

**U.S. EPA Region 7
Strategic Agricultural Initiative
Request for Proposals (RFP) FY 2008**

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

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NAME: Strategic Agricultural Initiative: FY08 Request for Proposals

ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER: EPA-R7WWPD-08-003

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

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: May 16, 2008 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 Water, Wetlands and Pesticides Division (WWPD), 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 support efforts by the agricultural community to “transition” away from high-risk pesticides to the use of less and reduced-risk pesticides, alternative methods of agricultural pest control, and sustainable practices in food production. The Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration, and implementation of reduced risk practices for pest management.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

The statutory authority for this grant program is the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agriculture Initiative and Section 20 of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended. FQPA, passed by Congress in 1996, establishes health based standards for pesticide residues in raw and processed food. It is intended to protect public health from exposure to pesticides and to create an environment favorable for the development and adoption of lower risk, effective pest management tools for U.S. agriculture. The EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and numerous agricultural organizations are working on efforts to implement the FQPA. For this effort, EPA established regional Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) programs to build partnerships through grants and outreach to reduce risks and use of pesticides in agriculture. For more background

information on FQPA and SAI, visit the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/laws/fqpa/>.

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. Environmentally Sound Pest Management: Priorities for Consideration

Projects must address one or more of the national SAI program goals. The goals of the SAI program are to:

- Utilize demonstration projects, outreach, and/or education to increase the adoption of reduced risk/integrated pest management (IPM) practices that provide alternatives to the use of highly toxic pesticides, Section 18 pesticides, and/or pesticides impacted negatively by FQPA decisions;
- Encourage partnerships between producers, commodity groups, scientists, extension, local/state/federal government agencies, and other stakeholders to demonstrate, promote, and utilize reduced risk/IPM practices in the field;
- Actively engage scientists, producers, industry, and local/state/federal partners in the specifics of implementing FQPA;
- Quantitatively measure and document the effects of using the reduced risk/IPM programs on the environment, human health and community;
- Facilitate a sustainable whole farm systems approach that utilizes conservation planning and reduced risk/IPM practices; and
- Demonstrate region specific pest management practices and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses that may be cancelled under FQPA.

SAI’s emphasis is on minor food crops; however, other agricultural commodities (including turf and ornamentals) will be considered where there are significant demonstrable environmental concerns and clear linkage to FQPA.

SAI grants are not intended to support basic research or projects with high administrative costs.

C. Environmental Results

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7, “Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreement,” Projects will be evaluated on their expected ability to achieve predicted environmental outputs and outcomes and produce on-the-ground, quantifiable environmental change. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured.

Outcomes Outcome *measures* are environmental improvements that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. These improvements are changes, benefits, effects or consequences to the environment that are a result from the accomplishment of activities, efforts and outputs. Projected environmental improvement outcomes can be over the short (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, decisions), or long term (changes in condition of the natural

resource). Some longer-term outcomes may occur after the proposed project closes. Additional environmental outcomes of an SAI grant project may include the following elements for reporting of project measures:

- 1) Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.
- 2) Increase in the number of growers using reduced risk/IPM tools and techniques;
- 3) Measure of quantitative and qualitative reduction in the use of higher risk pesticides or pesticides in general;
- 4) Partnership between crop producers, EPA, other federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested stakeholders to implement reduced risk/IPM programs;
- 5) Percent reduction or pounds per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients.

Outputs Output *measures* are the results or products from accomplishing an environmental activity or effort that are related to an environmental goal or objective and will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specific date. The anticipated outputs of an SAI grant project may include:

- 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;
- 4) Partnerships established between federal and non-federal programs to provide reduced risk/IPM programs for crop producers.

The SAI program supports EPA Strategic Plan Subobjective 4.1.5. (For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>.)

Applicants should discuss anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes in the proposed workplan. **All proposals must include the following elements for reporting of project measures:**

- Current level of pest management and the projected level of pest management at the end of the project based on the "IPM Transition Index" located at http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/pdf/Transition_Matrix.pdf.
- Number of acres impacted by the project.
- How they will result in ensuring the public health and socio-economic benefits of pesticide availability and use (EPA Strategic Plan Subobjective 4.1.5).

Applicants must also include a discussion of whether the identified project outcomes have the potential to reduce energy consumption and/or the production of greenhouse gases.

If your project is selected for funding, measures included in your proposal may be subject to negotiation.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Amount of Funding Available

The EPA Region 7 Strategic Agricultural Initiative program anticipates having approximately \$100,000 to award to eligible and successful applicants. Awards will be made through assistance agreements ranging from \$20,000 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. The 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 activities, 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 that maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 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

All projects should have an anticipated start date of no earlier than **September 1, 2008**. Project periods may be up to two (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, local governments, and individuals and international entities. 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. For profit organizations are not eligible for funding. Ineligible groups are encouraged to collaborate with an eligible organization to submit proposals.

B. Leveraging and Cost Sharing/Matching

EPA grant panel reviewers will review, evaluate and rank proposals will be the amount of financial resources the applicant has (or reasonably will have) that this project will supplement (see Section V.A.9.).

There are no cost-share requirements for these projects nor are matching funds required. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).

C. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for consideration under this announcement, applicants must meet all of the following criteria. Failure to meet all of the following criteria by the time of proposal submission will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration. 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. Applicant must be an eligible applicant in accordance with Section III.A.
2. Proposals must address one or more of the goals of the Strategic Agricultural Initiative program listed above in Section I.B of this announcement.
3. Proposals must include the elements for reporting project measures listed above in Section I.C of this announcement.
4. A proposal's request for EPA funds must fall within the funding limits expressed in Section II.A.
5. Implementation of all projects must occur within one or more of the four states of EPA Region 7 – Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska.

6. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal 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 proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
7. In addition, 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 proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.
8. 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. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Heather Duncan as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
9. The EPA will consider only one (1) proposal by each individual investigator. Proposals from different investigators within the same organization are acceptable.

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 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101

Applicants applying through Grants.gov will find the entire application package by following the instructions listed in Section IV.D.2 of this announcement.

B. Content and Format of Proposal Submission

Proposals, prepared as described below, must be typewritten. The Proposal Narrative workplan **described below, must be limited to no more than twelve (12) double spaced pages**, including the cover page - excess pages will not be reviewed. The SF 424, SF 424A, other SF forms, resumes, and other supporting documentation such as letters of support submitted with

the workplan will not count toward the twelve page limit. All workplans must be formatted for and placed on 8.5” x 11” paper using no smaller than 11 point Times New Roman font with 1” margins. 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.

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

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:

All proposals should include the sections and section titles listed below. For example, the proposal should include a section titled “Executive Summary” followed by the sections “Proposal Narrative,” “Project Title,” “Environmental Issue,” and so on. The page numbers shown in parentheses for each section listed below are suggested lengths only; applicants may adjust their Proposal Narrative up to and within the 12-page limit to best fit their needs.

1. Cover Page (1 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:

2. Executive Summary (1 page)

The Executive Summary is a stand-alone document, not to exceed one (1) page, containing the specifics of what is proposed and what you expect to accomplish regarding measuring or movement toward achieving project goals. This summary

should identify the **measurable environmental results** you expect including potential human health and ecological benefits. (See Section I.C for more information about environmental results.)

3. Proposal Narrative (12 pages)

The proposal narrative should specifically address each of the evaluation criteria disclosed in Section V.A (Selection Criteria). The proposal narrative includes Parts 5.a. through 5.g.

- a) **Project Title:** self-explanatory.
- b) **Environmental Issues:** Concisely describe the environmental issue(s) of concern and the importance of that issue.
- c) **Literature Review/Background:** Briefly describe relevant information currently available. This should include information on current projects that are relevant to or provide the basis for either the experimental design or the validation of an innovative or new approach to pest management and improving water quality. Include a list of key literature citations.
- d) **Objectives:** Include a numbered list (1, 2, etc.) of concisely written project objectives. In most cases, each objective can be stated in a single sentence. Link each stated project objective to EPA Strategic Plan Sub-objective 4.1.5. (See Section I.D.3. of this announcement.) All grant-funded activities are required to be linked to EPA's Strategic Plan.

A minimum of one objective must also address the goals of the FQPA SAI, which can be found in Section I.B.

- e) **Environmental Results:** Provide a work plan for tracking and measuring your progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of the proposed project (see Section I.D., Environmental Results). Within the plan, include the following components:
 - List the activities required to accomplish the work plan objectives
 - Describe the project activities in detail and include an outreach/public participation strategy
 - Describe how you will achieve clearly defined, measurable results.
 - Describe what baseline will be used
 - Describe the anticipated contribution towards improvement to human health, the ecosystem, or quality of life
 - Where appropriate, explicitly state the target pesticide(s), pest(s), and/or crop(s).

For more information about workplans, see <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm>.

To identify appropriate environmental outcomes and outputs, choose from the measures listed in the SAI Toolbox

(http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php). If additional performance measures (other than those listed in the SAI Toolbox) are used, they must be clearly described and submitted in the proposed workplan. Be sure to describe the method you will use to attain data to support the measures indicated.

f) **Timetable for Accomplishments:** Include a timetable that identifies what tasks/ steps, results, and final products will be accomplished under each of the objectives during the project and when completion of each is anticipated. Describe significant steps and milestones.

g) **Programmatic Capability:** Applicants should submit information addressing the items below.

(1) Briefly describe your organization's experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to implement the proposed project.

(2) Include a brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of staff and their qualifications (no resumes are required), or your ability to hire or obtain the requisite experience.

(3) Provide a brief description of your past performance in successfully completing agreements, meeting reporting requirements, and submitting acceptable final technical reports under federal and/or non-federal funded agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed agreement performed within the last 5 years. Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement.

When evaluating an applicant for programmatic capability, EPA will consider information provided by applicants and may consider information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

f) **Environmental Results Past Performance**

Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) 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, 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.

4. Budget Narrative (1 page)

Please submit a detailed budget with narrative, explaining the need for funding under each of the appropriate budget categories. List the anticipated amount of funding and associated staff needed to achieve the project objectives. Include the requested federal and any non-federal cost share in these estimates. Link each task or activity from the project work plan to the associated resources that are needed to accomplish the activity. Under travel, include the travel location(s), estimated number of trips, estimated total mileage, and number of nights lodging required throughout the entire project period. Describe how leveraged resources will be obtained (if applicable) and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project. 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>.

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 the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term “management fees or similar charges” refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

5. Standard Forms (not included in page limitations)

Applicants are required to submit the following forms with the proposal package. These forms will not count against the page limit.

Standard Form SF 424 – Application For Federal Assistance

Include the 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.

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.

Standard Form SF 424B – Assurances Non-Construction Programs Certification

Certification Regarding Lobbying

Key Contacts List

Key Contacts List – Additional (if needed)

Blank forms can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>.

6. Other Attachments (not included in page limitations)

Other attachments such as resumes, letters of support are not required, but may be included within the proposal submission. Any submitted letters of support should specifically indicate how the supporting organization would assist the project.

D. Submission Deadline and Instructions

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 faxed submissions. Proposal submissions must be **received** by the EPA contact listed below or through grants.gov on or before the due date and time. For any questions concerning submission, please contact Heather Duncan, 913-551-7640 or at duncan.heather@epa.gov.

Applicants must use only one of the following two methods to submit proposals. **Emailed or faxed submittal of proposals will not be accepted.**

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

EPA encourages applicants to submit their proposal materials electronically through www.grants.gov. If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, please follow the appropriate instructions for electronic submission outlined in Appendix B.

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 May 16, 2008.**

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 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.

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.

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 May 16, 2008.**

Address for Hard Copy Submission

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Attn: Heather Duncan, SAI Coordinator
WWPD/TOPE
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

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.

F. 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 proposals or portions of 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.

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:

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.

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"> • (10 points) The project is consistent with the one or more of the goals of the Strategic Agricultural Initiative. (See Section I.B. for goals.) • (5 points) The project is based on a “whole systems” approach to pest management and integrates pest, soil, crop, and water management practices. • (5 points) The project addresses an agricultural pest management problem in food crops or other agricultural commodities (including turf and ornamentals) where there are significant demonstrable environmental concerns and a clear linkage to FQPA.
<p>2. Degree of transferability to other areas (10 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10 points) Likelihood that the project can be replicated in other areas by other organizations to their benefit.
<p>3. Partnership and Outreach (20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10 points) The project relies on partnerships and the participation of growers as part of the project activities. Cooperation with scientists, extension officers, pest control advisors, crop consultants 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. • (10 points) The project focuses on ground-level results by transferring information and agricultural practices to shift growers towards lower risk methods of pest management.

<p>4. Clearly stated pest management issue, goals/objectives, timeline of activities, narrative budget, and description of roles and responsibilities of project staff (10 points)</p>	<p>The proposal clearly describes and demonstrates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2 points) Relevance of an identified pest management issue to growers' adoption of reduced risk pest management alternatives and/or sustainable integrated pest or crop management methods. • (2 points) Summary of key goals, objectives, and final products. • (2 points) Schedule or timeline of activities for the project. • (2 points) Budget and estimated funding amounts for each proposal component/task that corresponds to the SF424A Grant Application form budget categories. Total costs must include both federal and any proposed matching (non-federal) components/tasks. Identify any proposed cost share or match in the budget. • (2 points) Description of roles and responsibilities of the applicant and major partners in carrying out the project commitments.
<p>5. Expected ability to produce measurable environmental results (25 points)</p>	<p>The proposal includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10 points) The required environmental performance measures (See Section I.C.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the <u>SAI Transition Gradient</u>. ○ Number of acres likely to be impacted by the project. • (5 points) A minimum of one additional performance measure that can be tracked throughout the project. • (2 points) A clear and effective plan for tracking and measuring progress in achieving expected outputs and outcomes. • (5 points) How the project will result in ensuring the public health and socio-economic benefits of pesticide availability and use are achieved (EPA Strategic Plan Sub-objective 4.1.5) • (3 points) A discussion of whether the identified project outcomes have the potential to reduce energy consumption and/or the production of greenhouse gases.
<p>6. Programmatic capability (Technical Experience and Past Performance) (10 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (5 points) Applicant has the staff expertise, qualifications, knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the project. • (3 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. • (2 points) Applicant has organizational experience and a management plan to ensure successful completion of the project.

- Leveraging (5 points)
 - (5 points) Applicant demonstrates leveraging of financial resources by showing:
 - (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or
 - (ii) that EPA funding will compliment activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources.

B. Review and Selection Process

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

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and assign scores to each proposal.

Region 7 anticipates announcing successful proposal(s) within 60 days after the closing date of this announcement. Project award is anticipated no later than 90 days after the notification of the successful applicant(s).

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status by mail. 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 CRF 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/chitoc.htm>.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 quarterly progress reports throughout the duration of the project. Progress reports are due 30 days after each quarter of 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.

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.

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.

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

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

APPENDIX A – CHECKLIST TOOL

Submission Requirements: Hard Copy or Grants.gov

Hard Copy Submittal

If the hard copy submittal method is used, one original hard copy of the proposal must be received by EPA by U.S. Postal Service, hand delivery, courier, or express delivery service no later than 5:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time, May 16, 2008.

Submit hard copy proposal to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Attention: Heather Duncan, SAI Coordinator
WWPD/TOPE
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

Grants.gov Submittal

If the Grants.gov submittal method is used, the proposal must be submitted no later than 5:00 P.M. Central Daylight Time, May 16, 2008.

Forms and Proposal Checklist

Note: All forms and proposal components listed below are required, regardless of method of submission.

Forms

- Standard Form SF 424 – Application For Federal Assistance**
- Standard Form SF 424A – Budget Information**
- Standard Form SF 424B – Assurances Non-Construction Programs Certification**
- Certification Regarding Lobbying**
- Key Contacts List**
- Key Contacts List – Additional** (if needed)

Proposal

- Cover Page** (1 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:

Executive Summary (1 page)

Proposal Narrative (12 pages)

Including the following sections:

- Project Title
- Environmental Issues
- Literature Review/Background
- Objectives
- Environmental Results
- Timetable for Accomplishments
- Programmatic Capability

Budget Narrative (1 page)

DUNS Number

Letters of Support (as applicable)

APPENDIX B – 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).**

Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-R7WWPD-08-003 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 May 16, 2008 at 5:00 PM CDT.

Proposal Materials

Proposals must be prepared as described in Section IV.C of the announcement and include the following information.

- 1. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**
Complete the form. There are no attachments.
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. SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs**

Complete the form. There are no attachments.

The total amount of federal funding requested for the two-year project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package. (See instructions for document 10 below.)

3. Narrative Workplan

Prepare as described in Section IV.C of the announcement (there is a 12 page limitation on this not including the budget narrative and other attachments such as resumes and letters of support) .

4. Other Attachments Form

Prepare as needed for the budget narrative and optional documents such as resumes, letters of support.-See Section IV.C of the announcement.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

Documents 1 through 2 listed under Proposal Materials above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For documents 1 through 2, 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 3 (the Narrative Workplan) and any other attachments such as the budget narrative, you will need to attach electronic files. For the Narrative Workplan, prepare the document as described in Sections IV.B and C of the announcement and save the document to your computer as MS Word, PDF or WordPerfect files. (U.S. EPA prefers to receive documents in MS Word, but documents prepared in WordPerfect will also be accepted.) When you are ready to attach it 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 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 – Region 7 – FY08 – Targeting BMPs – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – Region 7 – FY08 Targeting BMPs – 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 – Region 7 – FY08 Targeting BMPs – 2nd Submission.” Once your application 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 application package through Grants.gov.

In the “Application Filing Name” box, your AOR should enter your organization’s name (abbreviated where possible), the appropriate region, the fiscal year (*e.g.*, FY07), and the grant category (*e.g.*, Tribal Air). 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/help/help.jsp>, and at the same time you should notify **Heather Duncan, as shown in Section VII**. If you have any technical difficulties at any time during this process, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>

Proposals submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the Proposal deadline, please contact **Heather Duncan, as shown in Section VII of the announcement**. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.