FICSA

Federation of International
Civil Servants' Associations

FICSA Communication Strategy

Overview of FICSA Communication Strategy

FICSA

Contents

1. OVERVIEW

Founded in Paris in 1952, the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) is a federated group of 30 staff associations/unions from organizations belonging to the United Nations common system.

FICSA Functional Review highlighted the importance of formulating a FICSA Communication Strategy, with clear strategic objectives, including how the message will be conveyed and through which means.

A suitable communication platform or tool should also be identified, depending on the needs of the audience, and whether the message needs to be delivered on a timely manner or not.

> *Recommendation 11 of FICSA Functional Review*
> *It is recommended that FICSA develop a communication strategy designed to help FICSA communicate effectively and meet core organizational objectives, and that the Communication Strategy be part of the Information Officer's portfolio*

1.1 FICSA's Mission Statement:

FICSA fosters the development of the international civil service in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and the constitutions of the specialized agencies. The Federation:

- Promotes amongst its Member staff associations/unions the exchange of information and views on all questions of common interest and coordinate their activities
- Represents all Full Members in negotiations with bodies of the United Nations common system
- Defends staff rights
- Ensures that equitable conditions of service for all common system staff are maintained at a level which will ensure the recruitment and retention of the most qualified people
- Contributes to building a positive image of the international civil service and defends its independence

1.2 FICSA Activities

FICSA's annual and ongoing programmes of work include the following activities:

- Representing the interests of international civil servants in interagency bodies and legislative organs of the common system
- Coordinating activities at the local level and exchanging information on conditions of service
- Informing all staff on issues affecting their conditions of service
- Organizing training seminars, workshops and working groups on specific aspects of conditions of service
- Advising member associations/unions on staff-management relations
- Producing position papers on the technical aspects of conditions of service
- Coordinating industrial action
- Supporting the use of the appeal process (internal appeals and Administrative Tribunals) in cases of non-observance of terms of appointment
- Formulating strategies to prevent violations of staff rights
- Participating in cost-of-living surveys that determine the post adjustment indices
- Providing technical assistance to member associations / unions in preparation for local salary surveys
- Advocating staff positions with representatives of Member States
- Providing guidelines on how staff associations should deal with organizational reform
- Assisting member associations / unions in capacity building and knowledge transfer

2. FICSA COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2.1   Strategic Objectives

The communication strategy is a tool that enables the fulfilment of FICSA's Strategic Objectives, as stated in its Mission Statement.

This communications strategy should be fit for purpose in its **general objectives**:
- help FICSA achieve its overall Mission and Vision objectives
- engage effectively with stakeholders
- demonstrate the success of FICSA's work
- ensure people understand what FICSA does
- change behavior and perceptions where necessary.

Based on FICSA's Mission Statement, the following **strategic objectives** are formulated:

1. It must clearly outline how the FICSA Secretariat can relay information and facilitate communication between FICSA Members, to facilitate exchange of information and views of common interests;
2. It must demonstrate the success of FICSA's work, in defending staff rights and representing its members;
3. It should relay any new information and development on best practices to members, that may impact conditions of service in the international civil service to FICSA members as well as external stakeholders if necessary;
4. It must ensure the work of FICSA is transparent and visible to the general public, therefore increasing the public interest in collaborating with FICSA and joining FICSA;
5. It must be accurate and timely.

2.2   Key Communication Types and Audience Matrix

The matrix below identifies the FICSA Internal and External Audience as well as the type of communications that are generally suitable for each audience, depending on the content.

A suitable FICSA Communication Tool/Platform will be utilized for each audience and content type below.

In addition to the below, there is another group that needs to communicate not only to each other but also with the Secretariat, ExCom and the Council – they are the Standing Committees on specific topics. They play important roles in assisting the Council in formulating policy and practice. Therefore, they are also a key user/audience of the communication practices within the Federation.

	Audience \ Type	Success Stories	Financial Account Status	Research and Publications	Developments in Common System	Developments in FICSA Member Organization(s)	Global Developments
INTERNAL	FICSA Secretariat	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	FICSA ExCom and Regional Representatives	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	FICSA Standing Committees Chairs and Vice-Chairs	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	FICSA Members	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
EXTERNAL	FICSA Partners (Other Staff Federations)	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔
	Executive Heads / CEB	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔
	ICSC	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Governing Bodies / UNGA	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔
	Public	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔

2.3   Key Communication Channels

Based on the audience and key messages, the following channels are available for use:

		Key Communication Messages	Key Communication Channels
INTERNAL	FICSA Secretariat	- Changes/updates on FICSA operations	- Internal staff email and UNOG or UN Secretary General bulletins, if relevant to FICSA staff in Geneva. - Staff meetings - FICSA Magazine and publications - FICSA Communications
	FICSA ExCom and Regional Representatives	- Changes/updates on FICSA Secretariat services - Changes in Policies, Rules, Procedures, Developments in the UN Common System - Upcoming meetings in the UN Common System (for action – to represent FICSA) - Upcoming Workshops	- Email to ExCom - ExCom Meetings - FICSA Communications, Circulars, News, Tweets and other Posts - FICSA Magazine and publications - Annual Executive Committee Report
	FICSA Members, FICSA Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Standing Committees	- Changes/updates on FICSA Secretariat services - Changes in Policies, Rules, Procedures, Developments in the UN Common System/UN Reform - Upcoming meetings in the UN Common System (for information and to contribute to FICSA position) - Upcoming Workshops	- FICSA Communications and Email to Members - FICSA Circulars and Emails to Members - FICSA News on Website - FICSA Posts on Website (pages / content) - FICSA Surveys - FICSA Polls (Mailing Vote, etc.) - FICSA Magazine and publications - Annual Executive Committee Report
EXTERNAL	FICSA Partners (Other Staff Federations)	- Items of common interests – joint statements, representation, research, media campaign, petition	- FICSA Email - FICSA Memo - FICSA Magazine and publications

		Upcoming Workshops	
	Executive Heads / CEB, ICSC, Governing Bodies / UNGA	- New appointments - Raising concern with regards to items impacting International Civil Service - Participation in Inter-Agency Meetings - Responses to Inter-Agency Memo	- FICSA Memo - FICSA Magazine and publications
	Public	- All information related to the work of FISCA, except those marked as confidential or restricted.	- FICSA Website - FICSA Magazine and publications

3. COMMUNICATION WORKPLAN

3.1   Roles and Responsibilities

The primary role in developing and implementing this communication strategy is the Information Officer. The FICSA Secretariat plays an active role in implementation, drafting a FICSA communication, sending out the communication, as well as archiving it on the website.

All FICSA Secretariat staff reports to the FICSA General Secretary who will provide oversight and guidance on executing the strategy.

FICSA has grouped its users/audiences mentioned above and where they belong, either to (a) internal or (b) external communication audiences. This will assist FICSA to deliver its messages to a targeted audience – the one which needs to know, or which could act upon the message at the right time.

3.2   FICSA Magazine

FICSA Magazine is a strategic tool to communicate the work of FICSA to a broader audience. The frequency is currently set to biannual issues. At the moment, FICSA Magazine is published as a hardcopy and distributed to all FICSA Members, as well as distributed during FICSA Council. It is also made available online on the FICSA Website and members are informed about its issuance. In the future, this may be made fully online as an e-Magazine.

FICSA Magazine has its own set of draft processes, including board of editors as well as guidelines, that will be annexed to this communication strategy once finalized.

3.2.1 Frequency

Biannual

3.2.2 Resources

The main role in FICSA Magazine as lead editors is by the FICSA Information Officer under the supervision of the General Secretary. Articles are solicited and collected from FICSA Executive Committee Members, FICSA Regional Representatives, FICSA Chairs and Vice-chairs of Standing Committees, and FICSA Members at large.

Financial resources required for the publication is negligible and is normally covered through advertisement revenue.

3.2.3 Long-term plans

- Have a group of 3-5 editors to plan issues, collect, write and edit articles
- Develop issues based on priority themes
- Printing should be phased out or a minimum of issues printed to satisfy announcers.
- Phase out the current hardcopy publisher
- New announcers should be identified, or contacts made with current announcers as a source of income
- Not more than 15% of announcements – using the FICSA Magazine as a source of income
  Publish slimmer and more frequent updates (2 editions per year, maximum 3)

3.3   FICSA Communication and Circulars

FICSA Communication and Circulars are periodically sent out by the FICSA Secretariat based on current events, i.e. after an inter-agency meeting to report on the meeting proceedings and FICSA's position

and contribution, as well as after any major developments or events of interest to the UN Common System.

Communications contain information of a general nature.

Circulars contain reports of high-level meetings or meetings in the regions.

These are kept on the FICSA Website under Media Center -> FICSA Communications and Media Center -> FICSA Circulars.

When a FICSA Circular or Communication is published, at the same time, an email is sent to all members with a PDF copy of the circular, and link to the website. Members have opportunities to proivde feedback, comments or concerns with regards to the topic, so that the communication is two-way.

3.3.1 Frequency

Depending on Inter-agency meeting schedule or events of interest.

3.3.2 Resources

This is internally produced by the Information Officer, with support by the rest of the Secretariat, based on Mission Reports by the FISCA Executive Committee Members. It is reviewed and approved by the FICSA General Secretary.

3.4 FICSA Website

FICSA Website is a strategic tool for FICSA, that was launched in December 2019. It provides a stage for FICSA to display its mission, goals, news as well as showcase our Federation's accomplishments and outreach materials. The user-friendly interface aims at increasing traffic onto FICSA's website and encourage staff associations/unions to join our Federation.
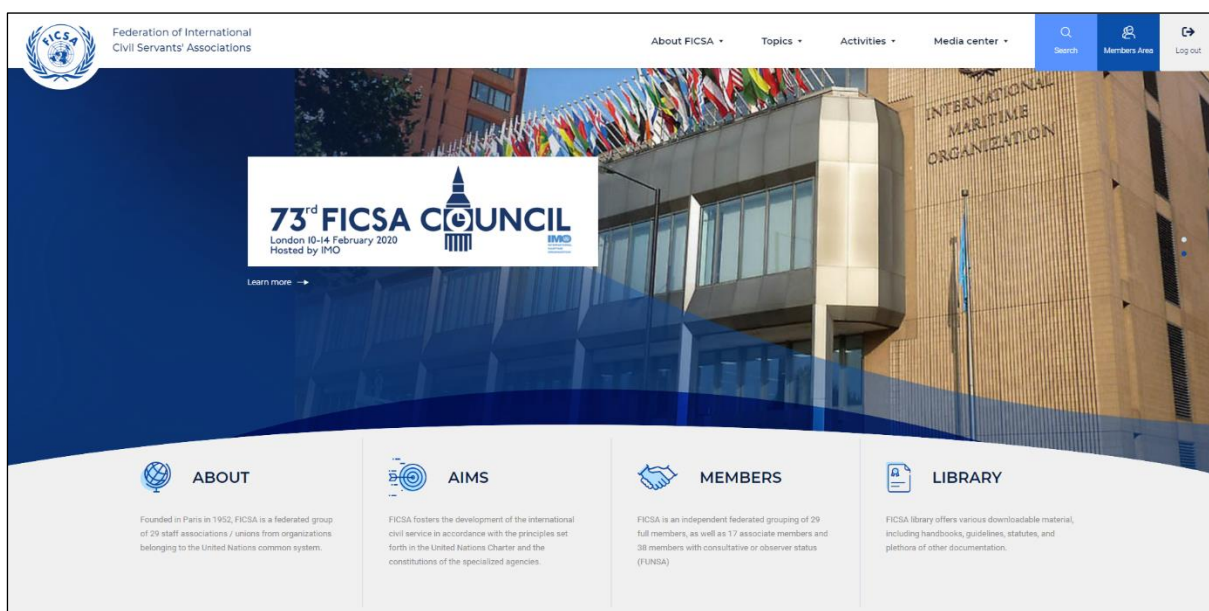
The main features include:

- Information about FICSA itself – how FICSA functions, its structure, history, achievements, contact information, statutory information such as the statutes.
- Information about how to join and become a member of FICSA
- Information by Topics and Standing Committee

- Information on FICSA activities including FICSA Council
- FICSA Publications under Media Center, including Communication, Circulars, News and other publications
- Easy access to the FICSA library, including digital document archive with content searching and indexing
- Automated workshop registration.

3.4.1 Frequency

The pages are updated or added based on new content, whereas the Communications and Circulars are updated on issuance.

3.4.2 Resources

This is internally managed by the Information Officer, with support by the Secretariat, based on information by the FISCA Executive Committee and FICSA members. It is reviewed and approved by the FICSA General Secretary.

3.5 Other Communication Tools

FICSA will use social media (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook), collaborative tools (SharePoint, Teams and the FICSA website to assist in the communication efforts and bring the users/audiences together. The key to fostering a successful community on social media is by being active. Regularly post news and updates and open the group for the members to communicate. It's a great way for the users to feel as though they are a part of something important and have a sense of community. Also, sending tweets posing questions regarding labor rights and challenges in the workforce can start a conversation and attract more engagement. Short quotations from the FICSA magazine can be made into a short graphic along with the link to the publication in order to enhance the message on social media as well as number of readers for the magazine. Success stories each member can also be shared to continue the conversation with the member as well as to educate the general public of the achievements FICSA is striving for.

Other tools FICSA will use in improving its communications are "subject clipping" and "press releases". The "subject clipping" provides audiences with copies of information, which is of specific interest to them and subject to changing demand; what they provide may include documentation, content, analysis, or editorial opinion, specific or general.

FICSA has also set up an electronic bulletin board by subject, geographical region, publication, or current developments for this purpose as part of its Website.

The primary function of a "press release" is to quickly publicize information that may have a significant impact or be of particular interest to a large and unrelated group of people. It is a highly efficient and cost-effective tool to highlight FICSA activities, appointments, achievements or awards received.

4. EVALUATION

FICSA Communication Strategy will be evaluated for effectiveness on a biennial basis at Council after its approval. It is considered a success if the information sent by FICSA is received by its target audience, who are able to use or consume the information, as well as forward it to relevant parties (i.e. members of the Staff Association/Union).

To ensure this is done effectively, FICSA will send out short surveys to its members to evaluate the structure, content, frequency and effectiveness of its communication.

4.1   FICSA Website

FICSA Website was recently launched in December, therefore little statistical data are available. Ongoing evaluation will be performed to identify the website traffic, as well as pages that receive the most traffic. This will identify which content is most helpful to its visitors, and which content may need revision or updating to make it more appealing. Most of the information will be shifted to the public space to ensure easier access. Only confidential member information will remain under the Member Section which requires a password. This password is communicated to members at any point when new Committees are in place.

4.2   FICSA Communications and Circulars, and general emails.

The FICSA Communication and Circular are sent through email to all members, and the email contains a paragraph soliciting feedback and evaluation. Any comments or feedback sent by members regarding its communication will be recorded in FICSA SharePoint and used for continuous improvement.

5. ANNEXES

5.1   Methodology

FICSA's Communication Strategy was formulated taking into account two major publication and guideline in this area, which are the Steyn Model for developing communication strategy and National Council for Voluntary Organizations' Knowledge Bank for Developing a Communications Strategy and was further adapted to FICSA's needs.

Steyn Model	NCVO Model
Analyze Internal Environment	**Statement of Purpose**
Identify Stakeholders (internal and external)	**Analyze Internal and External Environment**
Identify Key Strategic Issues	• SWOT, PESTLE
• Implication for stakeholder	• Competitor
• What need to be communicated	**Identify FICSA's Communication Objectives**
• Comm Goals?	• How Comm can help FICSA achieve its vision, aims and objectives
Comm Policy	**Identify Stakeholders (Internal and External)**
• Who should communicate What to Whom?	**Identify Topics and Messages**
Draft and Approval process	• Matrix of What Communication should go to which Audience
Comm Media	• Who? What they need to know? What message? How?
• Most suitable channel?	**Comm Media**
• Website / Email / Meeting / Social Media / Combination	• Most suitable channel?
Final Output : Strategic Communication Plan	• Website / Email / Meeting / Social Media / Combination
• How the Comm Strategy will be implemented	**Work plan (schedule / timescales / deliverables)**
	Evaluation and Improvement

5.2   References:

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations. (2019, March 12). Developing a Communications Strategy. Retrieved February 3, 2020, from
https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/campaigns/communications/communications-strategy

Steyn, Benita. (2000). Steyn: Model for developing corporate communication strategy. Communicare. 19.