

Original: English

ICCAT COMMUNICATION POLICY-NON-PAPER FOR DISCUSSION

Background

The need for an ICCAT Communication Policy was considered at the 2012 meeting, and several CPCs indicated that more information was needed before a policy could be developed. The Chair of STACFAD agreed to work on this issue intersessionally through a virtual working group to develop a policy for consideration at the 2013 Commission meeting.

Three CPCs volunteered to join this virtual Working Group - Guinea Equatorial, Morocco and USA. While no firm conclusions have been drawn by the Group, the attached has been developed as a starting point for discussion. This information was circulated to ICCAT CPCs in October 15 as ICCAT circular # 6150/2013. Unless the Commission takes a decision at the 2013 meeting, the Working Group, which is open to all CPCs wishing to join, will continue to work on this virtually in 2014.

NON-PAPER FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE VIRTUAL COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

A communications policy for ICCAT should be developed by the virtual working group, rather than through an external call for tender.

As articulated in STF-208, communications activities should be well integrated with the routine activities of the Secretariat so that the Commission can quickly and effectively convey the results of its work.

Relative to STF-208, there are some serious concerns about engaging a reporting service during the ICCAT Annual Meeting, as the issues at play are complex and negotiations are highly sensitive. Daily reports would likely distract from the Commission's work, rather than support it. Instead, communications efforts should be focused on conveying outcomes rather than attempting to characterize deliberations that are still in progress. The estimated expense of daily reporting is also considerable, and better longer-term results could be achieved in a more cost effective way.

Available funds could instead be used to secure the technical expertise needed to maximize the impact of web-based communications throughout the year.

Proposed next steps for the development of a communications policy:

1) Articulate goals

For example:

- Educate interested members of the public and constituent groups about the significance of the Commission's work to help increase support for and awareness of ICCAT's role in promoting sustainable fisheries management.
- Communicate to interested constituents and industry groups the specific outcomes of Commission/SCRS meetings and how these outcomes may affect them. Reporting on the outcomes of the Annual Meeting and other activities should be succinct, factual, and presented in plain language.
- Improve dialogue between the Secretariat and CPCs, including to facilitate information exchange concerning CPC obligations and deadlines in order to support compliance.

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2) Consider current communications activities underway within the Secretariat to establish a baseline understanding of how these activities are accomplished and with what financial and human resources. Identify any unmet communication needs/gaps, as well as resources needed to close such gaps.

3) Identify and discuss tools to implement the policy:

For example:

a) Public website

Consider the following:

- Improved navigation with assistance from web designer
- Front page access to user-friendly information (e.g., meeting summaries or outcomes)
- Summary pages by species
- Annual or semiannual feature story highlighting Commissions' major outcomes and accomplishments

b) Password protected site for CPCs

Consider the following:

- Include all circulars
- Presentation of other information, including meeting documents and proposals

c) Quarterly newsletter

Consider the following:

- Maximize exposure through new format (e.g., active vs. passive delivery system: web updates and/or circulation via email rather than traditional newsletter in pdf format)

d) Press Release following Annual Meeting

Consider the following:

- Press release/meeting summary should be timely and factual; drafted and approved by a the Communications Working Group (in essence, a steering committee with representatives of the Secretariat, Commission officers and CPCs)

e) Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Consider the following:

- Establishing accounts for the Commission likely not feasible at this time
- Instead, social media can be employed by CPCs and observers to drive interested members of the public to the site when new information is available, including release of web stories highlighting meeting outcomes and accomplishments.

4) Establish scope of work, including specific tasks and necessary resources to implement the communications policy, and issue call for tender to provide necessary technical support

5) Consider and establish/revise rules that facilitate external engagement

For example:

- participation of observers
- engagement of press
- use of blogging, film, etc.