

Workshop for OIE National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals

Dubai, United Arab Emirates,
27 – 29 September 2010

Report



**Regional Representation
For the Middle East**

Proceedings of the Workshop

During the 76th OIE General Session in May 2008, the International Committee of the OIE reiterated the importance of the Focal Points for animal diseases notification and requested delegates to nominate additional Focal Points for: wildlife, veterinary products, animal production food safety, animal welfare and aquatic animals.

OIE Focal Points, nominated by OIE delegates and acting under their supervision, are an important mechanism for countries to satisfy to their OIE obligations and to strengthen communication and collaboration with the OIE.

In the global programme of OIE Focal Points' training, the OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East (RR-ME) organized a specific training for OIE Focal Points on Aquatic Animals (AA) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 27 to 29 September 2010.

The aim of this training was to provide information on good governance concepts for improving aquatic animal health and food safety of products of aquatic animal origin, to explain and clarify roles and responsibilities of OIE Focal Points on AA and to facilitate, where appropriate, consistency and harmonisation amongst OIE Members when assigning responsibilities to these officials.

This training was hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

OIE Focal Points on AA from the following 13 countries attended this workshop: Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, KSA, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Syria, Turkey, UAE and Yemen.

The MoEW also invited some observers involved in aquatic matters in UAE, and a total of 40 persons attended this workshop.

Large and active discussion, facilitated by an English – Arabic translation, gave the opportunity for all focal points to exchange views and experiences.

Participants also had an overview of the technical experiences of UAE in AA during technical visits to the Atlantis Aquarium, the Dubai Aquarium and the Marine Environment Research Centre of the MoEW in Umm Al Quwain.

All the Power Point™ presentations made during this workshop are available at the following address: <http://www.rr-middleeast.oie.int/viewpage.asp?ID=264>



Attendees during the visit of the Umm Al Quwain Aquatic Research Centre

The Inauguration Ceremony

The workshop was inaugurated by Eng. Abdullah Salman Al Janaam, Executive Director of Animal and Agricultural Affairs of UAE. He welcomed all the participants of the workshop and said that it was a pleasure for UAE to host such a meeting. He also expressed his gratitude to the OIE for the strong support and assistance provided to the VS of UAE.

He mentioned also that the UAE have diverse and rich marine life thanks to the length of the coasts on two seas: the Gulf and the Oman Sea; and that fisheries in the UAE are considered economically viable for the country and serve large segments of the society.

He explained that the Ministry is also concerned by research in this domain. A dedicated research centre, based in Umm Al Quwein, has been established since the eighties and research programme conducted are more and more diversified.

He wished all participants a very good stay in Dubai and a very profitable workshop.



Eng. Abdullah Salman Al Janaam, Executive Director of Animal and Agricultural Affairs of UAE

Dr Ghazi Yehia, OIE Regional Representative for the Middle East, thanked the UAE Authority for the extraordinary hospitality and cooperation in the organisation of this workshop. He reminded the participants that training is an important part of capacity building and improvement of competencies of Veterinary Services, which is one of the main mandates of the OIE.



*Dr Ghazi Yehia
OIE Regional Representative*

He also mentioned that the Regional Representation will still be involved in this domain, in compliance with its mandate adopted democratically by the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, and that, in 2010, 4 trainings of OIE Focal Points were scheduled.

He wished all participants an enjoyable stay in Dubai and to have a productive training.



Participants during the opening ceremony

The Training of Focal Points on Aquatic Animals

The training was facilitated by Dr Franck Berthe, General Secretary of the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, Dr Ghazi Yehia, OIE Regional Representative for the Middle East, Dr Gillian Mylrea, from the OIE International Trade Department in Paris, and Dr Pierre Primot, from the OIE Regional Representation of Beirut.

After providing general information on the OIE (role, objectives, mandates, structure (at global and regional levels) and management), they described and explained the work of each of the OIE Focal Points, assisting the Delegate in their relevant domain of competencies. A specific focus was made on the Terms of Reference of the OIE Focal Point on Aquatic Animals.



Dr Franck Berthe, from the OIE Aquatic Commission

It was also the opportunity to present the OIE Regional Representation project to create in this region a relevant and active network of OIE focal points. Dedicated pages were created in the OIE regional website to place all documents of regional importance. To this end, Focal points were invited to send regularly to the OIE Regional Representation updated information on this specific topic.

Facilitators outlined the role and work of the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, and detailed the relevant OIE Standards on Aquatic Animals, with specific presentation of the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Code and of the Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals.

They also explained the OIE guidance on aquatic animal disease surveillance and described standards to be followed in order to implement national strategies for the control and prevention of disease emergencies in aquatic animals.

Some important concepts, such as the Good Governance of Veterinary Services and the concept of Global Public Good, to qualify the work of Veterinary Services worldwide, were underlined with a focus on OIE actions in such areas through the OIE PVS Tool. This Tool was elaborated for the assessment of Veterinary Services through a standardized and recognized procedure in order to identify areas for improvement and additional expertise to enhance the quality of Veterinary Services, in compliance with the OIE Standards, such as the Gap Analysis, the PVS Follow-Up and the Legislation expertise.

It was outlined that even if this programme started initially by the evaluation of the "Terrestrial part" of Veterinary Services, a similar standardized method, the OIE PVS Tool - Application to Aquatic Animal Health Services, has been developed, based on the same framework, for the assessment of the "Aquatic sector" of Veterinary Services or the Aquatic Animal Health Services when not part of the Veterinary Service.

Facilitators encouraged Focal Points to promote the use of this tool for the evaluation of Aquatic Animal Health Services with their OIE Delegate and to advocate for sending a request to the OIE.

Specific information was also given on safe commodities and food safety concerns in aquatic products and the current relationship between the OIE and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

During this workshop, Dr Feisal A. Bukhari, Consultant in Aquaculture from KSA gave a clear overview of the situation of aquaculture in the Middle East.

Dr Ali Khaitibi Tabar, an aquaculture expert in Iran, presented a case study on white spot disease in Iran and explained how the Veterinary Authority and the farmers control this disease by the implementation of a relevant Code of Practice.

Two specific cases were presented:



- Mr Rashid Al Shihi, oceanographic specialist of the MoEW of UAE, presented a study of biotoxin monitoring of red tide (Harmful Algal Blooms) and its impact on Marine Resources in the UAE Coastal water during 2008-2009;
- Dr Iyad Srour, Head of Diagnosis Bacterial Diseases Section from the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform of Syria, exposed practical aspects of investigation conducted after high mortality of in fish farming ponds in 2008.

Mr Rashid Al Shihi, from the MoEW of UAE

Selected national OIE Focal Points on AA were also invited to present the situation in their respective countries.

The Focal Points of Jordan, KSA, Lebanon and Turkey made a presentation accordingly.

Several points could be highlighted from the different country reports:

- In most of the Middle Eastern countries, the Competent Authority for aquatic animal is not under the Veterinary Services;
- Very few veterinarians in the region are specialized in the field of aquatic diseases;
- In some regional countries and at the level of VS, the knowledge of the aquatic disease situation is very low. Such a situation is mainly due to lack of surveillance programmes, lack of sampling flow and insufficient dedicated databases;
- The concern of VS is generally limited to the export certification of aquatic animals and products;
- Basic and specialized training as well as communication and extension programmes are lacking in most of the countries.



Hüseyin Haluk AŞKAROĞLU from Turkey

Facilitated by simultaneous English – Arabic interpretation, discussions were very active and fruitful during these two days.

Technical visits were also planned during this training. Visits were conducted at the Atlantis Aquarium, at the Dubai Aquarium and at the Marine Environment Research Centre of the MoEW in Umm Al Quwain. Participants could have an overview of the technical experience of UAE in this domain.

Conclusions

This workshop for OIE Focal Points for Aquatic Animals is part of a large programme of the OIE, providing information and training to each nominated Focal Point in order to improve collaboration and communication of each country with the OIE.

The main purpose of this workshop was to increase understanding of the OIE's roles and mandates and the relationships between veterinary, fisheries and aquaculture officials (as several OIE focal points are based in other Competent Authorities such as in Fisheries Departments, in Research Centres or Universities).

Accordingly, this workshop was a first step to enhance the knowledge of Focal Points for Aquatic Animals on the OIE standards and on their role, according to their Terms of Reference.

The proposal to build a network of regional OIE Focal Points for Aquatic Animals would provide a good start in improving collaboration and the exchange of information between all regional countries, playing a large part in improving knowledge with respect to standards. Participants supported the idea to build such a network at the regional level in order to discuss particular issues they are facing.

It is expected that the training will be the beginning of a regional networking as proposed by the OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East and will improve technical inputs of Middle Eastern OIE Members into the standard setting processes on aquatic animals as well as improve diagnostic capacity and therefore reporting of aquatic animal diseases to the OIE, through the WAHIS system.

Participants expressed also their wishes to benefit from regular follow-up workshops on this topic.

In a world where the global demand for animal proteins is expected to increase by 50 % in the near future, aquatic animal and aquatic products will make a significant contribution to satisfy such a demand. It is therefore crucial that Veterinary Services develop their technical competence and scientific expertise in the area of aquatic animals.

Annexes

1. Agenda
2. List of participants
3. Speeches made during the opening Ceremony
4. Evaluation of answers to the satisfaction questionnaire

Annexe 1: Agenda

Workshop for OIE National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals

Samaya Hotel , Dubai, UAE, 27-29 September 2010

Day-1: Monday 27 September 2010

Time	Theme	
08:00-09:00	Registration of participants	
09:00-09:30	Inauguration and Opening	
09:30-10:15	General presentation of the OIE and its Regional Representation for the Middle East	Dr Ghazi Yehia
10:15-10:30	Focal Points - Terms of Reference	Dr Pierre Primot
10:30-11:00	Why is Aquaculture and Aquatic Animal Health so Important?	Dr Franck Berthe
11:00-11:30	Morning break - Coffee/Tea	
11:30-12:00	<i>The Aquatic Code</i>	Dr Gillian Mylrea
12:00-12:30	Safe Commodities, Fish Welfare, Animal Production Food Safety	Dr Gillian Mylrea
12:30-12:45	Discussion	
12:45-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-14:30	OIE- Listed Diseases / Criteria for Listing	Dr Franck Berthe
14:30-15:00	OIE Disease Notification and Reporting Obligations	Dr Gillian Mylrea
15:00-15:30	Discussion	
15:30-16:00	Afternoon Break Tea/Coffee	
16:00-16:30	Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Middle East	Dr Feisal A. Bukhari
16:30-17:15	Aquatic Animal Health Surveillance	Dr Franck Berthe
17:15	End of Day 1	
20:00	Dinner at Oceanis restaurant - Atlantis Hotel.	

Workshop for OIE National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals (contd)

Day 2: Tuesday 28 September 2010

Time	Theme	
09:00–10:00	<i>The Aquatic Manual</i> Reference Labs/Collaborating Centres/Twinning	Dr Franck Berthe
10:00–10:45	Good Governance and the Evaluation of Competent Authorities / Aquatic PVS Tool	Dr Pierre Primot/ Dr Gillian Mylrea
10:45- 11:15	Morning Break Tea/Coffee	
11:15–12:15	National Strategies for the Control and prevention of Disease Emergencies in Aquatic Animals	Dr Franck Berthe
12:15–12:30	Case Study Report: Red tide in UAE	Dr Ibrahim Al Jamani (UAE)
12:30–14:00	Lunch	
14:00–14:10	OIE Aquatic Animal Health Commission Website: Demonstration	Dr Gillian Mylrea
14:10–14:30	Case Study Report: White Spot Disease	Dr Franck Berthe
14:30–14:50	Case Study Report: White Spot Disease in Iran	Dr Ali Khatibi (Iran)
14:50–15:10	Implementation of the OIE standards in the countries of the Region - Practical Experience	Jordan
15:10–15:30	Implementation of the OIE standards in the countries of the Region - Practical Experience	Turkey
15:30–15:50	Implementation of the OIE standards in the countries of the Region - Practical Experience	Saudi Arabia
15:50–16:10	Afternoon Break Tea/Coffee	
16:10 – 16:30	Aquaculture procedures in Lebanon	Lebanon
16:30–16:50	Case Study In Syria	Syria
16:50-17:00	Discussion	
19:00	Visit to Dubai Mall and Aquarium + Dinner	

Workshop for OIE National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals (contd)

Day 3: Wednesday 29 September 2010
Aquatic Research Centre - Umm El Quwain

Time	Theme	
09:15-09:30	UAE Aquatic Research Centre	Dr Ibrahim Al Jamali, OIE FP
09:30-09:45	Arrangements for Working Groups	Dr Gillian Mylrea / Dr Ghazi Yehia
09:45-10:45	Working Group Session: - Strategies for implementation of OIE standards - activities of focal points	
10:45-11:30	Working Group Reports	
11:30-11:45	Morning Break Tea/Coffee	
11:45-12:15	Conclusions of the meeting	
12:15-12:30	Closing ceremony	
	Lunch in Um El Qiwain beach restaurant.	

Annexe 2: List of participants



**WORKSHOP FOR OIE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR AQUATIC ANIMALS
DUBAI, UAE, 27-29 SEPTEMBER**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Annexe 3: Speeches made during the opening ceremony

OIE training of focal points on Aquatic Animals

UAE 27 – 29 September 2010

Speech of Dr Ghazi Yehia (OIE Regional Representative)

Mr Representative of the Minister of Environment and Water of United Arab Emirates,
Honourable participants and Colleagues,

The OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East extends its sincere thanks to His Excellency Dr Rashed Ahmed Bin Fahed, Minister of Environment and Water for his support, hosting this meeting in United Arab Emirates, and to the team of his Ministry for providing all necessary assistance to make it successful.

I would like to thank you all for your commitment to participate in this meeting, which we hope will be beneficial for strategies for aquatic animal disease control in the Middle East.

During the 76th OIE General Session in May 2008, the International Committee reiterated the importance of focal point for animal diseases notification and requested to nominate additional focal points for: wildlife, veterinary products, animal production food safety, animal welfare and aquatic animals.

OIE focal points, nominated by OIE delegates and acting under their supervision, are an important mechanism for countries to satisfy to their OIE obligations and to strengthen communication and collaboration between countries and the OIE.

Training is an important part of capacity building and improvement of competencies of Veterinary Services, which is one of the main mandates of the OIE.

Therefore, the OIE has developed a Tool, the PVS Tool, for the assessment of the quality of Veterinary Services by using a standardized method and according to the relevant OIE standards.

This was an important step to establish the main area for the improvement of Veterinary Services.

Most of Middle Eastern countries have already been assessed according to this method, and

several of them have also applied for the gap analysis, which is the following step of the process, establishing, with active collaboration of the country, the frame of a strategic plan to reinforce Veterinary Services.

During those PVS assessments, staff training was recognised everywhere and by all Veterinary Services as an essential activity to strengthen the capacities of Veterinary Services.

The OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East has proposed, since its creation in 1998, several programmes in this area, as one of its main activity.

The Regional Representation will still be involved in such domain, in compliance with its mandate adopted democratically by the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East.

In 2010, 4 trainings of focal points were scheduled.

The first training for focal point on animal production food safety was held in Kuwait last February.

The second training for focal points on wildlife was organized in Tanzania in March, in collaboration with our colleagues from the OIE Regional Representation for Africa.

This present training of OIE focal points on Aquatic Diseases will be followed by the training of Focal Point on animal welfare in Beirut, Lebanon November 23rd-25th.

Your Excellency, Honourable participants,

For sure we will enjoy a wonderful stay in Dubai and have a productive training and outcomes.

Thank you.

OIE training of focal points on Aquatic Animals

UAE 27 – 29 September 2010

Speech of Eng. Abdullah Salman Al Janaam, Executive Director of Animal and Agricultural Affairs of UAE

In the name of Allah the most gracious the most merciful, the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the Prophet and his companions

HE/ Ministry of the environment and water resources

Dr. Ghazi Yehya, director of the OIE regional office.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Peace be upon you.

First, I would like to welcome you in your second country the UAE for the opening of the workshop aiming at training engagement officers in the Middle East region on aquatic animal health. I would also like to express my gratitude to you for having accepted the invitation to participate in this workshop. I wish you all success in your deliberations during this meeting and may you enjoy your stay in Dubai.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The UAE has accomplished great progress in its economic, social and cultural life thanks to the supreme instructions and enlightened policies of HH Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and his brother HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, UAE vice president, prime minister and ruler of Dubai as well as their brothers from the Supreme Council of the emirates rulers. This progress also encompassed aquatic animals and their sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The UAE has diverse and rich marine life thanks to the length of the coasts on two seas: the Gulf and the Oman sea; characterized by the abundance and variety of fishes and animal life, divided between tropical and semi tropical regions.

Also, fisheries in the UAE are considered economically viable for the country and serve large segments of the society.

It is to be noted that the ministry of the environment and water resources has included in its strategic goals and initiatives the preservation of fish stocks, all its types and kinds in order to reach auto-sufficiency in fish. This contributes in the realization of food security. The ministry has promulgated the necessary legislation to protect the fish resources, in an attempt to enhance aquatic life.

Fish farming is one of the most important supplementary sources for food diversity and animal protein. The UAE government has given it primary importance and has established an aquatic environment research center in the ministry of the environment and water resources in order to develop aquatic animal culture in the Emirates.

The center has completed the life cycle of many kinds of aquatic animals including two types of shrimp, the local and the white Indian shrimp and a number of sea fish such as the hammour, mullet, abbaiti and freshwater fish like the tilapia.

Furthermore, we see the role of the ministry in the conservation of fish resources and in undertaking scientific research on the fish wealth as a whole in order to foster food security and guarantee sustainable environmental development in the country.

In addition to the attention given by the ministry through fostering vital security and the creation of laboratories for the protection and prevention of aquatic resources and for the inspection of fish farms, human resources have been trained in order to guarantee food security in the country.

Moreover, in light of the climate changes, global warming and other accompanying environmental factors, such as the increase of sea levels and temperatures, as well as the increase in the number of natural disasters such as the red tide and their impact on aquatic life and fish stock, which will lead to a number of unexpected diseases in the region.

The present workshop comes in the context of OIE efforts to highlight the importance of knowing these diseases that affect aquatic life, raising awareness about prevention from these diseases and safeguarding food safety as well as the participation in training and habilitating human resources in the region.

Given the increasing demography in the Middle East countries and given that natural fisheries are depleted, many countries in the region have adopted the fish farming techniques to fill the gap in food security in the future, and which is expected to grow in coming years. This may, in its turn, cause many diseases among the farm fishes, in case these farms were not properly managed. Hence, we should give primary importance to the diagnosis and prevention of diseases, increase the quality of the farms products in order to preserve food security and increase the region's capacity to keep up with countries around the world in the field of fish disease prevention.

Finally, I wish you all success in your endeavors during this workshop and hope that we will come out with results and recommendations to enhance vital security and develop prevention programs, fight aquatic animal diseases in the UAE and other Middle Eastern countries in order to guarantee food security for our societies.

Thank you for your attention.

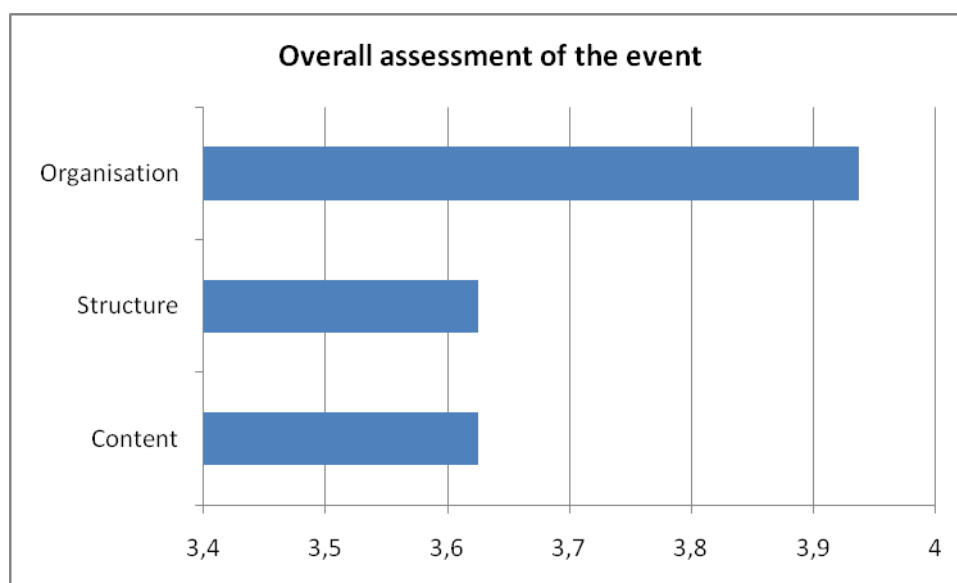
Annexe 4: Evaluation of answers to the satisfaction questionnaire

Workshop of OIE focal points on Aquatic Animals
Dubai, UAE, 27 – 29 September 2010
Evaluation of answers to the satisfaction questionnaire

17 attendees answered the above mentioned questionnaire and 5 of them anonymously.

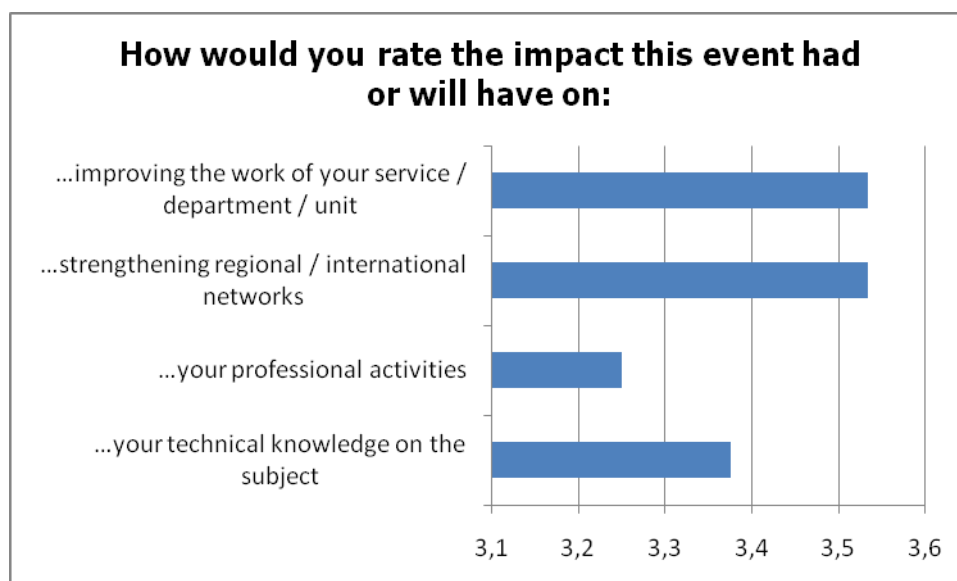
1. Overall assessment of the event

This event was well appreciated by all attendees, in terms of organization, structure and content. The graph below shows the average of attendees' rating (1 to 4) in this domain:



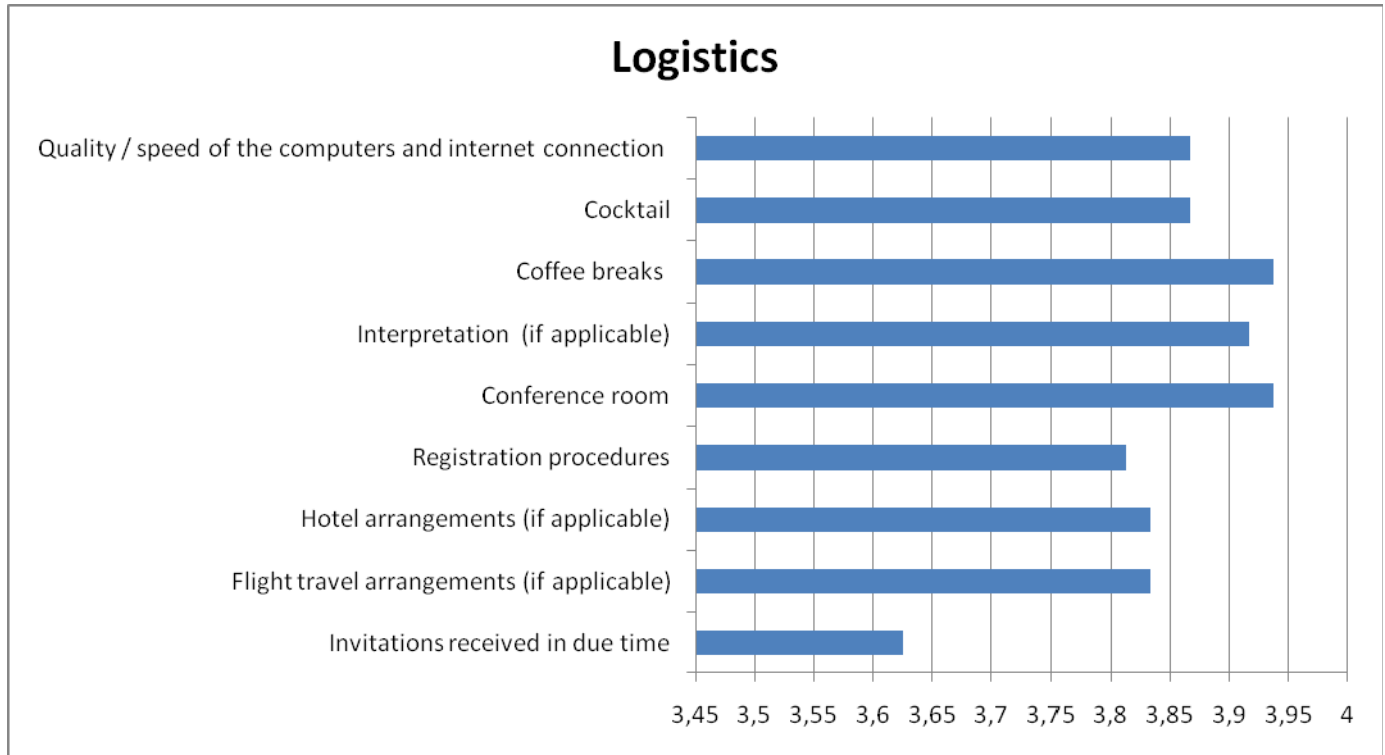
2. Impact of this event on attendees

On a same rating scale, the second part of this questionnaire concerned the impact of this event on attendees. As showed by the graph below, most of participants considered that this event will have a profitable impact on their work, professional activities, knowledge on the subject and will help to strengthen networking in the region.



3. Logistics

The event logistic was well appreciated by attendees as showed by the graph below, presenting the average attendees' rating for different points concerning this event logistic. Some local attendees, invited by the UAE Authorities regretted to receive their invitation too late.



4. Lectures

It was particularly difficult to analyse this part as some of the attendees didn't understand how to fill in this part.

In our point of view, this part is too complicated to be correctly filled in by the attendees, and difficult for participants to complete when the questionnaire was distributed at the end of the workshop.

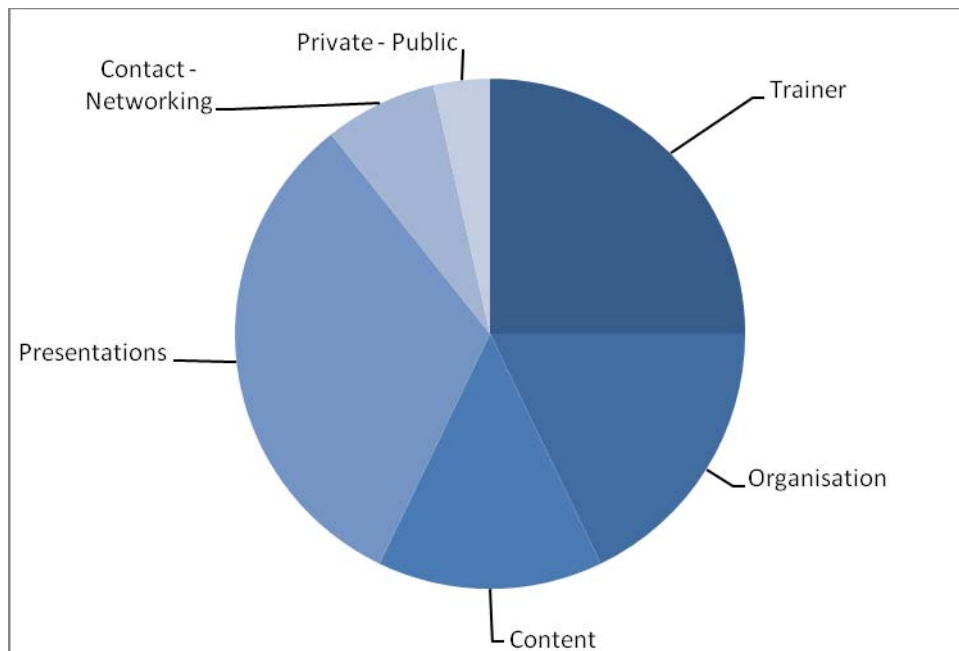
We proposed to simplify this part, using the same rating scale:

- Quality of the speakers
- Quality of the content
- Technical level of presentation
- Expectative fulfilled
- Respect of the timing
- Logical sequence

5. Comments

5.1. Strengths

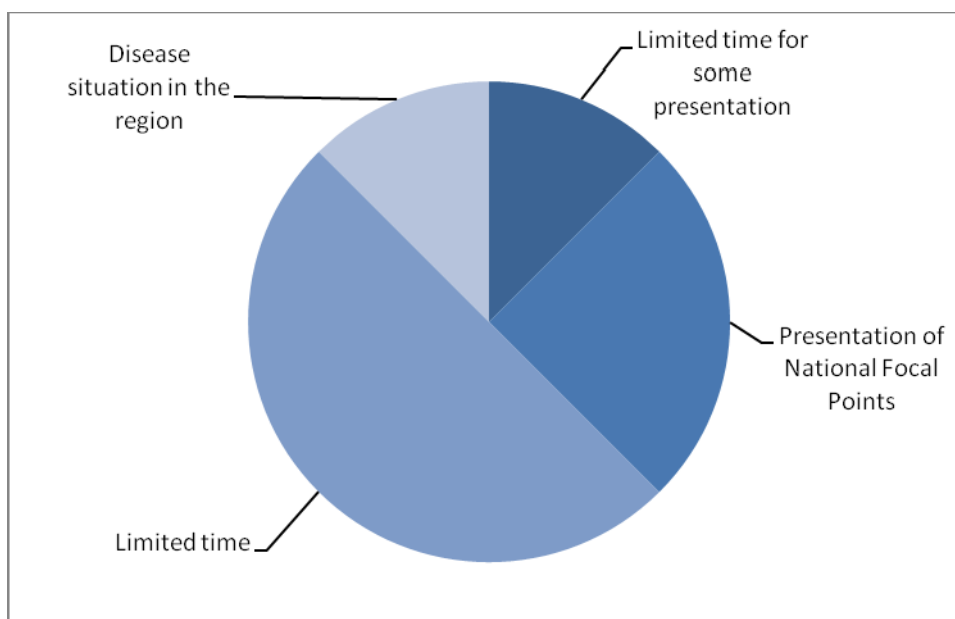
The main strengths as recognized by the attendees concerned the quality of trainers, the content of this workshop, the overall quality of the presentations, and the organisation. The presence of both representative from public and private sectors was also underlined as well as opportunities to create contact and networking.



5.2. Weaknesses

Attendees identified a few points. Some of them regretted the limited time of this workshop. They would prefer having more time, particularly to tackle practical aspects and regional issues, such as the description of the disease situation in the region.

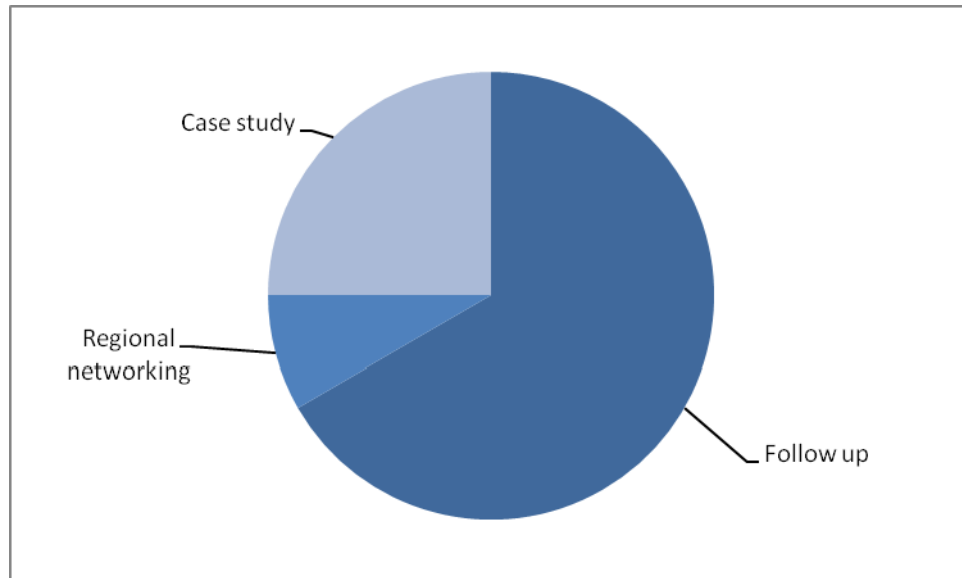
Some of them mentioned the poor quality of some country focal points presentation.



5.3. Suggestion

The attendees expressed their satisfaction and the benefit of this event to their personal skills and professional environment. Therefore they expressed their wishes to follow up this programme with more technical inputs.

The creation of a regional network of OIE Focal Points was also suggested.



6. Conclusions

This kind of questionnaire is particularly useful, giving the opportunity for attendees to express their perception of events organized by our Regional Representation.

Most of the comments and suggestions summarized discussions which took place during the entire workshop.

However, as mentioned previously, the part concerning the lectures needs to be simplified.