

## TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary April 10, 2013

---

### 1. Roll Call

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

### 2. Approval of March 2013 Minutes

**Changes:**

- 1) Program Reports – “Field Activities” Note that John “Norman” will be the Field Activities Representative on this activity.
- 2) Re: Jerry cause of death – remove “from cancer”.
- 3) Discussion on approving PT provider – sounds like the Board approved the PT Provider, Change this so that the Board “endorsed” the information provided.

**Motion to Approve with Changes:** Steve Arms  
**Second:** Elizabeth Turner  
**Approved:** Unanimous

### 3. Officer Election

As stated in the Bylaws:

*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.*

#### Election Results:

Sharon Mertens: Chair (Motion by Aaren Alger; Second by Steve Arms; Approved Unanimous)  
Aaren Alger: Vice-Chair (Motion by Dave Speis; Second by Jack Farrell; Approved Unanimous)  
Alfredo Sotomayor: Secretary (Motion by Steve Arms; Second by Jack Farrell; Approved Unanimous)  
David Speis: Treasurer (Motion by Alfredo Sotomayor; Second by Jack Farrell; Approved Unanimous)

### 4. Letter to EPA (Attachment 1)

The Advocacy Committee has drafted a letter to be sent to EPA's Forum on Environmental Measurement to provide an update on TNI activities.

Change:

- 1) Small edit – second sentence change “have” to “has”.
- 2) Editorial: “EPA” vs. “Agency” – choose one.
- 3) CSD section: It talks about the different Volumes, then specific changes. There may be a disconnect between what is being talked about. Maybe we should restructure this section to link the changes discussed to a particular volume, or make it into two paragraphs.
- 4) Opening paragraph: a little long. State the purpose first, then the vision. Or place the vision into a separate text box.
- 5) CSD section: Swap the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sentences.
- 6) 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence also applies to the NEFAP ABs – add them in.
- 7) Suggest that we include a cover letter that acts as a summary.
- 8) Closing paragraph: Is there anything more that TNI wants to include in this paragraph – anything more that TNI wants to get out of this? Just goodwill and information.

**Motion to Endorse the Letter to EPA with changes:** Jack Farrell

**Second:** Dave Speis

**Approved:** Unanimous

### 5. SOP 1-101, Operation of TNI Committees (Revised)

This SOP is a core SOP of TNI and was initially approved in 2008. It governs operations of TNI committees. The previous version excluded a number of committee that operated by special rules. The Advocacy Committee had prepared a draft SOP for their committee and after reviewing this SOP, the Policy Committee determined that it would be better to have one SOP for all committees and then list the exceptions in an Appendix. And that is the primary difference between this SOP and the previous version. This revision now governs all committee except expert committees, the TNI Board of Directors, the NELAP Accreditation Council, and the NEFAP Executive Committee.

While working on this revision, the Policy Committee made a number of other minor changes. These are summarized below.

- Deleted Section 7.1.5 which prohibited TNI members from serving on more than 2 committees, but added language in Section 7.2.7 which indicates the number of committees should be a factor in considering a new member.
- Revised various sections in Section 7.1 to remove dates and deadline that were not practical. The revised language provides more flexibility for adding members.
- Added section 7.6.6 which clarifies that associate members may not vote.
- Added section 7.7 related to substitute members and proxy votes.
- Added “or confirm” to section 8.1 so that committees do not have to “elect” a chair every year.
- Revised Section 8.4 to require all committees to have a Vice-Chair.
- Added section 10.1.4 to allow committees to invite guests.
- Removed language in 10.3.1 that required minutes to be posted in 14 days.

This SOP was sent to all committee chairs for their review and comment in March. Some minor changes were made based on their feedback.

**Motion to Approve SOP with Suggested Changes:** Jack Farrell  
**Second:** Steve Arms  
**Approved:** Unanimous

**Volunteers to Develop Training:** Sharon, Alfredo, Jerry – will begin and make a plan.

## 6. PT Executive Committee Charter (Attachment 2)

The PT Executive Committee has developed a new charter and is presenting it for the Board to review and approve.

Discussion ensued regarding updating and review of all committee charters, including implications for financial support. Review of committee charters will be rolled into the yearly budgetary process.

## 7. ELAB MDL LOQ Request for Action (Carryover from March)

This was briefly discussed in February and the Board decided no action was needed, but a request was sent by the Chemistry Committee chair to take action.

In March, the Board was informed that EPA had responded to ELAB and we should wait and see that response. That does not appear to be the case and the Chemistry Committee chair has requested the Board reconsider this topic.

Jerry will go back to Richard and get more information on this topic.

## 8. Program Reports (Attachment 3)

---

## Attachment 1 Draft Letter to EPA (text only)

---

The NELAC Institute (TNI) in cooperation with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has made great progress towards accomplishing our mutual goal of the generation of environmental data that is of a known and documented quality. The Agency's support and funding have been instrumental in contributing to TNI's mission of fostering the production of such data in an open, inclusive and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the environmental community. The Institute would like to share with the Agency's Forum on Environmental Measurements our most recent and significant accomplishments towards this vision. Advancements have been made in the areas of standards development, NELAP expansion, Field Sampling and Measurement Organization accreditation, proficiency testing, educational delivery and outreach.

The TNI vision includes a true national accreditation program, whereby all United States entities involved in the generation of environmental measurement data are accredited to one uniform, rigorous, and robust program that is implemented consistently nationwide and focuses on the technical competence of the entity pursuing accreditation.

### **Consensus Standards Development**

Two volumes of TNI's environmental laboratory sector standard (ELSS) provide requirements for laboratories and laboratory accreditation bodies. Two volumes for proficiency testing standards related to all types of measurement are designed for proficiency test (PT) providers, and PT provider accreditors. These four volumes are now classified as American National Standards by the American National Standards Institute. Two volumes for TNI's Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations (FSMOs) provide requirements for sampling and field measurement organization and those accreditation bodies. In our ongoing interest in continual improvement, further ELSS development is underway. A new calibration standard for fixed laboratory management systems is nearing completion, and an update of the PT requirements is in process. We are also beginning development of updates to the management system standards for microbiology, radiochemistry, and chemistry. TNI has established requirements for quality and management systems of FSMOs and their accreditors to improve the quality of data collection, and updates to the standards are in the final stages. Lastly, the Office of Air's recognition is pending for the Stationary Source Audit Sample Program, which is based on the recently approved TNI standard.

### **National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program**

TNI's National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) now has 14 states and 15 Accreditation Bodies (ABs). Region 6 provides a liaison with the Agency and coordinates EPA participation in the evaluations of NELAP ABs, as some regions choose to continue in that role. NELAP has adopted the 2009 TNI ELSS. All NELAP ABs are evaluated against Volume 2 of this standard (ISO 17011). Five state ABs officially accredit laboratories to Volume 1 (V1, ISO 17025) of that standard, while the remaining 10 state ABs are still transitioning, but do not penalize labs for implementing the "new" standard. Additionally, 28 of the remaining 35 states with laboratory accreditation programs utilize some aspect of the TNI standards or recognize NELAP accreditation as equivalent to their in-state programs. More states utilize the Field of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) tables developed by TNI and virtually all states utilize PT providers recognized by TNI.

TNI provides national resources useful to stakeholders of the environmental laboratory community. These include the Laboratory Accreditation Management System (LAMS) database ([www.nelac-institute.org/lams](http://www.nelac-institute.org/lams)), method and analyte codes used by virtually all state programs, and a database of accreditation/certification programs for every state ([www.nelac-institute.org/abdb.php](http://www.nelac-institute.org/abdb.php)).

Traditionally, laboratories have been accredited under NELAP by state agencies recognized by TNI as Accreditation Bodies. Over the past year, TNI has initiated a major effort to evaluate how Non-Governmental Accreditation Bodies (NGABs) may participate in NELAP. In March of this year, a working group was convened to develop the policies and procedures to implement a program that would recognize NGABs to accredit laboratories to the TNI laboratory standard. We expect this to be a reality in early 2014.

### **Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations**

The National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP) launched the accreditation of FMSOs in August 2011. The NEFAP Executive Committee has developed AB evaluation and recognition procedures to ensure the consistent implementation of the TNI FSMO standards. These procedures and oversight by the Executive Committee allow one accreditation to be accepted everywhere technically competent field activities are required by data users. The Executive Committee has established a Recognition Subcommittee to perform the review of the evaluation process and provide recommendations on accreditation as well as to make the recognition decision. Currently one AB is fully recognized and is accrediting FSMOs to the TNI 2007 FSMO standard. Three other ABs are recognized under this program and are awaiting their first FSMO application in order to complete the recognition process. Two other ABs are expected to apply for recognition.

### **Proficiency Testing**

The PT Program Field of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) tables have traditionally included drinking water, non-potable water, solid and chemical materials, and whole effluent toxicity. The program has expanded to also incorporate stationary source audit samples and field lead (Pb) testing. Additionally, work is underway with EPA to develop FoPT tables for Cryptosporidium. NELAP, non-NELAP and NEFAP ABs rely heavily on the PT Program as part of their accreditation programs. There are currently two TNI approved PT Provider Accreditors (PTPAs), both perform ongoing monitoring of PT Providers to ensure conformance with the TNI Standards. The PT Program Executive Committee is working with both PTPAs to develop a mechanism to gather information to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of the PT Program.

Each of the TNI-recognized PTPAs maintains a database to evaluate the performance of each PT Provider. TNI considered establishing a national database to collect PT data that could be used to help establish FoPTs, but concluded such a database was not needed.

### **Educational Delivery System**

In 2011, TNI started a new process for providing training called the Educational Delivery System (EDS), a comprehensive training system that utilizes multiple face-to-face and web-based training venues. Training courses, workshops, forums, seminars, and on-demand webinar education materials are developed by TNI and its contracted training providers. TNI's training efforts are focused on improving the quality and consistency of laboratory assessments, assisting laboratory quality managers in understanding the accreditation requirements, and providing technical training to laboratory analysts and field professionals. In 2012, TNI provided 27 training events that reached over 1300 individuals. TNI's goal is to move much of this training on-line, and already nine webinars have been recorded and are available for viewing as downloadable webcasts. A number of additional training courses are planned for 2013. To see the current list of courses being provided, go to the TNI EDS webpage (<http://www.nelac-institute.org/edshome.php>).

### **Outreach**

In keeping with TNI's vision for truly national environmental programs, we have a number of on-going outreach efforts in addition to our biannual meetings. These include submitting articles for publication in the Water Environment Federation's Lab Solutions newsletter, inviting non-NELAP states to participate in periodic teleconferences of the NELAP Accreditation Council, having representatives at lab and trade organization meetings, and providing training and assistance with regulations such as EPA's latest Methods Update Rule. Also, to ease the somewhat intimidating task of developing documents from scratch, TNI offers Quality Manual and SOP templates for purchase by anyone, but particularly designed for small labs. Additionally, TNI established the Small Laboratory Advocate role to lead a group continuing the long-term commitment begun by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference to embrace the small laboratory community and to assist them with accreditation and lab quality issues. During the coming year, TNI will emphasize outreach to encourage the adoption of the NEFAP accreditation for FSMOs by regulatory authorities.

Thank you for allowing us to share these accomplishments. Please let us know if you need any additional information. We would be happy to meet with you to provide more details. TNI appreciates the support and

opportunities the EPA has provided to us in the past and we look forward to our continued collaboration in the future.

**Attachment 2  
 Proficiency Testing Program Executive Committee Charter**

<b>1. Committee Name:</b> PTP EC	<b>2. Version:</b> Rev 3.0	<b>3. Date:</b> 3-22-13
<b>4. Mission Statement:</b>  Ensure that an effective Proficiency Testing (PT) program exists to support all The NELAC Institute (TNI) accreditation programs and develop Fields of Proficiency Testing (FoPTs) as negotiated with TNI.		
<b>5. Program Administrator:</b> Ilona Verrips Taunton		
<b>6. Committee Members:</b>		<b>7. Stakeholder Group:</b>
<b>Proposed Members</b>		<b>Representation</b>
Stacie Metzler – Chair (2009)		Lab
Justin Brown (2011)		FSMO
Susan Butts (2012)		AB (Non-NELAP)
Patrick Brumfield (2012)		PT Provider - Other
Michella Karapondo (2011)		US EPA
Nicole Cairns (2012)		AB
Joe Pardue (2011)		Other
Andy Valkenburg (2011)		Lab
Steve Gibson (2011)		AB
Carl Kircher (2010)		AB
Eric Smith (2010)		Lab
Curtis Wood (2010)		PT Provider - Other
Jennifer Loudon (2013)		Lab
<b>8. Objectives:</b> The PTP Executive Committee has duties and responsibilities to:		
✓ Receive and evaluate proficiency testing provider accretor (PTPA) applications.		
✓ Approve organizations that meet the requirements of the TNI Standards to be designated as a PTPA.		
✓ Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the PT program and the Fields of Proficiency Testing.		
✓ Collect and review PT data for the purposes of creating and maintaining FoPT tables for various matrices and programs.		
✓ Provide an update on the PTP Executive Committee activities and PT Program to the TNI Board of Directors during semi-annual TNI forums.		
<b>9. Success Measures:</b> The effective implementation, oversight, and ongoing development of TNI's PT Program in a manner that fosters input from and is accepted by stakeholders.		
<b>10. Key Milestones for 2013:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update of all committee SOPs.</li> <li>• Development and implementation of dispute resolution procedure.</li> <li>• Continued development and update of FoPT Tables.</li> <li>• Implementation of FoPT Management Procedures (SOP 4-107).</li> <li>• Development and implementation of a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the PT Program.</li> </ul>		

**11. Considerations:**

Exploring the need for additional IT services that could be employed to streamline FoPT review and update, as well as compile information for evaluating the effectiveness of the PT Program.

**12. Available Resources:**

- TNI staff support will be provided.
- Committee and Associate member volunteers.
- Freeconference.com service is used for conference calls.
- Website support is provided by the TNI webmaster.
- TNI conferences and scheduling.
- Expenses for PTPA Assessments.

**13. Additional Resources Required:**

NA

**14. Anticipated Meeting Schedule:**

The PTP Executive Committee will conduct most business by monthly conferences as scheduled by its members (third Thursday of each month at 1pm EST). Face-to-face meetings occur during semi-annual TNI conferences where audience participation is encouraged.



### Attachment 3 PROGRAM REPORTS

---

#### CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- The Chemistry Expert Committee has posted its Calibration Voting Draft Standard on the website. TNI members may vote any time through May 11. The committee will discuss comments received during its August meeting in San Antonio. The committee has almost completed its proposed modification of the EPA document "Appendix B to Part 136 – Definition and Procedure for the Determination of MDL". When complete, it will be reviewed by an advisory group (yet to be established) prior to its submission to EPA.
- The Stationary Source Audit Sample Program now has two audit sample providers available, as required by EPA. It is expected, therefore, that EPA will soon approve implementation of the program.
- The Proficiency Testing Expert Committee, having almost completed its proposed changes to the Laboratory (Volume 1) and Accreditation Body (Volume 2) modules, is now working on Volume 3 (Requirements for PT Providers). In this volume, a decision must be made whether to defer to the ISO 17043 requirements for verifying PT stability and homogeneity testing. This would allow the PT providers more flexibility in the verification methods they use.
- The Radiochemistry Expert Committee is continuing to review Module 6 of the Laboratory Volume. Currently, they are considering method validation, and plan to move on to QC in the next month or two.
- The Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee is proceeding to create the listing of Third Party Assessors, and continues to explore how to develop a generic application that will be usable by ABs as well as helpful to labs. Members have been asked to begin review of the first half of the revised Compliance Checklist ("Technical Review") that will accompany the revised SOP for the next round of NELAP AB evaluations.

#### NEFAP

- The contract was finalized with PJLA and a certificate has been issued.
- Another AB has received their first FSMO application and the technical observation is planned for May 2013. Information has been gathered and sent out to help in the selection of the evaluator.
- Continued follow-up on training needs for Recognition Subcommittee. Two members need to complete the quiz.
- In Progress: Justin and JoAnn finalized a listing of upcoming meetings/conferences where NEFAP has an opportunity to present. Ilona and William worked in Denver on a format 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. Documents are now being collected to put up on the site and a number are ready for posting after William makes the changes.
- The NEFAP EC has 3 new members and Calista will continue for an additional 3 years. The new members are Nilda Cox, Paul Bergeron and Carl Kircher. The charter is being updated with the new membership and will be submitted to the Board this week.
- Scott Evans distributed a final DRAFT to the subcommittee working on the NEFAP training SOP. The subcommittee will be meeting this month to finalize the DRAFT and submit it to the NEFAP EC.
- The Mobile Lab Subcommittee has started work. They are finalizing a questionnaire to help them better understand different state mobile lab accreditations. Paul Bergeron was added to the subcommittee.

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

- The committee has finished reviewing comments and is now working on changes to the standard. The modified standard will be posted on the website along with the comments, resolution and response to the comments. Committee members will vote on the standard within 15 days of this posting. The updated standard should be ready for posting by the end of the month.
- One of the voting issues was that minor changes that were made to the standard that included the ISO language did not make it into the version with only the ISO reference. The committee is working on reviewing the two documents to ensure this is not an issue in the next posting.
- The committee has started working with the NEFAP EC on mobile lab issues. John is the FAC representative on this committee.
- The committee has formulated a subcommittee to work on FSMO tools. They will begin work on a Quality Manual guidance document or template this week. Ilona has been compiling information and examples to help facilitate the discussion and planning phase. The group would like to be complete or be in Final DRAFT form by San Antonio.
- The committee will begin work to update the NEFAP brochure. They will work with the NEFAP EC to do this.

## **NELAP**

### **Accreditation Council**

- The remaining 4 evaluations are progressing. Streamlined versions of the Evaluation SOP and checklists prepared by the NELAP Evaluators and incorporating recommendations from the NELAP QA Officer have begun committee reviews with the goal of final approval by early fall, 2013.
- The second NELAP Assessor teleconference was held on April 1. The topic was internal audits. The third such teleconference will occur in June.
- The AC has begun revising its Voting SOP based on review and recommendations from policy Committee.

### **Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee (LAS EC)**

- The Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee has completed its merger with the former Technical Assistance Committee. An updated charter will be presented for adoption at the LAS EC's April meeting and submitted to the Board for its May meeting. Three standing subcommittees will address Standards Interpretation Requests, the Assessment Forum and the Mentor Sessions. Initially, 3 ad hoc groups were appointed to develop or review the SIR SOP revisions, the NELAP Evaluation SOP and a draft policy requested by the NELAP AC; these groups will recommend changes or approvals to the full committee.

## **PROFICIENCY TESTING**

### **PT Program Executive Committee (PTP EC)**

- The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee started work on the Solid Chemicals and Waste FoPT table. They are back to meeting every other week to finish this table.
- An editorial change is being made to the recently approved NPW FoPT table that will be effective on July 1, 2013. Alkalinity, Total (CaCO<sub>3</sub>) criteria needed to include a greater than or equal sign. This

correction has been made on the posted table.

- The chair is working on a letter to request data from the PTPAs so the Evaluation Subcommittee can determine how the data should be collected and evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the PT Program. This process is expected to be completed in May.
- The office visits and observations are complete for ACLASS. The PTP EC has approved the continued accreditation of ACLASS as a PTPA. A formal letter will be going out this week.
- The SOP Subcommittee has a meeting scheduled this week. The Dispute Resolution is being voted on by e-mail. The next SOP to be worked on is the Voting SOP.
- The committee charter has been finalized and is attached.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Advocacy Committee**

- The Advocacy Committee has finalized a letter to the EPA FEM summarizing TNI's accomplishments over the past several years. The letter is ready for TNI Board approval.
- The Advocacy Committee is designing a half day session at the San Antonio meeting tentatively titled: The Importance of Competency in the Environmental Measurement and Monitoring community.
- The Newsletter was sent out on March 22 in a new "e-zine" format.
- A Position Statement on small laboratory quality systems was approved and sent to the Policy Committee for review.

### **Non-Governmental Accreditation Body (NGAB) Working Group**

- The NGAB working group will be meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month. They have finalized their charter and are focusing on reviewing the NELAP and NEFAP SOPs.

### **Information Technology Committee**

- John Kuhn has taken over as chair replacing Art Clark. Continued progress is being made on the national database with 10 ABs now actively providing data. The committee plans to begin work on the methods compendium effort outline in the EPA cooperative agreement.

### **Policy Committee**

- In response to the Board's request during its March meeting, the TNI Bylaws were reviewed. The committee will develop and recommend additional language clarifying that "balance" in committees may include additional stakeholder interests beyond AB, lab, and other, depending on the area of the committee's activities. If Board members have additional issues to suggest for reconsideration, the committee will address those at the same time.
- A new version of SOP 1-101, Operation of TNI Committees, is complete and offered to the Board for approval at this meeting.
- The committee has completed its review of SOP 3-108, "Issuance of Provisional Recognition of Accreditation Bodies According to the TNI Standard" and will return comments to the NELAP AC

### **Training**

- There was no Brown Bag webinar this month. The time was needed for planning the next few webinars in the series. There should be Brown Bag webinar in May.
- 2013 goals: The need for accreditation is being evaluated. Ilona has started work in updating the EDS and CEU SOPs, reviewing general organization information to make sure it contains what is needed, preparing options for assessment in order to award CEUs, setting up tracking documents for awarding CEUs, etc... Though we have not applied for accreditation, we would like our program to look similar to an accredited program as we begin issuing CEUs.
- Training certificates for completed webcasts were prepared and distributed.
- The first technical training Webinar (ion chromatography) will be offered on April 25<sup>th</sup>. There are more than 25 students already registered. We are also working to get all documentation into place to award 0.1 CEU's for the class.
- Copies of the QM Template and Handbook were distributed to the QS Expert Committee for their review. They will be looking for areas that will need to be updated when the new standard is finalized.

### **2013 Environmental Measurement Symposium – San Antonio, Texas**

- Abstracts have generally been placed into their sessions. Ilona and Earl will be meeting this week to go through the schedule and make sure nothing was missed. Chairs will be notified of the final lists and Ilona will be notifying speakers during the week. A poster summary will be completed and distributed with the notification.
- All website versions of the abstracts and biographies will be reviewed before the posting goes live.
- There are a couple of missing biographies, but generally these are in great shape.
- The website will be reviewed this week for any additional updates so it is ready for the posting of the preliminary schedule and abstracts/biographies.
- Registration should open late this week and the conference brochure is in final production with a goal to mail by April 17.
- We now have 4 meeting sponsors at \$5K each (Absolute Standards, Agilent, ERA, and Perkin Elmer) and 22 other exhibitors at various levels. Working to get NSI and Bruker to become sponsors.

### **Membership Report**

- Active Members: 892