

# **WCRP Communication and Outreach Strategy**

Draft May 2012

## **1. Introduction and Objectives**

This document outlines the communication strategy for the World Climate Research Programme and its core projects. The WCRP Open Science Conference urged WCRP to communicate more actively and effectively the need for “actionable” science to its network of affiliated scientists and projects, and to share the outcomes of WCRP coordinated activities with WCRP sponsors, stakeholders and public at large. WCRP is putting more emphasis on the need for climate research to meet the requirements of decision-makers, and effective and timely delivery of resulting information and knowledge to the users. In order to be at the forefront of climate research and also be responsive to the stakeholder needs for climate information, WCRP identified several major scientific challenges as major foci over the next decade. WCRP needs a dedicated communication and outreach strategy to effectively report progress and share the information and knowledge resulting from research on the grand science challenges. This strategy will help WCRP to:

- Be a reliable source of science-based climate information for the past, present and future state of Earth’s climate system
- Attract the best minds from the international scientific community to continue providing global context and integrative framework for regional climate research and information
- Increase public awareness about importance of climate and environment for a sustainable future
- Enhance the profile and the visibility of WCRP projects, activities and products
- Attract the next generation of Earth/climate scientists to WCRP and its Projects activities
- Support information exchange and dialogue between the WCRP Secretariat and the projects as well as assist WCRP and its projects in securing the necessary resources to fulfill their objectives

Strategic partnerships with the WCRP core projects and working group will be critical to ensuring that scientific knowledge is developed and shared; science-based dialogue is maintained among different sectors and interest groups; and climate research remains a cornerstone of decision makers’ agenda.

Effective outreach is needed especially for entraining early career scholars from across the world, including less-developed and developing countries, in order to facilitate growth of the diverse future workforce needed to meet the increasingly complex scientific challenges of the future. Moreover WCRP need to develop and tap into the regional expertise for meeting the climate service agenda. The WCRP communication and outreach strategy must be therefore integral part of the WCRP activities in order to achieve effectively its goals.

## **2. Strategic Approach**

This strategy will focus on a limited number of key topics and core products to achieve timely and effective delivery of intended information and to have the desired outcome within the available resources and time frame. For successful

implementation of this plan, it is important to have effective communication and flow of information among the WCRP secretariat, core Projects, Councils and Working Groups on one hand, and with the sister Global Environmental Change (GEC) programs and capacity development organizations (e.g. APN, START, etc.) on the other hand.

This communication plan will target scientists, the media and the general public, sponsors and decision makers, and students and early career scientists as audience and contributors. Active engagement of scientists is key to the success of WCRP research, communication and capacity development. Bridging the gap between scientists and decision-makers is a priority for WCRP to ensure effective and timely delivery of climate information. At the same time, the media shapes public opinion and has a multiplier effect towards successful communication with decision-makers and public. The secretariat can play a major role in engaging the WCRP sponsors and their respective networks in this communication strategy.

The basic language of all WCRP communication products will be English, however, WCRP should continue to communicate some of relevant and exciting results in other languages in compliance with sponsoring organizations language policy and arrangements.

### **3. Key Messages**

- WCRP leadership in research on climate prediction and predictability
- Excellence and objectivity in climate science
- Major focus on actionable regional climate information
- Observations, models and analysis are key to providing best science-based climate information
- A world wide network of climate experts required to meet the Earth System challenges

### **4. Key Audiences:**

1. **Scientists:** WCRP projects and their affiliate networks, and GEC sister programs and their respective scientific networks
2. **Media and the general public**
3. **Sponsors:** WCRP main sponsors, funding agencies
4. **Decision makers:** policymakers and private sector leaders
5. **Students and Early Career Scientists**
6. **Scientific assessments**
7. **Global and regional environmental conventions**

### **5. Key Products**

#### **5.1 Specific Actions for WCRP Network:**

- Make available exciting news and scientific highlights for broad dissemination
- Prepare and publish e-zine, e-bulletin, e-news etc...
- Maintain an up-to-date list of WCRP reports and publication, and provide web access to them
- Encourage the publication of the outcomes of workshops and conferences in open literature, i.e. minimize gray literature as much as possible

- Develop presentations that highlight latest discoveries and results from the WCRP network for presentation at major national and international conferences
- Maintain an up-to-date e-media presence

### **5.2 Specific Actions for Communication and Media Experts:**

- Develop a process for timely identification and dissemination of newsworthy items from WCRP network
- Partner with the WMO, IOC and ICSU communication Teams to develop and disseminate news worthy items through press releases/conferences
- Establish a social Media presence, e.g. Facebook, Twitter...
- Together with the IPOs develop simple products that people can use effectively (flyers, brochures etc...)
- Contribute to existing and emerging popular "climate change" blogs
- Initiate activities that highlight the WCRP achievements and progress on topics of interest to the public and communication media, e.g. sea-level change, monsoon, drought, ice sheets, ozone etc...
- Communicate science with accessible language for different audiences, geographical areas, e.g. French, Spanish, Chinese, etc.

### **5.3 Specific Actions for Sponsors and Stakeholders:**

- Identify key opportunities for promoting WCRP results with the public, NGOs, private sector and policy makers
- Develop informative brochures and achievement reports that highlight latest scientifically exciting and societally relevant results

### **5.4 Specific Actions for Students and Early Career Scientists:**

- Engage the network of students and early career scientists to identify opportunities, organize events and disseminate WCRP findings and results
- Assist WCRP in having a strong presence in the social networks
- Disseminate information on WCRP capacity development activities
- Participate in a WCRP mentors and mentees program for developing the next generation of Earth/climate system scientists
- Jobs portal

### **5.5 Specific Actions for Scientific Assessment:**

- Partner with the IPCC, UNEP, UNESCO, WMO communication teams to develop press releases on WCRP inputs to assessment reports
- Make available e-zine, e-bulletin, e-news etc...
- Maintain an up-to-date list of WCRP reports and publication, and provide web access
- Provide input to their communication products and support their outreach plan

### **5.6 Tools**

- Website
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Presentations/multimedia
- Publications

- WCRP Events
- Participation in related events
- Multimedia, i.e. print, TV, radio, etc.

### Target Audience and Communication Means:

Audience	Web	Newsletters	Publications	Media	Events
Scientists	- webpage - blog - Multimedia	- eZine - eNews - scientific highlights	- meetings reports - annual report - presentations & multimedia - flyer	- Journals articles - eMedia presence - Opinion editorials - Interviews	- Planning meetings - Workshops - Conferences (PuP, OSC) - Participation in events
Press & General Public	- webpage - blog - facebook - Multimedia	- eZine - eNews - scientific highlights	- Fact Sheets - annual report - presentations & multimedia - flyer	- Press kit - Press releases - opinion editorials - blog's guest - Interviews	- UN press conferences - Rio+20 - UNFCCC COPs - Local events
Sponsors & Decision-Makers	- webpage - blog	- eZine	- Fact Sheets - annual report - presentations & multimedia - flyer	- Opinion editorials - Interviews	- SBSTA - Rio+20 - WEF - Participation in related events
Students & ECS	- webpage - blog - facebook	- eZine - eNews - scientific highlights	- annual report - multimedia - flyer	- eMedia presence	- training events - networking opportunities
Scientific Assessments	- webpage - blog	- scientific highlights	- meetings reports - annual report - presentations & multimedia - Fact Sheets	- Journals articles - eMedia presence - Opinion editorials - Interviews	- Workshops - Conferences (PuP, OSC) - UNFCCC COPs - SBSTA

## 6. Key Activities

### 6.1 Website(s)

The website(s) and e-media are central to WCRP communication strategy. They are most effective means for up-to-date science and programme information and news,

publicizing scientific and technical events, publications and calls from the WCRP Secretariat, the Projects and their affiliate networks.

It is important to maintain the webpage(s) up-to-date by posting exciting news and scientific highlights for broad dissemination and trying to adopt the similar format and standards for communication among the entire WCRP network. Such coordination, especially with the core projects' webpages will improve navigation and access to available information, and help avoid redundancy of information on too many sites, which is quite often the reason for inconsistency among the sites and outdated information.

Several web-based tools can be introduced for improving the service to the communities and making the website more interactive:

- A blog with opinion editorials,
- A dedicated space for press/public,
- FAQ and "ask an expert"
- ECS and Students network dedicated space on the web site(s)
- Capacity development space including on-line mentors and mentees dialogue

## **6.2 Social Media**

WCRP's Facebook page potentially will attract next generation of scientists interested in climate change and variability and their impacts on society and environment. It can be used for disseminating news, calling for participation in events, as well as providing opinion editorials and photographic essays of major events.

## **6.3 Multimedia**

Videos, photos, interviews, presentations, products from the research community should be posted on the website and Facebook to enhance awareness for WCRP.

## **6.4 Newsletters**

The WCRP e-zine, the quarterly newsletter, reaches 2,200 contacts from the science community, press and public worldwide. The newsletter distribution list is also used to disseminate announcements, alerts, and breaking news.

## **6.5 Publications**

The meeting briefs (reports) summarize the outcomes and recommendations of the WCRP planning meetings. It is recommended that outputs of WCRP and affiliated workshops/conferences be published in the open literature such as EOS, BAMS, Science, Nature, etc. as much as possible.

Scientific fact sheets on specific topics (e.g. Sea-level and Monsoon) are best ways to update the rapidly emerging scientific understanding and knowledge about such topics. They can be posted on-line for users to get updates on the state-of-the-art climate science or be translated and printed for major international policy events such as the UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties, etc.

The WCRP *Accomplishment Report* is a reference source for highlighting the projects results and major scientific undertakings for the WCRP network, sponsors, and stakeholders. The focus should be primarily on results and accomplishments and not description of activities, and frequency of publication should be commensurate with scientific progress and availability of new and exciting results.

A *WCRP flyer* is used to document the functions and structure of the Programme and projects for new members of WCRP network, and for introduction to general public and interested groups.

## 6.6 Events

The WCRP Open Science Conference (OSC) held in Denver, USA, in October 2011, was a good opportunity to showcase WCRP, its projects and achievements during the preceding decade. The outstanding response and participation by more than 1900 scientists from more than 80 countries, and follow up request to have such a conference in the future are the best indicators of impact of such events and their benefit to the WCRP and affiliate networks. The OSC complemented the Planet under Pressure conference, co-organized by the four global change programmes (IHDP, IGBP, DIVERSITAS, WCRP) and ESSP, by bringing together global change experts from all disciplines and fostering science-policy dialogue beyond the traditional network affiliated with each and all of these programmes.

The following WCRP events will offer considerably higher visibility for the groups organizing them, and for WCRP as a whole, if they are prepared, coordinated, and conducted having in advance a communication and outreach plan:

CMIP5 Analysis Workshop

Extremes Workshops (i.e. Droughts, Monsoons, etc.)

International Reanalysis Conferences

International Earth System Modelling Conferences

CORDEX International and Regional Conferences

Special Sessions at International and National Scientific and technical Conferences

## 6.7 Media Outreach

Tools for reaching the media will be a press kit, interviews with the executive director/key opinion leaders, and press releases. Likewise, networking during conferences, via phone and e-mail will be a key component that needs a systematic approach with preparation, good timing, and active engagement of volunteers.

Blogging Journals as possible target:

Richard Black	BBC online	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/correspondents/richardblack/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/correspondents/richardblack/</a>
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Andy Revkin	NYT Dot Earth	<a href="http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/author/andrew-c-revkin/">http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/author/andrew-c-revkin/</a>
James Randerson	Guardian	<a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/profile/jamesranderson">http://www.guardian.co.uk/profile/jamesranderson</a>
Ananyo Bhattacharya	Nature	<a href="http://blogs.nature.com/news/author/Ananyo-Bhattacharya">http://blogs.nature.com/news/author/Ananyo-Bhattacharya</a>
	scienceInsider	<a href="http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/earth-science/">http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/earth-science/</a>
Joe Romm	Climate Progress	<a href="http://thinkprogress.org/romm/issue/">http://thinkprogress.org/romm/issue/</a>
	Real Climate	<a href="http://www.realclimate.org/">http://www.realclimate.org/</a>
	climate central	<a href="http://www.climatecentral.org/blogs">http://www.climatecentral.org/blogs</a>
Aleem Ahmed	Monthly Global Science, Pakistan	aleem.ahmed@gmail.com

## 7. Evaluation

Communication efforts need to be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure effectiveness and ability to modify tools and methods for the desired outcome and impacts. A summary report of the communication activities with an overall assessment of their effectiveness should be prepared and reported to the JSC biannually to allow sufficient data for meaningful assessment. For example, such a report may include the following information:

- Website statistics: monthly analysis of visits, PIs, time spent on page, most favorite categories etc.
- Publications: number of subscriptions, orders and downloads will be measured for each issue.
- Newsletters: the number of subscriptions/unsubscriptions and reads will be tracked.
- Events and conferences: number of events organized and conferences participated in.
- Media coverage: number and quality of press coverage.