ICVA 2019-2021
ENABLING STRATEGY
COMMUNICATIONS
1. INTRODUCTION

The ICVA Communication Strategy defines specific communication objectives, target audiences, key messages and evaluation measures to support the achievement of our overall strategy. It covers both the communication and dissemination activities to our target audiences on our content pieces.

ICVA’s added value relies on its network nature and the content creation and dialogue it fosters. Hence ICVA communications aims at strengthening ICVA as a network, and supporting content sharing and discussion rather than brand visibility. This Communication Strategy aims at enabling increased access to information and creating the space to influence with collective voice and action.

Our Communication Strategy is one of ICVA’s enabling strategies, which include fundraising, human resources, and membership strategies, which all join together to support our overall strategy. It is framed around three pillars: efficiency, growth in influence and engagement which each guide specific objectives, as illustrated below:

ICVA strengthened its communication capacity in September 2018 to address some of the challenges the organization is facing and support the implementation of the 2019-2021 Communication strategy.

2. OUR COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

While ICVA is perceived as a recognized voice with a well-regarded pool of experts, some communication challenges remain. The Communication Strategy aims at addressing the following challenges:

The Secretariat remains small and ICVA needs to leverage the strength of its membership to counter-balance a limited staff capacity.

ICVA strives to ensure that policy is being informed by practice and that members feel informed and connected to the network despite geographical distance. Enhanced communications can help improve the means and methods of sharing resources among the network.

Although a number of staff can operate in other languages, the primary working language of the Secretariat is English, which is problematic for interaction with NGOs from specific regions.
3. OUR AUDIENCES

The Communication Strategy, which will be used by the ICVA Secretariat and the ICVA Board, aims to enable the Secretariat to reach specific audiences which are divided below in 1) primary active audience stakeholders, who know about ICVA and have the ability and willingness to support our network and influence; 2) primary non-active audience stakeholders, who know about ICVA and could have the ability to support our network and influence but do not do so; and 3) secondary audience stakeholders, who may or may not know about ICVA, and represent an opportunity for us to engage further. A detailed breakdown of our audience groups can be found at the end of the document.

4. WHAT ARE WE COMMUNICATING

The messages below aim at ensuring our communication efforts converge towards supporting shared messages. These will help guide our overall communication efforts. Underlying sets of messages will be developed as relevant around different ICVA thematic focus, and will help guide our various communication projects. These underlying and overarching messages aim at defining our value proposition, and support the Membership and Fundraising Strategy efforts\(^1\).

Overarching message: **We are a global NGO network for principled and effective humanitarian action**

- Voices of all our members are needed to shape policies according to humanitarian principles
- The diversity of our network gives us a unique opportunity to influence policy making at all levels, be it regional, national, local
- ICVA creates the space for NGOs to engage with relevant stakeholders and be heard on issues that matter
- Our long-standing relationships position us as a leader in global humanitarian policy
- Our expert led thematic content helps our members better navigate the humanitarian landscape

Note: These are suggested overarching messages. It is suggested to have a set of key messages for each thematic focus area around which we will plan specific communication activities.

\(^1\) Links to ER3 and ER4 from ICVA Membership Strategy
5. WHAT WILL OUR COMMUNICATION ACHIEVE?

This strategy focuses on strengthening ICVA as a global NGO network for principled and effective humanitarian action by **consolidating** the communication approaches around our ways of working. It also focuses on **outreach** to new and evolving audiences and strategic partners, stakeholders and supporters. Lastly, the strategy aims at **leveraging** our membership for more collaborative engagement and cross-fertilization.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** By 2021, comprehensive communication approaches will be consolidated around our ways of working

*Audience:*  
Primary active and non-active audiences: Members, Affiliates, Observers, Other NGO Networks, Non-NGO Partners, Governments; and  
Selected secondary audience: Potential Members/Non-Members, selected Regional Organizations

**Expected Results (ER) 2019-2021 for objective 1:**

⇒ **ER1a.** *Increased access to, promotion, and use of the content we produce and discussions we engage in on a day-to-day basis.* ICVA content will be bundled into thematic communication packages which will each follow a standard dissemination plan for increased promotion and relevant, timely outreach.

⇒ **ER1b.** *Increased visibility around selected key ICVA content pieces.* ICVA will consider its main events and publications as key communication opportunities (i.e. annual conference, learning labs, other TBC) and will develop specific communication project plans to ensure story promotion ahead, during, and after the actual event. A standard template communication project plan will serve as the basis for each project.

⇒ **ER1c.** *Integration of the communication with policy/advocacy planning to leverage opportunities to influence.* In selected instances, specific communication products and outreach will be developed to support advocacy efforts.

⇒ **ER1d.** *ICVA staff and members act as communicators.* Capacity of each staff will be enhanced for all to become active players of our communication to leverage our communications effort as a whole.

**Objective 2:** By 2021, we will have INCREASED our outreach towards relevant audience and other influencers

*Audience:*  
Primary active and non-active audience: Members, Affiliates, Observers, Other NGO Networks, Non-NGO Partners, Governments; and  
Secondary audience: Potential Members/Non-Members, Regional Organizations, Academic Institutions, Other Stakeholders.

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2 Links to ER10 from ICVA Fundraising Strategy  
3 See ER5 from ICVA Fundraising Strategy, ER1 to ER4 from ICVA Membership Strategy, and Objective 2 from Human Resources Strategy
Expected Results (ER) 2019-2021 for objective 2:

⇒ ER2a. *Increased level of influence.* ICVA will expand its outreach in order to raise awareness among audiences that are not familiar with us, or non-active members, with the aim to allow more voices to be heard.

⇒ ER2b. *Ensure relevant content is targeted to relevant audiences.* This will be achieved by aligning with regional strategies and tailoring relevant content or information for specific audiences.

⇒ ER2c. *Create more opportunities for NGOs to be heard.* Offer opportunities for speaking engagements to “untapped” members and create a two-way dialogue with some partners who may not often be heard.

Objective 3: By 2021, our relationships with members will be LEVERAGED for engagement⁴

**Audience:**
Primary audience active and non-active: Members, Affiliates, Observers, Other NGO Networks, Non-NGO Partners, Governments;

Expected Results (ER) 2019-2021 for objective 3:

⇒ ER3a. *Amplify our messages through members.* Increase our engagement with partners’ communication department to broaden our outreach and leverage members’ knowledge and capacity.

⇒ ER3b. *Build stronger sense of belonging among members.* Clarify ICVA’s expectations from members and ensure they know which role they can play.

6. IMPLEMENTATION and MEASURING SUCCESS

In line with the Communication Strategy, ICVA will develop a detailed annual communication workplan which will include the various communication channels, associated timeline and focal points. The workplan will be a living document, adapted as needed to ensure relevant implementation of the strategy.

The workplan will also include a specific set of metrics, monitored and reviewed every 6 months at a minimum, to allow communications efforts to be readjusted as needed.

7. BREAKDOWN OF OUR AUDIENCES

**Primary active and non-active audience** – high to medium level of knowledge of ICVA, ability to support and influence, but not all are actively engaged

⇒ **Members, Affiliates, Observers** - The staff of our members, affiliates, and observers, at the headquarters, regional and country levels.

⇒ **Other NGO Networks** - Membership networks, such as InterAction, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), Voice, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance

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⁴ See ER1 to ER4 from ICVA Membership Strategy
(ALNAP), as well as the vast number of regional and country networks, which engage and interact with our Regional Hubs and beyond.

⇒ **Non-NGO Partners** - ICVA’s policy and advocacy work brings it in touch with a number of strategically important partners, such as the Inter-Agency Committee (IASC), OCHA, UNHCR, other humanitarian UN agencies and the International Migration Organisation (IOM).

⇒ **Governments** - Governments, in their widest sense as donors, legislators, and affected states. This includes Permanent Missions based in Geneva and New York and the regional of the ICVA Regional Hub.

⇒ **Regional Organizations** - ICVA’s Regional approach brings the network into regular contact with key Regional bodies, for example the EU, ASEAN, AU, ADB, etc. Some may naturally fit in the secondary audience section (i.e. EU) \(^5\)

**Secondary audience** – medium to no level of knowledge of ICVA, opportunity to engage

⇒ **Potential Members/Non-Members** - NGOs who work and are involved in humanitarian operations.

⇒ **Regional Organizations** - ICVA’s Regional approach brings the network into regular contact with key Regional bodies, for example the EU, ASEAN, AU, ADB, etc. Some may naturally fit in the primary audience section (i.e. ASEAN, AU, ADB) \(^6\)

⇒ **Academic Institutions** – The ICVA Secretariat has identified influential departments of Universities and Academic Institutions that specialise in humanitarian study and continues to engage with academics providing insight and research into regional and global humanitarian challenges.

⇒ **Other Stakeholders** - Other actors relevant to humanitarian response. These include formal stakeholders, such as the military, and informal, such as solidarity, faith-based and Diaspora groups, and the private sector.

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\(^5\) Regional directions will provide further guidance on specific regional organizations to be targeted

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