

Water Quality Framework FAQ's

How will the WQF help make current business processes more efficient?

The framework will streamline water quality assessment and reporting, eliminate paper reporting, and provide a more complete picture of the nation's water quality. Through the scope of the water quality framework we are looking to: (1) automate large portions of state and regional business processes, (2) integrate new pieces, where appropriate, to better support regions and states, (3) limit redundancy in state and regional information entry, (4) incorporate other program systems and processes to compile a complete picture of the nation's water quality, and (5) facilitate better communication between states, regions, EPA, and programs with system enhancements.

When migrating to the new ATTAINS data exchange, what will happen to the Assessment Database (ADB)?

Starting in 2018, the ADB will no longer be supported due to version incompatibility. Instead, a cloud based data entry system will take its place. Mechanisms for transitioning will be made clear closer to implementation. The new ATTAINS exchange will also support Exchange Network data sharing.

What is best for my state, using the new cloud based data entry for ATTAINS, or an Exchange Network node?

This will depend on your state's funding for the transition, your capacity to develop a node, and technical staff time and availability. There is not an answer that will work for all states.

What is the Catchment Indexing Process (CIP)?

The CIP is a way for EPA headquarters to better assimilate the 305(b), 303(d), and TMDL data by translating the data to catchments. Through the process, EPA-HQ can take any format or resolution data is provided by the states and/or regions and compare it consistently across the country. The process takes geospatial data and translates it to the corresponding catchments based not only on a spatial intersection but also incorporates logic, such as flow, to appropriately assign or not assign Assessment Units (AU's) or priority areas to catchments.

What do states or regions have to do to comply with the new CIP?

States and Regions do not need to change how they do business with the new CIP. The CIP is being built to accommodate current state and regional business processes. The 13 state geoprocessing pilot phase provided EPA-HQ with a variety of state data types that better helped EPA-HQ understand state and regional needs and those will be incorporated into the automated CIP. The types of Assessment Unit types which will be included in the process are: linear features, watershed areas, and points.

What if a state has not developed geospatial information for 305(b), 303(d), or priorities?

Following the geoprocessing pilot we have done our best to identify states with limited geospatial capacity and are aiding in their abilities to derive the information. However, if for some reason we have not captured a state, we will make an extra effort to work them to identify their needs and help them provide information that can be translated through CIP. In addition, if you know or are a state that does not have the capability to generate this information and we have not been in contact with you regarding the issue, please contact Shera Reems, reems.shera@epa.gov or Wendy Reid, reid.wendy@epa.gov as soon as possible.

- Can an Assessment Unit cross catchment boundaries? (Yes)
- What happens if there are multiple Assessment Units in a catchment? (We could show Medium Resolution and High Resolution examples)
- How is the overall summary value for a catchment determined/calculated/derived?
- Where can I download catchments for my state? (We could direct them to Horizon Systems' NHDPlus website, but then they'd have to stitch together catchments from multiple hydro regions. Should we make zipfile downloads of the catchments for each individual state and post it on the Sharepoint?)