

# TNI Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

## April 11, 2012

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### 1. Roll Call and Welcome New Directors

Directors	Present
Joe Aiello	X
Aaren Alger	X
Steve Arms	X
Susan Boutros	X
Judith Duncan	X
Zonetta English	
Jack Farrell	
Keith Greenaway	
Sharon Mertens	X
Judy Morgan	X
Patsy Root	
Matt Sica	
Scott Siders	X
Alfredo Sotomayor	X
Dave Speis	X
Elizabeth Turner	X
Susan Wyatt	X
Ex-Officio Directors	
Brenda Bettencourt	
Brooke Connor	X
George Detsis	
Jordan Adelson (Janice Willey)	X
Staff	
Lynn Bradley	X
Carol Batterton	
Ken Jackson	X
Jerry Parr	X
Ilona Taunton	X
Janice Wlodarski	X

### 2. 2012 Officer Election

The Officers shall be a Chair, Past-Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Other Officers may be established by the Board of Directors. The Officers, with exception of the Past-Chair, shall be elected annually at the first meeting of the newly elected Board of Directors, from among its members.

#### Chair

Nominations: Sharon Mertens, Motion by Steve Arms  
 Second: Judy Morgan  
 Discussion: None  
 Approved: Unanimous

**Past-Chair:** Steve Arms

**Vice-Chair**

Nominations: Aaren Alger, Motion by Steve Arms  
Second: Judy Morgan  
Discussion: None  
Approved: Unanimous

**Secretary**

Nominations: Alfredo Sotomayor, Motion by Judy Morgan  
Second: Judy Duncan  
Discussion: None  
Approved: Unanimous

**Treasurer**

Nominations: Dave Speis, Motion by Judy Duncan  
Second: Judy Morgan  
Discussion: None  
Approved: Unanimous

**3. Approval of March Minutes**

**Motion to Approve:** Judy Duncan  
**Second:** Steve Arms  
**Approved:** Unanimous

**4. 2012 Board Orientation**

A PowerPoint presentation was provided separately with these minutes. Three options for a Board orientation can be done. The presentation can be used a) as a self-paced orientation to be reviewed by each Director on their own, b) the presentation can be discussed in this April meeting of the Board, or c) a webinar can be scheduled at another time.

A hybrid of the options could also be applied, i.e., if Directors review on their own and have questions, they can email or call with their questions, etc.

Jerry will set up a time in April to hold the webinar. It will be recorded so others can review whenever they like. Webinar recording will be available to anyone who wants to see it, not just TNI members.

**5. 2011 Financial Report and 2012 Budget**

The 2011 Financial Report and the 2012 Budget were reviewed by the Board of Directors. Summary data is available for members upon request.

**6. Ways and Means Committee**

The Finance Committee is charged "to perform an annual review of the TNI financial records and report the results to the Board of Directors." The Finance Committee recommends the Board form a new committee, the Ways and Means Committee that would be chartered to investigate mechanisms for increasing revenue for TNI.

Everyone is asked to give this some thought and get back with Jerry in the next month if you'd like to take part on the committee or if you have any questions or suggestions. *Sharon and Steve* are willing to help out.

WMC will be a separate committee from the Finance Committee. Finance Committee has a completely different mission, only exists to serve a specific function.

**Motion to form the Ways and Means Committee to investigate mechanisms for increasing revenue for TNI:** Steve Arms  
**Second:** Judy Duncan  
**Approved:** Unanimous

## **7. Support of NELAP (Attachment 1)**

From the January minutes: The AC has requested that TNI create a position statement. The reason for wanting the statement is more than just because of the original ACIL letter, but also to diffuse any kind of notion that the TNI Board supports a position of having third-parties as the only accrediting option. The Board has requested that the AC withhold judgment of the Board's position, and not assume by lack of immediate attention that there is a lack of support of the AC, until after the Sarasota meeting. Jerry volunteered to prepare this document.

The attachment provides a good history and statements about activities and describes the positive benefits of NELAP and labs of NELAP, but it does not conclude with the kind of statement that indicates the Board's support and encouragement of the AC. Without this, it's just a good information sheet.

Jerry will redraft (hopefully as 1 page) and send for more comments. It should be shared with the NELAP AC for their comments as well.

## **8. SOP 1-108 – Nominations to the TNI Board of Directors**

This SOP has been reviewed by the Policy Committee and is being provided to the Board for their review and endorsement.

### **Motion to Approve SOP 1-108 – Nominations to the TNI Board of Directors**

**Motion:** Judy Duncan  
**Second:** Judy Morgan  
**Approved:** Unanimous

## **9. Program Reports (Attachment 2)**

## Attachment 1

### **National Laboratory Accreditation Essential to Ensure Reliable Environmental Data**

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Each year, hundreds of millions of measurements are performed by over 5,000 US environmental testing laboratories to determine whether or not a regulated entity is in or out of compliance, evaluate the extent and nature of environmental contaminants in air, soil and water, and to collectively provide information used to protect human health and the environment.

For example, homeowners may seek testing of their well water to see if it is safe to drink, a wastewater treatment plan may test its discharge to demonstrate compliance with a permit limit, the Federal Government may test soil at facilities to determine if a site can be redeveloped, or a town may contract to test its air to determine the impact of a new industrial activity that has moved into the area.

Many of these measurements are performed without adequate surveillance to ensure they are reliable. Without this surveillance, government agencies and the public often make decisions that may be based on incomplete or inaccurate information. Such decisions:

- Increase the anxiety over environmental contamination where no such anxiety is justified, or provide assurance of no risks when such assurances cannot be proven.
- Promote unnecessary expenditure of funds to remedy a non-existent environmental concern, or taking insufficient actions when such remedies are needed.
- Result in devaluation of property based on inaccurate measurements.
- Lead to over-regulation of some industries when such regulation is not required.

The NELAC Institute (TNI), a non-profit organization whose mission is to “foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality”, administers the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) that ensures the competency of all laboratories that measure environmental contaminants in environmental media (e.g., air, soil, water). TNI’s program contains a number of fundamental attributes:

- Laboratories are periodically inspected by an authoritative, independent organization, called an Accreditation Body (AB), to ensure they have the staff, facilities, equipment, and professional practices to generate reliable data.
- Laboratories are held accountable to an internationally-recognized standard supplemented by requirements specific to environmental testing that are essential for ensuring reliable data.
- Laboratories are periodically evaluated using proficiency test (PT) samples to gauge the accuracy of laboratory results.
- PT sample providers are evaluated to ensure they are qualified to make available and grade these test samples.
- ABs that inspect laboratories are monitored by TNI to ensure they have the resources for operating an accreditation program.
- Laboratory assessors have access to professional training to conduct laboratory assessments.

No other organization in the United States has developed requirements specific for environmental testing that have an equal level of rigor that ensure their consistent application by multiple state agencies and users. No other organization has established a system whereby government agencies may have confidence that participating laboratory assessors and ABs manage and implement reliable accreditation programs. No other organization has established a comprehensive PT program encompassing as many analytes and media.

Over 2000 laboratories have been accredited in TNI’s National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP). TNI’s NELAP is governed by consensus standards that incorporated input from all

stakeholders, including state and federal agencies, regulated industry, small and large laboratories and that represent the best professional practices in the industry.

**NELAP benefits the public by:**

- Establishing a uniform set of standards by which environmental data is produced, promoting the comparability and defensibility of information across various states, agencies and regulatory programs.
- Being more cost effective, through the use of the accreditation status of a laboratory by multiple stakeholders and consequently reducing the number of assessments performed by accreditation bodies.
- Presenting greater opportunities for consensus by pooling the expertise of multiple agencies, states and the private sector in developing standards.
- Improving the quality of laboratory assessments by establishing uniform requirements for training assessors and facilitating opportunities for information exchange.
- Expanding the scope of accreditation programs to include emerging contaminants, field sampling activities, and additional environmental media.
- Reducing the amount of effort needed to define environmental project requirements.

**Laboratories benefit because accreditation to NELAP standards:**

- Replaces redundant and often contradictory on-site assessments with comprehensive standardized inspections.
- Increases the acceptability of data by regulators and customers.
- Reduces significantly the substantial indirect costs associated with redundant accreditation activities.
- Enhances the credibility of data generated.
- Establishes a level playing field for laboratory operations across the industry.

## Attachment 2

### PROGRAM REPORTS

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#### **CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT**

- When the 2009 Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Standard was written, a Uniformity of Standards Committee reviewed all the modules to check for any inconsistencies such as contradicting standards and definitions of terms. The current revised Quality Systems Standard has only clarification changes, so this was a relatively easy task and has been completed by the program administrator. The Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee will review the revised PT standard for uniformity at both the WDS and VDS stages.
- The Environmental Measurement Methods Expert Committee has almost completed its proposed language for a WDS on calibration. An accompanying guidance document is also being prepared.
- The Stationary Source Audit Sample Table (posted on the TNI website) provides the following information for analytes by method: concentration range; acceptance criteria; and audit sample reporting limits (analogous to environmental laboratory PTRLs). Currently, the Committee is working on an SOP for management of the table. Information on the first audit sample provider (ERA) has been posted on the EPA website, and will soon be on the TNI website.
- The revised Accreditation Body Committee charter is complete and will be posted on the website.
- The Corrective Action Task Force for Standards Development is meeting twice a month and has developed an initial list of key findings.

#### **NEFAP Executive Committee**

- The Evaluation SOP is still being worked on. The committee agreed to some language for a recognition subcommittee to work on the final approval of ABs and this language is being added to the SOP for review by the Executive Committee.
- There was some confusion on status of the Voting SOP update, but it is now in review and should be ready for the Policy Committee in April.
- The vote to the TNI membership for Executive Committee membership closed last Friday and the new members will be announced this week. The voting results have been forwarded to the committee chair.
- The FSMO checklist was reviewed against the standard as a final check. It will be forwarded to William for posting this week. It will only be made available to individuals who agree they own a copy of ISO 17025.
- There will be a Lead Evaluators and Technical Evaluators meeting on April 16<sup>th</sup>. ABs now have applicants and the final part of their evaluation (assessment of an FSMO) is being planned. There may also be a new AB applicant coming.

#### **Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)**

- The committee continues to make progress on updating the sections for the new DRAFT standard based on the suggestions that were received. The committee is continuing to go through the updates during conference calls and the conference call schedule has been increased. The updates need to be completed by the end of June.
- A subcommittee has been formed to look at the issues of PTs associated with the field program. They are reviewing comments on the standard and looking for ways to best update the standard to insert this information.

- Advocacy continues with many scheduled upcoming events. More questions are being asked of the committee.
- There is no report yet on the subcommittee that was developed to look at the best way to accredit mobile labs and stand alone analytical instruments used in the field. Overlap with NELAP will be considered.
- The “NEFAP Training Oversight Subcommittee” is still working on written procedures on how to determine training needs and review training proposals submitted for review. This SOP originally included advocacy, but this is now being separated into a separate Advocacy SOP.

## **NELAP**

### **Accreditation Council**

- Seven AB evaluations are underway; two more will be initiated by the end of the year.
- OK advises that it will need to modify its regulations before applying to become a new AB, with likely a 2 year delay.
- All state non-NELAP Accreditation Bodies will be invited to join the May 7 AC meeting. This will be the first of upcoming semi-annual "open" meetings of the AC, which will include other or additional groups in the future. This particular meeting will be the first step in the Advocacy Committee's planned outreach to non-NELAP states.
- The AC has requested that LAS EC draft a policy or procedure, as appropriate, for AB notifications of changes in status, to include whether additional oversight might be needed. Language from the original 2003 NELAC standard was provided as an example of what is desired.
- A sample report from a DoD-recognized AB is now available for the AC to consider in its decision about whether and how to utilize reports of governmental non-NELAP ABs, per Option 5 from the AB Task Force.
- The AC continues to address a few Standard Interpretation Requests at each meeting.

### **Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee**

- Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) process:
  - 7 requests were received in March. Five will be handled by QS, one was not a SIR and the other is being evaluated.
  - 19 SIRs have been approved and have been forwarded for uploading to the website.
  - The SIRs that received a 2/3 vote that still have a “Veto” or “Needs Discussion” were reviewed. A number were forwarded with comments to the QS for reconsideration. The others were forwarded to the NELAP AC as a reminder for discussion. Review notes were added. There are 17 of these SIRs. The NELAP AC is dedicating time in each meeting to work through all of the SIRs and these will be taken care of through that process.
- The committee is still working on updating the Standards Review SOP so that it will be ready to be used with the new standards that are being updated. People would like to be involved earlier in the process.

### **Technical Assistance Committee**

- Committee members are continuing to prepare course summaries that will include suggested elements and objectives for each course.
- A newsletter article was prepared for April to update the general membership on the progress of the committee.

## **PROFICIENCY TESTING**

- The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee is continuing to review NPW analytes.
- The FoPT website now has an option for people to sign-up to receive e-mail updates when new FoPT tables are added to the website or when posted tables are changed. This information has been added to the TNI newsletter that will be distributed in April. E-mail addresses for state contacts are needed so they can be informed of this option too.
- The committee has received a formal complaint on the process of communicating PTPA information to all states. Some states are not aware that there are currently two PTPAs and this is affecting PT Providers who work in these states that are accredited by the new PTPA provider. This was discussed at the last meeting and will be worked on in April.
- The committee is continuing to work with William to update the PTPA listing on the website to include their scope.
- The chair and program administrator will be meeting in April to update SOPs and work on PT Program Complaint SOP.
- The PTPA database subcommittee had their first meeting. Issues were reviewed and everyone has an action item to review the standard to help compile requirements by this Wednesday. The committee will meet again on Friday, April 13th to review these requirements and begin looking at options to ensure they are being met.
- A new PT Provider has been accredited by A2LA, Advanced Analytical Solutions.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Advocacy Committee**

- The Advocacy Committee is coordinating with the NELAP AC on the development of an outreach plan to non-NELAP states. The plan includes inviting non-NELAP states to participate in a NELAP AC conference call on May 7. Feedback from this conference call will be used to design a special session at the summer meeting for non-NELAP states.
- The Advocacy Committee will be coordinating with the Policy Committee to develop a hierarchy of definitions for position statement, policy and operating procedures. In doing this they will review existing By-Laws, policies and SOPs. They will also use the documentation of the PPT Committee that worked to develop the proposal for creation of TNI as this document includes articulation of many of the core values that should be documented as Position Statements.
- The next newsletter will be published on April 15.
- EPA's final adoption of the Method Update Rule is expected by next week.
- The Advocacy Committee will submit an article on TNI training opportunities to WEF Lab Solutions.

### **Accreditation Body Assistance Task Force II**

- The TNI Board approved the ABTF's final plan of action for Recommended Options 1-7 at their last meeting. The Board appointed a new task force to pursue development of an implementation plan for Recommended Option #8 (non-governmental ABs).
- The new task force held their first meeting on April 9. Judy Duncan was elected chair and Alfredo Sotomayor was elected vice chair. The task force developed a charter and agreed to meet twice monthly. A draft implementation plan will be presented at the summer meeting in Washington, DC.

### **Policy Committee**

- The committee has been meeting every other week since Sarasota.



- The NELAP AB Evaluation SOP has been reviewed and forwarded to the NELAP AC for some recommended changes.
- The TNI Board Nomination SOP (1-108) has been completed and is being forwarded to the TNI Board for final approval.
- A tremendous effort continues to be made in document control. SOPs and Policies are now clearly summarized and format updates are just about complete.
- The committee is using a discussion board to make comments on documents needing review between meetings.

### **EPA Cooperative Agreement**

- The article on “Accreditation of State Environmental Laboratories” has been edited by APHL staff and has now been accepted for publication in the upcoming edition of *Bridges*.

### **Environmental Measurement Symposium – Washington, DC, August 2012**

- Almost 190 abstracts have been received for this conference. Sessions are just about finalized and the first complete table of sessions and order will be ready on Thursday for review. Session chairs have started notifying speakers regarding acceptance of their abstracts. A final list will be distributed by Ilona by the end of the week and a request for biographies will be distributed at the same time.
- Speakers have started sending in biographies, so posting to the website should be possible by the end of next week.
- 17 Exhibitors have already signed up for the conference. A new tracking sheet has been added to the website to make it easier for the coordinators to work from one document and easily stay updated on status.
- A new smart phone application will be available to attendees to track meeting times and locations in DC.

### **Membership Report**

- Active Members: 845