5. Editorial services go greener

Governing body documents used to take weeks of staff overtime, reams of paper and thousands of litres of fossil fuels to dispatch to Member State representatives. That was until Editorial Services (EDT) converted to true “green” documentation for the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific.

Now Member States receive working documents in enhanced Portable Document Format, or PDF. This initiative allows technical units to spend more time improving content, embedding links to supporting documents for reference and previous governing body decisions for context. This feature allows Member States to simply click on hyperlinks, rather than searching for supporting materials.

As a result, Member States receive governing body documents sooner and in a format that is easier to share for translation, for example, and to verify receipt. Not surprisingly, Member State representatives have expressed broad satisfaction with the convenience and functionality of the new documentation system, not to mention the kilos of papers they no longer have to carry. EDT still makes a limited number of hard copies available – both of working documents and daily journals – for representatives at the Regional Committee session. All documents are also posted on the WHO Regional Office website.

While boosting connectivity and convenience, the new document system significantly shrunk the carbon footprint of the Division of Programme Management, as well as shipping and overtime costs. In all, document production and dispatch costs shrunk by more than US$ 35 000 in 2017, compared to previous regional committees.

To carry out this initiative, EDT staff mastered techniques for converting documents so that they add enhancements to documents while improving the security and portability of WHO documents.

For the sixty-ninth session of the Regional Committee, EDT will look to further enhance security and functionality of documents, while updating Member State contacts and improving convenience for participants. ■