

Timeline for Development of a National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program

August 1, 2009

30 Years of Continued Progress

	Event	Comment
1978	Drinking Water Certification Program established	
1980	RCRA and CERCLA regulations adopted	Start of unprecedented growth in lab testing
1980-1984	Establishment of CLP program	First defacto national program
	Establishment of some state programs for other media	Beginning of state-imposed variable requirements
1984-1986	Formation of IAETL, meeting with Hank Habich	Commercial labs advocate better approach
1988	EPA Report to Congress: EPA/600/9-87/030	<p>Finding: Because of the increased reliance upon complex laboratory measurements performed under carefully controlled condition, EPA should determine whether there is a need for a uniform laboratory certification program for the FWPCA programs. The Agency has a formal program of certification of drinking water laboratories. The Agency also has two water laboratory approval programs based largely on study performance: 1) the Discharge Monitoring Report - Quality Assurance (DMR-QA) studies for major dischargers under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) who must perform satisfactorily on a group of basic analytes, once per year, and 2) the Water Pollution (WP) Studies conducted semiannually for all wastewater and ambient monitoring laboratories. In the nonwater areas, performance evaluation (PE) studies are conducted quarterly for the Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) and Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability These five program areas for laboratory evaluation/approval in the EPA are compounded by the state studies conducted by most primary states in three or more of these areas. Consequently, any laboratory operating interstate may be required to operate according to varying but overlapping QA/QC requirements and performance requirements for a number of state and federal programs.</p> <p>Recommendation: A task force should be created, which consists of representatives from ORD and EPA program offices, and other federal and state agencies and interested parties to evaluate the feasibility of a nationally coordinated environmental laboratory certification program. The task force should consider whether criteria should be developed requiring routine review of QC documentation of laboratories performing environmental analyses.</p>

1991-1992	CNAEL Report	Recommends formation of program with the key elements of on-site audits, performance evaluation testing, and data audits and recommends the program “operate through a self-supporting mechanism.”
1991-1993	EPA/State Focus Group	Creation of model for NELAC
1994	Federal Register Notice about NELAC; <i>59 FR 62178</i>	
1995	NELAC 1	Bylaws adopted
1996-1998	Development and adoption of first NELAC Standards	
	Cynthia Dougherty publishes memo	Indicates NELAC acceptable for drinking water certification
July 1, 1999	NELAC 5	First AA’s recognized
	NELAC 5i	Henry Longest announced “EPA will be withdrawing support from NELAC and that EPA had always considered that NELAC should be a self- sustaining program, funded by its stakeholders. He recommended that NELAC be moved into the private sector.”
2000	Transition Committee explores options for NELAC	Recommends non-profit be established
January 24, 2001	655 laboratories accredited to the NELAC Standard	
	INELA Articles of Incorporation filed	NELAC Transition Committee briefed on progress of organization and asked for input
	NELAC 7i	Model for new role of NELAC developed
2002	INELA begins operation with creation of BOD and bylaws	
	INELA web site established	
	INELA files for tax-exempt status	
July, 2003	Last NELAC standard adopted	
	NELAC Standing Committees cease operation	
	INELA Expert Committees begin operation	
	INELA takes on management of “Forum” meetings	
	INELA receives recognition as a 501c3	
	NELAC forms Standards Review Committee	
2004	INELA Policy on Standards Development adopted	
	INELA strategic planning session	
2005	NFSTC begins to assist NELAC with self-sufficiency effort	\$750,000 over 5 years for self-sufficiency
	INELA applies to ANSI for accreditation	Recognition as a consensus standards organization

	INELA enters into cooperative agreement with EPA	\$300,000 over 3 years for standards development and technical assistance
	NELAC removes policy from 2003 standard	
	NELAC SSTG formed	To explore options for NELAC self-sufficiency
2006	INELA Working Draft Standards published	
	INELA cooperative agreement for NEMC	\$300,000 over 5 years for meeting support
	INELA signs agreements with ANSI and ASTM	Allows for use of ISO 17025 and 17022 in INELA standards
	NELAC Special Committee Report presented to EPA	The NELAC Board wishes to explore with EPA its vision as to how the EPA can best participate to help ensure the success of the national environmental laboratory accreditation effort. Since the EPA OW has statutory authority to implement and enforce laboratory certification under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, and many states in turn accredit their drinking water laboratories through primacy, we consider it logical to first develop a cooperative accreditation program between OW and NELAP. This cooperative program can be established in a way that complements and enhances EPA's regulatory and oversight authority. We believe these are compelling reasons to come together and explore the use of NELAC as the starting point in harmonizing the EPA's data quality assurance and laboratory accreditation requirements.
	Self-Sufficiency Task Group (SSTG) Effort	Led to MOU with INELA to form Partnership Planning Team (PPT). See SSTG report.
August 2006	NELAC Director resigns	EPA's direct support for NELAC ceases; EPA cooperative with NFSTC allows NELAC to continue to operate
		NFSTC, NSF and TNI begin to work cooperatively together
	Partnership Planning Team Effort	Developed structure for new organization
November 6, 2006	Formation of TNI	New bylaws, BOD, committees, etc as recommended in PPT report
January 2007	TNI sends letter to FEM	"There is much work still to be done and we hope that by working together we will accomplish great things. TNI continues to be committed to a national accreditation effort, one that may in the future align and meet the needs of the EPA Programs."
March 2007	EPA Sends letter to TNI	"EPA looks forward to collaborating with TNI, building upon the OW/NELAC collaboration over the past 10+ years, as TNI seeks to further develop and expand the accreditation program."
May 2007	Cynthia Dougherty publishes memo	Supports continued participation of EPA Regions in NELAP AB evaluations
August 2009	New TNI Standards adopted by NELAP	