U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Region 4
Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Grant Program: FY2007 Request for Proposals (RFP)

OVERVIEW

Sponsoring Agency and Office: U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 4, Air, Pesticides and Toxics Management Division

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals (RFP)-Initial Announcement for Fiscal Year 2007

Funding Opportunity Title: Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Grant Program

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R4-SAI-07-001

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.

Proposal Submission Deadlines: Closing date and time for receipt of the proposals is October 31, 2007, at 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST). Applications submitted via U.S. mail must be received in the Program Office by the closing date and time.

Executive Summary: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits application packages to help support efforts by the agricultural community to transition to lower risk pesticides and pest management practices in agricultural production, resulting in a sustainable food system. The emphasis is on food crops, however other agricultural commodities (including ornamentals) will be considered, especially where there are significant demonstrable environmental concerns. The program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration, and implementation projects. The total estimated funding available under this competitive opportunity is $700,000. Under this announcement, EPA Region 4 anticipates awarding 3-5 two year grants for the purpose of transition and implementation. The maximum individual award is $200,000.

Eligible Applicants: Assistance under this program is generally available to States, U.S. territories or possessions, federally recognized Indian Tribal governments, and Native American Organizations, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public and private non-profit institutions and individuals which submit applications proposing projects with significant technical merit and relevance. **All projects must occur in one or more of the Region 4 states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.**

This RFP includes the following information:

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Section I.   Funding Opportunity Description
      A. Background

The statutory authority for this grant program is the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) and Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended. 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 http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/laws/fqpa/.

The general award and administration process is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 ("Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations") and 40 CFR Part 31 ("Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments") as applicable.

B. Environmentally Sound Pest Management: Priorities for Consideration

EPA Region 4 will fund projects under this announcement that result in the transition by growers to more environmentally sound pest management practices. In order to accomplish this, the SAI Grant Program will give priority consideration to projects that:
- include a "whole systems" approach by integrating pest, soil, water and crop management practices;
- address an array of commodities;
- focus on sustainable agriculture (defined as farming practices that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible);
- incorporate conservation planning;
- are submitted by applicants that have a proven track record of grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices; and
- have an outreach and extension component to their program.

Projects must also address one or more of the following goals for the FQPA SAI:

- utilize demonstration, outreach, or education projects, or any combination thereof, to increase the adoption of reduced risk/integrated pest management (IPM) practices that provide alternatives to the use of highly toxic pesticides, pesticides authorized for emergency use under Section 18 of FIFRA, 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 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; and
- demonstrate region-specific pest management practices and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses that may be cancelled under FQPA.

C. Measuring Environmental Results

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7, "Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreement," EPA requires that all grant recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature and in how they are measured. Applicants must discuss anticipated environmental outputs and outcomes in their proposed workplan.

Outcomes *Outcome measures* are environmental improvements that will occur from carrying out a program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. These improvements are changes, benefits, effects or consequences to the environment that are a result from the accomplishment of activities efforts and outputs. Projected environmental improvement outcomes can be over the short (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, decisions), or long term (changes in condition of the natural resource). Some long-term outcomes may occur after the proposed project closes. Projects to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce at least one, and preferably all, of the following environmental outcomes.

Expected Environmental Outcomes for SAI Grant Program:
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;
3. encourage partnerships between crop producers, EPA, other federal, state and 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 SAI program;

4. measure the number of acres impacted by the project under management which include pesticide risk reduction practices; and
5. measure percent reduction or pound-per-acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients.

Outputs *Output measures* are the results or products from accomplishing an environmental activity or effort that are related to an environmental goal or objective and will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected Environmental Outputs for SAI Grant Programs:
1. educational and outreach materials for growers;
2. conservation plans for growers that include reduced risk pest management;
3. conferences, seminars, and on-site field training; and
4. partnerships established between federal and non-federal programs to provide reduced risk pest management programs for crop producers.

Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in **Section VI. Subsection C.** ("Reporting Requirement") of this announcement.

Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan/Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Architecture. These assistance agreements will support EPA Strategic Plan Subobjective 4.1.5.**: Realize the Value from Pesticide Availability**-Through 2011, ensure the public health and socio-economic benefits of pesticide availability and use are achieved.

For additional information about how the SAI FQPA Grant Program aligns with EPA's Strategic Plan consult page 29 of EPA's Office of Prevention Pesticides and Toxic Substances FY 2008 National Program Manager's Guidance at http://www.epa.gov/cfo/npmguidance/oppts/2008/final_npmguidance.pdf.

For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 4, go to http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/2006/goal_4.pdf.

All proposed SAI projects must demonstrate how they will result in ensuring the public health and socio-economic benefits of pesticide availability and use. Projects will demonstrate and facilitate the adoption of farm management decisions and practices that provide growers with a "reasonable transition" away from the highest risk pesticides, as mandated by FQPA. Average percent change in the utilization of reduced risk pest management practices over time per grantee will be determined by regular measurement based on the SAI Transition Gradient.

Additional ideas on setting performance measures and the SAI Transition Gradient can be found in the SAI Toolbox at http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php.

Section II.   Award Information

   A. Amount of Funding Available

The total estimated funding expected to be available for awards under this competitive opportunity is $700,000.

   B. Partial Funding

Funding for these projects is not guaranteed and is subject to the availability of funds and the evaluation of proposals based on the criteria in this announcement. In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete portions, or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for awards, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process. Award of funding through this year's competition is not a guarantee of future funding.

   C. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

EPA anticipates awarding 3-5 grants ranging in value from $75,000 to $200,000 subject to the availability of funds and quality of evaluated proposals. Indirect cost rates will not increase the maximum funding amount. Costs incurred by the applicant prior to the receipt of a written offer of a grant award from EPA are incurred at the applicant's risk. If for any reason EPA does not fund your grant application or does not approve the pre-award costs, EPA is under no obligation to reimburse applicants for these costs. Current SAI grantees may submit proposals for a new grant but not for an increase in existing awards. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection date. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

   D. Start Date and Project Duration

Award funds for the selected proposals will be available in November 2007; however, **grantees should not expect to receive funds or begin projects until spring of 2008**, to allow sufficient time for completion of required paperwork and the offer and acceptance of a grant award. Funding may be used for **up to two years** from the time grants are awarded.

   E. Funding Type

EPA expects to award the funding for selected projects in the form of a grant under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20.

F. Can funding be used to acquire services or to fund partnerships?

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 grant recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance to fund partnerships provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of 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. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

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 from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or 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.

Section III.   Eligibility Information

A. Who May Apply

EPA is soliciting proposals from States, U.S. territories or possessions, federally recognized Indian Tribal governments, and Native American Organizations, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public and private non-profit 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.

Implementation of all projects must occur within one or more of the eight states of EPA Region 4: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

B. Matching/Cost Share Requirements

There are no cost-share requirements for these projects nor are matching funds required. However, one criterion reviewers will use to review, evaluate and rank proposals will be the amount of financial resources the applicant has (or reasonably will have) that this project will supplement (see Section V. Subsection A. 10). Applicants are encouraged to leverage funds from other sources as much as possible. The applicant may demonstrate this by showing how EPA funds will supplement ongoing efforts currently or recently funded by other federal, state, local, or private partner participation.

All grants are subject to federal audit.

C. Threshold Eligibility Issues

In order to be eligible for funding consideration under this announcement, proposals must meet all of the following conditions. Failure to meet any of the following criteria in the proposal will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration. Applicants deemed ineligible as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Applicant must be an eligible applicant in accordance with Section III.

2. Proposals must address one or more of the goals and objectives of the SAI program listed above in Section I. Subsection A. 2.

3. A proposal's request for EPA funds must fall within the funding limits expressed in Section II.

4. Proposals must utilize the following measure in addition to any other declared environmental measures:

   Current level of pest management and the projected level of pest management at the end of the project based on the "IPM Transition Index" at: http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/pdf/Transition_Matrix.pdf.

5. Since the FQPA/SAI Grant Program is intended to help implement FQPA, proposals must not include activities that involve basic research. Proposals may include a component for applied on-farm research, as long as they also have demonstrations, education and/or outreach activities.

6. Proposals must substantially comply with all format and content requirements and directions for submittal contained in Section IV of this announcement. Proposals which do not substantially meet these criteria will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV, with respect to the

proposal or parts of the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

7. Proposals must be received by the EPA through http://www.grants.gov, the U.S. Postal Service, or other delivery service on or before the solicitation closing date published in Section IV of this announcement. Proposals submitted via email will not be accepted and proposals received after the published closing date will be returned to the sender without further consideration.

8. The EPA will consider only one proposal by each individual investigator. Proposals from different investigators within the same organization are acceptable.

9. Projects must be located in one or more of the Region 4 states: **Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee**. (Note: It is not required that the applicant be located in Region 4.)

Section IV.   Application and Submission Information

A. How to Obtain a Financial Application Package

The complete grants financial application package can be downloaded from EPA's website at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/index.htm or http://www.grants.gov/. Potential applicants may request a paper copy of the financial application package by contacting the EPA contact listed in Section VII. of this announcement. If you wish to submit your application electronically, you must use the electronic package available at the http://www.grants.gov/.

B. Content and Form of Applicant Submission

Proposal workplans, as described in this section, must be limited to 16 pages (a page is one side of a piece of paper) single spaced including the cover page. In addition, resumes and other supporting documentation such as letters of support can be submitted as attachments and will not count toward the 16 page limit. All proposals, complete with attachments, must be formatted for 8 ½ x 11" paper using no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman font with 1" margins as one Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file. All application materials must be completed in English.

All application packages must contain a project workplan and a completed and signed federal grant application (SF 424 and 424A) which can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm or http://www.grants.gov. (See Section IV D I-II for details about completion of SF 424 and 424A). The project workplan must describe the proposed project and address all of the threshold eligibility factors in Section III and the evaluation criteria listed in Section V. A.

1. Cover Page: Include the following information (Page 1)

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

> Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R4-SAI-07-001
> Project Title:
> Project Coordinator:
> Organization Name and Address:
> Telephone No.: Fax No.: Email Address:
> Project Duration (including Starting Date and Ending Date):
> First Year Funding Request:
> Second Year Funding Request (if applicable):
> Total Funding Request (for the entire project):

2. Budget Narrative: (Page2)
Please submit a detailed budget with narrative, explaining the need for funding under each of the appropriate budget categories. List the anticipated amount of funding and associated staff needed to achieve the project objectives. Include the requested federal and any non-federal cost share in these estimates. Link each task or activity from the project workplan to the associated resources that are needed to accomplish the activity. Under travel, include the travel locations(s), estimated number of trips, estimated total mileage, and number of nights lodging required throughout the entire project period. Describe how leveraged resources will be obtained (if applicable) and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project. Include enough detail for EPA to determine if the costs are eligible, allocable, reasonable and allowable. For more information, see http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm.

3. Table of Contents: (Page 3)

4. 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. for more information about environmental results.)

5. Proposal Narrative: (Includes Parts I-VIII below. The proposal narrative should address each of the ranking criteria in Section V of this announcement. Parts I-VIII **should not exceed 12 pages**.)

> **Part I: Project Title**
>
> **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.

Part III: Justification – For each objective listed in Part II above, discuss the potential outcome(s) 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 and should explain the importance of the project and the target crops(s).

Part IV: Literature Review – Briefly describe relevant information currently available and information on projects currently in progress that are relevant to or provide the basis for either the experimental design or the validation of a new approach to pest management.

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 and is a well-conceived project 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.

Part VI: Performance Measures, Expected Outputs and Outcomes, Evaluation Plan – Please describe in detail your plan for evaluating the success of the program in terms of **measurable environmental results** (See Section I.). How will you track the selected measures? The workplan 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. 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:
- Number of acres likely to be impacted by the project.
- 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).
- Percent reduction or pound-per-acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.
- Evidence that the applicant expects to partner with others and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with media

releases or other outreach activities.

Part VII: Environmental Results Past Performance – Submit a list of all EPA and other Federal agency assistance agreements that your organization performed within the last three years, and describe 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 have no relevant or available past performance reporting history, please indicate this in the proposal, and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.

Part VIII: Programmatic Capability – Submit a list of all federally funded agreements similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last five years and describe (i) whether and how you were able to carry out and manage those agreements successfully and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. In evaluating applicants under these factors of 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). In addition, provide information on your organizational experience and plan for achieving the objectives of the proposed project within the established timeframes, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to achieve the goals of the proposed project. If you have no relevant or available past performance or past history, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for the elements of this factor under Section V.

6. **Proposal Appendices**

Appendix A: Literature Cited – List cited key literature references alphabetically by author.

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.

Appendix C (Optional): Signed Letters of Commitment or Support

C. Submission Method

Please note that you may choose to apply *one of two ways*. If you wish to apply with a hard copy submission, please follow the instructions under "Hard Copy Submission" below. If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, please follow the appropriate instructions under "Electronic Submission" below. EPA encourages applicants to submit their application/proposal materials electronically through http://www.grants.gov. Please only use one form of submission. Proposals should be typed in 12 point font on 8.5 x 11 inch paper with a minimum of 1-inch horizontal and vertical margins.

> **1. Hard Copy Submission** – Two hard copies of the complete proposal package as described in Section IV. B. "Content and Form of Applicant Submission" and in Section IV. D. I-II (the same forms as if you were applying electronically). "Proposal/Application Materials" **must be received** by October 31, 2007, 5 p.m. EST. Hard copy submissions may be made either by courier or express mail. The proposed workplan and attachments may be submitted on a CD. Email submissions are no longer allowed. Please mark all submissions: **ATTN: SAI FQPA Grant Program** (See address below). If a CD is submitted, it may be in *(Adobe) Portable Document File* format (.pdf) or *Microsoft Word Document* format (.doc). Nomination letters, letters of support, and maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted as part of the CD. Pictures and/or computer generated maps may be included as separate files using *Joint Photographic Experts Group* format (.jpg) or *Tagged Image File* format (.tif).
>
> All hard copy proposals and CDs should be sent to:
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> > Lora Lee Schroeder
> > Strategic Agricultural Initiative Coordinator
> > APTMD, Pesticides Section
> > U.S. EPA Region 4
> > Atlanta Federal Center
> > 61 Forsyth Street
> > Atlanta, GA 30303-8960
>
> **2. Electronic Submission –**
> **ATTENTION –** *Microsoft Windows Vista and Word 2007* **Users**
> Please note that Grants.gov does not currently support the new Microsoft Vista Operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms is not compatible with Vista. Grants.gov will be reviewing this new product to determine if it can be supported in the future.
>
> *In addition, the newest version of Microsoft Word (Word 2007) saves documents with the extension .DOCX. The Grants.gov system does not process Microsoft Word documents with the extension .DOCX. When submitting Microsoft Word Documents as attachments on Grants.gov, please use the*

***document format in Microsoft Word with the file extension .DOC. If you have
any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center
at*** support@grants.gov ***or call 1-800-518-4726.***

If you wish to apply electronically, the electronic submission of your
proposal/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 Registered," on the left side of the page. ***Note that the registration
process may take a week or longer to complete.*** If your organization is not
currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an
Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin
the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this grant announcement, go to
http://www.grants.gov and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of
the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package
and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application
package for this announcement. To download the PureEdge viewer click on the
"PureEdge Viewer" link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may
retrieve the application package and instructions by entering the Funding
Opportunity Number, EPA, EPAR4-SAI-06-001, or the CFDA number 66.716 in
the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by
clicking on the button "How To Apply" at the top right of the synopsis page for
this announcement on http://www.grants.gov (to find the synopsis page, go to
http://www.grants.gov and click on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button on the
left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by
Agency feature to go to EPA opportunities).

Application/proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date
stamped electronically.

Please be sure to view the additional instructions for applying electronically under
this announcement through use of Grants.gov that are available for download on
Grants.gov.

If you have any technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to
http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp.

3. Application Submission Deadline – Your organization's AOR must submit
your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov
(http://www.grants.gov) no later than October 31, 2007, 5:00 p.m. EST.

D. Proposal/Application Materials
**The following forms and documents are required to be submitted under this
announcement:**

1. **Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)**
2. **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)**
3. **Narrative Proposal and Appendices**

Prepare the application, budget information and narrative proposal and appendices in accordance with the instructions described below:

1. **Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance**
Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include an organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Applicants who do not already have a DUNS number may find instructions for obtaining one at the following website:
http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. A DUNS number may also be obtained at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

2. **Standard Form (SF) 424A – Budget Information**
Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22. If indirect costs are requested, a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be submitted as part of the application package.

3. **Narrative Proposal and Appendices**
Prepare as described in Section IV.B. of the announcement. The project's workplan including Appendices should be readable in *Microsoft Word* (.doc format) or *Adobe Acrobat Reader* (.pdf format) and consolidated into a single file.

4. **Application Preparation and Submission Instructions**
Documents I through II listed under Application Materials above should appear in the "Mandatory Documents" box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For Document 1 (Standard Form SF-424), click on the appropriate form and then click "Open Form" below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out the form, click "Save." When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, "Move Form to Submission List." This action will move the document over to the box that says, "Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission."

For Document 3 (Narrative Proposal and Appendices), you will need to attach electronic files (including electronic files for the Proposal Appendices). Prepare your narrative proposal and appendices as described above and save the document to your computer as a *Microsoft Word* Document (.doc) or an (*Adobe*) Portable Document File (.pdf). When you are ready to attach it to the application package, click on "Project Narrative Attachment Form," and open the form. Click "Add Mandatory Project Narrative File," and then attach your proposal and appendices (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click "View Mandatory Project Narrative File" to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside "Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;" the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click "Add Optional Project Narrative File" and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click "Close Form." When you return to the "Grant Application Package" page, select the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" and click "Move Form to Submission List." The form should now appear in the box that says, "Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission."

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the "Completed Documents for Submission" boxes, click the "Save" button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: "Applicant Name – FY07 – SAI Proposal – 1st Submission" or "Applicant Name – FY 07 SAI Proposal – Back-up Submission." If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to "Applicant Name – FY07 SAI Proposal – 2nd Submission."

Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the "Application Filing Name" box, your AOR should enter your organization's name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY07), and the grant category (e.g., SAI FQPA Grant Program). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the "Grant Application Package" page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the "Submit" button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot the computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission

problems, he or she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or e-mail at support@grants.gov, or contact Lora Lee Schroeder at (404) 562-9015, or by e-mail at schroeder.lora@epa.gov.

Application packages submitted through Grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from* support@grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Lora Lee Schroeder at (404) 562-9015. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

If you have never used Grants.Gov before, here are some tips:

Most organizations have found Grants.Gov to be a user friendly system. The most frequent concern has occurred when an organization has delayed obtaining the unique electronic signature to the last minute.

Register for your electronic signature early! An electronic signature requires three levels of authorization before you can submit on line. You need to decide who will be the AOR, the caretaker of the electronic signature for your organization. At a university the Chief Grant Official generally signs all of the electronic grants for the entire institution. If all goes well, this process takes about a week, but some organizations have encountered internal and external delays; therefore the registration process can take longer.

Remember, you cannot submit your application online until your organization has e-authorization credentials. Here are the basic steps:

1. Obtain a Certified DUNS Number. You must first have a certified, unique Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. Some organizations may have more than one DUNS number registered. Only one can be certified. This can lead to unexpected delays.

2. Central Contractor Registry and Credential Provider Registration. Once you have your unique, approved DUNS number, you need to register with the Central Contractor Registry.

3. Grants.Gov Electronic Signature Authorization. Once steps A and B are complete, you will then need to contact Grants. Gov. The Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will be assigned a password that will enable him or her to sign the Grants.Gov applications electronically. The AOR must be an individual who is able to make legally binding commitments for the applicant organization. Organizations may designate more than one AOR.

Be sure to download and read the instructions and the application at the Grants.Gov website**.**

E. Submission Dates

All proposals must be **received** in the Program Office by October 31, 2007, 5 p.m. EST. Applications will be considered late and ineligible to receive funding if not received on or before the application submission date and time, regardless of the postmark date.

F. 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.

G. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants (except for Indian Tribes and Tribal Consortia) 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.

H. Other Information

EPA Region 4 will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. However, in accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications.

All applicants applying for funding must have a Dunn and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. Applicants that do not already have a DUNS number may find instructions for obtaining one at the following website: http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted. A DUNS number may also be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711.

When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicant's cognizant audit agency, or at the rate for which the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA provided. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

Section V.   Application Review Information

A. Selection Criteria

Those proposals that meet the threshold criteria listed in Section III will be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the criteria below.

1. Focuses on sustainable agriculture, and uses conservation planning and a whole systems approach (10 points)	• (10 points) The project is based on a "whole systems" approach to pest management and integrates pest, soil, crop, and water management practices.
2. Importance of project in relation to FQPA (10 points)	• (5 points) The project addresses critical pest management issues relative to the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) and is consistent with the goals of the FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative. (See Section I.B. for goals.) • (5 points) The project focuses on actual results, getting information and agricultural practices into the hands of growers who actually use them to shift away from FQPA-targeted pesticides and Section 18 pesticides to other methods of pest management.
3. Commodity and Region-wide significance and degree of transferability to other areas (5 points)	• (1 point) The project addresses agricultural commodity pest problems. • (2 points) The proposal includes a discussion of critical pest management issues, explaining the importance of the project and the commodity. • (2 points) The proposal addresses how the agricultural practice and reduced-risk tools could be adapted to other locations with similar cropping systems.

4. Involvement of on-farm demonstration with active roles for multiple grower participation (15 points)	• (15 points) The project relies on partnerships and the participation of growers as part of the project activities. Cooperation with scientists, extension agents, 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 will be considered in evaluating proposals against this criterion.
5. Clearly stated pest management issue, goals/ objectives, timeline of activities, narrative budget, and description of roles and responsibilities of project staff (10 points)	The proposal clearly describes and demonstrates the following: • (2 points) An identified pest management issue and the relevance of that issue to growers' adoption of reduced risk alternatives and/or sustainable integrated pest or crop management methods. • (2 points) Summary of key goals, objectives, and final products. • (2 points) Schedule or timeline of activities for the project. • (2 points) Budget and estimated funding amounts for each proposal component/task that corresponds to the SF424A Grant Application form budget categories. Total costs must include both federal and any proposed matching (non-federal) components/tasks. Identify any proposed cost share or match in the budget. • (2 points) Description of roles and responsibilities of the applicant and major partners in carrying out the project commitments.

6. Expected ability to produce measurable environmental results (25 points)	Projects will be evaluated on their expected ability to achieve predicted environmental results, expected outcomes, project goals, and produce on-the-ground, quantifiable environmental change. • (10 points) The proposal includes the required performance measure describing the 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 Gradient http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/pdf/Transition_Matrix.pdf • (5 points) The proposal includes a minimum of one additional performance measure that can be tracked throughout the project. To identify appropriate project performance measures, choose from the measures listed in the SAI Toolbox located at http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.php. If additional performance measures (other than those listed in the SAI Toolbox) are used, 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. • (5 points) The proposal describes the expected outcomes of the project, including: (i) how the project will result in ensuring the public health and socio-economic benefits of pesticide availability and use (EPA Strategic Plan Sub-objective 4.1.5); (ii) the expected percent reduction or pound per acre reduction in the use of highly toxic pesticides; and (iii) the number of acres likely to be impacted by the project. • (5 points) The proposal includes a clear and effective plan for tracking and measuring progress in achieving expected outputs and outcomes.
7. Use of outreach to enhance grower adoption (15 points)	• (10 points) The project uses outreach and other communications that will lead to effective learning and adoption of new practices • (5 points) The proposal includes a description of how long term, sustainable adoption will be measured.

8. Programmatic capability (Technical Experience and Past Performance) (10 points)	• (2 points) Applicant has past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years. • (2 points) Applicant has history of meeting reporting requirements on prior or current assistance agreements with federal and/or non-federal organizations performed within the last 5 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements. • (2 points) Applicant has past performance in documenting and/or reporting on the progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federal and/or non-federal agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 5 years. (If such progress was not made, document why not.) • (2 points) Applicant has organizational experience and a management plan to ensure successful completion of the project. • (2 points) Applicant has the staff expertise, qualifications, knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to achieve the goals of the project.
9. Utilization of leveraging (funding and partnerships) (5 points)	• (3 points) The process includes documentation of the applicant's partnership(s) with agencies or organizations already monitoring environmental quality in the project area. • (2 points) The extent to which applicant demonstrates (i) how he or she 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 at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants
Note: Strategic Agricultural Initiative grants 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*.	

B. Review and Selection Process

There will be a two-tiered review process for proposals. The first tier will be a basic review of the proposals to assure they are eligible for funding consideration. The first tier will include a determination of whether the applicant has satisfied all the threshold criteria listed in Section III, Part C.

Those proposals that pass the first tier will undergo a second tier review. Each eligible proposal that meets the first tier review requirements will be reviewed by a panel consisting of EPA Region 4 staff and possibly some external partners. The second tier will involve the actual evaluation of the proposals against the criteria contained in Section V. As a competitive financial assistance program, no proposal is guaranteed funding. Each proposal will be given a numerical score, with a total of 105 points possible.

The results of the review panel will be forwarded to the Division Director for final funding decisions which will be based on the results of the review panel and consideration of programmatic priorities which are geographic and crop diversity.

Section VI.   Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Following the selection process, all applicants who submitted a proposal will be notified via e-mail regarding their application status. Letters will follow per the below schedule:

> **1.** EPA anticipates notification to successful applicant(s) will be made via U.S. mail by December 7, 2007. This notification, which advises that the applicant's application package has been selected and is being preliminarily recommended for award, is a request for a final application package and not an authorization to start the project. Successful applicants will be provided with instructions and a due date for submitting their final application package. The award offer signed by the EPA Approving Official is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. It can take 120 days or longer from the date an awardable application is received for the applicant to receive its award offer.

> **2.** EPA anticipates notification to unsuccessful applicant(s) will be made via postal mail by December 14, 2007.

Note – USEPA reserves the right to negotiate appropriate changes in workplans after the selection and before the final award consistent with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1, Section 11).

B. Administration and National Policy Requirements

The award and administration of these grants will be governed by the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements set forth at 40 CFR

Part 30 or 31. In addition, the provision in 40 CFR Part 32 governing government-wide debarment and suspension, and the provisions in 40 CFR Part 34 regarding restrictions on lobbying apply.

1. Procurement Procedure: 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.

2. Allowable Costs: 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. 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, 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.

3. Review of Non-Profits: Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement may 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 . Non-profit applicants that qualify for funding, depending on the size of the award, may 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.

4. Quality Assurances: In accordance with 40 CFR 30.54 and 31.45, projects of the size and type being funded under this assistance agreement generally require submission and approval of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The QAPP includes efficacy and performance data, surveys and similar results. 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. If selected for an award, Region 4 will provide examples of QAPPs and provide guidance in its development. In addition, to reduce paperwork, the QAPP may substitute for the "Methods and Materials" portion of the workplan, if developed as part of your proposal. See http://www.epa.gov/Quality/extramural.html for further information about QAPPs.

5. Conference/Workshops: 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 estimated percentage of participants expected to attend, 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?

6. Indirect Costs: 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) 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.

7. 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, referred to as the "Common Rule." 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 the annual reports. Until further notice, EPA will not consider funding for research that involves intentional dosing human toxicity studies with pesticides.

C. Reporting Requirements

The selected grant recipients will be required to complete annual and final reports per the terms and conditions of the approval of the award. Final reports are due within 90 days of the completion of the project. The annual report must address the status of all of the objectives and activities in the proposal, environmental impacts measured or observed, and a statement of expenses. A template for the annual and final report will be provided to the grantees. Reports may be submitted either electronically or by hard 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.

Section VII.   Agency Contacts

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this SAI FQPA RFP, please contact:

Lora Lee Schroeder, EPA Region 4, Strategic Agricultural Initiative Coordinator, telephone number: (404) 562-9015; fax number: (404)-562-8973; e-mail: schroeder.lora@epa.gov

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