

# NATIONAL LABORATORY ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (NVLAP) INTERACTIVE WEB SITE (NIWS) TRANSACTIONAL SURVEY

## FOUR STANDARD SURVEY QUESTIONS

### **1. Explain who will be surveyed and why the group is appropriate to survey.**

The National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) accredits testing and calibration laboratories that comply with the NVLAP Procedures and General Requirements (15 CFR 285). Each laboratory that applies for initial or continuing accreditation using the NVLAP Interactive Web Site (NIWS), a web-based application that enables laboratories to complete and submit their applications for accreditation over the Internet, will be asked to complete the survey at the conclusion of the application process. The benefits of the NIWS include simplification of the application process, elimination of the redundancy of submitting the same information year-after-year, and shortening of the time needed to provide the information to NVLAP. These laboratories are appropriate to survey because they are the sole customers of the NVLAP and users of NIWS. The collection of the information from the participating laboratories is covered under OMB Control Number 0693-0003, *NVLAP Information Collection System*.

This survey will permit NVLAP to ensure that the design of the NIWS is meeting the needs of customer laboratories through the collection of valuable information for the identification, prioritization, and implementation of future system modifications and enhancements.

### **2. Explain how the survey was developed including consultation with interested parties, pre-testing, and responses to suggestions for improvement.**

The staff member who developed the survey has received training in using survey design templates; i.e., those created by NIST Technology Services a few years ago with the assistance of a contractor/consultant, Management Insights, of New York. Questions for the survey were developed based upon experience with previous NVLAP transactional surveys, including the Accreditation Service Customer Survey and the Assessor Questionnaire Survey.

The survey was sent by e-mail to electromagnetic compatibility and telecommunications (ECT) and acoustical testing laboratories as pre-testing, which resulted in the respondents providing very useful feedback, which was incorporated into the design of the next software release.

The survey instrument will contain drop down-menu items for the Yes/No answers, a drop-down menu of accreditation program choices for Question 1 of the instrument, and some questions will allow a fill-in-the-box or text free-form option. The instrument focuses upon measuring customer satisfaction with the specific transaction (i.e., applying for accreditation through the NIWS) and measuring the performance of key attributes such as clarity, ease of use, and responsiveness.

### **3. Explain how the survey will be conducted, how customers will be sampled if fewer than**

**all customers will be surveyed, expected response rate, and actions your agency plans to take to improve the response rate.**

Any customer laboratory that submits its application for accreditation on-line using the NIWS will have the opportunity to complete a survey. It is planned that the survey screen will appear after the customer receives the following “Submission Completed” notice: “Your application for NVLAP accreditation was successfully submitted on mm/dd/yyyy.”

This topic is highly salient to our customer (laboratory) population, and based upon previous survey response rates, the response rate is projected to be 50% to 70%. This estimate is supported by applying the H-B (Heberlein and Baumgartner) model to predict the response rate as follows:

46.5 (constant term for a government survey of targeted population)  
+14.6 (if topic is highly salient to intended respondents)  
-0.44 (-0.44 X N, where N = 1 page)  
+7.4 (+7.4 X C, where C = 1 contact)  
68.06

Actions that NVLAP will take to improve the response rate include 1) publication of the survey’s availability in NVLAP’s newsletter and on its web site, and 2) a friendly questionnaire design that will be simple and easy to complete on-line.

**4. Describe how the results of the survey will be analyzed and used to generalize the results to the entire customer population.**

Results will be used to identify opportunities for improvement (preventive action) in the web-based application process—a service to our customers. Responses will be organized by NVLAP field of testing, using simple statistical techniques such as frequency distributions.

Comments will be summarized in a spreadsheet. These results will be reviewed by the NVLAP Management Committee on a regular basis as part of NVLAP’s ongoing management review process (an integral part of its quality management system). Because the survey design will remain the same over time, changes in level of satisfaction can be measured over time in response to management decisions.