

## TNI Board of Directors and Committee Chairs Meeting Summary January 16, 2008

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Chair Judy Duncan called the meeting to order on Friday January 16, 2009, at 8:30 am in Miami, FL. The following members were present:

### Roll Call

Directors	Present
Joe Aiello	√
Steve Arms	√
Judith Duncan	√
Jack Farrell	√
Ken Jackson □	√
Tom McAninch	√( by phone)
Sharon Mertens	√
Judy Morgan	√
Ken Olson	X
Aurora Shields	√
Matt Sica	X
Alfredo Sotomayor	√
Dave Speis	√
Curtis Wood	√
Bob Wyeth	√
Ex-Officio Directors	
Brooke Connor	√
Deb Szaro	√ (by phone)
George Detsis	√ (by phone)
Edward Hartzog	X
Committee Chairs	
Art Clark	X
Jeff Flowers	√
June Flowers	√
Maria Friedman	√
Dan Hickman	√
Paul Junio	√
Betsy Kent	√
Carl Kircher	√
Kirstin McCracken	√
Marlene Moore	√
Denise Rice	√
Staff	
Carol Batterton	√
Jerry Parr	√
Ilona Taunton	√
Jane Wilson	√
Guests	
Gary Dechant	√
John Applewhite	√
Bob DiRienzo	√
Paul Bergeron	√

## Agenda Items

### **1. Implementation of the TNI Laboratory Standards**

June Flowers reviewed the recommendations on the new TNI standards that the LASC had provided to the NELAP Board. The LASC recommendations included recommendations for 7 tentative interim amendments, 6 guidance documents, 18 editorial changes. The NELAP Board will review these recommendations and use them in their determination whether or not to adopt the standards. Dan Hickman noted that the Board's focus will be these recommendations and that Standard Interpretation Request inquirers should be notified that it will take longer to get a resolution to their questions.

There was some confusion about how the tentative interim amendment process and editorial changes would be done in relation to the NELAP Board review. Dan Hickman indicated that he would like the NELAP Board to see and act on the final version after all editorial changes had been made. Dan believes that February 2009 is when they need to get through the recommendations they have now and get comments back to LASC, March 2009 is a good target date for adoption, and July 2010 is still a viable implementation date for the ABs. After discussion on the process, Ilona Taunton drafted a flow chart showing how all the activities could be coordinated. (See attached flow chart).

LASC will need to set actual deadlines for all the guidance documents. All documents will need to be complete before the San Antonio meeting. Targeted deadline will likely be mid July to accommodate any unforeseen issues. All committee chairs need to review the records management SOP to ensure that any documents produced conform to these new procedures. Steve also noted that any prepared documents should be sent to him so that the versions can be archived as we move through the implementation process.

Based on discussion above, the plan developed in August, 2008, (Attachment 1) has been modified as shown in redline.

### **2. Field Activities**

Marlene Moore presented the Field Activities Program strategic plan (See Attachment 2) and requested approval from the TNI Board to go forward. Discussion and comments on this proposal included:

- o Bylaws changes may be needed
- o Should we set up a pilot program in one media to get started?
- o Need an accredited stack tester program now for acid rain program
- o TNI board needs to know costs, anticipated revenue, and plan for self-sufficiency before we go forward.
- o Can this be a national program if we have multiple ABs and different boards?

Sharon Mertens made a motion to accept the Field Activities report and strategic plan and for TNI to begin steps for implementation including bylaws changes. Ken Jackson seconded the motion.

Jack Farrell requested an amendment to the motion to require a TNI Board review of the business plan and progress in 6 months (summer meeting). Ken seconded and Sharon concurred with the amendment. All present voted in favor, with none opposed.

### **3. SW-846 Update IVB**

Dave Speis and Dan Hickman reported on discussions with respect to SW-846 method accreditation issues that had occurred over the week. Dan Hickman expressed concern that the NELAP Board could not completely fix this issue alone. The majority of the Accreditation Bodies have agreed to

drop the letter designation for the SW-846 method in their accreditations, but not all ABs will do this. One solution would be to accredit by technology, but the EPA OW would not accept that approach.

Jeff Flowers indicated that ELAB would be visiting with the EPA OSWER in Washington, D.C. to develop a process for handling this issue. Perhaps a member of the NELAP Board could attend this meeting as well. In the future, TNI should consider outreach to regulators who may be unaware of the complications of methods issues in accreditations. TAC could assist with this outreach.

#### **4 Standards Interpretation requests**

Ilona reported that requests for method interpretation that are coming in as a part of the standards interpretation process are de-railing some TNI committees, particularly Technical Assistance. TNI needs to consider a long term solution to methods interpretation, but for now, the website needs to be revised to say that methods interpretation is not the function of the standards interpretation process. Also, the website needs to say that while we are in the standards approval and adoption process, we may not respond to requests. Ilona will work with Jack Farrell to establish a template for responding to method related questions. We would like to provide the inquirer with some links to help them get an answer to their question.

TAC should develop a plan for a long term solution to methods interpretation.

Discussion included the following comments:

- Every region has the authority to decide – so more than response will be likely.
- Consider establishing a blog on questions until we have something up and running.
- Need to involve regional folks to help answer questions.
- TNI could become a repository for the questions and answers, but committees of experts from EPA, regional offices, state people, method experts, etc ..., actually answer the questions.

#### **5. ELAB Report comparing TNI and DW standards**

Jeff Flowers reported that ELAB was in the process of validating the comparison study of the TNI standards and the DW certification manual. Kirstin McCracken and Paul Junio have been invited to assist. Jerry asked when would be an appropriate time for TNI to visit with ELAB to share our impressions of the report. There may be other documents that need to be considered to get the whole picture. We have a 2-3 month window to complete the review.

Judy Duncan suggested that TNI form a work group to get back to ELAB with comments. The work group will consist of one member each from CSDB, Policy Committee, Jack Farrell, Jane Wilson and Jerry Parr. The review will focus on how the programs are similar, how they are different and how they can be brought together. Jerry will take the lead for TNI. ELAB will make a recommendation to EPA based on their final evaluation.

#### **6. Stationary Source Audit Sample**

Maria Friedman reported that drafts of the stationary audit sample standards are out for comment. Comments are due on January 29, 2009. Section and module numbers are needed before the standards can be published as working draft standards. Completion date is estimated to be August 2009. Maria expressed two concerns:

- There is no established sector for Working Draft Standards. Jerry noted that work is in progress to determine where this fits into the organization. May involve the PT Board.
- A2LA has indicated they want to do an additional onsite evaluation of PT providers who participate in this program. It would create additional cost for the PT providers. Jerry will visit with Randy Query about this.

The EPA program ends October 1, 2009, and most believe TNI needs to be ready to assume the program at that time; however, we still do not have all the information we need to set up the program. EPA has a database for states to enter audit samples results, but the A2LA PT database doesn't work for this purpose. Some think we may still be able to use EPA's database after Oct. 1. TNI should consider whether it will be possible to use the lab accreditation database being built with assistance for NFSTC. TNI should follow up with NFSTC on funding availability. We should also determine where this program fits within TNI's organizational structure.

Dan Hickman noted that we should consider using TNI method codes for any work done on the database. He also mentioned that he believes some of the elements of the needed database are similar to LAMS and that he should be consulted before anything gets started. Jerry is looking into how to get Dan access to the current EPA database so that he can evaluate how it might fit.

## 7. Proficiency Testing

Frequency of PT: the subcommittee working on the PT frequency issue doesn't have enough information to make a recommendation yet. The key question that needs to be answered is "What is the purpose of PTs?" Jerry will look at the CNAEL report and early PT minutes to see if we can determine what the early thinking was. Kirstin expects something to be ready by the San Antonio meeting.

FOPTs: The PT Board has four FoPT subcommittees.

- Micro – most of this subcommittee's recommendations have been adopted. Some could not because of conflict with the 2003 standard.
- WET – this subcommittee is very close to providing a recommendation so that the EPA criteria document can be retired.
- Air and Emissions – this subcommittee is working on two tables, one is for SSAS. They are very close to making a recommendation to the PT Board.
- Chemistry – this subcommittee is re-evaluating current limits and looking to eliminate the experimental PT tables. They will also be working on group headings to make it clear which analytes must be run.

GLEMP: Carl Craig posed the issue of this program at the Advocacy committee meeting. The idea behind GLEMP was for industries to be able to pull together their resources to help select competent laboratories. Labs were ranked based on PT performance and the group had talked about performing on-site audits. GLEMP is now without a PT program given the recent merger between ERA and APG.

The question being raised is whether industrial clients need something beyond NELAP accreditation. A group was formed (Ilona Taunton, Bob Wyeth, Judy, Dave Spies, Curtis Woods) to work on this. A meeting with ERA and GLEMP may be a consideration. This group will consider the issue and come back to the TNI Board with recommendations.

## 8. DMRQA

EPA has indicated that NELAP accredited labs will no longer have to participate in DMRQA.

## 9. New ABs

Carol Batterton reported that applications from two new accreditation bodies are expected in about six weeks. They are Virginia and Minnesota. Evaluation teams will need to be assigned and the QAO contract extended. South Carolina has been considering making application, but the current budget uncertainties have put their plans on hold. South Carolina also expressed concern about participating in the program due to their perception of assessor inconsistency.

Several remarked that assessor uniformity was brought up as an issue several times during the conference and that assessor uniformity needs to be emphasized more as we move forward with the new standards. Jack Farrell indicated that this would be a good topic for an Assessment Forum. Some aspects of that training could include development of an assessment SOP, steps to a successful assessment, what you thought was a deficiency really isn't. The definition of consistency needs to be established to move forward successfully with this training. We can ask labs with more than one accreditation to provide examples of inconsistencies.

Denise Rice pointed out that the Onsite Assessment Committee has developed 3 guidance documents for use with the new standards. These guidance documents include a basic training course curriculum and technical course curricula.

## **10. Organizational Structure**

NELAP Board: Need to add an EPA person as ex officio to the NELAP Board, and also provision for associate members.

Bylaws The Policy committee will draft bylaws changes. Changes for Field Activities may be needed as well

QA: Need to consider adding a function for QA feedback to the TNI Board on the activities of the NELAP Board. This function could mirror the old AARB with annual review and report.

## **11. Advocacy**

RS&T Directors and regional labs: TNI has a credibility issue with some EPA Regions and we need to take steps to reach out to these Regions, particularly the RS&T Directors.

Judy's survey: TNI should use the information gathered from this survey in future outreach efforts and to identify problems that may exist.

Help for state agencies: The TNI Board should put together a letter ASAP to state agencies about the value of the NELAP accreditation program.

## **10. Administrative**

Website: The website committee has volunteered to do the QA function for the National Database.

Policies: The new document control policy is effective April 2009. Jerry will schedule a meeting with staff to review.

Annual committee reports: TNI bylaws require each committee to submit an annual report. The Policy committee is working on an example to share. Committees will be required to review their old charters and submit new ones.

Board election: six TNI board members terms will expire. They are Joe Aiello, Ken Jackson, Dave Speis, Jack Farrell, Judy Duncan, and Curtis Wood. Jerry will post notice for applications and the election will be in April. A new chair will be needed also. Jerry will send a reminder to board members with expiring terms.

Finance and budget: the final 2008 financial report will be presented at the February Board meeting. The 2009 budget may be re-visited after the 2008 report is reviewed. If EPA grant money is not forthcoming soon, we may need to revise the 2009 budget.

### **11. Next meeting**

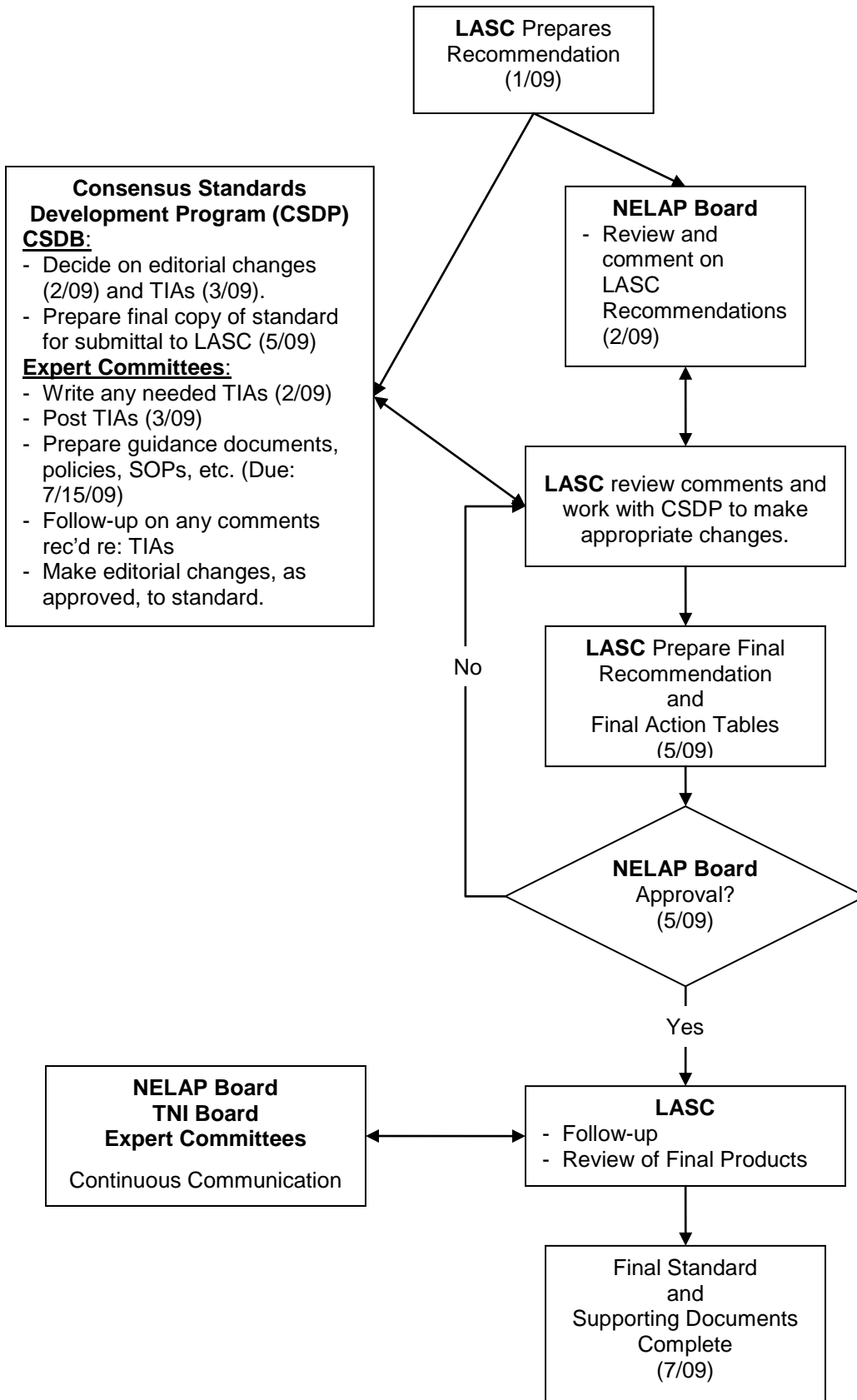
The next TNI Board meeting is February 11, 2009.

Attachment 1

**Project Plan: TNI Standards Implementation**

<b>Task</b>	<b>By whom?</b>	<b>When?</b>
<b>Consensus Standards Development Board</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalized standards for Laboratories and Proficiency Testing</li> </ul>	Expert Committees	June 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop SOP for tentative interim amendments</li> </ul>	CSDB and Policy Committee	November 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differences/changes documents for LASC use</li> </ul>	Expert Committees	ASAP
<b>Laboratory Accreditation System Committee</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review standards and provide comments/questions to expert committees (through CSDB) as developed</li> </ul>	LASC	ASAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerate meeting schedule and/or schedule face to face meetings as needed</li> </ul>	LASC	ASAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make recommendation concerning standards adoption to NELAP Board</li> </ul>	LASC	January 2009 (Miami meeting)
<b>Expert Committees</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TIAs</li> <li>Editorial changes</li> </ul>		
<b>NELAP Board</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt recommendation of LASC</li> </ul>	NELAP Board	March 31, 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new standards</li> </ul>	NELAP ABs	July 2010
<b>Technical Assistance Committee</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise the Quality Manual template to be consistent with the new standards</li> </ul>	Ilona Taunton	August 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop mentoring session on new standards for Miami meeting</li> </ul>		January 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and schedule regional workshops on the new standards</li> </ul>		Spring/Fall 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop guidance, SOPS, etc, as requested for implementation</li> </ul>		July 2009

**FLOW CHART - TNI STANDARD FINALIZATION (01-16-09-v0)**





**Attachment 2**

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**THE NELAC INSTITUTE  
FIELD ACTIVITIES PROGRAM**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2009-2012**

**Clarifying Mission and Purpose**

WORKSHEETS

January 15, 2009

*Voted – 1/14/09 Committee meeting*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Consistent with the mission of TNI, the purpose of the National Environmental Field Activities Accreditation Program (NEFAP) is to foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an open, inclusive, and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the community.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

All organizations conducting environmental field sampling and measurements in the United States will be accredited to TNI's consensus national standards.

## **PROGRAM HISTORY AND PROFILE**

Laboratories that perform environmental analyses have long been subject to accreditation/ certification programs but no such effort has been established for organizations that perform field measurements or conduct sampling. On July 1, 1999, the TNI formed a new standing committee, the Field Activities committee that was chartered to develop standards for the accreditation of Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations (FSMOs).<sup>1</sup>

In 2002, this committee developed and approved a standard for "sampling and field measurements, which are not explicitly covered in other NELAC standards." However, this standard was never adopted into regulation by an accreditation body (AB). In 2003, the Field Activities committee began work on new accreditation standards based on ISO 17011 and ISO 17025.

In 2007, TNI adopted two standards for the accreditation of FSMOs:

Volume 1: General Requirements for Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations

Volume 2: General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations

The Field Activities Committee is charged by the TNI Board through its committee charter to guide Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations (FSMO) and Accreditation Bodies (AB) through the accreditation process using a systematic method that assures a uniform approach for entities seeking or granting accreditation. Specific requirements that are essential to the accreditation process are identified for each type of organization in the TNI standards. The TNI standards direct FSMOs and ABs to procedures that are required as part of the accreditation program.

In order for this activity to be a truly national program, policies and procedures must be written to ensure the consistent implementation of these standards. In addition, agreements between the accreditation bodies (ABs) and TNI are necessary to ensure the evaluation of the implementation of the standards, TNI policies and procedures are completed in a uniform and fair manner.

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<sup>1</sup> The references to TNI for activities that occurred from 1997 to 2006 refer to the predecessor organizations to TNI, the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference or the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation.

Lessons from history provide insight into key practices offering stability and growth for this new program.

- There is recognition among many that this program is needed.
- TNI has established procedures to enhance openness, transparency and consensus.
- A few dedicated volunteers with a passion for this effort, committee structure and balance, and the expertise and experience of the organization's membership are all proven assets.
- Accreditation standards have been developed.
- TNI has financial assistance from EPA to support this effort through 2010.

There are, however, recurring themes that contribute to instability and need to be addressed to ensure success.

- Except in very limited circumstances, there are no statutory or regulatory requirements that would make such a program mandatory.
- There are only a few identified accreditation bodies as of December 2008. (Third party and government sector)

This Strategic Plan was prepared to provide clarity of the future of the TNI FSMO effort and to provide a plan for implementing a field activities accreditation program. This plan would result in the formation of the TNI National Environmental Field Activities Accreditation Program (NEFAP)

## **NEFAP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **Program Description**

The purpose of this program is to provide an organizational framework for the accreditation of field sampling and measurement organizations (FSMOs) within the TNI structure. The primary components of this program are to:

- implement consensus standards for the accreditation of FSMOs,
- evaluate and approve applications for organizations to become TNI recognized FSMO Accreditation Bodies, and
- provide an infrastructure to support the above efforts, for example, advocacy, technical assistance, etc...

### **Structure**

1. TNI Board
2. NEFAP Board
3. Field Activities Expert Committee, Accreditation Body Committee and other Expert and support committees

### **NEFAP Board**

The NEFAP Board consists of balanced representation of the following stakeholder interests:

- representative(s) from the TNI Board of Directors
- representative(s) of the TNI Field Activities expert committee

- representative(s) from FSMO Accreditation Body committee, (AB Committee to vote for representation on this Board.)
- representative(s) of Organizations that perform field sampling and/or measurements,
- Other interests, including at least one representative from a government agency, (This is to include representation for different media.

The board shall not have any interest category in a position of dominance. The members are voting members of the board except when a conflict of interest arises. The Board would elect their own chair. Meetings are open for participation to all TNI members. Meeting minutes are to be posted to the TNI website.

The NEFAP Board has the following duties:

- Guide NEFAP in its primary mission for developing and maintaining a program for the accreditation of FSMOs.
- Serve as the policy and coordinating body in matters relating to this program.
- Hold accountable, review, and approve actions of all NEFAP committees.
- Determine whether or not a field activities accreditation standard is suitable for implementation.
- Determine the schedule for implementation of new or revised field activities accreditation standards.
- Approve clarifications and interpretations on standards related to NEFAP.
- Provide an annual report to the TNI Board of Directors on the activities of this program.
- Review and approve organizations as FSMO accreditation bodies by the establishment of mutual recognition process
- Establish a process by which all FSMO accreditation bodies are periodically reviewed to ensure their conformance to the requirements for accreditation bodies.

### **Field Activities Expert Committee**

This committee develops consensus standards for the accreditation of field sampling and measurement organizations (FSMO). The operation of this committee is governed by TNI SOP 2-101, Procedures for Expert Committee Operations. The composition is governed by the TNI Procedures Governing Standards Development. The Field Activities Expert Committee Chair provides a liaison to the Consensus Standards Development Board.

The mission and objectives for the FAC is as follows:

The mission of the TNI Field Activities Committee is to develop specific field accreditation standards for accrediting bodies for field sampling and measurement activities by engaging industry experts in a consensus-based standards development process providing the means to improve the quality and consistency of environmental data throughout the United States.

The committee will support these field accreditation standards with appropriate guidance materials to facilitate implementation and adoption of these standards on a national and international level. The committee is committed to establishing and maintaining an environment for standards development that will ensure continual improvement of field accreditation

standards that are aligned with the practical constraints of sampling and field measurement as well as regulatory and industry specific requirements.

- \* Improve the quality and consistency of environmental data by establishing standards for activities related to environmental sampling and field measurements
- \* Engage industry experts in the standards development process through targeted outreach activities to ensure the development of standards for various medias that are practical, appropriate and implement-able for organizations of varying size and structure.
- \* Develop consensus-based field accreditation standards that are consistent with other national and international standards, avoiding unnecessary duplication and non-value added requirements. Complete the initial phase of standards with the development of the foundational standards (competency and conformity assessment) and at least one (1) matrix-specific field standard.
- \* Collaborate with affected stakeholders to develop a practical and functional audit system, specifically designed to assess conformance to the requirements of the standard, which utilizes existing resources and capabilities to ensure that: the required technical expertise is available; costs are minimized; and the quality and consistency of environmental data continually improves.
- \* Continually evaluate and establish success measures to target opportunities for improvement.
- \* Develop and maintain the tools (e.g., guidance documents, templates, training materials, etc.) necessary for consistent standards implementation.

Utilize existing and future TNI infrastructure and resources to accomplish mission.

### **Role of the TNI Board of Directors**

The TNI Board of Directors performs the following activities to support this program:

- Assigns a Program Administrator to assist with work of the field activities program and determines the level of activity for this individual.
- Appoints one member to the NEFAP Board.
- Reviews and approves an annual budget for the program.
- Provides oversight to evaluate how well the program is achieving its goals.
- Dispute resolution

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

<b>Goal(s)</b>	<b>Objectives/Priorities</b>
1. Build a recognition process for ABs to ensure uniform implementation of the TNI FSMO standards	This process is to include an evaluation of ABs to meet, implement and understand the TNI standards. The evaluation process is to be a peer review process following procedures adopted by the interested parties (AB with input from the TNI stakeholders). (High priority concurrent with item 2 and 3 below)
2. Work with the TNI Board to revise the TNI bylaws, if necessary, to ensure reasonable fit with this program.	FAC, NEFAP Board and ABs to work with TNI Board to review bylaws if necessary – priority with item 3.
3. Review TNI Policies and SOPs, especially in the implementation of a national program that ensures consistent implementation.	May require separate policies, SOPs and Bylaws revision. High priority for TNI Board to review and update these items.  This must be discussed for August TNI meeting (2009) and publish necessary changes to TNI By-Laws for vote.
4. Implement the FSMO Accreditation Program	Establish a process for input from the ABs to the TNI Field Activities Committee on changes or improvements required to the standards. Establish a TNI fee structure to accomplish the evaluation process and other aspects of the NEFAP as identified by the stakeholder community. Establish a process for interpretation of the FSMO standards  Consider a pilot for a segment of the industry such as stack testing. (Second priority concurrent with item 8 below)
5. Establish the voluntary adoption and formal acceptance of NEFAP in contracts, regulatory program and other forms of requirements.	Work with data users for voluntary adoption of NEFAP for accreditation of sample collection and field-testing organization as part of selection of contractors. Primary process is to work with DoD, other federal agencies or state agencies for adoption/acceptance of TNI 3 <sup>rd</sup> party process. Second priority concurrent with 4
6. Develop government (federal, state and local) acceptance of the TNI accreditation program.	Either as voluntary or mandatory acceptance process. Low priority.
7. Evaluate the SSAS effort to see if it should be incorporated into this program.	Stationary Source Audit Samples (SSAS). At this time the committee does not see the SSAS process as part of the field activity process. Requires discussion in the future to determine if this process is more consistent with PT Board or NEFAP Board if the program moves toward a PT program. (Low priority, since NEFAP can incorporate by reference or include in process as best fit is determined.
8. Review TNI Policies and SOPs, especially in the standards development area, to ensure reasonable fit with this program.	Review of standards adoption to ensure balance and appropriate stakeholder input. (Low priority since standards are adopted)