



**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2015-2020**

**THE NELAC INSTITUTE (TNI)**

March 11, 2015

## Mission

To be the leader in providing systems and processes to foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an open, inclusive, and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the community.

## Vision

All entities generating environmental data will be uniformly accredited to the TNI standards.

**Strategy 1:**  
**Establish and maintain national programs for the accreditation of environmental laboratories, field sampling and measurement organizations, and other organizations directly involved in the generation of environmental monitoring data.**

**Goal 1.1 Ensure that TNI accreditation standards are used universally and are developed or revised as needed in an efficient process.**

See Attachment 1 for a list of acronyms used in this document.

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Have all states use the TNI standard for accreditation.	Advocacy	Medium
Develop a streamlined and more effective standards development process.	CSDPEC	2/1/15
Complete the standards development process for the 2015 Environmental Laboratory Standard so that it can be provided to NELAP for implementation.	CSDPEC	8/1/15
Review and modify other TNI standards as appropriate and consistent with ANSI requirements, with the goal of a 5-year cycle. - Establish a review committee - Develop plan for reviewing standards	CSDPEC	On-going
Revise the TNI standards if needed to ensure consolidated evaluations of NGABs involved in multiple TNI programs can occur.	CSDPEC	Medium
Maintain an effective and efficient process for interpretation of standards.	LASEC	On going
Create a Whole Effluent Toxicity Expert committee.	CSDPEC	2/1/15
Explore the formation of an Asbestos Expert Committee.	CSDPEC	Low
Publish in each newsletter a graphic that tracks the status and progress of standard development efforts	CSDPEC	On-going
Expand the use of technology (e.g., shared desktop images, web conferencing and cloud storage) to reduce travel costs for committee members involved in standards development.	Staff	12/31/15
Work to encourage NELAP and other ABs to accept the accreditations granted by NGABs.	LASEC	12/31/15

**Goal 1.2 Maintain and expand an effective national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Maintain a respected and efficient system for recognizing states as Accreditation Bodies.	NELAP AC	On-going
Adopt Fields of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) that are appropriate for evaluating laboratory performance.	NELAP AC	On-going
Develop a policy regarding AB implementation of standards developed by TNI.	NELAP AC	Low
Develop a schedule for implementation of the 2015 standard.	NELAP AC	High
Implement an effective program to recognize non-governmental ABs to grant accreditations to the TNI standard.	TNRC	6/15
Maintain a national database of accredited laboratories. - Ensure labs from NGAB effort are included	IT Committee	On-going
Develop and make available a generic application form for laboratories.	IT Administrator	Medium
Explore the feasibility of better utilizing 3 <sup>rd</sup> party assessors.	Board	High
Work with California to assist them with becoming ABs.	NELAP AC	On-going
Develop and maintain a Methods Compendium for use by assessors and labs	IT Committee	On-going
Work with other states to assist them with becoming ABs.	NELAP AC	On-going

**Goal 1.3 Maintain and expand an effective national program for the accreditation of field sampling and measurement organizations (FSMOs).**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Ensure the implementation of a national program for FSMO accreditation that is consistent with the TNI FSMO Standard requirements.	NEFAP EC	Medium
Develop a more streamlined process for recognition of ABs.	NEFAP EC	High
Develop tools to help streamline accreditation of FSMOs.	NEFAP EC	Medium
Develop and implement a plan for treatment of mobile labs among NELAP ABs and between NELAP and NEFAP.	NEFAP EC	High
Develop an advocacy program to expand the use of accredited FSMOs (e.g. encourage industry contracts requiring NEFAP, reach out to engineering firms).	NEFAP EC	Medium

**Goal 1.4 Maintain and expand a Proficiency Testing (PT) program to support a national environmental accreditation program that contains the following elements:**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Implement all policies and procedures necessary for operation and continual improvement of a national PT program – for various matrices, stakeholders and accreditation programs.	PTPEC	High
Ensure that an oversight program is in place for PT providers to ensure that the providers are competent to operate environmental PT programs.	PTPEC	On-going
Ensure that FoPTs are appropriate for their intended use.	PTPEC	On-going
Implement a process to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the PT provider oversight program and the FoPTs.	PTPEC	On-going
Develop a better process for getting data for setting PT acceptance limits and to handle complaints.	PTPEC	High
Develop a revenue source to fully support this program.	Finance	High

**Strategy 2:**  
**Brand TNI as the resource for all activities related to generating environmental measurement data.**

**Goal 2.1 Enable and encourage stakeholders to participate in the activities of TNI by providing assistance and incentives.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Provide routine communications/information to TNI members.	Advocacy	On-going
Develop better systems to encourage members to vote on standards.	Advocacy	Medium
Improve the system for encouraging volunteers to become involved in TNI activities and ensure a pool of volunteers is available for committees.	Advocacy	Medium
Develop and implement an orientation program for new committee members.	Policy	Medium

**Goal 2.2 Promote the benefits of accreditation to stakeholders, advocate for stronger support of accreditation from data users, and persuade data users to make accreditation mandatory.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Develop a long range plan for promoting and marketing accreditation to data users.	Advocacy	Low
Form Marketing and Outreach subcommittee under the Advocacy Committee to identify opportunities to promote TNI.	Advocacy	Low
Develop a “State of National Accreditation” report every two years and offer briefings to EPA Regional Science and Technology Directors and Forum on Environmental Measurement.	Advocacy	High
Expand outreach to non-NELAP states <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share the “State of National Accreditation” briefing noted above to assessors</li> <li>- Assign a TNI ambassador to every non-NELAP state, identify current barriers.</li> <li>- Offer one free, non-voting membership to the certification manager or his/her designee of every non-NELAP state. Develop and offer a free webinar to introduce TNI and highlight the benefits of recognition, to expand communication on the TNI standard as the ‘ gold standard ’, and to explain what NELAP is today.</li> </ul>	Advocacy	High
Work with the EPA Office of Water to ensure that the TNI laboratory accreditation standard is deemed “equally effective” to the Drinking Water Certification Manual (DWCM). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor changes to the DWCM.</li> <li>- Develop a document that summarizes the differences and similarities of the TNI and EPA Drinking Water programs. (Distill down from the crosswalk).</li> </ul>	Advocacy	High
Meet periodically with EPA program offices (e.g., Air, Solid Waste, and Wastewater), other federal agencies, state agencies, trade associations, other data users, and FSMOs to promote TNI and to better understand their needs for reliable environmental data and work to ensure the TNI program meets the needs of all data users.	Advocacy	Low
Continue to conduct Assessment Forums to disseminate information. Make Assessment Forums more widely available through webinars.	LASEC	On-going
Promote EPA laboratory competency policy required for grants, EPA cooperative agreements, and contracts and show how TNI’s accreditation programs are an effective way to demonstrate compliance with this policy.	Advocacy	Medium
Effectively use the Small Laboratory Advocacy Group (SLAG) to engage small laboratories and to disseminate information to small laboratories.	Advocacy	Medium
Consistently have a seminar at NEMC to introduce newly accredited laboratories to TNI.	Advocacy	Medium

**Goal 2.4 Provide conferences that are beneficial to the environmental community, enhance TNI's mission, and contribute resources to support TNI's programs.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Continue to hold a semi-annual Forum on Laboratory Accreditation.	Advocacy	On-going
Continue to co-sponsor the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC).	NEMC Steering Committee	On-going
Explore opportunities for working cooperatively with other organizations to hold other regional conferences and workshops.	Advocacy	High

**Goal 2.5 Establish TNI as the premier organization for training in areas related to environmental measurements.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Develop and implement a comprehensive training program for stakeholders.	Training Steering Committee	High
Review the needs assessment performed in 2011 and update if needed.		On-going
Increase usage of technology.		Medium
Increase use of available training materials already developed.		High
Explore issuing certificates for completion of multiple trainings within a specific training track (e.g. Quality Systems).		Medium
Look for opportunities to collaborate with other training providers.		Low

**Goal 2.6 Use technology to make our processes more effective and efficient.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Redesign website for marketing, outreach, and technical assistance while maintaining key information for TNI members.	IT Committee	2/1/15
Train TNI leadership on how to effectively use social media and implement a social media strategy	IT Committee	7/1/15
Develop a strategy to better use technology to support and market TNI products and services.	Ways and Means	Medium

**Strategy 3:  
Improve infrastructure to ensure TNI's future success and financial sustainability.**

**Goal 3.1 Create a succession plan for sustainability.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Develop an approach for Board recruitment and succession planning.	Executive Committee	Medium
Develop and maintain a succession plan for key individuals.	Executive Committee	High
Develop and maintain a knowledge management system.	Staff	Medium

**Goal 3.2 Develop and maintain an effective management system.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Ensure adequate staff are available to support TNI programs.	Executive Committee	High
Evaluate Executive Director and key staff performance on a periodic basis.	Executive Committee	Medium
Implement an annual orientation program for Board members, committee chairs, and committee members.	Policy	Medium
Ensure the Board is representative of all stakeholders.	Nominating Committee	Medium
Ensure documents made available to the public are the most current version in effect.	Policy	On-going
Develop and implement a Quality Management Plan.	Policy	High
Conduct internal audits as defined in the Quality Management Plan.	Policy	On-going

**Goal 3.3 Increase the operational and management efficiency and effectiveness of TNI.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Maintain fiscally prudent operations.	Finance	On-going
Produce timely, accurate financial reports.	ED	On-going
Conduct annual financial audit or review.	ED	On-going
Maintain an effective and transparent system for document control and records management.	Policy	On-going
Maintain a Policy Committee to ensure policies and procedures have been implemented for all key activities.	Policy	On-going
Periodically monitor the progress of each program towards its objectives.	Board	On-going
Produce an Annual Report.	Board	On-going

**Goal 3.4 Acquire stable, long-term financial resources to support TNI programs and their growth.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Establish a Ways and Means Committee to look at fiscal opportunities and issues for identifying and generating new sources of revenue.	Board	Medium
Grow financial reserve to 25% of annual expense by 2020.	Finance	2020
Annually review income and expense and make adjustments for the upcoming year.	Finance	On-going
Maintain errors and omissions insurance.	ED	2/1/15
Establish a plan for each program to become financially self-sufficient. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a process by which the PT program becomes financially self-sufficient.</li> <li>- Establish a process by which the Stationary Source Audit Sample (SSAS) program becomes financially self-sufficient.</li> <li>- Find internal sources of revenue to support the standards development program.</li> <li>- Expand the training program to produce revenue to support TNI programs</li> </ul>	Finance	10/1/15

**Attachment 1**  
**List of Acronyms Used by TNI**

AB — Accreditation Body  
AC — NELAP Accreditation Council  
ACIL — American Council of Independent Laboratories  
ANS — American National Standards  
ANSI — American National Standards Institute  
APHL — Association of Public Health Laboratories  
ASDWA — Association of State Drinking Water Administrators  
AWWA — American Water Works Association  
CSDP — Consensus Standards Development Program  
CSD EC — Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee  
DW — Drinking Water  
DWCM — Drinking Water Certification Manual  
EC — Executive Committee  
ED — Executive Director  
EPA — Environmental Protection Agency  
ET — Evaluation Team  
FAC — Field Activities Expert Committee  
FEM — EPA Forum on Environmental Measurements  
FoPT — Field of Proficiency Testing  
FSMO — Field Sampling and Measurement Organization  
IEC — International Electrochemical Commission  
ILAC — International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation  
IS — Interim Standard  
ISO — International Standards Organization  
LAB — Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee  
LASEC — Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee  
LE — Lead Evaluator  
NACLA — National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation  
NACWA — National Association of Clean Water Agencies  
NEFAP — National Environmental Field Activities Program  
NEFAP EC — National Environmental Field Activities Program Executive Committee  
NELAP — National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program  
NEMC — National Environmental Monitoring Conference  
NGAB — Non-Governmental Accreditation Body  
NPW — Non-Potable Water  
OGWDW — EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water  
PT — Proficiency Testing  
PTP — Proficiency Testing Program  
PTPEC — Proficiency Testing Program Executive Committee  
PTPA — Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor  
QS — Quality System  
SCM — Solid and Chemical Materials  
SIR — Standard Interpretation Request  
SOP — Standard Operating Procedure  
SSAS — Stationary Source Audit Sample  
TNI — The NELAC Institute\*  
VDS — Voting Draft Standard  
WDS — Working Draft Standard  
WEF — Water Environment Federation  
WET -- Whole Effluent Toxicity

*\* Note that in the context of TNI, the word NELAC is not an acronym; it is a contrived word.*