

TNI Board of Directors Meeting Agenda December 12, 2012

1. Roll Call

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

2. Approval of November Minutes

Motion: Elizabeth Turner
Second: Patsy Root
Approved: Unanimous

3. AB Task Force Report (Attachment I)

Sharon invited Carol and Alfredo to describe the concept paper from the ABTFII. She basically walked thru the document, explaining that the goal was to have a program that was no less rigorous than NELAP with the same or similar process for recognition. She described the steps of evaluation, and noted that the qualifications and responsibilities of the team are specified, but that the QAO role is envisioned as residing with the contracted evaluator. The Board-appointed committee to oversee the structure needs further deliberation of its name, whether to be "approval" or "recognition." The ABTFII seeks input from the Board and concurrence on continuing to develop the process for TNI-sanction of NGABs.

There was some discussion about how to utilize possible ILAC-recognitions, but these points were beyond where the ABTFII has progressed. A recommendation to consider how NEFAP utilizes ILAC recognition in its development of further process items followed. There is a need to define which group (or a new one) will flesh out the implementation of TNI's NGAB program. A session at the conference in Denver, on Thursday morning, will be devoted to working on implementation.

A motion to accept the recommendations of the concept paper was made by Dave Spies and seconded by Alfredo Sotomayor. All votes were aye with Farrell abstaining.

Motion: For the Board to Accept the Recognition Concept paper from
ABTFII – Dave Speis
Second: Alfredo Sotomayor
Abstentions: Jack Farrell
Approved: Passed

4. **Cryptosporidium Program**

As discussed in the November call, the 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 agenda for the AC to start looking at.

The Office of Drinking Water is also ready to move the Cryptosporidium PT program out to the private sector. Initial discussions in a conference call on November 17 on whether our Standard would be applicable has led to a meeting scheduled for Denver on this topic.

5. **EPA Activities Relating to Field Sampling and Measurements and Laboratory Accreditation**

Lara Phelps was on call to brief the TNI Board on recent efforts within EPA:

1. We have been working very hard on several committees in the Forum on Environmental Measurements to get some new guidance documents, LOC statements and things of that nature in place. Have just come from a meeting with the Science and Technology Policy Council who have just approved those new documents. They will be coming out on the website hopefully by the end of 2012.

2. Around March 2011, we wrote the Policy to Assure the Competency of Organizations Generating Environmental Measurement Data Under Agency Funded Acquisitions Agreement – today we successfully presented and had a policy approved to expand that. We now also have one for Assistance Agreements and Inter-Agency Agreements. This two-step process is now complete. We already have a commitment with the Contracts Office, the Grants Office, and the Quality/OAR to, at the beginning of next year, coordinate all of these documents and frequently asked questions into the guidelines document.

3. The Executive Management Council met last week to discuss field activities in the agency field program's and a decision was made to require all field programs across the agency to become compliant with 10 Field Operational Group (FOG) guidelines that were established some time ago. There will be a directive coming out detailing expectations and the exact timeline, which we are expecting compliance to be within 3 years.

6. **Program Reports (Attachment 2)**

Attachment 1

Non-Governmental Accreditation Body Recognition Concept Paper

Background:

In our previous report to the TNI Board, the ABTF II reported that an evaluation process similar to the current NELAP/NEFAP Evaluation SOP can be designed to approve Non-Governmental Accreditation Bodies (NGABs) as meeting requirements of the TNI standards to accredit laboratories. However, a major question remained as to what body will provide oversight and approval for the NGABs, since some state ABs indicated that they cannot allow an NGAB to be a member of the NELAP AC.

The ABTF II recommended the establishment of a separate approval and oversight body for NGABs as the best and only path forward. The Board agreed with this proposal and directed the ABTF II to begin development of this concept and to keep the Board advised of their status. This paper describes the elements of a recognition process for NGABs as currently envisioned by the ABTF II.

Basic Concept:

A Recognition Committee reporting to the TNI Board will evaluate NGABs for conformance with the TNI environmental laboratory standard. The ABTF II believes that the process to evaluate NGABs should be no less rigorous than that used currently for NELAP recognition. To achieve this, the policies and procedures applied to NGAB recognition should be the same or similar to those used for NELAP recognition.

Purpose:

The role of this committee is to provide a determination that an NGAB meets the requirements of the TNI standard and is recognized to grant accreditation to laboratories in conformance with the applicable TNI standards for the environmental laboratory sector, and is capable of managing an accreditation program in a consistent, uniform manner.

Process:

Accreditation Bodies will be evaluated initially and at a minimum of once every three (3) years. This evaluation must include:

- Completeness and technical reviews of the application package,
- An on-site evaluation,
- ILAC recognition may serve as demonstration that the NGAB is qualified to manage an accreditation program.
- Observation of the NGAB conducting an assessment,
- On-site evaluation report(s) with findings for both the on-site evaluation and the observation, and
- Recommendations to the Recognition Committee regarding recognition or denial of recognition.

All evaluation team members must meet minimum requirements for training and professional qualifications and must successfully complete the TNI basic evaluator training course. The evaluation team must:

- Have at least one member who meets the education, experience and training requirements for laboratory assessors specified in the applicable TNI standards; and
- Have at least one other member with experience that includes at least one of the following:
 - 1) one year of experience implementing an accreditation program; or
 - 2) one year experience developing or participating at a managerial level in a laboratory accreditation program.

- Have documentation that verifies freedom from any conflict of interest that would compromise acting in an impartial, nondiscriminatory manner.

The Lead Evaluator (LE) is responsible for:

- Planning the evaluation activities.
- Ensuring that technical review is complete before the onsite is conducted.
- Being responsible for the quality systems aspects of the evaluation process.

The Evaluation Coordinator (EC) is a TNI staff person that has the following duties:

- Assisting the evaluation team by assuring all communication between the evaluation team and the NGAB, and between the evaluation team and the Recognition Committee occurs in a timely manner.
- Tracking and documents that all aspects of NGAB evaluations are performed in a timely manner in conformance with the Evaluation SOP (to be developed). Note: Ensuring timeliness may not be an appropriate responsibility for this position.
- Reviewing the NGAB application for completeness, with concurrence of the LE.
- Reviewing the evaluation reports for completeness and consistency according to the evaluation SOP and the TNI standards.

Note: The QAO function was left out intentionally. The NGABs will be a smaller group than the current NELAP ABs and the QAO function may not be needed. Additionally, if TNI contracts the LE position for NGABs, then only one person or entity will be conducting evaluations, and that may also negate the need for a QAO. The definition and function of Evaluation Coordinator are included for now, but it may be possible to combine the LE and EC positions at some point.

Recognition Committee:

The committee is composed of five members selected and voted on by the TNI Board to grant the final decision on the recognition of non-governmental accreditation bodies. The TNI Board appoints the chair of the committee.

Note: The ABTF II does not have a recommendation as to whether this committee should be called “recognition” or “approval” committee. Some feel that it should be called “approval” since “recognition” carries the connotation of “mutual” which will not necessarily be the case for all current NELAP ABs. The committee could also be called “NGAB recognition committee” to differentiate. The task force agreed to leave this decision until after further discussion and input from the Board.

Recognition Committee Members:

- Are appointed by the TNI Board
- Must be a TNI Member in good standing
- Must have no conflict of interest

A committee member does not have to be a current member of the Board of Directors but must have the following credentials:

- Must be familiar with TNI NELAP and NEFAP programs and standards and procedures
- Must have TNI-recognized training on the applicable Evaluation SOP

Recognition Committee Tasks:

- Review the Evaluation Team’s recommendation and supporting documents. Provide a decision on the Recognition of the AB. The vote is by two-thirds majority.
- Submit a letter on the decision to the applicant NGAB and TNI Board of Directors

Requested Action:

The ABTF II requests input from TNI Board on this concept and concurrence to continue development of this approval process for NGABs.

Attachment 2 PROGRAM REPORTS

CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- The Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee has drafted a document of proposed activities related to 3rd-party assessors. The plan includes the following phased approach:
 - (i) collect the names of individuals and/or organizations conducting on-site assessments;
 - (ii) using contact information from Phase (i), collect information on criteria outlined in Appendix A and produce a report of findings;
 - (iii) develop a program to vet information found in Phase (ii);
 - (iv) implement the program based on information found in Phases (i), (ii) and (iii).

The Committee is drafting a revised charter for the year beginning 1/1/2013. The draft should be available for comment and approval at the Denver meeting.

- The newly-formed Radiochemistry Committee has twelve Committee Members and currently two active Associate Committee Members, and is meeting monthly by teleconference. The committee is conducting a full-review of V1M6 of the Environmental Sector Standard, and is targeting completion of a working draft standard by the summer of 2013.
- The Microbiology Committee is now meeting by conference call and is reviewing V1M5 of the Environmental Sector Standard. The future inclusion of parasitology, enteric viruses, and molecular methods such as qPCR will be considered. Also considered will be method codes for the TNI Database.
- The Chemistry Expert Committee has voted its modified Working Draft Standard (WDS) out of committee. It will be posted on the TNI website by December 14 to allow the requisite 30 days of publication prior to its discussion during the Denver meeting. Meanwhile, the committee is continuing to draft its proposed modification of Appendix B to part 136 – Definition and Procedure for the Determination of MDL.

NEFAP

- The Recognition Subcommittee has begun work on the review of the material to finalize an AB. It was determined that the subcommittee needs more information than initially thought and this is being submitted to the group this week for review. One subcommittee member has some issues with confidentiality, so all information has to be sent to him instead of being e-mailed.
- Continued follow-up on training needs for Recognition Subcommittee.
- A candidate for the new chair of the NEFAP EC was presented and an e-mail vote is in progress.
- 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. This committee is planning to meet in December.
- An update to the charter is being submitted for finalization at the December meeting. The final charter will be forwarded to the Board of Directors.
- Continued to make updates to website.

- Work will progress in advocacy in December. Justin and JoAnn will finalize a listing of upcoming meetings/conferences where NEFAP has an opportunity to present. Ilona will work with William to provide this information on the NEFAP site so speakers can be found and people will know where they can go to get more information about NEFAP.
- Work is continuing on the Nomination Subcommittee to put together a list of candidates to replace Executive Committee members that are rotating off the committee.
- Marlene plans to meet with the chair of the FAC to finalize some concepts for the Training Subcommittee so the SOP can be completed.

Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)

- The Voting DRAFT standard was approved by the committee on November 15th.
- The Voting DRAFT standard was posted on November 28th, voting will open on Dec 14th, and the last day to vote will be Jan 12th.
- Voting results and comments will be discussed in Denver.
- Work on an FSMO Quality Manual Template will begin in December. Ilona will compile all information and Justin and Ilona will invite people to join the subcommittee to begin work on this tool.
- The committee will begin work with the NEFAP EC on mobile lab issues. This group will meet in December or early January for the first time.
- 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. John Moorman will be representing FAC.
- The committee will finalize their charter in December and provide it to the CSDP.
- A new member was approved and added to the committee: Yoon Cha.

NELAP

Accreditation Council

- The planned assessor training session on December 3 went well. VA led the discussion on traceability, with lively participation in the discussion by both state and contract assessors.
- The AC will meet with EPA representatives in Denver to discuss EPA’s announced intent to have states accredit labs for Cryptosporidium testing, for the next monitoring study required by regulation in 2015. Preliminary discussion among the NELAP ABs shows that several states currently accredit for “crypto.” EPA has a separate Certification Manual and training for crypto, and while a few state assessors have completed the course, there was not then any expectation that EPA would cease certifying crypto labs for the next monitoring study.
- Work to finalize the package of SIRs for return to LAS EC continues.

Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee (LAS EC)

- Kirstin Daigle, Chair, has given notice that she can no longer fill that role. She has asked to hand off the position to a new chair at conference in Denver, and will be unable to serve after that time.

- LAS is continuing its effort to revise the Standards Interpretation SOP.
- Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) Update:

Total Number	Closed Out	SIRs in NELAP AC	Quality Systems	PT	LAB	Being Redirected
218	133	64	5	6	0	3

- 2 SIRs need 1 more vote and then a final response will be sent to the inquirer and be posted on the website.
- 26 SIRs currently have enough negative votes that it is clear they are not going to be approved. This list needs to be reviewed by LAS EC and the NELAP EC to determine next steps. Why is the SIR response not approved – disagreement with interpretation, need for slight modification, etc??? Ilona will be working with Lynn and Kirstin on these.
- There are 5 SIRs that need to be opened up for discussion at a NELAP AC meeting before they can be finalized. They currently have a 2/3 vote approval, but a discussion was requested before finalization.
- There are a number of SIRs that are ready for a final notification to the ABs that have not voted – they have already received a 2/3 approval but voting rules require a 2 week notification to those who have not voted to confirm there are not vetoes. At the request of the NELAP AC, this process will be held until they have had an opportunity to complete a project they started where all the earlier SIRs are being reviewed and re-voted on. They are working with LAS EC and will be working with the Expert Committee on any concerns.
- There were 3 SIRs submitted this month – 2 were not SIRs and the third is still being worked on. Letters have been sent to the inquirer and the SIRs have been closed out.

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.
- TAC meeting in Denver will become a forum to discuss the TNI Training effort.

PROFICIENCY TESTING

PT Program Executive Committee (PTP EC)

- The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee has finished their review of NPW analytes. Data is still being pulled together to begin work on the SCW tables. It is expected that work on this table will begin mid December.
- Options for the PTP EC to evaluate the PT Program were presented to the PTP EC. Feedback was to strictly follow the items listed in the standard and the chair is working on a letter to request some of this data from the PTPAs so the Evaluation Subcommittee can determine how the data should be collected and evaluated. This request will be going out in the next week.
- The PTP EC charter was reviewed and an update was prepared for finalization at the December meeting. The charter update will be submitted to the Board of Directors after this meeting.
- The NPW FoPT table update was presented to the committee. Committee members are reviewing the table in detail and it will be discussed and finalized at the December meeting. The committee discussed an effective date with various PT Providers that attended the November meeting. The goal will be July 1, 2013.

- The Advocacy committee requested a White Paper to discuss the importance of a PT Program. The chair and Curtis Woods are working on this paper. A DRAFT will be reviewed in Denver.
- The agenda for Denver was discussed and finalized.
- The SOP Subcommittee is continuing to meet. The PTP EC did not have sufficient time to address SOPs in their November meeting, but work will continue in December.
- 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 hurricane and the rescheduling of the on-site. ACLASS will be evaluated in February 2013. Travel plans are in progress.
- A meeting was held with Carrie, Leah, Jerry, the PTP EC chair and the PTP Program Administrator to discuss next steps in TNI's involvement with the Protozoa PTs. It does appear that there are ways that TNI can be involved in this program. EPA is preparing an update to requirements and this will be available for everyone's review in December. The group decided to meet in Denver to determine next steps after review of this document. The Protozoa FoPT table was discussed and it will not be posted until after the Denver meeting. The concerns expressed about the table were followed up on and it is now ready for finalization in Denver.
- The Microbiology FoPT Subcommittee held its first meeting in November and will begin working as a subcommittee.

ADMINISTRATION

Advocacy Committee

- The Advocacy Committee did not meet in December, but will meet again on January 3, 2013, to plan for the Denver meeting.
- The Advocacy Committee has received 2 versions of a revised newsletter format which will be reviewed at the January meeting.
- Stephanie Drier (MNDoH) has agreed to assume responsibility for drafting the member profile article for upcoming newsletters.
- The committee has received drafts of two position statements for review at the next meeting.

Non-Governmental Accreditation Body (NGAB) Task Force

- The NGAB Task Force has approved a final draft concept paper on a recognition process for NGABs which establishes a recognition committee under the TNI Board. The draft paper will be presented to the TNI Board for approval of the concept and direction to proceed.

Policy Committee

- Policy Committee is actively reviewing three SOPs but none are ready to present to the Board at this time.
- A complaint was received this month regarding the TNI website. It was not a complaint that was appropriate to be handled through the process, but assistance was provided to the complainant and the complaint was resolved.

Training

- The fifth Brown Bag Webinar occurred December 7th. Information has already been submitted for posting as a webcast. We continue to get positive feedback on these webinars and course

attendance continues to be high. Survey results were in the 4-5 range. The next webinar will be in February.

- Prepared a DRAFT PowerPoint for future Webinar trainers that outlines with screen shots how to work within WebEx. The format is being modified and new information on how to work with TNI on training events is being added. This will be complete this week.
- The Education Delivery System (EDS) application and fee schedule have been updated based on information collected the last 6 months and discussions with the Finance committee. The website has been updated.
- EDS and the use of Webinars/Webcasts will be discussed in the TAC meeting in Denver.
- Reviewed process for working with groups who want to view Webinars and Webcasts. Looked for ways to simplify the registration process and simpler procedures have been implemented.
- Prepared and began using a manual survey for Webinar/Webcast trainings where the participant missed completing the pop-up survey.

Conference Planning

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

- Early Registration will close December 28; registration is very light. (<100).
- Exhibit program sold out with 21 exhibitors.
- Hotel announced remodeling activities that will have minor impact. Significant concessions from hotel will benefit both TNI and attendees.

2013 Environmental Measurement Symposium – San Antonio, Texas

- RFP for training sent out to potential trainers.
- Exhibit Program has opened.
- Call for Abstracts emailed to >4500 individuals
- New instruction documents were prepared and old ones were updated to reflect many new procedures:
 - Abstract Style Guide
 - Biography Style Guide
 - Duties and Responsibilities: Oral Presenters
 - Duties and Responsibilities: Session Chairs
 - Paper Style Guide
 - Written Materials Agreement

Website

- Working on new organization chart to show 2 new committees.
- Web pages added for Microbiology and Radiochemistry committees.
- LA DHH starting to upload lab data into LAMS. That will mean 8 ABs are now active..

Membership Report

- Active Members: 850