



**Excerpt from the Minutes of the 26th VICH Steering Committee (SC) meeting
Pertaining to the
Contact meeting with non-VICH members in view of forming the
Outreach Forum
November 15, 2011
Tokyo - Japan**

1. Opening of the meeting and chairperson's introduction

The meeting was chaired by Dr Masato Sakai, Director General of NVAL of JMAFF.

2. Participation in the meeting

11 countries (Argentina, Brazil, China, Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, South Africa, Taipei China, Thailand, Philippines, Ukraine) & 3 international organisations (ASEAN, CAMEVET and UEMOA) participated in the meeting.

3. Outcome of the Contact meeting on Wider International Harmonisation

The Contact meeting had been successful with fruitful discussions and extensive exchange of information. The expectations of the non-VICH countries/regions were in line with the VICH objectives and the majority of countries and all regional organizations were willing to become members of the proposed Forum. South Korea, China and Taipei China had indicated their need for further reflection.

With regard to the roles and responsibilities of the regional organisations, it was noted that UEMOA has the power of regulation, whilst the members of ASEAN and CAMEVET have no decision making power for their region, but have a coordination function.

Many technical questions were asked, especially regarding existing GLs, and there was a general request for training. There were also questions regarding the preference for representation of the local industry, whilst it was confirmed that most countries have at least one industry association, except Ukraine.

South Africa and UEMOA asked for information about the conditions to become an Observer to the SC and the SC was reminded that South Africa had already submitted a request to the VICH Secretariat in early 2010.

The high degree of interest from all participants in the VICH activities and the expectations for more information and training, as well as for involvement in the elaboration of new GLs was noted.

In a decision by the SC, taken the day after the Contact meeting, it was unanimously agreed to create a "VICH Outreach Forum" composed of the participants in the Contact meeting, however, clear Terms of Reference would need to be established.

The SC agreed that the objective of the forum is "to provide a basis for wider international harmonisation of registration requirements, improve information exchange and raise awareness of VICH and VICH GLs with non-VICH countries".

Further candidate countries will have to apply in writing and the SC will analyse their application and decide on their participation on a case by case basis.

Number of participants

The SC agreed that in principle one person per country /organisation should participate in Forum meetings, unless a country has a specific regulatory situation requiring the presence of 2 persons i.e. more than one agency involved in veterinary products registration. In this case, the country should inform the SC which will then make a decision on a case by case basis.

SC representation in the Forum

In principle all SC members would attend Forum meetings. Should not all members be able to attend Forum meetings, it was decided that in any case at least 6 SC members, 3 representatives from the regulators and 3 representatives from industry, should attend Forum meetings, as well as the VICH Secretariat.

Criteria for participation in the Forum

OIE presented 4 revised criteria for participating in the Forum and pointed out that the aim was to involve further countries/regions in VICH activities.

The following 4 criteria for participating in the Forum:

- Regulation for marketing authorisation in place
- Willingness to accept and work towards implementation of VICH GLs
- Paying for participation (travel costs, accommodation and translation if needed)
- Regular participation

Countries/regions to be invited to the Forum

The Forum should start with a limited number of countries and could expand at a later stage. Countries and regions which attended the Contact meeting would be invited, as well as Russia, India and Mexico, which are countries of importance on the world market. Should other countries wish to participate in the Forum, these will be required to send a formal demand to the Secretariat and the SC will decide by written procedure on a case by case basis.

Frequency of meetings

The Forum would meet back-to-back with VICH SC meetings. The first meeting will take place in the margin of the 27th SC meeting in June 2012 in Brussels, and should if possible be held for 1,5 days (Tuesday 26 all day & Wednesday 27 June in the morning), to be confirmed.

Link between Forum, VICH and OIE

VICH will chair the Forum in collaboration with OIE.

The VICH Secretariat will be the secretariat for the Forum and therefore will be responsible for sending the invitations and circulating all necessary documents, as well as for the logistics of Forum meetings.

Training

It is not VICH's role to provide training, as training needs relate primarily to risk assessment and risk management questions, but VICH can provide support to the activities of OIE. OIE explained that it has started the second phase of the OIE National Focal Points on veterinary products' training, including a session on VICH and VICH GLs. The VICH secretariat has collaborated with OIE for this part of the training programme.