

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# **Region 9 FY08 Preproposal Guidelines**

## **The Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) Program**

### **and**

## **Regional Methods Program (RMP)**

(April 11, 2007)

Attached for your use are the Preproposal guidelines for two Office of Research and Development (ORD) funded programs that address Regional issues. Projects can be submitted for funding in both the Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) and Regional Methods (RM) Programs. For FY08, Preproposals submitted for either program should use the RARE/RM Programs Guidelines, below. If a project is not recommended by the Regional Science Council (RSC) for funding through RARE, the Project Description will be submitted for funding through the RM Program, if they qualify as methods. For more information, contact the Regional Science Council (RSC) Co-chairs, the specific RSC Division representative(s) or the Regional Science Liaison (RSL).

The RARE Program is used to support high priority, short-term (one-to-two years), Region-specific research projects. Projects are nominated by the Region and coordinated with ORD staff, who manage the extramural funding vehicles through which the research is performed. Regional staff work with ORD to ensure the Regional objectives are met. The RARE Program activity is coordinated by each Region's Regional Science Liaison (RSL) to ORD.

The goals of the RARE Program are to:

1. Provide Regions with near-term research on high priority, Region-specific science needs;
2. Improve collaboration between Regions and ORD Labs and Centers; and
3. Build the foundations for future scientific interaction.

The RM Program is used to support development of chemical or biological analytical methods that address specific Regional problems. The RM Program projects are funded and managed by ORD. The RS&T Directors prioritize projects submitted from all Regions and fund the top few projects. The RM Program projects are typically one year projects. The RM Program activity is coordinated by each Region's Regional Science Liaison (RSL) to ORD, in cooperation with the RS&T Director and/or Regional Laboratory.

The goals of the Regional Methods Program are to:

1. Provide Regions with a means of developing Regional specific analytical methods;
2. Address a chemical or biological analytical need of the Region in a timely manner;
3. Improve collaboration between Regions and ORD Labs and Centers; and
4. Build the foundations for future scientific interaction.

**Comparison of RARE Program and RM Program:**

	<u><b>RARE</b></u>	<u><b>RMP</b></u>
Funding level	~\$200K/yr/Region in FY07	~\$600K expected for all projects nationally
Decision made by	Region (DRA)	RS&T (Lab) Directors
Type of project	short term (1-2 years), can include methods development	short term, chemical/ biological methods development
Performed by	Extramural scientists funded by ORD with input from Regional scientists	Regional Laboratories

**FY08 Region 9  
Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) Program  
Preproposal Guidelines**

The Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) Program is a funding mechanism used to support high priority, short-term (one to two years), Region-specific research projects funded by the Office of Research and Development (ORD). Projects are nominated by the Region and coordinated through ORD staff, who are responsible for managing the funding. The funding does not come directly to the Region from ORD, but the Region can direct the use of the funds; that is, the Region selects project Preproposals, which are typically performed through a cooperative agreement or contract by a third party research organization (e.g., a university) under the direction of an ORD Laboratory. The Regional proponent, as the Technical Contact, works closely with an ORD principal investigator. The RARE Program activity is coordinated by each Region’s Regional Science Liaison (RSL) and ORD, along with the Regional Technical Contact.

**PRE-PLANNING**

If you need to identify a contact at ORD to discuss a project description, the Regional Science Liaison (RSL) is one of the contacts who can identify appropriate ORD staff. The current ORD RSL is Bobbye Smith (x2-3735). Your RSC Division representative can also be of assistance. To determine the main research areas in ORD Laboratories and identify researchers to act as the Principal Investigator or Project Officer, you can also review the ORD Research Plans at <http://www.epa.gov/ORD/htm/researchstrategies.htm>

Projects need to meet Regional priorities. The EPA Region 9 **FY07 Regional Science Council Science Plan** should be reviewed to assist you in understanding the current high priority science needs and is used as a key criterion by the DRA in making final project selections. Region 9's Strategic Plan is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/docs/region09/planning/> . The Agency’s Strategic Plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfopage/plan/plan.htm> .

**SUBMISSION CRITERIA:**

1. **SUBMISSION OF PREPROPOSALS**  
RARE Project Descriptions, or Preproposals, may be submitted by Region 9 staff to the

RSL or Regional Science Council (RSC) co-chairs at any time throughout the calendar year, however, they will only be reviewed during the annual solicitation period. Previously submitted Preproposals may be re-submitted for review. Such submittals will be reviewed using the same criteria as new submissions.

The approximate annual schedule for the RARE process for submission to ORD is below:

- Regional announcement of RARE solicitation for upcoming fiscal year (May or earlier)
- Preproposals due date set by the RSL, (early June or July)
- If requested, presentation at June or July RSC meeting
- RSC list completed by late June or early July
- In July, one or two Project Descriptions are submitted to ORD
- From July to September, Regional Technical Contact works with ORD to finalize the Scope of Work and other project documentation
- Sometime in October or November, the funding arrangements are completed by ORD

2. PREPROPOSAL FORMAT FOR PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

The Preproposal is to be no longer than 5 pages and should follow the format below. The first page should include the Contact Information, Signatures and Abstract.

**PAGE 1**

**Preproposal FY 2008  
Region 9 Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE)  
and Regional Methods Program (RMP)**

**TITLE:**

**REGIONAL CONTACT:** Name(s), Division, mail code, phone number, email address

**DIRECTOR'S NAME AND SIGNATURE:** (The Division Director and/or Management Team must sign to acknowledge that this is a Divisional priority area of research)

**ORD CONTACT NAME:** (Need not be determined at the time of submission - this person will probably act as the principal investigator for the project)

**REGIONAL SCIENCE LIAISON OR REGIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL**

**REPRESENTATIVE NAME AND SIGNATURE:** (The RSL or RSC representative must sign to acknowledge that the process to identify an ORD collaborator has been initiated).

**REGION 9 HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH:** (If the proposed work involves Human Subjects Research, Bobbye Smith, RSL will need to sign acknowledging that the project has begun the EPA review and approval process).

**ABSTRACT:** A short project description that will appear in the RARE Tracker Database, approximately 1/2 page in length.

**PAGES 2 to 5**

**BACKGROUND:** Explain the problem including the scientific questions that are driving the project. If known, include knowledge of existing research in this field. If appropriate, discuss whether proposed research will fill a data gap.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:** Identify, as specifically as you can, the research objectives including a preliminary outline of the research project. Try to describe the project in terms of a scientific hypothesis, if possible. Explain why this project is important to the Region. It is important that the research helps the Region and Agency meet goals described in the Regional Strategic Plans, so the Preproposal author is encouraged to describe how his or her project will help achieve these. Web sites with this strategic plan is provided (above) in these guidelines.

**RESEARCH APPROACH:** Describe the research approach. This should include a logical sequence of actions that will lead to validation or invalidation of the hypothesis. Briefly describe the critical decision points in the approach and how they might impact the experiment's interim steps or final outcome. You must describe the initial aspects of the project in detail so that Regional, and eventually, ORD reviewers can clearly evaluate how you think the project will unfold.

**SOLE SOURCE RESEARCH:** As Region 9 implements this program, RARE funding is NOT intended for sole-source applications. Additionally, ORD, not Region 9, is the ultimate decision-maker about what funding vehicles to use to perform the research, and so, projects dependent upon IAGs or contracts are not appropriate. A successful Preproposal must be able to be competed under ORD/Agency competition rules. In general, a proposal submitted to you by an academic researcher that you may wish to fund, will not be eligible for consideration. Research that must be done by a specific person or entity to be successful is not eligible. For example, a proposal that you discuss with a specific academic researcher, or for a specific State or federal agency, in anticipation of RARE funding, would be considered a sole-source application and not eligible for consideration.

**HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH:** If the project description includes research on or about humans, from 3 months to one year of additional time may be necessary to complete the process. Preproposals potentially describing Human Subjects research must be reviewed by Region 9's RSL (Bobbie Smith) in consultation with the Human Subjects Regional Contact, who will make a determination whether the work falls under this category of research. If it does, the RSL's signature (or an email received prior to the submission date) is required to demonstrate that this initial step has been taken and additional review and approval processes will be required. The authors will need to describe how those review and approval processes will be addressed to assure that the project can be funded and executed in a timely fashion.

**RESEARCH PRODUCTS:** Describe the products from the research, e.g., data, reports, models, scientific articles, etc., and how they will be used in your work and/or how they align with Region 9 priorities and science needs.

**ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES:** Describe how the research will support environmental decisions and link to environmental outcomes, as articulated in the Regional Strategic Plan and/or the Regional Science Plan. Examples of such linkages include, but are not limited to: 1. data being generated to develop a water or air quality criterion or goal, or support a TMDL; 2. a new chemical analytical method being developed used to document the presence of an emerging contaminant in ambient surface water, providing information to support a water quality monitoring program; 3. air quality data used to support a risk assessment of an environmental justice community, and ultimately resulting in improved air quality in the community; 4. a method to detect pathogens that will document their presence in surface water and lead to animal management practices to reduce the movement of the pathogens into the water.

**PROPOSED BUDGET:** For FY08, the budget is \$200K. More than one project may be funded, or the Preproposal author may propose up to \$400K total, for two fiscal years. **For a two-year project, annual products or deliverables are required. The second year of funding is not automatic, and will depend on the quality and timeliness of the first year's deliverables.** Describe any schedule limitations or milestones and how they may impact the Research Approach described above. Briefly describe in qualitative terms the resources necessary (e.g., the level of technical staff [graduate students or PhDs, etc.], materials necessary, travel, publications).

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT:** Outline how you, as the **Regional Technical Contact** intend to track the status of the project, and contribute to the success of the project, such as assisting in development of the Work plan, review of Quality Assurance Project Plan(s), developing research products, and peer-input activities, and how you would coordinate with the ORD Principal Investigator and the Regional Science Liaison. For project descriptions that the Regional Human Subjects Review Official, (Dr. Bruce Macler), has designated as Human Subjects Research, describe how you and the project team will address the additional requirements to assure that the research can be funded, performed, and the products communicated, in a timely fashion.

## **PREPROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS**

1. Each Preproposal submitted shall be reviewed and evaluated by each RSC member using the criteria in the attached table ("RARE Preproposal Evaluation"). The RSC members will review each proposal based on the technical merit and without regard to programmatic influences.
2. Based on the results, the Preproposals will be ranked. If there is a large disparity in ranking, the RSC will meet to discuss individuals' perspectives.
3. The Preproposal author(s) for the top ranked Preproposals will be requested to present an overview of the project to the RSC in a regular monthly meeting, and answer questions from the RSC. The typical presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes.
4. After the presentations by the Preproposal author(s), the RSC will decide if further critical review is needed. For instance, expert advice in cost estimating for a particular type of sampling

may be needed. If a critical review is warranted, the RSC will delay action until the additional advice is provided. However, the RSC cannot delay more than a month in making its decision.

5. After the presentations, or after the additional critical review has been completed (if one is required), the RSC will prioritize the projects. Each Division will have one vote. However, if the RSC member is one of the Preproposal authors, he or she will be excused from voting. The RSC alternate member will vote.

5. The reviews and recommendations from the RSC are submitted to the Deputy Regional Administrator (DRA). The DRA is the nominating official for the Region to ORD and makes the final decision on what Project Description(s) to recommend for funding. The RSL will prepare the nomination package(s) for DRA signature.

6. The RSL will work with ORD, in input from the Preproposal Author, to assure that the required information for the transmittal package, including the final Project Description, Work Plan, Quality Assurance Plan, and/or other components of the funding arrangements are submitted in a timely fashion. It is ORD's responsibility to prepare these documents since the ORD Principal Investigator is usually the funding Project Officer.

7. Status updates on RARE projects will be provided by the RSL to the RSC.

