



# **International Cotton Advisory Committee**

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**Attachment 8a to SC 556  
24 September 2018**

## **Communication Strategy 556<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**

**27 September 2018  
The ICAC Secretariat's Office  
1629 K Street, NW, Suite 702, Washington DC 20006**



**Attachment 8a to SC 556  
24 September 2018**

**For Discussion / Approval**

**Communication Strategy**

The Standing Committee SC 556

**Purpose**

To propose to the members of the Standing Committee a communication strategy for 2018/19.

**Action Required**

Discussion / Approval

# 2018/19 ICAC Communications Strategy

Mike McCue  
Communications Director  
International Cotton Advisory Committee



INTERNATIONAL COTTON  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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# Communications Strategy

A multi-pronged, multimedia communications program that raises public, private and governmental awareness of the ICAC's data, publications, conferences and research capabilities.

The plan comprises:

- Traditional media such as press releases, ICAC reports and industry publications
- Social media, primarily Twitter and LinkedIn (Is there value in other platforms? Instagram, Facebook, etc.?)
- In-person networking at events and conferences, both ICAC's and those from other organisations like BCI, WTO, ICA, ITMF, etc.



# Why this approach?

**To have ICAC recognised as the go-to source of unbiased, impartial information on the cotton industry.** *(Social media; promotion of statistics, data and technical information; speaking engagements for the ED and members of the Secretariat; new and improved website)*

**To battle myths, lies and misunderstandings about cotton and its social, environmental and economic impacts.** *(#TruthAboutCotton campaign on Twitter & LinkedIn; speaking engagements)*

**To assist governments in formulating policy that benefits the hundreds of millions of people around the world who depend on cotton for their livelihood.** *(Direct engagement with Standing/Steering Committees; more interaction with members to identify their problems; Plenary Meetings; activities of the Cotton Team)*

**To expand membership, which will increase the budget and provide ICAC with additional resources.** *(Creation of a recruiting kit highlighting the benefits of ICAC membership; written and video testimonials from current members gathered at the Plenary Meeting in December)*

**To increase awareness of ICAC's capabilities, including its 2,000-member research network.** *(Internal communications efforts as well as publishing articles in industry media, such as CATGO annual report, trade publications like Cotton Grower, etc.)*



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# Twitter

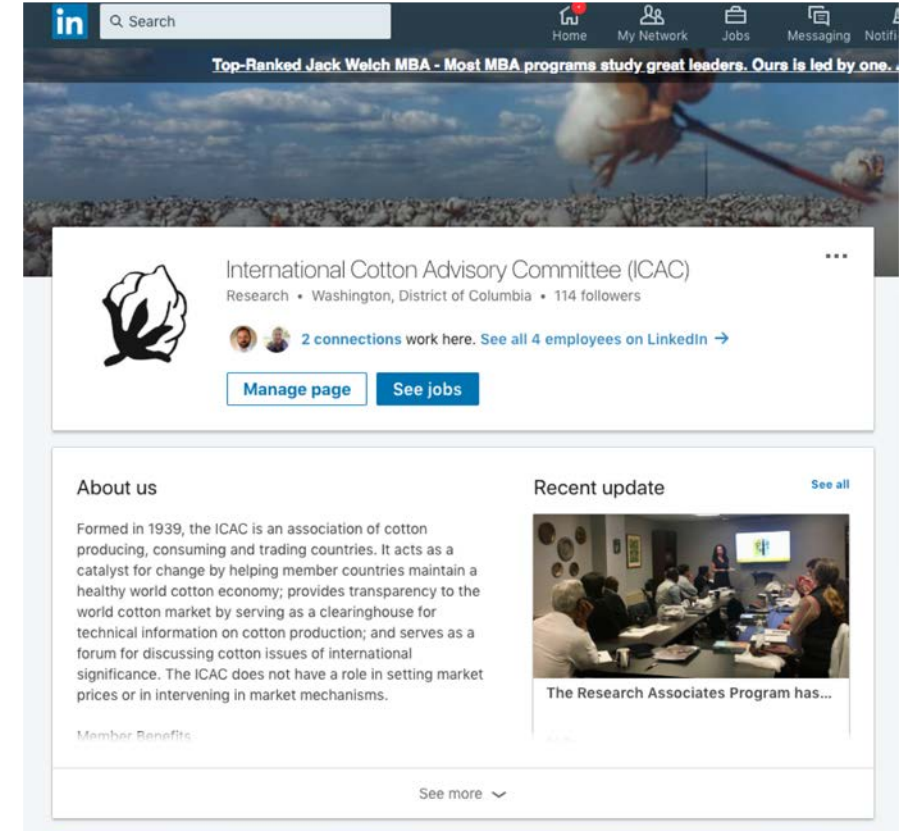
- Goal: To reach 300 followers by the start of the Plenary Meeting (216 followers on 17 September)
- KPIs
  - Target of 2-3 tweets per week
  - At least one #TruthAboutCotton post per week (high engagement)
  - Mix in ED & Secretariat activities to demonstrate activity
- Expected Outcomes: Enhanced visibility, a more energised audience, greater engagement and opportunities with partners & private sector
- Costs:
  - Occasional licenses for art/graphics



[www.icac.org](http://www.icac.org)

# LinkedIn

- Goal: Increase reach and exposure among targeted audience segments; reach 150+ followers by PM in Dec. (114 on 17 September)
- KPIs
  - Minimum of 2-3 posts per week
  - Create Showcase pages for major initiatives: #TruthAboutCotton, Keshav's H2O research, CSITC, etc.
- Expected Outcomes: Greater exposure for our mission-critical projects, especially among a highly targeted audience
- Costs: N/A
  - Exception: LinkedIn advertising to specific groups (cotton traders, cotton yarn buyers, etc.)
    - There is some expense, but it is minimal, easy to control, and can be very cost-effective



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# Press Releases

- Goal: Cultivate a go-to group of cotton- and ag-related reporters. Regular interaction with media = regular coverage. Relationships matter.
  - KPIs
    - Use selectively – only for significant announcements and developments. For smaller initiatives, utilise social media.
    - Press release sent for:
      - Cotton This Month (but not Cotton This Week)
      - ICAC Recorder
      - Review
      - All publications that appear quarterly or less frequently
      - Daily during Plenary Meeting
    - Each press release should feature an Executive Summary that presents the high points immediately under the headline. The point is to make it easy for reporters and editors to get the gist without having to read everything. The easier we make their lives, the more they will come to rely on us.
    - What metrics?
  - Expected Outcomes:
    - Recognition as the top source of cotton-related information
    - More coverage in media of all types
- Costs: N/A (Unless sent out via wire service – worth considering)



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INTERNATIONAL COTTON  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1629 K Street NW, Suite 702,  
Washington, DC 20006, USA

## ICAC's 77<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting: Announcements on Hotels, Tours and Sponsorships

For Immediate Release

Date Posted: 10 [August](#), 2018

### Executive Summary

*The ICAC's 77<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting:*

- *Will be held in Abidjan, capital of Côte d'Ivoire, 2-6 [December](#), 2018, at the Sofitel Abidjan Hotel Ivoire*
- *Has guaranteed availability and discounted rates at nearby hotels until 15 October*
- *Offers three technical tours after the Plenary is adjourned*
- *Has finalised a variety of sponsorship packages*
- *Offers online attendee registration at <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/icac.org>*

### ICAC's 77<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting: Announcements on Hotels, Tours and Sponsorships

The International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) has made several important announcements regarding its 77<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting, which is scheduled for 2-6 [December](#), 2018, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire:

**Hotel room charges and availability.** ICAC and the Organising Committee in Abidjan have reserved blocks of rooms at the conference hotel, the Sofitel Abidjan Hotel Ivoire, as well as several others nearby. However, the reserved rooms and discounted rates are only guaranteed until 15 [October](#), 2018. After that time, hotels are free to make those rooms available to the public and charge their normal rates. For more information about accommodations, please click [here](#).



# Member Outreach and Recruitment

- Goals:
  - Retain members
    - Communicate value whenever possible
    - Personal visits from Kai, at least once/year
    - Country profiles?
  - Recover old members and recruit new ones
    - Why did those who left do so?
      - Are those reasons beyond our control? (eg, no \$\$)
    - What can we do for non-members?
      - Determine their country-specific problems so we can help
  - Establish contact with all cotton-producing countries
  - Create Associate Member program
    - Open to other international cotton associations (ICA, ITMF, etc.)
    - Open to national associations (NCC, ANEA, Cotton Australia, etc.)
  - CRUCIAL: Develop value proposition for cotton consumers, not just producers.
    - Possibly can rely on ITMF for help here



# Member Outreach and Recruitment (cont.)

- KPIs
  - Create recruitment package
    - What do other ICBs do?
    - Create dedicated materials that are specifically designed to communicate value.
      - Printed materials (traditional marketing)
      - Testimonials from current members (print, video)
  - Retain current members, add new ones
- Expected Outcomes:
  - Increased revenue/resources
  - The more the merrier
- Costs:
  - Printing
  - Videographer at Plenary?



# www.icac.org

- Goal: Dramatically improved website, from appearance through functionality
- KPIs
  - Increased traffic
  - Greater subscription rates for all publications (paid and free)
  - Greater engagement and interaction (Learning Corner, Innovation Forum, etc.)
  - All of the above can be measured and monitored via Google Analytics
- Expected Outcomes: Greater visitor traffic, information that's easy to find and access, and the development of an "ICAC community"
- Costs:
  - \$6,500 for development with Mevatron
  - Occasional licenses for art/graphics



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# Plenary Meetings

- Goals:
  - To help governments formulate policy that promotes a healthy world cotton economy. (External)
  - To bring together researchers, government officials, and thought leaders from the private sector to address cotton's most pressing challenges. (External)
  - To increase attendance on an annual basis, generating additional revenue (Internal)
  - To use the gathering as a launching point for other marketing & communications efforts, such as written and video testimonials, face-to-face meetings with the Steering Committee. (Internal)
- KPIs
  - Increased attendance
  - Development of new marketing & communications vehicles
  - Attendee satisfaction surveys
  - Policies enacted?
- Expected Outcomes: Increased revenue, greater visibility, secure our place as a must-attend meeting in a crowded cotton calendar of events
- Costs: N/A



# Reporters and publications

## Goals:

- To increase coverage of ICAC – researchers, publications, etc.
- Secure ICAC's role as the top source of cotton data and information
- Establish Secretariat members as global thought leaders
- KPIs
  - Article placements
  - An increase in ICAC citations and references
  - Placement of previously written stories (Review, Recorder, CTM) to minimise the workload on an already-strained Secretariat
- Expected Outcomes: Greater visibility, enhanced credibility, and recognition as thought leaders among editors and reporters at cotton and textile-focused media outlets
- Costs: N/A





# Internal Communications

- Goals:
  - Communicate value
  - Encourage greater participation with member governments
  - Justify the budget (and the need to make it higher)
- KPIs:
  - Timely delivery of monthly newsletter
  - All Secretariat activities are reported
  - Increase in participation and feedback from members (eg, more than 9 delegates attend the Strategic Away Day)
  - Increase open % (analytics)
- Expected Outcomes: High member retention rates, enhanced ability to leverage existing membership base to recruit new ones, greater visibility among influential senior government officials (the ones who pay assessments)
- Costs: N/A





# Partnering Opportunities

- Goals:
  - More effective communications for ICAC
  - More effective communications for partners
  - Greater impact for the cotton industry overall
- KPIs:
  - Multi-association initiatives (ICAC + CI on #TruthAboutCotton)
  - Less redundancy of efforts (not reinventing the wheel)
  - Creation of an association specialty list? (who's best at what? CI = consumer research and marketing; ICA Bremen = cotton testing; ICAC = statistics, data and technical/trade information; BCI = sustainability, etc.)
- Expected Outcomes: Greater efficiency (most appropriate group spearheads the project), better coordination, unified approach to the market, and making it easier for media members to know who to go to for specific information
- Costs:
  - Occasional travel?
  - Whatever is required to execute the initiative



# Video

- Goals:
  - Greater impact on target audience
  - Reach everyone regardless of their preferred media platform
  - Put a “face” on the organisation
  - Make highly technical information easier to digest
  - Ensure we don’t lose the younger crowd
- KPIs:
  - Use of video whenever it’s appropriate
  - Maximise value of face-to-face interactions (like the Plenary Meetings)
  - Use of Skype for recordings when meetings aren’t in person
- Expected Outcomes: Greater market coverage; creating a more personal relationship between ICAC and target audience members; engaging a younger and more tech-savvy audience
- Costs:
  - Video equipment (if necessary)
  - Video training (if necessary)
  - Video editing software (if necessary)



# Annual Report

- Goals:
  - Provide tangible evidence of value
  - Increase transparency in operations and finances
  - Create a benchmark for the coming year
  - Vehicle for Executive Director to outline his vision
- KPIs:
  - Was it done?
  - Was it done on time?
- Expected Outcomes: Allows Executive Director to communicate directly with Committee members on major issues; going through the process forces internal stakeholders (Secretariat members) to evaluate and quantify their performance over the prior year
- Costs:
  - Design services (Yana might be able to do it herself)
  - Printing costs?



# World Cotton Day

- Goals:
  - Pioneer the creation of a highly visible, positive, international event
  - Draw attention to the ICAC and the cotton industry in a fun and positive way
  - Engage and excite ICAC members and other industry stakeholders
  - Develop better relationships with private sector/potential investors/sponsors (eg, Brooks Brothers)
- KPIs:
  - # of events held
  - Media coverage
  - Increase in traffic on ICAC website (dedicated page)
    - Metrics for all of the above?
- Expected Outcomes: Increased visibility and enhanced reputation for ICAC; opportunity to put cotton in the global spotlight in a positive way; members can highlight (show off) their cotton industries and developments; better engagement with industry media and hopefully mainstream press as well
- Costs:
  - Printing of promotional materials?
  - Advertising/promotion?
  - Associated costs if ICAC holds its own event



[www.icac.org](http://www.icac.org)

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# Training

- Goal: To achieve effective knowledge transfer between ICAC researchers and the global cotton community
- KPIs
  - Quarterly webinars in various topics (TBD)
  - Consistently increasing attendance and engagement
  - Effective promotion via website, social media
- Expected Outcomes: Not only knowledge transfer that benefits the value chain, but elevation of ICAC as the premier source of unbiased information about cotton
- Costs:
  - Occasional licenses for art/graphics
  - Software?



## Sponsorships and Advertising

- Goal: To increase revenue and expand ICAC activities and capabilities in a way that does not infringe on our impartiality and unbiased approach to information
- KPIs
  - Create guidelines for what is and isn't acceptable advertising, and secure approval from the Standing Committee
  - Identify a core group of potential advertisers and the best venues (Plenary Meeting, website, publications)
  - Determine pricing and create promotional materials to support the program
- Expected Outcomes: An expanding budget, better engagement with the private sector
- Costs:
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# Why do we need a defined 'Communications Strategy'?

**The single biggest problem in  
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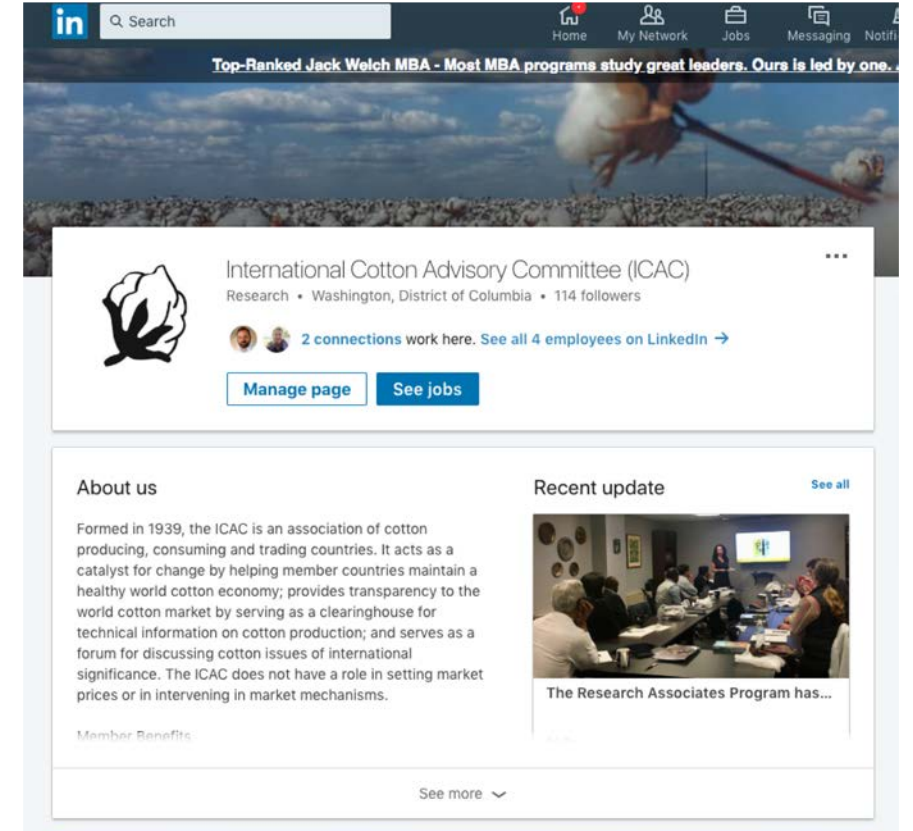


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