TOPIC NOTE

Online consultations for a knowledge sharing platform on resilience

Topic 3 - A knowledge sharing platform on resilience: what about Information Technology and Knowledge Management?

Dear all,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this third week of the online consultation on the creation of a knowledge sharing platform on resilience.

As the number of resilience related initiatives grows within the food and agriculture sector, it becomes increasingly important to address the clear danger of duplication of initiatives and lack of learning. There is an urgent need of harmonization and action-oriented knowledge sharing on resilience initiatives in order to trigger more effective actions and policy design.

This week, we would like to focus on the importance of information technology and knowledge management issues. This last discussion is designed to exchange on what technology and infrastructure are most suitable to address the needs of a platform as identified by participants. We also invite participants to express their views on how to best ensure impact of knowledge products and upscale of resilience practices that will be shared on the platform.

Modern information technology (IT) is a major component of most knowledge and learning platforms. Innovative uses of IT provide powerful tools for creating knowledge and accelerate the speed of knowledge transfer. Furthermore, mobile and web-based technologies, including social media and web-based services, connect and facilitate interactions and conversations among users of the platforms and empower them to participate in creating, distributing, and sharing knowledge regardless of their physical location.

By 2020, the number of unique mobile phone subscribers in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is projected to reach 504 million (about 49% penetration rate) up from 329 million (38% penetration rate) in June

2014; and there will be 525 million smartphones, up from only 72 million at the end of 2013[1]. Meanwhile, according to the World Bank data, in 2014 SSA had about 19 Internet users per 100 people. However, this number is expected to go up due to the increasing availability of mobile broadband and affordability of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers (i.e. iPad, Galaxy Tab, etc.) all capable of accessing the internet and applications (Apps) on the go. The Internet Society also forecasts 703 million 3G and 4G connections for sub-Saharan Africa by 2018[2], which will increase the number of people accessing the Internet on mobile devices.

The information technology infrastructure for the resilience knowledge and learning platform should be scalable and take into account both existing and potential future technologies to connect users, stakeholders, and key partners and to leverage on similar knowledge platforms/initiatives.

Technology related issues are essential in the design of a knowledge platform. However, technology itself does not guarantee that the products and content of a web platform are useful, adopted and scaled up by users. This discussion will call upon "knowledge experts" to address the issues of "use" and "usefulness" of knowledge products and information. Space will be provided to exchange on the necessary links between information technology and knowledge management. Discussion will also address what knowledge sharing methods and tools should be used, what conditions should be put in place, what type of knowledge sharing events could be organized to maximize the impacts of knowledge products and contents.

This discussion invites you to address the following questions:

- **What suitable, user-based information technologies should be supported by the platform?**

- **Should a web portal be a major component of the platform? What types of modern tools and technologies could be incorporated into the platform to help maximise knowledge transfer and the overall impact of the portal/initiative?**

- **What is the best arrangement for hosting the platform's information technology infrastructure? In-house? External (partners)? Cloud? What are the pros and cons of each option?**

- **How to ensure that knowledge products and other platform contents are used, useful, adopted and upscaled? For which users?**

- **What are the conditions to put in place? What knowledge sharing tools, methods and events should be used and how? Should we set up a community of practice? If yes, which one and why?**

- **How to measure the success of a knowledge sharing platform?**

Looking forward to your contributions,

We count on you,

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[1] GSMA. 2014. The Mobile Economy: Sub-Saharan Africa 2014.

[2] Internet Society. 2014. Global Internet Report 2014: Open and Sustainable Access for All