

## TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary September 10, 2008

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### 1. Roll Call and Approval of July and August Minutes

Directors	Present
Joe Aiello	Yes
Steve Arms	Yes
Judith Duncan	Yes
Jack Farrell	Yes
Ken Jackson	Yes
Tom McAninch	Yes
Sharon Mertens	Yes
Judy Morgan	Yes
Ken Olson	Yes
Aurora Shields	Yes
Matt Sica	Yes
Alfredo Sotomayor	Yes
Dave Speis	Yes
Curtis Wood	Yes
Bob Wyeth	Yes
Ex-Officio Directors	
Brooke Connor	No
Deb Szaro	Yes
George Detsis	No
Edward Hartzog	No
Staff	
Carol Batterton	No
Jerry Parr	Yes
Jane Wilson	No
Janice Wlodarski	Yes

Approval of July 2008 meeting minutes:

Motion to Approve: Sharon Mertens  
 Second: Ken Jackson  
 All in Favor: Approved

Approval of August 2008 meeting minutes:

Motion to Approve: Sharon Mertens  
 Second: Ken Jackson  
 All in Favor: Approved

### 2. Job Postings

Jim Pletl requested if he could post a job opening on the TNI website. Opinions regarding this request were mixed. It was the overall decision that while it posting job openings may be something that TNI wants to consider doing in the future, it is not currently the appropriate time to do so now.

General discussion points included:

- TNI does not have to be and do everything. Should stick with core services and processes. Also, posting jobs may change the way the organization is viewed and TNI does not want to be caught in the position of allowing members to “steal” employees. (Dave)
- Would posting jobs on the TNI site be viewed as an endorsement by TNI? Would we have to establish guidelines, i.e., do we charge a fee? (Sharon)
- May not be ready for it right now but it is something that other organizations do. It could be a part of “member services”. It would have to be managed well. (Alfredo) (Jim)
- Previous discussions provided approval for organizations to post job openings on the boards at meetings. (Judy)

## **2. Laboratory Answer Line**

This came up in the last LASC meeting when we were reviewing the questions that are coming in. Approximately 1/3 of the questions coming in are technical method questions, not related to the standard. It may be possible for questions to be funneled to the proper expert or methods author, responses collected, and then posted on an interpretation website for anyone to review. One issue is that usually when these questions come in, a response is needed immediately and this process takes time. Jerry’s suggestion was to develop a subcommittee under LASC, a subcommittee of “experts” in different areas to provide “opinions”. “Method Clarification Request.”

It was decided that a subcommittee would be appointed to review the situation and provide a recommendation. Ilona (LASC) and Jack (TAC) will go back to their committees for more discussion. This will be an agenda item for the Strategic Planning meeting in January 2009. Additionally, LASC will continue to keep track of how many of these requests are coming through, and Jerry will see if there are funds to conduct a small pilot.

## **3. Membership**

In July and August we had about 50 memberships expire, including some who are active on committees. Jerry is making inquiries to find out if renewal notices are getting through. More needs to be done to welcome new members. Currently there is a 60-day reminder notice via email, a 30-day reminder notice via email and then a final email reminder 30 days past their membership expiration. Some concern was expressed that many people don’t regularly read their email and so may be missing the notice(s). Actions items for this agenda item include:

- Send emails to the 50 members that didn’t renew. Jerry will send the information to Board Members for follow-up.
- Provide a list of expired membership with each month’s meeting minutes.
- Change the 30-day email notice to hard copy.

## **4. TNI Activities**

The revised TNI Activities List, tied back into the Strategic Plan, was very well received. Suggestions were made to use this list to inform members about current activities and progress made on issues within the organization in the TNI Newsletter (sidebar item?). Also, this could be used in the future to help create the annual report (use as an outline).

**5. TNI Programs**

Over the last few weeks we have finally produced a final set of accreditation standards, have begun a new effort with the stationary source air effort, and have also started a process to move the FSMO standards forward. In attempting to write something about our new standards for the website and also begin the process of promoting the FSMO effort we should consider establishing each of these efforts as its own program.

NELAP is our best established program with its pieces being PT, TAC, LASC, etc and should be our primary focus, but we also need to help the FSMO program as well. By thinking this way, we can get out of the using "environmental lab" to cover everything. May need to revisit some fundamental organizational concepts we have established.

**6. Miami Forum**

With the active help of the Conference Planning Committee, everything is coming together very well. The Florida Society of Environmental Analysts and the Florida Department of Environmental Quality will help publicize the meeting. Jerry has submitted a presentation request to the Florida Surgeon General. The brochure should be mailed out late this month.

**7. Executive Director and Program Administrator Reports**

See Attachments 2 and 3.

**8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 at 1:00pm EST.

Attachment 1

TNI Activities List

**1. Establish and maintain a national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories and other organizations directly involved in the generation of environmental monitoring data.**

1.1 Finalize all [environmental laboratory] accreditation standards that are currently under development.

- |   |              |           |
|---|--------------|-----------|
| - Complete Consensus Standards process                    | CSDB         | Done      |
| - Need secure on-line document download system            | ED           | Oct 2008  |
| - Consider renegotiation of agreements with ASTM and ANSI | ED           | Oct 2008  |
| - Complete LASC review                                    | LASC         | Jan 2009  |
| - NELAP Board adoption                                    | NELAP Board  | Jan 2009  |
| - Replace NELAC 2003                                      | NELAP Board  | July 2010 |
| - Resolve PT frequency issue                              | PT Committee | Jan 2009  |

1.2 Establish and maintain a national PT program to support a national environmental accreditation program.

- |   |          |           |
|---|----------|-----------|
| - Establish and maintain FoPTs for chemical & micro in potable water, non-potable water and soils | PT Board | Done      |
| - Establish and maintain FoPTs for Whole Effluent Toxicity  | PT Board | Jan 2009  |
| - Establish and maintain FoPTs for Air and Emissions  | PT Board | Jan 2009  |
| - Select PT provider accreditor   | PT Board | Done      |
| - Hold an annual PT caucus  | PT Board | Jan 2009  |
| - Implement the new TNI standards for PT providers and PTPAs                                      | PT Board | July 2010 |
| - Resolve PT database ownership issue   | ED       | Oct 2008  |

1.3 Establish a credible and efficient system for the recognition of Accreditation Bodies.

- |   |             |           |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| - Establish policies and SOPs               | NELAP Board | Done      |
| - Complete 2008 evaluations of existing ABs | NELAP Board | Dec 2008  |
| - Complete 2009 evaluations of existing ABs | NELAP Board | Dec 2009  |
| - Provide introductory training to new ABs  | NELAP Board | Oct 2008  |
| - Revise AB application form if needed      | NELAP Board | Oct 2008  |
| - Establish fee for services plan           | NELAP Board | June 2009 |
| - Provide mentoring session for new ABs     | NELAP Board | Jan 2009  |
| - Process new AB applications               | NELAP Board | As needed |
| - Implement the 2008 TNI AB standard        | NELAP Board | July 2010 |

1.4 Develop a national database of accredited laboratories.

- |   |             |           |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| - Beta version of database released. DB demo in Miami | NDB         | Jan 2009  |
| - Implement national database                         | NELAP Board | June 2009 |

1.5 Develop and implement policies and procedures to implement a national program.

- |  |      |           |
|--|------|-----------|
| - LASC will take this on after standards review complete | LASC | June 2010 |
|--|------|-----------|

1.6 Expand the program into non-traditional areas of environmental data collection.

- |  |      |           |
|--|------|-----------|
| - Assist EPA OAR with audit sample program |      |           |
| Establish SSAS committee                   | CSDB | Done      |
| Prepare Working Draft Standard             | SSAS | Jan 2009  |
| Finalize standard                          | SSAS | Sept 2009 |
| - Establish an FSMO program                |      |           |
| Develop standards for FSMO                 | FAC  | Done      |

Establish FSMO program	FAC?	Oct 2008
Recognize FSMO AB	FAC?	Jan 2009
Integrate SSAS effort into FSMO program	???	Jan 2010
- Establish a Taxonomy program		
Form a Taxonomy Expert Committee	CDSB	Oct 2008
Develop standards for Taxonomy		Jan 2010
Establish Taxonomy program		
Recognize Taxonomy AB		
- Identify other areas	BoD	June 2009
- Revise SOP on standards development to allow for expansion	CDSB	Dec 2008
- Revisit TNI Mission and Vision as it relates to emerging programs	BoD	June 2009

**2: Increase the number of states participating [in NELAP].**

2.1 Deleted. See Goal 2.4

2.2 Develop an effective system for having states participate in the program without having to become Accreditation Bodies.

- Consider options for Affiliate or Associate ABs	AB committee	Jan 2009
- Hold an Affiliate/Associate AB forum at each of TNI's meeting	LASC	On-going
- Build a directory of every state accreditation program	TAC???	June 2009
- Survey non-participating states	AB Committee	Jan 2009

2.3 Develop materials and provide assistance to states to make it easier for them to participate.

- Provide an Assessment Forum at every TNI meeting	TAC	On-going
- Provide mentoring sessions for ABs at TNI meetings	TAC	On-going
- Develop model legislation and regulations for new ABs to use	TAC????	Jan 2009

2.4 Provide outreach to stakeholder groups to understand their needs and concerns on national accreditation and bring those needs and concerns back to TNI for action

- Identify groups for meetings and set priorities	Advocacy	Dec 2008
- Hold meetings and identify issues of concern	Advocacy	Dec 2009
- Form a joint taskforce to identify and work together through the issues	Advocacy	June 2010
- Summarize what has been learned and present to appropriate TNI programs	Advocacy	July 2010
- Shepherd the issues with the TNI programs	Advocacy	Dec 2010

2.5 Harmonize the TNI accreditation standards with the EPA drinking water certification program.

- Perform a detailed comparison of DW manual to TNI standard	Advocacy	Jan 2009
- Present findings to EPA OW and TNI Expert Committees	Advocacy	June 2009
- Develop revised WDS as appropriate	Expert Committees	Jan 2011

2.6 Work with other EPA programs (e.g., Air, Solid Waste, Wastewater) to make the TNI program meet their needs.

- Identify groups for meetings and set priorities	Advocacy	Dec 2008
- Hold meetings and identify issues of concern	Advocacy	Dec 2009
- Form a joint taskforce to identify and work together through the issues	Advocacy	June 2010
- Summarize what has been learned and present to appropriate TNI programs	Advocacy	July 2010
- Shepherd the issues with the TNI programs	Advocacy	Dec 2010
- Continue efforts to work with DMRQA program	Advocacy	Dec 2009

**3: Increase the number of laboratories participating [in NELAP].**

3.1	Advocate for stronger support of accreditation from data users.		
	- Develop white paper to promote benefits	Advocacy	Dec 2008
	- Seek opportunities to promote benefits	Advocacy	On-going
3.2	Delete: See Goal 2.4		
3.3	Promote the benefits of accreditation to laboratories.		
	- Develop white paper to promote benefits	Advocacy	Dec 2008
	- Seek opportunities to promote benefits	Advocacy	On-going
3.4	Develop materials and provide assistance to laboratories to make it easier for them to participate.		
	- Develop templates to help laboratories	TAC	Done?
	- Hold workshops to assist labs in becoming accredited	TAC	
	- Establish Small Laboratory advocate position	BoD	Done
	- Define duties for Small Laboratory Advocate	TAC/Advocacy	Oct 2008
	- Consider TNI lab hotline	BoD	Oct 2008
3.5	Persuade data users to make accreditation mandatory.		
	- Develop white paper to promote benefits	Advocacy	Dec 2008
	- Seek opportunities to promote benefits	Advocacy	On-going
3.6	Delete. See Goal 2.4		
3.7	Delete. See Goal 2.4		

**4: Provide conferences that provide benefit to the environmental community and enhance TNI's mission.**

4.1	Hold a semi-annual Forum on Laboratory Accreditation.		
	- Revisit scope and scale of winter meeting	Conference	Done
4.2	Co-sponsor the National Environmental Monitoring Conference.		
	- Work with NEMC Board to co-host this meeting	Conference	Done
	- Hire additional contractor to work on technical program	ED	Done
	- Write proposal to secure grant renewal	Finance	Dec 2009
4.3	Conduct other regional conferences and workshops.		
	- Identify regional conferences where TNI could hold workshops	TAC	June 2009

**5: Establish infrastructure to ensure TNI's future success.**

5.1	Attract and retain qualified paid and volunteer staff for all services and activities.		
	- Improve on-line membership process	Website	Done
	- Improve committee application process	Website	Done
5.2	Delete. See Goals 3.1, 3.3 and 3.5		
5.3	Increase the operational and management efficiency and effectiveness of TNI.		
	- Improve functionality of website	Website	Done
	- Prepare an annual operational budget	Finance	Dec 2008
	- Conduct financial review of TNI 2006 records	Finance	Dec 2008
	- Conduct financial review of TNI 2007 records	Finance	April 2009
	- Establish routine financial reporting system for quarterly reports	Finance	Oct 2008
	- Establish document management system	Secretary	Jan 2009
	- Establish process to measure the effectiveness of each program	BoD	Jan 2009
	- Develop Policies and SOPs for general TNI use	Policy	On-going
	- Develop Policies and SOPs for finance and administrative activities	Finance	April 2009
	- Fund Program Administrator for Advocacy effort	BoD	Done
5.4	Meet the needs of stakeholders by providing an appropriate level of service.		
	- Produce an Annual Report	BoD	April 2009

- Ensure Website has timely useful information	Website	On-going
- Provide periodic member newsletter	Advocacy	On-going
5.5 Acquire stable, long term financial resources to support TNI programs and their growth.		
- Generate a business plan	BoD	April 2009
- Establish process for sale of TNI documents	Finance	Done
5.6 Develop and maintain an effective Board of Directors.		
-Target outreach to new members and new attendees not on committees		
	BoD	April 2009
- Discuss and resolve how training will be done	BoD	April 2009
- Board succession	BoD	April 2009
- Conduct performance evaluation on Executive Director	BoD	April 2009
- Follow up with Allan Antley on TNI collaboration for eLRN.	BoD	April 2009
- Update Strategic Plan	BoD	Jan 2009

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**Attachment 2**  
**Executive Director's Report**

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**September 9, 2008**

**Activities completed since July 8:**

- Filed indirect cost proposal with DOI
- Generated six-month financial report
- Set up meeting on DMRQA program with EPA
- Resolved NEMC Program Chair issue with selection of Ilona s Co-Chair
- Completed DC meeting
- Produced final version for publishing of 2008 TNI Standards
- Established schedule, exhibit program and registration fees for Miami meeting
- Posted Call for Papers for NEMC 2009

**Upcoming activities**

- Get website fully operational
  - membership, purchase documents, committee pages
- Publish remaining Board minutes
- Finalize training courses for Miami
- Prepare and send out brochure for Miami
- Open registration for Miami
- Hotel site visit
- Produce 9-month financial report
- Begin planning NEMC 2009
- Send TNI standards to ANSI and ASTM with royalty checks
- Post RFP for technical training document and select contractor

**Organization update**

July 8:	670 Active members
September 9:	648 Active members



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**Attachment 3**  
**Program Administrator's Report**

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**June 10, 2008**

**Consensus Standards Development Program**

- The new SSAS committee has met once since the DC forum and will meet twice in September. Maria Friedman is serving as the interim chair. It still has not yet been officially constituted as an Expert Committee by CSDB due to lack of balance. CSDB will be looking at adding flexibility to the TNI standards procedures that would allow for the recognition of some additional interest categories, since the current ones don't work well for this committee.
- The PT, QS, AB, and OSA committees will start/continue work on comparison documents between the NELAC 2003 requirements and the TNI modules for use by LASC in their review of the standards.
- FAC committee has completed the rewrite of their accreditation policy SOP and will be forwarding to Policy committee for review.
- Appeal on QS module was responded to and resolved to the satisfaction of the appellant.

**TNI NELAP Board**

- All onsite evaluations for AB renewals are complete. Three evaluation team recommendation reports have been forwarded to the NELAP Board for action.
- Renewal letters for the next round of evaluations will be sent out in late September.
- Online training for potential new AB's has been scheduled for October 23 on the EPA web training system.

**Laboratory Accreditation Committee**

- The LASC is in the process of reviewing the new TNI standard.
  - The group started with the PT related standards. Volume 1: Module 1 and Volume 2: Module 2 is complete and Volumes 3 and 4 are expected to be complete by 9/12/08. The PT Expert Committee Chair will be invited to a meeting the week of 9/15 to review the comments and provide input. A final review will then be submitted to the PT Expert Committee.
  - The second review topic will be Quality Systems.
  - The group has decided to increase the frequency of meetings and look into using web conferencing to complete the review process. If it appears the group is falling behind this will be re-evaluated.
  - A subcommittee has been formed to finalize the SOP for standards review. It appears that it will need a few adjustments and a subcommittee will speed up this process without taking the focus off of Standards Review.
- The Standards Interpretation Request process is underway. All requests are responded to with an e-mail letting them know we received the request, which committee, program or board is working on it and an approximate time frame to expect a response. It was originally anticipated that the Assessment Forum would provide most of the responses, but it appears that many of the questions still need to be passed on for a final response. Dan Hickman, June Flowers and Ilona Taunton are

finalizing the status table and then requests for responses will be distributed to the appropriate group.

- One issue raised is how to deal with technical/method related questions. There were a number of options raised. One option was to determine whether TNI would consider providing an additional service to the laboratory community. Currently laboratories need to contact the various agencies independently with these types of technical questions. Would TNI want to be a funnel for these questions and provide a website with the questions and answers. June was approached in DC by EPA OW regarding our current process and they are interested in having access to the questions and answers. Would this mean that they and others would support a more technical/method oriented Q&A? Is there a need for this?

### **National Database Subcommittee**

- The National Database system is untested, but it could be used today by manually entering in all the information. There are still additional searches that need to be built.
- Future Plans:
  - Dan Hickman plans to enter in some dummy lab data so the committee can see how it works.
  - ABs will be contacted to make sure it is doing what it was intended to do.
  - Need to consider non-NELAP states – is another status field needed? Charge for using the database?
  - SOPs need to be written. Need to check if we will be given any kind of a manual by the developer.
  - Goal is for all states to be in the database (DRAFT) by Miami. They should be able to start downloading data.

### **PT Board**

- Evaluation of A2LA as PTPA is continuing. Next step is an on-site review.
- A2LA is making progress on the PT Provider renewal assessments. Expiration dates have been extended. Six out of eight are complete.
- PT Oversight Database: PT Providers are now uploading data and more testing of the system will be done as it is populated. Uploading will be required by October and the database will be fully effective and being used for monitoring by January 2009. The PT Board is considering the following items:
  - Should the PT Board consider asking A2LA to do a comparison of performance range vs. existing acceptance criteria? A2LA is open to providing additional information. The expense for doing this would need to be worked out.
  - If another PTPA were brought in, they will have their own database. How do you handle this? Or do you only have one PTPA, but multiple auditors? Need to review procedures and determine whether the current standard addresses more than one PTPA.
- Experimental PTs were reviewed and options were presented in DC. Further discussion is needed.
- The PT Board will vote on 9/18 whether to reform the Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee with the following goals:
  - Look at reducing the number of analytes.
  - Look at the need to document the extraction prep method (an issue raised during in DC).
  - FoPT ranges.
- WET FoPT Subcommittee: The subcommittee hopes to present acceptance criteria to the PT Board by the Miami meeting.

- Air and Emissions (AE) FoPT Subcommittee: Subcommittee has started meeting and is currently in a data collection phase.

### **Technical Assistance Committee**

- TAC has added the following new members: Susan Wyatt, Gale Warren, Charles Morrow, Ronald Houck, and Jarrett Thomas.
- TAC will be planning mentoring sessions for Miami on the new TNI standards and training for potential ABs.
- TAC will begin discussing regional workshops for training labs on the new TNI standards.
- Barbara Escobar has indicated that she will resign as chair of the Technical Assistance Committee due to workload issues.
- TAC is coordinating with the NELAP Board on training for potential ABs.

### **Advocacy**

- The Advocacy Committee has developed an almost final version of the “Benefits of NELAP Accreditation” paper. This paper will be posted on the website and can be used to develop talking points and presentations for outreach efforts.
- The next TNI newsletter will be released October 15. Michael Wichman is the editor.
- Members of the Advocacy Committee and TAC will meet with Lenard Schantz to develop a role description for the Small Lab Advocate.
- Aurora Shields has resigned as Chair due to a job change and Judy Duncan is serving as interim chair until a new chair can be appointed.

### **Website**

- No meeting since DC.

### **Policy**

- No meeting since DC.

### **Finance**

- Approved system for periodic financial reporting. First report will be provided to the Board in October.
- Started reviewing financial policies. Priorities are travel and purchasing.
- Approved Indirect Cost Proposal for FY 2007.