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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

**STATUS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE IOC COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY REPORT
(SINCE THE 29TH IOC ASSEMBLY, JUNE 2017)**

Summary

This document provides a status report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the IOC Communications Advisory Report 2016–2020 ([IOC/EC-XLIX/Inf.2](#)) on the development of corporate communications materials and activities.

Introduction

As a starting point to the development and implementation of an IOC-wide communications strategy, the Secretariat commissioned the production of a Communications Advisory Report and Action Plan (IOC/EC-XLIX/Inf.2) to assist the Secretariat and Member States in achieving IOC's overall organizational objectives, engaging effectively with relevant stakeholders, and demonstrating the impact of its work. The Advisory Report and Action Plan was released in June 2016 and communicated to the IOC Executive Council at its 49th session. Follow-up information documents (2017: [IOC/INF-1348](#); 2018: [IOC/EC-LI/2 Annex 1 Add.1](#)) informing about the status of progress in the implementation were provided at the 29th IOC Assembly (21–29 June 2017, Paris, France) and at the 51st session of the IOC Executive Council (3–6 July 2018, Paris, France).

This information document will continue this follow-up exercise, providing a status report on the implementation of the key recommendations emanating from the Communications Advisory Report since July 2018.

Table 1 below summarizes the status of implementation of the 11 actions recommended by the Communications Advisory Report to the IOC Secretariat, at the time of the 29th IOC Assembly, and the status of implementation today.

| Recommendations | Implementation Status | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | June 2017 | July 2018 | June 2019 |
| Production of Corporate Brochure | Completed | Completed | Completed |
| Production of corporate videos | Completed | Completed | Completed |
| Creation of brand guidelines | Completed | Completed | Completed |
| Launch of high profile campaign: UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) | In progress: design phase | In Progress: Started Implementation | In Progress: Advanced |
| Redevelopment of IOC website and information tools | In progress: design phase | In Progress: Started Implementation | In Progress: Advanced |
| Establishment of a Communications Team | In progress: design phase | Completed | Completed |
| Organization of communications and media training for IOC staff | In progress: design phase | Completed | Completed |
| Development of IOC Media Plan | Pending implementation | In Progress: design phase | In Progress: Started Implementation |
| Development of monthly IOC e-Newsletter | Pending implementation | Completed | Completed |
| Development of IOC Policy Brief Series | Pending implementation | In Progress: design phase | Completed |
| Set up of marketing database and annual survey | Pending implementation | Completed | Completed |

Table 1. Status of the implementation of the 11 recommendations.

As the table shows, implementation of the various recommendations has moved forward consistently. All of the 11 recommendations presented in the Communications Advisory Report either have been completed (7) or are currently in progress (4). The following sections give specific information on each recommendation, with specific focus on the ones where implementation is still in progress.

IOC Corporate Brochure (Completed)

The corporate brochure *One Planet, One Ocean* ([IOC/BRO/2017/1](http://ioc.unesco.org)) is available in English and French via the IOC website (<http://ioc.unesco.org>), as well as via distribution by the IOC Secretariat during the 51st Executive Council.

The brochure has met wide approval among Member States and key stakeholders. To help the IOC Secretariat keep up with the public demand for the brochure, Germany recently printed one thousand (1,000) copies for IOC distribution. In addition, since June 2017, Germany has also printed nearly six thousand (6,000) copies for distribution at the national level. For this initiative, the IOC Secretariat is very thankful to the German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH).

Corporate Videos (Completed)

A **corporate animated video** entitled “**One Planet, One Ocean: Mobilizing Science to Save Our Ocean**” has been produced to promote the IOC brand and its integrated services, forming the backbone of IOC’s digital public face and complementing the corporate brochure. The animation is available in English, with subtitles in French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

In addition, the IOC Secretariat completed several additional corporate and thematic videos that help communicate the ways in which IOC benefits its Member States and other stakeholders from its programmatic activities. All videos are openly accessible via the UNESCO/IOC Ocean Playlist on the UNESCO Youtube Channel (<http://on.unesco.org/2rBtsOH>).

Brand Guidelines (Completed)

A document compiling formal **IOC Brand Guidelines** was produced on February 2017 based on the innovative branding used in the corporate brochure and videos. These guidelines apply systematically to all new communication products (including social media and communication printed material) and are available upon request to the IOC Secretariat.

IOC monthly e-Newsletter (Completed)

The Communications Advisory Report recommended the creation of a quarterly “**IOC e-newsletter**” aimed at providing ongoing value to its Member States and stakeholders through stories that show how its services are being utilized at the national level. In February 2018, the IOC Secretariat launched “IOC News”, a monthly e-Newsletter going out to around 700 key stakeholders and interested persons around the globe. The newsletter is designed and distributed each month via the Mailchimp mass-mailing online tool, and conveys the month’s top 5–7 events or news items coming out of IOC activities. The newsletter also contains an interview with individuals who have worked with or to help IOC toward the achievement of its mandate. IOC News is released via email on the last week of each month. Sign-up to receive IOC News can be found via Facebook (<http://facebook.com/locUnesco>) or via the IOC website (<http://ioc.unesco.org>).

Marketing Database and Annual Surveys (Completed)

In order to systematically monitor and evaluate IOC’s communication activities vis-à-vis its stakeholders and key target audience, including national delegations, the IOC Secretariat set up a marketing database containing two email distribution lists: a general list, containing all subscribers to the IOC Newsletter, and a list of media contacts. This database is a living tool, nourished daily by people interested in IOC activities and media contacts who wish to write about any aspect of IOC’s mandate and/or report on IOC activities. Subscription to the general list happens through the Mailchimp mass-mailing online tool, via this form. The media list is nourished manually by the informal IOC Communications Support Team (see below) on a case-by-case basis.

Establish a Communications Team (Completed)

Taking into account the rapid upscaling in outreach and communications activities, the IOC Secretariat set up an informal “Communications Support Team”, covering the following aspects:

Communications: coordinating both the IOC Secretariat’s routine web editorial work, managing the various communications projects required to implement the recommendations of the Communications Advisory Report, drafting press releases, providing photo/video coverage for events, and managing the UN World Oceans Day Portal, *inter alia*;

Publications & Member State Information: coordinating translations, printing, and ensuring branding coherence for publications; coordinating documentation and venue logistics for IOC Governing Body meetings; and managing circular letters, Member State contact lists and information behind the upcoming IOC Country Profiles feature of the new IOC website, *inter alia*;

Outreach & Partnerships: coordinating the organization of and fundraising for events, exhibits, and international days (e.g. World Oceans Day); managing public relations outreach and partnerships; acting as official focal point vis-à-vis NGOs and Goodwill Ambassadors, *inter alia*.

IOC staff responsible for the tasks above meets as frequently as needed to ensure the effectiveness and coherence of IOC communications activities. As with all IOC communications activities, ultimate validation and supervision comes from the Senior Management Team.

Communications and Media Training for IOC Staff (Completed)

The IOC Secretariat commissioned a half-day communications & media training for its senior and professional staff. The training took place on 2 October 2018, and was conducted by Steve Menzies (Flinch Marketing Ltd.) and BBC World Service Journalist and Newsreader David Eades. The training prepared senior management and programme specialists to effectively engage mainstream and emerging media when communicating about IOC, their programmes and activities, or specific products/campaigns such as the recently published [Global Ocean Science Report](#) or the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

IOC Policy Brief Series (Completed)

In its role as coordinating body for the Decade, the IOC Secretariat will both produce and act as repository for a number of resources related to the Decade. For that reason, and given the cross-cutting nature of the Decade, the IOC Policy Brief Series was reframed as a dedicated publication series for the UN Decade, featuring policy-relevant reports and technical documents associated with key Decade objectives and thematic areas. The series has been inaugurated in the context of the 30th Session of the IOC Assembly, with the following publications:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The UN Decade Series, 1 | Report of the First Executive Planning Group (EPG) Meeting (UNESCO, Paris, 17–19 December 2018) |
| The UN Decade Series, 2 | Outcome of the First Global Planning Meeting (13–15 May 2019, Copenhagen, Denmark) |
| The UN Decade Series, 3 | Accelerating Ocean Science for a Better World: The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 |

High Profile Campaign – UN Decade of Ocean Science (In Progress)

Following the 5 December 2017 proclamation by the UN General Assembly of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), IOC has successfully launched a digital campaign around the Decade preparatory process, including social media materials, several videos

featuring key stakeholders, and two brochures. The brochures are available from <http://ioc.unesco.org>. As the Decade preparatory process and constituent elements take shape, the communication needs and targets will evolve. The IOC Secretariat is actively planning communications actions during the preparatory phase (2018–2020) and the actual Decade (2021–2030). A communication strategy for the Decade is currently being drafted by the IOC Secretariat in collaboration with external marketing consultants.

To support the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development’s communications, the IOC Secretariat has also commissioned the development of a dedicated website (www.oceandecade.org) that will replace the existing page on the corporate website (www.en.unesco.org/ocean-decade) and will serve as Online Community Platform for all Decade’ stakeholders, who will have the opportunity to actively engage in the planning of the Decade.

The Decade will require further efforts in terms of Media engagement. The IOC Secretariat has hired a Media Advisor for the Decade for a period of four months (May–August 2019), to help implement media outreach activities and draft a Media strategy within the overall context of the Communication Strategy for the Decade. The Media Advisor will also pilot regional Media Training Workshops to be organized starting from the second half of 2019, with the first one taking place in Noumea, New Caledonia, in parallel with the Pacific Community Workshop (23–25 July 2019). A Regional Media event will be held in Brazil in September, co-organized by the IOC, The Boticario Group Foundation and the Brazilian academia.

Redevelop the IOC websites, Online Presence and Information Tools (In Progress)

The IOC has taken a major step in completely revamping its online presence, replacing two out-of-date corporate websites with a unique, centralized portal for all IOC corporate communications and programmatic activities (<http://ioc.unesco.org>).

The new integrated corporate portal combines the public outreach and IOC governance aspects of IOC’s online presence, creating an easy-to-use, visually-appealing platform that includes both a public interface (news, events, publications, IOC governing body documentation, contact database) and a Secretariat intranet for internal communications. Only the basic functionalities are currently operational on the new IOC website, and the full website will be launched before the end of 2019.

In parallel to the redevelopment of its corporate website, the IOC Secretariat also redeveloped its key corporate information and knowledge management tools, notably a new version of the *OceanExpert* corporate information database that stores all IOC’s contacts, corporate documents and events information. As a database, *OceanExpert* “powers” the new IOC corporate website, providing the backend data for a new IOC digital product, “Country Profiles” that will feature on the IOC corporate website national information about each Member State’s engagement with IOC and its programmatic activities. All information and knowledge management tools are being developed by IOC’s Project Office for International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE), located in Ostend, Belgium.

On social media, IOC’s public continued to grow in fast rhythmic, as the data above illustrate ([Figure 1](#)). The figure shows the growth rate of IOC’s followers on the different social media platforms in the period 12 June 2018 to 12 June 2019. Much of this growth in social media visibility was driven by increased IOC mobilization around major scientific, policy and intergovernmental conferences and campaigns, i.e.:

- a. The High-level Scientific Conference “From COP21 towards the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development” (10–11 September, Paris)
- b. World Tsunami Awareness Day (5 November, worldwide) – celebrated at UNESCO on 16 October 2018 with a half-day conference.

- c. The First Global Planning Meeting of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) (13–15 May, Copenhagen)
- d. World Oceans Day (June, 8, worldwide) – celebrated on 6 June 2019 with a full-day programme of events at UNESCO headquarters, and further iterated online via social media and the IOC-managed official UN Portal for World Oceans Day (<http://unworldoceansday.org>)

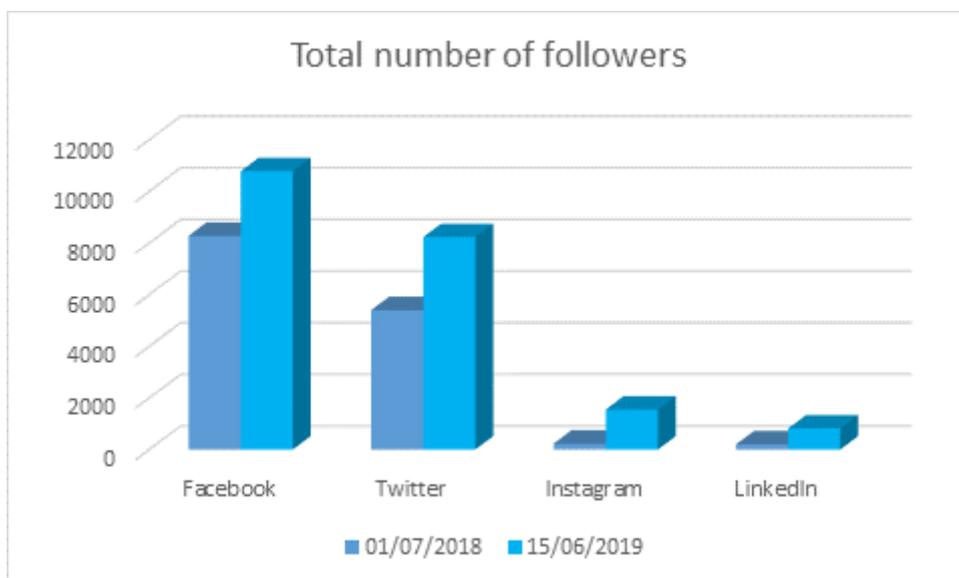


Figure 1. Total number of followers on IOC social media accounts

Growth: Facebook: +30% | Twitter: +52% | Instagram: +573% | LinkedIn: +305%

Since last year, IOC’s presence on Instagram has grown consistently, also thanks to the availability of graphic assets made both internally (videos for the Decade and for World Oceans Day, in collaboration with the Marine World Heritage) and externally (infographics for World Oceans Day), including some valuable assets provided by informal collaboration with the creators of Our Planet Netflix series and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Finally, in terms of website development, the IOC Secretariat further developed its partnership with the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN-DOALOS) around a UN-wide online portal to celebrate the World Oceans Day. The World Oceans Day Online Portal is financed by the SUEZ Group, and has since 8 June 2017 been accessible via the following URL: www.unworldoceansday.org. Launched at the UN Ocean Conference (5–9 June 2017), the Portal has consistently gained visibility within the UN system, attracting a wide net of partners and active users—from UN Agencies to national governmental agencies, scientific institutions and NGOs. It now features 44 Partners (13 UN organizations, 30 NGOs/Foundations/Research/Private sector, and 1 individual champion). For 2019 World Oceans Day, 96 events have been registered onto the portal, which reflects an 88% increase in the number of registered events compared to 2018 World Oceans Day.

IOC Media Plan (In Progress)

While a full and long-term Media Plan, as recommended by the Communications Advisory Report, has not yet been finalized, the IOC Secretariat has begun to systematically identify the best possible stories from IOC’s programmatic activities to engage mainstream media. This has resulted in stories being placed on major news outlets, such as BBC (UK), Sky News (UK, Italy), Thomson Reuters (Global), VEJA Weekly (Brazil), El Universal Daily (Mexico), and several important French media outlets, including TV5 Monde, Le Monde, and AFP. The challenge for the Secretariat is to channel these successes into a more systematic approach to media engagement and partnerships.

Outlook for 2019–2020

During the second half of 2019, the Secretariat will continue working for the continuous improvement of communication activities:

- A new, captivating and user-friendlier corporate website is currently in the final stage of development, and will be launched before the end of 2019.
- The layout of the United Nations World Oceans Days portal will be improved too, based on user behavioural reports and two years of analytical information.
- Major efforts will be dedicated to developing and deploying communications activities to promote the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, in line with both Decade-branded events (regional workshops, Second Global Planning Meeting, media trainings) and other relevant events, such as OceanObs'19 (16–20 September 2019), Our Ocean Conference (24–25 October 2019) and UNFCCC COP25 (2–13 December 2019), and the 2nd UN Ocean Conference (2–6 June 2020).
- The Our Ocean Conference, the UNFCCC COP25 (the “Blue COP”) and the 2nd UN Ocean Conference will be major points for communicating IOC’s core messages and the continuous, systematic value it provides to its partners, Member States, and the public at large. These three conferences will provide a coherent timeline for developing a broad package of communications materials and activities, including the development of animated videos, interactive exhibitions, and large public outreach events.