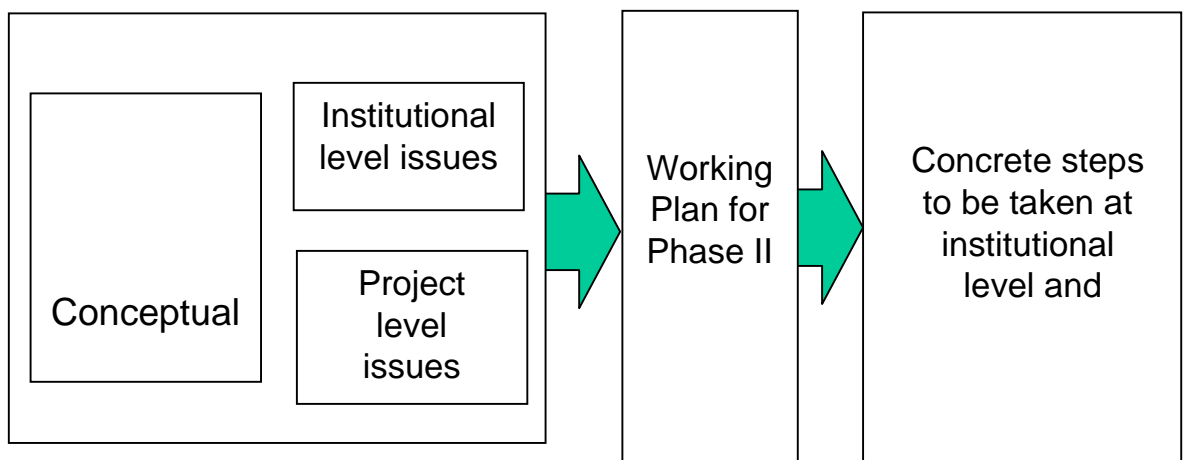# 5. Communications Program

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1. Introduction

The IGES Strategic Program for the Second Phase explicitly calls for the setting up of a Communications Program (CP) in order to disseminate results of various research activities of IGES projects.

Preparing the IGES Communications Strategy

The Communications Program for the Second Phase (IGES Strategic Program for the Second Phase) calls for:

- The **dissemination** of IGES Research activities and results at an appropriate time and in a usable form to different clients, including decision-makers. For this purpose, IGES will utilize the mass media, Internet, newsletters, press releases, peer-reviewed journals, books, discussion papers and other publications.
- A communication and **outreach office** should be created to collect, compile and communicate research and other outputs, including annotated research summaries.
- First Phase **research results** to be compiled and presented as a database
- Expansion and utilization of the **Internet** to be better accessed by researchers to information they need. The IGES Researcher's Database will be used for this purpose.

This document presents the IGES Communications Strategy - outlining the basic conceptual framework (communications, information management, knowledge transfer etc.) and includes issues to be considered at the institutional and project levels. It provides a working plan for the Second Phase that will be used to decide the concrete steps to be taken.

The Communication Program is an **administrative task** for the Second Phase. It is not a *project per se*, but is constructed to assist IGES projects in their communication and dissemination tasks.

The information contained here is based on IGES project plans and proposals, Board proceedings, publications and progress reports, as well as in-depth interviews with Project Leaders and IGES staff members. The document has also benefited from feedback during three seminars with IGES Staff members and researchers conducted during the period July to October 2000.

2. Structure of the Communications Program

The main objective of the **Communications Program (CP)** is to ensure the widest possible access to IGES and its information products by the public, media representatives, UN agencies and other multilateral organizations, community groups, NGOs, universities and other institutions.

The CP's vision is to advance the creation, management and use of data as a strategic resource to enhance public awareness and environmental education, inform decision-making, and improve the user's access to information about environmental research carried out by IGES.

The broad objectives of the CP are:

- **to improve public access to quality environmental information**
- **to meet the public's environmental information needs**
- **to provide smart information tools for environmental analysis and decision-making**
- **to support IGES project activities in education, research and practice**

The CP strongly believes that IGES must not limit itself to the knowledge, analyses and expertise available within its own projects, but must also reach out and tap the knowledge, analyses and expertise of leading institutions in each of its fields of activity.

Focusing on information *literacy*, the CP will recognize when there is a need for information to solve a problem or develop an idea, work with project staff to formulate questions based on information needs, brainstorm multiple strategies for approaching a problem or issue, identify, organize and sequence tasks to complete an information based project, and perform other related information management tasks.

As shown in the figure above, the two-pronged cyclical approach to communications calls for (a) the targeted, timely and useful dissemination of information from IGES projects and activities, and (b) the setting up of an information collection system to support and complement IGES projects and activities.

The CP will work closely with project and administrative staff *internally* and with partners and end-users *externally*, in broadly meeting their data and information needs. It will also develop appropriate policies regarding data privacy and intellectual property rights.

The CP will be responsible for the planning and implementation of IGES's information and dissemination activities, publication processes, reports on IGES activities etc. It will help in creating awareness and promoting various aspects of environmental management in terms of the mandate of IGES. It will work towards synthesis and repackaging of research results, analysis and assessment of cross-cutting issues in the themes covered by IGES projects.

3. Activities

Some of the activities that are covered within the CP (and carried out in close cooperation with project teams and other IGES units) include the following.

- define and foster the target audience
- develop a systematic publication system for IGES as a whole covering such issues as online dissemination and 'on-demand' publishing
- cover meetings within and outside IGES and prepare press releases and summaries of proceedings and debates
- prepare and assist in editing press releases and information materials; prepare and edit publications and pamphlets
- write special feature articles on IGES and issues of concern to the target audience of IGES
- assist in liaising with press and media representatives, information officers from other organizations as well as with government departments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- provide information material to other organizations for inclusion in their media activities
- help arrange press conferences and briefings on IGES and environmental issues for groups such as universities, NGOs and media representatives
- cover major conferences, sessions and special events and activities

4. Implementation Plan

Presented below is the proposed **Implementation Plan** for the CP. The items, 'Persons responsible'

and 'Time required' are not exclusive and there will be substantial overlap for both aspects.

Activity	Details	Persons responsible	Time period
Define Target Groups	Target audience for IGES activities at IGES and project levels	Project Leaders, CP team, and other IGES admin staff	Initial intensive 2 months - *and ongoing throughout Phase II*
Ascertain different formats for communication	Depending on activities and the targets, appropriate information products and formats need to be developed	CP team with Project Leaders and their staff	Initial intensive 2 months - *and ongoing throughout Phase II*
Ascertain key strategies and approaches	Develop an overall strategy and approach for communications	CP team, senior management, Project Leaders,	2 months
Training and brain storming	This is focussed on Project Leaders and their staff, aiming at explaining the communications strategy, INFORMAT and other information management issues and providing the necessary tools for the purpose.	CP team, IT staff, CB team.	Initial intensive 6 months - *and ongoing throughout Phase II*
Coordination Mechanism Set up	Development of an overall coordination mechanism for IGES	Senior management, administrative staff and Project Leaders.	3 months
Evaluation Systems	Monitoring and evaluation need to be built into the CP strategy, particularly in processing feedback and ensuring that users have been delivered the info they seek.	Senior management, CB team, administrative staff and Project Leaders.	Initial intensive 3 months - *and ongoing throughout Phase II*

The ideas, plans and provisions in the CP will be implemented at three levels in IGES in order to foster broad participation among IGES staff.

1. The *first* level is at the **institutional level** - where a series of seminars and brain-storming sessions will be organized regularly for all IGES staff. Existing events will also used for this purpose, where feasible.

2. The *second* level is at the **Project Leaders level** - where the regular meetings of Project Leaders with the senior management officers will be used as an opportunity to also discuss the communication strategy, due to its cross-cutting nature. Individual project meetings, where all project staff meet, will also be used to discuss the communication strategy where possible.

3. The *third* level is at the **Communication Working Group level**. It is proposed to formulate a Comm. Working Group, which will consist of the CP team, one representative from each project, and administrative and technical staff members (including the IGES PR Team). This group will meet regularly to review CP activities, contribute information, ideas and other resources towards effective implementation of the communications plan of IGES.

It has to be noted that the issues and tasks listed here broadly fall under the heading of 'communications and dissemination'. Actual implementation of these tasks will be shared among project staff, administration, IT, PR and other associated units/staff members.

The CP will have to particularly work in close cohort with the IGES - Capacity Building program and the Environmental Education program, in developing its actions.

The CP team, project and administrative staff will also have to make a proactive effort in assisting and involving various institutional and individual partners of IGES in implementing the provisions under this strategy.

A tentative three-year implementation plan is listed below. This list will be added to and modified in consultation with IGES Management.

YEAR 1

- Target group identification in consultation with administrative staff and Project Leaders/staff
- Develop and update a general emailing list of address (using existing resources)
- Set up the following lists:
  - Email Alerts
  - Web Update
- Redevelop IGES website to be more thematic, and make more project-level info available
- Identify a focal point for each project and set up the Communications Working Group
- Collaborate with appropriate external organizations and institutions for info collation and dissemination, for example, CIESEN, IISD etc.
- Assist in preparing IGES publications
- Help project staff in their communications and information management activities if necessary
- Assist in public relations, event organization, report and publication activities
- Organize seminars and brain-storming meetings at the project and IGES levels.
- Other tasks as identified and designated by the IGES Management.

YEAR 2

- *Ongoing:* Update email address lists with new addresses
- *Ongoing:* Further develop and maintain the IGES website in consultation with project staff
- Set up following new lists (and continue to update and maintain lists started in Year 1):
  - IGES-PUB
  - RESEARCHER
  - Six lists specific to each project
- Develop and disseminate IGES publications online
- Identify and subscribe to external email lists for IGES information dissemination:
  - Environment News lists
  - Online newsletters and bulletins
- Assist in preparing IGES publications
- Help project staff in their communications and information management activities if necessary
- Assist in public relations, event organization, report and publication activities
- Organize seminars and brain-storming meetings at the project and IGES levels
- Other tasks as identified and designated by the IGES Management

YEAR 3

- *Ongoing:* Update email address lists with new addresses
- *Ongoing:* Further develop and maintain the IGES website in consultation with project staff
- Set up following new lists (and continue to update and maintain lists started in Year 1):
  - Embassy Environment Circle
  - University Professors
- Identify and subscribe to external email lists for IGES information dissemination:
  - Project specific lists and forums
- Assist in preparing IGES publications
- Help project staff in their communications and information management activities if necessary
- Assist in public relations, event organization, report and publication activities
- Organize seminars and brain-storming meetings at the project and IGES levels
- Other tasks as identified and designated by the IGES Management.

5. Approach to Communication at IGES

Communications at IGES focuses on three levels:

Strategic level

Task: to provide a resource to build the information literacy of IGES Staff so that they are more able to function as effective researchers in an era when everyone is continuously bombarded by data. The CP will help deal with data by developing and assisting the ability to plan a information resource-based project, think critically about data, research for necessary information and create and present a new synthesis to others using technology.

Responsible: CP Team members, Project Leaders and Staff, IGES Partners.

Institutional level

> Task: Establishment and strengthening information infrastructure to promote IGES and its activities/outputs by providing effective services, including information on how to present information, how to access it, develop a market-oriented way of information management. Efforts will also be made to incorporate issues of information management skills within IGES performance review actions. These issues will also be included new job descriptions, as well as modified existing ones.
> Responsible: CP Team members, Project Leaders and Staff, Administrative Staff

Project level

> Task: Development of knowledge transfer, and supporting project-level activities within an integrated CP approach by strengthening research and managerial skills, providing direct data and information services, developing and supporting public awareness and information delivery systems, etc.
> Responsible: CP Team members, Project Leaders and Staff

6. Components of the Communications Program

The CP has identified five components within which various activities will revolve. The most important component is to define and foster the target audience of IGES activities. Also intrinsically built into all five components is the issue of training of IGES staff in information management and knowledge transfer issues.

CP Component 1: Information

> *The primary product that will be handled by the CP is information itself - from raw data and research results to knowledge.* The information component will create a two-way portal of information for collation, packaging and dissemination - of IGES research activities to a worldwide audience on one hand, and of external activities and information products that would assist IGES activities. The CP informs and educates the target audience about IGES and its activities - through lectures and seminars, answering public queries, and issuing press kits and press releases.

CP Component 2: Defining and fostering the Target Audience

> *The CP will identify and foster the target audience for IGES information dissemination activities. It will initiate a series of dialogues and brainstorming exercises with the Project Leaders and staff members, as well as external entities for this purpose.* It will also conduct public opinion research about IGES where and when necessary. It will study and report on opinion trends about environmental issues as reflected in the mass media. It will use the trends to develop appropriate strategies for design and development of activities. It will assist in developing monitoring

procedures for and generate reports on the outputs and *outcomes* of IGES research activities.

CP Component 3: <u>Marketing</u>

The CP will assist in providing promotion and marketing material for audio-visual products, including its design and implementation both online and offline. It will also initiate and assist in the marketing and publicity of IGES information products, including events, publications etc. in close cooperation with the PR unit of IGES.

CP Component 4: <u>Special Themes</u>

The CP will initiate and implement information programs for a designated issue or theme (that cuts across several project areas of IGES). It will work with project staff to develop complete packages and press kits on the theme to be used in a variety of events and opportunities. It will also oversee the development and maintenance of a database on the theme in close cooperation with relevant project staff.

CP Component 5: <u>Dissemination and External Collaboration</u>

The CP will determine and assist in the development of dissemination priorities, requirements and specific needs of project research activities and IGES as a whole. It will ensure that all external queries received are answered accurately and appropriately, and initiates efforts aimed at countering negative public impressions about IGES or the issues/themes that it is working on. It will assist and arrange for the preparation and production information materials such as pamphlets, brochures, background papers on IGES. It will also provide advice and guidance on dissemination activities, as well as arrange special events for the general public.

The CP Team will also initiate collaborative activities with external entities (government agencies, universities and research institutions, NGOs and other organizations) in information exchange and dissemination in a mutually supportive manner. Particular attention will be paid to respond to the needs of Japanese and international audiences.

CP Component 6: <u>Public Relations</u>

The CP will closely work with Public Relations staff of IGES to assist in PR activities. The CP Team will help in the PR activities, and will also assist in using online media, including web and email, for PR purposes.

7. IGES Information Content

Information content of IGES' activities can be grouped into three areas:

a. Substantive information, and lessons learned

Purpose	To collect and synthesize lessons learned through project research activities and other processes
Target Groups	Researchers and research institutions in developing countries, NGOs and civil society groups,
Sources	IGES projects and partners institutions/networks, CB program
Who Collects the Information	Project staff and research partners, collaborating researchers and institutions, in close cooperation with the CP team
Dissemination Medium	Publications (reports, fact sheets, books); web documents; email messages
Products	Lessons learned publications, best practices, reports, publications, illustrative examples

b. Policy or normative information

Purpose	To identify, analyze and disseminate examples of good policy, enabling legislation and lessons and standards from research activities, and to link lessons of experience to the environmental policy debate and the global normative debate on good governance.
Target Groups	Policy developers/decision-makers, politicians, diplomats, government officials etc.
Sources	IGES project activities, and partners institutions/networks, CB program
Who Collects the Information	Project staff and research partners, collaborating researchers and institutions, in close cooperation with CP team
Dissemination Medium	Publications (reports, fact sheets, books); web documents; email messages
Products	E.g. policy papers, tools, thematic casebooks, contributions to the global discussions and conventions.

c. General or management information

Purpose	To prepare general overview information on IGES for public relations, maintain a "central" collection of IGES information - in the form of an Outreach office, and support monitoring on progress
Target groups	IGES Board, visitors and collaborators, general public, international aid agencies
Sources	IGES project teams, Administrative, PR and other units
Who collects the information	CP Team, in close cooperation with other units of IGES
Dissemination medium	Publications (reports, fact sheets, books); brochures, pamphlets, reports; web documents; email messages
Products	A central collection of information produced by IGES projects; information to be used for public relations purposes, such as media articles promoting IGES, e.g. brochures, reports, content for web site, articles, videos etc.

8.   Target Audience of the Communications Program

The message, mode of delivery, timing and target of IGES's dissemination activities changes at different points of an inverted pyramid, along which the different target audience are located.   From a global scale to a local scale, the audience includes UN agencies, international conventions, multi-lateral agreements (e.g., ESCAP, UNEP, etc.), Regional Networks and associations (e.g., APEC, ASEAN, APN, Eco-Asia, etc.), donor agencies and multilateral institutions (e.g., JICA, ADB, etc.), national and local governments (e.g., Ministry of the Environment, Kanagawa Pref., Kita Kyushu City), universities and research institutions, private sector- business and industry, NGOs/NPOs and community groups.

This scale of audience is critical in linking the audience to the type of information they would use, the format and mode of delivery of that information, and its frequency. The target audience also varies at the institutional level, and at individual project levels.

Each project will clearly have to build a constituency of information users on its own, and intrinsically incorporate it into the project planning and implementation processes. Separating project research and communications and dissemination actions may be shortsighted, and will not make optimal use of the knowledge generated. Focus, therefore, should shift from what IGES is doing to how IGES is thinking in order to attract and hold the attention of the target audience.

As mentioned earlier, identifying the target audience is an important aspect of establishing the institutional legitimacy of IGES to be working on the issues and themes that are covered in its projects. A middle path should be followed - where proactive generation of information by projects has to be met with information expectations of the end user. At the same time, a coherent institutional image of pedagogy and intellectual strength has to be built to foster and maintain a user constituency. These should ultimately extend to project planning.

9.   Guidelines for IGES Website

The following are some of the guidelines to enhance the information provided on the IGES website. These guidelines should be included, wherever applicable, in any information product - for example, electronic versions of printed material, factual or statistical information, databases, graphics, photos, maps, charts, tables, audio, video or film:

● **A focal point** (a person's name or title) within IGES should be provided on the document to allow user contact and feedback. The feedback will guide the author in focusing on the topics and issues of interest to users. The focal person should then respond to those messages in a timely manner.
● **The date of last revision**. If a document is routinely updated it may be appropriate and efficient

to provide update information, and include the source of the latest information. This can be done through a statement at the bottom or at the top of the document.

- Whether the information is an advance, unedited, or incomplete copy. Occasionally annexes to documents are difficult to create in HTML format for posting. In such cases a note stating that annexes are missing from the electronic version should be included. All summarized documents should include a note indicating where the full text version can be **obtained**. An indication of restricted or limited access, where applicable, should also be included.
- A **disclaimer** for unofficial documents.
- The **retention period** (Example: "Documents on this site will be retained for one year").
- A **copyright** statement should be displayed, to the extent possible, on each page of any print-outs generated by the user. Mentioning the URL each page is considered good practice in order to enable repeat visits and to reference the document (much like including journal information at the beginning of each article of that journal)
- A **link** to return to the top page of the IGES website at the bottom of all supporting documents.

Additions to existing documents or files on the IGES website (project information, events, announcements, vacancies, press releases, etc.) may be included at the bottom of a document. This will help in providing the reader a context for the information provided in the document.

Responsibility for documents posted on the IGES website lies with the respective author/project staff member, with a commitment to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information is made available. Technical assistance in this respect may be provided by the CP staff, including training in HTML files and information management.

10. Email Dissemination Plan for IGES Activities

The Email Dissemination Plan is part of the overall IGES Communications Strategy for the Second Phase. It outlines the use of email resources - both in-house and external - to present the institution's image and to disseminate information generated by IGES activities. This needs to happen at the right place, at the right time, at the right scale and to the right people.

The following points need to be kept in mind regarding the online dissemination strategy:

- An involved awareness on the part of all IGES staff members of the need to disseminate. Any and all activities of the projects will generate information that someone will find useful.
- Clearly understand and anticipate needs of the end-user, and then work backwards in order to design and develop activities that will meet those needs, including information required and the means to deliver it.
- Develop dissemination content actively - on a daily basis through a variety of means - in order to 'spread the message.'

- The message needs to be delivered to different users in different formats so as to ensure good knowledge transfer. Focus needs to be developed on how, when and why the user will use the information.

Presented below as a part of the Online Dissemination Strategy are two sets of email lists to be developed as indicated for various purposes. One set is to be developed internally, within IGES, and the other set is to take advantage of various lists that already exist on the Internet, both email and web resources.

It is structured so as to build a strong target audience and user constituency at the IGES level and at the level of individual projects. In the following two tables, (a) … refers to lists that cover IGES as a whole, (b) … refers to lists covering individual projects, and (a+b) … refers to lists that cover both levels. The lists indicated here will be developed and implemented on a step-by-step basis.

Name of list	Location of list	Maintenance responsibility		Target audience	User registration	Content of message	Frequency of dissemination	Additional remarks
		List	Content					
Iges-event … (a)	IGES Mail server	Comm.Staff	Conference Services	Interested persons in Japan	Self/auto registration, via the IGES website	Info on project events, IGES events and other collaborative events	As and when necessary	… may also need to list in other/external major events lists
Iges-pub …(a)	IGES Mail server	Comm.Staff	Publications division	Interested persons in Japan and others who have purchased publications previously	Self/auto, plus survey card	Info on new and upcoming publications, including reviews, extracts, contact addresses etc.	As and when necessary	… explore the possibility of listing IGES publications in Amazom.com, B&N etc.
Embassy … (a)	IGES Mail server	Comm.Staff	Comm.Staff and project staff	Ambassadors and embassy staff	Manually, after telephone confirmation	IGES events and other int'l aspects/focus of IGES, leadership and other eLearning opportunities	Once in two months	… attempt to contact and input into the Embassy Environment Circle meetings.
Project-specific lists (6 lists) …(b)	IGES Mail server	Individual project staff	Individual Project Leader and staff	Individual and specific researchers, organizations, NGOs who work on the same theme.	Self/auto, plus manually, by each project team	Individual projects' work-in-progress, outputs, new activities, new staff etc.	Once in two months.	… involved and active participation by each Project Leader/staff is critical
Researcher … (b)	IGES Mail server	Person-in-charge of researcher database	… plus Comm.Staff	All individuals registered in the database	Manually, by staff	Overall IGES info, research collaboration opportunities, useful online info and eLearning.	Once in two months.	… the database needs to be expanded, put online, with updating responsibility passed on to respective person.
E-alert … (a)	IGES Mail server	IT Team	Comm.Staff	Anyone and everyone	Self/auto, via the IGES website	Progress reports of IGES	Once in two months.	
Web-update … (a)	IGES Mail server	IT Team	Comm.Staff	Any interested person	Self/auto, via the IGES website	New items added to the IGES website	Monthly or once in two months.	… this will supplement the "What's New?" page
University Professor … (a+b)	IGES Mail server	IT Team	Comm.Staff	Individual professors and professional associations	Manual, after oral/email confirmation	Overall IGES info, research collaboration opportunities, useful online info and eLearning.	Monthly or once in two months.	… focus on how IGES will *help* the professor (and not just what it is doing).

Name of list	Location of list	Maintenance responsibility		Target audience	User registration	Content of message	Frequency of dissemination	Additional remarks
		List	Content					
Project theme lists … (b)	External	External	Project and Comm.Staff	Members of specific thematic lists	To be identified by project and Comm.Staff	IGES events and other int'l aspects/focus of IGES, leadership and other eLearning opportunities. Plus – overall IGES info, research collaboration opportunities, useful online info and eLearning.	Monthly or once in two months.	… focus on new and unique things the projects are doing. Also need to find opportunities to collaborate.
Environment News Lists … (a+b)	External	External	Project and Comm.Staff	Organizations that operate the news list and their members + subscribers	Comm.Staff	— *same as above* —	Monthly or once in two months.	… need to respect the lists' aims and objectives, and package the IGES message carefully to fit this.
Online Newsletters and Bulletins … (a+b)	External	External	Project and Comm.Staff		Comm.Staff	— *same as above* —	Monthly or once in two months.	— *same as above* —

11. Revisions/Changes to the Communications Program

The CP strategy as presented here will be constantly modified and changed depending on the changing needs of IGES itself. Besides adding to the existing knowledgebase of information management strategies, the CP team will produce a series of working papers on a wide variety of issues related to information and knowledge management. Where possible, these issues will also be intrinsically included into the projects themselves.