Resources and Support for Laboratory Accreditation from TNI
October 12, 2015

The NELAC Institute (TNI) is a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is 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. TNI operates a number of programs to support this mission, including the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP). To support this program, TNI provides resources for both laboratories and the organizations that accredit laboratories.

This document was prepared to summarize some of the resources available from TNI.

TNI supports the recommendations of the expert review panel assisting the California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP), not only because they are well-considered, sound, and practical, but also, because they are in harmony with TNI's mission.

By re-applying to NELAP, ELAP would validate all efforts it undertakes to improve its accreditation program by an independent, external group of national stature consisting of extremely qualified peers. In re-joining NELAP, the California ELAP would have the benefit of participating in the NELAP Accreditation Council and partake of the expertise and best practices knowledge of 15 other ABs. As a NELAP AB, the California ELAP would be in a privileged position to keep pace with the trends and changes affecting the environmental laboratory community and to shape and refine the future of laboratory accreditation beyond its state borders.

If the California ELAP became a NELAB AB, in-state laboratories would benefit from the opportunity to obtain reciprocal accreditation from all NELAP-recognized ABs. By adopting the TNI Standard, the California ELAP could focus its resources to improving and maintaining excellence in its accreditation program, instead of diverting efforts to create a redundant, inefficient, and insular accreditation standard.

Tools for Accreditation Bodies

TNI has developed and maintains a number of resources in helping Accreditation Bodies (ABs) implement their program. These include:
- A database of over 3000 analytes and an easy system for adding new analytes,
- A database of over 4000 methods and a Methods Compendium that allows access to a copy of the method,
- A Laboratory Accreditation Management System that allows ABs to upload information about their accredited laboratories and also allow the general public access to search for laboratories,
- An annual Assessment Forum, where laboratory assessors can share information,
- Training courses on ISO 17011 and the TNI standard for ABs,
- Fields of Proficiency Testing (PT), tables of analytes required for proficiency testing with concentration ranges and acceptance limits,
- A listing of PT Providers accredited to the TNI standard for PT providers, and
- A listing of third-party contract laboratory assessors.

Tools for Laboratories

TNI has also developed and maintains a number of resources in helping laboratories become accredited. These include:
- A database of over 3000 analytes and an easy system for adding new analytes,
- A database of over 4000 methods and a Methods Compendium that allows access to a copy of the method,
- Fields of Proficiency Testing (PT), tables of analytes required for proficiency testing with concentration ranges and acceptance limits,
- A listing of PT Providers accredited to the TNI standard for PT providers,
- A Small Laboratory Handbook, a document that explains the TNI standard in plain English,

- A Quality Manual Template, a document that allows a laboratory to easily develop their own Quality Manual,
- A listing of consultants that assist laboratories in becoming accredited,
- An annual Mentor Session where information to help laboratories is shared,
- A Small Laboratory Advocacy Group, where laboratories can share information and ask questions, and
- A series of downloadable webcasts (see the text box below) to help train laboratories on specific aspects of the TNI standard.

Webcasts Available from TNI
- Corrective Action Process and Root Cause Analysis
- Records and Record Keeping
- Theoretical and Practical Consideration for Establishing Sensitivity of Measurements
- Internal Audits and Management Review
- Ethics Training for the Environmental Professional
- Establishing a Data Integrity Plan
- Defining Organizational Responsibilities
- Method Selection and Validation
- Developing the Quality Manual as a Useful Management Tool
- Document and Document Control
- Implementing the 2009 TNI Standard