

Network (*see* Section VIII for details) (45 points each).

- Air Quality System (AQS)
- Facility Registry System (FRS)
- National Emissions Inventory (NEI)
- Resource Conservation and

Recovery Act Information System (RCRAInfo)

- Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS)
- Toxics Release Inventory System (TRIS)

(b) Implement any other type of data flow (regulatory or voluntary, State-to-EPA, facility-to-State, State-to-State, etc.) using the Exchange Network. (30 points each)

(c) Conduct multi-party planning activities to develop new data flows, explaining how the new data would be used and shared via the Exchange Network. This activity could include developing a collaborative project plan for possible submission to EPA if future funding becomes available. (up to 90 points)

(d) Use the Exchange Network to integrate and use information for environmental decision-making and public access, including geospatial data. Projects could include, but are not limited to, activities that would improve the locational data for facilities in EPA's Facility Registry System. (up to 90 points)

(e) Use the Exchange Network to share data that have not previously been available for environmental and human health protection purposes (*e.g.*, environmentally related health data, regional environmental data, data needed to fill current data gaps, etc.). EPA has recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to collaboratively collect data for the Environmental Public Health Tracking System; applicants may be interested in proposing activities that complement this effort using the Exchange Network. (up to 90 points)

(f) Enhance the utilization of the Exchange Network by developing tools/applications that use data made available through Web services (*e.g.*, watershed analysis tools using EPA and other partner/stakeholder data published through Web services). (up to 90 points)

In addition to implementing one or more data flows, applicants must make a commitment to share information about their projects with other partners via the Exchange Network Web site at <http://www.exchangenetwork.net>. If an applicant has received funding through a previous Exchange Network assistance agreement, the applicant must identify

activities that build on, but do not duplicate, previously funded activities. (2) 10 points.

Identify the benefits of the project (*see* Section VI introduction).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Projects funded under the Challenge Category must be collaborative efforts. The pre-proposal must identify a single lead agency or department that will be responsible for administering the assistance agreement, if awarded.

In addition to the criteria outlined above, EPA may elect to fund complementary pre-proposals from different partners that address related work areas (*e.g.*, XML schema development), and it will seek to leverage and coordinate all of the complementary pre-proposals before reaching final funding decisions.

In making award decisions, EPA will examine the past performance of those who have received previous Exchange Network assistance agreements (*e.g.*, timely and complete semi-annual reports, achievement of performance goals/milestones, etc.). If two proposals have been scored equally, the one with the best previous track record may be ranked higher. If an applicant has not received a prior Exchange Network assistance agreement, that applicant will not be penalized.

Section VII. Award Administration Information

The selection of pre-proposals for funding and the awarding of assistance agreements will be posted on the Exchange Network Grant Program Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/Networkg>). Recipients of assistance agreement awards will be required to submit semi-annual and final progress reports. A reporting form template will be provided to all funded grantees by the appropriate Exchange Network Regional Coordinator. Recipients will also be required to complete annual Financial Status Reports. All reports must be prepared in either Microsoft Word or WordPerfect and submitted electronically to the appropriate Exchange Network Regional Coordinator. If a disagreement arises between an eligible applicant and EPA, EPA will follow dispute resolution procedures, as outlined in 40 CFR part 31, subpart F.

Section VIII. EPA Systems Information

Applicants are urged to consider developing FY 2004 proposals that relate to the following EPA national environmental information systems, particularly if submitting proposals for Implementation or Challenge assistance agreements:

- Air Quality System (AQS)
- Facility Registry System (FRS)
- National Emissions Inventory (NEI)
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information System (RCRAInfo)
- Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS)
- Toxics Release Inventory System (TRIS)

By focusing on this limited number of data flows, EPA and its partners should be able to deliver tangible results by the end of the two-year program period.

EPA urges applicants to consider the data flows listed above, but the Agency will also consider other data flow activities, particularly if such activities can demonstrate the value of the Exchange Network. Provided appropriations for the Exchange Network Grant Program become available in FY 2005, EPA plans to highlight two additional data flows in next year's guidance:

- Integrated Compliance Information System—National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (ICIS-NPDES)
- Storage and Retrieval for Water Quality Data (STORET)

While ICIS-NPDES and STORET data flow activities may be proposed for the FY 2004 Exchange Network Grant Program, they will receive greater attention in FY 2005.

Each of the national environmental information systems identified above is described briefly below, along with current plans for the data flows and suggested activities for consideration by applicants. The implementation schedules for specific data flows differ, but the activities that EPA offices have suggested generally relate to one or more of the following:

- Improve data collection processes, the quality of data in EPA information systems, and the utility of and access to environmental data by all Exchange Network partners;
- Work with EPA to develop XML schema for particular data flows and conduct related data mapping and documentation activities;
- Develop or adapt Exchange Network nodes or node clients as required to implement particular data flows;
- Submit data through the Exchange Network and EPA's Central Data Exchange (CDX) to EPA's national environmental information systems;
- Enhance data validation mechanisms, increase the frequency of data submissions, or enhance error detection/feedback mechanisms using the Exchange Network;
- Work with EPA to develop and implement Web services to obtain, use,