

**Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting
Monday, July 3, 2023 1:30 pm Eastern**

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kristin welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1. The minutes of June 5, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote after a motion by Millie, seconded by Lynn Boysen.

2. Discussion of Possibilities for Revising the NELAP Evaluation Process

Unfortunately, due to the July 4 holiday weekend, the LAB Expert Committee leadership was unavailable for this meeting, but Lynn presented the ideas and concepts that have been discussed in LAB and with the NELAP evaluators group. A brief summary of information contained in the materials attached to the meeting reminder is provided here, and discussion points about several of the outstanding issue are captured.

The primary reason for updating this process is to focus on successful implementation of the AB's documented procedures. Consensus exists that evaluations performed for initial applications and for the first evaluations after a new standard (Volume 2) is implemented should focus on ensuring that adequate documentation exists, but otherwise, for renewal applications, only updates to that documentation need to be reviewed. Then the evaluation team will be able to focus on implementation.

A secondary reason emerged early in the discussions, with many evaluators asking for additional team members to share the workload. Several possibilities have been identified but finding additional evaluators may be a significant challenge.

Four draft options were offered for discussion, with the various components to be viewed as a "mix'n'match" of possibilities discussed, rather than already agreed-upon actions.

Team size – Expanding the evaluation team size using only state staff will be problematic, but it may be feasible to bring other stakeholders into the process – lab staff, data users, state and federal program personnel (regulators), non-NELAP states, NGABs, and NGOs (non-profits involved in environmental protection). Training for these non-AB personnel would be crucial, and would need to be thorough enough to encompass concepts that state AB staff are likely to be familiar with already, such as basic assessment activities. Conflict of interest issues, particularly with competitive labs, would need to be managed carefully, if this idea moves forward; perhaps limiting participation to captive or municipal labs could eliminate that.

Another possible way of reducing the impact on evaluator workloads might be to spread out the activities over three years, with roughly a third of the evaluation occurring annually.

Assessor competency – A number of evaluators would like to see assessor competency included in evaluations, possibly even bringing back the observations of assessments. Not all ABs favor this, preferring to do their own workforce evaluations. Lynn noted that the Credentials Committee is likely to pick up its review of how to offer a credential ensuring assessor competency, as one of the next few roles it addresses.

Standardized internal audit checklists – using an AB's internal audit checklist might be a

way of streamlining some aspects of the evaluation, if there could be a standardized checklist used by all ABs. This idea drew mixed reaction but no firm resistance. Florida is currently overhauling its internal process now and offered to share its materials, if desired.

A related issue, standard forms to fill out as part of the renewal applications, met with no hard objection, also. Examples given were from Minnesota's "Key Performance Indicators" spreadsheet, although not all ABs have a comprehensive database from which to pull those numbers.

Another possibility for shortening the Technical Review checklist would be to eliminate those ISO items that don't really pertain to governmental ABs, such as "legal entity" and not offering consultation (when states are often required to provide "compliance assistance").

Several evaluators have wished for standardized method checklists, and the only objections to these were the huge number of them that would be required, and who would create and maintain them. Once again, Florida offered to share its "cheat sheets" which apply to many of the more common methods, and indicate which methods require specific activities (or not). One participant noted that if a standard checklist were inaccurate, that would be a serious liability for the AB.

Next steps – the LAB committee will discuss revising the evaluation process at its conference session, which takes place on Thursday morning, August 3. Then the Council will hold its own discussion of the issues after lunch on that same day.

3. New Business

Lynn noted that the Program Manager training has been submitted to the Training Coordinator (Ilona) after a final review by Kristin and Michele (who will be the trainers). She asked whether AB representatives would need only a Certificate of Attendance (no quiz), or if a Certificate of Completion (with short quiz to be completed after the training) was desirable. After a brief discussion, Lynn agreed to discuss this with the trainers and create a short quiz.

Minnesota raised an issue about secondary accreditation of a lab that could not provide evidence of a NELAP assessment, only to the Defense Department QSM and also ISO/IEC 17025. This is likely an issue that can only be resolved between the primary AB and Minnesota, or by unilateral decision of Minnesota, since the NELAP Mutual Recognition Policy POL 3-100 does not address any aspect of this issue.

After a request, Kristin agreed to contact Jerry about a possible location for a private meeting of the Council, probably during the Technology Showcase on Tuesday afternoon.

4. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NELAP AC will be on Thursday afternoon, August 3, at 1-3 pm Central, during the Environmental Measurement Symposium. Council members will be notified of how to access this meeting remotely, closer to the meeting date. WebEx invitations are typically sent out the morning of the meeting.

The next teleconference meeting of the NELAP AC is tentatively scheduled for **Monday, September 11, 2023, at 1:30 pm Eastern**. A final decision will be made at conference. An agenda and documents will be provided in advance.

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
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