

**SUMMARY OF THE  
TNI  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MARCH 17, 2008**

The Policy Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met on March 17, 2008 at 11:30 AM (ET) by teleconference.

Chairperson Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor, of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, led the meeting. A list of committee members is given in Attachment A. A list of the action items generated during this meeting and of uncompleted ones generated during previous meetings is included in Attachment B. The meeting agenda is given in Attachment C.

**ATTENDANCE, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Mr. Sotomayor was not able to send or receive any electronic messages to the committee. The agenda and the minutes of previous meetings did not reach committee members. He will send the documents to the committee at a later time.

Mr. Sotomayor informed the committee that he wanted to include in each agenda a standing item to update the committee on the activities and projects of the members' respective programs. The committee agreed with the idea and Mr. Jerry Parr noted that this would prompt him to update the committee on developments with the TNI Website.

Mr. Parr reminded members to vote for the election of TNI Board of Directors. He also informed the committee that a newsletter was about to be published and that the committee needed to draft a policy regarding travel re-imbursement for TNI. The travel re-imbursement policy was one of the administrative set of documents the committee had agreed to draft.

**REVIEW OF PROGRAM SOPS**

The committee discussed a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) received from the Consensus Standards Development Program (CSDP) and the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP):

- CSDP: Accreditation Process Policy for Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations
- NELAP: TNI Accreditation Bodies Standards Review and Acceptance
- NELAP: Dispute Resolution Process of TNI

The committee reviewed the "TNI Accreditation Bodies Standards Review and Acceptance" SOP and discussed the conditions noted in the document for acceptance of a new standard. The committee agreed that "improvement over the current standard" would cover cases where the standard should be changed for clarity and ease of use. Concerns about the quorum needed to accept a standard were addressed in another SOP submitted by NELAP that the Policy Committee had already endorsed.

Ms. RaeAnn Haynes moved to endorse the “TNI Accreditation Bodies Standards Review and Acceptance” SOP and Ms. JoAnn Boyd seconded. All voted affirmatively to endorse the SOP, except Mr. Steve Stubbs, who abstained.

The committee reviewed the “Dispute Resolution Process of TNI” SOP and was briefed about the need to endorse this SOP before the NELAP Accreditation Bodies (ABs) recognition evaluations could take place. The committee felt that the document would be somewhat dynamic and that it could be changed based on experience with using it, if necessary, during this evaluation cycle. The committee suggested adding a definition for “evaluation team” in future revisions of the SOP, but did not feel this would preclude endorsement of the document.

Mr. Robert Wyeth moved to endorse the “Dispute Resolution Process of TNI” SOP with the recommendation to define “evaluation team” in a future revision. Ms. Boyd seconded. All members voted affirmatively, except Mr. Stubbs, who abstained.

The committee proceeded to discuss the “Accreditation Process Policy for Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations” document. The committee had some preliminary discussion on the document before the meeting. Committee members felt that the document combined policy, procedure, and guidance, and that its format was not consistent with what would be generally regarded as policy.

Some committee members felt that the document was instructing others on how to use the TNI Standard and that this change of direction might require discussion by the TNI Board of Directors. Other committee members felt that the document read in parts as if it were modifying or setting standard requirements. After additional discussion, the committee agreed to send the document back to the Field Activities Committee for a consideration of the concerns expressed. Mr. Sotomayor will draft a summary of the committee’s review and will talk to the Chair of the Field Activities Committee to brief him about them and offer assistance.

#### **TNI MEMBERSHIP FOR ALL DIRECTORS**

Mr. Stubbs sent a message to the NELAP Board of Directors requesting including discussion of this item on the Board’s agenda. The Board had not met yet, so discussion of this topic was deferred to the committee’s next meeting.

#### **RESPONDING TO MEMBERS’ CONCERNS ABOUT PROGRAMS**

At its last meeting, the committee agreed to include discussion on this topic on the agenda. Mr. Parr had been approached about designating a body to discuss concerns that members might have about TNI committees and programs. At that time, it was suggested that the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Board (ELAB) might serve this purpose, but it was agreed that this would not necessarily fit with ELAB’s Charter, that ELAB could only advise EPA, and that it would be desirable if the proposed function could remain within TNI.

Although the ultimate decision maker in TNI is its Board of Directors, the committee did not feel that the TNI Board should be involved in resolving programmatic or procedural concerns until it was necessary by virtue of the matter under consideration. Mr. Parr and other committee members felt that the Policy Committee could serve in this capacity because it was the only

committee within TNI that consisted of representatives from each program, and that under the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC), the counterpart committee (Program Policy and Structure) had entertained those concerns.

The committee agreed to expand its functions to cover reviewing and resolving concerns expressed by members about programs and committees. To accomplish this, Mr. Sotomayor noted that the committee's charter would need to be expanded. He also felt it would be desirable to prepare a brief statement for the TNI Board to endorse so that the committee's added responsibilities were formally approved and clear to all members.

#### **ANNUAL REPORT**

The committee deferred discussion of this item to its next meeting.

#### **WORK PLANNING**

The committee deferred discussion of this item to its next meeting.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Mr. Sotomayor will forward messages to the CSDP and NELAP informing the programs of the committee's endorsement and comments on the SOPs. He will also forward the comments and the documents to the TNI Board of Directors for consideration at the board's April 9 meeting.

The committee will prepare a brief message for the TNI Board of Directors requesting endorsement of the committee's proposed expanded responsibilities.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM (ET).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
TNI  
POLICY COMMITTEE  
MARCH 17, 2008**

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**TNI  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MARCH 17 2008**

**ACTION ITEMS GENERATED AT THIS MEETING**

<b>Item No. Meeting Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1. 03/17/08	Mr. Sotomayor will notify NELAP of the committee's endorsement of the SOPs on Standard Acceptance and Dispute Resolution.	03/31/08
2. 03/17/08	Mr. Sotomayor will notify the Field Activities Committee the concerns related to the "Accreditation Process Policy for Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations."	03/31/08
3. 03/17/08	Mr. Sotomayor will forward the NELAP SOPs of Standard Acceptance and Dispute Resolution to the TNI Board of Directors for endorsement.	04/02/08
4. 03/17/08	The committee will prepare a brief message for the TNI Board of Directors requesting endorsement of the committee's role in reviewing and resolving concerns of members regarding TNI committees and programs.	04/04/08

**UNCOMPLETED ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

<b>Item No. Meeting Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
2. 01/31/07	Mr. Sotomayor will set priorities for developing policies and procedures needed by TNI.	02/28/07
3. 10/22/07	Mr. Parr will compile a graphic list of the Institute's logos and marks that would be covered by POL-103 for consideration by the TNI Board.	12/03/07
4. 10/22/07	The committee will complete drafts of a set of basic TNI administrative policies and SOPs.	04/04/08
1. 11/19/07	Mr. Sotomayor will forward examples of procedures describing appeal procedures for the committee to consider.	02/01/08

<b>Item No. Meeting Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
2. 03/03/08	The committee will discuss its annual report and work planning.	03/17/08

Policy Committee

March, 17 2008

11:30 AM – 12:55 PM (ET)

AGENDA

- 11:30 Attendance
- 11:35 Announcements
- Minutes of Previous Meetings
- 11:40 Review of Program SOPs
- CSDP: Accreditation Process Policy for Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations
  - NELAP: TNI Accreditation Bodies Standards Review and Acceptance
  - NELAP: Dispute Resolution Process of TNI
- 12:10 TNI Membership for all Directors
- 12:25 Responding to Members' Concerns about Programs
- 12:40 Annual Report
- Committee Report
  - Standard Format
- 12:45 Work Planning
- Charter
  - SOPs to Draft
  - Others
- 12:50 Next Steps
- 12:55 Adjournment