

Annual Reporting of Quality System Progress

Background

States, tribes, and interstate organizations are required to develop and implement an ongoing quality system as a condition of EPA funding (40 CFR Parts 30 and 31). This quality system must be documented in a Quality Management Plan (QMP). Annually, each state, tribe, and interstate organization provides to EPA an annual report detailing changes to the QMP and reporting on the status/progress of their organization's quality system. In addition, a QAPP inventory list is provided annually to notify EPA of environmental projects that require QAPPs.

During the May 2006 meeting of the EPA New England QA Roundtable, EPA initiated a discussion regarding annual reports. Specifically, EPA was interested in determining:

- what QA information is commonly reported to describe the status/progress of the organization's quality system;
- what report formats are typically used.

The information gathered during the meeting was compiled into a table for distribution and review prior to the next QA Roundtable meeting. Further discussion of the topic at the October 2006 meeting led to general agreement that annual reports "are a good way to keep state senior management involved and informed of the status of the quality management system" and should receive senior management concurrence prior to submittal to EPA.

A sub-group was formed and charged with preparing a "Draft" **Annual Report Template** that would capture a minimum set of agreed upon QA information from each organization. The template would be designed to capture, among other QA-related information, trends, special projects, and needs/concerns. In addition, the **Annual Report Template** would address multiple audiences and identify cross-cutting issues and priorities. The intent of the **Template** is not to require a standardized format. Rather, the intent is to gather consistent information which allows for an assessment of the health and maturity of the collective regional quality system.

The Draft **Template** was presented and discussed at the 1-25-07 QA Roundtable and subsequently finalized and approved by participants at the 10-2-07 meeting.

Template Annual Quality System Status Report (Reporting Period)

Date:

Organization:

Prepared by:

(e.g., QA Manager, QA Team)

Concurrence Signatures:

(e.g., QA Manager, Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Other Senior Management)

Table of Contents

Part A: Status/Progress Report

Part B: Quality Management Plan Update

Part C: QAPP Inventory List

Executive Summary

[Highlight accomplishments and identify programs/projects that QA personnel have participated in and/or provided technical assistance to over the past year. Describe areas needing improvement and recommendations to management. Identify key management priorities and cross-cutting issues, if applicable.]

Part A: Status/Progress Report

Please include in your Annual Report to EPA a discussion of the following:

1. Quality System Assessments

A. Quality System Assessments of Your Organization: *[Describe assessments and self-assessments performed on your organization's quality system. Summarize findings, recommendations, and outstanding corrective actions. Also, identify assessments performed on your organization by another organization (e.g., EPA, NELAC). Summarize findings (EPA assessment reports may be referenced) and outstanding corrective actions. Note and evaluate any trends.]*

B. Quality System Assessments of Other Organizations: *[Describe external assessments that your organization has conducted on other organizations' quality*

systems. Summarize findings and outstanding corrective actions. Note and evaluate any trends.]

An example table has been provided as guidance; narratives containing pertinent information are acceptable.

Quality System Assessments Conducted During Reporting Period			
Internal Program or other Organization Assessed	Assessor (and Org.)	Date(s)	Findings and Corrective Action Status

C. Technical Assessments: *[List the Technical Assessments conducted by your organization on itself and on other organizations. Indicate whether the assessments are routine. Identify technical assessments that were conducted in response to problems and indicate any outstanding corrective actions. Note and evaluate any trends.]*

An example table is provided as guidance; narratives containing pertinent information are acceptable.

Technical Assessments				
Type (field, laboratory, data,)	Org./ Project Assessed	Assessor (and Org.)	Date(s)	Finding and Corrective Action Status

D. Project and Data Reports Assessed: *[List the project reports and/or data reports that were reviewed or assessed for data quality. Note and evaluate any trends]*

2. Areas for Improvement/Recommendations to Senior Staff

A. Areas for Improvement: *[Identify areas for improvement and describe work that has been accomplished and/or planned. Describe recommendations for improvement and communications to senior management.]*

B. QA System Challenges/Vulnerabilities: *[Discuss the challenges to, and the vulnerabilities of, the quality system.]*

Other topics may also be included in the Annual Report and may include:

- **QA Communications:** *[Describe any quality issues communicated within your organization and the means by which you communicated this information (e.g., website, senior management memo, QA briefings and training, notification and scheduling of assessments).]*
- **QA Courses:** *[List the QA-related courses that were developed, presented, and/or attended by your organization. Provide groups within the organization that received training.]*
- **QA Training Needs:** *[Identify, by topic, the QA training needed by your organization. Also, identify groups within your organization that would be targeted for training.]*
- **QA Guidance Materials/Tools:** *[Describe QA-related guidance or other quality system tools (checklists, computer tracking systems, etc.) that were developed. Embedded web-links should be used whenever possible.]*
- **QA Best Practices:** *[Identify any best practices or innovative practices that were developed or implemented.]*
- **QA Special Projects/Technical Issues:** *[Describe the special projects, technical issues, priority activities and cross-cutting programmatic issues in which QA personnel have been involved.]*
- **Other Components:** *[Provide a narrative description of a particular component or aspect of your QA System that was not described previously in the report.]*

Part B: Annual Quality Management Plan Update

[Reminder: EPA approval of a QMP is valid for no more than five years. The organization must revise and resubmit its QMP at the expiration of the five-year life-span of the QMP. In addition, the organization must document an annual review of the QMP.]

Provide the status of your QMP activities in the last year. This may include one of the following:

1. A review of the [Organization's] Quality Management Plan [revision number/date] was completed on [date], and no revisions are necessary at this time.

2. A review of the [*Organization's*] Quality Management Plan [*revision number/date*] was completed on [*date*] and the following revisions will be made:

- 1.
- 2.

3. Comments.

[If a QMP Update was not conducted, provide an explanation in this section. For example, a revised QMP may be submitted to EPA as a "courtesy" copy and would not be fully reviewed and re-approved by EPA. Such an extensive review and approval process would occur at the 5-year approval deadline. Also, waivers may be granted when scheduled timeframes for QMP re-submittals and Annual QMP Update overlap.]

Part C: QAPP Inventory List

A QAPP Inventory List, as of [date], is provided below or in separate attachment.