

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/repguide.html>). The document recommends the ten basic elements of a State water monitoring program. One of the ten elements is the use of an accessible electronic data system for water quality that meets State/Federal geo-locational standards with timely data entry and public access. EPA's new STORET (STORage and RETrieval) system provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality.

In the future, EPA will require that all States use STORET either directly or indirectly (e.g., via the Central Data Exchange (CDX) which will include the Monitoring Data Standard). For States that do not currently operate STORET, the Elements document cited above states that these States' monitoring strategies should provide for the use of STORET as soon as it is practicable. In the interim, the document states that States should store their assessment information in an accessible electronic database. Consistent with this approach, States that are not yet prepared to use STORET for storage of data generated in the development and implementation of Section 319 watershed projects should in the interim store their assessment in an accessible electronic database.

EPA's goal is that, as soon as possible, all States will use STORET to store data generated in the development and implementation of Section 319 watershed projects. STORET broadly contains water quality data with actual concentrations of pollutants that are measured in the water or other similar parameters that may be used, such as macroinvertebrate counts. Because STORET is publicly accessible and utilized on a large scale, it is critical that monitoring data from all EPA-funded projects be entered into STORET so that the information can be available to all interested practitioners. Over the past decade EPA has developed a modernized STORET system that has improved the quality of entered data (including adding biological data) and is fully interactive and more user friendly. For more information on STORET, see <http://www.epa.gov/storet>.

4. Reporting and Record-Keeping for Sub-State Organizations

Just as the grant agreement specifies outputs and milestones to be achieved by the States, States should assure that agreements with sub-State organizations specify outputs, milestones, and reporting and record keeping requirements in memoranda of agreement, contracts or other appropriate documents. As indicated in the preceding section, States may,

where appropriate, include in these agreements a provision requiring the sub-State organization to enter data into STORET and GRTS reporting worksheets for entry into GRTS.

Where a sub-grantee provides a portion of the State's match, the State should ensure that adequate records are kept with respect to that portion. 40 CFR section 31.41(a)(2) specifies that grantees shall not impose more burdensome requirements on sub-grantees than they are subject to themselves.

V. Management and Oversight of Section 319(h) Grants

EPA's oversight approach will emphasize cooperative partnerships based upon EPA's and the States' mutual goal of implementing dynamic and effective national nonpoint source programs designed to achieve and maintain beneficial uses of water. The guidelines established in a new joint performance evaluation process will promote continuous monitoring throughout the life of projects to help ensure the mutual understanding of expectations and outputs of particular grants (see 40 CFR 35.115 and EPA Order 5700.6).

In conducting its oversight activities, EPA will rely to a significant extent on information and reports provided by the State as well as data entered by the State into STORET and GRTS. EPA will review this information and then contact the States if EPA needs additional information. In addition to reviewing the State's reports, EPA or the State should endeavor to meet at least annually to discuss the State's progress in implementing its program.

Of primary importance is the discussion of State progress in developing and implementing watershed-based plans and achieving results from these implementation activities. To the extent relevant and appropriate to fully evaluating this progress, Regions should review at least some of the State's watershed-based plans and discuss both their strengths and weaknesses with the State. Regions should also review and discuss with the State the rate of progress in successfully implementing these plans.

EPA and the State should also discuss ways in which EPA can better assist the State during the forthcoming year in implementing the State's program. Types of assistance to be considered include: support for State efforts to assess water quality problems; support for State design and implementation of watershed-based plans; technical assistance to help the State monitor the progress and results of watershed

projects; and assistance in the development of outreach tools.

When evaluation results show that grant and contract provisions have not been substantially achieved, the State and Region should work cooperatively to take corrective action. If performance or the results achieved by the State are poor, the Region may be required to determine that the State has not made "satisfactory progress" under Section 319(h)(8) and to deny the State's grant application the following year. As discussed above, one particular area of importance for Regional determination is whether States have made satisfactory progress in addressing their impaired waters through the development and implementation of watershed-based plan. Other forms of corrective action are described at 40 CFR 31.43.

When a State lead nonpoint source agency is providing EPA grant funds to other State or local agencies to carry out the terms of a nonpoint source grant, the lead agency remains responsible for all outputs in its Section 319(h) work program. Thus, if a local agency has difficulties performing particular funded activities, the Region should work with the State lead agency to resolve the problem.

Periodic Reviews

Using its "feedback loop" established in States' upgraded nonpoint source management programs, the State should periodically review and evaluate its nonpoint source management program (i.e., every five years). Using environmental and functional measures of success, the State will assess the goals and objectives of the nonpoint source management program, and revise the program as appropriate, in light of its review.

VI. Grants to Indian Tribes

These guidelines are not specifically directed to Tribal nonpoint source management programs. Given the differing statutory provisions and approaches applicable to Tribal programs, EPA publishes separate nonpoint source guidance for Tribes. However, we present a brief overview below. For detailed information about Tribal nonpoint source programs, we recommend referring to the *Tribal Nonpoint Source Planning Handbook* (EPA-841-B-97-004, August 1997) as well as additional guidance documents written for Tribal nonpoint source programs that are located at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/tribal.html>.

Tribes, like States, must have EPA-approved nonpoint source assessments and management programs (as well as approval for treatment in a similar