



<b>Policy TITLE:</b>	<b>Mutual Recognition Policy for Accreditation Bodies</b>
<b>Policy NO.:</b>	<b>3-100</b>
<b>REVISION NO:</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>NELAP</b>

<b>Committee Approved Date:</b>	1-4-10
<b>Policy Committee Reviewed Date:</b>	
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<b>POL Effective Date:</b>	1-4-10

## I. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The principle of recognition is a fundamental concept in a national environmental laboratory accreditation program. This policy establishes the principle of recognition as an essential element of and condition for membership in the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP).

## II. SUMMARY

The policy establishes the responsibilities of primary and secondary accreditation bodies as they relate to mutual recognition, describes circumstances when the policy does not apply, and prescribes how disputes relating to the policy between or among accreditation bodies are to be resolved.

## III. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Standards: the criteria adopted by the NELAP Board as the basis for accrediting environmental laboratories.

2.2 Mutual Recognition: the acceptance by an accreditation body of an environmental laboratory accreditation issued by a primary accreditation body without any other duplicative actions to determine the laboratory's conformity to the Standards. For the purposes of accreditation, mutual recognition does not mean automatic accreditation by a secondary accreditation body or exemption from complying with the administrative processes of a secondary accreditation body.

2.3 Primary accreditation body: an accreditation body that accredits environmental laboratories by determining their conformity to the Standards through, among other things, the review and approval of applications, performance of on-site assessments, evaluation of proficiency testing results, and application of laws and rules relating to accreditation.

2.4 Secondary accreditation body: an accreditation body that accredits laboratories through Mutual Recognition.

#### IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PRIMARY ACCREDITATION BODY

A primary accreditation body is responsible for:

1. ensuring laboratories it accredits meet applicable requirements contained in the Standards;
2. granting interim or full accreditation to applicant laboratory organizations;
3. assisting secondary accreditation bodies, if requested, with the verification of accreditations issued by the primary accreditation body; and
4. maintaining conformance to the Standards and the policies, procedures, resolutions, and interpretations pertaining to accreditation bodies approved by the TNI NELAP Board.

#### V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SECONDARY ACCREDITATION BODY

1. Except as specified in this policy, an accreditation body agrees as a condition for membership in the NELAP to:
  - a) recognize environmental laboratory accreditations issued by primary NELAP accreditation bodies without any other duplicative actions to determine the laboratory's conformity to the Standards. These actions include, but are not limited to, proficiency testing, quality assurance, and on-site assessment.
  - b) maintain conformance to the Standards and the policies, procedures, resolutions, and interpretations pertaining to accreditation bodies approved by the TNI NELAP Board.
2. Mutual Recognition of an accreditation issued by a primary accreditation body:
  - a) is limited to the fields of accreditation included in the primary accreditation at any point in time, and
  - b) does not prevent a secondary accreditation body from verifying the accreditation with the primary accreditation body or, without imposing any additional requirements concerning on-site assessments, quality assurance, proficiency testing, or other matters relating to conformance to the Standards, requiring a laboratory to adhere to applicable laws and rules and normal administrative process, such as submitting applications and paying fees.

#### VI. EXCEPTIONS

A secondary accreditation body does not have to recognize a primary accreditation or grant secondary accreditation if a law, rule, or decision resulting from a legal action precludes or has the effect of precluding the secondary accreditation body from granting accreditation in whole or in part to a laboratory.

#### VII. DISPUTES

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Disputes between or among NELAP accreditation bodies relating to this policy shall be resolved according to the appropriate TNI policy or procedure.

**VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy becomes effective on January 4, 2010, and remains in effect until amended or revoked by the TNI NELAP Board.

**Policy Approved Changes**

<b>Prev. Policy No.</b>	<b>New Policy No.</b>	<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>
n/a	3-100 Rev 0.1	3-10-12	Updated format.