

**AGENCY:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

**TITLE:** "ECOLOGICAL INDICATORS OF AIR QUALITY"

**ACTION:** Request for Applications (RFA) - Questions and Answers

**RFA NO:** OAR-CCD-04-12

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO:** 66.034

**SUMMARY:** The following are formal Agency responses to questions/comments regarding the subject solicitation.

**1. Who is eligible to apply for the grant?**

Proposals will be accepted from state, local, multi-state, and tribal governmental agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations, as defined by [OMB Circular A-122](#).

**2. Is this a new program? If not, is there a list of prior awardees available? Has the EPA Clean Air Markets Division (CAMD) awarded funds for the development of Ecological Indicators of Air Quality before or is this the first RFA of its kind?**

The "Ecological Indicators of Air Quality" is a new program. The Clean Air Markets Division has not previously awarded funds for this program.

**3. What is the original solicitation date for this program?**

The original solicitation date for this program is August 18, 2004.

**4. Is this program being funded by FY 2004 or FY 2005 funds?**

EPA anticipates use of FY 2004-2005 funds for award of this program.

**5. Is it true that only one proposal will be funded from this solicitation?**

Yes.

**6. As we understand the description of the award funding, \$100,000 will be awarded in Year 1 with an additional \$150,000 available in years 2-5. Total funding will not exceed \$250,000 over five years. Is this correct?**

Yes. However, EPA reserves the right to fully fund the selected project, in the total estimated amount of \$250,000, at the time of award.

**7. Other than the requirements specified in the RFA, is there a certain type of applicant that is typically more competitive than other applicants?**

No. Each eligible application will be evaluated according to the criteria detailed in the RFA. Applications which are best able to directly and explicitly address these criteria will have a greater likelihood of being selected for award.

**8. The RFA states that there is no match required for this program. If an applicant were to supply a cash or in-kind match, would this ultimately benefit them during the evaluation process? Also, if this is the case, would cash or in-kind be more preferable?**

No. Matching funds are neither a requirement nor an evaluation factor. An applicant will gain no competitive advantage in offering matching funds.

**9. Is EPA interested in targeting a specific type of aquatic (freshwater lake, stream, or estuary) or terrestrial (forest, prairie, urban) habitat or, should the proposal target multiple habitat types?**

Proposals should consider aquatic and/or terrestrial ecosystems.

**10. Should the indicator development have a national or regional focus?**

Although EPA is primarily interested in national indicators, regional indicators will also be considered.

**11. Is EPA interested only in ecological indicators for air compounds such as SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> or, are you also interested in other compounds such as mercury, PAHs, and persistent organic pollutants such as dioxin?**

Although EPA is primarily interested in SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>, proposals that include mercury in addition to SO<sub>2</sub>, and NO<sub>x</sub> will also be considered.

**12. Should indicator development focus on the identification of new monitoring techniques and/or the utilization of deposition modeling or is it best to develop the indicators using existing data and monitoring capabilities?**

The main objective of this project is to enhance scientific assessment capabilities to better track how changes in air quality and atmospheric deposition impact aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. This should involve identifying a comprehensive suite of indicators and corresponding metrics (or measurements) for using these indicators to consistently assess changes in air impacts to ecosystems over time. The identification and selection of indicators should be based on existing monitoring programs/data collection efforts and scientific assessment literature rather than developing information through new lab or field research.

### **13. What should be the rationale for selecting indicators?**

EPA does not offer specific rationale for selecting indicators, however, potential applicants may want to consider the following guidance:

- The selected group of indicators should enhance scientific assessment capabilities to improve tracking of air quality impacts to ecosystems over time.
- Selection of indicators should be based primarily on existing monitoring programs/data collection efforts and scientific assessment literature.
- Good indicators should have a valid measurement quality (associated metric) for assessing air-ecosystem impacts and have the capability to be tracked consistently (even if not currently monitored adequately).
- Useful indicators for this project should also be unambiguous and easy to understand by the public.