

Benefits of NELAP to State Accreditation Bodies

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Participating ABs benefit from NELAP by:

- Saving the resources and efforts that would be incurred in creating local or state accreditation standards.
 - TNI has active Expert Committees that are recognized by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as consensus standards bodies. These committees have developed the consensus standards for the operation of NELAP. The committees are continuously working to improve the standards by a process that involves the input of all affected stakeholders, including labs and ABs.
- Reducing the number of on-site assessments to perform through the reciprocal recognition of accredited laboratories.
 - Currently, over 300 laboratories have accreditations in multiple states, with some laboratories holding as many as 14 individual accreditations. If these accreditations were not offered through a mutual recognition process, the number of laboratory assessments that would need to be performed would increase nationwide by over 400 assessments per year. Because most of these laboratories offer complex scopes of work covering multiple matrices and technologies, a conservative estimate of the number of duplicative assessment hours would be in excess of 10,000 hours, the equivalent of 5 additional assessors that would need to be hired.
- Having access to a global accreditation database, training courses for assessors, and a national forum for exchanging information.
 - TNI has implemented a national database of accredited laboratories that allows the NELAP ABs to quickly and efficiently monitor the accreditation status of all labs.
 - TNI provides training courses for laboratory assessors.
 - TNI's semiannual meeting, the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, provides a mechanism for AB representatives to exchange information to help improve their program.
- Appointing representatives to an accreditation council composed of peer accreditors.
 - Every participating organization is highly involved in the process.
 - Every AB participates in the development of the requirements and must approve the requirements for the standard to be implemented.
- Receiving rigorous evaluations to confirm the quality of their operations.
 - TNI periodically evaluates each program to ensure conformance to the TNI standard. This evaluation provides assurance to the laboratory community and the public that the program is being managed effectively.

Options for a State Operated Certification/Accreditation Program

State agencies that accredit or certify laboratories have the following choices:

- EPA Drinking Water Certification Manual
- State-developed program
- ISO 17025 based
- TNI Standard

Characteristic	EPA*	State	17025	TNI
Technical Requirements for labs	x	x	x	x
Quality System Requirements for labs		?	x	x
Incorporates ISO 17025		?	x	x
Data Integrity Component		?		x
Requires conformance to EPA/State Regulations	x	?		x
Applicable to multiple matrices		?	x	x
Contains specificity for environmental testing	x	?		x
Developed by consensus			x	x
Requires approval of standard by AB		x		x
Requires oversight of AB				x
Allows for recognition of labs in other NELAP states				x
Specific and detailed proficiency testing requirements	x	?		x
Provides oversight of PT providers				x
Training, tools and templates developed for labs		?		x

* For drinking water only