

# TRI University Challenge Questions and Answers

## General

- **What are the benefits of partnering with TRI University Challenge?**

TRI University Challenge offers students practical experience working on environmental issues with EPA and gives faculty the opportunity to advance their research applications. TRI University Challenge projects can also serve as a capstone project for students.

As a partner, you will receive direct support from EPA TRI staff experts to answer questions and assist you with TRI tools and data analysis. Additionally, partners will receive national recognition and promotion through the TRI University Challenge website and speaking opportunities at conferences and events.

- **How will EPA typically collaborate with partners on a project?**

EPA TRI staff will tailor the types of interaction based upon project proposals, providing the support needed to successfully complete each project. Examples of collaboration include bi-weekly phone calls and webinars with involved students and staff, regular email contact, and report status updates to proactively address any issues. Partners that are already very familiar with TRI data may need less direct support.

- **Do I need to have a strong scientific background to get involved?**

TRI University Challenge aims to make scientific data more understandable to the public, a goal that's benefitted by many types of skills and knowledge sets. Even without scientific expertise, you could offer creative insight into reaching communities, relating to the general public, and crafting new tools.

We encourage interested parties to design a proposal that applies your unique skills and interests to any of the key project themes: Pollution Prevention (P2) & Sustainability, Stakeholder Engagement, Technology and Data Mashups, and Environmental Education.

- **What funding is available for partner projects?**

Although we don't have any direct funding for selected projects, there are a number of resources, including both EPA and non-EPA grants, that TRI staff can direct you to. Applicants are also encouraged to reach out to their communities or other organizations for additional financial support, if needed. Project proposals can address low-hanging fruit, capable of starting up quickly and requiring less money.

- **Are all TRI data public?**

Yes, all TRI resources are public information and can be cited in any published literature.

## **Application Process**

- **Who can submit a project proposal and apply to be a TRI University Challenge partner?**  
Anyone affiliated with an accredited college or university can submit a proposal. This includes undergraduate/graduate students, Ph.D. candidates, and academic faculty and researchers. Applicants must be a current student or faculty member to be eligible.
- **How can I apply?**  
To apply, complete the [Partner Application Form](#) and send your completed application to the [TRI University Challenge](#) at Scott.Zachary@epa.gov by 5 p.m. on May 13, 2013. Applications should address all stages of the proposed project, from the approach you will take, to the specific timeline, and completion of the project.
- **How will the project proposals be reviewed?**  
A review panel of four to five EPA staff will individually assess and assign scores for each application based upon the evaluation criteria. After the scoring process, the review panel will meet together to reach a consensus on the selected proposals. The evaluation criteria include: clarity and effectiveness of proposed approach (40%), project outcomes (40%), and partner capabilities (20%). Additional criteria details are available on the TRI University Challenge website: <http://www.epa.gov/tri/university/>.
- **How many project proposals will be accepted per region?**  
There is no set number of proposals that will be accepted per region. Geographic diversity in proposals is helpful because environmental data differs greatly by location. However, the top evaluation criteria will be the quality of the project proposal.
- **How many project proposals will be selected overall?**  
EPA will select at least five applications to partner with TRI University Challenge. Additional projects may be chosen depending on the staff resources needed to support each project.
- **When will I find out if my proposal has been selected?**  
EPA will notify applicants of the proposal decisions in mid-June of 2013.
- **If my proposal is selected, when will my project begin?**  
Selected projects will be launched at the beginning of the fall semester of 2013, starting in August or September.