



INTERNATIONAL COCOA ORGANIZATION  
ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DU CACAO  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО КАКАО  
ORGANIZACION INTERNACIONAL DEL CACAO

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**To:** All Members

**From:** The Executive Director

**Subject: Report on the ICCO communication strategy and visibility for the 2020/2021 cocoa year**

The Executive Director presents his compliments and has the honour to provide Members with the attached report on the ICCO communication strategy and visibility for the 2020/2021 cocoa year.

03 September 2021



**REPORT ON THE ICCO COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND VISIBILITY  
2020/2021 COCOA YEAR**

## REPORT ON THE ICCO COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND VISIBILITY 2020/2021 COCOA YEAR

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Note on the Draft 5-year Strategic Plan of Action (2019 – 2024) contained in document **EC/13/2**, states that “*ICCO and its Secretariat are completely absent from social media; the Secretariat should rapidly propose a **communication and media strategy** to the Council, to enhance the visibility of the Organization, design a new website, and prioritise the organization of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> editions of the **World Cocoa Conference** as flagship events.*”

2. A Communication and Media strategy was approved by the International Cocoa Council in September 2019 (document **EC/14/7**). A total of 9 activities were proposed to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Ensure that the ICCO Secretariat improves its communication with its Member countries as well as with the other cocoa stakeholders by improving its digital platforms of interaction and engaging more closely with its audiences.
- ii. Ensure that the information produced by the Organization is available in formats (including digital format) that are appropriate and attractive to its various audiences.
- iii. Ensure that the Organization has strong links with the media in its Member countries and communicates important news to its audiences easily through this network.

This document is a report on the implementation of the activities proposed by the Secretariat.

### II. STATE OF PLAY OF THE COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STRATEGY

#### **Activity 1: Redesigning the ICCO website**

3. A new website with a modernised interface has been developed, with a redesigned and more functional Members’ Corner area and the eagerly awaited e-commerce platform.

4. We have increased the efficiency of the Search Engine Optimization of the website to improve its position in Google's organic results. It should be noted that this work must be done continuously due to the recurrent technological changes of the search engine.

5. A mobile application has been developed, for both iOS and Android platforms (currently at the testing stage) to provide access to the most visited contents of the website: news, statistics; and the Members' Area.

6. Furthermore, given the importance of our statistical publications, the statistics section of the website has been redesigned to offer a more user-friendly access. Among others, a new functionality has been developed to consult the daily and monthly average cocoa prices, in order to facilitate their analysis and download. Market reports and documents generated by the Statistics section now have dedicated spaces in the statistics area of the website (monthly reviews of the market, statistics on grindings, production and supply & demand).

7. A new data portal with advanced statistics which will be accessible through personal user accounts is being developed.

8. As a complementary activity to the website renovation, we have also updated contents related to the ICCO published on Wikipedia, in accordance with the information published on our upgraded website.

**Activity 2: Liaise with institutions in Member countries on a daily basis and use digital tools in so far as possible and appropriate**

9. Several specific collaborations have been carried out with institutions in different Member countries, especially in Ghana (Ghana Cocoa Awards), Indonesia (CoEx Program), Ecuador (ProEcuador FORO Internacional de Cacao Ecuatoriano Sostenible) and Peru (Acuerdo Cacao Bosques y Diversidad, Cámara Peruana de Café y Cacao).

**Activity 3: Be active on social networks and interact with target audiences**

10. As a prior step to strengthening digital communication on social networks, the Organization's profiles have been standardized, aiming for greater homogeneity and consistency in our digital presence. The social profiles of the Organization are listed in the following table:

Social Network	Profile	Link
LinkedIn	International Cocoa Organization (ICCO)	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-cocoa-organization-icco">https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-cocoa-organization-icco</a>
Twitter	@IntlCocoaOrg	<a href="https://twitter.com/IntlCocoaOrg">https://twitter.com/IntlCocoaOrg</a>
Facebook	@IntlCocoaOrg	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/IntlCocoaOrg">https://www.facebook.com/IntlCocoaOrg</a>
Instagram	International Cocoa Org	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/intlcocoaorg/">https://www.instagram.com/intlcocoaorg/</a>
YouTube	International Cocoa Organization - ICCO Official	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP9c5dQRwPFuURWoc0QSkFw">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP9c5dQRwPFuURWoc0QSkFw</a>

11. The digital reputation of the Organization is being developed through the publication of its own content (daily cocoa prices, relevant information from statistical bulletins, monthly market reports, campaign on the health properties of cocoa, etc.) as well as sharing relevant content from third parties.

12. Some results obtained during the past year are shown in the following table:

Network	Followers	Growth rate over 1 year (%)
LinkedIn	4727	278% (from 1248)
Twitter	2917	38% (from 2110)
Instagram	258	N/A (from 0)

*Data as at 19 August 2021*

13. In terms of followers, LinkedIn and Instagram have grown significantly, with the latter being a network in which fewer publications were made (12) because it was not identified as a priority platform in the achievement of our communication objectives. However, it will be a network to take into account in the coming years given its organic growth.

14. Focusing on LinkedIn, the engagement rate<sup>1</sup> achieved with respect to other players in the sector is noteworthy. The following table shows some reference data extracted from this social network:

Network	Engagement rate
ICCO	6,18%
World Cocoa Foundation	3.10%
International Cocoa Initiative	3.13%
ECA	5.20%
Olam	2.40%
Barry Callebaut	4.38%
FCIA	9.50% (*)
Rainforest Alliance	3.63%
Fairtrade	3.52%

(\*) ICCO profile gained 2,325 new followers (71.71%) compared to the Fine Chocolate Industry Association.

15. Finally, it should be noted that these results have been obtained only through organic growth, i.e. no budget has been invested to generate followers or improve engagement rates, which in addition to saving costs for the Organization, is an indication of a greater commitment from our followers.

**Activity 4: Redesigning existing ICCO public documents in a user-friendly, more attractive, and lighter format**

16. The following documents have been updated and redesigned to have a simplified layout and a user-friendly format:

- i. Quarterly Bulletin of Cocoa Statistics
- ii. Monthly Review of the Market
- iii. Production of cocoa beans and data on grindings
- iv. Statistics on Supply and Demand
- v. Annual Report
- vi. ICCO PowerPoint template

17. We have also developed new marketing materials related to the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Cocoa Conference (WCC5) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the International Symposium on Cocoa Research (ISCR2022), including the development of new websites with new functionalities for the online submission of abstracts and the sale of tickets through our e-commerce platform. The website addresses for these events are shown in the following table:

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<sup>1</sup> Engagement rate across all organic and sponsored updates in 1 year. Calculated as: (Clicks + Likes + Comments + Shares + Follows) / Impressions. Data as of 06 August 2021, last 12 months.

Event	Website
ISCR2022	<a href="https://www.iscrsymposium.org/">https://www.iscrsymposium.org/</a>
WCC5	<a href="https://worldcocoaconference.org/">https://worldcocoaconference.org/</a>

#### **Activity 5: Produce new informative documents**

18. A presentation brochure was produced to provide information on the activities of the Organization to cocoa stakeholders and to attract potential new countries by explaining the benefits of membership. It is available in English, French, Russian and Spanish in both print and digital format.

19. In addition, some digital assets (images and videos) have been produced to be shared on social media, related to the different meetings and events of the Organization and various cocoa related topics.

#### **Activity 6: Build a network of journalists worldwide and communicate important news via this network**

20. ICCO currently has a database of more than 100 journalists at the international level, to whom the various press releases concerning the Organization are distributed on a regular basis:

- i. Monthly Cocoa Monthly Reports are distributed monthly.
- ii. The press release for the Quarterly Bulletin of Cocoa Statistics is sent out every three months, along with a brief review.
- iii. Other communications:
  - a. Results of the Expert Working Group on Stocks.
  - b. Extension of the International Cocoa Agreement, 2010 until 2024 and good progress in its amendment.
  - c. Updates on other events: ISCR2022 and WCC5.

21. During the past year, the Executive Director has been interviewed several times by international media outlets: BBC World Service Radio, RFI and *Deutsche Welle*.

#### **Activity 7: Organize press conferences for important ICCO events**

22. Due to the limitations caused by the ongoing pandemic and the change to virtual format of the Council meetings, the press conferences planned in document EC/14/7 have been modified. A press conference was nevertheless held at the ICCO headquarters on 18 December 2020, on the occasion of the renewal of the Consultative Board, with the presence of 29 Ivorian journalists and representatives of the main international agencies (Bloomberg, Reuters, RFI, TV5, etc.).

#### **Activity 8: Make use of digital advertising campaign to promote ICCO activities**

23. During the period under review, there was no advertising investment for the achievement of the communication objectives. However, given the postponement of two planned events (ISCR2022 and WCC5) due to the global health situation, the implementation of this activity will be conditional to budget availability and the evolution of the pandemic.

### **Activity 9: Draft a comprehensive communication strategy for the forthcoming years**

24. As specified in document EC/14/7, a new staff member was recruited to carry out the communication activities and develop the communication strategy for the forthcoming years. Both the communication strategy and plan were produced, approved by the Executive Director and presented to the staff, and provide the guidelines currently directing the Organization's communication.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

25. Since the approval of document EC/14/7, several communication activities have been carried out to enhance the Organization's visibility, especially in the digital ecosystem, and improve the perception of the Organization and its Member countries within the world cocoa sector. The results obtained can be considered encouraging, although based on the approved communication strategy, greater collaboration between the Secretariat and Member countries is necessary to amplify the audience for the contents generated by Members.

26. During the 2021/22 cocoa year, communication activities as specified in document EC/14/7 will be specifically oriented towards:

- i.** Promoting transparency and market information in the world cocoa economy:
  - a. Produce cocoa country profiles to be uploaded on the website.
- ii.** Striving towards obtaining fair prices and equitable returns to producers and affordable prices to consumers:
  - a. Research and share studies done by the Secretariat and other sources related to processing and transformation of cocoa products.
- iii.** Promoting and encouraging the consumption of chocolate and cocoa-based high-quality products:
  - a. Share information on cocoa products and their health attributes by organizing physical or digital campaigns.
  - b. Share stories from different world regions on the various uses of cocoa in chocolate and as ingredient - on the website or social media.
  - c. Communicate with Member countries having regulations susceptible to limit cocoa consumption.
  - d. Inventory existing niche markets (organic, bean-to-bar, etc.) worldwide and disseminate their advantages and difficulties via the ICCO website and social media.
- iv.** Promoting innovation with financial tools and digital solutions:
  - a. Disseminate user-friendly, simplified information from the studies to be commissioned and other financial tools and initiatives via the website and social media.

- v.** Contributing to the sustainability of the world cocoa economy:
  - a. Organize (virtual) tailored workshops to disseminate information from events (ISCR & WCC) in relation to this topic.
  - b. Disseminate ICCO Secretariat and other relevant stakeholders' studies, concept notes on this topic.
  
- vi.** Promoting international cooperation in the world cocoa economy:
  - a. Expand the membership of the Organization (leaflets, events...): Colombia, Mexico, Vietnam, Uganda, Tanzania, Turkey, USA, Japan.
  - b. Improve the communication networks between Members and the Secretariat, giving visibility to their actions.
  
- vii.** Enhancing the transparency and visibility of the work of the Secretariat:
  - a. Use ICCO meetings to organize side events such as launches/press conferences for ICCO events alongside meetings of the Consultative Board:
    - WCC5/ICC
    - ISCR in Montpellier, France – December 2022
  - b. Implement an internal communication strategy for the staff of the Secretariat.
  
- viii.** Improving the interaction between the International Cocoa Council and the Consultative Board:
  - a. Organize webinars, virtual workshops and platforms of discussion between various stakeholders.