

SSAS Committee Meeting – December 11, 2017
Meeting Minutes
Attendance:

Committee Member	Affiliation	Term Expiration	
Tom Widera – Chair	ERA – (Provider)	Dec 31, 2019	Present
Ed MacKinnon	TRC Env. Corp. (Stationary Source Tester)	Dec 31, 2018	Absent
Gregg O'Neal	NC DAQ (State Government)	Dec 31, 2019	Present
Katie Gattis	Element One Inc. (Lab)	Dec 31, 2020	Present
Michael Klein	NJ DEP (State Government)	Dec 31, 2019	Present
Mike Hayes	Linde (Provider)	Dec 31, 2018	Absent
Paul Meeter	Weston Solutions (Stationary Source Tester)	Dec 31, 2017	Present
Michael Schapira	Enthalpy Analytical LLC (Lab)	Dec 31, 2020	Absent
Sheri Heldstab	Chester LabNet (Lab)	Dec 31, 2021	Present

Associate Member	Affiliation		
Jim Serne	TRC Env. Corp. (Stationary Source Tester)	NA	Absent
Maria Friedman	(Laboratory)	NA	Absent

Guest	Affiliation		
Stan Tong	EPA – Region IX (Federal Government)	NA	Present
Brian Allen	Weston Solutions (Stationary Source Tester)	NA	Present

Call to Order:

Tom Widera began the meeting at 2:04 EDT. A quorum was present.

Membership Updates:

TNI Committee membership is a three year term. A second three year term is available. Tom updated the current membership status. Paul Meeters' second term expires December 31, 2017. He will stay on as an associate for 2018. Brian Allen joined the call as a potential replacement for Paul. Brian needs to fill out an application on the TNI website.

All current members have indicated that they want to stay on the committee for 2018. Tom welcomed Sheri Heldstab as a voting member of the committee. Sheri will begin officially in January 2018. Mike Schapira nominated Tom and Sheri seconded to stay as chair. There were no other interests for Chair. A vote was conducted and all members approved. Tom asked for volunteers for vice-chair and there was no interest.

Ned Shappley will be the new EPA representative for the SSAS Committee since Candace had retired.

October 2017 Minutes Review:

Minor edits noted and corrected. Katie Gattis motioned and Michael Klein seconded. All approve (Paul Meeter abstained). The minutes passed.

Method 8 Audit Investigation:

Mike Schapira and Tom are communicating regarding the Method 8 audit sample issue to determine what further information needs to be collected to continue this investigation.

2018 Schedule:

Tom issued a schedule for the 2018 meetings including the member responsible for minutes. William Daystrom will set up calls for the year. August call date may change due to the summer TNI meeting.

Sulfuric Acid Method 8 Issue Update:

Tom updated the Committee on the status of the ERA Method 8 audit issue. All four participants were sent updated reports with the new evaluation as "No Evaluation" for all the involved 42 projects.

The SSAS Central database has not yet been updated. The initial thought was to keep the data in the database and comment as "No Evaluation" instead of pass/fail. If the data is No Evaluation, the statistics will not be used to calculate the pass/fail rates. Gregg indicated that by keeping the audit in the database, it keeps a record that the tester ordered the sample as required.

Paul asked if TNI has encountered any issues similar to this in the PT sector. Tom indicated that it has happened in the past for any analytes that needed to be invalidated in a study. Paul wanted to know what TNI does in these situations. Tom indicated that the Consensus Standards Committee is meeting soon and he will bring this up at the meeting. Paul asked if EPA had any input. Tom said that he hoped Ned Shappley would be on the call to give his input. We can bring this up to Ned at the next call.

Method 8 Sample Discussion from EPA Region 9:

Stan Tong received a question from a customer asking if they could investigate a potential Method 8 audit problem for a sample they failed. It turns out that the sample was one from a bad batch from ERA. They then went to Sigma for a retest and still failed. The lab got two peaks by IC and if they combine the two results they get the right answer. The lab questioned whether the second peak could be SO₃. Stan asked both ERA and Sigma how they made the samples. Tom indicated that ERA uses sulfuric acid because it is required by the SSAS table. Sigma indicated that they made this lot with sodium sulfite. Stan asked how close the historical emissions were, compared to the regulatory limit for this facility. It was determined that historical emissions were generally well below the emissions limit. EPA Region 9 then recommended that the local Regulatory Agency accept the audit sample and also suggested that the lab lodge a complaint to see why this batch was made with sodium sulfite. Sheri indicated it was her lab. She said that if the audit sample had been prepared in peroxide instead of water, the SO₃ would have oxidized to SO₄ and there would not have been a problem. Sheri suggested maybe diluting in peroxide to avoid the issue. Katie

mentioned that the audit sample should arrive in the same form that the analysis is being done. Tom mentioned that in order to be accredited, the Provider Accreditor will check to see if the sample design is compliant with the SSAS Table. The footnote on the SSAS tables indicates that both Method 6 and 8 audits must be made with sulfuric acid so Sigma made the sample incorrectly.

Paul discussed whether we should contact Sigma or their accreditor to investigate how many batches may have been made incorrectly. Katie said she had history getting better results by contacting Sigma directly. There is a formal process for filing a complaint through TNI. The question was raised if Sigma may have sent an SO₃ sample by mistake. Section 6 of V1M3 exists to question and/or complain directly to the Provider regarding the audit. So a question can be sent to Sigma to ask what had happened. The Regulator also gets notified so they are informed of a potential problem with the audit. Stan contacted Sigma and their response was that the sample is designed for a titration analysis and not IC which is why they made it with sodium sulfite and not sulfuric acid. Ultimately, Sigma needs to follow the SSAS table. Michael asked if the Committee has an obligation to lodge an inquiry into this. Sheri indicated that she can file a complaint on her end if her client is OK with this. Tom suggested going to Sigma with the issue and seeing what their response is. If the response from Sigma is not to our liking we can elevate the issue to a TNI complaint. Paul asked if V1M3 indicates a timeframe for response. Tom replied by indicating that the Provider must respond within 45 days of receipt of the complaint.

Sulfuric Acid Research:

Sheri asked if ERA had done any research on whether the caps or vials are leaching SO₄ into the audit samples. In the Root Cause Analysis performed by ERA for the recent H₂SO₄ issue from ERA, Tom placed a series of vials with both DI water and sulfuric acid into his car with the vials on their side and left them there for 3 weeks. After analyzing these vials, the DI water samples showed no SO₄ and there was no increase in the SO₄ value for the H₂SO₄ samples. Tom concluded that there was no leaching of SO₄ either off the glass vials or from the caps. Tom felt that the increase in the value of SO₄ was due to loose caps on these batches which caused evaporation of the DI water in the sample.

V1M1 Changes:

Initially the Committee was not looking at the terms and definitions, Section 3, due to the Consensus Standards Committee creating a glossary of terms. However, it appears that the glossary will not be complete prior to finishing the V1M1 revisions, so Tom asked for all members to review the terms with any questions or changes.

Tom also wants to address Gregg's inquiry regarding the potential methods for expanding the SSAS Table ranges. Should this be put into V1M1, and if so, where? Tom mentioned that the PT Expert Committee will convene a sub-committee to discuss any potential changes to the FoPTs for the Proficiency Testing program. Tom checked the SSAS Charter and noticed that there is an objective for the Committee to expand the scope of the SSAS Table but it does not address a mechanism for this expansion. Tom questioned the Committee whether the expansion of the Table should be addressed in V1M1, as this module addresses the requirements of the Audit Sample Provider. The expansion of the table is the responsibility of the Committee and not the Provider.

Section 6.3 discusses the SSAS Table and the analytes. Not all the analytes on the SSAS Table are being provided in the audit program, because there needs to be two accredited Providers for any analyte to be included in the audit program. For Section 6.3.1, Sheri felt that the wording was being misinterpreted that all analytes on the table must be provided. She feels that the changes in this section now clear up this point and that the wording now represents the intention of the Committee. The Committee now seems to feel comfortable with how the section is worded. Tom asked if we need to update the Charter to address this issue. Gregg asked if we should consider having another module to address SSAS Table expansion.

Michael and Gregg brought up our past discussion about using the Provider repeatability to set some initial limits outside the ranges until enough data had been collected to set final limits. Gregg then mentioned doing pilot studies to collect this data. Katie added that there would be an issue of who was going to pay for these additional analyses in the pilot studies. It seems that our discussions in the past stopped at this point because we could not determine who would be responsible for paying for the pilot study. Tom mentioned that in the PT program, when new analytes are added to the FoPTs, NELAC would place them on an "Experimental Table" with initial ranges and acceptance limits. The labs would have to run the PTs but would not get dinged if they failed the criteria. After a significant number of data points were collected, statistics could be run to set final criteria and then those analytes would be placed onto the Accreditation Table. Tom thought that this could be done for the expanded range concentrations.

Michael mentioned bringing Ned Shappley into the discussion and get his opinion on this matter.

Next: January 16, 2018 at 2 pm Eastern
Meeting Adjourned 3:39 pm Eastern

Next Minutes Author:

Katie Gattis