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Update on the emailing issues experienced by the Secretariat in 2022

SIOFA Secretariat

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Abstract	

Several emails sent from the Secretariat did not properly reach their recipients, especially to several heads of delegation. Some messages have been tagged as SPAM by mail servers, which sometime seem to reject or quarantine such messages.
It is important that the messages from the Secretariat are well received to SIOFA official contacts. The issue has been investigated by the Data Officer and several factors have been identified that could explain the bad ranking of message. Since these findings, the Secretariat has improved its emailing method accordingly.

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[1] Restricted documents may contain confidential information. Please do not distribute restricted documents in any form without the explicit permission of the SIOFA Secretariat and the data owner(s)/provider(s).
[2] Documents available only to members invited to closed sessions as per SIOFA RoP 20.

Introduction and rationale

In 2022, several emails sent from the SIOFA Secretariat did not properly reach their recipients, especially Circulars to HoDs.

Some messages have been tagged as SPAM by the mail servers, and several other mail servers are rejecting or quarantining such messages. The issue has been investigated by the Data Officer.

Findings

Several criteria and routines are running in the background of mail servers for checking the "quality of an email".

The Factors that increase the risk of a message being tagged as SPAM are:

1. Email Content is 'spam-like': contains suspicious links, files or monitored keywords
2. Email Design Doesn't Follow the Protocols, especially the formatting
3. Spam laws are violated: too many mails sent from the same address in a short period of time
4. Domain Reputation is poor
5. IP Reputation is bad
6. Email Authentication is Failing
7. Email Engagement is Poor
8. Putting many recipients in BCC (blind carbon copy)

A few emails from the Secretariat may have fallen under factor 1, 7 and 8

Factor 1: Words that create urgency or pressure are being monitored, a few messages from the Secretariat contained words like *important* or *urgent*. If those are used too often, systems will consider the sender as a spammer.

Now the Secretariat will avoid including these words in the message or in its subject.

Factor 7: A poor email engagement may be triggered if the messages received are not read, it is fully understandable that many CCPs and officials contacts ignore messages and do not read them. There are several reasons to this: time availability, not enough relevance for a person, etc.

The Secretariat will try to improve the targeting of its messages and decrease the number of recipients accordingly, and not sending a message to all contacts systematically.

Factor 8: The practise of putting the recipients' address in BCC is good. It prevents to provide too many addresses to one recipient that can be re-collected and reused for bad purposes. However, some email servers consider this as a bad practise.

In the same line of improving the targeting of the message, the BCC recipient shall be used less often.

Conclusion

The application of these measures will hopefully improve the ranking of the messages sent from the Secretariat to a good and reliable level.

It is also desirable that SIOFA users contact their IT administrators to whitelist the SIOFA email domain (siofa.org and apsoi.org).