

**Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Forum on Laboratory Accreditation      San Antonio, TX**  
**Wednesday, January 19, 2022    3:30 pm Central**

1) Welcome and Introductions

Maria welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced those committee members present. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A.

2) The Mentor Session and Assessment Forum

Maria thanked Dorothy for coordinating the Mentor Session that was underway at the same time as the committee meeting, and also thanked Judy Morgan for coordinating the Assessment Forum that took place earlier in the day. Then Maria described both of those training sessions and talked about the topics presented at this conference. Those details are in the presentation outline in Attachment 2, below.

3) SIR Management and Standards Review

Maria then discussed the number of SIRs by year and the processes in place for addressing these Standard Interpretation Requests, from determining validity to verifying that the responses are implementable by the Accreditation Bodies, and noted that a number of improvements have been made in tracking SIRs.

She also mentioned Implementation Guidance and showed an example. These are designed to share best practices for particular issues related to a section of the Standard where an actual interpretation is not feasible or needed but that would benefit from additional information about how to actually meet the requirement(s) of the Standard. These are available only to TNI members through the website.

Maria also noted that LASEC will review all Draft Standards (individual modules) and provide its recommendation to the NELAP Accreditation Council, as the upcoming revisions proceed.

4) Questions and Comments

A committee member asked if it would be possible to have the SIR number on the website where the interpretation is posted. Lynn noted that the number is in the URL for the individual SIRs, but in the section where related SIRs from different versions of the Standard are grouped, those numbers are not accessible.

A participant asked whether TNI interprets ISO language or if we pass that to ISO/IEC. Another participant noted that we should not reject a SIR because it's ISO language (and TNI does not do so). Yet another participant explained that ISO's Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) has a Standard Maintenance Group that addresses questions (such as interpretation requests) but that its responses are not enforceable.

A brief discussion took place about "limbo SIRs" – SIRs where the NELAP Accreditation Council views the expert committee's explanation as correct but literally an excessive

and unnecessary workload, and thus does not approve it as enforceable. These SIRs may languish for extended time periods until they either get corrected in a revision of the Standard or administratively withdrawn by LASEC.

One committee member noted that the three major Guidance Documents written to accompany the 2016 Standard are not well known, but sometimes do address the questions presented in SIRS, and noted that some reference to the relevant Guidance Document should be made in the interpretation itself. There was general agreement that the existence of these Guidance Documents needs to be better publicized.

Maria thanked everyone for coming to the session.

#### 5) Next Meeting

The next regular teleconference will be Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 1:30 pm Eastern. The agenda and any needed documents will be sent in advance of the meeting.

The SIR Subcommittee teleconference will be on Thursday, February 16, at 1:30 pm Eastern.

**Attachment A TNI LABORATORY ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
ROSTER**

	NAME	EMAIL	Term End Date	INTEREST	AFFILIATION	S/H CATEGORY	PRESENT
1	Maria Friedman, Chair	<a href="mailto:gamfriedman@gmail.com">gamfriedman@gmail.com</a>	1/23 (first term)	SIRs	CA ELAP	AB	Yes
2	Dorothy Love, Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:dorothylove@eurofinsus.com">dorothylove@eurofinsus.com</a>	1/22 (2nd term)	Mentor Session	Eurofins Environmental	Lab	(in Mentor Session)
3	Aaren Alger	<a href="mailto:Aaren.s.alger@gmail.com">Aaren.s.alger@gmail.com</a>	1/23 (first term)	SIRs	Alger Consulting & Training	Other	Yes
4	David Caldwell	<a href="mailto:david.caldwell@deq.ok.gov">david.caldwell@deq.ok.gov</a>	1/23 (first term)	Assmt. Forum, SIRs	OK DEQ	NELAP AB	Yes
5	Sumy Cherukara	<a href="mailto:Cherukara.sumy@epa.gov">Cherukara.sumy@epa.gov</a>	1/23 (2nd term)		EPA R2	Other	No
6	Stacie Crandall	<a href="mailto:scrandall@hrsd.com">scrandall@hrsd.com</a>	1/24 (first term)	SIRs	Hampton Roads Sanitation Distr.	Lab	No
7	Mike Delaney	<a href="mailto:mike@mikedelaney.org">mike@mikedelaney.org</a>	1/23 (first term)		Retired (MWRA)	Other	No
8	Jack Farrell	<a href="mailto:aex@ix.netcom.com">aex@ix.netcom.com</a>	1/22 (first term)	Mentor Session	Analytical Excellence	Other	No
9	Silky Labie	<a href="mailto:elcatllc@centurylink.net">elcatllc@centurylink.net</a>	1/21 (first term)	SIRs	ELCAT	Other	No
10	Bill Hall	<a href="mailto:George.Hall@des.nh.gov">George.Hall@des.nh.gov</a>	1/22 (first term)		NH ELAP	NELAP AB	No
11	Harold Longbaugh	<a href="mailto:harold.longbaugh@houstontx.gov">harold.longbaugh@houstontx.gov</a>	1/23 (2nd term)	SIRs	Houston Lab	Lab	Yes
12	Louise McGinley	<a href="mailto:louise.mcginley@tceq.texas.gov">louise.mcginley@tceq.texas.gov</a>	1/22 (first term)	SIRs	TCEQ	NELAP AB	Yes
13	Michele Potter	<a href="mailto:michele.potter@dep.nj.gov">michele.potter@dep.nj.gov</a>	1/21 (first term)		NJ DEP	NELAP AB	No

**Associate Members**

	Debbie Bond	<a href="mailto:DBOND@southernco.com">DBOND@southernco.com</a>			Alabama Power	Lab	No
	Myron Gunsalus	<a href="mailto:ngunsalus@kdheks.gov">ngunsalus@kdheks.gov</a>			KS Lab Director	NELAP AB	No
	Carl Kircher	<a href="mailto:carl.kircher@doh.state.fl.us">carl.kircher@doh.state.fl.us</a>		SIRs	FL DOH	NELAP AB	No
	Mitzi Miller	<a href="mailto:mitzi.miller@moellerinc.com">mitzi.miller@moellerinc.com</a>		Mentor Session & Assmt Forum	Dade Moeller	Other	No
	Judy Morgan	<a href="mailto:Judy.Morgan@pacelabs.com">Judy.Morgan@pacelabs.com</a>		Assessment Forum	Pace Analytical	Lab/FSMO	No
	William Ray	<a href="mailto:Bill_Ray@williamrayllc.com">Bill_Ray@williamrayllc.com</a>			Wm Ray Consultants	Other	No
	Mohan Sabaratnam	<a href="mailto:msabaratnam@iasonline.org">msabaratnam@iasonline.org</a>			IAS	AB (non-gov.)	No
	Nick Straccione	<a href="mailto:nstraccione@emsl.com">nstraccione@emsl.com</a>		Mentor Session	EMSL	Lab	No
	Katie Strothman	<a href="mailto:katie@sanderslabs.net">katie@sanderslabs.net</a>			Sanders Labs	Lab	No
	Program Admin. Lynn Bradley	<a href="mailto:Lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org">Lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org</a>					No

## Attachment 2 – Outline of Presentation

### Activities of LASEC Maria Friedman, Chair California ELAP

#### Agenda

- ❖ Welcome and Introductions
- ❖ Recent Activities
- ❖ Update on SIR Activities and SIR Management SOP
- ❖ Participant Feedback Request
  - ❖ Are there other issues that would benefit from LASEC attention?
- ❖ Discussion/Questions from the Participants
- ❖ Adjourn

#### LASEC Members

#### Our Mission

- ❖ Manage TNI's efforts in supporting a national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories by
- ❖ Supporting the NELAP Accreditation Bodies (ABs) and non-governmental ABs (NGABs) recognized to accredit to the TNI Environmental Laboratory Sector (ELS) Standard
- ❖ Enabling stakeholders such as laboratories, proficiency testing providers and data users to effectively participate in the development of, adoption and implementation of, and compliance with the TNI standards

#### Recent LASEC Activities

- ❖ Mentor Session and Assessment Forum
  - ❖ Forum on Environmental Accreditation, January 2021
  - ❖ Environmental Measurement Symposium, August 2021
  - ❖ Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, January 2022
    - ❖ Mentor Sessions and Assessment Forums are now recorded and made available as webcasts through TNI's Educational Delivery System
- ❖ Many improvements to SIR management processes and Implementation Guidance development

#### Mentor Sessions

##### The Sessions

- Encourage networking and collaboration
- Provide for knowledge sharing (guidance)
- Reduce barriers to:
  - ✦ getting accredited
  - ✦ maintaining accreditation

##### Speakers include

- State Accreditors
- Assessors
- Lab Managers
- Quality Assurance Specialists
- Instrument Specialists

TNI Mentor Session, January 2022

***Responding to Assessment Findings***

Wednesday January 19, 1:00 – 5:00 pm Central

Dorothy Love moderating

- A combination of presentations and interactive discussion of poor responses to findings
- Additional speakers and discussion leaders are
  - Silky Labie
  - Jeanette Hernandez

Assessment Forum

Started in 2005

Goal

- ❖ To provide an opportunity for laboratories and laboratory assessors to share information on how to improve the laboratory assessment process

Topics

- ❖ Feedback from the previous participants
- ❖ Hot topics of the day
- ❖ Suggestions from individuals
- ❖ Member presentation interests

TNI Assessment Forum, January 2022

***Writing Assessment Findings***

Wednesday January 19, 8:00 am – noon Central

Judy Morgan moderating

- Panel presentations and discussion of best practices for writing and properly citing findings
- Interactive review of findings for good, bad and missing attributes
- Additional panelists include
  - Calista Daigle                      Val Slaven
  - Mitzi Miller                        Aaren Alger
  - Jeanne Mensingh

SIR and SIR Management Update

- ❖ New submittals receive an acceptance decision within 5 business days

Total/Valid	Year
8/4	2016
8/2	2017
19/14	2018
30/6	2019
26/10	2020
<b>29/17</b>	2021

## SIR Process

### SOP 3-105 – Standards Interpretation Request

#### Criteria for a valid SIR

- ❖ Must contain only one question
- ❖ Must apply directly and clearly to cited section of Standard
- ❖ Question is understood without supposition
- ❖ Question is compelling – the language used in the Standard section cited is not clear or might have more than one interpretation
- ❖ Cannot be used to settle a dispute between a laboratory and an AB
- ❖ Is not a “how to” question or a method interpretation question
- ❖ Where possible, the question should be framed in a manner that solicits a “Yes” or “No” answer

LASEC is responsible for verifying that all SIRs relevant to the module have been reviewed for incorporation when each module of the TNI Environmental Laboratory Sector Standard undergoes revision

Expert Committees are requested to always mention in minutes and discussions that their SIR responses do not become part of the Standard until approved as implementable by the NELAP Accreditation Council and then are posted to the TNI website

## LASEC SIR Process Changes

- ❖ Enhanced SIR Tracking Spreadsheet Now Monitors Timeframes
- ❖ SIR Management SOP 3-105
  - ❖ LASEC receives periodic reports on adherence to timeframes
  - ❖ More formal procedures for SIR Subcommittee including a required 2/3 majority vote for all SIR activities (consistent with new TNI Voting SOP 1-102)
- ❖ Implementation Guidance SOP 3-114
  - ❖ IG development requires advance approval of LASEC SIR Subcommittee
  - ❖ SOP awaiting final approval from Policy Committee and TNI Board
  - ❖ Implementation Guidance – Available Only to TNI Members

## Coming Up Next

- ❖ LASEC will review all Draft Standards (individual modules) and provide its recommendation to the NELAP Accreditation Council
- ❖ Mentor Session and Assessment Forum sessions for the Environmental Measurement Symposium in Crystal City (Arlington), Virginia, August 2022
  - ❖ Suggestions for topics are welcome!
- ❖ LASEC will sustain its management of SIRs

## Any other issues?

## Questions?

## Discussions?

