

The Potential of a Centralised Electronic Database for Environmental & Related Data Reporting and Resource Management for Developing Countries and SIDS

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Reporting to Conventions and MEAs

- Reporting to the Rio Conventions and other MEAs is required by all signatory parties.
- NRs are required on a regular basis – every 2-3 years for CBS, ~ 5-6 years for UNFCCC and ~ 5-6 years for UNCCD.

Resource needs

- Preparation of NR takes considerable resources in terms of time, human and technical resources, financial, administrative, logistical, etc.
- This represents a significant burden on developing countries.
- UNEP has therefore initiated a pilot project called the FNR-RIO.

The UNEP FNR-Rio Project

- Presently the 3 Rio Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD) have their own requirements and frequency cycles in terms of national reporting, which includes data and information for :
 - A national situational analysis.
 - Strategy and action plans.
 - Capacity building needs.
- UNEP has initiated a project to study the potential of having a single integrated national report to the three Rio Conventions.
- Mauritius is 1 of the 6 pilot countries chosen to try this approach (along with Lao, Afghanistan, Liberia, Pulau, & Eritrea).

Mauritius FNR-Rio

- A National Consulting team of 2 people.
- An International Consultant.
- MoESD

Recommendations

- MUELEX
- National Coordinating Committee for NR

The MUELEX in Mauritius

- Mauritius has recently established an interactive electronic database for all the environmental laws and environmental MEAs and Conventions that Mauritius is a signatory to.
- This was set up with the collaboration of the MoESD, CSO and the Attorney Generals' office.



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MUELEX is a database providing a comprehensive source of information on environmental law and policy in Mauritius. >> [read more](#)

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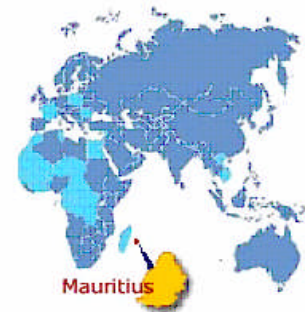
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Expanded MUELEX

- Under the impetus of the FNR-Rio project, it is proposed to expand the MUELEX to cover all aspects of environmental data and information (Government reports, white/green papers, scientific/technical published and unpublished, as well as grey literature) to serve as the main repository and source of all environment related data and information for Mauritius.

Regional Resource Sharing

- Taking the integrating process a step further, the present paper proposes a regional approach to data and information archiving and dissemination.
- This will enable sharing experiences and national reports, networking, and decision-making on common issues of sustainable development.

Need for a centralised repository for regional sectoral data

- There is a need for a framework to enable flexible, secure, coordinated resource sharing among dynamic collections of individuals, laboratories, institutions, and government agencies.
- This could be in the form of a collaborative platform that brings together distributed resources across organizational boundaries and links people together.

Need for a centralised repository for regional sectoral data contd.

The collaborative platform could take the form of centralised regional sectoral databases that will group together all (or maximum) data and information for a given sector (e.g. environment, health, agriculture, etc.) from all countries in the region, and reposing in a designated regional centre (e.g. 1 for SEA, 1 for WCA, and 1 for NA).

This will enable data users to access data and information on a given sector pertaining to all countries in the region from a single source without having to browse through several datasets and websites.

Need for a centralised repository for regional sectoral data contd.

Information and data should include national strategy and action plans, national green and white papers, other public documents, scientific papers and publications, technical/ annual/ project reports, consultancy reports, conference proceedings, newspaper articles, news items, feedback from grassroot levels, names and contact details of experts, etc.

The database should be structured and have varying levels of accessibility, with institutional and individual password-controlled access.

Need for a centralised repository for regional sectoral data contd.

The database should be regularly updated, and have the normal features of interoperable archiving, search and retrieval, guided by subjects or keywords, and provide information in short summaries as well as full text, with a feature to redirect the user to appropriate links.

Need for centralised regional sectoral databases contd.

Such databases would be immense benefit to data users at all levels.

It would enable resource sharing, serve to optimise resources, and avoid duplication of research efforts.

Within a given country, the website could also serve as a national consultation platform for key issues of national importance.

Data Quality & IPR

- Data and information validation for accuracy, reliability and quality assurance .
- Indicator based data and information.
- IPR of data and information in the database will have to be resolved upfront.
- Administration and management rights must also be decided upfront.

Capacity Building

- Capacity must be built in the hosting country in terms of financial, human and scientific/ technical resources through North-South and South-South cooperation.

Regional Sectoral Database

- In the first instance, such a database would promote co-sharing of environmental data and information, and at a later stage to sharing, and better utilisation, of human, technical and scientific resources.
- It would help in developing synergies among different data, e.g. agricultural statistics with household socioeconomic data.
- This could then become part of the WDS.

Regional Sectoral Databases contd.

- Furthermore, it would also help in enhancing/improving access to data and information needed for national reporting to international Conventions, e.g. the Biodiversity-related Conventions, the Rio Conventions, etc.
- In the long run, this may be expected to enable a common integrated regional reporting to the Conventions, thereby helping to maximum resource utilisation and optimise time and effort.
- This may well lead to a common report to the Rio Convention for a given region, rather than individual countries.

Conclusion

- Building local and regional capabilities for STI is the best option for development in Africa.
- Regional sectoral databases that serve as repositories of data and information can enable resource sharing, efficient utilisation of scarce resources and enable common reporting to the various Convention bodies (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, etc), and play an important role in a STI-based development scenario.

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Thank you for your attention