

THE NELAC INSTITUTE

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

Introduction and Summary

This document describes the organizational structure, governance and operation of all TNI committees and related groups as well as summarizing the core programs and key staff.

TNI manages the following activities:

1. Administration and Support
- Core Programs**
2. Consensus Standards Development
 3. National Environmental Field Activities
 4. National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation
 5. National Environmental Proficiency Testing

The sections that follow provide the organizational structure and activities for each activity.

General Principles

TNI manages four core programs that are working together towards a common vision. Each core program has the authority to establish policies and procedures for the program, make decisions, and operate somewhat independently, with the following restrictions:

- All policies and procedures will be reviewed by the Policy Committee to ensure policies from different programs are not in conflict with each other.
- All policies and procedures will be reviewed by the Board of Directors to ensure the policy does not create a program that cannot be funded or puts the organization at risk.
- The reviews above will be used to provide feedback to the program, and as appropriate, each program will address any issues raised by the Policy committee and the Board of Directors before implementing the policy.
- Each core program will provide an annual report to the Board of Directors as to progress achieved towards the goal of the program. The Board of Directors will provide feedback to the program for future efforts.
- Each core program will establish strategic goals and objectives that will be reviewed by the Board of Directors to ensure the goals and objectives are aligned with TNI's mission.

With this independence, there is however an expectation that the various groups described in this document will work together in areas of common interest. For example, the Consensus Standards Development Program is expected to work with the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) to ensure that standards are being developed that can be used by NELAP.

The phrase "adopt" is used throughout this document to imply that a particular group has accepted the work product (e.g., a standard, a policy, a checklist, PT limits) from another program for use within their program. This language is not meant to imply that the group who did not develop the information has any authority to change the work product. Rather, it is meant to imply the group needing the work product would approve for adoption or remand back to the developing group with identification of specific issues

that would preclude implementation. It would then be up to the group that developed this information to decide on the course of action.

The descriptions that follow frequently use the term “ex officio.” In all cases this is meant to imply an individual that participates on the group in a non-voting capacity.

Definitions of TNI Groups

TNI Board of Directors: The governing body appointed to hold fiduciary responsibility and guide the work of the organization. The composition of the Board is set forth in the bylaws; Directors are elected by membership.

Executive Committee: A committee responsible for strategic direction, growth and fiscal management of a core TNI program. Executive Committees are required to have balance of stakeholder interests.

Note: The Chair of an Executive Committee is an ex-officio member of the TNI Board of Directors, unless the Chair has been elected by the TNI membership as a Director.

Standing Committee: A committee defined in bylaws with specific composition and duties.

Expert Committee: A committee focused on standards development with composition defined by SOP 2-100.

Administrative and Support Committee: A committee tasked with a specific function to support administrative activities of TNI. Administrative and Support committees are not required to have balance.

Program Committee: Committee tasked with a specific function to support a program. Program Committees are required to have balance.

Accreditation Council: Individuals representing NELAP or NEPAP-recognized ABs. The composition of the Accreditation Council is defined by policy for that program and may vary.

Subcommittee: Group appointed by a committee to work on a specific issue and provide recommendations. Not required to have balance.

Administration and Support

Description

Administration and Support consists of the TNI Board of Directors, a number of committees that work across all TNI programs, and TNI staff. These groups and individuals provide the overall direction and management of TNI as well as ensuring an infrastructure exists to support core programs.

Structure

1. Board of Directors
2. Administration and Support Committees
 - a. Advocacy Committee
 - b. Conference Planning Committee
 - c. Finance Committee*
 - d. Information Technology Committee
 - e. Nominating Committee*
 - f. Policy Committee
4. Executive Director
5. Staff, hired by the Executive Director
 - a. Program Administrators
 - b. Meeting Planner
 - b. IT Administrator
 - d. Clerical
 - e. Accounting (outsourced)
 - f. Other as needed and budgeted for (e.g., legal)

* A Standing Committee in the TNI Bylaws

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall have ten (10) to eighteen (18) Directors with at least three (3) Directors representing NELAP-recognized Accreditation Bodies (ABs), at least three (3) Directors representing accredited laboratories, and other Directors representing other interests such as: non-NELAP states, federal agencies, Proficiency Test (PT) providers, Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations, NEFAP Accreditation Bodies, third party assessors, and data users.

The Board of Directors –

- supervises, controls and directs the business affairs of TNI by:
 - actively pursuing its mission,
 - managing the budget,
 - adopting policies and rules,
 - receiving complaints and directing to the appropriate body for action, and
 - appointing agents to assist with the above activities.

- performs the following activities to support each core program of the organization:
 - Reviews and approves an annual budget for the program.
 - Evaluates how well the programs are achieving their goals.

Unless it is specifically stated otherwise in the TNI Bylaws, the Board of Directors will not direct the activities of any core program. For example, the Board of Directors will not change a consensus standard adopted by an Expert Committee, change an acceptance limit established by the PT Board, or overturn a decision by the NEFAP Board.

Advocacy Committee

The purpose of this program is to promote TNI's core programs. The Advocacy Committee will consist of 10 to 16 members with balanced representation. A TNI Director will chair this committee. At least two (2) other Directors shall be members of the committee. The TNI Small Laboratory Advocate shall also be a member of this committee. In forming this Committee the following stakeholder interests must be represented:

- NELAP-recognized AB
- NELAP accredited laboratory
- Non-NELAP AB
- EPA representative
- NEFAP representative

The Advocacy Committee will:

- Establish relationships with other organizations (e.g., ACIL, AWWA, WEF) that have an interest in accreditation issues.
- Establish relationships with EPA program offices.
- Develop presentations and papers to promote national accreditation.
- Develop presentations and papers to promote TNI.
- Provide outreach at national, regional and local meetings.
- Assist with publication of the member newsletter.

Conference Planning Committee

The purpose of this committee is to help plan and organize two meetings per year to allow TNI members and the public the opportunity to discuss topics related to accreditation. The Conference Planning Committee is an unrestricted committee. The TNI Executive Director shall be the chair of this committee. The TNI Meeting Planner shall be an ex officio member of this committee.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee consists of at least three (3) Individual Members appointed by the Chair whose duty shall be to perform an annual review of the TNI financial records and report the results to the Board of Directors. The Chair of this committee shall be the Treasurer. This Committee also

- develops an annual budget for review by the TNI Board,
- provides periodic reports to the Board on the status of TNI's finances, and
- publishes an annual Financial Report.

Information Technology Committee

The Information Technology Committee is an unrestricted committee that has members who have the interest and skill set in working on this committee. Note: The IT Administrator of The NELAC Institute shall be an ex officio member of this committee. The Information Technology Committee will:

- Provide recommendations as to the design and content of the TNI website.
- Manage the TNI Laboratory Accreditation Management System.
- Maintain TNI databases such as technology codes, method codes and analyte codes.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee consists of three (3) Individual Members appointed by the Chair whose duty is to develop a slate of candidates for election to the TNI Board of Directors. Except for the Past Chair, none of the Members shall be a member of the existing Board.

Policy Committee

Under the direction of the Board of Directors, the committee will serve as a resource for the development of policies. The Policy Committee shall consist of at least one member from each core program, one TNI Director and one at-large member. Other at-large members may be added. The Policy Committee will:

- Serve as a resource for the development of policies.
- Review policies from all programs for conformity with respect to style and for consistency with one another and with the overall mission of TNI. The Policy Committee may forward a program policy to the TNI Board or may return the program policy to the originating program for additional work.
- Develop general policies for TNI (e.g., travel reimbursement, purchasing, conflict of interest, etc.).
- Review and evaluate requests for policies received from the membership and others and provide a recommendation to the Board.

Note: After review for organizational impact (e.g., legal, fiscal or credibility issues), the TNI Board will confirm all policies for final adoption and use by the program.

Executive Director

Under the general direction of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director has day-to-day responsibility for TNI. The Executive Director will attend all Board meetings, report on the progress of TNI, answer questions of Board members and carry out other duties as designated by the Board. The Executive Director is responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission and financial objectives.

In program development and administration, the Executive Director will:

1. Assure that the organization has a long-range strategy, which achieves its mission, and toward which it makes consistent and timely progress.
2. Provide leadership in developing program, organizational, and financial plans with the Board of Directors and staff, and carry out plans and policies authorized by the Board.
3. Promote active and broad participation by volunteers in all areas of the organization's work.
4. Maintain official records and documents, and ensure compliance with federal, state and local regulations.

5. Maintain a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field.

In communications, the Executive Director will:

1. See that the Board is kept fully informed on the condition of the organization and all important factors influencing it.
2. Publicize the activities of the organization, its programs, and goals.
3. Establish sound working relationships and cooperative arrangements with other interested groups and organizations.
4. Represent the programs and point of view of the organization to agencies, organizations and the general public.

In relations with staff, the Executive Director will:

1. Be responsible for staffing and staff management.
2. Encourage staff and volunteer development and education, and assist program staff in relating their specialized work to the total program of the organization.
3. Maintain a climate that attracts, keeps and motivates a diverse staff of top quality people.

In budget and finance, the Executive Director will:

1. Be responsible for developing and maintaining sound financial practices.
2. Work with the Board in preparing a budget and ensure that the organization operates within budget guidelines.
3. Ensure that adequate funds are available to permit the organization to carry out its work.
4. Jointly, with the Chair and Secretary of the Board of Directors, conduct official correspondence of the organization, and jointly, with designated officers, execute legal documents.

Program Administrators

Program Administrators are individuals assigned by the Executive Director to provide staff support to TNI's programs. As such, Program Administrators:

- Ensure that policies and decisions of TNI as they relate to each program are implemented.
- Assist the program committees and subcommittees in achieving their goals.
- Ensure publication of information relating to the program.
- Provide monthly reports to the TNI Board on progress of the program towards goals.
- Assist in the preparation of an annual budget for the program.
- Perform other such duties as may be assigned by the Executive Director.

The Program Administrator shall be an ex officio member of all committees within a given program. If the Program Administrator is not a staffed position, these duties will be performed by a volunteer designated by the Executive Director.

National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP)

Description

The purpose of this program is to establish and implement a program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories.

Structure

1. Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee
2. NELAP Accreditation Council
3. NELAP Technical Assistance Committee

Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee

The purpose of this Executive Committee is to manage TNI's efforts in supporting a national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories. Activities of the Committee include developing and establishing policies and procedures, interpretations, guidance documents, and any related tools used by accreditation bodies to implement NELAP.

The LAS Executive Committee will consist of 7 to 15 members with balanced representation. In forming this Committee the following stakeholder interests must be represented:

- NELAP-recognized AB
- NELAP accredited laboratory
- Non-NELAP AB
- EPA representative
- PT Provider

To ensure that the program is implemented effectively and to address the needs of the stakeholder community, the LAS Executive Committee will work in cooperation with other core programs within TNI. Specifically, the LAS Executive Committee:

- Will work with the Consensus Standard Development Program Executive Committee to ensure that accreditation standards developed for this program are suitable for use, and
- Will seek the assistance of Expert Committees when developing guidance.
- Will work cooperatively with the NELAP Accreditation Council to assist in implementing this program.

Note: To foster communication, the Vice-Chair of the NELAP Accreditation Council should be a member of this committee.

NELAP Accreditation Council

The NELAP Accreditation Council shall consist of:

1. One Representative and one Alternate selected by each NELAP-recognized Accreditation Body (AB)
2. An Ex-Officio member representing EPA

The NELAP Accreditation Council shall have final authority for implementation of the program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories to include the following:

- Review and approve applications from prospective ABs to become NELAP-recognized.

- Periodically review all NELAP-recognized ABs to ensure their conformance to the requirements established by this organization.
- Coordinate with the LAS Executive Committee to:
 - Include new standards into the NELAP program.
 - Include interpretations and clarification of the NELAP standards.
 - Adopt relevant acceptance limits for proficiency testing developed by the PT Executive Committee.
 - Adopt policies and procedures for use within the program.
 - Respond to complaints about the program.
- Ensure a national program through mutual recognition.

NELAP Technical Assistance Committee

The purpose of this committee is to provide assistance to stakeholders, particularly those seeking accreditation and those who accredit for NELAP. The Technical Assistance Committee is an unrestricted committee that has members who have the interest and skill set in working on this committee. The Technical Assistance Committee will:

- Develop tools and templates to assist laboratories and accreditation bodies with implementing accreditation programs.
- Ensure that training programs relevant to the needs of the stakeholder community are provided.
- Ensure that laboratory assessors have a forum to discuss common issues.
- Develop a mentoring program to assist both laboratories and accreditation bodies with implementing accreditation programs.

National Environmental Proficiency Test Program

Description

The purpose is to ensure that an effective PT program exists to support TNI's programs.

Structure

1. PT Executive Committee
2. Fields of Proficiency Testing committees: chemical, micro, WET, air, etc.

Composition of the PT Executive Committee:

The PT Executive Committee will consist of six (6) to fifteen (15) members with at least one representative from each of the following groups, insofar as practical/possible:

1. NELAP ABs
2. Non-NELAP ABs
3. EPA
4. Other
5. Accredited Laboratory
6. PT Provider

Note: At least one member shall be a member of the Proficiency Testing expert committee.

Duties of the PT Executive Committee

- Provide assistance to the Board of Directors on the selection of PTPA(s).
- Monitor the PTPA(s) to assure that they are following the requirements set forth by TNI.
- Establish and approve Fields of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) tables.
- Ensure accredited PT Providers exist for every TNI FoPT.
- Work with other TNI Committees to establish and approve Fields of Proficiency Testing tables for use by other programs.

Consensus Standards Development Program

Program Description

The purpose of this program is to develop consensus standards for use by TNI's core programs. This group has a support role in assisting other programs with activities such as guidance and standards interpretation.

Structure

1. Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee

This Executive Committee consists of five (5) to ten (10) members with one representative from each Expert Committee, one member from the Executive Committee of all other core programs, plus additional At-Large members representing other interests.

2. Expert Committees

- a. Accreditation Body
- b. Field Activities
- c. On-site Assessment
- d. Proficiency Testing
- e. Quality Systems
- f. Stationary Source Audit Sample
- g. Other expert committees may be formed to address new areas.

Duties of the Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee

- Guide the program in its primary mission for developing and maintaining standards.
- Define roles and responsibilities, as appropriate, for the Expert Committees.
- Provide oversight, guidance and direction of the Expert Committees.
- Authorize other task forces and study groups as necessary.
- Annually review the work of all Expert Committees.
- Ensure that the process for standards development and adoption conforms to the requirements established by TNI.

National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP)

Description

The purpose of this program is to establish and implement a program for the accreditation of field sampling and measurement organizations (FSMOs). The primary components of this program are:

- The recognition of Accreditation Bodies,
- The development and adoption of the accreditation system.

As such, the NEFAP Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the program. To ensure that the program is implemented effectively and to address the needs of the stakeholder community, the NEFAP Executive Committee is expected to work in cooperation with other key committees within TNI. Specifically, the Executive Committee:

- Will work with the Field Activities Committee to ensure that accreditation standards developed for use for this program are suitable for use, and
- Will work with the Consensus Standard Development Program Committee to ensure that accreditation standards developed for this program are suitable for use.

Structure

1. NEFAP Executive Committee
2. Technical Assistance Committee

NEFAP Executive Committee

1. One Representative from each NEFAP-recognized Accreditation Body (AB)
2. 5-10 TNI members representing stakeholder interests.

Note: At least one member shall be a member of the Field Activities expert committee.

Duties of the NEFAP Executive Committee

The NEFAP Executive Committee shall have final authority for implementation of the program for the accreditation of FSMOs to include the following:

- Review and approve applications from prospective ABs to become NEFAP-recognized.
- Periodically review all NEFAP-recognized ABs to ensure their conformance to the requirements established by this organization.
- Adopt relevant acceptance limits for proficiency testing developed by the PT Executive Committee.
- Adopt the FSMO Accreditation Standards for use in the program.
- Develop and adopt interpretations and clarification of the NEFAP standards.
- Develop and adopt policies and procedures for use in the program.
- Respond to complaints about the program.
- Ensure a national program through mutual recognition.

