

## **QA Workshop**

### **Solution to Workshop 1**

#### **Scenario**

A potential client has come to you with a request for analysis that involves examining a field for contamination by diesel oil.

Consider the issues you would discuss with the client before agreeing to take on the work in your laboratory.

#### **Issues**

The following is a list of issues that the laboratory should discuss with the client.

- Why is the analysis required? Perhaps the client is planning to develop the site (e.g. building a housing estate) and needs to know to what extent the site will need to be cleaned up (remediated) before the development can start.
- What was on the site before – how did the contamination get there? Knowing the history of the site may give clues to the exact nature of the contamination and the likely level of contamination.
- What exactly does the customer want measured? The analyst and the client need to make sure that they both agree on what is meant by ‘diesel oil’.
- Does the client have a particular analytical method that they want used? There may be a method stated in regulations or the client may want a particular method used so that they can make a direct comparison with results from previous analyses.
- Who will be responsible for taking the samples and how many samples will there be? The customer may have contracted a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to take the samples or they may want the laboratory to advise on a suitable sampling plan and arrange for the samples to be taken. In contaminated land investigations the sampling plan is extremely important. If insufficient or inappropriate samples are taken then the results of the analysis may be worthless.

The laboratory also needs to know how many samples there will be and when they will arrive. Will the client send all the samples in one go, or will they be sent in smaller batches?

- How should the samples be stored prior to analysis? This is an important consideration in many cases. It is essential to ensure that the samples do not degrade in any way between sampling and analysis. The client and the laboratory need to agree on a procedure that will ensure that the samples are stored correctly during the time from when the samples are taken to when they arrive at the laboratory.
- When does the customer require the results? Turnaround times are an important consideration. The customer may have good reason for wanting the laboratory to produce the results quickly. The analyst must ensure that the laboratory is capable of meeting any turnaround times agreed.
- How does the customer want the results to be reported? This will vary from case to case. In some instances a simple test certificate will suffice, whilst in others a detailed report will be required. The costs of preparing the report should be included in the price quoted for the analysis. The analyst should also check whether the customer is expecting an interpretation of the results or simply a statement of the facts.