

Summary of the Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, 2024 1:00 pm Eastern

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Yumi welcomed everyone to the meeting, as Aaren has stepped back from the Chair role for a few months. Attendance is noted in Attachment 1 and the agenda as distributed is in Attachment 2. The agenda was approved by unanimous vote after a motion by Nilda seconded by Aaren. The minutes of January 16, 2024, were approved unanimously after a motion by Bill, seconded by Aaren.

2. Discussion of Comment Number 2

Florida's program manager had joined the October 2023 meeting to discuss this comment, explaining that Florida's process of having the third party assessor (TPA) send the final assessment report to the lab and the AB simultaneously is well established and is included in the contract language for all TPAs. Florida staff review the report within a few days and, if revisions are needed, those are requested from the TPA and an amended report is issued, but that is an uncommon occurrence. This is the first time that the committee has focused its discussion on how to proceed.

There is strong sentiment among some, but not all, of the parties who have taken positions on whether the AB must release the report after it is reviewed or if Florida's process is acceptable. Discussion points are summarized below:

Insistence that the AB be the party releasing assessment reports after final approval. Possibly a time extension for releasing the report (longer than the current 30 days) would ease FL's concerns. No time period was offered, but two weeks has been previously discussed. Five days seems insufficient.

All other ABs either do review reports prior to release, or wish they were doing so (from a Lead Evaluator).

LAB should consult with the full Accreditation Council prior to making any change, in order to avoid having this issue remain controversial and require a third revision of the V2M1 Draft Standard (DS).

If the assessment report preparation time is extended, the lab should also be given an equivalent amount of additional time to respond with its corrective actions.

The point is not which party actually delivers the report, but rather a desire to have the AB review and approve it prior to delivery, as is done when the assessors are state employees of the AB. This was the reason the change was made to §6.4.4.1 in Revision 1 of the DS, in response to a comment from an AB. Now, a different AB is objecting to the change.

LAB may be making this too complicated, as Florida's process does not seem to create problems. Labs can always question a finding if they believe it to be inappropriate.

What matters is that the AB is responsible for the content of the assessment report. The problem is not about correcting typographical errors, but about state enforcement and the AB's responsibility for the report's content.

The 30-day time limit was originally put into Volume 2 because some ABs were not providing assessment reports for extended periods, and labs were complaining loudly.

If the AB does not review the report prior to delivery to the lab, does that endanger the AB's recognition? Not presently.

In §7.6.7, it's not clear whether the AC can actually accept "responsibility" for the assessment report without ever having reviewed it. Section 5.5 is also pertinent. If the AB is willing to accept the risk of having to enforce a report that was not reviewed, perhaps the current system in Florida should be allowed to stand as-is.

From an evaluator, there is at least one additional AB that does not review reports prior to issuance to the lab, as its interpretation of the statute authorizing use of TPAs appears to state that the AB does not actually have oversight of the contractor.

An assessor explained that 30 days is already too long to write the report, as details get forgotten over time. A week is ideal.

One participant noted that there appeared to be a consensus to require that the AB review the report, but no consensus on timeframe modifications. Aaren offered a motion that comments 2 and 3 be determined to be persuasive, but no second was offered and the motion died. Yumi will take the issue to the NELAP Accreditation Council, along with an issue about certificates that arose from conference. This may happen in March or be delayed until April or May, depending on factors beyond LAB's control.

3. Consider Potential Language Revisions for Persuasive Comments

The following actions were taken after discussion and agreement on language revisions to comments already deemed persuasive at prior meetings:

Comment #	Line # (sorted blue/green spreadsheet)	Section	Change to language, from consensus decision
64 and 62	41 and 60	7.11.1.2.8 And 7.7.5.1.10	Remove phrase "prior to the assessment"
71	43	7.14.3	Change time for retention to six (6) years, equivalent to two evaluation cycles
8 and 69	53 and 54	7.6.3.5	Delete the "all caps" phrase. Complaints are covered in ISO language elsewhere
61	61	7.7.5.1.5 and 7.7.5.1.6	Insert new clause between those two sections, "failure to submit acceptable correction report, as required" and renumber subsequent sections as needed. Change the 5 decimal numbering to 4 decimals and lower-case letters (here and also in §7.11.1.2). Amend 7.7.5.1 to state "Reasons to deny initial application for accreditation...".

4. New Business

Marlene provided advance notice that with the Field Activities Committee's (FAC's) revision of the FSMO Standard, they are trying to make it consistent with the Environmental Lab (EL) Standard, to the extent possible. That committee is going through the EL V2M1 Draft Standard in its current state (partially revised towards Revision 2), and it is likely that the FAC will request some additional items be added to "our" module, particularly concerning ethics and data integrity, in order to make the two Standards more consistent.

Aaren moved and Nilda seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Approval was unanimous.

5. Next Meeting

The next planned teleconference meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 1:00 pm Eastern.** Yumi is unavailable for this meeting, so Aaren will chair it, and she has asked that we use Microsoft Teams for screen sharing, to make editing easier. The Teams login information will be included in the meeting reminder that you receive, transmitting the agenda and updated documents.

Aaren asks that committee members unable to attend please notify her and Lynn prior to the meeting date.

Attachment 1 LAB Expert Committee Roster

Name/Email	Term ends	Affiliation	Present?
Aaren Alger, Chair Aaren.s.alger@gmail.com	1/30/2026 (2nd term)	Other – Alger Consulting & Training	Yes
Socorro Baldonado sbaldonado@mwdh2o.com	1/30/2026 (2nd term)	Lab – Metropolitan Water District, La Verne, CA	Yes
Nilda Cox nilda.cox@et.eurofinsus.com	1/30/2025 (2nd term)	Lab – Eurofins Eaton Analytical LLC	Yes
Yumi Creason, Vice Chair ycreason@pa.gov	1/30/2025 (1 st term)	AB – Pennsylvania	Yes
Bill Hall george.w.hall@des.nh.gov	1/30/2026 (1st term)	AB – NH DES	Yes
Sviatlana Haubner Sviatlana.Haubner@cincinnati-oh.gov	1/30/2025 (1 st term)	LAB – Cincinnati Metropolitan Sewer District	No
Michella Karapondo Karapondo.michella@epa.gov	1/30/2025 (1st term)	Other – EPA OGWDW TSC/Cincinnati	No
Michael Perry michael.perry@lvvwd.com	1/30/2026 (2nd term)	Lab – Southern Nevada Water Authority	No
Zaneta Popovska zpopovska@anab.org	1/30/2025 (2nd term)	AB – ANAB	Yes
Program Administrator: Lynn Bradley Lynn.Bradley@nelac-institute.org	N/A		Yes
Associate Members:			
Paul Bergeron Paul.bergeron@la.gov		AB – LDEQ	No
Debbie Bond dbond@southernco.com		LAB – Alabama Power	Yes
Taryn Hurley taryn.hurley@deq.ok.gov		AB – OK DEQ	Yes
Paul Junio paul.junio@pacelabs.com		LAB – Pace Labs, Inc.	No
Carl Kircher, Chair carl_kircher@flhealth.gov		AB – Florida Department of Health	No
LeeAnn Kline lkline@mireider.com		M J Reider Associates	No
Ryan Lerch Ryan.lerch@deq.ok.gov		AB – OK DEQ	Yes
Marlene Moore mmoore@advancedsys.com		Other – Advanced Systems, Inc., Newark, DE	Yes
Mei Beth Shepherd, Vice Chair mbshep@sheptechserv.com		Other – Shepherd Technical Services	No
Nicholas Slawson nslawson@a2la.org		AB – A2LA	No
Ilona Taunton Ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org		Other – TNI Program Administrator	No
Cathy Westerman cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov		AB – VA DCLS	Yes

Attachment 2 – LAB Expert Committee Meeting Agenda, February 20, 2024

- Welcome and Roll Call
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes (January minutes attached)
- Discussion of Comment #2, §6.4.1.1 (draft module and Response-to-Comments files and also October minutes summarizing discussion with Florida, attached)
- Consider Potential Language Revisions for Persuasive Comments (as noted in the attached Response-to-Comments spreadsheet)
- New Business, if any
- Adjourn