

Region 4
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Science and Ecosystem Support Division
Athens, Georgia

POLICY

Title: **Field Branch Quality Policy**

Effective Date: August 20, 2015

Number: SESDPLCY-001-R5

Author

Name: Hunter Johnson

Title: Field Quality Manager, Science and Ecosystem Support Division

Signature: 

Date: 8/17/2015

Approvals

Name: Michael V. Peyton

Title: ~~Director~~, Science and Ecosystem Support Division

Signature: 

Date: 8/18/15

Name: Antonio Quinones

Title: ~~Deputy Director~~, Science and Ecosystem Support Division

Signature: 

Date: 8/17/2015

Name: Bobby Carter

Title: Regional Quality Assurance Manager, Region 4

Signature: 

Date: 8/17/2015

Name: John Deatruck

Title: Chief, Field Services Branch

Signature: 

Date: 8/17/15

Revision History

The top row of this table shows the most recent changes to this controlled document. For previous revision history information, archived versions of this document are maintained by the SESD Document Control Coordinator on the SESD local area network (LAN).

History	Effective Date
SESDPLCY-001-R5, <i>Quality Policy</i> , replaces SESDPLCY-002-R4 General: Corrected any typographical, grammatical, and/or editorial errors. Changes were made to reflect the current SESD structure. Cover Page: Updated individuals and structure on approval page to reflect changes in staffing and reorganization.	August 20, 2015
SESDPLCY-001-R4, <i>Quality Policy</i> , replaces SESDPLCY-002-R3	August 23, 2011
SESDPLCY-001-R3, <i>Quality Policy</i> , replaces SESDPLCY-002-R2	April 17, 2009
SESDPLCY-001-R2, <i>Quality Policy</i> , replaces SESDPLCY-002-R1	January 21, 2008
SESDPLCY-001-R1, <i>Quality Policy</i> , replaces SESDPLCY-002-R0	November 1, 2007
SESDPLCY-001-R0, <i>Quality Policy</i> , Original Issue	October 1, 2007

1 Policy

1.1 SESD Field Branch Mission

SESD's mission is to provide quality science support for congressional mandates and initiatives, and partnerships with academia, state, local, and tribal governments.

1.2 SESD Field Branch Quality Policy

The SESD Field Branch is strongly committed to sound science and quality assurance (QA) practices which will produce environmental data of appropriate quality to be used by its customers for decision making. The Field Branch Quality System supports this commitment and is consistent with the requirements of EPA Order CIO 2105.0, Policy and Program Requirements for the Mandatory Agency-Wide Quality System and ISO 17025.

It is the policy of SESD that all decisions which are made to protect human health and safeguard the environment will be based on data of sufficient known quality to support the level of decision required. SESD policy also includes a commitment by management that the quality system supporting the generation of data of known quality and effective environmental technology will be implemented as described in this policy. The SESD policy is achieved by ensuring that adequate and acceptable planning, implementation, and assessment procedures are utilized through all phases of projects/studies/tasks which require the generation of environmental data and/or the use of environmental technology.

SESD managers and staff will assure that 1) there are sufficient QA activities conducted by the field branches to provide data that is scientifically valid and legally defensible and 2) that all work products are provided in a timely manner as agreed upon with the customer. Environmental data quality is the responsibility of all SESD staff who are directly or indirectly involved in the generation of data. Management is responsible for assuring that adequate resources, including personnel, travel funds, and extramural funds, are available to implement the field branches quality assurance system.

1.3 SESD Quality Goals

The following are SESD goals which serve to support the divisional policy:

1. The data quality objectives (DQO) process, or a similar systematic planning process, shall be used to plan project or study goals and objectives as they relate to programmatic or regulatory requirements, and needed environmental data quality prior to the initiation of data collection activities. DQOs, or similar outputs from a systematic planning process, shall be documented in a quality assurance project plan, or equivalent project-level planning document.

2. QA Project Plans (QAPPs), or equivalent planning documents, however named, shall be developed by field investigators responsible for designing and implementing a project, study, or task which requires the collection, measurement, analysis or use of environmental data. QAPPs and equivalent planning documents shall meet EPA requirements and will incorporate project-specific DQOs. QAPPs or other equivalent planning documents shall be approved by the appropriate designated official prior to project implementation except under circumstances requiring immediate deployment to protect human health and the environment. In these cases, development of a QAPP and its applicable DQOs shall be completed in a timely manner following deployment in accordance with the SESD Operating Procedure for Project Planning (SESDPROC-016).
3. Managers and staff within the SESD field branch will receive QA training appropriate for their responsibilities related to data collection, measurement or environmental technology. Managers and staff are required to be familiar with the SESD Field Branch quality system documentation and to implement the policies and procedures in their work.
4. Communication on QA issues and activities will be maintained among the Regional Quality Assurance Manager, the Field Quality Manager, managers, quality assurance officers, and staff.
5. Assessments will be performed to determine the effectiveness of the SESD quality system.
6. QA processes will be designed in the most cost-effective manner without compromising data quality. Continuous improvement in the quality management system will be emphasized.