

United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9

**Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta
Water Quality Cooperative Agreements**

2010 Request for Proposals

Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (EPA)

Funding Opportunity Name: Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta Water Quality Cooperative Agreements

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-WTR3-10-003

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 66.463

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (EPA) is soliciting proposals under this announcement to improve water quality in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta (Delta) and its watershed. Proposals must address one of these program priorities, but not both:

- Priority A: projects that assess Delta water quality issues and regulatory approaches for Delta water quality protection, or
- Priority B: projects that help establish a comprehensive regional monitoring program in the San Joaquin River Basin.

Successful proposals will be funded through cooperative agreements with the U.S. EPA (i.e. EPA will be substantially involved). See Section II.D of this solicitation for more information on EPA's role.

EPA anticipates awarding two to three cooperative agreements under this solicitation. Awards will range from approximately \$100,000 - \$200,000 with each project period being up to three years. The total amount anticipated to be awarded under this announcement is approximately \$400,000. No matching funds are required under this program. A broad range of entities are eligible to submit proposals that address the water quality needs in the Delta and watershed [discussed in the Section III of this solicitation].

All proposed project activities **must** be eligible under Section 104 (b) (3) of the Clean Water Act. See Section II of this solicitation.

Important Dates

April 12, 2010	Proposals must be received by EPA by 5pm Pacific Standard Time
April 28, 2010	Initial project approvals identified and project applicants selected for funding will be requested to submit a formal application package
May 28, 2010	Complete application and work plans received by EPA
Sept. 30, 2010	Awards made

The above dates (other than the April 12, 2010 proposal submission date) are anticipated dates and may be subject to change.

Intent to Apply (OPTIONAL): EPA invites applicants to submit an informal notice of Intent to Apply by email to the contacts below by March 22, 2010. Submission of intent to apply is optional, however, it helps EPA to better anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of submitted proposals.

Contact: Tina Yin,
WQCA Coordinator
Phone: (415) 972-3579
Email: yin.christina@epa.gov

Contact: Carolyn Yale
Bay-Delta Team
Phone: (415) 972-3482
Email: yale.carolyn@epa.gov

US EPA Region 9
Watersheds Office (WTR 3)
75 Hawthorne St
San Francisco, CA 94105

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background.

As a participant in a coordinated federal agency initiative to assist ecosystem restoration and water supply reliability in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta (Delta), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has committed to fund several projects that will contribute to better water quality protection.

The severity of problems in the Delta has been brought into focus by the dramatic decline of key Delta fish populations. There is evidence that impaired water quality plays a role in the decline of valued aquatic species and their habitat. Contaminants also threaten human health, the quality of drinking and agricultural water sources, and other beneficial uses. Causes of poor water quality include salt water intrusion from the diversion of water in the Delta, agricultural and urban runoff, aquatic pesticides, wastewater, and legacy mercury originating upstream of the Delta.

Substantial work is underway to understand the sources of chemical and physical stressors and the direct and indirect impacts on species of concern, aquatic habitat and other beneficial uses. Additionally, more attention is being paid to ways in which longer-term and large-scale trends such as urbanization in the Bay-Delta watershed may alter the ‘stressor profile’ and management options. Much of this work has been directed through the CalFed Science Program and Interagency Ecological Program (IEP), and has been vetted in workshops and expert panel reviews.

The resulting assessments help agencies target water quality protection activities, including work to fill information and regulatory gaps. The California State Water Board and Regional Boards 2 and 5 adopted a Strategic Work Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary that commits to a range of actions. In the next several years, the state of California (State) anticipates various improvements to the water quality regulatory regime including (but not limited to) permit renewals for fifteen major municipal wastewater treatment plants and four county stormwater programs; a renewed irrigated lands regulatory program; new State standards related to salinity in the Southern Delta and flows on the San Joaquin River; and TMDLs for pesticides and methylmercury. Recent State legislation for the Delta expanded the Water Boards’ responsibilities, including increased oversight of in-delta diversions and development of flow criteria for the Delta ecosystem.

With the heightened attention on the Delta and its watershed, there is a widely-recognized need for better water quality information. The California Water Quality Monitoring Council (established pursuant to SB 1070) is now charged with improving the

coordination and cost-effectiveness of water quality and ecosystem monitoring and assessment, enhancing the integration of monitoring data across departments and agencies, and increasing public accessibility to monitoring data and assessment information. The Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) is striving to improve its efforts to assess water quality in all of California's surface waters. SWAMP conducts monitoring directly and through collaborative partnership, and provides numerous information products, all designed to support water resource management in California. In addition, learning from successful regional efforts elsewhere, the establishment of regional monitoring programs has begun in all three areas of the Bay-Delta 'system': the Delta (through a program sponsored by the Central Valley Water Board); the Sacramento Basin (through the Sacramento River Watershed Program), and the San Joaquin Basin (through a U.S. EPA planning grant). The EPA role in improving San Joaquin monitoring originated with CalFed interest in defining system-wide needs for monitoring and assessment.

B. Program Priorities. EPA is seeking projects that advance and support the water quality improvement efforts in the Delta as described above. EPA is making funding under this solicitation available for projects under two program priorities.

Proposals must address one of these program priorities, but not both:

- Priority A: Projects that assess Delta water quality issues and regulatory approaches for Delta water quality protection; or
- Priority B: Projects that help establish a comprehensive regional monitoring program in the San Joaquin River Basin.

Priority A: Delta Water Quality Program Assessment

EPA seeks proposals to develop, evaluate, synthesize, and present information on significant Delta water quality issues and the effectiveness of the current regulatory mechanisms to protect water quality in the Delta and its tributaries. This work will complement ongoing activities in the Delta by addressing subjects not currently covered through other review and planning processes. The schedule and focused subjects for this assessment will be determined in coordination with the agencies conducting complementary activities.

Proposals should address the following:

- a. **Review process:** Describe the process(es) that will be used to develop, evaluate, synthesize and present information on complex Delta water quality issues. Both venues for public comment and structured science reviews should be considered. For example, the types of activities included in proposals may include expert panels, peer

review, workshops and other means of bringing scientific expertise to bear on Delta water quality issues and generating products according to an established schedule.

- b. **Scientific expertise:** The work will call for scientific review, synthesis, and reporting on information. Thus, proposals should ensure the participation of highly qualified experts, objectivity, and timely products. Applicants should demonstrate ability to assemble the appropriate expertise, organize and oversee reviews that make effective use of this expertise, and produce reports or other products that appropriately synthesize information and identify issues needing further investigation.
- c. **Coordination:** The proposal should anticipate working closely with established Delta science entities, such as the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP), the Delta (formerly CalFED) Science Program and agencies responsible for planning and regulatory programs in the Delta.

Examples of activities that would be appropriate for this priority include but are not limited to:

- Convening, overseeing, and compiling the results from one or more science review panels on topics relating to the effectiveness of water quality regulatory programs in addressing current and emerging issues. Water quality topics may include, but are not limited to, toxics, nutrients, emerging contaminants such as endocrine disruptors, interactions of contaminants, and characterization of estuarine habitat.
- Compiling and synthesizing information received by EPA through a public comment process with respect to topics related to water quality and regulatory program effectiveness and needs in the Delta.
- Facilitating structured discussions on water quality issues, planning and/or regulatory activities.

It is not anticipated that proposals under this priority will be subject to environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act. However, applicants should note that certain types of projects may require environmental review in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. For further information on NEPA requirements, see Section VI.H.

Priority B: Establishing a San Joaquin River Basin Regional Monitoring Program

EPA seeks proposals that help establish a regional program for monitoring and assessment in the San Joaquin River Basin, as defined in the Draft Proposed Strategy for San Joaquin River Basin Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment (The EPA-funded Strategy can be viewed at <http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/watershed/sfbay->

[delta.html](#).) The Strategy identifies the following elements to support the establishment of a regional program: (1) Sampling Coordination, (2) Methods and Quality Assurance Standardization, (3) Data Analysis and Interpretation, (4) Data Center, and (5) Implementation (Funding and Institutional Arrangements). Proposals should undertake activities described in, or consistent with, the Strategy, as well as related efforts such as SWAMP and the California Water Quality Monitoring Council. If a proposed activity falls outside the scope of these activities, explain how this contributes to progress towards a regional program to help improve water quality.

Proposals should address the following:

- a. **Results:** Activities that demonstrate results, such as more robust assessments, broader use and access to data, improved technical assistance to the monitoring community, and institutional arrangements for ongoing comprehensive regional monitoring.
- b. **Integration.** Activities that work with existing programs within the San Joaquin region to maximize the benefit of ongoing sampling and assessment. Agencies should link appropriately with related programs such as the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP), San Joaquin River Restoration, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, etc.
- c. **Ongoing regional program.** Contribute to the establishment of an ongoing regional monitoring program with strong in-basin leadership and participation. This may include developing institutional arrangements within the San Joaquin region with lead and contributing roles by in-basin interests, such as the public, state and federal agencies, water managers, agricultural producers, urban storm water programs and others concerned with monitoring and assessment.

Examples of activities that would be appropriate for this priority include but are not limited to:

- San Joaquin Basin data management services and tools for enhanced data reporting, retrieval, and sharing. A lead Data Center for the San Joaquin Basin would be responsible for maintaining a web-based data submission system, and providing support to a wide range of entities that produce water monitoring data. The Center then provides data through the California Data Exchange Network (CEDEN).
- Assessment of water quality within the San Joaquin Basin utilizing existing data. Preference will be given to assessments that further data sharing and integration, and establish broadly supported assessment questions.
- A State of the San Joaquin River Basin conference/workshop to convene a broad range of experts and interests to explore priority water quality issues and enhance

collaboration. Such meetings should be a regular component of a regional monitoring program.

- Methods and mechanisms to further coordination of sampling and the standardization of field and lab methods across programs.
- Partnership agreement establishing a regional monitoring program with sustainable funding plan, and in-basin technical and policy oversight structure.
- Expanded uses of the Central Valley Monitoring Directory to facilitate increased cooperation among existing monitoring activities. Preference will be given to use and application of the system as opposed to developing additional functions.

It is not anticipated that proposals under this priority will be subject to environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act. However, applicants should note that certain types of projects may require environmental review in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Please see Section VI.H for further information on NEPA requirements.

C. EPA's Strategic Plan Linkage and Environmental Results. Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the EPA's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and environmental outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>).

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. All proposals must support EPA's strategic goals to improve and restore impaired water quality on a watershed basis and facilitate ecosystem-scale protection and restoration under EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 - Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.2 (Protect Water Quality), Sub-objective 2.2.1 (Protect and Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis) and Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, Objective 4.3 (Ecosystems), Sub-objective 4.3.1 (Protect and Restore Ecosystems). (<http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.html>)

These Strategic Plan goals and objectives apply to both priority topics.

Applicants need to demonstrate in their proposals a clear linkage between the relevant goals listed in the *EPA Strategic Plan (2006-2011)* and the project's expected outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature, and in how they are measured.

2. Outputs. The term "output" means an activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over the

period of time or by a specific date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI.D of this announcement, “Reporting Requirements.”

Examples of Outputs for Delta Water Quality Program Assessment (Priority A) include but are not limited to:

- A science panel synthesis report and findings.
- (#) workshops and write-up of proceedings.
- Report and recommendations concluding a public comment process on specified water quality issues.

Examples of Outputs for Establishing a San Joaquin River Basin Regional Monitoring Program (Priority B) include but are not limited to:

- San Joaquin data management services.
- State of the San Joaquin River Basin meeting.
- Coordination of monitoring and methods coordination on specific water quality issues, including documented agreement on protocols and responsibilities.
- Partnership agreement on water quality parameters and protocols for coordinating sampling.
- Incorporation of Monitoring Directory into a California Water Quality Monitoring Council web portal.
- A water quality assessment report based on broadly supported assessment questions.
- Establishment of technical coordinating committee with broad in-basin representation.

3. Outcomes. The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes that will be achieved beyond the assistance agreement funding period should be included.

Also, applicants are encouraged to identify potential outcomes at various stages in this sequence: For example, proposals might identify outcome measures for “better information,” “better management,” and “long-term environmental conditions.”

Examples of Outcomes for Delta Water Quality Program Assessment (Priority A) include but are not limited to:

- Evidence over a representative period of years and hydrologic conditions of a trend towards recovery of sensitive aquatic species.
- Evidence of beneficial water quality effects on the growth, health, fecundity or survival of valued aquatic species or on the trophic web upon which they rely.
- Use in adaptive management of water quality indicators for the Bay-Delta system.

Examples of Outcomes for Establishing a San Joaquin River Basin Regional Monitoring Program (Priority B) include but are not limited to:

- Improved water quality resulting from more robust assessments based on better integration of existing monitoring.
- Enhanced collaboration among sectors (e.g., urban and agriculture) leading towards integrated solutions.
- Established regional monitoring program with in-basin leadership and oversight, and a sustainable funding plan.
- Positive trend in an environmental stewardship index.
- Development of water quality outcome indicators that integrate information across the Bay-Delta system.

Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at:

http://www.epa.gov/nps/watershed_handbook/pdf/ch09.pdf.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

These funds were appropriated to the EPA to support Water Quality Cooperative Agreements under Section 104 (b)(3) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §104(b)(3). Funding under this program may only support research, investigation, trainings, demonstration projects, surveys or studies related to the cause, effects, extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of water pollution. Demonstration projects must be for new or innovative efforts. Ongoing program implementation is not eligible under this authority.

Funding for these projects is not guaranteed and is subject to the availability of funds and the evaluation of proposals based on the criteria in this announcement. EPA reserves the right to make no awards, or fewer awards than expected under this announcement. In addition, award of funding through this competition is not a guarantee of future funding.

A. Available Funding. EPA anticipates awarding 2-3 grants under this solicitation. The amount of federal funding will range from approximately \$100,000-\$200,000 with each project period being up to three years. The total amount anticipated to be awarded under this announcement is approximately \$400,000. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

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 selection decisions. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. Project Period for Awards. The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will begin in Summer/Fall 2010. Proposed project periods may be up to 3 years.

C. Partial Funding. In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications under this announcement by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

D. Funding Type. All projects selected under this RFP will be awarded as “Cooperative Agreements.” A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity/project. EPA Region 9 will negotiate the precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process. Potential substantial federal involvement for the projects funded under this solicitation may include:

- Collaboration in refining the work plan and during performance of the scope of work.
- Close monitoring of performance to verify results and adjust timing and emphasis given to activities, consistent with the scope of the work.
- Reviewing substantive terms of proposed contractual work.
- Reviewing and commenting on reports.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants. State water pollution control agencies, interstate agencies, and federally-recognized Tribes, colleges and universities, individuals, and other public or non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for cooperative agreements under this program. For-profit entities are not eligible.

B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirement. No cost-share or matching funds are required. Although cost-sharing/matching is not required as a condition of eligibility under this competition, under Section V of this announcement EPA will evaluate proposals based on a leveraging criterion.

Leveraging is generally when an applicant proposes to provide its own additional funds/resources or those from third party sources to support or complement the project they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds awarded. Any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the proposal. Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted below.

Voluntary cost share is a form of leveraging. Voluntary cost sharing is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project when a cost share is not required. Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share **must** include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424. If an applicant proposes a voluntary cost share, the following apply:

- A voluntary cost share is subject to the match provisions in the grant regulations (40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable).
- A voluntary cost share may only be met with eligible and allowable costs.
- The recipient may not use other sources of federal funds to meet a voluntary cost share unless the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant.
- The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget.

Other leveraged funding/resources that are not identified as a voluntary cost share:

This form of leveraging may be met by funding from another federal grant, from an applicant's own resources, or resources from other third party sources. This form of leveraging should not be included in the budget and the costs need not be eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement. While this form of leveraging **should not** be included in the budget, the grant workplan **must** include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31 as applicable.

D. Threshold Eligibility Criteria. These are requirements that, if not met at the time of proposal submission, will result in elimination of the proposal from further consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors (See Section V) of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for

funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applicants must meet the applicant eligibility requirements described in Section III. A.
2. Projects must support the water quality goals of the Sacramento -San Joaquin Bay-Delta and watershed, as described in the discussion of geographic scope in Section 1, and **MUST** address one of the priority topics (Section I.B.).
3. Proposals must support Strategic Plan Goal 2 and 4 of EPA's Strategic Plan as specified in Section I.C.1.
4. Proposals seeking an award amount of federal funding in excess of \$200,000 will not be considered for funding.
5. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV or they will be rejected. However, proposals that exceed the 10 page limit will not be rejected but those pages in excess of the limitation will not be reviewed.
6. Proposals must be received by EPA via mail, hand-delivery, express delivery service, or through grants.gov no later than **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on April 12, 2010**, as specified in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposals reach 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 associated with www.grants.gov. 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 Tina Yin (Tel: 415-972-3579, yin.christina@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
8. Proposals submitted by fax will not be considered.
9. All proposed project activities **must** be eligible under Section 104 (b) (3) of the Clean Water Act. Proposals for demonstration projects must demonstrate applications, technologies, methods or approaches that are new, innovative or experimental. Proposals for demonstration projects that are carried out through routine or established practices will not be considered.

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package. This announcement describes all the documents required to submit a proposal package. Specific grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at <http://www.epa.gov/region09/funding/applying.html> and by mail upon request by calling the Region 9 Grants Management Office at (415) 972-3702.

B. Form of Application Submission and Deadline. Applicants must submit their proposal using one of the two methods outlined below: hardcopy/compact disc or grants.gov. All proposals must include the information described in Section IV.C regardless of mode of submission. Complete proposal packages must be **received** by EPA Region 9 at the address below via mail, hand-delivery, express delivery service, or submitted on grants.gov by **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on April 12, 2010.**

1. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD). If selecting this method of submission, applicants must send two hard copies of the complete proposal package as described below in Section IV.C, and a CD of the complete proposal package via mail, express mail delivery or hand delivery. To reduce paper use, applicants are requested to submit double-side printed proposals. **Please address all submissions to:**

Tina Yin, Re: Delta WQCA 2010
EPA Region 9 (WTR-3)
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

The CD may contain files in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf), Microsoft Word (.doc), or WordPerfect (.wpd). Letters of support and maps must be scanned and submitted as part of the CD. Pictures and/or computer generated maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

2. Grants.gov – Electronic submission: Applicants who wish to submit their proposals electronically through the federal government’s Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download an application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required package, they can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to EPA. Complete instructions for submitting applications via grants.gov are included as an attachment to this announcement.

For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Get Registered” on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please

encourage your office to designate an Agency Official Representative and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

C. Content of Proposal Submission. The proposal package must include all of the following: Standard Form 424, Standard Form 424A, and Proposal Narrative. As explained below, there is a 10 page limit for the Proposal Narrative. There are no page limits for the other parts of the proposal.

- **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance**

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

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

- **Standard Form (SF) 424A , Budget Information**

Complete the form (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm>). There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A; the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

If indirect costs are included in the proposed project budget, applicants must have, or obtain, a negotiation indirect cost rate with a “federal cognizant agency.” If selected for funding, applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate agreement.

- **Proposal Narrative**

The proposal narrative (comprising sections 1-3 below) may not exceed a maximum of 10 single-spaced typewritten pages and must use no less than 12-point standard font. The proposal narrative, budget, tables, timeline, charts, graphs, and pictures are all included within the 10 page limit; pages in excess of 10 will not be considered. The SF 424, the SF 424A, letters of support, resumes, and maps do not count toward the 10 page limit. The proposal narrative must include the information listed below:

1. Summary Page (1 page limit)

- a. Project Title.
- b. Abstract. Provide a brief executive summary (approx. 150 words) that describes the proposed work, the program priorities to be addressed as discussed in Section 1.B., and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.
- c. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
- d. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.
- e. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including voluntary cost share or in-kind resources.
- f. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates.

2. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative should describe how the proposed project meets the objectives and guidelines established in Sections I-III of this announcement. Be sure to refer to the objectives/guidelines for the Priority Topic that the proposal is addressing. The evaluation criteria in Section V are a good guide.

a. Scope of Work/Approach: The scope shall contain the following components:

- i - Summarize the objectives of the project, the approach taken to address these objectives, and the expected results.
- ii - Describe the specific proposed actions and methods; the responsible parties; the time required for each task; milestones that will measure progress; and the resulting work products. Describe other funds such as voluntary cost share or leveraged resources that will be used for the project, if any. (No match is required; see Section III.C of this solicitation.)
- iii - Identify project benefits. Both priority topics are intended to fund activities that provide information leading to better water quality protection programs in the Bay-Delta and its watershed. Explain how the project would improve the effectiveness, scope, or other measure of success for water quality programs. If applicable explain how the proposed activities will improve institutional capacity for environmental protection.

iv - Describe the roles of the applicant and partners (including subgrantees if any). Highlight the roles of any partnerships contributing to the project. Discuss how programs or other activities based in the region will be involved in the project.

vi - Describe the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project. If applicable, identify any project partners that have with the specific expertise or program responsibilities needed to accomplish the proposed activities.

vii - Describe staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

viii – Include a budget with estimated funding amounts for each work component/task.

b. Environmental Results—Outputs and Outcomes

Identify the project outputs (Section I.C.2) and outcomes (Section I.C.3).

Describe how progress towards achieving them will be tracked and measured. Be as specific as possible in quantifying the anticipated outputs and outcomes.

c. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Submit a list of federally (and/or non-federally if applicable) 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 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/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

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). If you do not provide any response for these items, you will receive a score of 0 for these factors.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

3. Detailed Budget Narrative

Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Explanations of the costs associated with each project task, including leveraged amounts, should be provided. Description of costs should correspond to figures presented in the SF 424A. A table highlighting key tasks and/or outputs for the length of the project with the associated budget breakdown is recommended.

Demonstrate how you will leverage additional funds/resources, if any, beyond the grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Describe the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how you will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged resources will play to support the proposed project activities. Selected applicants are expected to abide by their proposed leveraging commitments during grant performance and the failure to do so may affect the legitimacy of the award. (See III.C. on leveraging.)

Management Fees: Budgets for proposals/applications may not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used

to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

4. Attachments. These are not included in the 10-page limit.

a. Resumes. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.

b. Support Letters. To substantiate the information contained in the narrative portion of the submission, letters verifying partnerships, and leveraged funds should be submitted as appropriate. All letters must be on the official letterhead of the agency or organization.

D. Intergovernmental Review. If selected for award, applicants (except for federally Recognized Indian Tribes) must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Executive Order 12372. EPA's implementing regulations for this Executive Order can be found at 40 CFR Part 29.1-29.13. Applicants 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.

E. Confidential Business Information. It is recommended that confidential business information ("CBI") **not** be included in your proposal/application. However, if CBI is included in the proposal/application, it will be handled in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2.203. Applicants must clearly indicate which portion(s) of their proposal/application they are claiming as CBI. EPA will evaluate such claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant which is otherwise required by 40 CFR Part 2.204(c) (2) prior to disclosure. However, EPA protects competitive proposals/applications from disclosure under applicable provisions of the Freedom of Information Act prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

F. Proposal Communications and Assistance. In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy of January 11, 2005 (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. However, EPA will respond to questions regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

G. Contracts and Subawards/Subgrants.

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the “recipient” even if other eligible applicants are named as “partners” or “co-applicants” or members of a “coalition” or “consortium.” The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds and reporting requirements.

1. Subawards, Contracts, and Partnerships. If successful applicants intend to use EPA grant funds to purchase goods or services under the grant, such applicants must compete the contracts for those goods and services and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of 40 CFR Part 30 or 31. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. While applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposal, if they do so it does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements, nor does it guarantee that costs incurred for such contractor/consultant will be eligible under the grant/cooperative agreement. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal based solely on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

2. Subawards/Subgrants. Successful applicants may award subgrants (also referred to as subawards) of financial assistance to fund partnerships under the EPA grant provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subgrants/subawards including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. There is no cap on subawards that are awarded non-competitively. (See Section III. E). However, successful applicants cannot use subgrants/subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using subgrants/subawards to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations. EPA will not be a party to subgrant/subaward agreements.

3. Subawardee and Contractor Consideration during Evaluation. Section V of the announcement describes evaluation criteria and the evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant’s own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant’s named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for-profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant’s named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrated in its proposal that the contractor(s) was selected in

compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper noncompetitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost of price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualification, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractors during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

V. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

Only eligible entities whose proposal(s) meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria set forth below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal package submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system with a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Points	Criterion
20	1. <u>Scope/Approach:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-conceived strategy and technically/scientifically sound approach for addressing program priorities in Section I, Part B (Scope of Work). (15 pts) • Realistic goals and time schedule for the execution of all tasks. (5 pts)
20	2. <u>Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood that project outputs will subsequently contribute to significant environmental results that include water quality and related environmental outcomes. (15 pts) • Effective plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving project outputs and outcomes. (5 pts)
20	3. <u>Partnerships/Leveraging:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of effective partners to ensure integration and collaboration with related efforts that will support ongoing water quality improvements and environmental protection. (15 pts)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which applicant demonstrates leveraged resources will support the proposed project (as described in Section III. B and IV.3). (5 pts)
20	<p>4. <u>Budget/Resources:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget is reasonable and appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes. (15 pts) • Budget estimates the proportion of funds designated for each major activity. (5 pts)
20	<p>5. <u>Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal (Section IV.C) (2pts)* • History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal as described in Section IV.C of the announcement including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not. (3 pts)* • Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. (3pts) • Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (12 pts) <p><i>* In evaluating applicants under this criterion EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items i and ii above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</i></p>

B. Review and Selection Process. Eligible proposals will be evaluated by a Selection Committee that will score and rank proposals using the evaluation criteria above in Section V.A. The Committee will consist of EPA staff and may also include representatives from other federal and state agencies. The Selection Committee will recommend to the Regional Selection Official which proposals should be funded in order of ranking. The Regional Selection Official will consider the Selection Committees’

recommendations, but may also consider the following factors in making his/her final selections:

1. the geographic distribution of funds; and 2. programmatic diversity.

Selected applicants will be notified and requested to submit a final application.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices. All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified in writing on or around April 30, 2010. Successful applicant(s) will be invited to submit a complete application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10) that will be due approximately 30 days after being notified. Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time.

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

1. Work plan components to be funded under the grant;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each work plan component;
3. Work plan commitments for each work plan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the work plan commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32. Applicants will receive a notice of award through postal mail.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements. The general award and administration process for funds under this solicitation are governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements to Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations") and 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"). All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable Code of Federal Regulation (formerly Office of

Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Circulars): 2CFR 225 (formerly A-87) for states and local governments, 2 CFR 230 (formerly A-122) for nonprofit organizations, or 2 CFR 220 (formerly A-21) for universities. Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In certain circumstances costs incurred prior to the grant award may be eligible for reimbursement. However, this does not include any costs associated with responding to this solicitation or in finalizing the application package. If costs are incurred before the award, they are incurred at the applicant's or grantee's own risk.

C. DUNS Number. All applicants are required to provide a number from the Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) when applying for federal assistance agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

D. Reporting. Project monitoring and reporting requirements can be found in 40 CFR Part 30.50-30.52, 40 CFR Part 31.40-31.41. In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the grant or cooperative agreement 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 quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The format for these reports will be identified during the grant application time frame, and will include reporting on established performance measures indicated in the project description (i.e., goals, outputs and outcomes). The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired.

E. Dispute Process. Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005), which can be found at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=3629&dbname=2005_register.

F. Administrative Capability Requirement. Nonprofit applicants who are recommended for funding under this announcement may be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c, and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, nonprofit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative

Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

In addition, non-profit applicants who receive an award under this announcement will be required to have at least two of their employees complete the mandatory online training, “EPA Grant Management Training for Non-Profit Applicants and Recipients.” One person must be the project manager, or equivalent, for the assistance agreement. The other individual must be the person authorized to draw down funds for the assistance agreement. The training must be completed by both employees prior to the acceptance of the award. The course can be accessed at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/training/index.htm>.

G. Restrictions on use of Federal Funds. In accordance with the EPA policy and OMB circular, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for fund-raising, or political activities such as lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal grants, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity.

H. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable environmental laws.

It is not anticipated that activities associated with either of the two priorities will be required to prepare a document for environmental impact review. In the event that NEPA compliance is needed, projects should follow the procedures described in the following paragraph.

In accordance with 40 CFR §6.301, applicants may be required to prepare an environmental information document (EID) which includes sufficient information to enable EPA to undertake any required environmental review of the proposed project under the National Environmental Policy Act. Pursuant to 40 CFR §6.200 (e) (1), this environmental review must be completed before a grant can be awarded; however, the costs for preparing the EID may be eligible for reimbursement under the grant. In addition, compliance with other federal environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, may also be required.

I. Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC). Certain quality assurance and/or quality control (QA/QC) and peer review requirements are applicable to the collection of

environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or condition; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data also include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and obtained from other sources such as data bases or published literature. Regulations pertaining to QA/QC requirements can be found in 40 CFR Parts 30.54 and 31.45. Additional guidance can be found at http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html#noeparqt. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process in their proposed projects. If your organization does not have a Quality Management System in place, one must be developed. A project specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be submitted and approved by EPA if your project includes sampling of any kind. Allow 4-6 months in your timeline for approval of these plans.

J. Assistance Agreement Terms and Conditions. Information Technology. As a Term and Condition of the grant, recipients will be required to institute standardized reporting requirements into their work plans and include such costs in their budgets. All environmental data generated as part of the project should be comparable to the state's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP).

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

For additional information, please contact:

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Watersheds Office
415-972-3579
yin.christina@epa.gov

Carolyn Yale, Bay-Delta Team
Watersheds Office
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VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Useful References. For further information, you may use the following links:

- **Draft Proposed Strategy for San Joaquin River Basin Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment** <http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/watershed/sfbay-delta.html>
- **Strategic Workplan for Activities in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary**
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/strategic_plan/docs/baydelta_workplan_final.pdf

- **Comprehensive Review of the Bay-Delta Plan**
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/periodic_review/index.shtml
- **Delta Water Quality- Comprehensive Monitoring Program**
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/delta_water_quality/comprehensive_monitoring_program/index.shtml
- **California Water Quality Monitoring Council (SB1070)**
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/monitoring_council/
- **California Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)**
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/