

# Terms of Reference for the BC Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (BCELTAC)

## *Background*

The British Columbia Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (BCELTAC) is a partnership-based advisory committee of government, private environmental laboratories, and other invited environmental industry stakeholders. The committee acts as the primary technical advisory committee to the British Columbia Ministry of Environment (MOE) on aspects related to environmental laboratory practice in the Province. The committee is responsible for providing guidance and assistance to the ministry in the development and maintenance of comprehensive environmental field sampling and laboratory methods, and related regulatory issues.

## *Terms of Reference*

### **1.0 Scope and Purpose**

The BCELTAC has been established by the Ministry of Environment to provide ongoing review and advice related to:

- technical aspects of environmental laboratory analysis and test methods, quality assurance, and other practices associated with environmental assessment, monitoring, and management within the Province, and
- provision, as requested, of recommendations to the ministry related to how such practice can be standardized, maintained and improved within the Province.

The BCELTAC, acting in consideration of input obtained from its members and other concerned stakeholders, has the following purposes:

1. advance, encourage, and facilitate continuing technical excellence in all aspects of environmental laboratory practice affecting government and private sector environmental laboratories within British Columbia,
2. as requested by the ministry, act within an expert capacity to provide advice and guidance in the development and maintenance of a comprehensive compilation of field sampling and laboratory analytical methodologies for the use of the ministry and the environmental laboratory community of British Columbia,
3. research, promote and champion the development of new and improved science based laboratory analytical methods,
4. foster, support and facilitate common accepted standards for laboratory practice and performance,
5. promote co-ordination and cooperation between and among: the ministry, concerned stakeholders, and private laboratories related to technical ramifications associated with changes to environmental monitoring

requirements and the delivery of related laboratory testing services in British Columbia,

6. as requested by the ministry, provide expert opinion and advice concerning environmental testing practices within British Columbia,
7. act as a primary resource to assist the ministry to facilitate effective and coordinated communication with private and public sector environmental laboratories and concerned stakeholders within British Columbia.

## **2.0 Guiding Principles**

The BCELTAAC will strive:

1. to ensure that any advice, guidance, or methodologies developed or otherwise provided by the committee meets a high standard of scientific defensibility, and
2. to conduct the activities and business of the committee in an ethical, honest, objective and impartial manner.

The BCELTAAC asserts, and the ministry acknowledges that the committee:

1. has no decision-making authority over the actions, programs, regulatory functions, or professional conduct of its members, and
2. does not warrant or otherwise accept liability or responsibility for the implementation of its advice.

## **3.0 Membership and Organization**

The members of the BCELTAAC shall primarily be composed of recognized experts drawn from the field of laboratory science or other scientific discipline or profession jointly considered by the Chair and Secretary of the committee to be relevant to the scope and purpose of the committee.

At a minimum, membership on the committee shall be offered to:

- the Laboratory Services Officer of the Water and Air Monitoring and Reporting Section, representing the Environmental Quality Branch, Ministry of Environment (the committee Secretary),
- representatives of government and private sector environmental laboratories located within the Province (one representative per laboratory),
- a representative of the Environmental Management Branch, Ministry of Environment,
- a representative of Environment Canada,
- a representative of the environmental industry in the Province (e.g. BCEIA), and
- other invited representatives as deemed appropriate by the Committee.

To ensure committee continuity, committee members normally serve an unlimited term.

A member may elect to resign membership on the committee for whatever reason at any time. However, resignation from the committee does not take effect until such time as the Secretary of the committee has been advised in writing of the member's resignation.

The committee is expected to conduct its business to the maximum extent possible based on an approach of mutual agreed consensus. In circumstances where consensual agreement cannot be achieved by the committee, the Chair may call for a vote on the part of active committee members.

A vote shall pass based on attaining a simple numerical majority of voting members. A current list of active committee members with voting privileges shall be posted on the ministry website. In the situation that a vote is irrevocably tied, the Chair alone may cast an additional deciding vote.

#### **4.0 Committee Officers**

The committee will elect a Chair and vice-Chair of the committee as principal officers. The term of office of the Chair and vice-Chair shall be decided by vote of the committee membership.

Members of the committee representing any level of government ("government members") enjoy full committee privileges without restriction, including full voting privileges. However, government members are prohibited from holding office as either the Chair or vice-Chair of the committee.

The vice-Chair shall act for the Chair under circumstances that the Chair instructs, or in the case that the Chair is incapacitated or otherwise unable to perform the duties of office. The vice-Chair may only act as Chair of the committee for a maximum period of 1 year. Furthermore, prior to the expiry of the said 1 year period, the vice-Chair acting as Chair of the committee must ensure an election to seek a new Chair is held.

The ministry shall provide administrative and secretariat support to the committee. The Laboratory Services Officer, representing the Environmental Quality Branch of the Ministry of Environment, shall permanently hold the office of Secretary of the committee.

#### **5.0 Confidentiality**

BCELTAC members are expected to protect and maintain as confidential any information of a private or privileged nature that may be divulged in consequence of the work of the committee.

## **6.0 Reporting and Consultation**

Provision of committee minutes, letters, reports, consultations, research, advisories, records, files and other communications is the primary responsibility of the Secretary of the committee.

The committee is expected to be both reasonably accessible and responsive to the public. To ensure that BCELTAAC has opportunity to publically communicate or report, the Secretary of the committee shall provide access to a ministry website, or otherwise provide means to allow the committee to publically communicate its work.

## **7.0 Meetings**

The committee meets on a quarterly basis, or at an alternate frequency as determined by the Chair. Although a preference to locate meetings within the locale of Vancouver, BC is recognized, the committee meeting location shall be at the sole discretion of the Chair.

The committee may invite individuals to attend and /or contribute to its meetings as deemed necessary and appropriate.

A quorum for the conduct of business at any meeting is 50% attendance of the committee's voting members. Members may attend committee meetings either in person or by electronic means.

## **8.0 Interaction with other Committees and the Public**

At the pleasure of the committee, the committee may respond to the request of another organized body or interested party to provide opinion, advice or recommendation related to an issue which falls within the committee's scope and purpose.

## **9.0 Budget**

The committee operates solely on a voluntary basis without an operating budget. Committee secretariat costs are borne by the ministry. Members provide their time and expertise on a *pro grata* basis (i.e. *pro bono publico*). The committee will not compensate travel or associated business expenses borne as a consequence of any member's participation on the committee.

Committee members, including government members, may elect to fund or contract work for the committee. However, the committee assumes no responsibility or obligation related to any contract, agreement or promise in respect to paid services of any kind that a member of the committee may enter into for the committee or on its behalf.