Integrated Research on Disaster Risk, IPO Communications Strategy
2017

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1. About IRDR

The Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Interdisciplinary Body was established by ICSU after approval at the 29th ICSU General Assembly in 2010. Its charge was to strengthen and use science and its interface with policy and practice to address the very significant and increasing challenges posed by natural and human-induced environmental hazards. The Science Plan for Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (the 'Science Plan') was developed as the foundation for the program of work that became known as the 'IRDR Program'.

ICSU, the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) are the three co-sponsors of IRDR. They jointly decided to establish the International Program Office at the Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth (RADI) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). IRDR is thus the first ICSU Interdisciplinary Body hosted outside Europe. The China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) has committed 300,000 Euro per year for a period of ten years to the IPO for program operations.

The programme is guided by three research objectives:

1. Characterising hazards, vulnerability and risk.
2. Understanding decision-making in complex and changing risk contexts.
3. Reducing risk and curbing losses through knowledge-based actions.

Three cross-cutting themes support IRDR's work towards these objectives:

1. Capacity building, including mapping capacity for disaster reduction and building self-sustaining capacity at various levels and for different hazards.
2. Development and compilation of case studies and demonstration projects.
3. Assessment, data management, and monitoring of hazards, risks and disasters.

Attainment of these objectives through successful projects will lead to a better understanding of hazards, vulnerability and risk; an enhanced capacity to model and project risk into the future; a better insight into decision-making that may increase risk exposure, as well as how choices may be influenced; a better understanding of how new knowledge can guide disaster risk reduction efforts at all levels; and a better support of implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

2. Background of IRDR Communications Strategy

In early 2016, the three co-sponsors of IRDR commissioned an independent, forward-looking mid-term Review covering the first six years of the ten-year program period. It is to serve as guidance for planning and implementation during the next phase of the program, which ends in 2020. The seven-member Review panel therefore focused their assessment areas critical for improvement. In 16th meeting of IRDR scientific committee, the final draft of review report was presented and discussed.

According to the review report, IRDR has had some success in creating visibility and reach by 'piggybacking' or co-sponsoring some events, organising IRDR conferences and engaging early career scientists. Yet interview and survey respondents assessed IRDR's visibility as low and its reach as inadequate given its potential. This means that its role as a major entity in the scientific arena and even more so, outside of it – even at global level - cannot be confirmed with a sense of comfort. The report pointed out "With the lack of resources and, until recently, suitable capacities in the IPO, communication suffered from a lack of focus on multiple media (conventional and social media, blogs, webinars)". There are few references to IRDR on the Internet, and it is even rarely mentioned in co-sponsors' documents. It elicits few citations and references, and does not have high impact flagship reports that highlight its niche and contributions in a manner that inspires. And while a focus on academic publishing is important, different stakeholder groups need different types of communication.

This IRDR IPO Communications Strategy lifted some of the information from the early documents and revised and updated the content based on existing communications tools, requirements of the programme and the guide of new Executive Director, scientific committee and the review report.

I.   Objectives

The main objective of this communications strategy is to bring coherence to IRDR internal and external communications in order to:

- Create awareness about the impact of IRDR's work under its research objectives.
- To promote positive perceptions of IRDR and strategically position IRDR in DRR and in support of implementation of SFDRR.
- To support an enabling environment for the research works of IRDR through resource mobilization and partnerships that will create synergies with the government, donors, research institutions, and other key partners in DRR.
- To facilitate knowledge management by documenting IRDR's works.

II. Rationale for Improved Communications Strategy

The rationale of this communications strategy entails the following:

- We need a more strategic approach to IRDR communications. IRDR communications will be more effective if there is a combined effort from partners, co-sponsors and members to communicate.
- We need to promote and showcase IRDR methodology and approach.
- We need to strike a balance between presenting (potential) contributions of IRDR and the wider contexts and the reality of the programme activities.
- We need to package activities of IRDR bodies to report in support of IRDR's mission while recognising the autonomy of all actors and reflecting their own vision of the role IRDR could / should / does play.
- We need to develop and agree on joint messages targeted at specific audiences.
- We need more coherence in our communication to leverage the overall, positive reputation of our partner organisations to be able to approach funders, donors and governments with requests for financial support.
- We need to be familiar with actors and processes to integrate and connect global, regional, national and local initiatives and actions that we can report on (*e.g. Co-sponsor UNISDR leading Sendai process; ICSU cautious supporter of London statement; Future Earth is player in CCA research; inter-level integration involves regional offices / platforms of both ICSU and ISDR)*.
- We need to be more proactive in our communication and speak out more about what IRDR has done and is doing consistently when events occur.

3. Audiences

Internal audience

IRDR family is the internal audience for awareness of what IRDR is on-going. It consists of:

- IRDR's co-sponsors and host: ICSU, ISSC, UNISDR, RADI,CAS
- IRDR National and Regional Committees (RCs and NCs)
- IRDR International Centres of Excellence (ICoEs)
- Internal Staff
- IRDR Science Committee Members, past SC members, Ex-Officio Members.

External Audience

SFDRR expressed a need for focused action within and across sectors by States at local, national, regional and global levels in the following four priority areas: "Understanding disaster risk", "Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk", "Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience", "Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction". Thus, to support the implementation of SFDRR and strengthen the visibility, position and leadership, IRDR should enhance the communication to different stakeholders.

1. Key stakeholders: Academia, scientific and research entities and networks
2. Important stakeholders:
   - Civil society, volunteers, organized voluntary work organizations and community-based organizations
   - Local governments
   - Business, professional associations and private sector financial institutions
   - Media

4. Existing Communication Tools

External Communications	
Online Tools	
• IRDR website	http://www.irdrinternational.org/

• Newsletter	Released quarterly
	- IDRD Newsletter Vol. 5 No. 1 (28 Jan 2014)
	   http://www.irdrinternational.org/irdr-publications/page/2/
	- IDRD Newsletter Vol. 5 No. 2 (30 April 2014)
	   http://www.irdrinternational.org/2014/04/30/idrd-newsletter-vol-5-no-2/
	- IDRD Newsletter Vol. 5 No. 3 (18 July 2014)
	   http://www.irdrinternational.org/2014/07/18/newsletter-vol5-no3/
	- IDRD Newsletter Vol. 5 No. 4 (31 Oct 2014)
	   http://www.irdrinternational.org/2014/10/31/irdr-newsletter-vol-5-no-4/
	- IDRD Newsletter Vol. 6 No. 1 (31 Jan 2015)
	   http://www.irdrinternational.org/2015/01/31/irdr-newsletter-vol-6-no-1/
	- IDRD Newsletter Vol. 6 No. 2 (8 May 2015)
	   http://www.irdrinternational.org/2015/05/08/irdr-newsletter-vol-6-no-2/

• Social Media	IRDR Facebook IRDR Twitter IRDR LinkedIn
• E-mail marketing tool	MailChimp http://mailchimp.com/ (2,476 combined subscribers)
• Press Releases	Related to events http://www.irdrinternational.org/2016-news/
• Online banners	IRDR in RADI, CAS, NCs, RCs, ICoEs pages and co-sponsors and partners pages.
• Email	List serve (IAP, RIA), group emails (e.g. SC members)
• Photo Library	http://www.irdrinternational.org/irdrphotos/
• Community of Practice (COPs)	AIRDR, DATA, FORIN
• Analytics	Mailchimp analytics, Google analytics, Website analytics, Social media account analytics
Print	

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• Brochure and Flyers	IRDR brochure, brochures of relevant events
• Conference Programme Book	2011 and 2014 IRDR Conference Programme Book
• Poster	Project posters (AIRDR, FORIN, RIA, DATA)
• Letters	Invitation letters to events
• Scientific Reports	Articles published in science journals (e.g. Planet@Risk, Elsevier, Challenges in Sustainability), project reports (e.g. IRDR Peril Classification and Hazard Glossary, FORIN, RIA), Conference Abstract (e.g. IRDR Conference 2011)
• Annual Reports	2011, 2012, 2013,2014, 2015 IRDR Annual Reports
• Other Publications	IRDR Strategic Plan 2013-2017, A Science Plan for IRDR (ICSU publication – in English and Chinese)
Public Relations	
• Events/Presentations/Workshops	IRDR events and IRDR related events (e.g. http://www.irdrinternational.org/events/upcoming-events/)
• Conferences	Such as Conference outcome of 1st Asian Science and Technology Conference on DRR held on 23-24 August 2016 in Bangkok
• Interviews from Media	Interviews (e.g. http://www.irdrinternational.org/2012/02/22/irdr-ed-international-innovation-interview/)
Internal Communications	
• Conference calls	Skype Calls (as scheduled)
• Face-to-face meetings	Staff Meeting (as scheduled)
• Workshops	Project related workshops, workshops initiated by NCs, RCs and ICoEs. (as scheduled)
• IRDR internal calendar	http://calendar.live.com

5. Work Plan

A tentative list of outcomes and suggested activities in 2017 is given below. This is the draft work plan, which will be updated accordingly to reflect the organizational requirements. Outcomes and activities aim to support the achievement of the main communications objectives.

OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES	PROGRESS INDICATORS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIMELINE
1. Redesigned and updated website	Website content management Use of social media	- Mapping of all IRDR and IRDR-related activities, especially activities of NCs and ICoEs. - Activity / news in the centre. - Different, bolder typeface, making it more visible. - Static information in the frames. - Blogs for popularization of DRR science	Communications Officer (may need to outsource Website Designer if total redesign of the website is necessary as SC meeting suggested)	
2. Publications	Publication of: - Annual report - Newletters - Outcomes of events	Release as scheduled	Science Officer and Communications Officer	
3. Visual Identity Standards (VIS) Guidelines incorporating elements of different IRDR bodies.	Creation of VIS Guidelines - Templates (letters, meeting documents, power point presentations; etc.)	VIS Guidelines	Communications Officer	
4. Co-ordinated work with ICSU, UNISDR and ISSC			Exec Director, Science Officer, Communications Officer	

to leverage and mobilize network synergies.			
5. Strategic support to IRDR Scientific Committee (SC) members, Regional and National Committees (RCs and NCs) and International Centres of Excellence (ICoEs).	Support and participation in workshops seminars, conferences, activities initiated by IRDR RCs, NCs and ICoEs, including presentations and representations by IRDR SC members to such events.	News Coverage of events IRDR templates for presentations and reports, sharing of blog sites	Exec Director, Science Officer, Communications Officer
6. Improved Media Relations	Media database	Increased coverage and mentions of IRDR related works in the media at the end of the evaluation year.	Communications Officer
	Press releases		Communications Officer
	Interviews, Press Conferences		Exec Director, SC members
7. Photo/Video Documentation	Photo/Video documentation of IRDR and IRDR related events.	Photo and Video Library	Communications Officer, Office Assistant
8. Conferences, workshops and programmes	As organizer or host	With IRDR family and potential partners	Exec Director, SC members, Science Officer, Communication Officer

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 IRDR IPO Report

IRDR will review bi-annually the communications strategy in order to adapt and localize information requirements and take into account the changing environment and communication needs. Ideally, this reporting should be part of the Scientific Committee Meetings held bi-annually.

The IRDR IPO Communications Officer will facilitate completing the bi-annual reports in order to coherently include it in the SC Meetings as part of the IPO report.

6.2 IRDR Network Report

IRDR National/Regional Committees and International Centres of Excellence must submit a bi-annual report of the activities between the SC Meetings.

The report should contain the following content:

1. A brief explanation for each main activity is required: a) how the activity was implanted; b) the outcome and impact; c) the results of the evaluation ((if available, e.g. evaluation of a course by the participants); d) any difficulties encountered (if applicable).
2. A brief description of the nature and outcome of any collaboration with other NCs/ICoEs.
3. A brief work plan for next period.

7. Use of IRDR name, emblem, and flag

As a general rule, a member of IRDR network may obtain permission to use IRDR's name and emblem only in relation to an activity included in their agreed work plan (as opposed to other standard activities that the institution may conduct). All cases are subject to the Executive Director's prior approval. Any authorization automatically comes to an end upon expiration of the period of designation.

Generally, the IRDR emblem and/or name should never be used in isolation. If the activity is organised/co-organised by IRDR IPO or IRDR (as a whole), IRDR logo should be adopted. If the activity is mainly organized/co-organised by IRDR NCs or ICoEs themselves, IRDR NC logo and IRDR ICoE logo should be adopted accordingly.

7.1 Letterheads

Subject to general rule and considerations stated above, a member of IRDR (IRDR IPO, IRDR NCs and IRDR ICoEs) may use its official title and the IRDR emblem on letterheads.

7.2 Website

Subject to general rule and considerations stated above, IRDR NCs and ICoEs must put the emblem on their web pages on a visible place with their official title.

Meanwhile, IRDR NCs and ICoEs should establish a separate page for IRDR related activities. The page is in accordance with the terms of reference and workplan of the NCs and ICoEs. The relevant activities should be reported so that IRDR website can cite them in time.

7.3 Brochures, presentations and published materials

They are subject to general rule and considerations stated above.

7.4 Training diplomas and certificates

If an activity in the work plan refers to specialized training and/or courses, the IRDR's name and emblem may be used on certificates of attendance, diplomas or similar awarded to participants only with Executive Director's permission.

8. Funding and Human Resources

The manpower and funding for communications are incorporated into the IPO budget which covers staff salary, printing of publications, brochure, flyers, banners, etc. Unless there is a need to outsource resources and manpower to effectively complete a communication product within a timeline, a separate budget is allotted for this expense. These items include outsourcing a website designer (e.g. total redesign of the website) , design of posters (for specific event that requires immediate submission of poster materials), hiring an I.T. expert for complex information technology (I.T.) services such as data migration for managing website content and additional interns for populating database contacts as needed.