U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 10
Puget Sound Action Agenda- Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads

2016 Request for Proposals

Federal Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Region 10

Funding Opportunity Title: Puget Sound Action Agenda – Implementation Strategies and Actions for Vital Sign Recovery Assistance Program

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R10-PS-2015-001, **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number**: 66.123

Statutory Authority: The statutory authority for the assistance agreements to be funded under this announcement is Section 320(g) of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 33.U.S.C.1251-1387).

Dates: The closing date and time for receipt of proposal submissions is **November 30, 2015, by 11:59 P.M., Eastern Standard Time (EST)** in order to be considered for funding. Proposal packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html) no later than the closing date and time.

Summary: This **Request for Proposals (RFP)** announces the availability of funds to create and maintain Strategic Initiative teams, form technical workgroups to develop implementation strategies, provide technical recommendations to the Puget Sound National Estuary Program (NEP) Management Conference, develop and refine the technical criteria for selecting priority actions, and to make and manage subawards to implement the work endorsed by the NEP Management Conference consistent with the 2014/2015 Puget Sound Action Agenda for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound. The 2014/2015 Action Agenda can be found at: Puget Sound Action Agenda 2014/2015.

Funding/Awards: EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for each of the three Strategic Initiative areas of focus described below for a total of three awards from this RFP subject to the availability of funds, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. Funding for each award is expected to be provided incrementally over a five-year period with an initial total of awards of approximately $15,000,000 (combined for all awards) for the three Strategic Initiative areas of emphasis for the first year and subsequent incremental funding through year five. Initial award amounts could vary among the three Strategic Initiatives based on the scope of each proposal and work plan and funding available from appropriations in year one. Each award could be for a project period of up to five (5) years. Incremental funding after the initial period of the award is subject to future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately $100,000,000 for the five year project period for all awards.

Funding will be awarded under Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations and, if applicable, subsequent appropriations, and the Clean Water Act, Title III, Section 320(g), (as amended). Successful applicants will be required to provide a nonfederal match equal to the amount of federal financial assistance that would be provided in the assistance award, as described in Section III of this RFP.

Important Dates:

September 22, 2015: RFP expected to be released and posted at: Grants.gov and at: EPA Puget Sound NEP-Grants and Funding

October 13, 2015: EPA Region 10 hosts a solicitation webinar to address questions about the RFP.

October 30, 2015: Applicants should have a current registration or have applied for registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) as well as having or applied for a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) registration. The process for obtaining both could take a month or more and both are required for applying to this funding opportunity. Applicants must also be registered in Grants.gov.

November 30, 2015: Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov by November 30, 2015 by 11:59 PM (EST). See section IV of this RFP for more details.

January 5, 2016: Selected successful applicants are notified and requested to develop and submit a complete application for assistance and negotiate a final work plan and budget for the proposal

February 28, 2016: Grant application and final work plan completed and submitted to EPA.

March 25, 2016: Award(s) made, subject to Federal FY2016 appropriation and other applicable considerations.

The above dates are subject to change. EPA reserves the right to amend this solicitation. Amendments could be administrative (change of dates or location), technical (change in requirements), or affected by the anticipated funding. EPA will post amendments on the web page for this solicitation which may be found at: Grants.gov and EPA Puget Sound NEP-Grants and Funding. Please check the web site periodically for changes.

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background Information and Program Summary

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance –CFDA number 66.123 (Puget Sound Action Agenda: Technical Investigations and Implementation Assistance Program) to act as Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads for the Puget Sound Action Agenda 'Strategic Initiatives' in coordination with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), EPA, and other relevant parties. The Partnership is the lead entity of the Puget Sound National Estuary Program (NEP) Management Conference and works closely with the EPA Puget Sound Program. Under the awards expected to be made under this RFP, as further described below, applicants would be expected under each Strategic Initiative area described below to identify, assess, prioritize and refine the Near Term Actions proposed by stakeholders through the Management Conference, and recommend to the Management Conference other actions needed to address the Strategic Initiative sub strategies in the 2014/2015 Action Agenda for the protection and restoration of Puget Sound. Additionally under the awards expected to be made under this RFP, applicants would be expected to make and manage subawards and implement Strategic Initiative work approved through Management Conference processes.

EPA, Washington State, Tribes, local governments, and nonprofit organizations have partnered for over 20 years to protect and restore Puget Sound through the Clean Water Act (CWA) National Estuary Program (NEP). The Puget Sound NEP Management Conference includes the program administrator, representatives of state and nations including Tribes, regional agencies, appropriate federal agencies, local governments, affected industries, academic institutions, and the public. The Puget Sound Partnership ("Partnership") has been designated by the EPA and Washington State as the lead State agency for the Management Conference for the Puget Sound NEP under CWA Section 320. The Partnership is defined in State legislation to include the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, Science Panel and Executive Director with staff.

In 2008, the Partnership published the first *Puget Sound Action Agenda*, a strategy to clean up, restore, and protect Puget Sound by 2020. On July 15, 2009, EPA approved the Action Agenda as the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Puget Sound under CWA Section 320. There have been two updates to the original Action Agenda, a major update in 2012 and a minor update in 2014. These Action Agendas can be viewed at:
http://www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php

As described in National Estuary Program (NEP) guidance and policies, the *Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)* for each NEP is intended to be a living document. As such, EPA has requested that each NEP review and update its CCMP every three to five years to keep the CCMP current and most relevant. The Puget Sound Action Agenda, the CCMP for Puget Sound, underwent a major revision that was approved by EPA in 2012.

Through the 2012 update of the Action Agenda, three areas of focus were identified that would deliver the most progress toward ecosystem recovery for the funds and effort invested. Termed

"Strategic Initiatives", these three priority areas are expected to provide the foundation of the Action Agenda through 2020. Accordingly, the strategies and sub-strategies from the 2012/2013 Action Agenda were carried forward into the 2014/2015 Action Agenda update and will also provide the foundation for an update of specific actions in the spring of 2016.

The three Strategic Initiatives developed in 2012 remain in effect and are the basis for Action Agenda work plans going forward. This RFP focuses on work to implement priority actions developed from the 2014/2015 Action Agenda and also the work to recommend and refine additional Near Term Actions to advance environmental outcomes under the three Strategic Initiatives.

The next update to the Action Agenda and its work plan is scheduled for 2016. EPA's Puget Sound program will review the 2016 Action Agenda update as part of the required CCMP Approval process and ensure that Action Agenda work plan updates remain consistent with the three Strategic Initiatives.
The Action Agenda addresses each Strategic Initiative by setting targets for recovery- termed Vital Signs in the Action Agenda- that are based on scientific understandings of the ecosystem. A complete description of the Puget Sound Action Agenda Vital Signs can be found at: http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/index.php. The recovery targets are used to guide refinement and content revisions to the Action Agenda, focus actions to be accomplished within the next two year funding cycle (Near Term Actions), recommend allocations of funding and other resources to specific strategies and actions, and evaluate Action Agenda implementation progress.

This RFP solicits proposals from eligible applicants that are interested in acting, in coordination with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), EPA, and other relevant parties, as *Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads* for each of the following three Strategic Initiatives. These initiatives are summarized below:

- **Protect and restore habitat**.
  Restoring damaged shorelines and protecting salmon habitats along the rivers and streams that flow into Puget Sound is necessary to sustain the many beneficial uses of Puget Sound including the recovery of local salmon runs and the commercial, recreational and tribal treaty rights associated with these valuable fisheries.

  The Puget Sound Action Agenda has identified at least six primary Vital Signs for protecting and restoring aquatic habitats under this Strategic Initiative including estuaries, eelgrass beds, marine shorelines, riparian areas, floodplains and maintaining summer stream flows. There is also an associated pressure reduction vital sign to more effectively manage land development from further degrading local aquatic ecosystems and contributing habitats.

  Associated actions under this lead area likely to include: protecting habitats through regulations, protecting and restoring habitats through incentives, removing barriers to broader habitat protection and restoration efforts and supporting development and funding of integrated actions identified in respective Vital Sign implementation strategies.

- **Prevent pollution from urban stormwater runoff**.
  Many streams that drain into Puget Sound are threatened from stormwater runoff due to pollution, altered flow regimes and resulting habitat degradation. These stressors result in alteration of the quality and quantity of water flowing in a stream channel such that organisms are exposed to more rapid and severe changes in water flows, elevated levels of contaminants and nutrients, altered channel stability and morphology. In short, polluted runoff from roads, roofs, parking lots, other paved areas, and from agriculture is considered the biggest threat to the water quality of Puget Sound and its contributing streams and rivers. Although we have many tools, technologies and practices for reducing stormwater pollution, we need to use them much more widely across the many local jurisdictions within the Puget Sound Basin.
  The Puget Sound Action Agenda has identified four primary Vital Signs associated with improving stormwater management: improving overall water quality in fresh water, improving water quality in marine waters, improving the quality of associated bottom sediments, and reducing the levels of toxics in aquatic food-webs and fish. A complete description of the Puget Sound Action Agenda Vital Signs can be found at: http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/index.php
  Associated actions under this lead area are likely to include: taking a watershed or catchment-scale approach to managing stormwater; preventing new runoff problems; fixing existing problems in a prioritized way; continuing to control sources of pollution and continue to educate local communities, public utilities, and land managers, and supporting development and funding of integrated actions identified in respective Vital Sign implementation strategies.

- **Restore and re-open shellfish beds**.
  Shellfish harvesting is a major economic sector in Puget Sound supporting over 3,200 local jobs and bringing in an estimated $270 million dollars to the region each year. It is also a tribal treaty right and a treasured tradition for countless Northwest families.

  But harvests are threatened by pollution that has closed more than 7,000 acres of Puget Sound beaches from commercial, recreational and tribal harvest. The health of our local shellfish beds begins on land, through reduction of pollution from contaminated runoff and failing on-site sewage systems.

  Supporting actions under this lead area are likely to include: preventing pollution through existing programs and regulations, preventing pollution through incentives, encouraging the recognition of the important beneficial use of shellfish, and supporting development and funding of integrated actions identified in respective Vital Sign implementation strategies.

EPA intends to select a Strategic Initiative Implementation Lead for each of the Strategic Initiative lead areas described above. The selected Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads will have a common set of activities applicable to all three areas and each Lead will also have work activities and projects that may be unique because of the different technical requirements of specific Strategic Initiative sub strategies as identified in the 2014/2015 Action Agenda. Strategic Initiative

Leads will be expected to engage in Puget Sound Management Conference processes and to award and manage subawards providing financial assistance for projects implementing priority actions for Strategic Initiative sub strategies identified in the 2014/2015 Action Agenda.

In short, EPA is seeking proposals from eligible applicants to serve as leads for each Strategic Initiative area of emphasis described above. Applicants should clearly identify which Strategic Initiative area of emphasis they are applying for in their application submittal.
Applicants may submit applications for more than one Strategic Initiative area, but a complete separate application must be submitted for each initiative. Applications that address more than one strategic initiative will be rejected and determined ineligible for award under this RFP. Applicants can submit only one application per Strategic Initiative area-if they submit more than one per area they will be contacted prior to the review process to determine which one to withdraw. Each eligible application will be evaluated based on the process and criteria in Section V of this RFP and EPA intends to select the highest ranked application for each Strategic Initiative area for award.

Eligible applicants may be selected for more than one award. Managing more than one Strategic Initiative area of focus would require a significantly higher level of diverse technical expertise, program administration experience and increased subaward management and monitoring capacity.

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFP; however only one entity can be responsible for the ensuring EPA Cooperative Agreement. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the Cooperative Agreement, and which eligible organization(s) will be subawardees of the recipient.

B. Objective

This RFP is aimed at projects and activities to increase the Puget Sound Management Conference's capacity to successfully implement the current Action Agenda and to inform future modifications to that plan. The overarching goal of the Action Agenda is to restore and protect the Puget Sound ecosystem.

The 2014/2015 Action Agenda contains sub strategies under the three main priority Strategic Initiatives discussed in this RFP and the related actions from the Action Agenda are prioritized to make the greatest progress toward ecosystem recovery targets for the time and resources spent, balancing ecological, economic and human well-being factors. The Strategic Initiatives help direct spending and resources, and guide the Partnership's work with partners to increase funding, seek policy changes, report successes and challenges, and educate and engage people in the recovery effort. As identified above, the three Strategic Initiatives for which EPA is seeking "leads" for under this RFP are:

1. **Preventing pollution from urban stormwater runoff.** Strategies and actions are organized into five themes:

    i. Take a watershed approach to stormwater management;

ii. Prevent new problems;
iii. Fix existing problems;
iv. Control sources of pollution; and,
v. Educate stormwater managers, individuals and communities about ways they can become part of the solution and reduce polluted stormwater runoff.

2. **Protecting and restoring habitat.** Strategies and actions are organized into three themes:

   i. Protecting*habitats through regulations;
   ii. Protecting and restoring habitats through incentives (including acquisition); and
   iii. Removing barriers to restoration of key habitats. (e.g. Prevent and respond to invasive species and update goals for in-stream flow rates).

   *Two specific elements of habitat protection are the prevention of oil spills and control of invasive species.

3. **Restoring and re-opening shellfish beds.** Strategies and actions are organized into two themes:

   i. Preventing pollution through existing regulations and programs; and
   ii. Preventing pollution through incentives.

The Action Agenda addresses each Strategic Initiative by setting targets for recovery (termed Vital Signs in the Action Agenda) that are based on scientific understandings of the ecosystem. These recovery targets are used to focus and guide development of strategies and actions needed to achieve the respective environmental outcomes as well as to inform needed revisions to the Action Agenda through adaptive management.
For each Strategic Initiative, Leads will lead the identification of actions to be accomplished right away (Near Term Actions), development of longer term sequences of actions, and recommend allocations of funding and other resources to implement the specific strategies and actions and evaluation of progress toward identified targets.

C. Eligible Activities: Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads and Scope of Assistance Program

This RFP is focused on supporting the functions that will enable efficient and timely implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda and builds the foundation for development of future updates to the work-plan of the Action Agenda.
There are a common set of activities applicable to all three of the Strategic Initiative areas of emphasis described in this RFP and there will also be activities and projects that are unique to each Strategic Initiative area of emphasis and related project activities as identified in the Action Agenda. This is described below.
In general, the common set of activities include engaging in Puget Sound Management Conference processes and the administrative activities associated with managing a subaward program to implement Near Term Actions under each Strategic Initiative area .
The unique components for each area of emphasis will be the specific projects and activities that selected Strategic Initiative Leads will award and manage through subawards for implementing priority actions identified in the Action Agenda. The characteristics of these subawards will vary because of the different technical and programmatic requirements inherent in each of the three Strategic Initiative areas of emphasis.
The organizing themes of work, and examples of strategies and actions for each Strategic Initiative area of emphasis are listed in Sections I A and B above.

Applicants should describe in their proposal how they will address and/ or perform the following:

Activities common to all three Strategic Initiative lead areas:

- Manage the EPA Cooperative Agreement awarded under this RFP to accomplish project objectives.

- Work cooperatively and continually with the EPA Puget Sound program, with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), with the NEP Management Conference and demonstrate how they plan on working efficiently and effectively with the other stakeholders supporting the Strategic Initiatives to implement and refine the FY16 Puget Sound funding model as released by EPA on March 27th, 2015 and further described in the June 4, 2015 timeline. Additional information on this funding model can be found at : http://www.psp.wa.gov/announcement_050115.php

- Working with the PSP and NEP Management Conference boards, to provide expert opinion and recommendations to inform future modifications to the Action Agenda. Utilize technical expertise to analyze results of related scientific investigations, ecosystem and project monitoring data, effectiveness monitoring, and other relevant sources of technical information. Support the PSP in its role as NEP Management Conference Lead by delivering time critical decisions and recommendations for Action Agenda updates.
- Lead the formation and oversight of long –standing Strategic Initiative teams that form the foundation of the Strategic Initiative Implementation Lead's assessment, technical review

and recommendation-making roles

- Collaborate with PSP to make technically supported recommendations of prioritization and sequencing of Action Agenda Near Term Actions - NTAs. Using an analytical approach, help to inform decision-making and help to direct allocation and sequencing of resources among basin-wide projects and to geographically specific actions.

- Efficiently and effectively implement and manage a subaward program based on resource allocation decisions to support the Strategic Initiative that the award addresses and related projects and actions described in this RFP. Subawards may be awarded non-competitively or competitively based on relevant criteria to achieve program objectives. If competitively awarded, a fair and impartial process must be used to evaluate proposals and make subawards and appropriate evaluation criteria must be used. The subaward program should provide accountability, transparency, predictability and appropriate technical standards, and utilize federal funding efficiently by making subawards as soon as possible after federal appropriations are awarded.

- Working with the PSP, the NEP Management Conference, and with EPA, develop ways to synchronize, consolidate and/or streamline the Action Agenda subaward processes so that an efficient subaward funding process and a consistent funding cycle is achieved for funding local implementation of Action Agenda actions and projects.

- Monitor subaward performance to ensure that the subawards are achieving the objectives of the program and expected outputs and outcomes and are being performed efficiently and effectively. Appropriately work with subaward recipients to ensure timely and expeditious use of funds to minimize the extent of unliquidated obligations. Track progress towards meeting outputs and outcomes, utilizing the Puget Sound Fiscal Ecosystem Accountability Tracking System (FEATS) or other reporting mechanism as directed by EPA.
  Working with the PSP, with the Puget Sound Management Conference boards and stakeholders, use the data and results obtained by the monitoring of subawards to adaptively manage the implementation and future updates of the Action Agenda.

<u>Activities common to all three Strategic Initiative lead areas but that will be tailored to the technical and/or programmatic requirements of each Strategic Initiative area of emphasis and related subaward projects and activities:</u>

- Consider and / or refine recommendations from the Strategic Initiative Transition Teams (SITTs), and implement through appropriate subawards the priorities and Near Term Actions recommended by the SITTs consistent with the approved CCMP and Action Agenda.

- Lead the formation and oversight of technical workgroups as needed to develop new Implementation Strategies and to refine existing Implementation Strategies to achieve Action Agenda Vital Sign targets within the area of emphasis for a particular Strategic

Initiative. A complete description of the Puget Sound Action Agenda Vital Signs can be found at: http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/index.php

- Fund activities identified in the Action Agenda to refine, monitor progress toward and help achieve identified Vital Sign targets. Provide the level of technical guidance needed to ensure subaward workplans are scoped to meet targeted environmental outcomes. This includes sequencing analytical, planning and implementation activities that support implementation strategies for achieving respective prioritized targets.

- For sub-awards within each particular Strategic Initiative area of emphasis, incorporate processes to guide and solicit actions that study, evaluate, model, plan, and prepare for the impacts of climate change on Puget Sound ecosystem protection and restoration activities. Strategic Initiative Leads should apply their technical expertise where applicable to help sub-awardees to integrate climate change adaptation into project design and implementation. These actions will be used to help and inform the Puget Sound Partnership's and EPA Puget Sound program work to meet the Agency-wide requirement that all NEPs conduct a broad, risk-based climate change vulnerability assessment and integrate climate change considerations into their revised or updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans by FY2020.

D. Strategic Plan Linkages, Anticipated Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures

Pursuant to paragraph 6.a. of EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements," EPA must link proposed assistance agreements to EPA's strategic goals (see EPA Order 5700.7). EPA also requires that applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs, environmental outcomes and performance measurements to be achieved under assistance agreements. These linkages, outputs, outcomes and performance measures are described below.

1. Linkages

Linkage to EPA Region 10's Strategic Plan for FY15-FY18: The plan identifies "Engaging with Partners on Puget Sound National Estuary Program Decisions" as Regional Objective (RO) 3.2. Specific commitments under RO 3.2 include:

a) Involve all partners early on in decision-making processes through strategic and priority-driven communication efforts (meetings, discussions, listening sessions, briefings).
b) Accelerate achievement of desired environmental outcomes such as the restoration of marine nearshore habitats, upstream riparian and floodplain habitats and protecting and improving water quality for more shellfish growing areas.

Identifying and establishing Strategic Initiative Leads for the Habitat, Stormwater, and Shellfish Strategic Initiatives is a central component in Region 10's approach to achieving these commitments and fulfilling RO 3.2.

Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan: The assistance agreements to be awarded under this RFP will be linked to EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 2: Protecting America's Waters: Objective 2 – 'Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems'; and specifically the sub-objective for Puget Sound, in that the assistance agreements will direct work to protect, restore, and sustain the quality of rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands on a watershed basis, and sustainably manage and protect coastal and ocean resources and ecosystems. The priority of the assistance agreements are to ensure successful implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda as the approved CCMP under NEP with particular focus on the success of the 2 year work plan in the 2016 Action Agenda update.

2. Outputs

The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Examples of expected outputs from the activities and project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

A. Outputs that could be common across all three Strategic Initiative lead areas:
   - Provide funding for projects that seek to complete Near Term Actions identified in current CCMP/ Action Agenda. The number of projects funded would be reported as a quantifiable output.
   - Provide subaward monitoring and performance reports and analysis to inform annual or biennial adaptive management processes ; collaborate with PSP to implement adaptive management
   - Staff, facilitate and maintain long-standing Strategic Initiative Technical teams.
   - Identify and recommend appropriate Vital Sign Implementation Strategies for technical development in Action Agenda planning cycle
   - Form technical workgroups to develop Management Conference adopted Vital Sign Implementation Strategies
   - Identify and recommend to the Management Conference boards , the appropriate Science and Monitoring activities critical to current implementation strategies and Near Term Actions
   - Manage the EPA Puget Sound assistance agreement to meet all required terms and conditions, including quality assurance, and financial reporting and project performance monitoring.

B. Outputs that could be specific to a particular Strategic Initiative area of focus- projects and subawards include but are not limited to:

   Stormwater Strategic Initiative
   - Low impact development, LID, project design and construction.
   - Workshops and trainings held for Puget Sound jurisdictions to improve stormwater management practices
   - Climate change adaptation and resiliency planning or project construction to address stormwater impacts

- Toxics reduction programs to reduce pollutant loading of stormwater runoff

Habitat Strategic Initiative

- Number of volunteer stewards who are trained in oil spill response. The number of volunteers would be reported as a quantifiable output.
- Subaward programs to target riparian protection and restoration
- Incentive programs to achieve net reduction in shoreline armoring
- Coordinated investment strategies developed/ implemented to maximize cross agency effectiveness for habitat restoration and protection
- Invasive species control programs to preserve / restore native vegetation in important habitat areas

Shellfish Strategic Initiative

- Pollution Identification and Correction programs supported in Puget Sound watersheds
- On-site sewer, OSS, inspections and repair programs or actions taken
- Agricultural best management practice structures designed or installed to protect shellfish growing areas
- Public outreach and education activities conducted to help reduce unregulated pathogen pollution
- Inspection and / or enforcement activities for pathogen pollution control

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

3. Outcomes

The term "outcome" means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be entirely achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Activities and projects to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce programmatic and /or environmental outcomes including but not limited to:

Stormwater Strategic Initiative

- Reduce number of water bodies identified on Washington's Impaired Waters listing.
- Stormwater management programs are established and functioning in majority of priority Puget Sound watersheds
- Marine water quality monitoring shows reduced contamination from stormwater pollution
- Toxicity levels in marine species are reduced.

Habitat Strategic Initiative

- More restored acres of native riparian vegetation are gained than lost.
- Increases to the amount of acres in conservation in forested acres upland to Puget Sound

- Improved ecosystem functioning observed in priority habitat areas.

Shellfish Strategic Initiative

- Increased acres of harvestable shellfish beds by 10,800 net acres.
- Pollution Identification and Correction programs functioning in all Puget Sound counties and better able to respond to instances of new pollution source detection.
- Fewer conditional closures of shellfish beds impacted by pathogen or nutrient runoff
- Existing commercial, tribal, and recreational shellfish harvest areas are protected and preserved results in improved public health.

4. Performance Measures

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. It is expected that the description of performance measures will include defined benchmark or change in status, either in programmatic function or environmental condition, and that the performance measures be time constrained and / or quantifiable such as the following:

- Performance Measure Example1 -for Technical Implementation Lead: Subawards complete projects within the stated timeframe and unliquidated obligations are minimized.
- Performance Measure Example2 – for subawards managed by Strategic Initiative Implementation Lead: number of feet of shoreline armoring removed.

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

- What are the measurable short term and longer term results the project will achieve?
- 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?

E. Logic Models

To ensure your application supports implementation of both the Puget Sound Action Agenda and EPA's national strategic plan objectives, we recommend that you include a logic model with your application. A logic model summarizes the major elements of your project, and connects strategic objectives to your proposed resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

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

With whatever logic model format you choose, please explain how the proposed work addresses the most significant challenges of the area of emphasis. We encourage you to identify ecosystem endpoints or indicators (the outcomes) that would be affected or supported by the products and information (the outputs) from the proposed scope of work. See Appendix A for information on logic models, results chains, and additional information sources.

II. Award Information

A. Number and Amount of Awards

EPA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for each of the three Strategic Initiative areas of focus described in Section I, for a total of three awards from this RFP, subject to the availability of funds, the quality of proposals received, and other applicable considerations. Funding for each award is expected to be provided incrementally over a five-year period with an initial total of awards of approximately $15,000,000 (combined for all awards) for the three Strategic Initiative areas of emphasis for the first year and subsequent incremental funding through year five. Each award could be for a project period of up to five (5) years. Incremental funding after the initial award is subject to future appropriations, satisfactory performance of work, and other applicable considerations. The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately $100,000,000 for the five year project period for all awards.

B. Start Date and Length of Project Period

Successful applicants should plan for projects to begin on or after April 1, 2016. EPA will accept proposals for a five year project period. The proposal must clearly demonstrate how the project will be sustained for the time frame proposed.

C. Funding Type

Successful applicants will be issued a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient

during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared. EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient. The final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient.

In addition, under the awards to be made under this RFP, EPA involvement may include: (1) negotiating the initial Scope of Work for the cooperative agreement and also annual amendments when incremental funding is applied for. EPA may re-negotiate annual work plans and budgets so long as it is done consistent with the scope of work of the agreement and the solicitation and EPA's annual federal budget; (2) monitor the project management and execution throughout the assistance agreement's project and budget period; (3) provide technical assistance and coordination as requested or needed by the recipient; and (4) review and approve technical deliverables.

D. Other Award Provisions

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement or to make less awards than expected. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete 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 was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Entities-See CFDA 66.123

- Federal government agencies and Washington State government agencies.
- Public and private institutions of higher education located in the United States.
- Units of local government organized under Washington State law and located within the Greater Puget Sound basin.
- Special purpose districts, as defined by Washington State law at R.C.W. 36.93.020, including but not limited to, irrigation districts, and water and sewer districts that are located in or govern land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound basin; and conservation districts located in or governing land and water resources within the greater Puget Sound Basin.

- Watershed planning units formed under RCW 90.82.040 and RCW 90.82.060, local management boards organized under RCW 90.88.030, salmon recovery lead entities organized pursuant to RCW 77.85, regional fisheries enhancement groups organized pursuant to RCW 77.95.060 and Marine Resource Committees organized pursuant to RCW 36.125.010 and RCW 36.125.020 if they are located within or their jurisdictions include waters and/or lands within the greater Puget Sound basin.
- Intrastate organizations such as associations of cities, counties or conservation districts in the greater Puget Sound basin.
- Nonprofit non-governmental entities.
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes located within the greater Puget Sound basin and any consortium of these eligible Tribes.

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

The greater Puget Sound basin is defined as all watersheds draining to the U.S. waters of Puget Sound, southern Georgia Basin, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Coalitions

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFP. However, one entity must be responsible for the Cooperative Agreement. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the Cooperative Agreement, and which eligible organization(s) will be subawardees of the recipient.

Subawards and subgrants must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR Part 200. The recipient must administer the cooperative agreement, will be accountable to the EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting, and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR Part 200, subrecipients or subgrantees are accountable to the recipient or grantee for proper use of EPA funding.

Coalitions may not include for-profit organizations that will provide services or products to the successful applicant. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards. For-profit organizations are eligible to receive 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. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Please see EPA's definition of consultants in Section 2 CFR Part 200, as applicable. For additional information, please review the

following Federal Register announcement for the Environmental Protection Agency numbered FRL–7644–5 and titled *'Interpretation of Regulations Related to Payments to Consultants Under Grants'.*

For-profit business entities, private individuals, and families are not eligible to apply.

B. Non-federal Match Requirement

The Clean Water Act, at §320(g)(3)(a)(II), provides that the Federal share of a grant under this program for a fiscal year shall not exceed 50% of the aggregate costs of implementing the project. For this RFP, this means that applicants must be able to show in their proposals that they and/or other members of the Management Conference will spend an equal amount of nonfederal funds on implementing these projects during the budget period. Applicants should identify the source (s) of the anticipated non-federal match, and describe the nature of the projects funded with the non-federal match. Proposals must show that the projects providing the nonfederal match are "committed" and that they have not been used to provide nonfederal match for any other federal financial assistance. While the match can come from expenditures to implement the Action Agenda/CCMP in the aggregate, this RFP encourages the match to come specifically from allowable costs related to the applicable area of emphasis. **Forms of Match:** The match requirement may be met in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions include volunteer or donated time, equipment, expertise, salaries, other verifiable costs, etc. and are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 CFR Part 200. The match must be for allowable project costs. Matching funds are considered assistance agreement funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the work plan. All assistance agreement funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of assistance agreement funds (examples of restrictions are outlined in Section III.D of this announcement) also apply to the use of matching funds. Other Federal assistance agreements may not be used as match without specific statutory authority. If matching requirements for incremental funding awarded under this RFP change as a result of future legislation on restoration of Puget Sound or otherwise, EPA will make appropriate adjustments to match requirements in the terms and conditions of the cooperative agreements.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Proposals must meet the threshold eligibility criteria listed below by the time of a proposal's submission or they will be eliminated from consideration for funding. Only proposals meeting all of the criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V.A. Applicants whose proposals are deemed ineligible as a result of the threshold review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the narrative proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

2. Initial proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their proposal is timely submitted.

3. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their proposal 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 late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with the EPA Puget Sound Program contact, Melissa Whitaker, at Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

4. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements as described in Section III. A above.

5. Applicants must demonstrate how they will meet the match requirements as described in Section III.B above.

6. Applicants may submit applications for more than one Strategic Initiative area, but a complete separate application must be submitted for each initiative and each project. Each application may address only one strategic initiative. Applications that address more than one strategic initiative will be rejected and determined ineligible for award under this RFP. Applicants can submit only one application per Strategic Initiative area-if they submit more than one per area they will be contacted prior to the review process to determine which ones to withdraw.

7. Proposals with international work plan elements must demonstrate that they directly and primarily benefit U.S. waters, resources, or policy interests to restore and protect the greater Puget Sound ecosystem.

D. Funding Restrictions

Actions required under NPDES Phase l and ll stormwater permits existing at the time of this announcement will generally not be funded. Applicants proposing stormwater-related activities in Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) areas must include a statement certifying that the work proposed for funding is either not required under a current stormwater discharge permit or it strategically supports Puget Sound targets and environmental outcomes that would otherwise not accrue. EPA may re-evaluate this restriction as future permit changes are made.

Award funds may not be used for matching funds for other federal assistance agreements, lobbying or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Award funding must be authorized by the statutory authority (e.g. Section 320(g) of the Clean Water Act) and may not be used to sue the federal government or any other government entity. In accordance with applicable law, regulation, and policy, any recipient of funding must agree to comply with restrictions on using assistance funds for unauthorized lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (i.e., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). EPA reserves the right to make final decisions regarding actions or costs incurred that are contrary or damaging to the intent and purposes of the Puget Sound National Estuary program (NEP), the Puget Sound Action Agenda and Management Conference, for which award funds may not be used.
All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under 2 CFR 200, Subpart E.

If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible

IV. Proposal and Submission Information

A. Requirements to Submit Through 'Grants.gov' and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants must apply electronically, except as noted below, through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this announcement and Appendix B. If an applicant does not have the technical capacity to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of limited or no internet access that prevents them from being able to upload the required proposal materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy or email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their proposal materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address:
OGD Waivers

C/o Barbara Perkins
USEPA Headquarters William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:
OGD Waivers
C/o Barbara Perkins
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Room # 51267
Washington, DC 20004

(Continued on next page)

Applicants must include the following information in their requests:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Organization Name and DUNS
- Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through www.Grants.gov.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above. EPA will respond in a timely manner to the request -- all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for proposal submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2015, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive proposal submission to EPA through December 31, 2015). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2015 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2016, the applicant would need a new exception to submit through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2016.

Please note the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (See Appendix B)

Your organization's authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete proposal electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than November 30, 2015, 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. See Appendix B for more instructions.

C. Content of Proposal Submission

The proposal package must include all of the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance** - There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.
2. **Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information -** There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (e.g. a percentage), the base rate (e.g. personnel costs and fringe benefits), and their amounts should also be indicated on line 22.
3. **Narrative Proposal (including the summary information page and workplan as described below)** cannot exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced, typed pages and should use no less than 12-point font. Supporting materials such as resumes and letters of support can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the above noted 20 page limit. Ensure that your narrative proposal addresses all of the evaluation criteria in Section V.

Summary Information Page (recommended not to exceed one page)

   a. **Application Title,** -Relate to and identify the strategic area of emphasis; i.e. "Strategic Initiative Implementation Lead-Habitat Strategic Initiative", etc.
   b. **Applicant Information** – Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
   c. **Project Period** - Provide proposed beginning date and ending date; awards may be for up to a five year work period.
   d. **Funding Requested** – Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA for the proposed work period. See Summary paragraph on Page 1 for information on total estimated funding.
   e. **Total Project Cost** – Specify total cost of the project. Identify amount of funding from other sources for required non- federal match
   f. **Abstract:** Provide a proposal abstract of no longer than 150 words. Include a statement of the proposed objective, the proposed approach affirming capacity to work with the Puget Sound NEP Management Conference, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes**.**
   g. **DUNS number.**

Workplan

The workplan should explicitly describe how the applicant proposes to meet the objectives and requirements in Section I of this RFP that apply to the Strategic Initiative that the application addresses and how each of the eligible activities described in Section I.C. will be accomplished. In the work plan the applicant should address each of the evaluation criteria listed in Section V and demonstrate that the applicant meets all elements of the threshold criteria in Section III.C including the non-federal match.

EPA is soliciting proposals for strategies to be implemented over a five year time period. It is important for proposals to describe levels of effort and workplans that are sustainable over the full five year project period. Because future funding levels are not guaranteed, applicants should present a proposed scope of work with well thought out sequencing and objectives described in the near term as well as objectives over the longer five-year term expected for these assistance agreements. By noting tasks or components that are severable (fairly independent of other actions) or that could be funded at variable levels, applicants can submit proposals that provide flexibility to incrementally award funds in later years of the project period.

The workplan must address the following information:

a. Project Summary/Approach: The summary shall contain the following components:

i) **<u>Partnering experience and approach</u>:** Outline your organization's experience and approach to collaborating, coordinating, and communicating within the context of large scale ecosystem recovery and restoration project(s). As applicable, specifically discuss how your organization would work with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), the Puget Sound Management Conference Boards, the EPA Puget Sound Program, and the affected regional, local and tribal stakeholders in the implementation of the activities and projects adopted by the NEP management Conference from the 2014/2015 Action Agenda and subsequent workplan updates for the Strategic Initiative for which your application is focused on. Describe your organization's strategies for technical decision making and sequencing among competing priorities Describe how your organization would work with the Partnership and Management Conference to allocate available funding resources among near-term actions developed from the 2014/2015 Action Agenda.

ii) **<u>Non-federal match</u>:** Discuss how you will provide the required match as described in Section III.B. This discussion should include how the applicant's organization will collaborate with the PSP and other state and local entities to identify and secure sources of non-federal match for subaward projects as well as the applicant's own use of award funds for direct costs requiring non-federal match.

iii) **<u>Subaward Projects:</u>** As noted in Section I.C, implementation of local and basin wide actions prioritized under a particular Strategic Initiative or Implementation Strategy will be funded by the recipient through subawards. Briefly describe your

organization's plan for the award of the subawards, how decisions will be made to award subawards competitively or non-competitively, what criteria you will use to award them competitively and non-competitively to ensure project objectives are attained , how subawards will be awarded in a fair and impartial manner, how solicitations will be issued and developed for competitive subawards, and how you will coordinate and monitor the work of the organizations receiving subawards under this program. Describe your organization's willingness, flexibility, plan, and capacity to work to synchronize, consolidate and or streamline your subaward processes where possible with other Puget Sound NEP subaward programs so that a unified subaward funding process and funding cycle is achieved for funding local implementation of Action Agenda actions and projects.

To effectively manage and oversee subaward work, your organization will need a formal documented system for making, managing, and monitoring subawards. Your organization's proposal should describe that system and how it functions (provide "hotlinks" to the documentation, rules and guidance for applicants or assistance recipients if they are available on the web or attaching these documents to your proposal).

If your organization's proposal relies on a subrecipient or collaborating agency to make and manage subawards, that other organization's formal documented system must be described in your organization's proposal. The discussion of the subaward management system should also describe the internal controls that the organization has in place to ensure that the procedures in the subaward management system are being properly implemented. Alternatively, if there currently is no formal documented system, the proposal narrative must describe your organization's plan and schedule for developing such a system in compliance with applicable State law.

Applicants acquiring professional or commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 2 CFR 200.317 – 200.326 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism. For additional information on subawards and contracts see Section IV.G.

Applicants should also describe how they will monitor subaward performance and ensure that the subawards are made expeditiously, performed effectively, and that utilization/ draw down of subaward funds will be managed so as to minimize the time periods of unliquidated obligations. The applicant should describe any prior experience it has had in making and managing subawards and the degree to which that history has been successful.

iii. **Creation and Oversight of Technical Teams (See Section I.C.):** The work plan should describe your organization's plan for creating, facilitating and overseeing the work of technical teams to develop and recommend Implementation strategies for adoption by the Puget Sound Management Conference.

Technical expertise will also be needed to inform the recommendations on funding allocation levels, the sequencing of Near Term Actions (NTAs) in the 2016 Action Agenda and for adaptive management updates to the Action Agenda.

iv. **Adaptive Management:** Describe the system that you will use to monitor and measure the progress of the projects funded with subawards. This discussion should address how your organization would provide monitoring information to the PSP and work with the Puget Sound Management Conference boards and stakeholders and how your organization's monitoring of subawards would be used to adaptively manage the implementation of the Action Agenda.

v. **Climate Change Resiliency:** Provide a discussion of how the proposed work plan addresses the impacts of climate change and builds ecosystem resiliency (see Section I.). Applicants are encouraged include in their work plan, policies and procedures to work proactively with their subawardee(s) to build climate change adaptation and resiliency into subaward project design and implementation.

vi. **Timeline:** Include a chart of milestones and timelines for accomplishing tasks, including estimates of timelines for proposed future tasks that may not yet be fully determined.

b. Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project (see Section I.D.) including what performance measurements, milestone timelines, or other means will be used to track and measure your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I.D and how the results of the project will be evaluated.

c. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Submit a list of 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 (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) 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. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, 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 proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

In addition, provide information on 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.

d. Detailed Budget Narrative (See Appendix C, Budget Sample) must include:

i. A description of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task.

ii. A description of the applicant's approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

iii. Itemized costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs. For those selected for awards, applicants will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency prior to award. This is not a necessary document for application but is necessary for the selected applicants to provide prior to award.

Note: All matching funds are subject to the regulations governing matching fund requirements at 2 CFR Part 200.

D. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for submission of proposals is **November 30, 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST)**. Proposals submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and subawards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, 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.

F. Webinar on this solicitation

EPA will be offering a webinar **on October 13, 2015** for interested applicants for this solicitation. The purpose of the webinar will be to answer any questions interested applicants may have about this RFP. We plan to record the webinar and make the recording publically available for interested applicants and or other interested parties who are not able to participate in the scheduled webinar.

We will post information about, and recordings from, this webinar on the following websites. Please monitor these websites for further detail on this webinar, including any date changes or additional dates that may be necessary.

http://www2.epa.gov/puget-sound/funding-and-grants-puget-sound

http://www.psp.wa.gov/funding.php

If you are interested in attending this webinar, please notify Melissa Whitaker at: Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov so that we can gauge the level of interest and possible need for more than one webinar.

V. Proposal Review Information

Only proposals from eligible entities that meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion below. Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their proposal. Each proposal will be rated under a points system. A total of 100 points is possible. Eligible proposals will be reviewed and ranked based on these criteria and EPA intends to select the highest ranking proposal for each of the Strategic Initiative areas for award.

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. **Quality of Proposal – 30 points total.** Proposals will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it will perform the activities described in Section I of the RFP for the Strategic Initiative that the proposal addresses and whether the proposal reflects the functions and objectives associated with performing as Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads as identified in this RFP. Reviewers will evaluate whether the proposed activities are logically presented, technically sound and supportive of the Puget Sound NEP management conference processes. Reviewers will focus on the following elements:

    a. **Clarity of the Proposal – 10 points:** The extent to which the applicant clearly demonstrates that it will efficiently and effectively perform the activities described in Section I of the RFP and the relevance of the proposal in developing recommendations for the allocation of Puget Sound resources for funding and management of subawards for Action Agenda priorities.

    b. **Technical Merit and Feasibility – 10 points:** The quality and extent to which the proposal demonstrates the ability to develop and apply technical criteria to provide oversight and guidance for Action Agenda Sound Strategic Initiative subawards and actions and to produce technically defensible recommendations for Puget Sound Partnership NEP Management Conference Councils and Boards.

c. **NEP Management Conference support – 10 points:** The quality and extent to which the proposal demonstrates the applicant's ability to successfully partner with and collaborate with the Puget Sound Partnership as the NEP Lead entity, and with the management conference stakeholders and Action Agenda implementers.

2. **Quality of Management Systems – 30 points total:** Proposals will be evaluated based on the quality of the proposed management system(s) based on the following factors:

   a. **Technical Workgroup/Program Management – 10 points:** The applicants experience in creating and coordinating technical workgroups and teams as evidenced by successful program management in areas of work encompassed by and related to the Strategic Initiative for which the applicant is submitting the project for. The applicants understanding of the technical basis for identifying, developing and facilitating implementation strategies for ecosystem recovery, and the applicants experience in utilizing adaptive management processes to guide and improve outcomes of environmental resource protection and recovery programs will also be evaluated.

   b. **Subaward Management System -10 points:** The applicants approach to making, managing, and monitoring subawards to ensure they are awarded and performed efficiently and effectively including how the applicant will select subawards for funding in a fair manner; how they will award subawards competitively and/or noncompetitively and what criteria will be used to ensure program effectiveness; how they will expeditiously make the subawards and oversee and monitor the subawards ; and how they will help ensure that the subawards achieve the expected outcomes and outputs including those identified in Section I.D. The thoroughness of the system in place or under development for making, monitoring, and managing subawards as well as the thoroughness of the internal controls and internal control review process in place to ensure that the subaward management system is working as designed, will be evaluated along with any past experience the applicant has in making and managing subawards. The ability of the applicant to make adjustments or modifications to their subaward procedures will be evaluated such that they can synchronize with or consolidate subaward procedures with other Puget Sound NEP funding including selected Strategic Initiative Implementation Leads awarded under this RFP.

   c. **Outputs and Outcomes – 10 points:** This criterion will assess how the applicant proposes to achieve the expected outputs and outcomes including those described in Section I.D. Eligible Activities., and the applicant's approach for tracking and measuring its progress towards achieving expected outcomes and outputs, including the tracking of outputs and outcomes from subawards as indicated in subaward work plans. The clarity and logic demonstrated in the applications linkage between technical outputs, subaward management and the expected environmental outcomes from implementation activities will be considered.

3. **Financial Integrity, Budget, and Nonfederal Match – 10 points total:** Proposals will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the budget information and whether it is reasonable to accomplish the proposed objectives, activities and meet project timelines. The budget information should provide a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity presented and be supported by a thorough internal financial management system.

   a. **Budget Information – 5 points:** Whether the proposal provides complete budget information such that amounts indicated for task areas described in the narrative proposal are clearly identifiable and sufficient and reasonable to complete the proposed work and it provides justification and/ or explanations sufficient to support of costs included in different budget categories. The proposal describes in the budget narrative how required non-federal match will accounted for.

   b. **Internal financial management system– 5 points:** Whether the narrative proposal describes the systems, policies and procedures by which the applicant will track expenditures funded by the EPA assistance agreement and how they will fiscally manage the proposed subaward program including procedures for working with subaward recipients to minimize the extent of unliquidated obligations. In addition, EPA will evaluate the applicant's approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner

4. **Past Performance and Programmatic Capability – 20 points total:**

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account their:

a) past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section IV.C of the announcement -**5 points**
b) history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to 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 points**
c) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, -**5 points**
d) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project -**5 points**

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

5. **Adaptive Program Management and Climate Change Resiliency – 10 points.**

   a. **Adaptive Management – 5 points:** Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's approach, practices and experience in applying adaptive management to programs and projects for protecting and restoring ecosystem functions and environmental outcomes. Information in the applicant's description of their program management experience as provided in response to criteria 2.a. – Technical Workgroup/Program Management – will be considered. The applicant's ability to collaborate with the Puget Sound Partnership and other Management Conference stakeholders in applying adaptive management practices will be assessed.

   b. **Climate Change Resiliency – 5 points:** Applications will be evaluated for components or activities proposed that address the potential impacts of climate change and how technical criteria for actions under the Strategic Initiatives or Implementation Strategies will include factors that could increase ecosystem resiliency. An applicant's experience in applying climate change adaptation and resiliency factors to other programmatic work will also be considered.

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those proposals which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above by an EPA evaluation team. Each eligible proposal will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. EPA intends to select the highest scoring proposal for each Strategic Initiative for award.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Following the evaluation-of proposals all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

Proposal Notifications

1. EPA notification to successful applicants will be made via e-mail. 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 the Regional Grants Management Official.

   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 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.

2. EPA notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via email. The notification will be made to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirement

A listing and description of general regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at EPA's Policy, Regulations and Guidance website.

C. Reporting Requirement

Semiannual reports and a detailed final technical report will be required. Semiannual reports summarizing technical progress, planned activities or changes to approved workplan for the reporting period and a summary of expenditures are required. The final technical report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final technical report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final technical report should discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere. The schedule for submission of semiannual reports will be established by EPA, as a term and condition of the award.

D. Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) at EPA's Dispute Resolution Procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested from Chris Castner, EPA Region 10 Puget Sound program at: Castner.Chris@epa.gov.

E. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into the Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, 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 Contacts

For further information, contact:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Melissa Whitaker
Region 10, Puget Sound Program
1200 6th Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101
E-mail address Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail or email to the contact person listed above. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the EPA Puget Sound NEP-Grants and Funding webpage

VIII. Other Information

A. Terms and Conditions

See EPA's Grant Terms and Conditions at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/tc.htm.

B. Riparian Buffers

EPA Region 10 anticipates that all new awards made under this solicitation will have a programmatic condition relating to riparian buffer projects. EPA Region 10 established the condition to ensure that Puget Sound Program funded buffer projects adhere to standards developed by NOAA to achieve water quality and salmon and tribal treaty resource recovery goals. In 2013 Puget Sound Lead Organizations agreed to use the condition, then in 2014 the programmatic condition was formally added to those awards.

The programmatic condition establishes that riparian buffer restoration projects in agricultural areas shall be consistent with the interim riparian buffer recommendations provided to EPA and the Natural Resource Conservation Service by National Marine Fisheries Service letters of February 4, 2013 and April 9, 2013, or the October 28, 2013 guidance. Grantees shall confirm in writing projects' consistency with the recommendations referenced above. When developing project proposals, grantees also should consider the extent to which proposals include appropriate riparian buffers or otherwise address pollution sources on other water courses on the properties in the project area to support water quality and salmon recovery. Deviations can only be obtained through an exception approved by EPA. In order for EPA to evaluate a request for an exception, the grantee must submit the scientific rationale demonstrating adequacy of buffers for supporting water quality and salmon recovery. The request must summarize tribal input on the scientific rationale or other relevant issues. The scientific rationale could be developed from sources such as site-specific assessment data, salmon recovery plans, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and the state nonpoint plan. EPA will confer with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Washington Department of Ecology and provide the opportunity for affected tribes to consult with EPA before making a final decision on a deviation request.

C. Quality Assurance

The selected recipients for this cooperative agreement, along with all subaward projects collecting environmental data, will require a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), as appropriate. The subawardees' QAPPs will need to meet the standards of the lead organization's QAPP. Approval of the recipient's Quality Management Plan (QMP) by the EPA Project Officer and the EPA Quality Assurance Manager, may allow delegation of the authority to review and approve QAPPs to the recipient based on procedures documented in the QMP All projects collecting environmental data will require a QAPP. Certain quality assurance and/or quality control (QA/QC) and peer review requirements are applicable to the collection of environmental data. Environmental data are any measurements or information that describes 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 databases or published literature. Regulations pertaining to QA/QC requirements can be found in 40 C.F.R. 31.45. Additional guidance can be found at http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html#noeparqt.
Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for development and approval of a QAPP for their proposed projects. If your organization does not have a Quality Management System in place, one must be developed. A project specific QAPP must be submitted and approved by EPA, before sampling is scheduled to begin. Allow about one month for EPA approval in your timeline.

EPA R10 Quality Assurance Team Contact: Don Matheny at (206) 553-2599 or email: Matheny.Don@epa.gov.

D. Data Access and Information Release

The OMB Circular A-110 has been revised to provide public access to research data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) under some circumstances. Data that are (1) first produced in a project that is supported in whole or in part with Federal funds and (2) cited publicly and officially by a Federal agency in support of an action that has the force and effect of law (i.e., a regulation) may be accessed through FOIA. If such data are requested by the public, the EPA must ask for it, and the grantee must submit it, in accordance with A-110 and EPA regulations 40 C.F.R. Part 30.36(d)(1).

E. Annual Grantee Conference

The recipient may attend one or more appropriate conferences each year, which may be within the Puget Sound region. The specific conferences will be determined in consultation with the EPA Project Officer. The purpose of this requirement is to provide recipients with opportunities to learn about and benefit from other relevant initiatives and programs that relate to the funded work, such as to:

- Exchange information about their funded work with organizations that may benefit from their experience; and,
- Raise awareness within the Puget Sound, Salish Sea, and large aquatic ecosystem protection and restoration communities of the funded work.

Examples of potentially relevant conferences include, but are not limited to:

- The 2016 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference and subsequent biennial conferences
- Local or regional meetings of Tribal, professional, scientific, or other relevant associations.

Participating in specific conferences and meetings will depend on the nature of the work proposed. Recipients will be allowed to use award funds to pay for travel and lodging needs. Recipients should include anticipated costs for attending conferences in their proposed budgets.

F. STORET Requirement

Recipients are required to institute standardized reporting requirements into their work plans and include such costs in their budgets. All water quality data generated in accordance with an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan as a result of this assistance agreement, either directly or by subaward, will be required to be transmitted into the Agency's Storage and Retrieval (STORET) data warehouse using either WQX or WQX web. Water quality data appropriate for STORET include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. The Water Quality Exchange (WQX) is the water data schema associated with the EPA, State and Tribal Exchange Network. Using the WQX schema, partners map their database structure to the WQX/STORET structure. WQX is a web based tool to convert data into the STORET format for smaller data generators that are not direct partners on the Exchange Network. More information about WQX, WQX web, and the STORET warehouse, including tutorials, can be found at STORET/WQX: What is WQX?

If activities submitted as match for this federal assistance agreement involve the generation of water quality data, the resulting information must be publicly accessible (in STORET or some other database). Recipients are encouraged to develop a cross walk between any non-STORET database utilized for the storage of water quality data associated with match activities and EPA's WQX.

Appendix A: Measuring Environmental Results

Logic Models, Outputs, and Outcomes

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

OUTPUTS: Outputs are the activities or deliverables that are to be accomplished as a result of an assistance agreement grant. Outputs are generally described as deliverables or milestones in a work plan or timeline. EPA Project Officers track the completion of outputs to monitor the progress of an assistance agreement. Outputs include items like the number of workshops held, number of volunteers trained, field work completed, studies completed, watershed management plan completed, etc.

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

Tracking medium and long-term outcomes can be costly, especially if monitoring, sampling and analysis are involved. In addition, it can take many years for the long-term impact of an assistance agreement to have a measurable effect on the environment. For small assistance agreements, we tend to focus on short and medium-term outcomes, however, the recipient should still attempt to state long term goals and objectives from the assistance agreement.

- ***Short-term outcomes*** may include changes such as increased knowledge or an active stewardship program.

- ***Medium-term outcomes*** may include documented widespread adoption of best management practices, documented reduction of pesticide use (E.g. 3 pounds of pesticides per acre no longer being used on 2000 acres).

- ***Long-term outcomes*** may include documented reduction of nutrients in a lake, documented reduction in number of children with asthma, documented improvement of indoor air quality, or meeting river water quality standards.

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

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

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

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

Logic models and results chains are tools to be used to build better projects and programs. Accordingly, logic models come in many forms and shapes, from simple storylines that link various actions into strategies and work programs to more complex system diagrams. For a straight forward implementation project, perhaps the logic model is as simple as clearly documenting the

history and basis for a particular project in a particular place to achieve a particular result. For a project with many tasks, work processes, timelines and partners, a more detailed approach may be more helpful.

With whatever logic model format you choose, please explain how the proposed work addresses the largest uncertainties or tests key hypotheses identified or embedded in the logic models. We also encourage the identification of ecosystem endpoints or indicators that would be affected or supported by the products and information from the proposed investigation.

Two brief examples of logic models are provided on the following pages.

Model Example 1: Generic Template

Proposal:	BLANK

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

Logic Model Example 2

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	ACTIVITIES	PARTICIPANTS	SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
EPA funds $148,768 *Logan County Planning Division Manager time in project management $1748* *(other stated inputs)*	*Conduct an ecosystem valuation of a small watershed in Logan County to determine functional values and/or cost-benefit of protecting natural systems over engineered stormwater structures.* *Develop land use designations, development standards, or incentive programs to help guide development of implementation approaches.*	*Logan County staff and University staff conduct valuation.* *Logan County staff, with assistance from outside contract and local citizen committee, develop land use designations and development standards and incentive programs.*	*Ecosystem Valuation* *Develop land use designations and development standards and incentive programs*	• *Increase in acreage or ecosystems protected from development.* • *No net increase in effective impervious cover* • *Reduced risk of increased flooding in downstream floodplain.* • *Reduction of chemical loadings or risk of chemical exposure.*	*Preservation of the naturally functioning ecosystem/watershed processes so that all species dependent on all the functions of that ecosystem are maintained in plentiful supply in the watershed.*
			OUTCOME MEASURES		
			Final report with recommendations for implementation. Specific land use designations in subarea plans. Incentive program.	# of wetland acres protected. # of functioning riparian miles protected. Peak flow hydrology maintained or reduced with increased development.	Watershed hydrology maintained. Less need for new restoration projects. Species maintenance or recovery. Chemical and/or nutrient pollutant loadings reduced.

Appendix B: Grants.Gov Submission Instructions

The electronic submission of your 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, 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 has a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM). The process for 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 obtaining a DUNS number assignment are 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 drop down 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 proposal package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on Grants.gov. Go to http://www.grants.gov then click on ***'Search Grants'*** at the top of the page and enter the **Funding Opportunity Number EPA-R10-PS-2015-001**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.123), then click ***'Search'***. 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 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.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through http://www.grants.gov no later than **November 30, 2015** by **11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time**. 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 proposal 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 package, click on the ***'Show Instructions'*** tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:
Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV.C of this RFP.

Optional Documents:

4. Other Attachments, if applicable-See IV.C.

Applications 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 Melissa Whitaker at (206) 553- 2119. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Technical Issues with Submission

1. Once the application package has been completed, the "Submit" button should be enabled. If the "Submit" button is not active, please call Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Applicants should save the completed application package with two different file names before providing it to the AOR to avoid having to re-create the package should submission problems be experienced or a revised application needs to be submitted.

2. Submitting the application. The application package must be transferred to Grants.gov by an AOR. The AOR should close all other software before attempting to submit the application package. Click the "submit" button of the application package. Your Internet browser will launch and a sign-in page will appear. ***Note: Minor problems are not uncommon with transfers to Grants.gov. It is essential to allow sufficient time to ensure that your application is submitted to Grants.gov BEFORE the due date identified in Section IV of the solicitation.*** The Grants.gov support desk operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except Federal Holidays.
A successful transfer will end with an on-screen acknowledgement. For documentation purposes, print or screen capture this acknowledgement. If a submission problem occurs, reboot the computer – turning the power off may be necessary – and re-attempt the submission.
Note: Grants.gov issues a "case number" upon a request for assistance.

3. Transmission Difficulties. If transmission difficulties that result in a late transmission, no transmission, or rejection of the transmitted application are experienced, and following the above instructions do not resolve the problem so that the application is submitted to www.Grants.Gov by the deadline date and time, follow the guidance below. The Agency will make a decision concerning acceptance of each late submission on a case-by-case basis. All emails, as described below, are to be sent to Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line. If you are unable to email, contact Melissa Whitaker at (206) 553- 2119. Be aware that EPA will only consider accepting applications that were unable to transmit due to www.Grants.gov or relevant www.Sam.gov system issues or for unforeseen exigent circumstances, such as extreme weather interfering with internet

access. Failure of an applicant to submit timely because they did not properly or timely register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov is not an acceptable reason to justify acceptance of a late submittal.

a. If you are experiencing problems resulting in an inability to upload the application to Grants.gov, it is essential to call www.Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 before the application deadline. Applicants who are outside the U.S. at the time of submittal and are not able to access the toll-free number may reach a Grants.gov representative by calling 606-545-5035. Be *sure* to obtain a case number from Grants.gov. If the problems stem from unforeseen exigent circumstances unrelated to Grants.gov, such as extreme weather interfering with internet access, contact Melissa Whitaker at (206) 553- 2119.

b. Unsuccessful transfer of the application package: If a successful transfer of the application cannot be accomplished even with assistance from Grants.gov due to electronic submission system issues or unforeseen exigent circumstances, send an email message to Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov prior to the application deadline. The email message must document the problem and include the Grants.gov case number as well as the entire application in PDF format as an attachment.

c. Grants.gov rejection of the application package: If a notification is received from Grants.gov stating that the application has been rejected for reasons other than late submittal promptly send an email to Whitaker.Melissa@epa.gov with the FON in the subject line within one business day of the closing date of this solicitation. The email should include any materials provided by Grants.gov and attach the entire application in PDF format.

Appendix C: Budget Sample

Budget Detail

This section of the work plan is a detailed description of the budget found in the SF-424A, and must include a detailed discussion of how EPA funds will be used. Applicants must **itemize** costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

Applicants should use the following instructions, budget object class descriptions, and example table to complete the Budget Detail section of the work plan.

- **Personnel - List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, and total cost for the budget period.** This category includes only direct costs for the salaries of those individuals who will perform work directly for the project (generally, paid employees of the applicant organization). If the applicant organization is including staff time (in-kind services) as a cost share, this should be included as Personnel costs. Personnel costs do not include: (1) costs for services of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the "Other" category; or (3) effort that is nor directly in support of the proposed project, which may be covered by the organization's negotiated indirect cost rate. The budget detail must identify the personnel category type by Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including percentage of FTE for part-time employees, number of personnel proposed for each category, and the estimated funding amounts.

- **Fringe Benefits - Identify the percentage used, the basis for its computation, and the types of benefits included**. Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans.

- **Travel - Specify the mileage, per diem, estimated number of trips in-State and out-of-State, number of travelers, and other costs for each type of travel.** Travel may be integral to the purpose of the proposed project (e.g. inspections) or related to proposed project activities (e.g. attendance at meetings). Travel costs do not include: (1) costs for travel of consultants, contractors, consortia members, or other partner organizations, which are included in the "Contractual" category; (2) travel costs for employees of subrecipients under subawards, which are included in the "Other" category.

- **Equipment - Identify each item to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year.** Equipment also includes accessories necessary to make the equipment operational. Equipment does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented, including lease/purchase agreement; or (2) equipment service or maintenance contracts. These types of proposed costs should be included in the

"Other" category. Items with a unit cost of less than $5,000 should be categorized as supplies, pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200. The budget detail must include an itemized listing of all equipment proposed under the project.

- **Supplies - "Supplies" means all tangible personal property other than "equipment".** The budget detail should identify categories of supplies to be procured (e.g., laboratory supplies or office supplies). Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing service, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the "Other" category.

- **Contractual - Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.** Contractual/consultant services are those services to be carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. Leased or rented goods (equipment or supplies) should be included in the "Other" category. The applicant should list the proposed contract activities along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, proposed duration, and proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive), if known.

- **Other - List each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.** This category should include only those types of direct costs that do not fit in any of the other budget categories. Examples of costs that may be in this category are: insurance, rental/lease of equipment or supplies, equipment service or maintenance contracts, printing or photocopying, rebates, and subaward costs. Subawards (e.g., subgrants) are a distinct type of cost under this category. The term “subaward” means an award of financial assistance (money or property) by any legal agreement made by the recipient to an eligible subrecipient. This term does not include procurement purchases, technical assistance in the form of services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, insurance, or direct appropriations. Subcontracts are not subawards and belong in the contractual category. Applicants must provide the aggregate amount they propose to issue as subaward work and a description of the types of activities to be supported.

- **Indirect Charges - If indirect charges are budgeted, indicate the approved rate and base.** Indirect costs are those incurred by the grantee for a common or joint purpose that benefit more than one cost objective or project, and are not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, the applicant must have a federal or state negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional), or must have submitted a proposal to the cognizant Federal or State agency. Examples of Indirect Cost Rate calculations are shown below:

    - ✓ Personnel (Indirect Rate x Personnel = Indirect Costs)
    - ✓ Personnel and Fringe (Indirect Rate x Personnel & Fringe = Indirect Costs)
    - ✓ Total Direct Costs (Indirect Rate x Total direct costs = Indirect Costs)
    - ✓ Direct Costs minus distorting or other factors such as contracts and equipment
      (Indirect Rate x (total direct cost – distorting factors) = Indirect Costs)

  Note on Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant’s cognizant Federal audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges cannot be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the work plan.

Example Budget Table

	EPA Funding	**Match
Personnel		
(1) Project Manager @ $40/hr x 10 hrs/week x 52 wks		$ 20,800
(3) Project Staff @ $25/hr x 40 hrs/week x 40 wks	$120,000	
TOTAL PERSONNEL	**$120,000**	**$ 20,800**
Fringe Benefits		
20% of Salary and Wages	20% (120,000)	20% (20,800)
- Retirement, Health Benefits, FICA, SUI	$ 24,000	$ 4,160
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	**$ 24,000**	**$ 4,160**
Travel		
Travel for Project Manager and staff: 500 mi/month @$0.55 /mi x 12 months	$ 3,300	
TOTAL TRAVEL	**$ 3,300**	
Equipment		
TOTAL EQUIPMENT		
Supplies		
Office and related supplies to support training	$ 10,000	
TOTAL SUPPLIES	**$ 10,000**	
Contractual		
Support Services Contract	$ 20,000	
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL	**$ 20,000**	
Other		
TOTAL OTHER		
Indirect Charges		
Negotiated Rate – Sample 10%	$ 12,000	
TOTAL INDIRECT	**$ 12,000**	
TOTAL FUNDING	**$189,300**	**$ 24,960**