

2016 Watershed Implementation Plan Assistance Funding *Request for Proposals*

BACKGROUND

Every year, EPA provides funds available to the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions to provide programmatic, technical, and resource support towards high priority needs that can be directly linked to implementation of the jurisdictions' Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs), meeting their two-year milestones, and/or addressing related midpoint assessment needs under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL).

2016 FUNDING PRIORITIES

In 2016, EPA has \$500,000 available to the Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions to provide support for jurisdictions' efforts to (1) complete the clean up their historical BMP data; (2) further develop and implement their BMP verification protocols, procedures and programs; and (3) develop communication and outreach plans targeted towards local partners in preparation for the development of the Phase III WIPs. These projects will also help inform the Bay TMDL's midpoint assessment in 2017 and the development of jurisdictions' Phase III WIPs in 2018.

Recognizing that jurisdictions have programmatic and resource needs beyond those identified in this proposal, future targeting of WIP assistance funds will continue to be done in collaboration with the jurisdictions and EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program Office, working through the partnership's Water Quality Goal Implementation Team.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

EPA is requesting a descriptive narrative, cost estimate, and schedule for one or more of the following activities so that funds may be provided to initiate this work (Attachment A is an example of the most simple proposal). EPA also asks that you identify the key tasks and their associated cost estimates under each selected activity so that partial funding can be provided in the event that the proposed work cannot be fully funded. Priority will be given to proposals which not only benefit a single jurisdiction, but have utility and possible use by other jurisdictions.

Historical Data Cleanup

The Chesapeake Bay Program is currently enhancing the partnership's decision support tools, including the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model (CBWM). The CBWM will be recalibrated in the 2016 timeframe as part of the Bay TMDL's midpoint assessment. As in 2015, the jurisdictions have opportunities to ensure the historical record of implementation between 1985-2014 is accurate to the best degree possible to help inform the final calibration of the CBWM at the end of 2016. The scope of data cleanup could encompass including BMP and wastewater data that are omitted from the current inventory, reporting more specific BMP types, correcting BMP implementation dates and/or locations, accounting for BMP life spans, and correcting areas treated by BMPs. Jurisdictions will need to approve the final data sets to be used in the modeling tools as the best reflection of how on-the-ground implementation rates and levels changed through time.

Proposals should clearly articulate the approach the jurisdictions will take in cleaning up historical data, including, but not limited to: how local partners and their BMP records are accommodated (e.g., conservation districts, counties, municipalities, etc.); identification of the source sectors that will be targeted for cleanup; proposed resolution for addressing implementation cut-off conditions; how

implementation data will be verified; and the scale at which the data will be collected (e.g. working at the county scale). All BMP records will be submitted through the National Environmental Information Exchange Network in 2016 for calibration into subsequent Beta and final versions of the CBWM, likely in March and June 2016. September 30, 2016 is the deadline for submitting BMP data that will be incorporated into the final Phase 6 CBWM. Information on previously submitted historic BMP and wastewater data is available on states' password-protected ftp sites, and additional guidelines for historic data cleanup are at http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/22163/ii.a._-_historic_bmp_and_wastewater_data_cleanup_01212015.pdf.

Implementation of BMP Verification Programs

In November 2015, the seven Bay watershed jurisdictions submitted to EPA their revised draft BMP tracking, verification, and reporting program plans within their existing Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant Quality Assurance (QA) plans (or Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Grant QA plans). In accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Program's Chesapeake Bay Basinwide BMP Verification Framework, in the two years immediately after the jurisdictions' enhanced BMP verification program plans are approved by EPA, the partners will ramp up their verification programs and make the necessary internal adjustments and adaptations for its implementation. In the 2018 progress reporting cycle, jurisdictions will need to provide verification documentation through the NEIEN reporting system.

Jurisdictions are encouraged to submit proposals to support any aspects of their planned work to implement their verification protocols, procedures, and programs as part of their larger BMP tracking, verification, and reporting programs. This planned work can also include addressing any outstanding comments documented during the review process from EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Program's BMP Verification Review Panel during the Partnership agreed to 'ramp-up' period.

Local Communication & Outreach Strategies

In preparation for the development of the Phase III WIPs, due to EPA in 2018, and the release of EPA's expectations for those plans in 2017, EPA secured a contract with the Institute for Environmental Negotiation, University of Virginia, to hold a series of conversations with stakeholders from federal, state, local, non-governmental and industry organizations. The purpose of this assessment was to identify lessons learned from the Phase I and II WIP process that should be applied to the Phase III WIPs in order to facilitate local engagement and implementation.

One of the key and shared concerns raised during the stakeholder assessment was the need for more strategic communications and outreach targeted toward local partners. Communication is a vital component of WIP development and implementation, with clear and consistent messaging and engagement necessary for Phase III WIPs that resonate at the local level. Jurisdictions are encouraged to submit proposals to support the development of comprehensive communication and outreach strategies targeted to the local sector(s) that outlines a clear plan for engaging local partners in the Phase III WIP development process, including opportunities for participation and what specific objectives need to be met and by when; the necessary resources to sustain current engagement efforts and to expand these efforts to previously unengaged local partners; and a clear schedule for implementing the communication and outreach strategy.

SCHEDULE

Please provide your requests for funding and associated estimates to Lucinda Power (power.lucinda@epa.gov) by **February 22, 2016**. Jurisdictions will be notified of the award of funds for their proposals by **March 7, 2016**.

EPA will then work with each of the jurisdictions to determine the appropriate funding mechanisms through which proposed projects may be funded. Funding mechanisms could include adding the funds to the jurisdictions' CBIG and CBRAP grants, EPA's Tetra Tech contract, and other existing EPA grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts.

ATTACHMENT A
Example Watershed Implementation Plan Assistance Funding
Proposal—Simple Format and Content

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
MS4 Guidance and Training Proposal

Virginia completed the issuance of the Phase 2 MS4 General Permit and one Phase 1 individual permit in 2013. The general permit includes the addition of 16 new MS4 areas identified from the 2010 census along with 87 existing Phase 2 MS4s. Virginia anticipates the remaining 11 MS4 individual permits will be issued by the end of 2015. These permits include specific provisions related to the Bay TMDL. In order to maintain high levels of compliance with these new permit provisions, additional funding is needed to provide training and tools to MS4 permittees.

Guidance and Tool Development - \$50,000

Virginia's Bay MS4 permittees have expressed the desire for more information and tools to assist in program development, reporting, self evaluation, and compliance. Work would be performed by qualified contractor in coordination with the Department of Environmental Quality.

- **Program Implementation Guidance** – This guidance would direct permittees in the implementation of their program plans.
- **Annual Report Template** – This template would serve as the starting point for the annual report narrative. MS4s would benefit by having a prepared template laid out to address all required reporting elements with clear descriptions of the required content. DEQ would benefit by having reports submitted in a common format, facilitating effective review.
- **Self Evaluation Compliance Checklist** – One of the best tools for advancing program compliance is a thorough self evaluation checklist. This tool would facilitate self assessments by permittees as well as clearly laying out expectations for compliance.

MS4 Training – \$37,500

Virginia's Bay MS4s are concentrated in Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads and the Richmond Metropolitan area. These areas would serve as training locations for each of the proposed training topics. This training would be developed and provided by qualified contractors in coordination with the Department of Environmental Quality and be available to permittees free of charge. The following training topics are proposed:

- **Understanding Expectations** – Compliance depends on a clear understanding of programmatic and administrative requirements. This session would discuss required program elements, timelines, expectations for demonstrating compliance and enforcement options.
- **Incorporating Measurable Components in MS4 Program Plans** - Measurable requirements are being incorporated into Phase I permits on an individual basis, but since the Phase II permittees are covered under a general permit, the permit is not specific about measurable goals.

This training would instruct permittees in the development of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) goals for inclusion in their MS4 program plans.

- **Tools for Program Development and Compliance** – Demonstrate how new and existing guidance and tools can be used to aid permittees in program plan development, reporting, self evaluation, and compliance.

Schedule

Generally, MS4 permittees have until July 2015 to develop their Chesapeake Bay Action Plans. To maximize the benefit of these tools and trainings to permittees, this project should be completed no later than March 2015. The tools and guidance development portion of the project should be completed by January 2015.