

**MINUTES OF
THE NELAC INSTITUTE'S
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
JANUARY 27, 2009**

Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operations

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met by conference call on January 27, 2009 at 1:05 PM Eastern Time (ET). The call ended at 2:30PM ET. Committee Chairperson Kirstin McCracken led the call.

Call to Order: The teleconference was called to order at 1:04 PM ET.

The following committee members were present for this call:

Kirstin McCracken (KM)
Dan Tholen (DT)
Steve Arpie (SA)
Shawn Kassner (SK)
Anand Mudambi (AM)
Amy Doupe (AD)
Stacie Metzler (SM)

7 out of 9 committee members were present and this number does comprise a majority sufficient to conduct committee business. A complete list of committee members is provided in Attachment B.

The following associate members were present for this call:

Mike Miller (MM)
Chris Bolling (CB)
Rachel Ellis (RE)
Gary Dechant (GD)
Jill Henes (JH)
Jeff Lowry (JL)
Brian Bolling (BB)

Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operations

Action Item Update

Item	Description	Assigned To:	Due Date:	Date Complete:
1	Send PT Frequency Subcommittee Report to Committee Members	Dan Tholen	01/09/09	01/09/09
2	Review Charter Objectives	All	02/10/09	
3	Request Cost Breakdown from TNI	Kirstin	12/10/08	In Progress
4	Prepare Assessor Forum Presentation	Shawn / Anand / Dan D / Jim W	01/12/09	01/12/09

The minutes from the teleconference from 01/06/09 were presented for approval by Kirstin. The motion was seconded by Anand. No further discussion occurred and the minutes were approved by vote. Call Vote Tally: 7 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain

Agenda Item 2: Committee Membership

Matt Sica resigned from the PT Committee mid-term due to impending responsibilities with the oversight of his state program that limits the time and resources he has available to participate as a committee member. His resignation is effective 01/27/09. Tom McAninch and RaeAnn Haynes rotated off the committee in January 2009. RaeAnn will continue her involvement with the committee as an associate member. Thank you to Matt, RaeAnn and Tom for the hard work and dedication of these committee members over their tenure and their contributions to the success of the development of the PT standard. Anand also plans to rotate off the committee soon but before he does so, he plans to reach out to the Office of Water to identify any potential new committee members so we can maintain the affiliation with the EPA.

These membership changes leaves 2 openings on the committee for the AB category and 1 opening for the other category. The AB positions need to be filled quickly in order to maintain balance. Kirstin asked for recommendations for potential AB members and the following names were proposed: Stacie suggested Kathy _____ from Virginia DCLS, Gary suggested Dennis Dobson with the State of Kansas-although Dennis may not be interested due to increasing responsibilities within his agency. Kirstin proposed via Jerry Parr, Anne Marie Allen with the State of Massachusetts, Shawn suggested that if Anne Marie were not interested, perhaps Lisa Touett with MA would be. Kirstin suggested Rachel Ellis with State of New Jersey and Shawn suggested Stu Lombard or Perry Brake from State of Washington. Discussion ensued. Rachel was present on the call and said that she would not be able to travel so the committee may wish to consider members that could travel. Given the present economic times, Kirstin suggested that inability to travel to the meetings may not be a problem given most of the activity is performed during the year via workgroup or teleconference. Richard Sheibley, Mitzi Miller and John Gumper were all suggested to fill the other category. *Action Items from Discussion: members will contact potential candidates to assess their interest as follows: Stacie- Kathy, Kirstin-Anne Marie Allen or Lisa Touett, Shawn-Stu or Perry. It was decided to reserve Dennis as a potential future candidate. The candidates for the other position will be contacted after the AB openings have been filled.*

Anand nominated Kirstin to serve as 2009 Chair, the motion was seconded by Anand. Vote Tally: 6 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain (Kirstin).

Kirstin nominated Shawn to serve as 2009 Vice-Chair, the motion was seconded by Anand. Vote Tally: 6 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain (Shwan).

Agenda Item 3: Miami Comments

Open Discussion. Mike Miller said he thought the session went well. The open forum at the assessor forum and the PT session prompted lively debate about the purpose of PTs, PT frequency and FoPT. To sum it up, the fundamental questions that arose from the meeting is "What is the purpose of PT?" and "What is the minimum number of PT needed to meet that purpose"? These are the questions that the committee will consider in 2009 as the PT Frequency Subcommittee wraps up its work. The TNI membership seemed pleased with the work done by the subcommittee and does not seem to think additional studies are needed. It was politely suggested to Kirstin by several members of the TNI Board of Directors that it is time for the PT Committee to move forward on the decision of whether the comment

to change PT frequency is persuasive or non-persuasive and to be prepare to present this decision at the August meeting.

Agenda Item 4: LASC Report

The LASC has proposed that the NELAP Board adopt the PT Standard with certain conditions that include editorial changes, completion of a guidance document and 3 TIA. Prior to the Miami meeting the committee had already identified the need for 2 of these TIA but was surprised with the proposal for the 3rd TIA which is associated with V1, MI complaint resolution. In this section the committee uses the term appeals process which was understood by the committee to be in development by TNI. This was a misunderstanding. An appeals process will not be created by TNI and use of the term “appeals” has legal connotations that would prevent at least one AB from adopting the standard. Considerable discussion on this topic followed at the LASC meeting and it was decided that the opposition is to use of the term “appeals” not the process itself. To that end, the committee has been instructed with rewording this section to reflect the true intent, which is conflict resolution. *Action Item: Kirstin will forward the LASC report to the committee member and this report will be the main agenda item for the next call.*

Agenda Item 5: PT Charter and Annual Report

The update of the 2008 Charter was never finalized. After discussion the committee decided to add the key milestones and 2008 schedule to the 2008 Charter and finalize this charter and issue a new revision for 2009. *Action Item: Kirstin will make these changes and forward the charter to committee members for approval by email.*

The TNI Board of Directors is requesting an Annual Report from the Committee. More information will be forthcoming.

With ~40 minutes left in the call, Kirstin opened discussion on the topic purpose of PTs. The discussion kicked off with the suggested charter changes proposed by Dan regarding the purpose of PT as well as the suggestion by Gary that the purpose of PT must be considered in the context of each stakeholder. The framework proposed by Gary via email is inserted here for historical reference:

Example: Purpose of PT for Potable Water

The potable water PT is an aqueous sample that mimics a routine drinking water source material and which contains trace or ultra trace levels of contaminants regulated by federal or state drinking water programs or of general concern to the health of the public. The purpose of the potable water PT is to:

- 1) Meet the requirements specified in the federal regulations XXX
- 2) Support the TNI Accrediting Authorities by ---
- 3) Support the environmental laboratory quality system by ---
- 4) Support the users of environmental data by ---
- 5) Support the general public by ---

Lively discussion followed and here is a brief synopsis:

Purpose of PT is to demonstrate technical proficiency of the laboratory to perform a method, to demonstrate lab’s ability to follow procedures and maintain proper records (it is assumed that without these quality systems- a lab may not perform well on PT) to assess conformance to the standard, to improve the quality of a laboratory, to improve the quality of environmental data nationwide. The capability of the PT to meet the needs of these objectives was further debated. Some considerations that were raised: evaluation of PT data in the context of methods that generated the data (as opposed to

technology specific), whole-volume PTs, real world matrices for PTs, laboratory QC vs. PT (labs can use PT to determine if QC limits are too wide).

To close the discussion, Kirstin suggested that the committee consider today's debate for future consideration as the committee's resolution on the purpose of PT will be necessary to develop the 2009 Charter and it will provide the framework for future standard development.

The committee unanimously decided to maintain the existing teleconference schedule of 2nd Tuesday of each month at 1:00 PM Eastern. If this day happens to be a holiday, the call will be held the following Tuesday or a different day amenable to the majority of committee members.

Call Close Out: Adjourned at 2:30PM

Action Items: The list of action items from this call are given in Attachment A.

Next Meeting: The next teleconference is teleconference has not been scheduled.

Attachment A

**ACTION ITEMS
TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE
01/27/09**

Item	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date	Date Complete
1	Request Cost Breakdown from TNI	Kirstin	12/10/08	In Progress
2	Forward LASC Report	Kirstin	01/31/09	
3	Update 2008 Charter and Forward	Kirstin	01/31/09	
4	Contact ABs	Stacie, Kirstin, Shawn	02/10/09	

Attachment B

TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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