

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2020-2025**

**THE NELAC INSTITUTE**

April 8, 2020

## Mission

To be the leader in providing systems and processes to foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an open, inclusive, and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the community.

## Vision

All entities generating environmental data will be uniformly accredited to the TNI standards.

**Strategy 1:**  
**Establish and maintain national programs for the accreditation of environmental laboratories, field sampling and measurement organizations, and other organizations involved in the generation of environmental monitoring data.**

**Goal 1.1 Ensure that TNI accreditation standards are used universally and are developed or revised as needed in an efficient process.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Educate all states on the benefits of the TNI standard and advocate for additional states to become ABs where appropriate.	Advocacy	Medium
Maintain a streamlined and effective standards development process.	CSDPEC	Medium
Develop a better document control process.	CSDPEC	High
Review and modify TNI standards as appropriate and consistent with ANSI requirements, with the goal of a 5-year cycle.	CSDPEC	On-going
- Address the 2019 ANSI findings.	CSDPEC	High
- Address modifications needed for ISO 17011 and 17025: 2017.	CSDPEC	High
- Address issues with the DOD QSM as needed.	CSDPEC	High
Maintain an effective and efficient process for interpretation of standards.	LASEC	On-going
- Create a new document that addresses 2003, 2009 and 2016 interpretations.	CSDPEC	High

**Goal 1.2 Maintain and expand an effective national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Maintain a respected and efficient system for recognizing states as Accreditation Bodies.	NELAP AC	On-going
Track AB implementation of Environmental Laboratory standards developed by TNI.	Board/NELAP PA	High
Update and improve the national database of accredited laboratories.	IT and NELAP AC	High
- Simplify and streamline TNI method codes.	IT and NELAP AC	High
- Address other issues from the AC.	IT	High
Support implementation and use of the generic application form for laboratories.	IT	Medium
Work with California to assist them with becoming a TNI AB.	Advocacy	Medium
Work with other states to assist them with becoming ABs.	Advocacy	Medium
Explore the feasibility of a four-year evaluation cycle.	NELAP AC	Medium
Encourage NELAP ABs to accept an assessment conducted by a TNI-recognized third party assessor body and/or NGAB as appropriate.	Advocacy	Medium
Advocate key decisionmakers to establish a mandate for national accreditation based on the TNI standard for all media and all laboratories.	Advocacy	Medium
- Explore the feasibility of consolidating two-tier programs in NELAP states.	Advocacy	Medium
- Work with NELAP ABs to require accreditation for all laboratories.	Advocacy	Medium

**TNI Strategic Plan - Goal 1.3 Maintain and expand an effective national program for the accreditation of field sampling and measurement organizations (FSMOs).**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Streamline Program/EC operations to minimize resources required to maintain program based on size and need.	NEFAP EC	Medium
Focus available resources and efforts towards marketing the program.	NEFAP EC	High
Establish subcommittee dedicated to evaluating training needs and developing classes related to field measurement and sampling.	NEFAP EC	High
Establish metrics and timeline for evaluation of success measures and impact on program.	NEFAP EC	High
Maintain a respected and efficient system for recognizing field Accreditation Bodies using a combined evaluation program with other TNI programs.	NEFAP EC	Ongoing
Develop revenue source via training or other streams to fully support this program and marketing activities needed for growth.	NEFAP EC	Medium
Determine a path forward regarding its interaction with the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP).	NEFAP EC	Low

**Goal 1.4 Maintain and expand a Proficiency Testing (PT) program to support a national environmental accreditation program that contains FOPT tables, analytes, etc. and assures all PT providers are competent.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Implement all policies and procedures necessary for operation and continual improvement of a national PT program – for various matrices, stakeholders and accreditation programs.	PTPEC	High
Maintain an oversight program for PT providers to ensure that the providers are competent to operate environmental PT programs.	PTPEC	On-going
Ensure that Fields of Proficiency Testing (FoPTs) are appropriate for their intended use.	PTPEC	On-going
Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the PT provider oversight program and the FoPTs.	PTPEC	On-going
Develop a better process for setting PT acceptance limits.	PTPEC	High
Develop a better process for getting PT data to handle complaints about FoPT Tables.	PTPEC	Medium
Develop a revenue source to fully support this program.	Finance	Medium
Ensure that FoPT tables have appropriate input from all stakeholders.	PTPEC	High
Explore the feasibility of technology-based PTs.	PTPEC	Medium

**Strategy 2:**  
**Promote TNI as the premier resource for all activities related to generating environmental measurement data.**

**Goal 2.1 Enable and encourage stakeholders to participate in the activities of TNI.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Provide routine communications/information to TNI members.	Advocacy, ED	On-going
Encourage members to participate in the development of standards by providing input.	CSDP	Medium
Create and sustain a systematic approach for encouraging volunteers to become involved in TNI activities and ensure a pool of volunteers is available for all types of committees.	Advocacy and staff	High
Maintain and improve an orientation program for new members. Develop a webinar for new member orientation.	Advocacy	Medium

**Goal 2.2 Promote the benefits of accreditation to stakeholders, advocate for stronger support of accreditation from data users, and persuade data users to make accreditation mandatory.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Develop a long-range plan for promoting the use of the TNI accreditation program to data users. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show the value/benefits.</li> <li>- Demonstrate the improvement in performance and data quality.</li> </ul>	Advocacy	High
Identify opportunities to promote TNI at regional and national meetings.	Advocacy	On-going
Develop a "State of National Accreditation" report every two years and offer briefings to interested stakeholders.	Advocacy	High
Expand outreach to non-NELAP states <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the "State of National Accreditation" briefing noted above to assessors.</li> <li>• Assign a TNI ambassador to every non-NELAP state, identify current barriers.</li> <li>• Develop an Introduction to NELAP webinar.</li> </ul>	Advocacy	Medium
Meet periodically with EPA program offices (e.g., Drinking Water, Air, Solid Waste, and Wastewater), other federal agencies, state agencies, trade associations, other data users, and FSMOs to promote TNI and to better understand their needs for reliable environmental data and work to ensure the TNI program meets the needs of all data users.	Advocacy	Medium
Continue to conduct Assessment Forums to disseminate information. Make Assessment Forums more widely available through webcast recordings.	LASEC/Training	High
Effectively use the Small Laboratory Advocate to engage small laboratories and to disseminate information to small laboratories.	Advocacy	High
Expand the NEMC help desk to provide information about TNI standards and accreditation. <sup>1</sup>	Advocacy	Medium
Explore how to effectively use social media and implement a social media strategy.	Advocacy	Low
Work with other trade associations to develop National program at the Federal level.	Advocacy	High

1. Advocacy has responsibility for organizing; other groups will participate.

**Goal 2.3 Provide conferences that are beneficial to the environmental community, enhance TNI's mission and contribute resources to support TNI's programs.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Continue to hold a semi-annual Forum on Laboratory Accreditation.	Advocacy	On-going
Continue to co-sponsor the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC).	NEMC Steering Committee	On-going
Explore opportunities for working cooperatively with other organizations to hold other regional conferences and workshops.	Advocacy	Medium

**Goal 2.4 Establish TNI as the premier organization for training in areas related to environmental measurements.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Establish a standing committee to develop, support and expand a comprehensive training program for the environmental measurement community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a comprehensive plan for training.</li> <li>• Seek out additional contract trainers for needs identified.</li> <li>• Explore development of training tracks for quality managers, technical managers, and identify other needs.</li> <li>• Expand use of technology to administer and automatically grade tests and provide certificates and digital badges.</li> <li>• Increase use of available training materials already developed.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities to collaborate with other training providers.</li> </ul>	Training Committee	High
Revisit guidelines and pricing for contract training providers and review training fee structure.	Finance	High

**Strategy 3:**  
**Continue to maintain and improve infrastructure to ensure TNI's future success and financial sustainability.**

**Goal 3.1 Create a succession plan for sustainability.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Develop and implement a systematic approach for recruitment and succession planning for Board members and officers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solicit feedback from the Board in 2020.</li> </ul>	Nominating Committee	Medium
Create and maintain a succession plan for key individuals, both staff and committee leadership. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct an annual review of staffing plans, including committee chairs.</li> <li>Identify potential new members to step into key roles.</li> </ul>	Board and EC	Medium
Maintain a knowledge management system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a historical knowledge system about key organizational decisions.</li> </ul>	ED and EA	On-going

**Goal 3.2 Develop and maintain an effective management system.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Ensure adequate staff are available to support TNI programs.	ED and EC	On-going
Evaluate Executive Director performance on strategic plan goals and objectives on a periodic basis.	Executive Committee	Medium
Implement an orientation and training program for new Board members, committee chairs, and committee members.	ED, CSDP and Policy	On-going
Ensure the Board is representative of all stakeholders.	Nominating Committee	On-going
Update the Quality Management Plan upon approval of revised strategic plan.	ED, Policy and staff	Medium
Conduct internal audits as defined in the Quality Management Plan.	Committee chairs and PAs	On-going

**Goal 3.3 Increase the operational and management efficiency and effectiveness of TNI.**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Maintain fiscally prudent operations.	ED and Finance	On-going
Produce timely, accurate financial reports.	ED	On-going
Conduct annual financial audit or review as needed.	ED	On-going
Maintain an effective and transparent system for document control and records management.	Policy	On-going
Periodically monitor the progress of each program towards its objectives thru monthly program administrator reports and by the annual report.	Board	On-going
Produce an Annual Report for publication on the TNI website and distribution to TNI's supporting organizations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify the Annual Report at the Annual Meeting to focus on highlights supplemented by a more detailed report.</li> </ul>	ED and Advocacy	On-going

Maintain errors and omissions insurance.	ED	On-going
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**Goal 3.4 Acquire stable, long-term financial resources to support TNI programs and their growth.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Review pricing approach for membership dues and sale of standards, training courses and related items.	Finance	High
Grow financial reserve to 25% of annual expense by 2025.	Finance	Medium
Annually review income and expense and make adjustments for the upcoming year.	Finance	On-going
Investigate alternative sources of revenue.	ED and Board	High



**Strategy 4:**  
**Explore new opportunities to provide additional benefits to our stakeholders and support financial sustainability.**

**4.1 Explore the feasibility of developing programs to document individual competency (knowledge)**

Objective	Assigned to	Priority
Establish a task force to explore and make recommendations regarding programs to document competencies for Quality Managers, Technical Managers, Assessors, Samplers and others as appropriate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Such documentation may involve credentialing</li> </ul>	Task Force	High

**4.2 Explore the feasibility of developing implementation guidance, and ultimately, a standard for laboratory consumables**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Establish a task force to explore and make recommendations on developing implementation guidance for laboratory consumables. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider forming an Expert Committee to turn guidance into a standard once the initial effort is complete.</li> <li>- Ensure representation from the vendor community.</li> </ul>	Task Force	High

**4.3 Explore the feasibility of establishing a mentoring program for laboratories**

Objective	Assigned to	Priority
Explore and make recommendations on developing a mentoring program which considers various approaches such as one on one, conference calls, webinars and electronic bulletin boards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create as a subcommittee under Advocacy.</li> <li>- Use TNI Ambassadors to help implement.</li> </ul>	Advocacy	High

**4.4 Reach out to non-NELAP states to see how TNI can provide benefits to their program**

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Expand the Ambassador program.	Advocacy	Medium
Pursue opportunities to meet with non-NELAP states to discuss use of LAMS, FoPT tables, and evaluating their programs. <sup>2</sup>	Advocacy	Medium

2. Evaluating state certification programs (when EPA already does that for water) is beyond TNI's existing services and would require creating an entirely new TNI effort, because of the non-standard approaches used by the various states. Maybe replace it with some series of training courses or the certificate programs discussed in §2.4?

**4.5 Explore and make recommendations on the need and feasibility for developing standards for sensor technology**

Objective	Assigned to	Priority
Establish a task force to explore and make recommendations on the need to develop standards for sensor technology when appropriate.	Board and Task Force	Low

#### 4.6 Explore the acceptance of TNI standards internationally and make recommendations

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Explore the extent to which TNI standards are accepted internationally and make recommendations on next steps if any. <sup>3</sup>	Advocacy	Low

3. Ask the NGABs (and by extension, their ILAC signatory groups) – have they ever heard of international use? – before going any further.