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**ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT OF SUPPLY AND
DEMAND**

PART 2: ESTIMATING THE VALUE OF SUPPLYING ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

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Introduction

1. The purpose of Part 2 is to outline the methodology used in drafting the questionnaire, which deals with assessing institutional capacity to meet the demand for environmental information. The questionnaire is appended as Annex I.

Methodology - Adding Effective Decision Making (EDM)

2. Peter Drucker outlines the following concept of the effective decision in the *Harvard Business Review*. Effective decision making involves:

- Concentrating on what is important
- Making the few important decisions on the highest level of conceptual understanding
- Finding constants in a situation, to think through what is constant rather than to solve problems
- Not being overly impressed by speed in decision making
- Wanting to know what the decision is all about and what the underlining realities are which it has to satisfy
- Wanting impact rather than technique, and
- Wanting to be sound rather than clever!

3. Drucker goes on to describe the sequence of steps involved in the decision making process.

1. The classification of the problem.

2. The definition of the problem.

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3. *The specifications which the answer to the problem must satisfy.*
4. *The decision as to what is right, rather than what is acceptable, in order to meet the boundary conditions.*
5. *The building into the decision of the action to carry it out.*
6. *The feedback which tests the validity and effectiveness of the decision against the actual course of events.*

Applying EDM to the questionnaire

4. As outlined in Part 1 (working paper UNEP/INF2000/WP/6), the role of this questionnaire is to tell us how to get to our goal. This process involves making decisions. Questions should therefore be relevant to our aims and objectives.

5. The sequence of steps outlined by Peter Drucker have been used to construct the questionnaire, because it is a systematic process with clearly defined elements and in a distinct number of steps.

Step 1 asks: Is it generic?

Is it exceptional and unique? Alternatively, is it the first manifestation of a new genus for which a rule has yet to be developed?

The section entitled Internal Data Management deals with this matter in the questionnaire. The aim here is to find out if there are common institutional infrastructure issues amongst institutions. We want to know if there is a problem in disseminating information and, if so, what is it? This section will enable us to formulate capacity building programmes, such as biodiversity data management courses.

Step 2 asks: What are we dealing with?

The section headed External Data Management deals with this matter. We want to know if the institutions are disseminating information and how. Here we can instigate programmes on dealing with the media and building a clearinghouse mechanism.

Step 3 asks: What are the “boundary conditions”?

Now, we want to know all about the institution itself: objectives, activities and geographical scope of work. We want to make sure the institutions are meeting certain conditions.

Step 4 asks: What will fully satisfy the specifications before attention is given to the compromises, adaptations, and concessions needed to make the decision acceptable?

Questions starting with “Do you have” deals with this. We want to know what they have before we can consider compromises.

Step 5 asks: What does the action commitment have to be? Who has to know about it?

Questions under External Data Management are poised to figure out existing commitment, especially question number 39. Even if an institution is lacking funds or human resources, the answer here is telling. Question number 40 lets us know who they think needs to know.

Step 6 asks: How is the decision being carried out? Are the assumptions on which it is based appropriate or obsolete?

6. Whoever fills in the questionnaire will give the answer to the first question. The whole of the questionnaire is structured to make sure we know what their current situation is, especially in regard to equipment being used.

Messages from testing this questionnaire

7. This questionnaire has the advantage of some preliminary testing at three environmental institutions. The following can be used to help further discussions on this topic and formulate future strategy.

Librarian

She has a very old software system for cataloguing their information and would like to update it, but there are no funds.

Project Manager, Information Specialist

In order to fulfil the mission of disseminating information, she believes that librarians, webmasters, and data managers need to be constantly supported. They are on the front line and deal directly with information seekers. Therefore, these people need to be involved in the dissemination policy. Too often, funding goes to data gathering. In her view, it is important to make sure the institution can disseminate information before we find out users' needs.

Webmaster

Their web is a window to the world, however the server is often not working and he is the only one to fix it. He needs another full time staff member! He would also like the other members of staff to understand the pressures and time it takes to maintain and update their web.

Communications Manager, Information Programme

Questionnaires take a lot of administration and time. Often, the response is minimal and takes constant reminding. She believes that face to face dialogue is much better and produces more honest answers.

Annex I

Questionnaire

Helping your institution meet environmental information needs

Description of your institution

1. Name:
2. Date of establishment:
3. Mailing address:

4. Telephone/ Fax:

5. Email/ Web site address:
6. What are the objectives of your institution? Please list most important objective first.

7. What are the activities undertaken by your institution? Please state how many people undertake each activity.

8. How many people are employed by your institution?

9. What is the geographical scope of this work?
 - International:
 - National:
 - Provincial:
 - Regional:
 - Other:

Disseminating information: Internal Data Management

10. Do you have a catalogue system of publications released by your institution?
11. Do you have a catalogue system of references used by your institution in their publications?
12. Is this system an electronic database, a physical filing system or both?
13. How familiar is your staff with the protocols of this filing system?
14. If the system is electronic, is there a back up for it?
15. How organized is your filing system?
16. What types of computers do you have? Please state how many you have of each.
17. Please state what type of printers you have and how many.
18. What operating systems are available to you?
19. What type of data base management system is available to you?
20. What type of word processors are you using?
21. What type of spread sheets are you using?
22. What statistical programmes are available to you?

23. What type of graphic software are you using?
24. What type of geographical information system is available to you and what version?
25. Do you have an internal computer network?
26. Number of PCs connected to the network and the type of connection.
27. Types of protocols used in the network:
28. Do you have modems? If yes, how many and what is their reception speed?
29. Are you connected to the Internet?
30. What type of communication technology is used?

Disseminating information- external data management

31. Does your organisation produce publications? If yes, how are they made available and is there a cost?
32. Does your institution produce periodical publications? If so, how often?
33. What age group and education level do you target?
34. Do you have a library and is it open to the public?
35. Do you have a web site and is it equipped with a fully functioning search engine?
36. Does your web site:
 - Follow a logical progression?
 - Provide links to other web sites?

37. Is your web site in good working order?

38. Do you work with the media?

39. Please tick services available and to whom:

Photocopying

Query response

On-line services

Periodical services

Other

40. Please state how these services are advertised: