

# EPA Region 7, Watershed Improvement Grant

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGION 7, WATER, WETLANDS, AND PESTICIDES DIVISION - EPA-R7WWPD-06-002

### A. Overview

Notice of Request for Proposals for Projects to be Funded from the Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division (WWPD), Watershed Improvement Grant – CFDA 66.111 Regional Environmental Priority Projects

**Proposal due date** **May 11, 2006**  
**If selected, tentative Application due date** **July 13, 2006**

### SUMMARY

**EPA Region 7 is requesting proposals that will include and directly result in on-the-ground activities which will result in chemical, physical and/or biological improvements in water quality in a watershed over the short, intermediate, and/or long term.** Additional emphasis will be placed on those projects that address agricultural pesticides. We expect this could be accomplished by leveraging these funds with ongoing efforts currently, recently, or reasonably expected to be funded. Project implementation must be within the states of EPA Region 7 specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and/or Nebraska. EPA Region 7 Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division intends to award an estimated \$300,000 to eligible applicants through assistance agreements ranging in size from \$50,000 - \$100,000 (total EPA Federal share). EPA estimates that up to four proposals may be selected to submit full applications. **All hard copy proposals must be received at the EPA Region 7, Kansas City, Kansas office no later than 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time, May 11, 2006, and all proposals through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) must be submitted no later than 6:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, May 11, 2006.**

## 1. Funding Opportunity Description

### A. Watershed Results & Community-Based Priorities for Consideration

Region 7 will award projects under this announcement that result in chemical, physical and/or biological improvements in water quality in a watershed. In order to accomplish this, the Watershed Improvement Grant Program will give priority consideration to projects that

- have an active watershed group ready to complete management techniques to restore watersheds,
- have strong partnerships financially and with their communities,
- include environmental results,
- have explicit and environmentally-based performance measures, and

- are innovative and exhibit the inherent connection of improved water quality and integrated pesticide management with the three EPA Region 7 priorities: critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and agriculture.

Additionally, the Watershed Improvement Grant Program will place an emphasis on projects that address agricultural pesticides. A priority will be given to agricultural pesticide proposals that include a “whole systems” approach by integrating pest, soil, water and crop management practices, address an array of commodities, focus on sustainable agriculture, incorporate conservation planning, and are submitted by applicants that have a proven track record of grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices. We expect that successful applicants will also have an outreach and extension component to their program. The term “Sustainable” agriculture as used in this context refers to farming practices that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible. Sustainable agriculture is directly related to the regional priorities of critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and agriculture.

Community partnerships include, but are not limited to, growers, non-governmental organizations, universities, minor crop growers, environmental groups, other agencies and organizations. Financial partnerships can be demonstrated by showing that EPA funds will supplement ongoing efforts currently or recently funded by NRCS Farm Bill funds and/or other federal, state, local, or private entities. These financial partnerships do not have to be listed as cost-share or matching funds.

The critical ecosystem priority focuses on facilitating the protection and/or restoration of ecosystems in Region 7, which are critical to biodiversity, human quality of life, and/or landscape functions. The sensitive populations priority focuses on reducing environmental and health risks to children, older adults, and people with chronic illness. The agriculture priority focuses on developing partnerships and projects in the agriculture community emphasizing cleaner air, purer water, and better protected land.

## **B. Priorities for Consideration**

The Watershed Improvement Grant Program projects will be awarded using either one or two sources of funding. Those projects awarded with one source of funding are single media; those awarded with two sources of funding are multi-media. In other words, multi-media grants are assistance agreements that are awarded citing two or more environmental law statutes, appropriation legislation, or applicable legislative history as the statutory authority and may only support surveys, studies, investigations and special purpose assistance.

**Therefore, projects must support the intent of the funding source(s) used and the associated criteria (See Section 3C, Threshold Eligibility Criteria).**

### **Watershed Improvement Projects (Single media):**

- Funding Source:
  - Clean Water Act 104(b)(3)
- **Criteria:**
  - Project supports 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.

**Watershed Improvement with Pesticide Emphasis Projects (Multi-media):**

- Funding Sources:
  - CWA 104(b)(3) and
  - Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agriculture Initiative and Section 20 of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended).
- **Criteria:**
  - Project supports 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, and
  - supports transition to using less and lower risk pesticides in crop production and increase farmers' adoption of ecologically-based, systems approach using integrated crop, pest, soil and water management methods.

To clarify, **demonstrations** are projects which show the overall effectiveness of an approach in solving a problem. They must be innovative in their use of technologies, approaches, and/or practices, and include outreach to share lessons learned. Demonstrations should build the capacity of programs and focus on long-term solutions. **Pesticides** include insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, and herbicides.

**C. Environmental Results**

All applicants are required to link their projects to environmental results. Environmental results are used as a way to gauge a project's performance using output and outcome measures. The term "output" means the result(s) or product(s) from accomplishing an environmental activity or effort that is related to an environmental goal or objective and will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specific date. The term "outcome" means an environmental improvement that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. , These improvements are changes, benefits, effects or consequences to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of activities, efforts, and outputs. Projected environmental improvement outcomes can be over the short (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource). Some longer-term outcomes may occur after the proposed project closes. For more information, see the EPA Region 7 Grants webpage at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm>. Additional ideas on setting performance measures can be found in the Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Toolbox at

[http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance\\_measures.php](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php).

In Region 7, the most common problems in streams and lakes are excess sediment, nutrients and pathogens. Projects may also address other problems that are known in a watershed. The stream or lake may be on a list as not meeting their designated uses (impaired waters) because of excess pollutants. This list, known as the Clean Water Act 303(d) list, is based on violations of water quality standards and is one method to find information on known water quality problems. More information and updated lists of these waterbodies and pollutants, including pesticides, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/water/tmdl.htm>.

**Watershed Improvement Projects:**

To illustrate, one output is the increased use of best management practices<sup>1</sup> in the watershed; while one anticipated outcome is water quality improvement with decreased levels of pollutants. Another potential output is the adoption by homeowners of disconnecting house downspouts to municipal storm sewer systems, e.g. rain gardens; resulting in a long-term outcome of chemical, physical and biological improvements in water quality in the watershed as a result of better water quality and reduced runoff. A third projected output is the adoption of homeowners of an integrated, systems approach with an increase in the practices installed to filter excess fertilizer and non-agricultural pesticide runoff; while the anticipated outcome is an increase in invertebrate/ fish populations as a result of better water quality and habitat in urban streams.

**Watershed Improvement with Pesticide Emphasis Projects:**

To illustrate, one output would be the completion of on-the-ground activities; while one outcome is improvement in water quality for a waterbody that is known or suspected to be negatively impacted by pesticides. Another projected output is the decreased use of pesticides; while the expected outcome is an improvement in water quality with decreased levels of pesticides. A potential output is the adoption by farmers of an integrated, ecologically-based, systems approach with an increase in the installation of stream buffers to filter pesticide runoff; while one anticipated outcome is an increase in invertebrate/ fish populations as a result of better water quality and habitat. (See [http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance\\_measures.php](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php) for more ideas.)

Environmental results not only assess the success of an applicant's project, they also gauge the effectiveness of EPA's programs by ensuring that EPA's limited resources are used to

further the Agency's Strategic Goals. The Strategic Goals for the Watershed Improvement Grant Program are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Best management practices are methods that have been determined to be the most effective and practical means of preventing or reducing pollution. These practices are often employed in agriculture, forestry, mining, and construction. The EPA, working with partners in industry and the academic community, have established and published best management practices for soil erosion, wastewater treatment, fuel storage, pesticide and fertilizer handling, and the management of livestock yards. The ultimate goal of these practices is to increase efficiency while reducing pollution.

**Watershed Improvement Projects:**

Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water  
Objective 2.2: Protect Water Quality  
Sub-objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality via Watersheds

**Watershed Improvement with Pesticide Emphasis Projects:**

Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water  
Objective 2.2: Protect Water Quality  
Sub-objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality via Watersheds

**and**

Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems  
Objective 4.1: Reduce Risks to Human Health via Exposure to Chemicals, Organisms, and Pesticides  
Sub-objective 4.1.1: Successfully Implement FIFRA/ FQPA and the Endangered Species Act

For more information on EPA’s Strategic Plan go to:  
<http://www.epa.gov/ocfopage/plan/plan.htm>.

Therefore, all proposed Watershed Improvement Projects must demonstrate how they will result in clean and safe water. Additionally, all Watershed Improvement with Pesticide Emphasis Projects must demonstrate how they will result in clean and safe water and healthy communities and ecosystems.

**2. Award Information**

EPA Region 7 Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division intends to award an estimated \$300,000 to eligible applicants through assistance agreements ranging in size from \$50,000 to \$100,000 (total EPA Federal share). From the proposals received, EPA estimates that up to four projects may be selected to submit full applications. EPA expects a portion of these will be for projects with a pesticide emphasis.

Activities proposed for funding are not necessarily expected to address the entire watershed, but are expected to have been developed based on a comprehensive assessment and plan for the watershed. Eligible activities should be of a relatively short time frame, i.e., 1 to 3 years. The Agency reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards. EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/ applications by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of the proposed project. If EPA decides to partially fund the proposal/ application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which

the proposal/ application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and the evaluation/selection process.

Should additional funding become available for award, the Agency may award additional assistance agreements no later than 4 months from the final selection decisions without further notice or competition. Awards will be based on this solicitation and will be in accordance with the final selection process.

EPA Region 7 will work closely with the recipient organization during the finalization of the workplan to determine EPA's involvement with the project. If it is determined that there will be no substantial EPA involvement, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a grant. If it is determined substantial involvement is anticipated between EPA and the recipient organization during the performance of the approved activities, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a cooperative agreement.

### **3. Eligibility Information**

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

Assistance under this announcement is generally available to States, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private nonprofit institutions, and individuals.

Public or private nonprofit institutions can be community-based or volunteer organizations, as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Nonprofit organizations, as described by Section 501(c)(3), that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

In order to be eligible, Tribes must be Federally recognized, although "Treatment as a State" status is not a requirement. Intertribal consortia that meet the requirements of 40 CFR part 35.504 are eligible for direct funding. Interstate agency and intertribal consortia projects must be broad in scope and encompass more than one State, Tribe, or local government.

#### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

There are no cost-share requirements for these projects.

However, EPA encourages applicants to identify opportunities to leverage other sources of funding as much as possible. The applicant may demonstrate this through state, local and/or other partner participation. One criteria reviewers will use to review, evaluate and rank proposals will be the amount of financial resources the applicant has or reasonably will have that this project will supplement (see Section 5). These financial resources do not have to be in the form of cost-share or matching funds. For example, the project demonstrates that EPA

funds will supplement ongoing efforts currently or recently funded by NRCS Farm Bill funds and/or other federal, state, local, or private partner participation.

All grants are subject to Federal audit.

### **C. Eligibility Criteria**

**To be eligible for consideration under this announcement, applicants must meet all of the following criteria.** Failure to meet all of the following criteria will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration.

1. The implementation of projects must occur within one or more of the four states of EPA Region 7, specifically Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and/or Nebraska. In the case of interjurisdictional watershed projects, they must be primarily implemented in EPA Region 7 which includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Interjurisdictional projects are encouraged, e.g., watersheds that cross state and/or tribal boundaries, provided that the appropriate water agency in the adjacent jurisdiction is a partner or supports the project.
2. Be an eligible applicant in accordance with Section 3A.
3. If the proposal is a **Watershed Improvement Proposal**, the proposal must support the water quality criteria as outlined in Section 1B.

If the proposal is a **Watershed Improvement with Pesticide Emphasis Proposal**, the proposal must support the water quality and pesticide criteria as outlined in Section 1B.

4. Proposals received after the deadline, as specified in Section 4C (Submission Dates and Times), will be rejected.

## **4. Application and Submission Information**

### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and 424A, are available at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/appforms.htm> and by mail upon request by calling the Grants Administration Division at (202) 564-5320 or by contacting the EPA Region 7 Grants Competition Advocate (see Section 7). If you have questions, contact the Regional Office Watershed Improvement Grant Contact (see Section 7) or visit the regional website at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm>.

Applicants applying through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) will find the entire application package by following the instructions listed in Section 4F of this announcement.

Applicants may submit their proposal by either: 1) hard copy through U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered, courier, or express delivery service, or 2) electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). These options are described more fully in Sections 4C Submission Dates and Times, and Section 4F Electronic Submission Through Grants.gov.

Appendix A is a checklist tool for some of the required information to include in the proposal for the RFP. This is a tool only.

## **B. Content and Form of Proposal Submission**

**If you are applying by the hard copy method, one original hard paper copy is required.** If you are applying by the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) method, no hard copy is required.

Full application packages should not be submitted at this time. **Proposals must be typewritten** and should have a page size of 8 ½ x 11 inches, be easily readable with a conventional font of 12 points or larger, double spaced, and be no more than 11-pages in length (a page is one side of a piece of paper). Please print double-sided if possible. Pages should be numbered in order starting with the cover page for ease of reading.

**All proposals should include the sections and section titles listed below.** For example, the proposal would include a section titled “Executive Summary”, followed by the sections “Proposal Narrative”, “Project Title”, “Environmental Issue”, and so on. The page numbers shown in parentheses for each section listed below are suggested lengths only, and applicants may adjust their project description within the 11-pages in a manner that best fits their needs.

The contents may vary slightly with different types of projects. **If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.** For example, in the proposal narrative “Watershed Improvement Grant Priorities” section, proposals without a pesticide component would include a subsection titled “Support a transition to using less and lower risk pesticides in crop production and increase farmers’ adoption of ecologically-based, systems approach using integrated crop, pest, soil, and water management methods.” This would be followed by a clear statement that this information is not applicable nor required as the proposal does not address pesticides.

**In addition to what is described below, applicants must ensure that they submit information in their proposal that addresses and corresponds to the criteria in Section 5A.**

- 1. Cover Page** (Page 1) - Provide the following information with your letterhead.  
Project Title:  
Project Coordinator:

Organization Name and Address:  
Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Project Duration (including Starting Date and Ending Date): \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) level and name of watershed within which the project occurs): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Funding Request: \_\_\_\_\_  
EPA Funding Requested: \_\_\_\_\_  
Whether project is devoted to agricultural pesticides: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate if this proposal is a continuation of a previously EPA funded project.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide the following:

EPA Assistance Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Budget Period of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Period of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

HUCs (also known as USGS Cataloging Units) and State 303(d) listings can be found on EPA's Surf Your Watershed Web site at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>

2. **Standard Form SF 424 - Application for Federal Assistance** (Page 2) - Include the organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424 (See Section 4A).
3. **Standard Form SF 424A - Budget Information** (Page 3 - 4) – Use budget amounts for the entire project in Sections A, B, C and D including both Federal and any non-Federal match (see Section 4A).
4. **Executive Summary** (Page 5) - The Executive Summary is a stand alone document, not to exceed one (1) page, containing the specifics of what is proposed and what you expect to accomplish regarding measuring or movement toward achieving project goals. This summary should identify the measurable environmental results you expect including potential human health, ecological, and clean, safe water benefits. It should also identify whether the project emphasizes pesticides.
5. **Proposal Narrative** includes Parts 5.a. – 5.i. (Pages 6-11) – The proposal narrative including **Parts 5.a. through 5.i. should not exceed six (6) pages.** These pages should be numbered beginning with Page 6.
  - a. **Project Title.** Self-explanatory.
  - b. **Detailed Itemization of the Amounts Budgeted by Object Class Categories.** For the Object Class Categories given in SF 424A, Section B,

provide detailed information for the funding requested (both Federal and non-federal match) and the associated costs needed to achieve the program/project objectives. Include enough detail for EPA to determine if the costs are eligible, allocable, reasonable, and allowable. For more information, see <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>.

- c. **Environmental Issue.** Concisely describe the environmental issue(s) of concern and the importance of that issue (project need).
- d. **Literature Review/ Background.** Briefly describe relevant information currently available. This should include information on current projects that are relevant to or provide the basis for either the experimental design or the validation of an innovative or new approach to pest management and improving water quality. Include a list of key literature citations.
- e. **Objectives.** Include a numbered list (1, 2, etc.) of concisely written project objectives. In most cases, each objective can be stated in a single sentence.
- f. **Environmental Results.** Provide a plan for tracking and measuring your progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of the proposed project (see Section 1 Environmental Results) that directly links to EPA's Strategic Plan/ GPRA Architecture (See Section 5, Criteria #8 for web-site addresses). Within the plan, describe how you will achieve clearly defined, measurable results. Where appropriate, explicitly state the target pollutant(s), pest(s), and/or crop(s). For more information about workplans, see <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm>.

Within the plan, link each project objective to anticipated environmental improvement outcomes by working backward through the following series of steps:

**Step 1) Outcomes.** List the environmental improvement outcomes that will be accomplished as a result of the project. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are the result from the accomplishment of proposed commitments and outputs. Describe how the project will result in chemical, physical and/or biological improvements in water quality in the watershed. Describe how the project outcomes link with EPA measures and commitments outlined in EPA's national water program guidance (See Section 5, Criteria #8 for web-site address

**Step 2) Outputs.** List the final outputs, products, or results which are expected to be achieved by accomplishing work plan activities. Link each output to the corresponding outcome.

**Step 3) Tasks/ Activities.** List the activities required to accomplish the work plan objectives. Link each output to the corresponding project activities. Describe the project activities in detail and include an outreach/ public participation strategy.

**Step 4) Grant Funding.** List the anticipated amount of funding and associated staff needed to achieve the project objectives. Include the requested Federal and any non-Federal cost share in these estimates. Link each task or activity to the associated resources that are needed to accomplish the activity.

**Step 5) Stated Objective/ Link to EPA Strategic Plan.** Link each stated project objective to the EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 (and Goal 4 for Watershed Improvement with Pesticide Emphasis projects) (See Section I of this announcement). All grant funded activities are required to be linked to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan established goals, objectives, and sub-objectives for accomplishing the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

**Step 6) Established Baseline for Measurement.** Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the program/ project resulted in environmental improvement, i.e., current condition, new condition. Additional ideas on setting performance measures can be found in the Strategic Agricultural Initiative Toolbox at [http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance\\_measures.php](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php)

- g. **Time Frame for Accomplishment.** Include a timetable that identifies what tasks/ steps, results, and final products will be accomplished under each of the objectives during the project and when completion of each is anticipated. Describe significant steps and milestones.
- h. **Watershed Improvement Grant Priorities.** (See Sections 1A and B) In one (1) page or less, briefly describe how the project will
  - i. include and directly result in on-the-ground activities to result in chemical, physical and/or biological improvements in water quality in a watershed over the short, intermediate, and/or long term,
  - ii. support 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;
  - iii. support a transition to using less and lower risk pesticides in crop production and increase farmers' adoption of ecologically-based, systems approach using integrated crop, pest, soil and water management methods (**pesticide projects only**); and
  - iv. exhibit the inherent connection of improved water quality and integrated pesticide management with the three EPA Region 7 priorities: critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and agriculture (**pesticide projects only**).
- i. **Major Partnerships.** Describe the project's partnerships both financially and within the community they will be working in. Additional ideas on forming partnerships can be found in the Strategic Agricultural Initiative Toolbox at [http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/funding\\_opportunities.php](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/funding_opportunities.php).
  - i. The project should demonstrate that EPA funds will supplement ongoing efforts currently, recently funded, or reasonably expected to be funded by NRCS Farm Bill funds and/or other federal, state, local, or private entities. These funds do not have to be listed as cost-share or matching funds.
  - ii. Identify the active watershed group ready to complete management techniques to restore a watershed.
  - iii. List all growers, non-governmental organizations, universities, minor crop growers, environmental groups, other agencies and organizations having a major role in the proposal. Provide name, organizational affiliation or

occupation (such as farmer), and a description of the role and responsibility each will play in the project.

- iv. Support letters should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project, and can include letters of support from State Water Quality and Agricultural Agencies. (Not counted in page limit.)
- j. **Programmatic Capability.** Applicants should submit information addressing the items below. For the purpose of evaluating an applicant for programmatic capability purposes under Section 5A Criteria #11 below, EPA will consider information provided by applicants and may consider information from other sources including Agency files and prior/ current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant).
  - i. Briefly describe your organization's experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to implement the proposed project.
  - ii. Include a brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of staff and their qualifications (no resumes are required), or your ability to hire or obtain the requisite experience.
  - iii. Provide a brief description of your past performance in documenting and/or reporting on your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs,(e.g., results) under Federal and/or non-Federal funded agreements similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed agreement performed within the last 5 years; and if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not. For each such agreement, applicants should submit information showing that progress/technical reports or other documentation generated under the agreement adequately demonstrated progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of the agreement, and if such progress was not being achieved then satisfactorily explained why not. Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement.
  - iv. Provide a brief description of your past performance in successfully completing agreements, meeting reporting requirements, and submitting acceptable final technical reports under Federal and/or non-Federal funded agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed agreement performed within the last 5 years. Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement.

### **DUNS Number**

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Individuals are exempt from this requirement. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

### **C. Submission Dates and Times**

**EPA will consider all hard copy proposals which are received no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time, May 11, 2006, at the EPA Region 7, Kansas City, Kansas office** from the U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered, courier, or express delivery service by this time and date. Only one form of delivery listed above is required to meet the deadline. EPA will not accept faxed submissions. Proposals received after the due date will not be considered for funding.

#### **Submission Address**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7  
WWPD/ WPIB  
ATTN: Watershed Improvement Proposals  
901 N 5th Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

EPA will also consider **electronic proposals** if you wish to apply electronically through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). If so, you must refer to the instructions in Section 4F Electronic Submission. **Your organization's AOR must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) on or before 6:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, May 11, 2006.** All proposals submitted via [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) after this due date and time will not be considered for funding.

### **D. Intergovernmental Review**

For successful applicant(s) whose proposals are selected under this Program (See Section 6), in the final grant application package applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Section 204, Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. This Program is 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 requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

### **E. Funding Restrictions**

EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authorities for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87 "Cost Principles for

State, Local, and Tribal Governments”; A-122 “Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations”; and A-21 “Cost Principles for Educational Institutions”. Ineligible costs will be reduced from the final grant award. Cost(s) incurred prior to award by the applicant (Pre-Award Costs) is allowed only with EPA approval.

### **Construction**

Construction projects, except for the construction required to carry out a demonstration project, and acquisition of land are not eligible for funding under this program.

### **Environmental Controls**

New or on-going programs to implement environmental controls are not eligible for funding under this program. Implementation includes routine or regularly conducted projects with little or no outreach to share knowledge, and the program has basic knowledge of proposed projects and outcomes. Programs can include, but are not limited to, existing or planned programs or actions which reflect Federal, State, or Local regulation requirements. For example, State National Permit Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting and Clean Water Act Section 401 certifications are not eligible for funding under this program.

## **F. Other Submission Requirements**

Please note that you may choose to apply electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under this announcement. If you choose to apply electronically via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), follow the instructions below.

### **Electronic Submission Through Grants.gov**

If you choose to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Get Started,” then “For AORs” (Authorized Organization Representative) on the left side of the page. **Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.** If your organization is not currently registered with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this grant program, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab at the top of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package for the announcement [https://apply.grants.gov/forms\\_apps\\_idx.html](https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html). To download the PureEdge viewer, click on the “PureEdge Viewer” link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R7WWPD-06-02, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement, in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button “How To Apply” 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 top of the page and then go to EPA opportunities).

Please review this announcement's additional instructions available for download on [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

If you have any technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/CustomerSupport>.

### **Pre-Application Assistance**

**Only questions regarding eligibility or seeking clarification of provisions in this solicitation will be answered. However, questions related to eligibility and clarification will not be accepted after May 4, 2006.** Questions should be submitted by e-mail to [R7Watersheds@epa.gov](mailto:R7Watersheds@epa.gov). Please include in the e-mail subject line "Watershed Improvement Grant." Additional information on writing your grant proposal and requirements are also available on the **regional website** at <http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/index.htm>.

### **Questions regarding this solicitation can be presented during a conference phone call.**

Questions should be submitted in advance by e-mail. The call begins at 10:00 am CST, March 28, 2006, with the conference line opening at 10:01 am. The call in number is 1-866-299-3188. Once you call into the EPA phone line, at the prompt enter "913-551-7928#", the conference access code followed by the "#" sign. If you have difficulty, you will be provided additional instructions and/or operator assistance.

If circumstances beyond our control prevent the conference call from occurring at the scheduled time and call-in number, it will be rescheduled in a timely manner and notice of the rescheduled date and time will be posted at [http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7\\_grant\\_opportunities.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm).

**Questions will be collected and answers will be posted on the regional website at [http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7\\_grant\\_opportunities.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm).** This information will be updated periodically with a final version by May 9, 2006.

Questions may also be answered by contacting the EPA Region 7 Grants Competition Advocate or the EPA Region 7 Watershed Improvement Grant Coordinator (see Section 7 Agency Contacts).

### **Public Participation**

EPA regulations require public participation in various Clean Water Act programs including grants (40 CFR Part 25.2(a)(5)). Each applicant for EPA financial assistance shall include tasks for public participation in their project's work plan submitted in the grant proposal as described in 40 CFR 25.11. The project work plan should reflect how public participation will be provided for, assisted, and accomplished.

**Confidential Business Information (CBI):** 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.

## 5. Application Review Information

### A. Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated based on the extent to which they address the following criteria.

1) Water Quality Program Area Emphasis (5 points)	✓	The project will effectively accelerate activities using innovative approaches, methods, technologies, practices, and/or techniques to address reducing and eliminating water pollution.
2) Pesticide Program Area Emphasis (5 points)	✓	(3 pts) The project will effectively result in a transition to using less and lower risk pesticides and increase farmers' adoption of ecologically-based, systems approach using integrated crop, pest, soil, and water management methods.
	✓	(2 pts) Project involves minor and/or specialty crops.
3) Strong Partnerships and Leveraging Funds (15 points)	✓	(7.5 pts) The project demonstrates strong partnerships within the community they will be working in.
	✓	(7.5 pts) The proposal demonstrates support and strong financial partnerships that are currently, recently, or reasonably expected to be funded that EPA funds will supplement.
4) Water Quality Results (15 points)	✓	The project includes and will directly result in on-the-ground activities which will result in chemical, physical and/or biological improvements in water quality in a watershed over the short, intermediate, and/or long term.
5) Watershed Group Readiness (10 points)	✓	The project has an active watershed group ready to complete management techniques to restore watershed(s).
6) Performance Measures (5 points)	✓	The project has explicit and environmentally-based performance measures.
7) Innovation & Cross-media (5 points)	✓	The project is innovative and exhibits the inherent connection of improved water quality and integrated pesticide management with the three EPA Region 7 priorities: critical ecosystems, sensitive populations, and agriculture.
8) Incorporation of Project into Broad Agency Goals (4 points)	✓	(1 pt) The proposal links project objectives with broad agency goals ( <i>e.g., Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) Goals, EPA Strategic Plan</i> ).
	✓	(1 pt) Project clearly couples the work intended to be accomplished under the assistance agreement with EPA's Strategic Plan/GPRA Architecture.
	✓	(1 pt) The project clearly describes how it will achieve clearly defined, measurable results directly related to EPA's Strategic Plan and EPA Region 7 strategic plan (for Region 7 strategic plan see <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/regionplans/region7/2004strategicplanreg7.pdf">http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/regionplans/region7/2004strategicplanreg7.pdf</a> ) (For EPA strategic plan see <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/2003sp.pdf">http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/2003sp.pdf</a> ).
	✓	(1 pt) The project describes how project outcomes link with EPA measures and commitments outlined in EPA's national water program guidance (see

	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/#fy05">http://www.epa.gov/water/waterplan/#fy05</a> ).
9) Clarity of Proposal (16 points)	<p>The Proposal clearly describes and demonstrates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ (2 pts) Clear description of an identified water quality issue and the importance of that issue to meeting federal, state, tribal, and community requirements, expectations, and needs.</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) Summary of key goals, objectives, and final products.</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) Detailed description of project tasks, an explanation of environmental results, and measurable outcomes.</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) How the project will contribute to water quality improvement and transition to using less and lower risk pesticides.</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) Schedule or time-line of activities for the project.</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) Budget and estimated funding amounts for each proposal component/task which corresponds to the SF424A Grant Application form budget categories. Total costs must include both federal and any proposed matching (non-federal) components/ tasks. Identify any proposed cost share or match in the budget.</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) Description of roles and responsibilities of the recipient and major partners in carrying out the project commitments.</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) Demonstration of the ability to conduct and manage the grant or describe the approach to hire or obtain the requisite experience.</li> </ul>
10) Effective Outreach (5 points)	<p>The proposal includes an effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ (2.5 pts) Strategy that will lead to the effective learning and adoption of new practices/ techniques in the watershed and other watersheds; and</li> <li>✓ (2.5 pts) A detailed description for how public participation will be provided for, assisted, and accomplished.</li> </ul>
11) Program Capability (12 points)	<p>The applicant demonstrates its technical ability to successfully carry out the proposed project taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ (2 pts) past performance in successfully completing Federally and/or non-Federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years,</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) history of meeting reporting requirements on prior or current assistance agreements with Federal and/or non-Federal organizations performed within the last 5 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements,</li> <li>✓ (4 pts) past performance in documenting and/or reporting on the progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under Federal and/or non-Federal agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years (and if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not),</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project, and</li> <li>✓ (2 pts) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project).</li> </ul> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under this factor, 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 (the first three items above) will receive a neutral score for those elements of this factor.</p>
12) Environmental Results (3 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The applicant proposes a clear and effective plan for tracking and measuring the progress in achieving expected outputs/ outcomes.</li> </ul>

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

All proposals will be screened by EPA staff for threshold eligibility purposes (see Section 3C) prior to review against the criteria above (see Section 5A). Failure to meet the threshold eligibility criteria will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration.

For those applicants who pass the threshold eligibility criteria, if any of the required elements of the proposal are missing (see Section 4B), EPA will contact the applicant solely to request the missing information. Failure to include or provide this information within two working days after EPA notification will result in disqualification and removal from the selection process. In addition, in accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy of January 11, 2005 (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet or discuss with individual applicants their 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.

A selected panel of EPA reviewers will review the proposals- from those applicants that pass the threshold eligibility review- based on the evaluation criteria listed above (see Section 5A). Both the quality and quantity of the proposals will play a significant role in the selection of grants for funding.

Based upon the review of proposals against the criteria above, the review panel will develop a list of the most highly rated proposals. Funding recommendations will then be made to the EPA Region 7 Regional Administrator from among the most highly rated proposals based upon the following additional factors:

- Agricultural pesticide funds available,
- Geographic distribution of funds,
- Diversity of projects,
- Diversity of watershed size, and
- Cost of project.

Final selection of proposals will be made by the EPA Region 7 Regional Administrator based on the recommendations of the review team and the additional factors listed above.

### **C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

Region 7 anticipates announcing successful proposal(s) within 60 days after the closing date of this announcement. Project award is anticipated no later than 90 days after notifying successful applicants.

## **6. Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Notices**

Applicant(s) will be notified by mail after final decisions have been made. This letter is not

an authorization to begin performance except at the recipient's own risk of EPA approving pre-award costs.

Only successful applicant(s) whose proposals are selected under this program will be invited to submit a complete grant application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10). The formal grant application package will be due by May 26, 2006 or one month after being notified. Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time.

Upon receipt of a complete application, work plan, and budget, the recommendations for funding of the award will be made to the Regional Administrator. When all funding decisions are complete, a grant award notification will be issued to the recipients. This is the conclusion of the competitive award process and begins the grant performance period.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted on the EPA Region 7 website address, [http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7\\_grant\\_opportunities.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm), at the conclusion of the competition.

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

### **Statutory Authority and Applicable Regulations**

The Watershed Improvement Grant projects are authorized under the Clean Water Act (CWA) 104(b)(3) and the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agriculture Initiative and Section 20 of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended. The general award and administration process is governed by regulations at 40 CFR part 30 ("Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations") and 40 CFR part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments") as applicable.

### **Non-Profit Applicants**

Non-profit applicants which are recommended for funding may, depending upon the size of the award, be required to complete and submit an Administrative Capability Form and supporting documents and may be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews in accordance with Sections 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 "EPA Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards."

### **Peer Review**

Most documents or products prepared for and intended for public distribution under EPA Region 7 assistance agreements will be subject to the peer review process. Some products/documents produced under this grant program may be exempted from the peer review process. Assistance agreement applicants should allow an eight-week time period in project schedules for each product which is subject to the peer review process. Concurrent review of multiple project products is possible. Scheduling preliminary submission of draft documents

to the project officer throughout the project period will facilitate the peer review process.

### **Quality Assurance**

If environmental activities include direct measurements or data generation, environmental modeling, or compilation of data from literature or electronic media as part of the funding agreement, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and submission date to EPA for approval will be required unless the organization can show a previously EPA approved Quality Management Plan. No federal funds may be expended or requested for reimbursement for data collection or environmental sampling activities prior to submittal and approval of the Quality Assurance Project Plan to/by the EPA Project Officer.

### **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.

### **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. Additionally, recipients of grants for monitoring projects will be encouraged to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STOrage and RETrieval). STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water quality, biological and other physical data of known quality for use by State environmental agencies, EPA and other Federal agencies, universities, private citizens, and many other organizations. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Applicants may also want to contact their State agency responsible for entering data into the system. Information on STORET is available at <http://www.epa.gov/storet>.

### **Conferences/ Workshops**

If a conference or workshop is an element of the project, the applicant will also be required to answer the following questions:

- Who is initiating the conference/workshop/meeting?
- How will it be advertised?
- Whose logo will be on the agenda and materials?
- What is the percentage of participants, i.e. federal, state, local or public?
- Will the grant recipient prepare the proceedings and disseminate the information back to the targeted community?
- Will program income be generated from this event?

### **Disputes Process**

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26,

2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Robert Bukaty at (913) 551-7846.

### **C. Reporting**

The successful applicant(s) will be required to submit to EPA either electronic or hard copy performance reports, at a frequency required by their grant conditions and/or approved workplan, to illustrate their progress and document any issues or challenges in accordance with 40 CFR 31.40 or 30.51 as applicable and a final report in accordance with 40 CFR 31.41 or 30.51 as applicable. An EPA Project Officer will work with the applicant to achieve the project goals and to provide necessary technical assistance.

## **7. Agency Contacts**

### **For further information contact:**

Jeannette Schafer  
Watershed Improvement Grant Coordinator  
913-551-7297, Telephone  
913-551-7822, Fax  
[schafer.jeannette@epa.gov](mailto:schafer.jeannette@epa.gov)

Robert Bukaty  
R7 Grants Competition Advocate  
913-551-7846, Telephone  
913-551-9846, Fax  
[bukaty.robert@epa.gov](mailto:bukaty.robert@epa.gov)

## APPENDIX A – CHECKLIST TOOL

### Watershed Improvement Grant Proposal Submission Checklist

#### Submission Requirements

- √ Proposal, one original hard copy, delivered to EPA by U.S. Postal Service, hand delivered, courier, or express delivery service on or before 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time, May 11, 2006.  
Submit proposal to:
  - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
  - WWPD/ WPIB
  - ATTN: Watershed Improvement Proposals
  - 901 N 5th Street
  - Kansas City, Kansas 66101
- √ Proposals through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) submitted on or before 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, May 11, 2006.

#### Forms

- √ Completed and signed Standard Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance (Page 2)
- √ Completed Standard Form SF-424A, Budget Information (Page 3-4)

#### Proposal

- √ Cover Page (Page 1) including:
  - a. Project Title,
  - b. Project Coordinator,
  - c. Organization Name and Address,
  - d. Telephone No., Fax No., E-mail Address,
  - e. Project Duration,
  - f. Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code level (HUC) and name of watershed, within which the project occurs),
  - g. Total Funding Requested, EPA Funding Requested,
  - h. Whether project is devoted to agricultural pesticides, and
  - i. Indication whether this is a continuation of a previously EPA funded project. If so, include previous EPA assistance number, budget period and project period.
- √ Executive Summary (Page 5)
- √ Project Narrative (should not exceed 6 pages) including (Page 6-11):
  - a. Project Title
  - b. Detailed itemization of the budget by individual Object Class Categories
  - c. Brief description of Environmental Issue(s) of concern
  - d. Background, Literature Review and Citation List
  - e. Project Objectives
  - f. Plan to track and measure Environmental Results and links to EPA Strategic Plan
  - g. Timetable for accomplishment of tasks, results, and final products
  - h. Brief description of how proposal meets Watershed Improvement Grant priorities
  - i. List of Major Partnerships (financial and community), the watershed group and support letters
  - j. Brief description of Applicant Programmatic Capability