

FACT SHEET

DoD Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program

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Overview

On December 24, 2008, the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health) issued a memorandum establishing the Department of Defense (DoD) Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP). Effective October 1, 2009, laboratories who are seeking to perform testing in support of the DoD environmental restoration (i.e. cleanup) programs and who do not hold an unexpired DoD Component (Army, Navy, or Air Force) approval need to be accredited in accordance with DoD ELAP. Laboratories that have DoD Component approvals in place prior to this date will be subject to DoD ELAP requirements when those approvals expire or when additions or modifications to their scope of approval are required.

This fact sheet has been prepared to provide basic information about the program.

Summary

The DoD ELAP will provide a means for laboratories to demonstrate conformance to the *DoD Quality Systems Manual for Environmental Laboratories* (DoD QSM) as authorized by DoD Instruction 4715.15, *Environmental Quality Systems*, December 2006 and as required by the *DoD Policy and Guidelines for Acquisitions Involving Environmental Sampling or Testing*, December, 2007. The DoD QSM is based on the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Quality Systems standard (Chapter 5), which

provides guidelines for implementing the international standard, ISO/IEC 17025, *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories*. Version 4 of the DoD QSM will be released soon. In the interim, DoD QSM Version 3 or a draft copy of DoD QSM Version 4 may be downloaded from the NavyLabs website <http://www.navylabs.navy.mil>.

The DoD ELAP will apply to environmental programs/projects at DoD operations, activities, and installations, including Government-owned, contractor-operated facilities and formerly used defense sites, where testing is being performed in support of environmental restoration programs. The program will apply to all laboratories, including permanent, temporary, or mobile facilities, that generate *definitive data*, regardless of their size, volume of business, or field of accreditation; the collection of *screening data* will be governed by project-specific requirements.¹

Accreditation will be open to all environmental laboratories that can demonstrate conformance to the DoD QSM. In cases where DoD ELAP accredited laboratory-testing services are not readily available (e.g., highly specialized testing, rare or unusual analytes) projects should consult their DoD Environmental Quality Workgroup (EDQW) Component Principal or

¹ As defined in the Uniform Federal Policy for Quality Assurance Project Plans, March 2005, definitive data are of sufficient quality to support final decision-making. Screening data are of sufficient quality to support an intermediate or preliminary decision, but must eventually be supported by definitive data.

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Mr. Edward (Ed) Hartzog, chair of the EDQW (edward.hartzog@navy.mil).

How it will work

On behalf of the Department of Defense, the EDQW will evaluate and recognize third-party Accreditation Bodies to perform laboratory assessments. The program will utilize United States-based signatories to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA).

Accreditation Bodies will apply for recognition using an application developed by the EDQW with input from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The EDQW will grant recognition to organizations meeting program requirements, which include: submission of a documented management system conforming to the international standard, ISO/IEC 17011, acceptance of specific Conditions and Criteria for Recognition, and completion of assessor training. The EDQW will provide oversight of the DoD ELAP accreditation process.

Once recognized, each Accreditation Body will establish and administer accreditation programs for assessment of laboratories to the requirements of the DoD ELAP. The DoD EDQW will resolve any disputes concerning interpretation of DoD-specific requirements (DoD QSM – gray boxes). The Accreditation Bodies will monitor implementation of corrective action responses and provide laboratories with certificates detailing their scope of accreditation. The Accreditation Bodies will publish a list of accredited

laboratories and their current scopes of accreditation on their website.

Benefits

This program will promote consistency among the DoD Components, promote fair and open participation, facilitate the procurement of analytical services, and shift the expense of laboratory assessments from the Department of Defense to the private sector. This will allow the Department of Defense to focus its resources on providing project-specific quality assurance oversight.

Compatibility with other programs

This program is being developed in compliance with the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act. Support and guidance are being provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, following procedures used to establish similar programs for other areas of testing. The DoD ELAP supports implementation of the Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, *Ensuring the Quality of Information Disseminated to the Public by the Department of Defense*, February 10, 2003.

For more information

Specific information on the operation of the program will be provided during the DoD Environmental Monitoring and Data Quality Workshop. For more information about this workshop, please visit our website at <http://www.navylabs.navy.mil>.