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, is asked to complete the survey at the conclusion of the application process. (The collection of the information from the participating laboratories is covered under OMB Control Number 0693-0003, *NVLAP Information Collection System*.) The survey responses provide valuable information to the NIWS system development team for the identification, prioritization, and implementation of future software modifications and enhancements. Without this feedback, the team would lack direction with regard to whether the NIWS is meeting the needs of customer laboratories and what is important to them.

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 created at NIST with the assistance of a management consultant. Questions for the survey were developed based upon this training and experience with previous NVLAP transactional surveys, including the NVLAP Accreditation Services Customer Survey and the NVLAP Assessor Questionnaire.

The survey instrument, which was first introduced to system users nearly two years ago, 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.

Respondents have provided useful feedback that has been incorporated into the design of software releases. Customer comments were also shared in a promotional/instructional flyer, which was mailed to laboratories with their renewal application packages.

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 an application for accreditation through the NIWS has the opportunity to complete a survey; as such there is no sampling. After a customer completes the application process, they receive a confirmation e-mail message that includes the following text:

We would appreciate your completing a short survey to provide feedback about your experience using the NVLAP Interactive Web Site (NIWS). To take the survey, please <u>click here</u>. The survey will open in a new window, so that you can easily return to the NIWS.

NOTE: If you are applying for accreditation in more than one program during this on-line session, please take the survey after all applications have been submitted.

If you have any questions, please contact NVLAP by phone at 301-975-4016 or by e-mail at niwshelp@nist.gov.

Based upon actual FY 2011 survey response rates, the response rate is projected to be 20%. One planned action to improve the response rate is to publish an article sharing survey results, as well as how NVLAP used those results, in the NVLAP newsletter, which is distributed electronically to over 800 customers. It is hoped that this communication will encourage more laboratories to try out the web-based application system. Also, a review of the survey methodology will be undertaken by the newly formed information technology team that NVLAP has assembled to design the next generation of the NIWS.

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 in the web-based application process—a service to our customers. Responses will be analyzed by NVLAP field of testing, using simple statistical techniques such as frequency distributions. A recent example of how NVLAP has used feedback from this survey to improve the customer experience is the addition of the capability for users to self-service their passwords.

A summary of results with comments is reviewed by the NVLAP Management Committee on a annual 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.