

**Accreditation Body Meeting
Monday January 25, 2010
Chicago Forum on Laboratory Accreditation
(with edits as approved at 2-16-2010 teleconference)**

Committee members present:

Joe Aiello, Chair
Sharon Mertens
Lynn Bradley
Kevin Kubik
Rebecca Pierrot

Joe Aiello also noted committee members Steve Stubbs and Jeff Flowers are at the conference but are attending other meetings. Steve Arms and Dan Dickinson were not able to attend the conference.

Joe provided a recap of the last 6 months of activity. The committee is in the process of updating its charter. It has been approved by the committee and has been submitted to the Consensus Standards Development Board for review.

The other major piece of activity is development of an SOP for accreditation bodies to the new TNI standard. The committee is using this meeting as a opportunity to review it with input from the public and NELAP assessors. The committee also needs to understand how elements such as primary and secondary recognition will function.

Sharon Mertens asked Mike Miller if the National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP) Board has been able to utilize the material that was shared with them. Mike said it was useful for identifying some of the key elements of what the accreditation bodies will be looking for so, it has been useful. NEFAP wants to maintain consistency with the NELAP approach where possible, although other elements of NEFAP are very different.

Questions have arisen about what ABs will have to do differently when the TNI standard is implemented, and the AB committee has developed an SOP. Development of the SOP was requested by both LASC and the NELAP Board. Sharon asked for additional public input and identification of needs for implementing the new AB standard. There are differences between the old NELAC 2003 Chapter 6 and the ISO requirements. A technical review checklist and other tools for the AB assessment are needed. The committee agreed it should revisit the spreadsheet compiled a year ago that had items that needed to be developed that are not in the new TNI standard – checklists, policies, etc. Evaluation teams had also created some of their own tools. The AB committee can help get everything put in one place.

Art Clark did the first draft of SOP for the round of AB evaluations that is just wrapping up. The SOP was not written to address new ABs being assessed for the first time. The

process for Virginia's assessment was already underway. The AB committee made the reassessment SOP a little more generic and referenced the TNI standard and adjusted other elements. The new SOP probably needs to be complete by end of 2010 for use in the TNI standard implementation process.

Appendices were added to the new SOP to address what to cover in opening and closing assessment meetings. At Carol Batterton's suggestion, additional work is focusing on what elements still need to be addressed. The mutual recognition issue is being worked on by the NELAP Board – this should come to the AB committee for comments in the future.

New assessors training will be needed for the next round of evaluations which will be to TNI standard.

EPA needs to get copied that the AB reassessment took place and someone needs to provide copies of the supporting documentation.

Changes to the SOP were discussed in San Antonio, and many of those items were editorial and have been incorporated. What are left are comments that still need to be resolved as follows:

- 1) Definitions for the primary and secondary accreditation – may be defined in the mutual recognition SOP.
- 2) 7.4 Checklist for completeness needs to be reviewed to see if it needs to be updated. Also who updates the application if it's more than changing dates, etc.? Could ask assessment team if there are things that can be improved. Comments are that the current checklist is difficult to work with.
- 3) 7.6 Does the opening meeting checklist need to be updated? Evaluator and/or AB input is needed on this item.
- 4) 7.6.4 The committee needs input on the reference to EPA programs. The clause doesn't refer to anything specific and could be deleted (see clause on EPA requirements).
- 5) 7.7 is a section that was added for new ABs. This item accounts for the fact that there are no historical records, etc., of how to observe conduct of a lab assessment, etc. The SOP needs to provide flexibility. John Gumpper suggested that the SOP could require assessment of lab within 1 year. It could be structures as multiple options, and one must happen. Needs to be a must statement.
- 6) 7.7.2.4 – This item applies to labs wanting to do drinking water assessments as well.
- 7) 7.9.2 – Copy of the evaluation checklist. It is not clear that one exists, or that it is voluntary to use it. The committee discussed whether use of a checklist is mandatory and how hard is it to write up the observations without a checklist. It was noted that checklists help promote consistency of assessment for the observation. A checklist could be added to the SOP as an appendix.
- 8) 7.14 The model accreditation letter needs to be updated.

- 9) 9.2 The committee also needs to get copies of letters to EPA offices/programs. Should copies go to all members of assessment team? EPA DW certification office as a minimum and director of regional office should get letters.
- 10) 7.14 – The committee must determine whether this is addressed in mutual recognition, but not sure this is right place as it's more a policy than process. There is nothing right now in the mutual recognition SOP.
- 11) 9.2 NELAC evaluation SOP had an evaluation coordinator as the point of contact for correspondence. This has been updated so the comment can be taken out.
- 12) 9.4 Records retention will be consistent with TNI POL-104 for Records Management. Electronic records are being used.
- 13) 10.1 Does this need to be reviewed every year when everything else is on 3 year cycle or whenever TNI standard is updated. Who gets the tickle that it needs to be done? A TNI calendar of what needs to happen for the renewal cycle would be helpful. Could ABC develop the timeline?

Joe noted the SOP is being circulated to NELAP evaluators over the next couple of teleconferences and then will be circulated to the NELAP Board for comments. The goal is to complete the SOP by the end of January 2011, or sooner if needed. One driver is that training will need to be developed for evaluators.

Sharon will incorporate comments from today's session and the AB committee will vote on the draft SOP at their next meeting to send it on to assessors/NELAP Board. Joe will accept any other comments before next AB committee meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 pm.