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## ***Environmental Information Quality Assurance Project Plan Standard Frequently Asked Questions***

### Whom does the directive apply to?

The [Quality Assurance Project Plan \(QAPP\) Standard](#) applies to all Agency employees responsible for environmental information operations. This includes EPA Regions and Program Offices and their sub-organizations. The Standard also applies to non-EPA organizations performing environmental information operations in support of EPA's mission or national program priorities.

### Is there applicability to non-EPA organizations?

Non-EPA organizations performing environmental information operations on behalf of EPA as defined by and in accordance with federal laws and legal requirements including administrative orders/enforcement actions, regulations, extramural agreements or performing work on a voluntary basis under agreement with EPA must adhere to the standard. Non-EPA organizations include but are not limited to contractors, regulated parties, cooperative agreement holders, grantees, states, tribes, localities, intergovernmental agencies, educational institutions, hospitals, non-profits, other federal governmental agencies and parties to Memoranda of Agreement or Understanding, volunteer organizations, and other environmental information providers.

### What is the purpose?

The QAPP Standard supports the implementation of EPA's [Environmental Information Quality Policy and Environmental Information Quality Procedure](#). The Standard defines the minimum requirements for QAPPs for all EPA and non-EPA organizations performing environmental information operations. Environmental information operations is a collective term that encompasses the collection, production, evaluation, or use of environmental information by or for EPA and the design, construction, operation, or application of environmental technology by EPA. This directive updates the Agency's QAPP requirements from 2001.

The QAPP is a formal planning document which describes how environmental information operations are planned, implemented, documented, and assessed during the life cycle of a project. The QAPP describes in comprehensive detail the necessary Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control requirements and other technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that the results of the environmental information operations performed will satisfy the stated performance and acceptance criteria.

EPA Regional and Program Offices participated in the development of the QAPP Standard. Thirty-six states and 23 tribal organizations participated in the development of the QAPP Standard. The requirements described in this Standard are consistent with the principles in the American Society for Quality/American National Standards Institute E4:2014 (R2019), *Quality management systems for environmental information and technology programs—Requirements with guidance for use*.



Why does EPA have an Environmental Information Quality Assurance Project Plan Directive?

Minimum requirements and responsibilities defined in the QAPP Standard ensure environmental information operations products and services are of known and documented quality, scientifically valid, legally defensible and are appropriate for their intended use in support of EPA’s mission to protect human health and the environment.

When does the directive go into effect?

The directive went into effect on July 18, 2023, when signed by the EPA Chief Information Officer and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information. Changes reflected in the QAPP Standard, that are not currently included in organization’s approved QAPPs and Quality Management Plans (QMP), must be incorporated during the next revision and approval of those documents.

How do I implement these directives?

Each EPA Region and Program Office develops and implements its own individual QMP which documents how QAPPs are integrated into their overall QA Program. The EPA organization’s QA Manager (QAM), in coordination with their leadership, is responsible for implementation of the QAPP Standard. The QAM also serves as a central point of contact for guidance and technical support to state, tribal and territory organizations.

Are these directives in addition to existing quality requirements?

The QAPP Standard supersedes *EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans (EPA QA/R-5, March 2001)*; *EPA Systematic Planning: A Case Study for Hazardous Waste Site Investigations (QA/CS-1, February 2006)*; and *EPA Systematic Planning: A Case Study of Particulate Matter Ambient Air Monitoring (QA/CS-2, EPA QA/CS-2)*.

Why does the format of this directive differ from the past version?

This directive is written in the Office of Mission Support Information Technology/Information Management directives template.

Are there any Agency documents or training to assist in meeting these directives?

Communication documents consist of: Frequently Asked Questions, memorandum from the EPA Chief Information Officer and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information to the Associate Administrators and Regional Administrators, one-page information sheet, desk statement and updates to the CIO News Brief and Administrative Updates. Also, Train the Trainer slides will be provided to QAMs in September 2023. QAMs are responsible for providing organization-specific training.