

THE ICCA ALERT SYSTEM

(revised 20th May 2017)

Background

Envisioned at the International ICCA workshop in Shirakawa, Japan, October 2010 preceding the CBD COP-10, was the idea to establish an international ICCA Alert System providing support to Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Local Communities (LCs) engaged in defending their ICCAs against impending threats. Depending on the context of each threat, it was decided that a system would be put in place for the Consortium to help in whatever way it could. An Alerts Coordinator (referred to as “Coordinator” hereafter), along with the Consortium membership, Steering Committee and Secretariat would encourage active exchanges, mutual support and effective joint actions among Consortium Members, Honorary members and Partners in responding to such threats.

If threats to ICCAs are identified, the Alert System helps to **build linkages among Consortium Members and with a variety of partners** (e.g. Friends of the Earth, Global Witness, Survival International, Rainforest Rescue, International Land Coalition, etc.) and other organisations. The aim is to identify meaningful and feasible action to protect the ICCA and the custodian community at risk. Action can range from live demonstrations to letter writing, from a media campaign to a petition online.

The support of the Consortium’s Members, Steering Committee and Secretariat is essential in assisting the Coordinator in validating an alert and organising appropriate responses.

When an alert requires public coverage, the Consortium’s communication tools are used to their fullest extent. For example, if such an alert is launched, then the Consortium’s website, Facebook group, Twitter page, Newsletter and Google-groups are all utilised to contribute to circulating the information and engaging in whatever action is needed. If required, ICCA Alerts are also given visibility through traditional media such as newspapers, television, radio, etc. ‘Change.org’ is a useful online campaign tool for petitions, which can also be used as an aid to the Alert System.

In synthesis: ICCA Alerts are **tools to help IPs and LCs to defend their ICCAs** in particular by **spreading information** and **developing partnerships for meaningful action**.

Aim and functions of the ICCA Consortium Alert System

The Alert System assists IPs and LCs in defending their ICCAs and associated aspects of their cultures, livelihoods and traditional knowledge, particularly in response to an acute, urgent and specific threat.

ICCA Alerts are submitted to the Coordinator by one or more Consortium Members or Honorary members (known as Alert Initiators). The Alert Initiators may have received the information from a non-Member but all alerts must be **validated** and **articulated in writing** by a Consortium Member or Honorary member acting as Initiator. The Alert Initiators assume the responsibility for securing the Free Prior and Informed Consent of the custodian community regarding the alert and for making sure that there is a genuine request for help on their part. The nature of an alert is determined by the relevant ICCA custodian community and **not** by the Initiators or the Consortium. No alert activity is undertaken without the express request/approval of the custodian ICCA community, which is kept informed at every stage.

An ICCA Alert may draw attention to the fact that financial resources are needed to match and complement community advocacy efforts, but alerts should never be used and/or interpreted as instruments to seek funding.

In view of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the ICCA Consortium and Friends of the Earth International on SAFE (Solidarity Action and Fund for the Defenders of the Commons and ICCAs) an ICCA Alert can also add visibility to a situation in which one or more Defenders of the Commons and ICCAs are at risk or have been negatively affected.

In synthesis: An ICCA Alert is only issued at the **request of its ICCA custodian community** and is **designed to be useful to that community**. Alerts are **not**, in principle, **a tool to raise funds**. Alerts can be **entry points for consideration in SAFE Initiatives**.

A Step-By-Step Guide

Step#1: Alert initiation

One or more Consortium Members or Honorary members who wish to initiate an ICCA Alert contact the Coordinator stating that they would like the Consortium to take action on a given ICCA threat and that they are certain of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the ICCA custodian community regarding the alert.

The Alert Initiators explain and clarify in writing why their case is of concern and why it is important for the Consortium to take action on it. They support the case by appropriate documentation, such as signed statements, videos, press articles, interviews, formal letters and reports, etc., in particular to document the consent and concurrence in the alert of the concerned community. The written statement specifically includes information on what the alert is meant to achieve, what action by the Consortium is desired/expected and whether visibility or confidentiality is desired.

All alerts are initiated by a **Consortium Member or Honorary member** who submits to the Coordinator a **written statement (filled form)** that includes the following:

1. Which **ICCA and custodian community** are concerned?
2. Has the custodian community provided their **Free, Prior and Informed Consent** to this alert?
3. Where is the proof of that?
4. What is the **alert** about (events, risks, etc.)?
5. Is there any **supporting documentation**? Please add it in annex and specifically include images.
6. What is the **desired result** of the Consortium's action from the custodian community point of view?
7. **Why** is it important for the Consortium to take action on this alert?
8. If other organisations are also supporting the custodian community with advocacy / outreach, what are their roles and how would they differ from the proposed role of the Consortium?
9. Have the **Members and Honorary members of the Consortium in the specific country/ region** been informed about the alert? What is their opinion about it?
10. Is **visibility** desired/ requested?
11. Is **confidentiality** desired/ requested?
12. Who is the **local Alert Focal Point Person** to keep in close touch with the Coordinator? Please add relevant e-mail, phone, social media, etc.

In synthesis: all ICCA Alerts are linked to **one or more Consortium Members or Honorary members acting as Alert Initiators** who submit a **written information statement (filled form)** about it.

Step#2: Deciding whether the alert is taken on by the Consortium

After properly assessing the request for an alert, the Coordinator:

- a. Does all that he/she can to obtain as quickly as possible **independent information and advice about it from all the Consortium’s Members and Honorary members in the affected country/region**, as well as **from key Consortium relevant partners** (e.g. Friends of the Earth, Global Witness, Survival International, Rainforest Rescue, International Land Coalition, etc.).
- b. Compiles the information received together with the information originally received from the Alert Initiators, makes sure that the relevant documentation and information is properly explained and adds his/her advice on the request.
- c. Submits the alert package to the Programme Committee of the Consortium Steering Committee for review and approval as well as for advice with regard to possible follow up action if the alert is actually approved.

The Programme Committee is asked to reply within a week, or earlier if the alert is particularly urgent. If the alert is not approved for Consortium action, information about it can still be spread through the Consortium normal communications channels.

If a serious conflict is identified within the Consortium’s membership about the alert, the Coordinator and Programme Committee may jointly request the advice of the Consortium’s Council of Elders. In that case, the Coordinator provides comprehensive and timely information to the Council, as appropriate and requested.

In synthesis: the Coordinator must ‘verify’ an alert with as much independent information as possible and all ICCA Alerts adopted by the Consortium must be approved by the Programme Committee of the Consortium Steering Committee.

Step#3: Making a good case for the alert

If the Steering Committee approves the alert, the Coordinator:

- a) Requests additional information on the alert (photos, articles, video links for uploading, etc.) and help (legal, administrative, etc) from the Alert Focal Point person, Consortium Members, Honorary members, Secretariat, Partners (e.g. Friends of the Earth, Global Witness, Survival International, Rainforest Rescue, International Land Coalition, etc.) or others, as appropriate.
- b) Refines and finalises a written description of the case and adds relevant images and other relevant information (e.g., videos).
- c) If the alert can be broadcast and does not require confidentiality, prepares an entry for the ICCA Alert page in the Consortium’s website (see below).

In synthesis: all ICCA Alerts are accompanied by a succinct description that articulates what they are about and—as much as possible – by images.

Step #4: Providing an appropriate response to the alert

Together with the relevant Alert Focal Point Person, custodian community, Alert Initiators and partners willing to engage, the Coordinator:

- a. Draws up a plan of action to respond to the alert, specifically keeping in mind the desired result of Consortium’s engagement from the custodian community point of view (initiatives may include specific letters to decision-makers, dissemination of information through Consortium communication channels, use of social media, newspaper articles, online petitions, public information events, demonstrations, etc.; we envisage that the Consortium will provide to its Members a mini-handbook or other type of guidance on types of responses that might be relevant in different situation).
- b. If requested by the Programme Committee of the Steering Committee, consults with them before agreeing on a specific action plan.
- c. If appropriate, works with FoEI and the relevant Consortium Regional Coordinators to ensure the entry into operation of SAFE initiatives.

- d. Does all that is needed to facilitate the timely and effective implementation of the plan (e.g. drafts the letters to be sent or the text of the online petition, makes sure that Members and partners are in touch and active, contacts newspapers and TV journalists, obtains specific information to add to the alert, etc.)

In synthesis: the **Coordinator** acts as the Consortium's Focal Point for the ICCA Alerts and is **responsible for making sure that a meaningful and feasible response is agreed and implemented.**

Step#5: Broadcasting the alert

If the alert requires visibility, the Coordinator:

- a. Creates an alert webpage, which is made publicly available only after the Initiators and custodian community have reviewed, improved it and approved it, as appropriate.
- a) If desired by the Alert Initiators and custodian community, broadcasts the alert to the Consortium networks and by using normal communication channels (Newsletter, social media...).

In synthesis: no information about an ICCA Alert is broadcast without the **express request/approval of the custodian ICCA community.**

Step#6: Following up the alert

As appropriate, the Coordinator follows up the agreed work plan-- e.g. by sending completed online petitions to government agencies, companies, indigenous federations and NGOs directly involved with the alert case. He/she also:

- a. Makes sure that the Alert is properly monitored with the engagement of the Alert Focal Point Person, custodian community, Alert Initiators and partners
- b. Posts updates on the Alert Page of the Consortium website until the specific alert is closed.
- c. Compiles the results of the alert actions (e.g. responses from government agencies, corporations, actions on the ground, etc.) and diffuses such results to the custodian community, Alert Initiators and relevant other parties as appropriate.
- d. Depending on the nature of the alert (i.e. its scale and political implications), facilitates the development of a longer-term plan of action with the Alert Initiators, Consortium Members, Honorary members and the Secretariat in the region of reference.
- e. As appropriate, closes the alert and informs the Programme Committee of the Steering Committee.

In synthesis: the **Coordinator supports the monitoring of an ICCA Alert and 'closes' it, as and when appropriate.**

Relationship between the Alert System and SAFE

SAFE (Solidarity Action and Fund for the Defenders of the Commons and ICCAs) is a collaborative effort of the ICCA Consortium and Friends of the Earth International. The initiative is currently being examined for feasibility taking advantage of an on-going project of FoEI in South East Asia.

There is a natural overlap of activities as part of the Consortium Alert System and SAFE. If appropriate, and if requested by the affected ICCA custodian community, the ICCA Alert System may be activated to provide visibility for a situation or activities initiated under SAFE. Conversely, SAFE initiatives may be requested as part of the plan of action of an ICCA Alert. In other words, the Alert System is one of the tools available to support those communities that are the beneficiaries of SAFE support and SAFE support is one of the possible responses to consider in response to a specific ICCA Alert.

In synthesis: **ICCA Alerts** are powerful tools to **support, give additional visibility and magnify action undertaken through SAFE** (in close coordination with our key partner, FoEI) and **SAFE** is a crucial avenue to provide **appropriate responses to ICCA Alerts**.

The Consortium's Alert Page

An ICCA Alert web page has been created in the Consortium website to host specific ICCA Alerts, raise internal awareness and foster mutual help within the Consortium. A specific alert page can also become a 'platform for action', e.g. to collect online signatures.

The ICCA Alert web page is maintained by the Coordinator with the assistance of a technical person, as necessary. Within the page, specific entries (sub-pages) are created to describe all alerts approved by the Steering Committee. Such entries are organised into 'live/current' alerts and 'closed' alerts (the latter being listed at the bottom).

Each alert entry contains:

- A title outlining the alert;
- A picture related to the alert;
- A link to the specific alert sub-page stating: 'To find out more about this ICCA Alert and how you can take action, please [click here](#)'.

Each sub-page hosting an individual ICCA Alert contains:

- A main title and a clear and simple outline of the case, including a description of the ICCA under threat;
- Explanatory pictures, web links to full articles, blogs and – if possible – videos;
- As appropriate, an "action section" with on-going initiatives (e.g. downloadable messages to send with clear indications to whom and where, a link to an online signature petition, etc.);
- A '**latest news**' section that will be regularly updated;
- An indication of a contact organisation or person and an indication of the Consortium Members or Honorary members who submitted the alert to the Consortium, who are noted as Alert Initiators;
- If necessary, any disclaimer from the Consortium, Consortium Members, Honorary members or others as relevant.

In synthesis: the Coordinator takes **first responsibility to maintain and update the ICCA Alert web page, as appropriate**.