



Policy TITLE:	Mutual Recognition Policy for NELAP-Recognized Accreditation Bodies
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REVISION NO:	0.3
Program	NELAP

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I. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The principle of recognition is a fundamental concept in a national environmental laboratory accreditation program. This policy establishes the principle of recognition as an essential element of and condition for participation in the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP).

II. SUMMARY

The policy establishes the responsibilities of primary and secondary NELAP-recognized accreditation bodies as they relate to mutual recognition, describes circumstances when the policy does not apply, and prescribes how disputes relating to the policy between or among accreditation bodies are to be resolved.

III. DEFINITIONS

All definitions are incorporated by reference to maintain consistency within the TNI organization.

Accreditation Body as defined in Vol 2, Mod 1, and Vol 2, Mod 2

NELAP Accreditation Council as defined in the TNI Bylaws

Standard as defined in Vol. 1 Mod. 2

Conformity Assessment Body as defined in Vol.2 Mod. 3

Primary Accreditation Body as defined in Vol. 2 Mod. 2

Secondary Accreditation Body as defined in Vol. 2 Mod. 2

Mutual Recognition: the acceptance by an accreditation body of an environmental laboratory accreditation issued by a primary accreditation body without any other duplicative actions to determine the laboratory's conformity to the Standards. For the purposes of accreditation, mutual recognition does not mean automatic

accreditation by a secondary accreditation body or exemption from complying with the administrative processes of a secondary accreditation body.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PRIMARY ACCREDITATION BODY

A primary accreditation body:

1. Ensures that Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) meet applicable requirements contained in the Standards;
2. Is responsible for receiving, evaluating and making accreditation decisions regarding granting, denying, revoking, and suspending interim or full accreditation to applicant laboratory organizations;
3. Receives and evaluates applications from laboratories that are physically located within the AB's borders for those fields of accreditation for which the NELAP AB offers NELAP accreditation, meaning that the laboratory's "home-state" is its NELAP-recognized AB;
4. May waive the requirement for the laboratory to seek primary accreditation from its home-state in cases where the laboratory applying for primary accreditation from its home-state would create a real or perceived conflict of interest. (For instance, an AB may grant a waiver to the state's primacy laboratory from having to apply to its own state agency for accreditation);
5. May choose to receive applications from laboratories that are physically located outside of the AB's borders when the applicant laboratory's home-state is not a NELAP-recognized AB or when the home-state AB does not offer Primary NELAP accreditation for one or more fields of testing. Primary ABs are not required by this policy to accept applications from out-of-state laboratories seeking primary accreditation.
6. Is responsible for assisting secondary accreditation bodies, if requested, with the verification of accreditations issued by the primary accreditation body;
7. Must maintain conformance to the Standards and the policies, procedures, resolutions, and interpretations pertaining to accreditation bodies approved by the NELAP Accreditation Council.
8. Is responsible for updating its data in the Laboratory Accreditation Management System (LAMS) at least every two weeks, if not more often.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SECONDARY ACCREDITATION BODY

1. Except as specified in this policy, an accreditation body agrees as a condition for participation in the NELAP to:
 - a) recognize environmental laboratory accreditations issued by primary NELAP accreditation bodies without any other duplicative actions to determine the laboratory's conformity to the Standards. The secondary AB may require copies of existing documentation and may work in concert with the primary AB in the event that any investigative actions are needed. The AB offering secondary accreditation to a laboratory should not impose additional requirements concerning on-site assessments, quality assurance, proficiency testing, or other matters relating to conformance to the Standards, but may request copies of the primary AB's on-site assessment report and a copy of the certificate of accreditation.
 - b) maintain conformance to the Standards and the policies, procedures, resolutions, and interpretations pertaining to accreditation bodies approved by the NELAP Accreditation Council.
2. Mutual Recognition of an accreditation issued by a primary accreditation body:
 - a) is limited to the fields of accreditation (methods and analytes) included in the primary accreditation at any point in time, and

- b) does not prevent a secondary accreditation body from verifying the accreditation with the primary accreditation body or requiring a laboratory to adhere to applicable laws and rules and normal administrative process, such as submitting applications and paying fees.

VI. EXCEPTIONS

A secondary accreditation body does not have to recognize a primary accreditation or grant secondary accreditation if a law, rule, or decision resulting from a legal action precludes or has the effect of precluding the secondary accreditation body from granting accreditation in whole or in part to a laboratory.

VII. DISPUTES

Disputes between or among NELAP accreditation bodies relating to this policy must be resolved according to the appropriate TNI policy or procedure. Disputes between a lab and an AB must be resolved according to the AB's policies and are beyond the scope of this policy.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy becomes effective on November 9, 2016, and remains in effect until amended or revoked by the TNI NELAP Accreditation Council.

Policy Approved Changes

Revision No.	Effective Date	Description of Change
0	1-4-10	
0.1	3-10-12	Updated format.
0.2	11-30-15	Minor editorial revisions prior to presentation to NELAP AC for first vote (documentation of initial approval cannot be located) Revisions approved by LASEC, recommended to NELAP AC for approval and adoption. Revised by NELAP to include "home state" application requirement. Revised to address Policy Committee comments upon its review.
0.3	11-9-16	Revised to add reporting to LAMS at request of IT Committee