

NHDES QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM - LIST OF DEFINITIONS

Data Quality Objective (DQO)

Qualitative and quantitative statements clarifying the purpose of a study, determining the most appropriate data to collect and the most appropriate conditions from which to collect that information, and specify tolerable levels of potential decision errors.

Data Validation

An analyte- and sample-specific process that extends the qualification of data beyond method, procedural, or contractual compliance (*i.e.*, data verification) to determine the analytical quality of a specific data set. Data validation criteria are based on the measurement performance criteria documented in the project quality assurance project plan (QAPP). Data validation must be performed by an organization independent of the group that generates the data. Data validation results in accepted, qualified, or rejected data.

Data Verification

A process of evaluating the completeness, correctness, and conformance or contractual compliance of a data set against the method standard, standard operating procedure (SOP), or contract requirements documented in the project QAPP. Data verification should be performed internally by the analytical group or fixed laboratory generating the data. Data can be checked by an entity external to the analytical group or fixed laboratory. Data verification may result in accepted, qualified, or rejected data.

Data Usability Assessment

The process of evaluating validated data to determine if it can be used for the purpose of the project, (*i.e.*, to answer the environmental question or to make the environmental decisions that must be made). Data usability includes the following sequence of evaluations:

- i. Individual data sets are evaluated to identify the measurement performance/usability issues/problems affecting the ultimate achievement of project quality objectives.
- ii. An overall evaluation of all data generated for the project is performed.
- iii. The project-specific measurement performance criteria and data validation criteria documented in the QAPP are evaluated to determine if they were appropriate for meeting project quality objectives.

Document

Any written, recorded information that is subject to change over time. Procedures, plans, policies and records are documents. Documents may be controlled. See Records.

Environmental Conditions

The description of a physical medium (e.g., air, water, soil, sediment) or biological system expressed in terms of its physical, chemical, radiological or biological characteristics.

Environmental Data

Any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; environmental modeling; or the performance of environmental technology.

Environmental Data Operations

Work performed to obtain, use or report information pertaining to environmental data.

Environmental Processes

Manufactured or natural processes that produce discharges to or that impact the ambient environment.

Environmental Programs

A term pertaining to any work or activities involving the environment, including: characterization of environmental processes and conditions; environmental monitoring; environmental modeling, environmental research and development; the design, construction, and operation of environmental technologies; and laboratory operations on environmental samples.

Program Manager

The person responsible for conducting a specific NHDES program; this program management function is vested in people at different administrative levels within NHDES. The term “project manager” is used to describe staff that have direct knowledge and/or responsibility at the project or site-specific level.

Quality Assurance (QA)

An integrated system of management activities involving planning, implementation, documentation, assessment, reporting, and quality improvement to ensure that a process, item, or service is of the type and quality needed and expected by the client.

NHDES Quality Assurance Manager

The person assigned to manage (NHDES') QA system.

Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP), Master/ Program

A planning document, written to USEPA specifications, which describes quality assurance procedures for a USEPA-funded program or a set of projects. Often used in conjunction with a Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP – see Definition).

Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

A planning document, written to USEPA specifications, which describes quality assurance procedures for a specific USEPA-funded project.

NHDES Quality Assurance Team

A group of NHDES staff from various programs with interest and expertise in QA/QC matters which provides assistance to the Quality Assurance Manager and NHDES programs on QA/QC matters.

Quality Control (QC)

The overall system of technical activities that measures the attributes and performance of a process, item, or service against defined standards to verify that they meet the stated requirements established by the customer; operational techniques and activities that are used to fulfill requirements for quality.

Quality Management

That aspect of the overall management system of the organization that determines and implements the quality policy. Quality management includes strategic planning, allocation of resources, and other systematic activities (e.g., planning, implementation, and assessment) pertaining to the quality system.

Quality Management Plan (QMP)

A formal document or manual that describes the quality system in terms of the organizational structure, functional responsibilities of management and staff, lines of authority, and required interfaces for those planning, implementing, and assessing all activities conducted. This QMP describes the quality system for all NHDES, regardless of funding source(s).

Records

A completed document that provides objective evidence of an item or process. Records may include photographs, drawings, magnetic tape, or other data recording media. See documents.

Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP)

A planning document used in conjunction with a Master/Program QAPP, which documents the procedural and analytical requirements for projects involving the collection of water, soil, sediment, air, or other samples taken to characterize areas of potential environmental contamination.

Site Specific Project Plan (SSPP)

A planning document also used in conjunction with a Master/Program QAPP, which describes the quality assurance procedures for a specific program/task that is not covered by the Master/ Program QAPP for the program. This document is similar to a SAP, but is often more involved and can include tasks other than sampling and analysis.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

A written document that details the method for an operation, analysis, or action with thoroughly prescribed techniques and steps, and that is officially approved as the method of performing certain routine or repetitive tasks.