

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Funding Opportunity Announcement No. R13AS80015

WaterSMART: Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grants for FY 2013



U.S. Department of the Interior
Policy and Administration
Bureau of Reclamation
Denver, Colorado

May 2013

Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects America's natural resources and heritage, honors our cultures and tribal communities, and supplies the energy to power our future.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Synopsis

| | |
|---|---|
| Federal Agency Name: | Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Policy and Administration |
| Funding Opportunity Title: | WaterSMART: Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) for FY 2013 |
| Announcement Type: | Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) |
| Funding Opportunity Number: | R13AS80015 |
| Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: | 15.554 |
| Dates: (See FOA Sec. IV.B) | Application due date: Tuesday, June 11, 2013, 4:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time |
| Eligible Applicants: (See FOA Sec. III.A) | <p>Applicants eligible to receive financial assistance to fund activities under this FOA include:</p> <p>Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: States, Indian tribes, irrigation districts, water districts, or other organizations with water or power delivery authority located in the western United States or United States Territories as identified in the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902, as amended.</p> <p>Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group: An existing watershed group, i.e., a grassroots, non-regulatory entity and otherwise meets the definition of a watershed group as described in Section I.B. Objective of Funding Opportunity Announcement and Section III.A. Eligible Applicants or a member of an existing watershed group.</p> |
| Recipient Cost Share: (See FOA Sec. III.E) | A non-Federal cost share contribution is not required for Phase I CWMP activities funded under this FOA. Reclamation will provide up to 100 percent of the total cost for Phase I Cooperative Watershed Management Program activities. |
| Federal Funding Amount: (See FOA Sec. II.B) | <p>Up to \$100,000 in Federal funds may be awarded to an applicant per award, with no more than \$50,000 awarded in each year of the project, under this FOA. The period of performance shall not exceed two years. The maximum amount of funding available per award may change based on the OMB approved Operating Plan for fiscal year (FY) 2013, and FY 2014 appropriations. Please note that awards under this FOA may be made with FY 2014 funding if FY 2013 appropriations are insufficient.</p> <p>Funding will be available under two Task Areas: Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group and Task B—Expansion an Existing Watershed Group.</p> |
| Estimated Number of Agreements to be Awarded: (See FOA Sec. II.B) | <p>It is expected that an equal number of awards will be made available for Tasks A and B Program activities.</p> <p>The number of agreements that will be funded under this FOA will be contingent upon the final OMB approved Operating Plan for FY 2013, and FY 2014 appropriations.</p> |

Application Checklist

The following table contains a summary of the information that you are required to submit with your application.

| √ | What to submit | Required content | Form or format | When to submit |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|---|----------------|
| | Cover page | See Sec. IV.D.4 | Form SF 424, available at: < http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15 > Page 18 | * |
| | Assurances | See Sec. IV.D.4 | Form SF 424B, available at: < http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15 > Page 18 | * |
| | Title page | See Sec. IV.D.5 | Page 19 | * |
| | Table of contents | See Sec. IV.D.5 | Page 19 | * |
| | Technical proposal: | | | * |
| | Background data | See Sec. IV.D.5 | Page 19 | * |
| | Project description | See Sec. IV.D.5 | Page 20 | * |
| | Letters of support | See Sec. IV.D.7 | Page 26 | * |
| | Resolutions | See Sec. IV.D.7 | Page 27 | * |
| | Evaluation criteria | See Sec. IV.D.6.. | Page 21 | * |
| | Funding plan | See Sec. IV.D.9 | Page 28 | * |
| | Project budget proposal: | See Sec. IV.D.10 | Pages 29 - 33 | * |
| | General requirements | See Sec. IV.D.10 | Page 29 | * |
| | Budget format | See Sec. IV.D.10 | Page 29 | * |
| | Budget narrative | See Sec. IV.D.10 | Page 31 | * |
| | Budget form | See Sec. IV.D.10 | Form SF 424A, available at: < http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15 > Page 33 | * |

* Submit materials with your application on June 11, 2013

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|---|
| ARC | Application Review Committee |
| CPA | Certified Public Accountant |
| CWMP | Cooperative Watershed Management Program |
| Department | U.S. Department of the Interior |
| EPA | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FOA | Funding Opportunity Announcement |
| FY | fiscal year |
| GIS | Geographic Information Systems |
| GO | Grants Officer |
| LCC | Landscape Conservation Cooperative |
| SAM | System of Award Management |
| OMB | Office of Management and Budget |
| Reclamation | Bureau of Reclamation |
| USC | United States Code |
| USGS | U.S. Geological Survey |
| WaterSMART | Sustain and Manage America’s Resources for Tomorrow |

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Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

I.A. WaterSMART: Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grants

The Nation faces an increasing set of water resource challenges. Aging infrastructure, rapid population growth, depletion of groundwater resources, impaired water quality associated with particular land uses and land covers, water needed for human and environmental uses, and climate variability and change all play a role in determining the amount of fresh water available at any given place and time. Water shortages and water-use conflicts have become more commonplace in many areas of the United States, even in normal water years. As competition for water resources grows—crop irrigation, city and community growth, energy production, and the environment—the need for information and tools to aid water resource managers also grows.

These water issues are exacerbating the challenges facing traditional water management approaches which by themselves no longer meet today's needs. The U.S. Department of Interior's (Department) WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) Program establishes a framework to provide Federal leadership and assistance on the efficient use of water; integrating water and energy policies to support the sustainable use of all natural resources; forming strong diverse partnerships with States, tribes and local entities; and coordinating with other Department bureaus and offices on water conservation activities.

The Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) contributes to the WaterSMART strategy by providing funding to watershed groups to encourage diverse stakeholders to form local solutions to address their water management needs. The purpose of the CWMP is to improve water quality and ecological resilience, conserve water, and reduce conflicts over water through collaborative conservation efforts in the management of local watersheds. The CWMP will be implemented in three phases:

- **This funding opportunity announcement (FOA) will implement Phase I of the CWMP by providing funding to establish or expand a watershed group.**

The following phases of the CWMP will not be funded under this FOA. In the near future, we do not see funding becoming available for Phase II and III.

- In Phase II of the CWMP, existing watershed groups that have satisfied the requirements of Phase I (i.e., a watershed group is established under

law and has a mission statement and restoration plan, and has scoped project concepts) may apply for funding to implement watershed management projects in Phase II.

- In Phase III, a watershed group may apply for larger grants to plan and carry out large-scale watershed management projects.

For further information on the CWMP and future funding of Phase II and Phase III of the Program, see: <www.usbr.gov/watersmart/cwmp/>.

One of the evaluation criteria under this FOA makes points available to applicants that demonstrate a nexus with the goals of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) in the geographic area of the watershed group (see Section IV.D.6. *Evaluation Criteria D: Watershed Group/Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Nexus*). This is to encourage geographically focused collaboration across various sectors (e.g., agriculture and environmental). LCCs are public-private partnerships composed of States, Indian tribes, Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities and others. Through the LCCs, conservation programs and partners working in the same geographic areas can come together to discuss a shared vision for the sustainability of natural and cultural resources.

The role of each individual LCC is to leverage funding, staff, and resources to develop applied science tools and strategies to help resource managers address landscape-scale issues (e.g., climate change and invasive species) and to facilitate information exchange among partners. Please refer to <www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/lcc/> for information of LCCs.

I.B. Objective of Funding Opportunity Announcement

The objective of this FOA is to invite States, Indian tribes, irrigation districts, water districts, local governmental entities, non-profit organizations, existing watershed groups, and local and special districts (e.g., irrigation and water districts, county soil conservation districts, as defined in Section 6001 of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act [Subtitle A of Title IX of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, P.L. 111-11]) to submit proposals for Phase I activities to establish or expand a watershed group. **Funding provided under this FOA must be used to develop a mission statement, project concepts, and a restoration plan.** All work must be completed within two years from the date of award.

A **watershed group** is defined in the Act (See: Section 6001 of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act, Subtitle A of Title IX of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, P.L. 111-11 [42 USC 10364]) as a self-sustaining, cooperative watershed-wide group that:

1. Is comprised of representatives of the affected stakeholders of the relevant watershed
2. Incorporates the perspectives of a diverse array of stakeholders, including all of the following, to the maximum extent practicable:
 - A. Representatives of:
 - Hydroelectric production
 - Livestock grazing
 - Timber production
 - Land development
 - Recreation or tourism
 - Irrigated agricultural production
 - The environment
 - Potable water purveyors and industrial water users
 - Private property owners
 - B. Any Federal agency that has authority with respect to the watershed
 - C. Any State agency that has authority with respect to the watershed
 - D. Any local agency that has authority with respect to the watershed
 - E. Any Indian tribe that either:
 - Owns land within the watershed
 - Has land in the watershed that is held in trust
3. Is a grassroots, non-regulatory entity that addresses water availability and quality issues within the relevant watershed

4. Is capable of promoting the sustainable use of the water resources of the relevant watershed and improving the functioning condition of rivers and streams through: water conservation, improved water quality, ecological resiliency, and the reduction of water conflicts
5. Makes decisions on a consensus basis, as defined by the bylaws of the watershed group

I.C. Program Authority

This FOA is issued under the authority of Section 6002 of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act, Subtitle A of Title IX of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, P.L. 111-11 (42 United States Code [USC] 10364).

Section II. Award Information

II.A. Total Project Funding

The total amount of funding available under this FOA will be determined upon OMB approval of Reclamation's FY 2013 Operating Plan. Please refer to www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/cwmp/index.html for updated funding information.

Through this FOA, Reclamation plans to award funds to Phase I applicants under two Task areas:

1. Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group
2. Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group

II.B. Project Funding Limitations and Cost Sharing

We anticipate that available funding will be divided equally between the two Task areas, unless the demand for funding is significantly higher for one of the two Task areas. All work must be completed within two years from the date of award. A total of up to \$100,000 in Federal funds may be awarded to an applicant over the two-year period, with no more than \$50,000 awarded per year. A non-Federal cost share contribution is not required for Phase I activities funded under this FOA. Within nine months from the initial date of award, Reclamation shall determine whether a recipient has made sufficient progress in the first year to justify second year funding. Second year funding is also contingent on the availability of appropriated funds.

Some or all new proposals selected under this FOA may be awarded with FY 2014 funding; therefore, some or all awards made under this FOA may be delayed until FY 2014 appropriations are approved by Congress.

II.C. Reclamation Responsibilities

Project awards will be made through grants or cooperative agreements, as applicable. If a cooperative agreement is awarded, the recipient should expect Reclamation to have substantial involvement in all activities funded under the CWMP. Substantial involvement by Reclamation may include:

- **Collaboration and participation** with the recipient in the management of Phase I activities and close oversight of the recipient's activities to ensure that the program objectives are being achieved
- **Oversight** may include review, input, and approval at key interim stages of Phase I activities

II.D. Award Date

Reclamation expects to contact potential award recipients and unsuccessful applicants in August 2013. Contingent on the availability of FY 2013 funding, assistance agreements will be awarded within one to three months after this date to applicants that successfully pass all pre-award reviews and clearances. If FY 2013 appropriations are insufficient, some or all awards made under this FOA may be made with FY 2014 appropriations, once the FY 2014 budget is approved by Congress.

Section III. Eligibility Information

III.A. Eligible Applicants

III.A.1. Applicant Eligibility for Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group

Applicants eligible to receive an award to fund activities under Task A include: States, Indian tribes, local and special districts (e.g., irrigation and water districts, county soil conservation districts, etc.), local governmental entities, interstate organizations, and non-profit organizations. To be eligible, applicants must also meet all of the following requirements:

- Significantly affect or be affected by the quality or quantity of water in a watershed
- Be capable of promoting the sustainable use of water resources
- Be located in the western United States or Territories as identified in the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902, as amended and supplemented; specifically: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands

III.A.2. Applicant Eligibility for Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group

In order to be eligible to receive an award to fund activities under Task B, the applicant must be an eligible entity as described immediately above (*Section III.A.1. Applicant Eligibility for Task A*) **and** must be either:

- 1) An existing “**watershed group**,” (i.e., a grassroots, non-regulatory legal entity that otherwise meets the definition of a watershed group as described in Section I.B. Objective of Funding Opportunity Announcement) as described above in Section I.B., *Objective of Funding Opportunity Announcement*
- 2) A **participant** in an existing watershed group, that meets the definition of a “watershed group” as described above in Section I.B. *Objective of Funding Opportunity Announcement*.

III.B Ineligible Applicants

Those not eligible for funding under either Task A or B include:

- Federal government entities
- Institutions of higher education
- For-profit organizations or companies
- Individuals

III.C. Eligible Activities

All work must be completed within two years of the award date. Activities must seek to establish (Task A) or expand (Task B) a watershed group.

Funding awarded under this FOA may be used to complete the following activities (1-4):

1. Establishment ***or*** expansion of a watershed group
2. Development of a mission statement for the watershed group
3. Development of watershed management project concepts
4. Development of a watershed restoration plan

In general, applicants selected for funding under this FOA are expected to complete each of the four activities identified above (all four activities must be completed for applicants to be eligible for future funding opportunities implementing Phase II of the CWMP). However, if your organization is an existing watershed group that has already completed one or more of the above-listed mandatory activities and, therefore, does not require funding for that activity, please include an explanation of this in your proposal, along with copies of any relevant documents (e.g., copies of an existing mission statement or project concepts, etc.) in support of this explanation. Watershed groups that have already completed some or all of the required tasks must demonstrate how the additional work/updates proposed will further enhance the goals of the watershed group to address watershed issues.

The following is a narrative description of the eligible activities that may contribute to the successful completion of activities (1 - 4), listed above:

1) Establishment (Task A) or Expansion (Task B) of a Watershed

Group: The establishment of a watershed group must include the creation of a grassroots, non-regulatory legal entity. In addition, the establishment or expansion of a watershed group may include, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Developing bylaws, articles of incorporation, and/or holding regular meetings
- Hiring a watershed group coordinator
- Hiring a facilitator to assist with outreach to stakeholders
- Outreach activities, such as the creation of an outreach plan or information materials (e.g., brochures, advertisements, website, videos) to establish broad-based membership

2) Development of a mission statement: Activities that result in the adoption of a watershed group mission statement may include, but are not limited to:

- Paying staff or hiring a consultant to assist with the development of a mission statement
- Administrative actions, such as holding meetings with stakeholders to develop a group mission statement
- Discussing the vision and the goal of the watershed group with potential watershed group members

3) Development of watershed management project concepts. (Note: funding is for the exploration of project ideas; no funding will be provided under this FOA to conduct watershed restoration projects): Activities that result in the development of watershed management project concepts may include, but are not limited to:

- Paying staff or hiring a consultant to develop project concepts or to perform an analysis of the watershed to identify and prioritize watershed management projects
- Interviewing potential watershed group members to gain an idea of projects that would improve the watershed

- Working with Federal agencies and State or local governments to see how the watershed can be improved

“Watershed management projects” are defined in Section 6001(6) of the Act as any project (including a demonstration project) that either:

- Enhances water conservation, including alternative water uses (e.g., lining or piping canals, implementing water treatment technologies, or changing water facility operations to optimize water use or make water available for instream flows)
- Improves water quality (e.g., restoring wetlands)
- Improves ecological resiliency of a river or stream (e.g., projects to address federally listed species or critical habitat concerns, such as habitat restoration, making additional water available, and vegetation management)
- Reduces the potential for water conflicts (e.g., development of water markets to make water available to meet existing water supply needs or uses)
- Advances any other goals associated with water quality or quantity

4) Development of a watershed restoration plan: Activities that result in the development of a watershed restoration plan may include, but are not limited to:

- Paying staff or hiring a consultant to develop the restoration plan, improve on existing restoration plans, or conduct water quality or quantity studies needed to provide baseline information about the watershed
- Obtaining mapping and other technical services, including obtaining data, performing modeling, or developing goals and benchmarks for the restoration plan
- Obtaining project management services or software technology required to formulate the watershed restoration plan

III.D. Ineligible Activities

The implementation of watershed management projects, as defined above in Section III.B. *Eligible Activities* will be funded under a separate FOA for Phase II and III activities and is not eligible for funding under this FOA. Examples of ineligible activities include:

- Development of engineering designs
- Installation of permanent features (e.g., fish screens or diversion structures)
- Pilot or demonstration projects
- Stream channel modifications (e.g., installing riprap, or deepening or widening the channel)
- Lining or piping canals
- Implementing water treatment technologies
- Changing water facility operations to optimize water use or make water available for instream flows

III.E. Length of Activities

Proposed activities should be completed within 2 years of the award date. Applicants seeking funding for activities requiring more than 2 years will be considered if you can demonstrate that there will be measureable accomplishments each year.

III.F. Cost Sharing

There is no requirement for a non-Federal cost share contribution for Phase I activities. If the applicant is voluntarily providing a non-Federal cost share this must be noted in the funding plan (see Section IV.D.9., *Funding Plan*).

III.F.1. Cost Share Regulations

If the applicant is voluntarily providing a non-Federal cost share, all cost share contributions must meet the criteria established in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) administrative and cost principles circulars that apply to the applicant. These circulars are available at <www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In-kind contributions may be included as part of a non-Federal cost share if the applicant chooses to include such information in its application for funding.

III.F.2. Pre-award Costs

Project pre-award costs that have been incurred prior to the date of award may be submitted for consideration as an allowable reimbursable expense. ***In no case will pre-award costs incurred prior to January 1, 2013, be considered for reimbursement.***

III.F.3. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs that will be incurred during the establishment or expansion of a watershed group, which will not otherwise be recovered. Indirect costs are those: (1) incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective and (2) not readily assignable to any one cost objective. If the applicant proposes indirect costs in the budget, then the applicant must either supply a copy of a current federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement or obtain an agreement within one year of award. For further information on indirect costs, refer to the applicable OMB cost principles circular <www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>.

III.G. Other Requirements

III.G.1. Laws, Permits and Approvals

Applicants shall adhere to Federal, State, Territorial, and local laws, regulations, and codes, as applicable, and shall obtain all required approvals and permits. Applicants must state in the application whether any permits or approvals are required and explain the plan for obtaining such permits or approvals.

III.G.2. System of Award Management

All applicants must be registered in the System for Awards Management (SAM) prior to award under this FOA. Instructions for registering for SAM are located at <www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM>. All applicants must maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times while they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration.

III.G.3. Applicant and Watershed Group Resolution

Applicant Resolution for Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group

All applicants must include an applicant resolution adopted by the applicant's board of directors or governing body, or for state government entities, an official authorized to commit the applicant to the financial and legal obligations associated with receipt of a CWMP award, verifying the following:

- The identity of the official with legal authority to enter into an agreement.
- The board of directors, governing body, or appropriate official who has reviewed and supports the application submitted.
- The capability of the applicant to provide the amount of funding and/or in-kind contributions specified in the funding plan. Please note

there is no cost-share requirement for projects funded under this FOA. This only applies if the applicant is contributing non-Federal cost share voluntarily.

- That the applicant will work with Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a cooperative agreement.

Watershed Group Resolution for Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group

In addition to the requirements for a watershed group resolution described above, to the extent that the applicant is a member of an established watershed group, but is not the watershed group itself; the applicant must submit a watershed group resolution from the watershed group indicating that the group supports the proposal from the applicant.

The watershed group resolution must be adopted by the proper officials and must verify the commitment of the entity as described in the section above for entities applying under Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group.

An applicant/watershed group resolution meeting the requirements set forth above is mandatory. If the applicant is unable to submit an applicant/watershed group resolution by the application deadline because of the timing of board meetings or other justifiable reasons, the applicant/watershed group resolution may be submitted up to 30 days after the application deadline.

Section IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.A. Address to Request Application Package

This document contains all information, forms, and electronic addresses required to obtain the information required for submission of an application.

If you are unable to access this information electronically, you can request paper copies of any of the documents referenced in this FOA by contacting:

By mail: Bureau of Reclamation
Financial Assistance Services
Attn: Michelle Maher
Mail Code: 84-27850
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, Colorado 80225

E-mail: mmaher@usbr.gov

Phone: 303-445-2025

IV.B. Application Submission Date and Time

Application submission date deadline:

Tuesday, June 11, 2013, 4:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time

Proposals received after the application deadline will not be considered unless it can be determined that the delay was caused by Federal government mishandling or by the Grants.gov application system.

*Please note that any application submitted to Reclamation for Cooperative Watershed Management Program funding may be subjected to a Freedom of Information Act request (5 USC § 552, as amended by Public Law No. 110-175), and as a result, may be made publicly available. In addition, **successful applications will be made publicly available** (following consultation with the applicant and redactions if needed) and may be posted on the Reclamation website.*

IV.C. Application Delivery Instructions

Applications may be submitted electronically through <www.grants.gov> or hard copies may be submitted as follows. Under no circumstances will applications received through any other method (such as e-mail or fax) be considered eligible for award.

By mail:

Bureau of Reclamation
Financial Assistance Services
Attn: Michelle Maher
Mail Code: 84-27810
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, Colorado 80225

Express delivery/mail services:

Bureau of Reclamation
Attn: Michelle Maher, Mail Code: 84-27810
Denver Federal Center
6th Avenue and Kipling Street
Denver, Colorado 80225

Phone: 303-445-2025

IV.D. Instructions for Submission of Project Application

Each applicant shall submit an application in accordance with the instructions contained in this section.

IV.D.1. Applications Submitted by Mail

Applicants shall submit an original and one copy of all application documents for hardcopy submissions. Each document should be clearly identified as the “ORIGINAL” or as a “COPY.”

- Please only staple or binder clip documents submitted.
- Hard copy applications may be submitted by mail or express methods to the addresses listed in Section IV.C, above.
- Materials arriving separately will not be included in the application package and may result in the application being rejected or not funded.

This does not apply to letters of support, funding commitment letters, and applicant/watershed resolutions.

- Faxed and e-mailed copies of application documents will not be accepted.
- Do not include a cover letter or company literature/brochure with the application. All pertinent information must be included in the application package.

IV.D.2. Applications Submitted Electronically

If the applicant chooses to submit an electronic application it must be submitted through Grants.gov at <www.grants.gov>.

- Please note that submission of an application electronically requires prior registration through Grants.gov, which may take 7 - 21 days. Please see registration instructions at <www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp>.
- Applicants have sometimes experienced significant delays when attempting to submit applications through Grants.gov. If you plan to submit your application through Grants.gov, you are encouraged to submit your application several days prior to the application deadline. If you are a properly registered Grants.gov applicant and encounter problems with the Grants.gov application submission process, you must contact the Grants.gov Help desk to obtain a “Case Number.” This Case Number will provide evidence of your attempt to submit an application prior to the submission deadline.

Regardless of the delivery method used, you must ensure that your proposal arrives by the date and time deadline stated in Section IV.B., above. Late applications will not be accepted unless it is determined that the delay was caused by Federal government mishandling or by a problem with the Grants.gov application system.

IV.D.3. Application Format and Length

The total application package shall be no more than **35** (thirty-five) pages. If an application exceeds 35 pages, only the first 35 pages will be evaluated. The font shall be at least 12 points in size and easily readable. Page size shall be 8 ½” x 11,” except for an occasional larger size for charts, maps, or drawings. The Technical Proposal section shall be limited to a maximum of **25** (twenty five) pages.

Applications will be prescreened for compliance to the page number limitations.

IV.D.4. Application Content

The application must include the following elements in order to be considered complete:

- SF-424 Application cover page
- SF-424B Assurances
- Title page
- Table of contents
- Technical Proposal and Evaluation Criteria (limited to 25 pages)
 - Executive summary
 - Background data
 - Project description
 - Evaluation criteria
- Required permits or approvals, if applicable
- Letters of project support
- Applicant/Watershed Group resolution
- Project Budget
 - Funding plan and letters of commitment, if applicable
 - Budget Proposal
 - Budget Narrative
 - Budget Form SF-424A

SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B forms may be obtained at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>.

SF-424 Application Cover Page

This fully completed form must be signed by a person legally authorized to commit the applicant to performance of the project. **Failure to submit a properly signed SF-424 may result in the elimination of the application from further consideration.**

SF-424 Assurances

A SF-424B—Assurances—Non-Construction Programs, signed by a person legally authorized to commit the applicant to performance of the project shall be included. **Failure to submit a properly signed SF-424B may result in the elimination of the application from further consideration.**

IV.D.5. Application Content. Technical Proposal and Evaluation Criteria

The application must contain the content noted in IV.D.4 above and must not exceed 35 pages in total. The Technical Proposal shall be no more than 25 pages maximum, and is included in the total page count.

The Technical Proposal includes: (1) Executive Summary, (2) Background Data, (3) Project Description, (4) Phase I CWMP Evaluation Criteria. **To ensure accurate and complete scoring of your application, your proposal should address each subcriterion in the order presented here.** Where applicable, the point value is indicated.

Title Page

Provide a brief, informative, and descriptive title for the proposed work that indicates whether the applicant is *establishing* or *expanding* a watershed group. Please include the name and address of the applicant and the name, address, e-mail address, telephone, and facsimile numbers of the project manager.

Table of Contents

List all major sections of the technical proposal in the table of contents.

Executive Summary

The executive summary should include all of the following:

- The date, applicant name, city, county, and state
- A one paragraph project summary that specifies the work proposed, including how project funds will be used to accomplish specific project activities and briefly identifies how the proposed project contributes to accomplishing the goals of this FOA (see Section III.C., *Eligible Activities*)
- The length of time and estimated completion date for the project

Background Data

Provide a map of the area showing the geographic location of the watershed (include the State, county, and direction from nearest town).

As applicable, describe the watershed, including the source of water supply, the water rights involved, length of existence, current water uses (i.e., agricultural, municipal, domestic, instream uses, or industrial), and the types of water issues faced in the affected watershed (e.g., shortfalls in water supply, water quality issues, endangered species concerns, environmental

issues, or other issues that the planned watershed group would like to address).

If the above background information is included in a current planning or engineering document (such as a water conservation plan, system optimization review, or other relevant planning efforts), the applicant may reference that document and attach the relevant pages of the plan or document as an appendix (please do not attach the entire document).

Project Description

The technical proposal description should describe the work in detail. This description shall have sufficient detail to permit a comprehensive evaluation of the proposal.

Please provide an overview of the goals and approach of establishing or expanding an existing watershed group as they relate to the mandatory activities.

- **Description of Applicant:** Describe the proposed or existing watershed group, addressing the definition of a watershed group in Section I.B, *Objective of Funding Authority*
- **Eligibility of Applicant:** Please write a narrative summary indicating how the applicant meets the eligibility requirements, as described in Section III.A, *Eligible Applicants*
- **Goals:** Discuss the preliminary goals and objectives of the new or existing watershed group. Also, please indicate whether you are seeking funding to perform: Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group; or Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group
- **Approach:** Describe, in sufficient detail to permit a comprehensive evaluation of the proposal, your planned approach to establishing or expanding a watershed group, including the following steps, if applicable:
 - Information gathering
 - Developing a mission statement, forming articles of incorporation, and hiring a coordinator
 - Conducting outreach to establish or expand membership of the watershed group, including efforts to ensure the diversity of the group

- Identifying problems and needs within the given watershed
- Developing a watershed restoration plan, including establishing goals and identifying and evaluating potential watershed management projects
- Creating a plan of action for the timing of implementing the four activities described in Section III.B.1. Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group or Section III.B.2. Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group
- Developing a final report
- State the length of time and estimated completion date for the proposed work

IV.D.6. Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Criteria portion of your application should thoroughly address each of the following criteria and subcriteria in the order presented to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of your proposal.

Applications will be evaluated against the Evaluation Criteria (listed below), which comprise 100 points of the total evaluation weight. *Please note that proposals submitted under Tasks A and B will be independently evaluated using the same funding criteria. Proposals may be prioritized to ensure balance among the program Task Areas and to ensure that the proposed activities address the goals of the WaterSMART program. For examples of successful proposals from FY2012, please visit the CWMP website at <www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/cwmp/index.html>.*

Evaluation Criteria A: Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope (30 points)

Up to 30 points may be awarded for this criterion. Priority will be given to the establishment/ expansion of a watershed group that represents maximum diversity of interests, including representatives of the different sectors and interests identified in the definition (e.g., hydropower production, livestock grazing, state and tribal governments) (see: Section I.B., Objective of Funding Opportunity Announcement).

Priority will also be given to those applicants that target stakeholders and project concepts for small to medium sub-basin sized watersheds with an approximate 8-digit hydrological unit code, as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) <<http://water.usgs.gov/GIS/huc.html>>, and which represent the full extent of the watershed. Applicants that describe work or engagement with stakeholders on a larger or smaller geographic scale will receive points

under this criterion based on the extent to which they intend to do work across the entire extent of the watershed.

Subcriterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity

Points shall be awarded to proposals that encourage collaboration with a diverse array of stakeholders across the watershed.

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: Please describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the new watershed group will include a diverse array of stakeholders, including outreach to stakeholders or collaborating with other groups or partners. For example, in the FY 2012 selection process for this program, successful applicants targeted a diverse array of stakeholders that included farmers, irrigators, tourist and recreation groups, environmental organizations, local universities, and local governments. Please provide details on how you plan to inform potential stakeholders about how they can become active participants in the watershed group (e.g., outreach activities, marketing materials, and recruitment of new members). If possible, please include letters or pledges/donations supporting the establishment of the watershed group. Please also describe the affected stakeholders that could potentially be involved in the watershed group’s activities and whether there is widespread support for the proposed watershed group within the watershed.

Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group: Please describe the current membership of the watershed group and explain whether the group represents a diverse set of affected stakeholders. Please describe any efforts that you will undertake to increase the diversity of the watershed group, such as engaging in outreach to include new members or collaborating with different groups or partners. Please provide details on how the watershed group will inform affected stakeholders about their efforts (e.g., outreach activities, marketing materials, or recruitment of new members). Describe the affected stakeholders that will be targeted for incorporation into the group.

Subcriterion No. A2. Geographic Scope

Under this subcriterion, points will be made available for applicants based on the extent by which they plan to engage stakeholders across a given watershed. Priority will be given to applicants that demonstrate that the watershed group will have/has a broad geographic scope. Less priority will be given to applicants that target only a small portion of the watershed.

Please provide a map illustrating the geographic boundaries of the existing or proposed watershed group members. *If a map cannot be provided, please describe the geographic scope to the best of your knowledge.*

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: Please describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the new watershed group will target stakeholders that represent the full geographic scope of the watershed. Please provide details on how you plan to inform potential stakeholders about how they can become active participants in the watershed group (e.g., outreach activities, marketing materials, and recruitment of new members).

Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group: Please describe the extent to which the existing watershed group represents the full geographic scope of the watershed. Describe any efforts that you will undertake to expand the geographic scope of the watershed group, such as engaging in outreach to include new members with the full geographic scope of the watershed. Please provide details on how the watershed group will inform affected stakeholders about their efforts (e.g., outreach activities, marketing materials, or recruitment of new members).

Evaluation Criteria B: Addressing Critical Watershed Needs (30 points)

Up to 30 points may be awarded to proposals demonstrating that there are critical issues or needs within the watershed that can be addressed by the new or existing watershed group.

Subcriterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

Please describe in detail the critical issues or needs occurring within the watershed including, for example: water shortages, flooding, structural impairments, water quality issues (e.g., addressing Total Maximum Daily Loads, or targeting high priority activities in your state's "Measure W" watersheds), endangered species issues, conflicts over water supply, and other related issues faced by affected stakeholders. Endangered species issues may focus on, but are not limited to, activities prioritized by resource agencies such as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Fisheries Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and appropriate state natural resource agencies.

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: For new watershed groups, applicants should consider contacting Federal, State, and local agencies; non-governmental organizations; and other affected stakeholders to discuss what critical issues are affecting the watershed.

Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group: For existing watershed groups, please describe in detail the critical issues or needs existing within the watershed, and if applicable, how the issues and needs being addressed have change or evolved since the formation of the group.

Subcriterion No. B2. Watershed Group Contributions that Address Watershed Needs or Issues

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: For new watershed groups, please describe in detail how the group plans to positively contribute to the management of the watershed issues or needs. Issues to be considered by the applicant should include how the watershed group will: address/enhance water conservation; improve water quality; improve ecological resiliency of a water source; reduce the potential for water conflicts; and/or advance any other goals associated with water quality and quantity. For example, in the FY 2012 selection process for this program, successful applicants discussed how they plan to gather information through database searches, inventory reviews, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis, and outreach to stakeholders to contribute towards addressing watershed issues. In addition to explaining how critical issues will be addressed, please discuss how the new watershed group will enhance collaboration between stakeholders.

Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group: Please describe in detail how the watershed group plans to continue or expand upon existing efforts to contribute towards improved management of the watershed. Watershed issues the group should include how they have:

1. Addressed or enhanced water conservation
2. Worked towards improving water quality and/or ecological resiliency
3. Reduced the potential for water conflicts
4. Advanced any other goals associated with water quantity

Please include descriptions of the watershed group plans to enhance collaboration between existing stakeholders to address issues and any plans to bring new stakeholders to the watershed group.

Evaluation Criteria C: Implementation and Results (30 Points)

Points shall be awarded to proposals based on the level of planning that supports the proposal and on the extent to which the applicant is capable of proceeding with the establishment or expansion of a watershed group upon entering into a financial assistance agreement.

Subcriterion No. C1—Project Planning

Task A—Establishment of a Watershed Group: Please describe how the proposed activities of the watershed group will conform to or meet the goals of applicable State or regional water plans. Such plans might include a water conservation plan, plans that meet the criteria identified in the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Nonpoint Source Management Program, plans that meet the EPA's criteria for Watershed-Based Plans, and/ or other relevant planning efforts. New watershed groups should contact Federal, State, or local agencies in your area to identify existing goals and watershed relevant to the proposed establishment of a watershed group. Please reference any relevant plans that you will make contributions toward, but do not include plans as part of this application.

Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group: Please describe how efforts the watershed group conforms with or meets the goals of any applicable Federal, State, or regional water plans. Such plans might include a water conservation plan, plans that meet the criteria identified in the EPA's Nonpoint Source Management Program, plans that meet the EPA's criteria for Watershed-Based Plans, and/ or other relevant planning efforts. Please demonstrate how existing plans developed at the Federal, State or regional levels are currently being used within the watershed group, and how existing plans will be used to conduct new activities as part of this proposal. Please reference any relevant plans that you will make contributions toward, but do not include plans as part of this application.

Subcriterion No. C2—Readiness to Proceed¹

Task A—Establishing a Watershed Group and Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group: *Applicants should describe their plan for implementing the proposed scope of work. Please include an estimated schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, costs, and dates (e.g., major milestones could include the development of a mission statement, restoration plan, bylaws and articles of incorporation, and project concepts). Applicants may refer back to their Technical Proposal if this information is provided there and do not need to provide duplicate information in addressing this criterion if it exists elsewhere in the applicant's proposal. If cost share is provided, please demonstrate the level of readiness for in-kind and/or cash contributions.*

Please provide a specific discussion of any problems or major difficulties anticipated in performing or accomplishing the work.

¹Please keep in mind that a grant recipient shall not be eligible to receive second year funding unless it is determined that the watershed group is making significant progress towards completing the four activities described in Section III.B *Eligible Activities*. Likewise, an applicant will not be eligible to receive funding for Phase II Program activities until the watershed group has completed all Phase I activities, as indicated in Section III.B. *Eligible Activities*.

Describe any previous work or activities (e.g., collaborative efforts, studies, or projects) that relate to implementing the proposed scope of work.

Evaluation Criteria D: Watershed Group/Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Nexus (10 points).

Up to 10 points may be awarded based on the extent to which there is a nexus between the proposed or existing watershed group (or any of its members) and the local LCC(s).

Task A—Establishing a Watershed Group and Task B—Expansion of an Existing Watershed Group If you (or other members of the existing or proposed watershed group) are participating in a LCC, please identify the LCC and describe your role in the LCC (e.g., Steering Committee Member, Sub-Committee Member, Working Group, interested party). Please provide a map illustrating where the watershed group’s activities will be or are focused in relation to LCCs. If a map cannot be provided, please provide a narrative response. If you are not participating in a LCC, please describe how the goals of the proposed or existing watershed group are complementary to the goals of the local LCC(s), or the goals of LCCs in general. Applicants are strongly encouraged to establish a relationship with their local LCC(s).

For more information about LCCs within the geographic area of the watershed, please refer to the following websites:

- <www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/lcc.html>
- <www.fws.gov/science/SHC/lcc.html>

If you have any questions about LCC activities, you may contact Avra Morgan at <aomorgan@usbr.gov> or 303-445-2906 for further information.

I.V.D.7. Letters of Support for Establishing or Expanding an Existing Watershed Group

Letters of Support

To demonstrate the diversity and geographic scope of the proposed or existing watershed group, please include letters supporting the establishment or expansion of the watershed group with this application. For existing watershed groups, a watershed group resolution verifying the capability of the applicant to meet established deadlines for entering into a cooperative agreement should also be included.

Letters of support will not be counted towards the 25 page limit within the Technical Proposal; however, they will be counted towards the 35 page proposal limit. *To ensure your proposal is accurately reviewed, please attach all letters of support/ partnership letters as an appendix.*

Applicant/Watershed Group Resolution

Include a resolution adopted as noted in Section III.G.3, *Applicant and Watershed Group Resolution* verifying:

- The identity of the official with legal authority to enter into agreement
- The board of directors, governing body, or appropriate official who has reviewed and supports the application submitted
- The capability of the applicant to provide the amount of funding and/or in-kind contributions specified in the funding plan, if applicable
- That the applicant will work with Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a financial assistance agreement

An applicant resolution or watershed group resolution meeting the requirements set forth above is mandatory. If the applicant is unable to submit the applicant or watershed resolution by the application deadline because of the timing of board meetings or other justifiable reasons, the official resolution may be submitted up to 30 days after the application deadline.

IV.D.8. Required Permits or Approvals

Applicants must state in the application whether any permits or approvals are required and explain the plan for obtaining such permits or approvals.

IV.D.9. Funding Plan

Non-Federal cost share is not required under this FOA; however, applicants that propose non-Federal cost-share should submit a funding plan that:

1. Describes any funding that is being requested or has been received from other Federal partners. **Note:** *Other sources of Federal funding must be accounted for.*
2. Identifies any monetary and/or in-kind contributions and source funds that will be contributed by the applicant (e.g., reserve account, tax revenue, and/or assessments).
3. Describes any in-kind costs that have been incurred prior to the anticipated project start date, which you seek to include as project costs, including:
 - a. What project expenses have been incurred
 - b. How they benefitted the project

- c. The amount of the expense
 - d. The date of cost incurrence
4. Provides the identity and amount of funding that will be provided by funding partners. If letters of commitment are available, please provide them as part of your application package.

If you are proposing a non-Federal cost share or other Federal funding that will be provided, please include the following chart (Table 1) to summarize the funding sources. Please, denote any in-kind contributions with an asterisk (*).

Table 1. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources.

| Funding Sources | Funding Amount |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Non-Federal Entities | |
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |
| <i>Non-Federal Subtotal:</i> | |
| | |
| Other Federal Entities | |
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| <i>Other Federal Subtotal:</i> | |
| | |
| <i>Requested Reclamation Funding:</i> | |
| | |
| <i>Total Project Funding:</i> | |

IV.D.10. Budget Proposal

General Requirements

Include a budget that estimates all costs (not just costs to be borne by Reclamation) anticipated to establish or expand your existing watershed group (See: Table 2. Sample Budget Proposal Format).

Budget Proposal Format

The project budget shall include detailed information on the categories listed below and must clearly identify all project costs and the funding source(s) (i.e., Reclamation or other funding sources). Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors. Each contractual estimate must be listed separately noting the name of the contractor or task title. Additionally, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget. It is strongly advised

Section IV. Application and Submission Information

that applicants use the budget format shown on Table 2 or a similar format that provides this information.

Table 2. Sample Budget Proposal Format

| Budget Item Description | COMPUTATION | | Quantity Type (hours/days) | TOTAL COST |
|---------------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------------------------|------------|
| | \$/Unit | Quantity | | |
| Salaries and Wages | | | | |
| Employee 1 | | | | \$ - |
| Employee 2 | | | | \$ - |
| Employee 3 | | | | \$ - |
| Fringe Benefits | | | | |
| Full-Time Employees | | | | \$ - |
| Part-Time Employees | | | | \$ - |
| Travel | | | | |
| Trip 1 | | | | \$ - |
| Trip 2 | | | | \$ - |
| Trip 3 | | | | \$ - |
| Equipment | | | | |
| Item A | | | | \$ - |
| Item B | | | | \$ - |
| Item C | | | | \$ - |
| Supplies/Materials | | | | |
| Item A | | | | \$ - |
| Item B | | | | \$ - |
| Contractual/Construction | | | | |
| Contractor A | | | | \$ - |
| Contractor B | | | | \$ - |
| Other | | | | |
| Reporting | | | | \$ - |
| Total Direct Costs | | | | \$ - |
| Indirect Costs - ___% | | | | |
| Total Project Costs | | | | \$ - |

This is only a sample budget proposal format. You may use this format or submit the information in a different format which provides a detailed break-down of costs and need justification for budgets presented in the SF-424A.

Contracts should be broken out into specific line items. You may attach a separate, detailed budget for each contract to adequately address all contractor budget items.

Budget Narrative Format

Submission of a budget narrative is mandatory. An award will not be made to any applicant who fails to fully disclose this information. The Budget Narrative provides a discussion of, or explanation for, items included in the budget proposal. Listed below are examples of the types of information to include in the narrative.

Salaries and Wages

Indicate program manager and other key personnel by name and title. Other personnel may be indicated by title alone. For all positions, indicate salaries and wages, estimated hours or percent of time, and rate of compensation proposed. The labor rates should identify the direct labor rate separate from the fringe rate or fringe cost for each category. All labor estimates, including any proposed subcontractors, shall be allocated to specific tasks as outlined in the recipient's technical project description. Labor rates and proposed hours shall be displayed for each task.

Clearly identify any proposed salary increases and the effective date.

Generally, salaries of administrative and/or clerical personnel will be included as a portion of the stated indirect costs. If these salaries can be adequately documented as direct costs, they should be included in this section; however, a justification should be included in the budget narrative.

Fringe Benefits

Indicate rates/amounts, what costs are included in this category, and the basis of the rate computations. Indicate whether these rates are used for application purposes only or whether they are fixed or provisional rates for billing purposes. Federally approved rate agreements are acceptable for compliance with this item.

Travel

Include the purpose of the trip(s), destination, number of persons traveling, length of stay, and all travel costs including airfare (basis for rate used), per diem, lodging, and miscellaneous travel expenses. For local travel, include mileage and rate of compensation.

Equipment

Itemize costs of all equipment having a value of over \$5,000 and include information for the need for this equipment, as well as how the equipment was priced if being purchased for the agreement. If equipment is being rented, specify the number of hours and the hourly rate. Local rental rates are only accepted for equipment actually being rented or leased for the project. If equipment currently owned by the applicant is proposed for use under the proposed project, and the cost to use that equipment is being

included in the budget as in-kind cost share, provide the rates and hours for each piece of equipment owned and budgeted. These should be ownership rates developed by the recipient for each piece of equipment. If these rates are not available, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineer's recommended equipment rates for the region are acceptable. Blue book, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other data bases should not be used.

Materials and Supplies

Itemize supplies by major category, unit price, quantity, and purpose, such as whether the items are needed for office use, research, or construction. Identify how these costs were estimated (i.e., quotes, past experience, engineering estimates or other methodology).

Contractual

Identify all work that will be accomplished by subrecipients, consultants, or contractors, including a breakdown of all tasks to be completed, and a detailed budget estimate of time, rates, supplies, and materials that will be required for each task. If a subrecipient, consultant, or contractor is known when your application is submitted, please provide this information in your application package. If the subrecipient, consultant, or contractor that is proposed is approved at time of award, no other approvals will be required. Any changes or additions will require a request for approval. Identify how the budgeted costs for sub-recipients, consultants or contractors were determined to be fair and reasonable.

At the request of the applicant, Reclamation can provide technical assistance. The type of assistance can vary depending on the local area office. If you are interested in receiving Reclamation's technical assistance, you must account for this in your budget. To discuss the type of assistance available and the cost, contact your local Reclamation office which can be identified at <www.usbr.gov/main/about>.

Reporting

Recipients are required to report on the status of their project on a regular basis. Include a line item for reporting costs (including final project and evaluation costs). Please see Section VI.C, *Financial Reports* for information on types and frequency of reports required.

Other

Any other expenses not included in the above categories shall be listed in this category, along with a description of the item and what it will be used for. No profit or fee will be allowed.

Indirect Costs

Show the proposed rate, cost base, and proposed amount for allowable indirect costs based on the applicable OMB circular cost principles (see Section III F., *Cost Sharing Regulations*) for the recipient's organization. It is not acceptable to simply incorporate indirect rates within ***other direct cost line items***.

If the recipient has separate rates for recovery of labor overhead and general and administrative costs, each rate shall be shown. The applicant should propose rates for evaluation purposes, which will be used as fixed or ceiling rates in any resulting award. Include a copy of any federally approved indirect cost rate agreement. If a federally approved indirect rate agreement is not available, provide supporting documentation for the rate. This can include a recent recommendation by a qualified Certified Public Accountant (CPA) along with support for the rate calculation.

If you do not have a federally approved indirect cost rate agreement, or if unapproved rates are used, explain why, and include the computational basis for the indirect expense pool and corresponding allocation base for each rate. Information on "Preparing and Submitting Indirect Cost Proposals" is available from Interior, the National Business Center, and Indirect Cost Section, at <www.aqd.nbc.gov/services/ICS.aspx>.

Total Cost

Indicate total amount of costs associated with proposed activities, including the Federal and non-Federal cost share amounts.

Budget Form

In addition to the above-described budget information, the applicant must complete an SF-424A, Budget Information—Non-construction Programs. These forms are available at <<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>>.

IV.E. Review and Selection Process

The Government reserves the right to reject any and all applications which do not meet the requirements of this FOA, or are outside the scope of WaterSMART Grants. Awards will be made for activities most advantageous to the Government. Award selection may be made to maintain balance among the program tasks listed in Section III.C, *Eligible Activities*. The evaluation process will be comprised of three steps described in the following subsections.

IV.E.1. First-Level Screening

All applications will be screened to ensure that:

- The application meets the requirements of the FOA package, including submission of technical and budget proposals, a funding plan, letter(s) of commitment, and related forms
- The application contains a properly executed SF-424 Application for Financial Assistance and a form SF-424B, Assurances–Non-Construction Programs
- The application includes an applicant/watershed group resolution, adopted by the applicant’s board of directors, governing body, or appropriate authorized official
- The applicant meets the eligibility requirements stated in this document
- The application meets the description of eligible activities in Section III.C., *Eligible Activities* of this document (Task A or B) and is within the scope of the CWMP
- The project can be completed within 2 years of the award date

An application must pass all First-Level Screening criteria in order for it to be forwarded for further consideration at the Second-Level Evaluation phase.

IV.E.2. Second-Level Evaluation (Technical Review)

Evaluation criteria will comprise 100 points of the total evaluation weight as stated in Section IV.D.6. *Evaluation Criteria*. Applications will be scored against the evaluation criteria by an Application Review Committee (ARC), made up of experts in relevant disciplines selected from across Reclamation.

Note: Proposals submitted under Tasks A and B will be independently evaluated by task group using the same evaluation criteria. Proposals may be prioritized to ensure balance among the program Task Areas and to ensure that the proposed activities address the goals of the WaterSMART program.

During the Second-Level Evaluation, Reclamation may contact applicants to request clarifications to the information provided if necessary.

IV.E.3. Third-Level Evaluation (Managerial Review)

Management will prioritize projects to ensure the total amount of all awards does not exceed available funding levels, to ensure areas that are in the most critical need of funding receive assistance, to ensure balance among the program tasks, and to ensure that the projects meet the scope and priorities of the WaterSMART Program. Positive or negative past performance by the applicant and any partners in previous working relationships with Reclamation may be considered, including whether the applicant is making significant progress toward the completion of

outstanding financial assistance agreements and whether the applicant is in compliance with all reporting requirements associated with previously funded projects.

IV.F. Pre-Award Clearances and Approvals

After completion of the third-level evaluation, Reclamation will notify applicants whose proposals have been selected for award consideration.

Reclamation will also complete a business evaluation and determination of responsibility. During these evaluations, the Grants Officer (GO) will also consider several factors which are important, but not quantified, such as:

- Pre-award clearances, determinations, reviews, and approvals
- Allowability and allocability of proposed costs
- Financial strength and stability of the organization
- Past performance, including satisfactory compliance with all terms and conditions of previous awards, such as environmental compliance issues, reporting requirements, proper procurement of supplies and services, and audit compliance
- Adequacy of personnel practices; procurement procedures; and accounting policies and procedures, as established by applicable OMB circulars

If the results of all pre-award reviews and clearances are satisfactory, an award of funding will be made once the agreement is finalized (approximately one to three months from date of initial selection). If the results of pre-award reviews and clearances are unsatisfactory, consideration of funding for the project may be withdrawn.

Section VI. Award Administration Information

VI.A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive, by electronic or regular mail, a notice of award.

VI.B. Award Document

If the applicant is awarded a financial assistance agreement as a result of this FOA, the proposed project and other relevant information from the application will be referenced in the agreement. The agreement document must be signed by a Reclamation GO before it becomes effective.

VI.C. Reporting Requirements and Distribution

If the applicant is awarded an agreement as a result of this FOA, the applicant will be required to submit the following types of reports during the term of the agreement.

VI.C.1. Financial Reports

- SF-425, Federal Financial Report, on a quarterly basis

VI.C.2. Program Performance Reports

- Quarterly reports
- 2 year projects will be required to submit a 270-day sufficiency report to demonstrate that significant progress has been made in order to receive second year funding
- Final report (please note final reports are public documents and will be made available on Reclamation's website)
- Final reports must demonstrate the applicants' successful completion of all of the following activities:

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- Establishment or expansion of a watershed group
- Development of a mission statement for the watershed group
- Development of project concepts
- Development of a restoration plan