

Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee Meeting October 18, 2011

1. Attendance

Joe Aiello (Chair) - Present	John Gumper - Absent
Steve Arms - Present	Virginia Hunsberger - Absent
Lynn Bradley - Present	Sharon Mertens - Present
Art Clark - Present	Faust Parker - Present
Nilda Cox - Present	Rebecca Pierrot - Absent
Jeff Flowers - Present	Aurora Shields - Present
Myron Getman - Absent	

2. Minutes

Minutes from 09/21/2011 were approved.

Action: Joe Aiello will forward for posting.

3. Combining Lab Accreditation Body and On-Site Assessment Committees (Sharon Mertens & Nilda Cox)

The Concensus Standard Development Board (CSDB) approved combining committees. The TNI Board of Directors agreed with the decision of the CSDB.

Action: Sharon Mertens and Nilda Cox will draft a new charter for discussion at the November 2011 teleconference.

4. TNI Position Statement – Recognition of NELAP Accreditation Bodies

The Committee decided to recommend to the Advocacy Committee that a position statement covering this topic be postponed until such time that the AB Task Force develops a detailed recommendation for changes in NELAP which are acceptable to both TNI and the Accreditation Council. The Committee believes that the current draft attempts to address policies/standards that have not as yet been developed. The Committee especially believes that the language in the draft under "Background" and "Challenges or Intended Audiences" was not appropriate.

Action: Joe Aiello will forward the committee's recommendation to Carol Batterton.

5. Surveillance Assessments

The AB Task Force recommended that a Working Group be established to develop a plan to implement its Recommendation #7: Use of Surveillance Assessments. A request was made to the Lab AB Committee to assign members to the Working Group to represent both the past Lab AB and On-Site Committees. Steve Arms, Aurora Shields and Nilda Cox from the current Lab AB Committee volunteered for this assignment. Given the creation of this Working Group the Lab AB Committee will not be spending time on this activity at this time.

Action: Joe Aiello will notify Carol Batterton of the assignments.

6. Third-Party Assessors (Art Clark & Jeff Flowers)

Activities continuing to draft language recommending the process that TNI will have with the use of Third-Party Assessors by NELAP Accreditation Bodies.

Action: Art Clark and Jeff Flowers will arrange a teleconference with Jerry Parr to seek some initial guidance.

7. Generic Application for Laboratory Accreditation (Rebecca Pierrot & Lynn Bradley)

Ms. Pierrot prepared a draft application and distributed it to Lab AB Committee members prior to the teleconference. Several comments were given, including the following:

Need a date of the application,

Need ability to check multiple circles after AB Box (not sure if we'll need this based on how we handle Fields of Accreditation),

Need ability to add boxes/fields for multiple ABs,

Need ability to add boxes/fields for multiple Technical Directors,

Need ability to add boxes/fields for multiple Quality Assurance Officers,

Need to have a signature area for labs to agree to fulfill the requirements of certification and other CAB obligations,

Don't need physical directions to lab,

Need to somewhere designate whether lab is commercial or non-commercial,

Would like to see personnel section (lab owner, lab director, lab technical directors, quality assurance officers) on new page/section,

Vehicle License No to read Vehicle License Plate.

Action: In preparation for the November teleconference Lab AB Committee members will continue to review the application and provide comments directly to Ms. Pierrott.

8. Future NELAP Evaluation Teams (Lynn Bradley & Art Clark)

Ms Bradley asked the LAB committee to work with the LAS EC and the NELAP AC, to find ways to accommodate EPA's declining participation in the evaluation process and perhaps streamline the procedures as well. This will need to include ways to find additional personnel (potentially, third party evaluators) to complete the evaluations. Considerable discussion stressed the extended timelines of NELAP evaluations versus other accreditations and certifications by dedicated auditors, a desire for a request directly from the AC itself, and a desire to find ways to retain connection with EPA's drinking water program so that we don't revert to separate certifications for state primacy issues.

Mr. Clark provided the following comments. When referring to EPA's declining participation, we are addressing EPA regions' participation and not the participation by EPA OW. One region has decided to do certifications (audits according to the certification manual) of their principal state labs that are accredited instead of relying on the PSL's accreditation body. The main issue relates to evaluations of state ABs (and not accreditation of labs). Originally, the evaluation teams consisted of an EPA regional person who was the lead evaluator and at least one person from another AB. Now the state person is the lead. The EPA regions have declining resources. Some regions have also become unhappy with NELAP. In Nov. 2010 the Regional Science & Technology folks (the directors of the regional offices which include regional labs and certification programs), recognizing the declining resources and declining willingness to participate, told the NELAP AC that there would be less EPA regional participation in the round of evaluations beginning in Dec. 2013. Some regions would continue to participate and some would not. The RS&T recommended that NELAP consider using a 3rd party evaluator. In the round of evaluations currently underway, most evaluations are taking longer than the expected 9 months. The ABs are also struggling to find the resources to participate on the evaluation teams. NELAP and TNI need to consider options to adequately staff the evaluation teams and to make the evaluations get done more smoothly. Paul Ellingson has some ideas for improving the evaluations.

Action: ?

9. Meeting Duration 11:00 – 1:00