

TNI PT Board Meeting Summary December 18, 2008

1. Roll call and approval of minutes:

Chairman Carl Kircher called the TNI PT Board to order on December 18, 2008, at 1PM EST. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A. Associate members Dan Tholan and Chuck Wibby were also present.

Minutes from the December 4, 2008 meeting were approved for posting on the TNI website. Ilona will have minutes posted.

2. New Members

This will be Kirstin and RaeAnn's last meeting as PT Board members. The Chair thanked them for their service and wished them much success in their future endeavors. RaeAnn requested that she be an Associate Member as she continues as the chair of the WET FoPT Subcommittee.

Gary's appointment to the Board has been renewed for another 3 years. The two new members will be invited to sit with the Board in Miami.

Carl asked that the Board begin thinking about who to appoint as Chair of the Board for 2009. This will be part of the agenda in Miami. Given his chair responsibilities in a number of subcommittees, he would prefer that a new Chair be elected for the PT Board.

3. A2LA Review

The review has been completed and the corrective action report has been submitted to A2LA. The results will be reviewed as an agenda item in Miami.

4. WET FoPT Subcommittee

New tables have been completed, but a cover letter still needs to be prepared. There have been some substantial changes:

- Eliminated phenols – health hazard.
- Eliminated copper sulfate – it doesn't work.
- Combined 20⁰ and 25⁰ into single criteria of 25⁰. The PT will need to be run at 25⁰.

The tables will be forwarded to Board members before the Miami meeting so the group will have time to review this information. No one from the subcommittee will be in attendance in Miami, so RaeAnn is forwarding a PPT for Carl to present.

The subcommittee wants to continue to work on the WET criteria. There is still room for more improvements.

5. Miami Meeting/PT Caucus

Proposed Agenda for meeting:

- Roll Call
- Welcome New Members
- Approval of 12-18-08 Meeting Minutes
- Election of Chair for 2009
- A2LA Evaluation
- WET Report and Presentation of New FoPT Tables
- Experimental PTs
- Check with the PT providers to confirm there are no objections to using their data to compare Performance Range vs. Existing Acceptance Criteria

BREAK

PT Caucus

- PTPA Presentation (Includes discussion on Database project, change in accreditation of one PT Provider)
- Acceptance Limits Presentation – Carl
- Update on ISO 17043 Presentation – Dan Tholan (Examine differences to various standards and the ramifications. ~ 15 – 20 minutes presentation.)
- Crosswalk?? (Will check with PT Expert Committee and Assessor's Forum Subcommittee to see if this is already being done.)

There has been some discussion as to whether the PT Board meeting will be Monday afternoon or Wednesday afternoon. (*Added 12-19-08: Jerry Parr said PT Board will meet Wednesday afternoon.*)

6. Experimental PTs

Eric summarized the various options the Board is looking at:

- Leave as is.
- Do away with Experimental PTs and roll them into the other FoPT Tables.
- Keep tables as they are, but PT providers don't send actual results to ABs. They only let them know that the lab has run the PT. There would be no pass/fail information – only a record of participation.

Carl and RaeAnn mentioned that they favor the first option. RaeAnn felt that Experimental PTs were useful and served a purpose.

Gary wanted to know if the Board has the authority to eliminate Experimental PTs. Carl clarified that this was option.

The Board decided that they wanted to do an electronic vote to determine which direction to go on this issue. If the vote resulted in a full quorum for one option, the option would be accepted. If the vote was split, the top two would be re-voted on via e-mail and discussed at the Miami meeting. Results will be passed along to the PT Expert Committee, LASC and the Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee.

The following motion was made:

Motion: Vote for one of the options presented in DC (below).

Made by: Gary Second: RaeAnn

Options:

- A. Leave Experimental Analyte Tables as they currently are.
- B. Leave the Experimental Analyte Tables as the currently are. However, do not provide associated acceptable/not acceptable evaluations for these parameters in the PT vendor study report to NELAP accrediting authorities that require only participation. The final report would provide those NELAP accrediting authorities with just a listing of what Experimental analytes were reported.
- C. Discontinue the use of Experimental Analyte Tables. Each new analyte would now be added directly to the accreditation tables and a default study mean of +/- 3 standard deviations would be applied to that parameter until sufficient data is generated to determine better analyte specific acceptance criteria.
- D. Discontinue the use of Experimental Analyte Tables. Each new analyte would now be added directly to the accreditation tables and fixed limits of +/- 100% around the true value would be used until sufficient data is generated to determine better analyte specific acceptance criteria.

Members will be asked to vote by responding to an e-mail by 12-23-08. Results will be added to the 12-18-08 minutes.

(Added 1-12-09:

	<i>Eric</i>	<i>Steve</i>	<i>Matt</i>	<i>Curtis</i>	<i>Gary</i>	<i>Kirstin</i>	<i>Carl</i>	<i>RaeAnn</i>	<i>Svetlana</i>	<i>Michella</i>
<i>A</i>	1	3	4	3	3	3	1	1	3	2
<i>B</i>	2	4	3	2	*	4	2	*		4
<i>C</i>	4	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1
<i>D</i>	3	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	3

* - *Doesn't believe B is a viable option.*

Number of #1 votes:

A	3
B	0
C	7
D	0

Option C has been approved with a vote of 7 out of 10.)

7. Standard Interpretation Requests (SIRs)

The Board continued work on SIRs # 28, 31, 32 and 33. Proposed language for all four of these requests was forwarded to the Board members via e-mail.

- Question #28

The following language was proposed to respond to #28:

Section 2.4.1 of the 2003 NELAC standard states that to be accredited initially and to maintain accreditation, a laboratory shall participate in two single blind, single concentration PT studies, where available, per year for each field of proficiency testing.

Section 2.1.3 of the 2003 NELAC standard states “Current NELAC fields of proficiency testing are located on the NELAC website”.

The current FoPT Table for Drinking Water posted on the TNI website (01/01/08), (which replaced the NELAC website) lists Total Coliform as an FoPT. However, the FoPT is footnoted to indicate that this FoPT is specifically applicable to the presence/absence (P/A) qualitative test. There is not an FoPT listed in the FoPT table for Total Coliform for the quantitative method, thus per Section 2.4.1 of the 2003 NELAC Standard, no PT (either qualitative or quantitative) is currently required for initial or continued accreditation for the quantitative method.

In 2007-2008, the TNI PT Board established the Microbiology Fields of Proficiency Testing Subcommittee. The primary task of the subcommittee was to evaluate the FoPT for microbiology and proposed changes to the FoPT as needed to ensure PT requirements were consistent with regulatory expectations, including those specified in the LT2 Rule. The subcommittee recommended several changes to the FoPT and one of those changes includes the addition of a FoPT for Total Coliform by a quantitative method. This recommendation was approved by the PT Board and the NELAC Board and the new FoPT requirement becomes effective January 1, 2009. Prior to the effective date of the FoPT, an AB cannot require a laboratory to successfully analyze a PT as a condition for accreditation nor can they withhold accreditation until the effective date of the FoPT, nor can the AB impose an

alternative PT requirement as a condition for NELAC accreditation. The AB may require additional PT not listed as NELAC fields of proficiency testing in order to determine laboratory eligibility to report data to a state program, but the AB may not impose those added state PT requirements for granting initial or continued accreditation.

The January 1, 2009 effective date was set to allow sufficient time for proficiency test providers and laboratories to prepare for the new PT requirement in accordance with the time frames set in the 2003 NELAC Standard. Nevertheless, the PT Board recognizes that when new regulations are promulgated and these regulations prompt a needed change for proficiency testing, the effective date of the regulation should be taken into account when determining the effective date for the new FoPTs and the PT Board will work on creating a mechanism to ensure this is done.

Gary moved that the Board accept this response and forward it to the NELAP Board/LASC. Second: Eric

Kirstin and Curtis approved this response via e-mail prior to the meeting. The Board approved this response.

Note: Carl excused himself from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest. He also added the following:

The Fields of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) Tables are posted to show what PT's are available that laboratories must perform in order to meet the NELAC Standards. The intent of the old NELAC PT Board in making these tables was not to make interpretations on groupings of qualitative versus quantitative, volatile versus semivolatile, or trace versus ultratrace (concentration). In fact, the current groupings were mostly based on the historical groupings from the old EPA WS and WP proficiency programs. The Tables were never meant to tell the PT Providers how they must package or group their analytes to distribute to participant laboratories.

Also, the Tables were largely formulated from the NELAC days when FoPT's were defined as Program-Matrix-Analyte rather than Matrix-Method/Technology-Analyte/Analyte Group (test method or technology thus not involved). There has been insufficient PT data available thus far to derive separate PT acceptance criteria for some analytes by HPLC vs. GC/MS, FL-AA vs. ICP/MS, etc. In such cases, the current PT acceptance criteria is based on all the technologies lumped together by analyte.

- Questions 31

The following language was proposed to respond to #31:

The TNI PT Board thinks that the acceptance criteria listed in the various Fields of Proficiency Testing Tables should be adequate to meet ILAC G13 requirements in most cases. For those analytes where the acceptance criteria are based on fixed limits or upon regression equations, these limits and criteria are based on aggregate PT data spanning several years from multiple PT providers.

Of course, the NELAP Program requires PT results to be scored acceptable or unacceptable based on these published limits. If the number of participants in the PT study is small, the acceptance limits published in the Tables still need to be used. However, since these limits are based on the aggregate scientific and statistical analyses, the TNI PT Board thinks that using these limits would satisfy ILAC G13 requirements for small data sets. The PT Provider should not have difficulty using this as a justification, and this justification should carry more tangible, defensible weight compared with any other alternatives that could be considered.

Nevertheless, there are Fields of Proficiency Testing where the acceptance limits are still based on consensus participant mean and a PT-study specific standard deviation. In these cases, the PT provider would definitely need to formulate an alternate procedure to handle small data sets. However, the TNI PT Board cannot really provide or advocate a specific protocol to use in these instances. In fact, it may be scientifically unsound to do so, since other procedures and statistical models (e.g., Lorentzian, Maxwellian, chi-squared, or Poisson, as opposed to Gaussian) may work better. In addition, the PT Provider may need to adapt or change models and procedures used to accommodate individual circumstances for a given PT study.

The TNI PT Board thinks the important thing to do is to document the preferred procedure(s) chosen (to satisfy ILAC G13), implement this procedure for the small data sets as needed, and be prepared to revise the SOP if the results do not work out as expected.

Gary moved that the Board accept this response and forward it to the NELAP Board/LASC. Second: Eric

Kirstin and Curtis approved this response via e-mail prior to the meeting. The Board approved this response.

- Questions 32 and 33

The following language was proposed to respond to Questions 32 and 33:

#32

The information in specific appendices, i.e. Appendix E for Microbiology, takes precedence over the information in the general standard, where conflicts exist. Therefore, Appendix E 3.2.1 must be followed and states, in the second sentence, "Sample sets of less than 20 data points may be used only with the approval of the PTOB/PTPA." The commentor needs to develop and present an option to A2LA and then work through any feedback until they have an acceptable procedure.

#33

Sections B.2.1 and B.2.2 serve different purposes and are not in conflict. The purpose of B.2.1 is to ensure that each analytical method being used is precise enough to effectively detect any bias or inhomogeneity in the sample. Section B.2.2 provides the specific criteria for evaluating the homogeneity of the sample. Both sections must be followed.

Carl moved that the Board accept this response and forward it to the NELAP Board/LASC. Second: Eric

Kirstin and Curtis approved this response via e-mail prior to the meeting. The Board approved this response.

8. SOP from Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee

The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee completed their review of SOP #4-001. Their changes are clearly marked in the DRAFT SOP that was distributed to the Board and Associate members. The Board decided they wanted to vote on this SOP via e-mail.

The following motion was made:

Motion: Accept the updates to SOP: 4-001 - TNI PT Acceptance Criteria and forward to the Policy Committee for finalization.

Motion made by: RaeAnn Second: Gary

Members will be asked to vote on this SOP by responding to an e-mail (Yes, No, Abstain) by 12-30-08. Results will be added to the 12-18-08 minutes.

(Added 1-12-08:

All Board members voted "Yes" with the exception of Michella, who did not vote, and Curtis. Curtis felt the SOP needs revision due to the change in approach to Experimental PTs.)

9. Effective Date for DW FoPT Table

The issue raised by Jeff Lowry at the 12-4-08 meeting has been resolved. He is no longer concerned about the effective date. The effective date will remain 1-1-09.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the PT Board is Wednesday afternoon, January 15, 2009 in Miami, FL. The agenda for this meeting is proposed in Section 5 of these minutes.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 PM EST.

Attachment A

**Participants
TNI
Proficiency Testing Board**

Members	Affiliation	Contact Information
Carl Kircher, Chair Present	Florida DOH	904-791-1574 carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us
Ilona Taunton, Program Administrator Present	TNI	828-712-9242 tauntoni@msn.com
Gary Dechant Present	Analytical Quality Associates, Inc.	970-434-4875 gldechant@aol.com
Steve Gibson Present	Texas Comm. on Env. Quality	512-239-1518 jgibson@tceq.state.tx.us
RaeAnn Haynes Present	Oregon DEQ Laboratory	503-693-5757 haynes.raeann@deq.state.or.us
Svetlana Isozamova Absent	Accutest Laboratories – Southeast Division	407-425-6700 svetlani@accutest.com
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Matt Sica Absent	State of Maine	207-287-1929 matthew.sica@maine.gov
Eric Smith Present	TestAmerica	615-726-0177 x1238 eric.smith@testamericainc.com
Curtis Wood Absent	Environmental Resource Associates	303-431-8454 cwood@eraqc.com

Attachment B

Action Items – TNI PT Board

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Actual Completion
8.	Gather additional names for newly formed Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee.	Carl	On-going until membership is about 14.	
10.	Let the new Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee know that information is available from NY regarding extraction/prep methods and PT results.	Carl	When Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee is formed.	
17.	Work on language for new TNI policy based on NELAC Policy #16 and EPA Criteria Document.	Chuck	11/17/08 Next Meeting Wk of 1/12/09	
28.	Forward final Standard Interpretation Request (SIRs) responses to the NELAP Board/LASC.	Ilona	12/23/08	
29.	Vote on Experimental PT Options	Members	12/23/08 (noon)	
30	Vote on SOP #4-001	Members	12/30/08	

Attachment C

Backburner / Reminders – TNI PT Board

	Item	Meeting Reference	Comments
1	Check with the PT providers to confirm there are no objections to using their data to compare Performance Range vs. Existing Acceptance Criteria.	9/18/08	This discussion will be added to the Miami meeting agenda.
2			
3			
4			
5			