

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

POLICY

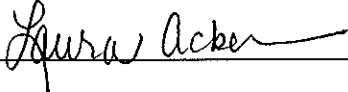
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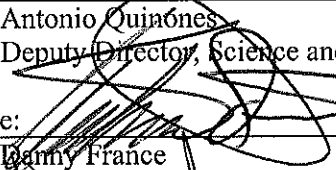
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Approvals

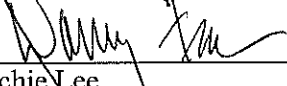
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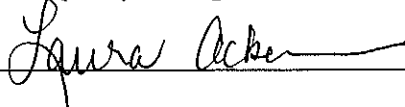
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Revision History

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 Document Control Coordinator.

History	Effective Date
<p>SESDPLCY-001-R3, <i>Quality Policy</i>, replaces SESDPLCY-002-R2</p> <p>Approval Page Updated individuals on approval page to reflect changes in staffing for the Deputy Director, Regional Quality Assurance Manager and the Enforcement and Investigations Branch.</p> <p>Section 1.2 Revised last sentence in first paragraph to update reference to EPA Order for the mandatory Agency-wide Quality System. The Order changed from 5360.1 A2 to CIO 2105.0.</p> <p>Section 1.3 Added "measurement and analysis" to first sentence in item #2. Added "measurement" to first sentence in item #3.</p>	<p>April 17, 2009</p>
<p>SESDPLCY-001-R2, <i>Quality Policy</i>, replaces SESDPLCY-002-R1</p> <p>Revision History Changed SESD Field Quality Manager to Document Control Coordinator.</p> <p>Section 1.2 Added second part of first sentence in third paragraph regarding timeliness of work product.</p>	<p>January 21, 2008</p>
<p>SESDPLCY-001-R1, <i>Quality Policy</i>, replaces SESDPLCY-002-R0</p> <p>Title Page Changed title for Antonio Quinones from Environmental Investigation Branch to Enforcement and Investigations Branch.</p>	<p>November 1, 2007</p>
<p>SESDPLCY-001-R0, <i>Quality Policy</i>, Original Issue</p>	<p>October 1, 2007</p>

1 Policy

1.1 SESD Field Branches Mission

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

1.2 SESD Field Branches Quality Policy

The SESD Field Branches are strongly committed to sound science and quality assurance (QA) practices which will produce environmental data of appropriate quality to be used by their customers for decision making. The Field Branches 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 or other equivalent planning documents shall be approved by the appropriate designated official prior to project implementation. QAPPs and equivalent planning documents shall meet EPA requirements and will incorporate project-specific DQOs.
3. Managers and staff within the SESD field branches 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 Branches 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.