FORM A COMMENTS ON THE WORK PROGRAMME OR ITEMS DOCUMENTED IN THE REPORT THAT DO NOT INCLUDE ANNEXES	
Name of Member or IO: **Norway**	**Commission report and date of report:** **Report of the Meeting of WOAH Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission.** **12 to 19 February 2025**
	Title of the item in the report or item in the work programme annex: N/A **Proposal/Comment:** New item for the work programme: Assessment of situations where environmental DNA/RNA samples could be suitable for surveillance programmes for declaring freedom from WOAHs listed diseases **Rationale:** The 2022 discussion paper on environmental DNA (edna-final-ang.pdf) recognizes that eDNA is a rapidly advancing field and that it is a cost-effective and non-destructive method to screen for infectious agents. The paper emphasises the lack of data on diagnostic performance and subsequent unsuitability to support declaration of freedom from listed diseases. On the other hand, positive samples fulfil the criteria of a suspect case in some cases e.g. for Gyrodactylus salaris. The ability to use water samples for early detection and disease monitoring is unique to aquaculture and offers great opportunities to both industry and competent authorities. Closed systems using recycled water technologies are becoming more common and the use of water samples for surveillance and monitoring is highly relevant in such systems. For example, ISAV HPR0 is challenging to monitor due to its cyclical nature. We noted a discussion among member countries during the WOAH 2025 general session in relation to surveillance of ISAV HPR0. The use of eDNA could be an important contribution to developing a sensitive surveillance program for ISAV HPR0, and similar infectious agents, where environmental samples may be more sensitive than animal-derived samples. Norway is of the opinion that work on the use of eDNA/RNA for diseases in aquatic animals, including obtaining diagnostic performance data, should be intensified. Norway therefore proposes that the commission actively requests/encourage such data from scientific communities. In addition, we suggest that the Commission

	initiate work to evaluate how eDNA/RNA can be included as a method suitable for forming part of a surveillance programmes to declare freedom from relevant WOAHs listed diseases in specific production systems. **Supporting evidence, if relevant:**
	Title of the item in the report or item in the work programme annex: N/A **Proposal/Comment:** New item for the work programme: Re-evaluation of scientific evidence for the distinction between *Marteilia refringens* and *Marteilia pararefringens* **Rationale:** The Aquatic Manual states that recent studies suggest that that *M. refringens* should be distinguished from *M. pararefringens*, however "a larger set of samples is required to properly define both species". Correct definition of pathogenic agents/diseases are essential to ensure proper surveillance and disease control, and to facilitate correct reporting. Norway encourages the Commission to ask member countries to provide updated scientific evidence so that the distinction between *Marteilia refringens* and *Marteilia pararefringens* can be re-evaluated, and the Aquatic code and manual updated if deemed appropriate. **Supporting evidence, if relevant:**