

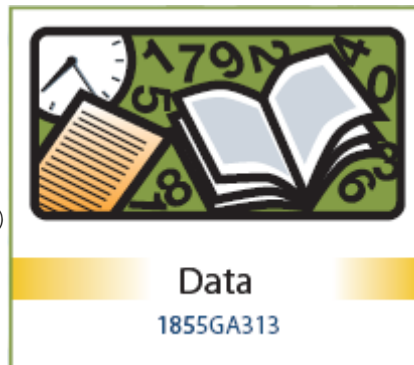


ReFOP

Regional Information and Knowledge Management

Back Ground

Information and knowledge management (IKM) plays certainly the most crucial role in our daily work. Our problem, just as anybody else's, is where to find new information and how to safeguard losing our own existing knowledge. To achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness of our cooperative processes, we have to decide how to develop and deliver knowledge based products demanded by our decision-makers. Understanding our information and knowledge (IK) needs is, thus, imperative. The "Start-up Workshop on Creating a Common Understanding on Information Networking and Knowledge Management" held in Bogor, November 2003, was a first attempt to this end. This fact sheet intends to promote awareness on IKM of regional organizations among the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry and what IKM network can do to translate into action ASEAN Vision 2020, namely to promote the sector as a model for sustainable development.



What Data, Information and Knowledge do we need?

Decision making in the context of intensive regional cooperation demands qualitative data and information. Decision makers are challenged to understand and select from an ever-increasing supply of data and information the "right" ones for their specific needs. Of particular concern are sustainable development and sustainable forest management (SFM). Both need to harmonize economic, social and environmental agendas. The challenge for public governance is policy coherence and to create the conditions that enable the supply of targeted information products to forestry decision-makers.

Why Networking?

To support regional decision-making in forestry requires information management as a mechanism for consensus

building. Participating organizations need to address the handling of information with a view of planning, budgeting, controlling and utilization



of this crucial resource. People and information / communication technology (IT) are the two main components of any information system. Each of our organizations' respective



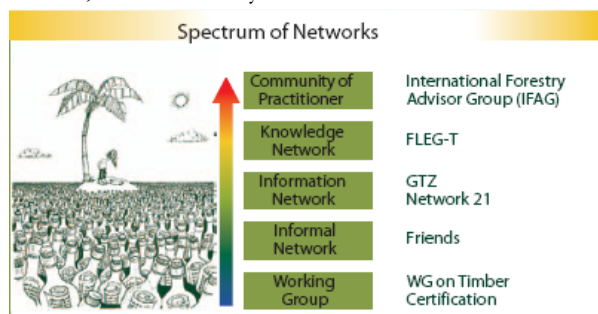
information needs and structures should be based on their policies, which must include the design of targeted information services. In the ASEAN context, all the information needs and products, other than specific national information, need not be readdressed or re-invented by each member country. A solution is the development of a functional information network , i.e. sharing the development and utilization of mutually beneficial information products and services.

Information networks – some structural remarks

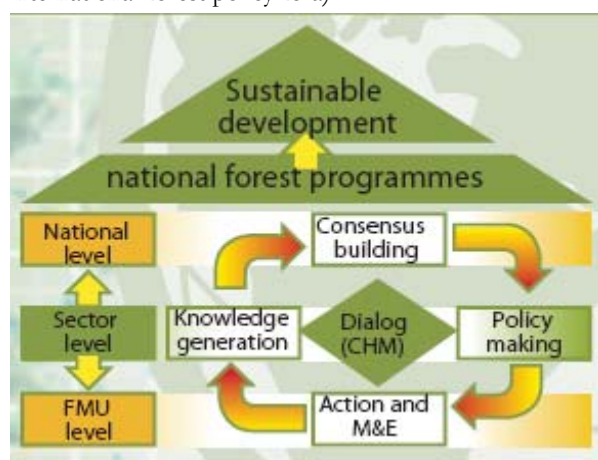
Information networks aim at generating and delivering products & services to support policy development. They provide a mechanism for interaction between members

to achieve specific goals. In our case, networking also serves as a mechanism for regional consensus building. We can define our intended network in terms of purpose and build it around the structure and functions of nfp processes. One function of large formal networks is the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM). In intergovernmental systems such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, a CHM defines, develops and provides access to quality information and data held by numerous governments and others using the Internet.

Its components are framed around issues of common interest, coordinated by a central hub



providing elements shared by all. The hub's role is not to control but to facilitate information exchange and to disseminate targeted information products to serve a common purpose as defined by its members (e.g. negotiating regional positions in the context of international forest policy fora).

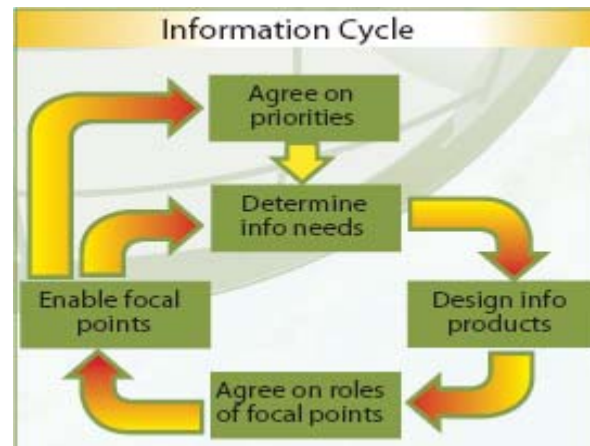


The CHM is owned by its members. This leaves the responsibility for quality, timeliness, maintenance and access provision with the initial provider. Key for effective decision making is coordination and access to national and regional information resources. Our challenge is to move from information/ knowledge vaults to shared knowledge pools.

Our Network – some words on its nature

Conveying the information needed to help people implement SFM, means generating and sharing information on a needs-based basis. The basic elements of SFM, and the stakeholders behind them, are rather straightforward: to establish balances between supply and demand of forest products and services; between public,

private and customary forest ownership, between forest conversion and conservation or between carbon emissions and fixation. Networking is a reciprocal and social process based on exchange of ideas, advice and contacts. Our network will start as a project-initiated group of persons from different organizations, who undertake joint tasks while keeping their autonomy intact. What type of network we choose and how to monitor its performance depends on our priorities. For ReFOP these are nfps, international forest policy processes, certification, forest trade and IKM. Our strategic framework is based on the information cycle. Our vision is to share IK on best practices in SFM and related areas to achieve consensus-based



objectives according to our regional agenda. Such contributions will provide the network with a growing recognition and reputation.

Sources and further reading

1. Lester R. Brown: Eco-Economy. Earth Policy Institute, 2001
2. www.bellonet.org



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