

Region 4 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Science and Ecosystem Support Division Athens, Georgia	
Policy	
Title: Quality Policy	ID: SESDPLCY-1000-R0
Issuing Authority: Deputy Director, SESD	
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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the Quality Policy established for the Science and Ecosystem Support Division (SESD). The Quality Policy ensures that SESD is 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.

Scope/Application

This document addresses the Quality Policy for SESD's quality management system, and managers and personnel directly or indirectly involved in data gathering to maintain conformance to technical and quality system requirements. The Quality Policy of the SESD is aligned with the mission of the Agency.

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1. Policy

1.1 Mission Statement

The mission of SESD is to provide scientific support of known and appropriate quality for congressional mandates and initiatives, and partnerships with academia, state, local, and tribal governments.

1.2 Ethics Statement

It is SESD's policy that all business be conducted with integrity and in an ethical manner. It is the responsibility of each staff member and manager to hold to the highest ethical standard of professional conduct in the performance of all duties and to adhere to EPA's Principles of Scientific Integrity Policy (see References).

1.3 Quality Policy Statement

SESD is committed to sound science and QA practices that will produce environmental data of known and appropriate quality to be used by its customers for decision making. The SESD 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 17025:2005.

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

Management and staff of SESD shall assure that sufficient QA efforts are conducted by the data gathering components of the division to produce records that are scientifically valid and legally defensible, and that all work products are provided in a timely manner as agreed upon with the customer. Environmental data of known and appropriate quality is the responsibility of all SESD staff who are directly or indirectly involved in the generation of data. The management of SESD is responsible for assuring that adequate resources, including personnel, and travel and extramural funds are available to implement the QA system of the division.

1.4 Quality Goals

The following are the goals of SESD that serve to support the divisional Quality Policy:

- The data quality objectives (DQO) selection process, or a similar systematic planning process, shall be used to delineate the goals and objectives of projects and/or studies, 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 (QAPP), or equivalent project-level planning document.
- Managers and staff of SESD shall receive QA training appropriate for their responsibilities related to data collection, measurement, conduction of a procedure, or environmental technology. Managers and staff are required to be familiar with the quality system documentation and control of records of SESD and implement its QA policies and procedures in their work activities.
- Communication on QA issues and activities shall be maintained among the Regional Quality Assurance Manager, and SESD's Laboratory Quality Manager, Field Quality Manager, Managers, Quality Assurance Officers, and Staff.
- Internal and external assessments shall be performed to determine the effectiveness of the SESD quality system, including a Management Review (SESD-PROC-013, see References), at least, once a year (ISO 17025).
- QA processes will be designed in the most cost-effective manner without compromising data quality. Continuous improvement in the quality management system will be pursued and embraced, as needed.

2. Definitions

None

3. Related Documents and Forms

None.

4. References

International Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical Commission, Standard 17025: General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories, 2nd Edition, Switzerland, 2005.

International Organization for Standardization, ISO 9000: Quality Management Systems-Fundamentals and Vocabulary, Switzerland, 2015.

U.S.EPA, EPA's Principles of Scientific Integrity,
<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-11/documents/epa-principles-of-scientific-integrity.pdf>.

U.S. EPA, Region 4, SESD, ASB, Laboratory Operations and Quality Assurance Manual, Athens, GA, most recent version.

U.S. EPA, Region 4, SESD, Operating Procedure for Management Review, SESD-PROC-1007, Athens, GA, most recent version.

U.S. EPA, Region 4, SESD, FSB, Operating Procedure for Project Planning, SESD-PROC-016, Athens, GA, most recent version.

5. Revision History

This table shows changes to this controlled document over time. The most recent version is presented in the top row of the table. Previous versions of the document are maintained by the SESD Document Control Coordinator.

History	Effective Date
SESDPLCY-1000-R0, Quality Policy, Original Issue	October 1, 2017