State of California

State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Quality Assurance Implementation Project Charter

(Version March 30, 2018)

Photo by Carl Henriet

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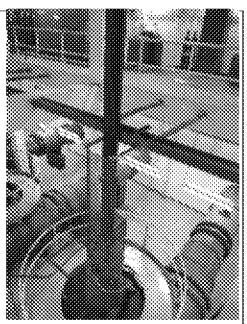
(Version 3/30/18)

Project Information

Project Name	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Quality Assurance (QA) Implementation Project
Program Name	NPDES QA Program
Division / Agency	Division of Water Quality / State Water Resources Control Board in coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Boards
Focus Area	Statewide NPDES Wastewater Permit Program (not storm water or MS4)
Product / Process	Planning and development, data problem resolution, implementation, and administrative oversight to support QA activities for the NPDES QA Program
Funding Source	N/A
Project Lead	Carl Henriet
Project Senior	Afrooz Farsimadan
Executive Sponsors	Jonathan Bishop / Karen Mogus

Project Overview

Background	The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) issued an Order on May 5, 2000 that established policy for an agency-wide quality assurance system that is mandatory for all programs that receive federal funding and rely on the need for quality data. U.S. EPA subsequently developed detailed program requirements and a series of guidance documents for quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) practices. This project will adapt the QA/QC practices to the NPDES Program.  Photo by Steven Moore The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) developed a Quality Management Plan (QMP) on October 1, 2010 to comply with U.S. EPA's Order. The State Water Board revised the QMP on December 8, 2016 (as Version 2.0) and U.S. EPA provided final approval on February 13, 2017. All individual QA Programs, including the NPDES QA Program, must achieve QMP requirements. The State Water Board's Office of Information Management and Analysis (OIMA) and Division of Water Quality (DWQ) completed an NPDES QA Program Plan on August 16, 2017 and will publish a revised version in March 2018. The NPDES QA Program Plan

	provides a foundation for a complete QA system and an approach for implementation. The Water Boards must implement the NPDES QA Program Plan. This Project Charter sets out a granular, stepwise approach to reach the goals and deliverables required by the QMP and the NPDES QA Program Plan. It establishes a target schedule for implementation based on priorities and a logical sequence for development. The schedule will be subject to change based on the availability of resources and complex and sensitive issues that arise during the process. This Project Charter will be subject to revision and status updates. The NPDES QA Program is not currently under a fixed timeline for development. However, the NPDES QA Program must maintain regular progress to reach its goals and deliverables even if the plans and schedule must remain somewhat flexible.

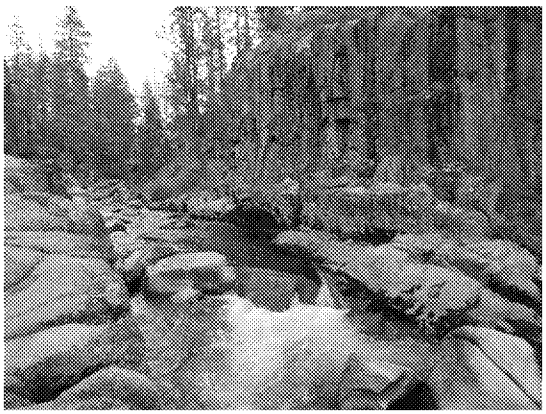
Objectives	The primary purpose of the QMP is to provide a framework to guide the acquisition of environmental data that are credible and appropriate for their intended use. The benefits and goals of implementing the NPDES QA Program Plan to achieve that purpose include:
	• Scientific data reliability
	• Reduced or justified resource expenditure
	• Effective management of internal and external activities
	• Reliable and defensible regulatory decisions
	• Beneficial use protection
	
	The NPDES QA Program Plan states that the following objectives are an initial listing of needed actions and activities to implement QA/QC elements:
	• Determine how to satisfy NPDES QA Program Plan elements in NPDES permits by developing the following:
	  – Permit requirements for QA and documentation
	  – Defining terminology and data quality standards
	  – Making program procedures, tools, checklists, and forms
	  – Offering guidance and training for staff and dischargers
	  – Other means identified during the process
	• Determine where gaps exist in administering a complete QA system within the NPDES Program and develop appropriate solutions.
	• Use screening activities to identify where data problems are occurring and develop appropriate solutions.
	• Develop data quality objectives that establish performance and acceptance criteria to serve as the basis for planning the collection of data of sufficient quality and quantity.
	• Determine the fields of data needed for entry into CIWQS to generate analyses and assessment of data quality.

	• Support the Water Boards' development of training outlined in NPDES QA Program Plan, section 7.4. • Support assessment and oversight of the NPDES QA Program outlined in NPDES QA Program Plan, section 7.5.
Scope	The requirements of the QMP and NPDES QA Program Plan fall into four categories: • Planning and Development – The project includes the development of internal deliverables for use by Water Board staff (e.g., technical references, checklists, tools, and forms). Existing resources from the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) and Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) will assist that effort. The project requires decision making regarding how the NPDES Program will satisfy elements of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) through staff and discharger actions. Attachment A, Figure 1 shows the 24 elements of a QAPP. A streamlined checklist will assure that staff complete NPDES permits with requirements to satisfy QAPP elements. Dischargers may need to perform additional actions for QA implementation and reporting to satisfy those requirements. The project will establish data quality objectives for the NPDES QA Program and develop procedures for data verification, validation, and assessment with considerations to the cost of compliance and resource limitations. The project will adapt U.S. EPA guidance documents for these procedures as best practicable to the NPDES Program. The project will consider if any Board-adopted actions may be necessary to implement QA and if there are alternative measures. The project will include stakeholder participation at appropriate opportunities. The project will develop and maintain intranet and internet webpages to support planning and development activities. • Data Problem Resolution – Attachment A, Figure 2 shows NPDES processes that affect the lifecycle of data through monitoring and reporting program (MRP) design, sample collection, analysis, reporting, storage within databases, retrieval, assessment, and use for permitting decisions. Data problems may originate in many different areas of this process. The project will make an ongoing effort to identify data quality problems, find their origin, and take corrective actions or recommend appropriate solutions to management. • Implementation – The project must plan, synchronize, and oversee many aspects of implementation. These efforts include staff training; discharger outreach; documentation of staff and discharger actions to satisfy QAPP elements; documentation of data verification/validation/assessment; coordination with CIWQS; laboratory audits or alternative measures; and corrective actions oversight. • Oversight and Administrative Functions – The project must provide ongoing communication and reporting in accordance

	with the QMP and NPDES QA Program Plan. The project will provide status updates to management and estimates of resource requirements to support NPDES QA activities. The project will initially focus on chemical parameters (e.g., conventional, non-conventional, priority pollutants), followed by whole effluent toxicity when the State Water Board develops policy. The project may subsequently address biostimulation indicators, fish tissue, sediment, and bioassessment parameters as needs arise in NPDES permits. The project will initially focus on individual NPDES permits and monitoring performed by Regional Water Boards (e.g., inspection monitoring or receiving water monitoring). The NPDES QA Program will develop and implement QA for general NPDES permits in a subsequent effort.
Stakeholders	Internal: Water Board managers (including Board level, executive level, and program/unit level), NPDES permit writers, inspectors, and caseworkers, and staff that work on water quality assessment, TMDLs, the CIWQS database, and enforcement. External: California citizens, U.S. EPA, NPDES dischargers, consulting laboratories, non-governmental organizations (e.g., California Association of Sanitation Agencies, California Water Environmental Association, Waterkeepers, Heal the Bay) and other interested parties.
Metrics	Primary metrics: • Satisfaction of QAPP elements by Water Board staff and dischargers through NPDES permits and other measures • Procedures for data verification, validation, and assessment with consideration to cost of compliance and resources • NPDES QA tools, training, and outreach in place • Identification and resolution of priority data quality problems • Laboratory audit procedures or alternative measures • Representative and reliable water quality data • Improved functionality of using the CIWQS database • Administrative reporting to satisfy the QMP and NPDES QA Program Plan Secondary metrics: • Minimized backlog to NPDES permit issuance and inspection commitments that are attributable to the resources required for QA implementation • Sequenced rollout of QA implementation actions to ease transition to a complete QA system

Initial Status	This Project Charter should be in a working format by March 2018 and it will remain as a living document, subject to revision and status updates on an as-needed basis. State and Regional Water Board staff formed an NPDES QA Work Group in early 2017 to perform planning and development functions, resolve problems, setup QA implementation activities, and support administrative functions of the NPDES QA Program. The DWQ NPDES Program QA Representative will fulfill roles and responsibilities described by the NPDES QA Program Plan, sections 7.1 and 7.2. The NPDES QA Work Group members must actively contribute to the project activities under a team approach to maintain the project schedule. The project will develop implementation actions and deliverables on a fiscal year basis. The initial planning and development activities for fiscal year 2017-18 focus on: (1) organizing available resources and information; (2) identifying where data problems are occurring and alternatives for resolution; (3) determining how QAPP elements may be satisfied through adaptation of U.S. EPA's QA/QC guidance documents to the NPDES Program; and (4) drafting an NPDES permit preparation checklist. The project will maintain an ongoing process of resolving data problems, starting with resolving easier problems first and making improvements to NPDES permits. The project will then develop NPDES data quality requirements and assessment procedures, which are QA activities that are internal to the Regional Water Boards. The project will subsequently work with stakeholders to determine if there is a need for any additional permit requirements for QA purposes. Attachment B shows key development and implementation activities and their relationships, which establish a progressive sequence for development. The NPDES QA Work Group will facilitate ongoing communication between the Regional Water Boards, NPDES and QA Roundtables, U.S. EPA, management groups, and stakeholders brought into the QA planning and implementation effort. The cost of compliance and resource requirements for implementation will be key considerations as the NPDES QA Work Group explores alternative measures for implementation. The NPDES QA Work Group will rely on administrative regulations and rulemaking information cited in Attachment C together with assistance from the Office of Chief Counsel for determining if proposed actions will require adoption by the State Water Board.

Photo by Steven Moore



NPDES QA Work Group

State / Regional Board / Office	Lead Representative	Backups
State Board - DWQ	Vacant position	
RB1	Claudia Villacorta	Cathy Goodwin
RB2	Jessica Watkins	John Madigan
RB3	Phillip Hammer	
RB4	Jau Ren Chen	Steven Webb
RB5	James Marshall	Anne Littlejohn, Alisha Wenzel, Dania Jimmerson
RB6	N/A – Declined	
RB7	Kai Dunn	Jeong-Hee Lim
RB8	Milasol Gaslan	Julio Lara
RB9	Keith Yaeger	Vicente Rodriguez
State Board – Office of Information Management and Analysis	Jarma Bennett (Data Management Steward), Renee Spears (Quality Officer)	
State Board - Office of Enforcement	Matt Buffleben	Erin Mustain
U.S. EPA	Becky Mitschele	

Project Schedule

The project will address many related and overlapping issues throughout the entire project schedule. The project schedule does not confine when discussions of an issue or an activity will take place. Rather, the project schedule shows when focused activities should take place to maintain the overall project schedule. In general, the project schedule organizes activities that focus on internal Regional Water Board procedures or actions (e.g., NPDES permit preparation and data assessment to satisfy QAPP elements) earlier than activities that focus on discharger actions. When the project engages dischargers / stakeholders to work on any additional NPDES permit QA requirements to satisfy QAPP elements, there will be higher justification that the requirements are necessary and it will provide for efficient discussion of issues to consider the cost of compliance. Attachment B shows how the development activities relate to one another and a progressive sequence for development.

Brackets within the activity descriptions show NPDES QA Work Group responsibilities or teams. Team member makeup may vary each fiscal year.

Color-coding identifies the categories of project activities as follows:

- Planning / Development / Training
- Problem Resolution
- Implementation
- Administrative

Fiscal Year 2017-18	Months	Goal	
		Start	End
Project Charter Adjustments: Adjust this Project Charter to NPDES QA Program Plan revisions. Finalize the project actions and target schedule. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	4	1/1/18	5/1/18
Annual NPDES QA Report: Submit the Annual NPDES QA Report to OIMA for Calendar Year 2017. The State Board QA Officer typically requires the report by August or early September at the latest. The QMP provides guidance for the required information. [State and Regional Board leads]	1	8/1/17	9/1/17
Develop QA Training for Staff: Assist OIMA with development of basic QA training for staff. The QA Roundtable is heading this effort. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	TBD		

Assemble QA Resources: Assemble existing U.S. EPA, SWAMP, ELAP, and Regional Board QA webpage or other informational resources (e.g., guidance documents, terminology, frequently asked questions, training, forms, checklists, example QAPPs, measurement quality objectives, and standard language) for internal use by the NPDES QA Work Group. [Work Group Team A]	4	3/1/18	7/1/18
NPDES QA Intranet Webpage: Develop the NPDES QA intranet webpage with informational resources assembled in the above activity. The intranet webpage must initially serve the NPDES QA Work Group and eventually serve Regional Board staff. Establish ongoing maintenance for QA documents, regulation updates, and alternative test procedure information. The intranet webpage is at: http://waternet/dwq/npdes/program_plan/ [Work Group Team A]	3	4/1/18	7/1/18
NPDES Water Data Event: Assist OIMA in developing and conducting an NPDES Water Data Event with Regional Board staff and stakeholders to discuss NPDES data needs and potential uses. Summarize comments for further use. Scheduled for 3/30/18 at the Cal EPA Building. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	5.5	11/21/17	5/1/18
Data Problem Screening Surveys: Develop and administer data problem screening surveys and interviews. Address NPDES data processes shown in Attachment A, Figure 2. Include staff that directly work with data and dischargers. Coordinate with NPDES Program Managers to promote staff participation. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	2	3/1/18	5/1/18
Data Problem Report: Summarize data problems, recommend priorities and methods for solution, identify easy vs. difficult solutions, and provide a report to management. Include a master data problems spreadsheet for decision-making and resolution tracking purposes. Problems may reside with policy; permit writing; discharger SOPs; field monitoring; laboratory analysis; reporting; and data review processes. The Data Problem Report will be the basis for ongoing planning. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	2	5/1/18	6/30/18

Crosswalk QAPP Guidance: Crosswalk U.S. EPA QAPP Guidance to determine how to adapt it to the NPDES Program. Partition the detailed QAPP elements as staff or discharger responsibilities. Create lists for both. Further partition staff responsibilities as NPDES permit preparation, data assessment, or other Regional Board responsibilities. (EPA QA/G-5 and QA/R-5) [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	3	3/1/18	6/1/18
DQO Guidance Adaptation: Review U.S. EPA Data Quality Objectives (DQO) Guidance and develop recommendations for NPDES Program adaptation. (EPA QA/G-4) [Work Group Team B]	2	4/1/18	6/1/18
Conceptual Data Verification / Validation: Review U.S. EPA Data Verification / Validation Guidance, visualize roles between staff and dischargers, identify focus issues and parameters, and develop concepts for NPDES Program adaptation. (EPA QA/G-8) [Work Group Team C]	2	4/1/18	6/1/18
SOP Guidance Adaptation: Review U.S. EPA Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Guidance for NPDES Program adaptation. (EPA QA/G-6) [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	2	4/1/18	6/1/18
QAPP Elements for Staff and Dischargers: Amend the detailed QAPP element lists for staff and discharger responsibilities based on adaptations of the above referenced U.S. EPA guidance documents. The lists will be a basis for ongoing planning. [Work Group]	1	5/1/18	6/1/18
Draft NPDES Permit Preparation Checklist for Staff: Draft an NPDES Permit Preparation Checklist for satisfaction of QAPP elements by staff. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	1	6/1/18	6/30/18

Fiscal Year 2018-19	Months	Goal	
		Start	End
Data Problem Resolution: Organize, schedule, and oversee FY 2018-19 data problem resolution. Problems may reside at policy; permit writing; discharger management; field monitoring; laboratory; reporting; and data review processes. Initial efforts will focus on resolving easy issues and planning for resolving the more difficult issues on a priority basis. The methods for problem resolution may include clarified NPDES permit requirements; policy development; improved documentation; terminology definitions; data quality standards; checklists; forms; procedures for staff; training for staff and dischargers; improved reporting instructions; and webpage resources. Begin coordination with ELAP for problems originating at laboratories. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	12	7/1/18	6/30/19
Develop QA Training for Staff: Assist OIMA with development of basic QA training for staff. The QA Roundtable is heading this effort. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	TBD		
Annual NPDES QA Report: Submit the Annual NPDES QA Report to OIMA for Calendar Year 2018. [State and Regional Board leads]	1	8/1/18	9/1/18
Project Status for Management: Present project status to the Joint MCC/DMC for management direction on key decisions. [State Board lead / Exec Sponsors]	1	9/1/18	10/1/18
Toxicity Assessment Resources and NPDES QA Intranet Webpage Update: Identify NPDES QA tools, training, webpage resources, and procedures necessary to support toxicity data assessment under new policy. Post resources or links on the NPDES QA intranet webpage. Toxicity policy may be in place in late 2018. Provide updates and maintenance to the NPDES QA intranet webpage. [Work Group Team A]	6	7/1/18	1/1/19
NPDES QA Internet Webpage: Develop a framework for the NPDES QA internet webpage to assist stakeholders and the public. Compile items for posting while the webpage remains under construction. [Work Group Team A]	6	1/1/19	6/30/19

Monitoring and Reporting Improvements: Make easy improvements to NPDES permit templates, Regional Board Standard Monitoring and Reporting Requirements, and CIWQS data portal reporting instructions to resolve data problems. Resolve problems with missing data fields and identifiers in CIWQS through clarified permit requirements or other methods. Make recommendations for informational resources to include on the NPDES QA internet webpage. Under this activity, the NPDES QA Work Group will only make easier improvements to permits that do not require rulemaking (see Attachment C). [Work Group Team B]	12	7/1/18	6/30/19
Inspection Improvements: Make improvements to the Compliance Evaluation Inspection checklist to resolve data problems. [Work Group Team B]	2	7/1/18	6/30/19
Standard Limit Calculation Types: Define and standardize the effluent limit types and calculations used in NPDES permits to reduce data problems in CIWQS. Resolution actions include (1) defining limit types that support existing objectives; (2) standardizing limit definitions for consistency; (3) clarifying limit calculations for all data situations (e.g., data sets with non-detect and detected but not quantified data); and (4) preventing development of new limit calculation types by permit writers and TMDL / Basin Planning staff. Consider how permit writers may convert limits to standardized types at permit reissuance (e.g., address anti-backsliding and antidegradation). Provide effluent limit coding assistance to database workers and contractors. [Work Group Team C]	12	7/1/18	6/30/19

Fiscal Year 2019-20	Months	Goal	
		Start	End
Data Problem Resolution: Organize, schedule, and oversee FY 2019-20 data problem resolution. Finish resolving easy issues and begin resolving issues that are more difficult. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	12	7/1/19	6/30/20
Annual NPDES QA Report: Submit the Annual NPDES QA Report to OIMA for Calendar Year 2019. [State and Regional Board leads]	1	8/1/19	9/1/19

Project Status for Management: Present project status to the Joint MCC/DMC for management direction on key decisions. [State Board lead / Exec Sponsors]	1	9/1/19	10/1/19
Regional Board QA Procedure Manuals: Develop improved or standardized Regional Board QA Procedure Manuals to support inspection monitoring and receiving water monitoring performed by staff. Address internal staff training and qualifications to perform sampling; equipment maintenance and logs; compliance sampling procedures and chain of custody; data validation and assessment; data maintenance; and in-house documentation. The work performed for this activity should provide an example of the standard operating procedures (SOPs) expected from dischargers. [Work Group Team A]	12	7/1/19	6/30/20
Final NPDES Permit Preparation Checklist and Documentation: Finalize and streamline the NPDES Permit Preparation Checklist to satisfy QAPP elements by staff, to prompt internal corrective actions, and to resolve data problems. Develop a database to document completed checklists. Setup documentation procedures for staff. Annual QA Reports may use the documentation. [Work Group Team B]	6	7/1/19	1/1/20
Implement NPDES Permit Preparation Checklists: Provide training as necessary and oversee implementation of the NPDES Permit Preparation Checklist by staff at the Regional Board level. Maintain database documentation. Implement internal corrective actions. [Each Regional Board]	6	1/1/20	6/30/20

Conceptual NPDES Permit QA Requirements for Dischargers: This activity will progress from the FY 2017-18 partitioned lists of staff and discharger responsibilities. This activity will develop conceptual NPDES Permit QA requirements (i.e., permit language) to satisfy QAPP elements by discharger actions. Consider implementation alternatives that avoid the need for rulemaking (see Attachment C). Address how to satisfy QAPP elements for Sampling Management Plans or Special Studies prepared by dischargers. Recommend the process how Regional Boards will review and approve discharger submittals. [Work Group Team B]	6	1/1/20	6/30/20
NPDES DQO Development: Develop data quality objectives (DQOs) for the NPDES QA Program with consideration to water body types, beneficial uses, and Basin Plan objectives / criteria. Adapt U.S. EPA DQO Guidance as best practicable to the NPDES Program (EPA QA/G-4). Consider the process used by SWAMP to develop and update measurement quality objectives, incorporated by reference in the California Ocean Plan. Evaluate the need to update minimum levels for priority pollutants and establish minimum levels for other parameters. Recommend a process to update minimum levels for management approval if needed. [Work Group Team C]	12	7/1/19	6/30/20

Fiscal Year 2020-21	Months	Goal	
		Start	End
Data Problem Resolution: Organize, schedule, and oversee FY 2020-21 data problem resolution. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	12	7/1/20	6/30/21
Annual NPDES QA Report: Submit the Annual NPDES QA Report to OIMA for Calendar Year 2020. [State and Regional Board leads]	1	8/1/20	9/1/20
Project Status for Management: Present project status to the Joint MCC/DMC for management direction on key decisions. [State Board lead / Exec Sponsors]	1	9/1/20	10/1/20

NPDES QA Internet Webpage: Develop the NPDES QA internet webpage to assist stakeholders and the public. Establish ongoing maintenance. [Work Group Team A]	12	7/1/20	6/30/21
Planning for Training Development: Assess outstanding training needs to fulfill requirements of the NPDES QA Program Plan, section 7.4. Scope training topics, develop training proposals, and coordinate with the Training Academy for approval by the DMC. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	TBD		
Representative Data Issues: Develop guidance for staff to determine representative data. Guidance should serve the uses of data for reasonable potential analysis as well as compliance assessment. [Work Group]	4	7/1/20	11/1/20
Draft Data Verification, Validation, and Assessment Procedures: Develop draft NPDES QA procedures for staff to review and assess data. Adapt U.S. EPA Guidance on Data Verification and Validation as best practicable to the NPDES Program (EPA QA/G-8). Consider the varying staffing structures and responsibilities among Regional Boards. Consider alternatives to adjust procedures to focus parameters and providing a level of coverage in balance with resource limitations. Consider how to document data assessments for use at the permit writer / enforcement level and Annual NPDES QA Reports. Develop a database to track and document data assessments for individual NPDES permits. [Work Group]	8	7/1/20	3/1/21
NPDES QA Resource Estimates: Estimate resource needs for staff to perform data verification, validation, and assessment for focus parameters or various levels of coverage. Report resource estimates for management consideration and direction. [Work Group]	2	1/1/21	3/1/21

Final Data Verification, Validation, and Assessment Procedures: Get management feedback for a target commitment level of data review for individual NPDES permits. Finalize NPDES QA data assessment and documentation procedures for Regional Board staff. Develop and maintain a database to document data assessment for purposes of permit writing, enforcement, and Annual QA Reports. [Work Group]	4	3/1/21	6/30/21
Corrective Action Procedures: Develop procedures to implement corrective actions that will resolve data problems at their origin, including staff and discharger processes. Develop documentation and follow-up procedures. [Work Group]	4	3/1/21	6/30/21

Fiscal Year 2021-22	Months	Goal	
		Start	End
Data Problem Resolution: Organize, schedule, and oversee FY 2021-22 data problem resolution. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	12	7/1/21	6/30/22
Annual NPDES QA Report: Submit the Annual NPDES QA Report to OIMA for Calendar Year 2021. [State and Regional Board leads]	1	8/1/21	9/1/21
Project Status for Management: Present project status to the Joint MCC/DMC for management direction on key decisions. [State Board lead / Exec Sponsors]	1	9/1/21	10/1/21
Data Verification, Validation, and Assessment Training for Staff: Develop NPDES QA training for staff based on final data verification, assessment and documentation procedures. Include outstanding training to fulfill requirements of the NPDES QA Program Plan, section 7.4. Include training for corrective actions. [Work Group Team A]	6	7/1/21	1/1/22
Implement Data Assessment Procedures by Staff: Oversee implementation of data assessment and documentation by staff at the Regional Board level. [Each Regional Board]	6	1/1/22	6/30/22

Draft NPDES Permit QA Requirements for Dischargers: Develop draft NPDES Permit QA requirements for dischargers to satisfy QAPP elements and support data assessment by staff. Consider what information staff will need to approve QA submittals and perform data assessment. Consider implementation alternatives. Route draft NPDES Permit QA requirements for management review. [Work Group Team B]	12	7/1/21	6/30/22
Stakeholder Participation: Engage stakeholder participation with the NPDES QA Work Group as appropriate to discuss QA issues. Work with stakeholders to consider the cost of compliance and alternatives to implement potential discharger NPDES QA requirements. [Work Group Team B]	12	7/1/21	6/30/22
Schedule NPDES QA Items for Adoption: Organize and schedule any NPDES QA items requiring adoption by the State Water Board as directed by management with assistance by OCC. Base decisions on administrative regulations and rulemaking information cited in Attachment C. Potential items for mandatory statewide implementation include discharger QA requirements under NPDES permits, updated minimum levels, and permit limit calculation types. (This is a placeholder activity) [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	12	7/1/21	6/30/22

Fiscal Year 2022-23	Months	Goal	
		Start	End
Data Problem Resolution: Organize, schedule, and oversee FY 2021-22 data problem resolution. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	12	7/1/22	6/30/23
Annual NPDES QA Report: Submit the Annual NPDES QA Report to OIMA for Calendar Year 2021. [State and Regional Board leads]	1	8/1/22	9/1/22
Project Status for Management: Present project status to the Joint MCC/DMC for management direction on key decisions. [State Board lead / Exec Sponsors]	1	9/1/22	10/1/22
NPDES QA Program Plan Update: Assist OIMA with making a scheduled 5-year update to the NPDES QA Program Plan (i.e., NPDES QAPrP). [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	6	TBD	TBD

Process NPDES QA Items for Adoption: Prepare and process any items that require adoption by the State Water Board. Coordinate actions with OCC and the State Board Executive Office. (This is a placeholder activity) [Work Group Team A]	12	7/1/22	6/30/23
CIWQS Accommodations for NPDES QA Documentation: Coordinate with CIWQS staff to provide any needed accommodations and portal instructions to receive QA documentation from dischargers under NPDES permit requirements. (This is a placeholder activity) [Work Group Team B]	12	7/1/22	6/30/23
NPDES Discharger QA Workshops: Develop NPDES QA Workshops to acquaint dischargers with appropriate QA procedures to satisfy NPDES permits and QAPP requirements. Provide other helpful information, tools, and resources to dischargers. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	6	1/1/23	6/30/23
Laboratory Problems Resolution: Develop triggers and procedures to perform Technical Systems Audits (i.e., laboratory audits) or implement alternative measures to deal with laboratory problems. Regional Boards lack technically trained staff in laboratory operations and regulations that can perform audits. Coordinate ideas with ELAP for implementing alternative measures vs. full laboratory audits. Subject to further discussion, alternative measures could include a corrective action process for deficient reporting, limited audits to perform specific checks or reviews not performed by ELAP, or audits focused on the specific nature or degree of problems at a facility. Plan how to bring in technical expertise. Format a report structure to support enforcement processes. Assess resource and technical qualification needs for management direction how to proceed. [Work Group Team C]	12	7/1/22	6/30/23

Fiscal Year 2023-24	Months	Goal	
		Start	End
Data Problem Resolution: Organize, schedule, and oversee FY 2021-22 data problem resolution. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	12	7/1/23	6/30/24

Annual NPDES QA Report: Submit the Annual NPDES QA Report to OIMA for Calendar Year 2021. [State and Regional Board leads]	1	8/1/23	9/1/23
Project Status for Management: Present project status to the Joint MCC/DMC for management direction on key decisions. [State Board lead / Exec Sponsors]	1	9/1/23	10/1/23
Process NPDES QA Items for Adoption (continuing): Prepare and process any continuing items that require adoption by the State Water Board. Coordinate actions with OCC and the State Board Executive Office. (This is a placeholder activity) [Work Group Team A]	6	7/1/23	1/1/24
Implementation Oversight: Plan rollout and ongoing oversight of staff actions (e.g., permit writing, data assessment) and discharger actions (e.g., QA submittals under NPDES permits) to implement QAPP elements and QA requirements. Plan rollout and ongoing oversight to implement corrective actions and laboratory audits. [Work Group Team B]	6	7/1/23	1/1/24
Laboratory Audit Training: Develop training for staff to perform laboratory audits or implement alternative measures. [Work Group Team C]	6	7/1/23	1/1/24
Assess QAPP Element Satisfaction: Assess and report how the NPDES QA Program satisfies QAPP elements on a program and/or project level through staff and discharger actions. Plan implementation of any additional needed actions. Management, OIMA, and U.S. EPA will review the report. [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	6	1/1/24	6/30/24
NPDES QA Program Assessment: Assist OIMA and U.S. EPA with assessment of NPDES QA Program conformance to the NPDES QA Program Plan and the Quality Management Plan. U.S. EPA Guidance on Assessing Quality Systems may apply (EPA QA/G-3). [State Board lead; Work Group assist]	6	1/1/24	6/30/24

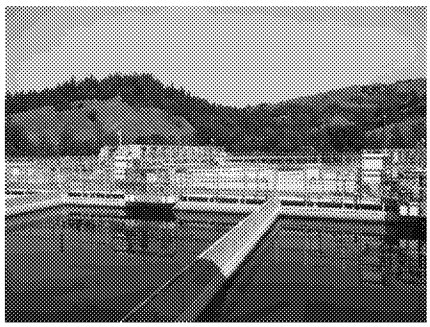


Photo by Steven Moore

State Water Board Approvals

Role	Name	Date	Signature
Senior	Afrooz Farsimadan		
Section Chief	Diana Messina		
Interim Assistant Deputy Director	Paul Hann		
Deputy Director	Karen Mogus		

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Regional Water Board NPDES Program Approvals

Region	Name	Date	Signature
1 – North Coast	Mona Dougherty		
2 – San Francisco Bay	William Johnson		
3 – Central Coast	Sheila Soderberg		
4 – Los Angeles	Augustine Anijielo		
5 – Central Valley	James Marshall		
6 – Lahontan	Not represented		
7 – Colorado River	Abdi Haile		
8 – Santa Ana	Milasol Gaslan		
9 – San Diego	Brandi Outwin-Beals		

Attachment A

24-Element QAPP

Project Management
A1 – Title and Approval Sheet
A2 – Table of Contents
A3 – Distribution List
A4 – Project/Task Description
A5 – Problem Definition and Background
A6 – Project/Task Description
A7 – Quality Objectives and Criteria
A8 – Special Training/Certifications
A9 – Documentation and Records

Data Generation
B1 – Sampling Process Design
B2 – Sampling Methods
B3 – Sampling Handling and Custody
B4 – Analytical Methods
B5 – Quality Control
B6 – Instrument/Equipment Testing, Inspection, and Maintenance
B7 – Instrument/Equipment Calibration and Frequency
B8 – Inspection/Acceptance of Supplies and Consumables
B9 – Non-direct Measurements
B10 – Data Management

Assessment and Oversight
C1 – Assessment and Response Actions
C2 – Reports to Management

Data Review and Usability
D1 – Data Review, Verification, and Validation
D2 – Verification and Validation Methods
D3 – Reconciliation with User Requirements

Figure 1. 24-Element QAPP

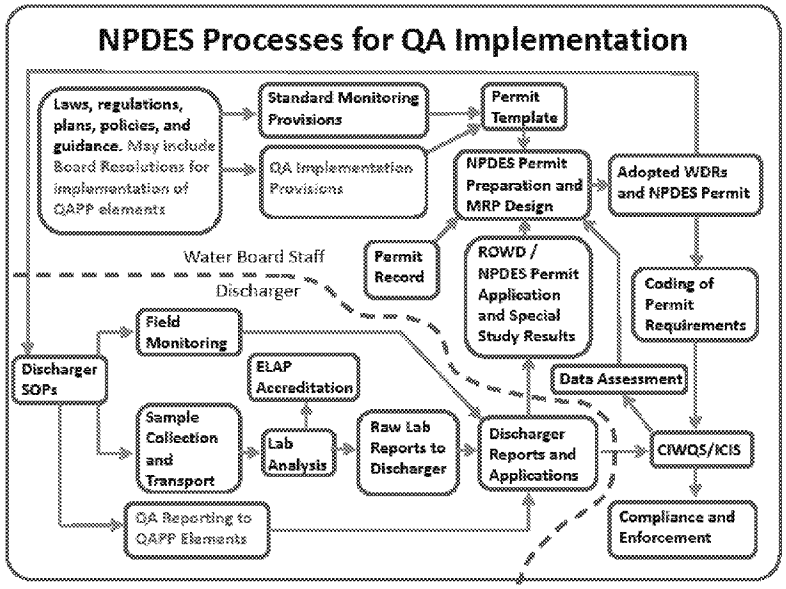
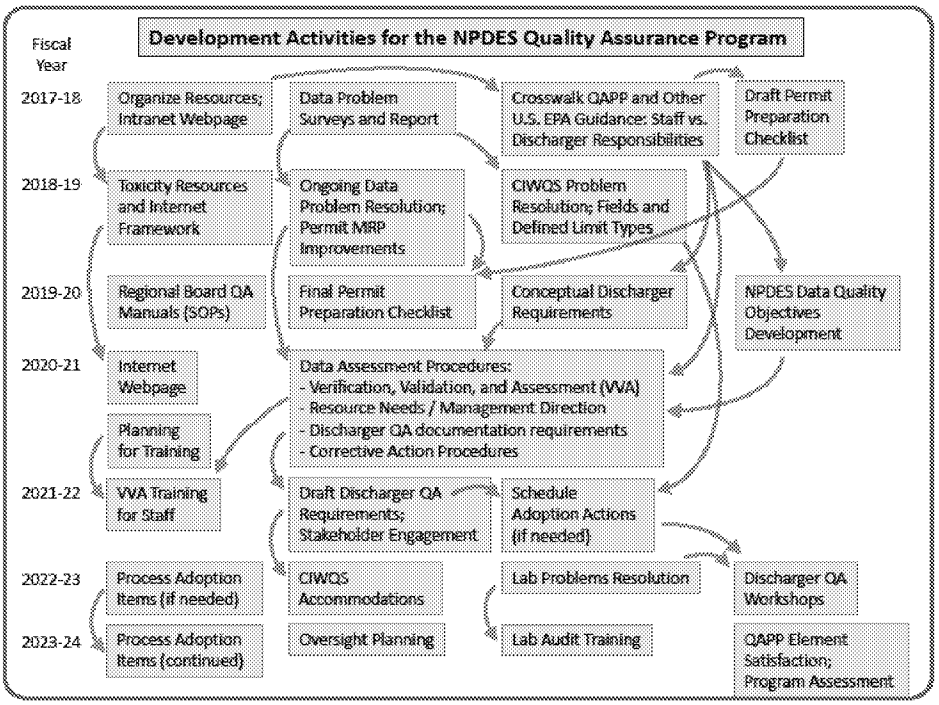


Figure 2. NPDES Processes for QA Implementation

Attachment B



The above figure shows key development activities for the NPDES Quality Assurance (QA) Program. The arrows in the figure show how activities relate to one another and a progressive sequence for development. The NPDES QA Work Group will work on the development activities on a fiscal year basis. The schedule for the development activities must remain flexible so that the NPDES QA Work Group may address any QA issue on an as-needed basis. The NPDES QA Work Group will use team efforts to divide work activities among its members. The team makeup may vary each fiscal year.

Attachment C

Administrative Regulations and Rulemaking Information

The following excerpts from California state law and regulations help establish the need to implement rulemaking processes prior to implementing regulatory requirements as a rule of general applicability. The California Government Code codifies the Administrative Procedures Act at section 11340 et. seq. The Administrative Procedures Act contains a proscription against underground regulation.

The law states that:

> "No state agency shall issue, utilize, enforce, or attempt to enforce any guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule, which is a regulation as defined in Section 11342.600, unless the guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule has been adopted as a regulation and filed with the Secretary of State pursuant to this chapter." (Gov. Code § 11340.5, subd. (a).)

State law defines the term "regulation" as follows:

> ""Regulation" means every rule, regulation, order, or standard of general application or the amendment, supplement, or revision of any rule, regulation, order, or standard adopted by any state agency to implement, interpret, or make specific the law enforced or administered by it, or to govern its procedure." (Gov. Code § 11342.600.)

Special procedures are applicable to Chapter 3.5, Administrative Regulations and Rulemaking, with emphasis on the exemption within provision (b):

> "The following actions are not subject to this chapter:
> (a) The issuance, denial, or waiver of any water quality certification as authorized under Section 13160 of the Water Code.
> (b) The issuance, denial, or revocation of waste discharge requirements and permits pursuant to Sections 13263 and 13377 of the Water Code and waivers issued pursuant to Section 13269 of the Water Code.
> (c) The development, issuance, and use of the guidance document pursuant to Section 13383.7 of the Water Code." (Gov. Code § 11352.)

The California Water Code requires that the Water Boards issue waste discharge requirements in compliance with the provisions of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as amended in 1972:

> "Notwithstanding any other provision of this division, the state board or the regional boards shall, as required or authorized by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, issue waste discharge requirements and dredged or fill material permits which apply and ensure compliance with all applicable provisions of the act and acts

> amendatory thereof or supplementary, thereto, together with any more stringent effluent standards or limitations necessary to implement water quality control plans, or for the protection of beneficial uses, or to prevent nuisance." (Wat. Code § 13377.)

The California Code of Regulations requires that the Water Boards issue waste discharge requirements in compliance with U.S. EPA regulations for the NPDES program:

> "Waste discharge requirements for discharge from point sources to navigable waters shall be issued and administered in accordance with the currently applicable federal regulations for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program." (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, § 2235.2.)