

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: Quantifying Soil Carbon Sequestration Potential Through Improved Pasture Management

ACTION: Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP No: OAR-CCD-09-07

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA): 66.034

DATES: The closing date for receipt of hard copy proposal packages is April 20, 2009, 4:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST). All hard copies of proposal packages must be received by Tom Wirth by April 20, 2009 by 4:00 p.m., EST in order to be considered for funding. Electronic submissions must be submitted via <http://www.grants.gov/> by April 20, 2009, 11:59 p.m., EST. Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals for a demonstration study to quantify changes in soil organic carbon resulting from improved pasture management practices. Eligible entities with experience implementing soil carbon measurement studies are encouraged to submit proposals.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total funding for this competitive opportunity is estimated to be up to \$150,000 over a one to two year period. EPA anticipates awarding approximately one cooperative agreement from this announcement, subject to availability of funds and the quality of proposals received.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

International awareness of the problems caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has created the need to improve public understanding of the sources and sinks and to implement strategies for containing and reducing the emissions of these gases. Enhancing the ability of terrestrial sinks to sequester carbon is one strategy that can make a significant contribution to this effort and soil carbon sequestration on grazing lands can play an important part. With approximately 280,000,000 hectares (700,000,000 acres) of grassland in the U.S. there is a tremendous potential to sequester organic carbon on these lands, while also improving the productivity of the soil and the profitability and efficiency of livestock production. One of the most important aspects of this issue that necessitates further investigation is a better understanding of the impacts of improved pasture management on soil organic carbon sequestration.

The Climate Change Division (CCD) in EPA's Office of Air and Radiation works to assess and address global climate change and the associated risks to human health and the environment. One of the primary responsibilities of the Program Integration Branch (PIB) of CCD is the quantification and estimation of GHG emissions from sources and sinks in the United States and the development of the annual inventory of GHG emissions and sinks. PIB also works with other countries and organizations in capacity building efforts to assist them in the quantification of emissions and sinks within their boundaries. As a result of PIB's proficiency in estimating GHG emissions and sinks resulting from agricultural management practices, it also participates on work designed to assess the potential for utilizing GHG offsets as a mechanism to lower the cost of reducing GHG concentrations in the atmosphere, such as through sequestration of organic carbon in the soil.

This project will benefit livestock producers, rural communities and the general public. It will provide the livestock industry with the most current information on which to base its decisions on the type of management practices that should be implemented to maximize sequestration of soil organic carbon. Livestock producers will benefit directly from increased soil organic matter content, improved forage production, increased livestock productivity and potentially through the selling of carbon credits that result from the additional carbon being sequestered on their land. Rural communities dependent upon the health of livestock operations, which are the economic backbone of many rural areas across the U.S., will benefit from more profitable and sustainable livestock operations. The general public will benefit through the development of a cost-effective mechanism for reducing GHG concentrations, improved water quality from better soil management, and from lower prices for livestock products that result from efficient, sustainable and well managed livestock operations. The global environment will also benefit from this effort as a result of establishing cost-effective approaches to reducing concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere.

Although some studies have been carried out to better quantify carbon sequestration on pasturelands, additional efforts are needed to improve the current state of knowledge. This work can contribute to improved inputs for the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks*, produced annually by EPA in compliance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as to international guidance documents used to estimate the change in carbon stocks in soils (e.g., Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories). Additionally, this work can further efforts to evaluate the potential of soil organic carbon sequestration on pastureland as a viable mitigation strategy to reduce the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere. The purpose of this cooperative agreement is to better quantify changes in soil organic carbon resulting from improved pasture management practices.

B. Scope of Work

This is a new solicitation opportunity. EPA is requesting proposals from eligible entities to provide the agricultural community and experts on GHGs and climate change with defensible data on the potential of improved pasture management practices to sequester soil carbon. The applicant's proposal should demonstrate an understanding of pasture management practices and the livestock industry, soil science and climate change, sources and sinks of GHGs relevant to agriculture, and experience with conducting soil carbon measurement studies.

Specific activities may include, but not limited to:

- Synthesis of the available data and information on soil carbon sequestration on pasturelands, and any other background information or studies undertaken by other organizations that may assist in the development of improved estimates of changes in soil carbon sequestration as a result of improved pasture management practices.
- An assessment of any gaps in the existing data and default factors used in estimating carbon sequestration on pasture that lead to those factors not being reflective of current conditions in the U.S.
- Development and execution of a technical plan to collect field data to address any identified gaps in data or information. This plan will include a detailed proposal for a field measurement study to supplement existing data, which will be carried out with the ultimate goal of developing improved factors for quantifying soil carbon (tons C/ha/year) sequestered over time as a result of improved management practices on pastureland.
- An assessment of the uncertainty associated with the developed factors, and how any potential sources of bias were identified and, where possible, eliminated.

- Dissemination of results of the study to non-federal audiences, including industry, domestic and international organizations, and the general public.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan

Tasks under this agreement support the EPA Strategic Plan's Goal 1: Clean Air and Global Climate Change. Objective: 1.5 Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In order to identify the methods, programs and/or initiatives to reduce GHG emissions, in accordance with Objective 1.5, it is imperative to have a solid understanding of the sources/sinks and magnitude of existing GHG emissions/sequestration for a particular emissions source/sink. The Program Integration Branch of CCD is responsible for a variety of analytical activities relevant to the quantification and estimation of GHG emissions and sinks.

The Tasks under this agreement support these objectives by gathering and producing data that will enable a better understanding of the soil organic carbon sequestration resulting from various pasture management practices. This will result in the development of improved data on pastureland soil carbon sequestration that will help the livestock industry, domestic and international organizations, and the general public, better estimate the GHG flux from pasturelands and develop strategies for reducing these emissions, and will also support EPA's Strategic Plan. This will lead to substantial environmental and human health benefits.

2. Outputs

The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected **outputs** from the project to be funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Assessment of existing research and data sources for comparison to soil carbon field measurements taken as part of this project.
- Development of a Technical Plan for conducting the actual measurement study, including quality assurance and quality control procedures to ensure that data are of a known and appropriate quality.
- Report on the measurement study outlining methodological approach, results, discussion, and documentation.

- Sequestration factors (tons C/ha/year) for selected pasture management practices in the U.S.
- Presentations at workshops and/or conferences.
- Recommendations for how to utilize the data developed through this cooperative agreement in other soil carbon modeling tools or guidance documents used to estimate GHG fluxes on pasturelands.
- Recommendations for future areas of study.

Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI.D of this announcement, "Reporting Requirement."

3. 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.

Projects to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce at least one, and preferably all, of the following environmental outcomes:

- Improved understanding of the processes and pathways that lead to sequestration of soil organic carbon on pasturelands as a result of adoption of improved management practices.
- Improved understanding of the regional representation of existing data on soil organic carbon sequestration resulting from improved pasture management, and where appropriate, development of updated factors (tons C/ha/yr) to reflect current conditions in the U.S. This data could be used to improve the estimates of soil carbon flux on grasslands in the U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory, calibrate existing models used to simulate soil carbon dynamics, and evaluate the potential for improved pasture management to be promoted as a practice to decrease the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere.
- Improved understanding of the effects of the livestock industry on greenhouse gas emissions and climate.

D. Supplementary Information

The statutory authority for this action is the Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3) which authorizes the award of grants for research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, and studies related to activities that improve economic, technical and programmatic understanding of climate change.

Demonstrations 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. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation activities are not eligible for funding.

The general public will benefit through an improved understanding of cost-effective options for reducing GHG concentrations in the atmosphere along with more efficient, sustainable and well managed livestock operations. This work can also contribute to improved inputs for the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks*, produced annually by EPA in compliance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated funding expected to be available for award under this competitive opportunity is up to \$150,000 over a one to two year period.

B. Partial Funding.

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.

C. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement under this announcement in value of up to \$150,000, subject to the availability of funds and quality of evaluated proposals.

In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of original selection date.

D. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated project period for the award resulting from this solicitation will be from **July 1, 2009** to a period of up to one to two years.

E. Funding Type

The funding for the selected project will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this project will be:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient);
- approving substantive terms of proposed contracts;
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with CFDA 66.034, proposals will be accepted from States, local governments, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, international organizations, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private non-profit institutions.

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

Non-profit 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 required cost-share or match for this solicitation. However, leveraging of funds is an evaluation factor in Section V. Leveraged funding or other resources need not be for eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement unless the Applicant proposes to provide a voluntary cost share or match. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost share/match/participation, applicants must meet their matching/sharing/participation commitment as a condition of receiving EPA funding. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for voluntary match/cost share/participation 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 voluntary matches/cost shares/participation. Other Federal grants may not be used as voluntary matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants). Any form of proposed leveraging that is evaluated under a section V ranking criteria must be included in the proposal and the proposal must describe how the applicant will obtain the leveraged resources and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals from eligible entities (see above) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Proposals to fund projects under this announcement must demonstrate the ability to plan for, and undertake, measurement studies of soil organic carbon in pasture soils as stated in section I.
2. 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. In addition, 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.
3. Proposals must be received by the EPA or through www.grants.gov on or before the solicitation closing date published in Section IV of this announcement. Proposals received after the published closing date will be 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 grants.gov and not the applicant.

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain Proposal Package

EPA encourages applicants to obtain proposal materials and apply electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>.

Applicants may also download individual grant application forms from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm.

To obtain a hard copy of materials, please send an email or written request to Wirth.Tom@epa.gov, or request a paper copy of materials by U.S. Postal Service from the following address:

Tom Wirth
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,
Climate Change Division
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW (6207J)
Washington, DC 20460

B. Mode of Proposal Submission

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in *one of two ways*: 1) Hard copy via express delivery, or 2) electronically via <http://www.grants.gov/>. Proposals will not be accepted via email, fax or standard 1st Class Mail delivery by U.S. Postal Service. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C. below, regardless of mode of transmission.

1. Hard Copy Submission

Please provide one original of the proposal package (including signed and completed SF 424 and SF 424A forms) and four copies--**no binders or spiral binding please**--to:

Express Delivery Address (FedEx, UPS, DHL, USPS, etc.)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Tom Wirth (Mail Code: 6207J)
Room 747C
1310 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 343-9313

Proposals will not be accepted via U.S. Postal Service.

Hard Copy Proposal Submission Deadline

All hard copies of proposal packages must be received by Tom Wirth, **April 20, 2009**, 4:00 p.m., EST.

2. Grants.gov Submission

The electronic submission of your proposal 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.

***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 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 proposal 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 <http://www.grants.gov/>). For more information on Adobe Reader, 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 proposal package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OAR-CCD-09-07**, or the CFDA number (CFDA 66.034) that applies to the announcement 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).

***If you have any questions regarding Grants.gov, please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.**

Grants.gov Proposal Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) **must** submit your complete proposal package as described below, electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/>) no later than **11:59 p.m. EST on April 20, 2009.**

Proposal Materials

The following forms and documents are required to be submitted under this announcement:

- I. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- II. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- III. Narrative Proposal (**as described in section IV.C of the announcement**)

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

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

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

II. Standard Form SF 424A – Budget Information:

Complete the form. There are no attachments.

The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

***Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency during application phase.**

III. Narrative Proposal

The document should be readable in PDF for Windows and consolidated into a single file and be prepared in accordance with Section IV C of this announcement.

Documents I through III listed under **Proposal Materials** above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the www.grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For documents I and II (SF 424 and 424A), click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that

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

For document number III, the Narrative Proposal, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your narrative proposal as described above in Section IV.C. of this announcement and save the document to your computer as a PDF file. When you are ready to attach your proposal to the application package, click on "Project Narrative Attachment Form," and open the form. Click "Add Mandatory Project Narrative File," and then attach your proposal narrative (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click "View Mandatory Project Narrative File" to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside "Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;" the file name should be no more than 40 characters long. If there other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click "Add Optional Project Narrative File" and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click "Close Form." When you return to the "Grant Application Package" page, select the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" and click "Move Form to Submission List." The form should now appear in the box that says, "Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission."

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

In the "Application Filing Name" box, your AOR should enter your organization's name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY09), and the grant category (e.g., Assoc Prog Supp). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the "Grant Application Package" page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the "Submit" button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is

being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot their computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] **If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, they may contact grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>**

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

C. Content of Proposal Submission

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

- **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**
Complete the form (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm> .There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

- **Standard Form (SF) 424A , Budget Information**
Complete the form (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm> .There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.
- **Narrative Proposal**
The document should be readable in PDF for Windows and consolidated into a single file and be prepared as stated below
The Narrative Proposal (including sections 1-3 below) **cannot** exceed a maximum of 15 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the Summary Page. Pages in excess of 15 will not be considered.

*Supporting materials, such as resumes and letters of support, are not required. If supporting materials are included as attachments, they will be included in the 15-page limit.

1. Summary Page

- a. Project Title
- b. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
- c. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.
- d. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost share or in-kind resources.
- e. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates.

2. Narrative Work Plan

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

- a. **Project Summary/Approach:** The summary shall contain the following components:
 - i. A detailed project summary, description of specific actions and methods to be undertaken and the responsible institutions, including estimated time line for each task.
 - ii. Description of the associated work products to be developed.
 - iii. Explanation of project benefits to the public, and specifically the potential audience(s) served.
 - iv. Description of the roles of the applicant and partners, if any.
 - v. Description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project.
 - vi. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.
 - vii. Budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF-424A, such as "other" and "contractual."

b. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the project (**See Section I**), including what measurements will be used to track your progress towards achieving the outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated. Identify the expected project outputs and how progress towards achieving the outputs will be tracked and measured.

c. Past Performance

I. Programmatic Capability: Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (**assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts**) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last ten years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

II. Reporting on Environmental Results--Outcomes and Outputs: 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 ten 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 these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.

3. Detailed Budget Narrative

Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs and total costs. Applicants shall also describe their ability to leverage funds.

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. 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.

E. 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, if 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.

F. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for receipt of hard copy proposal packages is **April 20, 2009 4:00 p.m., EST**. All hard copies of proposal packages must be received by the Tom Wirth (Wirth.Tom@epa.gov), 4:00 p.m., EST on **April 20, 2009** in order to be considered for funding. Electronic submissions must be submitted via Grants.gov by **April 20, 2009 11:59 p.m., EST**. Proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

Final (full) grant applications will be requested only from those eligible entities whose proposals have been tentatively selected for award. Additional instructions for final application packages will be provided when the applicant is notified of the tentative selection.

G. 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. However, the agency considers competitive proposals/applications confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

H. Pre-Proposal Assistance and Communications

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 proposals. However, EPA will respond to questions in writing from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Please forward your questions to Tom Wirth (Wirth.Tom@epa.gov).

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, facsimile, or electronic mail to the contact person listed above. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the OAR

Grants/Funding webpage: http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html.

V. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

Criteria	Points
<p>1. <u>Project Summary/Approach:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: (i) (15 pts) the extent and quality to which the narrative proposal includes a well-conceived strategy for addressing all of the requirements in Section I, Part B (Scope of Work) and Part C (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs), (ii) (15 pts) the extent and quality to which the narrative proposal’s goals are realistic and will be actually implemented by project end, (iii) (5 pts) whether the narrative proposal sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project(s).</p>	<p>35</p>
<p>2. <u>Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the effectiveness of the applicant’s plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I of this announcement.</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>3. <u>Past Performance--Programmatic Capability and Reporting on Environmental Results:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the applicant’s technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicants: (i) (9 pts) past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 10 years, (ii) (8 pts) history of meeting reporting requirements on federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 10 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, and (iii) (8 pts) past performance in documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal</p>	<p>25</p>

<p>contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project within the last 10 years; and, if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not.</p> <p><u>NOTE:</u> In evaluating applicants under this criterion, 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 will receive a neutral score for those elements under this criterion. A neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p>	
<p>4. <u>Staff Expertise/Qualifications:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: (i) (5 pts) the description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project , (ii) (5 pts) and description of the applicant’s organization and experience relating to the proposed project.</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>5. <u>Budget/Resources:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors: (i) (5 pts) whether the proposed project budget is appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes, (ii) (5 pts) whether the budget provides an approximation of the percentage of the budget designated for each major activity.</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>6. <u>Leveraging Resources:</u> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) (2 pts) 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) (3 pts) that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources.</p> <p>Any form of proposed leveraging that is evaluated under this factor must be included in the narrative proposal portion of the application and must describe how the applicant will obtain the leveraged resources and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.</p>	<p>5</p>

B. Review and Selection Process

A review team will evaluate all eligible proposals using the criteria above. Each proposal will be given a numerical score, with a total of 100 points possible, and will be rank ordered according to the numerical score. The review team will develop preliminary funding recommendations for the Approving Official based on this ranking.

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

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

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

Proposal Notifications.

- a. EPA anticipates notification to the *successful* applicant will be made, via telephone, electronic or postal mail by **May 29, 2009**. The notification will advise the applicant that its Proposal has been successfully evaluated and recommended for award. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance. The notice shall require submission of a Final Application. (*Refer to Section IV(B), Content and form of Application Submission.*)

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

- b. EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicant(s) will be made via electronic or postal mail by **May 29, 2009**. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement

A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at:

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm.

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their proposal to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Proposal and not all states

require such a review.

C. DUNS Number

All applicants **are required** to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

D. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. Quarterly reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities for next quarter and summary of expenditures are required. The final report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of quarterly reports will be established by EPA, after award.

E. 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) located on the web at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=3629&dbname=2005_register

Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Tom Wirth (see section VII for contact information)

F. Non-profit Administrative Capability

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 CONTACTS

For further information, contact:

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All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, facsimile, or electronic mail to the contact person listed above. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the OAR Grants/Funding webpage: http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html .