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UNEP Workshop on Knowledge Management and MEAs

Chexbres, Switzerland
22-24 September 2009

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

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Knowledge Management

Knowledge and information management

There is no integrated system designed to store, search and retrieve information generated at the UN, much less to do so rapidly and in real time limiting the ability to translate data and facts into informed policy and management decisions

Former Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan
Investing in the UN for a Stronger Organization Worldwide
(A/60/692)

Knowledge Management

Knowledge and information management

"Perhaps our greatest challenge is to create a way for the thousands of information-gathering bodies around the world to connect with each other and share knowledge. We need to create more equitable access and commit ourselves to a more flexible and efficient open source community."

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner
International Environment House News, June 2006

Knowledge Management

There is little understanding of what "knowledge" is in the context of the United Nations system

Knowledge Management (KM) is perceived differently by different organizations

Knowledge management in the United Nations system
(JIU/REP/2007/6)

Knowledge Management

Furthermore, the perception of KM within the organizations surveyed is not uniform and there are diverse levels of sophistication in the understanding of KM and its role and importance within a given organization, as well as within the United Nations system.

Knowledge management in the United Nations system
(JIU/REP/2007/6)

Knowledge Management

JIU recommended that the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), *develop a common system-wide definition of knowledge management, and a minimum set of guidelines to be used in the development of knowledge management strategies by each UN entity*

Knowledge management in the United Nations system
(JIU/REP/2007/6 and A/63/140)

Knowledge Management

However, *In their consolidated response to that report, organizations noted that CEB lacked the capacity and resources to effectively produce these outputs and should focus instead on its role in the coordination of the knowledge management activities carried out by individual entities*

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on knowledge management in the United Nations system, Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/140/Add.1)

Knowledge Management

In December 2008, a Secretariat Information and Communications Technology Strategy was approved by the General Assembly simultaneously with approval of the establishment of the Office of Information and Communications Technology

(Approved by the General Assembly in Resolution 63/263)

Knowledge Management

As outlined in the Secretary-General's *Report on investing in information and communications technology*, the Secretariat knowledge management function is now placed in the Office of Information and Communications Technology

Investing in information and communications technology: information and communications strategy for the United Nations Secretariat
Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/793)

Knowledge Management

Knowledge and information management

The new ICT strategy has identified three broad areas of critical needs: knowledge management, resource management and infrastructure management, which must be addressed in a coherent manner across the Secretariat

Investing in information and communications technology: information and communications strategy for the United Nations Secretariat
Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/793)

Knowledge Management

With regard to knowledge management and collaboration the *Strategy* identifies it as one of the key institutional drivers and defines knowledge management as encompassing three essential processes that are intricately linked:

- organizational learning;

- information management; and

- information technology

Knowledge Management

The knowledge management programme in the Strategy has the goal of providing an effective and collaborative environment for United Nations personnel and stakeholders "to capture, share and own substantive knowledge relevant to their expertise"

Knowledge Management

By taking advantage of both mature and leading-edge KM technologies in the market… and visualization applications… the KM programme will facilitate organizational innovation and provide UN personnel and stakeholders with the ability to fully apply the knowledge they produce

(A/62/793)

Knowledge Management

Future developments:

Knowledge sharing/knowledge management was discussed 17 September 2009 in New York by the High Level Committee on Programme Coordination (HLPC).

The next CEB meeting, to be hosted by UNIDO in Vienna in February 2010, will discuss KS/KM as suggested the UNIDO DG, and that the proposal was endorsed by the Secretary General.

Knowledge Management

With regard to KM as an essential element in an information and communications strategy, the biodiversity conventions and UNEP attempted a very similar approach!

To date, there have been 4 KM-related meetings among the conventions and UNEP (and EMG) that have attempted many of the same objectives as A/62/793.

Knowledge Management

Meetings on KM and information exchange:

1. Informal Meeting on Formats, Protocols and Standards for Improved Exchange of Biodiversity Information, 19 - 20 February 2002 - Montreal, Canada

2. Meeting of the technical working group on an information exchange mechanism for the EMG, 12-13 March 2006, Nairobi, Kenya

3. A brainstorming workshop on KM for MEAs, KM for biodiversity related conventions and harmonization of national reporting, 13-16 June 2006, Cambridge, UK

4. UNEP workshop on KM among MEAs, 7-9 March 2008, Cambridge, UK

Knowledge Management

Montreal 2002: recognized that interoperability is urgently needed to foster scientific and technical co-operation and information dissemination and exchange, within the constraints of the infrastructure currently available

Nairobi 2006: 4. Recommended the approval of pilot-project(s) proposed by ICTAC to demonstrate the feasibility and utility of adherence to common formats, protocols and standards

Knowledge Management

Cambridge 2006: Implementation of a project proposal (InforMea) to establish a practical and feasible approach to empowering Parties and secretariats by using the principles and IT tools of KM

Cambridge 2008: Received guidance from the Secretariats in terms of reviewing the status of the Knowledge Management project and identified future work on KM among the biodiversity-related agreements (including discussion on national reporting harmonization)

Knowledge Management

During all meetings, the conventions expressed the belief that regardless of the physical and human resources available, KM projects related to information management will ultimately fail unless technical capacity is increased at the Secretariat level

Projects using convention data are not sustainable in the long-run unless the custodians of the data are able to participate equitably in the development of the project. This entails the ability to manage their data accordingly

Knowledge Management

What is different today?

– Greater support from UNEP through the establishment of a KM office in Geneva

– Greater possibility of cooperation and funding through this office

– Issues of governance, harmonization and cost-effectiveness

– Maturity of ICTs

– Recognition that the continued growth of disparate information systems lacking harmonization and interoperability is not sustainable

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