



<b>Policy TITLE:</b>	<b>Relationship of NELAP AB Certificates of Recognition and the NELAP Evaluation Process</b>
<b>Policy NO.:</b>	<b>3-102</b>
<b>REVISION NO:</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>NELAP</b>

	<b>Last Revision</b>	<b>Last Review</b>
<b>LASEC Approved Date:</b>	3/12/2025	
<b>NELAP AC Approved Date:</b>	3/10/2025	
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<b>TNI Board of Directors Endorsed Date:</b>	NA (4/9/2025)	
<b>Policy Effective Date:</b>	3/10/2025	

## I. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy describes the relationship between issuance of Certificates of Recognition and the three-year evaluation cycle for the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Accreditation Bodies (ABs).

## II. DEFINITIONS

**Certificate of Recognition:** the document that officially designates a NELAP AB as being “approved” to accredit laboratories to the standard adopted by the NELAP AC. A certificate is valid for one (1) year.

**Evaluation Team (ET):** a team comprised of the LE, other State AB and/or EPA representatives, and any other technical evaluators approved by the NELAP AC to conduct a review of an AB for the purpose of granting NELAP recognition to the AB.

**Lead Evaluator (LE):** the chosen member of the ET who provides direction for the ET and is responsible for issuing the written final recommendation regarding AB recognition, based on input from the entire team.

**NELAP Accreditation Body (AB):** The state organization having responsibility and accountability for accreditation, recognized by the NELAP AC to accredit laboratories in the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program.

**NELAP Accreditation Council (AC):** The body within NELAP comprised of one individual and one alternate from each recognized Accreditation Body, appointed by the AB, and holding final authority for implementation of the program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories.

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### III. RELATED DOCUMENTS

NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102

### IV. CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION

Beginning with the start of The NELAC Institute's (TNI's) fiscal year 2019, in October 2018, all NELAP ABs in good standing are issued a Certificate of Recognition. "Good standing" means that the AB's most recent evaluation was satisfactory and that its continued recognition was approved by the NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) at the conclusion of that evaluation.

New certificates are issued annually to each AB in NELAP, contingent upon the most recent evaluation being satisfactory and assuming that the AB wishes to continue with the program.

### V. NELAP EVALUATION CYCLE CHANGES

The NELAP AB evaluations begin with a renewal letter sent to the AB, three years after the site report of the prior evaluation is delivered to the AB. Evaluations are conducted in accordance with the NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102, by a team of peers led by a Lead Evaluator (LE) who is contracted to The NELAC Institute. This team may include EPA regional staff where the AB is located, as applicable.

### VI. CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN NELAP AC

As documented in SOP 3-102, the final step of an AB evaluation is the decision of the NELAP AC concerning whether to accept the recommendation of the evaluation team, for continued recognition, as presented by the LE. In the unexpected event that the evaluation is unsatisfactory, and the NELAP AC accepts a recommendation not to renew an AB's recognition, then the NELAP AC will determine a suitable amount of time for laboratories to seek primary accreditation with a different AB and, based on that determination, set an "end date" for the AB's then-currently-valid Certificate of Recognition. In this case, the Certificate issued to that NELAP AB would expire on the date determined by the NELAP AC, regardless of the "normal" annual expiration date on the Certificate when it was issued.

#### Policy Approved Changes

Revision No.	Effective Date	Description of Change
0	10/1/18	
1.0	3/10/25	Revise evaluation schedule so that each AB's evaluation begins three years after the site report of the previous evaluation was delivered to the AB. Changed future to present tense; editorial changes to section V with no change in intent.