

**MINUTES OF
THE NELAC INSTITUTE'S
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE
November 9, 2010**

Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operations

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met by conference call on November 9, 2010. Committee Chairperson Kirstin McCracken led the call.

Call to Order: The teleconference was called to order at 1:35 PM ET.

The following committee members were present for this call:

Stacie Metzler
Shawn Kassner
Jim Webber

The following associate members were present for this call:

Rachel Ellis
Mike Miller

Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operation Items

Two thirds majority was not present so the minutes from the October call could not be reviewed.

Agenda Item 2: Working Draft Standards

The committee needs to complete a new WDS by February meeting in Savannah to incorporate previously approved TIA. Because the TIA language is already in the standard, no clerical work is necessary.

The committee will need to potentially add language to the WDS for WET. Stacie gave the group an update. The WET subcommittee held a call recently and invited Eric Smith and Kirstin to attend. The group discussed the purpose of the PT. The FoPT tables for WET were created at the request of the DMRQA. At present time, it is unknown if the FoPT were intended to be used for accreditation and if so, what is the expectation of the AB regarding laboratory performance and corrective action? To answer these questions, Raeann Haynes of Oregon will attend an accreditation council (AC) call to ask these questions and also to provide an overview of how WET testing is different than chemistry. One of the concerns of the subcommittee is that the FoPT may not be appropriate and Eric has agreed to re-establish the WET FoPT subcommittee to tackle these issues. Raeann will report back to subcommittee the feedback from the accreditation council and Stacie will provide this information to the committee. The committee must first understand the expectation of the AC before it can develop standards for required participation, performance and corrective action.

The committee will also need to address the concerns of the AC council with the WDS. Specifically, the language in V3 regarding scoring of PTs, specifically, the language that allows a <LOQ result to be scored acceptable when the LOQ is greater than the lower acceptance limit established for the FoPT. Mike asked if there was any effort to establish multi-concentration PT – or a high level PT that would test the proficiency of industrial labs in their normal range of operation. Shawn added to this by saying that

there is also a problem in that some of the WP PT concentration ranges are too high for some municipalities. Not only do multi-level PTs needs to be addressed – the need for multi-level PTs needs to be more visible. Shawn asked a question for Rachel and Jim... Do the ABs know the levels at which labs are working at and how much effort is required to track a multi-level PT? The answer – ABS should verify that labs are reporting PT in the same manner as samples during routine on-site visits and ABs should verify that LOQs established by laboratories are appropriate for work performed as part of the accreditation process.

After further discussion it became clear that the committee is still unaware of the real issues of the AC with the PT modules. To address this, Shawn suggested that a subgroup of the committee work with the AC to document all of their concerns to report these back to the committee. The committee cannot begin work to change the WDS until we have this information. Shawn agreed to head the workgroup and make arrangements with the AC. Stacie and Mike volunteered to be part of the workgroup.

Kirstin will work on setting up spreadsheets to track changes needed to the WDS and to track history of decisions made. Shawn will send Kirstin of an example spreadsheet the SSAS used that was effective for this purpose.

Kirstin asked if there were other known concerns with the standard (other than the inconsistencies and clerical errors already brought to our attention). Kirstin knew of 2 clauses in the current TNI standard that were supposed to have been removed but for some reason were not. One is the clause in V3 that says supplemental PT samples must include the analyte for corrective action. Kirstin recalls that the committee had decided that this requirement should be removed. The PT sample for corrective action should be unknown. To demonstrate proficiency, the lab must be able to properly indicate when an analyte is not present as well as identify when an analyte is present and at the proper concentration. The members present agreed so this clause will be further reviewed during the WDS process. The other clause is the clause in V2 which requires a laboratory to have a policy for handling PT samples when the PT sample is outside their normal range of calibration. Because the PT program requires that PT samples be handled in the same manner as field samples; there is no reason that a laboratory should have a procedure to handle PT samples differently. This clause will also be under review with the WDS. Finally, Kirstin indicated that she would like the committee to re-consider the clause that stipulates that when a laboratory reports a PT sample by multiple methods using the same technology, a failure by one method is a failure for all methods. Different methods using the same technology produce different analytical results based on the matrix and the prep method. Mike indicated that this clause was in the 2003 Standard at the insistence of a specific AB. The member present though that it would be worthwhile to review and/or make a change at this time.

The committee plans to have the WDS complete for review at the Savannah meeting. The committee session in Savannah will be dedicated to presenting the new WDS to the TNI membership. To achieve this, the group present decided that supplemental calls were needed and the members present set the following call schedule. Calls will be held between now and the Savannah meeting from 1:30-3:00 PM on the following dates:

- November 30th
- December 14th
- January 4th
- January 18th

The call was adjourned at 2:20 PM.

Attachment A

**ACTION ITEMS
TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE**

Item	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date	Date Complete
1	Workgroup to meet with AC	Shawn	11/30/10	
2	Set up tracking system for WDS changes	Kirstin	11/30/10	
3				
4				
5				

Attachment B

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