

TNI Policy Committee Meeting Summary Friday November 15, 2013

1. Welcome, Roll Call and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by Alfredo at 11 am Eastern. He noted that minutes of the November 1 meeting were distributed, and any comments should be provided within a week. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1; Judy Morgan, Chair of the Laboratory Accreditation Systems Program Executive Committee (LAS PEC,) was invited to join the meeting in order to continue coordination with the Consensus Standards Development Program Executive Committee (CSD PEC) about reviewing new standards prior to finalization and adoption.

During the course of this meeting, repeated confusion arose about using “EC” to represent both executive committee and expert committee. Participants noted that this is a longstanding issue, and that the PT Executive Committee now uses PT Program EC or PTPEC. Building on this concept, participants agreed to use “PEC” to refer to “program executive committees” (CSD PEC, LAS PEC, PT PEC, NEFAPEC) and “TEC” to refer to “technical expert committees” (PT TEC, LAB TEC, QS TEC, Chemistry/Micro/Rad TECs, and so forth.) This new notation will be used starting with this set of minutes.

2. Updates

TNI Bylaws Revision – the Board requested a few minor edits to the draft revision of the Bylaws (from our November 1 meeting) that was presented to it on Wednesday November 13. There was one significant change requested, that the “ratification” of ex-officio Board members be only for participation by the federal agency and not for the individual nominated to fill that role. Presently, it is the Board’s decision which federal agencies to invite, and each federal agency appoints its ex-officio member with no further review.

Since several of the current ex-officio Board members were not present (including the one who made that request,) Alfredo was asked to prepare two different versions of the draft Bylaws for the Board’s December 11 meeting, at which time a vote may occur, since the required period of notice of a proposed change will have passed. One version will have just the editorial changes requested while the other will contain those editorial changes plus revised language reflecting ratification of only the federal agency’s participation and not the individual nominee. In response to Alfredo’s question, none of the committee members present offered any reaction to this concept.

SOP 2-100 Standards Development and Review – Policy Committee review of this SOP was placed “on hold” while further discussions and exploration of the roles of program executive committees in standards development took place. LAS PEC had expected to create its own standards review SOP, based on prior standards development where it was an integral part of the final stage review activities. Now LAS PEC struggles to identify an appropriate role that is timed not to be disruptive if a barrier to adoption or implementation were to be identified.

CSD PEC clarified that its SOP must be clear that none of the Accreditation Bodies (ABs) within TNI can have undue influence on the development of the standard, and that is the underlying reason for not specifying roles of particular program executive committees, even though those may be different within the different TNI programs.

The new process does seek to inform and involve the stakeholders or “customers” as the standard is being developed, but simply “hoping” that this will prevent barriers is inadequate, and no one wants a repetition of the situation where an adopted standard has parts that cannot be implemented by the ABs. Completing the standard and then beginning review for implementability, as is done with Standard Methods and ASTM methods, risks having to forfeit a

standard that has been completed if it is found to be unusable, and go back to the beginning of the time sequence, even if only one change is needed.

Judy Morgan noted that the previous LAS PEC SOP 5-102 (to be renumbered as 3-XXX) no longer fits within the framework of SOP 2-100 at all, even with attempts to update it, and that the full committee has not yet been asked to begin work on a standards review SOP, and won't do so until an appropriate role for LAS PEC is identified. She stated her belief that LAS PEC need not review for editorial or cross-reference aspects but that it is uniquely qualified to review Environmental Laboratory Sector Standards (ELSS) for suitability. However, if an in-depth of the review occurs late in the developmental process, and identifies some sort of problem that would interfere with implementation, that could be severely disruptive of the standards development process. Yet, if that review occurs too early, it could miss potential suitability problems.

Bob Wyeth, who chairs CSD PEC, clarified that the "suitability" should be established prior to approvals or votes being taken, that this is the purpose of involving all stakeholders early on, and extending the standards development timeline to include such additional participation. He suggests that the primary concern might be where in the timeline the LAS PEC review should occur, and that the revised LAS PEC SOP should reflect that LAS PEC will have been advised of what the changes are, so that LAS PEC's role is to establish how to address those changes. Bob did agree to revisit SOP 2-100 with CSD PEC to clarify that the relevant program executive committee would be the one invited to participate – the LAS PEC for an ELSS standard, the NEFAP EC for a field activities standard, and so forth.

Several additional possibilities were offered, and settled on after further discussion. First, Bob will take back to CSD PEC the recommendation that an additional SOP be developed to describe how and when outreach to the stakeholders (including PECs) should occur, detailing how and when the TEC developing the standard (or its portion of the standard) would take those actions. Second, LAS PEC's SOP can be expanded to encompass the entire NELAP standards review and adoption process – whether the standard can be implemented by the NELAP as well as how to accomplish implementing the standard along with needed training and a "roll-out sequence."

With those additional concepts being taken back to their respective PECs, the Policy Committee will pick up with review of SOP 2-100 at its next meeting on December 6, 2013. This is urgent, since the new SOP must be approved so that the standards "in development" can proceed with an ANSI-compliant consensus standards development process.

3. NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102

The committee began reviewing an earlier revision of this SOP during 2012, but suspended that review upon learning that another revision was underway. The document presently designated as Revision 3 contains changes from both revisions, both adapting to the TNI ELSS standard and accommodating the streamlining recommendations of the NELAP QA Officer. Lynn noted that the AC agreed that all ABs should be evaluated to Volume 2 of the TNI ELSS, regardless of whether they have transitioned to accrediting laboratories to the TNI ELSS.

Review began, working through the document section by section.

§1 – no changes

§2 – add a "close parenthesis" at the end

§3 – in the final paragraph, change "that" to "and"

§4 – discussion about whether the "unique" definitions (i.e., those not in standards) are consistent across the various TNI documents. Jerry offered to create a master glossary of these, which was done and circulated to members later in the day

-- the definition of Evaluation Coordinator requires clarification regarding how this person is selected and also to omit the final sentence of the existing definition

-- the definition of "finding" as being only a negative needs eventually to be brought into compatibility with the other TNI programs, so that "finding" can be either positive or negative. This was raised prior to adoption of Rev. 3 by the AC, but given the time urgency, revising the rest of this SOP to accommodate that change was simply not feasible. Such a revision should become part of any future revision of this SOP

-- concerns about the need for a definition of "audit" were not fully resolved during discussion.

-- time ran out at the definition of "mock audit." Review will resume during the December 6 meeting.

4. Next Meeting

Policy Committee will meet again on Friday December 6, 2013, at 11 am Eastern. Teleconference information and an agenda will be circulated in advance of the meeting. Review and approval of SOP 2-100, Standards Development will resume, along with review of SOP 3-102 NELAP Evaluation. These other documents are, in rough order of priority:

- NEFAP SIR SOP 5-106 (partially completed) and possibly concurrent with NELAP SIR SOP revisions (from LAS EC)
- Policy about Notification of Changes to AB Operations
- Revisions to NELAP Voting SOP per Policy Committee
- Documents that may need updating once Bylaws revisions are finalized
 - SOP 2-100 (Standards Development and Review)
 - Revisions to Pol 1-122 (Determining Stakeholder Category of Committee Members, should accompany Bylaws revision when presented to TNI Board)
 - Revisions to SOPs 1-101 and 2-101, about Committee Operations, as needed to accommodate changes to Bylaws.

Action Items are included in Attachment B and Attachment C includes a listing of reminders.

Attachment A

Name/Affiliation	Representing	Present
Alfredo Sotomayor, Chair Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Madison, WI alfredo.sotomayor@ Wisconsin.gov	TNI Board	Yes
JoAnn Boyd Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, TX jboyd@swri.org	Lab and FSMO	No
Patrick Brumfield Sigma-Aldrich RTC, Laramie, WY patrick.brumfield@sial.com	PT Executive Committee	Yes
Silty Labie Env. Lab. Consulting & Technology, LLC Tallahassee, FL elcatllc@centurylink.net		No
John Moorman South Florida Water Management District West Palm Beach, FL jmoorma@sfwmd.gov	NEFAP Executive Committee	No
Mei Beth Shepherd mbshep@sheptechserv.com		Yes
Susan Wyatt, Vice Chair Minnesota DOH, St. Paul, MN susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	NELAP AC	No
Bob Wyeth Retired rwyeth@yahoo.com	CSD Executive Committee	Yes
Jerry Parr (ex-officio) Executive Director, TNI Jerry.Parr@nelac-institute.org		Yes
Lynn Bradley, Program Administrator The NELAC Institute (Staunton, VA) lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org		Yes

Attachment B

Action Items – TNI Policy Committee

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Comments/Completion
34	Review NELAC chapter 6 for needed policies and SOPs, applicable to the AC	Susan	3/15/13	Pending with AC – initial discussions occurred October 7
48	Review SOPs 1-101 and 2-101 for possible edits to assign responsibility to chairs for addressing committee member changes in stakeholder categories	Alfredo	6/5/13	Hold until stakeholder category revisions to Bylaws are completed
51	Continue review of NEFAP SIR SOP	Full committee to take up at future business meeting	Deferred until after Bylaws revision	
54	Add videos to committee chair training on the SOP and conduct guidance, and confirm with Sharon that a webinar in Louisville will be acceptable.	Alfredo	October 4, 2013	Preparations for webinar are underway
57	Create master glossary of definitions used in TNI documents (definitions in standards are not normally repeated in SOPs and policies)	Jerry	Asap	November 15, 2013

Attachment C

Backburner / Reminders – TNI Policy Committee

	Item	Meeting Reference	Comments
1.	Look into need to include something about review schedule in all SOPs.	3/20/12	
2	Include mention of abstentions in SOP 1-102 revision (or elsewhere,) to ensure that intentional choice of appropriate wording is made in committee decision making choices	10/5/12	
3	In SOP 1-101, "Committee Operations," or else SOP 1-102, "Decision Making..." some mention of "default" decision making rules would be beneficial, since most committees do not have documentation of their decision processes.	10/22/12	SOP 1-102 discusses various options and situations where one might work better than others, but SOP 1-101 refers to 1-102 as if it sets a default.
6	New Committee Charter format should include listing for Executive Director as ex officio member for all committees (per Bylaws.)	9/20/13	Charter format to be upgraded to address committee annual budgets later this year