Assessment Forum on Consistency
The Forum – Summer 2009
Summary Discussion and Feedback

TNI Assessment Forum
January 26, 2010
Barbara Escobar & Silky Labie
Objectives

- Summarize Past Discussions
- List Past Recommendations
- Best Practices

**Ultimate Objective…**

**Consistency in Assessments**
San Antonio Forum

- August 2009
- Assessment Forum – Perspectives
  - Data Users
  - 3rd Party Assessors
- Audience Input
- Consistency Discussions
Discussion Summary

3rd Party Accreditation Organizations

Consistency Strategies

- 2-Day Training on the Relevant Standard
- Annual Face-to Face and Webinars
- Assessors must Review Methods being Performed
  - Must be Familiar with Lab
Discussion Summary cont.

3rd Party Accreditation Organizations Consistency Strategies

- Team Leaders
  - Crucial in Keeping Assessments on Track
  - Oversight Necessary

- Cost to Lab for On-Site Visit should not Drive Assessment Length
  - Upfront Preparation Minimizes On-Site Visit Time
Discussion Summary cont.

3rd Party Accreditation Organizations
Consistency Strategies

- Report must be Clear & Concise
  - Factual Information

- Assessment Evaluations from lab are crucial
  - No Repercussions
Discussion Summary cont.

3rd Party Accreditation Organizations
Consistency Strategies

- Disclose Findings immediately
  - Document with Records
- No CARs Allowed During Audit
  - Root Cause Analysis Needed
- Require Lab to Provide Proof of Correction
  - Avoids Repeats
Accreditation/Certification = Meeting Standards
- Does not mean that lab always follows the audited process and procedures

Auditor must Determine how QS is Working not Simply that it Exists

Data must be Reviewed!

Working QS ≠ Usable Data
Recommendations

**Train Assessors:**
- Interviewing Techniques
- Assessing multiple versions of the same method
- Method Interpretation
  - Flexibility allowances
- Data Review
Recommendations cont.

Provide Resources:

- EPA CWA communication process, through their webpage and forwarded information through the State Assessor’s Forum, http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/methods/
Don’t:
- Cite General Standards for a Specific Issue/Finding
- Let “pet problems” Dominate Audit

Do:
- Make Reports Concise
- Look at the Whole Picture
  - Be a Renaissance Person
Recommendations cont.

**Avoid Repeat Findings:**

- Require Root Cause Analysis, not Instant Fixes
- Schedule Teleconference to Discuss Audit Report
- Require Proof of Correction
Recommendations cont.

- **Peer Review**
  - Share Audit Reports Among ABs
  - Compile Common Findings & Post

- **Actively Seek Laboratory Feedback**
  - Report Card or Score Card
Cloning the Ideal Assessor

- Technically Competent
- Knowledgeable in Policies
- Great Interpersonal & Organizational Skills
- Efficient Communication & Interviewing Skills
- Being Prepared, Thorough & Efficient
- Free!!!
Best Practices for Consistency

Let’s Share Ideas...