Experiences and Lessons Learned from Implementing an Online Knowledge Platform: Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN)

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Introducing IGES and APAN

Who’s IGES?

- Non-profit policy research institute promoting sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific region
- Established in 1998, IGES is headquartered in Hayama, Japan and has branch offices and desks in Bangkok, Beijing, Kansai, Kitakyushu, New Delhi, and Tokyo
- IGES Regional Centre (Bangkok) – main arm to collaborate with local and international partners, including USAID, ADB, etc.

What’s APAN?

- Regional network of practitioners responding to the growing and urgent need for climate change adaptation
- Capacity building, knowledge management, forum organization
- Supported (financial and in-kind) by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, USAID, UNEP and others

APAN Web Portal: http://www.asiapacificadapt.net/

APAN Web Portal: Funding Structure

How’s the APAN Web Portal funded?

- USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific, a climate financing project, sees APAN as pillar for sustaining its outcomes, knowledge management activities, including website development/management, implementing Community of Practice activities
- Work done through IGES, with allocated, dedicated KM and web staff
- Clear work plans and regular, quarterly and annual, reporting to USAID/RDMA on KM activities

APAN Web Portal: Key Features

- Regularly update and maintain the APAN web portal with the latest adaptation news and publications
- Use of Climate Tagger on the APAN Web Portal to sort and streamline climate change adaptation information to better reach end-users

Fostering a Community of Practice (CoP)

What is the APAN Exchange Series?

- Regular email-based discussions reaching over 800 practitioners.
- Developed by IGES, supported by USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific
- Effective (and cost-effective) CoP modality to engage governments and practitioners
- Getting responses directly in your email inbox is immediate and intimate
- Capture experience-based knowledge from practitioners
- Encourage discussion, interaction and learning
Fostering a Community of Practice (CoP)

How to ensure successful regional knowledge sharing?
- Be current and be touch with global events
  - Discussion on gender and climate change adaptation ran during International Women’s Day in March 2016
- Run online discussions prior to face-to-face events
- Online communities don’t emerge spontaneously; need to nurture, identify CoP ‘champions’ to initiate/stimulate discussion
- Summarize conversation and develop/share key messages and reports

Fostering a Community of Practice (CoP)

What is the APAN live online chat?
- Connect experts with practitioners (national/local govt officials) ‘live’
- Text-based (typing) accommodates low bandwidth internet connections

Knowledge Platforms: 9 Points to Think About

1. Being clear on your objectives
2. Identifying a distinctive niche
3. Narrowing down your audience
4. Understanding your audience
5. Generating great content (good content doesn’t create itself)
6. Creating effective online communities (don’t emerge spontaneously; time limit discussion)
7. Getting your staffing right
8. Clarifying governance arrangements
9. Creating a sustainable business model (what’s your funding model; demonstrate value; sponsorship)