

10/31/08

**Region 1 – Request for Initial Proposals
for EPA/Regional Dedicated Water Quality Program Funding
Announcement # EPA-R1-09-OEP-WQB**

OVERVIEW:

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1, Office of Ecosystem Protection, Water Quality Branch

Funding Opportunity Title: Region 1 – Request for Initial Proposals for EPA/Regional Dedicated Water Quality Program Funding

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R1-09-OEP-WQB

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

Action Dates: The deadline for receipt of initial proposals is **December 15, 2008**. Applicants who are invited to submit final applications will be notified of final application deadlines and requirements after December 15, 2008.

Executive Summary

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region 1, Office of Ecosystem Protection, Water Quality Branch, is soliciting proposals from eligible agencies/organizations for the coordination and acceleration of research, studies, experiments, investigations and demonstration projects to improve the capacity of New England States to effectively and efficiently assess total maximum daily loading capacities (TMDL) for impaired waterbodies throughout the region, and to develop state water quality standards (WQS) (including nutrient criteria) for New England waterbodies. EPA will not provide funding to state environmental agencies for "routine" TMDL and WQS work that the Agency supports with grants under Section 106 and 319 of the Clean Water Act; production of TMDLs and WQSs must be an incidental by-product of the activities EPA funds under this competitive announcement. This notice sets forth the process that will be used for selecting awards.

FULL TEXT ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

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

WQSs must be an incidental by-product of the activities EPA funds under this competitive announcement. With regard to demonstration projects, they 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.

Under this RFIP, projects will be funded in two categories: TMDL program development, and WQS program development. The TMDL proposals and the WQS proposals require separate initial proposals (See Sec. IV(A)). See the expected “outputs” and “outcomes” below for a more detailed description of each category. As a general matter, the expected outputs of all awards under this announcement (regardless of category) will result in the acceleration of the New England states’ development of tools for meeting water restoration goals (i.e., TMDLs), or tools for determining which waters must be cleaned up, how much may be discharged, and what is needed for protection (i.e., WQS), or in the regional coordination of those program development activities.

Measuring Environmental Results

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

A. Outputs

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

Expected outputs for TMDL program development proposals:

1. *New and improved methods of developing TMDL targets (maximum loading capacities) for water quality impairments related to stormwater (i.e., targets useful for directing best management practices and TMDL implementation) or other high priority sources or pollutants, and/or*
2. *Trained staff and demonstrated applications of improved TMDL development methods that involve new, or innovative targets that also provide improved and accelerated TMDL implementation. (For example, for TMDLs addressing stormwater-related impairments, pilot the use of new and innovative targets based on stormwater volume, or percent impervious cover in the upstream watershed, the concentration of bacteria, or other targets that provide more appropriate and effective BMP implementation.), and/or*
3. *New tools or methods for TMDL development by using modern techniques (such as satellite imaging, GIS technology, automated data analysis, or other innovations) that would accelerate the production of maximum loading capacity calculations.*
4. *New tools and arrangements to foster regional coordination of TMDL development when more than one state has an interest in a waterbody.*

Expected outputs for WQS program development proposals:

1. *An assessment methodology developed to support innovative or environmental results-based water quality standard criteria development.*
2. *Results of research, investigations, surveys, or studies which support development of environmental results-based nutrient criteria (for lakes, and rivers & streams).*
3. *Results of research, investigations, surveys, or studies which support development of environmental results-based criteria, but for other than nutrients.*
4. *A suite of relevant ecosystem-linked criteria developed to better ensure that designated uses are fully attained.*
5. *New tools and arrangements to foster regional coordination of WQS development when more than one state have an interest in a parameter.*

B. Outcomes

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

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

TMDL and WQS program development project outcomes:

1. *A more advanced state of knowledge among state personnel involved in developing TMDL and WQS.*
2. *Improved capacity of state TMDL development programs.*
3. *Improved capacity of state programs to develop and implement WQS.*
4. *Better coordination among TMDL and WQS programs in New England states.*

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

C. Alignment with EPA’s Strategic Plan

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

II. AWARD INFORMATION

The total estimated funding available for awards under this announcement is approximately \$600,000 for TMDLs and approximately \$70,000 for WQS. The number of expected awards is approximately 10 (8 TMDL; 2 WQS), with an expected range of award of \$10,000 - \$90,000. However, proposals requesting funding below or above the expected range of award will be considered. Applicants may receive awards for both TMDL and WQS projects but must submit separate initial proposals for each.

EPA anticipates awarding assistance agreements in the form of grants based on this RFIP. However, if any proposals request or warrant substantial EPA involvement (e.g., for technical assistance, extensive oversight of activities or review of new methods) then EPA reserves the right to award a cooperative agreement.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated. 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. Final application submittals may not exceed the cost submitted in the initial proposal.

EPA reserves the right to make additional selections for awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy and without further competition, if additional funding becomes available after the original award selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

In accordance with CFDA 66.436, assistance under this program is generally available to States, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private non-profit institutions and individuals. Nonprofit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

B. Cost sharing or Matching

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

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants and proposed projects will need to meet all of the following threshold criteria at the time of their initial proposal submission. Threshold criteria will be applied on a pass/fail basis. Failure to meet any of them will render the initial proposal ineligible; ineligible proposals will not be evaluated or considered. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

Threshold Criterion 1: Geographic location of proposed project work

Proposed projects must take place in one or more of the six New England States (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT).

Threshold Criterion 2: Project Eligibility

Proposed projects must be designed to conduct research, perform studies, conduct experiments or demonstration projects, or offer training to improve state capacity or arrangement for regional coordination of TMDL and WQS programs in New England states rather than perform routine state TMDL and WQS work that EPA funds under Sections 106 and 319 of the Clean Water Act. EPA will not provide funding for “routine” TMDL and WQS work that the Agency supports with grants under Section 106 and 319 of the Clean Water Act; production of TMDLs and WQSs must be an incidental by-product of the activities EPA funds under this competitive announcement. With regard to demonstration projects, they must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.

Threshold Criterion 3: Substantial Compliance

a. Initial proposals must substantially comply with the proposal [or application] submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the initial proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

b. In addition, initial proposals must be received by the EPA or received through www.grants.gov, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the initial proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their initial proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

c. Initial proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems solely attributable to the grants.gov website and not the applicant. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires initial proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their initial proposal with Danny Rodriguez as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your initial proposal not being reviewed.

Threshold Criterion 4: Narrative summaries for TMDL and WQS combined in one initial proposal will not be considered.

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Content and Form of Submittals

1. Initial Proposal Submittals: Content and Format

Applicants must use the following format for initial proposal submission(s), and must include the information outlined below in their initial proposals. Initial proposals must be no longer than four pages (8 ½ x 11 inches, single-spaced, minimum font size of 11 point) - pages in excess of this page limitation will not be reviewed. Each proposal (whether TMDL or WQS) can include several individually costed projects or project phases, listed in order of funding priority, with the most important project listed first (see *Attachment A* for example, which also includes examples of eligible TMDL projects and the required content). Applicants must also make sure that, to the extent not otherwise addressed below, their initial proposal submittal provides information addressing all of the initial proposal evaluation factors identified in Section V.A.1. The same applicant who submits the initial proposal must be the applicant who submits the final proposal.

Program	(Specify: TMDL or WQS)
Project Title	
Funding Amount	(Total amount of federal funding requested.)
Project Description(s) (state prioritized, costed list)	<p>A. General summary statement of project goal & justification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How this project will improve state capacity or interstate coordination of TMDL or WQS programs. - Expected environmental <i>outcomes</i>. <p>B. Plan for tracking and measuring progress towards achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I of this announcement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify timeframes for achieving expected outputs and outcomes. - Explain how progress will be measured. <p>C. Project descriptions (phased in order of funding priority):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who (will perform the work - recipient or recipient’s contractor?); - What (modeling assistance, training, studies and research leading to the development of best practice documents, experimental approaches to development of TMDLs, demonstration projects, arrangements for improving interstate coordination, etc.); - Where (specific 303(d)-listed waterbodies to be used for studies, or training facilities involved); - When (indicate time frame for accomplishing milestones); - Why (build TMDL development capacity, improve interstate coordination); and - How (methods and/or approaches that are transferable to other states). <p>D. Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - QAPP if the project involves sampling or data collection. - Brief final status report on output/outcome measures at end of project

	period. - Summary report of research, study, or demonstration including means of disseminating the results of such projects; training plans, meetings, workshops, and other arrangements for innovative ways of improving regional coordination. E. Cost: (of each project or phase).
Applicant Contact	Name, agency, e-mail address, telephone.

2. Final Application Submittals

If your initial proposal is selected for further consideration, you will be invited to submit a final application. Further instructions for the submittal of the final application package will be provided to these applicants at the appropriate time. Final application submittals will be evaluated against the final application review criteria in Section V.A.2. In the final application submittal, applicants will be asked to provide certain information, including:

a. Program Capability Information

Submit a list of federally funded agreements 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) how you were technically able to successfully carry out and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V.A.2, 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). If you have no relevant or available past performance or past reporting history, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.A.2.

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

b. Environmental Results Past Performance

Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements), and 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. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V.A.2, 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 environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.A.2.

c. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” Final applicants must contact their state’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state’s process under EO 12372. Names and addresses of the SPOC’s are listed in the Office of Management and Budget’s home page at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

3. General Submission Information

a. Confidential Business Information

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

b. DUNS

All applicants applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Data Numbering System (DUNS) number. Applicants who do not already have a DUNS number may find instruction for obtaining one at the following website:

<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

A DUNS number may also be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711.

c. Management Fees

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

d. Partnerships, Contractors and Subawards.

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

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

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

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of

subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

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

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

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

B. Submittal Date

The deadline for EPA or grants.gov receipt of initial proposal submittals is **Friday, December 15, 2008, 4:30 PM EST**. Late initial proposals will not be considered.

C. Submittal Instructions

Applicants have the option of submitting their initial proposal(s), prepared in accordance with the instruction and requirements in Section IV.A.1 of this announcement, in one of the following two ways. Applicants should use only *one* of these methods:

1. In a hard copy mailed or delivered to:
Danny Rodriguez
U.S.E.P.A. Region I
One Congress Street, Suite 1100 (CIP)
Boston, MA 02114-2023
2. Electronically via <http://www.grants.gov>. (See Attachment B for instructions for using this method.)

Initial proposals submitted via hard copy are required to include the four page (maximum) narrative as outlined in Sec. IV.A.1.

Initial proposals that are electronically submitted through www.grants.gov must include the four page (maximum) narrative outlined in Section IV.A.1 of the announcement and the Application for Federal

Assistance (Standard Form 424) as part of the submission. Standard Form 424 requires applicants to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (see Sec. IV(A)(3)(b) above for instructions).

If you wish to submit your initial proposal electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your initial proposal must be made by an official representative 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 B of this announcement.

D. Proposal/Application Communications and Assistance

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

V. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Initial Proposal Evaluation Criteria (100 points):

- a. Extent and quality to which the initial proposal has a plan for tracking and measuring the applicant's progress towards achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes including those listed in Section I of the announcement. Reviewers will also focus on the degree to which the proposal contains clear measures of success and timeline for the project(s), and provides a description of the format in which these measurements will be reported. **(20 points)**
- b. Extent to which the proposed project will provide information that takes an innovative approach to further the development of new or improved TMDL targets or WQS approaches (including nutrient criteria) which will improve specific state program capacity or interstate coordination within a reasonable timeframe. **(40 points)**
- c. Extent to which the proposed project is likely to increase states' capacities for, and pace of, developing and submitting approvable TMDL(s) or WQS (including nutrient criteria) to EPA. **(40 points)**

2. Final Application Review Criteria (100 points):

- a. Programmatic Capability **(80 points):** Under this factor, the Agency will evaluate the applicants technical ability to successfully carry out the proposed project taking into account such factors as its:
 - (i) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last three years **(20 points);**

- (ii) History of meeting reporting requirements on federally-funded assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements **(20 points)**;
- (iii) Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project **(20 points)**;
- (iv) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project **(20 points)**.

In evaluating applicants under this factor, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance or reporting history (items i and ii above), will receive a neutral score for those elements of this factor.

- b. **Environmental Results Past Performance Criterion (20 points):** Under this criterion, 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 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. (For example, the criterion is worth 20 points, so a neutral rating for an applicant with no past performance reporting history on outcomes and outputs would be 10 points.)

B. Review and Selection Process:

1. Initial Proposals

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

2. Final Applications and Awards

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

A panel comprised of EPA Region 1 staff will evaluate each final application based on the final application review criteria described above and provide funding recommendations to the regional approval official. Final funding recommendations will be made by the regional EPA approval official based on the panel recommendations and the following other factors: geographic distribution of funds and a balanced package of projects (i.e., ensuring package adequately addresses state capacity for both target/criteria development and pace of development). The goal of the process is to select a package of projects that will have the best chance to promote the use of new and improved techniques that strengthen state TMDL and/or WQS development programs, and to increase the pace of TMDL production in the New England States.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices and Other Award Requirements

Applicants who have been selected for award and whose final application has been approved can expect to receive an award document which constitutes an agreement between EPA and the recipient organization, and sets forth the terms and conditions of the financial assistance. As the assistance agreement is a legal document, an authorized representative of your organization must indicate acceptance by signing and returning the appropriate copies to the EPA Region 1 Grants Office. Specific instructions will be provided with the award document.

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

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

Quality Assurance Requirements: Final awards involving the collection of environmental data will require an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) prior to data collection. The award recipient must coordinate review of the QAPP with the EPA Region 1 QAPP Office located at the Region 1 Laboratory in Chelmsford, MA.

Data Reporting Requirements: Final awards involving the collection of environmental data will require water quality data gathered under the funded project to be submitted to EPA's National STORET Data Warehouse using the Water Quality Exchange (WQX) framework via EPA's CDX network node capability, or (for smaller users) via EPA's new web-based XML generation and submittal tool, WQXWeb, Water Quality Exchange Web. Information on submitting data can be found at the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/storet/wqx.html>. All users submitting data must also register with the Central Data Exchange (CDX), referred to in Section VII below.

B. Administration and National Policy Requirements

Disputes: Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the EPA representative listed in section VI. C. of this announcement.

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

Nonprofit Administrative Capability 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). 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.

VII. Agency Contact

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

If you have difficulty accessing either the full announcement electronically or the dispute resolution procedures electronically, please contact:

Danny Rodriguez
U.S.E.P.A. Region I
One Congress Street, Suite 1100 (CIP)
Boston, MA 02114-2023
Tel: 617-918-1510; Fax: 617-918-0510
E-mail: rodriguez.danny@epa.gov

VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Exchange Network

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

ATTACHMENT A. – **SAMPLE Initial Proposal with Examples of Eligible Projects**

Project: TMDL Development Capacity Building in the State(s) of ____

Amount of Funding: \$47,500

Description

Justification: Recipient will conduct the following projects with *outputs* which will result in improved stormwater TMDL targets; state staff trained in a new TMDL development method; a piloted application of the % impervious cover method for stormwater TMDLs; and will work toward the use of more detailed land cover data to inform location of priority BMPs for TMDL implementation and accelerate the pace of TMDL production. These projects will increase state capacity and pace for TMDL development, and result in better coordination among the New England states because sharing project results with other New England States will be a project priority.

Plan for Tracking and Measuring Results: Recipient will track outputs and short-term outcomes as deliverables listed below. Measures of medium-term outcomes will be tracked by measures appropriate to their anticipated contribution during the project period of the grant. Long term outcomes will be tracked in terms of EPA environmental measures “L” (SP-10), “Y” (SP-11), and “W” as committed to in the 2008 State of ___/EPA PPA.

Project Description(s):

(1) Recipient will conduct a study in the State of ____ to better understand the relationship between impervious cover in watersheds and aquatic life use support to facilitate state-specific TMDL target-setting for stormwater-impaired waters. Recipient, with the assistance of an intern funded under this grant will collect macroinvertebrate data at 30 sites (statewide) during the fall 2008 sampling season and will contract to cover lab costs of macroinvertebrate identifications.

Deliverable (documentation of outputs): Results presentation at interstate meeting; data summary report on TMDL targets.

Env.Measure/Milestones: Fall 2008 data collection; data analysis winter 2008-9; final output by March 2009.

Cost: \$12,500

(2) Recipient will train State staff in the use of % IC method of TMDL development, and, as a training exercise, will pilot an application of the method in the _____ watershed, which will involve __ sub-watersheds. This exercise will produce a template appropriate for future State TMDL development.

Deliverable (documentation of outputs): Template for TMDL report; presentation of results at interstate meeting.

Env.Measure/Milestones: Training & application fall 2008; template by December 2008; presentation by late winter 2009.

Cost: \$15,000

(3) Recipient will contract for technical support and training for state staff in the use of higher resolution land use coverage with the purpose of developing a more detailed implementation plan for the _____. Stream stormwater TMDL.

Deliverable (documentation of outputs): Results presentation at interstate meeting; summary report on TMDL new approach.

Env.Measure/Milestones: Training fall 2008; implementation plan/report by late winter 2009; presentation by March 2009.

Cost: \$20,000

(4) Other: Recipient will... (What new ideas do you have for accomplishing our goals?)

Applicant Contact: (Name, telephone, e-mail address, mailing address)

ATTACHMENT B:

GRANTS.GOV ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
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General Application Instructions

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your initial proposal must be made by an official representative 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.

The electronic submission of your proposal/application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is 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.

To begin the proposal/application 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).

Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R1-09-OEP-WQB, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.436), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the proposal/application 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).

Application Submission Deadline:

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete Initial Proposal and SF 424 electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **midnight, Eastern Standard Time, December 15, 2008.**

Please submit all of the proposal material described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to <http://www.epa.gov/region1/assistance/p2/index.html#p2grants> or go to <http://www.grants.gov>

Proposal Materials:

The following forms and documents are required to be submitted as part of the initial submission under this announcement:

- 1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)**
- 2. Initial Proposal (4 page-maximum)** - Prepared as described in Section IV.A.1 and Attachment A of the announcement.

The initial proposal must include all of the following materials:

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

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

2. Initial Proposal (Section IV.A.1 and Attachment A of announcement)

This document should be readable in Adobe Portable Document (.pdf) or in Microsoft Word (.doc) and consolidated into a single file, and should comply with all applicable formatting instructions in Section IV and Attachment A of the announcement.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

For document I, click on the 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 II, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your initial proposal as described in Section IV.A.1 and Attachment A of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or 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 (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 filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there other attachments 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 you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY09 – Assoc Prog Supp – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – FY 09 Assoc Prog Supp – Back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – FY06 Assoc Prog Supp – 2nd Submission.”

Once your proposal package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the proposal 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 his/her 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, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726, or email at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp, or contact Danny Rodriguez at rodriguez.danny@epa.gov, or at 617-918-1510.

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

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from [grant.gov](http://www.grants.gov)*), please contact Danny Rodriguez at rodriguez.danny@epa.gov, or at 617-918-1510. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

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