

Sources Sought Synopsis
SOL-CI-13-00016
Technical and Regulatory Support for the Development of Criteria for Water Media
(Ecological Emphasis)

THIS IS A SOURCES SOUGHT SYNOPSIS FOR WRITTEN INFORMATION ONLY. THIS IS NOT A SOLICITATION ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PROPOSALS AND NO CONTRACT WILL BE AWARDED FROM THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is performing a “market search” for large and small businesses in preparation for a future procurement.

The EPA has a need for a contractor to provide the Office of Water’s Office of Science and Technology (OST), Health and Ecological Criteria Division (HECD), with support in its mission under the Clean Water Act (CWA) to protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters (e.g., protect them from the adverse impacts of chemicals, suspended and bedded sediments, microorganisms, and nutrients; assess and maintain the quality of biological communities; diagnose the causes of impacts) and address these components in media such as surface waters, wastewater, biosolids, and sediments. It also requires support in providing assistance to States and Tribes as they implement their water quality standards programs in order for OST to meet one of its crucial missions.

The specific purpose of the resultant contract would be for the contractor to provide technical and regulatory support services to the Health and Ecological Criteria Division (HECD) in OST to develop, revise, and implement ecological criteria for the protection of water quality on a national, state, and site-specific basis. Activities in support of this purpose might include:

SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- conducting toxicological reviews
- conducting national and site-specific ecological hazard assessments
- conducting national and site-specific ecological risk assessments
- performing statistical analyses
- evaluating national and site-specific methods for ecological criteria development
- evaluating national and site-specific ecological impacts of pollutants
- evaluating national and site-specific risk assessment measurement endpoints
- analyzing tissue, surface water, sediment, biosolids, and effluent samples for chemicals, microorganism, and nutrients
- performing population modeling of chemical impacts on aquatic or aquatic-dependent species
- conducting laboratory toxicity tests and field studies
- conducting biological assessments and laboratory taxonomic identifications
- conducting toxicity tests in water and sediment
- developing bioavailability, chemical fate, transport and effect and population model development and support
- developing data bases
- conducting GIS and other mapping

- evaluating bioaccumulation potential, trophic transfer, calculating and applying bioaccumulation factors
- sampling ambient waters, effluents, organism tissues, and biosolids for chemical analysis
- conducting literature reviews, reviewing technical data, performing analyses and summarizing findings
- conducting remote sensing
- investigating, interpreting, and addressing experimental and emerging science: genomics, endocrine disruptors, pharmaceuticals and personal care products, prions, nanotechnology, immunosuppression, etc.
- implementing knowledge and experience in the use and application of EPA national and site-specific guidance methodologies for the development of water quality criteria

DOCUMENTATION SUPPORT

- preparing national and site-specific ecological criteria documents in standard EPA format
- preparing national and site-specific technical information documents
- preparing national and site-specific technical support documents for methods, criteria, and regulations
- preparing the index of references for proposed regulations and other publications
- preparing presentation materials
- arranging and conducting workshops
- preparing public outreach, brochures, fliers, etc
- performing technical writing
- providing Water Quality Standard (WQS) Academy instruction and technical presentations
- developing non-technical summaries of documents for the general public
- developing non-technical briefing material for senior managers
- organizing literature reviews and references in an alphabetized or chronological or subject area order
- preparing peer review summaries and documents

Please see attached draft Performance Work Statement for additional information concerning the anticipated tasks under the resultant contract.

All interested parties are hereby invited to submit a capability statement of no more than fifteen (15) pages, and no smaller than 12 point font. In keeping with the potential tasks, interested parties submitting capabilities statements in response to this sources sought should address their ability to provide, or have access to, senior technical experts in: aquatic toxicology, aquatic chemistry, sediment toxicology, ecotoxicology, statistics, bioaccumulation, nutrients and nitrification, biological assessment, biocriteria, aquatic biology, wildlife toxicology, embedded sediments and suspended sediments, biosolids risk assessment, fate and effects and transport modeling, geochemical speciation modeling, aquatic life criteria development, and other criteria development derivation procedures to provide technical expertise to HECD and its customers.

The successful contractor shall provide all necessary labor materials, facilities, and services in support of the efforts. It is anticipated that the contract will be a Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF) Level of Effort (LOE) starting in December 2013 with a one year Base Period and four Optional Periods of 12 months each. Interested parties should include a discussion of the capability of

their accounting system or ability to implement a cost accounting system required of a cost-type contract. Previous experience with cost-type government contracts should be discussed. Approximately 15,000 LOE hours are anticipated for each contract period with contractor's needing to provide as much as an additional 2,800 hours for a total of 84,000 hours in total for all periods if all the potential LOE hours are realized. The applicable NAICS code is 541690 with a size standard of \$14,000,000. The resultant contract would be a follow-on to EP-C-09-001 with Great Lakes Environmental Center, Inc.

In the previous acquisition, EPA restricted the following types of firms from receiving award due to an inherent conflict of interest posed by the implications of the services to be provided under the contract: firms that were chemical producers/importers; pesticide or agricultural products producers/importers; and waste management/waste disposal firms.

Any interested firms should submit a capability statement which demonstrates the firm's ability to perform the key requirements described above. Standard company brochures will not be considered a sufficient response to this Sources Sought Synopsis. In the capabilities statements, contractors should provide their size status for the above referenced NAICS code, (i.e. large, small) and whether or not they are certified Hubzone, 8(a), women-owned, small disadvantaged and/or service veteran owned concern.

The EPA reserves the right to set this action aside for small businesses if it determines that there are two or more small businesses able to compete in terms of market prices, quality, and delivery. If set aside, a small business would be required to perform at least 51 percent of the direct labor costs incurred under the contract with their own personnel (FAR 52.219-14). Capability statements from small businesses should address their ability to meet this requirement. Responses to the above should be submitted to Courtney Stallworth, at Stallworth.courtney@epa.gov no later than 21 calendar days from date of this posting. A separate synopsis will be issued for the Request for Proposal (RFP) resulting from this sources sought synopsis.

The EPA is also interested in soliciting ideas that firms may have as to the appropriate means of incentivizing contractor performance from a contractor's perspective.

PERFORMANCE WORK STATEMENT

TECHNICAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA FOR WATER MEDIA (ECOLOGICAL EMPHASIS)

1.0 Background

The Office of Science and Technology (OST) is one of four program offices within the Office of Water of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Health and Ecological Criteria Division (HECD) is one of three divisions within OST. One mission of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water (OW) under the Clean Water Act is to protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters (e.g., protect them from the adverse impacts of chemicals, suspended and bedded sediments, microorganisms, and nutrients; assess and maintain the quality of biological communities; diagnose the causes of impacts) and address these components in media such as surface waters, wastewater, biosolids, and sediments.

In fulfillment of this mission, OST carries the broad responsibility of developing effluent guidelines, ecological criteria, assessment and diagnostic tools, risk assessment methodologies, limits for pollutants in various water media, and provide assistance to States and Tribes as they implement their water quality standards programs.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this performance work statement (PWS) is to provide technical and regulatory support services to the Health and Ecological Criteria Division (HECD) in OST to develop, revise, and implement ecological criteria for the protection of water quality on a national, state, and site-specific basis. This technical and regulatory support requires experience in aquatic toxicology, aquatic chemistry, sediment toxicology, ecotoxicology, statistics, bioaccumulation, nutrients and nitrification, biological assessment, biocriteria, aquatic biology, wildlife toxicology, suspended and bedded sediments, biosolids risk assessment, fate and effects and transport modeling, geochemical speciation modeling, aquatic life criteria development, and other criteria development derivation procedures. This support includes activities such as:

Scientific/Technical Support

- conducting toxicological reviews
- conducting national and site-specific ecological hazard assessments
- conducting national and site-specific ecological risk assessments
- performing statistical analyses
- evaluating national and site-specific methods for ecological criteria development
- evaluating national and site-specific ecological impacts of pollutants
- evaluating national and site-specific risk assessment measurement endpoints
- analyzing tissue, surface water, sediment, biosolids, and effluent samples for chemicals, microorganisms and nutrients

- performing population modeling of chemical impacts on aquatic or aquatic-dependent species
- conducting laboratory toxicity tests and field studies
- conducting biological assessments and laboratory taxonomic identifications
- conducting toxicity tests in water and sediment
- developing bioavailability, chemical fate, transport and effect and population model development and support
- developing data bases
- conducting GIS and other mapping
- evaluating bioaccumulation potential, trophic transfer, calculating and applying bioaccumulation factors
- sampling ambient waters, effluents, organism tissues, and biosolids for chemical analysis
- conducting literature reviews, reviewing technical data, performing analyses and summarizing findings
- conducting remote sensing
- investigating, interpreting, and addressing experimental & emerging science and contaminants: genomics, endocrine disruptors, pharmaceuticals and personal care products, nanotechnology, immunosuppressants, etc.
- implementing knowledge and experience in the use and application of EPA national and site-specific guidance methodologies for the development of water quality criteria

Documentation Support

- preparing national and site-specific ecological criteria documents in standard EPA format
- preparing national and site-specific technical information documents
- preparing national and site-specific technical support documents for methods, criteria, and regulations
- preparing the index of references for proposed and final regulations and other publications
- organizing and summarizing comments on proposed regulations and other publications
- preparing presentation materials
- arranging and conducting workshops
- preparing public outreach documents, brochures, fliers, etc
- performing technical writing
- providing Water Quality Standard (WQS) Academy instruction and technical presentations
- developing non-technical summaries of documents for the general public
- developing non-technical and technical briefing materials for senior managers
- organizing literature reviews and references in an alphabetized or chronological or subject area order
- preparing peer review summaries and documents

The technical requirements of this procurement are detailed below. All work required under this contract shall be defined in written work assignments issued by the Contracting Officer (CO). The EPA Project Officer (PO) or Work Assignment Manager (WAM) reviews all contractor analyses and

makes final determinations with regard to program objectives and the content of Agency regulations.

3.0 Statement or Scope of Work – General Tasks

The contractor shall supply all necessary labor, materials, services, equipment, and facilities in support of EPA as delineated below and as further directed by specific work assignments, including quick response work assignments, in accordance with the contract PWS. Each initial deliverable shall be provided to the PO/WAM in draft form for review and comment. The draft, with required changes and revisions as noted, will be returned to the contractor for completion of each final deliverable. All products shall be submitted, at a minimum, in an electronic format, as specified in the work assignment, that is compatible with hardware and software in use by HECD at the time the work is performed. Electronic formats required may include: html, xml, pdf, wordprocessing, PowerPoint, database management software, spreadsheet or GIS formats as specified in the PWS. Final products should be available as 508 compliant documents.

- 3.1 **Mathematical Modeling and Statistical Analyses:** The contractor shall perform mathematical modeling, Monte-Carlo analyses, and statistical analyses in support of criteria development. At a minimum, the contractor will perform regression analyses, analyses of covariance, and nonlinear regressions and use and have access to SAS, Sigma Stat, Sigma Plot, ICP, and TOXSTAT.
- 3.2 **Standard Software:** The contractor shall develop documents and data bases using EPA standard and approved software (e.g., MicroSoft Word and Excel, and Lotus Notes) unless specifically requested to do otherwise in a work assignment. Software documentation for all contractor-developed or non-standard programs and models shall be accessible to the Work Assignment Manager (WAM) and other persons authorized by the EPA Project Officer (PO).
- 3.3 **Laboratory Availability:** The contractor shall possess or have access to an appropriately equipped laboratory and staff that can analyze pollutants such as organics, metals, nutrients, and pathogens, using appropriate methods (e.g., gas chromatography/mass spectrometry, metals using atomic absorption) in water media (e.g., wastewater, surface water, estuarine and saltwater) and other complex media (e.g., sediments, biosolids, and tissue).
- 3.4 **Laboratory and Field Studies:** The contractor shall possess or have access to the facilities, equipment, and scientific staff needed to conduct laboratory and field studies on ecological effects of chemicals, nutrients, microorganisms, and suspended and bedded sediments, conduct bioassessments, develop biological indices, and derive biological criteria. The contractor shall conduct laboratory and field studies to support the development of water quality criteria, biocriteria, wildlife criteria, sediment benchmarks,

- nutrient criteria, suspended and bedded sediments criteria, other ecological criteria, biosolids pollutant limits, and other program requirements. This shall include the capability to perform field and laboratory taxonomic analyses of fish, invertebrates, plants, algae, diatoms and other biological communities to varying levels of taxonomic identification (family, genus, species) and collect bioaccumulation data to support bioaccumulation factor (BAF) derivation.
- 3.5 **Sample Analysis:** The contractor shall collect and analyze samples (e.g., wastewater, surface water, tissue, sediment, or biosolids) for pollutants to support development of water quality criteria, biocriteria, wildlife criteria, sediment benchmarks, nutrient criteria, other ecological criteria, biosolids pollutant limits, impairment diagnostics (toxicity and stressor identification evaluations) and other program requirements.
- 3.6 **Quick and Rapid Response:** The contractor shall provide information that will be used by EPA for quick and rapid responses and analyses of options, issues, and policy decisions as they relate to the tasks in this Performance Work Statement (PWS). Quick and rapid responses are those that require completion in one to seven days or as specified in a work assignment. EPA will review the results of all contractor analyses, and make a final decision with regard to program objectives and policy decisions. Examples of quick and rapid response tasks (related to ecological risk assessment guidelines and results of ecological risk assessments) include:
- Analysis of dose response and infectivity data, exposure data, and bioaccumulation data;
 - Technical review of criteria in proposed State and Tribal water quality standards;
 - Recommendations, with documented rationale, of approval or revisions to standards.
- 3.7 **Administrative Acts:** The contractor shall comply with the requirements for studies and rule making records in the Administrative Procedures Act, the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Clean Water Act, OMB Circular A-130 for management of Federal Information Resources, the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure, the EPA Docket Policy and Records Management Policy, and any other appropriate authority.
- 3.8 **Risk Assessment Guidance:** The contractor shall perform the specific tasks in the PWS in accordance with the appropriate EPA risk assessment guidance and science policy guidance (e.g., ecological risk assessment guidelines).
- 3.9 **Foreign Language Translation:** The contractor shall provide, when included in a work assignment, a complete and accurate translation of foreign language articles cited in a criteria document or technical guidance document. Translations shall be performed by experienced scientific translators well-versed in chemical, toxicological, statistical, ecological, nutrient, biological, or microbiological terminology, as appropriate. No translations shall be made without the prior written approval of the Project Officer.
- 3.10 **Administrative Record Support:** The contractor shall provide data and documentation to be used by EPA in the analysis of technical issues and options for proposed and final regulation, draft and final criteria, and other publications. Deliverables under this task

include data summaries, technical reports, option papers, issue papers, public and confidential records and files. The contractor shall describe and document the data gathering activities; display, characterize, and interpret the data and information collected; obtain copies of any references used; and describe all methodologies used. Written reports and corresponding records and files shall be prepared, organized, indexed, and cross-referenced in an administrative record for a proposed or final regulation, draft or final criteria, or other publication so that the analyses and conclusions can be reproduced based on the information in the administrative record.

- 3.11 **Rulemaking and Technical Publication Support:** The contractor shall index and summarize public and peer review comments on proposed regulations and technical documents. Using information provided by EPA (e.g., typically public comments submitted in response to a proposed regulation, information collection request, or draft technical document publication), the contractor shall prepare an index of issues in the information provided by EPA, and cross reference those issues to the comments. For technical issues assigned by the WAM, the contractor shall, based on knowledge of the appropriate rulemaking or draft technical publication, prepare draft technical responses to the issues in the comments including all relevant citations to the administrative record. EPA will review the draft technical responses, and prepare the final responses to the comments. The contractor shall compile final responses into a responsiveness document.
- 3.12 **Preparation of Outreach Materials:** The contractor shall develop outreach materials in support of the tasks in this PWS. Those materials include brochures, presentation boards, 35 mm and electronic slide shows, fact sheets, pamphlets, posters, videos, Internet layouts, and models. The materials shall be developed for use in media events (e.g., press releases), training, presentations, and briefings. In addition, the contractor shall provide materials for distribution at presentations. All materials shall be provided in accordance with the limitations set forth in the Section H clause titled "PRINTING (EPAAR 1552.208-70.) The contractor shall provide a draft of all materials for approval by the WAM, and shall prepare the final materials based on the WAM's comments on the draft materials. For print products, the contractor shall provide a camera-ready copy and an electronic copy in a format that enables the material to be loaded onto the Internet. This task shall only be done in direct support of the technical requirements in this PWS.
- 3.13 **Workshop Support:** The contractor shall provide support in arranging workshops, conferences, training sessions, and public meetings, and in obtaining appropriate technical experts to address subject matter relative to this PWS. Meeting support shall be limited in scope, and shall cover only those meetings required to address the requirements in this PWS. The contractor shall arrange travel only in accordance with the authority and limitations in the Section H clause titled "APPROVAL OF CONTRACTOR TRAVEL" (i.e., use of contract funds to pay for travel expenses is strictly limited to personnel providing direct services in support of the workshops, conferences, training

sessions, and/or public meetings the contractor has been tasked to perform in support of the PWS, such as where the contractor is tasked to identify and obtain the services of the appropriate technical experts, consultants, speakers, scientists, and/or others who contribute directly to the requirements at issue). The contractor shall support EPA by: (1) providing information for meeting agendas, including typing the agendas; (2) preparing drafts of technical information for use in preparing briefing materials; (3) identifying and inviting speakers and experts to participate in a workshop; (4) arranging for meeting space when Government space is not available; (5) arranging for the appropriate audio-visual equipment; (6) providing advance announcements, registration support, visual aid preparation, logistical support, case study preparation, and interactive and role-playing activity development; and (7) preparing a report of the meeting, including the meeting results, for approval by the WAM.

- 3.14 **Third-Party Data Review:** The contractor shall evaluate the quality of third-party data (journals, grey literature, non-EPA databases, etc.), contacting authors, if required in a work assignment, to obtain additional quality information. Quality will be compared to EPA and programmatic guidance for acceptability.

- 3.15 **Data Quality Act/Information Quality Guidelines Requirements:** The Data Quality Act (also known as the Information Quality Act) requires EPA to ensure that influential information disseminated by the Agency is sufficiently transparent in terms of data and methods of analysis that the information is capable of being substantially reproduced. To support compliance with these data transparency/ data reproducibility requirements, EPA may include QAPPs and deliverables prepared by the Contractor as part of any rulemaking record documentation to be made available to the public. The Contractor may claim information in QAPPs as confidential; if the Contractor chooses to do so, the Contractor shall submit a sanitized (i.e., public) version and an unsanitized (i.e., confidential) version at the time the QAPP is submitted for approval by EPA. If Agency is required to release the QAPP to public, the sanitized version shall be included in the public docket for the applicable rulemaking (or other docket record), and the unsanitized version shall be included in a non-public (i.e., confidential) portion of the docket (or record).

Information contained in the approved QAPP and other documents prepared by the Contractor for dissemination by EPA shall be transparent and reproducible and meet the requirements of the Data Quality Act for influential information. EPA's *Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity, of Information Disseminated by the Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA/260R-02-008, October 2002), referred to as "EPA's Information Quality Guidelines," describe EPA procedures for meeting Data Quality Act requirements. Section 6.3 of EPA's Information Quality Guidelines indicate that "especially rigorous robustness checks" should be applied in circumstances where quality-related information cannot be disclosed due to confidentiality issues. Where applicable, the Contractors should indicate which results were obtained using the tools (SOPs, checklists, and guidelines) that the Contractor designates as confidential so that the EPA WAM can easily identify the areas that shall

require rigorous robustness checks and document that those checks have been performed. At the discretion of the EPA Work Assignment Manager (WAM) the Contractors may be requested to prepare pre-dissemination review checklist as described in Section 5.5 of the Office of Water Quality Management Plan, February 2009 (or as updated). If this is required, the EPA WAM shall notify the Contractor through written technical direction.

4.0 Statement or Scope of Work – Specific Tasks

For the following specific tasks, the EPA PO or WAM will review the information in draft form for technical soundness and adherence to Agency policy.

4.1 Aquatic Life Criteria and Protection

4.1.A. Chemical Criteria Document Development

The contractor shall prepare, evaluate, and revise aquatic life criteria documents in accordance with the Aquatic Life Criteria Guidelines or modifications and updates to that methodology. (<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/criteria/aqlife.html>). These documents provide information on the effects to aquatic life (including aquatic plants and aquatic dependent wildlife) from exposure to chemicals in water media. The contractor shall document the methodology, assumptions, and rationales used for this task.

An aquatic life criteria document shall address:

- Problem formulation (i.e., framing the context of the criteria document by integrating information on sources, stressors, exposures, effects, ecosystem and receptor characteristics; identifying assessment endpoints and developing a conceptual model, as per the 1998 EPA Guidelines for Ecological Risk Assessment)
- Acute and chronic toxicity to aquatic animals and plants and/or subchronic and indirect effects;
- Bioaccumulation (and a statement of the potential impact to aquatic dependent wildlife if deemed necessary);
- Chemical toxicity and other relationships as appropriate to the given chemical (e.g. immunosuppression, endocrine disruption, multiple stressors, sublethal effects, etc);
- Uncertainty analysis and steps or studies that could resolve it;
- Applicability and implementation of criteria;
- Impact of the criteria on Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or designated use attainment;
- Other areas set forth in a work assignment and those needed to address the Agency Information Quality Guidelines.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide during development of an aquatic life criteria document include:

- Conduct literature reviews (using ECOTOX, STORET, and other databases as required in a work assignment) to augment or develop a file of references;

- Evaluate literature against HECD's data requirements worksheet;
- Conduct toxicity tests, laboratory, or field studies as designated in a work assignment;
- Develop data tables;
- Conduct statistical analyses;
- Provide toxicological, chemical, and biological expertise to the EPA in developing the supporting science and criteria document;
- Provide support to categorize and summarize public and peer review comments;
- Prepare draft responses or options papers for technical comments;
- Compile responses into responsiveness documents.

4.1.B. Chemical Criteria Methodologies and Models

The contractor shall provide technical support and expertise during the evaluation, revision, and preparation of risk assessment and risk characterization techniques or methodologies for aquatic life protection (e.g. modifications to the aquatic life guidelines, development of the biotic ligand model for metals).

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Provide expertise and perspective on the existing methodologies;
- Evaluate both traditional (e.g., mortality, growth, reproduction) and emerging risk assessment measurement endpoints (e.g., endocrine disruption, immunosuppression, multiple stressors);
- Provide expertise in fate, transport, and effects modeling; mode of action, aquatic system recovery, and water quality variability;
- Document the methodology, assumptions, and rationales used;
- Categorize and summarize public and peer review comments;
- Prepare draft responses or options papers for technical comments;
- Compile responses into responsiveness documents.

4.1.C. Selecting Pollutants-of-Concern

The contractor shall provide technical support during the preparation, evaluation, or revision of procedures for selecting pollutants-of-concern in water media for which ecological criteria may be developed.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Develop procedures for establishing the priority of the pollutants-of-concern;
- Technical support and expertise during the evaluation of those pollutants;
- Document the methodology, assumptions, and rationales.

4.1.D. Contaminated Sediment Assessment

The contractor shall provide expertise and experience to EPA and its stakeholders in the derivation and application of Equilibrium Partitioning Sediment Benchmarks.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Use of the Equilibrium Partitioning Sediment Benchmarks methodology to conduct site

assessments;

- Evaluate and analyze data;
- Prepare issue, options, and white papers;
- Apply the theory to new pollutants, including bioaccumulatives;
- Provide technical support in assessing the applicability and implementation of the benchmarks;
- Provide technical support in assessing the impact of the benchmarks on TMDLs or “designated use attainment”.

4.1.E. Bioaccumulation

The contractor shall conduct bioaccumulation and bioconcentration assessments of nonionic organic, ionic organic, and inorganic and organometallic chemicals.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Evaluate a chemical's environmental fate, its bioavailability to aquatic organisms, and its potential for being metabolized;
- Develop national bioaccumulation factors (BAFs) according to the guidance presented in the 2000 EPA Human Health Methodology (<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/criteria/humanhealth/method/>);
- Provide support in the development of guidance documents for conducting field studies of bioaccumulation.

4.2 Biological Assessment and Criteria

4.2.A. Biological Assessment and Criteria Development

The contractor shall conduct biological assessments, derive biological criteria and quantify biotic response to anthropogenic stressors, including predictive landscape methods.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Perform biological surveys and bioassessments in wadeable streams, small rivers, estuaries, lakes, wetlands, coral reefs, the Great Lakes and large rivers;
- Classify water bodies for similar biological conditions;
- Determine proper reference sites;
- Derive useful reference conditions for a comparative analysis of test sites;
- Predict impacts of global climate change on aquatic systems, including potentially altered pathways and mechanisms of anthropogenic stressors impacting these systems;
- Conduct statistical analyses needed to conduct classification and reference condition analyses, including the multi-metric and multi-variate approaches;
- Use of RIVPACS and other modeling tools;

- Identify various taxonomy of freshwater invertebrates, plants and fish, and marine invertebrates, plants and fish.
- Improve level of rigor of state and tribal biological assessment;
- Method development for deriving biological response stressor associations;
- Method and model development to better integrate biological assessments and criteria with chemical, physical and landscape/watershed level assessments and/or criteria;
- Method development for establishing thresholds protective of aquatic life;
- Conduct expert solicitation to calibrate biological condition model for streams, rivers, wetlands, estuarine and coastal systems;
- Method development to develop numeric decision rules and thresholds for Biological Condition Gradient models;
- Incorporate biological assessments and criteria into decision science and ecological risk assessment frameworks.

4.2.B. State/Tribal Support Capability

The contractor shall assist States and Tribes in their development and implementation of biological assessments and criteria, including use of bioassessment information to refine designated aquatic life uses in State and Tribal Water Quality Protection Programs, including water quality standards.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Support in understanding the status and evolution of each State's or Tribe's program, the current issues they face and the different options and solutions;
- Oversee or perform biological assessments in States or Tribal nations;
- Conduct on-site bioassessments, taxonomic evaluations, data analyses, report preparation, results presentations, data storage and technical program evaluations;
- Adjust the bioassessment methods to be compatible with the State's or Tribe's methods and to be compatible with the ecoregion or water body type that is being tested.

4.2.C. Outreach, Training and Communication Capability

The contractor shall provide training to State, Tribal, and EPA personnel and other groups on aspects of bioassessment and criteria development and implementation as described in section 4.2.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Produce necessary training information and materials to support training efforts;
- Produce biological assessment and criteria materials and information for public outreach and public information (both printed paper media and electronic, web-based media);
- Translate complex scientific information into simplified, accurate public information;
- Produce informational brochures, fact sheets, briefing information, flyers, etc;
- Conduct mass mailings and mass e-mails to biocriteria experts who work with the States, Tribes, EPA, industry and public interest groups.

4.2.D. Data Support Systems Capability

The contractor shall provide technical support regarding database management systems used by EPA, States, and Tribes for the storage and analysis of biological assessment data.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Operate and apply the Ecological Data Analysis System (EDAS) currently used by State and Tribal agencies;
- Provide training and instruction on the use of EDAS for States and Tribes;
- Use of STORET, the interface between STORET and EDAS; and other bioassessment data analysis systems and application;
- Identify issues associated with relating bioassessment data from one system to the other and be capable of developing a solution for integration.

The contractor shall also provide support in obtaining and analyzing data from databases external to EPA (e.g., USGS NAWQA data), for the purposes of obtaining occurrence and or effects information for environmental pollutants.

4.2.E. Taxonomic Capability

The contractor shall conduct the taxonomic analyses of bioassessment sample taken in any water body type as described in section 4.2.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Correct identification of organisms in bioassessment samples to any level (order, family, genus, species, sub-species, tribe, etc.);
- Develop and conduct all necessary QA/QC programs to ensure accurate identification of aquatic organisms;
- Train others in taxonomic evaluations and QA/QC.

4.3 Nutrient Assessment and Criteria

4.3.A. Nutrient Criteria Development

The contractor shall provide support in development of criteria for nutrient -biological relationships.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Support and expertise in waterbody specific Nutrient Technical Guidance and Ecoregional Nutrient Criteria that have been developed to date and their approaches;
- Expertise in nutrient scientific principles;
- Support EPA in development of nutrient criteria in wetland, estuarine, big rivers, and coastal systems.

4.3.B. State/Tribal Support Capacity

The contractor shall assist States and Tribes in their development and implementation of State/Tribal Nutrient Plans.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Access, assess, and analyze data available in existing nutrient databases and other nutrient data (both historical and current);
- Nutrient modeling;
- Work with State and Tribal scientists and water quality standards personnel to forge consensus.

4.3.C. Outreach, Training and Communication

The contractor shall train States, Tribes, and other interested parties in the scientific principles and approaches of eco-regional nutrient criteria development.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Explain the details and approaches outlined in the EPA Technical Nutrient Guidance for specific waterbody types - lakes/reservoirs, rivers/streams, estuaries/coastal waters, big rivers, coral reef systems, reservoir embayments, and wetlands;
- Teach the material to the targeted audience at their respective scientific/policy level.

4.3.D. Implementation Guidance

The contractor shall assist in development of implementation guidance for monitoring of nutrients, and setting permit limits and TMDLs for nutrients. Technical support services the contractor shall provide include: Develop several specific implementation guidance memos or documents to assist States and Tribes in the development and implementation of nutrient criteria and standards.

4.3.E. Data Support/Literature Searches

The contractor shall collect nutrient (and nutrient response) data from estuarine, coastal, big river, reservoir embayments, coral reef and wetland systems from various sources, including National, State, and Tribal databases and published literature. The contractor shall quickly sift through datasets and determine data quality.

4.4 Suspended and Bedded Sediments

4.4.A. Suspended and Bedded Sediment Assessment and Criteria Development

The contractor shall conduct suspended and bedded sediment assessments and develop potential methods for deriving criteria.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Perform and analyze turbidity, suspended solids concentration, total suspended solids, settleable solids, embedded sediments and other bedload measurements in streams, small rivers, estuaries, lakes, wetlands, the Great Lakes and large rivers;
- Classify water bodies for the purpose of determining natural reference or background concentrations of sediment in different water body types.

4.4.B. State/Tribal Support Capability

The contractor shall assist States and Tribes in their development and implementation of

suspended and bedded sediment criteria.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Evaluate the status and evolution of each State's or Tribe's program, issues and different options and solutions;
- Oversee or perform sediment sampling and analysis in States or Tribal nation;
- Evaluate States and other key countries (such as Canada) programs for managing and controlling suspended and bedded sediment, including TMDLs, monitoring, standards implementation and criteria development.

4.4.C. Outreach, Training and Communication Capability

The contractor shall provide training to EPA, State, and Tribal personnel, or other groups, on suspended and bedded sediment criteria development and implementation.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include:

- Produce necessary training information and materials;
- Produce materials and information for public outreach and communication (including both printed paper media and electronic, web-based media);
- Translate complex scientific information into simplified, accurate public information.
- Produce informational brochures, fact sheets, briefing information, flyers, etc.
- Conduct mass mailings, mass e-mails to suspended and bedded experts who work with the States, Tribes, EPA, industry and public interest groups.

4.5 Biosolids

The contractor shall communicate complex technical material to the public using -risk communication- techniques.

Technical support services the contractor shall provide include as requested:

- Analyze current research literature in biosolids;
- Analyze the specific information needs of decision makers facing biosolids decisions;
- Assist EPA to engage in a purposeful process of skillful interacting with stakeholders supported by appropriate information;
- Conduct empirical evaluation of communication impacts;
- Support the analysis of prioritization and screening of compounds found or likely to be found in biosolids;
- Provide modeling support for conducting biosolids risk assessments

4.6 Global Climate Change

The contractor shall provide technical support in global climate changes issues and prepare work products as specified in detailed work assignments, in particular, the on the effects of climate change on water resources and water quality standards programs.

4.7 Quality System Requirements

EPA policy requires all organizations conducting EPA-funded environmental programs to establish and implement a quality system. This is accomplished through a Quality Management

Plan (QMP) that documents how the organization structures its quality system and describes its quality policies and procedures, criteria for and areas of application, and roles, responsibilities, and authorities. It also describes an organization's policies and procedures for implementing and assessing the effectiveness of the quality system.¹

All technical activities performed under this contract must be supported by the Contractor's quality system and documented by the Contractor in a customized Quality Management Plan that documents how the contractor will integrate quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) procedures and plans into the wide variety of technical activities contemplated in the PWS.

In addition, all individual projects under the contract that involve environmental data operations must be supported by a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that describes the quality assurance procedures, quality control specifications, and other technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that the results of the project to be performed will meet project specifications.

Requirements governing the customized QMP and QAPPs prepared in support of this contract are described below.

Customized Quality Management Plan

A **Quality Management Plan (QMP)** documents how an organization will plan, implement, and assess the effectiveness of its quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) operations. Specifically, it:

- Describes how an organization structures its quality system, the quality policies and procedures, areas of application, and roles, responsibilities, lines of communication and authorities.
- Documents the elements of the organization or program's quality system

The QMP is an organization or program-specific document; it describes the general practices of an organization or program.

A **customized QMP** is a QMP that is tailored to the requirements in the PWS, and explains how the organization's Quality System will support those specific activities, and is prepared in accordance with *EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans*.¹ The contractor shall annually review, and if necessary, revise this customized QMP to ensure it accurately reflects their organizational structure and quality system throughout the duration of the contract.

Quality Assurance Project Plans

¹ See EPA Order CIO 2106.0 - EPA Quality Program Policy; EPA Order CIO 2105.0 (formerly 5360.1 A2) - Policy and Program Requirements for the Mandatory Agency-wide Quality System, May 2000; and *EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans* (QA/R-2), March 2001 (Reissued May 2006), EPA/240/B-01/002.

EPA policy requires that an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) be in place before commencing any work that involves the collection, generation, evaluation, analysis or use of environmental data. The work to be performed by the Contractor under this contract involves such activities.

The Contractor shall prepare and submit a programmatic Quality Assurance Project Plan (p-QAPP) upon the award of the contract. A p-QAPP is used to describe, in a single document, information that is not site or time-specific, but applies throughout the program (i.e., contract). Application-specific information is then added to the approved programmatic QAPP as that information becomes known or completely defined. This may be accomplished through the use of:

- Supplemental QAPPs (s-QAPPs) prepared for individual work assignments, which are designed to supplement the approved p-QAPP with the additional detail needed to describe the specific goals and objectives of the project or tasks supported under the work assignment and the specific QA strategies and technical activities that will be employed to support the objectives of the work assignment project or task
- OR -
- Traditional QAPPs prepared for individual work assignments, which are designed to serve as stand-alone documents that focus on the goals, objectives, QA strategies, and technical activities needed to support a single work assignment or project.

Note that while the customized QMP documents an organization's *management system* for the environmental work to be performed under the contract, the programmatic QAPP documents the *technical QA/QC elements* needed to support the environmental work that will be performed under contract. Supplemental and traditional QAPPs also document the technical QA/QC elements needed to support the environmental data operations that will be performed, but they do so at the work assignment or project level, rather than at the contract level. **Note:** Because the programmatic QAPP is prepared as a contract-level document, it is understood that the details (e.g., specific objectives, analytical methods, and/or acceptance criteria) of specific projects may not be known. In such instances, the contract-wide programmatic QAPP should document the Contractor's procedures for defining and documenting this information for specific projects or work assignments.

To support requirements specified in the *EPA Quality Manual for Environmental Programs* (CIO 2105-P-01-0), the Contractor's programmatic QAPP for this contract must specify that (1) all major deliverables (e.g., Technical Support Documents, Study Reports, Study Plans, etc.) produced by the Contractor under this contract will include a discussion of the QA/QC activities that were or will be performed to support the deliverable, and (2) this discussion will provide a sufficient level of detail to support EPA's use of the data.

EPA policy requires that an approved QAPP must be in place before any environmental data operations begin. Accordingly, the Contractor shall not incur any billable costs for work that

involves that involves the collection, generation, evaluation, analysis or use of environmental data under the contract, unless those activities are covered under an approved programmatic QAPP, supplemental QAPP, or traditional QAPP.

All QAPPs prepared under the contract, including the programmatic QAPP, shall be reviewed at least annually to ensure their content continues to be valid and applicable to the program over time. Previously-approved QAPPs that do not specifically address all of the environmental data operations performed under the Work Assignment will require editing and resubmission for approval.

Any QAPP that is approved by EPA for a Work Assignment issued under this contract will be considered by EPA to be available in the public domain and may be distributed by EPA to the public. (See the discussion of “Data Quality Act/Information Quality Guidelines Requirements” above.)

The Prime Contractor shall ensure that all parts of the organization performing work, including subcontractors (including consultants), are responsible for implementing the approved Programmatic QAPP and any other QAPP that has been approved by EPA to support an individual Work Assignment issued under the contract. The Prime Contractor shall also ensure that all personnel involved in the work have access to the latest approved version of the QAPP and all other necessary planning documents applicable to the work they are supporting.

The Prime Contractor shall ensure that all personnel in the organization, including subcontractors (including consultants), who are involved in each individual work assignment and task, understand the technical and QA requirements prior to the initiation of data collection, generation, evaluation, analysis, or use activities.

The Prime Contractor must ensure that all personnel, including subcontractors, who develop and review QAPPs prepared in support of this contract have the experience and educational credentials to understand the relevant issues.

The Contractor shall provide all QAPPs prepared under this contract to the EPA WAM in electronic form in both a word processing file and a PDF file. When preparing QAPPs under this contract, the Contractor shall do so in accordance with the following documents:

- U.S. EPA QA/R-5, *EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans*, March 2001 (reissued May 2006). EPA/240/B-01/003. <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/r5-final.pdf>
- U.S. EPA QA/G-5, *Guidance for Quality Assurance Project Plans*, December 2002, EPA/240/R-02/009. <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5-final.pdf>

The contractor also may be asked to comply with other guidance when preparing QAPPs for specific types of activities such as modeling and statistical analyses, environmental surveys, monitoring, generation of GIS data, biological & ecological assessments, etc. Examples of such additional QAPP guidance include:

- U.S. EPA QA/G-5M, *Guidance for Quality Assurance Project Plans for Modeling*, December 2002, EPA/240/R-02/007 (<http://www.epa.gov/QUALITY/qs-docs/g5m-final.pdf>)
- U.S. EPA *Guidance on the Development, Evaluation, and Application of Environmental Models*, March 2009, EPA/100/K-09/003 (http://www.epa.gov/crem/library/cred_guidance_0309.pdf)
- Guidance available in the in New England Regional Library Quality System Documents (<http://www.epa.gov/region1/lab/qa/qualsys.html>); see Modeling and Use of Secondary Data Guidance)
- U.S. EPA QA/G-5S, *Guidance on Choosing a Sampling Design for Environmental Data Collection for Use in Developing a Quality Assurance Project Plan*, December 2002, EPA/240/R-02/005 (<http://www.epa.gov/QUALITY/qs-docs/g5s-final.pdf>)
- U.S. EPA QA/G-5G *Guidance for Geospatial Data Quality Assurance Project Plans*, March 2003, EPA/240/R-03/003 (<http://www.epa.gov/QUALITY/qs-docs/g5g-final.pdf>).
- *Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan Guidance for Programs Using Community Level Biological Assessment in Wadeable Streams and Rivers*, July 1995, EPA/841/B95/004, (<http://www.epa.gov/bioiweb1/pdf/EPA-841-B-95-004GenericQualityAssuranceProjectPlanBioassessment.pdf>)

Reporting Quality Assurance Progress

When an approved QAPP is in place for any Work Assignment issued under this contract, the contractor shall be required to include Statements of Quality Assurance Progress in the contractor's monthly progress reports from the time of QAPP approval until the final deliverable necessitating the QAPP is accepted by EPA.

The contractor shall also furnish a Quality Assurance Report (QAR) at the time a final technical support document or other final document is provided. The QAR may be a section or chapter of the final document. The QAR will be submitted for review and approval by the Work Assignment Manager to document the contractor's QA/QC of the technical effort to produce a defensible deliverable. The contractor can anticipate including the QAR with other deliverables of the Work Assignment. The Work Assignment Manager will specify the format the contractor must follow for preparing the QAR in the individual task of the Performance Work Statement.

5.0 EPA Office of Water - Environmental Justice Language for OST's Acquisition

Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) directs Federal agencies to focus on minority and low-income populations in implementing their programs, policies and activities. Consistent

with the Agency's continuing commitment to environmental justice and fair treatment of all people, the contractor shall notify the EPA Project Officer of minority and low-income population, as well as populations with different patterns of subsistence consumption of fish and wildlife, likely to be affected by a program, policy or activity associated with work done under the contract and, when requested by EPA, shall identify any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of the program, policy or activity of concern on these populations.

3.1 Compliance with Information technology requirements

3.1.1 All work performed under this contract shall adhere to the clause EPAAR 1552.211-79 "Compliance with EPA Policies for Information Resources Management", which requires adherence to all Agency directives for performance of any IRM related work.

3.1.2 All contractor work shall be in compliance with pertinent Federal and EPA information processing and telecommunications standard and procedural guidelines. The contractor shall also comply with the Federal Information Processing and Standards (FIPS) and Federal Security Information Management Act along with its accompanying procedures, published by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST). The contractor shall also comply with EPA's technical and operational standards as issued by its technology services organizations. The contractor shall observe the policies, procedures and formats published as follows:

Federal Policies and Regulations	
Computer Security Act of 1987	http://csrc.nist.gov/groups/SMA/ispab/documents/csa_87.txt
The Privacy Act of 1974 Section 552a	http://www.justice.gov/opcl/privstat.htm
The Rehabilitation Act Section 508	http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/act.htm
Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) Accessibility Standards (36 CFR part 1194)	http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/508standards.pdf
The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 as amended, and any applicable Executive Orders	http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/statutes/FairLaborStandAct.pdf
U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-4, Risk Analysis	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a004_a-4/
OMB Circular A-11, Financial Reporting and Performance	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a11_current_year_a11_toc
OMB Circular A-76, Personnel Issues	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a076_a76_incl_techn_correction
OMB Circular A119, Consensus Standards	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a119/a119.html

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OMB Circular A-123, Internal Control Management	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a123_rev
OMB Circular A-130, Information Resource Management	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a130_a130trans4
OMB Circular A-131, Value Engineering	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a131/
OMB Memorandum M-08-27, Guidance for TIC compliance	http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/memoranda/fy2008/m08-27.pdf
OMB Memorandum M-08-22, Guidance on implementing FDCC	http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/fy2008/m08-22.pdf
OMB Memorandum M-07-24, Updated principles for Risk Analysis	http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/memoranda/fy2007/m07-24.pdf
OMB Memorandum M-07-11, Implementation of Commonly Accepted Security Configurations for Windows Operating Systems	http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/memoranda/fy2007/m07-11.pdf
OMB Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal Agencies	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_final_information_quality_guidelines
Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA)	http://csrc.nist.gov/drivers/documents/FISMA-final.pdf
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-34	http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-34-rev1/sp800-34-rev1_errata-Nov11-2010.pdf
FISMA Compliance	http://csrc.nist.gov/groups/SMA/fisma/compliance.html
Federal Continuity Directive 1	http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/offices/fcd1.pdf
Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN)	http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/15C96.txt
Federal Information Processing Standards	http://www.itl.nist.gov/fipspubs/
Government Information Security Reform Act	http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=106_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ398.106.pdf
Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA)	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a130/a130.html
Information Technology Management Reform Act	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/m96-20.html
OMB Memorandum on Agency Architecture Development	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/m97-16.html
PDD-63 White Paper	http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/paper598.htm
Presidential Decision Directive - PDD-62	http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd-62.htm
Presidential Decision Directive - PDD-67	http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-67.htm

FIPS Publications	http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/PubsFIPS.html
Section 508 Compliance	http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=content&ID=12
NARA Electronic Records Management (ERM) Guidance	http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/erm-guidance.html
Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 12	http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-24.pdf

EPA Policy and Procedures	
EPA Data Standards	http://iaspub.epa.gov/sor_internet/registry/datastds/home/overview/home.do
Information Management & Information Technology Policies that apply to Contractor's performing work through an EPA issued Contract	http://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8/
EPA Web Guide	http://www.epa.gov/webguide/index.html
IRM Policy Manual	http://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8/archived/polman/index.html

3.2 IRM Policies, Standards and Procedures [<http://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8/>].

All contractor work shall be in compliance with the 2100 Series (2100-2199) of the Agency's Directive System contains the majority of the Agency's IRM policies, standards and procedures.

3.3 Registry of Environmental Applications and Data

<http://www.epa.gov/epahome/data.html>

A contractor developing or enhancing an information resource shall first conduct a thorough search of existing information resources, through means such as READ, to ensure development/enhancement of information resources does not duplicate existing information resources. If potential duplication is determined, the contractor shall consult with the EPA Task Order Manager to ensure that existing information resources are optimally utilized in conjunction with the information resource being developed/enhanced by the contractor. For any development/enhancement of information resources, the contractor shall work with EPA on inserting/updating resource description information in READ.

1.4 Data Standards and Environmental Data Registry (EDR)

(http://iaspub.epa.gov/sor_internet/registry/datareg/home/overview/home.do)

Any development/enhancement of information resources (information resources include systems, databases, and models/web applications that utilize information in OW systems and databases),

as well as any data products flowing to or from EPA information resources, must adhere to the data standards detailed in the EDR.

3.5 Monitoring information in STORET and follow-on data systems

[<http://www.epa.gov/storet>]

(<http://www.epa.gov/storet/>)

Any ambient water quality, chemical, physical, biological, sediment, tissue and ecological monitoring data collected as part of a contract or grant or cooperative agreement activities must be entered into STORET or its follow-on data systems and be made available to EPA in a compatible format. The contractor shall use their own company name as the entity for data collected by the contractor when entering their data. The contractor shall report quality control of the data upload to EPA.

3.6 National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) Indexing [<http://www.epa.gov/waters/>]

Data related to OW programs that is required to meet the EPA Latitude/Longitude Standard shall also be indexed to the NHD, using EPA OW standard formats available on the WATERS website. Exceptions include groundwater data and data that is related to points greater than two miles from the United States coastline. The WATERS website describes EPA tools and training that are available for NHD indexing.

3.7 Web Standards

All software (including web pages) development shall be done in consultation with the COTR/ACOTR according to functional requirements and design found in the following documents. All work performed by the contractor must also adhere to the government policies and guidance in the following manuals:

EPA Standard Operating Procedures for the Development and Review of Publications:
Printed, Web, and Other Media (<http://www.epa.gov/productreview/index.html>)

EPA Web Guide <http://yosemite.epa.gov/oei%5Cwebguide.nsf/homepage/>

EPA Section 508 Accessibility Guide: <http://www.epa.gov/accessibility/>

EPA Office of Water Web Standard Operating Procedures and Guidance:
<http://epaowhelpdesk.zendesk.com/>

Guide for Developing Usable and Useful Web Sites (Usability Guidelines)
<http://www.usability.gov/>

EPA Information Resources Management (IRM) Policy
<http://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8/policies/index.html>

All manuals shall be made available to the contractor through the EPA Contracting Officer or the Contracting Officer Technical Representative or Alternate (COTR) at the time the Request for Proposal is provided. Contractors should be familiar with all requirements prior to commencement of work.

PROPOSED NON-EPAAR COI CLAUSES
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Section L. DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST Local LRT-09-05

- (a) This contract will require the contractor to provide technical regulatory support services under specific work assignments. Specifically, the contractor will be required to revise and implement ecological criteria for the protection of water quality on a national, state, and site-specific basis. All offerors shall specifically disclose whether they have any business or financial relationships with consultants/contractors that provide litigation support, product support, and defense, and product liability services to chemical producers/importers, pesticides and agriculture product producers/importers, waste management/waste disposal firms, and pharmaceutical and personal care product producers/importers or whether it is performing any work that potentially conflicts with work under this contract EPA or other Government agencies.
- (b) K provision entitled, ORGNAIZATIONAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST CERTIFICATION (EPAAR 1552.209-72), requires the offeror to certify that it is not aware of any potential organizational conflicts of interest. If the offeror cannot so certify, then L provision entitled, ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST NOTIFICATION (EPAAR 1552.209-70), requires the offeror to provide a disclosure statement with its proposal describing all relevant information concerning any past, present, or planned interests bearing on whether it (including its chief executives and any directors, or any proposed consultant or subcontractors) may have a potential organizational conflict of interest.
- (c) The Agency has determined that firms directly engaged in the business or which have business or competitive relationship(s) within firms involved in the activities described in paragraph (a) above (further referred to as “these activities”) may have significant potential organizational conflict of interest in relation to the requirements of this solicitation. In addition, a potential organizational conflict of interest may exist with firms that provide consulting and/or technical services related to these activities.
- (d) Firms responding to this solicitation are required to disclose any such business relationships. The disclosure statement must address actual and potential organizational conflicts of interest within the offeror’s entire corporae umbrella, including parent company, sister companies, affiliates, subsidiaries, and other interests held by an offeror. In addition to identifying actual and potential organizational conflicts of interest, the disclosure statement shall describe how any such conflict can be avoided, neutralized, or mitigated. The EPA Contracting Officer will determine an offeror’s eligibility for award based on the information provided in the disclosure statement.

- (e) The purpose of requiring the information covered by paragraph (c) and (d) above is to provide the Agency with an opportunity to assess its vulnerabilities relative to organizational conflicts of interest of individual offerors prior to award. The Agency recognizes that there exists a need for firms to gain the requisite technical experience necessary to fulfill the requirements of the proposed contract and that such experience is often gained through provision of consulting or related technical services to firms who are involved in these activities. Accordingly, the fact that a firm has, or plans to work for a company who is involved in these activities will not necessarily disqualify the firm for consideration for award on the basis of actual or potential conflicts of interest. The more dependent a firm is on commercial work that relates to these activities, the greater the risk to the Agency that there will arise during contract performance a significant number of conflict of interest situations which would preclude the Agency from using the contractor's support. There is no set formula for determining how much corporate business involving these activities would result in a determination by the Contracting Officer that award to a particular offeror would not be in the best interest of the Government due to organizational conflicts of interest concerns; each offeror will be evaluated individually on the basis of the information disclosed pursuant to the requirements of this provision and upon the adequacy of the offeror's plan for avoiding, neutralizing, or mitigating such conflicts. In summary, the Agency is seeking a technically qualified firm which can demonstrate that its corporate base of activities will not impact its ability to provide unbiased work products to the Agency under the proposed contract.

Section L. CONFLICT OF INTEREST PLAN (LC-09-04)

As part of the initial offer, offerors shall submit an Organizational Conflict of Interest (COI) Plan which outlines the procedures in place to identify and report conflicts of interest, whether actual or potential, throughout the period of performance of the contract. The plan shall address step-by-step the checks and balances in place to detect potential or actual conflicts of interest, organizationally and with personnel, that could result from activities covered by the Performance Work Statement. The COI Plan shall be incorporated into any resulting contract.

The COI Plan shall be evaluated in accordance with the provision in Section M entitled "Evaluation of Conflict of Interest Plan."

The Agency's minimum standards for Organizational Conflict of Interest Plans is included as an attachment to the solicitation.

Section L. EXCLUSION OF SOURCES

Any entities which are chemical producers/importers, pesticides and agriculture product producers/importers, waste management/waste disposal firms, pharmaceutical and personal care product producers/importers are ineligible for award of this contract.

Section M. EVALUATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST PLAN (LC-09-05)

The plan described in Section L, entitled “CONFLICT OF INTEREST PLAN,” will be evaluated as acceptable or not acceptable. Notwithstanding any other evaluation of the offeror’s proposal, an offeror that submits a plan that is unacceptable at the time of award will not be eligible for a contract award.

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