



Draft ITTO communication strategy 2022–2026

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Introduction



- ITTO has been conducting wide-ranging communication activities for many years.
- The Council at its 55th session requested the Secretariat to prepare a communication strategy to further increase the impact of ITTO's work.
- A robust communication strategy will help elevate ITTO's role in the forest dialogue and provide thought leadership on policies, practices and innovations for sustainable development through SFM and a vibrant trade of forest goods and services.
- Effective communications also support fundraising efforts.



Methodology



- ITTO engaged the services of Burness (www.burness.com), a communication agency supporting non-profits, to assist in developing the communication strategy.
- The work included:
 - assessment of ITTO communications and landscape research;
 - audience research;
 - message development;
 - message testing; and
 - drafting an opinion piece for potential placement in a major media outlet.
- Views of members were also gathered through an online survey.

Communication opportunities and challenges



Opportunities:

- Wealth of technical expertise—needs to be amplified.
- Play a valuable role in the larger conversations on economic development, climate change, biodiversity, and even pandemics.
- ITTO's successes show the power of small-budget projects with high impact—a **key “differentiator”** of the Organization.
- Contribute to the ‘green recovery’ in the COVID-19 era.
- ITTO is well respected and often advises other multilateral bodies (e.g., CBD, CITES, FAO).
- ITTO's Fellowship Programme—has yet to be tapped.

Challenges:

- SFM is poorly understood by the public — “chopping down trees is bad.”
 - **Sustainable forestry** needs to be backed up with concrete examples of impact and strong messaging.
- Web content in French and Spanish is not as robust as English (needs more resources).
- ITTO programme impact can be hard to define with concrete accomplishments.
- Conservationism.

Communications goals



1. **Elevate ITTO's thought leadership around tropical forests**, particularly as they relate to urgent issues (climate change, fires, biodiversity loss, livelihoods, and zoonoses and the COVID-19 pandemic).
2. **Promote sustainable forest management practices that are succeeding.**
3. **Continue to serve tropical timber traders and companies.**



Key audiences



- Current, occasional and prospective donors.
- Media outlets covering environmental and sustainable development issues.
- ITTO consumer member countries.
- ITTO producer member countries.
- Tropical timber companies and the media outlets that cover this industry.



ITTO value proposition and key messages



Messaging goals

- Explain the global environmental crisis and how the world's tropical forests can be part of the solution.
- Define sustainable forestry as a key tool for ensuring the conservation of tropical forests and their capacity to mitigate climate change.
- Assert ITTO as the go-to partner for sustainable forestry.

ITTO value proposition and key messages



Value proposition

- The world faces many planetary emergencies
- Sustainable forestry—is the path forward for addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and poverty.
- ITTO works to improve the health and value of tropical forests worldwide.

ITTO value proposition and key messages (example)



- **Problem:** The timber industry globally faces widespread criticism because of the perception that chopping down trees is inherently bad.
- **Solution:** ITTO works to improve the health and value of tropical forests worldwide.
 - Through more than 1200 projects in over 40 countries, ITTO has demonstrated how to improve the livelihoods and wellbeing of communities living in tropical forests. These regions often contain pockets of extreme poverty, especially where deforestation has razed the landscape and ruined livelihoods. In its policy and field work, ITTO:
 - Supports economic development.
 - Encourages community forestry, locally based forest enterprises, local food security, and equitable benefit sharing.
 - Builds capacity to manage forests sustainably and add value to forest products.
 - Promotes the economically viable restoration.
 - Empowers local communities to earn income from sustainably produced wood and non-wood products.

ITTO value proposition and key messages (example)



- **Success story:** A small grant from ITTO in 2009 provided the stimulus for MALEBI, a women's association in Côte d'Ivoire, to improve charcoal production using efficient, ecofriendly techniques, increasing the standard of living in the local community and promoting the importance of forest conservation. MALEBI then undertook a larger ITTO project in 2016 to restore a 100-hectare area in the nearby Ahua gazette forest to ensure a continuous supply of wood for charcoal production.
- **Ask:** What more is needed?
 - There is no better way to conserve tropical forests than to sustainably manage it.
 - Bringing small producers into the sustainable tropical forest products trade is one of the keys to solving tropical deforestation and achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

Communication tactics



- Infuse communications with key messages and value proposition.
- Create special donor-targeted content.
- Continuous improvement and revisions to the website.
- Improve online accessibility of the Tropical Timber Market Report content.
- Obtain solid metrics of past ITTO-funded projects through in-depth analysis.
- Routinely prepare success stories.
- Strengthen the organization's social media presence.
- Continued participation in relevant meetings and conferences.

Communication tactics



- Create or join opportunities to reach donors.
- Develop and deploy media relations, (a good example is a [Mongabay story](#) published early this year).
- Publish updated “Status of Sustainable Forest Management in the Tropics”, including press promotion.
- Issue statements at key moments during the year.
- Site visits/feature-story promotion.
- Op-eds.
- Use of podcasts.
- Increasing video portfolio.
- Prepare for criticism.

Benchmarks and metrics would be collected to evaluate communications success.

Resources



- The activities in this strategy constitute an ambitious plan to improve ITTO's **visibility** and **messaging** with **key audiences**.
- Additional resources to support ITTO's brand extension, increase its influence and help achieve its mission would be a smart investment.
- ITTO communications benefit from the productivity of other programme areas—securing additional resources for their outputs will propel communications work.
- More details on resources need are included under the “timeline” chapter of the Draft Communication Strategy.



Thank you for your attention!



<http://www.youtube.com/user/it>



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