

**Federal Agency Name:** US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Region 2 Wetland Program Development Grants

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

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** 66.461

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-R2-09WPDG

**Dates:** Hard copy proposals must be received by the Agency Contact (see Section IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION of this RFP) by **5:00 P.M. EDT July 7, 2009**. Proposals submitted electronically via e-mail must be received by **5:00 P.M. EDT July 7, 2009**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII AGENCY CONTACTS before **June 23, 2009**. Written responses to frequently asked questions will be posted on EPA's website at: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)  
<http://www.epa.gov/region2/water/wetlands/grants.htm>

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

**Note to Applicants:** If you name subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractor(s) in your proposal to assist you with the proposed project, pay careful attention to the information in Section II.C CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS.

## **SUMMARY**

### **Notice of Request for Proposals for Projects to be Funded from the Wetland Program Development Grants - Regional Allocation**

(CFDA 66.461 - Wetland Program Development Grants)

Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) provide eligible applicants an opportunity to conduct projects that 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 water pollution. While WPDGs can continue to be used by recipients to build and refine any element of a comprehensive wetland program, proposals that address one or more of the three national priorities (Wetland Program Planning Based on the Four Core Elements, Regulation-Enhancing Wetland Protection and/or Monitoring and Assessment) identified in Section I FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION may increase their chances of being selected for award (see Section V APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION). States, tribes, local government agencies, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible to apply under this announcement. Universities that are agencies of state government are eligible. Non-profit organizations are not eligible to compete under this RFP.

This document describes the grant selection and award process for eligible applicants interested in applying for WPDGs under this announcement.

Implementation of wetland protection programs is not an eligible activity under this announcement.

The total amount of federal funding available under this announcement is approximately \$1,760,000 depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately 5 to 10 awards will be made under this announcement. Awards will likely range from \$50,000 to \$500,000 in federal funds.

## **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The goals of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) wetland program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, EPA seeks to build the capacity of all levels of government to develop and refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management.

WPDGs were initiated in FY 1990 and provide states, tribes, local governments, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia (hereafter referred to as applicants or recipients) an opportunity to carry out projects to develop and refine comprehensive wetland programs.

The statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). All proposed project activities must be consistent with Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA, which restricts the use of federal funding under these assistance agreements to projects that improve wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, and it is encouraged that the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetland program, for fundraising, or to fund the purchase of land or conservation easements. Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding.

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

The WPDG program supports EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 4: Healthy Communities, Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems, Sub-Objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

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: Restore and Protect Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain, and restore the health of critical natural habitats and ecosystems
  - Sub-objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands: By 2011, working with partners, achieve a net increase in wetland acres with additional focus on assessment of wetland condition.

All proposed projects must demonstrate the linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting ecosystems. Additional information regarding EPA's Strategic Plan and discussion of environmental results can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>.

Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

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

- Development of criteria for assessing the condition of “at-risk” wetlands;
- Development of training materials and tools to help local decision-makers integrate wetland protection into watershed planning;
- Development of methods or criteria to assess the success of a mitigation site;
- Development of pilot restoration sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of a new restoration technique;
- Development and verification of assessment methods and/or tracking (reporting) systems.
- Development of methods to determine the technical adequacy of compensatory mitigation project plans (e.g., plan review standards);
- Development of methods to assess the ecological suitability of proposed compensatory mitigation project sites, taking into account a watershed context;
- Determining the adequacy of compensatory mitigation for managing cumulative wetland impacts under the Federal CWA Section 404/401 program;
- Development of information that will contribute to a broader understanding of wetland resources across a state or tribal nation;
- Development of monitoring surveys; and
- Development of methods or strategies to fill gaps in wetland mapping and data collection to facilitate the development of wetland assessment programs and the other core elements of a comprehensive wetland program.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. For instance, there is great need to improve the knowledge and decision-making ability, with respect to environmental issues, of local and state officials who are in the position of creating laws, ordinances, permits, etc. In this context, certain efforts designed to improve decision-making and behavioral changes can be viewed as environmental outcomes (results) if the grantee can show or measure the improvement in the knowledge of decision-makers who are in the position to create environmental institutional changes that are necessary to restore or protect the environment. In such instances, outcomes are not measured typically by environmental or water quality indicators, but rather by the institutional indicators that lead to the adoption and application of laws and regulations and the active management of programs necessary to provide environmental protection.

Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

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

- Increased understanding of a wetland's condition;
- Improved wetland protection efforts;
- Application of informed, scientifically valid approaches to watershed planning that will protect, prevent, and reduce pollution to wetlands and other aquatic resources;
- Increased understanding of how to ensure "no net loss" in quality and quantity of wetlands in the 404 regulatory program; and
- Increased quality and/or quantity of wetlands.

As part of the workplan applicants must describe how the project will result in the protection of wetland resources and link the anticipated outputs and outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Further information is located in Section IV.C, CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION of this RFP.

### **C. PRIORITY AREAS**

This announcement is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to help support state/tribes/local governments in developing wetland programs. We are especially interested in proposals that address one or more of the following three National Priority Areas. While addressing a priority area is not a mandatory requirement or threshold eligibility factor, failure to address them will affect scoring under the priority criterion in Section V **APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**.

The National Priority Areas are based on the Four Core Elements of a strong State/Tribal Wetlands Program. Starting next year EPA will be releasing a Core Elements Framework that will describe in greater detail the types of activities that can be carried out to fully develop each of the Four Core Elements. This Core Element Framework, <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/estp.html>, will be the basis for the Priority Areas in subsequent RFPs.

EPA encourages applicants to include travel plans for wetland personnel to attend at least one national wetland meeting in support of the project or for training each year (e.g., National EPA, state, tribal, local wetland meeting or wetland monitoring workshops).

### **1. NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS**

#### **a. WETLAND PROGRAM PLANNING BASED ON THE FOUR CORE ELEMENTS**

The EPA Wetland Program has identified four core elements critical to effective, comprehensive wetland programs. Further description of these core areas can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/estp.html>. This priority is intended to develop plans to aid in protecting wetlands and water resources through the development of one or more of the following plans. This can include the updating of an existing Wetlands Protection Plan.

- a. Development/update of a Comprehensive Wetlands Protection Plan;
- b. Development/update of a Wetlands Monitoring Plan. For information in addition to the site above, see the Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment

- Program at  
[http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/pdf/Wetland\\_Elements\\_Final.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/pdf/Wetland_Elements_Final.pdf) ;
- c. Development/update of a State or Tribal Comprehensive Regulatory Strategy and Implementation Plan;
  - d. Development/update of a Wetland Restoration and Protection Plan.

As part of the development of one or more of the plans listed above, individual pieces of the plan may also be completed as long as new knowledge is gained (e.g., a wetland inventory for any of the plans listed, development of outreach materials for any plan, or assessment of wetlands as part of a monitoring or comprehensive plan).

## **b. REGULATION (ENHANCING WETLAND PROTECTION)**

States/tribes/local governments may choose from a number of different paths in their development of wetland protection measures. EPA recognizes that the development of a regulatory program can begin with either non-regulatory or regulatory activities. However, any non-regulatory activity under this priority should be connected to building or strengthening wetland protection / regulation. For example, community outreach and communication activities are needed to help generate public support for the adoption of wetland regulatory programs by state/tribes/local government. Therefore, development of a wetland mitigation tracking system could precede the development of a regulatory program.

State/tribe/local government regulatory programs are generally organized around one or a mixture of the following five approaches: (1) the use of CWA Section 401 Certification process; (2) the development of statewide programmatic general permits; (3) the assumption of CWA Section 404 program by states and tribes; (4) the development of state/tribal/local government permitting program; and (5) the promulgation of wetland/aquatic resource protection ordinances or laws. Any aspect of these approaches can be strengthened if a state/tribe/local government has already developed wetland regulations or a wetland program.

While any project that helps build effective wetland protection through regulation is encouraged under this priority, additional information is provided below on two possible approaches to wetland protection/regulation – improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation and refining the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources-that applicants may want to consider focusing on. EPA is providing more detail on the types of projects of interest in these two areas.

### **i.) Improving the Effectiveness of Compensatory Mitigation**

Projects (i.e., research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies) that improve states/tribes/local governments capacity to ensure ecologically effective compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources under the Federal CWA Section 404/401 program or state/tribal regulatory programs either by entities that have assumed the CWA 404 program, have a similar permit system, or are permitted by the Federal agencies, are encouraged.

On April 10, 2008, EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) issued revised regulations governing compensatory mitigation for authorized impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. These regulations are designed to improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation to replace lost aquatic resource functions and area, expand public participation in compensatory mitigation decision making, and

increase the efficiency and predictability of the mitigation project review process. A copy of the rule and related documents can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/wetlandsmitigation/>.

Background information describing concepts and methods for improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation can be found in a National Academy of Science publication entitled “Compensating for Wetland Losses under the Clean Water Act.” The document can be found at <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309074320/html/>

## **ii.) Refining the Protection of Vulnerable Wetlands and Aquatic Resources**

While all wetlands provide important ecological functions on a watershed and landscape scale, some are more vulnerable than others. For example, geographically isolated wetlands and other waters may be particularly at risk, and these waters may be subject to impact from activities other than the discharge of dredged or fill material. Information regarding geographically isolated wetlands can be found at:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/guidance/SWANCC/index.html#studies>

Applicants wishing to build or strengthen comprehensive wetland protection programs to protect such vulnerable waters from a variety of potential impacts are encouraged to do so. EPA encourages applicants to incorporate wetland issues into broader watershed planning and watershed management goals and to reflect on the contribution by wetlands to the broader aquatic ecosystem.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Regulation National Priority Area include:

- Projects to evaluate the ecological performance of wetland/stream compensatory mitigation banks.
- Projects for research/studies to support the development of effective ecological performance standards for compensatory mitigation sites.
- Projects to improve the long-term stewardship of compensatory mitigation sites.
- Projects to inventory and evaluate the types and functions of wetlands within a state/tribe/local governmental area that are geographically isolated and therefore may no longer be fully covered by the CWA.
- Projects to incorporate wetland issues into broader watershed planning and watershed management goals and to reflect on the contribution by wetlands to the broader aquatic ecosystem.
- Projects that include, but are not limited to, information dissemination, data exchange, research, investigation, and studies which support the inclusion of vulnerable wetlands in comprehensive wetland and watershed protection programs, and/or support refinement of information regarding the function of these valuable resources
- Projects to survey vulnerable wetland types in order to identify potential opportunities to protect them through land acquisition, conservation easements, or tax incentive provisions.

## **c. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

Wetland monitoring continues to be a national program priority, with an overall goal of building the capacity of states/tribes to report on the condition and quantity of their wetlands. EPA encourages the submission of proposals that develop strategies to strengthen state and tribal adoption of a wetland monitoring and assessment program (*i.e.*, research, investigation, experiment, training, demonstration, or study projects to determine the causes, effects, and extent

of pollution to wetland resources, that in turn, further the development of state/tribal/local government capacity). Further description of the building blocks for a state/tribal wetland monitoring and assessment program can be found in “Elements of a State/Tribe Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program” at [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/). This document recommends ten basic elements of a wetland monitoring program, and serves as a tool to help determine whether a wetland monitoring program meets the requirements of CWA 106(e)(1). Proposals that are designed to refine state and tribal wetland monitoring programs should address the building blocks described in the “Elements” document.

**i) National Wetland Condition Assessment Intensification Studies**

The purpose of this sub-priority is to support state, tribal, or regional consortia interested in producing an intensification study in conjunction with the National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA), a national probabilistic survey of wetland condition that will take place in 2011. The survey will provide a statistically valid assessment at the national and regional level but is not designed to draw conclusions about wetland condition at smaller geographic scales. Proposals under the Intensification Studies sub-priority would involve adding additional sites to the sample locations provided in the NWCA design for a specific geographic area and conducting a statistically valid condition assessment for that geographic area. An appropriate scale would be a region, a state, or a hydrologic unit (8 digit HUC or larger). Typically, a study would need at least 50 randomly selected sample sites to be considered statistically valid.

Proposals should indicate how the applicant will use funds to design and produce an intensification study in conjunction with NWCA. The intensification study should use the same indicators, wetland classification system, and field sampling methodologies as the NWCA to allow for the intensification study to be scientifically comparable to the results from NWCA. NWCA protocols will be posted on EPA’s NWCA website (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/survey>) as soon as they are finalized.

Proposals are encouraged to use the same design methodology for selecting sampling points as NWCA. The additional sampling points in the intensification study can either be drawn from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Status and Trends plots (if available for that state or geographic area) or could be drawn from another network of sample plots established at the state or regional level. EPA will provide technical assistance in producing a sampling site design that uses the NWCA methodology.

EPA will also consider proposals that use an alternative probability-based design to select sample sites. Descriptions of the alternative designs should identify the intensification area, state what wetland classes will be included, and document the wetland GIS data that will be utilized for the site-selection design. If an alternative design is proposed, applicants should be aware that all 50 sampling sites would be in addition to the sampling sites in the state/region selected in the NWCA design. Funding may be awarded for up to a 3-year period.

**ii) Wetland Monitoring Surveys**

EPA encourages the submission of proposals that will develop and demonstrate the use of wetland monitoring surveys to evaluate and report trends in wetland area and condition for specific watersheds and other local planning areas. Surveys can be conducted to help document the significance of especially vulnerable aquatic resources, including headwater streams and geographically isolated wetlands. Surveys also can be conducted to evaluate the cumulative effectiveness of wetland restoration projects and programs. These smaller scale demonstrations should be conducted in such a manner that the data can be used for larger scale assessments such as in a rotating basin design. Proposals should explain how resultant data from the demonstration

project will contribute to a broader understanding of wetland resources across a state or tribal nation.

Examples of case studies illustrating wetland monitoring and assessment methods can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/bawwg/case.html> . Many of the case studies listed on those websites were funded by WPDGs. A number of common program development steps can be seen in those case studies. Many successful programs begin with the development of a reference wetland network in a selected watershed or region. Sampling information then is used to develop and test wetland monitoring methods. Those methods, in turn, are used to implement assessment projects that generate the information needed to manage and report aquatic resource condition in the selected watershed. Additional information related to wetland monitoring and assessment can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/monitor.pdf> and [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/devgrants.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/devgrants.pdf) .

Proposals also may include tasks that describe how an existing or developmental wetland assessment method used in the project will be refined. Examples of how states have developed and tested methods can be found at:

[http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/wetlands/WetlandEcologySection\\_reports.html](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/wetlands/WetlandEcologySection_reports.html) and [www.cramwetlands.org](http://www.cramwetlands.org) .

To support a proposed project, applicants may also request funds to host technical training workshops, establish regional or state interagency wetland monitoring and assessment workgroups, develop volunteer monitoring programs, and improve wetland inventories (*e.g.*, use of hydrogeomorphic (HGM) wetland classification system).

### **iii) Wetland Mapping**

EPA is emphasizing the need to fill gaps in wetland mapping and data collection to facilitate the development of wetland assessment programs and the other core elements of a comprehensive wetland program. Historically, wetland assessment efforts have been impeded by the lack of up-to-date wetland inventory maps and the lack of a common set of indicators and metrics to ensure reporting consistency among the states/tribes. Accurate and up-to-date wetland spatial information is necessary to quantitatively measure gains in wetland; develop monitoring and assessment programs; develop efficient and effective regulatory/mitigation/enforcement programs; assist in the siting of wetland mitigation using a watershed approach; and develop state, tribal, county and watershed-wide restoration plans. Accurate spatial data will also help to incorporate wetlands into state and local level watershed planning efforts.

Many states, tribes, and EPA regions have identified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory (NWI) as the best existing base map for monitoring wetland gains and losses. EPA supports projects that enable mapping of wetland areas at a more refined scale than the NWI such as: mapping at 1:12,000 resolution, assigning attributes for types of wetlands to locational data, and developing tools that facilitate the above efforts. A "National Wetland Mapping Standard" is being developed by a workgroup of the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC). This will provide a national standard for wetland mapping, and wetlands mapped using the standard can be uploaded to the NWI data base to refine the existing NWI data. Eligible applicants can take advantage of the development of this data standard by forming "Wetland Mapping Coalitions" to help co-fund state wide mapping efforts that would otherwise be too costly for any one group to undertake. By forming these coalitions soon, Wetland Mapping Coalitions could be in position to use the mapping standard when it is expected to go final in the Spring of 2009. These coalitions are most effectively structured to address both mapping and monitoring issues concurrently and thus should be developed in close collaboration

with any existing or planned interagency monitoring workgroup. More information about the FGDC wetland mapping standard can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/nwi/fgdcwet.html>.

Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. Projects will be eligible for funding when mapping activities are carried out as part of helping or informing development of a wetland program, for planning purposes, or as part of a demonstration project.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Monitoring and Assessment National Priority Area include:

- Projects to demonstrate how wetland assessment data can be used to inform watershed planning decisions, including the use of assessment data to prioritize wetland restoration.
- Projects that test the efficiency of wetland indicators across a variety of wetlands and to identify appropriate indicators that will meet the data needs of state and/or local scale assessments.
- Projects to demonstrate how wetland assessment methods and indicators can be used to develop mitigation performance standards that in turn can be incorporated into state water quality standards.
- Projects to develop on-line training and field tools for identifying hydrologic connections (such as aerial photography analysis, mapping.)
- Projects to assess the vulnerability, function, location, and size of wetlands that reside within the 100 year floodplain based on FEMA maps and to develop an area of special significance protection program.
- Projects that assess ecosystem services provided by type of wetland.

## II. AWARD INFORMATION

### A. AMOUNT OF FUNDING

EPA anticipates approximately \$1,760,000 in federal funding to be available for assistance agreements under this announcement to fund approximately 5 to 10 awards. Awards for the selected projects will likely range from \$50,000 to \$500,000 in federal funding. EPA will fund a maximum of 75% of the total project cost (see Section III.B. for information on minimum non-federal 25% cost share/match requirement.)

It is anticipated that the assistance agreements awarded under this announcement will have one to five-year project periods. The project period for assistance agreements under this announcement should be no more than five years.

Awards made under National Priority I.C.1.c. i **National Wetland Condition Assessment Intensification Studies** should range from \$150,000 to \$350,000 in federal funding and be for a minimum of three years in length.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA 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 to the competition and selection process.

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

announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

## **B. CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS**

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. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal 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.

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 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION of the announcement?

Section V APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION 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 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 evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

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

States, tribes, local government agencies, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia are eligible. Past recipients of WPDGs include but are not limited to: wetland regulatory agencies, water quality agencies, planning offices, wild and scenic rivers agencies, departments of transportation, fish and wildlife or natural resources agencies, agriculture departments, forestry agencies, coastal zone management agencies, park and recreation agencies, non-point source or storm water agencies, city or county, and other state/tribal/local government agencies that conduct wetland-related activities.

Non-profit organizations are not eligible to compete under this RFP.

Projects must be performed within one or more of the states of EPA Region 2 specifically New York, New Jersey, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be eligible to apply for funding. In the case of inter-jurisdictional watershed projects, they must be primarily implemented in EPA Region 2. Applicants need not be located within the boundaries of the EPA regional office to be eligible to apply for funding so long as the project will be performed within the geographic boundaries of the Region.

Tribes must be federally recognized, although "Treatment as a State" status is not a requirement.

Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504 (<http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/search/40cfr.html>). This section states that an Intertribal Consortium is eligible to receive grants only if the Consortium demonstrates that all members of the Consortium meet the eligibility requirements for the grant and authorize the Consortium to apply for and receive assistance. An Intertribal Consortium must submit to EPA adequate documentation of: (1) The existence of the partnership between Indian Tribal governments, and (2) Authorization of the Consortium by all its members to apply for and receive the grant(s) for which the Consortium has applied.

The term "interstate agency" is defined in CWA Section 502 as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other

agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator.”

Universities that are agencies of a state government are eligible. Universities that are not chartered as a part of state government are not eligible. Universities must include documentation demonstrating that they are chartered as a part of state government in their proposal. Documentation may include such things as: state/tribal constitution, university charter, or case law that has confirmed the university as a state agency.

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

**All applicants must describe in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost in cost share/matching funds in accordance with 40 CFR 31.24, 35.385, and 35.615.** The cost share/match must be for allowable costs and may be provided by the applicant or partner organization or institution. The cost share/match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions and other non-cash support. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. If the cost share/match is provided by a partner organization, the applicant is still responsible for proper accountability and documentation. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority. All grant funds are subject to Federal audit.

The total project cost is the sum of the total requested federal share and applicant cost share/match. The minimum cost share/match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four as illustrated by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$100,000 the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions as cost share/match.

If a tribal or intertribal consortium includes its WPDG in an approved Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), the match requirement may be reduced to 5 percent of the allowable cost of the work plan budget for the first two years in which the tribe or intertribal consortia receives a PPG; after two years, the match may be increased up to 10 percent of the work plan budget (as determined by the Regional Administrator). See Section III.D PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS for additional information. Currently the Agency is finalizing a process to determine the percent match for tribal and intertribal consortium after the two year initial grant period (see regulations at 40 CFR Part 35.536(c)).

Where the stated purpose is to include a WPDG into a PPG, a tribe or intertribal consortia may prepare a budget and proposed work plan based upon the assumption that EPA will approve the waiver amount for PPGs under 40 CFR 35.536. If the tribe or intertribal consortium does not or cannot include the WPDG as part of an approved PPG, or chooses to withdraw the WPDG from their PPG, the tribe or intertribal consortium must then meet the 25% cost share/match requirements identified above and, as applicable, negotiate a revised workplan with the EPA contact identified in Section VII AGENCY CONTACTS.

Please contact the EPA Regional grant contact person listed in Section VII AGENCY CONTACTS of this RFP if you have any question about calculating match.

All applicants must describe in their proposal submission how they will contribute a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost *in cost share/matching* requirement. If an applicant can not meet the 25% match by the time of award they will not be eligible to receive funding.

### C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that if not met by the time of proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V, APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION, of the announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III A, ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS of this announcement.
2. Projects must be performed within one or more of the states of EPA Region 2 specifically New York, New Jersey, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be eligible to apply for funding. In the case of inter-jurisdictional watershed projects, they must be primarily implemented in EPA Region 2. Applicants need not be located within the boundaries of the EPA regional office to be eligible to apply for funding.
3. Proposals must **substantially** comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV, APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION, 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. If a single spaced proposal narrative is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 16 page double spaced page limit for the proposal narrative specified in Section IV.C.3; excess pages will not be reviewed (Section IV.C.3 establishes a 16 page double spaced proposal narrative page limit which would be the equivalent of 8 single spaced pages; any single spaced pages in excess of 8 will not be reviewed).
4. Proposals must be limited to activities that **improve wetland programs** by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations 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, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration.
5. Funds cannot be used for activities to implement a wetland program, for fund-raising, or for the purchase of land or conservation easements.
6. Funds cannot be used for inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands.
7. Proposed activities that are or might be required by a previous or pending permit or regulatory activity, i.e. CWA Section 404 permit, CWA Section 402 permit, CWA Section 401 certification, or federal, state, tribal, or local government regulatory requirement(s) are not eligible for funding because they are implementation

- activities. Documentation is required that demonstrates that proposed activities are development activities outside the scope of existing regulatory requirements.
8. This grant program cannot fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property. If proposals are submitted that have these ineligible activities, that portion of the proposals will be ineligible for funding and may render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.
  9. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. If proposals are submitted that have these ineligible activities, those portions of the proposals will be ineligible for funding and may render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.
  10. Proposals must be received by the EPA, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV. 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 and not the applicant. For hard copy or e-mail 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 Kathleen Drake as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by regular first class U.S Postal Service, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service to the Regional EPA contact identified in Section VII **AGENCY CONTACTS**. Electronic submission must be sent via email to [Drake.Kathleen@epa.gov](mailto:Drake.Kathleen@epa.gov). Proposals that are submitted via FAX will not be considered.

#### **D. PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

Funds for a WPDG may be included in a PPG. A PPG enables entities to combine funds from more than one environmental program grant into a single grant with a single budget. Under this competition, states and interstate agencies proposals must first be selected under the competitive grant process described in this RFP and, in accordance with 40 CFR 35.138, the workplan commitments that would have been included in the WPDG workplan must be included in the PPG workplan. Similarly, Tribal and intertribal consortia proposals must first be selected under this competitive grant process in accordance with 40 CFR 35.535. If a proposed PPG work plan differs significantly from the WPDG work plan approved for funding under this competition, the Regional Administrator must consult the National Program Office (see 40 CFR 35.535). The purpose of this consultation requirement is to address the issue of ensuring that a project which is awarded WPDG funding under this competition is implemented once commingled with other grant programs in a PPG. For further information, see the final rules on Environmental Program Grants for state and interstate agencies at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A and tribes and intertribal consortia at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B. The rules are also available on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-TOX/2001/January/Day-09/t218.htm> (state) and at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2001/January/Day-16/g219.htm> (tribal).

### **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

#### **A. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGES**

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm) and by mail upon request by calling the Grants and Interagency Management Division at (202) 564-5320.

## B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in *one* of two ways: 1) electronically via e-mail or 2) hard copy and CD by regular first class U.S Postal Service, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service to the Regional EPA contact identified in Section VII, **AGENCY CONTACTS**. Proposals that are submitted via FAX will not be considered. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C, **CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**, below regardless of mode of submission.

### 1. Electronic Submission

E-mailed submissions must include “**FY09 Region 02 WPDG Proposal**” and the submitting **agency’s name** in the subject of the email. All required documents listed in Section IV.C, **CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION** of the announcement must be attached to the email as separate Adobe PDF files. Please note that if you choose to submit your materials via email, you are accepting all risks attendant to email submission including server delays because of the size of the document. Email submissions exceeding 15MB will experience delays and may not be received on time by the Agency. For these size submissions, applicants should submit their application materials via hardcopy or else they may be received late and not considered for funding. Letters of support, pictures and/or maps may need to be scanned so that they can be attached and submitted electronically. Pictures and/or maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

The address for electronic submission is: Drake.kathleen@epa.gov.

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

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package as described in Section IV.C, **CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by overnight delivery, courier service, or hand delivered. Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: FY09 WPDG Proposal** (see Section VII **AGENCY CONTACTS** for the address and who to send the package to). The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc). Letters of support, pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD. Pictures and/or maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

Hard copy proposals must be submitted by regular first class U.S Postal Service, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service to the Regional EPA contact identified in Section VII **AGENCY CONTACTS**. Proposals that are submitted via FAX will not be considered.

The address for hard copy submission is:

Kathleen Drake  
Wetland Program Development Grant Coordinator  
USEPA Region 2  
290 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007-1866

## C. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

**Applicants should read the following section very carefully and address all requirements thoroughly.**

All proposal packages, regardless of how submitted, must include the following three documents described below:

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

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

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).

**2. Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information**

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

**3. Proposal Narrative**

The proposal narrative must be no more than sixteen (16) typewritten double-spaced 8.5 x 11 inch pages (a page is one side of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. Additional pages beyond the 16 page limit will not be considered. If a single spaced proposal is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 16 page double spaced page limit for proposals; excess pages will not be reviewed (eight (8) single-spaced pages is the equivalent of the 16 page double-spaced proposal narrative page limit; any single-spaced pages in excess of 8 will not be reviewed). Supporting materials (such as support letters from partners, and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit for the proposal narrative.

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

1. Cover Page including:
  - a. Project Title (the project title should reflect the main project outcome/objective and should be 15 words or less);
  - b. Indicate the National Priority Area(s) from Section I.C PRIORITY AREAS that are addressed in the proposal ;
  - c. Name of Applicant;
  - 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);
  - f. Total project cost and dollars requested; and
  - g. Abstract/project summary (the abstract should begin with one or two sentences describing the main objective of the proposal. It should also include a listing of the main tasks to be accomplished, and a description of the final product(s). The entire abstract should be 250 words or less).
  
2. Project description containing:

- a. Description of Project – Provide a description of the project including a clear description of the methodology and approach to be used for the project as well as a statement that all activities are development, program building activities and are outside the scope of existing regulatory requirements.
- b. Project Tasks - Outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals. Describe the projects tasks or components and the anticipated products associated with each task. Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant.
- c. Milestone Schedule - Provide a milestone schedule that covers the entire grant period. Include a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and products. Include the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task.
- d. Project Need - Describe the need for the project and how the project activities will support, build on, and develop the state/tribe/local government wetland programs.
- e. National Priority Areas - Describe the National Priority Areas, identified in Section I.C PRIORITY AREAS of this announcement, that this project will address and how the project would do so.
- f. Project Goals and Objectives;
  - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the objective(s) of the project and describe how it is (they are) related to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4, Objective 4.3, Sub-objective 4.3.1 (see Section I FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION of this announcement);
  - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results (outputs) expected to be produced through the completion of this project. Describe how you will track your progress towards producing the stated output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.B ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN of this announcement);
  - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements (outcomes) to be accomplished as a result of the project activities. (See Section I FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION of this announcement for a discussion of what outputs are, and to see specific examples). These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which result from completing the workplan and producing the products or outputs. Describe an approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.B ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN of this announcement);
  - iv. Established Baseline for Measurement - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the project resulted in environmental improvement (i.e., current condition).
- g. Restoration Demonstration Project Information - If you are proposing a restoration demonstration project, describe the current

environmental condition of the project site and the reason for restoration. Describe your post-installation monitoring program, and whether it will be funded as a part of this project or with another named funding source. If another funding source would be used, explain how you know that this work will be funded. Describe the regulatory authorities that you must comply with (e.g. CWA Section 404 permits, any applicable state and local permits). You may need to comply with regulations in order to conduct, monitor, and/or maintain a proposed restoration demonstration project. If you are not proposing this type of project, do not provide any description for item “g”.

- h. Planning Project Information - Indicate whether or not the plan you will produce would contain a specific wetland implementation component. Such a plan component would identify potential environmental improvements for wetlands. Indicate whether or not the proposed plan would be a component of a comprehensive watershed plan that would likely contribute to watershed restoration and improved water quality. If you are not proposing this type of project, do not provide any description for item “h”.
- i. Staffing Information - Provide a brief description of staffing resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of staff and their qualifications. Annotated resumes are preferred but are optional. The resumes may be attached at the end of the 16 page proposal and are not included in the page limit.
- j. Applicant’s Experience - Provide a brief description of the applicant’s organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization’s readiness and ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
- k. Partnership Information - Describe who will partner with the applicant. Describe the roles of specific partners in the project’s components/tasks. You may attach optional letters of support, from intended partners, to the end of your proposal. Letters of support are not counted in the 16 page limit.
- l. Transfer of Results and Outreach – Describe how the applicant will share the project methods, results and/or products with others. Describe whom the applicant plans to share the information with; within and beyond their own organization, state or tribe, and region. Include a description of how the applicant and/or partners will provide information to the public.
- m. Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) - If you plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements (see Section VIII.A QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) and STORET of this announcement for additional information). For example, do you plan to provide a QA Project Plan for EPA to review?
- n. Invasive Species Control - What will you do to ensure that your project does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species? Explain how you would respond if an invasive species problem occurs in relation to your project. (See Section VIII.E

INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL of this announcement for further information).

3. Budget Narrative – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. Provide a description of the budget items found in Form 424A such as “other” and “contractual. Identify the requested federal dollars, the cost share/match and the total project cost for each component/task for each budget item from Form 424A. Explain if and how non-federal partners will provide some of the cost share/match. Attach optional letters of support, from intended cost share/match partners, to your proposal. Letters of support are not counted in the 16-page limit. Describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Include travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period.

While contractual and subgrant efforts may be part of an applicant’s proposal, each WPDG recipient must be significantly involved in the administration of the award. EPA recommends that recipients use no more than 50% of the grant funds to contract or subgrant to any other entity. However, if the applicant needs to exceed the recommended limit, the applicant should submit a written description for the need for greater contractual or subgrant support. EPA will evaluate the need for greater contractual or subgrant participation as part of the proposal. Note that any proposed subgrants should be included in the “other” cost category of the SF 424A.

When formulating budgets for proposals, 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 the agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the project.

4. Past Performance - Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally 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 3 years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements, (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports and (iii) 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 evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION, EPA will

consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current 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 environmental results reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION. Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for these factors.

5. Optional Attachments not included in the 16-page limit:
  - a. Any pictures and/or maps to describe the project.
  - b. Staff Resumes describing the experience of relevant applicant staff (see item 2.i. Staffing Information, above, in the Project Narrative outline.).
  - c. Support Letters verifying how project partners and others are supportive of the project. Partners who will be providing cost share/match should describe the resources (in-kind services or dollars) that they are committing to the project (see items 2.k. Partnerships, and 3. Budget Narrative in the Project Narrative outline). All letters should be on the official letterhead of the supporting agency or organization.

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

#### D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII AGENCY CONTACTS by **5:00 P.M. EDT July 7, 2009**. Proposals submitted electronically via e-mail must be received by **5:00 P.M. EDT July 7, 2009**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

#### E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

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

#### F. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION:

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. 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.

Note that under Public Law No. 105-277, data produced under an award is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

**V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**A. SELECTION CRITERIA**

Only those proposals that meet the threshold eligibility criteria found in Section III will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights listed below (115 point scale). Applicants need to address these criteria in their proposal submittal. Points will be awarded based on how well each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal submittal. While addressing a priority area is not a mandatory requirement or threshold eligibility factor, failure to address them will affect scoring under the priority criterion in Section V **APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**.

<p>1) National Priority Areas (20 points)</p>	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposed project addresses one or more of the National Priority Areas (Wetland Program Planning Based on the Four Core Elements, Regulation (Enhancing Wetland Protection) and/or Monitoring and Assessment) identified in Section I.C.1 NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS of this announcement.</p>
<p>2) Environmental Results: Outputs, Outcomes, Results and Measuring Progress (30 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates each of following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. Outputs, Outcomes, Results, and Link to the Strategic Plan (15 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How likely it is that the proposed project would achieve environmental results (i.e., will the project result in the protection of wetland resources); (5 points)</li> <li>• How well the proposal describes project products (outputs) and outcomes and how well these support the project’s goal(s). (5 points)</li> <li>• How well the proposal is linked to the EPA Strategic Plan. (5 points)</li> </ul> <p>B. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcomes and outputs (examples of outcomes and outputs can be found in Section I.B ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN of this announcement). (15 points)</p>
<p>3) Specific Workplan Elements (30 points)</p>	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the following:</p> <p>A. A clearly articulated milestone schedule that provides a breakout of the project activities into phases by associated task and a timeline for completion of the tasks including the anticipated dates for the start and completion of each task. (5 points)</p> <p>B. A clear description of the methodology and approach to be used for the project. (10 points)</p>

	<p>C. A clear detailed budget with estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. Identify the requested federal dollars, the required 25% cost share/match and the total project cost for each component/task for each budget item from Form 424A. Explain if and how non-federal partners will provide some of the cost share/match. Describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable. (5 points)</p> <p>D. A clear description for the need for the project and how the project activities will support, build on, and develop the state/tribe/local government wetland programs. (5 points)</p> <p>E. A description of how and to whom the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to other state, tribe, and local governmental agencies and the public or other agencies within the state/tribe/local government. How information from a demonstration project or pilot will contribute to inform other projects or situations across a state or tribal nation. (5 points)</p>
4) Partnerships) (10 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate partnerships including a clear description of the roles of specific partners in the project's components/tasks.
5) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/Qualifications (10 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. The applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project, and the organization's readiness and ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points)</p> <p>B. The applicant's staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points)</p>
6) Past Performance (15 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion:</p> <p>A. Past performance in successfully completing 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 5, and preferably EPA agreements). (4 points)</p> <p>B. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years (no more than 5 and preferably EPA agreements) and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (3 points)</p> <p>C. Extent and quality to which the applicant documented and/or reported</p>

	<p>on their progress towards achieving the expected results (<i>e.g.</i>, outcomes and outputs) under federally and/or non-federally assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a contract) performed within the last 3 years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (8 points)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> In evaluating applicants under A, B, and C above, EPA will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (<i>e.g.</i>, Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (<i>e.g.</i>, to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for these factors (for item A above 2 points, for item B above 1.5 points, and for item C above 4 points). Failure to provide any past performance information, or to include a statement in your proposal that you do not have any relevant or available past performance information, may result in a zero score for these factors.</p>
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**B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

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

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A above, and assign scores to each proposal and will develop a list of the most highly rated 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 review panel and may also take into account factors such as:

1. Geographic distribution of funds;
2. Diversity of projects (this includes type of project and type of applicant i.e. state/tribe/or local government); and
3. Availability of funds.

**VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**A. AWARD NOTICES**

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by e-mail. A final application will be requested from eligible applicants whose proposal has been successful evaluated and preliminarily selected for award. The applicant 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 EPA’s Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1). An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;

3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with §35.115 of 40 CFR;
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments; and
6. 8-digit or 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Code ("HUC") information for projects that are place-based. State or tribal-wide projects will not require HUC information. The HUC scale (8- or 12-digit) will be contingent on the type of project and the geographic scope of the project, and will be determined through consultation between the EPA Grant Project Officer and the grantee.

In addition, successful applicants and their partners 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.

A list of the successful proposals will be posted at the following website addresses <http://www.epa.gov/region2/water/wetlands/grants.htm> and at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) will also contain information on any modifications to the announcement).

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

The general award and administration process for all Wetland Program Development Grants is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments") and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A ("Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies") and Subpart B ("Environmental Program Grants for Tribes"). These regulations can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/epacfr40/chapt-I.info/chi-toc.htm>.

#### **C. DISPUTE PROCEDURES**

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

#### **D. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS**

- Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program.
- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the workplan.
- Proposed project activities must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.
- Under the competition, each proposed project must be able to be completed within the project period. 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.

- Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to insure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.

## **E. REPORTING**

For this funding opportunity WPDGs are covered under the following EPA grant regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 (Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments), and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (States, interstate agencies and local governments) and Subpart B (Tribes and intertribal consortia). These regulations specify basic grant reporting requirements; including performance and financial reports (see 40 CFR 30.51, 30.52, 31.40, 31.41, 35.115, and 35.515). In negotiating these grants, EPA will work closely with recipients to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements into each grant agreement consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, 35.115, and 35.515. These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance reports. At a minimum, however, the reporting schedule must require the recipient to report at least annually.

## **VII. AGENCY CONTACTS**

Note to Applicants: EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via email and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **June 23, 2009** and written responses will be posted on EPA Region 2 website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/region2/water/wetlands/grants.htm> In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants or discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals.

Regional Contact Information:

Kathleen Drake  
Wetland Program Development Grant Coordinator  
USEPA Region 2  
290 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007-1866

Drake.Kathleen@epa.gov  
(212) 637-3817

States in EPA Region 2 where applicants can propose projects:

New York  
New Jersey  
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico  
U.S. Virgin Islands

## **VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**

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

Quality Assurance /Quality Control requirements are 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. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Regional Office Wetland Grant Coordinator (See Section VII AGENCY CONTACTS for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff.

Additionally, recipients of grants for wetland monitoring projects will be encouraged to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STOrage and RETrieval) database. STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET or monitoring data made available in the Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI) Core Monitoring Data Element Standard (or Data Exchange Template) will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Information on STORET is at <http://www.epa.gov/storet> and information on the standard is at <http://www.epa.gov/edr>.

#### **B. ANNUAL WETLAND MEETING/TRAINING**

EPA encourages state /tribal /local governments to include travel plans for wetland personnel to attend at least one national wetland meeting in support of the project or for training each year (e.g., National EPA, state, tribal, local wetland meeting or wetland monitoring workshops). Applicants should account for travel plans and costs in the workplans and the project budget.

#### **C. 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. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations at 40 C.F.R. 30.36.

#### **D. 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.

#### **E. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL**

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to ensure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations

promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.

**F. EXCHANGE NETWORK**

EPA, States, Territories, and Tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network. This data sharing network is a secure, internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is an Exchange Network based framework by which EPA compiles water quality monitoring data into the STORET Warehouse. EPA's presence on the Exchange Network is represented by CDX which authenticates users and validates data submitted through WQX.