

# Quality Assurance Unit

Our in-house Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) improves the quality, efficiency, and economy of all the services we offer. Not only is the QAU integral to the success of our FIFRA and other environmental projects, but it also sets the standard for every staff member and endeavor at Stone Environmental, Inc. (SEI).

**Experience:** Our QAU staff has substantial expertise in the regulatory compliance requirements and standards for FIFRA, CERCLA, and RCRA. This is backed by 18 years of laboratory experience for a true understanding of analytical methodologies, method validation, data assessment, and data validation.

**Economy:** When our QAU works side by side with our project managers and principal investigators, answers to compliance issues are only a step away. You save time and money when the professional service providers and QA are housed under one roof.

**Communication and Availability:** We're accessible to resolve day-to-day quality assurance issues, address protocol deviations, review SOP modifications, solve problems, and take corrective action quickly and cost effectively. There's no telephone tag or long line of communication to hold things up.

**Flexibility and Capacity:** Many of our clients have their own quality assurance staff, but they are often juggling numerous studies, project management demands, and auditing requirements, and can't always accommodate new assignments. We can offer assistance or manage your quality assurance work to offset workload pressures and expedite results.

**Corporate Commitment:** SEI has designed its corporate structure to be consistent with the quality standards defined in GLP. All of our employees are trained in GLP, and embrace accurate record keeping and docu-

mentation practices. The spirit of GLP is incorporated into all SEI projects, not just those required to comply with them.



*Our QAU assures GLP standards are met, from properly documenting field observations to correctly calibrating and monitoring field equipment.*

## QAU Services

Because of the unusually broad experience of our staff, we offer a range of services:

**GLP Quality Assurance for FIFRA and FQPA:** SEI has a thorough understanding of the OECD and US GLPs and has been providing quality assurance oversight of EPA-regulated studies for years. We have audited analytical laboratories and testing facilities, and conducted field and onsite inspections. We also have provided protocol assessment, phase inspections, data and report audits, and training. In addition, we can help implement GLPs at your facility.

We provide QA for all GLP studies, including:

- Prospective groundwater
- Tap water (retrospective) groundwater
- Simulated rainfall runoff
- Community surface water monitoring
- Aquatic monitoring
- Terrestrial dissipation

### **Environmental Project Planning and Coordination**

**Assistance:** SEI can assist in planning an entire sampling and analysis project, from recommending laboratories to coordinating between the sampling teams and the lab and providing technical guidance. Other services SEI offers to enhance the quality of an environmental investigation include:

- Auditing laboratories prior to and during the project
- Developing specialized performance-based methods
- Preparing a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)
- Recommending and developing appropriate analytical methods
- Performing field sampling audits
- Determining if data quality objectives have been met

**Litigation Support Services:** SEI litigation services include expert consulting; preparation of expert reports, cross-examination questions, affidavits, and graphics for trial use; deposition testimony; expert testimony at trial; and support of other experts.



*We conduct lab inspections for mobile as well as fixed labs.*

**Data Validation:** SEI performs validation of laboratory analytical data packages for water, soil, air, solids, and biota matrices for parameters including:

- Volatile organic compounds
- Semivolatile organic compounds
- Pesticides
- PCBs and their congeners
- Metals/cyanide
- Dioxins/furans
- Classical wet chemistry analytes
- Isotopic and selective ion monitoring
- Performance-based methods

We conduct the validation pursuant to current US EPA National Functional Guidelines. Other documents we use include EPA regional guidance documents, laboratory standard operating procedures, and analytical methodologies such as Contract Laboratory Program Statements of Work and SW-846.

**Data Interpretation:** Our QAU interprets analytical data and conducts technical reviews of sample chro-



*Collection of data from remote instruments (like this weather station) presents unique challenges for compliance that our QAU identifies and addresses.*

matograms. We identify chemical and biological degradation products, and provide mass spectral interpretation of tentatively identified compounds.

**Third-Party Reviews:** For clients, SEI has provided independent, third-party reviews of numerous documents to ensure that the work adequately addresses all aspects of the project. We regularly review:

- Proposals of work
- Fieldwork plans
- Quality Assurance Project Plans
- Sampling and analysis plans
- Reports of findings

The reports we prepare from this review comment on the appropriateness and accuracy of the work performed and the usefulness of the data collected.

**Laboratory Inspections/Audits:** SEI has performed onsite laboratory audits for fixed and field facilities for commercial clients, engineering firms, and potential responsible parties (PRPs). Our inspections assess a laboratory's capabilities and qualifications for providing acceptable analytical data for a sampling and analytical program. We assess laboratory methodologies and quality assurance systems. Additionally, our audits can reveal instrument and operator irregularities.

**Single- or Double-Blind Performance Evaluation (PE) Samples:** PE programs are an excellent way to monitor a laboratory's ability to produce high-quality results. We have managed PE programs to assess ongoing laboratory capabilities, using both single-blind and double-blind evaluation samples.



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