FEDERAL AGENCY NAME: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of E-Enterprise for the Environment

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: Tribal Support for E-Enterprise for the Environment, 2024-2029

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: EPA-OCFO-OEE-23-02

ASSISTANCE LISTINGS NUMBER: 66.611

KEY DATES:
- September 20, 2023: Information session (click here for more information)
- October 16, 2023: Solicitation closes, applications are due by 11:59 PM (ET)
- January 2, 2024: Funding decisions made and notification of funding selections
- By February 15, 2024: Anticipate award

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than October 16, 2023, 11:59 p.m. ET in order to be considered for funding.

CONTENTS BY SECTION

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

Established in 2013, [E-Enterprise for the Environment (E-Enterprise)](#) is a collaborative partnership through which EPA, tribal, and state co-regulators rely on a shared governance model to improve how we protect human health and the environment. Three key principles support E-Enterprise's goal to modernize environmental program implementation: 1) early and meaningful engagement through a shared partnership, 2) streamlining/simplifying processes and efforts, and 3) sharing/developing technology, where needed, to optimize effectiveness and create efficiencies. Through this E-Enterprise shared governance model, EPA, tribal, and state co-regulators set priorities related to the 3 principles. More information, including a video explaining the goals and benefits of E-Enterprise, can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/e-enterprise.

E-Enterprise is normally governed by up to three groups: [the E-Enterprise Leadership Council (EELC), the Management Board (MB), and the Interoperability and Operations Team (IOT).](#) The roles and charge are outlined in the 2016 [E-Enterprise Charter.](#)

- The EELC consists of ten senior EPA executives, ten state commissioners, and ten tribal environmental leaders, or their designees. The 30 representatives collectively and collaboratively provide high-level direction and oversee progress on projects and related E-Enterprise activities/work. The EELC conducts work via regularly schedule meetings and email communication.

- The MB provides direct oversight and management of E-Enterprise projects and functions. Specific duties of the MB include implementing policy decision made by the EELC, identifying issues and agenda items for the Executive Committee and EELC, and identifying E-Enterprise project recommendations and priorities, including managing staff resources to support project teams efficiently and effectively. Two tribal representatives have historically been representatives on the MB, one being a co-chair.

- The IOT provides direct oversight and management of E-Enterprise projects and functions. Specific duties of the IOT include support and guide design, interoperability, and operation of all technical aspects of E-Enterprise and Exchange Network. This includes shared services, standards, architecture, and infrastructure. Two tribal representatives have historically been representatives on the IOT, one being a co-chair.

The [ten EELC tribal government representatives](#), or their designees, are selected based on having expertise in environmental program implementation or management. The Tribal representatives of the EELC are appointed from elected officers of Tribal governments or their designated employees. The Regional Tribal Operations Committees (RTOC) or equivalent in each EPA Region determines a method for selecting an EELC representative, considering appropriate talents, interests, program area responsibility and experience, and other factors deemed relevant by the RTOC or equivalent for effective membership on the Leadership Council. Each EPA Regional Administrator issues a letter to the director of the American Indian Environmental Office and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) when a member is selected by the RTOC or resigns from the EELC. EPA's Deputy Administrator, a state commissioner and a tribal leader, or their designees, are the EELC Co-Chairs. All EELC representatives are expected to participate regularly in calls and meetings, as indicated by the Charter. There is no limit as to how long a tribal representative can serve on governance groups, including the EELC, as described in the [Charter.](#)

The Management Board and IOT governance groups are comprised of EPA, tribal and state environmental professionals manage, and these two groups manage the E-Enterprise project portfolio and activities under the EELC direction. E-Enterprise projects are agreed to by tribal, state and EPA representatives and captured in the E-Enterprise Strategic Direction, which is a forward looking strategic plan developed every two-years (next one scheduled to be release by Dec. 2023).

MB and IOT tribal, state and EPA representatives, or their designees, also may participate on the project team. Project teams consist of regularly scheduled meetings/interactive discussions, as well as participate in continuous improvement events, product design/test design, and/or share and learn series, or roundtables. Many E-Enterprise projects are cross-programmatic or multi-media in nature. Projects may focus on data management, information exchange, as well as priorities expressed by the Administration. Some project teams look to the selected grantee to coordinate with RTOCs or Tribal Partnership Groups as subject matter experts. For example, Exchange Network, data/information management projects may look to the Tribal Exchange Network Group, and water projects, may look to the National Tribal Water Council.

For the purposes of this solicitation, the words "tribe" and its derivatives refer to Indian tribal entities identified as federally recognized by the United States Department of Interior, which includes tribes within the contiguous 48 states and native entities within the state of Alaska (Alaska Native Villages and Alaska Tribes). The term "Indian country" means: (1) all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and including rights-of-way running throughout the reservation; (2) all dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States, whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of the state; and (3) all Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.

Applicants are encouraged to attend an information session on this Tribal Participation in E-Enterprise RFA. Please see Section IV. E, Information Sessions for further details. Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to view the the E-Enterprise presentation via Prezi and the E-Enterprise 101 webinar to learn more about the E-Enterprise for the Environment Program *prior to* attending the information session.

B. Program Goals and Objectives

EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to support Tribes in the E-Enterprise. The goal is to support and enhance tribal participation in E-Enterprise by providing tribes necessary research, training, and technical assistance (RTTA) as outlined in assistance listing 66.611. Under this solicitation, EPA intends to select one recipient by awarding a cooperative agreement (See Section II.E). The scope of work is broad and may cross between many environmental program areas (commonly referred to multi-media or cross-media) including but not limited to air, climate, water, chemical safety, land clean-up and revitalization, enforcement and compliance, and environmental justice.

The recipient may promote discussion, collaboration, and partnership on topics related to streamlining and modernizing environmental programs by (1) supporting analyses, studies, evaluations, workshops, conferences, and projects that lead to reduced pollutants generated and conservation of natural resources; (2) improve economic information and analytic methods to support studies, surveys, analyses, evaluations, conferences, workshops, and projects on the benefits, costs, and impacts of environmental programs; (3) improve economic information and analytic methods to support studies, surveys, analyses,

evaluations, conferences, workshops, and projects of incentive-based and voluntary environmental management strategies and mechanisms; (4) support research to explore and develop strategies and mechanisms for those in the economic, social, governmental, and environmental arenas to use in environmental management decisions; (5) provide technical assistance to help communities learn about and implement locally led, community driven, innovative approaches that deliver environmental, economic, and quality-of-life benefits; and (6) build and strengthen the adaptive capacity of states, tribes, and local communities to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to the impacts of extreme weather, and other events, now and in the future.

To support and enhance tribal participation, EPA previously awarded a cooperative agreement to support tribal government representatives in E-Enterprise. The former grantee provided technical assistance to tribes to deliver environmental results, as well as build strength and capacity for tribal co-regulators to participate in innovation and streamlined processes in governmental services. Workplan activities included the following:

- Provided travel assistance, including travel support and reimbursement to attend all in-person/hybrid E-Enterprise related meetings, trainings, workshops, and communicating/outreach events.
- Supported the development of agendas for EELC, MB and IOT meeting. Agendas were inclusive of tribal perspectives. The grantee worked with tribes to ensure tribes provided input to the meeting discussions, Strategic Direction, project portfolio, and coordinated site-visits when meetings were located in Indian Country.
- Supported the tribal EELC representatives through analyses, studies, and technical assistance for E-Enterprise projects. Support tribal participation across all environmental program areas, included training, research, and disseminating information on E-Enterprise projects with a tribal focus. Past projects included the Data Debris Recovery Tool, Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP) Streamlining Effort, the Pesticides Matching Label, Software Procurements for Tribal Environmental Professionals, the Enterprise Community Platform, the Compliance Learning Agenda, the Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Load Tracking and Implementation System (ATTAINs), and E-reporting on Water Quality Roadmap.
- Provided outreach, training, and technical assistance as it relates to tools and services needed to improve and streamline environmental protection in Indian Country, specifically leveraging the E-Enterprise Bulletin and national conferences, workshops and trainings. Developed weekly emails to tribal representatives on relevant work, developed briefing materials to support participation in discussions, and contributed to the E-Enterprise National Meeting to ensure tribal interests are included.
- Convened tribal environmental program managers to share tribal perspectives with EPA and States on initiatives, guidances and other technological, data management and streamlined processes. This included coordination with the Regional Tribal Operations Committees.
- Provided technical support on most E-Enterprise planning with EPA and Environmental Council of States (ECOS) staff to ensure tribal experiences are captured in E-Enterprise meeting agendas and project work; help provide tribal perspectives on framing issues related environmental modernization efforts calls (note, EPA hires a contractor to assist with conference call logistics).

The applicant's proposal, including the outputs and outcomes must address Task 1 and Task 2 (see below), including the time and budget allocated to the 2 tasks. Please note that applicants may propose other activities if they will effectively support tribal participation on the E-Enterprise.

Task 1: Support for and participation in E-Enterprise Governance and Project Teams

Overview: The selected applicant will provide technical assistance and support to ensure federally recognized tribes can participate in E-Enterprise with the goal to work together through a shared governance process to streamline and modernize environmental programs. EPA is interested in seeking applications that will:

- Support tribal co-regulators, specifically, the ten tribal EELC representatives and other tribal representatives that assume positions on E-Enterprise governance and project teams, outlined in the E-Enterprise Charter and pursuant to EE Strategic Direction or other EE-related priorities, projects, activities, or work.
- Provide tribal representatives the technical, logistical, and operative support to participate in the EELC meetings, governance, and project team discussions, as well as other EE-related activities/work. This may include providing technical assistance activities such as facilitation/preparation; meeting and agenda planning; prioritizing travel assistance, including travel reimbursements; coordination; and outreach to tribal representatives nationally. The selected applicant will also work directly with Regional Tribal Operations Committees and tribal environmental professionals interested in participating in E-Enterprise projects and other EE-related activities/work.

- Support up to ten tribal EELC representatives and up to four tribal Governance Board (2 MB, 2 IOT) representatives with research assistance through studies and analysis to prepare for and engage in EE related discussions. This technical assistance may involve creating a shared and transparent workspace to ensure tribes are engaged and are aware of project work by developing meeting summaries and establishing means for collaborating and sharing information (e.g., report-outs for the tribal EELC representatives and tribal Governance Board representatives). An applicant may also propose other research and technical assistance tasks.

Task 1.a. Support the E-Enterprise Leadership Council: Applicants should demonstrate in their application how they will support the ten tribal EELC representatives in the activities bulleted below. Annual workplan activities should include the following:

Provide EELC Meeting and Logistical Support: A selected applicant may help support and coordinate the implementation of the EELC meetings listed below, examples include, providing travel support and reimbursement for 10 tribal representatives for in-person meetings, ensuring meeting agenda topics include tribal interests, working with tribes to identify session leads or subject matter experts on agenda topics, assisting with the development of meeting sessions to ensure strong outcomes, and providing support for meetings conducted in Indian Country that may include site visits. Applicants should be able to support the tribes who participate in these meetings; however, the selected applicant is not required to host EELC or fund them under this cooperative agreement. Budgets should allocate personal time and travel costs accordingly to:

i. Support 10 participants for two in-person/hybrid EELC meetings per year, including travel costs to/from the meetings.
ii. Support approximately 2-4 EELC teleconference calls per year (up to 90 minutes).

iii. Support the tribal co-chair in 6-10 teleconference calls per year (30 minutes) with EPA Deputy Administrator and State Co-Chair to strategize, set meeting agendas, or discuss other significant matters.

iv. Attend a weekly call with staff from EPA and the Environmental Council of States.

More information about meetings: For the two annual in-person meetings (Task 1.a.i), one is held in Washington, DC and the other typically takes place in another U.S. city or in Indian Country. The EELC in-person meetings are two full working days (2-3 nights). For examples of what topics are discussed at EELC meetings, please read the E-Enterprise Bulletin (Issue #16), issued quarterly (see also Issue #14, #18 for most current meeting topics). In the past, tribes have elected to add on or conduct a tribal-only caucus meeting the day before an EELC meeting (making the meeting 3 working days). The selected applicant supports this tribal-only caucus meetings (develops agenda, takes notes, facilitates meeting) in coordination with the timing of the EELC meetings, or independently, should the tribes request one.

Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend meetings and conferences. Funds awarded under this solicitation can be used by the selected recipient to support tribal EELC representative travel expenses for participation at all EELC meetings identified in the cooperative agreement workplan. Tribal EELC representatives, or tribal governance representatives, may also opt to travel to relevant conferences and meetings for the purpose of meeting the objectives of this project, and acquiring knowledge that will be disseminated back to the full EELC and more broadly to tribal environmental professionals. The applicant will decide which tribal representatives receive travel assistance to specific events. The selected applicant is solely responsible for determining a methodology for selecting and funding reimbursement requests and providing a report on how participating non-federal attendees benefited from the meetings and conferences. EPA will not participate in the selection or approval of individuals who receive travel assistance.

Applicants may include in their application, the cost to attend EELC meetings, and all planning meetings to support the tribal representative(s), including attending a weekly call with staff from EPA and the Environmental Council of States.

Task 1.b. Support Management Board and IOT: Applicants should demonstrate how they will support the tribal representatives that participate on the E-Enterprise Management Board and IOT. The selected applicant will support up to four tribal representatives for 5-years under this cooperative agreement. Annual workplan activities should include the following:

Provide MB/IOT Meeting and Logistical Support: A selected applicant may help support and coordinate the implementation Management Board and IOT meetings, examples include, providing travel support and reimbursement for up to 4 tribal representatives (2 MB, 2 IOT) ensuring the agenda topics resonate with tribal partners, work with tribes to identify session leads or subject matter experts, assist with the development of meeting sessions, and providing planning support for meetings conducted in Indian Country. Applicants should be able to support the tribes who participate in these meetings; however, the selected applicant is not required to host these meetings or fund them under this cooperative agreement. The selected applicant will support up tribal representatives for 5-years under this cooperative agreement. Budgets should allocate time accordingly:

i. Support for two in-person/hybrid meetings per year, including travel costs to/from the meetings.
ii. Support for approximately 1-2 teleconference calls per month (up to 60 minutes).

iii. Attend a weekly call with staff from EPA and the Environmental Council of States (same call as above under EELC)

More information about meetings: The selected applicant may help support and coordinate travel, research, and communication for up to 4 tribal environmental professionals to participate in both in-person/hybrid meetings (bulleted above) The dates and locations for the in-person meetings are determined by the MB and IOT co-chairs. Applicants may include in their application, the cost to attend MB and IOT meetings, and all planning meetings to support the tribal representative(s), including attending a weekly call with staff from EPA and the Environmental Council of States (same call as above under EELC).

Applicants may propose to use a portion of the assistance funds to defray transportation and subsistence expenses for non-federal attendees to attend meetings and conferences. Funds awarded under this solicitation can be used by the selected recipient to support tribal MB and IOT representatives travel expenses for participation at all EELC meetings identified in the cooperative agreement workplan.

Task 1.c. Support to E-Enterprise Project Teams: If applicant's budget allows, applicants may also support tribal participation in E-Enterprise project teams. The E-Enterprise Project Portfolio consists of existing projects and related EE activities/work; and approximately every 2-years the EELC sets a Strategic Direction identifying EE priorities and projects, or other EE-related activities/work. The E-Enterprise project portfolio is agreed to through a consensus building process with tribal, state, and EPA officials, or their designee. Tribal, state and EPA staff often implement the project work.

The selected applicant will support up tribal representatives for 5-years under this cooperative agreement. Annual workplan activities may include the following:

i. Provide technical assistance to tribes in the implementation of strategic direction/project work by attending the virtual, hybrid or in-person workgroup meetings. Most meetings are teleconference calls, with the exception of in-person Lean events, workshops, or other EE-related conferences.

ii. The selected applicant may provide support to tribal project team workgroup representatives, such as facilitating scheduling, note-taking, providing research, and conducting analysis, as well as communicating and providing outreach on project outcomes and supporting travel to in-person workgroup sessions.

iii. Supporting tribes in the implementation of E-Enterprise projects. Past projects have included: tribal involvement in community-led data generation in environmental management (participatory science, Indigenous or Traditional Ecological Knowledge), the development of a compliance Learning Agenda, inclusion of tribal capacity in the advancement of environmental monitoring technologies, tribal software needs, tribal water quality sampling technology and information sharing, as well as supporting clean ups on tribal lands during emergencies.

iv. The selected applicant may choose to facilitate or lead a project team, in coordination with states and EPA, should the budget allow.

Task 2: Training and technical assistance resources for federally recognized tribes related to E-Enterprise for the Environment

Overview: The selected applicant will provide and coordinate technical assistance, outreach and communication, as well as training with the goal to increase awareness and gather further interest in E-

Enterprise amongst all federally recognized tribes. The goal is to make E-Enterprise more responsive to tribes and better understand how tribes can leverage as well as benefit from streamlined services, as well as modernization efforts in tribal environmental programs. An applicant may also propose other technical assistance and training tasks.

Task 2.a. Technical Assistance: The selected applicant should be able to provide technical assistance, such as solicitation of key tribal representatives to participate in E-Enterprise. This includes tribal representatives to serve on the EELC, Management and IOT, as well as E-Enterprise project teams, or on other EE-related work activities, given their important perspectives, experience, interest, and expertise. This level of participation is essential for shared governance to function effectively for EPA, states, and tribes. Applicants should expect to work with Regional Tribal Operations Committees to solicit new tribal representatives.

The selected applicant should be prepared to use and provide technical assistance for tribes using the E-Enterprise Sharepoint website, which is a (non-public) on-line Microsoft Outlook site that all representatives of the EELC, MB/IOT, and project teams use to collaborate and share information for project management. While EPA hosts the site, non-EPA employees can access and utilize Sharepoint once access is granted by EPA. EPA provides access to and help desk support, however the selected applicant and tribal representatives, may need to assist with sharing files and alerting EPA of access issues.

Task 2.b. Communication and Outreach: Applicants should propose an outreach plan to increase awareness and interest in E-Enterprise amongst all federally recognized tribes, which may include training events. This plan should specify the number of outreach activities the applicant proposes (per calendar year), as well as provide a description of a cost-effective approaches (e.g., webinar, newsletter/listservs, roundtables, or presentation at a national conference or forums) so that tribes may continue to learn more about E-Enterprise activities, with the goal to use the E-Enterprise tools (projects and related EE activities/work) or participate in governance and project team work. Applicants are encouraged to leverage existing forums such as the E-Enterprise quarterly Bulletin, tribal-centric conferences/national meetings, RTOCs, and regional or programmatic events.

The selected applicant should assist tribes in communicating information discussed at the EELC, MB, IOT, and Project team meetings, particularly ensuring that EPA RTOCs and other EPA [Tribal Partnership Groups](#). Given the connection with E-Enterprise and the Exchange Network, data management and information technology, there is strong need to coordinate with the [Tribal Exchange Network.](#)

Successful applicants may also contribute to and leverage [the E-Enterprise Bulletin](#) (issued each quarter) to develop and share information to partners. Selected applicants should be prepared to work with EPA to develop and email weekly reports to Tribal EELC representatives to keep them informed about E-Enterprise related work.

Task 2.c. National Meeting and Training: Applicants can support tribes in their participation of the [E-Enterprise National Meeting](#), which is held every two-years. The next E-Enterprise National meeting is scheduled for Spring 2024. In past years, the meeting has offered virtual and in-person trainings, workshops or webinars. The location has not yet been decided. The selected applicant is *not responsible* for implementing a national meeting, however, they can support tribes who choose to participate as

attendees or presenters. The goal is to ensure the national meeting is responsive to tribal needs. The selected applicant may choose to support the planning of a national meeting through activities such as, providing travel support, including travel reimbursements to tribal participants to attend the meeting, ensuring the agenda is responsive to tribal needs, and seeking tribal proposals that align with the national meeting theme. Please note, budgets should reflect the cost of this meeting for Years 1, 3 and 5 of the cooperative agreement. For more information on past national meetings, please visit: https://www.eenationalmeeting.net.

Funds awarded under this solicitation may be used by the selected applicant to support tribal participation at other national or regional meetings identified in their workplan to support tribes in being trained on E-Enterprise (i.e. Tribal Lands and Environment Forum, National Tribal Forum on Air Quality, National Tribal Data Academy) This may include tribal representation at relevant conferences and meetings to conduct tribal outreach, identify and address high priority tribal interest areas and technical analysis, and seek tribal input on, or help to disseminate the results of studies or outputs in E-Enterprise related efforts.

C. Environmental Results and EPA Strategic Plan Information

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must review the linkage of proposed applications with the Agency's Strategic Plan. Application narratives must explain how the proposed work supports the EPA Strategic Plan goal and objective identified below.

Awards made under this RFA will support the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan's Cross-Agency *Strategy 4: Strengthen Tribal, State, and Local Partnerships and Engagement, specifically Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Sovereign Tribal Partners and Fostering Tribal, State, and Local Partnerships.*

In addition to supporting the Cross-Agency Strategy work, the activities funded under this award may support aspects of Goals 1-7 of the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan given they are cross-media in nature.

The program anticipates that a cooperative agreement awarded under this solicitation will achieve the Agency's goals and objectives for strengthening tribal engagement by addressing the required output and outcome performance measures provided directly below in Section I.D.

D. Measuring and Reporting Environmental Results

Output & Outcome Performance Measures: Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7A1, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA requires that grant applicants and recipients describe environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs are activities, efforts and/or associated work products related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outcomes are the results, effects or consequences that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective (e.g., increase engagement with tribal partners). Within the project narrative, applicants must provide an estimate of expected outputs and outcomes, as well as a plan for measuring and reporting outputs and outcomes during the grant period.

Requirements for Estimating Outputs and Outcomes: Applicants must describe and estimate their expected outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, their expected outcomes as described. It is

expected that the description of performance measures will include the following: sustained or increased levels of participation by tribal representatives in E-Enterprise governance meetings, projects and related EE activities/work; speed and accuracy in delivering technical assistance and meeting support to tribal representatives for governance meetings; and effectiveness of and satisfaction in training.

The following are questions to consider when developing output and outcome measures of quantitative and qualitative results:

i. What are the measurable short-term and long-term results the project will achieve?
ii. How does the plan measure progress in achieving the expected results (including outputs and outcomes) and how will the approach use resources effectively and efficiently?

The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their proposal. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful process and output and outcome strategies and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. Applicants may also include additional output and outcome measures if they choose. Please describe methodologies used to estimate outputs and outcomes within the project narrative.

Samples of results include:

Supporting EPA Cross Agency Strategy 4: Strengthen Tribal, State, and Local Partnerships and Engagement, specifically Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Sovereign Tribal Partners and Fostering Tribal, State, and Local Partnerships.

Task 1, Long Term Outcome: Strengthen Tribal Participation in E-Enterprise Governance to improve collaboration in modernization and streamlining efforts.

Task 1, Short term Outputs:

- Coordination for 10 tribes to attend the 2 in-person/hybrid EELC meetings each year, including meeting preparation, travel assistance, and facilitation.
- Coordination for 10 tribes to attend up to 4 teleconference EELC meetings each year, including meeting preparation, travel assistance, and facilitation.
- Coordination for up to 4 tribes to attend the 2 in-person/hybrid MB/IOT or project team meetings each year, including meeting preparation, travel assistance, and facilitation.
- Coordination for up to 4 tribes to attend the monthly MB/IOT or project team meetings each year, including meeting preparation, travel assistance, and facilitation.
- Support the implementation of one Tribal Related E-Enterprise Project
- Attend 4 weekly staff calls per month.

Supporting EPA Cross Agency Strategy 4: Strengthen Tribal, State, and Local Partnerships and Engagement, specifically Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Sovereign Tribal Partners and Fostering Tribal, State, and Local Partnerships.

Task 2, Long Term Outcome #1: Strengthen and increase E-Enterprise related training and support for federally recognized tribes to engage in E-Enterprise efforts.

Short term Outputs

- Participate in planning for the E-Enterprise National Meeting (every 2 years)

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- Attend 4 tribal related meetings each year (RTOC, Tribal Conferences, etc) each year to share information and train tribes on E-Enterprise topics/ projects.
- Provide Sharepoint assistance, if needed, in coordination with EPA.

Task 2, Long Term Outcome #2: Increase communication and outreach so federally recognized tribes can improve participation in and knowledge of E-Enterprise.

- Develop a tribal website or shared site (Sharepoint, Google drive) for information relevant to tribal co-regulators
- Development and electronic distribution of E-Enterprise related information to tribes using the E-Enterprise Bulletin process each year.
- Development and electronic distribution of 3 E-Enterprise weekly updates per month in coordination with EPA Project Officer
- Coordination with Regional Tribal Operations Committees to ensure all 10 tribal positions on the EELC are maintained and filled. Assist with onboarding new representatives in coordination with E-Enterprise Regional Coordinators.
- Coordination with Regional Tribal Operations Committees to ensure all tribal positions on the MB (2) and IOT (2) are filled. Assist with onboarding new representatives in coordination with E-Enterprise Regional Coordinators.
- Up to 4 meetings with Tribal Exchange Network and Tribal EELC representatives to ensure strong coordination on Exchange Network and data/information management related topics.

E. Statutory Authority and Assistance Listing

The statutory authorities for this action are the following: Clean Air Act, Section 103; Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10; Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442; Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, Section 203; Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, Section 20; Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3); Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001; and Public Law 105-174.

F. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to sections III, IV, V, and VI of this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses. These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please the point of contact listed in this solicitation (Section VII) to obtain the provisions.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

A. Amount of Funding Available

It is anticipated that a total of approximately $1,000,000 will be awarded under this solicitation. The award will depend on the availability of funds, quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. In FY 2024, the total funding is not expected to exceed $200,000. EPA may exercise the option to extend and incrementally fund the cooperative agreement for up to four additional years.

B. Number and Amount of Awards

It is anticipated that one award will be made under this solicitation.

C. Additional Awards

While EPA anticipates making one award under this solicitation, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this solicitation, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

D. Award Funding and Incremental/Full Funding

This award may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations. If incrementally funded, EPA expects to fund up to $200,000 for the first year, and $200,000 each option year for four more years (until 2029).

E. Award Type

EPA intends to award one cooperative agreement under this solicitation. Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant in the performance of the work supported. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:
- close monitoring of the selected applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

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 selected applicant.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. Eligible Applicants

Consistent with Assistance Listing No. 66.611 and EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements (EPA Order 5700.5A1), competition under this solicitation is generally available to Interstate, Intrastate, State (includes District of Columbia, public institutions of higher education and hospitals), Local (includes State-designated lndian Tribes, excludes institutions of higher education and hospitals), Public nonprofit institution/organization (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals), Federally Recognized lndian Tribal Governments, U.S. Territories and possessions (includes

institutions of higher education and hospitals), Individual/Family, Private nonprofit institution/organization (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals).

Nonprofit Definition: Consistent with the definition of Nonprofit organization at 2 CFR § 200.1, the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a nonprofit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR 200.1 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status, such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not an eligibility requirement for applying to this solicitation and voluntary cost share will not be evaluated under Section V.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

1. Substantial Compliance Criteria

Each application must meet the Threshold Eligibility Criteria provided below at the time of submission in order to be considered for funding. These are requirements that, if not met by the time of submission, will result in elimination of the application from being considered for funding. Only applications from eligible entities (Section III.A) that meet all threshold eligibility criteria (described in this section) will be evaluated against the merit evaluation criteria in Section V. If applications are deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review, the applicants will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

a. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this solicitation or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including using a legible font type and size in the application.

b. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically

allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in Section IV, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

c. Applications submitted outside of Grants.gov will be deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was due to EPA mishandling or technical problems associated with Grants.gov or SAM.gov. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a submission outside of Grants.gov.

2. Additional Threshold Criteria
Applications must meet the following threshold criteria to be considered eligible:

- Applications must provide support to all federally recognized Indian Tribes, not specific to one region.
- Applications must not request more than $1,000,000 over 5-years.
- Applicants may only submit 1 application under this opportunity. Applicants that submit more than 1 application will be contacted to determine which application to evaluate. The remaining application(s) will be deemed ineligible.
- Applications must address the agency's Strategic Plan goal and objective listed in Section I.C.

D. Performance Partnership Grant (PPG) Agreements

Assistance agreements issued under this program are ineligible for inclusion in PPGs.

IV. SUBMISSION INFORMATION AND APPLICATION MATERIALS

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures
Applicants must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this solicitation. If your organization has no access to the internet or access is very limited, you may request an exception for the remainder of this calendar year by following the procedures outlined here. Please note that your request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods. Issues with submissions with respect to this opportunity only are addressed in Section IV.B.5: *Technical Issues with Submission* (below).

B. Submission Instructions
1. SAM.gov (System for Award Management) Registration Instructions

   Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an

account using [login.gov](1) to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](1) for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. [SAM.gov](1) requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that [SAM.gov](1) registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](1) on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their [SAM.gov](1) registration includes a current e-Business (GeBIZ) point of contact name and email address. The Ebiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](1) for help with your [SAM.gov](1) account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm ET.

2. **Grants.gov Registration Instructions**

Once your [SAM.gov](1) account is active, you must register in Grants.gov. Grants.gov will electronically receive your organization information, such as e-Business (Ebiz) point of contact email address and UEI. Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active Grants.gov registration. Grants.gov registration is FREE. If you have never applied for a federal grant before, please review the [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](1) instructions. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, the Ebiz point of contact is the only person that can affiliate and assign applicant roles to representatives of an organization. In addition, at least one person must be assigned as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only person(s) with the AOR role can submit applications in Grants.gov. Please review the [Intro to Grants.gov-Understanding User Roles](1) and [Learning Workspace – User Roles and Workspace Actions](1) for details on this important process.

Please note that this process can take a month or more for new registrants. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through Grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the application submission deadline.

Contact [Grants.gov](1) for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](1) to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal

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[1] Login.gov a secure sign in service used by the public to sign into Federal Agency systems including SAM.gov and Grants.gov. For help with login.gov accounts you should visit http://login.gov/help.

and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

3. **Application Submission Process**

To begin the application process under this grant solicitation, go to Grants.gov and click the red "Apply" button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

The electronic submission of your application to this funding opportunity must be made by an official representative of your organization who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal financial assistance. If the submit button is grayed out, it may be because you do not have the appropriate role to submit in your organization. Contact your organization's Ebiz point of contact or contact Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov

Applicants need to ensure that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who submits the application through Grants.gov and whose UEI is listed on the application is an AOR for the applicant listed on the application. Additionally, the UEI listed on the application must be registered to the applicant organization's SAM.gov account. If not, the application may be deemed ineligible.

4. **Application Submission Deadline**

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **October 16, 2023, 11:59 PM ET.** Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. Please note that successful submission of your application through Grants.gov does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and not be considered.

5. **Technical Issues with Submission**

If applicants experience technical issues during the submission of an application that they are unable to resolve, follow these procedures **before** the application deadline date:

- Contact Grants.gov Support Center **before** the application deadline date.

- Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.

- Please also send an email with Tribal E-Enterprise Support Cooperative Agreement/Assistance Needed in the subject line to Jessica Snyder (snyder.jessica@epa.gov) **before** the application deadline time and date. The email **must** include the following:

a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
b. Description of the issue
c. The entire application package in PDF format.

Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

Please note that successful submission through Grants.gov or email does not necessarily mean your application is eligible for award.

EPA will make decisions concerning acceptance of each application submitted outside of Grants.gov on a case-by-case basis. EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to submit through Grants.gov due to Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access. Failure of an applicant to submit prior to the application submission deadline date because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of an application outside of Grants.gov.

C. Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this solicitation:

Mandatory Documents

A. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

B. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A). For aid in understanding budget cost categories please see the Agency's Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance.

C. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54

D. EPA Form 4700-4 Pre-award Compliance Review Report. For aid in preparing form, please see tips guidance here.

E. Project Narrative Proposal: Use the form located in the workspace platform in grants.gov and attach your project narrative. Please prepare project narrative with the format outlined in Section IV.D.

F. Budget Narrative Attachment Form: Use the form located in the workspace platform in grants.gov and attach your Budget Narrative. Please prepare budget narrative as described in Section IV.D

D. Project Narrative and Budget Narrative
The project narrative is to describe the work and should be concise and well organized. Applicants should format and prepare their project narrative to include the following pieces of information. This information will be reviewed against the merit evaluation criteria in Section V.A.

Format:

   a. Narratives must not exceed 15 typed 8 1/2 x 11 pages.
   b. Pages must be single-line spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font with no indenting paragraphs.
   c. Do not use a "double column" (aka newspaper) format. Readability is of paramount importance. Do not include more than one application in any file. Please do not zip the file or use a zip extension for your file because it will not be accepted
   d. Please provide narrative and budget for the entire 5-year cooperative agreement.

Content:

   a. **Project approach:** Project narratives should describe a strategy that demonstrates the ability to support task 1 and task 2. This includes support of the tribal EELC, Management Board and IOT representatives, as well as project teams, should the budget allow (task 1). The strategy should address training and technical assistance needs for federally recognized tribes related to E-Enterprise, that includes tasks related to communication and outreach (task 2).
   b. **Environmental Results:** The project approach should provide concise and clear details to demonstrate the outcomes, outputs and performance measures as outlined in Section I.D.
   c. **Programmatic Capability and Environmental Results Past Performance:** Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe: whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

      In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V.A, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current/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 application 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 0 for these factors.

   d. **Budget Narrative, includes a detail budget table:** Use this section to provide a narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Applicants must describe and itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Applicants should use whole dollar amounts. See budget justifications in the Agency's Interim General Budget Development Guidance for

Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance. This includes the Timely Expenditure of Awarded Funds, including an approach and/or tools used to monitor how funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

E. Information Session

EPA's Office of E-Enterprise will host one informational webinar for potential applicants on **September 20, 2023 from 1:00-2:30pm ET.** Information on how to register and submit questions prior to the information session will be available on the EPA website: Tribal Support for E-Enterprise for the Environment. For details on the types of questions EPA can respond to, please refer to the grant solicitation clause on PreProposal/ Application Assistance and Communication.

Attendees are advised to connect five minutes prior to the scheduled time indicated to ensure proper connection. The webinar link works best when using the Google Chrome browser. Connection problems may result when using Internet Explorer or Microsoft Edge. For those unable to attend, a recording of the webinar will be posted to EPA website: Tribal Support for E-Enterprise for the Environment.

Additionally, interested applicants are strongly encouraged to view the the E-Enterprise presentation via Prezi (EXIT) and the E-Enterprise 101 webinar (EXIT) to learn more about the E-Enterprise for the Environment Program prior to attending the information session.

F. Coalition Coverage

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients of the recipient (the "pass-through entity"). Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1 and comply with EPA's Subaward Policy. The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for proper use of EPA funding.

For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants.

Refer to the Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a "partner" or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.

G. Releasing Copies of Applications

In concert with EPA's commitment to conducting business in an open and transparent manner, copies of applications submitted under this NOFO may be made publicly available on https://www.epa.gov/e-enterprise or other public website for a period of time after the selected applications are announced.

EPA recommends that applications not include trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged, or sensitive information, if disclosed, that would invade another individual's personal privacy (e.g., an individual's salary, personal email addresses, etc.). However, if such information is included, it will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR § 2.203. (Review EPA clause IV.a., Confidential Business Information, for more information click here.

Clearly indicate which portion(s) of the application you are claiming as confidential, privileged, or sensitive information, or state 'n/a' or 'not applicable' if the application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information. As provided at 40 CFR § 2.203(b) if no claim of confidential treatment accompanies the information when it is received by EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the submitter.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.
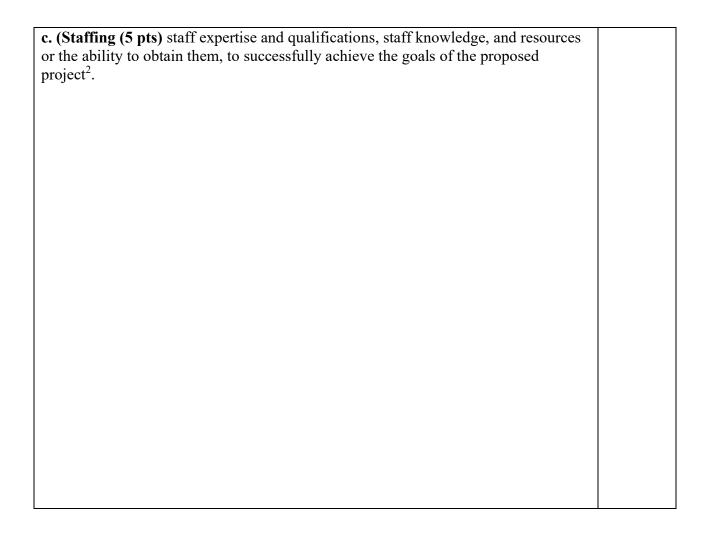
A. Merit Evaluation Criteria

Applications meeting the threshold eligibility criteria in Section III.B will be evaluated based on the criteria set forth below (see table). Applicants should directly and explicitly address these criteria as part of their Narrative Proposal and application submission. Each submittal will be rated under a point system, with a total of 100 points possible. Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the application addresses the criteria; the failure to provide applicable information in the application may affect the score assigned for a criterion. EPA will review project narratives for clarity, concise form, logical flow of information and clear responsiveness to all merit evaluation criteria.

Applicants should explicitly address these merit evaluation criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative. To assist EPA reviewers, applicants are strongly encouraged to reference the numbers and titles of the merit evaluation criteria in their project narratives to help identify where the criteria are being addressed.

Applications will be evaluated based on the Merit Evaluation Criteria outlined in the table below:

MERIT EVALUATION CRITERIA	POINTS
I. Project Summary/Approach: Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate applications on the extent and quality to which the narrative proposal: **a. Overall Project (30 pts)** Provide a detailed project summary and description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, consistent with Section I.B. Include details of every activity for which the applicant is seeking funding. This section should include details about how the activities will meet the goal of the program. Applications should only include information in Section 1.a. of their workplan that will not be covered by another section of their workplan. **b. Project Implementation (5 pts)** sets forth an approach for the execution of the tasks associated with the project and for achieving the project goals and objectives by	40

project end and sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project(s). **c. Anticipated Public Benefits (5 pts)** Qualitatively describe the anticipated public benefits from the proposed project.	
II. <u>Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures</u> **a. Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes (10 pts)** Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project as defined in Section I.D. Specific outputs and outcomes should be provided and may include short- and longer-term activities (prefer table format) **b. Performance Measures and Plan (10 pts)** Applicants should describe the proposed performance measures, which will be the mechanism to track, measure, and report progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Applicants should describe their plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated, as described in Section I.D.	20
III. <u>Programmatic Capability and Past Performance</u>: Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's **a. Past Performance (5 pts):** past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal as described in Section IV.D.c of the solicitation. Submit a list of up to three federally-funded assistance agreements that the applicant is performing or has performed within the last three years. Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts. EPA assistance agreements are preferred. These assistance agreements should be awards directly to the applicant. For each of the agreements, include: • Project title • Assistance agreement number • Federal funding agency and assistance listing number (formally known as the CFDA number) • Brief description of the agreement – no more than two sentences. **b.** **Reporting Requirements (5 pts):** history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the narrative proposal as described in Section IV.D.c of the announcement including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not.	15

c. (Staffing (5 pts) staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project[2].	

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[2] Note: In evaluating applicants under items III.a and III.b (above) 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 reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these sub-factors (items I and II above-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 0 for these factors.

IV. <u>Budget Narrative:</u> Applications will be evaluated based on the reasonableness, necessity, and allowability (of costs) of the proposed budget for the level of work proposed and for the expected benefits to be achieved. An applicant's budget narrative and budget details must account for both federal funds and any non-federal funds (e.g., any voluntary cost-share/match if applicable). Applicants must precisely describe in their budget narrative how they will account for any voluntary cost-shares. **a. Budget Detail (15 pts)** whether the proposed budget provides a detailed breakout by funding type included in the proper budget category for each activity requesting funds. Costs are allowable and reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes. This should be in chart format. **b. Reasonableness of Costs (5 pts)** EPA will evaluate the reasonableness of the applicant's budget based on the applicant's narrative description of the budget and detailed breakout of requested funding for each work component or task. Provide a detailed description of every itemized cost, including how every cost relates to the project narrative and specific emission reduction activities. **c. Expenditure of Awarded Funds (5 pts)** Applicants should provide a detailed written description of the applicant's approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.	25

B. Review and Selection Process

1. **Review:** All applications received by Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the Threshold Eligibility Criteria (Section III.B). Applications that do not meet the Threshold Eligibility Criteria and are deemed ineligible will not be evaluated further or considered for funding. Applications meeting the Threshold Eligibility Criteria in Section III.B will be evaluated by review panels which will include EPA headquarters and regional staff. Applications will be evaluated and ranked based on the merit evaluation criteria and point allocation scale provided in Section V.A.

2. **Selection:** EPA review panels will rank the applications using the evaluation scores and provide that ranked list to the Selection Official. EPA anticipates final funding decisions will be made by January 2, 2024.

3. **Federal Award Date:** EPA anticipates it will announce selection decisions in January 2024 and tentatively plans to issue awards by February 15, 2024.

VI.   AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at EPA Solicitation Clauses.

A. Award Notification

EPA anticipates notifications will be made via electronic mail (email) to the successful applicants by January 2, 2024. The notifications will be sent to the original signer of the application or to the project contact listed on the Key Contact form of the application package. This notification will inform the applicant that their application has been selected and is being recommended for an award, but it is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by the EPA's Grants and Interagency Agreement Management Division (GIAMD) of the Office of Grants and Debarment (OGD). Applicants are cautioned that only an EPA grants officer is authorized to bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds. Selection of this grant does not guarantee an award will be made.

For example, statutory authorization questions, funding issues or other discoveries found during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided by email. The successful applicant may need to amend or submit additional documents and forms which must be approved by EPA before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

B. Submission Requirements

All application forms must be filled out in their entirety, prior to being considered for an award (refer to 2 CFR Part 200, as applicable).

C. Reporting

Recipients are required to submit the following reports as outlined the Terms and Conditions:

Annual Progress and Financial Reports:

 i. Annual progress reports should include a summary of technical progress, progress in meeting outputs and environmental outcomes achieved as described in Section I.D, and planned activities for the next year. Reports must be emailed annually to the EPA Project Officer (snyder.jessica@epa.gov) and should include the grant award number.

 ii. Recipients are expected to submit Federal Financial Report (Standard Form [SF] 425) annual, as outlined the Terms and Conditions.

 iii. The schedule for submission of the annual report will be established by EPA after the award is issued. (Reports are due 90 days after the end of the yearly workplan activities are completed, so if workplan is March 1, 2024- February 31, 2025, the annual report is due by May 1, 2025)

Final Technical and Financial Reports:

 i. Recipients are expected to email a final technical report to the EPA Project Officer within 120 days after the grant activities have concluded and should include the grant award number. See Close out instructions here. The final technical report should include a summary of the project or activity, advances achieved, and costs of the project or activity.

 ii. Recipients are expected to submit Final Federal Financial Report (FFR) (SF-425) to RTP. All EPA awarding offices require the Final FFRs to be submitted to the Research Triangle Park Finance Center (RTPFC) at rtpfc-grants@epa.gov.

VII. CONTACT INFORMATION

Further information, if needed, may be obtained from the EPA contact listed below. Information regarding this solicitation obtained from sources other than these Agency Contacts may not be accurate.

Main Point of Contact: Jessica Snyder, snyder.jessica@epa.gov (email preferred)

Written Inquires:
Jessica Snyder, C/O Shana Harbour
Office of E-Enterprise, Office of the Chief Financial Officer,
U.S. EPA 1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Mail code 2710A,
Washington, DC 20460
202-340-8395
snyder.jessica@epa.gov