

NRMRL QAPP REQUIREMENTS FOR RESEARCH MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION PROJECTS

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS: Include cover page, distribution list, approvals, and page numbers.

0. COVER PAGE (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

Include the Division/Branch, project title, revision number, EPA technical lead, QA category, organization responsible for QAPP preparation, and date.

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

In this document, “project” can mean (a) development or substantial modification of a model for application to address a general problem; (b) application of an existing model (including minor modification to the existing model) to address a specific problem; or (c) a development or substantial modification and application of a model to address a specific problem.

- 1.1 State the purpose of the project and list the project objective(s). Indicate whether a new model will be developed or an existing model will be used.
- 1.2 Describe the problem, the data to be generated by the model, how the data will be used to address the problem, and the intended users of the data. Describe the environmental system/setting to be modeled, where the model will be applied, and the circumstances and scenarios to be considered for the modeled system.

2. ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

- 2.1 Identify all project personnel, including QA, and related responsibilities for each participating organization, as well as their relationship to other project participants.
- 2.2 Include a project schedule that includes key milestones.

3. MODEL SELECTION (MODEL APPLICATION ONLY)

- 3.1 Discuss model selection with respect to how it will be used and how it is consistent with the project objectives. Include fundamental details such as whether the model will be used to predict the world beyond the model or in scenario analysis of the model itself. Describe the limits to where the model is applicable.
- 3.2 Provide a description of the model attributes/capabilities required for the project. This description should include hardware requirements and restrictions. Provide an overview of the candidate model attributes, including:

- model origin and its original purpose, if applicable
 - model structure (e.g., stochastic vs. deterministic, structural framework)
 - parameters and variables
 - the algorithms and equations that have been developed to support the model theory, along with the sources of the algorithms
 - spatial extent (individual, group, population)
 - spatial resolution (location independent/dependent, dimensionality)
 - temporal extent (length of modeling period)
 - temporal resolution (time step)
- 3.3 Identify the model to be used or, if the model has not yet been selected, describe the process to be used for the selection of an existing model.
- 3.4 Identify specific requirements for application of the selected model for this specific purpose (e.g., current and appropriate data, parameter values, assumptions).

4. MODEL DESIGN (MODEL DEVELOPMENT ONLY)

- 4.1 Describe the conceptual model(s) for the system, including model parameters.
- 4.2 Identify algorithms and equations that have been developed to support the model theory, or if such equations are not already available, describe the process used to develop these equations.
- 4.3 Specify required sources for model databases and any requirements for these data (e.g., quality, quantity, spatial, and temporal applicability). If data sources are not currently known, describe the criteria used to identify sources. Describe how any data gaps will be filled.

5. MODEL CODING (MODEL DEVELOPMENT ONLY)

- 5.1 Discuss the requirements for model code development, where applicable.
- 5.2 Identify computer hardware and software requirements.
- 5.3 Discuss requirements for code verification.

6. MODEL CALIBRATION (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

Calibration is the process of adjusting model parameters within physically defensible ranges until the resulting predictions give the best possible or desired degree of fit to the observed data. Calibration should be applied each time the model is modified.

- 6.1 Discuss how the model will be calibrated.
- 6.2 Identify the type and source of data (e.g., new data, existing data, professional judgment, expert opinion elicitation) that will be used to calibrate the model, including any requirements for the data (quality, quantity, and spatial and temporal applicability). If data sources are not currently known, describe the criteria used to identify sources.
- 6.3 Specify acceptance criteria which need to be met for the difference between

predicted and observed data during model calibration, where applicable. The statistical methods (e.g., goodness-of-fit, regression analyses) or expert judgment to be used should also be discussed.

7. MODEL VERIFICATION (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

Verification consists of comparing the predictions of a calibrated model with available data that were not used in the model development and calibration.

- 7.1 Discuss the approach to be used for model verification. Describe how the verification is appropriate based on the model's purpose. Identify the type and source of data (e.g., new data, existing data, synthetic test data sets, professional judgment, expert opinion elicitation) that will be used to verify the model. If data sources are not currently known, describe the criteria used to identify sources.
- 7.2 Discuss the characterization of model uncertainty (model framework, model input, and model applicability) and sensitivity (model application only).
- 7.3 Describe any requirements (quality, quantity, and spatial and temporal applicability) for the data that will be used to verify the model.
- 7.4 Describe the approach used to determine if the independent data verify the model predictions. Specify the criteria which need to be met for the difference between predicted and observed data for the model to be considered to be verified. Discuss any statistical methods to be used (e.g., goodness-of-fit, regression analyses).

8. MODEL EVALUATION (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

- 8.1 List and describe the qualitative or quantitative assessment process to be used to generate information to determine whether a model and its analytical results are of a quality sufficient for the intended use.
- 8.2 List and describe any independent/external evaluation and review of the model and model design, such as scientific peer review.

9. MODEL DOCUMENTATION (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

Specify the requirements for model documentation. Good documentation includes:

- final model description, final model specifications (model development only), hardware and software requirements, including programming language, model portability, memory requirements, required hardware/software for application, data standards for information storage and retrieval
- the equations on which the model is based (model development only)
- the underlying assumptions
- flow charts (model development only)

- description of routines (model development only)
- data base description
- source code (model development only)
- error messages (model development only)
- parameter values and sources
- restrictions on model application, including assumptions, parameter values and sources, boundary and initial conditions, validation/calibration of the model, output and interpretation of model runs (model development only)
- the boundary conditions used in the model
- limiting conditions on model applications, detail where the model is or is not suited
- changes and verification of changes made in code
- actual input data (type and format) used
- overview of the immediate (non-manipulated or -post processed) results of the model runs (model application only)
- output of model runs and interpretation
- user's guide (electronic or paper)
- instructions for preparing data files (model development only)
- example problems complete with input and output
- programmer's instructions
- computer operator's instructions
- a report of the model calibration, validation, and evaluation (model development only)
- documentation of significant changes to the model
- procedures for maintenance and user support, if applicable

10. REPORTING (MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND MODEL APPLICATION)

- 10.1 List and describe the deliverables expected from each project participant.
- 10.2 Specify the expected final product(s) that will be prepared for the project (e.g., journal article, final report).

11. REFERENCES

Provide the references either in the body of the text as footnotes or in a separate section.