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RESULTS OF THE INFORMAL 2010 PILOT TEST OF THE ELECTRONIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE 1995 FAO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

SUMMARY

This supplementary paper provides the results of the pilot test of the electronic questionnaire for the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The approach and design to the pilot test is described along with the results obtained. In the final section of the paper the Committee is invited to note the results obtained in the pilot test and agree to the new electronic Code questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

1. In order to explore cost-effective options for collecting and analyzing information on the implementation of the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Secretariat, as reported at previous sessions of COFI, has re-designed the biennial Code questionnaire and moved it to an electronic interface. This was done to make the task of completing the questionnaire faster and to reduce the time and costs associated with the statistical evaluation of responses.

2. The Secretariat developed the electronic questionnaire interface between 2008 and 2010. The revised questionnaire reflects the content of the former questionnaire, but updates and expands it slightly in relevant sections. Most open-ended questions have been removed because they were time consuming for respondents to complete and difficult to evaluate and analyze in a standard format. Such questions have now been provided with relevant lists of pre-set options and responses from which respondents may choose.

3. In completing the revised questionnaire the user interface allows for the selection of one of FAO's six official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). The interface is built on a Microsoft Excel 2007 platform, which is expected to work on most personal computers worldwide.

PILOT TEST

4. A pilot test for the electronic questionnaire interface was undertaken by the Secretariat in August and September 2010. The test sought to evaluate the workability of the interface and to detect operational problems.

5. A representative list of countries was established. They were invited to participate in the pilot test. Some of the countries had requested to participate in the exercise. Table 1 shows the countries invited to participate in the pilot test and the countries providing feedback.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF COUNTRIES AND RESPONSES TO THE PILOT TEST OF THE ELECTRONIC CODE OF CONDUCT QUESTIONNAIRE

	Intended language	Responded	Language of response
USA	English	yes	English
New Zealand	English	yes	English
Canada	English	yes	English
Faroe Islands	English	yes	English
China	Chinese	yes*	Chinese
Senegal	French	no	not applicable
Mali	French	no	not applicable
France	French	no	not applicable
Oman	Arabic	no	not applicable
Morocco	Arabic	yes	French
Argentina	Spanish	yes	Spanish
Chile	Spanish	yes	Spanish
Spain	Spanish	yes	Spanish
Russia	Russian	yes	Russian
Kyrgyzstan	Russian	yes	Russian

* Chinese staff within FAO tested the interface, following China's communication that it would not be in a position to respond within the suggested deadline.

6. The only language that was not tested was Arabic, owing to the fact that Morocco opted to respond in French and Oman was unable to provide a response before the deadline. However, non-western alphabet languages, Russian and Chinese were tested, and both ran smoothly. Since the Arabic application uses the same transposition mechanism within the application (English being the programming and reference language), it is assumed that its performance would not differ from its non-western alphabet peers, and would in fact run smoothly also.

7. The pilot test consisted of the new electronic Code of Conduct questionnaire and a supplementary survey. The survey was intended to collect information from the questionnaire user as to problems encountered and suggestions for improving the electronic interface and the questionnaire (pre-set answer options, etc.).

RESULTS OF THE PILOT TEST

Electronic interface

8. The electronic interface was reported unanimously to be a major improvement by all countries participating in the pilot test.

9. Minor difficulties identified with the interface were finding the name of the country in the drop-down menu in languages other than English; enabling the macro function inherent in the interface, which in some cases is automatically disabled by Excel as a precaution; naming of the different sections could be improved to make it yet more intuitive to navigate between sections and adding additional navigation buttons (including save buttons on every question and answer page); and formatting and printing of the completed questionnaire.

Electronic questionnaire

10. The questionnaire was deemed to be complete and suggested response options provided were considered to be adequate in providing answers relevant to the national contexts and situations. A limited number of suggestions were made and these will be considered by the Secretariat.

Conclusions

11. The Secretariat found the pilot test extremely useful as a means of soliciting feedback in relation to the acceptance of the electronic questionnaire and the detection of technical problems with the interface. Feedback received would enable the interface to be enhanced.

12. The general conclusions of countries participating in the pilot test were that the electronic-user interface and the revised questionnaire were simpler and more convenient to use and that the work of responding to the questionnaire was less time consuming.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

13. The Committee is invited to:

- note the results of the pilot test of the Code questionnaire, and
- agree to the new electronic Code questionnaire.