



# TNI: The DC Symposium and Beyond

Alfredo Sotomayor, WI DNR  
FSEA Fall Meeting  
October 17, 2008





# The Plan

- A tiny bit about TNI
- Update on Summer 2008 NEMC-TNI Joint Meeting
- Activities for the Near Future
- Activities for the Longer Term
- Q&A, Discussion





# MISSION AND VISION

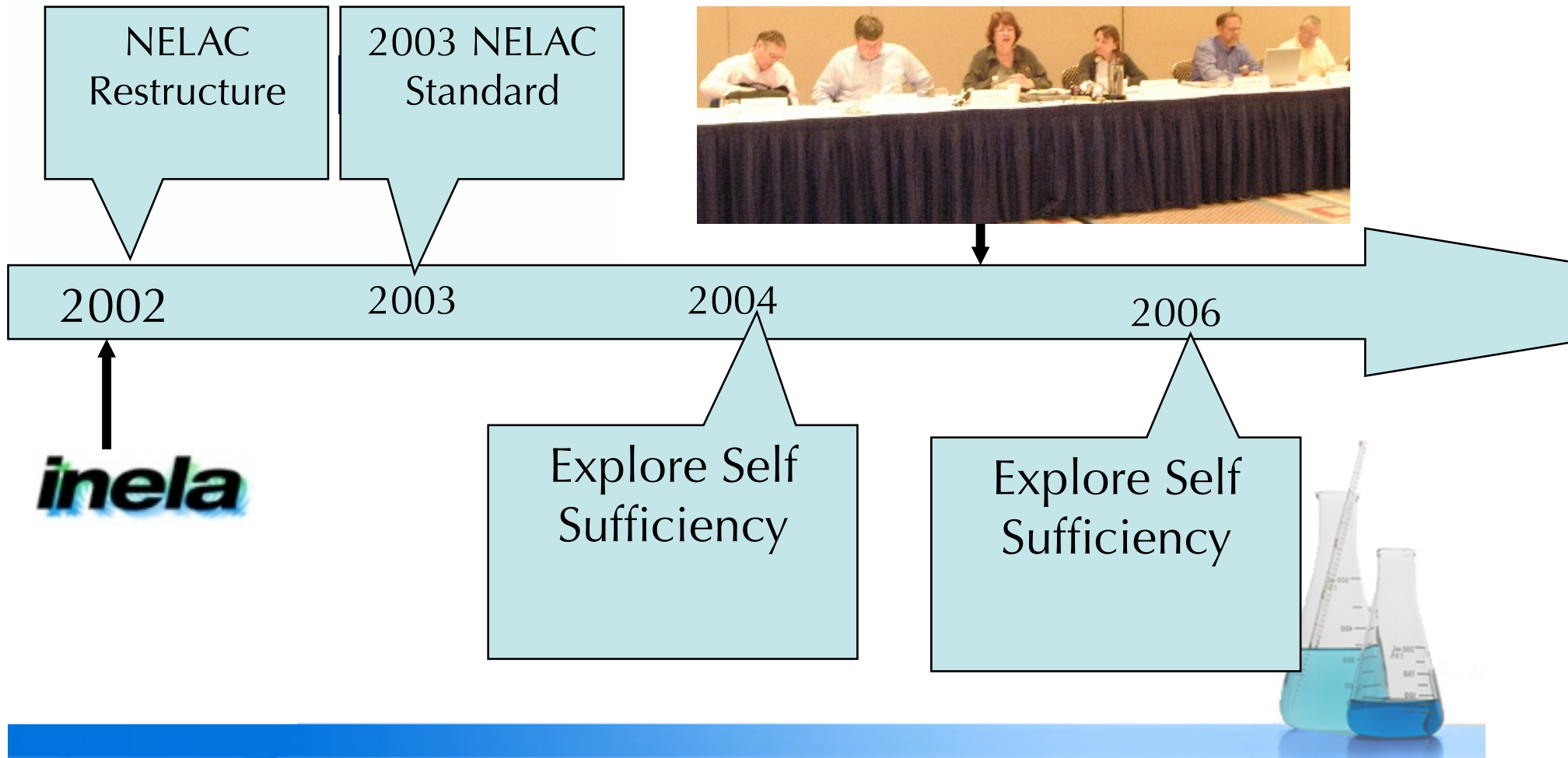
To foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an **open, inclusive** and **transparent** process that is responsive to the needs of the community.

All entities generating environmental data in the United States will be accredited to consensus national standards.





# History





# History



11/6/06



- New name, bylaws, and board of directors
- Mission, vision, programs, membership
- 17 new committees
- Strategic plan for moving forward



# TNI: A 501(c)3 ORGANIZATION

Board of Directors

## Self-Governing Programs

- Consensus Standards
- NELAP
- Laboratory Accreditation
- Technical Assistance
- Proficiency Testing
- Advocacy
- Forum

Staff

## Administrative Committees

- Policy
- Advocacy
- Website
- Conference Planning

Individual Members



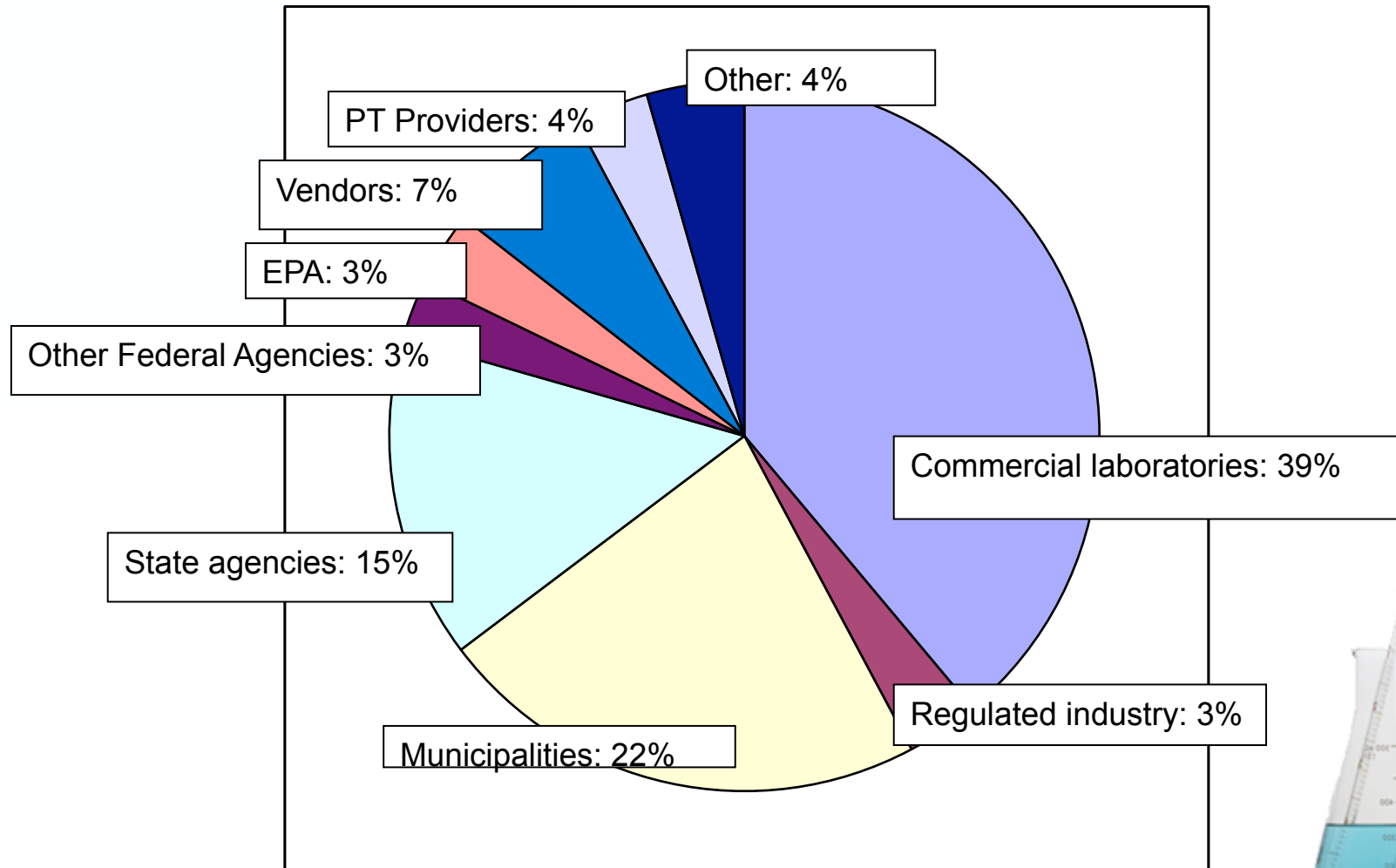


# WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?

- **Organizations that accredit laboratories**
  - Recognized accreditation bodies
  - States that are not recognized accreditation bodies
  - Federal agencies that operate accreditation programs
- **Accredited laboratories**
  - Commercial, Municipal, University, State, Federal, Health, Industrial
- **Others:**
  - State and federal agencies that do not operate accreditation programs
  - Data users, consultants, proficiency testing providers, vendors
  - Anyone interested in laboratory accreditation



# Member Demographics





# Membership Summary

- Accreditors 21%
- Accredited 64%
- Others 15%

*In TNI the regulators are not in the majority.*





# MEMBERS

- Individual Members
  - May vote
  - May serve on committees or the Board
  - Entitled to member discounts
  - Access to members area of website
  
- Organizational Members
  - May appoint individual members
  - Are recognized
  - May not vote as an organization
  - Get free copies of standards





## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

- ❑ Infrastructure for stakeholders
- ❑ Consensus building for establishing requirements for:
  - Organizations that accredit
  - Organizations that are accredited
  - Proficiency testing programs
- ❑ Recognition of organizations that operate accreditation programs
- ❑ Assistance to members





# Environmental Measurement Symposium 2008



- Joint meeting of NEMC and TNI's Forum on Laboratory Accreditation
- August 10 – 16, 2008
- More than 500 attendees
- Every other summer in DC



# NEMC

- International speakers
- Metals speciation
- Nanotechnology
- Homeland security
- Emerging contaminants

*Synergy among scientists, laboratories, and regulators*





# TNI Forum on Laboratory Accreditation

- Committee meetings
- Board meetings
- ELAB
- Assessment Forum
- Mentoring and Training Sessions

*A good mix of business, information exchange, and assistance*





# TNI Forum

## Consensus Standards

- All Standards have been approved and are being considered for adoption by NELAP.
- When adopted by NELAP, TNI Standards will replace the 2003 NELAC Standards around 2010.
- Final draft of Standards are available on the TNI website.

*Stronger and more adaptable than NELAC Standards*





# PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING LABORATORY STANDARDS

- For implementation by NELAP
  - Review by LASC
  - Adoption by NELAP Board
  - Changes in state regulations
  - Development of policy and guidance; and
  - Training and outreach
- For implementation by others
  - Standards are available for use





# TNI Forum

## Technical Assistance

- Presented template for laboratory SOPs
- Mentoring sessions on:
  - Data Qualifiers
  - Efficient sample throughput
- Assessment Forum
  - Comparison of AB programs
  - Interpretation of standards and test methods
  - Standard Methods in regulatory compliance





# TNI Forum

## NELAP

- All on-site evaluations of ABs have been completed
- Recommendations for renewal moving along
- Some observations of on-site laboratory assessments to be completed
- Evaluation process worked very well





# TNI Forum LASC

- Has completed SOP on requests for standards interpretation
- Reviewing TNI Standards as part of implementation process for NELAP
- Discussion on how to address requests for interpretation of analytical methods





# TNI Forum PT Program

- A2LA, the PTOB, has completed all assessments of PT providers
- PT Board discussing FoPT for:
  - Whole effluent toxicity
  - Microbiological methods
  - Air and emission methods
- PT Committee is evaluating PT frequency
- DMR-QA





# TNI Forum Advocacy Program

- Appointment of Small Laboratory Advocate
  - Serves on TAC and Advocacy Committee
- Continued interaction with EPA program offices, and environmental associations

*TNI acknowledged the need for advocacy by elevating it to a program at the Institute's inception.*



# Beyond DC





## Beyond DC NELAP ABs

- Virginia obtained statutory approval to require NELAP accreditation
- The following states are poised to apply for recognition:
  - KY, ME, MN, NC, OK, SC
- If all are recognized, there would be 20 ABs

*A significant movement toward a National Program*





# Beyond DC National Database

- Enormous progress
  - The end is in sight!
- First comprehensive single repository of environmental laboratory information in the USA
  - Will allow checking accreditation scope and status of laboratories
- Will be unveiled in 2009 at TNI Miami meeting





# Beyond DC

## Small Laboratories

- Small Laboratory Advocate
  - Len Schanz, City of Rochester, NY
  - Seeks input and channels it to TNI Programs and Boards
  - Raises visibility of concerns of small laboratories
  - Has a modest budget

*TNI believes that all laboratories, regardless of size, should be participants.*





# Beyond DC

## Small Laboratories II

- Expect to have discussions on:
  - Documentation requirements
  - Level of quality control
  - Frequency of PTs
  - Scalability of TNI Standards to size of laboratory operations

*Combined efforts on education, outreach, assistance, and proposals to change standards*





# Beyond DC Field Activities

- TNI Standard for Field Sampling and Measurement Organizations (FSMOs) has been completed and:
  - Addresses operations of FSMOs
  - Has a module for ABs accrediting FSMOs
  - Recognizes that involved parties are not equivalent to counterparts in the environmental sector
  - Is available for any AB to consider





# Beyond DC

## Field Activities II

- Activities addressed by standard:
  - Are not part of NELAP's charter
  - May not fall under the regulatory authority of NELAP ABs
  
- Accreditation of FSMOs
  - Could be voluntary
  - Could be administered or implemented by an organization such as A2LA





# Beyond DC

## Field Activities III

- Stationary Source Audit Samples
  - Developing standards for manufacture and analysis of audit samples for source emission testing
  - PTs for a different application
  - The right order of events: a Standard, before the samples

*TNI is a pioneer in setting requirements for field activities.*





# Beyond DC PT Frequency

- ❑ Active discussion on the possibility of reducing PT frequency to one per year
- ❑ Solid effort of PT Committee reviewing actual data to arrive at a recommendation
- ❑ Several models may be proposed for implementation
- ❑ Recommendation expected by early 2009
  - Standards would need to be amended





# Beyond DC

## SW-846 Methods

- Uneven implementation of SW-846 Updates by ABs has been problematic for laboratories.
- Accreditation programs are also caught in the middle, because they are not the ones that require specific methods.
- Desire for speedier availability and increased flexibility create unexpected problems.





# Beyond DC

## SW-846 Methods II

- ELAB has listened to concerns
- NELAP may listen to additional others
- Expect more:
  - Discussion
  - Headaches
- Ultimate solution may require a shift in:
  - Specification of acceptable protocols
  - How assessors determine conformance





# Beyond DC

## 2003 NELAC to 2010 TNI

- Now that the TNI Standards are approved...
  - Members need to remember what they endorsed.
  - Preparations for implementation should start.
  - An entire mentoring session in the TNI 2009 Miami Forum will compare Quality Systems requirements in both standards.





# And beyond DC Somewhere over the...





# Emerging Issues

- Expanding sectors
  - Taxonomy, FSMOs
  - Opportunities for trying different models
- Methods compendium
  - Single source for listing and possible of access to all test methods required by regulation
  - Have received funding for initiative





# Emerging Issues II

- Comprehensive survey of all laboratories:
  - NELAP accredited
  - ISO 17025 accredited
  - First attempt to reach the entire population
  - Goal is to quantify the benefits of accreditation
- Curricula for assessor training
  - Basic and technical training





# On-Going Efforts

- Long-term self-sufficiency
  - Entrepreneurial activities
- Increasing membership
- Development of internal policies and SOPs
- Moving beyond Standards' development
  - Implementation
  - Assistance





# Come Join Us This Winter!





# MIAMI FORUM

- January 12-16, 2009
- Implementation of the 2008 Laboratory Standards
- National Database Preview
- New Accreditation Bodies
- Training Courses



In Cooperation With





# Mentoring and Training

- Special session comparing 2003 NELAC to 2008 TNI Quality Systems Requirements
- Data Handling Techniques
- Part 1000 of *Standard Methods*
- Part 9000 of *Standard Methods*





# Contact TNI

## THE NELAC INSTITUTE

<http://www.NELAC-Institute.org>

817-598-1624

[jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org](mailto:jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org)

