

**Minutes of Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee
Tuesday January 31, 2012, 1:30 – 3 pm
Sarasota Forum on Laboratory Accreditation**

Committee members present:

Joe Aiello, Chair
Steve Arms
Lynn Bradley
Nilda Cox
Jeff Flowers
John Gumper
Virginia Hunsberger (phone)
Sharon Mertens
Rebecca Pierrot (phone)
Aurora Shields

Joe Aiello opened the meeting with committee member introductions and noting that the former On-Site Assessment Expert Committee is now combined with the Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee. He turned to Sharon to present the draft charter (see Attachment 1).

Sharon presented the draft committee charter, and also noted that the combined committee needs an additional AB representative and also a new EPA representative, since Art Clark's retirement leaves us with no EPA representation, even though Art remains on the committee.

The draft charter was accepted by the committee members present, unanimously.

Next, Joe noted that recommendation 2 from the AB Assistance Task Force was assigned to our committee, and that the first item to be addressed was already underway, the uniform application process. Rebecca has done all of the work on this, and since she was on the phone, she discussed the progress thus far. She is coordinating with Dan Hickman, TNI Program Administrator for the LAMS database, the TNI Information Technology Committee and also with William Daystrom, TNI's Webmaster.

Items that are common to all state ABs are in the attached draft pdf version of an application, but plans are underway to have an online application that will include each AB's additional items. Lynn agreed to send the pdf to the Accreditation Council members and ask for comments and feedback, and a list of what additional information each AB requires. ABs will be asked to identify items that are "legacy" requests and no longer actually needed for the purposes of this new online version of an application for accreditation.

Participants from the audience noted that some ABs need "original" or ink on paper signatures for the application, to conform with regulations, so that print capability is needed, even if the data entered online can be otherwise utilized. Other issues identified are that "Laboratory Director" needs to be more clearly defined in relation to existing application forms, and at least two states will need the capability to export the "uniform application" into its online application.

The technical issues ought not to be difficult to resolve, since the eventual product will be able to interact with LAMS and probably with Minnesota's Environmental Laboratory Data Operations system, which is available to all NELAP ABs free of charge. Rebecca noted that the committee will need both laboratories and ABs for beta-testing of the uniform application, in the future. The PDF file accompanies these minutes, and if possible, will become Attachment 2 when the minutes are approved and posted.

Another recommendation assigned to LAB by the AB Task Force was Third Party Assessors. Jeff Flowers took the lead for this item, and working with a few third parties has drafted a list of potential information that TNI will need to collect on candidates. (See Attachment 2) TNI would presumably retain this information, so that it is available to state

ABs seeking to contract with third party assessors, whether individuals or non-governmental ABs providing assessors.

Meeting participants recommended that the items be grouped by category, as well as separated by minimum requirements (consistent with the standard) and supplemental qualifications. Some discussion occurred about whether all information could be made public, or if there could/should be “private” information available only to ABs seeking to hire third parties. A committee member asked that results of peer evaluation of assessors be made available as well.

The eventual role of TNI in qualifying or providing third party assessors to NELAP ABs remains undetermined, as does the method(s) of sharing information gathered. There are benefits and liabilities of TNI making a list of names available, since that would imply endorsement and an omission might be inferred to be a negative recommendation. It remains to be seen whether TNI will consider credentialing third party assessors, too, but there was discussion of breaking out the available assessors by experience and qualifications as either lead, supporting, or technical assessors. Eventually, discussion settled on three possibilities. TNI could set minimum qualifications, or verify qualifications and experience as provided by individuals, or perform a full credentialing for assessors. Another possibility raised was that TNI could simply provide generic language for NELAP ABs to use in state Requests-for-Proposals from third party assessors.

Attachment 1 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION BODY COMMITTEE CHARTER

1. Committee Name: Laboratory Accreditation Body	2. Version: 1.0* *As combined Accreditation Body and On-Site Committees	3. Date: January 2012
4. Mission Statement: As a means to improve the quality and consistency of environmental data throughout the United States and to foster the mutual recognition of laboratory accreditation by Accreditation Bodies, the mission of the Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee is to develop and support accreditation standards by engaging experts in a consensus-based standards development process.		
5. Committee Sponsor: Consensus Standards Development Board		
6. Committee Members:	7. Interest Category & Stakeholder Group:	
Joseph Aiello (Chairperson)	AB - NJ State Department of Environmental Protection	
Stephen Arms	AB - FL Department of Health	
Lynn Bradley	Other - Emeritus Federal Government Scientist	
Art Clark	Other - Emeriti Federal Government Scientist	
Nilda Cox	Lab - MWH Laboratories	
Jefferson Flowers	Lab - Flowers Chemical Laboratories, Inc.	
Myron Getman	AB - NY DOH	
John Gumpfer	Other - Chemval	
Virginia Hunsberger	AB - PADEP	
Sharon Mertens	Lab - Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District	
Faust Parker	Lab - Atkins Environmental Toxicology	
Rebecca Pierrot	Lab - ALS	
Aurora Shields	Lab - City of Lawrence KS	
8. Objectives:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Periodically review the TNI Standards for accreditation bodies (Modules 1 & 3) and recommend revisions as necessary for consistency and improvement.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the NELAP program by assisting with implementation of the AB Task Force recommendations of July, 2011.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support the TNI Standards for accreditation bodies by developing and recommending appropriate training and guidance materials as coordinated within the TNI to facilitate the implementation and adoption of these standards on a national level.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review and respond to Standards Interpretation Requests, as referred.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gather information on accreditation body activity as requested. This may include surveys and interviews.		
9. Success Measures:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful adoption of policies and recommendations by TNI and NELAP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assist in development of database for laboratory applications and a generic TNI application to make the process easier. ○ Assist in developing tools to assist ABs with tracking PT data. ○ Assist in developing tools to assist ABs with tracking corrective actions ○ Enhance the process by which NELAP-recognized ABs can use 3rd party assessors. ○ Develop a model solicitation template for states to use in contracting 3rd party assessors and related services. ○ Assist in task force that is evaluating and developing surveillance assessment criteria. • Continued mutual recognition among Accreditation Bodies. • Decisions that are found acceptable by federal, state and private sector organizations. • Increased number of NELAP accreditation bodies and/or accreditation bodies adopting the use of TNI Standards. • Increased number of organizations recognizing NELAP accredited laboratories. 		
10. Key Milestones: <i>(significant events and corresponding dates)</i>		
<i>For the generic application form:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2012 submit the generic application form for comments. • July 2012 – Present beta version of the generic application for review and comments. Identify beta testers. • January 2013 – Make the above mentioned tool available for use; provide information and/or training to the laboratory and AB community. 		
<i>For the 3rd party assessor model:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2012 – Submit 3rd party assessor criteria to membership for comment. • Date TBD – develop plans to collect assessor information. • Date TBD – Develop activities to categorize 3rd party assessors based on the data collected. • Date TBD – Develop activities to evaluate the level of expertise of 3rd party assessors. • Date TBD – Develop program to define TNI's role for providing qualified 3rd party assessors. 		
11. Considerations: <i>(assumptions/constraints/obstacles/risks)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer member organization with significant time constraints • Maturing TNI infrastructure can provide more resources for the committee to achieve their goals. • The committee has the ability to identify and engage the right expertise to get their job done. • The committee has the ability to implement an effective consensus-based standards development process • ABs and other stakeholders will accept the work products of the committee. • Budgetary and financial constraints, as well as industry politics, may prevent the adoption of otherwise usable solutions. • Standards must establish a consistent baseline for achieving good data quality but provide for maximum flexibility with minimum prescriptiveness. 		

12. Available Resources:

- Volunteer committee members
- Existing national and international consensus-based standards
- EPA Cooperative Agreement
- TNI Website
- Other TNI Committees (Expert and Support)
- Participating organizations
- A potentially large group of volunteer associate members to help with committee objectives.
- Benefits from ANSI recognition.

13. Additional Resources Required:

- Industry experts
- Writers and technical editor support
- Database and web-based service support for development of specific tools.
- Web-based services for shared document access during teleconferences
- Administrative support for committee operation
- Travel support
- Members to balance the interest groups of the committee.

14. Anticipated Meeting Schedule: *(specify meeting format and frequency)*

- Monthly Committee Teleconferences (open to all Full and Associate Members)
- Additional committee teleconferences as needed
- Committee meetings (face-to-face) during semiannual TNI Forums (Winter and Summer)

Potential information to be collected from Third Party Assessors

- . Years experience as an environmental assessor
- . Degree(s) held (BA/BS/MS/PhD)
- . Years experience in and analytical laboratory (Positions and duration)
- . Training courses completed (when and where)
 - . Assessor training
 - . Technical Training Courses
 - . Specialized training and skills
 - . Refresher and continuing training courses
- . Specialized program knowledge (TNI, NELAP, NQA-1, ISO 9001...)
- . Specialized technical knowledge (organic, inorganic, radiochemistry,...)
- . Specialized knowledge of software quality principles
- . Current involvement with national organizations
- . Completed course for NELAP assessors
- . Years experience as an environmental assessor
- . Degree(s) held (BA/BS/MS/PhD)
- . Years experience in and analytical laboratory (Positions and duration)
- . Number of quality training presentations made (type and content)
- . Membership in trade/professional organizations
- . TNI Committee membership
- . Authorship of documents related to environmental assessments
- o Contracts maintained and duration
 - . USEPA training as a certification officer for Drinking water
 - . Business Organization and number of years in Business
- o Number of Qualified Assessors
- o Geographic areas covered
 - . Insurances Maintained and Amounts (Liability, errors and omissions, workman's comp, etc)
 - . Statement of Financial Stability (DB)
 - . Organizational Compliance with 17025 and 17011 for operation
 - . Number of NELAP compliant assessments completed
 - . Experience conducting assessment for State accrediting bodies