



SOP TITLE	Procedures for Expert Committee Operations
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1.0 Purpose and Applicability

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) gives uniform guidelines for the operation of TNI Expert Committees, Task Forces, and similar groups (collectively “committees”). The TNI Consensus Standards Development Program Executive Committee (CSDP EC) is responsible for appointing such standing and special committees, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, as deemed necessary to further the objectives of TNI.

The CSDP EC is governed by SOP 1-101, Operation of TNI Committees. This SOP outlines any requirements not already covered by SOP 1-101. Both SOPs 1-101 and 2-101 may be complemented by procedures developed and documented by the committees to which they apply, but may not be superseded by those procedures.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 committees to which it applies. These procedures apply to the membership and operation of all Expert Committees. Procedures other than balance are applicable to subcommittees and/or workgroups (by whatever name).

3.0 Related Documents

POL 1-129 Expected Conduct of Participants in TNI Activities
 SOP 1-102 Voting Rules for TNI Committees
 SOP 1-125, Committee Application and Membership Tracking Procedures
 SOP 2-100 Procedures Governing Standards Development
 SOP 2-102 CSDP EC Procedure for Addressing Conflicts of Interest
 TNI By-Laws

4.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Accreditation Body (AB)	Authoritative body that performs accreditation. NOTE 1 to entry: The authority of an accreditation body is generally derived from government.
Affiliate Committee Member	A person who is not a TNI member but has technical expertise needed by a specific committee, is invited to join the committee, and has full voting privileges.
Associate Committee Member	A TNI member who may participate in a committee, but who does not have voting privileges.
Balance	A condition in which no Stakeholder Group has a majority of voting members and all default Stakeholder Groups are represented
Closed Session	An Expert Committee meeting where attendance and participation is limited to the Program Administrator and the voting members of that committee
Committee Member	All Elected, Associate, and Affiliate members
Consensus Body	A group whose membership meets the requirements of balance and lack of dominance. The group maintains: (i) openness; (ii) balance of interest; (iii) due process; (iv) an appeals process; and (v) a process to achieve consensus
Consensus Standard Development Program	The committee within TNI that has responsibility for the Consensus Standard Development Program. This executive committee provides oversight to Expert Committees in the development of standards

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**Executive Committee
(CSDP EC)**

Dominance	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
Elected Member	A TNI member who applied for and is approved to participate on a committee and has full voting privileges.
Expert Committee	A committee whose duties include the development and maintenance of consensus standards.
Field Sampling Measurement Organization (FSMO)	Organizations engaged in environmental sampling and field measurement activities.
Laboratory	An organization that collects or analyzes samples in a fixed-base, mobile, or field-testing facility for chemical, and/or physical, and/or bacteriological properties or parameters
Stakeholder Group	any group of individuals with a direct and material interest in a particular TNI activity and that participates by: a) expressing a position and its basis, b) having that position considered, and c) having the right to appeal. Default Stakeholder Groups are Accreditation Bodies, Accredited Organizations, and Other
Standard	A document that has been developed and established within the consensus principles of TNI and that meets the requirements of TNI procedures. The term “standard” refers to a revised section, module, or volume as well as to the complete package of modules once adopted and implemented, such as the Environmental Laboratory Sector Standard.
Standard Interpretation Request (SIR)	The submission of a request for an interpretation of how a standard applies to a particular situation, including the review of draft interpretations and adoption of a final approved interpretation.
Voting Member	All Elected and Affiliate members

5.0 Commitment to Openness, Inclusiveness, Transparency and Equity

- 5.1 Committees must conduct their activities openly, following procedures that promote the inclusion of all TNI members. Committees must provide due notice of their meetings and must 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 must not be used to otherwise circumvent TNI’s commitment to transparency of operations. Deliberations and decisions made during closed sessions must be documented as appropriate. These deliberations and decisions may only be available to the members of the committee that conducted the closed session, and the TNI Executive Committee.
- 5.3 Because of the diversity of the committee’s membership, it is understood that each person may have a particular viewpoint on an issue. Committee members must declare potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest when the committee votes on any matter, except for routine administrative issues. When a person has doubt as to whether a conflict of interest may exist, the person must declare the presumed conflict so it can be properly evaluated. If an individual wishes the nature of his or her conflict to remain private, that person may simply recuse themselves from the issue at hand. Recusal must be effective for both discussion and voting purposes, and the vote counted as an abstention. When an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest is identified, then the committee along with the individual(s) so affected will decide whether or not further action, such as recusal from participating in the formal discussion (i.e., after the initiating motion is made) and abstaining from the vote itself, is appropriate or necessary.

6.0 Basic Duties of Committees

- 6.1 Committees have authority to establish policies and procedures to conduct their business in support of TNI's mission.
- 6.2 Committees must document their mission, composition, objectives, success measures, available resources and anticipated meeting schedule in charters following a format developed by the TNI Policy Committee.
- 6.3 Committees must document decisions they make following SOP 1-102 Voting Rules for TNI Committees.
- 6.4 The CSDP EC must review committees' policies, procedures, and charters to ensure they are not in conflict with each other.
- 6.5 Voting Members of an Expert Committee constitute the Consensus Body for the Standard, volume, or module for which they are responsible. When a standard is presented to the committee for approval, all voting members of the Expert Committee are required to vote.
- 6.6 The duties of Expert Committees include:
 - Development and maintenance of consensus standards
 - Resolution of Standard Interpretation Requests
Note: Resolution of Standard Interpretations Requests is described in SOPs 3-105 and 5-106
 - Development of guidance documents, as necessary
 - Contributing to the development of SOPs, as necessary

7.0 Committee Membership

7.1 Committee Composition

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

7.1.2. 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 Expert Committee's scope of activity. Requests for changes in the stakeholder group designations for a given Committee must be presented to the CSDP EC, and under its recommendation, be presented to the TNI Board of Directors for its approval.

7.1.3. Voting membership is based on approved Committee membership. Details regarding the application for membership, review and approval process are presented in SOP 1-125.

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- 7.1.4. Associate Committee Members may fully participate in committee activities but do not have voting privileges. All TNI members are eligible to be Associate Members of any TNI Expert Committee.
- 7.1.5. Elected Members and Associate Committee Members must be TNI members. Affiliates may be sought out by the Committee based upon their expertise. After the committee determines an individual should be added as an Affiliate, the PA sends a secure link to an on-line application form for the proposed Affiliate to complete before becoming eligible to fully participate as a Voting Member. Affiliates have a declared Stakeholder Group and must be accounted for in terms of balance.
- 7.1.6. Appropriate committee operations are best served when the number of Voting Members is not less than five (5) and not more than fifteen (15). No more than 30% of Voting Members may be Affiliates. If an Expert Committee would like to have a number of Voting Members that is more than 15, it must request approval of the CSDP EC. A Super Majority vote of the CSDP EC is required to approve such a request.
- 7.1.7. Organizations may have more than one Voting Member on a Committee. An organization is a company, state agency, or municipal government, EPA Program/Office/Region, or other federal agency. However, membership on a committee is limited to two members of an organization without the recommendation of the CSDP EC and the approval of the TNI Board of Directors.
- 7.1.8. 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. Balance among Stakeholder Groups must be ensured. Expert Committee Chairs and the CSDP EC Chair will ensure through the membership application and approval process that the overall interests of all members of the community can be maintained.
- 7.1.9. Individuals may serve as a Voting Member on more than one expert committee concurrently.
- 7.1.10. At least annually or whenever there is a change made to the make-up of a committee, the CSDP EC Chair and applicable Expert Committee Chair(s) will review Committee membership rosters for balance, general make-up of the committee, and appropriate representation by the overall community.

7.2 Becoming a Committee Member

- 7.2.1 At least annually, an announcement is placed in the TNI Newsletter that lists each Expert Committee and the number of representatives of each Stakeholder Group on that committee. In conjunction with that announcement, instructions are included directing any interested applicant to the website to file an application to join an Expert Committee, as well as contact information to request additional clarity.
- 7.2.2 Applications for committee membership may be submitted and accepted at any time.
- 7.2.3 Any TNI member may apply to join any Expert Committee by completing the TNI Committee Application in the Member section of the TNI website.
- 7.2.4 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;

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- 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.

- 7.2.5 TNI procedures for receiving applications and tracking committee membership can be found in SOP 1-125. Applications are reviewed for completeness and accuracy by the Program Administrator. 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 also include individual committee membership and terms of service, changes in Stakeholder Group, resignations, or terminations from the committee.
- 7.2.6 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 Voting Members may be added to the Committee at any time. If there is not an available position on the Committee for a new member of that Stakeholder Group, or if an applicant is not confirmed for appointment to a committee, the application will be returned to the Program Administrator (PA) for notification of the applicant and documentation of the decision. Any applicant who cannot be approved for Voting Membership, for whatever reason, will be offered an Associate Committee Member position.
- 7.2.7 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 its designee, will recommend their appointment to the Chair of the CSDP EC.
- 7.2.8 Appointments of Voting Members will be confirmed by the Chair of the CSDP EC as soon as practicable but within 30 days of receipt of notice that a new member was elected.
- 7.2.9 Voting 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 CSDP EC. The Program Administrator will maintain a record of the decision.

7.3 Terms of Appointment for Voting Members

- 7.3.1 Voting 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 must be given staggered terms at the formation of a committee. 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 Voting Members added to the committee throughout the year, begin immediately upon approval by the Chair of the CSDP EC.
- 7.3.4 Terms for committee members expire as follows: (1) an Elected Member voted onto the committee prior to September 1 of a calendar year has a term that expires three years from that calendar year; or (2) an Elected Member voted onto the committee on or after September 1 of a calendar year has a term that expires three years from the following year. The year the term expires is recorded in the database according to SOP 1-125. For example:

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- Membership started August 30, 2020, the expiration of the term would be after the Winter meeting in January of 2023.
- Membership started September 1, 2020, the expiration of the term would be after the Winter meeting in January of 2024.

7.3.5 If an Elected Committee Member whose term on the committee is expiring is taking on a new substantive role within the committee, leading an ongoing activity that needs to be completed, or if no other qualified candidates are available, one additional term of three years or less (beyond the second term) may be approved. If the Committee Chair endorses the extension, the Chair must petition the CSDP EC for its approval. If it is the committee Chair making the petition for an extension, a simple majority vote of the Expert Committee is needed to endorse the additional term. If the Expert Committee endorses the extension, the Chair must petition the CSDP EC for its approval.

7.4 Maintaining Balance in a Committee

- 7.4.1 If a Voting Member changes employment, the member must notify the committee. If the change creates imbalance, the Voting Member must be removed from the committee as a voting member.
- 7.4.2 If a Voting Member resigns from a committee and the change creates imbalance, the committee must elect a new Voting Member to resolve the imbalance. If a new Voting Member cannot be elected for whatever reason, the Committee must re-establish balance before any additional committee operations may occur.
- 7.4.3 Membership rules (i.e., the number of members from a given organization, the total number of members in a committee) must be followed when committees are dealing with balance.

7.5 Removal of Voting Member

On the recommendation of the committee Chair to the CSDP EC, a Voting 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,
- 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 7.2.4; or
- Member fails (without good cause) to provide a vote on a Standard when presented for approval.

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 member must apply to become an associate committee member. A member may apply at any time to become an associate committee member.
- 7.6.3 The Program Administrator must annually verify the continued participation of associate committee members.

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7.6.4 Committee Chairs must allow associate committee members to participate in all committee meetings, but may establish rules that allow Voting Members time to deliberate among themselves and to complete committee business.

7.6.5 The participation in closed committee sessions is limited to Voting Members and Program Administrators.

7.7 Consensus Body

The Voting Members of an Expert Committee constitute the Consensus Body for the Standard, for which they are responsible.

8.0 Committee Leadership

8.1 Committees must annually elect a Chair and a Vice Chair from among its Voting Members, typically at one of the committee's first meetings of the year. Except for a newly created committee, the Chair should have served on the committee as a member or associate for at least one year.

8.2 Upon the recommendation of the CSDP EC, the Chair of the TNI Board of Directors retains authority to remove, for cause, a committee Chair from office.

8.3 An Affiliate may only serve as the Chair of an Expert Committee with the approval of the Consensus Standards Development Program Executive Committee.

8.4 The committee Chair is responsible for the efficient operation of his or her committee. The committee Chair with the support of the Program Administrator:

8.4.1 Schedules committee meetings.

8.4.2 Posts committee meeting schedules on the TNI Website.

8.4.3 Sets the agenda for committee meetings.

8.4.4 Presides and conducts committee meetings.

8.4.5 Ensures that minutes of committee meetings are made available to the TNI IT Administrator as soon as practicable.

8.4.6 Conducts the selection process of new Voting Members and new committee Chair.

8.4.7 Maintains up to date rosters of Voting Members.

8.4.8 Provides to the Executive Director an annual report of committee activities and accomplishments for presentation at the Annual Meeting.

8.4.9 Facilitates communication with other committees to fulfill program objectives.

8.4.10 Develops, schedules, performs, and reports on the results of internal audits of TNI committee operations.

8.5 The Vice-Chair performs any duties assigned by the committee Chair and all the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.

8.6 The committee Chair may appoint additional officers with the committee's concurrence.

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9.0 Subcommittees and Work Groups

- 9.1 Expert Committee Chairs, with concurrence of their respective members, may establish subcommittees or work groups to complete specific tasks that help fulfill program objectives.
- 9.2 Subcommittees or work groups must consist of at least three members. Subcommittees are formed for long-term, continuous work whereas work groups are formed to address short-term, finite, tasks.
 - 9.2.1 In subcommittees and work groups all members have a vote.
 - 9.2.2 The Expert Committee votes to approve the outcome of a subcommittee or workgroup.
- 9.3 The committee must assign and approve the scope of tasks for the subcommittee. The scope may include subcommittee composition. Subcommittee minutes must be reported to the respective Expert Committee and either included in the Expert Committee minutes or posted separately to the website.
- 9.4 When the work group has completed its work, the work product is returned to the parent committee, and the work group is disbanded. Based upon the shorter-term efforts of a work group, minutes are optional.
- 9.5 Subcommittees and work groups may only provide recommendations on proposed actions to be voted on by the Expert Committee.

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 is 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 appropriate. Notice of any non-routine 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 must send invitations regarding virtual meetings to all Committee Members, associate members, and any TNI member asking to participate in a particular meeting. Invitations should be sent at least three days prior to a virtual meeting and may include a tentative 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 Voting Members before allowing others to speak.
- 10.1.6 TNI routinely uses the recording feature available in conference calling applications for quality control purposes to accurately capture discussions for subsequent publication in the published minutes. 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.

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10.2 In-person Meetings

- 10.2.1 Committees may meet in-person as necessary to conduct business. All in-person meetings are open to TNI members and the general public, except when a committee meets during a closed session. In-person meetings will generally include the semi-annual TNI Forum on Environmental Accreditation and any special meetings scheduled by an Expert Committee.
- 10.2.2 Notification of in-person meetings is the responsibility of the Executive Director of TNI or their designee, and is typically accomplished via the TNI website, email and mail. In-person meetings follow the same procedures as found in Section 10.1.
- 10.2.3 When an in-person meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the TNI Forum, the agenda for the in-person meeting must be supplied to the TNI Executive Director or designee by the committee chair or the committee's PA. The agenda must be supplied in time for publication in the event program.
- 10.2.4 Notification of non-routine meetings must be made at least 30 days prior to said meeting. The Chair will send out a reminder to all Committee Members. A tentative agenda may be included with the reminder.
- 10.2.5 In-person meetings and webinars designed to share information with the public and solicit feedback have no requirements for a quorum.

10.3 Documentation of Proceedings

- 10.3.1 Minutes must be taken and are 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 must include date and time of the meeting, a list of all Members 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. Included with the listing of Voting Members must be their Stakeholder Group, employer, and contact information (email or postal mailing address), but must not include telephone numbers.
- 10.3.3 Minutes must include a summary of discussions on Standards that are conducted during committee meetings. Voting on Standards that are a proposed American National Standard (ANS) must be accompanied by an individual tally of each member's vote.

11.0 Committee Charters and Work Plans

- 11.1 Each Committee must 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. The Charter is approved by the Chair of the CSDP EC with the concurrence of the CSDP EC Members. Final approval of a Charter or revisions thereof 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.
- 11.3 Each committee or task force develops a Charter which describes the group's goals, objectives, and success measures.

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11.4 A Work Plan (however named) is a document that tracks in detail the activity of a group during each year. The Work Plan can be a stand-alone document used internally by the group or appended to each set of minutes.

Each committee or task force is free to establish its own format, but typically include the following elements:

- Task description,
- Date initiated,
- Date completed,
- Document number (if applicable),
- Status, and
- Comment

12.0 Complaints

If a complaint is received, resolution of the complaint follows the procedure found in SOP 2-104, CSDP EC Complaint Procedure. It is important to note that complaints may be delivered via the Complaint form found on the TNI website as well as via email, phone, or in person.

13.0 References

- SOP 1–101: Operation of TNI Committees
- SOP 2-104: CSDP EC Complaint Procedure
- SOP 3-105: Standard Interpretation Process
- SOP 5-106: NEFAP Standard Interpretation SOP
- TNI Quality Management Plan
- TNI Strategic Plan
- Robert's Rules of Order*

14.0 SOP Approved Changes

Revision	Date of Change	Description of Change
0	10/17/2007	New Document.
1.0	3/18/2010	Major rewrite to match TNI operations.
1.1	1/23/2015	Changes based upon voting requirements and clarification of recorded meeting records.
2.0	01/11/2018	Changes to sections: 2.1.2 by adding the Asbestos and WET committees; 2.3.3 by adding a sentence about representation; 2.4.4 allowing individual to serve on more than one committee; 2.5.2 was added to allow an additional term in special situations; 3.1.7 and 3.2.7 by removing the 5 and 10-day requirement for minutes; 3.2.8 was added to not list phone numbers of committee members; and minor editorial changes.
2.1	1/10/2019	Modified section 2.3.3 to allow for more than one member per organization (up to 2) on an expert committee.
3.0	06/11/2020	Revised throughout to reflect operational changes.
3.1	06/12/2020	Editorial changes to 11.1.6 and 11.2.8.
4.0	05/19/2023	Revised for consistency with SOP 1-101 regarding definitions and format.
4.1	06/02/2023	Minor edits by the Policy committee
4.2	07/11/2024	Edits made in definitions for consistency between SOPs 1-101, 2-100, and 2-101; changes made to affiliate per TNI Board. Added section 10.2.5 related to quorum for in-person meetings. Added section 12 on Complaints. Changed shall to must throughout.