

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2015 Support for Water Quality Framework Training Workshop, Nonpoint Source Agriculture Training and Technical Assistance, and Hypoxia and Agricultural Nutrient Outreach and Technical Assistance Request for Proposals

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-15-04

Questions and Answers

Q - I consider submitting a proposal to the "EPA-OW-OWOW-15-04" about water quality, training and assistance and agricultural related issues in Sinai, Egypt. I want to know if the grant is only for Gulf of Mexico areas or worldwide.

A - Projects should be located in the 50 United States. The training workshops should be located in or near major U.S. cities accessible to transportation to most effectively accommodate travel needs of participants.

Q - What is the anticipated project start date? When funds would be available?

Funding will be available after the award has been made. The proposed start date would be after the award is made. The award will be official and final only after these steps: approval of your final application, and a notice of award approval issued by the EPA Award Official.

Q – What is the project period for the projects?

A – Projects are anticipated to have a five year project period.

Q - For priority #2, our project would involve a substantial amount of data gathering to develop the training materials and a smaller component of the project would be actual training. Would that meet the threshold criteria, or does the project have to be primarily direct training activities?

A - 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. 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.

Q - Does the training in priority #2 have to be national in scope, or can it be limited to a region?

A – For Priority II, EPA is interested in funding proposals that reach multi-state or regional scales and that are scale-able to other areas.

Q – Who will be on the review panel?

A – The proposals will be reviewed by Federal employees.

Q - For National Priority I, the RFP states that applicants may request up to \$200K in the first year and up to \$100K in each of the subsequent four years, and that applicants should conduct three trainings over the five-year period. Is there any leeway in the per-year caps to reflect the much higher costs in the years the workshops are held? The funding schedule does not correspond to the workshop schedule as currently designed.

A - For National Priority I, EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare, and conduct three State and Tribal Data Management Sharing Training Workshops – over the five year project period. It is anticipated that the training would be scheduled every other year. The award is anticipated to be incrementally funded for a total of \$600,000 over the five year project period with an anticipated funding of \$200,000 in the first year and \$100,000 per year for the remaining four years. The amount of funding is what we anticipate to have available for this project. The applicant is responsible for providing a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each project task.

Q - (National Priority Activity 1): The Detailed Budget Narrative appears to be included in the overall 10 page limitation for the Proposal Narrative. Would EPA consider excluding the budget narrative from the page limit?

A - The detailed budget is included in the page limit.

Q - (National Priority Activity 1): In Section D (page 3) of EPA's RFP, it's stated that three State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshop meeting events are anticipated. What duration (i.e., how many days) should be assumed for preparing the costing for each of the three workshop meetings?

A - EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to plan, prepare and conduct three State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops over the five year project period. Each workshop should be four days in length.

Q - (National Priority Activity 1): For costing purposes, is EPA assuming that a provision of light refreshments (e.g., drinks and small snacks) for these workshops is appropriate and will help to achieve the goals and objectives of these meetings?

A - Applicants proposing light refreshments in their proposals should describe in their workplan the cost and use of light refreshments for the project. The recipient agrees to obtain prior approval from EPA for the use of grant funds for light refreshments.

Question 4 (National Priority Activity 1): What are the specific quality assurance and quality control requirements that are needed for the State and Tribal Data Management and Data Sharing Training Workshops Activity (National Priority Activity 1); does EPA believe that a Quality Assurance Project Plan document is needed for National Priority Activity 1 or only a narrative quality assurance statement within the proposal?

A - Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) is not counted in the 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. 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.

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.