



<b>FIRMS Steering Committee Meeting</b>
<b>Eighth Session</b>
<b>Rome, Italy, 4 - 5, and 8 February 2013</b>
<b>FIRMS target audience and communication strategy</b>
<b>Author: FIRMS Secretariat</b>

At FSC7, the FIRMS communication strategy was tackled for the first time with the professional assistance of the FAO/FI communication specialist. A “FIRMS communication strategy” wiki page was initiated (see [par. 1 and 2](#)), and the approach to be followed was introduced:

“a formal strategy on communications needs to be developed. One of the first steps would be to identify the target audience in order to determine what type of message needs to be communicated. Once a common understanding is established priorities can be set using clear FIRMS branding. Short and long term goals should be decided. After deciding on the target audience the various routes to disseminate information can be investigated (graphic, text, social networking)”.

FSC7 also acknowledged that the name of FIRMS (Fishery Resource Monitoring Systems) may be limiting and while the acronym and logo is quite branded it may be able to change the name to more accurately reflect the inclusion of the Fishery aspects. Two suggestions were made *Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System*, or *Fishery Information and Resources Monitoring System*, and FSC7 concluded that decision on a change of name should be made at the next meeting of the FSC.

Following the recommended approach, and referring to the events, requests and suggestions which have affected FIRMS, the FIRMS Secretary has substantially extended this wiki page documenting the various aspects to be considered in a communication strategy:

- [Primary audience, benefits, and targeted products](#): this paragraph lists FIRMS audience by main type of client/audience, suggests benefits which such client/audience would draw from FIRMS, and which existing or potential product is expected to realize these benefits. FSC8 is requested to review, validate and further contribute.
- [Communication objectives, and elements of a communication plan](#): this paragraph is a first attempt to define communication objectives for each identified target audience, with the related communication message and communication plan. Its content should be strengthened and further elaborated at FSC8, with the view that the services of communication specialists will be hired for finalizing these key messages.
- [FIRMS information products and communication artifacts](#): status and potential developments: This paragraph reviews existing FIRMS information products and

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communication artifacts, and lists others which could be potentially developed / set-up. FSC8 is expected to provide guidance on prioritizing the development / implementation of new information products and communication actions as part of the forthcoming intersession workplan.

- [Outreach experience](#): this paragraph provides a summary of FIRMS outreach and communication activities during the period 2008-2012, and the perceived results. This summary can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the various communication actions in reaching their objectives

For full information, please see [FIRMS communication Strategy Wiki page](#) .

The following part of this meeting document doesn't intend to replicate the Wiki page, but rather to provide a brief cross-cutting analysis of its content aimed at highlighting key facts and aspects which require specific attention from FSC8.

Four types of target audience are distinguished, and for each are reviewed the benefits which such client/audience would draw from FIRMS, the product(s) expected to realize these benefits, and ideas of key messages are proposed.

Group 1. The **RFBs and their Member States** (considered together in terms of their regional belonging) constitute the 'historic' group targeted by FIRMS communication action. Since years, the FIRMS Secretariat participated to a number of RFBs committee meetings, which progressively enabled to identify and refine the political and strategic benefits. Correspondingly, the information products and services have been tailored to satisfy this audience in priority. Judging from the current partnership level and from recent set of positive answers received from agencies newly invited to join the partnership, these communication actions can be assessed to be relatively successful. FSC8 is invited to review, comment and confirm whether those benefits are correctly identified and whether the information products match them. FSC8 is also invited to propose ways to approach and convince RFBs from the Pacific and from South America, areas still poorly covered by FIRMS.

Group 2. The **Governmental agencies** constitute a group of higher resolution than the RFBs Member States; here States are here considered as single entities rather than considered together and belonging to a regional group (case above). This group type is new and forward looking from the FIRMS viewpoint, but becoming important with the progressive involvement of nations through RFBs. The benefits identified to date for this group stems from FIRMS experience with CECAF, RECOFI, and SEAFDEC. From this experience, an attempt was made for a communication message:

<< FIRMS inventories of resources and fisheries contribute, together with other sources, to the EAF by improving transparency and engagement of the general public in the monitoring of the status of fisheries, as well as of the status of fishery management plans >>

... but inputs on this communication message are welcomed from FSC8. Somewhere, the message for this group should meet with that to RFBs' Member states. The communication plan involves a number of actions and has to be actively supported by concerned RFBs Secretariat.

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Group 3. The **Global or Regional marine science networks in support to “the state of ...”** is a group composed of various more or less connected initiatives, and is foremost forward looking. FIRMS has discussed at FSC7 its possible contribution to “FAO review of the state of marine resources”; FIRMS has presented its possible contribution to the “UN global state of the environment”, but no precise response was provided. Another promising audience consists of the regional LME projects which aim at monitoring the “State of the regional environment and ecosystems”, and of global thematic networks such as Tuna network and High Seas Deep Seas programme.

The **[i]NGOs influencing seafood consumers and industry on sustainable fisheries** constitute an emerging but promising group from FIRMS view point, with (during the last 18 months) two very tangible examples of iNGOs (Ocean Trust and SFP/FisheriesWiki) which have expressed strong interest in FIRMS as authoritative, objective/credible, and sustainable source of information on the state of fishery resources and the status and plans of their management.

The two above audience groups look at building their own monitoring capacity and advocacy on existing, sustainable and credible sources of information. They might be understood as FIRMS allies so long they are perceived to pursue the same general goals and, as brokers or re-publishers of FIRMS information, can be seen as power-users which could influence the type of information products which FIRMS should make available. Communication messages to each of them are proposed to be:

To LME / regional ecosystem projects << FIRMS makes available authoritative, objective, credible, and sustainable information on the state of fishery resources and their management, which together with other biodiversity and environmental sources of data, will contribute indicators of the state of the environment and ecosystem >>

To NGOs advocating on sustainable fisheries << Through authoritative, objective, credible, and sustainable information on the state of fishery resources and their management', FIRMS provides the foundations for iNGOs to build more specific evidence-based advocacy to support concept of sustainable fisheries >>

Group 4. Finally the **donors** which would support FIRMS with funding also constitute an audience of primary interest, not so much in respect of FIRMS information products, but of a proper communication message. Those messages would build on the ones developed for the groups identified above. Donors are also Member States and there might be converging interest hence messages to both talk to the State as a donor and as a FIRMS beneficiary. This however implies that those States can be involved in FIRMS e.g. as RFB members, or that their interest is called upon to build NatFIRMS. **FSC8 should provide directions and networking for approaching donors.**