

TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary November 10, 2010

1. Roll Call and Approval of October Minutes

Directors	Present
Joe Aiello	X
Aaren Alger	X
Steve Arms	X
Susan Boutros	X
Judith Duncan	
Robert DiRienzo	
Zonetta English	X
Jack Farrell	X
Ken Jackson	
Sharon Mertens	X
Judy Morgan	X
Matt Sica	
Alfredo Sotomayor	X
Dave Speis	X
Elizabeth Turner	X
Curtis Wood	
Bob Wyeth	X
Ex-Officio Directors	
Brenda Bettencourt	X
Brooke Connor	X
George Detsis	X
Edward Hartzog	
Staff	
Lynn Bradley	X
Carol Batterton	X
Jerry Parr	X
Ilona Taunton	X
Jane Wilson	X
Janice Wlodarski	X

Approve October Minutes

Motion: Jack Farrell
Second: Bob Wyeth
Approved: Unanimous

1. Implementing the New Standard for Laboratories

The PT Expert Committee has decided to take up three key issues identified as obstacles by the Accreditation Council. From discussions with Kirsten:

1. it is likely that language that relates to the use of non-accredited providers and experimental analytes will be deleted;
2. the section on reporting PT data will likely be revised to instruct laboratories to report PT data like they report their analytical data; and
3. thus, detection limit reporting, LOQ reporting and other options will then be allowed. We believe this change should satisfy the Council.

The PT committee will take up this issue this month with a goal of having a revised standard by February 2011.

Do we all agree with the path forward that has been identified? Yes.

2. Consistency Improvement Task Force

The Consistency Improvement Task Force (CITF) was chartered with improving the consistency of TNI laboratory assessments and accreditation body (AB) evaluations. The original charter on October 14, 2009 was for one year with an option to extend the charter. See Attachment 1.

Where we are now:

The CITF formed 4 subcommittees to complete the goals of the Task Force. Will have white paper to present in Savannah in February. Need to recharter for one more year to finalize report with finalized work products for the Board's review and approval.

Motion to extend CITF Charter for an additional year, through November 2011:

Motion: Alfredo Sotomayor

Second: Sharon Mertens

Approved: Unanimous

3. Quality Management Plan

A draft Quality Management Plan for TNI has been prepared. This document and a separate organizational chart were provided separately. The QMP has been reviewed by a team from the Board. The most significant impact of this plan will be the addition of a QA Director for TNI and QA functions for each program. Pending the Board's review and discussion of this document, the QMP will be sent to all committee chairs for comments with the goal of finalizing the document by January 12, 2011.

Document has been developed as a broad view quality systems document, not a detailed QA document, intended to compass all of TNI's activities. For particular programs down the road, there may be a need for more specific, detail documentation but not at this point in time. Lynn tried to describe the organization, how it works and to highlight its good points as well as to describe what the minimum level of documentation needed in all areas. Some areas, particularly the IT area, will have some work to do to bring themselves up to minimum standards in terms of QA documentation. This

document is the basis to start a new position of QA director and then to evolve from there. QMP update should be in sync with organization's strategic plan updates: reviewed every year; major revisions every 3 years (5 year plan).

Committees will be asked to review the document from a conceptual point of view. We want to get buy in from the committees on the direction as well.

QA structure: The QA structure runs parallel to the organization. The QA director would be hired on as paid staff; the subordinate parts are intended to be staffed by volunteers within each program to fill the role of QA manager for that program.

4. Program Reports

See Attachment 2.

Attachment 1

Consistency Improvement Task Force

A concerted effort to improve the consistency of TNI assessments and evaluations

I. Purpose

The Consistency Improvement Task Force (CITF) is charged with improving the consistency of TNI laboratory assessments and accreditation body (AB) evaluations.

The CTIF will promote systems and develop recommendations to achieve its purpose.

II. Members

Name	Affiliation
Alfredo Sotomayor, Chair	Wisconsin DNR
Jerry Parr, Ex Officio	TNI
Carol Batterton, Staff	TNI
James Broderick	New York City DEP
Jack Farrell	Analytical Excellence, Inc.
Ed Hartzog	DoD EDQW
Kevin Kubik	USEPA Region 2
Tom McAninch	Laboratory Consulting Services
Verl Preston	TestAmerica, Inc.
Stephen Stubbs	Texas Commission Env. Quality
Robert Wyeth	Columbia Analytical Services

III. Duration

The task force is chartered for a year, with an option for renewal at the conclusion of the term.

IV. Major Goals

To accomplish its purpose, the CITF has identified four major goals. Each of the goals will be supported by activities and tasks that will be developed during the initial CITF meetings. The CITF will assign priorities to the activities and tasks attempting to have a good mix of short term and long term assignments. The CITF may delegate some activities and tasks to other groups within TNI.

A. Establish Realistic Expectations about Consistency

Defining and measuring consistency as it applies to the accreditation of laboratories is a difficult process. Assessment consistency may be perceived differently by each of the organizations and individuals involved in the accreditation process. Assessments that

may appear consistent to an accreditation body may seem inconsistent with other assessments to the laboratory being assessed.

The CITF will:

- Produce a document discussing attributes of consistent systems, sources of inconsistencies, and sensible means for determining and improving the degree of consistency of operations.

B. On-Site Assessments of Laboratories

Laboratory assessments are the most common and visible of NELAP activities. The majority of the consistency concerns voiced by TNI members are associated with the on-site assessment of laboratories.

The CITF will:

- Explore how assessor training can be used to improve the consistency of laboratory assessments.
- Design a uniform process, involving the NELAP Board and including assessor feedback, for laboratories to resolve findings viewed as inconsistent with the TNI standards.
- Develop a blueprint for conducting assessments that considers the emphasis given to different areas reviewed during assessments.
- Establish expectations for the communication of assessors within and between ABs.
- Investigate opportunities for having assessors observe other assessors performing laboratory assessments.
- Define a process for assessor oversight.
- Focus on the corrective action cycle, including causal factors, of laboratory findings as an area in need of improved consistency.

C. Evaluations of Accreditation Bodies

Assessors, not ABs, are usually the focus of efforts to improve consistency of assessments. However, ABs employ assessors and therefore share responsibility for the consistency of assessments. TNI has made progress in standardizing the evaluation of ABs, but there is a need to review and evaluate systems that ABs establish to improve the consistency of operations associated with and beyond laboratory assessments.

The CITF will:

- Explore how evaluator training can be used to improve the consistency of AB evaluations.
- Establish the elements of consistency plans to be used by ABs.
- Review how ABs use requests for interpretations of standards to promote consistency.

- Evaluate how ABs deal with political pressure in making accreditation decisions and the role that enforcement agents may have in shaping consistency efforts.
- Consider the role that third party ABs and reciprocal agreements may have in improving consistency.
- Focus on the corrective action cycle, including causal factors, of evaluation findings as an area in need of improved consistency.

D. Laboratories and Users of Laboratory Services

It is logical to consider the regulated community and the users of their services in any efforts aimed at improving the consistency of assessments and evaluations. Developing clear and auditable accreditation standards is the first step in this process, but rarely does the standard alone ensure its own uniform implementation. The fresh start afforded by the upcoming implementation of the TNI Standards presents an opportunity to create systems to ensure the standards' consistent application.

The CITF will:

- Promote the development of tools to implement the TNI Standards
- Consider systems allowing ready access to decisions regarding interpretation of standards.

V. Deliverables

The CITF will issue a report at the conclusion of its term. The CITF envisions promoting or developing products that will be offered as they become available. The CITF will issue periodic progress reports to the TNI Board.

Attachment 2

PROGRAM REPORTS

CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- Stationary Source Audit Sample (SSAS) EC has completed review and comparison of the TNI SSAS standards and the final EPA rule. As a result of the rule, four TIAs have been identified for the SSAS standards. The TIAs have been drafted and approved by SSAS EC and have been provided to the CSD EC for discussion at its next meeting on 11/11/10. A SSAS EC subcommittee is continuing work to update the SSAS table and will also include additional notes as part of compliance with the EPA rule. SSAS EC is also trying to determine the status of the SSAS Provider Accreditor program, as some providers have applied to be accredited.
- QS EC endorsed a Voting Draft Standard (VDS) for release to TNI membership vote. As ISO language is involved, Jerry developed a disclaimer regarding the posting of the ISO language for the purpose of a cover memo and the documents will be posted in the TNI members only area. QS also is reviewing comments from LASC to the QS checklist.
- CSD EC discussed steps for formation of the new Expert Committee on Environmental Measurement Methods. TNI procedures require a public announcement of new Expert Committee formation and standards development. A notice of these proposed actions was published on the TNI website on 10-30-10 and applications for committee members are being sought.

NEFAP (including Field Activities Committee)

NEFAP Executive Committee

- The NEFAP Executive Committee has appointed Keith Greenaway as their Vice Chair.
- A nominating committee has been formed to develop and implement the process for selecting new members for the NEFAP Executive Committee to replace members that will be rotating off in June 2011. The committee includes Marlene, Dane and Keith.
- A2LA has indicated that they will be completing an AB application before the end of the year and PJLA has stated their application is coming. Evaluations will move forward as applications are received.
- Marlene is putting together more details regarding the AB Evaluators training. There are some scheduling conflicts and the date may be pushed back from the original late November goal.

Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)

- The committee will be finalizing DRAFT language for two Standard Interpretation Requests (SIRs) at their next meeting.
- A subcommittee made up of individuals who originally voted on the current Standard was formed to review the current standard to ensure that all updates to the standard were made prior to finalization. There were 15 changes that were approved that did not make it into the final version of the standard. The committee is looking back at previous minutes to verify these changes were approved and then the standard will be corrected.

NELAP

Accreditation Council

- The NELAP AC has not taken any additional action on the PT standard implementation issues. The AC is waiting for feedback from the PT expert committee on potential changes to the standard.
- Marlene Moore was the successful bidder for evaluator training in Savannah.
- The NELAP AC will consider the Evaluation SOP for approval at the next meeting on November 15 (November 1 meeting was cancelled).
- Renewal letters for KS, LADHH, and NH will go out the week after Thanksgiving.
- Lynn Bradley will take over as program administrator for the NELAP AC beginning December 1.

Status of AB Payments

AB	Amount	Date
California	\$ 6,000	17-Jun
Florida	\$ 6,000	16-Aug
Kansas	\$ 6,000	16-Aug
Illinois	\$ 6,000	30-Oct
Louisiana DEQ		
Louisiana DHH	\$ 6,000	23-Jul
Minnesota	NA	
New Hampshire	\$ 6,000	20-Oct
New York		
New Jersey	\$ 6,000	17-Jun
Oregon	\$ 6,000	28-Jul
Pennsylvania	\$ 6,000	12-Oct
Texas	\$ 6,000	15-Aug
Utah	\$ 6,000	7-Jul
Virginia	\$ 6,000	14-Jun
Total	\$ 72,000	

Technical Assistance Committee

- The LOD/LOQ webinar originally planned for December 9, 2010, has been postponed to January (date TBD) due to schedule conflicts with presenters.
- 17 regional workshops have been completed. Upcoming regional workshops include:

Date/Location	Lead	Other Speakers	Lead organization
Nov. 23: Baton Rouge, LA	Jack	Linda/Tom	TNI
December 3: Chicago, IL	Jerry	Jack, Paul Junio	IAETL
December 9: Richmond, CA	Jack	Diane Lawver	TNI
February 3, 2011: Savannah, GA	TBD	TBD	TNI

- The first DRAFT of the Quality Manual Template has been distributed to the Quality Manual Template subcommittee, Quality Systems Expert Committee, and interested parties on the Small Lab Advocacy Group (SLAG). Susan Wyatt has also been contacted to see if any of the evaluators would be willing to review and comment on the manual. Comments have started coming in. The subcommittee has started work on collecting examples that will be helpful to a laboratory preparing a Quality Manual. Training will be provided in Savannah.

Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee

- Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) process:
 - 4 requests were received in October. Two questions were forwarded to Quality Systems and the other two are requiring correspondence to determine how to handle the request. One appears to be a PT Executive Board question and the other looks like a method specific question that is not a SIR.
 - SIRs are being posted to the NELAP AC SIR review site. ABs are asked to review the SIRs and note whether they agree with the response or whether it needs discussion on a future AC call.
 - There were 6 SIRs that were returned to the LASEC by the NELAP AC. These were originally determined to be SIRs the NELAP Board should respond to. The NELAP AC feels they should be responded to by an Expert Committee. They will be reviewed next Tuesday and forwarded as appropriate.
 - June and Ilona are continuing to meet to review the older SIRs and get them up on the website for on-line review. 10 SIRs have been forwarded to the NELAP AC review site, 3 have been canceled, 8 are in progress with the expert committee, 2 are waiting for a response from another SIR and 1 was forwarded for more information from the inquirer.
 - Quality Systems submitted 6 new responses that have been forwarded for posting to the NELAP AC review site.
- The DRAFT Implementation Project Summary and is posted on the website. It is an "Easy Link" on the NELAP home page – "2009 TNI Standard Implementation Project". Updates will be added once a week unless none were received.

Consistency Improvement Task Force

- The CITF met to review their progress. They are planning to present draft work products at the Savannah meeting.

Accreditation Body Assistance Task Force

- The AB task force distributed a survey to ABs to help in determining what services would be most helpful to ABs.
- The task force has developed a draft list of observations and recommendations based on discussion and the survey results. They hope to finalize this list by mid-December.

PROFICIENCY TESTING

- The Chem FoPT Subcommittee is continuing to work on limit updates. The subcommittee approved the DRAFT DW FoPT table and has forwarded it to the PT Executive Committee. They also updated the NPW and SCM FoPT tables that include the addition of experimental analytes. The vote on these tables is being completed by e-mail. They are also working on the update of the Non-Potable Water FoPT table – they previously only looked at experimental analytes and are now looking at the remainder of the analytes. The expected implementation dates for these tables will be July 1, 2011.
- The Field PT Subcommittee did not meet this month. They are still compiling data. The next meeting is planned for November 16th.

- PTPA Assessments:
 - ACLASS has provided a response to their assessment and it still be reviewed by the evaluators.
 - The A2LA evaluation team attended an A2LA evaluation of a PT provider.
- The committee discussed the PTPA database issue and some ideas were forwarded to Jerry for his input.
- TNI/EPA Joint Cryptosporidium Work Group. The group provided the following input regarding their first meeting earlier this week: The first meeting was well attended and there was useful input on ideas for TNI to expand EPA's PT program. Carrie's understanding is that Matt Sica is seeking permission from the PT Executive Committee for the group to meet as a protozoa-type fields of testing subgroup to establish criteria for use with the current EPA Cryptosporidium Program.
- The three priorities this committee will work on in the upcoming months is development of a process to add analytes to FoPT tables, completion of the PTPA audits and approval of the FoPT tables.

ADMINISTRATION

Advocacy Committee

- The next newsletter is scheduled to be published in mid-November.
- Keith Chapman reported that SLAG is reviewing the new quality manual template and small lab handbook drafts.
- TNI exhibited at the annual meeting of state drinking water administrators.
- Steve Arms and Jerry Parr met with EPA's Regional Science and Technology Directors.

Policy Committee

- The Policy Committee is continuing to refine the working draft of the global TNI Complaint SOP. A Complaint Policy is in final draft form, but the committee has decided to wait and send both documents forward at the same time.
- The Policy Committee is now focusing on the Complaints and Voting SOPs from the PT Executive Committee, along with the NELAP AC's Mutual Recognition Policy.

Conference Planning

Savannah

- Material for exhibitors in Savannah is now available and the registration site is open. Three exhibitors have registered. Absolute Standards and ERA have signed on as Meeting Sponsors.
- Conference brochure (provided as a separate attachment) is at the print shop and should be mailed this week.
- On-line registration has opened.

NEMC

- The DRAFT Call for Papers has been finalized and the Academia Call for Papers is just about complete. Abstract preparation procedures have also been completed.

- Session Chairs are being identified and solid session proposals are being submitted.
- Work on the new website format has been started. Information is being uploaded and a first review will be available before the next Board of Trustees meeting.
- A DRAFT Session Chair responsibilities summary has been completed and is being reviewed by Earl.
- Work has been started on the Exhibitor program and a DRAFT will be available within the next two weeks.

FEM Cooperative Agreement

- Jerry, Ilona and Ken met by teleconference to prioritize the required action. The first task was to get the Environmental Measurements Expert Committee (EMMEC) off the ground. This committee is tasked with developing measurement tools for LOD, LOQ, and calibration (later it will work on method validation/verification procedures for use with EPA's "flexible approach"). The CSDP Executive Committee has yet to approve formation of the EMMEC, so in the meantime a "steering committee" of 3 key people has been formed (Richard Burrows is Chair). This has met once by teleconference and has developed a draft charter. The intent to form the EMMEC and its associated standards activity was posted on the website on October 30 (as required by Procedures Governing Standards Development), together with an invitation for people to nominate themselves. After 1 month the committee can be formed. Meanwhile, it is anticipated the CSDP Exec. Committee, at its Nov. 11 meeting, will approve formation of the EMMEC.
- The cooperative agreement requires development of an acceptable approach to accreditation of state primacy labs. Some TNI members are already working on an APHL subcommittee to address this topic. Ken is monitoring their progress through attending their teleconferences. APHL and TNI members will meet face-to-face at the Savannah meeting to investigate working together.

Training

- The DRAFT TNI Training – Educational Delivery System SOP has been reviewed and comments are being incorporated. An application and confidentiality statement still need to be completed.
- A number of vendors that offer webinar services have been contacted to determine services offered and pricing. A summary table is being prepared with this information and then a service will be selected.
- Preliminary plans for a training website have been discussed with William. He will be ready to add the information as it is being developed.
- A survey is being planned to get feedback from the various groups in TNI regarding training needs. There have also been discussions with various TNI members who are trainers and Jerry has provided a listing of all training courses offered since 2003. This information will be used to begin developing curriculum. A meeting is being planned during the Savannah meeting to roll out the training program and get input. It is expected that this program will be a benefit to the new EMMEC.

Membership Report: October 2010

Active Members: 735