



**NWQMC**  
NATIONAL WATER QUALITY  
MONITORING COUNCIL

*Working Together for Clean Water*

# Methods and Data Comparability Board

## ***National Environmental Methods Index (NEMI)***

### **Use NEMI first to find the environmental methods you need!**

Since 2002, NEMI (<http://www.nemi.gov>) has helped the scientific community find the environmental methods they need with an easy-to-use, searchable online methods database of both regulatory and non-regulatory laboratory methods. Over the years, many environmental professionals have told us that NEMI has become an indispensable part of their toolboxes. Now, with a growing database of over 800 methods and new types of methods recently added, it's more useful than ever.

### **Population/Community, Toxicity, and Field Analysis Methods**

An exciting development in the evolution of NEMI is the addition of these new types of environmental methods that never before have been part of a methods compendium, and will bring the utility of NEMI to an entirely new user group. Search options tailored to these new methods are available, and the information provided is designed to help users select and compare methods based on applicability to their monitoring needs. Check it out online at <http://www.nemi.gov/>.

The NEMI development team operates under the direction of the Methods and Data Comparability Board (<http://acwi.gov/methods/>). The Methods Board is a partnership of water-quality experts from government agencies and private organizations who all share a commitment to developing water-quality monitoring approaches that facilitate collaboration and comparability amongst all data-gathering organizations. The Methods Board is chartered under the National Water Quality Monitoring Council, whose mission since its charter in May 1997 is to coordinate and provide guidance on implementation of the voluntary, integrated, nationwide monitoring strategy.

### **“Greener” Methods Rating Being Developed**

A project that aims to define, identify, and promote analytical chemistry methods that use fewer harmful solvents, use safer chemicals, and minimize waste has been initiated by the American Chemical Society's Green Chemistry Institute (GCI). Working with the Methods and Data Comparability Board (MDCB), GCI is defining metrics and rules to rate the “greenness” of analytical methods and is applying these rules to the over 800 analytical methods in NEMI.

### **Help NEMI Grow**

Through the Methods and Data Comparability Board, the EPA and the USGS are looking for partnerships to help NEMI continue to grow. The partnership will occur through a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA).

Potential partners are currently being identified to provide funding and assistance for the following activities to:

- suggest new types of regulatory information to be included in the database
- support the search for new methods that can be included in the database
- author and co-author papers and posters for conferences, and
- determine outreach approaches and prepare materials to broadcast the usefulness of NEMI in professional journals, newsletters and on the Web.

Cooperative partners will benefit by:

- gaining visibility through public-recognition of the partnership and NEMI, and
- interacting strategically with other leaders in the industry.

*Please see the Opportunity Brief on the NEMI Web site for more information.*

## NEMI is Free and Easy to Access

NEMI is free to the public, and can be easily accessed on any computer with an Internet connection. If you need to get method information to a colleague, you can simply e-mail them the link to the NEMI Web site. When you travel, you don't need to worry about loading NEMI software on your laptop. Since NEMI is web-based, updates are immediately available, and software upgrades are done centrally so all you need are occasional upgrades to the (free) browser software on your PC.

## NEMI has Easy-to-Compare Method Data

Whether you are in a laboratory or an office, if you work in the environmental field you need to have access to information on analytical methods: What is the most sensitive method for an analyte? Most precise? Most cost-effective for your needs? (Cost differential may be lab-dependent). NEMI makes comparing methods easy: simply type in the analyte name or CAS number, click on the search button, and you'll have information on a host of methods in a format that makes method comparison a snap.

## NEMI includes Regulatory Information

Deciphering the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to find EPA-approved methods can be an onerous and frustrating task. Approved methods are distributed in various sections throughout the CFR, making them difficult to find. Adding to this difficulty, methods often are modified by regulations (that appear only in footnotes). NEMI makes finding approved methods a much easier task by allowing the user to simply select the pollutant and regulation of interest; instantly a list of the approved methods, with all relevant modifications required by CFR footnotes will be generated. Furthermore, you can download the approved version of publicly available methods with a single mouse click.

## NEMI is on the "Grow"

NEMI is already useful, but is still a young system with great potential to grow. Furthermore, NEMI users have a say in how NEMI grows, by submitting comments via easy-to-use online forms. If there's something you'd like to see in NEMI, let us know.

## Good Questions about NEMI

### *How do new methods get entered into the NEMI database?*

Here are the most common ways:

1. Provide direct funding. Several agencies have provided direct monetary support for the NEMI workgroup, whose members edit and review their methods data for inclusion in NEMI.
2. Provide in-kind support. For this option, an agency or organization contacts the NEMI group, usually via e-mail, and requests information on the data required and the business rules for the data. They then provide the information to populate the data fields in NEMI. Online forms are being tested and will be available in the near future to facilitate data entry.

### *How can I get my method in NEMI?*

Contact us! Through the online forms being tested, you will be able to directly enter your methods into the staging area of the database where they can be reviewed. If you'd like more information, use the comment submission form or send email to [nemi@usgs.gov](mailto:nemi@usgs.gov).

### *How can I get more involved?*

Once again, contact us! If you have comments on how NEMI can be improved or would like to join a workgroup, please let us know.

## Feedback

### **Taken from NEMI's Message Board:**

"This is great, such a resource tool you cannot truly imagine. Office or field response help at the touch of a key stroke!!!"

*Quality Assurance Compliance Officer-New York*

"This is an excellent idea. A "one stop" shopping for analytical methodologies."

*Quality Assurance/Control Officer-Kentucky*

"I use the NEMI site almost every day. Thanks for developing and maintaining this great resource."

*Quality Assurance Officer -- Illinois*

"Love the site. It is very useful. The database retrieval and searches are fast and the data generated extremely helpful. Very good job."

*IT Specialist, Analytical Laboratory-Alaska*

