

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF OIE MEMBERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OIE CODES

S.C. MacDiarmid

Professor in Veterinary Biosecurity¹

Original: English

Summary: *The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is recognised by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the international standard-setting body for matters pertaining to animal diseases and zoonoses. The standards of the OIE, published in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code and the Aquatic Animal Health Code, are developed and updated through a flexible, transparent and rapid process which depends on the active participation of the 178 Members of the OIE.*

The extent to which the 36 Members in the OIE's Far East, Asia and Oceania Region participate in the development of standards was determined by analysis of data from two sources. The first was OIE International Trade Department records showing the number of comments that Members had made on draft Code texts in the three-year period from 2008 to 2010 inclusive. The second source of data was replies to a questionnaire sent to the 36 Members in the Region.

Analysis of comments made during 2008 through 2010 revealed a low level of Member participation, with only 11 Members offering comments on draft Code texts circulated on twelve separate occasions. On the other hand, the rate of response to the questionnaire was high, with 21 of 36 Members returning completed questionnaires.

The major barriers to Member participation in the development of Code texts were identified as lack of expertise within a country (12 of 21 responses) and lack of time or available personnel (9 responses).

Keywords: *Aquatic Animal Health Code – Asia – Terrestrial Animal Health Code*

¹ Dr Stuart C MacDiarmid, Adjunct Professor in Veterinary Biosecurity (Massey University), Principal Adviser Risk Analysis, Policy Branch, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand

1. Introduction

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) publishes standards for animal diseases control including for the safe trade in animals and animal products, and standards for diagnostic tests and vaccines. The standards for safe trade are published in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* [3] and the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* [4]. The standards for diagnostic tests are published in the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* [5] and the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals* [6]. This paper discusses the participation of OIE Members in the Far East, Asia and Oceania Region of the OIE in the development and revision of the standards which are published in the *Codes*.

The *Codes* contain science-based recommendations for animal diseases control including the reporting, prevention and control of OIE-listed diseases, and for assuring safe international trade in terrestrial animals (mammals, birds and bees) and aquatic animals (amphibians, fish, crustaceans and molluscs) and their products. The *Codes* detail sanitary measures which the Veterinary Authorities (or other Competent Authorities) of importing and exporting countries should apply to manage the risks posed by animal diseases and zoonoses. Correctly applied, these measures prevent the introduction and spread via animals and their products of agents pathogenic for animals or humans.

The standards published in the *Codes* are developed, revised and adopted through well-established procedures [7]. There is only one pathway by which standards are adopted and that is through their approval by the World Assembly of Delegates meeting annually at the OIE General Session.

The World Trade Organization (WTO)'s *Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures* [8] recognises the OIE as the international standard setting body for matters pertaining to animal diseases and zoonoses. Application and use of the standards by OIE Members is the cornerstone to facilitating safe international trade in animals and their products.

2. The development of the OIE Codes

The process by which the standards in the *Codes* are developed and updated is flexible, transparent and rapid. It also provides for continuous improvement of standards as new scientific information becomes available.

Recommendations on new *Code* standards and significant revisions to existing standards are developed by small groups of independent experts. These *ad hoc* groups report either directly to one of the Specialist Commissions or, depending on the topic, via an OIE Working Group, which in turn reports to a Specialist Commission. All draft standards are reviewed by the relevant Specialist Commission, then provided to the OIE Members for review and critical comment. All comments submitted by Members are examined by the relevant Specialist Commission, which may deal with comments directly or may send them to the *ad hoc* group and Working Group for consideration and advice. The reports of *ad hoc* groups and the Commission's review of Members' comments are recorded in the Specialist Commission's report. These reports are sent to Members after each meeting and are also published on the OIE website.

Twice a year OIE Members are given the opportunity to submit written comments on proposed new or revised standards. The reports of the February meetings of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission and the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission contain the texts of all new or revised standards proposed for adoption by the World Assembly of Delegates at the General Session held in the following May.

The normal cycle for the adoption of new texts in the *Codes* is two years, meaning that the development of a new text is the subject of consultation with OIE Members on two to four occasions during that period. In the case of emergency situations warranting a more rapid procedure, standards may be developed within a shorter period. Less significant modifications to existing texts may also be undertaken in a one year period, if Members agree to the proposed modifications.

The only way in which new OIE standards can be adopted is through a resolution by the World Assembly of Delegates during the General Session. In almost all cases, standards are adopted by consensus.

Every OIE Member, regardless of wealth, size or state of development, has an equal voice in the adoption of standards. The World Assembly's discussion and decisions regarding the adoption of standards are recorded in the report of the General Session, which is sent to Delegates and is also published on the OIE website.

3. The participation of the OIE Far East, Asia and Oceania Region in Code development

To determine the extent to which OIE Members in the Far East, Asia and Oceania Region participate in the process of development of standards in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*, data were obtained from two sources.

The Trade Department at OIE Headquarters record all Members' submissions made on draft texts circulated after the February and September meetings of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission and the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission. These records for the years 2008 through 2010 were analysed to determine the number of submissions each Member made on draft *Code* texts during those years.

The second source of data was the responses to a questionnaire developed by the author and OIE Headquarters and circulated to the regional Members in September 2011. Completed questionnaires were received from 21 Members and were analysed to determine the extent to which each Member participated in the process of standards development and the means by which this participation was conducted.

4. Comments received

The numbers of comments on draft *Terrestrial* and *Aquatic Code* texts received by OIE Headquarters are shown in [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#). During 12 rounds of consultation over the three year period 2008 to 2010 inclusive, only 11 Members in the Region (out of 36) offered comments on draft *Code* texts. In total, 513 comments were received by OIE Headquarters, which is an average of 47 per participating Member.

Fewer Members submitted fewer comments on *Aquatic Code* texts than on *Terrestrial Code* texts. Over the period, 103 comments on *Aquatic Code* texts were received from 6 Members, in contrast to 410 comments on *Terrestrial Code* texts received from 11 Members.

5. Answers to the questionnaire

The OIE has 36 Members in the Far East, Asia and Oceania Region (see [Table 1](#)). Of these, 21 replied to the questionnaire and the replies are summarised in [Table 3](#).

In response to the first question asking which Competent Authority in the Member's country/territory is responsible for providing the OIE with comments on draft *Terrestrial Code* and *Aquatic Code* texts:

- 20 of 21 responded that it was either an agriculture ministry or a veterinary or livestock agency which provided comments on *Terrestrial Code* texts;
- 1 Member had not yet defined a Competent Authority to provide comments on either of the *Codes*;
- 2 of 21 Members had a different government department as Competent Authority for commenting on draft *Aquatic Code* texts;
- 6 of the 21 responding Members did not have in place a mechanism to ensure awareness among stakeholders of proposed changes in the *Codes*;
- 6 of the responding Members used meetings as the sole mechanism for ensuring awareness of proposed changes;
- Another 5 Members used meetings in combination with other mechanisms such as circulars or memoranda, emailing lists, postings on a website, and telephone ([Table 4](#));
- 1 Member used circulars or memoranda as the sole mechanism.

All Members were aware of the role of OIE national focal points and only two did not have any focal points themselves. Those Members which did have focal points did not necessarily have them for all the technical areas possible (see Table 3). The most commonly maintained focal points were for 'aquatic animals' and 'animal production food safety' (19 each). 'Animal disease notification to the OIE' was the least common (11).

Members were asked to describe the tasks carried out by these focal points. Not all Members described the tasks carried out by their national OIE focal points. However, those that did described the tasks as essentially the same as in the OIE's terms of reference for the different focal points. It can be assumed that in those instances where a Member did not list the tasks, this was because they were congruent with the terms of reference.

As well as consulting with different divisions within the same ministry or department, in 15 of the Members the Competent Authority consulted with one or more other central government departments or agencies when formulating comments on proposed changes to OIE *Codes*. The particular department or agency consulted depended, naturally, on the topic under consideration. The department or agency most frequently consulted was that with responsibility for public health (11 instances). Other departments or agencies consulted are shown in [Table 5](#). The mechanisms for this consultation with other central government departments were essentially the same as those summarised in Table 4.

When asked whether the Competent Authority consults with provincial or state veterinary services when formulating comments on draft *Code* texts, 7 Members replied in the affirmative (Table 3). It was not possible to determine from the questionnaire why most Competent Authorities did not consult with provincial or state veterinary services, but at least some respondents pointed out that there were no provincial or state veterinary services within their territory. The mechanisms for this consultation, where it occurred, were essentially the same as already described.

Eight (8) of the 21 respondents stated that the Competent Authority consulted with farming or aquaculture organisations when formulating comments on draft *Code* texts (see Table 3). The number and type of farming organisations consulted varied widely ([Table 6](#)). The most common type of organisation consulted were aquaculture organisations.

While a minority of Members consulted with farming or aquaculture organisations, the majority did consult with other stakeholders (Table 3). The stakeholders most commonly consulted were universities (11) and veterinary associations (9). Three (3) Members specified under 'other' that they consulted with animal welfare groups. Four (4) Members consulted with OIE Reference Laboratories or OIE Collaborating Centres.

Members were asked what barriers they face in offering comments to the OIE on changes proposed to texts in the *Codes*. Their responses can be seen in Table 3. Two (2) Members reported that they faced no barriers. The most common barrier faced was lack of expertise (12) and 2 Members reported that they did not have sufficient staff to do the work. Of the 7 Members reporting that the time allowed by the OIE was the problem, 1 elaborated by saying that the period for comment on texts coming out of the September meetings of the Specialist Commissions coincided with the main summer holiday period in the Southern Hemisphere. Other barriers faced by Members were listed as follows:

- a lack of standard setting-procedures approved by the OIE membership;
- persuading stakeholders to offer comment in an appropriate form;
- 'failure in disease reporting';
- language; or
- the rationale for proposed changes was not adequately explained.

5. Discussion

While the response rate to the questionnaire sent to the Members in the OIE's Asia, Far East and Oceania Region was high (21 out of 36), the actual degree of Members' participation in the development of the international standards in the *Codes* is disappointing. Over the three year period 2008 to 2010 inclusive, only 11 Members offered comments on draft *Code* texts and three of those Members made a single comment only. Of particular concern is the low level of Regional participation in the development of *Aquatic Code* standards. As Mohan [2] has pointed out, aquaculture is the world's fastest growing food production sector, with more than 90% of the 53 million tonnes of global farmed fish and shellfish production originating in the Far East, Asia and Oceania Region. Devastating impacts of aquatic animal diseases in this Region have clearly demonstrated the risks associated with international trade and the vulnerability of aquaculture to the spread of disease. The science-based standards developed by the OIE and published in the *Aquatic Animal Health Code* detail the sanitary measures which Veterinary Authorities (or other Competent Authorities) should apply to manage the risks posed by aquatic animal diseases. These measures are of major importance in preventing the spread of diseases through international trade. It is regrettable that the Region with so much to lose from disease emergencies in aquaculture should make such small contribution to the development of the standards designed to protect aquaculture from diseases while facilitating trade in the products of aquaculture.

Despite the low level of regional participation in the development of international standards, the importance of aquaculture is reflected to a certain extent by the fact that all Members with OIE national focal points maintain one for 'aquatic animals', and aquaculture organisations were the most commonly consulted by those Members which consult producer organisations on draft *Code* texts.

As would be expected, given the broad range of subjects covered by the standards in the OIE's *Codes*, most Members consulted with other central government departments, agencies or institutions when formulating national responses to proposed changes in *Code* texts. The number of central government departments varied widely, partly because of the different accountabilities included the various departments in different countries. For example, in most Member countries it appears that responsibility for fisheries matters resides in the same government department as the responsibility for livestock health matters. The responsibility for food safety may sometimes be in the same central government department as livestock health, or it may be in a different department responsible for human health matters, or it may be in a stand alone agency. This diversity of allocation of accountabilities is probably the main reason for the diversity in responses. It is clear, however, from the responses received that the Competent Authority in nearly every Member country consults across a range of accountabilities when formulating comments on proposed changes to the *Codes*.

The extent to which the Competent Authorities in the Region consult with farming or aquaculture organisations when formulating comments on draft *Code* texts is regrettably low. Farming and aquaculture organisations represent those producers whose animal health interests the Competent Authorities are meant to protect. It is the commodities produced by the members of these farming and aquaculture organisations that are so important in food production, poverty alleviation and generation of wealth through international trade. These producers have a direct interest in ensuring that international standards facilitate international trade in the animals and animal products they produce. They also have a direct interest in ensuring that the same international standards provide protection against the international spread of pathogens through trade in animals and animal products [1]. Further, because these organisations of producers understand the intricacies of their industries in a way that that central government regulators seldom do, they often provide important insights into the strengths and weakness of proposed international standards. Consultation with farming and aquaculture organisations should be strengthened.

Although fewer than half the Members said that the Competent Authority consulted with farming or aquaculture organisations when formulating comments on proposed changes to the *Codes*, a greater proportion did consult with various other stakeholders. Universities were the most commonly consulted, followed by veterinary associations. In a few cases the Competent Authority consulted with an OIE collaborating centre or reference laboratory. This could be within the territory of the Member or in another country. Consultation with these sources of technical expertise is surely a reflection of the Members' wish to ensure the soundness of the OIE's science-based standards.

Seven of the Members said that the Competent Authority consulted with consumer groups when considering proposed changes to the *Codes*. Although this occurred in a minority cases, such consultation is likely to grow as consumers became more aware of the benefits, and potential risks [1], of international trade in animal products. Similarly, although only three Members stated that animal welfare groups were consulted, this consultation is also likely to become more common as consumers everywhere become more aware of animal welfare issues, especially those around the international trade in live animals.

In several of the questions Members were asked to describe the mechanisms used to consult with other central and provincial government agencies and different stakeholders. As one would expect, a range of methods of communication are used. Meetings of various kinds, either as the sole mechanism or in combination with others, are the most common. When appropriate people, sufficiently prepared, can be brought together in a well-conducted meeting, this can be a very effective means of consulting on proposed changes to *Code* texts or informing stakeholders of changes that have been adopted. However, it can be expensive to conduct such meetings, especially where appropriate people have to travel long distances to participate.

Circulars and memoranda were given as a means of consultation on proposed changes of informing of adopted changes. Such written communication is very useful for informing interested parties of changes which have been adopted but are an inefficient method of consulting on proposed changes, especially as 'time provided by the OIE' was cited by several Members as a barrier they faced in offering comments to the OIE.

While four Members said that they used websites as a means of consulting on proposed changes and informing on adopted changes, only two used emails for these purposes. In two Member countries in the Region, and in several other OIE Member countries in other Regions, the combined use of emails with postings to a website has proven to be a very cost-effective and efficient mechanism for distributing proposed *Code* texts for comment and for informing stakeholders of new standards once *Code* texts have been adopted by the OIE. The future should see more Members incorporating email and website postings into their procedures for consulting with and informing stakeholders. In response to the question, Australia explained that "Email distribution lists are maintained (one for Terrestrial [*Code* texts], one for Aquatic [*Code* texts]) and interested parties can request to have their names added to the list. There is information on the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry website and a generic email address ... where people can request to be added. Reports of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission and Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission are distributed by email with a brief explanation of key areas of interest to Australia."

These two Australian websites can be seen at:

www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/aquatic/aquatic_animal_forums

www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/animal/oie

While one Member (Australia) uses its websites for consultation on proposed changes to *Code* texts as well as informing stakeholders of changes adopted, another Member (New Zealand) uses its website to inform stakeholders about national comments made on draft texts;

www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosec/pol/intl/consult-intl-reg-stds/intl

Another excellent example of a Member's website (United States of America), that is used both for consulting with stakeholders on proposed changes to the *Codes* as well as informing them of comments submitted to the OIE, can be seen at:

www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/oie/terrestrial.shtml

The most common barrier Members face in commenting on draft *Code* texts is lack of expertise within the country. However, the second most common barrier is said to be the time provided by the OIE for Members to consult with their stakeholders, formulate critical comments on draft *Code* texts and communicate these back to OIE Headquarters in time for the next Specialist Commission meeting. Two Members stated that a barrier they faced is insufficient personnel. However, this is essentially the same as having insufficient time. If staff were not committed to other work, they could be analysing and formulating comments on draft *Code* texts.

The Specialist Commissions have long recognised the problem time constraints cause for Members formulating their comments on draft *Code* texts. In the past three years the Specialist Commissions have rescheduled their twice-yearly meetings to maximise the time provided to Members to formulate comments. However, there is little room for flexibility; the General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates is held each year in May. The Specialist Commissions must meet as early as possible in the year so as to allow them to properly address Members comments, revise texts, write their reports and have them translated into the official languages and still allow the Members at least 60 days to analyse standards proposed for adoption in May.

Time must also be scheduled during the year for meetings of *ad hoc* groups convened by the Specialist Commissions to draft new *Code* texts or significantly revise existing ones.

There is little more that can be done, in terms of scheduling and deadlines, without the OIE having to forego its current two year cycle for standard development. However, Members could streamline their own processes of internal analysis, consultation and comment on draft *Code* texts by adapting to newer technology. Some Members with the Region and in other Regions have been able to streamline their processes through the use of email distribution lists and websites (see above).

One Member stated that a barrier was that the Specialist Commissions did not provide adequate technical explanation for proposed changes to *Code* texts. This comment has been made on a number of occasions directly to the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission which has, in recent years, made a concerted effort to explain the scientific basis for proposed changes, often providing references to the scientific literature to support proposals. In this, the Commission has been assisted to a great extent by Members themselves who are, increasingly, providing scientific references to justify their own submissions on draft texts.

Another Member gave as a barrier faced the “lack of standard setting procedures approved by OIE Members, especially uncertainty in the start of each work and in the procedure until its adoption”. The Specialist Commissions have been aware of this concern for some time and the procedures used by the OIE in developing standards have recently been documented and published on the OIE website [7].

Once Members have commented on proposed new or revised international standards in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* or the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*, and once the appropriate Specialist Commissions have addressed the Members comments, the standards are then proposed for adoption by the World Assembly of Delegates, meeting in the General Session, held each year in May at OIE Headquarters. When a new text has been adopted into one of the *Codes* it becomes an international standard and is recognised as such under the WTO's *Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures* [8]. Members whose national standards are not harmonised with those of the OIE risk becoming involved in trade disputes. It is, therefore, surprising that a few Members do not amend national regulations on the basis of changes to OIE standards and do not incorporate recent changes to OIE standards when negotiating import conditions with trading partners.

The international standards of the OIE are developed through the active participation of the OIE's Members. Further, they are adopted by the consensus of all the OIE's Members. When published in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* or the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*, these standards are essential to improve animal health worldwide and to enhance the safety of international trade in animals and animal products, encourage harmonisation of national legislations and control measures, narrow the gap between rich and poor countries, and promote fairer trade by eliminating unjustified restrictions. It is thus important that the OIE, in collaboration with its Members, ensures active participation of all stakeholders in the development of animal health standards.

References

- [1] MacDiarmid S.C. (2011).– (Editor) The spread of pathogens through international trade. *Rev. sci. tech. Off. Int. Epiz.*, **30** (1) ; 370 pages.
- [2] Mohan C.V. (2011).– Aquaculture and aquatic animal health management issues in the Asia–Pacific region. *In: Aquatic Animal Health Programmes, their benefits for global food security* (Panama), 28–30 June 2011. World Organisation for Animal Health, Paris. www.oie.int/eng/A_aquatic/Docs/Abstracts/Mohan.pdf . Accessed 13 October 2011.

- [3] OIE (2011a). Terrestrial Animal Health Code. World Organisation for Animal Health, Paris. Available at: www.oie.int/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/ (Accessed 12 October 2011).
- [4] OIE (2011b). Aquatic Animal Health Code. World Organisation for Animal Health, Paris. Available at: www.oie.int/international-standard-setting/aquatic-code/access-online/ (Accessed 12 October 2011).
- [5] OIE (2011c) Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals. World Organisation for Animal Health, Paris. Available at: www.oie.int/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-manual/access-online/ (Accessed 12 October 2011).
- [6] OIE (2011d) Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals. World Organisation for Animal Health, Paris. Available at: www.oie.int/international-standard-setting/aquatic-manual/access-online/ (Accessed 12 October 2011).
- [7] OIE (2011e). Procedures used by the OIE to set standards and recommendations for international trade, with a focus on the *Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes*. World Organisation for Animal Health, Paris. www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Internationa_Standard_Setting/docs/pdf/A_OIE_procedures_stand__recom_2011.pdf (Accessed 13 October 2011).
- [8] WTO (2011). Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. World Trade Organisation, Geneva. Available at: www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/15-sps.pdf (Accessed 29 September 2011).

.../Annex

Annex

Table 1.– Number of comments received from OIE Members regarding the Terrestrial Animal Health Code texts, 2008 to 2010

	2008		2009		2010		Total	Reply to questionnaire
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn		
Afghanistan							0	
Australia	13	13	26	17	21	14	104	Yes
Bangladesh							0	Yes
Bhutan							0	Yes
Brunei							0	Yes
Cambodia							0	
China (People's Rep. of ~)	7	2			13	5	27	
Chinese Taipei	3	2	2	2	2	5	16	Yes
Fiji							0	Yes
India							0	
Indonesia							0	
Iran							0	
Iraq							0	Yes
Japan	11	13	11	4	10	3	52	Yes
Korea (Rep. of ~)				2		4	6	Yes
Korea (Dem. People's Rep. of ~)							0	
Laos							0	Yes
Malaysia	1						1	
Maldives							0	Yes
Micronesia (Fed. States of ~)							0	
Mongolia							0	
Myanmar							0	
Nepal							0	Yes
New Caledonia							0	Yes
New Zealand	25	11	27	7	29	3	102	Yes
Pakistan		1					1	
Papua New Guinea							0	
Philippines							0	Yes
Russia							0	
Singapore					1		1	Yes
Sri Lanka							0	Yes
Thailand	2	1	3	1			7	Yes
Timor Leste							0	Yes
United States of America	26	13	20	8	23	3	93	
Vanuatu							0	Yes
Vietnam							0	Yes
Total	88	56	89	41	99	37	410	21

Table 2.– Number of comments received from OIE Members regarding the Aquatic Animal Health Code texts, 2008 to 2010

	2008		2009		2010		Total	Reply to questionnaire
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn		
Afghanistan							0	
Australia	7	4	8	3	4	2	28	Yes
Bangladesh							0	Yes
Bhutan							0	Yes
Brunei							0	Yes
Cambodia							0	
China (People's Rep. of ~)				1	3		4	
Chinese Taipei	3	2			1	1	7	Yes
Fiji							0	Yes
India							0	
Indonesia							0	
Iran							0	
Iraq							0	Yes
Japan	3		3	2	3		11	Yes
Korea (Rep. of ~)							0	Yes
Korea (Dem. People's Rep. of ~)							0	
Laos							0	Yes
Malaysia							0	
Maldives							0	Yes
Micronesia (Fed. States of ~)							0	
Mongolia							0	
Myanmar							0	
Nepal							0	Yes
New Caledonia							0	Yes
New Zealand	9		11		6		26	Yes
Pakistan							0	
Papua New Guinea							0	
Philippines							0	Yes
Russia							0	
Singapore							0	Yes
Sri Lanka							0	Yes
Thailand	7	2	5	2	4	7	27	Yes
Timor Leste							0	Yes
United States of America							0	
Vanuatu							0	Yes
Vietnam							0	Yes
Total	29	8	27	8	21	10	103	21

Table 3.– Responses to questionnaire (21 of 36 Members replied)

2. Is there a mechanism managed by the Competent Authority that ensures awareness among animal health stakeholders of changes in the OIE <i>Code</i> proposed for adoption?	
Yes	15
No	6
3. Are you aware of the role of OIE national focal points?	
Yes	21
No	0
For which of the following technical fields your country has nominated a Focal Point:	
Aquatic animals	19
Animal disease notification to the OIE	11
Wildlife	18
Veterinary products	17
Animal welfare	16
Animal production food safety	19
Communication	12
4. Does the Competent Authority consult with other central Government Departments/Agencies in formulating comments on draft <i>Code</i> texts?	
Yes	15
No	6
5. Does the Competent Authority consult with Provincial/State veterinary services in formulating comments on draft <i>Code</i> texts?	
Yes	7
No	14
6. Does the Competent Authority consult with farming/aquaculture organisations or associations in formulating comments on draft <i>Code</i> texts?	
Yes	8
No	13
7. Does the Competent Authority consult with other stakeholders in formulating comments on draft <i>Code</i> texts?	
Yes	12
No	9
OIE Reference Laboratories or Collaborating Centres	4
Veterinary associations	9
Universities	11
Consumer groups	7
Industries	7
Others	6
8. What are the barriers you face in offering comments on proposed changes to <i>Code</i> texts?	
Time provided by the OIE?	7
Expertise in your country?	12
Other?	8
9. After changes to <i>Codes</i> are adopted at the General Session, does the Competent Authority report these changes back to stakeholders?	
Yes	13
No	8
10. Does the Competent Authority amend national regulations on the basis of changes adopted by the OIE?	
Yes	18
No	3
11. Does the Competent Authority incorporate recent changes to OIE standards when negotiating import conditions with trading partners?	
Yes	17
No	4
12. Does the Competent Authority have in place a mechanism to inform the Provincial/State veterinary services of amended regulations and new import/export conditions based on changes adopted by the OIE?	
Yes	11
No	10

Table 4.– Mechanisms by which the Competent Authority communicates proposed changes to the Codes

Means of communication	Sole means	In combination with others
Meetings	6	5
Website		4
Circulars, memoranda	1	5
E-mails		2
Telephone		1

Table 5.– Central government departments or agencies with which the Competent Authority consults on proposed changes to the Codes

Department or agency responsible for	
Public health	11
Environment, conservation	5
Research or national laboratory	6
Foreign affairs and trade	3
Food safety	4
Fisheries	3
National development	2
Agricultural chemicals, veterinary medicines	1
Other	4

Table 6.– Farming or aquaculture organisations with which the Competent Authority consults on proposed changes to the Codes

Producers organisation or association for	
Poultry and eggs	4
Beef	4
Dairy	5
Sheep meat	2
Wool	1
Goats	1
Pork	4
Bees	1
Horses	2
Aquaculture	6
Other or mixed	4