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## **Communication and Advocacy Strategy for the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific \***

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1. SIAP overview

1. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) is a regional institute of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). SIAP is based in Chiba City, Japan. Since 1970, the Institute has been helping build capacity of national statisticians in 62 members and associate members of ESCAP.
2. More recently, SIAP's programme has become guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as other internationally agreed development goals and resolutions and mandates adopted by the Commission.
3. SIAP's mission is to strengthen the capability of the developing members and associate members and economies in transition of the region to collect, analyse and disseminate high-quality, timely statistics that can be used for economic and social development planning. The Institute aims to assist members in establishing or strengthening their statistical training capabilities and related activities. These objectives are achieved by undertaking practically oriented training of official statisticians, networking and partnership with other international organizations and key stakeholders, and through the dissemination of information.<sup>1</sup>
4. To fulfill its mission, SIAP offers several types of courses:
  - Residential courses: 6- to 16-weeks group training programmes conducted in Chiba, Japan.
  - Short courses: ranging in duration from 2-day to 3-week in-country, sub-regional and regional seminars and training workshops. They are organized via teleconferences in the style of a webinar in the pandemic.
  - E-learning: These programmes are developed with an effort to reach a larger audience to provide information and skill development for all persons dealing with issues relating to official statistics.
5. Focus areas of SIAP training are prioritized in accordance with various United Nations mandates, the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, and ESCAP strategic directions and determined in consultation with ESCAP member States and associate members and regional and global statistics development partners. The Governing Council reviews and endorses SIAP work plans at its annual sessions.

### 1.2 Rationale for communications

6. The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan of SIAP states that there was an increased demand for high-quality statistics to monitor progress towards SDGs and the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. To satisfy this increased demand, among other factors, national statisticians need to be equipped with up-to-

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<sup>1</sup> SIAP evaluation report, 2019

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date skills and knowledge in collecting and processing data and producing and disseminating official statistics. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic further emphasized the importance of accurate data collection and transparency in sharing this data. The pandemic showed that lack of reliable statistics breeds misinformation and can create distrust from the public to the government, which was a case for COVID-19 vaccines in some parts of the world.

7. SIAP's role as a provider of professional training is to build better national capacity of the member States to collect, prepare and disseminate official statistics. For this, SIAP needs to build lasting relationships with potential trainees, such as staff of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and policymakers, to ensure continuity of their statistical training and equip them with up-to-date skills. SIAP also seeks to improve the understanding the government officials of the important role of official statistics; especially, the role of statistics in creating facts-based policy to support post-COVID-19 recovery. Both components require consistent and targeted outreach with elements of focused advocacy.
8. Additionally, the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan commands a development of a resource mobilization strategy for SIAP that goes beyond increasing contributions of the member states. This resource mobilization strategy would also require communications support to craft impactful messages and products to raise visibility of the Institute and communicate the value and benefits of SIAP training.
9. To accomplish this, the Institute needs drive from the supervisory bodies/stakeholders to develop communications with the target audiences. The Institute would need not only outreach but also high-quality content and materials, such as SIAP introductory materials and course descriptions, that would introduce the Institute to the target audiences and create interest in SIAP's courses.

### **1.3 What is a communications and advocacy strategy**

10. The communications and advocacy strategy is a guiding document that describes how communications tools can be used to reach the strategic goals of the organization. The main goal of a communications strategy is to set a broad framework for communications approaches that would help the Institute reach its strategic goals through engagement with the relevant audiences.
11. To create such a framework, a communications strategy needs to define several key dimensions:
  - **Communications objectives – why** does SIAP want to communicate? Communications, in its principle, is a support function. Communications goals should not exist in isolation from the strategic goals of the Institute, and communications strategy should ultimately be geared towards reaching the overall objectives of the organization by creating different levels of engagement among the stakeholders of the Institute.
  - **Target audiences – who** does SIAP want to communicate with? Using the strategic plan, the evaluation report and consultations with the SIAP team, the communications strategy should analyse the business environment of SIAP and identify all groups of stakeholders and the

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nature of their relationships with SIAP. Based on the stakeholder mapping, the communications strategy will attempt to define the key target audiences.

- **Narratives – what** does SIAP want? When there is a clear understanding of the stakeholder environment, the strategy needs to define a messaging strategy or communications narratives. The narratives set an overall angle and direction of the communications messages depending on the engagement objectives for specific audiences. Narratives also form the advocacy approach.
  - **Communications approaches, channels and products – How** will SIAP deliver and shape its communications? Based on the outcomes of the stakeholder analysis and the audience-specific SIAP objectives, the communications strategy will suggest a suitable **communications approach** and a **range of channels**. The selection of channels depends on a) specific communications goals, b) how members of the segment access information, c) communications capacity of SIAP.
  - **Communications products** are specific items of content such as stories, publications, campaigns, etc. They are key messages to the relevant stakeholder. Communications channels are vehicles that deliver communications products.
12. The communications strategy not only suggests answers to Why? Who? What? and How? of SIAP communications but also makes implementation recommendations that would help translate the communications strategy into actions.
- **Implementation recommendations** - While the strategic plan developed for SIAP places communications as a support function for the fundraising plan, it has been decided during consultations with SIAP staff to expand the scope of communications to cover other areas where outreach is needed. Communications strategy outlines the overall approach to communications. To operationalize the strategy, the Institute needs to develop an annual communications plan that would help reach strategic communications objectives through Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timed (SMART) sub-goals. These goals should be measured and monitored through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which can be quantitative (obtained through tracking and analytics), dichotomous (completed/incomplete) and qualitative (feedback).

### **1.4 Methodology of the communications strategy**

13. The communications and advocacy strategy has been developed with the support of a consultant.
14. To build an impactful communications and advocacy strategy, the consultant has reviewed existing business strategy documentation, including Strategic Plans, Annual reviews, etc. Following this, the consultant reviewed previous communications activities and communications products created in the past. Finally, the consultant had consultations with the SIAP staff to get their perspective on communications, desired outcomes, and areas for improvement.

15. This information above will be used as inputs to answer the strategic communications questions: Why? Who? What? and How?

### Chapter 2: Situational Analysis

16. SIAP has a unique mandate and capacity to build knowledge and capacity of national statisticians and ensure accurate reporting of SDGs and other developmental indicators. Working on the regional, sub-regional and national levels, SIAP has a robust network of partners and stakeholders that have various degrees of interest and influence over SIAP's ability to reach its strategic objectives.
17. Historically, SIAP has been engaging its core stakeholders and partners through several communications tools, including:
  - Direct emailing: business communications with focal points in the targeted organizations
  - Newsletters: a bi-monthly newsletter shared as email attachments
  - Website: <https://www.unsiap.or.jp/>
  - Social media channels: [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
  - Events such as the annual meeting of the SIAP Governing Council and of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific
  - SIAP Learning Management System (LMS): library of all available e-learning courses
18. In addition, SIAP has produced several communications products:
  - [SIAP 50 e-book](#)
  - [Pages with course descriptions \(concept notes\)](#)
  - Flyers
19. While all of these channels and products are useful and serve the purpose, they may be improved and complemented by other communications tools that would multiply SIAP's outreach.

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### 2.1 SWOT analysis of SIAP communications

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The UN brand and credibility</li><li>2. Defined and structured target audiences – allows for a more precise, targeted engagement</li><li>3. Unique and well-defined mandate that allows for specific and tailored messaging</li><li>4. Alignment and contribution to the SDGs, which is the internationally recognized development framework</li><li>5. Extensive regional network with statistical institutes and organizations</li><li>6. Engaged staff with a buy-in for communications</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Insufficient existing communications infrastructure</li><li>2. Digital resources such as website and course libraries would benefit from updated navigation and structure</li><li>3. Difficulty to communicate success stories due to lack of immediate tangible impact</li><li>4. Limited number of staff members</li><li>5. Distance from the headquarters</li><li>6. Multiple time zones that create scheduling difficulties for courses and meetings</li><li>7. A diverse region with varied proficiency of English language requires translation of the training materials, which are complex and technical in nature</li></ol>
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. No direct competition</li><li>2. Partnerships with sub-regional and national organizations and professional networks would offer an additional communications avenue to reach the national-level audiences</li><li>3. Strong communications angle that SIAP training can contribute towards and help demonstrate impact on country-level SDG monitoring and diagnostics – an important area</li><li>4. Transitioning of the client countries to post-covid recovery will emphasize the need for stronger domestic capacity due to increased reporting needs and “building back better” aspirations - potentially increasing demand</li><li>5. Drive from the supervisory bodies/stakeholders to develop communications (top-down interest)</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Potential lack of understanding of the value offered by SIAP training among decision makers</li><li>2. Redistribution of financial and time resources to COVID-19 response from the side of potential trainees</li><li>3. Inability of lecturers and trainees to travel to the location for interactive training due to COVID-19</li></ol>

Table 1: SWOT analysis of SIAP communications

### 2.2 Potential areas for improvement

*(based on the review of documents and consultations with the SIAP team)*

20. Lack of a unified approach to communications: While SIAP established several recurring communications products (e.g., a newsletter), most of the outreach activities are happening on an ad-hoc basis. By planning communications ahead, SIAP will be able to build stronger engagement with the target stakeholders, secure more trainees, and prepare the foundation for future fundraising.
21. SIAP is a subsidiary body of ESCAP, a Regional Commission of the UN, and follows the visual identity of the UN. SIAP also has a strong brand (and logo) supported by 51 years of operational legacy. Yet, the SIAP brand does not have a standardized visual identity, positioning statement, and standard collaterals, e.g., brochures, standard slide decks, etc.
22. Currently, SIAP is more successful offering courses on a “pull” basis, or **upon request** from NSOs. However, there is lots of potential to develop a “push” approach, where SIAP shares information with its target audiences **proactively** to secure more attendees, including timely communication on upcoming training opportunities and the value offered by the courses.
23. Training invitations do not always reach all relevant staff in NSOs with various reasons. Staff changes and turnover in the client institution pose additional challenges.
24. SIAP can do more to leverage its participation in professional networks and partnership with NSOs and other UN agencies to reach broader audiences and amplify its messaging.
25. SIAP’s mandate covers a diverse region, where English language proficiency is not universal and varies from country to country. SIAP’s communications should take into consideration existing language barriers when developing communications approaches and products.
26. As a training institute, SIAP may consider strengthening its approach to knowledge management by producing summaries of the offered courses that would be available to wider audiences (at later stages) and a comprehensive catalogue of available courses.



## Chapter 3: Communications strategy

### 3.1 Communications objectives

27. As mentioned previously, communications goals should support the strategic goals of the Institute, and communications strategy should ultimately be geared towards reaching the overall objectives of the organization through communications tools.

#### **SIAP Strategic Objectives (Business Goals)**

28. The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan of the Institute sets the Goals and Outputs as the following:

**Goal 1: Improved availability and quality of official statistics for SDG monitoring in ESCAP members and associate members**

Output: Enhanced knowledge and skills of government officials to produce, process, analyze, and manage quality official statistics for SDG monitoring

**Goal 2: Improved coverage and quality of national statistical systems to deliver training**

Output: Strengthened capacity of national statistical systems to provide statistical training for monitoring SDGs

**Goal 3: Improved coverage and quality of statistical training through enhanced partnership and innovation**

Output: Partnership with statistical training institutions in the region, international organizations, and civil society organizations for joint training activities

**Goal 4: Sustained increase in financial and human resources**, and improved statistical training and other services provided and coordinated by SIAP

Output 1: ESCAP member and associate members and partners increased their contribution to SIAP and SIAP delivered training using improved IT infrastructure and service

Output 2: Improved training facilities and infrastructure and ICT equipment and facilities in SIAP

Output 3: Aligned human resources to the expected outputs

29. To reach these strategic objectives, the communications function can offer a range of outreach and engagement tools. With this, the proposed strategic communications goals are:

**Goal 1: Build support for SIAP among target audiences through:**

- Consistent outreach to target audience
- Strengthening SIAP positioning by defining and communicating the value
- Leveraging partnership and networking resources to communicate SIAP messages

**Goal 2: Support resource mobilization through advocacy:**

- Targeted and consistent communications with key partners to build an understanding of SIAP's importance and value
- Communicate impacts and benefits of SIAP training through success stories

### **Goal 3: Stimulate demand from potential trainees by informing them of the availability and learning value of the courses**

- Creation of communications materials for courses
- Proactive promotion of courses to the target audiences
- Leveraging of partners' networks
- Increasing visibility of the courses on the website

### **3.2 Targeting**

30. To develop effective communications, it is necessary to examine the environment of the Institute, including its stakeholders and their relationships with SIAP. Based on this information, the strategy will suggest communications approaches, channels and products to strengthen outreach to the specific groups. For example, for stakeholder groups that comprise a limited number of individual members (structured audiences), communications should be more personalized and dialogue-based to create engagement and build lasting relationships. With less structured audiences (with a large number of members that are not known to SIAP individually), the appropriate choice would be one-to-many channels where one source of communications shares the message with multiple recipients (like social media posts and newsletters) and pull-communications, where SIAP makes information accessible and available for those interested in it.
31. Based on those aspects, stakeholders of SIAP are classified in Table 2: SIAP targeting summary. The primary source for the stakeholders is Table 2 of Annexes of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. Detail information for each category is explained in [Annex – SIAP Stakeholders – SIAP Stakeholders](#).

Audience	Description	Composition	Engagement goals
Key partners	Influential partners, supporters and observers that have a say in SIAP's strategic direction, funding, and take part in decision making	ESCAP member States and associate members  Government of Japan (host country)	Build relationships  Secure support and build understanding of the importance of SIAP's training and reliable statistics
Potential trainees and their managers	Producers and active users of statistics whose work would benefit from SIAP's training	<a href="#">National statistical offices</a>  <a href="#">Policymakers and producers of official statistics</a>  <a href="#">Statistical training and research institutions</a>	Encourage participation and support of SIAP  Build top-of-mind awareness
Supporters and outreach ambassadors	Broader audiences that have business synergies with SIAP and who would benefit from cooperation with the Institute	<a href="#">Development institutions</a>  <a href="#">Academia</a>  <a href="#">Corporate agencies</a>	Build partnerships  Recruit as goodwill ambassadors  Secure SIAP's cross-promotion to partners' audiences
Private sector and public	External unstructured audiences with limited interest in SIAP at present; potential trainees and collaborators in future	Public  Private Sector	Make information accessible and available

Table 2: SIAP targeting summary

### Internal audiences - SIAP staff

32. SIAP staff constitute an important stakeholder group that has direct access to the primary stakeholder groups. SIAP staff act as ambassadors and primary points of contact with key decision makers and trainees. Role of managers of SIAP is, especially, significant in this context since they can contact partners with authority and symbolic influence.
33. Engagement objectives of SIAP staff are to build internal culture and loyalty; keep informed on SIAP offers and relationships with stakeholders.

### 3.3 Communications narratives

34. As has been discussed earlier, SIAP has different communications objectives for different groups of stakeholders. Communications narratives are broad angles that guide content and messaging targeting clusters of stakeholders. Narratives are wider than key messages and should be used as a strategic framework to set the logic of communications. ([Note on narratives](#))

#### **SIAP narrative for Key partners**

35. Stress value of statistics and statistical capacity building for improving monitoring of SDGs and evidence based policy-making.
36. Emphasize the unique value: Describe that SIAP is an important institution with unique competencies that adds value in the region by sharing knowledge and building capacity of the entire region, and emphasize that SIAP works with developing countries, bringing them up to speed on global SDGs monitoring and reporting practices, and that, by supporting SIAP, they are making a long-term investment in the development of their countries and the region as a whole.

#### **SIAP narrative for Potential trainees and their managers**

37. Stress value to offices by having well-trained staff with up-to-date skills and knowledge.
38. Encourage participation by emphasizing personal benefits and career advancement: Describe that SIAP is a reputed institution with unique expertise and knowledge in cutting-edge statistics and emphasize that they can transform their skills and knowledge to help them become a leading statistic professional, and that SIAP training will help advance their career and build their professional standing.

#### **SIAP narrative for Supporters and outreach ambassadors**

39. Emphasize value for their stakeholders: Describe that SIAP is an institution that has unique expertise in statistics and training, and emphasize that, through cooperation with SIAP, they are getting access to top-notch professionals, training opportunities, and know-how that they can share with their audiences, and that, by partnering with us, they are creating more value for their stakeholders.
40. Private sector and the general population do not require a separate narrative as the communication objective is to make information accessible and available, i.e., passive or "pull" communications. In the future, it may change based on the changes in SIAP's strategic objectives and fundraising approaches.

#### **Positioning Statement**

41. A positioning statement is an important element of the messaging strategy. It is a universal description that specified the core competencies of SIAP and clearly outlines the mandate, targets, and value of SIAP. The positioning statement should give readers a brief, yet specific overview of what SIAP is. The Positioning Statement is used to introduce SIAP to first-time readers and serves as

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a universal "About Us" statement. Unlike narratives, the positioning statement should be used as is, without modifications.

42. Presently, SIAP has a mission statement that is clearly communicated on the Website and in the produced communications products. However, there is no unified positioning statement and the "About us" descriptions vary from one product to another, e.g., ["who we are"](#) and ["50 years of Statistical Capacity Building by UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific \(SIAP\) in Asia Pacific region and Way ahead"](#).

### Suggested Positioning Statement

43. The positioning statement should be stated as the below.

"The United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) is a professional statistics training centre for government officials and others working on official statistics. SIAP offers short and long-term specialized trainings to strengthen knowledge and build skills of national governments' employees to produce, use, and share reliable statistics, including for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of fact-based policy.

SIAP is a regional training arm of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)."

## 3.4 Communications approaches

44. To communicate with the stakeholders, SIAP needs to consider the goals and characteristics of the target audiences. Based on this, SIAP can make an informed decision on communications channels, products and messages. In general, audiences can be divided into structured (limited number of individuals with similar interest/influence that are known to the organization) and unstructured (many members with varying interest, not known to the organization).
45. If the goal is to **build engagement within a structured audience** (e.g., NSOs, the number of people who need to receive communications is limited and SIAP knows the individuals), SIAP should opt for communications channels that are personal or a **one-to-few communications approach**. One-to-few communications refer to the channels where one sender shares the messages with a limited number of recipients. For example, during an event, the organizers actively engage only with those who attend the event. One-to-few channels also allow for 2-way communications (a dialogue), where the recipients of the messages can respond and provide feedback. This interactivity allows building personal relationships, which is an important component of lasting engagement.
46. If its goal is to **raise awareness among broader unstructured audiences**, a better choice of channels would be **one-to-many communications**, which include channels where one sender shares the message with many recipients. For example, TV adverts, social media, and newsletters. Such channels do not allow for active feedback or conversation (i.e., constitute 1-way communications) and are suitable for bigger messages and wider audiences.

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47. In practice, however, best is to combine the two approaches, where one is central and the other one is complementary.

### **3.5 Advocacy**

48. In principle, advocacy constitutes a section of communications that aims to promote change. This change can be in perception, in policy, in opinion and decisions. Advocacy uses concentrated messaging and focus communications channels to deliver the advocacy message to the target audiences.
49. As an institution, SIAP is mandated to provide high-quality statistical training to government officials and users and producers of official statistics. In some instances, especially in the post-COVID context, national agendas might not prioritize statistical training and skills development for employees. To counteract this and secure more trainees, SIAP should build an effective messaging strategy to emphasize the need for continued staff education and the importance of reliable and diverse statistics.
50. To accomplish this, SIAP will develop a set of communications narratives that would be tailored to the needs and expectations of the specific audiences. Based on the narratives, the Institute will develop key messages that will be incorporated consistently throughout communications products.
51. These narratives should also set an underlying direction for speeches of senior management, public speaking of SIAP staff, and direct communications with key partners, potential trainees and collaborators.
52. SIAP should also seek to cooperate with advocacy allies to amplify the main messages.

**Advocacy objectives** (what does SIAP want to accomplish): Sensitize and build support among target audiences to the importance of staff training and reliable statistics and to SIAP's unique position to provide it

**Advocacy targets** (who should receive messages):

- ESCAP member States and associate members
- NSOs
- Policymakers

**Advocacy allies** (who can help SIAP amplify messages):

- Network of partners
- Academia and students
- Statistical training and research institutions
- Development institutions

**Proposed advocacy messages:**

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- Continuous statistical training of staff is an investment into the country's ability to produce, use and share reliable statistics.
- Reliable statistics is an essential tool to combat misinformation, make informed policy decisions and increase transparency.

**Advocacy methods** (how will SIAP deliver messages) include all communications channels, with an emphasis on:

- Leadership advocacy – speeches and official engagements of the top official of SIAP
- Events and public speaking opportunities for SIAP staff
- Direct outreach and one-to-few communications
- Collaboration with advocacy allies

### 3.6 Communication channels and products

#### 3.6.1 Channels

53. Communications channels refer to the vehicles/ methods to deliver information to the stakeholders. Communications products describe the format and content of the materials that are distributed through the communications channels. For example, a video is a product, while a website that showcases the video is a channel and so would be a social media account (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram). In some cases, a product is also a channel, the most common example is a Newsletter, which combines the traits of both.

#### **Focal points and direct emailing**

54. A dedicated person to share updates and training portfolio news with their counterparts through business communications over email. Updates should be shared once they become available and the focal point should encourage feedback and 2-way communications.

#### **Events and public speaking**

55. Virtual or in-person events, including events of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific (The Network) represent a valuable networking opportunity, where SIAP can engage multiple key stakeholders at the same time. Also, events offer a great platform for advocacy through public speaking.
56. While in-person events are not feasible at this time, SIAP should leverage its digital capacity to host virtual events and attend virtual events organized by the partners.
57. To build on the good work of SIAP that is already in place, the Institute should increase interactivity and integrate more communications elements into existing events such as (Governing Council of SIAP, meetings of the Network, Management Seminars, etc.) rather than establishing new events. This would also allow the use of human and financial resources more effectively. For an example of methodologies to develop events, please [see an event suggestion](#).

#### **Partnerships**

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58. SIAP should seek opportunities to join forces with the stakeholders from the “partners and collaborators” to organize thematic events, produce series of content or run specialized training sessions. These invitations to partner serve as high-quality engagement tools to help strengthen cooperation and secure support.

**Website:** [www.unsiap.or.jp](http://www.unsiap.or.jp)

59. The website should serve as a primary repository of SIAP content with central real estate (landing page) showcasing training schedules and information about the course content. The website should be kept up-to-date and offer an option to subscribe to the newsletter.

### **Newsletter**

60. Currently, SIAP issues a bi-monthly newsletter. The newsletter contains a lot of valuable information but does not effectively showcase the most important materials and does not use design and layout options effectively. Additionally, the newsletter is difficult to produce as it requires creating new content (texts) and gathering inputs from many internal parties for each new issue.

### **Social Media**

61. Social media is a powerful tool to engage wider audiences. SIAP, however, will not prioritize active public promotion through social media at present. Instead, SIAP may use social media as an additional networking platform and a channel for SIAP alumni to stay in touch. For this, two social media channels are most suitable: **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**. SIAP also has an inactive Twitter account, which should be deactivated.
62. **Facebook** is the social media platform with the largest number of users, and many SIAP alumni have accounts.
63. **LinkedIn**, on the other hand, is a professional network that encourages business-related communications and networking.
64. To make an informed decision about which platform to use more, SIAP should add "Which social media channels you use most frequently?" to end-of-training feedback questionnaires.

### **Professional and Sectoral Media**

65. SIAP should be responsive to media requests and use media opportunities for advocacy and to build a broader positive reputation. This means, that SIAP should take on media engagements such as interviews, expert opinions, op-eds when they arise and use these opportunities to strengthen messaging. Additionally, SIAP should consider joining forces with its partners to secure editorial placements in professional journals and periodicals.

## **3.6.2. Communications Products**

### **Success stories**

66. Success stories should be composed of the following elements.  
**Purpose:** to showcase career benefits and value of SIAP training and encourage participation



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**Concept:** Visual and written stories from former SIAP trainees, where they share how the training helped them in their day-to-day work and in reaching their professional objectives. Depending on the availability, the success stories can also feature supervisors of the trainees to share wider impacts of the courses.

**Format:** Portrait photos, written testimonials in long format and edited to short blurbs.

Optional: (under 2 mins) video testimonials from the participant, might be produced as a recorded video Q&A.

### **Course packs (product communications)**

67. Course packs should be composed of the following elements.

**Purpose:** to highlight benefits of attending the course, create a better understanding of SIAP offer and generate interest

**Concept:** compelling course descriptions communicating benefits of attending the course and the learning outcomes

**Format:** Sets of communications products that include:

- course 1-pager - a course description written in simplified English; should use the same template and follow the same structure to allow for continuity when new courses are being developed
- overview of the course content (laid out as a 1-pager)
- a message with a photo from the course instructor (optional - a video from the instructor); desirable – a message from former course attendees (testimonials for specific courses)
- course sheet – a 1-pager with key course information to help participants retain course content and use as a reference sheet for future; should use infographics and be practice-oriented. The sheet should be shared after completion of the course

Optional:

- Animated course videos/explainers with narration (1-2 minutes)
- Course-related case studies – real-life (or hypothetical) scenarios that showcase the practical application of the course learning by participants; or how the course helped solve a challenge

### **Year in review publication**

68. Year in review publication is a short annual publication summarizing SIAP's milestones and accomplishments over the last year. The publication should be no more than 20-30 pages and include the following sections.

- Senior manager message: a welcome message from the senior SIAP manager
- Faculty message: a joint message from SIAP faculty. Both messages should follow the strategic narratives of SIAP and emphasize the key messages.
- SIAP milestones: short descriptions of major SIAP accomplishments
- Infographics with the number of courses, attendees and relevant data
- New courses or featured courses (those with the most demand)
- Testimonials from course attendees, if possible, several case studies/participants profiles
- Looking forward – quick overview of upcoming activities in the next year (if available- a schedule of courses)
- "Thank you" messages to SIAP supporters

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- Optional: Supporting media – animated video summarizing the report

### **SIAP collaterals**

69. Currently, SIAP is lacking a well-presented set of introductory materials that can be shared with prospective trainees and potential partners (or newly appointed officials). Such materials should provide an overview of SIAP, compellingly present the courses and introduce SIAP as a brand. For this, these materials should follow the same graphic design standard (branding guideline) and be available in hard copies and as digital publications.
70. A set of standard SIAP marketing materials should include the followings.
- SIAP brochure / introduction
  - Catalog of courses (based on the course 1-pagers)
  - Slide deck
- Optional:
- Visual assets such as SIAP rollups (for visual representation during events), branded folders for documents, SIAP-branded merchandise;
  - Digital assets: SIAP-branded background for virtual meetings;
  - Desirable: SIAP-branded coffee table book or a corporate gift for VIP guests and key partners (can be a book about Japan with a foreword by SIAP)

### **SIAP Talks**

71. SIAP Talks should be developed in line with the following purpose, concept and format.
- Purpose:** strengthen SIAP's message on impact and value and offer an opportunity for alumni and partners to showcase their work. It will also serve as a lighter activity to offer a pause during formal meetings. SIAP should also use this opportunity to showcase multimedia materials and success stories.
- Concept:** A series of TED-style talks during the annual meeting of the SIAP Governing Council. In addition to the formal protocol of the meetings, SIAP may organize a more interactive and fun session geared towards communications objectives. For example, a short coffee session, where SIAP alumni, partners, participants of the statisticians' network, and attendees of SIAP courses can share highlights and important developments in statistics-related fields from their home institutions for the audience of senior decision makers. SIAP should also consider coordinating with ESCAP's Stats Café and invite the most memorable participants to prepare SIAP talks as featured guests. Additionally, SIAP may consider inviting academia and student to present interesting research.
- Format:** interactive and lively 5-minute TED-style presentations

### **Media materials**

72. To leverage opportunistic media opportunities, SIAP needs to prepare a range of media materials including Press Releases, Op-eds on specific themes, interviews and corresponding talking points and expert commentaries.

## Communications strategy summary

Segment	Groups	Engagement goals	Communications narratives	Communications approaches/channels/products
<b>Key partners</b>	<p>ESCAP member States and associate members</p> <p>Government of Japan (host country)</p>	<p>Build lasting relationships</p> <p>Secure support and build understanding</p>	<p><b>Emphasize the unique value:</b> SIAP is an important institution with unique competencies that adds value to the region by <b>sharing knowledge and building capacity of the entire region</b>. SIAP works with <b>developing countries, bringing them up to speed on global SDGs monitoring and reporting practices</b>. Supporting SIAP, a <b>long-term investment</b> is made in the development of the countries and the region</p>	<p><b>Advocacy</b> through public speaking, direct engagement, and leadership communications</p> <p><b>One-to few:</b> Direct emailing with updates and engagement in decision making Events and partnership engagement</p> <p><b>One-to-many:</b> Newsletter; specialized media</p> <p><b>Key Products:</b> Emails, success stories, year in review, SIAP Talks</p>
<b>Potential trainees and their managers</b>	<p>NSOs</p> <p>Policymakers and producers of official statistics</p> <p>Statistical training and research institutions</p>	<p>Encourage participation and support of SIAP;</p> <p>Build <a href="#">top-of-mind awareness</a></p>	<p><b>Encourage participation by emphasizing personal benefits and career advancement:</b> SIAP is a reputed institution with unique expertise and knowledge in cutting-edge statistics. SIAP can <b>transform skills and share valuable knowledge</b> to help trainees become a leading statistic professional. SIAP training will help <b>advance career</b> and build professional standing.</p>	<p><b>Advocacy</b> through public speaking, direct engagement and leadership communications</p> <p><b>One-to-few:</b> Direct emailing and course-specific communications Events</p> <p><b>One-to-many:</b> Newsletter, specialized media Online networking: social media, network resources</p> <p><b>Key Products:</b> Course packs, success stories, year in review, SIAP collaterals, website content</p>
<b>Supporters and outreach ambassadors</b>	<p>Development institutions</p> <p>Academia</p> <p>Corporate Agencies</p>	<p>Build partnerships</p> <p>Recruit as advocacy allies</p> <p>Secure SIAP's cross-promotion to partners' audiences</p>	<p><b>Emphasize value for stakeholders:</b> SIAP is an institution that has unique expertise in statistics and training. Through cooperation with SIAP, top-notch professionals, training opportunities, and know-how are available and can be shared with audiences. By partnering with SIAP, more value for stakeholders is created.</p>	<p><b>Joint advocacy</b></p> <p><b>One-to few:</b> Direct emailing/updates Events and partnership engagement</p> <p><b>One-to-many:</b> Newsletter, specialized media, media (opportunistic)</p> <p><b>Key Products:</b> Year in review, success stories, partnership proposals, SIAP collaterals, SIAP Talks</p>

Table 3: SIAP communications strategy summary

## Chapter 4: Implementation of the recommendations

### 4.1 Implementation steps

73. To translate the communications strategy into practical actions, SIAP would need to complete several important steps.

#### **Develop an annual work plan for communications activities**

74. By planning communications ahead, SIAP will be able to build stronger engagement with the target stakeholders, secure more trainees, and prepare the foundation for future fundraising. The communications work plan should translate strategic communications objectives into SMART sub-goals. These goals should be measured and monitored through KPIs, which can be quantitative (obtained through tracking and analytics), dichotomous (completed/incomplete) and qualitative (feedback).
75. The communications work plan should offer details on what content pieces and communications materials including communications products mentioned in 3.6.2. will be produced in the year, in what order and what would be their specific themes/focus angles.

#### **Develop an editorial calendar**

76. Based on the communications work plan, it would be possible to build an editorial calendar or a calendar of communications activities. For this, it is important to understand SIAP's milestones during the year, including dates of board meetings, publication of the training schedule, industry events and professional holidays, launches of new courses and so forth.

#### **Prepare contact lists and organize databases**

77. SIAP team should support communication efforts by helping build contact lists. These contact lists will be used for newsletters, invitations to events, and announcements from SIAP. Contact lists should be regularly updated and every new entry should be also added to the service platforms like MailChimp.

#### **Standardizing SIAP brand**

78. SIAP brand does not have a standardized visual identity, positioning statement, and standard collaterals. Thus, SIAP needs to prepare communications products and essential communications assets, including SIAP branding guideline and set of branding templates.

**SIAP branding guideline:** a document that unifies the visual appearance of SIAP. It details visual attributes such as logo, logo placement, corporate colours, and fonts. The branding guideline is an essential asset to create a recognizable brand and offer basic guidance to SIAP staff. SIAP's branding guideline should be consistent with the UN branding.

#### **Set of branded templates:**

- a. [Course 1-pager](#) template
- b. Course [sheet](#) template
- c. [Success story](#) template (+ storyline format)

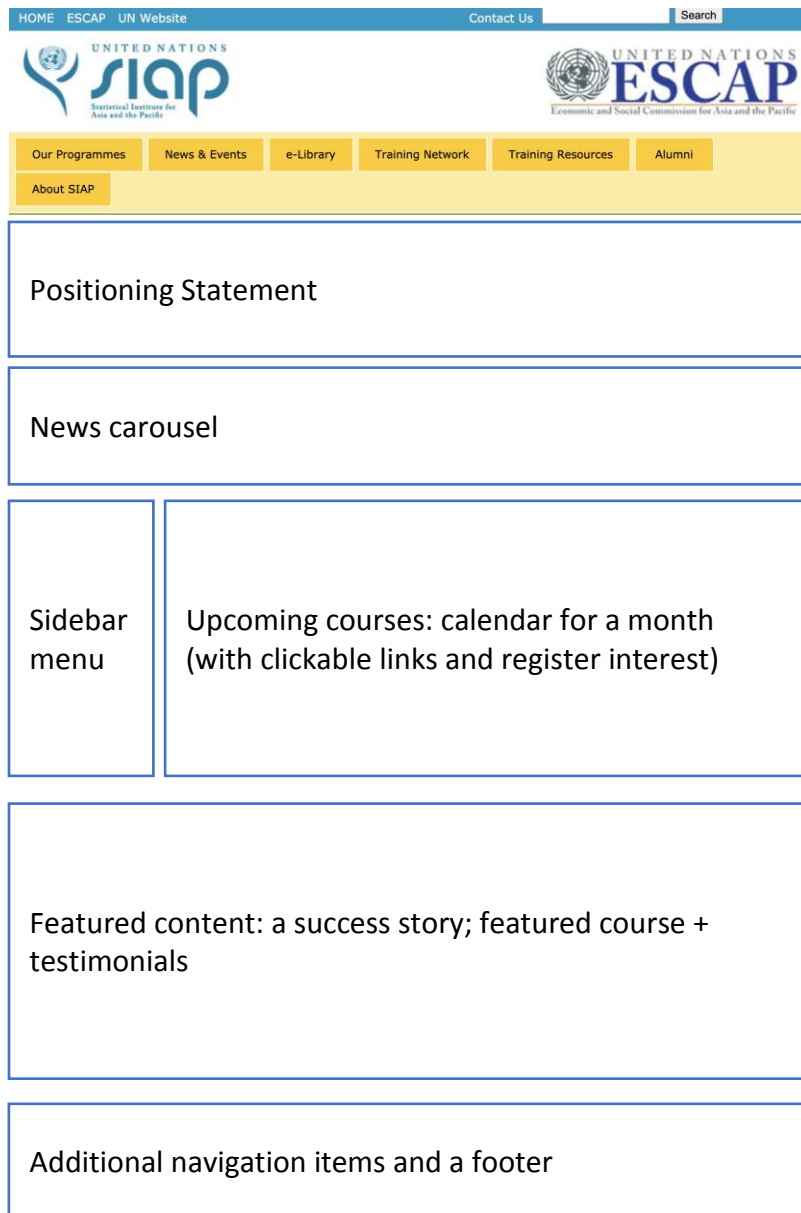
- d. Newsletter template (either Word or MailChimp)
- e. [Year in review template](#) (by sections)

### Website update

79. As a training institute, SIAP may consider strengthening its approach to knowledge management by producing summaries of the offered courses that would be available to wider audiences (at later stages) and a comprehensive catalog of available courses. Currently, SIAP has a website with rich content. However, the architecture and design of the website could benefit from a revision. The exact design concept and architecture should be prepared in consultation with an experienced web designer, but the following elements would benefit from a comprehensive revision:

- **The landing page** is very heavy on text and has a long scroll field. The key content items are not prominently highlighted, and the page does not point a visitor towards the most important elements, i.e., there is no clickable anchoring element such as a post/news carousel. The current slideshow occupies the primary real estate yet does highlight any content as it is not clickable.
- **Training schedule** and catalog of courses: Possible improvement could be in the way courses content and schedule are displayed. For example, the training schedule can be integrated as a calendar with clickable links to course pages and an "express your interest" form that would allow interested visitors to submit their email addresses and get more information about how to attend the course. The website would benefit from a searchable catalog of online and in-person courses, including search by topic, country, language, etc.
- **Training [resources page](#)** follows a different visual styling and is not consistent with the rest of the website.
- **[SIAP Learning Management System](#)** needs a redesign.
- The website can use more **visual elements**, such as infographics and photos. Long fields of text should be moved to designated webpages and be displayed as "read more" hyperlinks on the landing page. The site should incorporate elements of the [UN web guideline](#).
- Website should make **special accommodations for people with limited abilities** and in compliance with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) of the World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative (W3C WAI) and the P.O.U.R. (Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust) principles from the [UN guidelines](#).
- Suggestion for the landing page structure (not design):

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### Newsletter Update

80. The newsletter should be brief and serve only as a vehicle to deliver updates and share existing content. The newsletter should not create its content (no separate texts and media items created specifically for the newsletter), but instead hyperlink website pages and resources that have been updated since the last newsletter was issued. The newsletter should have a central story or a theme that would attract attention and encourage the readers to explore further. For this, SIAP should consider the perspective of potential readers and what value SIAP can add. For example, one option would be to establish a “course spotlight” section as the central newsletter item. This would help address several considerations:
- SIAP’s core added value is its courses.
  - Courses will receive description packs, so there will be existing content that does not need to be created separately.

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- By featuring specific courses in newsletters, SIAP should create a platform to effectively share success stories through testimonials from trainees.
81. Schedule of newsletters should be planned in advance, including the central themes and featured courses. The schedule of the newsletters should be reflected in the calendar.

### **Focal Point**

82. There is lots of potential to develop a “push” approach, where SIAP shares information with its target audiences proactively to secure more attendees, including timely communication on upcoming training opportunities and the value offered by the courses. SIAP can also do more to leverage its participation in professional networks and partnership with NSOs and other UN agencies to reach broader audiences and amplify its messaging. Focal points remain responsive to feedback from their counterparts.

Types of information to share via direct emailing:

- New training opportunities
- Key events both hosted by SIAP and attended by SIAP that are relevant for the counterparts
- Success stories
- Important updates and news

## 4.2 Practical recommendations

### **Where to start**

83. To begin implementing the communications strategy, SIAP would need several important elements: a communications work plan that plans activities, specific products, budget and human resources for a year, an editorial or communications activities calendar that times those activities and helps stay on track, prepare communications products and set up corporate accounts for social media and software tools.

### **Developing a communication work plan**

84. The work plan should translate strategic communications objectives into SMART sub-goals. These goals should be measured and monitored through KPIs, which can be quantitative (obtained through tracking and analytics), dichotomous (completed/incomplete) and qualitative (feedback). [Note on connecting strategic objectives to Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\).](#)
85. The work plan should include:
- **Description of communications activities and products**, specific themes and content details. Use product concepts provided in the strategy and details which product comes out first. For example, success stories – who will be the specific interviewees, what does SIAP want them to say? Or course packs – which course would SIAP does first: short-term or long-term? Does SIAP need to put in place any contracts to put in place any vendor contracts to produce them? Who will be responsible to prepare texts and content for the course packages? Newsletters – what will be the theme of each newsletter? What sections does SIAP want to include? Who should contribute content?

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- **Division of responsibilities** – who prepares texts? who prepares and sends out the newsletters? who reaches out to the key partners and potential trainees?
- **Procurement plan** – what activities can SIAP do in-house and what does SIAP want to outsource?
- **Budget for a year** – how much money would SIAP need?
- **KPIs and activities tracker** – what has been planned? VS what has been accomplished? and what are the outcomes?

### **Developing a calendar of communications activities (editorial calendar)**

86. Based on the communications work plan, SIAP can build a calendar of communications activities, which should include:
- SIAP operational milestones (Board meetings, releases of new courses, etc.)
  - Important industry events and professional celebrations (e.g. International day of statistics, meetings of the Network, big events on statistics), which constitute speaking and networking opportunities
  - SIAP newsletters releases
  - Release of SIAP communications products (success stories, SIAP year at a glance)
  - Social media calendar – how frequently do you plan to post on social media and what types of content
  - Official engagement of SIAP staff that support advocacy (meetings, bi-lateral and multi-lateral consultations)
87. To create a shareable calendar, SIAP should consider using a built-in planner in Microsoft Teams or Gmail. Outlook calendar is poorly suited for this function. It is a good idea to set up different calendar categories (in different colours) such as SIAP milestones, events, newsletters, releases of communications products, etc. and make sure that the calendar is available for the team members.



## Annex – SIAP Stakeholders

Audience	Description	Composition
Key partners	Influential partners, supporters and observers that have a say in SIAP's strategic direction, funding, and take part in decision making	<a href="#">ESCAP member States and associate members</a> Government of Japan (host country)
Potential trainees and their managers	Producers and active users of statistics whose work would benefit from SIAP's training	<a href="#">National statistical offices</a> <a href="#">Policymakers and producers of official statistics</a> <a href="#">Statistical training and research institutions</a>
Supporters and outreach ambassadors	Broader audiences that have business synergies with SIAP and who would benefit from cooperation with the Institute	<a href="#">Development institutions</a> <a href="#">Academic institutions</a> <a href="#">Corporate agencies</a>
Private sector and public	External unstructured audiences with limited interest in SIAP at present; potential trainees and collaborators in future	Public Private Sector

Table: SIAP stakeholders

### Key partners

#### ESCAP member States and associate members

Governments of the ESCAP member States and associate members; make statistics available for wider domestic (and beyond) audiences and users of statistics; use statistics for reporting on SDGs. The annual cash contributions from ESCAP member States and associate members are the major source of funding for SIAP.

#### Government of Japan (host country)

Host government of SIAP

### Potential trainees and their managers

#### NSOs

Statistics offices of countries that collect data, produce statistics and make it available for consumption by the public, policymakers, academia, governments and other groups of their audiences that require reliable up-to-date data.

Examples (based on the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan):

- Afghanistan: National Statistics and Information Authority
- American Samoa: Research & Statistics Division, Department of Commerce, American Samoa Government
- Armenia: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia
- Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Azerbaijan: The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

#### Policy makers and producers of official statistics

Targets for SIAP training and potential influencers that can help promote SIAP to the domestic decision makers and are also data users.

Examples:

- National Central Banks
- Ministries of Economy, Finance, Environment, etc.
- Civil registration offices
- National Authorities

#### Statistics training and research institutions

National institutions that build the capacity of national statisticians, conduct statistical research, and share statistical findings with the public. Statistics training and research institutions also provide potential trainees as well as local experts that can be contracted by SIAP. They have direct access to the network of national statistics professionals (and domestic stakeholders) and can be recruited as countries-based partners and advocates for SIAP.

Examples (based on the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan):

- China: Statistical Education and Training Centre, National Bureau of Statistics
- India: National Statistical Systems Training Academy, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
- Indonesia: Education and Training Centre, BPS-Statistics Indonesia

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- Iran (Islamic Republic of): Statistical Research and Training Centre
- Malaysia: Statistical Training Institute, Department of Statistics Malaysia
- Philippines: Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute
- Republic of Korea: Statistical Training Institute, Statistics Korea

### Supporters and outreach ambassadors

#### Development institutions

International and regional development organizations that advocate for better national statistics capacity, wider and better data collections, and transparency and accountability. Development partners are also a source of funding for SIAP, as well as providers on in-kind support and technical capacity.

Examples (based on the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan):

- ADB: Asian Development Bank
- ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- CELADE: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
- SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
- SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

#### Academic institutions

National and international research centers and academia that carry out research and offer education in relevant disciplines. Education institutions are potential partners for joint training opportunities, as well as networks of young, up-and-coming professionals. Academic institutions might offer capacity support by lending experts and conducting joint training courses, help build stronger training programs, and help raise the visibility of SIAP among younger audiences.

Examples:

- Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute
- Moscow Higher School of Economics at the National Research University
- University of Maryland
- Chulalongkorn University

#### Corporate Agencies

Agencies that co-organize training via supports to trainees such as Japan International Corporation Agencies (JICA)

## Additional notes

Stakeholders are classified as Key partners, Potential trainees and their managers, Supporters and outreach ambassadors, and Private sector and public in this strategy for SIAP. It is often applied in market strategies to classify stakeholders and to use different narratives and key messages among them. A typical example in the market is as the below.

A note on narratives and key messages: A case of selling apples

**Narratives for cosmetic companies** – apples have natural properties that benefit the skin and are appealing to younger audiences.

**Key messages:**

- Apples contain vitamin C and powerful antioxidants that protect your skin against free radicals
- Apples are perfect for oily skin - they moisturize the skin without making it greasy

**Narratives for restaurants** – apples have a variety of tastes ranging from sour to very sweet, which makes them universal ingredients that are available all year round

**Key message:**

- Apples are your staple yet versatile ingredient all year round

**Narratives for schools** – apples are rich in vitamins and microelements; they can be used as an alternative to sugary snacks and have lower prices than other fruits and snacks.

**Key message:**

- Apples are a perfect snack straight from nature to the kids' lunches

## *SIAP Communications and Advocacy Strategy*

- Apples offer vitamins and minerals for healthy growth

### A note on Strategic Goals, Operational Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

#### **Connecting strategic goals to KPIs in communications:**

Strategic-level goal SG1: Build awareness of SIAP among target audiences through consistent outreach

#### Operational-level goals:

OG1: Carry out outreach to the target audiences through (unpacking what “consistent outreach” means specifically):

- OG1.1 Direct marketing (emails)
  - KPI 1.1: Average number of emails sent to the target audiences
- OG1.2 Newsletters
  - KPI 1.2.1: Number of newsletters sent (\*this is a KPI that is easy to track but it is process-oriented rather than impact)
  - KPI 1.2.2: Number of newsletter recipients
  - KPI 1.2.3: Click-through rate (\*this indicates how many recipients actually opened the newsletter and is the most representative KPI to measure)