

Projects describe a particular study or data collection effort. When submitting data to EQuIS, data providers create a Project ID, Name, and Description. Whether a project spans one or more years, creating a Project ID when a project begins helps ensure that a project is identified uniformly throughout its lifespan across SAPs, reports, data submittals, and other documentation.

Project ID (*max 35 characters*): A unique identifier that can be used to signify all data collected and activities performed under a given project. DEQ recommends the following Project ID naming guidance*:

- Avoid including the year so a Project ID remains relevant for projects that span multiple years.
- Keep it simple and use intuitive abbreviations so data users can easily identify and distinguish between projects.
- Include key information such as the name of the watershed or waterbody that is the focus of the study, the name of the monitoring program, and/or the issue being investigated.
- Avoid spaces; use hyphens or underscores instead.

Project Name (*max 120 characters*): A concise name assigned to a project; may resemble the title of a project plan or SAP.

Project Description (*max 1999 characters*): A brief narrative synopsis of the primary goals or objectives of the project. Project descriptions may include information such as a description of the project area, a list of project goals and objectives, and/or an indication of the data types to be collected. Project description may be pulled from project plans or SAPs if available.

Stations that represent the location where data collection took place are established when data from monitoring sites are submitted to EQuIS, including Station ID, Name, Description, Latitude and Longitude. When data is subsequently collected at this same location, the existing station is referenced rather than submitting a new station.

When creating the monitoring locations table in a SAP, it may improve efficiency later during data management to include the existing station ID for sites where data was previously submitted to MT-eWQX, and to develop station IDs for any new sites that were not previously submitted. *Data providers can coordinate with DEQ's Water Quality Data Manager to query the MT-eWQX organization to which they are submitting data to identify whether their intended sites are already established stations.*

Station ID (*maximum 20 characters*): Shorthand identifiers typically comprised of two key components (waterbody and location) that can be used conveniently on field forms and sample bottles. DEQ recommends the following Station ID naming guidance*:

- Use underscores or hyphens to visually separate elements, not spaces.
- Include the entire waterbody name or an intuitive abbreviation.
- Distinguish sites on the same waterbody using intuitive location descriptors rather than arbitrary numbers, such as headwaters, mouth, above or below tributary confluences, geographic landmarks, road crossings, etc., rather than arbitrary numbers. For example, "WATERBODY-MOUTH" and "WATERBODY-HDWTR" are more descriptive than "SITE-01" and "SITE-02."
- Use uppercase and/or lowercase.

Station Name (*max 80 characters*): Spell out the waterbody name in full plus include a brief description of the station's location (e.g., "Boulder River downstream of Hwy 87 bridge"). If a waterbody name includes a fork or a cardinal direction, the waterbody name should come before the qualifier to aid in data sorting (e.g., "Flathead River North Fork" is preferred over "North Fork Flathead River").

Station Description (*max 255 characters*): Create a more detailed description of the station to provide clarifying information such as directions to find the station or other site specifics that may not be obvious otherwise (e.g., distance up- or downstream from an easily identifiable landmark).

Latitude and Longitude Coordinates (*decimal degrees*): For existing stations, include the previously-established coordinates in the SAP's monitoring location table so these can be readily transcribed onto field forms or into EDDs. For new sites, proposed coordinates should be included in the SAP's monitoring location table but the final/actual coordinates will be recorded in the field at the time of data collection. Final coordinates often vary slightly from those proposed in the SAP, for example, if field personnel shift to ensure safe access or site representativeness.

*DEQ's Water Quality Data Manager may refine project or station information submitted by data providers before MT-eWQX upload.