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ICIMOD
Knowledge Management
&
Communication Strategy

2014

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1. Introduction and rationale

As a knowledge organization, ICIMOD has long had an established practice on knowledge management and communication. This Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy is one of the key deliverables of ICIMOD's Medium Term Action Plan III (2013-2017) approved by the ICIMOD Board of Governors in December 2012.

ICIMOD's Strategic Framework 2012 identifies knowledge management and communication as two of the most important means of change. It stresses that ICIMOD should "knowledge share smarter" using more evidence-based knowledge and learning, and enrich its communication with a more focused use of social media like blogs, Twitter, Facebook, mobile communication solutions and by appropriately repackaging knowledge for different target groups.

Knowledge and communication tools will be used to:
- give voice to relevant target audience and mobilize people for participation and action
- convey information for learning and training
- support efficient collaboration between KMC and Programmes, Initiatives, and Thematic Areas

MTAP III recognizes that effective and timely communication is the key to the utilization of research and a prerequisite for impact. It argues that knowledge management solutions must be enriched through internal learning from operational practice, and external learning from long-term knowledge partnerships.

MTAP III emphasizes the following:
- Improving ICIMOD's knowledge management activities and tailoring them closely to the needs of the regional programmes and initiatives and Centre-wide activities (intranet, seminars, forums, etc.)
- Optimizing ICIMOD's communication and outreach by providing well-presented and repackaged information and knowledge to partners, stakeholders, and other beneficiaries through the right combination of KMC products (websites, publications, knowledge management tools, seminars, outreach tools, etc.)
- Extending ICIMOD's regional/global outreach to wider audiences and media (flagship publications, online presentation, video channel, etc.)

This strategy aims to integrate knowledge management and communication across all Regional Programmes and Initiatives as well as to ensure a close collaboration with partners and our Regional Member Countries (RMCs). It is important to utilise the fact that

ICIMOD is an Intergovernmental Organisation and must address different target groups, needs, and aspirations of the RMCs.

A knowledge management and communication strategy is an ongoing and iterative process; it is a means of elaborating how we network, participate, and interact with the world. Knowledge management and communication are cross-organizational issues that move ICIMOD to improve its organizational culture, management systems, administrative processes, information technology solutions, communities of practice, and learning and development mechanisms.

As communication is a key element for the achievement of ICIMOD's goals, the Centre needs a broader and more collective view of communication. The communication of science is no longer simple dissemination, but rather a complex and inter-connected process in which different players engineer and seek to link knowledge, messages, attitudes, and new practices. Science plays a fundamental role, but in this process, many other actors will want to have a say, including our partners, the media, civil society, the private sector, and the general public.

Good communication reflects a two-way dialogue, where we listen, design, and deliver audience-informed strategies, and then gather feedback to assess our impact. This feedback loop is imperative for developing a professional communication profile, for research and researcher visibility, and for reuse of information and knowledge.

Knowledge shared and delivered in appropriate formats and through relevant channels is central to enable informed decision making at all levels. This Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy provides guidance for the targeted communication, sharing, and dissemination of the knowledge generated by the Regional Programmes, Initiatives, and Thematic Areas in such a way as to foster its application by target audiences for behavioural change and positive policy and development outcomes.

KMC's professional staff and tools will assist Regional Programmes and Thematic Areas in proactive networking, outreach, communication, and knowledge sharing activities to improve understanding among different audiences – local, national, regional, and global – of the importance of mountain systems and important mountain issues such as climate change, as well as to influence action and achieve impact. KMC will ensure greater emphasis on impact pathways and on synthesizing knowledge from experience, thereby demonstrating ICIMOD's impact.

KMC shall build the internal capacity to transform knowledge into meaningful action, at both policy and local levels. Rigorous and continuous effort shall be made to update the

capacity of KMC not only to be in sync with the latest trends and developments in the field of knowledge management and communication, but also to promote seamless uptake of ICIMOD-generated knowledge by its partners as well as policymakers beyond the region.

The KMC strategy will be supported by the detailed guidelines in implementation.

What is knowledge management and what is communication
Knowledge management is creating, capturing, sharing, and using the skills and experience we all possess to enhance ICIMOD's performance; it is getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, helping people to share and put information into action in ways that are intended to improve organizational performance.

The key components of good knowledge management are:
- the right conditions (a common reliable infrastructure, a willing organization, a culture which encourages learning and sharing)
- the right means (a common model, processes, and tools)
- the right actions (where people instinctively seek, share, and use knowledge)
- the right leadership (where learning and sharing are expected and role-modelled)

We understand communication as a two-way, dynamic, interactive process between information and knowledge providers and receivers facilitated by dedicated communication specialists. We encourage communication processes on content-related issues with the aim of motivating, involving, and engaging our target groups. Communication is about strengthening understanding by exchanging messages to enrich meaning and common knowledge.

2. Objectives

This document sets out a knowledge management and communication strategy that supports the implementation of the Centre's overall objectives and the effective utilization of knowledge management and communication for greater impact, better and broader outreach, and efficient internal communication.

The broad objectives are:
- Guide ICIMOD in using knowledge management and communication more strategically in all its activities
- Optimize ICIMOD's knowledge management activities and those areas of communication for which the Centre is valued

- Describe how ICIMOD will address the management of knowledge and communication
- Ensure co-production of knowledge and recognition of knowledge partners
- Provide an understanding of the different kinds of processes that need to be addressed from a knowledge management and communication perspective, and what this mean in terms of tailoring our work to different audiences
- Set out how the internal knowledge management and communication process will be managed, together with issues related to branding and identity

Secondary goals:
- Enhance collaboration among scientists, policymakers, and local communities
- Strengthen the role of women
- Create networks for knowledge sharing

3. Guiding principles

As a knowledge organization, ICIMOD bases its legitimacy on knowledge generated both in-house and through continuous exchange with partners. Effective knowledge management and communication is of great importance in sharing and disseminating this knowledge. ICIMOD primarily communicates through text, multimedia, networking, and dialogue with partners. However, by repackaging our knowledge to target different audiences, ICIMOD ensures impact at the broadest scale. We have therefore identified a number of guiding principles in the area of knowledge management and communication. However, the overall principles of engagement as set out in the MTAP III apply.

Centre-wide orientation:
KMC will operate from a Centre-wide perspective to link up with all the Programmes and Initiatives of the Centre in a participatory manner to enhance policy processes and help strengthen impact throughout the Centre. KMC provides a wide range of services throughout the Centre and assists the management, the various thematic areas, programmes, and initiatives by providing hands-on support where needed. This includes support to institutional relations and partners.

Working with and through our partners:
Partnerships are essential for making knowledge 'travel'. Knowledge partnerships will be actively formed to produce KMC products and ensure their relevance, wide dissemination, and usefulness. In a strategic way, all partners will be connected to one another and to sources of data and knowledge.

Building on the past:
The KMC process will build on successful approaches, concepts, and products developed in recent years in the areas of knowledge creation and networking, information provision, communication, and impact analysis.

Supporting 'learning':
KMC's role is to encourage internal learning and the development of the necessary competences for staff to engage more meaningfully and effectively in policy processes.

An integrated way of working:
Effective knowledge management and communication require an integrated approach. To bring the results of the Centre's work to the attention of all target groups, KMC will be actively involved in the Programmes and Initiatives of the Centre. HimalDoc is to be used not only as a library catalogue but also as central repository for all ICIMOD-produced or related knowledge products (publications, reports, photos, posters, and videos). The Regional Database System (RDS) is the common repository for all data collected or produced by ICIMOD and Partners. Each Programme and Initiative will be requested to forward relevant material for registration in the regional database.

Conceptual guidance but decentralized decision-making:
KMC will provide direction and guidance in Centre-wide aspects of knowledge, information, and communication, as well as in relation to Programmes and Initiatives. Decisions on the content of KMC-related aspects of programmes and initiatives will be integrated in the activities already being planned with the help from KMC. The formulation and development of Programme and Initiative communication strategies will be based on ICIMOD's Centre-wide KMC Strategy.

Avoiding 'blue prints':
As processes differ between Programmes and Initiatives, we will tailor knowledge, information, and communication products and services to the specific requirements of the Centre as a whole, and to the respective Programmes and Initiatives.

Keeping things smart and manageable/being pragmatic:
Innovations will be introduced in accordance with Programmes and Initiatives demands to enhance the quality of policy processes while taking into account ICIMOD's Strategic Framework and other strategies.

Preventing fragmentation:
We will ensure that Centre and Programme activities in the area of knowledge management and communication are coherent and complementary to what the rest of the Centre is doing and strive to create a clearer idea of what the Centre does as a whole.

Supporting Open Access and Creative Commons:
In principle, all of ICIMOD knowledge products are considered public good. For ICIMOD, Open Access and Creative Commons are concerned with the right of the public to access publically funded research and knowledge. It is about ensuring that research literature and others forms of knowledge products are made available online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions.

Building on existing and standardized text:
To ensure the use of correct information, facts, and figures, ICIMOD encourages its staff as much as possible to make use of the standard text collection (blurbs) developed by KMC. The different blurbs are meant for use in presentations, proposals, partner agreements, etc. A set of standardized PowerPoint about ICIMOD as well as short video stories are also available and should be used.

Research and Publication Ethics
All ICIMOD staffs have ethical obligations with regard to research and publication of the outcomes from the Programmes and Initiative. ICIMOD therefore aims to define best practices in the ethics of research and publishing and expects its staffs to follow these examples.

Gender Sensitivity
ICIMOD's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment is pursued through gender-specific programming and gender mainstreaming with action in all of its fields of competency. This entails being gender sensitive and including all stakeholders, avoiding a male perspective or bias in communications and outreach, and prohibiting communications, knowledge products, and images that sanction, promote or glamorize violence, exploitation, discriminatory, derogatory, stereo-typical or essentializing images of women.

Language
British English is the primary language for ICIMOD publications. However, when appropriate or needed, publications and other knowledge products can be translated into other languages.

Multi and Social Media

ICIMOD will promote and use a range of digital tools and media. ICIMOD's website www.icimod.org will act as a Portal to link and connect users to a range of web-based systems including video, SMS, and digital storytelling. Social media and other web 2.0 tools will be used where appropriate. Throughout, it will be important to monitor the use of these systems to contribute back to our understanding of how they can be used in our knowledge-based outreach activities.

From research to use

ICIMOD research makes sense through uptake and use. Communication strategies and uptake strategies are closely linked and will be combined for maximum effect. ICIMOD works with a focus on the interactions between the people having and needing the knowledge. In this sense The ICIMOD Knowledge Park at Godavari acts both as a demonstration and training centre, and as a testing plot for ICIMOD-generated knowledge products.

4. External Communication

Tailoring for effective knowledge management and communication

ICIMOD is both a knowledge-based and a communication-based organization which potentially interacts with four broad types of external audiences. Internal communication will be addressed in a special section of the strategy.

These audience groups are:
- Partners
- Donors/stakeholders
- Target audiences
- General public and media

ICIMOD will actively develop linkages to the media at different levels. At the local and regional level, media should be engaged as part of the policy engagement and to reach research-based knowledge to a wider audience. ICIMOD intends to engage global-level media to raise the regional mountain issues to the global audience and disseminate emerging research results more widely.

ICIMOD's interaction and work with national, regional, and the global media will be further described in in detailed guidelines.

Effective engagement with these groups requires a solid understanding of how knowledge management and communication can be used, i.e., what knowledge is relevant at a particular point in time, for which audience, in what form, and how it should be made available for different audiences.

This calls for targeted engagement, guided by in-depth analysis of the audience and the context in which knowledge must be shared. In some cases, particular audiences that should be engaged at specific policy moments can be targeted through well-defined communication (e.g., a relevant publication for a particular type of audience which needs it at a specific moment in the process). In other cases, emerging processes and issues can be nurtured by providing information to audiences which will enable them to build relationships, get to know each other, foster networking and other exchanges, and create opportunities to interact on content.

To support Programmes and Initiatives in defining their communication priorities, we will work with Communication Assessment, an analytical instrument that complements Impact Pathway Analysis. The same tool will be used to determine our Centre-wide communication needs and to identify how we can enhance the communication with our institutional partners and funding agencies.

The output will be a planning per programme and initiative that allows ICIMOD to support the activities by providing appropriate information exchange and dialogue at the right time with the right people and organizations, in the right form and making use of appropriate instruments to ensure their success. In addition, it will help us to identify what knowledge we need to generate in order to keep pace with the demands of the processes.

Other outputs will be a regularly updated Programme/Initiative Communication Plans, formulated in collaboration with Programmes and strategic knowledge partners, and a Knowledge Management Plan with a focus on in-house knowledge needs and internal communication.

Conscious efforts shall be made to ensure that our communication outputs influence policy processes through the uptake of our knowledge both regionally and globally. This shall be achieved by embedding media personnel in our field trips to encourage wholesome reportage of our activities, by conducting a series of tailor-made media trainings, and by identifying long-term knowledge partners among the media and other relevant institutions.

Producing Global Knowledge and Influencing the Global Agenda

One of ICIMOD's key areas is to ensure that the mountain issues identified at the national and regional level are raised at the global level. ICIMOD will ensure this through:

- Providing intelligence on strategic meetings that are held globally and regionally
- Liaising with the media
- Attending key conferences at the regional and local level

Furthermore, ICIMOD will ensure that the explicit knowledge generated through Programmes, Initiatives, and the Thematic Areas is documented and made widely accessible on other websites, portals, and clearinghouses.

5. Branding and identity

All material produced by ICIMOD, or with the inputs of ICIMOD staff and its associates, will carry the logo of ICIMOD, or – where this is not feasible – be identifiable as content/intellectual property produced with resources from ICIMOD. Exceptions are where ICIMOD's knowledge and information is requested as a hidden or background input to policy moments or processes chaired by other actors. Other exceptions would also be situations where strong visibility of ICIMOD would be unwise for strategic reasons.

To encourage networking with partners and stakeholders, or to target policy processes more specifically, ICIMOD has a longstanding practice of establishing and maintaining complementary websites which follow ICIMOD's corporate layout and design. Some are temporary while others are set up with a long-term outlook. The ICIMOD corporate website serves as a principal reference point and platform for these websites, from which visitors are directed to the relevant sites.

As part of our corporate communication, we will systematically include information about the mandate of ICIMOD and the nature of our work in various communication instruments, such as websites, hardcopy publications, e-newsletters, etc. In this way, we will help create a better understanding of what ICIMOD is and what we do.

ICIMOD publications produced together with our partners can carry the partner's logo on our product. Where ICIMOD provides substantial inputs for the production of a partner's publication we will request that our logo also be put on the product.

All material produced by ICIMOD is a public good. If third parties wish to make use of it, the origin needs to be properly quoted and a copy of the material reproduced sent to ICIMOD for information and recording.

6. Management

KMC plays a leading and coordinating role in Knowledge Management and Communication, maintaining the Centre-wide focus, in close cooperation with the Senior Management Committee (SMC) and the Director General (DG).

The SMC takes strategic decisions on knowledge management and communication. KMC supports the DG in external communications, provides advice on communicating ICIMOD's messages, and carries out communication and knowledge management activities as agreed with the DG.

Meetings, seminars, and workshops are used to share relevant information and discuss new developments related to knowledge management and communication.

For the day-to-day management, the roles performed by KMC include:
- Strategic and conceptual advice for Programmes
- Preparing knowledge management and communication policy issues and feeding these to the Management
- In cooperation with SMC, initiating and executing Centre communication activities
- Initiating and implementing Centre-wide knowledge management and knowledge networking activities
- Supporting Centre partnerships and linking our knowledge management and communication with that of partners
- Linking up with the IT section and the HR section of the Finance and Administration on information technology and human resource development issues, respectively
- Monitoring and evaluation of Centre-wide knowledge management and communication

7. Internal Communications

Internal communications play a vital role in the functioning of any organization. Good internal communications are necessary to support ICIMOD's strategic development.

For ICIMOD internal communication is not only crucial to inform, motivate, and influence the staff, but is an integrated part of our daily knowledge generation and sharing.

ICIMOD Staff need:
- An understanding of ICIMOD's objectives and their purpose, in order to be able to participate in the process of achieving them

- Functional information in order to be able to do their job efficiently and effectively
- Details about change and help to adapt

In addition to the practical aspect, there is the deeper role of internal communications:
- Developing and maintaining a sense of community and cohesion amongst staff
- Giving staff a sense of belonging and ownership of ICIMOD
- Reinforcing core organizational values
- Developing a culture of celebrating success and achievement, thereby improving morale and motivation, encouraging pride in ICIMOD's work and achieving more unity of purpose towards common goals

ICIMOD uses various channels of communication of which the most important are the Intranet, the DG's blog, minutes from meetings, the institutional calendar, and other forms of knowledge management tools.

We communicate to the staff with the same understanding, care, and creativity as to our external audience, and we provide ample mechanisms for feedback and two-way Communication between Management and Staff.

Some of the key areas for internal communications and knowledge sharing will focus on:
- Collecting and sharing knowledge that is produced by different actors, use of the Intranet for document storage and sharing and HimalDoc as repository for all relevant documents, photos, videos, presentations, posters, etc
- Supporting the use of tools to improve communication and knowledge sharing across the Centre, underlined by the intensive use of the Intranet and digital communication platforms
- Effective face-to-face communication and informal interactions with the use of Brown Bags, Knowledge or Friday Forums, and Knowledge Cafés
- Support to monitoring and evaluation processes as a way for internal communication and knowledge sharing, Impact Pathway Analysis, Knowledge Cafés, and Reflection Workshops