**Minutes of IYRP Global Communications Team Meeting on 26 March 2021**

**Attendees:**

* *Ann Waters-Bayer* – agricultural sociologist (Canada/Germany); CELEP; ISG; RISGs for Europe and for Eastern & Southern Africa
* *Barbara Hutchinson* – University of Arizona; Rangelands Partnership; SRM; ISG; North America RISG
* *Burcu Ates* – Yolda Initiative; RISG Europe
* *Elena Dosamantes* – Alumni from University of Arizona; originally from Mexico (ranching family); currently working in Hawaii
* *Engin Yilmaz* – Yolda Initiative (Turkey); ISG; Europe RISG (co-chair); global communications team
* *Fiona Flintan* – ILRI based in Rome; also works with IFAD; ISG; global communications issues on rangelands; rangelands atlas will be launched in May; Europe RISG
* *Khalid Khawaldeh* – Alnawatif Cooperative (Jordan); West Asian Pastoralist Network (WAPN); Arab Pastoralist Network; World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP); North Africa & West Asia RISG
* *Letizia Bindi* – Italy; anthropologist; transhumance in UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage; APPIA Network; Europe RISG
* *Mandakh Nyamtseren* – JASIL (Mongolia); geography with focus on desertification; Central Asia & Mongolia RISG
* *Natasha Maru* – doing PhD on pastoralists in India; has worked with FAO in past; South Asia RISG
* *Pablo Frere* – Argentina Chaco forest; Pastoamericas; South America RISG (with Pablo Manzano)
* *Rashmi Singh* – working on PhD in Eastern Himalayas; South Asia RISG
* *Tatsama Motilal* – India/Rajasthan; works with camel herding and small ruminant communities; South Asia RISG
* *Tungaa Ulambayar* – Mongolia; community-based conservationist; PhD from Colorado State University; ISG; Central Asia & Mongolia RISG

Unable to connect: *Huang Xiaodan* – Lanzhou University, China; East Asia RISG

**Recording of meeting:**
<https://arizona.zoom.us/rec/share/bggbmBvOncUp7U5jhiOdjwM5HbUaX13i6JA29zlrbFdS4k7-7yc5Rnbo4ijtf70Y.p-PyJwVZzwbIXDsZ>

**Discussions:**

1. **Review of ToRs for communications teams / capacity & expectations of RISG communications teams in achieving the responsibilities and actions; clarifying membership and commitment**

***A. Global communications team***

Ann – It is not clear in the Tors how people are recruited into the global comms team. There are currently 5 people in the global team; the other participants in this meeting are from RISGs. The RISGs in the Arctic, Australasia and West & Central Africa have not yet identified liaison persons to this communications group.

Natasha – What is the process of decision-making? What is the relationship between the global team and the regional comms coordinators? How do we review and amend actions?

Engin – Contributions have always been on a volunteer basis; no processes on decision-making have been defined.

Ann – When we put out a document, we send it around to each other and come to an agreement on how we want it to be. We do not have a particular hierarchy; rather, we work as a team.

Natasha – Working informally and coming to consensus does work well, but maybe there should be a point included in the ToRs about current decision-making and how disagreements might be resolved.

Khalid – This can be general and not complicated; we are a communications team, and big decisions will be made by the ISG.

Ann – The ISG is indeed the decision-making body; we usually sent documents to the Executive Group and asked if they are okay; they may not have sent them to the entire ISG for approval.

Letizia – We need to be able to act quickly on certain things; we should have a quick structure to decide what is to be published and develop a more structured strategy for issues requiring wider discussion and decision-making.

Engin – We should remember what period we are in and what will happen after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September; RISGs will be developing action plans that should include governance mechanisms, but now the structure needs to be based on volunteers’ capabilities and time constraints.

Ann – We should take note of these possible changes in structure, but continue fairly informally until September, when we hope the IYRP will be approved.

*Agreement to add a point to the ToRs about current decision-making by consensus*

*Suggestion to include all ISG members in approval of communications materials, if time allows*

Engin – current global communications plans:

* work on branding messages for global level and social media campaign ready by June
* global online campaign to start in August and intensify into September; maybe also some small-scale activities prior to FAO Conference in July.
* if resources allow, would also like to organise an event for UNGA, working together with RISGs.

Tungaa – Will there be a plan for communications that will also include national TV etc?

Ann – We do not have a plan at national or regional levels; we hope each RISG will make a plan for how to work in the regions to support the global effort and make own inputs at national level.

Tungaa – We need strategic resource materials on the IYRP website that can be used to support communications efforts regionally and locally.

Ann – There are two IYRP websites with all kinds of materials; we will try to make these resources more easily available.

*Barbara to prepare handout with links to resource pages on www.iyrp.info as well as materials on IYRP archive website (see annex)*

***B. RISG communications teams***

Ann – Since we are all volunteers, are the responsibilities outlined in the ToRs for the regional comms team realistic?

Natasha – There is much enthusiasm in South Asia but many people do not have a lot of technical skills, especially in local pastoralist groups. It is difficult to find time to volunteer. Many local organisations are not yet on board with the IYRP. It would help to break down responsibilities in a phased manner – now vs after September – and clear guidelines from the ISG to the regional groups.

Ann – Perhaps the regional groups could suggest options for a staged set of actions; some regional groups are more active than others and have different capacities. It would be useful for the groups to see what the others are doing. In the coming weeks, the RISGs could share their ideas about how they plan to phase their activities in their respective regions.

Rashmi – People who are leading communications in the different RISGs need to discuss among themselves. We could all take responsibility to share individual updates within this group, then send them out more widely. The South Asia group designed its own logo and letterhead; we issued a call for engagement in South Asia. We would like to know how to share this progress on the webpage and how otherwise to share with the various RISGs.

Ann – With the current website, it may be hard to make regular regional updates of that type. We need to find other ways to highlight current news. The only option right now on the website is “Take a Look at This” on the homepage, but only one thing can be highlighted at a time. With several RISGs, there will be lots of news, but how to make it more widely known? We need to think about how to communicate such news more broadly, also so that we inform and inspire by each other.

Engin – We are using the website as a main platform for making clear to the world why the IYRP is important. More specific information from regions and individuals among ourselves and for outside parties can be shared through social media. The website is more static and focused on giving the right message to decision-makers, while social media are for news and sharing.

Barbara – Should there be a subgroup for social media? Elena Dosamantes would like to help with social media, particularly FaceBook and Twitter.

Mandakh – Social media cannot stand alone without a website; we probably need two groups: one for the website and one for social media.

Ann – Further people in the group are welcome to express their interest in joining the social media group together with Engin and Elena.

Mandakh – In responsibilities of regional comms groups, what does policy dialogue refer to?

Ann – initially, the ISG did not suggest separate communications teams and policy dialogue teams, but the RISG for Eastern & Southern Africa decided to have two groups: a comms team and a policy working group to examine current policy on rangelands and pastoralism in the countries in the region and to plan how to influence it. The two subgroups will work closely together, as communication is closely interlinked with influencing policy.

1. **Suggestions for additions/improvements to this website**

Ann – The RISG for Eastern & Southern Africa would like to have a separate button on each regional webpage for policy documents and analyses.

Barbara – Yes, this is possible.

Ann – Please send other suggestions for what should be added before September to the website

1. **Updating regional pages on “online booth" (**[**www.iyrp.info**](http://www.iyro.info/)**)**

Mandakh – For managing website content, can a guide be put together with information on who to contact for content to be uploaded?

Ann – There are two aspects to managing the regional webpages: deciding on content and uploading the content.

Barbara – The University of Arizona maintains the websites, but Ann and I can add content to the iyrp.info website. Eventually we will have a guide and we will train those who would like to upload regional documents to those webpages. However, for now, send your documents, photos or videos to Ann and me for uploading.

Ann – Now prior to UNGA, it is important to have visual documents and only a few short, attractive written documents; focus on photos and videos, with pastoralists talking about their lives and their pride in what they do. After UNGA, we can consider changes that might be needed in the website, and other types of resources needed in the years leading up to and during the IYRP.

Tatsama’s suggestion in Chat – *Maybe we can have an standard operating procedure to segregate what goes on the website and what goes on the social media platforms + how we ensure 'equivalent' representation to material shared by different organisations, regions, pastoral communities, etc.*

Letizia – We need to have a plan for how frequently to post on social media, sending out information regularly, perhaps twice a week, with equally divided material from different regions.

Ann – Some regional groups are not as strong as, for instance, the South Asia group; the global group may need to help those other groups to prepare and share information.

Ann – We will need someone to monitor the messages being posted and make sure that the regions are being fairly equally covered. We will discuss within the global comms team about how to divide up this and other tasks.

1. **Populating IYRP page on website for International Grassland & Rangeland Congress (IGC/IRC)**

Ann – The IGC/IRC organisers have offered to host a webpage on the IYRP on their website.

Barbara – What are the options, is it only text or photos or videos?

Ann – It seems to be wide open for any type of content.

Barbara – We need a template that considers design versus content and a timeline / target dates.

Engin – I propose having a smaller version of our already developed content on iyrp.info so as now to create too much more work.

Ann – Good idea, but maybe regional groups might want to contribute additional content about their inputs; is anyone from the regional groups going to the IRC/IGC? (no response)

Ann – We will compile the questions about the webpage and send them to the IGC/IRC organisers.

1. **Major regional events in which global team and/or other RISG comms teams could assist**

Ann – International/global events include the UN Food Systems Summit in Sept 2021, the pre-summit in Rome in July 2021, UNGA in New York in September 2021, IRC/IGC in October 2021 and probably a UN Decade of Family Farming event towards the end of 2021. Are there any regional events where we could help each other raise awareness?

Engin – Europe has both a policy and a communications groups. The policy group plans a webinar in June that will include roundtable sessions with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in each session. The final session will have high-level involvement from the European Commission (Vice-President) and the Mongolian Minister of Agriculture. Within the webinar, we are going to discuss with the MEPs the impact of European Union policies in Europe and in other countries, so this event will also be important for the rest of the world. We hope for collaboration with the RISGs in this and also after September.

Ann – Our first target is getting country support at the UNGA in September but, from then on, we need to focus on trying to influence policy related to rangelands and pastoralism.

Barb – The North American group focuses right now on trying to gain more letters of support from organizations and institutions throughout the United States. There will be a group letter for organizations to sign onto that will be sent to high levels, i.e. the Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of the Interior, and then hopefully to the Ambassador at the State Department. The target date for completion is July.

Ann – Please keep this group informed about such events and activities in your region; this would give people in other regions ideas of what they could do and how they might support each other.

Letizia – I agree with the agenda set for this phase at regional and global level to get the IYRP approved and then work on policies and concentrate more on communication strategies of dissemination and enhancing sensibilities. In Europe, we need to work on the Common Agricultural Policy, which currently does not give enough attention to pastoralism. It is extremely important to support the work of pastoralists.

Ann – I suggest that we have another meeting in about four weeks so that we can update each other and see where we need mutual support. We will send out a doodle poll to see if we can find a time when most people can be online. If there are no other points, we can adjourn the meeting for today. Thank you very much for taking part and for all your suggestions.

**Request for your feedback:**

1. Please review the “Resources and News” section for your region and let Barbara and Ann know if you would like to add content.
2. If there is a person in your RISG who is interested in being trained in how to upload content to your regional webpage, please send the name and email address to Barbara and Ann.

**Links from IYRP.info website for global and regional “Resources and News”** – here you will find minutes from regional RISG meetings as well as IYRP flyers (1-page and 4-page versions, in some cases adapted for a specific region):

<https://iyrp.info/resources/front> – home page

<https://iyrp.info/resources/325> – Australasia/Oceania

<https://iyrp.info/resources/342> – Central Asia and Mongolia

<https://iyrp.info/resources/334> – East and South Asia

<https://iyrp.info/resources/358> – Eastern & Southern Africa

<https://iyrp.info/resources/360> – Europe & Arctic

<https://iyrp.info/resources/359> – North Africa & Middle East

<https://iyrp.info/resources/359> – North America

<https://iyrp.info/resources/363> – South America

<https://iyrp.info/resources/361> – West & Central Africa

**IYRP archival website** – resources are listed in sections that can be accessed from dropdown menus with various headings; the most relevant for the Communications Teams include:

<https://globalrangelands.org/international-year-rangelands-and-pastoralists-initiative>

THE MAJOR DROPDOWN MENUS AND CONTENTS:

* Mongolian proposal for an IYRP: resources & COAG results
	+ Press releases in multiple languages
* IYRP Support Group
	+ Meeting minutes
	+ Terms of Reference
* Regional IYRP Support Groups
	+ Meeting minutes
	+ Terms of Reference
	+ Preparatory process for RISGs in multiple languages
* Public relations materials
	+ Flyers
	+ Graphics
	+ 12 themes document in multiple languages
	+ Logo
* Presentations and posters
	+ PPT about history of the IYRP effort
	+ Posters presented at various meetings
* Joint International Rangelands & Grasslands Congress, 2021
	+ Link to Congress website