

Assistance for TMDL development and implementation in Region 7- Request for Proposals

Overview Information

1. Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7, Water, Wetlands, and Pesticide Division
2. Title: “Assistance for TMDL development and implementation in Region 7”
3. Announcement type: Initial announcement
4. Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R7WWPD-04-012
5. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.436, “Surveys, Studies, Investigations, Demonstrations, and Training Grants and Cooperative Agreements - Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act”
6. Dates:
Proposals due: July 20, 2004
Program funding recommendations: on or before August 4, 2004
Begin work: about September 28, 2004

Executive Summary

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals for one year with the possibility to competitively renew annually for a total project period up to a three years, from states, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and other public and private nonprofit institutions and individuals, to assist the states and tribes in EPA Region 7 in (1) developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) required by the Clean Water Act, or (2) conducting monitoring as provided in the Monitoring Plans of existing approved TMDLs, or (3) reopening existing approved TMDLs where needed. Multiple awards are anticipated, each for one of seven specific tasks, described in the full text of this Request for Proposals.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals for one year with the possibility to competitively renew annually for a total project period up to a three years, from

states, tribes, and all other eligible and qualified interested parties, to assist the states and tribes in Region 7 to work in seven focus areas:

1. Develop protocols for obtaining an estimate of the sediment oxygen demand and aeration rates for the purpose of establishing Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) for oxygen demand including possibly ammonia oxygen demand. The Agency's priority is for protocols for water bodies that still require TMDLs for oxygen demand impairments or for existing approved oxygen demand TMDLs that need revisiting.

2. Develop a protocol for estimating the phosphorus recycling in lakes and streams, including flux from sediment and resuspension of sediment, and for estimating the lake response time if the source is stopped. The Agency's priority is for estimates for waterbodies that still require TMDLs with impairment linked to excess phosphorus or for existing approved phosphorus linked TMDLs that need revisiting.

3. Develop a protocol for developing TMDL allocations addressing ammonia in lakes, specifically considering the relationship between ammonia toxicity and pH. The Agency's priority is for protocols for water bodies that still require lake TMDLs for ammonia or for existing ammonia in lake TMDLs that need revisiting.

4. Develop a protocol for estimating sediment yield from watersheds which have Best Management Practices (BMPs) in place, specifically to determine a minimum threshold of BMP implementations such that improvement of water quality at the watershed outlet may be observed. The Agency's priority is for protocols for water bodies that still require TMDLs for sediment related impairments or for existing approved sediment related TMDLs that need revisiting or for monitoring sediment related approved TMDLs.

5. Estimate the effectiveness of BMPs designed to reduce the impact of irrigation on the levels of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), sulfate, selenium, and boron for the Arkansas River upstream of the Kansas border.

6. Develop a TMDL translator protocol for assessing biological impairments caused by sediment, specifically relationships between in stream sediment and measures of the health of in stream biological communities and relationships between stream bank characteristics and measures of the health of in-stream biological communities. The Agency's priority is for protocols for water bodies that still require TMDLs for biological impairments caused by sediment or for existing approved biology/sediment related TMDLs that need revisiting or for monitoring biology/sediment related approved TMDLs.

7. Other high priority or difficult issue for which the state or Indian Tribe located in EPA Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri) needs assistance to develop TMDLs or monitor existing TMDLs. Applications in this seventh focus area will need to provide a convincing explanation in the proposal narrative that the work is indeed needed by the states or tribes located in Region 7 for the purpose of developing TMDLs or monitoring existing TMDL implementations.

Each proposal must address only one of the seven focus areas, above. Multiple proposals from one entity are allowed.

All work involving generating data by measurements or observations in the environment or using or manipulating environmental data to obtain a result or an understanding contained in a work product must have an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for the work dealing with such data and work product before work can begin.

The resulting work products will allow the state or tribe located in EPA Region 7 to immediately or quickly and easily apply the work from one of the seven focus areas to one of the three needs: (1) developing TMDLs required by the Clean Water Act, or (2) conducting monitoring as provided in the Monitoring Plans of existing approved TMDLs, or (3) reopening existing approved TMDLs where needed.

Work plans and budgets that provide for entry of the project's new environmental data into STORET (short for STorage and RETrieval) are encouraged. STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET or monitoring data made available in the Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI) Core Monitoring Data Element Standard (or Data Exchange Template) will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Information on STORET is at <http://www.epa.gov/storet> and information on the standard is at <http://www.epa.gov/edr>.

II. Award Information

The type of assistance will be grants. Pre-award costs are not allowed for these proposals. Multiple awards are anticipated to cover the three needs in the seven focus areas. The total EPA funding available to implement these projects will not exceed \$609,267 for this fiscal year. Funding available for successive years in multi-year proposals is not guaranteed. Proposals for one year only are encouraged, with consideration for complex or difficult situations. Recipients who submit multi-year proposals will be required to re-submit proposals for each successive year in accordance with that year's competition. Multiple awards to a single entity are allowed. Funding amount of individual awards may be changed by mutual agreement to meet total funding limitations.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

All states, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and other public and private nonprofit institutions and individuals are eligible. Non-state, non-tribe entities within Region 7 and all entities outside Region 7 are responsible for obtaining a prior mutually written agreement with a state or tribe in Region 7 expressing the likelihood that the work product will be useful to meet one of the three needs in one of the seven focus areas described in Part I of this Announcement.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required.

C. Other Eligibility Criteria

No other eligibility criteria.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The forms for the application package are located on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/appforms.htm> An application package is also available by contacting the EPA Region 7 Competition Advocate (see Section VII for Agency Contact Information)

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

The EPA wishes to provide potential respondents with maximum latitude in preparing their responses to this RFP. However, to facilitate the comparative evaluation of all proposals received, EPA requests that applicants follow the general outline found at “EPA Grant-Writing Tips”, <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>.

The application must contain:

- 1) An e-mail address to which a notification of receipt of application will be sent.
- 2) A narrative described on the “grant writing tips” Website, consisting of eight parts plus appendices. A schedule and description of reports and other work products resulting from the work described in the proposal must be included in the narrative. To minimize difficulties, schedules in multi- year proposals should facilitate rather than hinder annual re-competition.
- 3) Non-state, non-tribe applicants located in Region 7 and all applicants located outside Region 7 must include a written agreement with a state or tribe in Region 7, expressing the likelihood that the work product will be useful to meet one of the three needs described in Section I of this RFP.
- 4) The narrative work plan must indicate an approved QAPP will be in place before any work involving environmental data begins. See Section VI-B, below.
- 5) For proposals with cost sharing, attached letters or other documentation to verify commitments to meet any cost-sharing offered in the proposal.
- 6) The application must contain the following twelve (or less as applicable) forms. The first 10 forms are available at the “application package” Website:
 1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
 2. Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A)

3. Assurances - Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)
4. Certification Regarding Lobbying (as applicable)
5. Certification Regarding Debarment (EPA 5700-49)
6. Preaward Compliance Review (EPA 4700-4)
7. Quality Assurance Requirement Form
8. Method of Payment
9. Key Contact List
10. Non-Profit Certification (if applicable)

In addition, the application must contain the following:

11. Copy of Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement - if you are requesting these costs
12. Narrative Budget explaining what is included in your budget categories for Form 424A above

Procedural and eligibility questions will be answered at any time. The contacts are listed below. Questions regarding clarification of this solicitation must be presented during a conference phone call beginning at 10:05 CDT, June 10, 2004, with the conference line opening at 10:01. The call in number is 913-551-8606. Questions may be submitted in advance by writing to the address below, or via email to miller.don@epa.gov, or telephone at 913-551-7393. Responses to advance questions will be given only in the conference phone call. If circumstances beyond control prevent the conference call from occurring at the scheduled time and call-in number, it will be rescheduled in a timely manner, and, notice of the rescheduled date and time will be posted at www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm. Notes from the conference call will be available upon request. Only questions regarding procedures, eligibility, or clarification of this solicitation will receive responses.

Applications may be sent hardcopy to:

Don Miller, WWPD/WQMB
U.S. EPA Region 7
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101

or electronically to miller.don@epa.gov followed by hardcopy at a later date.

C. Submission Dates and Times

The complete application is due at the EPA Region 7 offices on **July 20, 2004**, at close of business.

D. Intergovernmental Review

The final application must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. This program is 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 requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding. Additional information can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html> .

E. Funding Restrictions

No funding restrictions.

F. Other Submission Requirements

No other submission requirements.

V. Application Review Information

A. Criteria

All applications from eligible applicants will be considered for review. All proposals from eligible applicants will be evaluated according to the following six equally weighted criteria to evaluate the balance between benefits and costs:

Benefits:

1. The likelihood that the work product will result in (1) one or more approvable TMDLs required by the Clean Water Act, or (2) monitoring results indicating attainment status of applicable water quality standards as provided in the Monitoring Plans of existing approved TMDLs, or (3) one or more approvable revised TMDLs for one or more existing approved TMDLs requiring reopening.
2. The likely total number of resulting new or revised TMDLs, or, the total number of existing TMDLs monitored and assessed, and, taking into consideration the complexity/difficulty of the situation.
3. The priority for establishing the one or more TMDLs or conducting the monitoring and assessment.

Costs:

4. The federal amount requested for the project (total cost less cost sharing and in-kind contributions).
5. The offered total time of the project.
6. With consideration for complex situations, the estimated total cost, difficulty, and time required by the state or tribe to convert the project work products into one of the three results described in review criteria 1, above.

Cost-sharing is not required.

B. Review and Selection Process

The EPA will review all proposals from all eligible applicants (in accordance with the above criteria) and will select what in its sole judgement it determines to be the one or more proposals that best serves State or Tribe responsibilities in the Clean Water Act by meeting one of the three needs in one of the seven focus areas (see Section I, above). Multiple awards to a single entity are allowed. Final selection for awards will be made by EPA Region 7 Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division Director.

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

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

EPA anticipates program funding recommendations on or before August 4, 2004, and awards on or before September 28, 2004.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by postal mail.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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 authority 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 A-21 "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions." Ineligible costs will be reduced from final grant award.

Confidential Business Information

Applicants should clearly mark information contained in their application which they consider confidential business information. EPA reserves the right to make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR, Subpart B. If no such claim accompanies the application when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant.

Quality Assurance

If environmental research including direct measurements or data generation, environmental modeling, compilation of data from literature or electronic media, and data supporting the design, construction, and operation of environmental technologies is to be performed as part of the funding agreement, a Quality Assurance Project Plan and submission date to EPA for

approval must be identified 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.

C. Reporting

Reporting requirements include financial reports, quarterly performance reports, a final report, the final work products if not included in quarterly or the final report, and any other reporting or data specified in the Statement of Work narrative. Reports must be submitted in accordance with 40 CFR 31.40 or 30.51 as applicable.

VII. Agency Contacts

Program:

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