



## **International Hydrological Programme**

52<sup>nd</sup> session of the IHP Bureau  
(Paris, 1-2 June 2015)

### **DRAFT PROPOSED IHP COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGY**

Item 3.7 of the agenda.

#### Summary

This document summarizes the draft proposed IHP Communication and Outreach Strategy, focusing in particular on the objectives of IHP Communication, internal communication, external communication and outreach, the responsibilities of the stakeholders and the financial constraints.

The Bureau may wish to take note of the report of the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee and encourage National Committees in their regions and partners to further strengthen the support of IHP for communication and outreach.

# **IHP Communication and Outreach Committee**

## **Draft Proposed IHP Communication and Outreach Strategy**

**25 May 2015**

### **I. Introduction**

Significant efforts have been made to adapt IHP communication practices in tandem with the Programme's own evolution (Annex 1). However, a lack of resources as well as the absence of a dedicated communication specialist to coordinate IHP Communication and outreach stymied the sustainability and impact of these initiatives. This has adversely impacted the programme's ability to convey success stories and progress in supporting Member States' water priorities as well as to maintain a high level of engagement with its key stakeholders. Furthermore some highly effective communication channels (e.g., IHP newsletter, Water Portal), developed when resources were available, were later severely downscaled or even abandoned. Also, budgetary constraint may have contributed to overlooking communication-relevant actions and resources during the planning and budgeting of technical programmes and activities

Arguably, these challenges affected IHP's ability to effectively engage the full list of potential partners and stakeholders, including youth, students in higher education, water practitioners, private sector water professionals, and the scientific community at large.

At its 21<sup>st</sup> session, the IHP Council approved Resolution IHP/IC-XXI-2 to established the Communication and Outreach Committee with a view towards enhancing the strategic positioning of communication within the Programme.

The IHP Communication and Outreach Committee believes that an appropriate communication plan can only be developed if a strategic view of communication and outreach is developed. To that effect, the committee emphasises the need to improve both internal and external communication of IHP, leverage existing UNESCO communication tools to enhance communication and outreach, and clearly define the target audience of IHP communication along with actions enhancing the flow and frequency of pertinent information.

This document builds on the above-mentioned historical efforts and represents the Committee's vision for Programme communication.

### **II. Objectives of IHP Communication**

Following the recommendation of UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) and guided by the decisions and recommendations (see annex) of the governing bodies of IHP IHP/IC-XXI-2, the main goals of IHP communication and outreach endeavour are:

1. Strengthen the collaborative engagement of IHP, the members of its network, and other stakeholders in implementing IHP programmes;
2. Increase public recognition of IHP's network and its role in contributing to water science and to the achievement of the water resources management priorities of member state's

3. Enhance the outreach of IHP's messages and their relevance to actual and mounting global challenges.

### **III. Communication**

#### **III.1 Internal Communication**

To strengthen the collaborative engagement of the IHP network to implement its programmes, IHP shall enhance internal communication between the members of its network. The main target audience of IHP Internal communication activities are:

- **Internal Partners**
  - Members of the IHP Secretariat (HQ)
  - Regional Hydrologists and SC Staff (Field)
  - WWAP
  - UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education
  - Category 2 water related centres
  - UNESCO Water Chairs
- **Stakeholders**
  - The National Committees of the IHP
  - Members of the Governing bodies of IHP

The specific goals of the internal communication are to:

- Enhance the flow of information between the members of the IHP Network
- Facilitate joint collaborative planning and implementation of IHP Programmes.
- Establish regional and/or disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary partnerships between Members of the IHP Network
- Share Data, Knowledge, reports, and important documents.

#### **III.2 Mechanisms of Internal Communication**

IHP shall utilize a variety of interactive tools and approaches to maintain a sustainable internal communication with sufficient frequency of updates. Among these tools are:

**a. *Common communication platform:***

The Secretariat of IHP has developed an integrated collaborative platform for the UNESCO Water Network using existing UNESCO's UNESTEAM SharePoint based platform. The platform shall serve as the primary mechanism for sharing feedback, information, documents, and news within the network joint discussions of work plans. The platform shall also serve as the access point to update information on network members (partners) with the platform streamlining the reporting and announcement mechanisms (e.g. web forms).

To date, all existing water-related centres and chairs, along with members of the secretariat at HQ and regional offices, representatives of WWAP and IHE have are members of the platform. The secretariat shall establish a mechanism in the near future to invite the national committees of IHP to join the platform.

It is understood that information on members of the network, which shall be presented on the secretariat web site (please see section x), shall originate from the members themselves.

Therefore, active participation in the common communication platform is highly encouraged to ensure timely updates and content quality on the IHP website and its social media presence.

**b. Meetings and Briefings:**

Increasing the frequency of joint meetings of the IHP network will provide forums for strategic planning, especially in advance of the formulation of biennial implementation plans. The secretariat shall consult with members of the network, and with the communication and outreach committee in formulating the meeting agenda so that these meetings results in optimal sharing of information among network members.

When invited, the Secretariat of IHP, in coordination with the Science Sector and with ERI shall make the maximum use of Information meetings and briefings to member states. Member states are also encouraged to invite the secretary of IHP to brief them on major accomplishments and key interventions.

**c. IHP Web site and Web Presence of Partners:**

The IHP website hosted by the secretariat is a very crucial element of the programme's internal and external communications, it shall be updated frequently in sustainable manners and it should contain sufficient information and links to the websites of all members of the network.

Individual members of the IHP network, especially centres and chairs are strongly encouraged to maintain their own websites also with sufficient updates and information highlighting their contributions to the programme as well as their collaborative efforts.

**d. Mail Lists and Memorandums**

IHP secretariat frequently shares memoranda with the various memnbers of the network. These memoranda shall continue to conveying requests and urgent information from the secretariat to members of the network.

**e. HP-Publication**

Technical publications, academic publications, policy notes and briefs, and workshop reports are important products of IHP activities. IHP shall enhance its efforts to highlight these publications and to present them both as integral part of the programme's value and to demonstrate a strategic approach to publication. An IHP publication strategy may be developed within the framework of UNESCO's overall publication strategy, taking into account the increase emphasis on communication.

Internal communication activities must ensure that IHP publications are accessible to the members of the network and to promptly inform all members of new publications.

### **III. 3 External communication and outreach:**

To increase public recognition and enhance the outreach (and relevance) of IHP messages, IHP shall improve external communication. The main target audience of IHP External communication activities shall be:

- **Partners**
  - Sister IGO
  - NGOs
  
- **Stakeholders**
  - Member State Delegations
  - Policy and decision-makers
  - Knowledge institutions and technical experts
  
- **General public, including the youth and children**

The specific goals of the external communication are to:

- Strengthen the engagement of stakeholders
- Enhance the visibility and awareness towards IHP
- Provide access to relevant IHP publications and materials
- Communicate the challenges
- Establish feedback mechanisms
- Inform of IHP events
- Convey a common identity joining the network

Following are the primary tools of IHP external communication:

### **III. 4 Mechanisms for External communication and outreach:**

#### **a. The IHP (Water Security) Website as external communication mechanism**

Enhancing the frequency of updates *and the informative quality of the content* of the IHP website is a critical factor in enhancing IHP's external communication. Hence, each member of the IHP network shall establish its own web presence.

To reach the widest possible audiences, the IHP Website shall be accessible in terms of its content and navigation. The Secretariat is encouraged to avoid overly technical terminology, especially in the front pages while attempting to provide concise and timely description of programme implementation, their accomplishments, and their relevance to enhancing water sciences and water resources management.

The Website shall also highlight the contributions of Member States and other members of the network to the implementation of IHP Programmes.

The IHP Website shall also provide access to IHP Publications, briefings, electronic versions of brochures, policy briefs, and other multi-media content developed by the Secretariat and/or other members of the network. Visibility of regional and country-based activities and accomplishments at must be high.

While maintaining IHP's website enhances IHP's public visibility of the programme, websites of the member of the IHP network's can make significant contributions to the programme's reach especially when they frequently reflect their cooperation and contribution to the implementation of IHP activities.

#### **b. Social media**

Leveraging social media, within the framework of UNESCO's overall communication strategy, and in cooperation with relevant units within UNESCO, is vital to enhancing the visibility of IHP and its activities, especially among younger generations. Possible social media engagements include

The establishment of groups on professional social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn). This will allow members of the Secretariat to remain up-to-date and to encourage collaboration within these networks.

The establishment, in coordination with ERI, Facebook presence for IHP network. The key purpose would be to communicate recent achievements, key contributions, and awareness raising messages consistent with IHP messages and common identity. It is advised that Facebook posts point to more detailed items available on IHP website and the sites of members of the IHP network.

A strategy to respond to feedback comments and monitor social media platforms must be developed internally with the support from ERI. However, it is important to mention that the presence of a dedicated communication officer at the Secretariat is essential to successful integration of social media as an effective communication tool.

## **IV. Responsibilities**

All communication actions of IHP shall comply with existing UNESCO communication strategies and guidelines at the sector and Organization level, including multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace and Priority Gender Equality guidelines.

### **IV.1 Responsibilities of the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee**

The responsibilities of the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee are defined in the Terms of Reference of the Committee, approved by the IHP Council in Resolution IHP/IC-XXI-2. This includes prioritizing communication actions.

### **IV.2 Responsibilities of the IHP Secretariat**

The primary roles of the Secretariat are to:

- **Present and update, on a biennial basis, a feasible communication action plan**, consistent with the principles adopted in this strategy and fully engaging the IHP network, to the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee. The plan shall incorporate a tiered approach<sup>1</sup> to match priorities and available resources and to identify additional resources required for optimal communication actions;
- **Facilitate implementation of the strategy** and communication actions, in particular by maintaining the IHP website as a dynamic, informative, user-friendly and actively maintained hub for outreach. The IHP Secretariat will actively collect information from the IHP Network, and will provide the possibility to easily share information from the IHP Network with the public.
- **Enhance the division's communication capacity** at the individual, collective and regional levels through training activities and other appropriate communication capacity-building actions;
- **Facilitate the systematic acquisition and diffusion of communication content from members of the IHP network**, establishing and maintaining a communication platform for the IHP community;
- **Adapt to emerging communication norms**, including, as appropriate and in coordination with ERI, the establishment of IHP presence on social media platforms.

### IV.3 Responsibilities of Members of the IHP Network

Successful communications depends on the whole IHP network. As was emphasized by the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Council, Member States are encouraged to actively contribute to IHP communication and outreach endeavours.

The primary roles of the IHP network are to:

- **Undertake communication actions**, including maintaining a website or webpage, consistent with the principles outlined in this strategy; and providing relevant information for the website and IHP programs.
- **Systematically generate and transmit content to the Secretariat** for mass diffusion, as appropriate (the Secretariat will provide templates/guidance for this);
- **Actively participate in and take ownership of the platforms** for communication and collaboration at their disposal, such as UNESTEAM.
- A crucial element for effective strategy implementation is the presence of a dedicated communication specialist on a full-time basis at the Secretariat.

## V. Financial considerations

It is important that IHP communication and outreach actions receive adequate financial and human resources support. Core funding to support outreach and communication activities will be made available by the Secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the current status and feedback from the Committee, the Council and others, the immediate priorities for the 2014-2015 biennial are (1) the full overhaul and rehabilitation of the IHP website, (2) the establishment of a presence of social media platforms, (3) the full operationalization of an internal communication platform and, if budget permits, (4) the revival of the newsletter. Other priorities may include holding, as appropriate, information sessions with the delegations of Member States concerning IHP activities and accomplishments, and the contributions of the IHP network to implementation. These issues will be addressed in the first phase implementation plan of the communication strategy.

IHP must have a dedicated communication and outreach officer. The Secretariat shall propose terms of reference for such post and seek the support from the members of the IHP network, as well as the sector towards the establishment of the post as part of the regular and necessary operation of the secretariat and the functioning of the programme. Where possible, synergies shall be identified to minimize duplication and maximize the utility of each member of the IHP community's contributions to communication, through the use of flexible communication media and active collaboration on message formulation and content generation.

## **VI. Evaluation and Adaptation**

This section concerns the evaluation of the implementation of the IHP Communication strategy and not the evaluation of the implementation of IHP strategic plans, which is outside the mandate of this committee

With respect to the IHP website and social media presence, traffic statistics will be used to discern the improvement in positioning IHP's various pages within the UNESCO website. Subsequently, measures of user satisfaction and quality of information diffusion shall be proposed and adapted in consultation with appropriate partners.

The Secretariat of IHP will incorporate, when appropriate, communication assessment components in its surveys to collect measures of user satisfaction and Programme visibility.

Qualitative information will also be sought through informal feedback, in particular through internal communication platforms, such as UNESTeam.

## Annex 1

### Key documents and Decisions concerning IHP Communication

See Resolution 18 C/2.232, approved by the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference, amended by several subsequent sessions of the Conference.

See Resolutions IHP/IC-XI-5 (A Communication Strategy for the International Hydrological Programme), IHP/IC-XII-5 (A Communication Strategy for IHP), IHP/IC-XIII-1 (Implementation of the Communication Strategy for IHP), IHP/IC-XIV-2 (Implementation of a Communication Strategy for IHP), IHP/IC-XV-5 (UNESCO Water Portal) and IHP/IC-XV-6 (Implementation of the Communication Strategy for IHP), IHP/IC-XV/Inf. 8 (Report on the IHP Communication Strategy and the Related UNESCO Water Portal Project), IHP/IC-XVI/Inf. 7 (IHP Communication Strategy and the Related UNESCO Water Portal Project).

The urgent need for a permanent post for a communications specialist was broached in multiple Council resolutions since the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Council in 1996:

- Resolution XII-5 in 1996: “*Appeals* to Member States to consider seconding a replacement communications expert to the Secretariat, to ensure that the original objectives of the communication strategy are achieved”;
- Throughout Resolution XIII-1 in 1998;
- Resolution XIV-2 in 2000: “*Welcoming* the urgent request by the Finance Committee in 1998 that a permanent position be created within the Secretariat to pursue this strategy, *Noting with disappointment* that the request of the Bureau at its 26<sup>th</sup> session to create a permanent post for a communications specialist for the IHP has not been approved, despite this resolution being carried by the Intergovernmental Council at every meeting since 1995, [...] *Stresses* the priorities placed on the communication position by previous Council meetings and the important role that this position can play in serving National Committees, *Requests* the Director-General of UNESCO to create a post of professional category for communication with the Division of Water Sciences”;
- Resolution XV-6 in 2002: “*Noting with concern* that the request of the IHP Bureau at its 26<sup>th</sup> session and the Resolution XIV-2 to create a permanent post for a communication specialist for the IHP has not been met, *Stresses* the urgent priorities placed on the communication position [...] and therefore *Urges* the relevant bodies of UNESCO to create an extrabudgetary post of professional category for communication within the Division of Water Sciences”.

Terms of Reference of the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee:

to act on behalf of the IHP in reformulating the communication plan of IHP and in assessing and promoting its implementation. It will also undertake initiatives to raise the impacts of the IHP communication plan and to promote wider reach of IHP, to the widest possible range of stakeholders, water professionals, and the public.