

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Puget Sound Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program**

**Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations in Support of
Implementing the Puget Sound Action Agenda**

2010 Request for Applications

Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

Funding Opportunity Name: Puget Sound Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program

Announcement Type: Request for Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R10-PS-1004

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 66.123

**THIS RFA WAS MODIFIED ON FEBRUARY 22, 2010. PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR
MORE INFORMATION**

SCOPE OF MODIFICATION

Due to the large number of Notices of Intent received for this competition, EPA is modifying the Overview, Important Dates, Section I Funding Opportunity Description, Section II, Award Information, Section IV B Form of Application Submission, Section IV D Submission Dates and Times, Section V B Review and Selection Process and Section VI A Award Administration Information in the RFA in three general areas by:

1. Extending the application deadline by one week, with a **new closing date of March 9, 2010;**
2. Increasing the level of potential funding available for the competition; and
3. Modifying the selection and review process to use multiple review panels.

EPA is not accepting new Notices of Intent to apply for this competition. Unless specifically noted at section headings herein, all other aspects of this RFA remain as originally posted.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY: To allow for efficient management of the competitive process, EPA requests submittal of an informal notice of intent to apply by January 29, 2010.¹ Submission of a notice of intent to apply is optional; it is a process management tool that will allow EPA to better

¹ As noted above, the modifications in this RFA do not extend the deadline for submitting optional Notices of Intent and that period is now closed.

anticipate the total staff time required for efficient review, evaluation, and selection of applications. Please submit the requested notice of intent to apply to EPA using the following email address: pugetsound_proposals@epa.gov

Overview

[Note: Please read carefully, this section was modified February 22, 2010]

U.S. EPA Region 10 is soliciting applications under this announcement for focused scientific studies and technical investigations which will assist with developing, monitoring, evaluating and guiding key implementation strategies of the Puget Sound Action Agenda toward attainment of priority environmental outcomes.

Under this announcement, Federal government agencies and Washington state government agencies are eligible to apply. Also eligible to apply are: public and private institutions of higher education located in the United States; units of local government organized under Washington state law and located within the greater Puget Sound basin; special purpose districts, as defined by Washington State law at R.C.W. 36.93.020, including but not limited to, irrigation districts, and water and sewer districts that are located in or govern land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound basin; conservation districts located in or governing land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound basin.

Watershed planning units formed under RCW 90.82.040 and RCW 90.82.060; local management boards organized under RCW 90.88.030; salmon recovery lead entities organized pursuant to RCW 77.85.050; regional fisheries enhancement groups organized pursuant to RCW 77.95.060 and Marine Resource Committees organized pursuant to RCW 36.125 are eligible to apply if they are located within or their jurisdictions include waters and/or lands within the greater Puget Sound basin.

Intrastate organizations such as associations of cities, counties or conservation districts in the greater Puget Sound basin are also eligible to apply, as are nonprofit nongovernmental entities; federally recognized Indian Tribes located within the greater Puget Sound basin and any authorized consortium of these eligible tribes as described in Section III. For-profit business entities, private individuals, and families are not eligible to apply. However, all of these types of entities could partner with an eligible applicant as appropriate.

The greater Puget Sound basin is defined as all watersheds draining to the U.S. waters of Puget Sound, southern Georgia Basin, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. A map of this area can be found at: [http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/office+of+water/wei09rfp/\\$FILE/puget_sound_basin_map.pdf](http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/office+of+water/wei09rfp/$FILE/puget_sound_basin_map.pdf)

EPA anticipates awarding between thirteen to twenty-four cooperative agreements under this Request for Applications (RFA). Awards will range between **\$200,000** to **\$700,000** in federal funding and have a project period of two to four years. The total amount available for all awards is approximately \$4.5 million dollars through the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, Public Law No:

111-8. An additional \$4.5 million funding for this RFA will be available from the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2010, Public Law 111-88. This brings the total potential funding for this competition to \$9 million dollars. Funds will be awarded under Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3), 33 U.S.C. 1254 et seq. There are no match requirements under this announcement. There are no restrictions on the number of applications from any one entity as long as each one is for a different project and is separately submitted.

Important Dates:

[Note: Please read carefully, this section was modified February 22, 2010]

January 29, 2010	Submittal of a notice of an Intent to Apply
March 9, 2010	Applications must be received in hardcopy or by e-mail by U.S. EPA Region 10 by 4:00 PM Pacific Standard Time.
May 14, 2010	Preliminarily selected applicants notified and requested to negotiate and submit a final application package.
June 01, 2010	Grant applications and final work plans received
July-August, 2010	Awards made.

Other than the March 9, 2010 application submission date, the above dates are estimated and subject to change.

EPA reserves the right to amend this solicitation. Amendments could be administrative (i.e., change of dates or location), technical (i.e., change in requirements), or affect the anticipated funding. EPA will post amendments at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/ECOCOMM.NSF/Puget+Sound/ps10fsscitec> and www.grants.gov. Please check periodically for changes.

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**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Puget Sound Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program**

**Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations in Support of
Implementing the Puget Sound Action Agenda**

**2010 Request for Applications
Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R10-PS-1004**

I. Funding Opportunity Description

[Note: Please read carefully, section I.B. was modified February 22, 2010]

A. Background/Introduction

US Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 (EPA) is ***soliciting applications for scientific studies and technical investigations supporting implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda.***

EPA, Washington State, Tribes, local governments, and nonprofit organizations have partnered for over 20 years to protect and restore Puget Sound through the Clean Water Act (CWA) National Estuary Program (NEP). The Puget Sound Partnership (“Partnership”) has been designated as the lead state agency for the management conference for the Puget Sound NEP under CWA Section 320. The Partnership consists of a Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, Science Panel, Executive Director with staff, and the Foundation for Puget Sound. In 2008, the Partnership published the *Puget Sound Action Agenda*, a strategy to clean up, restore, and protect Puget Sound by 2020. On July 15, 2009, EPA approved the Action Agenda as the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Puget Sound under CWA Section 320 (http://www.psp.wa.gov/aa_action_agenda.php).

The EPA-approved Action Agenda/CCMP for Puget Sound identifies a broad spectrum of strategies and actions needed to protect and restore the Sound and puts forward five priorities:

- Protect intact ecosystem processes, structures, and functions.
- Restore ecosystem processes, structures, and functions.
- Reduce the sources of water pollution.
- Work effectively and efficiently together on priority actions.
- Build an implementation, monitoring, and accountability management system.

The priority of the Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program is to support projects that are likely to achieve quantifiable and scientifically defensible results. Successful applications are expected to clearly support or meaningfully inform implementation of the Puget

Sound Action Agenda. This solicitation also seeks to support implementation of the Action Agenda's 2009-2011 Biennial Science Work Plan for Puget Sound (http://www.psp.wa.gov/downloads/ACTION_AGENDA_2008/BSWP_1Dec2008_as_submitted.pdf) which identifies some of the high-priority science activities needed to guide, effectively implement, evaluate, and track the progression of the Action Agenda toward achievement of specific protection and restoration goals.

The funding for this competition was appropriated in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, Public Law No: 111-8. Additional funds from the EPA's 2010 appropriation, the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2010, Public Law 111-88 may be obligated to this program if legally appropriate and consistent with agency policy.

The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be funded under this announcement is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. CWA Section 104(b)(3) restricts the use of these assistance agreements to the following: 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. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

B. Objectives

The scientific studies and technical investigations sought through this RFA will support some of the key science activities needed to advance work and progress toward identified goals, objectives and priorities of the Action Agenda by assisting with the:

- Development of monitoring approaches, information and/or analyses which support the understanding and communication of ecosystem conditions, status, and rates of change.
- Refinement of strategic threat reduction targets and recommendations and for the development and identification of technically achievable environmental outcomes by topical objective, geography, local ecosystem, or ecosystem component.
- Development of science-based recommendations for refining and prioritizing implementation strategies and activities by topical objective, geography, local ecosystem, or ecosystem component.
- Refinement of implementation '*results chains*' (http://www.psp.wa.gov/PM_sos2009.php) for linking implementation activities, refining threat reduction targets, and identifying appropriate benchmarks and environmental targets by topical objective, geography, local ecosystem, or ecosystem component.

Key science based program strategies for Puget Sound identified in the 2009-2011 Puget Sound Biennial Science Work Plan include:

- Improving the application of science to support priority ecosystem protection and restoration strategies and outcomes.
- Enhancing collaborative monitoring, modeling, assessment and applied research capacities.

- Using science support and technical studies to improve the effectiveness of both local and regional management activities and initiatives;
- Conducting baseline studies and ecosystem monitoring activities to demonstrate measurable environmental changes and/or trends in condition.
- Developing models and conducting analyses in support of the adaptive management of regulatory or program implementation decisions.

This solicitation encourages multifaceted projects that support identification and achievement of priority environmental outcomes or threat reduction targets affecting the greater Puget Sound basin including but not limited to:

- Reducing pathogen pollution and protecting and restoring water quality in shellfish growing areas, recreational waters, and beaches.
- Remediating contaminated sites or preventing sources of toxic pollution.
- Protecting and recovering the productivity of species, ecological communities, or food webs.
- Restoring or protecting important watersheds, wetlands, floodplains and nearshore habitats.
- Reducing nutrient loads to both freshwaters and sensitive marine waters
- Reducing air emissions which affect human health or contaminate aquatic ecosystems

In light of the objectives described above, applications submitted under this RFA should address the following items:

- Demonstrate how the proposed scientific studies and technical investigations support priority Puget Sound ecosystem protection and restoration goals.
- Match proposed studies and investigations to the appropriate scale and context to ensure that activities will lead to an environmental result in Puget Sound.
- Provide strategically valuable analytical tools, information and/or technical approaches that will enable and catalyze measurable outcomes in Puget Sound.
- Help to fill critical program implementation needs leading to significant environmental results in Puget Sound.
- Produce scientifically defensible products in support of major Puget Sound initiatives and planning and regulatory decisions.
- Promote adaptive management approaches by providing information, analysis and objective guidance to programs and policies seeking to protect and restore Puget Sound.

As discussed in Section V.B of this RFA, EPA expects to convene between six to eight review panels organized by the subject matter of the proposals received and consistent with the objectives and types of outcomes described above.

C. Eligible Activities

A wide range of studies and investigations will be eligible for funding under this RFA. Eligible project activities could include:

- Analyzing existing and emerging information with best available tools.

- Supporting integrated environmental monitoring program development to improve environmental management at focused and relevant scales.
- Developing a better understanding of the how the physical, chemical and biological processes of the Puget Sound ecosystem are affected by priority threats, environmental management approaches, and population growth.
- Using integrated conceptual frameworks and/or logic chains to refine indicators, assess risks, and evaluate strategies in order to help integrate marine, nearshore, and terrestrial ecosystem protection efforts.
- Conducting key scientific investigations that address critical questions and support priority environmental outcomes.
- Designing and implementing adaptive management approaches for watershed and nearshore restoration efforts.
- Designing, piloting and supporting watershed-wide pollutant loading and effects studies associated with surface water runoff or other sources of pollution.
- Identifying and evaluating key stressors affecting the Puget Sound pelagic food web with the potential to affect forage fish restoration.
- Identifying, evaluating and developing key ecosystem service and socioeconomic indicators.
- Synthesizing, integrating, and communicating the current best available science and technical information to relevant management forums and the public.
- Assessing, focusing and directing coordinated corrective actions to improve water quality in areas such as where beach water quality advisories, shellfish bed closures, or harvest area downgrades are occurring or are likely to occur.
- Improving our understanding of the impacts of stormwater runoff on aquatic resources and the effectiveness of different management practices and policies.
- Testing and developing tools and techniques to reduce pollutant loadings and habitat destruction from stormwater.
- Identifying, assessing, quantifying and evaluating priority toxic contaminants from terrestrial, atmospheric, and marine discharge sources.
- Identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, and demonstrating source control actions for nutrients and toxics.
- Providing technical support for developing, monitoring, and evaluating system scale habitat protection and restoration strategies and actions.
- Evaluating current conditions and ongoing habitat loss at key scales to determine net changes in extent and function of riparian, wetland, floodplain and estuary habitats.
- Identifying, developing and testing fiscal, regulatory, or other types of incentives to help protect and restore watershed processes and ecosystem functions.

In all relevant projects and activities, EPA strongly encourages applicants to factor in the consideration of the impacts associated with **climate change**. EPA recognizes that addressing climate change is broad and multifaceted and may include consideration of extended timeframes, different rates of change and the need to incorporate regional data and projections into more localized applications. In the context of this solicitation, climate change information could be incorporated as a direct consideration affecting specific threats, trends, conditions, projections

and/or the likely effectiveness of proposed protection and restoration programs and activities. Climate change could also be considered as it affects the resilience, supporting processes, or capacity of the ecosystem to provide sustained resources and environmental services to local communities and environments.

Examples of selected technical studies and investigations eligible under this RFA that could address climate change implications include:

- Identification of wetland and flood plain protection and restoration projects or approaches that increase natural water storage and enhance resiliency of natural systems during high flow events.
- Identification, monitoring, and evaluation of enhanced stormwater practices to increase natural retention and protection of groundwater quality and quantity.
- Identification of potential indicators and monitoring approaches for tracking changes in food webs, habitats, community composition, or productivity.

EPA's Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

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

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plans

By assisting implementation efforts of the Puget Sound Action Agenda, the Puget Sound Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program helps implement goals in EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. (<http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>) The program seeks to improve and restore water quality, habitat and beneficial uses on a watershed basis and facilitates ecosystem-scale protection and restoration approaches. Relevant goals and objectives identified in the 2006-2011 EPA Region 10 Strategy are:

- Protecting and Restoring Watersheds.
 - Washington State has established a goal of restoring Puget Sound to a healthy state by 2020. To assist the State in attaining this goal, Region 10 will work with our state, federal and tribal partners to accomplish the following by 2011:
 - Improve water quality and enable the lifting of shellfish harvest restrictions on 1000 acres of shellfish beds
 - Remediate 200 acres of contaminated sediments
 - Restore 3,500 acres of nearshore wetlands

Relevant goals in EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan include:

- Goal 2 - Clean and Safe Water
 - Objective 2.1 Protect Human Health
 - Sub-objective 2.1.2 Fish and Shellfish Safe to Eat
 - Objective 2.2 Protect Water Quality
 - Sub-objective 2.2.1 Protect and Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis
- Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems
 - Objective 4.2 Communities
 - Sub-objective 4.2.1 Sustain Community Health
 - Sub-objective 4.2.2 Restore Community Health Through Collaborative Problem-Solving
 - Objective 4.3 Restore and Protect Critical Ecosystems
 - Sub-objective 4.3.1 Increase Wetlands
 - Sub-objective 4.2.3 Facilitate the Ecosystem-Scale Restoration of Estuaries of National Significance
 - Sub-objective 4.3.8 Restore and Protect the Puget Sound Basin
- Goal 5 – Compliance and Environmental Stewardship
 - Objective 5.3 Improve Human Health and the Environment in Indian Country

These documents are available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm> and <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/EXTAFF.NSF/Reports/2007-2011+Region+10+Strategy>, respectively.

2. Outputs and Outcomes

The priority of the Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program is to support projects that are likely to achieve quantifiable and scientifically defensible results. Successful applications are expected to clearly support or meaningfully inform implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Proposed activities must be linked to environmental results and demonstrate their respective contributions. Applicants must include specific statements describing how the proposed activities will support environmental results in terms of well-defined **outputs** and **outcomes**.

The term "output" means an activity, effort, or associated work product that will be produced within the timeframe of the grant or by a specific date. Outputs can be on-the-ground environmental improvements or behavioral, health-related, or programmatic milestones. An example of a programmatic "output" could be increasing the availability and relevance of ecosystem information to decision-makers who write and implement laws, ordinances, and permits and create institutional changes.

The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out a program or activity. Outcomes may be short-term (i.e., changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skill), intermediate (i.e., changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (i.e., changes in condition of natural resources). Outcomes may not always be measured

by environmental or water quality indicators but by institutional indicators such as the adoption and application of laws and regulations or improved management of environmental programs. We encourage you to try to predict the outcomes in terms of an environmental benefit or reduced risk to a watershed as a result of implementing the law, regulation, or program.

Examples of Outputs and Outcomes:

Outputs and outcomes may be challenging to articulate. Below are some specific examples of expected outputs and outcomes that may be achieved under the awards to be made under this RFA:

Expected outputs might include:

- New scientific information supporting, and capable of guiding or evaluating, implementation programs, policies, or practices to protect the waters and resources of Puget Sound.
- Technical and scientific reports providing needed information to address key areas of uncertainty or otherwise necessary to support adaptive management approaches.
- New monitoring or sampling data gathered to address key gaps in scientific understanding of the Puget Sound ecosystem and how Puget Sound is influenced by specific management actions and programs.
- Problem-solving analysis, critical evaluations, or synthesis of historic and recently collected information to address key gaps in the scientific understanding of the Puget Sound ecosystem – how it has trended over time, how will it look in the future, and how actions affect the ecosystem.
- Baseline ecosystem or water quality monitoring data that indicate measurable and scientifically defensible environmental improvement.
- Studies and information that enhance community participation and awareness of management issues affecting Puget Sound.
- Studies that evaluate, guide, and improve the restoration and protection of watersheds, wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains or nearshore aquatic habitats.

Outcomes expected as a result of the awards under this RFA could include:

- Protecting and restoring the functions and productivity of local ecosystems.
- Reducing stormwater pollutant loadings through innovative treatment practices.
- Providing technical information and/or assistance that results in the protection or reduction of risk to specific high quality waters, delisting of streams identified under Clean Water Act §303(d), or increased recreational, subsistence, or other beneficial uses of specific water bodies.
- Protecting or restoring local ecosystems and food webs by reducing sources of toxics and nutrients

Additional information regarding environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/regulations.htm>. Scroll down to [Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements \[EPA Order 5700.7\]](#)

3. Logic Models

One way of organizing scientific/technical activities that facilitates their application to implementation activities and programs is through the use of logic models, which in general terms are also known as results chains. To ensure that applications support implementation of both the Puget Sound Action Agenda and EPA's national strategic plan objectives, **we require that you include a logic model with your application.** A logic model summarizes the major elements of your project, and connects strategic objectives to your proposed resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

Logic models and results chains are tools to be used to build better projects and programs. Accordingly, logic models come in many forms and shapes, from simple storylines that link various actions into strategies and work programs to more complex system diagrams. For a straight forward implementation project, perhaps the logic model is as simple as clearly documenting the history and basis for a particular project in a particular place to achieve a particular result. For a project with many tasks, work processes, timelines and partners, a more detailed approach may be more helpful.

In this RFA, we encourage the research community to work from the concept of logic models, or 'Results Chains' as described by the Puget Sound Partnership (http://www.psp.wa.gov/PM_sos2009.php) using an Open Standards approach. With whatever logic model format you choose, please explain how the proposed work addresses the largest uncertainties or tests key hypotheses identified or embedded in the logic models. We also encourage the identification of ecosystem endpoints or indicators that would be affected or supported by the products and information from the proposed investigation. **(See Appendix A for information on logic models, results chains and additional information sources).**

II. Award Information

[Note: Please read carefully, section II. was modified February 22, 2010]

The total amount expected to be awarded under this announcement is approximately \$9 million of Federal Fiscal Year 2009 and 2010 funds for approximately thirteen to twenty-four cooperative agreements. Awards will range between \$200,000 to \$700,000 in federal dollars and have a two to four year project period. Applications **that request an amount in excess of \$700,000 in federal funds will not be considered for funding.** An eligible entity may submit multiple applications under this RFA if each one is for a different project and is separately submitted. There is no limit on the number of applications an entity can submit.

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

Cooperative Agreements and Interagency Agreements: Selected recipients will enter into funding agreements with EPA (see Section VII). The Puget Sound Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program will fund cooperative agreements. The cooperative agreements will be awarded under the relevant Appropriations Act and/or Clean Water Act, Title III, Section 104(b)(3), as amended, Public Law 94-117 and Public Law 106-457, 33 U.S.C. 1330 et seq.

Cooperative agreements, as opposed to grants, permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the applicant in the work supported by the agreement. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of “substantial involvement” as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance, collaboration during the performance of the scope of work, in accordance with 40 CFR Part 31.36(g), review of proposed procurements, reviewing qualifications of key personnel, and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

If another federal agency is a successful applicant, the EPA will negotiate an Interagency Agreement with that agency pursuant to the EPA's cooperation authority under section 104(b)(2) of the Clean Water Act and the other agency's corresponding cooperation authority.

Fewer Awards: EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this solicitation, award less than the full amount of funds available, or make fewer awards than expected.

Additional Awards: EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections must be made within 6 months of the original selection decisions.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants under this RFA include:

- Federal government agencies and Washington state government agencies.
- Public and private institutions of higher education located in the United States.

- Units of local government organized under Washington state law and located within the Greater Puget Sound basin.
- Special purpose districts, as defined by Washington State law at R.C.W. 36.93.020, including but not limited to, irrigation districts, and water and sewer districts that are located in or govern land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound basin; and conservation districts located in or governing land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound Basin.
- Watershed planning units formed under RCW 90.82.040 and RCW 90.82.060, local management boards organized under RCW 90.88.030, salmon recovery lead entities organized pursuant to RCW 77.85.050, regional fisheries enhancement groups organized pursuant to RCW 77.95.060 and Marine Resource Committees organized pursuant to RCW 36.125 if they are located within or their jurisdictions include waters and/or lands within the greater Puget Sound basin.
- Intrastate organizations such as associations of cities, counties or conservation districts in the Greater Puget Sound Basin.
- Nonprofit non-governmental entities.
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes located within the greater Puget Sound basin and any consortium of these eligible tribes.

An Intertribal consortium must have adequate documentation of the existence of the partnership and the authorization of the member Tribes to apply for and receive assistance. Documentation that demonstrates the existence of the partnership of Indian Tribal governments may consist of Tribal council resolutions, Intertribal consortia resolutions in conjunction with a Tribal council resolution from each member Tribe, or other written certification from a duly authorized representative of each Tribal government that clearly demonstrates that a partnership of Indian Tribal governments exists. Documentation that demonstrates that member Tribes authorize the consortium to apply for and receive assistance may consist of a Tribal council resolution from each Tribe or other written certification from a duly authorized representative of each Tribal government that clearly demonstrates that the Tribe authorizes the consortium to apply for and receive the grant on behalf of the Tribe. An Intertribal consortium resolution is not adequate documentation of the member Tribes authorization of the consortium unless it includes a written certification from a duly authorized representative of each Tribal government.

For-profit business entities, private individuals, and families are not eligible to apply. However, all of these types of entities could partner with an eligible applicant as appropriate.

The greater Puget Sound basin is defined as all watersheds draining to the U.S. waters of Puget Sound, southern Georgia Basin, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. A map of this area can be found at: [http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/office+of+water/wei09rfp/\\$FILE/puget_sound_basin_map.pdf](http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/office+of+water/wei09rfp/$FILE/puget_sound_basin_map.pdf)

B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirement

There is no match requirement associated with this RFA.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Below are requirements which if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of your application from consideration for funding. Only applications that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V.A. Applicants whose applications are deemed ineligible as a result of the threshold review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

- 1) **Eligible Applicant:** Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements as described in Section III. A. Eligible Applicants.

- 2) **Submission Form and Content:**
 - a. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the narrative proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

 - b. In addition, applications must be received by the EPA as specified in Section IV of this announcement on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

 - c. Applications received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems attributable to EPA systems. Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with the contact person identified in Section IV. B.2. as soon as possible after the submission deadline

- 3) **International Proposals:** Projects with international work plan elements must directly and primarily benefit U.S. waters, resources, or policy interests to restore and protect the greater Puget Sound ecosystem.

- 4) Applications must be for projects that improve water quality 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. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

5) **Funding Prohibition:** Most of the awards under this RFA are anticipated to be appropriated from the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, Public Law 111-8. However, if any additional funds are made available through the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2010, Public Law 111-88, then the following funding prohibition applies.

Congress has prohibited the use of federal funds to award grants to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) or any of its subsidiaries and therefore in order to be eligible for funding consideration under this competition all applicants must affirmatively indicate in their application that they are not subject to this prohibition. In addition, since this funding prohibition applies to subawards/subgrants and contracts awarded by grantees, applicants must consider it when preparing applications.

D. Funding Restrictions

Activities regulated under the CWA are not eligible for funding under this solicitation. Required activities under NPDES Phase I and II stormwater permits will not be funded. To ensure activities proposed for funding are not required in a permit, applicants proposing stormwater-related activities in Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) areas must include a statement documenting that the work proposed for funding is not required under a stormwater discharge permit.

IV. Application and Submission Information

[Note: Please read carefully, sections IV.B. and IV.D were modified February 22, 2010]

A. Requesting an Application Package

Grant application forms are available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm> or <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/omp.nsf/webpage/Region+10+Grants:+Application+Forms+-+Required+and+Optional>). You can also submit an email request for copies of the forms to Daniel Steinborn at Steinborn.Daniel@epa.gov. See the required list of forms under Section IV.C.

B. Form of Application Submission

Applicants must submit application packages using one of the two methods outlined below. You must include the information in Section IV.C regardless of the method you choose.

1. Electronic Submission: Electronic submissions must be e-mailed to pugetsound_proposals@epa.gov and be received by the deadline stated in Section IV.D of this announcement. All required documents listed in Section IV. C must be attached to the e-mail.

Please Note: If you choose to submit your materials via e-mail, you are accepting all risks associated with e-mail submission including server delays and transmission difficulties. E-mail submissions exceeding 15 megabytes (MB) will experience transmission delays as they are automatically treated as low priority and will not be delivered until after 6:30 P.M. PST. E-mail submissions larger than approximately 60 MB are automatically rejected by the EPA mail server. If your application approaches this size, you should divide it between two e-mail messages to the

address specified, above. For these size submissions, submit them by e-mail at least two days before the due date to account for server delays at both the sender's mail server and the EPA mail server. Applicants submitting their application materials through e-mail to the designated e-mail address, above, should receive an "out of office" reply that acknowledges delivery of your application within a few hours of sending the application. If you do not receive such an acknowledgement, you should call Daniel Steinborn at (206) 553-2728 to confirm receipt by the EPA. Alternatively (as noted below), large application packages may be submitted in hard copy by postal mail, express delivery service or in person.

2. **Hard Copy:** Two hard copies of the complete application package, as described in Section IV.C, may be mailed, delivered by express mail, or hand delivered to the address below. If providing hard copies, please include color images of any maps, figures or graphics intended to be viewed in color. Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: Daniel Steinborn, Puget Sound Science and Technical Investigations Assistance Program.**

Daniel Steinborn, PS WMA Program
U.S. EPA Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900 (ETPA-086)
Seattle, Washington 98101

Hardcopy application packages must be received by Daniel Steinborn through standard mail courier, hand-delivery, or by express delivery service by **4:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time, Tuesday, March 9, 2010.** If hand delivering, please deliver to the EPA's first floor mail room by the loading dock by 4:00 p.m.

C. Content of Application Package Submission

All application submissions, regardless of the type of submission, must contain the completed and signed original grant application forms, as well as a narrative proposal, as described below.

1. **Required Grant Application Forms:** Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email address in Block 9 of the Standard Form SF 424. The forms are available at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/omp.nsf/webpage/Region+10+Grants:+Application+Forms+-+Required+and+Optional> or <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>

- Signed Standard Form 424 (Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email address in block 5 of the Standard Form 424.)
- Standard Form 424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs.
Provide a detailed breakdown of cost by category on the SF 424A. Project costs include grant administration costs. When formulating budgets for applications, you may not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant's cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. See Section IV F for more information on restrictions on management fees and similar charges.

- Standard Form 424B Assurance, Non-Construction Programs.
- Certification Regarding Lobbying.
- Standard Form LLL, Pre-Award Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if EPA funding totals over \$100,000 and your organization is or will be conducting lobbying activities.
- EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Financial Assistance.
- EPA Form 5700-54, Key Contacts Form (optional, but helpful for EPA staff).

2. Narrative proposal- The narrative proposal, including the cover page and project narrative as described below, must not exceed 12 single spaced letter sized pages and should use no less than 12-point font. Pages in excess of 12 pages will not be reviewed. All narrative proposal materials (except as noted below) including the cover page, project narrative, tables, timeline, charts, graphs, and pictures must be included within the page limit. Narrative proposals should contain the components listed below:

Cover Page. The cover page should include:

- a. The title of the proposed science study or technical investigation
- b. Contact information of Principal Investigator: name, affiliation, address, telephone, and e-mail of the contact person.
- c. Abstract: Provide a proposal summary of no longer than 150 words. Include a description of the need, the proposed work, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.
- d. Briefly indicate how you found out about this RFA.
- e. Amount of federal funds requested.
- f. DUNS number-See Section VI.
- g. ACORN Restriction. Indicate that you are not a subsidiary of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN).

Project Narrative. Applicants should ensure that the narrative addresses all of the evaluation factors in Section V.A. The narrative should include the following sections:

Summary for the Proposed Investigation or Technical Study: Briefly describe the management or resource protection questions that the investigation is aiming to address,

the basic study design and major elements or tasks involved, and the relevance to the ecosystem, ecosystem component, local watershed or management sector. Relate the proposed work to priorities discussed in the Puget Sound Action Agenda or Biennial Science Plan (see psp.wa.gov/aa_action_agenda.php) or the EPA objectives and goals stated in Section I. of this RFA.

Project Components: Describe in some detail the tasks and activities associated with each major project component. Also describe the extent to which the proposed project components demonstrate an interconnected effort, or are part of a larger interconnected effort, to help guide, monitor, assess, or improve the effectiveness of efforts to implement the Puget Sound Action Agenda, Biennial Science Plan, or local implementation plans towards critical outputs and environmental outcomes.

Also address the degree to which the project uses or promotes adaptive management to improve the effectiveness of existing plans and programs as new information is developed. Include milestones and timelines for accomplishing identified tasks and activities.

Environmental Significance: Describe, using a conceptual ecosystem model, the significance of the affected environment, significance of threats and emerging problems, and relevance of proposed work to related ecosystem management endpoints, showing which threats and stressors the proposed work addresses. Describe key assumptions or hypotheses the proposed work tests.

Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes: Include specific statements demonstrating a connection between outputs from the project and priority outcomes for the identified ecosystem or watershed. Describe why the proposed activities will be effective at achieving or contributing to environmental results.

Monitoring and Measuring: Describe the methods for tracking and measuring your progress towards achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes including those identified in Section 1. Consider such factors as baseline, natural variability, environmental targets, and contingencies if you are proposing an adaptive management approach. Monitoring does not need to be paid for under this grant, however, monitoring or other evaluation methods should be discussed in the application.

Innovation: Describe how the project uses unique, creative or novel approaches to studying, demonstrating or integrating science into environmental protection or restoration efforts or a unique and novel approach within a specific geography.

Collaboration: Describe who your partners will be. Discuss how you will engage policy makers, elected officials, the public, partners, knowledgeable scientists, and other stakeholders in making the project successful.

Outreach and Information Transfer: Describe the outreach component, the strategy for disseminating results, and lessons learned among plan and program implementers including state and local government programs, watershed organizations, or others with similar implementation roles and challenges. Describe how the project will promote and actively conduct technology transfer or provide technical assistance that improves knowledge of targeted ecosystems and our ability to protect these ecosystems to scientists, decision makers, and the public.

Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Submit a list of no more than five federally funded, non-federally funded or self-financed assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement but not a contract) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last five years and describe:

- a. Whether and how you were able to successfully complete and manage the agreements.
- b. Your history of meeting the reporting requirements under the agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

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

In addition, provide the following information:

- a. Your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project.
- b. Your staff expertise, qualifications, or knowledge, and the resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project.

Please also attach the following documents to the narrative proposal which do not count towards the narrative proposal page limit:

- a. **Map(s)**. A map of the proposed work areas or areas affected must accompany the application.

b. Detailed Budget. In the detailed budget, provide a detailed breakdown and explanation of costs by the budget categories in the SF 424A. Description of costs should correspond to amounts presented in the SF 424A. A sample format for Detailed Budget is available at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/omp.nsf/webpage/Region+10+Grants:+Work+Plans+and+Budgets>. When formulating budgets, see Section IV F for more information on restrictions on management fees and similar charges.

c. Logic Model: Activities, outputs, and outcomes should be summarized in the form of a logic model. Please see Appendix A for more information and logic model examples.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due by **Tuesday, March 9, 2010, 4:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time (PST)**. **Applications** not received by this date and time will not be considered for funding.

E. Pre-proposal/Application Assistance and Communications

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. You are responsible for the contents of your applications. However, we will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. You may find additional information in our "Frequently Asked Questions" document at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/ECOCOMM.NSF/Puget+Sound/ps10fsscitec>

F. Management Fees

When formulating budgets for applications, you must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant's 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 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 proposed, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

G. Partnerships, Contractors and Subawards

Subgrants or contracts to third parties may be awarded under the cooperative agreements resulting from this solicitation as appropriate and according to proper procedures. Applications containing a subaward project or process (also called mini-grants) are also eligible for funding consideration. Below are two questions and corresponding answers on subawards and contracts to further explain the differences, limitations, and relevant regulations:

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 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. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the application solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

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

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

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

- An applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR

Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for-profit firms or individual consultants.

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

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

G. Confidential Business Information

In accordance with 40 CFR Part 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application package as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidential claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications or portions that 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 Part 2.204 (c)(2) prior to disclosure. However, competitive applications are considered confidential and protected from disclosure prior to the completion of the competitive selection process. Note: Under Public Law No. 105-277, data produced under an award is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

V. Application Review Information

[Note: Please read carefully, section V.B. was modified February 22, 2010]

A. Evaluation Criteria

All eligible applications based on the Section III threshold eligibility review will be evaluated on the following criteria and weights below. Points will be awarded based on how well each evaluation criterion and sub-criterion is addressed. Weight is based on a 100 point scale.

**20
Points**

1. Quality of Application. Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the described project(s) is part of a multifaceted program and reflects an ecosystem-based approach to protection and restoration of key habitats and processes. Reviewers will evaluate whether the proposed approach is technically/scientifically sound, and if the methods are appropriate to the specific tasks and proposed scales. Reviewers will focus on the following elements:

a) Clarity of the Management or Resource Protection Questions. The quality of the basic study design and major tasks involved, and the overall relevance of the project to the ecosystem, ecosystem component, local watershed or management sector will be evaluated. In addition, the application will be evaluated based on the project's relationship between the proposed work to priorities discussed in the Puget Sound Action Agenda, Biennial Science Plan, and the EPA goals/objectives identified in Section I of this RFA. (7 points)

(b) Technical Merit and Feasibility. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a command of relevant peer reviewed literature, provides a clear conceptual model of the system, and clearly shows the pathways and hypotheses within the conceptual model that the proposed work will be testing or exploring. Reviewers will look at the level of project development such as clarity of application elements and tasks, the readiness to proceed, overall technical merit of the proposed work, and the extent to which the project is part of an integrated effort to show environmental results. (7 points)

(c) Multi-faceted Program. The extent to which the application encompasses, or is part of, a comprehensive program, the context of the project and other supporting or related work, and whether it reflects a watershed or ecosystem-based approach to protection and restoration efforts. (6 points)

<p>20 points</p>	<p>2. Environmental Significance. Applications will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate:</p> <p>(a) Significance of Affected Environment. Clear identification of the targeted ecosystem or the significance or value of the system and the resources affected by the proposed work. (5 points)</p> <p>(b) Significance of Threats and Emerging Problems. Documentation of the threat of problems or emerging problems that are addressed by the project. (5 points)</p> <p>(c) Relevance of Project to Priorities. How the project will help solve or avoid environmental problems and addresses Puget Sound Action Agenda priorities, strategies, and goals, leading questions in the Puget Sound Science Plan and/or local implementation plans. (5 points)</p> <p>(d) Interrelated Projects. The extent to which the proposed project components demonstrate an interconnected effort, or are part of a larger interconnected effort, to help guide, monitor, assess, or improve the effectiveness of efforts to implement the Puget Sound Action Agenda, Biennial Science Plan, or local implementation plans towards critical outputs and environmental outcomes. (5 points)</p>
<p>20 Points</p>	<p>Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes. Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they clearly articulate and include a set of performance measures and progress milestones including,.</p> <p>(a) Outputs and Outcomes. The extent to which the application identifies and demonstrates a connection between project outputs and priority outcomes for the identified ecosystem or watershed. Scores will be based on the scientific defensibility and relevance of the proposed tasks to key milestones and identified outcomes. (10 points)</p> <p>(b) Measuring and Monitoring. The extent to which the applicant describes a clear and scientifically defensible plan for tracking and measuring their progress towards achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes including those identified in Section 1 (10 points)</p>

<p>10 points</p>	<p>Innovation. Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they describe unique, creative or novel approaches to studying, demonstrating or integrating science into environmental protection or restoration efforts or a unique and novel approach within a specific geography. Emphasis will be placed on how well the applicant demonstrates a thoughtful and strategic approach to problem-solving including, but not limited to, the application of best available science, or connecting science and policy and communicating results. (10 points)</p>
<p>10 Points</p>	<p>Partnerships and Information Transfer. Applications will be evaluated based on:</p> <p>(a) How well they <u>demonstrate and substantiate strong collaborative partnerships</u> and document effective working relationships among knowledgeable scientists and technical staff, state, tribal, local entities, and appropriate sector-based or community involvement. Scores will be based on the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate strong and diverse partnerships necessary for completing the investigation, translating and transferring results to appropriate audiences, and developing implementation recommendations. (5 points)</p> <p>(b) Proposed outreach and information transfer, including the design and breadth of the outreach and technical transfer components. The score will be based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear strategy for organizing and transferring the knowledge and experience garnered to people, programs, management sectors, organizations, geographic areas, or watersheds in need of the resulting information for decision making purposes at relevant implementation scales. (5 points)</p>
<p>10 Points</p>	<p>Budget and Financial Integrity. Applications will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the budget information and whether it is reasonable and clearly presented and provides a good return on the investment. (10 points)</p>
<p>10 points</p>	<p>Past Performance and Programmatic Capability. Applications will be evaluated based on the applicant’s ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:</p> <p>(a) Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C. (3 points)</p> <p>(b) History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements (If progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not). (3 points)</p>

(c) Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. (2 points)

(d) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (2 points)

Note: In evaluating applicants under items (a) and (b) of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the narrative proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these sub factors (items a. and b-. a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of zero for these factors.

B. Review and Selection Process

All applications received by EPA by the March 9, 2010 deadline will be evaluated against the threshold criteria listed in Section III. Applications that do not pass the threshold review will not be considered further for funding and the applicant will be notified.

All eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by one of six to eight review panels organized by the general subject matter of the proposals received. The specific number of review panels is dependent on the type and number of proposals received. Proposals that address more than one subject matter area will be grouped with the review panel that most closely matches the content and emphasis of the proposal. Review panels will consist of EPA staff with topical expertise using the evaluation criteria outlined in Section V.A. Based on the scores from the review, each review panel will develop a ranked list of the applications and preliminary funding recommendations which will be provided to the approving officials. Final funding decisions will be made by the Approving Officials (Directors of the U.S. EPA Region 10 Office of Water and Watersheds and the Office of Ecosystems, Tribal and Public Affairs) based on the preliminary recommendations and each ranked list from each review team. In making the final funding decisions based on each ranked list, the Approving Official may also consider the diversity of projects in terms of scope of work and/or geography, and the balance of funds available.

VI. Award Administration Information

[Note: Please read carefully, section VI. A. was modified February 22, 2010]

A. Award Notices

EPA expects to announce selections by May 14, 2010. A list of successful applications will be posted on EPA Region 10's website at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/ECOCOMM.NSF/Puget+Sound/ps10fsscitec> at the end of the competition. All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by mail.

EPA anticipates notification to the successful applicant will be made via telephone, email, or postal mail by May 14, 2010. The notification will advise the applicant that its proposed project has been successfully evaluated and recommended for award. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

This notification, which advises that the applicant's proposed project has been recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. As a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of recommendation.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The general award and administration process for Puget Sound Scientific Studies and Technical Investigations Assistance Program grants is governed by regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 31 "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments" and includes Indian Tribal Governments, and 40.C.F.R. Part 30 "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations".

Nonprofit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement may be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Sections 8.b, 8.c, and 9.d of EPA Order 5700.8, 'EPA Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards' which can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf. Nonprofit applicants that qualify for funding, depending on the size of the award, may be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capability Form, with supporting documents, contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

If a local government does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments." The local government recipient whose cognizant Federal agency has been designated by OMB must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal for approval to its cognizant Federal agency within six (6) months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant Federal agency has not been identified by the OMB, the local government recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period.

In circumstances in which another federal agency is the successful applicant, the EPA will negotiate an Interagency Agreement with that agency pursuant to the EPA's cooperation authority under

section 104(b)(2) of the Clean Water Act and the other agency's corresponding cooperation authority.

C. DUNS Number

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

D. Reporting

Project monitoring and reporting requirements can be found in 40 CFR Part 30.50-30.52, 40 CFR Part 31.40-31.41. In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements and to ensure that milestones and performance goals are achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted semiannually and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The format for the reports will be identified during the grant application process and includes reporting on performance measures such as goals, outputs, and outcomes. A final report is due 90 days after the cooperative agreement expires.

E. Dispute Resolution Process

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 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 from Daniel Steinborn at Steinborn.Daniel@epa.gov.

F. Restrictions on Use of Grant Funds

Fund-Raising/Lobbying Restriction: EPA policy and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circular state that any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for fund-raising, or political activities such as lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. EPA grant funds may be used only for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award.

Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal grants, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity.

G. Allowable Costs

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable Code of Federal Regulations (formerly OMB Cost Circular): 2 CFR Part 225 (formerly A-87). (See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>)

VII. Agency Contact

For additional information, please contact:

Daniel Steinborn
US EPA Region 10
1200 6th Ave. Suite 900 (ETPA 086)
Seattle, Washington 98101

Telephone: 206-553-2728
Email: Steinborn.Daniel@epa.gov

VIII. Other Information

A. Quality Assurance and Quality Control

All projects collecting environmental data will require a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). Certain quality assurance and/or quality control (QA/QC) and peer review requirements are applicable to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or condition, ecological or health effects and consequences, or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data also include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and obtained from other sources such as data bases or published literature. Regulations pertaining to QA/QC requirements can be found in 40 CFR Parts 30.54 and 31.45. Additional guidance can be found at http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html#noeparqt.

Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for development and approval of a QAPP in their proposed projects. If your organization does not have a Quality Management System in place, one must be developed. For successful applications, a project specific QAPP must be submitted and approved by EPA, before sampling is scheduled to begin. Allow about one month for approval in your timeline.

B. Allowance for Collection of Geospatial Information

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

This information may be derived from, among other things, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), remote sensing, mapping, charting, and surveying technologies, or statistical data. For purposes of EPA grants, this refers to geographically based information or

data or the tools, applications or hardware that allow one to collect, manage, analyze, store, or distribute data in a geographic manner.

C. Data Access and Information Release

The 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 40 CFR Part 30.36(d)(1).

D. Assistance Agreement Terms and Conditions

1. Annual Grantee Conference: The grantee may attend related regional or national conferences. The purpose of these conferences is to provide organizations with training and support to refine funded work or to better understand how the respective technical study or scientific investigation assists or improves efforts to restore, protect, or better manage the watersheds and estuarine ecosystems within the greater Puget Sound basin; provide help and assistance regarding Agency grants management requirements; and provide grant recipients with opportunities to share successful approaches with each other. You will be allowed to use award funds to pay for travel and lodging. Please include in your proposed budget.

2. Information Technology: Recipients are required to institute standardized reporting requirements into their work plans and can include such costs in their budgets. All environmental data must be entered into the Agency's Storage and Retrieval data system (STORET). STORET is a repository for water quality, biological, and other physical data used by state environmental agencies, EPA and other federal agencies, universities, private citizens, and many other organizations. EPA will provide information regarding training to input data. More information about STORET can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/STORET> or contact Dan Steinborn at Steinborn.Daniel@epa.gov.

E. Exchange Network

EPA, states, territories, and tribes are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure, Internet- and standards-based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data. States, tribes and territories exchanging data with each other or with EPA, should make the Exchange Network and the Agency's connection to it, the Central Data Exchange (CDX), the standard way they exchange data and should phase out any legacy methods they have been using. More information on the Exchange Network is available at <http://www.exchangenetwork.net> or contact Dan Steinborn at Steinborn.Daniel@epa.gov.

Appendix A - Measuring Environmental Results: Logic Models, Outputs, and Outcomes

Beginning in early 2005, EPA has required that all grant recipients document outputs and "to the extent practicable" outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature, and in how they are measured.

OUTPUTS:

Outputs are the activities or deliverables that are to be accomplished as a result of a grant. Outputs are generally described as deliverables or milestones in a work plan or timeline. EPA project officers track the completion of outputs to monitor the progress of a grant. Outputs include things like number of workshops held, number of volunteers trained, field work completed, study completed, watershed management plan completed, etc.

OUTCOMES:

Outcomes are the measurable impacts or results of the work of the grant. While outputs are accomplished during the life of the grant, outcomes generally occur after the completion of the grant. It is useful to categorize outcomes as short, medium, and long-term. Measuring environmental outcomes can be challenging, especially for small grants.

Tracking medium and long-term outcomes can be costly, especially if monitoring, sampling and analysis are involved. In addition, it can take many years for the long-term impact of a grant to have a measurable effect on the environment. For small grants, we tend to focus on short and medium-term outcomes, but we want to see the grant in the context of long term goals and objectives.

- *Short-term outcomes* may include things like: increased knowledge, active stewardship program.
- *Medium-term outcomes* might include: documented widespread adoption of best management practices, documented reduction of pesticide use (3 of pounds of pesticides per acre no longer being used on 2000 acres).
- *Long-term outcomes* might include: documented reduction of nutrients in lake, documented reduction in # of children with asthma, documented improvement of indoor air quality, meeting water quality standards.

The following hypothetical examples include brief discussions of outputs and outcomes.

Example 1: For a project aimed at protecting a salmon run, expected outputs may include an ecosystem services valuation; a formal public review process for the valuation; and a systematic, multifaceted outreach effort to educate decision makers on the results of the valuation and its recommendations. Other outputs of the proposed work could include implementation and completion of specific habitat restoration projects previously identified in an established salmon recovery plan or other local implementation plan, leading to a specific number of acres of habitat restored, fish passage barriers removed, or the like. All of these products, or outputs, would be clearly identified as grant products and would be expected to be completed as part of the proposed work. The expected outcomes would include anticipated acres of key habitat protected or restored as a result of the valuation. Other outcomes would include supporting a healthy salmon run, maintaining water quality standards, delisting a water-body segment listed as impaired under CWA §303(d), or attaining a milestone under a TMDL.

Example 2: A proposed project may be focused on protecting marine water quality and shellfish harvest areas. The anticipated outputs may be a local assessment program that systematically lists areas of known water quality and shellfish habitat problems, and systematically identifies appropriate/innovative technologies, development patterns, best management practices (BMPs), and other tools relevant to addressing these issues. The outputs would also include a report presenting the specific findings of the assessment. For example, such an assessment program could identify innovative household scale septic systems as a tool for addressing nitrogen inputs to impaired estuarine waters; or innovative procedures to connect decisions regarding the location and use of septic systems to land use decisions and water quality requirements in sensitive areas. The proposed work may also include a plan for obtaining and documenting a formal technical review of the assessment by regionally recognized experts; for presenting and publicizing the assessment and its results; for taking public comment and revising the assessment; and for formally presenting it to key decision-making bodies. All of the previous outputs would be delivered during the project period. Outcomes of this work would include reduced pollutants in surface waters and an upgrade in shellfish harvest areas.

LOGIC MODELS:

Logic models are intended to help identify the range and sequence of actions necessary to attain a particular project result or outcome. They help line up and organize sequences of actions to achieve results. This is particularly relevant today as projects and implementation programs become more complex and multi-faceted and yet need to be communicated to and understood by many people. Logic models also help both project implementers and evaluators to view the whole system of actions and eventually to assess if the system is working as expected, or if not, why not. In these ways logic tracks and result chains can help design, communicate, evaluate, track and adapt our work programs.

Logic models and results chains are tools to be used to build better projects and programs. Accordingly, logic models come in many forms and shapes, from simple storylines that link various actions into strategies and work programs to more complex system diagrams. For a straight forward implementation project, perhaps the logic model is as simple as clearly documenting the history and basis for a particular project in a particular place to achieve a particular result. For a project with many tasks, work processes, timelines and partners, a more detailed approach may be more helpful.

In this RFA, we encourage the research community to work from the concept of logic models, or 'Results Chains' as described by the Puget Sound Partnership (http://www.psp.wa.gov/PM_sos2009.php) using an Open Standards approach. With whatever logic model format you choose, please explain how the proposed work addresses the largest uncertainties or tests key hypotheses identified or embedded in the logic models. We also encourage the identification of ecosystem endpoints or indicators that would be affected or supported by the products and information from the proposed investigation.

Two brief examples of logic models are provided below

Model Example 1 Generic Template

Proposal:					
Link to EPA Strategic Plan	Resources/Input	Activities (and targets, if any)	Stated Outputs (with targets)	Anticipated Outcomes (with targets)	Baseline
<p>Goal 2=Clean and Safe Water Objective 2.1: Protect Human Health Subobjective 2.1.1= Water Safe to Drink Objective 2.2= Protect Water Quality Subobjective 2.2.1= Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis 2.2.2= Improve Coastal and Ocean Waters</p> <p>Goal 4=Healthy Communities and Ecosystems Objective 4.3= Ecosystems. Protect, Sustain, and Restore the Health of Natural Habitats and Ecosystems Sub-objective 4.3.1=Protect and Restore Ecosystems Sub-objective 4.3.2=Increase Wetlands</p>	<p>Describe the resources needed ... funding amounts from EPA and match, in-house and/or contractor expertise, property, etc.</p> <p>← identify and describe sub-objectives that are relevant</p>	<p>Describe actions, not results... e.g. conducting technical assessments and reviews, developing plans for getting public input... purchasing information or equipment developing ecosystem assessments or watershed characterizations</p>	<p>Describe actual products, reports, meetings, plans, for each activity. Include numbers and dates expected if known. These should be accomplishments <u>during</u> the grant period.</p>	<p>Examples: Broader results that <u>continue or occur after</u> the end of the grant project period. Include numbers and dates expected if known Short Term: (1) volume of cleaner water discharged or supplied for X number of people (2) Increased infiltration, (3) Increased public support or scientific understanding of watershed or ecosystem capacities or recovery limitations. Interim: (1) Potential reduction of pollutant loadings. (2) Increased environmental awareness within community. (3) Protection of acres or functions of wetlands or local ecosystem. (4) Reduction of risk to watershed or ecosystem through proactive assessment or calibration. Long term: Restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of targeted</p>	<p>Data on current conditions discharge volumes, quality, high quality waters in need of protection, impervious cover against which to measure change due to funded activity.</p>

				ecosystems, or improved health of associated population Supportive of strategic sub-objectives in column 1	
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Logic Model Example 2

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	ACTIVITIES	PARTICIPANTS	SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
<p><i>EPA funds \$148768</i></p> <p><i>Logan County Planning Division Manager time in project management \$1748</i></p> <p><i>(other stated inputs)</i></p>	<p><i>Conduct a ecosystem valuation of a small watershed in Logan County to determine functional values and/or cost-benefit of protecting natural systems over engineered stormwater structures.</i></p> <p><i>Develop land use designations,</i></p>	<p><i>Logan County staff and University staff conduct valuation.</i></p> <p><i>Logan County staff, with assistance from outside contract and local citizen committee, develop land use designations and development standards and</i></p>	<p><i>Ecosystem Valuation</i></p> <p><i>Develop land use designations and development standards and incentive programs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Increase in acreage or ecosystem protected from development.</i> <i>• No net increase in effective impervious cover.</i> <i>• Reduced risk of increased flooding in down stream flood plain.</i> <i>• Reduction of chemical</i> 	<p><i>Preservation of the naturally functioning ecosystem/ watershed processes so that all species dependant on all the functions of that ecosystem are maintained in plentiful supply on the watershed.</i></p>

	<i>development standards, or incentive programs to help guide development of implementation approaches.</i>	<i>incentive programs.</i>		<i>loadings or risk of chemical exposure.</i>	
OUTCOME MEASURES					
			Final report with recommendations for implementation. Specific land use designations in sub area plans. Incentive program.	# of wetland acres protected. # of functioning riparian miles protected. Peak flow hydrology maintained or reduced with increase development.	Watershed hydrology maintained. Less need for new restoration projects. Species maintenance or recovery. Chemical and/or nutrient pollutant loadings reduced.