

U.S. EPA Region 7  
Strategic Agricultural Initiative  
Request for Proposals (RFP) FY 2009

**AGENCY NAME:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7; Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division; Toxics and Pesticides Branch

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NAME:** Region 7 Strategic Agricultural Initiative: FY09 Request for Proposals

**ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER:** EPA-R7WWPD-09-001

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER:** CFDA 66.716 – Surveys, Studies, Demonstrations, Educational Outreach, and Special Projects

**PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** Friday, March 13, 2009 at 5:00pm CDT.

Proposals received at EPA Region 7 or through Grants.gov after the Due Date and Time will not be reviewed (See Sections III and IV).

**SUMMARY**

**Notice of Request for Proposals for Projects to be Funded from the EPA Region 7 Strategic Agricultural Initiative Grant (CFDA 66.716 - Surveys, Studies, Demonstrations, Educational Outreach, and Special Projects).** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 is soliciting proposals to promote transition to reduced-risk pest management practices in agriculture within the area served by Region 7. This area includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and nine tribal nations. The Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) program supports grants for education, outreach, demonstration, and implementation of reduced risk practices for agricultural pest management. Region 7 estimates that approximately \$100,000 will be available for awards under this competitive opportunity. Funding will be available through grant agreements ranging from \$30,000 to \$100,000 (total EPA federal share).

**I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

**A. Background**

The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) passed by Congress in 1996, establishes health based standards for pesticide residues in raw and processed food. It is intended to create an environment favorable for the development and adoption of lower risk, effective pest management tools for U.S. agriculture. To support this effort, EPA established regional Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) programs to build partnerships through grants and outreach to reduce risks of pesticides and pesticide use in agriculture.

The statutory authority for this grant program is Section 20 of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended. The general award and administration process is governed by regulations at 40 CFR part 30 (“Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education,

Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations”) and 40 CFR part 31 (“Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”) as applicable

## **B. Goals and Objectives – 2009 SAI Priorities**

The focus of SAI is primarily on minor food crops. However, projects related to other agricultural commodities (including turf and ornamentals) will be considered where there are demonstrable environmental concerns and clear linkage to the 2009 SAI priorities.

The following are 2009 priority areas for the Region 7 Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Program for which agricultural integrated pest management (IPM) advancements are sought:

1. Resistance management
2. Pollinator protection issues
3. Endangered species protection
4. IPM approaches for controlling rodents and/or predators in livestock operations
5. Urban / Rural Interface and volatile pesticides
6. Alternatives to the use of synthetic pyrethroid insecticides

Projects must address one or more of the national SAI program priorities. SAI grants are not intended to support basic research or projects with high administrative costs. However, proposals may include a component for applied on-farm research, as long as they also have demonstration, education and/or outreach activities. Proposals for demonstration projects must involve applications, technologies, methods or approaches that are new, innovative or experimental. A demonstration project that is carried out through a routine or established practice is not eligible for funding.

## **C. Environmental Results**

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

**1. 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 solicitation may include but are not limited to the following: 1) increase the number of growers using reduced risk/IPM tools and techniques; 2) measure quantitative and qualitative reduction in the use of higher risk pesticides or pesticides in general; and 3) support partnerships between crop producers, EPA, other federal/state/local agencies, and other interested stakeholders to implement reduced risk/IPM programs and to leverage funds from other sources to increase the scope of the FQPA/SAI program.

**2. 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 solicitation may include but are not limited to the following: 1) educational and outreach materials for growers; 2) conservation plans for growers that include reduced risk pest management; 3) conferences, seminars, and on-site field training on pest management techniques; 4) partnerships established between federal and non-federal programs to provide reduced risk/IPM programs for crop producers; 5) acres impacted by the project under management that include pesticide risk reduction practices; and 6) percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients.

**3. Program Measures.** As part of the project narrative, proposals should separately list the anticipated project outputs and outcomes in table format. In addition to proposal-specific outputs and outcomes, all proposals must contain the following reporting elements:

- a. Total number of acres impacted directly by the project under management that include reduced-risk pest management practices.
- b. Total number of “potential” acres impacted by the project. Potential means the total number of acres that the proposed project could impact in addition to and including the number of actual acres involved in the project.
- c. Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.
- d. Declared SAI Transition Gradient number (0-5 Rating) from the “SAI Transition Gradient”. A rating **must** be provided in your proposal for the beginning of the project, and provided at the conclusion of the project.

**Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Transition Gradient:**

0	No transition, growers resist any change.
1	Growers are interested in learning about reduced-risk pest management practices
2	Reduced-risk pest management practices have been initiated at the grower level on a pilot basis.
3	Growers utilize key management practices to determine pest management needs.
4	Full implementation of reduced-risk pest management practices.
5	Adoption of a <i>whole systems</i> approach.

**4. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan.** The SAI program supports the EPA Strategic Plan’s Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems; Objective 1: Chemical and Pesticide Risks; Subobjective 5: Realize the Value of Pesticide Availability. Specifically, awarded projects will protect public health and the environment from risks posed by pesticides by promoting transition to reduced-risk pest management practices in agriculture.

**II. AWARD INFORMATION**

**A. Amount of Funding Available**

The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is approximately \$100,000 to award to eligible and successful applicants. Awards will be made through grant agreements ranging from \$30,000 to \$100,000 (total EPA federal share). Costs incurred prior to the grant award will not be reimbursed.

## **B. Funding Type**

The funding for selected projects is in the form of a grant awarded under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20.

## **C. Total Number of Awards**

Funding for these projects is not guaranteed and is subject to the availability of funds and the evaluation of proposals based on the criteria in this announcement. Region 7 expects to select 1-3 proposals for award. However, the actual number of awards will depend on individual proposal costs and the total final amount of federal funding available. Proposals to supplement existing projects are eligible to compete with proposals for new awards.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a 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 after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 4 (four) months after the original selection decisions.

Award of funding through this year's competition is not a guarantee of future funding.

EPA Region 7 reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

## **D. Start Date/Project Duration**

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation must begin no earlier than September 1, 2009. Proposed project periods may be up to 2 years.

# **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

## **A. Eligible Applicants**

Assistance under this program is generally available to States, U.S. territories or possession, federally recognized Indian tribal governments and Native American Organizations, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private nonprofit institutions, and local governments.

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

For profit organizations are not eligible for funding. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the

Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. Ineligible groups are allowed and encouraged to collaborate with an eligible organization to submit proposals.

### **B. Cost Sharing/Matching**

There are no cost-share requirements for these projects nor are matching funds required.

### **C. Eligibility Criteria**

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals from eligible entities (see above) that meet all threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. 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. Proposals cannot exceed \$100,000. Proposals that request more than \$100,000 will not be considered for funding.
2. Proposals must address one or more of the national SAI program priorities, as listed in Section I.B.
3. All projects must be carried out within one or more of the states of EPA Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska), and/or Tribal Nations in Region 7.
4. Proposals must contain the following reporting elements:
  - ✓ Total number of acres impacted directly by the project under management that include reduced-risk pest management practices.
  - ✓ Total number of “potential” acres impacted by the project. Potential means the total number of acres that the proposed project could impact in addition to and including the number of actual acres involved in the project.
  - ✓ Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.
  - ✓ Declared SAI Transition Gradient number (0-5 Rating) from the “SAI Transition Gradient”. A rating **must** be provided in your proposal for the beginning of the project, and provided at the conclusion of the project.

#### **Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Transition Gradient:**

0	No transition, growers resist any change.
1	Growers are interested in learning about reduced-risk pest management practices
2	Reduced-risk pest management practices have been initiated at the grower level on a pilot basis.
3	Growers utilize key management practices to determine pest management needs.
4	Full implementation of reduced-risk pest management practices.
5	Adoption of a <i>whole systems</i> approach.

5. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

6. Proposals must be received or electronically submitted via Grants.gov by 5:00 PM Central Daylight Time on Friday, March 13, 2009. Proposals postmarked or submitted through grants.gov after this time will be returned to the sender without further consideration. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with the SAI Coordinator, Heather Duncan, ([duncan.heather@epa.gov](mailto:duncan.heather@epa.gov), 913-551-7640) as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
7. Proposals from different principal investigators within an organization will be accepted. However, principal investigators may not submit more than one proposal.

#### **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

##### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

Blank application forms can be obtained at the following Internet address:

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>

Hard paper copies of application forms can be obtained at the following address:

Heather Duncan  
Environmental Protection Agency – Region 7  
WWPD/TOPE  
901 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101

##### **B. Format of Proposal Submission**

The Proposal Narrative (including sections C.1.a-f below) must be typewritten and cannot exceed a maximum of 13 single-spaced pages, including the Summary Page. Pages in excess of 13 will not be reviewed. The SF 424, SF 424A, other SF forms, and other supporting materials, such as resumes and letters of support, are not included in the 13-page limit. All narrative proposals must be formatted for and placed on 8.5” x 11” paper . One side of a sheet of paper is considered one page.

The full proposal package as described below and all attachments must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat file. Please do not zip the file, or otherwise use a file compression utility.

##### **C. Proposal Contents**

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated and ranked by a selected panel of EPA reviewers based on the evaluation criteria and weights listed and described in Section V.A of this solicitation. The evaluation criteria in Section V.A should be used as a guide for organizing, preparing, and completing the work plan. All proposals must include the following information:

###### **1. Proposal Narrative**

All proposals should include the sections and section titles listed below. For example, the proposal should include a section titled “Cover Page” followed by the sections “Problem Statement”, “Project Summary/Approach”, “Partnerships and Outreach” and so on. Applicants may adjust the length of each section within the Proposal Narrative up to and within the 13-page limit to best fit their needs.

The document should be readable in Adobe Reader or Microsoft Word and consolidated into a single file and be prepared as stated below.

**The Proposal Narrative must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III (including the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.C) of this announcement, and must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.**

**a. Cover Page** Provide the following information with your letterhead:

Docket ID number: EPA-R7WWPD-08-003

Project title:

Project Coordinator:

Organization name and address:

Telephone number:

Fax number:

Email address:

Project duration (including starting date and ending date):

First year funding request:

Second year funding request, if applicable:

Total funding request:

EPA funding requested:

Please indicate if this proposal is a continuation of a previously EPA funded project.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide the following:

EPA assistance number:

Budget period of project:

**b. Problem Statement** This section shall contain the following components:

- i. Concise description of the pest management issue(s) of concern and the importance of that issue in EPA Region 7's geographic boundaries.
- ii. List of the individual crop(s) involved in the proposed project.
- iii. List of the individual pest(s), if applicable, involved in the project, including the scientific name(s) (*Genus species*)
- iv. Description of how this issue is related to one or more priorities of the SAI program (see Section I.B)
- v. Description of current efforts that are relevant or provide basis for either the experimental design or validation of an innovative/new approach to pest management. Include a list of key literature citations if appropriate.

**c. Project Summary/Approach:** This section shall contain the following components:

- i. Detailed strategy for addressing the identified agricultural pest management issue. Include a list of pesticide active ingredient(s) replaced and alternatives transitioned to as a result of the proposed project.
- ii. Description of specific goals/actions of the project and the methods to be undertaken, including estimated time line for each task.
- iii. Description of the associated work products to be developed.

- iv. Explanation of how the project will result in ensuring the public health and/or socio-economic benefits of reduced-risk pest management practices.
- v. Detailed budget narrative, clearly describing how EPA funds will be used and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Link each task or activity from the project work plan to the associated resources that are needed to accomplish the activity. Include enough detail for EPA to determine if the costs are eligible, allocable, reasonable, and allowable. For more information, see <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>. Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency.

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

- d. Partnership and Outreach** This section shall contain the following components:
  - i. Description of how the project relies on partnerships as part of the project activities. Cooperation with scientists, Cooperative Extension Service personnel, pest control advisors, crop consultants, agricultural producers, other non-profit organizations, and other partners is encouraged. Letters of support from collaborators, indicating their contributions to the project, should be provided for this factor.
  - ii. Describe the roles of the applicant and major partners.
  - iii. Describe how the project will produce ground-level results by transferring information and agricultural pest management practices to growers through outreach.
- e. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs** This section shall contain the following components:
  - i. Table identifying and listing the anticipated project outputs and outcomes. Include the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the project (See Section I), including what measurements will be used to track your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes
  - ii. Description of how the results of the project will be evaluated.
  - iii. Description of the expected project outputs and how progress towards achieving the expected outputs will be tracked and measured.
- f. Programmatic Capability – Technical Experience and Past Performance** This section shall contain the following components:
  - i. Past Performance and Reporting on Environmental Results: Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and



cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. Also, describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

NOTE: In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the narrative proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

- iii. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge and resources (or ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (i.e. expertise in agricultural pest management issues and in working as a change agent in agriculture)
- iv. Description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project.

**2. Attachments.** These are not included in the 13-page limit.

**a. Resumes.** Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.

**b. Support Letters.** Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.

**3. Standard Forms** These are not included in the 13-page limit.

Applicants are required to submit the following forms with the proposal package. These forms will not count against the page limit. Blank forms can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>.

#### **Standard Form SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance**

Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. Clearly state the total funding amount requested for the entire project period in Block 15. Note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424.

Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

#### **Standard Form SF 424A – Budget Information**

Use budget amounts for the entire project in Sections A, B, C and D including both federal and any non-federal match. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

#### **D. Submission Deadline and Instructions**

Proposal submissions must be **received** by the EPA contact listed below or through grants.gov no later than **5:00 P.M. CDT on Friday, March 13, 2009.**

Applicants must submit their proposal packages in **one** of two ways: 1) electronically through the Grants.gov website **or** 2) hard copy by commercial delivery service, hand delivery, U.S. Postal Mail, or courier service to the EPA contact identified below. EPA will not accept e-mailed or faxed submissions.

For any questions concerning submission, please contact Heather Duncan, 913-551-7640 or at [duncan.heather@epa.gov](mailto:duncan.heather@epa.gov).

##### **1. Electronically via <http://www.grants.gov>**

EPA encourages applicants to submit their proposal materials electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, please follow the appropriate instructions for electronic submission outlined in Appendix A.

If you wish to submit your proposal electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal package as described in Section IV.C must be made by an official representative (an AOR) of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Get Registered” on the left side of the page. Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. For further instructions, see Appendix A of this announcement.

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **5:00 P.M. CDT on Friday, March 13, 2009.**

##### **2. Hard Copy Submission**

One hard copy of the complete proposal package described in Section IV.C is required to be sent by commercial delivery service, courier service, U.S. Postal Mail, or hand delivered.

Address for Hard Copy Submission	Heather Duncan U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7 WWPD/TOPE 901 North 5 <sup>th</sup> Street Kansas City, KS 66101
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For all proposals submitted under this announcement by hard copy, the proposals **must be received** at the address listed below no later than an **5:00 P.M. CDT on Friday, March 13, 2009.**

### **E. Intergovernmental Review**

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html).

### **F. Confidential Business Information**

It is recommended that confidential business information not be included in your proposal.

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

### **G. Funding Restrictions**

EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authorities for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87 "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments"; A-122 "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations"; and A21 "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions." Ineligible costs will be reduced from the final grant award. Cost(s) incurred prior to award by the applicant will not be allowed.

### **H. Pre-Application Assistance**

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

### **I. Contracts and Subawards**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application 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.

**V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**A. Selection Criteria**

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weights. Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal submittal. Each proposal will be rated based on the following evaluation criteria and weights with a total of 100 points possible.

<p>1. Importance of project in relation to the intent and goals of the SAI program (20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (10 points) Project addresses a significant pest management issue in EPA Region 7.</li> <li>• (10 points) Project is consistent with the one or more of the goals of the Strategic Agricultural Initiative.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Project Approach/Summary (25 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (15 points) Project approach/summary demonstrates a well-conceived strategy for addressing the identified agricultural pest management issue with realistic goals and an achievable time frame.</li> <li>• (10 points) Proposal’s budget is appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Partnership and Outreach (20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (10 points) Project relies on partnerships as part of the project activities.</li> <li>• (10 points) Project will produce ground-level results by transferring information and agricultural pest management practices to growers through outreach.</li> </ul>

<p>4. Expected ability to produce measurable environmental results (10 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (5 points) Ability to measure results using appropriate environmental outputs and outcomes, including the required project measures as listed below and in Section I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total number of acres impacted directly by the project under management that include reduced-risk pest management practices.</li> <li>• Total number of “potential” acres impacted by the project. Potential means the total number of acres that the proposed project could impact in addition to and including the number of actual acres involved in the project.</li> <li>• Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.</li> <li>• Declared SAI Transition Gradient number (0-5 Rating)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• (5 points) Proposal lays out an effective plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Programmatic Capability - Technical Experience and Past Performance (25 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (5 points) Applicant has past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years.</li> <li>• (10 points) Project staff have the expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge and resources (or ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the project’s goals.</li> <li>• (10 points) Proposal demonstrates the applicant’s organization and experience to successfully achieve the project’s goals.</li> </ul>

**B. Review and Selection Process**

Proposals will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those proposals which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA evaluation team. Each proposal will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. Preliminary funding recommendations will be provided to the Approving Official based on this ranking.

Final funding decisions will be made by the Approving Official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendation of the EPA evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the Approving Official may also consider programmatic priorities and geographic diversity of funds. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA Award Official.

**VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**A. Award Notices**

Following EPA’s evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

EPA anticipates notification to the successful applicant will be made via telephone, email or postal mail within 60 days after the closing date of this announcement. The notification will advise the applicant that its proposed project has been successfully evaluated and recommended for award. The notification will be sent to the project coordinator, as listed on the cover sheet of the proposal narrative.

This notification, which advises that the applicant's proposed project has been recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. At a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of recommendation.

EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via email or postal mail within 60 days after the closing date of this announcement. The notification will be sent to the project coordinator, as listed on the cover sheet of the proposal narrative.

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.

## **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

The general award and administration process the Grants is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments") and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A ("Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies") and Subpart B ("Environmental Program Grants for Tribes"). These regulations can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/epacfr40/chapt-I.info/chi-toc.htm>.

### **C. Nonprofit Administrative Capability Clause**

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

### **D. Dispute Process**

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Chester Stovall, 913-551-7549, [stovall.chester@epa.gov](mailto:stovall.chester@epa.gov).

### **E. DUNS Number**

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

### **F. Copyrights**

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

### **G. Reporting**

Grants are covered under the following EPA grant regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 (Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments), and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (States, interstate agencies and local governments) and Subpart B (Tribes and intertribal consortia). These regulations specify basic grant reporting requirements; including performance and financial reports (see 40 CFR 30.51, 30.52, 31.40, 31.41, 35.115, and 35.515). In negotiating these grants, EPA will work closely with recipients to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements into each grant agreement consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, 35.115, and 35.515.

For these grants, successful applicant(s) will be required to submit semiannual progress reports throughout the duration of the project. Progress reports are due 30 days after each midyear and annual milestone during the project period. Reports should include a description of project activities including accomplishments, successes and lessons learned along with any problems and/or delays. Environmental outcomes should be indicated in relation to the approved schedule and milestones. Quarterly Financial Status Reports (FSRs) will also be required. A final project report is also required 90 days following the end of the project period according to the same format. All reports can be submitted either electronically via email or by hard paper copy.



## **H. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)**

Quality Assurance /Quality Control requirements are 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. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Regional Office Grant Coordinator (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

For these grants, if environmental activities include direct measurements or data generation, environmental modeling, or compilation of data from literature or electronic media as part of the funding agreement, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and submission date to EPA for approval will be required unless the organization can show a previously EPA approved Quality Management Plan. No federal funds may be expended or requested for reimbursement for data collection or environmental sampling activities prior to submittal and approval of the Quality Assurance Project Plan to/by the EPA Project Officer.

## **I. Peer Review**

Most documents or products prepared for and intended for public distribution under EPA Region 7 assistance agreements will be subject to the peer review process. Assistance agreement applicants should allow an eight-week time period in project schedules for each product which is subject to the peer review process. Concurrent review of multiple project products is possible. Scheduling preliminary submission of draft documents to the project officer throughout the project period will facilitate the peer review process.

## **J. Conferences and Workshops**

If a conference or workshop is an element of the project, the applicant will also be required to answer the following questions:

- Who is initiating the conference/workshop/meeting?
- How will it be advertised?
- Whose logo will be on the agenda and materials?
- What is the percentage of participants, i.e. federal, state, local or public?
- Will the grant recipient prepare the proceedings and disseminate the information back to the targeted community?
- Will program income be generated from this event?

## **VII. AGENCY CONTACTS**

Heather Duncan  
EPA Region 7 Strategic Agriculture Initiative Coordinator  
913-551-7640 (telephone)  
913-551-9640 (fax)

[duncan.heather@epa.gov](mailto:duncan.heather@epa.gov)

Chester Stovall  
EPA Region 7 Grants Competition Advocate  
913-551-7549 (telephone)  
913-551-9846 (fax)  
[stovall.chester@epa.gov](mailto:stovall.chester@epa.gov)

## APPENDIX A – GRANTS.GOV INSTRUCTIONS

### How to submit your proposal through Grants.gov:

At <http://www.grants.gov>, you will find step-by-step instructions which will help you to apply under this announcement. Proposals submitted through grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Get Registered” on the left side of the page.

**Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.** If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

### Proposal Process

To begin the proposal submission process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab on the left side of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package” to download the compatible Adobe viewer and obtain the application package. **To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version ( [Adobe Reader applications are available to download for free on the Grants.gov website](#). For more information on Adobe Reader please visit the [Help section](#) on grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or [http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program\\_status.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp)).**

Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-R7WWPD-09-001 or the CFDA #66.716**, in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the proposal package by clicking on the Application button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Find Grant Opportunities” button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

### Proposal Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than Friday, March 13, 2009 at 5:00 PM CDT.

### Proposal Materials

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

#### I. Proposal Narrative

The document should be readable in PDF or MS Word and consolidated into a single file and be prepared in accordance with Section IV C of this announcement. There is a 13-page limitation on the proposal narrative.

#### II. Attachments

The document should be readable in PDF or MS Word and consolidated into a single file and be prepared in accordance with Section IV C of this announcement. These are not included in the 13-page limit.

- a. **Resumes.** Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.
- b. **Support Letters.** Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.

### III. Standard Forms

These are not included in the 13-page limit.

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

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

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

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package.

### **Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions**

Documents I and III listed under **Proposal Materials** above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Grant Application Package page.

For documents III (SF 424 and 424A), click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action will move the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document number I, the Proposal Narrative, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your proposal narrative as described above in Section IV.C. of this announcement and save the document to your computer as a PDF file. When you are ready to attach your proposal to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach your proposal narrative (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;” the file name should be no more than 40 characters long.

If there other attachments (document II) that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “Add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application

Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once your proposal package has been completed and saved, send it to your Authorized Representative (AOR) for submission to U.S. EPA through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through grants.gov.

In the “Application Filing Name” box, your AOR should enter your organization’s name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY09), and the grant category (e.g., Assoc Prog Supp). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot their computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] **If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, they may contact grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>**

Proposal packages submitted thru grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.