proposal must be for a separate issue area. Proposals addressing more than one issue area in a single proposal will be rejected. Applicant’s proposals, however, must address one or more Actions under an issue area – for example, multiple actions under the same issue area may be included in the same proposal.

4. Proposals must **substantially** comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in **Section IV Application and Submission Information** of this announcement or they will be rejected.

In addition, proposals must be received by EPA as specified in Section IV of this announcement on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

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 it was late due to EPA's mishandling. For hard copy or emailed submissions, where Section IV requires 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 proposal with the Agency Contact as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by regular first class U.S. Postal Service, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service to the EPA contact identified in **Section IV. Proposal Submission Instructions**. Proposals that are submitted by FAX will not be considered.

### **5. Matching Requirements**

There is no matching requirement; however, the extent of partnerships and leveraged funding will be considered by reviewers during the evaluation process. (See Section V).

Leveraged funding or other resources need not be for eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement unless the Applicant proposes to provide a voluntary cost share or match. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost share/match/participation, applicants must meet their matching/sharing/participation commitment as a condition of receiving EPA funding. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for voluntary match/cost share/participation if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for voluntary matches/cost shares/participation. Other Federal grants may not be used as voluntary matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).

## **IV. Application and Submission Information**

### **A. Submission Deadline**

Proposal packages must be received by **5:00 P.M. CST on June 15, 2009**.

**All proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.**

### **B. Proposal Submission Instructions**

Proposals must be submitted by hard copy through the mail or commercial delivery service or through email to [GMP.proposals@epa.gov](mailto:GMP.proposals@epa.gov). Application materials, including the proposal and signed forms, sent through email must be in PDF format. Please contact Esther Coblenz at (228) 688-1281 and/or [coblenz.esther@epa.gov](mailto:coblenz.esther@epa.gov) if you have questions about submission.

The address for hard copy submission is:

EPA/Gulf of Mexico Program Office  
ATTN: Esther Coblenz  
Mail Code: EPA/GMPO  
Building 1100, Room 232  
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529

## **C. Content and Format of Proposal Submissions**

**Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly.**

The full application packages are not requested at the time of the initial application submission. Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final application packages will be requested from the eligible applicants whose proposals have been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. The applicants will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application packages.

All proposals **must** include the following three documents described below:

### **1. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include an organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that all applicants applying for funding must have the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number 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 or by visiting the web site at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).

### **2. Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs**

Complete the form. 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 the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, 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.

You may retrieve the SF 424 Form and SF 424A forms at <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo> or [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm).

### **3. Proposal Narrative/Workplan**

The Narrative/Workplan must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

#### **Format:**

1. **Cover Page** including:

- a. Project Title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective)
  - b. Indicate the Priority Issue Area from Section I
  - c. Name of Applicant
  - d. Type of Organization ( State or local government, interstate agency, tribe, college or university, or other public or nonprofit organizations.)
  - e. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
  - f. Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code level (HUC) and name of the watershed, within which the project occurs) . HUCs can be found on EPA's Surf Your Watershed Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>. Not applicable if project is Gulf-wide.
  - g. Total project cost and dollars requested from EPA.
  - h. Duration: Specify project period of performance, from 1 year up to 3 years.
2. **Abstract/project summary** (recommended 75 words or less);  
 Abstract/project summary (the abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the proposal. It should also include a listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s).
3. **Project description** containing:
- a. Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern (need for the project);
  - b. Project Goals and Objectives (describe a **plan for measuring progress** toward achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs (See Section I) which would include the following elements);
    - i. **Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan** - List the Objective(s) of the project and describe how they are related to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4, Objective 4.3, Sub-objective 4.3.5 (See **Section I Funding Opportunity Description** of this announcement);
    - ii. **Results of Activities (Outputs)** - List the products/results which are expected to be produced through the completion of this project. Describe how you will track your progress towards producing the stated output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in **Section I Funding Opportunity Description** of this announcement);
    - iii. **Anticipated Environmental Results/Improvement (Outcomes)** – List the anticipated environmental improvements (outcomes) to be accomplished as a result of

the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which result from completing the workplan and producing the products or outputs. Describe an approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in **Section I Funding Opportunity Description** of this announcement).

- iv. **Established Baseline for Measurement** - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the project resulted in environmental improvement (i.e., current condition).
- c. **Project Tasks** -Outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals. Describe the project tasks or components and the anticipated products associated with each task. Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant.
- d. **Milestone Schedule** – Provide a milestone schedule that covers the entire grant period. Include a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and products. Include the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task.
- e. Describe how the project will address:
  - i. One or more of the actions/activities identified in Section I of this announcement under a specific priority issue area and how these activities fit into strengthening and supporting the Alliance Regional Partnership.(The applicant should clearly identify which actions they are addressing under the priority issue area: **Water Quality, Habitat Conservation and Restoration, Ecosystems Integration and Assessment, Nutrient Reduction, Environmental Education, and Coastal Community Resilience**. Remember, submit a separate proposal for each **issue area** for which you are applying.)
  - ii. State, local, and/or other stakeholder participation (partnerships); Describe plans and status of collaboration and partnerships among the public, private, and independent sectors.
  - iii. Opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding. Describe: (a) how the applicant will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (b) how EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. **Leveraged funding or other resources need not be for eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement unless the Applicant proposes to**

**provide a voluntary cost share or match. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost share/match/participation, applicants must meet their matching/sharing/participation commitment as a condition of receiving EPA funding. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for voluntary match/cost share/participation if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for voluntary matches/cost shares/ participation. Other Federal grants may not be used as voluntary matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).**

- iv. Quality Assurance/Quality Control(QA/QC)- If the applicant expects to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how there will be compliance with the QA/QC requirements (see **Section VIII. QUALITY ASSURANCE/ QUALITY CONTROL REQUIREMENTS** of this announcement for additional information).
  - v. **Education/Outreach Component:** Identify whether project includes an education/outreach component. If applicable, describe the target audience and how that group would be impacted by the project. Include a description of how the applicant and/or partners will provide information to the public.
  - f. Provide a brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications (annotated resumes are preferred but not necessary).
  - g. Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
  - h. Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer/share the results and/or methods to other state, local governments or other agencies within the state, local governments and the public. Proposals should explain how information from a demonstration project or pilot will contribute to inform other projects or situations across a State.
4. A budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in Form 424A such as "other" and "contractual. Total costs must include both federal and matching (nonfederal) components. Identify the voluntary match/share/participation in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness,



reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend meetings throughout the proposed project period.

Budget should represent the project total and the total which would be requested from EPA for the project's duration. **Funding is not assured for subsequent years for any project.**

When formulating the budget, 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.

5. Information addressing (a) the applicant's past performance in managing federally and/or non-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 performed within the last 3 years (no more than 3 such projects and preferably EPA projects) and the applicants history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. and (b) how the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally and/or non-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 3 years (no more than three such agreements and preferably EPA agreements). For each such agreement covered by (b) above, applicants should briefly describe the assistance agreement and how progress/technical reports or other documentation generated under the agreement adequately demonstrated their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of the agreement, and if such progress was not achieved, describe whether the documentation satisfactorily explained why not.

Note: For a and b above, if the applicant has prior EPA assistance agreement experience, the proposal should discuss the prior EPA grants first; if the applicant does not have prior EPA assistance agreement experience then they should submit information on projects funded by other Federal agencies; if you have not previously received Federal funds, you may provide a history of applicable past performance with private funding, or funding awarded by state, tribal or local governments (applicants who

have not managed projects with outside financing may provide information regarding relevant projects funded in-house, along with contact information for the person(s) familiar with the project(s). Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement. If the applicant has no prior past performance experience at all, that should be stated in the proposal and the applicant will receive a neutral score for those factors.. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider other relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

6. Any support letters should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project.

#### **D. OTHER INFORMATION**

Examples from Previous Years.

When developing project submissions, you may look at types of successful projects from previous years, available at <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo>.

#### **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, Subpart B. **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.

Note: Under Public Law No. 105-277, data produced under an award is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

#### **Intergovernmental Review**

The funds associated with this announcement require Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs,” review. E.O. 12372 structures the federal government’s system of consultation with states and local governments on its decisions involving grants, other forms of financial assistance, and direct development. Under E.O. 12372, States, in consultation with their local governments, design their own review process and select the federal financial assistance and direct development activities they wish to review. If selected for funding, the recipient of the federal assistance agreement will be required to send a copy of their application and proposal to the appropriate State

Clearinghouse Office for an intergovernmental review, if applicable. (See: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>)

### **Communications with Applicants.**

In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff **will not meet with individual applicants or 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/proposals. However, EPA will respond to questions in writing, preferably by email, from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing by email and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII and written responses will be posted on EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program website at <http://epa.gov/gmpo>.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **A. Criteria**

Each eligible proposal that meets all of the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system with a total of 100 points possible.

#### 1. Relevance/Rationale: (15 points)

- a. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of the proposed project to the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Governors' Action Plan and the level of support for long-term goals and implementation actions. (5 points)
- b. Whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to the Governors' Action Plan and activities. (5 points)
- c. Likelihood that the approach proposed will make substantial progress toward strategies leading to improving the health of the Gulf of Mexico and achieving one or more of the environmental outcomes as identified in the announcement. (5 points)

#### 2. Scientific/Professional Merit: (15 points)

Extent to which the proposed approach is technically sound and/or innovative; whether the proposed methods, approaches, and concepts are appropriate and; whether there are clear goals and objectives.

#### 3. Programmatic Capability: (15 points) (Each item is 3.75 points)

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors: (i) its 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 performed within the last 3 years, (ii) its history of meeting reporting requirements under 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 performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, (iii) its organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and (iv) its staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Note: In evaluating applicants under this criterion, 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 criterion.

#### 4. Environmental Results Past Performance: (10 points)

Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under Federal agency 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 performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not.

Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, EPA 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 reporting history will receive a neutral score for this factor (5 points).

#### 5. Environmental Results – Measurable or Quantifiable Outputs and Outcomes: (10 points)

Includes the degree to which the applicant has provided an evaluative component to the project as requested in Section I, Measuring Environmental Results, in addition to how the applicant's progress and success in achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes including those identified in Section I will be measured and tracked.

#### 6. Budget (10 points)

The reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and with the expected benefits to be achieved.

#### 7. Collaboration/Partnerships: (15 points)

The quality of proposed partnerships, including the degree of broad participation within the network of Gulf of Mexico programs, organizations, State and Federal agencies and workgroups, etc., and demonstration of significant partnering that results in outreach and education. Applications will also be evaluated on whether they provide a partnership with a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding the long-term commitment to the proposed objectives of the Action Plan.

#### 8. Leveraged Resources: (10 points)

Under this criteria, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources.

### **B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

All timely submitted proposals will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

GMP reviewers and/or panel members will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V. A and assign scores to each proposal. Based on the review of proposals against the criteria above, the reviewers/panel will develop a list of the most highly scored proposals to submit to the Selection Official.

Final funding decisions will then be made by the Selection Official based on the evaluation conducted by the reviewers/panel and may also take into account the following factors: geographic distribution of funds; project diversity (this includes type of project and type of applicant i.e. state/tribe/or local government); programmatic balance/priorities; and availability of funds.

EPA employees as well as GMP reviewers and/or panel members who intend to serve as reviewers and score project proposals will be required to sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form and will not be able to serve as a reviewer if they have any personal, familial, or financial or any other type of conflict of interest with **any applicant that may impair their objectivity and** that cannot be mitigated. **If an individual has a conflict of interest with respect to a proposal, then they cannot review any proposals under this competition.**

#### **Anticipated Announcement Award Date**

GMP will post a list of all proposals selected after the funding is awarded. The list will be posted at the following site: [www.epa.gov/gmpo](http://www.epa.gov/gmpo) . All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified within 15 days by email and postal mail after the final selections are made.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Notices**

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status via email. Final applications will be requested 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. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. All **final** workplans must include the information required in 40 CFR § 35.107 and 35.507.

An approvable workplan is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with §35.115 of 40 CFR; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

#### **Pre-award Review for Administrative Capability.**

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding will be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with paragraphs 8.b, 8.c, and 9.d of EPA Order 5700.8 [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700\\_8.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf) **EPA Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards** and may be required to fill out an “Administrative Capability” form.

In accordance with Executive Order 12579, organizations that have been debarred or suspended from a program by any federal agency will not be eligible to receive an award or subaward through this solicitation.

#### **Administrative and Reporting Requirements.**

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or make fewer than anticipated. The successful applicant will be required to adhere to the Federal grants requirements, particularly those found in applicable OMB circulars on Cost Principles (A-21, A-87, or A-122), Administrative Requirements (A-102 or 110), and Audit Requirements (A-133) available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/>. This includes government-wide requirements pertaining to accounting standards, lobbying, minority or woman business enterprise, publication, meetings, construction, and disposition of property. EPA regulations governing assistance programs and recipients are codified in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and the successful Federal applicant will be required to comply with the OMB Circular and appropriate sections of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

#### **Dispute Resolution Process.**

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes involving any applicant, including Federal applicants, 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://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting [coblentz.esther@epa.gov](mailto:coblentz.esther@epa.gov).

### **Funding Restrictions**

- Award recipients may award contracts in accordance with 40 CFR 30.44 and 40 CFR 31.36, and subgrants in accordance with 40 CFR 31.37. The State, Tribe, or local agency, must not simply pass through funding to an organization that is not eligible to receive funding directly.
- While contractual efforts can be a part of these grants, each recipient must be significantly involved in the administration of the grant. EPA recommends that recipients use no more than 50% of the grant funds to contract with non-governmental entities. However, if the applicant wants to exceed this limit, the applicant may submit a written justification for greater involvement by nongovernmental contractors as part of the grant application package or proposal. EPA will evaluate the need for greater contractual participation and may approve the request if there is adequate justification to exceed the 50% limit. If the contractual work is being done by another State/Tribal/Local Government agency, interstate agency, or intertribal consortia, these entities must be clearly indicated in the proposal. See also Section IV.E.
- Grant funds cannot be used to pay for travel by Federal agency staff.
- Under the competition, each proposed project must be able to be completed within the project period and with the initial award of funds. Recipients should not anticipate additional funding beyond the initial award of funds for a specific project. Eligible applicants should request the entire amount of money needed to complete the project in the original grant application.
- Grant funds cannot be used to fund an honorarium under this competition.

### **Other Requirements.**

Please note that this is not a complete list of all regulations and policies that govern these funds. Our Grants Management Office web site at <http://www.epa.gov/region4/grants/regulations.html> identifies other grant regulations that apply.

## **VII. Agency Contact**

For Further Information Contact:

Esther Coblentz, Gulf of Mexico Program Office [Coblentz.esther@epa.gov](mailto:Coblentz.esther@epa.gov)

Phone: 228-688-1281

## **VIII. Other information**

Funding amounts are estimates of the maximum amount expected to be available for FY 2009, based on our best available information. These amounts are subject to change without further notification, based on the amount of federal funds actually appropriated and allocated for these programs.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL**

Quality Assurance /Quality Control requirements may be applicable to these grants (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project.

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### **GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION**

Grants awarded under this announcement may involve Geospatial Information. Geospatial data generally means information that identifies, depicts, or describes the geographic locations, boundaries, or characteristics of inhabitants and natural or constructed features on the Earth. This includes such information derived from, among other sources, socio-demographic analysis, economic analysis, land information records and land use information processing, statistical analysis, survey and observational methodologies, environmental analysis, critical infrastructure protection, satellites, remote sensing, airborne imagery collection, mapping, engineering, construction, global positioning systems, and surveying technologies and activities. It also includes individual point or site-specific data that are referenced to a location on the Earth and digital aerial imagery of the Earth.

This information may be derived from, among other things, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), remote sensing, mapping, charting, and surveying technologies, or statistical data. For purposes of EPA grants, this refers to geographically based information or data or the tools, applications or hardware that allow one to collect, manage, analyze, store, or distribute data in a geographic manner.

### **DATA SHARING**

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.