



Secretariat

4 November 2019

Administrative instruction

Communications guidelines and publication policy

The Secretary-General promulgates the following:

I. Purpose

1. The purpose of the present instruction is to ensure consistency and coherence in the way in which the International Seabed Authority communicates externally and internally. It is to be used in conjunction with the administrative instruction on official documents ([ISBA/ST/AI/2017/5](#)), which provides a valuable guide to the drafting and processing of official documents and should be followed by all staff. Information relevant to the processing and dispatching of official correspondence that needs to be considered by all staff is to be found in the *Correspondence Manual*.

2. A consistent approach to communications is central to: (a) enhancing the visibility, credibility and impact of the Authority's strategic objectives and activities and, where needed, clarifying them; (b) increasing awareness and understanding of the Authority's mandate and activities; and (c) communicating official messages from the Authority and the secretariat to the appropriate audience, including to the general public.

II. Communications guidelines

A. Visual style

3. For visual coherence and consistency of branding, all products should maintain the appropriate visual standards outlined in the "ISA Communications Guidelines". These will be revised on a regular basis and include the approved logos, colour scheme, typography and imagery.

4. The Authority's logo is the singular most important item that represents the organization to the public. The official seal, flag and emblem of the Authority were adopted by the Assembly at its 84th meeting, on 14 August 2002 (see [ISBA/8/A/12](#)). Therefore, it is important that the Authority's logo be presented correctly on all products.

5. Specific requirements and technical information are found in the "ISA Communications Guidelines".



6. If a partner publishes a publication, the Authority's logo cannot be used without careful review of the content and written consent from the Secretary-General through the Communications Unit.

B. Media outreach and enquiries

7. It is in the Authority's interest to work with the media, and the Authority is committed to being open and transparent in all its dealings with the media.

8. All staff, including temporary contractors, consultants and interns, are expected to abide by the following guidelines, which are further elaborated in the media policy contained within the "ISA Communications Guidelines":

(a) The Secretary-General is the primary spokesperson for the secretariat, unless otherwise delegated to one of the Heads of Offices or any senior staff member;

(b) Staff, contractors, consultants and interns who are not formally delegated to respond to media outlet enquiries must refer all such enquiries directly to the Communications Unit for a response;

(c) Requests from the Secretary-General or the Communications Unit for staff to provide information for the collation of a media response must be given high priority. Such requests should be answered on the same day, where possible.

C. Press releases

9. The Communications Unit is responsible for publishing and distributing press releases to the global media, as well as to staff, member States, United Nations entities and all relevant stakeholders.

10. In principle, all quotes are to be attributed to the Secretary-General. On occasion, the Secretary-General may delegate authority to a senior staff member.

11. A request for a press release can be made by Heads of Offices by submitting a press release request form outlining details of the upcoming event or announcement to the Communications Unit at least two weeks in advance of the event.

12. The drafting of the press release is the responsibility of the Communications Unit. The draft will be shared with the relevant Head of Office for review and with the Senior Policy Officer/Special Assistant to the Secretary-General for final approval.

13. Any joint press releases will follow a specific process for which formal approval will be obtained from the relevant partner organization or entity by the Communications Unit.

14. Further details and technical requirements regarding the development and issuance of press releases are found in the "ISA Communications Guidelines".

D. Media advisories

15. In principle, any event to be held by the Authority will be communicated to the media by the Communications Unit two weeks ahead of the effective date.

16. All draft media advisories will be shared by the Communications Unit with the relevant Head of Office for review and with the Senior Policy Officer/Special Assistant to the Secretary-General for final approval.

17. Further details and technical requirements regarding the development and issuance of media advisories are found in the “ISA Communications Guidelines”.

E. Announcements

18. As a general practice, any event to be held by the Authority should be communicated to the relevant stakeholders at least one month before the effective date.

19. Announcements such as calls for submissions for an event or a request for nominations that are to be posted on the Authority’s website and sent to all stakeholders should also be communicated as indicated above.

20. Further details and technical requirements regarding the development and issuance of announcements are found in the “ISA Communications Guidelines”.

F. Quarterly newsletter

21. The Authority issues a newsletter at the beginning of each quarter of the calendar year. The newsletter is circulated through an electronic subscription list that includes a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

22. Newsletters are developed by the Communications Unit with the support and contribution of all Offices. Accordingly, Heads of Offices will be required to provide input on a list of the suggested stories two weeks before the publication date.

23. Staff are also encouraged to submit articles to the Communications Unit about any interesting activity, event, meeting or initiative. In that case, the articles should not exceed 150 words and be submitted at least two weeks before the publication date.

24. The Communications Unit reserves the right to select and edit all items for the newsletter; therefore, Heads of Offices are encouraged to inform the Communications Unit of upcoming events ahead of time.

25. The publication of the newsletter is the responsibility of the Communications Unit.

26. Further details and technical requirements regarding the development and issuance of the newsletter are found in the “ISA Communications Guidelines”.

G. Opinion pieces

27. All opinion pieces are authored by the Secretary-General, and occasionally jointly with another United Nations or high-level official. In order to maximize placement on key dates, relevant Heads of Offices who wish to request an opinion piece should submit their request and some bullet points or key messages to the Communications Unit at least one month before the publication date.

28. In the light of the above paragraph, it is the responsibility of the Communications Unit to seek approval and comments from the Secretary-General. If approved, the relevant Office will draft the opinion piece and submit it to the Communications Unit for editing. The Communications Unit will obtain final approval from the Secretary-General.

29. Further details and technical requirements regarding the development and issuance of opinion pieces are found in the “ISA Communications Guidelines”.

H. Social media channels

30. The Communications Unit is responsible for the creation and management of all institutional social media accounts. To streamline the Authority's online presence, Offices are discouraged from setting up separate social media accounts, as relevant content can be provided to the Communications Unit and shared from the main channels.

31. Further details and technical requirements regarding the creation and management of all institutional social media accounts are found in the "ISA Communications Guidelines".

I. Website

32. The Communications Unit is responsible for the visual identity and overall content management of the Authority's website. As with other public information products, the visual appearance of the Authority's website is consistent with the organization's visual identity and branding.

33. All public information products are uploaded to the Authority's website, where they are highly visible to external audiences. While the Communications Unit manages the overall content of the Authority's website, it is the responsibility of staff within each Office to keep their pages up to date. Should staff have any requests for updates to the home page, they should direct them to the Communications Unit.

J. Photography and video

34. The Authority maintains an internal stock photograph database and can outsource external photography services. Services include taking high-quality stills for branding, for print and for the web, as well as providing coverage for Authority-led events held at headquarters.

35. In addition to photographs, the Authority is building an internal stock video database and can outsource video coverage for events held at headquarters. This includes recording Secretary-General video messages, interviews and webcasts. Staff attending events organized by the Authority outside headquarters are encouraged to provide the Communications Unit with video footage of reasonable quality including short interview segments (known as vox pops), with supporting details where necessary.

36. Further details and technical requirements regarding the use of photography and video are found in the "ISA Communications Guidelines".

K. Graphic design

37. The Communications Unit is responsible for maintaining a consistent branding and communications design strategy to effectively deliver the Authority's message to its global audience. The Communications Unit can provide and outsource a variety of graphic design solutions, from creating visual designs for the development of specific products or specific events to designing promotional materials such as banners, brochures, flyers, infographics, PowerPoint presentations or other public information products.

38. Heads of Offices should contact the Communications Unit at least one month before the work is to be conducted to determine whether the work can be undertaken in-house or whether an external designer should be engaged.
39. All designers should be provided with the Authority's visual style guide contained within the "ISA Communications Guidelines".
40. Further details and technical requirements regarding graphic design are found in the "ISA Communications Guidelines".

L. Document, email signature and PowerPoint templates

41. Using common templates strengthens the Authority's brand and identity and ensures that the correct information is included in documents to be circulated both internally and externally. Standardized Word, PowerPoint and electronic signature templates have been developed for that purpose, including for press releases, media advisories, Secretary-General statements, policy briefs and concept notes.
42. Official e-signatures must not be accompanied with additional content, such as quotations, inspirational or devotional epithets, bons mots or emoticons. A standard disclaimer should be used, as follows: "This message is for the designated recipient only and may contain privileged, proprietary, or otherwise private information. If you have received it in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original. Any other use of the email by you is prohibited."
43. Standardized PowerPoint templates have been developed by the Communications Unit and must be used by all staff in order to project a uniform and professional corporate image. The templates will be reviewed on occasion. Although the structure of the slides can be easily adjusted, it is important that the design elements (colours, font, etc.) remain the same.
44. Further details and technical requirements on the use of Word, professional signatures and PowerPoint templates are found in the "ISA Communications Guidelines".

III. Publication policies

A. Publications style guide

45. The overall purpose of the publications style guide contained within the "ISA Communications Guidelines" for all publications issued by the Authority is to achieve a common look and feel that makes them easily recognizable and in line with United Nations editorial standards, thus strengthening the Authority's image and visibility.
46. When planning publications, staff should seek the guidance of the Communications Unit. All external designers should be provided with the publications style guide to ensure consistency in the visual identity and branding.
47. Further details and technical requirements on the development of any publication are found in the "ISA Communications Guidelines".

B. Publication categories

48. The Authority's publications are classified into the following categories:

(a) General publications: This category includes books, such as *The Law of the Sea: Compendium of Basic Documents, Legislative History of the "Enterprise"*

and other publications that are intended to add to the published literature on a particular topic. The audience for these publications tends to be a wide audience of legal, policy and scientific experts, as well as libraries;

(b) Technical studies: This series includes papers related to the work of the Authority and manuals aimed at facilitating the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for its various actors, as well as scientific studies. The series is targeted mainly at legal or scientific experts;

(c) Studies and reports: This category includes the Authority's project documents, manuals and publications in various formats. These publications are targeted at a wider audience of stakeholders with an interest in the work of the Authority;

(d) Workshop reports: These reports include the proceedings of workshops organized by the Authority only or in partnership with other organizations or institutions;

(e) Policy briefs: These papers provide a concise summary of an issue related to the work of the Authority and the policy options for dealing with it, along with recommendations. They are aimed mainly at government policymakers and other experts. Policy briefs are typically a maximum of eight pages in length;

(f) Public information and advocacy materials: These include booklets, flyers, brochures, information briefs, newsletters and multimedia products, which may be published in various print and digital formats. They are generally targeted at a wider audience than those targeted in policy briefs.

C. Distribution

49. To ensure a permanent record, general publications and technical studies will be issued with an International Standard Book Number and cataloguing-in-publication data, as appropriate, and will go through a full production process (copy-editing, design, layout and publication). Workshop reports, miscellaneous studies and reports, policy briefs and all other ephemeral material do not need to be issued with an International Standard Book Number.

50. All publications, regardless of category, will be made freely available for download on the Authority's website.

51. General publications and technical studies are made available for purchase in print format through Amazon. Subject to the availability of funds, limited print runs may be ordered by the secretariat for distribution (e.g. to the membership of the Assembly or for a specific meeting or event). Workshop reports and miscellaneous studies and reports are not generally issued in print format unless it is cost-effective to do so, or where printed copies are required for a particular event or meeting. Policy briefs and other ephemeral material may be produced in print format as required and at the discretion of the Head of Office concerned, subject to the availability of funds.

D. Signature of forewords and prefaces

52. In publications prepared by the secretariat, a foreword or preface may be signed only by the Secretary-General or, as appropriate and upon his instructions, by an official who is authorized to assume responsibility for the publication.

E. Attribution of authorship in Authority publications

53. The policy relating to attribution to individual authors has the following objectives:

- (a) To acknowledge original intellectual contributions in the preparation of secretariat publications and reports;
- (b) To facilitate dialogue with the international academic and professional communities;
- (c) To provide appropriate recognition of the intellectual accomplishments of individual staff members of the secretariat;
- (d) To assure current and potential staff members, known to be experts in their respective fields, that their professional work in the secretariat will be recognized among their peers;
- (e) To increase staff responsibility in the creation of high-quality publications and reports.

54. Attribution to organizational units smaller than a department, or to individual authors, may appear anywhere in the publication, as deemed appropriate by the author department concerned, except on the front cover, title page or reverse-of-title page. This practice is valid in the case of official publications and other major publications and intergovernmental reports and major publications substantially edited for wider public dissemination.

55. In the case of specialized technical publications, including collections of scholarly papers, and periodicals, attribution to organizational units smaller than a department, or to individual authors, may appear anywhere in the publication, as deemed appropriate by the author department concerned, including on the front cover, title page or reverse-of-title page.

F. Attribution to consultants

56. When a consultant is engaged to prepare a report for the Authority, authorship of the report shall not in principle be attributed to the consultant, unless otherwise recommended by the organizational unit responsible for the substantive context of the publication, and with the approval of the Secretary-General. A reference to the consultant's contribution may, in appropriate cases, be made in a footnote of the report or, where appropriate, in other parts of the report. All rights, including title, copyright and patent rights, to any work remain with the Authority (ISBA/ST/AI/2003/01).

G. Attribution to other organizations, government representatives and authors other than International Seabed Authority staff

57. The names and logos of other organizations, Governments and entities may appear on the cover and title pages as authors if they are jointly responsible for the preparation of a publication that the Authority has produced. Alternatively, acknowledgement may be made in a foreword or preface.

H. Disclaimer

58. When a publication is in whole or in part attributed to individual authors within the secretariat, the prefatory matter shall contain a statement indicating the position of the secretariat towards such material. Such a disclaimer shall read: “The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the International Seabed Authority.”

IV. Final provisions

59. The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 4 November 2019.

(Signed) Michael **Lodge**
Secretary-General
