

Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing Expert Committee Meeting Summary

October 18, 2017 1:00 pm Eastern

1. Welcome and Announcements

Rami welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes of the September 20, 2017, meeting were approved by acclamation. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1, below.

2. Follow-Up Items

PTPEC appointed Nicole Cairns (of NY state, and chair of the PT Expert Committee) as liaison for discussions to address our request sent to PTPEC about finding ways to improve utility of PT data was well received. Rami has scheduled a call with her later in October.

Laura Phillips of EPA's Office of Wastewater Management promised a response from her office to the meeting summary from the ELAB-EPA meeting at conference, and her follow-up questions to that. A draft response arrived October 20. Also, the ELAB agenda for its October meeting (that coincides with the WET committee) included a discussion of WET PT issues, but no further information is available.

One of the PT issues that keeps arising is whether there should be two PT rounds per year for WET testing. Participants noted that WET PTs are vastly more time-consuming than "ordinary" chemistry or microbiology PTs, in that a WET test may take a week or longer, while a chemistry PT can be run in-line with other samples and even including sample prep, likely takes under an hour. A conservative estimate for 2 WET PTs/year would be 5% of the lab's time.

3. Updating the Standard

Demonstration of Competency

Lynn explained her reason for distributing the for-committee-use-only version of the revised ISO 17025 draft, so that WET committee members will be able to ensure that language created for the revised WET module does not conflict with any of the language that will eventually become the Quality Systems module, particularly for the QA/QC of water chemistry testing.

Pete and Steve explained that no further progress has been made on revising the demonstration of competency language, but noted that the topic has been discussed in-depth several times previously. Rami asked that committee members with additional thoughts please share them now with Steve and Pete so that they can begin drafting the revision of that portion of the module.

Organism Source and Age

This led to an extended discussion about pros and cons of growing organisms in-house versus consistently using purchased organisms, since the organism age requirements of methods are different for purchased organisms (up to 48 hours) than for house-grown ones (24 hours maximum age.) Some believe that the age distinction per source is unwarranted, and that it is more important to have consistent quality and age of organisms, since all methods require the same quality control.

Participants noted that auditors do check the age of organisms where they are cultured in-house, but that's not the case for purchased organisms. Further, despite the requirement that all sub-contractors are supposed to meet accreditation requirements, it is apparent that no one in the industry is checking on the suppliers of purchased organisms, and there is no accreditation mechanism for them.

Another participant noted that holding times for samples may impact the degradation of toxicants. Participants then discussed that it might be feasible for the standard to be more restrictive (but not contradictory to) the published methods.

Chemistry

The committee members who volunteered to draft the chemistry section were not present for this meeting, but others discussed their thoughts on this issue.

Water chemistry measurements are supportive data, and not compliance data. The WET method manuals typically cite older methods that are no longer available on the EPA web site, which has led to a situation where at least one AB requires that methods employed be those published in the Standard Methods compilation (Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater, currently at the 23rd edition.) Although no particular year seems to be specified for Standard Methods, those methods do include some required QC.

One participating AB noted they look at supporting data for WET testing, including standards and instrument calibration, and they require that the test reports indicate that water quality tests supporting WET methods are not to be used for compliance purposes. Other participants indicated that they are expected to comply with requirements of the Quality Systems module (V1M2). Lynn suggested that the revised WET module find a way to state explicitly this concept, that the water chemistry tests are not compliance measurements but rather to ensure that test organisms are in suitable habitat during their lifespans and while testing is being conducted.

Another participant asked about possible value of looking at QC requirements from the old EPA methods as cited in the method manuals, to see how detailed they were and whether that information might be useful as guideline for this revision.

4. New Business

The only new business was to settle on suitable meeting dates for the remainder of the year, since there are major holidays to work around. Participants agreed that a compromise of Wednesday, December 6, would work, and then another meeting on January 17, 2018, the week prior to conference.

5. Next Meeting

The next teleconference meeting will be Wednesday, December 6, at 1 pm Eastern. Teleconference information and an agenda will be provided in advance.

Attachment 1

Committee Membership

Member	Affiliation	Email	Category	Term Expiration	Present
Rami Naddy (Chair)	TRE Env. Strat. LLC	naddyrb.tre@gmail.com	Lab	Feb. 2018	Yes
Ginger Briggs	Bio-Analytical Laboratories	bioanalytical@wildblue.net	Lab	Feb. 2018	No
Pete De Lisle (Vice Chair)	Coastal Bioanalysts Inc.	pfd@coastalbio.com	Lab	Feb. 2018	Yes
Steven Rewa	Environmental Resources Management	steven.rewa@erm.com	Lab	Feb. 2018	Yes
Chris Burbage	Hampton Roads Sanitation District	cburbage@hrsd.com	Lab	Feb. 2018	No
Chris Pasch	Alan Plummer Associates, Inc.	cpasch@apaienv.com	Other	Feb. 2018	Yes
Teresa Norberg-King	USEPA	norberg-king.teresa@epa.gov	Other (Affiliate)	Feb. 2018	No
Elizabeth West	LA DEQ LELAP	elizabeth.west@la.gov	AB	Feb. 2018	No
Amy Hackman	Penn. Dept. Environ. Protection	ahackman@pa.gov	AB	Feb. 2018	Yes
Michele Potter	New Jersey Dept of Environ Protect.	Michele.Potter@dep.nj.gov	AB	Feb. 2018	No
Michael Pfeil	Texas Comm. Environ. Quality	Michael.pfeil@tceq.texas.gov	AB	Feb. 2018	No
Kari Fleming	WI DNR	kari.fleming@wisconsin.gov	AB	Dec. 2017	No
Associate Members					
Debmalya Bhattacharyya	NE Ohio Regional Sewer District	bhattacharyad@neorsd.org	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Michael Chanov	EA Eng., Sci. &Tech.	mchanov@eaest.com	Lab (Assoc.)	--	No

Kevin Dischler	Element Materials Technology	Kevin.dischler@element.com	Lab (Assoc.)	---	No
Monica Eues	CK Associates	Monica.eues@c-ka.com	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Joseph Faircloth	FL DEP	joseph.faircloth@dep.state.fl.us	Lab (Assoc.)		Yes
Christina Henderson	Bio-Aquatic Testing, Inc.	chenderson@bio-aquatic.com	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Vel Rey Lozano	USEPA Region 8	Lozano.VelRey@epa.gov	Other (EPA)	--	No
Linda Nemeth	Northwestern Aquatic Sciences	lnemeth@tds.net	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Mark O'Neil	Environmental Enterprises USA, Inc.	moneil@eeusa.com	Lab (Assoc.)	---	No
John Overbey	American Interplex Corp.	joverbey@americaninterplex.com	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Joe Pardue	Pro2Serve	Parduejir@oro.doe.gov	Other	---	No
Katie Payne	Nautilus Environmental	katie@nautilusenvironmental.com	Lab (Assoc.)		Yes
Shain Schmitt	ESC Lab Sciences	sschmitt@esclabsciences.com	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Greg Savitske	US EPA OECA	Savitske.gregory@epa.gov	Other (EPA)		No
Thekkekalathil "Chandra" Chandrasekhar	FL DEP	Thekkekalathil.Chandrasekhar@dep.state.fl.us	Other (Assoc.)		Yes
Beth Thompson	Shealy Consulting	bthompson@shealyconsulting.net	Lab (Assoc.)		Yes
Jordan Thorngren	Eurofins (Horsham, PA)	jordanthorngren@eurofinsUS.com	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Karla Thurman	Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts	kthurman@lacsds.org	Lab (Assoc.)		No
Tom Widera	ERA	twidera@eraqc.com	Other		No
Program Administrator					
Lynn Bradley	TNI	Lynn.Bradley@nelac-institute.org			Yes

Attachment 2

Action Items

	Action/Activity	Responsible Person(s)	Anticipated Completion	Comments
10	Review 2009 and 2012 versions of V1M7	All members	Summer 2018	Be prepared to discuss chemistry and look for possible additional topics needing attention
15	Draft language about DOC requirements	Steve and Pete, with others	??	May meeting begins the review
16	Submit difficult questions from webinar to committee for response	Ginger, Elizabeth, et al	?	To be addressed after conference
17	Draft language about QC requirements for water chemistry measurements	Michele, John, others?	??	First committee discussion was October 2017 meeting