

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting September 20, 2010

1. Roll call

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 12:30 PM CDT on September 20, 2010. Steve Stubbs opened the meeting, and served as chair until Aaren Alger arrived. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the 9-7-10 meeting were reviewed and approved for posting, with one change – the section cited by Steve Arms (comment that FL cannot accept PT samples from non-accredited PT providers) is Section 4.1.2 (not 4.1.12, as initially stated.) Steve Arms moved for approval and Paul Bergeron seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous for approval.

3. Kevin Kubik's position

Kevin Kubik has served as ex-officio representative to the AC for some months now, and the Chair expressed gratitude for his presence and valuable help as liaison with the EPA.

Kevin has taken another position within EPA Region 2, and will no longer be able to participate in TNI activities. His role as evaluator will be assumed by Linda Mael, of Region 2; she was the "original" evaluator there. Kevin's replacement to the AC should be named soon, but he will continue participation until that individual is identified.

NOTE: as of September 21, the FEM Director notified TNI that Arthur (Art) Clark from EPA Region 1 assume this ex-officio position for EPA.

4. Review of Evaluation SOP and associated documents

The new Evaluation SOP was been approved by the Accreditation Body Expert Committee and sent to the LAS Executive Committee (LAS EC) for review and approval. Concurrently, a copy was sent to the Policy Committee and the AC for preliminary review.

Cathy Westerman offered several comments on the SOP that are not "show-stoppers" but worthy of consideration and more details were provided in a separate email to Lynn and Aaren, following the meeting. NOTE: Because the SOP is pending LAS EC approval, those comments were sent to LAS EC Chair for consideration and incorporation at their discretion; should they be satisfactorily addressed now, the approval process will be smoother.

It was determined that no additional changes to the AB application were needed beyond

adding the requirement for including the dates of last assessment for accredited labs, and this document (plus the associated Completeness Checklist) is final. The Compliance Checklist (Technical Review) has also been developed and is undergoing review in the LAS EC, but does not require LAS EC approval.

The Fields of Accreditation table, required to accompany the Application Form, was the subject of extended discussion. An updated table is in development, that provides example methods for each matrix and technology (M/T), and that will include Technology Codes, as will be required for the database when that comes online.

A process for adding new M/T fields needs to be formulated, since ABs commonly do add new fields in the months between evaluations. When EPA led the evaluation process, the EPA (lead) evaluators approved new M/Ts for ABs, but nothing has superseded that now-defunct approval. This becomes particularly important since the TNI Standard requires that assessors be trained in all areas being assessed, with suitable documentation, so the M/T fields need to be standardized across ABs.

5. Review of implementation guidance document

One revision of the Implementation Guidance document had already been made, based on comments submitted before the AC meeting, and a request for further clarification of the document's opening paragraph was made, since it's not yet clear that all ABs will be able to implement all aspects of the new TNI standard effective July 1, 2011. This guidance is being submitted to the Policy Committee for approval under the procedures of the new Guidance SOP (in development.)

Some ABs expressed concern about their ability to comply with aspects of the Proficiency Testing Standard. The largest issues concern the grading protocol of "<" (the less-than reporting) and possible use of unaccredited PT providers. Some states cannot use "less than" results in their PT grading scheme. These issues may have substantial impact on secondary accreditations. While this is expected to affect a small subset of labs, it needs to be resolved. In hindsight, these comments were made during the development of the PT standard, but were not addressed, and the standard was then adopted through the processes in place.

Initially, Steve Arms and Aaren Alger will talk with Jerry Parr about possible solutions, that may include requesting a temporary interim amendment (TIA) to the PT standard, or other yet-to-be-identified solutions. The AC believes that ample time exists to resolve the problem so that impact on laboratories can be avoided.

6. Next meeting

The next regular conference call of the NELAP AC should be on October 4, 2010. Potential agenda items will include:

Approval of minutes

Status of Evaluation SOP and related documents
Follow-up on Implementation Guidance discussions
Action items from TNI Board memo
Additional discussion on technologies table
TNI assistance grant from EPA – statement of work

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
CA	George Kulasingam T: (510) 620-3155 F: (510) 620-3165 E: gkulasin@cdph.ca.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Jane Jensen jjensen@cdph.ca.gov	
FL	Stephen Arms T: (904) 791-1502 F: (904) 791-1591 E: steve_arms@doh.state.fl.us	Yes
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	Alternate: TBA	
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	Alternate: Michelle Wade MWade@kdheks.gov	
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	Altérnate:	
LA DHH	Louis Wales T: (225) 342-8491 F: (225) 342-7494 E: lwales@dhh.la.gov	No

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	Alternate: TBD	
NJ	Joe Aiello T: (609) 633-3840 F: (609) 777-1774 joseph.aiello@dep.state.nj.us	No
	Alternate : TBD	
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PA	Aaren Alger T: (717) 346-8212 F: (717) 346-8590 E: aaalger@state.pa.us	Yes

	Alternate: Dana Marshall dmarshall@state.pa.us	
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UT	David Mendenhall T: (801) 584-8470 F: (801) 584-8501 E: davidmendenhall@utah.gov	Yes
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VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 cathy.westerman@dgs.va.gov	Yes
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	Program Administrator: Carol Batterton T: 830-990-1029 or 512-924-2102 E: carbat@beecreek.net	No
EPA Liaison	Kevin Kubik T: 732-321-4377 E: kubik.kevin@epa.gov	Yes
	Evaluation Coordinator: Lynn Bradley T: 202-565-2575 E: Bradley.lynn@epa.gov	Yes
	Quality Assurance Officer Paul Ellingson T: 801-201-8166 E: altasnow@gmail.com	Yes
	Oklahoma David Caldwell Judy Duncan	Yes