

Fundamentals (7.a): Environmental Chemistry Lab Sustainable Funding and Sample Quality & Prioritization

Clarify priorities, develop stable funding, and update quality management system for DTSC's Environmental Chemistry Lab.

Goal: Effective analytical data for science-based DTSC decision-making by achieving stable funding and sample quality & work prioritization for ECL.

Science-based decision-making relies on samples are capable of providing data that meets the data quality objectives of their intended project. ECL's lab resources must be used efficiently, which requires a clear approach to work prioritization and stable funding.

Improving sample quality, clarifying work prioritization, and developing stable funding would: 1) improve the lab data that underlies project decision-making, 2) provide more efficient and cost-effective ECL work flow, and 4) address aging equipment and inadequate resources.

Factors hampering ECL's efforts to optimize its work flow include: 1) many field staff are not aware of sample requirements or what information different analyses will provide; 2) many field staff do not know the limitations of analytical methods or how to interpret lab reports; 3) ECL generally prioritizes sample requests on a first-come-first-served basis rather than based upon prioritization among the core programs in conjunction with their annual work plans; 4) ECL's budget does not cover replacement of instruments as they age and become obsolete.

Timeline:

April – June 2013:

- Meet with DTSC core programs to identify specific approaches to improving sample quality
- Meet with core programs to identify potential approaches to clarifying ECL work prioritization

July – September 2013:

- Develop and implement plan for work prioritization
- Develop and provide training for field staff on improving sample quality
- Develop ECL SOP for ensuring proper PCA charge codes are used so that costs can be recovered

October 2013 – March 2014:

- Provide on-line resources for field staff on sample quality

- Develop and implement online system that provides customers with ready access to status of sample analyses and scheduling/capacity information