



# NEWS

NATIONAL VOLUNTARY LABORATORY  
ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

[www.nist.gov/nvlap](http://www.nist.gov/nvlap)

## NVLAP Training at MSC Conference March 10 and 11, 2008



**Disneyland**  
Park

NIST/NVLAP will once again conduct a two-day seminar entitled *Preparing Your Laboratory for 17025 Accreditation: A Step-By-Step Approach*, at the Measurement Science Conference (MSC) held at the Disneyland Hotel Conference Center in Anaheim on March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Twenty five representatives from industry and government agencies participated in this seminar in 2007 and we received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

The seminar is definitely useful for new laboratories seeking accreditation, but it would also be useful to train new staff, a refresher course for existing staff, or assist in preparation for scope additions for laboratories already accredited.

This interactive two-day seminar is aimed at quality managers, laboratory management and personnel thinking about seeking accreditation, and assessors. It includes presentations and lectures, group exercises, and panel discussions with ample opportunities for questions.

Topics include: How should a laboratory prepare for an initial and renewal accreditation? What should you expect during an assessment? How does your laboratory respond to the accreditation body when the management system has nonconformities? What is traceability and why should anybody care? Proficiency testing is required so, how is it handled and what's the benefit? Added this year, is a presentation on referencing NVLAP accreditation and logo usage in the international community.

Instructors for the seminar include: Barbara Belzer and Thomas Hettenhouser, Calibration Program Managers from NVLAP, Greg Strouse, Scientist from NIST, and Sherrie Wentzel, Management and Program Assistant from NVLAP.

Please consider yourself or any of your staff as attendees. Please pass this on to any colleagues, customers, or vendors that may be interested in 17025 accreditation. Thank you for using NVLAP as your accreditation body. We look forward to seeing you at MSC.

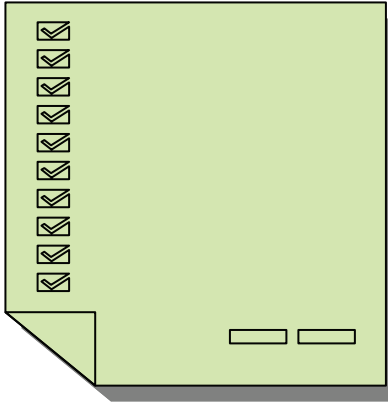
Registration link is <http://www.msc-conf.com/2008/registration/>, register for NIST Seminars, and then select N04.

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## Using Customer Information to Create Change

### Sharing survey results



NVLAP expresses its sincere appreciation for the time and effort that laboratories have committed to help us by completing the Accreditation Services customer surveys. Feedback is an important but often overlooked element of the survey process; therefore, we are taking this opportunity to share the information gathered by the survey, to celebrate the areas of success uncovered by the survey, and to generate ideas for acting on areas of opportunity.

NVLAP's strategic objective is to increase the recognition, acceptance and impact of laboratory accreditation while addressing the needs of both domestic and international stakeholders. One of the measures of our success is the overall customer satisfaction with accreditation as reported on the surveys collected from NVLAP-accredited laboratories. The following is an overview of the survey results for 2006 and 2007. Please be assured that we have taken your comments to heart and have already made a number of changes to the way we do business.

### What have we been told?

Survey respondents rated their overall satisfaction with NVLAP's services on a scale of 1 through 5, with 1 being *Very Dissatisfied* and 5 being *Very Satisfied*. In 2006, 178 respondents provided ratings that averaged 4.24. In 2007, the average rating from 172 respondents was 4.33 – definitely the right direction!

Customers were asked to rate NVLAP on several service delivery characteristics (courtesy, ease of application process, responsiveness, quality of proficiency testing, timely processing of accreditation, and accuracy of certificate and scope of accreditation), as well as value vs. cost, likelihood to renew accreditation, and overall satisfaction. Customers reported that they are highly likely to renew ( an average of 4.66 in 2007). Solid satisfaction ratings were given to the accuracy of accreditation documents, responsiveness, and courtesy, with more moderate satisfaction ratings given to the remaining questions.

We scrutinized the tallied results for each question and narrative comments looking for recurring themes and identifying appropriate actions. One recurring theme was the desire of labs to be able to renew their accreditations electronically. NVLAP has responded by developing the NVLAP Interactive Web Site (NIWS) – a web-based program that allows laboratories to submit their applications over the Internet. First introduced in 2006 to ECT and Acoustical testing laboratories, the program is now open to Asbestos Fiber Analysis laboratories. The remaining NVLAP accreditation programs will be brought on board in 2008 and 2009. Based upon customer feedback, the navigational flow of the system is now being redesigned.

**(Continued on Page 3)**

Some survey comments suggested that NVLAP should do a better job communicating with laboratories and promoting itself to the accreditation community. Key activities that NVLAP has undertaken to address these comments include providing more training seminars for laboratories and assessors in conjunction with annual scientific meetings and conferences. For example, NVLAP will be conducting a seminar entitled “Preparing Your Laboratory for 17025 Accreditation: A Step-By-Step Approach” at the Measurement and Science Conference in Anaheim, CA on March 10-11, 2008. In addition, you may have noticed more participation by NVLAP headquarters staff in laboratory on-site assessments. Many laboratories have expressed satisfaction with being able to interact directly with NVLAP staff on their “home turf,” in some cases, for the first time. In April 2007 NVLAP launched its redesigned newsletter - *NVLAP News* - in an electronic (PDF) format. We plan to post more communication and marketing tools on our web site to help laboratories promote their accreditations, including a brochure that you can download and “good news” stories. We have increased the use of NVLAP “Lab Bulletins” to keep you informed of important information about accreditation requirements in your respective programs. And last but not least, an increased use of e-mail is speeding up correspondence and shortening the time between a laboratory’s submission of its application and receipt of accreditation documents.

Survey responses, both numerical ratings and narrative comments, indicate a continued concern about the high cost of accreditation. The facts without excuses are that NVLAP is a federal organization that operates with little, if any, appropriated funding, relying primarily on customer fees to operate the program. Our share of the overhead for being part of the national metrology institute of the United States (NIST) must be borne by these fees, but we are doing our best to minimize fee increases. NVLAP’s fiscal year 2008 operating budget represented a nominal increase from the 2007 level. We were able to limit fee increases for FY2008 to 2%. There is also some good news on the Asbestos TEM proficiency testing (PT) front where fees for this activity had increased substantially in 2006 after a 5-year cessation of the PT program. These costs were reduced in 2007 and have stabilized. NVLAP program managers are effectively managing the PT contract to produce the best value for the money, as well as looking for alternative courses of action to reduce costs.

### **Where do we go from here?**

2007 was a year that instituted a lot of change for NVLAP-accredited laboratories, especially the transition to the requirements of the 2005 edition of ISO/IEC 17025. NVLAP has recognized that some of our systems and processes needed to be adapted to meet the changing needs of our customers. Tangible results have been delivered to date (e.g., the NIWS, more training seminars, an on-line newsletter, more frequent updating of the web site, etc.) and NVLAP is always committed to continual improvement.

We welcome your feedback and recommendations and ask that you take a few minutes to fill out the Accreditation Services Customer Survey when you receive your certificates and scopes of accreditation. We will continue to use these performance measures to track our progress toward improvement and have increased our target rating for overall satisfaction for the coming year. We believe that NVLAP’s success can only grow when customer laboratories have ownership in shaping our future direction.

*“We believe that NVLAP’s success can only grow when customer laboratories have ownership in shaping our future direction.”*

## **Japan MIC to Recognize NVLAP-Accredited Japanese ECT labs**

### **U.S.-Japan Telecom Bilateral Recognition Agreement**

The United State and Japan completed final steps for implementation of a bilateral agreement to facilitate trade in telecommunications equipment and expand opportunities for U.S. certification bodies. U.S. Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer and Japan Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura exchanged diplomatic notes in Tokyo, signaling completion of the necessary steps for entry into force of the United States-Japan Agreement on Mutual Recognition of the Results of Conformity Assessment Procedures (MRA) for telecommunications equipment on January 1, 2008. “Japan is the United States’ fourth largest trading partner. This agreement will help build upon the strong bilateral trade relationship already benefiting our countries,” said Deputy U.S. Trade Representative John K. Veroneau. “This agreement will lower the costs and increase the speed of marketing telecommunications equipment traded between our countries. This should be of important help to U.S. companies and workers, given that Japan is the fifth largest export market for U.S. telecommunications equipment.”

### **Background**

The MRA was signed in Washington, D.C., on February 16, 2007, and subsequently approved by the Japanese Diet on June 19.

This is the United States’ sixth telecommunications MRA covering certification, following MRAs with the European Union (EU) and European Economic Area, European Free Trade Association (EEA-EFTA) (Iceland, Lichtenstein, and Norway) that cover telecommunications equipment among other things, and with Canada, Hong Kong, and Singapore under the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) telecommunications MRA.

Based on this agreement, both the U.S. and Japan will be able to designate private-sector entities in their respective territories to test and certify telecommunications terminal and radio equipment as meeting the technical requirements of the other country. The agreement is expected to enhance speed to market, and lower costs in the \$2.2 billion trade in telecommunications equipment between the two countries. Japan is now the fifth largest export market for U.S. telecommunications equipment manufacturers, and this agreement is particularly important given the innovation and fast paced growth that characterized both markets.

### **NVLAP to Accredite Japanese ECT Labs to FCC**

NVLAP has begun implementation of a recognition agreement with Japan’s Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) in support of the U.S.-Japan MRA. The U.S.-Japan MRA covers equipment regulated in the United States by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and in Japan by the MIC.

On November 6, 2007, NVLAP submitted its application for recognition by MIC to accredit Japanese electromagnetic compatibility and telecommunications (ECT) laboratories performing testing for unintentional radiators and industrial, scientific and medical (ISM) equipment to FCC technical regulations. On November 19, 2007, Japan’s MIC notified the FCC of their decision to recognize NVLAP as a U.S.-based accrediting body accrediting Japanese laboratories to conduct tests required under FCC regulations. NVLAP will now inform MIC for each Japanese-based laboratory upon initial or renewal accreditation.

## LAP updates

**Calibration Program:** Welcome and congratulations to the newest accredited labs: State of California, Sacramento, CA, Boeing Corporation, Everett WA., and Rainin Instrument, LLC in San Diego, CA.

**Personal Body Armor Program:** Is now accepting applications for accreditation to the NIJ Standard 0101.06, draft standard, Part 5, Environmental Conditioning Protocol and Part 6, Ballistic Resistance of Personal Body Armor.

**Biometrics:** Transportation Security Administration Qualified Product List transition phase is now in progress.

**SCAP:** NVLAP recently announced a new laboratory accreditation test suite as part of its Information Technology Security Testing (ITST), Cryptographic and Security Testing (CST) Laboratory Accreditation Program (LAP) (formerly known as the Cryptographic Module Testing LAP). The new test suite will be known as the Security Content Automation Protocol or SCAP (pronounced “es-cap”) test suite.

SCAP is composed of six open XML standards:

1. Common Vulnerabilities and Exposure (CVE) – a dictionary of security related software flaws;
2. Common Configuration Enumeration (CCE) – a dictionary of software mis-configurations;
3. Common Platform Enumeration (CPE) – a standard nomenclature and dictionary for product naming;
4. eXtensible Checklist Configuration Description Format (XCCDF) – a standard XML for specifying checklists;
5. Open Vulnerability Assessment Language (OVAL) – a standard XML for checking the machine state; and,
6. Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS) – a standard for scoring the impact of vulnerabilities.

These components are designed to assist in the management of assets, compliance, configurations, and software flaws. See also <http://scap.nist.gov> Accredited laboratories will test software to validate SCAP capabilities so that the software may be included on the Validated Products List maintained by NIST’s Information Technology Laboratory (ITL).

For additional information on SCAP or the ITST LAP, visit our web pages:

<http://ts.nist.gov/Standards/Accreditation/CST-LAP.cfm> and <http://ts.nist.gov/Standards/fields.cfm>

Welcome and congratulations to the first three accredited laboratories: EWA-Canada IT Security Evaluation & Test Facility in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; ICSA Labs in Mechanicsburg, PA; and SAIC Accredited Testing and Evaluation Labs in Columbia, MD.

## Background: Change in Name of LAP

NVLAP previously announced a name change in its Information Technology Security Testing (ITST) Laboratory Accreditation Program (LAP): The Cryptographic Module Testing (CMT) Program was changed in September 2007 to the Cryptographic Security Testing (CST) Program to reflect the additional test scopes added for the National Personal Identity Validation Program (NPIVP) and the General Services Administration (GSA) FIPS 201 Evaluation Program test methods.

More recently, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requested that NVLAP accredit for Security Content Automation Protocol (SCAP) test methods. SCAP enables automated vulnerability management, measurement, and policy compliance evaluation; enumerates vulnerabilities, mis-configurations, platforms, and impact; and provides machine-readable security configuration checklists. The SCAP test methods have been developed by NIST's Information Technology Laboratory for use in such applications as checking the Federal Desktop Core Configuration (FDCC) settings, feeding information into the National Vulnerability Database, and many other purposes.

SCAP test methods are all based on the foundation of Information Technology Security, but not all require the same depth of expertise and understanding of cryptography, so we are renaming this LAP to "Cryptographic **and** Security Testing" (CST).

## New Signatories to APLAC and ILAC MRA

NVLAP wants to remind its customers and assessors that new signatories to the APLAC and ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) happen on a regular basis. Most recently, the Laboratory Accreditation Bureau (L-A-B) located in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, is the latest accreditation body in the U.S. to receive global recognition. NVLAP encourages its customers and assessors to click on the links to our MRA partners from the NVLAP web site for up-to-date listings of the signatories.

NIST Handbook 150, *Traceability of measurements*, and in particular section B.3.3, describes the requirement to use accredited laboratory services. Having another accreditation body as a signatory to the MRA expands the opportunities for our accredited laboratories to procure accredited calibration services.

If you have questions about this subject, contact your NVLAP Program Manager.



## Vanda White receives NIST Bronze Medal

Vanda White, NVLAP's Quality Manager, received the Bronze Medal for her work on the NVLAP Quality System, at the NIST awards ceremony held on December 5, 2007.



Dr. James Turner, Acting Director of NIST and Dr. Belinda Collins, Director of Technology Services present the NIST Bronze Medal Award to Vanda White of NVLAP.

“Ms. White directed and supervised the establishment of a comprehensive set of administrative procedures and instructions that ensures a uniform approach to determining laboratory competence, consistent with international practice and relevant standards. The robust quality management system comprising these procedures and instructions underpins every aspect of NVLAP operations, providing assurance to customers and users that NVLAP accreditations are technically sound and rigorous. This management system, recognized internationally through laboratory accreditation cooperations, contributes to wide reciprocity of acceptance of calibration and test reports from NVLAP-accredited laboratories in other economies.” Congratulations Vanda!

## Welcome and Farewell

### Welcome

Ms. Tessa Beavers joined the NVLAP staff in October as our Administrative Support Assistant. Tessa earned a B.S. degree in Finance from Greensboro College, Greensboro, North Carolina, and has worked at NIST for several years in the Building and Fire Research Economic Studies group. She is helping to manage the office and the “behind the scenes” business of NVLAP and is taking on the responsibility of managing the files unrelated to accreditation, but essential to the office. Tessa is responsible for ordering goods and products for NVLAP, serves as the official timekeeper and keeps the orders moving for all our travel related authorizations and vouchers.

NVLAP is fortunate to have Tessa working on our team; she has a great work ethic and “get it done” attitude. The customers and stakeholders of NVLAP will indirectly benefit as well.

### Farewell

Dr. Lawrence (Larry) I. Knab, Program Manager for the majority of the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) Product Testing LAPS, including Carpet and Cushion, Commercial Products, Efficiency of Electric Motors, Energy Efficient Lighting, Thermal Insulation, and Wood Based Products, retired on January 3, 2008, after more than 31 years of service at NIST. Larry has managed the largest number of the laboratory accreditation programs within NVLAP and was especially busy these past two years updating the program-specific handbooks and checklists to include the requirements of the 2005 edition of the ISO/IEC 17025 for each of his programs. Larry maintained excellent communication with his customers and stakeholders and this was no easy task with the volume of proficiency testing that needed to be managed for these programs. NVLAP staff will especially miss Larry for his caring manner and attention to detail. These qualities make for excellent customer rapport as well.

The silver lining is we won't be bidding him a final farewell. Larry will work with NVLAP on a part-time basis and although he won't be managing the previous programs, we look forward to his future contributions and collaborations.



## WHAT WE DO

The National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) provides third-party accreditation to testing and calibration laboratories. NVLAP's accreditation programs are established in response to Congressional mandates or administrative actions by the Federal Government or from requests by private-sector organizations. NVLAP is in full conformance with the standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), including ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO/IEC 17011.

### NVLAP Mission Statement

To deliver high quality, value-driven accreditation services to testing and calibration laboratories by:

- ◆ meeting or exceeding customer expectations;
- ◆ operating to globally accepted requirements for accreditation bodies;
- ◆ promoting world-wide acceptance of test and calibration results of NVLAP-accredited laboratories; and
- ◆ pursuing organizational and technical excellence.



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NVLAP is located on the beautiful campus of the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, MD

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