

U.S. EPA GULF OF MEXICO DIVISION

Gulf of Mexico Innovative Nutrient Reduction: Farmer to Farmer and Watershed-based Non-Agriculture Approaches 2022 Request for Applications

Federal Agency Name:	Environmental Protection Agency
Funding Opportunity Title:	Gulf of Mexico Innovative Nutrient Reduction: Farmer to Farmer and Watershed-based Non-Agriculture
Announcement Type:	Request for Applications (RFA)
Funding Opportunity Number:	EPA-GM-INR-2022
Assistance Listing:	66.475

KEY DATES: All dates listed below are tentative.

October 14, 2022	RFA Opens Please review the recorded webinar, Q&A, and the helpful hints for developing an application, posted at https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico/us-epa-gulf-mexico-division-funding-opportunity-gulf-mexico-innovative-nutrient before submitting questions. If the answer needed is not already included in the Q&A, please submit questions to GMP-RFP@epa.gov . Q&A will be updated weekly if new questions are received.
December 8, 2022	Applications due to the Gulf of Mexico Division at 11:59pm ET
March 3, 2023	Anticipated Notification of Selection
July 1, 2023	Anticipated Award

Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov <https://www.grants.gov/> no later than Thursday December 8, 2022, at 11:59pm (ET) in order to be considered for funding.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible entities for innovative nutrient reduction projects in one or more of the five Gulf states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida) AND within the Gulf of Mexico watershed. This RFA is one of the steps EPA is taking to reduce the negative impacts excess nutrients have on the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem. Applicants must demonstrate innovative nutrient reduction strategies in rural, suburban, urban, or working lands.

FUNDING/AWARDS: Under this RFA, a total of approximately \$16 million (a maximum of \$1.5 million per award) may be awarded as grants and/or cooperative agreements for approximately 10-16 projects, contingent upon funding availability, the quality of applications received and other applicable considerations. In addition, EPA expressly reserves the right to make no awards or to adjust the number of awards originally anticipated.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: An RFA web page has been created at <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico/us-epa-gulf-mexico-division-funding-opportunity-gulf-mexico-innovative-nutrient> where you can find information related to the RFA process, including a recorded webinar, frequently asked questions, budget spreadsheet and other information to assist you in developing your application.

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I. APPLICATION INFORMATION

I.A. About EPA Gulf of Mexico Division (GMD)

GMD is a non-regulatory program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) founded to facilitate collaborative actions to protect, maintain, and restore the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico in ways consistent with the economic well-being of the Region. To carry out its mission, GMD continues to maintain and expand partnerships with State and Federal agencies, federally recognized Tribes, local governments and authorities, academia, regional business and industry, agricultural and environmental organizations, and individual citizens and communities. For more information, please see <https://www.epa.gov/gulfmexico>.

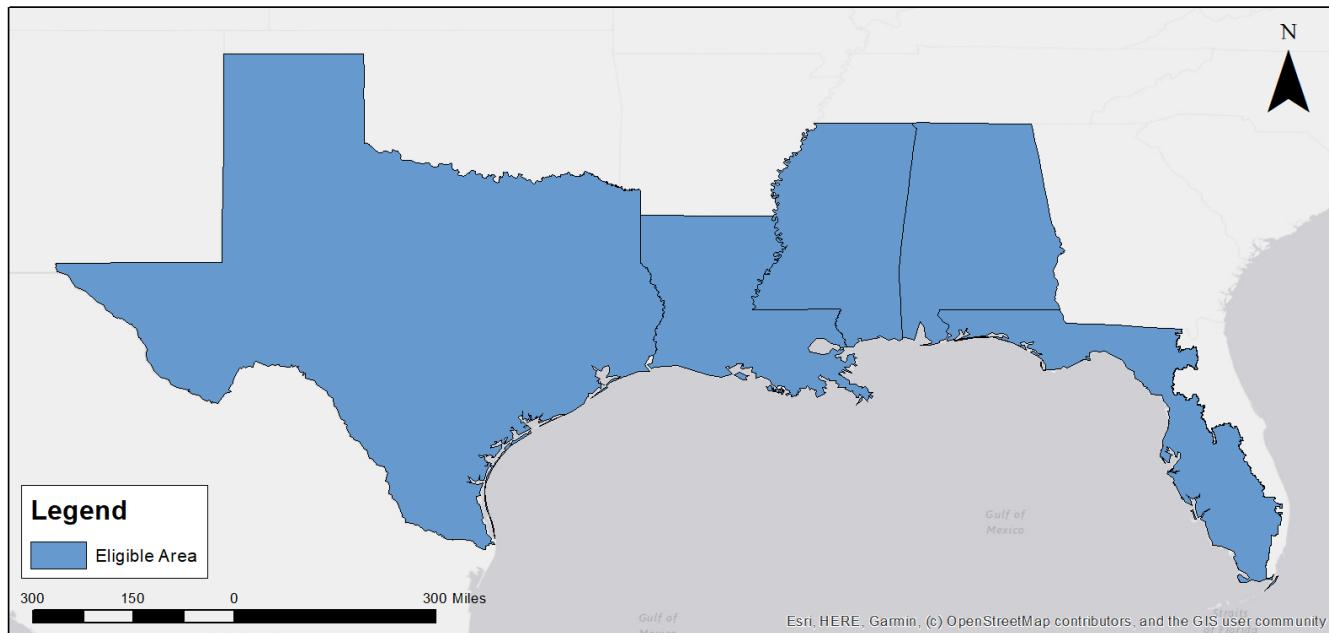
I.B. Scope of Work

The EPA GMD is announcing a Request for Applications (RFA) from applicants to demonstrate technologies, approaches and strategies to reduce nutrient pollution. This must include demonstrations ([see definition here](#)) of innovative technologies and/or conservation projects that have the potential to reduce excess nutrient loads. This may also include the development and use of innovative approaches or strategies to overcome barriers to adoption of the most effective and efficient ways to reduce nutrient loading.

Applications must address a nutrient reduction demonstration project with a plan for proof of concept in one of the following areas:

- **Improving Habitat to Reduce Nutrient Pollution:** Projects to enhance or restore riparian and near coastal areas in rural, urban, and suburban communities to reduce nutrients.
- **Managing Urban Runoff:** Projects to capture, store, filter, and treat runoff to reduce nutrient loads and improve water quality consistent with a broader strategy for watershed protection or restoration.
- **Farmer to Farmer:** Projects to reduce nutrient loads while enhancing performance of working lands through conservation practices and to advance the adoption of nutrient management through farmer-led outreach and education networks.

To be eligible for this funding opportunity, projects must take place in one or more of the five Gulf states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida) AND be within the Gulf of Mexico watershed. Please see the map below.



Environmental Justice and Underserved Communities: Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected. EPA will evaluate environmental justice issues under criterion 5 of Section V.A. of this RFA.

For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, “underserved communities” means populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as defined in Section 2 of the [Biden Administration’s Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities](#), examples of which are identified in Section 2 of the [Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities](#), including affected disadvantaged communities as referenced in the [Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#) and defined in OMB’s Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 initiative, [M-21-28 \(July 20, 2021\)](#). Applicants are encouraged, as appropriate, to include data from [EPA’s EJSCREEN tool](#) (or a comparable GIS system) other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools) as part of their application to identify whether communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental and human health harms or risks, including affected underserved communities, will benefit from the proposed project.

I.B.1. Funding Opportunity Background

Nutrient pollution is a continuing and growing challenge with profound implications for public health, water quality, and the economy. Nutrients are one of the most widespread stressors impacting rivers and streams. Fifty-eight percent of the nation’s rivers and streams and 45 percent of our lakes have excess levels of

phosphorus. About two-thirds of the nation's coastal areas and more than one-third of the nation's estuaries are impaired by nutrients. Excess nutrients can contribute to harmful algal blooms, areas of low oxygen known as "dead zones," and high levels of nitrates that contaminate waters used for recreation, drinking water, wildlife, pets, livestock, and aquatic life—while they may also damage the economy in many communities. Nutrient pollution reduction activities that help protect public health and reduce pollution in rural, tribal, and low-income communities that lack the resources to address these issues on their own is especially a priority.

Innovative management of working lands provides a unique opportunity to develop more sustainable and resilient landscapes that work for people and supports wildlife and ecosystem functions. Demonstration projects foster the development of new ideas and forward-thinking strategies which are critical to address nutrient pollution. Partnerships bring together diverse knowledge and perspectives from farmers, ranchers, local water utilities, municipalities, industry, and conservation organizations providing an opportunity for successful and lasting efforts that significantly reduce nutrient pollution.

For more information on nutrient pollution visit:

2022 EPA Nutrient Reduction Memorandum: <https://www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/2022-epa-nutrient-reduction-memorandum>

EPA Webpage on Nutrient Pollution: <https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution>;

EPA Webpage on Polluted Runoff: <https://www.epa.gov/nps>;

I.C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage, Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes and Performance Measures

Pursuant to Section 6a of EPA Order 5700.7A1: Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements, EPA must link proposed assistance agreements with the Agency's Strategic Plan. EPA also requires that grant applicants and recipients adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1: Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements](https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan)).

I.C.1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan

The activities to be funded under this announcement support EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities, Objective 5.2: Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds of the EPA Strategic Plan (<https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>). **All applications must be for projects that support the goal and objective identified above.**

I.C.2. Environmental Results

EPA also requires that grant applicants adequately describe environmental outputs and outcomes to be achieved under assistance agreements (see [EPA Order 5700.7A1: Environmental Results under Assistance Agreements](https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan)). Applicants must include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the priorities described above.

I.C.2.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 period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. Expected outputs from the projects to be funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Activities performed to enhance, protect or restore habitat via demonstration projects that reduce nutrient pollution
- Monitoring to demonstrate reduction in nutrients (For suggested nutrient monitoring methods and **data requirements**, please refer to [Section VIII.B. and VIII.C](#))
- Activities performed to reduce the amount of nutrients reaching water bodies
- Number of education events/presentations
- Number of participants at events/presentations

Progress reports and a final report will also be required outputs, as specified in Section VI.C. “Reporting Requirement,” of this RFA.

I.C.2.b. 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 environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature, but must also be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. Expected outcomes from the projects to be funded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Acres of habitat enhanced, protected or restored (can include habitat “windows”) **over the life of the project** with quarterly milestones clearly reflected. An initial baseline must be included to provide an accurate view of progress.
- Improvement in at least one nutrient related water quality parameter in a water body and/or segment **over the life of the project** with quarterly milestones clearly reflected. Applicant should evaluate the baseline conditions as a part of their project to provide an accurate view of progress.
 - Examples of water quality parameters that could be used include: nutrients (primarily nitrogen and phosphorus) and associated indicators (chlorophyll, turbidity, total suspended solids, dissolved oxygen, and pH).
- Number of communities that are more resilient **over the life of the project** as a result of increased willingness to adopt, fund, and implement nutrient pollution reduction projects. The applicant should describe how the change will be measured, the barriers overcome, and how resiliency was improved.
- Number of individuals with improved understanding of nutrient issues in their community and actions they can take to reduce nutrient loads. The applicant should describe how the change will be measured.

Descriptions of other outputs and outcomes which may be accomplished as a result of project activities should also be included.

I.C.2.c. Performance Measures

The applicant should also develop performance measures they expect to achieve through the proposed activities and describe them in their application. These performance measures will help gather insights and will be the mechanism to track progress concerning successful processes, outputs, and outcome strategies, and will provide the basis for developing lessons to inform future recipients. It is expected that the description of performance measures will directly relate to the project outcomes

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

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

I.D. Statutory Authority

This RFA is expected to result in the award of grants and/or cooperative agreements (hereafter collectively referred to as “grants”) to improve the Gulf of Mexico. GMD’s statutory authority to award grants is contained in the Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of assistance agreements to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. In addition, the Explanatory Statement for H.R. 133, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2022, directs EPA to “coordinate with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Gulf States, and other State, local, and private partners to leverage greater resources toward conservation projects on working-lands within the Gulf Region and Mississippi River Basin.”

I.E. RFA Terms

The following are defined for the purposes for this request for applications only:

- **Demonstration Project:** The term “demonstration project” means a project that 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. The applicant must clearly explain in the application how the technologies, methods, or approaches used are new or experimental and how the project otherwise meets the requirements of a demonstration as described in this RFA. If your project uses technologies, methods or approaches that have been used previously in other geographic areas and/or other situations, then your proposal must include an explanation as to how your demonstration project is different from such prior projects. The applicant must also explain what will be learned from the demonstration project.
- **Farmer:** For the purposes of this RFA, EPA is defining “farmer” as those individuals that make management decisions concerning agriculture lands, including cropland, forestland, and grazing lands. Collaboration and/or coalitions between organizations are encouraged, including collaboration that increases knowledge transfer.
- **Underserved Community:** For purposes of this competition and the evaluation of applications, “underserved communities” means populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. Applicants are encouraged, as appropriate, to include data from [EPA’s EJSCREEN tool](#) (or a comparable GIS system) other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools) as part of their application to identify whether communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental and human health harms or risks, including affected underserved communities, will benefit from the proposed project.

I.F. Additional Provisions for Applicants Incorporated into The Solicitation

Additional provisions that apply to sections III, IV, V, and VI of this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#). These provisions are important for applying to this solicitation and applicants must review them when preparing applications for this solicitation. If you are unable

to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please contact the EPA point of contact listed in this solicitation (usually in Section VII) to obtain the provisions.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

II.A. Award Amounts

Approximately \$16 million in EPA funding is expected to be awarded under this RFA for approximately 10-16 projects, subject to the quality and quantity of applications received, the availability of funding, agency priorities and other applicable considerations. **The maximum amount that will be awarded for an individual project is \$1.5 million; applications seeking EPA funding in excess of that amount will be rejected.**

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and other applicable considerations, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of the original selections.

In addition, EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards under this announcement or to make fewer awards than anticipated.

II.B. Anticipated Project Start and End Dates

This Request for Applications instructs applicants to submit certifications and other documentation required for a full and complete funding package so that their projects could, if selected, proceed expeditiously. The estimated project period for awards resulting from this solicitation will begin summer or fall 2023. Proposed project periods may be up to three years.

II.C. Funding Type

Successful applicants will be issued a grant or cooperative agreement as appropriate. A cooperative agreement is an assistance agreement that is used when there is substantial federal involvement with the recipient during the performance of an activity or project. EPA awards cooperative agreements for those projects in which it expects to have substantial interaction with the recipient throughout the performance of the project. EPA will negotiate the precise terms and conditions of "substantial involvement" as part of the award process. Federal involvement may include: close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.317 and 2 C.F.R. §200.318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurements; reviewing qualifications of key personnel; and/or review and comment on the content of printed or electronic publications prepared (final decision on the content of publications rests with the recipient). EPA does not have the authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient.

II.D. Additional Funding Information

Award Funding: Awards may be fully or incrementally funded, as appropriate, based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

Future Funding: Selection or award of funding under this RFA is not a guarantee of future funding.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

III.A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with Assistance Listing 66.475, applications will be accepted from governmental entities, including state agencies, interstate agencies, Indian tribes (Federal and State recognized), local governments, institutions of higher learning (i.e., colleges and universities), and non-profit organizations (as defined at 2 C.F.R. §200.1) are eligible to apply for funding under this RFA. School districts or high schools designated as one of the eligible entities above are eligible.

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. For-profit colleges, universities, trade schools, and hospitals are ineligible.

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

For-profit organizations are not an eligible entity for this funding opportunity.

III.B. Coalitions

Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA; however, one entity must be responsible for the grant. Coalitions must identify which eligible organization will be the recipient of the grant and which eligible organization(s) will be subrecipients of the recipient (the “pass-through entity”). Subawards must be consistent with the definition of that term in 2 CFR 200.1 and comply with [EPA’s Subaward Policy](#). The pass-through entity that administers the grant and subawards will be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds and reporting and will be the point of contact for the coalition. As provided in 2 CFR 200.332, subrecipients are accountable to the pass-through entity for proper use of EPA funding. For-profit organizations are not eligible for subawards under this grant program but may receive procurement contracts. Any contracts for services or products funded with EPA financial assistance must be awarded under the competitive procurement procedures of 2 CFR Part 200 and/or 2 CFR Part 1500, as applicable. The regulations at 2 CFR 1500.10 contain limitations on the extent to which EPA funds may be used to compensate individual consultants. Refer to the [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#) for guidance on competitive procurement requirements and consultant compensation. Do not name a procurement contractor (including a consultant) as a “partner” or otherwise in your application unless the contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements.

III.C. Eligible Activities

Projects submitted must fit under the following funding statute Clean Water Act, §104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of grants to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations,

experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution.

Demonstration projects: The applicant must clearly explain in the proposal how the technologies, methods, or approaches used are new or experimental, and/or the location is new and significant, and how the project otherwise meets the requirements of a demonstration project as described [here](#).

III.D. Ineligible 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. The following are ineligible activities:

- Projects that do not comply with Clean Water Act § 104(b)(3), which authorizes the award of assistance agreements to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution.
- Actions required to settle a formal enforcement action or included in a court order; or specified as a required mitigation measure under a state, local, or federal permit for a specific project; however, grant funding may be used to enhance or expand such projects beyond minimum requirements for compliance.
- Work involving only routine maintenance of storm water infrastructure and other facilities.
- Projects which fall under the existing planning responsibilities of an individual state or local government (e.g., development of TMDLs or required components of MS4 permits).
- Solely “gray infrastructure” projects (e.g., installation of sewer lines).
- Construction activities that are not a part of a demonstration project. This includes, but is not limited to, preliminary planning to determine the economic and engineering feasibility of a facility; the engineering, architectural, legal, fiscal, and economic investigations and studies; surveys, designs, plans, working drawings, specifications, procedures, and other actions necessary to the construction of a facility; the erection, acquisition, alteration, remodeling, improvement, or extension of a facility; and the inspection and supervision of the construction of a facility.
- Work to improve federal lands.

III.E. Match or Cost-Share

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.A](#) of this announcement EPA will evaluate proposals 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 [Appendix C](#) of the announcement). **Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted in the two forms below. For this funding opportunity, however, applicants should focus on the first form “III.E.1. Other Leveraged funding/resources that are not identified as a voluntary cost share”.**

III.E.1. Other leveraged funding/resources that are not identified as a voluntary cost share.

This form of leveraging may be met by funding from another federal grant, from an applicant's own resources, or resources from other third-party sources. This form of leveraging should show how the EPA funding requested will complement planned or existing activities relevant to the proposed project(s). This

form of leveraging should not be included in the budget and the costs need not be eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement. While this form of leveraging should not be included in the budget, the grant workplan should include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 C.F.R. Part 200 or Part 1500.

III.E.2. Voluntary cost share is a form of leveraging

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. If an applicant proposes a voluntary cost share, the following apply:

- A voluntary cost share is subject to the match provisions in the grant regulations (2 C.F.R. § 200.306).
- 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.
- 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 grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 C.F.R. § 200.

III.F. 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 for funding. *Only applications from eligible entities (listed in Section III.A) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Sec. V.A. of this RFA.* Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified by e-mail within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. **Substantial Compliance:** Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in [Sec. IV.B](#) of this announcement or else they will be rejected. ***Where a page limit is stated for the Project Narrative in Sec. IV.B, pages in excess of the 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. **Grant.gov submission:** In addition, initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov as stated in [Sec. IV.A](#) of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Appendix A) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV.A of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in [Appendix A](#) of this announcement 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 [Appendix A](#), which include both the requirement to contact Grants.gov and email a full application to EPA prior to the deadline.

3. **Application Deadline:** Applications submitted after the submission deadline specified in [Sec IV.A](#) will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. **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 late submission.** Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Rachel Houge (GMP-RFP@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.
4. **Project Location:** Projects must be located in one or more of the five Gulf of Mexico states (Florida, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana) **AND** be within the Gulf of Mexico watershed or the application will NOT be considered.
5. **Funding Request Limit:** Applications seeking EPA funding in excess of \$1.5 million will be rejected. In addition, an application for a multi-phase project will be treated as a request for the full amount for all phases. If that combined amount exceeds the specified maximum, the application will be rejected.
6. **Project Scope:** Applications must address a nutrient reduction demonstration project with a plan for monitoring to prove the concept as identified in [I.B](#). If applicant is missing either of those components, the application will NOT be considered.
7. **Environmental Results:** Applicants must identify estimated or anticipated environmental results in their application and identify MAJOR anticipated results on the Summary Information page or the application will NOT be considered.
8. **Ineligible activities:** If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, as identified in Section III.D, 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.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

IV.A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures. Complete application packages must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov by **11:59 pm Eastern Time on Thursday, December 8, 2022**. Please see the complete instructions for submitting applications via Grants.gov and the limited exception procedures in [Appendix A](#) of this announcement.

IV.B. Content of Application Submission

Unless otherwise stated the application package must include the following materials:

1. **Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance:** Complete the form. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address. This form also requires a registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. See [Appendix A](#) for more information. The contact person you provide in Block 8.f. should be different than the Authorized Representative listed in Block 21.
2. **SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs:** Complete the form. Provide overall budget information. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be

entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

3. **EPA Form 5700-54, EPA Key Contacts Form:** Complete the form. A minimum of two different people (contacts) should be identified. Please be sure the contacts on this form are consistent with all other forms, as applicable.
4. **EPA Form 4700-4, Pre-Award Compliance Review Report:** Complete the form. See [Tips for Completing EPA Form 4700-4](#) for guidance on filling out this form.
5. **Project Narrative Attachment Form – See Appendix C:** Includes **the Summary Information Page; Workplan; Detailed Budget Narrative; and Maps.** The project narrative must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the threshold eligibility criteria in [Section III.F.](#), the requirements in [Section I.B](#), and address the evaluation criteria set forth in [Section V.A](#). The project narrative cannot exceed a maximum of 12 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the summary page, workplan, and detailed budget narrative. Excess pages will not be reviewed. **The project narrative must substantially comply with the specific instructions, format and content as defined in Appendix C or it will be rejected.**
6. **Other Attachments Form – Budget Table.** A fill-able template for the budget table is available for download with the RFA on www.grants.gov and by following the Gulf of Mexico Innovative Nutrient Reduction 2022 Request for Applications Announcement link at <https://www.epa.gov/gulfmexico>. Prepare as described in the [budget table](#) section of the announcement. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the budget table template. This file should be submitted using the “Other Attachments Form” in Grants.gov. and may be uploaded as an excel file.
7. **Other Attachments Form - Resumes or curriculum vitae of Principal Investigators and critical staff.** Use the “Other Attachments Form” to attach a copy of the resume or curriculum vitae of principal investigators and critical staff for the proposed project. Such documentation should outline the education, work history, and knowledge/expertise of the individual(s) that relate to managing the proposed project. ***Please consolidate all resumes into one file and include the word “resume” in the filename.***
8. **Other Attachments Form – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.** Use if indirect costs other than the 10% de minimis are included in the project budget. Use the “Other Attachments Form” to attach a copy of your organization’s Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable. (See Application Preparation and Submission Instructions below for more details.) You must submit a copy of your organization’s Indirect Cost Rate Agreement as part of the application package if your proposed budget includes indirect costs. Please include the words “cost agreement” in the filename.
9. **Other Attachments Form – Support Letters.** Use the “Other Attachments Form” to attach any relevant letters from collaborators, partners or communities in support of the project. Specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project or what that organization supports, as applicable. Please consolidate all letters into one file and include the word “Letters of support” or “LOS” in the file name.

No. 105-277, data produced under an award, and any information provided to EPA, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Communications: See: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses> for general provisions regarding communications with applicants. EPA will post a pre-recorded informational presentation to provide additional guidance in developing your application. The presentation can be found by following the Gulf of Mexico Innovative Nutrient Reduction 2022 RFA link here: <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico/us-epa-gulf-mexico-division-funding-opportunity-gulf-mexico-innovative-nutrient>. Any questions you have after watching the presentations should be submitted to gmp-rfp@epa.gov. EPA will respond to questions received via the Q&A found on our website through December 2,2022 but cannot guarantee that it will respond to questions received thereafter. The Q&A found on the website will be updated weekly if new questions are received.

IV.C. Submission Date and Times

The closing date and time for submission of applications is Thursday, December 8, 2022, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time (ET). Applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

Application Review: Applications meeting the threshold eligibility criteria in [Sec. III.F](#) will be evaluated based on the criteria set forth below. **Applicants should explicitly address these criteria as part of their application package submittal in the project narrative, following the content requirements set forth in [Appendix C](#).** If not, you risk the possibility of information being left out by you as the applicant or overlooked or not fully comprehended by the reviewers when the project is scored. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 130 points possible.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they address the criteria; failure to provide applicable information in the application may affect the score assigned for a criterion.

V. A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Total Possible Points	130
1. Project Design Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality of: a. (15 points) The overall proposed project, consistent with Section I.B.; and b. (10 points) Demonstration of an innovative approach to perform the project or deliver results. This may include concepts, approaches, methods, or combinations of them and how monitoring will be used to demonstrate the results as well as the commitment beyond demonstration phase of project. c. (5 points) Anticipated public benefits to be derived from the project, including describing the degree to which the project can be expected to produce results that will have general application to nutrient pollution reduction.	30

Applicants should refer here for information to include in the “Project Design”	
<u>2. Environmental Results—Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures</u>	30
<p>Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality of:</p> <p>a. (10 points) Anticipated environmental results (outputs and outcomes).; and</p> <p>b. (15 points) A sound plan for qualitatively and quantitatively measuring, tracking, and reporting the environmental results.</p> <p>c. (5 points) A clearly articulated milestone schedule for project tasks including key milestones for specific tasks and the likelihood of completion of the project’s goals and objectives by project end.</p>	
Applicants should refer here for information to include in “EnvironmentalResults”	
<u>3. Collaboration</u>	10
<p>Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate diverse and unique partnerships, particularly those that contribute to expected environmental results and build capacity. Projects without partnerships will be evaluated based on how well the applicant can demonstrate how it will be able to effectively and efficiently perform the project on its own without partners.</p> <p>Letters of support are required to substantiate their role.</p>	
Applicants should refer here for information to include in Collaboration.	
<u>4. Communication and Dissemination of Results</u>	10
<p>Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate a clear communications plan that will actively transfer and disseminate project-related information to appropriate audiences and relevant stakeholders, with the goal of expanding adoption of successful approaches.</p>	
Applicants should refer to here for information to include in Communication of Results.	
<u>5.Underserved Community</u>	10
<p>Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they demonstrate i) a plan for meaningful engagement of communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental, climate and human health harms or risks, including affected underserved communities, and ii) the project’s benefit to affected communities, including affected underserved communities.</p>	
Applicants should refer here for information to include in the Underserved Community section.	
<u>6. Leveraging:</u>	10
<p>Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate that EPA funding will complement planned or existing activities relevant to the proposed project. Anything listed here should be carried out by the applicant (or partner) with other sources of funds or resources.</p> <p>Applicants will be evaluated based on the role the leveraged resources will play to support the proposed project activities and the likelihood the leveraging will materialize before or during grant performance.</p>	

Applicants should refer here and here for information to include in Leveraging.	
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7. Applicant Capability and Past Performance:	15
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Applicants will be evaluated based on the organization's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:

- a. (5 points) Past Performance: History of successfully i) completing and managing assistance agreements and ii) meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified, 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. If such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not.
- b. (5 point) Staff expertise and qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project
- c. (5 points) Financial Controls: Describes the financial controls currently in place to ensure that awarded funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner.

Applicants should refer [here](#) for information to include in Applicant Capability and PastPerformance.

8. Budget	15
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Applicants will be evaluated based on the reasonableness, necessity, allowability (of costs), and cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget. Cost-effectiveness will consider the organizational overhead (indirect costs) and direct costs versus anticipated results. This section will be evaluated by reviewing two items: 1) budget table and 2) budget narrative (located within the project narrative workplan). The budget table should be easy to understand and link the expenses to the tasks and deliverables from the project workplan. The budget narrative should be used to provide a description of costs not easily understandable in the budget table.

Utilizing the suggested budget table template is strongly encouraged to avoid information being left out by the applicant, or overlooked, or not fully comprehended by the reviewers when the project is scored.

Applicants should refer [here](#) for information to include in Budget.

V.B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in [III.F](#). Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be considered using the evaluation criteria listed above. Eligible applications will be evaluated based on the criteria above by review panels composed of federal agency staff. Separate review panels for each state may be developed if a large number of applications is received. Review panels will rank the applications based on the criteria above and develop preliminary funding recommendations for presentation to the selection official(s). Under this competition, EPA also reserves the right to fund the top ranked application from each applicable state (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida) contingent on the quality of the application, Agency priorities, and funding availability. Each state will have its own ranking list and funding recommendations. Information pertaining to proposed recommendations may be shared with appropriate governmental departments or agencies before selections are made in order to determine whether potential selections (a) are expected to be funded by another funding source or (b) could be affected by permitting or regulatory issues.

V.C. Other Factors

Final funding decisions for each funding opportunity will be made by the selection official. In making the final funding decisions, the selection official will consider the review panel rankings and recommendations and may also consider the following factors: any duplicate funding issues; the amount of the organization's unliquidated obligations on previous GMD grants; program priorities; funding availability; appropriate balances of geographic and jurisdictional distribution of projects; and organizational diversity in terms of applicant type selected to receive awards (e.g., local government, state agency, Indian Tribe, college and university, other not-for-profit entity) in order to help ensure a broad representation of entity types receiving awards to promote program effectiveness.

Any final selections made out of rank order must be documented and justified based on the factors listed above. Once selections have been made, a funding recommendation will be developed and forwarded to the EPA approving and awarding official.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Note: Additional provisions that apply to this section can be found at [EPA Solicitation Clauses](#).

VI.A. Award Notices and Status

Following evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status, as follows:

1. EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicants will be made via email to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application within 60 days after the closing date of this RFA.
2. EPA anticipates that notification to successful applicants will be made via electronic mail to the original signer of the application or the project contact listed in the application within 60 days after the closing date of this RFA. The notification will advise them that their proposed project has been evaluated and forwarded to the EPA approving official for further consideration and possible award. This notification, which advises finalists that their proposed project has been forwarded to the approving official, **is not and should not be considered as** an authorization to begin work. Applicants are cautioned that only the EPA award official 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 the EPA award official, 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 to finalists and award of a grant can take up to 90 days or longer.

Administrative and National Policy Requirement: The successful applicants will be required to adhere to federal grants requirements, particularly those found in applicable Cost Principles (2 C.F.R. § 200 Subpart E), Administrative Requirements (2 C.F.R. § 200 and 1500), and Audit Requirements (A-133). This includes government-wide requirements pertaining to accounting standards, lobbying, minority or woman business enterprise, publication, meetings, construction, and disposition of property. Additional EPA regulations are codified in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations. A listing and description of general EPA regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/policy-regulations-and-guidance-epa-grants>.

VI.B. Reporting Requirements

Applicants selected for funding shall provide narrative, technical progress reports addressing financial and work progress. Special conditions requiring quarterly progress reporting and a detailed final technical report will be added to awards. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

VI.C. 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 Federal Register notice references regulations at 40 C.F.R. § 30 and 31 that have been superseded by regulations in 2 C.F.R. § 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 C.F.R. § 1500, Subpart E.

VI.D. Additional Programmatic Items of Note

Issuance of Awards: EPA reserves the right to negotiate appropriate changes in project terms and amounts (*i.e.*, changes that do not affect the integrity of the competition or materially change the application) consistent with EPA Order 5700.5A1 and other applicable policies, before making final decisions and awards. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no awards. Applicants may be asked to include greater detail and specificity for their workplans before final awards are issued. Applicants may also be requested to satisfy data quality or peer review requirements before or shortly after the awarding of grants.

Other Programmatic Requirements: Additional applicable programmatic terms and conditions will be included in grant agreements, including provisions for: signage for on-the ground projects, and EPA pre-approval of subcontracting and of conference participation. Applicants should budget time and resources for these activities.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For administrative and technical issues regarding this RFA, please contact Rachel Houge via email at gmp-rrp@epa.gov. All questions must be received in writing via email with the reference line referring to this RFA (Re: RFA EPA-GM-INR-2022). Please review the Q&A, and the helpful hints for developing an application, posted

at <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico/us-epa-gulf-mexico-division-funding-opportunity-gulf-mexico-innovative-nutrient> before submitting questions. Q&A will be updated weekly if new questions are received. EPA will respond to questions received through December 2, 2022, but cannot guarantee that it will respond to questions received thereafter.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

VIII.A. Quality Assurance

Assistance agreements that involve environmental information and that are expected to exceed \$200,000 (in federal funding) at solicitation issuance or award shall develop a written Quality Assurance (QA) system commensurate with the degree of confidence needed for environmentally related data operations as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 1500.12. Environmental information is defined as data and information that describe environmental processes or conditions which support EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment. Environmental information includes but is not limited to data from direct measurements or analytical testing results; data produced from environmental modeling; and data compiled from other sources such as databases or literature.

GMD uses a graded approach to QA requirements for awardees depending on the environmental information being collected and how it will be used. Prior to collecting environmental information, the recipient must develop and implement QA procedures, specifications, and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives through a Quality Management Plan (QMP), a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and/or another agreed upon QA document such as a combined QMP/QAPP. A QMP is an organization-specific document that describes the quality control, policies, qualifications, and procedures for planning, implementing, and evaluating work and may apply to multiple projects. A QAPP is a project-specific planning document that describes comprehensive details about the QA requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure the project objectives are met and are of sufficient and known quality. The QMP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R2: EPA Requirements for Quality Management Plans, and the QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. EPA can assist successful applicants in determining which QA document(s) is required for the proposed project. The recipient shall ensure that subawards involving environmental information issued under this agreement include appropriate quality requirements for the work. The recipient shall ensure those sub-award recipients develop and implement QA planning document(s) in accordance with EPA Quality policy and terms and conditions of the award. The QMP and/or QAPP must be approved by EPA at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Successful applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process.

Organizations may be granted an exception or modification to the QMP requirement if they meet certain criteria, which may include but is not limited to one-time, short-term, and special projects or projects of limited scope; and/or organizations generating, collecting, compiling, and/or using environmental data for public education purposes. EPA Requirements for QMPs and QAPPs can be found here:

<http://www.epa.gov/grants/implementation-quality-assurance-requirements-organizations-receiving-epa-financial>.

See [Section VII, AGENCY CONTACTS](#) for Agency Contact information for referral to an EPA QA staff member.

VIII.B. Water Quality (WQ) Exchange

If WQ data are generated, either directly or by subaward, the successful applicant must ensure all WQ data are transmitted into the Agency's Data Warehouse annually or by project completion using the Water Quality

Exchange (WQX) in accordance with an EPA approved QAPP. WQ data that are appropriate include physical, chemical, and biological sample results for water, sediment and fish tissue. The data include toxicity data, microbiological data, and the metrics and indices generated from biological and habitat data. WQX is an online tool for EPA data partners to upload and share data with EPA and the public. WQ data collected using continuous monitors, either by the recipient or by subaward, are not required to be transmitted into the EPA Data Warehouse. More information about WQX including tutorials, can be found at www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data-wqx.

Nutrients best practices for WQX: <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/wqx-nutrients-best-practices-guide> includes methods and required data format.

VIII.C. Nutrients Monitoring Method Guidance.

In addition to the Nutrients Best Practices for WQX, you may also find useful technical guidance here: <https://www.epa.gov/nps/nonpoint-source-pollution-technical-guidance-and-tools>

Appendix A. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions

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

Applicants must apply electronically through [Grants.gov](#) under this funding opportunity based on the Grants.gov instructions in this 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 Appendix A. under Technical Issues with Submission.

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 need to 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 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 eBusiness (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 on the red “Apply” button at the top of the view grant opportunity page associated with this opportunity.

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. 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.

Please Note: All applications must now be submitted through Grants.gov using the “Workspace” feature. Information on the Workspace feature can be found at the [Grants.gov Workspace Overview Page](#).

4. Application Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through **Grants.gov no later than Thursday, December 8, 2022, 11:59pm (ET)**. Please allow for enough time to successfully submit your application process 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 the Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-GM-INR-2022 in the subject line to gmp-rfp@epa.gov before the application deadline time and date and must include the following:
4. Grants.gov ticket/case number(s)
5. Description of the issue
6. 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 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

Please submit *all* of the application materials described below using the Grants.gov application package, accessed using the instructions above. The following forms and documents are required under this announcement, as described in Section IV.C. of this announcement:

Mandatory Documents

1. Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*.
2. Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs*
3. EPA Form 5700-54, Key Contacts Form
4. EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants Requesting Federal Financial Assistance*
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form (See Appendix C for additional information)
6. Other Attachments Form – Budget Table
7. Other Attachments Form – Resumes
8. Other Attachments Form - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
9. Other Attachments Form – Letters of Support/Partnership

Applicants should confirm receipt of their application with Rachel Houge (GMP-RFP@epa.gov) as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Appendix B. Helpful Links (including Grant and Budget Development Training)

- A. For assistance in filling out forms, please see the Common Errors document found on <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico/us-epa-gulf-mexico-division-funding-opportunity-gulf-mexico-innovative-nutrient>. At this link, you will also find the Q&A and other RFA information.
- B. For EPA Grants Award Process Webinars and other grants information, please follow this [link](#).
- C. For EPA guidance on budget development, please follow this [link](#).
- D. For additional guidance on grant writing and other resources, please follow this [link](#).

Appendix C. Project Narrative and Budget Table Format

The project narrative and budget table must substantially comply with the instructions, format, and content described below. It must also address the evaluation criteria in [Section V.A.](#) of the RFA. The project narrative, including the cover page, workplan, and budget detail, must not exceed a maximum of 12 single-spaced type-written pages. **Excess pages will not be reviewed.**

Supporting materials, such as project team biographies, partnership letters, and negotiated indirect cost rate agreements can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 12-page limit. Supporting materials should also be submitted using the Optional Attachments form.

Applicants should ensure that their project narratives are written clearly using understandable terms. Doing so will help ensure that the evaluation team members understand the purpose, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Each Project Narrative must be formatted for 8½" x 11" paper and should use no smaller than an 11-point Calibri font with 1" margins. Do not use a "double column" (aka newspaper) format. Readability is of paramount importance. Do not include more than one application in any file. Please do not zip the file or use a zip extension for your file because it will not be accepted.

Do not include confidential business information in your application.

Project Narrative Format (12-page limit)

A. ***SUMMARY INFORMATION PAGE (SHOULD NOT EXCEED ONE PAGE)***

- **Project Title.** Please limit to 60 characters. EPA reserves the right to change the project title for its administrative convenience.
- **Applicant Information.** Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, e-mail address and UEI number. *Do not include private information.*
- **Type of Organization.** Specify, consistent with your SF 424, one of the following:
 - Local Government (includes County, Municipal, Inter-municipal organizations, Township, Special Purpose District and other entities defined as local governments at 2 C.F.R. § 200.64)
 - State Agency (includes Interstate)
 - Indian Tribe
 - College and University (includes private and state institutions)
 - Not for Profit/Non-profit
 - Other
- **Proposed Funding Request.** The total dollar amount requested from EPA must not exceed \$1.5 million or your application will be rejected.
- **Project Duration.** Provide beginning and ending dates. See "Anticipated Start and End Dates" in [Sec. II.B.](#)
- **Brief Project Description.** Summarize the proposed project in 100 words or less in a clear and succinct manner in PLAIN LANGUAGE, including expected outputs, outcomes and environmental benefits resulting from implementation of the project. Include environmental KEY TERMS that could be used as search terms (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus, stormwater, etc.). Do not use acronyms. Should the application be selected, and a grant awarded, this description may be posted to the EPA Web. EPA reserves the right to make unilateral changes to conform to posting requirements.

- **Project Area:** Identify which of the following areas your project best addresses. Improving Habitat to Reduce Nutrient Pollution OR Managing Urban Runoff OR Farmer to Farmer.
- **Project Location.** Specify a single, representative project location where the benefits of the project will be realized, including 8- or 12-digit HUC code (available from <http://water.usgs.gov/wsc/reg/04.html>). Location must take place in one of the five Gulf states AND the Gulf of Mexico Watershed. In addition to the single best representative location, for projects with multiple locations, specify up to five cities, counties, states, zip codes, and congressional districts where work will be performed. If your project includes more than five locations, select the five that best represent the project.
- **Project period.** Provide anticipated project start date and anticipated project completion date.

B. PROJECT WORKPLAN (11-PAGE LIMIT)

Applicants must ensure that the workplan addresses the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the RFA. Applicants should use the section and subsection numbers and headings below which correspond with the evaluation criteria in Section V.A. of the RFA. The workplan should be written clearly using understandable terms.

Section 1. Project Design (30 points)

a. Overall Project (15 points). Provide a detailed project summary and description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, consistent with Section I.B. (Scope of Work) of the RFA. This section should include:

- **Why** you are proposing this project, why you have chosen these goals, and the need for this project
- **What** will be done, including details of every activity for which the applicant is seeking funding
- **How** the activities will meet the goal(s) of the program
- **Where** the project will take place. Include a map at the end of the narrative (not counted towards page limit) that delineates the project boundaries and/or shows the expected location(s) of project(s)
- **Relevance to EPA Strategic Plan and Gulf of Mexico:** Explain how your project is relevant to the Gulf of Mexico AND how the results will support EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities, Objective 5.2: Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds of the EPA Strategic Plan (<https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>).

b. Project Significance (10 points). Describe how your project is novel or innovative and cite technical or conceptual foundation(s) for this approach – for example, studies, pilot projects, successful projects elsewhere, etc., where appropriate, that verify the need for your project. (All references/citations should be on a reference page at the end of the document and will not be counted in the page limit.) This section should include information about how monitoring will be used to demonstrate the results of the project. This should also include a description of how what is learned from the project will be used to implement projects or activities focused on nutrient reduction beyond this project.

c. Anticipated Public Benefits (5 points). Qualitatively describe the anticipated public benefits from the proposed project. This should include a discussion of how the project can be expected to produce results that have general application to nutrient pollution reduction.

Section 2. Environmental Results – Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures (30 points).

a. Expected Project Outputs and Outcomes (10 points) Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes and outputs of the project as defined in Section I.C. of the RFA. Specific outputs and outcomes should be provided and may include short- and longer-term activities. **Points will be deducted if no quantitative targets are identified.** In addition to a narrative discussion of the outputs and outcomes, the applicant is encouraged to include a table outlining major environmental results and performance measures.

b. Environmental Results Plan (15 points). Applicants should describe the proposed performance measures, which will be the mechanism to track, measure, and report progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Applicants should describe their plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected project outputs and outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated, as described in Section I.C. of the RFA and Section 3.a. of this appendix.

c. Timeline and Milestones (5 points) Provide a timetable or schedule with target dates projected for major activities, accomplishments and deliverables, including development of quality assurance documents and the submittal of quarterly and final reports. The link between the activities and achievement of identified outputs and outcomes should be clear.

Section 3. Collaboration (10 points). The following items should be included in this section:

- List the partners involved and their role in the project, including how the partnership will contribute to expected environmental results and build capacity.
- If you do not have partners, please describe why partners are not necessary for effective and efficient project performance.
- **Letters of support that state the organizations commitments to the roles identified are required.**

Section 4. Communication and Dissemination of Results (10 points). Describe how project results will be actively transferred with the goal of expanding adoption of successful approaches.

Section 5. Underserved Community (10 points).

- Applicants are encouraged, as appropriate, to include data from [EPA's EJSCREEN tool](#) (or a comparable GIS system) other EJ-focused geospatial mapping tools) as part of their application to identify whether communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental and human health harms or risks, including affected underserved communities, will benefit from the proposed project.
- Describe your plan for meaningful engagement of communities adversely and disproportionately affected by environmental, climate and human health harms or risks, including affected underserved communities.
- Describe the project's benefit to affected communities, including affected underserved communities.

Section 6. Leveraging (10 points)

- Describe how EPA funding will complement planned or existing activities relevant to the proposed project(s). Anything listed here should be carried out by the applicant or partner with other sources of funds or resources. Describe the role the leveraged resources will play in the overall project and the likelihood the leveraging will materialize before or during grant performance. 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. For information on the type of leveraging being requested see [Section III.E.1.](#)

Section 7. Applicant Capability and Past Performance (15 points). The following items should be included in this section:

A. Past Performance (5 points).

- Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements).
- Describe whether and how you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
- Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including: 1) whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements; and if not, provide an explanation; and 2) whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements.

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.**

B. Staff experience and Qualifications (5 pts)

- Describe organizational experience and staffs' expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources that will ensure successful achievement of the project results; or describe how you will obtain these qualifications; provide supporting documentation (i.e., resumes or curricula vitae for key staff, as defined in Sec. [IV.B Content of Application Submission](#)).

C. Financial Controls (5 points)

- Describe financial controls in place to ensure that awarded funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner.

Section 8 - Detailed Budget Narrative (15 points Evaluated in Conjunction with budget table).

- In the [budget table](#), you will provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each work plan component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of costs not easily understandable in the budget table or that require additional information. Common examples where this is necessary are: 1) description of the roles and responsibilities of personnel, 2) description of what supplies will be used for, 3) description of why the purchase of equipment is preferable to rental of equipment, 4) providing contract details such as whether it will be sole source or competed and why that choice was made, and 5) description of activities of a Subawardee, etc. All subaward funding should be located under the "other" cost category. *Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for EPA guidance on budget development.*
- Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine cost-effectiveness, reasonableness and allowability of costs. Cost-effectiveness will consider the organizational overhead (indirect costs) and direct costs versus anticipated results.

Section 9 Map(s) (not counted towards page limit)

- Include a map that delineates the project boundaries and/or shows the expected location(s) of project(s)

Section 10 Quality Assurance (not counted in page limit)

- **Quality Assurance:** For awards under this competition that are expected to exceed \$200,000 in federal funding AND involve the generation or use of environmental data, please provide a statement acknowledging 1) your need to demonstrate competency prior to beginning work and 2) your understanding that a Quality Management Plan (QMP) and/or a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) may be required. Please see Sec. VI.O. at the following link for more information: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-06/external-clauses-2022-06-06.pdf>. For further information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions Document regarding this EPA requirement: <https://www.epa.gov/measurements/documents-about-measurement-competency-under-assistance-agreements>.
- If you or a Subawardee plan to collect or use environmental data or information, explain how you will comply with the Quality Assurance requirements (see [Section VIII.A, QUALITY ASSURANCE](#), of this announcement for additional information).

Budget Table Format (15 points -Evaluated in Conjunction with budget narrative).

A budget table must be provided that identifies major costs associated with the application in an easily understandable format. Where possible, the budget table should link expenses to tasks and deliverables from the project description. Budget resources necessary for completing a QMP or QAPP or appropriate QA document, if applicable, sharing project information broadly, and reporting progress, should be included.

Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine cost-effectiveness, reasonableness and allowability of costs. Cost-effectiveness will consider the organizational overhead (indirect costs) and direct costs versus anticipated results.

Utilizing the suggested budget table template is strongly encouraged or you risk the possibility of information being left out by you as the applicant, or overlooked, or not fully comprehended by the reviewers when the project is scored. The fillable template is available for download with the RFA on <https://www.grants.gov> and by following the Gulf of Mexico Innovative Nutrient Reduction 2022 RFA announcement link at <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico>.