

## Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting December 6, 2010

1. Roll call

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 PM EST on December 6, 2010. Those members in attendance are listed in Attachment 1.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the 10-15-10 and 10-22-10 meetings were reviewed and approved for posting as presented.

3. Next round of evaluations

Renewal letters for KS, LADHH, and NH are prepared. These would have normally been sent Dec. 19, but it was agreed that they should go earlier due to the holiday.

Approved team assignments are in place for these three evaluations, from the October 18 meeting. However, these may need to be adjusted in order to have a state evaluator for NY, since several of the experienced state evaluators who are neither undergoing nor conducting evaluations during this upcoming time period are unavailable. Availability of evaluators for the current teams may be impacted, so letters are being held in abeyance until the situation is resolved.

The evaluation SOP as well as the application form, completeness checklist, technical review checklist and the Field of Accreditation (FoA) spreadsheet were passed by the AC with no negative votes, and will shortly be posted to the NELAP AC web page.

4. Update Implementation of new PT standards

Eric Smith asked to provide an update about the PT tables and elimination of the experimental PT tables. That update is summarized below:

The PT Executive Committee is currently working to finalize updated FOPT tables based on feedback received from the NELAP AC this past summer and fall. As per the AC's latest stated preference, certain analytes have been put back onto Experimental FOPT tables. A revised Drinking Water Accreditation FOPT table and Drinking Water Experimental FOPT table are currently being reviewed by the PT Executive Committee, and we are anticipating that we will soon be forwarding finalized Drinking Water Accreditation and Experimental FOPT tables to the NELAP Accreditation Council for consideration. An Effective Date of July 1, 2011, is currently being put on the Drinking Water Accreditation and Experimental FOPT table updates, and a July 1, 2011, Effective Date may also be proposed for upcoming Non-Potable and Solid & Chemical Materials table updates (we will want to be sure that PT providers are given sufficient time to implement the changes).

Eric asked for additional discussion about the experimental PT tables. The AC was clear

that only the accreditation table will be adopted, and that no AC members see a need for experimental tables. If non-NELAP states need those PTs (from the experimental tables,) then they can be adopted by rule or some other method. It was noted that these non-NELAP states ought to be notified of the changes. Eric reiterated that the PT Executive Committee will continue as planned, and will provide a list of analytes that will be dropped. He also asked that if there should be an analyte on the experimental table that any AB wishes to retain, please communicate that to the PT Executive Committee Chair.

#### 5. Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) PT

Scott Hoatson asked that the AC consider how best to define the requirements for WET PTs, and had requested that Kirsten McCracken and Stacie Metzler of the PT Expert Committee join the AC for a discussion of this topic. Pete DeLisle substituted for Stacie. WET PTs were added to the PT tables but are currently run through EPA's Discharge Monitoring Report Quality Assurance program (DMRQA) and accreditation is not dependent on results but corrective actions are required. Can this still be an option for the WET PTs, and if so, what would an AB expect to see for corrective action if an unacceptable result occurs?

Is a root cause analysis acceptable or is a supplemental PT required (these are very difficult to obtain)? Accreditation is currently not revoked, suspended, or denied based on performance of WET PTs.

Discussion included concerns of whether there are regional difference in the organisms being tested, and whether a Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) ought to be submitted concerning whether WET PTs are exempt from the 2/year requirement since they are not "chemistry" – it seems widely understood that "chemistry" PTs are referred to in the NELAC standard, although the language is not explicit. Kirsten indicated that explicit language for one WET PT/year will be added to the working draft TNI standard going forward, and that she will take back to the WET PT subcommittee a recommendation to maintain the status quo for this PT.

The following language was provided by Kirsten concerning the reference to "chemistry" PTs:

"It's iffy, but this is the section [cites to §1.3, Applicability]. Originally we had intended that we would add appendices to the standard as new FoPT were developed for new technology. However, we completely underestimated the process to do so, especially the complexity of AB approval and state regulations.

Also, §5.1.1 says 'routine environmental samples' and I recall that Jerry thought that maybe it could be argued that WET testing are not "routine environmental samples" – I think it's a stretch with the language and we would be better off with a TIA."

When she provided the citation about the "chemistry" PT, Kirsten also asked "I have been told that some ABs have this specific version of the TNI standard references in regulation. A TIA changes the version of the standard so even if we issued a TIA for the lab module; the new version with the TIA would not be recognized and for that reason we needed to find an alternative solution. Is this assumption true?" If ABs do have this standard in regulation, Kirsten needs to know soon.

And, for information only, Susan Wyatt said that MN is developing an online training for assessing WET PTs, in conjunction with EPA/Duluth and WA state ecology department. This will be available once finished, probably in summer 2011.

#### 6. Standards Interpretation Requests

Ilona Taunton had provided a Word document of all the SIRs that have been voted upon, in hopes that the AC could complete its official voting process (as an accreditation issue). Some ABs had not voted, and the SIRs had languished for a period of time already. However, due to a few early departures from the teleconference, there was not a quorum present by time this issue was reached.

Several AC members expressed frustration with the system, in that one cannot vote “no” or “veto”, only “yes” or “needs discussion,” and there was more frustration that the SIRs provided to the AC for “official” voting had been removed from the SIR voting site.

As a result of this discussion, two things will occur. Lynn will draft a revision of the AC’s Voting SOP that addresses electronic voting, and the SIR website for voting will be revised to allow “no” and “veto” votes. Additionally, at some future point, the SIRs will be view-able at the same time as one votes, instead of (as now) having to log into a separate site to view them.

#### 7. Next meeting

The next regular conference call of the NELAP AC should be on December 20, 2010. It appears that most AC members will be available.

Potential agenda items will include:

- Approval of minutes
- Update on renewals, including tentative teams for future renewals for consideration
- Consideration of Kirsten McCracken’s question about whether the TNI standard for labs has been adopted into regulation, and thus a standard with a TIA might be moot.
- Review of draft voting SOP revisions
- Other items as may become known

## Attachment 1

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	Alternate : TBD	Rachel Ellis (present)
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VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 <a href="mailto:cathy.westerman@dgs.va.gov">cathy.westerman@dgs.va.gov</a>	no
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	NELAP AC Program Administrator and Evaluation Coordinator Lynn Bradley T: 703-867-5966 E: <a href="mailto:LmbTbird@aol.com">LmbTbird@aol.com</a>	Yes
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	Oklahoma David Caldwell Judy Duncan	yes (Caldwell)
	Guests: Jeff Lowry, ERA Eric Smith, PT Executive Committee Kirsten McCracken, PT Expert Committee Pete DeLisle, for Stacie Metzler of PT Expert Committee	