

**Consensus Standard Development Board Meeting
Forum on Environmental Laboratory Accreditation
Newport Beach, CA
January 17, 2008**

Board members present:

Ken Jackson (Chair)

Anand Mudambi

Jeff Flowers

Bob DiRienzo

JoAnn Boyd

Denise Rice

David Speis

Jane Wilson (Program Administrator)

Other participants:

Kirstin McCracken – Test America

Sam Stribling – Tetra Tech

Paul Bergeron – LA DEQ

Ken Jackson welcomed the participants and the attendees provided self-introductions.

Proposal to Develop Taxonomy Standard

Sam Stribling described the need for a standard for personnel involved in taxonomy – the process of identifying and naming biological organisms. The field of taxonomy forms the basis of for the application of biological data. Biological monitoring is becoming more common as part of ecological risk assessment and experienced taxonomists are hard to find. The proposed model could be an accredited taxonomy laboratory that has certified personnel on staff. It would be an individual proficiency testing model to verify the taxonomist has the ability to produce reliable data. It is proposed as a new TNI standards sector so as to provide the most flexibility.

Sam described the North American Benthological Society (NABS) program that is in place – it needs a consensus standard to use as its basis. An examination is available – certification is good for 5 years. The test is a practical exam that covers five separate taxonomic sectors.

In order to move forward, the standards project would have to be conducted within the current TNI policies. The project is consistent with the TNI mission. Since it would require the formation of a new Expert Committee, it would be helpful to have some TNI members and experienced Expert Committee members participate. Mentoring and an orientation process would be helpful, as it would for any new committee. Ken will provide Sam with the current TNI policies for standards development and committee operations.

Next steps – TNI Board and CSD Board will confirm whether TNI will undertake the project, and Sam will determine whether the TNI process can be compatible with the NABS process and its requirements.

Field Sampling and Monitoring Organization (FSMO) Accreditation Policy

David Speis explained that the Field Activities Committee drafted an Accreditation Process policy since that function is not addressed in the FSMO standard. The policy describes the accreditation process for four different types of situations. The approach is necessary because of the “umbrella” approach used in the standards for multi-site FSMOs. The FSMO can apply for a multi-site organization if using the same quality system for each site. The policy also describes different processes for independent accrediting bodies versus government accrediting bodies. Dave also reviewed key points of the FSMO standards for the Board.

Due to meeting time constraints, the Board will continue the review and approval process for this policy via email following the Forum. NOTE: The policy was subsequently approved on February 1, 2008 by email vote of the CSDB and forwarded to the TNI Policy Committee.

Comments Put on Hold for Next Standards Revision Cycle

Comments related to reduction in frequency of proficiency testing (PT) samples were put on hold by the PT Expert Committee. Ken encouraged the Expert Committee Chairs to review all comments being held for the next revision during an upcoming EC meeting. The Committee should try to define the data that is needed to make a decision on the comment. The Advocacy Committee has asked PT to report on progress on the PT sample issue at the next TNI meeting in August 2008. ELAB will also act as a liaison for agency and state participants.

Moving the TNI Standards Forward

The next step for the PT and Quality System (QS) modules is to send them to the Uniformity of Standards Committee (USC) for consistency review. They should look at all 14 modules for consistency amongst the whole TNI standards. Only editorial changes can be made at this point. The USC should report back to the Expert Committees to ensure all changes are editorial and do not unintentionally change requirements. The TNI appeals period will start after posting the final standards to the TNI site. Also there is a need to make it clear that the new TNI standard is not yet implemented and labs should not use it yet.

The CSDB will provide notification to the NELAP Board and the Laboratory Accreditation System Program after the 30 day appeal period has expired. The TNI Executive Director will confirm whether any appeals were received or have been completed.

Implementation of the new TNI decision-making policy will be an item for next CSDB meeting.