OCEAN ECOLOGY

A DNV COMPANY

Quality Policy Statement V06

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Updates

Section	Description	Page
All	Branding updated	All

This document outlines the Quality Policy for Ocean Ecology.

Quality Management Policy Statement

Ocean Ecology aims for its Quality Management System (QMS) to conform to ISO 9001 standards where possible in order to consistently provide services and outputs that meet client and statutory requirements whilst enhancing client satisfaction through continual improvement and assurance of conformity to these requirements. Ocean Ecology are also a leading participant in the North East Atlantic Marine Biological Analytical Quality Control Scheme (NMBAQC).

Project Management and Delivery

- Ocean Ecology's management structure ensures a Project Manager is appointed for each project enabling delegation of tasks to be tailored to meet the requirements of the specific client and specific projects. This is managed through the use of Smartsheet project management systems allowing Ocean Ecology to remain up to date on project progress ensuring deadlines are carefully monitored and realistic timeframes are adhered too. Ocean Ecology can therefore effectively monitor the progress of projects and be aware of percentage completion of different stages and when projects are finalised and completed. Sign off on completion of all processes ranging from survey design, mobilisation, analysis and report writing is carried out to ensure quality is maintained and to aid the project management process.

Field Operations

- All Ocean Ecology ecologists involved in field operations hold a minimum of an MSc in a Marine Scientific discipline as well as STCW 95 Offshore Safety and APITO HUET certificates, GWO Manual Handling, ENG1 and OGUK Medicals.
- Ocean Ecology MMOs and PAM operators hold JNCC MMO and PAM certificates as well as BOEM/BSEE Gulf of Mexico Protected Species Observer (PSO) certificates.
- During all MMO and PAM operations Ocean Ecology ecologists work in accordance with the JNCC guidelines for minimising the risk of injury and disturbance to marine mammals.
- During sampling all positional information is checked with the ship's officer during subtidal work or senior scientist during intertidal work at the time of collection and careful notes entered into a note book including notes on: station number, date and time

of collection, position of sample, number of attempts, type of sediment, sample volume and details of any sub samples taken.

- Careful labelling of the sealed sample containers is undertaken by the lead ecologist, for addition of formalin, and for collection of appropriate sub-samples. The lead ecologist is responsible for checking the labelling and addition of formalin at each station before moving to the next sampling station.

- A series of photographs of each sampling step during the survey procedure and of all samples collected are included in our standard survey protocol.

- Following completion of the survey, sealed samples will be carefully checked against the field notes and transported to the Ocean Ecology premises.

Laboratory Processing and Analysis

- All of Ocean Ecology's samples are, as a matter of course, subject to a level of quality assurance relating to the experience of the analyser involved in processing the sample whilst all sieving, sorting and identification follow National Marine Biological Analytical Quality Control (NMBAQC) Scheme guidelines.

- Following receipt of samples, the sealed samples are carefully checked against any ancillary field notes before commencement of processing checking off and logging each sample.

- A proportion of the samples analysed by each analyser is selected for full quality assurance checks as part of Ocean Ecology's internal quality assurance procedures.

- Sieved and sorted residues are re-checked and a full list of any remaining fauna is listed on the back of the sample sheet and kept as a record. If deemed necessary, all samples from an analyser will be reprocessed if an unacceptable number of animals remain in the residue after the initial processing.

- Each stage of sample processing is signed off once a given process is complete. Each sample process is signed off on both a paper sign off sheet and within an electronic database with times taken also recorded. Sample processing times are monitored weekly against the targets set at the time of tendering and various procedures put in place if projected finish times are delayed.

- All data entry from taxon sheets into Excel spreadsheets and/or databases is checked to irradiate transcription errors. Where data is imported, this is also checked to ensure no problems have occurred. All data are stored in a unified format and can be easily interrogated and exported to other packages for statistical analysis.

- All particle size distribution analysis is undertaken in line with NMBAQC guidelines with samples requiring laser diffraction sent to Swansea University to be analysed using their Malvern Mastersizer 2000 wet element laser particle size analyser.

Data Analysis and Reporting

- Ocean Ecology ecologists use a variety of software including ArcGIS, PRIMER v6 and Microsoft Office suite during data analysis and reporting. All stages of mapping and data analysis are checked and re-analysed if any errors are identified.
- All reports are drafted and proofed by more than one ecologist before being delivered to the client to irradiate errors. Each report is signed off by Ocean Ecology's lead consultant/ecologist who ensures the project meets the client's required specification.

Ross Griffin

Technical Director

28th June 2024

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