

**Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting**  
**August 7, 2017            10:30 am Eastern**  
**Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, Washington, DC**

**1.     **Introductions****

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 10:30 am on Monday, August 7, 2017, at the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation in Washington, DC. Those present are listed in Attachment 1.

**2.     **Update on Evaluations****

Aaren provided an update on the current round of evaluations, including a brief summary of changes to the Evaluation SOP 3-102, and introduced Steve Arms, the current NELAP Lead Evaluator. Steve reported that the KS site report has been delivered, the NY site visit is scheduled for later in August, and that reviews of Technical Checklists and documents are underway for the other six evaluations underway. He noted that obtaining documents for off-site reviews has been problematic, with at least one AB preferring to pay for additional evaluator time on-site rather than convert its documents into transportable electronic format, and that for state and federal evaluators, reviewing the documents in their offices is also difficult due to numerous workday interruptions. Also, a number of ABs will require temporary extensions.

Aaren suggested that it might be time to shift the schedules for evaluations, so that the early-cycle overload gets more evenly spread out over the three year cycle. She noted that we don't want to extend the evaluation cycle beyond three years, but that perhaps the evaluations will need to be de-coupled from the renewal of recognitions, with the creation of a mechanism for withdrawing recognition is the AB's evaluation does not "pass." Steve suggested that the Council consider replacing the current evaluation scheme with continuous surveillance, systematically looking at various aspects of the evaluations (internal audits, timelines, training records, etc.) over the three year period.

Comments on this proposal were as follows:

- Prior to granting a temporary extension, the lead evaluator should be consulted to ensure that there are no obvious problems with the evaluation underway.
- An effective evaluation is of paramount importance to the program.
- This being the first use of a revised process, we can expect to find that some revisions are needed.
- The Council can revise the process in mid-cycle, if it's not working for us.

**3.     **Status of the 2016 Standard****

Comments on the "outline" of proposed revisions (essentially, a working draft) of the Chemistry module (V1M4) were due in late July. No obvious stumbling blocks were identified, and TNI anticipates that the revised module will be incorporated into a document called the "2016 Standard Revision 1.0."

**4.     **LAMS and AB Reporting into the Database****

NY, KS and FL are not updating the Fields of Accreditation (FoAs) for accredited labs in

LAMS. IL is reporting FoAs for drinking water labs and KS is very close to being able to report. NY continues to use an “old database” internally, and its first priority is to publish on the NY public website, but they can make available a \*.csv file of labs and FoAs to other NELAP ABs requesting it. LAMS also tracks technologies being used.

The AC had asked TNI’s Database Administrator, Dan Hickman, about identifying primary and secondary FoAs separately in LAMS, once it became clear that some ABs are including secondary FoAs in their overall list. Dan reports that this can be done, but that it’s not a trivial change to the database, and asked the AC if they wished to display only FoAs currently offered (by each AB) or to display those not offered as well. The Council will discuss this further and provide Dan with a response later in the year. Aaren pointed out that, for PA, a lab should always ask, if they want an unlisted FoA, while another AB noted that they will only add a FoA if a state program requests it.

Dan also raised the issue of, when there are multiple primary ABs for a lab, which one should be responsible for reporting the demographic information, and whether the AC wishes to change the procedure. For now, if there is a flag that prohibits automated changes to the primary AB (that can make such changes,) so that the second primary AB cannot make such changes, and if the primary AB responsible for demographics changes, that entry must be made manually by the AB that owns the demographics already.

As a follow-on to the LAMS discussion, Steve Arms made a recommendation to the Council that assessor qualifications be connected to technologies as listed in LAMS, rather than just “chemistry.” FL offered to share its form used for documenting qualifications in that way. There was no further discussion of the issue.

## **5. Standard Interpretation Requests (SIRs)**

Aaren noted that there are maybe 10-15 SIRs pending completion of AC vote, but that some of these require discussion before they can be completed. There is no longer a “backlog” as was the case, several years ago. She described the process including how she and the LASEC Chair vet the incoming submissions, the appropriate expert committee prepares an interpretation, the LASEC reviews the interpretation and posts it for vote by the AC.

Aaren noted that the AC votes may be the slowest part of the process, now, and also discussed the timelines for review. She suggested that SIR submitters avoid saying that their question results from a “dispute with the AB” since that automatically means the SIR will not be accepted as valid.

## **6. Draft Policy on Method Selection for On-Site Assessments**

LASEC provided a draft of this policy, several months ago, but the AC wanted some aspects to be broader and others more specific, so a small group of AB representatives has undertaken to revise the draft. They are also considering how to incorporate the expectations of EPA’s drinking water program as well as how to somehow retain documentation that prep methods were reviewed even though not necessarily included in the site report, by ABs that do not separately accredit prep methods. She noted that the eventual policy might more appropriately be called the “assessment policy” and that the goal is to be consistent across programs.

Method-defined parameters (such as BOD) will always need to be assessed on-site. The biggest issue is how to reconcile the EPA drinking water programs demands to assess every

aspect of every drinking water method with the reality of AB assessment resources and the time available to spend on-site at the lab. Aaren expressed hope that the policy can be finalized by the winter meeting in Albuquerque.

**7. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Council will be rescheduled according to an email poll, since the scheduled date falls on the Labor Day holiday. For the agreed-upon date, an agenda and any documents will be sent in advance.

**Attachment 1**

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
FL	Carl Kircher E: <a href="mailto:carl.kircher@flhealth.gov">carl.kircher@flhealth.gov</a>	Yes
	Alternate: Vanessa Soto E: <a href="mailto:Vanessa.sotocontreras@flhealth.gov">Vanessa.sotocontreras@flhealth.gov</a>	Yes
IL	Celeste Crowley T: 217-557-0274 F: 217-524-6169 E: <a href="mailto:celeste.crowley@illinois.gov">celeste.crowley@illinois.gov</a>	Yes (phone)
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	For information purposes: John South John.South@illinois.gov	
KS	Sara Hoffman <a href="mailto:sara.hoffman@ks.gov">sara.hoffman@ks.gov</a>	No
	Alternate: N. Myron Gunsalus <a href="tel:785-291-3162">785-291-3162</a> E: <a href="mailto:ngunsalus@ks.gov">ngunsalus@ks.gov</a>	Yes
	For Information Only: Paul Harrison	Yes
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-3247 E: <a href="mailto:Paul.Bergeron@la.gov">Paul.Bergeron@la.gov</a>	Yes
	Altérnate: Elizabeth West <a href="mailto:elizabeth.west@la.gov">elizabeth.west@la.gov</a>	No
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	Alternate: Stephanie Drier 651-201-5326 E: <a href="mailto:stephanie.drier@state.mn.us">stephanie.drier@state.mn.us</a>	No

NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: <a href="mailto:george.hall@des.nh.gov">george.hall@des.nh.gov</a>	No
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OR	Scott Hoatson Agency Quality Assurance Officer Oregon Department of Environmental Quality 503-693-5786 E: <a href="mailto:hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us">hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us</a>	Yes
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	Included for information purposes: Chris Redman <a href="mailto:christopher.l.redman@dhsosha.state.or.us">christopher.l.redman@dhsosha.state.or.us</a>	Yes
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NELAP AC PA and EC	Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: <a href="mailto:lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org">lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org</a>	Yes
EPA Liaison	Donna Ringel T: 732-321-4383 E: <a href="mailto:Ringel.Donna@epa.gov">Ringel.Donna@epa.gov</a>	Yes (phone)
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Guests:		