

# Comparability Fact Sheet

Version 3.0: July 20, 2009

This fact sheet is intended to help program participants understand the concept of "SWAMP comparability". More importantly, it provides guidelines and tools for those seeking to become SWAMP-comparable. For convenience, it is divided into three components:

- **Frequently Asked Questions:** to address the most common inquiries from those seeking to be SWAMP-comparable;
- **Comparability Tools:** to identify solutions specifically designed to simplify SWAMP comparability; and
- **Online Resources:** to consolidate and briefly describe web URLs referenced in the above sections.

---

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### What does it mean to be SWAMP-comparable?

It means that data meets the requirements of two key SWAMP documents:

- 1) [The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program Data Management Plan](#)
- 2) [The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program Quality Assurance Program Plan \(QAPrP\)\\*](#)

\*Projects funded by budget allocations for fiscal year (FY) 2008-2009 and later must follow the requirements of the QAPrP. Projects already funded by pre-FY 2008-2009 budget allocations may continue to completion under the December 22, 2002 [Quality Assurance Management Plan for the State of California's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program](#) (QAMP). Projects sponsored by the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Board's) Division of Financial Assistance (DFA) are required to use either the QAMP or QAPrP. However, the State Board strongly encourages the use of the 2008 QAPrP for all forthcoming projects.

### Do I have to use specific methods for field sampling?

Bioassessment sampling and field measurements must be conducted according to the standard operating procedure (SOP): [Collecting Benthic Macroinvertebrate Samples and Associated Physical and Chemical Data for Ambient Bioassessments in California](#). While there are no other SWAMP-mandated field methods, all projects must meet the holding times specified in QAPrP Appendix B: *Sample Handling*.



Other field techniques are detailed in the California Department of Fish and Game - Marine Pollution Studies Laboratory (DFG-MPSL) SOP: [Conducting Field Measurements and Field Collections of Water and Bed Sediment Samples in the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program](#). This SOP is not required by SWAMP, and is provided for informational purposes only.

Finally, the *SWAMP Field Methods Course* is a narrated training video that is divided into six modules (i.e., *Reconnaissance, Water Quality Measurements, Flow Measurements, Water Sampling, Sediment Sampling, and Sample Handling and Shipping*). For a free CD- ROM, please email [George Nichol](#) or call (916) 341-5504.

### **Do I have to use specific methods for laboratory and field analyses?**

No. However, SWAMP measurement quality objectives (MQOs - see QAPrP Appendix A: *Measurement Quality Objectives*) must be met. These are acceptance criteria (i.e., control limits) for data's precision, bias, representativeness, completeness, comparability, and sensitivity. For example, SWAMP requires 75-125% recovery for its inorganic chemistry matrix spike samples. Be aware that not all promulgated methods (e.g., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], *Standard Methods*) meet SWAMP MQOs. [The National Environmental Methods Index](#) (NEMI) may be a useful tool for analytical method selection.

Please note that SWAMP reporting limits (RLs – see QAPrP Appendix C: *Reporting Limits*) are target values rather than programmatic requirements.

### **Do I have to use a SWAMP-audited laboratory as my contract laboratory?**

No. SWAMP advises that quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) requirements be written into the laboratory's contract.

### **What if my project can't meet all the requirements of the QAPrP?**

For questions regarding QAPrP deviations, please contact your program manager, contract manager, and project QA Officer; or the QA portion of the [SWAMP Help Desk](#).

### **What if my project involves a parameter that isn't addressed in the QAPrP?**

If the parameter receives no coverage in the QAPrP or its appendices, there are no associated SWAMP requirements.

### **Does SWAMP-comparability apply to effluent?**

No. Currently, effluent monitoring is addressed in neither the QAPrP nor the SWAMP database.





**Does SWAMP comparability apply to receiving water?**

Yes. Currently, receiving water monitoring is addressed in both the QAPrP and the SWAMP database.

**Is there a database set up to receive my SWAMP-comparable data?**

Please contact the [SWAMP Help Desk](#) for data management inquiries. At this time, SWAMP does not distribute a database for SWAMP-comparable projects. The State Board is developing avenues to receive SWAMP-comparable data.

**Who is the QA Officer for my project?**

For questions regarding your project QA Officer, please contact your program manager and contract manager, or the QA portion of the [SWAMP Help Desk](#).



## Comparability Tools:

SWAMP has created a variety of tools specifically designed to simplify programmatic comparability:

- The [SWAMP Help Desk](#) is a telephone-based resource created to support those seeking programmatic comparability. Separate lines are available to handle issues pertaining to data management (831-771-4114) and QA (206-525-0491).
- The [SWAMP Water Quality Monitoring email list](#) notifies subscribers of important programmatic updates and training opportunities. Similar subscriptions are available for a variety of other State Board efforts.
- The [SWAMP Advisor](#) is an interactive online tool that compiles user input into a SWAMP-comparable quality assurance project plan (QAPP). At the same time, the user learns the rationale for requested input and gains direct access to supporting information and resources.
- The [SWAMP QAPP Templates](#) are formatted Microsoft Word documents that include guidelines and boilerplate language for each element of a SWAMP-comparable QAPP.
- The [SWAMP QAPP Review Checklists](#) are tools for assessing each element of a completed SWAMP-comparable QAPP. The checklists are equally useful during document creation.



## **Online Resources:**

*Hosted by the State Water Resources Control Board*

### **State Board SWAMP Page:**

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/swamp/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/)

*Program guidelines, documents, and links*

### **SWAMP Advisor:**

[http://swamp.waterboards.ca.gov/swamp/qapp\\_advisor/](http://swamp.waterboards.ca.gov/swamp/qapp_advisor/)

*Automated online tool for SWAMP QAPP creation*

### **SWAMP Email List:**

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/swrcb\\_subscribe.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml)

*Subscriptions to the online mailing lists of various State Board efforts*

### **SWAMP QAMP:**

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/swamp/qamp.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/qamp.shtml)

*The QAMP and associated appendices in Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word formats*

---

*Hosted by the Data Management and QA Teams*

### **SWAMP Database Management Systems:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/resources-and-downloads/database-management-systems>

*Documents pertaining to SWAMP database guidelines, submission, and training*

### **SWAMP Database Comparability:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/swamp-comparability/database-comparability>

*Guidelines, links, and a Help Desk pertaining to SWAMP database comparability*

### **SWAMP QA:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/resources-and-downloads/quality-assurance>

*SWAMP quality assurance homepage and links*



[www.waterboards.ca.gov/swamp](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/swamp)

### **SWAMP QA Comparability:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/swamp-comparability/quality-assurance-comparability>

*Guidelines, links, and a Help Desk pertaining to SWAMP QA comparability*

### **SWAMP QAPrP:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/resources-and-downloads/quality-assurance/quality-assurance-program-plan>

*The QAPrP and associated appendices in Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word formats*

### **Regional SWAMP QA Report Template:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/resources-and-downloads/quality-assurance/quality-assurance-report-template>

*Narrative and tabular templates for the QA section of regional SWAMP reports*

### **SWAMP QAPP Templates:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/resources-and-downloads/quality-assurance/quality-assurance-project-plan-guidance/#QAPPTemplate>

*Microsoft Word templates and guidance for SWAMP QAPP creation*

### **SWAMP QAPP Review Checklist:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/resources-and-downloads/quality-assurance/quality-assurance-project-plan-guidance/#QAPPChecklist>

*Checklists used for review of completed SWAMP QAPPs*

### **SWAMP SOPs:**

<http://swamp.mpsl.mlml.calstate.edu/resources-and-downloads/standard-operating-procedures>

*SWAMP sampling, data management, and QA SOPs*

---

*Hosted Externally*

### **EPA Quality System Documents:**

[http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa\\_docs.html](http://www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html)

*Agency-wide "Guidance" and "Requirements" documents for internal and external quality systems*

