

**Summary of the Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, January 15, 2013, at the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, Denver, CO**

Members present in the room:

Jeff Flowers  
Nilda Cox  
Sharon Mertens  
Carl Kircher  
Doug Leonard  
Lynn Bradley

Members present on the phone:

Rebecca Pierrot  
Steve Arms  
Joe Aiello

Jeff Flowers chaired the meeting.

New member Doug Leonard was welcomed into the committee membership. His joining was approved by email since the previous committee teleconference. Sharon nominated Carl Kircher for membership and Nilda seconded the nomination. Carl was approved unanimously and immediately thereafter, Steve Arms requested to resign from the committee. (Since both are Florida AB representatives, only one can be on the committee at a time.) Jeff thanked Steve for his 12 years of service on the LAB Committee.

Carl nominated Jeff for chair, and Sharon seconded. Jeff was elected unanimously, and immediately thanked Joe for his service as chair over the past several years.

Updated Charter

A draft charter was presented for adoption that includes agreed-upon staggered terms for members as well as current year activities and objectives. One member's affiliation required an edit. Rebecca moved to adopt the updated charter, and Sharon seconded.

One member noted that the charter would need to be updated regularly since it only addresses current year efforts. The TNI process for annual update and approval of the charter was explained.

The draft charter was unanimously approved by those present, and will be submitted to the Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee for acceptance.

Administrative portions of AB duties – Generic Application

Rebecca Pierrot leads this project. She described both its background and current status to participants. The project was delayed while TNI's Database Administrator, Dan Hickman, completed more urgent activities associated with implementing EPA's Method Update Rule. The Chair asked Dan to comment on his role also.

Dan noted that while labs want the generic application, the NELAP Accreditation Bodies have no interest in it, and many would have to revise regulations to adopt it. Also, in polling NELAP Accreditation Council members, many desired to have each of their Fields of Accreditation (FoA) included on the generic application, and that is essentially un-do-able. A multi-state application with demographic information would be manageable, assuming that the NELAP ABs indicate some willingness to adopt it.

This item was one of the recommendations from the Accreditation Body Assistance Task force, and initially some ABs indicated that an electronic application would be helpful as administrative support, but the “scope creep” to include FoAs (which ABs desire) has shifted the ability of TNI to address the issue.

There was discussion of whether to “build it, and they will come” but presently, best guess is that no more than half of ABs will utilize this effort. Dan indicated that the cost of creating a generic application with only demographic data is low, and the cost to states to adopt and use it would be minimal. Dan also noted that adding the fee structure for all states (as requested by ABs) would be confusing, particularly without the FoAs included, since the scope of accreditation determines the fee.

One AB requested a repeat poll of the NELAP ABs. Another commenter suggested that if the application contained only demographic information, non-NELAP ABs might be able to use it as well. No resolution was reached on how to proceed.

### Third Party Assessors

A proposal for creating a listing of third party assessors, available to NELAP ABs, was submitted to the TNI Board on January 8, 2013. Jeff Flowers leads this activity, and discussed the proposal for participants. The proposal as submitted is in Attachment 1.

Discussion noted that the step forward to actually credentialing assessors would represent a great change for TNI. There was some consensus around the concept of developing phase III in parallel with phases I and II.

### Standards Interpretation Requests

Jeff noted that LAB has responded to several SIRs in the past year. Not knowing for sure whether these have attained final approval, the interpretations provided were not available for discussion.

## **Attachment 1 – LAB Proposal to TNI Board regarding Third Party Assessors**

### Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee Proposal to the TNI Board of Directors For Evaluation of Third Party Assessors

Date: Jan 8, 2013

Scope: Third Party Assessors that are hired by Accrediting Bodies to support on-site assessment activities. Not State Assessors

Work Plan: Four-phase Program

- I Produce and publish on the TNI website names of individuals and/or organizations conducting on-site assessments (for initial list see Appendix B)
- II Using contact information from Phase I, collect information on criteria outlined in Appendix A and produce a report of findings.
- III Develop a program to vet information found in Phase II.
- IV Implement program based on information found in Phases I, II and III.

#### **PHASE I**

Phase I will help to understand the extent of the community involved in providing on-site assessment activities. It should include only those persons and organizations having an interest in supporting NELAP.

The goal of Phase I is to develop a listing of individuals/companies that either provide or are interested in providing accreditation services in support of the NELAP. Also, the list would only include individuals/companies that have expressed an interest in having their names and qualifications published on the TNI website. At this phase the list will be for informational purposes only and will not in any way be in a format that would imply a TNI endorsement. The list would make available contact information that could be used to support NELAP AB activities when soliciting third party assessors. Individuals and/or companies would also gain some visibility by having their names published on the TNI web site. The list would also be used to provide contact information for any future activities relating to Phases II, III and IV below.

#### Implementation plan:

- (1) Add Bullet in the NEWS section of the TNI web page to announce Phase I.
- (2) Add a page on the TNI website to provide plans and the criteria given in Appendix A. WEB Page will also include all future information relating to TNI's activities with Third Party Assessors.
- (3) Publish an article in the next TNI Newsletter on TNI's Third Party Assessor activities.
- (4) Discuss plans at the Denver Conference

#### **Resources Needed by the LAB:**

LAB will need access to the web master and possibly the Information Technology (IT) Committee for design and production of the web page announcements. LAB will prepare an announcement article for publication in the Newsletter.

#### **PHASE II**

The goal of phase II is to get the information on as many of the qualification criteria (Appendix A) from the group of participants as possible. These criteria have been reviewed by the LAB and discussed at public meetings during two conferences. While some of the informational items will not apply to every respondent, they in total do help a reader understand more about an individual assessor or an organization conducting assessments. For example, the geographical location item will help the reader understand where that firm operates normally, but is not a 'requirements type' item. At this phase the list will continue to be for informational purposes only and will not in any way be in a format that would imply a TNI indorsement.

#### **Resources Needed by the LAB:**

Access to the Web Master and possibly the IT committee for design and production of the web page form to collect and display information. This may use a survey form or something of less technology if the number of particples is low as well as web posting of the collected information.

### **PHASE III**

Develop a program in TNI that provides a vetted credentialed community of Third Party Assessors (individuals and/or organizations) found qualified to conduct on-site assessments in support of NELAP Accrediting Body activities. Phase III is the most challenging to produce. The product of this phase could be of several different forms and as of yet has not been determined. It could be in the form of an SOP, an additional TNI Program or some other TNI format.

#### Implementation Plan:

The development of this phase will take some time to design and finalize. It will take the next 1 to 2 years to complete. Implementation plan will be addressed once approval is granted by the TNI BoD.

#### Resources Needed by the LAB:

Significant resources will be needed from the LAB over the next 1 to 2 years. The full extent of resources needed is yet to be determined and will be dependent on findings from Phases I and II.

### **PHASE IV**

Implement the program based on the findings from Phases I, II and III.

#### Implementation Plan:

Yet to be determined.

#### Resources Needed by the LAB:

Yet to be determined. Depending on the final development of the program there could be a long term commitment from TNI to administer future and ongoing activities.

## **Appendix A**

### **INDIVIDUALS**

- Degree(s) Held
- Years Experience in an Analytical Laboratory (positions & duration)
- Years Experience as an Environmental Laboratory Assessor
- Total Number of Environmental Laboratory Assessments Completed
  - Number of the Total That Were NELAP Assessments
  - Number of the Total that Were ISO/IEC Assessments
- Experience Related to Conducting Assessments for State Accrediting Bodies
- Training Courses Completed (with dates)
  - Non-NELAP Assessor Training
  - NELAP Assessor Training
  - USEPA Drinking Water Certification
  - Technical Training
  - Other Specialized Training
  - Refresher/Continuing Training
- Specialized Program Knowledge (TNI, NELAP, NQA-1, ISO/IEC...)
- Specialized Technical Knowledge (micro, inorganic, organic, radiochemistry...)
- Computer Software Expertise
- Memberships in Trade/Professional Organizations
- Current Activities Related to National Organizations
- Current and Past Membership in TNI Committees, Councils and Boards
- Presentations Made
- Publications Authored (name and date)
- Name of Individual
- Geographic Area Covered

- Contracts Maintained and Duration
- Statement of Financial Stability (DB)
- Insurances Maintained Amounts (liability, errors & omissions, workman's comp...)

### **ORGANIZATIONS (Assessor Requirements)**

- Degree(s) Required
- Years Experience in an Analytical Laboratory Required (positions & duration)
- Years Experience as an Environmental Laboratory Assessor Required
- Total Number of Environmental Laboratory Assessments Completed Required
  - Number of the Total That Were NELAP Assessments
  - Number of the Total that Were ISO/IEC Assessments
- Experience Related to Conducting Assessments for State Accrediting Bodies
- Training Courses Required
  - Non-NELAP Assessor Training
  - NELAP Assessor Training
  - USEPA Drinking Water Certification
  - Technical Training
  - Other Specialized Training
  - Refresher/Continuing Training
- Specialized Program Knowledge Required (TNI, NELAP, NQA-1, ISO/IEC...)
- Specialized Technical Knowledge Required (micro, inorganic, organic, radiochemistry...)
- Computer Software Expertise Required
- Memberships in Trade/Professional Organizations
- Current Activities Related to National Organizations Required
- Current and Past Membership in TNI Committees, Councils and Boards Required

### **ORGANIZATIONS (General Information)**

- Number of Qualified Assessors
- Name of Business and Number of Years Business
- Geographic Area Covered
- Contracts Maintained and Duration
- Statement of Financial Stability (DB)
- Insurances Maintained Amounts (liability, errors & omissions, workman's comp...)
- Organizational Compliance with 17025 and 17011 for Operation

## **Appendix B**

### **Potential third party assessors**

rhsheib111@yahoo.com  
 mwmillerenviron@yahoo.com  
 lpeytonj@comcast.net  
 aex@ix.netcom.com  
 jgumpper@chemical.com  
 mmoore@advancedsys.com  
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 Mike@sheptechserv.com

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 mitzi.miller@moellerinc.com

To be expanded...