ITEC- TISS International Certificate Programme

On

"Socially Responsible Messaging"

In Collaboration with

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

Hosted by

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Concept Note

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, is the leading capacity building platform of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Instituted in 1964, ITEC is one of the oldest institutionalized arrangements for international capacity building having trained more than 200,000 officials from 160+ countries in both the civilian and in the defence sector.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) is a community-engaged Social Science University, established in 1936. TISS was started as Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work and in 1964, it was granted the Deemed University status under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956. Since its inception, the institute's vision has been to be an institution of excellence in higher education that continually responds to changing social realities through the development and application of knowledge, towards creating a people-centered, ecologically sustainable and just society that promotes and protects dignity, equality, social justice and human rights for all.

ITEC and TISS are collaborating to offer an **International Certificate Programme on Socially Responsible Messaging**. During this two-week programme, participants will engage in lectures, discussions, case studies, field visits and workshops to deepen their understanding of ethical and socially responsible communication across advertising, social media, and mass communication. Guest speakers, including experienced media and marketing professionals and experts in communication studies, will also provide insights and perspectives on key topics. Participants will have the opportunity to collaborate on projects and assignments, allowing them to apply their knowledge and skills in practical contexts. By the end of the programme, participants will have gained valuable insights and strategies for effectively navigating the complex landscape of media and messaging, and fostering more inclusive, responsible communication practices within their organisations.

Programme Introduction

This two-week programme examines the principles and practices of socially responsible messaging, exploring how messages are developed, shaped, communicated, and received across different social and cultural contexts. It focuses on how communication can influence attitudes, perceptions, behaviours, and public conversations, and introduces participants to the key considerations involved in developing messaging that is effective, ethical, inclusive, and responsive to diverse audiences. Media, advertising, social media, and other communication channels are explored as contexts through which messages reach and engage different publics. It introduces participants to key concepts from the social sciences that inform socially responsible advertising, public messaging, and positive

change, while also engaging with the business models, economics, and regulatory mechanisms — including India's Information Technology Act and Digital Personal Data Protection Act — that shape how media and social media platforms operate. Drawing on a multidisciplinary background from development communication, politics, public administration, sociology, social psychology, gender studies, media studies, and communication studies, the programme engages with themes such as the psychological effects of messaging, social consciousness, regulatory mechanisms, and the growing influence of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, on communication.

The programme adopts a pragmatic, case-based pedagogy, organising learning around contemporary case studies, real-world campaigns, and applied communication challenges. Each session integrates conceptual input with interactive discussion and applied exercises, enabling participants to critically interrogate media messages, situate them within their broader social implications, and develop communication practices that are simultaneously effective and socially responsible.

•Programme Objective

- Build a conceptual and analytical foundation for understanding how messages are developed, communicated, interpreted, and experienced at the individual, societal, and state levels.
- Familiarise participants with the regulatory, legal, and ethical frameworks that shape responsible communication and messaging across different platforms and contexts.
- Understand the psychological effects of messaging and how communication, including social media, can shape attitudes, behaviours, public opinion, and social consciousness.
- Build participants' ability to critically analyse communication and messaging, and translate this understanding into effective and socially responsible communication practices.
- Examine how organisational, commercial, technological, and public-interest considerations shape the development and dissemination of messages across different communication channels.

- **Programme themes**

Theme 1: The Context of Socially Responsible Messaging

Examines the legal, ethical, social, institutional, and technological contexts that shape contemporary communication. The theme situates messaging across three interconnected levels — the individual, society, and the state — and considers the broader systems within which communication takes place.

- **1.1 Regulation, Ethics and Responsible Communication**
  Introduces the legal, regulatory, and ethical principles that establish the responsibilities and boundaries of communication, including India's Information Technology Act and Digital Personal Data Protection Act.
- **1.2 Engaging with Social Media: Individual, Society and State**
  This session examines social media messaging across individual, societal, and state levels — addressing responsible engagement and misinformation, the targeting and impact of messaging on communities, and the state's role in regulation, governance, and sensitive, responsible communication that reaches all sections of society.
- **1.3 Institutions, Technology and the Changing Communication Environment**
  Explores how organisations, commercial interests, digital platforms, algorithms, and

emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence shape the communication environment and influence the ways messages are produced and circulated.

Theme 2: Foundations of Social Messaging and Communication

Introduces the core concepts and processes involved in creating and making sense of messages, with attention to purpose, meaning, language, context, and communication channels.

- **2.1 Understanding Messages: Purpose, Meaning and Communication**
  Examines why messages are created, how they are structured, and how choices of language, framing, tone, and form contribute to meaning.
- **2.2 Messages, Meaning and Interpretation**
  Explores how meaning is constructed and interpreted, considering the role of context, culture, prior experiences, and communication settings in shaping understanding.
- **2.3 From Traditional to Digital Messaging**
  Traces key shifts in communication practices from oral, print, and broadcast forms to digital and social media, focusing on how changing channels have transformed the ways messages are produced and circulated.

Theme 3: Messaging Across Social and Cultural Contexts

Explores how people's social, cultural, linguistic, technological, and generational circumstances affect their ability to access and engage with communication, and considers how these differences can inform more sensitive messaging.

- **3.1 Understanding Audiences and Social Contexts**
  Examines how culture, language, lived experiences, and social contexts influence how people engage with and respond to messages.
- **3.2 Access, Digital Divide and Communication**
  Explores unequal access to communication channels, technologies, and information, including the roles of connectivity, affordability, language, literacy, and digital skills in people's ability to receive and engage with messages.
- **3.3 Communicating with Children and Gen Alpha**
  Examines the particular considerations involved in communicating with children and younger audiences in increasingly digital, personalised, and algorithm-driven environments, with attention to age-appropriate and responsible communication.

Theme 4: Messaging, Psychology and Public Response

Examines the individual and collective effects of communication, drawing on behavioural and social psychology to understand how messages can influence attitudes, emotions, behaviour, and public conversations.

- **4.1 Messaging, Attitudes and Behaviour**
  Explores how communication can influence perceptions, beliefs, emotions, attitudes, and behaviour, introducing key concepts from behavioural and social psychology.
- **4.2 Messaging, Public Opinion and Social Consciousness**
  Examines how messages contribute to the formation and circulation of public opinion, collective sentiment, and social consciousness, including the role of social media in amplifying public conversations.

Theme 5: Communicating Responsibly — From Awareness to Action
Brings the programme together by examining what socially responsible communication looks like in practice. It moves from identifying communication challenges and understanding audiences to developing, reviewing, and refining messages, culminating in a practical campaign exercise that applies the concepts and principles covered throughout the programme.

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how messaging operates across individual, societal, and state levels, and how communication has evolved from traditional to digital forms.
- Identify the key legal, ethical, regulatory, institutional, and technological factors that shape and constrain contemporary messaging practices.
- Analyse how messages are developed, interpreted, and experienced across different social, cultural, and technological contexts.
- Assess the extent to which access, language, and socio-cultural context condition audience reception of, and response to, messaging.
- Analyse how messaging influences attitudes, behaviour, public opinion, and social consciousness.
- Critically evaluate communication materials for effectiveness, accessibility, cultural sensitivity, ethical considerations, and social responsibility.
- Apply these principles to develop and refine a socially responsible messaging campaign.

Dates and Duration

Date: 10th February 2027 to 23 February 2027

Duration: 2 weeks

Programme Structure

The programme will combine both classroom lectures and experiential learning:

- The **classroom component** consists of 60 hours, which will include lectures that will be delivered by faculty and experts.
- The **experiential learning** will consist of 40 hours, which will include hands-on experience through workshops and field exposures

Eligibility

This programme is designed for working professionals across communication, media, marketing, and social media roles. It is especially useful for people who create, approve, or manage messaging as part of their day-to-day work, including but not exclusive to:

- Marketing and brand communication professionals
- Advertising, creative, and content teams
- Social media managers and handlers across departments
- Corporate communications and PR professionals