

**United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9**

**West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast**

**2008 Request for Proposals**

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

**Funding Opportunity Name:** West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast

**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-R9-WTR3-08-006

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers:** 66.439

**Overview**

U.S. EPA Region 9 is soliciting proposals under this announcement for projects that conserve, restore and protect the water quality, habitat and environment of California coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters through comprehensive approaches to water quality management. The emphasis is on supporting implementation activities based on existing plans, such as Comprehensive Conservation Management Plans (Clean Water Act Section (CWA) 320), State programs such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, and local watershed plans.

States, local governments, public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies are eligible to apply. For-profit commercial entities and all Federal agencies are ineligible. Nonprofit 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.

The total amount expected to be awarded under this announcement is approximately \$5,000,000 made available pursuant to the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act. U.S. EPA Region 9 anticipates awarding approximately three to five grants or cooperative agreements under this solicitation. It is expected that the federal share of the awards will range from approximately \$250,000 to no more than \$1,000,000 each with project periods of three to five years. U.S. EPA is requiring applicants to demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will provide the minimum non-federal match of 25 percent of the total cost of the proposal. Federally recognized Indian tribal governments may be exempt from this match requirement if they can demonstrate the match requirement would impose an undue economic hardship.

The West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast is a focused effort under the U.S. EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant (TWG) Program. The TWG Program is designed to support the protection and restoration of the nation's water resources through a holistic watershed approach to water quality management. The goal of the TWG Program is to advance successful partnerships and coalitions that have completed the

necessary watershed assessments and have a technically sound watershed plan ready to implement.

**Important Dates:**

August 25, 2008.....Proposals must be received by U.S. EPA or electronically through Grants.gov by 5pm Pacific Standard Time

October 17, 2008.....Initial approval identified and sponsor of projects selected for funding will be requested to submit a formal application package

November 15, 2008...Application and work plan received via hardcopy

December 2008.....Awards made

The above dates (other than the August 25, 2008 proposal submission date) are anticipated dates and may be subject to change.

**Contact:**

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**United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9**

**West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast**

**2008 Request for Proposals**

**Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-WTR3-08-006**

**I. Funding Opportunity Description**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Region 9 is soliciting proposals under this announcement for projects that conserve, restore and protect the water quality, habitat and environment of California coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters through comprehensive approaches to water quality management. California is rich with diverse and productive ocean and coastal ecosystems that benefit Californians and people across the nation in numerous ways. California's 1,100 miles of coastline and related watersheds support abundant wildlife, commercial fishing industries, and vibrant coastal communities. The coastline and related watersheds provide a broad range of recreational opportunities and a variety of goods and services that are economically valuable to the State and essential to its citizens' quality of life. Some coastal ecosystems, such as wetlands and kelp forests, absorb nutrients or capture sediments from the land, thereby improving water quality and protecting important habitats. These ecosystems serve as nurseries and habitat for marine life and help to protect shoreline communities from floods and storms.

During the last three decades, there have been some notable successes in protecting California's coastal resources and related ecosystems. Point source pollution has been significantly reduced. Valuable coastal assets have been purchased and placed in the public trust. Coastal development has been guided by one of the most progressive coastal management programs in the country, and our understanding of the way natural systems work together has greatly improved.

Despite these successes, significant challenges remain. California has world-class beaches, but continues to suffer beach closures as a result of bacterial pollution. More than 90 percent of the State coastal wetlands — among the most valuable and productive resources — have been lost to diking, draining, and filling. Furthermore, declining fish stocks have forced the federal government to impose significant restrictions on salmon and other types of fishing. More recently, climate change impacts have been forecast to adversely affect coastline ecosystems.

U.S. EPA Region 9 is encouraging watershed practitioners to examine California's coastal resources and related ecosystems in the context of the larger watershed in which they exist, and to propose solutions that creatively apply an array of tools, including federal, state, and local programs. The goal is to advance successful watershed partnerships and coalitions that have completed the necessary assessments and have a

technically sound plan ready to implement. Hence, U.S. EPA Region 9 is looking for innovative ways to address California coastal water quality problems that will result in tangible, measurable environmental results.

Activities proposed for funding are not required to address the entire watershed, but are expected to be based on a comprehensive assessment and plan for the watershed. As such, all activities should directly support the described watershed plan and the requested funds should be used in accordance with the plan. Examples of watershed plans include but are not limited to, Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 320), plans developed under State programs such as Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, and local watershed plans. All proposals must include a monitoring component that is consistent with ensuring ongoing implementation and documenting environmental improvements.

### **EPA's Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes**

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the Agency'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>).

The West Coast Estuaries Initiative for the California Coast, as a focused effort under the Targeted Watersheds Grant (TWG) Program, is linked to the U.S. EPA Strategic Plan (2003-2008 U.S. EPA Strategic Plan). It is predicated on the concept that watersheds are improved most effectively and efficiently by managing water resource use and water quality on a watershed basis. The TWG Program supports U.S. EPA strategic goals (<http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.html>) to improve and restore impaired water quality on a watershed basis and facilitate ecosystem-scale protection and restoration under 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).

In accordance with the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan, the West Coast Estuaries Initiative aims to support projects that are likely to achieve quantifiable environmental results within the project period. Therefore, applicants for these funds must 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".

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. Proposals must include a description of

how assistance agreement recipients will track and measure progress toward the environmental goal throughout the assistance agreement period. Expected outputs from the projects to be funded under this solicitation may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Number of volunteers involved in a clean-up activity.
- Number of stream miles where best management practices have been implemented to reduce sediment and/or trash inputs.
- Amount of acreage where invasive species have been removed.
- Number of local ordinances, such as riparian buffers and low impact development (LID) targets, passed aimed at protection and restoration of water quality.
- Amount of contaminated sediment or stream bank material removed from a wetland or stream.
- Number of studies producing data to model sea level rise or other climate change impacts.

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. Outcomes may be short-term (i.e., changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skill), intermediate (i.e., changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (i.e., changes in condition of natural resources). Proposals must include a description of project outcomes resulting from the project outputs. Expected **outcomes** from projects funded under this solicitation may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Pollutant load reductions that could include delisting of impaired water bodies or increased recreational use of water bodies.
- Capacity building at the local level to address nonpoint sources of water pollution, such as trash and pathogens.
- Improved water quality in urban streams as a result of demonstration projects of riparian buffers and low impact development (LID) techniques.
- Improved aquatic habitat quality by minimizing or eliminating invasive species.
- Baseline and resulting water quality monitoring data that indicate measurable environmental improvement.
- Increased resilience to, or mitigation of, climate change impacts.

For example, for a project aimed at reducing sediment loads, an expected output under the award could be the number of trees planted, the miles of riparian buffer restored, the number of culverts repaired, or other best management practices installed. The expected outcome of the particular activity would indicate the expected sediment reduction to be achieved (e.g., cubic yards) in a specified time period relative to the overall goal (e.g., achieving a water quality standard, delisting a water-body segment listed as impaired

under CWA Section 303(d), or attaining a milestone under a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)).

In another example, a proposal may be focused on reducing bacterial contamination. The anticipated output of this activity could be the number of farmers who install livestock fencing, or the number of homeowners who participate in a BMP program. Anticipated outcomes of this project could be a reduction in fecal coliform concentration, a rise in macro invertebrate populations, or the number of days a water body displays a "blue flag" (i.e., is safe for swimming, fishing, or boating).

To the fullest extent possible, proposals should specify the anticipated quantifiable water quality and related environmental outcomes to be achieved. Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/awards/5700.7.pdf> or <http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/documents/FY06NPGappendix-b.pdf>.

## **II. Award Information**

The total amount anticipated to be awarded under this announcement is approximately \$5,000,000 of Fiscal Year 2008 funds to support three to five grants or cooperative agreements. It is expected that the federal share of the awards will range from approximately \$250,000 to no more than \$1,000,000 each and have a project period of three to five years.

In appropriate circumstances, U.S. EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications under this announcement by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of proposed projects. If U.S. 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(s) thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

U.S. EPA reserves the right to make no awards or fewer awards than expected under this announcement.

U.S. EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy if additional funding becomes available after the original award selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

Selected recipients will enter into a funding agreement with the U.S. EPA Region 9. The West Coast Estuaries Initiative will fund both grants and cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA and the selected applicant in the performance of work supported by program funds. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, federal involvement for projects selected may include but are

not limited to: close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel (U.S. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); and review and comment on the content of publications (printed or electronic) prepared (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### ***A. Eligible Applicants***

States, local governments, public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies are eligible to apply. For-profit commercial entities and all Federal agencies are ineligible. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

#### ***B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirement***

EPA is requiring applicants to demonstrate in their proposal submission how they will provide the minimum non-federal match of 25 percent of the total cost of the proposal. This means EPA will fund a maximum of 75 percent of the total project cost. In addition to cash, matching funds can come from in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., consistent with the regulations governing matching fund requirements (40 CFR 31.24 or 40 CFR 30.23). Federal funds may not be used to meet the match requirement for this grant program unless authorized by the statute governing their use.

Federally recognized Indian tribal governments may be exempt from this match requirement if they demonstrate that fulfilling the match requirement would impose undue economic hardship. Tribal governments wishing to be exempt from the minimum 25 percent match requirement must submit a written request with justification along with the proposal. Match exemption requests should be sent directly to the EPA contact listed in Section IV.D. U.S. EPA will notify the potential applicant of its decision within ten business days of the date of receipt of the proposal. If approved, the proposal will be scored as if it meets the minimum 25 percent match. (See Section V.)

#### ***C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria***

These are requirements which, 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 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. An applicant must meet the applicant eligibility requirements as described in Section III. A.

2. Applicants must demonstrate how they will provide a match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost as described in Section III. B. (This criterion does not apply to Tribal applicants who have received a cost-share waiver from U.S. EPA Region 9. See III. B.).
3. Proposals seeking an award amount in excess of \$1,000,000 of federal funds will not be considered for funding.
4. The proposed activities must be intended to conserve, restore and protect the water quality, habitat and environment of California coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters.
5. 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. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
6.
  - a. Proposals must be received by EPA or through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published 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.
  - b. Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling. 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 Ephraim D. Leon-Guerrero as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
  - c. Proposals submitted via email (email submission is not the same as submitting through grants.gov) or by fax will not be considered.
7. Proposals must support Strategic Plan Goal 2 of EPA's Strategic Plan as specified Section I.
8. Proposals must be consistent with the funding restrictions described in Section III.D below.
9. Proposals must include a monitoring component that is consistent with ensuring ongoing implementation and documenting environmental improvements.

#### ***D. Funding Restrictions***

Activities required or regulated under the CWA are ineligible. For example, activities for the development of TMDLs and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater projects will not be funded. However, activities demonstrating the



non-regulatory component of TMDLs (e.g., the elements of a watershed plan that address non-point source pollution) and that go beyond stormwater permit requirements are eligible.

Under this solicitation, foreign land acquisition or proposals that contain work plans with a majority of the activities to be implemented outside of U.S. borders will not be considered for funding. Projects with any international work activities included must directly and primarily benefit U.S. waters.

The construction of buildings or other major structures, or the purchase of major equipment or machinery will not be funded under this program.

For the purpose of this solicitation, “major structures” is defined as an activity that involves earth moving activities and results in a relatively permanent structure constructed over a plot of land or in a body of water that normally may be expected to have a period of service of a year or more after being put into use. Examples may include, but are not limited to, dams, reservoirs, sewage treatment centers, and cluster systems.

For the purpose of this solicitation, “major equipment” is defined as an article of property of a durable nature that normally may be expected to have a period of service of a year or more after being put into use and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$10,000. Examples may include, but are not limited to vehicles, boats, motor homes, office furniture, construction equipment such as backhoes, fork-lifts, and trash booms and compaction systems. Note that the leasing of equipment may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the work plan.

#### **IV. Application 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***

Applicants must submit their proposal using one of the two methods outlined below. All proposals must include the information described in Section IV.C. regardless of mode of submission.

1. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD). If selecting this method of submission, applicants must submit 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. **Please address all submissions to:**

**Ephraim D. Leon-Guerrero**  
**West Coast Estuaries Initiative – California Coast**  
**U.S. EPA Region 9 (WTR-3)**  
**75 Hawthorne Street**  
**San Francisco, CA 94105**

The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf), Microsoft Word (.doc), or WordPerfect (.wpd). Letters of support and maps will need to be scanned so that they can be 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 Submission. Applicants who wish to submit their materials electronically through the federal government's Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download a proposal or application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required proposal or application package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency. Letters of support, pictures, and maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the proposal package. Pictures and/or computer generated maps must also be in an electronic format and submitted along with the proposal package.

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal package must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. 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 AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the proposal process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package" to download the compatible Adobe viewer and obtain the application package. **To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader applications and download the compatible Adobe Reader version ( Adobe Reader applications are available to download for free on the Grants.gov website. For more information on Adobe Reader please visit the Help section on grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or [http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program\\_status.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_status.jsp)).**

Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the proposal package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R9-WTR3-07-006 or the CFDA number 66.436, in the space provided. Then complete and submit the proposal package as indicated. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click

on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. **Complete instructions on applying through Grants.gov can be found at: [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply\\_for\\_grants.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp) and in Attachment A of this announcement.**

### ***C. Content of Proposal Submission***

The proposal package, as described below, must not exceed 12 pages in length and must use no less than an 11-point font, single-spaced. Pages in excess of 12 will not be reviewed. The proposal narrative, budget, tables, timeline, charts, graphs, and pictures must be included within the 12 page proposal package limit. The SF 424, the SF 424A, hardship letter, and letters of support do not count toward the 12 page limit. Any appendices aside from support letters will not be reviewed.

Each proposal package must contain all of the components listed in this section.

## **1. Proposal Narrative.**

**A. Abstract.** Provide a brief (approximately 150-word) executive summary of the proposal. This should include a short summary of the proposed work and a description of the coastal resources to be addressed, the need for the work, the anticipated outputs and outcomes, and identification of the plan from which the proposed activities are based.

**B. Project Narrative.** The narrative description of the proposed tasks and activities must include the following sections:

**i. Characterization of the Coastal Watershed/Waterbody.** Describe the watershed, including any critical or significant natural resources, such as wetlands. Include a description of the physical, chemical, biological, ecological, socioeconomic, and cultural characteristics, including rural, urban, and environmental justice areas. Briefly describe the environmental problems and threats facing the watershed and the existing watershed plans and planning efforts addressing the problems and threats, including demographics of the impacts.

**ii. Project Need.** Describe the environmental significance of the project, that is, the problem or conservation issue(s) to be addressed, why it is a priority, and the context relevant to the overall watershed plan. The objectives of the proposal and the immediate and long-term desired outcomes should be described relative to the overall environmental conditions. An assessment of the natural resource and environmental conditions and evidence of problem sources, along with the prioritization of the threats and impairments facing the watershed should be included.

The prioritization should focus on those threats and impairments that will be addressed by the proposal. Provide evidence that sufficient comprehensive planning and assessment has been completed to ensure that the proposed activities will achieve tangible and sustainable environmental results

**iii. Project Plan.** Describe the work that will be done using the West Coast Estuary Initiative funding and the non-federal matching funds. Identify the specific deliverables and the anticipated outcomes associated with the major project components.

- a. Project components: Describe in detail the tasks and activities for each project for each year of the project period. Include milestones and/or timelines for accomplishing tasks for the project period. Explain how the projects fit together to benefit the watershed as a whole and are ready for implementation (i.e., feasibility). Include in this section why the proposal will work and what makes it innovative. If the proposal is a market-based trading project, describe the drivers, the buyers and sellers, and the scheme already in place so that a trade can begin.
- b. Partnering: Describe how you and your partners and other stakeholders will be engaged in your project.
- c. Financial Integrity/Budget: Explanations of the costs associated with each project should be included. Description of costs should correspond to figures presented in the SF 424A (see item 6).
- d. Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes: Applicants must include specific statements describing the anticipated environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined "outputs" and to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined "outcomes" (See Section I for details on outputs and outcomes).
- e. Monitoring and Measuring: Describe the water quality monitoring and assessment that will be conducted consistent with the project components. Identify appropriate environmental indicators that will be monitored, and describe the method for evaluating environmental improvements. Describe the methodology (i.e., sampling, survey models, etc.) and time table that will be used to measure progress, including your approach to measuring progress towards achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I.

**iv. Peer Outreach and Information Transfer.** Describe the outreach component of the project. Describe the strategy for disseminating the results, including lessons learned, of the project among watershed organizations and governmental agencies with similar environmental challenges within the project watershed and to a wider (i.e., regional or national) audience. Describe how the project will promote and actively

conduct technology transfer or provide technical assistance that improves the knowledge of state and local decision-makers.

**v. Past Performance/Programmatic Capability.** Provide a list of federally and/or state funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than five, and preferably U.S. EPA agreements), and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In addition, describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and; (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V. A., U.S. EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from U.S. EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g. to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for those elements under Section V. A. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of zero for the 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.

**vi. Leveraging.** Demonstrate how you will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources (beyond the required cost match requirement specified in Section III of the announcement) to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Leveraged funding or other resources need not be for eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement unless the Applicant proposes to provide a voluntary cost share or match. If EPA accepts an offer for a voluntary cost share/match/participation, applicants must meet their matching/sharing/participation commitment as

a condition of receiving EPA funding. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for voluntary match/cost share/participation if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for voluntary matches/cost shares/participation. Other Federal grants may not be used as voluntary matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).

Any form of proposed leveraging that is evaluated under a section V ranking criteria must be included in the proposal and the proposal must describe how the applicant will obtain the leveraged resources and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

**2. Map(s).** A map of the watershed and the proposed work areas must accompany the narrative text. Maps of hydrologic unit codes and state 303(d) listings can be found on EPA's Surf Your Watershed web site at <http://www.epa.gov/surf/>.

**3. Signed SF 424 and SF424A.** In addition to the proposal narrative, applicants must provide a detailed breakdown of cost by category for each project on the SF 424A. All project costs including grant administration costs, matching funds, and travel (including travel expenses to the annual TWG conference (see Section VIII.B)), should be included.

When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

**4. Letter(s) of Support.** To substantiate the information contained in the narrative portion of the submission, letters verifying partnerships and matching funds should be submitted, as appropriate. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate active involvement of both public and private partners via letters of support. All letters must be on the official letterhead of the agency or organization.

A. Signed letter(s) from active partners indicating their commitment to implementing the workplan or specific proposed projects.

B. A minimum of one letter signed by an authorizing official from an entity committing to provide matching funds, either in cash or in-kind contributions, including the total value of its commitment toward the projects.

***D. Submission Dates and Times***

Applicants who choose to submit their materials in hard copy form must send two copies of their complete proposal packages and the CD to:

**Ephraim D. Leon-Guerrero  
West Coast Estuaries Initiative – California Coast  
U.S. EPA Region 9 (WTR-3)  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105**

Complete proposal packages must be **received** by U.S. EPA at the address above via mail, hand-delivery, or express delivery service by **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on August 25, 2008.**

Submissions through Grants.gov must be electronically stamped via Grants.gov by **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on August 25, 2008.**

***E. 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 §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.

***F. 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(2) prior to disclosure.

***G. 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.

## *H. Contracts and Subawards/Subgrants*

### **1. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards/subgrants, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?**

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible entities 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.

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.

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, as appropriate. Subgrants/subawards do not have to be competed; **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.

### **2. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?**

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, 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 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants. (ii) an applicant's named



contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal if the applicant demonstrates 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 or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

**EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.**

## **V. Application Review Information**

### ***A. Evaluation Criteria***

Only those proposals that meet the threshold criteria in Section III will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants should address these criteria as part of their proposal submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system, with a total of 80 points possible.

20 points	<p><b>1. Quality of Proposal.</b> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they describe project(s) that are part of comprehensive assessments and plans and reflect a watershed-based approach to conservation, protection and restoration. Reviewers will evaluate whether the approach is technically/scientifically sound and/or innovative, and whether there are clear project goals and measurable objectives. Under this criterion, reviewers will focus on the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Feasibility.</b> The extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of priority water resource problems within the watershed, has substantially completed the assessment and planning phase, and is prepared to begin work. Reviewers will look at the level of project development (i.e., the readiness of the project, technical merit, and expected environmental improvements) (10 points).</li> <li>• <b>Innovation.</b> The extent and quality to which the proposal describes unique, creative or novel approaches to environmental conservation, restoration or protection. The extent and quality to which a proposal clearly articulates how the project incorporates adaptation to climate change, or mitigation of it, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption, energy use and increased use of sustainable practices will be considered under this criterion (10 points).</li> </ul>
10 points	<p><b>2. Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes/ Measuring and Monitoring.</b> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which a proposal clearly articulates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a set of performance and progress measures with identified and measurable</li> </ul>

	<p>indicators as described in Section I of this announcement. (5 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a sound plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes including those identified in Section I of the announcement. (5 points)</li> </ul>
20 points	<p><b>3. Environmental Significance.</b> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates relevance to solving an important environmental problem in the watershed and thereby achieve the state and federal environmental priorities and goals to conserve, restore and protect the water quality, habitat and environment of California coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters.</p>
10 points	<p><b>4. Partnerships/Leveraging of Funds.</b> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate (i) how they will obtain leveraged funds or resources (beyond the required cost match specified in Section III) and coordinate the use of EPA funding with these other federal and/or non-federal sources of funds or resources to carry out the proposed project, and/or (ii) how EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources already obtained. Applicants will be also be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate and substantiate strong collaborative partnerships and document effective working relationships among state, tribal, local entities, and broad-based community involvement. Scores will be based on the extent and quality to which the applicant can show a wide variety of public, private, and non-profit participation, and that the partners are providing funds to the project at a level beyond the required match.</p>
5 points	<p><b>5. Financial Integrity.</b> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the budget information provided including whether it is reasonable and clearly presented.</p>
5 points	<p><b>6. Peer Outreach and Information Transfer.</b> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the design and breadth of the outreach component. The score will be based on the extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates a clear strategy for transferring the knowledge and experience garnered to other watershed organizations and agencies with similar environmental challenges both within and beyond the affected watershed.</p>
10 Points	<p><b>7. Past Performance/ Programmatic Capability.</b> (each sub-criterion listed below is worth 2 points each) Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their: (i) past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or state funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years, (ii) history of meeting reporting requirements under federally and /or state funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, (iii) extent and quality to which they adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outcomes and outputs) under Federal and/or state funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but</p>

	<p>not contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not, (iv) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and (v) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under i-iii of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance or reporting history (items i, ii, and iii above), will receive a neutral score for those elements of this criterion. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of zero for the factors.</p>
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### ***B. Review and Selection Process***

Eligible proposals will be evaluated by the Region 9 West Coast Estuaries Initiative Selection Committee which will score and rank the proposals using the above criteria. The Committee will consist of EPA staff and may also include representatives from other Federal agencies. The Committee will develop a list of the most highly rated proposals to send to the selection official. Final selection decisions will be made by the selection official, the Director of the U.S. EPA Region 9 Water Division, based on the selection committee recommendations and rankings and may also take into account program priorities and objectives, available funds, and geographic diversity.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### ***A. Award Notices***

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by mail. 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 expects to announce its selections in the Fall 2008. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, specific activities, duration of the projects, and role of the EPA Project Officer will be determined in the pre-award negotiations between the selected applicant and EPA.

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 or cooperative agreement;

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.

### ***B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements***

The general award and administration process for all Targeted Watersheds Grants (including the West Coast Estuary Initiative) is 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): 2 CFR 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 accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts).

### ***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](http://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://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>.

#### ***F. Administrative Capability Requirement***

Nonprofit applicants that 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](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 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.

### **VII. Agency Contact**

For additional information, please contact:

**Ephraim D. Leon-Guerrero**  
**West Coast Estuaries Initiative – California Coast**  
**U.S. EPA Region 9 (WTR-3)**  
**75 Hawthorne Street**  
**San Francisco, CA 94105**

**Telephone: (415) 972-3444**  
**Email: leon-guerrero.ephraim@epa.gov**

## **VIII. Other Information**

### ***A. 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](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. Allow 4-6 months in your timeline for approval of these plans. All projects will require a QAPP.

### ***B. Assistance Agreement Terms and Conditions***

Information Technology. Also 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).