

How an Environmental Data  
Management System  
can do a lot of work for you...



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Managing an environmental monitoring programme can be labour intensive, however many of the tasks are repetitive – and if done manually can not only take a lot of time, but can be significantly open to human errors.

If you suffer from the above, here's how an Environmental Data Management System (EDMS) can help.

Tasks in managing your monitoring programme can generally be put into a few broad areas based around the Plan Do Check Act principle. An **Environmental Data Management System** helps at all of these stages.

## Plan

The chances are that you will have an environmental permit. This will detail what monitoring you have to do, where to do it, at what frequency and what to measure. It will also detail any compliance limits and reporting periods. These should ideally all be placed in a structured plan. A good **Environmental Data Management System** will facilitate a dynamic plan, managing its requirements often without the need for additional management input.

## Do

A good dynamic plan incorporates scheduling, informing relevant people of what needs doing, and also alerting if it hasn't been done on time. It should be able to prepare field visits for technicians so they know exactly what is required and can enter readings directly into their mobile device.

## Check

A large amount of checking is required. Has the correct monitoring been done, has the lab sent back the correct results? Are they in compliance? Are they even physically possible readings? Are the dates correct, are sample point and parameter names spelled correctly and consistently, etc.

An **Environmental Data Management System** can automatically check all of the above, and mark them off against the master plan. In the case of a mobile device with a field visit pre-loaded, readings can be automatically and immediately checked for compliance.

The manager can now easily see the status at a glance. Once data is held in a secure, quality checked database, further checking can be done by comparing various data sets against one another with interpretation tools such as maps, contour plots, graphs and interpretive reports. Such collation and interpretation if done manually is fraught with increased likelihood of copy/paste errors, duplication and other human errors.

It can also be time consuming and complex formatting and arranging data sets to be acceptable for e.g. GIS, contouring, reporting tools and spreadsheets. An all-in-one system with tools layered over the data and easily accessible saves large amounts of time and effort.



## Act

Immediately on detection of a compliance breach, an EDMS can alert appropriate people by email or SMS so that they can take appropriate action. Moreover, in such circumstances, regulators often require notification within a short period (possibly 24 hours as in the UK's Schedule 6 requirements).

The **Environmental Data Management System** can populate and deliver this pre-prepared to the manager with whatever relevant information the database has, for example again with Schedule 6, all other breaches at the same location over the last 18 months might be required. Imagine sifting through spreadsheets to try and accurately obtain this information!

If follow-on tasks arise from e.g. a compliance breach, these can also be managed in an **Environmental Data Management System**. The EDMS will be aware of reporting periods. It will know which reports need producing when, what information they should contain and who should receive them. It can automatically collate reports and deliver them to appropriate recipients.

