



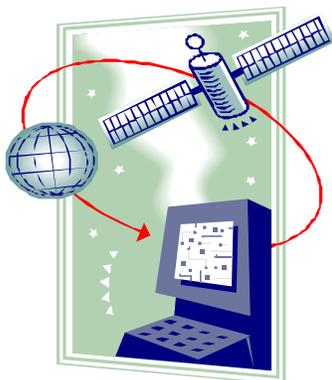
Newsletter to provide latest updates on activities

Over the past two years, the USEPA, State and local air agencies, and tribal representatives have been working closely in developing a process to update our nation's air monitoring program. Called the "national monitoring strategy," this effort will substantially improve and enhance the way air pollutant data are collected, disseminated to the public, and optimized for health studies and many other important data uses. This newsletter is intended to provide the public with periodic status reports as to the development and implementation of this strategy. In addition, a draft fact sheet will be available by mid-August at the following link:

<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/amtic/monitor.html>

Rapid Dissemination of Data: One Key to the New Strategy

The use of new communications technologies is one of the cornerstones to the new monitoring strategy. High speed data links, including the possibility of satellite communications will speed the flow of air quality data from the field to the public.



To promote the effectiveness of such technologies, new safeguards will be needed to assure that high quality data is passed through. Despite advances in instrument technology, occasional malfunctions produce erroneous information, which needs to be screened out prior to public viewing.

NMSC met July 30th In San Francisco

The National Monitoring Strategy Committee (NMSC), an 18-member panel overseeing the development of the national monitoring strategy, and comprised of USEPA management staff, and key representatives from state and local air agencies, and tribes held a planning meeting in San Francisco on July 30, 2002. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Draft Strategy Document (DSD) in preparation for its release for public review. The DSD is the culmination of over two years of effort on the part of the NMSC to develop a comprehensive strategy for moving the nation's air monitoring programs into the twenty-first century.

Once released, State and local agencies and the public will be able to review and comment on the document. Though not an official document in the sense of EPA promulgation, the concepts and strategies it contains will be the blueprint for the way air monitoring programs are conducted in the future. During the meeting, the NMSC made final comments and approved the DSD for an official release in September.

Members of the NMSC are: John Bachmann, USEPA OAQPS; Jack Broadbent, Air Division Director, USEPA Region 9; Joellen Lewtas, USEPA NERL; David Mobley, Director EMAD, USEPA; Joe Paisie, Leader, Integrated Strategies Group, USEPA; Sally Shaver, Director, ESD, USEPA; Rich Scheffe, Leader, Monitoring and Quality Assurance Group, USEPA; Mike Koerber, Director, Lake Michigan Air Divisions Consortium; Dennis McLerran, Air Director, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency; Geri O'Sullivan, STAPPA/ALAPCO; Charles Pietarinen, Chief, Bureau of Air Monitoring, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; Ron Rothacker, California Air Resources Board, Steve Spaw, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission; Dick Valentinetti, Air Director, Vermont Air Pollution Control Division; William Auberle, Northern Arizona University (representing the tribes); Dwayne Beavers, Cherokee Nation; B. Bobby Ramiez, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; and Mel Zeldin, consultant and facilitator.

Workgroups Continue to Make Progress

The three NMSC working groups are making substantial headway toward changes needed to support the New Monitoring Strategy. These workgroups are comprised of representatives from both EPA and State and local agencies, and they have been meeting on a regular basis. The following summarizes the latest recommendations from each workgroup:

Regulatory Reform

A number of changes will be proposed to 40CFR Part 58, Appendix D, Network Design. These include aspects for changing references from NAMS and SLAMS to NCore; changing the number of required monitoring sites; and details pertaining to individual pollutants and monitoring programs, such as PAMS. Details of these changes are still in the development stages.

Because there will need to be changes to Part 58 supporting the new NAAQS revisions for particulate matter, the proposed regulatory changes for both NCore and PM will be integrated into one package. Currently, it is estimated that the draft regulation changes will be published in the Federal Register about the June 2003 time frame.

Quality Assurance

Changes are being developed to improve the way quality assurance programs are operated. Several approaches are being studied. First, the use of validation templates will assist in the quality control requirements for each criteria pollutant as a tool for validating air monitoring data. Second, by better defining the roles and responsibilities of quality assurance managers, the efficiency of the overall quality assurance program can be improved. Third, a graded approach can help to improve efficiency as well, by allowing the more stringent objectives, for example, to apply to NAAQS comparisons. This process would allow greater flexibility for state and local agencies.

Other enhancements under consideration include the development of a certification/accreditation program for designated job functions, such as site operators, calibrators, and laboratory technicians; an annual QA conference; and development of generic Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs).

Although a wide array of new technologies is being looked at for possible future inclusion into air monitoring networks, at this time there are two key recommendations from this workgroup.

(1) the use of continuous PM_{2.5} monitors should gradually replace up to 50% of the current FRM filter instruments over the next five years. With input from the Clean Air Science Advisory Committee (CASAC) urging EPA to move toward a greater level of continuous PM monitoring than now exists, several approaches are being considered which may enable a more widespread use of such monitors. Continuous monitors provide many advantages over filter based monitors for meeting several important needs: more responsive PM reporting to the public, and better time-resolved data to better determine the health effects of PM and linkages with other pollutants measured on a continuous basis.

(2) the integration of better information transfer technology into air monitoring networks. With the availability of high-speed data storage and communication technologies, there needs to be a concerted effort to integrate these technologies into air monitoring networks for rapid data linkages to programs such as AIRNOW, which makes real-time data available to the public.

For more information on the National Monitoring Strategy, please contact Sharon Nizich at 919/541-2825, or Rich Scheffe, at 919/541-4650.

This Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Monitoring and Quality Assurance Group, Emissions, Monitoring and Analysis Division of the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, U.S. EPA, Research Triangle Park, NC 27711.