Data Protocol –
Information Dissemination Guidelines

CROP ICT Working Group

Definitions

- "Quality" is an encompassing term comprising utility, objectivity, and integrity. Therefore, the guidelines sometimes refer to these four statutory terms, collectively, as "quality".

- "Utility" refers to the usefulness of the information to its intended users, including the public. In assessing the usefulness of information that the CROP ICT Working Group disseminates to the public, the Working Group will consider the uses of the information, not only from the perspective of the Working Group, but also from the perspective of the public. As a result, when reproducibility and transparency of information are relevant for assessing the information usefulness from the public perspective, the Working Group will take care to ensure that reproducibility and transparency have been addressed in its review of the information.

- "Objectivity" includes whether disseminated information is being presented in an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased manner. This involves whether the information is presented within a proper context. Sometimes, in disseminating certain types of information to the members and public, other information must also be disseminated in order to ensure an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased presentation. Also, the CROP ICT Working Group will, where appropriate, identify the sources of the disseminated information (to the extent possible, consistent with confidentiality protections) and, in a scientific or statistical context, the supporting data and models, so that the public can assess for itself whether there may be some reason to question the objectivity of the sources. Where appropriate, supporting data should have full, accurate, and transparent documentation, and error sources affecting data quality should be identified and disclosed to users.

- "Integrity" refers to the security of information, or protection of the information from unauthorised access or revision, to ensure that the information is not compromised through corruption or falsification.

- "Information" means any communication or representation of knowledge, such as facts or data, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms. This definition includes information that the CROP ICT Working Group disseminates from a web page, but does not include the provision of hyperlinks to information that others disseminate. This definition does not include opinions, where the Working Group makes it clear that what is being offered is an individual's opinion rather than fact or Working Group views.

- "Protocol" refers to the official procedure of rules governing affairs of the CROP ICT WG for information collection, storage and dissemination to members and public.

- "Information dissemination product" means any book, paper, map, machine-readable material, audiovisual production, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristic, that the CROP ICT Working Group disseminates to the public. This definition includes any electronic document, CD-ROM, or web page.

- "Dissemination" means CROP ICT Working Group initiated or sponsored distribution of information to the members and public in all media and formats.

Guidelines

The following guidelines describes the CROP ICT Working Group's policy for ensuring the quality of information that it disseminates to the members and public. It sets forth the administrative procedure by which members and public may obtain disseminated information.

The Secretariat of the CROP ICT Working Group will update this paper as and when the need arises in consultation with the members of the Working Group.

The following guidelines are for ensuring and maximising the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by the CROP ICT Working Group:

1. The CROP ICT Working Group through its Secretariat is responsible for managing communication within the Working Group organisations, members and with the general public (e.g., news and press releases, managing the web site and access documents).

2. While some information made available by the CROP ICT Working Group may be public, "Member-Only" information will be available to authorised users only, including representatives of member organisations, observers, and invited stakeholder.

3. Those authorised to access Members-Only information:

   - Must treat the information as confidential within CROP ICT Working Group;
   - Must use reasonable efforts to maintain the proper level of confidentiality; and
   - Must not release this information to the general public or press.

4. The Secretariat of the CROP ICT Working Group must provide mechanisms to protect the confidentiality of Members-Only information and ensure that authorised parties have proper access to this information. Documents should clearly indicate whether they require Members-Only confidentiality. Members uncertain of the confidentiality level of a piece of information should contact the Secretariat of the Working Group.

5. CROP ICT Working Group representatives may authorise Members-Only access to member representatives and other individuals employed by the member who are considered appropriate recipients such as focal point members.

6. The CROP ICT Working Group adopts a basic standard of quality (including objectivity, utility, and integrity) as a performance goal for all information that it disseminates. The Working Group members take appropriate steps to incorporate information quality criteria into information dissemination practices.

7. As a matter of good and effective information resources management, the CROP ICT Working Group reviews the quality of information before it is disseminated. Information

quality is integral to every step of the Working Group development of information, including creation, collection, maintenance, and dissemination. The Working Group substantiates the quality of the information it has disseminated through documentation or other means appropriate to the information.

8. Generally, the Secretariat of the CROP ICT Working Group disseminating the information, will be responsible for reviewing the quality of information before dissemination, with appropriate oversight by the Working Group Chairperson or the Chairperson's designees. The originating member will use internal peer reviews and other review mechanisms to ensure that disseminated information meets quality standards including objectivity, utility, and integrity in both presentation and substance. Each member organisation is responsible for ensuring that the pre-dissemination review is performed and documented at a level appropriate for the type of information disseminated.

9. To facilitate review, members may seek and obtain, where appropriate, timely correction of information maintained and disseminated by the Secretariat of the CROP ICT Working Group.

10. The Secretariat of the CROP ICT Working Group will investigate and respond to requests for correction in a flexible manner, taking into consideration the nature and extent of the request, the nature and timeliness of the information involved, the significance of the changes to the use of the information, and the magnitude of the amendment needed. Should the Working Group determine that an update is necessary, appropriate responses might include personal contacts by letter or telephone, press releases, website postings, errata sheets in publications, or mass mailings to correct a widely disseminated error or address a frequently raised request.