

## Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting

August 19, 2013

### 1. Roll call and Approval of Minutes

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 pm EDT on Monday, August 19, 2013. Minutes of the July 15, 2013, meeting were approved. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

### 2. Action Items Pending

- Inform PT Expert Committee of need to address requiring PTs for crypto when there is no TNI-recognized PTP – perhaps by language including state- or federally-recognized PTPs (done)
- Communicate to QS Expert Committee and LAS EC Chairs that, for now, any revisions of SIR responses based on AC comments on the voting site must be coordinated through the LAS EC and ought not be undertaken independently (done)
- Communicate to TNI Executive Director that read-only access to AC SIR voting site may be granted to expert committee chairs
- Obtain exact and official title of the current version of the 2009 TNI Standard with TIAs (Lynn to do)
- Draft RFP for third party evaluator to be prepared for AC review, by September
- Letter to CA with deadline for response to site report (CA Lead Evaluator)
- Final Response to Complaint from ACIL – pending completion of evaluation process for the AB (site report sent to CA)

NOTE: The email vote on the policy concerning ABs notifying the AC about operational changes closed on July 29 with 14 ABs approving and one not responding to the vote. The policy has been forwarded to the Policy Committee for review but is immediately implemented by the Council. Policy Committee has also been notified that the AC does not wish to adopt the recommended “unanimous consent” approval process for SIRs and that Policy Committee should continue with its review of the most recently approved NELAP Voting SOP as it stands.

### 3. Follow-Up from Conference

#### Crypto Meeting

Susan summarized the crypto meeting with a few TNI Board members and EPA representatives (including the AC and Board liaisons.) She explained that during an earlier call with Carrie Miller and R5’s Certification Officer, Al Alwan, she had the opportunity to fully describe the NELAP accreditation process and how it includes compliance with client requirements, such as the Certification Manual and in particular, the new Chapter 7. She also noted that EPA now accepts MN ELAP’s assessments of the crypto methods while they address the Chapter 7 requirements and include use of the crypto checklist therein. NOTE: Susan indicated that if any ABs object to the tacit agreement by the Council to use this checklist, they should speak up ASAP, else EPA will believe that all agree to its use. For further details on this meeting, see Attachment B of

the August 9 AC minutes.

The issue of requiring 2 PTs/year for crypto was raised, since there is presently no PT Provider recognized by TNI. The sole US provider, WI State Laboratory of Hygiene, will be strongly encouraged to apply for TNI recognition, which ought not to be difficult since it is already ISO 17043 accredited as a PTP.

Steve Arms noted that its Chapter 7-trained assessor will be accompanied by the EPA contractor to observe a crypto assessment in NY State, in the near future.

#### Access to the SIR Voting Site

During conference, Paul Junio (QS Expert Committee Chair,) was granted read-only access to the AC voting site, and had emailed Aaren to inquire whether he could begin to revise SIR responses based on the AC comments. The council discussed the pros and cons of having expert committee chairs having access to this site and reached consensus that such access would support the AC's commitment to transparency and ought to be granted. NOTE: LAS EC wishes to have a period of stability with its newly approved revisions to its SIR SOP, so that Paul Junio has been asked not to undertake revisions to SIR responses until the LAS EC's process for determining when those are necessary has a chance to play out.

#### Implementation Status of the 2009 TNI Standard

ABs not participating in the Council's session at conference will be asked to update their status. (This will be communicated to the TNI Board with the August Program Report, as prepared by the Program Administrator regularly. All available information, at the time of writing these minutes, is in the August 9 minutes. Once the remaining information is available, an updated table will be provided to the Council.)

#### Other concerns

Several negative reflections on the NELAP program were noted, in the NEMC's session about laboratory accreditation (Thursday afternoon August 9, sponsored by ACIL and moderated by Matt Sica) and also that continuing concerns were expressed about the perception that California is not meeting NELAP standards and by extension that the entire NELAP program is problematic.

- This latter concern led Fred to offer an update on the status of the CA ELAP. The program was to merge with the drinking water laboratory, but that, several weeks ago, a memo issued from the Governor's office stating that ELAP will be moved to the Water Board. This means that what seemed like forward progress has been returned to limbo status, and Fred estimates this will take at least 2-4 months to resolve, but was uncertain whether the pending legislation to authorize such reorganization would be effective in 2014 or 2015.
- Since the issuance of CA's response to the site report from the evaluation has been delayed awaiting the merger with the drinking water lab, this new development clearly delays resolution CA ELAP's status. After discussion, the Council agreed to send a letter to the current acting Branch Chief, Dave Mazzer, setting a deadline of no more than 2 months for response to the site report. Presumably, some corrective actions have been implemented and those can be acknowledged even as the program's organizational location remains beyond the control of program management. This would permit the AC to

issue some sort of response to ACIL that should help de-fuse the increasing vocalizations of discontent among CA-accredited NELAP labs.

Several AB representatives noted that expert committees have responded positively to comments from NELAP ABs on the standards being revised. The PT Expert Committee made significant improvements to its standard in response to comments and the new PT Chair, Shawn Kassner, commits to sustaining a closer working relationship with the AC. The Chemistry Expert Committee also responded positively to the many comments from NELAP ABs, ruling most “persuasive” and assigning new committee member Gary Ward to re-write those portions of the standard. Scott noted that he also has joined the Chemistry Committee, so will likely be drafted to assist Gary.

Susan noted that Dan Hickman, TNI’s Database Administrator, spoke to the AC session, urging the remaining ABs to upload their Field of Accreditation data into LAMS. He also noted that some ABs have not been uploading changes to demographic data, and asked that those be taken care of. As ever, Dan stands ready and willing to assist any AB with its efforts to upload data into LAMS.

Susan also indicates that she’s unable to determine the exact title of the “official” standard – the 2009 TNI Standard with TIAs. Lynn will check with Jerry and get a definitive answer to this. Susan also asked for clarification about which versions of the standards being revised are circulating, and seeks to ensure that only the versions with all changes being considered need to be reviewed, not multiple versions with multiple revisions.

#### **4. Need for AC Policy about “Home State” NELAP Accreditations**

The old NELAC Standard required that laboratories apply for NELAP accreditation in the state in which they are located, where possible, but this requirement is not part of the TNI Standard. It was supposed to be adopted as part of a set of policies after TNI was formed but has not emerged. With the transition away from the NELAC standard, this becomes increasingly urgent. Paul asked if the AC would please prepare and adopt such a policy.

Susan noted that she has been charged by the Policy Committee with a review of NELAP policies and procedures, identifying gaps and getting those items into policies for the program. She committed to completing this process and presenting the results to the AC, as well as to the Policy Committee. Then the AC can determine how to get the policies drafted and implemented.

#### **5. Resuming Discussion of “Unanimous Consent” from July Meeting**

The Council initially discussed this issue at its July 15 meeting, but did not reach resolution. Concerns were expressed about possible later repercussions or unforeseen negative impacts. Paul had invited AC members to email him with their thoughts.

Discussion resumed with a review of the “unanimous consent” procedure, and the suggestion that perhaps the AC could be more open and transparent than in the “NELAC era.” There was some sentiment for avoiding the situation of forcing an AB to vote on an item (particularly a SIR) that is not within the scope of accreditations that it offers.

Consensus was reached that unanimous consent ought not to be adopted, and that the Voting SOP should not be revised to address that procedure. This means that the most

recently approved version (April 29, 2013) should be reviewed by Policy Committee as it stands. NOTE: Policy Committee has been advised of this decision.

**6. Next Meeting**

The next AC meeting will be on Monday, September 9, 2013. The scheduled meeting would fall on the Labor Day holiday, so the following week was chosen as alternate meeting time. A reminder with the conference call information and agenda will be sent the previous week.

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**Attachment 1**

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Guests:		