

**Federal Agency Name:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

**Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2015 National Priority Activities for the Section 303(d) Program, the Nonpoint Source (Section 319) Program, the Wetlands Program, and the Water Quality Monitoring Program

**Announcement Type:** Request for Proposals (RFP)

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-OW-OWOW-15-02

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 66.436

**Dates:** Proposals must be received in hard copy by the Agency Contact (See Section IV of this RFP) by **5:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (EST) March 24, 2015** or by electronic submission through Grants.gov by **11:59 P.M. EST March 24, 2015**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **March 17, 2015**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/shedfund/2015-National-Priority-Activities.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/shedfund/2015-National-Priority-Activities.cfm).

*Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal have been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.*

**Note to Applicants:**

If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provision found at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation\\_provisions.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm).

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to provide support for training and technical assistance activities to build the capacity of state and tribal officials and nongovernmental stakeholders in the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) Program, the Nonpoint Source (CWA Section 319) Program, the Wetlands Program, and the Water Quality Monitoring Program. The seven National Priority Activities identified in this announcement are:

- (I) plan, prepare, and conduct five annual CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Training Workshops;
- (II) provide training and technical assistance to advance CWA Section 303(d) Program Implementation;
- (III) plan, prepare, and conduct five to ten State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops on aquatic resource specific (i.e., rivers/streams, lakes, coastal waters, and wetlands) issues, and up to two national State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops covering all aquatic resource types on a biennial basis (e.g., one national workshop in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and one national workshop in FY 2018);

- (IV) plan, prepare and conduct four State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment;
- (V) plan, prepare and conduct two State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Training Workshops on a biennial basis (e.g., one in Calendar Year (CY) 2016 and one in CY 2018);
- (VI) plan, prepare, and conduct five to ten Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops for Technical Service Providers (TSPs), Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs), and other agricultural industry consultants on conservation practice systems to protect water quality; and
- (VII) plan, prepare, and conduct two to six Wetland Program Training Workshops on a variety of topics related to wetland regulatory, monitoring and assessment, restoration, and/or water quality standards.

Funds awarded under this announcement for training and technical assistance support activities may be used to promote participation and to support travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend workshops.

Funding provided under this announcement supports Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan. Information on the EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply. 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. As discussed in Section I.D, funding for assistance agreements awarded under this announcement is provided under the authority of Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA.

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$3,915,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that up to ten awards will be made under this announcement to be funded incrementally. The following are the expected total of awards for each of the seven National Priority Activities:

- one award for the CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops (National Priority Activity I) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$900,000 with a five year project period.
- one to three awards for providing training and technical assistance to advance CWA Section 303(d) Program Implementation (National Priority Activity II) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$200,000 per award with a five year project period;

- one award for the State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops (National Priority Activity III) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$975,000 with a five year project period;
- one award for State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment (National Priority Activity IV) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$80,000 with a two year project period.
- one award for State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops (National Priority Activity V) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$160,000 with a five year project period.
- two awards for Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops (National Priority Activity VI) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$300,000 per award with a five year project period.
- one award for Wetland Program Training Workshops (National Priority Activity VII) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$600,000 with a six year project period.

## **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to provide support for training and technical assistance activities to build the capacity of state and tribal officials and nongovernmental stakeholders in the CWA Section 303(d) Program, the Nonpoint Source (CWA Section 319) Program, the Wetlands Program, and the Water Quality Monitoring Program. The seven National Priority Activities identified in this announcement and discussed in further detail in Section I.B below are: (I) CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops; (II) Training, Studies, and/or Tools to Advance CWA 303(d) Program Implementation; (III) State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops; (IV) State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment; (V) State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops, (VI) Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops; and (VII) Wetland Program Training Workshops. Funds awarded under this announcement for training and technical assistance support activities may be used to promote participation and to support travel expenses of non-federal personnel to attend the training workshops.

The seven National Priority Activities support Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems, of EPA's Strategic Plan for FY 2014 – 2018. As discussed in Section I.D, the statutory authority for the awards expected to be made under this announcement is section 104(b)(3) of the CWA.

### **B. NATIONAL PRIORITY ACTIVITIES**

Each proposal submitted under this announcement must address one, and only one, of the seven National Priority Activities described below. Applicants may submit more than one proposal package (including SF 424, SF 424A, and proposal narrative) under this announcement as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses only **one** National Priority Activity. The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the National Priority Activity addressed in the proposal. If an

applicant submits a proposal that addresses more than one National Priority Activity, it will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.

### **National Priority Activity I: CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops**

Under this National Priority Activity, the goal is to conduct training workshops to enhance the capabilities of state and tribes to support the achievement of CWA Section 303(d) listing and TMDL programmatic requirements.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct five annual CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops. Project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional workshop training topic areas and/or project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops is expected to include primarily state, tribal and territorial TMDL CWA 303(d) program personnel and may also include local and regional officials, stakeholders, and national experts. If fully funded, an estimated 80-100 participants are expected to attend each training workshop with representatives from 50 states, some territorial and tribal representatives, and some non-state/non-federal representatives, and federal representatives (mostly EPA CWA 303(d) program personnel); approximately 70% state, tribal, and other non-federal (e.g., university, non-profit, etc.), and 30% federal. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goals of the CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops are: (1) to support implementation of the CWA Section 303(d) Program Vision issued on December, 2013 (see <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/lawsguidance/cwa/tmdl/programvision.cfm>); (2) to build on lessons learned and advance the Section 303(d) program and development of TMDLs nationally; and (3) to foster close coordination among CWA Section 303(d) Listing and TMDL Program practitioners by bringing together state, tribal, federal, and other interested stakeholders involved with implementing the December, 2013 Vision and other program activities under Section 303(d) of the CWA.

The training workshops should focus on new developments in state/tribal Listing and TMDL programs, particularly those related to implementation of the new CWA 303(d) Program Vision; best management practices in program implementation (including strategic management); programmatic, technical or innovative approaches for the Listing and TMDL program (such as those related to water quality assessments, Section 303(d) listing approaches, water quality

modeling best management practices, nonpoint source loadings, approaches for dealing with agriculture-related impairments, stormwater and other wet weather sources, and/or other pollutant-specific TMDL development and implementation issues); and/or, improvements in state and federal coordination in implementing the CWA Section 303(d) Program.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with states, tribes, territories and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to state, tribal, and territorial governmental agencies and other interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening state, tribal, and territorial CWA 303(d) program personnel as well as federal agencies responsible for implementing the CWA Section 303(d) program.

The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants and to bring as many state, tribal, and territorial CWA 303(d) program participants as possible. Applicants should demonstrate their intent to coordinate, where possible, the technical training workshops with existing meetings to increase interaction among state, tribal and territorial and federal CWA 303(d) program personnel and to reduce the travel burden on non-federal attendees.

The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the training workshops, select workshop locations, secure workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical and programmatic assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one cooperative agreement under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$900,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for this award will be five years and that the award will be incrementally funded up to \$180,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

### **National Priority Activity II: Training and Technical Assistance to Advance CWA Section 303(d) Program Implementation**

The overall goals of the training and technical assistance for this National Priority Activity are: (1) to share the scientific, technical and/or programmatic issues or innovations to advance the development and/or implementation of TMDLs or alternatives to TMDLs by a diverse group of non-governmental stakeholders of the CWA Section 303(d) Program together with state and federal CWA 303(d) Program personnel; (2) to foster such communication between the target audience and state and federal CWA Section 303(d) program staff; and (3) to share such communication with a broader group of stakeholders by disseminating reports, papers or presentations.

Under Section 303(d) of the CWA, states, territories, and authorized tribes, collectively referred to in the Act as "states," are required to develop lists of impaired waters. These are waters for which technology-based regulations and other required controls are not stringent enough to meet the water quality standards set by the states. The CWA requires that states establish priority rankings for waters on the lists and develop TMDLs for these waters.

To meet the goals noted above for this National Priority Activity, EPA is soliciting proposals for training and technical assistance that support listing of impaired waters, TMDL development, use of non-TMDL alternative approaches by point sources and nonpoint sources to restore water quality. Project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

EPA does not anticipate proposals will cover more than one type of training or technical assistance project. Examples of potential training and technical assistance projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Trainings (either at the national or regional level) among non-governmental water professionals and stakeholders together with state and federal CWA Section 303(d) Program personnel on innovative and effective approaches for implementing the CWA Section 303(d) Program nationally or regionally. Trainings could be either separate workshops or part of an existing conference. The target audience is expected to include primarily non-governmental practitioners and stakeholders of the CWA 303(d) program and state/federal CWA 303(d) Program personnel. Topics should be of national or regional significance related to the CWA 303(d) Program; or,
- Reports on or compendiums of best TMDL development approaches (including reasonable assurance demonstrations to support nonpoint source allocations), non TMDL restoration plan approaches, and TMDL implementation approaches to restore waters impaired by both point and nonpoint sources. Topics should be of national significance related to the CWA 303(d) Program; or,
- Technical information exchange among non-governmental stakeholders of the CWA 303(d) Program and state/federal CWA 303(d) Program personnel to keep them apprised of current issues and developments through series of conference calls, series of webinars, newsletters, social media and other appropriate mechanisms. Topics should be of national significance related to the CWA 303(d) Program.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and provide for training and technical assistance that support listing of impaired waters, TMDL development, and TMDL implementation by point sources and nonpoint sources to restore water quality. The proposal should also describe the applicant's approach for consulting with a diverse group of non-governmental stakeholders involved in the CWA 303(d) program to determine topics for training and technical assistance. Additionally, in order to further accelerate dissemination of information arising from the training and technical assistance—proposed under this activity, proposals should include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the

training and technical assistance to state, tribal, and local governmental agencies and other CWA 303(d) Program stakeholders and the general public. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening non-governmental practitioner stakeholders and state/federal CWA 303(d) Program personnel of the CWA Section 303(d) Program.

Training proposed under this National Priority Activity should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate the travel needs of participants. Trainings do not need to be stand alone, but can be held in conjunction with other trainings, workshops, or similar events already planned by other organizations. The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the training, identify appropriate timeframes, select training locations, secure training facilities, develop training agendas and materials, and select speakers. EPA will support the training by programmatic assistance, training promotion, and review of training agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logo on any training materials it provides. EPA will use its logo on any training materials it provides.

Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees (such as state, tribal or territorial CWA 303(d) Program personnel or nongovernmental stakeholders of the CWA 303(d) Program) to attend the proposed training. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one to three cooperative assistance agreements under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$200,000 per award, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). It is anticipated that the project period for the awards will be five years and that the awards will be incrementally funded up to \$40,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

### **National Priority Activity III: State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops**

Under this National Priority Activity, the goal is to conduct technical training workshops to build the capacity of states and tribes to more effectively assess water quality at the national, regional, and state-scale focusing on technical training on topics related to the National Aquatic Resource Surveys. Information about the National Aquatic Resource Surveys (NARS) can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/nationalsurveys.html>.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops to build the capacity of states and tribes to more effectively assess water quality. These technical training workshops will include:

- (a) Five to ten technical training workshops (i.e., one to two workshops per year for five years with each workshop one to three days in length) focused on specific aquatic

resources or issues. During any given year, these smaller training workshops do not have to focus on the same aquatic resource type and may cover different topics.

(b) Up to two national technical training workshops (e.g., one national workshop in FY 2016 and one national workshop in FY 2018) covering all aquatic resource types.

The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional workshop training topic areas and /or project components that may not be included in the announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops is expected to include state and tribal monitoring, assessment, and wetland program personnel and other national experts engaged in developing and implementing the NARS and state/tribal scale statistical surveys. The target audience is also expected to include individuals from the university, research, and non-profit community and EPA staff from Headquarters and the Regional Offices with expertise in the specific training topic identified.

Approximately 25-75 people are expected to attend each of the aquatic resource specific technical training workshops depending on the specific topic(s) covered; approximately 60% state, 5% tribal, 10% other non-federal (e.g., university, non-profit, etc.), and 25% federal. Up to 300 attendees are expected to attend the national technical training workshops covering all aquatic resource types; approximately 55% state, 5% tribal, 10% other non-federal (e.g., university, non-profit, etc.), and 30% federal. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goals of these technical training workshops are to: (1) enhance communication, coordination, and technology transfer among states, tribes, and federal agencies to ensure state and tribal interests are effectively represented in the continued development and implementation of the NARS; (2) facilitate increased understanding and technology transfer of probability-based sampling, methods comparability, and other issues of interest to states and tribes; and (3) increase inter-jurisdictional collaboration among states and tribes and to build or expand state and tribal aquatic resource monitoring capacity.

The smaller technical training workshops should focus on technical and programmatic issues including refining ecological indicators, developing data analysis procedures, establishing reference condition, integrating multiple field methods, and improving state and tribal use of monitoring data to inform decision-making. A portion of these workshops could also be dedicated to technical training on developing a probability-based survey design, data analysis techniques, or field-based monitoring demonstrations. Face-to-face meetings are preferred for the smaller aquatic resource specific technical training workshops, but depending on the specific



training topics to be covered, applicants instead may propose to use webinars or other remote training tools to facilitate training as appropriate.

The national technical training workshops covering all aquatic resource types should focus on training participants on successful approaches for enhancing state, tribal, and national assessments of condition of the nation's waters consistent with CWA Section 305(b). Issues that applicants might consider in designing the national technical training workshops covering all aquatic resource types include successful approaches for implementing probability surveys and using probability data, conducting methods comparability studies, and applying the biological condition gradient to assessments at multiple scales. It is anticipated that the national technical training workshops will be held on a biennial basis (e.g., one national workshop in FY 2016 and one national workshop in FY 2018).

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the technical training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should also describe the approach for consulting with states, tribes, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. The proposal should include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to state, tribal, and local governmental agencies and other interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate experience working with and convening state, tribal, and federal agencies to effectively respond to the range of aquatic resource monitoring needs nationally.

Whenever possible, the smaller and national technical training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants. Applicants should demonstrate their intent to coordinate, where possible, the technical training workshops with existing meetings to increase interaction among state, tribal, and other monitoring experts and organizations and to reduce the travel burden on non-federal attendees. For example, the applicant is encouraged to combine the technical training workshops (smaller or national) with other meetings, provided that the applicant can demonstrate that the appropriate audiences will still be served by doing so.

The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the technical training workshops, identify appropriate timeframes for each technical training workshop, select workshop locations, secure workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and materials, and select speakers. Applicants should consider the NARS schedule (available on the EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/monitoring/nationalsurveys.html>), including the timeframe for survey implementation and data analyses/national report development. EPA will support the workshops by providing programmatic assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any workshop materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any workshop materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one cooperative agreement under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$975,000

depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the award will be five years and that the award will be incrementally funded up to \$195,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

**National Priority Activity IV: State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in Support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment**

Under this National Priority Activity, the goal is to conduct training workshops to educate states and tribes on new approaches for sharing CWA Sections 303(d) and 305(b) data as well as TMDL data. EPA is developing new approaches for sharing this data as part of EPA's Water Quality Framework (Framework). A goal of the Framework is to more fully integrate water quality monitoring, assessment, and restoration data. As a first step in this effort, EPA is redesigning the Assessment TMDL Tracking and Implementation System (ATTAINS). This system tracks state 303(d), 305(b), and TMDL data. The new ATTAINS system will also integrate national statistical surveys with statewide statistical surveys and site specific assessment. It is anticipated that these training workshops will educate states and tribes on new approaches, as well as get state and tribal input on these approaches.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct four State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment. The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage these workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional workshop training topic areas and/or project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops is expected to include primarily state and tribal monitoring, assessment, and TMDL program personnel and may also include local and regional officials, stakeholders, and national experts. An estimated 15-30 participants are expected to attend each training workshop; approximately 75% state, 10% tribal, 15% federal (mostly EPA). Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goals of the State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops are: (1) to provide training to states and tribes on the new approaches for capturing monitoring, assessment, and TMDL data; (2) to solicit feedback from state and tribal personnel on the new data model for tracking these data; and (3) to provide information for scoping the integration of these data.

The training workshops should focus on new approaches for tracking and reporting monitoring, assessment, and TMDL information. The training workshops should be structured in such a way

as to allow discussions on the new data model, presentations on the state and tribal approaches for tracking and reporting these data, and opportunity to solicit feedback from the states and tribes on these new approaches.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with states, tribes, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to state, tribal, and local governmental agencies and other interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening state, tribal, and federal agencies responsible for implementing the CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), and TMDL programs.

The training workshops should be located in or near U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants. Applicants should demonstrate their intent to coordinate, where possible the training workshops with existing meeting to increase interaction among state, tribal, and monitoring personnel and TMDL program personnel and to reduce the travel burden on non-federal attendees. The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the training workshops, select workshop locations, secure meeting facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical and programmatic assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one cooperative agreement under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$80,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the award will be two years and that the award will be incrementally funded up to \$40,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

#### **National Priority Activity V: State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops**

Under this National Priority Activity, the goal is to conduct training workshops to ensure that nonpoint source program practitioners understand current issues and advancements in the national Nonpoint Source Program and to provide technical training on nonpoint source management practices. The national Nonpoint Source Program is authorized under Section 319 of the CWA, and is focused on implementing state nonpoint source management programs. Territories and Tribes also receive Section 319 grant funds and implement nonpoint source programs. This National Priority Activity description uses ‘State and Tribal’ to refer collectively to all these entities.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct two biennial State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Training Workshops (i.e., one workshop every two years with

each workshop up to four days in length). The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional workshop training topic areas and/or project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

It is anticipated that the training workshops will be held on a biennial basis (e.g., one in CY 2016 and one in CY 2018). The target audience for the State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops is primarily state, territorial and tribal nonpoint source program personnel and may also include local and regional officials, other federal agency personnel, stakeholders, and national experts. An estimated 130-180 participants are expected to attend each training workshop; approximately 60% state (representatives of up to 50 states), 5% tribal, 5% territorial, 10% non-state/non-federal, and 20% federal (mostly EPA but also U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) representatives), U.S. Forest Service, etc. ). In general, state, tribal, and territorial attendees will cover their own travel expenses. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to promote participation by defraying transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees and/or speakers to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goals of the State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops are: (1) to ensure participants understand current issues and advancements in the national Nonpoint Source Program; (2) to foster close coordination among nonpoint source program practitioners and partners by bringing together state, tribal, territorial, federal, and other interested stakeholders involved with program activities under section 319 of the CWA; and (3) to provide technical training on nonpoint source management practices.

The training workshops should focus on new developments in state/tribal/territorial nonpoint source programs, best management practices (including strategic management), innovative approaches for the nonpoint source program, and/or improvements in state and federal coordination in implementing the national nonpoint source program. The training workshops should also address technical and programmatic issues impacting the nonpoint source program, such as the balance of restoration and protection activities, coordination with other water quality programs such as the CWA Section 303(d) and source water protection programs, and coordination with USDA conservation programs. Other workshop topics applicants might consider in designing the training workshops include programmatic alignment with the Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories (<http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/upload/319-guidelines-fy14.pdf>), watershed-based planning, and state NPS management program updates and priorities among other programmatic issues that may arise.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with states, territories, tribes, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the training workshops to state, territorial, tribal, and other interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with and convening state, territorial, tribal, and federal agencies responsible for implementing nonpoint source and/or water quality management programs.

The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants. The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the training workshops, select workshop locations, secure workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical and programmatic assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one cooperative agreement under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$160,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the award will be five years and that the award will be incrementally funded up to \$32,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

#### **National Priority Activity VI: Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops:**

Under this National Priority Activity, the goal is to conduct training workshops to build the capacity for agricultural professional advisors to work with farmers and producers in adding conservation practice systems into farm management conservation plans for the long term. The trainings will focus on conservation practice systems that control and trap nutrients that move over and through cropland that will improve both on-site and downstream water quality.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops to Technical Service Providers (TSPs), Certified Crop Consultants (CCAs), members of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), members of Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA), soil and water conservation district staff and engineers, and other agricultural consultants and professionals on conservation practice systems that protect and restore water quality and/or provide training to conservation professionals working at the small watershed scale on effective integration of conservation practice systems in the landscape.

The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the technical training workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. Applicants are

encouraged to identify additional workshop training topic areas and/or project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The overall goal of the technical training workshops is to continue to train the professional workforce that advises private landowners on the implementation of targeted conservation practice systems that improve water quality, including agricultural drainage water management systems that control and trap water and associated agricultural pollutants; these systems also provide significant water quantity benefits to farmers and producers. There are many conservation systems that can provide benefits to farmers and producers but currently there are a limited number of trained professionals available to plan, design, build, implement, and assist in long-term management of these practices. These conservation practices include but are not limited to nutrient management as part of an overall system, various tile water drainage management practices including water control structures (e.g., flash board structures attached directly to the tile outlets), wetlands placed at the end of the tile lines, riparian buffer strips in areas where lateral seepage is the dominant flow, constructed bioreactors utilizing denitrification walls or trenches to intercept tile flow, and saturated buffers.

There are many certification organizations whose members provide information directly to landowners, farmers and producers. The technical training workshops should provide open training opportunities for all those with technical assistance certifications, or other qualified conservation professionals. In their proposal the applicant should include a plan for advertising the trainings to certification organizations including for example, but not limited to, TSPs, CCAs, NAICC, LICA, etc. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed materials and provided technical trainings to field staff with these materials; these materials could be used as the basis for the trainings. The training should include instruction on developing USDA Conservation Activity Plans specifically for Drainage Water Management Practice Standard 554 (USDA CAP 130 plans). The training materials should also include educational information on the state of nutrient pollution in the U.S. and the impact of it on water quality both at the local level and downstream.

It is anticipated that the successful applicants will hold five to ten technical training workshops (i.e., one to two workshops per year for five years with each workshop being one to three days in length) focused on specific conservation practices systems tailored to the need in the area of the training. The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the technical training workshops, identify appropriate timeframes for each technical training workshop, select workshop locations, secure workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and training materials, and select speakers. EPA, with input from USDA, will support the workshops by providing programmatic assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any workshop materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any workshop materials it provides.

The target audience for the Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops is TSPs, CCAs, members of the NAICC and of LICA, soil and water conservation district staff and engineers, and other agricultural consultants and professionals including federal and state agency

staff. An estimated 50 – 100 participants are expected to attend each training workshop; approximately 70% non-state/non-federal, 15% state (representatives of up to 50 states), 2% tribal, and 13% federal (mostly USDA representatives). Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to promote participation by defraying transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the technical training workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with leadership of the targeted audience organizations, the Agricultural Drainage Water Management Task Force (<http://hostedweb.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/usdasdru/ADMS/ADMSindex.htm>), the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition (<http://admcoalition.com/>), states, USDA and EPA to determine the training priorities. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer the results of the technical training workshops to these same entities and other interested agricultural groups. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience in disseminating technical and engineering design standards through a variety of multimedia and working with the agricultural industry, USDA, and planning design principals..

The successful applicants should determine where there are concentrations of these professionals in need of training that work with landowners, farmers and producers that implement conservation practices systems. The technical training workshops should be planned for in-person delivery with supplemental information available through multimedia platforms including webpages and smartphone apps. The technical training workshops should be located in or near centralized areas to agricultural communities with identified priorities that include protecting and restoring local and downstream water quality. Applicants should demonstrate their intent to coordinate, where possible, the technical training workshops with existing meetings to increase interaction the attendees, for example, the applicant is encouraged to combine the technical training workshops with other meetings, provided that the applicant can demonstrate that the appropriate audiences will still be served by doing so.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding up to two cooperative agreements under this this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$300,000 per award, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the awards will be five years and that the awards will be incrementally funded up to \$60,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

#### **National Priority Activity VII: Wetland Program Training Workshops**

Under this National Priority Activity, the goal is to conduct training workshops to enhance the capabilities of states, tribes (federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes), and

others to develop and implement wetland programs. Experience with many state and tribal wetland programs has distilled a set of core elements, actions, and activities that together comprise a comprehensive wetland program. EPA has summarized these common core elements, actions, and activities in the *Core Elements of an Effective State and Tribal Wetlands Program Framework*, also called the *Core Elements Framework* (CEF). EPA's CEF can be found at: [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/wetlands/estp.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/estp.cfm). The CEF describes in greater detail each of the four core elements that comprise a comprehensive state/tribal wetland program. These four core elements are: monitoring and assessment; voluntary restoration and protection; regulatory approaches, including CWA 401 certification; and wetland-specific water quality standards.

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct three to six Wetlands Program Training Workshops on a variety of topics related to the wetland CEF to address state/tribal/local government wetland program development or refinement. The project components described below provide some detail on roles and responsibilities the successful applicant may be expected to assume in order to establish and manage the Wetland Program Training Workshops. The description below does not attempt to be comprehensive. Applicants are encouraged to identify additional workshop training topic areas and/or project components that may not be included in this announcement, but that may contribute to overall project success in their proposals.

The target audience for the Wetland Program Training Workshops is primarily state and tribal wetland program personnel including natural resource, wildlife, transportation, and agriculture staff and may also include local and regional officials, stakeholders, and national experts. An estimated 25-100 participants are expected to attend each technical training workshop depending on the specific topic(s) covered; approximately 60% state, 15% tribal, 5% other non-federal (e.g., university, non-profit, etc.), and 20% federal. Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend the training workshops. The applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the training workshops. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

The overall goals of the Wetland Program Training Workshops are to: (1) help states/tribes/local governments examine wetland related problems (e.g., wetland loss of acreage or function, public perception of the value of wetland, and management of wetland resources); (2) determine program development needs (*i.e., Monitoring and Assessment, Voluntary Restoration/Protection, Regulatory Approaches, and Wetland-Specific Water Quality Standards*); and/or (3) develop solutions to wetland related problems by creatively applying the full array of available planning, outreach/education, technical and financial tools.

In their proposals, applicants should outline the steps they will take to plan, prepare, and conduct Wetland Program Training Workshops and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops. The proposal should describe the approach for consulting with states, tribes, local governments, and other interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. The proposal should also include a description of how the applicant will transfer results of the training workshops to state, tribal, local governmental agencies, and other



interested stakeholders. In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their experience working with state and tribal wetland programs.

The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants. Applicants should demonstrate their intent to coordinate, where possible, the workshops with existing meetings to increase interaction among state, tribal, and other monitoring experts and organizations and to reduce the travel burden on non-federal attendees. For example, the applicant is encouraged to combine the training workshops with other meetings, provided that the applicant can demonstrate that the appropriate audiences will still be served by doing so.

The successful applicant will provide the overall leadership for the training workshops, select workshop locations, secure workshop facilities (meeting rooms, accommodations, audio-visual equipment, etc.), develop workshop agendas and materials, and select the speakers. EPA will support the workshops by providing technical and programmatic assistance, workshop promotion, and review of workshop agendas and materials. The successful applicant will use its logos on any materials it provides; EPA will use its logos on any materials it provides.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Activity is addressed. EPA anticipates funding one cooperative agreement under this National Priority Activity for a total available funding of approximately \$600,000, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project. It is anticipated that the project period for the award will be six years and that the award will be incrementally funded up to \$100,000 per year, depending on Agency priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the recipient.

### **C. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Funding provided under this announcement supports Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters; Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan. Information on the EPA Strategic Plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.html>.

All proposed projects must demonstrate the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goals of the EPA Strategic Plan. Projects should demonstrate the linkage to the overall goal of Protecting America's Waters.

Environmental results are a way to gauge a project's performance and are described in terms of outputs and outcomes. Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or 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.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

#### National Priority Activity I: CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops

- Training workshops on innovative assessment and modeling methodologies for TMDL development, including communication of results through written reports or web portals.
- Training workshops to promote enhanced coordination among state, tribal, and federal programs and other stakeholders implementing the CWA 303(d) program, including communication of results through written reports or web portals.

#### National Priority Activity II: Training and Technical Assistance to Advance CWA Section 303(d) Program Implementation

- Training workshops (national and/or regional level) on innovative and effective approaches for implementing the CWA 303(d) Program.
- Reports on or compendiums of best TMDL development and TMDL implementation approaches to restore waters impaired by both point and nonpoint sources;
- Technical information exchange through conference calls, webinars, newsletter, social media and other appropriate mechanisms, among non-governmental water professionals or stakeholders together with state and federal CWA 303(d) program personnel on innovative and effective approaches for implementing the CWA 303(d) program.

#### National Priority Activity III: State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops

- Technical training workshops on aquatic resource monitoring methods and design, including methods comparability.
- Technical training workshops on analyzing NARS data for use in national and regional reports.
- Technical training workshops on innovative techniques for using probability-derived monitoring data to address state or tribal water management program priorities.
- Technical training workshops on approaches for combining aquatic resource monitoring data collected with different field protocols or in different resource types to support alternative means of implementing the NARS.
- Technical training workshops on improving administrative, technical, and logistical aspects of monitoring program design and implementation at multiple scales.
- Cross-resource dialogue on design and implementation innovations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of state, regional, and national monitoring and assessment of the Nation's water resources.

#### National Priority Activity IV: State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in Support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment

- State and tribal workshops on data management for CWA 303(d), CWA 305(b), and TMDL data.
- More complete data model that reflects state and tribal business processes for tracking and reporting this information.

#### National Priority Activity V: State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops

- Training workshops on new technical developments and innovative approaches in nonpoint source programs, including best management practices and watershed planning.
- Training workshops on nonpoint program policy developments, and/or improvements in state and federal coordination in implementing the national nonpoint source program and coordination with other water quality programs such as the CWA Section 303(d), source water protection, and USDA conservation programs.
- Training materials on topics related to the Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories (<http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/upload/319-guidelines-fy14.pdf>),
- Training material on technical information on best management practice selection and performance.

#### National Priority Activity VI: Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops

- Training materials based upon existing USDA-NRCS field staff trainings that include training modules on nutrient pollution impacts on water quality.
- Technical training workshops on planning, designing and implementing innovative conservation practice systems on private agricultural lands.

#### National Priority Activity VII: Wetland Program Training Workshops:

- Training materials and tools to help state and tribal monitoring, assessment, and wetland personnel learn about wetland monitoring and assessment
- Technical training workshops to educate and train states/tribes on techniques to protect wetlands.

Environmental outcomes are 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, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

#### National Priority Activity I: CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops

- Increased timely state submissions and federal approval of lists of priority impaired waters under Section 303(d) of the CWA. Increased knowledge of how to develop TMDLs that facilitate achievement of water quality standards.
- More consistent implementation of CWA 303(d) program to restore impaired waters/watersheds.
- Increased awareness among TMDL program practitioners on innovations and best practices to implement the CWA 303(d) program.
- Increase in extent of priority waters addressed through TMDLs, non-TMDL alternative restoration approaches or protection.

National Priority Activity II: Training and Technical Assistance to Advance CWA Section 303(d) Program Implementation

- Increased knowledge of how to develop and implement TMDLs and non-TMDL alternatives that facilitate achievement of water quality standards.
- More consistent implementation of CWA 303(d) program to restore impaired waters/watersheds.
- Increased awareness among TMDL program practitioners on innovations and best practices to implement the CWA 303(d) program.
- Increase in extent of priority waters addressed through TMDLs, non-TMDL alternative restoration approaches or protection.

National Priority Activity III: State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops

- Increased awareness of how to develop and use information from probability monitoring designs.
- Improved quality of NARS data and analyses.
- Increased consistency and comparability among national, state, interstate, and tribal monitoring and assessment techniques supporting a national integration of multi-scale water resource surveys.

National Priority Activity IV: State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in Support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment

- Improved CWA 303(d), CWA 305(b), and TMDL reporting, including taking a paper process and making it an electronic process.
- More effective and transparent demonstration of environmental progress in water quality protection and restoration.
- Reduced reporting burden on states and tribes.
- More timely submittal and review of CWA 303(d) data.

National Priority Activity V: State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops

- Increased awareness among nonpoint source practitioners of innovations and best strategies for controlling a variety of pollution sources.
- Increased understanding of ways to advance strategic partnerships with agricultural agencies and stakeholders to leverage resources and implement suites of agricultural conservation practices.
- Current understanding of issues and opportunities facing the national nonpoint source program and state/tribal/territorial strategies for addressing challenges.

National Priority Activity VI: Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops

- Increase in numbers of certified technical assistance providers to develop USDA CAP 130 and similar plans.
- Demonstrated increase in the number of USDA CAP 130 plans being approved for funding in the area affected by the proposal.

- Increase in participants' knowledge of conservation practices as demonstrated by pre- and post-training assessments.
- Increased understanding by technical assistance providers of nutrient impacts on water quality.
- Increased adoption of the agricultural conservation systems that are promoted with the training.

#### National Priority Activity VII: Wetland Program Training Workshops

- Increased understanding of how to use monitoring and assessment data in the protection of wetlands.
- Increased understanding of innovations of compensatory mitigation practices through CWA Section 404.

As part of the proposal narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of outputs and outcomes can be found at: [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/epa\\_order\\_5700\\_7a1.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/epa_order_5700_7a1.pdf)

### **D. STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be funded under this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. CWA Section 104(b)(3) restricts the use of these assistance agreements to the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. If the proposal is a demonstration project, then the applicant must describe how it meets the following requirement. Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches. EPA expects that 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 a demonstration project. For proposals that include demonstration projects, the applicant must describe how the project meets the above requirements.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING**

The total amount of expected federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$3,915,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that up to ten awards will be made under this announcement to be funded incrementally. The following are the expected total of all awards for each of the seven National Priority Activities:

- one award for the CWA Section 303(d) National Listing and TMDL Training Workshops (National Priority Activity I) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$900,000 with a five year project period.

- one to three awards for providing training and technical assistance to advance CWA Section 303(d) Program Implementation (National Priority Activity II) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$200,000 per award with a five year project period;
- one award for the State and Tribal Aquatic Resource Monitoring Technical Training Workshops (National Priority Activity III) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$975,000 with a five year project period;
- one award for State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Workshops in support of CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), TMDLs, and water quality monitoring and assessment (National Priority Activity IV) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$80,000 with a two year project period.
- one award for State and Tribal Nonpoint Source Program Training Workshops (National Priority Activity V) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$160,000 with a four year project period.
- two awards for Nonpoint Source Agricultural Technical Training Workshops (National Priority Activity VI) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$300,000 for each award with a five year project period.
- one award for Wetland Program Training Workshops (National Priority Activity VII) will be incrementally funded for a total of \$600,000 with a six year project period.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund a proposal by funding discrete portions or phases of a proposed project. 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.

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

## **B. TYPE OF FUNDING**

It is anticipated that cooperative agreements will be funded under this announcement. When a cooperative agreement is awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for a project selected may include:

1. Close monitoring of the recipient's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
2. Collaboration in the selection of training and technical assistance topics.
3. Collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
4. In accordance with 2 CFR 317 and 2 CFR 318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements;
5. Review of qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select

- employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and
6. Review and comment on tasks/deliverables and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement(s) (the final decision on the content of these reports rests with the recipient).

### **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

#### **A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, intertribal consortia, territories, possessions of the U.S. (including the District of Columbia), public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, and public or private non-profit institutions are eligible to apply. Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible. 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.

An intertribal consortium is a partnership between two or more tribes that is authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance. (See 40 CFR 35.502.) The intertribal consortium is eligible only if the consortium demonstrates that all of its members meet the eligibility requirements and authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance in accordance with 40 CFR 35.504 at the time of proposal submission. An intertribal consortium must submit with its proposal to EPA adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the consortium by its members to apply for and receive the grant. (See 40 CFR 35.504.) Non-profit applicants may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a non-profit organization in OMB Circular A-122.

#### **B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS**

No cost-share/match is required under this announcement.

#### **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 that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the 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. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement.
2. Each proposal submitted under this announcement must address one, and only one, of the National Priority Activities (Activity I, II, III, IV, V, VI, or VII) listed in Section I.B. Applicants may submit more than one project proposal package (including SF 424, SF 424A, and proposal narrative) under this announcement as long as each one is separately submitted and addresses **only one** National Priority Activity. The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the National Priority Activity addressed. Proposals that address more than one National Priority Activity will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.

3. Except as stated below, 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. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV.C.3 with respect to the proposal narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Section IV.C.3 establishes a 12-page, single-spaced proposal narrative page limit that includes the cover page
4. Proposals must be for projects that improve water quality by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.
5. An applicant may submit a proposal requesting up to a maximum federal amount for each National Priority Activity (Activity I, II, III, IV, V, VI, or VII). If an applicant submits a proposal that requests more than maximum federal amount for the National Priority Activity, it will be rejected from further consideration. Proposals for awards under National Priority Activity I cannot exceed \$900,000. Proposals for awards under National Priority Activity II cannot exceed \$200,000. Proposals under National Priority Activity III cannot exceed \$975,000. Proposals under National Priority Activity IV cannot exceed \$80,000. Proposals under National Priority Activity V cannot exceed \$160,000. Proposals under National Priority Activity VI cannot exceed \$300,000. Proposals under National Priority Activity VII cannot exceed \$600,000.
6. Proposals must be received by EPA or received through Grants.gov, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. If submitting a hard copy proposal, applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person / office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.
7. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due, to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems solely attributable to the Grants.gov website and not the applicant. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person / office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Concepcion Cahanap at [OWOW-RFP@epa.gov](mailto:OWOW-RFP@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline -- failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
8. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. **Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions or e-mailed submissions.**
9. If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

## **IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. HOW TO OBTAIN A PROPOSAL PACKAGE**



Applicants can download individual grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment website at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>.

## **B. FORM OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Applicants have the option to submit their proposal packages (as described in Section IV.C below) in **one** of two ways: 1) electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or 2) hard copy with compact disc (CD) to the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 via express delivery service, hand delivery, or courier service. Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed or e-mailed submissions. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C, CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, below, regardless of mode of submission.

### **1. 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 on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit a proposal through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then go to the "Get Registered" link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Applicants" on the top of the page and then "Apply for Grants" from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>.

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on "Search Grants" at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OW-OWOW-15-02, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.436), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click "Browse Agencies" in the middle of the page and then go to "Environmental Protection Agency" to find the EPA funding opportunities.

### **Proposal Submission Deadline**

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 P.M. EST March 24, 2015**.

Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit. Please submit all of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the "Show Instructions" tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Please submit *all* of the proposal materials described below.

### **Proposal Materials**

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

#### **Mandatory Documents:**

- I. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- II. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- III. Proposal Narrative - prepared as described in Section IV.C.3 of the announcement.

**Optional Documents:** Supporting Materials, if applicable – See Section IV.C.3 for more details on what may be considered supporting materials.

Proposals submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the proposal deadline, please contact Connie Cahanap at 202-566-1382. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

### **2. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD) Submission**

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package described in Section IV.C CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION below, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by express delivery service, courier service, or hand delivery. Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: FY 2015 National Priority Activities**. Electronic files on the CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc.) Annotated resumes will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD.

**Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed or e-mailed submissions.**

The address for hard copy submission is:

Attn: Concepcion Cahanap  
US EPA, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

William Jefferson Clinton (WJC) Building West, Room 7410H  
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

### **C. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

**Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly.** A complete proposal package must include the following three documents described below:

#### **1. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance**

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the 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 or by visiting the web site at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).

#### **2. 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 the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

#### **3. Proposal Narrative**

The proposal narrative, items A-E below, must be limited to no more than twelve (12) typewritten single-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper) (**except** for documents specifically excluded from the page limit as noted below). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. **Additional pages beyond the 12 page limit will not be considered.** Hard copy submissions may be submitted double-sided. The proposal narrative will be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 12 single-spaced page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed. Supporting materials (such as annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit for the proposal narrative. Any documentation pertaining to Quality Assurance/Quality Control is also not included in the page limit for the proposal narrative.

The proposal narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below in items 1-5. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal narrative.

##### **1. Cover Page (included in the page limit) including:**

- a. Project title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less);

- b. Name of applicant
- c. National Priority Activity from Section I.B addressed in the proposal **(proposals must address only one National Priority Activity per proposal package)**;
- d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
- e. Total project cost (specify the amount of federal funds requested and the total project cost); and
- f. Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less): Provide a brief description of the proposed project.

2. **Project Description** containing:

- a. Technical Approach – Describe how the proposal addresses one of the National Priority Activities (Activity I, II, III, IV, V, VI, or VII) described in Section I.B of this announcement. Applicants must address only one National Priority Activity per complete proposal package. Outline the steps you will take to plan, prepare, and conduct the training workshops and technical assistance and describe the roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the training workshops and technical assistance. Include a description of the approach for consulting with interested stakeholders to determine the training priorities. If travel assistance is to be provided for non-federal attendees, describe the process for selecting non-federal attendees who may receive travel assistance.
- b. Environmental Results and Measuring Progress -
  - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan – Provide the objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.2: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems (see Section I.C of this announcement);
  - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the anticipated products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project activities and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.C of this announcement); and
  - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of project outputs. Describe an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement).

- c. **Milestone Schedule** – Provide a projected milestone schedule that covers each year of the proposed project period. The milestone schedule should provide a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks. The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant. Include an approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The project start date will follow acceptance of the award by the successful applicant,
  - d. **Transfer of Results** – Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to interested stakeholders.
  - e. **Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)** (not counted in page limit) - If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A, **QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)**, of this announcement for additional information). Note: Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is required of all EPA assistance agreements that fund data collection and assessment and information analysis. The cost of the QAPP development should be included in the proposed budget.
3. **Detailed Budget Narrative:** Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project 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”. All subaward funding should be located under the “other” cost category.
- a. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total cost. All subaward funding should be located in the “other” cost category. Describe itemized costs in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine their reasonableness and the allowability of costs for each project component/task. If applicable, the budget narrative for the travel cost category must include travel reimbursement to pay for travel costs of non-federal attendees to attend workshops. Helpful tips on writing a budget may be found at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/ogd\\_budget\\_detail\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/ogd_budget_detail_guidance.pdf).
4. **Programmatic Capability/Specialized Experience**
- a. **Staff Expertise/Qualifications** - Provide a list of key staff and briefly describe their expertise/qualifications and knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Include an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) workers (based on 2080 hours per year/FTE). Annotated resumes of the applicant’s key staff are also encouraged but not required, should be provided as attachments, and are not counted in the page limit.

- b. Organizational Experience - Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
  - c. Specialized Experience – For National Priority Activity I, include a description of your experience in working with and convening state, tribal, territorial, and federal agencies responsible for implementing the CWA Section 303(d) program. For National Priority Activity II, include a description of your experience in working with and convening non-governmental practitioners and stakeholders of the CWA Section 303(d) program. For National Priority Activity III, include a description of your experience in working with and convening state, tribal, and federal agencies to effectively address a range of aquatic resource monitoring needs nationally. For National Priority Activity IV, include a description of your experience working with and convening state, tribal, and federal agencies responsible for implementing the CWA Section 303(d), CWA Section 305(b), and TMDL programs. For National Priority Activity V, include a description of your experience in working and convening state, territorial, tribal, and federal agencies responsible for implementing nonpoint source programs and/or water quality management programs. For National Priority Activity VI, include a description of your experience in disseminating technical and engineering design standards through a variety of multimedia and working with the agricultural industry, USDA, and planning design principals. For National Priority VII, include a description of your experience working with state and tribal wetland programs.
5. **Past Performance:** Briefly describe federally funded and/or non-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 three years (no more than five agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and:
- a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
  - b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
  - c. Describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress toward achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

**Note:** In evaluating applicant's past performance, the Agency 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/prior 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 past reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in the proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, may result in a zero score for these factors (see Section V.A.).

**NOTE:** The applicant should also provide in its proposal narrative any additional information, to the extent not already identified above, that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

#### **D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES**

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII by **5:00 P.M. EST, March 24, 2015**. Proposals submitted electronically via e-mail must be **received** by **11:59 P.M. EST, March 24, 2015**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

#### **E. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR APPLICANTS INCORPORATED INTO THE SOLICITATION**

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, which are incorporated by reference, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information and contracts and subawards under grants, can be found at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation\\_provisions.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

### **V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

#### **A. SELECTION CRITERIA**

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

<b>1) Technical Approach (30 points)</b>	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal addresses one of the National Priority Activities (Activity I, II, III, IV, V, VI, or VII) identified in Section I.B of the announcement. (30 points)
<b>2) Milestone Schedule/</b>	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates each of the following sub-criteria:

<b>Detailed Budget/Transfer of Results (15 points)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The adequacy and completeness of the milestone schedule for project tasks, including timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks. In addition, whether there is a clearly articulated approach to ensure that awarded funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner will also be evaluated. (5 points)</li> <li>b) The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. (5 points)</li> <li>c) The adequacy of the description on how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to interested stakeholders. (5 points)</li> </ul>
<b>3) Environmental Results (15 points)</b>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the potential to achieve environmental results anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (10 points)</li> <li>b) The extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.C of this announcement). (5 points)</li> </ul>
<b>4) Programmatic Capability/ Specialized Experience (20 points)</b>	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Organizational experience related to the proposed project and infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (10 points)</li> <li>b) Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points)</li> <li>c) Specialized experience applicable to the National Priority Activity (Activity I, II, III, IV, V, VI, or VII) as described in Section I.B. (5 points)</li> </ul>
<b>5) Past Performance (20 points)</b>	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an</li> </ul>



	<p>assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements). (10 points)</p> <p>b) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (5 points)</p> <p>c) Extent and quality to which the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably EPA agreements), and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> In evaluating applicants under items a), b), and c) above, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (e.g., Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants who have no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for these factors (i.e., 5 points for subcriterion a), 2.5 points for subcriterion b), and 2.5 points for subcriterion c)). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for the factors (i.e., zero points for subcriterion a), zero points for subcriterion b), and zero points for subcriterion c)).</p>
--	---

## **B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

All proposals received by EPA in hard copy or received by EPA via e-mail by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will be set up for each National Priority Activity to review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. The review panels will develop a separate ranked list of the proposals for each National Priority Activity based on the scores received. The ranking list for each National Priority Activity will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions for each National Priority Activity, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account program priorities.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. AWARD NOTICES**

Following EPA's evaluation of the proposals, all applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. The notification of recommendation for award is not an authorization to begin performance, nor is it a guarantee that the award will be made.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement.
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component.
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment.
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with 40 CFR §35.115..
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

The selected project will be posted on EPA's website at [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/shedfund/2015-National-Priority-Activities.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/shedfund/2015-National-Priority-Activities.cfm). This website may also contain additional information about this RFP. Deadline extensions or other modifications, if any, will be posted on this website and <http://www.grants.gov/>.

### **B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

This award is subject to the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Title 2 CFR, Parts 200 and 1500. 2 CFR 1500.1, Adoption of 2 CFR 200, states that the Environmental Protection Agency adopts the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards to Non-Federal Entities (subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200), as supplemented by this part, as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policies and procedures for financial assistance administration. This part satisfies the requirements of 2 CFR 200.110(a) and gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance as supplemented by this part. EPA also has programmatic regulations located in 40 CFR Chapter 1 Subchapter B.

### **C. DISPUTES**

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

### **D. REPORTING**

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted semi-annually and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating assistance agreements, EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the workplan consistent with 2 CFR 328, Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance, and 40 CFR Part 45. This includes any problems, issues or difficulties encountered that may affect the quality requirements of the project. The recipient must indicate what if any corrective actions were taken. Award recipients will be required to submit the final report electronically and in hard copy and should include, in addition, a 1-2 page project summary. If travel assistance is provided to selected attendees to attend workshops, the recipient will be required to provide a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the workshops.

### **E. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR APPLICANTS INCORPORATED INTO THE SOLICITATION**

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, and administrative capability can be found at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation\\_provisions.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm). These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

### **F. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW**

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the state has selected the program for review. Further information regarding this can be found at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_spoc](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc).

## **VII. AGENCY CONTACTS**

**Note to Applicants:** 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, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about any of the language or provisions in the announcement. **Please note that applicants should raise any questions they may have about the solicitation language to the contact identified in Section VII as soon as possible so that any questions about the solicitation language may be resolved prior to submitting a proposal.** In addition, if necessary, EPA may clarify threshold eligibility issues with applicants prior to making an eligibility determination. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **March 17, 2015**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's website at [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/shedfund/2015-National-Priority-Activities.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/shedfund/2015-National-Priority-Activities.cfm).

#### **Agency Contact**

Concepcion Cahanap

E-mail: [OWOW-RFP@epa.gov](mailto:OWOW-RFP@epa.gov)

### **VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)**

QA/QC requirements may be applicable to these assistance agreements (see 2 CFR 1500.11). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Agency Contact (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

If water quality data is generated, either directly or by subaward, the successful applicant must ensure all water quality data is transmitted into the Agency's Storage and Retrieval (STORET) Data Warehouse annually or by project completion using either WQX or WQXweb in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan. Water quality data that are appropriate for STORET include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is the water data schema associated with the EPA, State and Tribal Exchange Network. Using the WQX schema partners map their database structure to the WQX/STORET structure. WQXweb is a web-based tool to convert data into the STORET format for smaller data generators that are

not direct partners on the Exchange Network. More information about WQX, WQXweb, and the STORET Warehouse, including tutorials, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/storet/wqx/>.

## **B. DATA SHARING**

All recipients of these assistance agreements may be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.