

National Risk Management Research Laboratory Innovation and Research for Water Infrastructure for the 21st Century

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Amendment #2

FUNDING INSTRUMENT: Cooperative Agreement

NUMBER: EPA-ORD-NRMRL-CI-08-03-02

DATES:

OPENING DATE (RFA): March 21, 2008

ISSUANCE DATE (AMEND #1): May 6, 2008

ISSUANCE DATE (AMEND #2): May 16, 2008

CLOSING DATE (RFA): **May 27, 2008**

(The closing date was revised via Amendment #1 from May 12, 2008 to May 27, 2008).
No further extensions are being provided.

The closing date and time for postmark of applications or electronic receipt of applications is **May 27, 2008, at 4:30 p.m. EST**. All applications must be post marked or submitted thru www.grants.gov as described in Section IV., by the closing date and time to receive consideration. No late proposals will be accepted.

To allow efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests submittal of an informal notice of an "Intent to Apply," by **May 9, 2008**. Submission of "Intent to Apply" is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted proposals.

(NOTE: This period is now closed.)

TITLE: Innovation and Research for Water Infrastructure for the 21st Century

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA)

CATEGORY OF FUNDING: Environment

NUMBER OF EXPECTED AWARDS: One

CEILING: \$ 10,000,000 -EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement, and it will be funded for up to \$2,500,000 per year for 4 years

CFDA: 66.511

COST SHARING OR MATCHING: Cost sharing is not required by statute or regulation; however, voluntary cost sharing will be evaluated in accordance with evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.

GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION: Not Applicable

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION: Programs under CFDA 66.511 are available to each State, territory and possession, and Tribal nation of the United States, including the District of Columbia, for public and private State universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, State and local government departments, and other public or private nonprofit institutions and in some cases, individuals or foreign entities who have demonstrated unusually high scientific ability. Profit-making firms are not eligible to receive awards. Eligible nonprofit organizations include any organizations that meet the definition of nonprofit in OMB Circular A-122. However, 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. Universities and educational institutions must be subject to OMB Circular A-21.

FEDERAL AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA),
National Risk Management Research Laboratory,
Water Supply and Water Resources Division,
Urban Watershed Management Branch.

DESCRIPTION: The general objective of this research effort is to produce, evaluate, and summarize performance, cost, and value data and information about innovative technologies (i.e., systems, devices, procedures) that will assist the user community to reduce the cost and improve the effectiveness of design, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement of aging/failing wastewater/stormwater/ drinking water conveyance and treatment infrastructure. Outputs are sought that can be producing their intended benefits for the user community within four years. The user community consists of utilities (primary client), technology and service providers, researchers and research funding organizations, and regulators.

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Application Materials

You may submit either a printed application or an electronic application (but not both) for this announcement. The printed application must be submitted to the address as specified in

Section IV.C. To apply electronically, the electronic application package available through the <http://www.grants.gov/> web site must be used. If your organization is not currently registered with grants.gov, you need to allow approximately one week for completion of the registration process. This registration, and electronic submission of your application, must be performed by an appropriate representative of your organization.

Agency Contact Person for Electronic Access Problem

Diana Ruffini: (732) 321-6678 email: ruffini.diana@epa.gov

Link to Full Announcement

<http://www.epa.gov/nrmrl/tech/funding.html>

QUESTIONS/RESPONSES EPA-ORD-NRMRL CI-08-03-01-2
Amendment #2
Innovation and Research for Water Infrastructure for the 21st Century

Amendment 2 is being issued to:

Respond to questions resulting from the RFA and Amendment #1. The period for receipt of questions has CLOSED. NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WILL BE RESPONDED TO WITH REGARDS TO THIS RFA.

The following questions were received in response to the subject announcement/amendment. The responses denoted below are the Government's Official Written Responses and shall take precedence over any other responses (answers) Written or Oral provided relative to this Request For Application (RFA).

1. Q: Can you please confirm that the call requires applicants to submit both a description of the Quality System and an actual Quality Management Plan.

A: Yes, both are required, as indicated in Section IV.A.4.a.viii., in the original announcement. The description of the Quality System will necessarily be brief in the project narrative, which has a 20-page limit. The Quality Management Plan is not subject to the 20-page restriction, and can include a more complete description of the Quality System.

2. Q: Research at U.C. Berkeley is guided by a set of rules and guidelines set for in the Faculty Handbook for Research Compliance. Would this suffice as a Quality System?

A: Applicants will need to determine whether their existing Quality System is adequate for this RFA and meets EPA Quality System requirements. Links are provided to descriptions of these requirements – see IV.A.4.c.

3. Q: Will each component of research identified in the proposal require a QAPP? If so, what level of detail is required to be submitted with the proposal?

A: A QAPP is not required in the proposal. However, the awardee must submit a QAPP 30 days before data collection begins. A QAPP, prepared per EPA requirements, will be required for each data collection project. See VI.D., third bullet for more information and links to QAPP.

4. Q: Please confirm that this is a research grant and does not pay for the physical construction and/or rehabilitation of deteriorating or inadequate infrastructure such as potable water, wastewater, stormwater, etc.

A. Yes, this is a research cooperative agreement. The cited activities are not inherently supportive or non-supportive of the requested research, so it is not possible to provide a definitive answer to the question. Section III.C.2, Relevance Eligibility Criteria, requires that proposals address the objectives in Section I.B in order to be eligible for award. Furthermore, the anticipated outputs and outcomes for the project are set forth in Section I.C. and are reflective of the RFA's anticipated objectives. It is EPA's intent that the applicant (or any proposed team/partnerships as described in Section I.V.G) will propose in a manner that reflects demonstration of all the objectives of the RFA and proposes outputs and outcomes it deems necessary to support its approach.

5. Q: 1. Are preliminary Engineering, Design, and other Studies related to project research in the four stated areas eligible costs of this grant?

2. If so, what are the fee structures or limitations for Engineering Fees?

A: 1. Yes, provided the successful applicant can demonstrate that the studies are necessary to carry out its proposed scope of work for the research.

2. Engineering fees must comply with OMB cost principles, 2 CFR Part 220, Part 225 Part 230, as applicable to be eligible costs. Further, any contracts with engineering firms must be entered into in compliance with the competitive procurement standards of 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as applicable. There are specific limitations on the extent to which EPA financial assistance may be used to compensate individual consultants that are found at 40 CFR 30.27(b) and 31.36(j).

6. Q: What are the fee structures or limitations for Administrative/Personnel costs?

A. Direct and indirect charges for Administrative/Personnel costs must comply with OMB cost principles, 2 CFR Part 220, Part 225 or Part 230, as applicable to be an eligible cost. As stated in Section IV.F, EPA does not consider management fees or other charges in excess of a recipient's direct or indirect costs to be eligible and allowable costs.

7. Q: Is mitigation and/or studies associated with required mitigation an eligible cost of this grant?

A. See Answer to Question #4.

8. Q: Please confirm the number of grants awarded. (The grant synopsis on page 5 seem different than the number of awards section).

A. Section II.C. sets forth that EPA anticipates awarding one (1) cooperative agreement, but retains the option to do otherwise.

9. Q: If we wish to attach a Cover Letter (a page or two) to the proposal, would it count against the 20-page limit?
- A. Yes, it would count against the 20-page project narrative page limit.
10. Q: Regarding Section IV.A.4.a.viii in the RCA (titled 'Quality Systems Description', page 11), it is our understanding that we need to attach a copy of our QMP to the proposal. (Please note that this is a big document and since we have an ongoing EPA Grant, we send annually updated QMP to EPA/ORD in June every year.)
- A. This award is independent of any other awards that the applicant may have with the agency. Your understanding of the submittal requirements is correct.
11. Q: 1. We interpret, under 40 CFR (part 30) that non-profits, including universities, (that meet the definition of non-profit in Circular A-122 and non-lobbying types) are eligible subawardees (or partners) without having to compete to do the research. Is our interpretation right?
2. We plan to have a mix of and university-subawardees (non-competing) and RFPs (competing) during the four-year award period. Is this in compliance with 40 CFR (part 30).
- A. 1. Yes, provided the subaward is for financial assistance to support the subawardee's research program and otherwise complies with the distinction between vendor and subrecipient relationships described in OMB Circular A-133.
2. Yes, subject to the caveats above subawards to universities are consistent with 40 CFR Part 30. Please be aware that your organization will need to issue competitive RFP's for commercial services in compliance with EPA requirements for taking affirmative steps to include small and disadvantaged businesses.
12. Q: Under Section IV.A.2., page 9, para starting "if amounts are budgeted for subcontracts.....non-competitive award", we need the following clarification. Does the term "subcontracts", also mean the amount that we would set aside for sub-awardees (without having to compete) who are non-profits described in Question 11 above.
- A. No.
13. Q: An output is defined as an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative/ /but must be measurable. Can you please give examples of outputs? Please give an example of a qualitative output that is measurable. /Outcomes are defined as results, effect, or consequences that will occur from carrying out an environmental program/ ... and must be quantitative. Can you provide examples of quantitative outcomes?
- A. The referenced language is required per EPA Order 5700.7 (Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements), and it is not specific to this RFA. Section I.C. provides sufficient details in this area.

