

Beginner's Guide to Preparing Quality Assurance Project Plans for Environmental Projects

Part 1

Speaker Notes

Note: Not all slides have associated speaker notes

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If your project involves the design, construction and operation of environmental technology, you should contact the EPA New England QA Office for guidance.

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The QA Project Plan is a document that describes, in comprehensive detail, the project's:

- Purpose and Objectives
- Technical Activities
- QA and QC activities
- Roles and responsibilities for planning, conducting, implementing, and assessing the project's results

The QAPP is designed so that the information from the project will result in information-based decisions.

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Non-EPA organizations funded by EPA are required to develop a QA Project Plan through 40 CFR 30, 31, and 35 for assistance agreement recipients.

Note the difference between QA and QC:

Quality Assurance is the set of activities that are performed to ensure the quality of a group of data e.g. training, documentation.

Quality Control is the set of technical activities that measures the performance of sampling and analytical procedures to verify that they meet the user's requirements.

Together, QA and QC allow you to identify contamination of samples, practices and procedures that are inadequate and equipment malfunctions. They also indicate when things are all right and standard procedures are being followed.

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An organized and consistent approach/process should be used to plan environmental projects.

Guidance for planning projects using an EPA process is provided in the *Guidance for the Data Quality Objectives Process*, EPA QA/G-4

Website: <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g4-final.pdf>

EPA New England also describes a planning process in the *EPA New England Quality Assurance Project Plan Manual* available in hard copy from the EPA NE QA Unit. Contact Denise DePierro 617.918.8365

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Additional program-specific QAPP guidance documents:

1) For beginners and less complex projects:

The Volunteer Monitor's Guide to Quality Assurance Project Plans, EPA 841-B-96-003,
September 1996

Website: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer/qappcovr.htm>

*Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan Guidance for Programs using Community Level
Biological Assessment in Wadeable Streams and Rivers*, EPA 841-B-95-004, July 1995

2) Guidance for more complex projects:

EPA New England Quality Assurance Project Plan Manual, Draft, September 1998. Contact
EPA NE QA Unit for hard copy.

Quality Assurance Requirements for Conducting Brownfields Site Assessments, Draft, October
1996. Contact EPA NE QA Unit for hard copy

Guidance for Quality Assurance Plans, EPA QA/G-5

<http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5-final.pdf>

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“1” addresses the objectives of the project and how you will manage the project

“2” addresses the specifics of how you will collect and report data

“3” addresses how you will check that all project tasks are completed properly

“4” addresses how you will review and interpret your data

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Assessment is defined as:

The evaluation process used to measure the performance or effectiveness of a system and its components. Assessments include audits, performance evaluation, and management systems reviews. Assessment findings should be documented in a report to management with recommendations for corrective actions, if applicable.

An audits is:

An independent examination to determine whether QA/QC and technical activities are being conducted as planned and whether the activities will effectively achieve quality objectives.

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This element describes how the data will be evaluated to determine whether they can be used to achieve project objectives.

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Environmental projects can range from the simple to the very diverse or complex, from measuring the pH of a lake to determining the presence of contaminants in fish tissue.

“One size” does not fit all. You need to determine the:

- ✓ Significance of the environmental problem to be investigated,
- ✓ Environmental decision to be made, and
- ✓ Impact on human health and the environment.

And then develop your QAPP accordingly!!