

APPENDIX 1 - COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

At ExCo 61 in Oslo (2008), the former Technical Coordinator (TC) Adam Brown, presented a Communication Strategy with the following benefits for the IEA Bioenergy Agreement (Agreement):

- An effective communication strategy will ensure that the work within the Bioenergy Agreement is more fully recognised and utilized by government policy and decision makers and the bioenergy industry.
- The development of policy-related products will be available with the suite of publications already produced from within the Agreement.
- Communication products will focus on, and address those stakeholders that the Tasks and the ExCo identify as our Key Customers. The messages that these products are seeking to convey will form an integrated part of the whole strategic plan for the Agreement.

The updated Communication Strategy presented here builds on the version introduced at ExCo61 (Doc 9.02) and shall serve as a discussion paper for ExCo71 in Cape Town. It has to be understood more as a guideline to future development.

2. NEED FOR A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The idea for an updated strategy came from the perception that there is an increased need for scientifically based information from the Agreement aimed at decision and policy makers in the IEA or national Governments and in other influential bodies. This means that the work carried out within the Agreement, and its global network of capability is still not always acknowledged or called on. In the long run this may undermine the credibility and influence of the Agreement and affect decisions on future funding and support. A well communicated, respected, and influential Agreement is likely to benefit from continuing and perhaps additional support from its sponsoring Governments, and to attract new participants.

Communicating the results and thinking from the Agreement is clearly a key activity required to deliver the mission and strategy of the Agreement, which puts emphasis on the development of networks and on information dissemination.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2008

Results of the Communication Strategy 2008 are:

- An increasing number of policy briefs and ExCo strategic papers have been released (see TC Report ExCo71, Doc 10.01).
- Communication with IEA HQ in Paris has significantly improved, partially as a result of Adam Brown's new position.
- The visibility at the REWP was increased.

- ExCo was invited to several high ranking conferences with good influence on national policy (e.g. Russia, Chile, etc.).
- Public perception of IEA Bioenergy was strengthened by the two Conferences of the Agreement in Vancouver (2008) and Vienna (2012).
- Influential speakers have been invited to the ExCo Workshops broadening the network.
- Websites of both ExCo and the Tasks have reached high standards.
- The visibility of the Tasks' work is excellent through publications, workshops, inter-Task activities, etc.
- Newsletters have been introduced by the majority of Tasks.
- The country reports have also clearly improved.

The Vision, Mission and Strategy of IEA Bioenergy as defined in the Strategic Plan 2010 - 2016 remain unchanged:

IEA Bioenergy Agreement

Vision: To achieve a substantial bioenergy contribution to future global energy demands by accelerating the production and use of environmentally sound, socially accepted and cost-competitive bioenergy on a sustainable basis, thus providing increased security of supply whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use.

Mission: To facilitate the commercialisation and market deployment of environmentally sound, socially acceptable, and cost competitive bioenergy systems and technologies, and to advise policy and industrial decision makers accordingly.

Strategy: To provide platforms for international collaboration and information exchange in bioenergy research, development, demonstration, and policy analysis. This includes the development of networks, dissemination of information, and provision of science-based technology analysis, as well as support and advice to policy makers, involvement of industry, and encouragement of membership by countries with a strong bioenergy infrastructure and appropriate policies.

Intensified and more effective communication of IEA Bioenergy results are timely now because the methods of GHG emission calculations, notably the calculation of dLUC and iLUC are impacting upon the further development of bioenergy. In particular, the European Commission and the European Parliament are introducing severe restrictions to the use of bioenergy.

The Bioenergy Agreement has the chance to encompass some of the world's leading experts in sustainability. We therefore have to formulate our view of the situation. The process has successfully started but has to be continued and intensified also in collaboration with other partners.

Policy issues and GHG emissions are just examples where strong communication is important, but there is more information needed in other fields like the development of gaseous and liquid biofuels. Generating scientific data, evidence and guidance for a successful up-scaling and application of gasification and pyrolysis technologies will be of great help for industry especially for small and medium enterprises (SME).

4. STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Even though progress in communication has been achieved, there is still potential for improvement. IEA Bioenergy ExCo and the Tasks must implement the practice that ***communication is not a one-time action but a continuous duty.***

In developing or reviewing a strategy it is necessary to:

- a. Be clear about the role of the Agreement
- b. Identify stakeholder organisations that the Agreement may want to inform
- c. Carry out an analysis by reviewing the existing publications and outputs and seeing how these are currently used
- d. Check current awareness/perception of Agreement documents amongst samples of these groups
- e. Canvass opinions on what information/outputs are/would be most valued by each Group
- f. Review the Communication Strategy with respect to both ***products*** (such as documents, reports etc) and ***channels*** for communication (including for example the web sites but also direct channels of communication via individuals, events etc.).

The Role of IEA Bioenergy

The Agreement's role is to provide unbiased and scientifically sound facts and conclusions, which meet our target groups' needs. Its analyses and conclusions need to be of a quality that is recognised as expert conclusions, sometimes by both sides of a debate when there are conflicting views. The role is not to shape policy but to ***inform policy makers*** through sound, science-based information. It has to be ensured that the expert information and analysis is presented in a form that is useful and understandable to these decision makers. For ***industry*** it is important to provide practice-oriented results including market aspects. Economy is one of the three pillars of sustainable development.

The Tenets of the Agreement's Communication Strategy

The three primary tenets of the Agreement's Communication Strategy are:

- To seek to ***inform governments*** in the member (and non-member) countries and regions. This will then influence the policies, targets, and incentives that will drive investment. ExCo members have a direct role in informing policy makers in their home countries, but the Agreement can also inform governments indirectly, for example via the IEA's infrastructure (via the REWP, CERT or Governing Board) and through influential intermediaries (such as UN and OECD bodies, NGO's etc), and academia and research institutions.
- To ***provide information*** via Strategic Papers, Newsletters, Case Studies and Technical Reports, which provide an authoritative basis for decisions by governments, influencers and industry, who can make use of the information to inform their national programmes.
- To compile and ***promote scientific results*** through Articles, Handbooks and Conference Proceedings.

Identification of Potential Audience Groups

In considering the sorts of organisations that may be affected by the work of the Agreement it may be useful to group organisations under the following categories:

- Agreement Participants (ExCo Members, Task Leaders and National Team Leaders)
- IEA Secretariat, REWP and CERT, and other Implementing Agreements
- Government Policy Makers, via ExCo Members and Task Leaders
- Regional bodies
- International organisations (e.g. UN organisations, OECD, FAO, NGO's, GBEP, ICPP, etc.) via ExCo or Task members acting as experts to these bodies
- Industry
- Academia and the scientific community

Figure 1 provides a schematic of how these organisations influence each other, so leading to deployment of bioenergy and other sustainable energy technologies. It also attempts to identify the main routes by which the Agreement may be able best to inform developments. Agreement Participants are key to successful communication of the work of the Agreement since they are a very important step in the communication chain with the other parties. Ensuring good internal communication of key results is therefore very important.

The other identified groups are essentially ‘beneficiaries’ of the work in the Agreement, and our aim must be to ensure that they have the best available information from the Agreement in the form most useful to them when they need it.

Review of Existing Publications and Outputs

Products: Table 1 reviews the current publications and outputs, looking at those produced under the aegis of the ExCo, and of the Tasks. The Table also indicates the target audiences for the various outputs.

The **ExCo** communication activities and outputs are focused on ensuring a good flow of information within the ExCo, (amongst participants, the ExCo and the Tasks) and to the range of target groups, with the aim of informing them of the key activities and results coming from the work of the Agreement. The web site is the major route for dissemination of the existing products, complemented by the Newsletter. More recently the Agreement has been developing a broader range of outputs aimed more specifically at policy makers and influencers (position papers).

The **Tasks** have an attractive programme of events and meetings, and the main written outputs are technical reports, handbooks and case studies, aimed principally at technology specific audiences of a technical/academic nature.

For more details see also Chapter 3.

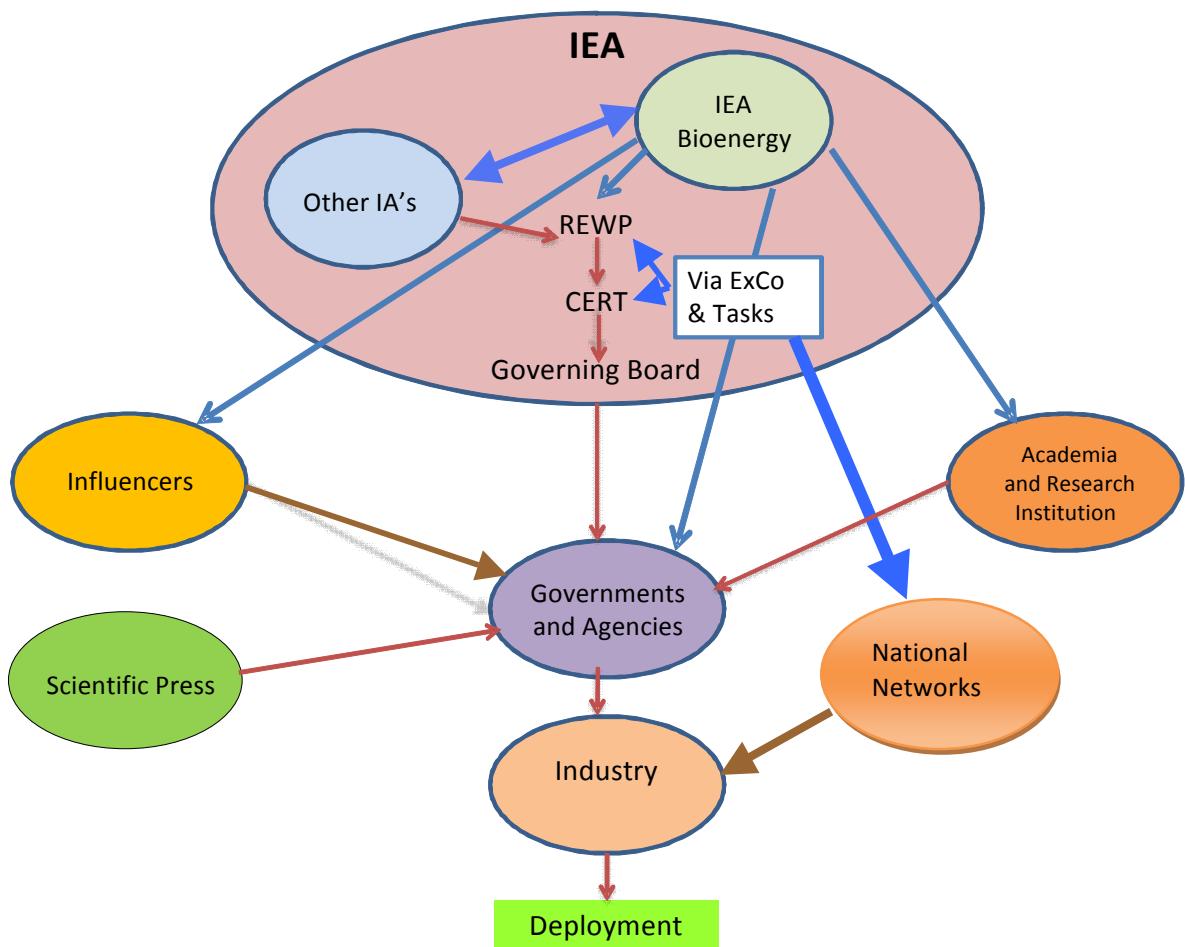


Figure 1: Communication Routes for IEA Bioenergy

Distribution channels

The routes used to ensure that the various products reach their intended audiences are as important as the information/messages themselves.

The ExCo (Secretariat and Members) and the Tasks have important roles in creating these channels for communication. There is also an important role for National Networks in ensuring that the results from the Agreement are disseminated. Some countries (such as AUT, NL, NO, SE) have set up mechanisms to ensure that results from across the IEA Technology network of Implementing Agreements are effectively disseminated within their national communities. It is of crucial importance that other countries establish similar mechanisms.

Both ExCo and the Tasks have to communicate and promote the results of IEA Bioenergy's work. Today the flow of information is so large that it is almost mandatory to communicate the same message more than once. ExCo Members who are closer or often part of the administration are ideal "internal channels" whereas TLs and NTL are "external" sources of information.

However, two basic rules have to be accepted:

- It is important that ExCo and Task Members carry the same message. Internal exchange of information must therefore have top priority.
- The rules for Agreement publications have to be followed, i.e. all strategic papers (position papers) have to be accepted by ExCo prior to publication, and any other publication by the working group elected, i.e. Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Technical Coordinator.

Current Perceptions

In order to steadily improve and adapt the strategy to the target groups' needs, it is advisable to make occasional enquiries (either in a verbal or written form) to seek some feedback from the target groups on current activity to see to what extent the activity is meeting our objectives. This should include not only feedback and views on the quality and content of what we produce, but also on the format and style of what is produced. Feed back about the routes through which the communications have reached the target audiences is also important.

5. PROPOSED STRATEGY

Objectives

The objectives of the Communications Strategy should support the overall Vision, Mission and Strategy of the Agreement. The objectives are equally valid for ExCo and Task members. There are just a few priorities for the respective actions:

For the ExCo: To ensure that the work of the Agreement supports policy development and deployment of bioenergy in member countries, and more widely, by communicating primarily with

- all ExCo members and other participants in the Agreement
- REWP, IEA HQ and other parts of the IEA Technology Network
- national and regional bioenergy communities in participant countries
- key influencing groups
- industry.

For the Tasks: To ensure that the ExCo Members are well informed about the work of the Tasks, with particular emphasis on key results and conclusions.

Both ExCo and the Tasks should address international organisations wherever it is possible, e.g. through personal relations, contributions at conferences and workshops or through contracting work.

Target Audiences							
	IEA Bioenergy Participants	IEA HQ/REWP	Governments/Policy Makers	Other Influencers	Industry	Academia	National Networks
ExCo							
Newsletter	***	***	***	***	**	***	**
Annual Report	***	**	**	*	*	*	**
Workshop publications	***	**	**	**	**	***	***
Position papers Contribution to Global Energy Supply GHG Balances	***	***	***	***	***	**	***
Website	***	**	**	**	**	**	**
ExCo workshop publications	***	***	*	*	*	***	***
ExCo Meetings	***	**	*	*	*	*	*
Technology Reports (Via Biomass and Bioenergy)	*	*	*	**	*	**	*
Tasks							
Reports	**	**	*	*	**	***	**
Handbooks	*	*	*	**	**	***	***
Case Studies	**	**	**	**	***	***	***
Country Reports	**	**	**	**	**	***	***
Brochures	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Websites	**	*	**	**	**	***	***

(*** = main focus, * = minor focus)

Table 1. Current publications and target public

Approach

The strategy should consist of four main activities:

- Produce a suitable suite of **products** from ExCo and from the Tasks.
- Evaluate to ensure we use the **best routes** to reach and influence the target audience.
- Utilize enquiries for getting **feedback** from the relevant target groups.
- Promote **internal information** exchange.

It may be helpful if Tasks developed specific **communication plans** for each product, and perhaps shared experience and best practice during one of the Task Leader meetings.

The **corporate identity** of the Agreement should be maintained beyond publications, i.e. for presentations and posters, etc. The Secretary in collaboration with the TC should provide a standard presentation on power point with the major highlights and outputs of the Agreement. The presentation should be updated at least once a year. The layout of the presentation (master) could also serve as a general design for Task and ExCo presentations.

Developing and improving products and their distribution channels

- ExCo members should review the ways that information and products from the Agreement are **disseminated to their national and regional bioenergy communities** (in Government, academia, industry, etc.) taking account of good practice in some of the member countries. Every NTL should know which community has been informed by the ExCo member and by which means. Of course the other way around should work equally well.
- We should continue to **enhance links with IEA HQ** and to make best use of their dissemination routes such as the OPEN Bulletin, the IEA's website, and other mechanisms developed as part of the overall IEA strategy which is under development.
- The **links with international organisations should be strengthened** (GBEP, IRENA, FAO, World Bank, etc.) and the exchange of information should be more structured. Only a steady information transfer can pass the message of IEA Bioenergy to other entities.
- **Specific products for industry** should be developed in the same way as for science and policy e.g. through industry workshops, market oriented newsletters, etc.
- **Media should be more involved** in ExCo's and Tasks' work e.g. through press announcements of workshops and conferences or through press conferences alongside conferences as was done at the IEA Bioenergy Conference 2012.

Occasional feed-back from science and industry shows that the Tasks' work related to the interest of the industry (e.g. Task 39 for EtOH industry) is very well recognized. However IEA Bioenergy as a whole is far less well known. There is considerable potential to improve that and create a win-win situation between ExCo and the Tasks:

- The ***Secretary's role as information Hub*** should be strengthened.
- ***Country reports compiling the major results*** and highlights of the Tasks' country reports should be published with links to the page of the Task cited.
- The ***style of the newsletter and the appearance rhythm*** does not correspond to the modern style anymore. It has to be published more often with very short intros for fast readers and a link to the website with more information.
- An ***address data bank*** has to be built up that is possibly based on the Task's data banks. It is important that data protection is maintained wherever it is required.
- The information on the work accomplished has to be shared with media by writing ***occasional press communiqués***.
- ***Information transfer via newsletters of other organisations*** (NGOs, governments, EC and private press bureaux, etc.) are of increasing importance.
- ***Social media*** for professionals like LinkedIn, etc. should be used.
- Eventually we should think about an ***App*** for pads and cellular phones.

6. FEEDBACK AND EFFECTIVENESS

Feedback

We should establish a systematic approach to getting feedback on our communications from the organisations we seek to influence. There are different measures to control the acceptance of our products:

- Count hits and entries on homepage and following websites, take note of time spent and follow up countries and eventually organisation that visited the websites.
- Once the newsletter is established we can use the addresses for a short feed-back of our work.
- Evaluations can be collected on standardized forms after each workshop or conference of the Tasks and of ExCo.
- A more detailed feed-back is possible through discussions during the national team meetings.

Management

In order to expedite the strategy, an active Working Group should be formed consisting eventually of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman as convener to work with the Technical Coordinator and Task Leaders to review progress and evolve the strategy further in the future.

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