ANNUAL REPORT 2008

New Members

1. On 1 January 2008, the National Institute of Medicaments (INAME) of Argentina and the Medicines Authority of Malta (MAM) became the 32nd and 33rd Participating Authorities of PIC/S, respectively.

2. On 1 July 2008 Cyprus' Pharmaceutical Services (CyPHS) joined PIC/S as the 34th Participating Authority. On 11 November 2009, the PIC/S Committee invited France's Veterinary Agency (ANMV) and Israel's Institute for Standardization and Control of Pharmaceuticals (ISCP) to join PIC/S as the 35th and 36th Participating Authorities, but only as of 1 January 2009.

Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme

The Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme (PIC Scheme) is an informal and flexible arrangement between GMP inspectorates. It entered into force in November 1995. It is run in parallel with the Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention (see Annex II). The common logo for both is PIC/S.

The Scheme retains and improves the Convention's main features, i.e. the networking and confidence building between the national inspection authorities, the development of quality systems, the training of inspectors and other related experts and its work towards global harmonisation of GMP. It is open to the participation of the inspectorates of other countries.

The main decision-making body is the PIC/S Committee in which all Members are represented and which meets at least once a year. The Committee is assisted in its task by an Executive Bureau and a Secretariat.

The PIC/S Executive Bureau's task is to prepare meetings of the Committee, implement the latter's decisions and recommendations, monitor the Scheme's activities and prepare the annual budget. The Bureau is composed of the Chairperson, two Deputies as well as two Members of the Committee.

Operation of the Scheme

3. The PIC/S Committee, the PIC/S Executive Bureau and the PIC/S Working Group on the Training of Inspectors met twice in the course of 2008.

4. The PIC/S Committee met under the chairmanship of Mr. Jacques Morénas (France / French Health Products Safety Agency) first in Krakow (Poland) on 26-27 May 2008 and then in Geneva (Switzerland) on 11-12 November 2008.

5. During these meetings, the Committee initiated a consultation of Participating Authorities on the operation and the structure of PIC/S. A majority of PAs was satisfied with the current system. The Committee nominated a Working Group in charge of making proposals on the way to further improve the current system based on suggestions made by Participating Authorities.

6. The Committee reviewed the assessment of new Applicants and the reassessment of older Participating Authorities. It also monitored the activities carried out by the Working Group on Training and by the Executive Bureau. It approved the 2007 accounts, discharged the Chairman for the financial year 2007, approved the 2008 budget and amended the Financial Rules.

7. It adopted a mandate for the PIC/S Working Group on Good Distribution Practices (GDP) consisting in the drafting of several recommendations and an aide-memoire related to GDP inspection. It also adopted several guidance documents and revised the PIC/S GMP Guide (see "Harmonisation of Guidance documents" below).

8. Due to the resignation of Mr. Michel Keller (Switzerland / Swissmedic) from his position of First Deputy Chairman, the Committee extended the mandate of Mr. Jacques Morénas (France / AFSSAPS) as PIC/S Chairman until the end of 2009 and elected Mr. Tor Gråberg (Sweden / MPA) as First Deputy Chairman and Ms. Helena Baião (Portugal / INFARMED) as Second Deputy Chairperson for the period 2008-2009. Dr. Joey Gouws (South Africa / MCC) was also elected as Member of the Executive Bureau for the period 2009-2010. The Committee nominated Singapore / HSA as ASEAN Liaison Authority for the period 2009-2010.

9. The Executive Bureau met in Krakow (25 May 2008) and in Geneva (10 November 2008). During these meetings, the Bureau prepared the meetings of the Committee, considered possible ways to improve the organisation's operation & structure based on suggestions made by Participating Authorities in the consultation and discussed administrative issues concerning the Secretariat and its staff (salaries, contracts, etc.).

10. The Working Group on the Training of Inspectors first met in Krakow on 26 May 2008 under the chairmanship of the PIC/S First Deputy Chairman, Mr. Michel Keller (Switzerland / Swissmedic). The second meeting took place in Geneva on 11 November 2008. It was chaired by the new First Deputy Chairman, Mr. Tor Gråberg (Sweden / MPA). For more information on the activities of the Working Group on Training, see "Training of Inspectors" below.

11. In 2008, the PIC/S Secretariat continued to provide secretariat services to the various PIC/S bodies (Committee, Executive Bureau, Working Group on Training).

The Participating Authorities of the PIC/S
(Convention and Scheme taken together)

By the end of 2008, PIC/S comprised 34 inspectorates from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic (human & veterinary), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovak Republic, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (see also Annex I).

Membership Applications: Indonesia and Slovenia apply

12. The membership applications of Indonesia's National Agency for Food and Drug Control (NADFC) and Slovenia's Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices (JAZMP) were received on 29 April and 28 October 2008, respectively. The Committee appointed a Rapporteur and a Co-Rapporteur for assessing each application.

13. The following progress was made in the assessment of other membership applications:

The assessment report on the application by Cyprus' Pharmaceutical Services (CyPHS), recommending CyPHS' PIC/S membership, was approved.

The assessment report on France's Agency for Veterinary Medicinal Products (ANMV), following the on-site assessment visit to France from 11 to 15 February 2008 was approved (at the Geneva meeting). As all outstanding issues had been addressed, ANMV was invited to access to PIC/S membership as from 1 January 2009.

The on-site assessment visit to Israel took place from 3 to 7 August 2008. The Committee followed the recommendation of the Rapporteur to accept Israel's Institute for Standardization and Control of Pharmaceuticals (ISCP) in PIC/S as from 1 January 2009.

A follow-up visit to Lithuania's State Medicines Control Agency (SMCA) took place from 13 to 17 October 2008. The Committee agreed in principle on SMCA's accession to PIC/S on 1 July 2009, provided that all outstanding issues were addressed.

The assessment report on Thailand's Food and Drug Administration (Thai FDA), following the on-site assessment visit to Thailand carried out from 18 to 25 January 2008 was reviewed. The Committee agreed on the action plan submitted by the Thai FDA for the correction of outstanding issues.

The on-site assessment visit to USA's Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) will be carried-out in 2009.

The membership application by the Ukraine's State Service for Medicine and Medical use Products (SMMP) has been reactivated. The Committee reviewed the interim assessment report on SMMP.

Reassessment of Participating Authorities

14. In 2008 the reassessment of Liechtenstein's "Amt für Gesundheit" (AG) was successfully closed.

15. The reassessment of Austria's AGES PharmMed was still ongoing at the end of the year. The on-site reassessment visit in Austria will be carried out in 2009.

Joint Reassessment Programme (JRP)

For many years, only Applicants to the Convention or the Scheme were subject to assessment. Founding Members were, however, never assessed. In order ensure that both new applicants and older members fulfil the same requirements, a Joint Reassessment Programme (JRP) was launched in 2000 under which existing PIC/S members are now also reassessed for equivalence on a regular basis. It is run in parallel with the EU's Joint Audit Programme (JAP) and uses basically the same tools.

Training of Inspectors

16. In 2008, the Working Group on the Training of Inspectors:

- reviewed the mandates and the yearly objectives of PIC/S Expert Circles;
- reviewed the draft Standard Operation Procedure on Coached Inspections;
- discussed the way to improve the operation of the Joint Visit Programme;
- reviewed the preparation for the 2008 Seminar on "Good Distribution Practices" (see below);
- commented on the programme of the 2009 Seminar, which would take place in Sweden (Uppsala, 4-6 November) on "Sterile and aseptic manufacturing from APIs to finished dosage forms"
- noted the tentative programme of the 2010 Seminar to be held in Malaysia on herbal medicinal products.

Joint Visits Programme

17. At the end of 2008, there were 31 active joint visit groups under the Joint Visits Programme (of which eleven groups were created in the course of the year), representing around 90 inspectors from more than 25 different nationalities.

PIC/S Joint Visit Groups

Another means of training inspectors of the PIC/S countries has been devised in the form of joint visits to manufacturers by inspectors of different countries. Groups of three inspectors are set up on the basis of applications sent to the PIC/S Secretariat. Each inspector is assigned within his/her group to act in turn as host for one year and guest for the other two years.

Visits are carried out in English or in a language commonly agreed by inspectors. Joint reports are drafted after each visit and sent to the Committee for evaluation.

The organisation of the joint visits has proved an excellent means for the further training of inspectors through mutual exchange of experience and a useful contribution to the maintenance of mutual confidence between competent authorities. Participants have also the possibility to discuss and compare their inspection methods and their interpretation of GMP rules.

2008 PIC/S Seminar in Krakow

18. The 2008 Seminar took place in Krakow (Poland) from 28 to 30 May 2008 on "Good Distribution Practices (GDP) as one of the key elements for the quality of medicinal products". It was organised by the Main Pharmaceutical Inspectorate (MPI) of Poland and it was the first time that a PIC/S seminar was dedicated to GDP.

19. The Seminar was attended by more than 120 inspectors representing 45 countries from all continents. Inspectors from a number of non-Member agencies coming from CIS[1], Cyprus, EDQM, EMEA, France (Veterinary Agency), Indonesia, Israel, Lithuania, Serbia, South Korea, Taipei, Ukraine, UNICEF, USA and WHO, also participated in the seminar. It was also the first time that a PIC/S Seminar was attended by a representative from Egypt.

20. Among the seminar participants were also a number of speakers, session chairpersons and workshop leaders. Speakers were mainly provided by PIC/S Participating Authorities and industry.

21. The Seminar focused on the following topics in the field of GDP inspection:

i) the legal aspects of GDP inspections;
ii) the application of risk analysis in GDP inspection planning;
iii) most frequent deficiencies in wholesaling and the development of suitable strategies for inspectors;
iv) the risk of counterfeit products in legal distribution channels;
v) the definition of problems in the scope of distribution of APIs.

1 Commonwealth of Independent States' Interstate Commission on Standardisation, Registration and Quality Control of Medicines and Medical Devices

22. Seminar participants also attended different workshops on:

- the most frequent deficiencies during GDP inspections;
- quality risk management in the field of wholesale distributors' inspection;
- inspection of GDP for APIs;
- discovering counterfeit during GDP inspections.

Expert Circles & Working Groups

Expert Circle on Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)

23. The 2nd meeting of the Expert Circle on APIs was held in Basle (Switzerland) on 3-5 December 2008. The meeting was organised by Switzerland / Swissmedic and was dedicated to i) Quality Risk Management in the field of APIs, ii) the distribution of APIs and iii) third-party audits. The meeting was attended by 36 inspectors from 26 Competent Authorities or International Organisations (EDQM, EMEA, WHO) and by 5 representatives from industry (with restricted participation in specific sessions).

Expert Circle on Computerised Systems

24. The Expert Circle on Computerised Systems was given a new mandate for developing and delivering a training programme for inspectors on computerised systems' inspection.

Expert Circle on Human Blood and Tissue

25. The 15th meeting of the Expert Circle on Human Blood and Tissue took place in Melbourne (Australia) on 20-23 October 2008. The meeting was organised by Australia / TGA and was attended by 43 participants from 23 countries / entities (including Brazil, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan and the USA). The meeting focused on i) the legislative requirements for the regulation of blood and tissue, ii) the principles of the forthcoming Advanced Therapy Medicinal Regulation and iii) the requirements promoted for the international harmonisation of labelling of blood and blood components.

26. Three workshops were also dedicated to the inspection methodologies for the collection, processing and testing of blood and blood components, tissue establishments and cell therapy establishments, respectively.

Expert Circle on Quality Risk Management (QRM)

27. The 2nd and 3rd meetings of the Expert Circle on QRM were organised by United Kingdom / MHRA in London (United Kingdom) on 21-22 January 2008 and by Malta / MAM in Gzira (Malta) on 18-19 September 2008, respectively. During the meetings the Expert Circle continued to further develop a model for QRM systems for inspectorates, a guidance document on the assessment of QRM implementation in industry and a training programme for inspectors on QRM. The goal of the Expert Circle to upgrade and update the Site Master File in order to take into account QRM was completed.

Why Expert Circles?

PIC/S Expert Circles have been set up by the PIC/S Joint Committee to facilitate the discussions and the exchange of information among inspectors specialised in a specific area of GMP such as blood, hospital pharmacy, computerised systems, active pharmaceutical ingredients, quality risk management, etc. Expert Circles meet regularly to develop draft guidance, recommendations, etc. and offer training in their respective fields of specialisation.

Working Group on Good Distribution Practices (GDP)

28. The 1st meeting of the Working Group on GDP took place in Utrecht (Netherlands) on 17-18 January 2008. The meeting was organised by Netherlands / IGZ.

Harmonisation of guidance documents

29. The following PIC/S documents were adopted in the course of 2008:

- Aide-Memoire on Packaging (PI 028-1);
- Aide-Memoire on the Inspection of APIs (PI 030-1);
- Revised Guide for the Preparation of Medicinal Products in Healthcare Establishments (PE 010-3);
- Revised SOP on Observed Inspections (PS/W 10/2002 (Rev. 2));

30. PIC/S also revised Chapter I (Part I) and Annex 1. It adopted a new (voluntary) Annex 20 (ICH Q9) to the PIC/S GMP Guide.

31. The list of PIC/S publications is available on the PIC/S web site: http://www.picscheme.org

Relations with other organisations

ASEAN

32. PIC/S decided to open-up its Joint Visit Programme to inspectors from ASEAN as part of the co-operation with ASEAN GMP inspectorates. It also considered the possibility to organise a new PIC/S-ASEAN forum in conjunction with the 2010 Seminar in Malaysia.

Europe

33. In the framework of the co-operation agreement between PIC/S and the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare (EDQM), PIC/S:

- invited a representative from EDQM to attend PIC/S Committee meetings and several PIC/S training events (2008 Seminar and meeting of the Expert Circle on APIs);
- extended the consultation on the draft PIC/S Aide-Memoire on APIs to EDQM;

- agreed to circulate suspension letters of the certificates of suitability (CEP) issued by EDQM to PIC/S Committee Members.

34. In addition, the PIC/S Chairman and the Director of EDQM also met in the course of the year to discuss the further implementation of the co-operation initiated between the two organisations.

35. In 2008, PIC/S continued to actively co-operate with the European Medicines Agency (EMEA) in the field of the training of GMP inspectors, the harmonisation of guidance documents and the audit of GMP inspectorates.

36. PIC/S also performed two on-site assessment visits of Applicants (Israel's ISCP and France's ANMV) jointly with the European Commission.

UNICEF

37. In December 2008, the Director of the Supply Division of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the PIC/S Chairman signed a co-operation agreement on the sharing of information on GMP inspections carried out and on the consultation on guidance documents.

WHO

38. The transitional period for WHO to conclude a partnership with PIC/S expired at the end of November 2008. WHO was invited to make proposals on possible ways to co-operate with PIC/S in the future.

PIC/S – Industry Joint Workshop

39. On 13-14 November 2008, PIC/S co-organised a second joint workshop in Geneva (Switzerland) in partnership with the Parenteral Drug Association (PDA) and the International Society for Pharmaceutical Engineering (ISPE). The workshop was dedicated to the "Manufacture of Sterile Medicinal Products (EU-PIC/S GMP revised Annex 1)".

40. The workshop was open to both regulators and industry. It was attended by around 100 participants (among which 42 inspectors) from 24 different countries and organisations. Participants came from PIC/S countries but also from Indonesia, Iran, China, Slovenia and the United States of America.

41. GMP inspectors and industry representatives were given presentations on the interpretation of the revised Annex 1 and on inspection experiences from both regulators' and industry's perspectives. They participated in practical workshops (case studies) on the capping of vials, media fills (process simulations); continuous monitoring; clean area classification and ISO norms; sterilisation and depyrogenation of contact parts and containers. The workshop was unanimously considered as a success by both inspectors and industry representatives.

LIST OF PIC/S
PARTICIPATING AUTHORITIES & PARTNERS
(as of 31 December 2008)

I - PARTICIPATING AUTHORITIES

(in the alphabetical order of the country in which they are located)

	PARTICIPATING AUTHORITY	**ACRONYM**
Argentina	Instituto Nacional de Medicamentos *(National Institute of Drugs)*	INAME
Australia	Therapeutic Goods Administration	TGA
Austria	Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety	AGES
Belgium	Agence Fédérale des Médicaments et des Produits de Santé *(Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products)*	AFMPS
Canada	Health Products and Food Branch Inspectorate	HPFBI
Cyprus	Pharmaceutical Services	CyPHS
Czech Republic	Státní Ústav pro Kontrolu Léčiv *(State Institute for Drug Control)*	SÚKL
	Ústav pro Státní Kontrolu Veterinárních Biopreparátů a Léčiv *(Institute for State Control of Veterinary Biologicals and Medicaments)*	ÚSKVBL
Denmark	Danish Medicines Agency	DMA
Estonia	State Agency of Medicines	SAM
Finland	National Agency for Medicines	NAM
France	Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits de Santé *(French Health Products Safety Agency)*	AFSSAPS
Germany	Bundesministerium für Gesundheit *(Federal Ministry for Health)*	BMG
	Zentralstelle der Länder für Gesundheitsschutz bei Arzneimitteln und Medizinprodukten *(Central Authority of the Laender for Health Protection regarding Medicinal Products and Medical Devices)*	ZLG
Greece	Εθνικός Οργανισμός Φαρμάκων *(National Organization for Medicines)*	EOF
Hungary	National Institute of Pharmacy	NIP
Iceland	The Icelandic Medicines Control Agency	IMCA
Ireland	Irish Medicines Board	IMB
Italy	Agenzia Italiana del Fármaco	AIFA
Latvia	Zāļu Valsts Aģentūra *(State Agency of Medicines)*	ZVA

Liechtenstein	Amt für Gesundheit	AG
Malaysia	National Pharmaceutical Control Bureau	NPCB
Malta	Medicines Authority	MAM
Netherlands	Inspectie voor de Gezondheidszorg *(Inspectorate of Health Care)*	IGZ
Norway	Norwegian Medicines Agency	NOMA
Poland	Main Pharmaceutical Inspectorate	MPI
Portugal	Instituto Nacional da Farmácia e do Medicamento	INFARMED
Romania	National Medicines Agency	NMA
Singapore	Health Sciences Authority	HSA
Slovak Republic	State Institute for Drug Control	SIDC
South Africa	Medicines Control Council	MCC
Spain	Agencia Española del Medicamento y Productos Sanitarios	AEMPS
Sweden	Medical Products Agency	MPA
Switzerland	Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products	Swissmedic
United Kingdom	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	MHRA

II – PARTNERS

(in the alphabetical order of their acronyms)

	OBSERVERS / PARTNERS	**ACRONYM**
	European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare	EDQM
	European Medicines Agency	EMEA
	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF
	World Health Organization [2]	WHO

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2 The observer status of WHO ended in November 2008.

From the Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention

to the Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme

The Convention for the Mutual Recognition of Inspections in respect of the Manufacture of Pharmaceutical Products (Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention) entered into force in 1971.

The Convention applies to inspection of the manufacture of medicinal and related products intended for human use, which are subject to control under health legislation. It provides that the Contracting States will exchange, on the basis of inspections, such information as is necessary for the health authorities in an importing Contracting State to be able to recognise inspections carried out in the Contracting State of the manufacturer.

In 2000 the Convention was operating between eighteen countries, namely, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom

Due to some incompatibility for the Member States of the European Union (and for the States parties to the European Economic Area) between their obligations under the Convention and under the EU, the conclusion of another type of agreement than the Convention was agreed upon. This is an arrangement between the inspectorates of the present Contracting States to the Convention but also open to the participation of the inspectorates of other countries. The new arrangement called "Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme" (or PIC Scheme) was put into force in November 1995.

The Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention and the Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme are run concurrently by one joint Committee and one Secretariat. The common logo for both is PIC/S.