

# **Strategic Agricultural Initiative Grant Program**

## **Fiscal Year 2007 Request for Proposals**

### **Environmental Protection Agency – Region III EPA-R3WCM-07-01**

#### **OVERVIEW INFORMATION:**

**1. Federal Agency Name:**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III  
Waste & Chemicals Management Division  
Pesticides/Asbestos Programs & Enforcement Branch

**2. Funding Opportunity Title:**

Strategic Agricultural Initiative Grant Program: FY 2007 Request for Proposals.

**3. Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement for Fiscal Year 2007.

**4. Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-R3WCM-07-01

**5. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 66.716

Surveys, Studies, Demonstrations, Educational Outreach, and Special Projects within the Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances.

**6. Statutory Authority:**

Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20.

**7. Date:** Proposals must be postmarked or submitted via Grants.gov on or before **5:00 P.M. EST on December 29, 2006**. All proposals postmarked or submitted via Grants.gov **after** this due date will **NOT** be considered for funding.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

EPA Region III is soliciting proposals to help implement the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) and to support efforts by the agricultural community to “transition” away from high risk pesticides to the use of less and reduced risk pesticides, alternative methods of pest control and sustainable practices in food production. The program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration, and field projects for FQPA transition and reduced risk practices for pest management in agriculture.

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Authority**

EPA expects to award grants under the authority provided in FIFRA Section 20 which authorizes the Agency to issue assistance agreements for research, public education, training, monitoring, demonstration and studies. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, and it is encouraged that the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project.

Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement.

Regulations governing assistance agreements are found at 40 CFR part 30 for institutions of higher education, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations; and 40 CFR part 31 for States and local governments. In addition, the provisions in 40 CFR part 32, governing government wide debarment and suspension; and the provisions in 40 CFR part 34, regarding restrictions on lobbying apply. All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circulars: A-87 (States and local governments), A-122 (nonprofit organizations), or A-21 (universities). Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (e.g., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements or contracts). See 40 CFR part 34.

### **B. Program Description**

1. *Purpose and Scope* - The purpose of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Grant Program (<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/grants/aginitiative.htm>) is to help implement FQPA and support “transition” efforts by growers to more environmentally sound pest management practices. The program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration and field projects for FQPA transition and reduced risk practices for pest management in agriculture. Priority is placed on project proposals that include a “whole systems” approach by integrating pest, soil, water and crop management practices, address an array of commodities, focus on sustainable agriculture, incorporate conservation planning, and are submitted by applicants that have a proven track record of grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices. Successful applicants will also have an outreach and extension component to their program. “Sustainable” agriculture refers to farming practices that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible.

2. *Goals and Objectives* - The goals of the FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative are:

- Utilize demonstration projects, outreach, and/or education to increase the adoption of reduced risk/integrated pest management (IPM) practices that provide alternatives to the use of highly toxic pesticides and/or pesticides impacted negatively by FQPA decisions.
- Encourage partnerships between producers, commodity groups, scientists, extension, local/state/federal government agencies, and other stakeholders to demonstrate, promote, and utilize reduced risk/IPM practices in the field.
- Actively engage scientists, producers, industry, and local/state/federal partners in the specifics of implementing FQPA.
- Quantitatively measure and document the effects and impacts of using the reduced risk/IPM programs on the environment, human health and community.
- Facilitate a sustainable whole farm systems approach that utilizes conservation planning and reduced risk/IPM practices.
- Demonstrate region specific pest management practices and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses which may be cancelled under FQPA.

### **C. Background**

The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), passed by Congress in 1996, establishes health based standards for pesticide residues in raw and processed food. It is intended to protect public health from exposure to pesticides and to create an environment favorable for the development and adoption of lower risk, effective crop protection tools for U.S. agriculture. The EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and numerous agricultural organizations are working on efforts to implement the FQPA. For this effort, EPA established regional programs for FQPA implementation and partnership activities to reduce risks and use of pesticides in agriculture. For more background information on FQPA, visit the EPA website at [www.epa.gov/oppfead1/fqpa/](http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/fqpa/).

### **D. FQPA/SAI Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs**

1. *Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan/GPRA Architecture.* These assistance agreements will support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems; Objective 4.1 - Chemical, Organism and Pesticide Risk; Program/Project 92 - Field Programs. To see EPA's 2003-2008 Strategic Plan visit: [www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm).
2. *Outcomes.* Through this grant program, EPA expects to: 1) increase the number of growers using reduced risk/IPM tools and techniques; 2) measure quantitative and qualitative reduction in the use of higher risk pesticides or pesticides in general; and 3) support partnerships between crop producers, EPA, other federal/state/local agencies, and other interested stakeholders to implement reduced risk/IPM programs and to leverage funds from other sources to increase the scope of the FQPA/SAI program.

3. *Outputs.* The anticipated outputs of these projects include: a) educational and outreach materials for growers; b) conservation plans for growers that include reduced risk pest management; c) conferences, seminars, and on-site field training; d) partnerships established between federal and non-federal programs to provide reduced risk/IPM programs for crop producers; e) acres impacted by the project under management that include pesticide risk reduction practices. If applicable, include those acres treated with biopesticides or reduced risk pesticides and/or those pest management techniques that do not employ chemical methods; f) percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients.

## **II. Award Information**

### **A. Amount of Funding Available**

The EPA Region III Strategic Agricultural Initiative anticipates having approximately **\$150,000 in 2007** to award to eligible applicants. Projects up to **\$75,000** will be considered for funding. Indirect costs must be included in the \$75,000 maximum funding amount. Costs incurred prior to the grant award will **NOT** be reimbursed. Should the amount available for funding change, the Agency will make grant awards based on the actual funding received. The Agency may award additional grants based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice of competition.

### **B. Funding Type**

The funding for selected projects is in the form of a grant awarded under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20.

### **C. Total Number of Awards**

The number of awards will depend on individual proposal costs, the final aggregate amount of Federal funding for all proposals, and the total final amount of Federal funding available. Proposals to supplement existing projects are eligible to compete with proposals for new awards.

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

**EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement (after the original award selections are made) if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions. The additional selections must be made in accordance with the terms of this announcement and EPA policy.**

#### **D. Start Date/Project Duration**

Award funds for the selected proposals are expected to be available in **April 2007**. Proposed project periods may be up to two (2) years.

#### **E. Disclaimer**

EPA Reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Grant funds are available to States, U.S. territories or possession, federally recognized Indian tribal governments and Native American Organizations, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private nonprofit institutions and individuals. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. For-profit organizations are not eligible; however, ineligible groups are encouraged to work with an eligible organization to submit proposals.

#### **B. Matching/Cost Share Requirements**

Matching funds are not required; however, applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage funds from other sources. (See Section V, B. 9.)

#### **C. Other Eligibility Information**

Proposals must address two or more of the Goals and Objectives of the FQPA/SAI program listed above in Section I.B.2. of this announcement.

Projects **MUST** have the following measures:

1. Acres impacted by the project under management that include pesticide risk reduction practices. If applicable, include those acres treated with biopesticides or reduced risk pesticides and/or those pest management techniques that do not employ chemical methods.
2. Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients.
3. Declared IPM Transition Index number from the "IPM Transition Index" located at [http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance\\_measures.php](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php)
4. Environmental Performance Measure Categories must be clearly identified by the applicant. Environmental Performance Measure Categories are: Air, Animals, Dietary, Economic, Human, Plant, Soil, and Water.

5. Projects must declare selected measures either direct or surrogate measures. Details to determine and select project related direct and surrogate measures for each above listed Category is located at: [www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance) To assist in identifying measures and outcomes, please visit: <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai> (SAI Grant Applicants – Performance Measures).

Proposals that do not substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement will be rejected. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to parts of the application, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. If a single spaced proposal is submitted, the narrative will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 12 page double spaced page limit for narratives specified in Section IV B 7. Proposals must be received by the EPA on or before the solicitation closing date published in Section IV of this announcement.

In addition, since the FQPA/SAI grant program is intended to support field projects, proposals should not include activities that involve basic research. The EPA will consider only one (1) proposal by each individual investigator. Proposals from different investigators within the same organization are acceptable.

Implementation of all projects must occur within one or more of the states of EPA Region III (Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia) or the District of Columbia.

Any proposals that do not meet the above requirements will not be considered further for funding.

## **IV. Application and Submission Information**

### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

Blank application forms can be obtained at the following Internet address:  
<http://www.epa.gov/region3/grants/appforms.htm>

Hard paper copies of application forms can be obtained at the following address:

Environmental Protection Agency – Region III  
ATTN: John Butler  
Waste and Chemicals Management Division  
1650 Arch Street – (3WC32)  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-2029

Applicants applying via grants.gov will find the entire application package by following the instructions listed in Section IV, F. of this announcement.

**B. Content and Format of Proposal Submission**

**If you are applying via the hard copy method, one original hard paper copy is required. If you are applying via the grants.gov method, no hard paper copy is required. (see Section IV F “Other Submission Requirements” of this announcement for more information about applying via grants.gov)**

Proposals should be typewritten, double spaced in 12 point or larger print using an 8.5 x 11 inch paper with minimum 1 inch horizontal and vertical margins. When submitting via grants.gov, the proposal must be readable in PDF, MS Word or Word Perfect WP6/7/8 for Windows and consolidated into a single file.

Pages must be numbered in order starting with the cover page and continuing through the appendices.

All proposals must contain the following with the corresponding page numbers:

1. **Standard Form SF 424 – Application For Federal Assistance** (no page number): Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. Clearly state the total funding amount requested for the **entire** project period in Block 15.

2. **Standard Form SF 424A – Budget Information** (no page number): Clearly state the requested funding amount for each of the Budget Categories under Section B for the **entire** project period. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (percentage), the base (personnel costs and fringe benefits) and the total amount should also be indicated under Section F – Other Budget Information.

\* If you are submitting a hard copy proposal, blank SF-424 and SF-424A forms can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/region03/grants/appforms/htm>

\*\*If you are submitting via grants.gov, the forms will be included in the electronic application package.

3. **Cover Page** (Page 1):

The cover page should list the following information with your letterhead:

Project Title:

Project Coordinator:

Organization Name and Address:

Telephone No.:      Fax No.:      Email Address:

Project Period (including Starting Date and Ending Date):

First Year Funding Request:

Second Year Funding Request, if applicable:

Total Funding Request (for the entire project):

Please indicate if this proposal is a continuation of a previously EPA funded project.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide the following:

EPA Assistance Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Budget Period of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Budget/Resources (Page 2):**

Please submit a detailed budget with your proposal, linking the cost of each objective with the budget. Explain the need for funding under each of the appropriate budget categories. Under travel, include the travel location(s), estimated number of trips, estimated total mileage and number of nights lodging required throughout the entire project period. Include information on other funding sources (leverage funds), if any. Describe how leveraged resources will be obtained and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

**5. Table of Contents (Page 3):** A one page table listing the different parts of the application and the page number on which each part begins.

**6. Executive Summary (Page 4):** The Executive Summary should be a stand alone document, not to exceed one (1) page, containing the specifics of what is proposed and what you expect to accomplish regarding measuring or movement toward achieving project goals. This summary should identify the **measurable environmental results** you expect including potential human health and ecological benefits. (See Section I. D. for more information about environmental results)

**7. Proposal Narrative (Includes Part I-VI):** Parts I-VI listed below should not exceed twelve (12) pages. These pages should be numbered beginning with Page 5.

- a. **Part I: Project Title.** Self explanatory.
- b. **Part II: Objectives.** A numbered list (1, 2, etc.) of concisely written project objectives. In most cases, each objective can be stated in a single sentence. These objectives should be specific and clearly stated.
- c. **Part III: Justification.** For each objective list in Part II above, discuss the potential outcome in terms of environmental, human health, pesticide risk and/or use reduction or pollution prevention. If appropriate, the target pest(s) and crop(s) should be explicitly stated. This section should be numbered with a justification corresponding to each objective.
- d. **Part IV: Literature Review.** Briefly describe relevant information currently available. This should also include information on projects currently in progress that are relevant to or provide the basis for either

the experiment design or the validation of a new approach to pest management.

- e. **Part V: Approach and Methods.** Describe in detail how the program will be carried out. Describe how the system or approach will support the program goals. Include a well conceived work plan that is realistic and appropriate to achieving the identified objectives. This should include a brief background on the main issues or challenges, specific objectives, main activities and expected outcomes and deliverables. Include the project area and clearly specify the crop(s) affected.
- f. **Part VI: Performance Measures and Expected Outputs and Outcomes.** Please state how you will evaluate the success of the program in terms of **measurable environmental results**. (See Section I. D.) The work plan should include **performance measures** that demonstrate the progress or environmental benefits of the project. Any project surveys are required to provide measurable outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes should be clearly listed in a table format. Include specific milestones and how you will measure improvements to human health, the ecosystem, or quality of life. Pick two or three measures from the SAI Toolbox which can be found at <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai> (SAI Grant Applicants, Performance Measures). In addition to the performance measures listed in Section V (Selection Criteria), all proposals and reports (progress and final) should also include the following elements for reporting of project measures:
- Acres impacted by the project under management that include pesticide risk reduction practices. If applicable, include those acres treated with biopesticides or reduced risk pesticides and/or those pest management techniques that do not employ chemical methods.
  - Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.
  - Economic viability of project adoption by growers.
  - Current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the SAI Transition Index. See <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai> (SAI Grant Applicants).
  - Any performance data linking the protection of endangered species or improving water quality and pesticide use reduction in the project area should be noted.
  - Performance data highlighting the reduced use of azinphos-methyl, Phosmet, chlorpyrifos, organophosphate and synthetic pyrethroid insecticides as well as fumigants with the transition to alternative methods of pest control should be noted. Project relationships to endocrine disruptors should also be included.

- Evidence that the applicant expects to partner with others and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with media releases or other outreach activities.
- Data on performance measures should be reported in table format whenever possible. Related and supportive scientific publications can be attached.

**8. Proposal Appendices:** These appendices **must** be included in the grant proposal. Continue page numbering as appropriate after Part VI.

a. **Appendix A. Literature Cited.** List cited key literature references alphabetically by author.

b. **Appendix B. Timetable.** A timetable that includes what will be accomplished under each of the objectives during the project and when completion of each objective is anticipated.

**9. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:** Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports, and (iii) how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g. outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.

In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goal of the proposed project.

### **Confidential Business Information**

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If

no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

### **C. Submission Dates and Times**

Proposals must be postmarked or submitted via Grants.gov on or before **5:00 P.M. EST on December 29, 2006**. All proposals postmarked or submitted via Grants.gov **after** this due date will **NOT** be considered for funding.

### **D. Intergovernmental Review**

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Executive Order 12372 or Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

### **E. Funding Restrictions**

Award will **not** allow for the reimbursement of pre-award costs. Indirect cost rates will not increase the \$75,000 maximum funding amount.

**Allowable Costs:** EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87; A-122; and A-21, as appropriate.

### **F. Other Submission Requirements**

Please note that you may choose to apply ***one of two ways***. If you wish to apply **electronically** via Grants.gov, please follow the appropriate instructions under “Electronic Submission” below. If you wish to apply with a **hard copy** submission, please follow the instructions under “Hard Copy Submission” below. Please only participate in one form of submission.

#### **Electronic Submission**

If you wish to apply electronically, 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. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Get Started,” and then “Authorized Organization

Representative (AOR).” *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this grant program, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” link on the left of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package ([https://apply.grants.gov/forms\\_apps\\_idx.html](https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html)). You may retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3WCM-07-01, in the space provided. You may also access the application package by clicking on the button at the bottom right side of the Find synopsis on Fedgrants.gov that says **Apply for Grant Electronically**.

Please be sure to view the additional instructions that are available for download on Grants.gov for this announcement.

If you have any technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant\\_help.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp)

### **Hard Copy Submission**

All **hard copy** proposals should be sent or delivered to:

Environmental Protection Agency – Region III  
Attention: John J. Butler  
Waste & Chemicals Management Division  
1650 Arch Street (3WC32)  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103-2029

**Pre-Proposal Assistance:** None planned.

Additional information about this announcement, including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications, may be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd>.

## **V. Proposal Review and Selection Criteria**

## **A. Proposal Review**

All proposals will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness by the Region III Strategic Agricultural Initiative Coordinator. Complete and eligible proposals will be evaluated by a panel of EPA staff using the selection criteria listed below (see Section III for eligibility information).

## **B. Selection Criteria (Total 100 points)**

1. Program focuses on sustainable agriculture and uses conservation planning and a whole systems approach. Proposals will be evaluated based on: (i) The description of the program's approach to methods for grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices, along with applied research and extension program components, and; (ii) The extent that a "whole systems" approach to pest management is encouraged. The project should strive to integrate pest, soil, crop, and water management practices. **(5 points)**
2. Importance of project in relation to FQPA. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent that they address critical pest management issues relative to the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) and are consistent with the goals of the FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative. (See Section I B 2 for goals) Projects must focus on actual results, getting information and agricultural practices into the hands of growers who actually use them to shift away from FQPA-targeted pesticides to other methods of pest management. **(10 points)**
3. Commodity and region-wide significance and degree of transferability to other areas. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent they address agricultural commodity pest problems, discuss critical pest management issues (explaining the importance of the project and the commodity) and address how the agricultural practice and reduced-risk tools could be adapted to other locations with similar cropping systems. **(5 points)**
4. On-farm demonstration with active roles for multiple grower participation. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent of their partnerships and the participation of growers as part of the project activities. Cooperation with scientists, extension officers, pest control advisors, crop consultants other non-profit organizations, and other partners is encouraged. Letters of support from collaborators, indicating their contributions to the project, should be provided for this factor. **(10 points)**
5. Clearly stated and measurable objectives. Proposals will be evaluated based on their clarity and ability to explain the project objectives and the degree to which the proposed project will: (i) Reduce or eliminate the use of highly toxic pesticides; and (ii) Increase farmers' adoption of reduced risk alternatives and/or sustainable integrated pest or crop management methods. Include a clear explanation of the methods (both quantitative and qualitative) that will be used to measure progress and impacts. Measures of success should be linked to reduction

of pesticide use/risks, implementation of alternative agricultural practices, and/or similar impacts. (10 points)

6. *Environmental Measurement/Outputs and Outcomes* (Medium and Long-term outcomes) Projects will be evaluated on their likelihood of achieving predicted environmental results, expected outcomes, project goals, and produce on-the-ground, quantifiable environmental change. Projects must have a clear plan to track and measure its progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes as identified in Section I. Include a description of expected outputs and outcomes. Include two to three performance measures that can be tracked throughout the project. Projects **MUST** have the following measures:
- a. Acres impacted by the project under management that include pesticide risk reduction practices. If applicable, include those acres treated with biopesticides or reduced risk pesticides and/or those pest management techniques that do not employ chemical methods.
  - b. Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.
  - c. Declared IPM Transition Index number from the “IPM Transition Index” located at [http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance\\_measures.php](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php) at the start of the project and expected number at the project’s conclusion.
  - d. Environmental Performance Measure Categories must be clearly defined by the applicant. These categories are: Air, Animals, Dietary, Economic, Human, Plant, Soil, and Water.
  - e. Projects must declare selected measures as either direct or surrogate measures. Direct measures identify actual environmental changes occurring with the adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. In contrast, surrogate measures identify changes in strategies or behavior that should lead to environmental changes. Details to determine and select project related direct and surrogate measures for each above listed Category is located at: [www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance). To assist in identifying measures and outcomes, please visit the Strategic Agricultural Initiative Toolbox located at: <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai> (SAI Grant Applicants, Performance Measures).

Performance measures on the economic viability of adoption by growers are encouraged. Any performance data linking the protection of endangered species or improving water quality and pesticide use reduction in the project area should be noted.

Performance data highlighting the reduced use of azinphos-methyl, Phosmet, chlorpyrifos, organophosphate and synthetic pyrethroid insecticides as well as fumigants with the transition to alternative methods of pest control should be noted. Project relationships to endocrine disruptors should also be included.

If you choose to use unique performance measures other than those listed in the Toolbox, they must be clearly described and submitted as part of the proposal. If your project is selected for funding, measures included in your proposal may be

subject to negotiation. Be sure to describe the method you will use to attain data to support the measures indicated. **(35 points)**

7. Outreach/Use of extension to enhance the likelihood of grower adoption. Proposals will be evaluated to the extent that there are clear plans for extension; outreach or communications that will likely lead to effective learning and adoption of new practices, and how the long term, sustainable adoption will be measured. **(15 points)**
8. Programmatic Capability (Technical Experience) and Environmental Results Past Performance/Qualification and experience of the applicant relative to the proposed project and involvement of key institutions and stakeholders. Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's: (i) past performance in successfully completing federally funded projects that your organization has performed and completed within the last three years; (ii) a history of meeting reporting requirements on prior or current assistance agreements with federal and/or non-federal organizations and submitting acceptable final technical reports; (iii) past performance in documenting and/or reporting on its progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally funded assistance agreements that the organization performed within the last three years (and if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not); (iv) organizational experience and ability to plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project; and (v) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. Applicants without past experience will receive a neutral score in this area. **(5 points)**
9. Project Utilizes Leveraging (Funding and Partnerships). Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will compliment activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share if the standards of 40CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. **(5 points)**

**PLEASE NOTE:** FQPA/Strategic Agricultural Initiative funds are not intended to support basic research; however, proposals may include a *component for applied on farm research*, as long as they also have *demonstration, education and/or outreach activities*.

## **VI. Award Administration Process**

## **A. Award Decisions and Formal Application Process**

The EPA Region III office will email acknowledgments to applicants upon receipt of the proposal. Proposals will be ranked and evaluated based on the criteria listed in Section V by a review panel. The highest ranked proposals will be submitted to the selection official, who will make selections based on the recommendations.

Once proposals have been reviewed, evaluated, ranked and selected, applicants will be notified via U.S. Mail regarding the outcome of the competition. The notification is not an authorization to begin performance on the selected project(s). The notice of award sent via U.S. Mail to the applicant's authorized representative and signed by the EPA award official is the authorizing document.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted on the EPA Region III website address at the conclusion of the competition (<http://www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd>).

If your proposal is selected for funding, you will need to complete a formal application for Federal funding. An application kit containing financial and administrative forms and general information on Federal grants will be mailed to award recipients. Blank forms may also be obtained at: <http://www.epa.gov/region03/grants/appforms.htm>.

## **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

The award and administration of these grants will be governed by the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to states, tribes, and local governments set forth at 40 CFR Part 31. Grants awarded pursuant to this solicitation are subject to the regulations for "Environmental Program Grants" set forth at the 40 CFR Part 35, subpart B. In addition, the provision in 40 CFR Part 32 governing government wide debarment and suspension, and the provisions in 40 CFR Part 40 regarding restrictions on lobbying apply.

Once a proposal is selected, the recipient may be required to submit before award, in addition to a full application, a copy of its written procurement procedures developed in accordance with 40 CFR 30.40 – 30.48 or 40 CFR 31.36, as applicable, for review.

Award recipients must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number on their formal SF-424 application form. A DUNS number can be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711. A DUNS number is not required until the full application is submitted.

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circulars. Copies of the circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>. In accordance with the EPA policy and the OMB circular, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for fund-raising, or political activities such as lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. See 40 CFR Part 40.

Nonprofit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement will be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Sections 8.b, 8.c, and 9.d of EPA Order 5700.8, 'EPA Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards' which can be found at [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700\\_8.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). Nonprofit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capability Form, with supporting documents, contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

In accordance with 40 CFR 30.54 and 31.45, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). This includes efficacy and performance data, surveys and similar results. The award recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The QAPP is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA Project Officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPP's can found at [http://www.epa.gov/quality1/qa\\_docs.html](http://www.epa.gov/quality1/qa_docs.html).

If a conference or workshop is an element of the project, the applicant will be required to answer the following questions: Who is initiating the conference/workshop/meeting? How will it be advertised? Whose logo will be on the agenda and materials? What is the percentage of participants, i.e. federal, state, local or public? Will the grant recipient prepare the proceedings and disseminate the information back to the targeted community? Will program income be generated from this event?

If indirect costs are budgeted in the assistance application and the non-profit organization or educational institute does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it agrees to prepare and submit its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with the appropriate Federal cost principle, OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations" or OMB Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions" within ninety (90) days from the effective date of the award for this assistance agreement.

If a local government does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments." The local government recipient whose cognizant Federal agency has been designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal for approval to its cognizant Federal agency within six (6) months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant

Federal agency has not been identified by the OMB, the local government recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period.

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the “recipient” even if other eligible applicants are named as “partners” or “co-applicants” or members of a “coalition” or “consortium”. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to acquire services or fund partnerships, provided the recipient follows procurement and subaward or subgrant procedures contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as applicable. For profit organizations are not eligible for subawards or subgrants under this announcement but may enter into procurement contracts with recipients.

Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by these regulations. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposal. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the proposal EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements. Subgrants or subawards may be used to fund partnerships with non profit organizations and governmental entities. Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products to carry out its cooperative agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of “subaward” at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or “subgrant” at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions.

Human Subjects: A grant recipient must agree to meet all EPA requirements for studies using human subjects prior to implementing any work with these subjects. These requirements are given in 40 C.F.R. 26. For observational studies involving children and/or pregnant women, please refer to Subparts B & D of 40 C.F.R. 26. No work involving human subjects, including recruiting, may be initiated before the EPA has received a copy of the applicant’s Institutional Review Board’s (IRB) approval of the project and the EPA has also provided approval. Where human subjects are involved in the research, the recipient must provide evidence of subsequent IRB reviews, including amendments or minor changes of protocol, as part of annual reports.

### **C. Reporting**

The successful applicant(s) will be required to submit quarterly progress reports throughout the duration of the project. Progress reports are due 30 days post each quarter of the project period. Reports should include a description of project activities including accomplishments, successes and lessons learned along with any problems and/or delays. Environmental outcomes should be indicated in relation to the approved schedule and milestones. Data on performance measures should be reported in table format whenever possible. Quarterly Financial Status Reports (FSR’s) will also be required. A final

project report is also required 90 days following the end of the project period according to the same format. Related published reports and research publications on the project with analytical data should be attached when applicable. All reports can be submitted either electronically or by hard paper copy.

#### **D. Dispute Resolution Process**

Grant 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 <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1271.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the contact listed in Section IIV.

#### **E. Disclaimer**

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

### **VII. Agency Contacts**

If you have questions or need additional information regarding the Strategic Agricultural Initiative Request for Proposals (RFP), please contact:

John J. Butler  
Environmental Protection Agency – Region III  
Waste & Chemicals Management Division  
1650 Arch Street (3WC32)  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103-2029

Phone: 215-814-2127  
Email: [butler.john@epa.gov](mailto:butler.john@epa.gov)