

*Medicine* ((D. Carpenter *et al.* *N. Engl. J. Med.* 358, 1354–1361; 2008), Daniel Carpenter and his colleagues at Harvard University studied 313 drugs approved for market between 1993 — when drug companies began paying for reviews, and penalties came in for the agency missing deadlines — and 2004.

They found that 14% of drugs approved in the two months before deadlines had serious safety problems requiring ‘black box’ label warnings, market withdrawals, or both, compared with 3.2% approved earlier in the process. The FDA is disputing Carpenter’s figures.

## Italy to help Kenya develop space programme

The Italian Space Agency, which operates a tracking station in Kenya, will give the country access to geospatial data and training in satellite systems.

Under an agreement signed on 28 March, six Kenyan scientists and engineers will travel to Rome to help build MIOSAT, an Earth-observation satellite. Italy will also set up a centre in Kenya to give scientists there access to Earth-observing data. The project is expected to cost the Italian government some €200,000 (US\$315,000).

The agreement is a major step forward



Italy runs a tracking station in Malindi, Kenya.

for Kenya’s nascent space programme, says Zachary Mwaura, the country’s secretary for defence. “This is something that we have really, really been looking forward to,” he says.

## Muslim nations raise status of science

Science is being taken more seriously in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a group of 57 states.

The OIC’s standing committee on science and technology (COMSTECH) is set to announce this week that only countries

committed to donating funds will be allowed to join the committee. Payment will be in proportion to gross domestic product, at a rate set by the OIC.

COMSTECH will use the money to launch programmes for its members in areas such as biotechnology, development of pharmaceuticals from indigenous raw materials, and science policy.

Until now, COMSTECH has been open to all OIC members, but few gave any money. Last year, only US\$2.59 million was taken from 13 states — most of it from Pakistan — which was used to support library services.

Atta-ur-Rahman, who heads both COMSTECH and Pakistan’s Higher Education Commission, expects up to 15 countries to join this year, with more joining in the future. “Most of the Muslim countries don’t have national science policies based on their local needs and available resources,” he says. “COMSTECH will help them.”

### Correction

Our News story on the Quake-Catcher Network (*Nature* 452, 397; 2008) should have noted that the concept originated with Elizabeth Cochran, a geophysicist at the University of California, Riverside, and that the project is now an ongoing collaboration between her and seismologist Jesse Lawrence of Stanford University in California.