AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND REMEDIATION TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE (EMRTAI)

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA) - Initial Announcement

RFA NO: EPA-OLEM-OMDP-23-01

ASSISTANCE LISTING NO.: 66.511

DATES:

DATE	ACTIVITY
July 31, 2023, by 11:59 p.m. ET	Application Submission Deadline
August 31, 2023	Approximate Date for EPA to Notify Applicants of Results
October 30, 2023	Approximate Date of Award

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SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

The hard rock mining industry has played a significant role in the development of our country. The industry has, and continues to be, an important contributor to both national and regional economies and is critical to our national defense. The benefits of mining to this country have been many but have come at a cost to the environment. As the country has matured there has been increasing recognition that environmental protection is as fundamental to a healthy economy and society as is development. The challenge is to simultaneously promote both economic growth and environmental protection. Currently, there are nearly 100 mining, or mining related sites on EPA's Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). Identifying, prioritizing, and implementing necessary cleanup actions at hard rock mine sites across the country is expected to take many years. Much of the cleanup cost will likely be borne by the public. Over

the past two Federal Executive administrations, a series of Executive Orders were passed that addressed the related topics of hard rock mining site cleanup, and the need for identification and 'remining' of Critical Minerals as defined by the Dept. of Interior, USGS.

The goal of the Environmental Monitoring and Remediation Technology Assessment Initiative (EMRATI or Initiative) is to assess, demonstrate or test the performance of environmental monitoring and remediation technologies that can identify and recover critical minerals from legacy hard rock mining sites or metal processing (smelting, refining, etc.) sites. The EMRTAI will help stimulate the monitoring and remediation technology sector, and support technology assessment and performance testing of technologies to advance EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment. The Initiative will also assist public entities such as non-profit organizations, industries, businesses, states, individuals, and communities in making better informed decisions when selecting new or existing environmental technologies for use at contaminated sites. The successful applicant (i.e., recipient of the proposed cooperative agreement) will conduct technology assessments, demonstration or performance testing of monitoring and remediation technologies related to legacy hard rock mining or metal processing sites for up to 3 years under a financial assistance agreement from EPA. The recipient will design and operate the Initiative by carrying out its work consistent with an EPA reviewed and approved quality management plan (QMP) and conducting assessments, demonstrations or performance testing of environmental monitoring and remediation technologies for use at said sites. As a result, this Initiative will provide the public and stakeholders with objective, quality-assured technology assessment and performance testing data for developed technologies in the field of monitoring and site remediation. Examples of technology areas to be performance tested include but are not limited to: water monitoring and remediation; and solid media (soil and sediment) monitoring and remediation (metals recovery).

The recipient will be expected to gain the active participation of environmental technology customers convened into separate stakeholder groups. Stakeholders should be selected to represent the interests of technology developers, technology buyers, consulting engineers, academia, financial interests, industry associations, public interest groups, local governments, etc. The stakeholder groups should help the recipient develop priority technology categories for technology assessment and performance testing, assist in the development of testing and assessment protocols and plans, help review assessment reports and identify collaborations for assessment and testing of technologies. Technology vendors will voluntarily submit their technologies for assessment and testing and likely pay a portion of the assessment and testing costs through separate agreements with the recipient. Funds the recipient receives from vendors for assessment and testing will be considered program income.

EPA's role in the cooperative agreement will be to provide technical and quality assurance support in concert with the recipient's activities, as well as assist with program outreach and communication of data and results. Program products (reports and other documentation from the assessment and testing of technologies) can be used by vendors in marketing and selling their technologies, purchasers in making purchase decisions, and state regulators in permitting environmental technologies. The goal is for the Initiative to gain acceptance as an important means of assessing and testing new or existing commercially available monitoring and site

remediation technologies related to legacy mining.

B. Scope of Work

EPA is soliciting applications from qualified entities that have an interest and experience in the scope of this Initiative, that is conducting assessments or tests of new or existing environmental monitoring and remediation technologies for identifying and recovering critical minerals (CMs) at contaminated legacy mining sites. Applicants must have the ability and knowledge to conduct assessment, testing and quality assurance support for new (SBIR Phase 2 and 3) and commercial environmental monitoring and remediation technologies. Ability and knowledge can be illustrated in a number of ways, including but not limited to having conducted the same or similar activities in the past as those described here. Familiarity with Federal cooperative agreement or grant operation and management would also be helpful for applicants to highlight. Displaying and describing productivity under these or other Federal agreements would also benefit in the solicitation process.

Assessments or testing of new or existing technologies could include investigating/researching the performance capabilities of such technologies and publishing the findings for stakeholders, users and purchasers of innovative technologies allowing them to make informed decisions regarding acquisition and/or use of these environmental technologies. How the assessment or testing results/findings are published is described in *Section I.E*. of this announcement. This Initiative is similar in scope and activity to past EPA SITE and ETV Program cooperative agreements; however, this new Initiative is focused on environmental monitoring and remediation technologies for identifying and recovering CMs at contaminated legacy mining sites. Through operation of this Initiative, the cooperator will conduct technology assessment and performance testing of new or existing environmental technologies that will help non-profit organizations, industries, businesses, states, communities, and individuals make better-informed decisions when selecting environmental technologies for monitoring or recovering CMs at legacy mine sites. This includes establishing stakeholder groups to help develop priority technology categories for technology assessment and performance testing, assist in the development of testing and assessment protocols and plans, help review assessment reports and identify collaborations for assessment and testing of technologies. The recipient will operate the Initiative by carrying out its work consistent with its quality management plan (QMP), and as a result, provide the public with objective, quality-assured assessment of technologies across a broad spectrum of monitoring and remediation technology assessment categories including, but not limited to: water monitoring and remediation (chemical concentration monitors, sorbent media for contaminants in water, water treatment technologies that remediate or destroy contaminants such as UV and oxidation for removal of groundwater contaminants); and solid media (soil and sediment) monitoring and remediation (chemical concentration monitors, sorbent media for contaminants in soil and sediment such as granulated activated carbon [GAC] addition for sorbing metals or other contaminants, soil and sediment treatment technologies that remediate contaminants such as sorption of contaminants on granular activated carbon).

EPA will provide technical consultation and quality assurance support in concert with the recipient's activities, as well as assist with program outreach and communication of technology

assessment and performance testing data and results. It is foreseen from EPA's experience with the retired verification program that products resulting from this Initiative (reports and other documentation from the assessment and testing of technologies) will be widely used by vendors in selling their technologies, purchasers in making purchase decisions, and state regulators in permitting environmental technologies.

Mandatory Objectives. The recipient will manage this Initiative. Activities and responsibilities of the recipient must include:

- Establishing a stakeholder group and technical panels to help in prioritizing technical monitoring and recovery needs (i.e., categories of technology to assess and/or test).
- Developing and submitting a Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP, *see Section I.F. and IV.D.6)* and a post-award Initiative Quality Management Plan (QMP) and operating the Initiative in accordance with their QMP.
- Providing outreach workshops;
- Preparing and developing technology testing protocols that include stakeholder needs.
- Developing performance metrics for assessing and testing new or existing technologies as well as sustainability metrics for evaluating long term and cross media impacts of the characterization or recovery technologies.
- Potentially managing subawards/contracts (as needed) with organizations for managing assessment, testing and data collection, and write progress and summary reports.

Applications may include (but are not limited to) proposed CM identification/monitoring and recovery projects that provide:

- Outreach on the Initiative's activities and track outcomes for impacts;
- Technology and process evaluations or demonstrations;
- Technical assistance, outreach and/or training to model or accelerate solutions;
- Feasibility studies;
- Expanding acceptance of monitoring or reclamation technologies at mining sites through technology demonstration projects or training and technical assistance; or
- Demonstration, training, or technical assistance projects for developing or improving existing technologies for 'alternative use.'
- Help make technology assessments more relevant to stakeholders through such activities as establishing relationships with other organizations that conduct technology assessment and performance testing similar to that undertaken by the Initiative.

Demonstrations must involve **new or experimental** technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration. These activities relate generally to the gathering or transferring of information or advancing the state of knowledge. Grant proposals

should emphasize this "learning" concept, as opposed to "fixing" an environmental problem via a well-established method.

To the extent practicable, applications must embody innovation. Innovation for the purposes of this RFA is defined as the process of making changes; a new method, custom or device. Innovation can take the form of wholly new applications or applications that build on existing knowledge and approaches for new uses. Applications must include a discussion on how the proposed work is innovative *(see Section IV.E.b.vii)*. Reviewers will draw from the above-mentioned innovation definition in the review/evaluation process of applications *(see Section V. A)*.

EPA will not be a party to contracts between the recipient and the technology developers and vendors. The recipient may seek in-kind support for technology assessment and performance testing by establishing collaborations with interested parties, such as state and local governments, and trade organizations to help defray costs of the assessment and testing conducted.

NOTE: A project's focus must consist of activities within the statutory terms of EPA's financial assistance authorities; specifically, the statute(s) listed in *Section I.C.* Generally, a project must address the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of water pollution, solid/hazardous waste pollution, toxic substances control or pesticide control depending on which statute(s) is listed in *Section I.C*. Further note, applications dealing with any aspect of or related to hydraulic fracturing (fracking) will not be funded by EPA through this program.

Ineligible Information Collection Activities.

The scope of work may not include requests for EPA funding for a survey or other information collection of identical information from 10 or more parties. EPA funds may not be used for the design or administration of an information collection, and EPA personnel may not participate in such activities. Reasonable costs for analyzing independently collected information and publishing the results of such information collections may be allowable to the extent authorized in the EPA approved budget for this agreement.

C. Statutory Authority and Regulations

The authority for this Request for Applications (RFA) and resulting award is contained in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9601; Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 U.S.C. 300j-1, Section 1442; the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1254, Section 104(b)(3); and the Solid Waste Disposal Act, 42 U.S.C. 6981, Section 8001.

For research with an international aspect, the above statutes are supplemented, as appropriate, by the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 102(2)(F).

Additional applicable regulations include: 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 40 (Research and Demonstration Grants).

D. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage

The activities to be funded under this solicitation support the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan. Awards made under this solicitation will support one or more of the following: Goal 6: Safeguard and Revitalize Communities; Objective 6.1: Clean Up and Restore Land for Productive Uses and Healthy Communities; Objective 6.2: Reduce Waste and Prevent Environmental Contamination; Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities; Objective 5.2: Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds. Specifically, the activities to be funded under this announcement will be linked to EPA's Strategic Plan consistent with EPA's current priorities for preventing contamination and helping communities, including local governments, to achieve goals. Applicants must explain in their applications how their project will further one or more of these objectives.

View EPA's Strategic Plan online at: https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan.

E. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7 *"Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements,"* EPA requires that all grant applicants and recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. Applicants must discuss environmental outputs and outcomes in the Project Narrative Application *(see Appendix A)*.

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 specified period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Outputs may include:

1. Technology assessment and performance testing documents and reports for environmental monitoring and remediation technologies for use at contaminated legacy mining sites. These documents include external, public documents and reports, peer-reviewed journal articles and other outreach materials targeted to specific audiences to achieve the objectives of the Initiative.
2. Generic assessment protocols, technology assessment and performance testing QA plans for environmental technologies.
3. Outreach to users of the outputs is a significant activity under the Initiative. It should be anticipated that several public presentations be made to stakeholders and user groups annually, relating to the activities conducted by the Initiative. Stakeholders and user groups include, but are not limited to, technology developers, technology buyers, consulting engineers, academia, industry associations, public interest groups, and local governments or tribes.

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. Applications must include a description of anticipated project outcomes resulting from the project outputs, even if the outcome to be achieved is beyond the assistance agreement funding period. Include the quantitative target associated with the outcome, as appropriate.

Outcomes from the Initiative's efforts include:

1. Pollutant or emission reductions, resource conservation, increase in financial and economic competitiveness, greater regulatory compliance, increased technology use and acceptance, and scientific advancement. The recipient will be expected to track outcome impact incidents supported under the proposed cooperative agreement.

F. Supplementary Information/Special Requirements

It is EPA Policy to ensure that the results of EPA-funded extramural scientific research are accessible to the public to the greatest extent feasible consistent with applicable law; policies and Orders; the Agency's mission; resource constraints; and U.S. national, homeland and economic security. This entails maximizing, at no charge, access by the public to peer-reviewed, scientific journal publications or associated author manuscripts, and their underlying digital data, created in whole or in part with EPA funds, while protecting personal privacy; recognizing proprietary interests, confidential business information and intellectual property rights; and avoiding significant negative impact on intellectual property rights, innovation and U.S. competitiveness. EPA's *Policy for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research* may be accessed at: https://www.epa.gov/research/non-epa-researcher-requirements. Terms and conditions implementing this policy may be accessed at: https://www.epa.gov/research/non-epa-researcher-requirements.

Applications submitted under this announcement shall include a SDMP that addresses public access to EPA-funded scientific data. See the SDMP clause in *IV.D.6* for details on the content of an SDMP. Applicants will also be asked to provide past performance information on whether journal publications or associated author manuscripts, and the associated underlying scientific data and metadata, under prior assistance agreements were made publicly accessible. These items will be evaluated prior to award.

Reasonable, necessary, and allocable costs for data management and public access as discussed in EPA's *Policy for Increasing Access to Results of EPA-Funded Extramural Scientific Research*, may be included in extramural applications and detailed in the budget justification described in Section IV.

Agency policy and ethical considerations prevent EPA technical staff and managers from providing applicants with information that may create an unfair competitive advantage.

Consequently, EPA employees will not review, comment, advise and/or provide technical assistance to applicants preparing applications in response to EPA RFAs. EPA employees cannot endorse any particular application.

Multiple Investigator applications may be submitted as: (1) a single Lead Principal Investigator (PI) application with Co-PI(s) or (2) a Multiple PI application (with a single Contact PI). If you choose to submit a Multiple PI application, you must follow the specific instructions provided in Sections IV. and V. of this RFA. For further information, please see the EPA Implementation Plan for Policy on Multiple Principal Investigators (https://www.epa.gov/research-grants/research-grants-guidance-and-policies).

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a consortium and submit a single application for this assistance agreement. The application must identify which organization will be the recipient of the assistance agreement and which organizations(s) will be sub-awardees of the recipient.

This award may involve the collection of "Geospatial Information," which includes information that identifies the geographic location and characteristics of natural or constructed features or boundaries on the Earth or applications, tools, and hardware associated with the generation, maintenance, or distribution of such information. This information may be derived from, among other things, a Geographic Positioning System (GPS), remote sensing, mapping, charting, and surveying technologies, or statistical data.

G. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation

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

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. What is the amount of available funding?

The total estimated funding for this competitive opportunity is approximately $3,000,000. Requests for amounts in excess of a total of $3 million in EPA funds, including direct and indirect costs, will not be considered.

The EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this RFA.

The EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made.

Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

B. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates award of one cooperative agreement resulting from this announcement. The award will be funded incrementally, on an annual basis over 3 years in amounts ranging from $50,000-$1,000,000 per award year. Applicants should plan for projects to begin on February 1, 2023. Up to approximately $500,000 of the estimated total can be set-aside specifically for awards to the following organizations:

- U.S. territories;
- Tribal governments;
- Tribal colleges and universities; or
- Eligible entities (see *Section III.A*) located in persistent poverty counties (see *Section II.A*).

EPA may adjust the funding based on the quality of applications received, Agency priorities, and other relevant considerations.

C. Funding Type

Cooperative agreements provide for substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officer and the selected applicant(s) in the performance of the work supported. Although the EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement for these projects may include:

- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- in accordance with 2 CFR§200.317 and 2 CFR §200.318, review of proposed procurement;
- approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).
- EPA technical and development support, insofar as intellectual assistance in the cooperative agreement (we do not foresee the use of Federal equipment or facilities to support this effort).
- review of products developed under this Initiative.
- posting of technology assessment and/or performance testing reports on EPA's CLU-In website (https://clu-in.org/) if the recipient's Quality Management Plan has been followed.

- reviewing the Initiative's Quality Management Plan and providing Quality Assurance support.

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.

Applications may not identify EPA cooperators, specific interactions between EPA's investigators and those of the prospective recipient for the cooperative agreement will be negotiated at the time of award.

D. Will applications be partially funded?

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

E. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated start date for projects resulting from this solicitation is **November 10, 2023**. All project activities must be completed within the negotiated project performance period of three years.

SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with Assistance Listing 66.511, applications will be accepted from:

- U.S. Territories and possessions (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals),
- State (includes District of Columbia, public institutions of higher education and hospitals),
- Local (includes State-designated Indian Tribes, excludes institutions of higher education and hospitals),
- Public nonprofit institution/organization (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals),
- Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments,
- Private nonprofit institution/organization (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals).

Consistent with the definition of Nonprofit organization at 2 CFR § 200.1, the term nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated mainly for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purpose in the public interest and is not organized primarily for profit; and uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operation of the organization. The term includes tax-exempt nonprofit neighborhood and labor organizations. Note that 2 CFR § 200.1 specifically excludes Institutions of Higher Education from the definition of non-profit organization because they are separately defined in the regulation. While not considered to be a nonprofit organization(s) as defined by 2 CFR § 200.1, public or nonprofit Institutions of Higher Education are, nevertheless, eligible to submit applications under this RFA. Hospitals operated by state, tribal, or local governments or that meet the definition of nonprofit at 2 CFR § 200.1 are also eligible to apply as nonprofits or as instrumentalities of the unit of government depending on the applicable law. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible. Profit-making firms and individuals are also not eligible to apply.

Nonprofit organizations that are not exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code must submit other forms of documentation of nonprofit status; such as certificates of incorporation as nonprofit under state or tribal law. Nonprofit organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that lobby are not eligible for EPA funding as provided in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, 2 U.S.C. 1611.

National laboratories funded by Federal Agencies (Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, "FFRDCs") may not apply. FFRDC employees may cooperate or collaborate with eligible applicants within the limits imposed by applicable legislation and regulations. They may participate in planning, conducting, and analyzing the research directed by the applicant, but may not direct projects on behalf of the applicant organization. An award recipient may provide funds through its assistance agreement from the EPA to an FFRDC for research personnel, supplies, equipment, and other expenses directly related to the research. However, salaries for permanent FFRDC employees may not be provided through this mechanism. Federal Agencies may not apply. Federal employees are not eligible to serve in a principal leadership role on an assistance agreement. Federal employees may not receive salaries or augment their Agency's appropriations through awards made under this program unless authorized by law to receive such funding. The applicant institution may enter into an agreement with a Federal Agency to purchase or utilize unique supplies or services unavailable in the private sector to the extent authorized by law. Examples are purchase of satellite data, chemical reference standards, analyses, or use of instrumentation or other facilities not available elsewhere. A written justification for federal involvement must be included in the application. In addition, an appropriate form of assurance that documents the commitment, such as a letter of intent from the Federal Agency involved, should be included.

Potential applicants who are uncertain of their eligibility should contact: **Benjamin Simes, Phone: 202-564-0527; email: simes.benjamin@epa.gov.** prior to submitting their application.

B. Leveraging or Matching

No matching funds are required under this competition. Although cost sharing/matching is not required as a condition of eligibility under this competition, under *Section V* of this announcement EPA will evaluate applications based on a leveraging criterion.

Leveraging is generally when an applicant proposes to provide its own additional funds/resources or those from third party sources to support or complement the project they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds awarded. Any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the proposal (See *Section IV*). Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted below.

1. Voluntary Cost Sharing/Matching Funds

Voluntary cost sharing is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project when a cost share is not required. Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share must include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424 and SF-424A. If an applicant proposes a voluntary cost share, the following apply:

- A voluntary cost share is subject to the applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200.306, Cost sharing or matching.
- A voluntary cost share may only be met with eligible and allowable costs.
- The recipient may not use other sources of federal funds to meet a voluntary cost share unless the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant or cooperative agreement.

The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget. If the proposed voluntary cost share does not materialize during the performance period of the grant or cooperative agreement, EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 CFR Part 200.

2. Leveraged Resources

Leveraged resources or "leveraging" is when an applicant proposes to provide additional resources to support or complement the proposed project which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds they are requesting. These resources do not need to be eligible or allowable costs under the program. Additionally, these resources should only be described in the applicant's project narrative and should not be included in the project budget on the SF-424 or SF-424A. If applicants propose to leverage funds, EPA expects them to secure the leveraged resources described in their applications. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during the performance period of the grant or cooperative agreement, EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action authorized under 2 CFR Part 200.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission, will result in elimination of the application from consideration of funding. Only applications from eligible applicants (see *Section III.A* of this RFA) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking criteria in *Section V* of this RFA. If necessary, EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination.

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in *Sections III.A., B., and C.* to be considered eligible. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

The threshold criteria are:

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

2. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in *Section IV* of this solicitation (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in *Section IV*) on or before the application submission deadline published in *Section IV* of this solicitation. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in *Section IV* of this solicitation to ensure that their application is timely submitted. Please note that applicants experiencing technical issues with submitting through Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided in *Section IV*, which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

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

4. Applications must address the mandatory objectives described in *Section I.B, Scope of Work,* of this announcement.

5. **Ineligible activities:** The application must be for eligible activities, see *Section I.B* for additional information on what is considered eligible activities. 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 for funding.

6. The application must demonstrate a public purpose of support or stimulation (e.g., by proposing work which primarily benefits a federal program or provides a service for a federal agency).

7. Federal funds requested must not exceed $3,000,000 total for all years combined. Applications exceeding the funding limits or project period term described herein will be rejected without review.

SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

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

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

B. Submission Instructions

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

   Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using login.gov to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the Entity Registration Checklist for details on this process.

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

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

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

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

2. Grants.gov Registration Instructions

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

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

Contact Grants.gov for assistance at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov to resolve technical issues with Grants.gov. 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. The Grants.gov Support Center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays.

3. Application Submission Process

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

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

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

4. Application Submission Deadline

   Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov no later than **July 31, 2023**, 11:59 PM ET. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application and allow for unexpected errors that may require you to resubmit.

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

C. Technical Issues with Submission

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

1. Contact Grants.gov Support Center before the application deadline date.

2. Document the Grants.gov ticket/case number.

3. Send an email with **EPA-OLEM-OMDP-23-01** in the subject line to **Benjamin Simes, Simes.Benjamin@epa.gov before** the application deadline time and date and must include the following:
   a. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
   b. Description of the issue
   c. The entire application package in PDF format.
   Without this information, EPA may not be able to consider applications submitted outside of Grants.gov. Any application submitted after the application deadline time and date deadline will be deemed ineligible and **not** be considered.

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

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

D. 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. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
4. EPA Form 4700-4 Pre-award Compliance Review Report
5. Project Attachment Form. This includes the Narrative Proposal (see formal detailed in *Appendix A: Optional Template for Narrative Proposal*) and Project Milestones (see format detailed in *Appendix B*). The Narrative Proposal and Budget Table and Description should be combined into one PDF file. The Narrative Proposal should not exceed 11 pages (including the cover sheet) and the Budget Table and Description should not exceed 4 pages. Pages in excess of the identified limits will not be considered.
6. Applications submitted in response to this solicitation must include a Scientific Data Management Plan (SDMP) that addresses public access to EPA-funded scientific data by including the information below:

   (1) If the proposed environmental monitoring and remediation technology assessment and performance testing described in the application is expected to result in the generation of scientific data, the application must include a SDMP of up to two single-spaced pages (this is in addition to any application page limits described in *Section IV* of this solicitation that apply to other parts of the application package) describing plans for providing long-term preservation of, and public access to, the scientific data and accompanying metadata created and/or collected under the award (including data generated under subawards and contracts) funded in whole or in part by EPA. The SDMP should indicate that the recipient will make accessible, at a minimum, scientific data and associated metadata underlying their scientific journal publications funded in whole or in part by EPA. SDMPs should reflect relevant standards and community best practices for data and metadata and make use of community-accepted repositories whenever practicable. The contents of the SDMP

(or absence thereof) will be considered as part of the application review process for selected applicants as described in Section V and must be deemed acceptable for the applicant to receive an award. The SDMP should include the following elements (Note: If any of the items listed below do not apply, please explain why):

i. Types of scientific data and metadata expected to be generated and/or collected under the award.
ii. The location where the data will be publicly accessible.
iii. The standards to be used for data/metadata format and content.
iv. Policies for accessing and sharing data including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, security, intellectual property and other rights or requirements consistent with applicable laws, regulations, rules and policies.
v. Plans for digital data storage, archiving and long-term preservation that address the relative value of long-term preservation and access along with the associated costs and administrative burden.
vi. Description of how data accessibility and preservation will enable validation of published results or how such results could be validated if data are not shared or preserved.
vii. Roles and responsibilities for ensuring SDMP implementation and management (including contingency plans in case key personnel leave the project).
viii. Resources and capabilities (equipment, connections, systems, software, expertise, etc.) requested in the application that are needed to meet the stated goals for accessibility and preservation (reference can be made to the relevant section of the application's budget justification).
ix. If appropriate, an explanation as to why data accessibility and/or preservation are not possible.

(2) If the proposed environmental monitoring and remediation technology assessment and performance testing is not expected to result in the generation of scientific data, provide the following statement (not subject to any application page limits described in *Section IV* of this solicitation) in your application as the SDMP: "The proposed technology assessment and performance testing is not expected to result in the generation of scientific data." If scientific data are generated after award, the recipient agrees to update the statement by providing EPA with a revised SDMP (see content of SDMP described above) describing how scientific data and accompanying metadata created and/or collected under the award (including data generated under subawards and contracts) will be preserved and, as appropriate, made publicly accessible.

Optional Documents:

1. **Other Attachments, if applicable.** This includes Milestones (*See Appendix B for an example*). These may also include references/works cited, letters of support, CV/Resume (please combine each of these individual items into one PDF, e.g., all the letters of support should be in one combined PDF, all the references should be in another combined PDF).

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 **Benjamin Simes, phone: 202-564-0527; or e-mail: Simes.Benjamin@epa.gov**. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

E. Content of Application Submission

In accordance with the mandatory documents listed in *Section IV.B*, all applications must contain the "Project Attachment Form" which includes the "Narrative Proposal" and "Budget Table and Description." The "Narrative Proposal," a maximum of 11 pages in length, must **explicitly** describe the applicant's proposed project and specifically address each of the evaluation criteria disclosed in *Section V.A Evaluation Criteria*, and the threshold eligibility criteria in *Section III.C.* The "Budget Table and Description" portion of the "Project Attachment Form", described in more detail in Section "c" below, must not exceed 4 pages in length.

Narrative Proposal. Narrative proposals should be concise and well organized. The following requirements apply:

- It must not exceed 11 typed 8 1/2 x 11" pages which includes a one-page Summary Information Page (i.e., the one-page Summary Information Page is page 1 out of the 11 pages total).) This does not include the Budget Table and Description, which is limited to 4 pages.
- It must be single-line spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, one column per page, and no indenting paragraphs.
- It must provide the information detailed in this section and **include responses to all *Section III.C, Threshold Eligibility Criteria*; *Section V.A, Evaluation Criteria*; as well as the information identified in *Section I, Funding Opportunity Description***. Factual information about your proposed project must be provided. Do not include discussions of broad principles that are not specific to the proposed work or project covered by your application. Responses to evaluation criteria should include the criteria number and title but need not restate the entire text of the criteria. Sufficient detail must be provided to allow for an evaluation of the merits of the proposal. **Vague descriptions, redundancy, and failure to address each of the evaluation criteria will result in a lower ranking**.

The Narrative Proposal *(Sections "a" and "b" below)* should be submitted in the format detailed in *Appendix A: Optional Template for Narrative Proposal*. The Narrative Proposal must substantially conform to the following outline and content:

a. The **Summary Information Page** (maximum of one-page) must include:

i. Project Title.
ii. Applicant Name. Identify the name of the organization submitting the application.
iii. Eligible Entity Type. Identify your organization's organization type from *Section III.A, Eligible Entities*. In addition, if you qualify for the set-aside, indicate that here.
iv. Project Type(s). Identify the project type(s) that are covered for your project.
v. DUNS Number. List the organization's DUNS number.
vi. Project Summary. Briefly describe the project in two to four sentences.
vii. Contact Information. Include name, title, address, email address, phone number. You can list both a primary and an administrative contact.
viii. Project Location. Include the location where the project will be taking place. If a project will occur in more than one location, indicate the city and state associated with the primary location.
ix. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including leveraging or in-kind resources.
x. EPA Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.
xi. Project Period. Provide estimated beginning and ending dates.
xii. Program Objective Elements. State the mandatory program objective elements addressed from *Section I.B, Scope of Work*.
xiii. Relevancy to Authorities and Regulations: Specify how this project falls under the authorities and regulations indicated in *Section I.C*.

b. **The Narrative Proposal.** Provide the information below on how the applicant will implement and conduct its project by addressing each of the evaluation criteria in *Section V* of this announcement. The Narrative Proposal must not exceed 11 pages. The Narrative Proposal Work-Plan must include:

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

- Detailed project summary, description of specific actions and methods to be undertaken and the responsible institutions, including estimated timeline for each task.

A. Describe a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results in *Section I.B, Scope of Work*.

Applicants for demonstration project funding explain how the project meets the statutory definition of "demonstration" and describe how the results of the project will be evaluated and disseminated to researchers, AD facility operators, regulators and other parties interested in advancing AD technology

B. Describe a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results in *Section I.D, EPA Strategic Plan Linkage*.

C. Describe a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results in *Section I.E, Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs*.

Anticipated Outcomes. Specify the expected environmental outcomes including those described in *Section I.E, Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs* of this announcement. Discuss how you propose to track and measure your progress towards achieving the project outcomes and results. Include quantitative targets for outcomes when applicable *(Refer to Section V. A, Evaluation Criteria).*

Anticipated Outputs. Identify the expected project outputs, including those described in *Section I.E, Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs* of this announcement and describe how you will track and measure your progress towards achieving the expected project outputs. Outputs, quantitative or qualitative, must be measurable during the project performance period. Include quantitative targets for outputs when applicable.

- **Clear and reasonable time schedule.** Provide a schedule indicating start times and completion dates of significant tasks and responsibilities under your program. For efficiency, it is suggested that project milestones be coordinated with important events (e.g., budget cycle, meetings). See *Appendix B* for an example you may wish to use.

ii. **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) that your organization performed within the last five years and describe: (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and (iii) whether journal publications or author manuscripts associated with the journal publications, and the associated underlying scientific research data and metadata, resulting from those agreements were made publicly accessible (and if not, explain why not; or explain why this requirement does not apply) to the extent permissible under applicable laws and regulations.

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 application, and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

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.

iii. **Effective Partnerships.** Identify all proposed partnerships and stakeholder groups that will be involved in the project. Describe what each group's role will be in project staffing, funding, design, and implementation. Mention the experience associated with the partners in working with the target audience (sectors, stakeholders). Please note that the procurement of commercial services (e.g., consultants, audio visual equipment, meeting space) is subject to the competitive procurement provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 and Part 1500, as applicable. Naming a commercial vendor or consultant as a "partner" does not relieve the applicant of responsibility for complying with competitive procurement requirements, including cost or price analysis, or justify sole source procurement. If an eligible applicant is partnering with a non-eligible applicant (e.g., a non-profit organization is partnering with a for-profit organization), state how the organization came to be (e.g. describe the competitive process that was followed). **Refer to EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements for additional information.**

iv. **Congressional Direction.** Consistent with Congressional direction, the applicant should describe the extent and quality which the project supports a state or local mandate, policy, or community priority to address technology assessment/testing for water, sediment or soil monitoring and remediation, waste reduction, and critical mineral recovery technologies for use at legacy mining sites.

v. **Transferability.** Describe how the project is transferable to other communities. Include the process you will take to ensure that other communities can benefit from this funding agreement.

vi. **Project Sustainability.** Describe your organization's plan to promote and continue efforts to support AD after EPA funding for this project has ended. Include how the project will continue to sustain the outcomes and outputs as well as any direction for future results.

vii. **Innovation.** Describe how the proposed project includes innovative or novel approaches (e.g., unusual, routine, or established practices) to support the development of AD. Include robust descriptions about your approaches to justify them. To the extent practicable, applications must embody innovation. Innovation for

the purposes of this RFA is defined as the process of making changes; a new method, custom or device. Innovation can take the form of wholly new applications or applications that build on existing knowledge and approaches for new uses. Applications must include a discussion on how the proposed work is innovative (see *Section IV.E.b.vii)*. Reviewers will draw from the above-mentioned innovation definition in the review/evaluation process of applications (see Section V. A).

viii. **Leveraging.** Demonstrate how you will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds/resources to leverage additional resources beyond the grant funds awarded [also include the following language only if there is a cost share requirement--"and any required cost share for applicants specified in Section III of the announcement"] to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Describe the type and amount of leveraging proposed, how you will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged funds/resources will play in the overall project. Selected applicants are expected to abide by their proposed leveraging commitments during grant performance and the failure to do so may affect the legitimacy of the award.

c. **Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds.** Describe your organization's procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner.

Prepare a master budget table using "SF-424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs" (aka SF-424A), available in the Grants.gov electronic application package. Only complete "Section B-Budget Categories." Provide the object class budget category (a-k) amounts for each budget year under the "Grant Program, Function or Activity" heading. Each column reflects a separate budget year. For example, Column (1) reflects budget year 1. The total budget will be automatically tabulated in column (5). Please see "Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance" for more details.

Applicants may not use sub-agreements to transfer or delegate their responsibility for successful completion of their EPA assistance agreement. Please refer to https://www2.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses#Contracts and Subawards if your organization intends to identify specific contractors, including consultants and sub-awardees in your application.

Please note that institutional cost-sharing is not required.

i. Budget Justification *[3 pages in addition to the Section IV.C.6, Page limitations]*

Identify the amount requested for each budget category and describe the basis for calculating the personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual support and other costs identified in the SF-424A. The budget justification should not exceed three consecutively numbered (bottom center), 8.5x11-inch pages of single-spaced, standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins.

Budget information should be supported at the level of detail described below:

(1) Personnel: List all staff positions by title. Give annual salary, percentage of time assigned to the project, total cost for the budget period, project role **and specify any annual cost of living adjustments. Compensation paid for** employees engaged in grant activities must be consistent with payments for similar work within the applicant organization. Note that for salaries to be allowable as a direct charge to the award, a justification of how that person will be directly involved in the project must be provided. General administrative duties such as answering telephones, filing, typing or accounting duties are not considered acceptable.

Below is a sample computation for Personnel:

Position/Title	**Annual Salary**	**% of Time Assigned to Project**	**Year 1**	**Year 2***	**Year 3***	**Total**
Project Manager	$70,000	50%	$35,000	$36,050	$37,132	$108,182
Env. Specialist	$60,000	100%	$60,000	$61,800	$63,654	$185,454
Env. Health Tech	$45,000	100%	$45,000	$46,350	$47,741	$139,091
Total Personnel			**$140,000**	**$144,200**	**$148,527**	**$432,727**

***There is a 3% increase after Year 1 for all personnel for cost of living adjustments**

Note this budget category is limited to persons employed by the applicant organization ONLY. Those employed elsewhere are classified as subawardees, program participants, contractors or consultants. Contractors and consultants should be listed under the "Contractual" budget heading. Subawards made to eligible subrecipients are listed under the "Other" budget heading. Participant support costs such as stipends or travel assistance for trainees (e.g., interns or fellows) are listed under the "Other" budget heading. Please see "EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs" for more details.

(2) Fringe Benefits: Identify the percentage used and the basis for its computation. Fringe benefits are for the personnel listed in budget category (1) above and only for the percentage of time devoted to the project. Fringe benefits include but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions and unemployment benefit plans. The applicant should not combine the fringe benefit costs with direct salaries and wages in the personnel category.

(3) Travel: In a table format, specify the estimated number of trips, purpose of each trip, number of travelers per trip, destinations and other costs for each type of travel. Travel for program updates in Cincinnati, and any other specific site travel should be outlined, and detailed costs provided. Explain the need for any travel, paying particular attention to travel outside the United States. Foreign travel includes trips to Mexico and Canada but does not include trips to Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories or possessions. **If EPA funds will not be used for foreign travel, the budget justification must expressly state that the applicant will not use EPA funds for foreign travel without approval by EPA.** Include travel funds for annual progress reviews (estimate for two days in Cincinnati, OH) and a final workshop to report on results.

Below is a sample computation for Travel:

Purpose of Travel	**Location**	**Item**	**Computation**	**Cost**
EPA Progress Review	Cincinnati, OH	Lodging	4 people x $100 per night x 2 nights	$800
		Airfare	4 people x $500 round trip	$2,000
		Per Diem	4 people x 50 per day x 2 days	$400
Total Travel				**$3,200**

(4) Equipment: Identify all tangible, non-expendable personal property to be purchased that has an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year. Equipment also includes accessories and services included with the purchase price necessary for the equipment to be operational. It does not include: (1) equipment planned to be leased/rented; or (2) separate equipment service or maintenance contracts. Details such as the type of equipment, cost and a brief narrative on the intended use of the equipment for project objectives are required. Each item of equipment must be identified with the corresponding cost. Particular brands of equipment should not be identified. General-purpose equipment (office equipment, etc.) must be justified as to how it will be used on the project. (Property items with a unit cost of less than $5,000 are considered supplies).

(5) Supplies: "Supplies" are tangible property other than "equipment" with a per item acquisition cost of less than $5,000. Include a brief description of the supplies required to perform the work. Costs should be categorized by major supply categories (e.g., office supplies, computing devices, monitoring equipment) and include the estimated costs by category.

(6) Contractual: List the proposed contractual activities along with a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided, the proposed duration of the contract/procurement, the estimated cost and the proposed procurement method (competitive or non-competitive). **Any procurement of services from individual consultants or commercial firms (including space for workshops) must comply**

with the competitive procurement requirements of 2 CFR Part 200.317-200.326. Please see "Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements" for more details.

Examples of Contractual costs include:

i. Consultants – Consultants are individuals with specialized skills who are paid at a daily or hourly rate. EPA's participation in the salary rate (excluding overhead) paid to individual consultants retained by recipients or by a recipient's contractors or subcontractors is limited to the maximum daily rate for a Level IV of the Executive Schedule (formerly GS-18), to be adjusted annually.
ii. Speaker/Trainer Fees – Information on speakers should include the fee and a description of the services they are providing.

(7) Other: List each item in sufficient detail for the EPA to determine the reasonableness of its cost relative to the technology assessment and performance testing to be undertaken. "Other" items may include equipment rental, telephone service and utilities and photocopying costs. Note that subawards, such as those with other universities or nonprofit research institutions for members of the team, are included in this category. **Provide the total costs proposed for subawards as a separate line item in the budget justification and brief description of the activities to be supported for each subaward or types of subawards if the subrecipients have not been identified.** Subawards may not be used to acquire services from consultants or commercial firms. Please see "EPA Subaward Policy for EPA Assistance Agreement Recipients" for more details. The "Other" budget category also includes participant support costs such as stipends or travel assistance for trainees (e.g., interns or fellows). **Provide the total costs proposed for participant support costs as a separate line item in the budget justification and brief description of the costs. If EPA funds will not be used for foreign travel by program participants, the budget justification must expressly state that the applicant will not use EPA funds for foreign travel without approval by EPA.**

Indirect Costs: For additional information pertaining to indirect costs, please see "Indirect Cost Guidance for Recipients of EPA Assistance Agreements."

(8) Other Attachments. The applicant can provide additional attachments such as references/works cited, milestones, letters of support, or CV/Resume. Letters of support should include the names and phone numbers of persons to contact at the organization providing the letter of support along with a description of what involvement (e.g., assistance, role) the organization has or will have with your organization/project. Applicants may include letters confirming commitments.

F. Pre-Application Assistance

Questions received from applicants and EPA responses will be posted online at: https://www.epa.gov/grants/office-land-and-emergency-management-grants-and-funding.

SECTION V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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

A. Evaluation Criteria

Eligible entities whose applications meet the threshold criteria in *Section III.C* of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criterion set forth below. Applicants must directly and explicitly address these criteria as described in *Section IV.E*. Please see Appendix A for an optional Template for Narrative Proposal (*Appendix A*). The information provided must be easily identifiable and clearly described to ensure the content of the application is clearly laid out for reviewers. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

Criterion	Maximum Points per Criterion
1. **Project Summary and Approach.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate: a. The extent and quality to which the narrative proposal includes a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results in the following areas: i. *Section I, Part B* (Scope of Work) (10 points) ii.*Section I, Part C* (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage) The extent and quality to which the narrative proposal includes a well-conceived strategy for addressing the requirements and plan for achieving project results. Outcomes and outputs must be quantitative or qualitative and must measure environmental improvement or should be directly linked to environmental improvement. Include quantitative targets as appropriate. (5 points) b. The extent and quality to which the narrative proposal sets forth a clear and reasonable time schedule and associated project tasks for achieving the project goals and objectives by project end. (10 points)	25
2. **Maintaining or Establishing Sustainable and Healthy Communities** a. How the project benefits communities and/or population health. **b.** The extent to which the project addresses engagement with communities and/or populations to ensure meaningful, ongoing participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project (i.e., leading to sustainability).	15
3. **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**. Under this criterion, applications will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, taking into account their:	10

Criterion	Maximum Points per Criterion
a. past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to *Section IV.E.b.ii* of the solicitation, (3 points) b. history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to *Section IV.E.b.ii* of the solicitation 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. (3 points) c. organizational experience and plan that will contribute to the timely successful achievement of the objectives of the proposed project. (2 points) d. staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. (2 points) **Note**: In evaluating applicants under items "a" and "b" of this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items i and ii above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.	
4. **Effective Partnerships.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which: a. The application describes how the quality of the partnerships and/or coalition currently in place will support the proposed project and why it is sufficient to complete the proposed project. If the partnership will be expanded, describe the additional members that will be engaged and/or recruited and the role that they will play. In addition, the application describes the role of each partner on the project and their experience working with the target audience and/or sectors addressed. (5 points)	10

Criterion	Maximum Points per Criterion
b. The application describes how organizations involved in the project are located in the community for which benefits will occur. (5 points) Applicants that do not plan on collaborating with other groups in project performance will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate how they will be able to effectively perform and complete the project without such collaboration.	
5. **Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the proposed project budget and narrative (including any voluntary cost share) to determine the extent and quality to which: a. Costs are reasonable to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes. (3 points) b. The proposed budget provides a detailed breakout of the approximate funding used for each major activity. (4 points) c. The application conveys the approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (3 points) An application's budget for the Standard Form 424 and budget narrative must account only for federal funds and any voluntary cost share. Cost sharing leveraging will also be considered in this criterion.	10
6. **Congressional Direction.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality which the project supports a state or local mandate, policy, or community priority to address technology assessment/testing for water, sediment or soil monitoring and remediation, waste reduction, and critical mineral recovery technologies for use at legacy mining sites.	10
7. **Transferability.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application identifies and explains how results from the project can be transferred to other communities.	5
8. **Project Sustainability.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application continues to promote efforts to support AD after EPA funding for this project has ended.	5

Criterion	Maximum Points per Criterion
9. **Innovation.** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the application based on the extent and quality to which the application includes concepts, approaches, methods, or combinations of them that demonstrate an innovative way to perform the project or deliver results (e.g., not usual, routine, or established practices) to support the development of AD capacity and infrastructure. To the extent practicable, applications must embody innovation. Innovation for the purposes of this RFA is defined as the process of making changes, a new method, custom or device. Innovation can take the form of wholly new applications or applications that build on existing knowledge and approaches for new uses. Applications must include a discussion on how the proposed work is innovative *(see Section IV.E.b.vii)*. Reviewers will draw from the above-mentioned innovation definition in the review/evaluation process of applications *(see Section V. A)*.	5
10. **Leveraging.** Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds/resources to leverage additional resources beyond the grant funds awarded to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the type and amount of leveraging proposed, how the applicant will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged resources will play to support the proposed project activities.	5

B. Review and Selection Process

1. **Threshold Eligibility Screening Process** - All applications will be screened for Threshold Eligibility (see *Section III.C*) by EPA staff from the Office of Mountains, Deserts and Plains (OMDP).

2. **Panel Review and Evaluation Process** - All applications that meet the Threshold Eligibility Criteria after the screening review will be reviewed based on the criteria in *Section V*. A ranking list will be developed by the review panel. The ranking list will also clearly identify projects eligible for set-aside consideration, as described in *Section II.A*.

3. **Final Selection Process and Other Factors** – Final rankings and selection recommendations from the review panel, based on the ranking list, will be presented to the Director of OMDP in Headquarters who will then make the final selection for award.

EPA anticipates selecting one grant. In addition to the ranking list, the Director of OMDP may also consider any of the following other factors in making final selection decisions among the high-ranking applications from the ranking list:

a. Geographic Diversity – EPA may consider the mix of high-ranking projects located in urban and rural areas or different regions of the country when making final selections, as well as the geographical nature or impact of the project.
b. Programmatic Priorities – OMDP priorities that may focus on certain environmental and/or public health issues. These overarching priorities may be considered when making final selections among high-ranking applications
c. Diversity of Project Types – EPA may consider the mix of high-ranking project types when making final selections to ensure that project types vary among those being awarded.
d. Diversity of Organization Types – EPA may consider the mix of high-ranking projects from various different types of organizations when making final selections to ensure that project types vary among those being awarded.
e. Availability of funds.

While EPA expects to make an award of approximately $3,000,000 total, including approximately $500,000 for the set-aside, these amounts may be increased or decreased subject to the number of quality applications received and other relevant considerations. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement.

C. Confidential Business Information

EPA recommends that you do not include confidential business information (CBI) in your application. However, if CBI is included, it will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR 2.203. Applicants must clearly indicate which portion(s) of their application they are claiming as CBI. EPA will evaluate such claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure. The agency protects competitive applications from disclosure under applicable provisions of the Freedom of Information Act prior to the completion of the competitive selection process.

SECTION VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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

A. Award Notices

EPA anticipates notification to successful applicants will be made via telephone or electronic or postal mail by **August 31, 2023**. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the application, or the project contact listed in the application. This notification, which informs the

applicant that its application 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 Grants & Interagency Management Division (GIAMD). Applicants are cautioned that only a grants officer is authorized to bind the Government to the expenditure of funds; selection does not guarantee an award will be made. For example, statutory authorization, funding or other issues discovered during the award process may affect the ability of EPA to make an award to an applicant. The award notice, signed by an EPA grants officer, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic or postal mail. The successful applicant may need to prepare and submit additional documents and forms (e.g., work plan), which must be approved by EPA, before the grant can officially be awarded. The time between notification of selection and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Applicants selected for award will be required to submit a final cooperative agreement application package to EPA. This package will include an EPA-approved final work plan that describes the work to be performed, a final budget, and the required certification forms. Programmatic terms and conditions will be negotiated with the selected recipient.

2. Approved cooperative agreements will include terms and conditions that will be binding on the grant recipient. Terms and conditions specify what grantees must do to ensure that grant-related and program-related requirements are met. Terms and conditions may be viewed at: Grant Terms and Conditions. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: Introduction to Regulations, Policies and Guidance for EPA Grants.

3. **Reimbursement Limitation.** If the recipient expends more than the amount of funding in its EPA approved budget in anticipation of receiving additional funds from EPA, it does so at its own risk. EPA is not legally obligated to reimburse the recipient for costs incurred in excess of the EPA approved budget.

4. **Intergovernmental Review Act**

   EPA financial assistance programs and activities subject to intergovernmental review under State single point of contact procedures are identified at https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-financial-assistance-programs-subject-executive-order-12372-and-section-204. Applicants for programs or activities subject to Intergovernmental Review that are not subject to State single point of contact review must provide directly affected State, areawide, regional, and local entities at least 60 days to review their application following notification by EPA that the application has been selected for funding as provided by 40 CFR 29.8(a) and (c).

C. Reporting Requirement

Quarterly progress reports and a detailed final report will be required. The quarterly progress reports will be submitted to the EPA Project Officer within thirty days after each reporting period. These reports shall cover work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, preliminary data results and a statement of activity anticipated during the subsequent reporting period. A discussion of expenditures along with a comparison of the percentage of the project completed to the project schedule and an explanation of significant discrepancies shall be included in the report. The report shall also include any changes of key personnel concerned with the project.

At the close of the grant, the successful applicant will submit a final technical report to the EPA Project Officer within 90 calendar days of completion of the period of performance. The final technical report shall include a summary of the project or activity, advances or goals achieved, and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final technical report should discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned during the project period.

D. Use of Funds

An applicant that receives an award under this announcement is expected to manage cooperative agreement funds efficiently and effectively and make sufficient progress towards completing the project activities described in the work plan in a timely manner. The cooperative agreement will include terms/conditions implementing this requirement. The Agency expects timely drawdown of funds and a yearly financial report. In addition to quarterly reports, other required financial reports will provide the Agency with information regarding progress being made.

E. 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) which can be found at Grant Competition Dispute Resolution Procedures. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the person listed in *Section VII* of the announcement. Note, the FR notice references regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 CFR parts 200 and 1500. Notwithstanding the regulatory changes, the procedures for competition-related disputes remains unchanged from the procedures described at 70 FR 3629, 3630, as indicated in 2 CFR Part 1500, Subpart E.

SECTION VII. AGENCY CONTACT

Benjamin Simes, U.S. EPA, Office of Land and Emergency Management/Office of Mountains, Deserts and Plains, 1301 Constitution Ave NW, Mail stop 4402P, Washington DC 20460; Phone: 202-564-0527; or e-mail: Simes.Benjamin@epa.gov

APPENDIX A: OPTIONAL TEMPLATE FOR NARRATIVE PROPOSAL

Instructions: All portions of the narrative proposal must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format, and content defined in the RFA. Page counts refer to one-side of a single-spaced typed page. Pages in excess of the identified limits will not be considered. The milestones, budget table, and narrative have separate page limits and will be considered in the evaluation.

Template for Summary Information

[Instructions: *The Narrative Proposal includes both a Summary Information page and Narrative Proposal Work-Plan and* ***should not exceed 11 pages****. The application's Summary Information page should follow the format below. The Summary Information should appear on the first page of the Proposal Narrative and should not exceed one-page.* ***Italicized and bracketed text should be deleted before submission.****]*

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)
Anaerobic Digestion Cooperative Agreement 2021
EPA-OLEM-ORCR-21-02

i. Project Title: *[Project title]*
ii. Applicant Name: *[Name of organization]*
iii. Eligible Entity Type: *[Eligible entity type]*
iv. Project Type: *[Project type]*
v. DUNS Number: *[DUNS number]*
vi. Project Summary: *[Briefly describe your project in 2-4 sentences]*
vii. Contact Information: *[Include name of contact person(s), title, address, e-mail address, phone number. An administrative and a primary contact can be listed]*
viii. Project Location: *[Location where the project will be taking place]*
ix. Total Project Cost: *[Specify the total cost of the project]*
x. EPA Funding Requested: *[Specify the amount of funding requested from EPA]*
xi. Project period: *[Provide anticipated project start date and anticipated project completion date]*
xii. Program Objective Elements: *[Mandatory program objective elements in Section I. B, Scope of Work]*
xiii. Relevancy to Authorities and Regulations: Specify how this project falls under the authorities and regulations indicated in Section I.C.

Template for Narrative Proposal Work Plan

[Instructions: *Applicants may use the following template for their Narrative Proposal Work Plan. Text that is italicized and bracketed may be deleted when submitting the application. Applicants are encouraged to use subheadings under each criterion to aid the reviewers in effectively reviewing your application.]*

Criterion 1: Project Summary and Approach (25 points)

a. Scope of Work: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
b. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
c. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
d. Time Schedule: *[Applicant's text goes here]*

Criterion 2: Maintaining or Establishing Sustainable and Healthy Communities (15 points)

a. How the project benefits communities and/or population health: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
b. The extent to which the project addresses engagement with communities and/or populations to ensure meaningful, ongoing participation with respect to the design, project planning, and performance of the project (i.e., leading to sustainability): [*Applicant's text goes here]*

Criterion 3: Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (10 points)

a. Past Performance in Completing and Managing Projects: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
b. Organizational Experience and Plan for Project Completion: *[Applicant's text goes here]*

Criterion 4: Effective Partnerships (10 points)

a. Partnership Description: *[Applicant's text goes here]*
b. Organization Location in the Community: *[Applicant's text goes here]*

Criterion 5: Budget and Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds (10 points)

a. Please see Budget Table and Description

Criterion 6: Congressional Direction (10 points)

[Applicant's text goes here]

Criterion 7: Transferability (5 points)

[Applicant's text goes here]

Criterion 8: Project Sustainability (5 points)

[Applicant's text goes here]

Criterion 9: Innovation (5 points)

[Applicant's text goes here]

Criterion 10: Leveraging (5 points)

[Applicant's text goes here]

List of Attachments:

[List all attachments (budget table and description, timeline with milestones, letters of support) that are being submitted with this package.]

*[You **do not** need to list the following mandatory documents:*

- *Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance,*
- *Standard Form 424A: Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
- *EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54*
- *EPA Form 4700-4: Pre-Award Compliance Review Report]*

APPENDIX B: MILESTONES

[Provide a schedule indicating start times and completion dates of significant tasks and responsibilities under your program. The following table is an example of a format applicants may wish to use in listing milestones. Other formats that clearly list the milestones and timelines are also acceptable. The Milestones ***should not exceed one page. This Milestones page does not count towards the 11-page limit.****]*

Timeline and Milestones Example:

Timeline / Workflow **New actions for this Project** Existing program actions into which this project will be incorporated	Winter 2018	2019												2020								
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Outreach to businesses to participate in Cohorts																						
EcoData Tracking Workshops																						
Cohort site visits + technical assistance/P2 recommendations + assessment for tanks & supplies																						
Permit guidance created																						
BMP toolkits produced (incl. Metrics Calculator)																						
Issue tanks RFP																						
Contracts issued for tanks																						
Permit assistance																						
Training on tracking waste stream impacts																						
Cohort Meetings																						
Cohort tracking and implementation period																						
Asset management training																						
3 training videos; **1 of which will be on side-streaming**																						
Reimbursements for tanks																						
Cohort follow-up site visits																						
Green Manufacturing training																						
Results analysis, review, & report writing																						