

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting

September 16, 2013

1. Roll call and Approval of Minutes

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 pm EDT on Monday, September 16, 2013. Minutes of the September 9, 2013, meeting were approved. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1. In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice Chair, Steve Arms agreed to moderate the meeting.

Since only 9 ABs were represented and the NELAP Voting SOP 3-101 requires a “full quorum” or 10 members present to initiate a vote on any matter of accreditation, the items presented for action could only be discussed.

2. Action Items Pending

- Review and vote on revised NPW FoPT table
- Review and vote on adoption of revised Evaluation SOP and tools
- Prepare and issue new certificate to LDEQ for renewal date 9/10/13, to expire November 16, 2015; PA will notify the Regional Office once copy of certificate is available.
- Review and adoption of Evaluation SOP 3-102 and “tools”
- Final Response to Complaint from ACIL – pending completion of evaluation process for the AB (response deadline letter sent to CA)

3. Emergency Revision to NPW FoPT Table

During the past several weeks, three separate complaints were filed with TNI concerning problems with one of the revisions to the Non-Potable Water Field of Proficiency Testing table (NPW FoPT table) and the TNI Board requested that the AC act quickly to approve a revised NPW FoPT table as soon as the Proficiency Testing Executive Committee (PTEC) could make draft revisions to solve the problem. Eric Smith of the PTEC joined this AC meeting to explain the problem and the solution as reflected in the proposed or draft FoPT table circulated shortly before the meeting.

New criteria for “total suspended solids” (TSS) in the NPW FoPT table that took effect on July 1, 2013, caused an abnormally high failure rate for the TSS PT sample. For one PT Provider (PTP,) the failure rate was as high as 33%. This generated multiple complaints, including two from PTPs, asking that the TSS criteria be revised.

PTEC met in emergency session and determined to revise the NPW FoPT table by reverting to the former or “old” regression equation coefficients (from the previous table) but to keep the new concentration limits for TSS PT samples. Going forward, the PTEC NPW subcommittee will monitor the PT results to see if they need to revise the concentration limits.

In response to a question from the AC about what the new criteria were based on, Eric explained that it was an evaluation of the prior data points from PTs but that some factor was overlooked during the initial review, resulting in a flawed equation for calculating the PT result.

Several other questions were asked about what will be the new effective date and how will labs be notified (will the ABs need to do that?) Eric indicated that these will need to be resolved with the PTPs. One AB representative asked that PTEC retain the colored text in the table going forward. Another AB representative noted that the ABs still have to use the “bad data” from the study in which this error was discovered UNLESS the studies are actually invalidated by the PTPs.

An informal poll of participants indicated that none would have a problem approving the revised FoPT table. Eric offered to return for the next AC meeting, to explain to the remaining AC members, if desired.

4. NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102 and Evaluation Tools

General discussion of the revisions to the Evaluation SOP focused initially on the revision to the definition of “finding” as proposed by TNI’s Executive Director for the purpose of harmonizing the NELAP evaluation SOP with the NEFAP and non-governmental AB (NGAB) programs. This change essentially changes the historical usage of “finding” as a negative requiring corrective action, to being one of three types – a comment, a concern or a non-conformity, with only the non-conformity requiring a corrective action. NOTE: historically, NELAP has used the term “observation” for the comments and concerns, and that is the language presently in the SOP.

One AB inquired whether adopting this new definition would require revising all of its SOPs to accommodate the different terminology. No clear response emerged.

Lynn raised an additional concern brought out after the previous week’s NELAP Evaluators teleconference, about the three-year-cycle of evaluations, being based on fixed certificate expiration dates (every 3 years) rather than having the certificate expire three years (36 months) from the date when the AC approved the renewal of recognition. Others remembered this change to fixed three year dates, and Lynn offered to add clarifying language to section 6.15 of the SOP to better explain the system. NOTE: this language is in the SOP circulated for the Sept 19 meeting.

5. SIR #108

Multiple SIRs on the voting website have six or more “disapprove” votes, but the majority of these have clear reasons for the disapproval that can be returned to the originating committees for consideration. Only SIR 108 seems unclear enough to need actual discussion, and it has multiple “needs discussion” votes as well as six “disapprove” votes.

This SIR questions the requirement to review all method SOPs annually. That requirement is in the NELAC standard but not in the 2009 TNI standard except as a “note” although the note is in the ISO language, not the added TNI language. AC members noted that the drinking water Cert Manual does require annual review of all method SOPs, and also that some EPA regions are more rigid about this requirement than are others.

From the discussion, Lynn indicated that she comprehends the problem well enough to be able to explain it when returning the item to LAS EC for a clearer response.

6. Scheduling a Special AC Meeting to Obtain Full Quorum to Initiate Voting

At the end of the meeting, Steve asked if the Council members would be willing to participate in a short, no more than 30 minute, meeting later in the week, to try and obtain a full quorum (10 ABs participating) so that voting on the FoPT table and the Evaluation SOP can be initiated. Both of these items are urgent and time sensitive, with the SOP needing approval so that the Request for Proposal for the third party evaluator can be issued in time to have a contract in place before the round of evaluations begins, and the PT issue needing urgent resolution due to the numbers of PT failures that resulted from the error being fixed.

Those participating agreed to Thursday, September 19, at the usual 1:30 pm Eastern meeting time. NOTE: A "hold the date" notice was sent immediately after the meeting.

9. Next Meeting

The next AC meeting will be a special session on Thursday, September 19, 2013, at 1:30 pm Eastern. The purpose of this meeting will be to have a full quorum in order to initiate voting on the urgent and time-sensitive accreditation matters before the committee.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AC will be on October 7, 2013, at 1:30 pm Eastern. A reminder with teleconference and agenda will be distributed prior to the meeting. The agenda will include review and approval of the documents for the upcoming round of NELAP evaluations.

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Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
CA	Fred Choske 510-620-31745 F: 510-620-3471 E: fred.choske@cdph.ca.gov	No
	Alternate: Dave Mazzer T: 510-449-5600 E: david.mazzer@cdph.ca.gov	No
FL	Stephen Arms T: (904) 791-1502 F: (904) 791-1591 E: steve_arms@doh.state.fl.us	Yes
	Alternate: Carl Kircher E: carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us	No
IL	Scott Siders T: (217) 785-5163 F: (217) 524-6169 E: scott.siders@illinois.gov	No
	Alternate: Janet Cruse T: 217-785-0601 E: Janet.Cruse@illinois.gov	No
KS	Michelle Wade E: MWade@kdheks.gov Ph: (785) 296-6198 Fax: (785) 296-1638	Yes
	Alternate: N. Myron Gunsalus ngunsalus@kdheks.gov 785-291-3162	No
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-3247 F: 225-325-8244 E: Paul.Bergeron@la.gov	No
	Altérnate: TBD	
LA DHH	Donnell Ward T: E: donnell.ward@la.gov	No
	Alternate: TBD	
MN	Susan Wyatt T: 651.201.5323 F: E: susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	No

	Alternate: Stephanie Drier E: stephanie.drier@state.mn.us	Yes
NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: george.hall@des.nh.gov	No
	Alternate: TBD	
NJ	Joe Aiello T: (609) 633-3840 F: (609) 777-1774 E: joseph.aiello@dep.state.nj.us	Yes
	Alternate : Rachel Ellis E: rachel.ellis@dep.state.nj.us	no
NY	Stephanie Ostrowski T: (518) 485-5570 F: (518) 485-5568 E: seo01@health.state.ny.us	Yes
	Alternate: TBD	
OR	Gary Ward T: 503-693-4122 F: 503-693-5602 E: gary.k.ward@state.or.us	Yes
	Shannon Swantek T: 503-693-5784 E: Shannon.swantek@state.or.us	Yes
	Included for information purposes: Scott Hoatson T: (503) 693-5786 E: hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us	No
PA	Aaren Alger T: (717) 346-8212 F: (717) 346-8590 E: aaalger@pa.gov	No
	Alternate: Yumi Creason E: ycreason@pa.gov	No
TX	Alice Colt T: (512) 239-3927 Alice.Colt@tceq.texas.gov	Yes
	Ruth Wedig Ruth.Wedig@tceq.texas.gov	No
UT	Kristin Brown T: (801) 965-2540 F: (801) 965-2544 E: kristinbrown@utah.gov	No

	Alternate: Robert Aullman T: 801-965-2541 F: 801-965-2544 E: raullman@utah.gov	No
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov	Yes
	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 E: ed.shaw@dgs.virginia.gov	no
NELAP AC PA and EC	Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org	Yes
EPA Liaison	Marvelyn Humphrey T: (281) 983-2140 E: Humphrey.Marvelyn@epa.gov	Yes
NELAP QAO	Paul Ellingson T: 801-201-8166 E: altasnow@gmail.com	Yes
Oklahoma	David Caldwell	No
Guests:	Eric Smith, Vice Chair, PT Executive Committee	