

**MINUTES OF
THE NELAC INSTITUTE'S
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
SEPTEMBER 25, 2007**

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met by conference call on September 25, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). The call ended at 2:30 PM ET. Chairman Dr. Anand Mudambi of the US EPA led the meeting. The list of the committee members is given in Attachment B.

Introduction

The following members attended this call:

- Anand Mudambi
- RaeAnn Haynes
- Kirstin McCracken
- Jim Pletl

The following associate members attended this call:

- Mike Miller (State of New Jersey, Trenton, NJ)

Status of Actions from September 11, 2007 call

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Anand will send the comments received on the PT DIS to Carol Batterton (LASC)	Pending
2.	Anand will send the Quality Systems comments to Bob DiRenzo	Pending
3.	Resolution of Unclear Comments (Anand) : Committee members will need to call commenter to resolve unclear comments.	Done

Review of PT Committee Charter and Conference Call Schedule

The committee reviewed its charter and its Conference call schedule. Anand will send the PT Committee Charter to Ken Jackson and the conference call schedule to TNI for posting.

Discussion on major comments received on Volume 1 (Laboratory Requirements):

Kirstin led the initial discussion on the major comments received on Volume 1 and the following sections provide a summary of recommendations agreed upon during the call.

Note: Any decision in the following sections is subject to change after further consideration by the committee.

a. Reducing the number of PT sample frequency from 2 per year to 1 per year.

This comment generated a lot of discussion. Mike Miller (NJ) was not opposed to this idea as the State of New Jersey already has a non-NELAP program which uses 1PT sample per year and might be easier for Accrediting Bodies to manage. However he felt this was a major change to the existing NELAC standard and was concerned that such a change to the standard may have some unintended consequences if it was not properly discussed. RaeAnn Haynes (Oregon) also had concerns regarding such a change and said that TNI should have a basic standard in place as quickly as possible which is close to the current NELAC standard and use the upcoming meeting in California to start the discussion regarding reducing PT sample frequency. She suggested a short paper to be drafted by the PT Committee for proposed changes to the next standard to be presented at the next TNI meeting. Jim Pletl (Laboratory Representative) wanted the PT committee to have more data on the impact of reducing PT sample frequency on laboratory data quality in order for the Committee to make an educated decision regarding such a change. Kirstin McCracken (Laboratory Representative) felt that the 2 PT samples per year assisted her laboratory in checking that methods were run appropriately over the course of the year and felt reducing the frequency might allow time before issues are found in laboratory systems. Dan Tholen had sent an e-mail regarding his concern on this issue as well. Overall the committee felt that this change could not be accepted due to the concerns expressed above without more input from stakeholders and data regarding PT frequency and laboratory data quality.

b. Multiple Methods Reporting using 1 PT sample.

Comments received requested that the standard be changed so the laboratories are not penalized by losing accreditation for all methods for one technology type if they fail a PT sample for only one method under that technology type. However under the current standard, laboratories are given accreditation for all methods under a technology type if they pass a PT sample for only one method under that technology type. The committee will not accept this comment as the current standard helps laboratories maintain accreditation for more than one method with only 1 PT sample.

c. Removing Experimental PT samples Section

Comment received recommending the removal of this section from the standard as it is difficult for the Accrediting Bodies (AB) to enforce as well as for the laboratories to comply. Mike Miller (New Jersey) expressed his concern that ABs would be unable to collect any data to set limits for new PT samples for analytes that may be regulated in the future if this section was removed from the standard. RaeAnn Haynes (Oregon) agreed with Mike and said the ABs need to have a mechanism not just for setting new limits but to test the stability and homogeneity of new PT samples. RaeAnn suggested removing the language in the standard but asking the TNI PT Board to consider making all experimental PT samples regular PT samples but with wide (3-sigma) limits. RaeAnn will draft an e-mail to be sent to the TNI PT Board for review by the PT committee. Curtis will need to review Volumes 3 and 4 if this language is removed from Volumes 1 and 2.

d. PT Sample Interval Tracking

This section has proved to be confusing to stakeholder. Kirstin will talk with Curtis Wood regarding clarifying the definition of Opening Date for a PT Study, as well as the language for the 15 day interval between Supplemental PT Studies and the “no more than 7 months” between regular PT Studies.

e. Appeal Process for Laboratories

Kirstin discussed comments regarding the lack of an appeal process beyond the Accrediting Body for a laboratory in the standard. RaeAnn and Mike pointed out that the accreditation process is run by the states and thus they have a final say regarding a laboratory accreditation status. Anand said the language regarding suspension and revocation was put in the standard to ensure laboratories were treated the more or less in a similar fashion by different ABs, at least on the programmatic side (the legal side being a complete individual state issue). Kirstin wanted to know who would perform the oversight of an AB, if the AB was not following the standard. Anand asked her to draft an e-mail to be sent by the PT committee to the NELAP Board asking for a NELAP policy statement on this issue.

f. PTRL Reporting in Volume 3

Guidance is needed on PTRL reporting.

Next Steps

Kirstin, Jim, and Tom will make the changes to the Draft Interim Standard using track changes and then address the comments received on Volume 1.

Action Items

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

Next Call

The next teleconference will take place on October 2, 2007 at 100 PM ET.

Attachment A

**ACTION ITEMS
TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING
SEPTEMBER 25, 2007**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Anand will send the comments received on the PT DIS to Carol Batterton (LASC)	Pending
2.	Anand will send the Quality Systems comments to Bob DiRenzo	September 25, 2007
3.	RaeAnn will send a draft e-mail for the TNI PT Board for review by the committee	September 28, 2007
4.	Kirstin will send a draft e-mail for the NELAP Board for review by the committee	October 2, 2007

Attachment B

TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Affiliation	Address
Anand Mudambi, Chairman	USEPA/OW	T: (202) 564-2817 F: (202) 566-0055 E: mudambi.anand@epa.gov
RaeAnn Haynes	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality	T: (503) 229-5983 ext 227 F: (503) 229-6924 E: HAYNES.Raeann@deq.state.or.us
Thomas McAninch	Laboratory Consulting Services	T: (903) 757-4269 F: (903) 234-9781 E: mcaninch@cabllynx.com
Kirstin McCracken	STL Burlington	T: (802) 923-1019 F: (802) 660-1919 E: kmccracken@stl-inc.com
James Pletl	Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD)	T: (757) 460-4246 F: (757) 460-2372 E: jpletl@hrsdc.com
Matthew Sica	Maine Laboratory Certification Program	T: (207) 287-1929 F: (207) 287-4172 E: matthew.sica@maine.gov
Dan Tholen	A2LA	T: (231) 929-1721 F: (610) 374-7234 E: dantholen@charter.net
Curtis Wood	Environmental Resource Associates	T: (303) 431-8454 F: (303) 421-0159 E: cwood@eraqc.com