

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting October 4, 2010

1. Roll call

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 12:30 PM CDT on October 4, 2010. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the 9-20-10 meeting were reviewed. Several members had emailed suggested revisions. Revisions will be made and the minutes circulated again prior to approval.

3. Standards Interpretation Requests

Iiona Taunton forwarded several standards interpretation requests (SIRs) that had previously been forwarded to the NELAP AC to prepare a response. The AC made the following determinations on these requests:

#105: does the accreditation process include all steps in the process, including sample prep? Specifically, if a lab is not accredited but performs the digestion of a water sample for method 6020 analysis then sends the digested aliquot to an accredited lab for the actual analysis can the results be considered valid from an accredited lab?

The lab will need to contact their specific AB for the answer to this question. Carol will draft the response. Scott Hoatson volunteered to assist.

#110: Does the standard require that a CAB use:

1. the most recent method (e.g. most recent version of EPA200.7)?
2. the most recent version of a compilation of Standards (e.g. STANDARD METHODS)?
3. or none of the above?

It was consensus of the AC following discussion on this questions that labs can use whatever version of standard methods that they want to as long as they document the version used and it meets program needs. However, the AC felt that the TNI Quality Systems Expert committee is the most appropriate group to respond to this question.

With regard to the remaining SIRs, the AC determined that these are truly interpretations of standards, and as such, it is not appropriate for the AC to make an interpretation. These requests will be sent back to LASEC with a request to have an expert committee prepared the response. Therefore, numbers 17, 23, 27, 93, and 99, along with 110 will be sent back to

LASEC with a request to forward to the appropriate expert committee for response.

Carol advised the AC that the electronic voting process for SIRs was now operational. In order for the AC to comply with their voting SOP, Ilona has suggested the following approach:

- Ilona will forward to Carol the SIR numbers of any SIRs that were added for online voting that week. Carol will use this information to alert the AC that there are new SIRs to review and vote on.
- Ilona will forward a summary of any SIRs that have received 10 affirmative votes (2/3 – Quorum) using the online system. These will be addressed at the next NELAP AC meeting by requesting a motion to accept the SIRs that have received 2/3 voting support on-line and then voting using the normal accreditation related topics voting procedures. This means that anyone not on the call will have the opportunity to vote over the next 2 weeks on the motion and then it will be finalized.
- Ilona will forward information on SIRs that are receiving “Needs Discussion” votes to have them discussed on a future NELAP AC call.

There was concern expressed that the system does not allow any indication that a vote is final. Votes may be changed after initially cast. Carol will advise Ilona to see if something can be changed to indicate a final vote.

4. Implementation of new PT standards

Following discussion at the last meeting about the difficulty that some ABs will have implementing the new PT standards, Aaren and Steve Arms met with Jerry Parr to discuss options for implementation. Jerry, Aaren and Steve developed the attached list of options for the NELAP AC to consider going forward.

In addition to the LOQ reporting issues noted in the options paper, some ABs will have problems implementing sections of the new standard dealing with PT analysis date reporting, unapproved PT providers, and experimental PTs.

Following discussion, Stephanie Ostrowski moved that the NELAP AC pursue option # 2 and re-vote on problematic sections of the PT standard. She further moved that these sections need to be fully identified before a re-vote takes place. Steve Stubbs seconded. In a roll call vote, all present voted in favor with the exception of NH and NJ who requested opportunity to vote by email. MN was no longer present on the call and will be allowed to vote by email as well.

Aaren stated that she and Steve Stubbs will work together to identify a list of problematic sections for the NELAP ACs consideration in re-voting.

5. Next meeting

The next regular conference call of the NELAP AC should be on October 18, 2010.

Potential agenda items will include:

Approval of minutes

Discussion on re-voting of PT standard

SIRs

Action items from TNI Board memo

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
	Alternate: Carl Kircher carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us	
IL	Scott Siders T: (217) 785-5163 F: (217) 524-6169 E: scott.siders@illinois.gov	Yes
	Alternate: TBA	
KS	Dennis L. Dobson 785-291-3162 ddobson@kdhe.state.ks.us F: (785) 296-1638	Yes
	Alternate: Michelle Wade MWade@kdheks.gov	
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-1244 F: 225-219-8244 E: Paul.Bergeron@la.gov	Yes
	Altérnate:	
LA DHH	Louis Wales T: (225) 342-8491 F: (225) 342-7494 E: lwales@dhh.la.gov	Yes

	Alternate: Ginger Hutto ghutto@dhh.la.gov	
MN	Susan Wyatt T: 651.201.5323 F: E: susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	
	Alternate: Stephanie Drier stephanie.drier@state.mn.us	Yes
NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: george.hall@des.nh.gov	Yes
	Alternate: TBD	
NJ	Joe Aiello T: (609) 633-3840 F: (609) 777-1774 joseph.aiello@dep.state.nj.us	No
	Alternate : TBD	Rachel Ellis
NY	Stephanie Ostrowski T: (518) 485-5570 F: (518) 485-5568	Yes
	Alternate: Dan Dickinson dmd15@health.state.ny.us	
OR	Irene Ronning T: 503-693-4122 F: 503-693-5602 E: irene.e.ronning@state.or.us	Yes
	Alternate: Raeann Haynes haynes.raeann@deq.state.or.us	
PA	Aaren Alger T: (717) 346-8212 F: (717) 346-8590 E: aaalger@state.pa.us	Yes

	Alternate: Dana Marshall dmarshall@state.pa.us	
TX	Stephen Stubbs T: (512) 239-3343 F: (512) 239-4760 E: sstubbs@tceq.state.tx.us	Yes
	Alternate: Steve Gibson jgibson@tceq.state.tx.us	
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
	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 ed.shaw@dgs.va.gov	
	Program Administrator: Carol Batterton T: 830-990-1029 or 512-924-2102 E: carbat@beecreek.net	Yes
EPA Liaison	Arthur Clark T: 617-918-8374 F: 617-918-8274 E: clark.arthur@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

Attachment 2

Issues with Implementing the TNI Standard

Background

A number of issues have arisen surrounding the new standard, primarily focusing on PT issues, with the most significant issue being LOQ reporting. The options below all relate to the LOQ issue, but could be applied to the other problematic sections as well. These options were outlined in a conference call on September 28 with Steve Arms, Aaren Alger and Jerry Parr

Possible Solutions (in order of personal preference, with 1, 2 and 3 being very close and 4 and 5 very untasteful)

1. Ignore the issue and let there be some inconsistency

It is clear that every AB does not implement the current standard exactly the same way. However, it is clear that in the 10 years of doing this, some trust has been garnered among the ABs. The trust is that labs are inspected by qualified assessors at some reasonable frequency (which may not always be 2 years). Laboratories are expected to correct problems identified and PT sample results are evaluated. The LOQ reporting issue will likely only affect those laboratories that perform organics and have a secondary accreditation with New York. These labs tend to be the more sophisticated labs in the country and are well used to having to deal with multiple and conflicting requirements. (Note: In looking at the list of accredited laboratories on the TNI website, none were shown to have a secondary approval from New York. I'm sure this is in error, but if we had a sense of how many labs this is, it might help influence the decision. Is it 10, 100, 1000?)

If this option is selected, the Council should also quickly send a strong signal to the PT Expert Committee that this issue must be readdressed. I did review all the comments from the 2007 vote and the 2009 TIA's, and could only find one negative vote on LOQ reporting from an AB, from Jim Broderick. This was in 2007. No negative votes on this section were submitted in 2009.

2. Revote the adoption of the standard by specific sections and veto those sections that cannot be implemented.

As summarized below, there are three specific sections that relate to LOQ reporting.

Volume 1: Module 1, Section 5.2.1:

Tells labs to report PT results to LOQ or low calibration standard.

Volume 2: Module 2, Section 4.2.2

Secondary AB may not impose any additional requirements for PT.

Volume 3, Section 10.3.1

Allows for reporting of < values to be graded acceptable.

The Council could decide to revoke the adoption of the standard and veto those sections and defer to the 2003 NELAC standard (Chapter 2, Appendix C) for evaluating PT results until such time as the PT Committee redrafts the standard. The Council should provide guidance to the PT Expert Committee on what changes could be implemented by every AB. During the conference call, we discussed allowing for some exceptions for regulated entities that only need to report to some permit limit, with the approval handled on a case-by-case basis by the applicable AB.

3. Allow for supplemental requirements.

The 2003 NELAC Standard (Chapter 1, section 1.6.2) allowed for supplemental requirements. The Council could adopt a policy that allows for such requirements with the appropriate oversight (e.g., approval of all such requirements by all ABs). Then, for example, New York could impose different requirements for all labs doing work in New York. This would require those labs doing work in New York to report their PT data two ways and would require the PT providers to evaluate the data two times. This is a little ugly but workable. As with number 1 above, this would be limited until such time as the standard could be revised.

4. Revoke the approval of any AB that does not comply.

This is not an acceptable solution to me.

5. Delay the implementation of the TNI standard

This is not an acceptable solution to me.