

IAATO Communications Strategy 2018 - 2023

Helping to deliver IAATO's Vision, 'Through self-regulation, Antarctic tourism is a safe activity that causes no more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment and creates a corps of ambassadors for the continued protection of Antarctica.'

Executive Summary

This Strategy is the overarching vision for IAATO's communications, 2018-2023. Its purpose is to support delivery of IAATO's Strategic plan, mission and vision.

The spotlight on the management and conservation of Antarctica is stronger than ever, as is the desire by travelers to experience Antarctica's unique wilderness first-hand. Visiting Antarctica is a great privilege and comes with a responsibility to keep it pristine. Balancing this obligation with meeting the interests of those who wish to visit or work there is an important challenge to meet head on and requires commitment by everyone with a vested interest. As such, effective communication is critical to strengthen IAATO and its relationship with the Antarctic community and other stakeholders including the travelling public.

Following analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, four overall objectives were identified that form the supporting pillars of the strategy and maintain IAATO's position as a world leader in safe, environmentally responsible private-sector travel:

- 1. IAATO's Internal Strength
- 2. IAATO as a valued Polar Partner
- 3. Antarctic Ambassadors
- 4. Media and Public Relations

These four objectives will recognize opportunities, highlight IAATO's work and encourage targeted internal and external stakeholders to invest in IAATO's mission and thus the continued protection of Antarctica. The strategy outlines IAATO key messages and methods to meet the objectives. It is an organic document, responding to IAATO's priorities and is subject to review and amendments. It assumes active leadership by the Executive Director and Executive Committee and allocation of sufficient resources, determined on an annual basis. With IAATO growing from strength to strength each year, it was determined that the Secretariat should be expanded to meet the communication needs of the association with the hiring of a Digital Media Assistant in 2017. The Head of Communications & Environment and Digital Media Assistant, together with the wider Secretariat and relevant committees and working groups as appropriate, will develop separate short and long-term work plans to help deliver the four key strategy objectives outlined in this strategy over the next five years.

It is noted that during an incident, the IAATO Secretariat's primary objective is to protect the reputation of the Antarctic tourism industry by supporting a safe and timely resolution by relaying correct, consistent information to the media and stakeholders.

The strategy concludes with an overview of how each of the four key objectives will be measured for success.

1.0 Introduction

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) represents the vast majority of commercial tourism operations in Antarctica. Founded in 1991, it now has a global network of over 100 members; 50 of them operating members, with a collective mission to advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic.

IAATO is self-regulatory, with guidelines, policies and procedures that are well respected by governments, Treaty Parties and other members of the wider Antarctic community. The association takes a proactive approach towards addressing any challenges and opportunities as they arise. A broad audience seeks IAATO's data and perceives the association as a voice of authority on effective tourism management. IAATO values the framework of the Antarctic Treaty System to achieve many of its objectives. In turn, the Treaty Party nations have relied on IAATO's ability to manage tourism effectively where the consensual nature of Antarctic Treaty System decision-making has postponed decisions or weakened agreed text.

However, Antarctica remains under intense scrutiny on a global scale. Antarctica and related news about its conservation and management stay prominent in the news. IAATO releases its tourism figures annually which, although largely in line with global trends, has led to considerable interest in polar tourism growth and the rise in the number of Chinese visitors. Public controversy affects public trust and their attitudes to issues such as climate change, fishing, tourism and impact on the environment.

Consequently, the need for effective communication has become increasingly more important. IAATO's communication strategy, derived from the association's Strategic Plan, builds on existing methods and takes new approaches to include engagement with many different internal and external stakeholders, including membership, the Secretariat and field staff and also would-be guests and the wider public. Implementation and delivery of this Strategy will involve:

- Active leadership, guidance and support by the Executive Director and Executive Committee:
- Allocation of sufficient resources;
- Promoting key messages, campaigns to reach target audiences and delivering communications through appropriate channels;
- Successful partnerships with stakeholders including governments and Competent Authorities, the media, scientists, educators and Non-Government Organizations;
- Acknowledgement that the strategy can be influenced by external circumstances and may have to adapt accordingly.

The key aspiration of this communications strategy is to build on previous communication and engagement success to deliver IAATO's Vision; 'Through self-regulation, Antarctic tourism is a sustainable, safe activity that causes no more than a minor or transitory impact

on the environment and creates a corps of ambassadors for the continued protection of Antarctica.'

IAATO Seeks to:

- advocate and promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible privatesector travel to the Antarctic;
- subscribe members to the principle that their planned activities will have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment;
- represent responsible Antarctic tour operators and others organizing and conducting responsible travel to the Antarctic Treaty Parties, the international conservation community and the public at large;
- develop, promote and circulate IAATO guidelines, procedures and membership requirements that fulfil IAATO's mission;
- advocate and promote operation by its members within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and similar international and national laws;
- foster continued cooperation among its members and to monitor IAATO activities;
- provide a forum for the international, private-sector travel industry to share expertise and opinions about safe and environmentally responsible travel to Antarctica;
- enhance public awareness and concern for the conservation of the Antarctic environment and its associated ecosystems and to better inform the media, governments and environmental organizations about private-sector travel to these regions;
- create a corps of ambassadors for the continued protection of Antarctica by combining education with a safe, responsible first-hand experience of the continent;
- support science in Antarctica through cooperation with national Antarctic programs, including logistical support and research;
- foster cooperation between private-sector travel and the international scientific community in the Antarctic;

2.0 Analysis – Where are we now? Where do we want to be?

In order to establish the goals and objectives of the communications strategy, an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was carried out. Strengths and weaknesses focus on internal matters, while opportunities and threats consider external factors. The analysis incorporates key issues arising from the IAATO Growth Management workshop; Marseille, October 2017.

Strengths

- Strong reputation, based on environmental responsibility;
- Represents the vast majority of commercial tourism operations in Antarctica;
- o Good relationships with key stakeholders;

Weaknesses

- Communication challenges in transmitting complex/detailed information to a wide range of diverse internal stakeholders;
- The workforce behind members and field staff (such as sales teams, ship officers and

- Strong, respected presence at ATCM;
- A respected partner in relevant scientific research programs;
- Unique, comprehensive database of Antarctic tourism;
- Good liaisons with partner cruise trade associations;
- Financially stable;
- Strong core of volunteer members to guide decision-making process (e.g. Committees and Working Groups);
- New Executive Director with fresh ideas for leadership, management and direction;
- Effective Secretariat team with good communication channels and shared work plans;
- Some well-established communication channels;
- Clear strategic plan;
- Clear organizational structure;
- o Transparent sharing of data and information

- crew) have limited awareness of IAATO's core values and mission;
- IAATO's Wilderness Etiquette is under pressure/overlooked;
- Internal website (intranet) not used to full capacity;
- Internal and external websites are cumbersome and lack focus for specific audiences;
- Slow adaptation by some to an evolving sector;
- Some field staff feel divided from IAATO;
- Limited presence in China;
- New members slower to adopt IAATO's core values and ethos;
- Not perceived as truly global.

Opportunities

- Better use of IAATO's unique dataset to our advantage;
- Strengthen understanding of stakeholders of successes to date and challenges ahead;
- Increased contribution to visitor management discussions at CEP and CCAMLR level;
- Improve media coverage of IAATO successes and values:
- More direct promotion of IAATO core values through delivery of key messages at meetings and through Member activities;
- Expand Antarctic Ambassador program;
- Promote and strengthen collaborative relationships with key organizations, such as SCAR, COMNAP and relevant academics;
- Improve use of website and other communications methods (social media, apps) to facilitate communication internally and externally;
- Good practice and strong response to incidents will increase public/stakeholder trust;
- Strengthen brand recognition;

Threats

- A single mass casualty incident;
- A major environmental incident;
- Unmanaged, uncontrolled growth potentially compromises IAATO's mission and vision;
- Growth leads to division and more aggressive marketing within IAATO, compromising our core goals and mission;
- Non-IAATO operators compromise the reputation of the wider industry;
- Irresponsible, negative press coverage and social media networking;
- Public view of Antarctic issues, particularly climate change, tourism and marine protected areas leads to negative perception of IAATO's core business;
- Loss of credibility if Member activities are not managed in a sensitive manner;
- Government/competent authority staff changes lead to weakened relationships;

- Translation of IAATO information into more languages to reach wider audiences;
- Effective media campaigns will lead to a positive perception of IAATO and Antarctic tourism;
- Government/competent authority staff changes lead to strengthened relationships

3.0 Communication Strategy Objectives

The communications strategy is designed to support IAATO's overarching Strategic Plan, 2018-2023. It will facilitate IAATO's public and industry engagement and create a wider understanding of IAATO's work as well as a greater awareness of Antarctica, why the region should be protected and the importance of ethical and environmentally sensitive travel.

Four key communication objectives have been identified to focus IAATO's communication efforts, recognize opportunities and encourage investment from stakeholders to promote safe, environmentally responsible Antarctic travel:

1. Internal Strength

Internal communications channels will be improved to strengthen the IAATO community and encourage a collective investment from internal stakeholders including Membership, Committees, Working Groups, field staff and the Secretariat to work proactively. As a result, IAATO's mission and vision will be valued and understood, policies and guidelines trusted and respected across all sectors. Opportunities will be embraced and challenges efficiently managed. This will demonstrate collaboration and excellence across all areas of IAATO's business leading to safe, environmentally responsible and enriching visitor experiences in the field.

2. A Valued Polar Partner

Communications and engagement with polar community stakeholders will be developed and strengthened to maintain proactive, transparent and reputable relationships. Collaborative opportunities will continue to be explored. IAATO's policies, guidelines, membership requirements and contributions to science and education will be reinforced internally and externally. IAATO is perceived as a voice of authority on effective visitor management and a trusted, respected partner in the wider Antarctic community. Antarctic private-sector travel is recognized as being a safe, responsible and valued activity.

3. Antarctic Ambassadors

To fulfil IAATO's vision of creating a corps of ambassadors for Antarctica's continued protection, the Antarctic Ambassador program will be expanded to encourage engagement and calls to action. Digital media presence will be increased with targeted campaigns emphasizing education and science. Materials, tools and resources will be developed to support Membership's educational and citizen science programs and marketing. Research that seeks to measure the Antarctic Ambassador concept will be reviewed and supported as appropriate.

4. Media & Public Relations

Relationships with the media and other external audiences will be fostered to positively position IAATO's reputation and encourage investment from external audiences in committing to safe, environmentally responsible travel and protection of Antarctica. IAATO will be viewed as a welcoming source of reliable, informative information by a global audience. Key messages and targeted campaigns will promote how IAATO fulfills its mission, supports science, charitable giving and conservation/monitoring efforts.

Delivering the overall objectives:

Separate communications work plans will be developed for each of the four Strategic Objectives in section 3.0 and reviewed on an annual basis. These objectives may be revised in response to the Strategic plan.

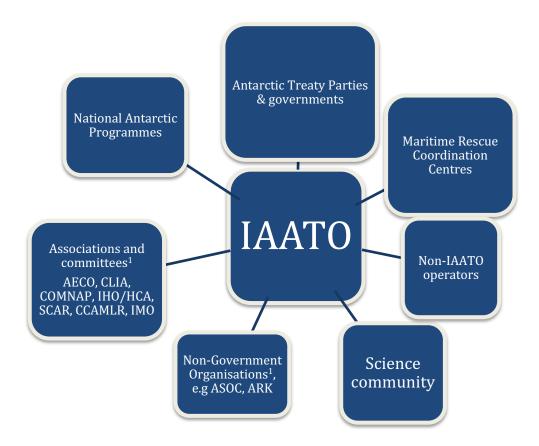
4.0 Stakeholders

With IAATO's mission the foremost consideration in the creation of the strategy, key stakeholders have been mapped out and identified for each of the objectives in section 3.0.

1. IAATO Internal Strength

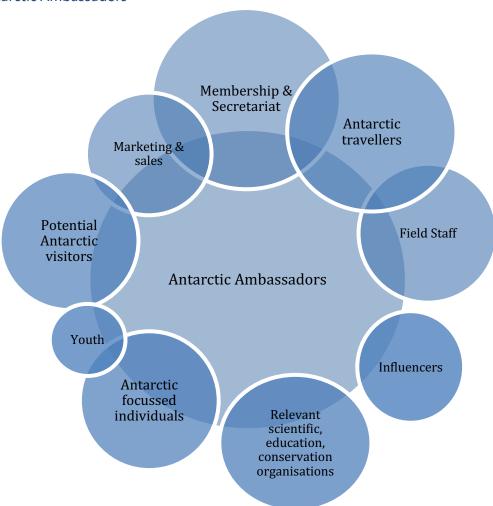


2. A Valued Polar Partner



¹ AECO – Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators; CLIA – Cruise Lines International Association; COMNAP – Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programmes; IHO – International Hydrographic Organization/Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica; SCAR – Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research; CCAMLR – Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources; IMO – International Maritime Organization; ASOC – Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition; ARK – Association of Responsible Krill harvesting companies.

3. Antarctic Ambassadors



'Influencers' include experts, bloggers, explorers or anyone with power to influence decision making because his/her knowledge, position or relationship with her/his audience.

'Antarctic focused individuals' includes anyone expressing interest in learning more about Antarctica but who may not necessarily travel there. E.g. educators, researchers, students, campaigners, students.

5. Media & Public Relations

- National and international environmental, travel and science journalists and relevant publications;
- Trade/industry press;
- Relevant experts/bloggers/influencers
- Researchers/students;
- Antarctic travelers potential and post-visit to raise awareness about IAATO's work and their role in visiting Antarctica responsibly;
- Non-IAATO yachts;

5.0 Key Messages

There are opportunities in all communication, from meetings to social media to conversations at an Antarctic landing site to convey key messages about IAATO. They can inform, educate, entertain or warn and often include a call to action to promote engagement. Key messages will be tailored for each objective, campaign and the audience being addressed but in essence IAATO's core messages are:

- IAATO advocates and promotes the practice of safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic;
- IAATO manages its activities to cause no more than a minor or transitory impact on the Antarctic environment;
- Visiting Antarctica is a privilege and comes with a responsibility to leave it pristine;
- IAATO is a global leader in safe, environmentally responsible visitor management;
- IAATO recognizes that Antarctic travel provides a unique opportunity to learn about the continent and its ecosystems that will deepen understanding and create a corps of ambassadors for Antarctica's continued protection;
- Safeguarding Antarctica from human activity requires collaboration and action on a global scale. IAATO works closely stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for the continent's ongoing protection;
- IAATO actively supports and promotes research leading to the responsible management of human activity in Antarctica;
- IAATO is transparent, sharing data and expertise to better manage human activity in Antarctica;
- IAATO works within the parameters of the Antarctic Treaty System which manages human activity in Antarctica;
- With over 100 members, IAATO works together and with stakeholders to safeguard Antarctica;
- IAATO quickly identifies challenges and works decisively and with commitment to meet them head on;
- IAATO actively supports and promotes the role of Antarctic science;

6.0 Communication Methods

Work plans and separate strategies as required will be developed for each of the four key communications objectives in section 3.0. Work plans will be reviewed regularly over the life of the strategy, 2018-2023 and tailored to fit emerging challenges and opportunities.

Key communications channels for the **Internal Strength** objective will include newsletters, e-bulletins, presentations and emails throughout the year, IAATO's annual general meeting and other relevant gatherings/workshops, targeted social media² and a new website to ensure information reaches members in a timely manner. The IAATO Field Operations

² As of March 2018, IAATO and Antarctic Ambassadors use Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Vimeo (IAATO) with potential to include Google+ and YouTube.

Manual will become fully digital and its contents updated, including briefings, theme and design. The Polar Guide: Antarctica app will be updated when required and relevant tools/resources will be developed for members, field staff and other internal stakeholders. New systems for improving Secretariat communications will be explored and implemented as necessary.

To deliver the **Valued Partner** objective, digital media, including the new website, will be designed with target stakeholders in mind to deliver relevant, helpful and timely information. Other channels include News Releases, emails, conferences and meetings and contributing expertise, data, multi-media materials to stakeholders as required. Relationships with MRCCs will be maintained through search and rescue communications exercises. Collaborations with target stakeholders and audiences will be explored and successes shared.

Expansion of social media channels for **Antarctic Ambassadors** will continue and an Antarctic Ambassador website developed and launched. Members and field staff will be provided with engagement tools and professional resources such as lectures and branded materials to encourage investment by Antarctic travelers.

Channels for the **Public Relations and Media** objectives will include redesigning the website to help target audiences find information more readily and in different languages. News releases, social media and outreach through lectures, events and presentations will be utilized. Potential collaborators will be identified and relevant online and print publications approached to deliver campaigns, such as yacht outreach.

7.0 Implementing the strategy

The IAATO Communications Strategy is an organic document, responding to IAATO's priorities over the life of the strategy 2018-2023. It is subject to regular review and amendments. With IAATO growing from strength to strength each year, it was determined that the Secretariat should be expanded to meet the communication needs of the association with the hiring of Hayley Court as Digital Media Assistant in 2017. Hayley supports Amanda Lynnes (Head of Communications and Environment) who is responsible for the strategy's ongoing development. The strategy is overseen by Damon Stanwell-Smith (Executive Director).

The IAATO Secretariat's communications team (Amanda Lynnes and Hayley Court) will lead on delivering the strategy with guidance and support from the wider Secretariat, the Executive Committee and other Committees and Working Groups as required.

The strategy will be aligned with the aspirations outlined in IAATO's Strategic Plan.

Work plans and separate strategies will be developed for each of the four key communications objectives in section 3.0. Work plans will be reviewed regularly and tailored to fit emerging challenges and opportunities.

Delivery of the strategy assumes a two-person communications team, supported by the five other members of the Secretariat (with the addition of an Operations and Data Assistant in

2018), external IT support and other contractors as required and approved by the Executive Director. Regular communications/media training will be required to increase capacity, expertise and keep the Secretariat current in rapidly evolving media world.

Individuals and members representing the association at meetings, should be made aware of IAATO's key messages, and be prepared to deliver them.

IAATO already achieves success through partnerships in many areas of business, including communications. This should be built upon, where appropriate, to increase impact and boost cost effectiveness for all parties involved.

Additional policies, work plans and strategies support this document (listed in Appendix I).

8.0 Incident Management and Response

In the event of an emergency, the IAATO Secretariat has an in-house Crisis Media Response Protocol that details the processes to be followed when communicating with those involved in a crisis situation and the media. This resource is also available to all members here.

During an incident, the IAATO Secretariat's primary objective is to protect the reputation of the Antarctic tourism industry by supporting the safe and timely resolution of the incident by relaying correct, consistent information to the media and stakeholders.

In the event of an incident, it is important that members keep the Secretariat informed throughout to ensure that press and stakeholder handling of the incident is clear and that consistent messaging is delivered across all agreed platforms.

It is the responsibility of individual members to ensure that they have the necessary operational procedures in place to protect clients, personnel and the environment during an emergency.

Strategy Objective	What to Measure	How to Measure	What does success look like?
Internal Strength	Channels – are they working? Are IAATO's newsletters, emails, updates, website, social media channels, Annual General Meeting, 'town hall' type meetings, workshops, team meetings and 1:1s effective? Are the channels appropriate? Content – are internal stakeholders getting the information they want and need in a timely, relevant manner? Is it accurate? Conversations - Are people communicating effectively? How well do the Secretariat communicate with each other? How well does the EC and other committees and working groups communicate with each other and the Secretariat? Voice - Do people have adequate opportunities to have a say? Do they receive responses to comments and suggestions? Can they contribute to conversations?	Internal Stakeholder Questionnaires, tailored for specific target audiences; Internal audits; Workshop/meeting evaluations; Committee/Working Group feedback/engagement; 1:1 Secretariat meetings with field staff and members; Monitoring frequency of messaging; Evaluating open/click rates; Media monitoring analytics; Website analytics; Social media analytics	Internal messaging is widely read, valued and understood; Behavioral changes and messaging from point of sale to the field demonstrate investment in IAATO's mission, vision, and wilderness etiquette; The IAATO community works together to respond decisively and with commitment to challenges and opportunities. Increased engagement by internal stakeholders on social media; Increased traffic to internal and external website pages; Internal Stakeholders are proud of IAATO's achievements and share messaging and successes with external audiences.

9.0 Measuring Success			
A Valued Polar	Channels - are they working? Are IAATO's emails Pross	Workshon/mosting evaluations:	IAATO's website redesigned and launched; New members show commitment to IAATO's mission and vision.
A Valued Polar Partner	Channels – are they working? Are IAATO's emails, Press Releases, fact sheets, website, social media channels, Annual General Meeting, workshops, meetings and 1:1s effective? Are the channels appropriate? Content – are external stakeholders getting the information they want and need in a timely, relevant manner? Is it accurate? Conversations – Are IAATO members and Secretariat communicating effectively with external stakeholders? Are external stakeholders communicating with appropriate IAATO representatives? Voice – Are there adequate opportunities to have a say? Do they receive responses to comments and suggestions? Can they contribute to conversations? Is feedback initiated and encouraged?	Workshop/meeting evaluations; 1:1 feedback/engagement sought; Monitoring frequency of messaging; Evaluating open/click rates; Media monitoring analytics; Website analytics; Social media analytics; Press Cutting Analysis	IAATO is invited to key stakeholder meetings, including ATCM, conferences, workshops as a recognized expert in visitor management; Stakeholders aware and share IAATO's key messages; Regular 1:1s held with appropriate IAATO representatives; Stakeholders are up to date with IAATO's work and information; New and emerging tour operators enquire about IAATO membership;

9.0 Measur	ring Success		Partners seek IAATO collaboration on key projects, research, planning and campaigns; IAATO's website redesigned and launched. IAATO's contribution to and support of Antarctic science is valued and acknowledged.
Antarctic Ambassadors	Channels – are they working? Are Antarctic Ambassadors social media channels and website effective? Are the channels appropriate? Do field staff and ambassadors have the tools they need to deliver and engage? Content – are members and field staff getting the information they want and need in a timely, relevant manner to deliver the concept? Is it accurate and appropriate? Are target audiences getting the information they want and need? Conversations – Are the target stakeholders communicating and engaging?	Questionnaires and surveys, tailored for specific target stakeholders; Education & Outreach Working Group feedback/engagement; Evaluating open/click rates; Media monitoring analytics; Website analytics; Social media analytics	Increased uptake and ownership of the concept by members and delivered to guests in the field; Antarctic Ambassadors website launched; Tools for field staff and ambassadors developed and made available in the field/via digital media; Increased digital media engagement and followers by target audiences; External reporting/feedback rewards system developed that will record and

	ring Success Voice – Are there adequate opportunities to have a		measure ambassadors taking action for
	say? Do stakeholders receive responses to comments and suggestions? Can they contribute to conversations? Is feedback initiated and encouraged?		the environment; Antarctic Travel Experience Project supported, results analyzed and published; Relevant educational and science partners seek collaboration with Antarctic Ambassadors; Antarctic visitors are more aware of their role in visiting responsibly;
Media & PR	Channels – are they working? Are IAATO's emails, Press Releases, fact sheets, website, social media channels, effective? Are the channels appropriate? Content – are stakeholders getting the information they want and need in a timely, relevant manner? Is it accurate? Conversations – Are IAATO members and Secretariat communicating effectively with stakeholders? Are	Monitoring frequency of messaging/news releases; Evaluating open/click rates; Media monitoring analytics; Media logs; Website analytics; Social media analytics;	IAATO's key messages and core values understood; Antarctic visitors are more aware of their role in visiting responsibly; IAATO's activities to deliver safe, environmentally responsible travel is respected and perceived positively in the media;

9.0 Me	9.0 Measuring Success			
	stakeholders approaching IAATO for expert advice and information? Voice – Do stakeholders receive responses to comments and suggestions? Is feedback encouraged?	Press Cutting Analysis	Increased awareness by non-IAATO operators of the need to visit Antarctica safely and responsibly; The IAATO website is redesigned to include specific pages for target audiences that will help and inform;	

Appendix I – List of Supporting Documents

1. Work plans/strategies.

For each of the four key strategy objectives separate work plans and campaigns will be developed as required to ensure maximum success.

- a. Internal Strength
- b. A Valued Polar Partner
- c. Antarctic Ambassadors
- d. Media & PR
 - i. Yacht Outreach Campaign
- 2. IAATO Social Media Policy
- 3. IAATO Crisis Media Response Protocol
- 4. Field Staff Communications Policy
- 5. Whistleblowing Policy