

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

Federal Agency Name: U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Gulf of Mexico Program Office

Funding Opportunity Title: Gulf of Mexico Alliance Regional Partnership Projects

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 66.475- Gulf of Mexico Program
www.cfda.gov.

Solicitation Number: EPA-GM-2008-1

Dates: The deadline for submissions is **March 15, 2008, 6 pm CST**. Proposals must be submitted electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>. For those applicants who lack the technical capability to apply through Grants.gov, please contact Esther Coblentz at (228) 688-1281 and/or coblentz.esther@epa.gov for an alternative submission method. All proposals received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. For further information, see Section IV.

Funding Opportunity Description: An estimated amount of up to \$3,000,000 for between approximately ten to fifty cooperative agreements may be awarded under this announcement to eligible applicants for projects that improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico by addressing improved water quality and public health, priority coastal habitat protection/recovery, more effective coastal environmental education, improved habitat identification/characterization data and decision support systems, and strategic nutrient reductions. Projects must actively involve stakeholders and focus on support and implementation of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Background

The EPA Gulf of Mexico Program's (GMP) mission is to protect, restore, and enhance the coastal and marine waters of the Gulf and its natural habitats; to sustain living resources; to protect human health and the food supply; and to ensure the long-term use of the Gulf shores, beaches, and waters. To carry out the GMP mission, EPA must continue to develop and maintain a partnership of State and Federal agencies, local governments, academia, regional business and industry, agricultural and environmental organizations, and individual citizens and communities that effectively addresses the complex ecological problems that cross State, Federal, and international jurisdictions and boundaries.

Project Summary

EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are co-leads of a Federal Workgroup of thirteen federal agencies committed to supporting the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, a partnership formed by the five Gulf State Governors. The Gulf of Mexico Program is the lead for EPA and is issuing this Request for Proposals seeking proposals to strengthen and support the Alliance Regional Partnership.

The Alliance released the Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts on March 28, 2006. For more information on the Governors' Action Plan go to <http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/>. This Action Plan is intended to be a dynamic starting point for effective regional collaboration and addresses specific issues and projects which will result in a healthier Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and economy with a vision toward healthy and resilient coasts and communities in the Gulf of Mexico. The Plan sets out a strategy with actions addressing specific projects/activities that will deliver significant results to achieve the environmental outcomes of improved water quality for healthy beaches and shellfish beds; restored/protected coastal habitats; increased awareness/stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico; improved management of Gulf habitats; and reduced nutrient inputs to sustain productive Gulf aquatic ecosystems. **These actions are listed in this announcement under the following topic areas: Water Quality, Environmental Education, Identification and Characterization of Gulf Habitats, and Reducing Nutrient Inputs.** The Gulf of Mexico Program is announcing the availability of funding to address these activities in the Action Plan.

Each of the Actions listed under the topic areas below describes some of the expected outputs and outcomes of projects addressing that Action. While Applicants may submit multiple proposals under this announcement, each proposal must be for a separate topic area. Proposals addressing more than one topic area will be rejected. Applicant's proposals must address one or more Actions under a topic area.

Topic Area-Water Quality

Action: Harmful Algal Blooms - Expand and strengthen the cooperative binational coastal observing and decision support system in the Gulf of Mexico for the advanced detection and forecasting of red tide (*K. brevis*) and for notifying public health managers. Educate the public to help reduce the human health, natural resource and economic impacts of bloom events.

Activities:

- Conduct a study to evaluate and compare the multiple methods of Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) detection technologies under development for *K. brevis* versus current microscopic identification methods.

- Conduct an investigation of advanced technologies for the rapid field screening and enhanced real-time remote sensing, platform sensing and autonomous sensing of HABs.
- Initiate, coordinate and conduct workshops and training to support the expansion of the Harmful Algal Blooms Observing System (HABSOS) to the following states of Mexico: Campeche, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Yucatan and Quintana Roo. These workshops will be coordinated with local, state and federal expert scientists' input to develop and implement a curriculum and training program for HAB field sampling, microscopic identification methods and the demonstration of toxin-detection methodology. Provide training to Mexican personnel for sample collection, HAB identification and enumeration; plus guide and assist the Mexican personnel to establish a sampling program for the detection of *K. brevis* and other HAB species.

Outputs:

- A comparative analysis and report on the HAB detection technologies (those under development versus current methodologies). Comprehensive lists, comparative points of reference, limitations and advantages, at a minimum, will be included along with the identification of data gaps and a list of recommendations.
- A comprehensive report on the advanced technologies for HAB detection and identification. A current scientific assessment of HAB identification methodology's which allows for improved prediction forecasts.
- A HABSOS binational workshop program with interactive training components that physically teaches field sample techniques, microscopic identification methodology and other pertinent program aspects for early detection and decision making support.
- Updated, state of the science reviews and recommendations that provides the local, state and federal resource managers the technical and scientific information to assist in decision making and thus reduce the human health impacts, plus the natural resource and economic impacts of HAB events.
- Binational interactive training for the HABSOS microscopic identification methods and sampling programs in the Mexican states which border the Gulf of Mexico.

Outcome:

- The environmental outcome to be accomplished from each of the above activities is to improve water quality to achieve healthy beaches and shellfish beds.

Action: Data Collection- Continue to maximize the efficiency and utility of water quality monitoring efforts for local managers by coordinating and standardizing state and federal water quality data collection activities in the Gulf region.

Activities:

- Identify and evaluate existing monitoring programs in the Gulf. At a minimum, for each monitoring program identify the overall study area(s), the key metadata-collected/recorded, the

relevant spatial and geographic components, the types of data collected and the sampling frequency, the data quality objectives, any analytical data limitations, and data quality; inventory Gulf-wide types of data being collected; conduct a data gap assessment; and, include GIS components for visual comparison and reporting elements.

- Conduct a Gulf-wide “round-robin study” for a core set of water quality parameters across Gulf coastal ecosystems. After individual sampling events in the round robin series, prepare and submit a summary of the sampling event’s findings (including, but not limited to, laboratory data, data analysis, statistics on data variability, data quality review, etc.) to be used in refining future sampling events of the round robin series.

Output:

- At the conclusion of the round robin study, a detailed report including narrative, data and maps depicting comprehensive findings from the Gulf-wide “round-robin” data comparability study. Special emphasis is on the determination of variability in data collection, data analysis, and /or data quality.

Gulf-wide data comparability which facilitates the coordination and standardization of state and federal water quality data collection activities and support to the Gulf States for the development of numerical nutrient criteria.

Outcome:

- The environmental outcome to be accomplished from each of the above activities is to improve water quality to achieve healthy beaches and shellfish beds.

Topic Area-Environmental Education

Action: Awareness and Stewardship- Build environmental awareness and stewardship ethics among Gulf citizens by coordinating education and outreach activities across the Gulf States to increase access to materials and programs that address Gulf of Mexico Alliance priority issues. Translate, communicate and disseminate relevant scientific data and information to the public, including students, educators, resource managers, local decision-makers, and the business community.

Activities:

- Expand the environmental education services for underrepresented and underserved populations through additional pilot projects (if testing new applications or methods), or by consolidating lessons learned from pilot programs already in existence. The latter can be achieved by designing a Gulf-wide program based on prior successes of these pilots, or through other means. Multi-state programs or partnerships are encouraged, particularly those with minority serving academic institutions.
- Develop and implement a pilot program for fully integrating formal and informal environmental education across the Gulf States. The purpose of this program is to increase the interface between formal and informal educational institutions by merging the learning tools of the informal educators with the ‘audiences’ of the formal educators. The goal is to deepen students’ and K-12 teachers’ understanding of the issues facing the Gulf of Mexico and its ecosystems, and the informal educators’ appreciation of how formal environmental/science educational materials can be changed to promote a stewardship ethic. Collaborations with other environmental educational organizations or institutions are encouraged.

Outputs:

- Next steps on pilots with underserved and underrepresented populations; additional pilots experimenting with new methods, or the transition from pilots to program.
- Mobile or traveling bilingual exhibitry that can be circulated throughout the Gulf Coast Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCs), as well as other environmental education centers that focus on the priority issues of the Gulf of Mexico Governor's Alliance as outlined in the Alliance Action Plan of 2006.

Outcome:

- The environmental outcome to be accomplished from each of the above activities is to increase awareness/stewardship among Gulf residents to establish the link between the health of the Gulf and quality of life of residents.

Action: Environmental Awareness - Promote an environmentally literate citizenry who understands the relevance of the Gulf of Mexico watersheds and coasts to the quality of their everyday lives and to the economic vitality of the region and the nation. Increase environmental stewardship in the practices and activities of Gulf Coast local governments and businesses.

Activities:

- Compile a comprehensive list of coastal environmental education programs available across the 11 U.S. and Mexico Gulf States and promote sharing of these resources through various methods such as website links, meetings, training or materials exchange; and, building on what is already available, develop and host a series of Gulf-wide workshops on priority Alliance issues and other topics of interest to state and local governments and the public.
- Develop a pilot project that institutionalizes experiential environmental learning in secondary and/or high school science classes. An example of a pilot project might involve training high school students how to sample water resources and work with the state environmental authorities to conduct formal water quality sampling, or a similar project that addresses Alliance priority issues.

Output:

- A compilation of Gulf-wide environmental educational resources that can be shared with formal and informal educators across the Gulf States, and a series of standardized workshops available to those educators as well.

Outcome:

- The environmental outcome to be accomplished from each of the above activities is to increase awareness/stewardship among Gulf residents to establish the link between the health of the Gulf and quality of life of residents.

Topic Area-Identification and Characterization of Gulf Aquatic Habitats

Action: Identify and Assess Gulf Habitats - Identify and assess the location, extent, variation and condition of priority coastal, estuarine, nearshore and offshore Gulf habitats and establish baseline information and a mapping system. The system will provide comprehensive access to uniform, quality-assured coastal habitat observations in the Gulf region by developing an Internet-accessible, geospatial database of local, state, and federal data sources.

Activities:

- Support the five Gulf States in identifying their critical habitat databases, to include current habitat data, habitat data needs, and the data scale necessary to fully support their habitat related missions. Support the States in submitting these critical habitat databases into the Priority Habitat Information System. (PHINS).
- Support, organize and implement 5 individual State Priority Habitat Information System (PHINS) user-needs workshops (1 in each of the five Gulf States) to include all the States' critical habitat data end-users of PHINS. These individual meetings will be followed up by 2 joint meetings for all Gulf States, to further refine PHINS use and data input.

Outputs:

- A comprehensive real-time report on State data needs which identifies, at a minimum, the breadth and scope of data collected, how it is used and where the data gaps exist.
- Workshops for the State end-users of PHINS and meetings for the five Gulf States.
- Improved identification and assessment on the location, extent, variation and condition of priority coastal, estuarine, nearshore and offshore Gulf habitats.

Outcome:

- The environmental outcome to be accomplished from each of the above activities is to sustain the quality of Gulf habitats.

Topic Area-Reducing Nutrient Inputs

Action: Nutrient Criteria: Expand and support the existing regional coordination venue to further coordinate knowledge, resources and tools for the development of numerical nutrient criteria in Gulf coastal ecosystems.

Activities:

- Evaluate the type(s) of existing water quality monitoring data collected Gulf-wide, identify data gaps and design a monitoring program to address data gaps in order to support the development of estuarine numerical nutrient criteria.
- Design and implement a study-plan to establish background ecological conditions in one or more common coastal Mississippi wetland types for use in supporting State permitting activities in the emerging technology of wastewater treatment with discharges to nearby wetlands for their recovery and long-term sustainable growth.

Outputs:

- Development of an expedited timeline and next steps for developing estuarine numerical nutrient criteria.
- A report that includes, at a minimum, a suite of conditions on which to establish protective and effective permit conditions for the discharge of secondary treated wastewater to wetlands. The report should provide a framework to establish cost effective monitoring strategies to adequately demonstrate impacts or lack thereof on acceptable wetland conditions.
- Meet the needs of the Gulf States through improved coordination among existing local, state, regional, and national nutrient reduction programs
- Establish background conditions of proposed wastewater to wetland sites and expedite the utilization of one or more pilot projects in coastal areas of the northern Gulf of Mexico to apply this technology. Establish a monitoring strategy to evaluate the impacts of such discharges so that lessons learned can be applied to future projects and used to develop necessary policies and regulations .

Outcomes:

- The environmental outcome to be accomplished from each of the above activities is to reduce nutrients in Gulf waters to achieve healthy and resilient coastal ecosystems.

Action: Hypoxia - Coordinate and develop a unified position among the Gulf States to advocate short and long-term actions – by all 31 states in the Mississippi River Watershed – to reduce Gulf hypoxia.

Activities:

- Establish effective watershed partnerships with the Sub-Basin or State(s) to facilitate voluntary nutrient reduction, including working with states to: (1) develop nitrogen and phosphorus reduction strategies, (2) coordinate, consolidate and improve access to data collected by States on Gulf hypoxia and, (3) identify and quantify the effects of the hypoxic zone on the economic, human and natural resources in the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin and the Northern Gulf of Mexico,

Output:

- The application of knowledge such as the “100 Watershed Study” that strategically targets watersheds for voluntary nutrient reduction actions.
- More efficient utilization of resources to address Gulf of Mexico Nutrient Reduction.

Outcome:

- The environmental outcome to be accomplished from each of the above activities is to reduce nutrients in Gulf waters to achieve healthy and resilient coastal ecosystems and reduce the size of the hypoxic zone.

Alignment to EPA’s Strategic Plan

Successful proposals must have clear and measurable environmental results directly related to EPA’s Strategic Plan. Awards resulting from this announcement must relate to **Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems** ---Protect, sustain or restore the health of people, communities, and ecosystems using integrated

and comprehensive approaches and partnerships; **Objective 4.3:** Ecosystems ---Protect, sustain, and restore the health of critical natural habitats and ecosystems; and **Subobjective 4.3.5:** Improve the Health of the Gulf of Mexico. For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to:

<http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>

Measuring Environmental Results

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7, "*Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements*," EPA requires that all grant recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. Applicants must discuss environmental outputs and outcomes in their proposed workplan.

- 1. Outputs:** The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work products related to an environmental goal and objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected *outputs* from the projects funded under this announcement are listed with each of the Actions identified above.

- 2. Outcomes:** The term "outcome" means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. 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.

Expected outcomes from the projects funded under this announcement are listed with each of the Actions identified above.

Statutory Authority

All proposals submitted will be reviewed for eligibility under Section 104 (b)(3) of the Clean Water Act. Assistance Agreements are authorized under this statutory authority to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. The term "pollution" means the man-made or man-induced alteration of the chemical, physical, biological, and radiological integrity of water.

II. Award Information

Funding Amounts and Number of Awards

Under this funding opportunity, EPA expects to award an estimated \$3,000,000 depending on availability of funds and the evaluation and quality of proposals. An estimated ten to fifty projects are expected to be awarded. The estimated award range is from \$13,000 to \$330,000.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or make fewer than anticipated. In appropriate circumstances, EPA also reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion

thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

The period of performance for awards under this announcement is from one year to three years.

Type of Award.

Successful applicants will be issued a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements require substantial EPA involvement with the recipient in the form of programmatic oversight and review and comment on all agreement activities and products. When a cooperative agreement is awarded, EPA's involvement in carrying out the work with the applicant will be described in a selection letter and identified in the terms and conditions of the award document.

In general, cooperative agreements awarded will be one-time awards and recipients should use the funds within the period of performance (from one year to three years).

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

State and local governments, interstate agencies, tribes, colleges and universities, and other public or nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. EPA will require nonprofit organizations selected for funding to provide verification of their nonprofit status prior to the grant award.

Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Proposals from eligible applicants must meet all of the following threshold eligibility criteria by the time of proposal submission. Proposals that fail to meet all of these criteria will not be considered for funding. 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. Proposed projects must be consistent with the Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3) authority. All proposals submitted will be reviewed for eligibility under Section 104 (b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Water Quality Cooperative Agreements are authorized under this statutory authority to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. The term "pollution" means the man-made or man-induced alteration of the chemical, physical, biological, and radiological integrity of water.

Projects that implement 'Best Management Practices' or any type of construction activities must qualify as a demonstration project under CWA § 104(b)(3). A demonstration project must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is

simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge is not a demonstration.

2. Ineligible Activities: Applicants must adhere closely to the types of projects authorized for funding under CWA § 104 (b)(3) in developing proposals. Unauthorized project types will be disqualified. Types of projects that are ineligible for funding are routine construction projects, except to a limited degree to demonstrate innovation, prevention, or removal of pollution; land acquisition; or projects that are largely general education/outreach or conferences unless they meet a clear need to accomplish a public purpose and are not for the direct benefit of EPA.

3.. While Applicants may submit multiple proposals under this announcement, each proposal must be for a separate topic area. Proposals addressing more than one topic area will be rejected. Applicant's proposals must also address one or more Actions under a topic area-- **for example, multiple actions under the same topic area may be included in the same proposal.**

4. Proposals must **substantially** comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or they will be rejected.

In addition, proposals must be received through www.grants.gov (or through any approved alternative submission method), as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the solicitation closing date and time published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

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. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Esther Coblentz as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

Matching Requirements

There is no matching requirement; however, the extent of partnerships and leveraged funding will be considered by reviewers during the evaluation process. (See Section V).

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).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Submission Dates and Times

Proposal packages must be received through <http://www.grants.gov> (or through any approved alternative submission method) by **March 15, 2008, 6 pm CST.**

B. Proposal Submission Instructions

Applicants must apply electronically online using the Grants.gov website with an electronic signature. For those applicants who lack the technical capability to apply through Grants.gov, please contact Esther Coblenz (228-688-1281) and/or coblenz.esther@epa.gov for an alternative submission method. Proposals submitted through an alternative method must also be received, as specified by Esther Coblenz, by the submission deadline stated in Section A above.

Grants.gov Submission

With Grants.Gov, you will be able to submit your entire proposal package on line with no hard copy or computer disks. Please be sure to view the additional instructions that are available for download on Grants.gov for this announcement and which are included below. If you have any technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or call the toll free Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or Esther Coblenz at 228-688-1281 or coblenz.esther@epa.gov.

After an applicant completes the required proposal or application package, Grants.gov transmits the package to the funding agency. Pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the application package. 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 can take up to two weeks if all steps are not completed on a timely basis, so register early!** If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this announcement go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package and instructions for applying under this announcement using Grants.gov (https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html). You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-GM-2008-1 or the CFDA number (66.475) , in the space provided. Then complete and submit the application 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.**

Proposal Materials

The following forms and documents are required to be submitted by applicants using grants.gov under this announcement (these documents and forms are also required for any applicant who is allowed to submit proposals through alternative submission methods):

1. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include an organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that all applicants applying for funding must have the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number 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.

2. Proposal Workplan

Prepare as described in Section IV. C. of this announcement. The proposal workplan must be readable in PDF or MS Word for Windows and **consolidated into a single file.**

Submission Instructions

Documents 1 and 2 listed under Proposal Materials above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For document 1, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action will move the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document 2, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your proposal workplan as described in Section IV.C. of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or PDF file. When you are ready to attach your proposal workplan to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach it (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “Add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name –FY08-Environmental Quality –1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – FY08-Environmental Quality – Back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – FY08-Environmental Quality – 2nd Submission.”

Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the "Application Filing Name" box, your AOR should enter your organization's name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY08), and the grant category (e.g., Environmental Quality). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the "Grant Application Package" page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the "Submit" button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number (FON) for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact Esther Coblentz at (228) 688-1281 and/or email at coblentz.esther@epa.gov.

Proposal packages submitted through grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from support@grant.gov) within 30 days of the proposal deadline, please send an email to coblentz.esther@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

C. Content and Format of Proposal Submissions

Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly. To the extent not otherwise addressed below, applicants must also provide information in their workplan addressing the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III and ranking criteria in Section V.

Workplan Format:

The Workplan must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

1. **Cover Page** including
 - a. Project Title
 - b. Name of Applicant
 - c. Type of Organization (State or local government, interstate agency, tribe, college or university, or other public or nonprofit organizations.)
 - d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number);
 - e. Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code level (HUC) and name of the watershed, within which the project occurs) . HUCs can be found on EPA's Surf Your Watershed Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>. Not applicable if project is Gulf-wide.
 - f. Total project cost and dollars requested.

g. **Duration:** Specify project period of performance, from 1 year up to 3 years.

2. **Abstract/project summary** (recommended 75 words or less);

3. **Project description** containing:

- a. Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern (need for the project);
- b. Project Goals and Objectives (describe a **plan for measuring progress** toward achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs (See Section I) which would include the following elements);
 - i. **Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan** - List the Objective of the Program/project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4, Sub-objective 4.3.5 (See Section I of this announcement);
 - ii. **Results of Activities (Outputs)** - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the workplan activities and your approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I of this announcement);
 - iii. **Anticipated Environmental Results/Improvement (Outcome)** - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of this program/project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of workplan commitments and outputs. Describe your approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I of this announcement and in Environmental Results Order 5700.7 at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>).
 - iv. **Established Baseline for Measurement** - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the program/project resulted in environmental improvement (i.e., current condition).
- c. Project Tasks (outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals and activities as described in Section I for the Actions being addressed in the proposal);
- d. Schedule (describe when you expect to complete significant steps and milestones);
- e. Describe how the project will address:
 - i. One or more of the actions/activities identified in Section I of this announcement under a specific topic area and how these activities fit into strengthening and supporting the Alliance Regional Partnership. (The applicant should clearly identify which actions they are addressing under the priority topic area: **Water Quality, Environmental Education, Identification and Characterization of Gulf Habitats, and Reducing Nutrient Inputs**. Remember, submit a separate proposal for each **topic area** for which you are applying.)
 - ii. State, local, and/or other stakeholder participation (partnerships); Describe plans and status of collaboration and partnerships among the public, private, and independent sectors.

- iii. Opportunities for leveraging other sources of funding. describe: (a) how the applicant will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (b) how 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).**
 - iv. **QA/QC issues** if the applicant expects to collect data and information; and
 - v. **Education/Outreach Component:** Identify whether project includes an education/outreach component. If applicable, describe the target audience and how that group would be impacted by the project.
 - f. Provide a brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications (annotated resumes are preferred but not necessary).
 - g. Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
 - h. Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to other state, local governments or other agencies within the state, local governments and the public. Proposals should explain how information from a demonstration project or pilot will contribute to inform other projects or situations across a State.
4. A budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in Form 424A such as "other" and "contractual. Total costs must include both federal and matching (nonfederal) components. Identify the voluntary match/share/participation in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend meetings throughout the proposed project period.

Budget should represent the project total and the total which would be requested from EPA for the project's duration. **Funding is not assured for subsequent years for any project.**

When formulating the budget, 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.

5. Information addressing (a) the applicant's past performance in managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years (no more than 3 such projects and preferably EPA projects) and the applicants history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. and (b) how the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project within the last 3 years (no more than three such agreements and preferably EPA agreements). For each such agreement covered by (b) above, applicants should briefly describe the assistance agreement and how progress/technical reports or other documentation generated under the agreement adequately demonstrated their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of the agreement, and if such progress was not achieved, describe whether the documentation satisfactorily explained why not.

Note: For a and b above, if the applicant has prior EPA assistance agreement experience, the proposal should discuss the prior EPA grants first; if the applicant does not have prior EPA assistance agreement experience then they should submit information on projects funded by other Federal agencies; if you have not previously received Federal funds, you may provide a history of applicable past performance with private funding, or funding awarded by state, tribal or local governments (applicants who have not managed projects with outside financing may provide information regarding relevant projects funded in-house, along with contact information for the person(s) familiar with the project(s). Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement. If the applicant has no prior past performance experience at all, that should be stated in the proposal and the applicant will receive a neutral score for those factors.. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider other relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files

and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).

6. Any support letters should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project.

D. OTHER INFORMATION

Examples from Previous Years.

When developing project submissions, you may look at types of successful projects from previous years, available at <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo>.

Confidentiality.

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B. **Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential.** If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

Other Considerations.

The funds associated with this announcement require Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," review. E.O. 12372 structures the federal government's system of consultation with states and local governments on its decisions involving grants, other forms of financial assistance, and direct development. Under E.O. 12372, states, in consultation with their local governments, design their own review process and select the federal financial assistance and direct development activities they wish to review. If selected for funding, the recipient of the federal assistance agreement will be required to send a copy of their application and proposal to the appropriate State Clearinghouse Office for an intergovernmental review, if applicable. (See: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>)

Communications with Applicants.

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff **will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria.** Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications/proposals. However, **EPA will respond to questions in writing, preferably by email, from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.**

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

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.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

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, if appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

(i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application 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/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application 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 non-competitive 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/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

V. Application Review Information

A. Criteria

Each eligible proposal that meets all of the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as

part of their proposal submittal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system with a total of 100 points possible.

1. Relevance/Rationale: (15 points)

- a. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of the proposed project to the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Governors' Action Plan and the level of support for long-term goals and implementation actions. (5 points)
- b. Whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to the Governors' Action Plan and activities. (5 points)
- c. Likelihood that the approach proposed will make substantial progress toward strategies leading to improving the health of the Gulf of Mexico and achieving one or more of the environmental outcomes as identified in the announcement. (5 points)

2. Scientific/Professional Merit: (15 points)

Extent to which the proposed approach is technically sound and/or innovative; whether the proposed methods, approaches, and concepts are appropriate and; whether there are clear goals and objectives.

3. Programmatic Capability: (15 points) (Each item is 3.75 points)

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors: (i) its past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years, (ii) its history of meeting reporting requirements under federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, (iii) its organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and (iv) its staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Note: In evaluating applicants under 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 and ii above), will receive a neutral score for those elements of this criterion.

4. Environmental Results Past Performance: (10 points)

Applicants will be evaluated based on the 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 agency assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, 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). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance reporting history will receive a neutral score for this factor (5 points).

5. Environmental Results – Measurable or Quantifiable Outputs and Outcomes: (10 points)

Includes the degree to which the applicant has provided an evaluative component to the project as requested in Section I, Measuring Environmental Results, in addition to how the applicant's progress and success in achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes including those identified in Section I will be measured and tracked.

6. Budget (10 points)

The reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and with the expected benefits to be achieved.

7. Collaboration/Partnerships: (15 points)

The quality of proposed partnerships, including the degree of broad participation within the network of Gulf of Mexico programs, organizations, State and Federal agencies and workgroups, etc., and demonstration of significant partnering that results in outreach and education. Applications will also be evaluated on whether they provide a partnership with a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding the long-term commitment to the proposed objectives of the Action Plan.

8. Leveraged Resources: (10 points)

Under this criteria, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) 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).

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All timely submitted proposals will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

GMP reviewers and/or panel members will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and assign scores to each proposal. Based on the review of proposals against the criteria above, the reviewers/panel will develop a list of the most highly scored proposals to submit to the Selection Official.

Final funding decisions will then be made by the Selection Official based on the evaluation conducted by the reviewers/panel and may also take into account the following factors: geographic distribution of funds; project diversity (this includes type of project and type of applicant i.e. state/tribe/or local government); programmatic balance/priorities; and availability of funds.

EPA employees as well as GMP reviewers and/or panel members who intend to serve as reviewers and score project proposals will be required to sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form and will not be able to serve as a reviewer if they have a personal, familial, or financial or any other type of conflict of interest

with **any applicant** that cannot be mitigated. **If an individual has a conflict of interest with respect to a proposal, then they cannot review any proposals under this competition.**

Anticipated Announcement Award Date

GMP will post a list of all proposals selected after the funding is awarded. The list will be posted at the following site: www.epa.gov/gmpo. All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified within 15 days by email and postal mail after the final selections are made.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status via email. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package. This letter is not an authorization to begin performance.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. All **final** workplans must include the information required in 40 CFR § 35.107 and 35.507.

An approvable workplan is required to include:

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

Pre-award Review for Administrative Capability.

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding will be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with paragraphs 8.b, 8.c, and 9.d of EPA Order 5700.8

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf **EPA Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards** and may be required to fill out an "Administrative Capability" form.

In accordance with Executive Order 12579, organizations that have been debarred or suspended from a program by any federal agency will not be eligible to receive an award or subaward through this solicitation.

Administrative and Reporting Requirements.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement or make fewer than anticipated.

The successful applicant will be required to adhere to the Federal grants requirements, particularly those

found in applicable OMB circulars on Cost Principles (A-21, A-87, or A-122), Administrative Requirements (A-102 or 110), and Audit Requirements (A-133) available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/>. This includes government-wide requirements pertaining to accounting standards, lobbying, minority or woman business enterprise, publication, meetings, construction, and disposition of property. EPA regulations governing assistance programs and recipients are codified in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and the successful Federal applicant will be required to comply with the OMB Circular and appropriate sections of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Dispute Resolution Process.

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes involving any applicant, including Federal applicants, will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting coblentz.esther@epa.gov.

Funding Restrictions

- Award recipients may award contracts in accordance with 40 CRF 30.44 and 40 CFR 31.36, and subgrants in accordance with 40 CFR 31.37. The State, Tribe, or local agency, must not simply pass through funding to an organization that is not eligible to receive funding directly.
- While contractual efforts can be a part of these grants, each recipient must be significantly involved in the administration of the grant. EPA recommends that recipients use no more than 50% of the grant funds to contract with non-governmental entities. However, if the applicant wants to exceed this limit, the applicant may submit a written justification for greater involvement by nongovernmental contractors as part of the grant application package or proposal. EPA will evaluate the need for greater contractual participation and may approve the request if there is adequate justification to exceed the 50% limit. If the contractual work is being done by another State/Tribal/Local Government agency, interstate agency, or intertribal consortia, these entities must be clearly indicated in the proposal. See also Section IV.E.
- Grant funds cannot be used to pay for travel by Federal agency staff.
- Under the competition, each proposed project must be able to be completed within the project period and with the initial award of funds. Recipients should not anticipate additional funding beyond the initial award of funds for a specific project. Eligible applicants should request the entire amount of money needed to complete the project in the original grant application.
- Grant funds cannot be used to fund an honorarium under this competition.

Other Requirements.

Please note that this is not a complete list of all regulations and policies that govern these funds. Our Grants Management Office web site at <http://www.epa.gov/region4/grants/regulations.html> identifies other grant regulations that apply.

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact:

Esther Coblentz, Gulf of Mexico Program Office

VIII. Other information

Funding amounts are estimates of the maximum amount expected to be available for FY 2008, based on our best available information. These amounts are subject to change without further notification, based on the amount of federal funds actually appropriated and allocated for these programs.

Quality Assurance /Quality Control requirements may be applicable to these grants (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project.

COPYRIGHTS

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

Grants awarded under this announcement may involve Geospatial Information. Geospatial data generally means information that identifies, depicts, or describes the geographic locations, boundaries, or characteristics of inhabitants and natural or constructed features on the Earth. This includes such information derived from, among other sources, socio-demographic analysis, economic analysis, land information records and land use information processing, statistical analysis, survey and observational methodologies, environmental analysis, critical infrastructure protection, satellites, remote sensing, airborne imagery collection, mapping, engineering, construction, global positioning systems, and surveying technologies and activities. It also includes individual point or site-specific data that are referenced to a location on the Earth and digital aerial imagery of the Earth.

This information may be derived from, among other things, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), remote sensing, mapping, charting, and surveying technologies, or statistical data. For purposes of EPA grants, this refers to geographically based information or data or the tools, applications or hardware that allow one to collect, manage, analyze, store, or distribute data in a geographic manner.

DATA SHARING

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