

United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9

San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund

Request for Initial Proposals

March 14, 2014

Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (EPA)

Funding Opportunity Name: San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (FY2014 Funds)

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-WTR3-14-01

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SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (EPA) is soliciting initial proposals under this announcement from eligible entities to protect and restore the water quality of the San Francisco Bay and its watersheds. The initial proposals will be short submissions describing a project's scope and environmental results and will be evaluated to determine whether a full proposal will be requested of the applicant. This competitive grant program seeks proposals to achieve significant water quality results to reduce polluted runoff, restore impaired waters and enhance aquatic habitat.

The total amount anticipated to be awarded under this announcement is approximately \$5,000,000 of fiscal year 2014 funds. Awards will range from approximately \$800,000 to \$2,000,000 of federal funds with project periods of up to four years. **Applicants must provide a minimum non-federal match of 50% of the total cost of the project.** A broad range of entities, as described in Section III, are eligible to submit proposals under this announcement for projects that protect and restore the San Francisco Bay and its watersheds within the nine Bay Area counties (Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco.)

Important Dates

April 30, 2014	Initial proposals must be received by EPA via Grants.gov, mail, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service by 5pm Pacific Standard Time.
May 30, 2014	EPA notifies finalists to prepare full proposals.
July 1, 2014	Full proposals must be received by EPA via email or mail, by 5pm Pacific Standard Time.
August 2014	Awards made.

The above dates (other than the April 30, 2014 initial proposal submission date) are anticipated dates and may be subject to change.

Notification of Expected Electronic Submission Requirement in FY15: EPA is moving towards electronic submission of all grant applications through www.grants.gov. It is expected that all solicitations issued on or after October 1, 2014 will require applicants to submit their application materials electronically through www.grants.gov.

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background. EPA has been administering the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF), a competitive grant program for the protection and restoration of San Francisco Bay watersheds, since 2008. To date, EPA has awarded over \$32 million in 25 grants supporting 53 projects. Those projects involved 71 partners who provided matching and leveraging of over \$105 million. Information on these awards is available at: <http://www2.epa.gov/sfbay-delta/sf-bay-water-quality-improvement-fund>

B. Program Priorities. EPA is seeking technically sound projects to reduce polluted run-off, restore impaired waters and enhance aquatic habitat. Achieving significant environmental results is an overall program priority. Therefore, it is most important that environmental results, also known as outcomes, such as those relating to water quality improvements and aquatic habitat enhancements, be quantitatively described in the initial proposal and a timeframe provided for achieving the results. Anticipated outcomes should not be expressed in general terms; for instance, just referencing “water quality improvements” is not sufficient. For more information on quantifying anticipated water quality results, see Section I.C.2 “Environmental Outputs and Outcomes.” For projects that are implementing activities called for in a plan such as a TMDL or a restoration plan with an extended (e.g. 20-50 year time horizon) timeframe, applicants should explain the degree to which the activities move towards the stated long-term goal or outcome.

EPA will consider a broad range of project types to protect and restore the water quality of the San Francisco Bay and its watersheds. While the focus of this solicitation is to select projects based on existing plans that are ready to be implemented, planning and assessment projects will be considered. Planning and assessment projects should have a high likelihood of being implemented and achieving water quality results. Such projects should describe in the initial proposal how the plan will be implemented (including funding considerations) and describe the environmental results to be achieved subsequent to completing the planning and assessment activities. In addition, EPA wants to support projects throughout the Bay Area. Therefore, initial proposals should address the extent to which significant environmental results will be achieved by the project in a geographic area that has not yet received SFBWQIF funding. SFBWQIF funded projects can be found indicated on the Project Map located at the SFBWQIF website. <http://www2.epa.gov/sfbay-delta/project-map-and-partners>

Projects should account for climate change to help ensure that the project achieves its expected outcomes even as the climate changes. As appropriate to project type (e.g. wetlands restoration, water quality improvement, etc...), the scope and approach described in the initial proposal should include a brief discussion of climate change considerations, for instance, how sea level rise was factored into the wetlands or stream restoration design, or how changing rainfall patterns were considered in the design of green infrastructure projects.

Projects must be consistent with the San Francisco Estuary Partnership's (SFEP) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). Therefore, initial proposals must indicate the CCMP objective(s) and action(s) to be implemented under the project. A list of the CCMP objectives and actions that address program priorities is included as Attachment A and should be used as a basis to provide this information in the initial proposal narrative. For additional information on the CCMP refer to the website link in Section VIII.C.

All projects that include a monitoring component should be compatible with the California Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), the California Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Program, and/or the San Francisco Bay Regional Monitoring Program (RMP). To maximize environmental results, projects should include broad partnerships and community participation/involvement, and ensure cost-effective designs and activities. All projects should include an information transfer component to promote the use of project results by other San Francisco Bay watersheds.

Applicants should carefully read this RFIP and closely consider the evaluation criteria identified in Section V.A. in order to propose projects that address these program priorities and will be most competitive throughout the selection process.

C. EPA's Strategic Plan Linkage and Environmental Results. Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to the EPA's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements.

<http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. All proposals must support EPA's strategic goals to improve and restore impaired water quality on a watershed basis and facilitate ecosystem-scale protection and restoration under EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 – Protecting America's Waters, Objective 2.2 (Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems), and Strategic Measures (Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis and Increase Wetlands.) (<http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/>)

2. Environmental Outputs and Outcomes. The significance of environmental outputs and outcomes you expect to achieve will be considered under the evaluation criteria during the selection process and must be addressed in the proposal submission (See Sections IV and V.)

a. Outputs. The term "output" means an activity, effort, and/or work product that will be produced or provided over a specific period of time or by a specific date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Proposals must include a description of project outputs and the way in which recipients will track project milestones throughout the grant period.

Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI.D of this announcement, "Reporting Requirements."

b. **Outcomes.** The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out project activities and/or completing outputs related to an environmental goal. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. Proposals must include a description of project outcomes resulting from the project outputs, even if the outcome to be achieved is beyond the assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes expected as a result of the awards under this announcement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Pollutant load reductions, attainment of water quality objectives, or other numeric indicators of water quality improvement.
- Acres of wetlands restored or other habitat type.
- Percentage of land area where Low Impact Development has been or will be implemented to achieve water quality improvements and/or other habitat enhancements.

Additional information regarding EPA's definition of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www2.epa.gov/sfbay-delta/environmental-results>.

D. Statutory Authority. The funds for the awards under this announcement were appropriated to EPA in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, and will be awarded under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (National Estuary Program), 33 U.S.C. §1330.

II. Award Information

A. Available Funding. The total amount available under this announcement is approximately \$5 million. The amount of federal funding per award is estimated to range from approximately \$800,000 to \$2,000,000. EPA anticipates awarding 3 to 5 grants under this solicitation.

Funding for the projects is not guaranteed and is subject to the availability of funds, the evaluation of proposals based on the criteria in this announcement, and other applicable considerations. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make no awards, or fewer awards than expected under this announcement. Further, award of funding through this competition is not a guarantee of future funding.

EPA also reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement consistent with Agency policy if additional funding becomes available after the original selection decisions. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. Project Period for Awards. The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will begin in September 2014. Proposed project periods may be up to 4 years.

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

D. Funding Type. Projects selected will receive funding in the form of grants.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants. The following entities are eligible to apply for funding under this announcement unless restricted by the authorizing statute(s): State, local government agencies, districts, and councils; regional water pollution control agencies and entities; State coastal zone management agencies; public and private universities and colleges, and; and public or private non-governmental, non-profit institutions. Non-profit organizations must have documentation of non-profit status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service or their state of incorporation, except that non-profits organizations as defined in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act 1995 or superseding legislation are ineligible.

B. Cost Sharing/Match Requirement. Matching funds of a minimum of 50% of the total project cost are required under this competition based on the requirements of Section 320 of the CWA. Accordingly, EPA is requiring applicants to identify the non-federal match of 50% on Form 424(A). A 50% match means EPA will fund a maximum of 50% of the total project cost, which is essentially an equal cost share of the total project cost with the applicant. Matching funds can come in the form of cash and in-kind contributions, such as the use of volunteers and/or donated time, equipment, expertise, etc., consistent with the regulations governing matching fund requirements (40 CFR 31.24 or 40 CFR 30.23) from your own organization and/or your project partners. Federal funds may not be used to meet the match requirement for this grant program unless authorized by the statute governing their use.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria. These are requirements which if not met by the time of initial proposal submission will result in elimination of the proposal from further consideration for funding. Only initial proposals that meet all of these criteria will be ranked against the evaluation criteria (see Section V) of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

- 1. Applicant Eligibility:** Applicants must meet the applicant eligibility requirements described in Section III. A.
- 2. Priorities:** Initial proposals must demonstrate that the project(s) protects and restores the water quality (including aquatic habitat) in the San Francisco Bay and its watersheds.
- 3. EPA Strategic Plan:** Initial proposals must support Strategic Plan Goal 2 of EPA's Strategic Plan as specified in Section I.C.1.
- 4. Fifty (50) % Match:** Applicants must demonstrate in their initial proposal how they will provide a minimum 50% match of the total project cost as described in Section III. B.
- 5. CCMP Consistency:** Initial proposals must describe how the proposed activities are consistent with SFEP's CCMP by reviewing Attachment A and identifying relevant CCMP objective(s) and action(s) to be implemented by the project.
- 6. Substantial Compliance:** Initial proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
- 7. Project Location:** Projects must occur within one or more of the nine Bay Area counties (Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco).
- 8a. Initial Proposal Submission:** Initial proposals must be received by EPA via Grants.gov, mail, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service by **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on April 30, 2014**, as specified in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their initial proposals reach the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.
 - b.** Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical difficulties associated with www.grants.gov. Where Section IV requires initial proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient.
 - c.** Initial proposals submitted by fax or emailed directly to EPA Region 9 will not be considered.
- 9. Ineligible Activities:** If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

IV. Proposal and Submission Information

A. Form of Initial Proposal Submission and Deadline. Applicants have the option to submit their initial proposal in *one* of two ways: electronically via www.grants.gov or hard copy and CD by regular first class US Postal Service mail, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service. Complete initial proposal packages must be submitted electronically through grants.gov or **received** by EPA Region 9 at the address below by **5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on April 30, 2014.**

1. Grants.gov – Electronic submission. Applicants who wish to submit their initial proposals electronically through the federal government’s Grants.gov website may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download an application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required package, they can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to EPA. Complete instructions for submitting applications via grants.gov are included as Attachment B to this announcement.

2. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD). If selecting this method of submission, applicants must send two hard copies of the initial proposal package as described below in Section IV.C., and a CD of the initial proposal package via mail, overnight delivery, hand delivery, or courier service. To reduce paper use, applicants are requested to submit double-sided printed proposals. **Please address all submissions to:**

**ATTN: Luisa Valiela, SF Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund,
EPA Region 9 (WTR-3), 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105**

The CD may contain files in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf), Microsoft Word (.doc), or WordPerfect (.wpd). Maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted as part of the CD. Pictures and/or computer generated maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

B. Content of Initial Proposal Submission. Applicants must include the information outlined below in their initial proposals regardless of mode of submission. Initial proposals (the proposal narrative sections as described below) must be no longer than **six pages in total** (8 ½ x 11 inches, single spaced); pages in excess of this page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants must also ensure that, to the extent not otherwise addressed below, their initial proposals provide information addressing all of the initial proposal evaluation criteria identified in Section V.A. and the threshold eligibility criteria identified in III.C. Forms 424 and 424(A), and a map DO NOT count toward the six page limit.

Initial Proposal Submission Content	
Applicant Information on Federal Assistance Standard Form 424	Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address. This form also requires a registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B), and Data Universal Numbering

	<p>System (DUNS) number (see Section VI.C. for more information).</p> <p>http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm</p>
Budget Summary on Federal Assistance Standard Form 424(A)	<p>Provide overall budget information on the form's tabular format including the specific amount being requested from EPA, the required match, and the total project cost.</p> <p>http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm</p>
<p>Proposal Narrative</p> <p><u>Project Scope & Approach</u></p> <p>(part of the 6-page limit)</p>	<p>Please describe the following: <u>Water quality problem</u>- Identify the watersheds and/or waterbodies to be addressed and discuss the specific water quality and environmental problems that will be addressed by project activities.</p> <p><u>Project activities</u>- Describe the proposed activities and highlight the plans and assessments that form the basis for the activities and expected results.</p> <p><u>Climate change</u>- As appropriate to each project type (e.g. wetlands restoration, stormwater treatment, etc.), briefly describe how anticipated climate change considerations were factored into the proposed activities.</p> <p><u>Timeframe</u>- Identify the timeframe for activities and environmental results. If planning and assessment activities are proposed, describe the likelihood of implementation, including key next steps, funding and timeframe for environmental results.</p> <p><u>Attachment A</u>- Review Attachment A concerning SFEP's CCMP and briefly list the relevant CCMP objectives and actions to be implemented by the project.</p>
<p>Proposal Narrative</p> <p><u>Environmental Results (Outputs/Outcomes)</u></p> <p>(part of the 6-page limit)</p>	<p>Clearly describe the expected project outputs (Section I.C.2) and outcomes (Section I.C.3). Please see the example "Output and Outcome Summary Table"* below as a suggested format to provide the required information.</p> <p><u>Quantify</u>- Be specific in quantifying the anticipated outputs and outcomes, especially outcomes related to water quality and habitat enhancements.</p> <p><u>Provide context</u>- Discuss the extent, magnitude and significance of the anticipated outcomes. For example, identify pollutant load reductions to be achieved in terms of the overall reductions and timeframe necessary to achieve water quality standards.</p> <p><u>Timeframe</u>- Outputs and outcomes achievable beyond the assistance agreement funding period should be included.</p> <p><u>Tracking</u>- Identify how progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes will be tracked and measured over the expected project time period. For some projects, this may include monitoring and the production of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).</p> <p><u>Geographic Location</u>- Identify the geographic area by</p>

	watershed and/or more specific location of the project(s).
Map	Provide a map of the watershed and the proposed work areas related to the project or, if more appropriate, provide a schematic that helps explain the proposed project activities.

*EXAMPLE: Outputs & Outcomes Summary Table		
OUTPUTS (activity, effort, and/or work product during project period)	OUTCOMES (environmental results)	
	SHORT-TERM (1-5YRS)	LONG-TERM (5-20+YRS)

C. Content for Full Proposals Once EPA Notifies Selected Applicants. Full proposals will be requested from those eligible applicants whose initial proposals score highly in the initial evaluation described in Section V. After the initial evaluation, such applicants will be provided with instructions and notification to proceed with submitting a full proposal by a required date that will be specified in the notification. Applicants who are not selected to submit final proposals will be notified in writing that they have not been selected to submit a final proposal. Those who make it to the second phase will be asked to provide a more in depth proposal, including details on the project’s partners, tasks and schedule, programmatic capability, and past performance. Full proposals must be no longer than **ten pages** (8 ½ x 11 inches, single spaced); pages in excess of this page limitation will not be reviewed. Complete instructions for the full proposal will be provided to applicants in the notification letter described above which will require applicants to, among other things, include the information outlined below in their full proposals and address the evaluation criteria for the full proposals. Letters of support and any required grant forms provided DO NOT count toward the ten page limit.

Full Proposal Submission Content	
Partnerships	Describe your project partners and community involvement in carrying out your project. Provide letters of support from

	<p>project partners to substantiate their role. Provide specifics as to the roles the partners will play to support the proposed project activities. Specifically describe whether the project partners establish or enhance new and unique relationships that contribute to expected environmental results and include agencies that have purview over water quality and land use decisions.</p>
Budget Detail	<p>Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget found in the SF 424(A). Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. Explanations of the costs associated with each project task, including match amounts in full or in part from project partners, should be provided. Description of costs should correspond to figures presented in the SF 424(A). A table highlighting key tasks and/or outputs for the length of the project with the associated budget breakdown is recommended. Discuss whether the overall project costs and the various components are cost-effective in furthering future implementation.</p>
Programmatic Capability and Past Performance	<p><u>Grant history</u>- Submit a list of federally and/or non federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements and preferably EPA agreements), and describe how you were technically able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.</p> <p><u>Reporting history</u>- For the grants listed above, describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you reported timely 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.</p> <p><u>Organizational experience</u>- Provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project.</p> <p><u>Staff experience</u>- Provide information on your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.</p>
Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds	<p>Provide information on the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.</p>

D. Intergovernmental Review. If selected for award, applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Executive Order 12372. EPA's implementing regulations for this Executive Order can be found at 40 CFR Part 29.1-29.13. Applicants should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact (SPOC) in their state for more information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance if the state has selected the program for review. You may find a listing of SPOCs at the following website maintained by the Office of Management and Budget: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

E. Contracts and Subawards/Subgrants. 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 and reporting requirements.

1. Subawards, Contracts, and Partnerships. Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/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 proposal 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 OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism

2. Subawardee and Contractor Consideration during Evaluation. 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:

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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 qualification, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractors during the proposal evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

F. Additional Provisions for Applicants under this Solicitation. Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including those related to confidential business information, proposal assistance and communications, management fees, and others can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. **These provisions are important and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation.** If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

V. Proposal Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria.

Initial proposals and full proposals will be evaluated and scored by reviewers using the applicable criteria listed below. Each initial proposal may receive up to 100 points and each full proposal may receive up to 100 points. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their submittals.

1. Initial Proposal Evaluation Criteria (100 pts)

Points	Initial Proposal Evaluation Criteria
45	<p>1. <u>Scope/Approach:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on whether they present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a technically/scientifically sound approach for the specific water quality and environmental problems to be addressed by the project activities, including appropriate considerations for anticipated climate change effects. (20 pts) • a description of the environmental significance of the project. (15 pts) • activities based on existing plans and assessments, such as watershed plans and TMDLs and/or associated analysis; or for proposed planning and assessment activities the likelihood of subsequent implementation. (10 pts)
45	<p>2. <u>Environmental Results—Outputs and Outcomes:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on how well they demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well defined outputs throughout the project timeframe. (5 pts) • that significant environmental results (outcomes), such as specific (quantitative) water quality and aquatic habitat results, will be achieved by the project. (20 pts) • an effective plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I. (10 pts) • the extent to which significant environmental results will be achieved by the project in a geographic area that has not yet received SFBWQIF funding. (10 pts) <p><i>Note: EPA will consider the quality and scope of the monitoring component to measure environmental results under this criterion. If monitoring is not an appropriate project activity necessary to achieve and document results, proposals will not receive a lower rating under this criterion.</i></p>
10	<p>3. <u>Budget Summary:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on whether the budget as presented in Form 424(A) is reasonable given the project scope and environmental results proposed. (10 pts)</p>

2. Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria (100 pts)

Points	Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria
35	<p>1. <u>Partnerships:</u> Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on whether they demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong partnerships and community involvement, particularly those that establish or enhance new and unique relationships that contribute to expected environmental results and include agencies that have purview over water quality and land use decisions. (20 pts) • specifics as to the roles the partners will play to support the proposed project activities. Letters of support provided by partners to substantiate their role will be reviewed. (15 pts)

40	<p>2. Budget Detail: Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the level of detailed budget information provided which should include an approximation of the cost allocated for each major activity over the project’s expected timeline. Budget resources necessary for completing a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), if applicable, sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress, are expected to be included. (25 pts) whether the overall project costs and the various components are cost-effective and reasonable in furthering future implementation of similar activities. (15 pts)
20	<p>3. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in the full proposal narrative as described in Section IV.C of the announcement. (5 pts) history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in the full proposal narrative as described in Section IV.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. (5 pts) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project. (5 pts) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (5 pts) <p><i>Note: In evaluating applicants under the first two items of this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and/or 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 subfactors (the first two items 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.</i></p>
5	<p>4. Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds: Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.</p>

B. Review and Selection Process.

1. Initial Proposals. Eligible initial proposals will be evaluated by the EPA Region 9 Review Committee which will score and rank the proposals using the evaluation criteria identified above in Section V.A.1. The Review Committee will consist of EPA staff and may also include representatives from other state or Federal agencies.

Applicants with the highest ranking initial proposals will be invited to submit full proposals.

2. Full Proposals. Those applicants identified to submit full proposals for review will be notified by EPA and will be asked to submit additional information requested by EPA (including the information identified in Section IV.C.) and address the full proposal evaluation criteria in Section V.A.2. The Review Committee will rank and score each full proposal based on the evaluation criteria described above in Section V.A.2.
3. Final Selections and Awards. The Review Committee will provide rankings and funding recommendations based on the full proposal scores to the selection official (Director of EPA Region 9 Water Division.) Final funding decisions will be made by the selection official, after consultation with the Regional Administrator. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official may also take into account the following factors: geographic distribution of funds, diversity of projects, and availability of funds. Applicants selected for funding will be asked to submit a final application package in order to award funds.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices. EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic and/or postal mail by August 2014. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the proposal or the project contact listed in the proposal. This notification, which informs the applicant that its proposal has been selected and is being recommended for award, is not an authorization to begin work. The official notification of an award will be made by EPA's Grants Management Office. Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered 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 through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), 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.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification by email or telephone within 15 days of the final selections for award.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and work plan content prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable work plan is required to include:

1. Work plan components to be funded under the grant;
2. Estimated funding amounts for each work plan component;

3. Work plan commitments/outputs for each work plan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA in carrying out the work plan commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 2 CFR Part 180.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements. The general award and administration process for all San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Funds is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements to Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations") and 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"). All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable Code of Federal Regulation (formerly Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Circulars): 2CFR 225 (formerly A-87) for States and local governments, 2 CFR 230 (formerly A-122) for nonprofit organizations, or 2 CFR 220 (formerly A-21) for universities. Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts.)

C. Reporting Requirements. 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 supported by the grant or cooperative agreement to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The format for these reports will be identified during the grant application time frame, and will include reporting on established performance measures indicated in the project description (i.e., goals, outputs and outcomes). The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired.

D. Pre-award Costs. Under this solicitation, EPA may consider the selected applicant's request to be reimbursed for costs incurred prior to the grant award. However, such costs must comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR 220 or 225. Therefore, if costs are incurred before the award, they are incurred at the applicant's own risk. In addition, pre-award costs do not include any direct costs associated with responding to a solicitation or in finalizing the application package.

E. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable environmental laws. Projects funded by the SFBWQIF are authorized under Section

320 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) also referred to as the National Estuary Program (NEP). The NEP does not require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pursuant to section 511 (c) (1) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §1371(c) (1). However, compliance with other Federal environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, and state laws and regulations may be required.

F. Competency of Organizations Generating Environmental Measurement Data. In accordance with EPA's Policy to Assure the Competency of Organizations Generating Environmental Measurement Data under Agency-Funded Assistance Agreements, successful applicants/recipients for awards under this competition that are expected to exceed \$200,000 in federal funding that involve the generation or use of environmental data must demonstrate competency to perform such work either prior to award, or if that is not practicable or will delay the award, prior to beginning any work involving the generation or use of environmental data under the agreement. Applicants that demonstrate competency prior to award must maintain competency, as appropriate, during the award period. Applicants that do not address competency prior to award must demonstrate competency prior to beginning any work involving the generation or use of environmental data under the agreement and maintain competency, as appropriate, during the award period. A copy of the Policy is available online at <http://www.epa.gov/fem/pdfs/competency-policy-aaia-new.pdf> or a copy may also be requested by contacting the person listed in Section VII of the announcement.

G. Additional Provisions for Applicants under this Solicitation. Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to human subjects, DUNS, registration in the System of Award Management (SAM), copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

VII. Agency Contact

For additional information, please contact:

Luisa Valiela
EPA Region 9, Watersheds Office (WTR-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105
415-972-3400
valiela.luisa@epa.gov

VIII. Other Information

A. Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC). 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. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process in their proposed projects. If your organization does not have a Quality Management System in place, one must be developed. A project specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be submitted and approved by EPA if your project includes sampling of any kind. If your proposal is selected and a QAPP required, you are encouraged to contact the EPA's QA Office at 415-972-3411 as soon as possible to discuss the process and set up a schedule for review. Allow 3-4 months in your timeline for approval of these plans.

B. Assistance Agreement Terms and Conditions. As a Term and Condition of the grant, recipients will be required to institute standardized reporting requirements into their work plans and include such costs in their budgets. All environmental data generated as part of the project should be comparable to the state's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP).

C. Useful References. This information is for reference purposes only. See Section VI.F. above for EPA's website guidelines.

- **S.F. Bay Area TMDLs and 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies**
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/TMDLs/
- **California Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)**
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/
- **S.F. Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan**
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/basin_planning.shtml
- **Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters**
http://www.epa.gov/nps/watershed_handbook/
- **EPA Region 9 Watershed Priorities**
<http://www.epa.gov/region09/water/watershed/index.html>
- **SF Bay Regional Monitoring Program (RMP)**
<http://www.sfei.org/rmp/>

- **San Francisco Bay Delta Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan**
<http://www.sfestuary.org/about-the-estuary/documents-reports/>
- **Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management Plan**
<http://bairwmp.org/>
- **Association of Bay Area Governments FOCUS Program**
<http://www.bayareavision.org/>
- **San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program**
<http://wrmp.org/protocols.html#protocols>
- **Bay Area's Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals**
<http://www.sfei.org/sites/default/files/sfbaygoals031799.pdf>

Attachment A: SFEP CCMP Objectives and Actions San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund

2014 Request for Initial Proposals

Review this list to indicate the San Francisco Estuary Partnership’s Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) Objective(s) and Action(s) to be addressed by your proposed activities. The list includes the CCMP objectives and actions that address the program priorities for this grant program. Proposals must demonstrate consistency with the SFEP CCMP by indicating the CCMP objective(s) and action(s) to be implemented. Provide this information in the proposal narrative section of your initial proposal.

AQUATIC RESOURCES	
Objective AR-2	Species-specific and non-indigenous management actions
Action AR-2.3	Control problem non-native invasive species
Action AR-2.7	Identify & control fish contaminants
Objective AR-4	Water management, flows affecting aquatic resources
Action AR-4.7	Protect shaded riverine aquatic habitats
Action AR-4.8	Increase shaded riverine aquatic habitat
Action AR-4.9	Protect & maintain tule islands, tidal wetlands & berms
Action AR-4.10	Decrease adverse effects of dredging & flood control
Action AR-4.11	Protect remnant stream habitats
Action AR-4.12	Protect marshes, wetlands, and tidal sloughs
Objective AR-6	Develop & implement Upper Estuary programs
Action AR 6.6	Bay tributary stream flow analysis and stream restoration
Objective AR-7	Protect, enhance, and restore subtidal habitats
Objective AR-9	Reduce and prevent marine debris
Action AR-9.1	Improve understanding of types and impacts of marine debris
Action AR-9.2	Expand existing prevention and cleanup programs

WILDLIFE	
Objective WL-1	Create & restore critical plant & animal habitats
Action WL-1.1	Restore tidal salt marsh for clapper rail & salt marsh mouse
Action WL-1.3	Acquire & restore wetlands
Action WL-1.4	Restore tidal marshes
Action WL-1.5	Identify, convert, or restore non-wetlands to wetlands or riparian

WETLANDS MANAGEMENT	
Objective WT-1	Create a comprehensive Estuary-wide wetlands management program
Action WT-1.3	Protect wetland buffer areas; transitional habitats
Action WT-1.4	Identify & protect & restore seasonal wetlands
Objective WT-3	Protect wetlands and expand acquisition
Action WT-3.2	Expand financial & technical assistance to landowners
Action WT-3.3	Encourage wetland protection bylaws
Objective WT-4	Expand wetland resource base
Action WT-4.1	Identify, convert, restore non-wetland to wetlands or riparian
Action WT-4.2	Prevent non-native invasive species in wetland restoration projects
Action WT-4.3	Identify, develop & implement success criteria for wetland restoration
Objective WT-5	Improve regional monitoring & tracking of restoration projects
Action WT-5.1.1	Implement wetlands tracking, data management & coordination

POLLUTION PREVENTION	
Objective PO-1	Reduce pollutants by establishing a Pollution Prevention Program
Action PO-1.2	Use effluent credits to encourage treating urban runoff
Action PO-1.4.1	Improve agricultural practices to reduce pollutants
Action PO-1.4.2	Implement control measures to reduce ag pollution
Action PO-1.8	Pollution prevention to trash, bacteria, sediment & nutrients
Objective PO-2	Improve regulatory systems for point & nonpoint source control
Action PO-2.3	Control selenium and mercury in the Estuary
Action PO-2.4	Urban runoff management update
Action PO-2.5	Control measures for energy & transportation systems
Action PO-2.6	Control agricultural sources of toxic substances
Action PO-2.7	Reduce toxic loadings from mines
Objective PO-3	Remediate pollution threats to public health and wildlife
Action PO-3.1	Cleanup of contaminated sites—new priorities
Action PO-3.2	Expedite cleanup of contaminated sites—improve processes
Action PO-3.3	Funding of large-scale infrastructure improvements
Objective PO-4	Improve water quality by restoring tidal wetlands, riparian & floodplains
Action PO-4.1	Incentives to restore stream and wetland functions
Action PO-4.2	Appropriate regulatory oversight and collaboration
Action PO-4.3	Encourage opportunistic stream/wetland restoration

WATER USE	
Objective WU-2	Develop water conservation methods & facilities
Action WU-2.1	Ensure efficient agricultural water management
Action WU-2.2	New methods of agricultural conservation
Action WU-2.3	Water districts & municipalities develop conservation measures

LAND USE AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT	
Objective LU-1	Improve planning, regulatory, and development programs of local, regional, and state agencies to protect resources of the Estuary
Action LU-1.1	Local general plans should incorporate watershed protection
Action LU-1.1.1	Incorporate nonpoint source controls into local govt. & businesses
Action LU-1.5	Promote stormwater BMPs and guidelines for site planning
Action LU-1.6	Educate and train planners, public works depts. & builders on sustainable design and building practices
Objective LU-2	Coordinate and improve integrated regional land use management
Action LU-2.3	Adopt & implement regional polices to protect and restore natural floodplains
Action LU-2.6	Prepare and implement Watershed Management Plans
Action LU-2.7	Adopt & implement natural stream & wetland function policies
Action LU-2.8	Increase incentives to economically disadvantaged communities
Objective LU-5	Develop new public & private economic incentives for protection
Action LU-5.3	Promote private sector protection & restoration efforts

Attachment B: GRANTS.GOV INSTRUCTIONS San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund

2014 Request for Initial Proposals

1. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

The electronic submission of your initial proposal must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. 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 submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the dropdown menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov, you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-R9-WTR3-14-01**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.126), in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

Proposal Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete initial proposal package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than April 30, 2014. Please allow for enough time to

successfully submit your application process and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

Please submit *all* of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the “Show Instructions” tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

2. APPLICATION MATERIALS

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- Narrative Proposal-prepared as described in Section IV of the announcement
- Other- Map as described in Section IV of the announcement

Application packages submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Luisa Valiela at (415) 972-3400. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.