

FACT SHEET

DoD Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program

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Overview

The Department of Defense established the DoD Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) in October 2009 to provide a unified DoD program through which laboratories can demonstrate competency and document conformance to the international standard ISO/IEC 17025 (as updated), *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories* as implemented by the *DoD Quality Systems Manual for Environmental Laboratories* (DoD QSM).

Using third party Accreditation Bodies operating in accordance with the international standard ISO/IEC 17011, *Conformity Assessment – General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies*, the DoD ELAP was established to:

- Promote interoperability among the DoD Components,
- Promote fair and open competition among commercial laboratories,
- Streamline the process for identifying and procuring competent providers of environmental laboratory services, and
- Promote the collection of data of known and documented quality.

Scope and Applicability

Laboratories seeking to perform testing in support of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program must be accredited in accordance with DoD ELAP. Participation in the program is open to all qualified

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

laboratories. It applies to permanent, temporary, and mobile laboratories regardless of their size, volume of business, or field of accreditation, that generate *definitive data*; the collection of *screening data* will be governed by project-specific requirements.¹ Laboratories may seek accreditation for any method it performs in accordance with documented procedures, including non-standard methods.

Authority

Operation of the DoD ELAP is authorized by DoD Instruction 4715.15, *Environmental Quality Systems*, Change 3, July 8, 2019. Laboratory conformance to the DoD QSM is required by the *DoD Policy and Guidelines for Acquisitions Involving Environmental Sampling or Testing*, December, 2007.

Program Oversight

The DoD Environmental Data Quality Workgroup (EDQW) provides program oversight according to procedures published in the Federal Register (Final Rule, 32 CFR Part 188), November 17, 2016. These procedures also were issued as DoD Manual 4715.25, *DoD Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP)*, April 6, 2017. On behalf of the Department of Defense, the EDQW recognizes independent Accreditation Bodies to conduct laboratory assessments and issue accreditations. The EDQW also maintains the DoD QSM, resolves issues concerning interpretation of DoD-specific

sufficient quality to support an intermediate or preliminary decision, but must eventually be supported by definitive data.

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requirements, handles complaints, and conducts project-specific laboratory approvals in cases where a project team is unable to identify a DoD ELAP-accredited laboratory for a specific test (e.g., highly specialized testing or unusual analytes). The EDQW sponsors the annual Environmental Monitoring and Data Quality Workshop (EMDQ), a workshop for public and private-sector environmental professionals concerning issues related to environmental sampling and testing. A key component of this workshop, the Open Forum, is dedicated to continually improving the DoD ELAP.

Compatibility with Other Programs

This program was developed in compliance with the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act. Support and guidance were 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.

The Accreditation Process

Accreditation Bodies must be U.S.-based signatories to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). The Accreditation Bodies also must continue to meet program requirements, including submission of a documented management system conforming to ISO/IEC 17011, acceptance of specific Conditions and Criteria for Recognition, and completion of

assessor training. Contact information for EDQW-recognized Accreditation Bodies is published on DENIX. Laboratories are free to select any EDQW-recognized Accreditation Body for services. Each Accreditation Body establishes and administers its accreditation programs in accordance with its internal quality systems requirements. They conduct assessments, issue assessment reports, monitor implementation of corrective action responses and issue accreditations. Each Accreditation Body must maintain on its website an up-to-date list identifying laboratories it has accredited. The list must contain the laboratory name and contact information, the accreditation expiration date, the date of the last on-site assessment, and the current scope of accreditation (methods, matrices, and analytes). Project teams are responsible for verifying selected laboratories are capable of meeting all project-specific requirements.

Benefits

The DoD ELAP shifts the expense of laboratory assessments from the Department of Defense to the private sector. This program allows the Department of Defense to focus its resources on providing project-specific quality assurance oversight.

For More Information

Updated information on the operation of the program is provided on a continuing basis during the annual EMDQ Workshop. To download a copy of the latest version of the DoD QSM, please visit: <http://www.denix.osd.mil/edqw/index.cfm>.