



<b>SOP TITLE</b>	<b>Operation of TNI Committees</b>
<b>SOP NO.</b>	<b>1-101</b>
<b>REVISION NO</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>Administration</b>

### SOP Approval Dates

	<b>Initial Approval</b>	<b>Last Revision Date</b>	<b>Last Review Date</b>
<b>Committee: Policy</b>	10/5/2007	3/19/2021	
<b>Program</b>	NA	NA	
<b>Policy Committee Review</b>	NA	NA	
<b>TNI Board of Directors Endorsement</b>	11/14/2007		
<b>SOP Effective Date</b>	1/31/2008	3/19/2021	

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## 1.0 Purpose and Applicability

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) gives uniform guidelines for the operation of TNI committees.

This SOP does not apply to the TNI Board of Directors, the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Accreditation Council, the National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP) Executive Committee and the CSDP Expert Committees. The operations of these groups are governed by documents referenced in Section 3.0.

This SOP will generally apply to TNI Administrative Committees. Any specific differences are addressed in Appendix A.

This SOP may be complemented by procedures developed and documented by committees to which it applies, but may not be superseded by those procedures.

## 2.0 Summary

This SOP describes the fundamental principles guiding operations such as basic duties, membership, leadership, meetings, terms of appointment for members, and documentation of proceedings of the TNI committees to which it applies.

## 3.0 Related Documents

## 4.0 Definitions

<b>Administrative Committee:</b>	A committee authorized by the TNI Board of Directors to perform administrative duties for the all of TNI or the TNI Board of Directors, or to conduct day to day business of the Institute.
<b>Balance:</b>	A condition in which no Stakeholder Group has a majority of voting members and all default Stakeholder Groups are represented.
<b>Committee:</b>	A committee authorized by the TNI Board of Directors to conduct activities for a specific program.
<b>Committee Chair:</b>	A Committee Member elected to direct the activities of a committee.
<b>Committee Membership:</b>	<p><i>Committee Member</i> – A TNI member with technical knowledge appropriate to the specific committee, with full voting privileges, who applied for and is approved to participate on a committee.</p> <p><i>Associate Committee Member</i> – A TNI member who may participate in any committee, but who does not have voting privileges.</p> <p><i>Affiliate Committee Member</i> – A person with special knowledge as a qualified individual and who is not a TNI member. An affiliate is eligible to participate as a Committee Member, with all rights and privileges, including voting. Affiliates are counted as full members on committees and must be accounted for in terms of balance. No more than 30% of members may be Affiliates.</p>
<b>Dominance:</b>	A position or exercise of dominant authority, leadership, or influence, by reason of superior leverage, strength, or representation, to the exclusion of fair and equitable consideration of other viewpoints.
<b>Ex-Officio Committee Member:</b>	A TNI member serving in a committee in virtue of his or her office or position in TNI. <i>Note:</i> TNI's Executive Director is an Ex-Officio, non-voting, member of all committees.
<b>Sub-committee:</b>	A unit under a committee that performs a specific task and whose actions and recommendations are considered by a parent committee.

## **5.0 Commitment to Openness, Inclusiveness, and Transparency of Operations**

- 5.1 Committees shall attempt to conduct their activities openly, following procedures that promote the inclusion of all TNI members. To this end, committees shall provide due notice of their meetings and shall document their proceedings, deliberations, and decisions in a manner that is accessible to all TNI members.
- 5.2 Committees may at times consider personnel matters or confidential business information, and may choose to conduct such deliberations in closed sessions. This eventuality shall not be used to otherwise circumvent TNI's commitment to transparency of operations. Deliberations and decisions made during closed sessions shall be documented, but may only be available to the members of the committee that conducted the closed session, and the TNI Board of Directors.

## **6.0 Basic Duties of Committees**

- 6.1 Committees shall have authority to establish policies and procedures to conduct their business in support of TNI's mission.
- 6.2 Committees shall document their mission, composition, objectives, success measures, decision-making, available resources and anticipated meeting schedule in charters following a format developed by the TNI Policy Committee.
- 6.3 Committees shall document decisions they make following established procedures.
- 6.4 The TNI Policy Committee shall review committees' policies, procedures, and charters, to ensure they are not in conflict with each other.

## **7.0 Committee Membership**

### **7.1 Committee Composition**

- 7.1.1 Committees may consist of Committee Members, Associate Committee Members, and Affiliates. All Voting Members must have relevant knowledge of the subject matter relative to the specific Committee's activities. Voting membership on the Committee shall not be conditional upon membership in any other organization nor unreasonably restricted on the basis of technical qualifications or other such requirements.

- 7.1.1. Committee Members are categorized into the following default Stakeholder Groups:

- ABs – accreditation bodies that operate accreditation programs,
- Laboratories – laboratories and other organizations (such as FSMOs) directly involved in providing sampling and measurements, and
- Others – consultants, proficiency test providers, state and federal agencies that do not run accreditation programs and all additional interested parties.

Any Committee may determine that additional or different stakeholder groups are appropriate for that Committee's scope of activity. Requests for changes in the stakeholder group designations for a given Committee shall be presented to the TNI Board of Directors for its approval.

- 7.1.2. Voting membership is based on approved Committee membership. Details regarding the application for membership, review and approval process are presented in SOP 1-125.
- 7.1.3. Associate Committee Members may fully participate in committee activities but do not have voting privileges. Not all TNI committees can accept Associate Members, for example Policy or Finance committees.

- 7.1.4. Committee Members and Associate Committee Members must be TNI members. Affiliates are individuals with relevant knowledge who are non-TNI members. Affiliates may be sought out by the Committee based upon their expertise or may be nominated for Committee participation by a TNI member. An Affiliate serving on a committee is eligible to fully participate as a Committee Member, with all rights and privileges, including voting. Affiliates are counted as Voting Members on committees with a declared Stakeholder Group and must be accounted for in terms of balance.
- 7.1.5. Appropriate committee operations is best served when the number of Committee Members is not less than five (5) and not more than fifteen (15). Affiliates are counted as full members on committees. No more than 30% of members may be Affiliates.
- 7.1.6. TNI Member organizations may have more than one Committee Member on a Committee. An organization is a company, state or municipal government, EPA Program/Office/Region, or other federal agency. However, membership on a Committee is limited to two members of a single organization without the approval of the TNI Board of Directors.
- 7.1.7. As TNI and all its Committees are striving for diversity within all Committees, membership should preferentially reflect volunteers who are representative of all sectors of the community.
- 7.1.8. Individuals may serve as a Committee Member on more than one Committee concurrently.
- 7.1.9. At least annually or whenever there is a change made to the make-up of a Committee, the applicable Committee Chair(s) will review Committee membership rosters for balance, as applicable (see Appendix A).

## **7.2 Becoming a Committee Member**

- 7.2.1 Applications for committee membership may be submitted and accepted at any time.
- 7.2.2 Any TNI member may apply to join certain Committees by completing the TNI Committee Application in the Member section of the TNI website.
- 7.2.3 Applicants must be able to:
  - Represent a specific Stakeholder Group;
  - Cooperate effectively with affected parties and stakeholders;
  - Effectively communicate with affected parties and stakeholders;
  - Commit a significant amount of time over a multi-year period;
  - Understand the technical and/or policy subject matter of the Committee; and
  - Contribute substantively to the issues relevant to, and tasks assigned to, the Committee.
- 7.2.4 TNI procedures for receiving applications and tracking committee membership can be found in SOP 1-125. Applications are reviewed for completeness and accuracy. Each applicant declares a Stakeholder Group, and this is taken into consideration when reviewing an application and the effect on committee balance. The application database tracks the status of each application and ultimate disposition. Records are also maintained that include individual committee membership and terms of service, changes in Stakeholder Group, resignations, or terminations from the committee.
- 7.2.5 Committees vote to add qualified new members and vote to confirm second three-year terms of existing members during a closed session of the committee. If openings exist on a Committee during the year, new Committee Members may be appointed to the

Committee at any time. If there is not an available position on the Committee for a new member of that Stakeholder Group, the application will be returned to the Program Administrator (PA) for notification of the applicant and documentation of the decision.

- 7.2.6 As soon as practicable, but within 30 days of the decision to accept a nominee as a member of a Committee, the Chair of the Committee, or their designee, will recommend their appointment to the Chair of the TNI Board of Directors.
- 7.2.7 Appointments of Committee Members will be confirmed by the Chair of the TNI Board of Directors as soon as practicable but within 30 days of receipt of notice that a new member was elected. If an applicant is not confirmed for appointment to a committee, the application will be returned to the Program Administrator and Committee Chair for notification of the applicant and documentation of the decision.
- 7.2.8 Committee Member nominees will be informed about the acceptance of their appointment by the committee's Chair or PA as soon as practicable but within 15 days of the decision of the Chair of the TNI Board of Directors. The Program Administrator will document the decision in the minutes.

### **7.3 Terms of Appointment for Committee Members**

- 7.3.1 Committee Members are appointed to three-year terms that are staggered so that some members rotate off each year. Any member who has completed a first term may be elected for a second three-year term, but no member may serve more than two (2) three-year terms consecutively, except as described in 7.3.5, below.
- 7.3.2 Members of newly formed Committees shall be given staggered terms at the outset of committee function. Members on new committees with initially assigned one- (1) or two- (2) year appointments may be allowed to serve two additional three-year terms.
- 7.3.3 Terms on a Committee routinely begin following the Winter TNI Conference. Rights and privileges of Committee Members added to the committee throughout the year, begin immediately upon approval by the Chair of the TNI Board of Directors.
- 7.3.4 Terms for committee members expire as follows. A Committee Member voted onto the Committee prior to September 1 of a calendar year has a term that expires three years from that calendar year. If a Committee Member is voted onto the Committee on or after September 1 of a calendar year, the term expires three years from the following year. The year the term expires is recorded in the database according to SOP 1-125. For example:
- Membership started August 30, 2020, the expiration of the term would be after the Winter meeting in January of 2023.
  - Membership started September 2, 2020, the expiration of the term would be after the Winter meeting in January of 2024.
- 7.3.5 A Committee Member, with the endorsement of the Committee Chair, may petition the governing body (i.e., an executive committee or the TNI Board of Directors) to serve an additional term of three years or less (beyond the second term). Such waivers should only be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as a Committee Member taking on a new substantive role within the committee, when an ongoing activity led by the Chair needs to be completed or when no other qualified candidates are available. If the Committee Chair is making this petition, the Chair needs a vote in favor of the additional term by a majority of the Committee.

#### **7.4 Maintaining Balance in a Committee, as applicable**

- 7.4.1 If a Committee Member changes employment and the change creates dominance, the Committee Member shall resign from the committee unless balance is reestablished by appointing one or more new Committee Members.
- 7.4.2 If a Committee Member resigns from a committee and the change creates imbalance, the Chair shall appoint a new Committee Member to resolve the imbalance.

#### **7.5 Removal of Committee Member**

On the recommendation of the Committee Chair to the TNI Board Chair or the Executive Committee Chair of a core program, a committee member may be removed for any of the following reasons:

- Member is absent from three consecutive meetings without an excuse communicated to the committee's Chair or who is
- Member is absent from at least half of the meetings in a six-month period
- Member does not continue to meet the requirements of paragraph 7.2.3

#### **7.6 Participating in a Committee as an Associate Committee Member**

- 7.6.1 TNI members may be Associate Committee Members of any TNI committee that accepts Associate Members. There is no restriction to the number of committees that a TNI member can join as an Associate Committee Member or to the number of Associate Committee Members a committee may have.
- 7.6.2 TNI members that wish to participate in a Committee as Associate Committee Members must register with the committee's Chair. A member may register at any time to become an Associate Committee Member.
- 7.6.3 Associate Committee Members must renew their registration annually, each January, to continue participating in any committee in that capacity.
- 7.6.4 Committee Chairs shall allow Associate Committee Members to participate in all committee meetings, but may establish rules that allow Committee Members time to deliberate among themselves and to complete committee business.
- 7.6.5 The participation in closed committee sessions is limited to Committee Members and Program Administrators.

#### **7.7 No Alternate or Proxy Voting Allowed**

7.7.1 Participation as a committee member is based on the education and experience of the individual, and not the organization the member represents. No person may participate as a substitute for a Committee Member unable to attend a meeting.

7.7.2 Proxy votes are not allowed.

#### **8.0 Committee Leadership**

- 8.1 Committees shall annually elect a Chair from among its Committee Members, typically at one of the committee's first meetings of the year. Except for a newly created committee, the Chair should have served in the committee as a member or associate for at least one year.
- 8.2 The Chair of the TNI Board of Directors shall confirm the appointment of any new committee Chair. The TNI Board retains authority to remove, for cause, a committee Chair from office.

- 8.3 The committee Chair is responsible for the efficient operation of his or her committee. The committee Chair with the support of the Program Administrator:
  - 8.3.1 Schedules committee meetings.
  - 8.3.2 Posts committee meeting schedules on the TNI Website.
  - 8.3.3 Sets the agenda for committee meetings.
  - 8.3.4 Presides and conducts committee meetings.
  - 8.3.5 Ensures that minutes of committee meetings are posted on the TNI Website in a timely manner.
  - 8.3.6 Conducts the selection process of new Committee Members and new committee Chair.
  - 8.3.7 Maintains up to date rosters of Committee Members.
  - 8.3.8 Provides to the TNI Board an annual report of committee activities and accomplishments at the Annual Meeting.
  - 8.3.9 Serves on an Executive Committee, when a program has an Executive Committee constituted by the chairs of all its program committees.
  - 8.3.10 Facilitates communication with other committees to fulfill program objectives.
- 8.4 Committees shall elect a Vice Chair. The Vice-Chair performs any duties assigned by the Committee Chair and all the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.
- 8.5 The Committee Chair may appoint additional officers with the committee's concurrence.

## **9.0 Subcommittees**

- 9.1 Committee Chairs, with concurrence of their respective members, may establish subcommittees to complete specific tasks that help fulfill program objectives.
- 9.2 Subcommittees shall consist of at least three members.
- 9.3 The scope of tasks assigned to the subcommittee shall be approved by the committee forming the subcommittee.
- 9.4 Subcommittees may only provide recommendations on proposed actions to be taken to a parent committee unless otherwise documented in the Committee Charter.

## **10.0 Meetings**

### **10.1 Virtual Meetings**

- 10.1.1 Committees may meet virtually to conduct their business. All virtual meetings are open to all TNI members, except when a Committee meets during a closed session.
- 10.1.2 A schedule of virtual meetings for every Committee will be posted on the TNI website. Any changes to the regularly scheduled meetings will be communicated to attendees as far in advance as possible by whatever means are appropriate. Notice of any supplementary meetings (other than closed session meetings) will be posted at least 5



days in advance of the meeting, whenever possible. Notice of any cancelled meetings will be provided to attendees as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

- 10.1.3 Committee Chair or PA shall send invitations regarding virtual meetings to all Committee Members and to all Associates. Invitations should be sent at least three days prior to a teleconference date and may include an abbreviated agenda.
- 10.1.4 Guests may be invited for particular issues at the discretion of the Chair.
- 10.1.5 The Chair may invoke Robert's Rules of Order to conduct committee business or limit debate to Committee Members before allowing Associate Committee Members to speak.
- 10.1.6 TNI routinely uses the recording feature available from conference calling applications for quality control purposes for the sole purpose of accurately capturing discussion for subsequent publication in the published minutes of the call of the TNI Board and committee meetings. The recordings are not maintained once the minutes are produced and are not provided to anyone except the TNI Program Administrators. Any TNI committee member who objects to this activity has the option of not speaking during the call or not participating in the TNI committee meeting.

## **10.2 In-person Meetings**

- 10.2.1 Committees may meet face to face as necessary to conduct their business. All face to face meeting are open to TNI members and the general public, except when a committee meets during a closed session. Face to face meetings will generally include the semi-annual TNI forum on environmental laboratory accreditation and any special meetings scheduled by an Expert Committee.
- 10.2.2 Notification of face-to-face meetings is the responsibility of the Executive Director of TNI or their designee, and is typically accomplished via the TNI website, email and hard copy brochure. As with virtual meetings, during in-person meetings the same procedures are followed regarding the agenda, approving and posting minutes, and keeping order during the meetings.
- 10.2.3 Notification of special meetings must be five (5) days prior to said meeting, if possible. The Chair will send out a reminder to all Committee Members, Affiliates and Associate Committee Members. A tentative agenda should be included with the reminder.
- 10.2.4 The Chair may invoke Robert's Rules of Order to conduct committee business or limit debate to Committee Members before allowing Associate Committee Members or public attendees to speak.

## **10.3 Documentation of Proceedings**

- 10.1 Minutes must be taken and are typically circulated to the Committee for comment prior to the next scheduled committee meeting. Minutes are discussed, amended and approved by e-mail or during a meeting of the Committee.
- 10.3.2 Minutes shall include date and time of the meeting, a list of committee members and associates in attendance, any guests, any changes to the agenda are noted, applicable voting results, record of all action items/matters taken up by the committee, and the time of adjournment. The minutes may include a listing of Committee Members, their Stakeholder Group and employer and include contact information, but should not include telephone numbers.

**11.0 Committee Charters**

- 11.1 Each Committee shall have a charter stating the mission and objectives of the Committee. The charter will be developed using a template provided by the TNI Policy Committee. For Expert Committees, the Charter is approved by the Chair of the CSDEC with the concurrence of the CSDEC Members. Final approval of a Charter or revisions thereof for other Committees, is the responsibility of TNI Board of Directors with consideration of the recommendation(s) by the Policy Committee.
- 11.2 The Charter of each Committee will be updated as necessary; Charters must be reviewed for updates upon implementation of a new TNI Strategic Plan or Quality Management Plan or new directive from the Board of Directors.

**12.0 References**

- SOP 1 – 102: Voting Rules for TNI Committees
- SOP 2 – 101: Procedures for Expert Committee Operations
- SOP 3 – 100: TNI NELAP Accreditation Council General Operating Procedures
- SOP 5 – 101: TNI NEFAP Executive Committee General Operating Procedures
- SOP 5 – 102: Voting Procedure for General Business and Field Activities Accreditation Matters
- SOP 5 – 103: Nominating Committee Procedure (NEFAP)

**13.0 SOP Approved Changes**

Revision	Date of Change	Description of Change
0	1/31/2008	New SOP
1.0	5/16/2012	Remove Program Boards; remove references section
2.0	4/5/13	Added Appendix A; other minor changes
2.1	4/18/14	Revised section 8.1 changing must to should in second sentence
2.2	11/14/2014	Revised Appendix A to clarify that associate membership is not appropriate for the Policy Committee. Added header.
2.3	04/18/2016	Removed Conference Planning Committee from Appendix A
2.4	03/26/2018	Added sentence to 8.3.5 about not including phone numbers in published committee minutes. This is conforming change to SOP 2-101 and does not require Board approval.
2.5	3/1/19	Remove one member per organization restriction and replace with two members as maximum, except for approval by Policy and Board. This is a conforming change to SOP 2-101 with language pre-approved by the Board of Directors. Other minor editorial changes to conform with TNI QMP. Change to App A to add a NELAP AC member as ex-officio to CSDEC with voting privileges.
2.6	11/1/19	Added "or designee" to section 7.2.4. Modified Appendix A to exempt the Finance and Nominating committees from having minutes and having a documented decision making process.
2.7	8/7/20	Revised to reflect operational changes and for consistency with changes made to SOP 2-100. Added Training Committee.
2.7	2/5/21	Editorial only; correcting header and removing duplicate section 6. Effective date remains 8/7/20.
2.8	3/19/21	Removed Decision-Making Rule and section 11 as the language is no longer relevant due to the Change in SOP 1-102. Added a new Section 11 to include Committee Charters. Move list in Section 3 to Section 12.

**Appendix A**

	<b>Exceptions from SOP 1-101</b>
<b>Administrative Committees</b>	
Advocacy	Chair is the Past Chair of the TNI Board. The TNI Small Laboratory Advocate is also a designated member. Other members are selected for special qualities and may serve unlimited terms.
Finance Committee	Chair is the TNI Treasurer. All other members must be Directors of the TNI Board. There is no requirement for balance. Committee members may serve unlimited terms. Does not require a Vice Chair. Does not require minutes or a decision making process.
Information Technology Committee	The TNI IT Administrator and Database Administrator serve on committee. There is no requirement for balance. Committee members may serve unlimited terms.
Nominating Committee	Chair is the Past Chair of the TNI Board. Each year, the Chair selects two individuals who are not Directors of the TNI Board. See SOP 1-108. Does not require a Vice Chair. Does not require minutes or a decision making process.
Policy Committee	Chair is the TNI Board Secretary. Other members are selected by each core program as representatives of that program, and their terms coincide with their term on the committee they represent. There is no requirement for balance. May have at-large members with unlimited terms. The nature of the committee's operations makes it inappropriate to allow associate members.
Training Committee	The TNI Training Coordinator serves on this committee. There is no requirement for balance. Committee members may serve unlimited terms.
<b>Program Committees</b>	
Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee	Chair must be someone knowledgeable about the consensus standards process and is selected by the Board. Other members of the committee are current Chairs of each Expert Committees, who serve as long as they are a committee chair. Up to three at-large members may also be added by the Committee Chair, and may serve unlimited terms. There is no requirement for balance. The NELAP Accreditation Council may appoint an ex-officio member to this committee (with voting privileges), subject to confirmation by the CSDEC membership. The nature of the committee's operations makes it inappropriate to allow associate members.
Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee	The TNI Small Laboratory Advocate may be an Ex-Officio member. The SIR Subcommittee is autonomous, as documented in the Committee Charter.
National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP) Executive Committee	Not covered by this SOP, SOP 5-101 applies
National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Accreditation Council	Not covered by this SOP, SOP 3-100 applies
Proficiency Testing Executive Committee	No exceptions.
<b>Expert Committees</b>	SOP 2-101 governs operation
<b>Board of Directors</b>	TNI Bylaws govern operation.