

K-Link: New approach to Knowledge Management in Central Asia

Effective search and information exchange in the field of sustainable use of land resources and adaptation to climate change

Context

In Central Asia, a large amount of goods and services produced is raised from natural resources such as forests, pastures, agricultural land, and water wealth. Consequently, it is here where a significant part of the workforce is employed and incomes of people are generated. However a destructive combination of unsustainable and unreasonable use of natural resources and climate change endangers a quality and a quantity of these resources in the future. In this regard, effective and innovative management approaches are therefore required to ensure long term integrity of ecological system.

International development agencies, local non-governmental organizations, local authorities and research institutions all have a vested interest in addressing the above mentioned acute problems. However, the complex landscape of these stakeholders and different level of collection, processing, storage and exchange of information lead to major difficulties in locating existing knowledge and communicating this information to data users. Therefore identification of best partners and best experience for interaction is not a simple task. These significant deficiencies in the knowledge management process show how urgent is a creation of a more efficient approach enabling to simplify and speed up the exchange of information and sharing of knowledge between all parties involved.

Our objectives

We aim at facilitating the exchange of expertise, best approaches and technologies, and best experience among stakeholders working in the field of adaptation to climate change and sustainable land management. To do this, the on-line K-Link tool was created in

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Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), European Union
Project region	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
Lead executing agency	Line ministries, nongovernmental organizations
Duration	2002 - 2015

the framework of our regional programme for the sustainable use of natural resources in Central Asia. The tool unites stakeholders' websites without creation of a central hub, and facilitates the exchange of information and sharing of knowledge among key partners. The tool will provide participating parties with necessary information related to natural resources management accessible through various web-sites, while retaining their independent status and keeping control over personalized data bases.

Our measures

In practice, knowledge management is tricky, raising both technical and conceptual issues: how do you effectively share information? How do you efficiently structure data? How do you manage intellectual property issues?

Attempts to create such a system tend to stumble on the problem of ownership: why should an institution "give" its data to another? This problem is even more acute when the institutions in question are situated in different countries.



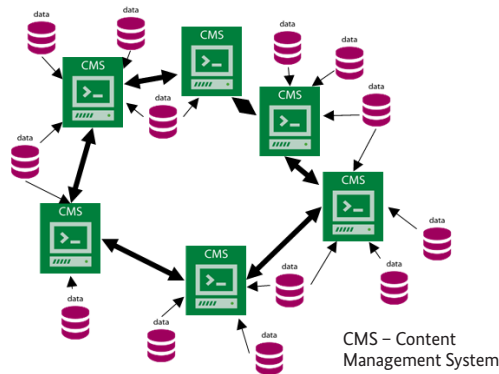
Heavy gully erosion in Bazar Korgon District, Kyrgyzstan.

Driving of cattle on mountain pastures in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan.



Presentation of K-Link tool during the workshop in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

To avoid this, K-Link does not aim to create a central hub or to propose common standards for climate resilience and sustainable land management. On the contrary, K-Link aims simply to identify successful existing internet platforms, develop tools which will facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of knowledge across these platforms and finally help organizations without an existing platform to create and manage their data in a more integrated manner.



Scheme of the K-Link

K-Link aims to achieve this by creating and orchestrating links between existing hubs and institutions in a distributed fashion. It lacks a nuclear body or center of control, and includes many components that work in unison, and together form a stable structure. The system is self-regulated and works without an organized center or authority. It is also pragmatic, as it doesn't require any additional financial cost from the participating partners.

This new system is developing by our partner – SIRIS Academic, which suggests non-standard and innovative approaches to strategic planning, knowledge management and organizational development.

Results and outlook

We aim at being the on-line K-Link tool a multi-donor initiative with participation of many of organisations and feedback from interested players, such as The World Bank, The Food and Agriculture Organisation and the European Environmental Agency has been consistently positive. These partners will continue to be involved in the development of a pilot knowledge exchange system during 2014-2015.

This pilot will be developed between six partners: the Kyrgyz State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry, NGO Camp Alatoo, The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), University of Central Asia, the knowledge sharing platform of the Central Asian Countries Initiative on Land Management (CACILM) and the public organization EcoMuseum of Karaganda. Monitoring of this initial network will be ongoing and carried out simultaneously with capacity building of local universities and software houses. Responsibility for K-Link will later be in the hands of these institutions who will develop it further. On-line K-Link tool aims, in the first turn, to bring together national and regional players before gaining a global recognition in the international research community.

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