

TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary

August 12, 2020

1. Roll Call

Directors	Present
Jordan Adelson	X
Aaren Alger	
Steve Arms	X
Justin Brown	X
Kristin Brown	X
David Caldwell	X
Stacie Crandall	X
Bob Di Rienzo	
Jack Farrell	X
Maria Friedman	X
Myron Gunsalus	X
Paul Junio	X
Judy Morgan	X
Patsy Root	X
Debbie Rosano	
Scott Siders	X
Nick Slawson	X
Alfredo Sotomayor	X
Dave Speis	X
Lem Walker	NEMC
Curtis Wood	X
Past Chair	
Sharon Mertens	X
Staff	
Lynn Bradley	X
Carol Batterton	X
Jerry Parr	X
Suzanne Rachmaninoff	X
Ilona Taunton	X
Janice Wlodarski	X
Bob Wyeth	X

Note: NEMC Sessions Occurring During the Board Call

11:45 – 12:15 A Collaborative Approach to Updating EPA Method 3050; Michelle Briscoe, Brooks Applied Labs

12:15 LUNCH BREAK

12:30 – 1:00 Lunch Speaker - Microplastics Analysis: Simplified Workflows for Comprehensive Characterization in the Environment; Jeff Prevatt, PIMA County Wastewater, and Tarun Anumol, Agilent Technologies

1:15 – 1:45 Measurement of Gross Alpha: Application, Interpretation and New Method Options; Glynda Smith, USEPA

2. Approval of July Minutes

Motion to Approve: Judy Morgan

Second: Patsy Root

Abstentions: Curtis Wood

Approved: Approved

3. Withdrawal of LA DOH from NELAP

On August 3, 2020, the Louisiana Department of Health formally notified the NELAP Accreditation Council of their intent to withdraw from NELAP on August 20, 2020 and revert back to a drinking water certification program based on the EPA certification manual. DOH currently accredits 9 laboratories – 3 in Louisiana and 6 out of state – as a primary AB. DOH also recognizes 23 laboratories as a secondary AB. The primary reason for this decision was stated to be the cost to

accredit the out of state laboratories and their limited resources since the drinking water laboratory closed after Katrina.

Kristin Brown has reached out to these 9 laboratories to let them know that we are there to help them transition to another NELAP AB or NGAB if they choose to do so. TNI plans to maintain their accreditation status in LAMS until their current certificate expires at the end of the year, and the Accreditation Council may take further steps to ensure that the labs do not suffer hardship as a result of the short timeframe for notification.

Discussion:

This has a very small impact to TNI. Only involves Drinking Water, only 9 labs. They are unlikely to rejoin. Florida said they can take all of those labs. And one of the larger labs has already found a Primary home.

4. Response to ANSI

Bob Wyeth submitted our corrective action response to the ANSI audit on August 4, addressing all of the findings, including very trivial ones like not underlining a word in a sentence. However, we strongly objected to one finding on the use of the words “stakeholder group” versus “interest category.” In our response, we stated:

“The market that TNI serves is a small niche group within the overall environmental community. Our principal activity revolves around accreditation for select services (primarily laboratories seeking accreditation from a limited number of Federal and/or State authorities). In our 20+ years as an organization we have had little or no interest from the public or other potentially impacted parties (including other ANSI members) outside of our 3 primary stakeholder groups. These stakeholder groups are laboratories, accreditation bodies and other. This latter (other) stakeholder group has included all other potentially interested and/or impacted groups or individuals. We are not restricted to member-only participation as interested parties can become Affiliate members of an Expert Committee with full committee/consensus group privileges. Interested parties also have access to information from the TNI website relative to activities of all committees and actions relative to standards development. This history and the nature of our organization, in the absence of any ANSI definition or requirement of “interest categories” or “stakeholders” in the ANSI Essential Requirement, we believe supports our proposed continuation of the term stakeholder as opposed to interest category in our organization and within our SOPs and Policies. We are proposing to seek approval from the ExSC for the use of this terminology.”

This response could jeopardize our ANSI accreditation, but the CSDP Executive Committee Chair and the TNI Executive Director believe we are past the point where the ANSI accreditation is critical to TNI’s success. With or without the ANSI accreditation, we will continue to fulfill the requirements of OMB A-119, the federal government requirements for consensus standards bodies.

Note: The ANSI accreditation of TNI as a consensus standards body is separate from the agreement we have to use ISO language in our standards.

Discussion:

We use ANSI for two different things. One is for the use of the ISO language, which without, we do not have a standard. The second use of ANSI is for this audit. While the audit did bring forth some important issues for us to correct, we may not need to use ANSI for this purpose in the future.

A cost/benefit analysis of using ANSI for this particular purpose (audit) will be done at the time the 2021 budget is put together (September timeframe).

5. SOPs to Review and Approve

- **SOP 2-100** (Procedures Governing Standards Development) was extensively revised based on comments from ANSI, as well as an extensive review by a special task force. This SOP has been approved by Policy and thus does not require approval by the Board, but this is one of the key SOPs in TNI. Substantive changes made include:
 - The process for standards development was simplified and now includes a notification step.
 - The complicated terminology of voting standard, interim standard, modified interim standard, etc. was all removed. There is a standard that makes its way through a process.
 - The Response to Comments effort is now clearly delineated in its own section.

Comments:

The review and revision of this SOP encompassed 4 – 5 months of intensive review by a special task force. The task force included 9 - 11 people. AEs, labs, all the interest groups/stakeholders, and half the Board were included in the review. This is one of our more important SOPs.

- **SOP 1-101** (Operation of TNI Committees) was revised to be consistent with SOP 2-100 and to add the Training Committee. This SOP does require Board approval.

Motion to Approve: Patsy Root

Second: Judy Morgan

Approved: Unanimous

6. Program Reports (Attachment 1)

7. Next Meeting: September 9, 2020; 1pm – 2:30pm EST

Attachment 1 PROGRAM REPORTS

CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- TNI submitted yet another response to our audit and have received a few minor additional comments from ANSI which will be addressed prior to our Corrective Action Plan being presented to the Executive Standards Council. All SOPs required to be submitted with our Corrective Action Plan have been approved and will also be supplied for re-accreditation efforts. In TNI's latest response the organization has taken a position regarding "stakeholders" versus "interest categories" which is somewhat problematic to ANSI but the final decision will come from the ANSI Executive Standards Council as opposed to the people with whom we are currently dealing.
- The TNI Glossary work group has begun activities by preparing a comparison document of all definitions presented in TNI documents and the current glossary as completed last year. Ultimate direction (i.e., guidance document, module of the standard, etc.) as to use of the glossary has yet to be addressed.
- Revisions to training materials for Committee Chairs and committee members has commenced and a preliminary draft is being prepared. This effort will be directed at training for all TNI committee in addition to the Expert committees.
- The Chemistry committee has begun initial efforts regarding modifications to Module 4 specifically as relates to Initial and Continuing Demonstration of Capabilities for the laboratory and individual analysts. The committee is also working to resolve a number of SIR issues reported to the committee by the LASEC.
- The Proficiency Testing expert committee continues to develop a work plan for 2020 focusing on needed changes to Module 1, including review of ISO 17011, 17025 and 17034 for consistency with the TNI standard. The committee did not meet in July as a result of the July 4th holiday. Their next meeting was held last Friday, August 7th and their work efforts now include attempts to resolve standard language surrounding the WETT PT issue.
- The Asbestos expert committee has developed their Response to Comments document which has been approved by the committee. They are in the process of developing their summary document. Upon committee approval of this summary, the Draft Standard and the Summary will be posted and announced consistent with Rev. 3.2 of SOP 2-100. This announcement will be directed to all relevant TNI committee chair as well as the non-TNI interested parties.
- The Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee made good progress on revising the assessor training and qualifications portion of the draft V2M1 and is coordinating with the Competency Task Force about its decisions. The only outstanding issue from comments concerns issuance of assessment reports, who can issue them and the AB's authority to approve the final report if changes are needed from the version issued by a contract assessor. The issue of how to address the recommendations of the Field Activities Task Force will be the final item and then a Draft Standard can be issued for comment. This may well happen by the end of calendar 2020.
- The WET committee began review of several revised sections of V1M7, and members continue working on other issues underway in recent months. All ABs on the committee are working with the Chair to craft an acceptable solution to the individual analyst demonstration of competency process for WET labs. The laboratory DOCs are clearly spelled out in the method manuals, but without any guidance from previous versions of the standard, individual ABs have settled into and hold tightly to

widely different requirements for individual DOCs, and three years of discussion have failed to produce an acceptable compromise thus far.

- The Microbiology Committee finalized their Summary of Changes document and are drafting language for William to post the public webinar and Jan to send out invitations to stakeholders. The original plan was to hold the webinar end of August and a final decision will be made tomorrow if it will be end of August or third week of September.
- The Quality Systems Committee completed work on their Summary of Suggested Changes to the Standard table to begin preparing for a public webinar to receive more input on the needed changes/additions to the Module 2 Standard. The Committee is looking at doing the webinar on September 14, 2020 and is working on the invitations to send to William and Jan. The Committee has set a goal to have a DRAFT Standard to present at the winter meeting so they can hit a target of August 2021 for an approved CSDP Module 2 Standard. The Committee is awaiting more input from Jerry to confirm they need to have an approved Standard that DoD can use.
- The SSAS Committee is continuing work on their SOPs to define how they will be able to provide audit samples at other concentrations. SOP 6-100 (Conducting Pilot Studies for New Concentration Ranges and Acceptance Limits for Source Sampling Audit Samples) has been sent to the Policy Committee for review and an update to SOP 6-101 (SSAS Table Management) is still being worked on. The Committee is continuing to meet more frequently to try to finish up their last SOP and the Standard updates in hopes that these changes to the program will encourage another audit sample provider to apply. Sheri gave an excellent presentation about the SSAS at NEMC last week. The presentation will be uploaded to the SSAS website and training website to provide people with more information about SSAS.

NEFAP Executive Committee

- The two workgroups formed to begin addressing the training plan and marketing plan have started meeting. Paul Bergeron is chairing the Training Workgroup and Halley Dunn Hastings is chairing the Marketing Workgroup.
 - The Training Workgroup is looking at training for ABs, field quality systems, sampling methods, matrices, etc.
 - The marketing workgroup is looking into using YouTube, surveys, and other options to communicate with its target audience. They also want to meet with the FAC to see what is possible in the Standard rewrite.
- A Nominating Committee (Chair – Geneva Bowman from AIHA) was formed to start working on Committee membership with a goal to vote in new membership in September.
- No progress made. The Committee is working on reviewing the Field Standards and providing formal review comments to the Field Activities Expert Committee.
- The Committee is continuing to delay the discussion regarding accreditation options for FSMO's until the Scope Guidance Document is complete. The Marketing Workgroup is aware of this discussion and may consider it during their discussions. Reminder: An interesting discussion was started in Milwaukee when someone asked if they could add an FSMO accreditation to their NELAP accreditation. This could work currently for an NGAB accrediting to the TNI Environmental Standard. This thought was incorporated into the TNI Strategic Plan recommendation as looking at ways to work with NELAP.
- Justin and Scott Haas (Chair, FAC) are discussing the need for the Scope Guidance document. It may just become a recommendation the FAC can consider in their Standard update.

Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)

- The Committee did not meet last Monday, but is continuing work on the DRAFT FSMO Standard that was developed by combining the 2014 Standard with the new ISO/IEC 17025:2017. They are going to change their process for working on the document to simplify things so more people will be involved.
- Scott and Ilona are working on the Summary of Changes document to hopefully prepare for a public webinar in Fall.

NELAP

Accreditation Council

- Review of one renewal application is complete and the AB awaits its site visit. Three other applications are in various stages of review and another was received last week. As was discussed at the July Board meeting, the Council has agreed to move forward with remote site visits, and is currently voting on a small revision of the NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-100 to incorporate that as an option. The plan is to use the first remote site visit (with NY state) as a pilot, with the Lead Evaluator and Program Manager working through process details beforehand as best they can, and then after the pilot, creating a some generic documentation as needed for future remote site visits. The site visit details are not included in the SOP, as each AB is different depending on how satisfactory the off-site document reviews were, so that a detailed protocol for remote site visits would not be feasible.
- The Council approved minor revisions to the Standards Review and Acceptance SOP 3-103, made during a review to ensure alignment with the revised Standards Development SOP 2-100. The document has been sent to Policy Committee for eventual review.
- LA Department of Health is withdrawing from NELAP as of August 20. This was an agenda item for the meeting. The Council is working through details of how best to accommodate the impacted labs, since the official notification of withdrawal was not delivered until August 3. Even though rulemaking was underway for some months, the NELAP AC was only made aware of the plan to revert to state-only certification for drinking water labs in mid-July.
- The Council is contemplating revisions to the Mutual Recognition Policy POL 3-100 that might make guide easing hardship on accredited labs if such a withdrawal happens again in the future, but there will necessarily be many detailed decisions that do not lend themselves to a rigidly structured protocol but are best made on a case-by-case basis.
- The implementation status of all NELAP ABs is unchanged from the March Board meeting, and thus the table will not be displayed until changes occur, as discussed at the April Board meeting.

Laboratory Accreditation Systems Executive Committee

- LASEC approved a revision to the LASEC Standards Review for Suitability SOP 3-106, made to conform to changes in SOP 2-100, and the document has been sent to Policy Committee for review. LASEC also reviewed the revisions to the NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102 and made some helpful clarifying edits.

PROFICIENCY TESTING

- The PTPEC did not meeting in July 2020. There is no update since the last report except:
 - The NELAP AC approved the NPW and SCM revised FoPT tables.
 - Shawn and Sheri Heldstab (Chair, SSAS Expert Committee) have opened dialog to start discussion the feasibility of Air PTs.
 - A URL issue was fixed on the FoPT Table site after the new tables were published. We were made aware of the issue through the TNI complaint process.

ADMINISTRATION

Advocacy

- The Advocacy Committee gave final approval to the white paper “Data You Can Trust”.
- The TNI Ambassadors met for their quarterly meeting and were briefed on the Mentoring Subcommittee’s work. The ambassadors discussed how they could help get the word out about the mentoring effort.
- The Mentoring Subcommittee discussed the role of a mentor and the difference between mentors and consultants. They also discussed and refined the questionnaire for labs. Members agreed that the focus should be helping labs to implement a quality management system rather than becoming accredited. Next steps for the subcommittee include:
 - Developing the overall structure of the program
 - Setting expectations (guidelines) for labs and mentors
 - Surveying for pool of mentors (develop application for mentors)
 - Developing a way to organize and match lists of labs and mentors

Policy Committee

- The Committee reviewed some changes to SOP 2-100 (Procedures Governing Standards Development) and finalized it. The Committee completed updating SOP 1-101 (Operation of TNI Committees) last Friday and reviewed SOP 3-103 (NELAP Accreditation Bodies Standards Review and Acceptance). Comments on SOP 3-103 will be returned for consideration.

Training

- The Training Committee finalized their Charter and it is being sent to the Policy Committee for review since this is a TNI Committee and not a Task Force.
- Current Classes being worked on:
 - Good Laboratory Practice – Internal Audits – Part II (Matt Sica) – Comments sent to ANAB for review and update of the training. Matt has resigned from ANAB, but will still be involved in providing training.
 - Marlene and Ilona are still discussing evaluator training for the NEFAP/PTP Evaluations.
 - Marlene finished up the GLP Measurement Series on July 30th: “Traceability of Measurements”, “How to Measure Temperature” and “How to Measure Mass.” Certificates will be going out this week. There were 30 individual registrations and 3 group registrations (one group had 30 individuals).
- Scott Siders is working on turning a training he was going to give in Minneapolis into a Webinar training. This class is being scheduled for early September.

- Marlene decided to do the upcoming PA assessor class via Webex instead. It will not be recorded. It will be held the week of September 28, 2020 and will be limited to a smaller size to make the online exercises and discussion work better.
- Jerry completed a special training for USGS on July 9, 2020. It was based on the current class posted on the TNI website dealing with testing requirements and regulations.

National Environmental Monitoring Conference

- We have 573 registrations so far (at the time of this BOD meeting).
- Then first week went very well with very few issues.
- William Daystrom, Barbara Hansen, Suzanne Rachmaninoff, and Ilona Taunton have done an incredible behind-the-scenes effort in holding practice sessions, managing the live sessions, posting webcasts, responding to new registrations, etc.

NGAB

- IAS Evaluation: Kristin Brown and Ilona met with IAS on Monday to discuss the possibility of doing a virtual observation of a virtual laboratory assessment. They hope to do this late September, so Ilona and Kristin will be working to update any procedures to accommodate this.

TASK FORCES AND OTHER GROUPS

Competency Task Force

- At its July meeting, the group worked from a draft provided by Jerry that offered both solid information and a template for use in this and other position competencies as well. Participants agreed upon TNI-specific assessment competencies and the general content of assessor training, both management and technical aspects, with input about the revisions being made to V2M1 by the LAB Expert Committee. Plans are that the August meeting will focus on generic assessment competencies.

Consumables Task Force

- The Task Force's July meeting was again well attended with excellent input to the issues being addressed. After the Task Force (TF) approved a minor change in the definition of "Critical Consumable" to ensure the inclusion of "Services", the TF discussed the characterization of and list of common consumables across all laboratories. The TF began their efforts by defining various groups of consumable; each group with a volunteer leader to gather as much information as possible. A spreadsheet was developed to collect the information and the TF will collate as much information as possible particularly considering the "intended use" scenario of many of these consumables and continue their characterization efforts (i.e., the criticality of the consumable for a given use).

Environmental Monitoring Coalition (EMC)

- EMC now has a website: envmoncoalition.org.
- EMC reviewed ELAB's list of priority topics and identified topics to pursue. Priorities for now include:
 - Schedule a meeting with Dan Hautman to discuss topics related to drinking water.
 - Acrolein and Acrylonitrile Preservation and pH – David Friedman will take the lead setting up a panel to discuss and make recommendations.

- User-Generated Mass Spec Library Acceptance Criteria – the EMC will put together a group of experts to explore solutions.
- Addressing Emerging Contaminants. We need a process for EPA to address issues with merging contaminants quickly and without a lot of bureaucracy. We should make the topic broader, not just emerging contaminants, but emerging issues. In cases where the agency does not or cannot take action, this can be an area where EMC can provide leadership. This is high priority.
- Jerry will do an overview presentation of EMC as part of the summer virtual meeting on August 14.

MEMBERSHIP

- Active Members: 1080
- 1 committee application received in July: 1 – SSAS
- 78 New and Renewed Memberships
- 26 Expired Memberships