

TNI Board of Directors Meeting Agenda Summary

November 14, 2012

1. Roll Call

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

2. Approval of October Minutes

Changes: #6 re: Freedom of Information Act

Motion to Approve: Judy Morgan

Second: Dave Speis

Approved: Approved

3. Third Quarter Financial Reports

The Finance Committee has reviewed in detail the TNI financial performance through September 2012.

4. Cryptosporidium Program

EPA Drinking Water Office issued a memo about a month ago that they are ready to roll Cryptosporidium Lab Approval program into the accreditation to states and regions. We are not sure yet what the reaction of the ABs is to this. It is on the on the agenda for the AC to start looking at.

Something else related to this program developed this week: Ilona, Mitsy, Kari – had a discussion about the Cryptosporidium PT program which is not mentioned in the memo --- that the Office of Drinking Water is ready to move this program out to the private sector. Initial discussion as to whether our Standard would be applicable and there may need to be a revision to the Drinking Water Certification manual, etc.

There is a conference call this Friday morning to discuss in more detail. Would anyone else like to be part of this discussion?

Jack can see if he can be on the call; Aaren; Susan can sit in if Aaren can't.

5. SOPs for Review and Approval

- Policy 1-111: Accounting Policies and Procedures for Administration of Assistance Agreements: General
- Policy 1-112: TNI Travel Policy
- Policy 1-116: Training Courses
- Policy 1-117: Accounting Policies and Procedures for Administration of Assistance Agreements: Property Management and Control
- Policy 1-118: Accounting Policies and Procedures for Administration of Assistance Agreements: Reporting Policy
- Policy 1-119: Accounting Policies and Procedures for Administration of Assistance Agreements: Policy on Recording Direct Labor Charges
- Policy 1-120: Accounting Policies and Procedures for Administration of Assistance Agreements: Conflicts of Interest Policy
- SOP 1-109: Establishing, Validating, and Maintaining Analyte and Method Codes

Not everyone has had time to review these. Let's give everyone time to review and send comments by 11/28. Jerry will review for comments and changes and then send for approval via email ballot. Major concerns can be addressed at the next meeting.

Will provide background and rational for SOPs/POLs in the future.

6. Program Reports

See Attachment 1

Attachment 1 PROGRAM REPORTS

CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has designated each of the 4 volumes of the 2009 Environmental Sector standard as “American National Standards”. This makes them the recognized standards for Environmental Laboratory Accreditation.
- In October Ken Jackson attended the ANSI forum on “**Incorporation by Reference, Reasonable Availability, and Copyright**” in Washington DC. A discussion panel included standards development organizations (SDOs), and general and senior counsels of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, US Coast Guard, and DOT. Unfortunately, the meeting had little relevance to TNI activities, since it did not address our issues of ISO copyright. The major issue was the dilemma of private SDOs trying to protect their own copyright when their standards are adopted by the Federal Government. However, the perspective of the federal representatives on the panel was of interest. They all agreed they don’t want to develop their own standards, citing lack of in-house expertise (and resources), and they rely heavily on the provisions of OMB-A119 to use standards developed by private SDOs. However, the government agencies and the SDOs are frustrated by the federal government’s difficulty in revising its regulations. Many cases were cited where the SDOs provide updates about every 5 years (as required by ANSI), but the federal agencies are still enforcing in regulation standards that are several generations old and sometimes totally redundant. Panel members complained there is not enough consumer participation even in a consensus process, and even if you can get their input, it may not be meaningful if they are non-technical people. The discussion provided a realization of what a great and perhaps unique model we have in TNI.
 - First, unlike the situations described in the forum, TNI’s customers (the state ABs and EPA) are part of the consensus body.
 - Second, almost all of our committee members are technical people and thus able to provide meaningful input into the standards development process.
 - Third, our “customers” are state governments and not federal agencies. While we may be frustrated that the ABs are slow to amend their regulations, most of them can do it in 2-3 years unlike federal agencies. Hence, the adopted TNI standards are reasonably up-to-date.
- The Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee (CSD-EC) has approved the charters of the new Microbiology and Radiochemistry Expert Committees, and has revised its own charter to reflect the new Expert Committee structure. These charters have been submitted to the TNI Chair.
- The CSD-EC has almost completed a TNI standards guidance document, which will provide the framework for the structure and drafting of TNI Standards. This will be a useful tool to help Expert Committees assure consistency between modules.
- The Chemistry Expert Committee has completed its modified Working Draft Standard (WDS) and will be presenting it for discussion at the Denver meeting in January 2013. The committee is now drafting a proposed modification of Appendix B to part 136 – Definition and Procedure for the Determination of MDL.
- The Proficiency Testing Expert Committee is continuing to address the comments received on its WDS.

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- The Quality Systems Expert Committee is continuing to address the persuasive comments received on its Voting Draft Standard.
- The Stationary Source Audit Sample Committee is updating Method 25 (Non-Methane Organic Compounds in Air & Emissions). When complete it must go to EPA for consideration as an improved method.
- 18 committee applications were received in the month of October. Most of these were for the new Microbiology and Radiochemistry Expert Committees.

NEFAP

NEFAP Executive Committee

- The NEFAP EC formed the first Recognition Subcommittee – Marlene Moore, John Moorman, Dane Wren, Paul Bergeron and William Batschelet. The new chair of this committee is Marlene Moore. The committee members are finishing up any missing training and will begin reviewing accreditation material this week to finalize an AB. They will meet late November/early December.
- Establish confidentiality procedures for the Recognition Subcommittee.
- The committee has started to discuss candidates for a new chair for the committee.
- A new subcommittee was formed to discuss mobile lab issues. Kim Watson, Scott Evans, Doug Berg and Marlene Moore will participate. An invitation has also been extended to the Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC) to provide a couple of members. They will participate as soon as the Voting Draft Standard is complete in November.
- The charter is being reviewed.

Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)

- The committee is completing the review of comments and has made updates to the standard. There are two final topics they are finishing up and they plan to vote in the Voting Draft Standard on November 15th.
- Work on an FSMO Quality Manual Template will be reviewed after the Voting Draft Standard is complete.
- The committee will begin work with the NEFAP EC on mobile lab issues after the Voting Draft Standard is complete.
- The chair and the NEFAP EC chair still need to meet to discuss the placement of the “NEFAP Training Oversight Subcommittee”. This subcommittee needs to work on written procedures on how to determine training needs and review training proposals submitted for review. This will be addressed in December.
- The committee is reviewing their Charter. An update will be completed in December and provided to the CSDP.
- Justin and JoAnn will put together an updated table of presentations and Ilona will work with William to post this list. The viewer should be able to see when and where presentations are planned, which presentations still need a presenter, etc.

NELAP

Accreditation Council

- The final AB evaluation of the current round begins in November. Ten renewals have been approved, four others are currently underway. Revisions to the evaluation process based on first experience with the TNI ELSS are underway and will soon enter the committee approval process, for use during the next round of evaluations, beginning December 2013.
- On December 3, the AC will initiate quarterly assessor training conference calls in place of the normal AC meeting. All NELAP AB assessors (including contract assessors) will be invited to participate in discussions of particular topics as selected by two volunteer ABs; state AB assessors who are able to adjust their travel schedules accordingly will participate, while the remaining assessors will learn of the discussion content from their program managers.
- At the request of the NELAP QAO, the AC discussed current use of interim accreditations, an issue that arose during evaluations. These were part of the 2003 NELAC Standard, and remain in several state regulations, but are not addressed in the TNI ELSS. For now, individual ABs granting secondary accreditations to labs with interim accreditations will address the issue with the primary AB. The issue has been formally referred to the Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee, to be addressed in the next revision of the TNI ELSS.
- The AC continues its intensive effort to address “backlogged” Standards Interpretation Request (SIRs.) All of the “needs discussion” items are being addressed. Some have been discussed and will be approved; some will be unapprovable-as-written and returned to the LAS EC with suggested clarifying language that will be implementable; others will be returned as either “not really SIRs but ‘help-me’ requests; some will be returned as obsolete. All of these problematic SIRs have languished and received Board attention as “backlog” and the AC anticipates decisions on the remaining “backlog” in its November 5 meeting but difficult or unresolved issues may languish until January.
- The AC is initiating a review of its foundation documents – a charter, a general operation procedure, the voting procedure – and has asked LAS to provide advice concerning the amount of oversight required for varying degrees of modification to AB operations, as states contemplate shifting from staff/direct-employee operations to contractor-conducted-state-overseen operations.

Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee (LAS EC)

- The LAS EC eagerly awaits definitive responses from the NELAP AC about the status and recommendations for the backlogged SIRs. The response from the AC will be handled on an ad hoc basis. LAS will shortly review and recommend to the Policy Committee and the Board a revised SIR SOP that will include ways to ensure that LAS reviews expert committee interpretations as well as weeding out the “help me” items that are submitted as SIRs.
- Once the CSD Executive Committee approves its revisions to the Standards Revision process, LAS will undertake to review its Suitability Review process.
- Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) Update:

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Total Number of SIRs	SIRs Closed Out	SIRs in NELAP AC Voting Process	SIRs at Expert Committees	SIRs Being Redirected
215	131	64	18	2

- Two more SIRs were finalized and forwarded for posting to the website. The inquirers were also sent a letter.
- 1 SIR was received in October and it was determined to not be a SIR. A letter has been sent to the inquirer and it has been closed out.
- There are two vetoes that need to be reviewed.

Technical Assistance Committee

- Completed efforts on AB Task Force assignment and draft report in progress.
- Set agenda for the Assessment Forum and Mentor Session for Denver.

PROFICIENCY TESTING

PT Program Executive Committee (PTP EC)

- The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee has finished their review of NPW analytes. The FoPT table has been finalized and approved by the subcommittee. There were some final decisions made to delete some analytes. A cover letter has been prepared and the PTP EC will have a copy before their November meeting. All minutes were reviewed and actions tables were updated. Work will begin on the SCW table on November 20th.
- The Chair, Stacie Metzler, and Ilona reviewed different options for the PTP EC to evaluate the PT Program. A letter was prepared and sent to the PTPA Evaluation/Database Subcommittee for comment. A final version will be completed by e-mail and shared with the PTP EC at their meeting this Thursday. There are still subcommittee members that would like to see a database that can collect all information to make establishing FoPTs more accurate and simpler. This is a topic that the PTP EC will need to consider separately and decide whether this needs to be further explored at this time.
- The SOP Subcommittee is meeting November 13th to update the complaint resolution SOP based on comments made. This SOP will be reviewed at the next PTP EC meeting. Review of the PTPA Evaluation SOP while working on the complaint resolution SOP showed that this SOP needs to be updated next.
- The A2LA evaluation is expected to be complete by the end of December/early January. The on-site evaluation had to be delayed into December due to the recent hurricane. ACLASS will be evaluated in February 2013.
- The State Assessors Forum was contacted to inform them of the new option on the PT page that will automatically e-mail them when any updates are made to the FoPT pages. They were also informed about the new SOP for adding analytes to the table.
- The PTP website material was reviewed and updated where needed.
- A meeting is planned with Carrie and Leah November 13th to discuss next steps in TNI's involvement in the Protozoa PTs.

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- Membership for the Microbiology Subcommittee is being finalized to review FoPTs, address less than values issue and set ranges for presence/absence PTs. This subcommittee should have its first meeting by the end of November/early December.
- The committee will look at their charter in November for any possible updates.

ADMINISTRATION

Advocacy Committee

- Newsletter was published in October.
- The Advocacy Committee approved SOP 1-118, "Development of Position Statements" as Provisional, pending final approval by the Policy Committee and TNI Board. As a pilot, three committees were asked to draft position statements on three priority topics; as the process evolves, additional members and committees will be involved.
- The committee discussed reformatting the TNI newsletter as result of feedback from recent mailing with "button" link instead of attached file.
- Advocacy made plans to assist the Small Lab Advocacy Group with its survey of small labs; a member offered the Survey Monkey tool for use.

Accreditation Body Assistance Task Force II

- After reviewing a modification of the NEFAP evaluation SOP to determine its suitability for approval of NGABs in the NELAP program, the task force is considering a recognition committee for NGABs that would be a subcommittee under the TNI Board of Directors. The ABTF II will have further discussion on this option at their next meeting.
- Next steps for ABTF II will also include developing a budget for the NELAP NGAB program.

Policy Committee

- Approved minor revisions to Policy 1-104. Per Board-approved revisions to SOP 1-116, the Chair of Policy Committee is authorized to approve such minor revisions without committee review.
- Authorized the Executive Director to send a notice about handling abstentions in committee votes to all committee chairs and the AC. This clarification seemed necessary due to circumstances of the NEFAP Executive Committee, since the non-governmental ABs (NGABs) on that committee are unwilling to vote on "approval" of other NGABs to accredit to the TNI field activities standard, due to concerns about anti-trust laws and regulations. The wording of committee voting procedures determines whether abstentions are counted as "not voting" for the total vote count, or whether abstentions are merely not included in the total vote count. It was also noted that "recusal" is not explicitly mentioned in "Robert's Rules" but is a special case of abstention where "direct personal interest" is involved; recusal is not considered mandatory. This issue will be addressed in future revision of appropriate committee operation and decision making documents.
- Financial policies and SOPs which have been in place since TNI's first federal funding were submitted for approval by e-mail ballot and approved as of October 19. These are submitted for approval at the November Board meeting, along with SOP 1-109.
- A formal complaint was received through the TNI website, but it concerned a technical issue with utilizing a "form" document on the TNI web site. Policy Committee agreed to delegate authority

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for handling this and similar technical complaints to the Program Administrator, without involving any TNI committee.

Training

- The fourth Brown Bag Webinar occurred November 1st and 2nd. Information has already been submitted for posting as a webcast. We received a number of notes from people complimenting the course material and the Webinar process. Survey results were in the 4-5 range for both presentations. There were a number of groups that took advantage of the webinar and viewed it together at one location in their organization.
- Prepared a DRAFT PowerPoint for future Webinar trainers that outlines how to work within WebEx. Additional slides will be added to expand on the application process and then a webcast will be prepared to share with TNI partners who are involved in training. An e-mail update will be distributed and a possible short meeting will be planned.
- Training certificates were completed for prior webinars. Training certificates for webcasts were also distributed and a new process has been put in place to work with webcast certificates.
- Handouts have now been added to the website to make downloading this information easier for webcast students.
- A new proposal for use of the EDS marketing aspect has been received. This has been followed up on twice and we are now waiting to hear back.
- Reviewed process for working with groups who want to view Webinars and Webcasts. Looked for ways to simplify the registration process.

Conference Planning

2013 Denver Forum (1/14-17, 2013)

- Registration has opened.
- Exhibit program sold out with 17 exhibitors.

2013 Environmental Measurement Symposium – San Antonio, Texas

- Call for Abstracts has opened.
- Exhibit Program will open November 19.

Website

- A summary of the TNI sessions in DC this summer was posted along with all presentations
- A plan to not proliferate new method codes for modified methods is moving forward.
- New banners on the home page bring better visibility to the training events, especially those that are time sensitive.
- Policies and Procedures page has been updated.
- Method code tables updated the official titles, and shows which methods are approved by EPA for drinking water and wastewater.

Membership Report

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- Active Members: 864