

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

THE NELAC INSTITUTE

July 9, 2025

Mission

To be the leader in providing systems and processes to foster the generation of reliable 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 directly involved in the generation of 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
1.1.1	Educate all states on the benefits of the TNI standard and advocate for additional states to become ABs where appropriate.	Advocacy	High
1.1.2	Maintain a streamlined and effective standards development process.	CSDP	High
1.1.3	Maintain an effective document control process for standards development.	PAs	High
1.1.4	Review and modify TNI standards as appropriate with the goal of a 5-year cycle.	CSDP	High
1.1.5	Continue to evaluate the use/need for ANSI accreditation relative to cost.	Board	Low
1.1.6	Complete the revisions to field and laboratory standard to incorporate ISO 17011 and 17025: 2017.	CSDP	High
1.1.7	Address issues related to the DOD QSM as needed, to include possible adoption of the next revision of TNI laboratory Standard	CSDP	Medium
1.1.8	Maintain an effective and efficient process for interpretation of standards.	LASEC	High

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

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
1.2.1	Maintain a respected and efficient system for recognizing states as Accreditation Bodies. Improve assessor competence?	NELAP	Ongoing
1.2.2	Maintain the national database of accredited laboratories.	Staff	Ongoing
1.2.3	Support implementation and use of the generic application form for laboratories.		Medium
1.2.4	Work with other states to assist them with becoming ABs.	NELAP	High
1.2.5	Encourage NELAP ABs to accept an assessment conducted by a TNI-recognized third party assessor body and/or NGAB as appropriate.	Advocacy	Medium
1.2.6	Explore implementing the updated vision for NELAP. * <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Investigate why there are two-tier programs in NELAP states and seek consensus on a new approach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify those items in TNI standard that do not add value. ○ Educate assessors on how to implement the requirements “ratchet down the insanity” – Work with NELAP ABs to require accreditation for all laboratories. – Work with EPA OGWDW to amend Part 142 to allow for NGABs. – Improve DW certification class to increase assessor pool. – Work with non-NELAP states to encourage them to become an AB or drop their program and rely on TNI. 	Advocacy	High

1.2.7	Improve the effectiveness of NELAP AB evaluations	NELAP	High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explore the feasibility of a four-year evaluation cycle. – Revise the evaluation process so that renewals focus on successful implementation of the program. – Explore a better AB evaluator process or feasibility of having ABs pay for a contract evaluator in place of an AB employee.* 		
1.2.8	Simplify method coders in LAMS	NELAP	Low

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

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
1.3.1	Focus available resources and efforts towards marketing the program.	NEFAP	High
1.3.2	Establish work groups dedicated to evaluating training needs and developing classes related to field measurement and sampling.	NEFAP	High
1.3.3	Establish metrics and timeline for evaluation of success measures and impact on program twice per year.	NEFAP	High
1.3.4	Maintain a respected and efficient system for recognizing field Accreditation Bodies using a combined evaluation program with other TNI programs.	NEFAP	High
1.3.5	Develop revenue source via training or other streams to fully support this program and marketing activities needed for growth.	NEFAP	High
1.3.6	Determine a path forward for collaboration with NELAP.	NEFAP	Medium
1.3.7	Expand use of FSMO standard in national and international markets.	NEFAP	Medium

Goal 1.4 Maintain and expand a Proficiency Testing (PT) program to support a national environmental accreditation program:

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
1.4.1	Implement all policies and procedures necessary for operation and continual improvement of a national PT program – for various matrices, stakeholders and accreditation programs.	PTP	High
1.4.2	Maintain an effective oversight program for PT providers to ensure that the providers are competent to operate environmental PT programs.	PTP	High
1.4.3	Ensure that Fields of Proficiency Testing (FoPTs) are appropriate for their intended use.	PTP	High
1.4.4	Maintain a respected and efficient system for recognizing organizations as Proficiency Test Provider Accreditation Bodies.	PTP	High
1.4.5	Develop a streamlined process for setting PT acceptance limits.	PTP	High
1.4.6	Develop a better process for getting PT data to handle complaints.	PTP	Medium
1.4.7	Develop a revenue source to fully support this program.	Finance	Low
1.4.8	Ensure that FoPT tables have appropriate input from all stakeholders.	PTP	Medium

Goal 1.5 Explore opportunities to use the TNI standard and related tools in non-environmental areas

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
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1.5.1	Explore the feasibility of providing support to the cannabis testing community through TNI tools and resources with a focus on improving ethics and data integrity components of cannabis laboratory certifications.	Advocacy	Medium
1.5.2	Explore opportunities in other non-environmental areas by creating marketing materials explaining how aspects of the TNI standard are useful and applicable to other industries.	Advocacy	Low

Strategy 2: Brand TNI as the premier resource for all activities related to generating reliable measurement data.
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Goal 2.1 Enable and encourage stakeholders to participate in the activities of TNI by providing assistance and incentives.

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
2.1.1	Provide routine communications/information to TNI members.	Advocacy	High
2.1.2	Encourage all TNI members to participate in the standards development process by reviewing the draft standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Email all members for all announcements – Discuss link for announcements – Investigate email issues with mailchimp 	CSDP	Medium
2.1.3	Create and sustain a systematic approach for encouraging volunteers to become involved in TNI activities and become members of committees. Post newsletter on linked-in and website	Advocacy	Medium
2.1.4	Maintain and improve an orientation program for new committee members.	Staff	Medium
2.1.5	Develop a webinar for new member orientation.	ED	High

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
2.2.1	Develop and implement a long-range outreach plan for promoting the use of the TNI accreditation program to data users. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Show the value/benefits. – Demonstrate the improvement in performance and data quality. 	Advocacy	High
2.2.2	Identify opportunities to promote TNI at regional and national meetings.	Advocacy	High
2.2.3	Develop a “State of National Accreditation” report every two years and offer briefings to interested stakeholders.	Advocacy	High
2.2.4	Expand outreach to non-NELAP states, including key decision makers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Share the “State of National Accreditation” noted above to assessors. – Assign a TNI ambassador to every non-NELAP state, identify current barriers. – Develop an Introduction to NELAP webinar. 	Advocacy	High
2.2.5	Meet periodically with EPA program offices, 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	Low
2.2.6	Continue to conduct Assessment Forums and Mentor Sessions to disseminate information. Make these events widely available through webcast recordings.	Training	High
2.2.7	Explore possibly more effective ways to use the Small Laboratory Advocate to engage small laboratories and to disseminate information to small laboratories.	Advocacy	Medium

2.2.8	Provide information about TNI standards and accreditation by exhibiting at the summer meeting. Have a poster instead. Tweak the conference program and website	Advocacy	Low
2.2.9	Explore how to more effectively use social media and implement a social media strategy.	Advocacy	Low
2.2.10	Explore opportunities for working with other organizations to develop a national accreditation program.	Advocacy	Medium

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

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
2.3.1	Continue to hold a semi-annual Forum on Laboratory Accreditation.	Advocacy	High
2.3.2	Continue to hold the Environmental Measurement Symposium.	EMS	High
2.3.3	Continue and expand the Sampling Conclave.	NEFAP	High
2.3.4	Explore opportunities for working cooperatively with other organizations.	Advocacy	Low

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

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
2.4.1	Maintain a committee to develop, support and expand a comprehensive training program for the environmental measurement community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a comprehensive plan for training. – Seek out additional contract trainers for needs identified. – Explore the development of training tracks for quality specialists, technical specialists, and identify other needs. – Increase use of available training materials already developed. – Look for opportunities to collaborate with other training providers 	Training	High
2.4.2	Re-evaluate guidelines and pricing for contract training providers and review training fee structure to identify opportunities for internal trainers.	Finance	Medium
2.4.3	Explore the possibility of offering TNI training resources for use in basic college science courses, at universities and also community colleges, as a way of encouraging workforce development and sustainability.	Training	Low
2.4.4	Explore potential acceptance of “unlimited training for a flat fee.”	Finance	Medium
2.4.5	Explore offering professional development hours at TNI conferences.	Training	Medium

Goal 2.5 Establish and maintain a credentialing initiative

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
2.5.1	Fully implement the credential effort for a QMS professional	Credentials	High
2.5.2	Develop KSAs and exam questions for chemistry technical specialists	Credentials	High
2.5.3	Develop guidance for use by other committees for establishing credentials	Credentials	High
2.5.4	Develop KSAs and exam questions for other technical specialists	ExC	High
2.5.5	Explore credentials for other professionals	Credentials	Low

Goal 2.6 Establish a professional development core program

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
2.6.1	Explore the creation of a young professional's program	TF	High
	Combine Training and Credentialing into one program		
	Jack Farrell Scholarship		
	Technical vs career		

Strategy 3: Maintain infrastructure to ensure TNI's future success and financial sustainability.

Goal 3.1 Maintain a succession plan for sustainability.

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
3.1.1	Develop and implement a systematic approach for recruitment and succession planning for Board members and officers.	Nominating	Medium
3.1.2	Create and maintain a succession plan for key individuals, both staff and committee leadership	Board	Medium
3.1.3	Maintain a knowledge management system.	ED	High

Goal 3.2 Maintain an effective internal organization to accomplish program objectives.

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
3.2.1	Ensure adequate staff are available to support TNI programs.	ED	High
3.2.2	Evaluate Executive Director performance on strategic plan goals and objectives on a periodic basis as required by the Quality Management Plan. Consider performance review for key staff – e.g., PAs - ED Consider input from committee chairs - ED	Board	Medium
3.2.3	Continue orientation and training program for new Board members, committee chairs, and committee members to include a webinar on Robert's rules for TNI. Conduct refresher training every three years in conjunction with new terms.	ED (nominating, CSDP EC, Policy)	Medium
3.2.4	Ensure Policies and SOPs are created and revised to support TNI activities.	Policy	High
3.2.5	Update the Quality Management Plan and Bylaws upon approval of the strategic plan.	Policy	High
3.2.6	Conduct management reviews as defined in SOP 1-133.	Board	Medium

3.2.7	Combine Training and Credentialing efforts into a new Core Program.	Board	High
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Goal 3.3 Increase the operational and management efficiency and effectiveness of TNI.

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
3.3.1	Maintain fiscally prudent operations.	ED	High
3.3.2	Produce timely, accurate financial reports.	ED	High
3.3.3	Conduct a financial review on a defined cycle.	Finance	Medium
3.3.4	Maintain an effective and transparent system for document control and records management.	ED	High
3.3.5	Periodically monitor the progress of each program towards its objectives through monthly program administrator reports and by the annual report.	PAs	High
3.3.6	Produce an Annual Report for publication on the TNI website and distribution to TNI's supporting organizations.	ED	High
3.3.7	Maintain errors and omissions insurance.	ED	High
3.3.8	Ensure coordination and consultation between and among the various TNI committees.	Board	High

Goal 3.4 Acquire stable, long-term financial resources to support TNI programs and their growth.

	Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
3.4.1	Review pricing approach for membership dues and sale of standards, training courses and related items at least every two years.	Finance	Medium
3.4.2	Grow financial reserve to 15% of annual expense by 2030.	Finance	Medium
3.4.3	Annually review income and expense and make adjustments for the upcoming year.	Finance	High
3.4.4	Investigate alternative sources of revenue and be alert for new growth opportunities.	Board	Medium

List of Acronyms

AB — Accreditation Body
AC — NELAP Accreditation Council
ANSI — American National Standards Institute
CSDP — Consensus Standards Development Program
CSD EC — Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee
DOD QSM — Department of Defense Quality Systems Manual
EC — Executive Committee
ED – executive Director
EMS — Environmental Measurement Symposium Steering Committee
ExC – Expert Committees
FoPT — Field of Proficiency Testing
FSMO — Field Sampling and Measurement Organization
ISO — International Standards Organization
LAB — Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee
LASEC — Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee
NEFAP — National Environmental Field Activities Program
NEFAP EC — National Environmental Field Activities Program Executive Committee
NELAP — National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
NEMC — National Environmental Monitoring Conference
NGAB — Non-Governmental Accreditation Body
OGWDW – EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
PA – Program Administrator
PT — Proficiency Testing
PTP — Proficiency Testing Program
PTPEC — Proficiency Testing Program Executive Committee
PTPA — Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor
QMS — Quality Mangement System
SIR — Standard Interpretation Request
SOP — Standard Operating Procedure
TF – Professional Development Task Force
WET -- Whole Effluent Toxicity