

## **Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks**

### **CHARGE**

The Charge to The Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN) originated with the Biodefense Policy Coordination Committee, and is derived from elements of Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD) 9, 10 and 22. Specifically, the Charge to the ICLN is to develop and maintain a coordinated and operational system of laboratory networks that provide timely, high quality, and interpretable results for early detection and effective consequence management of acts of terrorism and other events requiring an integrated laboratory response.

### **CHARTER**

#### **Background**

In recent years, several laboratory networks have been developed independently to provide coordinated, nation-wide analytical services to counteract potential chemical, biological, or radiological threats. The ICLN was established in 2005 through the creation of a Memorandum of Agreement for an Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (MOA, attached) among the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Commerce (DOC), Defense (DOD), Energy (DOE), Health and Human Services (DHHS), Homeland Security (DHS), Interior (DOI), Justice (DOJ), State (DOS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This Consortium was established to provide a nation-wide, integrated system of laboratory networks to assist in responding to acts of terrorism and other events requiring an integrated laboratory response, with a foundation in shared understanding of reliability and accuracy of results and performance comparability among analytical processes employed.

#### **Authorities**

The authority for the existence of the ICLN is established through MOA. Partial authority to achieve the objectives of the ICLN is contained in the "Commitments of the Signatories" contained in the MOA. In addition, the recognition that the ICLN represents an essential and required capability within the infrastructure of homeland security, is derived from the commitment and support of the member Departments and Agencies, as evidenced by approval of this Charter. Special emphasis is focused on the sustained commitment and ongoing responsibilities of the officially designated representatives to the Network Coordinating Group (NCG) and their facilitation of engagement with representatives of the Joint Leadership Council (JLC) at the Departmental level. This document conveys specifically the recognition by signatory agencies that engagement of designated staff to the NCG is a primary critical duty and carries the responsibility to work toward achievement of optimal resource coordination and utilization within the scope of the ICLN.

#### **Vision**

As inspired by the vision stated in the founding MOA, the ICLN promotes a U.S. homeland security infrastructure with a coordinated and interoperable system of laboratory networks, accountable for provision of timely, credible, and interpretable data in support of surveillance, early detection, and effective consequence management of acts of terrorism and other events requiring an integrated laboratory response. The ICLN further envisions a goal of integrated resource utilization to ensure gaps in laboratory analytical capability are addressed through a risk-based prioritization approach.

## **Scope**

The ICLN provides a venue for the efficient coordination of analytical laboratory services for chemical, biological, and radiological events through inter-network strategic and operational planning, identification of accountabilities, communication and information sharing, resource optimization, and resource and response coordination. The limitations of this scope are detailed within the "Authority and Limitations" section of the attached MOA. In addition, the ICLN provides a potential venue for coordination of these activities at the international level.

## **Structure**

The ICLN structure is outlined in the attached MOA, and is reiterated here in brief. The structure includes the Joint Leadership Council (JLC), composed of one senior policy member from each Department or Agency participating in the ICLN; the Network Coordinating Group (NCG), composed of senior technical and program representatives from DHS, DOD, DOJ, DOS, and each Network (including State representatives, as appropriate) represented in the ICLN; an Executive Secretariat (ES) provided and supported by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and individual technical experts (TEs) and *ad hoc* working groups (WGs) established by the NCG. DHS chairs the JLC and NCG.

The Network members of the NCG include the Laboratory Response Network (LRN), the Environmental Response Laboratory Network (ERLN), the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN), the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN), the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), and laboratory networks within the DOD and DOJ. Additional Departments, Agencies, and Networks may be added through agreement of the JLC. NCG Subgroups currently include 1) Methods, 2) Proficiency Testing, 3) Training, 4) Scenarios and Threat Prioritization, and 5) Information Technology, Coordination and Communication. The NCG has established three current Technical Working Groups: Environmental Chemical Lab Response WG, Radiological Laboratory Response WG, and Environmental Anthrax Validated Sampling Plan WG.

## **Functions and Functional Relationships**

The basic functions and functional relationships of the JLC, NCG, ES, TEs, and WGs are defined in the attached MOA. Additional functions and functional relationships are identified here.

The JLC interacts with the appropriate White House office within the context of each JLC member organization's authorities and responsibilities, and maintains engagement with the NCG. When high-level policy or other issues prove intractable or insolvable or interfere with the achievement of any NCG or individual Network objective, the JLC facilitates or supports the NCG needs by either addressing and resolving the issue, or acting as advocate for the NCG to the appropriate White House office or the leadership of the participating Departments and Agencies, as appropriate, to resolve the issue. The JLC may also direct, advise, or recommend issues requiring attention of the NCG, and will accept advice and recommendations from the NCG on issues requiring the attention of the JLC. These communications can occur in writing through the ES or through joint JLC/NCG meetings. The JLC currently meets biannually with the NCG and according to a prioritized agenda largely developed by the latter.

The NCG interacts with the JLC and provides direction to and oversight of the TEs and WGs. Officially designated laboratory network representatives to the NCG are vested with the appropriate responsibility and authority necessary to facilitate progress on the goals and objectives consistent with the purpose of the ICLN. This responsibility incurs the due diligence

to properly vet issues which may have impact at the Department and Agency levels relative to priorities, inter-related policies, and/or resource impacts. Laboratory network representatives shall have a comprehensive operational and policy knowledge of their respective networks as well as the ability to obligate resources and make decisions within their span of control. The NCG also provides specific terms of reference (TOR) for the TEs and WGs, and reviews the recommendations and other products of the TEs and WGs for the establishment of written ICLN Guidance or Standards, incorporation into the ICLN Strategic Plan or Operational Plan, or other action as appropriate. When scientific, technical, or policy issues interfere with the work of the TEs or WGs, the NCG either addresses and resolves the issue, or acts as advocate for the TEs or WGs to the JLC to resolve the issue. Decisions made by the NCG involving inter-agency issues are consensus driven and are made by representatives during a particular meeting. If a primary NCG representative is absent from a particular meeting, a secondary representative, with decision-making abilities, will represent the specific network for that particular meeting. All NCG representatives, unable to attend a particular meeting, will be briefed on prior meetings by their designated attendees before representing their network during a current meeting, so that all representatives will be current on issues being addressed by the NCG. Technical Experts and Working Groups respond to the NCG within the context of their Terms of Reference on ICLN scientific, technical, and/or policy issues.

**Representation:** When a designated representative to either the JLC or NCG is replaced for any reason, it is essential that historical and functional continuity of the ICLN be maintained. Therefore, to the extent possible, the designating authority (Department, Agency, State, Network) will arrange for an appropriate transition period to ensure new representative is fully informed before assuming the new role.

**Decisions and Issue Resolutions:** Issues of importance to the ICLN will be identified as agenda items in advance of a meeting to ensure the appropriate subject matter experts (WG), network (NCG) or Department/Agency (JLC) representatives are informed of decisional issues. Issues will be resolved through consensus, which is defined as a majority of the designated representatives of the WG, NCG, or JLC in favor of the proposed actions and no representative of the respective group in opposition. When consensus is achieved on an issue requiring the attention or resolution of the group providing continuity or oversight, the issue will be presented by the chair of the action group. When consensus cannot be achieved on an issue, each opinion will be presented to the appropriate oversight group by a properly designated representative of the action group for subsequent resolution.

### **Requirements for Membership**

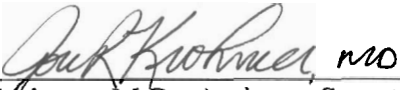
Laboratory networks will be considered for membership in the ICLN on a case-by-case basis. At a minimum, an applicant network should have some functional relationship to the purpose of the ICLN, a coordinator or other point of contact who is authorized to represent the applicant network, and a commitment by the applicant network to adhere to the standards and guidelines of the ICLN.

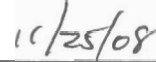
### **Conflicts with Existing Authorities**

No provisions in this document are intended to interfere with, undermine, or replace existing authorities in law or regulation that pertain to the Departments, Agencies, and Networks that are parties to the document. In the case of conflict, existing authorities and obligations supersede.

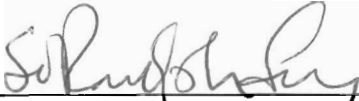
**Approval**

This charter is agreed to by:

 M.D.



Dr. Jon Krohmer, M.D., Assistant Secretary (Acting), Office of Health Affairs, Department of Homeland Security  
Chair, JLC, on behalf of JLC membership





Dr. S. Randolph Long, Ph.D, Deputy Director, Chemical Biological Division, Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security  
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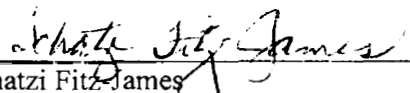
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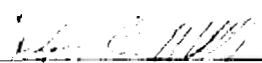
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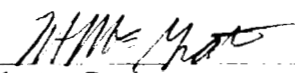
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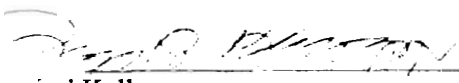
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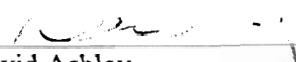
**NCG Network Managers**

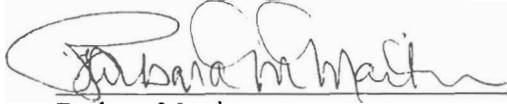
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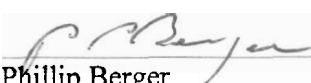
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